

Whidbey SPINDRIFT

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BOATING EDITION



WELCOME TO OAK HARBOR'S BOAT-E-O!

WHIDBEY-DECEPTION PASS BOAT CLUB'S COMMODORE HARRY JUNKINS, AND BOAT-E-O CHAIRMAN JOHN BLATTMAN WAVE A FRIENDLY WELCOME TO ALL BOATS AND BOATERS FOR THE SUMMER EVENT AUGUST 14. CO-HOSTING THE BOAT-E-O IS WHIDBEY NAVAL AIR STATION, WITH AN ASSIST FROM THE NAVY LEAGUE AND NORTH WHIDBEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

WHIDBEY SPINDRIFT

THE ONLY MAGAZINE THAT REALLY CARES
ABOUT ISLANDERS

CAPT. COUPE IN WHIDBEY HISTORY . . .

In November, 1852, Captain Thomas Coupe filed his claim on Whidbey Island, on what is now the town of Coupeville, county seat of Island County.

Captain Coupe was a daring sea-faring man, and was the first to sail his full-rigged ship through Deception Pass. Mrs. Coupe was with him when he accomplished this feat, and wanted him to quit the sea for good. At various times, he was supposedly planning to do so, but despite his promises, stayed with it. He built three sloops and made three trips to France in 1855 and 1856 carrying spars from Utsalady on Camano Island and for the French Government.

A story is told of Captain Coupe regarding his determination to carry all possible sail regardless of the weather. One day a heavy gale caught his ship under full sail and he gave no orders to take in any canvas until it looked as though the masts would be torn away. Finally, when he did give the order, his crew refused because of the danger of being swept away themselves.

In a rage, the Captain himself went up, wearing a pair of canvas trousers. High above the deck, the wind in a furious gust swept up the bell bottomed trouser legs, ripped them at the seams and tore them completely off him.

Captain Coupe built the first frame house on Whidbey Island, and it still stands just east of Coupeville's Front Street. One of the two walnut trees planted by the

Captain also stands. The trees were planted as walnuts. The house is still being lived in, but the bank in front of the house is being steadily washed away. Only a few years ago a road in front of the house was abandoned by the town.

Families of sea captains who settled on Whidbey Island brought a different kind of life to this part of the northwest; different in that they had more of the material comforts than most of the pioneers had.

Those captains who sailed the high seas brought back to their families silks and satins from the Far East, sandalwood chests and spices. Even the later sea-captains who sailed the Sound and Canadian waters were closer much of the time to the centers of population such as Port Townsend and Victoria, where ladies hats and gowns were available.

Many of the sea captains who settled on Penn's Cove in the early 1850's came from a class of people who were used to pianos and good books. Several pianos were shipped around the horn to Whidbey Island.

Since 1941 a new breed of "sea Captains" have moved to Whidbey Island with the Navy. Many are retiring from active duty to make their homes here much as the early day seamen did.

FIRST CHURCH

A record of the first church building built on Whidbey Island is contained in a letter from Father Bolduc, a Catholic Priest who visited Whidbey in 1841 following Father Blanchet's visit in 1840.

The church was constructed by 200 Indians, of the Klalam and Skadjat tribes, who felled the trees, and "four of the most skilful undertook the arrangement of the edifice".

In two days it was ready for the Priest's occupancy, it was 38 feet long by 25 feet wide. The wood was rough, the roof covered with cedar bark, and the interior overlaid with rush mats.

The church was located near where the community hall in Coupeville now stands.

CAPTAIN VANCOUVER

Many geographic place names in the Pacific Northwest were given by Capt. George Vancouver in 1791 when the expedition of His Majesty's Navy to explore the Pacific coast from Mexico to Alaska.

Puget Sound, Mt. Rainier, Mt. Baker, Hood Canal, Port Townsend, Admiralty Inlet, Whidbey Island and Bellingham Bay are among the names assigned them by this British explorer.

Whidbey Island was discovered by Vancouver's first mate Joseph Whidbey, who first charted the east side of the island, then navigated Deception Pass.

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