

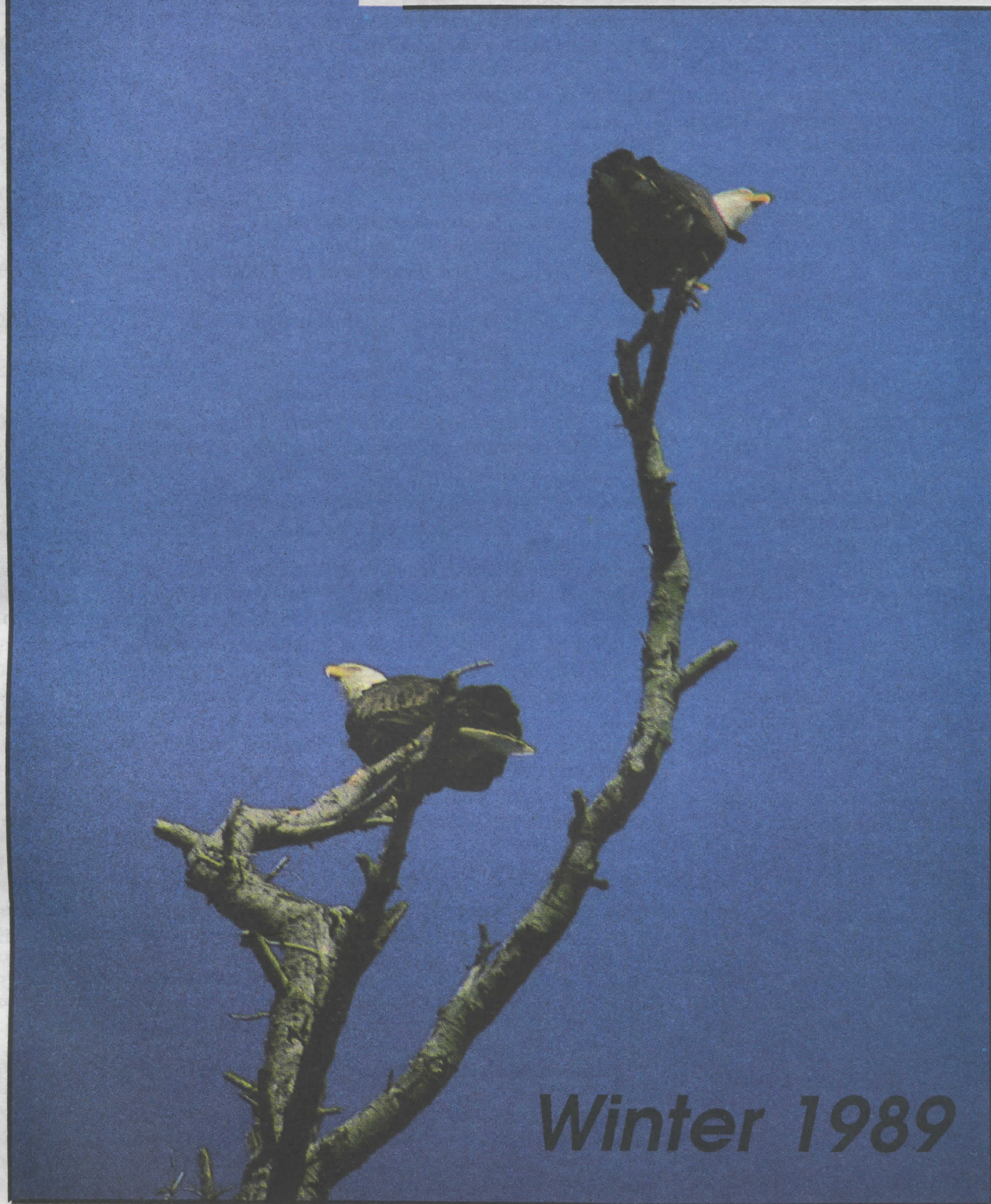
Spindrift Two

50¢

Volume 12

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Whidbey Island's Own Magazine



Winter 1989

Ebeys' 1852-53 Diary Tells of Pioneer Life

Following are excerpts from the diaries of two of Whidbey Island's most famous pioneers: Rebecca and Colonel Isaac N. Ebey. Although neither of them lived very long after arriving on the Island, because of their writings and because of the heritage they left here, they will forever be remembered. Rebecca died at the young age of 30; Isaac, who had remarried, was killed by Northern Indians in the Island's most infamous murder, in August 1857. The diaries cover the period between July 1852 and March 1853, and as we read through them we can feel the tension between the whites and the Indians rise, especially with those Indians from off the Island.

Rebecca...

Sunday, July 4, 1852: This is a great day in some places. We hear cannon firing from some port or vessel up the Sound. I think such things should be postponed until Monday as it is a great violation of the Sabbath. There are none here today but Thomas, myself and the children.

July 15: Mr. Wilson from Olympia who had camped on the beach called with Mr. Hughes and Mr. Brownfield on their way to Dungeness, and they bought 50 cents worth of bread. Another man off another vessel at Port Townsend bought 2 1/2 pounds and John Bartlett one pound.

July 22: A steamer passed this evening, supposed to be the Hudson

Bay Company's steamer *Beaver*. Eason is eight years old today (*Rebecca and Isaac's son*).

July 23: The steamer proved to be the U.S. surveying steamer *Active*, surveying the coast of California and Oregon.

July 24: Just as we were ready to eat supper the doctor and engineer of the steamer *Active* came and took supper with us. the doctor is a very intelligent looking man.

July 26: Thermometer 65 degrees. The weather in the States at this season of the year is oppressively hot, but this is an uncommon cool season for this country and everything seems to grow very fast.

Aug. 5: Vegetation is fresh and green and growing fast, though reports say that in every other portion of Oregon it is dried up and dead. The ground here continues moist through the dry season. Mr. Alexander has dug his well 60 feet deep and came to dry, fine sand and quit.

Aug. 7: Thomas (*Davis*) and Dr. Lansdale started for Olympia today and from thence they are coming back to the mouth of the Snohomish river and are going up it as far as they can in a canoe, and then view out a road across the mountains to the mouth of the Umatilla. Received a letter from Winfield (*Isaac's brother*) stating that mother and brothers John and James had started for this country. Hope mother will get here safe.

Aug. 17: Mr. Ebey arrived this morning before breakfast. I very much rejoiced to see him.

Aug. 12: Samuel Crockett, Mr. Smith, Mr. Howe and Mrs. Holbrook were all here in the forenoon to hear the news from Mr. Ebey.

Aug. 14: Mr. Ebey is getting his claim surveyed today. Captain Bell, John Bartlett and John Alexander are helping.

Aug. 16: Dr. Tolmie, his lady and two other ladies, his little boy and a little brother-in-law were here today, bound for Victoria. Mrs. Tolmie is half Indian, but shows very

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Isaac Took No 'Guff' from Indians

little of the Indian features and appears to be quite intelligent. She was educated by the Hudson's Bay Company in Victoria. The Dr. was very kind in leaving us a fine large piece of fresh beef as a present.

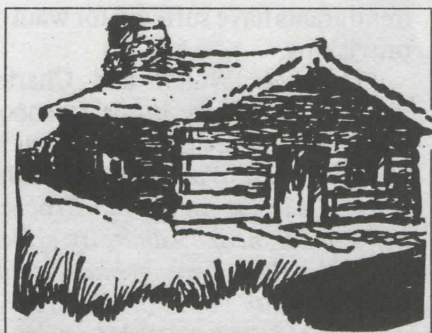
Aug. 17: Mrs. Bounsel gave a great alarm of fire this morning. The Indians had set fire not far away and it was about to burn up the house. She moved all the things out and then sent all over the neighborhood for men, but none could be found, as they were all surveying. Toward evening the men came and I sent them over. They succeeded in getting the house out of danger. *(The Bounsels lived on the place now owned by J. E. Hancock.)*

Isaac...

Aug. 19: Pulled an Indian's wool and kicked another one's bottom today for being impudent and saucy to Rebecca when I am absent.

Rebecca...

Aug. 21: This day one year ago we left Ft. Hall and camped on a



beautiful creek a half day's journey this side. *(Fort Hall was in what is now Idaho, located in the southeastern part near Pocatello.)*

Aug. 29: Went to see Mrs. Smith in the evening who is sick and has a fine daughter. This is the second birth on the island among the white settlers.

Isaac...

Aug. 31: Two Catholic priests came here this evening. They are looking for a location for a mission.

Sept. 2: The priests went over to the Cove this morning to see the natives. They returned after dark having baptised several children.

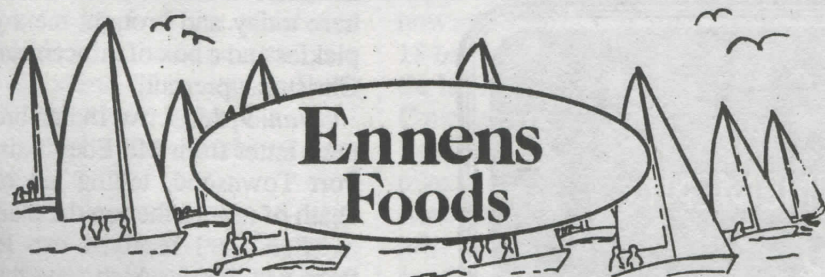
Rebecca...

Sept. 14: Henry Wilson and another gentleman came from Olympia. They brought several numbers of the Olympia newspaper which is just commenced. The first paper published on Puget's Sound. It is called "The Columbian."

Sept. 18: Mr. Ebey and Captain Bell undertook to finish the smoke-house today. They sent John Bartlet to his house to get some tools on Mr. Bounsel's horse. The saddle turned and John fell off and the horse turned and stepped on his arm and broke it between the wrist and elbow.

Sept. 26: King George and La-lacks' family were here this morning from Townsend, very anxious to learn whether they are to receive any pay or not for their potatoes the cattle destroyed. Mr. Ebey had to reason the case with them and tell them that Mr. Sterling the Indian Agent would be down and settle with them. Old King George was very easily satisfied but the women talked a good deal. *(King George and the Lalack*

(Please turn the page)



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Ebey's Prairie Was Pioneer Neighborhood

(Continued from page 7)

family were Indians.)

Oct. 1: Mr. Crockett here to borrow the cat. The mice are very troublesome at his house.

Oct. 2: We had our two new houses raised today. We had 12 men to help. Mrs. Alexander, Mrs. Smith and Ann Crockett were here all day and helped me cook dinner.

Oct. 7: We hear nothing of Thomas and Dr. Lansdale. They have been gone over two months. Some new immigrants have arrived in Townsend and Olympia. Captains Bell and Paddle have returned.

Oct. 8: We have a family of Indians hired digging potatoes. They are bringing cranberries frequently. (Cranberries were found on the marsh at the north end of the Island, near Cranberry Lake.)

Dr. Lansdale Returns

Oct. 21: Dr. Lansdale came last night. He says he and Thomas heard of mother, James and John being in the Grand Ronde (Eastern Oregon) valley recruiting their stock. Thomas went out to meet them. They have plenty of provisions. A great many

immigrants have suffered for want of provisions.

Oct. 24: Walter and Charles Crockett were here in the forenoon and Hugh in the afternoon. (Sons of Col. Crockett Walter and Charles were still living on the old Crockett homestead near Admiralty Head when the diary was printed in the Island County Times in 1891.)

Nov. 15: The weather has turned warmer, but still cloudy. No rain in the daytime, but generally at night. The ground is not muddy and the rain does not make it disagreeable. Men continue laboring every day here in the winter, while in the States they are all housed up and can do nothing but keep the fires and feed the stock. How great the contrast.

Nov. 24: There are a great many Indians on the beach who are continually coming to look at us, but are not saucy.

Nov. 27: Mr. Hill returned from Victoria this evening with 1,000 pounds of flour, 250 for us.

Nov. 28: George Allen came today. He brought the distressing news of mother's death..

Nov. 29: John Indian has slipped

off to the Cove and did not come back until after night. I think he has the notion of leaving.

Dec. 1: John left us today for good. The men at Port Townsend sent him word he could get a dollar a day loading vessels and I suppose that induced him to go.

Dec. 16: Heard today that Mr. Smith had started up to Olympia with our scow and was caught in that storm Friday evening and ran her ashore on McDonald's Island and broke her all to pieces. It is a great loss to us and the other owners.

Dec. 17: Have just heard of the death of Snakalum which happened last night.

Dec. 19: The Skagits have sent over to Port Townsend for the Clallams to come and mourn the loss of Snakalum, their head chief. They all seem to take it very hard. He died with the Quinzy (sic) or sore throat. The Clallams have just left here for the cove. All the Tyees had to come in and warm but I would not let any other in. In a bundle of letters was a letter from Mr. Ebey dated Oregon City Dec. 5.

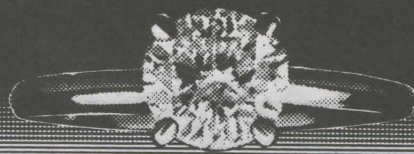
Dec. 25: Christmas day. Dr. Lansdale and Mr. Alexander were here today and brought me a jar of pickles and a box of mincemeat for a Christmas present.

Jan. 9, 1853: An Indian brought me a letter from Mr. Ebey's sister at Port Townsend, telling me of the death of my mother on the plains.

Feb. 1: I received two letters from Mr. Ebey which state that he will be home before long. The last Olympia papers give the proceedings of the legislature. Mr. Ebey has four counties organized and their county seats stationed. Our county is called Island and the county seat is Coveland. The name is appropriate and I am glad we have a county of our own.

(The first officers of Island County were appointed by the Legislative Assembly: Auditor, Richard H. Lansdale; Commissioners John Alex-

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This old house still sits above Ebey's Landing as it did in the days when it was an inn waiting for ferry travelers. Built by the Ebey family in the late 1860s, it is referred to today as the Ferry House.

ander, John Crockett, I. B. Power; Sheriff, Hugh Crockett; Assessor, Humphrey Hill)

Indians Grow Bolder

Feb. 2: Sam came today for his pay. I had to give him a blanket, but he did not deserve anything more than what I had given him, which was a good old coat, hat, boots and two good old shirts. They (*the Indians*) are all a great deal of trouble, and I hope the time will come when we can do without them.

At this point in the Island County Times publication of the diaries in 1891, the editor interspersed a note: "Wonder what the lady would think in these days of Chinese?"

Feb. 17: Captain Paddle came today for some potatoes. I let him have half a bushel for a dollar. Six large Indians came today and crowded in the door so that I could not stand them. I tried to get them out and shut the door, but they stood still and sauced me until I was afraid of them. When they found I would say no more they started off.

Feb. 21: Mr. Ebey was over to

the Cove today and Mr. Fox, Mr. Ivans and Mr. Miller came home with him. They have chartered the *Cabot* to take to the Columbia after families who wish to live here on the Island, perhaps 30 or 40, which will be a great addition to our little settlement. We only number six families now and about 15 children. There are 18 bachelors and youths residing on the Island but we want more families. Coveland is beginning to improve. Vessels are loading in the Cove with piles and square timber. There is one store and Mr. Fox is going to erect a grist and sawmill. There is plenty of good timber and our farmers have some wheat coming on and in another year will be able to make their own flour in place of having to bring it from California at \$20 per hundred (pounds).

Feb. 22: Mr. Ebey is setting out fruit trees today. Some Clallam Indians have returned to their old camping ground in the lower part of our garden.

Feb. 28: The Indians are bothering us about the potatoes our stock and that of our neighbors destroyed

for them last summer, through their own neglect in not fencing or guarding them. They threaten to kill our stock if we do not pay. The potatoes were estimated at \$300 by three competent judges and we have met and concluded it would be best to pay them half at this time and get them to wait for the balance rather than have difficulty with them now when our settlement is so small. John Crockett paid \$20, S. B. Crockett \$30 and Mr. Alexander \$20.

March 4: Some young men came ashore from a brig to find a location for a storehouse on the Island and Mr. Ebey recommended Coveland. They have 15 tons of goods.

Famous Last Words

March 14: The Clallams have been over to the Cove this morning and killed four Indians of the Skagits. The latter came over here with their guns this evening to fight the Clallams who are camped on our beach, but they are cowardly and went away without doing any injury after firing a few gunshots.

(Please turn the page)

Ebeys Didn't Consider Indians a Danger

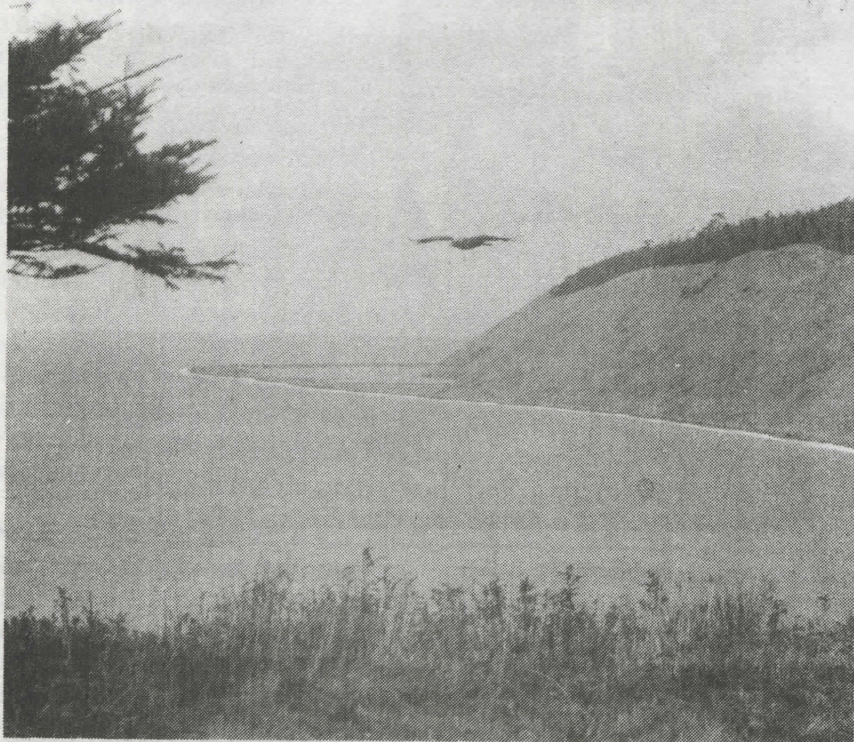
March 15: Old King George came from Port Townsend and there was a Skagit standing by their camp door. King George slipped up behind him and shot him dead and threw the

body in the bay. Mr. Ebey went down in the evening, and there was the dead Indian floating back and forth in the surf. They say the reason of the killing was that there is a superstition

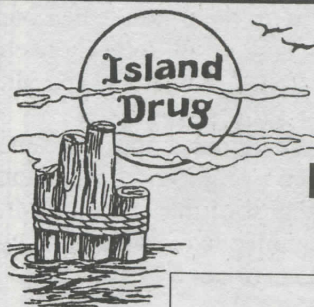
among the Indians that there are those who the whites would call witches, and they are trying to kill them off.

March 16: I hear no shooting today but some of old Lalack's family stood guard all night fearing the Skagits. I understand today they have all moved from the Cove to Oak Harbor. You who may see this in after years may wonder how the first settlers of this country could live without being in a great deal of danger. But we feel in perfect safety, as the Indians know better than to murder a white person. They know we could have them all killed, therefore they live in fear toward the whites.

(Ed. Note: Mrs. Ebey did not live to see her husband murdered and beheaded by the Indians or she would not have put so much faith in them.)



An eagle soars across Ebey's Landing.



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Water Ways Were Whidbey's Highways

Joseph Jewett, a grandson of Robert Bailey, wrote that he first saw Whidbey Island in 1896 when he came to the Island with his parents aboard a sternwheeler. The family disembarked at Possession Point, and from there they walked the beach at low tide all the way to Cultus Bay, leading their cattle and horses.

There were no docks or roads on that part of the Island at that time. The beach was the easiest "road" to take going anywhere. Jewett related that he started his schooling in 1901, walking through dense forests to the nearest school, located at what was later Maxwellton.

Cultus Bay, the name coming from the Indian word for "bad," was so-called because of the difficulty ships had finding refuge from the southerly winds that prevailed. It was a favored meeting place for Indians. On the long sandspit they gathered to dig clams, dry them, and to smoke salmon.



Old timers recalled that the Indians had a "long house" and a smaller house on the spit, while two more long houses were located farther north along the bay. As late as 1900 there were no stores or trading posts in the whole Scatchet Head area.

Mr. Ellis, a farmer at Cultus Bay, wrote of sailing his boat to Everett for supplies, and then having to wait outside in the strait for a high tide to carry him back. A sudden storm could make this a very dangerous journey.

The water highways of the 1850s were fraught with much uncertainty. The late Flora Pearson Engle quotes from Mrs. Isaac Ebey's diary: "This evening at bedtime Mr. Ebey arrived accompanied by Mr. Bailey. They were almost exhausted, after having walked a great distance, leaving their canoe and Indians on account of high winds...."

Colonel Ebey was returning from Olympia and for some reason Bailey was with him. (Robert Bailey was South Whidbey's first permanent settler, and Cultus Bay was called Bailey's Bay in the early years.)

Will Engle, one of the Island's early settlers in the Ebey's Prairie area, told of going down-Island in the 1850s, to Bailey's to cut timber. ☒



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**A Langley
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Langley Also 100 Years Old This Centennial Year

The town of Langley on South Whidbey came into being almost simultaneously with the statehood of Washington. In 1881 Jacob Anthes, the "Father of Langley," bought 120 acres of land one mile west of the present townsite from John Phinney for \$100, built a cabin and lived there for some years, clearing land and cutting cordwood for woodburning steamers plying the Sound.

Noting the good harbor and that it was accessible from almost any point, he felt sure that this was a good place for a town to locate. So in 1886 he filed a homestead claim.

In 1889, the Great Northern Railway was expanding to the coast, and townsites were being platted all over the Northwest. Now was the time to act. Jacob Anthes, Judge J. W. Langley of Seattle, C. W. Sheafe,

James Satterlee, A. P. Kirk and Howard B. Slauson incorporated the Langley Land and Improvement Co., and the town of Langley was born. This was the materialization of Anthes' dream.

A dock was built for \$5,000, then a general store and post office, with young Anthes taking a leading part. he was the town's first storekeeper and postmaster. His trading post was the center of the little settlement that began to grow. A log school house was soon built for the 15 children there, at a cost of \$2.50 per month per child. This was collected by Anthes to pay the teacher's salary. His store also contracted with steamboats for cordwood, a business that employed 25 woodsmen and seven teams of horses.

The depression of 1893 dealt Langley a hard blow. The dock went out in a storm and had to be rebuilt, then the railway put the steamboats out of business. Hard times endured until the 1898 Gold Rush to Alaska provided work for 100 men in the Langley area, providing piling and

brush.

In 1902, a road to Coupeville was opened and progress became constant.

In 1989, this year of the State Centennial, Langley is a prosperous and growing community with a lively art colony, school buildings and churches. It is the site of the Island County Fair each August, and supports many cultural groups. Located on the waters of Saratoga Passage, the town is situated west of Camano Island. A few miles south, the Mukilteo ferry unites Clinton with the mainland.



TM

Dykers Bought Whidbey Farm in 1900

Crescent Harbor, named by Dr. Richard Lansdale in 1852, was a popular place for some of Whidbey Island's first settlers. The Wallace, Izett, and Miller families farmed the broad acres they first cleared; they built their homes, schools and even a blockhouse, which fortunately was never needed and which later became a storehouse for vegetables.

In the very early days packs of wolves roamed the area making night travel hazardous. Many a near calamity was described by the settlers, of times they were treed by a pack of howling wolves while on a night mission through the woods.

But slowly the woods became fields, farms carved from North Whidbey forests. Roads were a problem, the first road wound about through trees and stumps, not graded and just barely wide enough to let a horse and wagon pass.

As late as the 1890s, the favorite route to Oak Harbor for Crescent Harbor farmers was along the shore to the Big Spring at the foot of the bluff on the east side of Oak Harbor. And when Herb Dykers bought a farm in Crescent Harbor, he remembered walking the shore to Oak Harbor to buy supplies, a distance of several miles. He told how he stopped at the Big Spring, which until the early 1900s was a sizeable small river that poured from the bluff into Crescent Harbor. There he met Indians who were paddling the Saratoga Passage waters and would stop for fresh water to drink. It was a refreshing stopover on a hot day.

The big Dykers house was part of a house built by an earlier settler, James Buzby, in 1859. The Dykers family bought it about 1900 and found the walls lined with New York Times newspaper!

All of the Dykers children were born on the Crescent Harbor farm they called "Herteveld": Martha, Obert, Lawrence, Barbara, Chapin and Herbert.

Herb Dykers came from Rotter-



North Whidbey folks lined Pioneer Way in 1941 for the Holland Days Parade. Pictured is a farm wagon and double team, with Obert Dykers and Allen Baird up. Horses were Maude, Mutt, Sparky and Ginger. This was the year the Dykers farm, 'Herteveld,' was sold to the Navy and the family moved to Skagit County.

dam in 1896, and as a single man, lived in a makeshift cabin near Cranberry Lake for some time, walking to Oak Harbor daily to find work. He later worked in Seattle where jobs were more plentiful, saved his money and bought the 300 acre farm that was to become the home-place for the Dykers family.

Obert Dykers carried on the farming along with his brother Chapin until the Crescent Harbor farm was sold to the Navy in 1941. The family moved to the Loop farm near Edison where the brothers continued farming. They later moved to the Conway area, another fertile farmland. In the late 1960s they moved to McLean Road just west of Mount Vernon where they engaged in dairying. Obert, known from childhood as

"Obe" operated a cattle hauling business, and said he knew every road and byway in both Skagit and Island counties.

Some small family "remembrances" include Obert and Martha walking to school in Crescent Harbor when they started school, and in the mid-1920s when the districts were joined, they rode the open-air school bus over the bumpy road into Oak Harbor.

Another interesting item was that of Obert's serious illness with pneumonia in 1934. There were no hospitals, and the family doctor, Henry Carskadden, performed a rib resection in the home. When Obert was born in 1913, the attending doctor, Dr. J. R. Parsons, came from Oak Harbor in a horse and buggy. <>



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To look back over the 100 year history of Whidbey Island and especially that part which centers around Coupeville is to recall scenes of tragedy and humor, hardships and blessings, and continual progress and change. We who have spent our lives on the Island have seen the big and little events happen, or heard of them from our fathers and mothers. They are not dull pages from history to us, but personal memories. So, too, shall this short history of Coupeville and the surrounding area be a series of personal recollections aimed at giving life and breath to yellowing pages of records and books.

Living on Whidbey Island in the early days was pioneering in a very real sense. Much of what we took for granted then seems like almost unbearable hardship today. There were no roads, the country was wild and the Indians a constant threat, mail service was erratic, and provisions were often scarce. It was said in those days that at Coveland (San de Fuca) they ate salmon and potatoes. At Coupeville venison and no potatoes. It was not uncommon for a family or settlement to be without flour for months at a time.

The history of Coupeville as a

town properly begins in 1854 when Captain Thomas Coupe build the first frame house there. He had previously filed a claim on the site on November 20, 1852, after his first voyage to that area.

My father, William B. Engle, who came with him on that first trip, staked out his claim on Ebey's Prairie and built a frame house there in 1853. His trip to pick up bricks for the chimney made the first wagon tracks across the future townsite. Previously, supplied had been put ashore at Davis' Landing some distance to the north.

My father's claim adjoined that of Col. Isaac N. Ebey, who filed in 1850 and is generally regarded as the first permanent white settler on the Island and one of its most honored pioneers.

The murder of Colonel Ebey by a group of Haidah Indians on August 12, 1857, is one of the most tragic episodes in the Island's history. Colonel Ebey and his family were then living in what they affectionately called "The Cabins," not far from Ebey's Landing. There had been considerable trouble with the Haidahs for several months which occasionally flared into open warfare. On the afternoon of the murder, a group of Indians had come to the Ebey house

Random Recollections of Coupeville

By Carl T. Engle

(As told to Jim Power, and printed in a Souvenir Edition commemorating Whidbey Island's Centennial, 1848-1948, reviewing 100 years of progress on Whidbey Island.)

but had left without causing undue alarm.

At the time, United States Marshall George W. Corliss and his wife were visiting the Ebey's before returning to Olympia. Several hours after the family and their friends retired, the Indians attacked. Mrs. Corliss jumped from a window and ran to my father's place and then to the home of Colonel Ebey's parents to give the alarm. All of the group staying at "The Cabins" escaped except Colonel Ebey. He went outside at the first sound from the Indians and was shot down and beheaded without warning.

The news of his death shocked not only people of the Island but those on the mainland as well. John Crockett made the coffin for Colonel Ebey, and my father dug the grave. The murderers were never caught.

Not all the events were tragic, however, and one does not dwell on them too much when looking back. We made most of our amusement, and much of it was in the spirit of horseplay. On one occasion a group got together to shivaree (charivari) a pair of newlyweds. When the couple refused to open the door, the group opened a window and pushed a pig through. This brought the door open in short order.

Pigs at one time were so numerous on the Island as to be a nuisance. They sprang from domestic ones



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which had escaped and gone wild, multiplying rapidly. As boys, we used to sit in trees at night at the edge of gardens and shoot them to prevent them from destroying the produce. Many of the settlers built traps to catch them. The last ones were killed or trapped around 1885 or 1886.

Coupeville's growth throughout the years was fairly steady if not spectacular. New businesses and stores were located in the town from time to time. The establishment of the Puget Sound Academy in the late 1880s made Coupeville an educational center for the northern Sound area. Students came to it from all over the surrounding area and even from as far as Oregon. There were two of us in the graduating class of '94: Spurgeon H. Calhoun and myself.

The town experienced two booms in its time, but unlike some of the hopeful metropolises started in the same time, it managed to survive. The first one came about 1890 when the whole area had a building hysteria. A rash of new townsites sprang up all over the Island, but most of these died aborning. The second Coupeville boom came in 1902 at the time Fort Casey was built.

There were several factors that contributed to Coupeville's permanence. One of these was the productivity of the prairies which made the town a shipping point for apples, potatoes, wheat, oats, wool and lumber. Being the county seat also contributed to stability as did the presence of a bank in the town. It was never much of a manufacturing center due to shipping problems, but many industries were started, some of which thrived for a time.

A sawmill built by Luther Clark and operated by the Lovejoy brothers survived for many years. These same brothers also built four steamboats at Coupeville. One of these went to the Yukon and operated there. The other three plied the Sound for many years.

A potato dryer was built during

the Alaska gold rush and operated successfully for several years. Attempts were made to establish a cannery, but this venture was never a success.


Three different tries were made to get a railroad on the Island. The first was by Jay Cook, the New York financier. If Cook had not gone bankrupt, the Island might have had rail service. Another was proposed about 1890, but failed. The last proposal was made in 1910 when promoters came in and sold stock. After collecting several thousand dollars from investors, the promoters vanished leaving Island people without a railroad or the money they had invested.

Today (1948), Coupeville has forgotten the delusions of grandeur that occasionally swept over it in earlier days. It remains the county seat, a pleasant home for its people, and the trading area for the rich prairies stretching out behind the town. Good roads link it with other parts of



The 'old' Admiralty Head Lighthouse that the author's mother and grandfather tended for many years.

the Island, and the bridge at Deception Pass to the north and regular ferry service to the south give easy access to the mainland.

To many of us, however, it still remains a place beloved in memory and rich in history where the pioneer spirit is never very far away. 



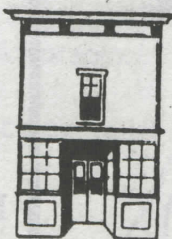
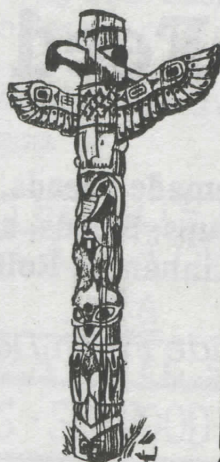


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