

# Spindrift Two

FALL 1992

Volume 16 Number 1

\$1.00



# Sea Captains: Capt. Lovejoy, first in a series

Whidbey Island has always been a haven for seafaring men and women. What began in the 1850s when Sea Captains or "Master Mariners" came from the Eastern shores of the United States to the present day when Naval "Sea Captains" fly over Whidbey's 50 mile length, ferries continue to ply their way at Mukilteo-Clinton and Port Townsend-Fort Casey, providing a water highway for thousands.

In the 1850s the Northwest was just opening up to settlers, men who had come to California for the 1949 Gold Rush only to be disappointed; sea captains intrigued by reports of a fair forested land on an inlet called Puget Sound, and the offer of "free land" to anyone brave enough to settle for a year.

Penn Cove was a deep water harbor on Whidbey's east side, just across from the mainland where much logging was going on. Logging, the cutting of ships' spars and the building of homes made up much of the early day economy. Oak Harbor opened up to the north at the mouth of Penn Cove, and as word traveled, more and more deep-sea captains came to find homes for their families where the weather was mild, crops grew abundantly and "land was free"; at least for the time being.

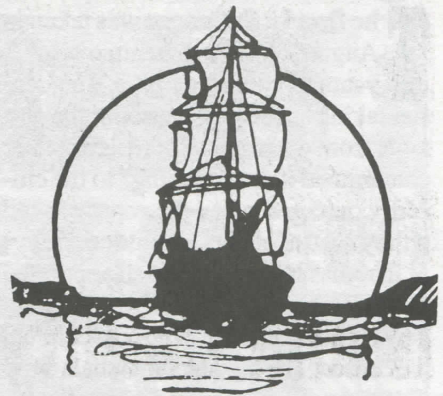
Captain Howard Bentley Lovejoy was the first pilot on Puget Sound, familiar with all local waters. Pilots were captains of extensive experience in Puget Sound where navigation was almost impossible for the best of ocean masters. Each cove and inlet had its own local tide and wind conditions. In

summer the west wind prevails in Penn Cove every afternoon, and in the morning the east wind blows. The first Pacific Coast tide table was issued in 1867 by the Coast and Geodetic Survey although the "Pacific Coast Pilot" was published in 1858.

Captain Lovejoy came to Whidbey Island in 1853 with Captain Thomas Kinney as his Mate. They loaded spars in Penn Cove for the first docks to be built in San Francisco, and from Long Point and Snaklum Point on later voyages. They were friends of the Indians who did most of the logging. On one voyage Captain Lovejoy took two Indian boys, sons of two Chiefs, to China to show them the Orient. One of the boys was forever after called "China Johnnie." Later the boys were given a trip to California by Captain Lovejoy. Chief Tom Squi Squi's son was one of them.

Mrs. Lovejoy was held in high esteem by the Indians who never understood her fear of them. During their "Potlatch" festivities which lasted several days while they made the cove ring with their hideous weird noises and beating of drums, Mrs. Lovejoy would lock the doors of her cabin and remain in terrified seclusion until the Potlatch was over. During the "Indian War" scare Mrs. Lovejoy took her children to the Alexander Blockhouse (still standing on Alexander Street) in Coupeville and slept with them on the floor, going home in the morning.

Mrs. Lovejoy was Calista Kinney, daughter of Captain Kinney and she



and Capt. Lovejoy were married Jan. 5, 1855 on her father's ship Pleiades, and sailed for Sitka, Alaska. Later Captain Lovejoy settled his family at Lovejoy's Point on Whidbey Island, President Grant signing homestead and donation claim deeds for Capt. Lovejoy, John Alexander and Captain Thomas Coupe. At that time more than a thousand Indians lived where Coupeville now stands.

Captain Lovejoy died in Coupeville in 1872 while in his early forties, leaving his young wife with six small children in their pioneer home. Captain Thomas Coupe at this time was like a father to Mrs. Lovejoy, other early settlers, her own family and her Indian friends helped her big family in the pioneer outpost of Coupeville.

The Lovejoy family name is well known in Coupeville history. The Lovejoy brothers were builders of boats and some of the well-known Puget Sound steamers came from their boat-building.

*Sea Captains to be continued.*




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# Greenbank was hunters' paradise

**Greenbank**, on Whidbey Island, that narrow part of the Island where the Loganberry Farm is located, along with Lake Hancock and the settlement of Greenbank itself, was named for Green Bank, Delaware, some 3,000 miles to the east.

In 1879, the Alexander-Rosenfield family lived on the beach west of the Greenbank area, the last homestead site on Whidbey Island. Alexander was a ship's carpenter and the family had come to Seattle from England a few years before Seattle's "Big Fire" in 1879. At the time Greenbank was heavily timbered with immense trees, with not even a trail. Travel was only by boat or by foot along the beach. Two or three times a month Rosenfield would sail west to Port Townsend for supplies.

Their nearest neighbors were the Robertsons to the north and the A.J. Demings at Bush Point and the Porters at Mutiny Bay. Deming was a colorful figure who had sailed the seven seas and had also experienced life in the gold

fields of the West. However, there were a number of descendants of sailors who had settled on the Island and married Indian girls, as was the custom in those early days.

Greenbank was a popular place with the Sound Indians as well as Indians for Neah Bay and Vancouver Island who came in big canoes to pitch camp and spend their time hunting, fishing, clamming and picking cranberries in the bogs surrounding Lake Hancock. Before the salt water broke through and poured in, it was a fresh water lake. It later became Hancock Lagoon.

The Indians were not the only ones who knew that Greenbank was a hunter's paradise. The small steamer "Wildwood" brought many hunting parties who brought their gear, supplies and hunting dogs ashore in rowboats from the ship anchored in deep water. The Rosenfields let the hunters make their headquarters at their home and they tied the dogs to trees where their baying kept everyone awake.

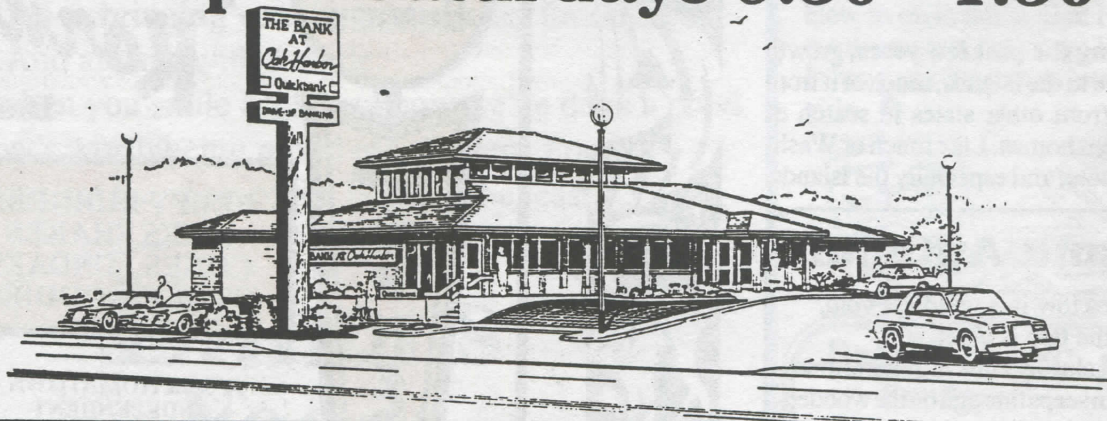
The Greenbank Farm, known today as the Loganberry Farm of Whidbey wines and vintages, opened in 1906 and one of the first settlers at Greenbank was Nels Christianson and his wife. Nels first worked at the farm, then bought a 40-acre tract a mile south and built a cabin out of trees he cut.

Christianson went into the shingle bolt business and floated by water over 1300 cords of shingle bolts to Edmonds where the mill was located. When the timber was gone he went to Alaska, leaving his wife to care for the Greenbank acres.

Water on Whidbey Island has always been scarce, since the Island has no rivers. Christianson dug a well 128 feet deep with pick and shovel and found no water. Later he bought an adjoining 50 acres which had several good springs.

Greenbank historian Jennie MacInnes wrote in 1954: "Time, as it always does, has brought many changes. The Rosenfield homestead in now de-

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# before land became settled

serted, and belongs to the U.S. Government as part of the Navy's target range. The big timber is gone, Indians have joined others of their tribes elsewhere. Paved and graveled highways have replaced the pony trails and logging roads, bringing many newcomers and tourists to Greenbank and Whidbey Island."

MacInnes also told how the land on which Greenbank is located, and also part of Oak Harbor is connected with the early history of this section of the U.S.

Congress passed the Act granting transcontinental railroad land, every odd-numbered section, a given number of miles north and south, and a wealthy banker in Philadelphia named Jay Cooke advanced the money to cover the cost of a survey of a route from Lake Superior to Puget Sound.

Before these men were repaid, the railroad became involved in litigation, and to compensate them, they were given 50,000 acres of land in this state which the railroad received in lieu of lands in the grant which had been patented to settlers before the act of Congress was passed.

About 10,000 acres of these lands were located at Greenbank and Oak Harbor. After Phillips obtained the land from the railroad he proceeded to sell them to settlers.

On a portion of the Greenbank property Phillips developed an experimen-



*"The Store" at Greenbank*

tal farm on which he stocked 100 head of Holsteins, second only in Washington to the famous Carnation herd. A landing dock for boats was built on the property and a hotel, store and post office erected at the land end of the dock. Because the U.S. Postal authorities objected to post office names of two words, the little town's name changed

to "Greenbank."

When disaster struck in the form of cattle tuberculosis it signalled the end of the dairy venture, and later the farm was sold to the Pommerelle Wine Company of Seattle. It was planted with loganberries, and (in 1979) was regarded as the largest loganberry farm on the west coast.



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## Oak Harbor was a bustling town 80 years ago

Eighty years ago was an exciting time in the life of the small village of Oak Harbor on North Whidbey. The possibility of a bridge across Deception Pass was the topic of conversation, as the Oak Harbor Commercial club met with county commissioners to negotiate. It was agreed that if the people would furnish volunteer work sufficient to complete the road to the landing on Whidbey Island the county would build the approaches to deep water. Skagit County was counted on to build the approaches on the Fidalgo side.

The agreement was contained in a resolution signed by Edgar Power, W.F. Beacham and H.O. Becker. Engineer Hannah began work on surveying for the bridge approaches, to keep grades not exceeding 4 percent. Chris Weidenbach of the Cornet district stated that the folks in his neighborhood were ready to go to work on the new road to the pass as soon as the route was surveyed.

In May of 1912 the new L. P. Byrne Hotel opened to the public on what is today East Pioneer Way. The hotel contained 12 airy outside rooms, all finished in white, well furnished, with large windows and a transom. The halls were wide and there were a number of exits in case of fire. The hotel was furnished with a large electric fire gong and the whole place was lighted with gas, plumbing, toilets, hot and cold running water and the view from the balcony on the second floor was excellent.

There was a Ladies Parlor on the ground floor, to be used as a rest room; an office with a fine stock of cigars, candy, etc., and a dining room with white linen, silver and glassware, and fresh fruit. In the kitchen everything was bright and new. The drummer's (traveling salesman) area included a sample room and a billiard room. An honest-to-goodness automobile met all the boats and took the guests to and



*Local businessmen parade down Barrington Avenue.*

from the hotel free of charge, meeting each boat at the end of the Byrne dock.

Byrne advertised his wonderful new hotel in Seattle and Olympia papers. Unfortunately, the hotel burned along with most of the business district of town in an early 1920s disastrous fire.

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 that week!

## Truth or consequences

A Rabbi, famed for his learning and wit, once was asked by his students why he so often illustrated a truth by telling a story. "That I can best explain through a story," he said, a parable about a Parable itself.

There was once a time when Truth went among men unadorned, as naked as his name. And whoever saw Truth turned away in fear or in shame, and gave him no welcome. So Truth wandered through the lands of the earth, rebuffed and unwanted.

One day, most disconsolate, he met Parable, strolling happily along in fine

In 1912, Oak Harbor News Editor Charles Bowmer was concerned over the apparent speed of automobiles in Oak Harbor and quoted the law: "Limit in town not faster than one mile in five minutes; at crossings not faster than one mile in 15 minutes."

That same year Charlie Wolfson advertised a new Overland five passenger car, with 30 H.P. self starter, gas tank, 110 inch wheel base, and windshield, delivered in Oak Harbor for \$1,100.

and many colored garb. "Truth, why do you seem so sad?" he asked cheerfully.

"Because I am so old and ugly that all men avoid me," he replied.

"Nonsense," laughed Parable, "That is not why men avoid you. Here . . . borrow some of my clothes and see what happens."

So Truth donned some of Parable's lovely garments, and lo, everywhere he went, he was welcomed. The Rabbi smiled.

"The Truth is that men cannot face Truth naked; they much prefer him disguised."

## Island's first industry was fishy operation

**T**he *Columbian*, an Olympia newspaper, under the dateline March 12, 1853 ran the following advertisement: "Wanted: Ten journeymen coopers immediately."

A cooper is a person who makes barrels, or kegs, and kegs were much in demand for salting down salmon for commercial shipment. Coopers with experience drew premium wages. Workers were needed at the Scatchet Head Fisheries on South Whidbey where salmon were being preserved.

Isaac Wood and Sons of Olympia advertised that they were prepared to deliver on call, 500 barrels, newly made for the salmon trade. Scatchet Head Fisheries were in tune with the times and comprised the first successful industrial operation to be located on Whidbey Island.

Originally the name Scatchet Head took in all territory between Maxwellton and Possession Point. According to the log of the schooner *Emily Parker*, a trade boat calling at Puget Sound ports in 1853, there were three separate fisheries operating at Scatchet Head that year. Three were engaged in supplying the prized salted salmon to San Francisco markets, and all coastal sailing vessels enjoyed a brisk trade in the precious cargo. Ship captains took great pride in the speed with which the barrels of salmon could be delivered to the southern ports.

The first permanent settler on South Whidbey was Robert Bailey who took

a Donation Claim on the eastern shore of Cultus Bay. Born in Virginia in 1802, Bailey came west some time prior to 1852. In the early summer of that year in company with two others, Bailey climbed Mount Rainier on the south side, along the rim of Paradise Valley. And shortly after that in July, he set out on another adventure, settling on Whidbey Island in July of 1852.

Bailey's first wife died on his Cultus Bay farm, and the census of 1870 showed a second wife, Charlotte, and a son Henry Bailey. Henry Bailey became a well-known Puget Sound steamship captain.

When Island County was organized in 1853, it included what today is San Juan, Skagit, Whatcom and Snohomish counties. All of Whidbey south of Holmes Harbor was designated Scatchet Head Precinct and the polling place, of course, was the Robert Bailey home. Bailey was well known in the northwest, serving as Assistant Indian Agent under Captain Robert C. Fay from 1856 through 1859. He died at his South Whidbey home in 1889, having lived for 37 years on the pioneer shores of South Whidbey Island.

Joseph Jewett, a grandson of Robert Bailey wrote that he first saw Whidbey Island in 1896 when he came with his parents on a stern-wheeler, possibly the *Fairhaven*. The family debarked at Possession Point and walked the beach at low tide all the way to Cultus Bay, leading their cattle and horses. There



were no roads at that time on South Whidbey. Joseph Jewett began his schooling in 1901 walking through dense forests to the nearest school which was located at what was to become Maxwellton some time later.

Cultus Bay was a favored meeting place for Indians in those early days. They came not only from the Island but from the mainland to dig clams and dry them and to smoke their salmon. They maintained a "long house" and a small shack on the Spit, plus two more long houses located farther north along the bay. The long houses were the Indians' shelter and meeting places for the tribes.

As late as 1900 there were no stores or markets in all of that area of South Whidbey. A Mr. Ellis, a farmer at Cultus Bay wrote of sailing his boat to Everett for supplies, then waiting out in the strait for high tide to carry him back into the bay. A sudden storm could make this a dangerous and uncomfortable journey.

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