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McKenna, Pierce County—
One-Time Boom Town
That Refused to Die
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—Water Color by Parker McAllister, Times Staff Artist.

THE 104-YEAR-OLD COUPE HOUSE (Coupeville) -:- See Page 2

The Odyssey Of John Gould

Three times he went seeking gold, but he found wealth as a Whidby Island farmer

By LUCILE McDONALD

LIVING in the oldest frame dwelling on Penn Cove, Whidby Island—the house built by Coupeville's founder, Capt. Thomas Coupe—has one serious drawback.

The bank in front of the weathered gray cottage has a tendency to crumble, and once in its 104-year history the home has had to be moved back. The present site of the house is safe enough, but the street in front has been closed because of fresh holes in the bank.

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Bruce have lived in the Coupe house 30 years. Bruce can look out the back windows across an old orchard to the house his grandfather, John Gould, erected a block away. That was in 1894, when Gould and his grandson moved from Crescent Harbor so that Bruce could attend the Puget Sound Academy at Coupeville.

Bruce owns a handful of interesting letters he found after his grandfather's death. Some of them are as old as Captain Coupe's house.

STRANGERS who go to talk with Bruce generally are seeking information about the old gray cottage and the town's founder. John Gould seldom is mentioned, and many have forgotten that he was one of Captain Coupe's contemporaries.

When Gould died in Coupeville July 6, 1900, he owned several large island farms and had amassed a tidy fortune. Probate of his estate was long contested in the Island County Court.

Gould was born in 1823 in Philips-

burg, N. J., a town named for his maternal grandfather. Young John's father died when the boy was 9 and he was sent to neighbors to work for his clothes and keep. He drove mules on a canal tow road to help support his younger brothers and sisters and at 14 worked in a rolling mill and nail factory in South Easton, Pa. He walked three miles there and back each day, crossing the Delaware and Ohio Rivers, and put in a 12-hour day at the foundry. After three years he quit and apprenticed himself to a millwright.

WHEN Gould was 27 he followed the gold excitement to California, crossing a large part of the Isthmus of Panama on foot. He had to wait two weeks for passage on the bark Circassian to California, where he prospected for two years.

In 1852 Gould and several others purchased the brig Eagle and sailed for the Queen Charlotte Islands to seek gold. On the way the vessel called at Portland, Ore., and Gould arranged to have another man continue north in his place.

Gould then journeyed to Puget Sound and that same year took a 160-acre land claim on Tulalip Bay, northwest of present-day Everett. In 1853 he constructed a small water-powered sawmill at the mouth of a nearby creek. It was the first mill in Snohomish County.

Two years later the United States signed a treaty with the Indians and Gould and Peter Goutree, a former Hudson's Bay Co. employee who was farming nearby, were notified they would have to leave.

(Goutree moved to Hat Island, east of Anacortes, where he lived until he was murdered in 1875.)

The reservation was not established formally until 1859 and Gould waited several years to be paid for his property. He was unhappy about the sum he received, for it was given to him in currency which had depleted in value.

ONE of the papers in Bruce's possession, dated April 15, 1854, covers the water privilege on the Tulalip saw mill and the right to cut timber for the Tulalip Mill Co.'s use for seven years. It is signed by Jehiel H. Hall.

Another document, neatly tied at the top with a bow knot of pink cotton tape, relates the proceedings of a board of appraisers convened by Michael L. Simmons, Indian agent, at the Tulalip Reservation September 24, 1860, to appraise the claims and improvements "on the lands selected for and secured to the Duwamish, Suquamish and other subordinate tribes" by the Point Elliott treaty of January 22, 1855, confirmed by the United States Senate April 9, 1859.

Caleb Miller, Thomas Maylor and R. S. Bayley comprised the board. They examined "a mill site situated upon a stream emptying into the Bay of Tulalip and found upon it a saw mill to which is attached five acres of land." The owners were C. C. Phil-



EDWARD BRUCE, grandson of John Gould, played with two of his dogs in the back yard of the 104-year-old Coupe house in Coupeville, where he lives. Bruce owns a collection of documents left by his grandfather, who came to the Puget Sound country in 1852.

lips, J. H. Hall and Gould. The mill was in good running order. The owners had been ordered not to make any further improvements.

The board decided that the mill, water power and five acres were worth \$6,000 and the frame house on the five acres of land above the property, belonging to J. H. Hall, was worth \$300.

THE board examined the 160-acre donation claim of Peter Goutree and allowed him \$250 for his two frame buildings and \$56.25 an acre for each of eight acres of cleared and cultivated land and \$5.25 an acre for the unimproved land, or a total of \$1,501.

Next the board examined John Gould's claim, finding he had lived there four years and completed the title, built three small frame buildings worth \$250, cleared and cultivated eight acres and owned water power valued at \$500. They awarded him a total of \$2,001.

The board awarded Hall a total of \$1,699.90 and Dixon \$400.

While Gould was awaiting a decision on the land, gold was discovered in 1858 on the Fraser River. The British corvette Satellite anchored off the mouth in June to issue clearances to the miners going upstream.

Gould joined the gold-seekers and received two papers signed on June 19 by Capt. James Prevost, commander of the Satellite and a member of the International Boundary Commission.

One was a receipt of \$5 in payment for one month's mining license. The other entitled Gould after payment of a \$5 fee "to pass up Fraser's River in a canoe having the undermentioned provisions and tools on board, all declared to be personal property and for personal use." They included four months' provisions for two men. These rare documents are in Edward Bruce's package. Gould remained at the Fraser River mines one season. Upon his return he engaged in carpentering and contracting. The last building he worked on was the Freeport mill in Seattle.

GOULD purchased a merchandise store on the Tulalip Reservation and operated it two years. Then in 1868 he bought half of the Isaac Ebey donation claim and moved to Whidby Island. He leased it several

years later and bought half of the William Wallace claim on Crescent Harbor, now owned by the Navy.

An 1873 document in the Bruce packet deals with a dispute about the property line dividing the husband's and wife's half of the Wallace claim.

Among the Wallace neighbors were James and Milton Mounts. Gould kept several letters James wrote him from Santa Fe, Argentina. James left Whidby Island in the early 1870's because, he said, "it was becoming too crowded."

Gould lived at Crescent Harbor more than 20 years with Sally, his Snohomish Indian wife. She bore him three children, two of whom died young. Sarah, the survivor, married a farmer from Maine, Bonaparte Bruce.

EDWARD BRUCE was born 77 years ago in Seattle because, he says, there was no doctor then on Whidby Island. After his mother's death in 1890 his grandfather adopted him.

By 1893 Gould rented his two farms and retired. His wife died that December. He moved to Coupeville and built his large house in the county seat, where he had served two terms as county commissioner and one as county treasurer.

After Gould's death Bruce lived in the East and Mrs. Mary Hendrickson, niece, occupied the old man's house on the block behind the Coupe cottage. Bruce returned in her last years to help manage her property. When she died in 1928 he discovered the packet of historic papers.

On Our Cover

THE house pictured in today's Magazine Section cover by Parker McAllister, Times staff artist, is one of the oldest in the state. Overlooking Penn Cove at Coupeville, it was built by Capt. Thomas Coupe two years after he filed a claim on the land in November, 1852.

The house, constructed of redwood, was the first frame dwelling on Whidby Island. Because the house was moved later, the century-old black walnut tree which had been planted behind it now is in the front yard.



JOHN GOULD