

## PORT GAMBLE, WASHINGTON\*

In July, 1853, the schooner *Julius Pringle* dropped anchor in Port Discovery Bay, Puget Sound. She was commanded by Capt. W. C. Talbot, who was at the head of an expedition which had come to Puget Sound in the interest of the firm W. C. Talbot & Co., to select a mill site, build a mill for the manufacturing of lumber and engage in the merchandise and lumber business.

The firm was composed of W. C. Talbot and A. J. Pope of San Francisco, Cal., and J. P. Keller and Charles Foster of East Machias, Me.

Among others on the *Pringle* were E. S. Brown, a millwright from Bangor, Maine, (lately of Hersey, Beau & Brown, Stillwater, Minn., and now receiver of the Northwestern Mfg. & Con. Co., Stillwater, Minn.), Cyrus Walker, Skowhegan, Maine, (now manager of Puget Mill Co.), Nathaniel Harmon of East Machias, (still a resident of Port Gamble), Hillman Harmon of East Machias, Davis Foster (2nd mate of *Pringle*), of East Machias, James White of Bangor, machinist and engineer.

The cargo of the *Pringle* consisted of lumber, tools, supplies and merchandise necessary for a beginning of the proposed venture.

After a hasty examination of Port Discovery Bay, it was decided to take possession of the place, and enough lumber to build a shanty was landed. After this, it was thought best to make up an exploring party to go further up the Sound in search of a more favorable location. A party was made up and started out in a sailboat and canoe under the direction of Captain Talbot. They followed the western shore of the Sound, touching at Port Townsend, and next at Port Ludlow, where they found what has always been known as the best mill-site on Puget Sound. But this place was already occupied by W. P. Sayward and J. R. Thorndike, who were hard at work building a mill. Next the party sailed up Hood Canal as far as Hazel Point, (opposite what is now Seabeck) but no suitable place having been found, it was thought best to cross the canal and follow the other shore back until they reached Port Gamble, where they found a large "spit" suitable for a mill-site, backed up by a large bay, deep water, and plenty of

most excellent timber handy to the water's edge. Some considerable time was spent here, cruising timber and sounding out the channel in and out of the Bay.

The party seems to have been pleased with the place, but hesitated to make a final decision, partly on account of a scarcity of fresh water for the boilers. It was finally decided to go further up the Sound, thinking they might find a still more favorable place. At Appletree Cove, they found a mill in process of construction under the ownership of J. J. Felt. This mill was afterwards moved to Port Madison.

Port Madison, the next place visited, presented a snug little harbor and location for a mill-site. But the bay was small, and depth of water and timber around the bay were not in favor of a location there. From Port Madison, the canoe returned to Port Gamble, the sailboat proceeding farther South until it had sailed around Vashon Island (opposite Tacoma) and no more suitable place than Gamble having presented itself, they sailed for Gamble, via Seattle.

Seattle, at this time, boasted of a sawmill, a few houses, and many tents. After the return to Port Gamble a few days more were spent in cruising and making soundings, after which they again started out, this time to return to Port Discovery, intending to locate there. On arrival at Discovery, they found settlers, hearing that a mill was to be built there, began to come in and locate around the bay, and before discharging the schooner's cargo, Captain Talbot thought best to look at the timber that grew around the bay. It did not compare favorably with that at Gamble, which influenced him to weigh anchor and sail for Port Gamble.

Arriving at Port Gamble, they immediately set to work discharging cargo and building a shanty, for lodging house, a cook-house and a store. These buildings were rough structures and constructed of eastern lumber from the cargo and cedar splits. The schooner after being discharged, went to Seattle and took a cargo of lumber and piles to San Francisco.

Then they started in laying the foundation and to build the mill. The timber for this purpose was hewn at the head of the bay on land now owned by W. S. Jameson. The full crew at this time left here by the *Pringle* was ten men.

On Sept. 5th, 1853, the schooner *L. P. Foster*, under command of Capt. J. P. Keller, one of the partners, arrived, 154 days from Boston, Mass. The *Foster* was about 176 tons burden and loaded

decks to the water with engine, boilers, merchandise supplies, and mill machinery and findings. Capt. Keller's wife and daughter were with him, and were the first white women to land at this place. The *Foster* bound in met the *Pringle* bound out, at Port Townsend, and thus learned the location of the mill-site. After considerable hard work the heavy cargo was unloaded and landed, the schooner taken to the head of the bay, and the crew went into the woods, cut a full load of piles, loaded the schooner, and she sailed for San Francisco under the command of Captain Talbot. Captain Keller remained at Port Gamble as resident owner. Capt. Finley Keller was mate of the *Foster* and Capt. A. W. Keller, now master of the bark *James Cheston*, was a sailor before the mast of the *Foster*.

E. G. AMES.