

*Whidbey Spindrift*  
*Spring - 1970*





## ALLEN'S CLAIM

George Washington Lafayette Allen was one of Oak Harbor's first settlers. He took up a quarter section of land north of Oak Harbor proper.

He was sheriff of Island county at an extremely early date, possibly the 1860's. Ten years later he left the island, but returned in the 1870's to rent the Samuel Crockett Sr. farm near Admiralty Head for a short time, and brought with him a second wife. He subsequently owned a place on the Swinomish flats near LaConner.

Mrs. Isaac N. Ebey mentioned Allen in her dairy several times. Sept. 1, 1852: High Crockett and George Allen got back last night with the scows. Nov. 28: George Allen was over today and brought me the distressing word of Mother's death (that event occurred while her mother, Mrs. Davis, was crossing the planes with an emigrant train to join her daughter on Whidbey Island.)

Jan. 6, 1853: Mr. Allen was here today with Mr. Smith to borrow a yoke of oxen to plow. They are all in a great way over at the Cove about plowing. Jan. 26: George Allen was here to borrow a froe. I could not refuse but hated very much to see it go. (In pioneer times borrowing and lending were common, since tools were very scarce.)



The race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong; neither yet bread to the wise; nor yet riches to men of understanding; nor yet favor to men of skill; but time and chance happens to them all. Eccles .9:11

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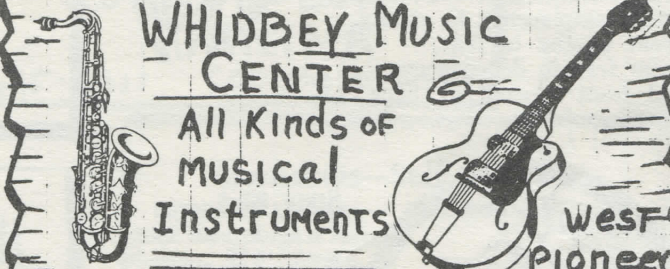
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# Island Mail

The first lighthouse inside Cape Flattery was erected at Admiralty Head (site of Fort Casey) in 1860, a testimonial of the Island's prominence in shipping on the sound. Mail service was provided in 1857, and a postoffice established at Coveland (at the head of Penn's Cove, near San de Fuca), and in 1859 another post-office open in Coupeville.

The early mail routes of those days brought the mail ashore at Ebey's Landing where it was taken by wagon or horseback to Coveland, Oak Harbor, Crescent Harbor and Coupeville. Thomas Numan brought the first mail by horseback to Oak Harbor.

## First School

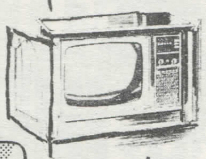
The 1860's saw the first school house built on Smith Prairie. The school was for white children only, and an old-timer whose father was an early day settler said he remembered the Indian children waiting outside the log school for recess when their white playmates could come out to play.

## Camano 1900

In 1900, Camano Island had 22 logging camps with an output of a quarter of a million dollars a year. Each employed from ten to 30 men who earned from \$40 to \$125 a month.

Utsaladdy was the metropolis, listed as a good little business village. During the fishing season the population doubled. Utsaladdy was considered the best lumber mill located on Puget Sound. It had a deep water harbor well protected from the wind, and was close to a railroad.


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# THE FIRST HOLLANDERS CAME ON 'IDAHO' IN 1894

Until 1892 there was little development on North Whidbey because the Northern Pacific railway had taken advantage of a government offer to sell land for \$1.25 per acre, and had bought up virtually all the unlocated land and held it until that date.

When the railway loosed their hold on the land, the Tucker-Potter Land Co. proposed fruit ranches to attract buyers from the mid-west.



The company spent a great deal of money clearing and grading 640 acres to plant to prunes. This was instrumental in bringing a great many settlers into the Duguala Bay area before the company folded.



State Flag

The official flag of the state is of dark green silk, bearing in its center a reproduction of the seal of the State of Washington, embroidered, printed or stamped thereon. When a fringe is used it is gold or yellow.

Stockholders in the company turned their holdings over to a R. E. Werkman, who set about interesting Hollanders who had settled in the east and midwest, and in 1894, the steamer Idaho brought its first passenger list to North Whidbey. Eighteen Holland



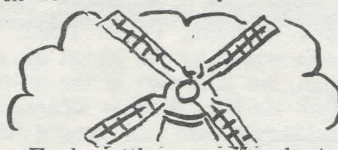
colonists were aboard, and a year later 60 more arrives with their families. Within two years there were 200 on North Whidbey, industrious, thrifty people, some with practically no money, who built homes and began farming through some of the hardest times the country had known.

One wonders at the courage of immigrants to a new and undeveloped country, speaking an unfamiliar language, and with little money. Tucker-Potter advertised a "great fruit area that needs only development to make all owning a portion of it wealthy."


## "First Child" Of Hollanders

Ben Ronhaar of Oak Harbor says that his family settled in San de Fuca on Nov. 3, 1895, and moved to Oak Harbor in the spring of 1896. He was born Dec. 13, 1895, and lays claim to being that "first baby".

He also said that Martinus Heller was born in Michigan, coming to Whidbey with his parents, and his brother George was born in 1896 on Whidbey Island.



Each settler was to plant and cultivate for five years, an area one mile square, then return it to the stockholders at \$250 an acre for the land they had paid \$50 per acre. A number of five-acre tracts were sold; only four men paid the company in full for their acreage and remained on Whidbey when the company quit.

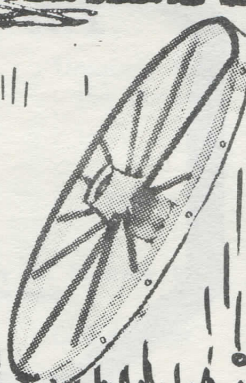


## PIONEER

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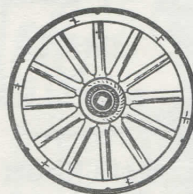
# EARLIEST CRESCENT HARBOR SETTLERS

Wallace located on 640 acres where the Navy game preserve and north lay, what was later called the John Gould place after it was sold to another pioneer.

Bessie Wallace noted that the Wallace family was the first white family on North Whidbey at that time (a number of bachelors had arrived to take up land claims) since Col. Ebey had not yet moved his family to the Island.

In a short time, however, the Wallace family was not without white neighbors. The Wallaces lived in Crescent Harbor during the 1850's and 1860's and Bessie Wallace married John A. Cornelius, living for a year at Oak Harbor until moving to the Skagit flats.

Bessie Wallace 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 for the family was deprived of church, school, and social life.



Crescent Harbor settlers in those early days included William Wallace, James Busby, James Nesbit, John Izett, Judge Chenoweth, Thomas Bruce, Caleb Miller, James and Milton Mounts, and others.




In 1853, W. B. Morse, a Methodist minister, appointed to Whidbey Island, preached at the home of William Wallace. In 1855 a school house was built on the Wallace property, and church and other public gatherings were held there.



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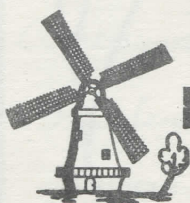
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## ORCHARD TROUBLE

Dr. Peter B. Miller and his wife Eva bought 160 acres of marshland south of Wheeler Lake on December 13, 1882. They built a cabin on the ground that became the Feek Ranch

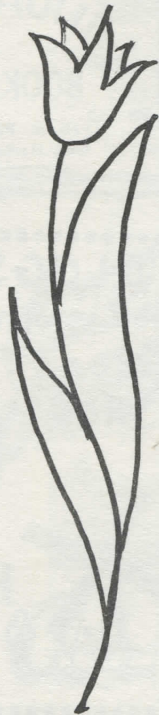
Miller hired Chinese workers to farm the property and they grew and harvested tons of onions and hay which Miller sold in Seattle. Miller, who spent most of his time in Seattle, had the Chinamen plant an orchard but the trees would not grow. On a trip to the island one day he found that all the orchard trees had been dug up and stacked in a corner of the plot while the Chinamen worked the ground with an oxen-pulled plow. The trees, they told him, would be replanted again in straight rows just as they had been every year after the field was plowed!

## FIRST SAWMILL


When Mrs. Charles Nienhuis joined her husband in Oak Harbor, they bought \$43 worth of used furniture and moved into a house in Swantown until they could build themselves a cabin in the woods.

In 1903, Nienhuis, his father E. K. Nienhuis, Henry Riksen and Dan Schowalter set up a mill in Clover Valley. As a result they supplied nearly all the lumber for houses and stores on North Whidbey.

Nienhuis dug potatoes for six cents a sack that first year when 17 sacks a day was a good day's work. He told that he wrote to his wife and told her the potatoes were so big that he could get one into a coal oil can.



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