

**Frozen Landscapes, Swirling History: Constructing Meaning at San Juan Island
National Historical Park**

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A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Urban Design and Planning

University of Washington

2013

Committee:

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Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

Department of Urban Design and Planning

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National Historical Park

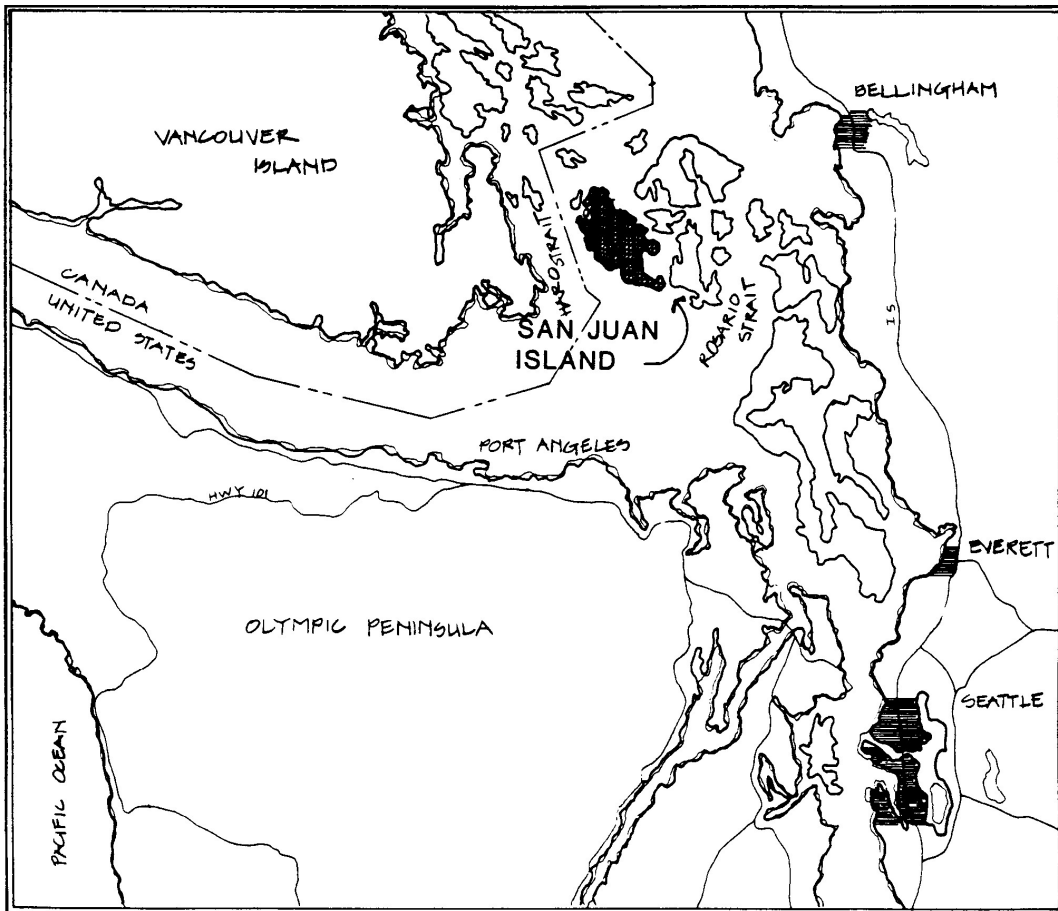


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¹Maps on cover and in Appendices B and C from: Cathy Gilbert. *Historic Landscape Report: American Camp and British Camp, San Juan Island National Historical Park, Washington*. Seattle, Wash: Cultural Resource Division, Pacific Northwest Region, National Park Service, Dept. of the Interior, 1987. Print. n.p.

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² Gilbert n.p.

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Abstract

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This thesis is about meaning, history, and landscape interpretation. Specifically, it examines the messages and media of interpretation at San Juan Island National Historical Park (SJINHP) in Western Washington. Drawing from planning and interpretive documents, I reconstruct the history of interpretation at SJINHP to show a preservation paradigm intent on freezing the sites within the historic period of commemoration. Through field observations, I assess the interplay of official meaning through planning and the dynamic “swirl” of history that comes to life in the park through the practice of interpretation both within and beyond the two sites at American and English camps. I then turn to an account of emerging interpretive practices within the National Park System (NPS), looking specifically at the “whole story” approach to the interpretation of history. Finally, I assess interpretation at SJINHP in light of recent developments in the NPS by looking at a number of different park units. Drawing from these examples, I assess web-based interactive media as a next potential phase in the construction of meaning at the park and as a novel direction in interpretation for SJINHP.

I

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Figure 1: View from Mt. Finlayson, American Camp

INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the construction of meaning through landscape interpretation at San Juan Island National Historical Park (SJINHP) in Western Washington. A remote landscape situated on the largest island of the San Juan Archipelago, SJINHP comprises two distinct sites, each rich in significance. **English Camp** is meticulously groomed and clearly delineated. It features manicured lawns adjacent a tranquil bay, enclosed by stands of fir and hardwood. Mt. Young east of the parade grounds affords territorial views looking out west over Vancouver Island. Stands of endangered Garry Oak woodland dot the hillside and encircle the Royal Marine cemetery, just over midway on the approach to the summit.

Where English Camp might be called enclosed and tranquil; **American Camp** is a landscape of dramatic views and exposure. A southeastern peninsula jutting into the Salish Sea, American Camp offers views of Mt. Baker to the northeast; the North Cascade Range to the east; Mt. Rainier to the southeast; and the majestic Olympics

arising out of the southwest.⁶ Winds scatter grass-seeds across waving grassland, a last haven of diminishing prairie landscape endemic to the coastal Pacific Northwest. Atop Mt. Finlayson sweeping views make the cultural and natural features discernible: the blowout adjacent to South Beach suggests heavy winds off the Strait of San Juan Da Fuca; the freshwater springs and seeps are marked by clumps of dense thicket; and waves of billowing grass show either copper or blonde depending on the season, while far in the distance an American flag waves atop the parade grounds.

The park provides extensive recreational opportunities. Mountain bikers and equestrians accompany hikers and dog-walkers along an network of trails surrounding and cutting through the English Camp parade grounds; beach goers and picnickers line South Beach, while whale watchers at American Camp scan the strait of San Juan de Fuca looking for pods of orca. Ornithologists, naturalists, and joggers all mix at SJINHP, and local island groups and residents host barbeques and birthday parties at a number of picnic sites at either camp. In this way it is just as much neighborhood park as it is national park, just as much backyard as it is hallowed ground.⁷

The story of the Pig War provides the thrust for interpretation at the two camps, and relates the story of mid-19th Century joint military occupation to the final settlement of the Oregon Territory dispute between the United States and Great Britain. The Pig War derives its name from the killing by an American frontiersman of a pig belonging to the Hudson Bay Company, the British mercantilist operating the Bellevue Farm on San Juan Island's southern peninsula. After a brief spasm toward war, thirteen years of

⁶ SJINHP, North Cascade and Olympic National Park were established in large part due to the legislative success of Senator Henry M. Jackson, whose role in expanding the national parks is described on an interpretive wayside atop Mt. Finlayson at American Camp.

⁷ See locational map in Appendix B, pp.56.

peaceful joint occupation commenced in 1859. The question of sovereignty was passed finally to an independent arbiter, Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany, who ruled in favor of the American claim to the San Juan Islands in 1872.

SJINHP was established in 1966 through enabling legislation to commemorate a moment when the territorial ambitions of the fledgling United States were significantly realized. Over the years, the meaning of the Pig War – and subsequently the park – has changed in ways both subtle and significant.

OBJECTIVES

This thesis tracks those changes, offering a view of the park whereby meaning is contingent upon official messages, interpretive media, and interpretive practices both within and beyond park boundaries. These changes occur despite efforts to “freeze” the sites, a preservation strategy observed by Temkin to construct or – in the case of SJHP – reconstruct the historic scene to the appearance of the period of time the park commemorates.⁹ The freezing of the historic scene describes the predominant planning and interpretive framework for the park pursued through official planning and interpretive documents. Nonetheless, disparate messages and practices emerge within this paradigm, and I look to artifacts like park brochures, audio-visual media, along with living-history programs to show a progression of historically contingent meanings that challenge the idea of a fixed park meaning. Then, in light of emerging trends in the messages of landscape interpretation at other NPS park units, and with mind to the

Martha Temkin, “Freeze-Frame, September 17, 1862: A Preservation Battle at Antietam National Battlefield Park.” *Myth, Memory, and the Making of the American Landscape*. Ed. Paul Shackel (Gainesville: UP of Florida 2001) 123:140.

advance of technology within the information age: I explore new directions for the meaning of the park, arguing for a transition from interpretation to interaction.

I forward my research in four sections. In Section II I define landscape interpretation and discuss it as a practice in constructing meaning for this national historical park, drawing from the work of NPS scholars, official NPS guidelines for landscape interpretation, and the academic literature of park interpretation. I look specifically to Temkin's study of Antietam as a precedent for understanding the "frozen landscape" and also as a methodological precedent, while identifying primary and secondary sources key to my study.

In Section III I describe interpretation at SJINHP as it is constituted through park planning and interpretive documents, showing the meaning of the park to have changed with official messages and interpretive media, and noting the emphasis on the preservation of the frozen, historic scene. I note narrative permutations, expansions, and progressions, and argue that the dominant narrative of the Pig War is reconstructed again and again: first through the mandate, then through early general management plans and interpretive prospectuses, and so on through subsequent iterations of the park brochure, each altering or affirming the meaning of the park, and often introducing new narratives for interpretation. In addition, based on my own observations and participation in interpretation at SJINHP, I provide an account of the practice of interpretation, accounting for wayside exhibits that stand out from the frozen landscape and also for the performance of historical re-enactment. I supplement these observations with an account of how interpretation occurs beyond park boundaries through interaction, both through the activities of park interpreters working in the community, and through online media.

Interaction, I argue, destabilizes the fixed meaning of the frozen landscape, and the meaning of the park is shaped through exposure to new interpretive contexts -- new times and places.

In Section IV I shift gears and assess interpretation on a broader scale. Drawing from emerging practices within a number of national park units, I consider the “whole story” approach to interpretation and consider its application to SJINHP. I also note the place of online media and mobile technology in recent interpretive practices, and without getting too far into specifics, assess opportunities for interpreting SJINHP in the future, first by asking: what is the “whole story” of SJINHP? And second: what is a novel way to tell it? I pursue these questions and conclude in Section V with a few points of reflection. I turn first to a review of the literature.

II

* * *

LITERATURE REVIEW

Early national park scholar and interpreter Freeman Tilden notes: “The word interpretation...refers to a public service that has so recently come into our cultural world that a resort to the dictionary for a competent definition is fruitless.”¹⁰ Tilden’s *Interpreting Our Heritage* remains a landmark work in the history of interpretation in the National Park Service, his six principles of interpretation indicative of the unique practice the agency would come to develop. Tilden defined interpretation “as an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original

¹⁰ Freeman Tilden. *Interpreting Our Heritage*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987. Print. 3.

objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information.”¹¹ Since Tilden, the definition of landscape interpretation within the NPS has come to be a matter of official record.

The NPS *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* define interpretation as the “reading of the landscape,” focusing on the functional “tools and techniques of interpretation,” which can include “guided walks, self-guided brochures, computer-aided tours, exhibits, and wayside stations.”¹² Interpretation reflects the “landscape’s significance and historic character,” with the resources interpreted evident of “varying levels of integrity or even differing periods of significance, both of which can result in a multi-faceted approach to interpretation.”¹³ Interpretive goals, the guidelines assert, effect the very treatment of the landscape.

A recent literature looks critically at the role of the NPS in its treatment of history through interpretation. A wide range of disciplines, reflecting the accuracy of Tilden’s assertion that interpretation is “an art which combines many arts,”¹⁴ is critical of the role of the NPS in “promoting and preserving the ideals of cultural leaders and authorities, developing social unity, and maintaining the status quo.”¹⁵ In the eyes of the critics, the official history conveyed through interpretation furthers the dominant paradigm of meaning to the exclusion of other possible stories and meanings. The preservation of social unity entails the subordination of divisive moments in American

¹¹ Tilden 8.

¹² *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*, 14 Dec. 2012. Online.

¹³ *Guidelines*. 14 Dec. 2012. Online.

¹⁴ Tilden 9.

¹⁵ Paul Shackell, introduction. *Myth, Memory, and the Making of the American Landscape*. (Gainesville: UP of Florida, 2001) 6.

history to the myth of one America as a land undivided, of one reconciled people comprising a nation of inexorable progress.

Critiques encompass a range of methodologies. Shackel's edited collection of national park cases, *Myth, Memory, and the Making of the American Landscape* includes: the gender politics of national commemoration (Workman on memorializing the Women's Movement); war, race, and representation (Seibert on the issue of African American soldiers at the National Battlefield at Manassas and Dubel on Japanese-American internment at Manzanar National Historic Park); the contested meaning of contested ground (Brown on the Lakota and Wounded Knee Battlefield Monument); and tourism and authenticity (Palus on the carriage roads of Acadia National Park).¹⁶ I follow Temkin's treatment of the NPS National Battlefield at Antietam as particularly relevant to the case of SJIHP.¹⁷

Temkin mines park legislative and administrative history to illustrate the ways in which meaning within Antietam National Battlefield changes, responding to the political, social, and cultural priorities of the day. Antietam, first commemorated by a local veterans association on September 17, 1867, five years to the day after the "single bloodiest day of the Civil War," would come under NPS management in the early 20th Century and interpretation would broaden beyond that bloody day in September. During the 1950s and 1960s, Antietam became a place for the interpretation of the emancipation proclamation and women's history, in line, as Temkin notes, with the rise of civil rights

¹⁶ All in Shackel, see: Courtney Workman. "The Woman Movement: Memorial to Women's Rights Leaders and the perceived Images of the Women's Movement." 47:66; Erika K. Martin Seibert. "The Third Battle of Manassas: Power, Identity, and the Forgotten African American Past." 67-84; Janice L. Dubel. "Remembering a Japanese-American Concentration Camp at Manzanar National Historic Site." 85:102; Gail Brown. "Wounded Knee: The Conflict of Interpretation." 103:118; Mathew M. Palus. "Authenticity, Legitimation, and Twentieth-Century Tourism: The John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Carriage Roads, Acadia National Park, Maine." 179:196.

¹⁷ Temkin 123:140.

and feminism in America. In the 1970s and 1980s emphasis on the ordinary lives of individual soldiers emerged concurrent with the rise of social history.¹⁸ In recent years, following the development of a general management plan, park administration has attempted to roll back the landscape, returning it to resemble the single day of battle to the exclusion or marginalization of these other narratives. A hierarchy in interpretive themes has emerged and as Temkin notes: “the idea of preservation through freezing can result in a terrible erasure and silencing of events and people affected by both past events and present interpretations.”¹⁹

In Temkin’s account, planning is essential to the practice of landscape freezing. The 1982 General Management Plan for Antietam provides an official administrative impetus for the restoration of the landscape to its presumed appearance upon the single day of battle. While landscape freezing often carries the veneer of preserving authenticity, it is also a response to encroaching development, which Temkin notes is “another instance of the interpretive stance being influenced by current social conditions and concerns” -- an instance of its historical contingency.²⁰ Freezing, Temkin observes, suggests an effort to interpret only the “truth” of the historic moment, where: “only one story is important and all others are silenced.”²¹

Despite occupying seemingly disparate poles of war and peace - Antietam commemorating the enormous human casualty of war and SJINHP marking a period of peaceful military occupation - the two parks are nonetheless closely linked, both by the time period they commemorate and by their current approach to preservation. SJINHP

¹⁸ Temkin 124:132.

¹⁹ Temkin 130.

²⁰ Temkin 130.

²¹ Temkin 133.

too makes the fixing of the historic scene to a distinct historical period of significance a priority, and projects from it the dominant park narrative of peace and diplomacy as the lesson or moral of the Pig War. The practice of interpretation in this sense is one of revealing meaning from an intact historic scene, and there emerges an effort to treat as heretical any attempt to redefine the story and meaning of the park.²³ Meaning is not a construction by this account, but rather is already present in the preserved landscape, awaiting revelation by the interpreter.

It is this idea I intend to challenge, arguing for interpretation as an act of constructing meaning, and denying the notion of any fixed truth waiting to be revealed. To that end, I follow Temkin's approach to the frozen landscape at Antietam and explore the historical contingency of the frozen landscape at SJINHP, arguing for a reading of park history as a means to understanding the historic events the park intends to interpret.

What follows from this is a discussion of new directions and the role of new media in interpretation at SJINHP. If meaning at SJINHP is recognized as historically contingent, shifting despite efforts to freeze the landscape: how might this lead to new constructions of meaning both within and beyond the park? What are other parks doing through new media and messaging that might inform 21st Century practices of constructing meaning through interpretation? I examine these questions to begin a dialogue about the meaning of the park within the present and for the future.

²³ Temkin 133. Temkin draws heavily here from Linenthal who argues for the value of freezing the landscape. Edward Tabor Linenthal. Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991. Print.

METHODS

I mine the collected literature of park administration, planning, and interpretation to assess how these documents have dictated the official messages and the media of park interpretation, and how they have contributed to the construction of meaning at SJINHP. In my analysis I include archival park brochures which offer clear statements with regard to the meaning of the park and the value of its commemoration. I fill gaps in my account by drawing from Cannon's *Administrative History*, which covers the park from its founding until the mid-1990s, and I pick up the thread where Cannon's account ends in 1997. The primary documents I analyze include the 1971 and 1984 interpretive prospectuses, the 2008 General Management Plan (2008 GMP), and a number of park brochures spanning the late 1960s to the present. Other documents – the 1968 and 1979 general management plans – I review through Cannon's *Administrative History*.

My research draws also from experience: study of the site in a studio setting and as a participant in park interpretation programs.²⁵ In the summer of 2012 I interned at the park. I gave interpretive tours, observed rangers doing the same, and researched the park archives. I supported park events and operations and attended lectures that addressed a spectrum of interpretive themes, including: the Pacific Coast survey, Native American land stewardship practices, site ecology demonstrations, flag-raising ceremonies and period and replica weapons demonstrations. I tied down the tents before Encampment, the annual July re-enactment ceremony and demonstration, and captured extensive footage of the weekend. I filmed short interpretive videos and provided event

²⁵ The studio, BE 598 of the University of Washington's College of Built Environments, studied the site as part of the 2011-2 *Parks for the People* design competition hosted by the NPS and Van Alen Institute. The other finalists included the University of Pennsylvania, the Kansas State University, Florida International University, the Pratt Institute, Cornell University, and the two award recipients: the City College of New York and Rutgers University.

photography distributed through park social media channels. I explored the sites extensively and blogged about the experience.²⁶

I also observed. Park Chief of Interpretation Mike Vouri is fond of saying that “history swirls around San Juan Island,” a remark that plays poetically with strong winds off the strait of San Juan de Fuca as they sweep across the American Camp prairie.²⁷ I use my observations to show that American and English Camps are complex sites, host to a panoply of historical narratives that predate the Pig War and extend beyond it, narratives that have nonetheless become secondary to the official history commemorated at the two camps. I observe a tension between the idea of a swirling history and a preservation program intended to freeze the landscape, and I bring this tension to the fore to depict the sites at SJINHP as places of contested meaning, where the official dominant narrative leaves uncovered other possible stories to be interpreted.

I also observe how interpretation at SJINHP extends beyond the boundaries of the park. Through lectures and events at the public library, the local community college, the performing arts center, and even at the main street Farmer’s Market in Friday Harbor: the meaning of SJINHP is increasingly constructed not simply through landscape interpretation but through interaction – with the local community, with tourists, and even through means of online and digital technology. The park website and social media channels represent places where interpretation in the park is no longer *within* the park. I probe the implications of a landscape interpreted in this way by drawing from my own experience and with an eye toward emerging NPS trends. I begin my investigation with a lay of the landscape, describing the sites of American and English camps and detailing

²⁶ The blog was hosted by the Van Alen Institute to put the *Parks for the People* studio findings into practice.

²⁷ Vouri, Park tour, Jan 2011.

the ongoing efforts to reconstruct the historic scene under the dictates of official planning and interpretive documents.

III

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THE FROZEN LANDSCAPE²⁸

ENGLISH CAMP



Figure 2: Restoration of the blockhouse, English Camp

Today the parade grounds at English Camp are central to the historic scene, carefully constructed to provide visitor access to the site with minimal interruption of the collected historic resources.²⁹ Physical remnants of the military occupation include the blockhouse,

²⁸ For historic base maps of the two sites from Gilbert's *Historic Resources Inventory*, see Appendix C.

²⁹ English Camp, which passed into the hands of the Crook Family following the military occupation, at the time of commemoration had the barracks, hospital, and blockhouse still situated on the site, though deeply

the bottom portion of which is replaced periodically due to saltwater intrusion, a summer ritual occurring about every seven years on the lawns of English Camp.³⁰ The formal gardens, once site to a Royal Marine vegetable garden, are now ornamented with flowers and maintained through hedgerows. A military-era storehouse now stores replicas of military-era weapons and assorted props for the staging of re-enactments, notably the annual Encampment event, attracting re-enactors to perform the times of joint occupation on the English Camp parade grounds. The hospital³¹ and barracks are an amalgam of materials, some original, others not, and the latter of which serves as the visitor center for English Camp in the summer months, host to the audio/visual presentation of the Pig War and a small gift store. The cemetery atop Mt. Young is a small fenced plot of restored headstones marking the remains of six Royal Marines lost to the occupation, though none lost to combat. Century old fruit tree lineages within the orchards northeast of the parade ground remain periodically fecund. The flagpole within the parade grounds, though not original³², flies the Union Jack, the only non-British protectorate permitted to do so in an official capacity. Each of the military-era buildings is painted and repainted in

decayed. No structures remained at American Camp during this period, and photographs around the time of the park's founding suggest the extent to which those at English Camp were near ruin.

³⁰ This is Vouri's estimate. The bottom portion of the blockhouse is replaced through a process combining 19th Century log-framing techniques with modern materials and tools. Interestingly, the second level of the blockhouse remains untouched and original to the commemorative period, providing a metonymical understanding of how the construction of the frozen landscape at English Camp literally rests on a regime of constant intervention in the present. In the future, given the as of yet unstudied prospect of sea level rise effecting two camp sites, it remains to be seen how the frozen landscape will respond to a warming planet. (Vouri, personal correspondence, July 2011)

³¹ The hospital, like each of the existing historic structures at American Camp was auctioned in 1872 at the conclusion of the military occupation. It was not resituated and restored to the English Camp parade grounds in 1974.

³² Vouri relates that as the British vacated the camp in 1872, they cut down the flagpole at the parade grounds, ostensibly for the purpose of not allowing the Americans to immediately hoist their flag. Thus while the occupation passed peacefully, this act suggests the extent to which it was still dictated by the symbols and rituals of war. Following the collapse of a subsequent flagpole at the parade grounds in the 1990s, the British government donated a modern, crank operated flag pole that sits at English Camp today. (Vouri, personal correspondence, July 2011)

whitewash, the composition of which is intended to reflect materials and techniques of the mid-19th Century. The Crook House, an outlier of the historic period, was originally painted white, and is now a muted olive tone in order to differentiate it from those structures dating to the military period.³³

AMERICAN CAMP

American Camp shows a similar project of preservation, intent on recreating and keeping intact the feel of the military period across a dynamic prairie landscape. The parade grounds are a short walk from the current visitor center and parking lot which are deliberately set aside from the historic resources. Enclosed by a white picket fence, the officer's quarters and military barracks sit adjacent the flag pole flying the American flag at the parade grounds. The laundress' quarters sits just outside the fence. Each of the structures was auctioned off and removed from the site following the occupation, with the barracks arriving to the parade grounds as recently as 2010.

The officer's quarters and barracks, it was revealed recently, are not in fact original to the site, having served at Fort Bellingham in 1856 *prior to* the Pig War and joint occupation. Though preserved to construct the historic period from 1859-1872, they have a history prior to the Pig War, and have to this point undergone multiple relocations,

³³ Cannon notes that the demolition of the Crook house was proposed and that the structure would be mined for building components from the military era. By the time of the 1984 prospectus though, the Crook house had emerged as a secondary interpretive theme for the park, in light of the role of Jim Crook, the late proprietor, for his role in maintaining the grounds at English Camp both prior to and after the founding of SJINHP. As it is currently, the Crook House is painted in earth tones to distinguish it from the historic period.

renovations, and expansions.³⁴ The interiors of these buildings remain un-restored and



Figure 3: Officer's quarters and military barracks, American Camp.

inaccessible to the public.

The redoubt, directly south of the parade grounds suggests the lengths to which American troops fortified their position under the threat of British warships, moving boulders and earth to establish militarily defensible ground. A flagpole marks the site of the Bellevue Sheep Farm directly south of the parade grounds and Lyman Cutler – the settler whose bellicosity precipitated the military standoff -- is believed to have staked his claim approximately a half-mile to the north.

The historic scene the two camps collectively freeze is a product of elaborate construction, spanning years of park resource investment, planning, restoration and maintenance. From the very early days of the park's existence until the present, the re-

³⁴ Staff, "Historic building moves slowly back home," [San Juan Islander](#) 03 Dec 2010. Online.

creation of the historic scene has served as a top planning priority, seen as vital to the park's interpretation programs and ultimately to the meaning of the park. What started as a preservation program focusing on the repatriation of military-era structures now extends directly to the management of natural resources, and the flora and fauna of SJINHP are managed through an effort restore the best estimate of Pig War period authenticity to the sites. In the next section, I relate the attempt to freeze the landscape evident in park planning and interpretive documents, and suggest also that the historic scene allows for a staging of park messages that are anything but frozen. I begin where the park begins, with the 1966 founding legislation.

1960s – 1970s

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Secretary of the Interior is authorized to acquire on behalf of the United States by donation purchase with donated or appropriated funds, or by exchange lands, interest in lands, and other such property on San Juan Island, Puget Sound, State of Washington, as the Secretary may deem necessary for the purpose of interpreting and preserving the sites of American and English camps on the island and commemorating the historic events that occurred from 1853 to 1871 on the island in connection with the final settlement of the Oregon Territory boundary dispute, including the so-called Pig War of 1859.³⁶

The legislative mandate authorizes the park to pursue a national interest in the acquisition of lands and the development of resources necessary to commemorate the Pig War and the events within this period.³⁷ It introduces the theme of American westward expansion

³⁶ United States. Cong. Senate. House Report No. 2623. Senate Report No. 510. Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs. An Act to Authorize the establishment of San Juan Island National Historical Park in the State of Washington, and for other purposes. (80 Stat. 737). 1966. Web. 24 Dec. 2012. San Juan Island Administrative History. http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/sajh/adhiala.htm

³⁷ Interestingly, the mandate does not make any reference to the Civil War, a conflict that, as illustrated through the scale of casualty at the Battle of Antietam, overshadows the Pig War in terms of national significance both within the period of commemoration and today. Vouri attributes, for example, the poor

into the Oregon Territory and the subsequent contestation with the British regarding land sovereignty. As such, the first construction of park meaning occurs through the mandate, and the initial meaning of the park is in fact instrumental as a means: it allows the NPS to begin consolidating land, to begin establishing the boundaries of the historic scene, and to pursue a planning and interpretive agenda centered on the aforementioned themes.

Just what lands would be needed and how boundaries would be drawn was the subject of an earlier study, the 1965 *San Juan Island National Historical Park: A Proposal*. This document proposes that SJINHP be “established to protect the significant historic features at English and American Camps for public enjoyment” and that “development must be subordinate to the historic setting while allowing the visitor access to the historic features and making provisions for appropriate management and protection.” Critical to the report is the timing: “rapidly expanding interest in subdivision and sale of property on San Juan Island emphasizes the need for early action on a proposal.”³⁸ Thus in so far as the establishment of SJINHP is an act of historic signification, it is also – as Temkin observes of Antietam’s program of freezing -- historically contingent, the urgency derived from mounting development pressures. The meaning of the park is thus tied to the objective of preserving historical resources from the encroachment of development.

Acquiring the land for SJINHP entailed the displacement of private ownership interests, and condemnation proceedings lasted through 1966 and on into the 1970s. The

condition of American soldiers at American camp during the occupation to the greater priority of supplying soldiers at the front lines of the war waged in the east. (Vouri, personal correspondence, July 2011.)

³⁸ Browne, Charles B, John E. Doerr, John A. Hussey, Alfred C. Kuehl, and Ronald N. Mortimore. *San Juan Island National Historical Park: A Proposal (Pig War National Monument) San Juan Island, Washington*. San Francisco, Calif: Western Regional Office, National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, 1964. Print. n.p.

imperative to reconstruct the historic scene thus emerges alongside the imperative for the displacement of private citizen interests, suggesting the extent to which the preservation mandate at SJINHP has sought to fabricate a sense of continuity between history and the present.³⁹ Ironically, the first step in preserving history in the park is to wipe clean the landscape as a register of historical change – to disrupt historical continuity in order to maintain its appearance. This was accomplished through the demolition or removal of structures and infrastructure created subsequent to the period of commemoration. A first step to preservation, in this sense, is the obliteration of the historical landscape in favor of the historic scene.

In the years immediately following park founding, planning activities adhered closely to the development and restoration of the historic scene, through the acquisition of land and historic structures.⁴⁰ The 1967 General Management Plan expands the imperative for the protection of the historic scene to planning for its active development and re-creation. Cannon describes the primary park objectives as the acquisition of lands and development of facilities necessary for the interpretation, restoration, and preservation of the historic scene. Recreation and encouraging local involvement in the preservation of “complementary stories and artifacts of the San Juan Islands” were also objectives, but conveyed through less detail. These actions support park programming

³⁹ Cannon notes that while most of the community viewed the establishment of the park favorably, a number of property holders with holdings at the proposed American Camp were subject to condemnation hearings after not coming to agreement with the NPS over the fair market value of their properties, which were viewed as prime for residences and vacation homes. These proceedings ended in acrimony, and though Cannon observes that the “resentment has quieted as time has passed,” I observed current residents in the park at times chafing at law enforcement in the park, particularly with regard to leash laws (47:53).

⁴⁰ Cannon 43:61.

based on the “general operating mission of the park...the preservation and interpretation of the historic story of joint occupation and the ‘Pig War.’”⁴¹

Perhaps because the early years of the park were concerned chiefly with land acquisition and resource development, there have emerged few interpretive media artifacts from the period. Within this era of limited media two interpretive brochures stand out. The first official park brochure dates to 1968 and is a pamphlet of a few pages. It provides a detailed historical account of the Pig War, arriving eventually to the larger context of the period and providing insight to the American frontier mantra of “Manifest Destiny.”⁴² Drawing from the expeditionary *Report on the Territory of Oregon* read before Congress in 1839, the brochure reconstructs in mythic terms the inexorable expansion of the nation westward:

“Who shall undertake to define the limits of the expansibility of the population of the United States? Does it not flow westward with the never-ceasing advance of a rising tide of the sea?...Occasionally an obstacle presents itself, in some unproductive region of the country; or some Indian tribe; the column is checked; its wings incline toward each other; it breaks; but it speedily reunites again beyond the obstacle, and resumes its forward program, ever facing and approaching nearer and nearer to the remotest regions of the west.”⁴³

The 1973 park brochure follows the same narrative, but provides a key alteration in message.⁴⁴ On a colorful back-flap layout featuring the “biographical sketches of 5 men,

⁴¹ Cannon 46.

⁴² See Appendix A for image of brochure, pp. 53. Park Brochure. San Juan Island National Historical Park. National Park Service: 1968. Print. n.p.

⁴³ Just as Cushing presents westward expansion as righteous and inexorable, the interpretive brochures of the early park era pay little regard to Native Americans. Despite the accomplishments of the American Indian Movement in the 1968 passage of the Indian Bill of Rights – the very same year the park released its first interpretive brochure -- interpretation of Coast Salish inhabitation was apparently beyond the official purview of park interpretation. This despite visceral reminders of their presence and plight encoded into the landscape, particularly in the names of places within the archipelago: Lummi Island, Indian Cove, Canoe Island, Squaw Bay, and the more ominously named Small Pox Bay, Massacre Bay, Skull Island, Victim Island, among others. See Cardle, Doug. Who the Hell Was San Juan?: Examining the Roots of San Juan Islands Place Names. Lopez Island, Wash: Coastal Press, 1982. Print.

2 warlike and 3 peaceful who made and settled the San Juan Island crisis,” the epochal drama of the earlier brochure now unfolds with the historic scene as stage for a morality play: peace through rational diplomacy serving as an antidote to war, “it’s predilection for “mushroom[ing] into murderous affairs” that destroy “property, art, and beauty of countless worth,” and takes the lives of “hundreds of thousands of people.”⁴⁵ Here interpretation moves from the reading of a history of American expansion through the conquest of the west to the interpretation of a moral landscape, the Pig War as a moment from which an important lesson can be drawn. Thus as the historic scene is being assembled, it is not simply to provide a portal of vision into the past, but to present SJINHP as a moral landscape, a meaning that will persist within the park, though not through all interpretive media offered over the years, nor with precisely the same message as articulated in the early park brochures.

The 1971 interpretive prospectus is the first official guide for interpretation at SJINHP and reads as an early “wish list” for the park, reaffirming the priority of freezing the historic scene by outlining a research agenda for its development. It also addresses targeting better local and regional exposure for the sites, primarily through signage at and along prominent transportation hubs and corridors, including airports, ferry terminals, and highways. This strategy of providing 3 points of visitor contact is first articulated in the 1967 GMP and reiterated again here, with one facility each at American and English

⁴⁴ See Appendix A for image of park brochure, pp. 54. Park Brochure. San Juan Island National Historical Park. National Park Service: 1973. Print. n.p.

⁴⁵ “This small piece of land and its attendant island,” the text continues, “will always be a reminder that insignificant causes, shrouded in national honor, need not be allowed to start war.” The language here, particularly the use of the term “mushrooming” is unavoidably evocative of images of nuclear war, the prospect of which was present during the context of the Cold War in which the park was founded. 1973 Park Brochure n.p.

camps to support interpretation and an administrative headquarters in Friday Harbor.⁴⁶ Within these three sites, a hierarchy and visitor itinerary is established: visitors arriving to Friday Harbor would drop in to the headquarters for orientation, proceed to American Camp, and then arrive at English Camp, the “jewel” of the sites.⁴⁷ The implications of this hierarchy favor English Camp due to a more advanced reconstruction of the historic scene, as a site more convincingly historic.

In terms of interpretive media, the 1971 prospectus highlights audio-visual presentations to relay the perspectives of American and British soldiers during the occupation, an emphasis on the technology of interpretation that will become an enduring priority for park management. The prospectus forwards a message for the park under the framework that each camp provides a place for commemorating “justice and friendship and a feeling of well-being” along with the “realization of the senselessness of freewheeling attitudes and clashes of arms.”⁴⁸ Later, this message, distinct from those emerging in the earlier park brochures, will provide the basis for scripting the audio-visual presentation within the park, emphasizing the camaraderie between soldiers in the respective camps and presenting the life and times of occupation as a building-block for current Anglo-American affinity and alliance.⁴⁹ It is the basis for the social history prominent in the park today. In essence, the 1971 prospectus establishes the potential for media exhibits and presentations of the social history of the park and suggests that the

⁴⁶ Cannon 135:141.

⁴⁷ United States. San Juan Island National Historical Park. Interpretive Prospectus. National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center: 1971. Print.

⁴⁸ 1971 Prospectus 2.

⁴⁹ Much of the social history of the park is derived from NPS historian Erwin Thompson’s exhaustive history of the camps and the island during the twelve years of joint occupation. Thompson is credited with providing the basis for siting the historic structures and, as Cannon notes, “is an excellent source of interpretive material for the park regarding everyday life and activities at both English and American camps” (83).

details of life during joint occupation could provide a meaningful illustration of the trajectory toward alliance that would develop between the two nations in later years.

By 1979 the park had made measured progress toward the restoration of the historic scene. In 1974 the military hospital was repatriated to English camp and a program for restoration was planned. The Laundress' Quarters were repatriated to American Camp in that same year.⁵¹ A trailer was installed at American Camp to house the exhibits and the audio-visual presentation specified in the 1971 prospectus. This "temporary" structure would serve as an administrative headquarters for the park and still sits atop the site today. This visitor center at American Camp is notable as the first fully-enclosed structure intentionally situated within the park that has no historic merit. As such, it was located at a distance from the parade grounds. The park constructed also a new by-pass road in 1974 that would eventually replace the county road which cut too close to the historic scene, indication of the substantial lengths to which the park would go in the interest of returning the sites to their appearance in the military period.⁵²

In 1979 the park also approved a new general management plan, a document that reasserted many of the objectives of the 1967 GMP, but differed in at least three significant aspects that would effect interpretation and park meaning. The 1979 GMP again placed preservation of the historic scene as the top resource management priority, but introduced the preservation of "prehistoric remains" in accordance with relevant law and management policies of the NPS and "the purpose of the park."⁵³ Though excavations of the sites at American and English camps dating to the 1890s had revealed evidence of pre-historic habitation, the 1968 archaeological management plan stressed an

⁵¹ Cannon 61.

⁵² For a discussion of the by-pass road and the controversy that accompanied it, see Cannon 66:67 and 77.

⁵³ Cannon 65.

investigation of “known cultural resources and sites at the park,” specifically the “identification of all historic structures” and other features associated with the period of military occupation.⁵⁴ The 1979 plan thus marks a broadening of the time period of interpretation, a broadening of the historical view beyond the confines of the frozen historic scene, if as of yet still in a limited way. The meaning of the park is yet again changing, though in small, subtle ways.

The second significant aspect of the 1979 GMP also corresponds to a change in park meaning, as it represents for the first time an imperative for the preservation of natural resources within the park relevant to the military period. Specifically, the plan calls for the management of “natural resources in order to recreate and perpetuate the historic scene,” and indicates that the freezing of the landscape should be constituted not merely through the repatriation and restoration of buildings, but in the actual management of the flora and fauna of the two sites. During the early years of the park’s founding, this entailed monitoring the European rabbit population, which dug extensive barrens and posed a threat to the integrity of artifacts as well as a hazard to visitors. The 1979 GMP extends this objective, urging cooperation with the state of Washington in “managing tidelands; and to identify threatened or endangered species and preserve their habitat.”⁵⁵

A final important objective of the 1979 GMP called for an expansion of research within the park, which though not a new objective, is notable given the emphasis on prehistory and natural resource preservation specified in the plan. Through research, the narrative complexity latent in the landscapes of British and American Camp would begin

⁵⁴ Cannon 65.

⁵⁵ Cannon 65.

to emerge, and the meaning of the park changes substantially through the creation of new messages in the years that follow. Through the 1979 GMP the park emerges as a place for active interdisciplinary inquiry.⁵⁶

1980s – 1990s

The 1980s and 1990s mark a very productive period for park scholarship and interpretive programming and seed much of the programming currently operational within the park. A record of ranger talks, guided walks, living history programs, and outreach efforts into local and regional communities emerges during this period, suggesting in some respects that the park was flourishing despite seemingly sporadic efforts at planning, a dearth of funding, and frequent administrative flux.⁵⁷

The development of natural resource management objectives is evident from the park brochure issued in the 1980s. Unlike prior brochures focused all but exclusively on the historic period, this brochure includes mention of the park as a place for the experience of nature. Gone are the details and flourishes of the prior iterations relevant to American westward expansion, and the Pig War is no longer offered as a morality tale. Instead, the narrative is a matter of fact telling of the historical state of affairs and the progression of events the park commemorates, enough to keep the visitor informed of the basics. It also goes further than other brochures to keep the visitor oriented. On the flipside of the brochure, large, legible maps of each of the camps suggest a need for clarity absent from maps in prior brochures. A description of the park's marine, prairie

⁵⁶ Currently the park website has a page dedicated to showcasing the archives assembled by Vouri and other park historians, indicative of robust park scholarship over the years, and testament of the close ties of the park to the University of Washington which has a satellite campus in Friday Harbor.

⁵⁷ Cannon 73:78.

and forest environs concludes the description of SJINHP. This emerging theme of the park as a place for the experience of nature is echoed also in the 1984 interpretive prospectus.

The 1984 interpretive prospectus, the last official long-range interpretation plan, was authored in consultation with the Harper's Ferry Center, Division of Interpretive Planning.⁵⁸ Unlike the 1971 prospectus, which was ineffective in implementing the stated objectives, recommendations from the 1984 prospectus provide a substantive framework for the interpretive media at the park today. Recommendations echo the call for permanent visitor contact stations at both camps, call for the addition of museum-like displays to the lobbies of each contact station, and specify the conversion of audio-visual interpretive media to a cinematic medium, among others.

Changes in the technology of interpretation were recommended through the conversion of the Pig War slide presentation to a cinematic medium. The untitled work was scripted during the 1970s when it first appeared as a sequence of water-color slides narrated through voice-over. After an eventual conversion to VHS following the 1984 prospectus, the format would again be changed to DVD, though the content would remain the same: a 12 minute description of the events leading to the military occupation of the island and then the social history of the occupation in subsequent years. It remains a clear yet dated articulation of the life and times of occupation, but is also case and point to Cannon's observation that the park seems to operate on "island time," or even in "survival mode." Due to low staffing and budgets, park staff dedicate the majority of

⁵⁸ United States. San Juan Island National Historical Park. *Interpretive Prospectus*. National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center: 1984. Print.

their time to “maintain basic operations, but not generally making progress on issues and projects.”⁵⁹ Thus in updating interpretive media, the park lags.

The park’s struggle to offer interpretive media attuned to the technology of the day raises questions with regard to the larger coherence of interpretation: why is technology important in presenting the meaning of SJINHP, particularly given the planning and interpretation paradigm consistent with freezing the landscape? Why is new technology essential to interpretation? I bracket these questions for now and take them up again in a discussion of emerging uses of technology within the NPS.

No longer just a place for learning about history, through the 1984 prospectus SJINHP emerges as a recreational landscape, a place for activities, a destination, both for out-of-towners and community members. The 1984 prospectus calls for updated trailheads and waysides to clearly mark interpretive points of interest and signage describing the activities available to visitors. Self-guided tours through American and English camps would become available in the 1990s through the publication of historic walking guides, as stipulated in the 1984 prospectus.⁶⁰ The lobby spaces of each visitor center would come to feature display cases with artifacts from military and prehistory⁶¹ and wall exhibits, all of which are available for view at the park currently.

The next major planning document for the park, the 2008 GMP, to a significant extent builds upon the framework for interpretation adopted in the 1984 prospectus and put into practice in subsequent years. It further integrates interpretation with resource

⁵⁹ Cannon 43:45.

⁶⁰ These illustrated brochures, one each for American and English Camp, are available in drop boxes at the entrances to the parade grounds and explain the circumstances of the Pig War through an interpretation of structures, waysides, and viewpoints.

⁶¹ Vouri constructed the display cases in 1996 through donated materials. Collections are on display at American and English camps but represent just a small portion of the artifacts recovered from the sites, which are kept at the NPS site at Fort Vancouver, WA.

management and recreational objectives, merging the various meanings of SJINHP – its national, natural, historic, and recreational significances into a comprehensive vision for the park.⁶²

2000 – PRESENT

The 2008 GMP provides a vision of the park where many constructions of meaning co-exist. The park is defined "in relation to its national, natural, historic, and community settings." In characterizing the meaning of SJINHP within the park system, however, the 2008 GMP reads as follows: "Among the national park system's nearly 400 units, SJINHP is the only site that illustrates, in its dramatic and largely intact physical setting, how war can be averted and peace maintained through positive action by individuals and governments – a powerful message in unsettled times."⁶³ While there may be multiple meanings emerging at SJINHP, the 2008 GMP specifies that there is a primary importance for the park: that it is stage for a morality play featuring "peace" amidst "unsettled times." While the theme of peace is clear within the narrative of the Pig War, what exactly are these "unsettled times"? It is unclear and not specified, and I will address later in Section IV the relationship of "unsettled" times to the meaning of SJINHP. Therein, I think, are possibilities for considering the future of interpretation at SJINHP.

The language of "intact-ness" is similarly cause for pause: if American and English camps are "intact", then why the sustained emphasis on their restoration, on their

⁶² Cannon notes that a long-range interpretive plan was scheduled for completion in 1999 (80). My attempts to locate this document both in the park archives and libraries of the University of Washington were unsuccessful.

⁶³ San Juan Island National Historical Park: Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. Friday Harbor, WA: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2008. Print.

freezing? And how does “intact-ness” contribute to their “drama” and the consideration of peace in “unsettled times?” The history of the park’s development suggests that the notion of “intact-ness” as reading historical continuity into the restored historic scene is a fabrication. The historic scenes at American and English camps are in fact the result of elaborate and deliberate reconstruction, intentionally developed by the park to give the illusion of continuity. The record of structural repatriation and restoration and maintenance suggests the considerable effort entailed of freezing the landscape, a process that is on-going, and the 2008 GMP takes this program even further.

The 2008 GMP expands the frozen landscape by suggesting the management of natural resources is inseparable from the mandate to preserve and interpret the Pig War period. Thus a preservation paradigm centered on the restoration of the parade grounds -- the built environment -- is extended to the natural features of the park. The preferred alternative “would broaden the scope of resource management and interpretation programs to emphasize the connections and interrelationships between the park’s natural and cultural resources.”⁶⁴ To do so, to restore the flora and fauna of SJINHP to the period of military occupation, requires a further freezing of the landscape through, paradoxically, *new development*: the construction of new facilities, trails and programs that would provide opportunities for visitors to understand the importance of the park’s natural resources. Thus the frozen landscape now extends beyond the picket fence of the American Camp parade grounds and out into the prairie.

⁶⁴ 2008 GMP 57. This is the language from Alternative C, the preferred alternative adopted by the park. Interestingly, Alternative B centers on a greater level of interpretation occurring outside park boundaries, a de-emphasizing of the historic scene that would have broken with prior directions outlined in the general management plans and interpretive prospectuses already mentioned here.

IV

* * *

DEEP TIME AND THE PRESENT

SJINHP begins in 1966 as a park intended to preserve historic resources from the encroachment of development. Meaning changes in the 1970s as these historic resources are repatriated within the sites and the military history is revealed within the landscape to evoke a moral: peace over war, friendship over conflict. In the 1980s and 1990s, the natural, the technological, and the recreational emerge as part of the park message, complicating the meaning of the park and de-emphasizing it as a place of moral import. Through Cannon, an administrative history reveals the park as itself an object of historical inquiry and the practice of how the park interprets history emerges as an area of study. With the 2008 GMP, the multiple, historically contingent meanings are preserved through official documentation and the restoration project – the landscape freeze – is re-affirmed through the inclusion of natural resources as park of the historic scene.

Similar to the emergence of the park as a moral, viewing the park as an ecosystem, which the 2008 GMP accomplishes, intensifies the narrative densities at the sites. The scale of history within the park changes, it broadens and deepens. The meaning of the park is now constructed as understanding the Pig War period across eons – understanding how glaciation formed the alluvial character of the soil, how the Coast Salish people burned prairies in the seasonal search for sustenance and surplus, how British mercantilists tended sheep and livestock to support the global trade of goods, and how a military installment on the frontier clear cut timber and moved earth. Vouri calls this broadening and deepening of history “deep time.”

The idea of “deep time” is reflected artfully in one of the interpretive waysides currently positioned throughout American and English camps entitled "Iceland".⁶⁵ In 2012 large, colorful exhibits replaced anodized aluminum waysides that were the primary means of *in situ* interpretation for an unknown period of years, and which dealt



Figure 4: "Iceland" wayside, American Camp.

exclusively with the interpretation of the historic scene within the historic period. "Iceland" exhibits the principle of deep time through photo collage, blending a contemporary view of Mt. Finlayson with historic photographs to give the impression not of distinct, well-defined historical periods, but of a continuum of change – not a frozen, but a dynamic and swirling landscape. These waysides suggest the tension between the official program of historic preservation through freezing and interpretive programs that

⁶⁵ Vouri, as it so happens, designed these exhibits.

take greater liberty in presenting a more complex understanding of the landscape -- the landscape across "deep time".⁶⁶

By introducing the meaning of the park across a continuum of time and space, extending it beyond the freeze-frame of the historic scene, the frozen landscape becomes unstable, regardless of the steps taken toward its preservation. Narratives gather and disperse: the manicured parade grounds at English Camp are but grass atop a refuse heap, a shell midden that is the accumulation of 9,000 years of prior habitation. History begins to swirl around San Juan Island.⁶⁷

SWIRLING HISTORY

While an investigation of planning and interpretive documents reveals the administrative means through which the landscape at SJINHP is intended to be frozen, looking more broadly at interpretation in the park suggests the meaning of SJINHP is tied to a great complexity of historical themes – the swirling history of the landscape. This suggests that interpretation at SJINHP has developed in official and unofficial ways. Planning and interpretive prospectuses provide one way to construct the meaning of SJINHP, but there are others worth exploring as well, specifically that which Cannon calls “interpretive programming in action.”⁶⁸

Living history programs ranging from re-enactment events like the annual summer Encampment, weapons demonstrations, and a host of other programs from barrel making to blacksmithing, and more recently prairie and woodland conservation, center on interpretation of park themes through direct interaction with park interpreters and

⁶⁶ See examples of replaced waysides in Appendix D, pp. 59-60.

⁶⁷ See example of "deep history" wayside in Appendix E, pp. 60.

⁶⁸ Cannon 146:153.

resources. Re-enactments throughout the 1980s and 1990s centered on the life and times of 19th Century soldiers, following the emphasis on the social history of the island that is the basis for the park interpretive video and a number of visitor center exhibits.⁶⁹ Beginning in the 1970s, park interpreters developed scripts and performed them within the park, donning period military garb and adopting personages reflecting a pastiche of disparate artifacts and affectations. Much in the same way that the sites at American and English camps were frozen through the repatriation of military structures to provide the illusion of historical continuity at the sites, re-enactments at SJINHP borrow from practices and historical artifacts from other sites, notably those that commemorate the Civil War.

Accordingly, the Pig War narrative is often extended to reach other moments and places important to national history, and skilled re-enactors are knowledgeable not just about the social and military history of the island, but capable of performances that demonstrate the larger context. Re-enactors draw links between SJINHP and other times and other places, connecting the Pig War to Pickett's Charge (Gettysburg National Battlefield) and the massacre at Wounded Knee (Wounded Knee Battlefield Monument, National Historic Landmark) through re-enactment, conveying not just the life and times of military occupation but its connection to a broader account of American history, particularly as relevant to peace and war.⁷⁰ Thus while park planning and interpretive

⁶⁹ Cannon 148.

⁷⁰ Both General George E. Pickett and James Forsyth were stationed at American Camp during the period of military occupation. Each would preside over notoriously bloody and dishonorable moments in American military history, suggesting the extent to which the peace celebrated at SJINHP was for some of the soldiers who occupied the islands brief and fleeting. SJINHP Chief of Interpretation Mike Vouri performs "The Life and Times of General Pickett" many summers on the island, an ongoing two-man performance featured at the San Juan Island community theater. He is accompanied by the banjo-picking of Mike Cohen and tells the story of Pickett, for which San Juan Island was but a minor stop along an infamous military career.

programming may have focused primarily on the Pig War period, the actual performance of interpretation reaches across time and place, beyond park boundaries, beyond the Pig War even, if still predominantly confined to an account of American military history.



Figure 5: Flag-raising ceremony salute at Encampment re-enactment, English Camp.

In addition to re-enactment within park boundaries, interpretation occurs also beyond park boundaries. Lectures and scholarly presentations from national park staff and historians occur in local libraries and touch upon themes and artifacts of 19th Century naval exploration such as the life and survey work of James Alden. A 2012 lecture series focusing on Native American land stewardship and cultivation practices attracted speakers from across the Western United States and took place at the local community college in Friday Harbor. Visitors actively participate in park resource management planning and review and comment on management goals and objectives in meetings in

Friday Harbor and Seattle. Meaning for the park – as a place of Native American land stewardship, as a place for community gatherings, as a place for planning and resource management – is increasingly constructed outside of view of the historic scene, beyond the frozen landscape, beyond the boundaries first established through the legislative mandate

Another significant development in park interpretation is the emergence of a park website and social media platforms. The 2008 GMP is the first planning document to acknowledge the importance of web-media in determining how visitors access and are oriented to the park and its resources, though it provides little guidance with regard to how the park should put this wide-reaching media to use.⁷² Currently, the park website is useful in orienting potential visitors to the park, its natural and historic resources, and also for the purposes of interpretation. Pages of the website are dedicated not only to the history of the Pig War, but also to conveying other minor interpretive themes: a brief history of Coast Salish habitation is described in a page called “The First Ones” and notable military figures with ties to the park – Pickett, Forsyth, Alden and others – are described for their time on San Juan Island and also for their connection to the Civil War.⁷³ To a certain extent, the website extends interpretation in a way that follows from the hierarchy established through official planning and interpretation documentation: the Pig War narrative is dominant, while other secondary narratives circle around it, remaining on the periphery, never fully supplanting the primacy of the official park message, that this is an “intact” landscape for commemorating peace over war. In this sense, the website seems a logical extension of official history at SJINHP as it has

⁷² 2008 GMP 162:165. The park launched the first official website in 1998 (Cannon 152).

⁷³ National Park Service. “San Juan Island National Historical Park.” 24 Dec 2012. Online.

adapted over time, reflecting changes in society, culture and politics. However, as the NPS examines new directions for interpretation in the 21st Century, the question becomes: is this the right history for the times?

V

* * *

NEW DIRECTIONS

If the interpretation of history is shown to be a historically contingent practice of constructing meaning, dependent on official messages and media that fluctuate with changing norms and technology, what history will SJINHP interpret in the future? If recent reports from the NPS are any indication, approaches to the interpretation of history at SJINHP may need to adapt, particularly if the Pig War is to provide any sort of moral as it is purported to do in the 2008 GMP. In this next section, I zoom out from an analysis of interpretation at SJINHP to assess more broadly the trajectory of interpretation within the NPS as the agency moves towards a second century of preservation. I hone in on approaches that are responsive to the idea that American history is complex and multifaceted, that supports interpretive practices that look to history to provide lessons for the future. I also survey new media practices that might inform new directions for SJINHP. Ultimately, rather than forward a coherent program for interpretation, my intent in this section is to raise questions and issues relevant to interpretation within the 21st Century. I began with an overview of how interpretation is being conceived in two recent and influential reports.

The 2011 NPS report *A Call to Action: Preparing for a Second-Century of Stewardship and Engagement* outlines an agenda for 21st C landscape interpretation: “In our second century we will fully represent our nation’s ethnically and culturally diverse communities. To achieve the promise of democracy, we will create and deliver activities, programs, and services that honor, examine, and *interpret America’s complex heritage.*”⁷⁴ This message imbues new meaning for national parks and as such is a significant revision of the NPS founding mandate in the 1916 Organic Act, to preserve notable landscapes of natural and historical significance “unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”⁷⁵

The 2009 report, *Advancing the National Park Idea*, forwards a similar vision for the national parks “meeting America’s 21st Century needs.”⁷⁶ National parks need be relevant within the present as the agency pursues “a plan for the future of the parks based *not simply on the grand vision of their founders*, but also on *our own awareness* of environmental problems, a burgeoning population, and critical needs in education.”⁷⁷ National parks are “powerful places to learn about the social and environmental challenges our country faces today” and parks should “offer creative responses to those challenges.” Thus emerging trends in landscape interpretation focus on how meaning of parks can be constructed to respond to the challenges of the present. In this sense, national parks are not static, frozen landscapes for the observation of history; rather, they are places where history should come to life. But how do landscapes respond to the challenges of the present? How can interpretation respond to the authority of legislative

⁷⁴ United States. *A Call to Action: Preparing for a 2nd century of stewardship and engagement*. Department of the Interior. Washington D.C.: National Park Service. 2011. Print. N.P.

⁷⁵ Organic Act. U.S.C., Title 16, Section 1. (1916).

⁷⁶ Emphasis mine. National Parks Second Century Commission. *Advancing the National Park Idea*. National Parks Conservation Association. 2009. Print. 14.

⁷⁷ Emphasis mine.

mandates – the vision of the founders – and still form meanings relevant for the present? What kind of messages and meanings emerge, and how might they apply to SJINHP? I turn now to a discussion of the “whole story.”

THE WHOLE STORY

“Telling America’s whole story,” a park commissioner in the *ANPI* report remarks, “with all its imperfections and beauty, is a gift to ourselves and to the future.”⁷⁸ While one might rightly question the “beauty” of the full American story, what is indisputable is a trend toward greater complexity -- or “wholeness” -- in how the NPS commemorates American history. One way of bringing forward this complexity is through park units that reveal painful, traumatic, or unjust moments in American history, in the interest of bringing reconciliation.

Recently incorporated sites such as the Manzanar Relocation Center National Historic Site outside of Los Angeles, CA (1992); Minidoka National Historic Site northeast of Twin Falls, ID; and the Tule Lake Unit of WWII Valor in the Pacific National Monument (2006), recount stories of Japanese American internment during WWII, preserving landscapes of oppression. Nicodemus National Historic Site (1996) in Nicodemus, KS, the Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site (1998) in Tuskegee, AL, and the African Burial Ground National Monument (2006) in New York City recount also stories of struggle: in these cases, the struggle of African Americans for full enfranchisement and dignity.

Each of these sites suggests that American history is fundamentally this history of struggle, with national parks playing a role in reconciliation through official recognition.

⁷⁸ Quote attributed to Carolyn Finney. National Parks Second Century Commission 5.

Manzanar, Minidoka, and Tule Lake show the struggle of immigrant groups to be free within a country that guarantees freedom to its citizens, and the struggle of a country to stay true to the ideal of freedom when confronted with war. In Nicodemus, Tuskegee, and the African Burial Ground, legacies of slavery, African American disenfranchisement, and political and cultural oppression reveal a struggle for civil rights and the idea that this land of opportunity, equality, and tolerance can also be a land of bondage, of disenfranchisement, and of persecution. The duality of American history is the complexity at root of the 21st Century experience of history. The “whole story” is an attempt to interpret this complexity as essential to American history, the idea that there can be no account of American history that celebrates freedom independent of slavery, no account of justice without injustice, no account of peace without war. In that light: what is the “whole story” of SJINHP?

NEW MESSAGE

An immediate issue in trying to ascertain the “whole story” of SJINHP arises in the attempt to determine just what exactly the struggle is and what the need is for reconciliation. On the surface, SJINHP is a park that commemorates reconciliation without fully recognizing the struggle: the emphasis on the social history of the park favors a narrative of diplomacy, the overcoming of struggle, and the forging of alliance. The peaceful social history of the joint occupation is an antidote to struggle, and as such it obscures that the Pig War did not occur during times of peace within American history. In fact, the entire Civil War would be fought between the killing of the pig and the Kaiser’s binding arbitration. The curious thing about SJINHP then, as a moral landscape,

a park that demonstrates “how war can be averted and peace maintained.” is how little attention is paid to the “unsettled times” of which the park is to serve poignant reminder. What *are* these “unsettled times”? Very little detail is provided through official park interpretation. If the park is meant to provide a moral lesson, what exactly is the teaching? What is being warned against?

Speaking at a public hearing in Friday Harbor in support of the park legislation in 1966, Senator Henry M. Jackson describes the purpose of commemorating the Pig War, echoing the language of “unsettled times” intended to provide a backdrop for the moral meaning of the park:

“In these *troublesome times*, it is well to remember—not only for us but for generations that follow us—the importance of the relationship between the United States and the English-speaking peoples...The bill before us proposes a national historical park to commemorate an event that took place many years ago, from which we can learn much, and profit much, in the future. Certainly other nations can learn a great deal from the outcome of this affair which occurred here over a hundred years ago”⁷⁹

A closer look at the historical context of the park’s founding provides one plausible explanation. On September 9th, 1966, for example, the same day the park was established through legislation, the popular news magazine LIFE ran a feature article entitled “The Air War.” The “Air War” was a through-the-cockpit account of bombing raids in Vietnam and the article documents a period of escalation in American involvement in the Vietnam War, a moment of escalation that would be indicative of even greater fighting to come.⁸⁰ The founding of the park, the time from which it springs, is not a time of peace but one of war and global conflict. This is its historical contingency, the “troublesome

⁷⁹ Emphasis mine. Quoted from official SJINHP announcement for Henry M. Jackson centennial celebration. Jul 2012.

⁸⁰ Tom Flaherty and Larry Burrows, “The Air War: The Most Controversial Phase of the U.S. Involvement in Vietnam,” LIFE 09 Sep. 1966: 44:60.

times” observed by Jackson. The moral of the park – diplomacy as an antidote to war -- is meaningful when considered against the ravages of war, when war is apparent, visible.⁸¹

Looking deeper into American history through the prism of SJINHP, other times of war emerge, meanings of the park that are glossed over currently in the official interpretation gleaned through park and planning brochures. The theme of Manifest Destiny articulated in the park proposal and 1968 brochure, for instance, glosses over the genocidal violence wrought against Native Americans in the settlement of the frontier, choosing to valorize the progress of the American settler over the disappearance of the Native American. This theme is mostly obscured at SJINHP, despite traces of Native American habitation prevalent throughout English Camp. Currently, the park acknowledges the historical presence of Native Americans within the lands that comprise SJINHP, but the relation of their disappearance to westward expansion is not a matter of official interpretation.

While interpretation at SJINHP does touch upon the Civil War, it is a secondary interpretive theme, obscured by the predominance of the narrative of the social history of the Pig War and peaceful occupation. When seen in light of battles like Antietam and in light of an American history that often reads as a history of conflict, it seems a stretch to say that the Pig War means anything more than a brief spasm toward peace amidst a seemingly endless string of war. As such, SJINHP is a site of struggle, with the very elements of the frozen landscape – the military structures, the redoubt at American Camp, the weaponry for re-enactments, the bullets within the display cases at the visitor centers

⁸¹ Jackson’s message in this regard could likely be construed in one of two ways: 1) it is important to remember the forging of alliances when at war, 2) or that diplomacy is always an option in the resolution of conflict. Which message Jackson intended is beyond my means to relate, but the main point is: the message of peace SJINHP represents is most relevant when war is not just a possibility, but a reality.

for each camp – serving as the physical artifacts of war that are nonetheless meant to preserve a message of peace.

NEW MESSENGER

While sites like Manzanar and Nicodemus seek reconciliation through the official recognition of struggle, perhaps at SJINHP it is the history of struggle that needs greater recognition. Perhaps the most compelling way to interpret the Pig War in the 21st Century is to show what it covers up, to show the frozen landscape for what it is: the armature of war intended to convey the importance of peace. But how to bring this view into focus? How can this complex interpretive message of war – on the frontier, at Antietam, and in Vietnam - be presented within the park, as part of a dual American history of war and peace?

In considering these questions, Vouri's concept of "deep time" re-emerges, allowing for the carrying of interpretive themes from one time period to the next, through history into the present. Where the frozen landscape attempts to freeze meaning, "deep time" envelops not only the period represented in the historic scene but also the period of park history in which freezing developed as the preservation paradigm. Thus at SJINHP there is the historic scene and the historical process through which it was reconstructed, and both are on view from the perspective of "deep time."

"Deep time" in this sense is the interpretive principle by which meaning collects within the sites of American and English camps. Glacial history underlies Coast Salish history, which underlies a history of agriculture and military history, all of which underlie the history of SJINHP as an administrative entity – as part of the national park system.

The interpretive theme of peace and war -- of reconciliation and struggle -- is then something to track over the course of “deep time,” to trace from one period to the other, both as it relates to the park, but also in reference to the broad context of American and even global history. The seed of this idea exists in the waysides mentioned earlier, which depict the park across the continuum of time. But what are the tools for the next epoch of interpretation? If the park is to develop a new message, it will need a new messenger.

The idea of a digitally enhanced landscape was common in various guises to each of the final submittals to the 2012 *Parks for the People* competition. The winning submission of City College of New York (CCNY) suggesting that the Nicodemus National Historic Site will likely be appreciated by more people who connect to it online than experience it *in situ*.⁸² For Nicodemus, the future of interpretation is in the communication of the park message through media that push beyond park boundaries, connect to other times and places, and that allow for a relationship of the past to the present, history to the future. Accordingly, the studio group recommended further development of online media through the “Nicodemus Web”, a concept of inter-relationality whereby the interpretive themes of the park are extended to other landscapes, to other times and places.

SJINHP presents a different case. SJINHP is not a remote landscape in the way that Nicodemus is, as the park receives in upwards of 200,000 visitors annually. Nonetheless, the seasonal nature of the park, where operating hours, visitor services, and interpretive programs are reduced in the winter season, presents a different kind of challenge for interpreters. Perhaps a novel way to bring in new media to park

⁸² The park in Nicodemus, Kansas is the least visited site within the park system, according to the studio report. City College of New York Studio, [Finding Common Ground: Nicodemus National Historic Site. Van Alen Institute Online Gallery, Online. 02 Dec. 2012.](#)

interpretation is to think of it as a remote-controlled landscape, to think of opportunities for interpretation within the park to occur through principles of interaction.

NEW MEDIA

Handheld mobile devices are increasingly common and capable of a wide range of operations potentially useful to landscape interpretation. Following the “Go Digital” action item in the 2009 *A Call To Action*, parks like the Homestead National Monument of America and Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park have created digital versions of park interpretive brochures and educational guides available on tablet and mobile devices, enhanced with audio and video to provide a more interactive reading of park resources. Going beyond the display case, Wilson’s Creek National Battlefield hosts a virtual gallery accessible online and through mobile devices, permitting remote access to images and information from the collection of historical artifacts.

Perhaps more at the vanguard of Web 2.0⁸⁴, students in New Orleans’ Jefferson Parish have researched and designed online interpretive media for Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve⁸⁵, while Fort Vancouver National Historic Site in Oregon was among the first units to experiment with QR codes to enhance static interpretive exhibits.

The diversity of approaches – mobile apps, i-brochures, virtual galleries, QR-codes, and user-generated interpretive research – suggests no systemic strategy for

⁸⁴ Defined as an era of internet development characterized by the proliferation of social media and user-generated content. Wikipedia contributors. “Web 2.0.” Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. 12 Dec. 2012.

⁸⁵ The NPS distances itself from this work. On a transfer page from the official park home page to that showing the work of the students: “The National Park Service does not control and cannot guarantee the relevance, timeliness, or accuracy of the materials provided by other agencies or organizations, nor does the NPS endorse other agencies or organizations, their views, products or services.”

determining the role of mobile technology within national parks. Each could be applied to the task of interpreting history at SJINHP and could supplement park efforts to expand the role of online media in interpretation that has already been discussed. Given that the NPS seems content to monitor the progress of various approaches piloted by individual park units, is seemingly time and room to experiment.

One approach congruent with the move towards new media practices for SJINHP might entail digitally enhanced waysides to deliver the more complex message of peace and war without disrupting the historic scene. Emerging technologies for mobile web-enabled devices focus on the bringing to life of physical content through digital scanning, a process whereby a still image is captured activating a transmission of content through the device. A code is scanned and a video shows on the screen, for example.

Imagine approaching a wayside at American Camp. Within the exhibit there is an indicator that the wayside is scannable, with more content revealed when read through a mobile device. Scanning the wayside reveals greater narrative density to the site, as meaning emerges across the continuum of “deep time” on the screen of the user.⁸⁶ The dual theme of peace and war is articulated across a range of time periods, and choices emerge with regard to the narratives being presented: users of the technology can choose among different narrative threads, different layers of meaning collected within the landscape and connecting to themes explored at other parks within the National Park System.

One option, for example, is an audio account of how Manifest Destiny served as the credo for westward expansion, precipitating war and the eventual disappearance of

⁸⁶ A technology currently under development called *Aurasma* promises this kind of interaction, using image-recognition capacities of mobile devices to create means of coding physical objects for virtual content.

Native Americans from land they once inhabited, delivered through the mobile device. Another option would be to interpret the founding of SJINHP as a political-historical construction, and images or documentary video from the war in Vietnam might emerge while a narrator recounts the “troublesome times” in which the park was founded. Each message should emphasize a moment of war simultaneous with the message that the park is a place to reflect not just on the history of war and peace, but also on these themes within the present. The importance of international diplomacy could be emphasized as well, with SJINHP providing a stage for the contemplation of war and peace and a forum for peaceful action. The subtlety of this approach is that it would do nothing to disrupt the historic scene, allowing the landscape to remain frozen in time while history swirls around it through the means of digital technology.

This specific idea was sketched by the UW studio team in the *Parks for the People* competition, as part of a larger approach to considering the role of digital media at SJINHP and more generally across the NPS. Framed as “The Journey,” the studio team asked the questions: how can digital technology assist attract and orient visitors to the park? What can they do with it when they get there? How might it change the experience and interaction with park resources? And what will they think about the park when they return home? The scannable wayside emerges as an opportunity for visitors to interact with park interpretive messages and media, the interpretive resources of the park, though what exactly these messages would be was not fully fleshed out. By focusing on a complex narrative of war and peace across “deep time”, I think a viable interpretation program could be developed.

Ultimately interaction with this digitally enhanced landscape is intended to provoke discourse. As visitors interact with this content they are urged to share their experience through social media, to respond to what they've seen, and ultimately to form their own impressions about the role of the park – to construct their own meanings. While my proposal falls short of specific, concrete steps, it is worth recognizing that to a limited extent the shift toward interaction may already be happening. The *Parks for the People* design competition resulted in the development of at least three forums for the discussion of the park: a blog detailing the studio process from the University of Washington; a blog I contributed to as an intern with the park that is hosted at the Van Alen website; and a website for curating the studio content and submittal.⁸⁷

With these opportunities come also complex challenges for implementation and questions: does being less reliant on physical objects – the historic structures, artifacts, and even the very landscapes – to convey the interpretive message warrant still their preservation? And are there times when the mediation of landscape through mobile technology should not be encouraged – are their times to turn-off?

These questions strike to the heart of ambivalence within the NPS regarding the proper use of digital technology in interpretation. On the one hand, online and mobile technologies are deemed vital to the 21st Century visitor experience; on the other, the history of national parks often promotes these landscapes as places of reverence, as such undeserving of anything other than the direct, visitor-to-landscape connection, minimally mediated by means disruptive to the natural or historic scene.

⁸⁷ My research and that of the studio is curated at <http://parks4people-uw.com/research>.

VI

* * *

CONCLUSION

On an even more fundamental level, the use of digital technology within the parks may potentially shift the very practice of landscape interpretation, just as prior changes in interpretive media have combined with new messages to create new meanings for history at SJINHP. Traditional interpretation practice holds the interpreter primary in the conveyance of the official park message to the visitor, an idea resonant in the refrain “there’s no substitute for a park tour with a ranger.”⁹² The freezing of the landscape follows a similar sort of logic, that the experience of the historic scene and the appearance of authenticity are essential to conveying the official park meaning.

But what happens when the official park meaning is viewed in greater complexity? The power, perhaps, of telling the “whole story” of national park units is to destabilize official history and meaning as that which is exclusive of all possible narratives in favor of one true meaning. American history demonstrates a duality of triumph and pain, freedom and oppression, peace and war and the 21st Century practice of interpretation should not just show an understanding of this relationship, but use it to provide more complex, variegated messages to establish park meaning relevant not just to the past, but for the future. National parks are important public places for commemorating and presenting the complex web of American history, and by considering the “deep time” of park sites, how the landscapes have changed over time and how they are contested ground, a more inclusive and democratic view of history

⁹² I observed this line a number of times during my internship from Vouri, SJINHP Superintendent Lee Taylor, and ranger Doug Halsey. Tilden’s will convey this idea as well.

emerges. "The new history," according to Kruger and Mariani, brings to light "the pain of the past" and the "struggles of the present" to "propose inclusive definitions for democratic futures."⁹³

To carry these 21st Century messages, digital technology provides interesting opportunities as a 21st Century messenger. As park units experiment with new media in interpretation planning and interpretation should account for changes in technology and media practice as essential to how parks convey their messages. As my research into SJINHP demonstrates, a great deal of intentionality and purpose goes into the development of the physical landscape – the historic scene through the frozen landscape, exhibits, and waysides. Considering the digitally enhanced or the online landscape should happen in parallel with the planning of the physical landscape.

If the challenge to the NPS and to SJINHP in the 21st Century is to still be relevant, the pace of change will be rapid. Changes within culture and economy, technological change, changing climate and demographics will all be challenges to the task of curating history through landscape central to the NPS' mission. National parks will perhaps always be stages for dramatizations and re-enactments, the question comes down to who will be performing, what the messages will be, and how they will be perceived, how they will push the national park idea forward. By discussing the performance of history at SJINHP, in light of the new messages and media for the 21st Century, I have hoped to show the historical basis of planning for interpretation that looks backward before moving forward.

⁹³ Kruger, Barbara and Mariani, Phil. *Remaking History*. Dia Art Foundation: Discussions in Contemporary Culture. Seattle: 1989. Print. pg. xi

APPENDIX A: 1968 Park Brochure

THE DISPUTED AREA

Continental Army

British Camp

British Camp

to many Americans, the idea that the great land west of the Rocky Mountains should remain a neutral zone, a buffer between the British Empire and the United States, was a natural one. The British were determined to retain the title of American Oregon country, and to do so they had to face the fact that the United States had a strong claim to the territory. The Oregon-Canada boundary was not clearly defined, and the two nations had to negotiate a settlement. The Oregon Treaty of 1846 was the result of this negotiation, and it established the 49th parallel as the boundary between the two nations. The San Juan Islands, which were the subject of a dispute between the two nations, were included in the territory of the United States.

As a result of the Oregon Treaty, the United States gained control of the territory west of the Rocky Mountains. The San Juan Islands, which were the subject of a dispute between the two nations, were included in the territory of the United States. The islands were of strategic importance, and their control was a matter of concern to both nations. The United States had a strong claim to the islands, and the British had a strong claim to the islands. The dispute was resolved by the Oregon Treaty of 1846, which established the 49th parallel as the boundary between the two nations. The San Juan Islands were included in the territory of the United States.

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ADMINISTRATION
San Juan Island National Historical Park is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20540. Address all inquiries to the Superintendent, Box 549, Friday Harbor, Washington 98250.

THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR—the Nation's principal natural resource agency—has a special obligation to ensure that our expendable resources are properly conserved, that our renewable resources are managed to provide the optimum benefits and that all lands are developed in the progress and prosperity of the future.

THE PIG WAR
On June 15, 1859, an American settler named Lyman Cutler saw a pig raiding his farm. He shot the pig, and the British claimed the pig as their property. The British claimed that the pig was a wild animal, and that it was the property of the British. The United States claimed that the pig was a domestic animal, and that it was the property of the United States. The dispute was resolved by the Oregon Treaty of 1846, which established the 49th parallel as the boundary between the two nations. The San Juan Islands were included in the territory of the United States.

THE OREGON DISPUTE
An Anglo-American agreement of 1819 had provided for the joint occupation of the Oregon Country. By 1845, however, the agreement had become inoperative, and the two nations had to negotiate a settlement. The Oregon Treaty of 1846 was the result of this negotiation, and it established the 49th parallel as the boundary between the two nations. The San Juan Islands were included in the territory of the United States.

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national park service u.s. department of the interior national historical park, washington

APPENDIX A: 1973 Park Brochure

san juan island

KENNETH NATIONAL PARK RESEARCH LIBRARY

Safety Notes
Watch your step, especially in the vicinity of American Camp. The San Juan rabbit digs many holes that can cause sprained ankles and broken bones.

Swimming is discouraged because the water temperature remains below 50 degrees all year. Try beachcombing instead.

Trees, climbing is dangerous for you and harmful to the trees.

Look out for insecure footing on the primitive trails and watch for overhanging tranches and downed limbs.

Administration

San Juan Island National Historical Park is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, P.O. Box 249, Friday Harbor, WA 98250.

As the Nation's national conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. Our water resources program is designed to protect and improve the environment and cultural values of our national waterways through outdoor recreation. The Department stresses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure their efficient and economical use. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for administration of the five island territories under U.S. jurisdiction.

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

San Juan Island in the summer of 1859 was an international tinderbox. When sheep grazed peacefully on the island, the British and the American forces of Great Britain and the United States stood face to face in a confrontation that could at any moment erupt in violence and possibly plunge the two nations into war. The start of the crisis—the death of a pig!

The "Pig War," as the confrontation on San Juan Island came to be called, had its origin in the Anglo-American dispute over possession of the Oregon Country, that vast expanse of land consisting of the present States of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho, and parts of Montana and Wyoming. In the early 18th century, four nations claimed this land: Spain, Russia, England, and the United States. Spain gave up her claim in 1819, when the Adams-Onís Treaty established the 42nd parallel as the northern boundary of California. Russia withdrew hers in 1824-25, when the Emperor Nicholas I signed the Treaty of St. Petersburg. Between 1825 and 1846 American pioneers battled British fur traders for control of the region between the 42nd parallel and 54° 40'.

Cool Minds Prevailed

Nations with conflicting interests and a touchy "national honor" to protect have been pushed into war by incidents as trivial as the killing of the San Juan pig. These wars have often mushroomed into murderous affairs that destroyed property, art, and beauty of countless worth and took the lives of thousands of people. Here on San Juan Island the British and the American sides, found themselves opposed by their own associates. These were men of good will and common sense who preferred to talk to their opponents and to try to understand their viewpoints. They would not allow war to break out.

Here are biographical sketches of five men, two warlike and three peaceful, who made and settled the San Juan Island crisis. This small piece of land and its attendant islands will always be a reminder that insignificant causes, shrouded in national honor, need not be allowed to start wars.



James Douglas (1803-1877). Sir James was the principal member of a 3-man British commission west of the Rockies from 1839 until 1858. In that year, though already Governor of Victoria Island, he resigned from the management board of British Columbia to accept a position of national-wide experience and direct and forceful action. He could charm his opponents when necessary, but he depended upon aggressive action to accomplish his purposes. His years of success in the Pacific Northwest confirmed his liking for Fraser River in British Columbia. Douglas foresaw that they would settle and then claim the land for America. Upon his own initiative, he extended his authority as governor to the colony of Vancouver Island to cover British Columbia. The British government approved his action and made him governor of the newly created territory in 1858. On San Juan Island, Sir James showed the same character. He was all for having the British Navy depart the Americans, both the soldiers and settlers, off the island.

Godfrey Phipps Hornby (1825-1895). A navy captain at San Juan Island, Hornby had a distinguished career in 1858 as Admiral of the Fleet. His father was also an admiral in the British Navy, and partly on this account his career was noted for frequent promotions and assignments to his liking. The Hornbys were landed gentry, enjoying a status and security that enabled Sir Godfrey to view the displacement of the British ships with indifference. Though a man of war by training, he never ordered his ships to open fire. Overwhelming power helped him, but his personal tact and discretion, as vice admiral of the British Mediterranean Fleet in 1878, enabled him to bring his warships through the Barenzelles to support the Turks in Constantinople, then under threat from the advancing Russian Army. Twenty years before, at San Juan Island, he had shown the same tact and discretion when he resisted the pressure of Sir James Douglas, Governor of Vancouver Island and British Consul General, to order Royal Marines to take a contingent of 100 British troops to the island.



William S. Harney (1800-1889). He was a soldier who made a practice of ignoring orders and disobeying his superiors. When he was a cavalry officer in the Mexican War, he was court-martialed for one such flagrant transgression by Gen. Winfield Scott. Harney pretended acceptance of the court's decision while at the same time writing to the secretary of war complaining of his treatment by Scott. Probably because of Harney's defiant attitude, he was promoted to Major General by James Polk. The President nullified the decision of the court-martial. On San Juan Island, nearly 20 years later, Harney had not changed. Now a brigadier general, he commanded the Department of Oregon which included San Juan Island. He was determined to ignore instructions and ordered troops landed on the island, with the intent of risking a battle.



Their presence, under the guns of a British warship, constituted a direct and continuing confrontation of opposing armed power. So tense was this situation that even the accidental firing of a cannon could have started the battle that could have meant war.

Winfield Scott (1786-1866). This great conciliator spent almost his entire adult life in the United States Army. Early in his career he studied military tactics and training in France, then the greatest military power in Europe. And as commanding general of the Army of the North, he applied new training methods that greatly improved the Army's fighting effectiveness. Scott was not solely a desk general. When war broke out with Mexico, he devised a strategy that enabled him to conquer Mexico in a 6-month, six-battle campaign. But a typical of him were the five times during his military career that he was wounded, including one instance of shooting. Three of these were dangerous.



ously escalating crises with Great Britain. The British ambassador to the United States, Lord Scott's retirement from the Army and public life.



Hamilton Fish (1808-1883). Lawyer, politician, and statesman, he was governor of New York and a member of Congress, serving first in the House and then in the Senate. In 1869, he was appointed by President Ulysses S. Grant to be Secretary of State.

State. Perhaps influenced by the bachelors of the Civil War, Hamilton Fish became a staunch supporter of the national honor. In 1871, years he guided American and British diplomats at a conference of American and British diplomats drafted the Treaty of Washington, which for the first time in history provided for settlement of "national honor" differences by arbitration. "Three times were arbitrated mutual satisfaction; the days were numbered when the United States-Canadian border in the North Atlantic; 'Alabama,'" fishing rights in the North Atlantic; and the San Juan Island dispute about the United States-American agreement of 1818 provided for joint occupation of the Oregon Country. By 1845, however, this agreement had become intolerable to the Americans, who considered it an affront to their "Manifest Destiny." Motivated by the nationalistic pride generated during the Jacksonian era, Harney and Scott, who had expounded the national destiny, and that who stood in the way of that destiny should be swept aside. It was right and necessary that the social and political benefits of American culture be spread from ocean to ocean and from pole to pole. The expansionist spirit of the age was to be the responsibility of the United States. "Does it not flow westward with the never-ceasing advance of a rising tide of the sea? Along a line of coast from the Gulf of Mexico, perpetually from the shores of the western frontier. . . . Occasionally, an obstacle presents itself, in some unproductive region of the country, or some Indian tribe; the column is checked; its wings incline toward each other; the obstacle is removed; it speedily reunites again beyond; ever racing and approaching nearer and nearer, to the remotest regions of the west. . . . This move-

ment goes on with predestined certainty, and the unerring precision of the great works of eternal Providence, rather than as an act of feeble man. American men may see the settlement of our people diffused over the Pacific slopes of the Rocky Mountains."

To many Americans, the idea that the great land west of the Rocky Mountains should remain under foreign influence was totally unacceptable. By 1845, the American spirit of Manifest Destiny had carried them almost as far as the Pacific and north as far as western Canada.

The British were determined to resist the tide of American migration sweeping across the Rockies and into the Oregon Country. They argued that American settlers had no right to settle there, that they were factually trespassing on land that belonged to England by treaties with Spain and Russia. These treaties, it was pointed out, entitled England to the southern tip of the Alaskan Peninsula, to the southern tip of the Alaskan Peninsula, and to all the land west of the Rocky Mountains from the northern boundary of California and Alaska to the southern tip of the Alaskan Peninsula. On the basis of early explorations by James Cook, George Vancouver, and Alexander Mackenzie, and through use by the long-established fur trading posts and commercial establishments of the Hudson's Bay Company, foremost among which was the Fort Vancouver on the lower Columbia River. The weakness of the case for the United Kingdom, however, was their failure to homestead the region.

Although both nations blustered and threatened over possession of the Oregon Country, neither sought to gain control of the whole region. The Americans, as well as the British, had an excellent reason for the 48th parallel, the exact British position, on the other hand, would agree to the Columbia River as the southern boundary of western Canada, because she considered ownership of the river vital for command of the interior fur trade. Thus the region actually in dispute was a narrow strip of land between the 42nd parallel and the Columbia River, about two-thirds of the present State of Washington. By 1845 a local clash was certainly possible with 5,000 Americans living in the Willamette Valley in western Oregon south of the Columbia River, as compared to 150 British gathered at nearby Fort Vancouver on the northern Puget Sound 100 miles north. Indeed, there were some among the Americans who threatened to cross the Columbia, drive out the Hudson's Bay Company, and set fire to its establishments.

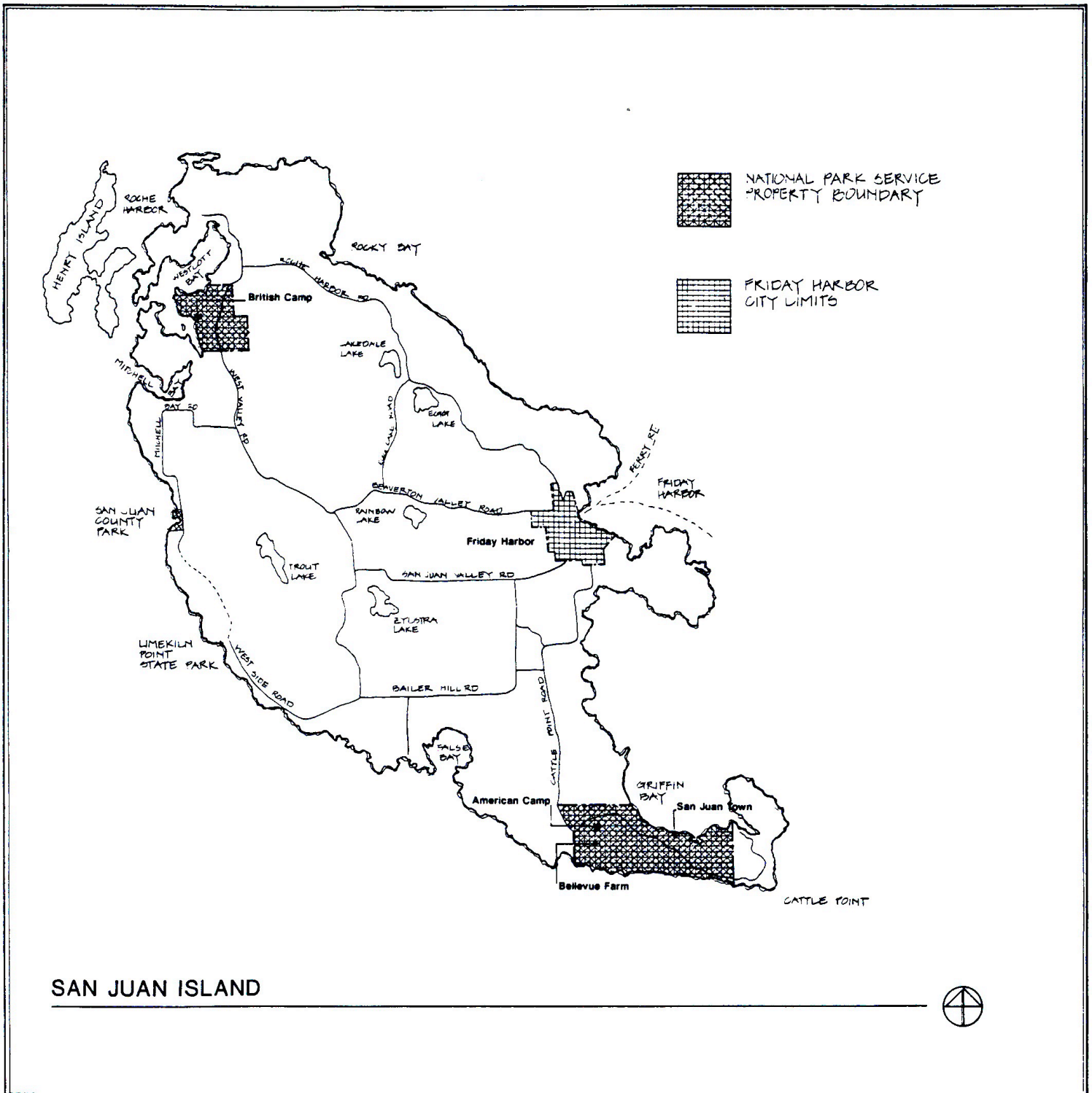
After 2 years of belligerent talk in the legislative halls of both Great Britain and America, and in the public press of both countries, wiser counsels prevailed. The Oregon Treaty of June 1846 gave the United States undisputed possession of the Pacific Northwest, including the entire territory extending the boundary "to the middle of the channel which separates the continent from Vancouver's Island; and thence southerly from the middle of the said channel and of Fuca's straits to the Pacific Ocean." But while the treaty settled the Oregon question, it created additional problems because of the fact that additional territory was to be added to the United States by the threat of war over the Oregon Territory was to be reproduced in miniature over the ownership of these islands.

The San Juan Issue

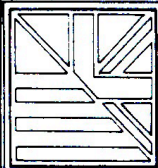
The difficulty over the interpretation of that portion of the boundary described as the "middle of the Channel," separating Vancouver Island from the mainland. The men who negotiated the Oregon Treaty, like so many other 19th-century statesmen who drew boundary lines on crude maps, seem to have had little accurate geographic knowledge of the area. There were actually two channels; one, Haro Strait, between the mainland, San Juan Island lay Strait nearer the mainland. San Juan Island lay between the two. Great Britain realized that possession of the island would give them complete control of the harbor of Victoria and the Fraser River. It therefore insisted that the boundary, through Rosario Strait. The Americans, reinforced by the unequivocal doctrine of Manifest Destiny, proclaimed it lay through Haro Strait. Thus both sides considered San Juan Island theirs for settlement.

As early as 1845 the Hudson's Bay Company had posted a notice of possession on San Juan. In 1850 it established a salmon-curing station there.

APPENDIX B: LOCATIONAL MAP, ISLAND



SAN JUAN ISLAND



**SAN JUAN ISLAND
NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK**

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE STUDY

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
PACIFIC NORTHWEST REGION
CULTURAL RESOURCE DIVISION

DRAWN BY: GILBERT DATE: 7/87

DRAWING NO.
438 - 80018

SHEET 1
OF 13

APPENDIX C: SITE MAP, ENGLISH CAMP

SOURCES

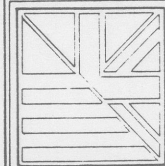
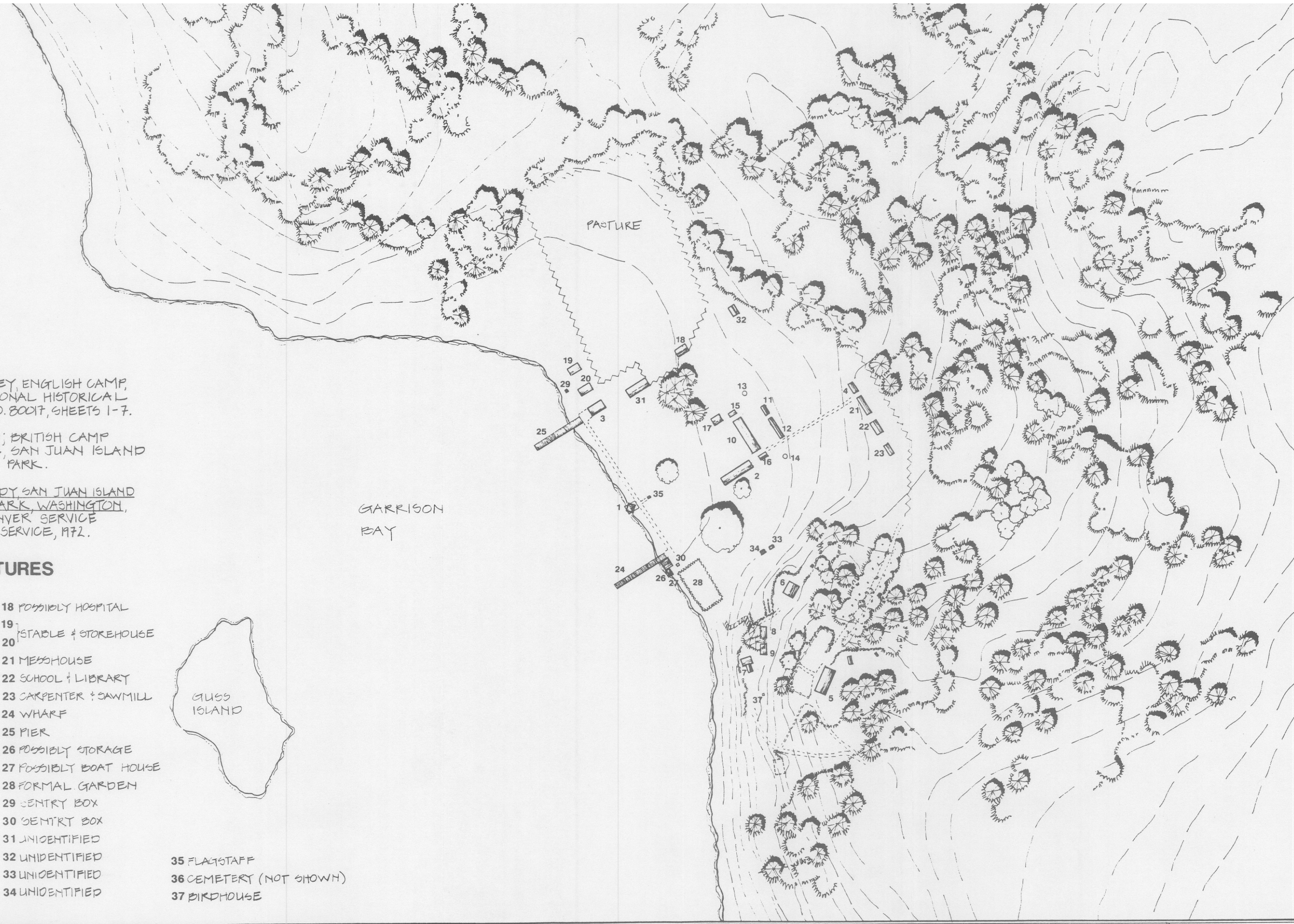
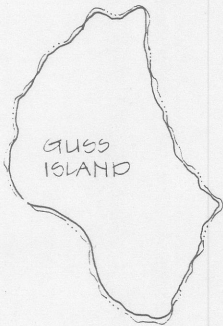
TOPOGRAPHIC SITE SURVEY, ENGLISH CAMP, SAN JUAN ISLAND, NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK, 1987. DRAWING NO. 80017, SHEETS 1-7.

HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS; BRITISH CAMP 1860 - PRESENT. ON FILE, SAN JUAN ISLAND NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK.

HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY, SAN JUAN ISLAND NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK, WASHINGTON, BY ERWIN THOMPSON, DENVER SERVICE CENTER, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, 1972.

HISTORIC STRUCTURES

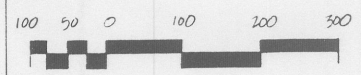
- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 BLOCKHOUSE | 18 POSSIBLY HOSPITAL |
| 2 BARRACKS | 19 |
| 3 STOREHOUSE | 20 STABLE & STOREHOUSE |
| 4 BAKERY OR BLACKSMITH | 21 MESSHOUSE |
| 5 CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS | 22 SCHOOL & LIBRARY |
| 6 MARRIED SUBALTERN | 23 CARPENTER & SAWMILL |
| 7 SURGEON | 24 WHARF |
| 8 SINGLE SUBALTERN | 25 PIER |
| 9 OFFICERS' MESS | 26 POSSIBLY STORAGE |
| 10 BARRACKS | 27 POSSIBLY BOAT HOUSE |
| 11 WASH & BATH HOUSE | 28 FORMAL GARDEN |
| 12 WASH & BATH HOUSE | 29 GENTRY BOX |
| 13 WELL | 30 GENTRY BOX |
| 14 WELL | 31 UNIDENTIFIED |
| 15 UNIDENTIFIED | 32 UNIDENTIFIED |
| 16 UNIDENTIFIED | 33 UNIDENTIFIED |
| 17 UNIDENTIFIED | 34 UNIDENTIFIED |
| | 35 FLAGSTAFF |
| | 36 CEMETERY (NOT SHOWN) |
| | 37 BIRDHOUSE |



**SAN JUAN ISLAND
NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK**
HISTORIC LANDSCAPE STUDY

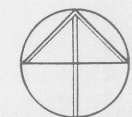
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
PACIFIC NORTHWEST REGION
CULTURAL RESOURCE DIVISION

DRAWN BY: GILBERT DATE: 10/86



SCALE 1"=100'

NORTH



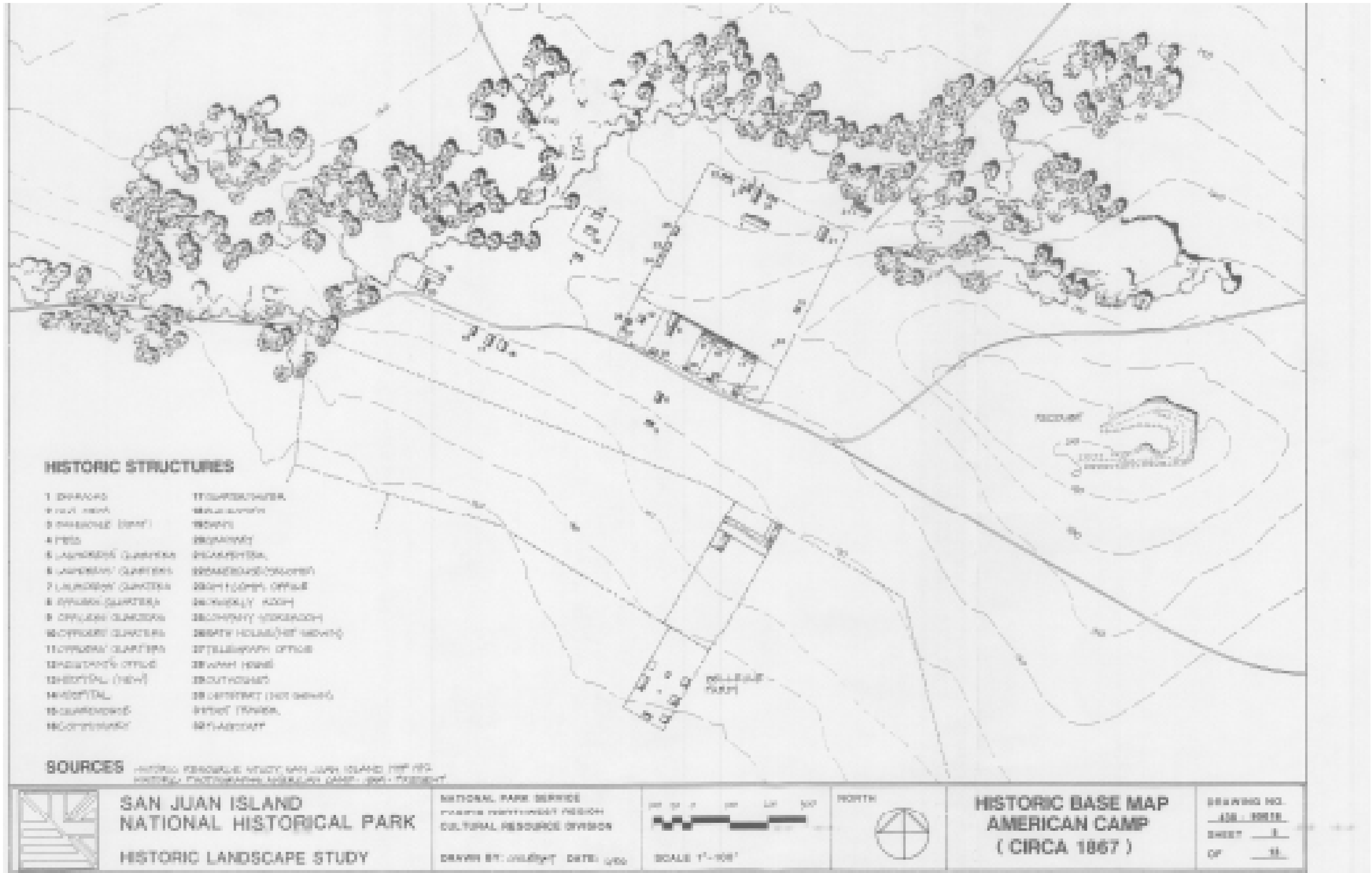
**HISTORIC BASE MAP
BRITISH CAMP
(CIRCA 1868)**

DRAWING NO.

438 - 80018

SHEET 10

OF 13



THE PIG INCIDENT

Cutlar's claim was about a mile back up the present road. He chose to ignore the charge that he was trespassing, built a cabin, and planted a small garden.

His potatoes soon attracted a Hudson's Bay Company pig. Repeatedly he drove it back to Bellevue Farm and complained, to no avail.

Early on the morning of June 15, he again saw the beast in his garden and "...upon the impulse of the moment seized my rifle and shot the hog". Immediately he went to the farm to make amends.

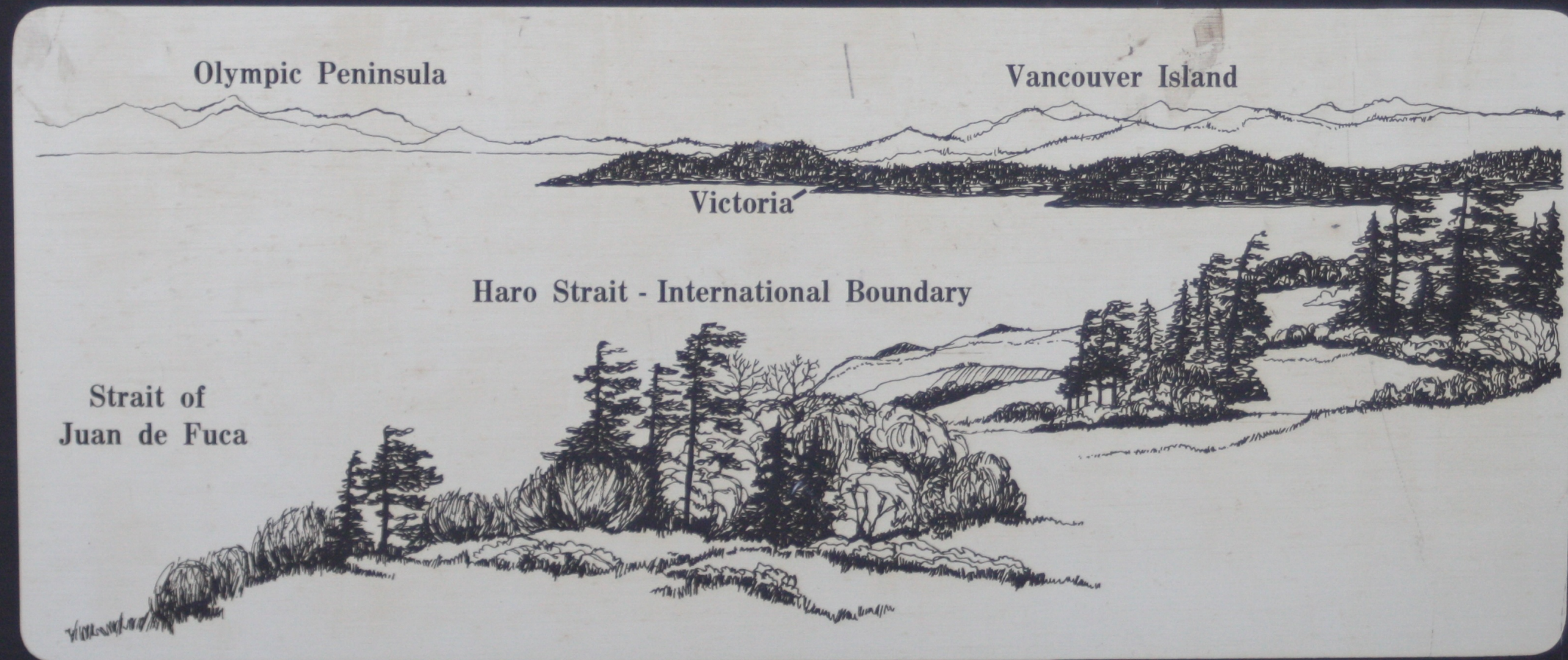


Cutlar found Griffin hard to deal with. They argued over the exorbitant price set by the company. Griffin threatened jail if the sum was not paid.

Cutlar refused and dared them to try to take him from his home. A month later Pickett led his soldiers ashore "to protect the interests of American settlers".

THE KAISER'S DECISION

The Kaiser's decision to award the San Juan Islands to the United States was welcome news to military strategists. They were concerned that enemy guns along the south and west sides of the island might block access to Puget Sound ports. Instead, the United States - Canadian border stands as a model of international cooperation.



San Juan Island National Historical Park

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Fishing Traditions

Over 2,500 years ago American Indians discovered the annual salmon runs that occur in the waters off South Beach—the shoreline below you. For centuries Indians returned there to harvest salmon, which they smoked and dried for winter meals. Using cedar rope and beach grasses the Indians wove reef nets, which funneled fish into lift nets at their canoes. The ingenious fishing method, which originated here, was mimicked by commercial fisheries in the 1800s.

2,500 years ago

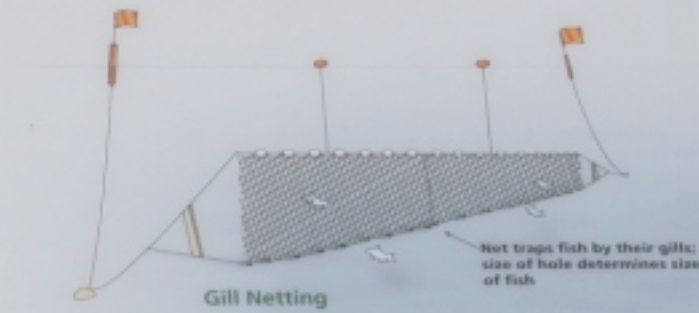
American Indians originated the practice of reef netting, a clever fishing method that fooled salmon into a reef-like net anchored by rocks.



By 1899 as many as 12 traps were located off South Beach alone, all owned by corporations like Pacific American Fisheries. Migrating salmon encountered long runs of nets, which steered and corralled fish into capture nets that fishermen lifted into their boats. The fish were then delivered to canneries in Friday Harbor. The traps could catch up to 37,000 fish per day.

1890s

Pacific American Fisheries established a camp on South Beach in the late 1890s. Fish trap operations were outlawed in 1935 because of their decimation of sockeye salmon populations and their unfair advantage over other commercial and sport fishing methods.



Today

Although reef netting continues today in Puget Sound waters, purse seining and gill netting are the preferred fishing methods off San Juan Island. Quotas are established on commercial and sport fisheries, which are closely monitored by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife in an effort to protect this dwindling resource.

