



Jose Narvaez: The Forgotten Explorer (Spain in the West Series)

Jim McDowell

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Long obscured by larger luminaries such as Malaspina, Vancouver, and Bodega y Quadra, Jose Narvaez made major contributions in exploration of the North Pacific Coast, both in investigating the Russian intrusion into Alaska, and exploring the coastline for the mythical Northwest Passage.

The Explorations: Narvaez full life story has never been told, yet he made significant discoveries during the age of exploration on America's North Pacific coast. Between 1789 and 1791, he was the first European to probe and chart Juan de Fuca Strait, sail across the large inland sea of Georgia Strait, explore its numerous islands, and discover the site of what is now western Canada's largest city-Vancouver, British Columbia. Narvaez preceded Captain George Vancouver's 1792 aboard the HMS Discovery by a full year.

The 1788 Journal-First English Translation: Narvaez log of 1788, here translated into English and printed for the first time, is a revealing and important document. In it Narváez details Captain José Martínez' voyage from San Blas to the Aleutian Islands and the Spanish (ie. Narvaez) first contact with the Russian fur traders in Alaska on Kodiak Island.

The lengthy journal (67 pages of text) is rich in detail, with fine descriptions of the native inhabitants of Alaska, as well as the Russians with whom the ship made contact.

The Lost Journal of 1790-1791: His log of the 1791 voyage in the vicinity of Vancouver Island, lost for 150 years, is traced and its possible disposition and current whereabouts are discussed and evaluated in a full chapter.

A Complete Biography: His life story spans the northwestern voyages of the late eighteenth century, the Mexican revolt following 1810, and the administration of Iturbide in the 1820s. His later work for the Mexican government included the charting of Lake Chapala, and the development of maps of western Mexico and Alta California.

Additional Material: Illustrations, charts, and maps add to the usability and value of the work. A glossary for the 1788 Narrative aids the reader in locating geographical locations mentioned in the text. Four appendixes contain a history of the Santa Saturnina, its dimensions and its manifest, as well as list of Narvaez descendants.

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