

Spindrift Two

50¢

Volume 7

Number 3

Whidbey Island's Own Magazine

Winter 1984



Fifty Years of News Headlines

13

News headliners 1890-1900

1891: Free Land in Oklahoma — the opening up of free land in the west brought settlers rushing to Oklahoma.

1893: First Ford Driven — Henry Ford test-drives his first automobile.

1894: Chop Suey Begins American Career — New York becomes birthplace of this quasi-Chinese dish.

1894: First Flick Flickers — C. Francis Jenkins shows first motion picture in Indiana.

1895: Buffalo Disappear From West — great concern is shown over loss of buffalo; only 800 said to be left on western prairies.

1897: Gold Discovered in Klondike — gold strike in Alaska makes city out of small town Seattle.

1899: Radio Astounds World — Marconi sends first press message across the English Channel by wireless, communicating 15 words per minute.

Popular songs at the turn of the century showed great Irish influence: "My Wild Irish Rose," "Sweet Rosie O'Grady," "Oh Promise Me," and "A Hot Time In The Old Town."

News headliners 1900-1910

1903: Wright Brothers Take To The Air — Orville and Wilbur Wright make the first successful flight of a heavier-than-air powered craft at Kitty Hawk, N.C.

1904: World's Fair Opens — hordes of visitors from all over the world are drawn to the famous St. Louis World's Fair.

1908: Alice Blue Becomes Fashion Fad — President Theodore Roosevelt's daughter, Alice, starts fad in her "sweet little Alice blue gown."

1909: Toast of Broadway Sweeps Country — Actress Lillian Russell becomes the toast of every town in which she appears.

1909: Perry Reaches Pole — Commander Perry makes first successful trip to North Pole.

Popular songs of the era were "A Bird In A Gilded Cage," "In My Merry Oldsmobile," "In the Shade Of The Old Apple Tree," and "Alice Blue Gown."

News headliners 1920-30

1922: Abies Irish Rose Opens — it ran for more than 2,500 performances.

1927: Lindbergh Flies Atlantic — completing the first solo nonstop flight across the Atlantic in his "Spirit of St. Louis."

1929: Mickey Mouse Debuts — first Mickey Mouse cartoon hits nation's theaters.



It was muddy . . . Oak Harbor's main street in the early 1920s, when the Model T Ford was a popular conveyance.

Popular songs of the day were "Bye Bye Blackbird," "Happy Days Are Here Again," "Yes, We Have No Bananas," and "Tea For Two."

News headliners 1930-40

1931: Star Spangled Banner Named National Anthem — capping years of arguments in Congress and in the press.

1932: World's Tallest Building Completed — New York's Empire State Building is first of the city's famous skyscrapers.

1934: Dionne Quintuplets Born — five darling baby girls capture world's imagination.

1937: Louis Beats Braddock — Joe Louis, who was to become a legend, knocked out James Braddock to take the heavyweight boxing title.

Popular songs of the 1930s were "I Found A Million Dollar Baby In The 5 And 10 Cents Store," "Let's Have Another Cup Of Coffee," "When I Grow Too Old To Dream," and "When The Moon Comes Over The Mountain."



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Fort Casey: 1897 Through World War II



Early-day picture of the lighthouse at Fort Casey.

Fort Casey's guns in its hey-day included seven 10-inch; six 6-inch; six 3-inch; two 5-inch; and 16 12-inch mortars, making a total of 37 guns dating from 1897 to World War II, when the guns were removed and used for scrap iron in the war.

One of three proud old forts of pre-World War I days that guarded the Straits of Juan de Fuca and Puget Sound, Casey was left desolate and inactive following the Second World War, her outmoded guns razed and bunkers empty.

Only her wooden barracks remained along with several other buildings such as officers' quarters on the perimeter of the Parade Ground, and the Lighthouse, an unused beacon that was fast falling into decay.

A small detail of troops arrived at Fort Casey shortly after the completion of the gun emplacements in 1899. The first garrison numbered 30 men under the command of Lt. A. D. Putnam. The Fort was officially activated in 1900 and although its guns

were never fired in anger, it remained an integral part of U.S. defense until 1921 when it was placed on caretaker status. A single platoon under a sergeant stayed behind to maintain the property.

Military activity during World War II at Fort Casey consisted of training and routine garrison duty, and the remaining outmoded coast defense guns were salvaged for scrap in 1942-43.

On April 17, 1950, the Army announced that Fort Casey was once again being placed in caretaker status and would be under the custody of the District Engineer, Seattle District Corps of Engineers.

In 1956, the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission acquired Fort Casey and initiated an interpretive program to provide the public with a complete story of an example of coast artillery. The lighthouse was renovated and an Interpretive Center opened.

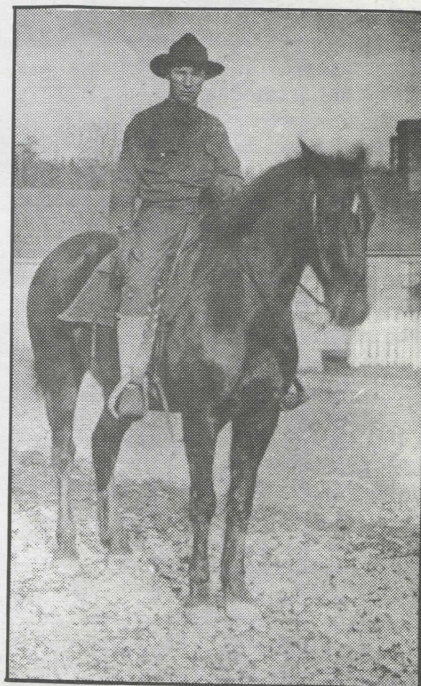
'Guns For Casey'

But a gun-less fort? No amount of dioramas and interpretive material could substitute for the big guns that had been installed nearly 60 years previously. A search was instituted for replicas of any of the Fort Casey guns, a search that went on for several years.

Finally, two 125-ton 10-inch guns, the last of 172 that had guarded harbor entrances, were discovered through the efforts of Navy Lieutenant Commander Dave Kirschner.

Stationed at Whidbey Island Naval Air Station, Kirschner became interested in the Fort Casey restoration project. While on a visit to Fort Wint in the Philippines he saw the guns and recognized them as duplicates of those at Fort Casey.

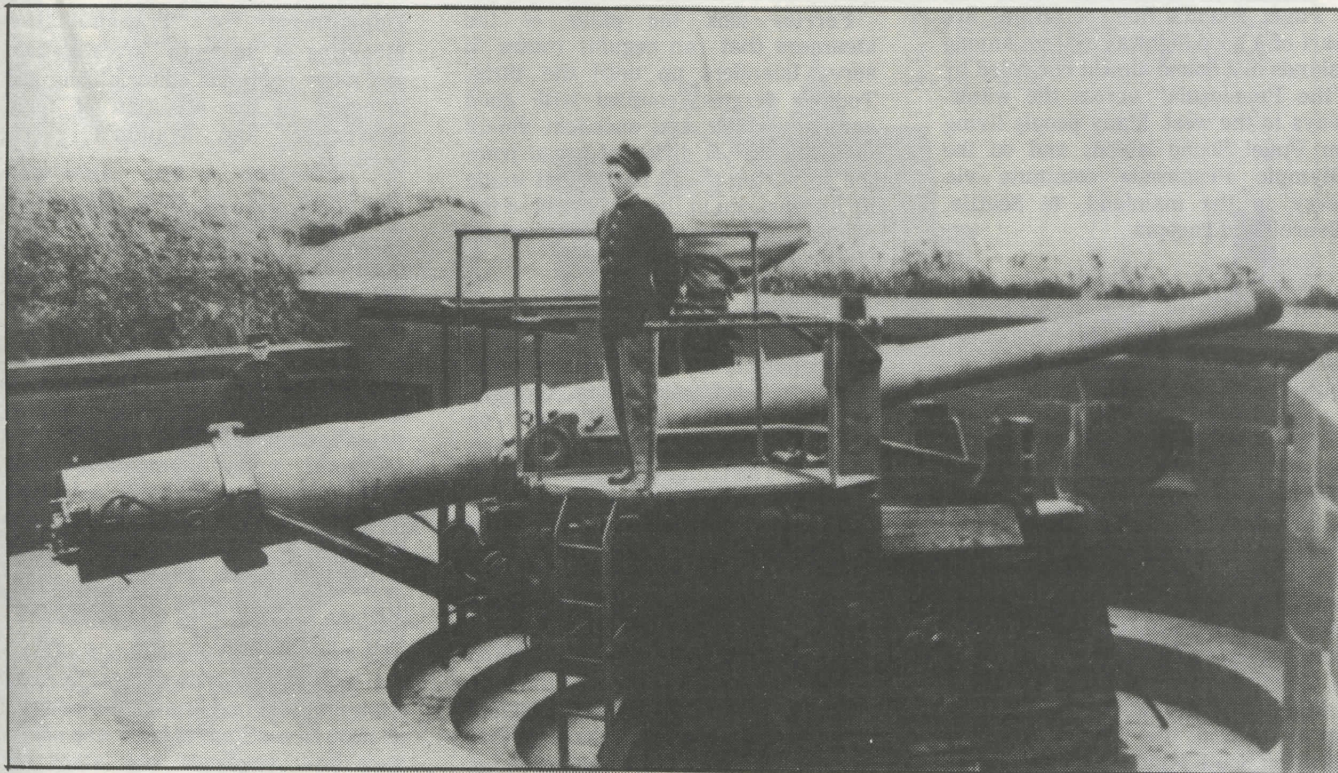
The guns are the only pair in existence except for a pair on Corregidor, property of the Philippine government and badly damaged by the American bombardment during the retaking of the islands.



Classic mode of travel at Fort Casey before and during World War I.

Coupeville Lions Rescued Casey Guns

15



The "big gun" at Fort Casey, helped to protect Puget Sound during World War I

Through the continuing efforts of the Coupeville Lions Club and the Oak Harbor George Morris Post 129 of the American Legion, Senator Henry M. Jackson and Wilfred R. Woods, vice chairman of the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, and many others, the "Guns for Casey" campaign was launched.

The U.S. Navy dismantled, crated and transported the guns through the jungle to Subic Bay, then cleaned, painted and prepared them at the Bremerton Naval Shipyard for reassembly at Fort Casey. The monumental task of shipping the guns across the Pacific to Seattle was donated by Sea-Land Service, Inc.

"The Guns" dedication ceremony took place Aug. 11, 1968.

Today Fort Casey is a picnic-and-tourist-and-school-children mecca. In a beautiful setting at Admiralty Head, where early pioneers landed their livestock from passing vessels, Fort Casey rests from the chaotic years when troops were stationed there, when 1,000 pound projectiles were fired by the big guns.

Fort Casey lies alongside Camp Casey, nowadays a camp for church and group studies, with the beautiful old buildings being used for dorms, and the swimming pool put to good use.

The Keystone Ferry makes regular

trips from the south side of Admiralty Head to Port Townsend, and campers and picnickers enjoy the beach. The lighthouse, successor to the frame building built in 1861, is now 81 years old and an inspiration to photographers and artists.

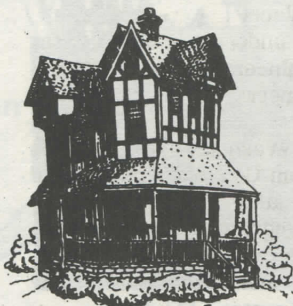


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Progress Awakened in 1912

17

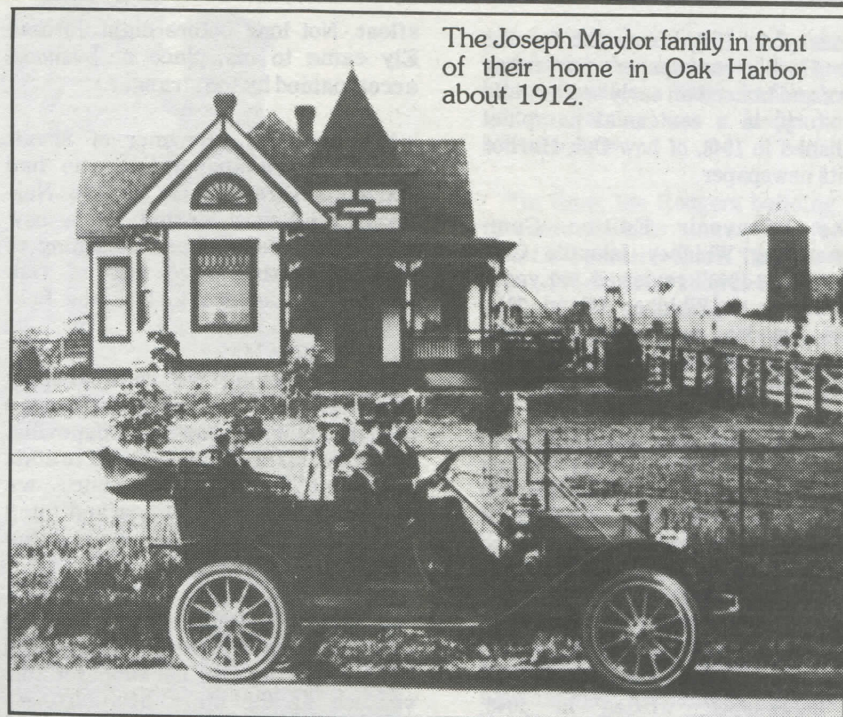
The year 1912 was an important one in Oak Harbor. We were still an unincorporated village, with one main street along the waterfront. The "business district" extended from Byrne's Store and wharf and warehouse, and a creamery and blacksmith shop on the east end, (Midway Blvd.) to Maylor's Store, the bank, a dock, and other assorted businesses on the west end (50th N.W.)

Because the only transportation to the mainland was by steamer, the Oak Harbor Commercial Club met to talk with the County Commissioners about the establishment of a ferry at Deception Pass. The commissioners agreed to build the ferry approaches to deep water if the people would furnish work to complete the road to the landing on the Whidbey side.

Chris Weidenbach of the Cornet Bay district said that the people of his neighborhood were ready to go to work on the new road to the Pass as soon as the route was surveyed, and they hoped there would be no delay. All were enthusiastic about a ferry from Cornet Bay to Fidalgo Island.

In May of 1912, a special school election was favorable for a special tax levy to raise \$2,000 to completely equip the new school. Vote was 84 to 23.

As progress quickened in Oak Harbor, the new Byrne Hotel opened to the public with 12 airy outside rooms,



The Joseph Maylor family in front of their home in Oak Harbor about 1912.

all finished in white and well-furnished, each with a large window and transom. The halls were wide and light and a number of exits were installed in case of fire.

There was a large electric fire gong and the place was lighted with gas. Plumbing was of the best, with indoor toilets and hot and cold running water throughout the hotel. The view from the second floor balcony was excellent.

On the ground floor there was a ladies' parlor, used as a rest room; an office with a stock of fine cigars and candies; a dining room with white linen, silver and glass and fresh fruit; a bright new kitchen, a drummers' sample room and a billiard room, were listed for patrons use.

An automobile, reputed to be an early Reo, met all boats and took guests to and from the hotel free of charge.



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Harvey T. Hill Told How a Newspaper

Harvey T. Hill, columnist for the Oak Harbor newspaper for many years and himself an early settler, told the story, in a centennial pamphlet published in 1948, of how Oak Harbor got its newspaper.

The "Souvenir Edition Commemorating Whidbey Island's Centennial 1848-1948" reviewed 100 years of progress on Whidbey Island. Pictured on its cover was a 1918 photograph of soldiers from Fort Casey riding in an Army car.

The pamphlet also commemorated the first annual Oak Harbor Turkey Festival; recollections of Coupeville by Carl Engle; a story about Jacob Anthes by Sid Nourse; and pictures of pioneer daughters and the clothing they wore 100 years before.

Headlined "The Story of the Island Newspapers," Hill's commentary on the newspaper, written in 1948, follows:

"We of Oak Harbor, along in the spring of 1911, noticed a tall gentleman wearing a black felt hat, long Prince Albert coat and gray trousers, walking up and down our main thoroughfare, very much interested in the business houses.

"As in all small communities, we all wondered what was in his mind, and in a short time, all kinds of rumors were

afloat. Not long before night Jerome Ely came to my place of business accompanied by the stranger.

"He was H.L. Bowmer of Skagit County, a newspaperman who had started several papers in the Northwest and was looking for a new venture in the business. Learning of the progressive little city of Oak Harbor, he decided to look the field over.

"At that time, we were keeping ourselves posted on local news through the Island County Times in Coupeville, and when Mr. Bowmer offered to start a paper in Oak Harbor, we businessmen thought it a grand thing to boost the city and surrounding country.

"Johnny Rodgers, Jerome Ely and I talked it over with Bowmer who said he would require backing for his venture at the start. His business associates in Skagit County reported him okay. The three of us made a loan of \$500 to start, and Johnny Rodgers donated a room free of rent in what was then the Rodgers building.

"In a few days the Bowmer clan arrived: H.L. (Dad) and Mrs. (Ma) Bowmer; Charles Bowmer and wife Flo; and Harry and Johnny Bowmer; bringing with them an old hand press, a few fonts of type, a bottle of printer's ink and a few reams of newsprint.

"They moved into the Eerkes house in East Oak Harbor, and at once set up their press and type table. Each one of the family had his allotted job: Dad Bowmer did most of the news finding, advertisements, and meeting the public.

"Ma Bowmer helped set type, kept the home fires burning, and prepared a snack for the bunch when they had time to come and get it. Charles and Flo were the editorial staff and Johnny was press boy when they could catch him and get him away from his playmates.

"The first edition of the Oak Harbor News, a five-column paper, appeared on the streets, a very snappy little sheet with all the news and ads from most of the merchants in town. And from then on, the Oak Harbor News appeared regularly each week giving the subscribers all the events of the day.

"One week it looked like we would miss our looked-for weekly news as the purchaser of materials overlooked the fact that his paper supply had given out until time to go to press.

"Dad Bowmer, being resourceful, called on our local butcher and purchased a supply of his brown wrapping paper for the news sheet of the week, and nobody was disappointed.



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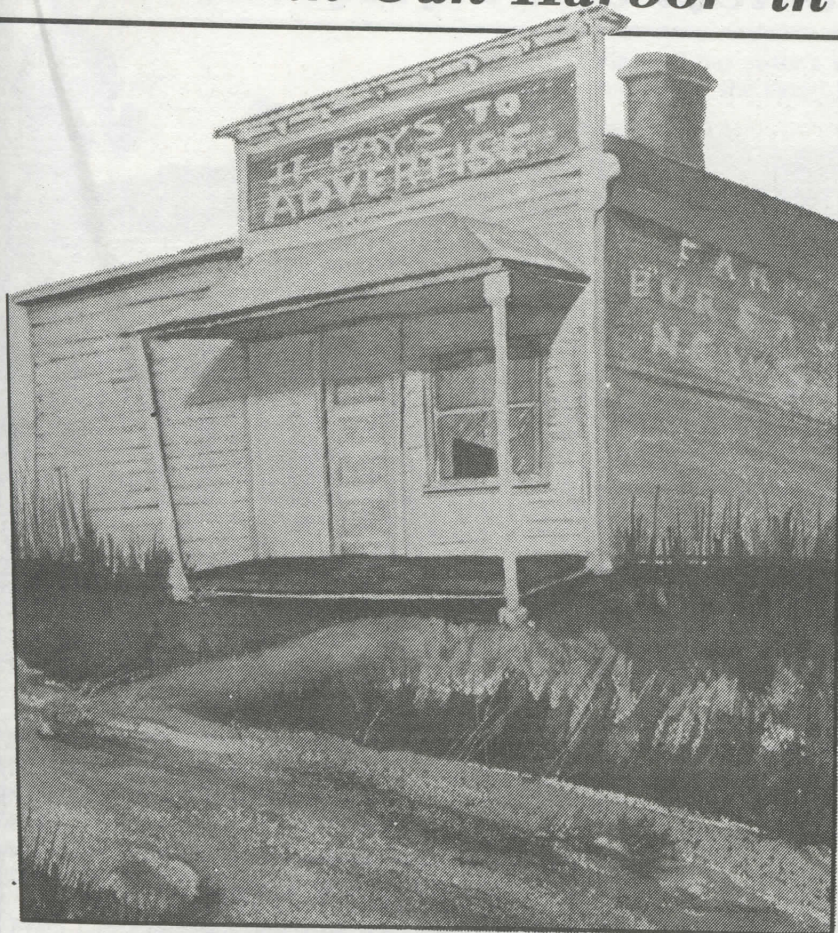


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"It Pays to Advertise" . . . Oak Harbor's first newspaper building is pictured in watercolor by Phyllis Smith, Seattle artist, and former publisher of the Whidbey Island newspapers.


"Besides giving us a newsy little paper each week, the Bowmers were good mixers in society. Dad and Ma Bowmer soon became leaders in the

M.E. (Methodist Episcopal) Church, Ladies Aid, and other social bodies. Charlie and Flo were good musical entertainers, taking part in all the

young folks' doings, and singing regularly in church services and at other functions. They had splendid voices. Johnny was a leader in all school sports.

"In time, the Rodgers building had to come down to make room for the new Co-Operative store. The Bowmers moved their print shop to Bank Street (50th N.W.) in one of Jerome Ely's buildings (see photo), and continued to give the public the best they had in the way of a newsy little sheet.

"After several years, however, the Bowmers began to look for new fields to conquer. The paper was sold to a graduate of the University of Washington in the early 1920s, Al Whitney and his young wife. Whitney added new machinery and eventually moved to a new building on West Barrington Avenue (Pioneer Way). He also changed the name of the paper to the Farm Bureau News. In 1931 the paper changed hands again, being taken over by George Astel. Within a few years, Astel took over the Coupeville and Langley papers to form the present three-paper chain on Whidbey.

"In 1939, Astel sold the group to Glenn and Phyllis Smith. The Smiths have blueprints for an ultra-modern building to be erected within a year (at the top of the hill). Such has been the growth of the Oak Harbor paper during its 38 years of life with the growing community it serves." 



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The Irish Settlement of Oak Harbor

People come and people go, but there are always those families who put down roots and remain for generations in the same area, contributing to government, social and spiritual values, and helping to shape the character of the country they call "home."

In the 1850s, Whidbey Island was some place in Puget Sound north of Olympia, which was then called Smithfield. Whidbey was a place where there were donation claims to be had for one dollar and a year's occupancy; a place accessible only by Indian canoe and sailing ship. It was adventure!

By Indian canoe the Maylor brothers followed the lead of Taftson, Sumner and Freund, Oak Harbor's first three settlers. The Maylors were from Ireland, half a world away. A land racked by a potato famine and persecution through hundreds of years.

Samuel Maylor was a gunsmith, a trade that was profitable in this new land that had only recently converted from bows and arrows. He and his



Tom Maylor's cabin, left on the harbor side of Maylor's Point. Maylor is pictured at right. Note hillside above bay area denuded of trees. The Oak Harbor Marina is now located in the curve of beach below.

brother Thomas cleared the land that became Maylor's Point (now Officers' Capehart housing), and set about

planting and building homes. The fifth generation of Maylors still live in Oak Harbor.



CHIMNEY SWEEPING

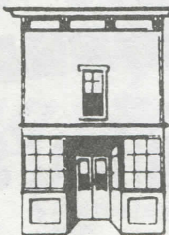
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Story of Tragedy and Survival



The McCrohan Clan

Toward the last of the 1850s decade, Francis McCrohan, born in Ireland and who as a boy had migrated to Australia, arrived on Whidbey Island. He brought his wife and five sons with him, first intending to go to California to find gold, but changing his mind when en route he heard of the wonderful opportunities for land on Puget Sound.

The McCrohans came north, after a three-month journey across the Pacific from Australia to California, first settling at Coveland (San de Fuca).

They also had four daughters. Christine McCrohan, who was born in Australia in 1847, came to the Northwest in 1860 aboard the sailing vessel Electra, in company with her sisters Margaret and Mary, and Mary's husband Maurice O'Leary.

From San Francisco they took the ship to Port Townsend, then a small boat across the Straits to Whidbey Island to join their parents.

Christine was only 18 when she married Captain Edward Barrington in 1865. She lived all the rest of her life in Oak Harbor where her six children were born. She also raised a step-

daughter Olivia, and her sister's son Raphael Brunn, whom she cared for from infancy.

Elizabeth McCrohan, married to Thomas Nunan, came to Whidbey Island in 1868. There were many Indians here at the time. The family was afraid to have any lights on at night, and they often herded the children into blockhouses when an attack by Northern Indians was expected and feared.

Margaret McCrohan married Raphael Brunn; Elizabeth, Tom Nunan; Mary, whose husband Maurice died, later married Captain George Morse. Today descendants of the Nunan, Morse, Barrington and O'Leary families still live on North Whidbey, more than 120 years after these "first families" arrived by Indian canoe and sailing ship.

The hard existence of our early settlers was often marked by tragedy, and in 1863 the little community of Oak Harbor suffered the loss of four of its members in one catastrophic happening.

Household articles such as furniture and cooking utensils were in much demand by the pioneers, and when an auction sale of household goods was held at Penn's Cove, at the settlement then called Coveland, Mrs. Francis McCrohan, her son David and son-in-law Maurice O'Leary, along with Ulrich Freund, hired an Indian with a good canoe to take them to Coveland.

Mrs. McCrohan bought a number of articles, among them several pieces of furniture. Freund bought a small wall mirror, but objected to riding home in the canoe, saying it was badly overloaded. He took the trail home through the woods.

The overloaded canoe rounded Blowers Bluff (now Scenic Heights), and was capsized when a sudden squall arose. The Indian was reputed to have been an excellent swimmer, the most powerful of his tribe, but he did not save himself or any of his party.

The next day a search party found their bodies on the beach. They told how the Indian was found crouched on hands and knees on the tidelands, as though attempting to crawl to safety.

The small community was stunned. Mary McCrohan O'Leary was bereft of mother, brother and husband, and left with two small boys to raise. The victims were buried in a small cemetery northwest of Oak Harbor, now called Pioneer Cemetery, where many early settlers have since been laid to rest.

Each year the descendants of these pioneers gather at the cemetery for a reunion. In the center of the site there is a large oak tree, and the story is retold of how Mrs. McCrohan, walking with one of her daughters nearby only a few weeks before the tragedy, stopped beneath a small oak sapling and said, "This is where I want to be buried."



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The steamer Fairhaven, a sternwheeler, ran regular routes on Puget Sound, from Seattle, to Whidbey and to Bellingham.

KEROSENE LAMPS

The March 15, 1912, issue of the Oak Harbor News spoke out on the necessity of more street lights for the town.

"Among the best and cheapest is the kerosene burning street lamp. It has an attachment that puts the light out at any time by manipulating a screw. It costs from \$1 to \$1.50 depending on size and only a few cents a week to run. The town of Edison in Skagit County has this lighting and it's much smaller than Oak Harbor. There should be at least five lights between the bank corner (where in 1983 Chez Monique is located) and Byrne's Store (just east of where Flintstone Freeway joins Midway Blvd.) and two on the dock to the boat landing. Until we are incorporated and an electric system installed these lamps would be very efficient."

In 1912 there was much traffic on the dock because the only transportation to the mainland was by steamer.

On June 28, 1912, the Oak Harbor News ran out of newsprint, and through the courtesy of the Maple Leaf Meat Market the paper was printed on butcher paper.

Pioneer Cafe

SUNDAY DINNER

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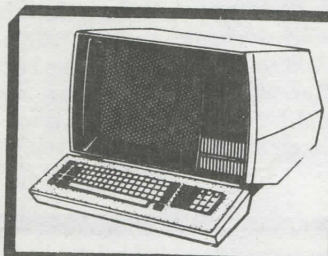
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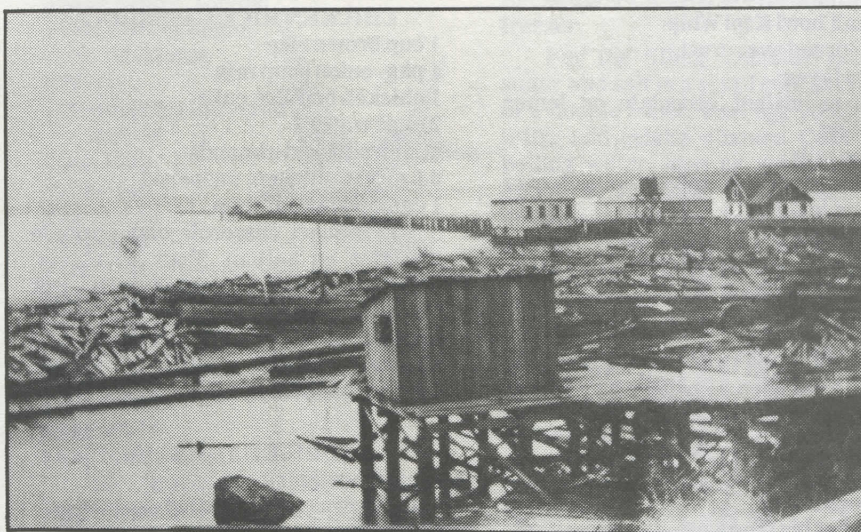
The final resting place of the Whidbey, one of the steamers that served the Island community at the turn of the century. The Whidbey burned in the bay and floated to Maylor's Point, where the remains stayed for many years.

1854 DRY FALL

Walter Crockett, early day Admiralty Head settler, recalled an extremely dry fall in 1854. The Indians were upset and caused an "outbreak" of violence, then escaped to the mountains. The settlers, few in those days, prayed for stormy weather to bring them back to their shore habitat, but in spite of the prayers the weather continued dry until late in December. Forest fires burned until Christmas.

RECORD CROP

One hundred bushels of wheat per acre was grown on the farm of F.A. LeSourd of Ebey's Prairie in 1892, and a glass jar of the LeSourd soil was exhibited at the Island County horticultural exhibit at the Whatcom County Fair.



Oak Harbor's waterfront about 1918, when a driftwood-clogged slough was located where the Flintstone Freeway is today.



"We're the one to come to"



EQUAL HOUSING
OPPORTUNITY



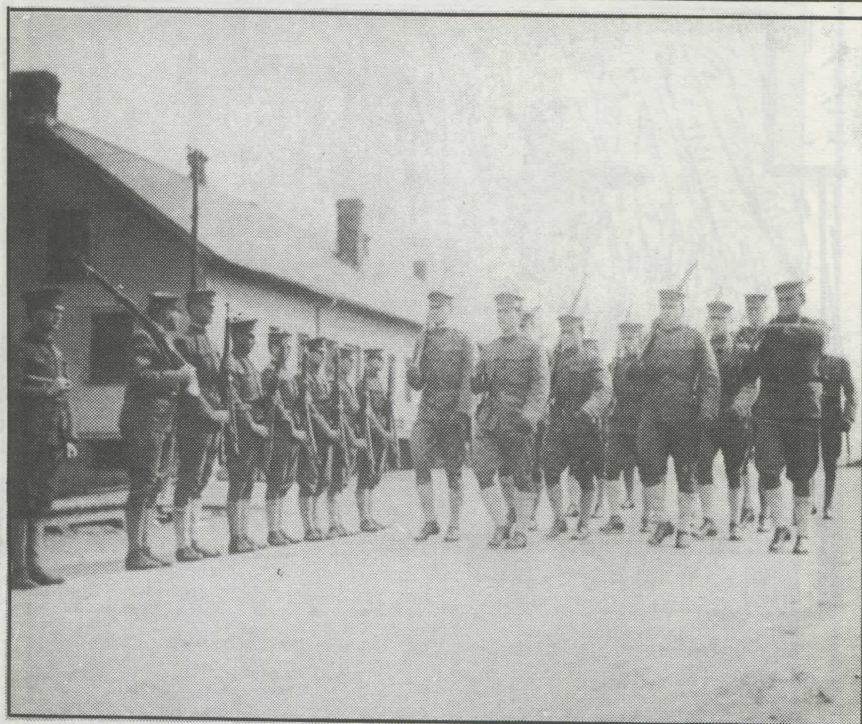
ISLAND SAVINGS and LOAN ASSOCIATION

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Friday Harbor, Concrete, Port Angeles

Doughboys at Fort Casey

35

—♥♥— *Anyway*



Hup! Hup! Hup! Fort Casey soldiers of World War I days.

People are unreasonable, illogical and self centered.

Love them anyway.

If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish ulterior motives.

Do good anyway.

If you are successful, you will win false friends and true enemies.

Succeed anyway.

Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable.

Be honest and frank anyway.

The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow.

Do good anyway.

The biggest people with the biggest ideas can be shot down by the smallest people with the smallest minds.

Think big anyway.

People favor underdogs but follow only top dogs.

Fight for some underdogs anyway.

What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight.

Build anyway.

Give the world the best you have and you'll get kicked in the teeth.

Give the world the best you've got anyway.

... Quoted in Response

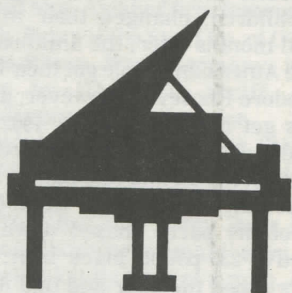
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Live Entertainment



Chars Cove

Let us tickle your fancy with our unique dining atmosphere. Watch the sailboats coming and going. Feel the sea breeze while sitting on our patio. Inside or out, you'll find the finest cuisine in the area. Sunday Buffet



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On the Water

Reservations Suggested
679-2515



Although Whidbey's weather is often wonderfully wet, wild and windy, it is rarely white. This is the Libbey house on Coupeville's main street as it looked during the Great Snow of 1916. The weather set records that year that still endure, as does the house.

Dorothy Neil, Editor
3102 300 W.
Oak Harbor, WA 98277

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