



Spindrift Two

Fall 1993

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\$1.00

Clover Valley was once a forest

Clover Valley, now the home of the Whidbey Island Naval Air Station, was once a vast forest growing on fertile ground. Some of its history was preserved through the writings of the late Edward Allen "Al" Power, who grew up in Clover Valley and graduated from Oak Harbor High School in the early 1920s.

When the Power family moved to Whidbey Island in 1892, they began an extensive program of clearing the forest off some of the best farm land on the Island. The clearing lasted for the next 35 years.

The 160 acre tract was purchased for \$4,500. John Power Sr. and John Power Jr. moved to the Island in the fall followed by Edgar Power the next month.

In 1906 the west half of 80 acres was sold to Ulbe Faber for \$6,000 and 40 acres to E. Eerkes for \$2,000; and another 40 acres to Fred DeWilde.

About 1901 Power bought the 160 acre farm in Crescent Harbor that later became the Fakkema Farm. The 400 acre Merritt farm was bought by John Sr. and in 1906 Edgar, his wife Grace and 15 month old Allen moved from the log cabin, then a shed to an imposing farm home built by Harvey Hill and Vince Stroops. This farm became one of the most productive on the Island.

Ed. note: On a Sunday afternoon in 1927 four young people, "Dutch" Power, Dave Judson Jr., Amy Ellen Bogue and Dorothy Burrier spent the afternoon climbing Goose Rock, and on our way home we stopped at the Power farm where Mrs. Power served us tea and crumpets in the big dining room.

The Power family later lived on



The Christian Reformed Church was built in the woods between Oak Harbor and Clover Valley in 1904 so both farmers and townsmen could attend. It became the Church of the Nazarene in the 1920s, and now is an apartment house. It sits on 80th NW in its original location; the parish house is gone.

Protection Island for some years.

An interesting account of the Indians was given by Ed Power in

his book "Whidbey Island Memories." The book is available at the Island County Museum.

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Crescent Harbor had a blockhouse

Yes, Virginia, there WAS a blockhouse built for protection against the Indians in 1855 in Crescent Harbor. The year 1855 was a time when the early settlers on Whidbey were concerned for their safety, and many a night was spent by families in the blockhouse, the small but effective "fort"

of that day.

From the files at the County Auditor's office is the following 1855 document: "Know all men by these present that I, William Wallace, for the consideration of protecting myself and family and my neighbors against the ravages of the Indians do hereby grant unto

Caleb Miller, James Busby and F. A. Chenoweth in trust for the neighborhood, a parcel Of one half acre of ground, the center of which is the center of the present blockhouse now standing near the residence of said Wallace's house, to have and to hold said building and fixtures in trust for the use of the neighborhood for the period of five years. It is understood that the "neighborhood" is from Miller's Point to George W. Allen's and Edward Barrington's. Dated Nov. 5, 1855, William Wallace, G. W. Allen and James Mounts, witnesses."

William Wallace filed the first land claim in Crescent Harbor, was noted for bringing the first horses to Whidbey Island in the summer of 1851 to work his farm, and his daughter, Polowna Wallace, born to the family that same year was the first white child born on Whidbey.

In 1853 the first board of County Commissioners of Island County granted a road to be built from the head of Penn's Cove (San de Fuca today) to the Wallace farm along the shores of Oak and Crescent Harbors. The official county board met in the home of John Alexander at Coupeville on April 4, 1853.



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Wallaces were first white family

The beautiful area on North Whidbey bounded by a gently curving beach was named Crescent Harbor by Dr. Richard H. Lansdale, an early settler who took up a donation claim at the head of Penn's Cove.

Today Crescent Harbor, from the county road to the beach, to and including Polnell Point is owned by Whidbey Naval Air Station. Here is located, instead of settlers cabins and a blockhouse, the Seaplane Base no longer used as such since the giant seaplanes of World War II became obsolete.

On Crescent Harbor property also is a game preserve and homes for enlisted personnel, as well as the Crescent Harbor and Olympic View Elementary schools. Polnell Point is a Navy survival area.

When William Wallace, who with his wife crossed the plains in 1845 with a party of immigrants and who narrowly escaped the Whitman Mission Massacre, learned that any settler here might become possessor of 640 acres of land under the Donation Claim Act, he gathered his possessions and set out for Puget Sound.

When he arrived at Smithfield, now Olympia, he found the Wallaces were the only white family there!

Wallace's ambition for free land was fired further when he met Col. Isaac N. Ebey, who had just located a claim on Whidbey Island still known as Ebey's Landing. Wallace started out by Indian canoe and a scow for his "land of dreams."

Bessie Wallace later told of hearing her parents tell of their visit to the Indian Village in Elliot Bay (Seattle) and how kind and hospitable the Indian chief was to them. He offered them all the land

they wanted in the area of the bay if they would only stay, but they continued on to Crescent Harbor.

Wallace located on 640 acres where the Navy game preserve and north lay, on what was later called the John Gould place. The Wallace family was the first white "family" on North Whidbey, as only a number of bachelors had arrived to take up land claims.

Soon the Wallace family had white neighbors and Crescent Harbor settlers in the early days included James Busby, James Nesbit, John Izett, Judge Cheno-

weth, Thomas Bruce, Caleb Miller, and James and Milton Mounts.

In 1853, W. B. Morse, a Methodist minister preached at the Wallace home. And in 1855 the settlers built a schoolhouse on Wallace property where church and public gatherings were held.

Bessie Wallace later wrote that she always regretted when growing up that her father had refused the offers of Chief Seattle and persisted in going so far from the main settlements where the family was deprived of church, school and social life.

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News items from the 'olden days'

The Island County Times of Coupeville reported news from all of North Whidbey including the following items in 1891:

Two new families were added to the Crescent Harbor area, the Case family from Michigan on the Crome place, and a man from Seattle who bought 15 acres of the Busby place for \$1,500.

The new Methodist Church in Crescent Harbor was fast going up and was ready for the plasterers. Built by the Lovejoy Company of Coupeville, "it is one of the handsomest buildings on Whidbey."

A Chinese fishing junk sailed into Penn Cove, and was boarded by Port Townsend Customs officials but no contraband found.

Blowers and Kineth of Coupeville were offering land for \$50 to \$100 per lot, at Glenwood Heights; one third down, balance in three months.

A. W. Bash of Oak Harbor was readying to build a house and plant fruit trees. (Bash's big square farmhouse was later sold to the Eerkes family and then to the Navy in 1941. It stood where the Seaplane Base entrance was located, now part of Skagit Valley College).

San de Fuca, formerly Cove-land was experiencing great growth, with a starch factory, a match factory, a cannery and shingle mills proposed.

The home of George Perrigo on Perrigo's Bluff near Ebey's Landing was completely destroyed by fire.

The "Chinese Menace" was written about, when several hundred Chinese were living on the Island. It was said they worked for less than white men, thereby

sending wages down and unemployment up. An effort was being made to establish a "white laundry" in Coupeville in opposition to two Chinese laundries. The local Chinese were all men, who worked and sent their pay home to China. They lived in a large bunkhouse on Terry Road, and the late Carl Engle of Coupeville told of visiting the Chinese compound as a boy and seeing them smoking opium at the close of the day's work. He said they loved children and were very good to him.

One hundred years ago, Billy Barlow, Skagit Indian Chief gave notice to all trespassers on the beach near the potlach house on Penn Cove to not pick the gooseberries and currants there. He also warned trespassers against breaking into the house where the Barlow goods were stored. "If you want berries or to go into the

house," he said, "ask, and it shall be given."

The Coupeville Academy, the "only institution of higher learning north of Seattle," opened in 1887 with the Rev. George Lindsay as Principal and three instructors. The Rev. Lindsay was the pastor of the Coupeville Congregational Church. When he left, the Rev. Chas. Newberry was called to be Principal.

The Hon. Charles T. Terry, member of the state legislature in 1885-86 suggested to the Congregational Church that the Academy be located in Coupeville. "If the people will donate the land and building, the church will raise an endowment of \$10,000," he said.

Dr. J. A. Highwarden offered a donation of \$500, and Mrs. Thomas Coupe donated 20 acres of land. J.E. Ebey donated 10 acres, and others gave \$10 to \$50.



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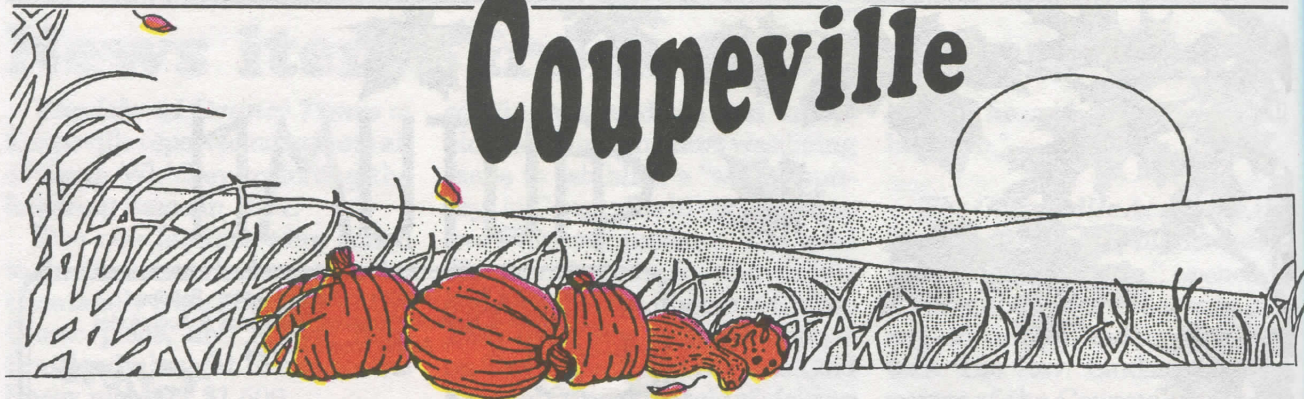
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Corner of P
1007 W. Pl
Oak Harbor

Coupeville



Captains first settled on Penn Cove

Penn Cove was a popular harbor for deep sea ships of the 1850s and '60s some 69 plus years after Joseph Whidbey landed his bark and talked to the Skagit Indians. Whidbey made detailed reports on the terrain and harbor, pointing out the pleasant rolling landscape dotted with oak trees and tall grass. The Indians were friendly and hospitable.

Captain Benjamin Barstow opened the first Trading Post in 1853 on the point where Judge Still built his get-away resort that is now the Captain Whidbey Inn. For this commercial venture, Captain Barstow gave up the sea.

In March of 1852 Captain Richard B. Holbrook along with Captain Eli Hathaway sailed into Penn Cove from Port Townsend. Holbrook homesteaded 160 acres in the middle of what is today San de Fuca, and he and Hathaway

opened a trading post on the mainland across from the southern point of Lummi Island. Each invested \$1,300 each to stock the store but were burned out by the Haidah Indians of Northern Vancouver Island and barely escaped with their lives.

Holbrook returned to Whidbey and built the two story frame house that still stands (1993) on the upper side of Highway 20 at the head of the San de Fuca dock. The trees that stand by the house were planted by Captain Holbrook from sprouts taken from the "Roeder tree" in 1880. The trees are 113 years old!

Captain Holbrook served two terms in the Territorial Legislature and was Assistant Indian Agent under Captain Fay in 1857. He was a great lobbyist for the territory. He had also served as Treasurer of Island County when

the "county" consisted not only of today's Island County, but Skagit, Snohomish, Whatcom and San Juan Counties. He kept the County funds in a sugar bowl in the china closet in his log cabin home! This caused some worry, but where else could one keep any amount of money in the Northwest where only primitive methods were available for government business?

In November of 1852 Captain Thomas Coupe filed his claim to what was to become the town of Coupeville, Island County's seat of government. The claims of Coupe, John Alexander and Captain Lovejoy filled the pleasant little hollow known to the Indians as "Psa-tle" translated into "snake basket." The name was a natural for a pleasant sun-warmed sloping area where the harmless gar-

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ter snakes basked in the sun.

The Indians who lived in their longhouses on the waterfront gave simple and often humorous-sounding (to the white man) names to area locations.

The adventurous Captain Coupe had some difficulty convincing his wife of any advantages of making a home on Whidbey Island. There were no schools, churches or other evidences of civilization and only transportation by water.

Olympia, still Smithfield at that time, was the nearest trading post and a "trip to the store" took several days by Indian canoe. But when the Captain promised to give up the sea, Mrs. Coupe came to live on Whidbey. The adventurous and daring sea-Captain went back on his promise. He built three sloops and made three trips around the Horn to France in 1855 and 1856. His ships carried spars from Camano Island, loaded at Utsalady and destined for Brest, in France.

The story is told of Captain Coupe's determination to carry all possible sail, and he gave no orders to take in any canvas until it looked as though the masts would be carried away. At one time when he did give orders to take in sail, the storm was so fierce that the sailors refused to go aloft because of the danger of being swept away. In a towering rage, the high-tempered Captain went up the mast himself wearing a pair of canvas trousers. A furious gust ripped the pants at the seams and tore them off completely!

The Coupe home in Coupeville still stands, along with a great walnut tree planted by the good Captain himself nearly a century and a half ago. A companion tree blew down in a storm several years ago.

SOUR GRAPES

or

There are two sides to every fish story

by Dorothy Neil

Dedicated to Island fishermen

Twinkle, twinkle little fish,
Now I wonder where you ish,
Down there wet and tantalizing,
On my motives theorizing!
How you dart and turn and leap
While I fidget, fish, and sleep.
As I yearn for tugging bite,
Your capricious appetite,
Keeps you safe from reeling snare,
And my luscious Sunday fare.
When the blazing sun has set
And I wish I'd used a net,
Little fishy, take a bow!
Steak is better, anyhow.

Epitaph

Fish, fishy in the brook,
Ate a fish hook like a schnook,
Now it really doesn't matter,
Fishy's resting on a platter.

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On the Water Under Front Street, Coupeville

Smith Island as it was in 1896

This account of Smith Island appeared in the Island County Times of Aug. 21, 1896, written by Horace Holbrook.

Smith, or Blunt Island is located in the Strait of Juan de Fuca about 13 miles NNE of New Dungeness, 11 miles NW of the entrance of Admiralty Inlet, and nine miles west of the north end of Whidbey Island. It would be rectangular if three of its angles were not rounded off. On the west side there is a vertical bank of 60 feet in height, from which the island gradually slopes to the east, with a bank of only 3 or 4 feet on that side. It has an area of about 50 acres, with 8 under cultivation.

The lighthouse was built in 1860, kept by Frank Dennison in a two story brick structure with a basement. It has on the north side a tower of six feet interior dimension from the basement to 10 feet above the roof. The iron and glass dome contains the light, lenses and revolving machinery. The light is of the fourth order, flashing white every 30 seconds, is 90 feet above sea level and is visible for 15.25 nautical miles.

A new light and set of machinery was installed two years ago. It was constructed in Paris in 1894 by Barbere and Fenestere and the lenses are revolved by clockwork, worked by a 50 pound weight descending in a groove in the side of the tower.

On a clear summer day, a grand view could not be had than from the tower in mid-channel of the straits. On the north the islands of the San Juan group are seen, reaching 1,600 feet. On the west Vancouver Island and the broad expanse of the straits as they extend to the ocean. On the south-west and south the Olympic moun-



tains appear to rise from the water's edge and mingle their snow clad summits with the clouds. ...

On the east is Whidbey Island, with the Cascade range above the wooded crest. Mt. Rainier is to the south and Baker to the north ... a mirage is often seen from the island in the summer ...

Another phenomenon: The waves over the sandbar extending from the east side of the island for one mile into the straits. The middle of this bar is bared at half tide, and during heavy gales from the west, when the water covers this portion of it, the waves traveling in an easterly direction sweep around the island and meet over the sandbar with such force that sometimes a wall of water more than a hundred feet in length is thrown up into the air to a height of 50 feet.

Geological features: Sedimentary deposit with slight trace of glacial drift. There are signs of a gradual settling of the island, due to the position between two mountain ranges, one of which is undergoing growth. But the most startling feature is the rapid rate of erosion by wave action which is taking place on its north, west and south sides.

On the east side a part of the debris is being piled in the bar before mentioned, far into the Straits. The rate of erosion is about five feet per annum, so at the

closing days of the glacial epoch, if the rate has been the same, the island extended for miles in a westerly and southerly direction. Only two or three more centuries will pass before the island will be but a sand bar to mark the spot where Smith Island once flourished.

"Smith Island"

Seven small white buildings, long
deserted,
Dot that little Island off to leeward
Between two stands of conifers
In the morning sun it floats
A mirage,
Borne on fog above the gray of sky
and water
Drifting aimlessly throughout the
day.
Did I say aimlessly?
All the sea-creatures
Know its roots are locked in these
uneven waters!
Even man knows this for did he not
Build himself a lighthouse on her
crown,
Whose winking light guides ships in
darkness
Through the Straits?
Sun outlines her form but briefly,
Flashing from the windowed
buildings.
Etching deep her southern cliffs.
And like a watercolor painting,
The long sandbar to northward
Fades into the water
As a sailboat
Bobs between it and my Island.
... DN

Smith Island as it was in 1896

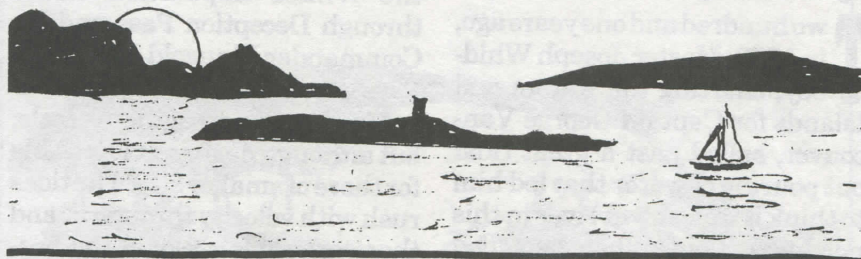
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