

Chapter 17



SAYSUTSHUN or Newcastle Island

The single most dangerous action you can take on this tour is failing to pay attention while travelling on the route. Do NOT read the following chapter while actively moving by vehicle, car, foot, bike, or boat.

SAYSUTSHUN/Newcastle Walking Tour

By Simon Priest (with great thanks to David Bodaly)



SAYSUTSHUN NEWCASTLE ISLAND

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Saysutshun or Newcastle Island is a Marine Provincial Park located in Nanaimo Harbour. It is accessed by private boat or public ferry (not available in the winter) from Maffeo Sutton Park near downtown. The island is a great place for hiking, bicycling, picnicking, swimming, and enjoying nature. This ten kilometre walking tour connects several points of historical interest, while passing through forests of Douglas Fir, Arbutus, and Garry Oak, by sea caverns and cliff top views, and over beaches of sand, shells, and gravel. Tent camping is possible on the island and fee-paid facilities include toilets, showers, and potable water. The island also has a rich geological and cultural history as described in this tour.



Saysutshun/Newcastle Island (larger) and Protection Island (smaller) in Nanaimo Harbour

Several mammals have been seen on the island. Deer (Ha'put) are prevalent and viewed as a gentle and caring gift by Snuneymuxw. A cougar (xw'tluqtnuc or "long tail") was witnessed visiting in the summer of 2018. Several black bears have been spotted on the island every year and occasionally observed swimming to and from the island.

The most unique species is the White Raccoon or Champagne Raccoon, also known as the Puk xul xul les (puk hul hul less). This animal lacks the gene for making black hair pigment that give raccoons a ring like appearance and so it looks blonde rather than albino. Stuck on the island, these animals have interbred to maintain their genetic mutations. Consider yourself to be extremely lucky if you manage to see one.

HISTORY

For at least 5,000 years the indigenous Snuneymuxw peoples lived in the Nanaimo region. On this Island, their villages were seasonally inhabited by the time the Spanish arrived and began charting the area in 1792. In the winter, the Snuneymuxw caught spawning herring in the surrounding waters, then foraged and hunted on nearby islands and other areas in the spring and summer. Fall was spent salmon harvesting on the Nanaimo and Fraser Rivers.

The Snuneymuxw had three settlements on Saysutshun: their name for the island which meant “training for running” in reference to the place they would bathe so as to cleanse themselves before a footrace or battle. One village was Clotsun at today’s Midden Bay (#7), where debris from daily living accumulated as a pile of discarded shells and other garbage. This was known as a midden and was usually heaped by the water. The other settlement, called Saysetsun, was on the grasslands near the start/finish (#1 & #10). Other places of indigenous heritage include: Tl:piles (meaning “going deep underwater”), a small bay surrounded by cliffs that made an excellent canoe landing; Thlap’qwum (meaning “boiling place”), where a legendary creature caused the water to boil in between the two islands; and Qulastun (meaning “facing backwards” or “the other way”) as another name for the large bay facing today’s city.

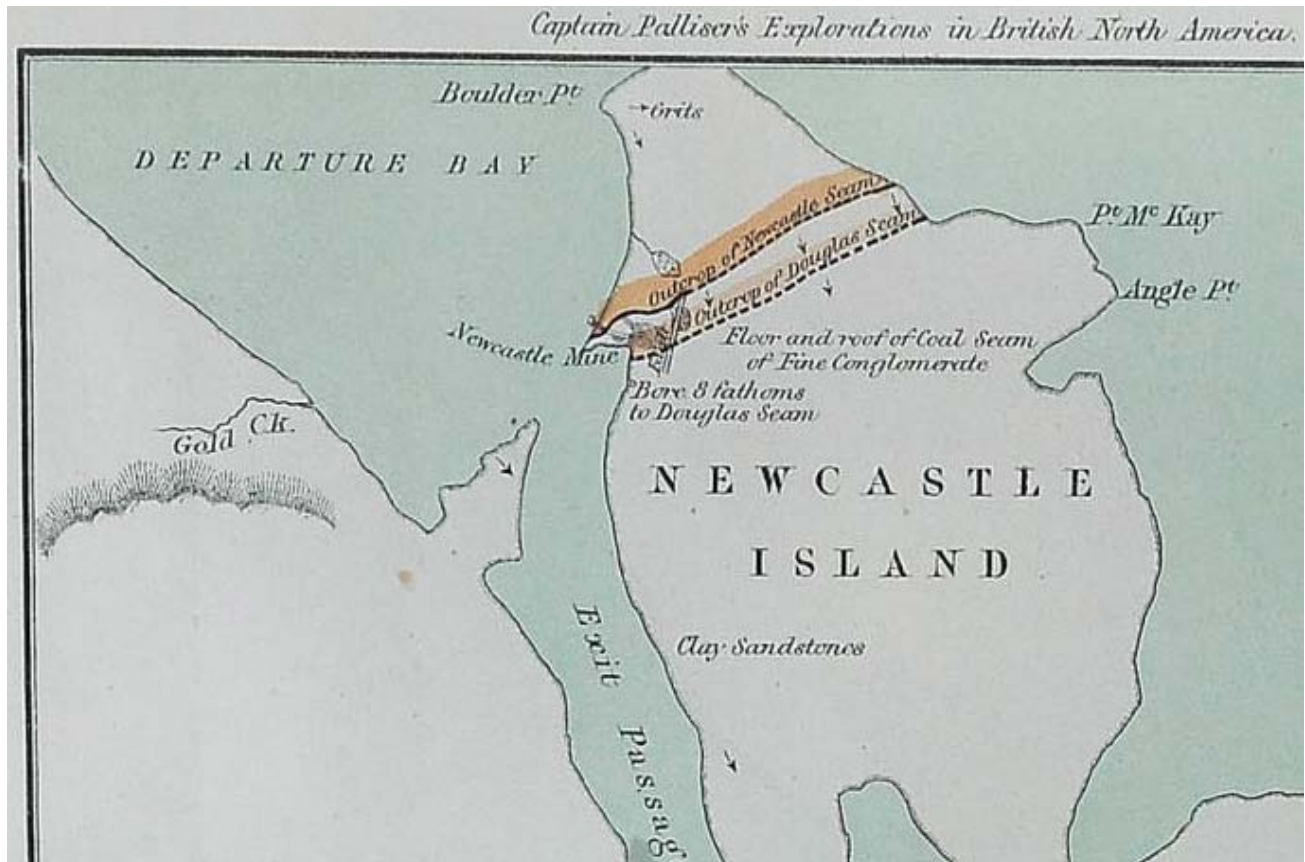


Snuneymuxw on the wharfs (Coal Tye is the central figure with a stick)

Coal wasn’t “discovered” in so much as the Snuneymuxw already knew of its existence. Unbeknownst to the community, one individual chose to share their indigenous knowledge with the British who came to colonize British Columbia (BC). In 1849, Chief Che-wech-i-kan (later nicknamed Coal Tye by the

British) saw a blacksmith in Fort Camosack (now the provincial capital of Victoria) heating a forge with coal from Fort Rupert (now Port Hardy). Coal Tye shared his familiarity of places with better “black stones” near Nanaimo and brought a canoe of high quality coal when he visited Victoria a year later.

The Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) sent an agent, Joseph McKay, to prospect coal in 1852 and to start mining at Colviletown, renamed Nanaimo in 1860, as a mispronunciation of the local Snuneymuxw First Nation. Coal Tye was later ostracized from the Snuneymuxw for sharing the presence of coal without their permission. Nevertheless, the Snuneymuxw supported Nanaimo’s growth through their hard work mining and loading coal. They were great contributors to the city’s success and prosperity.



The 1860 Pallister's Expedition map of the island showing the two major coal seams known at that time

When the HBC began mining here, Newcastle Islands was named for the British coal mining town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Coal was mined at points in Departure Bay (#7) from 1852 to 1883. A succession of mines operated with shifting names depending on the new company that owned each: Newcastle, Brechin, No. 4 Northfield, and Fitzwilliam. Mining on the island was all but finished by 1900.

Although the supply of coal from the Newcastle Seam was depleted here within 30 years, the discovery of the underlying Douglas Seam led to expanded mining in what is now downtown Nanaimo for much longer. By 1939, mine tunnels extended for several kilometers under the islands and harbour waters.

Sandstone was quarried from 1869 to 1932. During initial coal mining and further explorations, high quality sandstone was found along the cliffs (#8) of the Newcastle (aka Exit) Passage, separating the island from Nanaimo, and at Mark's Bay (#10) near the ferry dock. Stone was removed for a number of

famous buildings in Victoria, New Westminster, and Vancouver, as well as the US Mint in San Francisco. The Pulpstone Quarry (#10), near the caretaker's cabin, shaped and removed unique sandstone that was used in pulp mills to grind up waste wood and manufacture paper. In 1932, the pulpstone extraction was moved to Gabriola Island, until industrial grinders made from artificial stone were introduced.

The herring were so plentiful in Nanaimo Harbour, that salt packing operations were popular after 1900. In the area known as Saltery Beach (#6) Herring was salted from 1911. Run by Japanese owners, the packed Herring were exported to Japan and China. When Canada entered World War II in 1940, most Japanese citizens were placed into Internment Camps and these businesses closed the following year.

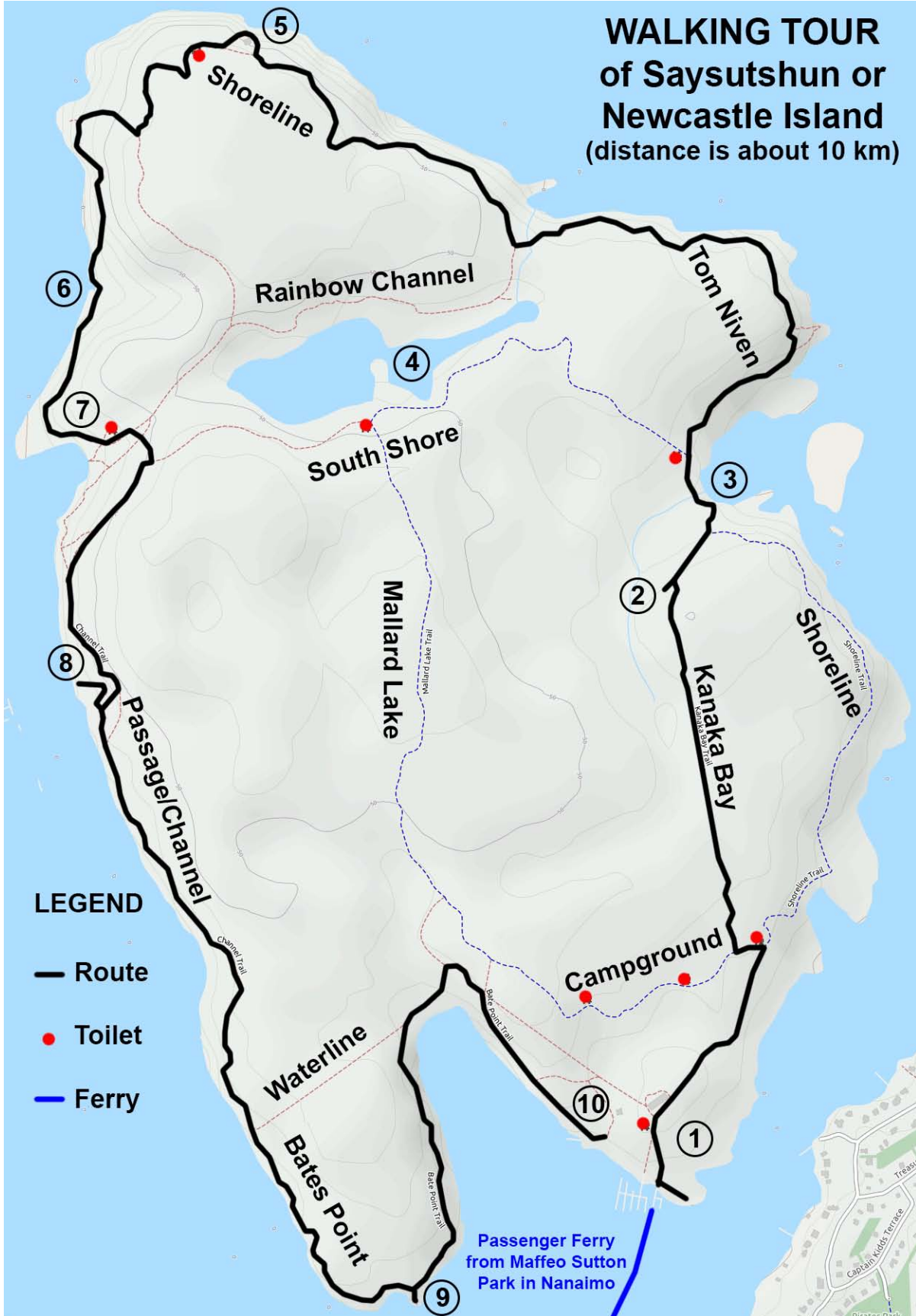
In 1931, the Canadian Pacific Railway opened a resort on the island to cater to passengers on their British Columbia Coast Steamship Service from the mainland. They built a bathhouse and pavilion with soda fountain and spring-loaded dance floor. A retired steamship, and later car ferry, called the *Charmer*, was converted into a floating hotel and moored in Mark Bay. Operations ceased in 1941, when all steamships were called into wartime service. By 1955, the financially failing resort was sold to the City of Nanaimo. In turn, unable to maintain the facilities and picnic grounds, the city sold the island to the provincial government in 1960 and the present day park was created in 1961 for perpetuity.

Over the years, the indigenous place names have all but disappeared and Spanish or English labels have replaced many. Some of those in use today are worth mentioning, as they are encountered on this tour. Tyne Point was named for the Tyne River next to Newcastle in Britain. Shaft Point (#7) was named for the Fitzwilliam Mine shaft that was there. McKay Point was named for the first HBC agent to explore the local coal fields. Kanaka Bay (#3), Mallard Lake (#4), and Saltery Beach (#6) are explained later. Giovando Lookout (#5) commemorates Larry Giovando, a local humanitarian and great servant leader of the Nanaimo community. Mark Bay and Bates Point (#9) honour Mark Bate, the first mayor of Nanaimo.



85th Convention Picnic of the International Typographical Union in 1917 on Newcastle Island

WALKING TOUR of Saysutshun or Newcastle Island (distance is about 10 km)



LEGEND

— Route

• Toilet

— Ferry

Passenger Ferry
from Maffeo Sutton
Park in Nanaimo

THE TOUR & ROUTE

This route proceeds counter clockwise around the island following a sequence of these named trails: Kanaka Bay, Tom Niven, Shoreline, Passage or Channel, and Bates Point. You are certainly welcome to explore additional side trails and viewpoints, but please recognize that this will increase the overall distance beyond the normal ten kilometres. With time spent at each stop, the tour should take 4 hours.

As you arrive by passenger ferry, you will walk through an arched sign reading “Welcome to Newcastle Is.” This is a replica of the original. Visit the hexagonal interpretive centre and read about nature on the island, including the Champagne Raccoons: a rare breed lacking the gene for making black pigments. Take time to look around the structures (#1) that remain from the resort era and first nation culture.



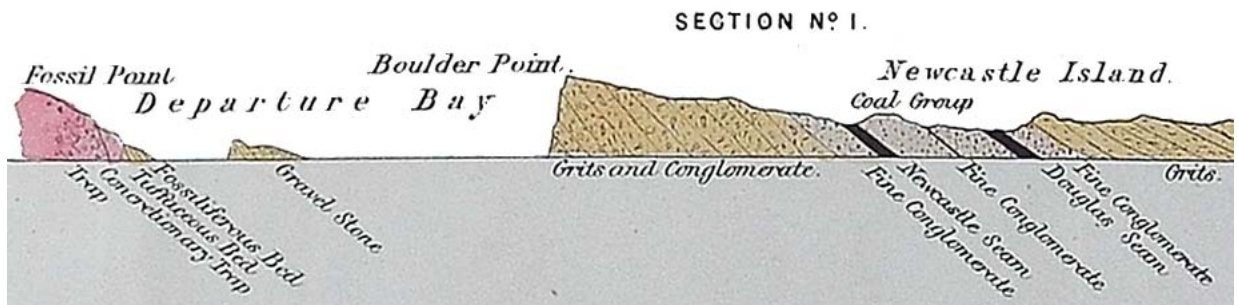
Steamships docked at the entrance to Newcastle Island

1. **The Pavilion and Bathhouse:** Two major buildings remain from the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) days. Both were designed for recreational swimming and dancing associated with visiting this resort, built in the early 1930s. It was once the only CPR resort on the west coast and popular day trip destination for company picnics. It complemented the CPR resorts in the Rocky Mountains and competed with the Union Steamship Company’s resort on Bowen Island.

The first structure is the Bathhouse located by the beach. It is a one-story building with a gable roof, front porch, and four shuttered windows. A native stone retaining wall is located below it. The second building is the Pavilion located up the hill on the grassy field. It is a two-storey, rectangular (about 12 by 24 metres) structure with a wrap-around verandah and a broad gable roof. It has a sprung floor for dancing and dances are still held here by the local dance society.

The area close to the water was traditionally the site of Saysetsun, a Snuneymuxw village. The first totem pole contains representations of the black bear and bald eagle. The appearance of these two animals signaled the arrival of the salmon and indicated the start of the fish harvest. The second totem pole marks the location of a longhouse used for herring fishing in the passage between the two islands.

Walk right, past the Pavilion, toward the Brownie Bay swimming spot. Turn left into the campground and right at campsite 14 onto the Kanaka Bay Trail. For the most part this trail is fairly straight and goes slowly uphill. It used to carry connecting wires, strung between the larger trees, from the resort to the underwater cable shack at Kanaka Bay (#3). At the bottom of a sudden, short, but steep downhill section, you will notice a rusty metal cylinder to your left. This is the air shaft (#2).

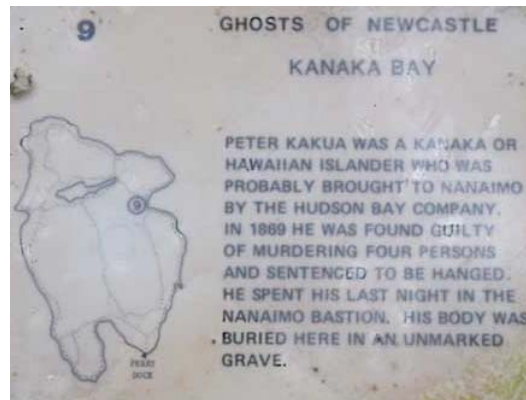


Geological cross section from an 1863 map showing the two known coal seams on the island

2. **Air Shaft:** This shaft was sunk in 1898, a few years before most coal mining ceased on the island. This was an attempt to reach the back pockets of coal that were being tapped from the large mines on Protection Island and just south of Nanaimo's downtown. By the end of 1898, workers had reached the Douglas Seam (two metres thick at about 100 metres underground) and then the Newcastle Seam (just over one metre thick and twenty metres deeper). These two seams were the only known coal at that time. Over at Midden Bay (#7), the Newcastle Pit had taken coal from the Newcastle Seam and the Fitzwilliam Mine had taken coal from the Douglas Seam.

Since the other Nanaimo mines were better located to remove coal from under the islands and harbour, this mine was abandoned in 1900 and its shaft was scaled back to supply ventilation to the back end of these other mines. A fan was added and air was blown into two levels of coal seams until 1938, when an underwater tunnel collapse rendered this air shaft obsolete.

Continue ahead on the main trail to reach the beach at Kanaka Bay and continue left along the shoreline.



The old interpretive sign at Kanaka Bay

3. **Kanaka Bay:** The sandy beach here makes a nice place to rest and explore. Many visitors to this spot have reported ghost stories connected to a multiple murder in the early days of Nanaimo.

Kanaka was the term used to describe a Hawaiian labourer for the Hudson's Bay Company. The word translates as "person" or "human" in the Hawaiian language. Many people of Polynesian descent came to work in British Columbia, because they signed on at HBC's post in Hawaii.

Peter Kakua was a Kanaka. He signed on to work the HBC in 1853 and was posted to HBC forts around the Pacific Northwest, before arriving in Nanaimo by 1860. He took an indigenous spouse by the name of Que-en and the nickname of Mary. Together, they birthed and began raising a baby daughter. Near the end of 1868, Que-en/Mary left Peter to live with her mother, Squash-e-lek, and her father, Shil-at-ti-nord. Intoxicated on alcohol and coming home late at night, Peter became enraged when he eventually found Que-en/Mary with her family. In his drunken rage, Peter took an axe and killed his daughter, spouse, and both her parents.

Once their dead bodies were discovered by the authorities, a search was initiated to find Peter and he was located beside a fire next to this bay. He immediately attempted to evade capture by running away, but was easily caught when he fell over a rock. He was bound with rope and paddled back to Nanaimo via canoe. In the middle of the harbour, he worked his hands loose and jumped overboard, while attempting to capsize the canoe. He was promptly hit over the head with a paddle, recaptured, and delivered to the gaol/jail beneath the Bastion.

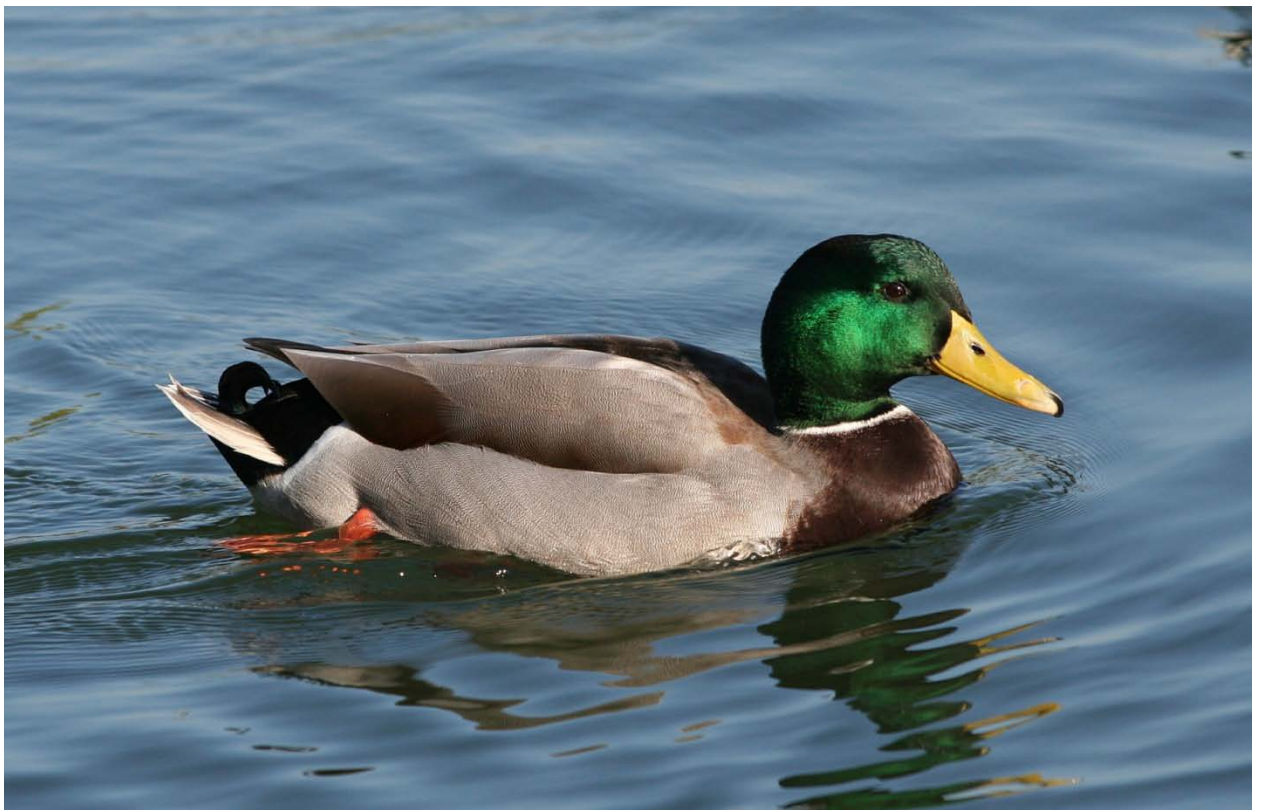
Peter stood trial twice in Victoria, once for the murder of his daughter and spouse and again for the murder of her parents. He was found guilty on both counts and sentenced to death. He was shipped back to Nanaimo, interred in the Bastion's gaol/jail, and prepared for hanging. He was hung at Execution Point (now Gallows Point) on Douglas Island (now Protection Island) in 1869. Since he was not Caucasian, cemeteries would not accept his body for burial. Since he was not a member of the Snuneymuxw first nation, his body was refused at their sacred burial grounds.

Instead, his casket was placed in a shallow unmarked grave here at Kanaka Bay (later named for his presence), where he had tasted his last freedom by the fire. Thirty two years later, while constructing their nearby mine shaft (#2), workers disturbed his grave. They opened a rotting coffin to find a well preserved skeleton and quickly reburied this away from the mine, but closer to the bay. Stories abound from visitors at the bay and campers on the island, who tell tales of strange sightings and eerie noises that could only be the ghost of Peter Kakua back for revenge!

A continuous telephone cable was laid across Georgia Strait from here to Point Grey near Vancouver as early as 1913. At the time, this was the world's longest underwater cable without a break or joint. The cement foundation near Kanaka Bay belongs to the cable shack, built to house the equipment necessary to prepare the electrical signals for underwater transmission.

At the trail junction near the toilets, turn right on Tom Niven Trail to follow the coast past Angle and McKay Points. Tom Niven worked for the City of Nanaimo and the Provincial Government as the island caretaker. During his retirement, he was killed when struck by a bobsled, while supervising a children's sliding hill. McKay refers to Joseph McKay: the first agent of the Hudson's Bay Company in Nanaimo.

After passing both points and crossing a small creek bridge (this is the outflow from Mallard Lake -- #4), turn right on Shoreline Trail (a left would take you out of your way and off tour in order to see the lake).



A Drake (male) Mallard Duck

4. **Mallard Dam:** This dam was built by humans to supply water for steam power at the short-lived Kanaka Bay mine. Water was piped along a different trail than the one you walked to get here.

Mallard Lake was named for the type of duck that frequented its surface. The CPR stocked this lake with beaver and muskrat to entertain their visiting tourists. Today, the lake contains abundant pumpkinseed sunfish, thought to be introduced in the past as bait for small-mouthed bass fishing. The lake was previously stocked with bass and other prized fishing species.

Continuing right on Shoreline Trail (instead of going to the lake), you climb steadily through forest that includes many cedar trees. Some of these may have been culturally modified (see next description), but many more have simply been damaged by human activity. Please do NOT remove bark from any trees.

You may also see large amounts of sap leaking out of damaged fir trees. The Snuneymuxw collected this stick substance and applied it to the outside of their woven hats or inside of their woven baskets. When it dried, gaps in the cedar were sealed and the hat or basket became waterproof.

Eventually the trail comes to a small structure at Giovando Lookout. A patch of Jack Pine trees grow here, indicating a significant forest fire once burned the northern tip of the island. Please do NOT be careless with flames. A great view is had from the cliffs above Nares Point and ferries may pass by.



Starting to pull a cedar strip

5. **Giovando Lookout:** From the cliffs above Nares Point at the northern tip of the island, views may be enjoyed toward Stephenson Point, Jesse Island, and Brandon Islands. On a clear day, one can see across Georgia Strait to the mountains and other features of the Sunshine Coast by Sechelt. This is also a great place to watch the ferries and other marine traffic pass all day long!

Look around for traces of bark stripped from western red cedar trees before the lookout. After offering a blessing to the cedar tree, an indigenous practice was to peel off long strips of bark for making everything from rope and baskets to clothing and hats. To begin, a horizontal cut through the bark was made at the base of the trunk. Then, the bark was gently separated from the tree above the cut. As the bark separated, further pulling peeled the bark in a long strip up the height of the tree until it came free. Only one or two strips were removed from each tree, because stripping all the bark would kill the tree. Each strip was considered a spiritual gift.

For each strip, the outer and inner barks were separated from each other and applied to different uses. The outer bark was used for fire starting or left in the forest to decompose and feed the next generation of trees. The inner bark was carried and stored in a gently folded way

and later split into long and thin pieces for weaving. These weaving pieces were then soaked and, if necessary, pounded in order to make the fibers easier to intertwine into useful products.

Bark is traditionally taken from the north side of a cedar that meets strict criteria, because only under these circumstances may the tree heal itself. Given increasing climate change, the cedar is in great decline and at the risk of dying off as a species. Therefore, out of respect for the people who co-exist with this tree, please do NOT strip bark unless you have both indigenous heritage and knowledge of the delicate process. We cannot afford to lose this tree forever.

Following the main Shoreline Trail away from the viewpoint, you pass the toilets and go over a small rise. After a noticeable stretch of downhill, turn right at the big cedar tree on Shoreline Trail past Tyne Point. The trail descends through some sandstone formations to reach the shoreline once more (#6). Beside the marsh that was once used to concentrate and dry salt from saltwater, you will find the corners of several building foundations of the Herring saltery and a rusty old boiler once used to concentrate the salt water.



Departure Bay Herring Salteries on Newcastle Island

6. **Saltery Beach:** This was the site of several buildings for Herring salting. The tidal salt marsh was used to evaporate seawater and extract salt for packing or canning fish. By 1938 at least four companies operated salt packing and fish canneries on this short stretch of Newcastle Island.

These companies were all owned by Japanese Canadians. Workers were both Japanese and Chinese in origin, and packed or canned fish were exported to Japan, China, and Hong Kong (then a British colony). Considerable prejudice and animosity already existed toward successful immigrants from “down on their luck” Caucasians. Arson was suspected, but never proven, when all four salteries burned in 1912. These were quickly rebuilt and modernized as canning facilities. In 1918, one of these salteries expanded into the Nanaimo Shipyards Limited.

While Vancouver claimed the first herring saltery, near Steveston in Richmond, Nanaimo claimed the most. By 1920, Nanaimo had over 40 operating herring salteries. The nickname “coal town” was jokingly changed to “herring town!” The Japanese method of fishing involved a pair of boats dragging a U-shaped seine net behind them. They would begin as far apart as possible and pass through the herring rich waters together. As the net filled, the boats moved closer together and pulled in their respective ends of the net to create a purse of captured fish. Operating year round, Salmon were packed and canned in the summer months, with herring in the winter and spring. Wooden boxes and later tin cans were stuffed full with fish and salt.

During the Second World War, Japan conquered Hong Kong, took over the Malay Peninsula, and was threatening Singapore. Since these were British territories at the time, Canadians became concerned about its citizens who happened to be Japanese. After the attack on Pearl Harbor,

Canada declared war against Japan. Fearful that some Japanese in the fishing industry were spying for the Japanese Navy, all fishing vessels and processing facilities were impounded. Soon after, in early 1942, all Japanese British Columbians were interred in work camps in the interior of the province. Following America's lead, this was a tragic and regrettable event, which was made worse by removing the rights, properties, and freedoms of these Canadian citizens. The high cost of internment was paid for by the seizure and sale of Japanese Canadian assets.

Continuing on the grassy trail along the shoreline, climb over a small hill and notice black gravel under foot. These are the tailing piles for the coal mine that once existed above here. As you follow the trail downhill, it comes onto the flat railway grade that once extended on a loading wharf as shown below.



The Fitzwilliam Coal Mine exterior in 1875

- Midden Bay and coal mines:** Coal mining began here in 1852 with the Newcastle Pit (later, it became a mine) that stripped away coal outcroppings at the surface. Operations at this open pit stopped and started frequently. The workers had only hand tools and scraped together what they could by digging holes and horizontal tunnels. By 1853, Nanaimo looked like a better place to access the two coal seams and, so much energy was focused there, that this mine slowed. By 1860, James Hector, a geologist with the Palliser Expedition, remarked that the seam had been well worked over with ample piles of coal awaiting transport, but this mine was closed during his visit to the island! The Newcastle Mine was depleted of coal and abandoned by 1876.

In an effort to mine deeper and keep up with the Nanaimo mines, the Fitzwilliam Mine dropped a vertical shaft here and operated as early as 1862. It was also the site of two of Nanaimo's initial mine fatalities, when "Coal was King." In 1874, one worker died from a tunnel collapse, while three others died in the firedamp (methane gas) explosion of 1876. Between 1878 and 1880, the mine shut down, while pumps continued to keep it from flooding. The construction of No 1 Esplanade Mine on Nanaimo's shore provided such easy and low cost access to underwater coal that this was the death knell to the Fitzwilliam Mine. It closed permanently in 1883.

The Brechin Mine (also known as No. 4 Northfield Mine) was located across the water on the point near the Departure Bay Ferry Terminal. It accessed these same seams in later years (1940-1950) by an angular descending slope that ran under the water to get under the island. As oil became the new fuel of choice, most Nanaimo coal mines stopped operating by the mid-1950's.

The bay nearby was the site of Clostun, a Snuneymuxw village, as evidenced by its nearby midden. The midden was the village garbage heap, where food scraps, dead animals, and sometimes dead people were placed. Most of the midden's plant and animal remains decayed and decomposed over time, so only the mineral contents (mostly shells) can be seen today. The presence of dead materials presents a "bad" or negative energy for the Snuneymuxw. As such, disturbing the contents of a midden, brings residual curses. Please do NOT dig in the midden.

After the coal mining and midden area, the trail bends left uphill, away from the beach. After the toilets, turn right and go straight up a steep and short hill. At the top, turn right on Channel (Passage) Trail. After passing two viewpoints that look down into the old Sandstone Quarry (#8), turn right to enter the quarry on a side trip. Do NOT climb down the cliffs. Return to the main trail when ready to continue.



Newcastle Island (Perimann) Sandstone Quarry in 1935

8. **Sandstone Quarry:** Sandstone on Newcastle Island was high quality and was quarried (1869-1932) for construction of the US Mint in San Francisco, the New Westminister Penitentiary and several other structures in Nanaimo, Victoria and Vancouver. Prior to 1869, many workers had noticed the quality of local sandstone. It was observed to have been very strong, highly resistant to erosion by the weather, and flawless in pattern and colour. They had used it for fireplaces in local homes and for some mine buildings and the foundations of other structures.

By 1869, Joseph Emery became aware of these very same properties. He was searching for the finest sandstone from which to build the US Mint in San Francisco. The Canadian stone proved to be of superior quality when compared with American stone. During the next five years, 8,000 tons were quarried here by about 50 local workers and 40 Chinese workers from San Francisco. Most lived in the tiny settlement of Perriman. It grew overnight beside the sandstone quarry and by the Channel (now called the Passage) waters between Newcastle Island and Nanaimo.

Initially, sandstone blocks were cut in the quarry by hand drilling a straight line of holes about ten centimetres into the bedrock. Next, wedges would be placed in each hole and hammered by hand until the rock cracked and a huge continuous block fell away from the quarry cliff face. Once separated, this huge continuous block would be similarly split up into smaller blocks, each weighing several tons and selling for a few dollars per ton. Once hand tools became obsolete, holes were drilled by steam-powered machines and small dynamite charges replaced the hammered wedges. Look around the quarry for many signs of these drill hole examples and a few of the "JB" (for J ____ B ____) monograms used to brand each block before shipment.



Zephyr Memorial Cylinder as placed in 1987 by the Underwater Archeological Society of BC

Toward the end of the US Mint's construction, a total of eight blank cylinders were requested. Each weighed thirty tons and would be shipped in pairs to San Francisco, where they would be sculpted into columns to support the massive front portico of the building. Two never made it out of Canadian waters. They were onboard the *Zephyr* when it shipwrecked off Mayne Island in 1872. A memorial, with one of the recovered cylinders, can be found by the water near the quarry from whence it came. In the end, the Mint was finished in 1872 with only six columns! Two standing stones from the *Zephyr* are placed at the passenger ferry in Maffeo-Sutton Park.

That year, Emery also took sandstone to build the pilings of the Alexandra Bridge at Spuzzum, BC, where the Cariboo Wagon Road crossed the Fraser River Canyon to give access to the gold rush interior. After his lease to remove sandstone ran out in 1875, several other construction projects signed on consecutively to lease for the quarrying of sandstone. First was the BC

Penitentiary in New Westminster. This was followed by several bank and business buildings in Vancouver and Seattle. Next were churches in Victoria and public government buildings in Nanaimo. Finally, the quarry stopped operations in 1932 and some loose stone was removed in 1955 for use in building additions to Christ Church Cathedral in Victoria. A request for some extra stone to repair the US Mint was refused in 1973, after the island became a marine park.

After viewing the quarry, return to the main Channel Trail, turn right and continue along the coastline. The trail will go uphill and away from the coastline, before dropping down and returning to follow it once more. At the point where the Waterline bends left away from the shore, you may notice water and power junctions here for utility services supplied to the island. Do not follow the Waterline. Instead, turn right here onto Bates Trail and follow the coastline to reach the view of Nanaimo from Bates Point (#9).

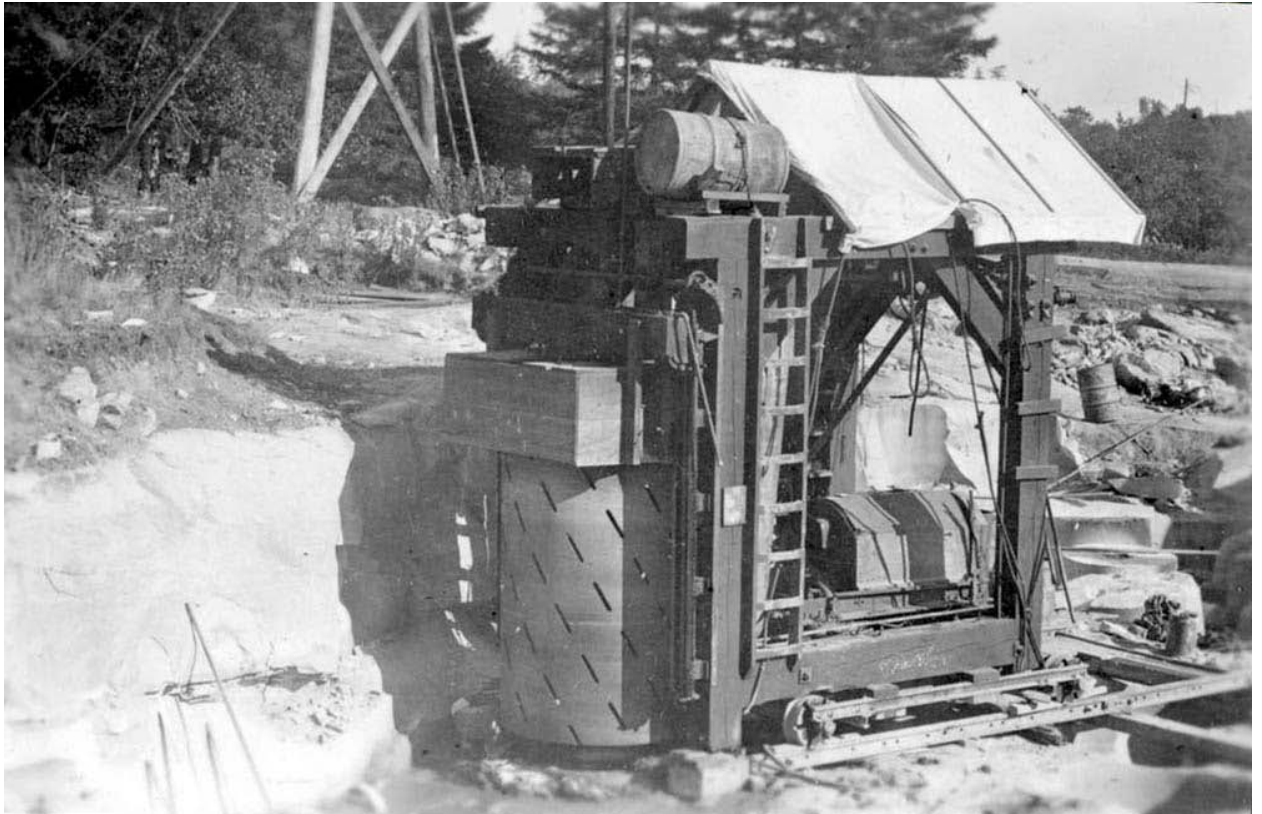


Downtown Nanaimo, circa 1860

9. **Bates Point:** Bates Point and the nearby Mark Bay were named after Nanaimo's first mayor: Mark Bate. He was also a manager of the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company who bought the island and most of the surrounding Nanaimo lands from the Hudson's Bay Company after 1861. Pause and enjoy this great view of the city centre. Today, you can easily see the tall towers and new marinas, but the Bastion (HBC fort) is obscured by taller nearby buildings. However, around 1860, the view was quite different. The Bastion (HBC fort) would have been clearly visible as the tallest structure above the wooden two story houses (see photograph). Roads were dirt and muddy after the rain. Planked boardwalks rimmed the shoreline and elevated wharfs docked tall sailing ships in the harbour. Railways were not yet built.

Return to and follow Bates Trail with views toward the start/finish and passenger ferry docks. After merging back into Channel Trail, go right, past Mallard Lake Trail, and abruptly uphill. At the top of the

hill, fork right to again follow the coastline on a trail past the Works Yard. Continue straight ahead and, upon emerging from the forest, the Pulp-stone Quarries (#10) are on the left. Further explore this area.



Cutter of pulpstones on Newcastle Island

10. **Pulp-stone Quarries:** while waiting for your ferry ride back to Nanaimo, explore this area where pulpstones were shaped, cut and polished for used as grinders in the pulp and paper factories. Much like the earlier sandstone quarry, high quality sandstone was taken for the forest industry.

A highly specialized cutting machine, operating from a steam-powered engine, shaped cylinders of sandstone in a very noisy process that took about 45 minutes per cylinder. The standing cylinder was cut or broken loose by detonating a small explosive charge in a horizontally drilled hole at its base. The cylinder was then moved to a lathe that trimmed and polished the stone.

The initial cut cylinders were about a metre tall and 1.4 metres in diameter. They were reduced by trimming and polishing to half their height and about a metre in diameter. The only finished pulp-stone on display came from nearby Gabriola Island and therefore has different dimensions. By 1932, pulp-stone work had ceased here and moved to Gabriola Island for another decade.

After exploring this quarry, visit anything nearby that you might have missed on arrival, and then return to the ferry passenger dock when finished. As you pass under the arched sign reading "Thank you, come again" and board the passenger ferry for Nanaimo, take a look back to the island. Reflect on the multiple periods of history that you have seen: indigenous, coal, sandstone, fishing, and CPR resort. Which was the most interesting? Which was the most memorable? Will you come again?