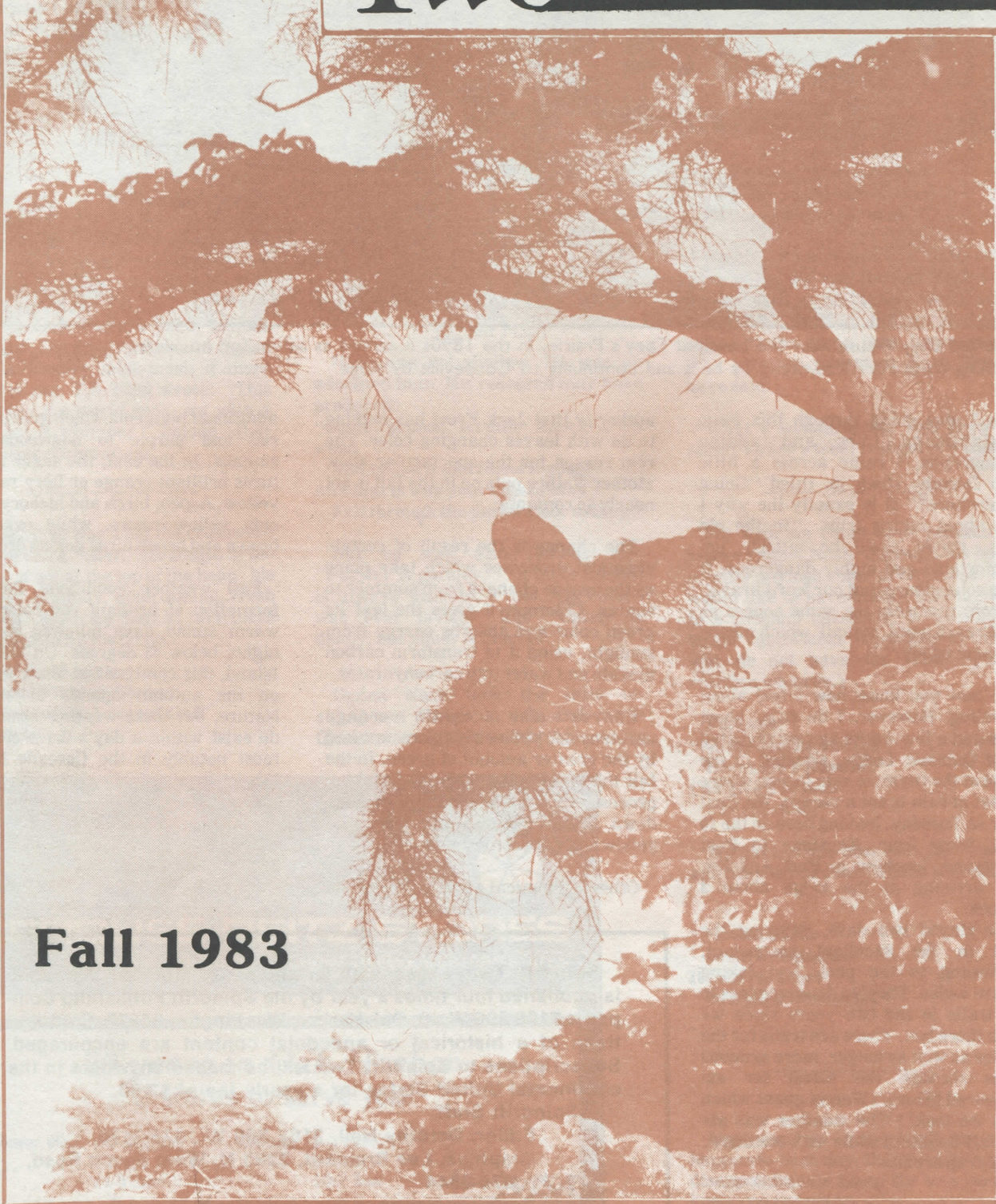


Spindrift Two

50¢

Volume 7 Number 2

Whidbey Island's Own Magazine



Fall 1983

When Oak Harbor was 'Klatoletsche'



Fourth of July, 1909 . . . This photo was taken on the beach about where Harbor Texaco is now located. From left: Katie Barlow (standing) and Old Tom Martin; his wife, "Mrs. Tom" sitting with hat on. Elsie Adams (Pasek) is to Mrs. Tom's left, with the "Duncan girls and their father from Seattle." Burns dock is in background. On this Fourth of July, Billy Barlow made the Fourth of July speech.

Snohomish and Suquamish Indians were the first inhabitants of South Whidbey Island near Possession Point, which they called Negwa'sx. The area was settled first by the Snohomish, who spoke a language similar to that of the Skagit Indians on North Whidbey.

Dee Hudson, who was stationed here with the Navy in 1962, wrote a book entitled "Principal Tribes and Villages on Whidbey Island, Washington." He was director-curator of the Pacific Museum of American Anthropology and Archaeology and has done research at Monroe's Landing and Penn's Cove.

Hudson relates that the Suquamish Indians lived on the western shores of South Whidbey and that Chief Sealh, for whom Seattle was named, was a member of that tribe.

Four tribes lived on Whidbey Island, the Snohomish and Suquamish on the south end; Skagits on central Whidbey, and Swinomish in the north. The Swinomish were "canoe people," who also had villages in the San Juans, conducting commerce regularly between the Islands.

The Skagits settled Oak Harbor and called it 'Klatoletsche.' The Coupeville settlement was called "Kalakut," and the Island itself was

named "Tschakolecy."

The Skagits were a well-advanced tribe by the time white men arrived. The 1841 United States expedition headed by Captain Wilkes reported that the Skagits had well-built lodges of timber planks at Penn's Cove.

The Snohomish tribe were a mighty nation whose lands stretched from Puget Sound to the Cascades and, before the treaties, included the southern half of Whidbey Island. Harriette Shelton Dover, daughter of Chief Shelton who was born at Sandy Point, told of her early life experiences when her family paddled from the Tulalip Reservation north of Everett,

to Whidbey Island in canoes for days of camping, fishing and hunting.

"My parents told me about the great hunting and fishing that was available on the Island. The salmon used to come in here by the millions. They said there were times when they would be out in a canoe and would run into a school of salmon. The water would ripple all around the canoe which would actually rise out of the water. My mother told me the salmon were dancing because they were happy, coming home."

Before the treaty of 1855, Harriette's grandparents and hundreds of other Snohomish Indians would move and live on Whidbey every year during the summer months. During the winter they lived in a big long-house where the city of Everett is now.

"My grandparents lived in a great long-house on Possession Point where all those considered tribe royalty lived. The long-house at Possession Point was the largest on Whidbey. It was 400 feet long, made from dressed cedar logs. The poles supporting the roof were all carved like totems, and inside the big building it was just one big room where everyone lived."

Indian women were expected to be reserved and quiet.

"I remember once when my sister and I were children and playing outside. Something happened and I laughed. My grandmother took me and sternly told me never to laugh out loud like that. She said no fine Indian woman ever laughs, throwing her head back and sounding like a horse. I never saw my grandmother laugh even once, but she was always happy."



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Indian Concept: Everyone Owns the Earth

Indians never punished their children by spanking or striking them. Their philosophy was "You can hit a mongrel dog, but not a child."

The Indian concept of the earth was that everyone owns it, with everything for everyone. There was law and order without prisons. The penalty for adultery was death for the woman, and the man involved was usually killed later by the woman's family.

"Governor Stevens told us we could choose anywhere in the tribal lands for our reservation, and some said they would take all of Whidbey Island. Others preferred the Snohomish River, and others Tulalip because of the big timber and its proximity to Whidbey and Camano Islands."

Tulalip was finally chosen for their permanent home, the Indians giving up land that had been part of their culture for thousands of years.

When the Indians finally understood what the white man's treaty meant, it was too late for them. To make a treaty fair to the Indians and acceptable to Congress was impossible because the Indian could not comprehend the meaning of the white man's "paper."

No Indian had ever thought of himself as owning the land any more than he might own the water or air. And if the paleface wanted to pay money for the land, fine. There was more land than the Indians needed anyway.

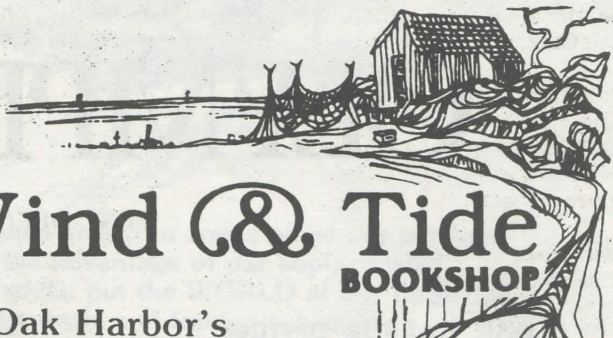
When the Army moved the Indians to the reservation, fenced in all the rest of the land and told the Indian to "keep out," then came the moment of truth... and understanding.

In the spring of 1855, Territorial Governor Isaac I. Stevens concluded most of the Indian treaties in the Pacific Northwest, signing treaties with both the Eastern Washington and Puget Sound Indians.

Most had the same basic provisions: the Indians were to move to designated reservations and all other land became the property of the government. Tribes had to release all their slaves; not make war on the Americans; and not trade with the British. The government was to establish Indian schools and provide a doctor.



Chief Charlie Snakelum (Snetlum) and his wife Katie, pictured about 1910. Charlie was highly regarded by settlers. He was an expert sheep shearer and local farmers relied on him during the shearing season.



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Kamiakim Warned Against White Man

And the Indians retained the right to fish at any accustomed place.

Chief Sealath signed a treaty in January 1855, containing these provisions and sold to the United States the land mass that now comprises the counties of King, Skagit, Snohomish, Whatcom, Island, San Juan and part of Kitsap, for the sum of \$150,000.

When a council of the tribes met in 1851, Kamiakin, the great War Chief of the Yakimas told them, "I have heard that as many Bostons will come as there are stones on the hills, step by step they take our land. They must be stopped!" Leschi, Chief of the Nisquallies, carried that word to all the tribes in Western Washington.

Even those tribes that did not go to war with the white man waited years for their treaties to be ratified by the Senate. The treaty with Chief Sealath's Duwamish Indians, was not ratified for over four years, and the money could not be paid until then.



Indian longhouse and canoes on Penn Cove west of Monroe's Landing about 1900, during an Indian potlatch.

The Senate sent back several treaties with Oregon tribes as being "too good" to the Indians, and all of these delaying actions added fuel to

the fire of Indian distrust which eventually led to the uprising of a majority of Washington's Indian tribes in 1858-59.



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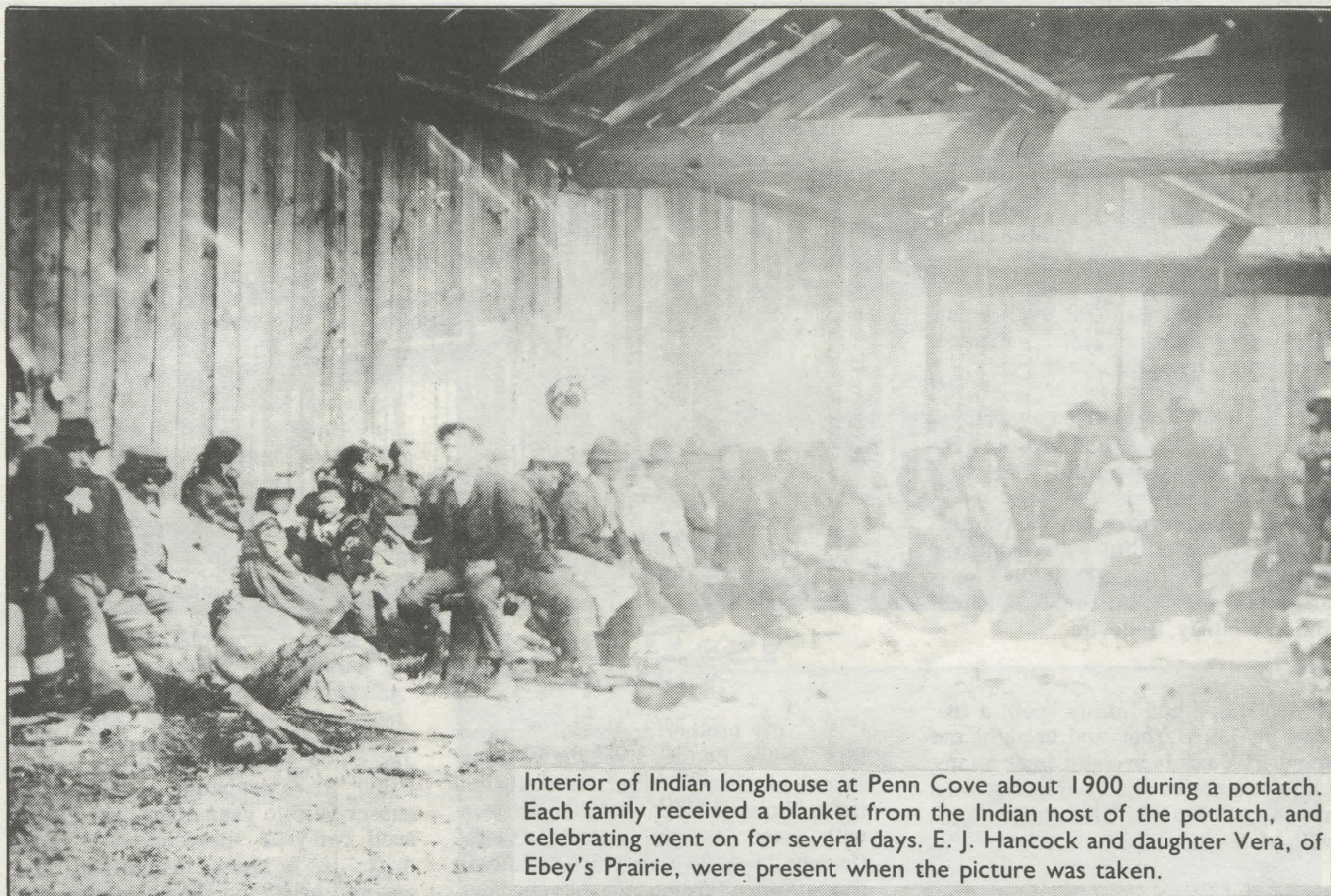
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Indian Potlatch at Penn Cove



Interior of Indian longhouse at Penn Cove about 1900 during a potlatch. Each family received a blanket from the Indian host of the potlatch, and celebrating went on for several days. E. J. Hancock and daughter Vera, of Ebey's Prairie, were present when the picture was taken.

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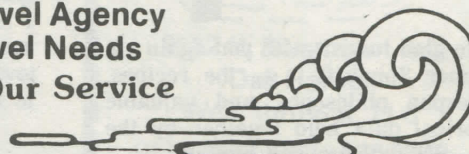
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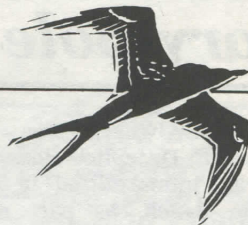
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Skagit County is 100 Years Old



Whidbey Island's neighboring county, Skagit, celebrates its 100th anniversary with a Grand Birthday Ball on Nov. 26. Nov. 28, 1983, is the official centennial date, to be marked by county-wide celebrations. A birthday party with cake and ceremony will be held at the original county courthouse in LaConner.

Skagit County, which before 1935 was separated from Island County by Deception Pass and reached only by ferry, is now joined by the Deception Pass Bridge. The towns of Anacortes, LaConner, Mount Vernon, Burlington, Sedro-Woolley, Concrete and others are now within from 20 minutes to an hour by road from Whidbey.

Anacortes, on Fidalgo Island, originally called Ship's Harbor by 1860 settlers, was given its present day name by Amos Bowman (Bowman's Bay), an engineer who came to this area as a surveyor for the British Columbia division of the Canadian Geological Department.

In 1877, Bowman and his wife Anna, came back to the area and bought 165

acres. They built a store, post office and newspaper, and Bowman named the community Anacortes, a derivation of his wife's name, Anna Curtis.

Burlington, located just north of Mount Vernon, was founded by two men, John Millett and William McKay, who formed a logging company in 1882. McKay purchased acreage and registered a plat for a townsite in 1891. Burlington became a city in 1902.

Edison settlement began in 1869 by Ben Samson and Edward McTaggart. (On the theory that any two houses made a settlement?) McTaggart was a Scot, born in 1833, who came with his parents to Virginia at age 6. He came to the Edison area about 1870, was a member of the local school board, and furnished lumber for the first Edison schoolhouse. He became postmaster, and suggested the name "Edison" after inventor Thomas A. Edison. The townsite, less than four acres, was laid out in 1886.

LaConner: Although trading posts were operating in LaConner since 1867,

it wasn't until 1870 that the town established a permanent site. John S. and Louisa A. Conner came that year; John was from Limerick, Ireland. Louisa was the area's first white woman; John owned and operated a trading post. He named the town LaConner, using his wife's initials.

Mount Vernon is now the county seat of Skagit County, and credit for its founding goes to Jasper Gates and Joseph Dwelley, (another twosome). Gates arrived from Missouri in 1870 after serving in the Civil War, and obtained a parcel of land where the town is now located. He was the first local sheriff and marshal.

The settler who had the most influence on the development of Mount Vernon was Harrison Clothier, who came to Skagit Valley in 1876. He and another man bought 10 acres from Gates for \$100 and laid out the town



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plat. Clothier and E.G. English established themselves as businessmen by opening a mercantile, then going into the lumber business in 1881.

Clothier was auditor of Whatcom County in 1880; a probate judge and legislator; Mount Vernon mayor; county treasurer and chief deputy assessor; not necessarily all at the same time.

Sedro and Woolley were two small towns that finally merged to become Sedro Woolley. The arrival of Mortimer Cook in 1884 saw the opening of his general store and the purchase of 40 acres where the town is now. In an effort to name his town something unique, he hit upon the name "Bug." But the town women were upset and suggested "Sedro," a misspelling of the Spanish word for cedar. Cook agreed but retained the incorrect spelling.

Sedro combined with neighboring Woolley to become one town in 1898. Phillip and Catherine Woolley bought 44 acres in 1889 and in 1890 bought 40 more acres to plat into a townsite. Woolley was incorporated in 1891.

Many mill towns developed along the Skagit River, including Alger, Blanchard, McMurray, Montborne, Allen, Big Lake, Clear Lake, Belfast, Ehrlich and Milltown.

Farmers on the Skagit flats built their homes on high ground to avoid the floods. Disastrous fire and floods plagued the early towns, with heavy floods in 1909, 1917 and 1922 causing great damage.

Another of Dorothy's Punny Jokes

A novice farmer asked an old-timer what he should do about the birds who were apparently trying to nest in his horse's luxuriant mane. The old farmer advised him to rub yeast into the mane, which he did.

He reported that the remedy worked, but wondered why.

To which the old-timer replied, "Wall, yeast is yeast, and nest is nest, and never the mane shall tweet."

(Ugh!!)



Picturesque LaConner on the Swinomish Slough, with Mount Baker standing guard in the Cascades.

The railroads brought prosperity to Skagit Valley, but steamers continued to ply the river, among them the aptly named sternwheelers Harvester and Gleaner.

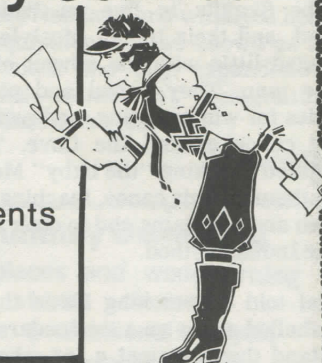
Today logging and agriculture are the two main industries in Skagit County. Schools are modern, shopping

malls proliferate, industry continues to grow, and the population continues to swell. Good highways and roads, automobiles and a good economy integrates Islanders and Mainlanders.

It's a far cry from the "shopping" trips made by early settlers on North Whidbey to LaConner, by canoe!

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Forests Were First Marketable Commodity

by Dorothy Neil

When people began to settle Whidbey Island they found one "crop" readily salable, and lots of it. Whidbey's trees, from the giant Garry oaks on North Whidbey through fir, pine, maple and alder, furnished the people with homes, heat, boats and lumber for export.

The lumberman we knew best was our father-in-law Jim Neil, who came to the Northwest in 1891 and worked on the Olympic Peninsula at Port Gamble and Bremerton, cutting the forest giants for Pope & Talbot, and saving enough money to invest in his own outfit.

Jim Neil was joined the year after his arrival by his wife Mina Belle Lynch Neil, and baby son Roy. During the next 13 years, six more children were added to the family.

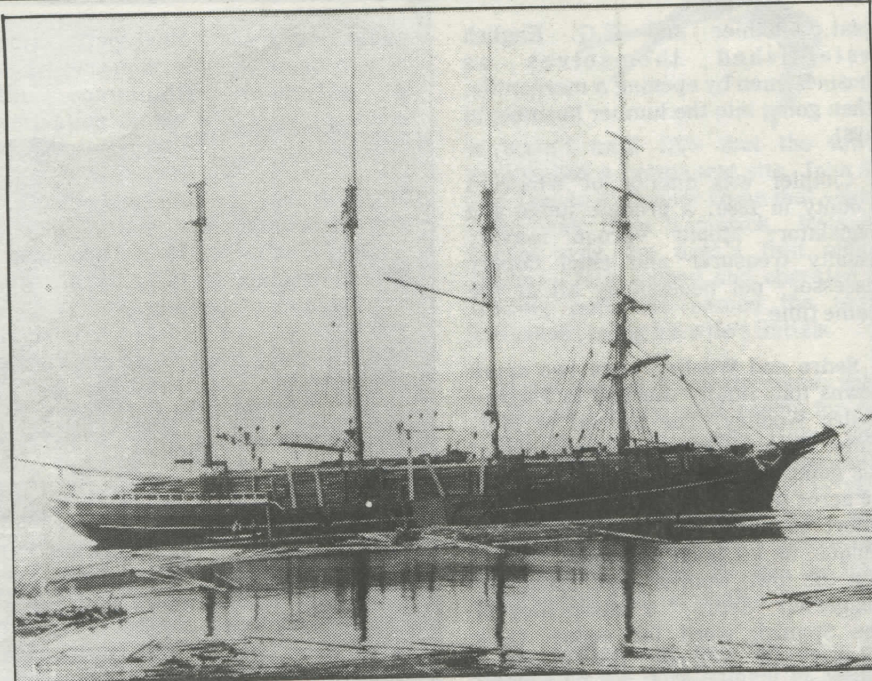
It was a hard life for a woman. She told us of helping her husband clear land in the evenings, after he had worked 10 hours in the woods and walked his team home. She would put the children to sleep out under the stars and together they would burn stumps, getting land ready for pasture.

The move to Whidbey Island was in the early spring of 1906, starting with a pole camp set up at Snaklum Point. That spring and summer the family lived in tents at the camp. The "baby," Melvin, was three months old and much of his early life was spent on the beach where his best friends were Charlie and Katie Snaklum, who lived in a little shack on the Spit.

The old couple were among the last of the Skagits to live on Whidbey Island, and their Indian lifestyle had changed little with the advent of the white man. They fished and picked berries for winter eating, and paddled their canoe around the Cove. They delighted in taking "the baby" Melvin with them in their canoe, teaching him to fish and dig clams and to cook them in the Indian method.

Mel told of watching Katie thread the shelled clams on a thin cedar stick to stand them against a log where a low fire had been built. The smoke would cure the clams for eating, in the same fashion that salmon was smoked.

One day the Indians offered the little



The four-masted schooner Providencia, out of Mexico, loading poles in Penn Cove. The poles were used in Mexican silver mines.

boy a sample. He was hungry and took the smoked clam eagerly. In a split second he spit the morsel as far as he could, and he remembered how the old couple laughed and laughed!

Many years later I showed him a photograph of Charlie Snaklum, destined for a cover-picture on Spin-drift. He had never seen it before.

"Do you know who this is?" I asked.

"My old friend, Charlie Snaklum," he replied, wonderingly.

The Neil family moved to Coupeville, into the big two-story house next to the Methodist Church. The house had a porch on two sides and tall windows and ceilings. Perfect for a

big family.

In those early days little boys wore dresses until they were several years old, and graduated into Buster Brown suits at about age five. A Coupeville telephone operator, whose office was at the bottom of the hill on Front Street, would telephone Mina Neil to tell her her "baby was running away," down the hill. And there he would be, every chance he got.

The pole camps south of Coupeville were worked for about five years, then the family moved to Oak Harbor, where they bought the home place of Captain George Morse, built in the early part of the 1890s.



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Pole Camps Gave Work to Early Settlers



The Neil pole camp at Snaklum Point, with Coupeville and San de Fuca men. Identity of all of them is not known, but a few familiar names stand out: Dan Earlywine, fifth from left standing; Harry Smith of Coupeville, upper center with white shirt, and John Mulder next to Smith; Jack Sullivan of Coupeville, number one in first row, seated; Jim Stoddard, number three in first row. Jim Neil standing at right. Roy Neil to right of Earlywine.

Neil pole camps were set up near Olson's Landing, Strawberry Point, and Eight Squaw Point, and the horses hauled the cut timber out of the woods where it was loaded on wagons to be hauled to Oak Harbor bay, where it was floated to Penn Cove.

There the timber was loaded aboard the *Providencia*, a four-masted sailing ship out of Mexico, to be used in the Mexican silver mines.

The pole business in Oak Harbor provided the first payroll of any size, and many early settlers worked in the woods to pay for their farmlands. The Hollanders provided workers who toiled long hours in the woods, then went home to clear land and plant crops.

At the Neil farm just outside Oak Harbor (north and east of where 700 Avenue West and 80th Avenue Northwest meet) there was great activity. First a water tower was built (still standing) with a "foreign-looking" roof over the tank. An electric plant was installed for the farm, and a concrete silo was built.

Then, in 1912, the "biggest barn on the West Coast" was finished, with rows of stanchions for livestock. The barn was officially "warmed" at a gala dance to which everyone from the surrounding countryside was invited. An imported dance band played, and refreshments were served by the basketful.

At harvest time the threshers would come, to be served three meals a day in the big farmhouse kitchen. Mina Neil did all the cooking with the help of Sadie Morse Davis, a near neighbor. Threshing food was always plentiful and good, and farm hands were considered lucky to get on the Neil threshing crew.

As the pole business prospered, so did the Neil farm and family. The family car was an EMF, forerunner of the Nash, and when the youngest boys were in high school and did the milking morning and evening, Dad Neil bought them a Model-T Ford touring car to get them to school in a hurry.

To speed up the process he built a road from the Neil farm east to the school, a road that is now 700 Ave. West. Because it was built through donated Neil land and with Neil horses and equipment it was known as Neil Road until the city expanded and adopted numerical designations, sometime in the 1950s.



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Loveland's: Story of a Sea Captain's Family



Of the many seafaring families who chose to settle on Whidbey Island in pioneer days, less has been written concerning the Benjamin F. Loveland family than any other. But the Lovelands were loved by all their pioneer neighbors and friends, who listened to the fascinating stories of spectacular lives lived on the high seas and in foreign countries.

Here was one instance in which the Captain's lady could match her husband in tales of adventure at sea. Mrs. Loveland was born at New London, Conn., in 1844 and made her first sea voyage at age 12 when she sailed unaccompanied from New York to join her parents in Honolulu.

The voyage began in June and took her around the Horn to San Francisco in November to load cargo, then reached her destination on Christmas Day . . . a little more than six months en route!

In 1876 she married an adventuresome sea captain and from that day sailed with him on his many whaling voyages. During one of the voyages to the Arctic she was forced to spend a long, dark winter with the vessel frozen solid in the ice along the Siberian shore.

Benjamin Franklin Loveland began his career before the mast at age 15 when he shipped out on a whaler bound for the Pacific from Massachusetts. He remained in the whaling profession for many years and was in command of the ship *Harvester* when she was lost in the great ice field disaster of 1871 near Point Belcher in the Arctic.

Only the navigating instruments and the ship's flag were salvaged from the *Harvester* before she was crushed in the ice. Members of the crew were rescued by one of the vessels that managed to get free. Many lives and 32 ships were lost in what remains one of the great sea disasters.


The event ended Captain Loveland's career at sea and in the spring of 1872 he moved with his family to a farm near Coupeville.

Mrs. Loveland's memory of her life aboard ship in foreign countries enthralled her neighbors. At one time she was adrift at sea for six days in a ship without a rudder. She was also in Japan during an insurrection when Captain Loveland unknowingly hoisted the American flag, an action which nearly cost them their lives.

The writer and humorist Mark Twain was a family friend, and Mrs. Loveland had many stories to tell of him. She also recalled having sung with Queen Lilioukalani in Hawaii and dancing with King Kalikowa IV in his palace.

The Lovelands, with their memories of the sea, settled in Coupeville and took to farm life in the little Island town. Mrs. Loveland died there in 1936 at age 92.

The sea captains and their wives and families who settled on Whidbey in the latter half of the nineteenth century formed a solid basis for the community as well as providing a wonderful store of spectacular events that superceded even the immense courage and adventure of prosaic Northwest America settlers of that era.



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'Mercer Girls' Part of Whidbey History

In 1860, Charles Prosch, a Seattle publisher of the Puget Sound Herald, suggested bringing single girls out from the east to fill the void in male-dominated Puget Sound. He suggested that not only were wives needed, but dressmakers, laundresses, cooks and school teachers.

It took a young man by the name of Asa Mercer who came to Seattle in 1861 and became president of the University of Washington the following year, to attempt to populate the area with single marriagable girls. And the "Mercer Girls," as they became known, to this day are an important part of the state's history, as well as the history of Whidbey Island.

Mercer went east on a privately-financed expedition in 1864 and brought 11 young ladies ranging in age from 15 to 25, to Seattle. They arrived May 16, 1864, to be greeted with a gala celebration that lasted all night.

Mercer's success in bringing single women to Puget Sound, most of them teachers, resulted in his unanimous election to the territorial senate.

The success of his first venture inspired the second in which he hoped to bring 500 women back to Puget Sound, but the journey turned into a disaster, through no direct fault of Mercer's.

Asa Mercer planned to call on President Lincoln, state his case and ask for a fueled and manned ship for



Flora Pearson Engle

his enterprise's journey from New York to Seattle. But Lincoln's assassination changed plans and it was nine months before Mercer sailed for home. If he could have sailed immediately he might have made his quota of 500 women, but delay and an unfavorable press took their toll.

Finally, General Ulysses Grant authorized a coaled and manned steamship, the Continental, for Mercer's use. But the Army's Quartermaster General refused to honor Grant's order, then agreed to sell the ship to Mercer for \$80,000.

Through a backer the sum was raised, but financial manipulation continued, and only about 100 persons were aboard the ship when it left New York harbor. A news article in the New York Herald, slandered Mercer and stated that all men on Puget Sound were rotten and immoral, and appealed to the women to stay at home.

Of the 100 passengers, 36 chose to stay in San Francisco rather than continue on to Puget Sound. Two children were born on the long three-month voyage, to a Mr. and Mrs. Boardman and to Mr. and Mrs. Stevenson. They also elected to stay in California.

Whidbey Island's Mercer girls were Josie and Flora Pearson, and Ida May Barlow. Josie and Flora came here with their parents and brother. Flora taught piano, and later married Will Engle, an Ebey's Prairie settler. Their grandchildren and great-grandchildren still live in Coupeville. Ida May Barlow (Pinkham), married and lived on South Whidbey for many years.

It is not known how many men signed a contract with Mercer for \$300 for which he agreed to bring a suitable wife of good moral character and reputation from the east to Seattle, but there must have been a good many disappointed swains in Puget Sound country.



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Three of Asa's Girls Lived on Whidbey



Ida May Barlow Pinkham

While the Mercer girls did not come to the Northwest with matrimony only in mind, nearly all of them married within a short time. They did not find their fate as predicted gloomily in San Francisco, as to "the dismal character of Washington Territory, the ignorance, coarseness and immorality of the people, as well as the impossibility of obtaining employment."

The new residents of Puget Sound were not helpless members of the "weaker sex." Miss Barlow, a teacher, could not find a teaching position so she started her own school. Another,

Miss Stevens, said of her new environment, "As for the scenery it would be paying Mercer a most extravagant compliment to say that he could overrate its beauty, only a poet of the first order could do that."

Asa Mercer married one of his "girls," and left Puget Sound for Oregon. They lived in Texas later where he worked as a newspaperman, then moved finally to Wyoming where they had a ranch. He died in Buffalo, Wyoming, on Aug. 10, 1917, survived by three sons, two daughters, and many grandchildren.



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Whidbey Island Called 'Unsinkable Flat-top'

Back in the late 1940s, just at the end of the war, the following article appeared in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, entitled "Whidby Islanders Live On Unsinkable Flat-top," by Carlton Fitchett.

PARKED NEAR LANGLEY, Aug. 24 — Well folks, Whidby (no 'e') Island residents motoring along what were once peaceful pastoral roads think nothing of it these days when the wheels of a huge Navy bomber thundering in for a landing almost scrape the top of their autos.

It happens many times a day but it was more than a little disconcerting to this Marco Polo of the paving.

War, as you will discover just after you pass Deception Pass Bridge southbound, has converted Puget Sound's largest island into a vast unsinkable "flattop."

The last time I was up that way before the war, Oak Harbor was a delightfully easygoing country town — the kind where farmers' wives trade in farm butter and eggs for calico or new shoes for junior.

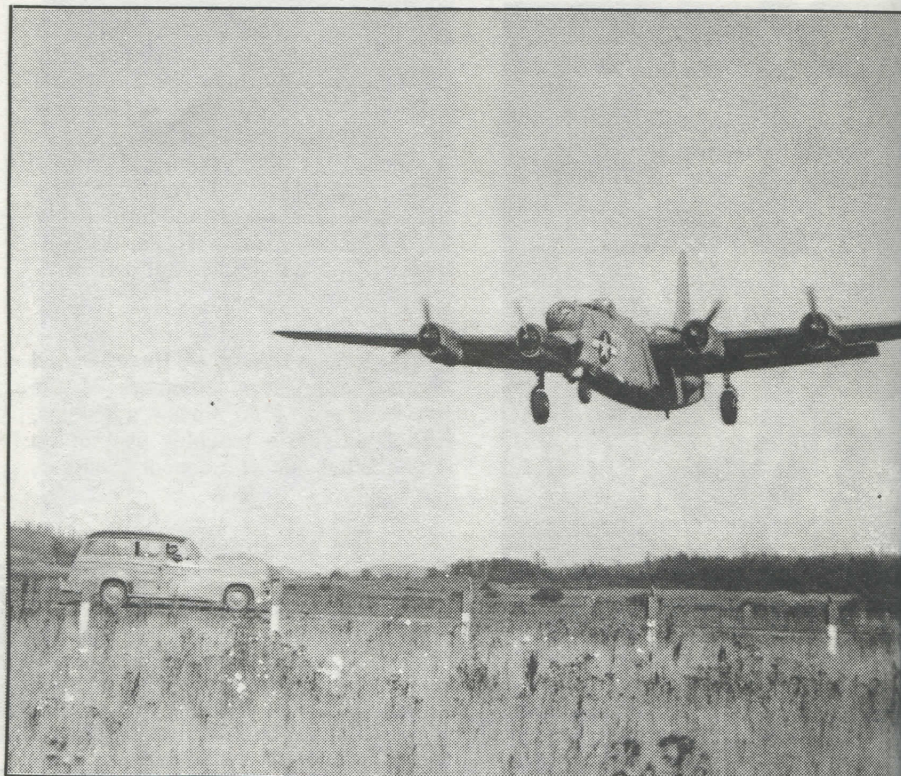
Now it is the most goshawful bedlam of war-made congestion we've ever run into. On the sidewalks, you're likely to be jostled off into the street, where you may be bumped by the uncontrolled traffic.

It is almost impossible for the visitor to horn into a restaurant or tavern day or night. We had to drive to Prairie Center, 10 miles distant, to get a bite to eat.

The reason for this terrific impact on the island's economy and mode of living is Naval Air Station, Whidby Island, built at amazing speed when the Japanese were knocking at America's backdoor by way of Attu and Kiska.

Through the courtesy of the acting commanding officer, Cmdr. Carleton M. Pike, USNR, I was able to inspect much of the vast, sprawling installation.

The station consists of Ault Field, devoted exclusively to land-based planes, and the Oak Harbor seaplane base, said to be the biggest PBV



August 1945 . . . A giant patrol plane lumbers in for a landing at Ault Field.

training base established by our Navy. There is a smaller, outlying field near Coupeville.

Uncle Sam picked out Whidby Island because of its strategic location in respect to the defense of Alaska and the patrolling of the Northwest Pacific Coast.

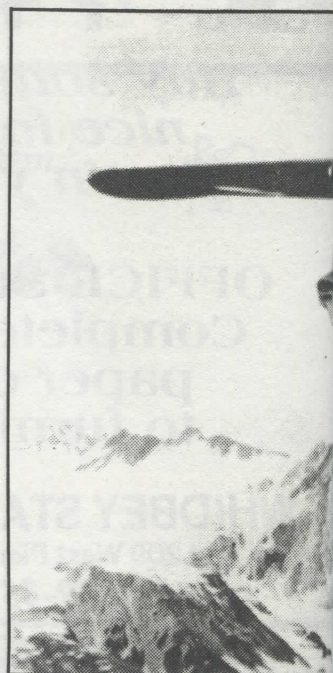
That he didn't let any grass grow under his embattled feet is shown by the fact that with the aid of thousands of civilian workers and machinery the two flying fields were ready and commissioned on September 24, 1942.

Clover Valley, on the righthand side of the main highway as you motor south from the bridge, is where they built Ault Field. It is there visiting motorists invariably duck their heads when planes fly in low for the mile-long landing strips.

Until the enemy was squeezed out of the Aleutians, Whidby Island Navy airmen flew regular patrols along the Alaska coast. Since then the two fields have trained thousands of the young men who were to help batter Japan to her knees. Night flying is carried on in all kinds of weather.

STRIKING CONTRAST

Though barracks, huts, officers' quarters and trailers sprinkle the landscape, civilian workers come by auto and bus daily from as far away as Mount Vernon. Navy personnel also overflow into homes in Anacortes and



by Wartime Reporter in Seattle P-I

other western Skagit County communities.

A few miles away in the Coupeville area are military installations of another day, blockhouses erected by the first settlers in the mid-1850s for defense against hostile Indians.

Carl Dean, automobile dealer at Prairie Center and one of the island's most civic-minded businessmen, took the wife and me on a tour to inspect the three remaining log fortifications.

He took us to the monument erected on the high bluff overlooking historic Ebey Landing near where Col. Isaac N. Ebey, guiding spirit of Whidby Island pioneers, was killed by invading Indians from British Columbia in 1857.

Dean showed us the field on fertile Ebey Prairie, also called Ebey Valley, where the world record of an average of 117 bushels to the acre was established on an 18-acre field. Thousands of turkeys already big enough for a feast gobbled at us as we motored along.

Dean told us that Harry Smith is the champion wheat grower and C.H. Sherman is the island's leading turkey grower. Freeman Boyer has the island's biggest farm: 400 acres.

We called on Mrs. Frank J. Pratt, president of the State Federation of Women's Clubs, at her beautiful home



Navy seaplanes moored in Oak Harbor Bay.

with its breath-taking outlook on islands and the deep blue waters of the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

ARMY THERE, TOO

The Navy hasn't a monopoly on military installations on Whidby Island. The Army has about 300 soldiers at Fort Casey, built just before the turn of the century, and Fort Ebey, built during World War II as part of the chain of fortifications guarding the entrance to Puget Sound. About 150 artillerymen are stationed there.

Whidby Island civilians say miniature powered planes are flown from Fort Casey by radio control and are used as targets by machine gunners. The tiny planes come down with their own parachutes when hit.

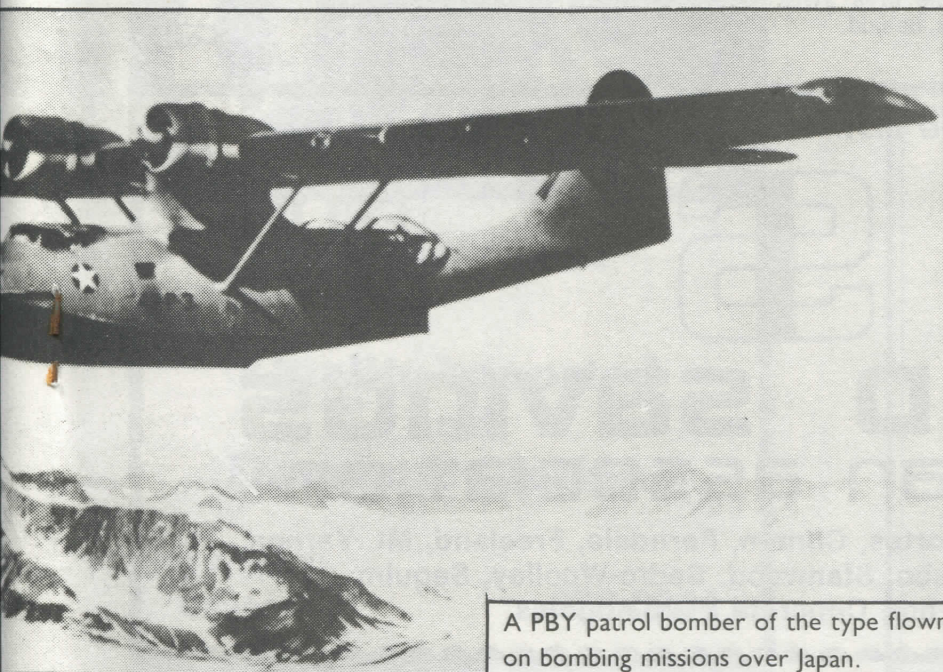
Whidby Island's first families are the descendants of the sea captains who settled at what is now Coupeville. They resent the modern practice of leaving the 'e' out of what they spell as Whidbey, pointing out that their historic island was named by its discoverer, Vancouver, for his trusted officer, Joseph Whidbey, who spelled it just that way.

(Editor's note: They got their wish when the Navy insisted on putting the 'e' back in Whidbey, because that is the way it appeared on their charts.)

If you visit Whidby by way of the bridge, be sure to stop in at Deception Pass State Park, a 2,000-acre wooded playground on either side of the turbulent channel.

Drive down to Reservation Bay (Bowman or Rosario?) with its picnic grounds and recreation area as we did.

On the Whidby Island side, you will find it worthwhile to drive to Cranberry Lake, North Beach, and the Youth Camp. Vern Yoakum, park superintendent, and Mrs. Yoakum said roads and trails will be improved extensively, now that the war is over.



A PBV patrol bomber of the type flown on bombing missions over Japan.

Indian Cross

Relic Guards

In the 60-odd years between the discovery of Whidbey Island by Captain Vancouver's first mate Joseph Whidbey in 1792 and the actual beginning of settlement in 1851, some interesting bits of history happened.

In 1839, before any white settler had set foot on Whidbey Island, a French Canadian Catholic priest by the name of Francis Norbert Blanchett began his work among the settlers on the Cowlitz River. News of the "Black Gown," as the Indians called him, spread throughout the Indian population, and Puget Sound Indians made pilgrimages of many miles to hear him.

Among those pilgrims were Chief Snetlum (also called Snakelum) of Whidbey Island, who took a party with him to receive instruction in the new religion. They stayed long enough to learn various ceremonies and songs, then returned home.

A year later, in May 1840, a canoe with seven Whidbey Island Indians traveled to the mission Father



The Alexander Blockhouse in Coupeville, built in 1855 by John Alexander. The cross is part of the original cross brought by Indians to the site on the occasion of a visit by a Catholic Missionary in the 1840s. The crossbar is a part of the original Alexander claim fence.

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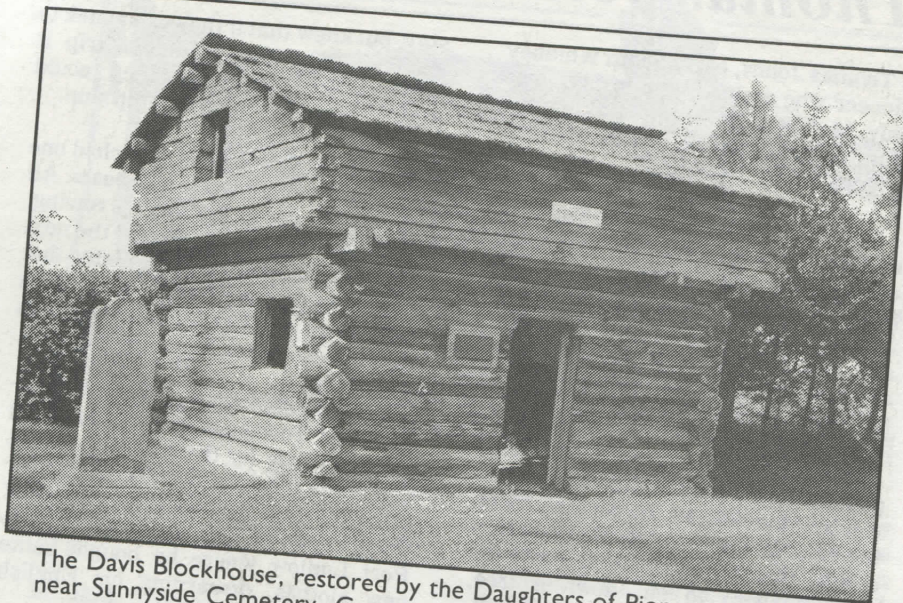
Coupeville's Blockhouse

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Blanchett was holding at Nisqually, to invite the priest to come to their Island. Two days later he arrived and was given a hearty welcome. They sang the Mass, showing they remembered their instructions of the previous year.

The long-house of Chief Snetlum was made of logs, 20 by 30 feet, with the interior sealed with woven tapestry mats. On Sunday, May 30, some 400 Indians attended the service where an altar had been prepared in a little room built of mats, with a rough plank serving as a table. Many sub-chiefs and Indians from other parts of the Island attended.

After the service, a great feast of smoked salmon and venison was



The Davis Blockhouse, restored by the Daughters of Pioneers, on the hill near Sunnyside Cemetery, Coupeville.

prepared and the Peace Pipe passed from brave to brave.

Suddenly the peace of the day was shattered by a great shout from a group of Indians who arrived carrying a huge cedar cross 24 feet long. When it was planted in the ground at Father Blanchett's direction, he prostrated himself before it, with all the Indians following suit.

When John Alexander took up his claim in 1851 in what was to become Coupeville, the cross still stood on his land. When Alexander died on Dec. 9, 1858, his body was placed in a hollowed cedar log and buried at the foot of the cross.

Many years later, in 1902, the still intact cedar casket was moved to Sunnyside Cemetery, and the remains of the cross were placed beside the door of the Alexander Blockhouse where it still stands in a glass case. The upright piece of the historic cross is only about seven feet tall now, and the cross-beam is a part of a rail taken from the first fence built around the Alexander claim.



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Thomas Johns was Deer Lagoon Pioneer

Thomas Johns, early South Whidbey pioneer who arrived here in 1859, was only 19 when he began making his home on this then wilderness island in Puget Sound.

He was born in Plymouth, England, on Dec. 31, 1840. His father was a sea captain who had won two medals fighting in the Crimean War. The elder Johns commanded a large sailing ship, and Thomas acquired his love for the sea from his father. At 17, he joined the British Navy.

Thomas was assigned to the carpenters' crew on an English man-o'-war and they did all the repair jobs on the ship. If the ship lost its mast in a storm, Johns' crew would put into the nearest shore to cut down a tree, hewing a new mast by hand.

Thomas Johns was a small man, only 5 foot 3, but very strong and wiry. When he was 19 his ship sailed from England around the southern tip of South America and up the west side of the Americas to Esquimaux, in British Columbia, about four miles north of Victoria.

Nine members of the crew like the looks of this new country and wanted to

stay, but knew that if they went back to England to wait for another trip it might be years before they could return. So they decided to jump ship.

After dark they quietly launched one of the ship's small white hull boats. All nine sailors got in and began rowing. They rowed all that night and the next day, going south. Johns said later that if the overcrowded boat had hit a storm they "would all have gone to Davy Jones' locker."

Landing near Dungeness, not far from Port Townsend, they hid in an old chicken house for the rest of the night and in the morning decided to go their separate ways, reducing the chance of being captured. Thomas Johns went to Port Ludlow where he bought some new clothes, discarding his English uniform.

Sometime during the year 1859 he met up with Ed Oliver, who had come to Ludlow for supplies and who asked him to go with him to Whidbey Island and become his partner in a logging venture.

Thomas fell in love with Whidbey and decided to make it his home. The land around Deer Lagoon was covered



with large trees of fir, hemlock and cedar and the land was gently rolling. Small plants of fern, huckleberry and salal grew in great abundance, yielding berries but necessitating clearing.

Skid roads were built for the logs to slide down to the water's edge, and oxen teams were used to pull them to the road, using ropes run through big rings on large wooden yokes around the teams' necks.

Small sailboats were used by the settlers to go to Port Ludlow or Port





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Johns Pardoned by Queen Victoria

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Townsend to get mail and provisions. They would sail out of Deer Lagoon through Useless Bay on an outgoing tide, and by the time they had bought their provisions and got the mail they could come back on the incoming tide.

Queen Victoria later offered a pardon to all the young men who had deserted her ships in this new country, the United States of America. And Thomas Johns and his eight friends who jumped ship in Esquimault were freed of the stigma of desertion.

The eastern side of Deer Lagoon became the home of Thomas Johns. He had a view of the Olympic Mountains and beautiful sunsets. His home was about halfway down the lagoon, and he filed in 1872 on 160 acres for a homestead.

Johns was naturalized at Port Townsend in Jefferson County of Washington Territory Dec. 4, 1872, and he proved up and bought his property in 1874. He built a small house consisting of a living room and two bedrooms near the marsh that bordered the lagoon. The house was made of lumber he rafted or towed by sailboat from Port Ludlow. There was plenty of lumber thrown away when

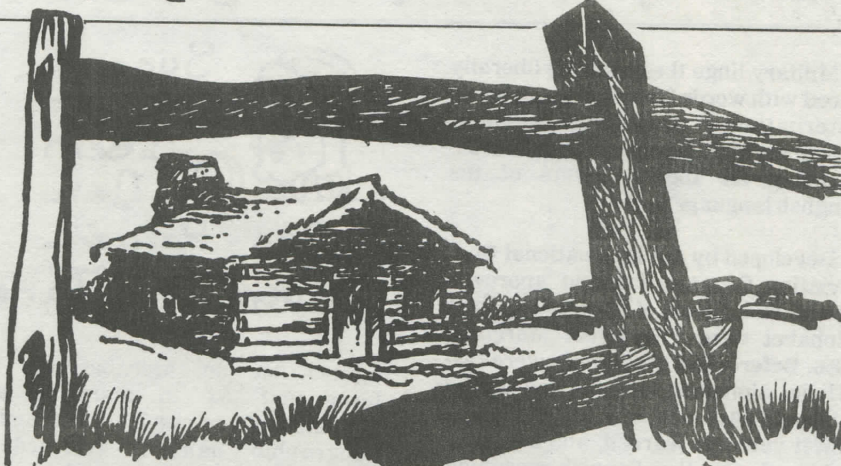
the deck hands on the big ships were told to throw away any lumber that was not perfect. His home also boasted a fireplace.

In 1878, Thomas Johns married Mary Jane Coffelt, a waitress in Port Townsend. They were married at her parents home on Lopez Island. Thomas was 37, Mary was 26.

Mary Jane soon made her husband's bachelor quarters look like a real home. She found the new life hard, but the land was rich and the vegetables grew and game was plentiful so they had enough to eat. She carried water

from a well, and washed clothes by hand, but so did nearly everyone else in those days. She loved the lagoon home as well as her husband did, loved watching the seasons change and the birds migrate.

But life on the frontier was hard at best; tragic at times. Their first child, a daughter, was born Feb. 4, 1879, with only an Indian woman in attendance since the nearest doctor was at Port Townsend. Later, this baby girl was joined by twin brothers, Richard and James, but the boys were drowned while swimming in the lagoon some years later.



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The Glenwood Hotel in Coupeville, still standing, is pictured about 1900.

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