



2008-2009 Guide to American and English Camps

Park founded to celebrate peace, nature

Created by an act of Congress in 1966, San Juan Island National Historical Park commemorates the peaceful resolution of the Northwest Boundary dispute between Great Britain and the United States. The boundary dispute is perhaps the best-known period in island history. American Camp and English Camp are administered to preserve and protect historic buildings and archaeological remnants, as well as interpret the "Pig War" crisis and joint military occupation of San Juan Island by the United States and Great Britain from 1859 to 1872. (Page 3)



English Camp's commissary, blockhouse and formal garden sit at the edge of the embankment on Garrison Bay.

Public transportation to English and American camps

Island Bicycles: 378-4941
Bicycles

Susie's Mopeds: 378-5244 or (800) 532-0087
Mopeds and automobiles

M&W Rental Cars: 378-2794 or (800) 323-6037
Automobile rentals and sales

San Juan Taxi: 378-3550 or 378-TAXI

Island Tours/Taxi: 378-4453

Bob's Taxi & Tours: 378-6777 or (877) 4-TAXIBOB
Service to all points on request

San Juan Transit & Tours: 378-8887 or (800) 887-8387
Regularly scheduled routes north to English Camp during the summer season with a reservation-only schedule available to American Camp three times daily. Guided tours available.

Inside this issue

Hiking

American and English camps offer numerous hiking trails. Browse our maps and trail guide to find one that suits you. (Pages 6 & 7)

Programs

From living history to nature to evenings of song and dance, it's all here. Check our summer program guide. (Pages 5 & 8)

Butterflies

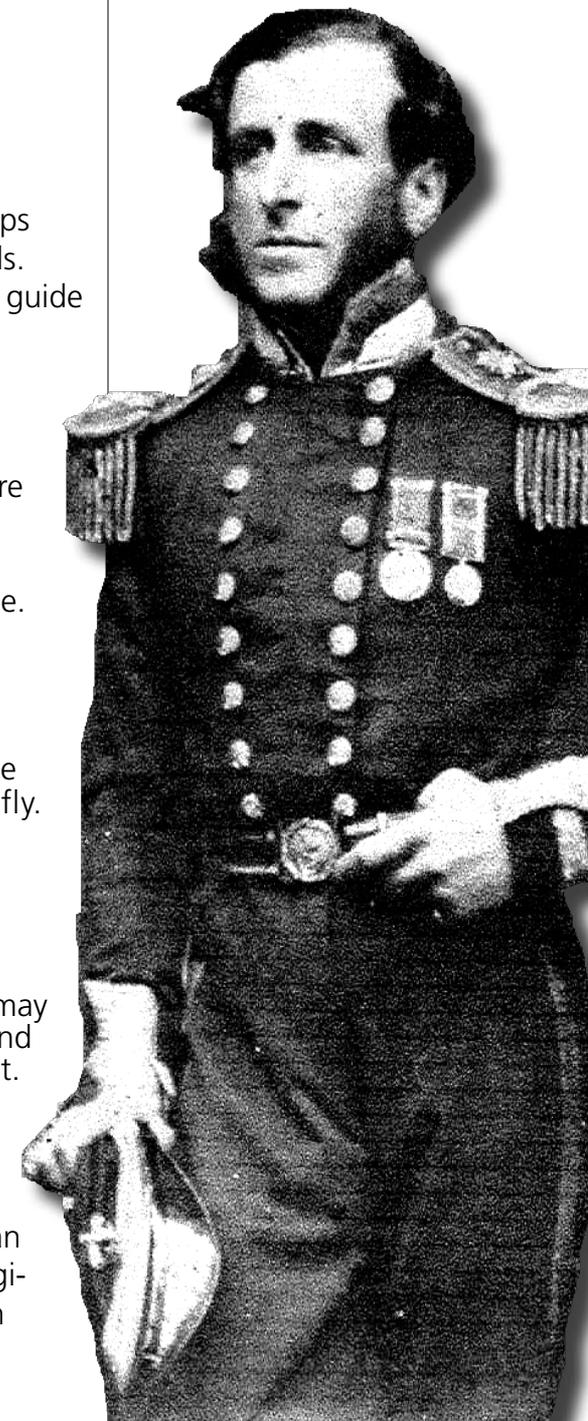
Learn the latest about the rare Island Marble butterfly. (Page 4)

Prairie update

If current trends continue, American Camp's prairie may become only a memory. Find out how we can preserve it. (Page 10)

Historic house

The park plans to return an officers' quarters to its original home on the American Camp parade ground. (Page 9)





National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

San Juan Island National Historical Park

Superintendent
Peter Dederich

Chief of Interpretation
Mike Vouri

Editor
Julia Coffey Vouri

Contact Information

Superintendent
San Juan Island NHP
P.O. Box 429
Friday Harbor, WA 98250

e-mail
SAJH_Administration@nps.gov

Administration
(360) 378-2240
FAX: (360) 378-2615

Visitor Services
(360) 378-2902
FAX: (360) 378-2996

Website
<http://www.nps.gov/sajh>

The park is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.

Cover:

Capt. Geoffrey Phipps Hornby, RN was in command of HMS Tribune, a 31-gun steam frigate, during the Pig War crisis. In electing not to force a landing on San Juan Island he saved countless lives and preserved the peace.

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Basic information

Finding your way to the parks

American Camp

The **American Camp** visitor center is about six miles southeast of Friday Harbor along Cattle Point Road. Simply drive west on Spring Street to Mullis Street and turn left. The road will wind a bit and change its name twice until it becomes Cattle Point Road. Remember to turn right on the visitor center entrance road *after* you see the large park entrance sign. If you turn before the sign, you'll be in the Eagle Cove housing development. Cattle Point Road passes three miles through the park right-of-way, and the speed limit is 45 mph. Please be mindful, especially in the wooded stretch, that wild animals cross this road and bicyclists may be just around one of the blind corners. Startled cyclists tend to turn and look over their left shoulders, which causes them to swerve toward the center line. Park speed limits are 15 mph on the visitor center entrance road and 25 mph on Pickett's Lane (which leads to South Beach). Remember to be especially careful when exiting the American Camp visitor center entrance road. Over the years, several accidents have occurred at this intersection.

English Camp

English Camp is located about nine miles northwest of Friday Harbor on West Valley Road. Take Spring Street

to Second Street and turn right. Go straight. At the first stop sign you encounter, Second becomes Guard. Go to the next stop sign and continue to go straight. The street runs past the library, bends right and left and becomes Beaverton Valley Road. Follow Beaverton Valley Road over Cady Mountain (it's a small mountain). The

seriously. English Camp may also be accessed via Roche Harbor Road. To reach the Roche Harbor Road from Friday Harbor, turn right at the second stop sign onto Tucker Avenue. Tucker becomes Roche Harbor Road just outside of town. Take Roche Harbor Road to West Valley Road and turn left. The parade ground entrance road will be your second right after you pass the park entrance sign. Take care to safely mind the 15 mph speed limit.

A Word About Road Safety

The island is only 54 square miles (about 16 1/2 miles long and 6 1/2 miles wide at the midsection). That means that not only is it difficult to get lost, you don't have to be in an all-fired hurry to get anywhere!

If you're driving an automobile or truck, be especially mindful of bicycles, mopeds and three-wheeled motorized scooters. They have the right-of-way the same as you. If you must pass, do it carefully and do not cross a solid double line. Conversely,

cyclists should remember that, while they *do* have the right-of-way on county roads, it is considered a courtesy here to form a single line right. If children are along, adults should ride at the rear of the pack.



road becomes West Valley Road. About 500 feet past the park entrance sign, on the left, is the entrance road to the parade ground.

The speed limit on this gravel track is 15 mph, and we urge you to take it

Things to know

Picnic areas are available at both camps.

Off-road travel (by vehicles, mopeds or bicycles) is not allowed in the park.

Pets must be kept on leash within park boundaries. Please pick up after them.

Natural features and ruins must be left undisturbed.

ONLY fruits, nuts, unoccupied seashells and mushrooms may be collected for personal use.

Archaeological artifacts are protected under federal law. Collecting, digging or using metal detectors is prohibited.

Using or possessing fireworks is prohibited year-round.

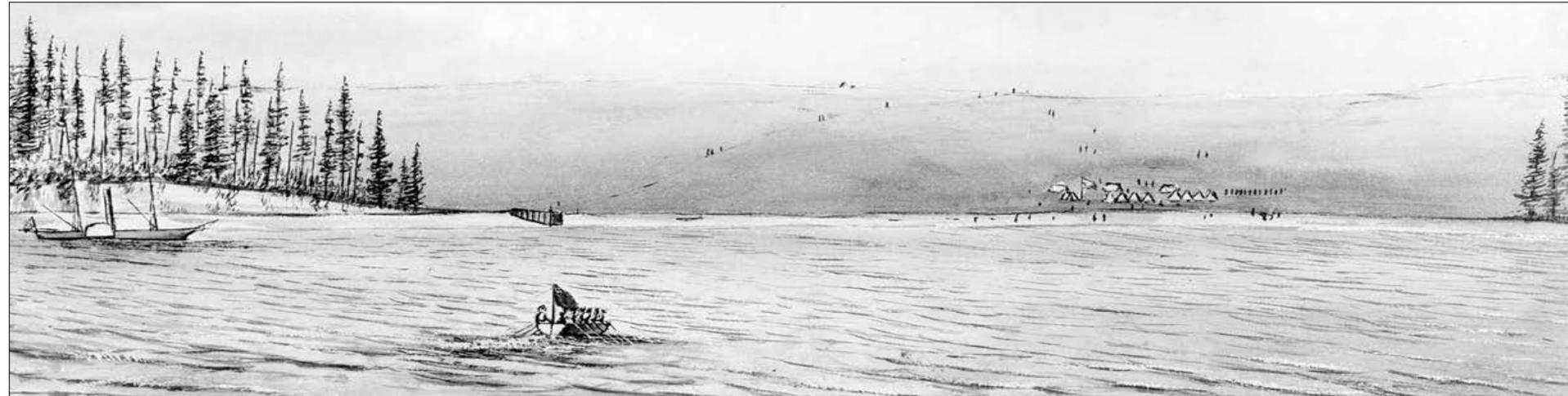
Hunting, trapping or carrying firearms on park lands is prohibited.

Horseback riding is allowed by permit in designated areas only.

The park is a day-use-only area, open from dawn to 11 p.m. No campgrounds are available at either camp. Several private facilities and a county-owned campground are available on the island.

**www.nps.gov/sajh
FAX: (360) 378-2996**

The Pig War: Close call for the United States and Great Britain



A longboat from HMS *Satellite* strikes out for the Hudson's Bay Company dock and Capt. George Pickett's camp of 60 U.S. soldiers on Griffin Bay on July 27, 1859.

On July 27, 1859, George E. Pickett's Company D, 9th Infantry, arrived on San Juan Island with a mission to protect United States citizens from the British government on Vancouver Island. The reason? An American settler named Lyman Cutlar had shot a pig belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company. Everyone overreacted, particularly U.S. Department of Oregon commander Brig. Gen. William S. Harney, who had issued Pickett his orders.

But more was involved than just a dead pig. For nearly 50 years, the two nations had been contending over the international boundary in the Oregon Country, a vast expanse of land consisting of the present states of Washington, Oregon and Idaho, portions of Montana and Wyoming and the province of British Columbia. The Oregon Treaty of 1846 had given the United States undisputed possession of the Pacific Northwest south of the 49th parallel, extending the boundary to the "middle of the channel which separates the continent from Vancouver's Island; and thence southerly through the middle of said channel and of Fuca's straits to the Pacific Ocean." But while the treaty settled the larger boundary question, it created additional problems because its wording left unclear who owned the San Juan Islands.

The difficulty arose over treaty language that referred to the boundary as the "middle of the channel." There were actually two channels—Haro Strait nearest Vancouver Island, and Rosario Strait nearer the mainland. The San Juan Islands lie between the two. Britain insisted on the Rosario Strait; the U.S., Haro Strait. Thus, both sides claimed the archipelago.

To solidify the British claim, the Hudson's Bay Company occupied the southern end of San Juan, first with a salmon-salting station in 1850, and followed by a sheep ranch—Belle Vue Farm—three years later. The Americans, meanwhile, declared the island within the limits of first Oregon (1848), then Washington Territory (1853). By 1859 about 18 Americans, including Cutlar, had settled on San Juan Island in anticipation of official American possession. Neither group acknowledged the jurisdiction or taxing authority of the other. Tempers were growing short.

Then Cutlar shot the pig. The Hudson's Bay Company allegedly threatened the American with arrest by British authorities if he did not make fair restitution for the pig. This compelled Harney to dispatch Pickett to San Juan Island.

British Columbia Gov. James Douglas responded by sending three warships with 61 total guns under Royal Navy Capt. Geoffrey Phipps Hornby to dislodge Pickett. The two sides faced off on the Cattle Point peninsula for more than three months until the arrival of U.S. Army commander Lt. Gen. Winfield Scott, who, with Britain's

blessing, was dispatched by President James Buchanan. Scott and Douglas negotiated a joint occupation of the island until the dispute could be resolved through diplomatic channels. The Americans remained at Cattle Point while Royal Marines established a comfortable camp on Garrison Bay, 13 miles north, in March 1860.

The joint occupation ended 12 years later when, on October 21, 1872, Kaiser Wilhelm I of Germany, acting as arbitrator, settled the dispute by awarding the San Juan Islands to the United States. Thus ended the so-called Pig War—with the pig the only casualty.

Island Marble butterfly: Marking aids preservation

The reappearance of the rare Island Marble butterfly on San Juan Island after more than 100 years continues to intrigue researchers and enthusiasts throughout the country.

In 1998, the Island Marble (*Euchloe ausonides insulanus*), thought to be extinct since 1908, was discovered during a prairie butterfly survey at American Camp. The only known specimens had previously been found on Vancouver Island in British Columbia.

Scientists believe American Camp, along with scattered locations on San Juan and Lopez islands, to be the only viable population in the world. At this point, the Island Marble is not listed as an endangered species, but efforts are ongoing to protect it.

"The presence of the butterfly is of great importance," said Chris Davis, resource manager at San Juan Island National Historical Park. "Its survival here hangs in the balance."

A study underway at American Camp and Friday Harbor may provide new insights into the natural history of the butterfly, including how far it flies, how long it lives and whether gender ratios vary in different areas.

This summer Dr. Merrill Peterson, a biology professor and entomologist at Western Washington University, will



Dr. Merrill Peterson of Western Washington University has been catching and marking the rare Island Marble butterfly in an effort to determine range and numbers. The procedure does not harm the butterflies.

capture, mark, release and later recapture butterflies at three sites: two at American Camp and another in Friday Harbor. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is sponsoring the survey in partnership with San Juan Island National Historical Park. Within the park, Dr. Peterson has established rectangular units of measurement called "transects" in the dunes east of Pickett's Lane and near Eagle Cove at American Camp, in addition to the abandoned gravel pit near Pear Point.

"We already have some idea about what the Island Marbles eat, where they



lay their eggs and how long it takes for eggs to become caterpillars," Davis said. "Hopefully we'll be able to reach some conclusions about how to estimate populations through the catching and marking study."

Davis said the next step will be to determine if it can adapt to feeding and laying eggs on native rather than the nonnative mustards it is currently utilizing at American Camp.

The answers to these questions will be critical in determining whether or not the park incorporates native mustard plants into its ongoing prairie

restoration plan.

"The goal of restoration is to control nonnative plant species, and at the same time, safeguard the Island Marble butterfly," said Davis.

The Island Marble is white and pale green, with a mottled pattern of greenish-yellow under its hind wings. Look in the grassy prairie near wild mustard plants. Don't confuse it with the more common Cabbage White, which is mostly white with a yellow underside and feeds on the same plants.

Island Butterflies

In addition to the Island Marble, the park has a healthy butterfly population in relation to the park's size and location, concluded Robert Michael Pyle in his 2003 survey of the park's butterflies. During the flight season (May–September), 32 butterfly species were identified. Most areas and all habitat types were sampled, and host plant and nectar source usage were recorded. In the spring, look for the first-to-arrive sky-blue Spring Azures, then Pale Tiger Swallowtails, Purplish Coppers, Silvery Blues, Brown Elfins, Two-Banded Checkered Skippers and many others.

2008 Summer Program schedule: Something for everyone

Weekly Programs

Pig War Story Guided Walk—Park rangers and volunteers describe events leading up to and including the Pig War and the peaceful joint occupation of San Juan Island by British and American troops. **Walks are scheduled at American Camp 11:30 a.m., Saturdays, May 31 to August 30.**

Living History: Life During the Joint Military Occupation on San Juan Island—Park rangers and volunteers create military and civilian life during the island's early pioneer period. Activities include blacksmithing, coopering, weaving, needlework and exhibitions of military equipment and skills. **12:30 to 3:30 p.m., Saturdays, May 31 to August 30, English Camp parade ground.**

Wildlife in the San Juan Islands
Puzzled by an animal or bird? Wolf Hollow Wildlife Rehabilitation Center Education Coordinator Shona Aitken answers questions and uses a variety of media to talk about wildlife in the San Juan Islands. **1 to 3 p.m., Fridays, June 6 to August 29, English Camp barracks.**

Special Programs

Exploring the Garry oaks of English Camp—Learn about English Camp's unique Garry oak woodland on the slopes of Young Hill. Park resource manager, Chris Davis and Kathleen Foley of the San Juan Preservation Trust, will conduct the activity starting with a PowerPoint presentation. **1 p.m., Saturday, June 14, English Camp barracks.**

Otter Pelts and Silk: The Quest for Empire in the Pacific Northwest—Learn about San Juan Island's direct connection to the China trade and the struggle for empire among the Spanish, British and United States fur trading companies and governments in this 90-minute program with historian Mike Vouri. **2 p.m., Saturday, June 21, English Camp barracks.**

In Concert: Sugar on the Floor—Folk singer Michael Cohen and the group "Sugar on the Floor" present a variety of songs from the 19th century and other genres. Cohen and his



Clint and Ruth Cannon, as Admiral and Mrs. Baynes, are always a big hit during the annual Encampment.

brother, John, have worked with the Smithsonian Institution in searching for and cataloging American folk tunes. **7 p.m., Saturday, June 28, English Camp barracks.**

Life and Times of General George Pickett—Historian Mike Vouri and folk

musician Michael Cohen join with the San Juan Community Theatre in presenting an evening of drama and song as George Pickett comes back to life to talk about his days on the frontier and Civil War battlefields. **Saturday, July 5 and Friday, July 25. All shows 7:30 p.m., San Juan**

Community Theatre. Tickets: \$12 adults, \$6 students.

Northwest Pioneer Folkways Demonstrations—Janet Oakley, education coordinator for the Skagit County Historical Museum
(Continued on Page 8)

The 2008 Summer Program pages are proudly sponsored by

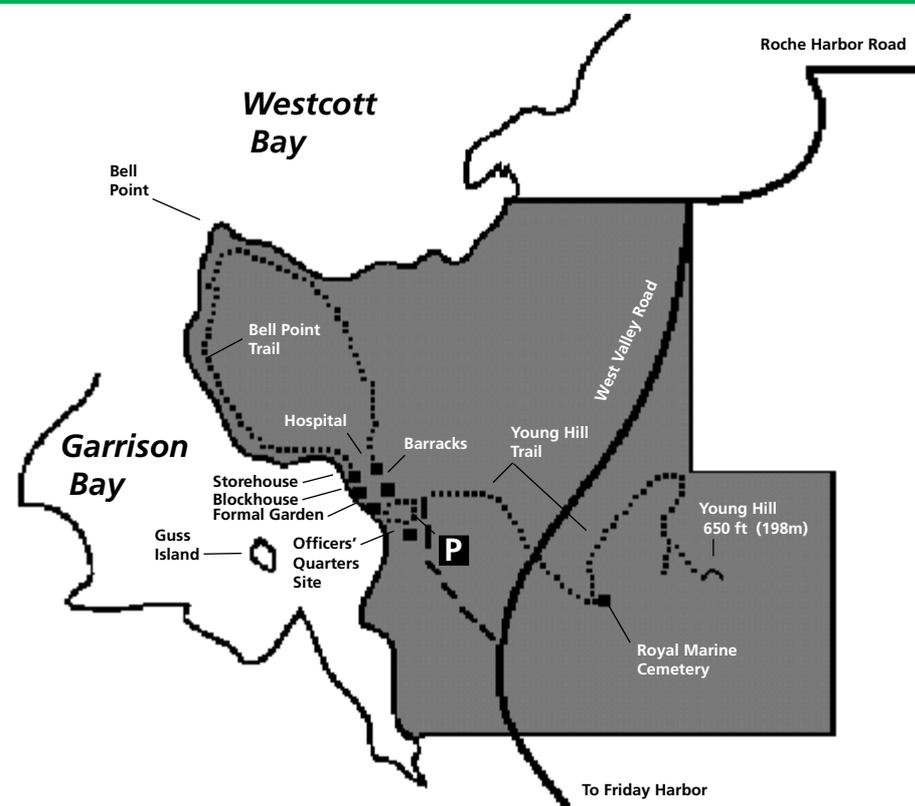
Young Hill trail—Hike this fairly steep trail up 650 feet to the top of Young Hill for a panoramic view of the island group's northwest corner, Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. Novice walkers should take care to pace themselves as most of the gain is in the last half mile. An exhibit panel identifying geographic features is mounted on an overlook about two-thirds of the way up the hill. (1.25 mi.)

Royal Marine cemetery—The Royal Marine cemetery is about 50 yards off the Young Hill trail, about a third of the way up. Five Royal Marines are interred, while a memorial stone is in place for two other marines. A stone also commemorates a civilian who was accidentally shot by his brother while hunting.

Bell Point trail—Walk the mile-long, fairly level trail to Bell Point for a view of Westcott Bay. If you like to harvest shellfish, check with the park ranger at the visitor center for locations, daily limits and red tide warnings. (2-mi. loop)

Self-guided walk—Relive the Royal Marine era along the trail that starts at the base of the main entrance trail. Pick up guides in the box next to the bulletin board and follow the numbered posts. When finished, please return to the box provided at the end of the walk. If you wish to purchase a guide, they are available for a one dollar donation at the visitor center. (.25 mi.)

English formal garden—The garden lies between the officers' quarters sites and the parade ground. The camp's second commanding officer had it built for his family to remind them of home.



Visitor center resources

Both American Camp and English Camp (summer only) have visitor centers with maps, books and gifts. The bookstore at American Camp is more comprehensive. Here are some of the more popular guides and book titles:

Booklets for guided walking tours of American Camp, English Camp and Jakle's Lagoon.

The Pig War: Standoff at Griffin Bay, by Mike Vouri.

Outpost of Empire: The Royal Marines and the Joint Occupation of San Juan Island, by Mike Vouri.

Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast: Washington, Oregon, British Columbia & Alaska, by Jim Pojar and Andy MacKinnon.

Wild Plants of the San Juan Islands, by Scott Atkinson & Fred Sharpe.

The Butterflies of Cascadia: A Field Guide to All the Species of Washington, Oregon and Surrounding Territories, by Robert Michael Pyle.

Seashore Life of the Northern Pacific Coast, an Illustrated Guide to Northern California, Oregon, Washington and British Columbia, by Eugene N. Kozloff.

Birds of the Puget Sound Region, by Morse, Averza and Opperman.

Birding in the San Juan Islands, by Mark G. Lewis and Fred A. Sharpe.

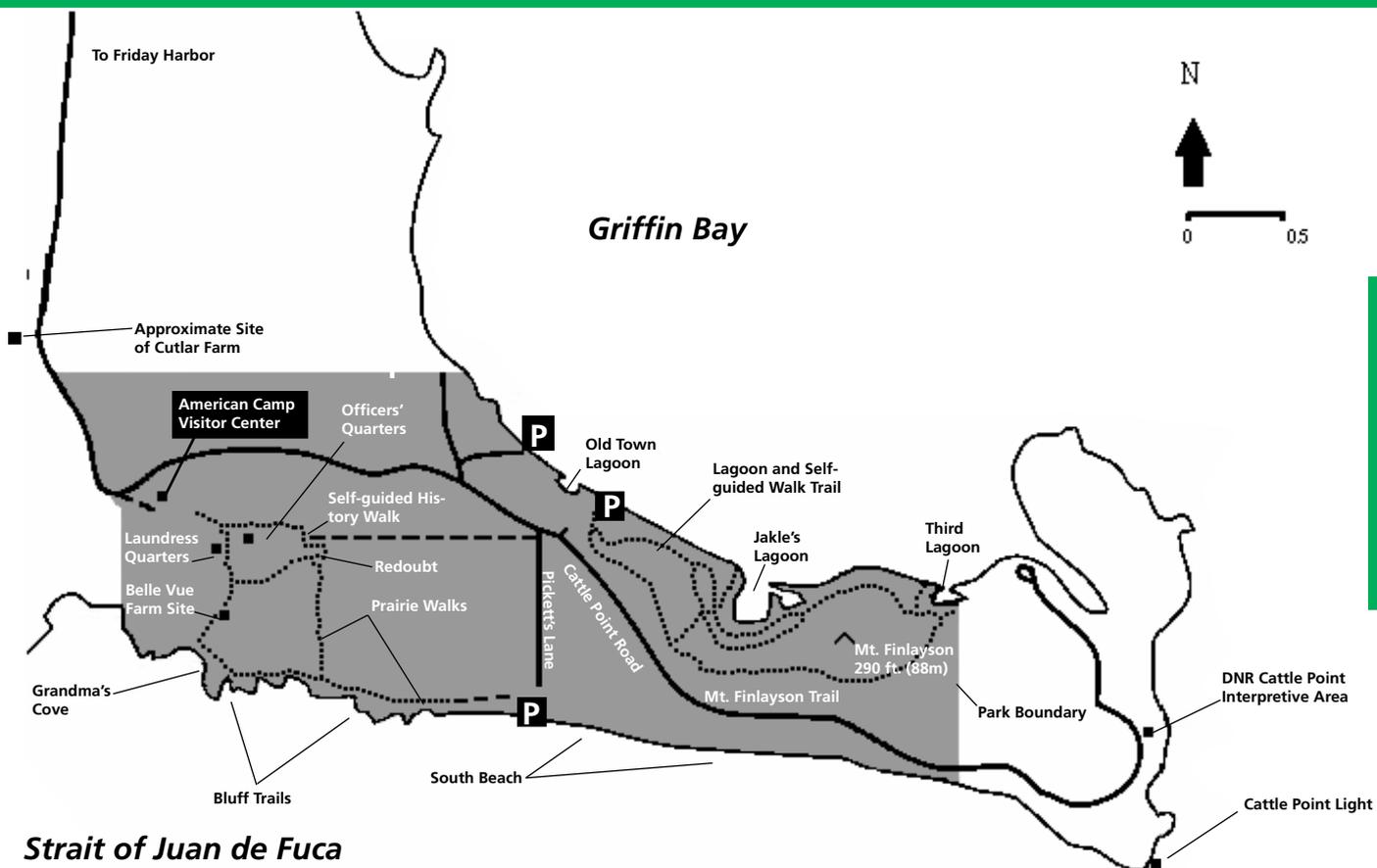
The Audubon Society Field Guide to the Bald Eagle.

American Cetacean Society Field Guide to the Orca.

The Restless Northwest: A Geological Study, by Hill Williams.

Guide to Native Wildflowers of American Camp, by Julia Coffey Vouri.

American Camp



Trails range from leisurely to strenuous. Ask a park ranger or volunteer about the best hike for you.

Strait of Juan de Fuca

Self-guided history walk—Relive the Pig War along the trail that starts and finishes in the visitor center parking area. Pick up guides in boxes at the trailhead and follow the numbers. (1.25 mi.)

Prairie walks—Primitive tracks crisscross the prairie and trace the bluff from Grandma's Cove to South Beach and back to the visitor center via the Redoubt. A great place for viewing Orca whales, the Redoubt also offers a regional perspective with views of Mt. Baker, the Olympic and Cascade ranges, Vancouver Island, and on an exceptionally clear day, even Mt. Rainier, 130 miles up Admiralty Inlet. Sweeping views are also plentiful from the Cattle Point and Redoubt roads and Pickett's Lane. Walkers are advised to use caution as rabbits have excavated warrens throughout the prairie. (2.5 mi.)

Grandma's Cove—Stroll downhill to one of the finest beaches on the island. Use caution when descending the bluff. (.25 mi.)

Mt. Finlayson trail—Hike along the grassy ridge to the top of Mt. Finlayson where you can see Mt. Baker to the east, Mt.

Rainier to the southeast, the Olympic Mountains to the south and Vancouver Island, British Columbia to the west. Come back the way you came or through Jakle's Lagoon. (3-mi. loop)

Jakle's Lagoon trail—Pick up a self-guided walk booklet, hike along the old roadbed and enjoy the quiet of a Douglas fir, cedar and hemlock canopy. This wooded area shelters deer and many types of birds, and is one of the most popular hiking areas on San Juan Island. (1.5 mi.)

South Beach—Walk along the longest public beach on the island. This is a great place to see an abundance of shorebirds, and in spring and summer, Orca whales. The beach is mainly gravel, so shoes or sandals are advised. Fires are limited to grates in the picnic areas. (2 mi.)

2008 Summer Program Schedule: (Continued from Page 5)

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in LaConner, demonstrates pioneer folkways from butter churning to Dutch oven baking and other tasks. **Noon to 3 p.m., Saturday, July 21, English Camp parade ground.**

The People of the Cedar—Richard Vanderway, education coordinator for Bellingham's Whatcom Museum, makes his seventh annual presentation in the park with an array of objects to provide a glimpse of Northwest Coast Indian culture. **2 p.m., Saturday, July 19, English Camp barracks.**

Encampment 2008—Join park staff, volunteers and re-enactors from throughout the region as they recreate life on San Juan Island at mid-19th century. The annual Encampment commemorates the peaceful joint occupation of San Juan Island by British and American forces from 1859 to 1872, and the final, peaceful settlement of the Northwest Boundary dispute. Throughout the joint occupation, the garrisons exchanged visits to celebrate holidays. Activities include blacksmithing, spinning and weaving and camp life. The highlight of the weekend is Saturday's Candlelight Ball from 7 to 10 p.m.

All day, Saturday and Sunday, July 26-27, English Camp.

Pig War Connections: George Pickett, James Alden and the American Civil War—Several of the key American officers in the Pig War crisis would play central roles in the American Civil War in both Confederate and Union ranks. Join park historian Mike Vouri for this lively and informative PowerPoint presentation. **2 p.m., Saturday, August 3, English Camp barracks.**

First Nations Flute Concert—Paul



NPS volunteer Stu Stern helps Max Haenel, then 10, learn blacksmithing.

Wagner of the Saanich (Northwest Coast Salish) tribe comes from a lineage of Shneh'em, medicine people who use many tools in healing, including music. Paul also plays the mbira and chipendani from Zimbabwe, digeridoo, guitar, bass and drum. **2 p.m., Saturday, July 28, English Camp parade ground or barracks.**

Gunsmithing on the Frontier—NPS volunteer and San Juan Islander Greg Hertel explains the attributes, use and repair of a variety of 19th century firearms. **1 p.m., Saturday, August**

16, English Camp parade ground.

A Weaving Weekend—Weavers from throughout Washington State will gather for the weekend to demonstrate how European and American Indian techniques melded to create woven objects and clothing unique to the Pacific Northwest. Cowlitz Nation weaver Judy Bridges and Fort Nisqually interpreter and storyteller Karen Haas will join San Juan Islanders Roger Ellison and Anita Barreca, plus other spinners and weavers also from the island. Participants will have a hands-on opportunity to make and take home their own small crafts projects. **All day, Saturday and Sunday, August 23-24, English Camp parade ground.**

Pickett's Irish: The Irish in the U.S. Army in the 1850s—Folk musician Michael Cohen and historian Mike Vouri take a closer look at the Irish in the U.S. Army in words and song. **2 p.m., Saturday, August 30, English Camp barracks.**

Programs are free and open to the public, except where noted. Programs are subject to change. For updates and accessibility information, call (360) 378-2902 ; e-mail mikevouri@nps.gov; or go to <http://www.nps.gov/sajh>.

For additional Park Guides go to:

Friday Harbor building confirmed as American Camp officers' quarters

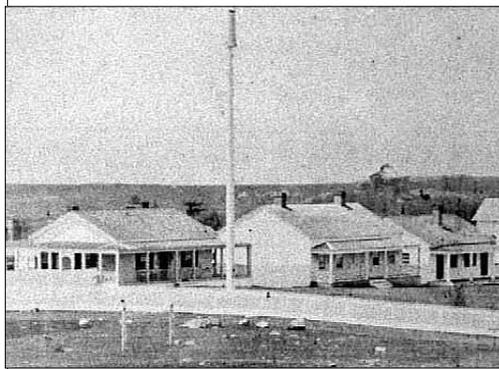
Plans in the works to bring it home

One of the oldest structures on San Juan Island and in Northwest Washington may be returning to the American Camp parade ground within the year.

Historic architects now believe that the Adam Brown house, known in recent years as the "Neal's Images" shop in Friday Harbor, undoubtedly served as an officers' quarters at American Camp during the joint military occupation, 1860-1874.

Plans are underway to transfer ownership of the structure to the park by the Friday Harbor House hotel, which will expand to the corner of First and West streets. The Brown House has occupied that location since the 1870s.

The building will be restored to its original location, directly adjacent to the existing officers' quarters, also built in the 1850s. That structure remained in use on the site as a farmhouse.



The Brown house (second from left in left photo) first served as an officers' quarters at Fort Bellingham and then Camp San Juan Island, where it was moved in the mid 1860s. The building was then purchased at auction and moved to its present location in Friday Harbor, shown in 1909 (right center).

Three years after the joint military occupation concluded, the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps auctioned the buildings at American and English camps. Several structures that were moved offsite have been identified over the years, and two—the Laundress Quarters at American Camp and the Hospital at English Camp—were returned to their original sites.



Island lore has long identified the Brown house as an American Camp artifact. The house first appears on city plats in 1885. County records show varying uses over the years, including a blacksmith shop, retail sales and a private residence.

The National Park Service commissioned an investigation of the building's pedigree in 1987, but the report failed

to provide documentation of the bill of sale at the time of auction, or any written record of its transport to the current site. Further research in 2005 at the National Archives in College Park, MD, revealed a February, 1876 Treasury department receipt for \$1,896 total for all buildings sold.

A cursory inspection by NPS architectural historians indicated that the building could have been erected in the 1860s. The original portion of the house also matches the dimensions of the building shown in U.S. Army inspection reports.

These conjectures were confirmed during a recent historic structure assessment conducted by Michael Sul-



The house stands at far right in the 1890s. The two-story structure at left is the Odd Fellows Hall. It remains in use as the Whale Museum.

livan of Artifacts Architectural Consulting, Inc. Sullivan believes that the house matches the box-frame architecture of the period, but the original boards bear saw blade patterns that could only have come from the Roeder Mill in Whatcom (now Bellingham).

Nearly all the dimension lumber used to build Fort Bellingham in 1856-1857 came from the Roeder Mill. The fort was dismantled by the army en masse from 1859-1866 and moved to American Camp.

With the building's pedigree now confirmed, the park is now making plans to repatriate the structure.

"This building has a lot of stories left to tell," said Peter Dederich, park superintendent. "It will provide enjoyment and scholarship for generations to come."



The Brown house today. For years, it served as an art gallery.

Prairie restoration: Ancient history, modern myths

A healthy prairie will spur return of native species

Those of us who know the peace of walking through the American Camp prairie when a breeze ruffles the grasses know the significance of preserving such a rare landscape. And yet we may want to be reassured that the delicate balance won't be disturbed any further.

Although the National Park Service is still in the process of completing a detailed plan to restore the American Camp prairie, preliminary discussions have prompted many concerns about the feasibility and effects of such a project. Over the past year, we've heard a few misconceptions, and would like to address them here. If you have any further questions, please call Chris Davis, chief of resource management, at 360-378-2240.

Myth 1: It's impossible to restore a prairie to its original state.

If you've been to Yellow Island here in the San Juans and seen its slopes carpeted in purple camas, yellow buttercups, red Indian paintbrush and clusters of delicate chocolate lilies, you have experienced a restored prairie.

Prairie restoration has been underway around the nation for decades. The world's oldest is the 60-acre Curtis prairie located on the campus of the University of Wisconsin in Madison, where bluestem and Indian grasses grow to eight feet tall in early fall.

Many classic experiments on planting techniques and the use of fire in prairie management took place here during the 1930s and 40s, and since then, restoration methods have evolved as more prairies have been restored. Plans to restore about 600 acres of prairie at American Camp to its native landscape of grasses and wildflowers will include many of these new techniques, including direct seeding.

Myth 2: The goal is to reestablish the prairie as it was in the 1850s.

A common misconception is that the park's goal is to return the landscape to how it was before the Hudson's Bay Company established Belle Vue Sheep farm on the prairie in 1853. It's often impossible to restore a site to a particular period of time for historical



The nonnative European rabbits have devastated large portions of the park's American Camp prairie above South Beach.

or ecological reasons. For instance, American Camp's prairie was heavily altered by human activities and non-native species, and historical records are not detailed enough to provide an accurate picture of prairie conditions in early years. The goal is to restore a prairie community dominated by native grasses and plants that supports habitat for native wildlife and rare species, such as Townsend's vole, the Island Marble butterfly, streaked horned lark and golden paintbrush. This goal is also compatible with park goals for the cultural landscape at American Camp.

Myth 3: Prairie soils are long gone.

Take a walk along the bluffs and you'll find yourself standing on historic prairie soils that developed over thousands of years under grassland vegetation. In fact, approximately 535 acres of American Camp supports soils formed

under native grasses and wildflowers. A combination of wind and excavations by nonnative rabbits has buried, but not destroyed, native prairie soils in some areas. A 2005 soil survey conducted at the park revealed that most prairie soils are intact throughout American Camp.

Myth 4: Removing nonnative plants will harm wildlife.

In fact, it's quite the opposite. Destruction of native habitat by non-native species is the second largest threat to native species today. The first is habitat destruction.

At many sites throughout American Camp, native plants that provided high-quality food and cover to native wildlife, such as trailing blackberry and Roemer's fescue, have been displaced by nonnative plants such as English hawthorne, quackgrass, Himalayan blackberry and other species.

These invasive species have already squeezed out ground-nesting native birds such as the horned lark, and elsewhere increased predation on native birds, decreased forage quality and affected mammal, reptile and amphibian populations. Look at the decimated stretch along Pickett's lane, where nonnative rabbits have set up camp in a vast network of warrens. These nearly 200 acres currently provide minimal habitat for native wildlife, including small mammals, birds and butterflies. You can also visit Pickett's Lane in late spring and early summer and see large flocks of gold finches feeding on seeds in small patches of the diminishing native fiddleneck. If these degraded areas are restored, the native habitat will naturally support more food plants, and thus, more wildlife.

Myth 5: Eagles and foxes will starve if rabbits are removed.

Yes, our bald eagles and nonnative red foxes occasionally feed on park rabbits—particularly those killed by cars or farm equipment. But studies done in the Pacific Northwest from 1990 through 2002 show that between 87 to 97 percent of the eagle's diet is fish and birds, and the red fox diet ranges from berries and insects to birds and small mammals. In general, both are opportunistic feeders, and frequently feed on available and abundant foods. Voles, for instance, are a delicacy for the red fox, yet studies show that the barren landscape created by the European rabbit is not suitable for small native mammals such as Townsend's vole. Removing rabbits will allow the habitat to regenerate in time and provide living room for voles as well as mice and other native mammals.



Machine-planted Alaska Brome grass seedlings are thriving at American Camp.

Year two: Western bluebirds still here

By Barbara Jensen

The second year of the San Juan Islands Western Bluebird Reintroduction Project has met with great success. These harbingers of spring, which were one of the more common songbirds at the turn of the century, are here again, thanks to the efforts of the San Juan Islands Audubon Society, San Juan Preservation Trust, EcoStudies Institute and American Bird Conservancy.

Western bluebirds disappeared from the San Juan Islands in the 1960s due to habitat loss and competition for cavity nest sites by European Starlings. Last year researchers developed a five-year plan to bring adult pairs to the islands each spring from the closest nesting area—Ft. Lewis, south of Tacoma. Modeled after nest box programs that

have successfully restored bluebird populations across the country, the birds are held in aviaries and later released into the shortgrass habitat needed for their mostly insect food diet.

Many local volunteers built nest boxes (with entrance holes too small to allow starlings) and placed them in various places around San Juan Island—mostly in the San Juan Valley. Eventually the program will expand to Lopez Island.

We hope the birds will return each spring from their southern wintering grounds to establish a breeding population and spread throughout their former range in the San Juan archipelago.

In spring 2008, nine pair of bluebirds were translocated. As of this June printing, four pairs hatched four to six chicks, compared to one pair that

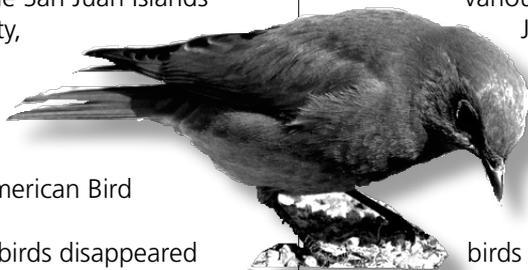
hatched three young last year. What was different this year? The birds were brought later in the season and held longer to assure a better bond between the adults, and the aviaries were two to four times larger and placed in areas well away from humans.

Four pair have not been located, so it is important to report any nesting bluebirds. These birds could have flown back to Ft. Lewis, like some did last year, but more likely they remained in the general area and have not been spotted by researchers. Look for them in places like the forest's edge of the grasslands at American and English camps. Adult birds and this year's newly hatched chicks have colored bands on each leg.

Don't confuse Western bluebirds with other local "blue" birds, such as tree, violet-green or barn swallows, red-breasted nuthatches or the rare mountain bluebirds. The male's rusty red breast and vivid blue head wings and tail attracts the females, which

are much more demure with pale blue wings and tail, sooty gray back and gray throat and belly.

Report any sightings to 360-298-2822, 360-378-2461 or 360-378-3068.



A Western bluebird perches on a pil- ing on San Juan Island, spring 2008

Barbara Jensen is President of San Juan Islands Audubon Society. A native of Washington with a strong background in the natural sciences, she is a former National Park Service ranger. She regularly leads birding and nature tours throughout the area. If interested, contact her at skylark@rockisland.com.

Eagle nest update

For the first time in six years, there will be no young to watch in the eagle nest at the American Camp visitor center. Although a pair has been frequenting the nest, their activity has mainly been courting.

The nest, which is anchored in an old, broken-topped Douglas fir above the center, has been continuously in use since 1995. Some observers believe the same pair had been returning annually since the nest's establishment.

Sixteen eaglets have fledged from the nest from 1996 to 2007—three of them in 2003.

The life history of the adult pair using the site is unknown, for neither bird is banded. But because eagles mate for life and defend their territory year-round, it is relatively easy to monitor their activities. Veteran nest watchers believe that a new male, barely mature, arrived with the original female in February 2008.

Exploring the Salish Sea

San Juan Island National Historical Park sits in the heart of the Salish Sea, a region named for its first stewards, the Strait Coast Salish peoples. One of the most diverse—and fragile—marine ecosystems in the world, it includes Puget Sound, Georgia Strait and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Here is a sampling of marine life that may be seen from the park's shorelines.

Orca whales

As you walk the bluffs of American Camp between May and September, listen for the soft spouting of Washington's state marine mammal: the Orca whale, aka Killer whale. You'll see more than one. They travel in large family groups, or pods, that often stay together for life and have been observed breathing in unison. These "whales" are actually dolphins that propel themselves through the water at great speeds, and true to their acrobatic status, they breach, lobtail, flipper-slap and spy-hop. If you're lucky, you may spot the dorsal fin of one of the males. At six feet, they are the tallest in the sea.



Dall's porpoises

It's easy to mistake a Dall's porpoise for an Orca whale. The markings are similar, but they're only about six feet long and have a much smaller dorsal fin. Look for their telltale rooster-tail spray as they slice through the water at up to 30 knots and play "chicken" before the bows of boats.



Minke whales

Minke whales regularly swim past South Beach at American Camp, but their dark, slim bodies, swift surfacing movements and nearly invisible blows can be overlooked in all but the calmest sea. The smallest of baleen whales at 25 to 35 feet, they have sharply pointed snouts and often approach smaller boats out of curiosity.



Pacific harbor seals

Hike to the overlook above Grandma's Cove in American Camp and look down. You may see one or more seals sunning on the rocks or lolling in the water, heads up like periscopes. If you see a seal pup on the beach, steer clear and contact the visitor center immediately. Females commonly park a pup for up to 24 hours while out foraging for food.

River otters

Found in marine as well as freshwater habitats, river otters are

plentiful here—much more than sea otters. Look for their lithe, five-foot bodies all along the American Camp bluff trail, at Jakle's lagoon and in Garrison Bay at English Camp. You'll see them foraging on land (they particularly like to sun themselves on grassy knolls) and in the inland waters.



Buffleheads bob and dive near Jakle's Lagoon.

Birds of the Salish Sea

With a volume of water equaling that of the Amazon River flushing from the Strait of Georgia through Haro Strait, the Salish Sea is a rich habitat for birds. The Strait of Juan de Fuca is a major summer feeding area for rhinoceros auklets, tufted puffins, pigeon guillemots, and by summer's end, common murrelets, Cassin's auklets and the occasional fork-tailed storm petrel.

On American Camp's rocky shorelines, listen for the piping calls of black oystercatchers and look for huge rafts of surf scoters in protected bays and on the open water. Shorebird migration begins around July 1, when birds such as black-bellied plovers stop to feed in the prairie grasses. Fourth of July Beach and Jakle's Lagoon are big wintering spots for ducks, including buffleheads and Harlequin ducks as well as common loons.