

Excerpt from *The Inside Passage of George Vancouver* written by Peter Puget during the exploration of Desolation Sound:

Leaving this Bay we found the Continent trended to the ENE but the Extreme heat of the Day prevented our pursuing it till the Afternoon, when with a fine Breeze we continued our [Route] in the above Direction for three Miles, passing an innumerable Quantity of Small Islands & sunken Rocks, which in many Places had scarcely sufficient water for the Boats; at the End of this Insular Navigation we perceived an old Indian Village¹⁰ at which we were induced to stop to fill our Water from a Fine Run that Emptied itself into the Sea, we therefore landed for that purpose in a Small Bay close to this [Deserted] Building – It was some time before we could discover by what path or Method we were to ascend into it, as a Platform projected considerably over the Base of the Rock, on the top of which was this Village built – However on Searching we found a plank laid to the Branch of a Tree from the ground & another from thence to the Rock & this was the only Entrance it had – This Building may be denominated a sort of [] [p.115] Fortification, for without ladders it cannot be ascended at any other than the proper Gate way. & the Conveyance to this being removed it absolutely would become a formidable place of Defence — This Village must have been deserted some time for the Houses were in such Condition, shattered and broken, that it was almost impossible to distinguish the one from the other. But by what remained, I should suppose they were from Ten to Twelve feet in height & about Sixteen feet Broad & the Same in Length. The supporters and each end of the Houses were exceedingly strong & from the General arrangement of the Village it was calculated to oppose a much larger Force than it could possibly contain – & it was likewise well adapted to screen the Inhabitants from the Inclement Seasons – For to these Corner Supporters are fixed Broad Plank in the common mode of Building, which entirely closes up the Sides and Ends except a Small Entrance which is left in every separate habitation from the outside. The Roof is composed of the same Materials, but made apparently without any Declivity to carry off the Rains. This no Doubt is well contrived by some Method of laying the Boards – The Village is composed of three distinct Buildings, each Row being divided by a Lane or Passage in which was an astonishing Quantity of Filth and Dirt, with a very offensive Smell – On the [Brow] of the Rock towards the Sea the Natives had with much trouble carried out a Platform on a Level with the top of

¹⁰ Behind Roffey Island, the rock nearest the mainland shore.

the Rock nearly three feet in Breadth & projecting beyond the water []. This was Supported by large pieces of Timber Ten or twelve feet Long whose Lower Ends were placed in Cavities about half way down the Rock & strengthened by additional pieces in different Directions gradually increasing towards the Top till the Frame was of sufficient Breadth to contain the Intended Platform with Safety – Whether this mode of Building is constructed against the assaults of the human species or whether to prevent the Bears and other voracious animals from destroying the younger Branches of their Families, whilst the Men are employed in their Domestic Duties must be left to future visitors whose knowledge may be more extensive by a longer Residence among the Indians – I shall however endeavour by Reasoning to [] for the Present Description of their Village – This Rock by its Size was once I have no Doubt the Residence of about three Hundred People & either their own Filth or oppression from their Neighbors had forced them to quit their Habitation by a [precipital] Retreat – for I have perceived many in our former Excursions who have been in the act of changing their Situation with their Families that they carry the Boards & all other usefull Parts for the Purpose of rebuilding with all the Domestic Utensils such as the Boxes for the water Baskets &c in that if I may be allowed the Expression, it is a total Removal of Home & Furniture. these are placed on Spars seven or Eight feed long whose Ends are lashed to the gunnels of two large Canoes – not unlike the Plan of the Double Canoes at the Southern Islands differing only in the Fixture of the Spars & the Space between the Canoes – But in their villages the Plank was left, the Houses seemed shattered by the Inclemency of the Weather – Their Domestic Utensils were in the Houses & some Carcases of Dogs were found among the Ruins – from their Circumstance, may we not infer that the Inhabitants were driven from the Village instead of making a voluntary Retreat – or else why leave behind their materials for building, the formation of which must be attended with infinite Labour to them; but what still more Strengthened the above opinion in my Mind, were the Carcases of the Dogs, for I have always perceived these animals to be highly [caressed] by the Indians as the only domesticated Creature in their Possession, & whenever a [Removal] took Place The Dogs were always considered as part of the Family. From their Circumstance, & from such only could we form an opinion, which however may be fallacious – We came too early in the Evening as During our Stay at the Deserted Village, all our Cloaths had been covered with Fleas, on its first Discovery some of the People run up to their Necks in Water but all to no purpose, boiling the Cloaths was the only remedy & which effectually cleared us of these troublesome Companions –