

Profiles of four early families when WA was still a territory

South Whidbey at a time of great change

In her life, she was known by several names: Zah-toh-litsa (or Gah-toh-litsa from some sources), Hotela, and the English names of Jane Newberry, Jane Johnson and Jennie. Later in life, she became known simply as Grandma Oliver (using her second husband's surname).



Zah-toh-litsa aka Jane Johnson Oliver

What is known about Zah-toh-litsa is that she was a survivor in a day when many women succumbed to disease, overwork, and complications of childbirth. She had six children by her first husband (William Johnson), and another six children with her second husband (Ed Oliver). She outlived all but one of her children by the time she died in 1942.

Zah-toh-litsa was born in 1857 into the upper class of the Snohomish Tribe. Her grandfather was Wha-cah-dub, (1789-1870), a sub-chief of the tribe.

Zah-toh-litsa's father was Whul-tay'lahth, a brother of Charles Whea-kadim, who was father of William Shelton, aka Wha-cah-dub, the last hereditary chief of the Snohomish Tribe who

was born on South Whidbey in 1869 at what is now Sandy Point.

She and Shelton were cousins. It is not known whether they shared lineage from the same grandmother, as men of status in the tribe sometimes had multiple wives.

During Zah-toh-litsa's parents' lifetime, large ships were a common sight on Puget Sound; first ships of Spain, then Britain, and finally the United States.

It wasn't until 1846 that Great Britain and the United States settled national northwest borders at the 49th parallel. Washington had first been part of the Oregon Territory (established 1848), but came into its own as a Territory in 1853. Statehood would not come until 1889.

Smallpox, measles and tuberculosis introduced by early trappers, explorers, sailors, and missionaries had already taken a heavy toll on the Coast Salish population by the time Zah-to-litsa was born, and westward expansion was increasingly pushing indigenous people off their lands.



Zah-toh-litsa's daughter, Louisa Johnson Porter, at her home on Mutiny Bay, with children and husband Nathaniel. She is expecting her eighth child of the ten she had with Nathaniel. Omer is on horseback. *From the Porter family collection. Circa 1905.*

Time of Change, continued

In an effort to prevent fighting and facilitate land settlement by Euro-Americans and immigrants, the Point Elliott Treaty was signed at Mukilteo in 1855, just two years before Zah-to-litsa was born, though it was not ratified until 1859 and only enacted in 1874.

It was a terrible deal for the indigenous peoples. The concept of 'owning' land was foreign to tribal leaders. To them, the lands were not the possession of any one person or any nation.

In a time of great transition, they reluctantly agreed to 'sell' lands for American/European settlement in exchange for education and vocational training for their children, healthcare, a permanent reservation where they could not be pushed off, homes, jobs, and being able to continue to fish and hunt as they had always done.

Compensation was promised not in money but in terms of blankets, house-goods and farming tools. The tribes and bands of indigenous people assigned to the Tulalip Reservation basically gave up ancestral lands of more than 9,000 square miles for a mere 35.3 square miles.

Zah-toh-litsa, however, did not relocate to the reservation at Tulalip, but remained on Whidbey Island her whole life, married first to William Johnson, and then neighbor Ed Oliver.

Zah-to-litsa had her first child, Louisa Ann) with William Johnson in 1873, when she was 16 years old and he was 51. A 35-year age difference between was not uncommon in those days.

As author Nancy McDaniel writes in her book, *The Snohomish Tribe of Indians*, "Natives of Puget Sound traditionally looked upon marriage outside of their tribes as prestigious. White women were at a premium in the Territory. Prospective brides imported from the east did not meet the demands in terms of both quantity and knowledge of the area for male settlers. Women with a knowledge of the area, with established social and economic networks, and native women with the knowledge

of where to hunt and fish were sought out as the partners of choice."

Land was another reason why marriage to indigenous women was desirable. The Donation Land Acts of 1850 and 1853 provided that a single man could claim 320 acres to homestead, but if married, they could jointly claim 640 acres. Even though this ended in 1855 (land was no longer free but could be purchased for \$1.25 an acre), the Homestead Act of 1862 provided free land to settlers willing to live on and make improvements to the land.

Some of the early marriages were according to the Snohomish custom of the bridegroom giving gifts to the bride's family, which were later reciprocated. Formal county marriage certificates were sometimes not recorded until years later. The Johnson's marriage certificate was recorded in Jefferson County in September 1878, three months after the birth of their second child, a son, George.

In addition to Johnson, some of the other early settlers who took Coast Salish women as wives included Andrew Deming, George Finn, Ed Oliver, Nathaniel Porter, Robert Bailey, and Joseph Brown.

William T. Johnson

William T. Johnson was born in 1822 in New York state. After an adventurous youth on the high seas, including sailing around Cape Horn, he landed on the Olympic Peninsula, where he had a 160-acre homestead at Port Ludlow.

Port Ludlow Mill on-site owners Syrus Walker and Arthur Phinney

wanted him to file for land on Whidbey Island for their Port Ludlow Mill Company (later bought by Puget Mill Company), but Johnson liked the Island so much that he sold his Port Ludlow property and filed a 160-acre claim in 1869 at a place now known as Double Bluff. (Over the years the Bluff was known by several names: Volcano Point for its then-smoldering underground peat fires, Ariel's Point by the Wilkes Expedition, Johnson's Bluff, Useless Bay Bluff, and finally, Double Bluff.)

Johnson was one of the first handful of white settlers on South Whidbey. The first recorded man was Robert Bailey in 1852 who settled near the Snohomish permanent village of Dig-dwash at Bailey's Bay, now Cultus Bay. He was followed in 1853 by Raphael Brunn who claimed 320 acres at Mutiny Bay.

In a paragraph in *The Washington Standard*, March 12, 1886, about Johnson's death it states that Johnson had lived on Whidbey for 25 years, which would have put his arrival around 1861.

Johnson's (Double) Bluff had excellent timber which he logged and then floated through Deer Lagoon and out to Port Ludlow where it was milled.

The 1870 Island County census lists a William T. Johns(t)on(e) born in New York in 1822 and an Indian woman, Jeannie, age 16, whose occupation was listed as "keeping house." Marriage was not a category in that year's census and early census records were often incorrect as to age, spelling, etc. It is possible that this Jeannie was indeed Zah-to-litsa and either her age was recorded incorrectly, or she was born in 1854.



The approximate areas where the four families settled. 1. Johnson, 2a. Oliver's first home, 2b. his second home, 3. Porter - further north to Mutiny Bay, and 4. Johns.

According to Cora Cook's article, the Johnsons' home was built under large trees on the bluff in a park-like setting. It had once been home to a large herd of elk according to Snohomish tribal legend before a fire swept across South Whidbey from Brown's Point to Double Bluff and the elk swam across Admiralty Inlet to the Olympic Peninsula. Early settlers reported finding many elk antlers and bones on the bluff.

In the 1870 census Johnson's real estate was valued at \$640 with personal property at \$500. Nine people are listed as living on the property as family members. It is possible that Johnson, age 48 in 1870, likely had children from a previous marriage or union.

In their 13-year marriage, six children were born to William and Zah-toh-litsa: Louisa, Florence, George, Frances, Charles, and Mildred. Little wonder that Zah-to-litsa was a popular midwife in the area.

As parents, they desired an education for their children, and along with neighboring logging and farming families, established a one-room log cabin schoolhouse in Austin in 1885 near what would later become Cookson's Corner. It would serve as a school until a new one was built in 1897, and then in 1915 a larger two-classroom Mutiny Bay School would be built.

In late February of 1886, William Johnson set sail in his small boat to take produce and beef to sell in Port Townsend, a popular trading center, far larger than Seattle back then.

Two days later, his body was found in his boat, which had washed ashore near Johnson's (Double) Bluff at a place then called Haller's Point. There were no signs of foul play and the coroner ruled that Johnson, age 64, had died from natural causes.

The family believed otherwise, for there were known pirates plying the waters between Whidbey and Port Townsend. There should have been a substantial amount of money from the sale of produce and beef, however, none was found on Johnson's body or in the sailboat.

He is buried along with other family members in an unmarked grave just up from the beach at Double Bluff. He was 64 when he died, leaving 29-year-old Zah-toh-litsa with six children to raise.

Edward Oliver

Edward Oliver came to South Whidbey in 1858 when he was just 28 years old, but he had already lived a life of adventure packed into those 28 years.

Born in Richmond, Virginia in 1830 to a well established family with colonial roots, his father died when he was but three months old.

His mother later remarried, to a man who Oliver evidently care little for, as he left home at age 11 to serve as a cabin boy. He worked on a two-masted schooner, and then a brig, which took him to the Mediterranean on several voyages.

He jumped ship in Moltier in the Mediterranean and enlisted in the British army where he served for nearly three years during the Crimean War both aboard a ship at the siege of Sevastopol and thereafter several battles on land where he was wounded. He received several medals for bravery.

After coming back to America, he once again engaged in maritime trade. During this time he survived a shipwreck off the coast of Florida, and was saved by a passing ship.

In 1857 he sailed from Boston around Cape Horn at the tip of South America to San Francisco where he worked in the lumber and coal trades up and down the west coast.

Eventually he came to Puget Sound on the brig Glencoe, landing in Steilacoom where he was accidentally shot in the leg while passing by a street brawl.

He recuperated in a hospital at Port Townsend and upon exploring the area, found Deer Lagoon to his liking. At that time the lagoon had tall cedars and lush vegetation. Shallow boats could pull up all the way near where the present Whidbey Telecom building is.

SEATTLE POST-INT

ON TREACHEROUS ICE

**Three Children Drowned Near
Port Ludlow.**

THE THIN ICE BROKE WITH THEM.

**Two Boys and One Girl Engulphed in
the Water While Skating--A
Sad Coincidence.**

Three children were drowned Tuesday afternoon at 3 o'clock, while skating on Johnson's lake, near Port Ludlow. The three were Edward Oliver, aged 9 years, Frances E. Johnson, aged 9 years, and George Johnson, aged 11 years, children of Edward Oliver, who was father of the first-named boy and stepfather of the Johnson girl and boy.

The children were skating over the lake when the ice gave way and all were engulfed in the water, which was only about seven feet deep at that place, yet they perished almost instantly. The bodies were recovered in half an hour after the sad accident by C. V. Anderson and Mr. Johnson and conveyed to the home near by.

A strange coincidence is the fact that Mr. E. Johnson, father of the two last-named children, was drowned exactly two year ago near Port Ludlow and Whidby island.

Mr. Anderson came to this city last evening on the steamer Edith, and ordered three caskets from Undertakers Cross & Company, returning on the steamer last night at 10:30 to Port Ludlow.

The funeral of the three children will be held from the family residence tomorrow afternoon, and interment made in the Port Ludlow cemetery.

Oliver worked 10 years logging on South Whidbey before staking a claim of 160-acres (at 25 cents an acre) and building a house on the west side of Useless Bay with a commanding view of the Sound. There he farmed hay and vegetables and raised cattle.

Oliver married Melvina Sooy (listed on the marriage certificate as Malvina Soou) in 1877 when he was 43 and she was 17. She was the daughter of a white settler and a Coast Salish mother. They had four children. Melvina died in 1886 at age 25.

In March 1887, Oliver married Zah-toh-litsa (Jane Johnson) and they made their home on the bluff near Oliver's Lake. (It is unclear whether they built a new home or lived at the Johnson home, which was near Oliver's Lake.)

The couple increased their combined

family with another six children born to them. Oliver died just shy of his 85th birthday in 1915. Jane Johnson Oliver, known in the community by then as 'Grandma Oliver' died in 1942, outliving all but one of her 12 children.

Perhaps the greatest tragedy to befall her was on New Year's Eve in 1889 when her eldest son George Johnson, age 11, and 9-year-old daughter Frances Johnson (erroneously spelled as Francis on census records), plus 9-year-old Edward Oliver's namesake son with his first wife, all drowned in Oliver's Lake (referred to as Johnson's lake in the Seattle P-I account), while ice skating on thin ice.

(The newspaper account on the pre-

vious page got a few details wrong: the children were buried on the Oliver-Johnson property, not at Port Ludlow. Also Mr. Oliver, not Johnson, helped recover the bodies.)

Louisa Johnson and Nathaniel Ellenwood Porter

Louisa Johnson, eldest child of William and Zah-toh-litsa, was married at age 16. Her husband was 51-year-old Nathaniel Ellenwood Porter, and like her mother's new husband, he too was a neighbor. His farm, Porter Place, was located at nearby Mutiny Bay.

Nathaniel's ancestral roots ran deep into American history; in fact, all the way back to 1635 and the Massachu-

setts Bay Colony.

His 6th great-grandfather, John Porter, had emigrated from Dorchester, England and became a prosperous landholder. Several generations of both sides of his family lived in parts of Massachusetts, including Salem, Plymouth, Beverly, Ipswich, and Boston.

Porter's ancestors also moved back and forth between Massachusetts and Nova Scotia. (Nova Scotia was part of the Bay Colony until 1691.) Although both his parents (Hezediah, III and Margaret Ellenwood) were born in Nova Scotia, Nathaniel was born Oct. 11, 1837 at Boston, the youngest of their 15 children.

Just like Ed Oliver, he began his working life at the young age of 10 as a cabin boy or waiter on ships. First he worked on the schooner Vine, then the brig Mickmac, and later the bark Elizabeth. He went to exotic places such as the West Indies and Europe.

At age 17 after returning to Boston, he decided to strike out for the gold fields of California. He went by rail as far as he could. Then by boat up the Missouri River. And then by foot to Fort Bridger in what was Utah Territory, where he enlisted in the Fourth Company of Bridger Volunteers.

He served for five months before transferring to the Quartermaster's Department where he hauled provisions to Salt Lake City and helped in the construction of a fort.

The year 1857 in Utah Territory was a tumultuous time. Federal troops were sent to install a new governor to replace Brigham Young, to establish a military presence, and to safeguard supply trains heading west through territory settled by members of the Latter-day Saints church.

These heightened tensions led to a short-lived 'Utah War' which included the Mountain Meadows Massacre of 90 to 120 settlers enroute to California. They were killed by the Mormon Nauvoo militia dressed as Southern Paiute native Americans.

Continuing on to California in 1858, Porter spent about a year there pursuing



The Austin Tigers baseball team in a photo taken July 28, 1910 shows left to right, back row: Alfred Oliver, Martin Oliver, manager Jed Denniman, Raymond Augenhough and Clifford Hilton.

Central row: John (Jack) Finn, Neal Stoddard, Charles (Charlie) Johnson, John Croyle, and Ernie Darlington. Mascot Raymond Cookson is in the foreground.

Martin Oliver (born 1888) and his brother Alfred (born 1892) were half-brothers to teammate Charles Johnson (born 1883). Their mother was Zah-to-litsa (aka Jane Johnson Oliver).



Nathaniel Ellenwood Porter came to South Whidbey in 1859 at the age of 22 and created a prosperous farm at Mutiny Bay.

Photo courtesy of the Porter family.

mining and farming, though evidently not quite finding a place to settle.

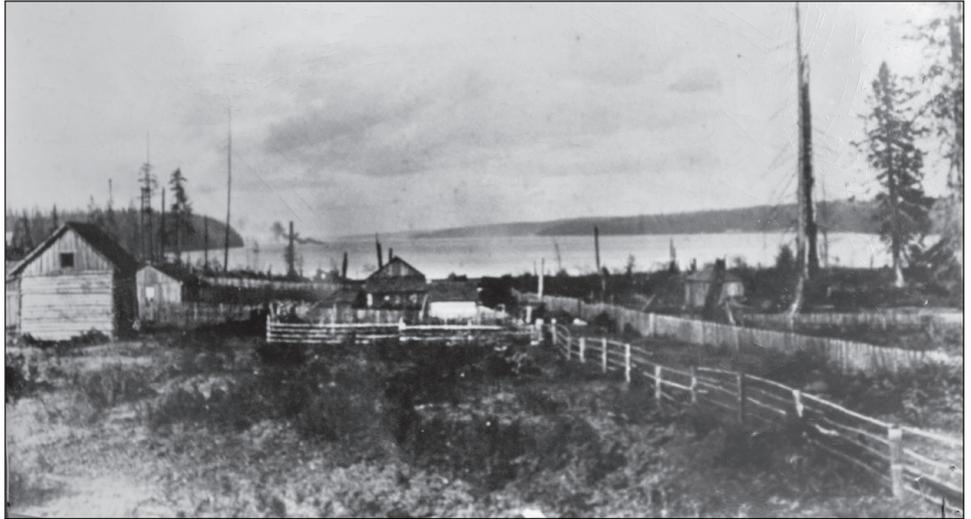
He then came to the Puget Sound region and purchased 160 acres of timbered land at Port Ludlow.

He sold this to the Puget Sound Pulp and Timber Company (later Pope and Talbot) for some cash plus 360 acres of low bank waterfront at Mutiny Bay in 1859.

The parcel had been defaulted on by original owner Raphael Brunns who took out a homestead claim on it in 1853, but made no improvements. Brunns moved up to Coupeville where he operated a mercantile until it failed in the mid-1860s.

Porter got a great deal as the land had already been logged off and needed only to be cleared of stumps for farming.

The hard-working 22-year-old had a house brought over by scow from Port Townsend (though some descendants claim it was only lumber to build a house). It was still on the property until 1979 when it was burned for fire department training.



The Porter family farm in the early 1900s. *Photos courtesy of Gaylord Porter.*



A group of young people, with some Porter children in the photo, at the front gate to the Porter farm. Note how the old road initially hugged the crest of the beach.

In the 1870 Island County census, Porter is listed as living with Sally (who possibly was also named Mary Hi-Ye-Nah) age 30, identified as a full Indian (Clallam tribe). She and Nathaniel had a daughter, Ellen Henrietta, born in 1874. Sally died in 1880 at age 40.

Later that year he married 17-year-old Mary Ann Williams, who was half-Swinomish through her mother.

Her father, Robert Williams, had been a lumberman in Port Townsend. After his death her mother Catherine (Katie, Kittie) Nunn Williams married George Finn, another early South Whidbey settler who bought land from Edward Oliver and Thomas Johns.



15-year-old Omer Porter, on the farm in 1914. According to his son, Gaylord, he often wore hats because he was self-conscious of his thick blonde hair.

Mary Ann gave birth to Asa (aka Acey) in 1881, but unfortunately she died in 1884 at the age of 21.

Five years later when 16-year-old Louisa married Nathaniel in 1889, she had a ready-made family with a step-daughter Ellen who was one year younger than herself and an eight-year-old stepson Asa.

Porter became a prosperous farmer and the family flourished with ten children born to them, plus the previous two children of Nathaniel's. His land holdings eventually included nearly 1,000 acres between Mutiny Bay to Holmes Harbor.

Tragedy struck Louisa's household as it had her mother's. On April 19, 1901, while Nathaniel was working in the fields and Louisa was busy in the kitchen, 10-year-old Leo (who went by the name of Pete) opened a closet door beneath the stairwell and picked up a loaded gun kept there for shooting crows. It suddenly went off and the shot traveled through the wall to where 6-year-old Florence was sitting on the sofa near two younger siblings. Florence died instantly. An inquest was held in Langley by Justice of the Peace Hugh McLeod the next week and the sad story was recounted by Pete and his parents. It was ruled an accidental death.

According to family members, this may have been the second child to die by accidental discharge of a firearm, as Pete's younger brother Benjamin is rumored to have died in a similar way involving playing with a loaded gun.

In 1910 a hunting accident on the Olympic Peninsula claimed Asa's life.

In 1915 daughter Elsie died at age 12 of tuberculosis.

Like her parents, Louisa and her husband Nathaniel, were interested in the education of their children. Nathaniel had served as a school director along with his future father-in-law, William Johnson, and neighbor A. J. Deming for the 1885 one-room schoolhouse in Austin (School District #10). It operated until a new school was built in 1897.

That year Louisa and Nathaniel donated a 210 foot by 105 foot parcel near

the shoreline between Austin and Mutiny Bay for \$1 to revert back to them when no longer needed as a school.

In December of 1911, the Porters sold a four-acre parcel of land a bit east and further from the shore than the previous 1897 school to School District #10.

This two-room Mutiny Bay schoolhouse taught children from Freeland, to Bush Point, to Double Bluff and was also used for Sunday School.

Son Omer Porter was a student there until eighth-grade and remembered it as having 40 students, eight grades and one teacher. About half the children had Coast Salish mothers, and others included immigrant children from Germany, Sweden and Norway as well as children from the nearby Free Land socialist colony.

The school was torn down in 1947 after South Whidbey schools consolidated to Langley. Its lumber was incorporated into Langley's new Masonic Temple, now Langley City Hall.

N. E. Porter not only prospered as a farmer and rancher, but also owned a schooner, no doubt to transport his

goods to market.

In 1896 he was elected road supervisor of the Mutiny Bay District. South Whidbey residents long felt short-changed by the county when it came to roads.

Son Omer N. Porter, (1899-1980) recounted how when people in the area had to travel to Coupeville to pay their taxes they rode a horse along the beach from Mutiny Bay to Coupeville.

"Two or three or four would go together, for their own protection. It took one day to go up and another day to return. There were no proper roads. You always took along an axe as you might have to get down off your horse and clear a way to get through the brush." said in a South Whidbey Record article by Christine Ferguson.

Nathaniel died in October 1916 at age 79. A short-lived, unfortunate marriage after Nathaniel's death, drained Louisa of the family's savings.

She returned to Porter Place to live until a few years before her death at age 65 in 1938.

Continued on page 8



Omer Porter, pictured here with future wife Blonche Inley at Mutiny Bay School. The school was built on land sold to the school district by Omer's parents adjacent to the Porter farm. Omer would have liked to have gone on to high school but found that the then sole teacher, with a class of 40 students and teaching eight grades, was not able to spare the time, so he went to work on the family farm.

Thomas John Johns

Jumping ship to start a new life in America

Thomas John Johns arrived as a 19-year-old on South Whidbey in 1859, shortly after Ed Oliver, but a little before William Johnson.

He was born New Year's Eve in Plymouth England in 1840, the son of a British sea captain. Young 'Tommy' as he was called, became a ship's carpenter at age 17 and sailed the Mediterranean to Burma and possibly China.

After sailing around the tip of South America, John's man-o-war ship put in four miles north of Victoria, B.C. on Vancouver Island.

He and nine other shipmates liked the look of the Pacific Northwest and decided to jump ship in the dead of night in a small boat. They rowed and landed at Dungeness, not far from Port Townsend.

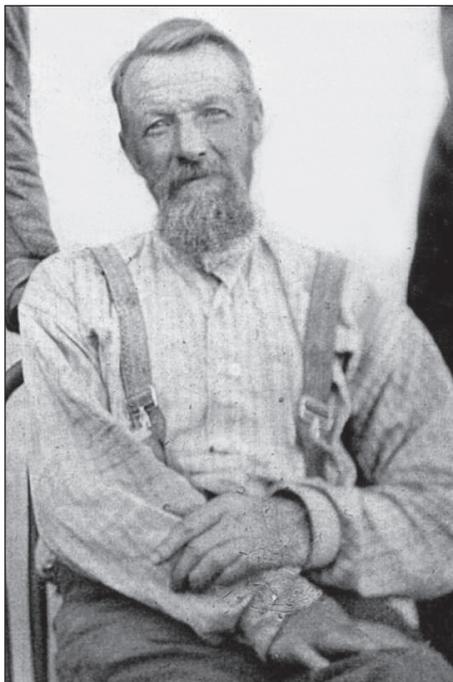
They separated the next morning and the 5-foot 3-inch blue-eyed, blonde-haired wirey teenager headed south to Port Ludlow where he met Ed Oliver who was looking for a partner to log Deer Lagoon.

The partnership of felling and floating virgin forest logs to mills in Port Ludlow proved profitable and in 1872 when Queen Victoria granted a blanket pardon for Navy deserters, Johns was able to buy land on the east side of Deer Lagoon near present day Bay View.

In 1878 he wed 26-year-old Iowa-born Mary Jane Coffelt on Lopez Island at her brother's house. They had met while she was a waitress in Port Townsend. She had moved out to Washington with her mother after her father died.

The Johns made their home on the northwest edge of Deer Lagoon. A daughter, Florence, was born in 1879, followed by twin sons James Jasper and Richard William, though the nicknames Florence gave them – Jimmie and Willie – were what they went by.

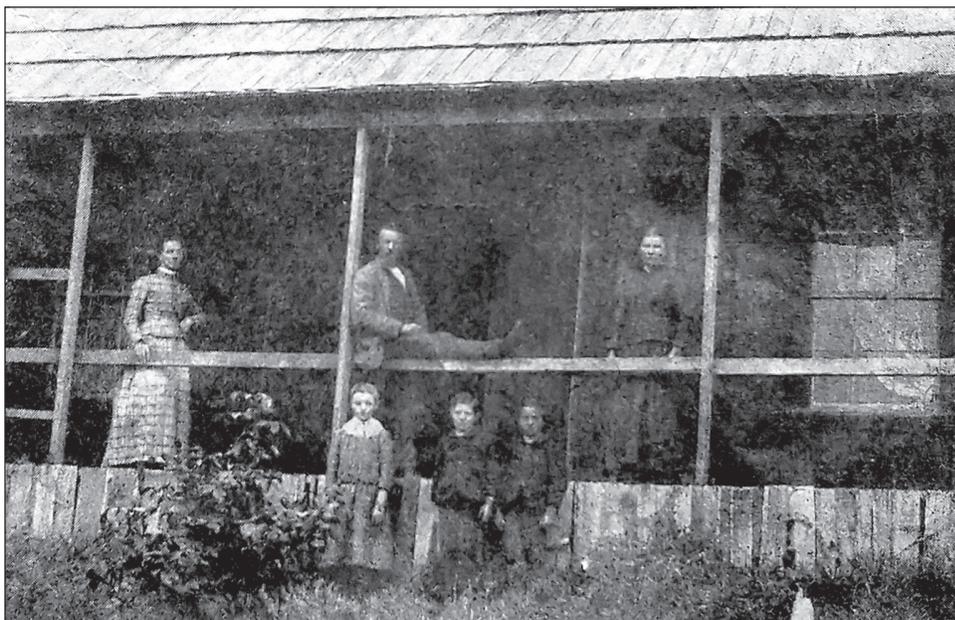
All native and pioneer families faced hardships, and death was often close at hand in the small South Whidbey com-



Thomas (Tommy) John Johns



Mary Jane Coffelt Johns



The Johns family, plus neighbor Jesse Thompson (right). Florence and her twin brothers, Jimmie and Willie are out front. This was likely taken around 1886. The Johns house featured hand-hewn cedar shakes and glass windows and was considered one of the more attractive homes in the area.

munity, whether by accident or disease.

In late October 1899 the Johns twins took their small sloop just two miles south to a logging camp near the Clise Slough at Maxwelton to visit friends. A storm was coming, and they were

urged to wait before returning, but decided to head home anyway.

The next morning Jimmie's body was found on the beach. A call went out to neighbors for help. Thomas Johns heeded the call, only to find that

Johns Family, continued

the body was that of Willie. Walking a little farther north he found Jimmie.

Newspaper accounts speculate that the sloop capsized and the twins, both strong swimmers, made it to shore. Jimmie, the stronger of the two had carried his brother, Willie, until he no longer could and continued north along the beach, just about a half mile from their home. It is speculated that the boys died of exhaustion and exposure.

The whole South end mourned the loss to this pioneer family. The newspaper mentioned that both Thomas and Mary Jane were near invalids at the time; Thomas suffering from severe arthritis. They both died six years later in 1905 after having been cared for by their daughter Florence.

Before he died, Johns and neighbor William Weedin each donated an acre for the establishment of the Bayview Cemetery.

Years before they worked together to establish a school in the log cookhouse on the Weedin property in 1885 and helped build a log schoolhouse north of present Bayview School in 1891.

Florence wed neighbor Friedrich "Fred" Tiemeyer in 1906. They opened several bakeries, including a bakery in Langley in 1925. Fred died in 1950. Florence died in 1966 at age 87.



Fred Tiemeyer and Florence Johns were married in 1906 by Langley Justice of the Peace Hugh McLeod.

Porter Family, continued



Louisa, holding her daughter Delight, stands next to son Omer (wearing a hat). In front of him are younger brothers William and Joe, then older sisters Lena and Blanche, and older brother Leo ("Pete") in the back. Circa 1916/17.

Her son Pete lived on the family farm during the Great Depression and slowly sold off parcels, as well as lost some in card games at the Dog House Tavern, according to his nephew Gaylord Porter. Pete died in 1943.

Daughter Lena married Frank Driscoll and lived at Mutiny Bay adjacent to the family property.

The land, which according to family, still contains unmarked family graves, was later developed, and the road moved up from the beach.

Omer would follow in his father's footsteps, first working the farm at age 15, then as a logger and later as a maintenance supervisor for the State Department of Highways on South Whidbey. He was also one of the first bonded deputy sheriffs in the county.

Omer had two children (Omer, Jr. and Bob) with first wife Blonche Inley (sometimes cited as Inlay). Blonche was raised by her maternal grandparents, Myron and Laura Curtis, on their Freeland farm where Payless Foods and Chase Bank now exist.

When Blonche died from pneumonia in 1929 at age 26, the two boys went to Porter Place farm and lived with Louisa while their father worked in logging camps off island.

The next year Omer met and married a young nurse, Tena Roodzandt, from an immigrant Dutch family. They settled off Saratoga Road where she and Omer had 11 additional children.

There are several descendants of the Porters still living on South Whidbey, many of whom are proud members of the Snohomish Tribe of Indians.

This article was compiled from interviews with Gaylord Porter and Gloria Porter Campbell... research from Hugh McLeod's Justice of the Peace 1901 ledger... articles from the South Whidbey Record, Island County Times, and Spin-drift articles by Gloria Porter Campbell, Linda Porter, Lorinda Kay, John Watkins, Cora Cook, Christine Ferguson... chapters from Lorna Cherry's books: South Whidbey and Its People, Volumes 1 and 2... and Keith Porter's Ancestry Online family research.

Additional sources were from area period newspapers, census records, Snohomish Tribal records, territorial and state marriage and birth certificates, plus the book: The Snohomish Tribe of Indians... Our Heritage... Our People by Nancy L. McDaniel, 2004, self-published.

No family history is ever quite complete, and we welcome additional information to add to our online version.

Challenging times call for courageous community giving...

Funding the South Whidbey Historical Society

As Covid-19 hit the planet and the earth stopped, our Historical Society went into hibernation with our Board seeking to plan the future and asking many questions.

- When will we be able to reopen the museum in Langley?
- With social distancing, will we be able to make presentations and tours?
- How will our funding change?
- Our mission is to preserve and tell the history and stories of South Whidbey Island. In this challenging time, how will we meet our mission and best serve Whidbey Islanders?

Funding is now our top priority. Parking for the Whidbey Island Fair has been the Society's largest fundraiser of the year. Those funds are now lost because the Fair has been canceled. To meet this shortfall, one Board member has offered up to \$1,500 if we can match those funds.

Your donation now will allow us to match that amount to help meet expenses for this year.

This is a start with long term funding being more problematic.

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization which has been the recipient of local and regional grants, we know this year may be different as many of our grant funders have also been affected by the Covid-19 crisis.



Non-profit organizations are here to provide service to their communities. They operate as private entities and are not governmental agencies. By law, they cannot make profits for their investors. Like everyone else, non-profits have expenses and bills to pay.

Under the federal stimulus package individuals will be able to deduct up to three hundred dollars of donations in 2020 to non-profits including 501(c3) organizations even if they are now taking the standard deduction. This is an added incentive to those who no longer itemize their deductions when filing federal tax returns.

The South Whidbey Historical Society is in the category of a "cultural/educational" non-profit.

Our funding comes from memberships, donations, book sales, fundraisers, and grants. Most of our workers are volunteers.

Parking for the Whidbey Island Fair has been the Society's largest fundraiser of the year. Those funds are now lost because the Fair has been canceled. To meet this shortfall, one Board member has offered up to \$1,500 if we can match those funds.

Our expenses include maintenance, insurance, and utilities for the museum and the log cabins on the fairgrounds.

Grant funding in the past years has allowed us to contract work for our website, historical videos, social media posts, community presentations, South Whidbey historical bus tours, and our newsletter.

We have nearly 3,000 followers on Facebook and have increased our membership. Last summer our Saturday morning Langley History Walks sold out nearly every week.

In February of this year we displayed many items from our collection at the Bayview Cash Store with a presentation each Saturday. As February came to an end, we were optimistic for 2020. Then came March and the pandemic.

We may not know the future, but we will be positive in our thinking. Yes, we are seeking donations. If you can help us match or exceed the parking funding at this time, it will be greatly appreciated as will your membership renewal.

Let us not be the generation that failed to keep good stewardship of our community's history.


Bill Haroldson
SWHS Board President



The 1918 flu pandemic on South Whidbey

A little historical perspective may be helpful with our current pandemic. This country has been through a similar, albeit much more lethal pandemic: the 1918 Spanish Influenza.

In his book, *"The Langleyites of Whidbey Island 1899-1921"* the late Bill McGinnis writes about Whidbey Island men working at the steel mills and naval shipyards for the WWI war effort.

"They received high wartime wages. The streets and theatres and hotels were full. Streetcars lurched around corners with men hanging on like monkeys. Everything was priced high. Everything that the army used was scarce, such as wood and leather.

Then came the Spanish Influenza: the horrors of war paled in comparison. It came on like a cold or Le Grippe, with a high fever. It seemed to fasten on the young and strong.

Some recovered. Some lasted a week - some a day. The doctors were baffled. They had nothing with which to fight it. They knew no established treatment or medicines. In cities, people were urged to wear the gauze masks made with a half a dozen layers of cotton gauze. No one was allowed to board a streetcar without a gauze mask.

When the Calista came in to Langley from Seattle, down the gang-plank would come the passengers -- wearing gauze masks over their noses and mouths.

Earl McMillan, a healthy and vigorous young redhead of 22, who was married to my sister Ruth and doing well as a steelworker, caught the flu. He was dead in two days..." - *Bill McGinnis*

The October 7, 1918 issue of The Seattle Star carried this article on its front page as WWI was nearing its final days.

DON'T BE A GRUMBLER

Don't grumble because you can't see a movie or play a game of billiards—or because the schools and churches closed. The health of the city is more important

than all else. An ounce of prevention now is worth a thousand cures.

Preparations were underway by Mayor Ole Hanson and Municipal health authorities to transform Seattle's big public dance halls and churches if necessary, into emergency hospitals to care for Spanish Influenza cases if the epidemic is not checked.

This action was decided upon as a preparatory measure, supplementing the order Saturday that closed schools, theaters, motion picture houses, pool halls and all indoor assemblages.

Schools re-opened in January, and by March, there were no new cases of the Spanish flu in the Seattle area.

Help Bar Deadly Influenza From Seattle

By DR. J. D. TUTTLE, State Health Commissioner. By SURGEON GENERAL RUPERT BLUE, U. S. Public Health Service.
Don't get into crowds, don't cough or sneeze without using a handkerchief, get plenty of fresh air, and when the symptoms of a cold appear isolate yourself as far as possible from others.
First there is a chill, then fever, headache, backache, reddening of the eyes, aches all over the body and general prostration. Persons so attacked should go to bed at once and call a physician.

NIGHT EXTRA FOR INFORMATION
Call Main 3000

The Seattle Daily Times

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, SATURDAY EVENING, OCT. 5, 1918. Price 3c

CHURCHES, SCHOOLS, SHOWS CLOSED

EPIDEMIC PUTS BAN ON ALL PUBLIC ASSEMBLIES

MR. LOVERING'S COMMENT
SEATTLE TO MAKE FIGHT ON DISEASE
Major and City Health Officer Will Demand Store and Gadget Closes in Quest for

We can't draw on your imagination for expenses to Berlin! Put over that Liberty Loan!

AMERICANS AND FRENCH SMASH FOE
U.S. TROOPS

Halls and Churches to Be Flu Hospitals

DON'T BE A GRUMBLER

Don't grumble because you can't see a movie or play a game of billiards—or because the schools and churches closed.
The health of the city is more important than all else. An ounce of prevention now is worth a thousand cures. In Boston, influenza has taken a toll of thousands. We do not want to court that situation here.

Write your own pandemic history...

As we look back on events that have shaped our lives, we often ask what was it like then?

Today many are trying to compare the Spanish flu of 1918 to the current coronavirus pandemic.

Yet, there is no one alive today that can tell their story.

Here is your chance to become part of local history. Write a story about your experiences with the 2020 coronavirus pandemic. It can be short or long but would capture life on Whidbey as they experienced it.

Young and old are encouraged to tell their experiences.

How did the pandemic change you and your family's lives? It could include pictures or even videos.

All would be submitted or copied into a digital format.

The stories will be archived into our collection and become property of the South Whidbey Historical Society.

It would be a digital time capsule of the pandemic for Whidbey Island available for researchers, family members, or anyone with an interest in history to look back to 2020.

As of the writing of this article, details are being worked out as to how to submit stories.

We will ask that you identify yourself and describe who you are. For example, are you a health worker, first responder, a business owner, student, or a retiree?

We will be providing more information about this project on our website and Facebook page.

Meanwhile start thinking and writing about your story.

South Whidbey Historical Society Membership Form

**Keep our remarkable local history alive for future generations.
Become a member or renew your annual membership.**

Please fill in the information below and mail it along with a check to:
South Whidbey Historical Society / PO Box 612 / Langley WA 98260.

You may also join or renew online at our website at: www.southwhidbeyhistory.org



Name _____

Address _____ City, State, & Zip _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Enclosed are my annual membership dues:

- Individual (\$20) Household (\$30)
 Business (\$50) Lifetime (\$300 or more)

My Donation: (SWHS is a 501(c)3 nonprofit)

- Enclosed is a donation of \$ _____

Help us share South Whidbey history.

**Please make a donation to the
South Whidbey Historical Society and
remember us in your estate planning
so that we may continue sharing our
local history. Thank you.**

Reopening of the South Whidbey Historical Museum

Under Phase 3 of Covid-19 restrictions, museums are allowed to open.

Two of our volunteers attended statewide webinars dealing with reopening of historical museums. They found that it is a complicated process.

It will require a plan posted within the museum with many restrictions in place to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

The safety of everyone is the highest priority. The restrictions include the wearing of masks by everyone including visitors and docents, social distancing in the museum, limiting the number in the museum at any one time, regular cleaning of any surfaces touched by visitors, and following all State guidelines.

Many of these restrictions are confusing and may not apply to a small museum. Most of our volun-

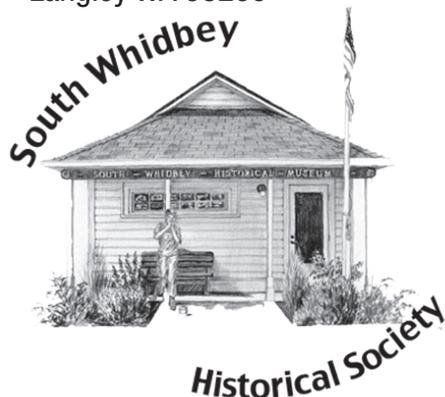
teers fall into high-risk categories because of their age and medical conditions.

After examining the process, the SWHS Board decided not to reopen the museum at this time but to continue outreach via our online endeavors.

The museum will open when it is safe to do so with fewer guidelines. Many other small historical museums are doing the same.

Visit us on Facebook at: www.Facebook.com/SouthWhidbeyHistory

South Whidbey Historical Society
PO Box 612
Langley WA 98260



Help us conserve and communicate local history

Like most small nonprofits, the Covid-19 restrictions have hit us hard. On top of that, our main fundraiser – parking fees for the Whidbey Island Fair

– will not happen this year because the Fair has been cancelled. Fortunately, we have a donor who will make a matching donation up to \$1,500 if we can raise an

equal amount. Will you help?

You can use the enclosed donation envelope, or donate online at our website at www.SouthWhidbeyHistory.org.



We look forward to a time when we can resume our community local history presentations such as last fall's talk on William Shelton.

Thanks to *Hanson's Building Supply* for sponsoring this newsletter issue

Thanks to Victor Hanson of Hanson's Building Supply for underwriting the printing of this newsletter issue.

Hanson's Building Supply was started in 1980 and is a family-run business in Bayview.

The company has been a good friend to the South Whidbey Historical Society over the years.

Would you like to sponsor a future issue of *Now and Then*?

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Contact Board President Bill Haroldson via email at SWHMuseum@gmail.com or by calling (360) 221-2101.

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www.SouthWhidbeyHistory.org