

THE LIME KILNS OF TEXADA

The oldest structures on Texada, aside from the first nations fish weirs, are three lime kilns.

In 1878 J.J. Palmer, together with a second investor, came to Texada with the intension of supplying marble for buildings. Their marble works closed by 1884. The marble quarried by Palmer was not accepted by the building trade in the United States.

Palmer seems to have been undeterred. He begun work to develop the quarrying of limestone and used this rock in the production of slacked lime.

By 1896 Palmer had completed a 30 foot stone kiln on the west side of Sturt Bay. Beside the kiln was his limestone quarry. Associated with the kiln in Sturt Bay was a cooperage to make the barrels, a wharf, and a lime shed that could hold 3,000 barrels of slacked lime.

The product was not of the quality he expected and he developed two more lime kilns and a quarry at the north end of the Island at Limekiln Bay. In December 1902 Palmer sold to a Tacoma group who built four more kilns in Limekiln Bay.

The product was sold to ready markets on the west coast of Canada and the United States as well as Hawaii. For example the Tacoma Steel Company, who purchased Palmer's assets on Texada, secured a contract with San Francisco businessmen in 1907 for 1,000 barrels of lime monthly. The 1,000 barrels per month was the maximum output from Texada, and reports said that the contract would have specified 3,000 barrels if production could have met the goal.

There are only three kilns left standing on Texada. Two are in Limekiln Bay and are fragile. The best preserved, and earliest kiln dating from 1896, is standing on the west shore of Sturt Bay. The kiln is best seen by standing on the breakwater of the Texada Boat Club and looking west. The quarry is also evident.

