

Whidbey Spindrift
April 1972

*"Een Holland
Se Gebeurtenis"
April 27-30*



"IN TRUST FOR THE . . . NEIGHBORHOOD"

Crescent Harbor settlers had built themselves a blockhouse for protection against Indians in 1855, at a time when Coupeville settlers were also concerned for their safety, and had constructed many small "forts" in that area.

From the files at the County Auditor's office is the following 1855 document:

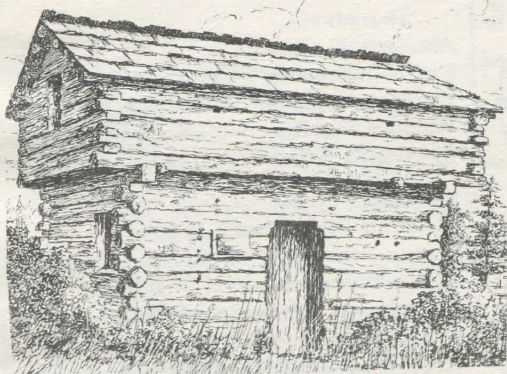
"Know all men by these present that I, William Wallace, for the consideration of protecting myself and family and my neighbors against the ravages of the Indians do hereby grant unto Caleb Miller,

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 block house 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, and also brought the first horses to Whidbey Island in the summer of 1851 to work his farm.

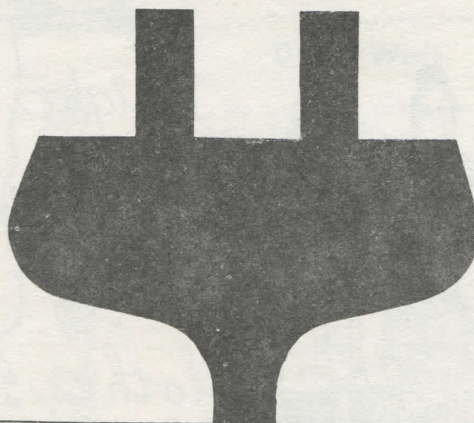
Polowna Wallace, the daughter born to the family that year, was the first white child born on Whidbey Island.

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



Behold the spring rain! How it gladdens the heart of the tiller of the field and starts the trees to budding; and ever thus releases the soul of him who has been winter-bound. — Whidbey Proverb.

THIS IS A PLUG FOR PUGET POWER

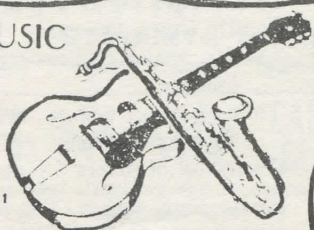


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ISLAND HISTORY

The first Hollanders who settled in and near Oak Harbor in 1894 found the land good, but uncleared. Many who came from Michigan were familiar with logging, but those from the prairies had no such experience from which to draw.



Hollanders recognized the need for stores and businesses, and by 1906 Oak Harbor began to take on the look of a small rural town. It had a blacksmith shop (Pete Komen), a hotel (Byrne's), two halls, a livery stable, a school, a phone office, a creamery, and 17 homes on the old Taftzon Donation Claim, which comprised the east side of town. By 1915, when the town was incorporated, on the Sumner claim (central part of Oak Harbor) there was a pool room, meat market, a doctor, dentist, men's clothing, school drugstore, bank, restaurant, harness shop, barber shop, two general stores (Maylor's was one) and 22 homes.

Ed Vanderzicht, a skilled dairy technician, came with his wife and family to Clover Valley, and then moved into town to be closer to his work. When James Neil moved his logging operations to Oak Harbor, with a payroll of 60 men, many of the Hollanders worked in the timber and with the money bought farms. The Zylstra family and their children were responsible for several places of business as well as their farms.

The Island County Times of April, 1895 wrote that the Hollanders who had come to Oak Harbor the previous year via the steamer Idaho, were later "enticed" to Yakima, east of the Cascades, with the promise of land at only \$2 per acre. When they investigated, they found the price upped to \$100. Jerome Ely, Oak Harbor historian, wrote that indignantly they returned to Whidbey Island, and in May of that same year ten more families arrived to make their home on North Whidbey, to swell the fast-growing Dutch community.

The Hollanders have always taken an active part in city and county government. At the incorporation of Oak Harbor, with 308 population, H. Muyskens and H. Hulst served on the city council; four have been mayor in the past 57 years, John Eerkes, 1927-28; Otto Van Dyk, 1932-35; Richard Zylstra, 1952-56; and Al Koetje, Oak Harbor's present mayor.

Within two years there were over 200 Hollanders busy making their homes in the "new country."

Many of the new Americans came to Oak Harbor with money to buy land, and to start businesses. But many others arrived with nothing much except themselves and families. The secrets of their success depended upon their help to each other; their industry and thrift, and awareness of business dealings.

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HOLLANDERS SETTLE

In the 1920's a number of new Hollanders came to Whidbey from Canada where they had experienced hard times on the prairies. A First Reformed minister, Rev. Cook, was instrumental in bringing these people to Oak Harbor. He said "new blood" was necessary for the health of the new colony. Up to this time they had stayed much to their own, very few marrying outside the Dutch settlement.

The new families from Canada were sponsored by the Oak Harbor Hollanders who found homes and employment for them.




At the close of World War II another group of Hollanders, these direct from The Netherlands, arrived. They too were "sponsored" by Hollanders on North Whidbey, and within a short time all had businesses or other employment and are contributing to the economy of Whidbey Island.

Two have served as County Prosecuting Attorney, James Zylstra and Ed Beekma, incumbent.

Riekele Zylstra, John Meeter and John Vanderzicht were elected county commissioners, with Vanderzicht presently in office. His father, Ed Vanderzicht, was appointed first town marshall by the first mayor, Jerome Ely.

Charles Nienhuis dug potatoes for six cents a sack when he first arrived, and 17 sacks was considered a good day's work. In 1903, Nienhuis with Dan Schöwalter, H. Riksen and E. K. Nienhuis went into the mill business in Clover Valley, and supplied all the lumber for nearly all the homes built on North Whidbey within the next few years.



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COUPEVILLE, SAN DE FUCA, IN 1863

In 1913, H. A. Swift wrote for the Island County Times an account of his coming to Whidbey Island as a 16 year old boy, in May 1863.

On May 1 he left his Massachusetts home for Washington Territory with his mother and stepfather, a retired ship captain. The party left by steamboat from Fall River to New York, and then to San Francisco by ocean steamboat. They arrived May 28, and were obliged to stay there until June before getting a vessel bound for Puget Sound.

The English ship King Lear set sail for Utsalady on Camano Island, where it would pick up a cargo of spars for France. The party spent four days at Skatchet Head on South Whidbey, then arrived at Utsalady June 29.

The family embarked for Coupeville in a large canoe propelled by four Indians. Also in the canoe were Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Cranney and Captain Ed Barrington, "who kept us all laughing with his jokes and funny stories of which there seemed to be no end".

The party landed on the beach in front of Capt. Coupe's house at 8 p.m. on the last day of June, 1863, and it was noted that Mrs. Coupe cooked an excellent dinner for the travelers.

The writer recorded that he was up early the next morning and tried to help Tommy and George Coupe do the milking, "with little success." After breakfast he walked from Capt. Coupe's house through the woods and over a narrow wagon road to about the center of where Front Street now stands.

John Robertson had a general merchandising store in a small one-story building, with a bar in the back, which "seemed to be patronized more than any other business."

(Ed. note:) the late Carl Engle told me that this was the oldest store building in Coupeville, and was later built onto, to make what is now the Six Persimmon restaurant on Front Street.)

There was an old hall built to the west of Robertson's, a two-story structure, with the entrance to the upper part at the front, and a flight of stairs from the street to a front platform. (This later was moved and became a part of Coupeville's old Central Hotel.)



CARDS, GIFTS
STATIONERY
FRONT & MAIN
COUPEVILLE

The residence of Capt. Fay, a large one-and-one-half story log house, stood on the corner near the Alexander Blockhouse. This was all of Coupeville in 1863.

18 (TURN TO PAGE 20)

Open 9-Midnight Party Needs

Sis' Corner

Pioneer and Midway

The writer said while he was looking around, his parents, Mrs. Coupe and Jennie Coupe joined him and they all took a canoe to the head of Penn Cove (San de Fuca) which was to be his home for the next four and one-half years. A 16-year old boy, he was thoroughly disgusted that he had been brought from his native city to such a God-forsaken country!

The party stayed awhile at the Jake Smith farm at the head of the Cove, and the ladies took the canoe to call on Mrs. Samuel Libbey. The men walked around the cove and stopped at the Holbrook house to admire the Holbrook's six-month old baby, Horace. They arrived for dinner at the Libbey home.

The Libbey house he visited that day had been torn down by 1913, the writer said, but the larger two-story frame building belonging to the County was still there, occupied by a R. S. Hathaway (County Auditor), a bachelor. (This must have been the county courthouse, which still stands at the head of the Cove.)

H. A. Swift said that there he took his first lessons in "Chinook" from Joe Libbey, and the party returned by canoe to Coupeville and to Capt. Coupe' hospitality. He signed himself "Ancutty Tillicum" ("Old Friend" in Chinook) and later wrote a number of "reminiscences" of old days.



Singing Superstitions

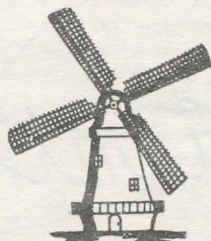
*If you sing before you dress,
You'll have trouble before you undress.
If you sing before seven,
You'll cry before eleven.
If you sing before you eat,
You'll cry before you sleep.*

Stogies

The long inexpensive cigar known as a stogie (or stogy) received its name from the Conestoga wagon. The strong cigars were first made for drivers of the heavy wagons whose tastes did not call for a mild smoke. The name stogie also came to be applied to the heavy boots worn by the Conestoga drivers.

Instant Soup

Among the items that Captain Meriwether Lewis stocked for his exploratory trip of the Louisiana Territory in 1803 was a dehydrated soup. He had 150 pounds of this "portable" soup made up by a Philadelphia cook under his direction. The soup cost \$1.50 per pound.



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