

Uncharted Waters: The Explorations of Jose Narvaez (1768-1840)

Jim McDowell

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Literary Nonfiction. Jim McDowell's new biography of the little-known Spanish explorer José María Narváez, reveals his significant discoveries during the European exploration of what is now Canada's Pacific Northwest Coast. Narváez was the first European to investigate a Russian fur-trading outpost in the Gulf of Alaska in 1788. The following year he became the first Spaniard to reconnoitre Juan de Fuca Strait. In 1791, he charted the interiors of three large inlets on Vancouver Island's West Coast, discovered a vast inland sea to the east (today's Salish Sea), mapped the entire gulf, made first contact with Aboriginal peoples in the area, and found the site of what became western Canada's largest city - Vancouver, British Columbia. Narváez also undertook diplomatic missions around the Pacific Ocean, charted the waters of the Philippines, and engaged extensively in the political upheaval that transformed New Spain into Mexico between 1796 and his death in 1840.



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