

Spindrift Two

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Volume 12

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Whidbey Island's Own Magazine



Summer
1988

'Big Spring' Was Popular Watering Hole for Canoe Indians and Settlers

In December of 1849 when Oak Harbor's first three white settlers arrived on North Whidbey, their Indian paddlers took them to the east side of Maylor's Point, in the Crescent Harbor area instead of landing them at Oak Harbor. The Indian paddlers were at odds with the Indians whose village was located near the beach at Oak Harbor.

Landing at the foot of the bluff that separates the two harbors on North Whidbey, the three adventurers found what the Indians referred to as the "Big Spring," a sizable spring of clear cold water that gushed like a river from the bluff and poured into the salt water of the bay. Big Spring continued in diminishing quantities until the 1940s, when the area became known as Eerkes' Spring, named for the family who owned and farmed the land.

The Navy, arriving in 1941, diked the Crescent Harbor shoreline some yards from the source of the Big Spring. Today the spring is still apparent, just northwest of the junction of Torpedo Road and the road built down the bluff from the Navy housing on top of the hill. The spring is no longer a small river, but a marshy spot overgrown with reeds and small bushes, in which a trickling stream still exists.

During the 1950s a Navy Captain became aware of the historic properties of the area and instituted proceedings that would ultimately restore the area for posterity, making it a pleasant picnic and rest area. However, before this could be accomplished, the captain was transferred, and the project dropped.

Early settlers in the Crescent Harbor area, walking to the small settlement at Oak Harbor for supplies, took the path along the shore, and on warm days always stopped at Big Spring for refreshment. The Indians of this part of Puget Sound knew the Big Spring well, stopping in their canoes for fresh water and a campsite on their journeys.

Big Spring is truly a historic site remembered by both the Indians and the white settlers, and would take very little effort for restoration.





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Lillian Kennedy Monroe wrote of her grandmother, Phebe Carleton Arnold, in "Pioneer Women," published by the Daughters of Pioneers of Washington.

Phebe Carleton Arnold and Alanson Warner Arnold were married in May of 1865 in a double wedding at Port Townsend. The other couple was Anne Dyer, Phebe's cousin, and DeWitt Dennison, who was later to be appointed the first keeper of the Smith Island Lighthouse.

The Arnolds came to Whidbey Island by canoe to Ebey's Landing and then went by wagon to the farm on the original Maddox Donation Claim they had purchased. The property was located one mile north of San de Fuca, then called Coveland. It was accessible by a narrow rough road through the woods to open fields, then up a long lane to a house built five or six steps above the ground because the original owner's wife feared the Indians and did not want them peering through the windows. Here they set up housekeeping, with four sons and a daughter born to them. Arnold also had a daughter, Lizzie.

Newlyweds Travel By Canoe to Make Home on Penn Cove in 1865

Phebe Arnold was a gentle person devoted to her family, friends and church. She rarely missed services at Coupeville, making the trip on horseback at first, then in a phaeton that her husband purchased for her. She had been born at Rockton, Illinois, on March 16, 1843, educated in the seminary there and was qualified to teach school. This she did when she arrived in Washington Territory in 1864 with her parents, William and Melissa Jan Carleton, her sister Harriett and brother Eddie. Their journey was by wagon

train from Rockton to Marysville, California, March 18, 1864 to August 2, 1864, then by ship to Port Townsend.

An incident of 1867 showed the kindness and ability of this pioneer couple to cope with emergencies in a pioneer land.

Phil Fay was a bachelor who lived at Fort Nugent. When his pigs escaped from their pen he followed their tracks onto the beach going toward Swantown. The tide was coming in, and he was eager to find them. In passing around a cliff, a breaker tossed a log against his leg breaking it below the knee.



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He was well aware that he was alone and would not be missed for some time.

The Arnold house was the nearest, 1½ miles away. Fay crawled on his hands and knees from the beach on a rough trail, dragging his injured leg. Many times he blacked out from the pain. When 6-year-old Lizzie Arnold heard someone calling, she told her father and grandfather who was visiting there at the time.

They went into the woods about a quarter of a mile and found him, a gory sight, hands and knees covered with blood and his face drenched with perspiration. They carried him to the house, and with Phebe Arnold's assistance, her husband set the broken leg as best he could. The next day they took him to Ebey's Landing where Indians were found who would take him to Port Townsend to a doctor. The doctor commented that the leg was well-set, and Fay recovered. His experience led him to sell his place to Arnold's father, and he never returned to Fort Nugent.

Lillian Kennedy Monroe added that when she and her sisters listened to this story as children, they were concerned about the pigs and were eager to know what happened to them. They were told they found their way up the bank and into the woods where they found roots to eat. The children were satisfied to know they did not drown and did not go hungry. ♪



This is the Monroe Farmhouse where Lillian Kennedy Monroe lived most of her life. The view is of Penn Cove from Monroe's Landing across to Coupeville



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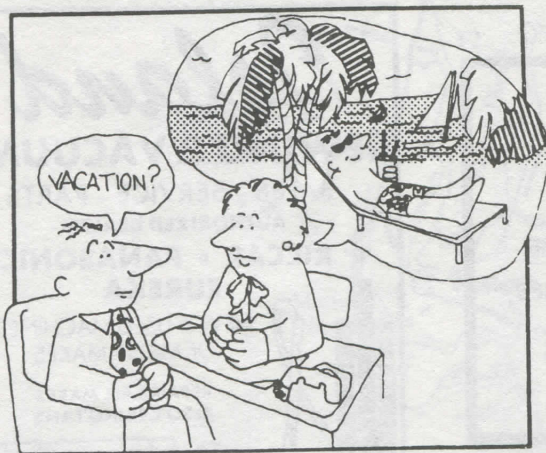
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Logging provided a living for many a family on Whidbey Island, in a day when the chain-saw was unknown and poles were brought out of the woods by horse, and transported to the water by wagon. Pictured are the men of the Neil Pole Camp on North Whidbey, many of whom have descendants who are still Islanders.

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Nathaniel Porter Came to Puget Sound and South Whidbey in 1859

The Island County census of 1860 listed men from Maine, New Hampshire, Nova Scotia, Massachusetts and New York, many of whom came by sailing ship from the East to the West Coast. They came to work in lumber mills and in logging operations; they came from the gold fields of California, and they came overland by covered wagon.

One of South Whidbey's earliest pioneers, Nathaniel Porter, was born in Nova Scotia in 1837. He was brought up on the rugged New England coast and early acquired a liking for salt water. When only ten years old he became a waiter on the small schooner *Vine*, later sailed on the brig *Michmac*, then on the bark *Elizabeth*. He made voyages to the Indian Ocean on the *Russell*, and in

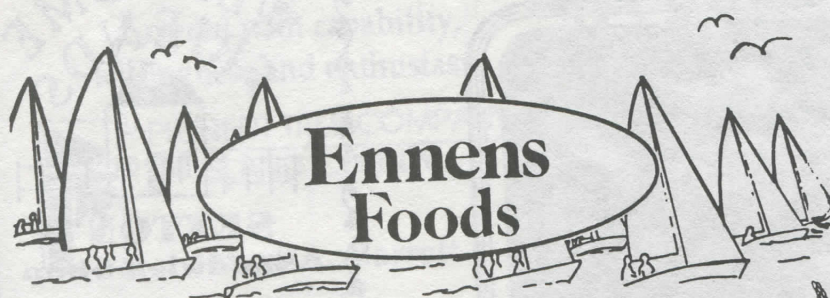
1857, returned to Boston where his parents lived and where he heard of the gold discoveries in California.

Going west as far as the railroad was built, he traveled up the Missouri river to Fort Bridger where he enlisted in the Fourth Company of the Bridger volunteers and served for five months. After his tour of duty he was engaged by the quartermaster's department and hauled provisions for the government to Salt Lake City, where he assisted in building a fort in the Utah Valley. After he left government service he continued west to California and visited San Bernardino, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Sacramento, spending time in both mining and farming until 1859.

In that year he came to Puget

Sound to work in a logging camp, taking up a claim of 10 acres. He next bought the 32 acre Donation Claim of R. B. Brunn at Mutiny Bay on the west side.

In 1880, Porter married Louisa Johnson who had been born on Whidbey and to them was born ten children. Gloria Porter Campbell, granddaughter of Nathaniel Porter who has been researching her family history for some time found her grandfather's name first showing on the records of Kitsap County, Post Office Teekalet, in the census of 1880 under Puget Mill Company No. 379. He obtained a U.S. patent to 170 acres at Point No Point which he sold in 1882. He owned 120 acres near Point Ludlow until 1913, and in 1870 was listed on the Island County census.

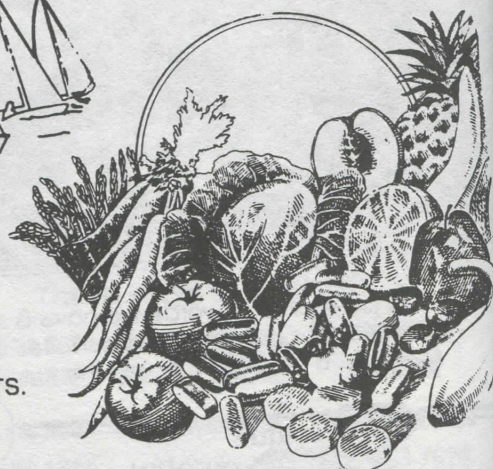


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Nathaniel and His Louisa Played Prominent Role in South Whidbey History

a farmer on South Whidbey where at one time he owned 156 acres, besides the Raphael Brunn property of 320 acres which he had acquired.

Nathaniel and Louisa Porter figured prominently in the history of South Whidbey Island. In 1897 they sold to the Board of Directors of School District No. 10, a parcel of land for one dollar for school purposes, "after to revert back." According to items gleaned by Gloria Porter Campbell from the Island County Times of 1897, "The Mutiny Bay District is building a new schoolhouse. A new site has been chosen near N.E. Porter's place, a more central location than the old site."

In 1896, Porter was elected road supervisor for the Mutiny Bay precinct. He was also the owner of a schooner, for in the July 29, 1898 Times, "A new store is established at Newell by the Newells. Pending completion of his new schooner, W. Newell is using N.E. Porter's schooner for shipping produce to market and bringing in goods."

In 1902, a May 16th item said "N.E. Porter shipped wool" and "those who have not whispered in school are (among others) Leo and Blanche Porter." A 1909 item said "Those neither absent nor tardy at school were Omer and Lena Porter." Omer Porter was Gloria Porter Campbell's father.

With ten children, the Porters were very cognizant of the need for schools on Whidbey, and in December of 1911, Nathaniel and Louisa sold four acres to School District No. 10. The new school opened in 1912, and it was noted that Island County School Superintendent Lena

Kohne was present. Sunday school was also held in the school building for many years.

The Island County Times continued to glean some doings of Nathaniel Porter and his family, and on Feb. 28, 1913, "N.E. Porter made a sale of some of his good potatoes over at Port Ludlow." On May 30, "At Austin the school boys are building the woodhouse for the district. This is the result of the manual training they are getting."

On Nov. 14 the Mutiny Bay school was the proud possessor of a Victor Talking Machine bought by the community! In 1915 the people started work on a tennis court at the Mutiny Bay School.

In 1916, Nathaniel Porter died, and the Island County Times reported the event: "A New England man by birth and training, Porter inherited many of the sterling traits of that good race which has been largely instrumental in founding ... the greatest government in the world, and brought with him to his Western home those qualities calculated to strengthen and protect the best interests of the community, county and state."

Nathaniel Porter was missed in his South Whidbey community where he had been a part of life for so many years. ⚓

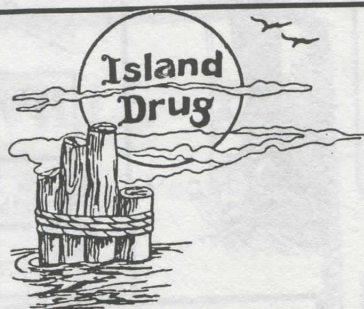


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Carl Engle Tells of 'Characters' He

The Engle Angle

This is a handwritten article given to Dorothy Neil by Carl T. Engle of Coupeville, shortly before he died. Engle, son of pioneers Flora Pearson and William Engle, describes some of the "odd" Islanders he knew during his long life on Whidbey Island.

The names of the following people are the names of people who live here on the Island and while they were all right, they were at least a little out of the ordinary.

A man by the name of Doss lived on what is now known as the Eggerman place. This man supposedly brought the dandelions to the Island. He was said to have been killed by a man by the name of Ford who was the son of Levi Ford who took up land over by Monroe's.

After he was gone, a family by the name of Regenwetter lived there and as long as I can remember there was a bachelor by the name of John Gilbert lived there. I have heard that he was a Belgian and that he had taken part in the California Gold Rush.

Robert Hathaway

Robert Hathaway was rather a character. I have heard he was sent to the West Coast in

the late 1800s by his family, they being ashamed of his drinking habits. He was supposed to have been a graduate of Harvard College, he was also supposed to have been engaged to marry Hetty Green, afterwards said to be the richest woman in the U.S.

"Old Bob" as he was called never married, he lived alone most of the time but his family for many years sent monthly payments for his keep. At one time I understand that except for the County Commissioners, he was practically the whole set of county officers, being sheriff, auditor, assessor and treasurer.

In later years he used to do a little abstract work before the law would only accept the work of certified abstractors. At the

time of his last sickness he was taken to a Seattle hospital and it was reported that Stone Webster paid all of the last expenses.

George Perego

George Washington LaFayette Perego was another character. He was born according to his own account on a large plantation owned by his parents in the State of Virginia. He must have been born in the early part of the 19th century as he was a veteran of three wars, the Seminole War, the Mexican War and the Civil War. For these services he received the magnificent pension of \$8.00 per month. As long as I can remember he lived on what is known as Perego's Spit where he owned 160 acres of land. He



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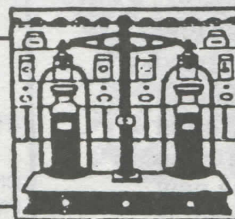


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Knew When He and the Island Were Young

had a small house occupied by himself, several dogs, several cats, and when the door was open quite a few chickens.

Perego claimed to have had a wife at one time in his earlier life and also claimed to have been a sea captain. He must have gotten here shortly after the Civil War and he died in 1900, alone in his little shack.

Jonas Robbins

Jonas M. Robbins had quite a reputation as a hunter, having stood in his door one morning and killed three deer with one shot of a shotgun from his back porch. He came here about 1870 from Wisconsin, stayed here for a few years, then went back

to his former home to look after his widowed mother and two younger sisters.

His mother died and left him to look after his two sisters. He evidently stayed with them for a good while as he did not return until possibly 1895, when he bought a piece of land in the woods in what is now East Coupeville. He built a small house and lived there for ten or possibly more years, until he died.

He was a kindly man and one time at Christmas he went to the storekeeper and told him to put a present on the Xmas tree for every youngster in town. In his later years he had two nephews come out and stay, I think for one winter.

John Seymour

John Seymour was another man who went into the woods in East Coupeville and cleared a small farm. He was a French Canadian and had had quite an exciting life. His profession was painter and at one time he had worked painting cars for the railroad in New Orleans.

He did a lot of house painting here after his arrival about 1885. He also did quite a little business at times buying and selling farm produce between different places on the Sound and Seattle, one time even making at least one trip by boat to New Westminster, B.C., when they had to put special planking on the boat to get back down the Fraser River on account of the ice.



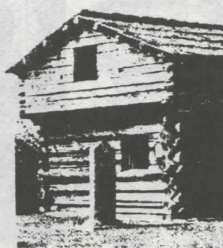


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Carl Was Son of William Engle and Flora

Seymour's favorite expression was "I can do anything." He lived alone and his house would have been a credit to any woman as a housekeeper. He was killed about 1903 in an accidental exploding of dynamite while blasting stumps for John Boyer where the Jas. Stover family now live.

Thomas Griffiths

Thos. Griffiths, known as "Little Tommy" was a man of small stature not much over five feet tall. Tommy was born at Land's End in England about 1820 and when a youngster in his "teens" shipped out as a

cabin boy on a Hudson Bay sailing vessel and came to Fort Nisqually in the 1840s.

Tommy was down on Whidby Island about 1846 but went back to the H.B. post and at one time he lived in Port Gamble. I have been told he came to the Island many years ago. Before Chas. Terry was married, Tommy lived with him and did the cooking and general chores around the buildings.

I do not remember where he lived when I first saw him, but possibly about 1883 or so he built a very small house not far from where the Methodist parsonage now stands, and was the janitor for the church.

Tommy was a happy little

fellow and made many visits to the houses of his friends in his later life. I remember he would show up at my father's place during the forenoon and if my mother had any small repair jobs such as putting in a window pane or soldering some leaky milk pans, Tommy would always do the small things. After having dinner, then about four o'clock he would leave for home.

He died about 1904, a little man with many friends.

Elisha Rockwell

Elisha G. Rockwell, one of Puget Sound's old time loggers was born in the State of Maine and must have gotten to the coast about 1860 as he was in the Caribou Mining excitement.

He finally got back to the Sound from the Caribou country without any money and went to work in logging camps for Thos. Cranney, who was at that time running a sawmill at Utsalady. He logged for a while on his own account at Holmes Harbor and then lived and did his last logging on Camano Island at what is now known as Camp Lagoon.

Elisha married an Indian woman, probably about 1870 thereabouts, and they had three children: a boy Charlie, who died young; a daughter Anna who was educated in a convent and died about 1897 or 1898; and a girl Mattie, who as far as I know is still living at this time (1953).

About 1890, Elisha came to Camano Island and bought a piece of land where Robert Engle now lives and built a house now standing on it. His daughter Mattie married a man by the name of Joe Baker. There were two boys but I think

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Pearson Engle, Two of Island's Pioneers

Baker deserted her and I have heard he was killed in the First World War. Elisha Rockwell died about 1908 or 1910.

Ben Ure

Ben Ure was a man who lived at the north end of the Island. Troxell's fish camp was at one time known as Ben Ure's Spit and one of the islands inside of Deception Pass was known as Ben Ure's Island. He was supposed to be a kind of old pirate who smuggled and sold whisky to the Indians. Ure died many years ago, sometime between 1895 and 1900.

Jesse Nye

Jesse Nye was a another resident of the North End. I never knew where he lived. I think he had one wooden leg. I do not know how he made a living, he and Ben Ure may both have had squaws as that was a pretty common thing during those days. About 1890 Nye had a small schooner he had built which he called the "Duck Hunter." He brought his boat over to Coupeville as I think he probably was sick and went to Alexander's hotel. If I remember rightly, he died not long afterwards and the boat was sold to meet his last ex-

penses.

Nye was a short man with a heavy beard, as to what his nationality was, I do not know.

Major Sewell

Major John Y. Sewell lived at what he called "Buena Vista" as he was a veteran of the Mexican War. This point between San de Fuca and Oak Harbor was also known as Cranney's Point and now is where one of the Muzzals lives just beyond Penn's Cove Park.

The Major had an Indian wife and two sons, Johnny and Crittenden. Crit, as he was known, was the older of the two boys and was the engineer on the steamer "Bob Irving," under the command of Capt. Olney. Once when they were trying to get up over Ball's Riffle on the Skagit River and were having trouble bucking the current, Olney called down to the engine for more steam and said that if he did not get it he would get another engineer at the next landing.

He got more steam, got so much, in fact, that the boiler exploded and Capt. Olney lost the top of his head.

The book of the life of Samuel Hancock was written, so Horace Holbrook told me, by Major Sewell from the facts told him by Hancock. Sewell must have died in the 1880s, but I remember seeing him around Coupeville a number of times when I was a boy.

Most of these short histories so far are about men that I do not think have many relatives who would ever write about them and their lives live only in the memories of bygone days. Possibly I may think of some more some of these days. ✂

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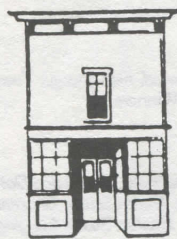
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Poles from Silver Lake area were hauled to Oak Harbor Bay in the 1900s to be rafted and loaded on ships bound for Mexico and other ports. Pictured is a log dump near what is now the Seaplane Base gate. Note horses, wagons and oak trees in background.



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Visitors aboard the big sailing ship "Garm," in Penn Cove about 1915, were Mr. and Mrs. James A. Neil (she in black dress and he in hat). The Neil Pole Camp contributed poles from Whidbey's woods to the regular cargo bound for Mexico. See piling in background on deck. Man at right is the ship's captain.

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"Long Boy," a World
War I ballad

By Lee Brainard

Before reluctantly delivering his request for a declaration of war to Congress 71 years ago, President Woodrow Wilson predicted: "Once lead this people into war, and they'll forget there was ever such a thing as tolerance; to fight you must be brutal and ruthless, and the spirit of ruthless brutality will enter into the very fibre of our national life, infecting Congress, the courts, the policeman, the man in the street."

And, of course, he was right. A special propaganda agency, the Committee on Public Information, was set up by the President under a newspaperman named George Creel. Creel enlisted 75,000 "Four-Minute Men" to deliver brief patriotic speeches to crowds at movie houses and theaters all over the country.

Here on Whidbey Island in the summer of 1918, such a group was formed to "guard our shores from treasonous and seditious speech, action and thought." These four upstanding and patriotically zealous citizens put out the word via the local newspaper for friend to turn in friend and neighbor to turn in neighbor whenever and wherever anyone was sus-

pected of not being 100% behind the war effort.

You can imagine the result. What a wonderful chance to get even with that guy down the street.

German Americans suffered the most bitter attacks. In 1917 more than two million Americans were of actual German birth, and millions more were of German descent. Many Americans with German names were fired from their jobs. In some workshops men with foreign accents were forced to crawl across the floor and kiss the American flag. Others were publicly flogged or tarred and feathered. At some war bond rallies, German Americans were forced to parade as objects of ridicule.

The Sound of the Island

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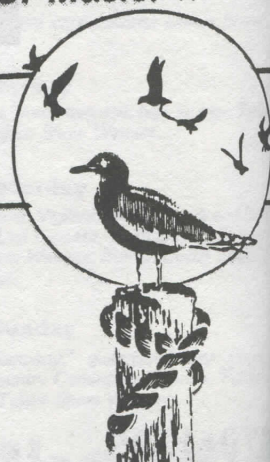
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World War I soldiers drill at Fort Casey

German-Americans on Whidbey Island didn't fare much better. One German-born man who had lived in peace and harmony on his small homestead south of Greenbank for many years, was suddenly "The Enemy."

Hoping to convince his neighbors that he was a true American, this unhappy man painted his house red, white and blue for the duration to reflect his patriotism. But colors alone could not counteract his unfortunate German heritage and he spent a miserable few years.

Nor did it pay to be a pacifist. In Seattle, a group of anti-war activists was formed that called itself the Non-Partisan League. The founder, who worked on a farm near Monroe, was called out of the barn one dark night, bundled into a car, driven about a mile up the road, tarred and feathered, and

warned never to show his face in the district again.

The anti-German fervor reached the ridiculous as this nation of immigrants gave the word "liberty" new meaning. The name of German measles was changed to "liberty" measles, hamburger became "liberty steak," sauerkraut "liberty cabbage," and dachshunds were dubbed "liberty pups." In Cincinnati, pretzels were banned from lunch counters.

Congress, with its usual brilliance, passed laws against espionage and sedition that established heavy penalties for criticizing the government, the Constitution, the flag, the uniforms of the Army and Navy, any Allied nation, or for obstructing the sale of United States War Bonds. All but the latter clearly violating the first amendment.

Under these laws an offender could be fined up to \$10,000 and 20 years in prison for saying anything "disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive" about any aspect of the government or the war effort. Historians were forbidden to disagree in any way with the official explanation of the causes of World War I, which held that Germany had been entirely at fault.

So zealously prosecuted were these laws that about 6,000 people were arrested and 1,500 sentenced, many for simply criticizing the Red Cross or the YMCA. In the Northwest hundreds of Wobblies (members of the I.W.W.), were arrested and indicted for advocating strike action.

If you think our personal freedoms are in danger today, think what it must have been like back in those "good old days."





A Fourth of July celebration in the early years of the century heads east on what was then Barrington Avenue and is now Pioneer Way. This is the intersection of Pioneer Way and 50th N.W. The building on the left, the Oak Harbor Bank, is now a pawn shop and minus its pillars which adorn the Masonic Hall in Coupeville. The building across the street from the bank was the drug store, now a vacant lot. At right is the Maylor Building, still in use.

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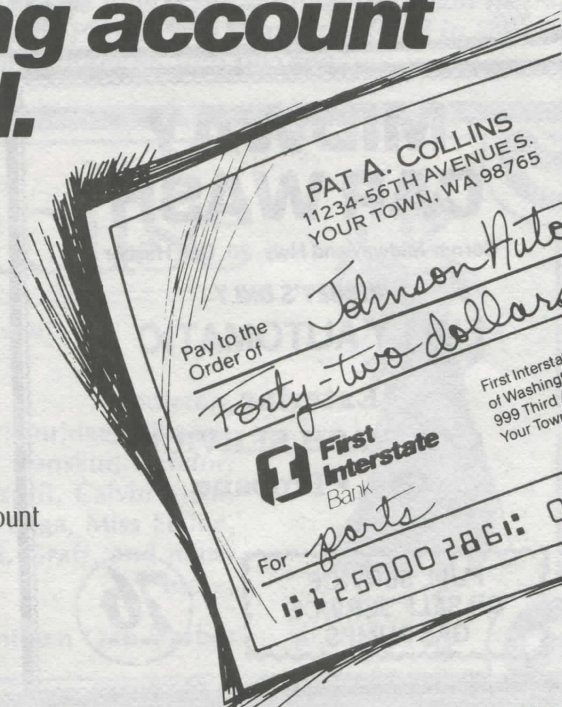
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Coupeville Festival, 1930s style

This picture, taken at the height of the Coupeville Water Festival parade in the early 1930s captured the main float and Festival Queen, to say nothing of the new electric stove and refrigerator that preceded the Queen! Indians with feather headdresses are pictured to the left of the queen, and Sorgenfrei's Garage in the background, where a public dance was held on Saturday night. On Sunday International Canoe Races took place between Indian tribes. The Water Festival took place annually during the late twenties and 1930s and attracted national attention.



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