

## OUR OWN "ERAS TOUR" OF TEXADA HISTORY

It might be interesting to approach the history of Texada through a timeline - a chronology of significant "eras" (thanks, Taylor Swift!). Over the next few months I will attempt to cover major developments in the island's past, but forgive me if I omit events that some readers might consider important.

### 1 PRE-EUROPEAN ERA

There is considerable archeological evidence that Shelter Point was once the site of a well-established First Nations village. The remains of stone fish traps, house excavations, middens (containing charred soil, clam shells, deer bones) and a variety of found artifacts indicate an occupation from approximately 3000 years ago. (Aquila Archeological study). So much for the story of First Nations' fear of the island sinking into the salty brine!

### 2 ERA OF EXPLORERS

Captain Jose Narvaez (Spanish) was the first European to see Texada (1791). He "discovered" it on Saint Felix's Day so he named it Isla de Felis. Unfortunately his chart notations were not clear to later British cartographers thus initiating the subsequent naming confusion - Favada? Favana? Tanada? Texada?

Captain George Vancouver (British) sailed past a year later but wasn't interested in stopping by. Detailed mapping of the area was accomplished by fellow limey Captain GH Richards (1857-1861) who named both Mouat Bay and Gillies Bay but nobody seems to know why he chose those names.

### 3. ERA OF EARLY SETTLERS

Some of the first settlers were whalers. Elijah Fader operated out of Blubber Bay until he went broke when the humpbacks "mysteriously" disappeared from the Strait.

Another settler, Harry Trim, was a whaler and a prospector who discovered the huge iron ore deposit just north of Gillies Bay (see next Era).

### 4. ERA OF BIG TIME MINERAL DISCOVERIES

Trim's 1871 samples of ore caused a sensation two years later when Sewell Moody assayed them at 80% iron! The site was pre-empted by a consortium which included BC Premier Amor de Cosmos ("lover of the universe" - real name BILL Smith).

His shady "insider dealings" of the "Texhada Scandal" were investigated by BC's first Royal Commission headed by the "hanging judge" Matthew Begbie. (Late spoiler: A de C got away with it!).

In 1880 Puget Sound Iron Company bought the claims and shipped 500 tons of ore to their smelter in Irondale, Washington. The Prescott, Paxton and Lake claims were developed.

Other areas were also investigated for geological riches. The company's agent, WH Pop Lee, erected the first limestone kiln near Blubber Bay (1887). Meanwhile Captain Sturt developed a marble quarry at Sturt (Marble) Bay. The quality proved to be inferior, however.

Texada started to attract prospectors and settlers, some of whom also worked in the mines.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH

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