

United States, and in the meantime I have to reciprocate most earnestly your hope that nothing may occur to interrupt the harmony and good feeling which should characterize the relations of neighboring states.

I have the honor to be

Your obedient servant

ISAAC I. STEVENS

Governor of Washington Territory.

To His Excellency

James Douglas

Governor Vancouver Island.

### Establishing the Navy Yard, Puget Sound.

The following letter from Lieutenant A. B. Wyckoff and the accompanying documents will be useful to the future historians. The originals of the documents have been placed in the library of the University of Washington:

Branch Hydrographic Office.

Port Townsend, Wash.,

November 20th 1907.

Sir:—

I take pleasure in mailing you copies of orders and letters in relation to the starting of the Navy Yard, Puget Sound. The original name was "Puget Sound Naval Station," but some years since Congress changed the name to Navy Yard, Puget Sound, because of its increasing importance. "Bremerton Navy Yard" is a mis-nomer, without official sanction, and should never be used.

The first official act in connection with this navy yard was an Act of Congress in 1888 directing the appointment of a commission of three naval officers to examine the coast north of the 42nd parallel of north latitude in Oregon, Washington and Alaska for a suitable site for a navy yard and dry-docks.

Hon. W. C. Whitney, Secretary of the Navy, appointed Capt. A. T. Mahan, Commander C. M. Chester and Lieut.-Comd. C. H. Stockton and they recommended several sites on Puget Sound and Lake Washington, June 30th, 1890, Congress authorized a second commission to consist of two civilians, two naval officers and one army officer to select a site for a dry dock at some point on the shores of the Pacific ocean, or the waters connected therewith, north of the parallel of latitude marking the northern boundary of California, including the waters of Puget Sound, and also Lakes Washington and Union in the State of Washington. The commission appointed was Hon. Richard W. Thompson, ex-secretary of the navy, ex-senator T. C. Platt, Col. Geo. Mendell, U. S. A., Capt. T. O. Selfridge, U. S. N. and Lieutenant A. B. Wyckoff, U. S. N. The report was made Dec. 23rd, 1890, and favored a site on Port Orchard as first choice.

Senator John B. Allen secured an amendment to the naval appropriation bill authorizing the Sect. of the Navy to acquire for

the purposes of a dry dock a tract of land not exceeding 200 acres on Port Orchard, Puget Sound, appropriating \$10,000 to pay for said land, and instructing the Sect. of the Navy to cause to be erected on said land, for naval and commercial purposes, a dry dock not less than 600 feet in length, not less than 70 feet wide at bottom of entrance and capable of admitting vessels drawing 30 feet of water, the cost of said dry dock not to exceed \$700,000. This amendment finally passed Congress March 2nd, 1891.

I enclose a copy of my orders of March 17th 1891. After selecting and purchasing most of the lands I was ordered to assume command of "The Puget Sound Naval Station" and on September 16th 1891, in the presence of many of the inhabitants of Kitsap County, I read my orders and the flag was hoisted for the first time by my daughter Selah Wyckoff. I presume that this was the first birthday of the navy yard. After making many borings I selected the site of the present dry dock. The contract for the dry dock was let to Byron Barlow & Co. of Tacoma for \$491,465, but owing to an increase in the length of the dock of fifty feet, and other changes, the final expense was \$610,000. The beginning of work on the dry dock was Dec. 10, 1892, when my daughter Mary E. Wyckoff dug the first spade full of earth.

In May 1892 I was ordered to command the U. S. S. "Nipsic" in addition to my duties as Commandant. The first vessel to enter the dry dock was the U. S. Monitor "Monterey," April 22nd 1896. A number of battle ships and the S. S. "Dakota" have also been docked in it, and the most careful measurements have never shown any settlement.

The above I think covers everything in connection with the beginning of the navy Yard, Puget Sound.

A. B. WYCKOFF  
Lieut. U. S. N. (Ret'd)

(Copy)

NAVY DEPARTMENT,  
Washington, March 17th, 1891.

Sir:—

You are detached from duty in the Bureau of Yards and Docks, and assigned to special duty connected with that Bureau.

You will proceed to Seattle, Washington, and then to Port Orchard, in the County of Kitsap, on Puget Sound, where you will select a tract of land, not exceeding two hundred acres in extent, suitable for the purposes of a dry-dock. You will furnish the Department with a plan of the site you may select, and report the lowest price per acre for which it can be purchased.

In the prosecution of this duty, you will be allowed all expenses which may be incurred in the thorough examination of lands, preparation of papers, etc., including office rent, and you are authorized to make such journeys as may be necessary. You will keep a strict account of all expenses incurred and travel performed.

This employment on shore duty is required by the public interests, and such service will continue until September 15th, 1891, unless it is otherwise ordered.

Very respectfully,

B. F. TRACY.  
Secretary of the Navy.

Lieutenant

A. B. Wyckoff, U. S. N.  
Bureau of Yards and Docks,  
Navy Department.

Puget Sound Naval Station.  
Sidney, Wash., June 11, 1892.

Hon. B. F. Tracy.  
Secretary of the Navy.  
Sir:—

I have the honor to submit my final report, under the Department's order of March 17th, 1891, to select a body of land, not exceeding two hundred acres, suitable for the purposes of a dry-dock, on Port Orchard in the County of Kitsap, State of Washington. The lands selected embrace one hundred and ninety acres, according to the survey of Civil Engineer T. C. McCollom U. S. N., a copy of which is enclosed, and have a frontage on tide water of one and one-fourth miles. The site lies on the North side of Sinclair's Inlet and includes the only two basins of level land of any extent, with accessible water front, in Port Orchard. The center of the reservation rises in two ridges to elevations above one hundred feet, furnishing excellent and healthful locations for residences, marine barracks and hospital grounds. The tide lands, donated by the State of Washington, embrace about thirty-five acres, a portion of which can readily be filled in from the adjacent bluffs. Sinclair's Inlet can furnish secure anchorage, with excellent holding ground in from six to eight fathoms, to at least fifty men-of-war, and the tidal current along the North side is scarcely perceptible. One hundred and forty-five and one fourth acres were purchased in September 1891; and five acres in March 1892. A suit was begun in September 1891, in the U. S. District Court, for the condemnation of forty acres of land lying near the center of the reservation, to which a clear title could not otherwise be obtained. Owing to various delays in the legal procedure, the final payments were not made until May 1892.

The one hundred and ninety and one fourth acres were purchased for \$9,512.50; and the cost of abstracts, recording deeds etc. was \$374.75, making a total of \$9,587.25.

Very respectfully,

A. B. WYCKOFF,  
Lieut. U. S. N.  
Commandant.

No/ 1912.

(Copy)

Bureau of Yards and Docks.  
Navy Department,  
Washington, D. C., June 22, 1892.

Sir:

The Bureau begs to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of June 11, 1892, forwarding your final report of the selection of lands for the site of a dry-dock on Puget Sound, Kitsap Co., Washington, together with Copy of the Survey made by Civil Engineer T. C. McCollom, U. S. N.

The Report of Survey has been forwarded to the Hon. Secretary of the Navy.

The Bureau, on its part, desires to thank and congratulate you upon the successful manner in which you have accomplished the work assigned you by the Department.

Please forward your account current for month of June as soon as practicable.

Very respectfully.

N. H. FARQUHAR,  
Chief of Bureau.

To

Lieut. A. B. Wyckoff, U. S. N.  
Commandant,  
Naval Station,  
Puget Sound, Wash.,

(Copy)

New York, July 15th, 1893.

Hon. H. A. Herbert.  
Secretary of the Navy,  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir,

Understanding that Lieutenant A. B. Wyckoff, U. S. Navy, is shortly to be ordered up for examination, and that no paper is on file in the Navy Department touching his services in connection with the establishment of the Puget Sound Naval Station, I desire to state that the work of the establishment of this station, requiring great judgment and energy on the part of Lieutenant Wyckoff, was performed by him to my entire satisfaction, and it gives me pleasure to express to you this opinion of the value of his services in order that it may be spread upon the records of the Department.

Very respectfully,

B. F. TRACY.