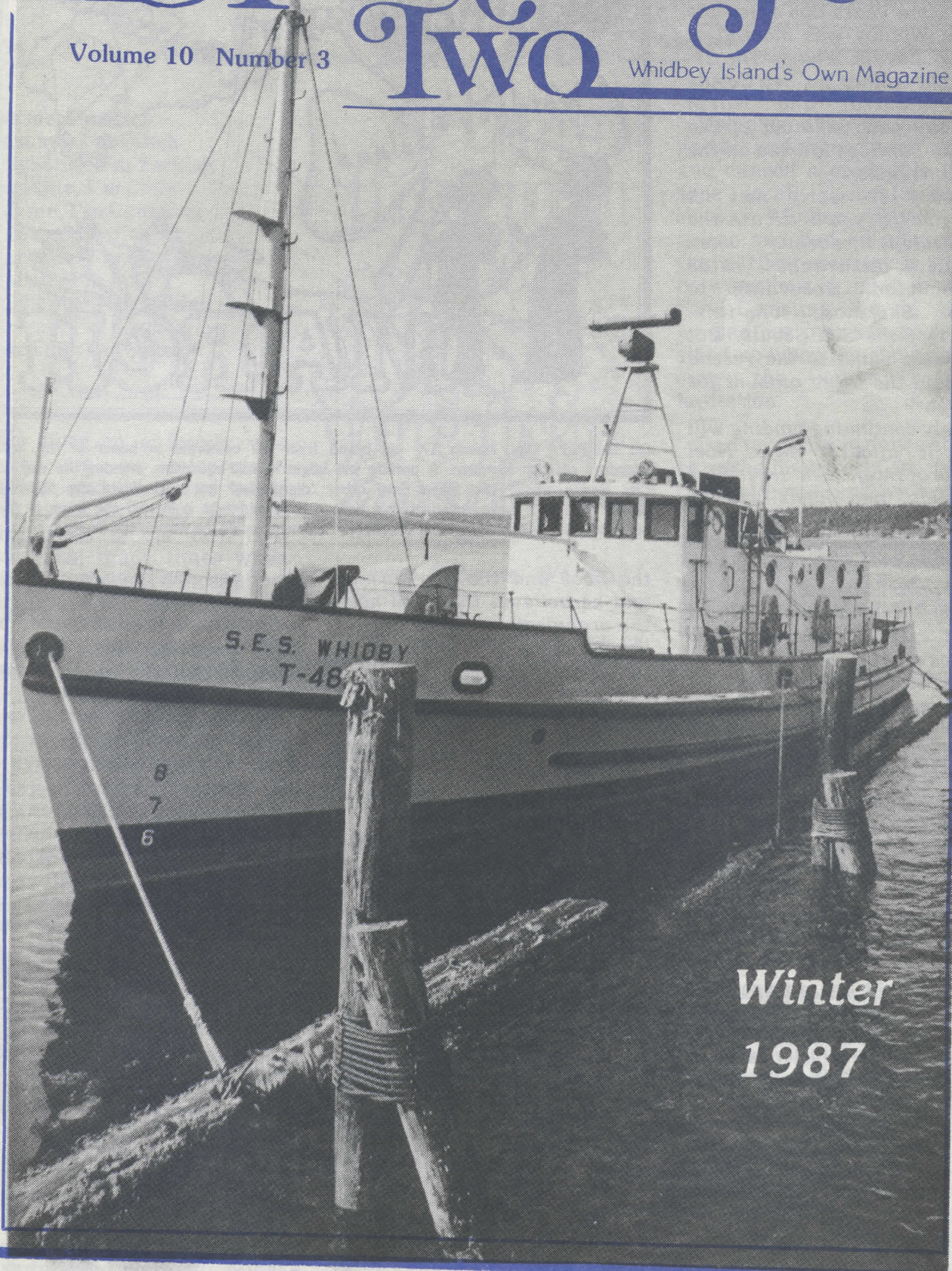


Spindrift Two

50¢

Volume 10 Number 3

Whidbey Island's Own Magazine



*Winter
1987*

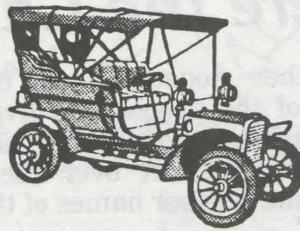
1916 Editor Takes a Drive Down Island

In March of 1916 the News editor took a trip from Oak Harbor to Langley, over the recently completed central highway. He reported that aside from a few muddy places beyond Smith's Prairie, the road was in "pretty good shape." He pointed out that the 38 miles from Oak Harbor to Langley was good for tourists to take for "a good auto ride."

The editor also mentioned there was a movement afoot to provide funds for a big ferry from Clinton to Mukilteo, and suggested everyone get behind the movement. There was also no ferry from Whidbey to Fidalgo Island at this time.

The highway ran through "one of the most beautiful spots" with the Calvin Phillips Co. presenting their big stock-breeding farm with well-kept buildings. Freeland, the "socialist town of Whidby" was visited next, with the road in bad condition, but a number of neat homes and businesses.

The prettiest scene the editor witnessed was Bay View, a



circular little valley surrounded by timber, in the center of which is a gem of a lake, with pretty farms and orchards running down to the water's edge.

Langley was the next stopping place, "busy Langley," which surprised the writer with the evidences of improvement. "Oak Harbor and Coupeville are clearly visible from the steamers as they land at the dock, but only a small portion of Langley." One had to climb up the long hill to the edge of

town for a charming view of the little city.

Langley was surrounded by small and intensive farming efforts, with the market at Everett and Seattle within easy reach. "Thrift and progressive spirit is bound to bring big results within a short time," he wrote.

A fine new high school building compared favorably with Oak Harbor's. A new electric light plant and a water system had been installed, and the Langley State Bank had deposits over \$40,000 under the management of Mr. Langley, the town's namesake.

The editor noted that Langley had a covetous eye on the county seat position, but whether that occurred or not, the town would have a population of from 1,500 to 2,000 people within a few years, with several important projects ahead to be developed.

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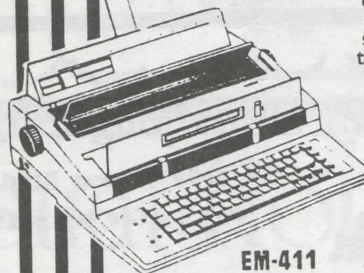
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About 1900. The "good old days" exemplified by skating on the slough that lay parallel to Oak Harbor's main street. Freund farm in the background.



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Winter of 1916 Brought the 'Coldest'

The winter of 1916 was a tough one, with a severe wind storm beginning on Friday, Jan. 21, and ending on Sunday. The big windstorm sank numerous boats and nearly destroyed the cannery building near the dock where over \$700 worth of canned beans were lost.

The windstorm paved the way for the "Big Snow of 1916" which deposited 36 inches on the level, starting within two days of the violent wind.

The Oak Harbor News reported that during the storm, a number of boats and scows put in to the Harbor, and LeLong's new launch, recently purchased from Mr. Holman, broke from its anchor on this side of Maylor's Point and sank to the bottom.

The old dock near Muller's in Crescent Harbor was washed



The best time of the winter in the 1920s was skating on Hastie Lake. The tent at the right sheltered a coffee and sandwich bar run by the Zylstra family for cold and hungry skaters. Today the lake waters have lowered and the area is overgrown with reeds.

away, and Mr. Olson's launch was washed ashore on Maylor's beach. Several other casualties were reported.

The storm bumped heavy logs against the piling under the cannery, washing some away and weakening others.



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With Stories of the Bitter Cold

(Continued from previous page)

When the tide went out, men from the community, including Cannery Manager Rogers, Charlie Ehrenfieldt, Morton Bray, Myron Schock, John Holman, Chris Bos and others worked Saturday night and until Sunday morning to save the building.

"Finally," the paper noted, "under the direction of Carpenter Ehrenfieldt, everything was made secure."

On Wednesday morning, the news reporter wrote that the day before and all night the snow had been falling in large feathery flakes, and by that time lay about four inches deep.

Before it stopped snowing, the white stuff measured 36 inches on the level, and was much deeper in drifts. All travel stopped, the mail couldn't get through, and farmers and residents of Oak Harbor found themselves marooned in their homes.



Oak Harbor's favorite ice skating rink for town kids in the 1920s and 30s was on the town slough that paralleled Main Street to Freund's Hill. Winters were colder then, and ice skating and sledding were regular winter activities.

COLD SPELL CONTINUES

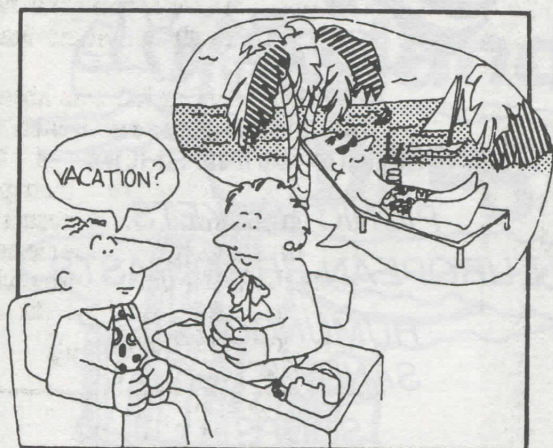
In the Jan. 14, 1916 issue of Oak Harbor News, they declared the previous Monday to be the coldest night in the past several years. On Tuesday it continued bitter cold and the ground was frozen as hard as adamant, ice bursting the water pipes leading from wells, and people running

hither and thither to obtain a supply to drink.

Out at Hastie Lake, however, these little difficulties were forgotten as a merry crowd of skaters enjoyed the "splendid recreation." On Wednesday the wind shifted and the snow started falling in feathery flakes. The Big Snow of 1916 had begun.



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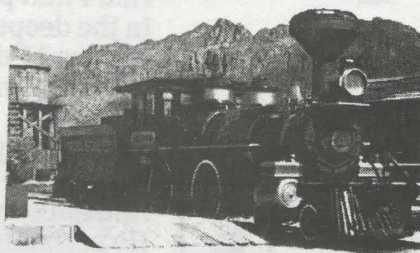
Avalanche Hits Train

15

In a sidelight to that terrible winter, the Island County Times reported on Jan. 21, that an avalanche of snow and earth had hit a Great Northern train, leaving eight dead.

Datelined Seattle, the story said two cars of a westbound Great Northern Cascade Limited train were swept from the track by an avalanche near Corea Station the Saturday before (Jan. 15) and were hurled 80 feet down the mountain side, causing death to four passengers, with four still missing. Fifteen passengers were injured, none seriously except Earl Smith of Spokane, a small boy.

The train was standing on the track near Corea, on the west slope of the Cascade mountains, when the avalanche struck it near the middle, a day coach and the diner going over the bank, while a sleeper behind them was toppled over on its side where it hung in its perilous position over the bank



but was not taken down.

The dining car stopped when about halfway down the slope and caught fire, being destroyed there.

The scene of the accident was but a few miles east of the scene of a similar disaster of February 28, 1910, when two Great Northern trains were struck by snowslides and nearly all persons on the two trains perished.

The Friday, Feb. 4 News headlined "The Worst Snow Ever," and said "the present is the longest spell of cold weather recorded during the past 25 years." The snow had started on Dec. 31, and lasted until well into February.

On Feb. 11, the News

reported that several mishaps had occurred in the vicinity of Oak Harbor during the week due to the heavy snow.

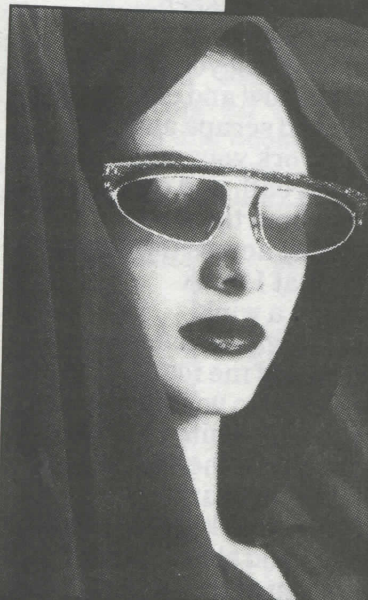
Mr. McGrew's horse shed was crushed in and he was nearly three hours getting his horse out from under the fallen roof; Max Tesch's chicken house fell in, but only a few of his chickens were killed; John Overway's barn was damaged; the Christian Reformed Church hitching sheds were crushed in; and the News kitchen tent, in which all their valuables were stored, was crushed in and was still a wreck.

COUPEVILLE WILDERNESS

In another storm story, this one not so tragic, Mr. Shirley Parker of East Coupeville related an experience, "the memory of which will remain with him as long as he lives." While in the woods east of town below Walter Aubert's place, he became lost in the snow. He tramped around trying to find his way out until night came on and not being able to find his way out fixed himself a place in the woods with fir boughs and stayed there all night. "He had no matches to light a fire with and one can well imagine how chilled through he must have been."

In the morning he was able to find his way to the beach by following the sound of the Calista's whistle and tramped the beach home. As a result of his harrowing experience, Parker's feet were swollen with frostbite and he had to be confined to the house.

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OLD DITTY

(via Lyle Muzzall)

A boy met a bear in the woods.
The boy's name was Algy,
The bear was bulgy,
The bulge was Algy.

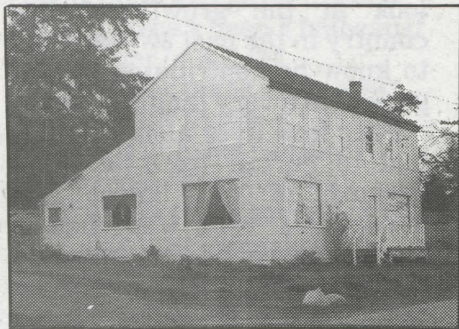
Samuel Libbey, County Auditor, Kept County Funds in a Hollow Cedar Tree

Samuel Libbey came to Penn's Cove in 1853. He left his wife and two sons in Maine in 1852 and sailed around the Horn with his brother-in-law, Captain Benjamin Barstow.

Barstow established a trading post at the Cove, and Samuel took 320 acres at Point Artridge on the north side of the present Libbey Road. He was joined by his family in 1859. Libbey worked at Barstow's store, cleared his land and shipped the timber to San Francisco. He became County Treasurer in 1857, holding the position until 1860 when he was appointed Deputy Auditor. He became Auditor and served until 1862.

While he was Island County Treasurer, for want of a better place, he kept the county funds in an old hollow cedar tree on his property. Libbey felt the money was safe, since there were few houses at the head of the Cove, and he had no safe or place in which to store the money.

The County Commissioners, however, were a little anxious about the hollow-tree depository, and Libbey was ordered to bring all receipts, money, orders and books to the county seat for auditing.



The old courthouse at the head of Penn's Cove as it is today.

Later, when he was elected Auditor, he kept the funds in the same cedar tree that had previously housed the county funds.

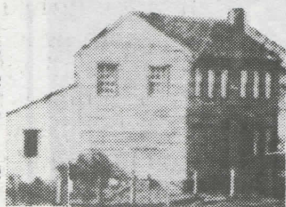
Mrs. Libbey was terrified of the Indians, and at Captain Ed Barrington's insistence they moved to a house at Penn's Cove. The house was built of logs and covered with vines, and stood near the poplar tree

that grew from a wand placed in the earth by Captain Henry Roeder.

The spot today is marked by young poplars that have grown from the original tree lost during a severe storm several years ago, according to an account in the book by Jimmie Jean Cook, "A Particular Friend, Penn's Cove."

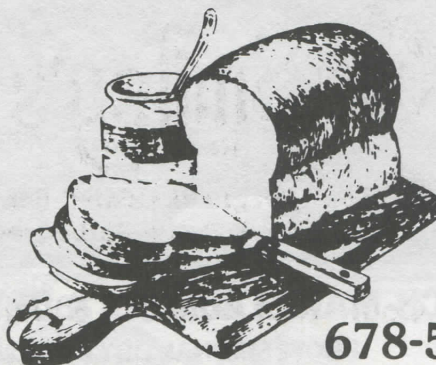
Samuel Libbey's son Joseph Barstow Libbey was also elected County Treasurer and County Auditor (1879-1892); his grandson Howard Wayne Libbey was elected Auditor and served until his death in office in 1921; and his great-grandson Joseph William Libbey served as Auditor from 1935 until 1971.

A remarkable and dedicated family.



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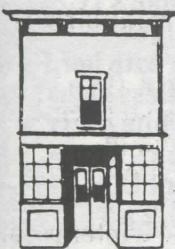
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Schoolroom scene at Cornet School, North Whidbey, about 1912.

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First Schoolhouse was a 1-room Frame Building on Freund's Hill

Oak Harbor's first schoolhouse was built about 1890 on Freund's Hill near where the Harbor View trailer court, (formerly Tip Top) now stands. The land was donated to the county for school purposes by Ulrich Freund, one of Oak Harbor's first three settlers, whose donation claim was located there.

The school, on 36 acres of land, was called Freund's School, and children of North Whidbey pioneers attended school there. One of the beloved teachers at the school was "Daddy" Franklin, a white-haired gentleman who taught in the 1890s.

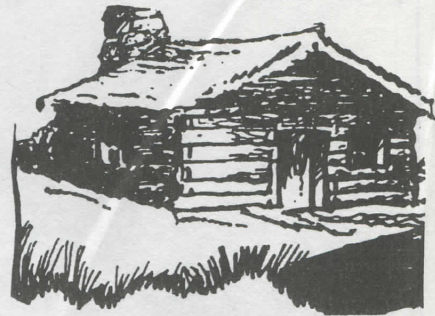
Mrs. Elsie Adams Pasek, a student there, remembered

well this primitive site of learning when she was interviewed some years ago.

The building itself was a one-room affair with six windows, all on the east side of the building. It was heated by a wood stove. Woods surrounded the school on three sides, but had been cut and burned in front, and the children played on stumps and logs during recess and at noon.

Mrs. Pasek remembered that two of their favorite games were Run-Sheep-Run and Anti-I-Over.

Drinking water had to be carried all the way up the hill from a spring at the bottom. Two children carried the pail, and a tin dipper dispensed the water.



Siding on the school building had been pried off here and there by the "big boys" who hunted bats which lived under the siding. Everyone walked to school, except the Maylor children who lived on the point across from the town, and who rowed across the bay in good weather, then rowed up the old slough that extended to the bottom of Freund's Hill.

When the school was no longer needed, Mrs. Jonothan Adams inherited the land and sold it to John Rogers, the Oak Harbor banker. Rogers put in an orchard and subsequently sold the 36 acres to Ben Loers Sr. for the sum of \$800.

A few of the orchard trees are said to still be in existence on the property where the "big rock" is located, a favorite play site for the school children.

The rock can still be seen on the left from the highway as you leave Oak Harbor going west.

Mrs. Pasek recalled many of those who attended Freund's School in 1902, the year Miss Kibble taught: May Calahan, Rekie Van Dyke, Pearl McCrohan, Anna Balda, Mattie Sager, Henrietta Van Dyke, Gerben Balda, Garrit Hulst, Ben Loers, Geert Zylstra, Clarence Sager, Herman Hulst, Walter Van Dyke, Ruby McCrohan (Neil), Syrena Ely (Neil), Gertie Eerkes, Minnie Skalman, Pauline Byrne, Ann and Winnie Loers, Eldon Ely, John Eerkes, Seth Crosby, Ainsley McCrohan and Ralph Freund.



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This is the third installment of a story about a trip overland by train by a Virginia family just after the turn of the century, to Lowell, a small town now a suburb of Everett. Maury, one of four Snyder children, continues his tale of those early years.

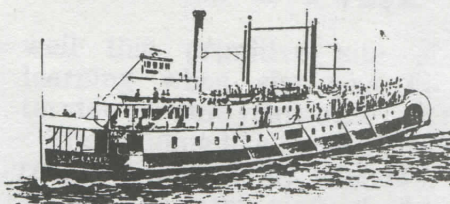
By Maury Snyder
Anacortes

When we arrived in 1909, Everett was really a sawmill town proudly proclaiming it was the City of Smokestacks. Pollution was considered a sign of prosperity then.

Jobs were plentiful in the mills, work and gold were in Alaska and how about Canada where help was needed in building the Powell River pulp plant, located in an area of British Columbia accessible only by boat?

Almost everyone we talked to had a spirit of enthusiasm for the present and optimism for the future. "Why not put some dams on the Columbia and irrigate the land and get some power too?" was frequently heard. A trolley car line was being built linking Everett with Seattle, and another railroad, the Milwaukee, was coming across to Everett.

Tales of Early Days in the Northwest



There was an abundance of gold nuggets, reddish gold from Alaska brought in by miners and travelers who had been there. Our new friends proudly displayed rings and bracelets made from that distinctive reddish Alaskan gold. We had to adjust to payment in \$5, \$10 and \$25 gold coins and were surprised at the absence of paper bills. They didn't come west until several years later.

A Fair Exposition

And then there was the 1909 Alaska, Yukon and Pacific Exposition which we attended with some friends on a beautiful day in September. By trolley car to Everett, changing at Hewitt, down that avenue to the dock, then the fast steamer *Telegraph* was our route to Seattle. At the Seattle dock we took a street car to the fair grounds on Lake Washington, now the site of the University of Washington.

Of the wonders of the world I remember the \$10 million of reddish Alaska gold brought in by ships of the Civil War between the Merrimack and the Monitor; the large glass columns (worth a fortune now) of the Brazilian Building and the bronze-skinned Philippino Igorotes dressed in little more than a back-hairdo.

But I was most impressed by the Forestry Building constructed in log cabin fashion. A very large bark-covered building the interior of the building converted into a Washington forest scene and running through it a trout stream replete with live fish.

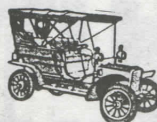
At a Japanese tea house where we paused for refreshments served in kimono-clad Japanese ladies I tasted for the first time Japanese tea. It was refreshing, delicious and so were the to-me brittle cookies.

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A Virginia Family Lands Near Everett

25



Tired but happy, we departed for home, and again as I look back it seems that the boats and trolley cars of that time served us all very well indeed.

Moving house

One day I heard Mother say, "Morrie, we must get away from that old saloon; this is not a good place to raise our children." (The Snyders, at the time, lived across the street from Tom Moss's Elk Saloon). Vacant houses were in short supply then but we did get one fortunately, in the same block with the Sedgwicks, Bashors, Bakers, Leaches and DeLines who were all in better or best brackets at the paper plant.

Harold, the Bashors' son went on with his education until he became a minister and gave the service at my sister Margaret's funeral.

The Stecher brothers, German Catholic immigrants, settled on farms south of Lowell and farther out were the Rees and Morgan families from Wales. There were immigrants from England who lived along Broadway in Everett and our next door neighbors, the Sedgwicks, were from England by way of Canada.

The Leaches also were from England, as was William Howarth, former bookkeeper at the paper mill who with the superintendant Mr. Jordan, together with financial backing from rich relatives, acquired the plant and when we arrived were operating it as president and general manager.

But by far the largest number of newcomers from "the old country" were Scandinavians whose difficulties with the English language often occasioned imitation, laughter and comic stories. I believe they imported Copenhagen snuff, called "snoose," which became so popular that it was used by all the workers in the sawmills, pulp and paper and shingle mills, by the loggers, and practically everyone except the ladies. I tried it for three years, but had to give it up when my burning esophagus rebelled.

The Scandinavians, tall, blond and blue-eyed, blended well with the older Americans who were basically of the same ethnic origin. A fairly recent survey gives Scandinavian descendants as about half the population of Washington state.

Two long-time senators from this state were of Norwegian descent; the late Henry Jackson, former Snohomish County prosecuting attorney

was our attorney at one time.

In 1936 his father, Peter Jackson, a cement contractor in the 1920s and 1930s, poured our basement walls and floor; the walls were 9 inches thick and 8 feet high. All this was done the hard way with his crew hand shoveling into his gasoline-powered engine mixer, the sand and gravel hauled to our building site.

When it was over, a number of sacks of cement I had paid for were left so Pete said, "Now you're a good fellow, I'll buy beer for everybody, we drink it and I'll take the cement." And so we did with the carpenter, Emil Larson and all hands participating. The senator worked as a building laborer for his father and other contractors and thus helped earn his bachelor's and law degrees.

Maury Snyder continues his saga of the early years next issue, discussing the local Indians and the salmon harvest.





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In 1860 Whidbey Began Thinking about Ferries

The following "ferry tale" was written by R. Wayne Strack, and appeared in a recent *Island County Historical Society* publication.

Ferry boats are such an ordinary part of life on Whidbey Island that we seldom think of them unless, of course, it's a particular boat...one that has left 30 seconds before we arrived to board.

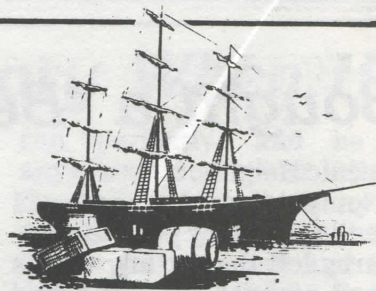
In 1860, while name calling and door slamming began to divide the House back east in preparation for our most shameful family feud, business as usual was the order on Puget Sound. So in July, Thomas Coupe contracted with Mr. Thomas Smallfield of Port Townsend, to build a 27-foot sloop to be used as a ferry boat between there and Whidbey Island.

The boat was to be built in Port Townsend with a centerboard that could be lowered to act as a deep keel for sailing close to the wind and raised to let Captain Coupe sail in close to shore.

The passengers would be traveling in convertible luxury, a removable coach roof would stay behind on sunny-day crossings.

Modeled after *Pride of the Bay*, of San Francisco fame, Coupe's boat, with an overhanging stem, added a foot to the original design. The contract called for one-inch cedar diagonally planked over the laurel frame.

The hull was to round smoothly from its 14-inch fir keel to a long and graceful bow, finished with a yew stem and scrolled and topped with a carved eagle's head. The stern



was to be ornamented with a 2½ foot spread eagle carved at Teekalet.

Lean and yachty, the *Maria*, named after Captain Coupe's wife, traded cargo space for speed. Described in an 1860 newspaper as "something undefinably grand and symmetrical," *Maria* was to run the choppy seas off Whidbey under 150 yards of cloth. With a 36-foot mast, 30-foot boom, 13-foot gaff and a 16x28-foot jib, this first ferry would be "very fast indeed."

Mr. Smallfield agreed to have the sloop finished by the first of October but production delays, like ferry boats, have been around quite awhile.

Maria wasn't launched until late November, but living up to the prediction that "nothing can offer the 'towline' on her bow," on the 27th of December Captain Coupe sailed the new ferry "down from Olympia" (down-sound was north with the tide) in about 15 hours.

By February 1861, Whidbey Island was being serviced by a daily ferry from Coupeville.

Bureaucratic baggage soon found its way aboard and, at a May meeting of Island County Commissioners, rates of ferriage and freight were established on the ferry between Port Townsend and Ebey's Landing, a hog could ride for one dollar and a man for only 50 cents more.

At Ebey's Landing, with spirits and supper and bed and breakfast, the Ferry House was ready to serve the needs of travelers. This was an enterprise sure to succeed: a place to wait for the ferry, because when you missed the boat back then, you missed it by at least a day.

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