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Municipal Information



VIEW OF ESQUIMALT VILLAGE, 1905.

ESQUIMALT - WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Chachimutupusas was the name given to the harbour and surrounding land area by the Spanish in the 1790s. According to Ethnographer, Ethno Historian and Linguist Randy Bouchard, "the native person who provided this term was a Makah Chief named 'Tetacus' from the Neah Bay area who accompanied one of the Spanish vessels from Neah Bay to Esquimalt Harbour. While the name has the appearance of a Makah term, it is more likely a Makah pronunciation of a Lekwungen term." There is no clear translation and it is thought it might simply refer to a village site.

The accepted definition of the word 'Esquimalt' was "a place of gradually shoaling waters" or "a place gradually shoaling." The area described was Rowe Creek in the Esquimalt District at Parson's Bridge. It was named for Thomas Rowe, RN paymaster, a member of the crew of the survey ship *HMS Fisgard*. In 1848, Rowe Creek was renamed Millstream Creek. The mouth of Millstream, 'Swhaymalthelth', was anglicized variously as 'Es Whoy malth', 'Is Whoy malth', and eventually, 'Esquimalt.' This was the place where RN ships provisioned fresh water.

The name 'Esquimalt' was not always spelled this way. In early documents it is often seen as 'Esquimault'. This was the spelling artist Paul Kane used to describe the scenes he sketched when he visited the area between 1846-1848. This is also the spelling the incorporation committee used sixty-four years later in a letter to the reeve and councillors dated 23 September 1912. The other spellings used by members of the Royal Navy in their correspondence to senior officers in Great Britain were 'Squirnal' and 'Squimalt'.

Pronounced "ess KWY-malt", the name "Esquimalt (Municipal District)" was adopted in the 18th report of the Geographic Board of Canada, 31 March 1924. It was re-approved 1 May 1934 on National Defence sheet Victoria.

In the 1950s, Wilson Duff, Curator of Anthropology at the British Columbia Provincial Museum, asked several Songhees Elders what the name Esquimalt, often spelled SXIMELEL, meant. He was told there was no firm definition other than "the word applied loosely to the people, the village, or the harbour."

No matter how the name is spelled, there is only **one** Esquimalt.

MEMBERS OF ESQUIMALT COUNCIL - 1912-2012

A community acquires a character in one hundred years, something that is the product of the place and the individuals who have lived in it. All of our elected officials come from different backgrounds and all have helped shape our community into the unique place that it is. Following are mini-bios of those people.





SURVEYING IN ESQUIMALT

Instructing Captain McNeill to examine the East and Southeast coasts of Vancouver Island in 1837, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) was pleased with the report on his findings as to the character of several inlets on the south coast.

In 1842, concluding 'Vancouver's Island' should be the goal for the resettlement of Fort Vancouver in the Oregon Territories, James Douglas, accompanied by surveyor and map maker Adolphus Lee Lewes, was intent on finding a specific site for the new fort. Both men determined Comosack Inlet was the most suitable harbour. Lewes drew "a coloured land use map of the area from Cadboro Bay to Portage Inlet showing areas of woods, forests, plains, marshes, rocks, hills and lakes entitled 'Ground Plan of Portion of Vancouver's Island Selected for New Establishment'. He added an insert map showing a selected part of the island and this map is considered the first cartographic document of Fort Victoria and Vancouver's Island."

Almost no surveying or map making was done between 1843 and 1849. Land claims mapping started in 1849 when Walter C. Grant arrived and assumed the work of part-time surveyor for the HBC. By the end of 1849, it was evident to Douglas the lack of maps was holding up land sales. A year later, after producing a map 'Sketch of the South coast of the Island' that was almost identical to a map produced in 1842, Grant resigned.

Looking to replace Grant within Canada, in 1850 the HBC committee rejected an application from Joseph Despard Pemberton (1821-1893) of Dublin, Ireland. Changing their minds in January 1851, the committee informed Douglas that Pemberton, a competent surveyor and cartographer, was coming from Britain to work for the company. Pemberton was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, as a railway engineer and he occupied various positions in that profession. He was a Professor of Civil Engineering at the Royal Agricultural College, England, from 1845-1850.

Bringing Benjamin W. Pearse as his assistant, Pemberton started his duties in Victoria. He found it difficult to proceed quickly as he had only done regional surveying and he had no experience surveying new territory. Consulting books on work being done in New Zealand and Australia, he applied some of those surveying methods in Victoria and Esquimalt.

During the summer of 1851, a triangulation network was set out, defining the boundaries of the district and Esquimalt. In 1852, he produced a map entitled 'Roughly Sketched Water Supplies' for the Esquimalt District showing rivers, lakes, streams, and marshes that could supply water for settlers and cattle. Included as well were sites that could be used for water operated mills.

As far as the HBC was concerned land use in the Esquimalt District was principally for the Puget Sound Agricultural



1912-1919

POPULATION

1911 CENSUS 2,719

(INCLUDES SOLDIERS STATIONED AT WORK POINT BARRACKS)

1912 WAS A LEAP YEAR.

This note was found in the journal of Dockmaster Arthur J. Daniels, "Sunday 14 April 1912, SS *Titanic* lost off Bank of Newfoundland - 1600 people drowned."

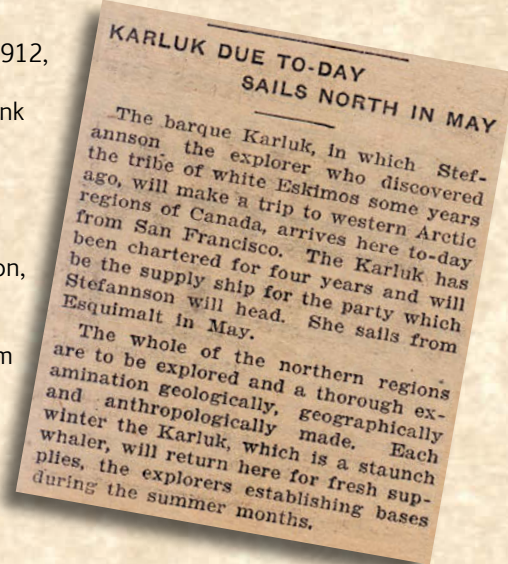
Sweeney Cooperage Company Limited opened a plant on Douglas Street (now Ellery Street) and advertised, "We Manufacture Barrels for Everything with High Grade Cooperage Stock." After fire destroyed the Esquimalt plant, 28 August 1924, the company relocated in Vancouver. Only the business office remained on the Island.

Esquimalt connections to the Carnegie Library began in 1911 when Dr. Helen Gordon Stewart helped form the British Columbia Library Association. In 1912, she became the first woman Head Librarian. From 1917 to 1919, she held the office of president of the British Columbia Library Association, the first woman to do that too. She was one of the people responsible for the passing of the first Public Libraries Act. A no-nonsense woman, Dr. Stewart designed and built her own small cottage on Admirals Road. She was one of the first women in the area to volunteer for overseas duty with the Red Cross during the First World War.

When council passed By-law No.12 in March 1912, it approved dividing the township into three wards, each represented by two councillors.

On 31 December 1912, the township had \$1206.72 in the bank and \$210 cash on hand.

Canadian born Dr. Vilhjalmur Stefansson, Anthropologist, Ethnologist and Explorer, sailed from Esquimalt Harbour in the whaling barque *Karluk* on his Canadian Arctic Expedition 17 June 1913.



Did You Know?

Captain McNeill surveyed the harbours of Sooke, Esquimalt and Victoria in 1837, and recommended Victoria Harbour as the place to build a fort. Chief Factor Douglas, after taking a second look, was not impressed with Esquimalt Harbour and wrote, "Its appearance is strikingly unprepossessing, the outline of the country exhibiting a confused assemblage of rock and wood."

LUGRIN, CHARLES HENRY, REEVE, SEPTEMBER 1912 - MARCH 1913.
BORN 1846 FREDERICTON, NB. DIED 1917 ESQUIMALT.

New Brunswick Militia. Justice of the Peace (JP), teacher, lawyer, journalist. Newspaper editor. Associations: Henry George Association, Board of Governors, UBC, Victoria & Island Development Association, Victoria Board of Trade.

The Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia, the Honourable Frank M. Ross, CMG, MC, LLD, presented the Coat-of-Arms to the township 23 January 1957.

Charges for the Coat-of-Arms were \$100 (to receive approval from the Earls Marshall) and \$295.55 (to cover registration fees required by the College of Heraldry). Esquimalt is one of a few places in Canada to have its Coat-of-Arms registered in England. The copyright was registered in British Columbia in 1958.

In 1957, Commander Henry (Harry) W.S. Soulsby, RCN, (Retired), a gifted artist and craftsman, presented Esquimalt with a

Coat-of-Arms carved in oak. It hung in the council chambers in the old municipal hall until 2004. Mayor Darwin Robinson, a shipwright and woodworker, took the coat-of-arms to his home workshop where he removed it from its cloth backing, repaired the damage that had occurred over the years and remounted it on a walnut shield. On British Columbia Day, August 2004, the Coat-of-Arms was hung in the new municipal hall council chambers.

Council voted to send a personal letter to municipal employee Reginald C. Jury, 4 January 1961 "commending him on the excellent craftsmanship displayed in producing a large replica of the Coat-of-Arms for the sports centre building." At the same meeting council decided to ask Jury to make another large scale replica of the Coat-of-Arms for the municipal hall. That replica was mounted on the stone wall of the municipal hall when it opened in 2003.

In July 1965, at the suggestion of Councillors Gerry Horne and Ed DeCosta, council agreed to have small municipal crests made for blazers/jackets so that "councillors would be recognized as being from Esquimalt" when they were on municipal business.

The Esquimalt Charter, presented along with the crest in 1957, was restored by art historian and calligrapher Georgia Angelopoulos in 2005. The red ink she used was made for Queen Victoria more than a century before. The Charter hangs in the council chambers.



CHAIN OF OFFICE

When members of the Royal Canadian Legion Esquimalt Dockyard Branch 172 learned the township did not have a chain of office, they took on the task of fundraising to provide one. After raising \$7000 to cover costs, they commissioned Birks Jewellers to design and craft a chain. With great pride, Legion President Cliff Ludtke presented the Chain of Office to Mayor Ken Hill on 8 June 1984 who gratefully accepted the gift on behalf of the residents.

The centerpiece, the Esquimalt Coat-of-Arms, is fashioned in gold and surrounded with a double gold chain linking gold flowers representative of the dogwood, the floral emblem of British Columbia. The names of each reeve or mayor and the dates of their years on council was engraved on the back of each flower. The Chain of Office, set on a collar of blue velvet, is worn at the inaugural meeting for each new council and at all formal occasions attended by the Mayor.



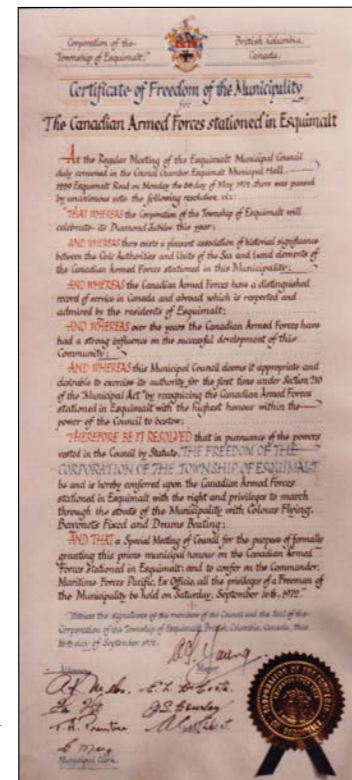
FREEDOM OF THE TOWNSHIP

The custom of granting Freedom of the City to a military unit goes back more than 300 years. Throughout our history, both in Britain and the Commonwealth, there is a strong tradition against the "warlike appearance of large bodies of troops in the streets; disturbing the civil repose and posing a threat, real or imagined, of infringement of civil rights."

The granting of the Freedom of a City to a military unit is a sign of the trust and good relationship between the two. The ceremony itself is symbolic of the days when cities barred friend and foe alike until the authorities were assured that the troops would be on best behaviour and the purpose of the regiment's presence was pacific. Once granted, the Freedom gives a unit the honour for all time of marching through the city with drums beating, colours flying, and bayonets fixed.

Traditionally, Freedom of the City (Township) was given to army units garrisoned there. It is unusual for a city to give this honour to a naval unit because they do not normally guard or picket a community as a regular duty. Granting this honour to both the 3rd Battalion PPCLI and Maritime Command Pacific breaks tradition and was unique in Canadian military history.

"At the regular meeting of the Esquimalt Municipal Council 8th day of May 1972, there passed by unanimous vote that in pursuance of the powers vested in the Council by Statute, The Freedom of the Corporation of the Township of Esquimalt be conferred upon the Canadian Armed Forces stationed in Esquimalt with the right and privileges to



BROWN, CHARLES, ALDERMAN 1915. DID NOT COMPLETE TERM,
RESIGNED AND RETURNED TO ENGLAND.
BORN 1865 ENGLAND.
Royal Navy (RN).



march through the streets of the Municipality with Colours Flying, Bayonets Fixed and Drums Beating;

And That a special meeting of Council for the purpose of formally granting this prime municipal honour on the Canadian Armed Forces stationed in Esquimalt; and to confer on the Commander, Maritime Forces Pacific, Ex Officio, all the privileges of a Freeman of the Municipality be held on Saturday, September 16th, 1972." The salute was taken by Mayor Arthur Young, and Admiral Richard H Leir, KCB, KCMG, CD.

The Certificate of Freedom of the Municipality states: "There exists a pleasant association of historical significance between the Civic Authorities and Units of the Sea and Land elements of the Canadian Armed Forces stationed in Esquimalt and that the Canadian Armed Forces have a distinguished record of service in Canada and abroad which is respected and admired by the residents of Esquimalt and that over the years the Canadian Armed Forces have had a strong influence on the successful development of Esquimalt."

3 PPCLI exercised their right on 20 June 1987 during the 75th Anniversary Celebrations with Mayor Ken Hill and Lt. Colonel Anthony W. Anderson, MBE, CD, Commanding Officer, 3rd Battalion PPCLI, taking the salute.



FREEMAN OF ESQUIMALT

Alfred Wurtele was given the honour of being the first Freeman of Esquimalt in 1987 during the 75th anniversary celebration of the incorporation of the Township.

He was born in Kingston, Ontario, in 1897. After a distinguished career in the Royal Canadian Navy, he retired with the rank of Commander. He and his wife Ann built their family home on Plaskett Place. Alf was a longtime member of St. Paul's Anglican Church where he served as church warden. He took a great interest in the community and entered municipal politics in 1946, serving as councillor until 1951. In 1952, he was elected mayor, a position he held until 1965 when he retired from politics. Through his efforts, a coat-of-arms and a new corporate seal was presented to Esquimalt in 1957.

As a young man, he excelled in sports, competing in ice hockey, soccer, rugby, track and even boxing. He never lost his love of sports and in 1960 his influence was the reason why the township successfully completed



HYMERS, GEORGE, COUNCILLOR 1915.
BORN 1886 DURHAM, ENGLAND. DIED 1956 VANCOUVER, BC.
REAL ESTATE AGENT.
Broker & financial agent.

Did You Know?

The earliest proposal to join the Gorge waterway with Esquimalt Harbour was published in *The Victoria Gazette* in 1858. It suggested, "A few thousand dollars judiciously expended would turn this ravine, between these two bodies of water, into an excellent canal, uniting the two harbors, and capable of floating lighters heavily loaded with merchandise, and when once into this inlet, the navigation to this city is easy of accomplishment - at least - so we are assured by old residents."



Esquimalt resident Samuel J. Pomeroy (1868-1936), an active member of the British Campaigners' Association, planted an oak tree in memory of Lord Horatio Kitchener (1850-1916) in the new Victoria High School grounds at the corner of Fernwood Road and Grant Street. A sergeant in the 50th Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment, Samuel fought in the Sudan in 1884. Along with his other medals, he wore the Khedive's Bronze star at the ceremony. In 2011, the tree was accidentally chopped down by the City of Victoria parks department.

The Canadian government introduced personal income tax in 1917, as a 'temporary' war measure.

Former Esquimalt police officer Arthur Halstead died 2 August 1917 of wounds received in action during the First World War. He joined the 103rd Battalion as a Sergeant-Major at the beginning of the war transferring to the 16th Canadian Resident Battalion in England where he was promoted battalion Sergeant-Major. Later in the war, he surrendered his stripes and rejoined the artillery as a gunner with the 45th Battery (Ontario) Canadian Field Artillery.

In 1918, Victoria Mayor Bert Todd once again called for the amalgamation of Victoria and Esquimalt remarking, "This is no new idea, anyone free from local prejudice, any stranger, would easily see the advantages of this Union." Replying to his comments, Reeve Arthur Coles stated, "I don't think you could get one person in Esquimalt to vote for Union. In the first place there would necessarily be higher taxes for the people of Esquimalt to pay and they would naturally be opposed." The *Daily Times* summed up the remarks with: "The 1st War ended November 11, 1918 but the Amalgamation War continues."



Canada mourned the loss of *HMCS Galiano*, the only Canadian ship lost during the First World War. She went down with all hands off Cape St. James, 30 October 1918. Emma Mary Brunton, onboard *Galiano* after her rescue from Triangle Island, was the first woman lost on a Canadian warship.