Organi August 1986

Ancient Whidbey Wreck Discovered by Vancouver's Crew

Cora Cook, South Whidbey writer and historian, about 1960 wrote a provocative story concerning an ancient wreck of a ship first discovered by Captain Vancouver sometime between July 2 and July 4, 1792.





Land Title Company

of Island County



Transamerica Title Services

FULL TITLE INSURANCE & ESCROW SERVICES

Oak Harbor 9046-900 West 675-2246/321-1333 Freeland 5570 S. Harbor Ave. 321-4838

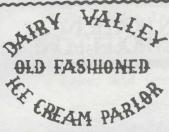


Oak Harbor

ROCKETS WILTON CAKE SUPPLIES

PLANES TRAINS MODELS MACRAME DOLL HOUSE MINIATURES CRAFTS

> 1108 WEST PIONEER OAK HARBOR 675-5813



DRIVE-IN DAIRY 2416 - 20th NW Oak Harbor

675-5300

FULL SERVICE DAIRY FARM FRESH PRODUCTS ICE CREAM TREATS SANDWICHES & **FOUNTAIN DRINKS**

"Try Our Milk ... And Taste The Difference.'

700 AVE

OPEN 10AM TO 9PM CLOSED SUNDAYS

KOETJE AGENCY, INC.



INSURANCE

675-5915

1547 Midway Blvd. Oak Harbor



1792 was the historic year in which Whidbey Island was discovered by Vancouver's First Mate, Joseph Whidbey. It was no doubt on this exploration trip, as they stopped along the shore, that they found other seafaring men had been here before them.

Vancouver's ship Discovery was anchored in the Straits to the west of Whidbey, and Joseph Whidbey and his men took to the small boats to explore. They found a large creek entering the east side of the bay near Maxwelton. Along the creek's bank was a bluff that stood 50 to 100 feet high. The creek must have been the size of a small river, for Whidbey's men towed up the creek in the shadow of the bluff on their left, with a giant sandbar on their right.

About three-quarters of a mile up the creek they came to what is now the mouth of the A wide sandbar separated the main bay from an inner bay known as "the core." This inner bay filled as the high tide rolled over the sandbar, then emptied as the tide receded.

They were amazed to behold what appeared to be a wreck of a ship half submerged! Rowing closer, they found it indeed to be the remains of a ship. Even in 1792 it was evident that the ship had been there for a long time. It was so weather-beaten that the name of the ship painted on the hull was indiscernable.

The shallow inner bay, bounded on the west by the wide sandbar, was almost a mile long in the north-south

(Continued on next page)

Maxwelton Holds the Answer

(Continued from previous page)

direction. On the inland side two streams poured fresh water into the bay, the larger of the two meandering away toward a small lake near Midvale. Known today as Miller's Lake, it served as the spawning ground for the mighty hooknose silver salmon

The large marshland diked off from the sea behind Maxwelton is the "core" where Captain Vancouver's sailors found the old ship remains in 1792. Rediscovery of the wreck was made in 1859 by the first white settlers of Deer Lagoon, Thomas Johnson and Edward Oliver.

They also found wild oxen roaming among the trees, which added to the mystery. Were the oxen aboard the ill-fated ship? Were they among cattle being transported to a



new-world settlement? Had the ship come ashore to find timber for a mast? Or disabled, had it blown ashore?

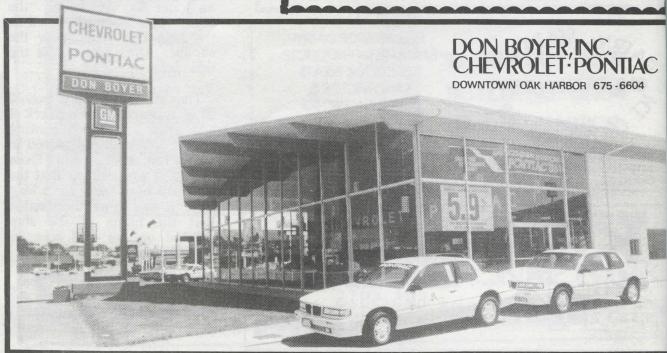
Any number of exciting conjectures can be made concerning the crew of the ship. . were they killed by Indians? Or did their lonely situation cause them to fight among themselves? Ms. Cook, relating the story, reported that on the Double Bluff side of Sunlight Beach, her father found two skeletons, one with a broken arm, the other with a fractured

jaw. Could they have been part of the crew?

Or they may been India skeletons, many of which have been excavated with the settling of Whidbey Island. It known that the Indian tribe often held full-scale powerstruggle "wars" with on another, leaving many dead of wounded.

It might even be that a coupl of early rumrunners zigge when they should have zagge and were caught by a riva gang, but that's not nearly a exciting. At any rate, th "bonnie braes" of Maxwelton named by a couple of homesic Scots, hold the answer burie somewhere beneath the cattail of the marsh.





South Whidbey Settlers Arrive in 1860s

Nearly 70 years passed after Joseph Whidbey's exploring party found the wreck of the ship on South Whidbey before white men again came to the Maxwelton area. Luther L. Moore homesteaded 17 acres along the eastern side of the bluff between the cove and Useless Bay on July 3, 1863.

He later bought 158 acres of school land bordering the east side of the cove, land belonging to the University of Washington. On Dec. 9, 1864, he acquired two more pieces of property, 83 acres in all. President Abraham Lincoln signed the Homestead Land Patents for the land.

In 1869 the southern section of land on the cove was deeded to Daniel Bagley, president of the University's Board of Regents, on a grant signed by Ulysses S. Grant. During the 1870s other parcels were purchased by William Bourne, John S. Doe, the Phinney Brothers Arthur and John, Amos Phinney, owner of a Port Ludlow mill, and Cyrus Walker of Puget Mill So.

Other 1870s settlers included Samuel Coulter, Ellen Lyons (first wife of Michael J. Lyons), Chris Anderson, who homesteaded the marsh around Wheeler's Lake; and George Perga.

In 1880 the vast reaches of timber and meadows of South Whidbey were settled by only a handful of pioneers, among them N.E. Porter of Mutiny Bay; a man named Johnson near Double Bluff; and George Finn, Chris Anderson, F. George, G. Johnson, Thomas Johns, Edward Oliver and Mike Lyons at Maxwelton. At Bailey's Bay (now Cultus) was Robert Bailey; and around Possession Point was John



About the year 1902, the sternwheeler Fairhaven put in at Langley town dock. The Fairhaven was a major link between the island and the mainland. Passengers and freight kept the steamers busy until the advent of ferries, better roads, and the ubiquitous automobile.

Phinney and Joseph F. Brown.

It was in the fall of that year that a young man of German ancestry by the name of Jacob Anthes paddled his skiff to Useless Bay, and spent the winter exploring the country and getting acquainted with the few settlers.

Anthes was to become "the father of Langley." He found trails but no roads. There was game of all kinds, ducks and geese covered the marshes. The sloughs were full of salmon and deer and bear were everywhere. It was truly a "land of plenty" where no one went hungry.

In the spring of 1881 young Anthes bought 120 acres a mile west of Langley from John Phinney for the sum of \$100, where he lived for several years. He built a log cabin and cleared some of the land, cutting cordwood for the many woodburning steamers that plied the Sound, thus making all the cash he needed.

During these years Anthes resumed surveying the woodlands in that area. Great stands of virgin timber covered the land, with no underbrush. He noted that where Langley is now located there was a good harbor, accessible from any point without the necessity of crossing the high ridge of the Island.

Satisfied with what he learned of this new, practically unsettled land, Anthes filed a homestead claim in 1886, and in quick succession a pre-emption and timber claim, paying all his expenses by logging operations.

The early years of the 1890s were "boom times" in the Northwest, with the Great Northern railway starting building to the coast. Towns were platted in forest and field and offered for sale. Anthes felt the time was ripe for the materialization of his dream, that of a town on South Whidbey.

(Continued on next page)

Langley Born Into Trials and Recession of 1890s

(Continued from previous page)

The Langley Land and Improvement Company was formed and included Anthes, Judge J.W. Langley of Seattle, C.W. Sheafe, James Satterlee, A.P. Kirk and Howard B. Slausen. The Town of Langley was born, named for the Judge.

A \$5,000 dock was built, followed by a general store and post office. Anthes took the leading part in the formation of the young town, and became both the town's first storekeeper and postmaster.

With a dock where boats could tie up, more people came. Cabins appeared in the woods, and ground-clearing began. Anthes' Trading post was the center of the community, and he contracted with steamboats to supply their cordwood fuel, averaging 35 cords sold daily.

This wood "business" furnished employment for 25 woodsmen and seven teams.



The woodsmen worked cutting wood during the day, and in early and late daylight hours cleared land where they could raise crops.

A community log schoolhouse was built for the 15 children of school age in the area, and Anthes' store was a clearing-house where parents paid \$2.50 per month per child for tuition. The money was used to hire a teacher.

Anthes also assisted in opening new trails and widening existing trails into the interior of South Whidbey so settlers could come into Langley to trade.

In 1893-94 a great depression struck the new little town and

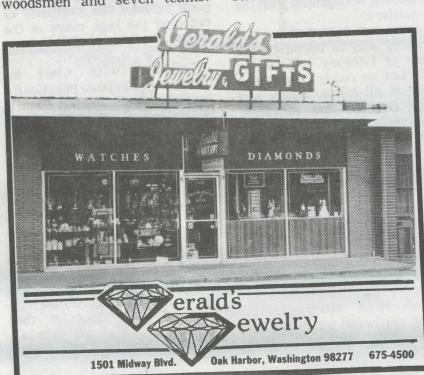
its people. Completion of the Great Northern Railway to Bellingham put the steamboats out of commission, losing Langley its steady source of revenue from cordwood. The dock went out in a storm and had to be rebuilt. Times were very hard, there was little money or work to be had. But on South Whidbey, as on the rest of the Island, there was plenty to eat in the wild game and fish.

RECOVERY

The 1898 Alaska gold rush helped the situation by stimulating business all through the Northwest. Large orders for piling and brush provided work for 100 men in the Langley district. Piling was in demand all along the coast, and brush was used to retard the action of water where land fill was taking place.

No county funds for road building were allotted South Whidbey until 1902 when the road to Coupeville was opened. Until then, South Whidbey had felt much closer to Seattle than to Island County with the County Seat so hard to get to. The new road helped unite the two communities.

The Sept. 20, 1895 edition of Coupeville's Island County Times reported: "One of the surprises of the Fruit Fair last Saturday was the splendid exhibit from the Jacob Anthes orchards at Langley. Nothing exhibited excited so much admiration as his German prunes. One tray contained three dozen, uniform in size, measuring about 9 inches in circumference. He also exhibited two clusters weighing five pounds each, growing on twigs 8 and 12 inches long. His apples, pears and plums were remarkable. equally exhibit was an eye-opener to those who were not posted concerning the 'head of the Island'.'



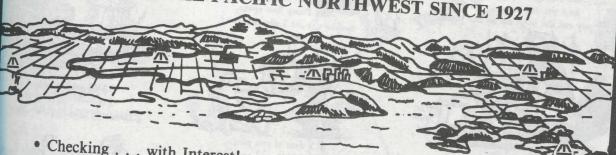




Mt Baker Bank

A SAVINGS BANK, MEMBER FDIC

SERVING THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST SINCE 1927



- Checking . . . with Interest!
- Portfolio of Savings Investments
- Individual Retirement Accounts
- Direct Deposit Services
- Drive-up Banking
- Consumer Loans
- Home Loans-FHA, VA and Conventional





1568 Midway Blvd.—Oak Harbor 98277

SUSAN LAZOTT, BRANCH MANAGER

BRANCHES ALSO IN MOUNT VERNON, BELLINGHAM, LYNDEN AND BLAINE

Harriet Low Holbrook Story Told

By Thomas B. Rainey, Ph.D. **Evergreen State College**

Alice Pfeiffer Forrester, a long-time resident of Coupeville, now lives in an Oak Harbor nursing home. She is a direct descendent of Captain Richard and Mrs. Harriet Holbrook, who homesteaded an original donation land claim at San de Fuca. Captain Holbrook, a pioneer mariner, commanded several steamships, which plied the waters of Puget Sound in the 1850s and 1860s.

Alice is a grand lady, a fitting descendent of the tough pioneer stock that settled Whidbey Island. Until an unfortunate accident forced her into the nursing home, she lived in the historic Holbrook House in Coupeville. Alice's grandsonin-law offers the following account of how Harriet Low great-Holbrook, her grandmother, came to Penn's Cove as a young woman. He presents it as a tribute to Alice and to the brave pioneer woman of Whidbey Island who was her forebear.

In the late 1850s, Harriet came to Puget Sound from

Dr. Thomas B. Rainey, author of the feature "A Tribute to Pioneer Women, Past and Present" in this issue, is a professor of history at Evergreen State College in Olympia. He is working on a history of Thurston County, which he plans to publish in time for the Washington State Centennial in 1989, and he writes that in his research, he frequently encounters material about Whidbey Island pioneers.

Dr. Rainey's wife, Nina Carter Rainey, is the greatgreat-granddaughter of Harriet Low Holbrook, and he found a letter about Mrs. Holbrook in "Told By The Pioneers," which formed the basis of his feature. No one in the family even knew about the letter, so Dr. Rainey presented it to them as a Christmas present.

Thank you, Dr. Rainey. We will be looking forward to hearing from you again. . . Dorothy Neil, editor.

Penobscot, Maine, to join her who husband preceded her to the Pacific Northwest. As a very young woman, she had married Crowell Sylvester, brother to the founder of Olympia. She



braved a harrowing sea journey, replete with a feverthreatened passage over the Isthmus of Panama and a week's stay in San Francisco, the roaring Sin-City of the Gold Rush.

Arriving in Coupeville, she expected to cross Whidbey Island and take the boat at Ebey's Landing for Olympia. But a storm delayed her a week, which she spent as a guest of Captain and Mrs. Thomas Coupe.

At the time, Captain Richard Holbrook lived in a log cabin across the Cove at San de Fuca (then Coveland). He was "proving up" and working his homestead. One day, a young friend stopped to talk with him and told him that he had met a very handsome woman at Ebey's Landing. The friend boasted that he would have proposed to the woman in an instant, but, alas, she already had an awaiting husband in Olympia. That woman was Harriet Low Sylvester.

Mrs. Sylvester started for Olympia on the little sidewheeler Waterlily. When she was almost there, however, the Waterlily foundered in the Narrows and sank. The men on board took the only life boat and rowed away, leaving Harriet and the other passengers "up to their armpits in water for nearly 24 hours.'

Arriving finally in Olympia, Mrs. Sylvester made many good friends and earned her with her sewing living machine. She meanwhile divested herself of her first husband. Records indicate that they separated for "reason of desertion." It is not clear, however, who deserted whom.

Enter the dashing young

• Restaurant Hood Systems
INSTALLED & SERVICED

•Fire Extinguishers

For Business - Home - Vehicle - Boat SALES — SERVICE — RECHARGE — REPAIR WHILE-YOU-WAIT SERVICE

INTER-ISLAND FIRE-SAFE CO.

STAN BRUCE, OWNER

679-2239

9128 975 Ave. E. Oak Harbor



Eu Cap

shou those wom wasa Car

Harri Chris Olym cerem on as Island Seattle Indian native

Once great young husbar by not After long li captain ancesto John Govern Massac fleet in

Cove, a came d Mrs. Ho of gree thought woman. tied a dkerchi head.

As the

Capta plowed de Fu drove husban up 50 to they be in the reporte years la

Holbi wife ald trade a a safeg Indians vicious Indian one m Indians

Old (

Evergreen College Professor in Olympia

Captain Richard Holbrook. It should be mentioned that in hose days the ratio of men to women in the Puget Sound area was about 8 to 1.

Captain Holbrook married Harriet Low Sylvester on Christmas Eve, 1860, in Olympia. Shortly after the ceremony, the newlyweds left on a sailing vessel for Whidbey Island. At the tiny village of Seattle they transferred to an Indian canoe, manned by six mative paddlers.

Once on the Sound again, a great storm came up. The young bride won her new husband's lasting admiration by not uttering a word of fright. After all, she too came from a long line of sturdy Yankee sea captains. Her father's direct ancestor had been Captain John Low, rear-admiral of Governor John Winthrop's Massachusetts Bay Colony fleet in 1630.

As the canoe came up Penn's Cove, a friend and neighbor came down to meet the new Mrs. Holbrook. Her first words of greeting were, "Why I thought you were an Indian woman." Captain Holbrook had tied a large bandana handkerchief around his wife's head.

Captain and Mrs. Holbrook plowed their homestead at San de Fuca together. The wife drove the horses while the husband held the plow to break up 50 tough acres. In so doing, they became "very good chums in those pioneer days," reported their daughter many years later.

Holbrook had to leave his wife alone when he pursued his trade as steamship captain. As a safeguard, he told the local Indians that she was strong and vicious, that she had killed an Indian up Sound. She had only one major problem with the Indians.

Old Cultus John, an Indian



had frightened many who another timid young wife, walked into the Holbrook cabin one day unannounced. He squatted down by the fireplace and began to smoke his pipe. Nothing daunted, Holbrook asked him to leave. He grunted, but did not move. The young pioneer wife knew that she must either eject him or suffer further indignities from him and his fellows. She grabbed him by the coat collar, dragged him to the door, pushed him out, and shut the door.

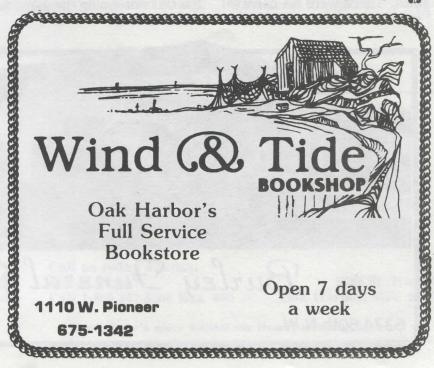
She picked up a big stick of wood and waited for the second act of this frontier showdown. The door opened slowly, cautiously, but surely. When

the crack was wide enough, she brought the stick down hard on the head of old Cultus. She lived in peace with the Indians thereafter.

Harriet Holbrook, in fact, was very fond of the Indians, especially of the women. She taught some of them to knit and sew and cook. She learned Chinook, the trade jargon, and some of the local dialect. And she acted as a kind of marriage counselor for them.

According to local lore, Mrs. Holbrook brought the first kerosene lamp to Whidbey Island. It lighted her happy home at Coveland. She later told her daughter, the mother of Mrs. Alice Forrester, that she lived her happiest and coziest years in the little old three-roomed cabin on the shores of Penn's Cove, with its big willows and fine view.

Alice Forrester, her grand-daughter, lived in the more commodious house built by Horace Holbrook, her uncle and a son of the pioneer couple. Full of years and memories, she is proud of her courageous grandmother, Harriet, and of her frontier heritage.



1912 Fourth Celebrated

The Fourth of July has always been an opportunity for celebration on Whidbey Island. The Hollanders who began settling here in the mid-1890s were so pleased with their new homeland, and anxious to be regarded as Americans, that they formed a band which played "Dixie" and other fundamentally American tunes at a Fourth of July picnic in Swantown.

Oak Harbor in the year 1912 celebrated the Fourth in a manner never before seen on Whidbey. A "conservative estimate" of 2,500 people attended the day-long festivities in a day when there were very few cars, and roads were undeveloped and poor.

But by 11 a.m. on the great day, the harbor was dotted with boats, from the steamers Gleaner and Calista to smaller boats called "launches." People came from Everett and Mount Vernon, most of them to see the Island for the first time.

The parade included many beautifully decorated farm wagons, buggies, and a few autos. There were no carnival "rides" in those days, but

6374 60th N.W.



In the early 1920s North Whidbey residents began agitating for a picnic site to be cleared on the east side of Cranberry Lake. Pictured is what may have been a Fourth of July celebration, a forerunner of the annual Deception Pass Picnic. Note soldiers in uniform from Fort Casey in lower left corner.

townspeople set up booths for refreshments, and there were races for everyone.

A patriotic program was held at Oak Tree Park (Smith Park) where the Honorable Judge Still of Coupeville gave the address. Oak Harbor Mayor Jerome Ely read the Gettysburg Address.

People ate picnic fare in the park and crowded the downtown restaurant and hotel. There was a ball game between Clinton and Oak Harbor, with the Oaks dropping the game 5-8 to the visitors.

Horse and pony races followed, and cash prizes went to winners. Mickey McCrohan won \$15 as winner of both the horse and pony races; Nick Faber of Clover Valley had the best float; Harry Barrington of San de Fuca had the best decorated auto; John Bos of Clover Valley won the wooden shoe race; and Neil's pole camp won the tug-of-war.

con

ead

Wa

pop

mos

take their

spec

resid

Fida

have

trail

expl

walk

from

park

high

Bay

tion

the

main

On

B

The day ended at the MWA Hall with an eight-piece orchestra from Fort Casey furnishing the music, everyone had a wonderful time.



Social Freedom Was Too Much for 1897

Freeland, Washington, on South Whidbey Island, was so named because it played a small part in a, Utopian experiment in 1897. It was an experiment in living that blossomed in Skagit County then spread to Island County.

In 1897, some colonists settled in the northern part of Skagit County vowing to "socialize the state of Washington and then the nation." The site chosen was a hillside near Bow, above Samish Bay.

Members of the Brotherhood of Cooperative Colonists poured in to create Equality Colony during the few years of its existence. Their purpose was to "organize people into groups or trades, establish manufactures of all kinds, to produce the necessities and some of the luxuries of life, abolish interest, profits and rents, use the time check in place of legal tender money, and practice brotherly love and the Golden Rule."

After pledging their belongings, Colonists signed a labor contract reading: "For such board,

laundering and other benefits as the Colony may grant me, I will work at such labor as I may be assigned to and such benefits be accepted by me as full payment for the labor I perform.'

That first year about 1,000 men were at work producing a million dollars worth of goods, and for a few years the number of Colonists and their produce skyrocketed. All was rosy but since there was no "leader" of the Colony, each man trusted in his neighbor to do his best, fairly and equitably. It didn't work.

Experiment in Socialism

In February 1906, a group of disillusioned Colonists gathered to admit what the outside world already suspected:

mon

Colo

telli

whe

Soci

for

in s

acre

the

feet

squa

indu

and

barl

com

shop

office

vent

each

quan

to

tlem

WH

"Recognizing the fact that irreconcilable differences have risen among the members of the Colony, several whom have declared their intention to leave owing to incendiarism and violence, assault and perhaps even murder, and having been assaulted with deadly weapons by some members of the Colony; and plainly seeing the impossibility of further harmony, confidence and friendly relations...we declare that the Honorable Court of Skagit County be asked to appoint a receiver to wind up the affairs of the Colony and to dispose of the property.'

An old timer named Bill Giles. who came to the town of Utopia







with his father, said his father was a "great socialist."

Giles related, "He had put money in the Topalabampo blony in Mexico, but never would ell if he got it back. He came here when he heard they were going to wialize Washington and worked ir five cents an hour and got paid in scrip. They had 420 acres, 80 acres for the center of town, along the hillside, with streets up to 60 leet wide leading to the town square. They were going to have industries, sawmills and fruit, and cereal coffee made out of barley."

"They built big apartments, a community dining room, a tailor shop, a printing shop, and a post office...big plans."

"There was no head to the venture, the people got to know each other too well. They quarreled, (many of them moved to Freeland and other settlements), then the sawmill

Keeps its Free-land

burned, followed by the barn and cows. Money had been borrowed on the cows, so that started the breakup of the Colony.'

Socialism in Washington state died with the breakup of the Skagit experiment. In a cemetery in Utopia, there are men and women who honestly searched for equality in life, and found it only in death. The Colonist experiment was over

The Colonists who settled in Freeland were said to be more successful than their Skagit brothers, and the free land there was homesteaded by members of the Colony. When the big socialist experiment ended, Freeland became just another small town eking out an existence on the most beautiful Island in the Sound.



Last Photograph

My sister squinted primly, Papa dozed, Mama donned the saintly look she saved for company.

With every move exposed, my brother dummied up, while I behaved like Greta Garbo.

Grandpa, rest his soul, bore no resemblance to the gentle man my heart recalls.

We each assumed a role so foreign to our natures that I scan our last togetherness and find no hint of warmth or loving.

Memory's patchwork scraps of time refute this antiseptic print.

And yet, the camera never lies; it traps forever, with a little bait of "Cheese," the strangers in our personalities.

(Norma Calderone of Baldwin Park, Calif., in Modern Maturity)



Where fashion and value meet!



FR/HION

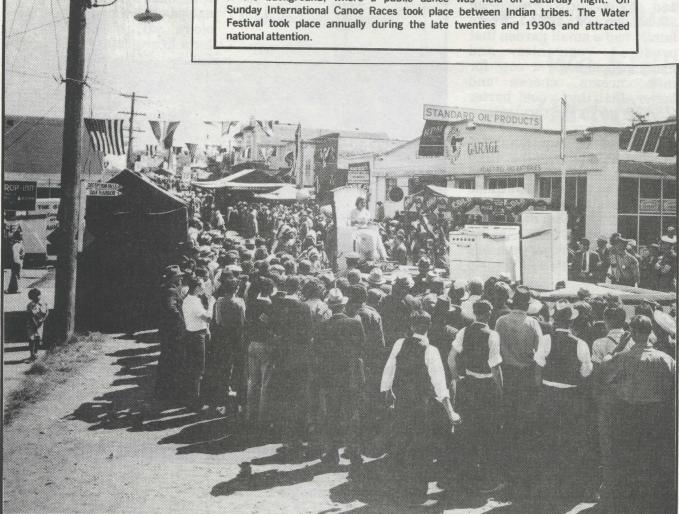
WHERE FA/HION AND VALUE MEET 1153 W. Pioneer Way, Oak Harbor







This picture, taken at the height of the Coupeville Water Festival parade in the early 1930s captured the main float and Festival Queen, to say nothing of the new electric stove and refrigerator that preceded the Queen! Indians with feather headdresses are pictured to the left of the queen, and Sorgenfrei's Garage in the background, where a public dance was held on Saturday night. On Sunday International Canoe Races took place between Indian tribes. The Water Festival took place annually during the late twenties and 1930s and attracted national attention.



Send a little bit of Whidbey Island to a friend . . . August 1986 Island history, recipes. places to go, things to do, and much more mailed anywhere in the continental U.S. for \$4.50 per year (4 issues). Gift cards 50° extra. Subscription will begin with next published issue. Back issues are available for \$1.50 each. I would like Spindrift Two mailed to the following address: Name Address City State Zip I enclose \$\square\$ \$4.50 for 1 year \$\square\$ \$8.00 for 2 years Make check payable to Spindrift Two, P.O. Box 1308, Oak Harbor, WA 98277