

7 Slide Show Narrative

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¹ Island Among the Mist ² Joseph Whidbey's Island

³ Imagine a place where the only technology is primitive tools and the land ⁴ has no one but a few coastal Indians. ⁵ There is an abundance of food and water. ⁶ This is how the Indians of Whidbey Island lived before the coming of the white man. ⁷

⁸ ^{TAPE} The Indians of Puget Sound belonged to the Salishan or Flathead family. On Whidbey Island, ⁹ there were three tribes - Skykomish, Lower Skagit and Suquamish.

¹⁰ Tribes were generally divided up into independent families each known by their "totem". ¹¹ Indians prided themselves in their closeness to the wild animals. Each clan used a totem such as the bear, ¹² salmon, ¹³ or killer whale to represent different families.

¹⁴ Puget Sound Indians were canoe-using, ¹⁵ more squat and shorter limbed than Plains' Indians. They had an easier time existing due to the mild climate ¹⁶ and availability of food. ¹⁷

¹⁸ Indians had many reasons to come to Whidbey. ¹⁹ It was a summer home because of the excellent fishing and hunting. They considered it beautiful.

Indians named many places on Whidbey Island, but few original names remain. ²⁰ Cultus Bay was based on the Chinook word for "useless" as it is very ²¹ shallow. Coupeville was called "Where There Are Snakes" ²² and Deception Pass appropriately known as "Dangerous Place".

²³ In 1492, Columbus came upon North America leading a revolution of discovery. ²⁴

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and change. Exactly ²⁵ 300 years after Columbus, another discovery ²⁶ was made - Joseph Whidbey's Island. ²⁷ As in other areas, this discovery led to years of encounter and exchange between the two cultures bringing ²⁸ an eventual disappearance of Native Americans on the "Island Among the Mists".

²⁹ The discovery started as a mission by Capt. George Vancouver to map the area and settle a dispute between the Spanish and English ³⁰ over land claims. The dispute was not settled, but ³¹ Vancouver's accurate mapping opened up the region to future settlement.

Vancouver's ships ³² were the "Chatham", 64' in length and the ³³ 8 "Discovery."

³⁴ Capt. Vancouver sent two officers in his command, Peter Puget and Joseph Whidbey to explore the area they thought a peninsula. ³⁵ They sailed through the channels in 16' skiffs. ³⁶ Each day they took a sighting of the sun to determine their latitude. ³⁷ The area was charted very accurately, thus allowing the English to establish their claims.

³⁸ Saturday June 2, 1792 English explorers under the command of Master Joseph Whidbey sailed into Penn Cove on the island. ³⁹ Capt Vancouver wrote "The surrounding country for miles presented a delightful prospect, consisting ⁴⁰ chiefly of spacious meadows, elegantly adorned with clumps of trees. In ⁴¹ these beautiful pastures, bordering on a expansive sheet of water, deer ⁴² were seen playing about in great numbers. Nature had here provided the well-stocked park." ⁴³ Even two hundred years later with the great changes settlement has brought - the land remains intact.

⁴⁴ Captain Vancouver gave specific orders to avoid an encounter with the

Indians so they could remain on friendly terms, but this was unnecessary. The Indians had never seen a white person, so when the explorers ran aground on the mud flats of Penn Cove, the Indians did not believe that they were white. They thought Whidbey and the sailors had painted faces and hands. To prove themselves white, Joseph Whidbey opened his shirt. After recovering from their astonishment, the Indians including Chief Snakelum helped the explorers off the mud bank.

On June 8th, 1792 Puget and Whidbey camped at the entrance to Deception Pass and found it connected to Skagit Bay. Because this passage "deceived his men", Vancouver called it Deception Pass and named the island it formed after Joseph Whidbey. Vancouver named most of the places around here - Port Gardner, Mount Ranier, Mount Baker and Port Susan.

In 1838, a major expedition led by Lt. Charles Wilkes sailed to the Northwest to explore further. They visited the 300 member Skagit tribe at Penn Cove who had a permanent fortified village of large, well-built timber lodges.

Catholic Priests visited Penn Cove. They built a church, near which was erected a large cross. Besides good morals and peace, they showed the Indians how to cultivate the soil.

Coupeville, one of the oldest town in the state, was founded by Capt. Thomas Coupe who landed at the Penn Cove site in 1853. He and his wife filed a 320 acre land claim and built their home. An influx of settlers created a building boom which occurred in 1890 and the Coupeville Wharf handled ships trading in wool, lumber, grain and crops.

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The Indian Wars in the Washington Territory are almost forgotten, but caused many to abandon homes and property while seeking shelter in⁶⁴ blockhouses. The settlers were not wiped out because the Puget Sound⁶⁵ tribes were more divided than their eastern bretheren. ^{TAPÉ}

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One earlier settler was Col. Issac Ebey, a Customs Collector. He was killed in 1857 by Tlingit Indians near Ebey's Landing on the west side of the island. ⁶⁷

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An Indian leader had been killed previously by the guns of a U.S. warship and the tribe sought vengeance. Col. Ebey was the victim. When asked who was in charge, the Tlingit Indian were told - Ebey. One night the Indians made a ruckus outside his house. When he came out they shot him and took his head. This was the beginning of many tragedies. If Indians came to the island and were thought hostile they were killed. Later diseases, such as small pox introduced by the white man reduced the Indian population more. ⁶⁹ ^{TAPÉ}

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January 22nd 1855 the U.S. Government signed a treaty with the Indians at Mukilteo. It was signed by Seattle, Chief of the Duwamish and Suquamish Tribes, Goliah, Chief of the Skagits and others. ⁷⁰ ⁷¹ ⁷³ ^{TAPÉ}

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At present no Indians live on Whidbey Island that hold reservation. The only signs of Native Americans having lived on the "Island Among the Mists" are a few memories, archeological digs and a tomb. ⁷⁴ ⁷⁶

Along with the Ebey's, settled the Crockett family who were close friends. Settlers kept arriving to purchase land and some had over 300 acres. Walter Crockett, Sr.'s land value was estimated at \$92,500 which is a ⁷⁷ ⁷⁸ ⁷⁹

sizable amount even now.

A letter written by one settler reads "The land along the sound is heavily⁸⁰ timbered.⁸¹ The best soil I have seen is on Whidbey Island. It is considered the best in the territory.⁸² Richard has a small farm. All good soil.⁸³ Nearly all cleared land and one side of it is on the cove."

Although the land was good,⁸⁴ times were rough.⁸⁵ Many perished.

On Whidbey Island today many changes have occurred, but history is still locked into people's memories and the buildings.⁸⁶ The new museum has done a remarkable job restoring memories, as many buildings have also been restored - the Crockett Lake blockhouse,⁸⁷ the blockhouse at the cemetery and many homes.⁸⁸

Many things over time have changed including people, houses and land.⁹¹ With all these changes there is still one thing that can never change - the memories of the "Island Among the Mists".⁹² ⁹³ ⁹⁴ ⁹⁵