San Juan Island National Historical Park:
An Environmental History

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Introduction

In 1966, the federal government established San Juan Island National Historical Park to commemorate the events that occurred on San Juan Island between 1853 and 1871. During that time, the island was at the center of a boundary dispute between the United States and Great Britain that resulted in the joint occupation of the island, and this conflict came to be known as the Pig War.[1] Due to vaguely worded language in the Oregon Treaty, the 1846 agreement between the United States and Great Britain that fixed the British-American boundary in North America at the forty-ninth parallel, ownership of San Juan Island remained contested until 1872. The treaty specified that the water boundary would be located in "the middle of the channel which separates the continent from Vancouver's Island."[2] However, both Haro Strait, to the west of San Juan Island, and Rosario Strait, to the east of Orcas and Lopez Islands, fit this description. The Hudson's Bay Company staked a British claim on San Juan Island when they established a sheep farm called Bellevue Farm on in 1853. In April of 1854, American customs collector Isaac Ebey presented Charles Griffin, Bellevue Farm's manager, with a duties bill. The next year, Whatcom County sheriff Ellis Barnes seized 34 rams and 410 ewes from the farm for taxes. Company officials expressed outrage at these actions on what they considered British soil.

Boundary surveyors from each nation worked from 1858 to 1862 to devise a water boundary between British Columbia and Washington Territory, but the lack of formal border did not stop citizens from either nation from establishing land claims on San Juan Island. As American settlers trickled to the island in the late 1850s, they encroached on what the Hudson's Bay Company considered British property. In June of 1859, American Lyman Cutler shot a Company pig that was eating potatoes in his garden. Tensions rose on both sides, and on July 4, American settlers raised their flag over the island. Twenty-two settlers then petitioned General William Harney, commanding general of the Department of Oregon, for military protection.[3]

In July of 1859, Captain George Pickett, commanding officer at Fort Bellingham, on the Washington Territory mainland, was ordered to move to San Juan Island. The next month, Lt. Col. Silas Casey, commanding officer of Fort Steilacoom, was given similar

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[1] This is only a brief summary of the Pig War; for a thorough study, see Erwin Thompson, *Historic Resource Study: San Juan Island National Historical Park*, (Denver: National Park Service, 1972); Michael Vouri, *The Pig War: Standoff at Griffin Bay* (Friday Harbor, Wash: Griffin Bay Bookstore, 1999); or David Hunter Miller, *San Juan Archipelago: Study of the Joint Occupation of San Juan Island* (Bellows Falls, Vt: Windham Press, 1943).

[2] Thompson, *Historic Resource Study*, 1.

[3] The petitioners specifically requested military protection from Indians, but the army's decision to send troops to San Juan Island was undoubtedly spurred by the British presence on the island.

orders. Casey and Pickett were instructed to protect American settlers from Northern Indians and to "protect their rights and resist any interference by British authorities in any conflicts of interest between American citizens and the Hudson's Bay Company."[4] In March of 1860, the British landed troops at Garrison Bay, on the northwest side of the island, to counter the American presence. The troops occupied their respective camps for twelve years. The standoff on San Juan Island is noteworthy for the fact that the troops coexisted peacefully; not a single shot was fired during the Pig War. In 1871, Great Britain and the United States agreed to allow Kaiser Wilhelm I of Germany to arbitrate the dispute. Both nations' troops occupied the island until 1872, when the Emperor sided with the Americans. The water boundary was established at Haro Strait, and San Juan Island became an American possession.

* * *

The purpose of this study is to rethink the history of San Juan Island in a way that takes into account the interactions between humans and the natural environment of the island. Most of the books and studies written about San Juan Island focus on the nineteenth century boundary dispute between the United States and Great Britain. No one has fully investigated the history of the interactions between the natural environment and the peoples—Northern Straits Indians, the Hudson's Bay Company, British and American armies, early homesteaders and twentieth century island residents—that have inhabited the island. An environmental history can further our understanding of how humans have affected their natural environment, and how the natural environment has shaped human history. This type of study includes information about the functions of ecosystems, the interactions between nature and social and economic systems as well as ideas and sentiments about the natural environment. To different people at different times, San Juan Island has been a valuable military instillation, a farmer's dream, and a tourist's paradise. Though twenty-first century visitors may view the island as a peaceful, rural hideaway, a refuge from urban life situated among spectacular scenery, the island's history shows us that this view is a cultural invention. Each group of island inhabitants has imagined San Juan Island in different ways, creating different sets of expectations that have affected the natural world.

* * *

The San Juan Islands, bounded on the west by Haro Strait and on the east by the mainland, are located near the Canadian border in northwestern Washington State. The archipelago contains 175 named islands, though hundreds more appear at low tide. The rocky islands, remnants of an ancient mountain range overcut by glaciers, stretch thirty-three miles long and twenty-seven miles wide. San Juan Island, on which the historical park is located, is the second largest island in the chain and the home of the largest town

[4] Thompson, 25.

in the archipelago, Friday Harbor (the town also serves as the county seat). The island, which is located at the west end of the chain, lies in the rain shadow of the Olympic Mountains, resulting in an unusually dry climate for a Western Washington location. The two sections of San Juan Island National Historical Park, American Camp (1,223 acres) and English Camp (529 acres) are located in different microclimates. The southern tip of the island, on which American Camp is located, receives only nineteen inches of rain per year, while English Camp, located on the northwestern side, receives about twenty-five inches annually.[5] The American Camp scene includes windswept prairies, sandy beaches and sweeping views across the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Haro Strait. In contrast, English Camp, with its meadow and formal garden, is situated on a relatively small, sheltered bay and surrounded by forest.

An environmental history can help us understand why people came to San Juan Island, what values they placed on the land and how they changed the island's landscape. Humans have interacted with San Juan Island's natural environment since the beginning of settlement by native peoples. Environmental changes reflect cultural changes, and each successive group of islanders brought their own hopes to the island. Northern Straits Indians, who kept permanent villages on San Juan, valued the island for its fisheries, wildlife and wild plants, and they managed and modified their surroundings in order to take advantage of these island resources. Early Europeans viewed the landscape as a storehouse of extractable commodities, and the onset of British and American settlement brought San Juan Island into the worldwide economy. American settlers and commercial enterprises further developed the island's natural resources by engaging in agriculture, mineral extraction and fishing, resulting in widespread environmental change. Late nineteenth and early twentieth century island boosters, imagining a prosperous agricultural and commercial landscape, promoted their island's natural resources in an attempt to lure settlers to the area. These idealized perceptions of the landscape shaped its use. However, Americans depleted many of these natural resources by the 1920s, causing many islanders to look to tourism to sustain the island's economy. As land preservation and scenic values gained importance among Americans during the mid-twentieth century, legislators, islanders and environmental groups worked together to support the creation of San Juan Island National Historical Park. By exploring the overlooked aspects of the interactions between nature and the cultures that have inhabited the island, we can better understand the history of the park.

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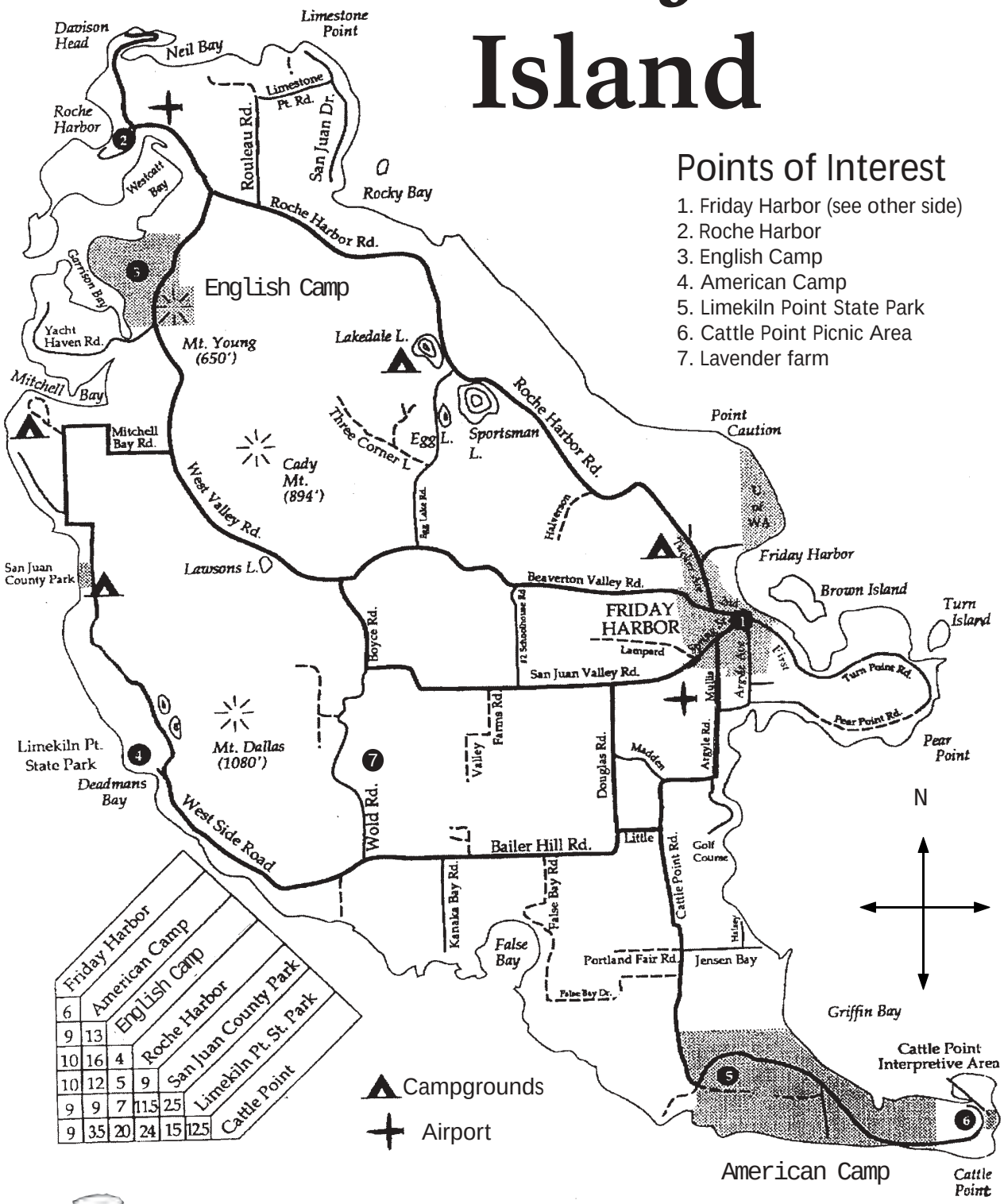
[5] Roy Davidson McClellan., *The Geology of the San Juan Islands* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1927), 1-4.

San Juan Island, showing the locations of both sections of the historical park. Courtesy of the National Park Service.

San Juan Island

Points of Interest

1. Friday Harbor (see other side)
2. Roche Harbor
3. English Camp
4. American Camp
5. Limekiln Point State Park
6. Cattle Point Picnic Area
7. Lavender farm



	Friday Harbor	American Camp	English Camp	Roche Harbor	San Juan County Park	Limekiln Pt. St. Park
Cattle Point	6	9	10	10	9	9
Limekiln Pt. St. Park		13	16	12	9	35
San Juan County Park			4	5	7	20
Roche Harbor				9	11.5	24
English Camp					2.5	15
American Camp						12.5

Courtesy National Park Service

San Juan Island is located in the Salish Sea, between mainland Washington State and British Columbia.
National Park Service map.

The San Juan archipelago. National Park Service map.

Chapter One

Changes in the Land: Northern Straits Indians and San Juan Island

People have utilized San Juan Island's natural resources for at least 9,000 years.[1] Though many have a tendency to see American Indians as timeless people, living in an unchanged landscape, the relationship between Indians and their environment has been much more dynamic. Rather than passively adapting to the island's environment, Northern Straits Indians actively shaped their natural surroundings before European contact. A semisedentary people, they traveled seasonally to fishing, shellfish harvesting and plant gathering locations. As a result of San Juan's different microclimates, geography and vegetation patterns, the Northern Straits used the two sections of the historical park for different purposes. Indians depended on the island's wild plants, trees, fish, waterfowl and wildlife, and through cultivation and the use of fire, they modified and managed their surroundings to best enable their resource use.

Early Islanders

Archaeologists believe that people have inhabited the Pacific Northwest for at least 11,500 years. The glaciers of the Pleistocene Era had receded to expose the San Juan archipelago, though there is no data that suggests people colonized the islands at this time. Humans inhabited or visited San Juan Island at least 9,000 years ago, but not much is known about these people, who may have only seasonally occupied the island. The island these early visitors encountered looked somewhat different than it does today. It had a slightly different shape and size due to the lower sea level. Cedars and Douglas firs had yet to colonize the island. However, the prairies of southern San Juan Island have been grasslands for thousands of years.[2]

Although the fisheries resources of San Juan Island have long been important to native peoples, evidence suggests that the earliest residents of the islands relied on terrestrial resources for subsistence. This may have been due to the difficulty of salmon fishing off the island; the endeavor may have required technology that these people did not possess. Instead, they utilized the resources of the island itself, such as plants and game. They most likely hunted deer and elk with spears or knives tipped with leaf shaped points made of dacite, a black volcanic rock found in Coastal British Columbia.[3]

Between 4,500 and 2,500 years ago, islanders' technology and art advanced as a result of changes in the island's natural landscape. Western red cedars and Douglas firs began to colonize the island around 4,000 years ago. Correspondingly, woodworking tools such as large stone

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[1] Julie Stein, *Exploring Coast Salish Prehistory: The Archaeology of San Juan Island* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 104.
[2] Stein, *Exploring Coast Salish Prehistory*, 17 and 105.
[3] Stein, 104.

mauls, adzes and wedges appeared at this time. Native peoples used these implements to build cedar structures and to fabricate clothing from cedar bark. They continued to hunt birds and game, which provided not only meat but bones that could be fashioned into tools and ornaments. New tools may have enabled native peoples to fish, since these early islanders began utilizing the fisheries of the surrounding waters during this era. This group primarily ate mussels, which were easily harvested, though they also consumed clams and fish.[4]

As fisheries resources expanded between about 2,500 and 1,500 years ago, increased numbers of native peoples began to migrate from the mainland to the island for year-round habitation. The island's population grew during this phase, as evidenced by the number of shell deposits that date from this time. The expansion of shellfish beds, caused by changes in area beaches as the sea level rose and eroding bluffs subsequently deposited additional sand on the beach, led to an increase in shellfish consumption. As archaeologist Julie Stein explains, the newcomers came to fish during the spring and to collect berries and dig camas and clams in the summer and fall. These peoples also began to stay on the island all winter with these stored foodstuffs. Characteristic Northwest coast Indian culture began during this time. These people crafted "exquisite carvings, stone tools and weavings," typical of the type that archaeologists consider traditional Northwest coast art.[5]

Native peoples began to use Garrison Bay as a dwelling place and center of food processing between 1,500 and 1,200 years ago. When the first occupants of English Camp came to the site, they found a small peninsula, jutting out into Garrison Bay, where the parade ground is now. The area to the northeast of the grounds was a wetland. These first residents lived in a cedar structure in the wooded area in the northern part of the site. The inhabitants of the building piled shells along three of the outside walls of the structure, a technique used briefly during this period, leaving a horseshoe shaped midden to the north of the parade ground. The evidence suggests that this structure, probably a dwelling, measured about 30 by 45 feet. Archaeologists do not know if the structure was occupied year round or seasonally, or why the occupants piled shells around the building. During this time, the southeastern end of the island was used infrequently. Shellfish remained important to native peoples' diet, and salmon fishing began during this period. These people may have relied more on wood and less on stone than their predecessors, given the number of woodworking tools found from this phase.[6]

The people who lived at Garrison Bay exploited the rich fisheries of the area, leaving behind middens that altered the island landscape. Native peoples continued to occupy the English Camp area until about the mid-nineteenth century.[7] They changed the dimensions of the Garrison Bay shoreline by depositing their shell and bone waste at the water's edge between 500 and 1800 A.D., extending the shoreline into the intertidal zone and creating the meadow at English Camp

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[4] Ibid, 20.
[5] Ibid, 22.
[6] Stein, 23-24. A midden consists of deposits of archeological artifacts such as food waste and tools.

now known as the parade ground. The waves in this sheltered bay are too weak to move any accumulated debris from the shoreline, so the waste generated by the site's residents filled in several hundred yards of the bay. As the site filled in, this created a flat, open space that would prove perfect for food processing and habitation.[8]

The Northern Straits

The Indians who occupied the San Juan Islands at the time of European contact were the Northern Straits. One of five language based "tribes" within the larger Central Coast Salish group, the Northern Straits are further subdivided into six groups: the Sooke, who lived in the area of Sooke Inlet on Vancouver Island; the Songhees, residents of the present-day Victoria area and nearby islands; the Saanich, who inhabited the Gulf Islands and the Saanich Peninsula of southern Vancouver Island; the Lummi, who lived among the San Juan Islands and the mainland to the east of the archipelago; the Semiahmoo, who occupied the mainland coast near Birch Bay, Boundary Bay and Drayton Harbor; and the Samish, who inhabited the southern San Juan Islands and Fidalgo Island. Before disease decimated Indian populations in the late eighteenth century, the Northern Straits numbered about 4,100.[9]

The category of Northern Straits is based on a shared language and culture rather than on American conceptions of Indian tribalism, a concept that does not fit the small, kinship based groups of the Indians who inhabited the San Juan Islands or Puget Sound area.[10] These groups associated and intermarried, and an individual often had relatives in multiple groups.[11] Some people lived in more than one village during their lifetime, and many villages incorporated members from different Indian language or cultural groups. As historian Alexandra Harmon points out, individual Indians often had "multiple associations, multiple loyalties and multiple ways to identify themselves to others."[12] This makes identifying the specific Indian groups on San Juan Island difficult, and there is conflicting data regarding which groups utilized certain parts of the island. It also creates problems when trying to understand Northern Straits land use practices. According to Harmon, "exchanges between communities not only inspired imitation but also introduced variations and encouraged innovations."[13] Some ethnographical information comes from tribal elders who recall past practices of their groups, though recollections may vary

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[7] Archaeologists are unsure about how the previous occupants of the Garrison bay area are related to the group that lived there between 1200 and the mid-nineteenth century.
[8] Stein, 75.
[9] Wayne Suttles, "Central Coast Salish" in Wayne Suttles, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 7* (Washington D.C: Smithsonian Institution, 1990), 473.
[10] Wayne Suttles, "Central Coast Salish," 453.
[11] Daniel Boxberger, *San Juan Island National Historical Park: Cultural Affiliation Study* (Seattle: National Park Service, 1994), 14.
[12] Alexandra Harmon, *Indians in the Making: Ethnic Relations and Indian Identities around Puget Sound* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 8.
[13] Harmon, *Indians in the Making*, 8.

from individual to individual due to the different practices of family groups lumped together as a tribe in the twentieth century.

Despite these difficulties, evidence suggests the Northern Straits were active participants in managing San Juan Island's ecosystem. The journals of the United States Boundary Commission, the recollections of Indians elders and the work of anthropologists and archaeologists show us that native peoples on the island depended on the marine and terrestrial resources to sustain themselves. The island provided such an abundance of edible natural resources that the Northern Straits did not grow crops, though they adapted land use techniques that facilitated the growth of desirable plants.

The Northern Straits were successful on San Juan Island due to the diverse landscape that allowed them to utilize various parts of the island in distinct ways. Evidence suggests that the Northern Straits only seasonally used the American Camp area, whose dry, exposed, and windy slopes would not have made a good location for a winter village. Though much of the island's shoreline is too steep and rocky to provide a good winter village site, the Northern Straits had permanent winter villages on protected bays on the northwest portion of San Juan Island.[14]

The Northern Straits used sites on Mitchell and Garrison Bays as winter villages for about 500 years, until the mid nineteenth century. Some archaeologists attribute these sites to the Lummi. However, other researchers note the confusing nature of assigning tribal identifications, and they contend that the winter village sites may have belonged to the Lummi, the Songhees or another group of Northern Straits.[15]

The Northern Straits favored the Garrison Bay site due to its sheltered location, the low bank that allowed canoes to be easily hauled ashore, and the flat, open meadow. The village, at the present site of the English Camp section of the historical park, was characteristic of a Northern Straits village and consisted of a large cedar plank house and many smaller houses. Often, several immediate families would share a dwelling based on kinship ties. Multiple dwellings, within a village, "were independent of each other, though they might cooperate for various purposes, such as defense," according to anthropologist Daniel Boxberger. William Warren, secretary of the United States Boundary Commission, reported in 1859 that the plank house on Garrison Bay was "about 500 or 600 feet in length, by about 50 to 60 feet in width, and must have accommodated over a thousand Indians." When the British came to the island in 1860, they dismantled the empty longhouse in order to clear an area for their own structures. There is no record of any encounter between the inhabitants of the longhouse and the British soldiers.[16]

One Lummi elder described the winter village at Mitchell Bay, just to the south of Garrison Bay. He recalled, "They had a nice, big campground. Good camping place for Lummi people. Canadian people and everybody were all mixed in there. They had a nice big smokehouse there;

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[14] Wayne Suttles, *The Economic Life of the Coast Salish of Haro and Rosario Strait* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1974), 69.
[15] Boxberger, *San Juan Island National Historical Park: Cultural Affiliation Study*, 20.

we call it a longhouse. There were about three of them…then they had small camping houses that they stayed in. Made out of shakes and one thing or another, but they were nice. The houses were known by the people that owned them."[17]

Empirical evidence combined with Lummi elders' recollections substantiate that the idea that the Northern Straits used fire to manage their natural surroundings on San Juan Island.[18] Burning was a common way for many North American Indian groups (including those in western Washington) to manage their landscapes. The Northern Straits likely burned the island's forests to facilitate travel through otherwise dense wooded areas. They probably also burned wooded areas in order to increase game habitat. The renewed undergrowth that followed a forest fire provided increased forage for deer and elk, which thrived in recently burned and young forests.[19]

American visitors in the nineteenth century noticed the effects of intentional burning on the island's forests. The boundary commissioners attributed the burning to Indians "in search of deer," indicating that burnt, open forests facilitated hunting.[20] In 1858, George Gibbs, geologist of the United States Boundary Commission, noted that the timber on the island was of little value, "having suffered from frequent conflagrations."[21] William Warren, the commission's secretary, reported that the vegetation resembled that of the eastern Cascades, "the ground being free of underbrush."[22] Henry Crosbie, the Whatcom County assessor, observed in 1859 that the undergrowth of the island is "spare, unlike other parts of the country," since fire kept the forest floor relatively open. The Northern Straits probably utilized burning techniques on other islands as well. Henry Custer, a boundary commission assistant, reported that Orcas Island hillsides and forests had been similarly burned.[23]

These intentionally set fires affected the composition and health of the forest. Frequent fires enabled Garry oaks and conifers to become the most common trees in the English Camp landscape during the prehistoric period. Garry oaks are rarely found in western Washington, and archaeologists believe that Indians may have traded for their seeds. The oak woodlands were kept free of competing trees and brush by fires, since the Garry oak found on the island are resistant to fires of low and moderate intensity.[24] The oaks thrived on the southern part of Young

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[16] Stein, 56; Boxberger, 18; William J Warren, 1860, Geographical Memoir, Appendix F, Records of the Boundary Claims Commission and Arbitration, Northwest Boundary Survey, RG 76. National Archives, College Park, MD.
[17] Stein, 58.
[18] Lightening causes almost all naturally occurring fires, but lightening is rare in the archipelago.
[19] Richard White, *Land Use, Environment and Social Change: The Shaping of Island County, Washington* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980), 21-25.

[20] Archibald Campbell, in U.S. Department of State "The Northwest Boundary: Discussion of the Water Boundary Question" (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1868), 140.
[21] George Gibbs, 18 March 1859, Records of the Boundary Claims Commission and Arbitration, Northwest Boundary Survey, RG 76, National Archives, Washington D.C.
[22] William J Warren, 1860, RG 76.
[23] Henry Custer, 11 April 1859, RG 76. He reported that "the timber is sparse, having been thinned out by fires."
[24] James K. Agee, *The Forests of San Juan Island National Historical Park* (Seattle: National Park Service, 1987), 47. Agee also presents an alternative theory about the presence of Garry Oaks on San Juan Island; he states the trees may have migrated up the Willamette Valley in Oregon to Washington State.

Hill (in the historical park) due to the shallow soil and moderate rainfall of the location, and periodic fires most likely kept Douglas firs from overtaking the area.[25] While the boundary commissioners may have viewed fires as damaging, frequent fires could be beneficial to the island's ecosystem. Fire encouraged healthy forests, since burning "released mineral nutrients accumulated in the litter, humus, wood and foliage of the old forest, while it simultaneously prepared seedbeds and triggered the release of some seed supplies." Furthermore, fires in older forests "kept a significant proportion of each region in young trees and thus reduced the susceptibility of the forest to insects and disease."[26]

Fire shaped the forests near the parade ground. Regular burning sustained a Douglas fir community, since this species was quick to colonize burned areas. Between 1715 and 1725, a large fire devastated the forests of what is now English Camp. These trees regenerated, though there may have been another large fire in the northeast of the parade ground around 1775. Grand firs may have dominated the area at one time, but only a few remain among the Douglas firs. Alders, maples and western red cedars thrived in the lower, wetter areas of the English Camp site. Indians likely burned the area that would become the parade ground to maintain the meadows, thereby attracting game and keeping trees and brush from encroaching on their winter village. In this way, the Northern Straits cultural practices created the landscape that would become English Camp.[27]

Logging, cultivation and livestock grazing on the southeastern end of the island over the past 150 years have made it difficult to piece together the prehistoric landscape of the American Camp area. The most likely scenario, as suggested by biologist James K. Agee, is that the American Camp prairies have most likely always been grasslands due to their soil composition and windswept location. Perennial grasses such as Idaho fescue, California oatgrass and junegrass likely dominated the prairies before Hudson's Bay Company livestock introduced exotic species to the island. A ridge runs from east to west across American Camp, dividing the area into a southern side which took the full brunt of winds and storms off the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and a sheltered northern side along Griffin Bay. North of the ridge grew a Douglas fir forest with some western hemlock This area was ideal hemlock habitat, but periodic burning favored Douglas firs, which regenerate quickly after a fire. "Wind deformed" Douglas fir dominated the area where the American military would build the redoubt and the parade ground, while the forest to the north was composed of Douglas fir, grand fir and lodgepole pine. Other tree species grew in the area as well. A few Garry oaks and junipers were probably scattered in protected areas of the grasslands, and some Sitka spruce grew at Griffin Bay. However, Agee

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[25] Agee, *The Forests of San Juan Island National Historical Park*, 66.
[26] White, *Land Use, Environment and Social Change*, 25.
[27] These fires were probably deliberately set, though they may have become unintentionally large. James K. Agee, *Historic Landscapes of San Juan Island National Historical Park* (Seattle: National Park Service, 1984), 4-5.

pointed out that the evidence for piecing together historic forest landscapes on San Juan Island is "sketchy," and that these hypotheses are not conclusive.[28]

The Northern Straits relied on the island's natural resources for sustenance. Camas, an onion-like bulb in the lily family, was the most important plant in their diet. The bulb grew at both sections of the historical park and was a staple as well as a sweet ingredient added to other foods. Camas thrives on prairies in dry climates, and it was also a mainstay of Indians in eastern Washington and British Columbia. Due to San Juan's location in the rain shadow of the Olympic Mountains, camas flourished on the island, especially on the prairies of the American Camp site and on rocky hillsides with a southern exposure, such as on Young Hill.

The Lummi, Songhees and Saanich harvested camas on San Juan Island. Women dug the bulbs in May, after the plant bloomed but while the stalk remained. These women utilized wooden digging sticks with a wood or bone handle as levers. The Northern Straits steamed the bulbs at the harvesting site, if it was far from a village; otherwise, the bulbs were taken back to the village for processing. Inhabitants of the Garrison Bay village steamed camas in a pit on the parade ground. Steaming, which could take a day and a half, transformed camas from a "white, glutinous or somewhat slimy and virtually tasteless bulb into a drier, brown to black, fig like morsel that was of a sweet agreeable flavor with the consistency of a roasted onion."[29] The Northern Straits dug pits, about two by four feet in which they layered rocks and wood. They started a fire in the pit, and after the rocks became red hot, kelp, salal branches, sword ferns, and madrona bark were laid on top, followed by the camas. A bucket full of water was poured into the pit to create steam. The hole was then covered with grass and about four inches of dirt, and another fire was built on the top. The concoction was left until the next day, when the camas were collected, dried and stored in cattail bags. Camas harvesting lasted about three weeks, in which time "an energetic family" could harvest ten to twelve bags.[30]

Though camas bulbs were native to the San Juan Islands, evidence suggests that the Northern Straits' actively promoted camas growth while discouraging competing plants. Indians throughout the Northwest used fire to cultivate camas, and the Northern Straits likely burned the American Camp prairies and the slopes of Young Hill were annually for this purpose. After the ripe bulbs were removed from the soil, women may have scattered their seeds into the disturbed ground from which they were harvested, as mainland Indian groups did. The Northern Straits may have also transplanted bulbs from one area to another, thereby increasing the amount of camas as the plants spread. The entire growing area was then burned to increase soil fertility for next year's crop. The burning added potassium, in the form of potash from the plant's ashes. Potash encourages growth, increases storage ability, and intensifies flavor in cultivated onions, and it probably has a similar effect on camas.Burning also reduced competition by other species.

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[28] Ibid., 18-23.
[29] Alston Vern Thoms, "The Northern Roots of Hunter-Gatherer Intensification: Camas and the Pacific Northwest" (Ph.D. Diss., Washington State University, 1988), 158.
[30] Suttles, *The Economic Life of the Coast Salish of Haro and Rosario Strait*, 62.

While the fire had little effect on the buried bulbs, it killed off competing plant species. Fire may have also controlled pests and disease.[31]

Other plants were vital to Northern Straits Indians for food, clothing, building materials and tools. Cedar was particularly important. The Northern Straits cut cedar to build structures, make canoes and create implements. They fashioned clothing from cedar bark. These native islanders picked berries such as serviceberry, thimbleberry, elderberry and huckleberry during the summer months, and the berries were sometimes sun-dried and stored. They harvested crabapples and stored them in cattail bags to ripen for winter consumption. In the spring, they gathered edible greens such horsetail, thimbleberry and salmonberry shoots. When peeled, these shoots resembled celery in texture and appearance. The groups utilized some plants for medicinal purposes. Alder sap, for example, was used as a tonic for an upset stomach.[32] Whether for shelter, food or medicine, San Juan Island's plants were essential to the Northern Straits.

The Northern Straits fashioned tools from plants for hunting game. Hunters attracted deer by blowing on a grass blade, which made a "fawn-like" squeal. They hunted deer and elk using bows made from cedar, vine maple or yew. To make bows, the Northern Straits cut tree limbs, wrapped them in kelp blades and then steamed them in pits until they were limber enough to flex into a bow shape. They fashioned arrow shafts from serviceberry wood or cedar, which they then smoothed with stone knives and dogfish skin. The arrow blade was stone or mussel shell. Game was also caught in nets made from elk or deer sinews or willow grass. In pursuit of game, hunters were able to use the topography of the islands to their advantage. The islands, with their many narrow game trails that passed through the high or rocky parts of the islands, were especially suited for "deer drives," a community hunting effort in which men drove deer into a net strung across a narrow trail. The Northern Straits also hunted elk on San Juan Island, but there is no information about these hunting practices.[33]

The Northern Straits utilized game for meat, clothing and tools. They steamed and dried deer meat and saved the deer hides, though it is unclear how the hides were utilized. Deer bones, sharpened to a point on one end, were used as weaving tools. Native peoples utilized woodworking tools made from bone and antlers, though tools made from wood and stone (such as slate knives or arrow points) were employed as well. Bones were probably also fashioned into jewelry and ornamentation.[34]

The Northern Straits depended on the marine resources off San Juan Island, and no resource was more important than salmon. Reef net salmon fishing, a "technologically sophisticated technique…that involved a great deal of labor and skill," was the Northern Straits' most important food gathering activity. In the beginning of the summer, the Northern Straits moved from their winter villages to temporary summer fishing camps, which were usually located in an

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[31] Thoms, *The Northern Roots of Hunter-Gatherer intensification*, 202; White, 22.
[32] Suttles, *The Economic Life of the Coast Salish of Haro and Rosario*, 58.
[33] Ibid, 83-84.
[34] Stein, 101.

area with a southern exposure to help dry the fish. Reef nets, which had to be made every year, were constructed of willow bark twine with young, flexible cedar branches twisted together as line. These nets were used exclusively by the Northern Straits to capture the Sockeye salmon that migrated through the San Juan Islands to the Fraser River each summer. As anthropologist Daniel Boxberger describes, "A long net was anchored to the sea bottom at the forward end and tied between the bows of two canoes at the back end. A smaller net was strung between the two canoes. The fish, swimming along the sea bottom, followed the lead net up, as if swimming over an underwater reef, and into the smaller net, where they were hauled aboard the canoes." The labor intensive method, performed by crews of six to ten men, was so effective that their harvest was probably limited only by the amount of processing they could do. During the height of the season, one reef net crew could catch several thousand salmon.[35]

There were at least ten reef net fishing sites off the west coast of San Juan Island. The Songhees operated nets in many of these locations, and the Lummi, Saanich and Samish probably also used these sites. Each site had an owner who had inherited that particular location. The owner could choose to hire a captain and a crew to fish for him in exchange for a share of the catch. As one Lummi elder recalled, "Each family had their own reef netting location. Each location had a name. It dates way back. They just didn't go and step on somebody's toes."[36]

It is unclear if the Northern Straits reef netted off American Camp's shore, though the beaches of the historical park were used for fish processing. A shoal that extends for two miles to the south of Cattle Point called the Salmon Banks would have been an ideal location for reef netting. The site provided the right type of moderate currents, since stronger currents would have torn the nets from their anchors. The shallow depth of the reefs forced the fish closer to the surface and allowed fishermen to anchor their nets on the shoal. The Salmon Banks also provided clear water in which the watchman, in the stern of one canoe, would have been able to spot the fish and order the crew to pull in the nets. The Northern Straits did process fish on American Camp beaches, where the exposure to sun and wind facilitated fish drying. The large beach provided plenty of room for fisherman to build temporary dwellings and for processing activities such as cleaning and drying on racks. As in other fish processing sites, the owner of the site and a crew built shelters on the beach out of mats or wood. The Northern Straits dried the fish on racks in between the dwellings and the shore, and they sometimes built fires in trenches to facilitate the drying or smoking of the fish. The mats, which were made from leak proof cattails or tules, could be rolled up and transported to other sites.[37] Fishermen used these structures as workshops to make tools and implements, such as nets. In this way, the plants of the island were utilized to facilitate the salmon harvest.

Since salmon were only available a few months of the year, the Northern Straits sought other fish as well, and these fish were processed at both English and American Camps. Smelt (also

[35] Boxberger, 19-20; Suttles, 161-2.
[36] Boxberger, 21-34; Suttles, 161.
[37] Boxberger, 33-34.

called herring by the Northern Straits) were the most commonly consumed fish after salmon. They were so plentiful that the group could easily catch them using only a pole studded with bone shards (and later, nails). The Northern Straits also consumed halibut, flounder, rockfish, dogfish, and ratfish at the winter village site at English Camp.[38]

Marine invertebrates, particularly bivalves and crabs, were vital to the Northern Straits diet, and American Camp beaches were important shellfish gathering locations. Native peoples gathered cockles, mussels, oysters and sea cucumbers from island shores at low tide, though they sometimes needed a digging stick to pry them loose. They also utilized digging sticks to harvest clams from gravel or mud flats. The Northern Straits harvested chitons, snails, barnacles and sea urchins from rocks, then collected these items into loosely woven baskets from which the water could drain out. They gathered crabs either by wading or by spearing the crustaceans from canoes. Though some of these foods, such as the sea urchins, were eaten raw, most were steamed. To steam shellfish such as clams, they would first heat rocks over a fire, and then cover the shellfish with kelp or white fir boughs for 15 minutes until they opened. Native islanders often roasted and dried clams and cockles for winter consumption. To roast, the shellfish were steamed (with the exception of rock clams and cockles, which did not require this first step) and removed from their shells, then threaded on a stick and set over a fire fueled by Douglas fir bark. The roasted meat was strung on a cedar bark line and dried in a smokehouse or a shed. Shellfish was available during the entire year, but the Northern Straits mainly harvested large quantities of the staple during the summer, and consumed the dried meat during the winter. Dried clams were a valuable export for the Northern Straits, and they were often traded to mainland Indians for waterproof baskets or smoked salmon.[39]

Waterfowl were also an important source of food, especially in the winter, when they were one of the few fresh foods available. The Northern Straits caught ducks by using fire on dark, cloudy nights. They lit a fire in a box of sand or clay on the stern of a canoe just behind the paddler. When the ducks saw the bright fire, the frightened birds flew into the shadow near the bow of the canoe, where a man with a multiple pronged spear (often made with a cedar shaft and deer bone point) easily killed them. Near English Camp, the Saanich, Songish and possibly the Lummi hunted duck using raised duck nets at Mosquito Pass (between San Juan and Henry Island). This method involved catching the ducks with a net made of nettle fiber or willow bark twine strung between two poles. The Lummi and the Saanich also hunted ducks with bow and arrow while on a canoe disguised with conifer boughs. The Northern Straits valued duck for clothing as well as meat, and duck feathers were woven with nettle fibers to make clothing.[40]

The Northern Straits obeyed a "complex interaction of free-access resources and locations held in trust for a larger kinship group."[41] Many natural resources were shared and open to

[38] Boxberger, 97; Suttles, 64.
[39] Suttles, 64-67.
[40] Suttles, 70-80; Boxberger, 6; Stein, 60.
[41] Boxberger, 6; Suttles, 60-67.

everyone, but some were considered private property. When resources were considered private, this sometimes meant that they were open to anyone within a large kinship group, which could include almost all of the Northern Straits. Other areas were owned by a family or single person who would receive payment for use of the resources and supervise the collections. Resource owners passed down both the knowledge of and the use of resources. Women usually owned shellfish beds, and their borders were sometimes delineated by rock boundaries. Kinship groups utilized the same reef netting locations each year, and these sites were regarded as privately owned. While most camas beds were open to all, women usually utilized the same locations each year, and some areas were considered private property. American Boundary Commission secretary William Warren reported that on the side of Young Hill "we saw in different places cobble stones placed in lines about 100 feet long, arranged in this position probably by the Indians…though for what purpose we could not conjecture."[42] These were likely the boundaries of privately owned camas beds.

European Contact

The Spanish were the first Europeans to explore the San Juan Islands, but they made few references to the Northern Straits in their records. In 1791, a Spanish schooner was driven off by "Indian war canoes" while exploring Haro Strait. Another encounter on the same channel spurred the Spanish to fire their cannons in an attempt to frighten the Indians.[43] The Spanish had traded extensively with Vancouver Island's Indians, but they did not explore the interior of the San Juan Islands, nor did they record any observations of the islands' native inhabitants. The British explored the islands' waters, but they too noted few interactions with the Northern Straits. William Broughton, an officer with George Vancouver's expedition to the Pacific Northwest, observed an Indian village on Orcas Island. Broughton's men traded for venison off of Lopez Island, after six Northern Straits from an onshore village rowed out to meet the Englishmen.[44] Charles Wilkes of the United States Exploring Expedition, who explored the islands' waters in the early 1840s, did not mention the Northern Straits in his reports. Though these early explorers did not find the islands' native inhabitants worthy of investigation, the first European company to settle the island considered the Northern Straits an essential part of their operation.

The arrival of the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) in the mid-nineteenth century significantly altered the Northern Straits traditional lifestyle as the remote island, its resources and its inhabitants became incorporated into a new economic system. The HBC had long included native North Americans in their business, through labor and trade. As the Company moved into the West Coast of North America after 1821, they disrupted the Indians' traditional economies that included the use of haiqua (a type of shell, found only on the west coast of Vancouver

[42] Warren, 1860, RG 76.
[43] Warren L. Cook. *Flood Tide of Empire: Spain and the Pacific Northwest, 1543-1819* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 304.

Island) and slaves as currency and trade goods. Instead, the HBC traded commodities such as blankets, muskets, gunpowder and shot, hunting and fishing tools, tobacco, clothing and ornaments for natural resources such as salmon and animal hides from native peoples.[45] Fort Victoria became a center of trade for Indians throughout the entire regions after its founding in 1843, just as other Hudson's Bay Company establishments had become in other areas. According to historian Richard Mackie, "Mutual interest and trading opportunities drove the exchanges, as did the utility, quality or novelty of British manufactures."[46]

On San Juan Island, Indians provided canoe transportation, labor for construction projects and salmon for the Company's export business. They also worked as sheepherders, caring for the Company's flocks. After contact with the Company, the archipelago's Indians began to utilize guns, rather than weapons fashioned from the native plants of the islands, to hunt game. This use of guns, a more effective hunting tool, likely contributed to the decline of game on the island in the 1850s. The Northern Straits had long traded among themselves and with other native groups, but contact with Europeans irreversibly altered their economy and way of life.[47]

The Hudson's Bay Company generally enjoyed good relations with the region's Indians, but the Americans did not. There had been Indian raids on settlers as well as on other Indian groups in the 1850s throughout the Puget Sound and San Juan Island areas. The American army established forts at Port Townsend and Bellingham in response to these attacks by Indians from the north of Washington Territory.[48] Especially feared were the Kwakiutl, an Indian group from the British Columbia coast. In his correspondence with James Douglas about the Indian threat in 1854, Washington Territorial Governor Isaac Stevens complained that Charles Griffin had frightened Puget Sound settlers with "certain incautious statements." The statements, along with Griffin's assertion that he could not provide protection to Americans on San Juan Island, drove American customs collector Oscar Olney off the island in 1857 to seek safety on the mainland. Stevens suggested that these statements were intended to keep Americans off of San Juan, but Douglas replied that "motives of humanity" drove Griffin to sound the warning. Nevertheless, Douglas assured Stevens that the Indians were not as unfriendly as rumored, and that he would pass on any reports if hostilities arose.[49]

The rumors, it seemed, were not without merit. Paul K. Hubbs Jr., Olney's successor, believed that fear of Indian attacks kept American settlers from colonizing the island. Hubbs' had been forced to take refuge with Griffin after Clallam Indians attacked his house. In 1858, a party of miners was attacked by 130 Kwakiutl on Orcas Island; the Royal Marines rescued the

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[44] J. Nielson Barry, "Broughton's Reconnaissance of the San Juan Islands in 1792" *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* Vol. 21, No. 1, 58.
[45] Richard Somerset Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains: The British Fur Trade on the Pacific, 1793-1843* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997), 283.
[46] Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains*, 287.
[47] Suttles, 89.
[48] Michael Vouri, *The Pig War: Standoff at Griffin Bay* (Friday Harbor: Griffin Bay Bookstore, 1999), 34.
[49] Provincial Archives, Victoria, British Columbia, Letter from James Douglas to the Right Honorable Henry Labouchere, 5 May 1854, in Record Office Transcripts of the Hudson's Bay Company, Vol. 3, 63.

group. In July of 1859, the twenty-two Americans on the island requested American military protection from "bands of marauding Indians, who infest these waters in large numbers."[50] Even Bellevue Farm had occasional problems with Indians. For example, in 1857, Griffin paid the steamer *Otter* thirty-six British pounds to chase Indian sheep thieves. By 1859, when American settlers had established themselves on San Juan, tensions between Indians and Americans on the island ran high. Indians were blamed for the murder of two Americans whose bodies were found washed up on the island's shore. Despite the lack of evidence, the Americans assumed Indians were guilty of the crime since they had been hunting on the island at the time.[51]

These Indians from the north inspired fear and awe in American settlers and surveyors. Boundary commissioner Archibald Campbell reported, "The insecurity and danger arising from the depredations of the Indians who came down from the Russian and British possessions at the north, in their immense war canoes, forced our citizens to abandon their attempts at settlement." Campbell continued, "When these northern Indians start out upon their trading and marauding expeditions with a fleet of canoes, they present a truly formidable array. Their canoes, made from the single trunk of a giant cedar of their country, are of the most beautiful model and workmanship; they are from seventy five to one hundred feet in length and will carry from fifty to sixty persons, and are driven through the water at great speed…They have been known to capture huge vessels." According to Campbell, the Northern Straits were "inferior in all ways" to these northern Indians, who were their "hated enemies." [52] The boundary commissioners, who hired Indians as assistants, chose to travel around the archipelago only during the winter, when "the expedition could be safely made by a small party…when it would be secure from annoyances from Northern Indians."[53]

The American military viewed the Indians not only as an annoyance, but a threat. Drunken Indians proved to be a nuisance to both the British and American military stationed on San Juan, even though it was British and American citizens who sold liquor to the Indians. One American lieutenant recorded, "The islands are often visited by smugglers, whiskey sellers-cattle thieves-and roving bands of Indians, who have to be looked after and punished for the depredations and violations of law and order-by this command." [54] Sgt. Henry Cooper reported, "We have been disturbed at night lately with discordant noises and reports of firearms" from the Indians.[55] Indian women were brought to the island as prostitutes. Captain George Pickett quickly became exasperated with the situation, and he wished that government authorities would handle what he felt was a civil matter. "Two-thirds of the Indians on this end of the island are drunk day and

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[50] Thompson, 190-1; Vouri, 42; Boxberger, 32.
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[52] Archibald Campbell,"The Northwest Boundary: Discussion of the Water Boundary Question," 132.
[53] Gibbs, 24 May 1858, RG 76.
[54] Letter from Capt. Thomas Grey to the Assistant Adjutant General, 11 April 1866, Records of the United States Army Continental Commands, San Juan Island, Letters Sent, Volume 1, Pt. 5, RG 393, National Archives, Washington D.C.
[55] Letter from Sgt. Henry Cooper to the Royal Marines Camp, 14 August 1861, San Juan Island, Letters Sent, Vol. 1, RG 393.

night…it is perfect bedlam," he complained.[56] Both armies agreed that the presence of alcohol on the island presented a problem, but there were simply too many liquor suppliers to control.

During this tense time, even traditional Indian activities came under suspicion. Lt. Colonel Silas Casey drove the Northern Straits from their seasonal fishing grounds off of San Juan in 1858. Pickett was distrustful of one particular group of Indians, and he accused them of only "pretending" to be on a hunting expedition during a visit to the island. In April of 1860, he noted worriedly that there were more than 4,000 Indians "from the north" gathering for salmon fishing off the island.[57] One of his gunboats, the *Forward*, had battled a "marauding party, killing a great many Indians," and he requested the company of the warship *Massachusetts* to help prevent other conflicts.[58]

Though many of these Indians may have been engaging in customary activities, their mere presence worried the Americans. Pickett endeavored to prevent further violence on the island. Under orders to remove Indians from San Juan, he postponed action until he could formulate a plan to do so without endangering the island's settlers. He realized that all of the Indians, even Bellevue Farm employees, would have to be expelled if this plan were enacted. When a Haida Indian was murdered, Pickett attempted to stave off revenge attacks by investigating the murder. When he was unable to find the killer, he offered restitution to the victim's widow. His tactic worked, and no retaliatory violence occurred. By mid-July in 1860, Indian violence had calmed considerably due to James Douglas' new policy of disarming all Indians who ventured into Victoria's harbor.[59]

The Northern Straits Displaced

American attempts to concentrate Northern Straits on reservations in the late nineteenth century further disrupted the Indians' practices and economies. Some Americans were sympathetic to Northern Straits' claims to the islands. American Archibald Campbell, in his boundary commission report, stated that the islands belonged to various Indian tribes.[60] George Gibbs suggested that the islands be made into reservations for the Northern Straits, since the archipelago provided "valuable hunting and fishing grounds."[61] Both Campbell's and Gibbs' conclusions were ignored by the federal government, who sought to contain the archipelago's Indians on mainland reservations. In 1859, the Treaties of Point no Point and Point Elliot were enacted to consolidate Indians in Washington State onto reservation lands. The Lummi were given a reservation on Lummi Island. The Samish initially settled on non-reservation lands on Guemes Island, but in 1912 the group was split and sent to both the Lummi and the Swinomish

[56] Vouri, 195.
[57] Letter from Captain George Pickett, 4-26-1860, Records of the United States Army Regular Mobile Units, Post Letters, Fort Bellingham and Camp San Juan Island, Vol. 1, National Archives, Washington D.C.
[58] Letter from Captain George Pickett to the Assistant Adjutant General, n.d., San Juan Island, Letters Sent, Vol. 1, RG 393.
[59] Vouri, 196.
[60] Campbell, "The Northwest Boundary: Discussion of the Water Boundary Question," 132.

reservations. Most Indians continued to occupy their traditional sites in the nineteenth century, and since the islands were disputed territory until 1872, the Bureau of Indian Affairs did not attempt to force the Northern Straits out of the archipelago.[62]

As British and American settlers colonized the island, the Northern Straits found themselves dispossessed of traditional hunting, fishing, gathering and winter village locations. By 1870, seventeen years after the founding of Bellevue Farm, only 36 percent of residents in the entire archipelago were Indian or part Indian. No adult male Indians remained on San Juan Island. Just twenty-one Indian women resided on the island, and all were married to white, Hawaiian, or African-American men. Forty-nine children of mixed ethnicity belonged to these couples.[63] In 1887 Congress passed the Dawes Act, which assigned individual allotments on the mainland reservations in an attempt to reduce the size of the reservations as well as force American conceptions of private property and land use on the Indians. The Bureau of Indian Affairs used the act to discourage Indians from traveling off reservation, thus limiting their access to San Juan Island.[64]

Some Indians continued to work as manual laborers as they had for the Hudson's Bay Company. Many picked crops for Puget Sound area farmers. Others sold fish, shellfish and berries to white settlers. Some Lummis became farmers on their reservation. The establishment of canneries in Northern Puget Sound in the 1890s encouraged commercial fisherman to set up fish traps on the Salmon Banks and other locations off the west side of San Juan Island, denying the Northern Straits access to their traditional fishing grounds. In 1895 the Lummi unsuccessfully sued a salmon cannery at Point Roberts for establishing fish traps at a traditional reef netting site, an action which reduced the Lummi catch to almost nothing. By 1912, only twelve Indians worked as fishermen in San Juan County. [65] More than sixty years later, the Boldt decision of 1974 would reinstate fishing rights guaranteed to Washington's Indians under nineteenth century treaties, and the Lummis were able to revive their fishing industry. In the late twentieth century, the Northern Straits once again began reef netting in the San Juan and Canadian Gulf Islands.

Contemporary Northern Straits occupy only a small portion of the lands on which their ancestors lived. The Sooke, Songhees and Saanich have reserves on Vancouver Island. The Semiahmoo occupy a small reserve just north of the border between the United States and Canada. The Lummis inhabit a reservation on Lummi Island in Washington State. Since American conceptions of Indian tribalism did not fit the lifestyle of the Northern Straits, some native peoples never gained federal recognition. The Samish are still seeking recognition from

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[61] Gibbs, 24 May 1858, RG 76.
[62] Boxberger, 29.
[63] 1870 Unites States Census, Whatcom County, San Juan Island, San Juan Island Historical Society Archives. 163 of the 448 residents in the archipelago were Indian.
[64] Boxberger, 40.
[65] John N. Cobb, *The Salmon Fisheries of the Pacific Coast* (Olympia, Wa: Government Printing Office, 1910), 51. There was a total of 205 county residents working in the fishing industry.

the United States government; this recognition would allow the group certain fishing rights. Though fragmented geographically, the Northern Straits continue to socialize with each other through summer festivals, games, dances, and religious ceremonies.[66]

Tribal members of the Lummi, the Songhee, the Saanich and the Samish still come to the San Juan Islands to fish, but private property owners have made access to most traditional resources off limits. Moreover, many of these resources, such as shellfish, game and wild plants, have been depleted. One Lummi elder explained, "The Lummi Indians can't go ashore on San Juan Island to dig a bucket of clams. They get drove away…They won't even let you land a boat anymore in lots of the old places."[67] While the Northern Straits had observed communal access to many natural resource locations, the creation of the boundary between the United States and Canada and the formation of reservations led to restrictions on natural resources such as salmon. No longer do the six Northern Straits groups share shellfish beds or fishing locations; each "tribe" is legally allowed certain quantities and access to specific sites.[68]

San Juan Island's native peoples spent thousands of years utilizing the natural resources of the island. They relied on the native plants and animals of the island for food, clothing, shelter and tools, and they were able to modify the natural landscape without destroying their environment's capacity to sustain them. While Northern Straits Indians collected and sold some of these resources in the marketplace after European contact, subsequent groups of islanders exploited these resources to the point of depletion. The commercially worthless native plants that had sustained the Indians were replaced by valuable market crops that could be profitably sold thousands of miles away. After the Northern Straits were dispossessed of the island, British and American settlers sought to shape the island into their own image of an ideal landscape.

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[66] Suttles, ed., 473.
[67] Stein, 6.
[68] Boxberger, 6.

Lummi Indians practice reef netting for salmon, probably around 1940. Courtesy of University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, NA1937.

The Northern Straits Indians were a semi-sedentary people, and they utilized different parts of San Juan Island for various purposes. American Camp beaches were used for fish processing. Courtesy of the National Park Service.

The Northern Straits actively managed San Juan Island's natural environment. On the American Camp prairie, they planted and harvest camas and then burned the meadows to increase soil fertility and decrease competition from other plants.

Camas (Camassia Quamash) bulbs were a staple of the Northern Straits diet. Steaming transformed the bulb from a tasteless, slimy plant into a food that could be eaten alone or used as a sweetener. National Park Service Photo.

Though the Northern Straits harvested camas and processed salmon at the windy and exposed southern end of the island, sheltered Garrison Bay made a much more desirable winter home. The site offered a low bank for hauling canoes ashore, and a large flat area for dwellings. The Northern Straits used the site as a winter home for almost 500 years. Courtesy of Washington State Department of Ecology, Shoreline Photos.

University students, led by Julie Stein, excavate a shell midden at English Camp. The island's native peoples changed the dimensions of the Garrison Bay shoreline as they deposited shell and bone waste at the water's edge between 500 and 1800 A.D. Over time, they created a flat, treeless area that proved perfect for food processing and habitation. Photo courtesy of Julie Stein.

Chapter Two
Rock of Empire: European and American Exploration of the San Juan Islands

The geographic isolation of the San Juan Islands and the Pacific Northwest kept Europeans from exploring the region until the late eighteenth century, when they were spurred by "curiosity, commerce, and conquest" to investigate the region.[1] European nations emphasized commercial interests over colonialism and settlement during this time, and both Great Britain and Spain sought to discover a Northwest Passage and to exploit the natural resources of the Pacific Northwest. In the mid-nineteenth century, American explorers and surveyors evaluated the island for resource extraction and defensive capabilities as well as agriculture and settlement. European and American expectations of San Juan Island's natural environment differed from those of the archipelago's previous inhabitants. Northern Straits Indians had primarily utilized the island's resources for subsistence purposes before European contact, but Europeans and Americans held different values and assumptions about the natural world. As these explorers surveyed the remote archipelago, they placed these values on the natural environment and searched for the natural resources that would make the San Juan Islands a valuable addition to their empire.

European Exploration and Surveying

Both Spain and Great Britain explored and claimed ownership of the San Juan Islands in the late eighteenth century, and these explorers were the first to see the natural landscape in terms of extractable commodities. European explorers were drawn to the region for timber (for ship masts) and otter pelts, which brought top dollar in the newly opened Chinese markets.[2] They also sought to discover the Northwest Passage, a mythical waterway through North America that would connect the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean. Though these early European visitors to the San Juan Islands believed they were discovering virgin land, they were actually viewing an environment managed and shaped by Northern Straits Indians. While the island's indigenous residents had viewed San Juan Island and its surrounding waters as an abundant landscape, European explorers saw little to entice them in the rocky archipelago.

The Spanish were the first Europeans to explore the islands. Spain, which occupied California in the eighteenth century, saw the Northwest as a logical extension of its North American possessions. The Spanish sent expeditions to map and explore the area, to defend against British claims and to search for a Northwest Passage. They also hoped to trade copper for sea otter pelts from the Indians. Competition among Spain, Great Britain,

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[1] Carlos Schwantes, *The Pacific Northwest: An Interpretive History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 42.
[2] Warren L. Cook, *Flood Tide of Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 281.

Portugal, Russia, France and the United States in the sea otter trade was fierce, and the Spanish were determined to stake their claim to the lucrative business.[3]

In May of 1790, the Spaniard Manuel Quimper skirted the western edge of the archipelago, but he mistook the islands for a solid landmass. Quimper sailed from Nootka Sound on Vancouver Island, where the Spanish had established a fort the year before, intending to explore the waterways inside the Strait of Juan de Fuca. He carried beaten copper sheets to trade with Indians for otter pelts, as they had successfully done on Vancouver Island. He also intended to assess the area for "strategic harbors…fresh water, firewood, fertility, climate, prevailing winds and Indian behavior." Though Quimper sighted and named Haro Strait, he did not have time or adequate provisions to explore the area inside and through the channel. Strong winds and unfavorable tides hampered his attempt to return to Nootka Sound, sending his ship, the *Princesa Real*, back and forth across the Strait of Juan de Fuca. From his vantage point, the islands looked like a solid coastline, and he mistook the archipelago for part of the mainland. Quimper did explore the Strait, and he marveled at the "delicious fish, among which were salmon of 100 lbs more in weight" he purchased from Olympic Peninsula Indians. However, the Spanish were uninterested in exploiting the fisheries resources of the region, since they preferred to concentrate on the lucrative fur trade.[4] Quimper successfully traded for sea otter pelts from Indians on the Olympic Peninsula and Vancouver Island coasts, which encouraged the Spanish to pursue further explorations in the area.

The next year, as part of Spain's continuing search for the Northwest Passage, Francisco de Eliza mapped the waters surrounding the area he called "Isla y Archipelago de San Juan." With two ships, the *San Carlos* and the smaller schooner *Santa Saturnina*, Eliza sought to locate the passage in the uncharted waters to the east of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, since the rest of the west coast of North America had largely been mapped. He sent José Verdiá to explore the area around the San Juan Island in a longboat, but Indian war canoes (which probably belonged to Indians that resided north of the islands) overwhelmed the boat in Haro Strait, forcing them to turn back. Verdiá soon returned to Haro Strait and spent ten days exploring the area, and he discovered that the Strait led to another, larger channel, later named the Strait of Georgia by George Vancouver. He spotted whales in the Strait of Georgia, prompting Eliza to determine that there was an undiscovered ocean entrance to the area, possibly the Northwest Passage, since the Spanish had not seen whales in the Strait of Juan de Fuca.[5]

Still hoping to discover the mythical passage to the Atlantic, Eliza sent the *Santa Saturnina*, commanded by José María Nárvaez, to explore the waters to the north of the

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[3] Cook, *Flood Tide of Empire*, 340.
[4] Cook, 280-1.
[5] Derek Hayes, *Historical Atlas of the Pacific Northwest: Maps of Exploration and Discovery* (Seattle: Sasquatch Books, 1999), 72.

archipelago. Passing by the San Juan Islands, the ship's pilot, Juan Pantoja y Arriga, described the chain as "an indescribable archipelago of islands, keys, rocks, and big and little inlets." Poor visibility, windy conditions and persistent rain hindered the Spanish explorations; the area's strong tides and submerged reefs also made the endeavor difficult.[6] For three weeks, Nárvaez explored north through Haro Strait and the Strait of Georgia to 50 degrees latitude, an area which Europeans had not previously explored. After running short of supplies and failing to discover the mythical passage, the Spanish turned back. Since they did not explore the archipelago's interior, only its perimeter, the Spanish map from these expeditions depicts the chain as one land mass. However, their limited explorations of the Strait of Georgia encouraged the Spanish to continue searching for the Northwest Passage.[7]

The Spanish made one final effort to find a trade route or valuable commodities in the archipelago. In 1792, a crew commanded by Alejandro Malaspina joined forces with George Vancouver's expedition to explore and map the area. However, the Spanish concluded, "One does not find there terrestrial or marine products whose examination or acquisition is worth exposing oneself to the consequences of a protracted voyage." Sea otters did not inhabit the waters beyond the Strait of Juan de Fuca, dashing the Spaniards' hopes of finding exportable commodities in the region. By the end of 1792, the Spanish realized that no passage to the Atlantic existed and that the damp, densely forested region was unsuitable for Spanish settlement or further commercial endeavors.[8]

However, the Spanish left their mark on the archipelago by naming many of the islands after patrons, crew members and natural features. Eliza probably named the archipelago for Juan Vicente de Guemes Pacheco Padilla Horcasitas y Aguayo, a potential patron of future explorations and the viceroy of Mexico. They originally named Rosario Strait "Canal de Nuestra Señora del Rosario," for a patroness of their expedition. Haro Strait (Canal de López de Haro) and Lopez Island were both named for Quimper's pilot, Gonzalo López de Haro.[9] Historians disagree whether Orcas Island was named for a native species of whale or for the viceroy of Mexico. Though many of these names survive, subsequent explorers renamed some of the features originally designated by the Spanish.

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British explorers were similarly unimpressed with the San Juan Islands within the context of their New World experiences. In his voyage to the Pacific Northwest in 1792, the British government charged George Vancouver with discovering a Northwest Passage and securing the region for Great Britain. A timber shortage in Great Britain motivated

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[6] David Richardson, *Pig War Islands* (Eastsound: Orcas Publishing Co., 1972), 21.
[7] Hayes, *Historical Atlas of the Pacific Northwest*, 72.
[8] Cook, 355.
[9] Hayes, 70-72. The name also referred to the waterway now known as the Strait of Georgia.

the British to search for large trees from which they could fashion ship masts. They also sought otter pelts for the lucrative market in China. However, the small size of the islands' trees compared to those on the mainland along with the absence of sea otters in the islands' waters made the archipelago undesirable for commercial endeavors. While Vancouver and his crew recorded favorable impressions of the land bordering Puget Sound, the body of water to the south, the British explorers held a different opinion for the San Juan archipelago, which they viewed as unsuitable for agriculture, settlement or resource extraction. [10]

The explorers were initially optimistic about the resources that might be found on the islands. Noting "an archipelago of islands of various sizes," Vancouver sent Lieutenant William Broughton to explore the islands. Broughton became the first European to investigate the interior waterways of the archipelago, since the Spanish had explored only the perimeter of the islands. From the west, Broughton stated that the chain looked "most capacious, and presented an unbounded horizon." The individual islands were "rocky… (and) well cloath'd with wood." Broughton's report focuses on nautical observations, and he recorded few of his impressions of the islands. He did find the archipelago an important location for collecting essential supplies. On Cypress Island, Broughton's men gathered fresh spring water and wild strawberries. They brewed spruce beer, from the needles of spruce trees found on the islands, to help prevent scurvy. The crew also fished the waters of the archipelago, and on Orcas Island they bought fresh venison as well as a live fawn from the Indians.[11]

The English had gathered much needed resources from the San Juan Islands, but the expedition members were unimpressed with the islands' potential for resource extraction or settlement, especially compared to the Puget Sound area, which they had just explored. Archibald Menzies, a Scottish botanist on Vancouver's ship *Discovery*, was highly enthusiastic about that area, which he felt had tremendous agricultural and settlement possibilities. Sailing through Admiralty Inlet into Puget Sound, he wrote of the "beautiful canals and wandering navigable branches" and of the "rich country" with easy ocean access and fertile banks that should be settled by any "civilized nation." Menzies described the area's climate as "exceedingly favorable." The soil was "light and gravelly" and would "yield most of the European fruits and grains in perfection." In sum, he described Puget Sound as "fine country…a desirable situation for a new settlement."[12]

However, he held a less favorable opinion of the San Juan Islands, which he viewed as bleak and worthless. His comments on their steep, rocky shores and stunted trees

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[10] Edmund S. Meany, *Vancouver's Discovery of Puget Sound* (New York: MacMillan and Co., 1907), 196.
[11] J. Nielson Barry, "Broughton's Reconnaissance of the San Juan Islands in 1792," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, Vol.21, No. 1, 59. Spruce beer was a fermented alcoholic drink made from spruce twigs, yeast and molasses.
[12] C.F. Newcombe, ed., *Menzies' Journal of Vancouver's Voyage, April to October 1792* (Victoria, B.C: W.H. Cullin, 1923), 47.

contrasted with his description of Puget Sound. "We could not help notice the difference between these islands and that fine country we had so lately examined. Here the land rose rugged and hilly…and was composed of many solid rocks covered with a thin layer of blackish mold which afforded the nourishment to a straddling forest of small stunted pines. The shores were almost everywhere steep, rugged and cliffy which made landing difficult, and the wood were in many places equally difficult of access from the rocky cliff and chasms." Menzies expressed excitement only about the archipelagos' unique plant species, which "added considerably" to his collection.[13] In the eyes of the British explorers, the small size of the islands' trees along with the absence of sea otters made the archipelago undesirable for commercial endeavors. Like the Spanish, the British had been looking for marketable commodities in the San Juan Islands, and when they did not find any, the deemed the archipelago worthless. Between 1792 and 1841, due to the lack of extractable resources and the realization that a Northwest Passage did not exist in the area, no European (or American) vessel visited the San Juan Islands.

The second Nootka Treaty, signed in 1795, had resolved the territorial dispute between Great Britain and Spain in favor of Great Britain, paving the way for British expansion into the region. In the mid 1850s, the British showed renewed interest in the region's timber resources. The question over the boundary between Oregon Territory and British North America brought many British warships to the region, and this spurred Royal Navy interest in timber, for ship masts, from the Pacific Northwest. The British ship *America* procured Douglas fir spars from Port Discovery on the Olympic Peninsula in 1845, and these trees proved better suited to ship masts than the softer California wood previously used by the navy. The spars so impressed the British Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific, Sir George Seymour, that he sent a number of Douglas Firs from Vancouver Island to England to be tested for quality. The trees proved superior to even those from Riga, in Latvia, which the navy considered the highest quality trees in the world. However, the problem of how to profitably transport the timber 18,000 miles, from the Pacific Northwest to England, proved insurmountable to those who attempted it. In 1855, the Crimean War increased the British need for timber for ship construction, and British warships were able to transport enough Northwest timber to solve that nation's immediate needs.[14]

Due to the timber crisis, San Juan Island's trees aroused some British interest during this time. Maps drawn by British surveyors noted the presence of "ship trees" on the west side of the island south of Deadman Bay, indicating that the British at least considered

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[13] Newcombe, ed., *Menzies' Journal of Vancouver's Voyage*, 48-51.
[14] Barry M. Gough, *The Royal Navy and the Northwest Coast of North America, 1810-1914: A Study of British Maritime Ascendancy* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1971), 96-98.

exploiting the timber resources of the island.[15] Due to the high quality timber on Vancouver Island and the mainland, these trees likely remained uncut, as there is no evidence to suggest that the British navy ever did utilize the archipelago's trees for ship masts.

British surveyors found themselves frustrated by the archipelago's weather, currents and native residents, just as Spanish explorers had been, while charting the archipelago in the 1850s. James Alden conducted the first marine survey of the islands in 1852, and these British explorations continued for about ten years, probably for defense purposes in anticipation of permanent occupation. Smoke from forest fires, which were probably intentionally set by the Northern Straits, obscured the islands' shorelines. Base marks, used by surveyors to map the islands, were destroyed by storms and by Indians. The surveyors complained of heavy rains and of the distorted appearance of the islands due to refraction during clear days. Treacherous currents and submerged reefs made navigation dangerous. George Davidson, a survey supervisor, concluded, "The experience of three seasons in this locality has not increased our relish for navigating these channels in sailing vessels."[16] The surveyors were undoubtedly happy to complete their task and leave the archipelago.

The British had explored and surveyed the archipelago beginning in 1792, but the islands were of uncertain ownership. A treaty signed in 1846 fixed the boundary in the Pacific Northwest in "the middle of the channel which separates the continent from Vancouver's Island." Due to the negotiators' ignorance of the region's geography, this could have meant either Rosario or Haro Strait, along the eastern or western edges of the chain. To settle the disagreement, the United States and Great Britain agreed to send surveyors to the region in order to devise a water boundary between British Columbia and Washington Territory. Between 1857 and 1862, British and American boundary commissioners worked to devise a water boundary between the American and British North America.[17]

Explorers had deemed the islands worthless, yet both the British and American government sought to claim the San Juan Islands for their own. The British and the American boundary commissions worked separately for over four years determining their recommendation for the international border. The British Admiralty chose James C. Prevost as British Water Boundary Commissioner. Prevost appointed Captain George Henry Richards as chief surveyor, while Charles Wilson served as the British commission's secretary. The British wanted only to determine the water boundary, but

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[15] Capt. G.H. Richards, "Haro and Rosario Straits, 1858-9," Map, Provincial Archives, Victoria, British Columbia.
[16] Lucille McDonald, *Making History: The People Who Shaped the San Juan Islands* (Friday Harbor, Wa: Harbor Press, 1990), 106.
[17] Erwin Thompson, *San Juan Island Historic Resource Study* (Denver: National Park Service, 1972), 1.

Archibald Campbell, the head of the American team, persuaded them that the entire 409 mile border west of the Rocky Mountains needed definition. Unsurprisingly, each group chose a water boundary that favored their own nation.[18] While Prevost maintained that Rosario Strait, to the east of Lopez and Orcas Islands, should be the boundary, Campbell favored Haro Strait, between San Juan and Vancouver Islands.[19]

The British commissioners encountered many of the same difficult conditions in the archipelago that frustrated previous surveyors and explorers. Charles Wilson, an educated twenty-two year old Englishman from a wealthy family, recorded the frustration of trying to navigate through "awful tides which run down narrow channels" as quickly as a rushing stream.[20] Twice during their initial thirty hour journey through the archipelago their ship, the HMS *Satellite*, was forced to take shelter in protected coves to wait out powerful tidal currents. The commissioners sometimes traveled at night to avoid these treacherous flows, though navigating in the dark presented its own problems.

Despite these difficulties, the archipelago's scenic beauty and agricultural possibilities charmed the Englishman. Wilson wrote, "I cannot describe to you the scenery of the islands, as it baffles all description…." When strong tides forced the ship to take shelter in the harbor of an unknown island, the springtime flower display enchanted Wilson. He exclaimed, "It was like walking through a flower bed in an English garden, the flowers were nearly all new to me and some of them very beautiful and would be prized in any English garden. I collected a great many." British surveyor Richard Mayne agreed, and he declared, "I have never seen wild flowers grow with the beauty and luxuriance they possess here."[21] The tide slackened and the commissioners set off in the direction of San Juan Island, which Wilson called the "loveliest" island in the archipelago. "[San Juan Island] has rich soil and everything seems to grow luxuriantly… [there are] beautifully sloping glades running down to the sea, bordered by arbutus, maple and dogwood." He likened the scenery to England's Mount Edgecumbe, a country estate famous for its gardens and views of Plymouth Sound since the eighteenth century, "the only difference being that [San Juan Island] is all natural and [Mount Edgecumbe] artificial." Wilson did not realize that the Northern Straits had actively shaped the landscape through their resource management strategies.

The surveyors may have agreed that San Juan Island possessed unique beauty, but they held differing opinions on the island's potential importance to the British Empire. Mayne concluded that it was "manifestly absurd" to think that the island had any "real

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[18] Herman Deutsch, *Surveying the 49th Parallel 1858-1861: The United States-Canada Boundary in the Pacific Northwest* (Tacoma: Washington State Historical Society, 1962), 2.
[19] Gough, *The Royal Navy and the Coast of North America*, 154.
[20] George F.G. Stanley, ed., *Mapping the Frontier: Charles Wilson's Diary of the Survey of the 49th Parallel, 1858-1862* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1970), 47
[21] Richard Mayne, *Four years in British Columbia and Vancouver island: An account of their rivers, coasts, gold fields and resources for colonization*, (London: John Murray, 1862), 40.

value." James Prevost, the head of the water boundary commission felt differently.[22] Prevost admitted that "San Juan Island is a beautiful and fertile island" with a significant proportion of cleared, potentially productive agricultural land, but he argued that it was the island's strategic location that would prove most valuable to the British government. Even if the island was "intrinsically worthless," Prevost believed that it was "of the utmost value to Great Britain, commanding as it does the channel of communications between Vancouver Island and British Columbia." Prevost saw little worth in the islands to the east, but he contended, "San Juan is invaluable to our possession."[23] Prevost's view would prevail among British government officials. The Hudson's Bay Company would come to value San Juan Island for its natural resources, and the British boundary commissioners thought the island offered a beautiful, agriculturally productive landscape. Ultimately, however, it was the strategic locale that led the British to contest American claims to San Juan Island.

American Exploration and Surveying

The first Americans to explore the waters around San Juan Island mapped the archipelago in 1841 as part of a four year journey around the world. The United States Exploring Expedition, led by Captain Charles Wilkes, emphasized scientific discoveries, and the government-sponsored mission helped establish the nation's reputation as a scientific authority.[24] Expedition members explored, mapped and named geographical features throughout the San Juan Islands and Puget Sound region. Charles Wilkes renamed the San Juan Islands the "Navy Archipelago" in his written reports, though he retained the designation "Archipelago de Arro," an English corruption of the Spanish name for the chain, on his maps. Wilkes renamed many of the individual islands as well, though some of his designations were never incorporated into official maps. San Juan became Rodgers Island and Orcas became Hull Island on his maps. He had more permanent success labeling Shaw, Blakely and Decatur Islands, all named for heroes of the War of 1812. Though Wilkes named these features, he largely ignored the San Juan Islands in his reports, suggesting that he did not find the archipelago noteworthy.

San Juan Island remained unimportant to the Americans until the boundary dispute with Great Britain in the mid-nineteenth century, when the Americans and the British contested each others claims to San Juan Island. The fur trade had declined by this time, and these nations looked to the natural environment to provide agricultural and extractive resource opportunities for settlers and corporations. As Washington Territory's population rose during the mid-twentieth century, the island became increasingly

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[22] Mayne, *Four Years in British Columbia and Vancouver Island*, 40.
[23] Michael Vouri, *The Pig War: Standoff at Griffin Bay* (Friday Harbor, Wash: Griffin Bay Bookstore, 1999), 24.
[24] Hayes, *Historical Atlas of the Pacific Northwest*, 120.

valuable to the United States for its strategic location, good harbors and arable farmland. Between 1851 and 1874, the island and its resources would be at the center of a dispute that would bring two nations close to war.

During the 1840s, the idea of manifest destiny—a phrase used by politicians to justify and encourage continental expansion—captured the American imagination. Settlers seeking land began streaming into the Pacific Northwest. Congress created the Washington Territory in 1853, and immigrants and corporations journeyed to the region hoping to find success through agriculture, logging and other natural resource uses. To facilitate settlement and commerce, railroad companies and government agencies chartered expeditions to map boundaries, survey land and record scientific discoveries. The Pacific Northwest had been surveyed for American settlement since the late 1830s, when the United States Exploring Expedition mapped the region. However, the expedition had largely ignored the San Juan Islands, which may have seemed too remote for settlement in 1840. As settlers claimed prime agricultural land on the mainland, however, the island's prairies became increasingly attractive to homesteaders. By the late 1850s, American settlers had arrived on San Juan Island, and the resolution of the boundary dispute became urgent.

The United States Congress called for the Northwest Boundary Survey in 1856 to "carry out the provisions of the first article of the 1846 treaty with Great Britain," which ambiguously defined the water boundary through the San Juan Islands. Archibald Campbell, the chief clerk of the war department, headed the survey. George Gibbs, the commission's geologist and interpreter, was an Eastern intellectual and author who had worked for the federal government on Indian commissions. Caleb Kennerly served as the expedition's naturalist and surgeon. Henry Custer, a Swiss-born topographer, served as the commission's assistant.

The United States Boundary Commission was charged not only with determining the water boundary between Washington Territory and British Columbia, but also with analyzing the "Haro" (San Juan) and "Northern" (Canadian Gulf) Islands for settlement and resource extraction. With an influx of miners to the region and the rapid settlement of Puget Sound area valleys, Americans eyed prospective agricultural areas in the islands. As Archibald Campbell stated in 1858, "The recent emigration to this region has attracted considerable attention to this beautiful and picturesque group of islands, and much greater interest that heretofore is now manifested in the settlement of the boundary question. The uncertainty in regard to their sovereignty prevents them from being occupied by American settlers."[25] In Campbell's eyes, the archipelago's natural

[25] U.S. Department of State, *The Northwest Boundary: Discussion of the Water Boundary Questio*n, Archibald Campbell to Lewis Cass, Secretary of State, 25 September 1858 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1868), 51.

landscape offered enticements to American settlers seeking agricultural or resource extraction opportunities.

The commissioners' records offer the best description of any historical records of San Juan Island's landscape during the nineteenth century. In language typical of the time, they portrayed the island as an agricultural Eden, lacking only industrious Americans who would turn the land into a profitable landscape. As the commission explored the island, they examined and were impressed by the island's prospects for agriculture, fishing, and mineral extraction. In this way, they exemplified the typical nineteenth-century American view of nature as a resource waiting to be exploited.

When the commission members described the island, they, like other explorers, commented on a landscape shaped by the Northern Straits Indians. The prevalence of open timber and prairie on the island were probably as a result of intentionally set fires by Indians; the practice that had encouraged desirable native plant growth for the Northern Straits also made the island exceptionally attractive to settlers. San Juan's prairies were well known throughout the region, but it is unknown how many acres of prairie existed on the island. George Gibbs stated, "The amount of actual prairie land on the island can hardly be stated with exactness, much of what is called so being rather open timber." He estimated that Home Prairie, the site of Bellevue Farm, was about two miles long by one-half mile wide. Oak Prairie, now called San Juan Valley, comprised of about three and one half square miles, or about a thousand acres. Gibbs noted that there were other, smaller prairies on the island as well. Henry Custer was told of a prairie "in the northerly part of the island of considerable size," though he was not able to see it. Some of these prairies had undoubtedly served as camas growing locations for the Northern Straits.

The commissioners enthusiastically promoted the island's agricultural possibilities. Gibbs estimated that between one-third and one-half of the island's land was arable. He declared the soil "excellent, but on the Bellevue prairie somewhat gravelly."[26] Custer estimated that between fifty and sixty claims of 160 acres each "of good and valuable land" could be established, while Gibbs predicted that about 130 claims could be settled.[27] Gibbs believed that when "subjected to cultivation, (the island) will doubtless reward the husbandman with abundant crops. The soil…is almost inexhaustible."[28] The geologist concluded, "In an agricultural point of view San Juan assumes a decidedly prominent place among the rest of the islands of the Sound. The soil is almost thoroughly good and productive and in low situated places even rich….I have no hesitation in saying that these islands are in every respect as valuable, agriculturally, as the settled part of

[26] George Gibbs, 18 March 1859, Geographical Memoir, Appendix C, RG 76, Records of the Boundary Claims Commissions and Arbitrations, Northwest Boundary Survey, National Archives, College Park, MD.
[27] Henry Custer, Geographical Memoir, Appendix D, 11 April 1859, RG 76; Gibbs, 18 March 1859, RG 76.
[28] Gibbs, 18 March 1859.

Vancouver's Island."[29] Henry Custer tempered Gibbs' enthusiasm somewhat as he noted that parts of the southwestern end of the island are "so exposed to the sweep of southern gales that no grain or fruit could be grown there."[30] He was undoubtedly referring to the southern slope of Mt. Finlayson.

Much of the island's terrain was rocky or hilly and therefore not suitable to field crops, but the commissioners believed that these areas were perfect for raising sheep. Gibbs believed "Much of what is not available for the plough affords good pasturage." Custer declared, "All land not fit for cultivation is nevertheless perfectly adapted to grazing purposes." He believed that even the island's hillsides, where the soil is "thin and rocky," possessed good grass for sheep.[31] Gibbs reported that "some of the hills are grassy to their summits," while other hills were "covered with a luxuriant growth of grass," perfect for sheep grazing. He observed that Bellevue Farm's sheep fared very well on the grass and the camas. According to Campbell, "The mutton of Vancouver's and San Juan Islands is remarkable for its delicacy of flavor, which may be accounted for by the peculiar properties of the grazing." He also noted that the absence of predators, along with the "sweet, nutritious grass" and the island's mild climate made San Juan perfect for sheep raising.[32] The commission did not promote the possibility that other livestock could be successfully raised on the island. Though the mutton was eaten locally, wool, not meat, was the primary export product obtained from sheep. Wool could easily be shipped around the world, an important factor for farmers in such a remote location as San Juan Island.

Farmers and livestock ranchers needed a reliable supply of fresh water, and the commissioners' report assured potential settlers that an adequate number streams and lakes watered the island. Henry Custer reported that the one permanent creek on the island, which ran through Oak Prairie and emptied in the southwest side of the island, was of "considerable size." He observed several other seasonal streams, as well as two permanent lakes that drained to the west. "Altogether, there seems to be no want of water on the island," Custer determined. Gibbs was more effusive in his praise of San Juan's water resources. He thought that some of the island's creeks were "of sufficient size and force to produce excellent mill power," perhaps for grain since the island lacked good timber resources. The island's saltwater harbors provided safe anchorage for settlers' boats and merchant vessels. Griffin Bay impressed Campbell as a harbor location, "one of the best and safest on the whole sound, with good anchorage almost everywhere."

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[29] George Gibbs to Lieut. John G. Parke, 24 February 1858, RG 76.
[30] Custer, 11 April 1859.
[31] Gibbs, 18 March 1859; Custer, 11 April 1859.
[32] Gibbs, 18 March 1859; Archibald Campbell, "The Northwest Boundary: Discussion of the Water Boundary Question," 133.

Custer also noted that the sheltered bays on the island's northwest side, near English Camp, would make excellent harbors.[33]

Due to the small size of the island's trees, the commissioners did not envision a thriving timber industry. San Juan's forests paled compared to the giant cedars and firs that grew on the mainland, and the American commissioners believed that the forested land on the island would be most valuable when it was cleared for agriculture. Gibbs reported that the forests of San Juan endured frequent fires. Burning by the Northern Straits created valuable prairie land for American settlers, but it reduced the value of the island's timber. Gibbs noted that "The timber is small and easily cleared," and he believed that when the land was "divested of [timber] by the hardy pioneer, [it] can be brought into profitable cultivation." Fir was the dominant tree, according to Custer, though he noted a "species of stunted oak" (Garry Oak) that grew on Oak Prairie. The oak was reputed to be "excellent timber for ship's knees." Custer also noted that the forests were less dense than on the mainland, with many open areas. Once settlers cleared timber from valley bottoms, he believed, "grain of every variety could be cultivated with rich returns." Gibbs did note a potentially valuable stand of large cedars at the north end of the island that he suggested could be profitably logged.[34]

As the commission's geologist, Gibbs was charged with examining the mineral resources of the island. Vancouver Island contained valuable coal deposits, and though the commissioners hoped to find coal in the San Juan Archipelago, only Orcas Island contained a small deposit. San Juan Island did contain high quality limestone, however, "a circumstance of great importance" to Archibald Campbell. The limestone was valuable both as lime and as stone for building structures. The discovery was especially important since no limestone deposits had been found in the Puget Sound area, and the mineral was imported from either California or Vancouver Island for building purposes.[35]

The fisheries resources of the island, which could "easily be made very productive and profitable," impressed the commissioners. Campbell believed that the islands might contain the most productive fishery in the Puget Sound region, and the men were impressed by the numbers of salmon caught by the Hudson's Bay Company off of San Juan Island."[36] Custer noted, "Halibut and codfish are also taken in large numbers, and are said to be unsurpassed in quality." "Persons supplied with the proper appliances for carrying on a fishery," Gibbs remarked, "might find it a profitable occupation."[37]

Impressed as they were with San Juan Island's natural resources, the commissioners probably did not look to the island's fisheries or native plants for their own sustenance.

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[33] Custer, 11 April 1859; Gibbs, 18 March 1859.
[34] Custer, 11 April 1859; Gibbs, 18 March 1859. Ship's knees were used to frame ships.
[35] Campbell, "The Northwest Boundary: Discussion of the Water Boundary Question," 7.
[36] Ibid, 7.
[37] Custer, 11 April 1859; Gibbs, 18 March 1859.

Despite the abundance of fish and shellfish, the Americans do not mention eating any seafood from the island's waters. Nor did they record eating the berries or any other plants native to the island. Instead, the commissioners appear to have survived on rations and some game such as venison, though it is not known whether they hunted or purchased the deer from the Indians. On one occasion when provisions were low, Charles Griffin of the Hudson's Bay Company's Bellevue Farm presented William Warren and Caleb Kennerly with "a fat lamb, which he had selected from his flock…This present was fully appreciated…as our venison had given out and we were reduced to …rations."[38] The commissioners were grateful to accept food fitting to European and American tastes. George Gibbs had worked as an ethnologist among Indian groups in the Pacific Northwest and he served as a translator for the boundary commission, so it is likely that he was familiar with many of the native foods of the region. However, there is no evidence that Gibbs used his knowledge or communication skills to procure local foods other than venison.

The commission evaluated some of the other islands in the archipelago in the same manner. They were especially impressed with Orcas Island, which also had a considerable amount of arable land as well as at least one coal bed. Many of the islands contained sufficient water and a mild climate conducive to settlement, according to the commission. To the commission, all of the islands were perfect for sheep raising, due to the absence of predators and the abundance of forage.[39] However, in their view, San Juan Island as the best location for potential settlers due to its abundance of prairie land.

The commission members all were charmed by the archipelago's beauty. Archibald Campbell believed that the islands contained some of the most beautiful harbors in the world. The commission leader thought that the interspersed patches of prairie and forest and the "mountain sides covered with luxuriant grass to their summits," gave the islands a "pleasingly rural aspect." The south facing, untimbered slopes of the islands, such as the one on Mt. Finlayson, charmed Campbell. "This peculiarity is so striking as to attract the attention of all who traverse these waters, and in spring time and early summer, when the grass is green and the flowers in bloom, the prospect is enchanting."[40]

As a result of their explorations, the boundary commissioners' names became the permanent designations of the islands. They had complained of the confusing nature of the island's names after consulting Spanish, British and American maps of the archipelago. For unknown reasons, the maps of the United States Coast Survey, published in the mid 1850s, ignored some of Wilkes designations while retaining others. To add to the confusion, the British had their own set of names for many of the islands and waterways. The commissioners favored Wilkes' names, except where the Spanish

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[38] William Warren, 1860, RG 76.
[39] Campbell, in "The Northwest Boundary: Discussion of the Water Boundary Question," 133.
[40] Ibid., 4.

names were "well established." Therefore, San Juan Island retained its Spanish name rather than the British designation "Bellevue" or Wilkes' name, "Rodgers."

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After the resolution of the boundary dispute, the American army surveyed the former military camps on San Juan Island for potential military reservations. In 1873 the army's board of engineers proposed that the southeastern end of San Juan Island, along with six other parcels in the archipelago, be reserved for defensive purposes. The army asked the General Land Office, the federal agency charged with surveying and selling lands to homesteaders, to refrain from surveying and selling the island's lands until the army could choose military reservation sites. In March of 1874, Major Nathaniel Michler was directed to survey the seven areas chosen by the army as potential reservations, and by September he had completed his assignment.[41] Michler selected sites based on their defensive capabilities, including their potential for defensive works development. Each reservation had to be less than 640 acres, according to an act of Congress passed in 1853.[42] The army gave squatters, islanders who resided within the boundaries of the newly established reservations, until January 1, 1878, to vacate the newly established reservations.

The geography of the southeastern part of San Juan Island made the area well suited to defensive purposes, and 640 acres were reserved for the military in this area. The reservation encompassed Mt. Finlayson, Cattle Point, Rocky Point, Neck Point and Goose Island, though it did not include the American Camp and Bellevue Farm sites. Michler included Mt. Finlayson in the reservation due to its "most comprehensive and commanding view." Michler also noted that Griffin Bay was "well sheltered," and he considered the harbor "most important as an anchorage."[43] Point Caution, on the northeastern part of the island (what would later become the University of Washington's Friday Harbor laboratories), was also reserved for the military. In December of 1875, seven military reservations were officially set aside in the islands.

The army surveyors working under Michler were charged with evaluating lands for military reservations, but they also expressed their belief that the former American Camp site could be successfully settled and farmed. They noted, "The larger part of this township is prairie, of which the soil is sandy and of very good quality. Scattered over the prairie are small groves of alder, willow and pine," wood which settlers could use for building materials and firewood. The large spring southwest of the military camp

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[41] Unknown author to Captain Sears, 5 May 1888, Office of the Chief of Engineers, Land Papers, San Juan Island, National Archives, Washington D.C.

[42] H. Clay Wood, Assistant Adjutant General, Headquarters, Department of the Pacific, to unknown, 8 January 1876, RG 77.

[43] Nathaniel Michler, "A Hydrographic Report of United States Military Reservations on San Juan and Adjacent Islands," 8 September 1874, RG 77.

provided "fine fresh water…a full supply during all seasons of the year."[44] Their notes describe a landscape altered since the arrival of Euro-Americans. The north side of Mt. Finlayson was thickly wooded with fir, cedar, maple and alder, and the surveyors reported dense undergrowth, perhaps as a result from the cessation of burning by the displaced Northern Straits. The southern slopes of Mt. Finlayson were covered in bunchgrass, a species introduced after the arrival of Hudson's Bay Company sheep.[45]

The surveyors observed that the area was all claimed by settlers, though no farms had been established yet on the former military camp. To the northwest of American Camp, on Robert Frazer and Christopher Rosler's claims, the investigators classified the soil in the fields and alder bottoms as good, but they considered most of the soil second rate. The timber consisted of fir, small pines, alder, willow and gooseberry, with undergrowth of wild rose and fern. Isaac Sandwith's claim, just to the west of American Camp, consisted of rocky prairie, with thickets of wild rose, willow, and gooseberry. At English Camp, they described the soil near Garrison Bay as "first rate," though they rest of the area they classified as "rough, inferior and second rate."[46]

On the whole, however, Michler did not believe that the island would become a prosperous agricultural landscape. While previous surveyors such as the American boundary commissioners optimistically predicted that the island could become an agricultural Eden, Michler's report foreshadows some of the difficulties island farmers would face in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He classified much of the land as "inferior," "second and third rate" and "rocky." The army engineer stated that the island contained "very little arable ground," and he revealed that though about 150 people had settled the island, hardly any land was actually being farmed. He noted that most raised sheep, an activity suitable to the island's rocky terrain. Furthermore, Michler was aware that the island's location, far from mainland markets, posed problems for farmers and merchants. Unlike other nineteenth-century island visitors who placed primary importance on the potential for natural resource use, Michler envisioned a different type of value in the island's natural landscape. He called the island's scenery "beautiful and extensive" and the climate "salubrious," and he thought that given more developed transportations and communications, the island could become a tourist destination and "a delightful summer home retreat" for residents in Victoria.[47]

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[44] T.M. Reed and John Whitworth, "Transcript of the Field Notes of the survey of Townships 34, 35, 36, 37, of the Willamette Meridian," General Land Office Survey, 1874, Bureau of Land Management Records Center, Portland, OR.
[45] G.F. Cramer, "Report of Survey of U.S. Military Reservations on San Juan and adjacent islands," July and August, 1874, RG 77.
[46] Reed and Whitworth, "Transcript of the Field Notes of the survey of Townships 34, 35, 36, 37, of the Willamette Meridian," 1874.
[47] Nathaniel Michler to Brigadier General A.A. Humphreys,20 April 1875, RG 77.

Despite Michler's pragmatic observations, island settlers pursued agricultural endeavors and resource extraction in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He had envisioned the island as a strategic location for national defense, but the sites he selected for military reservations were never developed for this purpose. San Juan Island also did not quickly become a tourist destination, since the remote location and lack of regular transportation to the islands kept large numbers of mainland visitors from vacationing in the archipelago until the 1920s. Instead, most islanders continued to try to shape the island's natural environment into a profitable agricultural landscape.

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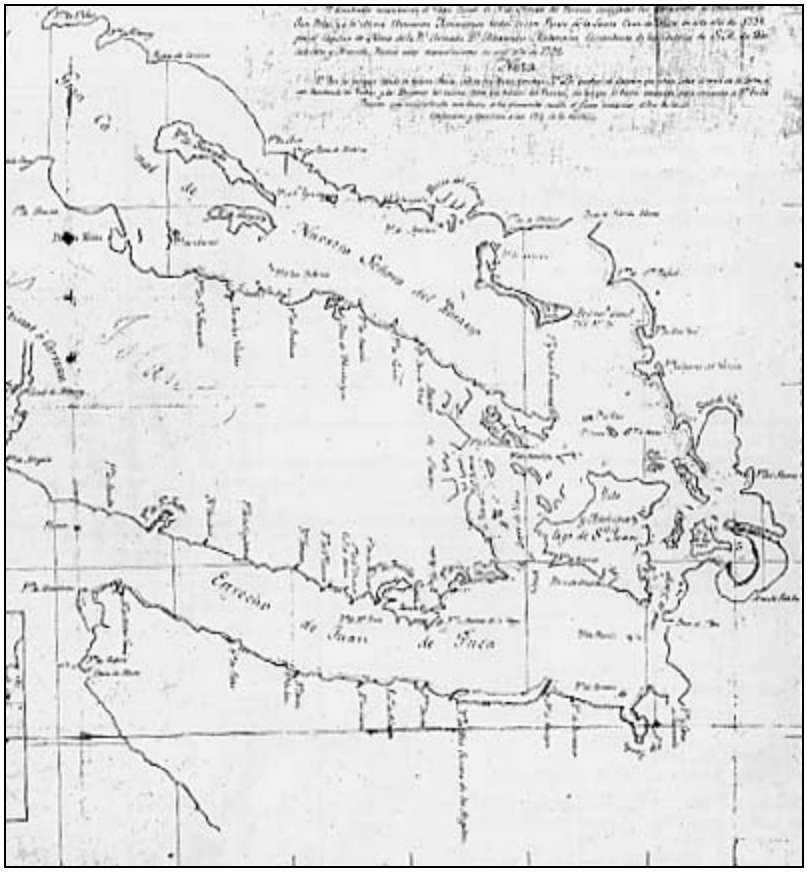

A 1791 map of the area is the first map to depict the San Juan Islands, though it shows the unexplored archipelago as a solid land mass. This map was later used to settle the British-American boundary dispute, since the United States inherited Spain's claims to North America. Photo reprinted from Derek Hayes, *Historical Atlas of the Pacific Northwest*, Seattle: Sasquatch Books, 1999, 74.

This 1858-9 map shows three possible options for drawing the disputed boundary between American and British North America. Photo reprinted from Derek Hayes, *Historical Atlas of the Pacific Northwest*, Seattle: Sasquatch Books, 199.

The island's grasslands, such as these in the American Camp section of the park, impressed the American surveyors who evaluated the island's agricultural possibilities. National Park Service photo.

Chapter Three

Island of Plenty:

The Hudson's Bay Company and San Juan Island

While European explorers considered the island environment incompatible with their economic goals, the Hudson's Bay Company thought differently. To the Company, the Pacific Northwest was an unexploited region ripe for commercial development, and San Juan Island was on e of the region's untapped resources. The Company imagined the island as a potentially profitable landscape, a place that not only met the needs of its residents but the demands of a market economy. The organization expanded to the island during the mid-nineteenth century in an attempt to control the area's natural resources and prevent American settlement. The Company extracted and sold raw materials, raised livestock, planted crops and exported salmon. In less than twenty years, their operations transformed San Juan Island's natural landscape into a productive agricultural environment.

The Hudson's Bay Company absorbed the North West Company (which held a royal charter to operate on the Northwest coast of North America) in 1821, thereby bringing Hudson's Bay operations to the region. In 1842, George Simpson, the chief factor of the Company, ordered the establishment of Fort Victoria on Vancouver Island to assert British authority in the region, to provide the company with a trading outpost accessible by sea and to explore the natural resources of the area. This move laid the groundwork for British settlement of San Juan Island in the early 1850s.[1]

The Hudson's Bay Company exploited new and remote markets, but when they turned their attention to San Juan, they did so within a different framework. The fur trade in the Pacific Northwest had declined by the mid-nineteenth century due to dwindling beaver numbers and changes in English fashion (the English favored silk hats instead of beaver by this time), so the Company sought to remain profitable through "the extraction, trade and export of various natural resources."[2] The provisions trade had become a viable export industry, and ships and employees, formerly used to transport furs, were now used to transport other commodities. By the early 1850s, when the Hudson's Bay Company expanded to San Juan Island, the organization was no longer a fur trading company, but "a general resource company that had recognized an abundant new environment and a broad commercial opportunity" in the Pacific Northwest. The Company

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[1] Although the Company claimed to have taken formal possession of the island by placing a wooden tablet on Mount Finlayson in 1845, no evidence for any such an action exists.

[2] Richard Somerset Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains: The British Fur Trade on the Pacific, 1793-1843* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997), 151 and 282.

sought commodities such as fish, lumber and agricultural products to sell to markets in Asia, California and Alaska.[3]

The Company's salmon exporting business was especially lucrative, and they kept an office in Honolulu for the purpose of facilitating the sale of its North American products to distant markets in Asia and in California. In 1845, salted salmon from the Pacific Northwest sold for ten to eleven dollars per barrel in Hawaii, and since each barrel cost the company only four dollars to produce, the Company made a good profit. In 1850, 4,000 barrels of salmon from the Company's Fort Langley (located southwest of present day Vancouver, British Columbia on the Fraser River) were sold in Hawaii for $41,000, "a very pretty sum," Vancouver Island Governor James Douglas concluded.[4] Fort Langley, which took advantage of the vast Fraser River salmon runs, produced more salmon for export than any other Company post. California became an especially important market in 1848, when the gold rush spurred demand for commodities such as salmon.[5]

With these profits in mind, Douglas logically sought to expand the Company's Northwest fishing operations onto San Juan Island.[6] He undoubtedly knew of the abundant catches off the west side of the island, where Fraser River salmon migrated to and from the ocean. Northern Straits reef netting locations in this area were well known to the Company, and the island's proximity to Fort Victoria made San Juan a convenient location for catching and processing salmon. In 1850, Douglas took steps to exploit the salmon runs off San Juan Island. The governor sent a Mr. Simpson, a company clerk, to San Juan Island to establish a salmon fishing operation on the island, possibly at Eagle Cove. Simpson remained on the island for only a few weeks, and there is no record of any salmon packing or exporting in that year.[7] Simpson's short visit may have been an exploratory mission that laid the foundation for the Company's foray on to the island the next year, or it may have been designed to indicate formal British possession of the island.

On June 1, 1851, the Company sent William Macdonald to establish a seasonal salmon fishery on the south end of the island. MacDonald traveled by canoe from Fort Victoria to San Juan Island with an Indian crew, a pilot and four French-Canadian workers.[8] Macdonald and the pilot chose a "small sheltered bay" on the southern part of the island, and though he does not pinpoint the location, it likely lies within the present day boundaries of the historical park. An 1860 United States military map shows a Company fishing station on the southern part of Griffin Bay, east of Jakle's Lagoon, but this location may not have been the site of the original

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[3] Joseph E. Taylor, *Making Salmon: An Environmental History of the Northwest Fisheries Crisis* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 60.
[4] Taylor, *Making Salmon*, 32.
[5] John Work to Edward Ermatinger, 8 August 1856, John Work Papers, Provincial Archives, Victoria, British Columbia.
[6] Hartwell Bowsfield, ed. *Fort Victoria letters* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1979), 30.
[7] David Richardson, *Pig War Islands* (Eastsound: Orcas Publishing Co., 1971), 32.
[8] William Macdonald, "A Pioneer," 30, Provincial Archives.

operation.[9] Macdonald recorded that the workers erected "a rough shed for the salting, packing and canning of salmon." He lived in a "primitive shelter" of four posts covered by a cedar bark roof for the first month of his stay. Macdonald purchased salmon from the Northern Straits, who seasonally fished in the area of the salmon banks, at the rate of one blanket (worth four dollars) in exchange for every sixty fish.[10] Rather than subsist on the wild foods and fisheries of the island, he and his men lived off of supplies from Fort Victoria brought by the schooner *Cadboro*. Macdonald must not have found his shelter too comfortable. After a month on the island, he elected to stay on board the *Cadboro* for the duration of his two-month stay. He then returned to Victoria to do office work.[11] There is no record of Macdonald's successor, though Charles Griffin, the Bellevue Farm manager, may have overseen the operation throughout the rest of the decade.

Though the first year's output was small, yielding only sixty barrels of salmon (there are forty to forty-five salmon to a barrel), the endeavor proved successful, producing from 1,500-3,000 barrels of salmon per year.[12] Douglas was pleased with the success of the operation, and he made plans to undertake curing on an even larger scale. Packed in barrels, the salmon were shipped first to Victoria and then to Hawaii, ultimately destined for markets in California and Asia. The fishery did not sustain this level of harvest for long, and it began to decline noticeably in the late 1850s. Douglas blamed what he called the "cyclical nature of salmon runs," in which some years produced exceptionally few fish.[13] In 1858, no fish were packed, and neither Charles Griffin nor Robert Firth (Griffin's successor as Bellevue Farm manager) mentioned a salmon fishing operation in their records after this time.

Wary of American expansion into the Pacific Northwest, the Company increased its operations on San Juan Island. In November of 1853, probably in response to the archipelago's incorporation into Whatcom County in the newly created Washington Territory, the Company sent Charles Griffin to set up a sheep farm, which he called Bellevue Farm.[14] San Juan's strategic location on Haro Strait, a trade route between the Queen Charlotte Islands, mainland British Columbia and the Pacific Ocean, also spurred the company's expansion onto the island. Gold had been discovered in the Queen Charlotte Islands, off the northwest coast of British Columbia, in 1851, and Douglas wanted to protect these resources from American encroachment.[15]

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[9] James W. Forsyth, "Southeast Portion of San Juan Island," Map, 1860, RG 49, Records of the Bureau of Land Management, National Archives, Washington D.C. While this shows us the location of the station in 1860, there are no maps or records that specify the station's location in 1851.
[10] Richardson, *Pig War Islands*, 33.
[11] MacDonald, *A Pioneer*, 31.
[12] George Gibbs, 18 March 1859, RG 76, Records of the Boundary Claims Commissions and Arbitrations, Northwest Boundary Survey, National Archives, College Park, MD.
[13] Hartwell Bowsfield, ed. *Fort Victoria letters*, 32.
[14] Griffin referred to the farm as "Belle Vue" in his journal, but most contemporary sources spell the name "Bellevue."
[15] Barry M. Gough, *The Royal Navy and the Northwest Coast of North America, 1810-1914: A Study of British Maritime Ascendancy* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1971), 132.

As American skepticism over the Hudson's Bay Company claim to the island increased, Company officials argued that the island was an essential part of their organization's agricultural production network. They claimed, for example, that Vancouver Island lacked the necessary natural resources to raise sheep. John Work, a Company employee, wrote that Fort Victoria had "limited pasturage…We have not a great extent of clear land." He goes on to complain about the difficulty of clearing forested land and the poor quality of the grass, which he called "artificial."[16] A wheat shortage on Vancouver Island in 1854, coupled with the high cost of importing grain from Oregon, also spurred the Company to seek additional cropland on San Juan Island.

However, the United States rejected this claim. Many Americans, such as Henry Crosbie, the Whatcom County assessor, believed that the Company occupied the island primarily for strategic reasons. In 1859 Crosbie stated, "The alleged cause of the sheep being placed there was the insufficiency of the pasturage in the part of Vancouver Island where they had previously been herded—the true cause was undoubtedly to give to a shadowy claim the substance of an occupation." Archibald Campbell, secretary of the American Boundary Commission that visited San Juan Island in the late 1850s, held a similar view. He stated that Hudson's Bay expansion onto the island "was doubtless accelerated by the territorial legislature…embracing the Haro Archipelago in one of its counties."[17]

As American settlers began to find their way to the island in the latter half of the decade, the company wanted to retain the island to prevent "a settlement of lawless American citizens, so near to Vancouver's Island."[18] George Gibbs' assessment of the Company's colonization of the archipelago seems the most logical. He believed that the Company settled the island with the intention of "securing all eligible sites for themselves and strengthening the quasi claim of the British government." To solidify their claim to the islands, the Company urged Douglas to find evidence at Fort Victoria of an action reputedly taken in 1845, when a Company employee claimed to have taken possession of San Juan Island by placing a wooden tablet on Mt. Finlayson. The British had learned an important lesson from the dispute over the border of the Oregon Territory, and it looked to formal possession of the San Juan Islands to keep American settlement at bay. However, Douglas was unable to prove the 1845 claim.[19]

The Company also tried to assert its presence on Lopez Island, just to the east of San Juan. Douglas granted a license in 1852 to a Company employee, William Pattle, to cut timber on the southwestern part of the island for the market in San Francisco. After building two primitive log

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[16] John Work to William Tolmie, 29 March 1852, John Work Papers.

[17] Henry Crosbie, "Assessment of HBC Co. property on San Juan Island made by assessors of Whatcom County, Washington Territory, May 20, 1859," RG 76; Archibald Campbell, RG 76.

[18] John Shepherd to Henry Labouchere, 29 February 1856, Record Office Transcripts of the HBC, Provincial Archives.

[19] George Gibbs, 18 March 1859; Secretary of the Hudson's Bay Company to James Douglas, 1 September 1853, Provincial Archives. It is unclear if Douglas tried to prove this action of possession, but the historical record does not provide any evidence that the tablet was placed on the island.

cabins and cutting spars, Pattle abandoned the enterprise to mine coal in Bellingham.[20] In September of 1853, the Hudson's Bay Company secretary advised the governor that "the proceedings of the Americans with regard to the islands should be narrowly watched, and that the most easterly of them should be occupied and turned to some use by the Company's servants." In February of 1854, Company leaders approved Douglas' plan to secure possession of Lopez Island, and the secretary instructed Douglas to offer land grants of no more than 500 acres each (he believed that fifty acres of good land would be adequate) to British subjects "with the view of securing occupation" not just on Lopez, but any of the islands. The Company believed that the claims of British citizens would "be more likely to be respected" by the American government than would the claims of the Hudson's Bay Company.[21] However, the Company had never encouraged settlers, and, according to historian Mike Vouri, Douglas "had been so successful at discouraging colonists, no one was around to take him up on [the offer]."[22] Douglas blamed the lack of British settlers on the unavailability of free land. The Company never succeeded in establishing their operations on any island but San Juan.

British and Spanish explorers had viewed the island as worthless, but the island's natural resources and location proved well suited for the Company's endeavors. The area surrounding Fort Victoria on Vancouver Island suffered from a shortage of arable lands, and James Douglas saw economic opportunities on the prairies of San Juan Island. In December of 1853, a month after Griffin arrived on San Juan, the steamer *Beaver* brought the first livestock to the island from Fort Nisqually, an outpost of Puget's Sound Agricultural Company (a subsidiary of the Hudson's Bay Company).[23] The company located the farm on the southern prairie, in what is now the American Camp section of the historical park. Griffin named the grasslands "Home Prairie." He estimated Home Prairie, which supplied grass for the sheep and other livestock landed by the company, to be about two miles long and one-half mile wide.[24] These grasslands provided land easily cleared for crops, and a nearby spring offered fresh water for the Company's employees and animals. The farm, located near San Juan's southern shores, had easy access to the steamers that would transport goods between the island and Victoria. Griffin located a pier on the large bay to the north of the farm, then called Ontario Roads or San Juan Harbor (now called Griffin Bay), due to its sheltered location that offered vessels a safe harbor from the sudden storms that commonly occurred in the winter.[25] A sheltered cove on the

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[20] Richardson, *Pig War Islands*, 34.
[21] John Shepherd to Henry Labouchere, 29 February 1856; The Secretary of the Hudson's Bay Company to James Douglas, 16 September 1853, Record Office Transcripts of the Hudson's Bay Company, Provincial Archives.
[22] Michael Vouri, *The Pig War: Standoff at Griffin Bay* (Friday Harbor, Wash: Griffin Bay Bookstore, 1999), 28.
[23] Gough, *The Royal Navy and the Northwest Coast of North America, 1810-1914*, 84; Erwin Thompson, *Historic Resource Study, San Juan Island National Historical Park, Washington* (Denver: National Park Service, 1972), 167.
[24] Gibbs, 18 March 1859.
[25] Henry Custer, "Report of Henry Custer, Assistant of a Reconnaissance of San Juan Island and the Saturna group," 11 April 1859, RG 76.

southern shore of the island off Haro Strait provided a safe landing place for the canoes that brought passengers and mail from Victoria.[26]

San Juan proved perfect for sheep raising, and Bellevue Farm continually expanded this throughout the island during the 1850s. Sheep, which prefer grazing on slopes, thrived on the steep, rocky terrain of the island. Griffin reported that the animals "find excellent food on the hill side prairies." He was probably referring to the camas beds that had been a staple of the Northern Straits diets. Although Company employees raised livestock, crops and garden vegetables on the island, wool was the primary product of Bellevue Farm. Griffin's journal entries emphasize the importance of sheep to Bellevue Farm; though his notes are brief, he always records the condition of the flocks. The Company utilized the entire island to graze their sheep. They were corralled at night, but they grazed freely during the day. Griffin established additional sheep stations on the island besides Bellevue Farm during the course of the decade. The exact locations of and the number of sheep stations established by the Company is unclear, but we know that there were at least four stations besides Bellevue Farm. One of these, dubbed the "John Bull" station, included five or six acres of cleared land, though it is unknown exactly where this station was or what was grown there. The four other stations consisted of a corral with a small sheepherder's cabin and were situated on prairies, connected to Bellevue Farm by road.[27] The exact locations of these stations are unclear. One of these was thought to be located near Friday Harbor, another south of Mitchell Bay and one beneath Little Mountain near Kanaka Bay. An additional station may have been sited on Oak Prairie (now called San Juan Valley).[28]

San Juan Island proved an ideal environment in which to raise one of the Company's most important commodities, and the flocks continued to prosper throughout the decade. On an 1855 visit, Douglas admired the healthy condition of the sheep on San Juan. They were free from "scab," a disease common in the Northwest. Even sheep that arrived on the island with the disease during their stay had completely healed.[29] Their numbers grew over the decade through natural increase, though Griffin lost a small number of the animals to wolves and to an unknown poisonous plant.[30] In 1853, the Company imported 1,369 sheep to the island. In May of 1856, their numbers had increased to 2,110, and by the next year, Griffin counted 2,890 sheep. In 1859, about 4,500 sheep roamed the island. Though the flocks prospered, they required workers to tend them and an infrastructure of buildings and transportation networks. The Company employed sheepherders to wean, clean, and shear the sheep; the sheepherders also protected the animals from both predators and "Indian sheepstealers."[31]

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[26] Captain G.H. Richards, "Griffin Bay and Adjacent Anchorages," Map, Provincial Archives.
[27] Custer, 11 April 1859; Gibbs, 18 March 1859.
[28] Thompson, Historic Base Map 1; Vouri, 29.
[29] Letter from James Douglas to the secretary of the Hudson's Bay Company, 24 February 1855, Record Office Transcripts of the Hudson's Bay Company, Provincial Archives.
[30] Charles Griffin, Bellevue Sheep Farm Post Journal, 15 November 1858, Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.
[31] San Juan Sheep Farm Account Book, 31 May 1857, Hudson's Bay Company Archives.

As the farm grew, the number of men employed by the farm rose. When Griffin landed on the island in 1853, he brought six Company employees with him. By 1859, seventeen to nineteen men worked for Bellevue Farm. George Gibbs reported that the farm's employees included "one Englishman, one Scotchman, two half breeds and a Kanaka" while "five Kanakas, one Scotchman and six or eight Chinese and Indians" worked exclusively herding sheep or as farm hands.[32] All but one of these farm hands and sheepherders were Indian, Hawaiian and Chinese.

Farm employees raised and tended other livestock for export, for employee rations and for farm work. Horses and oxen were indispensable to Bellevue Farm endeavors. Griffin utilized both animals to clear and plow fields, and horses also provided transportation. In 1853, Company brought three horses, two cows with calves, one heifer, one boar, and one sow with young to the island.[33] By 1859, the farm had thirty-five horses and forty head of cattle as well as oxen and pigs. Like the sheep, these animals required human labor for protection, and more structures such as barns, corrals and troughs. Farm employees raised field crops to sustain the livestock throughout the winter.[34] They slaughtered and salted cattle and hogs for their rations, and they shipped the surplus animals to Victoria for sale or export.

The farm met Douglas' expectations of a successful agricultural enterprise. During an 1855 visit, the governor called the land "very fine quality," and he predicted that Bellevue would become "a very pretty tillage farm." Douglas proposed bringing new land under cultivation, and he sent additional oxen to the farm for this purpose.[35]

Daily life on the farm was a ceaseless cycle of tending the livestock and crops. In San Juan's mild climate, rarely did poor weather conditions halt the men's work. Company employees planted, weeded and harvested the garden that grew at Home Prairie, then cleaned and stored the produce in root cellars. Farm workers used horses and oxen to clear about 100 acres around Bellevue Farm for the field crops that also grew on Home Prairie. Planting, harvesting, threshing, cleaning and storing crops were year round work. Company employees purchased seeds in Victoria, and they grew field crops such as oats, wheat and peas, as well as garden vegetables including carrots, cabbages, turnips and potatoes. They sowed and harvested grain for employee meals, for export and for livestock feed during the winter. Typical Griffin journal entries include "All hands planting potatoes" or "All hands digging up and hauling turnips." A week's potato harvest could yield more than 600 pounds of the tuber. Griffin called the returns on the plots "satisfactory."[36]

By producing and exporting resource-based commodities from San Juan Island, the Hudson's Bay Company brought the island into the global economy. Bellevue Farm products such as wool, salmon and grain were sold in Victoria and points around the globe. The Company's Hawaiian

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[32] San Juan Sheep Farm Account Book, 14 December 1853; Gibbs, 18 March 1859.
[33] San Juan Sheep Farm Account Book, 14 December 1853.
[34] Henry Crosbie, "Assessment of HBC Co. property on San Juan Island made by assessors of Whatcom County, Washington Territory, May 20, 1859," RG 76.
[35] Letter from James Douglas to the Secretary of the HBC, 24 February 1855.
[36] Custer, 11 April 1859.

office brokered many of the overseas exchanges, and the Company traded lumber, fish and flour from their Pacific Northwest operations for sugar, tobacco, molasses, coffee, rice and salt from Hawaii and Asia. The salmon exported to Hawaii even became incorporated into the Hawaiian diet.[37] The Company recruited Hawaiian employees to work, primarily as sheepherders, in the Pacific Northwest. Locally, the island's mutton fed Bellevue Farm and Fort Victoria employees, while hogs and cattle were sold in Victoria and given out as rations to farm employees. The Company shipped San Juan Island wool to England, and though this endeavor proved unprofitable, it helped to justify their presence on San Juan Island.[38]

Bellevue Farm products also supplied miners in Victoria and mainland British Columbia and the British military during the occupation of San Juan Island. In 1858, about 35,000 prospective miners passed through Victoria on their way to the Fraser River gold fields on the mainland of British Columbia. Until the gold rush, Victoria comprised little more than Fort Victoria. There was no food, shelter or adequate water supply to accommodate the hoards of miners. A tent city quickly sprang up, and William Macdonald observed that the area began to take on the appearance of a town. To feed the influx of immigrants, the Company shipped Bellevue Farm sheep and crops to Victoria and to the mainland of British Columbia. One letter from Roderick Finlayson at Fort Victoria in June of 1859 asks Charles Griffin to send "all the sheep you may have on hand disposable for sale."[39] The gold rush drastically reduced the number of sheep on San Juan Island. Finlayson goes on to ask for the farm's "full supply of potatoes."[40] In the early 1860s, the Company began to provide some supplies to the British military stationed at English Camp. In February of 1861, Griffin reported sending sixty-two sheep to the camp. He sold additional sheep to the British military on San Juan Island in April and August of that year.[41]

By the end of the decade, Bellevue Farm consisted of seven small dwellings as well as barns and other outbuildings (there were a total of seventeen structures). Griffin's house was surrounded by "a fine collection of flowers," suggesting that he found it necessary to supplement the natural landscape to properly make his home on the island. Richard Mayne, a British boundary surveyor, described the farm as situated on "a beautiful prairie." The farm's cultivated areas included two large fenced areas for field crops and a garden, though the actual size of the area is unclear.[42] While the editor of the *British Colonist* (a Victoria newspaper) estimated that the Company cultivated 100 acres, George Gibbs speculated that six acres near the houses and an

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[37] Mackie, 155.
[38] Gibbs, 18 March 1859.
[39] Theodore Morgan, *Hawaii: A Century of Economic Change* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1941), 223; Macdonald, 31; Roderick Finlayson to Charles Griffin, 6 June 1859, Bellevue Sheep Farm Post Records, Hudson's Bay Company Archives.
[40] Gibbs, 18 March 1859; Roderick Finlayson to Charles Griffin, 6 June 1859.
[41] Bellevue Sheep Farm Journal, Charles Griffin, 1861.
[42] Lieutenant Thomas Casey, "Map of Southeast End of San Juan Island," December 1860, RG 77, Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers, National Archives, Washington D.C; Thompson, 170; Richard Mayne, *Four Years in British Columbia and Vancouver Island: An Account of their Forests, Rivers, Coasts, Gold fields and Resources for Colonization* (London: John Murray, 1862), 40.

additional forty acres to the west were farmed. Henry Crosbie, the Whatcom County assessor, put the figure of plowed land slightly lower when he reported that 80 acres were "fenced and under cultivation."[43]

The *British Colonist* editor described the scene in 1859:

> The station faces the Straits of San Juan de Fuca, and comprises about six small one story dwellings, of hewn logs, built around a small open square. Behind to the north are several barns. The dwellings are situated within a hundred yards of the shore, on the side of a gentle slope, running back about a half a mile to the summit of the peninsula. About one hundred acres around the station were enclosed and under cultivation. We were informed they claim the whole southern end of the island…nearly the whole of which is prairie and used as a sheep ranch. A herd of 4,000 and odd sheep, with some 1,000 lambs, were quietly grazing a short distance below."[44]

The construction of transportation routes for the Company's agricultural operations left an imprint on the island. In 1854, Bellevue Farm employees cut trees to build the first road on the island to facilitate the movement of their sheep. During a visit in January 1855, Douglas felt the grasslands were "rather scanty" for the number of sheep the Company grazed on the island As a result, he ordered the Company's Indian laborers to cut a road to fresh pasture on the west side of the island, about sixteen miles from Bellevue Farm. By that summer, roads linking sheep pastures to Bellevue Farm and steamer docks crisscrossed the island. As the agricultural operations expanded, so did roads through the forests of San Juan Island. In March of 1858, Griffin employed Indian labor to cut a road from one prairie to another to facilitate sheep grazing.[45] In September of the same year, roads were cut from "Park Hill" to a spring and from an unnamed prairie to Bellevue Farm. Two months later, Griffin "sent all hands…out to cut a road thru from Lereux's Prairie, off Prairie du Chive, to Channel Prairie."[46]

The Hudson's Bay Company's operations modified the natural environment in ways that were perhaps unexpected, yet revealing of their economic rather than ecological perspective. For example, raising sheep for a global market led to increased herds and decreased rangeland. Bellevue Farm sheep, whose grazing habits and sharp hooves prevented grass regeneration, roamed increasing distances throughout the island. By 1858, Griffin reported difficulty in finding fresh pasture for the expanding flocks. [47] The animals devastated the native grasslands at American Camp. Unlike rhizomatous grasses, the caespitose (bunch) grasses that predominated

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[43] Gibbs, 18 March 1859; Crosbie, "Assessment of HBC Co. property on San Juan Island made by assessors of Whatcom County, Washington Territory, May 20, 1859."
[44] Thompson, 170.
[45] Griffin, Bellevue Sheep Farm Journal, 15 March 1858.
[46] Griffin, Bellevue Sheep Farm Journal. Charles, 8 November 1858. The names of these prairies are Griffin's; their locations are unclear.
[47] Gibbs, 18 March 1859.

on the southern prairies were unable to withstand heavy grazing.[48] The cryptogams, such as moss, ferns and fungi, were not able to withstand the trampling by Bellevue Farm stock. This paved the way for exotic plant species such as silver and early hairgrass, cheatgrass, Canada thistle and tansy ragwort, species better able to tolerate sheep grazing.[49] The seeds of these exotic species journeyed to the island on Company ships and mixed with seeds of field crops. Sheep even ate the species of cactus that grew on the island, "for moisture, during the summer," according to Gibbs.[50]

The Hudson's Bay Company preferred a productive nature, a preference that not only altered native vegetation but also affected native animal populations on San Juan Island. Before the arrival of the Hudson's Bay Company, black bear, elk, deer and wolves roamed the island. However, the Company's priorities lay with protecting their investment, and the arrival of the British spelled the demise of some animal species on the island, especially predators. William Macdonald reminisced about his stay in 1851, "Wolves used to prowl round us all night."[51] Wolves preyed on Company sheep and were therefore a threat to the farm's principal product. The sheepherders laced sheep carcasses with strychnine to poison the predators. This killed a number of wolves, and, according to the island's Indians, taught the remainder not to molest the sheep. Griffin was especially aggressive about exterminating wolves. One incident in November of 1858 left his horse dead after a fall while pursuing a wolf.[52] Company employees also shot wolves, and as a result, the animals were probably extinct on the island by 1859. Hunting by Hudson's Bay employees (as well as early American settlers) devastated black bear and elk populations on the island, and though some deer remained, their numbers had drastically dwindled by 1860. Henry Custer reported in 1859 that game was "almost extinct" on the island. Robert Firth, Bellevue Farm overseer in 1865 and 1866, never reported any encounters with predators.[53] In less than a decade, British and American residents of San Juan had wiped out the island's predator and large wildlife populations.

The Company's quest for profits also altered the island's forests. European explorers had derided the timber quality of the San Juan Islands, but the forests suited the needs of the Hudson's Bay Company and its agricultural operations. Cutting and hauling wood frequently occupied farm employees as the Company converted trees into fuel and building materials. The farm initially imported bricks and planks from Fort Victoria in 1854, but in later years, farm employees utilized the island's forests for building materials. Workers cut pine and cedar to

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[48] James K. Agee and David Rolph, *A Vegetation Management Plan for San Juan Island National Historical Park* (Seattle: National Park Service, 1993, 40.

[49] Jim Romo, "Considerations for Management of Grassland Vegetation at San Juan Island National Historical Park," in Cathy Gilbert, *Historic Landscape Report*, (Seattle:National Park Service, 1985).

[50] George Gibbs, Journal (transcription), San Juan Island National Historical Park Files, San Juan Island, Washington.

[51] Macdonald, 30.

[52] Griffin, Bellevue Sheep Farm Journal, 15 November 1858.

[53] Keith, Gordon, ed., *The James Francis Tulloch diary, 1875-1910,* **(**Portland: Bingford and Mort, 1978), 21; Custer, 11 April 1859; Robert Firth, 1865-66, Diary, Provincial Archives.

construct houses, fences, outbuildings, and roofing shingles as well as barns and enclosures for livestock. They also built a slip for boats and at least one bridge. Livestock required fenced enclosures and barns, and Company employees cut timber to construct these structures. Company employees also cut oak from the slopes of Mt. Young, near English Camp, to make carts, wheels and harrows (a type of plow that pulverizes and smoothes the soil). Wood was also fuel for he Hudson's Bay Company steamers *Otter* and *Beaver*, which carried supplies, mail and passengers to Bellevue Farm and farm products to Fort Victoria. Company employees did much of the wood cutting, but Northern Straits Indians also cut and sold wood to the Company to power their steamers.[54]

The Hudson's Bay Company created, as best it could, a familiar agricultural landscape that reflected both market needs and cultural beliefs. While the Northern Straits Indians relied on the fisheries, wild plants and game of San Juan Island, the Company preferred to raise garden vegetables and livestock and to import supplementary rations from Victoria. Mutton was a staple of Bellevue Farm employees, and sheep were routinely slaughtered for rations. Pork from Bellevue Farm pigs supplemented their diet, and on at least one occasion Griffin ordered a cow slaughtered for workers' rations. Cows also provided milk to farm employees. The farm imported salted beef, tea, "grease" (probably lard or other cooking fat) and flour from Fort Victoria. There is no evidence that suggests that Company employees ate locally available fish or plants.

The British presence on the island could not deter American settlers from establishing residency, and squatters continually encroached on the Hudson's Bay Company's operations. As settlers and the American military established themselves on lands used by Bellevue Farm, Company employees complained of disruption to their operation. A.G. Dallas complained to Douglas in 1859 of "the great damage sustained by the Hudson's Bay Company." He declared, "Our sheep, cattle and horses are now disturbed at their pasturage, and driven from their drinking springs, in the vicinity of which the troops are encamped. Much of the pasture is also destroyed."[55] The next year, Dallas reported "the whole island is overrun by squatters and whiskey sellers—Our sheep and other animals are consequently much disturbed, and excluded from several of the former runs altogether, and the Indians and our own people are much demoralized." Upon arriving at the island in September of 1860, he reported that "every man we had was in a state of drunkenness, and Mr. Griffin driven to his wits end." Dallas blamed the drunkenness and the subsequent loss of labor on Americans, who sold whiskey to soldiers, Indians and Company employees from the newly established San Juan town.[56]

Though Bellevue Farm had been a lucrative enterprise for the Hudson's Bay Company, by 1860 the business struggled to remain profitable. The increased security costs associated with

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[54] Griffin, Bellevue Sheep Farm Post Journal; Journal of the Steamer *Beaver*, Hudson's Bay Company Archives.
[55] A.G. Dallas to James Douglas, August 5, 1859, San Juan Island Correspondence, etc, Provincial Archives.
[56] A.G. Dallas to Thomas Fraser, 12 September 1860, Record Office Transcripts of the Hudson's Bay Company, Provincial Archives.

protecting Bellevue Farm's property from American settlers hurt the farm's profits. Dallas also cited increased transportation, communication and labor costs as detrimental to the farm's profitability. Even if Great Britain prevailed in the boundary dispute and were awarded the island, Dallas believed that few buyers could be found to purchase tracts of island land. He stated that only if the farm sold all of its livestock could it make a profit.[57]

To regain some of their losses, H.H. Berens, a Hudson's Bay official, attempted to persuade the British government that the Company had settled the island only with the idea of securing territory for Great Britain in mind. Berens even went so far as to state that the island was a "source of outlay and expense to the Company," and he sought reimbursement for "past and future" expenses. San Juan was settled by the Company "not as lucrative speculation or one which could be of any value to the Company's trade," Berens argued, "but, simply, as a defensive measure, and the only means of securing the islands from the encroachments of the Americans." Furthermore, he stated, the Company could no longer afford to maintain a British presence on the island without government reimbursement.[58] However, the scathing response from T. Frederick Elliot, a British government official, indicated that the crown was not prepared to accept this argument. Elliot found no evidence for such an assertion, and he cited a previous letter in which the Company admitted that they had settled San Juan Island for their own benefit. "The claim is one which is quite inadmissible" reprimanded Elliot.[59] The Company received no compensation from the British government.

By 1863, encroachment by the American military and settlers had reduced Bellevue Farm from about 100 acres to sixty acres. Robert Firth's journal of his tenure on the farm from 1865 to 1866 reflects a much smaller operation than Charles Griffin had overseen. Firth does not describe any construction projects and he mentioned only one employee.[60] Numbers of livestock at the farm had been drastically reduced. The Company abandoned the farm and the island in the late 1860s or early 1870s. By 1874, when Nathaniel Michler mapped the area for the American army, only nine of the original seventeen buildings remained.[61]

By the 1870s, the Hudson Bay Company abandoned San Juan Island. Like the Northern Straits before them, the Company managed the island's environment to facilitate resource use, but the landscape left by the British showed greater signs of modification. Imprinted on San Juan's terrain were overgrazed hillsides, plowed prairies, and logged forests as well as the built environment in the form of roads and buildings. These changes demonstrated a dramatic shift from a subsistence to a market economy, and the Company's occupation of San Juan Island initiated a new phase in the utilization of the island's natural resources. The island continued to

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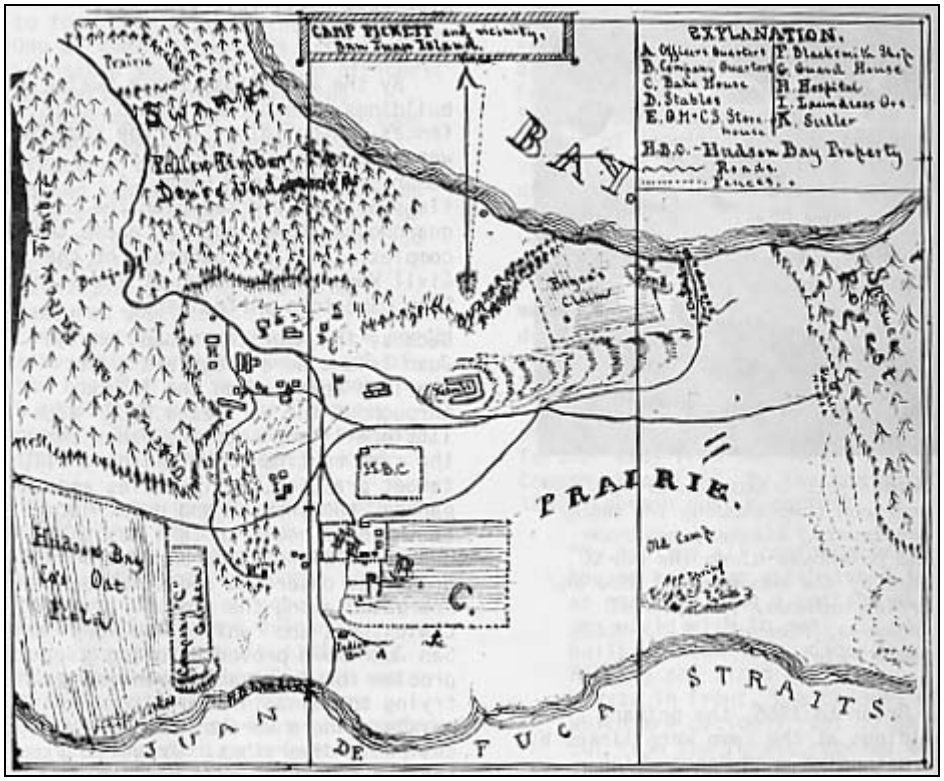
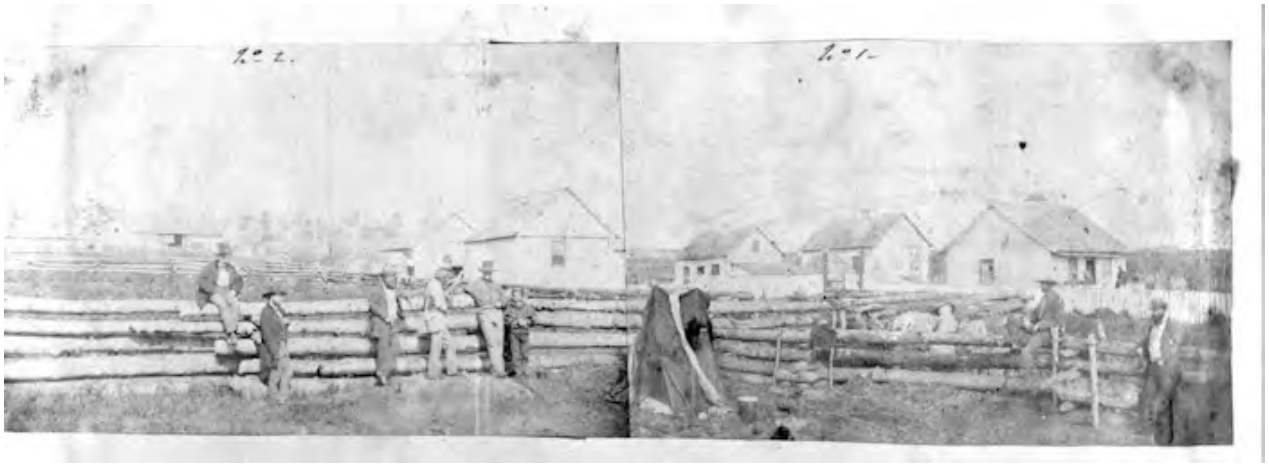
[57] A.G. Dallas to Thomas Fraser, 12 September 1860.
[58] H.H. Berens to Lord John Russell, December 20, 1860, Record Office Transcripts of the Hudson's Bay Company, Provincial Archives.
[59] T. Frederick Elliot to H.H. Berens, 30 April 1862, Record Office Transcripts of the Hudson's Bay Company.
[60] Robert Firth, Diary, 1865-66.
[61] Thompson, 171-3.

occupy a place in British and American visions of pastoralism and natural resource use as settlers and companies continued to exploit the natural resources of the island.



Bellevue Farm along with American Camp in the early 1860s. The Hudson's Bay Company found the large prairie perfect for agricultural activities like growing crops and raising livestock. "Camp Pickett and Vicinity, San Juan Island," reprinted from Cathy Gilbert, *Historic Landscape Report*, Seattle: National Park Service, 1986.



A rare photograph of Bellevue Farm, 1859. Over the course of twenty years, the company transformed the island's natural landscape into a productive agricultural environment. Courtesy of Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

The view from the former site of Bellevue Farm in 2006. Courtesy of Mike Vouri.

Chapter Four

The Military Landscapes of San Juan Island

By the late 1850s, the United States and Great Britain both considered San Juan Island a strategically important location, and both nations claimed the island as their own. The British government considered the island key to defending Haro Strait and mainland British Columbia, while the Hudson's Bay Company coveted the fisheries, agricultural and timber resources of the islands. The United States similarly considered the island strategically important; furthermore, a number of Americans had settled on the island. In July of 1859, increasing tensions between the Hudson's Bay Company and American settlers (or squatters, from the British viewpoint) on the disputed island compelled the American army set up a fort on the south end of the island near Bellevue Farm.[1] In response to this perceived American encroachment, the British established a military camp at Garrison Bay, on the northwestern part of the island, in March of 1860.

The ways that the British and the American armies manipulated the natural landscape reflected not only their different geographic locations, but also their different cultural views of their place in the natural world. The British established camp on a serene, sheltered bay; in contrast, the Americans chose a site at the edge of a large, dry, windswept prairie. While the British enjoyed their formal garden, vine covered terraces and croquet grounds, the Americans put little effort into landscape design, instead focusing on the utilitarian aspects of constructing a military camp. The military occupation of San Juan Island National Historical Park is well known, but relatively little resource use and ecological change occurred during the historic period due to the armies' tenure on the island. Both groups cut trees, built structures, established roads and planted gardens on the island. However, for all of the military occupation's historical impact, the two armies caused relatively little environmental change.

American Camp

Even before the military occupation of the island, some Americans military officers considered the island vital to the defense of the Puget Sound area. General Persifer F. Smith reported to President James Buchanan in 1857 that San Juan, Lopez and Orcas Islands were integral to commanding and defending the inland waters of Puget and Queen Charlotte Sound as well as the Strait of Juan de Fuca. He believed that the islands contained the best harbors on the Pacific Coast, and that the archipelago could prove

[1] For a thorough account of the military occupation of San Juan Island, see Erwin Thompson, *Historic Resource Study: San Juan Island National Historical Park* (Denver: National Park Service, 1972), or Michael Vouri, *The Pig War: Standoff at Griffin Bay* (Friday Harbor, Wash: Griffin Bay Bookstore, 1999).

valuable for timber and coal.[2] Two American topographical engineers, sent by the army in 1855 to assess the military importance of the archipelago, confirmed his views. They concluded that the islands "are so situated that they form an admirable land locked harbor of ample size accessible by narrow entrances in any wind and weather and capable of being defended almost by small arms. As a naval station secured by batteries, this position commands all the interior waters and the approach to the (U.S.) territories." The engineers feared that Puget Sound and the Straits of Juan de Fuca could be used to blockade the Pacific Coast or used as a base for an attack on San Francisco. They thought that the island could also prove valuable as a refuge for American ships during storms, or as a natural resources storehouse for military needs such as "wood, water, coal, provisions, timber and spars."[3] They saw the possession of San Juan Island as integral to protecting the West Coast.

In 1860, the Chief Engineer of the United States Army agreed that the archipelago was essential for defense purposes. General Joseph G. Totten, renowned for his expertise designing coastal fortifications, believed that if Great Britain possessed San Juan Island, the British would control the waterways inside of the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Totten asserted that "the possession of the San Juan group of islands is, strategically, of high importance to us." The United States Board of Engineers agreed that if the British possessed the island, the American command of the waterways to the east would be of little value. The board recommended that a naval station be established at Griffin Bay, due to its large size and sweeping marine views, in order to "counterbalance" the British naval presence on Vancouver Island.[4]

General William S. Harney, commander of the Department of Oregon, believed that the island contained valuable natural resources, such as timber, fresh water and grass, but he was convinced that the island's strategic location remained its primary value. San Juan, according to Harney, "is the most commanding position we possess on the Sound; overlooking the Straits of Haro, the Straits of Fuca and the Rosario Strait, [the island] is the most suitable point from which to observe and prevent the northern Indians from visiting our settlements to the south of it. At the southeastern extremity one of the finest harbors on the coast is to be found, completely sheltered, offering the best location for a naval station on the Pacific Coast." The army steamer *Massachusetts* utilized wood and fresh water from the island as it delivered supplies to Puget Sound area military installations and patrolled the waters for Indian movements. Boundary commissioner

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[2] United States Department of State, *The Northwest Boundary: Discussion of the Water Boundary Question, Island of San Juan* (Washington D.C: Government Printing Office, 1868), 52.
[3] Captain George Stoneman and Lieutenant W.H.C. Whiting, July 5, 1855, in United States Department of State, *The Northwest Boundary: Discussion of the Water Boundary Question, Island of San Juan*, 52.
[4] Joseph Totten, in United States Department of State, *The Northwest Boundary: Discussion of the Water Boundary Question, Island of San Juan*, 134; James O. McCabe, *The San Juan Water Boundary Question* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), 32.

Archibald Campbell agreed with General Harney's assessment. He declared that while the island offered agricultural opportunities to American settlers, "It is in a military and naval point of view…that their importance is to be mainly regarded." Army surveyor William Walsh agreed, and he likened San Juan to Gibraltar "since it is situated so as to command the avenues of commerce to all the interior waters."[5]

On July 18, 1859, Captain Alfred Pleasanton, General Harney's acting adjutant general, commanded Captain George Pickett to establish camp on the southeastern end of San Juan Island. Pickett and his company were stationed at Fort Bellingham, and they abandoned the site in order to move to the island. Pickett chose a location near the Hudson's Bay Company wharf on Griffin Bay, about 200 yards above the water. The camp was situated on a small prairie, surrounded by forest to the east and west. Pickett felt uneasy about the exposed location and the proximity of the H.M.S. *Tribune*, a thirty-one gun steam frigate anchored in Griffin Bay. Within the week he moved the camp south, over the ridge, to a spring on the large prairie that the Hudson's Bay Company used as sheep pasture. A *Victoria Colonist* reporter described the scene. "The whole of this side is prairie, extending to the end of the Island. In the middle of it, near the springs, were three tents, erected by Captain Pickett's company… commanding a very excellent view, and with water convenient."[6] The new location also proved temporary.

In early August, General Harney sent Lt. Colonel Silas Casey and three companies of men to San Juan Island. Upon arrival, Casey assumed command, and he disliked the camp's location. He reported, "We are encamped in rather an exposed position with regard to the wind, being at the entrance to the Straits of Fuca. The weather at times, is already quite inclement."[7] Like the first site, the new location was also exposed to fire from British ships. By the third week in August, Casey decided to move the camp to a third and final location.

Casey chose the new camp location for its sheltered position, expanse of prairie and commanding view of both Griffin Bay and Haro Strait. The camp was located at the edge of the prairie, north of Bellevue Farm, backed by forest and sheltered from the strong winds that swept off the Strait. British boundary commissioner James C. Prevost observed that the camp "is very strongly placed in the most commanding position at this end of the island, well sheltered in the rear and on one side by the Forest and on the other

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[5] General Harney to General Scott, 19 July 1859, *Washington Pioneer-Democrat*, 15 June 1860; Captain A. Pleasanton to Lieut. Colonel Silas Casey, 7 July 1859, in *The Northwest Boundary: Discussion of the Water Boundary Question*, 146; Archibald Campbell to Secretary of State Lewis Cass, *The Northwest Boundary: Discussion of the Water Boundary Question*, 52; William Daniel Walsh to his father, April 1860, San Juan Island National Historical Park files, San Juan Island, Washington.

[6] Erwin Thompson, *Historic Resource Report: San Juan Island National Historical Park* (Denver: National Park Service, 1972), 126-128.

[7] Lt. Colonel Silas Casey to Captain Pleasonton, 14 August 1859, Records of the Bureau of Land Management, Abandoned Military Reservation File, San Juan Island, RG 49, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Washington D.C.

side by a commanding eminence." A *Victoria Gazette* reporter described the site as "in a little valley…selected with a view to protection against the cold and disagreeable winds." The reporter concluded, "It's hard to conceive of a more romantic spot; the white tents peeping up and out from among the green foliage." [8]

The task of establishing a camp was less than romantic, however. Army engineer William Peck wrote, "After landing, we were compelled to make room for ourselves and received a detail to assist in moving the logs and rubbish, which of course caused considerable grumbling." The distance of the nearest fresh water also posed an inconvenience for the troops. The nearest spring was almost a mile away, so the soldiers caught "an Indian pony," one of several who roamed the island, to cart the water to camp.[9] By the end of August, 461 American soldiers and officers occupied the site.

When the American military arrived on the southeastern end of the island to establish camp, they encountered a vast expanse of prairie. Previous island occupants manipulated this landscape for food production (whether for subsistence or export to market), but instead of harvesting camas, growing crops or raising sheep, the Americans set out to exploit the landscape for military purposes.

Americans at Camp Pickett worked to reshape their natural environment into a secure, productive military instillation. Many camp structures were constructed using wood from Fort Bellingham's abandoned buildings, but soldiers harvested some trees to provide wood for building materials. For example, wood from Fort Bellingham was utilized to build the quartermaster's house and the attending surgeon's house, while the soldiers cut logs to build junior officer's quarters and a barn for fifteen animals.[10] Soldiers cut fir, alder and pine for building materials and firewood.[11] Pickett assured his superiors that there was "no expense to government for fuel at this post—it is cut by the men." The Americans may have purchased some lumber for building in Victoria, since Pickett remarked that it was inexpensive to purchase and ship wood to the camp from the colonial town.[12]

One of the most significant modifications to the island's natural environment by the American army was the construction of a 700-foot long earthen fortification called Robert's Redoubt.[13] Soldiers built the redoubt on the eastern edge of the camp site in a

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[8] Thompson, 133-4.

[9] Brewster, C. Coulter, ed., *The Pig War and other experiences of William Peck, soldier, 1858-1862,* (Medford: Webb Research Group, 1993), 98; Captain George Pickett to Major Babbitt, Fort Vancouver, Sept. 9, 1860, Records of the United States Regular Army Mobile Units, San Juan Island, RG 391, NARA, Washington D.C.

[10] J. Haskell, 11 February 1869, Records of the United States Army Continental Commands, Land and Produce Records, RG 393, NARA, Washington D.C.

[11] Charles Bird, "Post Description," Post Orders, RG 391, NARA, Washington D.C.

[12] Captain George Pickett to Headquarters, 8 December 1861, Letters Sent, Post Letters, Vol. 1, Part 5, RG 393, NARA, Washington D.C. .

[13] The redoubt was named for its designer, Second Lieutenant Henry Martyn Robert.

location that afforded views extending over both the bay and the strait. Army engineers designed the fortification to support six thirty-two pound guns, so that the redoubt would allow even a small force to defend the site against attack. Constructing the enormous redoubt was difficult work, as the men worked only with picks and shovels. Before the Americans completed the structure, Lieutenant General Winfield Scott ordered the artillery removed and the redoubt abandoned as part of a deal with the British that reduced the American force and removed artillery from the camp. The order to cease work caused "great rejoicings" among the men, according to Peck, but he expressed disappointment that his work engineering the fortification had been pointless.[14] Boundary commissioner William Warren lamented, "The Earthworks thrown up last summer have been dismantled, and only serve to disfigure a beautiful mound just south of camp."[15]

By the mid-1860s, the camp included twelve main structures, fences, roads, outbuildings and the abandoned redoubt. The Americans did not know how long their island stay would last, and many of the structures were not built to last for many years. In 1865, the troops procured lime, wood and other building materials to improve some of the camp's hastily built structures. In 1867 and 1868, as it became apparent that the troops would continue to occupy the island, a building boom followed and resulted in the harvesting of additional timber. Eventually, at least thirty-four structures stood at American Camp. Even with these improvements, the buildings did not shield the men from the often chilly, damp island climate. J.G. Haskell grumbled that the camp buildings did not keep out inclement weather. "It has rained, snowed, hailed or blew almost every day this month," he complained one September, "and in our exposed position we have been obliged to stand the full effect of each storm."[16]

Though the Americans focused on the utilitarian aspects of building a military fort, at least one camp resident sought to create a home-like environment through ornamental gardening. The wife of Major H. Allen grew a small flower and vegetable garden outside of her home. Ornamental gardens were frequently found near officers' quarters at military bases, but her garden seems unique to the camp.[17] In contrast to their British counterparts, the Americans did not incorporate gardens into their camp design.

In the view of the American military, the natural world of the island was a blank slate—a strategic location for a camp but not an environment that would meet their every need. Most military camps relied on rations, and the San Juan Island camp imported staples such as flour and pork from an army distribution center in San Francisco. While Charles Bird noted that the island's waters abound with "salmon, halibut, flounder, rock

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[14] Vouri, 122 and 177.
[15] Thompson, 134.
[16] Ibid, 140; For a detailed inventory of the camps buildings, see Thompson, 147-164; J.G. Haskell, 30 September 1871, RG 49, NARA, Washington D.C.
[17] Cathy Gilbert, *Historic Landscape Report: San Juan Island National Historical Park* (Seattle: National Park Service, 1986), 36.

cod and herring…and smelt," Bird did not indicate that the troops ate these fish. William Peck mentioned the "delicious salmon" available on the island, indicating that some soldiers may have at least sampled the local fish. There is no evidence that soldiers hunted deer, duck or any other wildlife for food. Civilians in San Juan Town supplied the military with goods and labor, and the army also contracted with civilians to transport supplies between Victoria and the island.[18]

The military utilized some locally raised foods to supplement their rations, though these consisted of non-native, domesticated plants and animals. A vegetable garden at Fort Bellingham initially provided fresh produce. Pickett moved from the mainland location to the island in the middle of the summer, and he considered the garden (which was "in fine and flourishing condition" at the time of the move) at the fort valuable enough to leave a few men behind to guard, tend, harvest and transport the vegetables to the island.[19] Once on San Juan, soldiers planted a vegetable garden at Camp Pickett. Its location is unclear, though the Americans almost certainly established the garden on the prairie.[20] Other supplies, such as fresh beef, were purchased from suppliers on San Juan or Vancouver Island. Pickett purchased a winter's supply of potatoes in 1861, either from island farmers or from Victoria merchants, and he noted that the company's own garden would produce enough to feed the camp in subsequent years.[21]

Rather than grow their own feed or rely on the island's grasslands, the military procured livestock feed from local farmers and civilians on the mainland. In the early 1860s, Pickett believed that sufficient quantities of hay and oats could be purchased from island farmers.[22] Charles Bird confirmed that the island was "particularly adapted" to raising hay and grain, and he believed that islanders grew more than enough to satisfy the military's needs. For unknown reasons, local sources eventually proved insufficient, and the army solicited suppliers from mainland Western Washington to deliver supplies such as hay, oats and straw.[23]

Though the American military regarded the island only as a strategic location for a military installation, William Daniel Walsh, an army surveyor at American Camp, considered the island as an abundant landscape. In the mid to late nineteenth century, American settlers were rapidly moving westward looking for agricultural opportunities.

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[18] Charles Bird, n.d.,, Post Orders, RG 391; Coulter, ed., *The Pig War and other experiences of William Peck, soldier, 1858-1862*, 101; "Notice of Bid Appearance," Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, RG 92, NARA, Washington D.C.

[19] Captain George Pickett, 26 April 1860, Post Letters, Fort Bellingham and Camp San Juan, Vol. 1, RG 391, NARA, Washington D.C.

[20] Thompson, 160, and Agee, *Historic Landscapes*, 26. The garden may have been situated either near Bellevue Farm fields, near the barracks, or possibly at both locations at different times.

[21] Captain Pickett to Headquarters, Letters Sent, Vol. 1, Part 5, Post Letters, Camp Pickett, RG 393, NARA, Washington D.C.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Charles Bird, RG 391; "Government Proposals," *Washington Standard*, 7 March 1868.

In contrast to other parts of densely timbered western Washington, the island boasted a sizable proportion of prairie. Walsh, who had traveled extensively around the western United States, believed that settlers could capitalize on San Juan's valuable natural resources. He admired the timber, the fresh water sources and "the richest soil" he had ever seen. According to Walsh, vegetables thrived and grew to extreme proportions in the island's soil. He effusively praised the island's "healthy climate," scenic beauty, and safe harbors, as well as plentiful game and fish.[24] Writing to his sister after his second visit to the island in 1861, Walsh penned, "You can scarcely imagine how delighted I was at beholding once more the most beautiful gem of the Pacific."[25]

William Peck, an army engineer who spent three months on San Juan, similarly fell in love with the island. He wrote that "The prospect is delightful and we feel we can enjoy ourselves here…The beautiful Straits of Juan de Fuca on the one side of the island and the Bay of San Juan on the other, dotted here or there with a sail of an Indian canoe, with the surrounding islands covered with their heavy pine timber, all add to the enchantment of the scene, and make this one of the most beautiful islands imaginable…Mounts Baker and Rainier loom magnificently far above the clouds, their snow covered summits shining like monuments of burnished gold in the bright sunlight." Peck spent his free time exploring the island ("running over some fine country") and duck hunting. Like Walsh, he also viewed the island in terms in terms of agriculture and resource extraction. He admired the island farms, characterized the soil as good and productive, and noted that land was being colonized quickly. Peck optimistically described the timber resources, and he envisioned a thriving fishing industry due to the vast quantities of "delicious fish" in the islands' waters.[26] Peck and Walsh provide an interesting contrast to their military peers, who valued the island only for its strategic importance, not for its natural resources. The Americans cut trees, plowed the prairie and built a fortification, but more significant logging, farming and other landscape modifications occurred after the army abandoned the island.

English Camp

The British similarly valued San Juan Island's strategic location, situated across Haro Strait from Vancouver Island. San Juan lay directly in the path of communications between Vancouver Island and the mainland, and the British believed that their ability to freely navigate the waters of the area depended on their possession of the island.[27] To the alarm of the British, Americans were rapidly settling the Pacific Northwest. The British

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[24] William Daniel Walsh to his father, April 1860, San Juan Island National Historical Park Files.
[25] William Daniel Walsh to his sister, 11 February 1861, San Juan Island National Historical Park Files.
[26] Brewster, ed., 101-120.
[27] Barry M. Gough, The *Royal Navy and the Northwest Coast of North America, 1810-1914* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1971), 156.

sought to possess San Juan Island as a buffer between Vancouver Island, with its valuable coal and timber resources, and the United States. Captain James Prevost of the British Boundary Commission viewed possession of the island as vital to the continued British naval presence at Esquimalt on Vancouver Island. Prevost believed that if the British did not possess the island, it "might someday prove fatal to Her Majesty's Possessions in the quarter of the globe." He also alleged that the island would provide "a wall of defense to [Vancouver Island's] peaceful occupation."[28] The Colonial Office agreed. It believed that the island was "of the utmost importance in a military, maritime and commercial point of view and on account of its close proximity to Vancouver Island." Marking the boundary at Rosario Strait would allow the British unimpaired movement and communications on Haro Strait.[29]

In 1860, in response to the establishment of the American camp, Prevost journeyed to the island and investigated a number of sites for a British military camp. He narrowed his search down to seven locations by February of that year, but.most of the suitable sites had some disadvantage. One location at the southern tip of the island had good boat access but no fresh water and little cleared ground. A nearby spot offered cleared prairie, fresh water and "every convenience for a camp," but the land had been settled by American Paul Hubbs. Prevost considered the abandoned American camp near the spring, but the area was too exposed. He favored a site near Friday Harbor, which had untimbered, almost level land, fresh water, a safe harbor for ships, and no settlers nearby, and why this location was not eventually chosen is unknown.[30]

Prevost found Garrison Bay ideal for a military camp, but an initial examination did not reveal a source of fresh water. Further investigations revealed a "large patch of water, half lake, half swamp" about three-quarters of a mile from the bay. Prevost also discovered two streams in the area. The area also boasted a sheltered harbor that provided anchorage for large vessels, gentle slopes, timber (including "very fine oak") and a meadow which afforded troops room to practice maneuvers. The site could accommodate a large number of soldiers and structures.[31] Lieutenant Roche, after an exploratory mission, called the Garrison Bay site, "admirably adapted for an encampment."[32] Furthermore, there were no European or American settlers nearby, and established transportation routes were available nearby. The bay lay just off the route of the steamer that regularly traveled from Victoria to the Fraser River, and a path led to Bellevue Farm,

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[28] Gough, *The Royal Navy and the Northwest Coast of North America, 1810-1914*, 154.
[29] McCabe, *The San Juan Water Boundary Question*, 33.
[30] David Hunter Miller, *The San Juan Archipelago: Study of the Joint Occupation of San Juan Island* (Bellow Falls, VT: Windham Press, 1943), 131-2.
[31] Letter from Captain Prevost, 13 March 1860, "San Juan Island Correspondence, etc," Vol. 1, Provincial Archives.
[32] Thompson, 200-1.

about eleven miles distant. Admiral Baynes and James Douglas agreed upon the location, and eighty-seven Royal Marines established camp on March 21, 1860.

The British found the site perfect for a military camp. The Northern Straits had also valued the natural features of the waterfront location, and they used the spot as a seasonal dwelling. The Indians appreciated the sheltered, waterfront location and the level, grassy meadow just as the British did. The British recognized that the parade ground was actually a human creation. Indians had created the large, flat area by depositing shell and bone remains, which were covered by grass and trees over the centuries. One sergeant reported that their camp was set "on a shell bank-the accumulation of 'Years,' evidently, as it averaged ten feet high, from thirty five to forty feet through, by 120 yards long, it was the work of Indians, as they live very much on a shellfish called 'Clams,' and of course deposit the shells just outside their huts." The British were either unaware or unconcerned that the Northern Straits still seasonally inhabited the site. Upon arrival, they began dismantling the longhouse that stood there.[33]

Like their American counterparts, the troops labored to transform their surroundings into a military camp. The British did import at least some building supplies (such as shingles, boards and other lumber) from Victoria, but the troops worked so hard cutting timber and clearing trails that Admiral Baynes suggested they be paid extra for their labor. The forest east and south of the shoreline was cleared for fuel and housing. The army expanded the natural terraces of the hillside with stone walls, cleared additional forest from the slope, and built officer's quarters. Eventually, the British erected an estimated thirty-seven structures.[34]

The British capitalized on the limestone resources of the island. They operated two kilns near Roche Harbor and used the processed lime for both mortar and disinfectant. They also exported some lime from the island, though details about the trade are unknown. Lime extraction on the contested island created problems between American settlers and the British military. In 1860, Captain Bazalgette sparred with William Brannock, John Hofenmeyer and Paul K. Hubbs Jr., who had been hired by S. Meyerback to build a kiln about three miles from English Camp, near Roche Harbor. The British commander was unable to keep the Americans from utilizing the resource.[35]

The British received supplies from Victoria, from Bellevue Farm and from early island settlers such as Gus Hoffmeister. Hoffmeister had a contract to supply the British with beef, and he kept 100 head of cattle and 500 sheep on Speiden Island (plus an additional thirty sheep on Henry Island) for this purpose.[36] The Hudson's Bay Company

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[33] Vouri, 190.
[34] "San Juan Island Correspondence, etc," Government of Vancouver Island, 1858-9, Provincial Archives; Thompson, 202.
[35] Thompson, 226.
[36] United States Works Progress Administration, *Told by the Pioneers* (Olympia, Wa: 1938), 50-51.

supplied the post with mutton and cattle.[37] The soldiers at least occasionally ate fresh fish, and they enjoyed some fresh produce as well. Soldiers planted fruit trees and a vegetable garden, fenced by saplings. The garden existed until 1867, when it was displaced by the formal garden. The vegetable garden may have been moved rather than eliminated, but its final location is not known.[38]

Nature clearly held a value beyond strategic importance for the men stationed at English Camp. Garrison Bay offered the British a sheltered, green, park-like spot for an encampment. Unlike the Americans, the British attempted to reflect a pastoral vision of nature in their camp design, one that included gardens and recreational grounds. Officers played tennis and croquet on the camp's lawns. One American visitor to the camp in 1868 described a "summer house," probably a gazebo, on Young Hill. This structure had no apparent military purpose, and probably served only for the enjoyment of the officers and their families.[39]

When Captain William Addis Delacombe arrived to command the camp in 1867, he brought his wife and family. Perhaps to provide his wife with a reminder of her English home or to bring order to the natural landscape, he ordered construction of a formal garden on the south edge of the parade ground. The garden, designed in the gardenesque style of the mid-nineteenth century, was composed of colorful, low border plants (probably annuals and bulbs) and arranged in a geometric pattern. The specific varieties of flowers remain unknown, but nurseries in Victoria undoubtedly supplied the plants. Paths led through the garden, which separated the main camp from the officer's quarters on the hill above the parade ground.[40]

Captain Delacombe's residence, also built in 1867, also reflected the attention paid to landscape design at English Camp. Delacombe helped design the structure, which became the most ornate and elaborate home in the camp. The large house contained two wings and two verandas as well as several outbuildings. A wide grassy lawn was planted in front of the home, while a series of rock terraces adorned the hillside below. An attractive display of climbing vines and roses grew in front of the house, and the lawn contained two additional rose beds. A fifteen-foot wide road lined with fir trees created a dramatic entrance to the home and grounds.[41]

The British were so successful in creating a pleasant, pastoral scene that tourists from Victoria journeyed to the site to picnic. Excursions were advertised in the *Daily British Colonist* newspaper. Visitors were charmed by the scene at Garrison Bay. One Victoria reporter praised the "delightful" combination of "natural" beauty and man-made gardens

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[37] Brewster, ed., 102.
[38] Carol Meadowcroft, "Reconstruction of the Formal Garden at English Camp," Gilbert, *Historic Landscape Report*, 243-4. Thompson, 225.
[39] David Richardson, *Pig War Islands* (Eastsound: Orcas Publishing Co, 1971), 111; Thompson, 224.
[40] Meadowcroft, "Reconstruction of the Formal Garden at English Camp," 244.
[41] Gilbert, 101.

that surrounded the officers' quarters.[42] He described, "Nature and art have combined to produce a scene calculated to delight and entrance the enthusiast, the snug little camp, fronted by a verdant lawn, while trellis like walks ascend in mazelike meshes the hill in the background, forming a fit study for the lover of the picturesque."[43] Enthralled by "the singular beauty of the scenery," an American visitor wrote, "In the fore-ground is the level green sward with a noble tree rising from its center, and fringed with spreading maples. Up through these are winding walks to the officers' quarters, and beyond, a lofty hill, on which a summer house has been erected, where the surrounding shores are seen to advantage."[44] Another writer depicted the camp as "a beautiful and sequestered little spot where stands the neat and picturesque camp of the British garrison…we may remark here that the neatness, cleanliness and good order observable through out the entire camp were the subject of general observation."[45] The British viewed their alterations as improvements of the natural landscape, and the overall scene was one of pastoral beauty.

The two armies occupied their respective locations until Kaiser Wilhelm I resolved the boundary dispute in 1872, paving the way for American settlement. Major Nathaniel Michler noted that the English left their pretty location "with regret…this locality is a beautiful one, and the buildings for both officers and men were pleasant and comfortable." According to historian Erwin Thompson, the British left "27 structures, two wharves, two wells, a pasture, a garden, roads, and considerable fencing."[46] However, visually and ecologically, their effect on the natural environment appears to have been limited. Most of the forest to the north and northeast of the camp remained intact. They had built structures, cut trails and logged timber, but the British caused relatively little ecological change on the island.[47]

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The American military considered the island valuable even after the boundary dispute ended (they expressed interest in locating fortifications at Griffin Bay on San Juan Island in 1874), but these plans were never realized. The military continued to consider the southeastern end of the island strategically important, and 640 acres at the tip of the island were designated as a military reservation, but the site was never developed.[48] San Juan Island's military significance and strategic importance had declined, and an

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[42] *British Daily Colonist*, 27 May 1867.
[43] *Daily British Colonist*, 27 May 1867.
[44] Edmund Thomas Coleman, "Mountaineering on the Pacific," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 1869, 794.
[45] Thompson, 204.
[46] Ibid., 209.
[47] James K. Agee, *Historic Landscapes of San Juan Island National Historical Park* (Seattle: National Park Service), 1984, 12-26.
[48] In 1923, the war department declared the majority of the reservation "useless" and allowed the land to be sold to the public. It retained one lot in section seven, as well as all of section eight, which encompassed the southeastern tip of the island, for a naval radio compass station.

increasing number of settlers were drawn to the island for its natural resources and agricultural opportunities. The departure of the military signaled the beginning of a new era for San Juan Island, as settlers began buying homesteads, constructing houses and establishing farms. Once again, cultural change would bring environmental change to the island.

The disputed boundary between the United States and British North America.

English Camp in 1865. This picture, taken from the northwest, shows some officers' quarters on the hillside but predates the construction of Captain William Delacombe's residence. Courtesy of the National Park Service.

Garrison Bay and English Camp in 1867. Captain William Delacombe's establishment of a formal garden at the encampment reflects the British cultural view of their place in the natural world. This is the only known photo of the garden. Courtesy of the National Park Service.

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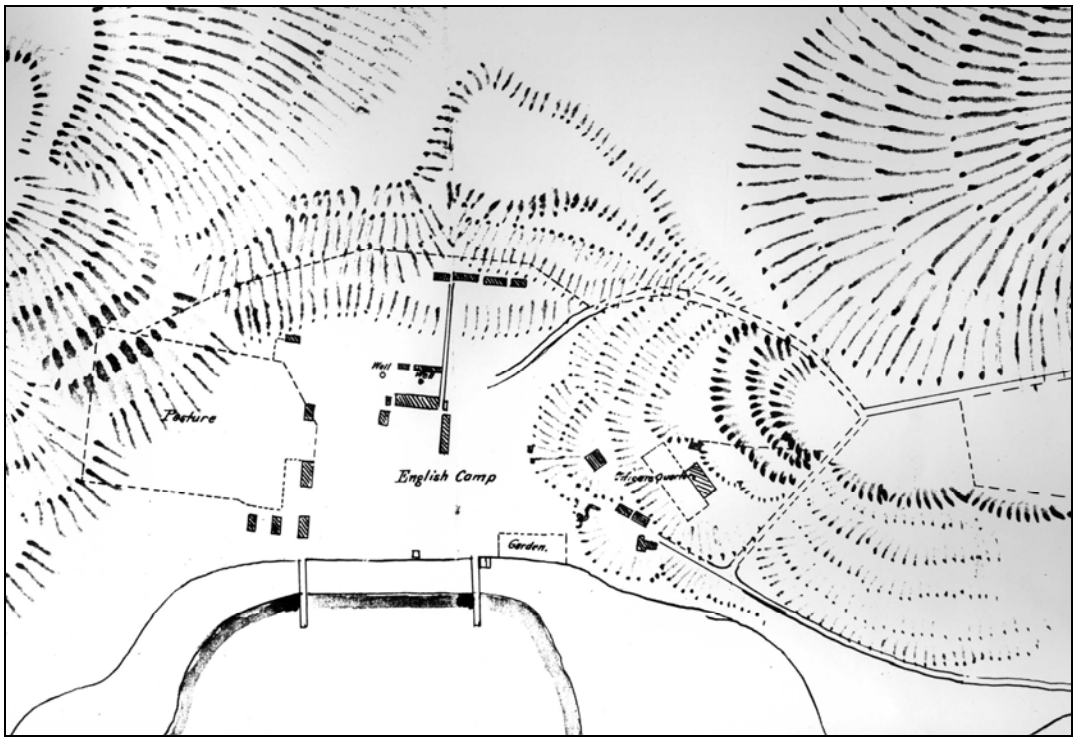
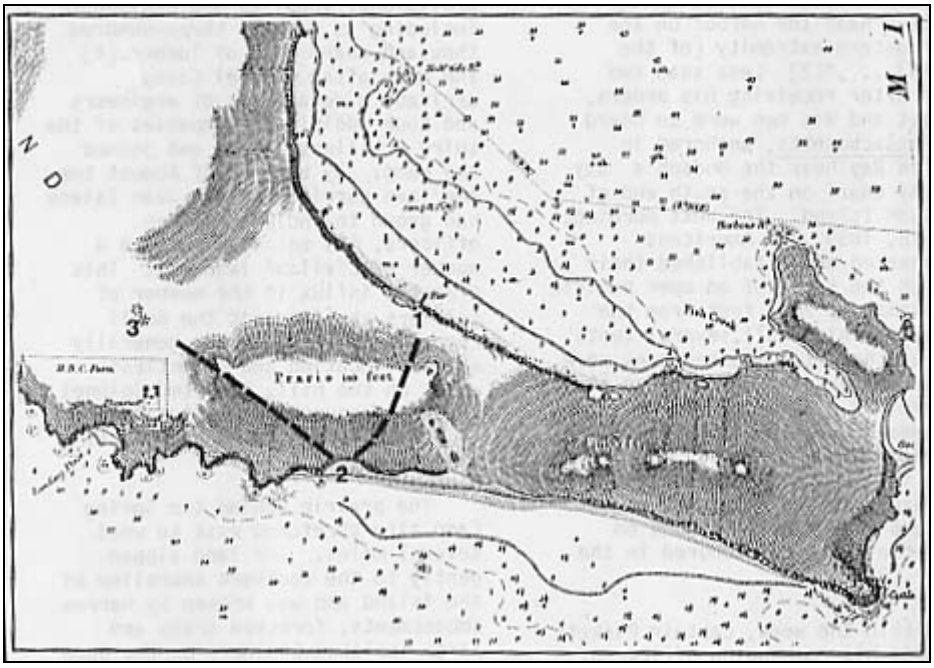
Captain William Delacombe's residence reflects the attention paid to landscape design at English Camp. The ornate home fronted a large lawn that contained two rose beds, while a series of rock terraces adorned the hillside below. In this way, the British created a park-like landscape on Garrison Bay. Courtesy of the National Park Service.



A map of English Camp in 1875.Captain James Prevost chose the site due to its sheltered harbor, gentle slopes, plentiful timber, large meadow and access to fresh water. Northern Straits Indians seasonally inhabited the site for many of the same reasons, but the British were either unaware or unconcerned that they settled an area claimed by the native group.

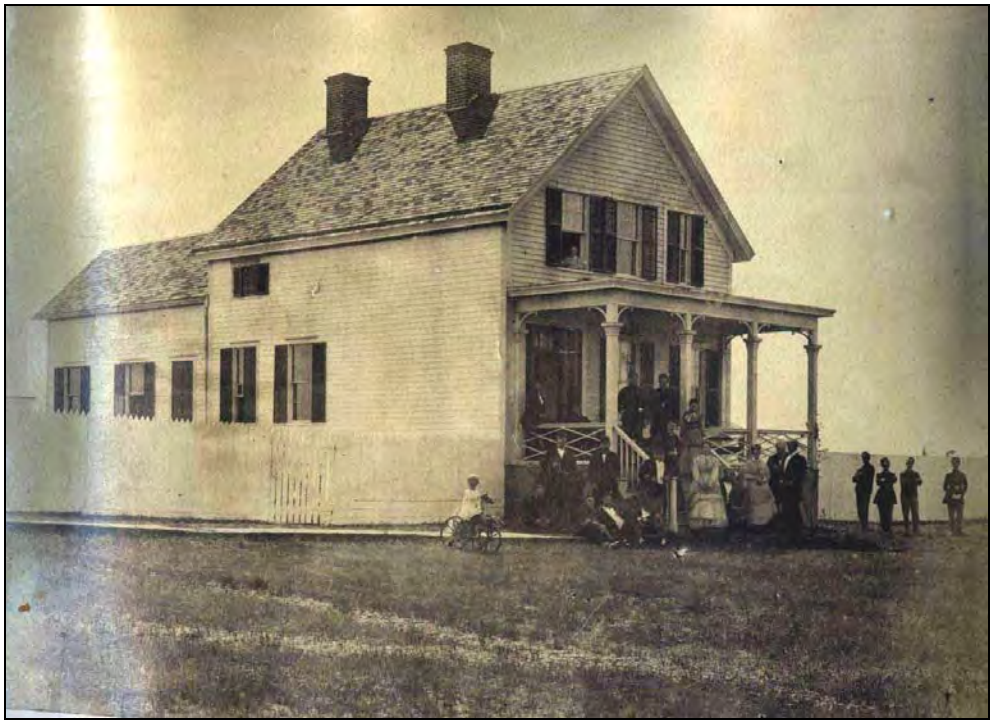
English Camp's beauty drew tourists from Victoria who wanted to visit the scenic, peaceful site. Courtesy of the National Park Service.



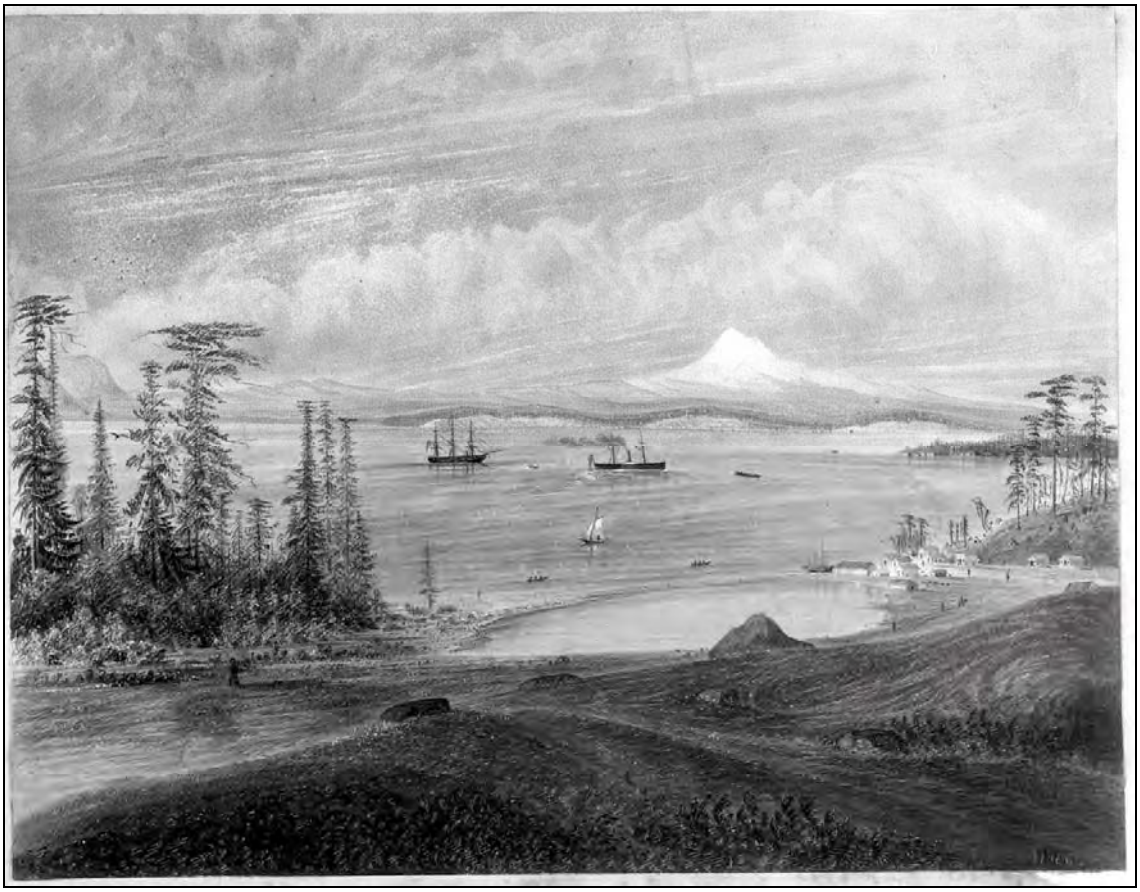
The three American Camp sites. Pickett first located his camp on Griffin Bay (#1), but moved his troops over the ridge to Spring Camp (#2) within a week. The next month, Colonel Silas Casey order the garrison to move to a more sheltered, defensible position on the edge of the prairie (#3), which became the camp's permanent location. Map reproduced from Cathy Gilbert, *Historic Landscape Report*, Seattle: National Park Service, 1986, 26.

American Camp in 1859, soon after the troops moved to their third and final location. Lt. Colonel Silas Casey moved the camp to this spot, on the edge of the prairie and with a commanding view of Griffin Bay and Haro Strait, after the camp's first two locations proved too exposed to wind and potential enemy fire. Courtesy of the National Park Service.

The American Camp parade ground ca. 1868. While the British also worked to create an aesthetically pleasing landscape, the Americans focused on reshaping their natural environment into utilitarian military instillation. Courtesy of the National Park Service.



The Commanding Officer's house at American Camp. British and American troops and officers socialized during their peaceful tenure on the island, and three British officers (pictured second, third and fourth from the left) are among the visitors in this scene. Note the contrast between the stark landscape surrounding this home, and the lush scene at the Captain's residence at English Camp. Courtesy of the National Park Service.



James Madison Alden's rendition of San Juan Village and Griffin Bay in 1859. Courtesy of the National Park Service.

Chapter Five

A Productive Island: Settlement in the Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

European and American settlement began in the 1850s, while San Juan Island was still disputed territory. Many settlers came to the island, and to the former military camps in particular, to raise marketable commodities such as sheep, field crops and orchard fruit. These settlers believed that San Juan provided extraordinary agricultural opportunities, and by replacing commercially worthless native plants with non-native crops and animals, they altered the landscape of the island and today's historical park. Settlers and corporations who ventured to San Juan beginning in the late nineteenth century sought to profit from the area's natural resources, and they modified the environment of the island and its surrounding waters by extracting limestone, cutting forests and harvesting salmon. These islanders had not inherited a pristine landscape, but settlers had a far greater impact on the natural environment than groups that preceded them. They brought larger numbers of livestock, cleared more land for crops and caught more fish than previous inhabitants. As they worked to create a productive landscape based on natural resource use, islanders in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries brought lasting environmental change to San Juan Island.

Early Settlement

With one exception, the first Euro-American residents on San Juan (excluding Hudson's Bay Company employees) were American customs inspectors, and they left few marks of their occupation on the island. Information about the first American on the island is scarce. In 1852, American William Webster claimed to have built a house and a store on the island, much to the alarm of Vancouver Island Governor James Douglas. Webster's account is probably true, as evidenced by the details he recounted about the Hudson's Bay Company salmon packing operation on the island, but no additional information about his tenure remains.[1] Henry Webber, an American customs inspector who came to the island in 1854, became the next American to reside on the island. Webber camped near Bellevue Farm, but there is no indication that he built any structures. He must have viewed the grasslands on this part of the island as potentially valuable property, because sometime before 1860, he claimed land that included part of the farm and American Camp. He did not settle this tract once the General Land Office offered the land for homesteading in 1876, but he did apply for a nearby parcel, to the north of Eagle Cove. In 1857 another inspector, Paul K. Hubbs Jr., also displayed an

[1]Erwin Thompson, *Historic Resource Study, San Juan Island National Historical Park, Washington* (Denver: National Park Service, 1972), 189.

attraction to the area when he built a cabin about 100 yards from Bellevue Farm headquarters. The next year, Hubbs Jr. expressed the belief that no European or American settlers had established claims on the island due to fears of Indian attacks.[2]

As news spread of the discovery of gold in British Columbia's Fraser River in 1857, however, the island soon became a hub of activity. Most early settlers were miners who either failed at the Fraser River gold fields in southern British Columbia or became stranded on San Juan along their way. By June of 1858, about 10,000 hopeful miners had traveled to Victoria on their way to the Fraser River, much to the consternation of the Hudson's Bay Company and the British Admiralty.[3] Most of the miners were Americans, and their preferred route was by ship from San Francisco to Victoria, then by small boat up Haro Strait past the west side of San Juan Island to the mainland of British Columbia. Others began the two day water journey to the Fraser River in Port Townsend, either spending the night in Victoria or camping on San Juan Island halfway through their trip. British Admiralty officer Richard Mayne reported that gold seekers "used every sort of boat" to reach their destination.[4] Many of these crafts undoubtedly had a difficult time negotiating the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Haro Strait, leaving men stranded on San Juan Island.

American settlers also trickled to the island in 1858 and 1859 hoping to pursue agricultural endeavors. By this time, the island's prairies had gained regional fame. Miners either saw the grasslands during their water journey to the Fraser River, or they heard about the untimbered land from their fellow goldseekers. Henry Crosbie, the Whatcom County assessor, listed nine Americans on the island in May of 1859, each of whom preempted a claim of 160 acres.[5] These men may have been lured by glowing descriptions of the island, such as the one that appeared in 1859 in the *Victoria Gazette*, a pro-American newspaper. The paper's editor opined, "The island has so much superior and eligible soil, where white oak, cedar, fir and pine abound, and where broad acres of unobstructed grass governed plain invitingly promise abundant and almost spontaneous crops." The editor complained that the Hudson's Bay Company had turned this "comparative Eden" into a "sheep pasture," and he felt that American agricultural

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[2] Thompson, *Historic Resource Study*, 190.
[3] Barry M. Gough, *The Royal Navy and the Northwest Coast of North America, 1810-1914: A Study of British Maritime Ascendancy* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1971), 136.
[4] Richard Mayne, *Four Years in British Columbia and Vancouver Island: An account of their forests, rivers, coasts, gold fields and resources for colonization* (London: John Murray, 1862), 41.
[5] Henry Crosbie, "Assessment of HB Co. Property on San Juan Island," 20 May 1859, Records of the Boundary Claims Commissions and Arbitrations, Northwest Boundary Survey, RG 76, E191, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park, MD. Crosbie identified these settlers as Paul K. Hubbs Jr, Charles H. Hubbs, Lyman Cutlar, Edward Gillette, John Whittey, a Powell, John Madison and John Hunter McKay.

endeavors would be preferable to British sheep ranching.[6] Henry Crosbie, the Whatcom County assessor, also described the island as perfect for agriculture due to its grasslands. He stated, "The isle is extremely fertile, as the island contains many prairies."[7] Immigrants filed preemption claims with the American military stationed on the island, which kept records of all such claims in the archipelago. About twenty-five men resided on San Juan Island by the end of 1859.[8]

As was common in the history of American westward expansion, speculators planned to capitalize on the seemingly untouched terrain. In February of 1859, Captain C.L. Denman and Edward Gillette surveyed and planned improvements on twenty-six claims of 160 acres each at the urging of failed American miners in Victoria. Denman and Gillette believed that if the island became part of the United States, settlers would be awarded the land under preemption laws.[9] George Gibbs of the American Boundary Commission dismissed the endeavor as "a matter of bare speculation" since he believed that none of the claimants would occupy the land.[10] Gibbs' prediction proved correct, but there were many other settlers who proved willing to settle unsurveyed, unimproved land on the island.

After the American military arrived on San Juan Island in July of 1859, civilians colonized the area for a number of reasons, according to historian Erwin Thompson: "out of a desire to be where the excitement was; some looking for work; and still others looking to supply their brethren with bread and booze."[11] Entrepreneurial minded settlers had a ready market, as approximately 500 soldiers, as well as additional numbers of settlers and Indians, occupied the island. A village called San Juan Town sprung up at the site of the Hudson's Bay Company wharf on Griffin Bay (then called Ontario Roads or San Juan Harbor). American boundary commissioner William Warren reported that the town included about twenty structures, with thirty to forty residents, in 1860.[12] Ownership of the town site was contested. The Company considered the tract their property, while two settlers each claimed the parcel.[13]

Estimates of the island's population ranged, probably due to the transient nature of these early settlers. The 1860 census records fifty-seven adults (besides those in the American and British military) on the island. Twenty-eight of these settlers identified

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[6] "U.S. Correspondence relating to the Occupation of San Juan by U.S. Troops" *Victoria Gazette*, August to October 1859, 96, Provincial Archives, Victoria, British Columbia.
[7] Crosbie, "1859 Assessment of Property," 5-20-1859.
[8] Thompson, 182. A preemption claim allowed the claimant priority if the land became incorporated into the United States.
[9] Thompson, 190-191.
[10] George Gibbs, 24 February 1858, Geographical Memoir, Appendix G, RG 76, NARA, College Park, MD.
[11] Thompson, 182.
[12] William Warren, 1860, Appendix F, RG 76, NARA, College Park, MD.
[13] S.V. Boyce and J.E. Higgins both claimed ownership of the town site.

themselves as farmers, while one hunter and one fisherman also resided on the island. The rest of the islanders were engaged in various trades and occupations. In 1861, the Olympia *Pioneer and Democrat* reported that sixty settlers were "opening farms and engaging in agricultural pursuits."[14] By January of 1860, Dr. Caleb Kennerly, an American boundary commissioner, estimated that between forty and fifty Americans farmed on the island, in addition to the thirty or forty people living at San Juan Town. These early settlers viewed the island as a potentially profitable agricultural landscape, and many established themselves on the island's prairies, which offered easily cleared land. Nine settlers had claimed tracts on the southeastern end of the island near American Camp by 1860. Kennerly noted "about a dozen claims taken up by American settlers…who had built small cabins" on the road from Bellevue Farm to Oak Prairie (now San Juan Valley).[15] Near English Camp, two settlers, probably Americans, built log huts either on Garrison or Westcott Bay, where they reportedly intended to grow potatoes. By 1860, there were about eight Americans living on the north end of the island. Over the next decade, additional settlers established farms and sheep ranches. The 1870 census shows that, excluding the British and American military, 278 men, women and children, in ninety-four households, occupied San Juan Island. Of these ninety-four households, sixty identified themselves as farmers, while three additional islanders were occupied as stock ranchers.[16]

Many of these early residents may have been lured to San Juan Island with positive reports such as the one that appeared in the *Washington Standard*, which encouraged settlers to take advantage of the "luxuriant" grass and the fertile prairies of the island. In 1876, the same paper depicted the island's farmers as busy, constantly "improving" the island's natural landscape by planting crops, building structures and raising livestock. Many of these early settlers were immigrants to the United States, and they settled on the disputed island in the hopes of eventually claiming their own parcel of land.[17]

On San Juan Island, as in the rest of the western United States, settlers found mining opportunities particularly attractive. The *Washington Standard* encouraged potential settlers to take advantage of the limestone deposits of the island, and a few islanders established quarries at various points around the island in the 1860s and 1870s. The 1860 census lists six men occupied in the lime manufacturing. In the spring of 1860, three Americans, Lyman Cutlar, D.F. Newsom, and Edward Gillete began an operation on the

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[14] Thompson, 194.
[15] Dr. Caleb Kennerly, 20 February 1859, RG 76, NARA, College Park, MD; Thompson, "Map of South East End of San Juan Island, W.T., Showing Government Reservations," Map 6.
[16] Thompson, 226; 1870 United States Census, Whatcom County, San Juan Island, San Juan Island Historical Museum Archives, Friday Harbor, Wash.
[17] "San Juan Island," *Washington Standard*, 12 December 1868; *Washington Standard*, 8 July 1876.

west side of the island.[18] By 1877, the San Juan Lime Kiln produced seventy barrels of lime per day and employed fifteen to twenty men. Also in 1860, S. Meyerback, a German immigrant, hired William Brannock, John Hofenmeyer and Paul K. Hubbs Jr. to build a kiln about three miles from English Camp, near Roche Harbor for small scale lime processing. Lime extraction and processing proved difficult for individuals and small companies, and by the late nineteenth century, two large companies would dominate the industry on the island.[19]

Charles McKay and Thomas Fleming typified the early island settler. McKay, a failed gold miner and one of the first settlers on San Juan Island, was attracted by market hunters' reports of the island as he journeyed back from the Fraser River gold fields to California. He recalled, "They told us what a fine island it was, full of game. So we went to see it. There appeared to be a lodestone on the island, for we got stuck at once." The Nova Scotia native claimed 160 acres as his own and began farming, though what crops he raised are unknown. Soon after he arrived, he recalled, a number of other Americans also established farms.[20] Fleming, a Scottish immigrant, moved to San Juan Island in 1863 after searching Port Angeles and Vancouver Island in vain for a place "like home" where he could establish a farm. After hearing enthusiastic descriptions of San Juan, he moved himself and his family to the island, which may have reminded him of his native Scotland. Fleming raised sheep, cattle and horses as well as field crops and vegetables. He sold some of his products, such as hay, potatoes and pigs, to the American military.[21]

As these settlers tried to capitalize on the island's prairies, limestone deposits and timber, they began to reshape the island into their vision of a productive landscape. In this way, islanders expanded on the changes to the natural environment initiated by the Company. Island farmers replaced the native grasses with marketable crops, and they erected fences to delineate private property boundaries. Settlers felled trees for firewood, fences and structures, though after 1874 they also utilized wood from the abandoned military camps' buildings (and in some cases, they may have moved entire buildings). The Hudson's Bay Company had built a few roads, and settlers cut additional rough roads and trails. They even built a race track near San Juan Town.[22] Company sheep had grazed much of the island, but settlers expanded the areas on the island affected by livestock grazing.

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[18] Ibid, 8 July 1876; Lucille S. McDonald, *Making History: The People Who Shaped the San Juan Islands* (Friday Harbor, Wash: Friday Harbor Press, 1990), 88. Newsom and Gillete were bought out in 1864 by August Hibbard; after Hibbard's murder in 1869, the operation continued under new ownership.
[19] Orcas Island Historical Society Newsletter Vol. 16, No. 3, (November 1997), 2; Thompson, 226.
[20] Charles McKay, "History of San Juan Island," *Washington Historical Quarterly* 2 (July 1908), 290.
[21] Lucile McDonald, "Pioneer Kept Diary in Pig War Period," *Seattle Times* Sunday Magazine, 19 March 1961, 9.
[22]McDonald, "Pioneer Kept Diary in Pig War Period," 9.

Though these early settlers were few in number, they caused profound changes to the native animal populations on the island. While black bear and wolves had been common on the island during the Hudson's Bay occupation, the new residents helped to exterminate predators, which were all extinct by the 1870s. Market hunters traveled to the islands to hunt deer, which they sold in Victoria and mainland British Columbia to Fraser River gold miners. Archibald Fleming recalled that wolves, elk, deer and beaver were prevalent on the island until the early 1860s, when overhunting caused their demise. James Tulloch, an early Orcas Island settler, blamed Indians for the demise of elk and deer, while other settlers blamed the Hudson's Bay Company's Hawaiian employees.[23] The American boundary commissioners held American settlers and market hunters liable for the loss of game animals; within a few short years, they charged, "the white man" had caused the extermination of elk and the decline of deer in the archipelago. Deer remained abundant in some places, but many settlers considered them a pest and hunted the animals, since they ate crops intended for market. After settlers exterminated wolves, disease became prevalent among deer, since the predators had helped control deer populations by preying upon weak and sick animals.[24]

Like the Hudson's Bay Company and many of the European and American explorers, most settlers, it seems, did not look to the local ecosystem for sustenance. According to the few accounts of early island life, settlers largely relied on non-native crops and livestock. Indians had taken advantage of the large duck populations of the islands, but settlers preferred to import quail and turkeys to raise and sell at market. Some early islanders traded for fresh fish from Northern Straits Indians, but they did not attempt to rely on these fisheries resources. Merchants sold settlers many items that they could not raise themselves. One store's inventory in 1865 included everything from canned meats, fish, fruits and vegetables to staples such as flour, sugar, spices, coffee and tea. Canned oysters and sardines were sold in a location that abounded with fresh fish.[25] Settlers also traded at the American garrison for supplies.

The James Hannah family provides an example of islanders' reliance on non-native foods and animals. Even though they eked out an existence on the island, they still seemed to rely on food and products derived from non-native plants and animals. James Hannah and his family lived eight miles from San Juan Town, and they worried about running short of supplies (such as flour) in the winter, when roads and bridges often washed out. The family relied on the products they made from their goats, sheep and

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[23] Keith, Gordon, ed, *The James Francis Tulloch Diary, 1875-1910* (Portland, Or: Bingford and Mort, 1978), 22 and McDonald, 9.

[24] United States Department of State, *The Northwest Boundary* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1868), 140; Keith, ed., *The James Francis Tulloch Diary,* 98; Ernest A. Davidson, Richard M. Bond, and J. Volney Lewis, "Report on San Juan Island Investigation," (National Park Service, 5 August 1937,) 3.

[25] Thompson, 186.

poultry. They knitted clothes from sheep's wool, rendered tallow from goat and sheep fat to make candles, and raised turkeys both for their own consumption and for the local market. While Lila Hannah recalled that the family sometimes purchased fish from Northern Straits Indians, there is no evidence to prove that they collected berries, shellfish, edible plants or any other foods native to the island and its surrounding waters.[26]

The island's remote, undeveloped character posed challenges to early settlers. In the 1860s, settlers used mail boats, trading schooners, rowboats and canoes (often paddled by hired Indians) to sell their merchandise in Victoria. Settlers sold or traded sheep, wool, venison, potatoes and other garden produce for staples such as sugar, tea, tobacco and hard goods such as tools. In the 1860s, the only regular boat service to the islands was the mail boat, which picked up island-bound mail in Victoria. Some supplies could be purchased in town, but settlers could only travel the island's poor roads in good weather. Since bridges often washed out after heavy winter rains, many settlers remained stranded until the community could get together to make the necessary repairs. The Crook family, for example, lived thirteen miles from San Juan Town, but it was more convenient for them to spend two hours rowing a forty-foot cedar canoe to Vancouver Island for supplies than to spend an entire day traveling overland to the tiny island village. This was probably not unusual. As Archibald Fleming recalled, nearly everyone who lived near the shore owned a boat. Islanders often found it easier to row from one part of the island to another than to travel cross country. During the 1870s, mail boat service made it slightly easier for farmers to get their products to mainland markets. In 1873, regular mail service began on a twice monthly basis. Within a few years, three boats carried the mail to San Juan Island, so that the island was served at least once per week.[27]

The General Land Office (GLO) opened land on the island to homesteaders in 1874. Due to the expanses of cleared land in the vicinity of Bellevue Farm and American Camp, this area was quickly settled, but not without some restrictions. Though the boundary dispute had been settled the previous year, in 1873 President Grant ordered that British land claims be settled before the agency offered parcels on the island to Americans. The army also requested that the GLO postpone land sales until potential military reservations in the archipelago could be surveyed and reserved. The military reserved 640 acres on the southeastern end of the island, leaving the area east of the former American Camp site undeveloped but off limits to homesteaders.[28]

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[26] Lila Hannah Firth, "Early Life on San Juan Island," 1945, Manuscripts, University Archives and Special Collections (MUASC), University of Washington, Seattle, Washington.
[27] McDonald, *Making History*, 59; Neva Durhack, "Birthday Greetings to Jim Crook," *Friday Harbor Journal*, 24 September 1964; United States Work Projects Administration, "Interview with Archibald Fleming, San Juan Island," *Told by the Pioneers*, (Olympia, Wash, 1937-8), 51.
[28] The military similarly reserved six other parcels in the islands, including one other parcel on San Juan Island at Point Caution.

Between 1879 and 1886, the General Land Office issued patents on all of the parcels in the area west of the newly drawn military reservation boundary. Henry Webber, the former customs collector, applied for 160 acres just to the north of American Camp. Robert Firth, who had been the manager of Bellevue Farm, homesteaded about 226 acres encompassing Bellevue Farm headquarters. Thomas Weekes received 80 acres to the northwest of American Camp. Carl Ostergaard homesteaded 163.1 acres to the east of Bellevue Farm, while William Taylor claimed 164.75 acres to the east of American Camp. George Jakle received 78.85 acres just west of the military reservation boundary. Joseph Sandwith, Robert Sandwith, Robert Frazer, and Christopher Rosler all established farms just to the north and west of the present boundaries of the American Camp section of today's historical park.

The majority of the former British military camp was settled by William Crook, probably in 1875. The level, grassy parade ground, sheltered harbor, spring and remaining buildings undoubtedly attracted him to the site. Crook applied for 161.85 acres, though his holdings eventually totaled 320 acres. Upon arriving at their homestead, the Crook family utilized an abandoned military structure for their residence. Isaac Sandwith claimed 160 acres now contained in the southeastern portion of the historical park. John McKay and Silas McCrary each homesteaded 160 acres just to the east of the camp. In 1896, James Holden settled on about 20 acres of land at Bell Point, to the northwest of the parade ground.[29]

These homesteaders sought to transform the former military camps into profitable agricultural landscapes. Robert Firth's and George Jakle's endeavors typified the type of agricultural activity settlers pursued on San Juan Island. By 1879, Robert Firth owned 300 acres on the former site of Bellevue Farm. He raised 500 sheep, 50 pigs, and 22 cows as well as horses and chickens. He grew 50 acres of hay to feed his animals in the winter, while 160 acres of his land remained meadow for livestock grazing. In addition, he cultivated 20 acres of oats, 60 acres of wheat, 20 acres of potatoes and 18 apple trees. George Jakle owned land just south of Griffin Bay, partly on the site of the former military camp, where he raised 345 sheep and well as small numbers of pigs, horses and cows on his 78 acres. Jakle also raised 25 acres of oats, 20 acres of wheat and 2 acres of potatoes.[30]

Their neighbors, who resided outside of the boundaries of the current historical park, all similarly raised sheep, field crops and orchard fruit. Joseph Sandwith, who owned land along the shore to the west of the American Camp site, raised 262 sheep; he also

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[29] Bureau of Land Management Online, General Land Office Records, Official Federal Land Patent Records Site, http://www.glorecords.blm.gov/, online resource accessed 20 June 2005.

[30] United States Census Office, *Tenth Census, Agriculture, 1880, Washington Territory* (Seattle: University of Washington Library, 1942).The 1880 agricultural census recorded the specific types of crops and livestock raised by islanders in the vicinity of the present day historical park, though that year was the last for this type of detailed agricultural recording.

cultivated hay, barley, oats, wheat, and peas. Robert Frazer and Christopher Rosler, both of whom homesteaded just north of the American Camp boundary, each grew 100 apple trees. Just southeast of the former English Camp site, Isaac Sandwith raised 490 sheep, 29 pigs, 68 chickens, a few horses and cows as well as 20 acres of hay and 3 acres of potatoes on his land.[31] Unfortunately, agricultural census records do not include the Crooks farm. Farming and livestock raising were central to the early settlement of the island, and thus to the transformation of the natural environment. Islanders saw these changes as welcome progress as they interpreted the landscape in terms of commodities for a marketplace.

Boosterism and the Reshaping of the Island Landscape

Due to San Juan's mild climate, expanses of prairie and seemingly fertile soil, boosters and settlers held high expectations for the island's agricultural potential. Island boosters embraced the Jeffersonian vision of an island of owner occupied small farms and ranches, rather than a few large industries or large landholders and tenant farmers. These democratic expectations of the island's yeoman potential shaped the ways that island residents utilized the landscape, and San Juan became an island of small farmers and ranchers.

Many western American communities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries vied for new residents by publishing promotional literature aimed at luring migrants to their area. An array of books, pamphlets and newspaper supplements from San Juan Island portrayed the island's natural resources as potentially profitable investments. These illustrated materials show an array of photos depicting the islands' resource-based industries. Booster publications emphasized the islands' agricultural prospects, such as growing orchard fruit and raising sheep and dairy cows. Many organizations made efforts to lure settlers to San Juan Island by promising abundant yields, easily cleared land, a favorable climate and reliable transportation options to get farm products to mainland markets. San Juan's lime deposits, fisheries resources, and mild climate were also promoted as additional inducements to settlers.[32] The large size of the island, as well as the presence of Friday Harbor, the archipelago's largest town and the country seat, also drew settlers to San Juan, and the isle attracted more new residents than any other in the archipelago.

Like other western states and territories that sought to attract migrants, Washington Territory published promotional literature to attract and aid potential homesteaders. Promotional material described San Juan County in glowing terms. One booklet,

[31] It is unclear how much land Sandwith owned at this time. While his 1879 land patent shows he was granted 160 acres, the 1880 agricultural census states his holdings totaled 670 acres.
[32] "Islands of San Juan County, Washington," Supplement to the *Everett Herald*, 1908, MUASC, UW.

published in 1875, promised that San Juan County "offers many excellent opportunities for immigrants and much of its best land lies unoccupied—land that is easily cleared and will produce heavy crops of either grain or vegetables." Though the booklet described the island as "thickly settled," it claimed that good land still awaited the prospective farmer.[33] The state continued promoting the county into the twentieth century. A 1914 publication promised potential migrants that a prosperous future awaited those who established sheep or dairy farms, orchards, or truck farms.[34]

In newspaper articles and promotional supplements aimed at mainland residents, San Juan Island's boosters promoted the island as a potential Eden. They called the island "the most delightful, charming and productive" on earth, and they believed that San Juan possessed natural advantages that ensured agricultural success.[35] One account read, "Here, fanned by cool sea breezes in summer and experiencing none of winter's intensities, (island farmers) live an ideal life amid an ideal environment."[36] Promoters described the islands' climate as "salubrious" and they promised, "Here, there are no high water rates as in irrigated sections, no sand storms, cyclones or cloudbursts as in the Middle West." Boosters claimed that the islands contained some of the "finest farms in western Washington" due to the exceptional soil fertility. The valleys produced "immense crops of grain and hay, while the upland is unexcelled for dairying and grazing purposes." According to boosters, grains, hay, fruit and potatoes grew "in perfection." [37] Promoters assured settlers that choice land for orcharding, stock raising, dairying, poultry raising or other farming could be bought for a reasonable price, enabling families of modest means to purchase their own farms.

The publications proudly displayed photographs of the island's orchards, ranches, lime kilns and fish traps. Pictures of prosperous looking farms with tidy white fences assured potential migrants that the island was a thriving agricultural community. Photographs of churches, schools, businesses, steamships and families posed in front of attractive homes filled the pages of brochures. These photographs were meant to assure potential residents that San Juan Island was not an untamed wilderness, but rather a domesticated, prosperous environment with a multitude of opportunities for migrants.

According to boosters, islanders would develop certain beneficial qualities from their tenure on the island. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many Americans believed in the connection between a healthy environment and a moral, productive citizenry, and San Juan's promoters capitalized on this idea in their

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[33] Mrs. A.H.H. Stuart, *Washington Territory: Its Soil, Climate, Productions and General Resources* (Olympia: Washington State Legislature, 1875).
[34] Harry F. Giles, *Homeseeker's Guide to the State of Washington* (Olympia: F.M. Lamborn, 1914), 15.
[35] "The San Juan Islands," *San Juan Islander* (Friday Harbor, Wash, 1901), 3.
[36] "Islands of San Juan Country, Washington," *Everett Herald*, 18 July 1908.
[37] "Islands of San Juan Country, Washington," 4.

promotional literature.[38] One pamphlet stated, "Here the simple life may be led among quiet, peaceful and healthful surroundings and the highest type of American citizenry developed."[39] The article continued, "It will be seen by perusal of the foregoing review of the resources of the San Juan Islands that nature has been peculiarly partial to them. It is not therefore surprising that the people of the archipelago are enthusiastic in their loyalty and prosperous, healthy and generally happy."[40] These types of arguments proved persuasive to migrants, and the population of San Juan County grew by forty-one percent between 1890 and 1900.[41]

As transportation improvements made the mainland more accessible to island farmers, islanders held high hopes for the future of their agricultural community. After the resolution of the boundary dispute, Whatcom (Bellingham) and Port Townsend became the principal markets for San Juan Island farm products. During the 1880s, twice-weekly steamer service began from Port Townsend, and in the 1890s, three steamers per week, from Seattle, called on the island. In 1901, daily (except for Sunday) steamer service began.[42] As early as 1900, island boosters assured potential residents that the island's isolation was a thing of the past due to frequent boat service. The advent of gasoline and diesel powered boats in the early twentieth century also gave island residents newfound freedom. Boosters envisioned that these new transportation connections would enable San Juan Island farmers to distribute their goods to the mainland quickly and easily. One report predicted that "in the future, this county will enjoy a large fresh fruit and sweet cream trade with the important and rapidly growing cities of Seattle, Tacoma, Everett and Bellingham, to which strawberries and cream will be shipped on swift motor boats."[43]

Island boosters painted a rosy picture of farming in the islands, but the life of settlers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was not easy. James Tulloch, a farmer on Orcas Island in the late nineteenth century, recalled the particular hardships of farming in the archipelago. The island's "wind shaped, badly twisted" trees proved exceptionally difficult to cut for both structures and firewood. Though boosters promoted the island's mild climate, he complained that the summers were "very dry and hot," and plagued by yellowjackets.[44] Plowing fields and transporting goods over land was tedious work, done with oxen and crudely built carts. Even the island's birds and animals were pests. Brown mink "infested" the forests, and deer proved a constant menace to crops such as cabbage and potatoes. "Pestiferous" crows devoured orchard fruit, and jaybirds (which Tulloch

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[38] Theodore Steinberg, *Down To Earth: Nature's Role in American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 157.
[39] Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, 9.
[40] Ibid, 20.
[41] "The San Juan Islands," 5.
[42] Norman Hayner, "Ecological Succession in the San Juan Islands," *American Sociological Society*, (Vol.XXIII, 1929), 87-88.
[43] "Islands of San Juan County," 9.
[44]Keith, ed, 12-13.

called "the torment of our lives") carried off potatoes and consumed newly planted seeds. Even gulls' cries became annoying to the vexed farmer. Some years, his crops did not produce high enough yields to earn a profit, and he was forced into the backbreaking labor of cutting wood for the lime kiln near Cascade Lake.[45]

Like other settlers, Tulloch labored to remake the natural landscape into what he considered a productive, profitable environment. Tulloch replaced the island's native plants with orchard trees, and he sought to rid his land of the deer and birds that damaged his crops. He found the islands' dry summers an obstacle to growing orchard fruit, so he and a neighbor built and shared an irrigation system using pipes salvaged from the ruins of Seattle's great fire. The water proved insufficient for both his farm and his family, causing Tulloch to construct another one-half mile of pipe from his home to a spring on Mt. Constitution for personal and garden use. Fruit growing initially proved profitable, but it involved "ceaseless and increasing toil" due to fighting pests and fungus and building and maintaining irrigation systems.[46]

Besides tapping into the islands' agricultural potential, Tulloch embarked on a beautification campaign in order to reshape the island into his vision of a picturesque natural landscape. Though surrounded by waters teeming with salmon and other fish, Tulloch dug two ponds and stocked them with imported Colorado trout. He lined the road on his property with crushed white shells collected from the island's beaches and built an ornamental fountain with a thirty foot spray near his garden. Tulloch's actions proved unusual; while a few of his fellow islanders followed his lead, Tulloch was disappointed at the majority of his neighbors' refusal to similarly "beautify" their property.[47] Most instead concentrated on developing successful agricultural enterprises.

Booster literature did not discuss problems such as Tulloch encountered, and the glowing descriptions of the islands successfully attracted new residents. Between 1880 and 1910, a time in which boosters heavily promoted the archipelago, the population of San Juan Island grew fifty-one percent. Many of these immigrants took up farming, and the amount of farmland in the county grew by thirty-eight percent between 1900 and 1910.[48]

Agriculture

Despite booster promises of fertile farmland and abundant yields, the pervasiveness of the sheep industry on San Juan Island suggests that other types of agriculture never lived up to islanders' expectations. The hilly, rocky and dry terrain that characterized much of

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[45] Ibid, 17-83.
[46] Ibid., 82.
[47] Ibid., 91.
[48] Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *13th Census of the United States, 1910, Volume 3,* (Washington D.C: Government Printing Office, 1913. There are no agricultural statistics specific to San Juan Island during this time.

the island was not ideal for raising crops, but sheep thrived in this environment. Raising sheep had become increasingly popular in the Pacific Northwest in the 1860s, and islanders eagerly took up the endeavor. Some turned to sheep ranching after their land failed to support other types of agriculture. For example, Alfred Douglas attempted to grow crops on his farm north of the American Camp site, but the lack of rainfall led him to abandon the effort in favor of sheep ranching.[49]

Boosters attributed the success of the sheep industry to the island's natural environment. The island's mild climate and "the plentitude and nutritious qualities of the natural grasses which grow here" also allegedly contributed to the high quality of the sheep. In 1889, 6,377 sheep roamed San Juan County. Ten years later, county records reported almost 13,000 sheep. According to boosters, "The finest grazing ranges in Western Washington are found in this country." Sheep ranchers in San Juan County raised more sheep than any other western Washington county throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[50] Boosters even claimed that San Juan Island sheep remained free from the diseases that plagued mainland sheep. Islanders raised the Shropshire, Southdown and Oxforddown breeds, which produced good quality meat and abundant wool. "The quality of the mutton is said by epicures to equal that of Wales and the Scottish Highlands," claimed one promotional pamphlet.[51] Though their numbers declined after 1900, sheep remained important to the island's economy throughout the first few decades of the twentieth century.[52]

Island boosters expressed similar enthusiasm about the dairy industry on the island. "This is a great dairy region," claimed the San Juan County Board of Commissioners.[53] While the depression of the 1890s raged, promoters alleged that the dairy farmers of the island "lived in serene disregard of outside conditions and enjoyed uninterrupted prosperity." [54] Island dairy farmers raised Jersey and Guernsey cows due to their heavy milk production. These farmers shipped the milk by steamer to Whatcom (now Bellingham) until a creamery was established on San Juan Island in the early twentieth century. Though there were only 443 dairy cows in San Juan County in 1889, by 1909 that number had grown to 1,969, and by 1919, islanders owned 3,175 dairy cows.[55]

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[49] Bill Jakle, interview by Jacilee Wray, in "The Salmon Bank: An Ethnohistorical Compilation," 2003, 14, San Juan Island National Historical Park Archives.
[50] "The San Juan Islands," 5.
[51] "Islands of San Juan County," 8.
[52] Hayner, "Ecological Succession in the San Juan Islands," 85. There were about 8,000 sheep remaining in the county in 1920.
[53] San Juan County Board of Commissioners, "San Juan County: Its History, Resources, Attractions and Advantages," n.d., San Juan Islands Pamphlet File, MUASC, UW.
[54] "Islands of San Juan County, Washington," 9.
[55] Washington State Bureau of Statistics and Immigration, *Dairying, Poultry and Stock Raising in Washington*, (Olympia: F.M. Lamborne, 1916), 92-94.

Photos in booster literature showed seemingly contented herds of dairy cows grazing on the island's grasslands, while prosperous farmers posed beside barns and fences.

The livestock of the Hudson's Bay Company and early settlers may have affected the island's natural environment, but with the increase in sheep and cattle grazing by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, San Juan residents expanded these changes. Islanders cut trees to build fences and barns for their animals. Many island residents began raising hay and grain to feed their cattle, and this required the clearing of trees and native grasslands. Farmers grew larger and larger quantities of hay and grain as their herds expanded, and between 1899 and 1924, the number of acres of hay on the islands increased by 300 percent.[56]

Settlers grew grain for human consumption as well, though the enterprise must have proved unprofitable. In 1886, Clarence Tucker built a three-story grist mill in Argyle, on the island's eastern shore, to process grain. Islanders hoped the mill would spur other manufacturing operations to open in the area, but it remained Argyle's only business. While the mill enjoyed some success for the next two decades, by 1909, the operation had closed due to insufficient business.[57]

Another type of agricultural endeavor on the island resulted in unanticipated environmental consequences. Rabbit farmers released unwanted animals into the wild on the island in the 1880s, and the animals spread quickly. The expanding rabbit population dug warrens into island soils and prevented the regeneration of trees. The animals found Douglas fir seedlings particularly palatable, and their consumption of these plants hindered forest growth. Farmers considered the animals a pest. Warrens posed a hazard to horses and cattle, who could fall and become injured in the holes, and rabbits may have eaten grasses and grain meant for livestock.[58] However, some island residents benefited from the rabbits. A few families supplemented their income by selling butchered rabbits, while many others hunted the animals for personal consumption. Many landowners allowed rabbit hunting by permission on their property, suggesting that they were eager to be rid of the animals. Jim Crook often had so much butchered rabbit on hand he offered the meat to horrified visitors who had come to see the remains of English Camp.[59] Rabbits continued to be abundant on the island into the late twentieth century.

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[56] Haynor, 85-86.

[57] Anita Garrett, "Grist Mill Symbolized Argyle's Ambitions," *Seattle Times Sunday Magazine*, 3 December 1961.

[58] Richard D. Taber, *Implications of the Rabbit Decline on San Juan Island* (Seattle: National Park Service, 1982), 2; Davidson et al., "Report on San Juan Island Investigation," 3. Rabbits had no apparent effect on local wildlife. In the 1930s, Davidson reported that the only noticeable effect that rabbits have had on native wildlife was on Smith and Flattop Islands, where rabbits pushed the Rhinoceros Auklet and perhaps Puffins out of their native habitat by taking over their burrows.

[59] David Richardson, *Magic Islands* (Eastsound, Wash: Orcas Publishing Co., 1973), 91; San Juan Island Pamphlet File, n.d., MUASC, UW.

In addition to livestock and field crops, islanders believed that San Juan's climate and soil were perfect for growing orchard fruit. There was much optimism in the early years of fruit growing, and in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the orchard fruit industry in the archipelago grew tremendously. The orchard industry prospered across the Pacific Northwest during this time, and according to island promoters, "No county of any state of the union…has greater possibilities for fruit culture."[60] Boosters claimed that due to the islands' adequate rainfall, San Juan orchardists had an advantage over eastern Washington growers who relied on costly irrigation. Most fruit raisers grew apples; in 1898, 150,000 boxes of apples were shipped from the islands to points around the globe. Islanders also grew pears, and these were shipped and sold in markets such as Chicago, Boston and New York. "The fruit ranches of San Juan County may be relied upon every year to yield products of unsurpassable quality, in enviable quantity," one promotional pamphlet asserted. Boosters assured potential farmers that "fruits of all kinds thrive here. Apples, pears, cherries, plums, prunes, strawberries and blackberries grow in perfection and in profusion." San Juan's farm bureau even promised an absence of pests, cheap land and the low cost of water freight. In 1899, there were almost 72,500 apple trees and over 28,000 plum, prune and pear trees in San Juan County. By 1909 the county boasted almost 77,000 apple trees and over 14,000 plum, prune, and pear trees. Boosters claimed that even small scale orchardists could profit. "Many orchards of five to ten acres are bringing rich rewards to their owners," according to the county's promotional literature.[61] In many cases, land values on the island were higher between 1880 and 1910, reflecting the success of the industry at its peak, than in the 1920s, after orcharding declined.[62]

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By the turn of the twentieth century, farmers were utilizing the land at the former American Camp site for orchards, sheep pasture, and field crops.[63] Though the boundary commission had publicized the island's fisheries and mineral resources, most settlers came to the islands to raise sheep and grow crops, activities more easily undertaken by the single homesteader. Robert Firth, the former Bellevue Farm manager who homesteaded on the site of the Hudson's Bay Company operation, grew wheat, oats and potatoes as well as orchard fruit at the site in 1899. Firth raised fruit in two separate orchards—one just above the shore of Grandma's Cove, and the other next to his house. His fields were surrounded by grasslands and he raised ninety sheep on the site, 400 less than he owned twenty years prior.[64] Cultivated fields of unknown ownership lay to the

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[60] "Islands of San Juan County," 10.
[61] Ibid., 10; "The San Juan Islands," 5; "San Juan Island" File, San Juan County Farm Bureau brochure, 1923, Northwest Collection, Provincial Archives, Victoria, British Columbia; "San Juan County: Its History, Resources, Attractions and Advantages."
[62] Haynor, 84.
[63] Agee, *Historical Landscapes of San Juan Island National Historical Park*, 26.
[64] "The San Juan Islands," 22.

east and northeast of Firth's property. John George Jakle, Jr., possessed an orchard and a small cultivated field just west of the military reservation boundary. Most of the area north of the Bellevue Farm and American Camp sites was classified as sparse or slashed timber, interspersed with grasslands.[65] Remains of rock piles in the forests on Mt. Finlayson testify that someone unsuccessfully tried to farm the logged of areas of American Camp in the early twentieth century.[66] Though these islanders only cultivated a portion of what would become the historical park, sheep undoubtedly grazed much of the area.

The military reservation, which encompassed the entire southeastern portion of the island (including the eastern part of the current historical park), remained largely undeveloped. The army leased this reservation, along with San Juan Island's other reservation at Point Caution, to islanders beginning in 1892 with certain conditions. Tenants were not allowed to cut timber, and they were responsible for removing any structures they had built when their lease expired.[67] An 1897 map shows two cultivated fields on the military reservation, one near Cattle Point and another on the shore to the east of South Beach. The field above South Beach belonged to James Bryant, who successfully grew potatoes in the parcel's sandy soil.[68] Eliza Jakle leased land on the reservation for one dollar per year beginning in 1898, and her sheep probably grazed the adjacent unfenced, unsettled land that would later become the historical park. She also may have grown crops in a cultivated field near Cattle Point. The venture could not have been very profitable. In 1911, Jakle's lawyer stated that she "ekes out a living raising sheep," and he portrayed her as caretaker for the reservation. He asserted that she kept campers (probably fishermen) from squatting on the lands and that she prevented fires from damaging the reserve.[69]

Islanders similarly raised orchard fruit, crops and sheep on the site of the former British military camp at the end of the nineteenth century. The Crook Family raised apples and cherries on the English Camp site. Sheep grazed the grasslands that grew to the northeast and northwest of the orchard, while the area to the south, on Garrison Bay, was forested. The Bell Point peninsula was also timbered, and the slopes of Mt. Young

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[65] United States Coast and Geodetic Survey, "Washington Sound, Part of San Juan Island, Pear Point to Eagle Point, 1897," Map, Columbia Cascade Support Office, Seattle, Wash.
[66] Agee, 26.
[67] Letter from Harvey Brown, Raymond Vessey, and David Brown, Appraisers of Abandoned Military Reservations, State of Washington, to the Commissioner, General Land Office, Washington, D.C., 20 September 24, Records of the Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Division, Abandoned Military Reservation File, Washington, San Juan Island, RG 49, National Archives, Washington D.C.
[68] James F. Bryant Land Patent, Bureau of Land Management Online Land Patent Details, http://www.glorecords.blm.gov/PatentSearch/ and Wray, "Bill Jakle Interviews."
[69] Letter from F.F. Randolph to Robert Shaw Oliver, Assistant Secretary of War, 19 February 1911, Abandoned Military Reservation File, Washington, San Juan Island, RG 49.

contained forest, some of which had been logged.[70] Isaac Sandwith owned 200 acres of the site; half of these were cultivated with field, orchard and garden crops, while the other half supported 300 sheep. Much of his land, from the boundary with the Crook property on the west to the road or track that ran through his property, was classified as sparse or slashed forest. Sandwith owned an additional 640 acres on the island, on which he kept about 700 additional sheep.[71]

Like other agricultural communities, San Juan Island was at the mercy of outside market forces, but the island's remote setting posed additional challenges to farmers. Fruit often spoiled before it reached mainland markets, and high transportation costs from the remote island made many endeavors unprofitable.[72] Improvements in railroad transportation (land transportation had become cheaper than water transportation by 1920) and irrigation helped fruit growers from eastern Washington capture an increasingly larger share of the market during the 1910s.[73] Island growers protested that the price of shipping to Seattle and the low prices offered by Seattle merchants drove them out of business. San Juan and Lopez Islands' grain growers faced similar difficulties in the face of competition from mainland farmers.[74] Pests and fungus also made agricultural endeavors increasingly difficult around the turn of the century. Coddling moths and tent caterpillars infestations forced farmers to destroy many of their orchard trees. James Tulloch complained that the rich, volcanic soils of eastern Washington gave that region's apples and pears a more attractive appearance than fruit from the San Juan Islands, thus making it more appealing to consumers.[75] By 1919, there were about 25,000 fewer apple trees in the county than ten years previous. By 1924, about 50,000 orchard trees remained in the county, less than half as many as there had been in 1899.[76] By the mid-1930s, visitors noted that many of the islands' orchards appeared dilapidated or abandoned.

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As the orchard fruit industry declined, island farmers turned to other crops to fulfill their hopes of a prosperous agricultural landscape. The island proved well suited to raising peas, and the pea industry proved to be one of the bright spots in the island's economy during the Great Depression. The first pea vines were planted in 1922 by John Henry, who planted peas on the island after soil samples and climactic conditions led him to believe that the island was the best spot on the West Coast for pea growing. By 1925,

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[70] U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, "Topography of Washington Sound, Wash, San Juan and Henry Islands, 1894," map at Columbia Cascade Support Office, National Park Service, Seattle, Wash.
[71] "The San Juan Islands," 18.
[72] Keith, ed., 90-91.
[73] Elmon A. Geneste Oral History, San Juan Island Historical Museum Archives, Friday Harbor, Wa.
[74] Haynor, 85.
[75] Keith, ed., 95.
[76] Loomis J. Shadboldt, *History of the Tree Fruit Industry in the State of Washington*, 1954, 7, MUASC, UW.

Henry grew peas on nearly 1,200 acres in San Juan Valley. His San Juan Islands' Canning Company, which produced "Saltair" brand peas, employed about 150 people and produced about 50,000 cases of peas per year. Henry utilized a former salmon cannery for processing the peas, since the decline in salmon had left one of the island's two canneries vacant. The pea canning industry provided employment from the 1920s through the depression.[77] In 1939, a pea weevil infestation devastated the crop, and Henry moved his operation to the mainland, where weevils did not thrive. The island's economy suffered due to the plant's closure, and the Roche Harbor Lime Company became the island's only major employer during the depression.

Boosters continued to promote the archipelago as a farmer's paradise. Although peas briefly thrived, the number of farmers in San Juan County decreased from 436 in 1920 to 363 in 1930.[78] The San Juan County Farm Bureau attempted to lure farmers to the area by using the same arguments that boosters had utilized for decades. One brochure promised that, "Pure, fresh water is everywhere, and all over is a temperate sun, kindly, beneficent, and never oppressive." The bureau promoted the low prices of island land and the low cost of water transportation to mainland markets. Furthermore, these boosters disingenuously claimed that pests never bothered the many crops grown by island farmers.

Some fruit and vegetable crops planted by islanders did enjoy some brief commercial success, but pests, transportation costs and market factors continually dashed the hopes of island farmers.[79] After the pea weevil devastated the pea industry in 1939, Warren Russell and George Jefferies bought John Henry's land in San Juan Valley and planted strawberries, and they grew the berries commercially with some success until 1960. A variety of other crops, such as filbert nuts, walnuts, peaches, grapes, ginseng, potatoes, wheat, and oats, were grown commercially on the island during this time, but none of these crops enjoyed the success of the orchard fruit and pea industries.[80] Despite this decline, the island remained predominantly rural.

In 1923, the navy made additional farmland available when they declared most of Section 7 of the military reservation (the area encompassing Mt. Finlayson, in the present historical park) "useless" and offered nine parcels in the tract for auction. Eliza Jakle had leased grazing land on the military reservation on the southeastern end of the island since 1898, but the grasslands of the area had remained off limits to further agricultural development. The navy similarly dispersed parts of section eight (the southeastern end of

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[77] "Pea Canning," San Juan Island Historical Museum Archives.
[78] United States, Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States*, Washington State, 1930. No Agricultural Censuses were taken between 1880 and 1925, so statistics for the early twentieth century are not available.
[79] Keith, ed., 98-101.
[80] "Strawberries," San Juan Island Historical Museum Archives; San Juan County Farm Bureau brochure, 1923.

the island) in the late 1920s.[81] Eliza's son George Jakle, Jr. bought 248.60 acres in section seven in 1925, while Eliza claimed 153.5 acres of section eight in 1927 under the Homestead Act.[82] The Jakles likely utilized their land, most of which now lies inside the boundaries of the historical park, for sheep grazing.

By the 1950s, islanders no longer saw agriculture as their future, though the island remained rural in character. One author and islander stated that by the 1960s only a few "gentlemen farmers" remained on what had been an agricultural island.[83] The amount of land used for crops and pasture had continued to decline, and the archipelago only contained 203 farms (124 less than a decade earlier) in 1960. At the former English Camp site, the Crooks no longer commercially raised orchard fruit, though orchard trees remained on the parade ground. The rest of the site was forested or woodland pasture for livestock. Much of the American Camp area consisted of livestock pasture, although some islanders grew hay, wheat, oat and barley in scattered plots around the area. Other areas near American Camp lay idle; tracts of both forest and grassland went uncultivated and ungrazed.[84] Though some islanders had enjoyed limited success raising sheep, orchard fruit and crops, boosters' visions of a prosperous agricultural landscape failed to achieve permanence.

The Lime Industry

On San Juan Island, as in the rest of the western United States, mineral extraction opportunities lured settlers and corporations. San Juan Island (along with Orcas Island, which had smaller deposits) held the only high calcium lime deposits on the West Coast, making the island the principle supplier for the entire western United States until the 1940s. Furthermore, the island's limestone deposits were easily accessible and close to water transportation routes. The deposits are found in rock outcrops that date from the Paleozoic Era, and these formations are the remains of an ancient mountain range that stretched from Vancouver Island to central Washington. Lime is used to make cement

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[81] Letter from Harvey Brown, Raymond Vessey, and David Brown, Appraisers of Abandoned Military Reservations, State of Washington, to the Commissioner, General Land Office, Washington, D.C., 9-20-24. Mrs. Jakle believed that she had an agreement with the war department that would allow her first right to claim the land near Cattle Point under the Homestead Act of 1862. She had briefly resided on the claim in the 19th century, which her first husband Frank Bryant had purchased from Paul Hubbs before the resolution of the boundary dispute. Frustrated investigators from the war department tried to make sense of conflicting stories from her son and other island residents regarding her tenure on the military reservation. They concluded that she had probably "kept up some manner of cultivation and had grazed the land continuously." Despite this, they decided that she had no right to the claim, since her second husband, George Jakle, had illegally filed two homestead claims. However, for unknown reasons, she was able to claim the land under the Homestead Act.

[82] Bureau of Land Management Online, General Land Office Records, Official Federal Land Patent Records Site, http://www.glorecords.blm.gov/.

[83] Richardson, *Magic Islands*, 97.

[84] "San Juan Island Land Use," Map, 1952, Historic Map Collection, Suzzallo Library, University of Washington.

and steel; one ton of lime is needed to make one ton of steel. It is also used agriculturally as a soil amendment.[85] Limestone extraction and processing was one of the largest industries on the island throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Boosters initially viewed the limestone as inexhaustible, but by the mid-twentieth century, the resource had become depleted.

Some settlers attempted to operate small scale lime processing operations, but like most mining operations, the expense of building and operating quarries and lime works favored large companies. Robert and Richard Scurr had processed lime near Roche Harbor beginning in 1881, but six years later, they sold their lime deposits to John McMillin in order to concentrate on their orchard and sheep raising operations. In 1888, McMillin's Tacoma and Roche Harbor Lime Company began extracting and processing lime on San Juan Island, and by 1900, the company had become the largest lime processing plant on the West Coast. Though some smaller companies also extracted and processed lime, McMillin's company dominated the industry not only in the archipelago, but in the western United States.

Contemporary observers marveled at both the limestone deposits and the lime processing operation at Roche Harbor. The Tacoma and Roche Harbor Lime Company owned 3,000 acres, on which they built the company town of Roche Harbor, complete with a hotel, a wharf, a large general store, a warehouse, a school and a church. The land also included two ranches on which the company raised cattle and hogs and grew hay, oats, and root vegetables for its workers. Early twentieth century descriptions of the company's limestone deposits, which were one-quarter mile thick and ran three-quarters of a mile from Roche Harbor to Westcott Bay, depicted the resource as "inexhaustible" and "the purest in the world." [86] The lime quarries were 250 feet high and one quarter mile wide. Observers described the thirteen kilns and the warehouses, which loomed above Roche Harbor, as "imposing." The warehouses held 20,000 barrels of lime, and one reporter noted, "It is a grand sight to see long rows of barrels piled high in these warerooms." [87] The company constructed nine inclined tracks (these were the island's only railroad) so that ore cars could use gravity to roll from the quarries to the processing plant. An engine was used to return the cars to the quarries.

The Tacoma and Roche Harbor Lime Company transported and sold their product around the world. The company's ship, which had a capacity of 550 tons, made monthly trips to deliver the lime to San Francisco. The company also transported the mineral on its five barges. In 1890, they produced 146,203 barrels of lime, and after 1901 that figure usually exceeded 200,000 barrels per year. San Franciscans used San Juan Island lime to

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[85] Lynette Evans and George Burley, *Roche Harbor: A Saga in the San Juans* (Everett, Wash.: B and E Enterprises, 1972), 35.
[86] "Islands of San Juan County," 17.
[87] "The San Juan Islands," 7.

rebuild after the 1906 earthquake. It was also shipped as far away as South American and Hawaii. The famous Bethlehem Steel Company of Pennsylvania was one of the company's biggest customers.[88]

Lime processing was the primary cause of the island's deforestation. San Juan's timber was generally too small for other types of commercial harvesting, but many private landowners cut and sold wood to the Roche Harbor Lime Company. The company also ran logging operations on its own land. One 1901 photo shows the previously timbered area above Roche Harbor, behind the warehouses and the kilns, completely devoid of forest. The thirteen wood fired kilns required three-and-a-half cords of wood each day, and the kilns ran seven days per week, twenty-four hours per day, and eleven months per year. Each kiln burned 1,050 cords of wood per year. The finished lime was shipped in wood barrels, and the associated barrel making further contributed to logging on the island. Employees at John McMillin's Staveless Barrel Company constructed 4,000 barrels per day from the island's fir and cedar.

Islanders depended on the lime industry in a number of ways. By 1908, the Tacoma and Roche Harbor Lime Company employed eighty-five men, while the Staveless Barrel Company occupied an additional fifty. Selling cut wood to the company to fuel the lime kilns supplemented the income of many islanders. Island farmers also sold products such as apples, potatoes or butter to company employees. The operation continued even through the Great Depression. From 1930 to 1940, the company extracted almost 240,000 tons of limestone from the island.[89]

There were smaller lime operations on the island as well. Harry Cowell, a rival of John McMillin, purchased and expanded Hibbard's claim on the west shore of the island, and his holdings stretched along the coastline from Smallpox Bay to Deadman Bay. Cowell also purchased and developed a number of smaller claims, both on San Juan Island and Orcas Island. The Harry Cowell Lime and Cement Company operated two processing plants in the county. One consisted of two kilns on the west shore of San Juan Island which produced about 230 barrels of lime per day in the early twentieth century. The other processing plant, which consisted of a single kiln, was located on Orcas Island. The company shipped lime to markets in Portland and around Puget Sound.[90] At least eight other individuals or companies dug limestone quarries at various points around the island. Jim Crook dug a thirty foot by nine foot quarry about one-half mile northwest of the English Camp blockhouse, and he operated a lime kiln on his property sometime in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. Due to the poor quality of Crook's

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[88] Ibid, 8; William R. Danner, *Limestone Resources of Western Washington* (Olympia, Wash: Washington State Printing Office, 1966), 88; Evans and Burley, *Roche Harbor*, 8.
[89] Orcas Island Historical Society Newsletter, Vol. 16, No. 3, (November 1997), 2; MacDonald, 92; Danner, *Limestone Resources of Western Washington*, 89. It is unknown how many tons were mined previous to 1919.
[90] "Islands of San Juan County," 19.

limestone, the venture never developed into a large operation. Another limestone outcrop, located on the west side of Mt. Young on Crook's property, was never quarried due to its small size.[91]

By the 1950s, the Roche Harbor Lime Company had difficulty finding enough high quality limestone to sustain their operations. In the 1930s, the company had optimistically predicted that enough limestone remained to supply the kilns for an additional fifty years, but they drastically overestimated the resource. Federal government contracts during World War II kept the Roche Harbor operation afloat during the 1940s, but by 1951, only six kilns operated. The company continued to employ forty workers until 1956, when Paul McMillin, son of founder John McMillin, sold the Roche Harbor property to investors who converted the complex into a resort. As farming declined in the 1950s some islanders attempted to restart the lime industry by commissioning geological studies, but these reports proved that the remaining lime deposits were too small to be commercially viable.[92]

After the industry collapsed, evidence of limestone extraction remained in the form of abandoned quarries and second growth forest. Islanders and company employees had cut most of the island's old growth forests to fuel the wood fired lime kilns and to make barrels. Investigators from the National Park Service in the 1937 observed that these mining activities had left "scars that are visible across distances of miles." The Roche Harbor Lime Company abandoned fifteen quarries when it ceased operations in 1956. Two of the quarries were converted into water reservoirs. An unknown number of individual quarries were scattered around the island from smaller operations.[93] The lime industry had provided jobs from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries, but islanders exhausted the finite resource.

Logging

The island's timber industry paled compared to that of mainland Washington State, but the timber resources of the island were utilized to fuel lime kilns, to power wood fired steamers, to build structures and fish trap pilings and to heat homes. Local timber companies exported a small amount lumber from the island. Boosters, again promoting a myth of abundance, promised that the island contained an "inexhaustible supply of timber," but by 1910, almost all of San Juan Island's old growth forest had been cut.[94]

Logging operations on San Juan Island in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries utilized techniques that ensured maximum harvests and severe environmental damage. Island loggers used the steam donkey, a small steam engine invented in 1882,

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[91] Danner, 92.
[92] Davidson et al., 10; Danner, 88.
[93] Davidson et al., 7; Danner., 85.
[94] "The San Juan Islands," 8.

which powered winches and chokes that pulled cut fir and cedar from the island's forests and onto either a gathering spot or the shoreline. The device allowed loggers to extract more timber than they had using horses or oxen. As a stream donkey dragged logs through the forest, it created marks that scarred the landscape and made it more difficult for most new trees to germinate. Evidence suggests that loggers sometimes utilized spar trees along with steam donkeys. Using this technique, loggers used pulleys to move the timber through the air by running the winch on top of a tree, thus limiting some of the environmental damage caused by dragging the logs.[95] By 1893, San Juan County's three sawmills processed four million board feet of lumber per year. At least one logging company, the Western Mills and Lumber Company, operated on the island; founded in 1902, the company employed eighteen men by 1908.[96]

Deforestation occurred at both former military camp sites. Jim Crook, owner of the majority of the former English Camp site, built a small sawmill on his property. Crook logged some of the timber on his property to make barrels for both the lime industry and the Great Northern Fishing Company. Between 1905 and 1920, almost all of the remaining old growth forest at English Camp was logged, and the area was then burned to clear the stumps. As logging and agricultural operations ceased in the late 1950s, Douglas firs, along with some grand firs and lodgepole pine, recolonized the meadows of English Camp.[97]

Most of the American Camp area was logged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The forests on the northern side of Mount Finlayson were cut during the 1880s, probably by settlers clearing land for agriculture, although there are still some trees in that area that date to the early eighteenth century. The majority of the remaining old growth forest, most of which lay to the northeast and northwest of the redoubt, was cleared between 1895 and 1910. These forests regenerated, and most of the area's trees date from the late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries.[98] Some commercial grade fir, spruce and hemlock grew on the north side of Mt. Finlayson by the mid twentieth century, and in the 1950s, some high grade logging removed the biggest trees in this area.[99] Despite the removal of the largest specimens, Douglas fir remained the dominant tree on the island.[100]

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[95] Logging file, Photo Collection, San Juan County Historical Museum Archives; Richard White, *Land Use, Environment and Social Change: The Shaping of Island County, Washington* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980), 96.
[96] Nellie V. Miller, *Resources of the State of Washington* (Seattle, 1933), 50; "The San Juan Islands," 8.
[97] Durhack, "Birthday Greetings to Jim Crook;" Agee, *Historic Landscapes*, 11.
[98] Agee., 26-27.
[99] Field Notes of the Dependent Resurvey of the Section Boundaries and Partial Subdivision of Fractional Section Eight, Township 34 North, Range 2 West, 9 August 1955, Bureau of Land Management Archives, Oregon State Office; Agee, 27.
[100] Tom Shroeder, "Historic Forest Conditions," *Forest Info for the San Juan Islands*, online resource accessed on 20 June 2005 at http://www.rockisland.com/~tom/presettle.html.

Fishing

Salmon sustained the Northern Straits Indians and attracted the Hudson's Bay Company to San Juan Island, and with the invention of canning in the late nineteenth century, the fishing industry provided economic opportunities for islanders. Salmon from the Fraser River migrate past San Juan Island, but the island's waters were lightly fished by Americans until the 1890s, when the first canneries opened in the waters north of Puget Sound.[101] The process of canning had been invented in 1864, and high market demand for canned salmon spurred the expansion of the industry throughout the Puget Sound region in the late nineteenth century. Though some other species of fish, such as halibut, were commercially fished off of San Juan Island, salmon was the primary catch of San Juan Island's fishing industry. Boosters promised that salmon fishing in the archipelago offered tremendous financial opportunities, and by 1900 the industry became the most important in the archipelago. However, by 1920 the fishing industry on the island declined due to market forces, overfishing, and environmental degradation.

Fishing quickly became the largest industry in the islands after canneries opened in Anacortes, Blaine and Friday Harbor in the early 1890s. Boosters promised, "The fishing industry has reached immense proportions and gives employment to hundreds of men during the summer months." The canning industry expanded rapidly, and by 1900, there were fifteen canneries in the waters north of Puget Sound.[102] In 1894, the Island Packing Company established a salmon cannery in Friday Harbor, and five years later, Pacific-American Fisheries purchased the cannery and renamed the operation the Friday Harbor Packing Company. In its first year, the cannery produced 25,000 cases of salmon, and by 1908, the business exported more than 50,000 cases per year.[103] At least one other cannery operated on the island in the early twentieth century as well. Canning companies exported much of the fish to the East Coast, Great Britain and Europe.[104] Around the turn of the century, over a thousand men worked in the fishing industry in San Juan County.[105]

Fish traps, called "a superior technology" by island boosters, enabled companies to harvest enormous quantities of salmon.[106] Culture and technology had limited Northern Straits salmon fishing; the reef net technique procured modest catches compared to fish

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[101] John F. Roos, *Restoring Fraser River Salmon* (Vancouver: Pacific Salmon Commission, 1991), 54.
[102] Committee on Protection and Management of the Pacific Northwest Anadromous Salmonoids. *Upstream: Salmon and Society in the Pacific Northwest* (Washington D.C: National Academy Press, 1996), 82; San Juan County Board of Commissioners, "San Juan County," n.d., MUASC, UW; Roos, *Restoring Fraser River Salmon*, 56.
[103] Jacilee Wray, The *Salmon Bank: An Ethnohistoric Compilation*, 5; "The San Juan Islands," 6.
[104] This cannery was owned by E.G. Ziegler, but there is no other information available about the operation. Joseph E. Taylor III, *Making Salmon: An Environmental History of the Northwest Fisheries Crisis* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 64.
[105] "The San Juan Islands," 5.
[106] Ibid, 5.

traps. The Hudson's Bay Company engaged in trade on a global scale, but they were constrained by their limited ability to process and trade salted fish before the advent of mechanized canning and the expansion of railroad transportation networks. With the invention of canning and fish traps, however, corporations became involved in large scale, profit driven salmon fishing operations in which large quantities of fish were caught, processed, and whisked and shipped to points around the globe.

Certain types of fish traps were first used in the Pacific Northwest in the 1850s, but it was not until 1879 that northwestern fishermen began using the eastern style poundnet, commonly known as a fish trap. These traps worked by funneling migrating salmon through a stationary structure, consisting of nets strung along pilings, into an enclosure called a spiller pot. The trapped salmon were then lifted aboard a scow and shipped to the cannery. By 1897, nine fish traps operated off of what is presently the American Camp section of the historical park. Around the turn of the century, additional traps were constructed off the west side of San Juan Island at Kanaka Bay, Deadman's Bay and Eagle Cove. In 1900, forty fish traps operated in the county, and these traps alone employed about 300 men. These devices were owned by corporations such as the Pacific-American Fisheries and Alaska Packers, since the expense of building traps made it difficult for individuals to construct and own the devices. While the Hudson's Bay Company had exported about 120,000 salmon in its best year on San Juan Island in the 1850s, a single trap operated by Shultz and Gross near Roche Harbor caught over 400,000 salmon in one season. In some cases, more fish were caught than could be processed. These fish were simply thrown away.[107]

The shores along southern and western San Juan Island became a hub of activity due to their proximity to the Salmon Banks, the submerged ridge that runs for about two miles to the south of Cattle Point. Due to the shallow depth of the banks, fishing companies were able to drive pilings into the shoal for fish traps. From the turn of the century and into the early 1930s, Pacific-American Fisheries operated a camp at South Beach near their fish traps consisting of bunkhouses and at least one cookhouse. The water from the nearby springs, which the company leased from Eliza Jakle, proved insufficient for the company's camp in the early twentieth century, and they were forced to bring water by scow to the locale.[108]

Commercial fishermen from all over the Puget Sound region came to fish at the Salmon Banks using gill nets, purseines and reef nets. Some rowed from as far away as Hood Canal and Gig Harbor in small skiffs. With the advent of gasoline powered motorboats in the early twentieth century and diesel powered boats in 1914, even greater

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[107] Taylor, *Making Salmon*, 144; United States Coast and Geodetic Survey, "Washington Sound, Part of San Juan Island, Pear Point to Eagle Point, 1897;" Wray, *The Salmon Bank*, Appendix A, Trap Inventory at Salmon Banks; "The San Juan Islands," 5.
[108] Wray, 5-6.

numbers of men ventured to the island to fish. Fishermen established three large camps, two on western San Juan Island and one on southern Lopez Island, in the vicinity of the Salmon Banks.[109] Fishermen moored boats in small coves and camped on the island's western and southern shores in order to station themselves near the salmon runs.[110]

The fishing industry was economically important to islanders from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries. Many islanders worked for wages for the fishing and canning companies. Individual fisherman utilized gill nets, purseines and reef nets to catch fish for sale to canneries in Friday Harbor and on the mainland. Fish caught in the spring were sold fresh to markets in the Puget Sound area; the summer sockeye run was preferred by canners due to its bright red flesh. Islanders depended on the fishing industry in other ways as well. Farmers sold butter, milk and vegetables to the fishing camps. Men and women worked in the cookhouses of the fishing companies cooking, waiting tables and washing dishes. Washington State law required that companies remove fish traps for part of each year, since they could be an obstacle to navigation. This meant that new traps had to be constructed annually. Companies employed island laborers to cut trees for trap pilings, and they hired islanders to build and dismantle the traps.[111]

Though the rhetoric of the time suggested otherwise, there were signs that the region's salmon fisheries were exhaustible as early as the 1880s. There were a few attempts in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to enact salmon harvest regulations, but they failed due to pressure from the fishing industry, which sought to maximize short term profits at the expense of long term sustainability. In 1908, a joint American-Canadian commission was established to study the condition of the Fraser River salmon runs. The commission recommended the regulation of salmon traps and commercial fishermen, but opposition from American canneries led Washington state congressmen to defeat the proposal.[112] Competing factions of the fishing industry sought to limit the harvest levels of their rivals; purse seiners in particular fought the trap industry. In 1924 and 1928, initiatives were proposed that would have either restricted or abolished certain types of commercial or trap fishing in Washington State. Both initiatives failed.

Market forces, overfishing, and environmental degradation caused the decline of the salmon fishing industry in the San Juan Islands as in the rest of the Pacific Northwest. The industry in the islands thrived until 1913, a record year for the Fraser River run, but subsequent years never matched this harvest level. While island boosters had seen fish

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[109] Daniel J. Chasen, *The Water Link: The History of Puget Sound as a Resource*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981), 45-47. Two of the camps were associated with particular ethnic groups. While the Scandinavians set up camp on southern Lopez Island, the Slavs and a group unassociated with any particular ethnic group established camps on San Juan Island

[110] Wray, Photo of McGeary Bight in "The Salmon Banks;" Letter from F.F. Randolph to Robert Shaw Oliver, Assistant Secretary of War, 19 February 1911, Abandoned Military Reservation File, Washington, San Juan Island, RG 49.

[111] Bill Jakle Interview, 22.

[112] Chasen, 47.

traps as an efficient, economical technology, the traps' success helped speed the decline of the salmon populations. Moreover, a large landslide on the Fraser River in 1913, caused by railroad construction, blocked the salmon migration on the river. Due to the blockage, the catch from this run declined by half in 1917 and one-sixth in 1921 (based on the catch in 1913). Siltation and pollution from gold mining, logging, and agriculture on the Fraser River also led to a decline in salmon numbers near San Juan Island. One of the island's two canneries closed sometime in the late 1910s or early 1920s. After World War I, a surplus of Alaskan salmon led to a depression in the industry, making the endeavor less profitable for islanders. Partly in response to urging from commercial and sport fisherman who resented the large catches enabled by fish traps, Washington State voters banned the devices in 1934. The industry, however, never returned to its nineteenth century harvest levels.[113]

Islanders continued to fish commercially using purse seines, gill nets and reef nets, the method of fishing used by the Northern Straits since before European contact. Many islanders dried and smoked salmon and herring for sale, and they also continued to fish for personal consumption.[114] The number of islanders employed by the fishing industry dropped, and though the Friday Harbor Packing Company continued to operate until 1959, it was no longer a major employer.

* * *

As natural resource based industries in the islands declined, so did San Juan County's population. The county had fewer residents in 1960 than it had in 1910.[115] However, transportation improvements meant that the San Juan Islands became more integrated into the region as a whole. These transportation improvements meant that Friday Harbor became the principal market, not only for San Juan Island residents, but for nearby smaller islands as well. During the 1920s, car ferries and special Saturday ferries for shoppers (between Lopez Island and Friday Harbor) were introduced. Goods and services became concentrated in Friday Harbor, rather than remaining scattered in island villages, making the town the commercial center of the San Juan Islands. In 1928, Friday Harbor had the only bank, creamery, weekly newspaper, car dealership, movie theater and drugstore in the archipelago.[116] These changes made travel from and around the islands convenient for island residents, and they also enabled large scale tourism to the

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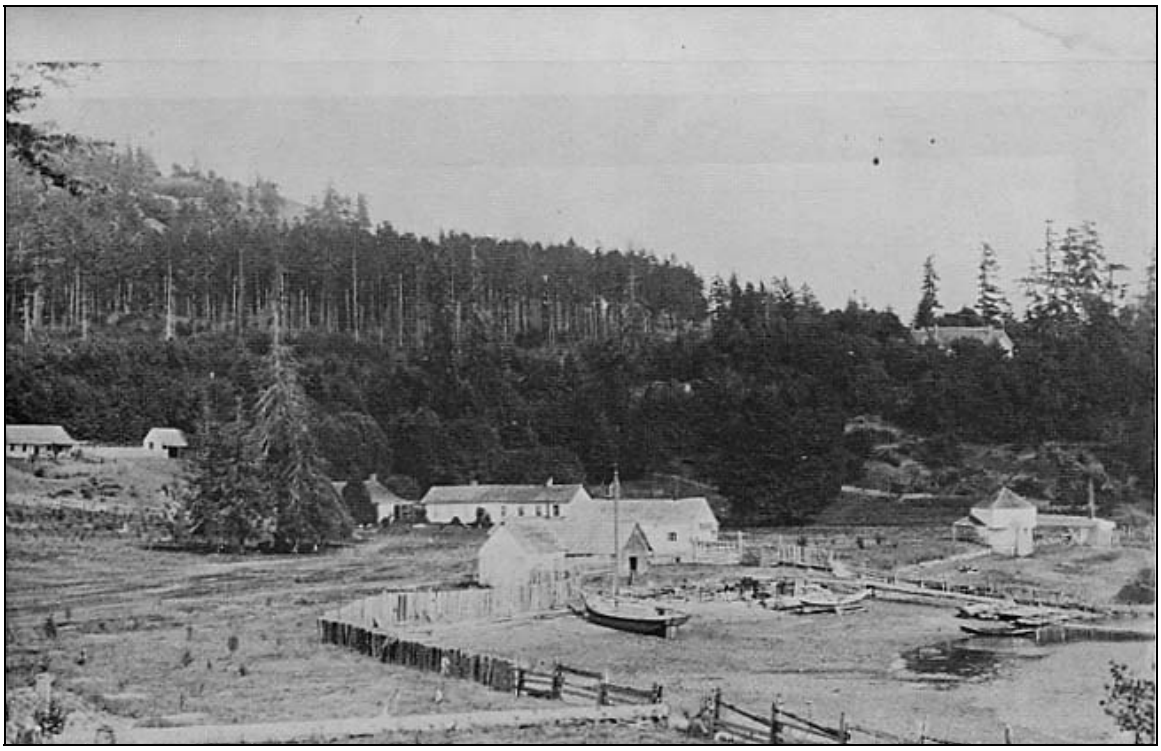
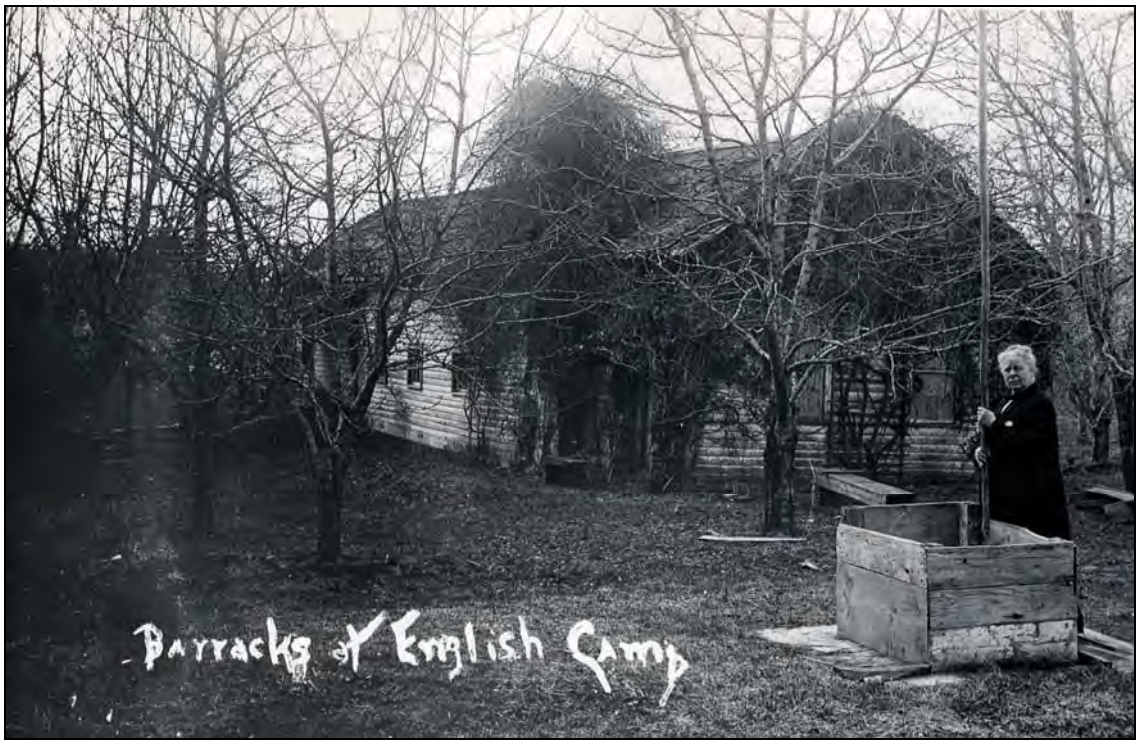
[113] Chasen, 45; Haynor, 84-85; Committee on Protection and Management of the Pacific Northwest Anadromous Salmonoids, 82.
[114] "The San Juan islands," 5; Bill Chevalier and Fran Chevalier, interview by Jacilee Wray in "The Salmon Bank: An Ethnohistorical Compilation,"41.
[115] In 1960, San Juan County had 2872 residents; in 1910, 3603. There are no statistics available for San Juan Island.
[116] Haynor, 88-92.

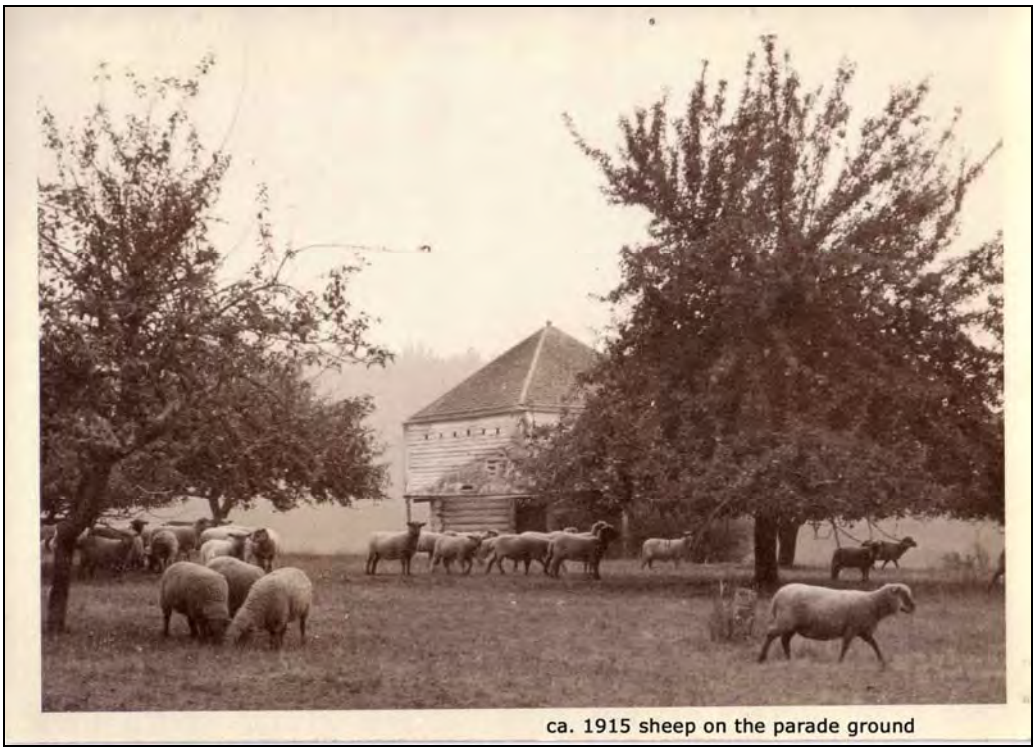
islands. Boosters' visions of an island of small, profitable farms and industries had failed to materialize, and many islanders began to see tourism as their island's future.



The James Crook Farm at the former site of English Camp, ca. 1890. The level, grassy parade ground, sheltered harbor, spring and remaining buildings undoubtedly attracted Crook to the site after the General Land Office offered the parcel for sale in 1874. Note the house of Captain Delacombe in the upper right. The structure burned down in 1895. Courtesy of the National Park Service. .



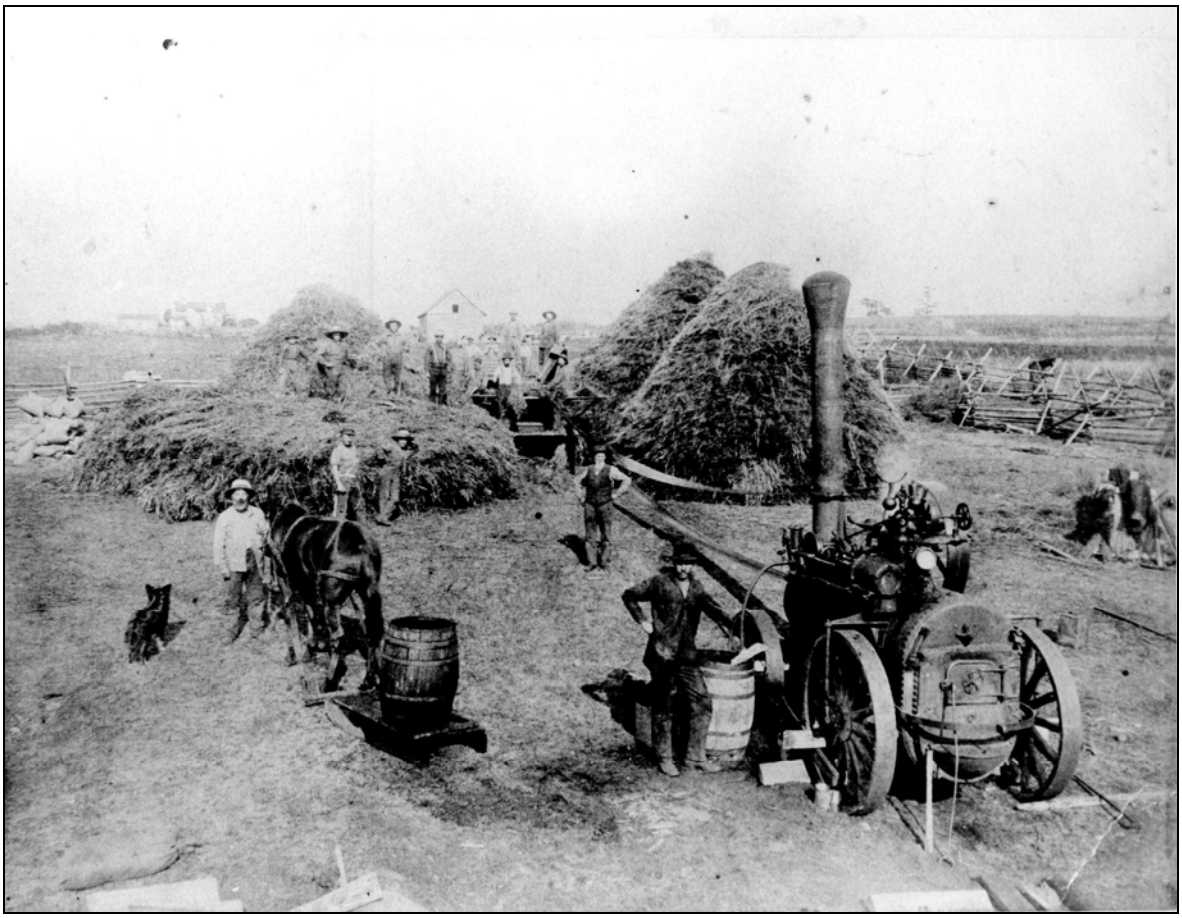
Mary Crook at the farm cistern. The British used the building in the background as barracks during the military occupation of the island. Courtesy of the National Park Service.



Sheep graze under the orchard trees at the Crook Farm, on the former parade ground of English Camp. Settlers came to the island beginning in the mid-nineteenth century to raise marketable commodities such as sheep and orchard fruit, and the old military encampments proved to be perfect for these endeavors. Courtesy of the National Park Service.

Farms occupied the former American Camp site at the turn of the twentieth century. The vast expanse of prairie attracted farmers, who often believed the island provided extraordinary agricultural opportunities, to the former camp site. This photo was taken from the Redoubt, ca. 1900. Courtesy of the National Park Service.

A farm on the American Camp site, where the former officer's quarters served as a farmhouse. Settlers, surveyors and speculators began coveting the camp's prairie while the military still occupied the site, and farmers quickly settled the area after the General Land Office sold parcels of the camp in 1874. Courtesy of the National Park Service.



Robert Firth's farm on the former site of American Camp. Nineteenth century settlers did not inherit a pristine landscape, but as they imported greater numbers of livestock and cleared more land for crops, they had a far greater impact on the island's natural environment than groups that preceded them.
Courtesy of the National Park Service.

Workers at the Tacoma and Roche Harbor Lime Company load bags of lime for export during the early twentieth century. Limestone extraction and processing was one of the largest industries on the island during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the Tacoma and Roche Harbor Lime Company was the largest lime processing operation on the West Coast. Due to the high quality of its lime deposits, San Juan Island was the principal supplier of lime for the entire western United States. The company's ship made monthly trips to San Francisco, and was even exported to South America and Hawaii. Courtesy of the Puget Sound Maritime Historical Society.

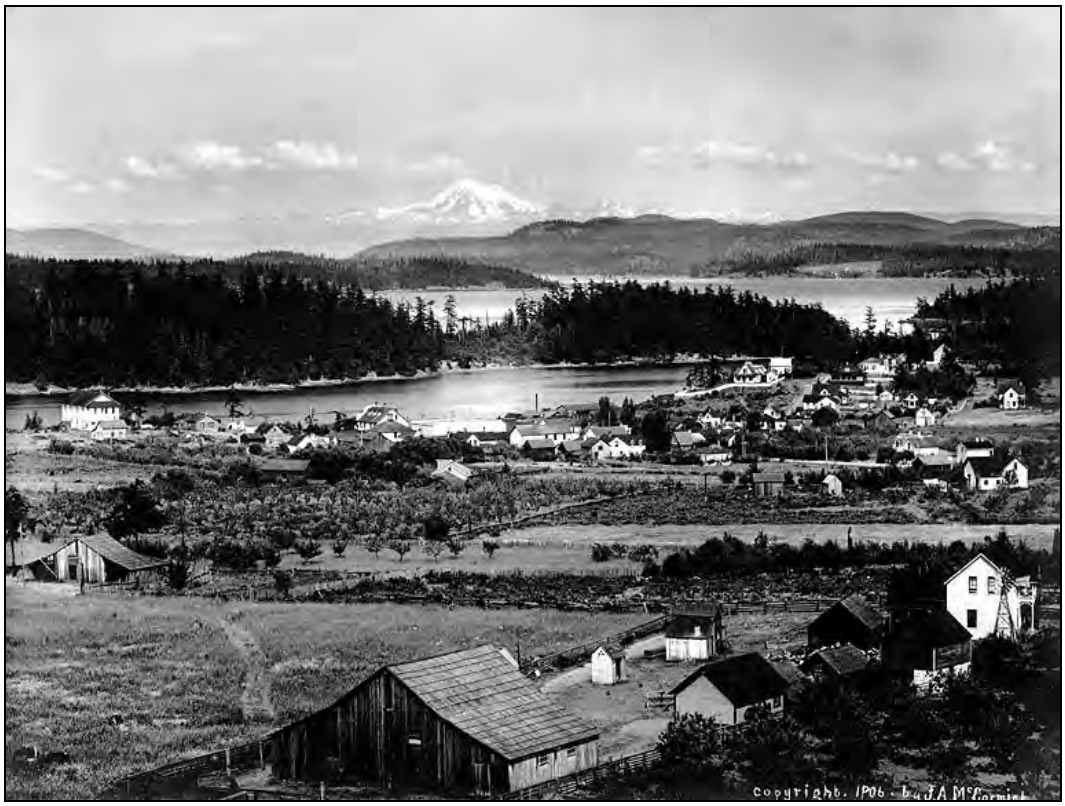
Another view of the lime works at Roche Harbor in the early twentieth century. Lime extraction and processing drastically altered the island's natural environment. The company dug fifteen quarries, and islander dug an unknown number of other quarries as they began smaller lime processing operations. Each lime kiln burned about 1,050 cords of wood per year, and lime processing was the primary cause of the island's deforestation. The company ran logging operations on its own land, and many private landowners cut and sold wood to the company. Courtesy of the Puget Sound Maritime Historical Society.

Roche Harbor ca. 1930. The Tacoma and Roche Harbor Lime Company owned 3,000 acres, on which they built the company town of Roche Harbor, complete with a hotel, a wharf, a large general store, a warehouse, a school and a church. The land also included two ranches on which the company raised cattle and hogs and grew hay, oats, and root vegetables for its workers. The company prospered even during the depression, but by the 1950s, the seemingly "inexhaustible" lime resources had been depleted, and the plant shut down in 1956. University of Washington, Special Collections, WASO878.

The Friday Harbor Packing Company's salmon cannery in 1915. Salmon from the Fraser River migrate past San Juan Island, and these fish sustained the Northern Straits Indians and attracted the Hudson's Bay Company to the island. However, the island's waters were lightly fished by Americans until the 1890s, when the first canneries opened in the waters north of Puget Sound. This cannery, established in 1894, produced more than 50,000 cases of salmon per year in the early twentieth century. University of Washington, Special Collections, COB250.

Purse seiners pose on an island beach in 1907. The shores along southern and western San Juan Island became a hub of activity due to their proximity to the Salmon Banks, the submerged ridge that runs for about two miles to the south of Cattle Point. Due to the shallow depth of the banks, fishing companies were able to drive pilings into the shoal for fish traps. From the turn of the century and into the early 1930s, Pacific-American Fisheries operated a camp at South Beach consisting of bunkhouses and at least one cookhouse near their fish traps. Courtesy of the Freshwater and Marine Images Bank, University of Washington, Special Collections.

Commercial fishermen in the San Juan Islands in 1916. By 1900, the fishing industry was the most important in the islands. More than 300 purse seiners and hundreds of gill netters jockeyed for position in the archipelago during the Sockeye and Humpback salmon seasons. Due to overfishing and habitat degradation , however, the salmon runs declined precipitously in the mid-1910s. Courtesy of the Freshwater and Marine Images Bank, University of Washington, Special Collections.



The outskirts of Friday Harbor in 1906. Boosters used pictures such as this one to promote San Juan Island as “the most delightful, charming, and productive (island) on earth.” In a number of illustrated publications, boosters encouraged Americans to settle the island and take advantage of the possibilities for orcharding, livestock and poultry raising, dairying and fishing. Many did, and they transformed the island into an agricultural landscape. WASO394, University of Washington, Special Collections.

The town of Friday Harbor in 1908. The town (and county seat) became the island’s commercial center in the late nineteenth century, due to its sheltered, deep water harbor and its freshwater springs. About 400 people lived in Friday Harbor at this time, and most of the island’s agricultural products were shipped from the harbor. University of Washington, Special Collections, WASO395.

Chapter Six

A New Land Ethic: Preservation and Tourism in the San Juan Islands

Islanders had relied on natural resource based industries since the mid-nineteenth century, but by 1920, market forces and resource depletion caused the decline of the island's agricultural, fishing and lime industries. At the same time, better transportation connections between the islands and the mainland and increased promotional efforts by island boosters helped make the San Juan Islands a desirable destination for tourists. Rather than viewing nature only for its extractable commodities, islanders began to see the value in scenic preservation and the island's recreational opportunities. As residents and visitors embraced this new vision of the island's natural landscape, the archipelago was reinvented as an unspoiled venue for relaxation and recreation.

* * *

The San Juan Islands had few facilities to accommodate tourists in the nineteenth century, but a small number of vacationers did venture to the archipelago during this time. James Douglas' daughter and niece both reportedly spent their honeymoon on San Juan Island in the 1850s, though there is no additional information about their visit to the undeveloped island.[1] Camping was a popular activity throughout the Puget Sound region in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and some of the first tourists to the area were families who camped on the islands' shores. In 1885, Washington Territorial Governor Watson Squire noted that "The scenery [of San Juan County] is beautiful and the various islands are attaining prominence as summer resorts." A tourist hotel was established in Friday Harbor in 1891.[2]

In the early twentieth century, small resorts began to appear on Orcas Island, the first of the San Juans to develop tourist facilities. Orcas' rugged, hilly topography made farming difficult, but it provided scenic landscapes that drew visitors. East Sound House, which advertised itself as a scenic destination for city dwellers seeking relaxation or recreation, became the first resort in the archipelago when it opened on the site of a former Orcas Island orchard in 1891. In 1901, a second Orcas resort opened on West Sound. Prominent Seattle families and developers began to build summer homes in the archipelago, and the area near Eastsound became especially popular.[3]

While natural resource based industries still dominated the archipelago's economy, few people were interested in land preservation in the San Juan Islands. Robert Moran, a

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[1] Richard Mayne, *Four Years in British Columbia and Vancouver Island* (London: John Murray, 1862), 40.
[2] Norman S. Haynor, "Ecological Succession in the San Juan Islands," Publication of the American Sociological Society, Vol. XXIII, 1929, 90, San Juan Island National Historical Park Archives.

[3] "The San Juan Islands," Illustrated Supplement to the *San Juan Islander* (Friday Harbor, Wash), 1901, 24; Haynor, "Ecological Succession in the San Juan Islands," 91.

former Seattle mayor, tried unsuccessfully to donate his Orcas Island estate to Washington State in the early twentieth century. Moran emphasized the scientific value of his land, since there was little interest in the scenic or recreational value of the property. He proposed that scientists and students utilize the estate to study forestry, zoology, botany and geology. He suggested that the summit of Mt. Constitution, the park's highest point, would make a fine site for a University of Washington astronomical observatory. However, Washington State did not have any agency to administer park lands, and state legislators considered the archipelago too remote to be an attractive tourist destination.[4]

In the mid-1910s, a number of factors converged to spur the state to create park land in scenic areas in places such as the San Juan Islands. National interest in scenic preservation arose as the automobile made previously remote natural areas more accessible to tourists. Stephen Mather, the first head of the newly formed National Park Service, traveled the nation urging the creation of national and state parks to protect scenic areas. In Washington, the city of Seattle began a "City Beautiful" campaign to attract visitors and residents. Many residents in the urbanizing Puget Sound region saw a need for parks that offered recreational opportunities such as hiking, swimming, and camping. In 1913, the legislature created the Washington State Board of Park Commissioners, but it failed to provide the commissioners with funding or guidelines. In 1921 the board became the Washington State Parks Committee, and though the legislature still did not allocate money for the agency, they did establish guidelines and directives and allowed the parks to operate concessions. The state finally accepted Moran's 2,600 acre donation in 1920, ten years after he initially proposed the idea to state legislators.[5]

Many islanders resisted the transition from a rural to a tourist economy, but some saw economic opportunity in the change. By 1908, developers were building summer homes on former orchards. One early twentieth century promotional paper reminded potential visitors that the island was "first and foremost the home of the stockraiser, the dairyman and the fruit grower," but islanders were beginning to see the economic value of attracting tourists. Sociologist Norman Haynor reported, "Farmers who own beaches on Orcas Island dream about the resorts they are going to establish, and storekeepers talk about a golf course and an automobile road up Mt. Constitution." Other island farmers and merchants eagerly viewed tourists as consumers for local products. As fitting an agricultural community, promoters boasted that the island's fresh foods, such as meat, cream, eggs and vegetables, "will build up (the tourist's) constitution that he may return

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[4] Thomas Cox, *The Park Builders: A History of State Parks in the Pacific Northwest* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988), 23.

[5] Cox, *The Park Builders*, 25. By the second half of the twentieth century, Moran State park had become one of the most popular parks in the Washington State park system.

to work with renewed strength." These islanders hoped that tourists would invigorate the archipelago's economy. However, just as the islands' remote location posed difficulties for local farmers attempting to sell their products in urban markets, their isolation presented problems for vacationers who sought a convenient getaway from their urban homes.[6]

The inauguration of car ferry service to the islands in 1923 enabled tourists to travel to the islands relatively quickly and conveniently, and as a result, the archipelago's tourist industry grew dramatically. The San Juan County Commercial Club even boasted that "the archipelago is on a main automobile highway" after ferry service began between Anacortes and Friday Harbor.[7] The expanded use of gasoline and diesel powered motorboats also contributed to increased visitation to the islands. Travel articles in Northwest newspapers and magazines showed Seattle and Everett residents that the islands were a desirable, convenient vacation destination. By the late 1920s, better transportation connections between the islands and the mainland had generated "a flood of visitors during the summer months—tourists, boy and girl campers, biological students, excursionists, yachtsmen, relatives of native islanders."[8] By the late 1940s, visitors could arrive by plane, ferry or private boat; two Black Ball ferries per day (three on Sundays and holidays) ran from Anacortes to the islands.

An Island Reinvented

Island boosters retooled their rhetoric as they attempted to lure a new type of resident and visitor to the islands. While early promotional materials had proudly showcased the island's natural resource-based industries, a new kind of publicity campaign developed in the first half of the twentieth century. Instead of lime kilns and reef nets, pamphlets publicizing the San Juan Islands displayed pictures of isolated beaches and tranquil coves. Newspaper photographs showed sport fishermen as they reeled in huge salmon, while hikers stood triumphantly atop Mt. Constitution on Orcas Island in tourist brochures. Travel articles that featured the islands appeared in national and regional magazines and newspapers with increasing frequency throughout the mid-twentieth century, and the islands became a popular vacation destination.

Generations of islanders had mined limestone, plowed prairies, grazed livestock and cut trees, but by the mid-twentieth century, boosters promoted the archipelago as a pristine retreat in a spectacular natural setting. Boosters promised visitors that the islands' scenic beauty, peacefulness and remote location would relieve stress for the urban dweller. One pamphlet read, "Here are mountains to climb and valleys to ramble through.

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[6] Haynor, 7-13 and 92.
[7] San Juan County Commercial Club, "San Juan Island in Puget Sound," ca. 1920s, San Juan County Pamphlet File, Manuscripts, University Archives and Special Collections, University of Washington.

Here are long expanses of water upon which the wearied worker may sail, row or be propelled. Here are numerous bays whose gentle slope and firm sands smilingly call for the patter of bathers' feet."[9] While early booster publications designed to attract residents had emphasized the island's development while downplaying the remote location, some tourist brochures highlighted the archipelago's remote location and the undeveloped natural environment in order to emphasize the quiet and relaxing setting. One typical booster publication called the islands "An enchanted paradise for the nature loving pleasure seeker." Promoters promised that the tourist's body *and* mind would be rested after a vacation in the islands.[10] One entrepreneur lured solitude seeking home buyers by promising that the development was "your island dream come true…a perfect setting where isolation, a mild climactic environment and scenic beauty contribute to repose and freedom from the strain of contemporary life."[11] Travel writers agreed, and they often described the islands as "a paradise" or "a hideaway."[12] One typical description read, "For pure eye-catching, breathtaking beauty, it is hard to imagine anything, anywhere, to compete with a meandering excursion among these quiet islands."[13]

While these descriptions enticed tourists who sought a peaceful vacation in a beautiful natural environment, magazines, other literature promoted the islands as a place for sports and recreation. Writers described the archipelago as "the nation's summer playground" and they promised that "sports and fun galore" awaited the island visitor. [14] They portrayed the islands as perfect for swimming, horseback riding, sport fishing, hiking, sailing, golf, canoeing and hunting. Promoters boasted that the islands were "dotted with beaches and coves for the delight of yachtsmen, sportsmen and pleasure seekers."[15] Whether a tourist desired an active or relaxing vacation, promoters assured potential visitors that the archipelago was a perfect destination.

Just as boosters had promised farmers that the archipelago's mild climate ensured successful harvests, tourist brochures promised visitors happy vacations under sunny skies, with mild temperatures and healthy surroundings. One brochure promised that the islands have "the finest climate in America, as well as long hours of daylight in the summer." The pamphlet continued, "Thunderstorms are virtually unknown and winds of hurricane violence are nonexistent. There are no extremes of hot and cold." Early promoters had pledged to farmers that abundant rainfall would water their crops, but

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[8] Haynor, 91. In the 1920s, about 5,000 tourists visited the islands each summer.
[9] "San Juan Island in Puget Sound."
[10] San Juan Island Chamber of Commerce, "Visit San Juan Island: Resort Guide," 1957, Manuscripts, University Archives and Special Collections (MUASC), University of Washington (UW), Seattle, Wa.
[11] "Welcome to Rosario," n.d., San Juan County Pamphlet File, MUASC, UW.
[12] Margaret Bean, "Dream Islands of Puget Sound," *Travel*, August 1933, 20.
[13] David Richardson, "San Juan Water Trip Filled with Beauty," *Tacoma Sunday Ledger/News Tribune*, 256 August 1961.
[14] "San Juan Island in Puget Sound."
[15] "Visit San Juan Island: Resort Guide."

tourists were assured, "Summer rainfall is extremely light." Visitors were promised that the rural islands contained no "mosquitoes…nor any poisonous snakes."[16] Islanders knew that while tourists wanted to enjoy the islands' natural environment, they did not want to be inconvenienced by bad weather or insects.

Many islanders considered rabbits a pest, but hunters from around the Puget Sound area flocked to San Juan Island for rabbit hunting. Since Washington State did not consider rabbits a game animal, hunters could pursue rabbits without a obtaining a license or obeying limits. Night hunting became a popular sport on the island for locals and tourists. Hunters drove cars equipped with spotlights and running board seats through island fields, while a passenger used long handled nets to scoop up rabbits. It was not uncommon for a pair of hunters to catch 100 rabbits in one night.[17]

As transportation improvements and promotion brought tourists to the islands in growing numbers, tourism became increasingly important to the area's economy. The commercial fishing industry in the archipelago had declined, but some islanders began to earn their living guiding sport fishing excursions and operating fishing supply stores and fishing resorts. New hotels and restaurants sprang up to serve the tourist trade. Other islanders earned a living constructing vacation homes and supplying summer home residents and tourists.

Scenery and Science

The waters around the archipelago had been famous for their commercial salmon fisheries, but by the 1920s, these waters also became valuable for scientific research. The University of Washington established a marine laboratory on San Juan Island in 1904, and the first classes were conducted in a defunct fish cannery in Friday Harbor. In 1921, the university received 484 acres of the unused military reservation at Point Caution, just northeast of the town of Friday Harbor.[18] Two years later, the Washington State legislature, at the urging of the University laboratories, created the San Juan Marine Biological Preserve, which encompassed the waters of the entire archipelago. The purpose of the preserve was to "preserve marine biological materials useful for scientific purposes, excepting materials gathered for food and kelp." Persons who collected non-edible marine organisms could be charged with a misdemeanor.[19] The creation of the preserve did nothing to regulate the harvesting of fish or shellfish in the area, but it

[16] "Welcome to Rosario."
[17] Francis E. Shafer, "Tourist Flow to the San Juan Islands," (M.A. Thesis, University of Washington, 1953), 23.
[18] Lucille McDonald, *Making History: The People Who Shaped the San Juan Islands* (Friday Harbor, Wash: Friday Harbor Press, 1990), 110.
[19] Michael R. Murray, "The Status of Marine Protected Areas in Puget Sound," Vol. II, MPA Site Profiles and Appendices, http://www.psat.wa.gov/shared/volume2/research.pdf, online resource accessed on June 20, 2005.

demonstrated an increasing awareness that the islands' waters were valuable for more than just their extractable, marketable commodities.

Further evidence of this growing interest in the islands' scenery and scientific value came in the 1930s.[20] During the New Deal, the federal government placed increased emphasis upon developing recreational opportunities for Americans. National park visitation dropped during the Great Depression, but as historian Larry Dilsaver explained, the New Deal "spawned the greatest booms in construction of visitor facilities, road and trail development, park planning, identification of new areas, and new initiatives for expansion of the system to ever occur."[21] The National Park Service twice considered preserving the entire archipelago during this decade.

Emerson Knight, a National Park Service landscape architect, was captivated by the islands' scenery during his visit in 1935. The National Park Service sent Knight to evaluate the chain for federal protection, and he recommended that the islands be preserved as a national recreation area due to their "intrinsic natural, educational, inspirational and scientific values." He suggested that the federal government buy out private property owners while allowing life tenure for island residents. Knight predicted that farmers would willingly sell their property due to the decline of agriculture in the islands, but he anticipated difficulty purchasing homes and land from summer home owners who valued the scenic locations of their vacation residences. Knight summarized, "The dream of creating the San Juan Islands, priceless in their natural endowments and excellence, into some form of National Recreation Reserve, is a vivid one recommended for fulfillment."[22] His report was published in 1937, but no actions were taken based on his recommendations.

Other National Park Service investigators were not as charmed. The Park, Parkway and Recreational Study Act of 1936 authorized the National Park Service to study potential new park, recreation and seashore sites, and the agency again evaluated the archipelago for inclusion in the park system. Seeking exceptional natural wonders, prime wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities for the public, three National Park Service employees teamed in 1937 to assess the feasibility of preserving the islands as a national park. Landscape architect Ernest A. Davidson, wildlife technician Richard M. Bond, and geologist J. Volney Lewis determined after two months of investigation that while "scenically the islands are excellent," they were not "of character sufficiently outstanding…to merit National Park status." To Davidson and his colleagues, there was no singular feature that deserved protection, since it was the islands' "distant views and panoramas outside the islands themselves" that made the area scenic. "There is almost no

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[20] Kelley June Cannon, *Administrative History: San Juan Island National Historical Park* (Seattle: National Park Service), 20 November 1997, 32-3.
[21] Larry M. Dilsaver, ed, *America's National Park System: The Critical Document*s (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1994), 67.

possibility of damaging such a type of scenery," they concluded. The investigators did not see the landscape as pristine and natural, as boosters hoped that visitors would , since they noted the lack of old growth forest and the evidence of repeated fires. Even the few old growth trees on the islands were considered "poor" compared to forests on the mainland.[23] "Considered as a whole," the investigators wrote, "scenic values of forest, lake and mountain are inferior to numerous portions of the Northwest." The team concluded that the scenery and geology of the archipelago were not of exceptional character or in danger of development, and that federal ownership was not necessary to preserve recreational opportunities in the islands.[24]

In the late 1920s and 1930s, however, the National Park Service had begun to espouse an ecological approach to natural resource management, symbolized by the creation of a wildlife division. One major study published in 1933 and titled "Fauna of the National Parks of the United States: A Preliminary Survey of Faunal Relations in National Parks," recommended that wildlife species be reintroduced into areas where human activities had reduced their numbers or eliminated them altogether.[25] Davidson and his colleagues demonstrated their commitment to these ideas when they recommended that certain areas in the San Juan Islands were worth federal protection as wildlife habitat.

The team considered Orcas Island to be worthy of some type of federal protection, due to the quality of its scenery and the opportunity for the National Park Service to restore wildlife habitat. They recommended that large mammals be reintroduced onto Orcas, and the team enthusiastically suggested that this provided a chance to provide habitat for wolves, a rapidly vanishing predator. Since wolves roam large areas, they often left other protected areas in the United States and were consequently trapped or poisoned. In an island environment, the team reasoned, the wolves would be protected from these human actions. The investigators believed that reintroducing elk, bear and wolves provided the opportunity to have "a really balanced wildlife population," since the animals would not swim away from the island. They also recommended that certain areas in the archipelago be set aside as refuges for nesting sea birds, and that the state work toward preservation and acquisition of shoreline.[26] However, the Park Service's commitment to ecological management lessened during the 1930s as the recommendations of wildlife biologists and other scientists conflicted with the emphasis that New Deal programs placed recreation and development. The suggestions of the team,

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[22] Cannon, *Administrative History: San Juan Island National Historical Park*, 33.
[23] Ernest A. Davidson, Richard M. Bond, and J. Volney Lewis, "Report on San Juan Islands Investigation," National Park Service, 5 August 1937, 2.
[24]Davidson et al, "Report on San Juan Islands Investigation," 1.
[25] Richard West Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 93.
[26] Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, 2.

who admitted that their idea was not feasible due to the number of property owners on the island, were never implemented.

Neither of these early attempts by the National Park Service resulted in preservation, but the attempts show the changing conception of the value of the San Juan Islands. By the mid-twentieth century, the islands were better known for their scenic beauty and recreational opportunities than for their agricultural, fishing or lime industries. One writer called San Juan Island a "photographer's paradise of old rail fences, sheep, cattle and fields." Tourists snapped pictures of the "gnarled old trees," remnants of the once thriving orchard industry, especially during the springtime bloom.[27] What had once been the islands' main industry now represented only a quaint photo opportunity for tourists.

The Contested Landscape

Islanders in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries worried about ways to get their products to market, but by the mid-twentieth century, politicians and island promoters placed increased emphasis on delivering tourists to the islands. By the 1950s, America's love affair with the automobile had reemerged stronger than ever after World War II rationing of oil and rubber ended. The Interstate Highway Act, increased suburbanization and the popularity of recreational auto touring spurred the growth of the American highway system. In 1959, Governor Albert Rossellini and the Whatcom county commissioners proposed a series of bridges linking San Juan, Shaw, Orcas, Lummi, Lopez and Decatur Islands, and they planned to inaugurate short ferry routes that would connect Decatur Island to Anacortes and Lummi Island to the mainland. According to this plan, tourists would be able to drive an "island hopping" loop that would provide "one of the most breathtakingly beautiful trips in the world." However, many islanders argued that making the chain so accessible would destroy the isolation and tranquility that drew tourists to the area. The bridges were never built due to this opposition and the tremendous expense.[28]

Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, many islanders continued to oppose development that might jeopardize the peaceful nature and scenic beauty of the islands. By the 1960s, most islanders accepted that the shift to a tourist-based economy would happen, but the reshaping of the island's landscape remained a contentious process as many residents feared that overdevelopment, in the form of summer homes and tourist facilities, would ruin the character of their rural island. During that decade, the San Juan County Planning Commission sought to create a landscape that balanced economic development with the islands' "natural charm."[29] The commissioners sought to "save" the

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[27] Ann Sullivan, "San Juans-Fabulous Islands," *Oregonian Sunday Magazine*, 8 May 1949.
[28] Editorial, "Bridges Linking San Juan Islands Urged," *Seattle Times*, 23 February 1959.
[29] Walt Woodward, "San Juan Plan Due in 3 Weeks," *Seattle Times*, 11 December 1966.

islands from overdevelopment, and their mission became "to preserve, protect and enhance those amenity qualities of the islands which are a reflection of their unspoiled natural beauty." The group completed a comprehensive plan in 1966 that suggested that the islands remain largely rural. The commission expressed the urgent need for more public recreational areas to attract tourists, especially on the shoreline, though it stressed that these areas should remain undeveloped. However, some residents opposed plans that favored tourism at the expense of commercial development. Fifty Lopez Island residents signed a petition encouraging the county to forego zoning efforts that would restrict "payroll producing industries."[30] San Juan Island residents were divided in their support for the plan, and due to the amount of opposition, the planning commission's recommendations were ultimately scrapped. This alarmed many Northwesterners who opposed industrial development of one of the region's prime vacation spots. Concern about the islands' future was so great in the region that the state legislature considered several bills that would have usurped the power of local planners to make planning decisions.[31]

Despite the failure of the planning commission's recommendations, many still agreed with the assessment that "The chief resource of the San Juans is obviously the scenery and relaxed environment." Generations of islanders had sought to promote and utilize the island's extractable natural resources such as lime, salmon and agricultural products, but by the 1960s, many islanders worked to keep development and industry out of their archipelago. A proposed aluminum plant on Guemes Island was never built after residents from around the region expressed outrage about this type of industrial development in the area.[32] Oil companies sought to begin exploratory drilling near the archipelago, but to the relief of most islanders, the proposal was defeated by the government of British Columbia. Many islanders similarly opposed large-scale development plans (such as a 1,150 acre hotel and condominium development on Kanaka Bay, northwest of the American Camp site) that they feared would ruin their island's rural character.[33]

San Juan Island National Historical Park

By the second half of the twentieth century, many people valued the scenery, recreational opportunities and historical significance of the English and American Camp sites, and this led to National Historical Park status for the sites of the former military camps. Attempts to memorialize the American Camp historic site began in the early

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[30] Woodward, "San Juan County Now has its Plans," 16 January 1967
[31] Walt Woodward, "Islands Given Two Year Breathing Spell," *Seattle Times*, 23 April 1967.
[32] David Richardson, *Magic Islands* (Eastsound, Wash: Orcas Publishing Co, 1973), 96.
[33] Alice Staples, "Big Project for San Juan Island is Told," *Seattle Daily Times*, 1 October 1965. The project also included a golf course, an observatory and a mile long jet landing strip; the developers intended to market the project to Californians. The development was never built.

twentieth century. In 1904, the Washington State Historical Society placed monuments on the site of the redoubt at American Camp and on the hillside overlooking Garrison Bay at British Camp to commemorate the events of the Pig War. Throughout the early to mid-twentieth century, Jim Crook guided visitors around the site of the former English Camp. By the 1950s, he was guiding as many as 100 curious visitors per day around his property.[34] Crook also maintained the small British cemetery per an agreement with the British government. To commemorate the events of the Pig War, Washington State purchased the site of the redoubt at American Camp in 1951. The state continued to acquire lands on both historic sites until 1963.

Due to the explosive growth in outdoor recreation and national park visitation that occurred after World War II, National Park Service director Conrad Wirth convinced Congress and President Dwight Eisenhower that the nation's national parks were in crisis. Between 1945 and 1954, national park visitation had jumped from 11.7 million to 47.8 million per year. Traffic jams, overflowing parking lots and deteriorating or inadequate visitors' facilities became the norm. Along with new roads, visitors' centers and other infrastructure in existing parks, Wirth sought to add new national parks and recreation areas to the system in order to meet the needs of the 80 million visitors that were expected to visit the parks in 1966, the fiftieth anniversary of the National Park Service. By 1966, Congress had allotted over $1 billion to the program, named Mission 66. This funding allowed the National Park Service to add seventy new units to the park system between 1955 and 1966.[35]

Just as there were too few national park units and facilities relative to the numbers of visitors, the San Juan Islands lacked enough public recreation areas to meet tourists' demands. Tourist traffic to the San Juan Islands increased tenfold between 1932 and 1952, and the majority of these visitors came from urban areas in the Puget Sound region. They sought recreational opportunities on the islands' scenic shores, but there were few parks or beaches available for public use.[36]

Ironically, however, the National Park Service initially ignored the recreational potential of American and English Camps when it agreed to preserve the sites. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, Senators Warren G. Magnuson and Henry M. Jackson promoted the creation of a national historical monument on the site of the former military camps on San Juan Island. The federal government designated the two camps as national historic landmarks in 1961. Washington State owned the former camps, but state legislators recognized that the federal government could better fund a park on the sites,

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[34] San Juan County Pamphlet File, MUASC, UW.

[35] Ethan Carr, *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 3-7.

[36] Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, 173 and 182; Shafer, *Tourist Flow to the San Juan Islands*, 23 and 26. In the 1950's, there were only three parks-Moran State Park on Orcas Island, Odlin County Park on Lopez Island, and San Juan County Park on San Juan Island-in the archipelago.

and they supported the transfer of their acquisitions to the federal government in 1964.[37] In 1965, a National Park Service team finalized a study of the proposed park site, in which they concluded that the establishment of San Juan Island National Historical Park was "feasible and desirable."[38] The report's authors believed the sites were primarily valuable for their historic significance, and the scenic and recreational values of the areas played almost no role in the team's recommendations.

By the 1960s, vacation home development on San Juan had boomed. The authors of the national historical park proposal urged the speedy acquisition of potential park lands due to the rising property values associated with the transition from a rural to a tourist economy. Landowners at American Camp no longer engaged in agriculture, logging or other natural resource use, and the land was slated for vacation home development. Above South Beach at American Camp, developers had platted sixty-six vacation home lots.[39]

Most islanders believed that park status for the English and American Camps sites presented an opportunity for land preservation in an area quickly becoming developed. Senator Henry Jackson, a sponsor of the senate bill to establish the historical park, received far more letters of support from islanders than of opposition to the proposed park. Most of the writers expressed interest not only in historic site preservation and interpretation, but also in the recreational opportunities and scenic beauty a large, waterfront park on the island would offer.[40] San Juan Island had remained the commercial center for the archipelago, and it lagged behind Orcas and Lopez as a tourist destination. Some saw park establishment as an opportunity for the island to draw a larger share of visitors.[41] Most islanders supported the creation of the park, but some worried about the increased traffic, pollution, and crime that the additional 50,000 tourists per year might bring after park creation. Some land owners on the proposed park site were concerned that the government would not compensate them for the full value of their property, and they expressed resentment that they would not be able to develop their property either for profit or for their own home site.[42] However, their voices were outnumbered by park proponents.

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[37] Cannon, 41.
[38] Charles B. Browne et al., *San Juan Island National Historical Park: A Proposal* (Washington D.C: National Park Service, March 1965), 1.
[39] Cannon, 52. At English Camp, the Crook Family was still raising hay and fruit on a portion of their 185 acres.
[40] Cannon, 39-40; "Legislation-S1441-Pig War National Monument, 1958-64," Henry M. Jackson Papers, MUASC, UW.
[41] David Richardson, "San Juan Water Trip Filled with Beauty," *Tacoma Sunday Ledger/News Tribune*, 25 August 1961, 9.
[42] Cannon, 40. The National Park Service estimated that the park would draw 50,000 visitors in its first year.

While state and federal agencies that supported the park's creation emphasized the historic value of the former military camps, environmental and outdoor advocacy groups endorsed the park proposal because of the scenic qualities, recreational opportunities and wildlife habitat at the sites. Emily Haig, speaking at a public hearing on behalf of the Seattle Audubon Society and the Washington State chapter of the Nature Conservancy, acknowledged the historical significance of the proposed park. However, the organizations she represented clearly valued the sites for their wildlife habitat. She urged the federal government to preserve "any undisturbed areas" at the former camps, and she urged the government to include bird nesting rocks and some small, nearby islands with significant bird populations into the park boundaries.[43] The Sierra Club supported park creation as a way to protect the island's natural beauty, and the club encouraged the inclusion of adjacent waterfront parcels for their scenic value.[44] A variety of other regional groups, such as the Washington State Historical Society and the San Juan County Democratic Party, were also vocal in their support of the proposed park. In September of 1966, Congress approved the creation of San Juan Island National Historic Park, one of ten new national parks designated that year.[45]

Environmental groups valued the San Juan Islands as a pristine and scenic vacation destination, and they continued to work toward land preservation in the San Juan Islands even after the federal government created the park. Seattle Audubon Society spokeswoman Hazel Wolf believed, "The islands are relatively unspoiled by encroaching civilization and might well be regarded as sort of a last frontier."[46] The Audubon Society urged the federal government to include the archipelago in the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation's inventory of coastal and inland waters, and the group hoped that additional areas in the island would be preserved for their "outstanding recreational opportunities" and wildlife habitat.[47] The Sierra Club continued to lobby for land preservation and against large scale developments in the archipelago. Brock Evens, a spokesman for the Sierra Club and the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs, summed up the attitude of many northwestern environmental groups when he stated, "We feel we have a stake in [the future of the San Juan Islands]."[48]

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[43] "Pig War National Historic Park Hearing Statement," Friday Harbor, Wash, 17 April 65, Emily Haig Papers, MUASC, UW.
[44] "Minutes of the Executive Committee, 29 May 1965," Sierra Club, Pacific Northwest Chapter, Emily Haig Papers. The club's proposal was defeated by real estate interests.
[45] Sellars, 206.
[46] Hazel Wolf on behalf of the Seattle Audubon Society to the San Juan County Commissioners, 19 November 1966, Legislation, San Juan Islands, 1966-7, Seattle Audubon Society Papers, MUASC, UW.
[47] Hazel Wolf on behalf of the Seattle Audubon Society to President Lynden Johnson, Governor Dan Evans, Senator Warren Magnuson, Senator Henry Jackson, and Representative Thomas Pelly, 15 December 1966, Legislation, San Juan Islands, 1966-7, Seattle Audubon Society Papers.
[48] Brock Evans to the San Juan County Commissioners, 24 November 1970, Brock Evans Papers, MUASC, UW.

Local grassroots groups emerged to safeguard the island's scenery, ecology, and rural character. Islanders founded Friends of the San Juan Islands in 1978 in order to lobby for growth management plans that would protect the islands' wildlife, natural environment, scenic vistas and rural landscapes.[49] The San Juan Preservation Trust, the first land preservation trust in Washington State, similarly sought to protect the "extraordinary beauty and abundant nature" of the archipelago. Founded in 1979, the Trust solicited donations to buy conservation easements from property owners willing sell the development rights to their land. The group also purchased land threatened by development and helped private property owners preserve scenic landscapes.[50] In 1990, county voters approved a real estate tax that funds the San Juan County Land Bank, an organization dedicated to "preserving the natural heritage" of the islands through the acquisition of farmland, wildlife habitat and other ecologically or scenically valuable parcels of land.

Managing the Landscape

The national historic park designation presented challenges to National Park Service administrators, scientists and staff. The Park Services' initial management objectives included interpretation of historical events, environmental education, and developing visitor services and recreational opportunities, as long as these actions did not interrupt the historic scene. The agency worked toward the goal of historic landscape and building restoration, and structures and fences built after the historic period were removed. Park staff also cut down fruit trees, once a staple of the island's economy, since they were planted outside of the designated historic period. Other elements of the landscape were restored. For example, park staff recreated the formal garden at English Camp in 1976. The 1979 General Management Plan reinforced the values laid out in the 1967 master plan. Historic preservation and interpretation remained the park's priority, but the plan placed increased emphasis on protecting natural resources, such as identifying and protecting endangered species and their habitat.[51]

The 1979 General Management Plan stated that one objective of the park was to "manage natural resources in order to recreate and perpetuate the historic scene."[52] Park management chose to recreate the historic scene as it appeared in the early 1860s, rather than a later period in which additional development occurred.[53] However, as biologist James Agee pointed out, a faithful recreation of the historic scene would include cutover

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[49] "Friends of the San Juans" http://www.sanjuans.org/, accessed online on 20 June 2005.
[50] "San Juan Land Preservation Trust" website, http://www.sjpt.org./, accessed online on 20 June 2005. The Trust has preserved 9,500 acres of land and 21 miles of shoreline in the islands as of 2004.
[51] Cannon, 55.
[52] National Park Service, *General Management Plan: San Juan Island National Historical Park* (Denver: National Park Service, 1979), 3.
[53] Cannon, 107.

forest. The park accepted the "historical inconsistency" of a more aesthetically pleasing interpretation of the scene.[54]

The landscape at English Camp in the late twentieth century was similar to that found during the time of military occupation, but resource managers proposed additional reforestation plans in order to better recreate the historic scene and conceal evidence of the site's agricultural past. Due to the Crook's wood cutting and livestock grazing, more meadow existed at the camp in the twentieth century than during the historic period. Regeneration of much of the cut forest had occurred by the mid-1960s. After park creation, trees encroached upon the meadow, and by the early 1980s, trees had colonized almost 50 percent of the meadow at English Camp.[55]

While trees had colonized much of the English Camp meadow, rabbits hindered the reforestation of American Camp. Agriculture and logging had ceased at the site, but the rabbit population kept the forest from spreading to previously forested areas at American Camp. Biologist Jim Agee calls the introduction of this non-native species "the single biggest ecological event to occur in the island's post-historic era."[56] By the mid 1970s, between 250,000 and 500,000 rabbits lived on the island, and about 40,000 of the animals inhabited American Camp. During this time, the rabbits consumed as much as three-quarters of new spring growth at the camp. As a result, little tree regeneration occurred around the site of the former military camp, since rabbits ate or damaged young trees, and grazing resistant grasses began to dominate meadows. Due to their intensive grazing habits, they reduced available forage for other animals, thereby affecting other mammal populations. Rabbits favored grasses, herbs and woody plants, which allowed weeds such as thistles and bracken to flourish. The island's raptors fed on the rabbits, but without any discernable affect on their population.[57] The American Camp area changed little between park creation and the early 1980s, since the park did not attempt to recreate the forested landscape, and rabbits kept trees from colonizing previously wooded areas.

In the early 1980s, a decline in rabbit populations, possibly from reproductive failure, allowed some grass regeneration and forest encroachment on grasslands at American Camp. Park managers and staff considered the rabbits a pest, but the sudden reduction in rabbit population caused unwanted changes. For example, the decline contributed to an increase in rodent populations. Rodents such as voles either damaged or consumed young trees and thus prevented some forest regeneration. In 1986, the park experimented with tree replanting in an effort to ascertain the best methods for restoring native plant species

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[54] James K. Agee, *Historic Landscapes of San Juan Island National Historical Park* (Seattle: National Park Service, 1984), 13.
[55] Agee, *Historic Landscapes of San Juan Island National Historical Park*, 15.
[56] James K. Agee, *Historic Landscapes of San Juan Island National Historical Park*, (National Park Service, 1984), 27.
[57] *General Management Plan: San Juan Island National Historical Park*, (National Park Service, 1979), 14.

to the prairie, but they determined that protecting seedlings with screens to prevent damage from voles was necessary.[58]

Trees had reclaimed much of the English Camp meadow, but at American Camp, resource managers believed they would have to take a much more active role in forest creation by planting and protecting seedlings, and by using herbicides to discourage competition from grasses. Some factors were beyond the control of resource managers, however. The greatest damage done to experimental stands was from water—either too much, during heavy winter storms, or not enough, during dry summers. The decline of the rabbit populations also increased fire fuel accumulations, making the park more vulnerable to wildfire. By the late twentieth century, the rabbits' continued presence in the park still affected the potential success of reintroduction of native plant species to the prairie. The rabbits' warrens, some of which are decades old, continued to create hazards for park hikers and horseback riders. By the mid-1990s, rabbit populations appeared to be rebounding, but it is unclear what consequences this holds for the park's natural landscape.[59]

Though fire helped create San Juan Island's natural environment, fire suppression policies prevailed on the island during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. At the turn of the twenty-first century, park managers faced controversial decisions about prescribed burning to lessen forest fuel loads and restore native plant species. At this time, the island's forests contained about as much wood as they did in the latter half of the nineteenth century, before extensive logging took place. Douglas firs remained dominant on the island, as they had been since before Euro-American settlement. However, island trees were about half as large as they were in the nineteenth century, and they grew more closely spaced together at this time. These dense forests of undersized trees reflected the history of high grade logging on the island and the cessation of low intensity fires, which previously culled smaller trees while leaving larger specimens standing. This type of forest is prone to catastrophic fires, since small, slender trees are not as fire resistant as larger varieties.[60] In 2000, the Washington State Department of Natural Resources named San Juan Island as the community most threatened by wildfire in northwestern Washington.[61]

Other resource management issues continued to pose challenges to the park. 130 different exotic species had invaded the park as a result of livestock grazing and cultivation, but park staff hoped to restore native grass species to the prairies, in part through the use of fire. Park plans also called for the preservation of Young Hill's Garry Oak habitat through prescribed burning, which would eradicate unwanted plant species

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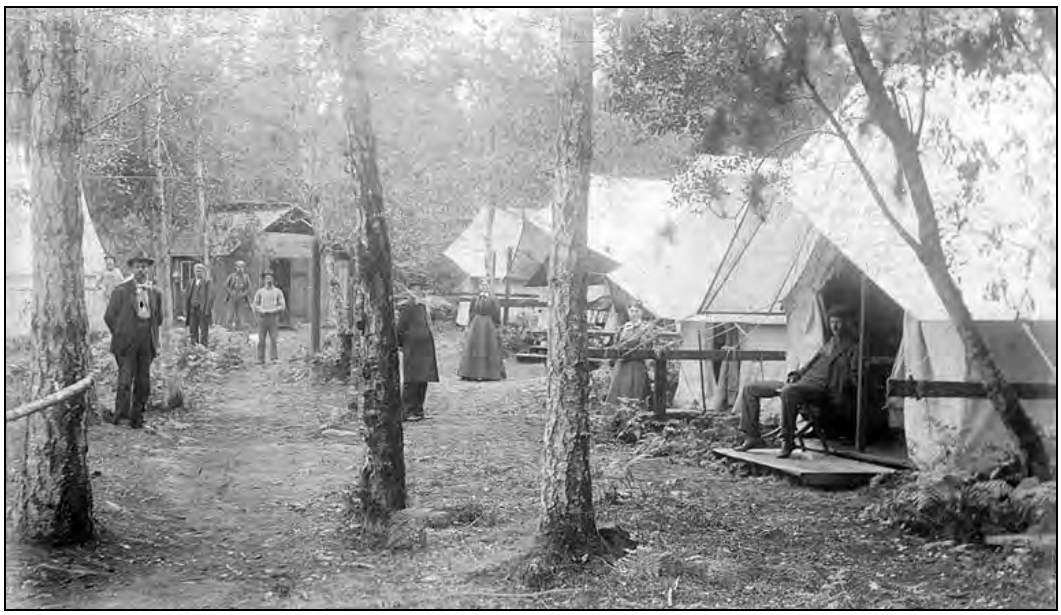
[58] Agee, 36; Cannon, 116-129.
[59] Agee, 36; Cannon, 116-129.
[60] Tom Shroeder, "Historic Forest Conditions," *Forest Info for the San Juan Islands*, online resource at http://www.rockisland.com/~tom/presettle.html, accessed on 20 June 2005.

that compete with the historic oaks. Conflicts over appropriate park usage, increasing visitation, and natural resource management all continue to present challenges to park administrators.

[61] Bill McGlaughlin, "Are We at Risk?" *San Juan Islander*, 12 February 2001.

A rare tourist excursion to James Island, in the eastern San Juan Islands, in 1893. Few vacationers visited the islands in the nineteenth century due to their remote location and the lack of tourist facilities. These tourists probably boated to the island for the day from mainland Washington State. University of Washington, Special Collections, WASO888.

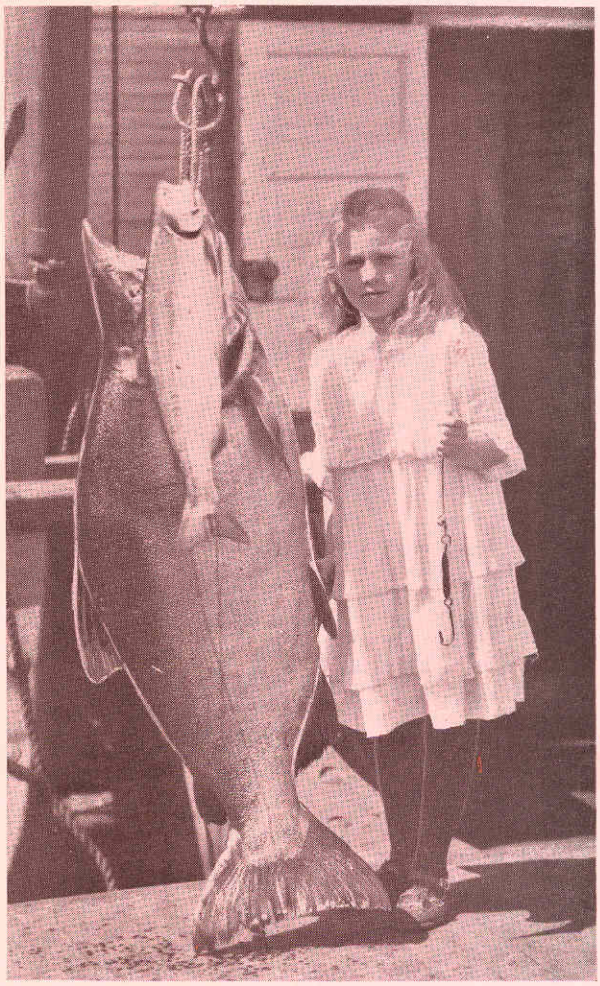


A tourist camp in the San Juan Islands, ca. 1900. Camping became a popular pastime throughout the Puget Sound region in the early twentieth century, and increasing numbers of visitors journeyed to San Juan and Orcas Islands after entrepreneurs established campgrounds there, University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, WASO769.

This Friday Harbor hotel (pictured here in 1906) was established in 1891, but few tourists ventured to the remote island at this time. University of Washington, Special Collections, WAS1159.

The Washington State Historical Society erected this monument, a commemoration of the Pig War, in 1904 at the James Crook Farm (the former English Camp). The group placed a similar marker on the remains of the redoubt, at the American Camp site. These were the first attempts to memorialize the conflict. Tourists proved curious about the incident, and Jim Crook often guided visitors around his property, University of Washington, Special Collections, WASO604.

A group of hikers on the summit of Mt. Constitution, on Orcas Island, in 1910. Orcas Island residents had founded a few small resorts and camp sites in the early twentieth century, and as a result the island attracted more visitors than did San Juan Island. Robert Moran tried to donate his 2,600 acre estate, which included Mt. Constitution, to the state for a park beginning in 1910, but the legislature refused to accept the gift until 1920. University of Washington, Special Collections, BAR183.



A PUGET SOUND KING SALMON

This fish, weighing about 100 pounds, was landed at Friday Harbor, Wash., during the 1921 season. Standing beside it is Dollie Washburn, nine-year-old daughter of C. P. Washburn of the Friday Harbor Packing Co. The small fish is a Sockeye salmon.

This 100-pound King Salmon was caught off of San Juan Island in 1921. Boosters used pictures such as this to publicize the island to sport fisherman from around the Puget Sound area. Courtesy of the Freshwater and Marine Image Bank, University of Washington, Special Collections.

The auto ferry *Rosario* in 1935. The inauguration of car ferry service to the islands in 1923 enabled tourists to travel to the islands relatively quickly and conveniently, and as a result, the archipelago's tourist industry grew dramatically. By the late 1920s, the new ferries had spurred "a flood of visitors during the summer months-tourists, boy and girl campers, biological students, excursionists, yachtsmen, relatives of native islanders." University of Washington, Special Collections, WASO881.

Tourists make their way up Mt. Constitution in 1930. Boosters had once promoted the islands to potential farmers and other settlers by publishing illustrated booklets featuring tidy farms and prosperous homes. During the twentieth century, promoters instead publicized the islands' scenic wonders, recreational possibilities and easy auto access, and the islands began to gain regional fame. The drive up Mt. Constitution in Moran State Park was one of the archipelago's main attractions. University of Washington, Special Collections, WAS1914.

The University of Washington's Puget Sound Biological Laboratories near Friday Harbor in the early twentieth century. By the 1920s, the island's waters had become valuable for scientific research. The university established a marine laboratory on San Juan Island in 1904, and the first classes were conducted in a defunct fish cannery in Friday Harbor. In 1921, the university received 484 acres of the unused military reservation at Point Caution, just northeast of the town. University of Washington, Special Collections, COB230.

Students from the biological laboratory embark on a research trip aboard the launch *Jestina* in 1922. The following year, the Washington State legislature created the San Juan Marine Biological Preserve at the urging of the university laboratory. The preserve encompassed the waters of the entire archipelago, and forbid the collection of non-edible marine organisms except for scientific purposes. University of Washington, Special Collections, COB194.

By 1960, the American Camp prairies were more valuable for their views and proximity to the beach than their ability to sustain livestock and crops. At the same time, better transportation connections to the mainland and strong promotional efforts by the tourist industry made San Juan Island an increasingly desirable destination for tourists, vacation home buyers and retirees. Developers plated sixty-six vacation home lots at the former American military camp site, but opposition to development by locals and environmentalists stymied their plans. Congress designated San Juan Island National Historical Park in 1966 in order to preserve the sites of the former military camps. Courtesy of Mike Vouri.

By the mid-twentieth century, the islands were better known for their scenic beauty and recreational opportunities than for their agricultural, fishing or lime industries. This view over English Camp and Garrison Bay can be reached from the top of Young Hill, inside the park. Courtesy of the National Park Service.

English Camp and the reconstructed formal garden. National Park Service staff recreated the garden as well as the park-like setting of English Camp. Courtesy of the National Park Service.

Park visitors tour the former American Camp parade ground. Courtesy of the National Park Service.

Park visitors watch a cooking demonstration during Encampment 2003. The annual Encampment event commemorates the peaceful military occupation of San Juan Island with reenactments, presentations and a candlelight ball. National Park Service photo.

Many visitors journey to the park for its recreational opportunities, such as biking. Courtesy of Mike Vouri.

Visitors wander through an old orchard, a remnant of the island's nineteenth century past, at American Camp. Courtesy of the National Park Service.

A hiking and interpretive trail crosses the remains of the American Camp redoubt. Courtesy of Mike Vouri.

Conclusion

San Juan Island National Historical Park now draws around a quarter million people per year. These visitors come to enjoy the windswept beaches and the expansive views of American Camp, where troops once prepared to defend the island from the British. They might hope to spot one of the three resident pods of orca whales from South Beach, where Northern Straits Indians and American fishermen processed their salmon catch. Visitors may look forward to seeing bald eagles hunt rabbits on the prairie, where the Hudson's Bay Company and American farmers grazed sheep and raised crops. They enjoy walking and picnicking on the serene waterfront meadow at English Camp, where British soldiers practiced maneuvers. Perhaps they visit the park to attend one of the living history programs, in order to learn more about a unique event in American history.

Most visitors have no idea that islanders throughout nineteenth and early twentieth centuries envisioned a much different future for the archipelago, and that assumptions about the island's value as a peaceful, relaxing vacation spot are relatively recent cultural creations. Islanders once pinned their hopes for a prosperous future on natural resource based industries such as agriculture, fishing and mining, but there is little evidence left of these industries today. A few orchard trees act as reminders of the island's once thriving fruit industry. Once bustling Roche Harbor, center of the island's lime industry, now serves as a popular resort. The docks that once harbored ocean going transport vessels attract hundreds of yachts on a summer day. Hiking trails lead past the old lime quarries, which have been mostly obscured by regenerating forest. Tourists can hire guides and charter boats for salmon fishing expeditions, but the commercial fishing industry is drastically smaller than it was a century ago. In 2003, only 1.5% percent of county residents made their living in forestry, fisheries, and farming combined.[1] Some agriculture does survive, though island farms now produce specialty products such as organic vegetables, heirloom variety apples and goat cheese. Sheep farming survives on a small scale; a few farms rear naturally raised lamb. These businesses cater to upscale restaurants, local residents and tourists rather than the global marketplace.

New residents, attracted by the islands' unhurried lifestyle and scenic beauty, have flocked to the islands in the past few decades. While the county's population remained relatively stable throughout the twentieth century, it exploded after 1970. 3,856 people resided in the archipelago in 1970. By 2003, that number had increased to 14,800. San Juan became the fastest growing county in Washington between 1970 and 2000.[2]

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[1] US Census Bureau, "Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics, San Juan County, 2000," online resource at http://www.census.gov accessed on 19 May 2004.

[2] Washington State Office of Financial Management, "Estimates of the total resident population by county," online resource at http://www.ofm.wa.gov/pop/coseries/c60to3.xls accessed on 19 May 2004.

Nineteenth and early twentieth century booster efforts focused on attracting residents and businesses to the archipelago. In contrast, twenty-first century islanders express concern about overdevelopment and population growth and the resulting loss of rural landscapes, scenic vistas and wildlife habitat.

These values now associated with the archipelago's natural environment have impacted the islands' economy and social structure. The influx of new residents, greater competition for available homes and building sites (due in part to recent trends of land conservation and preservation) and the high costs of transporting workers and materials to remote island locations has resulted in escalating home costs. Reflecting the tremendous growth on the islands, the construction industry employed more islanders than any other job sector in 2003. Large numbers of tourists have created an increase in low-wage service sector employment. [3] There is a greater gap between household income and housing prices in San Juan County than any other county in Washington, and many native born islanders can no longer afford to live in the archipelago.[4] Land conservation and preservation safeguard the scenic beauty and recreational opportunities that attract tourists and seasonal residents, but these measures come at a high cost for some island residents.

Our culture's expectations of San Juan Island have changed since the island was settled by Europeans in the mid-nineteenth century. Visitors to the island expect stunning scenery and abundant wildlife rather than logging and mining operations. Tourism has replaced agriculture as the dominant industry, and the island's natural landscape reflects this change. As it has in the past, the dominant cultural view will continue to influence the natural environment to shape society, the economy and the ecosystems of San Juan Island.

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[3] Bureau of the Census, *Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics, San Juan County, 2000* (Washington D.C., 2003).

[4] Community Development and Long Range Planning Department, San Juan County, Washington, online resource at http://www.co.san-juan.wa.us/planning/Housing%20and%20Population/Affordable%20Housing.html, accessed on 20 June 2005.