

## Short History of Masonry in the Region

The Freemasons of San Juan Lodge are members of a Fraternal Organization dedicated to making good men better and thereby making the community better. We are located on San Juan Island in Friday Harbor, Washington.

History: On May 19, 1792, Captain George Vancouver under the direction of Captain James Cook, dropped anchor aboard the 300-ton H.M. Sloop of War Discovery, between Bainbridge and Blake islands. The following morning, Capt. George Vancouver dispatched Lt. Peter Puget and Master Joseph Whidbey to conduct a detailed survey of the waters to the south. This is the first penetration of "Puget's Sound" by Europeans. Thus charting every feature of the massive estuary and naming most of them in the process. And he was far from finished. Before his North Pacific mission ended he would survey 1,700 miles of coastline. Freemasons were among those exploring the area including Captain George Vancouver and lesser known mariners and traders. Even Captain James Cook has long been reputed to have been Mason, although no evidence has been found to support that contention.

There are several Masonic lodges found in the area. The oldest chartered lodge is Franklin #5 in Port Gamble WA, followed by Port Townsend Lodge #6 both chartered in 1859. Victoria-Columbia #1 in Victoria BC was chartered shortly thereafter in 1860. As of 1910, approximately 60 lodges were situated in the Puget Sound region.

Accessible only by water or air, San Juan Islands are an archipelago of hundreds of islands, reefs, and rocks between mainland Washington and Vancouver Island. Only in 1872, later than any other area in the 48 contiguous states, did the San Juan Islands and thus Friday Harbor become an undisputed part of the United States following the "Pig War" boundary dispute with Great Britain.

After the Civil War, population surged in the Pacific Northwest spurred on by the gold rush in the Klondike, free land grants, and resolution of the Canadian border disputes. Friday Harbor was named after an Hawaiian immigrant working for the British Hudson's Bay Company. Joe Friday and his son tended a Hudson's Bay Co. sheep enterprise on the island and some time before 1878 the inlet was named Friday Harbor. The first official government map of Washington Territory to list the inlet's name was issued in 1878.

Washington Territory became a state on Nov 11, 1889. Friday Harbor was incorporated in 1909 and remains the only incorporated town in the county. Like Friday Harbor, ports at Roche Harbor at the northwest tip of San Juan Island and Richardson on the

southern end of Lopez grew rapidly in the late 1800s and early 1900s as island industry and commerce expanded. Early settlers depended heavily on the islands' rich marine resources. As settlement increased the islands supplied the surrounding region with fish, agricultural produce, timber, and lime from some of the nation's richest deposits.

Our Lodge was the first Masonic lodge in San Juan County. Founded by E. H. Nash, our Lodge was the one hundred and seventy fifth Lodge chartered in 1909 by the Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons of Washington, dedicated to Faith, Hope, and Charity.