

# Spindrift Two

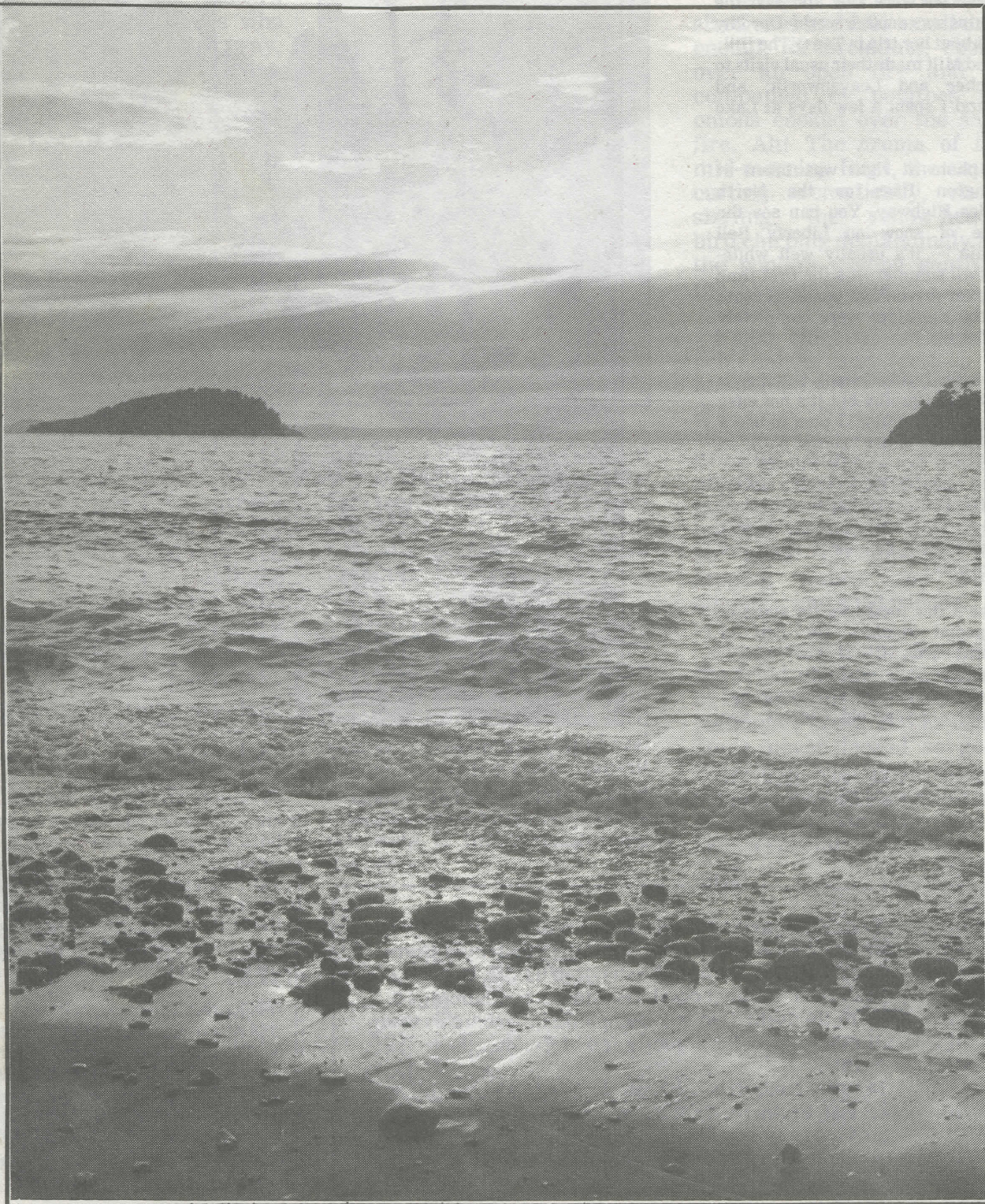
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Volume 8

Number 2

*Fall 1984*

Whidbey Island's Own Magazine





## <sup>4</sup> By Horse and Buggy to Deception Pass

As editor of the Island County Times in the 1950s, I learned a great deal about the history of Coupeville and Whidbey Island from some of the sons and daughters of the Island's very first pioneers

Such a friend was Carl T. Engle, who was elderly at that time, but whose memory of names, places and details was phenomenal. Having gleaned most of the news happenings in Coupeville within a short time, I would hie myself to the Engle farm to visit with Carl and his lovely wife Edith, and hear about history first-hand.

The row of lilacs along the west side of my home on the top of the hill in Oak Harbor came from the Engle farm. Carl Engle himself dug the young plants for me.

Engle's account of a trip from Coupeville to Deception Pass in 1893 is a classic of history that outlines the wilderness of North Whidbey 90 years ago. Today, the route is encompassed by a swiftly growing town of Oak Harbor, and the Whidbey Island Naval Air Station. The "road" spoken of by Engle was the main road north to the ferry until the Navy arrived in the early 1940s. Twice the highway has been moved to accommodate the Ault Field airstrips.

Engle's account:

"I remember a group who about 1893

made the trip to Deception Pass. When you step into your car and in a few minutes are at the bridge, I wonder how many ever stop to think what a trip it was in those days.

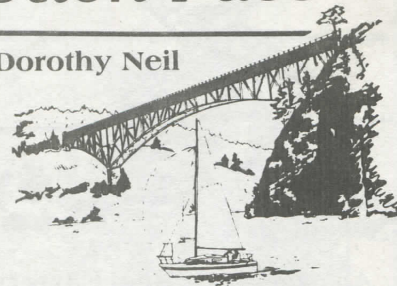
"The group included my father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. William Engle; Miss Edith Comstock, Mr. and Mrs. A.H. Kohne, Mrs. Albert Kineth, Mrs. John Robertson and the C.E. and F.D. Newberrys.

"Having to use farm horses that were not suited for fast driving, we left home about five in the morning. The road was different in those days, it left Coupeville not over half-way from the Ben Tufts place and the electric substation; went by the house owned by Lawrence Boyer and below to where Dr. Bishop's new home is.

"The next house we came to was the George Libbey house close to the old county courthouse, then the Grasser place. (At the head of Penn Cove). Then on to what was to some extent known as a 'ghost town,' San de Fuca. It had passed its boom stage by then and was gradually getting back to normal.

"Along the bluff we came to the Monroe place and up the hill, passed the Condra and Watson houses and to the Arnold Freund house and turned north, seeing some three or four houses and a wharf which was Oak Harbor on the right.

By Dorothy Neil



"Going north we passed the Adams house, the Captain Morse house, and the old Nunan house, then we hit the woods.

"Our party came out at what is now Ault Field and passed the Garrett and Maryott houses, then the old Walker house, through the woods again and out at the Hoffman place where the Weidenbach families now live.

"We had reached the end of the road and from there on we were in for miles of soft beach driving. We arrived at the Pass about 10 o'clock and I think it was the first trip by road to the Pass for anyone in our party.

"One thing I remember very clearly that all day whenever one looked over the water, no matter in what direction, you could see four or five big salmon in the air.

"But all things must end, so after a picnic lunch and walking around for awhile, we started home, arriving in Coupeville after dark, tired but having enjoyed a fine trip."



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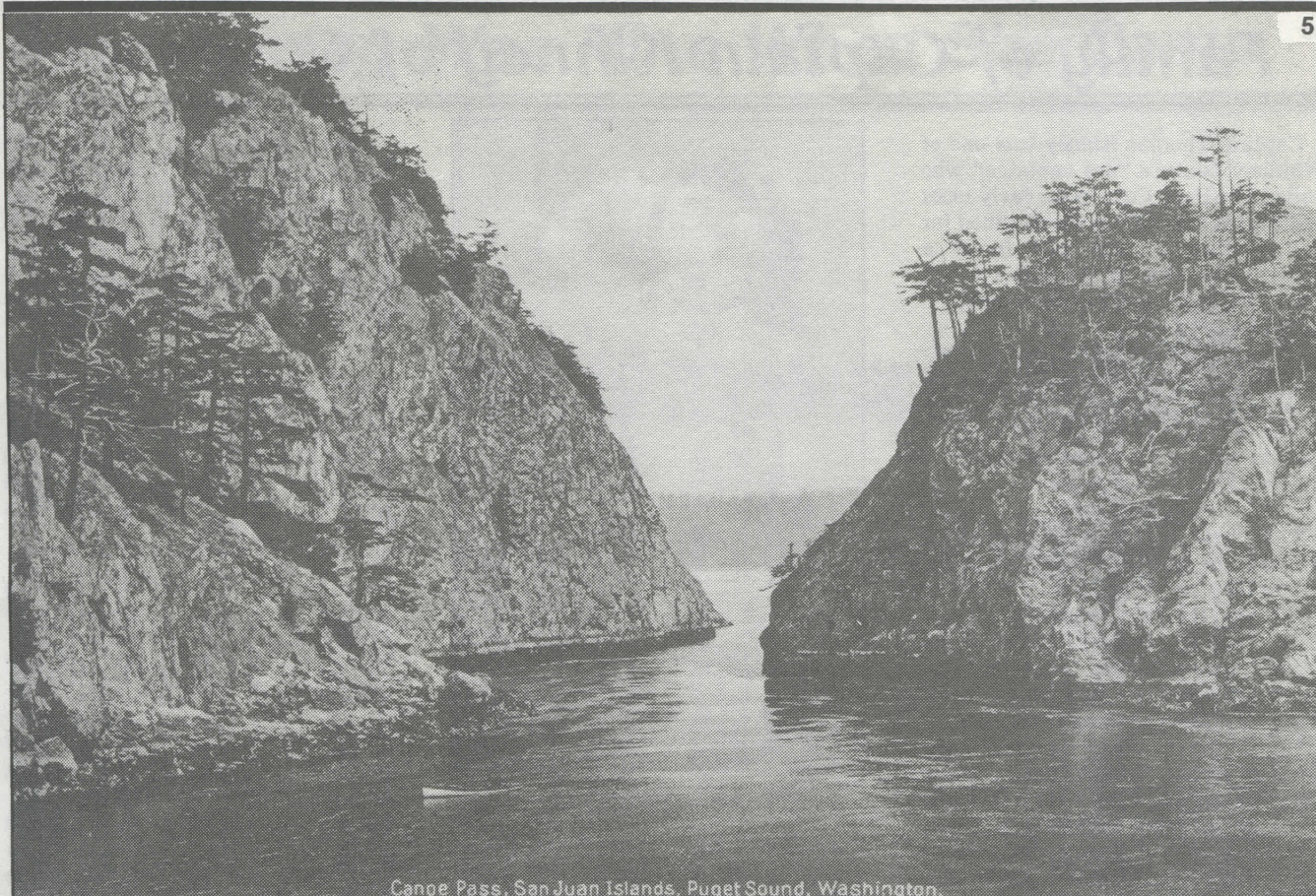
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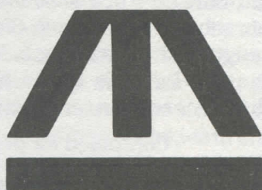
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Canoe Pass, San Juan Islands, Puget Sound, Washington.

Canoe Pass, next to Deception Pass, as Carl Engle's party saw it in the days before a bridge was built. The rock on the right is Pass Island, which Captain George Morse foresaw as a "stepping stone" for the bridge that was to come many years after his death.



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## <sup>6</sup> Family of Captain Kinney of Coupeville

Captain Thomas Kinney was one of Whidbey Island's "sea captains" who sailed into Penn Cove in the early 1950s to load his ship with poles destined for San Francisco, and who found a lucrative market for the timber which abounded in this wilderness country.

Captain Kinney found Whidbey to his liking, and sent to Boston for his wife and 9-year old Julia who had received her schooling until then in excellent Boston schools, a sound preparation for her life in the Northwest.

The journey from Boston was taken by boat to the Isthmus of Panama where they crossed to the Pacific side in a "little tin train," recalled later by Julia Kinney Hancock. From there Mrs. Kinney and Julia took a steamer to San Francisco. Two years later, when Captain Kinney had completed a home in Coupeville, the two took passage on the barque "Onward" for the Northwest. They laid off Cape Flattery for eight days before it was safe to enter the Straits, then on to Utsaladdy, 28 days after leaving San Francisco.

The indomitable Captain Kinney met them at Utsaladdy with his dory, and rowed his family and all their belongings across the Saratoga Passage to Coupeville!

Eleven-year-old Julia and her mother were welcomed to Whidbey Island by the Snohomish and Flathead Indians who came in great numbers to see the arrival of "Skoodnum," the name they had given Captain Kinney because of his great strength, his wife or "Kloutchman" and "Tenas" the little one.

The Kinney's first home still stands near the waterfront at what is now Kinney and Front Streets in Coupeville.

Julia Kinney Hancock later told of growing up in the Island town where there "were no roads, everyone rode horseback," and she went to school at Prairie Center on land donated by Captain Coupe.

"We had lots of dances and surprise parties and there was always plenty of good food. I've danced all night until the birds called me in the morning," she said in one interview. There was a big red-painted hall in downtown



The young Julia Kinney

Coupeville, the Good Temperance Hall, where dances were held. Coupeville young folk often rowed to Oak Harbor for dances there.

She told of one experience, when two canoes of young folks, with their chaperones, started to Oak Harbor. Indians were rowing the canoes and before they reached the shore, a southeast gale whipped up the waves into ominous whitecaps.

Julia told how they had to keep the sail up to keep ahead of the whitecaps, but the sail kept coming out and Julia's escort, Ellison Ebey had to hold it in place. The girls huddled at the bottom of the canoe and Julia's Aunt Kittie screamed every time a wave hit the side of the boat.

They finally reached shore, soaking wet, where they built a fire to dry out. Their spirits were undimmed through the narrow escape, and they went on to the dance. They danced all night and returned home in the morning after the wind had died down.

The young Julia was one of the top students in the small school at Prairie Center, due to her Boston schooling. She and Frank Alexander captained spelling bees. When she was 15, her teacher Nellie Coupe, daughter-in-law of Captain Thomas Coupe, founder of Coupeville, advised Julia to take an examination for a teacher's certificate. This she did and made a third grade certificate at her first try; a year later she got her first grade certificate, and at age 20 she was given a life certificate to teach.

Her first year of teaching was at the old San de Fuca school and she rode horseback to and from Coupeville. She taught school at Utsaladdy, and was matron for girls at the Neah Bay Indian reservation for a year.

(Continued on page 7)

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# Julia Kinney Was Nine When She Came

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(Continued from page 6)

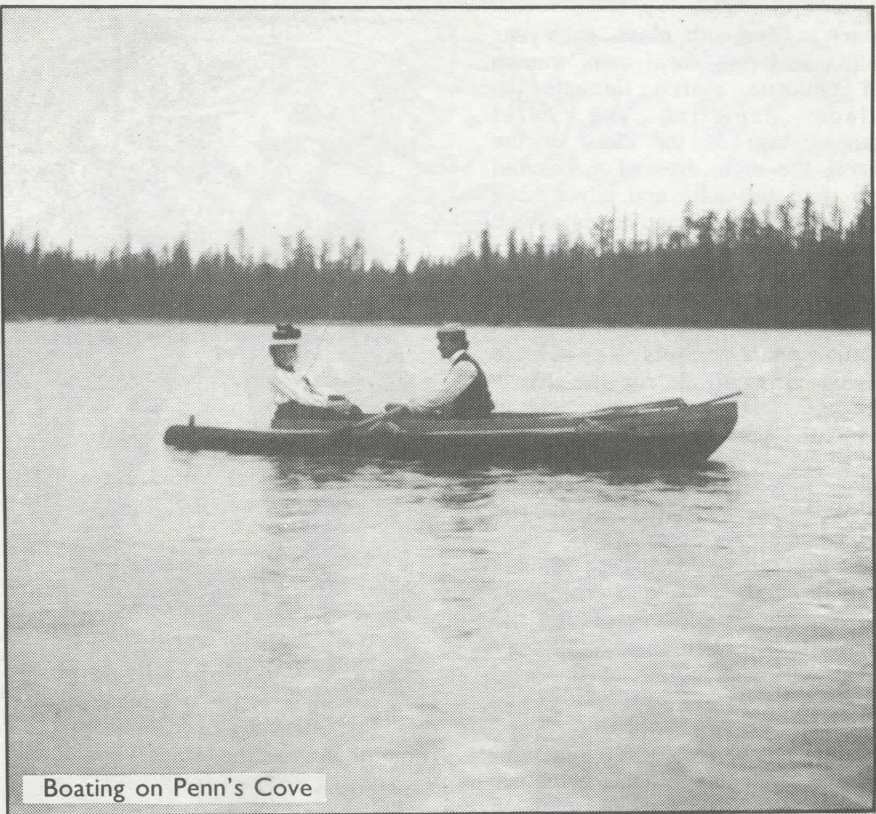
During summer vacations she attended classes at the University of Washington. She taught school in Oak Harbor, and in 1885 blazed new trails for women when she defeated the incumbent to become the first woman county school superintendent in Island County!

As county school superintendent, it was her job to visit the four schools on Whidbey and two on Camano Island, which meant traveling by horseback and Indian canoe. She told of traveling all over Whidbey Island, "all through Clover Valley seeing at various times deer, bear, and skunk cabbage."

Her prize trip was to Useless Bay. From Coupeville she went 20 miles by steamer to Clinton, transferred to the back of a colt to ride the 10 miles to Useless Bay. By that time school was out and she had to wait over until the next day to visit the school.

Returning, she was rowed out to meet the steamer and an amazed captain and crew to see a woman boarding a ship out of the wilderness.

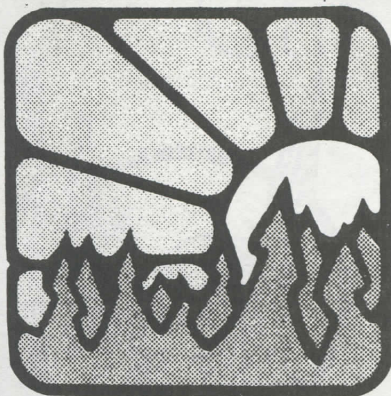
Her colt was a spirited one named "Thad Stevens," who was off the minute she touched the saddle, and required much maneuvering to slow. Once she was riding and met a runaway team. As Julia took her foot from the stirrup, her horse turned and she fell off on her head. The team shied and the wagon ran over her ankle. This was only one of the many accidents that happened to her while riding.



Julie married Ernest Hancock in 1886. The large farm home that was to become a popular social meeting place was built in 1889. It was a house designed after the southern plantation style. It had eight fireplaces, one in each bedroom. The house is long gone, but the farm is still farmed by the Hancock family.

In an interview at age 87, Julia

Kinney Hancock had this word of advice: "Break and ride your own spirited horse; drive a car through an open field when you've never driven a car before; catch every childhood disease you can; let a wagon run over your leg; take a tumble over a horse's head; go boating during a choppy Whidbey storm; and watch the years roll by as you gracefully live to a ripe old age."



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# <sup>12</sup> Pioneer Remembers 1880s San de Fuca

San de Fuca, at the head of Penn Cove, is a place that holds a great deal of Whidbey Island history.

When the early settlers arrived in 1852 they named it Coveland. Dr. Richard Lansdale settled there after naming both Crescent and Oak Harbors, and he was joined by a number of deep-sea captains who brought their families to Whidbey to live.

In 1854 Coveland was the commercial center of Whidbey. Captain B.P. Barstow opened a trading center on the site where now the Captain Whidbey Inn stands. In 1857 a post office was established, two years before a post office opened in Coupeville.

The mail was brought by horse and rider overland from Ebey's Landing, brought there by boat from Port Townsend. The Barstow company brought freight and passengers from San Francisco to Penn's Cove and kept groceries, clothing, shoes, cook stoves and other basic needs of the first pioneers.

Because Penn Cove was a "deep water" harbor, the big ships of sea captains who sailed all over the world dropped anchor there. Captains James and Henry Swift, whose Donation Claim is located where Rolling Hills development now stands; Captain Henry Richard Holbrook, who sold his claim to land promoters to be platted for a town; and Captain Samuel Libbey, who became the first clerk for



The "old courthouse" at the head of Penn Cove, now a private residence, was the first public building on Whidbey Island and possibly the oldest still standing in the state. A post office was established here in 1857.

the first school district in Island County. These men of the sea were among those who settled in Coveland.

Coveland officially became San de Fuca in 1877 when Holbrook sold his claim to make a townsite. The Holbrook home still stands, on the north side of the road above the San de Fuca dock.

Reminiscent of early days in Whidbey Island's first townsite is the Island County Courthouse, built in 1855 by Lawrence Grennan and Thomas Cranney. The courthouse served all the area between the Canadian border and what is now Snohomish County.

When it was built there wasn't enough country business to take up the room, so it was also used as Cranney's living quarters, and a store as well as the post office. The structure is said to be the oldest government building in the state of Washington.

Carl T. Engle, son of William Engle who settled on Ebey's prairie in 1852 and who was one of the first men to arrive at the scene following the massacre of Colonel Isaac Ebey, wrote some of the things he remembered about the pioneers on Whidbey Island.

As a young boy, he told of driving in a horse and buggy from Coupeville to San de Fuca on a New Year's Day, and seeing a Chinese junk in Penn Cove. The junk had two men, a boy and a big yellow dog aboard.

Engle's account of the early-day San de Fuca, then Coveland, follows:

"Before 1889 the area between Kennedy's Lagoon and Monroe's Landing was not very thickly settled. Mrs. Samuel Libbey lived alongside what is still known as the "old courthouse," and her son George and his family lived out by Fort Ebey.

(Continued on page 13)



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# Carl Engle Tells of Island Trip

(Continued from page 12)

"A little farther along the bluff was the Locke place where a couple of bachelors lived and the last place was where Mrs. Ben Sweatman lived with a grandson and nephew.

"From the old courthouse going north we soon came to the historic old house of Dr. Richard Lansdale where many important meetings were held. I think Robert Hathaway lived there later, and you can yet find the pile of stones from the house's chimney.

"This part of the country was platted by Lansdale as the townsite of Coveland, and at one time the address of people living in what is now Coupeville was "Coveland" as the first post office was there.

"A little farther on was the house of Captain Henry Roeder, a pioneer resident of Bellingham. This is now known as the Grasser farm. When we came to the road leading from the sawmill, we found the schoolhouse. Taking this road we came to the Power house where Mrs. Isaac Powers and her two sons Joseph and Henry and daughter Martha lived. Martha never married and was always a very attractive bachelor girl.

"A little farther across the road was the home of A. W. Arnold, where he, his wife, four sons and two daughters lived. Toward Fort Nugent was a house occupied by Mrs. Arnold's parents and her brother Eddie Carlson.

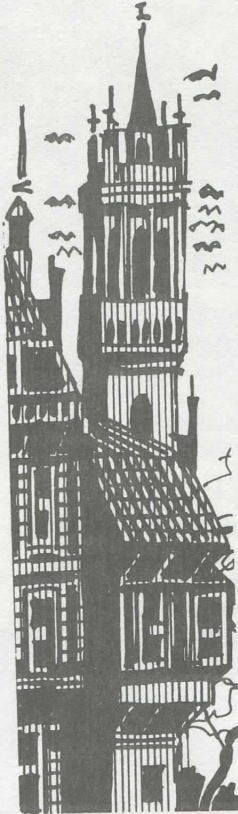
"Back to the bay, we come to the R. B. Holbrook home where Mr. and Mrs. Holbrook, two sons and a daughter lived. Following the road along the

water was the John Gillespie home with three sons and a daughter; and a little farther to the Captain Swift home, three daughters and a son.

"A little farther was the Vrooman place, a mother and father and possibly two daughters. They moved

away about 1881. At the Monroe farm was the couple with a son and daughter, and what is now the Reipma farm was the old Grant place.

"That is what I remember of what is the San de Fuca country when I was a boy."



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# 14 Father Blanchett, Catholic Missionary

On March 17, 1839, Father Blanchett, Catholic Missionary to the Northwest Indians, arrived at the Plamonden home in Cowlitz County. Many Indians who had heard of the "Black Gown" went to see him, and among them was Chief Snetlam from Whidbey Island.

While there they were taught songs and ceremonies of the Catholic faith. About a year later a canoe of Indians from Whidbey traveled to Nisqually to hear Blanchett teach. They invited him to bring his missionary work to Whidbey, and as a result, he held services here for over 400 Indians who sang the Mass and received instruction, then smoked the Peace Pipe.

The date was May 30, 1840, over 10 years before the first white settlers began to arrive on Whidbey.

During the services, a great shouting was heard, and a group of Indian braves came bearing a huge 24-foot cross which they deposited at Blanchett's feet. He blessed the cross and had it set into the ground.

According to the early white settlers, this cross originally stood about 500 feet west of the present site of the Alexander Blockhouse (near Front and Alexander Streets on Coupeville's waterfront), and still stood there when John Alexander took up his claim.

Many years later, when Abram Alexander sold that part of the claim, he took the upright beam of the cross and moved it to the blockhouse. The crossbar is a rail of the first fence built



The Alexander Blockhouse in downtown Coupeville, relic of the 1850s when Indians were the real or fancied foe, built to protect families of pioneer settlers on Whidbey Island.

on the Alexander Donation claim.

Part of this historic cross is now displayed in a case in front of the Alexander blockhouse. The relic is only 10 feet high, but it is all that is left of the original 25-foot cross. It is possibly Whidbey Island's oldest artifact with a known history.

## About the Alexanders

In the spring of 1851, John Alexander, his wife and three sons, John Jr. 12, William 14, and Joseph 2, came west in a covered wagon. Journeying to the Northwest, they finally landed in Coupeville in November of that year to be greeted by the Coupe and Lovejoy families, the only settlers there.

According to an account by daughter Lois Perkins, Alexander suffered a serious injury to his leg on the journey cross-country. Infection set in and there was no doctor on the wagon train.

The men of the wagon train were inexperienced medically, so Alexander had himself strapped to a table and drank enough whiskey to deaden the pain but so he could remain conscious to direct them. The men removed his leg with a carpenter's saw, and he lived.

John Alexander and other settlers built what is known as the Alexander Blockhouse in Coupeville in 1855, during the threat of the Indian Wars, to protect them from unfriendly Indians.

Alexander used a peg where his leg was amputated, and one day while exploring the beach, he broke his peg leg and had to crawl up the beach in a cold rainstorm. The subsequent effects of exposure, shock and cold brought on pneumonia, and in four days John Alexander was dead.

Five Indians and two white men hollowed out a huge cedar log in the fashion used by the Indians to build canoes, for the casket. Captain Coupe spread his fine broadcloth cape over the casket for the service, and Alexander was buried at the foot of the wooden cross erected for Father Blanchett in 1840.

(Continued on page 15)

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# Came to Whidbey Island in 1840

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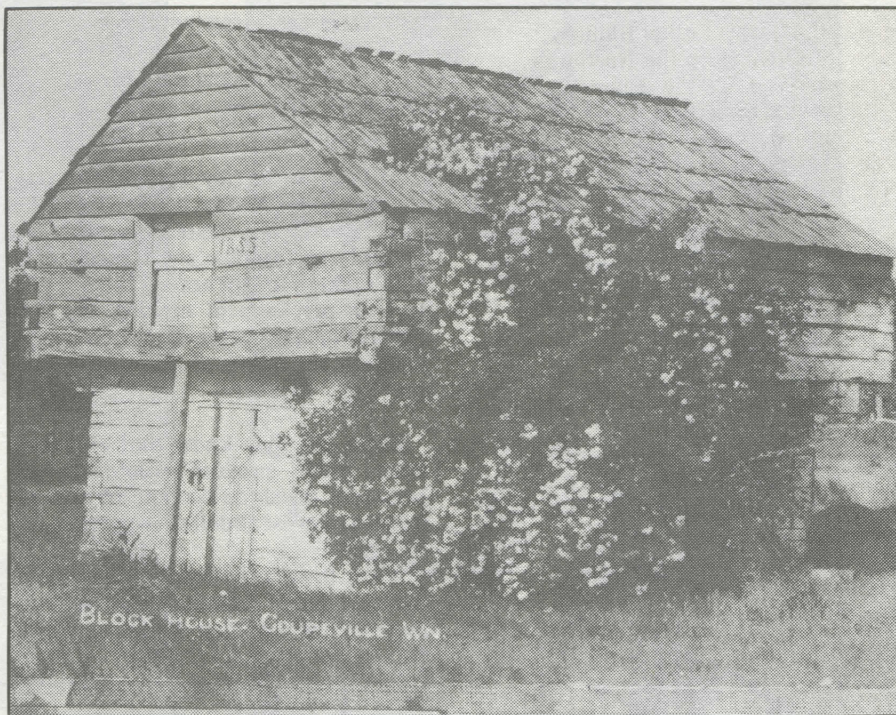
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Many years later, Alexander's remains were removed and reburied, still in the same cedar log, in Sunnyside Cemetery.

Left with a big family of eight children, Mrs. Alexander, with the help of her neighbors, built the home that was to become known as "The Inn," where she cooked for the many people who came on boats to Penn Cove and Coupeville.

In 1860, Mrs. Alexander married Captain Robert Fay, John Alexander's closest friend, and they continued to operate the inn. Later the inn was taken over by Abram and Grace Alexander who named it the "State Hotel." Later it became the Blockhouse Inn. It was destroyed by fire in the early 1960s.

Several of its windows were salvaged by the Island County Historical Society and grace the front of the little County Museum across from the Alexander Blockhouse.



An 1855 blockhouse near Coupeville makes a peaceful pastoral scene with flowering vines attacking it instead of the Indians it was built to repulse.



The Alexander Blockhouse as it appeared in the 1920s, with a "stockade" around it. The old monument has been restored and cared for and is a fascinating subject for history buffs.

The old Bozart Blockhouse near an early-day mansion near Coupeville. Neither the blockhouse nor the mansion still exist.





# World War I 'Murder' of Young

## Fort Lewis Ranger

The words inscribed on the monument hidden in the woods and tall grass at Fort Lewis, say only "Major A.P. Cronkhite, C.E. — Died October 18, 1918."

In the years since, countless soldiers, more than a few of them generals, have seen the white concrete pillar in the fenced plot a half-mile from the artillery impact area. They must have wondered who Cronkhite was, and why there should be a memorial to him in this remote place. Some suppose the man is buried there. Others assume he was a war hero.

Neither is correct, but Major Alexander P. Cronkhite was indeed a remarkable man. His death by gunshot, although ruled an accident by a military court of inquiry in 1918, eventually triggered what a Tacoma judge called, "one of the most sensational murder trials in the history of the United States."

Before the case finally reached a federal jury in 1924, it involved two men destined to become president: Herbert Hoover and Franklin Roosevelt; charges that the War and Justice Departments were attempting a cover-up; and almost ruined the lives of two innocent men.

The case is the subject of a book written by the daughter of a lieutenant in Cronkhite's 213th Engineer Regiment, Rosemary Reeves Davies. Her father was Lt. Fred D. Reeves, 213th's Adjutant. The book, sub-titled "Federal Justice on Trial," traces the whole incredible chain of events in "The Rosenbluth Case," named after the captain who was one of the men charged with murder.

The case includes all the elements of drama: a famous father obsessed with the belief that his son, a military academy graduate, would never disobey a regulation and thereby cause an accident, so must have been murdered; prejudices; political corruption and turmoil; and confused, conflicting stories of witnesses.

Together, these elements came close to convicting a sergeant and a captain of a crime they did not commit.

Major Cronkhite, 25 years old when he died, was the son of Major General Adelbert Cronkhite, who commanded

the 80th Infantry Division in France in World War I. The elder Cronkhite was one of the Army's best-known and respected officers.

Young Cronkhite graduated with honors from West Point in 1915. His was "the class the stars fell on," because many of its members became generals. Cronkhite was seventh in his class, far ahead of his two most famous classmates: Dwight D. Eisenhower and Omar N. Bradley. Bradley was 44th and Ike 61st in the class of 164.

The handsome, blond Cronkhite also distinguished himself as a marksman and athlete. Although never ordered overseas, he achieved rapid wartime promotion, making it to major in just three years. He drew almost perfect efficiency ratings from his superiors. At the same time, his friendliness and informality made him popular with subordinates.

Cronkhite had just been released from the Camp Lewis hospital after recovering from the flu during the worldwide influenza epidemic of 1918 that took such a heavy toll in the Northwest. The hospital and its morgue were filled with victims. Nevertheless, he decided to go along

with a company of the 213th on a road march.

Captain Robert Rosenbluth, 31, son of Russian Jewish immigrants and graduate of Yale University with a degree in forestry, was the company commander. Cronkhite was the company training officer. He told Rosenbluth he "was just going along for the walk, and maybe to suggest solutions to some problems."

Also in the unit was Sergeant-Bugler Roland Pothier from Providence, R.I. Pothier had a strange history. He had been kicked out of the Navy, court-martialled and stripped of rank in the Army, and repeatedly accused of thefts, lying and mischief. But Major Cronkhite liked him.

Cronkhite, in fact, selected Pothier as his orderly. The choice puzzled almost everyone in the unit. One story was that the two shared an interest in music, and this was the reason for their association.

The march went routinely until the men reached a point in the woods about 50 yards from where the Cronkhite monument now stands. A rest break was called. During it, Cronkhite asked Rosenbluth and Pothier to walk with him toward an



The Cronkhite Monument at Fort Lewis (Ranger photo)



abandoned farmhouse.

A short time later four shots were heard. Then Rosenbluth raced back to the column, yelling for Lieutenant Elmer Seaburg, the regimental physician. He found Cronkhite dead.

Next day, the Tacoma News Tribune ran a brief report that the major had been killed in an "accident...on the Camp Lewis rifle range." This error on the location was typical of the confused reports by witnesses. Rosenbluth and Pothier were the only ones close enough to have seen what actually happened, and they didn't seem sure.

One thing, however, was fairly clear. Despite the regulation against off-range shooting, Cronkhite had decided to do some informal target practice. Perhaps it was because he was proud of his shooting prowess, a skill that included the ability to cock a pistol as he drew it back and fire and hit the target, all in the same motion. Perhaps he considered that ignoring regulations was a trivial matter, and trusted Rosenbluth and Pothier to not say anything.

In any event, Cronkhite put a tobacco can on a post and shot at it at least twice. His first shot, and maybe a second, missed. As most soldiers know, hitting a small target at any distance with a .45 caliber pistol is like trying to throw a rock through a knothole.

But after the next shot, the major turned to Rosenbluth and said, "I got it that time, Rosie."

There the clearness of accounts ends. According to the captain, the pistol slipped as Cronkhite turned. When his fingers instinctively tightened to straighten the twisted gun, which had a hair trigger, it went off.

Cronkhite fell to the ground, crying, "My God, I'm shot!" An autopsy determined that the bullet hit near the right shoulder, passed through both lungs and severed the aorta. No treatment could have saved his life.

The appointed board of inquiry, consisting of three senior officers of the regiment, declared on Oct. 30, 1918, that the death was accidental. It accepted the version above as the most probable explanation of how the accident occurred.

A minor incident later took on curious significance. Cronkhite's body was carried in an ambulance to the camp hospital and somewhere along

the way his broad-brimmed campaign hat was lost. Little attention was paid to this at the time but after Pothier was accused in 1921 of killing the major, he made the cryptic remark, "If they could just find the hat, it would clear up everything."

There's no record that Pothier ever explained his statement but it seemed to relate to Cronkhite's ability to cock and fire a pistol with one continuous, sweeping motion. Many soldiers in the 213th believed that this flourish in shooting technique cost the major his life.

They speculated that as he brought the pistol downward and on target, the barrel brushed against the hat, twisting it toward his body. His finger snapped the trigger as he tried to recover his grip and straighten it.

But there was another theory, which Rosemary Reeves Davies suggests in her book is more probable. She thinks it likely that Pothier accidentally shot Cronkhite. Pothier had borrowed a .45 from another soldier, but no one else

(Continued on page 22)

## MIDWAY CAR WASH

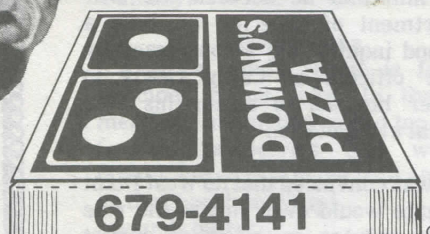
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# 22 Those Accused Were Acquitted

(Continued from page 21)

knew he had it. In fact, the major probably told him not to say what he wanted it for, since the purpose was some unauthorized target shooting.

Pothier was said to be careless with weapons. In Panama he almost killed a man with an accidental discharge from a handgun he was cleaning. He had forgotten it was loaded.

If that is what happened, it would explain another mystery: Sergeant George Root found four exploded shells at the accident scene. Apparently Cronkhite had fired three of them. His pistol chamber held six. Three unexploded shells were still in his gun. Where did the fourth come from?

A few in the regiment leaned toward still another theory: suicide. They said the bout with flu had left Cronkhite depressed. None of these explanations was accepted by Cronkhite's parents. General Cronkhite returned from Europe in 1919 to open a full and lengthy investigation.

He had his son's body exhumed and another autopsy performed. Results supposedly affirmed that the bullet path was such that the major could not have shot himself.

He hired private investigators and began hounding the Justice Department for help. It became an obsession with him and he accused the War Department of covering up both a slipshod inquiry and a conspiracy by senior officers at Camp Lewis to murder his son to smear his (the general's) reputation.

He was convinced that no West Point graduate would ever violate the rule not to indulge in off-range target practice. He claimed to have assembled a great file of testimony and evidence and promised to "bring it forward at the proper time."

But the proper time never came. He refused to give any of his evidence to federal prosecutors, either at the grand jury hearing or at the trial. Instead, he merely repeated over and over that his son was a fine young man, that he must have been murdered, and that there was a sinister conspiracy to block justice.

From 1919 to 1924, Rosenbluth, then

a civilian, waged a losing battle to defend himself against vague charges. There were vicious attacks against him by rabid right-wing publications. They called him a poor officer, a German Jew traitor, and a Russian-born, Bolshevik sympathizer.

He served after the war with relief organizations in Europe which Herbert Hoover helped create. Hoover wrote to U.S. Attorney General, telling him that Rosenbluth was a man of fine character, and that such allegations were "absolutely untrue." He also received public support from other distinguished men, among them Franklin Roosevelt, senators and congressmen, and the governor of Pennsylvania, Gifford Pinchot.

But it wasn't enough. In September 1924, Rosenbluth and Pothier were arraigned in federal court on murder charges. By this time Pothier had been in jail for nearly three years; Rosenbluth was free on bond following his indictment in October 1922.

Pothier's trial began in Tacoma on Sept. 30, 1924. The government's case was so weak that the long-awaited drama was anti-climatic. No plausible motive for him to want to kill Cronkhite was ever established.

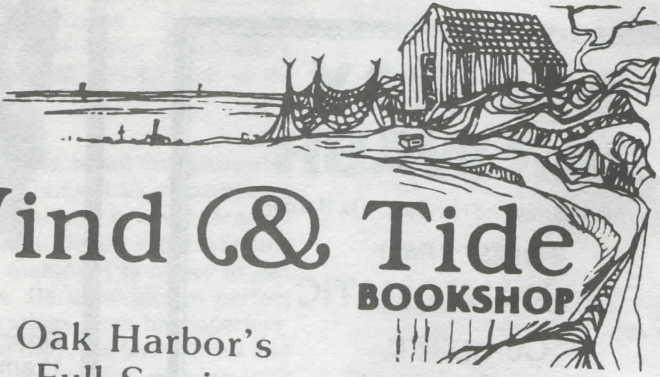
The government's medical expert was an assistant to the New York District Attorney who was getting paid

\$250 a day to appear at the trial. He insisted "the only way the major could have shot himself was with his thumb on the trigger and his revolver held at arm's length." Obviously, he could not have done this accidentally.

The defense called Captain Eugene B. Caffey, a friend of Cronkhite's. The prosecutor handed him a .45 caliber pistol and challenged him to demonstrate how Cronkhite could have shot himself. Caffey raised the pistol until the barrel pointed up, cocked it with his thumb, showed how it might have been over-balanced, then swung it down until it aimed at his chest. At this point, the prosecutor demanded curtly, "now try to pull the trigger one-half inch!"

"Snap!" With that sound, the case against Pothier, and Rosenbluth who was supposedly the instigator, collapsed. The jury found Pothier "not guilty," and the charges against Rosenbluth were dismissed.

It's not known what happened to Pothier, but Rosenbluth went on to serve a distinguished career as assistant commissioner of social welfare for New York state. He retired at the age of 80, and in 1967 he received the John Howard Award for outstanding work with juvenile offenders. He was 83 when Mrs. Davies' book was written in 1969.



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# 32 Report Reflects 1880s Schooling

School Report for School District No. 6 School commenced April 5 <sup>th</sup> 1880 School closed June 26 <sup>th</sup> 1880 59 days of School one day taken to attend Teachers Examination						Age Name						No. of Hand Count No. of Studies		No. Studying		No. of Classes in	
age	Name	No.	days present	days absent	No. of studies												
17	Nunan George	1	46	13	6	16	Morse Nellie	13	25 1/2	83 1/2	5	Reading	32	Reading	6		
14	" Thomas	2	38	3	6	8	" Marshal	14	58	1	3	Spelling	32	Spelling	3		
12	" Matthew	3	33	6	6	7	" Sadie	15	42	17	1	Arithmetic	23	Arithmetic	7		
10	" Lulu	4	43	16	4	5	" Lincoln	16	46	13	1	Grammar	15	History	2		
17	Brunn Raphael	5	36 1/2	2 1/2	6	15	Christopher John	17	58	1	4	History	9	Geography	1		
14	Barrington Edward	6	33 1/2	3 1/2	6	12	" Anna L.	18	57	2	5	Geography	19	Grammar	8		
12	" L. Skilla	7	47	12	5	14	Schafer Louise	19	53	6	5	Entire No. of Scholars 32 Average. " " 24					
11	" Harry	8	38	1	4	12	" Willie	20	45	14	5						
7	" York	9	32	7	1	8	" George	21	33	4	3						
4	" Sidney	10	10	49	1	10	Thomas Hattie	22	49	10	5						
18	O'Leary Arthur	11	29	30	6	8	" Emma	23	45	14	3	Ida May Vrooman					
13	" James	12	48 3/4	10 1/4	6	6	" Eber	24	34	25	1						
						14	Monroe Anthony	25	53	6	6						
						17	" Annie	26	11	48	6						
						9	Hastie Robert	27	47	12	3						
						4	" Bertha	28	18	41	1						
						8	Gildow Amelia	29	49	16	2						
						6	" Clayton	30	8	51	1						
						8	James Freddie	31	46	13	2						
						12	Watson Blanche	32	45	14	4						

One hundred plus years ago, in 1880, schooling on Whidbey Island was scant, with classes held in homes and in roughly-put-together buildings with wood heat and outdoor sanitary facilities. So were many of the homes, as a matter of fact.

In School District No. 6, San de Fuca, school began April 5 and closed June 25 that year, with 59 total days of schooling. Oak Harbor's first school opened in 1896 on Freund's Hill. Ida May Vrooman was the teacher for 32 "scholars," with an average of 24 present at any one time.

Classes were held in reading, spelling, arithmetic, history, geography and grammar. Many of the students attended about half of the time, possibly through sickness, the necessity of work, or the weather.

Reading the list of students of Miss Vrooman, the names of Whidbey's earliest settlers are revealed, among the best known were Nunan, Brunn, Barrington, O'Leary, Morse, Monroe, Hastie, Watson, Christopher, Schafer, Thomas, Gildow and James.

Children walked or rode horses to school, taking their lunches, and it is easy to see why school was not held during the cold winter months. In the summer and fall there was plenty to do on farms and in home of the settlers, which required all hands for survival.

Of the 32 students, only 9 were interested in history, 15 in grammar, 19 took geography, 23 arithmetic, all 32 took spelling and reading. The Three R's, "reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic," were the basic school studies.

Teachers were not required to have college degrees, but had to pass an examination in order to teach. On Miss Vrooman's report one notes, "59 days of school, one day taken to attend teachers' examination."

W  
206-2=4  
8x3=24  
Q  
7  
3  
1



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# Academy Filled Area Education Need

33

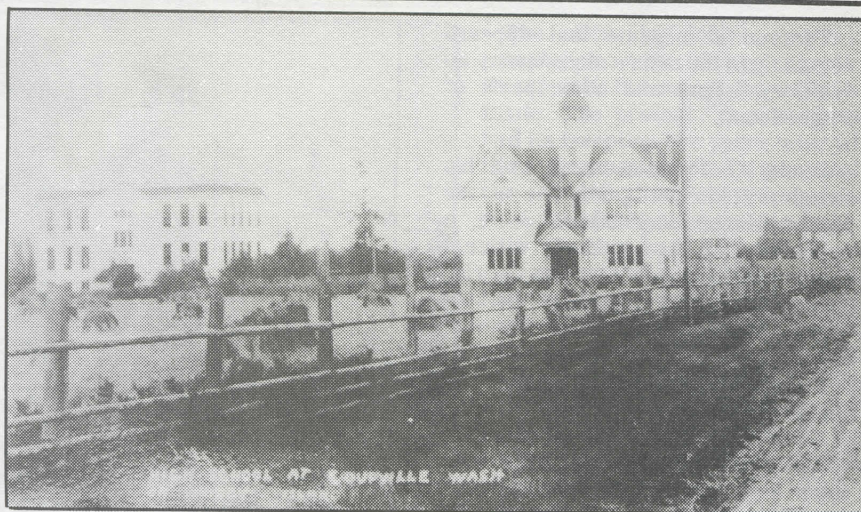
Back in 1885, Whidbey Island was an important place on Puget Sound. Things were moving fast. Promoters from all over the country had their eyes on this area, even to proposing a railroad from "Little Chicago" near Admiralty Head through Coupeville and San de Fuca to Oak Harbor and on northward to Skagit County.

A canal promotion was in the works to be built from the head of Penn Cove to West Beach, and much enthusiasm was generated.

Coupeville was growing, and the Honorable Charles T. Terry, legislator from Island County, took upon himself the responsibility of founding the Puget Sound Academy, an institution of higher learning much needed in those pioneer days.

Terry convinced the leaders of the Congregational Church that Coupeville was one of the best points on the Sound for such an institution. The Rev. C.C. Otis, General Superintendent of missionary work for the church, visited the area and was favorably impressed with the location and the importance of having such a learning facility located farther north than Seattle.

A community meeting fired the imaginations of many important men in Seattle and Tacoma. It was agreed that the local people would donate the land and the building, and the church



Early Coupeville schools

would raise an endowment of \$10,000. This sum, magnificent for the time, was raised in two days.

Dr. J.A. Highwarden of Coupeville had nearly completed a building for a hospital at that time and offered to donate the construction for college purposes. He also donated \$500.

The community was excited, and Mrs. Thomas Coupe, wife of the founder of Coupeville, donated 20 acres of land. J. E. Ebey donated 10 acres, and others gave from \$10 to \$500.

The Academy, "the only institution of higher learning north of Seattle,"

opened in 1887 with the Rev. George Lindsay as Principal. The teaching staff consisted of Professor Frank Brown, Natural Science instructor; Miss E.E. Schneider, director of the women's department; and Miss Ellen Gaston, instructor in music and drawing.

When Lindsay took charge of the Congregational Church, the Rev. Charles E. Newberry became director of the Academy.

In 1891, four years after the Academy was founded, a news story in the Island County Times said that the growth of the school meant more building was needed, and said that trustees of the institution were working on additions to be ready for the fall term of that year.

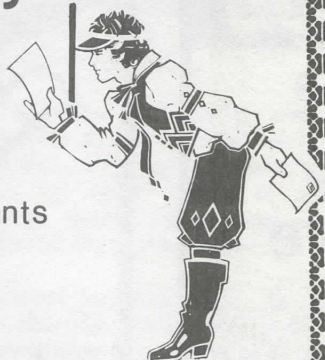
All of the "principle points" or settlements on Puget Sound, including Seattle, Tacoma, Port Townsend and Blaine were represented in the student body who came to board at the school.

By 1891, the teaching staff had increased to include not only the Rev. Lindsay but a Miss Grannis, principal for women; Nellie Sheldon, history; Anna Whelan, vocal and instrumental music; and Kate Welbrook, matron.

The teaching profession was opening the way for women's "liberation" and the Puget Sound Academy became part of that movement. While many young men were enrolled in the Academy, most of the students were women, who used their educations to become teachers.

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# Daniel Pearson Family Left a Heritage

Pearson is a name that appears regularly in the annals of yesterday on Whidbey Island and other parts of Puget Sound.

Daniel O. Pearson came with his daughters to Seattle via one of the famed Mercer expeditions. Josie, a schoolteacher, died suddenly within a few years; Georgina married Charles Terry, a Whidbey Island farmer, and Flora, the youngest, became Mrs. Will Engle, or "Flora A. P. Engle," as her many writings of her years in Coupeville testify.

A son, also Daniel O., came with them and then sent for his childhood sweetheart, Clara Jane Stanwood, who traveled here by way of the Isthmus of Panama, by steamer, by foot, and by Indian canoe.

In 1877, when Daniel Orlando Pearson moved to the mainland between the outlets of the Skagit and Stillaguamish Rivers, to a place called "Centerville," he renamed the place "Stanwood" after Clara's family.

D. Carl Pearson, their son, at age 21 ran for Island County auditor and was elected in 1898. The office paid \$600 a year. He also was elected Justice of the Peace. And about that time the Island County newspaper was for sale, and he



The old 1860 Admiralty Head (Fort Casey) Lighthouse, where Carl Engle was born, and where his mother Flora Pearson Engle was lighthousekeeper.

bought it. He hired a young man to help, O.S. Vanolinda, who was to become famous as a publisher in his own right. The judge-newspaper combo worked out well.

As judge, Pearson is quoted in a story written by Seattle newspaperman Frank Lynch in 1958:

(Continued on page 35)

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(Continued from page 34)

"Seems there were two doctors in Coupeville, one plain and all business, the other young, personable, but without a license to practice. When the younger was brought to court, the elders figured his chances at no better than 50-50. They hadn't consulted the women.

"As each juror departed for court he received an ultimatum from his wife: 'You do right by that fine young man, or don't you show back home,' or words to that effect.

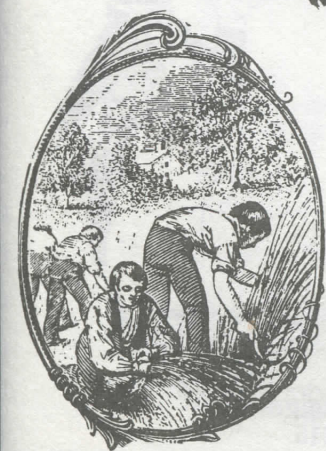
"The young doctor made it out on the ballot."

Marjorie Engle Hazen of Freeland, daughter of Carl Engle and granddaughter of both Daniel Pearson and William Engle, Whidbey pioneers, wrote the following a few years ago regarding the Fort Casey lighthouse and its people.

"My great grandfather D. O. Pearson was lighthouse keeper of the Fort Casey light in the early 1860s, and my grandmother, Flora A. P. Engle was his assistant.

"When she and my grandfather William B. Engle were married in 1875 they lived at the lighthouse with her parents, and on Sept. 30, 1877, my father, Carl T. Engle was born there.

"On the day Carl T. Engle was born, George Dewey, later to become Admiral Dewey, was lighthouse inspector, and he visited there. My mother, Betty Engstrom of Greenbank has the original log kept by the Pearsons during their stay there."



Washington Territorial Capitol

When the frontier village of Olympia was founded in 1851, the area now identified as Washington state was part of Oregon Territory. On Nov. 28, 1853, Washington Territory, which then included northern Idaho and part of Montana, was formed. Olympia, formerly Smithfield, was designated as the capital.

A frame building, (the Gold Bar restaurant), near Capitol Way and Second Avenue was the meeting place of the first territorial legislature. In 1856, a frame structure was built on the present capitol site and served as the seat of government until 1902. In the meantime, enabling legislation for statehood had been passed by Congress, and on Nov. 1, 1889, Washington became the 42nd state to enter the union.

Although work on a permanent capitol was started in 1893, the present Legislative Building was not completed until 1928. A nationwide competition was held to select an architect and the contract was awarded to Ernest Flagg of New York. The building he designed was about two-thirds the size of the present Legislative Building.

Foundations were laid but work was stopped in 1894. A national depression, a gubernatorial veto, and attempts to move the state capitol to Seattle delayed resumption of work on the capitol for the next few years.

To meet the pressing need for space, in 1901 the state purchased the Thurston County courthouse at Legion Way and Washington Street and added a wing to house the legislature. This building, now known as the Old State Capitol Building, served as the state capitol from 1903 to 1928.

The 1909 legislature authorized completion of the "Flagg plans" for the capitol, but no appropriation was made. The present "Capitol Group" had its inception two years later when the legislature adopted a proposal of the Washington chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

A nationwide competition was held for the general design of a group of capitol buildings to serve as a guide for future construction. The competition included detailed plans for the Temple of Justice, the first unit of the group to be built. The architects chosen were Walter R. Wilder and Harry K. White of New York.

In designing the Capitol Group the central problem, as the architects viewed it, was "how to split the usual massive Capitol Building up into six or more components without diminishing each part so as to make it seem comparatively insignificant."

The domed Legislative Building was placed in the center and the other buildings were grouped around it in such a way that from nearly every viewpoint one gets the same general effect of an impressive dome rising from a very broad base.

The magazine, *American Architect*, in November 1915, described the Washington state Capitol Group as "reminiscent of the Acropolis at Athens."

The Legislative Building, completed in 1928, was the third structure of the Capitol Group to be completed. The first two were the Temple of Justice and the Insurance Building. The Public Lands-Social Security Building, completed in 1937, and the Transportation Building, in 1940, were the fourth and fifth.

The sixth unit was never built. It was to have been a structure identical to the Insurance Building. It would have been on the west side of the Legislative Building where the Governor's Mansion now stands.

