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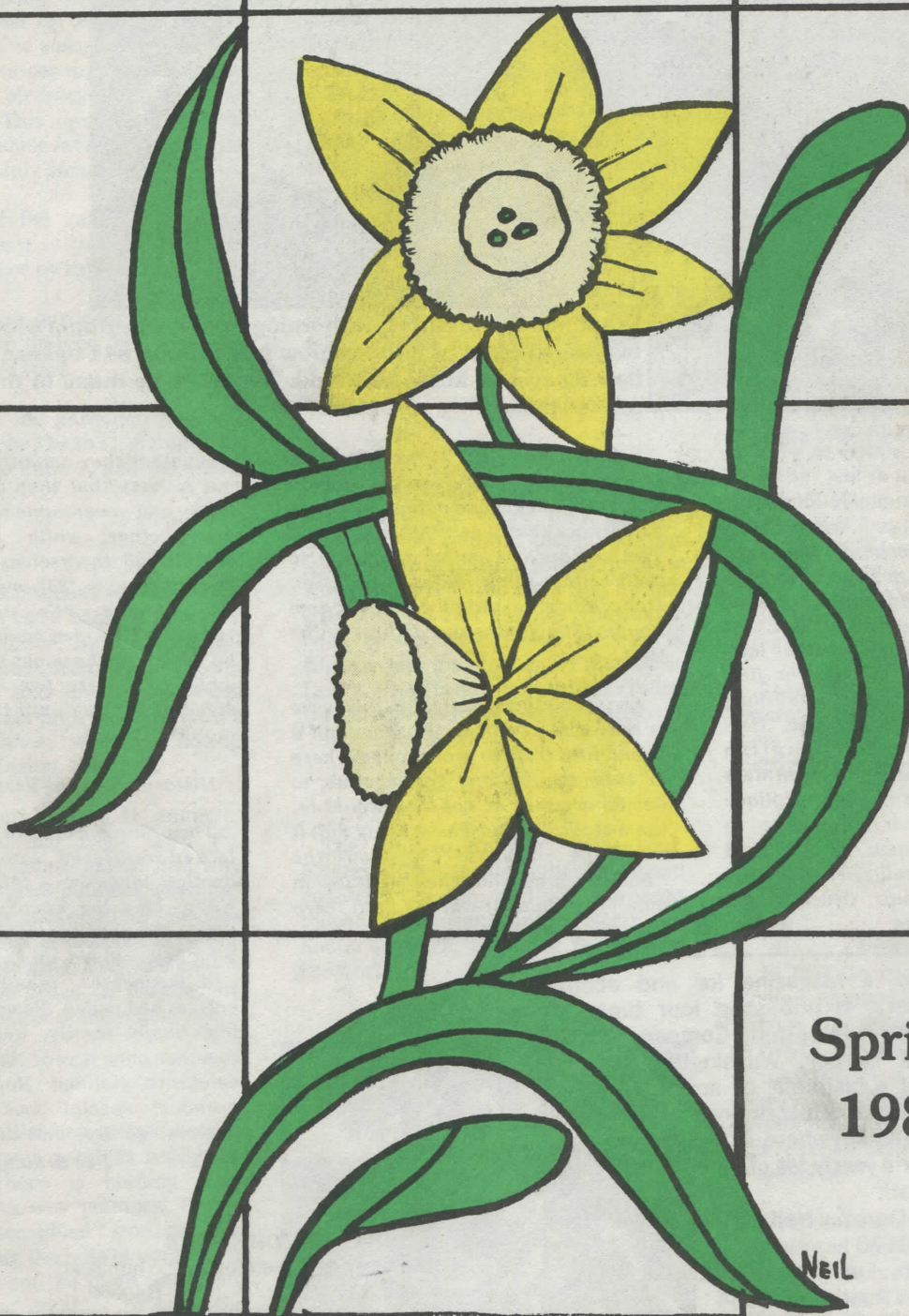
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Volume 5

Number 4

Whidbey Island's Own Magazine



Spring
1982

NEIL

Blacks came early to Puget Sound country

Roots in the Northwest

The first known non-Native American to set foot in the huge region which was called the Oregon Territory was a black man. He was Mark Lopeus, or Lopez, a sailor from the Cape Verde Islands.

In 1788 Lopeus stepped ashore at Tillamook Bay with a landing party from the American sloop "Lady Washington," looking for wood and water. He was attacked and killed by local tribes, though the rest of the landing party tried to save him.

The captain of the Lady Washington named the landing place Murderer's Harbor in commemoration of the incident, which took place 15 years before the historic overland journey of the Lewis and Clark party, which included among its members another black, Ben York.

Appropriately enough, one early pioneer in the State of Washington was a man named George Washington, an Afro-American.

Washington left Missouri and Illinois in the face of discrimination, and homesteaded in western Washington. In 1872, the railroad built a line through his property, giving Washington the idea to establish a town.

He invited people to settle, offering free lots and providing moving services. He named the town Centralia.

Washington made money from his enterprise, and when the depression of 1839 hit, he operated a relief program for the townspeople out of his own pocket.

Washington lived until 1905. In 1922 a marble monument was erected in the city's park to honor the founder of Centralia.



George Bush, an Afro-American and veteran of the Battle of New Orleans, led a mostly white party of settlers from Missouri to the shores of Puget Sound in the winter of 1843-44.

Though there were threats of whippings for any blacks who might try to settle in the Oregon Territory, members of Bush's party unanimously agreed to fight if need be to protect their leader and his family.

country

Later, when a territorial law prohibiting black ownership of homesteads was passed, friends of Bush secured Congressional exemption for Bush. Other blacks moved in as settlers, and the territorial law was never enforced.

The Bush family prospered. One son became a wheat farmer, the other was twice elected to the first legislature of the State of Washington.

Bush Prairie is named after George Bush, and the presence of his party of settlers in what is now Washington did much to solidify U.S. claims to the area during on-going early disputes over placement of the U.S. — Canadian border.

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The Year of the Big Barn Warming

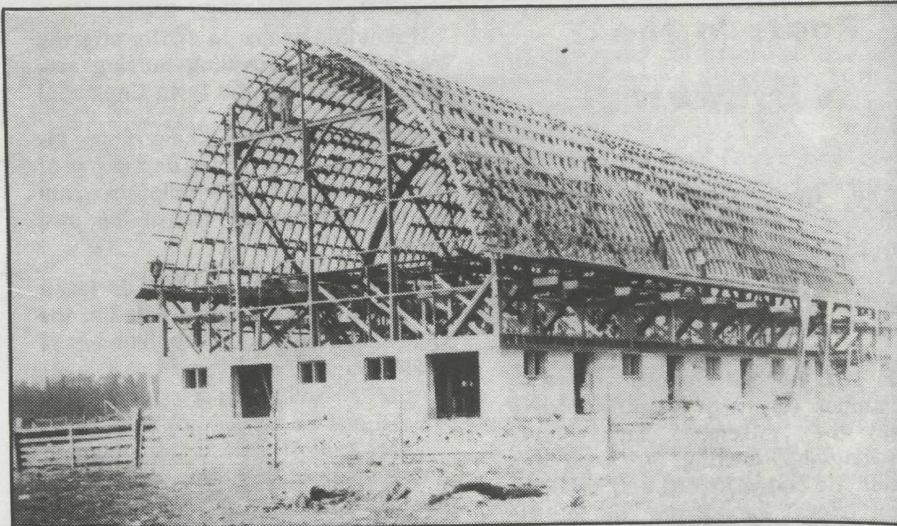
Every town has its "first" or "biggest" or "best" whether it be a family, house, store or railroad. But Oak Harbor became famous in 1913 as the site of the "biggest barn on the west coast."

What is in 1982 known to North Whidbey islanders as "the Roller Barn" was built when a small launch-drawn barge was the "ferry" across Deception Pass, when recreation was as home-spun as Islanders themselves, and a barn-dance was an occasion for the entire community.

Barn-warming was traditional in the Northwest, and on Whidbey Island. Other barns in Coupeville, on South and North Whidbey had been "warmed" from time immemorial, when perhaps only one fiddle furnished the beat for dancing feet bent on spending the whole night properly "warming" a newly completed barn.

Barns went up with the enthusiastic participation of the community; everyone pitched in to help the neighbor who needed a barn. So it was only proper that the community be entertained with the best music possible, the best farm-family fare possible, where the "best people" wore their "best bib-and-tuckers" and had the best time in perhaps years!

When logger James Andrew Neil moved to Oak Harbor from Coupeville in 1910 he bought the "Morse mansion" and adjoining land. Neil had come from the Olympic Peninsula where he



The Big Barn "in the building," designed by Otto Van Dyk and constructed by local carpenters.

had logged since 1891, to log south of Coupeville. His camp originally was set up at Snaklum Point, then he moved north where there was more timber.

The two-story frame house built by Captain George Morse, legislator, and deep-sea captain, was hardly big enough for the Neil family with its five boys and two girls, and there was no barn of any size.

It was June 1913, and the last shingle had been nailed to the roof of the big barn, the last hinge on its doors. The late Otto Van Dyk, architect and builder, had completed his biggest job.

It was complete with a shining coat of red paint with white trim. It held stanchions for 48 cows, plus box stalls, calf pens and storage, and a vast uncluttered space for the hay-loft.

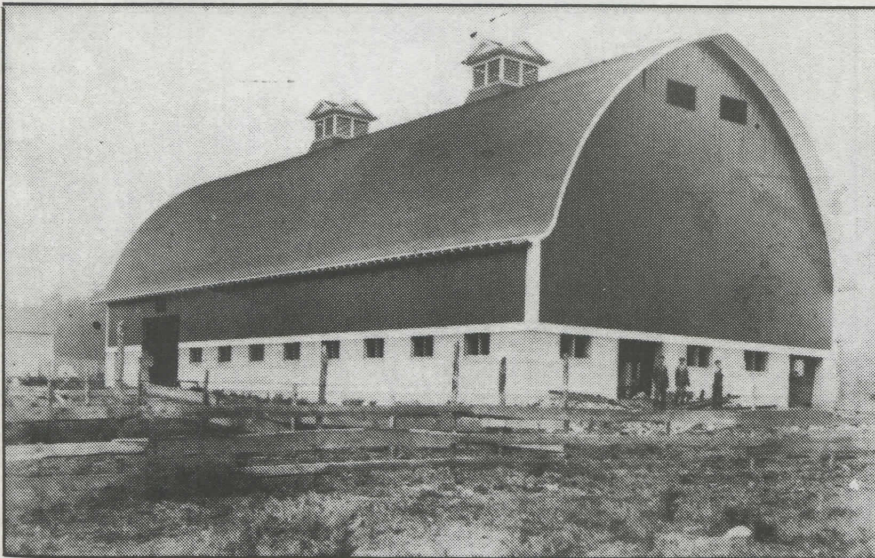
In those days the weather was more predictable than today, and the farmers never cut their hay until the day after the Fourth of July, so everything was timed perfectly for the barn-warming.

At the Neil Ranch, there was a lot of enthusiasm with a big family of young people to help plan the dance. There were almost enough Neils living at home to put on a barn dance themselves!

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"Biggest Barn on the West Coast"



The completed barn, "the biggest barn on the West Coast" at completion, before the concrete silo was built next to it. It was the scene of one of the biggest barn-warmings on Whidbey in 1913, when people came by boat and buggy to attend and dance until dawn.

There was Roy, Hazel, Lester, George, Vera, Warren and Melvin, with Roy married to Ruby McCrohan and living in a house separate from the ranch house and Hazel was to be married that same year to Max Goehry. James and Minabelle Neil ruled this noisy brood, entering into the home-produced fun of that era with

the same enthusiasm as the young people.

An Everett orchestra was hired . . . one that played polkas, schottisches, square dances and round dances. Waltzes and two-steps were popular in 1913 and a stomping good time was had at any barn-warming.

From Coupeville a good share of the community turned out for the Neil barn dance. It meant in most cases, driving ten miles in carriages over a narrow, rutted road. So Dick Hastie, owner of a stout launch, made a good thing out of passenger service that night.


Hastie charged 50 cents for a round trip, and remembered that he brought about 60 persons over that night. He unloaded them at the end of the Oak Harbor dock, where they had their choice of a 1913 taxi service with two autos of the crank-and-jump variety at the service of patrons.


Hastie also told about Dan Schowalter of Coupeville taking the acetelyne lights off his 1913 car and hanging them up in the barn to augment the lighting for the dance.

For days in the kitchen of the farmhouse, neighbor women under the supervision of Mrs. Neil roasted hams and beef to make into party sandwiches. All the facilities of the kitchens of the Neil pole camps were commandeered to furnish good food for the dancers.

(Continued on page 8)


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They Came by Boat and Buggy to Dance

(Continued from page 7)

Melvin and Warren Neil, who were only eight and ten years old at the time, remembered that on the night of the dance, the boys helped carry wash-baskets of food, home-made bread and home-cured hams made into fragrant sandwiches, from the kitchen to the barn.

Syrena Ely, who was later to become the wife of Lester "Si" Neil, remembered that virtually everyone she knew was at the barn dance. She said that whether they danced or not, they came for a cup of coffee and something to eat and a chance to look over the biggest barn they had ever seen!

The loft was decorated with little fir trees cut from the farm acres, and they trembled with the beat of happy feet, the acetelyene lamps flickered and shone, the summer dresses of the women whirled and dipped as the violins cried and banjos thumped.

It was a proud night for the big barn.

There were other barn dances there later; one in 1917 when dancers included boys in uniform from Fort Casey and students from the University of Washington where Vera Neil was a student. But the most important and the biggest was that night in June 1913.



Today the big barn echoes to the music of skaters, not really missing being a "real" barn at all. The cows, the hay, the batches of kittens, and calves, the sweet-smelling hay, and

the people who lived there are but memories.

And isn't that the Skater's Waltz they are playing?



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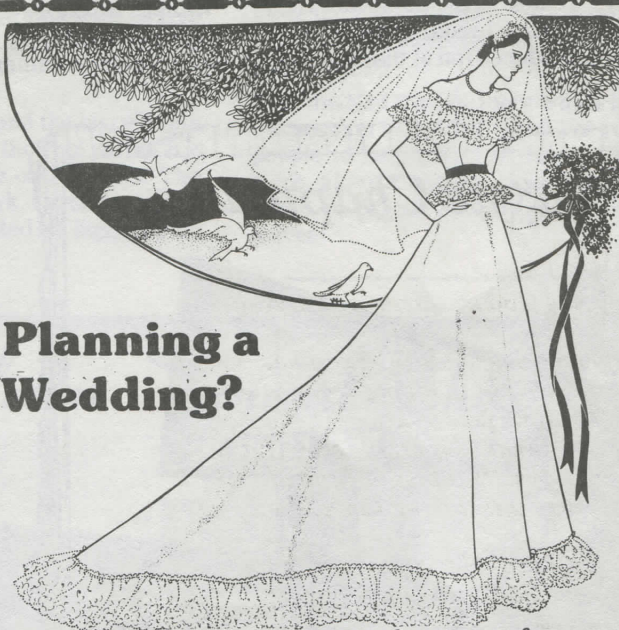
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Pioneer Barringtons starred in Gold Rush

Don Woodcock's story on his excursion to the Alaskan waterway, the Stikene, ties in with the history of Whidbey Island . . . three generations back.

Captain Edward Barrington was one of Oak Harbor's 1850s settlers, who married one of the McCrohan sisters who came from Ireland via Australia. Their three sons, all who became boat captains, were William H. (Hill), Sydney and Harry Barrington.

The Barrington brothers owned a fleet of boats that plied the Stikene River during the Gold Rush days of 1897 through the first years of the twentieth century. It was an exciting time to live although much tragedy took place during the "gold rush" era when thousands took to the trails and mountains of Alaska to find the elusive fortune. Some did. Most didn't. The Barringtons found it in providing transportation by river boat, but their enterprises also suffered tragedy.

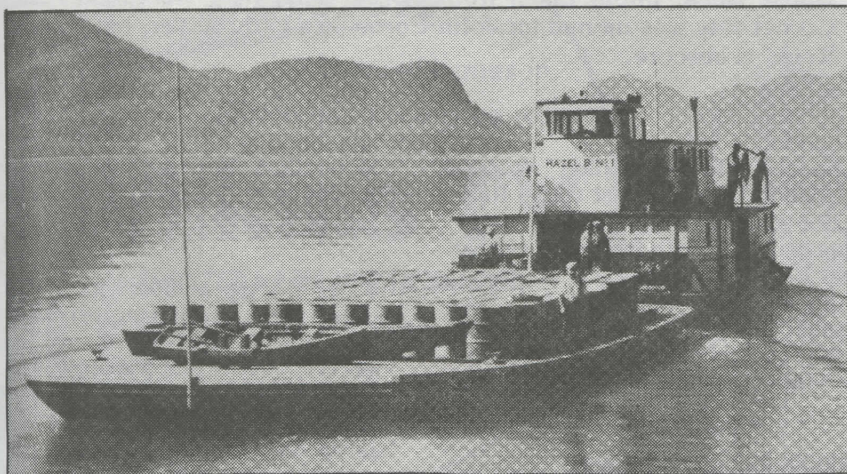


The three Barrington Brothers, Hill, Syd and Harry who dominated the Stikene river boat business for 35 years with six boats, all named the Hazel B. The brothers were sons of Capt. Ed Barrington, one of Oak Harbor's earliest settlers. They were born in Oak Harbor, where their father built The Growler, the only boat ever built there.

Bill Barrington Jr. of Alaska Maritime Agencies lives in Anchorage but keeps close ties to "family" on North Whidbey. He graduated from Oak Harbor High School and returns regularly to reunions to visit with old friends.

In July of 1900 the Florence S. owned by Sid Barrington, who was also her pilot, sank in the river with the loss of three lives. The 75-foot iron-hulled boat was carrying 60 tons of general merchandise and passengers to the gold fields from Whitehorse to Dawson when it capsized. Captain Barrington had stood watch for 24 hours and had just turned the wheel over to Captain Jordan when the disaster occurred.

Bill Barrington's heritage will not allow him to get too far from the sea.



"Hazel B" river boat belonging to the Barrington Brothers.

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First Settler Didn't Stay Long

The following bit of Whidbeyana originally appeared in column form in Oak Harbor's Farm Bureau News back in 1933 and 1934. Written by George Albert Kellogg, these "Whidby" (as it was spelled then) columns were compiled and printed into a booklet entitled "A History of Whidbey's Island."

FOR EVERY PIONEER, ONE SQUARE MILE

In 1845, Michael Simmons of Tumwater made a canoe trip as far North as Whidby. This canoe tour of the Sound by newcomers became a customary method of surveying the Puget Sound Country. Without roads, it opened up an immense amount of territory to the eyes of the prospective settlers, in a comparatively comfortable and rapid manner.

Aside from the occasional visits of the priests to their "Whitby" Mission, now numbered as one of the 18 Catholic Missions of the Northwest, there seems to have been no other white visitors until 1848.

In this year, Thos. W. Glasgow came by canoe from Tumwater, built a cabin on the present Ebey's Prairie, planted wheat and potatoes, and returned for some companions.



With A. B. Rabbeson and A. B. Cornefix, he started back to the Island by way of Hood Canal, however, Cornefix decided to return to Tumwater.

In the meantime, the Indians had not viewed this invasion of their territory with complacency. Patkanim, the great Chief of the Snoqualamies and allied tribes, opened a grand council of sub-chiefs and their tribes on Whidby, taking care to provide 60 deer for the feast.

He argued that while the whites were few it was possible to drive them out. The chiefs from the upper Sound did

not agree with him, as they had found the Boston men to be a protection against more savage tribes.

Rabbeson and Glasgow came in on this council, and during the excitement which followed the discussion, Rabbeson, fearing an inter-tribal war, left immediately for Tumwater. Two days later, with the help of a friendly Indian, Glasgow followed Rabbeson.

The elder Mrs. Holbrook, who was at one time a Mrs. Sylvester of Olympia, reported that the Indian who helped Glasgow in making his escape was a young squaw with whom he lived in Olympia, and by whom he had two children.

Later, the Indian woman was supposed to have been sent away with \$5.00 and a pony, and one of the children was adopted by a negro woman of that city.

While the first settler on Whidby Island showed considerable trepidity in his attempted settlement, and even more discretion in leaving, he did not fare so well in the opinion of the town of Olympia.



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So, Col. Ebey got the "First" honor

The Washington Standard of April 5th, 1862, carried the following article:

Headlined "INHUMAN BRUTALITY," the article stated, "Whereas Mr. Glasgow has been for several years carrying on a system of inhuman torture towards his wife, Mrs. E. Glasgow, and her helpless children, and from which she has now escaped, throwing herself upon the protection of her numerous friends," followed by a series of resolutions in which Glasgow was denounced as a "tyrant" and a "monster."

These resolutions were signed by 43 ladies of the town, which must have been about the total female population. Even the editor remarked that "popular indignation very nearly found vent in tar and feathers upon the appearance of the accused in town one day this week."

As to whether the wife spoken of was the Indian woman previously mentioned there is no proof, but Glasgow came back with a letter of defense in the next issue, in which he acknowledged having struck his wife, but claimed that it was necessitated by her being out of her mind.

As a reminder of the effect of frontier life on the editorial policy of a Washington editor, we quote the warm

words of that journalist: "While we are opposed to everything like mob justice, the story told by himself, that part about the parental treatment he exercised towards his wife, is a series of cruelties which would cause the blood to boil for the administration of a coating of tar and feathers to the inhuman wretch."

And so it may be just as well that the honor of being the first permanent settler on Whidby fell to the lot of another.

EBEY GETS "FIRST" HONOR

The brig "Orbit," in January 1850, landed a party of gold miners in San Francisco, and was then sold to Benjamin F. Shaw, Edmond Sylvester, a Mr. Jackson, and Isaac N. Ebey, who sailed her up to Puget Sound.

They landed at the new village of Smithfield, located near Tumwater, a place that promised rapid growth in the near future. Ebey, who was something of a reader, had among his meager household effects, a copy of the "Life of Olympia" (Tulvia Morata).

It was Ebey who suggested the name "Olympia" to replace the name "Smithfield." Whether there was any actual connection between his

possession of the book and his suggestion to the people of Smithfield, has not definitely been established, but the name "Olympia" was given to the little village that was to become the capital of Washington Territory.

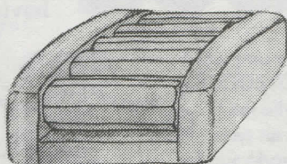
The Oregon Donation Land Law was passed by Congress on September 27, 1850, and applied to all of the old Oregon Territory, within which was Whidby Island.

Taking advantage of the provisions of this measure, Ebey came to Whidby Island and filed a Donation Claim on October 15, 1850. This claim was located on the western shore of the Island, just across from the present site of Port Townsend.

In making his choice, Ebey showed most excellent judgment, as this prairie was to prove one of the most productive areas in the United States. The yield of wheat on what came to be known as "Ebey's Prairie," has broken all records many times.

Across Admiralty Inlet, on the site of the present Port Townsend, Henry C. Wilson had taken a claim as early as August 15, of this same year. This was the same Wilson who had been, a few years before, a clerk in Mr. Balch's store in Steilacoom.

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Three Gold Seekers Started Oak Harbor

There has been considerable controversy about the settlement of the three earliest pioneers of Oak Harbor: Taftzon, Freund and Sumner. Jerome Ely is the authority for the statement that these three met Samuel Hancock, who was well acquainted with Puget Sound country, at Tulalip, and that Hancock brought these men over to Miller's Point in January 1850.

As there was a fight in progress between the tribe of Indians at Tulalip and the Scagets (Skagits) on the Island, the Indians who brought them over would not go on into Oak Harbor. Taftzon cut steps up the steep bluff, that he might go where he could look over the Oak Harbor prairie. There were, of course, no whites to be seen, but the Indians were everywhere.

The three put up their tents, and each staked out 320 acres. An Indian who hung around the tent so much as to be a nuisance, was unceremoniously kicked out. Instead of bringing back a horde of blood-thirsty savages, he returned three days later with a wild goose as a peace offering.

Zachary Martin Taftzon, who was born in Hammerfest, Norway, was a shoemaker by trade, but had come to the United States as a sailor. As soon

as the necessary notification had been made to the federal land office in the village of Portland, down near the Columbia River, Taftzon went back to Olympia in his canoe, paddled by Indians, to get nails and salt pork for the three settlers.

Ely says that when Taftzon returned he found a Dr. Lansdale ready to jump his claim. After being asked to move on, Lansdale went to Penn's Cove.

In addition to his other troubles, Taftzon found that the Indians, in order to get the use of the can, had thrown away his tea. I can't imagine anything more useless to a North American savage than the contents of a can of green tea! But the can, as a primitive mortar, may have delighted the eyes of a Skagit Medicine Man.

The Indians expected results from their Medicine Man. They had recently killed one whose patient had died.

While it was true that claims were frequently not filed in the land office until some time after settlement on a tract of land, it is doubtful if a year would have elapsed in the case of these three men. Records show their claims to have been filed on January 4, 1851. That of Dr. Lansdale at Penn's Cove was on March 31, 1852.

Whether they did settle in 1850 is doubtful, and just what Lansdale's relative position was among the earliest settlers has never been worked out satisfactorily.

A.A. Denny throws some light on this, however, in writing that Dr. Lansdale, who had come to Oregon in 1849, went down the Sound from Olympia in a canoe with King George, the Duke of York, and the Duke of Clarence (three local Indians).

Lansdale, says Denny, settled first at Oak Harbor on February 10, 1851, which would have given Taftzon just about time to have gone back to Olympia. Here at Oak Harbor he was supposed to have planted a garden, but hearing of Snoqualmie Falls through Col. Ebey, he went with an Indian guide to the Falls, and on up to the top of the mountainous divide, between Puget Sound country and the upper Columbia Basin.

Dr. Lansdale received the congratulations of the people of the Territory through the editor of the *Columbian*, an Olympia newspaper. A lengthy article gave a description of the doctor's trip, which was spoken of as a "new route across the Cascades."

Although the doctor finally settled on Penn's Cove, he left some imprint upon Oak Harbor, for he is credited with having named Crescent Harbor.



HUNTER

An early settler in Coupeville was Jenas M. Robbins who came in 1870 from Wisconsin, then returned for a few years to care for his widowed mother and two sisters. He returned to Whidbey about 1895 and bought a piece of land in the woods in what is now East Coupeville and built a small house.

Robbins was known as a hunter and an excellent shot. It was told that one morning he stood in his doorway and killed three deer with one shot of a shotgun! Robbins was said to have been a kindly man and once during the Christmas season he went to a Coupeville storekeeper and told him to put a present on the Christmas tree for every youngster in town and he would pay for them!



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Others Followed to Wolf-infested Island

Following the Taftzon party came William Wallace, in the summer of 1851. A daughter, named Polowna, was the first white child born on Whidbey Island.

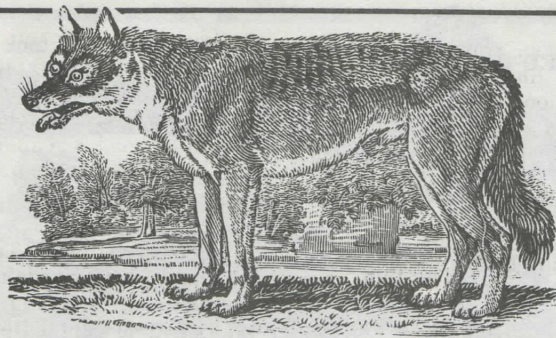
During the year 1852, several more claims were filed, although there were a considerable number of men who settled on the Island for a few weeks or months, then left without filing.

John Alexander, who had arrived in Olympia in the fall of 1851 on the schooner "Exact" in company with A. A. Denny, filed on his Penn's Cove claim on August 1, 1852. Alexander staked out his claim early in the spring.

The Alexanders' son, Abraham Lansdale, was born on November 13, 1852, becoming the first white boy born on the Island. The night he was born, two older children had to be sent to Coveland (now San de Fuca) for Dr. Lansdale. These boys rode horseback, carrying huge torches, to not only light their way through the woods, but to keep away the wolves.

At this time, and for several years after, large grey timber-wolves

The Wolf



brought destruction and frequently terror to the homes of the early settlers.

A story is told about the doctor, riding horseback one night through Smith's Prairie, being pursued by a pack of wolves. In desperation he rode under a tree, caught its lower branches and climbed up, letting his horse get away as best he might. The wolves kept him "treed" until daylight.

It was a common belief among the "old timers" that wolves were especially fond of the odor of asafetida, some of which the doctor had with him, and that this odor was partly responsible for the tenacity with which the wolves followed and stayed with him.

At any rate, Sam D. Howe had a horse whose tail was taken off by a wolf pack in close pursuit, and losses of young livestock were altogether too common.

Hunters adopted the practice of carrying strychnine with them. After killing a deer, the waste not taken home with the hunter was thoroughly poisoned. In a few years, this practice did away with all the wolves on the Island.

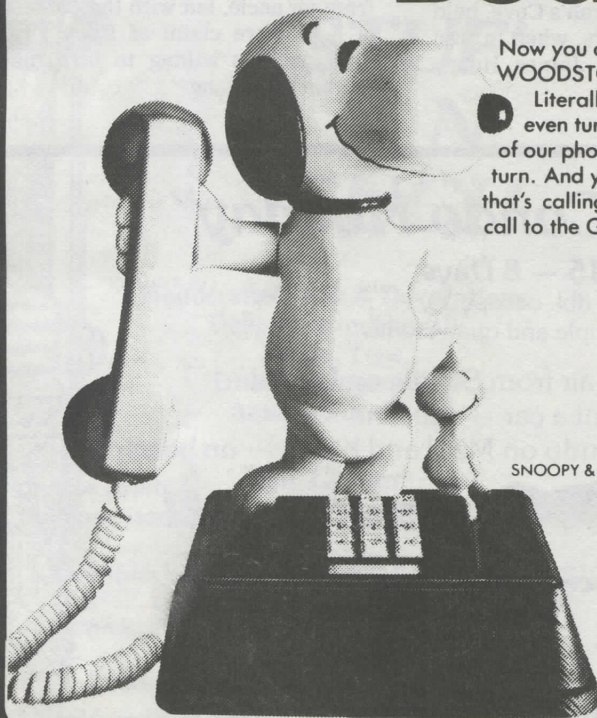
To come back to the Alexanders, Abraham later claimed that his middle name was actually Lincoln, but on account of the association with Dr. Lansdale, he was dubbed Abraham Lansdale Alexander in spite of himself.

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MAJOR LIKED TO SHOW OFF

"Major" Daniel Show filed on a claim back from the north shore of Penn's Cove on April 27, 1852. Show was not a major in the army, but because of his affectations and "big talk," some title of the kind was, in all good humor, felt necessary for him.

He had been the leader of a wagon train in crossing the plains and such leaders were frequently called "Major." Prone to give advice on all subjects, he pretended to practice medicine.

As a money-maker he was successful, and was acknowledged the best horse trader on the Island. Before coming here, he had been with a party who chartered the sloop "Georginia" for a gold-seeking expedition to the Alaskan Coast. The schooner was wrecked, and he, with Sam Howe and others, was held captive by the Haidah Indians. They were rescued by an expedition under Simpson P. Moses.

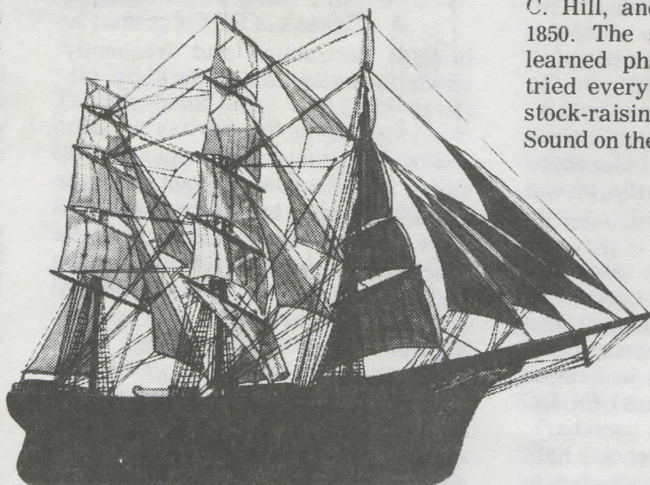
It is told of the Major that when a woman came to him to have a tooth treated he said, very impressively, "Madam, I'll implicate that tooth tonight, and in the morning, if it's not better, I'll distract it!"

SAM HOWE AND OTHERS

Samuel D. Howe, just mentioned in connection with Major Show, was a native of Kentucky and a civil engineer

by profession. He took his claim on Penn's Cove on May 5, 1852. Howe was to become one of the Territory's most important men.

Captain Richard B. Holbrook, a native of Plymouth, Mass., came up the coast via the Panama crossing, and filed on his Penn's Cove claim the same day as Howe.



J.C. Davis is shown to have taken his claim on the south shore of Penn's Cove on July 1, 1852.

R.S. Bailey arrived September 1, 1852, and took a claim on the southern end of the Island.

Jacob Smith, who filed October 10th, on the north shore of Penn's Cove, held his claim but four years, when in 1856 he sold it to Captain James Henry Swift for \$3,000.

Mr. and Mrs. Smith had a daughter born on August 29, 1852. This child, named Cordelia, was the second white child born in the new settlement.

On November 20th, Nathaniel D. Hill filed his claim on Admiralty Inlet, south of the Ebey claim. Hill, of Montgomery County, Pa., had come to San Francisco with his brother, Robert C. Hill, and others of his family, in 1850. The son of a doctor, he had learned pharmacy, but in the west tried everything from gold-mining to stock-raising. He had come to the Sound on the brig "John S. Cabot."

Coming up from San Francisco on the same boat, of which Thomas Coupe was master, William B. Engle staked out a claim near the Ebey's which was also filed November 20th. Engle, a native of Burlington County, N.J., had been in the Sonoma mines for the two previous years. As a boy he had learned the trade of ship's carpenter from an uncle, but with the possession of a 640-acre claim of Ebey Prairie land, he was willing to turn his attention to farming.

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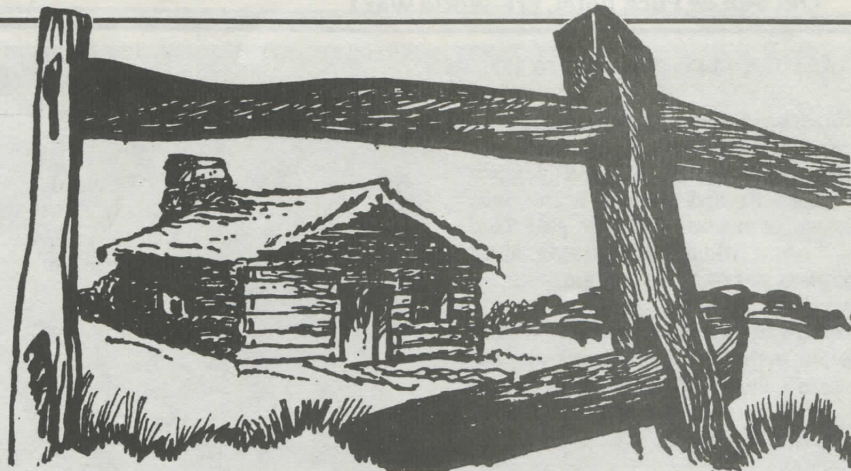
Early Whidbey Island Homes

EARLY DWELLINGS

For some years, log cabins sufficed to shelter the early settlers, although William Wallace is supposed to have built a frame house on his Crescent Harbor claim in 1853. The next frame dwelling was built that same year by William Engle on Ebey's Prairie; he lived in it for 12 years, and it is still used for a residence. Captain Coupe built his frame house in what became Coupeville, at the end of 1854.

Thomas Maylor, Sr., whose claim was filed November 25, 1852, was born in County Cork, Ireland. He came to Michigan with his brother Samuel in 1847. Shortly after that, he returned to Ireland, where he sold his commission as a lieutenant in the army, and came around to San Francisco by boat from New York.

Maylor was a gunsmith by profession, which in the ensuing years made him very useful to both white and Indian hunters on the Island. The Maylor claim was located on the long point which separates Oak Harbor from Crescent Harbor.



Captain Thomas Coupe sailed into Skagit Bay, and down to Penn's Cove, using the route through Deception Pass. His claim, filed November 20, 1852, was to become the site of Coupeville. It is said that as his ship entered the Pass, he called his wife on deck to watch the astonishment she would be sure to show as they went through the narrow passage. On their arrival he promised this New York woman that he would give up the sea if she would stay on the Island.

Thomas Coupe was a man of great determination. He told a story that he considered a good joke on himself, concerning his tendency 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 taken away. Then, the wind being so high, the sailors would not obey him. In a rage, he went up himself, wearing a new pair of canvas trousers. High above the deck the wind, in a furious gust, swept up the trouser legs, ripping them at the seams, and then tearing them completely off him.

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MORE PIONEER PERSONALITIES

In 1852, there was, among others on the Island who made no permanent settlement, a Captain George Bell, who build a cabin near the head of Penn's Cove. He took no claim, and left in a short time to go to sea again.

Captain Robert C. Fay did not take a claim either, although he was on the Island before June 1852 and lived here the rest of his life. Captain Fay was from Vermont, and had come to Alki in the Denny party of September 1851. He later became active in Indian affairs.

Two brothers, John and Thomas Bartlett, were employed on the farm of Col. Ebey in June 1852, but left for San Francisco within a short time.

Thus, with his claim filed in October 1851, Col. Isaac N. Ebey was Whidby's first permanent settler. Along with that of Joseph Whidbey, his name will live as long as western civilization finds this Island so pleasant upon which to work and play.

Old San de Fuca hotel, pre-World War I



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Coveland was Whidbey's First Post Office

Early day post offices on Whidbey Island often changed names and sites, from one side of the Island to another; from a less populated area to a more densely populated.

At the head of Penn's Cove "2 miles by road northwest of Coupeville, one-half mile southwest of San de Fuca" Whidbey's first post office was established July 7, 1857 under the name of Coveland. Coveland was also the name of the town that became San de Fuca. Thomas Cranney was postmaster, in the Grennan and Cranney store building erected in 1855.

The building was on the claim of Dr. Richard H. Lansdale and only about 3 miles by water from Coupeville. It was a large rectangular two story structure with chimneys at both ends, and still stands (1982) at the head of Penn Cove, known as "the old courthouse" because in the mid-1800s the District Court rented the building, using it for trials.

Both the post office site and the name was changed in 1860, to Ebey's Landing, with Robert C. Hill, postmaster. In 1861 the office again became Coveland with the name and site changed to Coupeville three years later.

Coveland, however, was re-established in 1870 with James Buzby postmaster, and continued until 1881.

George Kellogg in "A History of Whidbey's Island" quotes from the diary of Winfield Ebey in 1857: "A new era is certainly dawning. We have a mail steamer, post office and postmaster. If the steamer can be kept afloat and made to pay, that is all that is necessary."

James Buzby, the 1870 postmaster when Coveland was re-established, was an industrious person. He came to Whidbey in 1852, a native of New Jersey. Seeing the possibilities of profit in lumbering, he bought timbers

to erect a mill in Crescent Harbor. The mill site proved insufficient so Buzby used the planks to erect his home on his Crescent Harbor claim.

A short time later he returned to the lumber business, and in 1868 bought a steamboat from which he removed the boilers. These he installed in a grist mill erected at the head of Penn Cove. About two years later the mill was moved to Seattle.

The Tidewater Grist Mill erected by Friend W. Wilson was built between the Lagoon and the tidewater, placing a mill wheel where it would be turned by water running from the lagoon as the tide ebbed. The mill could not compete with larger mills, and it was sold to a Port Townsend enterprise. Friend W. Wilson was Coveland postmaster in 1878.

Captain James Henry Smith, Coveland's last postmaster was a native of Massachusetts who went to sea at the age of 14. As skipper of the Bark Anadir he sailed to Utsaladdy to load fir timber for Falmouth, England, and Brest, France, in 1855. Two years later he returned for more timbers, and becoming thoroughly enamored of the Islands, returned within a few years with his family.

They disembarked at Utsaladdy and stayed at Thomas Cranney's home on June 29, 1863. The next day he engaged Indians to take him and his family by canoe to Coupeville.

In 1860 the San de Fuca Post Office was established, with Henry C. Power as postmaster. It was located only a mile northeast of the village of Coveland whose post office had been closed nine years before the San de Fuca office opened. The San de Fuca installation continued until Jan. 31, 1954, and included postmasters Joseph C. Power (brother of Henry C.), Sibella Barrington Fisher, Madeline Fisher, Sibella B. Fisher, Mark E. Hingston, Richard S. Trumbull, and Opal Mae Trumbull.



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