Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra Mollinedo, to give him his full name, was arguably the ablest of the small group of Spanish naval officers who spent much of their professional life exploring the Pacific Northwest. The progress of his career marked the end of a period of ad hoc exploration and the introduction of expeditions which relied more on rational, careful practices and sophisticated planning. His career makes this shift dramatically visible, for initially he leaped to prominence with his superiors through a rash and daring act, stretching his ship and crew beyond their limit, while his later career illustrates cautious thoughtfulness, epitomized by his transformation into the negotiator of an international dispute. Bodega’s career in the Americas spanned almost the entire twenty-year period, from 1774 to 1795, when this remote corner of the world was the focus of Spanish concern.¹

Freeman Tovell lives in Victoria, British Columbia, and is the author of several articles and a forthcoming biography on Bodega y Quadra. He retired after thirty-five years in Canada’s diplomatic service, in which he held ambassadorships to Peru and Bolivia.
Bodega y Quadra occupies a unique position among Spain’s eighteenth century Pacific explorers. He stands midway between an able workaday coastal pilot like Esteban José Martínez, who undertook exploration in addition to his regular duties, and a truly international-minded figure like Alejandro Malaspina, whose desire to further Spain’s imperial interests was melded with the spirit of the Enlightenment: scientific curiosity. Instead, Bodega y Quadra is best seen as an “organization man”—both in the sense of his ambition to rise within his chosen sphere and in the organizational skills which he brought to Pacific coastal exploration. As his interaction with the celebrated English explorer George Vancouver attests, he was far from parochial-minded, offering extravagant hospitality and sharing geographical information with the representative of Spain’s longtime nemesis. Like Malaspina, Bodega was a naval officer of the Enlightenment, what the Spanish called La Marina Ilustrada. Unlike him, however, Bodega was a son of the New World, compelled to achieve what he could with the limited resources available on New Spain’s northern frontier. The conclusion of his career illustrates the frustrating “glass ceiling” which typically stunted the careers of Spaniards born in the Americas. Even a man like Bodega y Quadra, possessed of extraordinary ambition, could not rise to heights he thought he deserved, for his achievements occurred on the fringes of the empire, far from the view of the Spanish court, and he lacked the close connections in Madrid on which the Spanish-born could rely. The fire of his ambition, which helps account for the seeming contradiction between the rashness he exhibited early in his career and his methodical later practice as an explorer and negotiator, was not enough to melt the ice of his creole origins.

“The impulsiveness of two spirited youths”

Bodega y Quadra’s early career dramatically epitomizes the transition from ad hoc exploratory expeditions to carefully-mounted, methodical ones. Born in 1744 in Lima, Peru, he was a criollo—a Spaniard born and raised abroad. His family’s noble ancestry, his mother’s lineage among northern Peru’s landed gentry and his father’s business success and position as a senior official of the Merchants’ Guild ensured their son entrance to the Real Academia de Guardias Marinas, the naval academy in Cádiz, Spain. After graduating, he briefly saw service in the Mediterranean, but this rather routine life ended when, as one of a group of six promising young officers, he was selected for service in New Spain to take part in the program of explorations of the Pacific Northwest.

In December, 1774, he reported for duty in San Blas, in the wake of
that Naval Department’s inconclusive 1774 expedition northward, in which Juan Pérez had failed to find any Russian settlements—the purpose of his voyage—or make any formal claims to possession. From his palace in Mexico City, Viceroy Antonio de Bucareli immediately ordered a second expedition. With the arrival of additional officers, Bodega among them, three ships were designated to be sent north; the 250 ton frigate Santiago, commanded by Lieutenant Bruno de Hezeta, the Sonora, a fifty-nine ton schooner under Lieutenant Juan de Ayala for inshore exploration, and the 200 ton packet boat San Carlos under Lieutenant Miguel Manrique, charged with making the first chart of San Francisco Bay.

The thirty-one year old junior lieutenant was disappointed when he learned he would be staying behind, and instead volunteered to serve as an extra officer on the tiny Sonora. They sailed from San Blas on March 16, 1775, but three days out Manrique developed signs of insanity and had to be sent back. In the reshuffling of commands, Bodega y Quadra was given the Sonora, a twist of fate that launched his career.

The voyage had been hastily put together, a situation that Bodega would never tolerate himself once he was in charge of expedition planning. The Sonora was a poor choice for exploration, only thirty-six feet long, not built for the open sea, and barely capable of three knots under full sail. She seriously delayed the expedition’s progress, for at times the Santiago was required to take in sail in order not to lose her entirely, and on one occasion even took the little Sonora in tow.

The untried crew of fourteen was mostly composed of ranch hands, and only four had previously been to sea. The Sonora carried no surgeon nor medicines of any kind, and a minimal supply of food and water. A small deck house made a cabin of sorts for the two officers, but the crew had to sleep in the cramped storage area or sitting up on deck, exposed to the elements.

After making landfall at Trinity Head in northern California, tragedy struck just south of Cape Elizabeth, near the entrance to the Quinault River on the coast of present-day Washington, when five of Bodega’s men and his boatswain were killed as they were obtaining water and wood ashore. ’Never again would Bodega allow himself or his men to be unprepared in their dealings with Native Americans. They continued north, with the six replaced by seamen from the Santiago. Off the entrance to the yet-undiscovered Strait of Juan de Fuca, Bodega y Quadra and his second in command, the twenty-four-year-old Francisco Mourelle, became convinced that Hezeta wanted to turn back because the
expedition was far behind schedule and the Santiago's crew stricken with scurvy. Huddled in their tiny quarters for two hours that night, the two discussed a radical plan. Then, under cover of darkness on July 31, 1775, the tiny Sonora deliberately slipped away to continue alone her voyage into the unknown.

Years later, Mourelle described their rashness as “the impulsiveness of two spirited youths.” Mourelle appears to have been the plan’s originator, though as “both were of the same mind, it was not difficult to obtain [Bodega’s] agreement.” In one of history’s more radical cases of peer pressure, they justified their decision partly by asking themselves whether they could face their friends in San Blas if they made no attempt to fulfill their mission.

The decision to “go it alone,” however, was more than an act of insubordination; it was madness. Continuing north into the fierce autumn storms—in one of which an enormous wave swamped and nearly sank her—the Sonora managed to reach a nondescript cove near present-day Sitka, Alaska. Scurvy and the effects of exposure left the crew so stricken that only Bodega y Quadra, Mourelle and the cabin boy remained strong enough to work the ship. Though they managed to reach 58°28’ north, Bodega y Quadra was defeated in his two attempts to reach 60°, the latitude specified in the expedition’s instructions. Compelled to retreat southwards, Bodega entered and named vast Bucareli Bay, on the west coast of Prince of Wales Island. It was charted carefully, and the act of possession was performed, for with an eye to the future he thought its warmer climate and excellent harbours would make the bay a good jumping-off point for later explorations. Continuing south, he hugged the coast as much as possible; had not winds forced the Sonora away from land, he would have been the first to sight the entrance to the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

When Sonora limped into port in Monterey, the capital of Spanish California, so weak were the two officers and the crew that all had to be carried ashore. Their voyage undeniably had epic qualities, and in his
report to Madrid, Viceroy Bucareli ignored Bodega’s insubordination and praised him instead for his “heroic constancy and disregard of risks.”\(^8\) He was rewarded with a promotion to Lieutenant, even drawing the attention of King Carlos III, who took the unusual step of ordering that both a notice and Bodega’s chart be published.\(^9\)

The voyage had afforded a remarkable display of seamanship and determination, not to say a harrowing experience. Though no significant discoveries had been made nor Russian settlements encountered, the consequences were important nonetheless.\(^10\) Because the expedition performed ceremonial acts formalizing their claim to possession at four locations, the Spanish empire in the Americas was extended some 1,500 miles further north.\(^11\) Essential knowledge of harbours and anchorages had been obtained, as had detailed information on the native people with whom future expeditions would interact.\(^12\)

Bodega y Quadra’s dogged, methodical approach to fulfilling his mission is especially apparent in the expedition’s most tangible result, the general chart of the voyage which he prepared. For the first time, a reasonably accurate indication of the direction of the coastline from San Francisco Bay to the Alaska Panhandle existed on paper, a vast region which previously had been a virtual blank on the map. To Viceroy Bucareli, the chart was especially significant, giving him and some authorities reason to seriously doubt whether any of the mythical navigable passages across North America existed.\(^13\) Because a number of powerful individuals in Madrid wanted absolute proof, however—especially the dynamic Minister for the Indies José de Gálvez—Spain’s search for the Northwest Passage continued, with Bodega y Quadra prominently involved.

**Bodega y Quadra’s Second Voyage:**

*An organizational triumph*

New Spain’s chronic shortages of money, manpower, and especially ships delayed Bodega’s second voyage for four years. While the viceroy insisted that the resupply missions to the California settlements, as yet far from self-supporting, should have priority over further exploration, Minister Gálvez disagreed, citing public knowledge that James Cook would soon embark on his third voyage in search of a Pacific entrance to the Northwest Passage. Gálvez ordered the expedition to sail promptly with a twofold mission: to explore Alaskan waters as far as 65° north, and to seek and arrest Cook for trespassing in Spanish waters.\(^14\)

To avoid the risks evident in sailing a lone ship into unknown northern waters, it was decided that the expedition should be carried out with two frigates. The *Princesa* was to be built in San Blas, while Bodega y Quadra was sent to Peru to purchase another, a merchant ship named the *Favorita* which he ordered converted to his specifications to make it more suitable for exploration. This voyage of exploration would be both the costliest, and the best prepared, of all the Spanish northern expeditions.\(^15\)
The almost casual approach which had characterized the preparations of the Pérez and Hezeta-Bodega expeditions, Bodega insisted, was not to be repeated. The officers assigned to the two frigates held planning sessions, chaired by Lieutenant Ignacio Arteaga, who by virtue of seniority had been appointed by the viceroy to lead the expedition. Arteaga was a competent sailor but lacked Bodega y Quadra's boldness, perseverance, planning abilities, and perhaps his judgment, since he had just been released from three years in jail for insulting a priest. Together, they carefully considered lessons learned from the two previous expeditions, particularly in matters of organization, communications and logistics. Bodega and his team of pilots painstakingly researched their courses, the winds and currents to be expected, and recommended places where exploration should be concentrated.

How does one convert a merchantman into an explorer?
As these eighteenth century before-and-after drawings show, the meticulous Bodega ordered extensive alterations to the Peruvian merchant ship Favorita to ready her for exploration—evidently even changing the female figurehead to a more suitably military lion!
n important key to success was the preparation of the expedition’s charts. Having demonstrated on his previous voyage the unreliability of maps by prominent theoretical geographers of the day, Bodega y Quadra and his team created a large, colour-coded chart to show what was known to exist and believed to be accurate from the explorations of Russian navigators, especially Bering and Chirikov, and the published maps of more reliable cartographers, including those of the Russian Academy of Sciences. After four years of preparations and delays, the expedition set sail from San Blas on February 11, 1779, three days before Cook, the man they were ordered to apprehend if encountered, was killed in Hawaii.

Arteaga accepted Bodega’s recommendation that Bucareli Bay, which lay in the same general latitude as the supposed passage of Admiral Fonte, be examined more thoroughly and a month was spent in the task. From there, the two ships continued north, performing acts of possession at Port Etches on Hinchinbrook Island at the entrance of Prince William Sound, the northernmost point ever claimed by Spanish explorers, and at Chatham Bay on Cape Elizabeth at the entrance to what is presently known as Cook inlet, where, unknown to them, Cook himself had performed the same ceremony the previous year. Also unknown to them, a Russian trading post stood nearby; a little more searching would have revealed fur traders here and elsewhere, for the Russians had a number of small settlements and trading posts in the vicinity.

Without any warning or consultation with Bodega y Quadra, however, Arteaga abruptly decided to sail back to San Blas. Because the coast here was trending southwest, there seemed no possibility of reaching 65° north as called for by instructions. Moreover, the violent storms, bitter cold, and blinding snow when it was not raining were conditions to which Mexico-based sailors were hardly accustomed, and made navigation in these treacherous waters extremely hazardous. Scurvy, too, had incapacitated many of Arteaga’s men. It is evident from Bodega’s none-too-discreetly-worded journal that he wished to continue exploring: “I agreed to return [to Monterey] in spite of my desire to
continue our navigation," he noted, but grumbled that "I did not have the opportunity to propose any other course." With age, perhaps, came greater caution, but in fact he was without viable alternatives for both Arteaga and Viceroy Bucareli had placed him under strict orders to remain in company; there was to be no repetition of 1775.

The following decade saw Bodega occupied in a variety of tasks. For a year he commanded the Naval Department of San Blas, and then made a second voyage to Peru and spent a stint in Havana. He was in Spain from 1784 to 1789, after arranging the transfer in hopes that it would help him obtain an assignment that would lead to his advancement to flag rank. He also hoped to gain the required permission to marry the daughter of a militia colonel in Tepic. Neither quest was successful.

Bodega’s pursuit of advancement was thwarted by the doubtlessly aggravating discovery that senior naval officers, especially Antonio Valdés, the Minister of Marine responsible for all senior appointments, were quite indifferent to or unaware of his accomplishments as an explorer. Twice he made the long journey from Cádiz to the royal palace of El Escorial, outside Madrid, to seek an interview with the minister, but it is apparent that he had no friends at court to espouse his case. In addition he encountered opposition for a more subtle reason: the well known prejudice against “colonials” being given senior appointments in any branch of the services, the government or the church. Moreover, a confidential assessment made of him at this time by his superiors dams him with faint praise:

Known worth, good conduct, modest talent, has had success fulfilling his commissions, satisfactory intelligence, has exercised command and shown an aptitude for it.

While in Madrid he submitted a proposal which is characteristic of the man, demonstrating intellectual interests midway between those of a pilot like Martínez, called on to undertake exploration, and a truly international-minded figure like Alejandro Malaspina. Bodega proposed a careful charting of the entire Pacific coast from Tierra del Fuego to as far north as possible to complement concurrent Spanish efforts to develop an accurate atlas of the Iberian peninsula’s coast. His proposal, however, would not have created a scientific expedition on the model of Cook and La Pérouse, whose voyages brought their countries prestige in both the scientific community as whole and among the general public. King Carlos III sought the opportunity to promote the natural and physical sciences as a means of shedding Spain’s intellectual isolation, and Bodega’s proposal offered negligible interest to the scientific community and would not have brought Spain the desired international acclaim. Malaspina’s proposal of a more ambitious expedition embracing a number of disciplines, however, received prompt royal endorsement. It did Malaspina no harm that both he and Minister Antonio Valdés were both members of the Order of Malta, a special link the like of which Bodega y Quadra could only dream. Not for the last time, he must have regretted the bane of his ambition: his colonial birth and lack of highly placed support.
Faced with unemployment, Bodega y Quadra volunteered to return to the Americas, and was appointed to command the Naval Department of San Blas, perhaps because the government desired to make use of his unrivaled knowledge of the Pacific Northwest. While this is the reason given in his letter of appointment, it is also clear that his decision was an act of resignation, perhaps even desperation. Even so, two years were to pass before his offer was accepted. Apart from the fact that his fruitless years in Spain had seriously worsened his financial position, San Blas did not promise the excitement likely to satisfy his ambitions. The only naval activities on Mexico’s west coast were routine supply missions to California and the protection of the coast against pirates and smugglers.

**A Surprising New Future**

The picture would change dramatically when Russian fur traders were encountered in the Gulf of Alaska in 1788, a discovery which led to the decision to establish a settlement in Nootka Sound to forestall a rumoured Russian plan to do the same. Captain Bodega y Quadra’s return coincided with the beginning of the period of greatest Spanish activity in the Pacific Northwest, and his organization skills were immediately needed to manage the sudden increase in the responsibilities of San Blas. Reporting to an able, “hands on” viceroy, the second Count of Revilla Gigedo, he had first to reactivate the naval base, virtually dormant for eight years, and to integrate new civilian and naval personnel, including officers sent from Spain to augment the handful who had remained. More ships had to be built to meet the demands of the renewed exploration program. Under Bodega’s direction, five major expeditions were planned and carried out. Intimately related to these voyages was the looming international crisis over the events at Nootka.

In 1792, Bodega y Quadra was placed in command of the Expedition...
of the Limits, which brought him to Nootka to negotiate with Captain George Vancouver. In signing the Nootka convention in 1790, Spain had backed down from the brink of war with Britain, but the document had serious defects, stemming from the fact that it had been negotiated hastily on the basis of incomplete and inaccurate information. Key articles were open to differing interpretations. For example, north of what point on the coast could the English establish trading posts? Was it north of San Francisco as the English maintained or, in various Spanish interpretations, was it north of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, the northern part of Nootka Sound or even the northern shore of Friendly Cove itself?

To attempt to resolve these and other matters, the two governments appointed their respective commissioners, and the viceroy selected Bodega y Quadra, “because of my good opinion of you, warranted by your zeal, skill and conduct. Your knowledge and experience in the northern coasts of this America assure the greatest success in this important mission.”

The British appointed Vancouver to undertake the assignment while engaged in his survey of the northwest coast.

Bodega y Quadra and Vancouver met twice, first at Nootka between August and September, 1792, for about three weeks, and then later at Monterey for about seven weeks. While Vancouver expected a rather cool reception at Nootka, his host instead proved friendly and hospitable, providing a house for Vancouver’s supplies, and daily bread, meat and vegetables for his ships. In the house which Bodega y Quadra renovated and enlarged “so as better to receive the English,” he entertained officers, regardless of nationality, with six-course dinners served on his personal silver, a feat remarked on with wonder by all who visited that remote wilderness. The comments of visitors such as John Hoskins, the mate of Robert Gray’s Columbia, are typical; they found the Spanish captain “really a gentleman, a friend to all the human race.”

Gray even named his son after him. Almost nightly there were parties with singing and dancing, while later, in Monterey, the diplomatic adversaries continued socializing, replete with horseback riding, hunting, countryside walks and visits to the nearby Franciscan missions of Santa Clara, Carmel and Santa Cruz. International tensions naturally did not vanish; in Monterey, for example, a bullfight organized by the Spanish disgusted the English visitors, while a dancing exhibition on Discovery, put on at Vancouver’s request by the Hawaiian women aboard, shocked the sensibilities of Monterey society.

While the negotiations themselves ended in stalemate and Nootka remained Spanish until 1795, the personal relationship between the two explorers helped internationalize knowledge of the North Pacific Coast’s geography. The best indicator of their rapport in geographical matters is perhaps their decision to bestow the place name “Quadra’s and Vancouver’s Island,” long since shortened to Vancouver Island. More importantly, whereas Spain had always been very secretive about her explorations, the Spanish captain provided Vancouver with copies of some of his most important charts, a gesture the British explorer reciprocated.
Naturally, such hospitality was not disinterested; while genuine, it was also political. Bodega’s outgoing personality created a congenial atmosphere for what otherwise might have been a sticky exercise, for he saw his mission as a diplomatic enterprise to allow Spain to regain a measure of the prestige and stature lost after her humiliation by Prime Minister William Pitt. Naturally too, the forty-eight-year-old Bodega must have seen in a successful defense of Spain’s interests his last opportunity to obtain that promotion to flag rank he so eagerly sought.

His dealings with the region’s native peoples likewise demonstrate a far-from-parochial mindset. There is a good deal of evidence in the accounts of visitors that he was largely successful in this delicate task. Vancouver wrote that he could not “avoid observing, with a mixture of surprise and pleasure, how highly the Spaniards had succeeded in gaining the confidence and good opinion [of the natives], together with the orderly conduct of the latter on all occasions towards the Spaniards.” Again, Bodega’s motives were not purely altruistic, for it was important to show the English that the inhabitants supported the Spanish presence. Moreover, the Spaniard and Maquinna, the Nootka Chief, were highly dependent on each other for the stability of their respective positions.

Whatever hopes for promotion in reward for this skilfully conducted mission that Bodega y Quadra may have cherished were disappointed. Upon returning to San Blas from Nootka and Monterey, he unsuccessfully sought a transfer to the Governorship of Callao, the port nearest his family in Lima, where the cost of living would be lower and he could improve his critical financial situation. In 1794, his extravagant lifestyle had helped him accumulate debts amounting to more than five years’ salary. Moreover, his health rapidly declined, reflected in his letters by increasingly frequent references to fatigue and difficulty in carrying out his responsibilities. Toward the end, this

Santa Cruz de Nootka. Bodega lavishly entertained guests in the Commandant’s House, marked A on the map.
resolute explorer was too ill even to sign his official correspondence. Although the viceroy strongly supported a transfer to Callao and the pension which he had long solicited from the Military Order of Santiago to which he belonged, he received neither. Even reimbursement for the heavy personal expenses incurred receiving Vancouver eluded him; the best the viceroy was able to win from Madrid after two years of effort was an ex-gratia payment of one year's salary. It had to be paid into his estate, for before approval was finally obtained, Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra died in Mexico City on March 26, 1794, at the age of fifty.31

One year after his death, his country's flag was lowered at Nootka, but the outstanding service he rendered in his twenty-year association with the Pacific Northwest is today honoured in his native Peru, Mexico, Spain and Canada. In California, his name lives on in Bodega Bay, where he stopped in 1775 while returning from his first, perilous voyage into northern waters.
NOTES

1 This article is an abridgment, with revisions and emendations, of two articles published in the Fall, 1995 and Spring, 1996 issues of Resolution, the journal of the Maritime Museum of British Columbia. It appears here by the kind permission of the publisher.

2 A notable exception to this rule was the Cuban-born viceroy Revilla Gigedo. There were others, such as Bodega’s brother Manuel, who was appointed Oidor in the Audiencia de Guatemala and was later a member, in Madrid, of the Council of State.

3 The best general work on Bodega remains Warren L. Cook’s Flood Tide of Empire: Spain and the Pacific Northwest, 1543-1819 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), with its extensive bibliography. The author of this article has completed the manuscript of the first biography of Bodega y Quadra.

4 The Spanish named this spot Punto de los Martires. The San Carlos was no longer with the other ships, having separated to explore San Francisco Bay and returned to San Blas.

5 Francisco Mourelle, “Segunda Exploración,” Ms. 331, Museo Naval, Madrid. This and other quotes are the author’s translations.

6 The cove on the tip of Kruzof Island in Salisbury Sound which Bodega called Puerto de los Remedios is known today as Sea Lion Cove.

7 Near present-day Ketchikan, Alaska. The name given was Puerto de Bucareli.

8 Bucareli to Arriaga, #2073 of 27 December 1775, ramo Correspondencias de los Vireyes, Series II, Archivo General de la Nación (hereafter cited as AGN).

9 These appeared in the Official Gazette of 19 March and 14 May, respectively. Mourelle went on to a distinguished career, serving as Bodega’s second-in-command on the 1779 Arteaga-Bodega expedition, with a notable record as an explorer of the Pacific in his own right. He also served as secretary to Viceroy Revilla Gigedo, saw a good deal of action in the Mediterranean in the late 1790s, and rose to the rank of rear admiral. He is buried in the Pantheon of Naval Heroes, Cádiz.

The bustling anchorage at Nootka, seen from the Spanish establishment.
The formal act of taking possession was performed in California at Trinidad Bay, in Washington at Grenville Bay, and in Alaska at Sea Lion Cove and Bucareli Bay. Like the French but unlike the British, the Spanish ceremony was both an elaborate political and religious one, featuring the raising of a cross, the chaplain’s sermon, and various symbolic gestures. The ceremony itself varied somewhat, depending on circumstances. The deed, a copy of which was sealed in a bottle and buried at the foot of the cross, always stated that possession was taken in the name of the king and (supposedly) with the natives’ consent. The fullest description of the acts as performed by the Spanish are to be found in the journal of Manuel Quimper, when exploring the Strait of Juan de Fuca in 1790. (ramo Historia 68, AGN). See also Henry R. Wagner, “Creation of Rights of Sovereignty through Symbolic Acts,” *Pacific Historical Review*, (December, 1938): 297-326.

The Yurok Indians of northern California, the Quenault Indians of the State of Washington and the Tlingit of the Alaska Panhandle. Descriptions by Bodega and Mourelle of their customs, government and economies remain a major source of information for those studying the pre-contact period.

These included those attributed to Ferrer Maldonaldo (latitude 60°N), Admiral Fonte (53°N), and Juan de Fuca (48°N), and the *Rio de Martín de Aguilar* (43°N), which was believed to lead to the Great Sea or River of the West.

Prince William Sound was known to the Spanish as either *Entrada de Valdés* (after the Minister of Marine), or *Bahía del Príncipe Guillermo*.

It is usually referred to by historians as the third Bucareli expedition, to differentiate between the attempt to locate Russian settlements, and the remaining expeditions searching for the Northwest Passage.

The priest had refused to celebrate Arteaga’s marriage, for the lieutenant had not obtained the required permission from the navy.

In his “Comentario,” Ms. 618, Museo Naval, Madrid.

When Spain declared war against England in support of the rebelling American colonies, Bodega and the other San Blas officers were ordered to Spain’s main Caribbean base, Havana, for war duty. Bodega managed to stave off his transfer for three years, spending 1780 in command of San Blas, then sailed the next year to Peru to seek mercury desperately needed by the Mexican mining industry. Since no extra supplies were available, the voyage failed, and proved costly for Bodega personally: a customs official in San Blas accused him—with some justification— of smuggling wine and other goods for personal use. The charge coincided with the viceroy’s recommendation of a promotion to full captain, but it took some time to clear up the matter. After payment of a stiff fine, the promotion was eventually approved, but it was his last.

The documentation of this critical period of Bodega’s career is very thin. Tepic is located in the hills behind San Blas, a healthier location where naval officers and senior civilian staff resided.

Ms. 1538, Museo Naval, Madrid.

These expeditions were the immediate re-occupation of Nootka after it had been temporarily abandoned, and four expeditions in search of the Northwest Passage: Salvador Fidalgo’s survey of Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet, the first exploration of the Strait of Juan de Fuca by Manuel Quimper (both in 1790), Francisco Eliza’s 1791 exploration with José María Narváez of the Hare and Georgia Straits, and Jacinto Caamaño’s 1792 survey of the Queen Charlotte Islands and lower Alaska Panhandle. He also provided support for the 1792 Alcalá Galiano-Valdés expedition, the first to circumnavigate Vancouver Island in a continuous voyage.

Revilla Gigedo to Bodega, 29 October 1791, ramo Historia vol. 67, AGN.

John Boit, *Columbia*’s awestruck fifth mate, commented in his log that, The governor gave a grand entertainment at his house, at which all the Officers of the Fleet partook. fifty four persons sat down to Dinner, and the plates, which was solid silver, was shifted five times, which made 270 plates. the Dishes, Knives and forks, and indeed everything else, was of Silver and always replaced with spare ones. There could be no mistake in this as they never carried the dirty plates or Dishes from the Hall where we dined.

On a personal level, Vancouver makes many cordial and evidently sincere references to Bodega in his report of their meeting and in the account of his voyage, praising his hospitality, generosity and benevolence. That Bodega reciprocated is less evident; his papers contain nothing comparable about Vancouver. This should not be construed as indicating a lack of esteem; the journals of Spanish mariners, unlike those of British naval officers of the time, are frustratingly impersonal in nature.

These charts now reside in the British Admiralty’s hydrographic office in Taunton, Somerset.

Any meaningful discussion of Bodega’s interactions with the region’s native peoples and their significance of his detailed observations to today’s ethnologists would require a separate article. It suffices to note here that he exhibited unusual sensitivity to Nootka customs and society.

These charts now reside in the British Admiralty’s hydrographic office in Taunton, Somerset.

The Spanish depended heavily on Maquinna for the security of their establishment, and Maquinna was dependent on Bodega’s support of his senior position in the regional hierarchy above his more powerful neighbours. These included Tatoosh, whose main village was on Tatoosh Island at the entrance to the Strait of Juan de Fuca, Hannah of Ahousaht, and Wickaninish, who dominated the central coast of Vancouver Island from Hesquiat to Barkley Sound. If Bodega used Maquinna to bolster the Spanish claim to sovereignty, the Nootka chief proved himself equally adept at using Spain to strengthen his own position.

Bodega’s extravagance is aptly illustrated by a single incident: when Broughton was leaving for England with Vancouver’s report, he asked him to purchase in London four dozen shirts “of the finest material available.” They cost Bodega a staggering £78 4/6d.

As far as can be determined from the documentary evidence, he died of either a brain tumor or the severest form of hypertension. He was buried in the Convent of San Fernando, Mexico City.

Artists with the Malaspina expedition drew Nootka in 1792, with the frigate Concepción anchored at left.