

## THE "BAY"

The small bay just north of Van Anda has been an important site of industry and activity for the past 150 years.

Officially known as "Sturt Bay" on marine charts, the first (1871) maps called it simply "Bay." Cartographers seven years later renamed it "Sturt Bay" after Captain H Sturt who purchased onshore Lot 1 (the first surveyed lot on Texada).

Sturt, a British soldier assigned to the San Juan Island garrison during the 1859 "Pig War," explored the BC coast in 1876 and discovered a significant deposit of marble in the bay. Unfortunately the marble was "too much broken up to be of any value" and Sturt's quarrying halted in 1879.

JJ Palmer purchased Sturt's properties and constructed a 2000-foot tramway from his nearby Marble Bay Mine (across from Mary, Mary's Cafe) to the bay's loading dock. Palmer later opened a limestone quarry in the bay itself and constructed a 30-foot tall kiln (still standing), a sawmill and a cooperage near the wharf. Chinese living in a camp at Emily Lake provided labour.

Over time "Sturt Bay" became known locally as "Marble Bay," which was reinforced when the 1909 Gazeteer of BC officially listed both names.

Yet another name appeared in the 1933 BC Pilot publication. It mentions "Caesar Cove" as the Van Anda port of call for the CPR steamships.

Caesar Cove is a tiny arm of ocean on the south side of Marble Bay. For over 100 years the Texada community has made use of this small-boat harbour and has fought to protect the shared facilities from private development.

Call it what you will, the "bay" has witnessed a wide range of enterprises and activities. Its waters have been plied by steamships and ore carriers, fish boats, water taxis, sailboats and scows (some hiding out after delivering grain to the Pocahontas whiskey still). A sawmill, barrel factory and storehouses have clung to its shores while the stately Marble Bay Hotel rested above.

Today current activity at the Boat Yard (including last year's spectacular sound-and-light show) and the popular Texada Boat Club floats have made Captain Sturt's little bay the busiest harbour on the island.



Peter Lock

Texada Island Heritage Society