

Spindrift

Two

Spring 1989

\$1.00

Whidbey Island's Own Magazine



Volume 12

Number 4

'The Ever-Whirling Wheele of Change' ...Spenser

In this Centennial year of the State of Washington, a look back at the changes that have occurred in the past 138 years is startling. In 1851, on Whidbey Island, flour cost from \$20 to \$40 a barrel, pork sold for \$30 a hundred pounds and a good yoke of oxen was priced at \$300. Now, 138 years later, cake mix sells for \$1.25 per box; sliced bacon costs \$1.75 per pound and International Harvester has made oxen extinct on Whidbey Island. (About 1900, the Fakkema family on North Whidbey was probably the last to have a yoke of oxen.)

In 1909, the *Island County Sun* reported, "The gasoline engine first broke the stillness of Whidbey when early in September 1891 a small motor driven boat came poppin' into Penn's Cove. The *Sun* explained to the curious that the boat craft was "propelled by an engine on the explosive principle, the fuel being gasoline and water."

By 1912, editor Charlie Bowmer of the *Oak Harbor News*, concerned over the speed of autos, quoted the law: "Limit in towns not faster than one mile in five minutes, at crossings not faster than one mile in fifteen minutes." In the same year, Charles Wolfesen advertised the new Overland, 5-passenger touring car, 30 h.p., self-starter, gas tank, 110-inch wheel base, windshield and delivered in oak Harbor for \$1100. (In 1989 the speed limit inside the city of Oak Harbor is 25 and 30 miles per hour, with speed on the highway at 55 mph. Lights dot the "crossings," the only assurance the motorist has of getting onto the highway in spite of the traffic.)

In the fall of 1853 the first census for Island County was taken, with 195 inhabitants and 80 voters listed. In King County, which included Seattle, there were 170 inhabitants and 11 voters.

Incidentally, two years later, in 1855, there were approximately 1,475 Indians on Whidbey Island. The entire white population at that time was estimated to be 180, with 16,000 acres

of land under claim. For the first few years Whidbey's growth was rapid, then the population remained almost stationary for more than half a century.

In the ten years between 1930 and 1940, the population of Island County increased by only 731. In 1939, the Farm Bureau News, Oak Harbor's newspaper, was selling want ads at one cent per word, with a minimum of 25 cents; green alder sold for \$4 per cord, or \$4.25 delivered!

With a 1989 population count of over 50,000 in Island County, one remembers what George Albert Kellogg, author of *A History of Whidbey*

Island published in 1934, had to say about Whidbey Island "Projecting myself to the vantage ground of another hundred years, I humbly predict that Master Whidbey will have found not just a jewel, but a long and elegantly formed brooch to adorn the ruffled western shoulder of these United States. Given care and protection through its own natural charm it will have given more people pleasure and peace in this westward moving world than had it the soil of Kansas, or the gold of the Yukon."

(Portions of the above were taken from Trudy Sundberg's *Portrait Of An Island*, published in 1961.)





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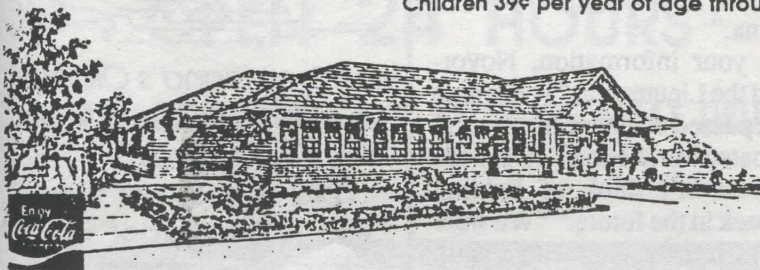
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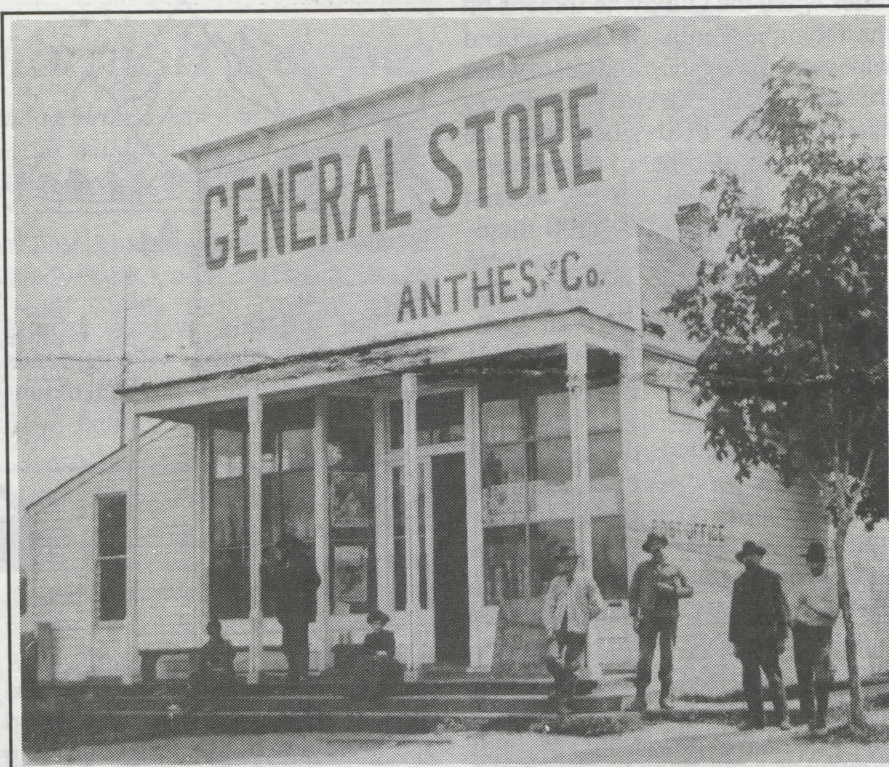
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Anthes Platted Langley 100 Years Ago

In the fall of 1880 a 15-year-old boy named Jacob Anthes came to South Whidbey, hired to hold down a homestead for a man named Pat Quinn. Quinn's "house" was a leaking 10 by 12 foot shack surrounded by woods, but Anthes grew to like the Island so well that when another couple came to take over his duties, he stayed on. He found work clearing a cattle trail to Sandy Point, explored the southern end of Whidbey Island and met most of the early settlers. He was still too young to file for a homestead, so he saved his money and bought 120 acres from John Phinney for \$100, just west of the present site of Langley.

Steamers plied the Sound and Saratoga Passage which required cordwood to burn, so young Anthes cut wood and sold it. At age 21 he filed a homestead claim on 160 acres adjoining the present site of Langley, and also filed a timber claim earning enough money from the logging operation to pay for the claim.



In 1889, the year of Washington statehood, the Great Northern Railway began building to the coast, and the laying out of townsites became a mania. Anthes envisioned a town on South Whidbey, and although he could not finance such a project himself, he convinced Judge J. W. Langley of Seattle to form the Langley Land and Improvement company.

Thus the town of Langley was platted and named for the Judge. A dock was built along with a hotel and several small homes. Anthes built a home for his wife, Leafy, and their four children in which they lived for 18 years.

Anthes was the central figure in the founding of Langley, and in 1891 built the first store and became the town's first postmaster, continuing to own the majority of the Langley area until about 1905. Names appearing prominently at that time were Hunziker, McLeod, Howard, Furman, McGinnis, Anderson, Coe, Strawbridge, Catron, Bainter, Funk, Simon, Jensen and Melson. Later, in the 1920s, there appeared the names of Noble, Primavera and Clyde.

In the early days maple trees lined First and Anthes streets. The sternwheeler *Fairhaven* served the town every other day, traveling from Everett to La Conner, stopping at Coupeville and Oak Harbor. Anthes planted a prune orchard and had a prune kiln for drying the fruit. The Indians helped pick the prunes and would put the rejects into barrels to be made into potent "prune jack."



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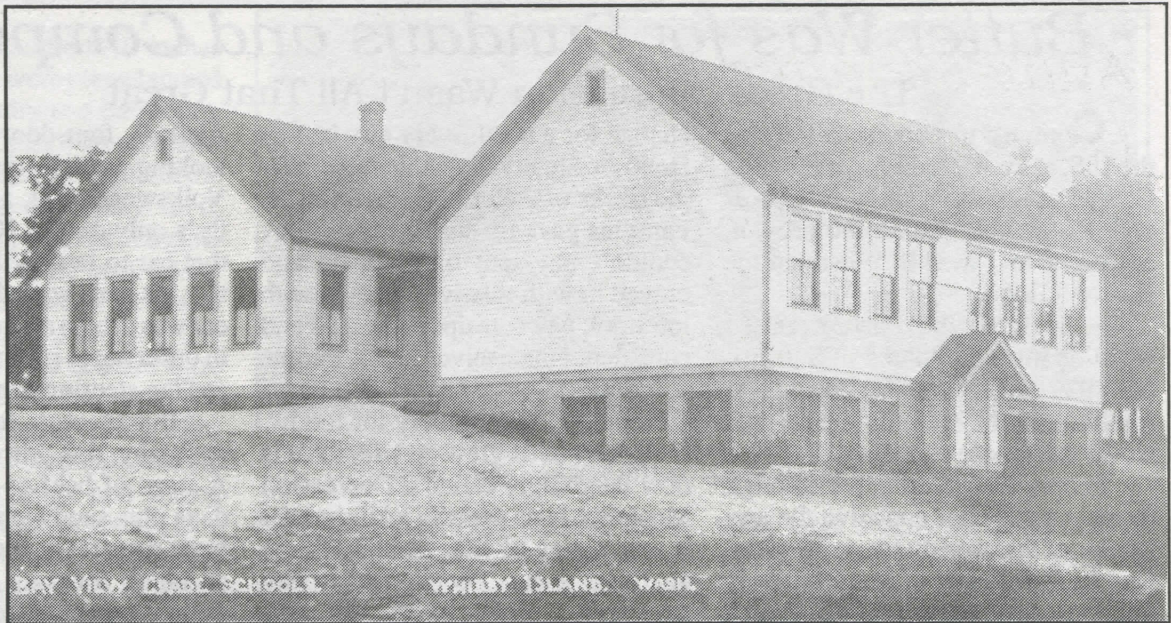
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One-room schools served the children of South Whidbey pioneers soon after Washington achieved statehood. Wherever several families settled, schools soon appeared, built by parents and often taught by young people not long out of school themselves. From early cabins in the woods where school had to be dismissed on dark cloudy days, to window-filled structures with elegant lines, South

Whidbey's first schools were all one-room affairs, where all ages attended and were taught by one teacher. Sometimes the schooling lasted only three months of the year, but it was education, nevertheless.

The Clinton area had the Brickyard or Scenic Heights school and the Deer Lake school; the Woodland and Intervale schools were at Maxwellton; the Ingleside school served Cul-

tus Bay. The Bayview school, built about 1905, is still in use, teaching new generations as the South Whidbey Campus of Skagit Valley College.

The end of the one-room schoolhouse on South Whidbey came in 1942 with the consolidation of the districts and the building of larger schools.



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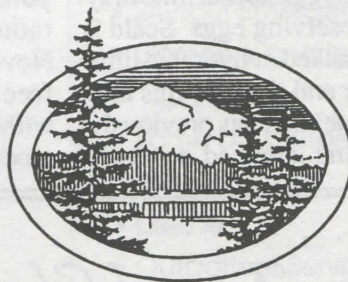
Coupeville lasses observe May Day in pre-WWI days.



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*Alice Esterly
and her friend Fleur*



Harbor Tower
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Hastie Lake, south of Oak Harbor and north of San de Fuca, now a sea of reeds, was named for a Scotsman, Thomas Perkins Hastie.

Hastie left Glasgow in the early 1830s for Liverpool to work at his trade of stonemason. There he met Margaret Peer, who was Welsh, and a registered nurse. They were married and had four boys.

In 1845 the family sailed for America on a "square-rigger," Tragedy sailed with them when one of the little boys fell down a hatch and was killed. The family reached New Orleans and came by wagon train to The Dalles, Oregon, arriving in 1849. It had been a journey of four long years from the Old World to the New.

At Fort Laramie, cholera broke out and Margaret organized a sick-train and nursed the patients through the epidemic. She was hailed as an angel of mercy in accounts of the journey in the Washington State Library.

The journey of the Hastie family west was not over. Leaving The Dalles in the spring of 1853 on a schooner

The Story of a Hastie Pioneer

bound for Penn's Cove, the passengers found they had to wait outside Deception Pass for the tide to change before completing their journey. They went ashore for a picnic at Cranberry Lake, then a saltwater lagoon.

At Penn's Cove, Hastie took a Donation Claim on May 10, 1853 near the lake that bears his name. Hastie Lake continued being a lake for the next 80 years, providing fresh water and ice skating in the wintertime for Whidbey Islanders. In the 1930s, a group of hunters allegedly seeded the lake with wild rice and wild celery to attract ducks. The seed was contaminated with cattails, which soon took over to produce what is now a cattail marsh.

Margaret Hastie is buried in Sunny Cemetery, Coupeville, where her headstone was brought from West Beach and carved with her name and a leaf design, by her husband.

"...the harness section by fall?"

A humorous story is told of Dick Hastie, third generation from Thomas: *In the 1930s, during the Great Depression, Dick sent to Sears Roebuck for three packages of toilet paper at 24 cents a package. Sears sent the merchandise with a bill for 9 cents more. They wrote, "If you had our latest catalogue you would have known it was 27 cents." Dick sent the money and replied, "If I had had your latest catalogue I wouldn't have needed toilet paper in the first place."*

William Hastie, son of Thomas, married Charlotte Glasgow and they became the parents of Dick Hastie, well-loved citizen of Coupeville for all his life.

The Glasgow family has a unique place in the annals of Whidbey Island history.

Thomas Glasgow was the Island's first settler, albeit temporary. In 1848, he came here with a friend who didn't stay long, to what later became Ebey's Prairie, west of Coupeville. He brought with him chickens and livestock and planted a garden.

When *Patkanim*, warlike chief of area Indians held a pow-wow on Whidbey Island to incite the Indians against the white settlers, his daughter warned Glasgow and the two fled in a canoe to Olympia, then called Smithfield. It was a fortuitous flight as the Indians burned his house and stole his stock, but missed catching Whidbey's earliest settler and the Indian girl who played the Pocohontas role.

The couple were married and the Indian girl took the name of Julia. The Glasgows had three children, a boy, Howard, and two girls, Charlotte and Abigail, both renowned for their beauty. While the parents never returned to Whidbey Island to live, their two daughters were adopted and raised by the Holbrook family at Penn's Cove (Coveland), after the death of their parents.

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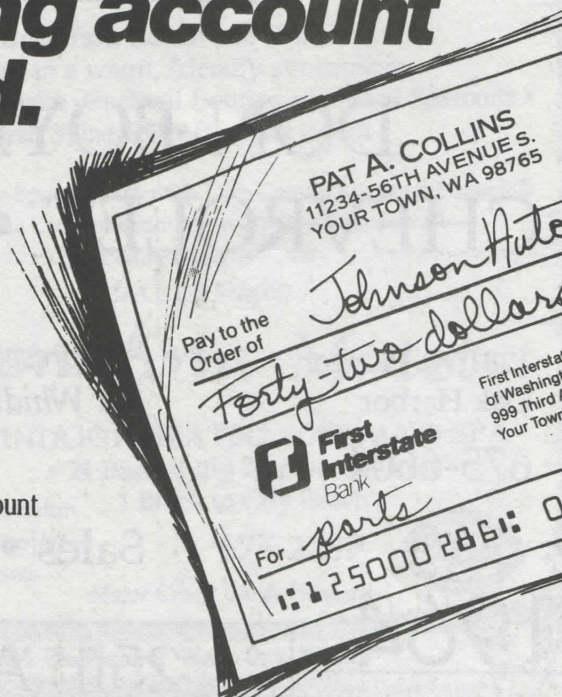
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Fakkemas Have Lived and Farmed Here Since 1895

"The Late History of the Meindert Fakkema Family," written by Hope Fakkema and Marilyn Fakkema in 1972 furnished the material for this story of a Crescent Harbor pioneer Dutch family.

Arriving in 1895 at San de Fuca, the family soon found a home in Clover Valley where they existed frugally until 1916 when a 200 acre farm in Crescent Harbor became available. Their 20 acre farm in Clover Valley and its one-room log cabin with lean-to and fireplace, was outgrown. Six of the Fakkema children were born in Michigan, and the other four on Whidbey Island. Meindert Fakkema had emigrated in 1881 from The Netherlands, along with Sytske Neusma, who was later to become his wife.

The move to Crescent Harbor was exciting. The brothers recalled herding 20 cows three miles along a country road between the farms. Ed and Paul carried their bee-hive slung from a stick held between them. The Fakkema team of oxen moved the furniture. Meindert was at that time too poor to own a team of horses, and the oxen were quite a novelty on North Whidbey.

The Fakkema family saga is typically pioneer. Harry, the oldest boy who was 22, designed the new house. It was built entirely by the family from materials on the land, except for windows and plaster. All the lumber came from trees chopped down and hauled to the mill. The sawyer took out enough lumber to cover his expenses and the rest was hauled to the farm.

The Fakkemas were fortunate to have so many boys to work on the farm. The day began at 6 a.m. with the milking chores. The boys were allowed to go to school only through the third grade, as they were needed on the farm. Fieldwork was aided by Teddy the dog, who carried coffee to the men in the field twice a day. He also carried mail to Harry who was

working in town, and then brought parcels back to the farm. Meeting someone on the way of whom he did not approve, he would drop the parcel, growl fiercely, then pick up his bundle and resume his journey.

When money became more plentiful, the family bought a bright and shiny new Buick with a genuine leather interior. It was one of the first cars on North Whidbey.

The family lived by the old saying "work before play." But despite long days of hard work, there were times for recreation. Families often piled into wagons and spent whole days visiting at another farm home. Mother Sytske especially loved to skate. It reminded her of Holland. The younger boys enjoyed baseball, making their own bats from peevee handles and the baseball from grain string. Later when they were older they made up their own team, known as the Crescent Harbor "Swamp Rats." They played the San de Fuca "Spud Diggers," Fort Casey, and even Langley.

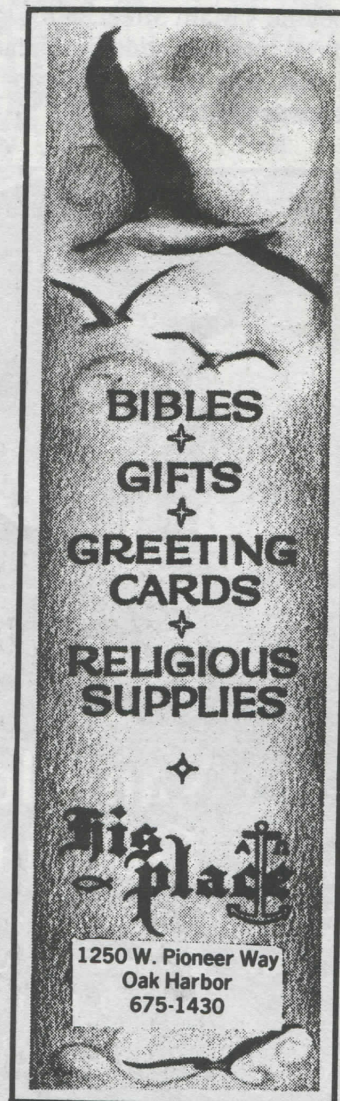
One morning Ed, Pete and Paul were playing war games, re-enacting the Japanese War of 1905. Ed laid a loaded shotgun over a log, with Pete and Paul positioned behind him. When the gun fired, it sent Ed rolling backward. Unfortunately, the boys' parents were homeward bound from church in their buggy and heard the shot ... and their story. Their mother chucked the gun between the wall and staircase where it remained until the house was torn down in the late 1940s. Ed and Pete, ages 9 and 7, were sent to bed without supper; Paul, 5 years old, was not held to account for the "war."

The boys had one bicycle between them and recalled that one of the four would ride while the other three ran alongside, then they would trade so everyone had a chance to ride part of the way to school.

Pete, who became ill and was unable to do farm work, graduated with the first graduating class at Oak

Harbor High. He studied radio, which later became his livelihood. The family grew up and began lives of their own, far from the Crescent Harbor farm. Mark moved to Michigan. Rein worked in a mill in Canada. Ed served in France during World War I, Harry worked in Oak Harbor where he eventually owned the largest garage in town, and Jenny married.

Today a number of the grandchildren and great grandchildren of the two pioneers from The Netherlands have made the Island their home and live and work on North Whidbey.



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