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Simón Gaviola's family connections

—18th-century placenames in the Strait of Georgia

by Nick Doe

As most readers know, Gabriola Island's name is derived from the Spanish toponym *Punta de Gaviola*, which first appeared on a chart of southern Vancouver Island compiled by the Spanish navy in 1791. In an earlier *SHALE* article,¹ I made the case for this naming being in honour of a Spanish nobleman, Simón Gavíola y Zabala. Simón Gavíola was the paymaster of the fleet protecting the trade routes between Spain and the Americas. Both of his family names—his father's, Gaviola, and his mother's, Zabala—are Basque.

In analyzing other placenames given by the Spanish navy in the Strait of Georgia in the same year, I came up with 32 names, of which, 14 were of high-ranking naval officers; 5 were Spanish government officials; 5 were of Saints; 4 were descriptive; 2 were rejected in later versions of the chart; and 2 were of persons unknown.

I now want to modify this assessment by transferring one name from descriptive names to the names of persons who were unknown when this research began. The remaining descriptive names then become:

- *Río de las Grullas* (“River of Cranes”, meaning “of herons”—Englishman River on Vancouver Island)
- *Islas de las Ballenas* (“Islands of whales”—Ballenas Islands)
- *Río de la Aguada* (“River where we obtained water”—possibly Wilson Creek near Sechelt).

The places named after people who had not been identified back when the *SHALE* article was written then become:

- *Punta de Gaviola*
- *Punta de Camino*
- *Punta de Romay*.

The reason for this change is that I now think that “*camino*”, which means “road”, is neither an allusion to the pilgrims' path through the Basque country—*el Camino de Santiago*—nor to the stretch of white cliffs on the south side of Savary Island, but is instead in honour of a person with the family name “Camino”.

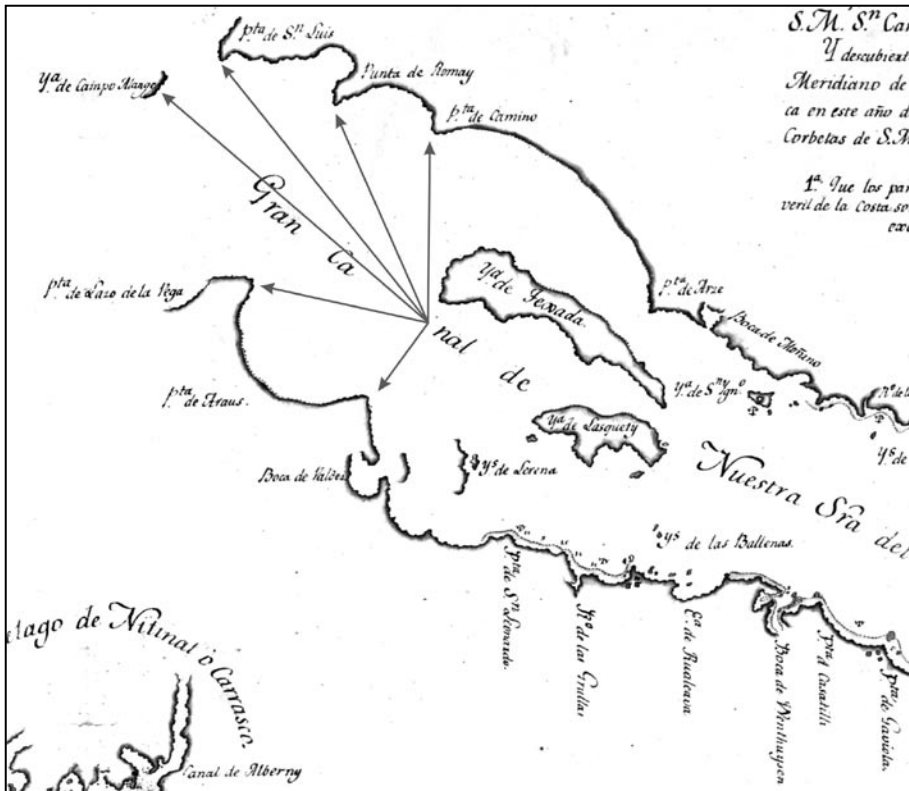
What prompted this revision was the discovery that a contemporary of Simón Gavíola was a man by the name of Juan Alonso del Camino y Rivera (Ribera).

The two undoubtedly knew each other—and both occupied powerful positions in Seville as members of the *Consulado de Mercaderes*, a merchants' guild that controlled trade with the Americas in the 1600s. Both were Knights of Santiago (*Caballeros de la Orden de Santiago*) as was Juan Francisco Bodega y Quadra Mollinedo² who was the Spanish naval officer responsible for adding all three names to the 1791 chart of the Strait of Georgia (*Gran Canal de Nuestra Señora del Rosario*).

While I had no reason to suspect that this Juan Camino was a naval person, it did open up the possibility that someone in his, evidently noble, family was.

¹ Nick Doe, *The origin of Gabriola's name*, *SHALE* 13, pp.7–38, June 2006.

² Bodega, Quadra, and Mollinedo are also Basque family names.



Courtesy MUSEO NAVAL, Madrid

A portion of the *Carta Que Comprehende...* showing the north end of the Strait of Georgia. The large island (*isla*) is *Yª de Texada* with *Yª de Lasqueti* below it. *Pª de Gaviola* is in the bottom righthand corner, and the Vancouver Island coast runs up to *Pª de Lazo de la Vega*. On the mainland coast north of Texada Island are the annotations *Pª de Camino*, *Punta de Romay*, and *Pª de Sª Luis*. I have added the array of six arrows centred off the coast of Texada Island. These are part of the analysis procedure explained in the text.

hydrographer in 1858.⁴ In contrast, it's not even absolutely clear where *Punta de Camino* and *Punta de Romay* are, so my first task will be to figure this out.

Henry R. Wagner, in his classic work on the early cartography of the coast, suggests *Punta de Camino* might be Harwood Island or "some high mountains on the mainland to the east of it" and that *Punta de Romay* was "probably" the east end of Savary Island.⁵

Again in an earlier article,⁶ I described a method for analyzing the 1791 Spanish Chart, *Carta Que*

Comprehende..., in which I concluded that *Punta de Camino* was Harwood Island; *Punta de Romay* was Savary Island; *Punta de San Luis* was Hernando Island and the

Where were the *puntas*?

Unlike the name *Gaviola*, which, at the time, could also correctly be spelt *Gabriola*, the placenames *Camino* and *Romay* have not survived.³

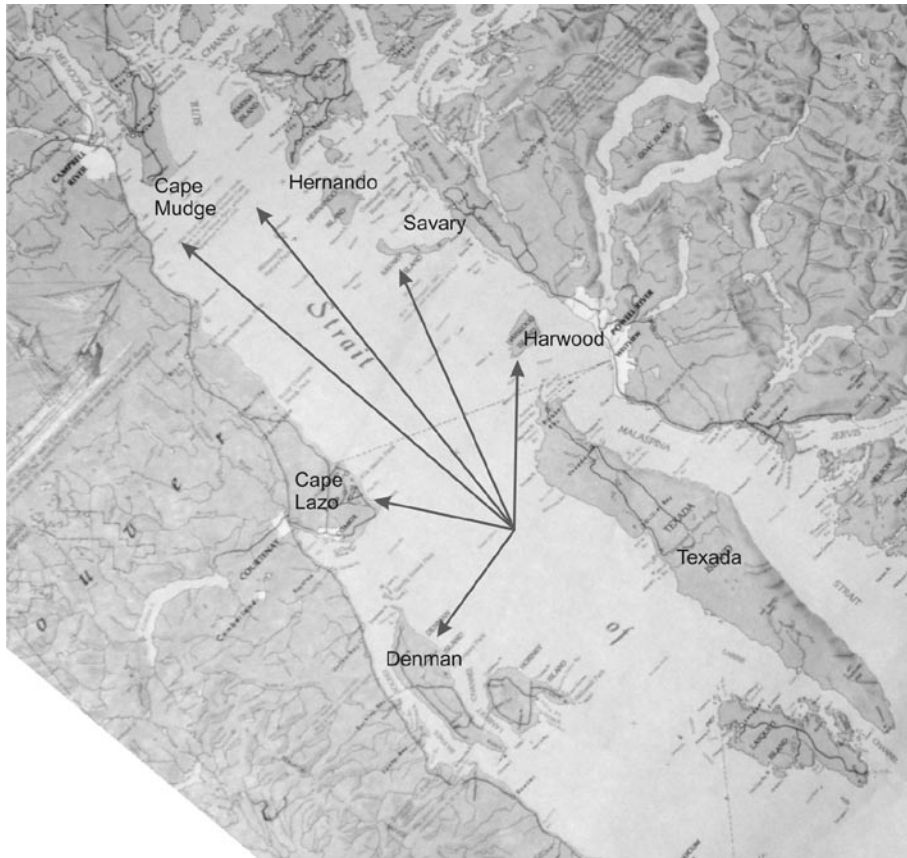
Gaviola was morphed into "Gabriola", with an "r", by a careless Royal Navy

³ Gabriola actually received two toponyms. Orlebar Point (Berry Point) was called *Punta de Casatilli* after Admiral Francisco Javier Everardo Tilly y Garcia de Paredes; Marqués de Casa Tilly.

⁴ Nick Doe, *A Russian map of Gabriola, 1849*, pp.10 & 12, *SHALE* 3, January 2002.

⁵ Henry W. Wagner, *The Cartography of the Northwest coast of America to the year 1800*, p.437 & p.491, University of California Press, 1937.

⁶ Nick Doe, *Some anomalies in a Spanish chart of Vancouver Island, 1791*, pp.7–20, *LIGHTHOUSE*, Journal of the Canadian Hydrographic Association, Fall 1997.



A modern map of the same area at the northern end of the Strait of Georgia. The array of six arrows centred off the coast of Texada Island is the same as shown on the Spanish chart on the previous page.

southwest tip of Cortes Island; *Isla de Campo Alange* was Cape Mudge; *Punta de Lazo de la Vega* was Cape Lazo, a surviving name; and *Punta de Araus* was the northern end of Denman Island.

Normally, I would be happy to let these identifications stand, but, during his lifetime, I was challenged on this by the Vancouver marine historian, John Crosse. John's opinions on these matters are not to be taken lightly. He wrote a 200-page book on the expedition of the small schooner *SANTA SATURNINA* and the longboat of the *SAN CARLOS* in July 1791 under the command of José María Narváez y Gervete. The book, which has yet to be

published and remains a draft,⁷ was based on John's extensive research in Spain and in the Spanish archives, and on what he learned during four summers sailing along Narváez's route around the Strait of Georgia in a small boat.

The criticism that John Crosse had was that in analyzing errors in the *Carta Que Comprehende...*,⁸ I had used the same methodology for the small segment showing the northern end of the Strait of Georgia as for the remainder

of the chart. In his view, and I think he was right, the small segment in question, which is shown on the previous page, was a rough sketch based only on compass bearings and crude visual estimates of

⁷ John Crosse, *In the Wake of Narváez—the Spanish discovery of Vancouver*, Vancouver BC, February 2003. My copy is a second draft, but it was constantly being revised up until 2006.

⁸ The chart of southern Vancouver Island compiled by Spanish naval officers at Nootka and San Blas, Mexico, at the end of 1791. Maria Dolores Higuera Rodríguez, *Catálogo crítico de los documentos de la Expedición Malaspina del Museo Naval*, 1985-1990, Ref: III.E [1] #1739. A good copy is in M.^a Dolores Higuera Rodríguez, *Northwest Coast of America—Iconographic Album of the Malaspina Expedition*, pp.28–9, Museo Naval de Madrid, 1991.

distances made in bad weather from a single location. This is in contrast to the more accurate method of establishing locations by triangulation.⁹ So as to be sure no mistake had been made, I recently repeated the analysis taking into account that the bearings on this particular part of the chart are likely to be far more accurate than are the distances.

Briefly the technique I used was:

1. record the (x,y) co-ordinates of points of interest on the Spanish chart
2. select a reasonable, but arbitrary, observation point on the Spanish chart and record its (x,y) co-ordinates
3. calculate from the (x,y) data the bearings of all the points of interest on the Spanish chart from the chosen observation point
4. on a modern map, record the (x,y) co-ordinates of points that are believed to be those on the Spanish chart
5. get the computer to select on the modern map an observation point from which all the bearings on the modern map correspond as closely as possible¹⁰ to all the bearings on the Spanish chart. If there is no good solution, go back to step 4 and select different points on the modern map
6. verify that the observation point on the modern map calculated by the computer at step 5 is plausible.

The results are shown in the following table and in the annotated modern map on the previous page. The identifications are unchanged from my earlier suppositions, and differ from John Crosse's identifications in only a minor way that doesn't affect the mainland coast.¹¹

⁹ Triangulation involves establishing a baseline of measured length and taking bearings of the distant object from the ends of the baseline.

¹⁰ Find the least sum of the squared errors.

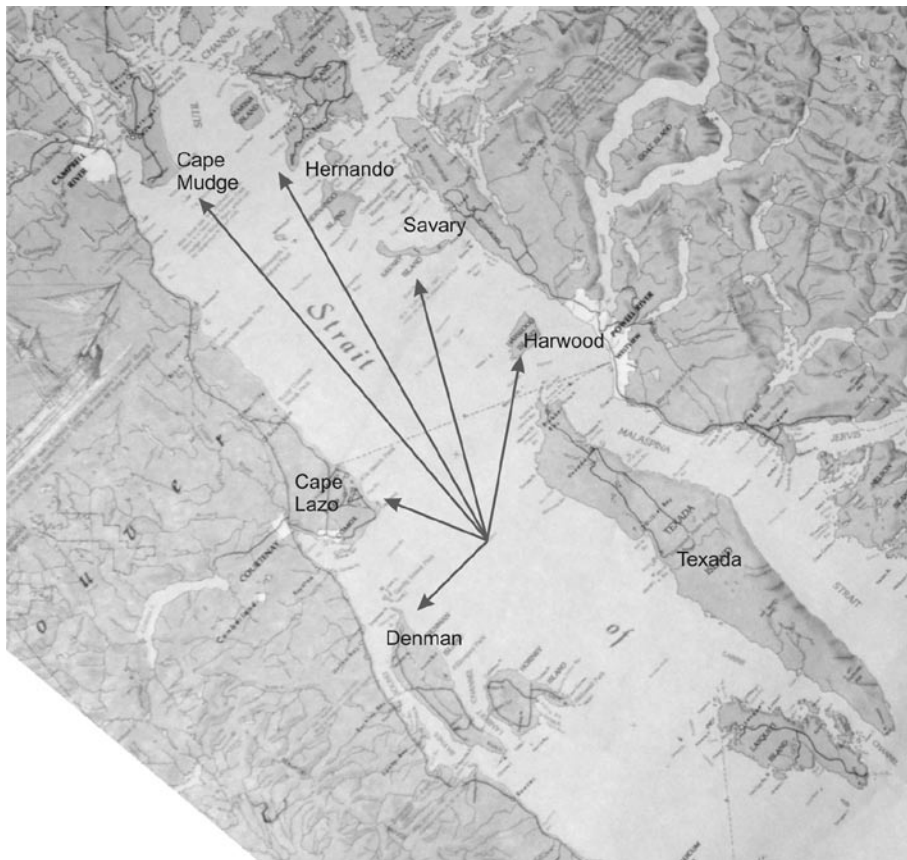
¹¹ The only difference in the identification of places is that John Crosse considered *Punta de Lazo de la Vega* to be Kuhustan Point, and *Punta de Araus* to be Cape Lazo. See Crosse...*ibid*, pp87–88. Mild

chart N 0°	Spanish	modern	Δ
Harwood	362°	366°	-4°
Savary	338°	337°	+1°
Hernando	322°	329°	+3°
Mudge	312°	315°	-3°
Lazo	284°	278°	+6°
Denman	221°	228°	-7°
root mean squared			$\pm 5.2^\circ$

Although the matches between bearings on the old Spanish chart and those obtained from a modern map are not too bad, they aren't all that good either. The variation of the differences is $\pm 5.2^\circ$, which is significantly greater than what one would expect for experienced navigators like Narváez and his fellow officers. It was therefore with some pleasure that I found that by allowing that "geographic north" in the segment of the Spanish chart was in fact "magnetic north", the match could be considerably improved to $\pm 2.1^\circ$ as shown in the next table and the second version of the modern map shown on the next page.

chart N +9°	Spanish	modern	Δ
Harwood	371°	372°	-1°
Savary	347°	343°	+4°
Hernando	331°	335°	-4°
Mudge	321°	320°	+1°
Lazo	293°	294°	-1°
Denman	230°	229°	+1°
root mean squared			$\pm 2.1^\circ$

support for this theory is provided by Joseph Baker's 1792 chart, Nick Doe, *Some anomalies...ibid*, pp.16–17, but I remain, unconvinced.



A better match between the Spanish chart and a modern map is obtained if the distance information in the Spanish chart is ignored and the bearings on the Spanish chart are taken to be compass bearings and not geographic bearings. In this map, the array of arrows has been rotated +9°. There is evidence on the chart that Narváez used a compass deviation of N12°30'E, which combined with this computer-calculated +9°, would give a conjectured total deviation of N21°30'E, which is close to what it is in this part of the world. Capt. Vancouver recorded magnetic north as N19°30'E (Birch Bay) and N20°45'E (nr. Alert Bay) in 1792.

The bottom line of this analysis for present purposes is that we can be as confident as one can be that *Punta de Camino* is Harwood Island, and *Punta de Romay* is Savary Island.

Camino?

If this were an academic paper I would at this point claim that the research proceeded by my pursuing the thought that since “Gaviola” had been so hard to track down, maybe “Camino” was being

difficult for exactly the same reason; that reason being that Gaviola is a 17th-century name, not an 18th century name as practically all the other names used for placenames are. In reality, what happened was that one day just recently, I decided to Google “camino” just to see what had been posted in the last five years. The result was a surprise. “Camino” is not a common family name, but in the

Hispanic world there are many examples showing that it exists—on Facebook’s website, *Arturo Camino*, *Mario Camino*, and *Mariana Camino*, whoever they might

be, were on the first pages of the search. It was clearly time to forget about pathways, especially those of the garden sort.

A few more minutes of searching came up with the above-mentioned discovery of a Camino-Gaviola connection:¹²

¹² Enriqueta Vila Vilar, *El poder del Consulado sevillano y los hombres del comercio en el siglo XVII— una aproximación*, fn.49 on p.14, in Allan J. Kuethe (ed.), *Relaciones de poder y comercio*

Juan Alonso del Camino [y Rivera]:
Cónsul en 1642 y 1643; receptor de la
avería y del Consulado; prestamista del
derecho de Infantes; veinticuatro; C° de
Santiago.

And right next door to this extract:

Simón de Gavíola [y Zabala]: Pagador de
varias rentas del Consulado; prestamista
del derecho de Infantes; C° de Santiago.

“C° de Santiago” means “Knight of the
Order of Santiago (Saint James)”. Only
persons of noble birth (*hidalgos*) could be
members. Both were accountants of some
kind; Camino was in charge of accounts
receivable (*receptor*), and Gaviola of
accounts payable (*pagador*) of the all-
powerful *Consulado* of Seville. The two
were not just colleagues however; the
application papers for Juan Alonso del
Camino y Rivera's entry into the Order of
Santiago were signed by Antonio de
Gavíola, who was Simón Gavíola's
father.¹³

Another name in the list was Domingo de
Sarricolea, which is interesting because
Sarricolea was the family name of Simón
Gavíola's wife.

The seat of the Camino family was Ajo in
the province of Cantabria (Santander). It
is about 60 kilometres west of the city of
Bilbao in Vizcaya (Bizkaia), which is
where Bodega y Quadra's family were
from, and only 45 kilometres from the
family home of his mother, Francisca
Mollinedo.

So is this enough to link Juan Alonso del
Camino y Rivera to *Punta de Camino*?

colonial: nuevas perspectivas, Escuela de Estudios
Hispano-Americanos, Sevilla, 1999.

¹³ The papers say that Antonio de Gavíola was a
natural of the town of *Goivar* (Elgoibar) in the
province of Guipúzcoa, which makes his identity
virtually certain.

Not really; what is lacking is a connection
with the Spanish navy and this is provided
by Juan Camino's father. He was Juan
Alonso del Camino y Camino, a *Receptor
General de la Armada y Flota de los
Correos de Indias* (Receiver General of
the Fleet and in charge of postal services
to the Americas).¹⁴ He was born in Ajo
and makes a good candidate for the
honour.

Romay?

The search for “Romay” on the Spanish
version of the web came up with lots of
hits; there is no doubt that this is a family
name. The best of the hits was a whole
Wikipedia article on the *La Casa de
Romay* (the House of Romay). It is a
noble family based in Pontevedra, Galicia,
in the northwest corner of Spain.

What I noted with interest in the
Wikipedia article (in translation) is that:

La Casa de Romay is mainly distinguished
by its many alliances with noble families
such as Sarmiento de Valladares, Suárez de
Deza, Saavedra, Mendoza, Montenegro,
Ulloa, Varela, Fernández de Córdoba,
Duque de Estrada, Osorio de Moscoso,
among others. [*my underline emphasis*]

The relevance to the topic at hand being
that Bodega y Quadra Mollinedo, who was
the commandant of San Blas, 1774-80 and
1789-94, was quite possibly related to the
Mendoza family. One of his great
grandmothers was Juana de Mendoza, and
she and her husband Juan de Losada were
from San Salvador in Galicia.¹⁵

This by itself means very little, except that
it encourages me to think that *Punta de*

¹⁴ José Díaz de Noriega y Pubul, *La Blanca de la
Carne en Sevilla*, Ediciones de la Revista
Hidalguia, 1976.

¹⁵ There are still people in the world with the
family name Romay-Mendoza.

Romay was named after a particular person, not the family in general; otherwise, why not *Punta de Mendoza*?¹⁶

Among the notables in the Romay family was, what at first glance seemed to be our man, Ramón Lorenzo Romay y Giménez de Cisneros. He was an Admiral of the Fleet (*Capitán General de la Armada*), had a very distinguished career both in the military and in government (*Director General de la Armada*), and Wikipedia en español has an entry just on him alone. He was a Knight of the Order of Carlos III, which had been created in 1771 in order to decorate those who had performed good deeds on behalf of Spain and the Crown.¹⁷ Better yet, his mother's family name, Giménez (Jiménez), is Basque, and members of that family were Knights of the Order of Santiago. Perfect—except for one thing. He was born in 1764, which puts him in the generation after Bodega y Quadra's. He was a bit young to have made a big impression in 1791,¹⁸ although

¹⁶ Family associations were of great importance in Spain at the time. That Juan Bodega was christened "Bodega Quadra y Mollinedo" and not the more usual "Bodega y Mollinedo" placed emphasis on the Bodega family's connections by marriage to the prestigious Quadra family. The Bodega's also owned land adjoining that of the Quadra's [Freeman M. Tovell, *The far reaches of empire—the life of Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra*, p.5, UBC Press, 2008]. Juan's nearest direct relative would have been his great grandmother, Isabel de la Quadra; however, the Quadra family befriended the Bodega family when they arrived in Lima, Peru, in the 1720s.

¹⁷ Gabriola's Marqués de Casa Tilly (footnote 3) was made a member of this order in 1789. Cape Lazo may have been named after the Spanish Admiral, Luis de Córdoba Lasso de la Vega y Verástegui, who was also made a member of this order in 1780.

¹⁸ Someone of Bodega's generation, who was in the navy, but not with any high rank, would be Antonio Fernández de Córdoba y Romay, who was

Dionisio Alcalá Galiano was only four years older, and Cayetano Valdés three years younger.

Gaviola?

Since the earlier article written in 2006, I have not been able to find out much more about Simón Gaviola and his family. A search of the holdings of the *Archivo General de Indias*, Seville, has drawn a blank, though maybe the information they have is not readily accessible through the catalogues and finding aids. An example of this is a reference to a request from Simón to the King, Philip IV, that his office be passed on, not to his son, but to whoever married one of his four daughters.¹⁹ The full quote is:²⁰

Simón Gaviola, *pagador* (paymaster) of the Indies escort fleet, did have a son who had already been assured of his father's office; but Gaviola later wanted that changes. He said his son was not ready to take over because he was studying at the University of Salamanca. But his four daughters were now of marriageable age and he had little money to give them. He therefore asked for the granted succession to his office to be 'for the person who marries one of his daughters, since he will select someone suitable for this office; also a knighthood for whoever marries another daughter'.

The son would have been Simón Antonio Gaviola y Sarricolea (Sarrikolea), but the daughters' names remain undiscovered.

baptized in Cádiz in 1745. His father, Luis Córdoba y Córdoba, was a *Capitán de navío* (Post Captain) and Knight of the Order of Santiago. Probably Cordova Bay near Victoria is named after him.

¹⁹ Archivo General de Indias: sección Gobierno, subsección Indiferente General, legajo 759, *consulta*, Consejo de Indias, March 14, 1636.

²⁰ David Goodman, *Spanish naval power, 1589–1665—Reconstruction and defeat*, pp.169-170, Cambridge University Press, 1997.

One of them was likely not over-excited on being informed she had to marry an accountant; nor another that her suitors were being offered a knighthood. Through modern eyes, it gets worse; Philippe IV agreed to the request, subject to the approval of the proposed husband by the Council of the Indies.

Discussion

So where do these investigations leave us? The problem here is that names of the noble families of Spain are to be found everywhere in the genealogical records if one just looks hard enough. Names of people of high status, both in the government or in the navy, in and before the 18th-century, that include names that occur in the history of the Spanish exploration of the waters around Vancouver Island include:²¹

Juan Ruiz de Apodaca y de Eliza,
Apodaca (Bowen Island.)-Eliza
(commander at Nootka, Port Eliza);

Juan de Arce Carrasco,
Arze (Cape Cockburn)-Carrasco (officer
on the SANTA SATURNINA, 1791);

José de Arce y Valdés,
Arze (Cape Cockburn)-Valdés (officer on
the MEXICANA, 1792, Valdes Island);

Luis de Córdoba Lasso de la Vega y
Verástegui,
Córdoba (Cordova Bay)-Lasso (Cape
Lazo);

²¹ In a draft of this article I included: José Agustín de Llano y de la Quadra Muzquez y Llerena, Llanas (Bodega's grandmother)-Quadra (Bodega's name, Quadra Island)-Llerena (Hornby/Denman Islands); and Nicolás de Mollinedo y la Quadra Rado y Llerena, Mollinedo (Bodega's mother) - Quadra (Bodega's name, Quadra Island)-Llerena (Hornby/Denman Islands); but I was kindly informed by Fernando L. de Lerena in Spain that Hornby and Deman Island's name, *Islas de Lerana*, is after Pedro López de Lerena y Cuenca, who was Spain's Minister of Finance at the time.

Antonio Fernández de Córdoba y Romay,
Córdoba (Cordova Bay)-Romay (Savary
Island);

Álvaro Queipo de Llano y Valdés,
Llanas (Bodega's grandmother)-Valdés
(officer on the MEXICANA, 1792, Valdes
Island);

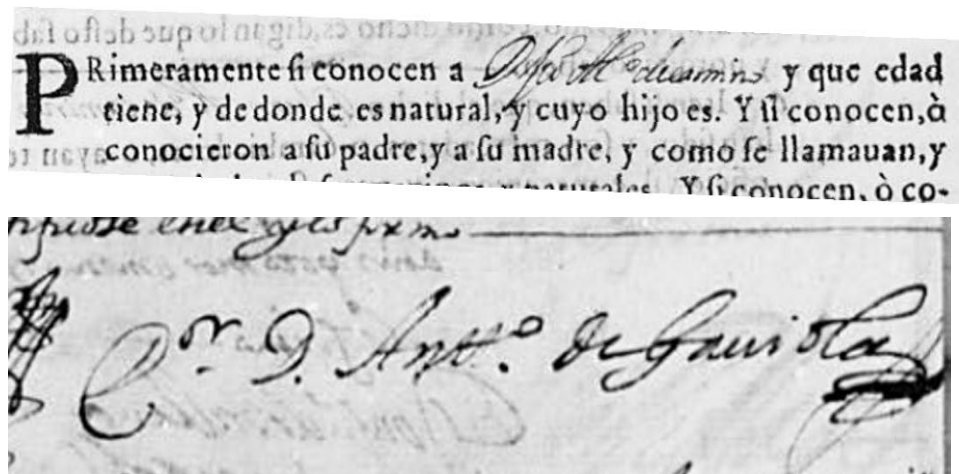
Ventura Moreno Zavala,
Moreno (Bentinck Island, Metchosin)-
Zavala (Gaviola's mother's name);

Félix de Tejada y Suárez de Lara,
Tejada (Texada Island)-Lara (Lummi
Bay);

Rafael Valdés y Córdoba,
Valdés (officer on the MEXICANA, 1792,
Valdes Island)-Córdoba (Cordova Bay)....

And this was after only a perfunctory search. I'm not saying any of the particular family connections have any significance in the naming of particular places, probably none of them do, but what I am saying is that they illustrate the closeness of the ties between many of the aristocratic families and high-ranking naval officers at the time. This makes identifying individuals difficult. We need to narrow the field down to aristocrats with strong naval connections and, if possible, personal ties to Bodega y Quadra. We also have to take into consideration that Bodega was not the ultimate authority when it came to handing out honours; he would have had to have had the approval of the viceroy of New Spain (1789–94), Juan Vicente de Güemes Pacheco Padilla Horcasitas y Aguayo, Conde de Revilla Gigedo. It probably helps that at least one of the viceroy's names, "Horcasitas" is Basque.²²

²² Although unlikely, Pedro de Horcasitas y Salaza, Marqués de la Vera, provides a possible family relationship. Francisca de Salazar was the mother of Bodega's great grandfather, Juan de la Bodega.



Top: The opening lines of the questionnaire required to be completed by anybody testifying as to the merits or otherwise of an applicant (*preudente*) to be a member of the Order of Santiago. The applicant's name is Juan Alonso del Camino y Rivera (*D Ja Alº decamino*).

Below: The signature of Don Antonio de Gaviola, Simón Gaviola's father, attached to Camino's application. Both Simón Gaviola and Juan Francisco Bodega y Quadra belonged to the Order of the Knights of Santiago, and Bodega was the Spanish naval officer most likely responsible for naming *Punta de Gaviola* and *Punta de Camino* in 1791.

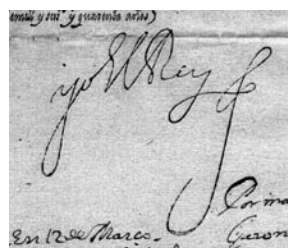
Conclusion

This is on-going research, so for the moment all “conclusions” are provisional, and are:

Punta de Camino is Harwood Island and was named after a member of the *Casa del Camino*. One possibility is Juan Alonso del Camino y Rivera who had connections with the Gaviola family; however, so far as I know, none with the Spanish navy. A better bet however is his father Juan Alonso del Camino y Camino who, like Simón de Gaviola, was, at one time, one of the high-ranking officials in charge of naval financial affairs.

Punta de Romay is Savary Island and was quite possibly named after Ramón Lorenzo Romay y Giménez de Cisneros, an Admiral, or somebody closely related from an earlier generation.

The research shows that identifying Gaviola's name with Simón de Gaviola is probably right. The Gaviola family name was not the only one to be honoured from the Basque region of Spain, and all have connections with the family of Bodega y Quadra, the commandant of the Spanish naval department of San Blas, which had responsibility for *Alta California* including establishments at Neah Bay and Nootka. We really can forget that seagull.²³ ◇



Persons of standing: The signature of King Philip IV of Spain (*el Rey*) on documents in the files of Juan Camino Jnr. and Simón Gaviola.

²³ A reference to the unlikely idea that Gaviola was simply a corruption of “gaviota”, meaning seagull.