



Descendants of Fort Nisqually Employees Association

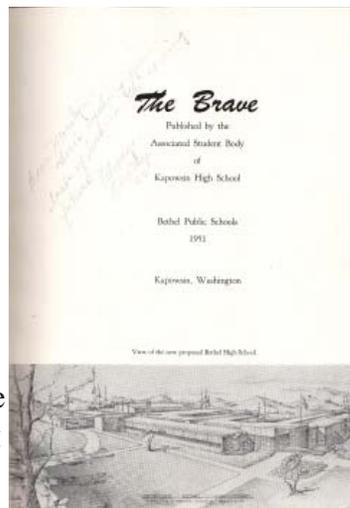
October 2013

Hudson Bay Company descendants abound in South Pierce County

SPANAWAY, WA — Long before Washington was a state or even a territory, even before Oregon was a territory, this area was occupied by indigenous people and the fur traders. In 1832, a small contingent from the Hudson’s Bay Company built a storehouse on the shore of Puget Sound at the mouth of Sequelitchew Creek. In 1833, they built an operational site on the hillside above it, on what is now the Home Course for golfers in Dupont. In 1843, they moved their fort site to a place that now is surrounded by black fence on Center Drive across from the new Dupont City Hall. In 1869, Fort Nisqually and the lands they owned around Pierce County was given up for \$750,000. It opened a large portion of Pierce County for settlers.

From the Tacoma Mall to Silver Lake, between the Nisqually and Puyallup Rivers, the Hudson Bay Company occupied and farmed in Pierce County. With few white women in the area, many of the farmers married Indian women or their daughters from mixed race relationships. These families and their descendants still live in and around south Pierce County. A large portion of the families living in the Bethel School District when it was formed in 1950 are these descendants and participated in labeling the high school, The Brave.

To this day, the high school is referred to as the Bethel Braves. Many years ago a comical, but inappropriate Indian logo was dropped as the school mascot and a drawing of an Indian was removed from the gym floor. Still, the public in the district like their Brave moniker and continue to support it. One reason is that many of these families are descendants of that past. People of mixed race live in the south county because they were not as welcome in town. Catherine Ross Murray, wife of the early county commissioner Henry Murray notably stayed at their farm on



continued page 2

Location Change for Descendants meeting October 6, 2013

October 6 at 1 p.m., the DFNEA meeting will be held in the Muck Creek area of Spanaway, NOT Dupont. The site will be Bethany Lutheran Church, 26418 Mountain Hwy E., Spanaway. This site also has the Bethany Cemetery where Cecelia Svinth Carpenter and several other descendants of the Puget Sound Agricultural Company now rest in eternal peace.

There is a pacque on the site giving a brief history of the PSAC settlers in the area, particularly John McLeod whose Donation Land Claim is across the Street. The church rests on John McPhail’s farm and Donation Land Claim. Other PSAC farmers in the area included William Benston, Henry Smith, Henry Murray, L.A. “Sandy” Smith, Peter Wilson, Charles Wren.

The speaker for the meeting will be a panel of PSAC descendants, Rober Foxcurran who had been researching Metis families and, if it can be arranged some former Bethel school people who know

continued page 2

Descendants, continued

260th Street (then Benston Goodacre Road) while her husband, a former HBC farmer lived on 7th and I Street in Tacoma to carry out his duties as County Commissioner in the late 1850's. Catherine, being the daughter of Charles Ross (son of a Scottish nobleman) and Isabella Mainville Ross, a Souix Indian, did not like to experience the discrimination she got living in town.

In Canada, the mixed race descendants of these Indian/white unions are an officially designated tribe called Métis. In the United States, we have no such designation for them. In the U.S., they also have no standing when it comes to claiming rights due to race. When you fill out the form to claim status and an American Indian, you almost always must have tribal affiliation to check the box. Many of the Descendants of Fort Nisqually have full siblings who for loss of some records, do not have the status their brothers or sisters can claim.

John McLeod was a farmer on Muck Creek. His wife (Claquodate-Mary) was the daughter of a well known Cowlitz Chief, Clapat-Swhadawa. His daughter Catherine married Daniel Mounts. His 320 acre farm was the area east of the Mountain Highway at the base of Muck Creek Hill, across from Bethany Lutheran Church. On October 6 at 1p.m. in the afternoon, the Descendants of Fort Nisqually Employees Association (DFNEA) will hold its biannual meeting in Spanaway at the Rocky Ridge area church, Bethany Lutheran. It is located at 26418 Mountain Hwy E.

The meeting has at least 4 purposes:

- 1) Early history about the church and grounds (cemetery)
- 2) History of the Hudson Bay Company's Puget Sound Agricultural Company operations in the Muck Creek area
- 3) The reason Bethel High is called "The Braves"
- 4) Discussion about the Métis of South Pierce County

For avid students of history, this should be an amazing day full of information you might not have known about the south county area. For people living in the area who actually are descendants of these families, you should be there to join in and visit with people who heritage is the same as yours. DFNEA wants you to be there to be appropriately recognized. For teachers and students of Washington State history, the information will be fast and furious. This meeting probably should be on video tape for posterity.

DFNEA Meeting location change

the transition from Kapowsin to Bethel. After the meeting, some people may want to take a drive around the nearby PSAC farm sites and a guide will be available. To the right, I have placed a map to help you find the location.

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