

various events made the success of the celebration possible. ◇

Island old timers—by Martha Hoggan (married to John Holm)

A hand-written note in the Gabriola Archives (1996.008.04). I've edited or inserted other words as indicated by square brackets. Braces indicate notes in the margin in Martha's handwriting. ED.

[Here's] what I remember first about the folks on the Island. There were very few white women Mrs. Jackie Foster, W. Stephenson's grandma (also a Joe Foster, Taylor Bay, wife Indian); a Miss Jemmison who lived with her two brothers; Mrs. J. Eastham [Easthom], Dick's mother, later married. [text confusing here] Hyme my mother (7 children at the lake) & my father [Alexander's] first wife's sister from Glasgow. There were a few bachelors and widows. Mr. Sabbason, the [pilot] at Taylor Bay, who brought the ships in. Mike Mannly [Manly], where Dick Eastham lived, an Irish bachelor. Mr. Rollo & his two sons, John & George. Jimmies grandfather. Mr. LeBuff [LeBœuf], [widower], one son, two daughters, [Indian mother]. William McDougal, [bachelor] Scotch. Mr. & Mrs. McLay and family all white. Mr. J. White Pemberton [Penberthy], Alaskan Indian wife, one son, two daughters. Mr. John Gemmel [Gimmelle], bachelor Scotch. Mr. McGuffy [McGuffie], Indian wife, two boys, two girls. Mr. Chappel [Chapple], Indian wife, two boys, one girl. Mr. Edgar, Indian wife, two boys, four girls. John Martin, Indian wife, large family. (Son & daughter of [pilot] and Indian...?). Jim Gray (½ Indian) married white woman, two sons, twin daughters. Harry Peterson, wife ½ Indian, was a [Boer] from [South Africa], large family. (Sister to Jim Gray). John Silva, [Portuguese], Indian wife. Harry Ogarr [?], [Degnen]'s Bay, bachelor. Mr. Crass [?Cross, also Degnen Bay] bachelor.

This was all that lived there at that time. I think that is all I can recall, till new folks started to move in, and the children got married.

p.s. These were on Gabriola when Uncle Dave & William came to the lake or soon after. [ca 1872, but some names are later than that]

p.s. There used to be a man by the name of Barney who lived on [Coats?] place and had two cabins, one by May's house and one in the woods over by the back bays. He just lived with the woods all around his log cabins, and when the Indians came, he [ran] through the woods to the other cabin till the Indians had left. That is the story told to my parents, but we used the cabin by May's for years, and I have played in the other one. ◇

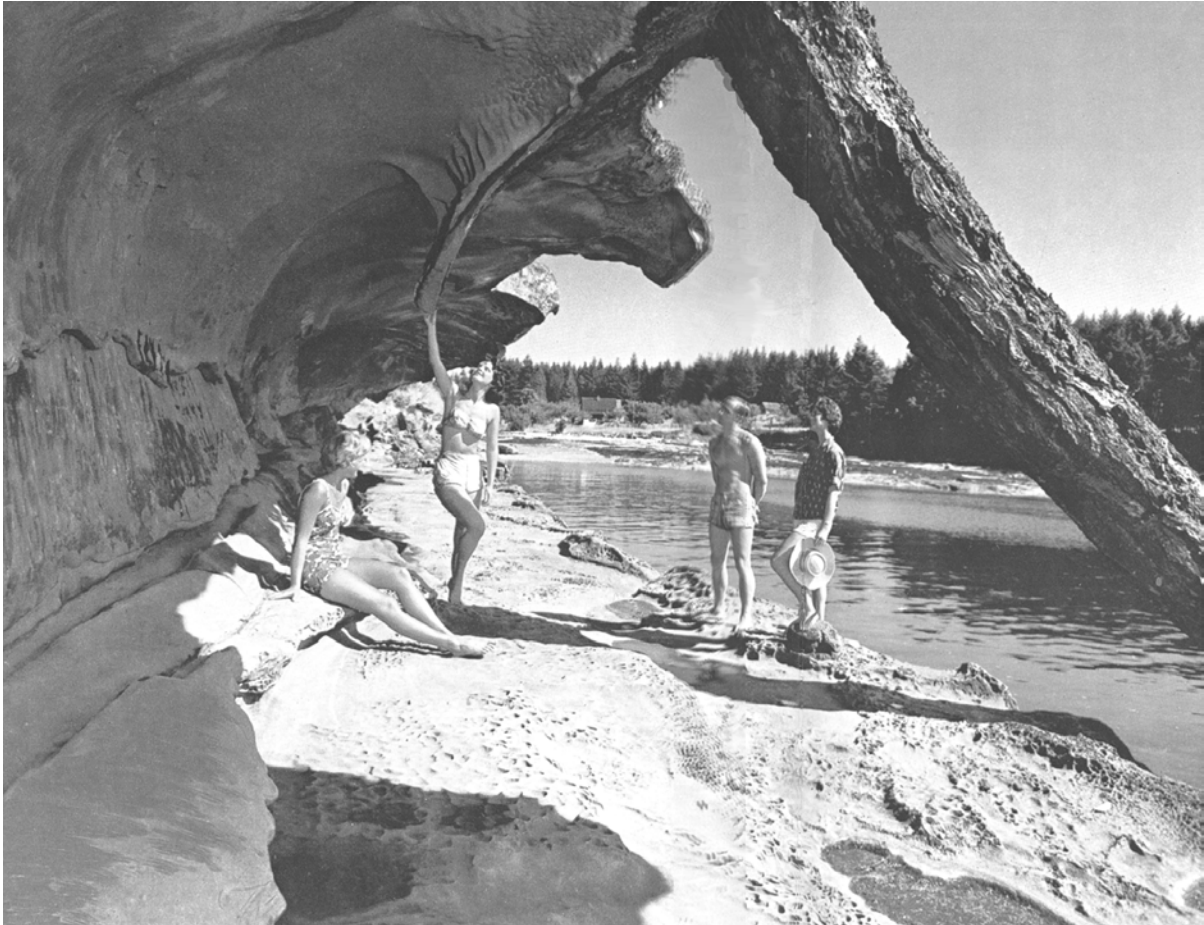
Beautiful Gabriola—anonymous

The following article appeared in the *Beautiful British Columbia* magazine in 1961.⁷ As will become obvious as you read it, this is not a recommended account of the Spanish naval visits in the 18th century—the author has garbled that and other parts of Gabriola's history, and the geology needs revising too—but it is an interesting read nevertheless. It also gives me an excuse to print the picture that accompanied the original article. For those that don't know, "panther" is the old name for a cougar. They were once fairly common on the island.

Gabriola Island

Gabriola Island, four miles offshore from Nanaimo, is steeped in history and has a variety of enchanting sights to appeal to the most discriminating visitor.

⁷ *Beautiful British Columbia—Land of New Horizons*, Winter 1961, pp.35–36.



A photograph of the Malaspina Galleries published in late 1961. Take a moment to note the fallen tree on the right. A roof, which according to some is about to collapse, was not the only hazard.

The nine mile by four mile island stretches in a generally east and west direction and is most famous for its Malaspina Galleries. The galleries have been formed by the action of wind and water on the sandstone and shale composition of the steep shoreline. Their 300-foot length of scooped out rock forms an overhanging roof 12 feet high.

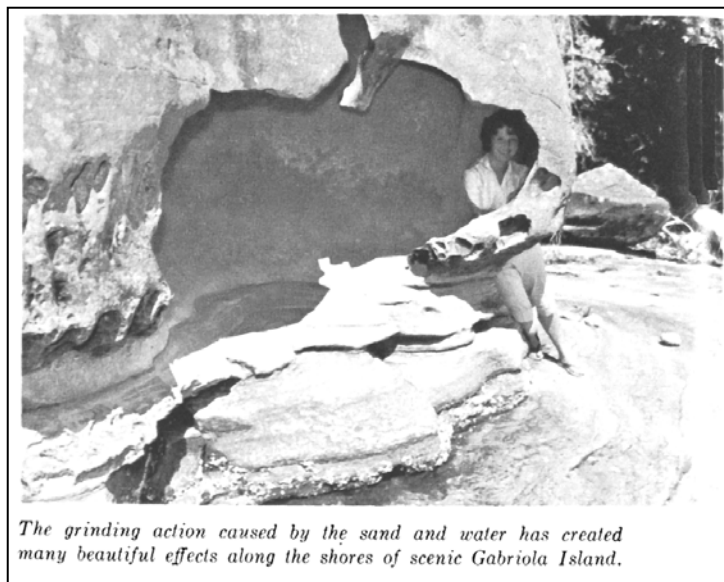
While the unique formation is known locally as the “Malaspina” galleries, the correct name is Galiano Galleries of Malaspina Point. They were named by the Spanish explorer Galiano who, with a colleague Valdez, discovered them in 1792. In the previous year Gabriola Island had been plotted by an Italian navigator Malaspina who was in the service of Spain under the

orders of Jose Maria Narvaez but the original exploring party failed to discover the galleries.

Little mention is made of the island or the strange rock formation until the mid-1800's. In the year 1854 the family of Glasgow-born John Hoggan⁸ began to assemble on Gabriola. John had emigrated to Cape Breton to escape the unrewarding life of a coal miner in Britain.

Later his two brothers, impelled by his adventurous example and motivated by the lure of the San Francisco gold rush, sailed around the Horn to 'Frisco to find the rush was over.

⁸ This was Alexander Hoggan, not John.



They moved north, reached Nanaimo and set out to seek suitable homesteading land. Their quest ended at Gabriola.

Shortly after taking up their land, they sent for their mother who journeyed around the Horn to join them and later they sent for their brother John in Cape Breton.

By this time John had a wife and six children and after incredible difficulties managed to arrive at Gabriola.⁹

Mrs. Martha Holm who was a daughter of John Hoggan recorded the following story of her Grandmother:

“My Grandma was a large, strong woman but you could not call her fat. She was all bones and not frightened of anyone or anything.

“Here is an experience that she had that might give you a kick. Uncle Dave was staying in Nanaimo and Uncle William had gone over to get groceries and he didn’t get back that night. She put away the cows and calves in the barn and after milking and feeding them went back to the house.

“Some hours later she heard the cows bellowing like mad, so she got her wrap on

and a lantern and pitchfork and went down to the barn. When she got close she saw that the hayloft door was open. So she went into where the cows and calves were and up on the rafters above was a big panther ready to spring on the cattle.

“She hung the lantern up and took her pitchfork and jabbed that panther till he finally jumped out the loft door. Then she climbed up and fastened the door and went home with her fork and lantern.

“Believe me I have heard this story from Grandma herself and others have heard it also. My Uncles David and William told my husband about what a woman she was for doing

things. You can do what you like with this as it is a true story.”¹⁰

Today the descendants of the early settlers engage in lumbering, fishing and agriculture. There are almost 500 permanent residents, many of whom are retired. The climate is pleasant and the pace of living is gentle.

Residents are treated to exciting views in almost any direction from the island. Generally, Gabriola’s contours are gently undulating with the highest point below 700 feet at the easterly end of the island.

Geologically, the island is a syncline or basin of sandstone and shale. Few residents realize that an extension of Vancouver’s Island’s coal seams runs far beneath the shale of Gabriola.

Although logging has taken place over the years, the island is still forested with fir, cedar, arbutus, alder and oak.

Surrounding waters provide excellent fishing for salmon or rock cod and at low tide oysters and clams are obtainable in ample quantities.

For the visitor or the permanent resident, Gabriola is indeed an ideal place in which to spend a vacation or to settle permanently. ♦

⁹ Jenni Gehlbach, *Alexander Hoggan & family*, *SHALE* 19, pp.46–8, November 2008. June Harrison’s book, pp.71–81.

¹⁰ Also in June Harrison’s book, p78.