

# Spindrift

## Two



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# How it came to Pass

## A brief history of fishing at Pass Lake by Joan Biller

Pass Lake, at the fishtail end of Deception Pass State Park, is a fly-fishing favorite. On any given day, there are as many float tubes as strikes on the water bobbing between "Pass Lake" boats.

Years ago, there were no tubes, no boats, and why not?

Because years ago, Pass Lake had no fish

A Marine Biology Station at Bowman Bay, conducting research in the 1930s, needed water from Pass Lake for its pools. Pass Lake was piped, satisfying the needs of the station and stoking the imagination of the Department of Game (now called the Department of Fish and Wildlife).

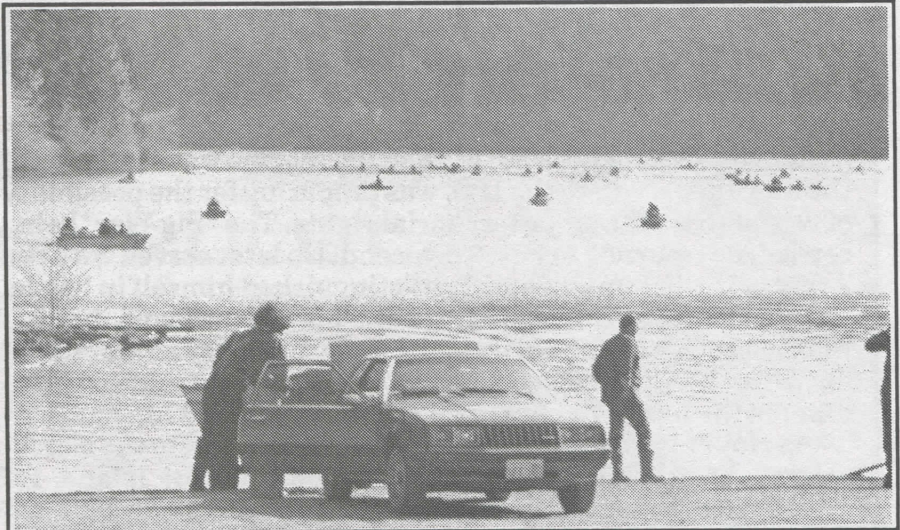
The Department of Game checked out the insect population in and around Pass Lake, went down their list of fish that would enjoy such a diet and picked out brown trout for their first "plant" in 1937.

The planted fish grew so well that rainbow and cutthroat were introduced two years later and these three species have been swimming in Pass Lake waters ever since.

Flyfishing came to Pass in 1941 and all was going along swimmingly until perch ate up the fish food and flyfishers were catching fewer and smaller fish. The lake had to be poisoned in 1946 and shut down for a disappointing, non-fishable two years.

The hiatus seems to have made the flyfishers all the more appreciative of Pass Lake, evidenced by an opening day extravaganza in 1948.

For some reason, there was a conversion to all "tackle, general" regulations from 1955-



*An opening day at Pass Lake in the late 1970s.*

1965. Conversion is a good word for it, as general tackle and fly-fishing are as separate in philosophy and practice as two religious persuasions.

The flyfishing faction persevered and returned Pass Lake to its flyfishing designation. The Fidalgo Fly Fishers, an active member of the Federation of Fly Fishers (with an emphasis on the word active), have influenced what is caught at Pass Lake and what is released. In 1975, this Anacortes-based group took a Pass Lake survey and reported the preference for fewer but larger fish to the Department of Game.

Regulations followed. Biologist Jim Johnston says that he used this organization's ongoing

records of fishing at Pass Lake when he proposed a "1 fish, 18 inch" minimum in the eighties. . . a regulation still in effect.

So, what will those tubists and boaters catch at Pass Lake and how long will it take them to do it? After fishing for an average of one and one half hours, these fishers can expect to catch an average fish of 14-16 inches (the range is 8 inches to 30).

They'll reel in brown trout, cutthroat or rainbow, species introduced to Pass Lake generations ago, or the elusive Atlantic salmon, a newcomer to these waters.

Pass Lake is a favorite fly-fishing locale — a curiosity considering it began as a lake with nary a fish at all. ☆

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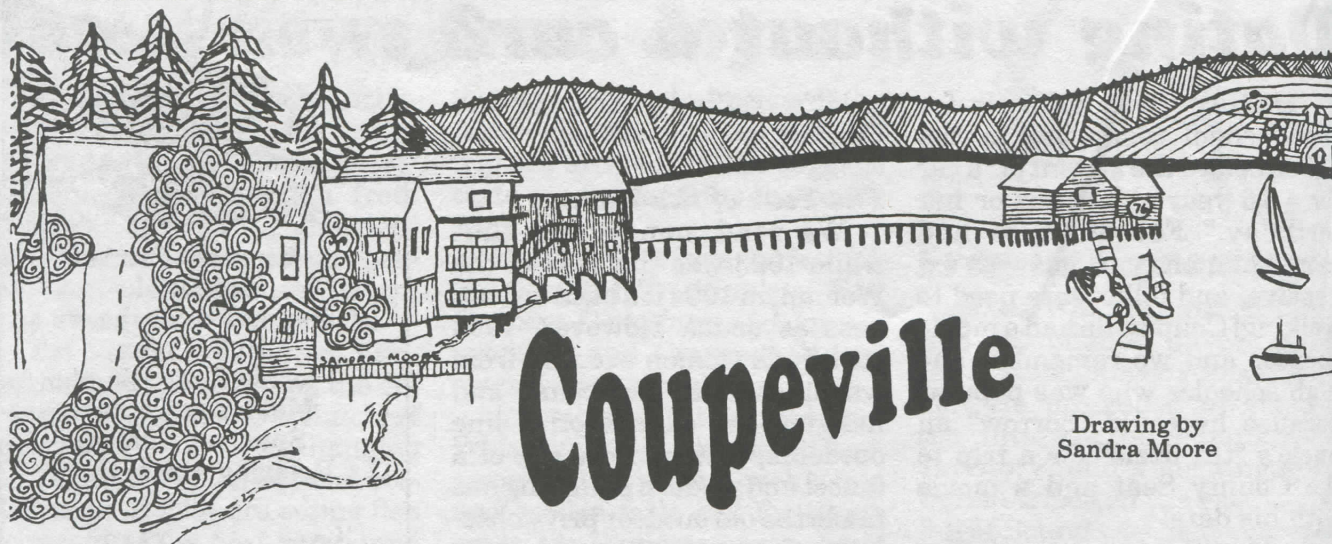
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Drawing by  
Sandra Moore

## Fort made Coupeville a boomtown

In 1897 bids for excavation and concrete works for a fort at Admiralty Head, one of three forts to guard the Straits of Juan de Fuca, were awarded to an Everett firm for \$84,980.50. Pay for laborers was \$1.65 for a 10-hour day, which was reluctantly raised to \$2 per day. The new fort was named Fort Casey honoring the Chief of Engineers of the U. S. Army Brig. General Thomas L. Casey.

The mammoth guns installed on the site were first fired on Sept. 11, 1901. The big guns were fortunately never aimed at an enemy ship, but the three forts dominated the Straits: Worden and Flagler, along with Casey. The first complement of men was 30, with barracks built later. Since its beginning the Fort has alternated between caretaker status and a busy, well-equipped fort.

A humorous story is told of a farmer near Fort Casey when the order came to cease firing the big gun at 6 a.m. as had been the tradition. When six o'clock arrived the first morning after the order, the farmer is said to have leaped from his bed shouting, "What was THAT?"

During World War I and for years afterward Fort Casey was an important post. But by 1934 it was on caretaker status, its big officers' homes standing silent and empty along with its enlisted housing and barracks.

But after Pearl Harbor, Fort Casey again came to life until 1950 when it was again "retired." In the age of airplanes, coastal guns no longer played an important part in defense, and the fort was used to train amphibious forces. In May of 1950 the last "amphib" tank headed for Fort Worden, across the Sound.

Fort Casey left its mark on Whidbey Island in many pleasant ways, as any number of Whidbey Island residents at one time served the Army at Fort Casey. Mickey Clark of Coupeville was born at the Fort, where his father served in the Army.

Other important men who made their mark in the town of Coupeville were Captain Lynn P. Vane who became Town Clerk and Justice of the Peace; Chester Maxim and Edward Kottke; Frank Navarra; and John Austin who settled on South Whidbey.

The increase of population

and business after Fort Casey's arrival led to the incorporation of the town in 1910, with Charles Lyon elected Mayor. Councilmen were J. W. Straub, Arthur Had-dock, A. R. Kineth, J. B. Libbey and E. D. Lovejoy.

During World War II the "big guns" of Casey were dismantled and the metal used in the war effort, but through the cooperation of the U.S. Navy, another "big gun" of the Fort Casey type was located in the Philippine Islands and moved to Admiralty Head for installation. Since then the Fort has become a tourist target and is included in the Fort Casey State Park.

The lighthouse, which was constructed before the Fort, now holds offices and history show-places, and WSU Beach Watchers patrol the area and work toward beautifying and preserving the important Whidbey Island landmark.

After World War I Fort Casey had a theater and held dances for Islanders and became an important recreation center. Many of the soldiers other than those mentioned, married Whidbey Island girls and became a part of the community. ☆

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A baseball game between Fort Casey and Coupeville, Langley or Oak Harbor, played on the Parade Ground, always drew a crowd of old "tin lizzies." The building at right is gone, but the officers' housing in the background, are still in use.

## Fort Casey held a gala ball in 1905

On our cover is a reproduction of the program and dance card of the First Grand Ball of the Fort Casey Amusement Club, which took place at the Fort on Wednesday Eve, September 20, 1905.

The dance card listed the dances: the Grand March; Waltz (dedicated "to our major"); Two-step; Lancers; Waltz ("to the 63rd Co. C.A."); Two-step; Three-step; Quadrille; Waltz ("to the 71st Co. C.A."); Two-step; Minuet; Germania Two-step, (Interval for refreshments); Waltz "to the 85th Co. C.A."); Quadrille; Two-step; Waltz; Two-Step; Three-step; Waltz; Two-step; and three "spaces" for extra dances should the dancers so desire.

"Home Sweet Home" was the last waltz to say goodnight. Refreshments were served halfway

through the evening festivities.

Club officers included Louis Davidson, president; David L. Branch, vice president; Henry T. Dunlap, treasurer; Harry Perry, secretary; Henry Ingram, chairman; and Frederick Presher, recording secretary. Allen J. Abney was Master-At-Arms.

Dancers came to the Grand Ball in horse-drawn carriages, and

by foot. The automobile era was just in the formative stage and transportation over the inadequate narrow dirt roads was hazardous. Ladies skirts were long and full and brushed the ground. But once there, the dancers danced the light fantastic until the wee small hours of the morning to the sweetest music obtainable, probably from Port Townsend! ☆



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# Remembering San de Fuca

by Carl Engle

(Coupeville native Carl Engle, son of Whidbey Island pioneers Will and Flora Engle, continues his handwritten account of his growing up years. Here he writes about San de Fuca as he remembers it from his youth. He wrote this in 1953; he died in 1958.)

Before 1889 the district between what is now known as Kennedy's Lagoon and what is known as Monroe's Landing was not very thickly settled. Mrs. Samuel Libbey lived alongside of what is now known as the "old courthouse" and her son George and his family lived out by Fort Ebey. A little farther along the bluff was what is known as the Locke Place where a couple of bachelors lived and the last place was where Mrs. Ben Sweatman lived with, I think, her grandson and possibly a nephew.

From the old courthouse we start towards what is now San de Fuca and we soon come to the historic old house of Dr. Lansdale, where many important meetings were held and where when I first remember, I think Robert Hathaway lived. I believe you could yet find the pile of stones which were used to build the chimney.

This part of the country was what was platted by Lansdale as the townsite of Coveland and at one time the address of people



*The first county courthouse and post office at Coveland. The Libbey house is at left. Both buildings are still lived in.*

who were living at what is now Coupeville was Coveland as that was where the post office was at first.

Going on a little farther we come to the house of Capt. Henry Roeder, who was a pioneer resident of Bellingham. This place is now known as the Grasser farm. When we get to where the road now leaves the highway going away from where the sawmill now stands (1953) was the Coveland Schoolhouse.

Leaving the school and taking that road (north) we come to the Power house where Mrs. Isaac Powers, her two sons Joseph and Henry and her daughter Martha lived. I suppose I should say that Martha, or Mattie as she was called, never married and I would say she was always a very attractive bachelor girl.

A little farther on after we cross the road was the A.W. Arnold farm where Mr. Arnold, his wife, four sons and two daughters lived. And still farther on, down towards Fort Nugent, was a house occupied by Mrs. Arnold's parents and her brother Eddie Carleton, another bachelor but not a girl.

Coming back to the bay we come to the R.B. Holbrook house where Mr. and Mrs. Holbrook, two sons and a daughter lived. Following the road along the water (east) we come to where John Gillespie lived with his three sons and daughter.

A little farther and we come to where Capt. Swift lived with his wife and children, at the time I remember he had three daughters and one son.

Next is where the Vrooman family lived, I think the mother, father and at least one, possibly two daughters. They moved away about 1881. We now come to the Monroe place, where Mr. and Mrs. Monroe Sr., lived when I first remember, with one son and a daughter. Going back of the present Riepma farm we find the old Grant place.

And that is all I remember about what now is the San de Fuca country when I was a boy. ☆

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# Smith cost Island sawmill and jobs

by Lois Perkins

(From the files of Island County Historical Society)

**What might have been**  
Whidbey Island's largest industry was lost to this area through the unfortunate attitude of an early day "minister" of the Gospel. In any event, the "Rev." Joseph Smith from whom Smith's Prairie was named, seems to have had a greater flair for business and politics than for preaching. Smith settled on the prairie in 1853 and according to record engaged in some rather sharp business dealings with both relatives and neighbors.

When in 1858 the Seabeck Mill Company decided to locate a mill on the Island they chose Snakelum Point as an excellent spot for their development. The Point was at that time included in the 640 acre claim of the Rev. Joseph Smith. Feeling that a large mill would offer good jobs and bring many advantages to the whole community, the settlers pledged several hundred dollars to help the mill company with development. The Rev. Smith was to give the necessary land for the mill from his claim as his contribution and the grant was to include a right of way.

While these negotiations were under way a Mr. Harmon was hired to prepare the huge timber necessary for the engine bed. This finished timber measured 20 in. by 30 in. by 16 feet. Unfortunately for the high hopes of the community, the engine bed timber proved to be the only development to come of the negotiations. When the attorneys for the Seabeck Mill Co. inspected the deed drawn up by the Rev. Smith they found the canny parson had reserved the right to ship any amount of any kind of freight over the mill company's

dock free of charge. The mill company left Whidbey without further negotiations and only the huge engine bed timber remained to remind the settlers of their lost industrial development.

As for Joseph Smith, he gave up his title as well as the church and went into politics and it was told at the time of his death many years later in Oregon, he was considered a very wealthy man. ☆

## Hard Times Coffee

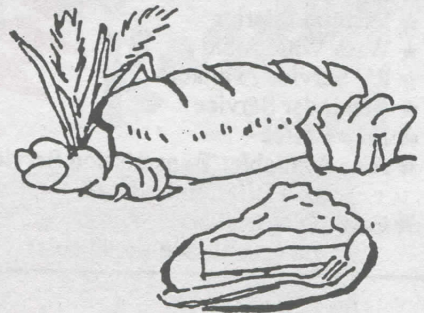
We ran across a recipe for "Hard Times Coffee" recently in our Great Depression files, and thought it might come in handy as the price of coffee goes up. Mix two quarts of wheat bran with one pint yellow corn meal. Add 3 well-beaten eggs and 1 cup best sorghum molasses. Beat the mixture and spread on a pan and place in oven to dry. Stir often while it is browning (at about 300°) which, it says here, is the secret of good coffee. A handful of the "coffee" is enough for two persons. Sweet cream improves the flavor of the brew. ☆

## Nocturne

by Bernice Ames

Cabbages tumble moonlight among them,  
Secret as roses with the darkness  
Deep in their leaves.  
Toward their silver edges  
A coon family hurries,  
Four ditto marks trailing their mother,  
Ring tails rippling the white slice of highway.  
When car lights suddenly scald the hilltop  
'Coons become cabbages,  
Round and motionless in the field,  
Tumbling moonlight among them. ☆

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# Old Cross lives on

One hundred fifty-five years ago Chief Tslalakum of the Sowkamish (Skokomish) set out by canoe to go to the Cowlitz Mission, founded the previous year by Fathers Francois, Norbert Blanchet and Modeste Demers who had come to the Northwest from Montreal, Canada. They arrived in Vancouver, Washington on Nov. 24, 1838.

Chief Tslalakum had heard of the teachings of a new religion, and he asked the priests to come and teach his people. He was given instruction, taught songs and ceremonies, and given a copy of a "Catholic Ladder," a board with dots and symbols and used to teach the Indians the basics of the Catholic religion.

The following year, Tslalakum sent a party to Father Blanchet asking him to come to Whidbey Island, and on May 26, 1840 Father Blanchet landed at



*A portion of the old Cross came to rest at the Alexander Blockhouse; it was protected later by a glass case.*

Ebey's landing.

The Indians met him at the beach, yelling "Who are you? Who are you?" When they saw it was a "Blackrobe" and not a hostile tribe, they were overjoyed. Blanchet himself was amazed and pleased when he found they knew the hymns and prayers that he had taught their chief the previous year. And they were also using the "Catholic ladder"!

An altar was constructed of a rough plank, surrounded by a shelter of woven mats. A "ladder" six feet high and fifteen inches wide was hoisted up for all to see. About 400 Indians from various tribes, Skagit, Snohomish, Skokomish and Clallams gathered to hear Father Blanchet.

Blanchet spent several days traveling around Central Whidbey, teaching and baptizing the Indians. When on the Penn Cove side where Coupeville is now located, his ministry was climaxed when several natives came carrying a 24-foot wooden cross! It was erected overlooking the cove, on the site of the present Penn Cove restaurant.

The cross remained there

until the early 1900s when a man who had rented a field from Abram Alexander, pulled it down and used it as a fence post! It was later recovered by Alexander and stored in the Alexander Blockhouse until 1915.

It was again erected near the blockhouse, the upright portion a part of the original 24-foot cross, the crosspiece a piece of Alexander's fence.

In 1992 John Hunt and Mickey Clark of Coupeville constructed a new glass-fronted shelter for the portion of the cross and installed it near the front of the blockhouse, with a brief history of the artifacts.

Schoolchildren especially, are impressed with this bit of the earliest of Whidbey history. One can only imagine what took place 150 years ago, when a dozen or more Indians came whooping up to the Alexander blockhouse where Father Blanchet and the tribal members were standing, carrying a 24-foot cross! Their enthusiasm was boundless.

And there, in a small glass enclosure, is the remnant of that great symbol of Christianity, the Cross! ☆

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