

Canadian International Seaport City and its Socio-Cultural History

~ Birth of Burrard Inlet and Its Development
for the port of Vancouver ~

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★ This paper includes a part of a lecture which I gave at the convention of the International Academic (Science) Exchange, sponsored by the Management Research Institute of Jeon - ju University, Korea in March, 1986.

It should be added that the above mentioned lecture dealt with only a part of this paper and has not been printed or published.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of completing this paper is based on the follo-

wing considerations : 1 . Little has been studied in our country on the history of the development of the port of Vancouver which is known as the core of the transportation network in the Pacific Rim area ; 2 . The volume of export cargo handled in the port of Vancouver in 1974 was the second largest following New York. What is the cause behind it ? 3 . In order to find out the factors of the cause, we have to understand the developmental process of the port of Vancouver first. Therefore I referred to the birth of Burrard Inlet and the history of the development of the port of Vancouver.

This paper touches upon the historical background of the port of Vancouver through the above mentioned three points exclusively, that is, we look at the subject from the angles of society, culture and communication. Because of the limited space for this paper this study limits its subjects to the study of the early history of the port of Vancouver and the major process of formation of Vancouver port Authority. By observing the historical background we will be able to see the characteristics (spirit of development) of the early port city of Vancouver. I hope this paper will be utilized as a touchstone to understand the present condition of the city of Vancouver in the light of its history and characteristics. According to the national census of 1981 the population of the City of Vancouver surpassed 1,268,000.¹⁾

1 . THE BIRTH OF BURRARD INLET

※ D. T. M. Narváez's Reconnaissance

It is generally said that the history of Burrard Inlet, presently called the port of Vancouver began in 1791.

According to native legend, the Squamish Indians offered wood, deer meat, vegetables and so forth to the spaniards and the latter gave bits of iron and barrel hoops to make knives to the former. Such interaction between the two is regarded as the original force which brought about the future development of the port of Vancouver.

The Spanish pilot D. J. M. Marváez set sail in the tiny schooner "Santa Saturnia" from the Fort of Nooka which was on the west coast of Vancouver Island in July, 1791. First he sailed south and went toward point Roverts (presently called Roberts Bank) . He dropped anchor off point Grey.

He was greeted by canoe - loads of Indians from the village of Fyalmu which is now called Jericho Beach. D. J. M. Narváez described native Indian villages located near the Capilano River :

the Squamish tribesmen were still living in the stone agae, they had a bountiful existence. The rivers that flowed into Burrard Inlet teemed with fish, and not far away was the mighty Fraser River, the greatest salmon stream of them all. The woods were full of berries and game, and the great cedar trees provided wood for their house and for their dugout canoes.²

Later he did not sail to the inner harbour via the First Narrows. But his navigation reconnaissance was centered in the area of Vancouver Island and he first discovered the open gate of the harbour of the western part of Canada.

After 1792 Europeans were to sail toward Burrard Inlet, said to be the finest harbour in the Northwest Pacific, by going through the inner narrows of Lion's Gate which is now poetically Known.

※ Capt. G. Vancouver' s Achievement

Present City of Vancouver is located in the center of Burrard Inlet. Capt. G. Vancouver whose name was given to the port of Vancouver later arrived at this area in 1792, one year after when Narváez's reconnaissance took place. The discovery of Burrard Inlet made the name of an Englishman, Capt. G. Vancouver immortal. His exploration work was done in small cutters or pinnaces. His exploration of Burrard Inlet was made in a small ship, accompanied by a launch commanded by English Lieut. Peter Puget.

Capt. G. Vancouver was sent out to the pacific coast with two missions. One was to negotiate the transfer of the Fort of Nootka under the terms of Nootka Convention. The other was to conduct an accurate survey of the eastern pacific coast. The negotiation bore little fruit though he and Don Francisco Bodega Quadra, the Spanish commander, were on good terms.

In referring to the second mission I will touch upon the progress of exploration into Burrard Inlet based on Capt. G. Vancouver's navigation diary. He took the present Stanley park peninsula to be an island. But boldly went through the First Narrows, "Not more than a cable's length in width."

There he was greeted by Squamish Indian who resided on the north shore. It was June 13, 1792. In his "Voyage to the North Pacific Ocean," Capt. G. Vancouver noted about the navigation conditions of the Second Narrows area:

For the sake of the company of our new

friends, we stood on under an easy sail, which encouraged them to attend us some Little distance up the arm . . . Some three or four canoes only accompanied us up a navigation which, in some places, does not exceed a hundred and fifty yards in width.³⁾

He sailed further and landed at a place which was remote from indian reserve and wrote about the circumstances of the Indians:

Our Indian visitors remained with us until by signs we gave them to understand we were going to rest, and after receiving some acceptable articles they retired, and by means of the same language, promised an abundant supply of fish the next day⁴⁾

Then capt. G. Vancouver confirmed the region of Indian Arm streching northward, and sailed out Burrard Inlet passing through the Second and First Narrows. On his return voyage on June 11, he was to come upon a great surprise, that is, he come upon two Spanish vessels at point Grey

They had been sent from Nootka and been engaging in completing the chart of this area (Point Grey) . Capt. G. Vancouver was disappointed to know that they had explored this area before him. Moreover it was revealed to him that the exploration troop of Capt. D. D. Galiano, a Spaniard, had preceeded further than Vancouver to the interior of Indian Arm.

But they became friends and exchanged charts and information.

The chart, the outcome of Capt. G. Vancouver's three-year painstaking surveys of the northwest pacific coast was used by many nations for over half a century.

2. THE RISE OF BURRARD INLET

※ Capital City Westminster and the Aemistration of R. C. Moody.

It was the magic cry of "gold" which first aroused Burrard Inlet from its long sleep. It was "Gold Rush" that started in 1858. The mining of placer gold on the bars of the Fraser River made New Westminster and Vancouver prosperous. The new crown colony of British columbia was proclaimed in 1858 and the capital city of New Westminster was established early the next year.

Because of this Burrard Inlet and its outskirts began to bask in the reflected glory of civilization. In order to protect Burrard Inlet region and the capital city of New Westminster, Col. R. C. Moody of the Royal Engineers, founder of New Westminster, proclaimed several military reserves on the shores of Burrard Inlet. The citizens of Vancouver should be eternally grateful for the proclamation. These reserves for protection extended to a huge area. These included the three hundred and fifty four acres which now make up Stanley Park, one hundred and ten acres which make up the park land at Jericho, the campus site of the University of British Columbia, and other places which are now designated as public land.

Also he completed a trail called Port Moody his honour. Keeping pace with the development of the area people sought to obtain land on Burrard Inlet in December 1859. These land seeking

people were called the "three greenhorns," that is, they were the first settlers in present Vancouver. They preempted the land east of Stanley Park before 1863. It took only a few years and months for the new immigrants to settle after the birth of the capital city New Westminster.

The Achievement of Capt. G. H. Richards, Hydrographer of the Royal Navy.

Needless to say the achievements of Narváez, Capt. G. Vancouver, and R.C. Moody which led the Port of Vancouver to modernization were magnificent. Especially, Capt. G. Vancouver's accomplishment of completing his chart was utilized for about half a century. But the chart which is presently used was completed by Capt. George H. Richards. He was honored with a title Admiral Sir George Richards for his accomplishment. Capt. G. H. Richard's detailed chart of Burrard Inlet was based on the pioneer work of Spanish explorers, Narvaez, Capt. G. Vancouver and others. He commanded Her Majesty's surveying vessel "Plumper" on the Pacific coast from 1857 to 1861. Among other things, "Plumper" was sent to survey Burrard Inlet with a view to the protection of the city of New Westminster. During the survey, coal outcroppings were found on the south of Burrard Inlet, thus this place was called Coal Harbour. An attempt to mine the seam was made, but it prove to be poor quality. Now it is buried under the Canada Pacific Railroad (C. P. R.) tracks.

Capt. G. H. Richards was responsible for many place names on the coast of Burrard Inlet and he rose to become Hydrographer of the Royal Navy because of his achievement of surveying the contour lines of the bottoms of the lakes, the sea and the rivers, and also the depth of water, ocean current, and the tide.

The First Foreign Export and the Construction of Lumber-mill.

Burrard Inlet was still a primeval wilderness. Among other things, the untrodden huge forest was the most attractive. It is said that the early period of the utilization of the forest resources started in 1862. In the same year a New westminster contractor received a preemption of 480 acres of timber on the north shore. The site is now known to be Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and Neptune Terminal in North Vancouver. This contractor began construction of a waterpower sawmill. Later the sawmill became known as the Pioneer Mills. The construction work was started in August 1863. The first cargo was shipped to New Westminster in the sternwheel steamer "Flying Dutchman" in August 1863. The cargo consisted of 25,000 feet of three-inch planking. The mill shipped lumber also to domestic markets, such as Victoria and Nanaimo.

In November 1864, J. O. Smith gained the ownership of the Pioneer Mills. And in the same month the mill made its venture into the foreign export trade. The export was the cargo of 277,750 feet of lumber and 16,000 pickets loaded in the barque "Ellen Lewis" for Adelaide. But since the inlet was not a port of entry then, the ship inevitably entered and cleared at New Westminster the loading took about two months, from September 16 to November 9.

J. O. Smith soon went bankrupt, and the mill was acquired by Sewell P. Moody. It was Australia with which Smith first had lumber export deal. The cargo was sent to Sydney in the barque "Glimpese" in May, 1865.

3. The History of the Development of the Port Vancouver

As stated before the start of the Port Vancouver took 195 years from the time when Narváez's reconnaissance took place. It was 1913 when Stevens became responsible for an act of Parliament which established the Vancouver-elected Parliament members. The act created the Port of Vancouver that extended the entire length of Burrard Inlet, included Indian Arm, English Bay, False Creek, and other areas which included all other tidal waters lying east of a line drawn from Point Atkinson to Point Grey.

Along with the construction of the Government Wharf, H. Stevens persuaded the government to approve the construction of the first grain warehouse. Among other things, the completion of the Panam Canal contributed to Vancouver and this place became the most important wheat shipping port in the world. Up to then the management of the port facilities was conducted by shipment dealers, that is, the Port of Vancouver had not total administration of management. But because of the foundation of the Vancouver Harbour Commission three officials were elected and were given the right of port administration management. The main rights were as follows: 1. the right to employ Harbour Master, engineers, and officials of the academic administration; 2. the right to collect funds of carry the port administration (the funds collected from facility leases and the charges of dealing cargo mostly); 3. the right to issue the bonds to raise funds for enterprises. Because the Harbour Commission had almost complete autonomy, and had strong power it became a political football. Consequently it became a nominal existence.

The Dominion Government anticipated the situation and felt the need to reform the port institutions. Therefore it asked

Sir Alexander Gibb, a harbour administration expert, to make the whole investigation. His final report recommended a centralization of the administration system of large scale ports (seven ports) in Ottawa. Transport Minister C. D. Howe Accepted his recommendation and established the National Harbours Board. Thus Ottawa became the center of administration and at the same time the remote control from the city created many problems. One of the problems, for example, was that there was centralization of finance, with all income paid into a central fund in Ottawa. There were serious problems in Vancouver because it was located far away from Ottawa that sent instructions and not fications.

There was a movement among shipping and business circles in the Port of Vancouver that faced the above-mentioned problems to establish a local harbour autonomy body. At last the Vancouver Port Authority was established in 1971. But this body was only an advisory body and did not have any rights in reality. All the instructions and orders were made in Ottawa. On the other hand, it was apparent that the National Harbours Board Act had outlived its usefulness.

In 1975, the then Transport Minister, Jean Marchand, announced plans to introduce legislation to create a new Canada Ports Act. But this Act was changed to the Canada Port Cooperation Act and the legislation was passed the Parliament in August 1982 and the Act was proclaimed on February 24, 1983. The substance of this Act was to keep the balance between each harbour autonomy body and national policy. In short the Port of Vancouver had its long awaited wish. And the Canada Port Cooperation became able to hand over its authority to local Port Cooperation. Under the new Act, the Port of Vancouver was to be

operated by a commission of up to seven members. Operating budgets were decided by the local port commission and capital budgets required the approval of the Canadian Port Commission.

Bo Ekstrom, General Manager of the Port of Vancouver stated his thoughts on the Canada Port Cooperation Act:

It has been long time coming, but the desk where the buck stops is leaving Ottawa at last and coming home to Vancouver

Conclusion

Canada is the largest country next to the Soviet Union. It is no exaggeration to say that the foundation of the development of the Port of Vancouver is its forest and lumber. The history of the Port of Vancouver is only 73 years long since the start of the Vancouver Harbour Commission as a modern port on full scale. But it was listed as the second busiest bulk cargo handling port following New York in North American in 1974.⁷ No doubt the Port of Vancouver is one of a few ports which achieved their dramatic development. Vancouver was munisipalized in 1886 and this year it sees its centennial year.

NOTES

- 1 . The World Almanac 1984, "Vancouver, British Columbia ... 414,281 (city) , 1,263,183 (Metro Area) , p. 547.
- 2 . N. R. Hacking, The port of Vancouver, p. 2 , 1975.
- 3 . *ibid*, p. 3 .
- 4 . *ibid*, p. 3 .

5 . Port of Vancouver, "Background Note: Overview of 1982 Port Legislation," Feb. 17, 1983, p. 1 .

6 . Bo Ekstrom, Port of Vancouver, Feb. 17, 1983, p. 4 .

7 . The volume of foreign cargo in 1974 was:

" In the record year 1974, this amounted to 32,465,536 tons.

Deepsea arrivals totalled 2,022 vessels of 39,393,218 gross tons."

The volume of lumber export in 1974 was:

" In the year 1974 the Port of Vancouver exported 950 million board feet of lumber and logs."

The major export items in the years around 1974 were:

" In recent years, Vancouver has become one of the great bulk cargo handling ports due to the huge increase in shipments of grain, coal, potash, sulphur, asbestos, metals, and other products of western Canada's vast hinterland."

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Chart-1 Around Vancouver Seaport City

