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# HISTORY: TOM NUNAN, ISLAND COUNTY OFFICIAL

Among the Irish who were early day settlers in Oak Harbor was the Nunan family.

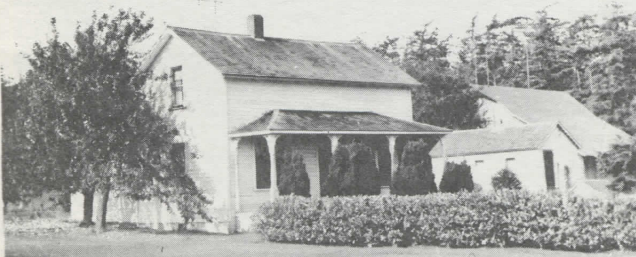
Thomas Nunan, born in Limerick, Ireland, lived a colorful and long life on Whidbey Island, taking an active part in Island politics.

Thomas Nunan was the first to carry the mail from Ebey's Landing to Coupeville, Coveland, Oak Harbor and Crescent Harbor. He rode horseback over a trail cut in the timber.

Nunan came to Oak Harbor in 1858. He had grown up in Australia where his parents had taken him when he was one year old. He married Elizabeth McCrohan in Australia. The McCrohan family also moved to Whidbey Island and settled at Oak Harbor.

Tom Nunan was county commissioner for 12 years, and in 1890 was elected Sheriff. He served two terms in the post of sheriff of Island County.

Just a year before he died in 1895 he was elected county assessor. He was the only candidate on the Democratic ticket who was elected in Republican Island County, testifying to the esteem in which his fellow citizens held him.



The Meeter home, built on the old Pioneer Nunan place north of Oak Harbor. When Tom and Elizabeth Nunan and their 12 children lived here, it was surrounded by tall trees; a rutted country road led to the homestead.

Thomas and Elizabeth Nunan had 12 children: Elizabeth, Frederick, George, Grace, Thomas, Louise, Herbert, Kate, Charlotte and Mamie.

Elizabeth and Grace, Charlotte and Mamie died of diphtheria in two different epidemics of the disease. Frederick died off Snaklum Point in 1887 while employed as an engineer of a coast survey launch.

The family spent five years in Seattle, moving there in 1880 when Nunan went into partnership with a man named Mitchell to establish a ship yard and marine way on the waterfront where the Northern Pacific depot now stands. Broken in health from severe attack of typhoid fever, he returned to Oak Harbor for the rest of his days.

The Nunan homestead was located north of Oak Harbor on Old Highway 1-D where the home of Mrs. Ed Meeter stands. The house was built for the Meeter family and the old Nunan house destroyed after it had stood for some 70 years.

Two of Thomas and Elizabeth Nunan's children lived all of their lives in Oak Harbor, Bert Nunan (Herbert) who for many years before his death was Oak Harbor's oldest Native Son; and Katie, who was Mrs. Jackson at the time of her death in 1964. Mrs. Jackson's daughter, Pauline McElroy, and grandson, Paul Allen, both live in Oak Harbor. Tom Nunan, a Seattle Fire Chief, came back to Oak Harbor to retire before his death. His daughter (Mrs. Yorke Dyer) lived here many years and her son, Roger Gage graduated from the high school in Oak Harbor where his great-grand father was a pioneer.