

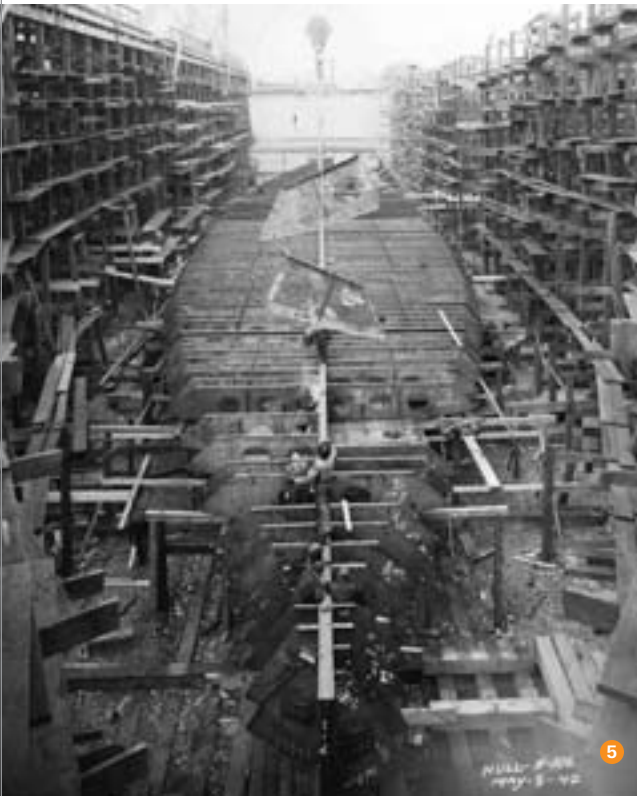
Natural History and First Nations

Before the arrival of the Europeans, the False Creek area was surrounded by a dense temperate rainforest of fir, hemlock, spruce and salal. Numerous salmon-bearing streams meandered through the trees, draining into the Pacific at False Creek. First Nations peoples, including the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh, inhabited the area; evidence of early settlements on False Creek dates back 3,000 years. The "creek" itself was five times its present size and its boundaries reached well into areas now filled and urbanized. The east end of the creek was a large tidal mud flat. The creek's shallows supported a rich diversity of sea life: shellfish and crustaceans abounded while the waters off the tidal beach supported sole, perch and sturgeon. The rich ecosystem of the estuary attracted migratory birds, and the coniferous forest was home to bears, cougars, elk and deer.



Industrial History

The name "False Creek" was coined by English sea captain Captain George Richards in 1859, when, expecting to pass through the waterway to Burrard Inlet, he instead came to a dead end. In 1867, Julius Voight, another of the early Europeans to arrive in Vancouver, built a cabin adjacent to the SEFC site. The ensuing influx of European settlers marked the beginning of an industrial period that would last more than a century. The industrial period began with the harvesting of local forest resources, and the area soon developed into a busy centre for manufacturing and processing. Southeast False Creek became an important industrial hub beginning in the late 1800s. The site was used for a variety of activities and was occupied by shipbuilders, sawmills, foundries, metalworks, a salt refinery and a public works yard. Though few signs of its industrial past exist on the site today, its legacy is far-reaching. Much of the city's early infrastructure, upon which modern-day Vancouver was built, was fabricated on this site.



1 Vancouver from the Lee block at the corner of Broadway and Main Street, 1913
 2 Behind L.A. Hamilton's campsite on the south side of False Creek, 1886
 3 Looking east from the shore at the foot of Nicola Street, 1900
 4 One of the last squatters' shacks near the Burrard Bridge on False Creek, 1934
 5 Hull No. 106 under construction at West Coast Shipbuilders Limited, 1942
 6 West Coast Shipbuilders Limited site under construction, 1941