

Trade provided First Nations access to new goods and sources of wealth, but contact with foreigners ultimately proved disastrous when previously unknown diseases were introduced. By the time the trade ended in the 1820s, First Nation populations were drastically reduced, some by as much as 90 per cent. In the

The first recorded contact between First Nations and Europeans on the west coast came on August 8, 1774, when a Spanish expedition under the command of Juan Perez traded briefly with local people just outside the entrance to Nootka Sound, approximately 70 kilometres up the coast from Tofino. Four years later, Britain's James Cook arrived in Nootka Sound, on his search for a northwest passage to link the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Cook didn't find the Northwest Passage, but an off-handed trade by his crew changed the history of the west coast. The men acquired sea otter pelts, one of nature's most luxurious furs. When the furs were traded in China for an astounding sum, the rush for this "soft gold" was on. For the next 50 years or so, trading ships, primarily from Britain and the United States, regularly called on the west coast – including Clayoquot Sound – to acquire sea otter pelts from the First Nations.

Maritime Fur Trade

Tofino is located in Clayoquot Sound, a region that takes its name from the Tla-o-qui-ah First Nations people. The Tla-o-qui-ah people have lived in several villages in the Sound for at least 5,000 years. Historically, they moved throughout their territory, harvesting resources of the land and sea – fish, berries, shellfish, birds, whales, and myriad plant species. The incredible natural bounty of this region sustained the people, providing for their health, and material, spiritual, and cultural wellbeing.

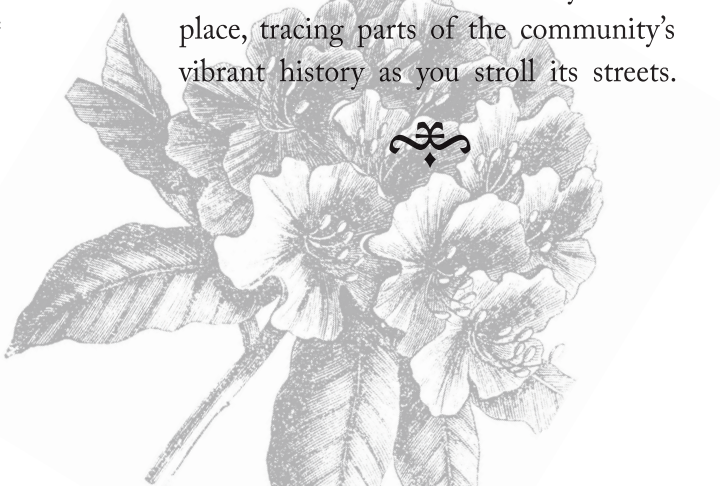
Tofino: A Town in Clayoquot Sound



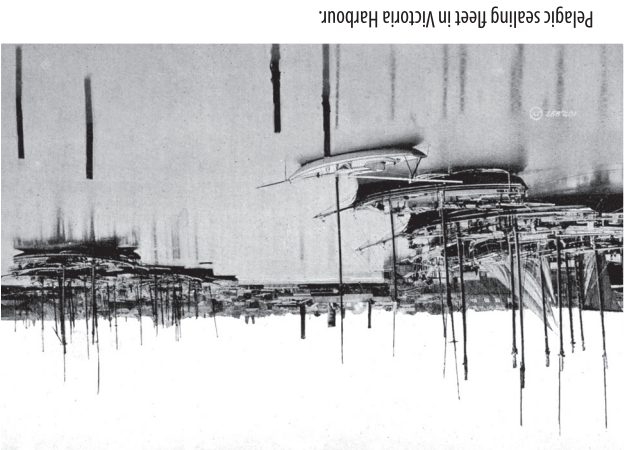
TOFINO'S HERITAGE

A self-guided tour

The heritage of Tofino is as eclectic and interesting as the residents who have come to the end of the road and called this place home. While the town itself is very young—Tofino was incorporated as a municipality in 1932—its roots as a place of human habitation are very deep. The explorers and traders who began visiting the west coast just over two centuries ago met First Nations people whose families had thrived on the west coast for millennia. This walking tour honours the shared history of this place, tracing parts of the community's vibrant history as you stroll its streets.



Soon, small trading posts sprang up along the coast. These trading posts became the kernels of towns that would eventually grow around them. The first non-native settlement in Clayoquot Sound was not Tofino, but Clayoquot on nearby Stubb's Island (see Stop 4). Clayoquot started as a trading post, where the trader worked with the captain of sealing schooners to hire crews for the upcoming season.



After the establishment of Fort Victoria in 1843, First Nations people along the coast canoed down the coast to trade. One of the trade items was the pelt of fur seal. In the 1860s, traders began outfitting their own sealing schooners and hiring native crews. The pelagic fur sealing fleet, based in Victoria, would travel up the coast in the spring, stopping in at villages, including Opatzah and others in Clayoquot Sound, hiring crews for the coming season. Once outfitted, the schooners would sail to the pelagic sealing grounds, sometimes travelling as far as the Sea of Japan and the Bering Sea, to hunt.

Fur Seals and Settlement

In the 1850s and '60s, the colonial government created a reserve system, relegating native people to tracks of reserve lands and restricting their access to resources in traditional territories.

This brochure was written by Adrienne Mason and designed by Marion Syme.

For further details on Tofino's history and historic areas, see, **Historic Tofino: A Walk in Time**, published by Postelsia Press.

For more information on the region's history, look for the following books.

Clayoquot Soundings: A history of Clayoquot Sound, 1880s-1908s, Walter Guppy

HERA: The Fire Ship of Clayoquot Sound, David Griffiths

Living on the Edge: Nuu-chah-nulth History from an Ahousht Chief's Perspective, Chief Earl Maquinna George

Long Beach Wild, Adrienne Mason

Settling Clayoquot, Bob Bossin

The Whaling People by Eugene Arima and Alan Hoover

TONQUIN: The Ghost Ship of Clayoquot Sound, David Griffiths

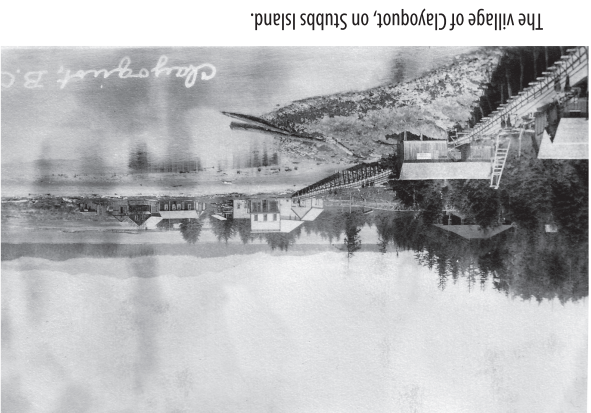
Voices from the Sound: Chronicles of Clayoquot Sound and Tofino, 1899 – 1929, Margaret Horsfield

Copies of this brochure are available from the District of Tofino.

The early settlers did what they could to survive in their new home. Some tried to farm or ranch, a difficult task in the damp rainforest. Many fished, worked small mining claims, or started a small business. Government jobs at the life boat station, the post office, or on road building crews, were coveted.

Some of Tofino's earliest settlers came from England, Norway, and Scotland. They settled on pre-emptions along the Esowista Peninsula, on harbour islands, and throughout the sound. In the 1920s, many people of Japanese descent moved into the area, settling at Clayoquot, Tofino, and Ucluelet. They were respected fishermen and active members of the community. Not long after the Japanese airforce attack on Pearl Harbour in December 1941, however, all people of Japanese descent – even those born in Canada – were removed from the coast by the Canadian government. They lost their homes, boats, and livelihoods. The evacuation forever changed Tofino as these Japanese residents never returned.

From these early days of schooner travel, other men travelled up the west coast. Settlers, miners, missionaries, and more came to the region looking for land, resources, and other opportunities. The colonial government offered pre-emptions, land that could be acquired inexpensively on the condition that it was

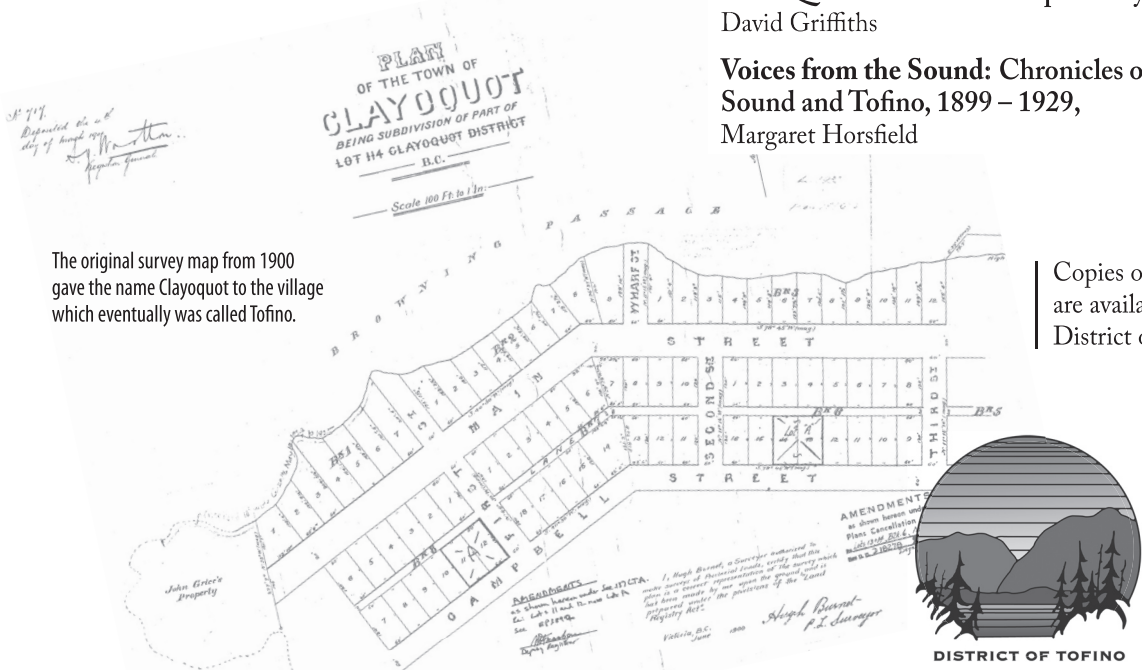


Who was Tofino?

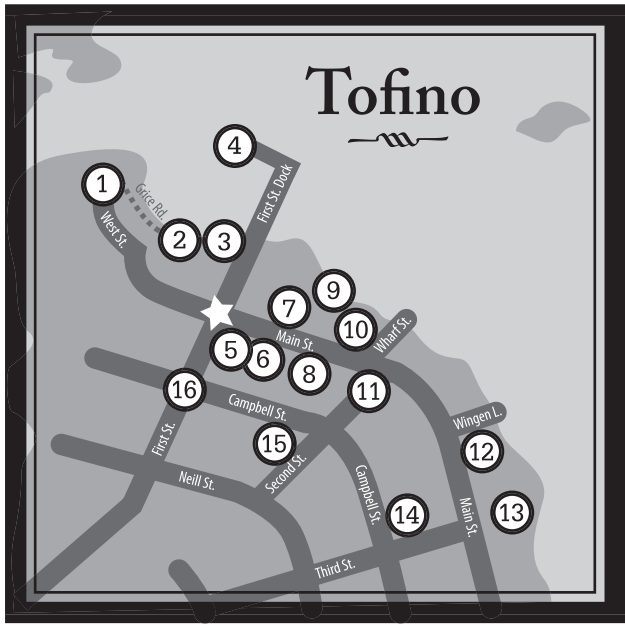
Many of the names on the maps and charts of our region honour people who travelled through the region, often on exploration, surveying, or trading expeditions. Some locations were named for colleagues or family members who had never set foot here. The name of our town is a case in point. Tofino was named after Captain Vincente Tofino de San Miguel, a Spanish hydrographer and rear admiral of the Spanish Navy. In 1792, commanders Dionisio Alcalá-Galiano and Cayetano Valdés of the Spanish Navy were surveying the area and named a nearby inlet in honour of Tofino.

In the late 1890s, people began to settle along the Esowista Peninsula and on islands and inlets nearby. The cluster of homes, and eventually a store, post office, and dock, made the kernel of the townsite that was eventually called Tofino. The town's first post office opened February 1, 1909 and the government recognition sealed the town's name to this location.

Tofino was incorporated as a district municipality in 1932.



The original survey map from 1900 gave the name Clayoquot to the village which eventually was called Tofino.



* The tour starts at the corner of Main and First streets.



Colin Nicholson; Captain Cook Collection.

Looking down First St. toward the dock. 1911.

* Walk west along Main Street and then down the hill along West St. toward the water.

① First Nations people live throughout Clayoquot Sound. The presence of a large midden (a bank of discarded clam shells and other remains from food procurement) in this location points to its long use by First Nations people. This point was called, N'aciqs (Nachiks).

One of the community's older homes can be seen on the side of the bluff. Harold Monk Sr., one of the first settlers on nearby Vargas Island, ran the Imperial Oil station that was below the house. Katie Monk was a much beloved teacher. The property, with its beautiful gardens, stayed in the family until 2008 when it was gifted to The Land Conservancy of BC.

The building on the end of this wharf operated as a fish buyer and ice plant. Plants like this once dotted the shoreline of coastal communities, but as the commercial fishing industry declined, many have been removed.

* Walk along the foot path toward the government dock (the red dock), past the condominiums.

This path is part of Grice Road, where Tofino had its beginnings. John Grice was thought to be Tofino's first settler. He pre-empted Lot 114, a 206-acre parcel of land, in 1893. He worked in the fur seal industry for a time and took on a variety of government jobs available, including Justice of the Peace.



Suman Family; Captain Cook Collection.

Along with several homes, Grice Road was the location of Tofino's first store. The store is thought to have opened in 1901 and had a succession of owners. It eventually housed the post office.

② The story of the wreck, *Hera*, which lies in Tofino's harbour, is recounted on a plaque near the anchor.

③ The first version of this sign, erroneously marking the Pacific terminus of the Trans-Canada Highway, was erected in 1926. It was an ironic placement, considering a highway didn't actually connect to Tofino until 1959.



Ken Gibson collection.

The government wharf on "boat day" with the arrival of the Princess Norah. The store built on pilings at the end of the wharf eventually became the first Tofino Consumer's Co-op. 1930.

The wharf has always been a focal point of the community. Coastal steamships that docked here were the lifeline to settlers, bringing supplies, mail, friends, and family. "Boat Day," which happened every 10 days or so, was a highlight for residents.

* Walk to the end of the wharf.

④ From the end of the dock you can see over the modern Tla-o-qui-aht village of Opitsaht, situated below the mountain, Wah-nah-jus (Lone Cone), on Meares Island. This village has been continuously occupied for at least 4000 years.

To the west, you can see the long sand spit of Stubbs Island where the first non-native settlement in the area – Clayoquot – was situated. At its largest, the village included a store, hotel, school, jailhouse, police station, post office, mining recorder's office, and telegraph office, as well as private residences.

* Walk up the hill to the corner of First and Main streets.



Suman family; Captain Cook Collection.

Looking east on Main St., 1949.

⑤ The Maquinna Hotel opened in 1959, the same year a road connected Tofino and Ucluelet to Port Alberni.

* Walk east down Main Street.

⑥ The house at 311 Main Street is one of the oldest houses in Tofino. It was built in the early 1900s by August Arnet, one of the four Norwegian brothers who were early settlers.

⑦ Tofino's first hotel, the White Wing Hotel, was scow on the waterfront below this building. By 1931, "Hotel Tofino" was located on this spot. The hotel had several owners over the years and an eclectic history. A table in the hotel dining room was the location of at least one emergency appendectomy. The original hotel burned down in the 1950s and was re-built. The building continues to operate as an inn and has been home to Tofino's first kayak tour business since 1988.



Avid Arnet; Captain Cook Collection.

The Great War Veterans Association hall on the left. Next door, at 321 Main St., is a private home that was once the location of the town's first bakery. The August Arnet home (311 Main St.) is on the far right.

⑧ The Tofino Legion had its beginnings in 1919 when community members formed a branch of the Great War Veteran's Association. Two years later they purchased a small building for \$700 to use as a meeting hall. In 1927, the organization became the Canadian Legion Branch No. 65. For many years, and still today, the hall has served as a de facto community hall. Fire destroyed the first two halls. This is the third, built in 1991.



Tofino's first lifeboat was powered by oars and sails.

⑨ In January 1908, Tofino received its first rescue boat and this lot was purchased for \$50 to build a boat house and the Clayoquot Life Boat Station. The lifeboat crew attended vessels in distress, but also transported injured people to medical care (sometimes in Port Alberni), dug graves, and delivered the deceased to the town's original cemetery on a harbour island. The current buildings on this site were constructed in 1954.

⑩ One of Tofino's pioneering families, the Arnets, arrived on this property over 100 years ago. Jacob Arnet, who emigrated from Norway, first pre-empted at Mud (Grice) Bay in 1893. The family moved to this property about 1910. The original home and boatshed were closer to the water's edge. The home at the top of the property was built in 1931. Jacob's three brothers eventually joined him in Canada and between them the brothers had 18 children. They were well-known fishermen and leaders in the community.

⑪ This corner houses two of Tofino's oldest buildings. The home at 351 Main St. was built by John Hansen, who came to Canada from Norway with his brother Anton in the early 1900s. The brothers were skilled carpenters and built many of the town's earliest houses and boats.

St. Columba Anglican Church celebrated its centenary in 1913. It was built with funds from parishioners, but also from an English benefactor who specified that the bequest be used to build a church in a rural setting amid trees and in a beautiful natural setting. The first service was held October 5, 1913, just three months after construction began.

⑫ For decades, this spot was the hub of town. The Wingen family and partners had a shipyard and machine shop, where they built boats, repaired engines, and ran the marine ways. The shops employed many people in town and several of the older homes on Main Street were built by the Wingen family and rented to their employees. In the mid-1950s, Tofino Fishing, a fish buying and processing plant was added. This was eventually sold to Canadian Fishing Company and then BC Packers. The last year of operation was 1995.

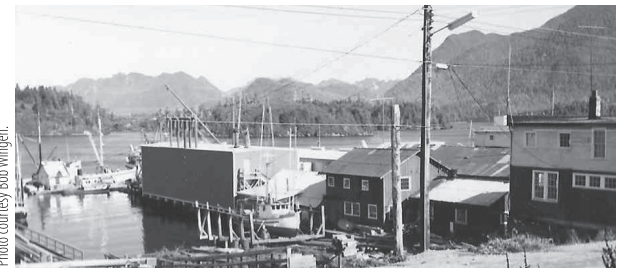


Photo courtesy Bob Wingen.

⑬ Over the years, and still today, people have lived on the small islands in Tofino's harbour. One of the most famous islands is Arnet Island, also known as Dream, Castle, or Tibbs Island. It was home for a time to one of Tofino's most eccentric residents – Fred Tibbs. He purchased the island in 1912 and cleared it of every tree but one. He built scaffolding around the tree and put a platform on top where he would sit from time to time, serenading Tofino with his cornet. He also built a house with a tower, his "castle." Tragically, Tibbs drowned in the harbour in 1921.



Arlene Craig (nee Bond).

The two largest mountains you can see from this park are the two peaks of Meares Island, known by the Tla-o-qui-aht people as Wah-nah-jus (Lone Cone) to the left, and Hilth-hoo-is (Mt. Colnett) to the right. This is where Tofino gets its water. In the early 1980s, when parts of the island were slated for logging, concerns over damage to the watershed and loss of old growth forest, began years of conflict over land use in Clayoquot Sound. In 1984, local people gathered on Meares Island and met loggers where they planned to come ashore. The Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations declared the island the Wah-nah-jus Hilth-hoo-is Tribal Park.

* Continue up Third Street to Campbell Street.

⑭ Today's District Office was the location of Tofino's first school. The original one-room school was built in 1906. Later, another room was added to accommodate students up to grade 8. Eventually the original rooms were replaced with the building that sits on the site today. In 1971, with the closing of the Christie Residential School on Meares Island, First Nations children came to school in Tofino. To accommodate the large student population, a new school was built two blocks away.

The long, rectangular building at 411 Campbell Street was originally a section of the hospital at RCAF Tofino (at Long Beach). After WW II, it was moved to its current location where it was used as a church. It was also a museum for a time and several artifacts remain inside and around the building.

In the gazebo in the park, look for the anchor of the *Tonquin* and the story recounting its wreck.

* Continue west along Campbell Street.

⑮ The restaurant on this corner was also part of the military hospital at RCAF Tofino (at Long Beach). Tofino's Masonic Lodge, who used the building for the meetings for years, orchestrated the move. Several businesses, including a series of cafés, operated out the building. Gloria and Jack Bruce opened The Schooner Restaurant in 1968 and it remains a family-run business today.

The firehall is partially constructed from old radar towers that were moved to the site from their original location at Radar Hill.

The gallery at 350 Campbell St. was designed and built in 1986 by artist Roy Henry Vickers and master carver Henry Nolla. The building echoes the traditional longhouses used by coastal First Nations people.

* Continue walking east to Campbell and First streets.



Ken Gibson collection.

⑯ The corner of First and Campbell about 100 years ago.