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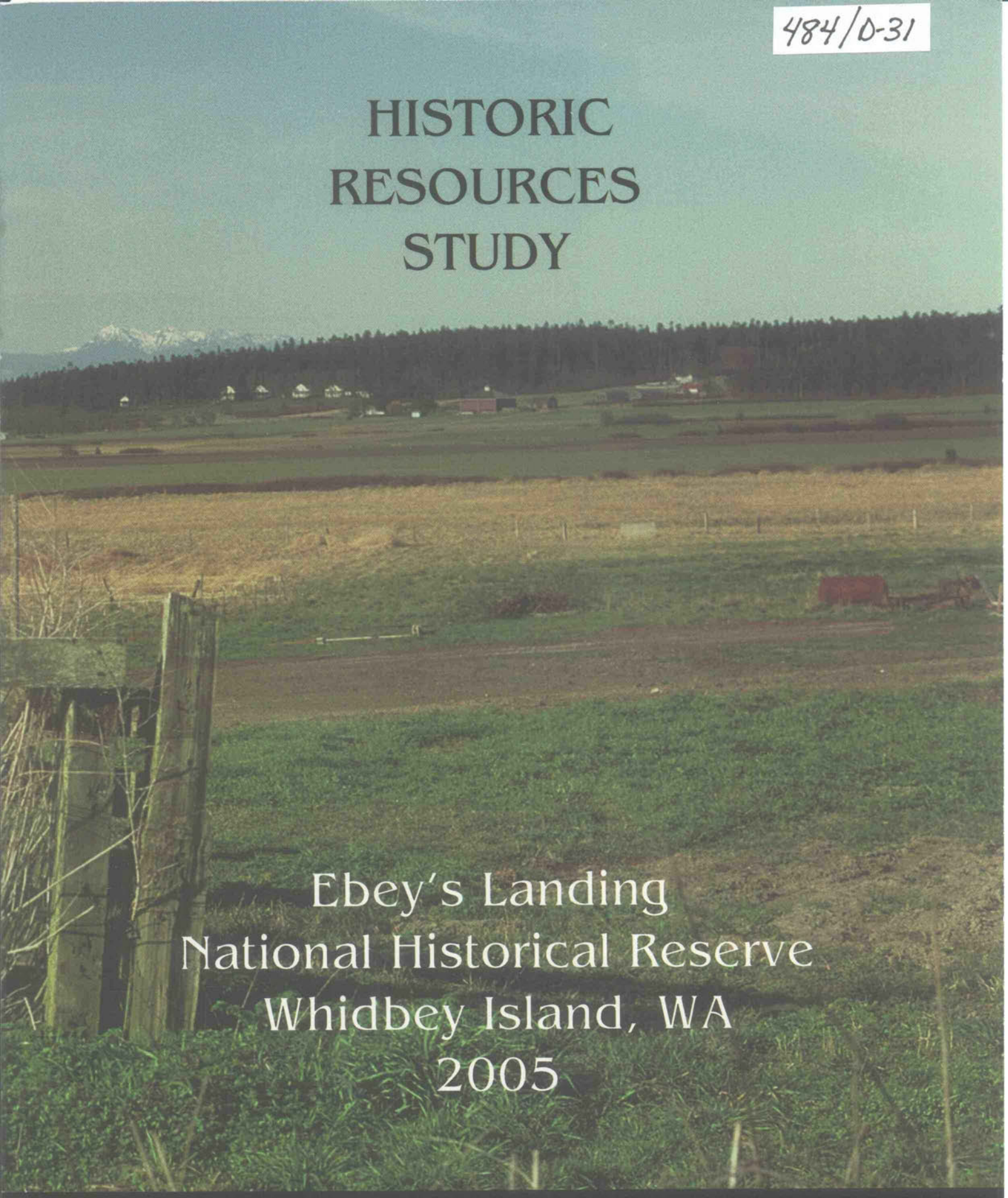
HISTORIC RESOURCES STUDY



Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve Whidbey Island, WA 2005

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

EBEY'S LANDING NATIONAL HISTORICAL RESERVE

HISTORIC RESOURCES STUDY

2005

Prepared for the
National Park Service
Seattle, Washington

by
Gail E. H. Evans-Hatch
Michael Evans-Hatch

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Astoria, Oregon

Introduction

Early on the morning of May 7, 1792, naturalist Archibald Menzies set out from Port Discovery on the Olympic Peninsula with British Captain George Vancouver and a few officers in three boats. Their objective, in Menzies' words, was to "examine and explore the country to the eastward of us," all of the islands, labyrinth of waterways, and convoluted coastline in the Puget Sound basin. The boat crews rowed in foggy weather and a light breeze about two leagues (six miles) to the north and then east. Here, "we entered a large opening which took a Southerly direction and which afterwards obtained the name of *Admiralty Inlet.*" Menzies wrote in his journal.

Captain Vancouver, Menzies, and the others landed their boats on a point on the west side of this inlet, near the future site of Port Townsend, to wait until the fog lifted before proceeding on. When the fog dispersed a little before noon, Menzies enjoyed a clear view of the surrounding countryside.

> To the North east of us across Admiralty Inlet which is a league [three miles] wide we had from this eminence a most delightful and extensive landscape, a large tract of flat country covered with fine Verdure & here & there interspersed with irregular clumps of trees whose dark hue made a beautiful contrast aided by the picturesque appearance of a rugged barrier of high [Cascade] mountains which at some distance terminated our prospect in lofty summits [Mt. Baker and its neighbors] covered with perpetual snow.[1]

Menzies' romanticized distant view of the Whidbey Island seen from across Admiralty Inlet, with Mt. Baker soaring skyward in the distance, offer us historical information about the physical setting of Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve (NHR) four hundred years ago.

Ebey's Landing NHR cultural landscape is comprised of 17,400 acres of diverse ecologies shaped by interwoven natural and human histories. The Reserve is irregular in shape, bounded on the north by wooded uplands and open fields; on the east by Penn Cove, open fields, and wooded uplands; on the south by the Admiralty Bay shoreline and a rocky headland; and on the west by an eight-mile-long stretch of beach and rocky cliffs along Admiralty Inlet. Land in the Reserve totals about 17,400 acres; water and submerged land in Penn Cove comprise

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[1] C. F. Newcombe, *Menzies' Journal of Vancouver's Voyage, April to October, 1792* (Victoria, B.C.: Legislative Assembly, 1923), 23; Robin Fisher, *Vancouver's Voyage: Charting the Northwest Coast* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1992), 25-30.

around 4,330 acres. Within the Reserve, certain physiographic features, types of vegetation, and historic and current land-use patterns help define areas of different character: prairies, woodlands, uplands, shorelines, and urban spaces.

In the early twenty-first century, principal land uses in the Reserve include: agricultural land (nearly 42 percent); woodlands (36 percent); wetlands (around 5 percent); and combined residential, urban, and commercial development (around 13 percent). Roughly 90 percent of Ebey's Landing NHR is privately owned. Publicly owned land in the Reserve, which comprises the remaining 10 percent, includes Fort Ebey State Park, Fort Casey State Park, Rhododendron State Park, Keystone Spit State Park, most of Crockett Lake (owned jointly by the state and Seattle Pacific University), part of the U.S. Navy's practice landing strip in Smith Prairie, and public access areas along Penn Cove and the west shore of the Reserve, as well as public parks and buildings in Coupeville, Prairie Center, and San de Fuca. Most of the historic buildings, structures, and street- and landscapes in Coupeville, Fort Casey, and the lighthouse on Admiralty Head are inside a twenty-two-square-mile Central Whidbey Island Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1973 (and amended in 1998). The boundaries of this National Register District coincide with those of Ebey's Landing NHR, established in 1978 as a unit of the National Park system, and are situated on north central Whidbey Island.

Whidbey Island is located in northern Puget Sound where the narrow neck of Admiralty Inlet to the southwest meets the Strait of Juan de Fuca to the west, which separates Washington's Olympic Peninsula from Canada's Vancouver Island. Situated about fifty miles south of the Canadian border and twenty-seven miles north of Seattle, Whidbey Island extends nearly forty miles from Deception Pass in the north (at 48°30') to Cultus Bay in the south (at 48°). Its width varies from one to ten miles. Whidbey Island is the largest of 107 islands in the San Juan/Puget Sound archipelago. Comprised of 208 square miles, it is second in size in the lower forty-eight states only to Long Island, New York. Whidbey Island's undulating eastern shoreline possesses numerous inlets, coves, and lagoons, such as Penn Cove, Oak Harbor, Holmes Harbor, and Harrington Lagoon. Whidbey Island, along with Camano Island to its east and three small, nearly uninhabited islands—Ben Ure, Strawberry, and Smith—make up Island County, Washington.[2]

Whidbey Island is situated in a coastal lowland, or trough, between two parallel north-south bands of summits, created by a series of tectonic uplifts

[2] Originally twenty times its present size, encompassing Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish, and San Juan counties, Island County was organized in 1853 by early settlers, including Isaac N. Ebey. Laura McKinley, *An Unbroken Historical Record: Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve: Administrative History* (Seattle, WA.: National Park Service, Pacific Northwest Region, 1993), 6-8; Cathy Gilbert and Gretchen Luxenberg, "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Central Whidbey Island Historic District (amendment)," Seattle, WA: National Park Service, 1998.

before Pleistocene glaciation. The coastal mountain ranges to the west of this trough extend from the St. Elias Mountains in coastal Alaska southward to the peaks of the Queen Charlotte and Vancouver islands, the Olympic Mountains and Willapa Hills, and the Coast Ranges of Washington and Oregon. The interior mountains to the east stretch from British Columbia's Fraser Valley to the Cascade Mountains of Washington and Oregon. North of Olympia, Washington, this trough, known as the Puget Trough, is largely submerged under waters of Puget Sound, Hecate Strait, and the Strait of Georgia. Extending 450 miles to the south as far as Cottage Grove, Oregon, this trough emerges from the water and forms the terrestrial lowlands of the Puget Basin, which extends 450 miles south to the southern end of the Willamette Valley. Glaciers at one time covered much of the submerged portion of the Puget Trough, creating U-shaped valleys and cirques in rugged coastal mountains, steep-sided mainland fjords, and a complex array of islands. Whidbey Island rises above the submerged portion of Puget Trough near its southern end.[3]

The natural and human histories of Ebey's Landing NHR are inextricably interwoven. The geography, geology, topography, climate, biotic life, and the evolving relationship between land and sea—the ecology—have all interacted and played a vital role in influencing the human history of the Reserve. This historical resources study traces the history of human habitation, occupation, and use of Ebey's Landing NHR. Sequential sections of this study tell the story of Native American habitation, European exploration, missionary activities, Anglo-American settlement, farming over 150 years, other commercial activities (fishing, shipping, logging, etc.), military activities, and social and cultural developments. This study has drawn on information in both primary and secondary historical material to synthesize the multiple layers of historical interaction between the human inhabitants of the unique physical environment of this place.

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[3] Kenneth M. Ames and Herbert D. G. Maschner, *Peoples of the Northwest Coast: Their Archaeology and Prehistory* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999), 44-45; Jim Pojar and Andy MacKinnon, compilers and editors, *Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast: Washington, Oregon, British Columbia & Alaska* (Vancouver, B.C.: Lone Pine Publishing and the British Columbia Ministry of Forests, 1984), 13-14.

Reserve Orientation

Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve

Reserve Boundary

Park

Primary Road

Secondary Road

Ferry Route

1 0.5 0 1 Miles

1:83,000

N

Data Sources:
Jones & Jones: cemetery
Island County: roads
NPS: Coupeville boundary, ferry route, flats, lakes, parks, Reserve boundary, shaded relief, shoreline

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National Park Service
PWRO-Seattle
GIS Group

Plot date: June 28, 2006
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Chapter 1

Setting the Stage

The Making of an Island

For thousands of years during the Pleistocene epoch (beginning about 2.2 million years ago), continental ice sheets repeatedly advanced and retreated from present-day Canada into the Puget Sound area. The movement of these rock-laden glaciers continually scoured the underlying bedrock and, upon their retreat, left great deposits of unsorted material behind. During the last major epoch of glaciation, beginning more than 20,000 years ago, the Cordilleran ice sheet (one of two ice sheets in North America at that time) grew and buried most of British Columbia under one or two ice domes. One lobe of this glacial ice sheet, known as the Fraser advance, reached south from the Fraser River Valley into Puget Sound and out through the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The last of three phases of the Fraser advance, named the Vashon Glacier (or Vashon Stade) after deposits it left on Vashon Island, covered all of the Puget and the adjacent lowlands as far south as present-day Tenino, Washington. Near the present United States-Canadian border, the Vashon Glacier was nearly 6,000 feet thick at its maximum extent around 15,000 B.P. (before the present).

Around 14,000 B.P., this most recent surge of continental ice began retreating, creating new landscape features as it began to withdraw from its southern terminus. The retreating Vashon Glacier gouged out Puget Sound and a trough to the north. By 13,000 B.P., ice had left the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and marine waters had replaced ice in Puget Sound. As this massive ice sheet continued to retreat, it dumped enormous loads of unsorted, unconsolidated, "bulldozed" rock, gravel, and finer material, known as glacial "till" or "drift," on the northern Puget Sound lowlands.

The retreating glacier deposited as much as 100 feet of till on the future Whidbey Island, which eventually emerged as a mass of gravel, clay, and glacial stones—glacial moraine.[4] These well-drained gravelly, sandy, and silty sediments of glacial till and subsequent water-deposited alluvium now blanket most of Whidbey Island. The abundance of smooth, rounded rocks and pebbles strewn across present farm fields in Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve (NHR)

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[4] Arthur R. Kruckeberg, *The Natural History of Puget Sound Country* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1991), 3-23; Ames and Maschner, *Peoples of the Northwest Coast*, 48-49; Richard White, *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change: The Shaping of Island County, Washington* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1992), 8.

attests to the tumbling, abrasive action of the last retreating glacier. The silt loams, the island's most agriculturally productive soils, are derived from decayed vegetation that later flourished in glacial lake basins that were left behind by the retreating Vashon Glacier. Much of this rich organic loam, fifteen inches deep in places, exists in Ebey's Landing NHR, on the prairies south of Coupeville, north and east of Crockett Lake, and north and west of San de Fuca.[5] On June 6, 1792, Archibald Menzies, doctor and naturalist on Captain George Vancouver's expedition, exuberantly described the qualities of the soil on Whidbey Island and its agricultural possibilities. "The Soil tho in general light & gravely would I am confident yield most of the European fruits and grains in perfection, so that it offers a desirable situation for a new Settlement to carry on Husbandry in its various branches."[6]

A relic of Pleistocene times, Whidbey Island provides striking evidence of its glacial past at Double Bluff, around Crockett Lake, and at Possession Point. At Double Bluff, on a projecting peninsula at the southwest end of Whidbey Island, a layer of peat (the remains of organic life) in the exposed bluff that was laid down during a warmer interglacial period, dates back one-hundred thousand years. Peat bogs, glacial depressions later filled with decayed organic material, are also plentiful around Crockett Lake in Ebey's Landing NHR. At Possession Point, a 300-foot-high promontory projecting from the island's southern-most end, a high bluff exhibits numerous layers of sediment that tell the story of glacial movement as well as warmer periods between glacial advances. Sedimentary layers at the bottom of the bluff date from a period of pre-Fraser glaciation. Above this, there are distinct successive layers that date from more recent glacial movement and warmer interglacial times when glacial meltwater deposited layers of sediment. The topmost stratum at Possession Point, called Vashon Till, is an unsorted boulder-clay glacial deposit.[7]

The Vashon Glacier is also responsible for the general topographic relief and elevation of Whidbey Island and Ebey's Landing NHR. The leveling and sculpting effect of the most recent ice sheet and meltwater from the ice left the Whidbey Island landscape with low relief. Marine water has nearly filled the trough gouged out by the retreating Vashon Glacier, leaving the elevation of Whidbey less than 500 feet. In Ebey's Landing NHR itself, the highest point (west of Coupeville and about a mile west of Sunnyside Cemetery) is around two hundred forty feet above sea level. The prairies of central Whidbey, once the beds of shallow glacial meltwater lakes formed during the retreat of the Vashon Glacier, are nearly flat and devoid of dramatic relief. Small hills with gently sloping sides and broad, level crests rise above these ancient lakebeds-turned-prairies. Several

[5] Frederick Buerstatte, "The Geography of Whidby Island" (M.A. Thesis, University of Washington, 1947), 15-17.
[6] Newcombe, *Menzies' Journal of Vancouver's Voyage,* 48.
[7] Kruckeberg, *Natural History of Puget Sound Country,* 22-23.

kettle pothole depressions west of Penn Cove created by retreating glacial meltwater, including those now filled with water like Kennedy's Lagoon and Lake Pondilla, also feature undulating topography (enjoyed by recreational mountain bikers). The greatest and most dramatic relief is found on the west side of Whidbey Island and the Reserve, where sheer, gravel, glacial bluffs drop precipitously to the Pacific Ocean shoreline.

Gentle Rains and Moderating Temperatures

The climate on Whidbey Island and in Ebey's Landing NHR, which contributes to the complexity and dynamism of the natural environment, is western maritime—mild and marginally wet. Three factors control the maritime climate throughout the Puget Sound lowlands: the Pacific Ocean, the nearby terrain, and oceanic semi-permanent, high- and low-pressure areas. The Pacific Ocean and its adjacent waters that encircle Whidbey Island—the Strait of Juan de Fuca, Admiralty Inlet, Puget Sound, and Saratoga Passage—moderate the island's climate. These large bodies of water, which release heat in colder months and cool the land in warmer months, prevent extreme fluctuations in temperature. During the coldest month, January, average minimum and maximum temperatures range from the low 30s Fahrenheit to the 40s, whereas in July, the average minimum and maximum temperatures range from 50° Fahrenheit to the mid-70s. The annual average range in temperature extremes is only about forty degrees, and the progression from winter to summer is gradual. The persistent cloud cover over Whidbey Island between November and March deflects the sun's warmth and slightly reduces the ground temperature.[8]

Ample annual rainfall is another essential element of Whidbey Island's western marine climate. In general, winters are wet and cloudy; summers are dry and sunny. Over 75 percent of rain falls between October 1st and March 31st each year. The Pacific Ocean and the terrain to the southwest profoundly influence the precipitation on Whidbey. Prevailing westerly winds between mid-October and early spring bring moisture from the ocean, which condenses as it moves over the cooler land and produces rain.

Far less rain falls on central and northern Whidbey Island (and the San Juan Islands) than on southern Whidbey and elsewhere in Puget Sound, however, due to the barrier created by the 7,000 to 8,000-foot-high Olympic Mountains to the southwest. Central Whidbey receives only eighteen inches of rain annually. When winter storms strike the coast, the moisture-laden air rises (a phenomenon known as orographic lifting) and drops rain on the middle and upper slopes of the

[8] Kruckeberg, *Natural History of Puget Sound Country,* 35-42; James W. Scott and Roland L. De Lorme, cartography by Ted R. Brandt and Patrick S. Grant, *Historical Atlas of Washington* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), 5-8.

Olympic rampart, where annual precipitation ranges from eighty (at the water's edge) to nearly two hundred inches (at Mt. Olympus and its sister summits). The mountains act to bar precipitation on their leeward side, thereby creating a "rain shadow" effect on the northeast side of the Olympic Peninsula and on Whidbey Island. Much of northern and central Whidbey Island receives less than twenty inches of rain a year.[9]

Finally, two major atmospheric pressure areas, or cells, over the north Pacific Ocean profoundly affect climate on the Northwest Coast and Whidbey Island. These pressure areas are created by worldwide air circulation characterized by the movement of warm air from the tropics toward the two poles and cool air from the poles back to the tropics. In the Northern Hemisphere these circulation patterns create vast swirls of clockwise (anticyclonic) winds around high-pressure areas and counter-clockwise (cyclonic) winds around low-pressure areas. The seasonal north-south shift of these two oceanic pressure systems over the north Pacific Ocean brings prevailing westerly and northwesterly comparatively dry, cool, and stable air into the Pacific Northwest and Whidbey Island in the summer and a prevailing southwesterly and westerly flow of cooler, moisture-laden air from mid-fall to spring. These two semi-permanent pressure cells that hover over the north Pacific propel the maritime air in the direction of Puget Sound and Whidbey Island, giving Ebey's Landing NHR its predictable blustery winters and dry, cool summers.[10] When visiting Whidbey Island on June 6, 1792, Captain George Vancouver's naturalist Archibald Menzies noted the mild climate in his journal. "The Climate appeared to us exceedingly favorable in so high a Latitude," Menzies observed, "a gentle westerly breeze generally set in the forenoon which died away in the Evening & the Nights were mostly calm & serene . . . ."[11] The movement of these pressure cells, the Pacific Ocean's temperature- and moisture-regulating influence, and the influence of high terrain southwest of Whidbey Island are part of the rich and complex environment that greatly influenced the human history of Whidbey Island and the Pacific Northwest.

The climate and the elevation of Whidbey Island have not always been as they are today. Around 10,000 years ago, the sea level was about 200 feet lower. After the retreat of the Cordilleran ice sheet into the Coast Range by around 9,500 B.P. and its eventual disappearance by around 7,000 B.P., temperatures along the Northwest Coast increased and the sea level gradually rose. Sea levels during this period were from thirty to fifty feet higher than they are today, thus submerging parts of the Penn Cove shoreline and the area around Crockett Lake in Ebey's Landing NHR. Admiralty Head, in fact, may have been an island. Another climatic shift took place between 7,000 and 4,000 B.P., when temperatures

[9] Kruckeberg, *Natural History of Puget Sound Country,* 36-37; Scott and De Lorme, *Historical Atlas of Washington,* Map 6: "Mean Annual Precipitation."
[10] Kruckeberg, *Natural History of Puget Sound Country,* 42-45.
[11] Newcombe, *Menzies' Journal of Vancouver's Voyage,* 48.

gradually became warmer than they are today and rainfall increased. The climate of the Pacific Northwest Coast may not have approximated today's climate until 5,000 to 3,000 years ago. Modern sea levels in the Puget Sound have probably only been achieved in the last 2,000 years.[12]

Prairies, Forests, Birds, Fish, and a Romantic Pen

Major changes in the biotic environment accompanied substantial climatic changes over the last 20,000 years. Vegetation, like the climate, has achieved its present composition as a result, in part, of glacial movements and the eventual disappearance of the Vashon Glacier and, eventually, the Cordilleran ice sheet. Around 18,000 to 15,000 B.P., before the glaciers began retreating, an open tundra-like habitat existed, supporting a mix of herbs, shrubs, and conifers (dominated by spruce, lodgepole pine, and firs). When deglaciation first began around 14,000 years ago, grasslands, parklands (grasslands with scattered trees and groves of hemlock, pine, and fir), and forests dominated by lodgepole pine with willow and soapberries gradually expanded northward from central Oregon. Changing climatic conditions and the lodgepole pine's intolerance of shade and relatively short life span encouraged new plant invaders to make their appearance. By around 12,000 B.P., coastal forests on Whidbey Island and further south became more diverse and probably included mountain hemlock, sitka alder, lodgepole pine, and perhaps ponderosa pine along with some herbs and sagebrush. The first known human inhabitants in the area saw this more luxuriant landscape. Western hemlock and red alder arrived in the Puget Sound lowland around 11,000 years ago, and were followed within 500 years by temperate tree species. Douglas fir, which quickly became the dominant tree in the western Washington lowlands, became associated with an abundance of red alder and bracken fern.

Warming temperatures and declining rainfall between 10,000 and 9,000 B.P., and again around 7,000 years ago, expanded the range of grasslands in the Willamette Valley northward. Whidbey Island, in the Olympic Mountain rain shadow, may have been particularly dry at that time. Oak savanna, which included Douglas fir and a variety of meadow grasses (camas lily, alumroot, Umbelliferae, and various composites) and drought-adaptive chinquapin may have been common. Rich, black prairie soils began to form during this period. When wetter and warmer conditions returned to the region between 7,000 and 4,500 years ago, oak and prairie herbs began to decline. Replacing them in the Puget lowlands were moisture-loving, or moisture-tolerant, conifer forests that included, in the Puget lowlands, the western red cedar. Forests on Whidbey and throughout the

[12] Ames and Maschner, *Peoples of the Northwest Coast,* 51-53.

Pacific Northwest began to approximate their present composition about 4,000 years ago when red and yellow cedar coexisted with western hemlock, Douglas fir, and lodgepole pine, and reached their present distribution.[13]

Evergreen forests have been the dominant life form and a distinguishing feature of the natural landscape of the Puget Sound lowland, including Whidbey Island, for thousands of years. Certain kinds of coniferous trees and other plant species have given this landscape its unique character. The geographic distribution of communities of species with coinciding tolerance ranges form what ecologists call life zones.

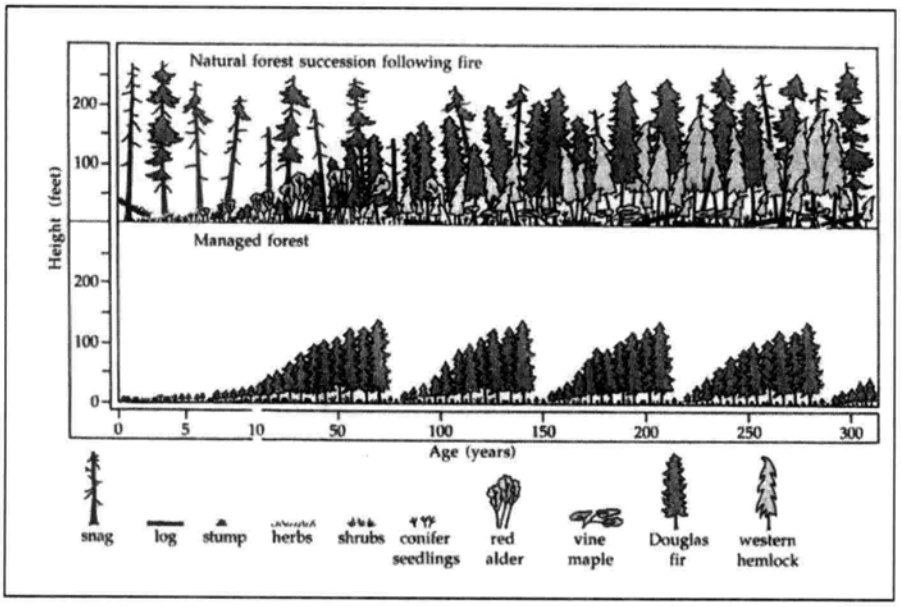

Illustration 1. Schematic diagram of succession, the sequence of vegetation in a lowland Pacific Northwest forest. From Arthur R. Kruckeberg, *The Natural History of Puget Sound Country,* 1991.

Although imperfect in describing reality, since not all species in one plant community have the exact same geographic range, ascribing zones to different communities of plants at least provides a broad overview of major vegetation patterns, or clusters, of plant species. Forest ecologists familiar with the Pacific Northwest have adopted a scheme of naming each zone according to its dominant tree species. Whidbey Island is located in the "western hemlock zone," which

[13] *Ibid.* 52-53; Estella B. Leopold, and Robert Boyd, "An Ecological History of Old Prairie Areas in Southwestern Washington," in *Indians, Fire, and the Land in the Pacific Northwest,* Robert Boyd, editor (Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University, 1999), 140-44.

extends from sea level to the lower mountain slopes of the Puget Sound lowlands. Ecologists view the western hemlock zone as a belt of climax vegetation where the western hemlock naturally reproduces and thrives in a mild, maritime climate on moist humus, in relatively shady sites. Under these ideal conditions, the western hemlock maintains a steady state, or climax, for many generations.[14] Although western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla)* is widely distributed and other species (lodgepole pine, ponderosa pine, and grand fir) are quite common in this zone, Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) is, in reality, the dominant tree species. Its Latin name, *Pseudotsuga,* means false (*pseudo*) hemlock (*tsuga*). The species name "*menziesii*"is named for Archibald Menzies, who is believed to be the first European to collect specimens of the Douglas fir. Whidbey Island's drier climate, the existence of gravely glacial moraine in places, and the incidence of past fires and other natural and human disturbances have encouraged the proliferation of Douglas fir. Although fires have destroyed hemlock, cedar, and mature fir, they have opened up the forest floor to sunlight, allowing the sun-loving Douglas fir seedlings to take root and grow to maturity.

Once established, the undisturbed Douglas fir often lived for over one thousand years, achieving enormous heights and girths. Thus, in this area of the western hemlock zone, Douglas fir is considered a regional subclimax successional species that is only theoretically replaced by western hemlock.[15]

Before Anglo-American settlement of Whidbey Island and commercial exploitation of its forest, Douglas fir, western hemlock, Sitka spruce, grand fir, and western red cedar formed a dense, nearly impenetrable mantle covering much of Whidbey Island. These forest stands ranged from four to six hundred years old, with some 200-foot-high western red cedar as old as one thousand years. Moisture-loving red cedar, which has been mostly removed by logging, probably once stood in great numbers near Crockett Lake. Mature western hemlock stood 125 to 200 feet high and had a diameter of 3 to 4 feet. The mature Douglas fir reached Goliath proportions with a height of 245 to 330 feet and a diameter of 5 to 7 feet.

Early European and Euro-American visitors to the Puget Sound lowland, awed by the expanse of immense trees in these evergreen forests, passionately described the primeval scene. In 1792, English Captain George Vancouver's sloop *Discovery* dropped anchor in upper Puget Sound, northwest of Admiralty Inlet, probably about two to three miles west of Whidbey Island and Ebey's Landing NHR. Archibald Menzies, Scottish surgeon, naturalist, and scribe to Captain George Vancouver, penned a romantic description of the evergreen-

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[14] Some biologists consider Whidbey Island and the Puget lowland to be in the *Pseudotsuga menziesii* (Douglas fir) zone, due to the dominance of Douglas fir in this area.
[15] *Ibid.,* 117-24; Scott and De Lorme, *Historical Atlas of Washington,* Map 7; Pojar and MacKinnon, *Plants of the Pacific Northwest,* 14, 30, 32.

dominated landscape as he looked toward Whidbey Island and the Olympic Peninsula from the deck of *Discovery*:

> Between us & the above [described] Ridge [the Cascade Mountains] & to the Southward of us between the two Mountains already mentioned [Mount Olympus and Mt. Rainier] a fine level Country intervened chiefly covard with pine forests abounding here and there with clear spots of considerable extent & intersected with the various winding branches of Admiralty Inlet. . . . These clear spots or lawns are clothed with a rich carpet of Verdure & adorned with clumps of Trees & surrounding verge of scattered Pines which with their advantageous situation on the Banks of these inland Arms of the Sea give them a beauty of prospect equal to the most admired Parks in England. . . . A traveler wandering over these unfrequented Plains is regaled with the salubrious & vivifying air impregnated with the balsamic fragrance of the surrounding Pinery.[16]

Archibald Menzies described in broad-brush terms, from the deck of his ship, a mosaic of plant species bound together by history and coinciding environmental tolerance ranges—a living landscape that still characterizes central Whidbey Island and Ebey's Landing NHR. Menzies is thought to have sailed into Penn Cove and described, at least in part, the natural setting he saw there. Beneath the Douglas fir-dominated evergreen canopy, an understory of shrubs and smaller plants, such as salal, Oregon grape, snowberry, oceanspray, Indian plum, red huckleberry, and rhododendron (now confined to a small area above Good Beach at the southwest corner of Penn Cove west of Coupeville) along with sword and bracken ferns, evergreen violet, western trillium, and wild ginger, grows in a range of conditions from dry to moist and from open to closed forests. Menzies identified varieties of dogwood, rose, blueberries, gooseberries, currants, honeysuckle, and at least two members of the raspberry family.[17] (Blackberries, later introduced from Asia by way of England, and cascara took root on disturbed ground in dry open forests.)

Depending on the environmental conditions, young western hemlock, western red cedar, Scouler's willow, and red alder also thrive on the forest floor. The forest undergrowth of living plants along with dead, dying, and decayed trees and plants spread across the forest floor made it, in Menzies' time, almost impenetrable to human travelers. Fires started by occasional lightning strikes and more regularly by local Indians may have cleared the forest floor of some debris. Fire also may have kept the forests on Whidbey Island from reaching their

[16] Newcombe, *Menzies' Journal of Vancouver's Voyage*, 48.
[17] *Ibid.*, 49.

hypothetical climactic climax by killing off less fire-resistant western hemlock and encouraging the growth of sun-loving Douglas fir.

Deciduous trees contributed to the ecological mosaic on northern Whidbey that Archibald Menzies observed in 1792 and that still exists today. Menzies's collection of Northwest Coast plant specimens also included maple, alder, and cottonwood. Vine maple, red alder, Oregon ash, and willow thrive on wet areas and along the shoreline. Garry oak was and still is dispersed across the open, grassy prairies, primarily north of Penn Cove near present-day Oak Harbor. The evergreen broadleaf golden chinquapin, a relative of the oak and chestnut, grows on dry, rocky, coarse-textured soils. (Madrone, the Puget lowlands' only broadleaf flowering evergreen tree, was introduced after 1900 on well-drained relatively dry sites around Penn Cove as an attraction for early resort vacationers.)[18]

Since Archibald Menzies penned his description of the Penn Cove landscape over two hundred years ago, the age and immensity of the "pine forests" he observed have changed. By 1900, fifty years of intensifying commercial logging had created a patchwork of virgin forest, second-growth forests, and burned land caused by Indians and occasionally by lightning strikes. Thirty years later, all of the virgin timber on Whidbey Island had been logged off except for a stand on a military reservation on north Whidbey Island, which later became Deception Pass State Park. Now, in the early twenty-first century, although 58 percent of Whidbey Island is forested, little old growth remains.[19] Two large relic woodland areas in Ebey's Landing NHR, where no cutting or burning has occurred since the early 1900s, provide a faint reminder of the nature and composition of the historic forest ecology Menzies described. These woodlands, located today in a narrow neck between the ocean and Penn Cove and along a north-south ridgeline south of Penn Cove, support a community of second- and third-growth Douglas fir and a few moisture-loving western red cedar and grand fir.

Changes in vegetation in Ebey's Landing NHR and elsewhere on Whidbey have also occurred along the ocean shorelines. Today, numerous plant species growing on the beach and stony bluff above the shoreline are non-native, having been introduced by humans over several decades. The principal plants found in the beach communities along the Reserve's eight-mile coastal strip are orchard grass, creeping bentgrass, dune wildrye, velvet grass, yarrow, and sand verbena. Plants commonly found on the shoreline bluffs include wild rose, snowberry, bracken fern, orchard grass, pea vine, harrow, and sea plantain. In

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[18] White, *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change,* 77-79; Buerstatte, "Geography of Whidby Island," 19-20.

[19] Bocker Reserve is reputedly unlogged, according to Robert Merrick, July 2003. White, *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change,* 80, 94; Buerstatte, "Geography of Whidby Island," 22; McKinley, *Unbroken Historical Record,* 5.

contrast, plants found today at Crockett Lake, Perego's Lagoon, and Grasser's Lagoon reflect native associations or compositions. Pickle weed, salt grass, and saltbrush are among the more notable plants found in these marshy communities.

The open "prairies" on central Whidbey Island, the "clear spots of considerable extent" that Menzies observed interspersed among the giant coniferous forests, have probably existed for thousands of years on central Whidbey Island, and are a distinguishing feature of Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve. On June 2, 1792, Archibald Menzies described the plains in the vicinity of Penn Cove as "a fine rich Country abounding with luxuriant lawns, cropt with the finest verdure & extensive prospects teeming with the softer beauties of nature."[20] He compared the beauty of these open prairies to certain culturally created landscapes in England, in his words the most "admired Parks in England."[21] On June 4, Captain George Vancouver recorded in his journal a similar bucolic scene of expansive fields. "The surrounding country," Vancouver penned in his journal,

> [F]or several miles in most points of view, presented a delightful prospect, consisting chiefly of spacious meadows, elegantly adorned with clumps of trees; mongst which the oak bore a very considerable proportion, in size from four to six feet in circumference. In these beautiful pastures, bordering on an expansive sheet of water, the deer were seen playing about in great numbers. Nature had here provided the well-stocked park, and wanted only the assistance of art to constitute that desirable assemblage of surface, which is so much sought in other countries. The soil principally consisted of a rich, black vegetable mould, lying on a sandy or clayey substratum; the grass, of an excellent quality, grew to the height of three feet, and the ferns, which, in the sandy soils, occupied the clear spots, were nearly twice as high.[22]

Clearly impressed with the countryside around Penn Cove, Vancouver summarized his impressions emphatically. "The country in the vicinity of this branch of the sea [Penn Cove] is . . . the finest we had yet met with . . .; its natural productions were luxuriant in the highest degree."[23]

From the Columbia River northward, glaciation is credited with the origination of these prairies. Gravel-laden meltwater rushing from under the last

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[20] Newcombe, *Menzies' Journal of Vancouver's Voyage,* 45.
[21] *Ibid.,* 48.
[22] W. Kaye Lamb, ed., *George Vancouver: A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and Round the World, 1791-1795, Vol. II* (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1984), 568.
[23] *Ibid.,* 568.

retreating Vashon Glacier formed channels and moraine banks of coarse, cobbly, textured soil and substratum beyond the southern reach of the retreating glacial fingers. In the aftermath of the melting Vashon Glacier, these low-lying, gravelly outwash plains, ranging in size from a few miles wide to vast parklands of thousands of acres, created a patchwork of prairies, oak woodland, and forest throughout the southern Puget Sound lowlands and to the north. These shallow stony soils, which built up around Penn Cove and Oak Harbor, are especially porous and, with little or no clay, lost water very quickly. Gravel surrounds the open prairies south of Penn Cove. The majority of Ebey's Prairie and some of Crockett Prairie consist of clay, 500 feet deep in places, with one or two feet of top soil.[24]

A variety of ecological settings found in Ebey's Landing NHR—salt water, fresh water, rocky and sandy shoreline, coniferous forests, riparian woodland, wet meadows and marshes, shrubby thickets, and open prairie (now farmland)—support a rich mosaic of varied plant communities that historically provided hospitable habitats for numerous animal, bird, and fish species. In turn, animals, birds, and fish, as well as smaller organisms, have all helped shape the Whidbey Island ecosystem. Through the green forest, across the open prairies, and in the fresh water on and salt water around much of the Reserve, these creatures move, mate, and sleep, leaving behind organic material that has been clipped, chewed, packed, bent, uprooted, digested, shaped for nests, and discarded again. A profound interdependence of these life forms goes back for thousands of years. The population and distribution of various herbivores, carnivores, and omnivores has naturally fluctuated in response to dynamic changes in the environment and to the presence and activities of humans.

A variety of mammals has made Whidbey Island their home. Black bear and wolves once lived on the island. Perceived as a menace by Anglo-American inhabitants, both animals were freely killed. In 1891, the *Island County Times* reported that: "bears are not so plentiful here this year as last, over a dozen of them having been killed in this neighborhood [Penn Cove area] last summer."[25] Bears have been gone from the island for several decades. In 1853, pioneer farmer Walter Crockett reported that: "there is a greate many wolves on this island. they are the largest that I ever saw in any country," the native Virginian observed.[26] Believing that the wolves presented a threat to livestock, the Island County Board of Commissioners, in December 1855, decided to place a bounty of

[24] Roger Sherman (long-time Ebey's Prairie resident) to Gretchen Luxenberg, historian, National Park Service, summer 2002; Buerstatte, "Geography of Whidby Island," 20; Kruckeberg, *Natural History of Puget Sound History,* 284-90.
[25] *Island County Times,* August 14, 1891.
[26] Walter Crockett to Harvey Black, October 15, 1853, Crockett Papers, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.

$3 on each wolf killed in Island County.[27] Pioneer descendent Alice Kellogg Cahail also recalled, that: "there were some wolves, but the settlers carried strychnine and when a deer was killed the intestines were poisoned and left in the woods, and the wolves were exterminated."[28]

Deer were once abundant on Whidbey Island (and the San Juans) where cougars, their natural predator, did not live. In 1853, farmer Walter Crockett wrote to his nephew in Virginia about the abundance of game on Whidbey Island, particularly deer. "My boys has a large quantity of them in the absence of other kinds of meat."[29] Smaller in size than deer on the mainland, black-tailed deer still occupy the island, although they, like bears, were reduced in number by hunters. Among the most conspicuous forest and prairie herbivores, these deer consume a wide variety of plants, including huckleberry, salal, vine maple, and many other shrubs, herbs, and grasses. The number of deer has fluctuated wildly since the arrival of Anglo-Americans. Restrictions on hunting in recent years have allowed the deer population to grow large in the early twenty-first century.

Whidbey Island is home to several other mammals. The red-tailed fox represents the family of carnivorous mammals that once resided on the island; in recent years, coyotes have exterminated the fox. Smaller mammals, such as raccoons, porcupines, and various rabbits, hares, skunks, squirrels, weasels, moles, rats, and other rodents all live on Whidbey Island and in the Reserve. Only rarely are sea mammals such as Stellar Sea Lion, Elephant Seal, and False Killer Whale sighted in Puget Sound waters around Whidbey Island. A native Clallam informant recalled seeing and hearing sea otters for the last time in the Strait of Juan de Fuca west of Whidbey Island in the 1940s. River otters still live on central Whidbey Island. At least thirty-eight species of land mammals make Whidbey Island their home, most of which can be found in Ebey's Landing NHR.[30]

A vast number of birds can be found in the various habitats in the Reserve. The wetland areas are abundant with waterfowl. Several species of the *Anatidae* family, including ducks and geese rest, forage, winter in and near the Reserve. (Swans only occasionally visit the island from the mainland.) The area around Crockett Lake, as well as several lagoons and small ponds, are ideal habitats for waterfowl. Other birds native to the island and region that may be readily observed are great blue heron, kestrel, Red-tailed hawk, Cooper's hawk,

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[27] "Records of the Board of County Commissioners," Island County, December 3, 1855, Island County Courthouse, Coupeville, Washington

[28] Alice Kellogg Cahail, "Whidbey Island," (II: 6), typescript, no date, Cahail Papers, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.

[29] Crockett to Black, October 15, 1853, Crockett Papers.

[30] Astrida R. Blukis Onat, "Resource Protection Planning Process Identification of Prehistoric Archaeological Resources in the Northern Puget Sound Study Unit" (Seattle, WA: Boas, Inc., 1987), 11-13; Roger del Moral and Becca Hanson, *Vegetation Resources of the Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve* (Seattle, WA: National Park Service, 1980).

sharp-shinned hawk, great horned owl, common snipe, and mourning dove. Bald eagles are plentiful. Shrubby thickets and hedgerows bordering farmers fields and along the forest fringes provide a hospitable habitat for numerous smaller birds.[31]

The abundant varieties of fish found in waters around Whidbey Island were noted more than two hundred years ago by Archibald Menzies, who sailed with Captain Vancouver up the Strait of Juan de Fuca, in Admiralty Inlet, and near Whidbey Island. In May 1792, Menzies noted the great variety of fish caught by Vancouver's crew while camped near Admiralty Inlet.

> The fish generally caught were Bream of two or three kinds, Salmon & Trout & two kind of flat fish, one of which was a new species of *Pleuronectes,* with Crabs which were found very good and palatable & we seldom faild in hauling on shore a number of Elephant Fish (*Chimara Callorhynchus*) & Scolpings (*Cottus scorpius*).[32]

Sixty years later, pioneer farmer Walter Crockett commented on the abundance of fish in Puget Sound and around Whidbey Island. In an October 15, 1853, letter to his nephew, Crockett wrote that "hear the waters of this bay abounds with the finest of fish. The Salmon is moste sought for. There was many thousands of barrels salted heare last season and shipped to Calafornia."[33] Today, fish that either feed in Puget Sound or pass through it seasonally include sole, halibut, flounder, smelt and eulachon, herring, greenling, sculpin, perch, sturgeon, skate, dogfish, rockfish, lingcod, cod, and salmon. Cutthroat trout are found in bays around Puget Sound year-round. Channels between the Puget Sound islands, including Whidbey, serve as funnels for numerous runs of several species of anadromous salmon (Chinook or King, Silver or Coho, Pink or Humpback, Chum or dog, and Sockeye) and other fish to spawning drainages along the mainland shoreline. Years of logging, farming, dam construction, fish traps, and urban building developments have adversely affected the spawning grounds and, therefore, the historic abundance of salmon. (Fish traps were banned in the 1930s because of severely diminished salmon runs along the coast.)

Shellfish abound in the rock shore habitats in central Whidbey Island. These include several species of clam (such as Little neck, steamer, butter, horse, big neck, rubberneck, jack-knife, and bent nose), crab, geoduck, Blue and California mussels, Olympic and Rock oysters, and scallops. The mud clam or Eastern soft shell was introduced to the area from the Atlantic Coast around the mid-nineteenth century. Penn Cove has supported the commercial production of

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[31] Onat, "Resource Protection Planning Process Identification," 9-10.
[32] Newcombe, *Menzies' Journal of Vancouver's Voyage,*22.
[33] Crockett to Black, October 15, 1853, Crockett Papers.

clams and mussels for many years. A large number of limpets, varied small snails, slugs, and some bivalves and univalves grow throughout the waters.[34]

The Hands of Women and Men

Human activities on Whidbey Island and throughout the much larger 450-mile-long Puget trough have helped perpetuate these tree-encircled parkland prairies over thousands of years. Anthropologists believe that Indians set fire to the prairie vegetation in order to discourage growth of native grasses and encourage the growth of certain plants used for food (such as camas and bracken fern), for medicinal purposes, for cordage used in fishing nets, and dyes extracted from nettles. Although not an English parkland, the prairies of Ebey's Landing NHR were, nevertheless, ancient landscapes manipulated by humans: cultural landscapes. Bracken ferns, which thrive on disturbed ground and sometimes grow seven feet high, and camas lily with its delicate blue spring and early summer flowers on thin stalks probably dominated large expanses of the prairies north and south of Penn Cove when the first Euro-American visitors and settlers arrived. The stinging nettle, favoring disturbed soil, also grew in expansive thickets on the prairies.[35]

The early pioneer settlers of the Northwest transported the word "prairie" west with them and applied it to open lowlands that, apparently, reminded them of the huge expanses of tall- and short-grass prairies they had encountered in the Midwest. Dr. William Frasier Tolmie, an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Nisqually in 1833, was one of the first to use the word "prairie" to describe the open parkland landscape he encountered in August that year. "Had a long walk on the prairie in the afternoon and came upon a portion new to me where winding elevations carpeted with young oaks and brake [bracken fern], and clothed with pines are not infrequent."[36] Isaac Stevens, the first governor of Washington Territory, described the prairies that he observed throughout the Puget Sound lowlands in his treatise, *Reports of Explorations and Surveys to Ascertain the Most Practicable and Economical Route for a Railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean* (1853-1855). "On Whidbey's island and other places adjoining the Straits of Fuca," Stevens wrote, "are ... rich prairies, with the appearance of having been formed by ... alluvial deposit[s] from rivers, though now more than a hundred feet above the water. . . . Prairies are often visible to the water's edge, interspersed

[34] Onat, "Resource Protection Planning Process Identification," 10-12.
[35] White, *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change,* 20-23; Pojar and MacKinnon, *Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast, 108, 420.*
[36] Quoted in Kruckeberg, *Natural History of Puget Sound Country,* 285.

with evergreen forests."[37] Stevens observed that the most striking feature of these so-called "dry prairies" was "the abruptness of the forests that surround them, giving them the appearance of lands, which have been cleared and cultivated for hundreds of years."[38] Stevens speculated that the prairies were the remains of much more extensive prairies, which within a comparatively recent period, occupied all the lower and dryer parts of the valleys, and which the forests have been gradually spreading over. . . . The Indians, in order to preserve their open grounds for game and for the production of their important root, the camas, soon found the advantage of burning, and when they began this it was only those trees already large that could withstand the fires.[39] Stevens, clearly impressed with the tranquil, domesticated appearance of prairies, portrayed their overall scene and setting in romanticized prose.

> With all this magnificence there is not wanting scenery of a milder and more home-like aspect. The smooth prairies, dotted with groves of oaks, which in the distance look like orchards, seem so much like old farms that it is hard to resist the illusion that we are in a land cultivated for hundreds of years, and adorned by the highest art. Nothing seems wanting but the presence of civilized man, though it must be acknowledged that he oftener mars than improves the love face of nature.[40]

In mid-June 1859, James G. Swan was similarly impressed with the natural floral beauty of the prairie he walked across on the north side of Penn Cove:

> The ground over which we walked was a perfect carpet of flowers. Conspicuous among these were the beautiful rhododendron, with its rich cluster of blossoms, the blue flowers of the camonass, the bright red of the bartsia and columbine. The white blossom of the fragrant syringa, the variegated lupine, the purple of the wild pea and iris, intermingled with violets, pansies and a variety of astors, making a floral

[37] Isaac Stevens, *Reports of Explorations and Surveys to Ascertain the Most Practicable and Economical Route for a Railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean, Volume XIII, Book II,* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Congress, Senate, 36th Cong., 1st Sess., March 3, 1853, May 31 and August 5, 1854, 20, 39.
[38] *Ibid.,* 23.
[39] *Ibid.,* 23.
[40] *Ibid.,* 23.

> display equal to any I ever witnessed in California, and one that would delight the heart of every true lover of nature.[41]

One hundred and fifty years ago, the prairies that Isaac Stevens and James Swan described supported a native plant community that included shooting star, chocolate lily, and a variety of grasses (such as wheat grass, Junegrass, bromegrass, ryegrass, reedgrass, and clover) in sunny, more open areas. Serviceberry, hazel, and Oregon ash proliferated in the oak savanna at the margins of the prairie and encircling forest. Anglo-American farming, logging, and urban developments have eliminated or greatly altered most of the prairie communities that Stevens observed. Native prairie flora is probably best preserved today on prairie remnants located on the military base at Fort Lewis, Washington, where certain military practices have involved frequent burning.[42] There is also a remnant of native prairie at the former state game farm on Smith Prairie, now AuSable Institute.

The effect of fire on the dry parkland prairies of the Puget Sound lowland is clear. Since regular intentional burning of the prairies ceased 150 years ago, herbaceous (herb-like) weeds, shrubs (like Scotch broom), and Douglas fir have gradually encroached on the edges of most prairies unless other human activities have kept the surrounding forests in check. In the early twenty-first century, prairies occupy about 5 percent of Whidbey Island and about 42 percent of Ebey's Landing NHR.[43] Grazing, plowing, and some logging have retained the historic open space of Ebey's Prairie, Crockett Prairie, and Smith Prairie (only part of which is included in the Reserve).

Although the island and the Reserve continue to move through time, they carry silent testimony to geologic, biologic, and human histories. Prairies and shallow valleys with sides gently sloping up the hilltops crowned in evergreen tell the story of sculpting glaciers. A lone camas lily in bloom at the edge of a plowed field stands in silent memorial to the first residents who lived amidst the island's bounty. A vacant, modest house with gray-brown siding, aged by salty winds, nailed over heavy old vertical plank walls continues to stand sentinel over the prairie it has seen transformed from small isolated plantings to a maze of fences, tilled fields and farm buildings. Today's quiet, patient and receptive observer can gaze across the island, and glean a sense of its full story. The sound of water washing across beach stones, the screech of a swooping gull, the sway of tall grass

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[41] James G. Swan, *Almost Out of the World: Scenes from Washington Territory, the Strait of Juan de Fuca, 1859-1861* (Tacoma, WA: Washington State Historical Society, 1971), 56-57
[42] Leopold and Boyd, "Ecological History of Old Prairie Areas in Southwestern Washington," 155-56; Richard White, *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change: The Shaping of Island County, Washington* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1992), 49.
[43] Kruckeberg, Natural History of Puget Sound Country, 287; McKinley, Unbroken Historical Record, 5.

under the caress of a breeze, the visual decrescendo of a farmer's fence disappearing over the distant hill, and the creak and slam of a barn door, are all parts of the unwritten language that so clearly relate the island's history. They are all parts of the island's story written in the pictographic language of the island's landscape.

Chapter 2

First Residents

The first Northwest residents applied concepts of city-state governance, inter-state compacts created by family linkages, modular housing, resource management, and material-based social stratification to create the single largest hunter-gather group in the world. Disease took lives and memories, and Euro-American farmers took land and autonomy.

The Loss of Cultural Memory

On May 2, 1792, Archibald Menzies and Captain George Vancouver went ashore at the headwaters of Discovery Bay (on the Olympic Peninsula) in what is today Washington State. Menzies memorialized the landing in his journal:

> We then landed on the East Side where we saw the remains of a deserted village of a few houses one of which had been pretty large & in make resembled the Nootka habitations as described by Captain Cook, but neither of them seemed to have been inhabited for some time. On a Tree close to it we found the skeleton of a child which was carefully wrapped up in some of the Cloth of the Country made from the Bark of a Tree & some Matts.[1]

The poignancy and significance of the child's skeleton takes on its true import when one realizes the catastrophic events that preceded the arrival of the Vancouver Expedition. Smallpox descended upon the residents of the Pacific Northwest in the late 1770s. The population was decimated by what some authors characterize as the most profound demographic catastrophe in human history.[2] Robert Boyd, a cultural anthropologist, has estimated that 33 percent of the total population of the area died in the epidemic; Henry Dobyns, an historical demographer, postulates that death rates in some cases were much higher,

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[1] C.F. Newcombe, editor, *Menzies' Journal of Vancouver's Voyage* (Victoria, B.C.: William H. Cullin, 1923), 29

[2] Kenneth Ames, and Herbert D. G. Maschner, *Peoples of the Northwest Coast: Their Archaeology and Prehistory,* (London: Thames and Hudson, Ltd., 1999), 53.

approaching 90 percent mortality.[3] Even if the lower percentage is accepted, the cultural impact was devastating. Not only was the collective memory of the Northwest inhabitants seriously diminished, the culture itself was irreversibly altered, perhaps to a greater extent than had occurred in the preceding 13,000 years. The dead infant who had been cradled in the gentle sway of tree branches would never be able to pass on its sense of cultural mores and norms to its children, and its very death meant that its individual life would not contribute to the normal cultural evolution of its people. The child's body was a silent testament to the reality that what culturally could have been, never would be, and what was would probably never be reported in the fullness of its reality. Anthropologists and historians would be forever deprived of much, if not most, of the cultural information that served to define the lives of those who had inhabited the Pacific Northwest for over 13,000 years.

The smallpox that devastated native populations during the epidemic of the 1770s, thought to have been introduced to the Northwest Coast by the Spanish Bruno de Hezeta-Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra expedition of 1775, was only one of several diseases resulting from European contact. Malaria, measles, influenza, dysentery, whooping cough, typhus, and typhoid fever were all visited upon the Northwest. The graph below dramatically depicts the cumulative effects of the various epidemics on the Northwest Coast population from 1770 to 1870.

The pre-1774 population of the Northwest Coast has been estimated at 185,000, making it the most densely populated nonagricultural region in the world at that time.[4] By 1874, when the first comprehensive ethnographic investigation was launched, the population had declined to a little more than 30,000. In 1874, Myron Eells, one of the most prolific writers on the ethnology of the Northwest Indians, began compiling his data. His initial investigatory tool was a questionnaire prepared by Otis T. Mason that Eells painstakingly completed, detailing the current practices as well as practices recalled by native informants. Unfortunately, by the time Eells had started work much of the collective memory had been lost. Eells was followed by a number of anthropologists who painstakingly attempted to reconstruct the culture of the Northwest Indians.

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[3] R. T. Boyd, "Demographic History: 1774-1874," In *Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 7: Northwest Coast,* W. Suttles editor (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1990); R. T. Boyd, *The Introduction of Infectious Diseases Among the Indians of the Pacific Northwest, 1774 – 1874,* (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Washington, Seattle, 1985); H. E. Dobyns, *Their Number Became Thinned, Native American Population Dynamics in Eastern North America,* (Nashville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983).

[4] Population estimates are calculated by first establishing a reliable benchmark population based upon a census determined to be accurate. This benchmark population is then expanded by extrapolations that apply the probable mortality rates based upon available evidence of regional mortality statistics where available or upon some historical average.

Franz Boas, Philip Drucker, Wayne Suttles, Stanley D. Davis, Frederica de Laguna, Margaret B. Blackman, Kenneth Ames, Roy Carlson, Bill Holm, and Michael Kew are just a few of the many professionals who have dedicated themselves to an investigation of this culture over the years, beginning in the early 1900s. Additionally, the historical record contains some eyewitness accounts of this culture as it existed shortly after European contact. Unofficial observations recorded by members of various expeditions, including those led by Cook, Vancouver, and Wilkes, also provide a glimpse of Northwest Indian life.

Those Who Greeted Whidbey and Wilkes

British Captain George Vancouver reportedly made the first European exploration of Whidbey Island between 1791 and 1795. Although the Spanish reportedly sailed into the Strait of Juan de Fuca from their ports in New Spain (now Mexico), and Russian merchants had been active on the West Coast of what is now Alaska, British Columbia, and California for decades, these early traders left no written accounts of their exploration of either the east or west coast of the island. One of Vancouver's trusted sailors, Joseph Whidbey, sailed past the east coast of Whidbey Island on June 2, 1792. Vancouver's journal memorialized Whidbey's observations: "Having advanced about four miles, they found, on a low projecting point of the western shore [probably East Point on Whidbey Island], a village containing numerous tribes of the natives."[5] The following morning Whidbey's group was "visited by a large canoe full of Indians, who were immediately followed by a hundred more of the natives, bringing with them the mats for covering their temporary houses, and seemingly, every other article of value belonging to them."[6]

On June 4th, Lieutenant Whidbey entered Penn Cove:

> In the morning, the examination of the western branch was pursued, and found to terminate in a very excellent and commodious cover or harbour with regular soundings from 10 to 20 fathoms, good holding ground. Its western extent situation in latitude 48 ° 17', longitude 237 ° 38', is not more than a league from the eastern shore of the main inlet, within the straits. On each point of the harbour, which in honor of a particular friend I call Penn's Cove, was a deserted village; in one of which were found several sepulchres formed exactly like a sentry box. Some

[5]George Vancouver, *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and Round the World, 1791-1795, Volume II* (W. Kaye Lamb, ed.) (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1984), 566.
[6] *Ibid.*, 567

> of them were open, and contained the skeletons of many young children tied up in baskets; the smaller bones of adults were likewise noticed, but not one of the limb bones could here be found, which gave rise to an opinion that these, by the living inhabitants of the neighbourhood, were appropriated to useful purposes, such as pointing their arrows, spears, or other weapons. . . . The number of its inhabitants [all of Penn Cove] he [Lt. Whidbey] estimated at about six hundred, which I should suppose would exceed the total all the natives we had before seen; the other parts of the sound did not appear, by any means, so populous, as we had been visited by one small canoe only, in which were five of the natives, who civilly furnished us with some small fish. The character and appearance of their several tribes here seen did not seem to differ in any material respect from each other, or from those we have already had occasion to mention.[7]

The Wilkes United States Exploring Expedition sailed into Penn Cove in early June 1841. Wilkes reported that the Indians he met occupied large, well-built houses of timber and planks, and were cultivating three or four acres of potatoes. Wilkes also reported that the Indians had erected several large enclosures close to one hundred feet long and thirty feet high of upright wooden timbers with rifle firing ports. Houses occupied the interior of the fortifications.

Reports from a Slave and a Missionary

Two other eyewitnesses are John R. Jewitt, who was captured and enslaved by Vancouver Island residents, and Myron Eells, a missionary who spent thirty-three years in the area and became the most prolific writer of Northwest Coast ethnography in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.[8]

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[7] Vancouver, *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and Round the World, 1791-1795,* 566.

[8] John R. Jewitt, *A Journal Kept at Nootka Sound,* (Reprint, Fairfield, WA: Ye Galleon Press, 1996). As with any eyewitness to events, places, and people, Jewitt's testimony must be closely examined for inadvertent misrepresentations resulting from inaccurate or incomplete observations, inaccurate or incomplete recall, or personal, social, or cultural prejudices through which the testimony is filtered. Observations of other cultures by untrained witnesses are subject to even greater errors as the result of cultural prejudices, which influence what the observer sees and later reports. Even trained observers filter information through cultural or politically over-sensitive filters. Also, see a report by Royal Marine John Ledyard of his observations of these first residents made while cruising with Captain James Cook in 1772. Relevant portions of Ledyard's observations are presented in chapter 3, below.

Jewitt was born in England in 1783. His father, a blacksmith, sent Jewitt to an academy when he was twelve where he remained for two years. After an unsuccessful apprenticeship with a surgeon, Jewitt returned home to Hull, England, where he met Captain Salter, the master of the ship *Boston*, which was destined to be attacked in Nootka Sound and suffer the loss of her entire crew save Jewitt and the sailmaker. Jewitt spent the twenty-eight months following the seizure of the *Boston* living as a slave of the Indians at Nootka Sound, over 150 miles distance from Whidbey Island. Given that physical separation, can Jewitt's observations be relied upon to inform us of life on Whidbey Island? The answer is yes, and the reasons are based upon one of the most distinguishing attributes about Northwest pre-European society: regional commonality with local diversity. As Kenneth Ames and Herbert Maschner argue so persuasively in *People of the Northwest Coast: Their Archaeology and Prehistory*[9], the commonality of pre-European residents is both striking and informative. Indians throughout most of the Pacific Northwest shared great similarities in architecture, dress, woodworking crafts and skills, ceremonies, and art as the result of frequent inter-village contact. This intercourse between villages in the region was encouraged in large part by local diversity in both the type and quantity of resource. Additionally, this intense inter-village interaction was intentionally fostered by the encouragement of inter-village marriages. It was not uncommon for a man and woman from different villages to marry, which, over time, resulted in multiple lineage connections between villages.

Sharing resources between villages more often than not was a cultural norm. If a resource in one area was unavailable during a specific season, villages could rely upon resources in nearby villages where in-laws frequently lived. This inter-village familial relationship web was not an isolated phenomenon. A village would be linked to surrounding villages, which would, in turn, each be linked to other villages on their periphery, and so on, much as stones tossed sequentially into a pond create interlocking, ever-widening ripples. With the ease of water transportation and the necessary seasonal movements of villages in pursuit of various foods, it would be inevitable that during the course of several thousand years, residents in the Northwest would be more alike than different. This is not to say there were no differences. There were. However, there was sufficient commonality for the observations of Jewitt in Nootka Sound to provide us some general insight into what life on Whidbey Island was like.

Myron Eells was another outside observer who left a written record from which some cultural information can be gleaned about Northwest Indians. Unlike Jewitt, whose father was a skilled tradesman, Myron Eells's father was a missionary. Myron Eells was graduated from Pacific University in 1866. He entered Hartford Theological Seminary and was ordained a Congregational minister in 1871. In 1874, seventy-one years after Jewitt's residency to the north in Nootka Sound, Eells visited the Skokomish Indian Agency on the northern end of

[9] Kenneth M. Ames and Herbert D. G. Maschner, *Peoples of the Northwest Coast*).

Hood Canal in western Washington where his brother was an Indian agent. Eells spent the rest of his life in western Washington, and during his residence there he compiled six volumes of notes recording his observations of the Indians in and around Hood Canal and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The six volumes are predominantly sketches and handwritten notes. The volumes were published in 1885.[10] Eells's preface clearly alerts the reader to Eells's cultural prejudices:

> In a general way, I should say of the greater part of those under forty-five years of age at the present time, that if they had white skins, talked the English language, if all of them had abandoned their belief in their medicine men, if they traveled in boats instead of canoes, if the women wore hats or bonnets on their heads, and if they were neater, they would be called civilized, at least as much so as the lower class of whites.[11]

This quote is critically important to a reader's analysis of the reliability and credibility of Eells's reports. Yet, in a later single-volume digest of Eells's work the editors did not include it.[12] This omission seriously impairs the critical reader's ability to assess Eells's work. His assessment of the Indian's level of "civilization" could well affect both what he deemed worthy of reporting (activities deemed "civilized" that he may have concluded were anomalies); and how he reported it (language is replete with words loaded with connotative meanings, e. g. "lodge" rather than "multi-family dwelling," "natives" rather than "residents"; "witch doctor" rather than "shaman" or "nontraditional healer"). However, if a reader keeps Eells's prejudices in mind, much of his record provides interesting and helpful insight.

Families and City-States

It is in part due to these and several other eye witnesses, as well as the combined effort of both professional historians and anthropologists, that we are able to piece together some semblance of an understanding of that culture both prior to and subsequent to European contact. It was a culture of unique technology (fishing, architecture, boat building, food preparation and storage), a culture of social ranking based upon birth and wealth, and a culture of unique art. It was a culture with a broad geographical range, stretching from southern Alaska

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[10] Eells, *The Indians of Puget Sound.*
[11] *Ibid.,* xi
[12] Robert H. Ruby and John A. Brown. *Myron Eells and the Puget Sound Indians* (Seattle, WA: Superior Publishing Company, 1976).

to northern California, and it had the largest hunter-gatherer population in the world before being decimated by Old World diseases.

There were no "tribes" in the sense of cohesive political-administrative units exercising legislative and judicial powers over residents within clearly identified venues. This concept of "tribes" was a model constructed by early European settlers who knew very little about Northwest Indian cultures and who lacked sufficient interest to inform themselves. The "tribes" construct was also a convenient way for representatives of the United States government to group spatially proximate villages to facilitate treaty negotiations. The negotiators had to first identify a single group they perceived as having fee simple ownership of some specific geographical area before they could negotiate a conveyance of that land. It was only much later, with the advent of linguistic and material culture comparisons, that European and Euro-American investigators began to move toward an understanding of the reality of the Northwest Indian culture.

Prior to European contact the Northwest Indians could only be characterized politically as an aggregate of autonomous villages. In fact, some anthropologists have argued that a complete list of "tribes" as perceived by its members would be nothing more than a list of all the villages in the area.[13] Shoreline territories on Whidbey Island were occupied or controlled by prominent extended families. Before European contact, more than fifty named groups on Whidbey Island and in its environs shared similar material culture characteristics and language. Each of the fifty groups had at least one winter or principal village and several summer camps. They interacted with neighboring groups by joint feasting, combined ceremonial activities, and inter-marrying. Anthropologists currently refer to these groups as Central Coast Salish. They spoke Lushootseed, occupied multi-family residences constructed of red cedar planks, fished from expertly constructed canoes or used complex weirs and fish traps, stored food in water-tight boxes constructed of steam-bent wood, wore skirts, capes, and trousers made of the shredded inner bark of cedar trees, and slept beneath blankets woven on two-bar looms using dog hair, mountain-goat wool, and a bird-down fireweed mixture.[14]

The nuclear social unit of Whidbey Island's first residents was the household, made up of one or more families closely related genetically or by marriage. A family consisted of an adult male with one or more wives, children, and, if wealthy, slaves acquired by capture or purchase. The household jointly occupied a single, rectangular multi-family dwelling having a shed or gable roof, constructed of cedar planks supported by heavy beams. The interior of the

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[13] Thomas T. Waterman, [Puget Sound Geography]. (Manuscript No. 1864 in National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 1920; Suttles, *Handbook of North American Indians*, 13.

[14] Meany mentioned seeing "about forty dogs in a drove, shorn close to the skin like sheep." Meany, *Vancouver's Discovery of Puget Sound*, 21.

dwelling consisted of a central open area surrounded by individual household sleeping areas. Each household had a fire pit in the central open area. Overhead beams were draped with fish, drying in the smoke rising from the fire pits. Ingress and egress was usually limited to a single door situated at the gable end of the building and frequently facing the water; however, side doors providing access to individual family areas were not uncommon. Houses were aligned side by side in one or more parallel rows, with the most affluent village resident frequently occupying a larger residence near the center of the village.

Owners, the Owned and Mobile Homes

There were three distinctive classes: upper, lower, and slave. Although an individual could move from lower to upper or upper to lower, class membership was most generally dictated by birth. But, to make the assertion that class membership was established at birth is to simplify a much more complex social phenomenon to the point that it is only superficially accurate.

Material affluence most often indicated a person's status within the village and within the village's immediate region. Material affluence was a direct result of two related factors: first, access to natural resources, such as an inherited right to fish or hunt a specific area, and, secondly, the skill required to harvest those resources. Access to a specific natural resource was generally an inherited right, but not an inalienable birthright. Failure of the heir to successfully harvest the resource, whether it be salmon or deer, could result in the forfeiture of the right to another who was sufficiently skilled. Ultimately, then, a person's standing as determined by material affluence and lineage greatly enhanced one's opportunity to be affluent but did not guarantee it.

An interesting corollary to class membership being determined by material affluence is the manner in which the affluence was publicized. Unlike many other cultures, including current American, where affluence is demonstrated by self-focused conspicuous consumption, the Northwest Indian demonstrated affluence by gift giving. The quantity, quality, and frequency of giving at formal gatherings for that purpose (called potlatches) was symbolic of the wealth (and, therefore, social standing) of the individual.

The search for material affluence was not limited to the village of residence. The wise individual would frequently seek to broaden the natural resource base to include resources available in nearby villages. Residents of a salmon-rich village would seek a husband for their daughter or a wife for their son in a herring-rich village, for example. The resulting kinship connection would often lead to enhanced affluence-based social standing by being able to give herring as well as salmon. And, after the establishment of this inter-village kinship

linking, someone in the herring village was able to enjoy enhanced social standing by giving salmon away.

Villages were typically located to both maximize protection from inclement weather and to facilitate access to food resources, fresh water, and water transportation routes. A group's primary village was typically a year-around residence, although certain groups did periodically depart for extended periods of time to gather food, hunt, or fish. With the advent of summer, members of the village dispersed in specialized groups to various summer camps to fish, gather various plant foods, or hunt land or marine animals. In these instances, the smaller groups would construct more elementary housing comprised of a frame over which mats would be placed. Where the pursuit of food necessitated a longer stay, the entire village would be relocated. The cedar boards that sheathed the village's multi-dwelling homes were removed and transported to the new village site, leaving behind the heavy-timbered house frames to be used upon the village's return.

The method used to transport the dwellings is interesting to note. Two canoes were placed abeam, planks were arranged from hull to hull, essentially creating a catamaran, and household goods were loaded aboard for transport to the new village site. Jewitt, who resided as a slave on Nootka Sound for over two years, chronicled the seasonal movements of his owner's (Maquina's) village:

- December 31, 1803: The village left Nootka and traveled approximately thirty miles up the sound to Tasshees
- May 22, 1804: The village returned to Nootka.
- September 4, 1804: The village moved to Tasshees
- December 13, 1804: The village moved from Tasshees to Cooptee
- February 17, 1805: The village moved to Nootka

In each instance, Jewitt reported that the villagers were occupied building their houses for approximately two days following their arrival. Unfortunately, he does not describe in detail the architecture of the houses or the method of their construction. Others, however, have described cedar planks being arranged either horizontally or vertically against the heavy roof and wall beams and secured in place using cordage made of cedar bark. There were no chimneys; a few roof boards were moved aside to permit the exhaustion of smoke.[15] A sleeping platform was constructed around the inside perimeter of the walls, raised about two feet from the floor. Although some authorities report that the sleeping areas were separated by partitions, and each had its own door to the outside,[16] most

[15] Ames and Maschner, *Peoples of the Northwest Coast.*
[16] Eells, *The Indians of Puget Sound.*

agree that the central-most area was an open, unpartitioned space dedicated to individual cooking fires.[17]

Since food resources were often available at different locations at the same time—salmon could be caught during their fall run up a nearby river, roots gathered in lowland meadows, and berries picked in upland areas—it was essential that small groups dispersed, each with a specialized food-gathering task. For example, Ames and Maschner report that the Coast Tsimshian maintained their principal villages and towns in Prince Rupert Harbor where they spent winters. In February or March some groups relocated thirty miles north for a fish run, after which groups gathered shellfish on islands to the west, and then harvested the fall salmon run on the Skeena River. Other than the relocation to the Skeena River, groups established temporary food-gathering camps. Their relocation to Skeena River, however, included the removal of planks from their house frames and the conveyance of the planks to the Skeena fishing village.[18]

Northwest Cuisine

The Central Coast Salish of Whidbey Island and its environs depended on vegetable foods and land game more than their neighbors to the north and those on the outer coast of Washington; however, their primary food remained fish. They caught one of the five species of salmon by trolling, using seines and gill nets, constructing weirs and traps, and harpooning. They constructed weirs and traps in the rivers. The weir consisted of a row of tripods supporting lattice sections across the river that prevented the up-river migration of the fish. Platforms were built on the down-stream side of the weir. Fishermen standing upon the platforms used dip nets to scoop up the salmon. The weir was the property of the entire village; however, the fishing platforms were individually owned.

Species other than salmon were also harvested. Herring and smelt were gathered with herring rakes manipulated from canoes; flounder were taken with seines operated by groups of people walking at low tide; flounder, lingcod, and rockfish were speared from canoes. There are also reports of village members gathering spawning herring and roe from fir branches they had placed in shallow water for that purpose. This creation of an artificial habitat for herring spawns is particularly significant in that it is not merely opportunistic food gathering, but rather intentional environment manipulation to facilitate food production. Authorities have also argued that the construction of fish weirs was not merely to harvest migrating fish, but also to create an artificial environment that would encourage the concentration of seals and other mammals that would feed on the

[17] Suttles, *Handbook of North American Indians,* Vol. 7.
[18] Ames and Maschner, *People of the Northwest Coast,* 120.

fish trapped or delayed by the weir, which then could be taken by village hunters.[19] There is also evidence that the Northwest Indians manipulated their terrestrial environment to facilitate food production. Several authorities have uncovered evidence of intentional burning to enhance grassland, fern propagation, and deer population.[20] Isaac Stevens, the first governor of Washington Territory, conducted a survey of possible railroad routes across the northern latitudes of North America. In describing the prairies of Whidbey Island, he said:

> A few remarks are necessary upon the origin of the dry prairies so singularly scattered through the forest region. Their most striking feature is the abruptness of the forests that surround them, giving them the appearance of land which [had] been cleared and cultivated for hundreds of years. From various facts observed I conclude that they are the remains of much more extensive prairies, which, within a comparatively recent period, occupied all the lower, the dryer parts of the valleys, and which the forests have been gradually spreading over in their downward progress from the mountains. The Indians, in order to preserve their open grounds for game, and for the production of their important root, the camas, soon found the advantage of burning, and when they began this it was only those trees already large that could withstand the fires. Occasionally gigantic fir trees, isolated or in groups, show, by their immense size, that these prairies have not been produced by, nor always exposed to, fires, for they must have attained a considerable age before they could have resisted fire.[21]

Hunting appears to have been specialized. Some individuals hunted marine animals with harpoons from canoes. Others specialized in hunting land animals such as blacktail deer, black bear, beavers, marmots, and elk. Armed with bow and arrow, the hunter usually worked alone, using dogs to help locate the prey and track it when wounded. Deer were also taken in pitfalls, snares, and drives with nets; several hunters would chase deer into the water where they could be clubbed. Lighted torches carried in canoes were used to chase ducks into nets

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[19] *Ibid.*

[20] R. T. Boyd, "Strategies of Indian Burning in the Willamette Valley," Canadian *Journal of Anthropology* 5(1): 65-86; Nancy Turner, "Traditional Ecological Knowledge," In *The Rainforests of Home, Profile of a North American Bioregion* (P. K. Schoonmaker, B. von Hagen and E. C. Wolf, ed.), (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1996).

[21] Isaac Stevens, *Reports of Explorations and Surveys to Ascertain the Most Practicable and Economical Route for a Railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean.* Volume XII, Book II, 36th Cong., 1st Sess., Senate, 1860, 23.

mounted on tall poles. Littleneck clams, butter clams, horse clams, cockle, geoduck, bay mussels, and native oysters were all gathered in season by the various village groups in the shallow waters of Whidbey Island. Sprouts, roots, bulbs, bracken, camas, wapato, salmonberry, thimbleberry, trailing blackberry, blackcap, serviceberry, salal berry, red huckleberry, blueberry, red and blue elderberry, and assorted nuts were available on the prairies of the island and at the forest edges.

Jewitt frequently recorded his invitations to meals and the food eaten. In the twenty-eight months he lived in Maquina's village, he received 112 dinner invitations.[22] The following table summarizes the various entrées and the frequency of their occurrence:

Entree	Frequency of Occurrence
whale blubber	27
seal blubber	14
salmon	12
salmon spawn	9
clams	7
dog fish	6
herring	6
herring spawn	6
cockles	5
spawn (species unspecified)	2
halibut	2
bramble berries	2
duck	1
mussels	1

Importantly, Jewitt recorded his entrees only when he was invited for a meal. Either he didn't otherwise eat (which is improbable), or he considered meals he or others in his household ate to be of no interest. If Jewitt's journal notes regarding the types and frequency of foods consumed were randomly recorded, then it is probable that the frequency of occurrence of food types in this list would statistically closely approximate the diet of Maquina's village. In that light, it is interesting to note that Jewitt's June 21, 1804, entry reports that a deer was shot and that this was the first deer Jewitt had seen since March.

The seasonal geographical movement of villagers and entire villages facilitated and encouraged intercourse between villages occupying disparate areas

[22] Slaves held by the first residents of the Pacific Northwest were apparently afforded the opportunity to roam when they had completed required tasks. A careful reading of Jewitt's diary leaves one wondering if his use of the term "slave" was a bit misleading. He was not at liberty to leave; however, he was granted privileges usually not associated with the status of slave in Euro-American culture.

within the region. Shared natural resources, specialization of labor (hunting, fishing, woodworking, boat-building, sculpting), and seasonal dispersal of groups from different villages led to complex intraregional social interaction including shared ceremonial activities, inter-marriages, and closely intertwined family lineages. As mentioned above, it would appear that members of the "upper" class frequently married "upper-class" members of other villages in an attempt to enhance inter-village cooperation and peaceful interchange. This connectedness and interaction resulting from intersecting lineages was a sociological and cultural chain-reaction. Two adjoining villages would interact with each other and in turn with their respective outlying villages who would in turn interact with villages adjacent to them. An obvious corollary of this is commercial activity. One of the hallmarks of the entire region prior to European contact was an extraordinarily extensive trade network that not only stretched from Alaska to Northern California, but also across the Cascades, up the Columbia River and even into the central plains of the North American continent.

Jewitt's journal notes frequent visits from surrounding villages, some quite distant. On July 19, 1804, Jewitt estimated that a canoe arrived from a village 150 miles to the north, and on July 29, 1804, he mentions the arrival of a canoe from a village 200 miles to the north. According to his journal, these frequent visitors always brought gifts, normally food, and on two occasions, canoes for Maquina. These guests stayed several days sharing news, feasting, and trading.

Northwest Technology

It is perhaps too easy to gloss over the various aspects of the life of these first residents of the Northwest Coast without pausing to consider how that life was possible. How could such a dense population occupy large, permanent, wood multi-family houses in established villages for generation after generation and yet rely upon food only available during limited, specific seasons, and in widely dispersed locales? Permanency, or "sedentism," as the anthropologist would prefer, could logically occur only in agriculturally based societies, but in "hunter-gatherer" societies, one would logically assume that individuals and villages would, of necessity, be more nomadic, moving from resource to resource. The question becomes even more profound when one realizes that the pre-European Northwest was the most densely populated hunter-gatherer population in the world. The answer lies not only in the division of labor between subgroups within villages, as has been noted above, or in the cultural imperative of intra-regional resource sharing, but also in technologies that maximized efficient access to food resources as well as the processing and storage of those food resources. The original Northwest Coast residents, including those on Whidbey Island, during their 13,000-year tenure in the area, developed precisely those technologies: sea-

worthy water craft to transport people and goods quickly and safely; fish traps, fish nets, weirs, dead falls, and traps to maximize efficient food gathering; and dehydration and smoking for food processing and storage.

Two products of this adaptive technology are the sea-going canoe and the simple wood box. Unlike the pre-European southwestern American cultures that developed pottery making to a high art, the original Northwest residents developed wood boxes and applied them to many of the same uses. Wood would be worked into thin components, which in turn would then be steam-bent into watertight boxes. These boxes were used to store as well as prepare food. To boil fish or some other food, a box would be filled with water and the food added. Stones would then be heated in a fire and dropped into the water until the water boiled sufficiently to cook the food.

Canoe construction methods used by many Northwest Indians did not simply involve the felling of a tree that was then hollowed out, as is popularly believed. For a watercraft to be sea-worthy, the sides must flare out away from the passenger/cargo compartment to deflect waves away from the occupants. This is particularly true near the bow or forward part of the boat where seas are frequently met head-on. To achieve this flare, the craftsmen would fill a hollowed-out log with water that would be boiled by continuously adding fire-heated stones. The boiling would continue until the sheer, or upper sides, of the boat would be malleable enough to be spread apart to create the necessary flare. Cross-members would then be inserted across the beam of the boat from sheer to sheer to maintain the desired shape. To further enhance the seaworthiness of a canoe, both the bow and stern of ocean-going canoes were separately crafted to rise substantially above the rest of the canoe and then lashed to the basic canoe hull. The radical rise of both bow and stern components was essential to keep the canoe dry in heavy weather. In short, the Northwest canoe was not merely a hollowed-out log, but rather a highly crafted vessel demonstrating some very sophisticated naval architecture.

And Then Came the Planters of Seeds

The initial contact between Northwest residents and Europeans was not as profoundly culturally disruptive as was the arrival of settlers in the mid- and late 1800s. Initially, Europeans came solely to trade for furs that would later be negotiated in Canton, China, for teas, spices, and fine porcelain. Sea mammal hunting had been part of the Northwest culture long before the arrival of the Russian, British, and United States merchants. Consequently, the arrival of the trading ships merely intensified and broadened a pre-existing activity. The merchants were not interested in acquiring land (beyond possibly isolated trading posts), or in effecting cultural modifications designed to make the residents more

comfortably European-like. The merchants wanted nothing more than the residents simply to continue doing what they had been doing, in exchange for which they proffered trade goods that were assimilated into existing cultural practices. Europeans and Northwest residents clashed, but these were isolated, reactive, and short-lived incidents that were discouraged by members of both groups on the grounds that such clashes served only to inhibit the free exchange of goods that benefited both groups.

The reaction of surrounding villages to Maquina's seizure of *Boston* and the killing of her crew serves as a good example. Jewitt states that shortly after the seizure of the ship, neighboring groups came to the village to trade for the items in the ship's cargo ("Other tribes of Indians come every day to trade with our Chief, bringing with them whale's blubber, train oil, dried clams, herrings, &c. . . " March 28, 1803). Jewitt's March 28, 1803, entry also states that Maquina, the apparent leader of the village where Jewitt resided, required the visitors to sleep in their canoes, and ordered Jewitt to arm himself and guard the ship's cargo. By April of 1804, nearby villages apparently entertained the notion of killing Maquina, believing that his seizure of *Boston* had resulted in ships no longer entering Nootka to trade. This absence of merchant traffic was a significant development for the area; Nootka Sound had been an area of heavy trading since the 1780s, and according to Jewitt's *Journal,* no vessels put into Nootka Sound in 1803 after the *Boston's* seizure.[23]

The settlers, on the other hand, who started arriving in the early 1850s, were intent on recreating the social and cultural environment they had left behind. They had brought cultural customs and patterns of land use with them and wished to recreate these upon their new land and thus, upon their new native neighbors. And, unlike the fur traders who were motivated to ensure that the Indians continued to live as they had, with the addition of intensifying their fur harvest, the interests of the settlers were frequently in direct conflict with the traditional life style of the original residents. Plants relied upon by the Indians, such as bracken fern, were frequently seen as pests to the Anglo-American farmer, or as

[23] It is interesting and significant that several months after the seizure of the *Boston*, Maquina felt compelled to explain his reasons for seizing the ship and killing the crew. Maquina told Jewitt that fourteen members of the crew from a schooner that had previously wintered in the area came ashore in the villagers' absence, "terrorized" the wives and stole forty skins. Shortly thereafter, the officers and crew of a second vessel shot and killed twenty men, women, and children in response to the theft of a simple carpenter's chisel by a village resident (December 6, 1803). If true, the villagers' response to the arrival of Jewitt's ship is at least understandable if not excusable. However, Maquina's explanation is highly significant even if the events he reported were untrue. The significance lies in the need to tell, not the credibility, of the story. Maquina's need to justify the incident to Jewitt at a time when there was no indication that Jewitt would ever return home, argues strongly for the premise that unjustified killing was not acceptable to Maquina, and by extension, to others of his culture, including residents of Whidbey Island.

with camas bulbs, perceived as being nothing but cattle fodder. Over 130 different species of plants were used in some way as foods by Northwest Indians, including those used as spices.[24] Fireweed, thimbleberry, and salmonberry were harvested in the spring. In late May and June, wild strawberries, red elderberries, huckleberries, blueberries, and thimbleberries were gathered. And in the fall, gooseberries, currants, Pacific crab apples, highblush-cranberries, bog and mountain cranberries, and evergreen huckleberries were sought. Root vegetables were equally important, including camas, tiger lily, wild onions, wapato, and rhizomes of bracken fern. Most plant foods were not only eaten in season, but were also processed for storage and later consumption. Berries were boiled and cooked into a thick, sweet paste, much like jam, and then dried into small cakes. Many berries were simply dried for later consumption.

A letter written on October 15, 1853, by Walter C. Crockett, a Whidbey Island settler, clearly illustrates the Indian-settler conflict over uses of the environment:

> It [camas] grows something like an onion in shape and about the size of a hickory nut. This plant afford[ed] very fine hogg range. The earth is very ful of it. The indians take large quantitys of it out of the earth to subsist on. It has a top resembling garlic. About the month of June it sends up a stalk about 12 inches high and has a very handsom pale blue bloom. About that time the indians dig it.

In contrast to the local Indians, the white farmers planted non-native plants as crops for domestic consumption and commercial sale, used tools and technologies to maximize production, and created boundaries separating one land use from another. Fences, free-ranging farm animals, and the actual destruction of some Indian food-plants considered "weeds" by settlers conflicted with traditional Indian plant gathering and game hunting. Crockett's 1853 letter continues:

> We have a very fine stock of hogs comeing on and they keep in fine order all the time. The Cammas is their principal subsistance, while the earth is soft so as they can root. When it becomes two dry for that operation, they then graze on fine clover. The hog stock is bound to be proffitabel. Pork at this time is worth from 15 to 20 dollars per hundred. Wheat is worth four dollars per bushel. Potatoes is two dollars and fifty cents.

[24] Jim Pojar and Andy MacKinnon, ed. *Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast*, (Vancouver, B.C.: Lone Pine Publishing, 1994), 24.

Samuel D. Crockett, (Walter's grandson, who came west in the wagon train as a baby), a Whidbey Island settler in the mid-1800s, wrote a letter to Edmond Meany, a University of Washington teacher, reporting his initial years on the island. His parents had settled on 320 acres on Ebey's Prairie.

> We soon discovered that the indians literally possessed the land where our claims had been staked – the estimated number being about [500] what was designated as the Ebey Prairie, named after Col. Ebey. They were there for the purpose of gathering and digging "Camas" as they called it. This was a starchy bulb about as large as an ordinary tulip bulb, with a purple flower and grew in great profusion. It was highly prized by them as food.

Walter C. Crockett, in his 1853 letter, also provides an interesting glimpse of Indian life shortly after the arrival of the first settlers:

> [D]ifferent tribes of Indians that is very numerous in this portion of Oregon. The Scadtrite indians are the owners of this island and reside on it in number about four hundred all classes they are not a war-like indian but are trying to take up with the habbits of the Bostons that is what they all call us they cultivate a good many potatoes take and sel a greate many salmon to those who is salting fish they are by no means hard up they handel a greate quantity of money. They are wiling to sell their land.

Isaac Stevens, first governor of the Washington Territory, conducted a survey of possible railroad routes along northern latitudes of the continent between 1853 and 1855. In describing Whidbey Island at that time, he states:

> Whidbey's island is the largest island of this whole region. It is about 30 nautical miles from north to south, and about two to five miles broad from east to west. It has a very irregular form, two broad ends, and a very narrow main body. It is separated on the north by Deception Passage from Fidalgo island; on the west it faces De Fuca strait, of which it forms the eastern shore, and to the west-southwest it forms the eastern shore of Admiralty Entrance; to the east it forms the western shore of Possession sound and Port Garner, and has . . . various headlands and inlets. The island is occupied by numerous tribe of Indians, the Skagits, who have many villages in it. It presents in many parts a

> delightful prospect, spacious meadows, beautiful pastures adorned with clumps of trees, principally oak.[25]

Anglo-American settlers assumed a dominion over the land and western clerics presumed to exercise a dominion over the spiritual life of the residents. However, what missionaries were selling is not necessarily what the Indians bought. The missionaries were selling what they characterized as "redemption" and ever-lasting life. What the Indians bought was the new Judaic-Christian rules designed by the missionaries to secure a place in heaven, but used by the Indians to reimpose a social order lost through the cultural disillusionment resulting from the calamity of epidemics.

It is questionable whether either settler or missionary would have succeeded were it not for the massive destruction of the pre-existing culture by repeated epidemic episodes. The record is filled with evidence that the residents were accomplished battle tacticians, as the Russians learned repeatedly. The pre-European intraregional transportation and communication networks were well-established, and when combined with the system of interlocking lineage, the residents were certainly well-positioned for a united response to alien intrusions. Were it not for the happenstance of repeated, episodic epidemics causing individual demoralization, cultural erosion and sheer reduction in the numbers of persons who could and would bear arms, would the northwestern portion of the American continent be subject to the sovereignty of the United States today? The question transcends mere academic inquiry, it facilitates a fuller, perhaps more accurate, appreciation of the pre-European culture that pre-dated the biological assault of old world diseases.

In summary, the first residents of the Pacific Northwest arguably possessed the technology, the social and political structure, the logistical capabilities, the tactical sophistication, and the motivation to at least make the settlement of the Northwest by outsiders extraordinarily expensive both in terms of material costs and loss of life. Were it not for the devastation visited upon them by Old World diseases, it is certainly arguable that immigration and settlement by outsiders would have been much more expensive to the newcomers, and would have perhaps even resulted in geopolitical lines dissimilar to those we draw today. The cultural transition that so rapidly and radically transformed the Northwest landscape was certainly not the result of any military, cultural, or technological success by the newcomers, rather it was the result of microbiological happenstance.

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[25] Isaac Stevens *Reports of Explorations and Surveys to Ascertain the Most Practicable and Economical Route for a Railroad,* Book I, 291.

Chapter 3

Visitors from Afar: Explorers and Missionaries to 1841

The same remoteness of the Pacific Northwest that attracts urban Americans of the twenty-first century made it one of the last great frontiers for Europe and the newly created United States of the late eighteenth century. Getting there in the eighteenth century required voyages lasting years, navigating merciless winds and currents in small, slow-moving vessels. Getting there meant pounding west through the hurricane-driven, mast-high waves of Cape Horn or the Straits of Magellan or heading east around the southern tip of Africa, crossing the Indian Ocean and then the Pacific. Many of the ship's crews died of scurvy, tuberculosis, and infected wounds. The hemp caulking and hull fittings worked loose, opening the ship's belly to the onrush of a sea devoid of mercy or memory, sending the crews in search of a friendly shore on which to beach for repairs, food, and water. They would ground their vessel at low tide in a mad race to make repairs and replenish supplies before being overtaken by tide or hostile residents.

Exploration of the planet in the late eighteenth century also meant traversing oceans without the benefit of what today would be considered the most elementary navigational technology. Although the latitude of a vessel could be determined with fair accuracy by the simple expediency of measuring the angle of the sun above the horizon precisely at noon, determining longitude was a problem. Position plotting was so inexact that ships would frequently anchor at night if near a lee shore, and, if anchoring were not possible, they would come about and sail a reciprocal heading until the first light of dawn.

Quite simply, eighteenth century voyagers frequently did not know precisely where they were. For centuries mariners had relied upon "dead reckoning" to determine their longitude—guesswork based upon compass readings and distances measured by the log.[1] Currents and other variables were

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[1] In this instance, "log" does not mean a documentary record, but rather an instrument towed in the water for determining a ship's speed. The speed of the ship, as indicated by the log, when related mathematically with elapsed time, provided the distance traveled, at least theoretically. The log could not account for currents. For example, if the ship were sailing north at four knots against an opposing current of three knots, the log would indicate a speed of seven knots, since it would show only the speed at which the hull of the ship was passing through the water, it did not indicate the speed at which the hull was passing over the bottom.

often difficult if not impossible to detect. The mystery of longitude made transoceanic voyages dangerous, and made accurate mapping of what was observed impossible. It wasn't until longitude could be accurately measured, for example, that the width of North America could be fully appreciated. A mid-seventeenth century map, prepared at a time when measuring longitude was still largely guesswork, indicated that North America was so narrow that it could be crossed on foot in ten days.[2]

Accurately measuring longitude was finally made possible by the appreciation of the relationship between two obvious realities: (1) The earth was basically spherical, described by a 360° circle, and (2) the earth rotated at a constant speed. The earth revolves through 360° in twenty-four hours; therefore, it rotates exactly 15° of longitude in one hour (360/24=15). Consequently, if the time at the ship's location is two hours later than the time at Greenwich, the navigator would plot the ship's longitude as 30 degrees (2 hours x 15 degrees/hour = 30 degrees). Dr. Nevil Maskelyne developed one of the first methods for making this time-difference determination. It was based upon measuring the angular distance between the moon and the sun or the moon and one of the fixed stars, and the time when the observation was made on board the ship. This time was compared to the time that the same astrological phenomena would be observed in London, and the time difference was then converted to degrees. These astrological angular distances as measured in Greenwich were published in the *Nautical Almanac.* Although theoretically correct, the mathematician who developed the method failed to appreciate the difficulty of accurately measuring astrological angles while standing on a sea-tossed deck.

An accurate chronometer was finally developed that could withstand both the physical forces exerted by a ship moving at sea and exposure to water. The chronometer kept track of Greenwich time so that whenever local time could be determined by astrological observation, the difference between the two, and hence the longitude, could be ascertained (again, one hour = 15 degrees). The chronometer came of age in 1759 when John Harrison completed his fourth timepiece. After exhaustive tests lasting until 1764, its reliability was officially acknowledged by the British Admiralty.

Accurate position fixing and the ability to accurately map what was observed were critically important to the eighteenth century explorers. They were not merely adventurers off on sailing cruises, they were scientists seeking knowledge of economic, military, or scientific import, and they needed to be able to map what they found. The voyagers were dispatched to investigate and report on flora, fauna, climate, topography, natural resources, the presence or absence of other Europeans, as well as the social, political, and economic characteristics of local inhabitants. These ships set sail from London, New Spain (Mexico), or Boston with well-educated and experienced biologists, astronomers, cartographers,

[2] Derek Hayes, *Historical Atlas of the Pacific Northwest* (Seattle: Sasquatch Books, 1999), 7.

surveyors, and artists on board. Their missions were nearly indistinguishable from any mission of today's NASA. The only material distinction is that today's NASA would not have launched any of these voyages of discovery, perceiving them as being entirely too hazardous.

Navigational and cartographic problems are only a very small part of the tangled history of Northwest exploration. The vast majority of that history is simply lost. According to today's commonly accepted archaeological record, American Indians were the first to explore and settle the area. By the time Asians and Europeans arrived, American Indians had spent thousands of years in the area, developing one of the richest materialistic cultures in the world. Unfortunately, little factual information is available with which to trace this history. Most anthropologists hypothesize that ancestors of the American Indians crossed from Siberia approximately 40,000 years ago in pursuit of game. To reach the Northwest, they crossed land bridges long since submerged by a rising sea fed by melting glaciers. Physical evidence has been uncovered that would appear to place well-developed hunter-gatherer cultures in the Pacific Northwest 13,000 years ago. Unfortunately, the exploratory and migratory history of the American Indians of the Pacific Northwest cannot be ascertained with certainty. Since there are no contemporaneous writings memorializing that history, we are left with anthropological conjecture based on sparse physical evidence, and oral reporting multiple generations removed from the reported events.

Asian Visitors

The Chinese and Japanese were probably the first non-Indian arrivals but, again, the absence of any surviving detailed written record permits only conjecture. The winds and currents of the North Pacific and the thousand-year nautical history of the Chinese and Japanese argue strongly for their arrival before Europeans. It stretches common sense to the breaking point to believe they never made landfall in the Northwest before the 1600s. Just as the Spanish would learn in the late 1600s, the prevailing winds and currents of the north Pacific describe a grand arc. They stretch from the Chinese mainland, sweep past the Aleutians, and then turn southeast down the North American continent until finally being turned back toward the west just a few degrees above the equatorial latitudes.

It is commonly believed by Chinese historians that Chinese vessels had intentionally or unintentionally approached the Northwest Coast long before the Romans occupied the British Isles. One story tells of a junk that left China in 250 B.C. bound for the Japanese Islands. It reportedly encountered a series of severe storms that drove it eastward until it came upon a foreign land called Fu-san by the Chinese. Some historians conjecture that Fu-san was North America. Two points are significant about this story. First, at least one of those storm-tossed

Chinese seamen must have returned to China, otherwise the story would never have been reported. It would merely have been a story of sailors disappearing at sea. Second, Fu-sang, or Fousang, was a name commonly used by European cartographers to identify North America as late as the mid-eighteenth century. To add credibility to this story, instances of Asian vessels washing ashore along the Northwest Coast were recorded in the nineteenth century. These shipwrecks included one in 1820 just south of the mouth of the Columbia River, another near Cape Flattery in 1833, and a third whose seamen were rescued by Hudson's Bay Company employees sometime before 1841.[3]

Early European and Russian Travelers

There is also a frustratingly meager record of early European exploration of the Northwest. The rivalry among European sovereigns prevalent at the time and the paranoia such rivalry inevitably engendered resulted in much of the written record of exploratory voyages being hidden away and eventually lost. Governments, believing in a need to keep discoveries secret or to distort them, destroyed or censored maps and ship logs. This, combined with the navigational and cartographic problems mentioned above, cast a deep, obscuring shadow, blurring distinctions between fact and fiction. It is possible, even probable, that European explorers ventured into Northwest Coast waters, even the Strait of Juan de Fuca, although there is no extant written record of such journeys. It is generally believed that Apstotos Belerianos, a Greek pilot employed by Spain and sailing under the name Juan de Fuca, entered the strait in 1592. Most seventeenth century maps show a strait between 45° and 48° North latitude usually identified as De Fuca Strait. Interestingly, on some charts this strait was also occasionally labeled the Strait of Anian and was believed to have connected to the western end of Hudson's Bay, creating the long-sought-after Northwest Passage. Additionally, since many seventeenth-century maps show California as an island, it is very possible that navigators, after sailing as far as Admiralty Inlet and seeing that it turned to the south, assumed that it eventually connected with the Gulf of California. Although all this is possible, there is no extant written record of it.

If the investigation of Northwest exploration history is limited to the extant written record, a somewhat different story emerges. It starts with Russian merchants who were the first Europeans leaving a clear record of their ventures into the waters of the Northwest Coast, followed by the Spanish government, which dispatched naval ships to the Northwest in an attempt to protect its well-established trans-Pacific merchant trade. Then came Britain's Hudson's Bay

[3] Derek Hayes, *Historical Atlas of the Pacific Northwest* (Seattle: Sasquatch Books, 1999), 9.

Company, which first established a long-term permanent presence on shore in the area.

The first written record memorializing entrance into the Strait of Juan de Fuca is the voyage of Ferrelo Cabrillo in 1543; however, there is no evidence that he penetrated the strait as far as Whidbey Island. Spain considered its exploratory voyages into the Northwest state secrets for the next two hundred years; consequently, very little is known about their journeys during this period. It is clear from the record, however, that Spain was actively engaged in trans-Pacific merchant shipping in the late 1570s. The English thief Sir Francis Drake sailed from London in 1577, navigated the Strait of Magellan, and entered the Pacific Ocean, where he plundered and looted Spanish merchant vessels and coastal villages. Although there is disagreement regarding how far north Drake sailed, at least one historian argues that Drake reached Vancouver Island on June 10, 1579.[4] If true, Drake was the first Englishman to sail into the waters of the Pacific Northwest. On his return south, Drake entered a small bay, where he beached his ship to make repairs. During a lull in ship carpentry, Drake claimed the land for the Queen of England. He called it New Albion, a name that continued in use for centuries to designate much of the western portion of North America. Drake returned to England in 1580 with ten tons of silver and 101 pounds of gold. Unfortunately, his maps were lost, leaving only maps derived indirectly from Drake's original maps. However, his ill-gotten gold and silver provide clear evidence of an established Spanish presence along the west coast of North America.

Although there is no written record memorializing Spanish landings along the Northwest Coast in the late 1600s, there is physical evidence both of their presence offshore and their unintentional landings as early as 1679. In 1564 Captain Alonso de Arellano, sailing for Spain, discovered that prevailing winds between the northern latitudes of 40 degrees and 44 degrees blew from west to east. Following that discovery, Spanish merchant vessels routinely sailed east before those prevailing winds. Departing the Spanish outpost in Manila, the ships of Spain, loaded with Asian spices, silver, and beeswax, would sail east before the prevailing winds until they approached the coast of what is now Northern California, then they would sail south before the winds, landing at Acapulco. This trade lasted for almost two hundred and fifty years. The last Spanish galleon on the run landed in New Mexico in 1815. [5]

In addition to documentary evidence of the annual transit of these commercial vessels in the late sixteenth century, there is physical evidence that the Spanish made at least unintentional landings along the Pacific Northwest Coast as early as 1679. Pieces of southeast Asian beeswax were found along the Oregon

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[4] R. P. Bishop, *Drake's Course in the North Pacific*, B. C. Historical Quarterly, March, 1939.
[5] Herbert K. Beals, Trans. *Juan Perez on the Northwest Coast: Six Documents of His Expedition in 1774*. Portland, OR: Oregon Historical Society Press, 1989.

coast and later sold to inhabitants of Fort Vancouver. One such piece, housed at the Tillamook (Oregon) Pioneer Museum, has been carbon-dated to approximately 1679, and a partial date reading "67" cut in the wax block is still visible.[6]

Additionally, a 1970s archeological dig south of Cape Flattery at the entrance to the Strait of Juan de Fuca may have provided some tangible evidence of pre-1700 European presence at that latitude. Archaeologists investigating a Makah village called Ozette that had been completely inundated by a mudslide around 1700, effectively creating a time capsule excluding post-1700 physical evidence, found European beads and some brass tacks.

Captain Juan Perez led Europe's first officially documented exploration of the Northwest Coast in 1774 when he sailed the frigate *Santiago* as far north as the Alexander Archipelago.[7] Perez was an ensign of the Spanish Navy who had worked his way up through the ranks as a pilot rather than being a graduate of the Spanish Naval Academy. Due to severe weather, Perez was unable to make the landfalls that were hoped for by the Spanish government.[8]

The first Russian government exploratory voyage to the Northwest, of which we have a record, was led by Vitus Bering and Aleksey Chirikov in 1741. After eight years of preparation, the expedition left Kamchatka[9] in two small vessels to explore the land beyond what we today call the Bering Sea. Chirikov made two landings on the Alexander Archipelago (where Sitka, Alaska is situated), and returned to Petropavkovsk on Kamchatka in 1742 with hundreds of sea otter skins.[10] That inauspicious beginning preordained the economic destiny of the Pacific Northwest Coast from the 1780s until the 1840s. Russian, British, and United States vessels plied the waters buying furs from the Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, Nootka, Salish, and Chinook people. The skins were transported to Canton, China, where they were traded for silk, porcelain, and tea.

Unlike that of Spain and Britain, the initial Russian presence was more private than governmental. Individual Russian fur buyers had slowly worked their way across what would later be called the Bering Straits and along the coast of what is today Alaska.[11] The first recorded Russian commercial vessel sailing into

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[6] Hayes, *Historical Atlas of the Pacific Northwest*, 9.
[7] Herbert K. Beals, Trans., *Juan Perez on the Northwest Coast:* 9.
[8] *Ibid.*, 27.
[9] A peninsula approximately twice the size of the Korean peninsula projecting into the Bering Sea from Siberia.
[10] James R. Gibson, *Otter Skins, Boston Ships, and China Goods* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1992), 13.
[11] Raisa V. Makarova, *Russians on the Pacific 1743-1799.* (Richard A. Pierce and Alton S. Donnelly, ed. and trans.) (Ontario: The Limestone Press, 1975).

the waters of the Bering Sea in search of fur was the *Petr,*[12] captained by E. Basov, who in 1743 sailed his vessel as far as Bering Island and returned with 64,000 rubles worth of sea otter pelts.[13] Between 1743 and 1778, there were ninety-nine recorded voyages to the Northwest Coast by Russian vessels owned by various Russian companies.[14] Anglo-Americans would not become actively engaged in the Northwest Coast fur trade until the 1780s, almost half a century after Russia had become a commercial presence in the region. The Russian presence was limited in large part to the extreme northern coasts. By 1800 three-fourths of sea otter skins obtained by Russian traders came from the Sitka Sound area. In July of 1800, Aleut hunting parties in the employ of the Russian traders killed more than 2,000 sea otter; the following June they killed 4,000. In 1805, the Russian vessel *Nadezhda*, accompanied by the ship *Neva* of the Russian navy, left port at Sitka with fur from 151,000 seals, 9,288 fox, and 4,220 sea otter.[15] The competition between these various companies was so intense, and often violent, that in 1799 the tsarist government formed the Russian-American Company and granted it a monopoly over the fur hunting on the Northwest Coast. However, there was almost no Russian presence south of what is now Sitka, Alaska. Anglo-American presence was concentrated further to the south.

James Cook and the Northwest Passage

The British Admiralty dispatched Captain James Cook to the Pacific Northwest in 1776. This was Cook's third and last voyage; he would be killed in the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii). Cook's expedition lasted four years. He circumnavigated the globe from east to west, including a stop in the Pacific Northwest to search for the famed Northwest Passage[16] that would connect Asian and European markets.[17] The "official" account of the voyage, compiled from Captain Cook's journal of events prior to his death at Kealakekua Bay, Hawaii, and then Lieutenant James King's journal (who succeeded Cook as commander of the

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[12] During the eighteenth and much of the nineteenth century, most Russian vessels were named after saints. *Petr*, for example, would be Saint Peter in English, and the full name in Russian would be written *Str Petr.*

[13] Makarova, *Russians on the Pacific 1743-1799.*

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] Gibson, *Otter Skins, Boston Ships, and China Goods,* 14.

[16] The pre-twenty-first century searches for the Northwest Passage were merely premature, not wrong. The polar ice melt caused by the greenhouse effect will permit ocean navigation from the North Pacific to the North Atlantic by the year 2005, according to the United States Navy.

[17] John Ledyard. *John Ledyard's Journal of Captain Cook's Last Voyage,* (James Munford, ed.). (Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press, 1963, ix).

expedition), were not published for almost four years after the voyage. The British Admiralty had demanded that all logbooks and journals written during the voyage by members of the expedition be turned over to the Admiralty to be reviewed and used in the preparation of the "official" account. Although the commanders of both ships gathered what they thought were all the journals, some accounts apparently were not collected, and several "unofficial" reports of the voyage were published before the Admiralty's three volumes. The first was published anonymously in London in 1781, *Journal of Captain Cook's Last Voyage to the Pacific Ocean on Discovery; performed in the Years 1776, 1777, 1778, 1779*. Most scholars now assert that Lieutenant John Rickman of the *Discovery* wrote this first "unofficial" account.[18] An American-born Royal Marine corporal, John Ledyard, who had served aboard Cook's flag vessel during the voyage, compiled an account of the circumnavigation in 1783, two years after returning. Ledyard wrote the account while in Hartford, Connecticut, in the winter of 1783, and sold his manuscript to Nathaniel Patten, a Hartford printer, who published the 208-page document in two parts.[19]

Ledyard was born in 1751 in Groton, Connecticut. He had briefly studied law, and was later a student at Dartmouth in Hanover, New Hampshire. After withdrawing from Dartmouth in 1773, he spent several months with the six American Indian nations in the northeastern United States. Ledyard then shipped out on a merchant vessel for Gibraltar and the Barbary Coast. In 1774, he was employed aboard a vessel bound for Falmouth, Great Britain. While in England, he was apprehended by a group in Bristol. They gave him a choice between serving aboard a vessel bound for Guinea or joining the British Army.[20] Ledyard chose the army. He was able in July of 1776 to talk his way aboard Captain Cook's vessel, the *Resolution,* in a successful attempt to avoid orders to fight for the British in the American rebellion. By this time he had transferred services and was a corporal in the Royal Marines. Ledyard was with Cook's expedition for its entire four years.

When Ledyard returned to England in 1780 as a sergeant, he was transferred to a British frigate, which was assigned to duty off Long Island on the east coast of colonial America. Ledyard's loyalties clearly rested with the rebelling colonists, and in 1782, when the opportunity finally presented itself, he obtained permission to go ashore to visit his mother, and he deserted.[21]

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[18] John Ledyard, *John Ledyard's Journal of Captain Cook's Last Voyage*, x.
[19] *Ibid.* p. xi
[20] It was not uncommon during this era for many seamen to be "recruited" from the streets of seaports and forced to enter sea duty.
[21] Ledyard, *John Ledyard's Journal of Captain Cook's Last Voyage,* xxxii. Ledyard's adventures continued. He made the acquaintance of Thomas Jefferson, and he promoted the idea of Northwest-China-New England trade. He attempted (with Jefferson's encouragement) to reach the Pacific Northwest by walking across Russia, Siberia, and the Bering Straits. He

The Cook expedition was comprised of two ships: the *Resolution* and the *Discovery*. *Resolution* had a complement of 112 officers and men (including its marine detachment); *Discovery* had eighty aboard (including its marine detachment). Some of the more notable men on Cook's third and last voyage included William Bayly (1737-1810), who served as astronomer on board the *Discovery*. Prior to the voyage, Bayly had served as an assistant in the Royal Observatory and as the astronomer on the *Adventure* during Cook's second voyage. Bayly would become Headmaster of the Royal Naval Academy at Portsmouth.[22] William Bligh, who later became famous in connection with a mutiny aboard the *Bounty* in 1789, was the sailing master of the *Resolution*. Charles Clerke served as both commander of the *Discovery* and the expedition's second in command. He had circumnavigated the earth with Byron in 1764-1766, and sailed with Cook on all three of Cook's voyages. He died from tuberculosis during Cook's third voyage.[23] John Gore, who succeeded to command of the expedition after the deaths of both Cook and Clerke, was later appointed Captain of Greenwich Hospital (a position occupied by Cook prior to his third voyage).[24] John Webber was the official artist and draftsman of the expedition. He later became a full member of the Royal Academy.[25] Omai, a native of the Society Islands, was also with the expedition. He had been taken to England during Cook's second voyage, and was being returned home.

Cook's voyage also included two men who were later instrumental in the exploration of Whidbey Island: George Vancouver and Archibald Menzies. Vancouver, then fourteen, joined the *Resolution* crew under the command of Captain James Cook at Depford Yard, England, on January 22, 1772. Vancouver served eight years, three months, and three weeks on Cook's ships *Resolution* and *Discovery*, before launching his own expedition of exploration to the Pacific Northwest in 1790. Archibald Menzies, also a veteran of Cook's third voyage, served as Vancouver's chief scientist. He was tasked with observing and recording flora, fauna, and local geography as well as contacting local residents they encountered.

Both Cook's ships were collier barks. A bark is a sailing vessel with three or more masts; the forward two masts are square-rigged, and the rear mast is rigged fore-and-aft. A collier bark was a type of bark used for carrying coal. It had an unusually broad beam, and a shallow draft. Although a collier bark was a slow sailing vessel for the time, its wide beam gave it greater stability in rough seas,

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didn't get far. He was arrested by agents of Catherine the Great and expelled from Russia. He finally joined a British expedition to explore central Africa, and died in Cairo.

[22] *Ibid.* p. xv.

[23] *Ibid.*, xvi.

[24] *Ibid.*, xvii.

[25] *Ibid.*, xvii.

and its shallow draft permitted it to explore relatively shallow water and to be beached when necessary to make repairs.

The *Resolution* was 110 feet long with a beam of thirty feet; she drew thirteen feet. The *Discovery* was a little over ninety feet long, had a beam of twenty-seven feet, and drew about eleven feet.[26] Both vessels met Cook's specifications:

> The ship must not be of great draught but of sufficient capacity to carry a proper quantity of provisions and stores for the crew, and of such construction that she will bear to take the ground, and of such a size that she can be conveniently laid on shore if necessary for repairing any damages or defects, and these qualities are to be found in North Country built ships, such as are built for the coal trade, and in none other.[27]

Not only did Cook's vessels have a full complement of crew to sail and maintain them and marines to protect them from assaults, they also carried cows, goats, geese, ducks, and other domestic livestock to be left to multiply on various islands along Cook's route.

Cook's expedition left England in the summer of 1776. It resupplied at the Cape of Good Hope in the fall of that year, and by early 1777 was sailing north away from New Zealand. The expedition spent April through July of 1777 in the Friendly Islands, reaching the Society Islands in mid-August. Sailing north again in mid-December, the expedition "discovered" Christmas Island and the Sandwich (Hawaiian) Islands. They reached the Northwest Coast of America in the spring of 1778, and that summer they entered the Bering Straits, sailing among the Aleutian Islands and examining a portion of the northeast coast of Asia.

After this first exploration of the Northwest, they returned to Hawaii to refit and resupply. It was during this stop that Captain Cook and four marines were killed. Captain Clerke assumed command of the expedition, and the vessels again sailed north from Hawaii and into the waters of the Pacific Northwest. After Captain Clerke died in 1779, the ships sailed along the coast of Siberia, down to Macao on the Chinese coast, and around the Cape of Good Hope. They arrived home in the fall of 1780 after being at sea for four years.

Ledyard's report of his observations of the Pacific Northwest Coast is instructive:

> [T]he 28th [of March] we entered an inlet in 49 degrees N. [Nootka Sound, Vancouver Island]. It was matter of doubt with many of us whether we should find any inhabitants here, but we had scarcely entered the inlet before we saw that hardy, that

[26] Ledyard, *John Ledyard's Journal of Captain Cook's Last Voyage,* xxv.
[27] As quoted in Ledyard, p. xxv.

intriped, that glorious creature man approaching us from the shore. Night approaching we came to an anchor between one of those islands and the eastern shore about one quarter of a mile from each. In the evening we were visited by several canoes full of the natives; they came abreast our ship within two rods[28] of us and there staid the whole night, without offering to approach nearer or to withdraw farther from us, neither would they converse with us. It lies in lat. 49. 33. N. and in 233. 16. E. long. and as it afforded excellent timber we furnished ourselves with a new mizen-mast, spare yards and other spars, besides wood. It also afforded us excellent water, a variety of good fish and the shores with some excellent plants. It is entirely covered with woods, such as maple, ash, birch, oak, hemlock, but mostly with tall well grown pine. We saw no plantations or any appearance that exhibited any knowledge of the cultivation of the earth, all seemed to remain in a state of nature; but as our observations did not extend three miles into the country they are imperfect.

On the 1st of April we were visited by a number of natives in their boats, which resemble our batteaux. They are about 20 feet in length, contracted at each end, and about 3 feet broad in the middle, and 2 feet and an half deep from end to end: they are made from large pine-trees, and we suppose burnt out. I had no sooner beheld these Americans than I set them down for the same kind of people that inhabit the opposite side of the continent. They are rather above the middle stature, copper coloured, and of an athletic make. They have long black hair, which they generally wear in a club on the top of the head, they fill it when dressed with oil, paint and the downe of birds. They also paint their faces with red, blue and white colours, but from whence they had them or how they were prepared they would not inform us, nor could we tell. Their cloathing generally consists of skins, but they have two other sorts of garments, the one is made of the inner rind of some sort of bark twisted and united together like the woof of our coarse cloaths, the other very strongly resembles the New-Zealand Togo,[29] and is also principally made with the hair of their dogs, which are mostly white, and of the domestic kind; upon this garment is displayed very naturally the manner of their catching the whale — we saw nothing so well done by a savage in our travels. Their garments of all kinds were wore mantle-wide, and the borders of them are fringed or

[28] A rod is equal to 5.5 yards, 16.5 feet, or 5.029 meters.

[29] A poncho-like garment extending from the neck to the lower portion of the hips.

terminated with some particular kind of ornament like it; their richest skins when converted to garments are edged with a great curiosity. This is nothing less than the very species of wampum so well known on the opposite side of the continent; it is identically the same; and this wampum was not only bound among all the aborigines we saw on this side of the continent, but even exists unmutilated on the opposite coasts of North-Asia. We saw them make use of no coverings to their feet or legs, and it was seldom they covered their heads; when they did it was with a kind of a basket covering made after the manner and form of the Chinese and Chinese-Tartars hats. Their language is very guttural, and if it was possible to reduce it to our orthography would very much abound with consonants. In their manners they resemble the other aborigines of North-America, they are bold and ferocious, sly and reserved, not easily provoked but revengeful; we saw no signs of religion or worship among them, and if they sacrifice it is to the God of liberty.

When a party was sent to procure some grass for our cattle they would not suffer them to take a blade of it without payment, nor had we a mast or yard without an acknowledgement. They intimated to us that the country all round further than we could see was theirs.

The food we saw them use consisted solely of dried fish and blubber oil, the best by far that any man among us had ever seen this they put into skins. Like all uncivilized men they are hospitable, and the first boat that visited us in the Cove brought us what no doubt they thought the greatest possible regalia, and offered it to us to eat; this was a human arm roasted. I have heard it remarked that human flesh is the most delicious, and therefore tasted a bit, and so did many others without swallowing the meat or the juices, but either my conscience or my taste rendered it very odious to me. We intimated to our hosts that what we had tasted was bad, and expressed as well as we could our disapprobation of eating it on account of its being part of a man like ourselves. They seemed to be sensible by the contortions of our faces that our feelings were disgusted, and apparently paddled off with equal dissatisfaction and disappointment themselves. We were complimented once before in the same stile, at our first discovery of Sandwich-Islands [Hawaii].

These people are possessed of a variety of impliments calculated for war, hunting, fishing and other purposes, some of which are remarkably analogous to ancient models, particularly

> the lance, which is every way similar to that used in ancient tournaments and feats of chivalry. They have also a kind of armor that covers the body from the breast downward to the knees; this consists of moose-skin, covered externally with slips of wood sewed to the leather transversely, and made short or long as best suits the part of the body it covers. They have also good bows and arrows, and stone hatchets; also a variety of snares both for fowl and quadrupedes.
>
> We found a few copper bracelets and three or four rough wrought knives with coarse wooden hafts among the natives at this place, but could not learn from the appearance of either of those articles or from any information they could give us how they became possessed of them . . .. .[30]

Spain and Britain vied for preeminence in and sovereignty over the Pacific Northwest. Spain was principally concerned with minimizing foreign encroachment in an area it considered Spanish territory. Britain was focused on the natural resources of the area and claiming territory. The conflict came close to war in the summer of 1790. James Colnett, a British naval officer, and Esteban Jose Martinez, a Spanish naval officer, were both in Nootka Sound on the west coast of Vancouver Island. Martinez ordered Colnett and the British out of the sound. Colnett, believing incorrectly that Captain James Cook was the first European explorer into the sound, refused. Unknown to Colnett, Juan Perez had explored the area in 1774, four years before Cook's 1778 exploration. Martinez was certainly aware of this since he had accompanied Perez on that voyage. Martinez seized Colnett's ship, the *Argonaut,* and arrested its officers and men who were transported to the Spanish naval base at San Blas on the west coast of what was to become Mexico where they were incarcerated.[31]

The conflict culminated in the Nootka Sound Convention signed by Great Britain and Spain on October 28, 1790. Three British ships, previously seized by Spain, were returned; Spain backed away from its claim of exclusive sovereignty of the Northwest Coast and both British and Spanish subjects were to be equally free to trade and establish posts anywhere north of the areas already occupied by Spain. Additionally, the convention provided that tracts of land on Nootka Sound claimed by British commercial interests and which had allegedly been seized in 1789 by Martinez were to be returned. Importantly, the convention did not establish the northernmost latitude of Spanish sovereignty.[32]

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[30] Ledyard, *John Ledyard's Journal of Captain Cook's Last Voyage,* 73.
[31] The Hakluyt Society, *George Vancouver: A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and Round the World, 1791-1795.* (W. Kaye Lamb, ed.) (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1984), 42.
[32] *Ibid.*, 44.

George Vancouver Surveys the Northwest Coast

On December 15, 1790, the British Admiralty commissioned George Vancouver to launch England's most extensive investigation of the Pacific Northwest to date. Vancouver's lieutenants were Mudge, Peter Puget, and Joseph Baker. Joseph Whidbey, age 35, was master of the *Discovery*. All four men had served with Vancouver during his Caribbean voyage on board the *Europa*. Two other ships were attached to the 1790 expedition, the *Chatham* and the *Daedalus*. The *Chatham* was a tender commanded by Lieutenant William R. Broughton, age 28, with Lieutenant James Hanson as second in command. James Johnston was master of the *Chatham*.[33] *Discovery* carried one hundred men; there were forty-five aboard *Chatham*.

Discovery was ninety-nine feet from sprit to transom, and measured seventy-seven feet along her keel. She was twenty-eight feet wide and drew fifteen feet, six inches. Her hull was copper fastened and sheathed with plank that was coppered over. Her armament consisted of ten four-pounders and ten swivels.[34] *Discovery* was considered a fit ship for the voyage. *Chatham*, on the other hand, was considered completely inappropriate. She was a brig-rigged tender, and measured fifty-three feet long at the keel and twenty-one feet across the beam. She was not considered a good sailing vessel. According to Johnston, her master, she was "not a match for the Dullest Merchant Vessel we have met with."[35]

Vancouver's expedition also included a provisioning ship, the *Daedalus,* that met Vancouver's other two vessels in the autumn of 1792. In addition to provisions delivered by *Daedalus*, *Discovery* and *Chatham* took aboard provisions at the Cape of Good Hope. The Admiralty appropriated 8,000 pounds sterling for trade goods to be used in bartering with Northwest Indians. Archibald Menzies, who had previously traveled to the Northwest Coast with Captain Cook, suggested the following as trade goods:

> At Nootka we found Copper the article most Sought after & in this we were very deficient having little or none on board. At Prince Williams Sound the Natives preferred Iron & put very little value on Copper or any thing else — they were so over stocked with Beads as to ornament their Dogs with them. At Queen Charlottes Isles & Banks' Isles, Iron, Cloth, Beads and

[33] *Ibid.*, 48.

[34] A four-pounder is a cannon that shoots balls weighing four pounds each and a swevel is a cannon with a small bore that is mounted on a swivel and normally positioned on the deck of a ship.

[35] As quoted in Hakluyt Society, 52.

> Brass & Copper trinkets answered best. At Cape Edgecome, Iron Frying-pans – Tin Kettles – Pewter basons & beads formed the chief articles of Trade. Ornamental lofty Caps covered with Brass or Copper would be good presents for the Chiefs & Warriors.[36]

Unlike Cook, who searched for a passage across North America that he suspected was at or near latitude 65 degrees, Vancouver made a detailed survey of the coast between 30 and 60 degrees north latitude in an attempt to determine the existence of a Northwest Passage in that more temperate region.[37] He was ordered to explore the coast from latitude 30 degrees north to Cook's River (as Cook Inlet was then thought to be) and to devote particular attention to the Strait of Juan de Fuca. He was instructed to "not pursue any inlet or river further than it shall appear to be navigable by vessels of such burden as might safely navigate the Pacific Ocean."[38] But first, Vancouver was "required and directed to proceed without loss of time . . . to the Sandwich Islands in the north pacific ocean, where you are to remain during the next winter; employing yourself very diligently in the examination and survey of the said islands."[39] The British Admiralty specifically identified those regions Vancouver was to explore, but they directed that the more detailed investigations on shore be conducted by Archibald Menzies, whose instructions included:

> An investigation of the whole of the Natural History of the countries you are to visit, as well as an enquiry into the present state & comparative degree of civilization of the inhabitants you will meet with, the upmost degree of diligence & perserverance on your part will be necessary, to enable you to do justice to your employers, and gain credit to yourself.[40]

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[36] Menzies to Banks, April 4, 1791, as quoted in Hakluyt. The list of trade goods actually taken is a varied one. It included axes, hatchets, adzes, chisels, hammers, nails, saws files, rasps, gimlets, pocket knives, spades, shovels, pick axes, sickles, augers, kettles, goblets, bracelets, buttons, thimbles, frying pans, tin kettles, pots and jugs, pewter pots, basins and spoons, scissors, needles, thread, scarlet cloth, colored linen, feathers, red and blue garnering, caps, earrings, and beads. The ships offered entertainment as well. The marines on board drilled and paraded, and the ships had fireworks on board. Sky rockets, water rockets, Roman candles, Bengal lights, and Catherine wheels were included and displayed.
[37] *Ibid.*, 55.
[38] *Ibid.*, 66.
[39] *Ibid.*, 66.
[40] Menzies' papers in the Provincial Archives, Victoria, B. C. as quoted in Hakluyt.

Vancouver dispatched forty-six separate survey parties during his stay on the Northwest Coast; Whidbey or Johnston led thirty-eight of them.[41] Vancouver had five chronometers on his voyage; however, many of the log entries show longitude calculated all three ways: dead reckoning, astronomical measurements, and chronometer readings. Unfortunately, however, almost all of Vancouver's longitude readings are too far east by several miles, notwithstanding the care with which he and the masters of his ships took their readings. His first reading made off the California coast in 1792 would have put him fifteen statute miles inland.

One of Lieutenant Joseph Whidbey's survey expeditions along the Northwest Coast brought him within sight of land now in the Reserve. Directed by Vancouver to explore Whidbey Island (named by Vancouver after Joseph Whidbey), Lt. Whidbey took his longboat into Penn Cove (also named by Vancouver, possibly after a friend and after one of William Penn's grandsons). Whidbey returned to Vancouver with a complete report of his observations of the area, which Vancouver recorded in his expedition journal. "On each point on the harbour," Captain Vancouver penned, "was a deserted village." Judging by the size of the deserted village, Vancouver estimated that the number of Penn Cove inhabitants exceeded all the natives they had thus far seen around Puget Sound.

Based on Joseph Whidbey's reports, Captain Vancouver described the landscape around Penn Cove in glowing terms. "The country in the vicinity of this branch of the sea is, according to Mr. Whidbey's representation, the finest we had yet met with," Vancouver wrote. Additionally, "the surrounding country, for several miles in most points of view, presented a delightful prospect, consisting chiefly of spacious meadows; elegantly-adorned with clumps of trees; amongst which the oak bore a very considerable proportion, in size from four to six feet in circumference." Vancouver went on.

> In these beautiful pastures, bordering on an expansive sheet of water, the deer were seen playing about in great numbers. Nature had here provided the well-stocked park, and wanted only the assistance of art to constitute that desirable assemblage of surface . . . only to be acquired by an immoderate expense in manual labor.[42]

American Charles Wilkes' Expedition

[41] *Ibid.*, 57.

[42] Luxenberg and Gilbert, "Central Whidbey Island Historic District (amendment), Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Section 8, pages 29, 32-33.

Lieutenant Charles Wilkes of the United States Navy led the first extensive United States exploration expedition. His expedition was focused primarily on locating natural resource wealth, particularly seals. His six-ship expedition departed from Hampton Roads, Virginia, on August 18, 1838, bound for the Pacific Islands and the Northwest Coast of America, and would return in 1842. Known officially as the United States South Seas Exploring Expedition, the expedition surveyed 280 islands and drafted almost 180 charts, including eight hundred miles of the Oregon coast. Wilkes' fleet included three, three-masted, square-rigged vessels (the 700-ton *Vincennes,* the 559-ton *Peacock*, and the 468-ton storeship *Relief*), the 224-ton, two-masted brig, the *Porpoise,* and two refitted New York pilot boats (the 110-ton *Sea Gull* and the 96-ton *Flying Fish*, both schooner-rigged). The *Peacock* was lost in an attempt to cross the bar at the mouth of the Columbia River, and would be replaced by a merchant ship purchased in Astoria, the *Oregon.*[43]

On board Wilkes's vessels were: James Dwight Dana, a mineralogist, destined to become a leading authority on vulconology; Horatio Hale, a philologist or linguist; Titian R. Peale and Charles Pickering, both naturalists; William D. Brackenridge and William Rick, botanists; and Joseph P. Couthouy, a conchologist or specialist in the study of shells. Two artists, Alfred T. Agate and Joseph Drayton, also traveled with the expedition to prepare drawings of specimens discovered by the scientists.

The six vessels sailed south from Virginia, around the southern tip of South America, west to New Zealand, south to explore the Antarctic, and then north to explore islands in the South Pacific, including the Society Islands, the Samoan Islands, the Gilbert Islands, and the Marshall Islands. After conducting some survey work in the Hawaiian Islands, the vessels turned toward the coast of the Pacific Northwest. The vessels did not remain together; they separated to survey and explore Antarctica and the islands in the South Pacific. By early April of 1841, the brig *Porpoise* had left the Hawaiian Islands headed for the Columbia River, where it rendezvoused with the other vessels of the expedition. By April 30, 1841, *Porpoise* was in Puget Sound where it remained for over three months conducting surveys in and around Whidbey Island.

Charles Wilkes, like Joseph Whidbey on the Vancouver expedition, ventured into Penn Cove. He, like Vancouver, described the plentiful number of native inhabitants, compared to other parts of Puget Sound that he had visited. In his journal, Wilkes noted the presence of multi-family lodges surrounded by tall wooden barricades encircling an Indian village on Penn Cove. These fortifications, a defensive structure used for protection against the northern Haida Indians, consisted of thirty-foot-high timbers set vertically in the ground. He also recorded a church and an enclosed field of potatoes and beans. Wilkes, like

[43] Herman J. Viola and Carolyn Margolis, eds., *Magnificent Voyagers: The U.S. Exploring Expedition, 1838-1842* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1985).

Vancouver, described dark rich soil, open pastoral meadows, natural prairies, and abundant timber on central Whidbey Island.

If all this history, written and unwritten, is credible, the question that logically arises is: "Why is Whidbey Island American rather than Chinese, Japanese, British, Spanish, or Russian"? Why do Northwest kitchens fill with the fragrance of Boston baked beans rather than borscht? Why does American football stream from Sunday televisions rather than soccer? And why are pedestrians on sidewalks attired in slacks, wingtips, and neckties rather than the kimonos of Asia or even the more logical near-nakedness of Northwest Indians? For answers we need go no further back than the sixteenth century and the interplay of happenstance. Multiple seemingly disparate events interlaced to create the fabric from which Whidbey Island of the twenty-first century was made: culturally, economically, and militarily devastating epidemics suffered by the Northwest Indians, the depletion of sea otters, civil war in France, Spain's preoccupation with northern California to the exclusion of the Pacific Northwest, and the shooting of one farmer's pig were overarching themes that interlaced to weave the future destiny of the remote Whidbey Island. The interplay of these and a multitude of other seemingly disparate and unrelated social, political, economic, and epidemiological factors of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries finally left only Britain and the young United States to puff, posture, and gesticulate over Whidbey Island's political destiny.

Missionaries Arrive

Christian missionaries were the first Anglo-Americans to travel to and establish widely dispersed small communities in the Pacific Northwest. Beginning in the 1830s, Methodist, Congregationalist, Presbyterian, Dutch Reformed, Roman Catholic, and Mormon missionaries established outposts of Christianity at about thirty sites in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. From 1834 to 1848, one Catholic mission site existed near Penn Cove on Whidbey Island.

Several stimuli drew missionaries to the Far Northwest. Several individuals stirred the interest of missionaries, such as: Hall Jackson Kelley, a leading advocate of colonizing the Oregon Country in the 1820s; New England entrepreneur Nathaniel Wyeth who spearheaded colonizing experiments on the Snake River in 1832 and 1834; Virginia congressman John Floyd, who spoke eloquently of Oregon Country; Thomas Hart Benton, the Missouri senator who throughout his life encouraged western settlement and advocated cheap or free land; and Lewis Fields Linn, a physician who as a Missouri senator in the 1830s and early 1840s actively sought federal protection of developing American interests in Oregon Country. All of these individuals kindled interest in the region. Missionaries also responded to the flood of popular material—books, newspapers,

lectures, and artwork—produced by western explorers, scientists, and armchair dreamers in the 1820s and 1830s that portrayed the Northwest as a paradise on earth. Gestating popular enthusiasm for the Northwest, which eventually broke out into "Oregon fever," coincided with a quickening of the Christian conscience sparked by a nationwide movement to revive Protestant Christianity in America, known as the "Second Great Awakening," led by eastern evangelical revivalists between the late 1820s and the 1840s. Moreover, some Indian practices and beliefs perceived as pagan and uncivilized by Anglo-Americans also aroused the missionary impulse among some denominations. Above all, missionaries wished to convert Indians to Christianity.

In 1831, a particular incident provided specific impetus to Protestant missionary activity in the Northwest. A group of three Nez Perces and one Flathead traveled from the Rocky Mountains to St. Louis in search of William Clark, then the superintendent of Indian affairs, and the "book" (possibly the Bible) and "black robes" (probably French Jesuits in Canada) for their people. The reason for their visit is uncertain. Possibly touched by Christian beliefs, transmitted by Roman Catholic voyageurs from Quebec who had married native women and also by young Indians who had attended an Anglican mission school at the Red River settlement (in present-day Manitoba, Canada), this small contingent of Indians may have been sent to St. Louis. Here, they hoped to learn more about the Anglo-Americans' source of power, which seemed to them to be somehow linked to the Bible and religion. An article describing this visit appeared in the Protestant's *Christian Advocate and Journal* of New York and probably did much to instigate the missionary outreach of several Christian denominations to the Pacific Northwest.[44]

The era of zealous missionary activity began in 1834 when young Methodist minister Jason Lee, his nephew Daniel, and a few associates traveled overland with Nathaniel Wyeth and settled on the banks of the Willamette River (about twenty miles north of present-day Salem). Only a small number of the Indians in the area had survived the great malaria epidemic of 1829-1833. Nevertheless, Lee built a mission school and conducted religious services over the next several years. Much of his time, however, was spent extolling the virtues of this promised land in letters and on periodic trips he made to the East Coast.

In 1836, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (an ecumenical coordinating body for the Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Dutch Reformed denominations) sponsored a group of Presbyterians led by

[44] As early as 1830, small groups of Indians went to St. Louis to meet with Jesuit priests. In 1835, 1837, and 1841, the Flatheads and Nez Perce sent other delegations to St. Louis in search of the "Black Robes." Wilfred P. Schoenberg, *A Chronicle of the Catholic History of the Pacific Northwest, 1743-1960* (Washington, D.C.: Pastoral Press, 1987), 4-5; Edmond S. Meany, *History of the State of Washington* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1909 and 1924), 13.

Marcus and Narcissa Whitman and Eliza and Henry Spalding. The party traveled overland with a wheeled vehicle as far as Fort Boise (the first to go that far west) before continuing on horseback to Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River. Before the end of the year, the Whitmans and Spaldings had selected and begun to establish separate missions—the Whitmans on the Walla Walla River about twenty-five miles upstream from the Columbia River (in present-day eastern Washington), and the Spaldings on Lapwai Creek near its junction with the Clearwater River in present-day western Idaho. The Whitmans worked over the next eleven years to erect a complex of buildings at their mission and teach the Cayuse the basics of writing, farming, and Christianity. Yet Cayuse and the Whitman's American cultures conflicted in many ways. Additionally, an epidemic resulting in numerous Indian deaths, which the Whitmans could not prevent, culminated in an attack on the Whitman Mission by a small group of Cayuse in late November 1847. The death of Marcus and Narcissa Whitman and eleven others and the total destruction of the mission ended a chapter in the history of Protestant missions in the Pacific Northwest.[45]

Other Protestant missionaries arrived in the Northwest in the 1840s. In 1840, Jason Lee returned to Oregon with a shipload of around fifty New Englander ministers and their families, farmers, and various artisans—known as the "Great Reinforcement." Lee used these new missionary recruits to help him establish pioneer settlements at The Dalles, Willamette Falls (later Oregon City), the Clatsop Plains (near Astoria), Nisqually, and, eventually, in the Okanogan country at Colville (in north central Washington) and at New Caledonia (in Canada). Two Methodist missionaries at Fort Nisqually, Dr. J. P. Richmond and W. H. Willson and their families, became the first Americans to live on the shores of Puget Sound.[46]

Although no Protestant missionaries ventured to Whidbey Island, one Christian denomination—Roman Catholics—visited the island. Unlike the Protestant missionaries Jason Lee, the Whitmans, and the Spauldings, Catholic priests did not have an interest in fostering white settlement and, as celibates, they did not bring wives or families with them. Additionally, the Catholic priests traveled widely throughout the region, establishing not only permanent missions

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[45] The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions also operated a mission called Tsimakain among the Spokane Indians, by New England Congregationalists Elkanah and Mary Walker and Cushing and Myra Eells from 1839 to 1848 and a mission operated from 1839 to 1841 among the Nez Perces at Kamiah, fifty miles up the Clearwater River from the Spalding's Lapwai mission. Carlos A. Schwantes, *The Pacific Northwest: An Interpretive History* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 81.
[46] Clarence B. Bagley, editor, *Early Catholic Missions in Old Oregon, Volume Two* (Seattle, WA: Lowman & Hanford Company, 1932), 36; Meany, *History of the State of Washington*, 223; Edmond Meany, "First Pioneer Homes on Puget Sound," typescript, Meany Papers (Box 59), Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.

but also performing missionary activities for only a few days or weeks at dozens of locations throughout the Northwest.

In 1838, Franciscan priests Francis Norbert Blanchet, Vicar General, and Modeste Demers, arrived in the Northwest. Less than a month after reaching Fort Vancouver in November that year, Father Blanchet traveled to the Cowlitz River (a tributary of the Columbia, in present-day southwest Washington), where Hudson's Bay Company families had established an HBC farm in 1833. Here, Father Blanchet celebrated mass on December 16, 1838, and made arrangements for constructing a house and barn, which would be the core of the first permanent Catholic mission, later known as St. Francis Xavier Mission. In early January 1839, Blanchet established a Catholic mission on the Willamette River at St. Paul (near Jason Lee's mission); he returned to the Cowlitz River mission in the spring of 1839. That spring, Father Demers went to Nisqually (an HBC fort and farm at the southern end of Puget Sound).[47]

News of Father Blanchet's activities on the Cowlitz River soon spread to several Indian groups around Puget Sound, including those on Whidbey Island. Indians began to arrive at the Catholic Mission on the Cowlitz River in April 1839 until there were nearly three hundred of them. Several Indians led by a man named Tslalakum traveled 150 miles by canoe and on foot from Whidbey to see the "black gown" and hear Father Blanchet speak of the Great Spirit. Less than one year later, in late May 1840, Father Blanchet traveled to Whidbey Island. Tslalakum, ill and unable to travel, had sent his wife and several men to St. Francis Xavier Mission to summon Blanchet. Father Blanchet made the trip to Whidbey Island, arriving at Tslalakum's village on the west shore of Whidbey Island "50 feet above the level of the bay," possibly near Ebey's Landing or Penn Cove.[48] According to Father Blanchet, other leaders of the Indian community (Witskalatche, Netlam, and others) brought some of their men to Tslalakum's village during and after the Mass he performed. Before Blanchet left the island, a wooden cross, twenty-four feet high, was raised near Tslalakum's village.[49] When Lieutenant Charles Wilkes and his American explorers visited Whidbey Island in

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[47] Wilfred P. Schoenberg *A History of the Catholic Church in the Pacific Northwest, 1743-1983* Washington, D.C.: Pastoral Press, 1987), 38-51; Schoenberg, *Chronicle of the Catholic,* 6-7; *History* Bagley, *Early Catholic Missions, Vol. II,* 38-40 and *Vol. I,* 61-62, 69-70, 82-85; "A House of the Lord, 1889-1989," pamphlet (Coupeville, WA: St. Mary's Catholic Church, 2000), 9; Schwantes, *Pacific Northwest,* 81-84.

[48] Bagley, *Early Catholic Missions, Vol. I,* 88; "House of the Lord," 10.

[49] Father Demers took up residence at the St. Francis Xavier Mission on the Cowlitz in October 1839. *Ibid.,* 86-89; Schoenberg, *History of the Catholic Church,* 48, 56; Schoenberg, *Chronicle of the Catholic,* 9.

1841, the cross was still standing. Wilkes named the island "Cross Island" to commemorate its presence.[50]

Nearly three years went by, apparently, before any Catholic priests returned to Whidbey Island and its landmark cross. It was not until March 1843 that a new arrival in the Pacific Northwest, Father John Baptiste Zacharie Bolduc, rowed to Whidbey Island from the newly established Hudson's Bay Company fort at Victoria. Bolduc found the large cross, erected three years earlier. The Indians on the island welcomed Bolduc enthusiastically, Father Blanchet later reported. Skachattes and other Indians built a sizeable house-chapel for him, which was named Sacred Heart of Mary, near the large cross. Father Bolduc shared the Indians' enthusiasm. After arriving on Whidbey Island from Victoria, Bolduc stayed on the island for eight days and baptized about 175 infants, before continuing south to the Cowlitz mission. He immediately asked for a permanent assignment on Whidbey Island. Three months later, Father Bolduc and Father Modeste Demers returned to Whidbey Island to develop the mission there. "For reasons too long to explain," Father Blanchet later wrote, the mission for Whidbey Island never materialized.[51]

It is unclear why the Catholic missionaries left Whidbey Island. Canadian artist Paul Kane, who visited Whidbey Island in early May 1847, offered one explanation in his journal. "A Catholic mission had been established on the island some few years before," Kane wrote in his journal, "but was obliged to be given up, owing to the turbulent disposition of the Indians, who, though friendly to the Hudson Bay Company as traders, look with great suspicion upon others who attempt to settle there, fearing that the whites would attempt to dispossess them of their lands."[52] Kane's assessment of the situation may well have been correct. On June 19, 1854, after the first Americans had settled on Whidbey Island around Penn Cove, Bishop Blanchet filed a land claim for the legal possession of the site of his cross and the aborted Sacred Heart of Mary mission.[53]

Although no Catholic parish church existed on Whidbey Island for many decades (until 1937), the cross erected by natives and Father Blanchet in 1840 remained standing. The exact location of this cross has never been determined with certainty. It reportedly stood, until 1950, in a field on the Alexander property

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[50] Charles Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition*, (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1849), 303.

[51] Schoenberg, *History of the Catholic Church,* 74-74; Schoenberg, *Chronicle of the Catholic History*, 14; James W. Scott and Roland L. De Lorme, *Historical Atlas of Washington,* cartography by Ted R. Brandt and Patrick S. Grant (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), map 26.

[52] J. Russell Harper, ed., *Paul Kane's Frontier, Including* Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America *by Paul Kane* (Austin, TX and London, England: University of Texas Press, 1981), 104

[53] Schoenberg, *Chronicle of the Catholic History*, 14; "House of the Lord," 12.

south of Penn Cove. The upright vertical piece of the original cross, according to local folklore, was moved to the Block House Inn in Coupeville in 1950 and preserved in a glass display case (rebuilt in the 1990s), which stands in front of the Alexander Blockhouse.[54] The historic authenticity of this piece of wood remains to be proven.

Even though the presence of Christian missionaries in the 1830s and 1840s was small and sometimes fleeting, the legacy of missionary activity proved profound for Indians, Americans, and the British government alike. Contrary to the missionaries' efforts to bring what Anglo-Americans viewed as a better, more "civilized" way of life to the Indians of this region, the missions, instead, tended to divide Indians into antagonistic Christian and non-Christian factions. At the same time, missionaries greatly encouraged the emigration of permanent settlers to the region through their writings, beginning in the early 1840s, which further disrupted and decimated Indian populations and their way of life, already shattered by a series of epidemics initiated by European explorers and travelers and for traders.

[54] "Early Day Churches and Schools Grew Quickly—Mystery Mission Found," *Island County Times*, 31 March 1955; "Pioneer Descendents Gather at Blockhouse," *Island County Times,* 31 May 1951; "Historic Cross Blessed by Bishop Connolly," *Island County Times,* 12 April 1951; Jimmie Jean Cook, *"A particular friend, Penn's Cove"* (Coupeville, WA: Island County Historical Society, 1988), 13; "House of the Lord," 14.

Chapter 4

Early Emigrants 1840-1860

News of the 3,000-mile, cross-country overland journey of missionaries Narcissa Whitman and Eliza Spalding in 1836 helped inspire entire families to travel to and settle in the Pacific Northwest. From the early to mid-1840s, the Whitman Mission served as a physical beacon for the earliest pioneer emigrants traveling over the Oregon Trail. Finally, the death of the Whitmans in 1847, combined with other factors, influenced Congress to create the territory of Oregon in 1848, the first territorial government west of the Rocky Mountains. This action, coupled with the growing presence of American settlers in the Northwest, not only counter-balanced the British Hudson's Bay Company in the Oregon Country, but also signaled the serious intentions of the United States government to assert its political interest in this remote corner of the North American continent.

The pastoral landscape around Penn Cove on Whidbey Island became the temporary or the final destination of numerous emigrants who traveled there, by ship and overland, and settled in considerable numbers from 1848 through the 1850s. These Anglo-American settlers brought with them tools, technology, animals and plants, as well as governmental, cultural, and social institutions that quickly began to alter the appearance of the landscape all around them.

America Moving West

Between 1841 and 1866, an estimated 500,000 people migrated to the Far West;[1] 53,000 of these went to the Pacific Northwest. The first family that moved to and settled in Oregon Country in 1840 provided a precedent and practical guidance for others who followed. In 1841, a group of around 100 headed west from Independence, Missouri. The following year, more than 200 people and 18 wagons rolled west. In 1843, the year of the so-called "Great Migration," an estimated 900 migrating Anglo-Americans, 100 wagons, and around 700 oxen and

[1] Merrill Mattes, "The Northern Route of the Non-Mormons: Rediscovery of Nebraska's Forgotten Historic Trail," *Overland Journal* 8: 2 (1990): 2-14.

cattle made the 2,000-mile, seven-month trip across the plains and over the mountains to the Columbia River. Around 130 were women and 610 children, typically traveling as part of a family, went west in the 1843 migration. Marcus Whitman's physical guidance given in 1843 to emigrants crossing the Blue Mountains inspired other families with wagons to attempt the arduous overland trip.

Between 1844 and 1848, the number of overland emigrants fluctuated between 1,000 (1846) and 5,000 (1845). After the discovery of gold in California, the number of emigrants heading west, mostly single men bound for California, soared to around 30,000 in 1849 and about 55,000 in 1850. After 1852, the number of emigrants traveling to California dropped, as word of unrealized gold fortunes in California spread, and the Pacific Northwest regained its appeal, especially to families interested in farming. Although only a fraction of the total number of westering emigrants, the largest migrations to the Pacific Northwest took place in 1852 and 1853, when around 10,000 and 7,500 emigrants, respectively, arrived in Oregon and Washington Territory. After 1854, overland migration to the Northwest dropped off, and no more than 2,000 people traveled to the region for the rest of the 1850s. By 1866, a staggering 350,000 people had migrated to the West, the majority traveling between 1849 and 1853.[2] With each passing year, more information about the routes west and travel conditions was gained and shared by an increasing number of emigrants.

Many motives inspired emigrants to travel to this distant locale: The anticipation of starting a new life; the expectation of improving one's economic condition; the hope of enhancing personal health and leaving virulent epidemic diseases behind; the desire to escape plaguing financial, family, romantic, or legal problems; the need to flee from perceived social constraints and enjoy upward social mobility; and the desire to withdraw from the increasingly virulent passions swirling around questions of race and slavery in the East were among the many motives that spurred emigrants westward. Before the United States-British North America boundary settlement with Great Britain in 1846, the patriotic argument that emigrants to the Pacific Coast would transport the great American democratic institutions for the benefit of all humankind appealed to few citizens and served as sufficient justification for heading west. In the 1850s, generous federal land policies (in the form of homestead acts) encouraging Anglo-Americans to settle and work the land also provided a great incentive to migrate west. The diaries and reminiscences of emigrants suggest that there was no single reason for leaving home and traveling 2,000 miles to a distant frontier. There were usually several motives of equal importance that were so interwoven they were nearly

[2] Merrill J. Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1969), 13-23; Susan Badger Doyle and Fred W. Dykes, *The 1854 Oregon Trail Diary of Winfield Scott Ebey* (Independence, MO: Oregon-California Trails Association, 1997), 1.

undistinguishable.[3] Westward-bound emigrants viewed Oregon Country and California, especially after the discovery of gold in 1848, as regions of hope, rebirth, and new opportunities.[4]

Several catalysts, especially the growing body of knowledge and promotional literature, encouraged migration to the Pacific Northwest. Reports of the travels of missionaries like the Whitmans, Spaldings, and Lees to the Oregon Country spurred many to consider making the trip. New England schoolteacher Hall Jackson Kelley remained a self-appointed apostle and ardent booster of the West through the 1840s, describing the Oregon Country as "the most valuable of all the unoccupied parts of the earth."[5] The Pacific Northwest became well known through the reports of the United States (South Seas) Exploring Expedition, led by Commander Charles Wilkes between 1838 and 1842, published in 1849. In 1841, scientists and artists on the Wilkes expedition recorded all aspects of the water and land around Puget Sound, including Whidbey Island, in great detail, thereby making the region's attractions known.[6] Written accounts of the international boundary dispute between the United States and Great Britain in the mid-1840s gave the Oregon Country some of the best publicity imaginable. Other government activities like the support for and publicity surrounding Lieutenant John Charles Fremont's transcontinental reconnaissance expeditions to the West between 1842 and 1844 and congressional discussions of Missouri Senator Lewis F. Linn's 1843 bill to donate as much as 1,600 acres to settlers willing to work the land, provided additional inducements for migration over the "easy carriage road across our continent," as described by Charles Fremont in 1842.[7]

The publication of overland guidebooks also encouraged migration to the Northwest. These travel guides provided detailed directions over the main Oregon Trail route as well as alternative shortcuts that developed over the years, providing mileages between physical landmarks, information about river crossings and ferries, camping locations, availability of food for cattle, the number of and relations with Indians along the trail, and many more practical details and advice that boosted the confidence of those considering the trip. Beginning at one of the "jump-off" supply towns on the Missouri River (usually Independence, St. Joseph,

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[3] William A. Bowen. *The Willamette Valley: Migration and Settlement on the Oregon Frontier* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1978), 17-21.

[4] John D. Unruh, Jr., *The Plains Across: The Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-60* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1979), 90-93.
Scott, James W., and Roland L. De Lorme. *Historical Atlas of Washington.* Cartography by Ted R. Brandt and Patrick S. Grant. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988., 15 Quoted in Carlos Schwantes, *Pacific Northwest,* 79; also see Pomeroy, *Pacific Slope,* 27-28.

[6] Meany, *History of the State of Washington,* 71-79.

[7] Quoted in Pomeroy, *Pacific Slope,* 31. The Linn bill passed the Senate in 1843 but failed to come to a vote in the House.

or Council Bluffs), trail guides led emigrants along the meandering, muddy Platte River to the North Platte, then up the Sweetwater River to South Pass at the Continental Divide. From there, guidebooks gave directions for crossing the desolate Great Basin to the Snake River, then on to the Columbia River and, eventually, the Cowlitz River, and Puget Sound.

Thousands became afflicted with so-called "Oregon fever" in the 1840s and 1850s. Books, articles, and letters from emigrants to family members in the United States, published newspaper articles, editorials, and speeches of enthusiastic promoters, and the work of Oregon emigrating societies that had organized throughout the United States, all offered potential emigrants encouragement and advice. Many of those travelers who actually made the trip to the West promoted the Oregon Country and Puget Sound. Their letters to family, friends and hometown newspapers described, in glowing terms, the promising agricultural and economic prospects, as well as the beauty of the country.[8] "The immigrants had barely established themselves," noted western historian Earl Pomeroy, "when they began to testify that they had not only survived but also had prospered, eating strawberries as well as wheat, and green peas picked on Christmas."[9] Newspaper editors, proclaiming the many advantages of this unsettled land, also proved to be energetic boosters. As early as 1852, the editors of the *Columbian* newspaper in Olympia promoted the country as much as reported the news. "Let them come," beckoned the October 2, 1852 issue of the *Columbian.* "We want families here by the thousands, as families are needed more than anything else; . . . Come along, and bring all your friends with you. Why should you not? This is the only part of Oregon in which you can settle advantageously," the editor affirmed. "We have . . . thousands of acres of excellent land lying idle which ought to be producing more."[10] The writings of James Swan (in *The Northwest Coast; or, Three Years' Residence in Washington Territory,* 1857), Washington Territory's first Governor Isaac Stevens (in several writings, including *A Circular Letter to Emigrants Desirous of Locating in Washington Territory,* 1858), Asa Mercer (in *Washington Territory: The Great North-West, Her Material Resources, and Claims to Emigration*), and others sparked the interest of some potential emigrants to the far Northwest. Isaac Stevens, as early as 1854, proclaimed "that their maritime advantages [the waters of Puget Sound, Admiralty Inlet, Juan de Fuca straits, and Hood Canal] are very great, in affording a series of harbors almost unequaled in the world for capacity, safety, and facility of access, and they are in the immediate neighborhood to what are now the best whaling grounds of the Pacific."[11] Asa

[8] Schwantes, *Pacific Northwest,* 90-91.
[9] Pomeroy, *Pacific Slope,* 27.
[10] Arthur J. Brown, "The Promotion of Emigration to Washington, 1854-1909," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 36: 1 (1945), 7.
[11] James G. Swan, *The Northwest Coast; or, Three Years' Residence in Washington Territory* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1857), 398.

Mercer expounded on the aesthetic delights and abundance of the Northwest: "The beauties of the climate, the vast extent of grazing lands—seven million acres of agricultural land of the finest quality—fish in a thousand bays and banks; big trees, piles and spars on hillside and plain; coal in measureless quantities beneath the hills; . . . an inland sea, and bays whitened by the sails of every nation; not one of these alone, but all announce the future of the north-west," Mercer trumpeted.[12] As time passed, agencies more than individuals assumed a greater responsibility for attracting newcomers to the territory. An immigration society was organized in Port Townsend that produced pamphlets regaling northwestern Washington's soil, climate, productions, and general resources. Eventually, real estate agents and railroad companies attempted to lure people to Washington's Puget Sound.

Generous land grant policies provided an important incentive for the pioneering Central Whidbey settlers like the Ebey and Crockett families and thousands of others to migrate to the Northwest in the 1850s. The Donation Land Claim Act of 1850 had a great impact on encouraging settlement of the Pacific Northwest. This early-day version of the 1862 Homestead Act allowed any white male United States citizen or Indians of mixed white-native parentage, eighteen years of age or older, to claim 320 acres (one-half section) of land if single. The wife of a male settler, if married before December 1, 1851, could also claim title to an additional 320 acres in her own right. (Aliens, African-Americans, and Hawaiian settlers were barred from taking advantage of the act.) White male citizens over age twenty-one who arrived in the Oregon Territory after December 1, 1850 and before December 1, 1854, could claim 160 acres if single and 320 acres if married. Residence on and cultivation of the land claimed for four consecutive years was the only requirement for settlers claiming land under this act. The law greatly encouraged marriage, the acquisition of land in the Northwest by families, and the establishment of farms. The act as amended remained in effect for five years.

During that time, more than seven thousand claimants acquired more than two and one-half million acres of land—land that some argue the federal government had not yet acquired title to from its Indian owners.[13] Within the boundaries of present-day Washington State, the General Land Office registered 1,018 claims comprising more than 300,000 acres of some of the most accessible and arable land west of the Cascade Mountains. The claims, sometimes irregular in shape, ranged in size from roughly 160 to 320 acres. The greatest concentrations of donation land claims north of the Columbia River were taken in

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[12] Brown, "Promotion of Emigration to Washington," 4.

[13] James M. Bergquist, "The Oregon Donation Act and the National Land Policy," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 58: 1 (March 1957), 17-35; Schwantes, *Pacific Northwest*, 103; Howard McKinley Corning, editor, *Dictionary of Oregon History* (Portland, OR: Binford & Mort Publishing, 1989) , 75.

corridors of Hudson's Bay Company and emigrant travel from Vancouver west along the Columbia, north up the Cowlitz River, along the southern and eastern edges of Puget Sound, and on Whidbey Island. When the 1862 Homestead Act came into effect on January 1, 1863, much of the prime agricultural land on and around Penn Cove had already been taken under provisions of the Donation Land Claim Act.[14] Isaac Neff Ebey, among the first to claim land on Whidbey Island in October 1850 and begin farming in the present Reserve, expressed his attraction to free land in a long letter written in April 1851 to his younger brother, Winfield, in Missouri. "The donation bill of Congress," Isaac Ebey asserted, "secures a man a competency for life mak[ing] him lord and proprieter of the soil he cultivates."[15]

In this same letter, Isaac Ebey told his brother Winfield of other motives for moving to Whidbey Island, including good health along with improved economic and social standing. "The people here knows not what sickness is," Ebey attested. "You would recover your health [and] all the family would enjoy such health and elasticity of sperits as you never knew before." Additionally, Ebey asserted:

> I desired wealth not for my self but for Rebecca [Isaac's wife], for my children, wealth to sooth the declining years of my parents, to assist my sisters, to give my brothers a better chance in life than fell to my lot. . . . The highest, the noblest aspirations of freemen is to better, to improve there condition in life, to elevate there character, to aspire to equal, to exceede those who are his superiors in life and station. These objects," Isaac asserted, "are much easier attained where the [means] are abundant and the leisure sufficient. . . . This Compitancy [of education, prosperity, and social standing] is much easier acquiered here than in Missouri. Of this I have not the least doubt.[16]

In addition to these inducements to immigrate to the Pacific Northwest, there were also important disincentives for remaining in the Missouri and Mississippi river valleys where the majority of immigrants were living before they began their westward trek. The national depression of 1837 had arrived late but lingered long, especially for farmers in a region of relatively harsh climatic extremes.[17] Diseases that thrived in the humid Midwest, particularly Asiatic

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[14] James W. Scott and Roland L. De Lorme, *Historical Atlas of Washington,* cartography by Ted R. Brandt and Patrick S. Grant (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), map 30.
[15] All quotes from Ebey to Ebey, April 25, 1851, Meany Papers.
[16] All quotes from Ebey to Ebey, April 25, 1851, Meany Papers.
[17] Pomeroy, *Pacific Slope,* 31.

cholera, reached nearly epidemic proportions in the Missouri River Valley in the late 1840s and early 1850s, and spread westward by steamboat travelers from St. Louis (and then carried further west by overland emigrants along the Platte River all the way to Fort Laramie). The family of Jacob and Sarah Ebey, Isaac Ebey's parents, lost three of their children between 1849 and 1851, most likely from disease.[18]

Anglo-Americans on Puget Sound

Several incidents combined to delay the Anglo-American settlement of Whidbey Island on Puget Sound for nearly a decade after the first flood of emigrants arrived in the Willamette Valley in 1843. The difficulties of reaching Whidbey Island overland from the end of the Oregon Trail on the Columbia River and then by ship across Puget Sound waters, the uncertainties revolving around the claims of British possession of the territory north of the Columbia River, and outbreak of Indian troubles north of the Columbia River at the Whitman Mission, a way station of the Oregon Trail, slowed the arrival of overland emigrants to Whidbey Island.

As early as 1834, four years before the arrival of visiting Jesuit priests, the Hudson's Bay Company had recognized the agricultural possibilities of Whidbey Island and first considered establishing a farm there. The growing profitable markets of Russian America and Hawaii and the diminishing supply of fur-bearing animals in the Northwest prompted the HBC to embark on agricultural enterprises. The 6,000 acres of rich prairie land around Penn Cove enticed the company to begin an extensive farm there. Numerous intervening events, however, delayed and finally quashed this venture.[19]

In the years after the first sizeable overland migration of Anglo-Americans to Oregon's Willamette Valley in 1843, a few emigrants began venturing up the Cowlitz River Valley from its mouth on the Columbia River. In 1844, Samuel Black Crockett, a friend of the Ebey family from Missouri, emigrated overland, arriving in Oregon City in mid-October 1844.[20] By the summer of 1845, Crockett had become involved in lumbering at a small settlement at the mouth of the White River, a tributary of the Columbia River. Spring flooding of the lowlands at this settlement induced Samuel Crockett and others to move. In the summer of 1845,

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[18] Mattes, *Great Platte River Road*, 83-85, 110.

[19] Victor J. Farrar, "Documents: Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey," *Washington Historical Quarterly* 7: 3 (July 1916), 239.

[20] Vernon Carstensen, ed., "Dairy of Samuel Black Crockett," in *Building a State, Washington, 1889-1939, Vol. III*, ed. Charles Miles and O. B. Sperlin (Tacoma, WA: Washington State Historical Society Publications, 1940), 607; L. A. Kibbe, ed., "Notes and Documents: Diary of Colonel Isaac N. and Mrs. Emily Ebey," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 33 (July 1942), 297.

Michael Troutman Simmons, a native of Kentucky who had emigrated overland in 1844, and several men decided to investigate the lower end of Puget Sound as a possible place for the settlement of the White River group. As Simmons and his men made their way down the Columbia and up the Cowlitz River, they encountered the small Cowlitz settlement of retired French trappers, as well as new arrivals John R. Jackson and his wife. In March 1845, John Jackson, a native of England and resident of New York and Illinois before traveling west to the Willamette Valley, had traveled up the Cowlitz River Valley with companions. Upon reaching the drainage divide between the Cowlitz and Chehalis rivers, Jackson came to an expansive open prairie, which he deemed suitable for farming. Here, at a place that later became known as "Jackson Prairie," John R. Jackson and his wife began building their home, reputedly making them the first Anglo-American settlers north of the Columbia River. Later, the Jacksons operated a grocery store, a post office, and a way station for travelers heading north to Puget Sound.[21]

The Simmons party proceeded further north beyond the Jackson place, cutting a crude wagon road through rugged country as they went, finally arriving at a waterfall and potential mill site on the DesChutes River near its mouth on Budd Inlet, a southern arm of Puget Sound. Simmons, still curious about the country further north, traveled by canoe as far as Whidbey Island. He returned, however, to the site at Budd Inlet and helped found the community of New Market (later renamed Tumwater), the first Anglo-American community north of the Columbia River. In October 1845, Michael Simmons returned to Fort Vancouver to report the success of his scouting trip and the infant settlement. He then returned to New Market with his and a few other families, as well as Samuel B. Crockett (and a man named Jesse Ferguson).[22] Writing to his mother back home in Missouri in July 1846, Samuel Crockett described New Market as "a beautiful place that lies two miles from the south end of Puget's Sound."[23] Impressed with this place, Crockett decided to settle there, and, with a man (Mr. McAlister) who had claimed adjoining land, Crockett fenced thirteen acres and plowed and planted eleven acres "in wheat, peas, oats, potatoes, etc." before the end of 1846.[24] In 1846, a number of additional overland emigrants made their way north of the Columbia River up the crude Cowlitz trail/road and settled on Budd Inlet and around the junction of

[21] The restored Jackson House, about eleven miles south of Chehalis, Washington, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. James O. Backman, "Jackson (John R.) House, National Register of Historic Places, Inventory—Nomination Form," United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, July 1972; Meany, *History of the State of Washington*, 224.
[22] Meany, *History of the State of Washington*, 223-25.
[23] Samuel B. Crockett to Mary Crockett, July 4, 1846, Meany Papers (Box 72), Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries, hereafter cited as Meany Papers.
[24] Crockett to Crockett, July 4, 1846, Meany Papers.

Skookum Creek and the Chehalis River (near present-day Centralia).[25] The difficulties of traveling there through dense forests in and north of the Cowlitz River drainage and by ship from the southern end of Puget Sound slowed the movement of emigrants to Whidbey Island.

In addition, the uncertainty of the island's political future deterred all but a few venturesome souls from exploring the potential for settling on Whidbey Island in the late 1840s. Despite his satisfaction with New Market (Tumwater), Samuel Black Crockett was one of many who hesitated to encourage his family in Missouri to join him there. The political uncertainties surrounding the future disposition of the Oregon Territory north of the Columbia River made Crockett doubt even his own long-term residence on the southern end of Puget Sound. "I cannot tell you whether I will come to Missouri or not," Crockett wrote to his mother on Independence Day, July 4, 1846. He continued,

> It depends a good deal on how the boundary line of this country is settled; if England gets this part of Oregon I think I will return [to Missouri], but if the United States gets it, it is very doubtful [that I will go back]. You may tell my brothers that they should not be anxious about coming to this country until they know who this country belongs to.[26]

International events culminating in 1846, forever after removed potential settlers' questions about whether Whidbey Island's future lay with the United States or with Great Britain.

The boundary question had its origins three decades earlier. Following the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain, treaties between these two countries, in 1818 and 1827, postponed any decision about sovereignty in the Pacific Northwest, leaving the United States and Great Britain to occupy the region jointly. British residents were subject to the authority of the Hudson's Bay Company. Americans, who began arriving in Oregon Country in considerable numbers in the 1840s, settled beyond the United States government and its laws, thus making them potentially subject to the authority of the Hudson's Bay Company enterprise, viewed as a grasping monopolistic octopus by most early settlers in the Willamette Valley. Specific problems arose in the early 1840s, however, which compelled settlers to plant the seeds of a government for themselves. Trapper and cattleman Ewing Young died without either a will or heirs, leaving the disposition of his substantial estate in the mid-Willamette Valley a perplexing legal dilemma. After meeting three times in 1841, settlers appointed a temporary judge to probate Young's estate, adopting New York laws as a model

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[25] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey, 246; Kibbe, Diary of Colonel Isaac N. and Mrs. Emily Ebey," 297; Meany, *History of the State of Washington*, 223-25.
[26] Crockett to Crockett, July 4, 1846, Meany Papers.

and thereby establishing an ad hoc judiciary for the Oregon Territory. A second halting step toward self-government was made in early 1843 when settlers met to wrestle with the problem of wild animal attacks on their livestock. At these meetings settlers set up a simple system of tax collection and the disbursement of funds for wolf bounty. These so-called "wolf meetings" reputedly set the stage, or at least established a forum, for creating a provisional government. Organized in May 1843, settlers patterned this homespun "government," which included a constitution and a system of voluntary taxation, from the book, *Organic Laws of the State of Iowa.* Oregon's grassroots government continued for the next five years until 1848 when Oregon became a territory of the United States.[27]

The creation of Oregon Country's provisional government coincided with the re-emergence of a national mood of "Manifest Destiny," a political doctrine that the United States had a God-given "right of manifest destiny to spread over the whole continent," in the words of congressman Robert Winthrop in January 1846.[28] James K. Polk, the Democratic Party's choice for president in 1844, embraced these expansionist views, and supported both the annexation of Texas and American occupation of the entire Oregon Country north to the 54° 40' latitude. After winning the election, President Polk declared, in his 1845 inaugural address, that the American claim to Oregon was "clear and unquestionable." Although American settlers by that time predominated south of the Columbia River, only a handful of United States' citizens had settled north of the Columbia, like the Jacksons on the Cowlitz River and Samuel Crockett and Michael Simmons on Budd Inlet on Puget Sound. The boundary dispute thus focused on the territory north of the Columbia River, now forming Washington State. Only Puget Sound, some ardent expansionists argued, gave the United States a commercial gateway to the Pacific and Asian ports. President Polk and many congressional leaders stubbornly maintained a claim to Puget Sound, despite the modest number of American settlers there. While congressional debate over the boundary line dragged on in 1846, the United States edged closer to war with Mexico and Great Britain became distracted by internal political problems of its own. Moreover, the Hudson's Bay Company regional headquarters at Vancouver no longer needed protection, since it had moved to Fort Victoria, Vancouver Island, in 1845. Thus, a host of complicating factors in 1846 brought Great Britain and the United States to agreement over the boundary at the 49th parallel. In June 1846, the Senate ratified a treaty that extended the international boundary along the forty-ninth parallel from the crest of the Rocky Mountains to the middle of the Strait of Georgia, and from there south and west along the Strait of Juan de

[27] Earl Pomeroy, *The Pacific Slope*, 56-60; Schwantes, *The Pacific Northwest*, 95-97;
[28] Quoted in Norman A. Graebner, *Empire on the Pacific: A Study in American Continental Expansion* (New York: Ronald Press Company, 1955), 123.

Fuca. In 1848, the U.S. Congress approved a territorial government for all of Oregon Country.[29]

Even though the question of sovereignty over Puget Sound had been answered in mid-1846, a series of disturbing events over the next three years checked the settlement of emigrants in the Puget Sound area and on Whidbey Island. The Whitman Mission Indian skirmish in late 1847 discouraged emigrants from traveling to the territory north of the Columbia River. Earlier in the year, a two-mile trail had been cut from New Market (Tumwater) to the southern shore of Puget Sound where the new farm of Levi L. Smith occupied the future site of Olympia, Washington. No Anglo-American settlers, apparently, ventured to Whidbey Island that year. Canadian artist Paul Kane, who visited and painted scores of Native American and landscape scenes around Puget Sound, presented an image of bucolic serenity on Whidbey Island. An apparent fictitious Anglo-American building (or possibly an Indian long house) nestled in a park-like setting expressed Kane's artistic license.

The discovery of gold in California in 1848 and the subsequent rush to Sierra Nevada gold fields also slowed the arrival of emigrants to Whidbey Island, at least for a short time. It diverted the stream of emigration from the Pacific Northwest to California in the late 1840s. It also induced many early settlers in Oregon Territory, including those on Puget Sound, to leave and seek quick, abundant wealth in California. Samuel Black Crockett, even though apparently pleased with his farming endeavors in New Market (later Tumwater), like hundreds of Oregon Territory settlers became afflicted with "California fever" when gold was discovered in the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada Range in early 1848. Crockett traveled with others for three months overland from Puget Sound to the Sacramento River Valley in the spring of 1848. After only two days working in a mine, Crockett and his companions all became deathly ill with a fever that lasted for weeks and kept them from mining.

No doubt discouraged by his own bad fortune as well as news from unsuccessful miners, Crockett, like so many other early Oregon Territory settlers, decided to return to the Northwest. "I have determined to sail for Oregon tomorrow," Crockett wrote to his father in Chariton Mills, Missouri. "I will sail in a small vessel called *Quito* commanded by Capt. Hawkes. . . . Tell the boys not to come to California," Crockett warned, "for the country is entirely overrun, the mines are all occupied. The day for making fortunes in California is over."[30] Crockett and other post-1848 emigrants soon discovered that California argonauts's need for food created a market for non-perishable farm produce and cattle that could be raised by Pacific Northwest settlers/farmers, at least the ones who had access to transportation (ships) to the California gold fields. By the early

[29] Schwantes, *Pacific Northwest,* 97-100; Graebner, *Empire on the Pacific,* 137-49.
[30] Samuel Crockett to Walter Crockett, August 23, 184[8], Meany Papers, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.

1850s, farming in the Northwest appealed to many emigrants more than the uncertain possibility of striking it rich in the California gold fields.

In 1848 and 1849, only a small number of Anglo-Americans visited Whidbey Island. Thomas W. Glasgow canoed to Whidbey Island in 1848 and built a small cabin on the west side of the island near Penn Cove. Preparing to settle there permanently, he also planted wheat and potatoes, and may have located a potential mill site, probably at the head of Penn Cove (future site of Coveland). After then traveling back to Tumwater, he returned to his cabin on Whidbey by way of the Hood Canal with companion A. B. Rabbeson. Soon after arriving, however, island Indians informed the two men that a local leader of the Snoqualmies known as Patkanim had decided to bar whites from the island, whereupon the men returned to Tumwater.[31] In 1849, Samuel Hancock, a native of Virginia who had emigrated west in 1845, stopped briefly at Whidbey Island while on an exploring expedition of Puget Sound. Sailing from Alki Point on the mainland (today's West Seattle) in a good southerly breeze, he and his local Indian companions landed on Whidbey Island in early 1849. The following day, Hancock canoed along the shore of the island, probably in the vicinity of Ebey's Landing, "great please with the appearance of the rich level land, which had many large fine prairies near the shore and seemed well timbered, principally with fir of the finest growth. I felt sure," Hancock prophesied, "that this would become a prominent agricultural part of the territory from the many advantages so perceptible." Hancock visited the east part of the island a few days later. (Hancock later returned to Whidbey Island around 1852 and took up farming on Crockett Prairie.)[32]

It was not long afterward, in 1849, that Patkanim engaged in a skirmish at Fort Nisqually, which further deterred emigrants from thronging to Puget Sound. With the departure of several Puget Sound settlers to the California gold fields, the time may have seemed right for Patkanim to carry out his plan to drive white settlers out of the area. In early May 1849, he led some of the Snoqualmies to the stronghold of white men, Fort Nisqually, and demanded that the men leave. After a gun was reportedly accidentally fired, the Indians outside the fort at once began an attack. The skirmish soon ended, leaving one Fort Nisqually man dead and two wounded. Two Indian leaders (but not Patkanim) were tried, convicted, and hanged, and Fort Steilacoom was established two months later to offer protection to Anglo-American settlers on Puget Sound. Yet the skirmish at Fort Nisqually was unsettling for prospective settlers to the area, at least temporarily.[33] Although a few emigrants arrived and began farming around Puget Sound that year,

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[31] Meany, *History of the State of Washington,* 225.
[32] Samuel Hancock, *The Narrative of Samuel Hancock, 1945-1860* (New York: Robert M. McBride & Company, 1927), quote from 96, also 96-99.
[33] Meany, *History of the State of Washington,* 149, 225.

apparently no Anglo-Americans ventured to the Penn Cove area of Whidbey Island in 1849.

Early Anglo-Americans Arrive on Whidbey Island

News of the incident at Fort Nisqually may have reached Isaac Neff Ebey, who had left his family in Missouri and traveled overland to Oregon Country in 1848. He stayed away from the Puget Sound region for several months. The discovery of gold in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains lured Ebey to head south in the fall of 1849. Like his friend Samuel Black Crockett, however, Ebey soon grew unsatisfied with his efforts and future prospects in the gold fields. Eager to investigate the country earlier described by Samuel Crockett, Isaac Ebey made his way to San Francisco, where he and a few others bought a brig, the *Orbit,* and headed north up the coast to Puget Sound. The *Orbit* pulled into New Market (Tumwater) in January 1850, where the Ebey party sold the vessel to Michael T. Simmons. Apparently impressed with the potential of the new settlement on Budd Inlet (near present-day Olympia), Ebey bought property there. During the spring and summer of 1850, Isaac Ebey explored the country around Puget Sound, including the Duwamish, White, and Puyallup river valleys, as well as Whidbey Island, for the ideal farm site. Ebey found it at the site where the Hudson's Bay Company had contemplated establishing a farm in 1834, where Michael T. Simmons had visited in 1845, and where Thomas Glasgow had built a small cabin in 1848. Here, near the edge of an open prairie and within view of the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the future Port Townsend, Isaac Ebey built a rudimentary cabin. Hurriedly, Ebey also planted a few crops and began making preparations to bring his wife and two sons and some of his wife's family to Whidbey Island. On October 15, 1850, Ebey filed a claim for possession of 641.66 acres of land under the provisions of the newly enacted Oregon Donation Land law.[34]

[34] Kibbe, "Diary of Colonel Isaac N. and Mrs. Emily Ebey," 297-98; Meany, *History of the State of Washington,* 225; Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey," 239-41.

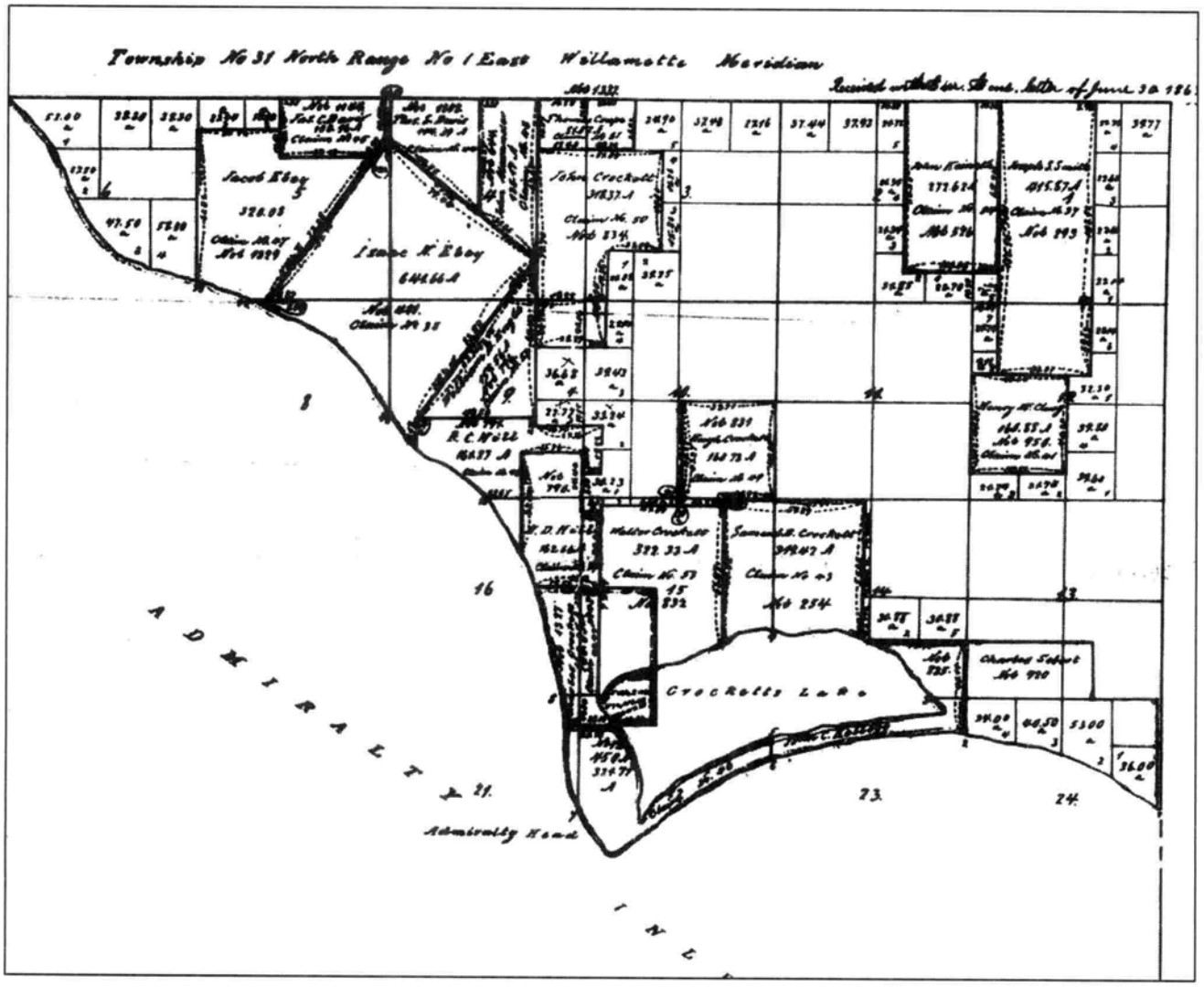

Illustration 2: This 1863 surveyor's map shows the adjoining donation land claims of Isaac Ebey, his father Jacob Ebey, and two brothers-in-law James C. Davis and Thomas S. Davis, all on Ebey's Prairie, north of Admiralty Inlet. The map also reflects the several claims of the Crockett family on land north of Admiralty Head on what became known as Crockett Prairie. General Land Office, Township 31 North, Range 1 East, Willamette Meridian, November 8, 1861. Copy at Washington State Archives, Olympic, Washington.

Isaac Ebey proved to be an enthusiastic and effective promoter of his new home in letters he wrote to his family on their farm at Plum Grove Place, near present Connelsville, Missouri. "My dearest brother," Isaac wrote to his younger brother, Winfield, in late April 1851:

> I scarcely know how I shall write or what I shall write. . . . the great desire of [my] heart is to get my own and father's family to this country. I think it would be a great move. . . . To the north along Admiralty Inlet . . . the cultivating land is generally found confined to the valleys of streams with the exception of Whidbey's Island . . . which is almost a paradise of nature. Good land for cultivation is abundant on this island. . . . If Rebecca, the children, and you all were here, I think I could live and die here contented. . . . I am very solicitous for you my brother, to come to this country.[35]

Isaac Ebey's letters home, as well as those written by his friend Samuel Black Crockett, undoubtedly had a tremendous influence on the Ebeys' and Crocketts' decision to migrate to Whidbey Island. Between 1851 and 1854, numerous Ebey and Crockett family members and friends came to Whidbey Island (or other nearby Puget Sound locations) to settle. In 1851, Isaac Ebey's wife Rebecca and their two young sons, Eason Benton and Jacob Ellison Ebey, left their Missouri home in May and headed west. Rebecca Ebey's brother, Thomas S. Davis, apparently also made the overland trip that year, having claimed 114 acres next to Isaac Ebey by February 1852.[36] The Ebeys traveled overland from their Missouri farm with Walter C. and Mary Black Ross Crockett and their children and one grandchild (Charles, Susanna H., Hugh, John and his wife Ann, and their one-year-old son, Samuel D. Crockett). After seven long months of tedious travel, Rebecca Ebey and her young sons and the Crocketts approached Puget Sound from the Cowlitz River and spent the winter of 1851-1852 in Olympia before being transported in a flat-bottomed scow (in two trips) to a landing (Davis's Landing, presumably near the north end of the Davis Donation Land Claim) on the west end of Penn Cove on Whidbey Island in March 1852.[37] In the summer travel season of 1852, Rebecca Ebey's mother (Harriet Davis) and

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[35] Isaac N. Ebey to W. S. Ebey, April 25, 1851, W. S. Ebey Papers and also Meany Papers, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.
[36] Isaac Ebey to Winfield S. Ebey, February 2, 1852, Winfield Ebey Papers, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.
[37] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey" (July 1916), 241 and (April 1917), 245-246; Walter C. Crockett to Harvey Black, October 15, 1853, Crockett Papers and Samuel D. Crockett to Edmond Meany, March 2, 1916, Meany Papers, both in Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.

brothers (John E. and James) joined the stream of emigrants heading west. Harriet Davis, sadly, died on the plains. Thomas Davis apparently met Rebecca's two brothers on the plains that summer; all three wintered in the Willamette Valley before arriving on Ebey's Prairie in April 1853.[38] Also in 1853, two cousins of Isaac Ebey's emigrated west from the Midwest: George W. P. Ebey and Royal Ebey.[39]

The next year, 1854, after delaying travel west until they received a reasonable price for the family's farm in Missouri, Jacob and Sarah Ebey, Isaac Ebey's parents, headed a small group of family members and friends overland to Puget Sound. Their party included Isaac Ebey's siblings—Winfield Scott, Elizabeth Ruth, and Mary Ebey Wright; Mary Wright's two children, Almira (known as "Myra") and James K. Polk (called "Polk"); George Wesley Beam, a cousin of Isaac Ebey; and Jack Lesley, a friend of Jacob Ebey's who had twice crossed the plains, and his wife and three children, all bound for California; and James J. Wood, a friend visiting from the East who decided to travel with the Ebey entourage. Walter Crockett, Jr., the youngest brother of Samuel B. Crockett, and Urban E. Bozarth, a family acquaintance from Adair County, Missouri, and the future husband of Mary Ebey Wright (who divorced her first husband), also emigrated to Puget Sound in 1854.[40] Nearly thirty Ebey and Crockett family members and friends migrated overland to the Pacific Northwest, primarily to the Penn Cove area of Whidbey Island, between 1851 and 1854.

These new arrivals continued to promote the idea that farming around Penn Cove offered a new and better life. Just like Isaac Ebey, seasoned sixty-seven-year-old Walter C. Crockett, Crockett family patriarch, expressed sincere enthusiasm about his new home on Whidbey Island—even after spending two years farming his land claim near Admiralty Head southeast of Ebey's Landing. "I am still very much pleased with my move and think my prospects are very fair at least to make a good living and do it with more ease than any place I have ever lived," Crockett wrote in an October 15, 1853 letter to Dr. Harvey Black, his nephew. "Any man that will persue a proper course heare . . . will not only make [a] living but must become wealthy," Crockett asserted. "When I look back to

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[38] Isaac Ebey to Winfield S. Ebey, March 22, 1853, Winfield Ebey Papers; Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey" (January 1917), 53, 61 and (April 1917), 133, 140, 144.
[39] George Ebey, after visiting the Rogue River Valley in southern Oregon and then California, came to Port Townsend in 1855. He and his cousin George Beam acquired land on Protection Island, near the entrance of Discovery Bay on the northeast Olympic Peninsula, but sold it in 1858 and returned to Winchester, Illinois. Kibbe, "Diary of Colonel Isaac N. and Mrs. Emily Ebey" (July 1942), 301; Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey" (July 1916), 242, 245-46.
[40] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey" (July 1916), 242; Doyle and Dykes, *The 1854 Oregon Trail Diary of Winfield Scott Ebey,* 4-10; Gerald Baydo, "Overland from Missouri to Washington Territory in 1854," *Nebraska History* 52: 1 (Spring 1971): 65-66.

Montgomery County, Va. and think of the rout that I traveled to get to this point, I am almost surprised to think that I am alive and almost as much surprised that I have got as much in my hands as I have. I never was more contented and happy than I am at this time," the sage and contemplative Crockett concluded.[41] Along with his letter, Walter Crockett sent a long, detailed description of the overland route taken by his party, which he offered to his nephew as a personal guide and for publication in a local Virginia newspaper. Although Dr. Black never emigrated to the West, his uncle's testimonial about life on Whidbey could have hardly been more compelling.

Other early settlers likewise praised their new home in letters to relatives back home. In a January 1854 letter to his mother in Massachusetts, E. Holbrook, the brother of settler and sea Captain Richard Holbrook, wrote of his new home on Penn Cove in glowing terms: "There are a number of harbors [around Puget Sound] as good as anyone could ask for. . . . The soil is rather poor [around the sound], not much if any better than in New England." However, he added, "the best soil I have seen is on [Whidbey] Island; it is considered the best in the Territory."[42] Winfield Scott Ebey echoed these same sentiments in a letter written around the fall of 1856 to his Aunt Mary L. Eason in Missouri. "The crops here have been abundant. It is the best country for wheat I ever saw as well as for all the small grains and vegetables. All kinds of stock do remarkably well." Comparing Whidbey Island with his old home in Missouri, Winfield concluded that: "I find this a better place to make money than Missouri and an easier place to live. The excellent health one enjoys makes life more agreeable."[43]

Several other families and individuals, in addition to the Holbrook, Ebey, and Crockett families, arrived on Penn Cove and the nearby prairies in the early 1850s. Some stayed only briefly or until the Indian troubles in 1857 and then moved away. Others marked their land claims and began to establish roots. In 1851, Dr. Richard Hyatt Lansdale filed his first claim at nearby Oak Harbor. A year later, Lansdale abandoned this claim (after an earlier settler claimed ownership of the same land) and filed another claim for land at the head of Penn Cove.[44] In 1852, several other emigrants arrived, including Samuel Hancock, Daniel Show, Samuel Howe, John and William Alexander, Jacob Smith, Nathaniel D. Hill, William B. Engle, Thomas Coupe, and Robert Fay.

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[41] Walter Crockett to Dr. Harvey Black, October 15, 1853, Crockett Papers, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.

[42] E. Holbrook, "A Pioneer Writes to His Mother," *Told by the Pioneers: Reminiscences of Pioneer Life in Washington, Vol. 2,* edited by F. I. Trotter, F. H. Loutzenhiser, and J. R. Loutzenhiser (N.p: Works Project Administration, c. 1938), 153-54.

[43] Quoted in "Young Ebey Writes from Ebey's Prairie," *Spindrift Two* 9: 3 (Winter 1986), 25.

[44] Kibbe, "Diary of Colonel Isaac N. and Mrs. Emily Ebey," 310; George Albert Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island* (Coupeville, WA: Island County Historical Society, 1934), 17.

In early 1853, three men on Whidbey Island "chartered the brig *J. C. Cabot* to [sail] to the Columbia River [and return with] families . . . to reside on the island; perhaps 30 or 40, which will be a great addition to our little settlement," Rebecca Ebey wrote in her diary.[45] On April 22, the brig *Cabot* arrived in Penn Cove from the Columbia River with several families, those of John Kellogg, James Busby, Thomas Hastie, Henry Ivens, John Dickenson, Rebecca Maddox and five children, and Mrs. Grove Terry and daughter Cloe, and R. L. Doyle. Dr. John Coe Kellogg, a *Cabot* passenger, settled on a claim located on Admiralty Head near the Crockett family holdings.[46] Several other families and unmarried men arrived in 1853, including John and Jane Kinneth,[47] Joseph Smith (who claimed land on the prairie that now bears his name), the Eli Hathaway family, the William Robertson family, John and James Davis, Robert Hill, Richard Holbrook, Isaac Power, John Condra, Hill Harmon, and B. P. Barstow.

Settlers usually selected acreage and began making improvements to their land, especially if they arrived during the busy summer months, a few weeks or even months before they actually filed for a donation land claim. Many even stayed for several years before filing their claimed land. The earliest arrivals filed a claim for 320 acres (if unmarried); if married, their wife could file for an additional 320 acres.

Many of the first Anglo-American settlers around Penn Cove traveled overland to the Pacific Northwest. On the final leg of their journey, they came to Whidbey Island by way of several different routes. Some navigated down the Columbia River to the Cowlitz River, ascended that river, and traveled overland to the southern end of Puget Sound. From there they traveled by ship or canoe, often paddled by local Indians, to Port Townsend and then Ebey's Landing. Alternatively, they may have sailed directly from Olympia to Whidbey Island (like the Crocketts) or from Olympia to the small village of Seattle, and then on to Penn Cove (like John and Jane Kinneth). For a brief period in the mid-1850s, a few emigrants, such as Winfield Ebey, traveled from the Columbia River south of present-day Walla Walla, Washington, over the Cascade Mountains to Fort Steilacoom on Puget Sound, by way of the so-called Naches Pass Trail.[48]

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[45] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey" (April 1917), 133.

[46] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey" (July 1916), 241; Edmond S. Meany, *History of the State of Washington* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1909), 227; Kinneth, "Early History of Whidby Island," Meany Papers; John A. Hussey and James N. Gibson, "A Short History of Fort Casey, Washington," typescript (San Francisco: National Park Service, June 1955), 10.

[47] Although this name is often spelled "Kineth," the correct spelling appears to be "Kinneth." Early maps of the Penn Cove area showing donation land claimants spell John Kinneth with a double "n." Jane Kinneth, spelled her name with a double "n" when she signed her reminiscences of her early years living on Penn Cove.

[48] Crockett to Black, October 15, 1853, Crockett Papers; Alice Kellogg Cahail, "Whidbey Island," typescript (pp. II: 45), Cahail Papers, Special Collections, University of

In many respects, the Ebeys, Crocketts, and several other early settlers on the prairies around Penn Cove typified overland emigrants and the pattern of migration to the Pacific Northwest. Like the majority of westward travelers, these early Whidbey Island settlers emigrated west in small groups comprised of family and friends. Kinship served as the organizing principle for roughly half of all emigrants traveling to farming regions in the West during the first decade of westward migration. A Crockett Prairie settler of 1852, Grove Terry encouraged his younger brother, Charles Townsend Terry, and other family members to join him on Whidbey Island. Charles Terry, Caroline Terry Kellogg, and Chloe Ann Terry Doyle, who all settled on the prairies south of Penn Cove, were siblings. In fact, some of the Kellogg and Terry family members traveled overland together in the same wagon company.[49] Likewise, in 1852, William Ballinger Engle traveled overland to Ebey's Prairie with the Nathaniel D. and Sallie Hill family.[50] The wife of Joseph S. Smith (who settled on Smith Prairie), was the sister of Jane Kinneth, who settled with her husband, John Kinneth, on land next to the Smiths on the south shore of Penn Cove.[51] In 1853, Samuel Libbey came to Puget Sound by ship with his brother-in-law, Captain Benjamin Barstow; both settled on land to the west of Penn Cove.[52] The influence of kinship on emigrant migration sometimes extended over several years. Samuel Hancock, who arrived on Whidbey Island in the early 1850s, persuaded his brother, Frank Hancock and his wife Hester Ann and four children to emigrant to the island in 1862.[53]

The early settlement of Penn Cove and the surrounding prairies by kin and friends, brought together by the ardor of overland travel, conforms to a prevalent pattern characteristic of western migration. It also suggests the transplantation of already existing communities of people bound together by familiar cultural attitudes, social customs, and political expectations, along with tools and technologies of farming and building and road construction. Although

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Washington Libraries; Doyle and Dykes, *The 1854 Oregon Trail Diary of Winfield Scott Ebey,* 26-28; Mrs. John Kinneth, "Early History of Whidby Island," June 10, 1907, Meany Papers (Box 94), Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.

[49] Cahail, "Whidbey Island," typescript (pp. I: 36, II: 1), Cahail Papers; Engle, "Recollections: Mr. and Mrs. R. L. Doyle," *Island County Times,* August 31, 1928; Flora Pearson Engle, "Recollections: Engle-Terry," *Island County Times,* July 20, 1928; "Pioneer Profiles: Chole Terr[y] Chronicles the Hazards of Crossing the Plains by Covered Wagon," *Island County Times,* February 10, 1955.

[50] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey" (January 1917), 52.

[51] Flora Pearson Engle, "Recollections: Smith Prairie," *Island County Times,* August 3, 1928.

[52] Flora Pearson Engle, "Recollections: Samuel Libbey," *Island County Times,* November 3, 1928.

[53] The Frank and Hester Ann Hancock family moved to Stanwood, Washington, after about ten years on Whidbey Island. One daughter Annie Hancock Libby, lived at Coveland and, later, West Beach; she died in San de Fuca in 1940. Cahail, "Whidbey Island," typescript (II: 43), Cahail Papers.

distant from their native homes in the United States, the Ebeys, Crocketts, and so many other families and friends who first settled on Whidbey Island transported and transplanted their world of farming. This became the nucleus of a new community on the prairies around Penn Cove.

The Ebeys and Crocketts typified emigrants in another respect. Like the majority of emigrants to the West, they were native-born Anglo-American farming families. Isaac Ebey was a sixth-generation American, having descended from Mennonite Theodorus ("Darst") Eby, who had immigrated to the United States in 1717. Walter C. Crockett and his wife Mary Black Ross Crockett were both native-born Americans, born in Virginia. Walter's father had fought in the Revolutionary War; Mary Black Ross's father had founded Blacksburg, Virginia. (A sizeable minority of emigrants heading for California during the Gold Rush years had been born outside the United States and, thus, broke from this pattern.)[54] In an 1857 census of Island County, census-taker Winfield S. Ebey reported that only thirty-one residents (or 17 percent) were "aliens" born outside the United States. Aside from those children and young adults who had been born in the West between the early 1840s and 1857, the majority of native-born Island County residents in 1857 were born in Illinois, New York, or Virginia.[55] John Kinneth, born in Germany, was unique among the first settlers in this island farming community.

The 1857 census of Island County (then comprising present-day Island, Snohomish, and part of Skagit counties), compiled by Winfield Ebey, notes a considerable number of county residents born in Oregon Territory and California. This suggests that some Whidbey Island residents had not traveled directly to Puget Sound, but had settled first and had children in Oregon and California locations before arriving on this far northwestern island.[56] For still others, for whom there is often only a faint record, Whidbey Island became just another temporary stopping place in their pursuit of the ideal new home.

Although the great majority of early settlers on Whidbey Island were Anglo-Americans, a few were not. A man known as "old Antone" lived in a small, unsubstantial building at Ebey's Landing in the 1850s. Winfield Ebey mentions him from time to time as a "steward," presumably of the Ebey land. He died in January 1862 and was apparently buried at Sunnyside Cemetery "up near the

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[54] Before the Civil War, slavery and certain laws in Oregon Territory restricted black migration to the West.

[55] At that time, Island County encompassed a much larger area, including present-day Island, San Juan, Whatcom, Skagit, and Snohomish counties. Winfield Scott Ebey, "Census Report, Island County, 1857," November 20, 1857, Washington State Archives, Olympia, Washington.

[56] Winfield Scott Ebey, "Census Report, Island County, 1857," November 20, 1857, microfiche, Washington State Archives, Olympic, Washington.

Indians."[57] In the mid-1860s, James Henry and Louise Swift relied on the services of Lizzie Ross, an African American woman who had worked for the Swift family in Massachusetts for many years before coming west with them. In 1870, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that twenty-nine "colored females" and twenty-three "colored males" lived in Island County.[58]

Finally, the Ebey and Crockett families exemplified another dominant westward migration pattern. Like the majority of overland emigrants, they moved several times before settling down permanently. Jacob and Sarah Ebey were born, respectively, in Pennsylvania in 1793 and Virginia in 1796, moved to Franklin County, Ohio, where they parented their first six children. They then moved to Sangamon County, Illinois, around1829 or 1830, where their seventh and last child was born. In the mid-1830s, they moved to Missouri before finally migrating to Puget Sound. Similarly, Walter C. Crockett, born in 1786 in Shawsville, Virginia, and his wife Mary, born in 1798 in Blacksburg, Virginia, moved to Boone County, Missouri, then to Putnam County, Missouri, in 1833, before migrating to Oregon. Many other prairie settlers around Penn Cove, like the John and Frances Alexander family, the John and Caroline Kellogg family, John and Jane Kinneth, and Richard Holbrook, also moved a few times before deciding to set down roots on Whidbey Island. Despite the commonalties between many early prairie settlers around Penn Cove and the thousands of other overland emigrants, the first Anglo-American residents of this island community deviated from the pattern of western emigration in some notable and interesting ways. First, although the majority of emigrants moved west, generally, along the same degree of latitude, many of the first settlers on the prairies around Penn Cove migrated several degrees north of their native states and states of temporary residence before arriving at Whidbey Island. Illinois, Virginia, New York, Pennsylvania, Missouri, Iowa, and Ohio, from which the great majority of prairie settlers hailed, all lay several degrees of latitude south of Whidbey Island. On the other hand, many of the non-native-born "aliens" and a few native-born settlers that Winfield Ebey recorded in his 1857 census of Island County originated from either the maritime provinces of eastern Canada or the New England states of Maine, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. Thomas and Maria Coupe, Richard Engle, Eli and Clarissa Hathaway, Sallie Hill, Richard and Harriet Holbrook, Samuel and Sarah Libbey, and J. H. Swift all hailed from northeastern provinces or states. By 1860, a number of unmarried laborers and tradesmen, such as ship carpenters, had arrived

[57] As quoted in Kibbe, "Diary of Colonel Isaac N. and Mrs. Emily Ebey," 307.
[58] According to Hattie and Louise Swift, Lizzie Ross did the household washing every Monday and collected a pail of buttermilk every Wednesday for churning into butter. Louise Butler Swift to "Mother," March 5, 1865 and Hattie M. Swift to Ella, July 16, 1865, Swift Papers; Meeker, *Washington Territory West of the Cascade Mountains,* 30.

on Whidbey Island, as well as nearby Camano Island, from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.[59]

This somewhat unusual movement of emigrants to the Penn Cove area from the Northeast coast suggests a second break from the dominant pattern of westward migration. Several early Penn Cove settlers did not migrate overland, but traveled by ship to Whidbey Island. In 1850, William Ballinger Engle, in the company of Nathaniel, Robert, and Humphrey Hill and their father, all traveled by steamer from New York City to the Isthmus of Panama. After crossing this to the Pacific Ocean by horse and by boat, the small entourage continued north up the West Coast (to San Francisco) aboard a steamer. Two years later, after spending time in the California gold fields, Engle and the three Hill brothers took passage on the *Cabot,* sailed by Captain Thomas Coupe, to Whidbey Island.[60] In 1852, Thomas Coupe claimed land on Penn Cove. Future Penn Cove settlers, Captains James Henry Swift and Richard Holbrook also arrived by ship and claimed land on the cove around the same time.

In 1853, Maria Coupe and her four children traveled from New England by ship around Cape Horn to San Francisco, where her husband Captain Thomas Coupe met his family and brought them by ship to their new home. In 1853, Captains Howard Bentley Lovejoy and Thomas F. Kinney also sailed directly to Penn Cove, and soon made their home there. Many years later, in 1868, Thomas Kinney's wife, Mary Elizabeth Houghton, and young daughter, Julia, traveled from the Kinney family home in Nova Scotia to San Francisco. Three years later, they sailed to Utsalady, where Thomas met them and brought them to the home he had built on land purchased from Captain Coupe on Penn Cove in Coupeville.[61]

The wives and families of several other sea captains also came to Whidbey Island from eastern states or Canadian provinces. Whidbey's close proximity and orientation to the sea may have been a key factor in encouraging sea-faring families to move to the island. Captain Simeon Bartlett Kinney's family of eight came by ship on a five-month voyage from Boston around Cape Horn to Whidbey Island, arriving there in the spring of 1853.[62] Around the same time, Captain Kinney also brought Thomas Grennan and Thomas Cranney, Penn Cove settlers and, later, mill owners on Camano Island, as well as other settlers to Whidbey Island on his ship. Harriet Low, the bride-to-be of Penn Cove donation

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[59] White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own,* 184-85; Doyle and Dykes, *The 1854 Oregon Trail Diary of Winfield Scott Ebey,* 7-8; Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey" (July 1916), 245-46; U.S. Census Bureau, Island County, Washington, Census, 1860.
[60] Engle, "Recollections: Engle-Terry," *Island County Times,* July 6, 1928.
[61] Lillian Huffstetler to Gretchen Luxenberg, July 12, 2002, National Park Service, Seattle.
[62] Flora Pearson Engle, "Recollections: Coupeville Some Sixty Years Later," *Island County Times,* May 4, 1928; Jimmie Jean Cook, *"A particular friend, Penn's Cove": A History of the Settlers, Claims and Buildings of Central Whidbey Island* (Coupeville, WA: Jimmie Jean Cook, 1972), 37-38.

land claimant Richard B. Holbrook, came by ship from New England via the Isthmus of Panama to Whidbey Island in the early 1860s. In 1863, Louisa Butler Swift, the young wife of Captain James Henry Swift, also came to Whidbey Island by ship directly from the East Coast to San Francisco, then sailed on to Utsalady on nearby Camano Island. From there the party canoed to Penn Cove. Not only the Swifts, but also their household furnishings came to Whidbey Island by ship, several weeks later, and not by wagon.[63]

Several families and a few single men settled on land claims and began to establish roots in the early 1850s. In February 1853, Rebecca Ebey noted in her diary that "we only number six families and about 15 children at present. . . . There are bachelors and youths residing on the island . . .."[64] Roughly forty persons occupied the cove and prairies in early 1853. By the fall that year, ten to twelve families and a total of eighty people lived in the present Ebey's Landing NHR. Whidbey Island was home to nearly half of the 195 white inhabitants who lived in all of Island County. The spurt in growth around Penn Cove coincided with the general growth in population in Washington Territory. In late 1853, fewer than 3,000 white settlers lived in all of the territory. One year later, newly appointed Governor Isaac Stevens counted 7,559 persons, including both white settlers and Indians, in the territory.[65]

The arrival of new emigrants slowed in the mid-1850s after the expiration of the 1850 Donation Land Claim Act removed the incentive of free land to settlers. At the same time, troubles between white settlers and northern Indians in the region, particularly those who came to Whidbey Island, not only served as a disincentive to potential settlers, but also probably provoked some settlers on the prairies around Penn Cove to move away.

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[63] E. W. W right, editor, *Lewis & Dryden's Marin History of the Pacific Northwest* (New York: Antiquarian Press, Ltd., 1961), 188; Records of the Daughters of the Pioneers of Washington, "Captain James Henry Swift and Family, Whidby Island Pioneers," in *Told by the Pioneers, Reminiscences of Pioneer Life in Washington, Vol. 2,* edited by F. I. Trotter, F. H. Loutzenhiser, and J. R. Loutzenhiser (N.p., c. 1938), 128; Donald M. Bullock, "Coupeville—Island's Oldest Settlement Founded by Sea Captains 100 Years Ago," *Whidbey Island Centennial Supplement,* May 31, 1951; Alice Kellogg Cahail, *Sea Captains of Whidby Island* (Pullman WA: Washington State University Press, 1901), unnumbered pages; Louisa Butler Swift to her mother, July 12, 1863 and August 3, 1863, and James Henry Swift to Mrs. Butler, September 9, 1869, all in Louisa Swift Papers, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.

[64] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey" (April 1917), 133.

[65] Precise population numbers are difficult to ascertain in the 1850s, since the size of Island County kept changing between 1853 and 1861 when it achieved its present size. James G. Swan, *Northwest Coast,* 401; "Island County Is 100 Years Old Early This Month," *Island County Times,* January 8, 1953; Meeker, *Washington Territory West of the Cascade Mountains,* 30; Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island,* 27, 37.

Fenceless Neighbors Clash in the Isaac Stevens Indian War

On December 26, 1854, Isaac Stevens, who was serving as both Governor of the Territory of Washington and Superintendent of Indian Affairs, concluded the Treaty of Medicine Creek. That treaty became the blueprint for several subsequent treaties negotiated by Stevens with other Indian groups throughout Washington Territory. This treaty provided for $32,500 (as well as an additional sum intended to prepare a reservation for occupancy) as total compensation for Indian relinquishment of all claims to the land. Under the terms of the treaty the Indians were to move onto designated reservations, maintain the peace, free their slaves, and not trade outside the United States. Additionally, the treaty provided that the Indians were to retain the right to hunt and fish in areas where they had traditionally hunted and fished.[66] During the next three years 5,000 Indians would be relocated to reservations throughout Washington Territory.

Shortly after the treaties had been signed and some resident Indians had relocated to reservations, gold was discovered on the east side of the Cascade Mountains in Washington Territory near Fort Colville. News of the discovery drew Anglo-American settlers from the Puget Sound area across the Cascades and directly through the newly formed reservation. This trespass, coupled with an abiding sense by some Indian residents that the terms of the treaty were unacceptable, engendered a growing disenchantment. Additionally, Indians residing in or near the new gold discoveries had previously only experienced the passage of settlers headed for the west side of the mountains. The discovery of gold changed that. Resident Indians were suddenly seeing an influx of miners intent on making use of the land for more than mere passage. The multiple activities associated with the creation of an infrastructure necessary for permanent settlements were observed: building construction, road construction, freight movement. The local Indians perceived their interests and their very way of living to be in direct conflict with those of the newcomers.

The uneasiness escalated and erupted into violence in the summer of 1855. Reports were received in Olympia that Indians had killed miners from

[66] The United States Supreme Court would later review these treaties, and conclude that the "Stevens Treaties" required an apportionment between Indians parties to the treaties and non-treaty fisherman of the harvestable portion of each run of anadromous fish that passes through the "usual and accustomed" fishing grounds. The court concluded that in accordance with the treaties, the maximum share of treaty Indians of the anadromous run is 50 percent of the harvestable portion. The treaty Indians could be apportioned less than 50 percent where a less amount would suffice to provide a moderate living. *United States v. State of Washington*, 626 F. Supp. 1405 (1985). The complete texts of the treaties can be found at 10 Stat. 1132 (Treaty with the Nisqualys); 12 Stat. 927 (Treaty with the Dwamish); 12 Stat. 933 (Treaty with the Makah); 12 Stat.951 (Treaty with the Yakima); and 12 Stat.971 (Treaty with the Qui-nai-elts).

Seattle who were headed for the newly discovered gold fields. Upon learning of the attack, A. J. Bolon, subagent for the Yakama Indians, went to the Yakama Indian Reservation to investigate, and was killed. On October 3, 1855, Major Granville O. Haller, United States Army, left The Dalles with a detachment of soldiers. He encountered dissatisfied resident Indians in the Yakima Valley, the encounter became violent, and Major Haller retreated. Shortly after this encounter, according to the available record, approximately 1,500 Indian residents of Puget Sound gathered under the leadership of "chiefs" Leschi and Quiemuth (both of the Nisqually Tribe) and "Chief" Nelson of the Green River Indians, and attacked settlers in the White River Valley.

Winfield Ebey, a settler on Whidbey Island, Washington Territory, memorialized the uneasy feelings in his October 29, 1855, diary entry. He recorded that people on the Sound were concerned about Indian violence east of the mountains. And their feelings of concern were exacerbated by news that regular army forces had been defeated by the Indians in several engagements.

In November 1855, twenty-five men of Volunteer Company I established a blockade on the Snohomish River to stop any Indians traveling into the Puget Sound area from eastern Washington. In February of the following year, volunteer companies G, I, and a portion of Company H established military posts at Bellingham Bay, Port Townsend and on Whidbey Island (presumably at the west end of Penn Cove). Other elements of the Northern Battalion of the volunteers moved up the Snohomish River to occupy fortifications both above and below Snoqualmie Falls. (Fort Tilton was situated three miles below Snoqualmie Falls and Fort Alden was located above the falls). After negotiating the treaties but presumably before the widespread hostilities began, Isaac Stevens left twenty-one-year-old Secretary of the Territory Charles H. Mason in charge of Washington Territory, and traveled to Washington, D. C. to arrange for congressional funding to complete the railroad surveys of the territory. Secretary of the War Davis opposed the funding and prevailed, forcing Stevens to pay for them personally. (When the Washington Territory Legislature later enacted the statute incorporating the Northern Pacific Railroad Company, Isaac Stevens was the first name that appeared on the list of the fifty-eight incorporators.) When Stevens returned to Washington Territory on January 19, 1856, he discovered that young Charles Mason had solicited the aid of six companies of "home guard" volunteers. Greatly disturbed, Stevens disbanded these groups and recruited his own companies of volunteers.[67]

Additionally, arrangements were made to retain the Indian leader Patkanim and a band of Snoqualmies to fight the territorial volunteers. Rather than receiving a salary, the Indians were paid $20 for each enemy Indian head and $80 for the head of each enemy chief. Secured heads were to be transported

[67] Meany, *History of the State of Washington*, 183.

aboard the sloop-of-war *Decatur* to Olympia, where each Indian received payment.[68]

Apparently, Isaac Stevens not only had difficulty with the Indian residents of the territory, but also with the United States Army, and the territorial judiciary. In late 1855 or early 1856, Major General John E. Wool, commander of the army's Department of the Pacific with headquarters in San Francisco, traveled to Washington Territory to disband Stevens's volunteers. Upon his departure, Wool left orders with his subordinate officers that they were not to cooperate with Stevens's volunteer forces; in fact, they were to disarm them. Wool asserted that the Indians had a right to all lands west of the Cascade Range.

Stevens apparently ignored the United States and prosecuted his war. In early April of 1856, Stevens declared Pierce County to be under martial law, and in May proclaimed that Thurston County was also under martial law. Stevens then ordered several men arrested, suspecting them of colluding with the enemy since the parents of the men's wives were Indian residents. Edward Lander, who up to that time had been serving as a captain in Stevens's volunteer army, left his post and resumed his prior role as territorial judge to grant a writ of habeas corpus freeing the men. He then ordered Stevens's arrest for contempt of court. For unknown reasons, George W. Corliss, the United States Marshall who would later be on the scene when Isaac Ebey was killed, was unable to arrest Stevens on the contempt charge.

Stevens responded by dispatching a force of mounted volunteers to Olympia, where a "Captain" Bluford Miller forcibly entered the law office of Judge Lander, arrested the judge, and incarcerated him at Camp Montgomery. By July, Judge Lander was back on the bench. He immediately summoned Stevens, who made an appearance by counsel before the court, and was fined $50 for contempt. According to a later biographer of Stevens, "By a letter of the secretary of state, dated September 12, Governor Stevens was informed that the president, while having no doubt of the purity of his motives, disapproved his action in proclaiming martial law." Undeterred, Governor Stevens later pardoned himself of the contempt conviction.[69] In November of 1856, Governor Stevens disbanded the volunteer service.

Throughout 1856 and into 1857, isolated incidents of settler-Indian hostilities continued in the Puget Sound area. The settlers attributed most of these incidents to Indians residing further to the north beyond the Straits of Georgia. On October 20, 1856, men on the ship *Massachusetts* reported an encampment of "northern Indians" at Port Gamble, and ordered them out of the area. When the Indians declined, the ship's crew opened fire with a howitzer, killing approximately twenty-five native residents. In early 1857, "northern" Indians reportedly captured

[68] Meany, *History of the State of Washington*, 183.
[69] Hazard Stevens, *Life of Isaac Ingalls. Stevens, Vol. II* (Seattle: Ye Galleon Press, 1978), 250.

the schooners *Ellen Maria* and *Blue Wing*, and killed the crew and passengers. The ships were never recovered.

Blockhouse Era

These and other incidents made settlers on the prairies and near the waterfront around Penn Cove increasingly anxious about their safety. In response to the settlers' perceived threat of attack by "northern Indians," the farmers around Penn Cove constructed several small "forts" that incorporated blockhouses. In early November 1855, when the threat of Indian attack first seemed possible, the farmers of Ebey's Landing in two weeks hurriedly built two blockhouses on the Walter Crockett land claim at the southern end of Crockett Prairie near Crockett Lake. Four farm neighbors, John Kinneth, Joseph Smith, Samuel Hancock, and son John Crockett, helped Walter Crockett erect this hefty hewn log structure with a slightly overhanging second floor that had walls punctuated by gun apertures. When completed, these hipped-roof blockhouses stood at the corners of a stockade of logs, set upright and side-by-side in a filled-in ditch, rising to a height of about twelve feet above ground level. The stockade, occupying an area of about 40 x 60 feet, enclosed a communal dwelling, blacksmith building, and a well.[70] Inside this so-called "fort," all the neighboring families took up residence each night and returned to their homes during the day to carry on with farm work. About sixty years later, Samuel D. Crockett, around six years old at that time, recalled that this fortification served as the nocturnal home of several settlers for many months.[71]

Other Ebey's Prairie and Crockett Prairie farmers built similar blockhouse structures in the mid-1850s. The John Crockett land claim (on northern end of Ebey's Prairie) became the site of another one or two blockhouses.[72] John Crockett's "fort," a large square building, apparently accommodated several

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[70] One of the Crockett blockhouses was moved and exhibited at the 1909 Alaska-Yukon Pacific Exposition in Seattle, then later moved to Point Defiance Park in Tacoma, Washington. The other blockhouse was "restored" by the Depression Era Works Progress Administration around 1938 and given by then-owners, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Armstrong, to the Whidbey Island Chapter of the Daughters of the Pioneers of Washington for their future care-taking. "Indian Uprisings Give Momentum to 'Blockhouse Era' in Middle 1860s [*sic*], *Island County Times,* March 17, 1955; "Pioneer Defenses Against the Indians: Ancient Blockhouses on Whidbey Island," no date [early 1900s], Pamphlet File, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.
[71] Crockett to Meany, March 2, 1916, Meany Papers.
[72] George Albert Kellogg, *A History of Whidbey Island* (Coupeville, WA: Island County Historical Society, 1934), 48-49; "Indian Uprisings Give Momentum to 'Blockhouse Era' in Middle 1860s [sic]," *Island County Times,* March 17, 1955.

families. At least one of these structures appeared on the General Land Office surveyor's map, completed in the late 1850s.[73]

John Alexander erected a blockhouse on his land claim, similar to the Crockett blockhouses but with a gabled, instead of a hipped roof. Like the Crockett fortification, the Alexander blockhouse was of hewn logs enclosed by a stockade of upright logs, set in a filled trench. According to pioneer Whidbey Islander, Richard Holbrook, and as reported by a Historic American Building Survey (HABS) historian in 1934, the original stockade enclosed several acres and extended on the north to the water line of Penn Cove.

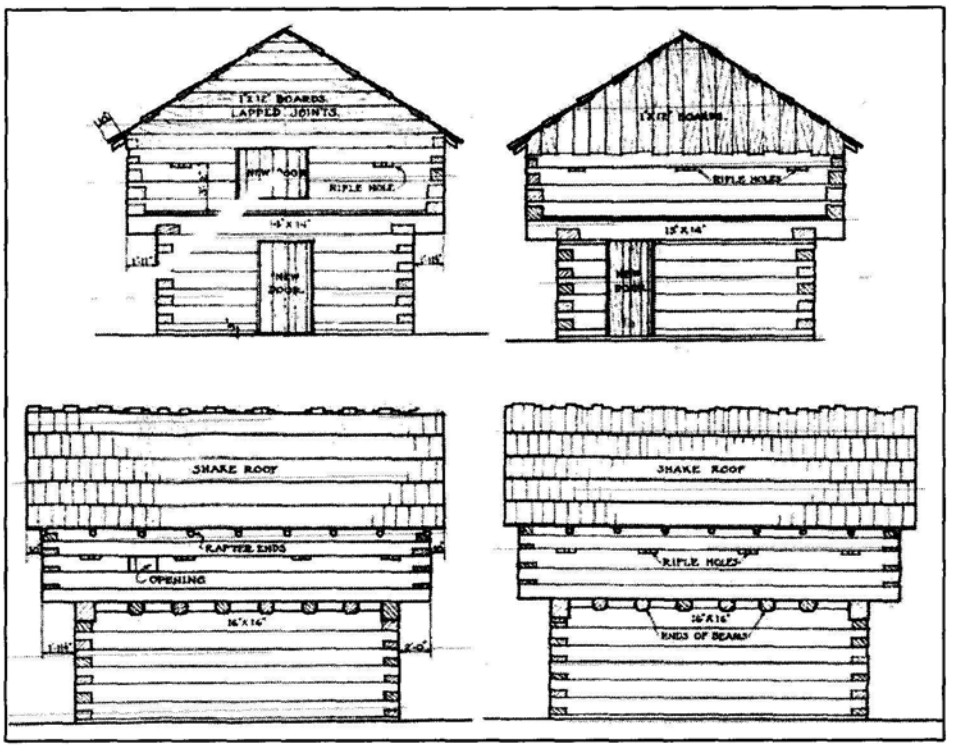

Illustration 3. This architectural elevation of the Alexander Blockhouse, constructed in the mid-1850s, was completed by the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1934, during the Great Depression. HABS #39-W-8, Library of Congress. Copy at Special Collections, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington.

[73] Surveyor General, Map of Township 31 North, Range 1 East, Willamette Meridian (Olympia, WA: Surveyor Generals Office, 1856).

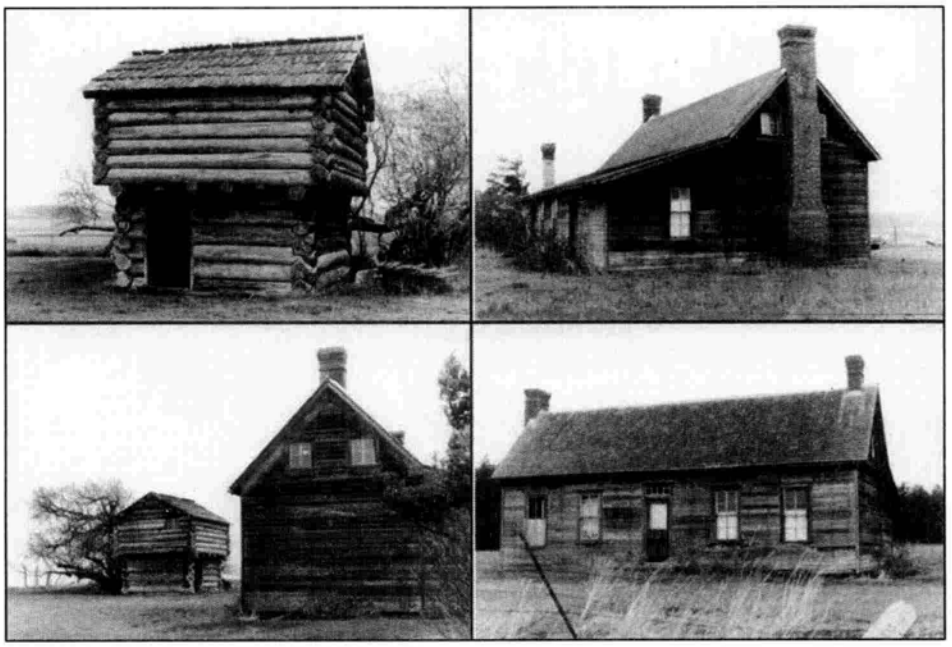

Illustration 4. Jacob Ebey Home and blockhouse. Clockwise from upper left: West-facing elevation of blockhouse, south-facing elevation of residence, north-facing elevation of residence with blockhouse in middleground, and east-facing elevation of residence. Photograph by Evans-Hatch & Assoc., 2001.

The land claim of Jacob and Sarah Ebey (parents of Isaac Ebey) became the site of four blockhouses that were also positioned at the corners of a stockade constructed of closely aligned upright logs. It is believed, although not known with certainty that the Ebey fortification was built in 1855. It is possible, however, that the stockade encircling the blockhouses may not have been built until immediately after the death of their son Isaac in August 1857.[74] (The extant Ebey blockhouse appears to be a re-creation of the original after a 1930s rehabilitation effort occurred.)

Prairie residents took additional action to protect themselves against the perceived threats of possible Indian attack. In early December 1856, Isaac Ebey, at the request of neighbor Walter Crockett, evidently wrote a letter to Lieutenant Colonel Silas Casey, in command of the army's Puget Sound District, asking that a

[74] Walters, *Historic Structures Condition Assessment and Evaluation Report,* 31; "Whidbey's Blockhouses, Older Than State," *Spindrift Two* 12: 2 (Fall 1988): 8.

military reservation be established on Whidbey.[75] In response to the continuing reports of incursions from the north, Fort Townsend (near Port Townsend) was established, with Major G. O. Haller in charge. Fort Bellingham was created and commanded by Captain George E. Pickett.

Ebey, in reality, may have asked for the development of an existing military fortification at the head of Penn Cove just northeast of Coveland. More than three years earlier, on February 21, 1854, President Franklin Pierce had ordered that a military reservation be established on Penn Cove. Comprised of around 640 acres, the trapezoid-shaped "Penn's Cove Military Reservation" was apparently never developed, possibly due to conflicts over ownership. A Government Land Office surveyor's map, dating from 1858, shows the reservation occupied by buildings (probably homes) and improved farmland belonging to Robert Holbrook, S.D. Howe, "M. Shove" (or "Show"), and Smith, Allen, and T. Hartie. Apparently, the government did nothing with this reserve for the next eight years. On August 31, 1866, the federal government relinquished the reserve.[76]

Death of Isaac Ebey

No one imagined that the clash between cultures in the Isaac Stevens Indian War would so poignantly touch the lives of Penn Cove and prairie residents as it did in the summer of 1857. In the dark early morning of August 11, Isaac Ebey was at "the cabins," as his home was known, asleep with his wife, his two sons (aged thirteen and eleven), his daughter (aged eight), and two guests, George W. Corliss, United States Marshall for Washington Territory, and his wife. According to Corliss's account transmitted to the newspaper, *Pioneer and Democrat,* in a letter one week later, dated August 18, 1857, a barking dog awakened the household about 1:00 a.m. Ebey went outside, after which Corliss reported hearing two shots.

[75] As early as October 1853, Crockett and the other settlers around Penn Cove had anticipated the relocation of a military post from Steilacoom on Puget Sound to the head of Penn Cove, but this had never happened. L. A. Kibbe, "Notes on Documents: Diary of Colonel Isaac N. & Mrs. Emily Ebey," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 33 (July 1942), 316; Walter Crockett to Harvey Black, October 15, 1853, Crockett Papers, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.

[76] "Military Lands, Washington Territory (Admiralty Inlet," photocopy of map and legal description, National Park Service, Ebey's Landing NHR, Coupeville, Washington; General Land Office, "Township No. 32 North, Range No. 1 East, Willamette Merican," Map, November 30, 1858.

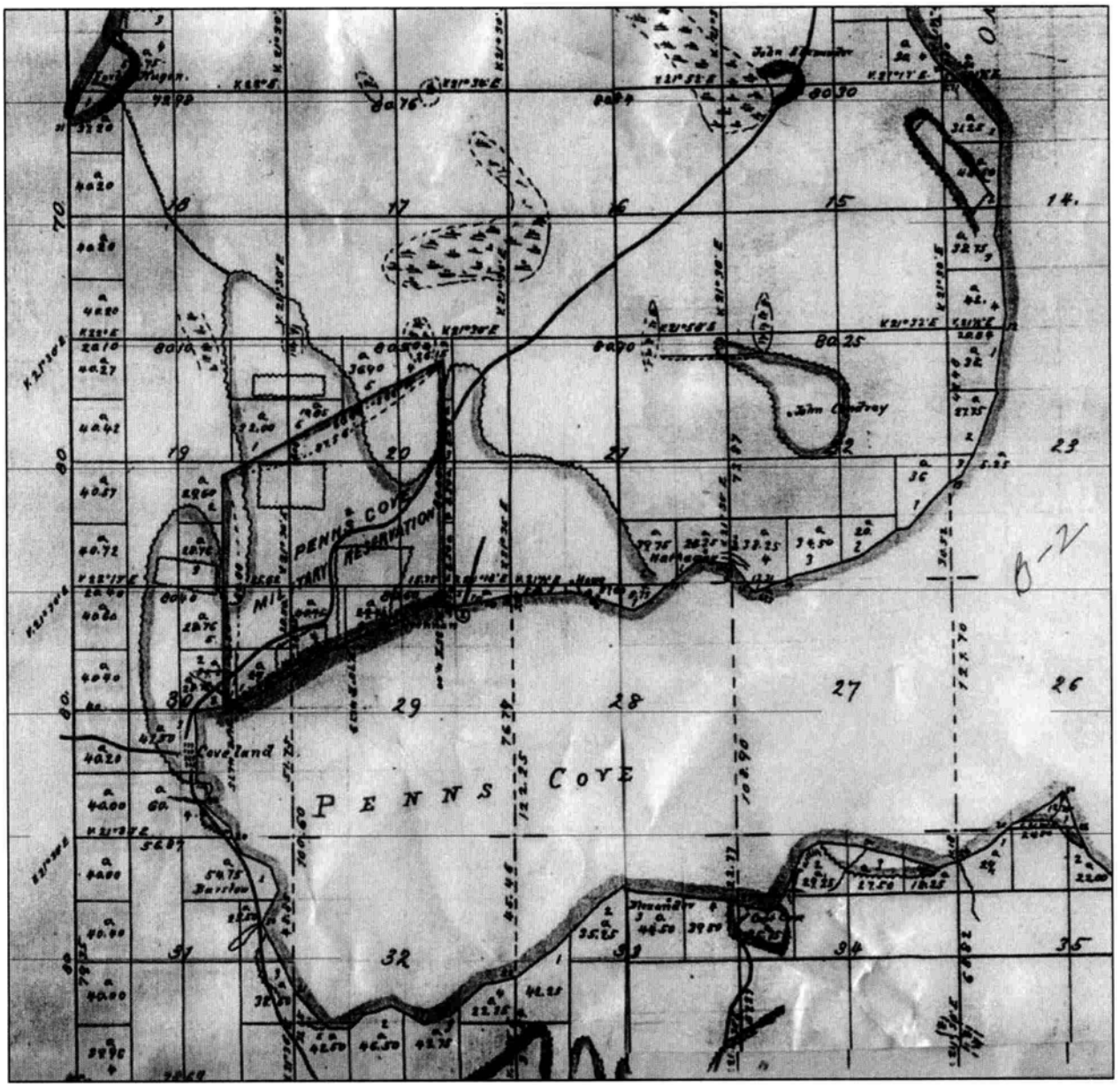

Illustration 5. This 1858 GLO surveyor's map shows the "Penns Cove Military Reservation" on the northern shore of Penn Cove in the vicinity of present-day San de Fuca. Surveyor General Office, Township 31 North, Range 1 West, Willamette Meridian, November 24, 1858. Copy at Bureau of Land Management, Portland, Oregon.

Corliss and his wife, along with Ebey's wife and children, gathered in a room toward the rear of the house. Shortly after hearing the shots, they saw Isaac Ebey through a window with an apparent head wound. More shots were heard. Mrs. Corliss escaped through the rear window, followed shortly by Emily Ebey[77] and the three Ebey children. Corliss held the door to the room closed as the other occupants fled, listening to intruders vandalize the house. Corliss then followed the others through the window, and accompanied Emily Ebey and her children into the nearby woods. Mrs. Corliss fled to a neighbor's house where she summoned help. When neighbors returned, Ebey's body was found near the house, with his head removed, as was the custom of Indians throughout the Northwest for thousands of years, and as was encouraged by Stevens's own volunteer army.[78] Common mythology holds that the August 11, 1857, killing of Isaac Ebey was in retribution for the attack on the Port Gamble Indians by the crew of the *Massachusetts.*

British Governor Douglas, in Victoria, later reported to Lt. Col. Thompson Morris of the United States Army that he had learned Indians from Russian America had killed Isaac Ebey. Governor Douglas had received this report from a resident of Fort Simpson, where the Indians were reportedly seen passing through the area with Ebey's head. The report further indicated that the killers were thought to be members of the Tlingit tribe.[79]

The territorial government and military officials took immediate action after the unexpected death of Isaac Ebey. In late August, Secretary of Washington Territory Charles H. Mason dispatched a message to Whidbey Island settlers. "By the steamer I send to the island a case of muskets and 2,000 caps. There is no ammunition at my disposal." At Fort Townsend, across Admiralty Inlet, Major Granville O. Haller wrote, in a August 21, 1857 letter, of "the occupation of the blockhouse near Point Partridge by soldiers."[80]

Shocked by the death of Isaac Ebey, Whidbey Island residents also acted immediately to protect themselves against possible future "attacks" by Indians.

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[77] Rebecca Ebey, Isaac's first wife, died in 1852.

[78] Numerous sources tell and retell the story of Isaac Ebey's death, suggesting the tremendous impact it had on local residents for decades, as well as its attention grabbing. More reliable sources include: Henry N. M. Winton, "The Death of Colonel Isaac N. Ebey, 1857," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 33 (July 1942), 325-47; Robert Hill, "The Murder of Colonel Ebey," in *Told By the Pioneers: Reminiscences of Pioneer Life in Washington, Vol. 2.,* edited by F. L. Trotter, F. H. Loutzenhiser, and J. R. Loutzenhiser (N.p.: Works Progress Administration, c. 1938), 115-18.

[79] Report of Lt. Col. T. Morris, 4th Infantry, Commanding, to Major W. W. Mackall, Asst. Adj. Gen., U. S. Army, San Francisco, California, from Headquarters Fort Vancouver, W. T., November 7, 1857, in *House Executive Documents,* 35 Congress, 1 session, XII [serial 958] no. 112.

[80] Quoted in Lucille McDonald, "Violent Death Ended Isaac' Ebey's Career," *Seattle Times,* March 5, 1961.

"After burying the colonel, we proceeded to build the blockhouses," Walter Crockett, Jr. wrote many years later.[81] Crockett was probably not referring to the Crockett blockhouse fortification, since, according to reliable sources, it had been constructed before Isaac Ebey's death. It is possible that John Davis, Isaac Ebey's former brother-in-law, may have built a blockhouse soon after Isaac's death in 1857. In October 1857, Winfield Scott Ebey, Isaac's younger brother and Davis's former brother-in-law, wrote in a letter that he was negotiating for lumber to build a stockade.[82] The extant Davis blockhouse, a hewn log structure with a gable roof, was erected on the Davis land claim, adjoining the land of Jacob and Sarah Ebey. (This blockhouse was "restored" in 1931; it now stands on the Sunnyside Cemetery grounds.)[83]

During the period of Indian unrest in the mid-1850s, sometimes called the "Blockhouse Era," settlers reportedly built a total of eleven blockhouses on five land claims near Coupeville. (A blockhouse also stood in Crescent Harbor, near present-day Oak Harbor, on the Wallace donation land claim, and near Partridge Point (northwest of Penn Cove on the Strait of Juan de Fuca). Settlers also built blockhouses in other parts of Washington, such as at the Cascades on the Columbia River and at Centralia.)[84]

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[81] Quoted in "The Blockhouse Period of Whidbey Island," *The Argus,* December 23, 1899.
[82] *Ibid.*
[83] "Old Blockhouse Will Be Marked by Whidby Club," *Seattle Times,* August 23, 1931.
[84] The Alexander blockhouse was moved (before 1934) to its present location in Coupeville on the grounds of the Island County Historical Society. The Davis blockhouse was later owned by the Cook family, who built a fireplace of rocks with clay and mortar and the chimney of sticks and clay in the structure, according to a HABS historian in 1934. In 1930 the Ladies of the Round Table "restored" this blockhouse in honor of pioneer mothers. It stands today on land adjoining the Sunnyside (formerly Valley View) Cemetery. Frank Pratt, Jr., future owner of the Jacob and Sarah Ebey property, "restored" the ruins of the remaining Ebey blockhouse before 1934. In 1955, the Daughters of the American Revolution of Everett placed a bronze plaque on the blockhouse commemorating its history. Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island,* 48-49; "Indian Uprisings Give Momentum to 'Blockhouse Era' in Middle 1860s [*sic*]; "Pioneer Defenses Against the Indians"; Susan Lord Currier, "The Block House Period of Whidby Island," *The Argus* December 23, 1899; "Col. Jacob Ebey Blockhouse Dedicated in Ceremony Observing 100 Years," *Island County Times,* January 6, 1955; "Whidbey's Blockhouses Older Thank the State," *Spindrift Two* 12: 2 (Fall 1988), 8-9; Edmond Meany, "When the Early Settlers Built Blockhouse Forts," typescript, Meany Papers, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries; "Historical Sketch" and plans, Jacob Ebey Blockhouse (Survey No. 39 W 16), John Alexander Blockhouse (Survey No. 39 W 8), and the James Davis Blockhouse (Survey Nol 39 w 11), Historic American Buildings Survey, 1934, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.

A New Cultural Landscape Emerges

These blockhouse and stockade structures, although impressive in size, were small in number compared to the growing number of Anglo-American buildings—rudimentary homes and essential agricultural outbuildings for storing and processing food—spread across the prairie landscape around Penn Cove. The early Penn Cove settlers often built their homes and farm buildings near water sources and the edge of prairies, where nearby fir and cedar trees provided some of the materials these first inhabitants used to construct outbuildings and fences and where these buildings did not occupy potential farmland.[85]

New arrivals built small, modest, sparsely furnished log cabins. The first home of Walter and Mary Crockett, raised in June 1852, was a small log structure on the low-lying neck of Admiralty Head.[86] William B. Engle, settler of 1852, built a log cabin on his donation land claim on south Ebey's Prairie.[87] Grove Terry, 1852 donation land claimant on Crockett Prairie, erected a cabin on his land.[88] In 1852, Captain George Bell lived in a log cabin at the head of Penn Cove.[89] The John Alexander family built their first log cabin, probably in 1852, just before the birth of their son in November of that year. The Alexanders apparently built a second log cabin in February 1853 (in downtown Coupeville near the present-day wharf and also near the site of Starwana Tavern in 1928). In May that year, C. Ivins also raised a house of logs, Rebecca Ebey wrote in her diary.[90] Captain Thomas Coupe erected a small log cabin in 1853 on the south side of Penn Cove.[91] That same year, Jacob Smith built a log cabin on his claim on the north side of Penn Cove.[92]

Joseph Smith built small log cabins for his family and for John and Jane Kinneth just before the Smith and Kinneth families arrived on their adjoining claims south of Penn Cove near Smith Prairie. The Kinneth cabin had no furniture at first. Their bed was built into the side of their cabin on Snakelum

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[85] Walter C. Crockett to Dr. Harvey Black, October 15, 1853, Crockett Papers, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.
[86] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey" (July 1916), 245; Hussey, "Short History of Fort Casey, Washington," 10-11.
[87] Carl Engle, "Whidby Island Loses Historic Old Home," *Island County Times,* April 6, 1944; "Wm. B. Engle House," historical sketch and drawings (N.p.: Historic American Building Survey, Office of National Parks, Buildings, and Reservations, 1934) in Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.
[88] Engle, "Recollections: Engle—Terry," *Island County Times,* July 20, 1928.
[89] Kinneth, "Early History of Whidby Island," Meany Papers; Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey" (July 1916), 244.
[90] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey" (April 1917), 135, 148.
[91] Flora Pearson Engle, "Recollections: Coupeville Some Sixty Years Ago, Our Patronym, Capt. Coupe," *Island County Times,* March 23, 1928.
[92] Cahail, *Sea Captains of Whidby Island,* unnumbered pages.

Point, supported by a post set in the ground. Jane later remembered cooking over a campfire. The Kinneths did not order furnishings from San Francisco until the following spring, Jane Kinneth recalled many years later.[93] (This cabin burned in 1856.) The first home of Captain Howard B. and Calista Kinney Lovejoy, built in 1853 or 1854 on the east side of Coupeville, was built of logs.[94] E. Holbrook, the brother of Richard B. Holbrook, wrote in a January 1854 letter to his mother in Massachusetts that he and his brother "have a good comfortable log cabin to live in" on the north side of Penn Cove.[95]

Floors in these early cabins were of rived (split lengthwise) boards or puncheons split from logs. During the summer of 1852, Ebey family members also helped the Thomas Alexander family build its home by "riving boards and hewing puncheons," most likely used for flooring.[96] Shingles may have been used on the roofs of these early log cabins. As early as 1852, the Ebeys used and loaned their froe (used to split shingles) to a neighbor.[97]

The first home of Dr. John and Caroline Kellogg, who arrived in the spring of 1854 on their land claim near the southern tip of Admiralty Head, was also a small log cabin. For nearly a year, their house had only a fireplace for cooking and no floor. Later a large brick oven, made from bricks crafted by Samuel Hancock, was built in the yard, where Caroline Kellogg cooked for her family, as well as Dr. Kellogg's patients, and visitors. In the spring of 1855, John Kellogg bought milled lumber for the floor in Olympia, which was shipped by schooner, thrown overboard near Admiralty Head, and collected on the beach by Kellogg.[98] Kellogg also built a log hospital on the family's land at Admiralty Head, used to care for the sick and convalescing patients.[99]

The home of Isaac and Rebecca Ebey was among the earliest dwellings on central Whidbey Island. Located near Ebey's Landing and the extant Ferry House,[100] "the cabins" as the house was known, stood as a covey of what Winfield

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[93] Kinneth, "Early History of Whidby Island," Meany Papers.

[94] Jimmie Jean Cook, *"A particular friend, Penn's Cove": A History of the Settlers, Claims, and Buildings of Central Whidbey Island* Coupeville, WA: Island County Historical Society, 1973), 38 (photo).

[95] E. Holbrook, "A Pioneer Writes to His Mother," *Told By the Pioneers: Reminiscences of Pioneer Life in Washington, Vol. 2*, F. I. Trotter, F. H. Loutzenhiser, and J. R. Loutzenhiser, editors (N.p., c. 1938), 153.

[96] Farrar, "Documents: Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey," (October 1916), 311.

[97] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey" (October 1916), 311 and (April 1917), 126; .

[98] Cahail, "Whidbey Island" (I: 2-2A, I: 4) , Cahail Papers.

[99] Hussey, "Short History of Fort Casey, Washington," 10-11.

[100] In January 2003, historical architect and former surveyor, Frederick Walters plotted the approximate location of the cabins using an 1856 survey map of the Ebey's Landing area. He determined that the cabins, the nearby garden, and a spring were all on the southeast side of the ravine behind the Ferry House, at the approximate location noted on the

Scott Ebey called "old houses."[101] For a few months after Rebecca joined Isaac Ebey on their land claim in the spring of 1852, the Ebey couple and their two young sons probably occupied Isaac's original rudimentary shelter. For many weeks during the summer of 1852, Isaac worked "at board timber" in preparation for erecting a new house for his family or for adding to the existing dwelling.[102] In August and September of 1852, Isaac Ebey, assisted by neighbors, began cutting and hauling logs for the new building. On October 2, Rebecca Ebey wrote in her diary that, with the help of twelve men, "our two new houses [were] raised today," presumably of log or with log framing, since Rebecca mentioned hiring an Indian to chink and daub these new buildings.[103] In mid-October, Isaac Ebey was busy "sawing timber" in a stand of timber nearby, possibly for an addition to "the cabins."[104] At the end of October, the Ebeys hurried to finish an additional "little room" for the young Bonsel (also spelled "Bonswell") family, who had been camping for some time at the bottom of the hill below the Ebeys' house.[105]

Isaac Ebey continued working on their house into November, cutting and hauling "board timber" to the house and constructing a chimney with mortar in one of the rooms of the house. On November 19, 1852, Isaac Ebey finished "our house today and we moved in it," Rebecca Ebey exclaimed. "It is very comfortable to sit by a good fire place once more."[106] Rebecca immediately began "scrubbing off the floors" of their new house, while, over the next couple of weeks, a hired Indian shaved boards, nailed them over cracks, and daubed the walls. Before the end of 1852, the Ebeys, with the help of neighbors and hired men, completed a sizeable smokehouse and a cookhouse (with chinked walls).[107]

Other small buildings with separate entrances or small additions to one of the two main houses in the cabins may have been added over the next five years. At the time of Isaac Ebey's death in August 1857, there were at least three or four houses or parts of these houses, each with an outside entrance. A small bedroom

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monument erected by Robert Pratt in the early 1900s that still stands and notes the existence of "the cabins." Frederick L. Walters to Gretchen Luxenberg, January 3, 2003. Also see Frederick L. Walters, *Historic Structures Condition Assessment and Evaluation Report, Ebey's Landing National Historic[al] Reserve.* Seattle, WA: National Park Service, December 2002, 15-15.

[101] Winton, Harry N. M., ed., "Extracts from the Diary of Winfield Scott Ebey," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 33 (July 1942), 335.

[102] Victor J. Farrar, editor, "Documents: Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey," *Washington Historical Quarterly* 7: 3 (July 1916), 245, 246.

[103] Farrar, "Documents: Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey," (January 1917), 45.

[104] Farrar, "Documents: Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey," (January 1917), 48.

[105] *Ibid.,* 49. 51. The Bonsel family, which lived on Ebey's Prairie only briefly, left Whidbey Island in November 1852 for Port Townsend and then San Francisco.

[106] *Ibid.,* 47-52.

[107] *Ibid.,* 43-44, 53-54; Farrar, ed., "Documents: Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey," *Washington Historical Quarterly* 7: 4 (October 1916), 310.

was accessed from a porch. Another small room, unoccupied and nailed shut, also opened from the outside. Another outside door may have entered the cookhouse/kitchen. The front door entered the main house from a long porch, and opened into a hall. A room for dining and cooking (with crockery and glassware) was entered from the hall, opposite the front door. The parlor also may have been entered from the hall. A door from the parlor opened into a bedroom. A sketch of the cabins done by Charles T. Terry in 1916 shows a gable roof over rooms on both sides of an open porch, suggesting that the cabins may have resembled a so-called "dog-trot" style of building.

Sleeping rooms in "the cabins," possibly only two, must have been quite small and cramped, and barely able to accommodate the Isaac Ebey family of five in 1857 (Isaac, his second wife, Emily,[108] as well as Eason, Ellison, and Anna Scounce, Isaac's stepdaughter and Emily's daughter from a previous marriage). When visitors stayed overnight with Isaac and Emily Ebey, the couple may have slept in the parlor. The home of Jacob and Sarah Ebey atop the nearby ridge to the west, even though it sheltered eight Ebey family members in 1857, was often used to house the family's overnight guests.[109]

Jacob and Sarah Ebey, Isaac Ebey's parents, may have decided to replace or enlarge their existing dwelling in order to accommodate the sizeable number of their extended family, plus frequent visitors to their house and to Isaac Ebey's "cabins." In the fall of 1856, Isaac Ebey helped his father hew logs, presumably for a new or enlarged dwelling on Jacob and Sarah Ebey's property. (These hewn logs would not have been for the Ebey blockhouse, since it was erected a year earlier).[110]

Although some early Ebey's Landing settlers continued to occupy and improve their original log cabin dwellings, beginning in the mid-1850s, others replaced their log dwellings with homes built primarily of milled lumber. In 1854 or 1855, Captain Thomas Coupe and his wife, Maria, built a "frame house." Boards that were reportedly planed by hand and shipped from San Francisco were probably used for the exterior walls, horizontal clapboard sheathing, and all finish work on the interior, while hewn timbers were probably used for sills and roof plates.[111] (The present board and batten siding is, no doubt, a later addition.) The John and Jane Kinneth family reportedly built a "frame house" on land purchased

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[109] *Ibid.,* 335-36, 339; Winton, ed., "Letter from Marshall Corliss, August 18, 1857," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 33 (July 1942), 340-44.
[110] L. A. Kibbe, "Diary of Colonel Isaac N. and Mrs. Emily Ebey, 1856-1857," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 33 (July 1942).
[111] Cahail, *Sea Captains of Whidby Island,* unnumbered pages; "History of Coupeville's Founders as Seen by Grandfather's Clock," *Island County Times,* June 25, 1853.

from adjoining property owner, Joseph Smith, probably immediately following the destruction of the Kinneth's log home by fire in 1856.[112]

Around the same time, the William B. Engle family also replaced their log home with a "frame house," according to Mrs. Engle and son Carl Engle. All structural members of the Engle's house were hewn timbers, most likely fashioned on Whidbey Island, whereas the finish lumber came by ship from New England around to the Northwest, Carl Engle reported in 1934. This one-and-one-half-story dwelling had six rooms, three on the ground floor and three on the second floor. The interior of the upper-story rooms was reportedly finished with split cedar boards and hewn timbers. William Engle, a carpenter and millwright, constructed the house. Before its demolition around 1944, the Engle's gabled-roof "wood-frame" dwelling, clad with wood shingles and pierced by a central brick chimney, had a one-story shed-roof portion across the rear with a small shed-roof portion attached to it, possibly added later. Windows were six-over-six, double-hung sash. (A third so-called "frame house" was erected at Crescent Harbor around the same time.)[113]

The Coupe and the Engle houses were typical of dwellings constructed or improved, beginning in the 1850s. The methods of construction and materials used for improving settlers' original log dwellings or replacing them with second-generation homes often incorporated hewn timbers for sills, roof plates, and other structural members, as well as planks (two to four inches thick) or boards (less than two inches thick) milled far away and shipped to Whidbey Island (often by one of the Penn Cove resident ship captains) or milled locally. The two-story, gabled-roof Island County Courthouse, built in Coveland in the mid-1850s and described and drawn by Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) architects in 1934, had hand-hewn timbers as structural members, such as studs, beams, and rafters. The gabled-roof Thomas J. Dow house on Front Street in Coupeville, constructed in the mid-1850s, used vertical wall boards, one and one-quarter inches thick and twelve inches wide, overlaid with clapboard siding, according to HABS architects who drew plans and details of the building in 1934.[114]

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[112] Flora Pearson Engle, "Recollections: Smith Prairie," *Island County Times,* August 3, 1928.
[113] The Engle House was demolished around 1944. Historic American Building Survey, "Wm. B. Engle House, Historical Sketch" (Project #39-W-15), May 1934, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries; Carl Engle, "Whidby Island Loses Historic Old Home," *Island County Times,* April 6, 1944; "Founder of Coupeville Leaves the Sea to Build First Frame House," *Island County Times,* September 1, 1955.
[114] Historic American Building Survey, "Island Court House—Coveland, Historical Sketch" and plans and elevations (Project #39-W-7), April 1934 and "Thos. J. Dow House" (#39-W-12), Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.

Building Materials and Methods

Rough-milled lumber did not become locally available until around 1856, when the Grennan and Cranney Mill began operating at Utsalady on nearby Camano Island. Before this, however, Whidbey Island residents, especially sea captains who made Penn Cove their home, had access to lumber milled in New England, San Francisco, and from early mills on Puget Sound. In the mid-1840s, Michael T. Simmons with others had begun operating a water-powered gristmill and sawmill, the Puget Sound Milling Company, at New Market (Tumwater) on the southern end of Puget Sound.[115] A large quantity of wood shingles was being produced (reportedly thirty thousand from one cedar tree) at the head of Puget Sound when emigrants first settled on Whidbey Island, according to 1852 settler, Walter Crockett.[116]

Following the 1848 discovery of gold in the Sierra Nevada foothills east of San Francisco, the demand and high prices paid for lumber needed to construct buildings in the booming Bay City of twenty thousand people had created an enormous market that attracted lumberman from far and wide and stimulated the construction of lumber mills in the Pacific Northwest. Only six months after Andrew Jackson Pope and Frederic Talbot of East Machias, Maine, arrived in San Francisco in December 1849, they began to receive shipments of lumber from relatives in Maine. Between 1849 and 1852, roughly ninety vessels loaded with lumber sailed from Maine to California, where great demands garnered tremendous profits for lumber mill owners and brokers. Pope and Talbot, along with other San Francisco lumber brokers, also brought cargoes of lumber from New Zealand and Tasmania to meet Bay Area demands. Pope and Talbot, as others like them, saw little future in continuing to ship lumber to San Francisco from such great distances, and turned to Oregon forests for sources.

At least five mills were built along the Columbia and Willamette rivers in Oregon Territory in 1849 and 1850 for the express purpose of exporting to San Francisco. By 1851, the Hudson's Bay Company was operating a steam-powered mill, the Vancouver Island Steam Mill Company, on Vancouver Island. Continuing demands for forest products such as piles, hewn timbers, and lumber in San Francisco gave birth to several embryonic mill settlements around Puget Sound in the early 1850s, including Port Townsend, Port Discovery, Seattle, Appletree Cove, Port Madison, Port Ludlow, and Teekalet, renamed Port Gamble in 1869. Here, Pope and Talbot began operating the Puget Mill Company in the fall of 1853.[117] In 1857, James G. Swan reported that there were "about thirty-

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[115] Cahail, "Whidbey Island" (I: 34), Cahail Papers; Edmond Meany, "First American Settlement on Puget Sound," *Washington Historical Quarterly* 7: 2 (April 1916), 139, 140-41.
[116] Walter Crockett to Harvey Black, October 15, 1853, Crockett Papers.
[117] Thomas R. Cox, *Mills and Markets: A History of the Pacific Coast Lumber Industry to 1900* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington, 1974), 46-63; Iva L. Buchanan, "Lumbering and

seven mills in the Territory, the largest of which is that of Pope, Talbot & Co., under charge of Captain J. P. Kellar, at Teekalet, on Hood's Canal."[118]

Whidbey Island residents, strategically situated at the head of the Strait of Juan de Fuca and of Puget Sound, at the crossroads of this lumber trading entrepot, were within easy sailing distance of a number of mills around Puget Sound. Many of the Penn Cove sea captains used their vessels to bring lumber to the island. Lumber used to build the Engle's house may have come from New England, and most likely was hand planed at the building site. Lumber for the Coupe house also may have been obtained in New England or in San Francisco, Olympia, or one of the Puget Sound mills visited by Captain Coupe. (Some accounts claim that the Coupes used redwood from California to build their house.) In the spring of 1855, Dr. John Kellogg bought 18-inch-wide boards (for flooring) in Olympia and had them shipped to Whidbey Island on a schooner. When the ship ran close to shore near the Kellogg's home near Admiralty Head, the crew threw the lumber overboard, and Dr. Kellogg plucked them from the water and carried them up the hill to his house.[119]

With the founding of the Grennan & Cranney Mill at Utsalady, around 1856, Whidbey Island residents had access to locally milled rough lumber from nearby Camano Island. Around this time, after the John and Jane Kinneth log cabin burned in 1856, "rough lumber" was obtained from the Grennan & Cranney Mill to build the Kinneth's second home on Snakelum Point, according to a HABS architect who drew plans of the Kinneth house in 1934. That year, the Kinneth's son, John Kinneth, reported that "all siding, trim, doors, and windows were hand planed and fitted by carpenters on the job." Located about 300 feet from Penn Cove, the one- and one-half-story, gabled-roof Kinneth house, with a one-story shed-roof portion along the side, featured horizontal "bevel" siding, six-over-six, double-hung sash windows, and a front door with sidelights centered on the façade.[120]

Many of the timber products from the Grennan & Cranney Mill appear to have been spars, piles, and some rough, unplaned lumber intended primarily for markets beyond Puget Sound, and even beyond the United States. As early as 1853, vessels had shipped piles for wharf building in San Francisco from Utsalady on McDonald (Camano) Island.[121] By 1854, the firm of Campbell and Grennan cut piles and square timbers at Polnell Point, and also delivered large spars to the

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Logging in the Puget Sound Region in Territorial Days," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 27: 1 (January 1936), 34-53.

[118] Swan, *Northwest Coast,* 399.

[119] Cahail, "Whidbey Island" (I: 2A), Cahail Papers.

[120] Historic American Building Survey, "John Kinneth House," plans and elevations (Project #39-W-19), July 1934, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.

[121] From an account written by Calista Kinney, who stopped at Utsalady on her way to Whidbey Island in 1853; in Cook, "*A particular friend, Penn's Cove,*" 38.

French and English governments, according to early Oak Harbor settler John Izett, who worked for the firm in 1854.[122] This export activity included an 1855 shipment of spars by Captain James Henry Swift on the *Anadyr* from Utsalady to shipyards in Brest, France. On a second voyage, Swift captained the *Anadyr* with a load of spars for the British Navy at Falmouth, England, as well as for the shipyard at Brest, France. Some of these spars, it has been said, were exhibited at the exposition in Paris and attracted worldwide attention.[123] In 1855 and 1856, Captain Thomas Coupe transported spars on his three sloops from Utsalady to the shipyards in Brest, France for the French government. And, again in 1863, spars were shipped to France from Utsalady. These shipments marked the beginning of early emigrants' ability to not only satisfy their local needs, but to began focusing on business opportunities beyond the island.

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[122] John M. Izett, "Whiby Island history," *Washington Historian* 1 (July 1900): 200.
[123] E. W. W right, ed., *Lewis & Dryden's Marine History of the Pacific Northwest* (New York: Antiquarian Press, Ltd., 1961), 188; Records of the Daughters of the Pioneers of Washington, "Captain James Henry Swift and Family, Whidby Island Pioneers," in *Told by the Pioneers, Reminiscences of Pioneer Life in Washington, Vol. 2,* ed. F. I. Trotter, F. H. Loutzenhiser, and J. R. Loutzenhiser (N.p., c. 1938), 128; Donald M. Bullock, "Coupeville—Island's Oldest Settlement Founded by Sea Captains 100 Years Ago," *Whidbey Island"* Centennial Supplement, May 31, 1951; Cahail, *Sea Captains of Whidby Island,"* unnumbered pages.

Chapter 5

Establishing Roots: Anglo-American Farming 1850s-World War I

Following the Indian troubles in Washington Territory in the mid-1850s, which slowed the arrival of new emigrants to Whidbey Island and even prompted a few settlers there to leave, the number of inhabitants around Penn Cove gradually began to increase. In November 1857, only three months after the killing of Isaac Ebey, Winfield Scott Ebey, Isaac's younger brother, completed a census of all Island County residents, totaling 188 inhabitants.[1] Ebey provided a breakdown of their gender, age, marital status, and native- or foreign-born origin.

Men: Total = 132 (70%)

5 yrs.	5-9	10-24	25-49	50	Married	single	Native	foreign
8	13	27	74	10	26	106	105	27

Women: Total = 56 (30%)

5 yrs.	5-9	10-24	25-49	50	Married	single	Native	foreign
14	6	12	19	5	28	28	52	4

Ebey's 1857 census reveals several interesting facts about the composition of Anglo-American residents in early Island County and, by deduction, the Penn Cove area. Many more single men lived in Island County at that time than both married and single women combined. A majority of these may have been working at the Grennan and Cranny mill at Utsalady; less than two years later, around fifty-five single men in their twenties and thirties were employed at this mill, according to the 1860 census.[2] The largest percentage of both men and women (49 percent) were from 25 to 49 years old. Despite the death of many women during childbirth, 10 percent of women in 1857 were fifty years old or older, whereas only 7 percent of the men had reached that age. Finally, the population of Island County in late 1857 was young, with nearly 43 percent of the 188 residents under the age of 25.

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[1] Winfield Scott Ebey, "Census Report, Island County, 1857," November 20, 1857.
[2] U.S. Census Bureau, "1860 Census, Island County, Washington Territory, Schedule 1," microfiche, Washington State Archives, Olympia, Washington.

One year later in 1858, the Island County tax assessor recorded nearly an identical count of county inhabitants. Roughly 180 white persons lived in the county (126 men and 52 women); 70 percent were men, one-quarter of whom were under the age of twenty-one. Although a few early Penn Cove settlers had left the island during the Indian War or died of diseases (tuberculosis, cholera, and other diseases), childbirth, or accidents during the 1850s, the continuing arrival of emigrants nearly doubled the white population of Island County. In 1859, around 270 inhabitants lived in the county. Roughly 140 Anglo settlers resided on Whidbey Island.[3] Nearly 125 of these residents lived on and around Penn Cove, occupying land in present-day Ebey's Landing NHR. If 1850 settler Isaac Ebey had lived until 1860, the then forty-two year-old farmer might have marveled at the increase in white inhabitants, from just a handful of emigrants to a small but growing rural community of farmers.

Despite the conflict between the original residents and the Anglo-American arrivals, the newcomers were determined to stay, make homes, and sink roots into the island's soil. More barns, houses, and fences appeared on the island's landscape, wagon roads to move farm produce to market were surveyed and cleared, religious services were offered in people's homes by traveling preachers, and children attended schools in unused extra rooms in various homes. Anglo-Americans had arrived; and so had American culture and its imprint on the landscape.

Early Farming

Many Anglo-American emigrants who settled on the prairies around Penn Cove were farmers who came west with the expectation of creating an easier life of farming than the one they had left behind. Emigrants to Oregon and Washington in the 1840s and 1850s settled on land that they believed was best suited to the continuation of their farming traditions. Like most other early settlers around Penn Cove (except the sea captains), members of the Ebey and Crockett families had farmed before moving to Whidbey Island. Even emigrants who had pursued other professions before moving west, like the ship captains and medical doctor John Kellogg, took up farming on land around Penn Cove. Because retail commercial activity and industry played a small role in the local economy for several years, only a handful of merchants, ship carpenters, blacksmiths, and other tradespeople lived around Penn Cove.[4] In November 1857, census-taker Winfield S. Ebey's list revealed the proliferation of farmers as

[3] Frederick Buerstatte, "The Geography of Whidby Island" (M.A. Thesis, University of Washington, 1947), 25; Marilyn Libbey Bailey. *Bow to Plow: Timber-Tillage & Taters* (Coupeville, WA: Island County Historical Society, 1995), 5.
[4] U.S. Census Bureau, Island County, Washington, 1860.

well as the small number of other professions pursued by Island County inhabitants.[5]

Farmers: 74	Merchants: 6
Clerks: 2	Millers: 3
Indian Agents: 3	Dairyman: 1
Carpenters: 2	Shipwrights: 2
Seaman: 4	Gunsmiths: 1
Blacksmiths: 2	Surveyors: 1
Sawyers: 3	School teachers: 1
Physicians: 1	Supreme Court members: 1
No occupation: 26	

About forty, or nearly half, of the seventy-four farmers in Island County had farms in or around Penn Cove, according to an 1860 census.[6]

After arriving on Whidbey Island, most of the earliest emigrants claimed land on the fertile, loamy soil of the prairies around Penn Cove, as the concentration of early land claims there testifies. As many earlier Whidbey Island visitors, like Archibald Menzies and Samuel Hancock, had observed, the open, treeless prairies seemed naturally suited for farming. One year after claiming land on Crockett Prairie, Walter Crockett noted that three different kinds of clover grew. Camas and ferns grew three feet high in places. Although the bracken ferns were as a "hemp pack" and their roots difficult to plow, Crockett felt that they did not injure crops as much as some other kinds of native vegetation.

The newcomers to the prairies wasted no time in planting seeds upon their arrival. Accounts of farming by Isaac and Rebecca Ebey in the early 1850s reveal that several crops were grown on the prairies by the early settlers, including wheat, onions, potatoes, and cabbage. In the fall of 1850, Isaac Ebey planted cabbage seeds on his land claim; he thinned and set out about 5,000 plants the next spring. By then he had already harvested about three and one-half acres of potatoes. Ebey's first planting and harvest had all been accomplished with no oxen, horse, cow, or plow, only a hoe "and the strength and will to work."[7] In early February 1852, Ebey, in a letter to his brother Winfield in Missouri,

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[5] Winfield Scott Ebey, "Census Report, Island County, 1857," November 20, 1857. Also see: Cathy Gilbert and Gretchen Luxenberg, "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Central Whidbey Island Historic District (amendment)" (Seattle, WA: National Park Service, 1998), Sec. 8: 36.

[6] This census listed individual farmers by name. U.S. Census Bureau, Island County, 1860, "Schedule 4: Production of Agriculture in Whidbey Island in the County of Island," microfiche, Washington State Archives, Olympia, Washington.

[7] Isaac Ebey to Winfield Ebey, April 25, 1851, Meany Papers (Box 72), Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.

explained that he intended to plant five or six acres of potatoes and harvest a thousand bushels of onions during the coming season.[8] Beginning in 1852, Ebey also planted vegetable seeds, including lettuce and tomatoes, for domestic use, in anticipation of his family's arrival.

In the summer of 1852, Rebecca Ebey began describing the cycle of farming activities in her diary. Cabbage plants were set out in early June. Potatoes were hoed through June and July. In late August and into September, Isaac Ebey and his neighbors, John Kinneth and Hugh Crockett, began breaking up the ground with a plow in preparation for planting wheat. Rebecca noted that plowing was interrupted one day in early September when Isaac "could not get the grass to burn and could not plow."[9] In late September, plowing continued on the Ebey and Crockett land claims, and the two families began digging potatoes. Hauling and chopping wood for fireplaces and stoves, especially in the fall and winter, kept the farmers busy when not occupied harvesting crops.

In January and February 1853, Rebecca Ebey hired local Indians to dig beds and set out onions, as well as harvest some onions and potatoes. She often hired local Indians to do some of the hoeing, planting, and other farm chores when Isaac Ebey was away from home. In late February, as the wheat planted the previous fall was "coming on," Isaac Ebey and a neighbor plowed and sowed more wheat. At the same time, Rebecca also began planting garden vegetables, including cabbage, lettuce, and tomato seeds.

March and into April were consumed with plowing and cutting up and planting potatoes, as well as onion and turnip seeds.[10] In a letter written to Winfield Ebey in Missouri in March 1853, Isaac reported that: "I am planting this spring about ten acres of potatoes. . . . Potatoes are worth $2.50 per bushel," he exclaimed. One month later, Isaac told Winfield that "our potatoes are coming up. Our wheat and barley and other grains, the first that ha[ve] been cultivated on the Island, look more promising than I have ever s[een] the same kind of crops in Oregon," Ebey exclaimed. "I think we will have an abundant harvest in proportion to the quantity of land sown." Isaac Ebey also noted the great demand for cattle, particularly oxen used in the timber industry, and the high price per yoke ($300) they would bring.[11]

A month later, Ebey expounded on the potential profitability of raising cattle. "The price of Cattle still Continues to keep high," Isaac wrote to Winfield.

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[8] Isaac Ebey to Winfield S. Ebey, February 2, 1852, Winfield Ebey Papers, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.
[9] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey," (January 1917), 45.
[10] Farrar, "Dairy of Colonel and Mrs. I. M. Ebey" (October 1916), 307, 311, 313 and (January 1917), 40, 41, 42, 44, 45 and (April 1917), 126, 132, 134, 135, 136, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 149-50, 152.
[11] Isaac Ebey to Winfield S. Ebey, March 22, 1853, Winfield Ebey Papers, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.

"Good A No. 1 Oxen seles for Three Hundred Dollars per yoke. Good cows at one hundred Dollars per head. I do not think the price will recede for many years," since the number of cattle in the Oregon country seemed to Isaac to be decreasing while the demand for them continued rising. "In making your preparation for a trip to this Country," Isaac advised his younger brother in May 1853, "you would do well to transfer every species of property you have into cattle, calves, yearling, two year olds. Turn every thing into Cattle, Sheep, hogs, horses. Claim house hold and kitchen furniture labor everything – put it all into young stock."[12] (About two years after arriving on Ebey's Prairie in 1854, Winfield Ebey, in a letter to a relative in Missouri, repeated the exclamations of his older brother about the success of raising cattle on the prairies around Penn Cove.[13])

Immediately after planting larger fields as well as house gardens in April and May, Ebey and his neighbors built fences to protect wheat and potato fields from wandering livestock. They dug holes for posts, then split, or malled, rails from felled cedar trees or "rail timber on the beach where there is an unusual quantity of drifted cedar timber," especially in the spring and after storms.[14] "Those plains," wrote Walter Crockett in October 1853, "is surrounded with fine fir and cedar timber we make our fencing of cedar."[15]

The early prairie farmers supplemented their diet with fruit, both native and introduced. In summer they gathered wild berries, just as the Indians had done, including strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, and gooseberries; in fall they picked huckleberries and cranberries.[16] In October 1853, Walter Crockett observed: "I have found more good, wild fruit heare than any place I have ever lived."[17] The prairie farmers also planted various fruit seeds and grafted trees soon after they arrived. In February 1853, young Eason and Ellison Ebey set out some raspberry and gooseberry bushes in the yard at their home above Ebey's Landing. That same month, Isaac Ebey planted some grafted fruit trees and vines—apples, pears, peaches, cherries, plums, and grapes—that he had apparently obtained during a recent trip to the Willamette Valley.[18] Obtaining seeds or stock sometimes proved difficult at first. The Crockett family had brought apple and other seeds with them. One Crockett neighbor (possibly Isaac Ebey) brought

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[12] Isaac Ebey to Winfield S. Ebey, April 20, 1853 and May 20 1853, Winfield Ebey Papers.
[13] Quoted in: "Ebey Letters Provide Glimpse of Pioneer Life 100 Years Ago," *Spindrift Two* 9: 3 (Winter 1986), 24-25.
[14] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey" (October 1916), 316 and (April 1917), 138; Crockett to Black, October 15, 1853, Crockett Papers.
[15] Walter Crockett to Harvey Black, October 15, 1853, Crockett Papers, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.
[16] Farrar, "Dairy of Colonel and Mrs. I. M. Ebey" (Oct. 1916), 311 and (Jan. 1917), 46.
[17] Crockett to Black, October 15, 1853, Crockett Papers.
[18] Rebecca Ebey recorded some of the varieties of fruit trees planted; they included Sweet Jane apples, nectarines, and Admirable, Ernest's Favorite, Avery's Early, and Red Rareripe peaches. Farrar, "Dairy of Colonel and Mrs. I. M. Ebey" (April 1917), 134, 136.

about fifty grafted apple trees from the Willamette Valley (perhaps from the nursery of Henderson Luelling and William Meek in present-day Milwaulkie, Oregon, the historical entrepot of orcharding in the Pacific Northwest). Crockett urged his nephew, Harvey Black, in Blacksburg, Virginia, to send hundreds of apple seeds; he had no doubt that all kinds of fruit raised in that part of Virginia would do well on Whidbey Island.[19]

The seasonal cycles of farming and improving settlers' homes continued through the 1850s, as prairie farmers planted new crops and cultivated and fenced more land. In 1853, Walter Crockett reported that he and his sons had harvested their first crop of wheat in the spring of 1852 and, observed, "it is a very good one for rough, raw land. We think that our crop will yeald twenty bushels per acre. Samuel [son of Walter Crockett] is of the opinion the same land will yeald forty bushels per acre next season."[20] By 1856, other crops, such as oats, strawberries, carrots, and beets were also grown and harvested along with wheat, potatoes, and onions.

In the fall of 1856, harvesting wheat, oats, and potatoes consumed much of the Ebeys' time. Now, however, Isaac and Winfield were aided in this task by a threshing machine borrowed from their neighbor William Engle. A total of about 115 bushels of wheat were threshed on Jacob Ebey's land, while Isaac Ebey's farm yielded around 110 bushels. The threshing machine and Winfield Ebey then went to the Crockett family farms to harvest their grain. After cleaning his grain, Isaac stored his crop in two hurriedly built granaries. Not long afterward, the oats and wheat were sacked. Some of it was sent off for grinding into flour; ninety-six bushels of wheat produced twenty barrels of flour. By the time the wheat had returned as flour at Ebey's Landing in a flat-bottomed Sequim Bay scow in late December, the Ebeys had finished digging and storing all their potatoes.[21]

The Ebey family kept exceedingly busy in the fall of 1856 not only harvesting crops, but also preparing for winter. They split posts for fencing repairs, hauled endless loads of wood on a dray pulled by their oxen, hunted and slaughtered cattle and hogs, and helped family and neighbors improve or construct homes and outbuildings. In October 1856, Isaac Ebey assisted his father Jacob "hew logs for smokehouse." The next two days, Isaac helped Jacob Ebey "hew house logs."[22] These logs may have been used to improve the foundation of or complete Jacob and Sarah Ebey's existing house (begun in 1855), or they may have been for the smokehouse, then under construction.

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[19] Crockett to Black, October 15, 1853, Crockett Papers.
[20] Crockett to Black, October 15, 1853, Crockett Papers.
[21] L. A. Kibbe, ed., "Notes and Documents: Diary of Colonel Isaac N. and Mrs. Emily Ebey," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 33 (July 1942), 303, 305, 307, 310, 314-15, 320.
[22] Kibbe, "Diary of Colonel Isaac N. and Mrs. Emily Ebey," 303-304.

A month later, Isaac helped his father "make boards and cover his smokehouse."[23] In mid-November, Isaac helped John Alexander raise his house, probably to replace his original dwelling. Isaac Ebey also "split out a lot of clapboards," possibly to improve his own home or construct a new outbuilding.[24] Isaac and his son Eason also repaired the fence around the house yard. Isaac described this foray in his diary. "Eason and I sawed up a large saw log on the beach into piling and clapboard lengths and split them into bolts, and packed several bolts up the hill and split them into paling to close up the yard fence."[25]

Neighbors often worked together, and shared equipment and oxen to accomplish large and lengthy farm tasks. One day in mid-December 1852, Rebecca Ebey noted in her diary that she "sent word to the people over there [at the Cove] to bring home our cattle and plow [w]hich they have been using for five weeks. Less than a month later, the Ebeys loaned one yoke of oxen for plowing to another neighbor. Farmers often borrowed farm machinery and work animals from their neighbors. Farmers routinely depended on their neighbors to assist with large and important activities. Neighbors often joined efforts in plowing and planting fields, splitting, hauling, and erecting fences, and building houses and outbuildings. The prairie settler neighbors nearly always raised cabins and houses together.[26]

By the 1860s, farmers often shared the cost of buying and maintaining more expensive machinery. John Crockett owned one-quarter interest in his threshing machine at the time of his death in the late 1860s. In 1878, John Kinneth and Henry Race together purchased a steam threshing machine, reportedly the first around Penn Cove. They also used some farm equipment collectively to perform larger tasks, like mowing and threshing.[27]

A clear and distinct division of labor existed between tasks performed by men, women, and children on the prairie farms. Whereas the adult men remained primarily occupied with heavier outdoor tasks, the women were principally responsible for managing everything in and immediately around the home. In the 1850s, both Rebecca and, later, Isaac Ebey's second wife, Emily, obtained much of the family's food from their own or neighbors' house gardens, nearby fields and woodlands, and from Alexander's store on Penn Cove. Potatoes, onions, cabbage, lettuce, and root groups (such as carrots, parsnips, and turnips) served as staple

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[23] *Ibid.,* 312.
[24] *Ibid.,* 311, 315.
[25] *Ibid.,* 311.
[26] Farrar, "Documents: Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey," (January 1917), 57-58, 59, 61 and (April 1917), 124, 135.
[27] Hattie Swift, Louisa Swift, and others make reference to the "mowers and threshers" coming in the summer and to "five men haying." Louisa Swift to "Mother" (Mrs. Butler), August 5, 1864 and Hattie Swift to Ella, March 26, 1865, Louisa Swift Papers, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.

vegetables. The women cooked fresh vegetables or, in the case of root vegetables, often left them in the ground until needed, or stored them in an outbuilding. Women, children, and, sometimes, local Indians picked native berries.

Routinely, the farmers ate only two meals a day, a morning and evening meal. Women prepared a substantial dinner of beef, pork, venison, chicken, an occasional wild goose or stuffed pheasant, or mincemeat pie. By the 1860s, the variety of foods that women prepared for the dinner meal had broadened further. In January 1864, Louise Swift described her week's dinner menu in a letter to her sister in Massachusetts. "Monday I got the dinner. It was a boiled dinner, one of your favorites; Tuesday, two chickens stewed; Wednesday, roasted stuffed kid, one month old; Thursday, a goose pie, venison steak; Saturday, roast venison; today [Sunday], cold roast."[28] Each week, women also baked several loaves of bread.[29] The early settlers' cuisine was often quite varied, despite the challenging work involved in food preparation and storage.

In addition to food and meal preparation, women performed a variety of other tasks. Some women, such as Rebecca Ebey, made butter from milk produced by the Ebey's sizeable herd of cows (twenty-three cows and calves in 1857).[30] Women also often made their own soap. Women spent at least one day a week washing and another day mending and ironing clothes. Routinely, they scrubbed floors. Women also made clothes and household items. Before schools existed in the area, women supervised their children's education, giving them regular lessons, most likely from school books brought west with them. The women settlers around Ebey's Landing also seemed to encourage moral teachings for their families by welcoming the early circuit-riding ministers into their homes for Sunday "preaching."[31]

Children, likewise, had specific farm and household chores. Young girls were expected to assist their mothers in managing the household. Young boys hauled and chopped wood, carried water from the well to the house, milked cows and fed and watered young livestock, sometimes delivered and collected market items from neighbors or stores, and weeded and helped harvest the family garden. Children spent time working at their studies, at first, completing lessons at home and, later, at school.

Farm animals, which arrived on Whidbey Island with the first settlers, contributed greatly to farming operations in the 1850s. Oxen were essential for plowing fields, especially where the dense roots of bracken fern made breaking up

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[28] Louise Swift to Annie Butler, January 6, 1864, and Louise Swift to Ella, March 26, 1865, Swift Papers, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.
[29] Kibbe, "Diary of Colonel Isaac N. and Mrs. Emily Ebey" (October 1916), 309, 311
[30] Isaac Ebey, Probate Case Files, Island County, Washington State Archives, Bellingham, Washington.
[31] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey" (October 1916), 319 (January 1917), 41, 42, 43, 44, 50, 51, 53, 58, 59 and (April 1917), 127, 129, 131, 132, 135. 136, 138, 143.

the ground extremely tedious. John Alexander, reportedly, brought the very first barge load of domestic animals to Whidbey Island in 1852.[32] John Kinneth brought the first horses to Whidbey Island on a flat-bottomed scow not long after he and his wife arrived on Penn Cove in 1852, Jane Kinneth recalled nearly fifty-five years later.[33] John Kellogg and others, reportedly "went to Ashland, Oregon, where they bought horses of the Coburg strain."[34] Horses gradually replaced oxen during the 1850s as essential farm work animals. However, some oxen were raised and sold to loggers who used them in the infant timber industry on the shores of Puget Sound. Horses also provided transportation for the settlers traveling over prairies and through woods at a time when roads were sparse and often muddy and rough. Many farmers had at least a small number of cows, which provided milk for drinking and essential ingredients for butter. The Ebeys and other settlers raised chickens for their eggs and meat. A few lambs were being raised in the area as early as 1852.[35] Swine also arrived early on prairie farms. "We have a very fine stock of hogs coming on," Walter Crockett reported to his nephew in October 1853.[36] Hogs were raised for pork and bacon. Camas, proliferating in the prairies, provided the principal fodder for the widely ranging hogs. In the late 1850s, John Kellogg reportedly brought the first large quantity of sheep to the prairies around Penn Cove. When the market for sheep collapsed following the 1858 rush to Fraser River gold fields, Kellogg bought around fifty unwanted sheep in Bellingham Bay, where they had been delivered from San Francisco. He had the herd delivered by ship to waters near his Admiralty Head farm.[37] (He may have sold his herd of sheep to nearby farmer John Crockett soon afterwards, since the 1860 census indicates that Crockett and not Kellogg owned the only sheep herd on Whidbey Island.) The mild maritime climate on Whidbey throughout the year relieved the farmers of spending labor, time, and materials to build shelters for farm animals.

A decade after Isaac Ebey had planted his first crops of cabbage and potatoes, a definite pattern of farming had emerged on the prairies around Penn Cove. In 1860, wheat, oats, and a variety of potatoes known as "Irish potatoes" remained the leading crops grown on the prairies. Often, farmers grew all three crops, however, usually one crop was favored. Isaac B. Power, who farmed northwest of Penn Cove, harvested substantially more wheat (800 bushels) that year than any other farmer around Penn Cove. Power's production of 1,000

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[32] Richard White, *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change: The Shaping of Island County, Washington* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington, 1980), 48.
[33] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey" (October 1916), 318; Kinneth, "Early History of Whidby Island," Meany Papers.
[34] Cahail, "Whidbey Island" (II: 6), Cahail Papers.
[35] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey" (January 1917), 59.
[36] Crockett to Black, October 15, 1853, Crockett Papers.
[37] Cahail, "Whidbey Island" (II: 6), Cahail Papers.

bushels of oats was exceeded or matched only by John Kinneth (5,000 bushels) and John Kellogg (1,000 bushels). The Isaac Power farm was also a heavy producer of Irish potatoes (1,000 bushels); only two other farmers in Ebey's Landing NHR, William Robertson (1,800 bushels) and Grove Terry (1,300 bushels), exceeded his yield in 1860. In 1860, the tax assessor reported the total number of acres devoted to each of these crops in Island County (still larger than it is today): oats (534); wheat (373); and potatoes (144).[38]

Farmers clearly favored oats over wheat and potatoes in 1860. The reasons were both varied and complex. The demand for and, thus, the market price for oats may have rewarded farmers more for their labor. Wheat may have been grown by that time by farmers elsewhere in the region, thus, lowering the demand and the price. Oats, for multiple reasons, yielded more bushels per acre on average than wheat in the 1859-1860 growing season. Island County farmers harvested slightly more than twenty-four bushels per acre, as compared with thirty-six bushels per acre of oats. Farmers grew few other crops in quantity; only a handful harvested small acreages of barley, buckwheat, rye, hay, sweet potatoes, peas, and beans. In 1860, only four farmers (Walter Crockett and William Robertson on the south side of Penn Cove and F. A. Chenowith and James Nesbet near Oak Harbor) grew orchards yielding fruit for market.[39] In 1864, Louise Swift commented on the harvesting of 1,200 bushels of apples harvested by one of the nearby orchards that were only eight years old.[40]

By 1860, nearly all farms around Penn Cove had livestock, according to the Island County census. Typically, each farmer owned one to four workhorses and/or oxen, as well as a handful of milk cows for domestic consumption of milk and the production of butter. A small number of farmers, however, raised small herds of dairy cows. Winfield S. Ebey, and the larger farms of John Kinneth, John Kellogg, and John Condra, each had from fourteen to twenty milk cows. Nearly every farm also had at least a few swine; some farmers, like John Kellogg, Charles Terry, and William Robertson raised as many as fifty to sixty hogs. According to the census, Winfield Ebey along with John Kinneth, owned the two largest herds of "other cattle," apparently beef cattle, of the prairie farmers; each grazed nearly fifty head. None of the prairie farmers owned sheep in 1860 except John Crockett, who grazed forty-three on his Crockett Prairie farm. As mentioned above, Crockett may have bought these sheep from John Kellogg, who acquired a herd of about fifty sheep in the late 1850s. (Captain Edward Barrington, farming north of Penn Cove, also had a sizeable herd of sheep).[41] The 1860 Island County

[38] Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island*, 37-38.
[39] U.S. Census Bureau, Island County, Washington Territory, 1860, "Schedule 4: Production of Agriculture in Whidbey Island in the County of Island."
[40] Louise Swift to Mrs. Butler, December 1864, Swift Papers, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.
[41] *Ibid.*

auditor's report summarized all livestock being raised on Whidbey Island: meat cattle (809), hogs (544), sheep (150), and horses (90).[42]

The 1860 auditor's report failed to disclose that the number of livestock raised, particularly meat cattle, hogs, and sheep, had increased dramatically. Between December 1858 and December 1859, the number of meat cattle in Island County (present day Island and Snohomish counties) had jumped from 130 to 809 head, hogs had increased from 162 to 544, and sheep had gone from 0 to 150.[43] It appears that Isaac Ebey's advice to his younger brother Winfield to focus his farming energies on livestock, given five years earlier, had been taken seriously by several Island County farmers. The Ebey family may have actually encouraged this trend toward raising stock.

In the 1860s, many established Whidbey Island farmers who had arrived during the 1850s took up and expanded sheep raising. These sheep farmers, just like Winfield Ebey, largely stopped raising wheat, barley, and potatoes, and converted their cultivated fields to pasture or raised hay. On Ebey's Prairie the number of sheep raised jumped from 46 in 1860 to 1,102 in 1870. At the same time, the bushels of wheat, oats, and potatoes dropped. Farmers around Penn Cove began planting timothy and clover in the late 1860s to feed the sheep. The bushels of barley produced also increased substantially. Many farmers throughout Island County, including those on the prairies around Penn Cove (like the Crockett brothers, Eason and Ellison Ebey, Nathaniel and Robert Hill, Robert Holbrook, Robert Hathaway, and Thomas Hastie) favored timothy over wheat well into the mid-1870s.[44]

In 1860, the Island County census also revealed that area of so-called "improved" land per farm was relatively small and mostly limited to the open, unforested land around Penn Cove. The census-taker recorded that roughly 2,136 acres on Whidbey Island were "improved."[45] About 60 percent (over 1,300 acres) of this improved land belonged to farmers on the prairies around Penn Cove, now in the Reserve. Although these farms ranged in size from about 100 acres to 320 acres, the "improved" acreage remained fairly small, averaging 32 acres per farm (but ranging from 5 acres to as many as 95 acres per farm). In 1860, John Kinneth, John Kellogg, and John Condra had farms with the largest "improved"

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[42] Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island,* 37.

[43] Kellogg, *History of Whidbey's Island* (Oak Harbor, WA: G. B. Astel, 1934).

[44] Interestingly, both John Kellogg and John Kinneth, neighbors living on the south side of Penn Cove in 1874, were growing corn and small, two-acre orchards and not timothy and barley. "Census for the County of Island, Washington Territory," 1874, microfiche, Washington State Archives, Olympic, Washington; White, *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change,* 62-63.

[45] The Island County assessor, in 1860, recorded that only 1,102 acres had been brought under cultivation. The word "improved" obviously had a different meaning to the census-taker than the farmer.

acreage (70 or more acres), whereas John Alexander (merchant), John Lysle (school teacher), Humphrey Hill (who had left for California by this time), and Winfield Scott Ebey (specializing in livestock rather than crop production) had no "improved" acres.[46] During the 1850s, farmers cleared little forest land for farming; there were still probably many acres of open prairie remaining to be "improved" before forests needed to be cleared for farming. Only I. B. Power, who owned a larger number of hogs and cattle than most prairie farmers, mentioned attempting to clear some forest for grazing land.[47]

By the end of the first decade of settlement, the farmers around Penn Cove appeared to have done well, as predicted by early emigrant settlers Isaac Ebey and Walter Crockett. Early farmers and visitors alike, in letters, diaries, and journals not only boasted of the prospects for agrarian prosperity, but also reported the actual productivity and market prices of many crops grown. When James G. Swan spent a few days on the prairies around Penn Cove in mid-June 1859, he described a bucolic scene of prospering farmers. "The numerous excellent farms all over the island," Swan wrote, "give evidence that the early discoverer was not mistaken in his appreciation of its value." Swan was much taken with Captain Fay's farm, about two miles from Coveland. "The land of Capt. Fay's claim is mostly prairie, very fertile, and yielding excellent crops. . . . The farm looks beautiful when viewed from the water, and it is altogether the pleasantest locality I saw on the island," Swan pronounced.[48] In June 1860 several of the farms around Penn Cove had a cash value of $5,000 or more, according to the U.S. census. These included the farms of Robertson, Kellogg, Kinneth, Walter Crockett, and John Condra. The farms owned by Eason B. Ebey and Jacob Ebey outranked all others, with a cash value of $7,000 and $8,000, respectively.[49]

Farmers' gradual accumulation of tools, combined with new developments in farming technology, created the potential for success on farms around Penn Cove as well. Farm equipment used by island farmers evolved rapidly in the early years just as a revolution in farm technology occurred across the country in the last decades of the 1800s. Since planting and harvesting his first crops in 1850-1851 with only a hoe, Isaac Ebey had acquired one breaking plow, one harrow, a set of double harnesses, four hoes, two picks, two shovels, and two

[46] U.S. Census Bureau, Island County, 1860, "Schedule 4: Production of Agriculture in Whidbey Island in the County of Island."
[47] White, *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change,* 50.
[48] James G. Swan, *Almost Out of the World* Tacoma, WA: Washington State Historical Society, 1971), 55, 57.
[49] U.S. Census Bureau, Island County, Washington Territory, 1860, "Schedule 4: Production of Agriculture."

scythes, all valued at $79, by the time of his death in August 1857.[50] By comparison, in June 1860, a few farmers (John Kellogg, Richard B. Holbrook, and Nathaniel D. Hill) on the prairies around Penn Cove owned "farming implements and machinery" valued at $500 to $550. Two farmers had farm equipment valued at $3,100 (William Engle) and $3,350 (Robert Crosby Hill).[51] In the 1860s, a harrow, roller, boring machine, combined reaper and mower, threshing machine, and spring wagon, in addition to one or more plows, had all become common farming equipment, along with smaller tools, such as scythes, plow points, hay forks, and an assortment of blacksmith tools. The estate of Oak Harbor farmer Charles Phillips, inventoried in 1867, and of Ebey's Prairie farmer John Crockett, inventoried in 1869, included all of these farm items.[52] By the mid-1870s, mechanical harvesters had arrived on Whidbey Island farms. The revolution in farming technology that swept across the nation following the Civil War gave prairie farmers around Penn Cove new mechanized reapers, the binder, and improved plows.[53]

Increasing Commercialization of Farming

Favorable market prices for crops and livestock raised and a means of transporting them to markets also contributed to the success of the prairie farmers in the early years. From the beginning of Anglo-American settlement around Penn Cove, crops were grown and livestock raised not only for subsistence by the early farmers, but also to be sold. Emigrants selected and settled on the prairies with the expectation of using the soil to improve their lives materially by engaging in commercial agriculture. Isaac Ebey clearly expressed this view in a letter written on April 25, 1851 to his younger brother Winfield in Missouri. "The natural wealth of Oregon . . . lies in her greate agricultural resources, in her lumbering facilities, in her inexhaustible fishers, and in her coal fields which have just been discovered and are now being opened." Ebey went on to describe the array of crops that could be grown and the high prices received for vegetables and grains harvested on the Cowlitz River. Last fall, Ebey wrote, the Cowlitz settlers had sold their first crop of potatoes—4,000 bushels of them—and "cabbage, onions, parsnips, carrots, beets, squashes, etc., sufficient to amount to $5,000 . . . to

[50] Isaac Ebey, Probate Case Files, Island County, Washington Territory, Washington State Archives; White, *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change,* 40-41; Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island,* 85.
[51] U.S. Census Bureau, Island County, Washington Territory, 1860, "Schedule 4: Production of Agriculture."
[52] "Inventory of Appraisement," Charles Phillips, 1867, and John Crockett, 1869, Probate Case Files, Island County, Washington State Archives.
[53] White, *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change,* 61, 72.

travelers, and settlers. . . this in one year by two poor men, both of them many years my father's senior." Mr. Jackson on the Cowlitz River had made $3,000 in 1850, mostly from wheat and oats, while Mrs. Jackson made $600 from butter, even though the Jackson farm was far from a navigable waterway. Ebey acknowledged that: "much depends on the location and the facility with [which] produce can [get] to market," noting that some Willamette Valley farmers had their profits consumed by transportation costs.[54]

In Isaac Ebey's view, the promise of Ebey's Prairie and nearby prairies was not only the fertility of the soil but also, and importantly, the close proximity of farms to available transportation to markets. "My [farm] front is [on] the ship channel where all vessels passes me bound for Pugets Sound."[55] In Isaac Ebey's view Whidbey Island was not far removed and remote from centers of population and markets. Instead, it stood at the edge of channels of regional trade, where farm produce (and other natural resources) could be transported to ports on Puget Sound, and especially to larger markets on the California coast, like San Francisco. In the early 1850s, the California Gold Rush had given rise to an immense and expanding market in and around San Francisco and the Sacramento River Valley, which incubated and enormously boosted commercial agriculture throughout the Northwest, including on Whidbey Island. Isaac Ebey seemed to have little doubt that the fertility of his land claim along with its maritime access to commercial markets would substantially improve his life.

Many early prairie farmers marketed their nonperishable farm produce almost immediately after they arrived on Whidbey Island. The interest expressed by some, like Walter Crockett, in not only crop yields but also market price of crops, attests to their intent to sell their produce. In 1853, Walter Crockett reported that wheat was worth $4 per bushel. Certain vegetables, such as onions, potatoes, turnips, and cabbage, also produced reasonably high yields, Crockett noted. He and his sons had harvested "neare a hundred bushels of onions," in 1853, which were worth nearly $6 a bushel, making their production quite profitable. Turnips grew well on the Crockett families' farms, reaching as much as 29 pounds. Potatoes yielded $2.50 per bushel. Although Crockett admitted that "it takes time to get the land subdued and the wilde nature out of it," he expressed confidence that the prairie land would support increased crop production and, when market prices for crops rose, cultivation of the soil would be a profitable business.[56]

Likewise, the Ebey family engaged in the commercial sale of even small quantities of farm produce early on. Soon after arriving on Whidbey Island in 1852, Rebecca Ebey contributed to the family income by making butter for sale.[57]

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[54] Isaac Ebey to Winfield Ebey, April 25, 1851, Meany Papers.
[55] Ebey to Ebey, April 25, 1851, Meany Papers.
[56] All Crockett quotes from Crockett to Black, October 15, 1853, Crockett Papers.
[57] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey" (October 1916), 314

In fact, several farmers' wives contributed to the family income on a regular basis by making sizeable quantities of butter. The farms of Mary and Walter Crockett, Hugh Crockett, Caroline and John Kellogg, and Margaret and Isaac Power all produced 200 or more pounds of butter a year in the late 1850s. Many years later, Alice Kellogg Cahail recalled that the Kelloggs were milking several good Durham cows around that time and "the quantities of yellow butter Mrs. Kellogg made [were] astonishing." Cahail went on to explain that Caroline Kellogg put most of her butter down in earthen crocks. "About Christmas time, Dr. Kellogg had some produce to sell, and since Victoria was their best market [in the late 1850s], he made a trip there, and, with other things, took his wife's butter along—it found a ready sale at a good price."[58] Exceptionally high yields of butter in 1859-1860 also came from the farms of Mary and William Robertson (400 pounds) and Sarah and Jacob Ebey (1,100 pounds).[59] Louisa Swift made as many as 400 pounds of butter in the summer of 1864.[60] Unlike crops that were harvested seasonally, the sale of butter gave farm families a more regular income.

Stock and grains were also favored farm products that were sold seasonally by the early farmers. Winfield Ebey, in a letter to his aunt, Mary Eason, in the fall of 1856, noted that: "prices of stock as well as almost everything else range high here. We have been selling beef here this summer at 16 cents per lb. Pork is about the same. Work oxen are worth from $150 to $175." Winfield went on to give the high prices of other livestock, as well as flour on Whidbey Island, which in 1856 was nearly 100 miles from the nearest mill.[61] In November 1856, Isaac Ebey submitted a bid and was awarded a contract to supply the newly established military post, Fort Townsend, with beef, at $.18 per pound, and 250 bushels of oats at $1.50 per bushel, and another 250 bushels of oats at $1.25 per bushel. After butchering a cow and sacking all of the oats, Ebey had these items delivered to the fort in a flat-bottomed scow four days later.[62] Throughout the 1850s, grain and potatoes brought high prices from myriad markets—small villages, logging camps, ship crews, and military posts located on Puget Sound. "Markets left farmers free to grow almost any crop climatically suited to the region," environmental historian Richard White claimed in *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change: The Shaping of Island County, Washington.*[63]

Settlers farming around Penn Cove also sold their produce in other, more distant, markets in the 1850s and 1860s. The various mining booms in the Far

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[58] Cahail, "Whidbey Island," II: 37, Cahail Papers.
[59] U.S. Census Bureau, Census, 1860, Island County, Washington Territory, "Schedule 4: Production of Agriculture."
[60] Louise Swift to Ella, March 26, 1865, Swift Papers.
[61] Quoted in *Spindrift Two* 9: 3 (Winter 1986), 25.
[62] Kibbe, "Diary of Colonel Isaac N. and Mrs. Emily Ebey," 315-16.
[63] Richard White, *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change: The Shaping of Island County, Washington* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1992), 44.

West created the first sizeable markets for farmers around Penn Cove and contributed generally to the growth of commercial agriculture throughout the Pacific Northwest from the late 1840s to the Klondike gold rush of the late 1890s. As the boom in gold mining began to wane in California in the 1850s, the discovery of placer gold deposits in 1855 near Fort Colville in the Okanogan country above the northern arc of the Columbia River (in present-day north-central Washington State), prompted a boom that lasted for several years. The arrival of thousands of gold-seeking argonauts to the Fraser River Valley in southwest British Columbia in 1858 created a market for farm produce and sustained the prices of certain livestock and produce at reasonable levels. A great demand for horses, used as pack animals by the miners, arose in mining supply towns like Whatcom (Bellingham) and Victoria. Penn Cove resident Captain Barrington delivered, on the *Growler,* a shipment of horses owned by Whidbey Island residents, including John Kellogg, to Victoria, British Columbia, where they were sold for a good price. Victoria provided one of the best markets for produce, often transported on the *Growler,* for several years in the late 1850s and early 1860s.[64] In the 1860s, gold discovered near Blewett, Washington, (twenty miles west of Wenatchee) and eastern Oregon, as well as Idaho and Montana, sparked another series of mining booms and opportunities for Whidby Island produce to supply needy miners.[65]

Importantly, the early market centers for mining districts, like San Francisco (for the Sacramento gold boom) and Victoria and Bellingham Bay (for the Fraser River Valley mining boom) were all accessible to Whidbey Island farmers by ship. Farming in this island community proved to be a distinct advantage during the period when ships provided the primary means of transportation to market centers. Farmers around Penn Cove worked only a few miles from locations of ship loading. Moreover, during the first few years of farming on Whidbey Island, few other farming districts in the region were as ideally located near major avenues of transportation as Penn Cove farmers.

In Search of Profitable Farm Produce, 1870s & 1880s

The lure and the promise of high market prices for agricultural produce that had attracted and sustained the early farmers around Penn Cove in the 1850s and 1860s gave way to unfavorable market conditions in the 1870s and 1880s.

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[64] George Albert Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island,* 69.

[65] Carlos Schwantes, *The Pacific Northwest: An Interpretive History* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 171-75; Milner Roberts, in "Mining," *Building a State, Washington, 1889-1939, Vol. III,* edited by Charles Miles and O. B. Sperlin (Tacoma, WA: Washington State Historical Society Publications, 1940), 275; Cahail, "Whidbey Island" (II: 38), Cahail Papers.

Several factors contributed to these distressed times. The emergence of new farming districts in California and east of the Cascades, aided in production by new mechanized machinery, increased competition for central Whidbey Island farmers. In the 1860s, new farmers in the Walla Walla Valley began practicing dryland farming techniques, and raised substantial amounts of grain and cattle to feed mining communities in Idaho. Other parts of the inland Northwest adopted similar farming methods, and turned semi-arid regions into agricultural cornucopias. As early as 1866, wheat and flour began being carried by ship down the Columbia River from the Walla Walla Valley. In the 1870s, Walla Walla County and Umatilla County in Oregon emerged as leading livestock producers in the Pacific Northwest, overshadowing the small livestock farming operations on Whidbey Island at a time when farm prices, in general, slumped following the panic of 1873 that ushered in an economic depression. By the 1880s, southeast Washington farmers grew enormous quantities of wheat, once a favored crop by early central Whidbey Island farmers. Wheat raised in this new farming region accounted for 93 percent of the state's total as early as 1889. In the late 1800s, teams of twenty-five to fifty horses and mules pulled new combination threshers to harvest bonanza quantities of wheat on the rolling hills of the Palouse. High produce yields eventually tended to lower market prices. By the 1880s, farmers around Penn Cove (and elsewhere) suffered greatly from declining prices for their wheat and other produce.[66]

Developments in the network of non-maritime transportation—railroads—on the mainland that became essential for linking farmers with distant markets also contributed to challenges that Whidbey Island farmers faced in the 1870s and 1880s. Private ventures like the Walla Walla and Columbia River Railroad, a thirty-two-mile-long narrow gauge line completed in 1875, carried wheat from the breadbasket of the Walla Walla Valley to steamboat landings on the Columbia River, where it was transported to Portland, Seattle, and more distant markets. When Dr. Dorsey S. Baker sold his railroad to the Oregon Steam Navigation Company in 1878, the Columbia River Railroad became part of Henry Villard's expanding railroad empire extending east from Portland. In the mid-1880s, fierce competition between two newly formed railroad companies (the Northern Pacific and the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company) resulted in the construction of a latticework of rail lines across agricultural lands of the Palouse. The completion of the Northern Pacific Railroad over the Cascades to Tacoma in 1887 funneled a substantial amount of grain grown in the interior to Puget Sound ports. That same year, railroad construction commenced between the Pacific Northwest and California.

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[66] Schwantes, *Pacific Northwest,* 166-71; Bond, "Half Century of Economic Progress: Agriculture," *Building a State, Washington, 1889-1939, Vol. III,* 225; White, *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change.*

At the time of statehood in 1889, twenty large and small railroad companies had laid over 2,000 miles of track in Washington. Between 1891 and 1893, rail connections between Seattle and Vancouver, British Columbia, and Seattle and agricultural supply and distribution centers in Saint Paul, Minnesota and in the Canadian province of Manitoba were opened, just as the worst depression in the United States (up to that time) descended over the nation. Beginning in mid-1893, agricultural communities experienced a long steady decline, both psychologically and economically.

Despite the depression, the expansion of this railroad network increased the population of Washington and expanded Pacific coast shipping between Washington and California. Grain, meat, lumber, and coal moved south from Puget Sound ports serviced by the railroads, and garden produce and gasoline were shipped north from California ports at low freight rates. Whidbey Island farmers found it difficult to compete with cheap produce from California that was shipped to lumber camps, mill towns, and cities that made up the local market. Around Puget Sound (and along the West Coast) ships and railroads, together, created new channels of commerce, on which Whidbey Island farmers stood at the margins.[67] In the 1870s and 1880s, without a rail connection, the farmers on the prairies around Penn Cove gradually became more and more remote from new and expanding mainland and marine transportation networks that brought farmers' produce to markets in expanding population centers.

In June 1876, Eason B. Ebey, the thirty-two year-old son of deceased Isaac and Rebecca Ebey, captured the frustration and discouragement many prairie farmers must have felt during this period in a letter written to his married cousin, Myra (Almira Neff Wright Enos), then living in California. "I could not conscientiously advise you and Mr. Enos [Myra's husband] to come here to stay unless you have means enough to live easily without depending on the farm for a living and schooling for the children, for really farming is an 'uphill' business here," Eason explained. "We now have to compete with California in almost everything, not only in grain and hay as of old, but now potatoes and cabbages that come in quantitys from S.F. [San Francisco] by every steamer." After suggesting that his difficulties were due, in part, to "farming without any previous knowledge of it," Eason conceded that there were factors beyond his control that challenged all farmers on Whidbey Island. "It has been very hard for me to get along owing to low prices and limited market and high wages for help."[68]

In response to the combined challenges of competition from farming districts in California and eastern Washington, moving to the margins of new transportation networks, and low prices for produce, farmers around Penn Cove

[67] Schwantes, *Pacific Northwest,* 154-55; Henry Foss, Reginald H. Thomson, Lancaster Pollard, "Transportion and Commerce," *Building a Wtate, Washington, 1889-1939, Vol. III,* 249-56; White, *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change,* 61-62.
[68] Eason B. Ebey to Myra Beam Enos, June 14, 1876, Winfield Ebey Papers.

remained much more sensitive to the market prices of various farm produce than they had in the 1850s. Consequently, farmers changed the kinds of crops and animals produced, as well as the farming methods they used. Farmers occupying the best land with the greatest acreage and most capital were able to respond to fluctuating market pressures more quickly.[69] In the mid-1870s, farmers began moving away from planting sizeable acreages of timothy and barley (still grown in substantial amounts in 1874, probably for the sheep being raised) and back to wheat, oats, and potatoes, as they had done in the 1850s.[70] By 1880, the production of wheat, oats, and especially potatoes had increased dramatically in Island County. The number of bushels grown of all three crops, especially potatoes, in 1880 and 1890, however, dropped once again. Hay and orchard fruit were also grown, but in lesser quantities, probably mostly for local markets and by farmers with established orchards.[71] At least a few farmers, like Eason Ebey who worked the farm of his Aunt Mary Wright Bozarth living in California, continued to raise beef cattle.

Date	Wheat*	Oats*	Potatoes*
1860	6,390	19,167	27,260
1870	3,271	4,856	15, 043
1880	22,223	38,451	202,010
1890	16,170	35,968	60,222

*In bushels

Interpreting the fluctuating production of each of these three major crops at ten-year intervals is difficult; only the most general observations are possible. The evident shift from the production of livestock back to wheat, oats, and potatoes suggests that competition from ranchers in eastern Washington and Oregon probably made it less profitable for Whidbey Island farmers to raise and ship sheep and cattle. The relatively lower yields of wheat and higher yields of oats in 1880 and 1890 also suggests that competition from wheat growers in the Palouse and elsewhere east of the Cascades may have persuaded farmers on central Whidbey Island to reduce their wheat production in favor of oats. The enormous jump in potato production from 1870 to 1880 reflects Whidbey Island farmers' effort to meet an enormous market demand, created by a blight in 1870 that drastically reduced the California potato crop for the next several years.[72] (By the turn of the century, the emerging potato production in southern Idaho discouraged Whidbey Island farmers from growing large quantities of this crop.) As in the late 1850s, farmers around Penn Cove probably alternated crops grown

[69] White, *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change,* 63.
[70] "Census for the County of Island, Washington Territory," 1874.
[71] White, *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change,* 62-65.
[72] *Ibid.,* 63-64.

from year to year in response to actual and anticipated market prices, site-specific soil conditions, the available capital of individual farmers, transportation costs, and labor conditions. There is little doubt that the agricultural market influenced what farmers around Penn Cove grew within a relatively narrow range of crops. Considering all the variables in crop selection and production, it is remarkable that most of the crops grown in the 1850s remained the principal crops raised thirty years later.

Farmers struggling to accommodate to volatile market prices, competition from newer farming regions, and new railroad transportation networks, along with the natural attrition of original farmers, contributed to a new trend in farming on the prairies around Penn Cove in the 1870s and 1880s. In the 1870s, the number of farms on Ebey's Prairie increased substantially, probably due to the subdivision of existing farms among the children of original donation land claimants and the creation of some new farms in adjoining woodland areas. Between 1870 and 1880, the number of farms on Ebey's Prairie increased from 22 to 35. (The number of farms around San de Fuca decreased slightly during the same period from 32 to 27, although "improved" acreage increased, suggesting that some forestland had, by 1880, been taken into farms.)[73]

In all of Island County, the number of farms increased from 74 (1860) to 94 (1870) to 117 (1880). Total farm acreage also increased in Island County over the same period from 15,251 (1860) to 32,413 (1880). Of the farm acreage, the number of "improved" acres jumped from 2,057 (1860) to 14,615 (1880).[74] These figures indicate that between 1860 and 1880 the average farm size in Island County had increased (from 106 to 277 acres) while the average number of "improved" acres per farm increased substantially (from 27 to 125 acres per farm). The 1874 territorial census for Island County indicates that there were many new, smaller farms of forty acres or less, while the acreage for many original donation land claimants remained much larger.[75] Also, it seems clear that new lands were being farmed in Island County by the 1870s.

Despite the difficult times for farmers in the 1870s and 1880s, older farm families probably hesitated to sell their farms for many varied reasons—to remain close to their family and a close-knit community of old friends, to hold on to their investment in land, and/or to stay in a mild climate, which residents still believed fostered good health. Eason Ebey expressed his reluctance to leave Whidbey Island in a letter written to his Aunt Mary Ebey Bozarth (Isaac Ebey's sister), in November 1877. "I prefer to locate here on my good wife's [Annie Louise Judson] account; her people and many friends live here or nearby, and the climate is good for her."[76] Ellison Ebey, in an 1889 letter, captured a common belief held

[73] *Ibid.,* 55-56.
[74] *Ibid.,* 60-61, 63.
[75] "Census for the County of Island, Washington Territory," 1874.
[76] Eason Ebey to Mary Ebey Wright Bozarth, November 2, 1877, Winfield Ebey Papers.

by many prairie farmers when he wrote that "old Mr. [Daniel?] Pearson is afraid to sell for fear it [his farm] may be worth more some time."[77]

Although many of the original farm families on the prairies around Penn Cove—Ebeys, Crocketts, Engles, Kelloggs, and the Kinneths—continued to own their farms, some began searching for alternatives to farming themselves. A few turned to other jobs that promised a more reliable, steady income. Eason Ebey was among those who sought other work while continuing to manage his and the other Ebey family farms. Between 1868 and 1876, young Eason Ebey took the position of Supervisor of the Common Schools in the Coupeville district, which presumably brought him some steady income. Between 1871 and 1876, while managing around 450 acres (mostly planted in timothy and barley), he also served as an Island County commissioner, for which he received a small compensation. The following year, Eason was elected as an Island County delegate to the territorial legislature, which paid minimally. In an 1877 letter to his Aunt Mary, he noted that "although farming has gone against me in years past, I will yet get into something that will pay, I am confident."[78] In 1879, Eason Ebey worked in partnership with C. E. Dodge as an agent for two flour mills (Wilson & Company on Whidbey Island and Gelbach's in Upper Tumwater) and a San Francisco dealer in grindstones. Later that same year, Eason worked as an agent for the Produce Commission Warehouse in Seattle. Despite the various wage-paying jobs Eason held, the census listed Eason Ebey as a "farmer" in 1870 and 1880. The 1880 census likewise listed his younger brother Ellison Ebey as a "farmer," even though he clerked in Granville Haller's and other stores in Coupeville much of his adult life.[79] In the early 1880s, Eason continued his search for more promising income; he took a job in the Office of Deputy Assessor, briefly, then, at least considered, selling a new type of washing machine to farmers' wives.[80] Eason Ebey's financial struggle eventually ended in the loss of his own farm (to John Gould) due to unpaid mortgages. Around 1890, Eason Ebey moved to Whatcom County and worked as a real estate broker, before his death in Lynden, Washington, in 1893 at age forty-eight.[81]

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[77] Ellison Ebey to Almira Enos, January 18, 1889, Winfield Ebey Papers.
[78] Eason Ebey to Mary Ebey Wright Bozarth, November 2, 1887, Winfield Ebey Papers.
[79] Census, "Schedule 1: Inhabitants in Whidbey Island in the County of Island," Washington Territory, 1870; Census, "Schedule 1: Inhabitants in Whidbey and Camano Islands in the County of Island," Washington Territory, 1880.
[80] Eason Ebey to Abraham T. Enos, February 13, 1879; September 21, 1879; and June 3, 1881, Winfield Ebey Papers.
[81] "Census, for the County of Island in Washington Territory, 1874," microfiche, Washington State Archives; Cook, *A Particular friend, Penn's Cove,"* 86, 134-36, 143; L A. Kibbe, editor "Notes and Documents: Diary of Colonel Isaac N. and Mrs. Emily Ebey," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 33 (July 1942), 300.

Beginning as early as the late 1860s, a few prairie farmers also began to rent or sharecrop "improved" farmland in an effort to bring in an adequate income. This tendency was especially great on the oldest farmlands on Ebey's Prairie and around the San de Fuca district (the old Coveland area). Renting or hiring laborers to work the older prairie farms may have become a logical and attractive alternative for the early settlers, whose heads of households had died by the 1870s and whose remaining family members were aging and had grown weary of the perpetual struggle to make ends meet in a new, more competitive agricultural environment of diminishing financial rewards. Renting, theoretically, promised farmers a regular, guaranteed income. Ebey family members were probably among the first around Penn Cove to rent their farms, following the death of Isaac in 1857 and Jacob in 1862, when their inheritors were either too young to farm themselves (Eason and Ellison Ebey) or had moved away from Island County (Mary Ebey Wright Beam and her children). When Eason Ebey reached age twenty-one in 1865, he began leasing part of the Ebey land (and the Ferry House) to a series of different tenants. Although he eventually lost his own farm, Eason continued to rent or lease other parts of the old Ebey donation land claim. In the mid-1870s, he helped his cousin living in California (Almira Wright Enos) lease the old Jacob Ebey farm to Edward Jenne and the Jenne brothers. In an 1879 letter to Abraham Enos, Almira's husband, Eason, wrote that "I have let . . . most of my place in small lots for potatoes. I shall only put in a few myself."[82] In 1888, Ellison Ebey wrote to his cousin Almira Enos about those renting or leasing various parts of the Ebey farm, including Lew Carlin, Edward Jenne, and George Gillispie (who paid $300 a year to rent possibly the Jacob and Sarah Ebey house).[83]

Renting and leasing farms on Whidbey Island was not at all uncommon in the 1880s. Around 1880, renters and sharecroppers worked about one-third of the farms on Ebey's Prairie and around San de Fuca.[84] New farmers arriving in Island County in the 1870s also tended to rent or sharecrop their farms during this period. Additionally, the number of laborers on Whidbey Island increased from 13 percent in 1860 to over 20 percent in 1870 and 1880, according to census data, suggesting an increase in the number of men hired to work on farms.[85]

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[82] Eason Ebey to Abraham Enos, March 8, 1879, Winfield Ebey Papers.
[83] J. Ellison Ebey to Almira Enos, October 12, 1888, December 29, 1888, January 9, 1889, and January 18, 1889, all in Winfield Papers.
[84] Cook, "A particular friend, Penn's Cove," 21, 66, 73, 86; White, Land Use, Environment, and Social Change, 57.
[85] U.S. Census Bureau, [Name of census or schedule], Island County, Washington, microfiche, National Archives and Record Administration, Seattle, Washington.

Indian and Chinese Farm Workers

The Chinese and Indian populations of Island County, although relatively small, comprised a substantial number of prairie farm laborers and also renters by the 1880s. Local Indians had initially worked as laborers on the farms of some early settlers. Rebecca Ebey, in the early 1850s, noted hiring local Indians to perform certain farm tasks when Isaac Ebey was away from the farm. A few Indians had remained on Whidbey Island and not moved to the reservations, created in the mid-1850s. Several Indian women had married Anglo-American men and raised families. Small communities of Indians had continued living around Penn Cove, just as they had done traditionally. The highest off-reservation Indian population in Washington Territory lived in Island County in 1880 (27 percent of the total population). The census for Island County that year recorded more than 250 Indians working at a variety of jobs. These included: "keeping house" (usually for Indian wives of white husbands living around Oak Harbor or on Camano Island), attending school (many children), fishing, doctoring (two men), and working as laborers or lumberman at the mill in Utsalady on Camano Island. Around fifteen Indians worked as "farm hands" or "farm laborers" on the prairies around Coupeville in 1880. By 1890, the Indian population in Island County had dropped to 141, half the Indian population of a decade earlier. Many had left to live on reservations, thus leaving the prairie farmers' labor force after contributing to it for nearly fifty years.[86]

A small number of Chinese inhabitants of Island County also began working as farm laborers and renters during this same period. Thousands of Chinese had immigrated from over-populated regions of southeastern China and the war-torn Guangdong province in the mid-1850s to work on sugar plantations in Hawaii and the gold fields of California. They also worked on constructing new transcontinental railroads in the American West and on farms. Some Chinese had first come to the Northwest in significant numbers in the 1860s, following the discovery of gold in eastern Washington. Many had been recruited to help build railroads in the Northwest in the 1870s. Chinese had already taken up farming in other Washington Territory communities, including nearby Port Townsend, where they farmed at the North Beach Chinese Gardens and grew vegetables for local residents as well as the Seattle market.[87]

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[86] Census, "Schedule 1: Inhabitants in Whidbey and Camano Islands in the County of Island, Territory of Washington," 1880, microfiche, Washington State Archives; White, *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change,* 71-73.

[87] Gail Dubrow, Gail Nomura, D. Gregg Doyule, Rose Wong, Connie So, Shawn Wong, Weiling Shi, and Lorraine Artura, " Asian/Pacific Americans in Washington State: Historic Context Document" (Olympia, WA: Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, 1992), 3-4.

In 1870, only six native-born Chinese were living in Island County; most worked as cooks at the Utsalady mill on Camano Island. One thirty-seven-year-old man, "Sing Sing," who worked as a cook, lived near the west end of Penn Cove.[88] By 1880, the number of Chinese in the county had risen to around forty-five; about half of these Chinese lived in the Coupeville farming district. The vast majority of these men were in their twenties and thirties.

Although some Chinese still held jobs as cooks at the Utsalady mill or onboard ships anchored around the county, a large number worked as "farm hands," "farm laborers," or "farmers," according to the 1880 census. Seventeen men of Chinese birth worked as farm hands on the prairies around Coupeville. Four Chinese men are recorded as "farmers" near Coupeville, suggesting that they may have been renting farmland. After passage of anti-Chinese legislation in the early 1880s, some Chinese farm workers were reportedly smuggled on to Whidbey Island to help with the potato harvest. This practice, which was lucrative for fishermen, continued into the 1890s.[89]

Over the next three decades, anti-Chinese legislation and xenophobic activities of many local central Whidbey Island residents profoundly impacted the lives and, in the end, the presence of Chinese residents in central Whidbey Island. In 1882, the U.S. Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, barring the arrival of any additional Chinese into the country. (This act was extended with additional restrictions in 1892, 1902 and 1904.) After the completion of the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1883 and the Canadian Pacific in 1885, the Chinese became the scapegoat for exclusionists on the West Coast who blamed the Chinese for a host of economic and social ills. The Chinese Exclusion Act was a formalistic, legislative manifestation of a xenophobia that was, in part, grassroots in creation.

Virulent anti-Chinese racist behavior following the act occurred in urban areas in California and also in Seattle. However, Whidbey Island residents were certainly not immune to the infectious intellectual paralysis that became a national epidemic through the last decade of the 1800s and the first two decades of the 1900s. An 1891 article appeared in the *Island County Times*:

> The prospects are good for an easy solution of the Chinese question here on Whidby Island. The course pursued on the part of the Government in running out the fresh arrivals, will reduce the number to such an extent that it will be difficult for Chinese renters to secure their crops, and very likely have the effect to discourage future efforts to farm the lands. In fact, some of the Chinamen who have lived on the island some time are making arrangements to leave as soon as their crops are secured.

[88] Census, "Schedule 1: Inhabitants in Whidbey and Camano Islands in the County of Island, Territory of Washington," 1870, microfiche, Washington State Archives.
[89] Buerstatte, "Geography of Whidby Island," 30-31.

An excellent example of the rationalization behind the xenophobia appeared a mere week after the above item was published:

> The *Times* has been to considerable pains to gather a few statistics regarding the Chinese upon Whidby Island; what they are doing here, and to give a fair estimate of the expense and absolute loss they incur to the white settlers and taxpayers. The approximate figures are obtained from Mr. John Robertson, who is pretty thoroughly posted upon what is being done in a business way on the island. He says that in the matter of raising potatoes alone, the Chinamen have something like the following estimates:
>
> Acreage.....750
> Average tons per acre.....7
> Total number tons.....5250
> Average price per ton.....$10
>
> Estimated value of crop $52,500
>
> Allowing one Chinaman to every ten acres (a fair estimate for the whole year), we would have 75 Chinamen on the island. Each will spend on an average $50 here, making a total of $3,750; the balance, or $48,750, is sent away and never gets back into circulation. Suppose we double the number of Chinamen and say they spent $7,500, then there is a clear loss to the money circulation of the island of $41,000.
>
> With these figures before him, is there a man, who has the prosperity of his county at heart, able to say that the presence here of the Mongolians is not a detriment? Because a man can get for the rent of his land a dollar and a half or two dollars an acre more by renting to a Chinamen, is he not in fact a loser in the end? A white man, even if he is peripatetic in his habits, puts the money he receives back into circulation. It would be far better to employ him. But the chances are that the places now occupied by Chinamen on the island would be filled by good, honest, industrious citizens with families, who would come here to make homes and improve and beautify them.

This article succinctly expressed the fears that precipitated overt bigotry-engendered conduct, such as the dynamiting of a Chinese potato storage pit in the Penn Cove area in the mid-1880s.

The editor of the *Island County Times*, D. Carl Pearson, continued his anti-Chinese crusade into the early 1900s. The newspaper's June 8, 1900 edition published approximately nine column-inches of anti-Chinese statements purportedly quoted from eleven island residents. Finally, in early October of 1900, the newspaper proposed that landowners enter into a covenant to no longer rent to Chinese. The October 12, 1900 newspaper reported that between fifty and sixty people attended a meeting held at the county courthouse. [90]

The newspaper published the item on October 13, 1900. It included the names of eighteen persons who purportedly signed the agreement.

Agreement Not to Rent Land to Chinese Tenants.

WE THE UNDERSIGNED, for and in consideration of the pecuniary benefits to ourselves and the welfare of the community at large, each with all the other parties hereto agree by these presents as follows:
1st – Not to rent land either directly, or by permitting our tenants to sub-let, any land in our possession or under our control to Chinamen for the period of 2 years from date of this instrument; or to employ Chinese labor for farm purposes PROVIDED, that this agreement shall not be finding unless all of the large land owners comply with this agreement.
Witness our hands this 10th day of October, 1900.

C. T. TERRY	S. E. HANCOCK
ED JENNE	C. P. EATON
A. W. COOK	A. L. ALEXANDER
W. B. ENGLE	SABINE ABBOTT
G. I. HERRETT	L. A. COMSTOCK
W. E. BOYER	F. A. LeSOURD
J. S. THOMAS	D. CARL PEARSON,
E. E. THOMAS	Agent for D.O. Pearson
R. M. WHITE	LESTER STILL, Agent
A. J. COMSTOCK	for Leslie Cullom

AND OTHERS

Illustration 6. Reprint of a display advertisement that was published in the *Island County Times*, October 13, 1900.

By 1902, xenophobic fears around Penn Cove had become so intense that a so-called "General Assembly of Coupeville" had forged their own version of the national Chinese Exclusion Act, which members circulated among island residents for signature. The proponents of this act alleged that the Chinese living around Coupeville took rented farms and farming jobs away from island residents and potential "white" newcomers, indulged in excessive gambling and drinking that corrupted Coupeville's young people, refrained from attending area schools and other "white" cultural activities, and occasionally left debts unpaid, and sometimes applied for financial aid from the county.[91]

Not all Coupeville residents and prairie farmers expressed such staunch xenophobic prejudice or participated in efforts to drive the Chinese away. In a

[90] "Farmers Sign the Declaration of Independence, Coupeville in a Fair Way to be Rid of the Chinese," *Island County Times,* October 12, 1900
[91] E. J. Hancock, "To the People of Coupeville and Ebey's Prairie," April 2, 1902. Lillian Huffstetler Private Papers.

April 1902 letter mailed to Coupeville and Ebey's Prairie farmers, Ernest Justus Hancock (son-in-law of early Penn Cove resident Captain Thomas Kinney) strongly denounced the local Chinese Exclusion Act and rumors that Hancock had withdrawn a promise to sign a petition supporting it. In his letter, Hancock stated that he had never planned to sign this paper, then emphatically explained his decision, for economic and moral reasons. Hancock argued that the Chinese farmers worked hard, gambled and drank no more than the "white" prairie farmers, and should not, therefore, on principle alone, be discriminated against. Hancock went on to condemn recent threats to blow up Chinese potato fields and burn Chinese homes. In closing his long letter, Ernest Hancock referred readers to certain articles in the Washington State Constitution, that affirmed that "no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law," and that "no person shall be deprived, in his private affairs, or his home invaded without due process of law."[92]

Ernest Justus Hancock was more than a man of words. He continued to rent some of his land to Chinese farmers. In his April 1902 letter, he countered apparent charges of trying to "keep the Chinese in the community to the exclusion of whites" by stating that "I will retain only those [Chinese] I have rented land to, and when I rent land I will see that the man has the use of it, no matter what his nationality or color may be."[93]

Hancock's determination to keep renting some of his farmland to Chinese residents may have encouraged a few Chinese to remain on central Whidbey Island. Ebey's Prairie reportedly became the last small enclave of Chinese farm laborers and farmers in Island County. In the end, however, anti-Chinese activities made it impossible for the Chinese to make a living and survive socially in Island County. They were forbidden from renting land for farming. From a peak in the Chinese population in Island County of seventy-six in 1890, their numbers dwindled over the next twenty years. In 1900, there were seventeen Chinese farmers, seven Chinese farmhands, and one Chinese storeowner, according to the census of Island County. The 1910 census counted twenty-eight Chinese, and ten years later, there were only eight.[94] The Chinese contribution to farming on the prairies around Penn Cove had ended and the presence of this Asian group nearly totally extinguished.

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[92] *Ibid.*

[93] *Ibid.*

[94] Census, "Schedule 1: Inhabitants in Whidbey and Camano Islands in the County of Island, Territory of Washington," 1880; "Census of the Inhabitants in the County of Island, Territory of Washington," 1885, microfiche, Washington State Archives; White, *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change,* 64-67; Dubrow, et al,"Asian/Pacific Americans in Washington State," 11--15. See also Lorraine Barker Hildebrand, *Straw Hats, Sandals and Steel: The Chinese in Washington State* (Tacoma, WA: Washington State Historical Society, 1977) for a basic overview of the Chinese in Washington.

The last of the Ebey Prairie Chinese lived into the Great Depression of the 1930s. According to local folklore, Ah Bo had remained on Whidbey Island, working as a farm hand and gathering ribbon seaweed and kelp along the tide line at Ebey's Landing. This he sold to Chinese food stores in Seattle to earn a small income. During summers, he worked in an Alaskan fish cannery to supplement his income. In 1929, aged Ah Bo lived in a small house without running water. He carried water from a nearby farm to his home in five-gallon kerosene cans, one each secured to the end of a pole extending across his shoulders. Ah Bo, an elderly dignified representative of a once much larger group of farmers on the prairie who was often seen trudging along roads near Ebey's Landing dressed in patched overalls and a worn black suit coat, may have been the last Chinese person to live on central Whidbey Island.[95]

Farming in the Early Twentieth Century

In the early twentieth century, the mechanization of agriculture on Whidbey Island farms brought higher crop yields, increased farm exports, and the resulting demands for better transportation, better schools, and greater social amenities. Although the size of the typical island farm decreased, the number of farms increased. In Island County the number of farms increased by 55 percent between 1900 and 1910 (from 254 farms to 458); the number of farms increased by another 60 percent between 1910 and 1920. Agricultural production also increased in the early 1900s. In 1910, island farmers sent 931,841 gallons of milk to the mainland; by 1920 the quantity had almost doubled to 1,770,173.[96]

Farm size started diminishing almost immediately after the conveyance of fee title to the original claimants under the Donation Land Claim Act (and its extensions) of the 1850s, and the reduction in farm size continued well into the mid-1900s. The type of land occupied by the new farms was marginal land. By the late 1910s, many of the newly established farms occupied land that had been logged over and was covered with stumps, slash and briar growth stimulated by the ground-disturbing activities associated with logging.

The new farms were started by new arrivals to the county, many of whom were new immigrants to the United States according to the Twelfth and Fourteenth censuses. Costs associated with clearing logged-over land forced the new farmers to focus on types of farming that did not require clearing the land, such as poultry and berries.

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[95] Burton Engle, "Rumrunning, Fish Trapping in History of Ebey's Landing," *Whidbey News Times,* January 3, 1974.
[96] *Farm Bureau News,* July 25, 1936.

The reduction in the size of the average farm eroded the individual island farmer's bargaining power with wholesalers and food processors on the mainland. To compensate, farmers on Whidbey joined in a nation-wide trend and formed cooperatives to represent them in purchasing equipment and supplies as well as marketing their produce. A cooperative creamery was formed in 1913.

Illustration 7. Threshing operation on central Whidbey Island farm c. 1900. Photograph courtesy of Island County Historical Society.

Cooperation among farmers took other less formal shapes as well. In 1917, Carl Engle of Ebey's Prairie and John Kinneth of Smith's Prairie joined with Oak Harbor area farmers to purchase five silos and share shipping costs.[97] Threshing in the early 1900s was typically done by machines owned by Fred Armstrong, Dan Schowalter, or Horace Holbrook.[98] The threshing machine owners fired up their steam engines in the fall and moved from one farm to the next, completing a circuit of nearly continuous threshing on central Whidbey Island farms. At harvest time, neighbors and family gathered to form a crew of twenty or more workers to complete the harvest on a farm. It took an engineer to keep the steam engine and the threshing machine running, a man to transport water for the steam engine, another to feed water into the engine's firebox, loaders

[97] *Island County Times*, June 8, 1917.
[98] *Island County Times*, August 22, 1913.

to pitch grain bundles onto wagons that would be driven to the thresher, a man to pitch bundles onto the feeding platform, a man to feed the stalks into the thresher, a man to compact grain into sacks, a man to sew the sacks closed, and a driver to transport the sacks of grain to the granary.

Illustration 8. Threshing on central Whidbey Island farm c. 1900. Note the distance between the steam engine and the threshing machine; the two are joined by a long leather belt. The steam engine was kept some distance from the actual threshing to minimize fire danger. Photograph courtesy of the Island County Historical Society.

The threshing operation was a hot, dusty, and physically exhausting experience. The incessant, loud, rhythmic chugging of the steam engine merged with the wheat dust billowing from the thresher to irritate the eyes and coat faces and lungs of the men and women who labored from sun-up to dusk in the August heat. At days end the laborers bathed in tubs of water left all day to warm in the sun. The host farmer would prepare an evening meal for those helping him with the harvest, and often find a place for them to sleep. Before light of day, the hosts would prepare breakfast, and another day of threshing would begin. And on it went until they moved onto the next farm to begin again.

In the early 1900s, central Whidbey Island farmers raised a diverse array of produce, including peas, beans, beets, turnips, potatoes, wheat, hay, and oats.

In 1917, peas and beans were favored crops on Ebey's Prairie. That year, 275 acres of peas were grown around Ebey's Prairie along with a few acres of

beans. According to the *Island County Times,* the acreage devoted to each crop on different area farms was as follows:[99]

Crop	Acres	Farmer/Farm Location
Peas	40	Al and Rae Comstock, Ebey's Prairie
Peas	30	Carl Engle, Ebey's Prairie
Peas	30	C. H. and John Lyon
Peas	26	E. J. Hancock
Peas	20	Ben Tufts
Peas	15	Walter Stoddard
Peas	9	Bert Arnold
Beans	4	Howard and Charlie Mitchell, San de Fuca
Beans	3	Charles Pennington, Coupeville, east of
Beans	1	John Love, San de Fuca

Several Coupeville/Ebey's Prairie farmers devoted many acres to fruit orchards. On the eve of United States' involvement in World War I, J. Anthes had ten acres in orchard, C. T. Terry raised 1,000 prune trees, and Ed Lovejoy cared for 300 pear trees on Lovejoy's Point.[100] South of the Penn Cove area, berries were planted on logged-off lands around Langley and along the western shoreline of Whidbey from Greenbank to Saratoga. In 1917, the first commercial harvest of berries was delivered to a Puyallup cannery. (Unfortunately, the cannery failed the following year).

Several farms raised milk cows. They sold the milk to the Oak Harbor Creamery[101] and averaged between $6 and $10.85 per month per cow profit.[102] Some Coupeville and San de Fuca area farmers raised sheep. In May 1915, they shipped one thousand pounds of wool.[103] On the eve of World War I, butter, mutton, and dressed hogs all left the Coupeville wharf on a scow towed by the steamer *Isabel*, bound for Everett, Seattle, and San Francisco.

Poultry increasingly contributed to the income of many Whidbey Island farm incomes in the early twentieth century. In 1913, there were five times as many farmers raising poultry on the island as there had been in 1908.[104] On April 3, 1914, the steamer *Calista* left Penn Cove with 108 cases of eggs, from Oak Harbor and Coupeville farms, bound for Seattle.[105] By May 1915, W. C. Schreck

[99] *Island County Times*, June 8, 1917.
[100] *Island County Times*, May 5, 1916.
[101] *Island County Times*, July 14, 1916.
[102] *Island County Times*, July 14, 1916.
[103] *Island County Times*, May 28, 1915.
[104] *Island County Times*, April 25, 1913.
[105] *Island County Times*, April 3, 1914.

had 1,250 laying hens, hatched 7,000 chicks, and shipped as many as 16 cases of eggs each week from his Ebey's Prairie farm.

The stories of the industry and dedication of Whidbey Island farmers are legion. And their efforts were often rewarded with robust harvests and respectable prices. In 1913, the average oat yield on the island was between 75 and 125 bushels per acre. Potatoes yielded from three to eight tons per acre. And clover and timothy produced two to two and one-half tons per acre. In 1914, W. E. Boyer and his son, Freeman, who were working the Abbott farm on Ebey's Prairie, harvested 470 sacks (28.25 tons) of potatoes from a small 1.3 acres. They sold them for $557.83.[106]

In 1917, three Whidbey Island farmers, Fred Dewilde of Oak Harbor and John M. LeSourd and Ernest Justus Hancock, both of Ebey's Prairie, won a national competition sponsored by the *Farm Journal* of Philadelphia for raising the biggest yields of wheat from a five-acre tract in the United States. The wheat yield realized by these three farmers had, in fact, been achieved by Whidbey Island farmers in the past. In 1891, Edward Jenne, for example, had harvested 950 bushels of wheat from twenty-five acres. That year, a total of 10,000 bushels of wheat had been raised on Whidbey Island; over 40,000 bushels had been harvested the preceding year.[107] Bountiful yields such as these continued into the early 1900s. In 1913, Fred Kreuger harvested 70 bushels of wheat per acre from his twenty-five-acre planting. In 1916, C. T. Terry realized a yield of almost 80 bushels of wheat per acre, and John Armstrong got 70 bushels per acre from his twenty-acre farm near San de Fuca.[108]

In the early 1900s, although farmers had much difficulty coping with price cycles, prices periodically amply rewarded the farmers' efforts. World War I proved to be a prosperous time for farmers. In September of 1916, wheat was selling for $35-38 per ton. Peas sold for $50 per ton. And island farmers received between $30 and $40 per ton for potatoes.

Land prices of the early 1900s on Whidbey Island clearly reflected the productivity and profitability of the island farms. Prices for farmland increased by approximately 32 percent between 1891 and 1915. In August 1891, A. W. Bash purchased 150 acres near Oak Harbor for $57 to $70 per acre.[109] In the winter of 1915, Sabine Abbott and his wife sold 60 acres of his Ebey Prairie farm to Joe Arnold for $13,000 (approximately $217 per acre).[110] In 1913, improved (cleared) agricultural land sold for $50 to $300 per acre (while unimproved land sold for $5 to $50 per acre).[111]

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[106] Island County Times, October 16, 1914.
[107] *Island County Times*, August 28, 1891.
[108] *Island County Times*, August 14, 1891, September 12, 1913, and September 15, 1916.
[109] *Island County Times,* August 14, 1891.
[110] *Island County Times,* March 5, 1913.
[111] *Island County Times*, June 20, 1913

Historically, central Whidbey Island residents have always had a grand view of a breathtaking seascape all around and a physical marine connection with a much larger world. Residents paused next to a pile of gathered camas to watch the residents of a neighboring village canoe toward that season's fish run. Anglo-American farmers in 1860 rested behind their yoke of oxen to watch a tall ship sail up the strait to load timber. And the 1910 farmer paused on his steam-powered thresher to watch a Japanese merchant ship, laden with goods for Seattle markets, steam past. Whidbey Island history is the story of farming with an unusual sense of its place in a larger world of travel and commerce on the waters encircling this long, narrow island.

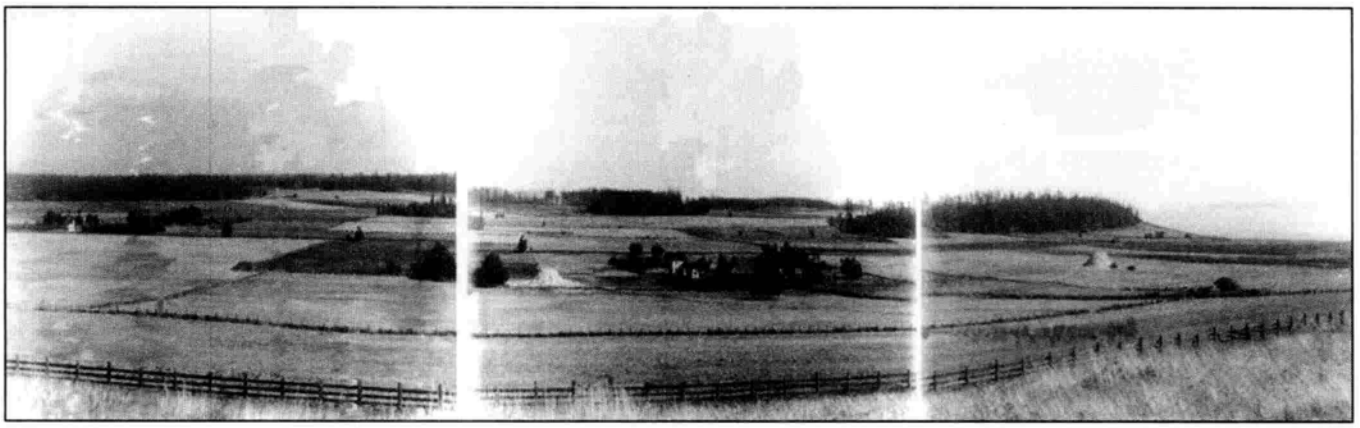

Illustration 9. This view looking east across Ebey's Prairie shows the typical cluster of shaded farm buildings surrounded by farmed fields delineated by fences into orderly rectangles. Photograph courtesy of Island County Historical Society.

Landscapes of Farming

By the turn of the twentieth century, the predominantly agrarian pursuits of central Whidbey Island residents had created a distinctive imprint on the landscape. The level or gently sloping prairies around Penn Cove had been brought under cultivation or grazed. Fences, often of snake construction, divided rectangular fields into different uses and were designed to confine grazing livestock to certain squares. Each farm typically had a cluster of farm buildings, comprised of the main house with additions, a nearby well and windmill for retrieving water, outhouses, one barn (or more) for storing hay and housing larger livestock during inclement weather, smaller outbuildings for chickens, hogs, and farm equipment—all shaded by deciduous trees. A few of the hillier areas scattered around central Whidbey remained wooded, usually in the second growth of timber.

Farm buildings evolved over the first fifty years of Anglo-American residence on central Whidbey Island. Even in the 1860s, some Penn Cove and prairie residents still occupied log cabins, although by then they probably already had been improved or enlarged at least once. Useable materials from older dismantled buildings were often incorporated into these improved buildings. Second-generation buildings, consequently, became hybrids, exhibiting old and new materials as well as newly developing construction methods and technologies.

The extant Ferry house, once known as "Ebey's Inn," exemplifies the once-common practice of rebuilding, enlarging, and improving dwellings on central Whidbey Island by recycling used materials while, at the same time, employing new materials and building methods. Following the death of Isaac Ebey in August 1857, his immediate family abandoned the family home, "the cabins," and stripped the cloth and paper off the inside walls. Materials from the abandoned cabins may have been used to construct the first section of the Ferry house around 1859 (the western part of the extant building, to the right of the main entry). One-inch thick vertical planks (with battens over the joints), resting on hewn horizontal sill logs positioned on stone or wood piers, served as the exterior walls; they also supported the gable roof of this one- and one-half-story dwelling. A wood-burning stove, not a fireplace, connected to a brick chimney was probably the earliest source of heat in the building.[112]

About four years later, a one- and one-half-story, fourteen-foot extension was made to the side wall of the existing dwelling. This addition probably took place when the quantity of mail and passengers transported to nearby Ebey's

[112] Information about the Ferry house construction materials and methods, described in this and following paragraphs, is based on in-depth historical research and careful inspection by historical architects and presented in Frederick L. Walters, *Historic Structures Condition Assessment and Evaluation, Ebey's Landing National Historic[al] Reserve* (Seattle, WA: National Park Service, December 2002).

Landing increased and the Ferry house began functioning as a small tavern and hotel for travelers. Although built using the same vertical plank construction methods as the first section, the Ferry house was aesthetically and functionally improved at this time with the application of horizontal weatherboards on the exterior walls.

The Ferry house received a third and final improvement, probably between the mid-1870s and early 1880s, with the addition of a major one- and one-half-story wing extending from the rear of the existing building. Perhaps spurred by even more steamship traffic between Ebey's Landing and the expanding community of Port Townsend,

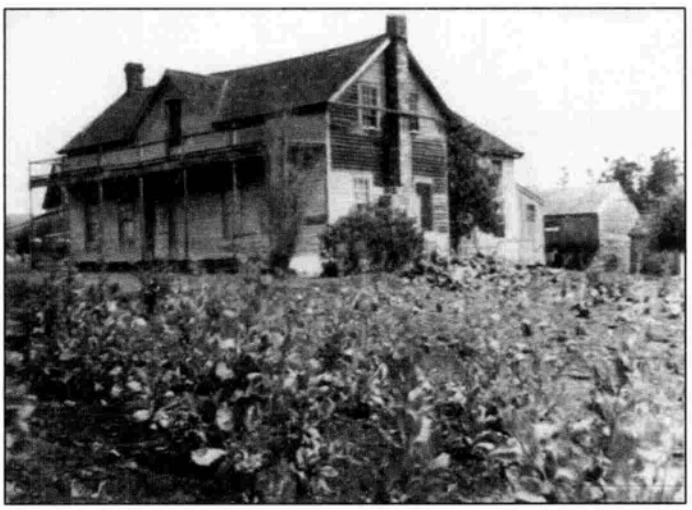

Illustration 10. "Ebey's Inn," also known as the Ferry House, had received nearly all of its major additions and alterations when this photograph was taken in the early 1900s. Note the very edge of the barn visible beyond the left corner of the house, and the outbuildings situated behind the residence. Photograph courtesy of Roger Sherman, Coupeville, Washington.

construction of this large new addition made use of the resourceful and innovative practice of blending existing materials and construction methods with new ones. Although the north side wall of this rear wing is of weight-bearing vertical planks (similar to the earlier walls), possibly made from recycled materials, the east and south walls employed the newer balloon-frame construction technology that used dimensional lumber and studs to create the weight-bearing skeleton of the building. To enhance the aesthetic appeal, comfort, and function of Ebey's Inn by guests, later additions included: a projecting gable roof and a two-story porch across the main facade as well as a brick corner chimney and projecting bay window (a typical feature of the Queen Anne style, popular in the 1880s and 1890s) in the dining room of the rear final addition. These improvements were probably all made before 1890. Other changes made in the early 1900s were limited to the construction of a brick chimney to the exterior of the southwest wall

(in the oldest section of the building), following severe damage to that wall during a lightning storm in 1917.

Other Ebey family members also made improvements to their homes. Atop the hill west of Ebey's Prairie, the extant Jacob and Sarah Ebey home exhibits evidence of ongoing improvements and modifications. The existing timber foundation, cut with a circular saw (and not hand hewn), suggests that the house may have been the third new or improved Ebey family dwelling on this site. (Isaac assisted Jacob Ebey in hewing logs in 1856, presumably for the second Jacob and Sarah Ebey home.) It was probably constructed after 1856-57 when Grennan and Cranney founded their mill in nearby Utsalady on Camano Island, making milled lumber readily accessible to Penn Cove residents. The walls of this Ebey house are of thick vertical planks (double thickness), similar to those in the first two sections of the Ferry house, which dates from the late 1850s and mid-1860s. The ground floor of the Ebey house, including the rear, one-story, shed-roof portion, may very likely date from the mid-1860s, after both Sarah and Jacob Ebey had died and the house was occupied by their daughter, Mary, and her husband Urban Bozarth. The Ebey-Bozarth house most likely incorporated some older building materials, possibly from the former Jacob and Sarah Ebey house. Over the next five decades, various alterations changed the appearance of the house. These included the additional of second-story flooring and dormer windows (later removed by 1934) that added light and headroom on the second story, the addition of horizontal channel siding on the exterior walls, and the removal of a small portico over the facade entrance. The Ebey-Bozarth house superbly represents the local, although not unique, Whidbey Island tradition of recycling older building materials and employing a variety of historic construction materials.[113]

Many other Penn Cove and prairie homes experienced similar evolutions. R. C. Fay, in 1863, occupied "a story and a half log house," according to H. A. Swift, who arrived in Coupeville with his family that year.[114] The family of Louisa and Captain James Henry Swift, who bought their land on the north side of Penn Cove from Jacob Smith, still occupied Smith's 1852 cabin, ten years after its construction. By that time, however, the cabin had probably been improved by the addition of horizontal clapboards over the outside walls and, perhaps, had even been enlarged somewhat.[115] In 1863, Louisa Butler Swift, wife of James Henry Swift, wrote to her mother in Massachusetts about their house "built of logs, a story and a half, two large rooms down stairs as large as your sitting room. The north room we used for our own room, the other is the dining room, and off

[113] Walters, *Historic Structures Condition Assessment and Evaluation, Ebey's Landing National Historic[al] Reserve,* 2002.
[114] "Founder of Coupeville Leaves the Sea to Build First Frame House," *Island County Times,* September 1, 1955.
[115] "Historic House Being Moved," *Island County Times,* May 11, 1928.

that are the stairs. We are having added a kitchen, pantry and bedroom." Louise reported that her log cabin "is the same as they all live in, and a very large one."[116] The Swift cabin measured about 18 by 32 feet.[117] More than two years later, Louise wrote of improvements being made to their home. "Everything remains the same with the exception of the rooms being papered and painted. The doors are grained maple," she added.[118]

Building Materials

John and Caroline Kellogg also purchased rough lumber from the Grennan & Cranney Mill for some of the construction materials used to build their new home on Smith Prairie around 1863. Since the mill produced only planed tongue-and-groove flooring and rough lumber at that time, Kellogg hired carpenter Van Patten to plane all of the one-by-six-inch cedar siding, window and door moldings, and all decorative details for the house. After months of hand-planing and construction work, Van Patten completed the Kellogg house at a total cost of $4,000. It was regarded for years as one of the finest homes in Island County. The Kelloggs' large, two-story house with bay windows in both the parlor and the sitting room featured a square cupola straddling the roof and a porch supported by columns that extended across the front. (The Kellogg house on Smith Prairie burned in th summer of 1913, when owned by the John LeSourd family.)[119]

In 1869, the Grennan & Cranney Mill contributed to the 170 million feet of lumber produced annually by a score of Puget Sound mills that was shipped around the world. Some of this lumber was exported. By 1870, the Grennan & Cranney Mill was one of thirteen major mills on Puget Sound that contributed to the 80 million feet of lumber exported to distant ports.[120] In 1871, vessels loaded with lumber at Utsalady were destined for Shanghai, China, and Valejo, California.[121]

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[116] Louise Butler Swift to mother Butler, August 3, 1863, Swift Papers.
[117] "Historic House Being Moved," May 11, 1928. The Swift cabin was moved to the Puget Race property and doubled in size in 1928.
[118] Louise Butler Swift to sister Annie Butler, December 17, 1865, Swift Papers.
[119] Cahail, "Whidbey Island" (II: 20), Cahail Papers; Flora Pearson Engle, "Recollections: Dr. and Mrs. J. C. Kellogg," *Island County Times,* August 24, 1928; "Was Famous Landmark," *Island County Times,* June 6, 1913.
[120] Meeker, *Washington Territory West of the Cascade Mountains,* 38.
[121] Ancutty Tillicum (H. A. Swift), "An Old-Time Trip on Whidby Island," *Island County Times,* February 21, 1913; "Utsalady," *Washington Standard,* October 7, 1871; Island County Historical Society, *Sails, Steamships and Sea Captains: Settlement, Trade and Transportation of Island County between 1850-1900* (Coupeville, WA: Island County Historical Society, 1993), 20.

The mill prospered from its shipments to foreign markets. By 1860, the Grennan and Cranney Mill had become fully established and expanded enormously. That year, the mill "turn[ed] large quantities of lumber annually"[122] and employed nearly sixty people, hailing from all parts of the United States, Canada, and Europe. They filled a variety of jobs; there were engineers, coopers, surveyors, machinists, ship carpenters, and blacksmiths, as well as numerous laborers.[123] By the early 1880s, the mill was 600 feet long and had a daily capacity of 164,000 feet of lumber.[124] By 1887, the Puget Mill Company owned the mill at Utsalady and, together with its other mills at Port Gamble and Port Ludlow, produced a total output of 90,000,000 feet of lumber.[125] Much of the Utsalady mill's prosperity may have been derived from its foreign shipments, rather than the relatively small Puget Sound market that existed before the 1890s. Until then, therefore, the Utsalady mill probably strived to mill products in demand by large foreign contractors rather than manufacture planed or finished lumber for purchase by local Puget Sound builders, including those on Whidbey Island.

[122] James Swan, "Scenes in Washington Territory," Swan Scrapbook, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.
[123] U.S. Census Bureau, Island County, Washington, 1860. The 1860 census shows that men working at the Grennan and Cranney Mill were natives of several northeastern states and Canadian provinces, as well as Ireland, England, Italy, Germany, and Belgium.
[124] Edmond Meany, *History of the Lumber Industry,* Marilyn Libbey Bailey, *Bow to Plow: Timber-Tillage & Taters* (Coupeville, WA: Island County Historical Society, 1995), 11-12.
[125] R. L. Polk & Company, *Puget Sound Directory, 1887* (Seattle, WA: R. L. Polk & Co., Publishers, 1887), 63.

Chapter 6

Moving Potatoes, People and Butter: Commerce and Transportation 1850s-World War I

Sixty years of transportation developments saw central Whidbey Island move from the cross roads of a maritime transportation network to a backwater outpost untouched by railroads and, at first, roads from the mainland. Sailing ships and then steamships brought people to Penn Cove and Ebey's Landing from thousands of miles away as well as only a few miles distant. Despite expectations that railroads and a canal would link Whidbey to mainland commercial markets, promoters' promises fell flat. The arrival of the automobile initiated great changes in the lives and the landscape of the prairies around Penn Cove.

By Sea

Early Anglo-American settlers around Penn Cove contrasted sharply with those settlers in the interior Willamette and Cowlitz valleys of western Oregon and Washington territories. Commerce and the emerging timber industry coincided with the arrival of emigrants who came to farm and begin a new life in a land distant from but part of the settled eastern United States. Whidbey Island's unique location in the mid-stream of navigable waterways in the Pacific Northwest, at a time when ships were used to transport goods and people, placed it at the center of commerce. The growing demand for timber for shipbuilding around the San Francisco Bay Area, a commodity readily available on the island (and throughout Puget Sound) near the water's edge, brought Whidbey Island into an arena of regional and international commerce early in its history of white settlement. Although remote from the Eastern Seaboard by land, the first settlers on Penn Cove and the surrounding prairies were at the edge of an expansive world of industry and trade around the Pacific Rim and even the world. Whidbey Island and Puget Sound, generally, truly constituted a hub of international trade.

Several sea captains who made their home around Penn Cove in the 1850s and 1860s engaged in regional and international commerce and trade between Whidbey and Camano islands and ports on the West Coast and around the world. Penn Cove residents Richard B. Holbrook and Eli Hathaway were among the first ship captains involved in Pacific Coast commerce. In March 1852, when Holbrook claimed land at the west end of the cove, the two sea captains

were shipping spars from Puget Sound.[1] In 1852, early Penn Cove settler Captain James Henry Swift sailed his bark the *Anadyr* to the North Pacific Ocean, where he spent nearly three years off the coast of Washington and Oregon hunting whales for their oil and bone.

Over the next several years, he piloted ships to several distant ports, including those on the Sandwich Islands.[2] Sea Captain Thomas Coupe first came to Penn Cove in 1852 in the bark *Success* to load a cargo of piles for transport to San Francisco. Coupe sailed ships laden with spars and piles between Puget Sound and San Francisco and European ports for a few years before turning from the international lumber trade to intra-Puget Sound marine commerce. He sailed the first revenue cutter on Puget Sound waters, the *Jeff Davis,* and later built and sailed small schooners on the Sound, as well as the steamer, *Success,* which served Whidbey Island settlers.[3] In 1853, Captains Howard Bentley Lovejoy and Thomas F. Kinney also engaged in shipping spars and piles from Penn Cove to San Francisco. They continued to pilot ships laden with timber, wheat, tallow, fur and hides, ice, salmon, and other products between ports up and down the West Coast and to Nova Scotia, China, and other ports. Captain Edward Barrington, a native of England who came to Puget Sound in 1852, bought the schooner *Eclipse* with Charles Phillips in 1854 (followed by the *Growler* in 1858), and carried on a freighting business between Olympia, Victoria, and Puget Sound ports. George W. Morse, who later made his home on a farm near Oak Harbor north of Penn Cove, owned and piloted a schooner (*Granger*) that carried freight between Puget Sound, British Columbia, and, occasionally, Alaska ports in the 1870s and 1880s.[4] Prairie settlers heard countless stories of commercial sailing adventures told by ship captains who had decided to settle on Penn Cove when not at sea.

Regional and international trade between Puget Sound ports, San Francisco, and many foreign countries was especially robust during the settlement period on Whidbey Island. Beginning in the early 1850s, the number of vessels in the coasting trade, which included Puget Sound, grew larger every year. Plying waters between Puget Sound, Vancouver Island, Portland, and San Francisco in 1852 were the brigs *John Davis, Franklin Adams, George W. Emery, Jane, G. W. Kendall, Tepic, Recovery, Daniel Leonosa, Nonpareil, Cyclops, Willamantic, Potamac,* and *Eagle;* the schooners *Cynosure, Exact, Demaris Cove, Susan Sturgis, Alice, Franklin,*

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[1] Cahail, *Sea Captains of Whidby Island,* unnumbered pages.
[2] Records of the Daughters of the Pioneers of Washington, "Captain James Henry Swift and Family, Whidby Island Pioneers," in *Told by the Pioneers,* 127-28; Cahail, *Sea Captains of Whidby Island,* unnumbered pages.
[3] Cahail, *Sea Captains of Whidby Island,* unnumbered pages; "Captain Coupe Talks Early Day," *Island County Times,* August 11, 1933; E. W. Wright, ed., *Lewis & Dryden's Marine History of the Pacific Northwest* (New York: Antiquarian Press, Ltd., 1961), 40-41.
[4] Cahail, *Sea Captains of Whidby Island,* unnumbered pages; "Captain Coupe Talks Early Day," *Island County Times,* August 11, 1933.

Mexican, Cecil, and *Mary Taylor;* and the barks *Desdemona, New World,* and *Success.* Aware of the prospects for prosperity increasing ship traffic held for Whidbey Island farmers, Isaac Ebey reported on this trend in an April 1853 letter to his younger brother Winfield in Missouri. "Shipping continues to pour into our waters at a great rate. Ours certainly will be the 'Commercial State' in time." One month later, Ebey commented again that: "shipping is increasing rapidly on the Sound. Ships are passing daily by our shore."[5] Ebey's neighbor, Walter Crockett, was also greatly impressed with the enormous increase in ship traffic around Whidbey Island since the Crockett family had arrived less than two years earlier. "Commerce is increasing very rapidly in this territory," Crockett wrote in mid-October 1853. "When I came to this country [in 1852] there was only five vessels traiding in to Pugets Sound and at this time there is upwards of fifty vessils comeing regularly into those waters and is shiping timbers, fish and coal to Sanfrancisco. . . . Admiralty "inlet is the greate high way for all the shiping that arrives in Pugets Sound," Crockett wrote his nephew in Virginia.[6]

In 1853, still more sailing vessels came to Puget Sound, including the brigs *George W. Kendall* and *Cabot,* the bark *Sarah Warren,* plus several other vessels.[7] According to *Lewis & Dryden's Marine History of the Pacific Northwest:* "reports of the remarkable possibilities for marine business on the Great River of the West, and on the vast inland sea, Puget Sound and its tributaries, had spread among the mariners on the more crowded waters of the Eastern coast, and they came with the rush."[8] In 1854, E. Holbrook, brother of Captain Richard Holbrook, estimated that there were "31 vessels running between here [Puget Sound] and San Francisco. Most of them are barks and ships."[9] That year, infant Puget Sound shipyards contributed to the growing number of ships on the Sound when they built three small schooners, the *H. C. Page, A. Y. Trask,* and *Emilie Parker,* along with the sloop *Col. Ebey.* Built at Port Townsend, the diminutive, forty-foot-long *Col. Ebey* was sailed most of the time by her owner, Captain L. B. Hastings.[10]

Many early settlers living on land with a view of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, Admiralty Inlet, and Penn Cove witnessed the regular ship traffic. Between June 1852 and May 1853, Rebecca Ebey recorded the almost daily passage of schooners, barks, brigs, and other vessels that could be seen from the Ebey home on the hill above Ebey's Landing, which on clear days offered a view across Admiralty Inlet to Port Townsend. In the summer of 1852, she noted seeing the schooners *Damerasuvo, Cadboro* (a Hudson's Bay Company vessel hauling board

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[5] Isaac Ebey to Winfield S. Ebey, April 20 and March 22, 1853, Winfield Ebey Papers, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.
[6] Crockett to Black, October 15, 1853, Crockett Papers.
[7] Wright, *Lewis & Dryden's Marine History,* 39-41, 47-48.
[8] Wright, *Lewis & Dryden's Marine History of the Pacific Northwest,* 43.
[9] E. Holbrook, "A Pioneer Writes to His Mother," in *Told by the Pioneers, Vol. 2,* 154.
[10] Wright, *Lewis & Dryden's Marine History,* 53.

timber), *George Emory* (from San Francisco), *Mary Taylor, Eagle, Beaver* (the first steamboat on the West Coast), and the U.S. Coast Survey vessel, as well as many other unidentified vessels "passing up" the strait or anchored at Port Townsend, across Admiralty Inlet. Among the many vessels Rebecca Ebey viewed in the spring of 1853, were those "beginning to load in the Cove with spiles [piles] and square timber"[11] and the arrival of the *Cabot* with families who had come to settle on the prairies around Penn Cove. In 1856, Emily and Isaac Ebey continued the practice of recording, in the family diary, commercial ships seen from the Ebey home. Between the end of October and early December, the Ebeys noted no less than twelve vessels (including the *Jenny Ford, Carbon, H. C. Page, Rob Roy, Colonel Ebey, Sequim,* and the *A. Y. Trask*). The revenue cutter *Jeff Davis*, piloted by Captain Coupe, regularly sailed into Penn Cove.[12]

In the 1850s, Penn Cove and prairie settlers participated in and depended on the large world of commerce and trade at the edge of their earth-bound agrarian community. They received building materials and household goods, farming supplies, and even farm animals that were transported on ships engaged in regional and international trade. Jane Kinneth, who settled on Smith's Prairie in 1853, recalled that in the early days "there would often be three boats at a time in the port [in Penn Cove] loading piles and by this means we got our supplies quite regular[ly]."[13] In 1854, Caroline Kellogg bought a hog that was transported on a sloop traveling from Olympia to Bellingham Bay, to Admiralty Head near the Kelloggs' home. When the vessel angled in toward the shore, the ship captain ordered the animal pushed overboard into the water. Several days later, according to local folklore, John Kellogg finally found and retrieved the sow, which by that time had given birth to a litter of piglets and was wandering in the woods about six miles from the Kelloggs' home. Later in the 1850s, the Kelloggs also received fifty sheep, which swam ashore after being delivered into the water near their Admiralty Head home.[14] Isaac Ebey, who traveled frequently around Puget Sound on government business, was just one of many farmers on north Whidbey Island who used these vessels for transportation to the mainland, often Port Townsend, an important seat of government in the early territorial days, on a regular basis,

[11] Recorded in Rebecca Ebey's diary on February 21, 1853. Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey" (April 1917), 133.
[12] Rebecca Ebey sighted the *Cabot* on April 22, 1853. For a sample of these diary entries, see Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey" (July 1916), 245 and (October 1916), 307, 308, 315, 318, 320, 321 and (January 1917), 44, 52, 54, 55 and (April 1917), 125, 126-27, 127, 128, 137, 139, 146, 149.
[13] Kinneth, "Early History of Whidby Island," Meany Papers.
[14] Cahail, "Whidbey Island" (II: 3), Cahail Papers; "Cargoes Were Delivered 'Overboard' in 1854—Whidbey's First Hospital," *Island County Times* 1951.

according to the 1856 diary of Emily Ebey.[15] The passage of ships engaged in commercial trade was an integral part of early Whidbey Island settlers' daily lives, providing them with visual as well as real contact with the larger world beyond the shores of their island home.

In the 1860s, sailing vessels left San Francisco every week for ports in Puget Sound, including Port Townsend across from Ebey's Landing.[16] South-bound cargo on these included timber products, oats, and other farm produce. Whereas some of these vessels were bound for distant countries, others navigated between ports on Puget Sound, such as Port Townsend, Bellingham Bay, and Olympia.[17] In 1869, schooners, barks, scows, and sloops carried piles, spars, and sawed lumber (103,500,000 feet), dressed lumber of all kinds (52,500,000 feet), coal (23,680 tons), and other miscellaneous articles valued at a total of $2,278,420. In 1869, 31 vessels trading on the Pacific Coast were licensed in San Francisco. A total of 51 vessels that plied Pacific coastal waters were licensed in Puget Sound. A total of 183 vessels engaged in foreign trade in 1869, exporting cattle, furs, grain, flour, cotton, and miscellaneous merchandise to ports beyond the Pacific Coast. In addition to vessels engaged in coastal and foreign trade, 48 vessels traded only between ports on Puget Sound.[18]

Thus, in 1869 alone, a total of 313 vessels plied the waters around Whidbey Island, affording Penn Cove and prairie residents abundant opportunities to move themselves and their goods to and from the mainland on commercial ships. John LeSourd, who came to Whidbey Island with his parents at age ten in 1875, remembered, as a child, seeing "lots of big sailing ships" at Port Townsend, the location of the U.S. Customs on Puget Sound for many years. "You would see sometimes a dozen or fifteen of these great big tall sailboats anchored out there," LeSourd recalled in 1969 at age ninety-four.[19]

Seafaring ships continued to engage in regional and international commerce through the 1880s, even as the promise of railroads in the Far Northwest arose and offered an alternative to the marine transport of lumber, coal, fish, and agricultural produce. By the mid-1880s, the marine commerce on Puget Sound had become enormous. A total of 1,869 vessels of all kinds (barks, brigs, schooners, sloops, steamers, and other ships) passed the Tatoosh Light on the Northwest Coast of the Olympic Peninsula between June 1883 and June 1884.[20] In 1887, the timber cut totaled 600,000,000 feet, more than any previous

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[15] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey" (October 1916), 307, 310; Sherman, *Sinking of the Calista, Part 1*, 10.
[16] Louise Butler Swift to mother Butler, June 2, 1863, Swift Papers.
[17] Kibbe, "Diary of Colonel Isaac N. and Mrs. Emily Ebey," 305, 307, 310, 312, 314, 316.
[18] Meeker, *Washington Territory West of the Cascade Mountains,* 32-33.
[19] Roger M. Sherman, *The Sinking of the Calista, Part 1 of a Maritime History of Central Whidbey Island* (Coupeville, WA: Roger M. Sherman, 1998), 12.
[20] Wright, *Lewis & Dryden's Marine History,* 325.

year, much of which was transported by ship to California ports and also sold in Washington Territory, with smaller amounts going to Mexico, South American, Australia, and the Pacific islands. Commercial vessels shipped coal and hops from Seattle and Tacoma. Ships transported salmon, oysters, herring, halibut, cod, smelt, sturgeon, clams, and crabs from Puget Sound to Portland markets. And oats, grown chiefly close to tide lands, including on Whidbey Island, were transported from Utsalady, LaConner, and Seattle to San Francisco.[21]

Travel and Mail Delivery to Whidbey

Although early Penn Cove settlers witnessed and sometimes used ships engaged in a larger world of maritime commerce, there was no regularly scheduled passenger and mail service with the mainland for years. In this early period, travel between Whidbey Island and the mainland proved a time-consuming and sometimes serendipitous adventure for settlers around Penn Cove. For a few months in 1852, the Ebeys and other early settlers jointly owned a flat-bottomed scow that they used for transporting people and goods to and from the island. In December 1852, however, the scow broke into pieces when Jacob Smith, sailing to Olympia, ran it ashore in a storm. The owners apparently never replaced this vessel.[22] The early settlers sometimes used canoes, often paddled by local Indians, to travel to Port Townsend and, occasionally, other small settlements on Puget Sound. Carved by hand from a single cedar log, these Indian canoes, able to carry twenty or more persons, combined seaworthiness with trim lines. According to local folklore, Dr. John Kellogg, who visited many settlers in need of his medical services around Puget Sound, became known as the "canoe doctor," since he often relied on a canoe, paddled by Indians, to deliver him to patients.[23] Transportation by canoe, however, was subject to favorable weather and tidal conditions. Canoes also performed the vitally important service of transporting mail to early Whidbey Island settlers throughout much of the 1850s.

Mail delivery to Whidbey Island, especially from the East Coast, followed a convoluted route. Irregularity, spontaneity, and resourcefulness characterized the delivery of mail to Ebey's Prairie and Penn Cove. From the Eastern Seaboard, mail was carried on commercial ships via the Isthmus of Panama to San Francisco.

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[21] R. L. Polk & Company, *Puget Sound Directory, 1887, Vol. I* (Seattle, WA: R. L. Polk & Company, 1887), 61-63, 499.
[22] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey" (January 1917), 56.
[23] Oscar Osburn Winther, *The Old Oregon Country: A History of Frontier Trade, Transportation, and Travel* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1950), 166; "Cargoes Were Delivered 'Overboard' in 1854—Whidbey's First Hospital," *Island County Times,* ?? 1951; Sherman, *Sinking of the Calista, Part 1,* 10; Carolyn Neal and Thomas Kilday Janus, *Puget Sound Ferries: From Canoe to Catamaran* (Sun Valley, CA: American Historical Press, 2001), 20-22.

In the very early days, ocean-going commercial vessels transported the mail from San Francisco to Port Townsend, or even Ebey's Landing and Penn Cove, where it was picked up and dispersed to settlers whenever convenient.[24] As early as 1852, William Engle sometimes carried mail from Ebey's Landing to Penn Cove and Oak Harbor settlers.

After Olympia received a post office in the early 1850s, mail customarily moved from San Francisco to Portland, Oregon. From there it went by boat down the Columbia River to the Cowlitz River, then up the Cowlitz to the Cowlitz Landing and Monticello, and, finally, from there by horseback or stage over a rough, muddy road to Olympia. Travel over this rugged, fifty-mile road took two days or more. Commercial sailing ships sometimes carried the mail from Olympia to Whidbey Island. In early February 1853, Rebecca Ebey noted that Captain Fowler transported the mail (letters and newspapers) from Olympia to Penn Cove, "which we have not had for a long time."[25] In March 1853, Isaac Ebey, in a letter to his brother Winfield, noted that: "we have now a mail of once a week from the States to the Columbia River and once in a while from the Columbia River to Olympia."[26] Travelers leaving Olympia and heading north often brought mail with them to Penn Cove on the sloop *Sarah Stone,* which had the mail contract around 1852 and 1853.[27] Sometimes the mail left Olympia and was transported by ship to Port Townsend, where it was then carried to Ebey's Landing or Penn Cove by canoe or ship. According to Rebecca Ebey in early 1853, Indians sometimes transported the mail by canoe between Port Townsend and the island.[28] Around 1853, Charles Phillips gathered mail up at Port Townsend and carried it by a canoe rowed by Indians to Ebey's Landing.[29] E. Holbrook commented, in early 1854, that: "letters are brought down by private conveyance."[30]

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[24] Island County Historical Society, *Sails, Steamships, and Sea Captains,* 31.

[25] Farrar, "Documents: Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey" (January 1917), 128. Captain E. S. Fowler came from the East Coast to the Pacific in 1849. He sailed on the *George Emery* to Puget Sound in 1850. In 1852, when Rebecca Ebey wrote of his arrival in Penn Cove, he piloted the schooner *Cynosure.* Wright, *Lewis and Dryden's Marine History,* 32.

[26] Isaac Ebey to Winfield Ebey, March 22, 1853, Winfield Ebey Papers.

[27] Wright, *Lewis & Dryden's Marine History,* 48.

[28] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey" (April 1917), 125, 126, 129.

[29] Charles Phillips and Captain Edward Barrington also, apparently, joined in transporting mail between Olympia and Bellingham Bay in a canoe around 1852-1853, before purchasing the schooner, *Eclipse,* which they used for freighting goods between Olympia and Victoria. Cahail, *Sea Captains of Whidby Island,* unnumbered pages. See also: Swan, *Northwest Coast,* 401; Cahail, "Whidbey Island" (II: 33), Cahail Papers; Ancutty Tillicum (H. A. Swift), "How We Got the Mails Fifty Years Ago," *Island County Times,* September 19, 1913.

[30] E. Holbrook, "A Pioneer Writes to His Mother," *Told by the Pioneers: Reminiscences of Pioneer Life in Washington, Vol. 2,* edited by F. I. Trotter, F. H. Loutzenhiser, and J. R. Loutzenhiser (N.p.: Washington Pioneer Project c. 1938), 153.

By early 1854, mail reached Whidbey Island from the east by one of two routes. It either came down the Columbia River and over the Cascade Mountains, "which makes them [letters and papers] so long on their way home or out here," or by steamer from San Francisco up the West Coast to Puget Sound.[31] For a brief five months in late 1854 and early 1855, mail arrived at Coupeville on the steamer *Major Tompkins,* before it wrecked near the entrance of the Victoria harbor, once again leaving the settlers without direct mail service to Penn Cove. John Alexander's store on Penn Cove may have been the informal collection and distribution point for mail before the establishment of an official post office on the cove.

Mail distribution on Whidbey Island became somewhat more organized beginning in July 1857, when the first post office on north Whidbey Island was established at Coveland on the west end of Penn Cove. Winfield Ebey rejoiced about this new development in his diary. "A new era is certainly dawning. We have a mail Steamer, Post Office and Post Master. If the Steamer can be kept afloat and be made to pay that is all that is necessary."[32] Thomas Cranney, the first postmaster, performed his duties for three years in the Island County Courthouse, constructed only a few months earlier in Coveland. J.D. Fowler took over as postmaster for one year, from April 1860 to March 1861. The post office remained in Coveland until March 1861.

At least some spontaneous informal mail delivery was made to Ebey's Landing around 1859 and 1860, presumably by ship from Port Townsend. George W. Beam, who probably then lived with his wife Almira Neff Wright (Isaac Ebey's niece) in the early Ferry house above Ebey's Landing, commented on waiting for the boat with mail at the landing, in January 1860.[33] By 1861, the demand for mail delivery there must have been great enough to warrant moving the post office from Coveland to Ebey's Landing (likely to the Ferry house), which was closest to the ferry landing. This arrangement lasted only five months, however; the post office returned to Coveland in August 1861. (Robert C. Hill served as postmaster during the post office's brief tenure at Ebey's Landing in 1861).[34]

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[31] Holbrook, "A Pioneer Writes to His Mother," 153.
[32] Quoted in George Albert Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island* (Coupeville, WA: Island County Historical Society), 66.
[33] George W. Beam Diary, January 14, 1860, George Beam Papers, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.
[34] Tim Boardman and Richard W. Helbock, *Washington Post Offices* (Lake Oswego, OR: La Posta Publications, 1986), 22, 26; Jimmie Jean Cook, *"A particular friend, Penn's Cove"* (Coupeville, WA: Island County Historical Society, 1988), 144. Also see: "Island Court House—Coveland," historical narrative and drawings, Historic American Building Survey.

And Then Came Steam

The arrival of steamboats on Puget Sound gradually improved travel and the transport of supplies and mail, even though the steamers' service remained irregular for many years. Known to sailors as "tea-kettles," "steam-kettles," or "stink-pots" because of their offensive black smoke and rhythmic beating noise, they were far better suited for plying the serrated coastline and tidal waters of Puget Sound than nobler ships of sail. Steamboats could maneuver more easily and were less affected by prevailing winds and the stormy weather of the Northwest Coast than sailing vessels. Small steamers had a shallow draft with no keel, allowing them to navigate in shallow water. Sternwheeler steamers, even more than side-wheelers, were especially maneuverable. Some steamers were little more than a shed-like structure on a flat-bottomed hull. Steamers carried both freight and passengers to communities of all sizes, to reach farms and businesses when the demand existed. Often they did not run on a regular schedule but limited their travel to an approximate daily sailing from a designated port. Steamers were first fueled by wood, available everywhere, then coal, and, finally, by oil.[35]

The diminutive, one-hundred-foot-long and twenty-foot-wide sidewheeler *Beaver,* constructed in England in 1835 for the Hudson's Bay Company, was the first steamer to enter the Pacific Ocean; it launched the Pacific Northwest into the steamboat age. Powered by two-lever engines that consumed forty cords of wood over twenty-four hours, the *Beaver* moved through the water at a lethargic seven knots. For fifty years, she served ports in Puget Sound and Vancouver Island, British Columbia. The *Otter,* a Hudson's Bay Company bark-rigged, propeller-driven, 122-foot-long steamer constructed in England in 1852, joined the *Beaver* on Puget Sound the following year.[36]

During her tenure, the *Beaver* witnessed the Puget Sound shores transform from fur-gathering activities to farming and logging, the cultural mix become more and more European, the arrival of railroads on the mainland, the first private international trade agreement (Japan Mail Steamship Company and the Great Northern Railway, 1896), the first United States Naval vessel arriving at the new Navy yard in Bremerton (the monitor *Monterey*, April 1896), and the construction of the first Whidbey Island dock that permitted ships alongside at any stage of the tide.

Puget Sound's first American-made steamer, the diminutive, one-hundred-foot-long *Fairy,* arrived from San Francisco on the deck of a bark and began operating in 1854. In anticipation of her launching, the January 15, 1853

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[35] Island County Historical Society, *Sails, Steamships and Sea Captains,* 54-55; M. S. Kline and G. A. Bayless, *Ferryboats: A Legend on Puget Sound* (Seattle, WA: Bayless Books, 1983), 3.
[36] Wright, *Lewis & Dryden's Marine History,* 15-18, 46-47; Sherman, *Sinking of the Calista, Part 1*, 1-2.

issue of Olympia's *Columbian* newspaper promoted the *Fairy* as a steamer of "sufficient size, strength, and power to run between the head of Puget Sound and Whidby's Island, Port Townsend, &c." On November 12, 1853, Olympia's *Columbian* newspaper proudly previewed its upcoming operation and schedule. "The splendid steamer *Fairy,"* the advertisement announced, would "ply regularly between Olympia, Steilacoom, Alki and Seattle, leaving Olympia every Monday and Wednesday."[37] The *Fairy* schedule, apparently, did not include Whidbey Island. In 1857, the *Fairy's* career abruptly ended when her boiler exploded, sinking the *Fairy* at the Steilacoom wharf.[38]

In 1854, Olympia's *Pioneer and Democrat* hailed the arrival of Puget Sound's first ocean-going steamer, the *Major Tompkins,* a veteran of service in New Orleans and on the Sacramento River. Known to some as "Pumpkins," the ninety-seven-foot-long *Major Tompkins* began operating in late September, providing regular passenger and mail service between Olympia, Steilacoom, Alki Point, Seattle, Port Gamble, Port Ludlow, Port Townsend, Coupeville, Bellingham Bay, and Victoria, British Columbia. Winfield Ebey took the *Major Tompkins* from Fort Steilacoom to Olympia in early October on what may have been the steamer's maiden voyage on Puget Sound waters. Ebey and other family members had just arrived at the fort after their arduous overland trek from Missouri. When Winfield rejoined his family in Olympia, they all boarded the *Tompkins* on October 12, 1854, and rode it to Whidbey Island, where Isaac Ebey and his two sons awaited their arrival.[39] In addition to passengers and freight, the *Major Tompkins* carried mail to the island from Olympia. Penn Cove residents heralded the *Major Tompkins* as a "healthy postal communication." To the great disappointment of settlers on Whidbey Island and other Puget Sound communities visited by the *Tompkins,* the steamer made its final trip and mail delivery less than six months after arriving on Puget Sound. In mid-February 1855, the *Major Tompkins* left Port Townsend, stopped at Ebey's Landing to drop off Isaac Ebey, then headed for Victoria. Heavy storm winds and high tides smashed the ship into rocks near the Victoria harbor entrance at Esquimalt.[40]

Other steamships arrived soon afterward on Puget Sound, perhaps encouraged by the founding of a new organization to encourage reliable and safe steamship travel. In 1855, the Puget Sound Navigation Company was organized with the express purpose of promoting navigation by steam on the "waters of Puget Sound, Hood's Canal, Admiralty Inlet, the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and the

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[37] Both quotes from Winther, *Old Oregon Country,* 166 and 167.
[38] Wright, *Lewis & Dryden's Marine History,* 45; Neal and Janus, *Puget Sound Ferries,* 28, 68.
[39] Gerald Robert Baydo, "The Life and Times of Winfield Scott Ebey" (M.A. thesis, University of Washington, 1966), 23.
[40] Wright, *Lewis & Dryden's Marine History,* 52, 59; Winther, *Old Oregon Country,* 167-68; Neal and Janus, *Puget Sound Ferries,* 28-30; Sherman, *Sinking of the Calista, Part 1,* 2.

northern waters of the Territory of Washington."[41] The *Traveler, Resolute* (Puget Sound's pioneer tugboat), and *Constitution* soon appeared on Puget Sound waters. Later in 1855, after the wreck of the *Major Tompkins,* the iron-propeller steamship *Traveler* arrived in Puget Sound from San Francisco on the deck of the brig *J. B. Brown.* For three years, she carried mail and passengers between Olympia, Steilacoom, and Seattle, occasionally stopping at Port Townsend and Victoria. The *Traveler* met the same fate as her predecessors. In March 1858, she encountered storm winds and strong tides near Foulwater Bluff at the tip of the Kitsap Peninsula, and, after anchoring, took on water and sank.[42]

Steamship navigation in the Northwest experienced a great boom beginning in 1857 and accelerated in 1858 due to the discovery of gold on the Fraser River and the rush of miners to this mining district, as well as the growth of the lumber industry throughout the region. Several new steamers arrived on Puget Sound, including the *Constitution* and the *Sea Bird,* both of which were engaged in the Fraser River mining traffic. Hunt Scranton, who had previously operated the *Major Tompkins* and held a contract to deliver mail on Puget Sound, briefly used the *Constitution*, between Olympic and Victoria, for that purpose. In late 1858, the 140-foot-long side-wheeler steamer *Eliza Anderson* took over mail delivery on the Sound. The *Eliza Anderson* traveled between Olympia and Victoria, making scheduled stops at Steilacoom, Seattle, Port Madison, Port Gamble, Port Ludlow, and Port Townsend.

Despite the increase in steamers operating on Puget Sound beginning in the late 1850s, progress made to serve the residents of Whidbey Island with regular transportation of people, goods, and mail was extremely tentative and fleeting. None of the steamers that went into service after the demise of the *Major Tompkins* made scheduled stops at Penn Cove. Port Townsend, on the run between Olympic and Victoria, was the nearest regularly scheduled steamer stop. In the 1860s, Samuel D. Crockett remembered crossing Admiralty Inlet from Ebey's Landing to Port Townsend in a sloop and then taking a tugboat to Seattle.[43] Whidbey Island residents often continued to rely on Indian canoes and commercial sailing ships for transportation to Port Townsend and other mainland Puget Sound communities.[44] Port Townsend's important stature as an early center of territorial government made it a key stopping place on maritime transportation routes.

Realizing the great need to link Penn Cove area residents with regular transportation to nearby mainland communities, particularly Port Townsend,

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[41] Quoted in Winther, *Old Oregon Country,* 168.
[42] Wright, *Lewis & Dryden's Marine History,* 55-56, 79.
[43] Crockett to Meany, March 2, 1916, Meany Papers.
[44] Wright, *Lewis & Dryden's Marine History,* 63-64, 76-77; Island County Historical Society, *Sails, Steamships and Sea Captains,* 54-55; Winther, *Old Oregon Country,* 168-69 Neal and Janus, *Puget Sound Ferries,* 30-31.

Captain Thomas Coupe helped fill the void in passenger service. He launched the twenty-seven-foot sloop *Marie,* named after one of his three daughters, in the late 1850s. Designed for both speed and the comfort of passengers, *Marie* boasted a 36-foot mast, a 30-foot beam, and 150 yards of flying canvas sails. On sunny days when rain wasn't falling, the roof of the passenger "coach" could be opened. Later, Captain Coupe built two other vessels, the steamers *Keturah* and *Mary Ellen,* named for his two other daughters, to transport passengers and freight to and from Coupeville.[45] In 1868, just seven years before his death, Coupe launched the steamer *Success,* which transported goods and passengers between Ebey's Landing and Port Townsend. It also ran between Seattle and Port Blakely. Penn Cove and prairie residents could take this steamer to Port Townsend and from there take a larger steamer to other communities on the Sound.[46] In addition to Captain Coupe's vessels, the *Black Hawk,* carrying as many as twelve passengers along with a cargo of freight, occasionally made an appearance in Penn Cove around this time, according to early Smith Prairie resident Jane Kinneth.[47]

Transporting mail by steamship failed to enhance service to Whidbey Island residents for several years. In the 1860s, mail delivery continued to be a convoluted enterprise. In the early 1860s, the *Eliza Anderson* left Olympia every Sunday at midnight laden with mail. After Captain Finch stopped at Steilacoom and Seattle, he sailed the steamer to Port Madison, where mail to several destinations (Mukilteo, Tulalip, Coveland, Utsalady, Swinomish, and Whatcom (later named Bellingham)) was put ashore. Around 1863 the eighty-foot-long steamer *J. B. Libby* (built by Captain S. D. Libby in honor of Captain John B. Libby, not Coveland postmaster Samuel Libbey) occasionally carried mail on this so-called "Whatcom route." Sometime between Monday night and Tuesday noon, depending on weather and tidal conditions, the mail arrived by Whitehall rowboat at Coveland, where then postmaster Samuel Libbey dispatched letters and newspapers to island residents eager for word of family and friends, and national news, like the progress of the Civil War. Libbey served as postmaster at Coveland between August 1861 and April 1864. The post office made its final move to Coupeville in April 1864, where John Robertson became postmaster for the next four years.[48]

Around 1863, genial and good-natured Captain "Humboldt Jack" (John) Cosgrove obtained the contract to carry the mail from Port Madison to the several

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[45] Island County Historical Society, *Sails, Steamships and Sea Captains,* 54-55.
[46] Wright, *Lewis & Dryden's Marine History,* 40, 200; ?? to auntie, August 8, 1869, Swift Papers.
[47] Kinneth, "Early History of Whidby Island," Meany Papers.
[48] Tim Boardman and Richard W. Helbock, *Washington Post Offices* (Lake Oswego, OR: La Posta Publications, 1986), 22, 26; Cook, *"A particular friend, Penn's Cove,"* 144; Ancutty Tillicum (H. A. Swift), "How We Got the Mails Fifty Years Ago," *Island County Times,* September 19, 1913.

communities, including Coveland. For two years, Cosgrove piloted the sloop *Maria* for this purpose. In 1865, he engaged the steamer *Mary Woodruff*, built at Port Madison two years earlier, for mail delivery to the recently relocated post office at Coupeville and other small communities on the Seattle-Whatcom route. "The *Mary Woodruff* and her new proprietor then began a career that made their names household words all over the Sound," according to *Lewis & Dryden's Marine History of the Pacific Northwest.* Much speedier than the *Maria,* the *Mary Woodruff* left Seattle with mail every Monday morning around 7:00 a.m. and, if all went well, arrived in Coupeville by 2:00 a.m. Tuesday, according to assistant postmaster H. A. Swift, who went by the pen name of "Ancutty Tillicum". "The steamer was the first 'all around' boat that had yet appeared [on Puget Sound.] She carried mail, freight, and passengers on various routes, towed logs and lumber vessels, and jobbed in these waters for years."[49]

With the arrival of the mail-laden steamer *Mary Woodruff* in Penn Cove in the mid-1860s, north Whidbey Island residents enjoyed regular steamship passenger and freight service to the mainland for the first time. Passengers traveling between Penn Cove and either Seattle or Whatcom (Bellingham) paid $5 for transportation and meals. The "old steamer had the reputation of serving the best meals of any boat on the sound. . . . Jack [Cosgrove] bought only the best of everything," a Penn Cove resident recalled fifty years later.[50] Jack Cosgrove continued operating the *Mary Woodruff* until around 1870, when his virtual monopoly on business was broken with the appearance of other steamers operating on the waters of the Seattle-Whatcom route.

In the early 1870s, the newly repaired *J. B. Libby* began operating between Seattle, Whidbey Island, Utsalady, La Conner, and Whatcom on the Whatcom route. By 1871, the *J. B. Libby* delivered mail to postmaster Granville O. Haller (serving in that capacity between 1868 and 1872) in Coupeville every Monday, leaving Seattle early in the morning and arriving at Coupeville around 4:00 p.m. that afternoon. Not long afterward, the *Libby* began making two trips a week to Coupeville, a schedule she continued through the mid-1870s.[51] In 1870, the *Olympia* joined the *Eliza Anderson*'s scheduled run between Olympia and Victoria, with several stops along the way.

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[49] Wright, *Lewis & Dryden's Marine History,* 119. Also see "Captain Coupe Talks Early Day," *Island County Times,* August 11, 1933; Sherman, *Sinking of the Calista, Part 1,* 2; Engle, "Recollections of Early Days, Coupeville Some Sixty Years Ago," *Island County Times,* January 20, 1928.

[50] Tillicum (H. A. Swift), "How We Got the Mails Fifty Years Ago."

[51] Wright, *Lewis & Dryden's Marine History,* 118-19, 236; *Washington Standard,* April 17, 1875; Tillicum (H. A. Swift), "How We Got the Mails Fifty Years Ago"; "Captain Coupe Tells of Early Days Here," *Island County Times,* August 11, 1933; Engle, "Recollections of Early Days: Coupeville Some Sixty Years Ago," *Island County Times,* January 20, 1928.

The following year, the economical and elegantly equipped steamer *North Pacific* entered the Puget Sound fleet of steamers, running regularly between Victoria and Port Townsend, still an important connecting point for Whidbey Island residents traveling to the main coastline. The efficiency and speed of the *North Pacific* contributed to the fierce competition between steamers on the Sound at that time and helped lower passenger and freight rates for runs on Puget Sound waters. For many years, Puget Sound residents and ship captains regarded the sizeable, 178-foot-long *North Pacific* the flagship of the steamship fleet plying the waters of the Sound. The 148-foot-long side-wheeler steamer *George E. Starr,* built in Seattle in 1879, ran in conjunction with the *North Pacific* on the Victoria route, which carried the mail to communities between these two small cities. Ten years later, the *Sehome* replaced the *North Pacific* on the Victoria route; soon afterward, however, it began making the Whatcom (Bellingham) run, serving small coastal and island communities. By the end of the 1870s, the number of both steamers and captains on Puget waters had increased dramatically. In 1880, the Puget Sound fleet consisted of roughly forty steamers, piloted by forty-two licensed captains, representing a four-fold increase in captains over just ten years.[52]

The demise of the *J. B. Libby,* one of the pioneer steamers on Puget Sound and one that helped advance the regularity of mail delivery to Coupeville in the 1870s, signified the end of the pioneer era of transportation and mail delivery to Penn Cove residents. On November 10th, while en route from Roche Harbor to Port Townsend with 500 barrels of lime, the *Libby* encountered a stiff breeze about ten miles off Whidbey Island in the Strait of Juan de Fuca. When the rudder broke from the hull, the captain lost the ability to steer the vessel. Fire, soon afterward discovered by the engineer in a hold with the lime, sent fourteen passengers and crew scrambling for lifeboats. After drifting about for several hours, the passengers and crew were finally picked up and the burned hull of the *Libby* towed ashore. In 1890, the *Libby* wreck was sold, ending her career on Puget Sound.[53]

A Lighthouse and Wharves: Necessities of Marine Travel

In 1858, the United States Coast Survey purchased ten acres on the southern tip of Admiralty Head from John C. Kellogg and his wife, Caroline

[52] Wright, *Lewis & Dryden's Marine History,* 189, 244, 270, 276-77; Neal and Janus, *Puget Sound Ferries,* 31-32. During the *Libby's* service as a mail carrier to central Whidbey Island, several postmasters had worked in Coupeville. Between 1872 and 1890 postmasters in charge of mail distribution in Coupeville included: O. H. Morgan (1872-1875); Edgar Bryan (1872-1875); Granville O. Haller (1876-1879); Daniel Pearson (1879-1880); Alvah Blowers (1880-1885); and John Babcock (1885-1890).
[53] Wright, *Lewis & Dryden's Marine History,* 372.

P.upon which the agency was planning to build a lighthouse. The agency paid the Kelloggs $400 for the land. The Kelloggs had acquired patent to the land under the Donation Land Claims Act of 1850, and had built a log home and small log hospital on it. On December 24, 1858, they conveyed the ten acres for the lighthouse to the Coast Survey.[54]

The original lighthouse, a modest wood frame structure with a square tower that rose forty-one feet from the base to the lantern, was operational in January 1861, just weeks before the commencement of the Civil War. After ships cleared the Dungeness Light in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, they would steer directly for the Admiralty Head Light, which would keep them clear of the long spits extending into the strait from Point Partridge, Point Wilson, Marrowstone Point, and Point No Point.

Captain William Robertson, who immigrated to Whidbey Island from Baltimore in the 1850s with his wife and two daughters (Leah and Mary), was the first Lightkeeper, appointed by Democrat President James Buchanan in 1859. Captain Robertson served as the lightkeeper for five years.

In 1864, Daniel Pearson, a Republican, was appointed lightkeeper by President Abraham Lincoln. Daniel Pearson had accompanied two of his daughters from Lowell, Massachusetts, where the daughters had been recruited by A. S. Mercer to immigrate to Washington Territory as teachers. The older of the two daughters, Josie, aged twenty, died of a heart attack on her way to school on Ebey's Prairie after only being on the island for six weeks. Daniel had been working as a night watchman at a Port Gamble sawmill. Upon Josie's death, local residents arranged for Pearson, who was in ill health, to be appointed as the lightkeeper. About one year after his appointment, his wife, son, and another small daughter, Flora, came west on the steamer *Continental.* His daughters, Georgia and Flora, actually operated the lighthouse since Pearson was not well.[55] In 1878, the Pearsons bought a farm, and Daniel Pearson opened a store in Coupeville, known as the Union Protection Store, on Front Street (at the location of Toby's Tavern in 2000).[56] In 1878, Laurence Nessell replaced the Pearsons; Captain Evans was the last keeper of the original lighthouse.[57]

In 1901, the original lighthouse was moved to Point Partridge on the west coast of Whidbey Island, after the construction of Fort Casey had begun in the late 1890s. The *Island County Times* reported this news in its March 15, 1901 issue.

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[54] Hussey, *Short History of Fort Casey,* 31.

[55] "Recollections of Early Days," *Island County Times*, March 9, 1928 September 13, 1928, September 28, 1928; October 26, 1928.

[56] Flora Pearson died in 1890; Daniel Pearson died in 1897.

[57] Flora A. Pearson, "Recollections of Early Days," *Island County Times,* January 20, 1928 and November 29, 1929.

> The lighthouse on Admiralty Head is to be removed to make room for the placing of guns at the fortifications at that place. . . . Point Partridge would be the new site for the light house. . . . Point Partridge [about five miles northwest of Admiralty Head] is a commanding position and according to those familiar with the waters of Puget Sound, a light there will be a greater aid to navigation than where it is on Admiralty Head.[58]

For several years, the lighthouse was used as quarters for noncommissioned officers. The new lighthouse on Admiralty Head, built in the early 1900s by the 13th Light House District Office in Portland, Oregon, included a twenty-five-foot high circular brick tower connected to a two-story residence for the keeper. A barn, chicken house, and brick oil house were also constructed nearby. Changes in shipping routes and channels around Whidbey Island made the lighthouse station obsolete by the late 1920s. The lantern was removed and placed in the New Dungeness Lighthouse across the strait near Port Angeles. The Admiralty Head Lighthouse served as quarters for an officer stationed at nearby Fort Casey during World War II. On January 17, 1941, the Treasury Department conveyed the land and the lighthouse improvements to the Secretary of the War.[59]

Several wharves were built around Penn Cove over the years. In the 1800s, at least one wharf was built at Coveland and one at Snakelum Point (sold in 1893). At least two wharves were constructed at San de Fuca. Coupeville had four, possibly five wharves by 1900.

Coupeville's first wharf was probably built around 1860 at the foot of Main Street. In 1875, the town boasted three wharves. In 1883, J. C. Sullivan received contracts to build two wharves in Coupeville, one of which may have been for John Robertson.[60] It is known that around that time John Robertson had a wharf built near his store at 8 Northwest Front Street. Robertson apparently sold this dock to the Calhoun family. Around 1880, Daniel Pearson (former Admiralty Head lighthouse keeper) had a 500-foot-long dock built in front of his store (the Union Protection Store) on Front Street. The Coupeville Wharf Company also operated Pearson's dock.[61]

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[58] "Admiralty Lighthouse," *Island County Times,* March 15, 1901.

[59] Records of the 13th Light House District reflect July 5, 1901, as the completion date of the plans for the new lighthouse; however, the Army Corps of Engineers records indicate the lighthouse was completed in March of 1900. See Hussey, 29. The restored lighthouse now serves as a museum and office space. Ray Jones, *Pacific Northwest Lighthouses,* (Guilford, CT.: Globe Pequot Press, 1997), 47-48.

[60] Roger Sherman to Gretchen Luxenberg, Seattle, WA: National Park Service, n.d. (summer 2002).

[61] Sheridan, *Coupeville—Past, Present and Future,* 27-28.

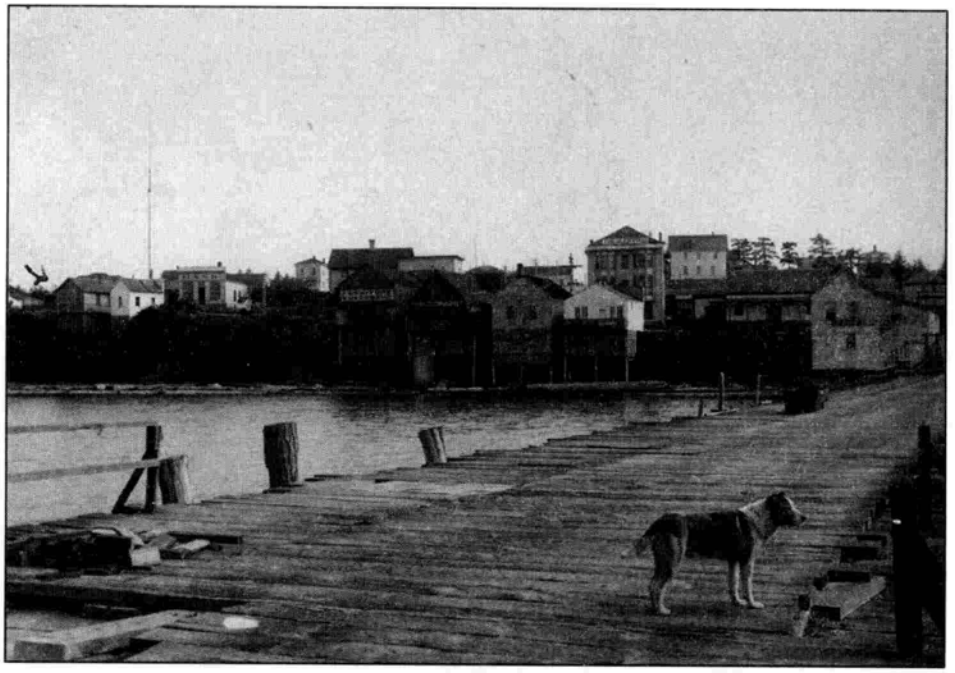

Illustration 11. Looking south into downtown Coupeville from end of wharf c. 1940. Identity of dog unknown. Photograph courtesy of the University of Washington Special Collections, photograph UW23480z.

The construction of wharves continued in the early 1900s. The LaConner Trading and Transportation Company apparently owned a wharf in Coupeville around this time. An article in the March 18, 1904, *Island County Times* announced that Joshua Green, as president of LaConner Trading and Transportation, had sold the dock and abutting tidelands to the Coupeville Wharf Company for $7,000. According to that newspaper, this conveyance would end a dispute between this transportation company and Whidbey Island farmers. However, possible conflicting interests between the Coupeville Wharf Company and Coupeville merchants and Whidbey Island farmers prompted the merchants and farmers to join hands in constructing their own wharf around 1905. This is the present (2002) dock in Coupeville.

Roads to Markets

Building roads on Whidbey Island that linked farmers to corridors of commerce and facilitated communication became a priority during the early years of settlement. The first roads built in the present-day Reserve often connected

points along the shoreline where commercial vessels anchored and loaded freight or delivered supplies or mail. When the Island County Commissioners met for the first time in the home of John Alexander in Coveland on April 4, 1853, roads were the first order of business discussed. "Now comes I. N. Ebey and eleven other householders," The Records of the Board of Island County Commissioners reported, "and present to the board their petition for a county road from Coveland to the northwest corner of I. N. Ebey's land claim." After approving the petition, the board appointed Isaac Ebey and two others, Daniel Show and Samuel Crockett, "to view and lay out a county road from Coveland to the northwest corner of I. N. Ebey's land claim."[62] That same clear, windless day, "Mr. Ebey and Samuel Crockett went to view the road . . . to Coveland," Rebecca Ebey noted in her diary. They were eager to move ahead with the project before the busy summer months of farming arrived, she reported. On April 8th, under cloudy skies, Isaac Ebey and several neighbors, "all went to help cut out a road from this prairie to Coveland and returned in the evening very tired," Rebecca Ebey reported.[63]

Despite their energetic beginning, these volunteer road builders were apparently unable to complete the Coveland-Ebey road (or they finished the road and simply went to the county commissioners for reimbursement of effort already expended). At the county commissioners board meeting on September 5, 1853, Ebey, Show, and Crockett reported that they had "viewed out and confirmed a road commencing at the south end of Beach Street in Coveland, and running around the head of Penn's Cove, until it leaves it, thence, in a southeasterly direction to the northeast corner of the claim of I. N. Ebey, which road, as reported, is confirmed and established as a county road." The commissioners appointed D. Show the supervisor of the road and authorized him to "work all the hands on both sides of Penn's Cove two days in opening and work said road." The board agreed to pay Show $3 for his services. At this same meeting, the board appropriated $60 to buy planks "to cover a bridge across the tide creek on the road from Coveland southward."[64] Although no more than a narrow, linear cut in the sod that was muddy during the rainy season and dusty in summer, this primitive early "road" built through woodlands and to the northern end of Ebey's

[62] The Board of County Commissioners at its first April 3, 1853 meeting, also directed three settlers to view a road from Coveland to the east side of William Wallace's land claim, northeast of Coveland, however, no future reference to this road was made in the commissioners record, suggesting that it may have been abandoned in favor of another road built toward Oak Harbor. Records of the Board of County Commissioners," Island County, Territory of Washington, April 4, 1853, Island County Courthouse, Coupeville, Washington.
[63] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey" (April 1917), 142, 143.
[64] "Records of the Board of County Commissioners," Island County, Territory of Washington, September 5, 1853.

Prairie provided a rudimentary means of moving heavier loads, including farm produce, between Ebey's Prairie and ships anchored in Penn Cove.

In 1854 and 1855, road building around Penn Cove received considerable attention from the infant Island County Board of Commissioners. In early April 1854, the board approved a petition to build a road from Coveland north to "Robert Fay's land claim and the fishing station," by way of Oak Harbor and Crescent Harbor. (James Swan walked over this road during his June 1859 visit to Whidbey Island and noted that this "is an excellent road to Penn's Cove" from the north.[65]) In early July 1854, the board also approved a road from I. N. Ebey's claim, eastward across John and Jane Kinneth's land claim to the northwest corner of Joseph S. Smith's claim at Smith's Landing, on the south shore of Penn Cove near Snakelum Point. This road apparently extended the road built the previous year to the northerly corner of the Isaac Ebey claim. R. S. Robins, Humphrey Hill, and John Lysle were given the task of "viewing" and locating this road. At their July 3, 1854, meeting, the board members also created three road districts: Oak Harbor, Teelalop, and Coveland (north of "Bald Hill"), with Thomas Hastie and William Engle as overseers.[66] Two months later, the board reviewed reports on the location of the Coveland-fish station road (from the north end of Beach Street in Coveland to Landsdale's claim at the head of Penn Cove, then northeast to Thomas Hastie's claim, then east-northeast to Fay's and the fish station), as well as the Ebey-Smith road. The board also consented to have another road viewed that would connect Captain William Robertson's, on the south side of Penn Cove, to Coveland, via the beach and then the already existing Coveland-Ebey road.[67]

In the spring of 1855, the Island County Board of Commissioners returned to the work of road building. In March, the board adjusted the location of the road from Coveland to Oak Harbor. On June 5, after a year of intermittent work on the road from Ebey's to Joseph Smith's claim near Snakelum Point, the board noted that it was "of sufficient width for waggons to pass conveniently," and ordered it opened. (A portion of this road was relocated in 1859.[68]) At the board's last meeting of the year, on December 3, 1855, Thomas Coupe and eleven other residents petitioned the board for a road from Coupe's land on Penn Cove, south along the Coupe and Alexander property line, to the east-west county road connecting Coveland and Smith's Landing near Snakelum Point. I. N. Ebey, John Alexander, and Robert Hill were assigned the task of viewing and locating this road.[69] About a year later, a wharf, probably the first in Coupeville, was constructed at the foot of Main Street, on land formerly owned by Thomas

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[65] Swan, *Almost Out of the World,* 55.
[66] "Records of the Board of County Commissioners," Island County, Territory of Washington, July 3, 1854.
[67] *Ibid.*, September 4, 1854.
[68] *Ibid.*, March 7, 1859.
[69] *Ibid.*, December 3, 1855.

Coupe, near the northern end of the Coupe-Alexander road, thus facilitating the movement of farm produce to ships (and providing impetus for the emergence of Coupeville as a town).[70]

Four years later, in March 1859, the county commissioners approved the location of another principal road—the road from the east-west Coveland-to-Smith's Landing road to Crockett's Prairie near Admiralty Head. The "Records of the Board of County Commissioners" reported that:

> The Prayer [request] of J. C. Kellogg and thirteen others was received for the location of a County Road leading from [Hill] Harmon's South West Corner running south on the line between Wm. Engle & Humphr[e]y Hill's land claims to Humphr[e]y Hill's southwest corner, from thence East between Humphr[e]y Hill & R. C. Hill to R. C. Hill's N.E. Corner, from thence South on the lines of R. C. Hill, Walter Crockett and Charles Crockett to the Little Prairie known as Charles Crockett's front.[71]

The commissioner's board ordered J. C. Kellogg, William Engle, and John Kinneth to view and locate this county road.[72]

Together, these county roads, approved by the board of commissioners within six years of the formation of Island County government, created the skeletal backbone of the pioneer transportation network around Penn Cove. Although county roads linking prairie farms and the various waterfront ship landings on Penn Cove were rudimentary for many years (and road sections were often relocated and constantly in need of repair after heavy rains), the early farmers had, by the end of the 1850s, established a primitive system of county roads. Since individuals traveling to neighbors' farms, the Coveland post office and store, or Alexander's store in infant Coupeville, usually walked, rode horseback, or canoed across Penn Cove, these roads were not built for the ease of light, unburdened travel.[73] Undoubtedly, narrow paths and unimproved roads had been and continued to be built by individual farmers. Some of the more

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[70] Mimi Sheridan, "Coupeville—Past, Present and Future" (Coupeville, WA: Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve, National Park Service, and the Town of Coupeville, June 1998), 27.

[71] "Records of the Board of County Commissioners," Island County, Territory of Washington, March 7, 1859.

[72] *Ibid.,* March 7, 1859.

[73] Rebecca Ebey noted in her diary the visits of many nearby neighbors who walked across the prairies to the Ebey's home. See Victor Farrar, editor, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey," *Washington Historical Quarterly* 7: 3 (July).
1916): 239-46; 7: 4 (October 1916): 307-21; 8: 1 (January 917): 40-62; and 8: 2 (April 1917): 124-52.

important roads probably evolved into roads for broader commercial public use, improved and maintained by the Island County government. The embryonic county road system of farm-to-market roads linking farms to waterfront anchorages were intended to facilitate commerce—the movement of farm produce and goods between farms and markets.

General Surveyor's Office survey maps of the three townships included in Ebey's Landing NHR, completed in December 1856 (including most of the prairies) and November 1858 (taking in Penn Cove area) show the principal roads in the area at that time. One road, forming the left half of a "T," went north from Admiralty Head and the Kellogg farm, meandered around Crockett Lake and the adjoining Crockett farms, then headed directly north across Crockett and Ebey's prairies and past the farms of Samuel Crockett, Hugh Crockett, and Mrs. Grove Terry, to the large farm of the John Crockett family (near present-day Prairie Center). Here the road turned sharply west across the north end of Ebey's Prairie, then angled northwest down the hill to Coveland, then continued generally northeast, crossing the Penn's Cove Military Reservation (discontinued in 1866), on the north shore of Penn Cove, toward Oak Harbor. This road connected nearly all the principal farms on Ebey's and Crockett prairies that did not have access to ships arriving at Ebey's Landing. It also provided important ground access to Admiralty Head, where, in late 1858 and April 1859, a small parcel had been purchased by the U. S. Coast Survey and reserved for a lighthouse (operational by 1861).[74]

A second principal road extended from the John Crockett family farm at the sharp right-angle bend in the road to Admiralty Head, eastward for about two miles to the sizeable farm of John and Jane Kinneth and the land of Joseph S. Smith and Smith's Landing. A third short, one-mile-long road linked the clearing of Captain Coupe's home on Penn Cove (later the site of Coupeville) with the main east-road, just north of John Crockett's farm. A very short stub road headed directly west from Penn Cove.[75] One road, the road to Ebey's Landing, does not appear on this surveyor's map. The road to Ebey's Landing may have been little more than a path cut in the sod around 1858. In 1861, however, when ships carrying the mail, freight, and passengers began making regular stops at Ebey's Landing and the Ferry house served as a way station for travelers, William

[74] John Hussey and James N. Gibson, "A Short History of Fort Casey, Washington," typescript (San Francisco: National Park Service, June 1955), 31.
[75] Township 31 North, Range 1 East (surveyed December 11, 1856); Township 32 North, Range 1 East (surveyed November 24, 1858); and Township 32 North, Range 1 West (surveyed November 24, 1858), all in Willamette Meridian (Olympia, Washington Territory, Surveyor General's Office, 1856 and 1858)., Bureau of Land Management regional office, Portland, Oregon.

Alexander and twenty-five others signed a petition asking the county commissioners to pay for a road "running from Coupeville to Ebey's Landing."[76]

Some of these early roads did not follow straight section lines or straight donation land claim property boundaries. Similar to roads laid out on the Eastern Seaboard, where the metes and bounds system of surveying permitted irregular property boundaries (before the advent of the township, range, and section grid system of surveying that began in the late 1700s), the roads around Penn Cove did not conform to any geometric grid pattern. Instead, they often followed the contours of the landscape, and were located near the outer edges of the prairies, about half way up hillsides. They served primarily as farm-to-market roads, linking the majority of active, older farms in the area to the waterfront at Coveland, Coupe's and Alexander's waterfront property, and Smith's Landing, where goods could be transported by canoe or ship to markets and where supplies could be obtained.

The 1860s witnessed the continued development and expansion of the county road system around Penn Cove, as the Island County Board of Commissioners gained knowledge about road building in the county. Throughout much of the early 1860s, the emphasis on road building shifted from the prairies south of Penn Cove to the north shore of the cove and the Oak Harbor area. Several road petitions were submitted to the county commissioners to build roads from Coveland north to the Oak Harbor area, to Crescent Harbor, to Dugualla Bay, and, by 1866-1867, to Deception Pass.[77] In the mid-1860s, the board approved the construction of one road along the north shore of Penn Cove from the head of Penn Cove to the existing road to Oak Harbor (in 1865 and 1866) and from the vicinity of present-day San de Fuca to Fort Nugent (directly north of Coveland on the Strait of Juan de Fuca shoreline near present-day West Beach Road).[78] (Roads around the Grennan and Cranney Mill at Utsalady on Camano, also received the attention of the board by 1866.)

The county commissioners approved a relatively small number of road projects on the prairies south of Penn Cove in the 1860s. These included the construction of: 1) roads from the beach in Coupeville to the beach near the Ferry house in 1865 (possibly a realignment of the earlier 1861 road); 2) a bridge across Crockett's Lake in 1867; 3) a thirty-five foot-wide road that meandered from John Crockett's and Walter Crockett's land claims in 1868 (near the north portion of the

[76] "Records of the Board of County Commissioners," Island County, Territory of Washington, May 6, 1861.
[77] "Records of the Board of County Commissioners," Island County, Territory of Washington, May 6, 1861, November 2, 1863, August 8, 1864, February 14, 1865, August 14, 1865, November 13, 1865, May 14, 1866, November 1866, February 11, 1867, May 1867, November 4, 1867, November 1868. May 3, 1869.
[78] "Records of the Board of County Commissioners," Island County, Territory of Washington, August 14, 1865, November 13, 1865, May 14, 1866.

Fort Casey Road); and 4) a narrow thirty-five foot-wide road that arched south from Smith's Prairie (near the present Patmore Road) to Crockett Prairie and west across Crockett and Ebey's prairies to the bluff (near present-day Hill Road) to the Ebey's Landing road in 1868. After a busy decade of opening new roads and relocating some older ones, the Island County Commissioners ordered, in May 1870, that all gates and obstructions should be removed from legal county roads.[79]

During the 1860s, the county's road building became more systematic and standardized. Major roads approved by the county measured between forty and sixty feet in width while minor ones were around thirty-five feet wide.[80] Beginning around 1860, the board levied a road tax. The commissioners also required property owners to serve on "road duty," which usually involved viewing and locating new or relocated roads, under the leadership of a district road supervisor. By 1867, road supervisors as well as road viewers and locators did receive a small payment for their services.[81] In an effort to raise revenue for road-building projects, the board established rates for "ferryage and frate between Whidbey Island and Port Townsend," in the early 1860s. In 1861, the rates were:

passengers, $1
hogs, $.75; pigs (per head) $.50; beef (per quarter) $.50
packages under 20 lbs., $.25
packages between 21 & 100 lbs., $.50
packages between 101 & 200 lbs., $1.00
packages between 201 & 400 lbs., $2.00[82]

During the 1860s, the number of road districts increased from three to seven, suggesting the increasing activity and importance of building and maintaining roads around the county. In 1871, the road fund for all seven districts amounted to $326.41. The two largest districts were District 2, north of Coveland, and District 3, south of Coveland, where Coupeville boasted a growing population. During the June 1870- June 1871 year, District 2 expended $75, while District 3 had spent $173.[83]

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[79] "Records of the Board of County Commissioners," Island County, Territory of Washington, August 14, 1865, May 1867, May 4, 1868; May 2, 1870.
[80] "Records of the Board of County Commissioners," Island County, Territory of Washington, June 7, 1859.
[81] "Records of the Board of County Commissioners," Island County, Territory of Washington, June 7, 1859,
[82] "Records of the Board of County Commissioners," Island County, Territory of Washington, May 7, 1861.
[83] "Records of the Board of County Commissioners," Island County, Territory of Washington, May 1871.

H. A. Swift, who came to Penn Cove in 1863 as a young man, recalled the major roads around the cove and on the nearby prairies in the mid-1860s. "The principal roads were from Coveland to Coupeville [today's Madrona Way] and Ebeys Landing [today's Ebey Road." The road to Coupeville [from] Coveland followed nearly the same ground as the present [1913] road along . . . what is now Still's Park until near the Sand Spit . . . , where it turned, ascended Bald [presumably Black's] Hill [now Sherman Road] until it got on a level with Ebey's Prairie," Swift explained in a 1913 newspaper article (under the pen name of Ancutty Tillicum). "Just before it got to the Prairie, it forked; the right fork [led] across the country to the Winfield Ebey [Ferry house] place, and thence down the hill to Ebeys landing." The other fork, Swift continued, went near the cemetery, then followed the fence line between the Isaac Ebey place and the Charles Terry farm to the end of his land, then continued along the Ralph Engle property and on to Coupeville. "The part of the road that was in the woods was in the winter time almost impassable and on the prairie [it] was pretty muddy but not as rough as thru the woods." Swift described the road from Coveland to Oak Harbor as usually impassable for a horse-drawn wagon, due to the steep grade and logs across the road. It could only accommodate horse traffic. According to Swift, in 1863 "most of the travel on the Island was done on horseback or in canoes, the road being too rough to ride on wagons with any comfort. . . . Everybody had at least one horse to carry them around."[84]

For years, roads were little more than trails. Farmers used wagons only when necessary to carry produce and supplies. In 1866, only two buggies existed around Penn Cove and the prairies, one owned by Dr. John Crockett and the other owned by Captain Thomas Coupe.[85]

Throughout the early decades of farming on the prairies, farmers around Penn Cove remained deeply interested and intimately involved in the process of building these important avenues of commerce and communication. Residents, not salaried permanent county staff, supplied the labor, money, and supervision, at minimal pay from the county, to construct and maintain the early farm-to-market roads, thus perpetuating the cooperative effort that Isaac Ebey and his nearby farmers had initiated in 1853. A. W. Arnold, who served occasionally as a road viewer and locater, recalled the process of road construction in 1874.

> There was a road wanted to accommodate the few settlers then living on what is now called the Fort Nugent road. Those settlers met together and agreed to have a meeting every Saturday

[84] All quotes from: Ancutty Tillicum (H. A. Swift), "In Days of Yore," *Island County Times,* September 5, 1913.

[85] Flora A. P. Engle, "Pioneer Privations and Pleasures, in *Told by the Pioneers, Vol. 2,* edited by F. I. Trotter, F. H. Loutzenhiser, and J. R. Loutzenhiser (Olympia, WA: Washington Pioneer Project, 1938.

> bringing their tools and to work until the road was completed. All winter long, through rain and shine, they worked with the result that a passable road, 2 1/2 miles long, was made with no expense to the county. Then, when the time came for working our road tax, we went and worked it out on the beach road at Monroe's landing.[86]

Arnold continued to explain that

> [W]hen it became necessary to have a road near the beach to Coupeville, the county paid for the cutting of the timber and brush, but there was not money enough to make the gravel hill passable. I then drew up a subscription," Arnold wrote, "and circulated it on Smith's, Crockett's, and Ebey's prairies and got, if I remember aright, one hundred and twenty dollars subscribed to make a road at the gravel hill under the supervision of Capt. N. S. Swift and Hill Harmon. . . . Mr. Abbot, now on the prairie accepted the subscription.[87]

Between the late 1870s and late 1890s, the basic network of roads across the prairies and around Penn Cove changed only slightly. By the late 1890s, a road ringed Penn Cove, linking the old center of Coveland and the new town of Coupeville.

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[86] A. W. Arnold, "He Lays the Pen Aside," *Island County Times,* March 18, 1904.
[87] *Ibid.,* March 18, 1904.

Illustration 12. This October 1897 map of central Whidbey Island shows the location of roads and the ferry at Admiralty Head that existed at that time. Courtesy of Island County, Washington.

Some of the main pioneer roads undoubtedly underwent repairs and minor relocations. Only relatively short sections of road were constructed during these years of sluggish growth. A short two-mile road was constructed northwest from the west end of Penn Cove to the Strait of Juan de Fuca shoreline. Another short road was constructed to the east from the southern end of the Joseph Smith land claim. And, with the advent of regular ship traffic to the south side of Crockett Lake, the county built a road across Crockett Lake to a wharf where ships docked. (The wharf was located to the east of the present Keystone ferry landing.) One major road and two or three minor roads were constructed from the southern end of John and Jane Kinneth's property to the southeast toward Holmes Harbor and beyond to connect with major logging and milling operations.[88]

Although the county commissioners devoted much attention to road building, until 1892, according to A. W. Arnold, only about twelve miles of roads existed in the Coupeville rural district and there were only about twelve property owners who built and repaired these roads.[89]

Rumors of a Railroad

Unfulfilled promises of the arrival of a railroad on Whidbey Island, first in the 1870s, then in the 1890s, and, finally, in the early 1910s, contributed to Whidbey Island's diminishing centrality in trade and travel. Gradually, after the completion of the first transcontinental railroad in 1869 and the increasing reliance everywhere across the country on speedier trains to travel and transport goods between the East and West coasts, Whidbey Island and Penn Cove lost their position near the crossroads of maritime travel. Whidbey Island swiftly became more remote from the primary avenues of mainland traffic. Changes in Whidbey's once close proximity to principal travel corridors put Penn Cove and prairie residents in a backwater agricultural community.

In 1872, the Coupeville business community became energized for a brief period by the prospects of the Northern Pacific Railroad building its terminus at the harbor on the edge of town.[90] The Northern Pacific Railroad identified the harbor at Coupeville as a possible terminus of its railroad.[91] No such railroad ever

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[88] J. M. Snow, "Map of Island County, W.T. Showing Lines of Roads and Boundaries of Road Districts," 1879, Island County Courthouse, (hanging on the wall), Coupeville, Washington; "Map of Island County, Washington," October 1897, Washington State Archives, Bellingham, Washington.

[89] Arnold, "He Lays the Pen Aside," *Island County Times*, March 18, 1904.

[90] G. P. Budlong & Sons, *Puget Sound Business Directory, 1872,* 20.

[91] G. P. Budlong & Sons, *Puget Sound Business Directory and Guide, Washington Territory, 1872* (Olympia, WA: Murphy & Harned, 1872), 20.

arrived, thus disappointing central Whidbey residents and contributing to the demise of Coveland. Even after the Northern Pacific located its terminus in Tacoma in 1873, speculators bought 58,600 acres of land on Whidbey and Camano islands, sustaining expectations that the railroad might still be extended to Island County.[92]

In the early 1890s, the Coupeville community again became greatly energized by another rumor that a railroad would soon arrive on Whidbey Island. The Chicago and Skagit Valley Railroad was to extend its line from the Keystone Harbor terminus of "New Chicago" (suggesting promoters' hopes for a reincarnation of the then boom agricultural processing and shipping metropolis on Lake Michigan) across Whidbey Island and Saratoga Passage on the east to Sedro-Wooley on the mainland. As early as March 1891, large advertisements in the *Island County Times* beckoned those in search of a home to come to Coupeville, "the best part of the Sound Country," where "a railroad will traverse Whidby Island within twelve months, and in five years Island County will be densely populated and Coupeville will contain 6,000 inhabitants."[93] "Come and settle before the rush."[94] Property in Coupeville and around Admiralty Head skyrocketed, selling for $50 and up for a single lot.

Neither of these two railroad ventures, however, ever materialized. The national economic panic and sharp downturn in 1893 immediately crushed these locally ambitious plans for a railroad. Additionally, the relatively small amount of produce of Whidbey Island farmers apparently could not provide sufficient tonnage to make the construction and operation of a railroad profitable.

In the early 1910s, the Whidbey Island newspaper revived rumors of rail transportation on the island once again. The January 24, 1912 issue of the *Island County Times* reported that engineers with the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad were surveying a possible route across "Fidalgo Island to Deception Pass and thence down Whidby island to a point just inside Admiralty head."[95] In 1913, railroad engineers considered two possible routes for a rail line to and on Whidbey Island. The editor of the May 16, 1913 issue of the *Oak Harbor News* wrote that "we are assured by men of capital and well-established integrity that Whidby Island will have an electric urban railway, extending its entire length from Deception Pass, where it will connect with the Anacortes and Eastern Railway, to a point nearly opposite Everett."[96] Admiralty Head (and "New Chicago"), once again, seemed a likely terminus for this route. Real estate prices doubled and tripled.

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[92] White, *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change,* 58.
[93] "Coupeville," *Island County Times,* March 17, 1891.
[94] Quoted in: *Sails, Steamships & Sea Captains: Settlement, Trade and Transportation of Island County Between 1850-1900* (Coupeville, WA: Island County Historical Society, 1993), 39.
[95] "Is Whidby Island to Have a Railroad?," *Island County Times,* January 24, 1912.
[96] Quoted in Buerstatte, "Geography of Whidby Island," 46.

A week later, a second route with a cheaper water crossing was put forward: from a point near the edge of the Swinomish Indian Reservation to Hope Island trestle and from the drawbridge to Whidbey Island. In September 1913, A. D. Bowen, president of the Anacortes and Eastern Railway Company, reported that Whidbey Island residents had paid for the railroad survey on the island and agreed to raise another $50,000, in subscriptions, to build it. Only this amount was needed, Bowen noted, to build the line from Anacortes to March's Point (location of the Milwaukee car barge ferry) and then to LaConner.[97] Despite Bowen's confident assurances, the railroad, apparently, determined that the limited volume of traffic would not warrant building either of the two investigated railroad routes. Once again, central Whidbey Island residents, particularly farmers and merchants, were disappointed and frustrated by inadequate transportation links to mainland markets.[98]

Steamers in the Early 1900s

Without a railroad to or on Whidbey Island and Penn Cove, prairie residents continued to rely on steamboats for transport. The beginning of the so-called "Mosquito Fleet," an armada of small, slim, sharp-nosed, wooden-hulled steamers, signaled the popularity of the steamer on Puget Sound. Comprised, at first, of side-wheelers and sternwheelers and, later, ships with propeller-driven engines, this enormous fleet of steamers, ranging in length from 30 to 200 feet, plied the waters of Puget Sound for fifty years. During that time, roughly 2,500 privately owned vessels were considered part of the Mosquito Fleet. Fleet steamers carried mail and freight of all kinds, including livestock, farm produce, clothing and bedding, tools, and, later, a few automobiles from almost any shoreline float, dock, or community on Puget Sound. Most fleet steamers could carry around 300 passengers. The Mosquito Fleet provided a vital intra-Sound transportation link between numerous rural communities and larger cities, and contributed to the development of many small towns around Puget Sound, including Coupeville. Steamers in the fleet provided regular passenger, mail, and freight service between Whidbey Island and the mainland.[99]

The Mosquito Fleet also opened the era of ferry transportation for automobiles to Whidbey Island (at Deception Pass) and many other Puget Sound

[97] "More Railroad Talk," *Island County Times,* September 5, 1913.
[98] Buerstatte, "Geography of Whidby Island," 46-47.
[99] Neal and Janus, *Puget Sound Ferries,* 35-38.

locations, beginning in the early 1910s.[100] With their greater capacity and increasingly regular and reliable schedules, steamers in the Mosquito Fleet gradually replaced sea-going trans-oceanic sailing ships in the marine channels of commerce around Whidbey Island. The last sailing ships on the Sound were built at Hall's Shipyard in Port Blakeley around 1900. Thereafter, the privately owned and operated steamers in the Mosquito Fleet dominated ship traffic in and out of Puget Sound for passengers, freight, and, eventually, automobiles.[101]

The *Fairhaven* steamer became an integral part of travel for central Whidbey Island residents for twenty-five years. The sternwheeler *Fairhaven* had been built in 1889 for the Pacific Navigation Company. She was a 130-foot-long, wood hulled ship with a 26.5-foot beam. On January 15, 1902, she struck a rock near Utsalady and sank in ten feet of water. A tugboat and two large scows raised her; she was repaired and returned to the LaConner-Seattle run. In 1906, the Island Transportation Company, a firm started by the Lovejoys of Coupeville, purchased the *Fairhaven.* In 1907, a gale drove her into the dock at Coupeville damaging her bow and superstructure. She was again repaired and returned to service.

The *Fairhaven* survived not only a sinking and dock collision, she continued her service through the severe nation-wide economic depression of the 1890s. The depression reached its climax for Puget Sound shipping around 1897. The entire industry underwent transformation. Smaller companies were absorbed by larger companies or simply discontinued doing business, and larger seemingly stable companies filed for bankruptcy protection from creditors. During the 1895-1896 shipping season, the entire Puget Sound grain fleet consisted of thirty-one ships and they were all of British registry. But, the July 17, 1897, arrival of the steamer *Portland* at the Seattle docks signaled an economic upsurge. She carried sixty-eight miners returning from the Klondike region of Canada's Yukon Territory, who brought with them $964,000 in gold dust and nuggets. The effect was almost instantaneous. The number of ship dockings went from the 18 in 1897 to over 173 by March 1898. Between the July docking of the *Portland* and the end of the year, 8,000 hopefuls had embarked for the Klondike from Seattle docks.

Although the Alaska gold frenzy began to diminish by early 1898, Puget Sound shipping continued to benefit from the gold fever. Farm products, mining equipment, and timber were shipped north into Alaskan and Canadian waters. Between mid-May and late October 1900 (the Seattle-Alaska shipping season),

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[100] Although steamers eventually carried a few cars, this history of Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve defines a ferry boat as a vessel operating on a regular schedule that functions as an extension of an auto highway and often has a double-ended hull with propellers at each end.

[101] Island County Historical Society, *Sails, Steamships and Sea Captains,* 62-68; Cahail, *Sea Captains of Whidbey Island,* unnumbered pages.

32,000 tons of general merchandise and machinery was taken up the Yukon River and $14,255,500 in gold was shipped out of Alaska, mostly to the Pacific Northwest.[102] By 1900, Puget Sound steamers were serving approximately twenty-five regular routes, including stops at Whidbey Island by the steamer *Fairhaven* on her daily runs between Seattle and LaConner. The *Island County Times* carried an advertisement of the LaConner Trading and Transportation Company: "Steamer *Fairhaven.* Leaves Central Dock, Seattle, daily except Saturday at 10 p.m. for all Whidbey Island Points, Everett and LaConner. Returning leaves LaConner daily except Saturday at 7 a.m. T. Green, Master."[103]

Several other steamers served Coupeville and other Whidbey Island points at the turn of the century. The *Peerless* left Coupeville each morning for Everett, where the *City of Everett* continued on to Seattle. According to the *Island County Times*, the *Skagit Chief* left Coupeville at 6 a.m. daily except Sundays, making stops at San de Fuca, Oak Harbor, Camano Island, Langley, Brown's Point, Clinton, Everett and Edmonds before arriving in Seattle.[104] A December 16, 1904, advertisement in the same newspaper announced the steamer *State of Washington* made stops at Tacoma, Seattle, Edmonds, Mukilteo, Everett, Clinton, Brown's Point, Langley, Oak Harbor, and Utsalady, as well as Coupeville and San de Fuca. The steamship left Coupeville and headed south for Seattle at 8 a.m., was in Everett by 10:30 a.m., and arrived in Seattle at 1:00 p.m. The *Hattie Hansen* also departed Coupeville at 8:00 a.m. daily bound for Everett, where she arrived at 11:30 a.m. and returned to Coupeville at 3:00 p.m.[105]

In 1913, Whidbey Island was served by four steamboats, the *Fairhaven,* the *Calista,* the *Camano,* and the *Whidby,* which made daily stops at the Coupeville wharf on their way to Everett, LaConner, and Seattle. After the *Whidby* burned in 1911, a second *Whidby,* which never stopped at Coupeville and Keystone, replaced it. In 1913, only the *Calista* stopped at Coupeville on its daily run. The *Camano* also served Whidbey Island in 1913. Both the *Calista* and *Camano* made extra trips between Seattle, Everett, Still Park, and Coupeville (*Calista*) and Everett, Clinton, Langley, and Oak Harbor (*Camano*) on certain holidays like the Fourth of July.[106] At that time, the *Fairhaven* made this run only when the *Calista* could not carry all the freight, especially in the fall at harvest.[107]

The *Fairhaven* made the Seattle-LaConner run from the time of her construction until the end of 1913, when she was sold to the Island Belt Steamship Company of Anacortes and used to haul freight only between Seattle and

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[102] Gordon Newell, editor. *The H. W. McCurdy Marine Hisjtory of the Pacific Northwest* (Seattle: The Superior Publishing Company, 1966), 286.
[103] *Island County Times*, February 8, 1901.
[104] *Island County Times*, February 8, 1901.
[105] *Island County Times*, December 16, 1904.
[106] "July Third and Fourth, 1913," *Island County Times,* June 20, 1913.
[107] Roger Sherman to Gretchen Luxenberg, Seattle: National Park Service, summer 2002.

Anacortes (with stops at Everett, LaConner and Whidbey Island). For fifteen years of her life transporting passengers between Whidbey Island and Seattle, Captain Theophilus Green commanded the *Fairhaven.* The November 14, 1913, issue of the *Island County Times* lamented her withdrawal from passenger service. Characterized as a Whidbey Island institution, the newspaper observed that the *Fairhaven* had been the first steamship that most island residents had ridden.

The end of the *Fairhaven* era coincided with the opening of a ferry across Deception Pass. In 1912, a ferry with limited service was initiated across Deception Pass, joining Whidbey Island to the mainland for the motorist. Ed Power, a county commissioner living in the Oak Harbor area, was reportedly the first customer. He transported his Pathfinder car across Deception Pass on June 1912.[108]

The scheduled commencement of a public ferry, the "Oak Harbor and Anacortes auto stage" in the summer of 1913, was enthusiastically reported in the *Island County Times.* "The inauguration of the ferry will bring a considerable amount of automobile travel to Fidalgo and Whidby islands." The ferry will make it possible "for farmers and residents of Whidby island to drive into Anacortes . . . to do their marketing and to sell their produce," the *Island County Times* exclaimed.[109] This ferry received an added boost when fares were lowered in August 1913. Charges for vehicles of all kinds suggested the transition, then underway, from horsepower to the new automobile.

Automobile (seven passenger)	$1.75
Automobile (five passenger)	$1.50
Automobile (small)	$1.25
Two-horse team and wagon	$1.50
One horse and buggy	$1.25
Horses, five or more at one time	$ .35
Bicycle	$ .35
Passenger	$ .25[110]

This ferry service at the pass continued to provide primary automobile access to Whidbey Island until the Deception Pass Bridge was built in 1935. Private companies continued to operate ferry service throughout Puget Sound until 1951, when the State of Washington assumed control of all ferries.

The emerging use and popularity of automobiles on the eve of World War I did not diminish the role played by Puget Sound marine transportation. Ships were merely modified to facilitate the transportation of the automobile. Ship

[108] *Island County Times*, June 20, 1913.
[109] "Anacortes Wants That Ferry," *Island County Times*, February 14, 1913.
[110] "Lower Rates at Deception Pass Ferry," *Island County Times* August 1, 1913.

decks were widened, superstructures were modified to permit cars to drive the length of the vessel on the main deck, and bows were broadened to enable nose-in docking against car ramps. Modified ships would dock bow-first and cars were driven aboard. At the destination, the ship would back into a ramp and cars would be driven off the stern end. Eventually, the car ferries were further adapted by having propellers installed at both ends eliminating the necessity of backing into a destination ramp. Use of cars by the general Puget Sound population did change the focus of intra-regional Puget Sound shipping. The central, primary focus was no longer on Puget Sound marine transportation, but was shifted to the automobile. Marine transportation routes and facilities were increasingly planned, designed, and constructed to support automobile transportation. Ferry landings were keyed to the highway system, rather than the other way around.

Chapter 7

Centers of Business and Government: Coveland, Coupeville and San De Fuca 1850s—World War I

Sea captains were among the first merchants around Penn Cove; they often returned to Penn Cove from San Francisco with general merchandise, after delivering shiploads of piles or other timber to the Bay City. Early businesses sprang up at points of loading and unloading goods around Penn Cove, at potential or actual mill sites, and also at places of government activity—the post office and the meeting place of county government. Commercial business ventures undertaken by some of the earliest settlers in the early 1850s were extremely transitory. Early enterprises sometimes only existed for a brief few months before the founding entrepreneurs closed down, sold their merchandise, and moved on to perceived better opportunities elsewhere, or died. Store buildings at both Coveland and Coupeville often housed a sequence of businesses, each with a different name. John Alexander, partners Thomas Cranney and Lawrence Grennan, John Robertson, and Granville O. Haller were just a few of the earliest merchants who operated their business for more than a few months. Greater stability in the business community did not begin until the mid- to late 1850s.

Booms in commercial business cycles mirrored national trends as well as local events or expectations. Whidbey Island felt some of the effects of the national depressions in the mid-1870s and early 1890s. The local expectation that central Whidbey Island might become the terminus of the railroad also fueled brief but real surges in the commercial sector. Despite periodic rumors in the late 1800s that the railroad would reach Coupeville, this never materialized. The physical isolation of Whidbey Island and Penn Cove from the mainland was never overcome and increasingly the area in Ebey's Landing NHR became a backwater of commerce and trade.

Coveland, an Early Center

The head of Penn Cove served as the original port used by several sea captains who loaded timber (poles, piles, and spars) in the shallow waters of this protected cove. Captains James Henry Swift, Eli Hathaway, Samuel Libbey, H. B. Lovejoy, Richard Holbrook, Benjamin Barstow, and William Robertson all

engaged in this timber trade and filed for donation land claims (DLC) in the early 1850s or purchased lots from original DLC owners from the mid-1850s onward, and settled on land near the head of Penn Cove. These men were among the first, although not the only, ones to engage in the general merchandise businesses at Coveland (near future San de Fuca). Richard C. Lansdale, a physician by training who claimed land at the head of Penn Cove in the spring of 1852, platted a townsite comprised of blocks and lots. Although this plat was apparently never legally recorded, the existence of this townsite on paper probably encouraged a few other merchants to buy lots from Landsdale, construct store buildings, and open businesses at the platted townsite of Coveland.[1]

In addition, the head of Penn Cove offered possibilities for capturing water for power to operate a mill. In early 1852, a man named Fox proposed building a saw and gristmill at Coveland. "Mr. Fox is going on to erect a saw and grist mill there [in Coveland], which will be a great advantage to our beautiful island," Rebecca Ebey noted in her diary, "as there is plenty of good timber for sawing and plenty of hands and oxen to cut and haul it to the mill, and our farmers have some wheat coming on, and will be able before another year to make their own bread in place of having to bring it from California."[2]

Whidbey Island's first sawmill reportedly existed at Coveland in the early 1850s, where the outgoing tide turned a waterwheel that powered the mill.[3] One hundred years later in the early 1950s, splintered pilings at San de Fuca bore tentative testimony to this saw- and/or grist- milling venture, which probably existed only briefly.[4] James Buzby, who came to Whidbey Island in 1852 left and then returned in May 1853 with materials to build a sawmill, reportedly abandoned his plans. It may have been that Fox, mentioned by Rebecca Ebey, already occupied the best mill site on the cove. (Many years later in 1868, Buzby erected a steam-powered mill at the head of Penn Cove, which operated for only about two years before it was moved to Seattle. In the late 1870s, the head of Penn Cove

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[1] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey" (October 1916), 308; Jimmie Jean Cook, *"A particular friend, Penn's Cove": A History of the Settlers, Claims and Buildings of Central Whidbey Island* (Coupeville, WA: Jimmie Jean Cook, 1972), 23.

[2] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey" (April 1917), 133-34.

[3] More primary research needs to be conducted to confirm the existence of a mill at Coveland. Among the secondary sources that claim the mill's existence are: Island County Historical Society, *Sails, Steamships & Sea Captains: Settlement, Trade and Transportation of Island County between 1850-1900* (Coupeville, WA: Island County Historical Society, 1993), 31. According to long-time Coupeville-area resident Lillian Huffstetler and historic photos located in the Island County Historical Society Museum, a grist mill stood on the north side of the point opposite Kennedy's Lagoon, before the present road was constructed nearby. The building remained at this location for many years after the road was put in (and after the millstone was later moved to the San Juan Islands). Lillian Huffstetler to Gretchen Luxenberg, July 12, 2002, Seattle, Washington, National Park Service.

[4] "Canal Proposed and Coveland Has New Name," May 31, 1951, *Island County Times.*

became the site of another mill venture, the "tidewater mill," built by Friend Wilson.)[5] A cannery, reportedly, also operated on pilings in this same general vicinity. Many generations of milling and other activities at the head of Penn Cove make it exceedingly difficult to know with certainty the origin and age of the existing scattered pilings now piercing the water's surface.

The prospects of a mill at the head of Penn Cove in the early 1850s, as well as the designation of Coveland as the Island County seat of government in the spring of 1853, may have spurred the founding of other business enterprises at Coveland early on. In late October 1852, Isaac Ebey helped raise a "storehouse for Captain Coffman" at Coveland, Rebecca Ebey wrote in her diary.[6] Four months later, in February 1853, Rebecca Ebey noted the existence of "one store at Coveland."[7] It is unclear who operated this store. In the early 1850s, the first small businesses in Coveland seemed to ebb and flow almost as frequently as the tide that lapped the shores of the cove.

The "one store at Coveland," mentioned by Rebecca Ebey in early 1853, may have been the infant business of John Alexander. Born in Ireland in 1805, John Alexander had immigrated to Canada as a child. In 1833, he had married fifteen-year-old Frances Sharp, also a native of Ireland. After living for eighteen years in Peoria, Illinois, the Alexander couple and their three children traveled overland to Oregon Territory, arriving in Portland in October 1851. After spending the winter in Olympia, the family moved to Whidbey Island in 1852, where John and Frances Alexander eventually claimed a long, narrow parcel of land fronting on the south side of Penn Cove.[8] John Alexander, then age forty-seven, started his general merchandise business soon after arriving on Penn Cove. In 1852, John Alexander purchased merchandise from a Captain Bell, according to a letter written that year by his wife Frances and presumably soon after opened a store.[9] Pioneer farming families on the prairies, including the Ebeys, began buying goods from Alexander's general merchandise store in 1852. In December 1852, Rebecca noted in her diary that she had obtained lard "from the store," probably Alexander's.[10] In February 1853, when Isaac Ebey was away from home, Alexander brought Rebecca Ebey 13 pounds of pork for which she gave him 3 ½ lbs. of butter; later in the same month, Rebecca noted that Eason and Ellison "have gone to Mr. Alexander's on an errand."[11] After Ebey's return, Rebecca Ebey

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[5] George Albert Kellogg, *A History of Whidbey Island* (Coupeville, WA: Island County Historical Society, 1934), 22.
[6] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey," October 23, 1852 (January 1917), 49.
[7] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey," February 21, 1853 (April 1917), 133.
[8] Cook, *A particular friend, Penn's Cove,* 35.
[9] Quoted in Cook, "*A particular friend, Penn's Cove,*" 36.
[10] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey" (January 1917), 56.
[11] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey," February 3, 1853 and February 7, 1853 (April 1917), 129, 130.

noted that "Isaac Ebey went to the Cove today to get some pork," March 12, 1853.[12] Ebey very likely made his purchase at John Alexander's.

John Alexander probably operated his first store for several months at Coveland. In early April 1853, when the Island County commissioners met for the first time, the three commissioners (one of whom was John Alexander) "met at the house of John Alexander in Coveland." At the same April session, the commissioners also ordered that "the house of John Alexander in Coveland is appointed the place of holding the courts in this county." The three commissioners held their second meeting on August 1, 1853, again "at the house of John Alexander in Coveland."[13] (After their August 1853 meeting, the commissioners made no mention of their meeting place for several months.) In 1853, the commissioners' meetings may have taken place in Alexander's home and not his store; this seems unlikely, however, since Alexander's store was a far more public place in which to hold the commissioners' business meetings. Alexander's store may have moved to the Alexander land claim on the south side of Penn Cove, at the future site of Coupeville, by mid-1853, shortly after the August meeting of the county commissioners. In February 1853, William Engle noted in his diary that he assisted John Alexander in building his house, possibly on Alexander's land claim on the south side of Penn Cove.[14]

Others established stores at Coveland in 1853. At the end of April 1853, Daniel Show (written as "Snow" on some DLC maps), early claimant of land north of Coveland, is mentioned as a storeowner at Coveland, perhaps following the departure of John Alexander. Show's store seems to have been a fleeting business venture.[15]

In 1853, Captain Benjamin Barstow began selling general merchandise at Coveland. One year earlier, Barstow had sailed from his native New England to the Pacific Coast with his brother-in-law Samuel Libbey. Barstow claimed land at the head of Penn Cove (just south of Richard Landsdale's claim) and probably opened his store in the summer or fall of 1853 with business partner George H. Kingsbery. Barstow's small "trading post" stood on a point of land in Coveland

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[12] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey," March 12, 1853 (April 1917), 138.
[13] All quotes from "Records of the Board of County Commissioners," Island County, April 4, 1853 and August 1, 1853, Island County Courthouse, Coupeville, Washington. The commissioners' records make no more mention of their meeting location after their August 1853 meeting for the next several months.
[14] Isaac Ebey also helped John Alexander raise his house in mid-November 1855, according to the diary of Rebecca Ebey. This second structure may have been a storehouse or a blockhouse, since Alexander's residence had apparently been completed in 1853. In any case, the Alexanders must have been fully established on the future site of Coupeville by the mid-1850s at the very latest. Kibbe, "Diary of Colonel Isaac N. and Mrs. Emily Ebey," 311, 315; Cook, *"A particular friend, Penn's Cove,"* 47.
[15] William Engle's April 25, 1853 diary entry notes that "the first court we have had was held at Show's store." Quoted in Cook, *"A particular friend, Penn's Cove,"* 47.

(now Barstow's Point), between the lagoon and the waterfront. Samuel Libbey, who arrived on Penn Cove in the summer of 1853 (after first spending time in Oregon), reportedly worked at Barstow's store, probably while Barstow engaged in shipping. On February 10, 1854 and for several weeks thereafter, an Olympia newspaper carried an advertisement promoting B. P. Barstow & Company's "line of packets between San Francisco & Penn's Cove," as well as "provisions and groceries" sold by Barstow and Kingsbery.

> B. P. Barstow & Company will keep constantly on hand Provisions and Groceries of all kinds, also Clothing, Boots & Shoes, Cooking Stove, etc., etc. . . . They are receiving by each of their vessels from San Francisco large supplies, and can furnish to the people and merchants of the Sound, goods lower than they can be procured at any other point.[16]

By 1854, Barstow's inventory of merchandise included a wide assortment of food, tools, clothing and fabric, kitchen utensils and goods, medicines, smoking tobacco and whiskey, and even four dozen German harps.[17] The Island County Commissioners, at their April 3, 1854 meeting in Coveland, discussed relocating an existing road to Captain Barstow's house.[18] One month later, Benjamin Barstow and G. N. McConaha drowned while returning from a legislative meeting in Olympia. Sarah Barstow Libbey, an heir to Barstow's estate, eventually became owner of the Benjamin Barstow land claim.[19]

Although the earliest businesses at Coveland were fleeting operations, the arrival of Lawrence Grennan and Thomas Cranney on central Whidbey Island introduced a measure of commercial and community stability. Lawrence Grennan, already on Whidbey Island by early 1853, visited with William Engle on March 20 that year.[20] Thomas Cranney, native of New Brunswick who had worked with his father in a dry goods store there, arrived on Whidbey Island in 1853. Within a year, Lawrence Grennan and Thomas Cranney became partners in a general merchandise venture at Coveland on the land claim of Richard Lansdale. In 1854, county roads linked Beach Street, which paralleled the shoreline in Coveland, to farmers on Ebey's and Smith's prairies, to the south and to Robert Fay's fishing station, beyond Oak and Crescent harbors to the north. The county had also, by then, constructed a bridge across the tidelands on the road leading south from

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[16] Quoted in Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island*, 22-23.
[17] Cook, *"A particular friend, Penn's Cove,"* 51, 53.
[18] "Records of the Board of County Commissioners," Island County, April 3, 1854.
[19] Cook, *"A particular friend, Penn's Cove,"* 51.
[20] Quoted in Cook, *"A particular friend, Penn's Cove,"* 48.

Coveland.[21] By October 1856, when Richard Lansdale gave Grennan and Cranney a bond for $1,000, promising to sell them eight lots in Block 2 of the unrecorded Coveland, Grennan and Cranney had most likely completed the two-story wood-frame building at Coveland that housed their store, boarded men working at the infant Grennan and Cranney Mill at Utsalady before adequate accommodations had been built there, and served as a meeting place for Island County commissioners meetings. Just a year after Thomas Cranney became deputy clerk of Island County, the first post office on Penn Cove was located in Coveland in July 1857, and he was appointed the first postmaster. Cranney most likely operated his store with Grennan, performed his duties as postmaster, and lived on the second floor of this two-story building in Coveland.[22] In 1857, Grennan and Cranney were one of six merchants doing business in Island County.[23]

By the summer of 1859, Grennan and Cranney still lived at Coveland, but no longer operated their store and post office. When James Swan visited Penn Cove in June 1859, he "stopped at the house of Messrs. Grennan & Cranney." Swan noted that "Mr. R. S. Hathaway [was] there in charge of the trading stores and post office."[24] At the end of 1859, Thomas Cranney married Sarah E. Coupe. This event plus his growing responsibilities as part-owner of the expanding mill at Utsalady probably made it necessary for him to move out of his bachelor's quarters in the two-story Grennan and Cranney building in Coveland and closer to the mill. Thomas Cranney officially resigned from his position as postmaster in April 1860.[25] The 1860s census of Island County listed Cranney's primary occupation as "manufacturer of lumber" and suggested by the close proximity of his residence to the mill that he and his young wife Sarah lived near the mill at Utsalady.[26]

Over the next three decades, Coveland entered a period of slow decline, slowed only by the continued presence of the post office (until 1864) and Island County government activities, which periodically took place in Coveland, the county seat. In the early 1860s, R. S. Hathaway, and also Samuel Libbey (county auditor and clerk of the board of commissioners in 1860 and 1861 and postmaster

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[21] "Records of the Board of County Commissioners," Island County, August 1, 1853, September 3, 1853, April 3, 1854, and September 4, 1854.
[22] "Records of the Board of County Commissioners," Island County, March 24, 1856; Tim Boardman and Richard W. Helbock, *Washington Post Offices* (Lake Oswego, OR: La Posta Publications, 1986), 22.
[23] Winfield S. Ebey, "Census Report, Island County, Washington Territory, for 1857," Washington State Archives, Olympia, Washington.
[24] James G. Swan, *Almost Out of the World* (Tacoma, WA: Washington State Historical Society, 1971), 56.
[25] Cook, *"A particular friend, Penn's Cove,"* 65, 144.
[26] "Census, Schedule 1, Free Inhabitants in Whidbey's Island in the County of Island, Territory of Washington" 1860, microfiche, National Archives and Record Administration, Northwest Branch, Seattle, Washington.

at Coveland from 1861 to 1864) occupied the Grennan and Cranney store building, along with a few others from time to time. The county rented space in this building to conduct commissioners' meetings in the spring of 1861.[27] Desperately in need of their own building, the county commissioners, in February 1864, invited contractors to submit proposals to construct a two-story, 24 x 30-foot courthouse and jail of square, 12 x 12 timber on the first floor and wood-stud-framed second floor, which was divided into two rooms. The jail was entered through a heavy door with iron grating. Although the commissioners planned to build this courthouse in Coveland, its construction never materialized. In the mid-1860s, the county commissioners rented space for meetings in various locations in the emerging village of Coupeville.[28]

By 1869, the Island County commissioners decided to move their meetings and their archives back to the officially designated county seat of Coveland. The following year, Thomas Cranney once again rented space in the Grennan and Cranney store building and the county's archives and other valuables were placed in a newly purchased iron safe. The commissioners soon afterward empowered the auditor to buy the Grennan and Cranney building, which then underwent a series of repairs. County business apparently took place in the old Grennan and Cranney store throughout the 1870s. In the early 1870s, Coveland boasted two stores, social societies, and schools nearby. The town's future as a center of activity dimmed, however, when, in 1872, the Northern Pacific Railroad identified the harbor at Coupeville as the likely terminus of its railroad.[29] In 1880, the commissioners again decided to relocate their meetings and archives back to the then bustling center of Coupeville. The commissioners left Coveland for the last time that year.[30]

Over the next several years in the 1880s (in 1880, 1884, and 1886) the Island County commissioners tried several times to sell their building (the old Grennan and Cranney building) in Coveland. Between 1880 and 1886, they rented or allowed free occupancy of the building to a series of tenants. Finally, in August 1886, the county sold the old two-story building in Coveland at a public auction to DeWitt W. C. Dennison for $150. By this time, Coupeville had become the unquestioned leading commercial and governmental center on Penn Cove.[31]

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[27] "Records of the Board of County Commissioners," Island County, May 7, 1861; H. A. Swift, "An Old-Time Trip on Whidby Island," February 21, 1913, *Island County Times.*
[28] "Records of the Board of County Commissioners," Island County, February 8, 1864; Cook, *"A particular friend, Penn's Cove,"* 136-37.
[29] G. P. Budlong & Sons, *Puget Sound Business Directory and Guide, Washington Territory, 1872* (Olympia, WA: Murphy & Harned, 1872), 20.
[30] Cook, *"A particular friend, Penn's Cove,"* 138-39.
[31] Historical Sketch, Island Court House—Coveland," Project # 39-W-7 (Washington, D.C.: Historic American Buildings Survey, 1934); Cook, *"A particular friend, Penn's Cove,"* 139.

Coveland experienced a rebirth and renaming in the 1890s. Entrepreneurs proposed digging a canal between Penn Cove near the old Coveland townsite and the Strait of Juan de Fuca, at West Beach, a distance of around two miles, to allow for ship traffic across Whidbey Island. W. T. Clark, promoter of the San de Fuca canal project, bought several farms and divided them into building lots on the cove, slightly north of old Coveland. San de Fuca emerged at this time as a small community of several stores and a fraternal building. A dock was constructed on the cove, which received a steamer with mail daily. The first and only issue of the village newspaper, the *San de Fucan,* was published in 1890. The single issue of this newspaper signified the diminutive and ancillary stature of San de Fuca, alongside its much larger and robust neighbor, Coupeville, to the southeast.[32]

Coupeville—Founding and Early Growth, mid-1850s-1889

John Alexander, who most likely opened his first store in Coveland, may have encouraged the gradual movement of small embryonic businesses from the head of Penn Cove to the south side of Penn Cove; when he opened his general merchandise store in infant Coupeville in the mid-1850s. In addition, the protected harbor at Coupeville provided an excellent place for shipping produce from prairie farmers and for receiving general merchandise. Alexander's store and the number of his customers grew steadily after his move to Coupeville. In 1856, John Alexander sold supplies, including tobacco, soap, and coffee, to local settlers. Both Isaac and Emily Ebey bought items at Alexander's in 1856. On Christmas Eve, for example, Emily Ebey noted that she "went over to Alexander's today [and] purchased some things for the children's stockings."[33] By 1858, John Alexander's store had a clerk and assistant. At the time of his death in December 1858, the list of his creditors living around Penn Cove was extensive. And his merchandise, much of which had been purchased in San Francisco,[34] was wide ranging and included household goods and clothing, farm equipment and hardware, building materials, and marine supplies. A partial list of items sold by

[32] "Canal Proposed and Coveland Has New Name," May 31, 1951, *Island County Times.*
[33] Kibbe, "Diary of Colonel Isaac N. and Mrs. Emily Ebey," 314, 316, quote from 319.
[34] John Alexander's probate files indicate that, at the time of his death in December 1858, he owed money for merchandise purchased to several San Francisco merchants, including: Morris Speyer (for general merchandise); Treadwell & Company (for hardware and agricultural implements); Gordon, Brooks & Backus (for metal goods); Tubbs & Company (for ship chandlery and stores); Coghill & Company; and Whiting, Goodman & Company. Alexander also was indebted to a Whatcom County merchandise store and to Grennan & Cranney Mill in Utsalady (for lumber). John Alexander Probate Case File, Island County, Washington State Archives, Bellingham, Washington.

John Alexander in the months preceding his death provides clues about basic items that local Penn Cove settlers could buy close to home.

Household Goods & Clothing	Farm Equipment & Building Materials	Ship Stores
boots	plows & Eagle #31	sail needles
shirts	hay rakes & forks	Manila rope
shawls	Whitmans horse power	boiled linseed oil
stockings	belts	bale oakum
ladies hose	scales	turpentine
shoes	butcher knives	varnish
purses	draw knives	pitch
cotton handkerchiefs	sheath knives	chalk lines
calico	pocket knives	kegs of black paint
gingham	mill files	kegs of white lead
needles & thimbles	saw files	tins of green paint
hooks & eyes	taper files	tins of blue paint
hair pins	hand saws	yellow ochre with oil
clocks	strap hinges	paint brushes
pitchers	spring bolts	magnets
bowls	picks & shovels	
plates	hand axes	
cups & saucers	axe handles	
razors	pick handles	
knives, forks, spoons	wedges	
candles & matches	spurs	
kettles	rope	
iron beds	floats	
wash bowls	buckets	
bake ovens	jacks	
fire dogs	jack planes	
fry pans	joiner planes	
coffee boilers	braces	
coffee mills	tin faucets	

The death of John Alexander in late 1858 left a void in commercial enterprises. William Alexander, oldest son of John and Frances Alexander, may have carried on with the business, briefly, before turning to farming. Two other men opened general merchandise stores in Coupeville around or soon after the time of John Alexander's death. Raphael Brunn (sometimes spelled "Brum"), a native of Germany who had originally claimed land on Mutiny Bay, arrived on Whidbey Island around 1858. In 1859, Brunn and a man named Fowler bought the northwest corner of Captain Coupe's property. Soon Brunn erected a store on Front Street (site of the future Whidby Mercantile Company). Interestingly, John

Robertson, also listed as a merchant in 1860, occupied the same household as Brunn and his wife Margaret. Raphael Brunn continued to operate his general merchandise store into the early 1860s, reportedly going bankrupt in 1861.[35] In 1863, Brunn's store building apparently stood vacant.[36] In September that year, the Island County commissioners ordered the county to rent a building known as Brunn's house for the purpose of conducting county commissioners' meetings.[37]

Illustration 13. Front Street, Coupeville, late 1800s. Photograph courtesy of University of Washington Special Collections. UW19490.

John A. Robertson soon emerged as Coupeville's principal merchant and saloonkeeper, following the departure of R. Brunn. A native of Maryland, Robertson had arrived on Whidbey Island with his father, Captain William Robertson, in 1853 at age nineteen. In 1860, John Robertson bought a tract of

[35] Cook, *"A particular friend, Penn's Cove,"* 61.
[36] R. Brunn is listed as a "merchant" in the 1860 census of Island County, and, judging from his nearby neighbors in the census, was operating his store on Penn Cove, near the home of Frances (the widow of John) Alexander's home. "Census: Schedule 1, Free Inhabitants in Whidby Island in the County of Island," 1860, National Archives and Record Administration, Seattle, Washington; Ancutty Tillicum, "The Cost of Living in Early Days," December 12, 1913, *Island County Times;* Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island,* 26.
[37] Cook, *"A particular friend, Penn's Cove,"* 136.

land on Front Street in Coupeville, in the northeast corner of the Alexander donation land claim, from Frances Alexander Fay, re-married widow of deceased John Alexander. The land purchased reportedly contained a warehouse, store, and dwelling house.[38] Not long afterward, he reportedly built the first wharf in future Coupeville at the foot of Main Street. In May 1861, the county commissioners transferred the liquor license previously issued to William Alexander (John Alexander's son) to John Robertson.[39] By 1862, not long after Brunn closed his business, John Robertson was buying produce from nearby farmers.[40] Around this time, Robertson began constructing a mill.[41]

In the 1860s, John Robertson's building on Front Street served multiple commercial, governmental, and social functions in Coupeville. As early as November 1863, the county commissioners began paying John Robertson rent for space to conduct county business. On March 14, 1864, the Island County commissioners ordered that "the building known as John Robertson Mill be rented for the use of the County, for Court purposes at the rate of $25 per month from the time the building is finished." (No record has been found indicating that Robertson's mill building ever functioned as a mill.) The commissioners also reported "John Robertson [gave] the privilege to the County Commissioners of purchasing the above named building," indicating the commissioners' interest in moving to Coupeville simultaneously with the post office's relocation from Coveland to Coupeville.[42] John Robertson became the first postmaster in Coupeville in April 1864. His store served as the post office and social gathering place. Many years later, Flora Engle recalled that "the names of those who had letters were read by the Post Master [in Roberton's store] to a group who always assembled and waited in hopeful expectancy."[43]

In the mid-1860s, Robertson turned down the county commissioners' offer to buy his building. John Robertson continued, periodically, to rent space to the county commissioners and apply for a license to sell liquor in his saloon at least into 1867, by which time his store may have been renamed the "Coupeville Store."[44]

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[38] Cook, *"A particular friend, Penn's Cove,"* 78.
[39] "Records of the Board of County Commissioners," Island County, April 11, 1861; Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island,* 26.
[40] Cook, *"A particular friend, Penn's Cove,"* 60.
[41] Cook, *"A particular friend, Penn's Cove,"* 61, 78.
[42] "Records of the Board of County Commissioners," Island County, November 2, 1863; March 14, 1864.
[43] Quote from Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island,* 66; Cook, *"A particular friend, Penn's Cove,"* 144.
[44] "Records of the Board of County Commissioners," Island County, August 14, 1865, November 13, 1865, August 1866, and February 11, 1867.

For a brief period between1861-1864, John Robertson operated the only general merchandise store in Coupeville, which barely existed as a village. His store was one of the only buildings in the village that stood on the south side of the crooked Front Street, running parallel to the Penn Cove shoreline; the north side of the street facing Penn Cove had no buildings. Many years later, H. A. Swift recalled that John Robertson operated a store with a small stock of general merchandise and a bar in the rear, in a diminutive one-story building (that stood on the future site of the Central Hotel).[45]

Illustration 14. View of Coupeville, looking west from high ground north of Parker Road and east of Leach Street. This photograph illustrates both the grid system of streets that characterized the evolution of Coupeville, as well as a growth pattern that moved inland from Front Street along Main Street before expanding into different directions. Photograph courtesy of Island County Historical Society.

Robertson's store, saloon, post office, and county government meeting place was complemented by only a handful of other buildings in Coupeville at that time. Nearby and to the west of Robertson's establishment stood a two-story wood-frame building with a meeting hall on the second floor. At the front, stairs

[45] The only other store around Penn Cove in 1863 was operated by Barrington and Phillips. Phillips attended to the store while Captain Barrington sailed the *Growler*. This still carried a larger stock of goods than Robertson's in Coupeville, hence did more business, according to H. A. Swift, who arrived on Penn Cove in the summer 1863. "The Cost of Living in the Early Days," December 12, 1913.

led from the street to a platform with a door that opened to the hall. (This hall was later moved and attached to the Central Hotel.) Much further to the west in 1863 stood the large one-and-one-half story half-log house of Robert Fay. Frances Alexander Fay, operated a boarding house not far from town. A narrow wagon road, bordered by woods, extended from this tiny commercial center comprised of two structures to the Coupe house. In 1866, the Coupe and Fay homes were two of about six dwelling houses in Coupeville, which then had an Anglo-American population of around thirty-three.[46]

The native population on central Whidbey Island also congregated at Coupeville, as well as at other locations around Penn Cove. Along the beach below Coupeville's main street, Indians lived in houses about two feet above high water. A large encampment of Indians also existed further east on Snakelum Point, Long Point, and across the cove at "Rancharee."[47]

In early 1864, John Robertson was joined by a second general merchandise enterprise. That year, Barrington & Phillips general merchandise partnership moved from Oak Harbor into the old building formerly occupied by the Brunn store. The increasing number of farmers who had settled around Oak Harbor in the late 1850s and early 1860s had, no doubt, encouraged Barrington and Phillips to open a store in Oak Harbor in the early 1860s. The relocation of the post office to Coupeville in 1864, plus the need for more shop space, may have prompted Barrington and Phillips to relocate their business to the former Brunn store building. At this new location, they carried a much larger stock than at Oak Harbor. Around 1866, Barrington & Phillips dissolved their partnership. Soon afterwards, the firm of I. F. Blumberg & Company purchased the old Brunn property. Major G. O. Haller managed the company's general merchandise store.[48]

Granville O. Haller soon bought the business from Blumberg, who retired from business and returned to California. Haller operated his general merchandise store alone until 1869, often employing clerks (including H. Arthur Swift and Joseph B. Libbey) until he took in two partners, Mason B. Clark and Theodore Fredman. Only a year earlier, Mason B. Clark had started a mobile store in the sloop *Mary Ellen.* He bought produce from the local farmers and sold them groceries, dry goods, and other necessities of life. N. S. Porter joined him in this venture, under the firm name of Clark & Porter, which soon after moved its operation to the old store building of John Robertson, whose interest in shop

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[46] January 13, 18, *Island County Times;* "Census: Schedule 1, Free Inhabitants in Whidby Island in the County of Island," 1860.

[47] Ancutty Tillicum (H. A. Swift), "An Old-Time Trip on Whidby Island," February 21, 1913; "Coupeville Fifty Years Ago," July 4, 1913; and "The Cost of Living in Early Days," December 12, 1913; all in *Island County Times.*

[48] Tillicum, "The Cost of Living in the Early Days," December 12, 1913; "Census: Schedule 1, Free Inhabitants in Whidby Island in the County of Island," 1860.

keeping had been replaced by a desire to pursue mining. Clark and Porter expanded the array of general merchandise sold. When Clark and his new partner, Theodore Fredman, joined with Haller in the summer of 1869, the new general business became known as G. O. Haller & Company. Both Clark and Fredman eventually left the partnership, and Major Haller continued to operate his general merchandise store alone, and with the assistance of clerks like Ellison Ebey, until 1879.[49] In early 1880, however, this long-time Penn Cove resident and Coupeville merchant and his family moved away from Penn Cove. Granville Haller sold his commercial property to Daniel Pearson.[50]

Residents living on and around Penn Cove in the 1860s had a small number of other choices for buying needed household goods. One or two local residents ran businesses away from Penn Cove in 1863. In 1861, the county commissioners had issued a license to F. G. Wentworth to sell "spirituous liquors in less quantities than one Gallon in the Ferry House at Ebey's Landing."[51] In 1863, James Clark kept a hotel with a bar at Ebey's Landing, presumably at the Ferry house. According to H. A. Swift, who arrived on the island in summer 1863, "at Ebey's Landing there was also a saloon that did a fair business, but as the room was very small, of course, could not carry much of a stock of goods."[52] This business, no doubt, held forth in the Ferry house, before it was expanded with later additions. In 1864, James Clark's liquor license was transferred to Hill Harmon and a man named Bunker. Hill Harmon continued to operate the hotel and the presumably single-room bar at Ebey's Landing (Ferry house) at least until May 1865.[53] By the early 1860s, Utsalady on nearby Camano Island also had a saloon, operated by several different individuals, including Daniel Elger, Thomas Cranney, and Daniel Jacklin.[54]

In additional to a few widely scattered business establishments around north Whidbey Island, locals occasionally traveled to Port Townsend to shop.[55] Louise Swift, wife of Captain James Henry Swift, wrote to her sister in Massachusetts about her family's infrequent trips to Port Townsend for supplies.

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[49] Ancutty Tillicum, "The Cost of Living in the Early Days," December 12, 1913, *Island County Times;* "Census, Island County, Washington Territory," 1870.
[50] Ellison Ebey to Abe Enos, February 15, 1880, Winfield Ebey Papers.
[51] George Beam, a member of the Ebey family who had occupied the Ferry house in 1860, presumably made arrangements with Wentworth to sell liquor in the Ferry house. "Records of the Board of County Commissioners," Island County, April 11, 1861.
[52] Ancutty Tillicum, "The Cost of Living in Early Days," December 12, 1913, *Island County Times.*
[53] "Records of the Board of County Commissioners," Island County, June 15, 1863, March 14, 1864, August 8, 1864.
[54] "Records of the Board of County Commissioners," Island County, April 11, 1861, August 8, 1864.
[55] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey" (April 1917), 140; Cook, *"A particular friend, Penn's Cove,"* 48.

"Henry is going to Port Townsend next week shopping. I want some kind of a new dress, either poplin or thibet," Louise told her sister in 1866.[56] Again, in 1869, Louise delighted in describing her recent shopping trip to Port Townsend to "get some dresses made at a dressmaker's from Frisco."[57] Shopping ventures to Port Townsend and other emerging towns around Puget Sound continued in the 1870s with increasing steamship transportation, even as Coupeville began to offer a wider array of goods and services to residents around Penn Cove.

During the 1880s, Coupeville grew at a steady although not spectacular pace as a commercial center. Coupeville remained a shipping point for agricultural produce grown by the approximately thirty-five prairie farmers around Coupeville.[58] In 1884, the town supported several businesses that lined recently widened Front Street (in 1882). These included "two stores of general merchandise, one drug store, three hotels (probably the Central, Alexander's long-time hotel, and Ebey's Inn/Ferry house), two saloons, and one blacksmith and wagon shop, as well as the courthouse, post office, schoolhouse, and the Methodist Church. New businesses, like the drugstore of Francis Puget Race, continued to appear or change hands in the 1880s. In the two 1887 and 1888 Island County business directories, the Coupeville business people included:[59]

Abraham Alexander	hotel proprietor
Annie Chambers	cook, Central Hotel
John Chase	agent, agricultural implements
Ellison Ebey	hotel, Ebey's Landing (Ferry house)
John P. Engle	blacksmith
Horace Holbrook	carpenter
Jacob Jenne	proprietor, Central Hotel
William Kaehler	clerk, Central Hotel
Staver & Walker	farm machinery and vehicles

The growth of Coupeville as a business center contributed to its expanding population and physical size. In the mid-1880s, roughly twenty-five dwelling houses lined the streets of the small town. In 1887, Coupeville claimed a population of nearly 800 living in and around the commercial center. Interestingly, only four Indians were listed in the Island County directory as Coupeville city residents that same year.[60] During the 1880s, the meandering main

[56] Louise Swift to Annie Butler, February 17, 1866, Louise Swift Papers, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.
[57] Louise Swift to Annie Butler, June 13, 1869, Louise Swift Papers.
[58] *Puget Sound Directory, 1887* Washington, D.C.: R. L. Polk, 1887), 499-501.
[59] *Puget Sound Directory, 1887* Washington, D.C.: R. L. Polk, 1887 and 1888), 499-501 and 797-98.
[60] *Puget Sound Directory, 1887* Washington, D.C.: R. L. Polk, 1887), 500.

road through the town's commercial district was widened to twenty feet between Lovejoy's and the Coupe property. From there to the west to Haller's former store, the road, Main Street, expanded to forty feet in width.[61] In 1889, Main Street was widened to sixty feet, cutting right through Haller's (then Pearson's) old store building at the corner of Front and Main streets, forcing the store to close. (Half of the remaining building later became the Circuit, Coupeville's first movie theatre.) At that time, Coupeville's basic roads included Main Street/Engle Road, Broadway/Ebey Road, Terry Road, Madrona Way, Front Street, and a road between Front Street and Lovejoy's Point. The editor of the *Island News* asserted that "there is not a town on the Sound that has improved as rapidly or so permanently as Coupeville has during this past year. . . . Coupeville is one of the pleasantest towns on Puget Sound," the editor boasted.[62]

The growth of Coupeville as a business center, no doubt, helped draw the seat of Island County government from Coveland to Coupeville in the early 1880s. In turn, the Island County government contributed to the growth of Coupeville, as it continued to expand public services to Coupeville residents and rural prairie and county residents. Lodged in the Good Templars Hall for most of the 1880s, the county commissioners expended funds to move the building back eighteen feet from the road, purchase a stove, a fireproof vault, and furnishings, and considered a plan for a county jail. In the 1880s, the county expanded assistance provided to financial destitute "paupers" in the county, a practice begun in the 1860s.

The county commissioners dramatically enhanced their physical presence in and the character of Coupeville's streetscape in the 1890s. Despite improvements made to the Good Templars Hall, the county commissioners declared the building an unfit and unsafe place for county business in 1890, less than one year after Washington achieved statehood.[63] "We your petitioners do pray," urged county residents before the county commission, "that your honorable body shall take action at this [1890] meeting looking to the securing of a site in the village of Coupeville and erecting thereon a county building that shall insure said records, documents, etc, a place of safe and proper keeping." In 1891, the county commissioners selected a site, upon which Coupeville contractor H. B. Lovejoy constructed the first Island Courthouse for $8,000. (This building remained in use as the courthouse until 1949, when a new courthouse replaced it.)[64] In 1900, a small jail was constructed nearby. The erection of the Island County Courthouse assured residents of the county that the government would have a permanent presence in Coupeville and contribute to the future economic stability of the town.

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[61] Cook, *"A particular friend, Penn's Cove,"* 130.
[62] Quoted in Cook, *"A particular friend, Penn's Cove,"* 124-25.
[63] "Records of the Board of County Commissioners," Island County, March 13, 1866, May 14, 1866, August 1866 February 11, 1867; Cook, *"A particular friend, Penn's Cove,"* 138-40.
[64] Cook, *"A particular friend, Penn's Cove,"* 140.

Coupeville: Booms and Busts in the 1890s

Coupeville had become a substantial town by the early 1890s. In addition to the new courthouse, it boasted a post office, two stately churches, an acclaimed private academy, public schoolhouse, wharves for shipping local produce, and several stores. In the 1890s, Coupeville experienced a boom in business activity and construction in response to rumors that a railroad would arrive on central Whidbey Island. Railroad promoters from the East promised a railroad connection to Whidbey Island and across this "rich and productive island." (Please see Chapter 6 for more on the unrealized railroad schemes to Whidbey Island.) Land speculators and entrepreneurs arrived in great numbers. Travelers arrived at the Coupeville dock on daily steamers like the *Fairhaven.* In 1890, Coupeville boasted three hotels for travelers who promoted the promise of anticipated prosperity on the island. The Glenwood Hotel (renamed the Calhoun Apartments in 1894) opened in 1890, the State House (later the Blockhouse Inn), and the Central Hotel offered comfortable accommodations to travelers. The Central Hotel, combined the Good Templar's Hall (later a community hall) and an adjacent building. (Both later burned down.)[65]

Builders and business people in Coupeville likewise experienced heightened activity during this period of railroad speculation. In the early 1890s, H. B. Lovejoy & Company, carpenters and builders, remained busy constructing several new homes and business blocks, while they continued to advertise an abundant availability of "full line of coffins and caskets." Several new businesses opened their doors around the same time. In 1891, Thornton & Nunan opened their new store, carrying "Dry Goods, Fancy Goods, Hats, Caps, Boots, Shoes, Stationary, Groceries and Hardware," according to a large quarter-page advertisement in the *Island County Times.* As an enticement to purchase goods at their store, Thornton & Nunan promised that the "highest prices paid to you [for] country produce."[66] The boom ended with the national financial crash in 1893.

Although the railroad scheme was never realized, Coupeville regained hope for renewed economic vigor when the federal government announced plans to build a fort at Admiralty Head, in the vicinity of the proposed "New Chicago" at the terminus of the railroad. Fort Casey was one of three similar installations planned near the entrance of Puget Sound.

Fort Casey Contributes to the Community[67]

[65] Sheridan, *Coupeville,* 48.
[66] "New Store," August 14, 1891, *Island County Times.*
[67] Details of the founding of Fort Casey are found in Chapter 9, dealing with wars.

Soon after its establishment in the early 1900s, Fort Casey offered its residents a diverse array of cultural and social activities. A private school had a student population of fourteen. Mrs. L. Greentree, a resident of Port Townsend, was the teacher. A 1901 article that appeared in the *Mail Herald* acknowledged the presence of the infant fort. "Across the island on the [west] side towards Port Townsend lies Fort Casey, situated on the military reservation. . . . This fort, with its company of soldiers and big guns, is there to protect us all from the depredations of pirates and add a zest to social events in the neighboring towns and forts."

Illustration 15. Baseball game at Fort Casey c. 1924. Photograph courtesy of the Island County Historical Society.

In the spring of 1904, a band was organized. Members of the band were reportedly new to music, but rehearsed diligently, and performed every Sunday. By November 1904, the band had improved to the point that it was apparently a joy to hear. Soon thereafter, it was transferred to the regular 6th Artillery Band at Fort Worden, where the officer in charge of the three forts resided.[68]

In the early 1900s, the fort also had a baseball team that competed not only with other army teams, but also with local civilian teams on Whidbey Island. The *Island County Times* faithfully followed the team's victories and defeats. Residents on the prairies and in Coupeville and San de Fuca participated in dances, holiday celebrations (like the Fourth of July) and other social events at Fort Casey. Central Whidbey residents also used the hospital at the fort. Families associated with Fort Casey contributed to the vitality of the community in other respects;

[68] *Island County Times*, June 3, 1904, and November 21, 1904.

they patronized local stores and attended schools in and around Coupeville. In 1910, Fort Casey's 300 men, plus some families, rivaled Coupeville, with its 300 residents.[69] Social and athletic activities at the fort continued to be a part of the cultural and social fabric of central Whidbey Island for many years. Through much of the late 1910s and 1920s, Coupeville's *Island County Times* published a column dedicated exclusively to activities at the fort, entitled "From Fort Casey."

Illustration 16. Spectators watching a Fort Casey baseball game, c. 1924. Photograph courtesy of the Island County Historical Society.

Coupeville's Continued Slow Growth in the Early 1900s

Coupeville also benefited from the boom in the lumber industry in the region in the early 1900s. Throughout the Puget Sound area, the lumber industry boomed between 1900 and 1910, largely due to the extension of railroads to Puget Sound cities (on the mainland) and the residual effects of the Alaska gold rush of the late 1890s. Logging camps and lumber mills on Whidbey Island employed

[69] Sheridan, *Coupeville,* 14.

hundreds of men, some of whom gave Coupeville merchants their business when not working. During this same decade, a large steam-operated lumber mill on Whidbey Island was located at Coupeville. In September 1902, Coupeville's Island Manufacturing Company cut 6,000 to 10,000 feet of lumber a day and had a planer mill with a daily capacity of 10,000 feet. The Island Manufacturing Company produced lumber for long-distance shipments and for the construction of steamers, including the steamers *Albion* and *Wilbur Crimmins.* After 1910, the development of large lumber mills at Everett and Seattle overshadowed and repressed the lumber milling industry on Whidbey Island.

Acclaim of the town's handsome setting as well as its economic opportunities came from several boosters in the early 1900s. In 1901, the *Mail Herald* described Coupeville as a thriving small town of around 500 industrious residents.

> The town of Coupeville is the county seat of Island County, Washington, and is pleasantly situated on an arm of Crescent Harbor. It has the conveniences of a court house, a school house, and a fraternal hall. It has no town council, nor mayor, nor policeman, and it has to drink rainwater or else patronize the bar of the Central Hotel. It can hardly be said to be a dry town at this time for the water runs off the roofs fast enough to keep the cisterns well supplied. County commissioners, a justice of the peace and a constable regulate town matters for these peaceable, sober, industrious people. They have, as part of the industries upon which they prosper, a saw mill, a grist mill and a well-to-do farming community near by them. There are three church buildings in the town, which afford ample opportunities for indulging in devotional activities.[70]

In 1904, the local *Island County Times* noted that "Coupeville, the county seat of Island County, is one of the prettiest little towns on Puget Sound. It has an unexcelled harbor, is backed by rich farming land and has every opportunity of becoming a bustling little city. Boost your town and county, strangers do, why not you?"[71] One year later, the local newspaper boasted of the healthful environment in Coupeville, as demonstrated by the number of older adults living there. "It is said that only 23 people out of a thousand live to be seventy years of age," noted the *Island County Times.* "Coupeville with a population of about 600 has more than 23 people who are 70 or over. Moral: If you want to live to a ripe old age, come to Coupeville."[72]

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[70] "From the *Mail Herald,*" December 6, 1901, *Island County Times.*
[71] September 16, 1904, *Island County Times.*
[72] March 31, 1905, *Island County Times.*

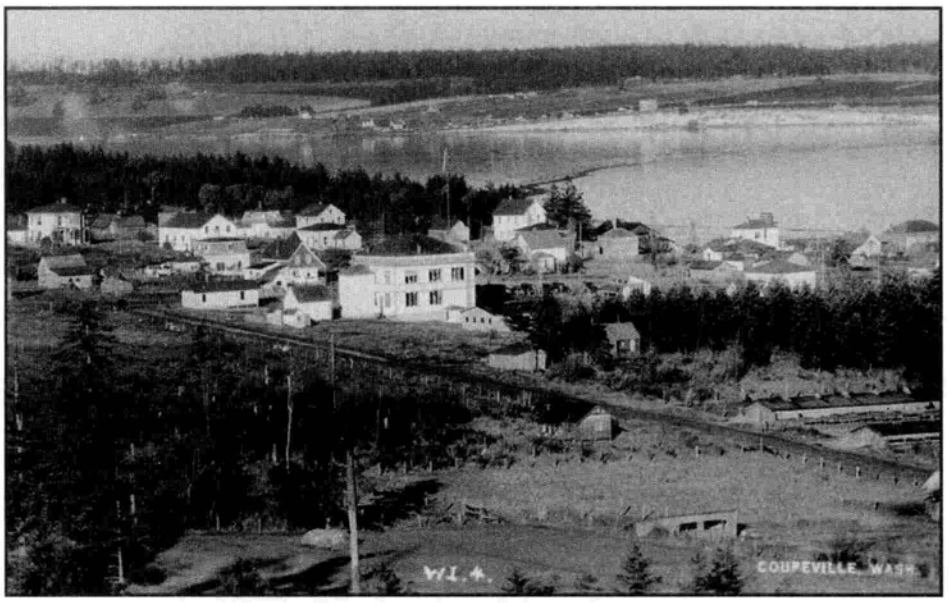

Illustration 17. Panoramic view of Coupeville looking northwest, c. 1900. The courthouse and jail can be seen in the center. Photograph courtesy of the Island County Historical Society.

The first decade of the twentieth century was a time when governmental activities were transformed from informal, spontaneous activities into formal, institutionalized pursuits. Coupeville was incorporated and Island County government expanded its role in the early 1900s, coincidental with a similar national trend toward expanding the role of government. During the so-called "Progressive Era," all levels of government—national, state, county, and municipal—took on new responsibilities and provided new or expanded services. In Island County and on central Whidbey Island, road building ceased to be a local activity that relied greatly on the volunteerism of neighbors; it became a county government responsibility funded by tax levies. County and municipal governments now became more actively involved in the construction, improvement, and maintenance of bridges, ferries, and docks, as well as installing water and sewer systems in town centers such as Coupeville. In the 1910s and 1920s, county and municipal governments everywhere, including Island County and Coupeville, also took on the responsibility of providing additional utilities, such as electricity and telephone service, to the public.

Illustration 18. Panoramic view of Coupeville, looking inland c. 1900. Photograph courtesy of the Island County Historical Society.

The petition to incorporate Coupeville, a town of approximately 600 persons in the early 1900s, was filed with the Island County Commissioners and reviewed by them on January 3, 1910. The commission delayed action on the petition expressing concern that requisite public notice had not been made. Sixty-four area residents signed the petition; however, there were opponents to incorporation. Those who objected argued against incorporation at the January 3rd meeting, and again at the February 17th meeting, when the issue again surfaced on the commissioners' agenda. An outspoken local farmer, Ernest J. Hancock, expressed concerns shared by several rural opponents, in his letter to the *Island County Times* of December 24, 1909. He worried that hefty taxes that would possibly result from the incorporation would be levied for unneeded public works such as water, sewer, and electric lights.[73]

The commissioners concluded that the incorporation issue should be resolved by the electorate, and put it to a popular vote on Saturday, April 2, 1910. A majority voted for incorporation and on April 4, 1910, Island County Commissioners decreed Coupeville an incorporated area under the laws of the

[73] Sheridan, *Coupeville,* 14.

State of Washington. The new town boundaries encompassed an area of 250 acres and had a population of 310 residents.[74]

Illustration 19. Main Street, Coupeville, looking north, c. 1900. Photograph courtesy of University of Washington Special Collections. Photo 23479z

On April 26, 1910, the newly formed Coupeville Town Council met and immediately voted to solicit proposals for the construction of an electrical system and a water system. The next decade saw a franchise granted for telephone service, the installation of streetlights, construction and expansion of streets and sidewalks, and the acquisition of a privately-funded water system on the west side of town.

The newly incorporated town focused considerable attention on streets and sidewalks. In addition to constantly clearing and grading existing roads, the town government built new roads in newly platted areas (and sometimes abandoned existing roads). At first a small number of town roads were planked to help prevent erosion and aid travel in the wetter winter months. The increasing use of automobiles in the 1910s required paving the town's major streets, which took place incrementally over many years. The newly incorporated town also improved sidewalks. Ordinance 18, approved in July 1910, called for the creation

[74] Minutes, Island County Board of County Commissioners, January 3, 1910; February 17, 1910; and April 4, 1910.

of a committee to "inspect all sidewalks and order all repairs or condemn those beyond repair."[75] In 1911, the town council approved a list of sidewalk locations recommended by a council committee charged with assessing sidewalk needs.

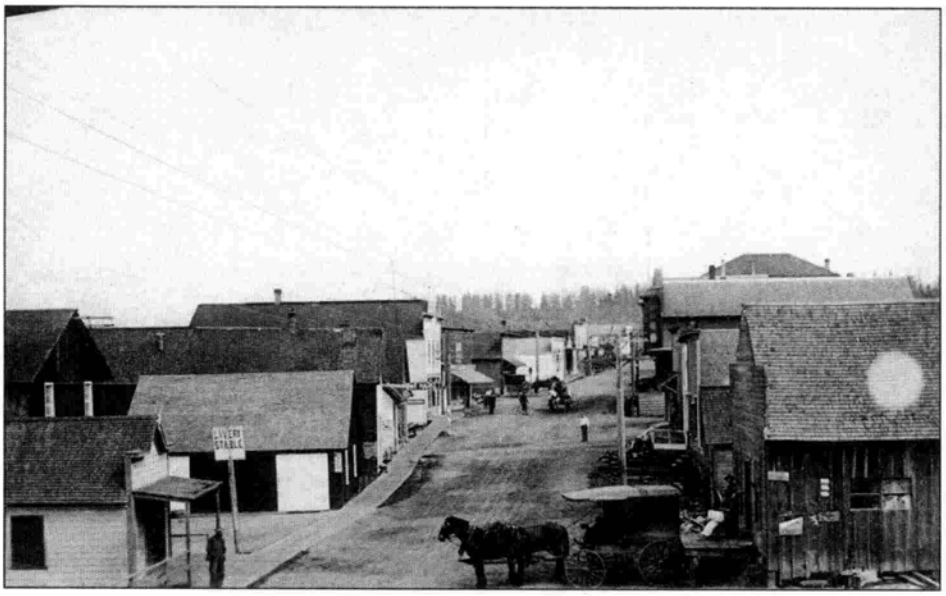

Illustration 20. Coupeville's main commercial street, Front Street, looking east, 1911. The two-story Central Hotel, with bay windows projecting from the second floor, is on the south side (right side) of Front Street (in the center of the photo). Sidewalks are of wood plank; streets are of packed dirt. Electric light poles align Front Street. Courtesy of Buswell Collection, Center for Pacific Northwest Studies, Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington.

Over the next few years, several sections of sidewalk, typically constructed of thick four-foot-wide boards laid and nailed crosswise on wood stringers, were constructed along more heavily traveled commercial streets.[76]

Coupeville's new town council also took responsibility for providing the town's utilities—electricity, telephone, and water. In May 1910, a month after their first meeting, the town council conditionally awarded an electricity franchise to Ira L. Todd of Fort Missoula, Montana. After Todd failed to fulfill his

[75] Quoted in Sheridan, *Coupeville,* 33.
[76] Sheridan, *Coupeville,* 33.

agreement with the town, the council contracted with W. C. Cheney to supply electricity. Cheney built his first power plant on the beach (behind today's Toby's Tavern). Cheney's one-kilowatt generator and sixteen cells of storage batteries supplied power for streetlights as distant as Perkins Street.[77]

In 1914, the town hired Cheney to erect poles and lines for streetlights. The October 23, 1914 issue of the *Island County Times* reported that the town council agreed to have W. C. Cheney install twenty, sixteen-candle-power lamps for the streets for which the town would pay $18.75 every month between September 1 and May 1, from early evening dusk to midnight. One week later, the town council members voted unanimously to award the electric light franchise to W. C. Cheney.[78] Cheney also offered to provide electricity to residences as well at a cost of fifty cents a month for one lamp and seventy cents for two lamps. "Now help the project," the newspaper coaxed readers, "by giving him another order for lights. This is cheaper than bother with kerosene."[79] Soon several buildings in the commercial district were lit with electric light bulbs. In 1915, the school at Prairie Center, about a mile south of the town center, received electricity.[80]

Around the same time, the town council considered providing telephone service to town residents. As early as 1900, the Eclipse Telephone Company had provided service to a handful of subscribers, including Samuel Hancock, Francis LeSourd, and Charles Terry. In November 1914, the town council awarded a franchise for telephone service in Coupeville to the Pacific Coast Telephone and Telegraph Company. Two years later, major improvements were made to the telephone line in Coupeville. In October 1916, a Pacific Coast Telephone and Telegraph Company crew of eight men came from Seattle to erect 100 new poles (towed in a boom from Everett). The new poles, once planted in the ground and wired, extended the phone line out of town as far as the schoolhouse at Prairie Center. Here, the telephone line was connected with the so-called "farmers line," which had previously run into Coupeville on the opposite side of the street. "The people of Coupeville and community will welcome these improvements," affirmed the *Island County Times*, "as they are timely and fit in appropriately with the establishment of the new lighting system."[81]

During this era of growth in local government, public services, and business, the weekly *Island County Times*, one of two newspapers located in Coupeville (along with the *Island County Sun*), played an important role in reporting and even influencing the course of some activities. W. T. Howard, editor of the newspaper from 1905 to 1926, crusaded for many causes in town. W. T. Howard had come to Coupeville from Schuyler, Nebraska at the urging of his brother

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[77] Sheridan, *Coupeville,* 36.
[78] "Electric Light Franchise Granted," *Island County Times,* October 30, 1914.
[79] "Electric Light Plant Sure," *Island County Times*, October 23, 1914.
[80] Sheridan, *Coupeville,* 36-37.
[81] "Improving Telephone Line," *Island County Times,* October 22, 1916.

Edward Howard, a Whidbey Island resident. Not unlike many Progressive Era public figures, Howard supported and promoted the arrival of electric lights, improved streets and sidewalks, community cultural and social activities, and downtown business growth. Typically, editor Howard greeted steamers *Calista* and *Atlanta,* which arrived daily at the Coupeville dock, to learn of regional and national news worthy of reporting in the next issue of his newspapers.[82]

In the years following the town's incorporation, Coupeville experienced continued commercial growth. In 1913, the town boasted a vibrant commercial section with several businesses and meeting halls. Local residents could do business at three general merchandise stores, two blacksmith shops, two drug stores, one combined furniture and hardware store, one bank, a shoemaker shop, a barber shop, a meat market, a watch repair shop, a combined restaurant and confectionary store, and a livery stable. A lumber mill and boat building business, operated by the Lovejoy family, stood at the foot of Otis Street. Three abstract companies, one real estate office, and five contractors and builders took care of the community's land, real estate, and building needs. Two doctors and three lawyers handled medical and legal concerns in town. Visitors to Coupeville could choose between the town's two hotels. [83]

In 1916, the *Island County Times* proudly presented its enlarged business directory that included several well-established businesses plus the business cards of several new ones. Businesses advertising in the February 25, 1916 issue of the newspaper included:

Business Name	Profession/Business
Dr. E. F. Ristine	physician and surgeon
Dr. J. H. Williams	surgeon, dentist
Burwell Bantz	civil engineer
W. C. Schreck	poultryman
J. J. Straub	blacksmith
Carl B. Gillespie	liveryman
Business Name	Profession/Business
F.P. Race	druggist
Island Realty Company	real estate
L. N. Sill	proprietor of L. D. Patterson, auto repair
Cushen and Ford Agency	auto service and repair
A. K. Capaan	butcher
James Zylstra	attorney
J. J. Sabin	taxidermist

[82] "Family of Early-Day Publisher Howard Continues Active in Community," *Island County Times,* October 6, 1955.
[83] "Coupeville—Island County," June 20, 1913, *Island County Times.*

Calhoun and Rosenfield	proprietors of Coupeville wharf and dealers in farm products
Island Electric Works	electric light plant
H. W. Libbey	painter, paperhanger, and decorator

"Our recommendation stands back of every firm or individual," the newspaper stated, "whose name appears in this list; they are all first class," the *Times* asserted.[84]

Other businesses arrived or opened in new locations during the next couple of years. In the fall of 1916, a new building was added to the business district. Sam Benson, proprietor of a restaurant for years, began construction of his own building on the waterfront side of Front Street, opposite the post office; this site had once been occupied by John Alexander's old store. Bensen's new two-story building measured 28 x 44; the second floor was reserved for living space. The ground floor had three separate spaces for a confectionary store, a dining room, and a kitchen in the rear.[85] Six months later, A. K. Capaan, a butcher located near the head of the wharf, moved his meat market into a building recently purchased from Henry Fair. The *Island County Times* described Capaan's new shop space as follows: "a big cooler has been installed, and a neat little office adjoining the sale room, a back room in which to keep meats, a room where lard will be rendered, etc., and the basement will be used in which to store hides. The place is a credit to Coupeville." Along with Benson's new restaurant, these two restaurants "make two valuable additions to the business structures of the place."[86]

Prairie Center Emerges on Eve of World War II

About a mile south of Coupeville's Front Street, the intersection of two main roads, Main Street and Terry Road, became the site of a new business establishment that formed the core of a small satellite commercial center. In 1916, two Fort Casey soldiers persuaded property owner Samuel Hancock to build a

[84] "Our Business and Professional Directory," February 25, 1916, *Island County Times.*
[85] "Coupeville to Have New Business Building," October 18, 1916, and "In His New Location," March 9, 1917; both *Island County Times.*
[86] "In His New Location," March 9, 1917, *Island County Times.*

Illustration 21. Front Street, Coupeville, looking east, c. 1920. Photograph courtesy of Island County Historical Society.

general merchandise store for them to lease. Five years later, Moritz Pickard and Sam Gelb bought their store—the Prairie Center Mercantile, specializing in groceries, feed and farm products, and household items of all kinds. When Fort Casey closed in the 1920s, Pickard and Gelb expanded their business by collecting certain local farm products, like eggs, chickens, and vegetables, and marketed them to Seattle wholesalers. They returned to their store with farm equipment, plumbing fixtures, and other items of use to local residents.[87]

Amidst this robust commercial and governmental growth, Coupeville, by the turn of the twentieth century, witnessed a cultural impoverishment. The departure of Indians occupying multi-family shorefront dwellings degraded the once rich diversity of the area's demographic fabric. The 1880 census-taker had counted 113 Indians living in the Coupeville area, including 17 fishermen, 18 farm hands, and 1 boatman. The approximately twenty-six Indian families of Coupeville had 38 young children living at home with their parents. Although there were undoubtedly as many or more Indians living in the Coupeville area in 1870, that year's census-taker had apparently not counted them. That person did, however, make note of the 12 Indian women married to Anglo-Americans and their 19 children.

[87] Sheridan, *Coupeville,* 53.

One possible explanation for the absence of Indians in the 1870 census is that they commuted to work. For example, during the fall Chinook salmon run, most fishermen would leave the Coupeville area and temporarily relocate to areas more accessible to the fish runs. But, this explanation simply does not apply since both the 1870 and 1880 enumerations on Whidbey Island were done in June. The high probability of a relatively large Indian population in the Coupeville area in 1870 is based not only on extrapolation backward from the 1880 census, but also forward extrapolation from 1863 information. In 1863, almost ten years after treaties and legislation created reservations on Puget Sound, Indian houses stretched along the Coupeville beach. In 1866 there were still no Anglo-American structures on the north or beach side of Front Street, only Indian homes, and the Indian residents probably outnumbered the Anglo-American residents in 1866 Coupeville – there were only thirty-three Anglo-American occupants of the six non-Indian homes on the south side of Front Street. The first decade of the 1900s, however, would see the cultural erosion of Coupeville.

By 1904, most Whidbey Island Indians had moved to a reservation created near La Conner. One of the few remaining Indians in the Coupeville area, "Chief" Billy Barlow, hosted the last major potlatch in 1904; 300 Indians attended. In 1909, Coupeville residents joined together to build a house for one of the last remaining Indian families: Susie and Alec Kettle. They built a house for the couple at 407 Coveland Street. Alec Kettle was said to be the last full-blooded Indian on Whidbey Island; he died in 1947. His funeral was held at the Methodist Church; he was buried in the Sunnyside Cemetery next to his wife and 7 children.[88] In 2003, Alec Kettle's house on Coveland Street still stands, although substantially remodeled.

The demise of native population, a casualty of robust economic growth in Coupeville, presaged Coupeville's own fall from prosperity, initiated largely by advancing "progress"—the arrival of the automobile. Change began in 1913. This was the year that Henry Ford began manufacturing autos on a moving conveyor belt, thereby achieving mass production and the beginning of falling prices, which put cars within economic reach of hundreds of thousands of middle-class Americans. This was also the year that an auto ferry began operating at Deception Pass, about fifteen miles north of Coupeville. Now for the first time in the town's history, Coupeville's sheltered cove that had accommodated ships for decades, began losing its economic importance. Coupeville, first settled by sea captains, a product of maritime trade for half a century, and the headquarters of the Island Transportation Company during the era of steamboats, began losing its position of importance on the eve of World War I. Automobiles and auto ferries began offering far greater flexibility in transport and at a lower cost.

[88] Sheridan, *Coupeville*, 59.

The Imprint of Community Centers on the Landscape

The evolution of central Whidbey Island business and community centers left a definite imprint on the landscape around Penn Cove during the first seventy years of Anglo-American settlement and development. The small trading center of Coveland at the west end of Penn Cove faded from existence within a few years of its founding, to be replaced by the emerging mercantile center of Coupeville. This new town's main commercial street, Front Street, hugged the Penn Cove shoreline (much like the Native American villages preceding and coincident with it) and from it long wharfs projected into the water. For decades, water transport stimulated Coupeville's business sector and facilitated travel by county government officials who met in Coupeville (after the county moved from Coveland).

Speculation about and anticipation of a new form and new route of transportation on central Whidbey Island spurred a fleeting flurry of building activity. "New Chicago," on Admiralty Head, rose and fell quickly in response to expectations that the railroad would terminate there. The proposed construction of a canal across the isthmus separating Penn Cove and the Strait of Juan de Fuca gave birth to San de Fuca in the late 1800s. Although no discernable landscape imprint remains of "New Chicago," a few historic remnants of diminutive San de Fuca can be found, suggesting dashed dreams of canal speculators that were replaced by those who invested in San de Fuca's future as a small center for travelers and vacationers. (Oak Harbor, to the northeast, emerged around the same time as the commercial center for farmers north of Penn Cove.) By the close of the nineteenth century, Coupeville had become the undisputed principal commercial and community center on the south side of Penn Cove.

Between the 1890s and the 1920s, Coupeville's growth faltered, due to local periodic hard times for farmers as well as national economic downturns. The two map vignettes above tell part of that story. In the early 1890s, the Coupeville commercial and social center hugged the Penn Cove shoreline; residences bordered the main street leading south from the town center. Twenty years later, not much had changed in Coupeville's pattern and the extent of commercial growth except for the addition of a few short streets and a handful of houses in town. Only the loss of wharfs jutting north into Penn Cove suggest that the town's focus was no longer toward the water. Otherwise, the town had grown but changed very little.

Chapter 8

Social and Cultural Life Around Penn Cove 1850s—1950s

During the one hundred years stretching between the 1850s and 1950s, the residents of the prairies and small communities around Penn Cove developed a rich cultural and social life. Education and religion were of the greatest interest and concern to the earliest settlers; schools and churches became the hub of early and long-lived cultural as well as social activities. Over time, simple gatherings (meals and dancing) among neighbors became augmented by a well-developed and rich matrix of fraternal organizations and social clubs as well as special seasonal events. The imprint of these activities on the landscape took the form of churches, schools, and library meeting places; fraternal halls (with commercial spaces often occupying the ground floor), and landscape features such as baseball diamonds, fair grounds, and market meeting places.

Building Schools

Education began at an early date on the prairies around Penn Cove. Before rudimentary schoolhouses were built and teachers hired, schooling took place in settlers' homes. The first public elementary schools, organized and supported by Island County in 1857, occupied small, rudimentary buildings that had often been used for other purposes and donated to the county school board. In the mid-1850s, local inhabitants may have even pooled their resources to pay teachers. Smith Prairie residents even funded their own "private" school through much of the 1860s. Finding and keeping teachers proved challenging for the county in the early days; a new teacher arrived almost every year at most schools. Probably due to the limited number of available teachers, and fluctuating student population, some schools periodically closed for a year or two in the 1850s and 1860s.

For many years, schools remained in session for only twelve to fourteen weeks a year. Since the school season was short, teachers had other primary occupations during most of the year. No public education existed around Penn Cove beyond the lower grades until the 1880s. The opening of the Puget Sound Academy in 1887, largely due to contributions of money, land, and buildings by

local residents, provided students in the Penn Cove area their first opportunity for a high school education. During the first fifty years of Anglo-American residency around Penn Cove, inhabitants developed a long and deep tradition of privately contributing to the education of children.

In the beginning, however, before the advent of schools, mothers taught their children at home, presumably from books they had brought with them to Whidbey Island. Ebey's Landing women, such as Rebecca Ebey, felt the strong need for both schools and churches. In early 1853, she wrote in her diary: "There are 18 bachelors and youths residing on the island, but we want more families, so we can have schools and churches for ourselves and our children."[1] The newly formed territorial legislature required counties to raise money for school districts that was equal to the legislature's 1854 tax of two mills on all taxable property. Although the newly formed board of county commissioners levied a school tax at its second meeting in August 1853, inadequate funding may have delayed the construction of schoolhouses as well as the hiring of teachers for three or four years.[2]

The first school on Ebey's Prairie probably relied heavily on the contributions and financial donations of the settlers themselves. Young students on the prairies around Penn Cove attended their first school in Thomas and Maria Coupe's house on Penn Cove, according to George Albert Kellogg. Here, three teachers instructed around seventeen students in their studies. The Coupe's library of about 100 books also served as an invaluable teaching resource.[3] Young students then included children of the earliest settlers: Thomas Coupe, Jr., Sarah Coupe, Jennie Coupe, George Coupe, Eason and Ellison Ebey, and James Polk and Almira Wright (cousins of the Ebey boys).[4] In early October 1855, Eason B. Ebey mentioned his school experience in a letter to his cousin John Eason. "Ellison and I have been going to school a good deal and trying to learn all we can. . . . Polk and Almira [Wright] have been going to school with us."[5]

The first actual schoolhouse building (not part of a settler's home) was a dark and gloomy log cabin erected near the northern end of Ebey's Prairie on the claim of John Alexander. It was located about one-half mile north of the blockhouse "fort" near the family home of John and Ann Crockett. John

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[1] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey," March 13, 1853 (January 1917), 130.
[2] Frederick E. Bolton, "Education," *Building a State, Washington, 1889-1939, Vol. III,* edited by Charles Miles and O. B. Sperlin (Tacoma, WA: Washington State Historical Society, 1941), 154; "Records of the Board of County Commissioners," August 1, 1853, Island County Courthouse, Coupeville, Washington.
[3] "100 Years of Service in Methodist Church Story," *Island County Times,* April, 30, 1853.
[4] George Albert Kellogg, *A History of Whidbey Island* (Coupeville, WA: Island County Historical Society, 1934), 117.
[5] Quoted in: "Young Ebey Writes from Ebey's Prairie," (Eason Ebey to John G. Eason, October 1, 1855), *Spindrift Two* 9: 3 (Winter 1986), 22.

Alexander and/or John W. Lysle built this rudimentary building around 1856. Lylse's first students included many of the earliest settlers' children: Samuel, Sarah, and Willie Crockett; George Coupe; Joseph Alexander; Phenny Power; Mamie Lysle; Almira and James Polk Wright, and Eason and Ellison Ebey. Nearly sixty years after attending this school in the 1850s, Samuel D. Crockett recalled that he and the other young students sat on hard benches facing desks that encircled the walls.[6]

In 1857, Island County government became actively engaged in supporting public education on Whidbey Island. The county raised money for its school fund by taxes as well as court fines and contributions. Following the brief tenure of Joseph S. Smith as school superintendent in early 1857, voters elected Winfield Ebey Island County Superintendent of Schools in July 1857, a position that he held until 1862. At that time, the county had four school districts: District 1 encompassed the area north of Penn Cove; District 2 included Coupeville and Ebey's Prairie; District 3 took in the Oak Harbor area; and District 4 encompassed all of Whidbey Island south of Ebey's and Crockett prairies. For the first year or two, the Coupeville-Ebey's Prairie district remained the only one of the four districts with an operating school.[7] In March 1858, the county paid John W. Lysle $112. 50 for services rendered as a teacher in the Ebey's Prairie-Coupeville school.[8]

In the late 1850s, a school was established on Smith's Prairie. The first school there was located in John and Jane Kinneth's farm field and was probably opened in the late 1850s when the Kinneth and nearby Kellogg families each had two children of school age.[9] Inhabitants living in the area paid by subscription for the construction of a log schoolhouse. Local farmer and carpenter Cyrus Cook constructed this school, and built the desks. A fireplace provided heat in the cool winter months. Mrs. Cyrus E. Cook, also paid by subscription, taught in this log house. Later, after the John Kellogg family moved to Smith Prairie, John Kellogg and John Kinneth built another school of logs. Reverend A. C. Fairchilds, a Methodist minister, was first to teach in this schoolhouse in the late 1850s.[10] The

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[6] Crockett to Meany, March 2, 1916, Meany Papers; Alice Kellogg Cahail, "Whidbey Island" (II: 14), Cahail Papers; both papers in Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.

[7] George Albert Kellogg, *A History of Whidbey Island* (Coupeville, WA: 1934), 86-87

[8] Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island,* 87.

[9] At least one source reported that the Smith Prairie school opened in 1855, however, this date seems early. Smith Prairie was somewhat removed from the concentration of settlers at that time, John and Caroline Kellogg (great promoters and consumers of education who had several children) had not yet moved to Smith Prairie, and John and Jane Kinneth had only one child, age two, in 1855. "Settlers Had School in '55 at Smith Prairie," *Island County Times,* May 31, 1951.

[10] Alice Kellogg Cahail, "Whidbey Island" (II: 15), Cahail Papers; Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island,* 117.

Smith Prairie school was presumably quite small, apparently much more like a private school, and operated in a more *ad hoc* fashion than the other schools on Whidbey Island.

During the 1860s, the "private" Smith Prairie schoolhouse remained unoccupied for several school seasons. In the mid- and late 1860s, a series of teachers taught in the Smith Prairie school, including Reverend C. Alderson, a red-headed preacher at the Methodist Church; Georgie Pearson, who had arrived on Whidbey Island with her older sister Josie and their father in June 1864; Ella Van Wermer; Miss Bartlett; Helen Doyle; and Nellie Morre. In 1871, D. K. Hartson was the last teacher on Smith Prairie before the school apparently closed for several years (when the creation of a new district for Smith Prairie school in 1870 was reunited with the Ebey's Prairie school district).[11] Smith Prairie residents eventually created their own "private school." They paid the salary of private teachers, who taught in residents' homes. Lillian Butters, a graduate of the Salem Normal School in Massachusetts, became one of the prairie's private school teachers, and, later, the wife of Albert H. Kellogg taught there. When the Kellogg family expanded to five children, Albert Kellogg built the family's own schoolhouse on Smith Prairie.[12]

In 1859, the Island County assessor noted the existence of two public schools in operation in Island County (then much larger than it is today). In addition to the Ebey's Prairie school, a school opened in Oak Harbor (District 3) that year with twenty students in attendance. The Ebey's Prairie school reported an enrollment of twenty-four scholars. By 1860, three schools around Penn Cove existed. District 1 (along the north side of Penn Cove) had fifteen students; District 2 (Ebey's Prairie-Coupeville) had twenty-five students; and District 3 (Oak Harbor) had thirty pupils. In May 1860, the county commissioners' records showed that around $410 had been paid from the Island County School Fund for public education.[13]

During the 1860s, the Island County school system expanded with the opening of an actual school in District 4 (south of Ebey's Prairie) and the formation of District 5 (Camano Island in 1863). In 1861, sixty-two pupils attended school in districts 1, 2, and 4. (No school was held in District 3, Oak Harbor.)[14] In 1864, the total school enrollment in Island County had increased to 123 students. In 1867, 124 students attended four schools in Island County, according to School Superintendent John Crockett. The county paid a total of

[11] Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island,* 88, 117.
[12] Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island,* 89.
[13] Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island,* 87; "Records of the Board of County Commissioners," May 7, 1860, Island County, Island County Courthouse, Coupeville, Washington.
[14] Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island,* 87.

$361 that year to its four teachers for three months of school. Two years later, there were still four schools taught by four teachers in the county.[15]

Although the number of students in all districts fluctuated, the school on Ebey's Prairie (in District 2) usually had the largest number of students. In the summer of 1863, Miss Fawcett, an English woman from Victoria, taught in the Ebey's Prairie school south of Coupeville. Classes were held in a diminutive building, measuring about 12 x 20 feet, according to H. A. Swift who came to Penn Cove in 1863 as a child. Fawcett taught about a dozen to fifteen students. She received $30 a month for her services, plus board for teaching two students music.[16] The next school season, Robert Fay taught in the Ebey's Prairie schoolhouse. "It was generally conceded," H. A. Swift later remembered, that Fay "taught the most satisfactory school that had ever been taught in the District."[17] In June 1864, sisters Josie (Josephine) and Georgie Pearson along with their father sailed to Whidbey Island from Lowell, Massachusetts, by way of the Isthmus of Panama and San Francisco. The Pearson sisters were two of ten women who moved from Lowell to teach in Washington Territory schools. Josie Pearson taught in the North Ebey's Prairie School only a few weeks during the 1865 school season before she suffered a heart attack and died.[18]

In late 1866, Dr. Webster, who arrived on north Whidbey Island in the summer of 1866, began teaching thirty students at the Ebey's Prairie School. His salary was $16 per student.[19] Eason Ebey held forth at the school around 1867, followed soon after by Nellie Moore, who taught school on Ebey's Prairie in the late 1860s, and Mrs. G. H. Greer taught at this school in 1871.[20] Children attending the Ebey's Prairie school walked to school or rode horses, if coming from a distance, like Alice and Albert Kellogg who then lived on Smith's Prairie (where the school there had apparently been temporarily closed). In 1869, the Ebey's Prairie school became the first school on Whidbey Island to conduct school for six months (rather than around three months).[21]

The Coveland and Oak Harbor areas were without any operating schools for a period in the early 1860s. In the summer of 1865, a school reopened in the Coveland area. This school occupied an old log house located on the former

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[15] *Ibid.,* 87-88.

[16] Ancutty Tillicum (H. A. Swift), "The Schools in the 60s," *Island County Times,* November 21, 1913; Louise Swift to "Mother" (Mrs. Butler), August 3, 1863, Louise Swift Papers, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.

[17] Ancutty Tillicum (H. A. Swift), "The Schools in the 60s."

[18] After Josie Pearson's death, a local Penn Cove area resident, reputedly, lobbied Washington, D.C. to give Mr. Pearson a job as the keeper of the Admiralty Head lighthouse, where his daughter Georgie Pearson assisted him.

[19] Arthur Swift to "Annie," November 18, 1866, Louise Swift Papers.

[20] Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island,* 88.

[21] Alice Kellogg Cahail, "Whidbey Island," typescript (II: 35), Cahail Papers, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.

Grennan and Cranney property, later owned by Captain James Henry Swift. Captain Swift donated a part of his property (and apparently the old Grennan and Cranney log house) for use as a school. A long, low shelf along one side of the room took the place of desks when students needed a flat surface to write in their copybooks. Hattie Swift, the young teenage daughter of Captain James Henry Swift, taught the fifteen scholars, beginning in June 1865, for three months.[22] In a letter home to her family in Massachusetts, she described her first teaching experience with youthful zeal.

> Well, Ella, what would you say if you walked in on me any day from Monday to Friday at any hour between nine and twelve a.m. and one and four p.m. and found me seated in full dignity behind a small table and before me arrayed on benches, a dozen young hopefuls, some young ladies, others gentlemen, books in hand, and, perhaps, a class of three or four before me reciting? . . . I suppose [your] first question is 'How do you like it?' First rate. I think it fine fun. . . . I shall have forty dollars a month. Pretty good pay, is it not? The farthest advanced scholar I have is interested in Arithmetic, the youngest in A, B, C's. The rest [are] between the two.[23]

Before the next school session, the Coveland School District built a new schoolhouse on the Grennan and Cranney property, where Hattie Carleton taught in 1866. The Coveland School District eventually moved this schoolhouse to the county road between Coveland and Fort Nugent (directly north of Coveland on the coast). In 1871, Nellie Moore, former teacher on Ebey's Prairie, had moved to the Coveland school.[24]

Oak Harbor also held its first school session in 1865. In the summer of 1866, Hattie Swift moved from the Coveland School District to teach the fourteen-week summer school session in Oak Harbor. During the week she boarded with the family of Captain Edward and Christiana Barrington, then returned to the Swift home on the north side of Penn Cove on the weekends. Hattie taught eleven students that summer who apparently challenged her disciplinary skills. "It is all I can do to manage them," she explained in a letter to her aunt in Massachusetts. "I have to use my roler pretty often. Last Summer [in

[22] Hattie Swift to "Ella," March 26, 1865, Louise Swift Papers.
[23] Hattie Swift to "Ella," July 16, 1865 and Louise Swift to "Mother" (Mrs. Butler), June 2, 1865, and Hattie Swift to "Auntie," July 24, 1866; all in Louise Swift Papers.
[24] By 1913, this Coveland School was being used as a storehouse. Ancutty Tillicum (H. A. Swift), "The Schools in the 60s"; Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island,* 88.

the Coveland School] I had fifteen and never had to punish one, but these are a different set."[25]

The 1870s witnessed the gradual expansion of the Island County school system, the number of students attending elementary schools, and the extension of the school year. In 1872, school Superintendent Eason Ebey reported that about fifty-two students attended the Ebey's Prairie school, which had been recently improved by public-spirited residents. Mrs. Grees taught classes in the school around that time.[26]

By 1873 six districts existed in Island County, and student enrollment numbered 131. That year, the Camano Island school in Utsalady extended its school year to nine months, making it probably the first in the county to hold a school term of modern length.[27] In the mid-1870s, the Ebey's Prairie schoolhouse had been completely overhauled and repaired with money raised by a tax levy.[28] Despite these improvements, Eason Ebey complained about the poor education his children received at the Ebey's Prairie school in a letter to his cousin Myra and Aunt Mary Bozarth. "Our school here is a poor affair," he wrote in January 1876, "so poor that we took the girls out two months ago and are trying to teach them at home what we can."[29] Henry Race, who emigrated from Australia via Honolulu to Port Gamble in 1859, and arrived on Whidbey Island with his wife Frances and family in 1876, became actively involved in improving the schools around Penn Cove. He was instrumental in building a new school in 1878.[30]

Island County school superintendents between 1857 and the 1890s usually served one to three two-year terms. The county paid superintendents around $25 (in 1865) for their services each year.

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[25] Hattie Swift to "Auntie," July 24, 1866, Louise Swift Papers.

[26] Eason Ebey to Mary Ebey Wright Bozarth, January 19, 1873, Winfield Ebey Papers, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.

[27] Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island,* 89.

[28] Teachers in the mid-1870s included: Mary Mullen, Lottie Haller, Mary Crockett, Sarah Crockett, Flora M. Cooper, J. M. Brownell, and Matty Power. Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island,* 89; Jimmie Jean Cook, *"A particular friend, Penn's Cove"* (Coupeville, WA: Island County Historical Society, 1973), 135.

[29] Eason Ebey to Myra and Aunt Mary Ebey Wright Bozarth, July 25, 1876, Winfield Ebey Papers.

[30] This 1878 school eventually was sold to John Priest and moved to the Priest farm on the south shore of Penn Cove, halfway between Good Beach and Coupeville. Cahail, "Whidbey Island" (II: 45); Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island,* 85.

Superintendents included:[31]

Year	Name
1857	J. S. Smith
1857-1862	Winfield S. Ebey
1862-1867	Robert C. Fay
1867-1869	John Crockett
1869-1874	Eason B. Ebey
1874-1876	Joseph S. Kelley
1877-1879	Jerome Ely
1879-1882	H. H. Lloyd
1882-1885	Jerome Ely
1885-1887	Julia E. Kinney
1887-1889	Lizzie E. Crockett
1889-1891	Thomas Cranney
1891-1893	Frank Dyer Newberry

Frank Dyer Newberry, who came to Washington Territory in 1888, served as principal of the two-room public school on Ebey's Prairie between 1890 and 1893, while serving as Island County superintendent. Newberry taught the fifth grade up to the tenth grade, depending on the needs of his more advanced students.[32]

No schools in the Coupeville area taught high school until the arrival of the Puget Sound Academy. Charles T. Terry, Ebey's Prairie farmer, recognized the need for such a school. While serving on the territorial legislature in 1885-1886, he met Reverend C. L. Otis in Olympia. Otis was the general superintendent of missionary work for the Congregational Church for Washington Territory; he and Terry discussed the idea of establishing a Congregational high school in Coupeville, an ideal point in the Puget Sound area, Terry argued, for such an institution. No school of this kind existed north of Seattle at that time. Acting on Terry's suggestion, Reverend Otis and other Congregational ministers visited Coupeville, and were persuaded to try to raise money to establish a school there. Reverend Otis proposed that the Congregational Church would contribute $10,000 to an endowment if local residents would make substantial donations to the school's establishment. Almost immediately, contributions of land, money, and a building were made. Dr. J. A. Highwarden, who was in the process of completing a large frame building at that time, donated it to the Congregational Church for the new school. Maria Coupe, widow of Captain Thomas Coupe,

[31] Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island*, 89.
[32] Cahail, "Whidbey Island" (III: 11).

donated twenty acres of land, and J. Ellison Ebey donated ten acres. Several others contributed from $10 to $500 each to the project. Within two years, the required $10,000 was raised, and The Puget Sound Academy opened in 1887.[33] The north Whidbey Island community continued to demonstrate great pride in and support of the academy. In 1889, the *Island County Times* newspaper, for example, offered one academically worthy local public school student a scholarship to attend the academy.[34]

Reverend Lindsay, from Dakota Territory, served as the first principal. Professor Frank Browne, of Indiana, instructed the natural science classes. Ellen Gaston, George Lindsay's niece directed the music and art classes. E. E. Schneider was principal of the "Ladies' Department." After a couple of years, Reverend Lindsey, who served as both pastor of the newly formed Congregational Church in Coupeville and the academy, asked to step down from his supervisory academy position so that he could devote most of his attention to his duties as church pastor, and teach only one or two classes at the academy.[35]

In 1890, Professor (the brother of Frank Newberry, who became superintendent of Island County Schools in 1891) replaced Lindsay as principal of the Puget Sound Academy. Before long, the academy began to attract students from towns and cities all around Puget Sound (Seattle and Tacoma and from Port Townsend to Blaine), as well as Whidbey Island, and from as far away as Oregon. By March 1891, the *Island County Times* reported that the student body had already outgrown the existing buildings. The trustees planned "to erect large and handsome edifices to be ready for the fall term [of 1891]."[36] The academy graduated two students in 1894: Carl Engle and Spurgeon H. Calhoun.[37] In 1896, the original academy building on lower Main Street burned, and a new building was constructed on land south of the Congregational Church (near the present fire station). A dormitory stood east of the church. The second academy building was demolished in 1934 and the dormitory in 1955.[38]

During Newberry's administration, students were offered three courses of study: classical, which prepared students for college; scientific, which provided students with a business education; and normal, which prepared students for teaching. A large advertisement in the August 14, 1891 issue of the *Island County*

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[33] "Puget Sound Academy," *Island County Times,* March 17, 1891.
[34] "The Times Scholarship," *Island County Times,* August 14, 1889.
[35] "Puget Sound Academy," *Island County Times,* March 17, 1891.
[36] *Ibid.*
[37] Carl T. Engle, "Random Recollections of Coupeville," *Souvenir Edition Commemorating Whidbey Island's Centennial, 1848-1948* (Oak Harbor, WA: Island County Farm Bureau News, 1948), 5.
[38] Florence G. Dorr, "A House of the Lord, 1889-1989: First Congregational Church of Coupeville, St. Mary's Catholic Church, 1932" (Coupeville, WA: St. Mary's Catholic Church, 2000), 3-4; Sheridan, *Coupeville*, 45.

Times promoted the academy's "prospectus" for the year, 1891-1892. "CLASSICAL, prepares for any Eastern College. SCIENTIFIC, thorough training in the elementary branches, including Algebra, Geometry, Rhetoric, Natural Philosophy. NORMAL, prepares teachers for their work."[39] During the early 1890s, Reverend George Lindsay taught the sciences, E. Grannis served as principal of the "Ladies Department," Nellie Sheldon taught history, Anna Whelan instructed vocal and instrumental music classes, and Kate Wellbrook, served as matron (housemother at the dormitory).[40] Other teachers during the 1890s included: Mrs. Newberry (French, rhetoric, and grammar), Miss Obernall (German), and Miss Wheeler (mathematics). Professor Newberry also frequently taught Greek and Latin. At the beginning of each school day, Professor Newberry, with his impressive, flowing red beard and deep bass voice, led students in a short worship service or singing service in the nearby Congregational Church. Every Friday evening, students participated in so-called "rhetoricals," which Professor Newberry critiqued the following Monday morning. "The purpose of this [event], long-time resident Carl Engle claimed, was to develop the future United States presidents, so that they would be able to make their promises in undying phrases."[41] Every Halloween, local children joined academy students in devising mischievous pranks on the grounds of the academy and Congregational Church.[42]

Graduation at Puget Sound Academy was a highlight of each school year. Crowds filled to capacity the lavishly decorated Congregational Church, where the ceremonies took place. Often Professor Edmond S. Meany, professor of history at the University of Washington who had developed a special interest in the early Anglo settlement of western Washington and particularly Whidbey Island, gave the commencement address. Meany invariably praised Newberry for his high scholastic standards and rigorous curriculum, and assured graduating students of their sound academic preparation for the university. Charles Newberry earned a widespread reputation as an excellent educator. Professor Newberry stepped down as principal of the Puget Sound Academy in the early 1900s. (His resignation as pastor of the Congregational Church came in September 1904, but he did not leave Coupeville immediately as was expected.[43]) In 1908, the Congregational Confederation moved the academy to Snohomish. By this time, the Washington State Legislature, created in 1889, had strengthened the education laws and given school districts the right to levy up to ten mills on each dollar of

[39] "Puget Sound Academy" (advertisement), *Island County Times,* August 14, 1891.
[40] "Puget Sound Academy," *Island County Times,* March 17, 1891; Cahail, "Whidbey Island" (III: 9).
[41] Carl Engle, "Carl Engle Recalls Day in Busy Coupeville During Early 1890s," *Island County Times,* June 18, 1953.
[42] Cahail, "Whidbey Island" (III: 9).
[43] *Island County Times,* September 16, 1904.

assessable property in a county.[44] As high schools became more common in towns around Puget Sound, enrollment in the academy had fallen. Reunions of academy alumni, usually held in Coupeville, continued for many years after the departure of the academy from the town, until the death of Professor Newberry. The Congregational Church community sold both the academy dormitory and the Congregational Church building in June 1934 to the Catholic Church for $1,500.[45]

By the turn of the twentieth century, the public school system on central Whidbey Island had expanded in response to a growth in population, partially spurred by the opening of Fort Casey at Admiralty Head and the anticipation of railroads arriving on the island.

By 1905, the Coupeville area high school had graduated its second class. Commencement ceremonies that year were held at the Congregational Church, decorations were red and yellow flowers, and Reverend C. E. Newberry gave the invocation. Mrs. Garrison sang a solo, "Moon Mothers," Professor J. T. Forrest of Bellingham delivered the address and Professor A. E. Bond handed out the diplomas . . . all three of them. The graduating class of three included Belle Comstock, Lemuel Wanamaker, and E. Ammon Hancock. Belle went on to attend and graduate from Bellingham Normal School and taught briefly before dying at a young age. Ammon Hancock graduated from the University of Washington and went on to obtain a masters degree from Harvard University. He taught for a time at a small college in Salem, Oregon, and later became editor of the Fort Collins, Colorado newspaper, *The Courier.* Lemuel Wanamaker graduated from the University of Washington with a civil engineering degree and returned to Whidbey Island where he worked for years as the county engineer.[46] Over the next fifty years, the high school graduating class had not grown explosively. The May 24, 1956, *Island County Times* reported that the high school class of 1956 was the largest graduating class in the history of the island – twenty-six seniors. The chart below provides a graphical depiction of Island County education in the late 1800s and early 1900s:

Although the population of students remained remarkably unchanged in Island County before World War I, the education infrastructure underwent some major transformations. By the late 1890s, the business of education had moved from the family home to the new office of the superintendent of education for Island County, Also, eighth grade graduation was made contingent upon passing a state-wide examination. In 1902, a Board of Education comprised of four

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[44] Bolton, "Education," *Building a State, Washington, 1889-1939, Vol. III,* 154.
[45] Cahail, "Whidbey Island" (III: 10), Cahail Papers; Dorr, "A House of the Lord, 1889-1989," 4, 7.
[46] *Island County Times*, May 26, 1955.

members was appointed to assist the superintendent on budgetary issues.[47] Island County boasted fifteen school districts at that time.[48]

The first two decades of the 1900s witnessed a great expansion of Coupeville schools. "Coupeville has a high school of twelve grades with a corps of fine teachers," the June 20, 1913 issue of the *Island County Times* reported. Students received instruction in physics, algebra, Latin, German, English and ancient history, American and English literature, geometry, civil government, and agriculture. "Pupils graduating from this school are allowed to enter the state university without examination," the newspaper article boasted.[49] In addition, instruction in cooking and sewing was offered to junior and senior girls and animal husbandry as well as woodwork and mechanical drawing for boys and girls.[50]

By 1913, the size of the high school graduating class jumped to ten graduates, six women (Madeline Fisher, Marie Terry, Vera Hancock, Doris Craddock, Mayme Black, and Zilmah Vader) and four men (Ray Comstock, Frank Morrill, Owen Lovejoy, and Will Race). Eight of the ten, noted the newspaper, had been born on Whidbey Island.[51] Three years later, thirteen student students, twelve girls and one boy, graduated from the Coupeville High School.[52]

Rapid growth of the school-age population on central Whidbey Island resulted in the construction of Coupeville's first separate high school building in 1913. Property for the school was bought from John Harrington (for $4,200). The *Island County Times* announced that the contract to construct the new high school building had been awarded to Morgan and Johanson of Everett, Washington, for $5,597. Construction was to begin immediately.[53] Yet even before the end of April, Carl Engle, Thomas Clark, and two or three others brought suit in the Superior Court asking for the court to restrain the contractors from moving ahead with the new high school, which by then already had the basement excavated. The plaintiff's attorney claimed that there would be insufficient funds remaining, of the total approved for building the new school, to buy school desks and furniture, put in a heating plant, and grade and gravel the school grounds. The plaintiff's request for an injunction must have been denied, since construction of the school soon proceeded.[54]

The new two-story wood-frame high school, constructed next to the 1901 school building near the crossing of Main Street and Terry Road (southeast corner) on Ebey's Prairie (at "Prairie Center"), was near completion in late August.

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[47] Minutes, Island County Board of County Commissioners, April 9, 1902.
[48] *Island County Times,* September 25, 1900.
[49] "Coupeville—Island County," *Island County Times,* June 20, 1913.
[50] "Opening of Coupeville Public Schools," *Island County Times,* August 21, 1914.
[51] "Our Commencement Exercises for 1913," *Island County Times,* May 30, 1913.
[52] "Commencement Exercises," *Island County Times,* May 26, 1916.
[53] "Contract Let for New High School Building," *Island County Times,* April 11, 1913.
[54] "Ask for an Injunction," *Island County Times,* April 25, 1913.

Workmen moved quickly to install seats and bring water to the building. J. N. Robb of Seattle busily worked on installing the heating plant, and Lou Hicks hastily put everything in order at both the new and old buildings, as opening day approached. On Monday, September 8, 1913, classes began in both school buildings. The teaching force at the school opening included: Principal M. S. Eullerdick, A. J. Seltzer (agricultural teacher) and Miss Hoxie, all at the new high school. Frank Coates, Anabel Robinson, Ursella Johnson, and Clara Garrison held forth at the grade school.[55] In early September, the school principal proudly announced that: "the completion of the new high school building marks the beginning of another epoch in the history of the schools here."[56]

The growth of Coupeville schools mirrored a rapid expansion in the Island County school system generally. Between 1891 and 1917 the number of teachers in Island County increased from twelve to fifty-six. The number of schoolhouses climbed from ten to thirty-three. Due to unrelenting opposition, small individual school districts that encompassed a single, isolated, neighborhood school building resisted the consolidations that would become an educational hallmark in the latter part of the twentieth century. Island County educational districts continued to be concerned with only a single school in a single neighborhood. In 1917, Island County had sixteen school districts and a total enrollment of 675 male and 625 female pupils.[57]

Later in the century, bureaucratic monolith school districts did begin to appear in Island County. Consolidation measures appeared on the 1953, 1955, and 1956 ballots, and all were defeated. The opposition to consolidation, however, was certainly not a manifestation of a general opposition to education. Voters passed a $100,000 bond measure in 1956 to construct a multipurpose room for use as a cafeteria and auditorium as well as two classrooms, a heating plant and a remodel of an existing gymnasium. And, this bond measure was passed in a year that the Coupeville School District had a total enrollment of 312 students. It would appear, therefore, that voters were not opposed to education, but only to the possible estranged decision-making they feared might result from an ever-enlarging education bureaucracy.

Birth of the Coupeville Library

Another manifestation of Coupeville area residents' favorable attitude toward education was the early grass-roots formation of the town's library. In 1883, the members of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU)

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[55] "Getting Ready for the New Year," *Island County Times,* August 29, 1913.
[56] "To Taxpayers and Patrons of School District No. 2," *Island County Times,* September 5, 1913.
[57] "Island County's Public Schools," *Island County Times,* July 6, 1917.

organized a free library and reading room, "which will fill a long felt want." It occupied rented space in the Odd Fellows Hall on Main Street, near the Methodist Church.[58] Later, library books were kept at the Women's Christian Temperance Hall, after its construction in 1890.

Prior to the establishment of a library, there were apparently books available at the newspaper office for area residents to borrow. These books were part of Washington State's traveling library. In 1904, the *Island County Times* informed its readers that the "state traveling library sent 38 books to D. Carl Pearson. They are free to all and can be found at the Times Office."[59] On occasion the Coupeville newspaper, The *Island County Times*, would publish a list of the books available for borrowing. By 1917, the books had been moved to the Congregational Church and were cared for by Lorena Coates.

In February of 1915, a Library Association organizational meeting was held at the Women's Christian Temperance Union Hall. It was attended by fifty Coupeville residents.[60] The Ladies Round Table Club had received a letter from Frank J. Pratt, Jr., a Seattle resident and frequent visitor to Whidbey Island. In his letter, Pratt had offered to contribute half the expenses required for the establishment of a library. The February organizational meeting was the result of Pratt's letter.

The embryonic Library Association struggled with several issues, including finding land in town upon which to construct a library building and maintaining the library once it opened. As one possibility, the association considered constructing a small addition on the new library and offering it as free residential quarters to a caretaker willing to maintain the library.

When the Library Association met in April 1915 at the courthouse, it decided to purchase a building lot on Main Street from Mrs. James Gillespie. Pratt's architect attended that meeting, in part to relay Pratt's feelings that the association should dedicate more funds to books than to a building. To that end the architect recommended building a simple bungalow style library structure.[61] Throughout the rest of the year, the association began to entertain doubts about building the library on the Main Street lot. Several members opined that the lot was too remote from most residents. Consequently, the Main Street lot was sold in January of 1916. In October, a fifty-foot waterfront lot was purchased from Mrs. W. J. Waldrip for $75.[62]

The following summer, at a meeting at Bensons' Restaurant, the Library Association concluded that since the building wouldn't be constructed for several months, they would temporarily rent the Smith Building, which had housed a

[58] Sheridan, *Coupeville,* 40.
[59] *Island County Times,* June 3, 1904.
[60] *Island County Times*, February 19, 1915.
[61] *Island County Times*, April 9, 1915.
[62] *Island County Times*, January 28, 1916, and October 20, 1916.

millinery store on occasion. This temporary library was opened Saturday and Sunday afternoons and evenings. Lorena Coates accepted the position of librarian, at a salary of $10 per month.[63] Later that summer, the Reverend R. M. Pratt (not related to Frank Pratt, Jr.) stopped by the Tacoma Public Library while on a business trip. He left with 250 discarded books, all for the fledgling Coupeville Library. The 250 books, when combined with the fifty books Reverend Pratt donated from his library, brought the total holdings of the library up to approximately 1,000 books.[64]

A mere two years after the Library Association organizational meeting, the library opened the doors of its new building on Front Street to Coupeville residents. Enthusiastically, library patrons borrowed an average of 100 books a week. According to an article in the local *Island County Times*, a number of residents had contributed dollar subscriptions, in addition to financial donations made by Frank J. Pratt, Jr., the Dorcas Society of San de Fuca, the Round Table Club of Coupeville, D. P. Dean, A. H. Kohne, Ralph Engle, M. S. Bullerdiek, and W. T. Howard.[65] In December 1917, the non-tax-supported Library Association counted only $8.52 in its account and immediately organized and produced a home talent play to raise funds.[66]

Support for and use of the new Coupeville Library didn't waver over the next few years. During 1927, the library circulated 3,650 books. The most frequently checked out magazines that year included: the *American* and *Scientific American,* followed by the *Saturday Evening Post.* In 1928, Frank J. Pratt, Jr., donated several subscriptions to the library, including *Yale Review, Foreign Affairs, Pamphlets of Political Science, Punch, Saturday Review, Manchester Guardian, Saturday Review of Literature Fortnightly Review* and *Living Age.*[67]

In March of 1928, the Whidbey Island Library Association voted to donate the library, building, land and books to the City of Coupeville. The benefits of the library as a municipal government activity transcended tax-based support. The primary reason expressed in support of the conveyance was that, as a municipal library, the library would be entitled to numerous benefits through the State of Washington Library, including circulation of additional books, and free receipt of government publications.[68]

Building a Religious Community

[63] *Ibid.* June 1, 1917.
[64] *Ibid.* July 13, 1917.
[65] *Ibid.* August 31, 1917.
[66] *Ibid.* December 14, 1917.
[67] *Island County Times*, January 6, 1928.
[68] *Island County Times*, March 16, 1928.

Spiritual education accompanied and was an integral part of the general education of the children of the early settlers living on the prairies around Penn Cove. A few of the ministers even taught classes in the schools, particularly in the privately funded Smith Prairie School in the early years of settlement. Like the development of public education, religious education first took place in settlers' homes. Prairie and Penn Cove residents contributed money and materials toward the erection of the earliest churches. Soon after the first settlers arrived in the 1850s, the Methodists arrived on Whidbey Island, and, although the presence of its ministers was sometime fleeting, the Methodists assumed a dominant place in the lives of prairie residents for several decades. Congregationalists arrived in full force with the founding of the Puget Sound Academy in Coupeville in the 1880s. The Catholic Church, after its brief pre-Anglo settlement presence on Penn Cove in the late 1830s and early 1840s, remained distant and relatively uninvolved in the religious lives of Penn Cove residents until the twentieth century. Throughout the entire history of religion around Penn Cove, churches gave community residents opportunities for not only spiritual but also social enrichment.

The earliest settlers observed the Sabbath in quiet meditation in their own homes soon after arriving on the prairies around Penn Cove. In March 1853, less than one year after arriving on Ebey's Prairie, Rebecca Ebey described a typical Sunday.

> We are spending this Sabbath in reading most of the time. All around is beauty adorned in quiet serenity—I feel as though I would like to hear a sermon preached—this beautiful Sabbath. . . . Although we are far from our own native land and in a country where the Gospel is not preached, we have not forgotten our vows. We live in hope of realizing religious ceremonies in the western country. . . . I hope the time will not be long until we shall be blessed with the preached gospel from zealous Christian ministers who are not laboring for money alone but for the good of the Church and Kingdom of Heaven. . . . We do not want proud hypocritical men who call themselves Ministers of the Gospel in this new Country.[69]

Only a few weeks passed when Rebecca Ebey wrote, on May 22, 1853, that "two preachers (Rev. Mr. Clare [Close] from Olympia and Mr. Morse from the Willamette) and Mr. Miller came here this evening after night and staid all night. Mr. [Close] intends preaching here on Sunday morning." Benjamin Close, assigned by the Methodist conference of Oregon to a pastorate in Olympia, had preached his first sermon there in December 1852. In April 1853, Close and an

[69] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey" March 13, 1853 (January 1917), 138; "100 Years of Service in Methodist Church Story," *Island County Times,* April, 30, 1853.

associate were touring the settlements around Puget Sound when they stopped on Whidbey Island and visited with the Ebeys, before continuing on to Port Townsend. Not long afterward, Reverend Morse was assigned to duty in an area that included Whidbey Island.[70]

Sunday religious gatherings began immediately after reverends Close and Morse visited the Ebeys. In late April 1853, a group of neighbors, including the Crocketts, gathered at the home of Isaac and Rebecca Ebey for a sermon. Rebecca Ebey noted in her diary for April 24, 1853, that "we had tolerable good congregation and heard a good Sermon." Isaac Ebey, in a letter to his brother Winfield in May 1853, reported that "we have [a] Methodist preaching at our house about every two weeks, and are to have a Camp meeting . . . about two hundred yards of our house on the 11th of July next. Our island is progressing," Ebey exclaimed, "more rapidly than our most sanguine expectations."[71] The minister then apparently went on to Penn Cove to give another sermon to a small congregation gathered in a settler's home. The organization of the Methodist Church for residents of Whidbey Island took place at the home of Richard Lansdale in July 1853.[72]

A month later, in August 1853, Reverend W. B. Morse arrived at Ebey's Prairie from Bellingham Bay to give a sermon at the Ebey's house before continuing on to Port Townsend. Settlers scattered around Penn Cove took turns welcoming Reverend Morse and, occasionally Reverend Close, into their homes for Saturday or Sunday sermons. In October 1853, Walter Crockett noted that "we have only lately had preaching amongst us" by Methodist ministers.[73] In 1853, the Crocketts and Kelloggs, as well as Charles Terry, opened up their homes to the reverends Benjamin Close and Morse for weekend sermons. Assemblages of about a dozen settlers gathered for these occasions. The Ebey, Crockett, Kellogg, and Hill families and English sailor Thomas Griffiths were among the early stalwart members of the Methodist Church.[74] Always interested in the education of their children, the early Methodist settlers held the first Sunday school in the Coupe home in 1854.[75] Prairie settlers called upon the services of the Methodist Reverend Close for more than preaching in 1853. That year, Close performed the wedding ceremony of Reuben L. Doyle and Chloe Ann Terry at the home of Isaac and Rebecca Ebey. When Rebecca Ebey died in the fall of 1853, Reverend Close conducted her funeral service. Both reverends Close and Morse were circuit-riding Methodist ministers who visited small communities around

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[70] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey" March 13, 1853 (January 1917), 145-46.
[71] Isaac Ebey to Winfield Ebey, May 20, 1853, Winfield Ebey Papers, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.
[72] Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island,* 1934, 25.
[73] Crockett to Black, October 15, 1853, Crockett Papers.
[74] Cahail, "Whidbey Island" (II: 16).
[75] Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island,* 25.

Puget Sound, including Port Townsend and Bellingham Bay, and came to Whidbey Island once or twice a month or when the need arose. "Whenever there was no preacher to fill the pulpit," Jane Kinneth recalled many years later, "Mr. [Joseph] Smith [early donation land claimant on the south side of Penn Cove] would preach."[76] After W. B. Morse left his position on Puget Sound to return to the East Coast of the United States in 1856, lay minister Smith reportedly "held our young church together" in 1857.[77] Reverend A. C. Fairchilds served as the pastor to the congregation in the late 1850s. (He also taught school on Smith's Prairie.) His tenure on Whidbey Island, however, was apparently brief.[78] For several months around this time, the only Methodist minister in all of Puget Sound was Reverend John Fletcher DeVore.[79]

In 1859, when Reverend DeVore served as the presiding elder of the Methodist Church, a committee formed under DeVore to build a church building. Winfield Ebey, Daniel Show, John Kinneth, and Thomas Hastie served on this committee, which raised funds for the church and located a site for its construction. Grove Terry donated the northwest corner of his farm on Ebey's Prairie (just south of the John and Ann Crockett farm, near the present-day crossing of Main Street and Terry Road) for construction of the church. The early settlers paid for the building by subscription; just as with schools, they contributed money and probably labor to erect this church. Lumber for the church reportedly came from the Grennan & Cranney mill in Utsalady on Camano Island. By the end of 1859, the seventeen members and four "probationers" had erected a small, unpretentious church valued at $640. (Settlers with Presbyterian leanings may have built or at least used this first church building on Ebey's Prairie, according to George Albert Kellogg.[80]) Sunday services continued to be semi-occasional, since the congregation still depended on the services of traveling ministers. When services were held, neighbors spread the word around Penn Cove, and arrived at the appointed hour on foot, horseback, or in wagons. Men and women sat separately, in pews divided by a central aisle. The visiting minister pronounced from the pulpit, a small stand at the front of the church. This diminutive Methodist Church stood on Ebey's Prairie for the next several years.[81]

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[76] Jane Kinneth, "Early History of Whidby Island," 1907, handwritten, Meany Papers, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.
[77] "100 Years of Service in Methodist Church Story," *Island County Times,* April, 30, 1853; Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island,* 31, 49.
[78] Cahail, "Whidbey Island" (II: 15).
[79] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey" (January 1917), 146, 149, 151; Cahail, "Whidbey Island" (II: 15); "100 Years of Service in Methodist Church Story," *Island County Times,* April, 30, 1853.
[80] Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island,* 67.
[81] "100 Years of Service in Methodist Church Story," *Island County Times,* April, 30, 1853; Cahail, "Whidbey Island" (II: 34).

During the 1860s and early 1870s, several ministers continued to serve the needs of the Methodists living around Penn Cove. Reverend Alderson, an English-born pastor, presided over the church for a time in the 1860s. He also taught in the Smith Prairie school. Reverend Patterson arrived on the prairies in the 1860s, and exposed Penn Cove residents to evangelism. He held the first extended revival meeting on Whidbey Island in 1869.[82] Patterson lived in the residence of former Ebey's Prairie schoolteacher John Lysle, which served as a parsonage for the nearby Methodist Church. (The house stood about fifty yards from the Ebey's Prairie school. Another parsonage replaced this one, possibly in the 1880s.) Reverend Patterson had a horse and buggy, which he stored in an old building on the Grove Terry farm. In addition to leading services in the Methodist Church on Ebey's Prairie, Reverend Patterson also preached at Port Gamble and Port Ludlow.[83] By 1871, Reverend Greer had arrived on Whidbey Island, and conducted worship services in the church. He and Mrs. Greer, who taught school around that time on Smith Prairie, lived near the church on Ebey's Prairie (probably in the parsonage). During Reverend Greer's pastorate in the early 1870s, new roads isolated the Methodist Church building from the main avenue of travel. [84]

In early 1873, Methodist Church members made an effort to move the small building to a more accessible, publicly visible location. Captain Thomas Coupe donated an acre of his land near the north end of Ebey's Prairie for the new church site. After great effort, movers succeeded in slowly transporting the church to a field about halfway to its new location. Eason Ebey noted in a January 18, 1873, letter to his Aunt Mary Wright Bozarth that "they commenced to move the church to the school house plot, have not succeeded and it now stands in the middle of Crockett's field."[85] The sluggish economy at that time was outdone only by the stalled movement of the church, which reposed in the farm field of John and Ann Crocket for two years. A disheartened and greatly diminished church membership, which dwindled to two at that time, no doubt lacked the energy to nudge the abandoned church toward its new location until the spring of 1875 when members finally reopened the Methodist Church on its new site (near the site of the present high school). The slowed economy, nearly extinct membership, and the building's idle stance in the mid-1870s took its toll on the church building. Additionally, hard times for the church in the mid-1870s may have been exacerbated by dissension among the few church members over the minister at that time, Reverend Greer (whose wife taught school on Ebey's Prairie). Both the

[82] Cahail, "Whidbey Island" (II: 15, 16).
[83] Cahail, "Whidbey Island" (II: 34).
[84] Cahail, "Whidbey Island" (II: 25); Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island,* 67.
[85] Eason B. Ebey to Mary Ebey Wright Bozarth, January 19, 1873, Winfield Ebey Papers. Also see: Alice Kellogg Cahail, *Sea Captains of Whidby Island* (Pullman, WA: Washington State University Press, 1901), section pertaining to Thomas Coupe.

"Terrys and Kelloggs are much opposed to Greer," Eason Ebey noted in January 1873.[86]

The 1880s experienced a small economic and religious revival among the Methodists with the arrival of a new presiding elder, Reverend David Gog LeSourd, appointed to the Puget Sound district. Like his predecessors, Reverend LeSourd visited several churches throughout the district. Traveling by various means—on foot, on horseback, by stage, canoe, or steamboat—LeSourd traveled over a wide area, from tiny churches at the foot of the Cascades to camp meetings among the Indians on the Nooksack. When he first arrived, his regular "circuit" included more than ten widely scattered churches (at Oysterville, Montesano, Tumwater, Olympia, Tacoma, Seattle, Skagit, Dungeness, and California Creek, as well as Whidbey Island). In 1885, a new pastor, Reverend W. B. MacMillin arrived to lead the congregation at a time of enthusiastic "gracious revival." Shortly, the church took in around forty new members. Religious invigoration led the church members to contemplate and construct a new, larger Methodist Church, with seating for around 400, in 1885 in a new location on Main Street in Coupeville. (George Padden bought and lived in the old church for a time in the 1880s.[87]) At dedication ceremonies for this new church, members raised over half of the $2,683 needed to pay for the building's construction.[88] Large, pointed-arch windows and a square bell tower on the corner of the façade, punctuated by the entry door, distinguished the church architecturally. An 1890 issue of the *San de Fucan* commended the Methodists for their new meeting place. "The church edifice is an exceedingly fine structure with tall spire and rich sounding bell. A good Sabbath school is held in connection with the church, which is a large and influential one and is doing a great deal of good."[89] By this time, Reverend M. Culmer served as pastor of the church and probably occupied the new Methodist Church parsonage located near the church, which had been constructed in 1889.[90] The Methodist congregation in Coupeville was one of twenty-seven Methodist churches in the Seattle district of Methodists at the time of Washington statehood in 1889.[91] It may have been around this time that the Episcopal Church and the Methodist Church joined, creating the M.E. Church of Coupeville.

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[86] *Ibid.*; "100 Years of Service in Methodist Church Story," *Island County Times,* April, 30, 1853; Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island,* 67, 97.
[87] Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island,* 97.
[88] "100 Years of Service in Methodist Church Story," *Island County Times,* April, 30, 1853.
[89] Quoted in: Cook, *"A particular friend, Penn's Cove,"* 114.
[90] Luxenberg, Castellano, and Lein, "Methodist Parsonage (No.177), Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve, Building and Landscape Inventory, Part B," Summer 1983, Reprinted 1995.
[91] John Martin Canse, "A Half Century of Cultural Progress," *Building a State, Washington, 1889-1939, Vol. III,* edited by Charles Miles and O. B. Sperlin (Tacoma, WA: Washington State Historical Society, 1941), 149.

Even with the addition of this house of worship to Coupeville, many residents continued to practice their own family religious rituals at home. George Albert Kellogg, whose Methodist family lived on Smith's Prairie, many years later recalled a boyhood memory of a Sunday morning religious ritual in the Kellogg home.

> But Sunday was more outstanding as a day upon which the early sunlight in my bedroom was accompanied by sounds of my father's singing voice drifting upward from the kitchen. Freed from all but the regular milking chores on Sunday mornings, it was his delight to fry 'flapjacks' or huge platters of smelt brought fresh from Penn's Cove by the Indians. . . . And on this day, as on every day, my father read aloud a full chapter from the Bible immediately after breakfast, followed by prayer with everyone [on] their knees. The memory of that varnish odor from warmed dining chair seats over which we bent, associated with appeals to the Almighty will remain as long as I live. It was all very dignified and impersonal for which we were grateful.[92]

Parishioners enjoyed the handsome new Methodist-Episcopal Church in Coupeville for only a short seven years. One evening in the spring of 1893, a nearby house caught on fire. The fire quickly spread to the wood-frame church, burning it to the ground. Insurance on the church had expired only a few days before. Despite the anguish and economic hardship caused by this enormous loss, the church congregation proceeded to clear away the ashes and debris and build anew on the same site on Main Street. A new church, constructed by H. B. Lovejoy, was dedicated near the end of 1894. Before the close of the century, a former pastor, Reverend W. B. MacMillin, returned to the church to revive and invigorate its membership. MacMillin led revival meetings just as he had thirteen years earlier, bringing a total of fifty new members into the congregation's fold.[93]

The Methodist-Episcopal Church in the twentieth century experienced cyclical bursts of growth and slack times, reflecting the economic health and population of the Coupeville area. Following the opening of Fort Casey at the turn of the century, Coupeville and the M.E. Church experienced a revival in growth and activity. In December 1903, a new furnace and heating system was added to the church at a cost of around $200.[94] Parishioners also solicited funds

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[92] Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island,* 98.

[93] "100 Years of Service in Methodist Church Story," *Island County Times,* April, 30, 1853; Luxenberg, Castellano, and Lein, "Methodist Church (No. 78), Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve, Building and Landscape Inventory, Part B," Summer 1983, Reprinted 1995.

[94] "Happened at Home," *Island County Times,* January 1, 1904.

for a bell and in the spring of 1904, the congregation purchased a new bell weighing 1,126 pounds. "Tom Paxton put [the bell] up," the March 4, 1904 *Island County Times* reported. "Merry bells will ring out from both churches now" [the M.E. Church and the Congregational Church].[95] The M.E. Church led a series of revival meetings a year later. "The revivals at the M.E. Church will continue next week. Very good meetings are reported," noted the February 17, 1905, issue of the *Island County Times.*[96] An addition to the west façade of the church in 1908 signaled a continued surge in church growth. In 1913, the local *Island County Times*, reported: "There are two fine churches, the Methodist and the Congregational. Both have excellent pastors with good-sized congregations and the whole community is inhabited by a church-going, intelligent, and law-abiding class of people."[97] Between 1900 and 1953, the year of the church's centennial celebration, nineteen pastors presided over the congregation's overall slow growth. The Methodist Church celebrated its one-hundredth birthday in April 1953 with a dinner, sermon, and pageant that highlighted the church's early history. Bishops from around Puget Sound and Portland, Oregon, as well as several former pastors attended this celebration. Then experiencing a post-World War II spurt in growth, that church had recently completed the construction of a new church school building, which was dedicated at the centennial celebrations. As the post-World War II "baby boom" generation came of age, church membership expanded, and, in 1979, an addition was constructed on the west façade of the church.[98]

The Presbyterians arrived early on Whidbey Island. Early Ebey's Prairie settlers welcomed a Presbyterian minister into their homes in 1856, perhaps shortly after the departure of Methodist Reverend Morse and during a hiatus in Methodist ministry on Whidbey Island. On Sunday, November 2, 1856, Emily Ebey noted that "religious services at Mr. [Samuel] Hancock's today by a Presbyterian minister from a vessel at Port Gamble, loading for Valparaiso," in her diary. This minister may have been Reverend Moses Allen Williams, a former missionary in Valparaiso, Chile, for three years. Two Sundays later, Emily Ebey noted that: "Mr. Williams, late from South America, . . . gave us a very good discourse of a little over an hour."[99] Not long afterward, Presbyterian minister Reverend George F. Whitworth came to Whidbey Island. In November 1854, Whitworth had organized the first Presbyterian Church in Olympia in 1854. Whitworth and his family lived for a time on a farm (later owned by Ralph Engle).

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[95] *Island County Times,* March 4, 1904.
[96] *Island County Times,* February 17, 1905.
[97] "Coupeville—Island County, *Island County Times,* June 20, 1913.
[98] "100 Years of Service in Methodist Church Story," *Island County Times,* April, 30, 1853; Luxenberg, Castellano, and Lein, "Methodist Church (No. 78), Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve, Building and Landscape Inventory, Part B," Summer 1983, Reprinted 1995.
[99] Kibbe, "Diary of Colonel Isaac N. and Mrs. Emily Ebey," 307, 312.

Reverend Whitworth organized a Presbyterian society on the island and served as pastor for the congregation for less than a year before moving to Seattle in the late 1850s.[100] Around this time, the Methodists reasserted their presence on Ebey's Prairie and, over the next several decades, became the dominant Protestant denomination in and around Penn Cove.

The religious and secular education of prairie and Penn Cove residents became most intimately intertwined with the founding of the Congregational Church and the Puget Sound Academy in the 1880s. As mentioned above, a small group of local residents organized the Congregational Church in 1887, and opened the Congregational Church-sponsored Puget Sound Academy. The Congregational Christian group held their first official meeting on February 20, 1887, (in the Methodist Church) under the direction of Reverend C. L. Otis, general superintendent of missionary work for the Congregational Church for Washington Territory. The group held its first business meeting at the nearby Puget Sound Academy building. Reverend George Lindsay, principal of the academy, conducted all church services and meetings. For the next two years, church members met every other Sunday in the new Methodist Church on Main Street in Coupeville. While the congregation raised money to construct its own church on Main Street, beginning in early 1889, members again held their Sunday services at the Puget Sound Academy for several months. All but the bell tower of the wood-frame Queen Anne style Congregational Church was completed in October 1889. Official dedication of the First Congregational Church took place on January 26, 1890. Arrival that year of the 800-pound bell from the McShane Bell Foundary of Baltimore, Maryland, a gift of T. W. Calhoun and E. J. Hancock, marked the final completion of the church.[101]

In the early 1900s, the congregation made several improvements to the church. Reverend Newberry painted the exterior in June 1900. In April 1902, the congregation planned to build a cistern on the church property. Around the time of Professor Charles Newberry's resignation as pastor of the church in September 1904, the congregation planned to put gas-generated lights in the church. A new, lower steeple, easier to maintain, replaced the original high, pointed steeple in 1917. In 1922, Reverend E. S. Ireland and his congregation elected to shingle the exterior of the church, apparently hoping to reduce maintenance costs and extend the life of the building. Electric lights replaced the existing gas-generated lights in December 1927.[102]

The next twenty years witnessed the slow attrition, consolidation, and eventually disbandment of the Congregational Church. During the 1920s, church membership declined when many of the earliest parishioners, including Flora

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[100] Canse, "Half Century of Cultural Progress," 146; Cahail, "Whidbey Island" (II: 15); Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island,* 67.
[101] Dorr, "A House of the Lord, 1889-1989," 1-3.
[102] *Island County Times,* September 16, 1904; Dorr, "A House of the Lord, 1889-1989, 4.

Engles, aged and died and young people in the town moved off of Whidbey Island in search of a wider range of job opportunities. The resignation of Reverend Ireland in August 1919 due to ill health, prompted a small committee of parishioners to explore the possibility of joining with the Methodist Church in Coupeville. The last quarterly meeting of the Congregational Church as a separate, autonomous entity was held in early October 1919 before the church merged with the Methodist Church. The two churches formed a federation sharing facilities and assets, yet maintaining their separate identify for the next twenty years. In January 1949, the Congregational community voted to completely disband their church and its members joined the Methodist Church congregation. The Methodist Congregational Church, thus, became the United Methodist Church of Coupeville on May 10, 1949.[103]

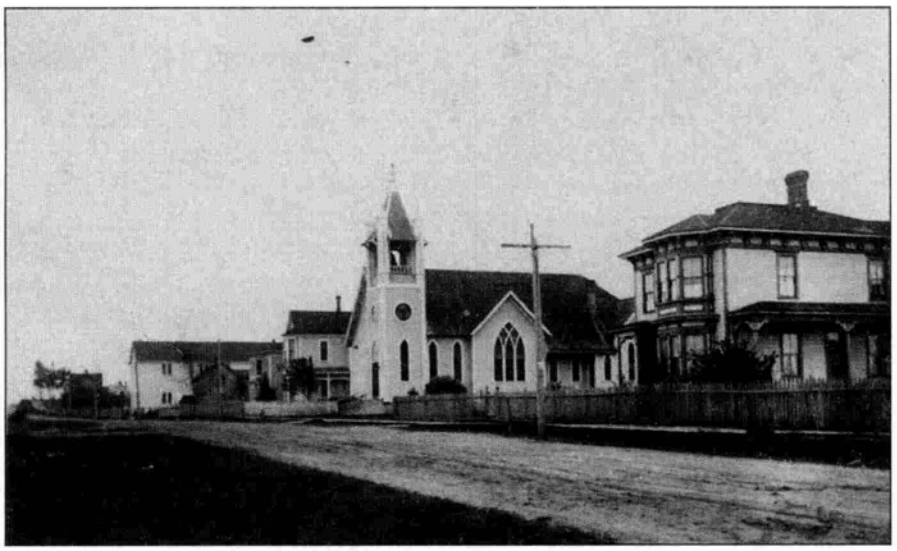

Illustration 22. Built as the Congregational Church in 1889, this church later became home to the Methodist Congregational Church, then the United Methodist Church, and, finally, St. Mary's Catholic Church. From Florence G. Dorr, "A House of the Lord, 1889-1989," 1989.

Less than three years after the Congregational and Methodist congregations merged, the Congregational Church building on Main Street acquired new occupants—Catholic Church parishioners. In September 1932, near the height of the Great Depression, Congregationalists agreed to rent their church building for one year to the Catholics. Two years later, the Catholic Diocese of

[103] Dorr, "A House of the Lord, 1889-1989, 5-6.

Seattle bought the Congregational Church, as well as the old Puget Sound Academy dormitory east of the church for $1,500. (The remaining academy building was torn down in 1934.)

The Catholic Church, after its brief pre-Anglo settlement presence on Penn Cove in the late 1830s and in the early 1840s, remained distant and uninvolved in the daily religious lives of Indians and Anglo settlers living around Penn Cove until the twentieth century. After Father John Baptist Bolduc's and Father Modeste Demers's aborted efforts to build a mission on Ebey's Prairie, Sacred Heart of Mary in 1843,[104] the Catholic Church had concentrated its missionary efforts elsewhere around Puget Sound, east of the Cascades, and north of the 49th parallel.[105] After emigrants began settling on the prairies around Penn Cove in the 1850s, priests had occasionally visited the Indians on Whidbey Island, while traveling between missions at Victoria, British Columbia, and Port Townsend, sometimes arriving at Ebey's Landing in canoes. In late August 1852, "two Catholic priests came here [Ebey's Landing] . . . seeking a location for a mission," Rebecca Ebey wrote in her diary. On September 2, 1852, Rebecca Ebey noted that: "the priests went this morning over to the Cove to see the Natives." Later in the day, the "priest returned after dark having baptized several children."[106] Despite this suggestion that a Catholic mission might be established on the island, no mission or church materialized for several decades. The small number of Catholic settlers (possibly no more than eight or ten families in the early 1900s[107]) and dwindling number of local Indians, along with the already existing Catholic missions at Victoria and, later, Port Townsend, may have convinced the Catholic Church that a permanent mission or church on Penn Cove was unnecessary.

As time went by, Whidbey Island settlers of the Catholic faith of necessity had canoed or sailed to Port Townsend for Catholic Mass, communion, and infant baptisms. Around the turn of the twentieth century, one resident of Fort Casey recalled making weekly trips to Port Townsend for Sunday Mass. "As children, going to Mass on Sunday from Fort Casey, on a government boat to Port

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[104] In 1951, an article in the *Island County Times* reported that Carl Engle's father had found pieces of logs (presumably on his property) that he believed to part of the a Catholic mission, perhaps Sacred Heart of Mary Mission, which was apparently partially built but never put to use by Catholic missionaries. Carl Engle's father used some of these logs to build a pig pen. "Early Day Churches and Schools Grew Quickly—Mystery Mission Found," *Island County Times,* April 12, 1951.

[105] Please see earlier chapter on "visitors" for a more detailed account of the early arrival of Catholic missionaries on Whidbey Island. Canse, "Half Century of Cultural Progress," 148.

[106] Farrar, "Diary of Colonel and Mrs. I. N. Ebey," August 31 and September 2, 1852 (October 1916), 41.

[107] *Ibid.,* 14.

Townsend was the lark and great event of the week," Dominican Sister M. Francina recalled many years later.

> Many a stormy day we were locked in the cabin with containers in front of us. The winds would toss the waves at times over the smoke stack. Landing at Fort Casey was the most difficult. One Sunday the waves were such that the family did not return until Wednesday at 3 p.m.[108]

The first semi-permanent Catholic priest near Penn Cove may have been at Fort Casey. Sister M. Francina recalled that in 1918 an army chaplain, Reverend G. Fox, S.J., offered the Christmas midnight Mass at Francina's home.[109]

Catholic priests continued to visit Whidbey Island in the 1920s. Father John E. O'Brien, who took an interest in Whidbey Island and regretted that no permanent Catholic church existed on the island, came often from Everett to celebrate Mass at the Liberty League Hall in San de Fuca. As O'Brien approached retirement, he persuaded Bishop O'Dea to allow him to start a parish on Whidbey Island. He held his first Mass at San de Fuca's Liberty League Hall in the late 1920s. It was Father O'Brien who approached the Congregational Church members about renting their empty church building and who vigorously encouraged the Catholic Diocese of Seattle to buy the Congregation Church in 1934, (by then renamed St. Mary's Church), as well as the Puget Academy School dormitory (which became Father O'Brien's living quarters).[110]

During the 1930s, St. Mary's Church struggled to build their congregation and keep the church building intact. The few Indians remaining around Penn Cove, Coupeville merchants and parishioners helped feed Father O'Brien, extended him credit at local stores, and raised money for church upkeep by organizing card parties, bazaars, and rummage sales. Following a destructive windstorm in 1936 that blew in the large window on the south wall and destroyed some interior furnishings, money was raised to replace the south wall window with two smaller ones. Around the same time, the existing choir loft on the front south sidewall was removed and the north bell tower entrance blocked off and used as a confessional. Parishioners also purchased pews from a West Seattle church in the 1930s. Father O'Brien worked energetically in the late 1930s to build up the Catholic community on Whidbey Island. He built a mission church in Langley in 1939, (St. Hubert's), and began a mission church in Oak Harbor, (St. Augustine's), in 1939, before succumbing to pneumonia and transferring to Seattle in 1941.[111]

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[108] *Ibid.,* 13.
[109] *Ibid.,* 13.
[110] *Ibid.,*13-14.
[111] *Ibid.,* 15-16.

The creation of a U.S. naval air base in Oak Harbor in 1942 fueled the growth of the Whidbey Island population, the Catholic Church membership, especially in Oak Harbor but also in nearby Coupeville, and the use of church buildings. The congregation of St. Mary's Church in Coupeville offered the basement of the church to kindergarten classes when the town's expanding School District outgrew space in the town's existing schools. The tremendous growth in Oak Harbor during and immediately after World War II elevated St. Augustine's Mission to parish status and encouraged the pastor, Father Harrington, to relocate his living quarters from the old Puget Sound Academy dormitory to the larger parish in Oak Harbor. Wayne Libby was hired to tear down the old dormitory following Harrington's departure around 1955.[112]

The decades of the 1960s and 1970s, proved to be a time of tremendous rebuilding and remembering the past history at St. Mary's Church. The devastating winds of the 1962 Columbus Day storm severely damaged the seventy-three year-old church, especially the bell tower. Then pastor, Father William Dell, closed the entrance through the bell tower and the deteriorating outside steps leading to it. Reverend Raymond Heffernan, pastor in the 1970s, led the congregation in a restoration effort following the listing of the church on the National Register in 1973 and as the American Bicentennial of 1976 approached. It was decided to rebuild the damaged bell tower to its original 1889 appearance, a project completed by the Parkhurst and Lange Company. Several people became involved in studying, replacing, and refurbishing different details of the original church building, including the Celtic cross that once stood atop the church spire and the tower bell crafted in 1889 in Baltimore, Maryland. All work completed during the restoration of the old Congregational and subsequent St. Mary's Church was recognized during rededication ceremonies held on May 30, 1976.[113]

Socializing: Abundant Choices

In the early period of settlement on central Whidbey Island, social activities often involved socializing while working together at farm tasks. Raising homes, barns, and outbuildings, planting and harvesting crops, and transporting produce and goods were activities frequently shared by neighbors, who often socialized over meals and at play after the work of the day was done. Neighbors socialized informally while visiting each other at home.

In 1853, soon after arriving on Whidbey Island, Rebecca Ebey noted in her diary that she enjoyed the company and musical talent of Mrs. Ivens, who

[112] Walt Lylie used lumber from the dormitory to build a barn on his property, which remained standing in 2000. Dorr, "A House of the Lord, 1889-1989, 16-17.
[113] Dorr, "A House of the Lord, 1889-1989, 17-18.

played the violin during her visits to the Ebey's home.[114] In the 1860s, "when work was done," long-time central Whidbey Island resident Flora A. P. Engle reminisced seventy years later, "father, mother and the children would get into the big wagon and jog and bump over rough roads, after the farm houses, six or seven miles . . . to spend the day and possibly the night with a neighbor. Hospitality was unbounded. . . . Sunday was the day for 'visiting out' and it was no uncommon thing for a family to entertain a dozen guests over the week-end," Engle remembered. Socializing with neighbors continued for decades.[115] In the early 1900s, the local newspaper, the *Island County Times,* institutionalized the activity by reporting who visited whom, in local news columns for each small community on central Whidbey Island. Such chatty reporting continued as an important news item, especially for the smaller communities of San de Fuca and Fort Casey, well into the mid-twentieth century.

Some early settlers became well-known for their welcoming hospitality and socializing skills. "The old imposing Kellogg house [on Admiralty Head] was the center of the social life in the early days in that section of the island," the *Island County Times* reported when the Kellogg home burned in 1913. . . . The young folks would gather from miles around for an informal good time, and many a time the old house has been the scene of a merry gathering of young folks who would come galloping up without any previous announcement."[116]

Informal socializing among the early settlers commonly took place to dedicate the raising of a new barn. Neighbors gathered for such an occasion in the mid-1860s to celebrate the completion of a large barn on the Ebey's Prairie farm of Hill Harmon and an important Civil War battle victory. "One whale of a barn dance and ox-barbecue brought folks from all over Puget Sound," old-time Ebey's Prairie residents recalled years later when this monolithic local landmark burned to the ground in July 1955.[117] Throughout the 1800s, Penn Cove and prairie residents gathered for dances and social gatherings in any large building that accommodated a crowd. Dances held at Utsalady and Port Townsend sometimes attracted local Whidbey Island residents. Beginning in the 1890s, the Hotel San de Fuca served as the scene of "social dancing parties" on Saturday evenings in the summer months. Gentlemen were charged $.50 and ladies $.25, and lunch was served.[118] This tradition was known as the Harmony Dancing Club in the

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[114] Kellogg, *History of Whidbey Island,* 117.
[115] Flora A. P. Engle, "Pioneer Privations and Pleasures," *Told by the Pioneers,* edited by F. I. Trotter, F. H. Loutzenhiser, and J. R. Loutzenhiser (Olympia?, WA.: Washington Pioneer Project, c. 1938), 120.
[116] "Was Famous Landmark," *Island County Times,* June 6, 1913.
[117] "Old House Remembers Harmon Barn Dance and Barbeque," *Island County Times,* July 21, 1955.
[118] "Happened at Home," *Island County Times,* August 19, 1901.

1920s.[119] By the turn of the twentieth century, public dances held in large halls at Fort Casey invigorated the social life of the community. By then music was sometimes provided by a small orchestra from Seattle or Everett.[120]

Holidays always gave residents a reason to socialize, at dances, picnics, and dinners. All ages came together to celebrate Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and the Fourth of July. Thanksgiving had special significance for those early settlers who had survived the challenges of the overland passage and the anxious first decade of establishing homes on the prairies and around Penn Cove. Prayer, feasting, and dancing marked early Thanksgivings on central Whidbey Island.[121]

The Fourth of July also became a favorite holiday to celebrate early on. In 1863, at the height of the Civil War, prairie and Penn Cove settlers celebrated a memorable Fourth of July according to H. A. Swift ("Ancutty Tillicum"), who had just arrived on the island as a young man.

> By noon, the greater part of the white people of this side of the Island had congregated at Coupeville. They came in wagons, [on] horseback and on foot, all in their Sunday cloths, as also did the Indians. . . . The exercises were held in the only hall in town, which then stood a little way west of where the Central Hotel now is [in 1913] . . . The exercises consisted of apt oration by the Hon. Jas. K. Kennedy, afterwards a Justice of the Supreme Court of Washington Territory. . . . It was one of the most patriotic he [the writer, Swift] ever heard. At that time, the civil War was at its height and there were some that did not at all agree with the speaker. . . . After the speaking was over, the audience dispersed and gathered in small groups and discussed the speech and 'swapped lies' generally, until evening when a dance was held in the hall.[122]

By the turn of the century, Fourth of July festivities had moved to Oak Harbor, which then rivaled Coupeville in size and economic vitality. The July 5, 1901 issue of the *Island County Times* reported that "yesterday was a quiet day in Coupeville, in fact the town was deserted. Some of the people went to Everett and some to Port Townsend, but most of them went to Oak Harbor."[123] Festivities at Oak Harbor included a day full of sports—a game of baseball between the rival Oak Harbor and Coupeville teams, a men's and women's bicycle

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[119] "San de Fuca News," *Island County News,* February 3, 1928.
[120] *Island County Times,* January 1, 1904 and August 31, 1917.
[121] *Island County Times,* November 18, 1904.
[122] Ancutty Tillicum [H. A. Swift] "Coupeville Fifty Years Ago," *Island County Times,* December 30, 1904.
[123] "The Fourth of July," *Island County Times,* July 5, 1901.

race, a boys and girls foot race, a "three-legged" race, a horse race, swimming contest, and a tug-of-war contest. Dancing followed in the evening.[124]

The religious holidays of Christmas and Easter were enthusiastically celebrated at the churches on central Whidbey Island. Members of the small, new Congregational and Methodist churches sang Christmas carols and attended solemn Christmas Eve and day services. By the early 1900s, the Congregational and Methodist-Episcopal churches each presented elaborate Christmas programs (with hymns, scripture readings, solos and duets by choir members, and dialogues by the children), published in the local newspaper.[125]

Illustration 23. Horse race during Fourth of July, 1914, celebration. Annotation of photograph reports that Freeman Boyer's horse Golden was the winner. Photograph courtesy of the Island County Historical Society.

The Congregational and Methodist churches, as well as their charitable outreach organizations, contributed a great deal to the social life of the rural community life for decades in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Pie socials, chicken dinners, and fairs organized by the women of the Congregational and Methodist-Episcopal (ME) churches at various times of the year brought people together from around the island. In the early 1900s, the Ladies Aid Society of the ME

[124] *Ibid.,* July 5, 1901.
[125] "Christmas Festivities," *Island County Times,* December 30, 1904.

Church often staged ice cream and cake socials, followed by a music program and food sales to raise funds for various charitable purposes.[126]

The schools, both the private Puget Sound Academy in Coupeville and the public schools, also provided abundant opportunities for community social events. The Coupeville High School basketball team, "the Coupeville nine," drew enthusiastic crowds to games with Whidbey Island teams from Fort Casey, Langley, and Oak Harbor, as did the high school baseball team.[127] An interest in sports and fitness probably contributed to the founding of the "athletic club" in Coupeville in 1905, which used the gymnasium at Puget Sound Academy. In March, the club elected its first "temporary officers," Lee Ludington (president), Arthur Kineth (secretary), and Laurin Gillespie (treasurer), and charged $1. for new members to the club.[128]

Figure 24. Maypole, May Day celebration, 1914, Coupeville. Photograph courtesy of Island County Historical Society.

[126] "A Social Event," *Island County Times*, March 17, 1891; *Island County Times,* January 1, 1904; "An Entertainment and Social . . . ," *Island County Times,* January 15, 1904 and October 21, 1904; "Children's Day," *Island County Times,* August 5, 1904; "Church Notes," *Island County Times,* April 4, 1913.
[127] *Island County Times,* April 3, 1901; "Baseball," *Island County Times,* May 6, 1904; *Island County Times,* January 26, 1917.
[128] *Island County Times,* March 3, 1905.

Beginning in the 1860s, Coupeville became the center of fraternal organizations. These and the buildings that these groups built became the hub of a plethora of social activities attended by residents throughout central Whidbey Island. The first and subsequent fraternal organizations brought prairie and Coupeville residents together for regular, lively social activities for over 100 years. The Lodge of Good Templars arrived in Coupeville first, becoming established by the mid-1860s. In November 1866, it boasted forty-six members. The Good Templars Hall on Front Street became a popular place for plays, lectures and speeches, and especially for dances.[129] In the 1890s, the young people in the area met at the Good Templars Hall every Saturday night for dances and socializing. "If you were not sick, you would have been sure to have been there," Carl Engle recalled many years later.[130]

Several other fraternal organizations were founded in Coupeville in the 1800s. The Masons, Whidbey Island No. 15 lodge, organized in 1869 with Granville O. Haller as its first worshipful master. Other early members included: Thomas Cranney, Daniel Pearson, Hugh Crockett, Hiram Harmon, and John Alexander. After meeting in the Good Templars Hall for a few years, the Masons built their own hall in 1874 at the corner of Main and Eighth streets. John Alexander reportedly constructed this building. Shop space rented to local merchants, as well as to the county commissioners for their monthly meetings, occupied ground-floor spaces, with the Mason's meeting hall up above on the second story.[131]

The International Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF), Glenwood Lodge No. 107, also organized in Coupeville and, in 1904-1905, constructed their own hall, a two-story wood-frame structure about 32 x 80 feet. At that time, it was the largest hall in town. The local newspaper applauded this addition, claiming that: "Coupeville is one of the best show towns in the state, . . . now that the Odd Fellow fine hall has been completed."[132] Over the next fifty years, the imposing Odd Fellows Hall served as the venue for numerous community social events—balls, dances, and social events of all kinds.[133] The Odd Fellows hall was demolished in the 1950s.

The Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), which organized in Coupeville in 1883, played an important role in Coupeville's social as well as educational and political life. In the course of pursuing their primary mission, to

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[129] Louisa Swift to "Annie," November 18, 1966, Swift Papers, Special Collections, Suzzallo Library, University of Washington.
[130] Engle, "Engle Recalls Day in Busy Coupeville."
[131] Donald M. Bullock, "Coupeville—Island's Oldest Settlement Founded by Sea Captains 100 Years Ago," in *Whidbey Island Centennial Supplement*, May 31, 1951; Cook, *"A particular friend, Penn's Cove,"* 82.
[132] "*Island County Times,* June 10, 1904 and February 24, 1905.
[133] *Island County Times,* December 22, 1916.

campaign for temperance, the women of the WCTU held ice cream socials and dances and they hosted educational activities. After their own hall was built in 1890, the WCTU hosted the local library (long before a library building was constructed) and movies for the general community.[134]

By the turn of the century, Coupeville boasted numerous fraternal and social organizations. In addition to the Masons, IOOF, their female branches of Order of Eastern Star and the Rebekahs, and the WCTU, the town also supported the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) for veterans of the Civil War, and the Woodmen of the World (Camp No. 447). In the early 1900s, many other fraternal and social organizations, formed in Coupeville, including the Ladies of the Roundtable, the Coupeville Garden Club, and the Coupeville Lions Club. Many of these groups used the large meeting halls of the IOOF, Masons, and WCTU to stage club social activities. All of these groups contributed to the social and cultural vitality of the community.[135]

Nearby San de Fuca became home to a number of social organizations, from the early 1900s onward. The so-called "Liberal League," a group that was probably founded on a belief in the early twentieth-century "Progressive Era" ideals of active, forward-looking government and business, held meetings for several years in San de Fuca. The game of "progressive whist" seemed to be a favorite past time of the group in the late 1920s. Around that time, officers and members of the Liberal League included: A. W. Monroe (president), Gilbert S. Olsen (vice president), Dorothy Morris (secretary-treasurer). Mrs. Fred Arnold, Mrs. Glenn Darst, Miss Wilma Morris, Harry Barrington, Charles Mitchell, William Benson, W. C. Baker, and James Zylstra. Several other social groups met in San de Fuca every week or twice a month in the 1920s, including the Dorcas Society (for sewing and conversation), the 500 Club (for entertainment and games), and the Thimble Club (for sewing).[136]

Although some of these fraternal and religious activities became less popular and even died, there were other opportunities for socializing in the twentieth century with the institution of new seasonal activities and expanding entertainment technology. Traveling presentations of "magic lantern slides" or stereoptocon shows and live entertainment were brought to town by the Lyceum Club in the early 1900s. A "moving picture show" became a regular feature in Coupeville as early as 1914. That summer, after the Fourth of July celebrations, "Coupeville will have a first class up-to-date moving picture show every Friday evening in the IOOF hall," the *Island County Times* announced.[137] In 1921, the Circuit Theatre was established, thus creating a permanent venue for showing

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[134] Sheridan, *Coupeville,* 49-50.
[135] "Coupeville—Island County," *Island County Times,* June 20, 1913; Sheridan, *Coupeville,* 51.
[136] "San de Fuca News," *Island County Times,* January 8, 1928; January 13, 1928; February 3, 1928; March 2, 1928; May 4, 1928; July 13, 1928; November 30, 1928.
[137] "Coupeville to Have Moving Picture Show," *Island County Times,* July 3, 1914.

movies and the only movie theatre on Whidbey Island until Fort Casey was reactivated during World War II and opened its own theatre which was open to the general public. The Circuit Theatre occupied the former Haller general merchandise store on Front Street (razed in 1954). At first, the projector operator at the Circuit provided sound for films with recordings, carefully coordinated with the moving reel. After the theatre changed hands in 1926, new owner Wiley Hesselgrove picked up a new movie each week in Seattle. Movies were typically shown on Wednesday and Thursday evenings, since residents preferred playing cards, attending dances, or engaging in other social activities on weekend evenings. The Circuit Theatre remained open for twenty years.[138]

Several seasonal events in and around Coupeville in the twentieth century were unique to the community. In the early 1900s, the *Island County Times* reported that seventy-five Indians were gathering that spring for a "potlatch across the bay" from Fort Casey.[139] Increasingly, as the last aged Indians in the area died, local Anglo residents began to appreciate more the Native American history that was unique to Whidbey Island and sought ways to commemorate it. In 1929, the Coupeville community held the Indian Canoe Races. Two years later, the first International Water Festival was staged around Penn Cove in August. Featured events included Indian canoe races and a salmon bake. Indian participants came from all around Whidbey Island and adjoining Skagit County, as well as from other parts of Washington and British Columbia. In 1933, at the height of the Great Depression when people sought relief in entertaining social activities, eighteen canoes, each with eleven men, entered the three-mile race in Penn Cove. The crews represented eight Washington and ten British Columbia tribes. Members of the Nooksack tribe, living near Mount Baker, won the race. Both Paramount and Universal studios sent camera crews to record the event on film, which was later shown nationwide.[140]

Other seasonal events were initiated in Coupeville in the twentieth century. The prairies around Coupeville became the site of both proposed and actual farming events. In the early 1900s, Smith's Prairie was identified as an ideal site for a combined fair grounds and racetrack. "With ample room for a track and all necessary buildings, fine farms in close proximity, and beautiful drives in many directions, this would undoubtedly be the place preferred above all others for speed contests and cattle show," the newspaper assured readers.[141] Market Days became an annual event held at Prairie Center in northern Ebey's Prairie. Coupeville became the site of a county fair. After the community began

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[138] "Lyceum Club Entertains," *Island County Times,* March 21, 1913; Sheridan, *Coupeville,* 51-52.

[139] "From Fort Casey," *Island County Times,* April 15, 1904.

[140] "Water Festival/Canoe Races," *Island County Times,* August 16, 1933; Sheridan, *Coupeville,* 7.

[141] "Fair Grounds and Race Track," *Island County Times,* March 17, 1901.

developing as a retreat for vacationers and refuge for artists, the Arts and Crafts Festival began in Coupeville in 1964, and continues in the early twenty-first century.[142]

As the number of settlers grew throughout Central Whidbey Island over the decades, the island's social and cultural environment expanded in response to the growing needs of the growing population. Almost immediately, the importance of education to the settlers was reflected in the creation of schools and the retention of teachers. Churches evolved, grew, and merged; fraternal organizations met a social need of the community at large by offering dances, theater, and picnics; and sporting activities enabled residents to celebrate community. The cultural and social life of the island ebbed and flowed in response to events of the broader world – with times of war, economic depression, and abundance. However, the importance placed on social and cultural needs by island residents clearly underscored an unspoken but obvious commitment to make the island a home for them and theirs to come.

[142] Harry F. Giles, *The Advantages and Opportunities of the State of Washington for Homebuilders, Investors and Travelers* (Olympia, WA: State of Washington, Bureau of Statistics and Immigration, 1929); Sheridan, *Coupeville,* 52.

Chapter 9

Wars and the Great Depression 1898—1970s

On September 11, 1901, Captain W. J. Muirhead, with William McKenzie working as his chief engineer and a crew of six, piloted the army tender *Major Evan Thomas* in a diagonal, zigzag pattern east up the Strait of Juan de Fuca with a small barge in tow. Approximately three-quarters of a mile to the east of the Admiralty Head promontory, a noncommissioned army officer again slowly scanned the waters of the strait and picked up his field telephone. "The range is clear," he said. Below, on the west-facing slope of the hill slightly below the ridgeline, Lieutenant A. D. Putnam checked his firing solution calculations on the plotting board and relayed range and azimuth settings to the gunner's crew. The muzzle of the ten-inch gun slowly traversed toward the west, aligning with the target as it elevated to compensate for the distance. As the gun came to rest, the gunner read back the coordinates to the lieutenant. The lieutenant scanned his plot board for the last time to ensure he had accurately compensated for the charge, mass of the round, distance to target, and the elevation off-set between firing point and target.

A little over one mile to the east, standing on the forward deck of a steamer, a young Edward Power saw a flash of fire from the army gun; seconds later he saw a large geyser erupt from the water a few yards from the towed target. Seconds later he heard a deep boom from the gun resonate across the strait.[1] It was the first test firing from Fort Casey on Admiralty Head, Whidbey Island, Washington.

The establishment of the Fort Casey Military Reservation in the late 1890s marked the beginning of a half-century of war and depression. During this period, the United States found itself embroiled in three wars—the Spanish-American War, the Great War (World War I), and World War II—the mass-production and affordability of the automobile, and an extended economic depression, which began in the 1920s for farmers and continued through most of the 1930s for the entire population of this country and developed countries around the world. All of these major world events profoundly impacted the lives and the landscape of central Whidbey Island. Many Penn Cove-area residents participated in the wars either directly or tangentially; all experienced the mixed effects of the coming of the automobile, the Great Depression, and depression-era work relief programs;

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[1] Edward Allen Power, "Whidbey Island Pioneers – William and Florence James." Typescript, Special Collections, Allen Library, University of Washington, 1977.

and all felt the coming of post-war prosperity in its multifarious forms. With great changes resulting from wars, economic fluctuations, and enormous technological advances, Whidbey Island's first generations of Anglo-American settlers looked back on the seemingly simpler times of early community-building around Penn Cove with great nostalgia and the desire to protect and memorialize certain features of that past.

Spanish-American War and the Founding of Fort Casey

Installation of the fort at the promontory known as Admiralty Head was the culmination of several years of debate. On November 1, 1850, a joint commission of U.S. Navy and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers officers that had been appointed by the president to identify areas on the West Coast requiring fortifications recommended that installations be constructed at San Francisco, San Diego, and on the Columbia River. Shore artillery protection of Puget Sound was reported as not being an immediate need.[2] Not all agreed. The year before, General Persifor F. Smith, the commanding officer of the U.S. Army's Division of the Pacific, stated:

> There are probably few harbors anywhere superior to those on the waters of Admiralty Inlet, whether for naval or commercial purposes. The entrance to the inlet, and the islands shielding the harbors outside of it, will require strong and defensive fortifications.[3]

The prevailing opinion, both in Congress and the War Department, was that the specific location of the navy shipyard that was tentatively planned for the Puget Sound area be identified before fortifications were installed. More than four decades passed before action was taken to establish a military post on central Whidbey Island at Admiralty Head along the west side of Admiralty Inlet, off central Whidbey Island.

The construction of Fort Casey, although a defensive post, still expressed the United States' increasingly ambitious, aggressive, and imperialistic stance in the larger world of international affairs around the turn of the twentieth century. For the first time in its young life, the United States made a tumultuous entrance onto the stage of world affairs. In the 1890s, the nation responded assertively to a series of international incidents that it previously would have ignored. In 1889 and 1890, the U.S. almost went to war with Germany during a dispute over Samoa. A

[2] U.S. Congress, House Report No. 86 (Ser. 1145), 420-21, 37th Cong., 2nd sess.; Senate, Ex. Doc. No 165 (Ser. 2513), 61-63), 50th Cong., 1st sess.
[3] Report of October 7, 1849, Senate, Ex. Doc. No. 47 (Ser. 558), 84-93, 31st Cong., 1st sess.

number of crises almost brought the U.S. to war with Italy and Chile around the same time. An 1895 crisis in Venezuela caused the U.S. to rattle its sword at Great Britain. And, in 1898, the United States went to war with Spain, in the Spanish-American War. At the conclusion of this three-month-long conflict, the U.S. emerged with an empire consisting of the Philippine Islands, Guam, and Puerto Rico, and a protectorate over Cuba. In 1898, the United States also annexed Hawaii. During this era of multi-national outbursts of imperialism, the United States built or reconstructed and modernized numerous fortifications around the country.

Fort Casey was strategically very important to national defense at this time of international uncertainty and before technological changes rendered such an armament obsolete. The fort was located on Admiralty Head, a promontory projecting into Admiralty Inlet. Ships entering Puget Sound from the Pacific Ocean needed to pass through the Strait of Juan de Fuca then turn south, passing through Admiralty Inlet. Fort Casey was part of a three-fort defense system situated on the Strait of Juan de Fuca to protect the Bremerton Navy Yard, near the southern end of Puget Sound, and the civilian population centers along Puget Sound, including Everett, Olympia, Tacoma, and Seattle. The artillery guns of forts Worden, Flagler, and Casey bracketed the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Admiralty Inlet approaches into Puget Sound.[4] On a broader scale, the fort was part of a series of forts that included Columbia River forts Stevens, Canby, and Columbia.

The fort was named for General Thomas Lincoln Casey, a graduate of the United States Military Academy, class of 1852, who, during his army career, had been responsible for the construction of the Washington Monument, the Library of Congress, and the Potomac Aqueduct, all in Washington, D. C.. He died on March 25, 1896,[5] two months before the United States Congress authorized the Secretary of War to expend funds for the construction of Puget Sound artillery emplacements at Point Wilson, Marrowstone Point on the mainland, and Admiralty Head on central Whidbey Island.

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[4] Deception Pass also provided access to the lower Puget Sound area for deep-draft vessels; however, from a tactical point of view it was considered highly improbable that a hostile naval fleet would subject its ships to the type of exposure that single-file passage through the pass would necessitate. Nevertheless, if any unwanted ship did make it through the narrow passage at Deception Pass, it would be met by six-inch guns at Fort Whitman, built on diminutive Goat Island, located to the southeast of Deception Pass (at the north end of Skagit Bay).

[5] United States Army, *General Orders No. 134,* Headquarters of the Army, Adjutant General's Office, 1899.

Construction of Fort Casey commenced in 1897.[6] The initial construction, completed by contractors Maney, Goerig, and Rydstrom of Everett, Washington, required moving 40,000 cubic yards of earth. The company hired eighty laborers at $1.65 per ten-hour day, and required them to live in temporary quarters provided by the company at a charge of $4.50 per week, including meals. Assuming a six-day workweek, the employees netted approximately $5.40 per week ($9.90 gross per week - $4.50 for room and board = $5.40). In short order, the employees struck, and the parties finally agreed on a gross pay of $2.00 per day for a ten-hour day. Construction of the initial four-gun emplacements was finished on December 15, 1898 after the three-month Spanish-American War had ended.

At the turn of the century, Fort Casey's armament consisted of four three-inch rapid-fire guns, two five-inch rapid-fire guns, six six-inch rifles, seven ten-inch rifles, and sixteen twelve-inch mortars emplaced in ten batteries.[7] According

[6] Although construction was commenced in 1897, congressional authorization to acquire the land was not granted until March 3, 1899; however, the conveyance was intra-governmental (conveyance was from the Secretary of the Treasury to the Secretary of the War). As will be seen below, a portion of the land occupied by the fort was previously owned by the United States government and occupied by a lighthouse.

[7] The following list was researched and assembled by John A. Hussey from numerous documents and maps in the custody of the Seattle District of the Corps of Engineers, and the Seattle Office of the General Services Administration. The list was later published in John A. Hussey, *A Short History of Fort Casey, Washington* (Seattle: National Park Service, 1955), 41-42.

(1) Battery Thomas Parker: Two model 1905 6" rifles mounted on model 1903 disappearing carriages. The construction of the battery was completed in August 1905.
(2) Battery Isaac Van Horne: Two model 1903 3" rapid-fire guns on pedestal mounts. The construction of the battery was completed in June 1905.
(3) Battery Reuben Turman: Two model 1897 5" rapid-fire guns on model 1896 balanced pillar mounts. Battery construction finished in January 1900.
(4) Battery William Worth: Two model 1895 10" model 1895 rifles mounted on model 1896 disappearing carriages. Battery installation completed in 1898.
(5) Battery James Moore: Three model 1895 10" rifles on model 1896 disappearing carriages. Battery construction completed in 1899.
(6) Battery Henry Kingsbury: Two model 1888 M II 10" rifles on model 1896 (gun no. 1) and model 1901 (gun no. 2) carriages. Battery construction completed in June 1904.
(7) Battery John Valleau: Four Model 1905 6" rifles mounted on Model 1903 disappearing carriages. Construction completed in March 1907.
(8) Battery John Trevor: Two Model 1903 3" rapid fire guns on Model 1903 pedestal mounts. Battery construction completed in June 1905.
(9) Battery Alexander Schenck: Eight Model 1890 MI 12" mortars on Model 1896 M II carriages.
(10) Battery Seymour: Eight Model 1890 MI, and Model 1890 12" mortars mounted on Model 1896 M II carriages. Construction completed in 1899.

to available records, the fort had annual firing practice. The average cost of the various rounds fired was approximately $500, at that time. The Board of Officers in 1901 and 1902 recommended the acquisition of additional land for the military reserve. In late May 1901, the U. S. government, through condemnation proceedings, acquired land for the reservation from numerous Crockett family members and several others "for the purpose of constructing and erecting thereon barracks and other buildings for the use of the garrison at Fort Casey."[8] Over the next forty-eight-years, the army acquired land to add to Fort Casey at a cost of approximately $41,848.84, and spent approximately $1,497,300 constructing buildings and structures.[9] The board also fixed the location of buildings in a basic over-all plan for the enlarged post. The board laid out a parade ground at the neck of Admiralty Head with a row of barracks along the southern edge and quarters for the officers on the northern end of the neck. A wharf was built into the water (and later rebuilt and enlarged).[10]

Fort Casey's first regular garrison, consisting of six officers and two hundred enlisted men of the 63rd and 71st companies of the U.S. Army Coast Artillery, arrived before the construction of several new buildings. They came in July 1902. Their arrival heralded the first construction within the fort, other than the armament. The first phase was completed in 1903, and, by April 1904, most of the original buildings had been erected and accepted by the quartermaster. The initial construction included barracks (permitting the men to move their quarters from heavy canvas army tents to buildings), quarters for officers and noncommissioned officers, a coal shed, and a storehouse for the quartermaster and commissary.[11]

Construction of the fort continued incrementally over the next few years. Between 1904 and 1910, one or more new buildings were completed almost every year. In 1904, a number of building projects were undertaken and completed. In mid-April, building contractors formally turned over to the Quartermaster, "two double-company barracks, one field officers' quarters, one hospital, one stewards' quarters, one guard house, one executive building, one school building, one quartermasters' building, one commissary building, and one bake shop. The mains for the water works are now being placed by a Portland firm."[12] Officers and enlisted men moved from the old quarters to the new in April, leaving the old post looking, "very forlorn and deserted," in May. By early June, a "woven wire fence"

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[8] *Island County Times,* May 24, 1901.
[9] John A. Hussey, *A Short History of Fort Casey, Washington*, Ms. (Seattle: National Park Service, 1955), 47.
[10] Hussey *Short History of Fort Casey,* 38.
[11] Hussey, *Short History of Fort Casey,* 39.
[12] "From Fort Casey," *Island County Times,* April 15, 1904.

had been built around the military reserve to prevent stray cattle from coming in and destroying property.[13]

Additional construction work continued during the last six months of 1904. Contractors McInnis and Harrington completed much of this work. According to the *Island County Times,* "McInnis and Harrington were the lowest bidders for construction of a series of buildings at Forts Worden and Casey."[14] The contract to construct one barracks and one double set of captains' quarters, awarded to McInnis and Harrington for $52,745, began in late June and employed about 300 tradespeople for the next several months. Men moved into these buildings in early 1905. This contracting firm also undertook other work – building a cellar and heating system under the administration building and grading the parade ground (along with Judkins and Herrett). A new wharf was also completed by the end of the year. Most of these additional structures were built of heavy wood frames on stone and brick foundations with slate roofs.[15]

The year 1905 witnessed the completion of more improvements made on the military reservation. McInnis and Harrington started work on a wagon shed, civilian teamsters' quarters, an addition to the stable, and a 35-by-45 foot pumping station (drawing water from eight brick wells, each having a diameter of ten feet), after building materials arrived in early March 1905. "Granolithic sidewalks" around the new buildings were begun in early 1905. In May, a 100-foot-high flagstaff was erected by contractor Harry Cotton.[16]

In 1906, workmen completed a fire station, hospital rooms, blacksmith shop, quartermaster workshop, and noncommissioned officers' quarters. The year 1908 witnessed the construction of a gymnasium and bowling alley, followed by the erection of more noncommissioned officers' quarters and the completion of several storage buildings. The construction of the reinforced concrete powerhouse in 1910 marked the end of major building projects before World War I. During this same period, Fort Casey's armaments were also expanded with the addition of several guns to existing batteries and the creation of new batteries.

During World War I, the building activity at Fort Casey increased. Map rooms were constructed, as well as gun escarpments, which were among the largest on the west coast. Also, the number of temporary quarters increased from around ten tents 1913 to around thirty tents in 1919, positioned in a row at the top of the hill.[17]

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[13] "From Fort Casey," *Island County Times,* March 18, 1904, May 13, 1904, and June 3, 1904.
[14] "From Fort Casey," *Island County Times,* May 13, 1904, and June 17, 1904.
[15] "From Fort Casey," *Island County Times,* June 24, 1904, July 1, 1904, July 8, 1904, September 9, 1904, October 28, 1904, November 11, 1904, November 25, 1904, December 23, 1904, and January 13, 1905.
[16] "From Fort Casey," *Island County Times,* December 9, 1904, January 13, 1905, February 17, 1905, March 3, 1905, and May 5, 1905.
[17] Hussey, *Short History of Fort Casey,* 42-43.

Fort Casey began to stimulate the economic and social vitality of nearby Coupeville and the prairie communities to the north. The *Island County Times* initiated a column, "From Fort Casey," that reported on an array of building construction and social activities on the post. It became an integral part of the community's social and cultural fabric.

Following the Great War, the army planned on maintaining the fort as an active installation and using it as a training facility. Additionally, in 1920, a battery of anti-aircraft guns was installed on the northern end of the military reservation, and a second battery north of Crockett Lake, immediately east of the center of the fort. Both batteries consisted of three-inch Model 1717 fixed anti-aircraft guns. A small amount of construction took place in the early 1920s; a filter and storehouse were added to the collection of fort buildings.

By the mid-1920s, however, a greatly diminished military budget at a time when the American public turned all of its attention to pursuits of peacetime "normalcy," resulted in Fort Casey's severely slashed funding. In 1927, the fort was placed on "caretaker's status" (all military functions would cease). As a consequence, the army maintained only a small force at the fort, assigned to guarding and maintaining the property. By 1937, the anti-aircraft guns installed in 1920 had been removed. The fort took on an air of desolation in the 1930s.[18]

As the United States built up its military strength in preparation for possible involvement in the Second World War, Fort Casey came back to life once again. By the end of 1940, Fort Casey had become a part of Harbor Defenses of Puget Sound, a military command that included Fort Worden (near Port Townsend), Fort Flagler, and Fort Whitman (an ungarrisoned post on Goat Island near Deception Pass). Harbor Defenses of Puget Sound included two units, the 14th Coast Artillery Regiment of the regular army and the 248th Coast Artillery Regiment, comprised of former National Guard units. Colonel James H. Cunningham commanded the 14th. Fort Casey became a training facility for these units.[19]

During World War II, new construction occurred at the fort. In February and March 1941, twenty-four buildings went up, most of them located along the southern boundary of the parade ground. They included nine barracks, a mess hall, a post exchange, a company store, a theater, a hostess house, a recreation hall, an administration building, a guardhouse, an infirmary, and a storehouse. (The original Victorian-style barracks were later demolished.) The staffing of the fort had dwindled over the years. In June 1941, six months before Pearl Harbor, an additional 400 men augmented the sole platoon stationed at the fort.[20] Another battery of three, three-inch anti-aircraft guns was added in the early 1940s. Nearly all of these buildings were of temporary frame construction. All rifles, guns, and

[18] Hussey, *Short History of Fort Casey,* 42-44.
[19] Hussey, *Short History of Fort Casey,* 44-45.
[20] *Seattle Times,* June 15, 1941.

mortars were removed from the fort before 1944. A number of obsolete coast defense guns were salvaged for scrap.[21]

After World War II ended in 1945, the U. S. Army maintained Fort Casey, for five years, as an active military post and a satellite facility of Fort Worden. During this time, the fort apparently continued to function as a training center. On April 17, 1950, the army announced that the fort was being placed in "caretaker status" due to a lack of adequate facilities at Admiralty Head to conduct training.[22] The Army Corps of Engineers maintained the facilities for the next four years.

On April 20, 1954, the Corps declared that most of the fort was unneeded for defense purposes; consequently, it was transferred to the General Services Administration (GSA) for disposition. At the time of conveyance to the GSA, the fort included 123 buildings and other structures that had cost the United States almost $1.5 million to erect over the years. In accordance with federal statutes in effect at the time, the GSA announced the availability of the installation to all federal agencies, soliciting any expressions of interest. The only agency that replied was the Coast Guard, asking that 1.7 acres be set aside for any future navigation aids that might become necessary.[23]

In 1956, the remaining 175 acres comprising the residential core of the fort, including the barracks, gym, officers' quarters, and the parade ground, was acquired by Seattle Pacific College (later University). This transfer into private hands occurred after the Coupeville and Oak Harbor Lions clubs had urged the President of the United States to set aside the fort for public use. Under the direction of Doctor Charles F. Shockey, botanical and marine equipment were installed at this field branch of the college, renamed "Camp Casey." The first boys and girls camp at the old fort opened in May of 1956[24] The heavily wooded point projecting into Admiralty Inlet, which included the Admiralty Head Lighthouse, was to be retained and developed by the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission as a public state park facility.

An additional five parcels were sold for $63,950 to private parties.[25] In 1956, the Hoenig family bought a small parcel, which included a row of noncommissioned officer's quarters and the physician's quarters, located at the northeaster edge of the fort. After renting the building as apartments for some

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[21] Hussey, *Short History of Fort Casey,* 45-46.
[22] *Seattle Times*, April 17 and 18, 1950.
[23] Hussey, *Short History of Fort Casey,* 46-47.
[24] "Fort Now 'Camp Casey' Say College Officials," *Island County Times*, February 9, 1956; "Camp Casey Activity Speeded Up," *Island County Times,* April 26, 1956; "Camp Casey Preparing for 200 Youngsters Next Week," *Island County Times,* May 10, 1956; "Oak Harbor Lions Go To Top; Request President to Stop Fort Casey Sale," *Island County Times,* October 20, 1955.
[25] *Island County Times*, June 14, and July 5, 1956.

time, the Hoenigs restored the structures and reopened them as the Fort Casey Inn, a bed and breakfast and conference facility. (The Trust Board of Ebey's Landing NHR and the Central Whidbey Historical Advisory Committee gave the Hoenigs an award for excellence in preserving the historic structures in the 1990s.)[26]

World War II brought other changes to central Whidbey Island. Although not in the Reserve, the construction of Ault Field, a naval air station north of the Reserve in Clover Valley, significantly expanded trade and housing needs in and around Coupeville and San de Fuca. Beginning in the 1950s, the subdivision of land on which to build the year-round residences of active and retired military personnel from the naval air station took place not only in Oak Harbor, but also in Coupeville, San de Fuca, and on the ridge east of Crockett Prairie.

Cycles of Farming

Throughout the early 1900s, demand for Island County farmland increased as Americans moved west in search of agrarian-based financial independence. This westward movement was all too often a response to a widespread program initiated by the federal government's back-to-the-land agricultural programs, along with several private interest groups, to encourage migration. These private groups included chambers of commerce, lumber companies with vast holdings wanting to sell, realtors, bankers, and railroads.

On Whidbey Island, this national agrarian movement coincided with a shift from an economy based on farming and logging to one based on agriculture alone. This resulted from over-cutting of wooded areas on the island and the end of the Alaska gold rush and its accompanying demand for building materials.[27] A case in point was the Land Settlement Conference convened in Tacoma on January 20, 1928. Sponsors of the conference included the Washington State Chamber of Commerce, the Bloedel-Donovan Lumber Mills Company, the Great Northern Railway, a Tacoma realtor, the State Development Committee, and the chambers of commerce of both Seattle and Tacoma. The typical mill worker on the East Coast struggling through his twelve-hour days to support a family was easily persuaded by the well-financed propaganda of these special-interest groups to move to western Washington farmlands. Unfortunately, the supply of improved land was not as elastic as the demand for it.

The stream of would-be farmers and mill-refugees continued into Island County in the early 1900s. What most found, and ultimately settled for, was the

[26] Luxenberg and Gilbert, "Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve, National Register amendment" (1998, Section 8, p 60).
[27] Buerstatte, "Geography of Whidby Island," 118.

logged-over land, fields of stumps simply too expensive to clear. One option was simply to leave the stumps where they were and raise poultry or berries; another possible solution that had strong support was public financial assistance for land-clearing work.

Between 1913 and the 1950s, improved transportation links to the mainland significantly impacted agriculture around Penn Cove. Beginning in 1913, the ferry service that transported the new motor vehicles as well as workhorses across Deception Pass, signaled the beginning of an evolution in the transportation system that made markets in the populated cities of Anacortes, Everett and Bellingham, and Seattle more accessible to Whidbey Island farmers. Increased efficiency in steamer traffic in the 1910s and 1920s improved the ability of farmers on Whidbey Island to get their produce to markets.

Construction of the Deception Pass Bridge, which linked Whidbey Island to Fidalgo Island (already connected to the mainland by a bridge across a slough), had the greatest impact on farmers and all who lived on central Whidbey. An earnest movement for a bridge across the narrow, steep-sided Deception Pass began in 1928 when the Deception Pass Bridge Association formed to stir interest in constructing a bridge. Over many months, this group of private citizens met in different towns on Whidbey Island, including San de Fuca and Coupeville. In late October 1928, the *Island County Times* reported that:

> The recently organized Deception Pass Bridge Association is getting desirable publicity and endorsement from outside of the county, all of which will be of value in procuring the simple legislation which is asked, permission for Island and Skagit counties to give a franchise to some private individuals to construct a toll bridge across Deception Pass, [in order] to give our farmers access to the markets for their products without having to cross on private ferries.[28]

The campaign for this "farm to market bridge," as it was promoted, used 1925 agricultural census figures to build the strongest argument for bridge construction. "It appears," the *Island County Times* reported in late October 1928, "that there are more farms in Island County, than in any one of . . . fifteen [Washington] counties."[29]

Despite the efforts of this private association, seven years and the depths of the Great Depression passed before the Deception Pass Bridge was constructed in 1935. With the financial assistance of the depression-era work-relief Public Works Administration, the State of Washington awarded a contract for $304,755 to the Puget Construction Company of Seattle to construct two bridges: one

[28] "Friendly to a Bridge," *Island County Times,* October 26, 1928.
[29] "Farm to Market Bridge," *Island County Times,* October 26, 1928.

spanning Canoe Pass (between Fidalgo Island and Pass Island) and one across Deception Pass (between Pass Island and Whidbey Island). "Now that the handicap of transportation is being removed by the building of the Deception Pass Bridge," opined one contemporary writer, "it will be possible to get the produce to market quickly and it is to be expected that 'Paradise Island,' as the Indians called it, will develop rapidly as a consequence."[30]

These new developments in transportation encouraged central Whidbey Island farmers to diversify and to shift their emphasis to more specialized produce that was shipped to nearby urban centers on the western Washington mainland. In the 1910s, in addition to raising award-winning quantities of wheat,[31] farmers on the prairies around Penn Cove began raising dairy cows for milk and butter and hens for their eggs. Wheat yields on Ebey's Prairie continued to be large in the late 1910s and early 1920s (roughly seventy-five to seventy-seven bushels per acre). But grain farming gradually became supplanted by dairy and poultry farming.[32]

Evidence of this shift to dairy farming was reported in 1915 by the *Island County Times.* A front-page column of the June 11th issue presented the details of John Kinneth's recent purchase of thoroughbred Guernsey cows.

> Mr. John Kineth, of Smiths Prairie, who is one of the most progressive and up-to-date farmers on Whidby Island, has begun to fulfill a cherished wish of his to have a herd of thoroughbred Guernsey cattle and last week bought, of a Port Angeles party, four heifers and a cow of this noted breed. They are all register cattle and as Mr. Kineth already has a bull of the same breed he hopes to soon have the nucleus of a herd of these famous cows.[33]

A huge increase in poultry farming took place in the early 1910s, just before World War I. According to the April 25, 1913 issue of the *Island County Times,* 'five times as many people were in poultry in and around Coupeville as there had been five years ago.'[34] Although the high price of feed for hens caused some poultry farmers to struggle, others continued to raise hens and ship sizeable quantities of eggs to large urban markets. In May 1915, W. C. Schreck on Ebey's

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[30] "Deception Pass Bridge," *Compressed Air,* September 1935, 4834. Pamphlet file, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.
[31] "Describes Island County," *Island County Times,* March 13, 1914; "World's Record Wheat Crop," *Island County Times,* May 31, 1951.
[32] *Island County Times,* June 8, 1917 and September 7, 1923; Also see Richard White, *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change: The Shaping of Island County, Washington* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington, 1980), 128-31.
[33] "Buys Thoroughbred Guernsey Cows," *Island County Times,* June 11, 1915.
[34] *Island County Times,* April 25, 1913.

Prairie had 1,250 laying hens and shipped as many as sixteen cases of eggs each week.[35] At the beginning of World War I, the chicken hatchery business on Penn Cove was centered around Arnold's in San de Fuca. Relatively inexpensive land, low start-up costs, an optimum climate, and improved transport between Whidbey Island and the mainland all favored the rapid growth of the poultry industry in the 1910s.

Potatoes were also grown with substantial success on Ebey's Prairie in the 1910s. In the mid-1910s, the *Island County Times* reported that W. E. Boyer and son Freeman Boyer, who grew potatoes on the Abbott farm on Ebey's Prairie, harvested 470 sacks (28.25 tons) of potatoes from 1.3 acres in mid-October 1914. This was the largest yield of potatoes on Whidbey Island, the newspaper claimed. Perhaps buoyed by the Boyer's success, in early June 1917, John Armstrong planted twenty-acres of potatoes on his farm in nearby San de Fuca.[36]

A few prairie farmers also raised sheep as well as hogs in the 1910s and 1920s. Harry Smith of Ebey's Prairie shipped mutton to market in the mid-1910s. Carl Gillespie bought one thousand pounds of wool from Coupeville and San de Fuca area farmers and presumably sold it in Seattle.[37] Frank Pratt, who had moved to Ebey's Prairie in the early 1900s, also grazed sheep on parts of the original Jacob and Sarah Ebey donation land claim on Ebey's Prairie, which he had bought in the 1920s. The *Island County Times* reported sizeable shipments of hogs made by Alonzo Case and his sons in 1913 and Ebey's Prairie farmer Carl Engle in 1914.[38] Ernest Justice Hancock sent out seven head of dressed hogs in 1916.[39]

The depressed egg market in the 1930s caused several central Whidbey Island farmers to introduce turkey farming on a large scale. The relatively dry climate and the large quantity of available grain on the central and north end of the island made these areas well suited to raising turkeys.

During the early 1930s nut trees were introduced. By 1935, between three and four thousand filbert trees were growing on Glenn Darst's farm near San de Fuca and a thousand more on J. M. Pratt's farm near Oak Harbor. By 1935, berries were planted on 428 acres, including 351 acres of strawberries. In 1945, five acres near San de Fuca and five acres near Useless Bay produced almost 12,000 pounds of nuts from the 3,000 trees worth approximately $3,500 in 1945 dollars.[40]

Marketing farm produce in the early twentieth century was aided not only by new transportation links to the mainland and new farm products but also by the formation of farm cooperatives. Farm cooperatives, first formed during and

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[35] *Island County Times,* May 7, 1915.
[36] *Island County Times,* October 16, 1914 and June 8, 1917.
[37] *Island County Times,* October 16, 1914 and May 28, 1915.
[38] *Island County Times,* April 18, 1913 and October 16, 1914.
[39] *Island County Times,* May 5, 1916.
[40] Buerstatte, "Geography of Whidby Island," 61.

shortly after World War I, assisted Whidbey Island farmers in a number of ways. Cooperative transport of farm produce reduced freight charges.[41] Cooperatives helped farmers market their produce. Cooperatives had more political clout in enacting helpful farm legislation than individual farmers. And, cooperatives helped encourage the dissemination of agricultural educational information through state and federal extension services and programs.

Several cooperatives formed to aid central Whidbey Island farmers. A cooperative creamery that was formed in 1913 expanded into the Island County Dairymen's Association in 1926, merged briefly with the Consolidated Dairy Products Company of Seattle, and finally joined the Skagit County Dairymen's Association. A poultry cooperative was established at Langley during the First World War. It opened a receiving station at Oak Harbor in 1925. By 1930, the cooperative handled 70 percent of all eggs produced on the island. In fact, throughout the 1920s over 80 percent of all poultry and dairy products on the island were handled by cooperatives. In the early 1920s, berry growers formed two cooperatives: the Island County Fruit Growers Association on the north end of the island, and the Whidbey Island Berry Growers Association on the south end. The north end association lasted only a few years, until the yield declined below the financial break-even point. The berry growers' association on the south end of the island marketed its products through a company in Everett until the late 1920s, at which time the cooperative established its own berrying plant.[42]

Certain trends in farming on central Whidbey Island that had begun in the early twentieth century continued after the Great War. One, was decreasing farm size and increasing number of farms. The number of farms in Island County tripled between 1900 and 1920, while farm size diminished substantially.

During the 1920s, with a decade of depressed prices and market conditions for farmers generally throughout the nation, many more Whidbey Island farmers turned away from growing grains and grasses to raising cows and hens or they turned to other means of generating income, like fishing, working for a business in Coupeville or Oak Harbor, or getting a county government job. Some young people who wanted a life other than one of farming left the island to attend college and/or to seek employment in the Seattle area, especially during the 1920s when farm conditions were depressed.

During the depressed 1930s, the number of farms around Penn Cove grew while the size of farms diminished. This trend mirrored a trend throughout western Washington counties, where the number of farms increased approximately 25 percent and the size of farms decreased by around 10 percent between 1930

[41] Buerstatte, "Geography of Whidby Island," 66.
[42] Frederick Buerstatte, "The Geography of Whidby Island," Master's thesis, University of Washington, 1947, 49

and 1940.[43] On Whidbey Island, the July 25, 1935 issue of the *Whidbey Record* reported that there were 877 farms on the island; six of more than 500 acres, 149 between 50 and 100 acres, 320 between 20 and 50 acres, and 164 of fewer than 20 acres. In short, over two-thirds of the Whidbey Island farms of 1935 were smaller than 50 acres. Four-fifths of Whidbey Island farms were run by the farm owner.[44] Since there were few jobs and no money to be made off the farm, people grew their own food on their farm. By 1940, on the eve of World War II, there were approximately 1,044 farms throughout Island County, an increase of 167 in just five years.[45]

During the decade of the Great Depression, when many impoverished city-dwellers were forced to live in shanty towns known as "Hoovervilles," some fled to the country. The lack of opportunities in cities fueled the so-called "back-to-the-farm" movement and, no doubt, contributed to the trend toward the increase in the number of individual farms. The rural population of central Whidbey Island expanded as people came to the country to farm and grow their own produce in an effort to provide food for themselves and their family during these economic hard times.

By the end of World War II in 1945, most island occupations were directly or indirectly dependent upon agriculture. The general farmers on central Whidbey Island who raised poultry, dairy, grains, vegetables, and fruits provided almost all of the island's income. Businesses in Oak Harbor, Coupeville, and Langley were all dependent upon the farmer for business. In 1945, Whidbey Island had 35,745 acres in farms, and 26,677 of that, or almost four-fifths, were in pasture being utilized by dairy herds or poultry.

Of the 545 farms, 82 percent reported having one or more milk cows, 77 percent raised some chickens, and 20 percent raised some turkeys. Twenty-three percent of island farms derived most of their income from dairy products, 13 percent from chickens, 10 percent from turkeys, 8 percent from berries, nuts or fruits, and 4 percent from vegetable seeds or bulbs.[46]

In the summer of 1946, Frederick Buerstatte, a graduate student at the University of Washington, conducted an extensive inventory of farms on the island. Buerstatte found that farm size differed between the southern and northern ends of the island. The average northern farm had seventy-eight acres, whereas the average southern farm consisted of forty-four acres and was situated on predominately logged-over upland or woodland pasture. Only 22 percent of

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[43] Campbell Garrett Murphy, "Farmers on Cut-over Timber Lands in Western Washington State" (M.A. thesis, University of Washington, 1943), 15.
[44] *Whidbey Record*, July 25, 1935.
[45] Twelfth Census, 1900, Agriculture; Thirteenth Census, 1910, Agriculture; Fourteenth Census, 1920, Agriculture; Fifteenth Census, 1930, Agriculture; Sixteenth Census, 1940, Agriculture.
[46] Buerstatte, "Geography of Whidby Island," 76-77.

island land from which crops were harvested in 1945 was in the south end of the island. Two-thirds of the island's dairy herds, or about 1,800 milk cows, were pastured in the northern end of the island.[47]

Frederick Buerstatte found that the typical farm derived most of its income from dairy products, had about twenty cows, a few pigs or chickens, some ground in potatoes or corn, and, if in the northern end of the island, about eight acres in alfalfa; if in the southern end, about ten acres in sweet clover or timothy. He also found that most poultry farms were situated on central and north Whidbey Island and that the typical poultry farm had a flock of about 10,000 turkeys or chickens. The typical berry farm had eight acres in strawberries or loganberries; the typical vegetable farm had ten acres in squash, carrots, or peas; and the typical vegetable seed or bulb farm had between six and seven acres in cabbage, beets, tulips, daffodil, or iris bulbs.[48]

Harvesting From the Sea

Along with farmlands, the waters of Puget Sound surrounding Whidbey Island were harvested as well. In 1903, Anglo-American settlers installed the first commercial fish traps along Whidbey Island's south, west, and northern shores.[49] These traps were designed and constructed to allow migrating fish to easily enter them through wide openings. As the fish continued on their normal path of migration, the trap became progressively narrower to finally deliver the school into a large end pen. The only escape was for the fish to retrace their course and exit through the mouth of the trap, and that was contrary to the dictates of their evolutionary spawning needs.

The Anglo-American fish traps of the early twentieth-century did not functionally differ from the traps that had been used by American Indians for thousands of years. However, their construction techniques, massive size, and dense deployment resulted in a short-term efficiency, which in a long-term, ecological sense was profoundly inefficient. The traps efficiently captured the majority of fish following that particular spawning route. Consequently maintaining a balance between any given years' harvest and availability of the resource for the future was extremely inefficient.

By 1919, the value of all traps installed along the shores of Whidbey Island was estimated to be $143,500. Fish traps dotted the beaches at regular intervals from Deception Pass at the north end of the island to Greenbank at the south. A single trap adjacent to Ebey's Landing was approximately one-half mile long. At that time, fish trap manufacturing was one of Island County's most

[47] Buerstatte, "Geography of Whidby Island," 79.
[48] Buerstatte, "Geography of Whidby Island," 118.
[49] *Island County Times,* January 3, 1947.

important industries. Fish trapping gave many local people employment, especially during the years of depressed farming in the 1920s and 1930s.[50]

Typically, a small room would be built on top of the trap to provide shelter for the two or three employees. One man watched the traps. A minimum of four men was needed to unload each trap. The traps would capture large quantities of fish, many of which would die before being removed from the trap, as well as fish that were simply too small for commercial use or were of a noncommercial species. The existing record is unfortunately so cluttered with gross exaggerations by both opponents and proponents that an accurate approximation of harvest and waste numbers is nearly impossible to determine. However, some contemporaries maintained that over eighty per cent of fish captured in traps were discarded as waste and died.[51]

There were eleven traps installed in the Deception Pass area and twenty to twenty-five along the west shore of Whidbey Island. Pilings were driven into the seabed by steam engines aboard barges, and latticework of netting, brush or lath was constructed to connect the pilings, forming a massive funnel. Once installed, traps would indiscriminately capture fish twenty-four hours a day until the traps were removed at the end of that season.

Persons who wanted to establish fish traps in Island County were required to file an application with Island County and the application had to be accompanied by a map showing the proposed location and a general plan of the trap. An examination of the applications disclosed that most applicants were canneries on the mainland, and most of the larger traps were installed in the Deception Pass area or along the northwest shoreline of Whidbey Island. The Admiralty Bay area had some traps owned by John Troxell (1933-34), R. Linwood Davis and Margaret R. Nelson (1933), and local farmer Wilbur Sherman (1932-33)[52]

In the late 1920s, efforts began to outlaw both fish traps and purse seining in Puget Sound waters. Opponents argued that their ecological inefficiency (as distinguished from and because of their short-term capture efficiency) would cause a serious depletion and perhaps loss of the resource. Organizations such as Bremerton's Salmon Protective League and Tacoma's Fish Conservation League squared off against well-financed canneries before the state legislature starting in

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[50] Burton Engle, "Rumrunning, Fish-trapping in History of Ebey's Landing," *Whidbey News-Times,* January 3, 1974; Harry F. Giles, *The Advantages and Opportunities of the State of Washington for Homebuilders, Investors, and Travelers* (Olympia, WA: Bureau of Statistics, Immigration, State of Washington, 1929); *Island County Times,* January 3, 1974.

[51] *Island County Times,* June 6, 1928. Also see John Franklin Troxell, *Fish Trap Man, 1894-1934,* 26-27, 189.

[52] Island County Fish Trap Location Maps, 1905-1947, Washington State Archives, Northwest Region, Bellingham, Washington. Location 04621.

1928.[53] The traps were finally outlawed, but only after circumventing the Washington State Legislature and using the initiative process. The last year of fish trapping on Puget Sound was 1934.[54]

Commercial Centers, World War I to 1970s

The vitality of Coupeville began a slow decline in the 1910s. The much-younger town of Oak Harbor north of Penn Cove, settled by Dutch emigrants in the 1890s, had quickly established itself as the island's most flourishing farming community. Several events contributed to Oak Harbor's continued growth between 1910 and the 1950s. A 1913 ferry linked Oak Harbor to markets in Everett and Seattle. Around the same time, the Oak Harbor Producer's Cooperative Company, a consumer cooperative formed to ameliorate exorbitant freight charges, became a great success within three years. In the 1920s, Oak Harbor became home to the Washington Egg and Poultry Association receiving station. Oak Harbor also received a U. S. Postal Department office around the same time. In the 1920s, the Oak Harbor population remained constant, unlike Coupeville and other Whidbey Island communities that lost residents who left farms for better paying jobs in cities on the mainland.

In the Great Depression of the 1930s, Oak Harbor (as well as Langley, Swantown, and San de Fuca) attracted more new residents than did Coupeville during a nation-wide "back-to-the-land" movement and the construction of the Deception Pass Bridge in the mid-1930s. And, in 1942, the establishment of various military installations, including a seaplane base near Crescent Harbor (east of Oak Harbor), and a bomber base at Ault Field in Clover Valley (north of Oak Harbor), quadrupled Oak Harbor's size.[55]

In contrast, Coupeville's population actually declined 19 percent during the 1930s. And even though it did receive its first sewer treatment plant, built by the depression-era work-relief program of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1938 and a new school, built by the WPA in 1941, Coupeville's commercial center suffered economically.[56]

Between 1910 and 1945, Oak Harbor's gain resulted in setbacks for Coupeville. The town's population dropped from around 600 in 1910, to 400 in 1920, and then to 300 in both 1930 and 1940. At the end of World War II, the population had increased slightly, possibly due to the influx of military personnel and their families to the naval base in nearby Oak Harbor. The 1950 census, reported in the local newspapers, showed that Coupeville had a population of 374,

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[53] *Island County Times,* June 6, 1928 and October 26, 1929.
[54] Engle, "Rumrunning, Fish-trapping in History of Ebey's Landing."
[55] Buerstatte, "Geography of Whidby Island," 66-67.
[56] Sheridan, *Coupeville,* 17-18.

a gain of only 49 persons over the last decade. In comparison, Oak Harbor's population had jumped from 376 in 1940 to 1,180 in 1950, largely due to growth associated with the nearby Naval Air Station. In 1950, Coupeville, with 427 people, once the largest town in Island County, ranked third in size, after Oak Harbor and Langley (located on southern Whidbey Island).[57]

Despite this slight population increase, the physical appearance of Coupeville's Main Street had suffered from decades of economic hard times and neglect. By the early 1950s, Coupeville looked beleaguered.

> With the exception of the courthouse and a few retail establishments, [Coupeville] resembled a ghost town, . . . most of the buildings are old and weatherbeaten and many are deserted. The Indian war canoes, the blockhouse at Alexander's, and the partially torn-down buildings along the waterfront are reminiscent of the Indian period when Coupeville was the center of culture on the island.[58]

During this same period (1940s), the Prairie Center Mercantile, a mile south of Coupeville at the intersection of Main Street and Terry Road on Ebey's Prairie, expanded its business by supplying Fort Casey and the U. S. Navy with needed supplies. The owners, the Moritz Pickard family, expanded their business further after the war. They opened a Honda motorcycle dealership. The mercantile store became a commercial and social center in the community. The Pickards owned the Prairie Center Mercantile Center until 1972.[59]

During the 1950s and 1960s, Coupeville, experienced substantial growth for the first time in several decades. Here as in nearly every community across the country, there was a post-World War II explosion in births and in population growth generally. In 1953, Coupeville boasted a population of 545 persons.[60] By 1960, Coupeville claimed to have a population of 740 people. In 1980, Coupeville's population reached more than 1,000.[61]

In addition to a population increase, Coupeville's town boundaries expanded after World War II. Between 1953 and 1979, the Coupeville town council approved eleven annexations, increasing the town from 249 acres (at the time of incorporation in 1910) to nearly 700 acres, about three times its original size. In 1956, the town bought the Fort Casey well field and water system (about

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[57] "Final Census Totals Give County 11,079," *Island County Times,* April 19, 1951; "Final 1950 Census Figures Released," *Island County Times,* October 18, 1951.
[58] Quoted in Buerstatte, "Geography of Whidby Island," 64.
[59] Sheridan, *Coupeville,* 53.
[60] "Coupeville Places 174th in Wash. State Census of Incorp. Towns, 545 Pop.," *Island County Times,* July 29, 1953.
[61] Sheridan, *Coupeville,* 19.

five miles south of town), and over the next several years extended both its water and sewer system through the newly annexed areas. Prairie Center was the first annexed area, followed by Sunset Terrace, and, in 1959, Parker Road, to the east. Between 1960 and 1970, the Madrona Vista subdivision, the Gospel Chapel property, and the Krueger Farm (in town between Coveland and today's Highway 20) were brought into the town boundaries. Although much of the annexed land was vacant, a great deal of it was later platted and developed.[62]

During this period of robust growth, Coupeville's commercial district changed dramatically. In response to demands placed on Island County government during the immediate post-war boom, a much larger Art Moderne-style courthouse was built on Main Street in 1949 (facing the water, once the old entrance into town). The old 1891 courthouse was razed, causing a massive public outcry that finally culminated in the creation of the local historical society. In 1972, a large courthouse annex was added; this was remodeled in 2003. A new justice center was completed adjacent to these properties in 2002. Beginning in the late 1970s, Coupeville began a transformation into a tourist destination. Front Street, once a place that serviced the everyday needs of the residents became a tourist destination filled with gift shops and restaurants. A new shopping center opened several blocks away from Front Street's waterfront vantage point, and multiple annexations changed the very shape of the town. These changes in Whidbey Island, and in Coupeville reflected broader nation-wide and world wide changes.

Throughout the first half of the 20th century, Whidbey Island was either thrust into the broader currents of the world, or had world tides rudely crash against its shores. This was a time when the nation and the world saw two wars, a massive economic depression, and the exponential acceleration of technological developments, including the popularization of the automobile, and the commercialization of air travel – all events that served to dramatically shrink the world. Many Whidbey Island residents were introduced to a wider world when they left the island to participate in the wars; island residents who stayed home had the wider world brought to them by an entire cadre of outsiders who arrived on the island to be stationed at one of the island's military installations. Island residents substantially modify their lives as best they could to accommodate their loss of economic affluence during the Great Depression, and carefully monitored national and world events looking for some indication of hope. Farming, once region-specific, became nationally and internationally focused, as did manufacturing, and travel. Post-war prosperity delivered housing, industry, hope, and a sense that all would be well. But, with that prosperity came pressures to tear down, modify, alter, remove, "improve," "develop," and "modernize." In short, that prosperity brought with it serious threats to the island's physical environment, the very environment that told its history. It was this very threat of the

[62] Sheridan, *Coupeville*, 19-21.

destruction of the island's past, coupled with a world-awareness that resulted from watching two world wars and a world-wide depression that engendered a sense of the unique role the island could play. The island could strive to remain as it was, remain as a reminder of a gentler time. Whether that gentler time had been real or was imagined was irrelevant. With the automobile and the airplane, the tourists would come to slow their respiration and bask in the silence of small farms, country lanes, and wood-framed shops. This time of wars and depression helped Whidbey Island to more clearly see the world, and define a lasting role.

Chapter 10

Recreation
Late 1800-1970s

Recreation on Whidbey Island and the Reserve has been and continues to be focused on the environment, specifically the gently undulating fields periodically accented by spires of evergreens, embraced by tidal waters. Over the two hundred years of Euro-American presence, the environment has evolved from being a source of natural resources to use and of sensory delight to one that provides both a sense of the island's beauty as well as its human history.

The Island's Historic Praises Echo through Time

Descriptions of Whidbey Island by early explorers were prophetic of a theme that would repeatedly surge across the island, much like the rush of tidal waters. Explorers stood aboard decks in the late 1700s and described the island as being reminiscent of pastoral English countryside, a countryside of green, gently rolling tranquility, accented by the spires of fir trees, and embraced by the green waters of the sound caressing the island's stone-laden beaches. Faint echoes of those descriptions first brought the "back-to-nature" outdoor lovers and romantics of the late 1800s seeking to commune with nature (such as Frank Pratt), the motorists of the 1910s and 1920s seeking to speed through it, and the hunters and fishers who continued the 11,000-year tradition of harvesting marine resources. Almost two hundred years after the first motoring tourists, those historic descriptions have reemerged to the accompaniment of throbbing steamships, docking with hundreds of weekend sightseers, and the drone of automobiles delivered by ferries or the Deception Pass Bridge.

If there is a single theme permeating the Anglo-American experience of Whidbey Island, however, it is one of an attempt to honor and celebrate the island for what it is. The litany of celebration frequently took the form of day visits, wandering through the forests, across the prairies, or along the beaches. Some celebrations were more protracted with stays at inns and resorts, and some became life-long covenants manifested by the construction of summer cabins or, later, retirement homes. Sometimes successful, sometimes disastrously unsuccessful, attempts to keep Whidbey Island as Whidbey Island have continued to effervesce to the surface of island consciousness since the first Euro-Americans came ashore

with pockets filled with seeds. Central Whidbey Island, west and south of Penn Cove, is unlike Hilton Head, South Carolina, which has been studiously transformed from a barrier island to a massive golf course, or Catalina, California, which has been fenced, or the southern half of California, which has been drowned in the Pacific Ocean under a mass of glitter, or Oak Harbor, north of Penn Cove, where water transported from Skagit has permitted the town and Navy base to grow and develop. Central Whidbey Island, some of which is now contained in the Ebey's Landing NHR, has remained remarkably unchanged and, for that reason, worthy of preservation, and an attraction to tourists.

Environment as Business

The perpetuation of Whidbey Island has not always been the result of benevolent motives. The island's beauty has long been perceived by its residents as an "asset." Its prairies, forests, expansive beaches, and breath-taking vistas have long been considered negotiable commodities that could be "leveraged" (as financiers enjoy saying), into the affluence of its residents. As early as 1901, Whidbey Island was promoting itself as a tourist destination. Promotional literature likened it to other places that were appealing and more familiar to readers than the remote Whidbey Island, by then a place in the backwater of bustling activity and growth on the mainland. On November 22, 1901, the *Island County Times* editorialized:

> If you want to see New England, and cannot travel far, come over to Whidby Island. So the contented and prosperous farmers on the island are fond of saying to their friends on the mainland. And truly there is much to remind one of a New England farming community in the fine fertile fields, the big comfortable-looking houses and barns, and the old orchards and gardens. . . . Summer excursionists and tourists are coming to appreciate the island for its hospitable homes, its beautiful woods, fine bicycle paths, and most of all, for beach.[1]

Central Whidbey Island's connection with the East, particularly New England, continued in the early twentieth century when it was first promoted as a tourist attraction and summer resort. A short paragraph in the July 29, 1904 issue of the *Island County Times* newspaper reported that visitors from not only Puget Sound cities, but "eastern points" had stayed at the San de Fuca Hotel during their visit to Whidbey Island.

[1] *Island County Times,* November 22, 1901.

Frank J. Pratt may have been a typical early twentieth-century tourist. Born and educated in Massachusetts, Pratt practiced international law in New York City and for the U.S. federal government before moving to Seattle in 1897, after being introduced to the West by Robert Lansing (later President Woodrow Wilson's secretary of state). Pratt first came to Whidbey Island around 1900 as a visitor.[2] He reportedly stayed occasionally at the Ferry house as a guest. New Englanders like Pratt may have nostalgically associated the rounded, glaciated terrain, small farm fields, and rocky ocean shoreline with certain areas in southern New England in the mid-1800s.

In the summer of 1913, the newspaper was still unabashedly promoting tourism, most likely focusing on those navigating the countryside aboard their new automobiles.

Whidbey Island merchants and local steamship lines produced their own promotional literature as well. A six-page brochure, complete with a 11 x 17 inch map of the island that was published sometime prior to 1929, included panoramic photographs captioned with phrases such as "delightfully romantic," "civic charm," "restful poise surrounded by pastural [sic] beauty," and "air perfumed with the tang o' the sea."[3] Another example of promotional literature, this one from the late 1940s, reported that, "Whidbey Island is one of the leading beauty spots of the Pacific Northwest," and promised that, "the fresh, salt air is stimulating, and one may find rest and quiet for tired nerves." "Whidbey is the angler's paradise," it boasted, and concluded that, "residents of beautiful Whidbey Island enjoy life to the fullest extent. Ideal climate, superb scenery, varied outdoor sports and community activities, assure 'a heap o' living'."[4]

Visitors: Petticoats and Waistcoats, Guns and Creels

And, they came. First by steamboat then by car. First to take a days' walk through nature, then to spend a weekend or a summer week. In early June of 1901 the steamer *Skagit Queen* arrived in Coupeville with one hundred visitors from Mt. Vernon. The boat's captain, Captain McDonald, expected to establish bi-weekly excursion runs throughout the summer. Another forty sightseers arrived on board the tug *Independent* to spend the day visiting the island.[5] Three years later, on June 10, 1904, the local paper reported the arrival of 400 visitors in Coupeville. The Fort Casey band met the visitors on the dock to escort the group

[2] "Services are Held for Frank J. Pratt, Retired Attorney," *Island County Times,* January 4, 1940.
[3] "Romantic Whidby Island," Brochure. Seattle: Whidby Island Ferry Lines, n.d.
[4] "Whidbey Island: Paradise of the Puget Sound Country," Oak Harbor, WA: Central Whidbey Island Chamber of Commerce, n.d.
[5] *Island County Times,* June 14, 1901.

to the fort for dinner and a "spirited" baseball game.[6] And, on June 22, 1904, the newspaper reported that an excursion of approximately 250 sightseers arrived from Burlington on the steamer *Elwood* the preceding Wednesday. According to the article:

> The boat arrived at 2 o'clock and departed at 8 o'clock in the evening. Most of the crowd spent the intervening time visiting Fort Casey and other places of interest on the Island. The popularity of Coupeville as a summer resort increases annually and all visitors are assured a royal good time.[7]

Visitors came for more than baseball, band music and sightseeing. They came to fish and to hunt as well. Sport bird hunting was begun as early as 1872 when Orange Jacobs, who would later become a King County Superior Court Judge, J. B. Montgomery, who built the Northern Pacific line to Tacoma from Kalama (southwest Washington Street), and Judge Wingard released sixteen pairs of bob-whites, imported from Pennsylvania on Whidbey Island. By 1928, Portus Baxter, sports editor of the Seattle *Post-Intelligencer*, reported that Whidbey Island was one of the leading bird hunting areas in the State of Washington. Migrations of androgynous fishes into and out of the sound passed the shores of Whidbey Island and had beckoned humans for over 11,000 years. The first island residents had based their entire livelihood in large part on the ebb and flow of the enormous schools of salmon for generations. Euro-Americans harvested the pink-fleshed delicacy as well. Not only did mainland canneries construct enormous fish traps off the shores of Whidbey Island, the island attracted fisher people from Mt Vernon and Seattle since before statehood. The early salmon-seekers were a hale and hardy lot who rowed back and forth through the waters of the Sound, pulling lures through the water. In the late 1920s, area residents "discovered" spinning. Rather than raise painful calluses by pulling on a boat's oars, the new sport involved sitting in a stationary boat and casting a bait fish out into the water. The bait fish was affixed to the hook in such a way that the act of retrieving it would cause it to spin in the water. Apparently, any salmon in the immediate neighborhood would find the spinning undulation of the little bait fish irresistibly alluring, and would drop whatever it had been doing to surge through the waters in reckless pursuit of the delicate morsel. On June 22, 1928, the *Island County Times* observed that an article had appeared in a Seattle newspaper describing the new sport of "spinning for salmon."

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[6] *Island County Times,* June 10, 1904.
[7] *Island County Times,* June 22, 1904.

The *Times* continued:

> Such stories as this ought to result in a considerable increase in the number of sporting visitors. Certainly it should when they realize that salmon can be caught in the waters adjacent to Whidby Island practically every month in the year, although until the recognized salmon season opens the fish are usually small.[8]

Responding to the Demand

Local Whidbey Island residents, seeing not only tourist footprints in the sand, but clearly seeing the writing on the wall as well, began catering to the visitors' needs. Resorts, wharfs and other dockage for steamboats, improved roadways, parks, footpaths, restaurants, boat rentals, and boathouses all bloomed at various locations around Penn Cove. In 1904, Lester Still began constructing a resort on heavily wooded land he had purchased near Coveland at the western end of Penn Cove. The area would later become known as Still's Park. According to the *Island County Times,* "Attorney Still is improving his property known as Barstow's Point, clearing it and building a large pavilion. He expects to have an up-to-date summer resort here in time."[9] Still was not guessing at the future of tourism, he was responding to an existing Island industry, an industry expected to grow. By 1907, Still had completed a two-story inn known as the Whid-Isle Inn, as well as some wood-frame cabins. The Inn was constructed of logs and had a second story porch that completely encircled the building.[10] Steamboat vacationers disembarked on the resort's wharf and spent their vacations boating, fishing, swimming, and strolling through the woods around Penn Cove. Still's resort coincided with a growing awareness on the island that tourism represented a potentially viable industry for the island. In May of 1904, the local newspaper had bemoaned what it perceived as an absence of amenities on the island for tourists:

> The excursion season is upon us, and Coupeville is doing nothing to entertain visitors, or encourage them to come again. A few dollars would fix up a park for excursionists that would make them want to come again. By a little effort Coupeville could have two or three excursions every week during the summer months. The people of Everett and Seattle want to

[8] *Island County Time,* June 22, 1928.
[9] "San de Fuca Notes," *Island County Times,* May 20, 1904.
[10] Photograph of Whid-Isle Inn taken c. 1912, photographer unknown. University of Washington collection.

> come here for a day's recreation, but it is up to the people of this place to do the right thing by them.[11]

In 1905, the State Hotel opened in Coupeville, operated by Alex and White. It had a restaurant as well as offering lodging.[12] There was also lodging south of Penn Cove. The Ebey House, also called the Ferry House, offered lodging for visitors.

> On the west side of the island, just across from Coupeville, is a delightful home for the summer boarder, at Ebey's Landing. The big airy house was built for a hotel when boats plied daily between this point and Port Townsend, six miles across the straits. Here is a wide field for enjoyment. A fifteen minute spin on the wheel takes one into town, over as pretty a road as one would care to travel. And here is the beach, not always tame, for the swell of the Pacific reaches well up the straits and at high tide the road of the white-caps is invigorating. At ebb tide the shore is rich with life.[13]

The following decades saw the development of other tourism-based facilities. Just east of the Whid-Isle Inn resort, the Smith family built a number of cabins in the 1910s and 1920s. Kennedy's Lagoon, another resort, opened in the same area in the 1920s. And time would prove the profitability of tourism. The August 1, 1913, *Island County Times* reported that the steamer *Gleaner* from Mount Vernon brought about 400 "excursionists" to Still's Park on the preceding Sunday.[14]

Of Automobiles, Bridges, New Roads and New Centers

By the late 1920s, automobiles were becoming commonplace, generally, in America and, to a lesser extent, on Whidbey Island. They brought campers, beachcombers, fishers, and swimmers. The automobile transformed recreational travel from a pursuit limited to the wealthy into an activity enjoyed by those of more modest financial means as well. The automobile not only increased the sheer number of visitors to the island, it added new demands for islanders to satisfy – improved roads, additional roads, and automobile-service businesses. The arrival of the tourists' automobile also decentralized tourism businesses on the island. Just as the automobile resulted in the dispersal of populations out into the

[11] *Island County Times,* May 27, 1904.
[12] *Island County Times*, March 3, 1905.
[13] *Island County Times,* November 22, 1901.
[14] *Island County Times*, August 1, 1913.

Illustration 25. This ad for Buick is just one of several similar advertisements for autos that appeared every week in the *Island County Times* (August 3, 1928).

American countryside to create suburbia, the arrival of the tourist automobile on Whidbey Island encouraged dispersal of tourist support businesses. Gasoline stations, restaurants, resorts, boating facilities, and public beaches and campgrounds continued to be spread widely across the island.

Had the automobile not become part of the tourist equation, one can logically conjecture that centers such as Coupeville would have become much more densely populated with recreational infrastructure businesses. There would have been more restaurants, more gas stations, more motels, and more docking facilities. Tourists would have arrived by boat and remain relatively geographically stationary, centralizing the economic demands created by their presence. If there were no automobiles in the equation, there would have been no Deception Pass Bridge and its associated park in the 1930s. There would have been no automobile ferries constructed that transported vehicles, beginning in the 1950s, to Keystone Ferry Landing. And, there would have been no Highway 20 constructed in the 1970s, which spawned a small burst of development along it at Prairie Center. In short, the combination of tourism and the automobile played a large role in shaping the cultural landscape of the island.

The 1920s saw an increased demand for summer homes as well as improved roads. Again, the automobile played a cardinal role. With automobile travel, population and economic centers such as Seattle moved within easy reach of the island in terms of time required to make the trip. What was once a bi-monthly outing aboard a steamboat in the early 1900s became a weekly escape by family car beginning in the 1920s. Additionally, since an auto-touring family would have its own transportation when they arrived on the island, the entire island was open for exploration. Not only could they now get to the island with ease, they could go anywhere on the island they wished. That awareness of on-island mobility led to the obvious conclusion that a weekend or summer cabin or home was a realistic possibility.

The 1920s and 1930s saw summer homes built on Blower's Bluff, Snakelum Point, Long Point and Good Beach. A 167-lot subdivision plat was filed for Beverley Beach on Holmes Harbor on July 6, 1928. The developer was D. A. Duryee, an Everett real estate salesman. He expected to sell the lots for summer home construction:

> The platting of the new addition is evidently with the purpose of making provision for country homes for those who have found the beauties of the resort, the fine fishing opportunities and who may feel disposed to get permanent possession of a camp site in that vicinity.[15]

[15] *Island County Times,* July 6, 1928.

By the end of the 1920s, tourism had become a significant economic activity on the island, and the Great Depression of the 1930s hurt the island's economy as it did the rest of the nation. Construction slowed and stopped, road maintenance and the building of new roads either didn't occur or when it did it was a gift of the federal government through the Civilian Conservation Corps. The tourists stayed home. The frantic activity associated with World War II, which gave new life to manufacturing, did not enliven island tourism. Fuel rationing kept Seattle in Seattle, and Whidbey Island resorts empty.

However, after World War II and by the late 1940s, the construction of vacation homes along Penn Cove resumed, and by the early 1950s much of the beachfront property along the cove had been subdivided for residential use. Lloyd B. Patton of Patton's Realty and Insurance, purchased approximately fifty acres of land once part of the John Kinneth donation land claim. The purchase included 3,000 feet of beach. The land was one mile east of Coupeville, a quarter mile west of Rhodena Beach and a half-mile west of Snakelum Point. Patten announced he would divide the acreage into approximately 103 lots, and would provide a year-round harbor for residents to moor their boats. Patton's first development was known as Patton's Pastures which he built in 1944.

All of the earliest vacationers and tourists who came to central Whidbey Island stayed at or built small cabins or cottages designed for seasonal use. Even those dwellings that were later converted to year round residences and were weatherized and expanded somewhat usually remained modest. The scale of these structures was similar to many of the old historic dwellings in Coupeville, built by merchants who experienced long periods of lean times.

In the 1940s, Whidbey Island continued to be promoted as "romantic" by transportation companies and any other business that might benefit from attracting tourists and summer vacationers. Although recreational travel to the island dropped during World War II due to the strict rationing of gasoline, Whidbey Island once again lured urban dwellers, after the war ended. Americans' fervent desire to look away from the world and inward after the war, to resume a "normal" life with their families, and to experience the restful relaxation of outdoor recreation, helped make Whidbey Island increasingly popular. Additionally, post-World War II middle-class families had enough money to expend on vacations, and Deception Pass Bridge made the island more accessible. The "romantic" Whidbey Island gave the public relief from the stresses of years of war and war-time shortages, as well as a place where they could be reminded of an (imagined) simpler pastoral agrarian past.

History and Preservation: Promises to the Future

A social phenomenon that gained momentum throughout the United States in the late 1940s and continued to grow through the 1950s was destined to initially retard and finally cause a partial arrest of the island building boom. The United States, as well as Whidbey Island, became aware of and interested in their history. The Sunday magazine supplement of *The Seattle Times, Pacific Parade,* exemplified the phenomenon by presenting the history of Whidbey Island as its feature article on September 8, 1946.[16] Newspapers of the 1950s frequently ran history columns, and the *Island County Times* was no exception. The *Times* devoted over fifty column-inches, including ten column inches on the front page above the fold, to pioneer history. The October 29, 1953 issued featured a photograph of Island County's first courthouse on page one above the fold; the February 17, 1955, issue dedicated almost twenty column-inches to the history of the Kellogg-Terry wagon train as some of its members headed for the island, and continued the story in its February 24th and March 3rd issues.[17] The newspaper mourned the loss to fire of the oldest barn in the county (located south of present-day Prairie Center) on the front page of its April 7, 1955, issue; provided the reader with a history of a pioneer home built in 1859 by Hill Harmon in its July 21, 1955, issue; and celebrated the dedication of a 100-year-old blockhouse in its January 6, 1955 issue.

Interest in and pride of history continued to grow through the 1960s and into the 1970s, as small communities and the entire nation prepared to celebrate the country's bicentennial of rebellion against England in 1776. It was manifested by increased memorialization through markers and plaques such as those so widely distributed by Daughters of the American Revolution. It was demonstrated by a growing sense of protectionism for physical manifestations of that history, most particularly buildings and places where important events occurred, or houses where people were born, lived or died. This protectionism was institutionalized through the adoption and implementation of historic districts and their associated design and zoning restrictions.

Importantly, this growth of a sense of historic pride added another important facet to the tourism industry on Whidbey Island. Not only did the island offer the tranquil, bucolic vistas first described by the Euro-American visitors of the late 1700s and perpetuated by romantic tourists and islanders alike, it could also offer the visitor a glimpse of American history. It was not just another pretty island – it was an island of heritage with substance. An island upon which America, according to the more romantic of historians, wrestled "civilization" from the wilderness with little more than determination, a horse-drawn plow, and divine destiny; won an honorable and just struggle with the

[16] "Historic Whidby Island," *Pacific Pride Magazine, The Seattle Sunday Times,* September 8, 1946.

[17] *Island County Times,* October 24, 1953; February 17, 1953; February 24, 1953; and March 3, 1953.

British for dominion; fought wind and tide with canvas and later with steam; and stood brave and defiant with cannon against all foreign enemies. Even to the more realistic historian, who perceived the story of the island in a less theatrical but nonetheless significant light, its history demanded telling, not only in narrative, but also through its cultural landscapes—the physical, visual evidence of human history on the landscape. Perhaps more importantly in its cultural landscapes.

National interest in history and its romance coincided with local interest in central Whidbey Island's historic little-altered town of Coupeville and its cultural landscapes of the past. In the 1960s, this national interest took form in significant federal legislation to protect and preserve tangible evidence of the past. In 1966, Congress passed the National Historic Preservation Act, which established a register of historic properties. Half a century earlier, Frank J. Pratt, tourist-turned-resident of central Whidbey Island had spent his own money to purchase, commemorate, and protect (by not destroying) properties that had once been most of the two Ebey families' donation land claims on Ebey's Prairie. His efforts to "save" a few Ebey structures and associated historic landscapes faintly mirrored efforts made in the East, around the same time, to perpetuate places like George Washington's home at Mount Vernon and colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, using private capital. Federal legislation in 1966 lent broad federal government support to preservation efforts, and ushered in an era of public preservation awareness and education.

In September 1972 the Town Council of Coupeville enacted an ordinance establishing an historic overlay zone encompassing a part of the area within the town limits. In October of the same year, the Board of County Commissioners for Island County enacted an ordinance establishing the Central Whidbey Historic Preservation District, which included the historic overlay zone. In December 1973, the Central Whidbey Historic Preservation District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, known as the "Central Whidbey Island Historic District."[18]

At the request of Louise Dewey, Secretary of the Pioneer Square Association, the representatives of the National Trust for Historic Preservation visited the island in September of 1973. The field report of that visit states, in part:

> Within both districts, one finds areas of considerable open space, much of it in agricultural use. Historic sites and structures, timbered hills, open prairie lands and water are inextricably bound to one another. In this respect, the area impressed us as a most fragile environment, which requires the most thoughtful planning to assure its preservation and

[18] Letter from Charles H. Odegaard, Executive Director, Washington State Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, to Miss Jimmie J. Cook, Island County Historical Society, December 27, 1973.

> appropriate contemporary use.In sum, Central Whidbey Island and Coupeville represent an important human and natural environment well worth the effort to retain.
>
> Preservation/conservation and progress are not mutually exclusive, but in such environments, creative, innovative planning is a prime requisite to an orderly progression of events, assuring that what development does take place is a positive contribution to the community. The determinations necessary to decide what makes a positive contribution are based upon the physical effects on the natural landscape, the psychological effects upon the people who both live in the area and visit it, and its economic effect upon the community. All are important and interrelated.[19]

Interestingly, some of the visitors from the National Trust were much more enthusiastic when they expressed themselves outside the constraints of institutionalized correspondence. During an interview by Teri Torrence of the *Whidbey News-Times*, Carol Galbreath, one of the National Trust visitors from that organization's San Francisco office, said, "The people here are sitting on a treasure, and they should be alerted to the value of it." Galbreath continued: "The Coupeville area is quite unique. It has the distinction of being on the National Register of Historic Places, and with good reason. There are very few communities like it because of its size and large open spaces." Galbreath reported that most districts listed on the National Register were within urban areas. Very few, she said are situated in a "stunning" natural environment, and few have large open spaces incorporated into their historical district.[20]

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[19] Letter "Field Report," from Robertson Collins, Carol Galbreath, and John L. Frisbee to file, National Trust for Historic Preservation, February 4-5, 1974.
[20] Quoted in Teri Torrence, "Historical District gets more attention," *Whidbey News-Times*, February 7, 1974.

Maps

Town of Coupeville Historic Buildings List and Map

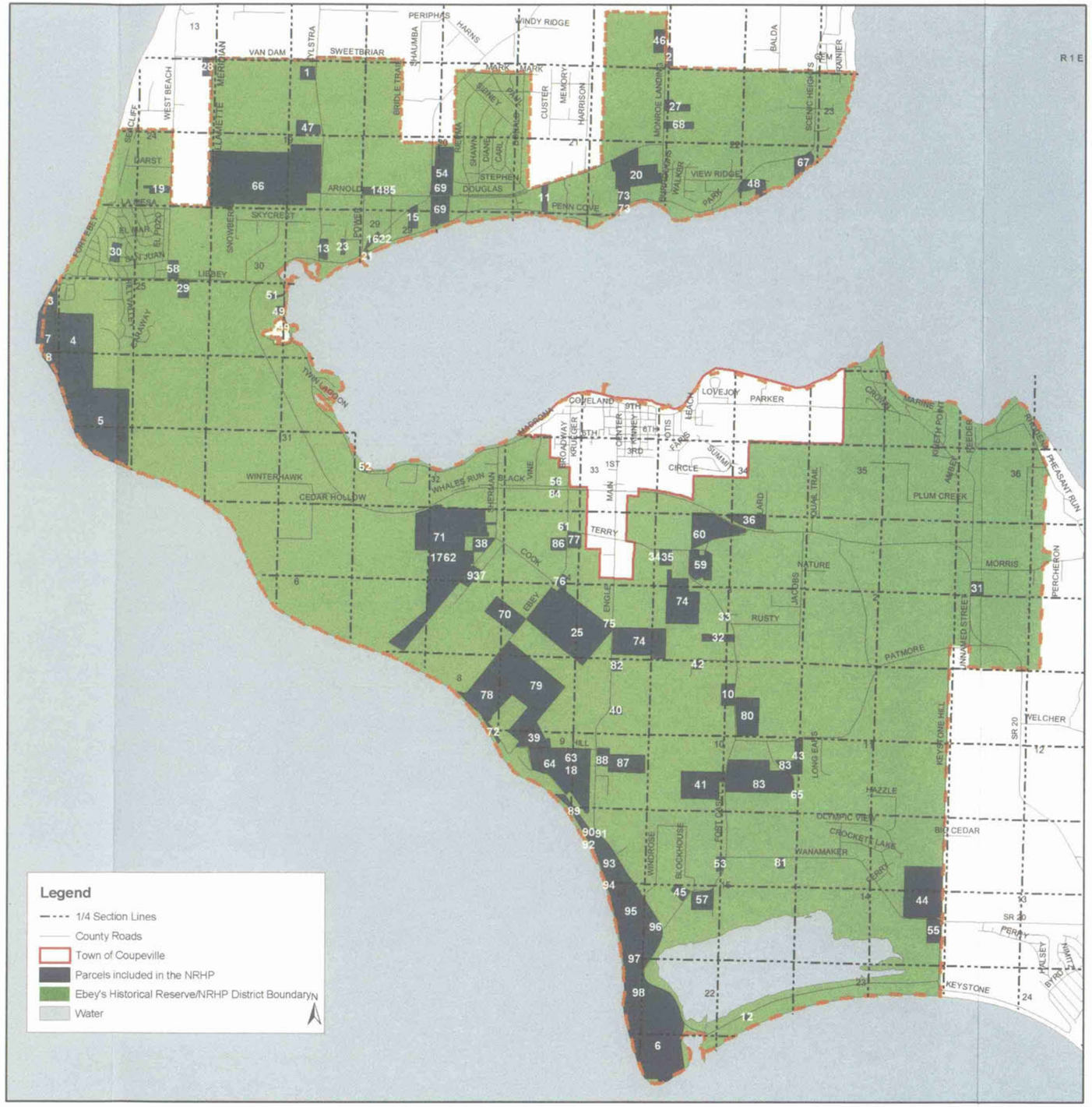
(Historic properties are keyed to map)

map #	NAME	STREET	PARCEL NO
1	*No number 1 on map*		
2	Wharf Warehouse and Dock	NW Front & NW Alexander	R13233-413-3650
3	Alexander Blockhouse	906 NW Alexander	R13233-397-3390
4	Fire Hall Museum	903 NW Alexander	S6025-00-07009
5	Holbrook Forrester House	805 NW Alexander	R13233-352-3600
6	Hockenbury House	803 NW Grace St	13233-344-3760
7	Telephone Exchange Bldg	902 North Main	S 7248-00-00000-0
8	The Bungalow AP Engle House	808 N Main	R13233-358-3900
9	Leach House	801 N Main	S6415-00-11003
10	Blowers Sewell House	710 N Main	R13233-326-3900
11	Kineth Sr House	702 N Main	R13233-308-3870
12	Methodist Church	608 N Main	R 13233-308-3740
13	Gillespie House	606 N Main	R13233-286-381
14	Highwarden House	604 N Main	R13233-282-3880
15	Jenne (Jacob) House	602 N Main	R 13233-277-3850
16	Dr. White Office	602 N Main	R13233-277-3850
17	Higgins House	506 N Main	R13233-264-3900
18	Joe Libbey House	308 N Main	R13233-264-3900
19	Rev. Lindsey House	206 N Main	13233-180-395
20	Congregational Church	207 N Main	R 13233-184-4240
21	Nichols House	208 S Main	R13104-490-3930
22	Sgt. Clark House	301 S Main	R13104-493-4210
23	Newberry House	305 S Main	R 13104-427-3800
24	Chapman House	402 S Main	R 13104-427-3800
25	Pat's Place	403 S Main	R13104-427-3800
26	Dixon House	404 S Main	R13104-4283940
27	Jenne (Will) House	508 S Main	S7246-00-00012
28	Wanamaker House	607 S Main	R131 04-331-4200
29	Coates House	608 S Main	R13104-355-3820
30	Barrett House	707 S Main	R13104-278-4510
31	Masonic Lodge	804 N Main	R13233-344-3870
32	Morris House	405 NE Center	S6415-00-32002
33	Clark (Ed) House	403 NE Center	S6415-00-32003
34	Howell House	401 NE Center	S6415-00-39004
35	Ives House/Jefferds rental house	803 NE Haller	S6415-0013-007-0
36	Stark House	801 NE Haller	S6415-00-13007

map #	NAME	STREET	PARCEL NO
37	Albert Kineth House	703 NE Haller	S6415-00-19000-0
38	Morris House	406 NE Haller	S6415-00-32007
39	Harpole Maternity Home	404 NE Haller	S6415-00-32007
40	Gillespie House	704 Main	R13233-308-387
41	Charles Angel/Rojas House	605 NE Gould	S6425-00-04001-0
42	Newcomb Structure	N side of NE Leach east of 1104	R13234-434-133
43	Newcomb House	1104 NE Leach	R13234-434-133
44	Benson House/Bowers House	1005 NE Leach [demolished]	R13234-412-175
45	Benson Dole House	805 NE Leach	S7215-00-01001
46	Mock House	801 NE Leach	S7215-00-01004-0
47	Johnson House	701 NE Leach	S7215-00-02005-0
48	Booth House	707 NE Lindsey	S6420-00-0005-2
49	King House	706 NE Lindsey	S6420-00-0005-3
50	Black House	701 NW Madrona W	R 13233-313-1720
51	Dr. White House	605 NW Madrona W	R13233-322-1850
52	E.O. Lovejoy House	1209 NE Leisure	S6310-00-00011
53	Bergman Structure	1306 NE Parker Rd	R13234-479-3170
54	Duvall House	302 NW Front	R13233-409-2860
55	Fairhaven House	209 NW Front	R 13233-398-3140
56	Gillespie Meat Market	24 NW Front	R13233-414-3550
57	Terry's Dryer	22 NW Front	R 13233-414-3580
58	Island Co Abstract Office	21 NW Front	S6025-00-07703
59	Island Co Times Bldg	19 NW Front	S6025-00-07005-0
60	Judge Still Law Office	17 NW Front	S6025-00-07004-0
61	Benson Confectionery	16 NW Front	R13233-411-3690
62	Elkhorn Saloon	15 NW Front	S6025-00-07006-0
63	Howell's Barber Shop	13 NW Front	R13233-385-3830
64	Coupeville Cash Store	12 NW Front	R13233-410-3750
65	Post Office	11 NW Front [altered]	S6025-00-07008
66	Robertson's Store	10 NW Front	R13233-409-3800
67	Whidbey Mercantile	8 NW Front	R13233-408-3870
68	Robertson House	5 NW Front	R13233-380-3880
69	Sedge Building	4 NW Front	R13233-405-399
70	Puget Race Drug Store	2 NW Front	R13233-400-4030
71	Glenwood Hotel	1 NW Front	S6025-00-18001
72	Col Haller House	1 NE Front	R13233-379-4060
73	Island Co Bank	5 NE Front	R13233-375-4150
74	Zylstra Law Office	6 NE Front	R13233-397-4150
75	Capt. Kinney House	207 NE Front St	S6415-00-08004

map #	NAME	STREET	PARCEL NO
76	Capt. Clapp House	307 NE Front St	S6415-00-07004-0
77	Fullington House	502 NW Coveland	S7070-00-11000
78	Pontiac Dealership/ Corey	105 NW Coveland	S6025-00-0600 1
79	Cushen House	15 NW Coveland	R13233-363-355
80	Methodist Parsonage	5 NE 9th St	S641 5-00-11 00
81	Griffith House	101 NE 9th St	S641 5-00-12001-0
82	First Methodist Parsonage	104 NE 9th St	S6415-00-09005
83	Jacob Straub House	202 NE 9th St.	S6415-00-08006
84	Stark House	203 NE 9th St	S6415-00-13003
85	Hesselgrave rental	205 NE 9th St	S6415-00-13003
86	Coupeville Courier	NE corner of 9th & Kinney St.	S6415-00--7008
87	Clapp House	305 NE 9th St	S6415-00-14002
88	Conard Cabin	902 NE Kinney St	
89	Ervin House	401 NE 9th St	S6415-00-15001-0
90	Gould House	501 NE 9th St	S6425-00-0200 1
91	Coupe House	504 NE 9th St	R13234-370-0150
92	Solid House	603 NE 9th St	R13234-34-0440
93	Chromy House	707 NE 9th St	S6005-00-04005
94	Nuttal House	801 NE 9th St	S6005-00-04002
95	Howard House	902 NE 9th St	S6005-00-6005
96	Watson House	5 NW 8th St	R13233-323-3730
97	Coupeville Town Hall	4 NE 7th St	S6415-00-22001
98	James Zylstra House	101 NE 7th St	S6415-00-22001
99	Todd-Lovejoy House	105 NE 7th St	S6415-00-22007
100	Courthouse Vault	behind 202/204 NE 6th St	S6415-00-23006
101	Vaughn House	501 NE 6th St	R13234-264-016
102	Williams House	1 NE 4th St	S6415-00-4001
103	Clark House	105 NE 3rd St	R13233-169-4470
104	Frain House	101 W Terry Rd	R131 04-394-337
105	Reuble Squash Barn	SE Terry Rd @ Prairie Center	R13104-419-445

CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES COUPEVILLE
CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES
NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES
NORTH
NO SCALE
Coupeville City Limits
HWY 20
Terry Road
Front Street
Hunter Street
Fifth Street
Sixth Street
Seventh Street
Eighth Street
Third
Ninth Street
Broadway
Block Road



Contributing Properties

National Register of Historic Places

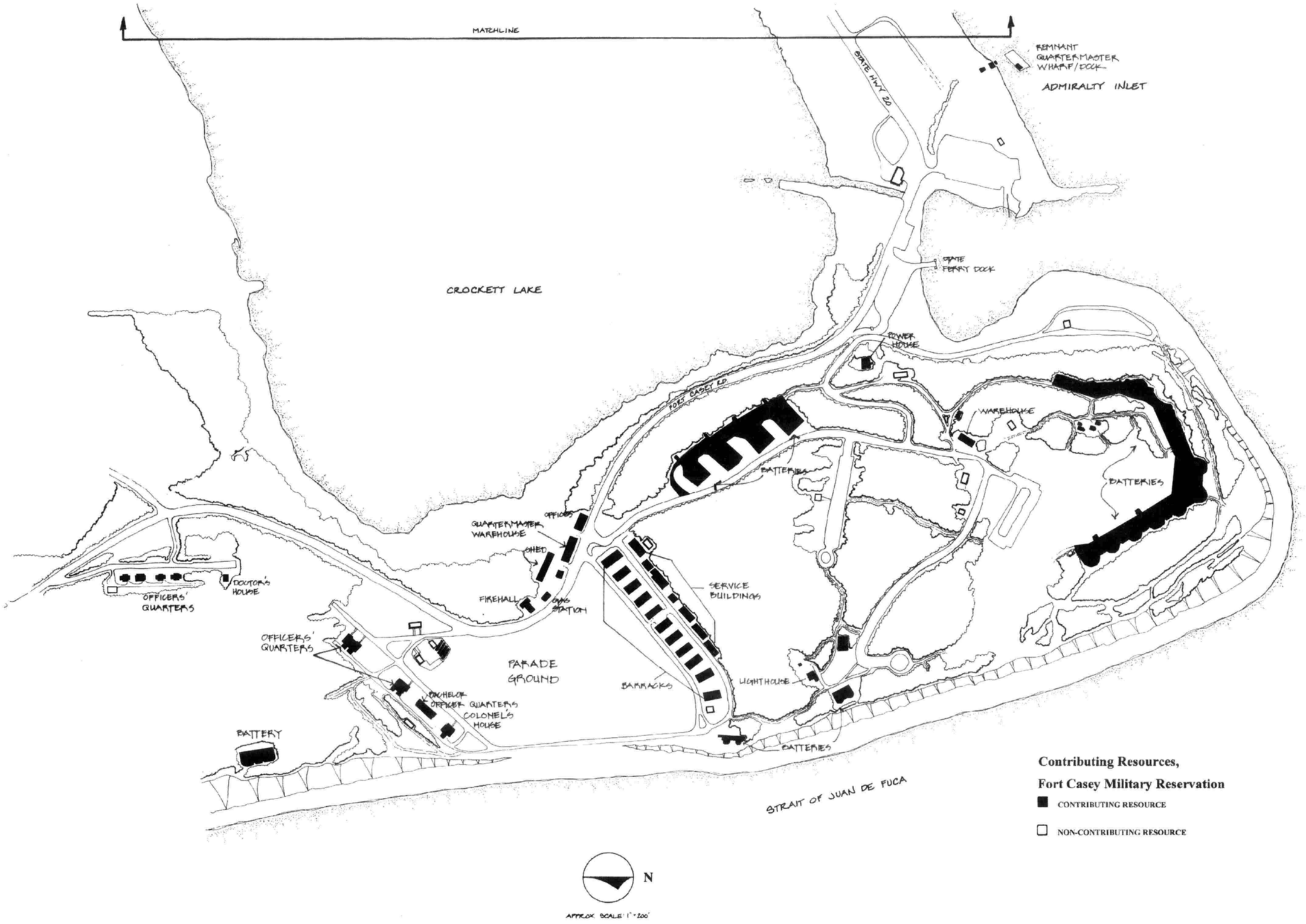
Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve

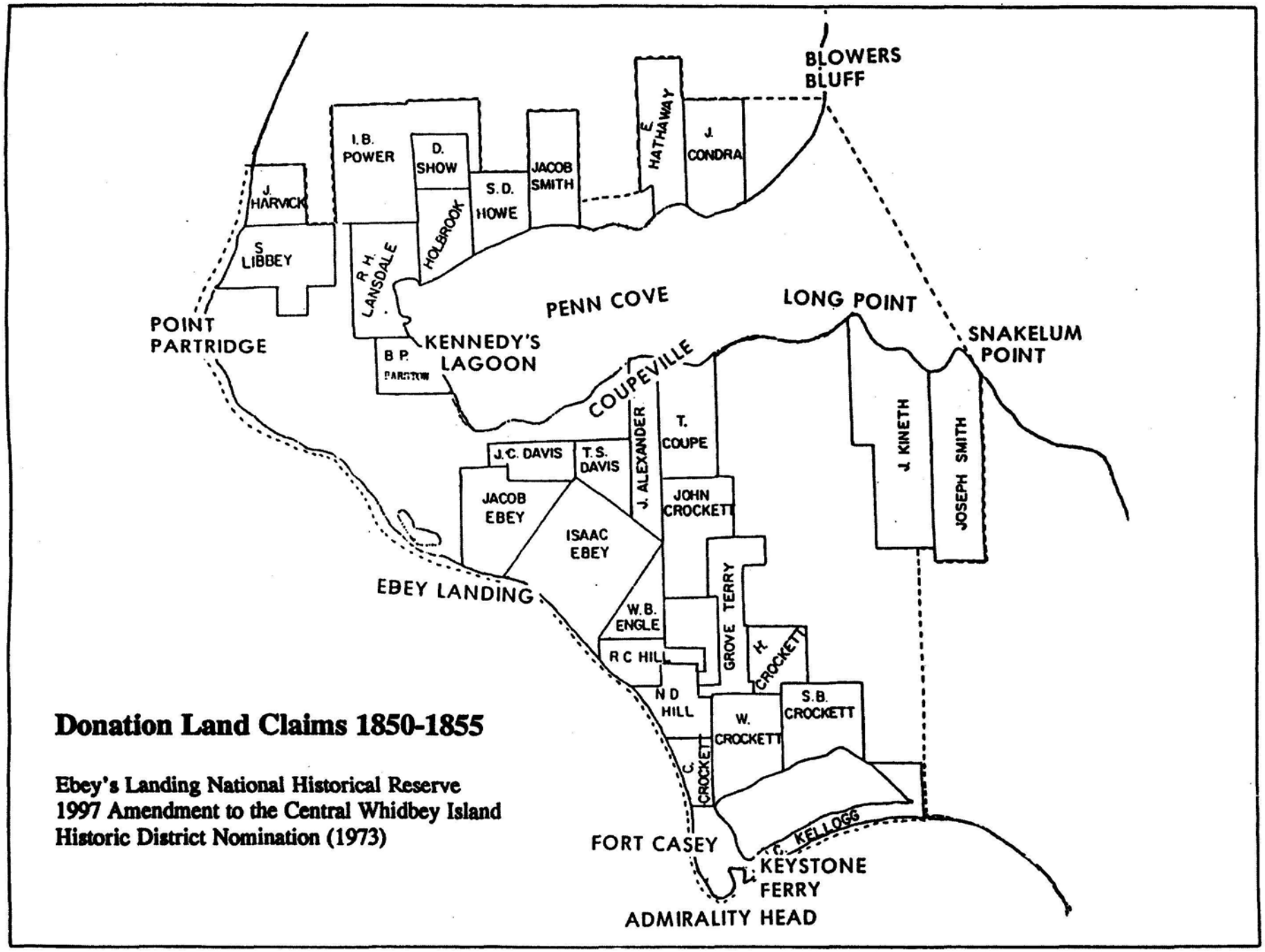
	PARCEL NUMBER		PARCEL NUMBER
1	R13219-478-3400	51	R13230-215-2340
2	R13215-093-0390	52	R13232-131-0520
3	Park	53	R13115-333-2810
4	R03225-067-0670	54	R13220-188-3000
5	R03236-304-1730	55	R13114-120-5030
6	R13122-285-0580	56	R13233-096-1940
7	R03226-123-5000	57	R13115-220-2200
8	R03235-514-5180	58	R03225-297-4170
9	R13105-282-4130	59	R13103-332-1790
10	R13110-403-2890	60	R13103-467-2020
11	R13221-050-1250	61	R13104-464-2270
12	S6370-00-61001 0	62	R13105-252-3300
13	S8060-00-14000 0	63	R13109-147-2530
14	S8060-00-66000 0	64	R13109-149-1990
15	S8060-00-37000 0	65	R13111-060-0100
16	S8060-00-07001 1	66	R13219-100-1950
17	R13105-252-3300	67	R13222-200-4940
18	R13109-147-2530	68	R13222-320-0550
19	R03224-053-3580	69	R13220-030-2950
20	R13221-154-4270	70	R13104-145-0170
21	S8060-00-0E012 0	71	R13105-450-3710
22	S8060-00-09032 0	72	R13109-278-0040
23	S8060-00-17002 0	73	R13221-055-4000
24	S8060-00-19004 1	74	R13103-093-0460
25	R13104-118-2490	75	R13104-098-3880
26	S8060-00-10001 0	76	R13104-267-2240
27	R13222-386-0380	77	R13104-399-2580
28	R03224-494-5000	78	R13108-392-5010
29	R03225-234-4480	79	R13109-425-1470
30	R03225-355-2100	80	R13110-338-3570
31	R13101-287-1000	81	R13115-345-4930
32	R13103-078-2490	82	R13109-500-4220
33	R13103-157-2690	83	R13110-120-4150
34	R13103-357-0420	84	R13233-054-1920
35	R13103-357-0630	85	S8060-00-66000 0
36	R13103-494-3300	86	R13104-419-2260
37	R13105-282-4130	87	R13109-157-4650
38	R13105-391-4680	88	R13109-165-3810
39	R13109-240-1420	89	FT CASEY
40	R13109-330-4240	90	FT CASEY
41	R13110-085-1980	91	FT CASEY
42	R13110-508-1810	92	FT CASEY
43	R13111-198-0120	93	FT CASEY
44	R13114-250-4610	94	FT CASEY
45	R13115-243-1470	95	FT CASEY
46	R13216-093-5110	96	FT CASEY
47	R13219-286-3570	97	FT CASEY
48	R13222-114-3380	98	FISHER/MESSMER HOUSE
49	R13230-154-2610	99	R13230-099-2780
50	R13230-167-2640		

Map Prepared By:
Island County Planning & Community Development
June 4, 2004
Specific questions should be directed to the Department at (360) 679-7339.

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

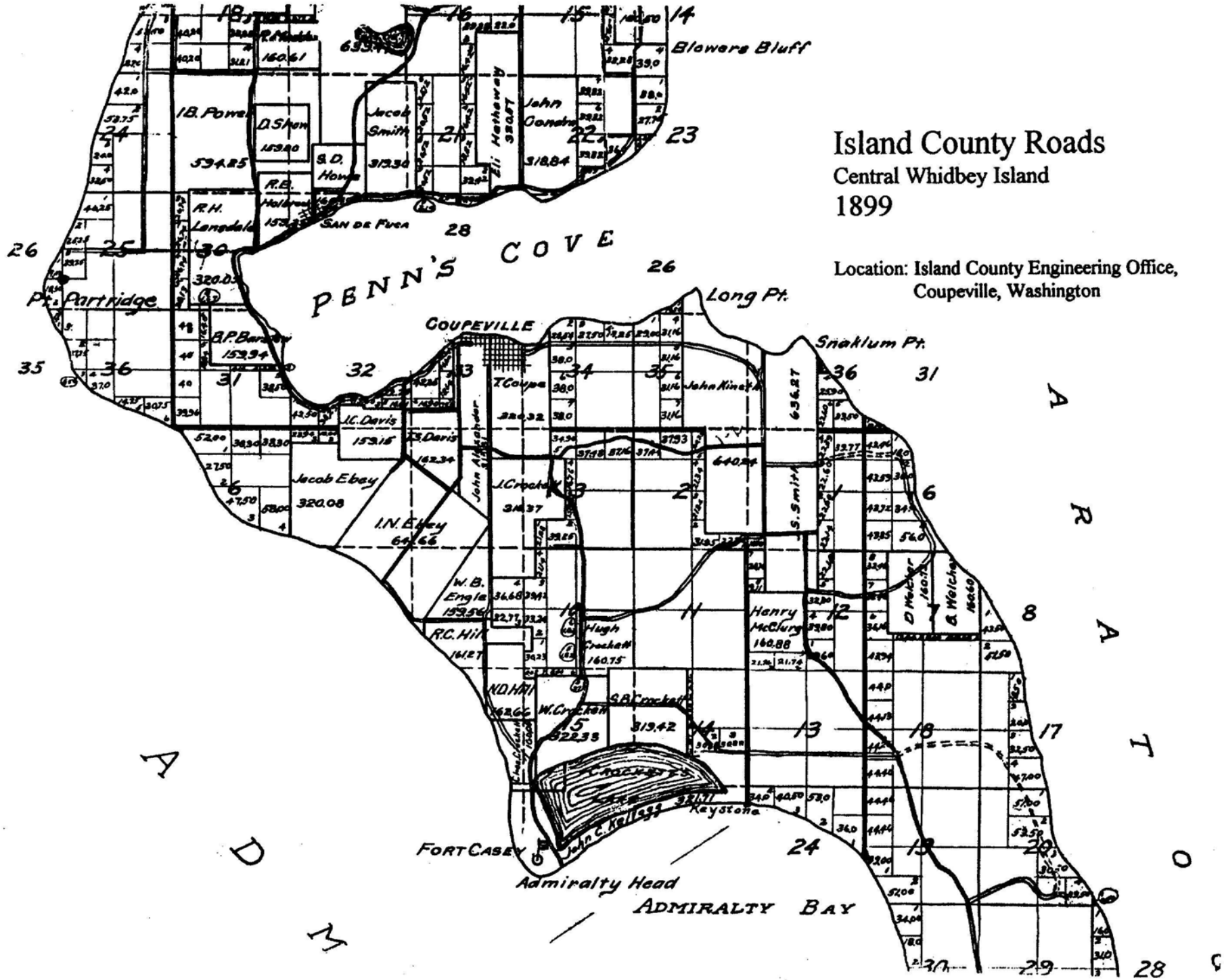
0 2,650 5,300 10,600 15,900 Feet


MATCHLINE
REMNANT QUARTERMASTER WHARF/DOCK
ADMIRALTY INLET
STATE HWY 20
STATE FERRY DOCK
CROCKETT LAKE
POWER HOUSE
FORT CASEY RD
WAREHOUSE
BATTERIES
BATTERIES
QUARTERMASTER WAREHOUSE
OFFICES
SHED
FIREHALL
GAS STATION
SERVICE BUILDINGS
DOCTOR'S HOUSE
OFFICERS' QUARTERS
OFFICERS' QUARTERS
PARADE GROUND
BARRACKS
LIGHTHOUSE
COLONEL'S OFFICER QUARTERS
COLONEL'S HOUSE
BATTERY
BATTERIES
STRAIT OF JUAN DE FUCA
N
APPROX. SCALE: 1" = 200'
Contributing Resources,
Fort Casey Military Reservation
CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE
NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE



Donation Land Claims 1850-1855

Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve
1997 Amendment to the Central Whidbey Island
Historic District Nomination (1973)


Island County Roads
Central Whidbey Island
1899
Location: Island County Engineering Office,
Coupeville, Washington
PENN'S COVE
COUPEVILLE
Long Pt.
Snakum Pt.
Pt. Partridge
Blowers Bluff
SAN DE FUCA
Jacob Ebey
I.N. Ebey
J.C. Davis
T.S. Davis
W.B. Engle
R.C. Hill
Hugh Crockett
Henry McClury
S. Smith
John Kinney
D. Welcher
A. Welcher
Keystone
FORT CASEY
Admiralty Head
ADMIRALTY BAY
ADMIRALTY

Recommendations for Management: Preservation, Protection, & Interpretation

It is fully acknowledged and appreciated that the preservation, protection, and interpretation of Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve (NHR) are intimately intertwined. They are not mutually exclusive issues. Preservation, for example, can be effectively pursued only if interpretation and education as well as protection are considered at the same time.

The following recommendations for management are brief. They are simply meant to stimulate future thoughtful discussion on this subject. Some of these recommendations have arisen during conversations with long-time Ebey's Landing NHR Manager Rob Harbour.

Community Involvement

Involving the community in the planning and activities of the Reserve is a never-ending task. This is especially true since the Ebey's Landing NHR community is dynamic and ever-changing, with old residents passing away and new comers arriving every day. More community involvement is needed so that new arrivals as well as long-term previously disinterested residents can learn and use the vocabulary of preservation, the tools to approach preservation problems, and the knowledge to implement the array of preservation options available to them (such as those found in the "Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation") inside the Reserve.

Planning and Design Guidelines

Greater awareness and understanding of appropriate preservation planning issues and, particularly, design guidelines is a specific but particularly important need for this dynamic growing and constantly changing community. Although formulas or lists of "Dos" and "Don'ts," can often give rise to belligerent attitudes and result in "cookie-cutter" design results, it may be especially helpful for newcomers to preservation to have actual realistic examples of appropriate and inappropriate design features on buildings as well as landscapes. Illustrations (historic and contemporary photographs), floor plans,

maps, color chips, and the like can all be used effectively to communicate clearly what design choices will succeed in a particular location of the Reserve and why. Educational field trips that highlight agreeable and acceptable design choices in certain neighborhoods of the Reserve may also be a helpful way to show what and why certain design features work within their particular setting. Design guidelines offered as educational tools will be most successful if they are positive by pointing out the good examples of design elements and not negative.

Open Space

Open spaces are a critically important design and biological feature of Ebey's Landing NHR. The existence and configuration of open spaces, particularly in the historic prairies to the south of Penn Cove, contributed in large measure to the creation of the Reserve and the designation of the Reserve as a National Register of Historic Places district, originally in 1973. Maintaining wooded areas are equally important, since their edges clearly define the prairie perimeters. If these open spaces are lost the Reserve will lose its ability to readily convey its long history of farming to residents and visitors alike. The scenic easement is one tool that has been used to protect and perpetuate open spaces with some success. However, too often these easements convey a sense of negative paternalism (i.e. "Thou shalt not . . ."). And there is a limit to the number of scenic easements that can be purchased by the National Park Service. It is especially important to explore new and more creative and positive ways of preserving and maintaining open spaces and wooded areas of varying sizes. Innovative new approaches (or revived historic approaches) to using large open fields, or a collection of adjoining small spaces (that together create large prairies), need to be explored. Finding ways to practically and economically use these open spaces and wooded parcels in a way that is historically visually appropriate is the key to preserving and perpetuating the land use patterns themselves.

National Park Service Contribution

The National Park Service (NPS) has and can plays a vitally important role in the preservation, protection, and interpretation of Ebey's Landing NHR. The NPS can continue to contribute its professional expertise to all aspects of the Reserve's management and interpretation, and to community education efforts. NPS can also continue to encourage more partnerships between public and private property owners and all those who have a stake in the Reserve's future preservation, protection, and interpretation.

NPS could do more to further educate the public about these important goals and to encourage community involvement in all aspects of implementing preservation and protection practices. The NPS might contribute additional funding to preservation and interpretation/education approaches. This might be done through mechanisms of leveraging money from other sources, contributing "seed" money to worthwhile projects, and reaching out to the community to explore other innovative ways of expanding financial resources.

Finally, the National Park Service's continued efforts to reach out to the community, as well as potential preservation partners, can be achieved most effectively when NPS personnel practice empathetic patience. Since so much land in the Reserve is privately owned, an attitude and approach of flexibility and thoughtful compromise is the key to management success in preservation and education efforts in Ebey's Landing NHR in the future.

Recommendations for Additional Research and Studies

There will always be additional historical research, an exploration of yet explored resources, and future studies needed for Ebeys' Landing National Historic Reserve. Work done to complete this Historical Resources Study has made the authors keenly aware of some worthwhile future research projects. The short list below is not exhaustive, but simply presents a few of the potential future research that might be done and put to good use on the Reserve.

History of Ethnobiological and Farming Practices

A centuries-old theme in the history of Ebey's Landing and Whidbey Island is natural resource use, extending from the period of Native American consumption of certain roots and berries to the present-day Anglo-American farming and horticultural practices, large and small. This ethnobiological and farming history is largely responsible for creating the cultural and even marine landscapes that distinguishes the Reserve and made it eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Although the history of natural resource use, including farming has been addressed in some previous studies, such as Richard White's published work of Island County (noted in the Bibliography), more in-depth research is needed in this area.

Ideally, this investigation would have an inter-disciplinary research design, making use of the methods and materials typically applied by historians, archaeologists, geographers, and historical landscape architects. Such a study might explore all of the resources (naturally occurring or raised) that have been harvested, the technologies employed for growing, harvesting, and storing, how these resources have been used (i.e. medicinal, as human food, as fodder), and the continuation of (or changes in) farming, culinary, and medicinal practices and their sharing across ethnic and national groups who occupied Whidbey Island. Sources consulted might include: primary historical documents, historical maps and similar cartographic illustrations, archaeological objects, and ethnographic research focusing on northern Whidbey Island. Accurate reliable information about the ethnobiology history and the history of farming is critical to the authentic interpretation and management of the Reserve.

Outbuilding Investigation

Outbuildings have been, historically, ever-present on the cultural landscape of Ebey's Landing NHR, since the arrival of Euro-Americans on Whidbey Island. Barns, outhouses, sheds, and similar small ancillary structures at one time outnumbered primary buildings, such as houses and commercial buildings in the past. They add rich texture to the cultural landscape of the Reserve, and convey much of its history to visitors and those interested in learning about Whidbey Island's past. The small scale of most outbuildings permit visitors to have a more intimate relationship with them and to connect with and appreciate the Anglo-American history of the Reserve more, perhaps, than with larger buildings. Many of the outbuildings in the Reserve have a rich and fascinating history, making them wonderful tools for interpretation and education. The presence of outbuildings contributed to arguments for National Register eligibility of the Reserve. Unfortunately, outbuildings in the Reserve (most of which are on private property) are very quickly being lost to neglect, deconstruction, fire, or other natural causes.

Of urgent need is a study of these outbuildings. An inventory of the outbuildings, which includes photographs, detailed descriptions, and geographic information, would help raise owners' appreciation of these resources, might instigate further discussions about management approaches and tools, and would serve as a valuable tool for researchers in the future.

Oral History Interviews

The importance of continuing the Ebey's Landing NHR oral history efforts cannot be emphasized too strongly. The Reserve, through the efforts of a contracted historian and others, thus far, has conducted dozens of oral history interviews. Some are taped, while others are not. All taped interviews and the notes taken for untapped interviews need to be gathered together, protected, and stored for easy access to future researchers and interpreters. A storehouse of valuable information exists in this existing oral history data, which could be used more effectively if properly consolidated and made accessible.

Additionally, oral history interviews need to continue. Much information about the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s history of Ebey's Landing is becoming lost with the death or approaching demise of Whidbey Island residents, who are now elderly. The post-World War II decades represent an important turning point in the history of northern Whidbey Island, and memories of it should be gathered in a systematic way. This oral history data is critically important for all future preservation and education efforts in the Reserve.

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