

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Rosario  
AND/OR COMMON

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER South of East Sound — NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CITY, TOWN Orcas Island CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
STATE Washington CODE 53 VICINITY OF East 2nd - Congressman Lloyd Meeds COUNTY San Juan CODE 055

**CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: <u>Resort</u>

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Gilbert H. Geiser, Owner and Manager  
Rosario Resort-Hotel (206) 376-2222  
STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Eastsound — VICINITY OF STATE Washington 98245

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. San Juan County Courthouse  
STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Friday Harbor STATE Washington 98250

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE Washington State Inventory of Historic Places

DATE 1974 — FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

CITY, TOWN Olympia STATE Washington 98504

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

EXCELLENT                       DETERIORATED  
 GOOD                                 RUINS  
 FAIR                                  UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

### GENERAL STATEMENT

Rosario is a partially intact luxury estate on a remote and protected cove on Orcas Island in the San Juan Archipelago, off the coast of Washington. It was developed following its acquisition in 1905 by renowned ship-builder and one time Seattle mayor, Robert Moran. The foundation for the three-story concrete and frame peristylar main lodge was hewn out of bedrock on a point of land commanding a view of East Sound and the westerly reach of the island beyond. The lodge, its Arts and Crafts, or so-called Mission Style furnishings, and the features of its grounds were designed by Moran himself. Conceived as a retirement project at a time when Moran was seriously ailing, Rosario was to be the home of Seattle's much honored pioneer for thirty-two years. When it was sold in 1938, Moran moved to smaller quarters elsewhere on the island. Of the original holdings of more than 6,000 acres, a private estate of 1,339 acres remained after the dedication of Moran State Park in 1921. The privately held portion changed hands for residential use a further time before its acquisition by the current owner in 1959. Consistent with Rosario's present role as a boathaven and year round resort and convention center, subdivided plats on the periphery of the estate have been sold for vacation homes. At the waterfront core of the 975 acres remaining under single ownership are most of the historic features developed by Moran. Buildings such as the main lodge have been adapted to new demands to some extent, but the estate's historical character is still apparent. Up-to-date facilities such as outdoor swimming pools, tennis courts, shops, and satellite rental units have been sited throughout the multi-level grounds as discreetly as possible.

### LEGAL DESCRIPTION

The main lodge at Rosario is situated in NW $\frac{1}{4}$  NW $\frac{1}{4}$  Sec. 6, T.36N., R.1W., of the Willamette Meridian. Subsidiary historic features on the 30-acre site occupy the SW $\frac{1}{4}$  Sec. 31, T.37N., R.1W., W.M.

### GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

The San Juan Archipelago is located above the northernmost reach of Puget Sound, between Canada's Vancouver Island and the Washington mainland. The island grouping makes up some 180 square miles of land surface, of which nearly 75 percent is concentrated in the three large islands of San Juan, Orcas and Lopez. Orcas, a saddle-bag shaped island of 56 square miles, is the largest of these. It is bounded on the north by the Strait of Georgia, which was charted first as the "Gran Canal de Nuestra Senora del Rosario la Marinera" by the Spanish commander Francisco Eliza in 1791. The enduring designation was given to the "Gulf of Georgia" a year later by Captain George Vancouver of the British Royal Navy. In 1847, Captain Henry Kellett, R.N., charted the channel on the east side of Orcas Island, and applied to it a part of the original designation for the Strait of Georgia made by Eliza. Thus, "Rosario Strait" forms the eastern boundary of the San Juan Archipelago.

The spectacularly sited estate which Robert Moran styled "Rosario" after the nearby channel, is located on the eastern shore of East Sound, the major inlet which nearly bisects Orcas Island.

### PHYSICAL FEATURES OF THE SITE

The main lodge and its subsidiary historic features are situated on Rosario Point and along

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

a small deepwater cove known as Cascade Bay, which is some 1,800 feet across. Inside the cove, a gentle slope rises from a narrow sandy beach. On the west, is the rocky promontory of Rosario Point, and on the east are the sheer cliffs of the ridge which lies between Cascade Bay and a fresh water lake at an elevation of 346 feet. Known as Cascade Lake, the latter is an historic source of Rosario's hydroelectric power and water for irrigation. From the slope occupied by resort buildings the terrain rises on the north and west to the summit of Rosario Hill, which is 806 feet in elevation. It is around this hill that the approach to Rosario Point descends from the county road. Much of the estate's surrounding forest backdrop is second growth timber, as the site was previously occupied by a sawmill and box factory. Among the major species now seen in the immediate environs are native firs, shore pine and Pacific madrona.

Moran's site planning was remarkably sound. The main lodge was placed inside the sheltering tip of Rosario Point, where it was settled into a bedrock foundation and given a skewed orientation to command a view of traffic plying up East Sound from the southeast. A large, three-story sidehill barn, no longer extant, was sited some distance upslope from the lodge and oriented longitudinally for optimum drainage away from the lodge to the east. Most of the employees' quarters were arranged along the slope above the barn. The shop and warehouse building was essentially aligned with a dock at the center of the cove. Landscaping was held to a minimum in the historic period, for the intent was to retain as much of the natural setting as possible. A typical treatment was the contouring of a pathway around the base of a mound offset from the northwest face of the lodge. Although, no doubt, it resisted much alteration, the outcropping with its vegetative cover nevertheless was advantageously used as a naturalistic buffer. There were no formal gardens, but a high-grade rolled lawn was maintained in the small court created by a circular carriage drive fronting the northwest facade. The outer perimeter of the forecourt was lined with a low concrete wall with stepped ends, and interspersed along it were pedestal mounts for tripartite upright and pendant light globes on concrete filled steel pipe standards. Anchor chain was strung, swag-like, between the pedestals for tethering horses. A concrete water basin and fountain presumably for watering horses is no longer in situ at this location. The forecourt demi-screen of lamps and similar lighting fixtures throughout the grounds are still intact. The lodge forecourt and the driveway, which was eventually paved, are now further embellished with mature horse chestnuts, maples, and other exotic flora. On the southeasterly side of the lodge, facing the water, is a bayed terrace lawn retained by a banked rubble wall surmounted with a concrete railing and lamps. Evergreen shrubs lining the inside of the perimeter walk of this terrace appear to have been planted at the same time the second owners constructed a sea wall and a concrete orchestra pit at water grade below the lodge with the generous intent of providing music and perhaps a dancing area for yachting guests at anchor in Cascade Bay. Another landscape feature which apparently post-dates the Moran era is a rustic, Japanese-style garden which has been developed in a hollow on the northeast end of the lodge.

The landscape at Rosario was not without a fashionable contrivance or two in Moran's time. At the center of the cove, a low concrete sea wall was constructed above the beach, and a strip of lawn was planted above that. In the space between the strand and the forest

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED APR 21 1977

DATE ENTERED

NOV 2 1978

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 3

which crowded the waterfront was a 360 foot long concrete lined and bow shaped lagoon for bathing and canoeing. It has islands in either end, and a concrete arch bridges the narrowest part in the middle. This lagoon, as is documented by the date inscribed in the bridge, was introduced in 1915. A year later, Moran added a final sculptural element to this artificial water feature by mounting at its forefront on a graceful concrete arc the liberty capped carved figurehead of the America, a clipper ship which had been built in Massachusetts in 1874, later put in the Pacific coasting trade, and wrecked upon neighboring San Juan Island in 1914. Moran admired this specimen of a dying sentiment and art in shipbuilding.

THE LODGE

Rosario Lodge is an imposing, yet unforbidding three-story mansion with basement which measures 62 by 110 feet. It is located on a foundation of bedrock on a sidehill site on Rosario Point. It has a peristylar ground story and a hipped roof with broadly overhanging eaves and a multiplicity of dormers and straight-sided chimneys. Plans were drawn by the founder of the estate, Robert Moran, who expressed his lifetime experience as an industrial and nautical engineer in terms of sound construction. While the lodge is highly individual in character, in its respect for its setting and thorough workmanship; its projecting roof forms and emphasis on porch space, it bears a distinct relationship to the Arts and Crafts movement, particularly as advanced in this country by Gustav Stickley's magazine, The Craftsman, which commenced publication in 1901. Reflecting Craftsman aesthetics even more directly were the solidly constructed furnishings and high quality natural wood finishes designed by Moran and fashioned on the site.

The basement and ground story are constructed of ten inch thick reinforced concrete; upper stories are of frame construction, and the entire exterior wall surface is stuccoed. The original overall pigment was a deep brick red, or maroon. The house was painted white by intervening owners some time between 1940 and 1959. As a consequence, the dark, repeating patterns of window openings and the veranda arcade contrast even more boldly with the present light reflecting exterior surface than they did originally.

Initially, the roof had a cedar shake cover, but later it was overlaid with copper by Moran when he acquired a large supply at a reduced rate during the Depression. Copper rain troughs leading from the valleys of dormer roofs to the eaves troughs are still in place atop this metal cladding. Large dormers at either end of the hipped roof and pairs of smaller dormer flanking light wells centered in either major elevation are faced with shingles. Flues and chimneys are tall and straight-sided, stuccoed, and finished with wide, rolled over caps. Overhanging eaves are carried by scalloped outriggers. The rain drain collection system is completed by downspouts which lead from the eaves troughs down the outside wall to the porch, where they are introduced through the wall and brought down on the inner side of porch posts.

The first and second stories are lighted by ribbon windows composed of long, squat bays of 7/8 inch plate glass with narrow sidelights. These openings are devoid of exterior

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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DATE ENTERED MAY 2 1978

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 4

trim or moldings. A rolled or lipped belt cornice which shelters a belt of electric light bulbs marks the division between the stories. The second story overhangs a veranda twelve feet deep which originally circumscribed the entire ground story core. The peristyle, or outer arcade, is formed by modified basket arches with tapered supports which are a pleasing foil to the general angularity of the building. The porch railing is solid with rounded top rail, and concrete porch steps centered in the front and north-east end elevations have solid curvilinear railings. Over the steps on the northeast end a watch bell inscribed with the estate name "Rosario" is still in place. Behind it, on the porch wall, red, green and white marine lanterns decorate the entrance to the livingroom. When the lodge was adapted for resort purposes after 1959, the veranda on the southwest end was removed to make way for a new diningroom wing, and all but the easterly 30 feet of the veranda on the rear face was enclosed for use as a cocktail lounge. On the westerly two thirds of the front elevation, the ground story wall was removed and rebuilt eight feet out into the veranda to create an enclosed gallery for circulation between the registration desk and the gift shop and public diningroom. An additional entrance and concrete porch steps imitating those existing were added on the westerly end of this face. Despite these alterations to gain usable interior space, the outward effect of the veranda arcade has been preserved on either major elevation. The concrete basement is above grade on the rear facade, where its surface is a taut plane with small, untrimmed rectilinear openings which light assorted recreation rooms.

Typical finish woods of the interior are teak (a durable wood commonly used for boat decks, etc.) and African mahogany. The former was used for basketweave parqueted floors (which were liberally accented with oriental area rugs), and the latter produced lustrous dark toned door and window trim, ceiling beams and the paneled wainscoting of the stair hall. Much of the furniture was also made of teak, which was particularly suitable for the straight lines of Moran's Mission Style banquet tables (frequently draped with deer hide "cloths"), chairs, settles, sideboards and other case pieces. Moran, with his engineering bent, and his experienced craftsmen, many of whom were shipwrights and machinists, produced fittings of considerable ingenuity. These included: a tall case clock for the main stair hall landing (it had a beaten copper face and a plate glass door which revealed the assorted polished brass eights); customized hardware, including special "butterfly" door hinges with cone shaped self-lubricating pins of lignum vitae and central pivot mounts for the plate glass windows; a Mission Style conversation chair with opposing seats; a quantity of leather upholstered armchair rockers; indirect lighting over the ribbon windows which was diffused through parapets of marbelized colored glass; desks with nautical recessed drawer pulls; chests of drawers with rounded corners and revolving mirror stands offset to one side; some built-in ship's bunks; and an extensive assembly of built-in kitchen and pantry cabinetry. While a good many built-ins and fixtures are in place, most of the original furniture has left the premises over the intervening years.

The two best preserved public rooms of the lodge are the ground story living-dining room which is now used as a private dining area, and, directly above, the music room, now used as a lounge. Among the distinctive features of the living-dining room are two lateral beams with coved plaster soffits which span the room at right angles to the longitudinal beams. On the underside of either of these peculiar beams so reminiscent of ship's

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RECEIVED	APR 21 1977
DATE ENTERED	NOV 2 1978

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 5

carpentry, are five of the ubiquitous frosted hemispherical light globes in "port hole" mounts used throughout the lodge. On the inside wall of this room, opposite the entry from the veranda, is a fireplace surround of molded concrete with a facing of marble chips. This feature is understood to have been cast in one piece by the Moran Company and shipped to Rosario for installation. Its mesh fireplaced screen is still intact on runners inside a voluted brass railing suspended from the coved mantle.

The music room was perhaps Moran's pride, for it boasted many specially acquired features. Chief among these was an Aeolian pipe organ for which a double tier of pipes divided by a windowed alcove was installed on the northeast wall. The organ console was centered on a horseshoe shaped balcony with a bowed plaster soffit on the opposite end of the room. On either side of the balcony are library alcoves equipped with portiere curtains. At the center of the ceiling is a faceted hexagonal stained glass light fixture depicting the seven liberal arts. It is attributed, on the basis of Moran's correspondence, to that paragon of Arts and Crafts ideals, Louis Comfort Tiffany. A second noteworthy piece of stained glass in the room is the large rectangular clerestory window in the alcove between the organ pipes. It depicts in detail Antwerp (the chief port of Belgium), various steam and sailing vessels in the harbor, and major landmarks on the east bank of the Scheldt, including the Cathedral of the Holy Virgin, the late medieval fortress, and the Stadhuis, or townhall. The work is signed by "L. de Contini, Brussels, Belgium", about whom no information is printed in the standard artists' biographical dictionaries. The final extraordinary feature of the music room is the fireplace on the entrance wall which is faced with green ceramic tile and trimmed with studded copper. Sailing ships are depicted in a blue and white tile frieze above the mantle, and marine lanterns on brackets are used as accents on either side.

The basement floor contains recreation rooms with varicolored mosaic tile floors. In the game room, a billiard table and a pool table were mounted on pedestals hewn from the bedrock. In one of the side aisles, a maple bowling alley was laid atop steel beams imbedded in the rock. The game tables and their monolithic bases (which had to be drilled out) were removed around 1960 when the area served temporarily as the resort's first conventional hall. There is a stage-like alcove with platform at one end. In the adjoining gymnasium is a 13 by 40 foot swimming tank, originally tile lined but recently relined with fiberglass. The old laundry and furnace rooms have been converted for use as a sauna and dressing rooms.

On the ground story were the stair hall, the 30 by 39 foot living-dining room, the kitchen and pantries, and two large refrigeration rooms. With the exceptions of the living-dining room and the stair hall, this floor has been altered for storage, lobby-office, cocktail lounge, and gift shop use. The second story contained, in addition to the music rooms, twelve bedrooms, sewing and linen rooms, and a trunk room. Several of the bedrooms are still maintained as guestrooms. Those spaces adjacent to the stair landing and music room are now used as administrative offices for the resort. Future plans for utilizing this floor as a boutique area are under consideration, but it is intended that most of the woodwork would be preserved. On the third story, in addition to the library balcony

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RECEIVED	APR 21 1977
DATE ENTERED	NOV 2 1978

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 6

of the music room, were a photo darkroom, dispensary and seven bedrooms. This floor lately has been used as quarters for resort personnel. The attic was a finished clear-span room capable of sleeping fifty persons on cots. It is presently used for storage purposes.

### SUBSIDIARY STRUCTURES

The oldest structure on the site is believed to date from the area's initial development as a lumber manufactory by E. P. and Andrew Newhall after 1887. A two-story, gable roofed and clapboarded frame dwelling presently referred to as the Newhall House, and to which the date of 1888 is attributed, fronts a fenced perimeter road immediately north of the lagoon. Simply furnished with details derived from the Classical Revival, this house apparently was not the showiest residence erected by the Newhall family at this location. It may have been built for Andrew Newhall when he first served as superintendent of the mill. Now privately occupied, the solitary remnant of the predecessor settlement has been latered externally to some extent with aluminum window sash and new siding on elevations exposed to the heaviest weather.

Of the six separate living quarters built by Moran on the estate for his domestic staff, four are still standing within the immediate environs of the main lodge. The largest of these, a pair of commodious three-story Craftsman bungalow, are sited on the grassy slope above and to the west of the lagoon. They are oriented toward the southeast somewhat like the main lodge. Sited in the trees immediately west of the original access road on the slope above the lodge are two rustic cottages of differing size with peeled log porch posts. Each of the four houses is privately occupied at present.

A circular playhouse or pavilion with concrete slab floor and roof, which was built on the inner bank of Rosario Point overlooking Cascade Bay, is now another of the private residential enclaves under resort management. Its date of construction is uncertain, but it is assumed to be contemporaneous with several other concrete structures erected in the early 1920s. Another such structure, a block-like utility building detached from the southwest end of the lodge, was enlarged and remodeled in a Spanish motif for use as a one-story office and beauty parlor around 1973. With a rectilinear plan now measuring 34 by 40 feet, this facility has a stucco exterior veneer and iron grilles on its double-arched facade. A concrete wood bin adjacent to it on the north is still in use.

A single story, 28 by 22 foot concrete hydroelectric generator building, or power house, bears the inscribed date 1921 on its plain facade, which is relieved only by small openings and strip pilasters. It is sited above the east end of the lagoon, which in turn is filled with fresh wastewater from the turbine. The capacity of the power house was cited as 125 kilowatts when Moran was promoting the sale of his estate in the early 1930s. To furnish this power, Moran built a concrete dam at the outlet of nearby, elevated Cascade Lake, which in turn was replenished via an artificial water course from Mountain Lake, which has a still higher elevation of 914 feet. The generator operated Rosario's electric lights, cooking, refrigeration and laundry equipment, and shop motors, with power to spare

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 7

for heating bedrooms in the main lodge. The generator is still in use, but its capacity is now supplemented from other sources.

The three-story concrete shop and warehouse building is rectilinear in plan and measures 25 by 90 feet. It is located on the far, or east end of the lagoon and is oriented perpendicular to the waterfront. The gasoline dock is slightly offset to the east. The building has a shallow, copper covered gable roof; strip pilasters and belt courses mark off its bays and stories. The building had its principal entrance in the south, or waterfront end, and it housed fully equipped machine, metal and woodworking shops, a brass foundry, and electric welding equipment. A stock of general mechanical merchandise and a supply of lumber were also stored in the building. Although the date inscribed in the south gable end is 1925, it is known that most of the custom work required to outfit and furnish the main lodge was carried out in this building, or on its site, between 1906 and about 1912. The sizable shop building was first converted for use as a "boatel", or motel for boaters in 1963, but interior partitioning has been revised several times since then. At present, a two-story frame veranda extends the length of the west elevation and across the sound end. Centered on the east elevation is a two-story covered stair structure.

**NEW CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATED WITH THE RESORT**

Since Rosario's opening as a public resort in 1960, a number of recreational facilities and rental units have been added to the grounds. The first addition to the lodge itself was a two-story, 75 by 52 foot diningroom wing with flat roof and white painted plywood exterior veneer. In 1968 it was erected at right angles to the main block alongside the westerly portion of the southwest end. The fore part of the wing was built out over the terrace in order to provide an unobstructed view of East Sound and Cascade Bay on three sides. At terrace level, an irregular shaped swimming pool measuring 31 by 26 feet was constructed for adult use at the base of the diningroom wing. In 1971 the original kitchen at the core of the lodge was replaced by a 60 by 36 foot concrete block kitchen wing - less hazardous in terms of fire, which telescoped from the southwest elevation of the new diningroom wing. The former kitchen area was then developed as storage and lobby-office space.

Construction of detached rental units began in 1965 and has continued nearly to the present day. Staggered, single-story multiple units known as Villas are clustered off the northeast end of the lodge. A pair of two-story Villas with balconies and interior finish of plaster board and fir trim resembling conventional motel blocks in design was sited further to the east, near Moran's concrete pavilion. Each of the Villas is sited below or in the back of normal sight lines from the public rooms of the lodge, and each is arranged in such a way as to provide an optimum view of its own. On the upper slope, outside the immediate environment of the lodge, are a number of housekeeping units called Haciendas which are connected by a perimeter road. Tennis courts, added in 1968, and a large convention center known as Discovery House erected in the 1970s similarly fall



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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 8

outside the historic core of the resort. Within the core, however, at the westerly end of the cove, are several other new facilities. These include a breakwater to protect a small boat basin, a family pool with concrete deck and bathhouse added in 1962, and a frame building on concrete slab with a wooden front deck which was built in 1963 to house a self-service laundry, snack bar and art gallery.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		Parks & Recreation	
				Movement, Nautical Engineering	

SPECIFIC DATES 1905-1925

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Robert Moran

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### GENERAL STATEMENT

Rosario is significant to Washington as the partially intact luxury estate personally designed and developed in an offshore island wilderness by Robert Moran beginning in 1905. The sizable main lodge (1906-1909) and the nearby 5,000 acre park which Moran dedicated to the State in 1921 are the physical features now most widely associated with the Seattle pioneer, one time mayor and founder of the renowned Moran Brothers shipyard. During the gold excitement in 1898, Moran's company produced and delivered to Alaska a fleet of river steamers, ocean tugs and barges vital to the Yukon trade. Later the company pioneered the steel ship-building industry in the Pacific Northwest. It manufactured U. S. war vessels, including the masterpiece, Nebraska (1902-1904), the first battleship launched from a Puget Sound shipyard. The first class roads which Moran constructed to his Orcas Island estate were donated to the county, and the estate's water rights were shared with the tiny settlement of Olga on Buck Bay. Because of these and other public-spirited deeds, Moran was looked on as the island's greatest benefactor. Robert Moran was genial host to family, friends and notables at Rosario. The estate changed hands in 1938 and again in the 1950s before its acquisition by the present owner in 1959. Although it is currently maintained as a commercial enterprise, Rosario's continuity as a place of hospitality in the San Juan Archipelago has been reaffirmed.

### DISCOVERY AND OCCUPATION OF THE SAN JUAN ARCHIPELAGO

The San Juan Archipelago, lying between Canada's Vancouver Island and the Washington mainland, was discovered in the great age of maritime exploration off the Northwest Coast of America. The entrance to the sizable opening in the coastline between northern parallels 48 and 49 was first examined in 1788 by British sea captain John Meares. On the strength of published tradition, Meares named the strait for its legendary discoverer, Juan de Fuca. Thereafter, examination of the Strait of Juan de Fuca was pursued by the Spanish, notably by Francisco Eliza, who, in 1791, vaguely delineated the "Isla y Archipelago de San Juan". Under Eliza's expedition names also were given to Haro and Rosario Straits, which delimit the island grouping on the west and on the east. Detailed exploration of the archipelago was first undertaken fifty years later by the United State Exploring Expedition under Lt. Commander Charles Wilkes, in 1841. British Royal Navy exploration of the archipelago dated from 1846. Further charting for the United States was conducted by the U. S. Coastal Survey in 1853.

The San Juan Islands figured in the diplomatic history of the Northwest Coast as a consequence of their being essentially overlooked in the settlement of the boundary between British North America and United States territory in 1846. The treaty abandoned to the United States everything south of the 49th parallel excepting the southern tip of Vancouver Island. The channel between the 49th parallel and the Strait of Juan de Fuca which was to have formed part of the westernmost segment of the international boundary was not precisely defined.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Interview, May 12, 1976, telephone: Mrs. John F. Burns, Orcas, granddaughter of Robert Moran, builder of Rosario estate, and daughter of John Moran, construction foreman. See also correspondence dated June 17, 1976. Mrs. Burns holds house plans, photos and Moran correspondence.

Interview, May 12, 1976: Gilbert H. Geiser, Owner and Manager, Rosario Resort Hotel since continued on attached page

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 30 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,0 5,0,9,6,2,5 5,3,8,8,2,5,0  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B 1,0 5,0,9,6,2,5 5,3,8,7,7,2,5  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C 1,0 5,0,9,1,7,5 5,3,8,7,7,2,5

D 1,0 5,0,9,1,7,5 5,3,8,8,2,5,0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See Continuation Sheet

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Elisabeth Walton Potter, Historic Preservation Specialist

ORGANIZATION

Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation  
 Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

DATE

July 1976

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 1128

TELEPHONE

(206) 753-4117

CITY OR TOWN

Olympia

STATE

Washington 98504

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL     

STATE X

LOCAL     

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Jeannette M. Weeks*

TITLE

Acting State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

April 13, 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

*William L. ...*  
 DIRECTOR OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE  
 REEVALUATION DATE

*11/2/25*  
*Oct 24, 1978*

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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DATE ENTERED	

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

The islands had been regarded as British soil by the Hudson's Bay Company ever since Fort Victoria, company headquarters on Vancouver Island, was founded in 1843. Partly as a means of establishing possession, company employees were dispatched to the nearest of the offshore islands, San Juan, to set up salmon curing and livestock stations at least as early as 1850. Traffic through the islands increased in the ensuing decade, particularly after gold was discovered on the British Columbia mainland in 1857 and 1858. As immigration to the San Juans by U. S. citizens and British subjects accelerated following the gold rush, jurisdictional disputes inevitably arose. An incident over the killing of a Hudson's Bay Company pig by an American settler nearly erupted into war in 1859. Thereafter, U. S. and British troops were garrisoned on San Juan Island to monitor an interim of joint occupation, during which time the Boundary Commission sought to negotiate a dividing line. Finally, after twelve years had elapsed, the question was submitted to William I of Germany for arbitration. Priority of occupation notwithstanding, in October 1872 the German Emperor and his expert advisors decided upon Haro Strait between Vancouver and San Juan Islands as the boundary intended by the treaty of 1846. Thus, the San Juan Archipelago officially became, intact, a possession of the United States. A year later, in 1873, the islands were organized by the Territorial Legislature of Washington into the local governmental entity of San Juan County.

**PRIOR SETTLEMENT AT ROSARIO**

Prior to Robert Moran's acquisition of holdings on East Sound at Cascade Bay, the place now occupied by Rosario Resort was known as Newhall. In 1887 the Cascade Bay Lumber and Manufacturing Company was incorporated to manufacture barrel stock (undoubtedly for Orcas Island lime works), boxes, and dressed and rough lumber for local trade. The officers, apparently brothers, were E. P. Newhall, president, and Andrew Newhall, superintendent. A small work force of ten was employed at the primitive camp initially, and a steamboat and a tug contributed to the operation. Water power was supplied by Mountain and Cascade Lakes, as it was in Moran's time. The date of 1888 has been attributed to the one remaining structure of the Newhall enterprise, a simple frame dwelling which may have been occupied by the superintendent. It is believed that a finer residence once stood at Newhall. A post office was established at this location in 1889. The company appears to have been in operation at least as late as 1901, and the property was purchased by Moran from Andrew Newhall in 1905.

**ROBERT MORAN, PIONEER OF THE STEEL SHIPBUILDING INDUSTRY IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST**

Robert Moran (1857-1943) was a native of New York, the grandson of an Irish emigre by the same name who had settled in New York City in 1826. His family on both the paternal and maternal sides were skilled iron workers, and the young Moran learned the rudiments of the machinist's trade at an early age. The third of his parents' ten children, he left public school at the age of fourteen to earn his living. In 1875, when he was not yet seventeen, Moran left New York and arrived in Seattle as a steerage passenger via steamer from San Francisco. Having no means, he immediately started to pick up jobs at common labor. Eventually he found work on a Puget Sound steamboat, and devoted the ensuing seven

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED	NOV 1978

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

years to steam navigation on Puget Sound and the inland route to British Columbia and Alaska. By the end of that time he had become a licensed chief engineer.

In 1882 the foundation was laid for a career which was to have a profound impact upon shipbuilding in Seattle. With a capital reserve of \$1,500, Moran and two of his brothers recently arrived from New York started a small machine shop for the repair of steamboat and sawmill machinery which grew and prospered. In 1887 Robert Moran was elected to the Seattle City Council. A year later he became Mayor, the sixteenth to hold the city's chief executive position. He was reelected for an additional term, and thus held the post from 1888 to 1890. It is generally agreed that Seattle was particularly fortunate in having made this choice, for the vigorous approach to rebuilding the downtown core following a disastrous fire on June 6, 1889 is credited in large part to Moran's leadership. Of all his accomplishments as Mayor, Moran was most proud of having replaced the city's inadequate water system which had been a major factor in the city's inability to stop the spreading blaze which wiped out the entire business section. At Moran's direction, the eminent hydraulic engineer, Benezette Williams of Chicago, was brought out to do survey work and plans and specifications for Seattle's Cedar River Water and Power Plant. The city's sewerage system was upgraded at the same time.

Moran's expanded machine business had been destroyed by the Great Seattle Fire, but was quickly put in operation again on a new waterfront site helping to fulfill the demands of rebuilding the city. The Moran Brothers Company was organized in December, 1889 with a capital stock of \$250,000. Moran was president, secretary and treasurer; his brother, Peter, was vice president. The third brother, William, had retired from the family business by this time.

The gold excitement in Alaska 1897-1898 was a boon to local business in general, as the Yukon bound were outfitted in and supplied from Seattle. In 1898 the Moran Brothers Company constructed a fleet of river steamers, ocean tugs and barges vital to the Yukon trade, and Robert Moran commanded its delivery to the North Pacific via the inland passage in August of that year.

In 1900-1901 Moran Brothers constructed a dry dock which enabled the company to take orders for building and repairing large steel and iron ships. The company successfully bid for construction of the U. S. Navy's first class 15,000 ton battleship Nebraska. At first the Navy rejected the Moran's low bid as being too high. But an arrangement was negotiated in which the Navy adjusted its specifications somewhat and, together, Moran Brothers and the Seattle Chamber of Commerce, which with local newspaper support organized a popular subscription campaign, made up the deficit. The Nebraska was launched with full ceremony October 7, 1904 and at 19 knots exceeded the Navy's requirements for speed. As was planned, the steel shipbuilding industry on the Northwest Coast was given its impetus by the building of this first battleship ever launched from a Puget Sound shipyard. At this time the Moran Brothers Company and the Moran controlled Seattle Dry Dock and Ship Building Company offered the most complete facilities of the kind on the Pacific Coast outside of San Francisco.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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RECEIVED	APR 21 1977
DATE ENTERED	1978

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 4

Following Robert Moran's retirement, forced by ill health in 1906, the company was sold to Berton-Griscomand Company of New York. Under various corporate titles, it continued as one of the largest and best equipped in the country, and it filled order for freighters, U. S. Navy submarines and other vessels throughout the period of the First World War.

Moran's membership in professional organizations included the Northwest Society of Engineers, the American Shipmasters' Association, the Marine Engineers' Association, the American Society of Naval Engineers, and the Institute of Naval Architects, London. In 1939 he was elected president of the Pioneer Association of Washington. He also was a trustee of the Washington National Parks Association. During the First World War he served in a volunteer capacity as Washington State director of the Public Service Reserve which registered for public service a labor force of 200,000 citizens who for various reasons were not available for active duty in the Armed Forces.

Robert Moran's family comprised, in addition to his wife, three sons (John M., Frank G., and Malcolm E. Moran), a daughter (Nellie), and an adopted daughter (Mary) who was his niece. The oldest son, John Moran, after serving as his father's construction foreman at Rosario, headed the Moran Manufacturing Company, a Seattle manufactory and machinery dealership. In 1914 Frank G. Moran founded and became headmaster of two well known schools for boys and young men in the Seattle area.

DEVELOPMENT OF ROSARIO

In his autobiography, published serially in The Marine Digest 1942-1943, Moran explained that by 1904 the strain of a lifetime of hard work, full responsibility for managing the family corporation, and the complexities of the U. S. Navy's battleship Nebraska contract had taken their toll both physically and mentally. He wintered in Santa Barbara, California and thereafter made several trips abroad to consult with European specialists, on whose advice, in 1906, and at the age of forty-nine, he utterly retired from the business world and left his home in Seattle. In 1905 he had acquired holdings at Newhall, on Orcas Island in the San Juan Archipelago, and planned the construction of a private estate there. In 1906 the Moran Brothers Company shipbuilding enterprise was sold to a New York concern which reorganized it as the Moran Company. Moran apparently retained the Nebraska contract, however, and personally superintended the completion of her outfitting in that year.

His state of health notwithstanding, Moran approached the development of Rosario with the same thoroughness and zeal he had applied to his business. He set up shops in which metals and whole imported hardwood logs could be worked on the site. Moran's granddaughter, Mrs. John F. Burns, recalls that plans for a two-story house of frame construction by a professional architect were commissioned at first, but these were laid aside, and Moran developed his own concept and was his own designer thereafter. Mrs. Burns reports that the original house plans drawn by Moran in her collection are dated 1906. Moran's oldest son, John M. Moran (Mrs. Burns' father) served as his father's construction foreman. A craftsman named Miller was in charge of woodworking. Construction of the main lodge extended over a three-year period. A note by Mrs. Robert Moran in the original guest register documents that the family officially took up residence in the lodge June 21, 1909.

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED	APR 21 1978

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 5

As Moran regained his health, certain refinements to the main building and its landscape, including outdoor lighting and the lagoon, and construction of concrete buildings continued through 1925. The total cost of the development has been given as \$1,500,000. The motive for this protracted development was revealed in Moran's autobiography. "Building 'Rosario' was simply a continuance of my life-long urge to be continually pushing ahead on industrial construction work," he said. Moran also constructed a yacht, Sanwan, at Rosario with the intention of commencing a world cruise, but the prospect of still further construction projects on shore proved more compelling. He turned his attention to development of a large wilderness parcel of over 5,000 acres which he had set aside and delivered into the public domain. In the park, formally dedicated as Moran State Park in 1921, he built miles of roads and trails, concrete bridges and the gateway arch with its American eagle finial and bulkhead swagged with anchor chain - all at his own cost. Moran's pride in the park as a unique beauty spot was entirely justified. Its crowning feature is Mount Constitution, an eminence 2,405 feet in elevation from which may be obtained a 360° panorama without equal of the San Juans, the Strait of Georgia, Rosario Strait, and the peaks of the Cascade Range on the mainland of British Columbia and Washington. The effect of the view was heightened when a masonry observation tower designed by Seattle architect Ellsworth Storey was constructed at the summit under state and federal auspices and completed in 1940.

LIFE AT ROSARIO

Upon its completion, Rosario was the showplace of the San Juan Islands. Moran was hospitable and no doubt enjoyed receiving the guests who made their way there from Seattle and other parts of the country by private yacht. It was an eighty mile trip by inland water route from Seattle. Nevertheless, as has been seen, the estate was not developed to be a showplace so much as it was a means of absorbing Moran's constructive tendencies and gainfully employing others in the process. Rosario was remote from hectic urban life, but it was by no means isolated. It was connected to the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph lines on the mainland via a five mile private hookup line to the Eastsound office. Moreover, Orcas Island had regular ferry service from mainland Washington and Vancouver Island to Orcas, the landing point fourteen miles distant by county road. There was regular mail service from Seattle and Bellingham, and Rosario had its own postmaster.

Rosario was self-sufficient for its water and power. The source of water for domestic use other than that required to run the electrical generator and for irrigation was a spring which flowed at an elevation of 700 feet from the base of Mount Constitution. The pure spring water was piped to a concrete reservoir buried in the ground at an elevation of 100 feet. Hydroelectric power harnessed from the outfalls of Cascade and Mountain Lakes operated lighting, cooking and refrigeration systems, overhead line shafting for the laundry and shop machinery, and heated bedrooms in the main lodge. What wood was burned in fireplaces was driftwood, as the conservation-minded Moran forbade the cutting of forest wood for that purpose. Livestock on the estate included dairy cows and horses. Hay fields, orchard stock and vegetable gardens were tended by employees of the estate.

A variety of leisure-time activities could be pursued at Rosario, including horse-back riding, hiking, camping, trout fishing, swimming, and croquet on the rear lawn. Reportedly,

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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RECEIVED	APR 21 1977
DATE ENTERED	NOV 2 1978

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 6

one of Moran's chief pleasures was operating his player pipe organ for the entertainment of guests. The style of life at Rosario was rustic in the most elegant terms. When darkness fell upon the water and the quiet island wilderness, the play of outdoor lighting around the large house and its grounds must have made Rosario seem a festive oasis indeed.

EVENTS FOLLOWING SALE OF THE ESTATE IN 1938

Robert Moran providently made preparations to sell the 1339 acres remaining in his private estate as early as 1932, at which time he had reached the age of seventy-five. In that year he published an album and text, entitled Rosario: An Estate in the Pacific Northwest, which promoted the property and its island setting. In it he stated that his purpose in offering the property for sale was to avoid passing it down to his descendents "in a division of small stock interests, no one of which would be financially able to carry the expense of the occupancy or maintenance of the property". It was his belief that because of the water rights and power system he had developed the property could be more "cheaply and advantageously" operated as a whole. Naturally, the prospective buyer would have to have considerable means, and in the depths of the Depression the number of satisfactory offers was limited. Finally, between 1938 and 1940 the sale, reportedly for a mere \$50,000, was transacted with Donald L. Rheem, a wealthy out-of-state industrialist who proved to be the estate's long-term interim owner and the one who carried out some substantial improvements. Moran, then a widower, took up residence in a smaller home he had built at White Beach near the ferry landing settlement of Orcas on the southwest side of the island. Rosario changed hands once again in the 1950s before 1320 acres were acquired for resort development by the present owner in 1959.

It was not until after the Second World War and the advent of recreational boating that the shoal-free San Juan Archipelago began to be the widely popular vacation spot it is today. From 1959 to the present, facilities at Rosario Resort Hotel and Convention Center, catering to boaters and motorists alike, have been expanded steadily. Certain interior decor and rental unit titles allude to the historic theme of Spanish exploration off the Northwest Coast of America. To finance such projects as the construction of outdoor swimming pools and satellite rental units it has been necessary to sell some of the platted sections on the resort's periphery. There are at present some 975 acres remaining under single ownership. Future needs, such as that for a sewage treatment plant, are expected to necessitate further sales, but the core of the resort will be preserved intact.



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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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DATE ENTERED

1973

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

1960. Owner's holdings include photographs, Moran library and miscellaneous memorabilia.

Meany, Edmond S., Origin of Washington Geographic Names (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1923; reprinted 1968 by Gale Research Company, Detroit).

Bagley, Clarence B., History of Seattle, Vol. 2 (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1916), 605-1609. Note on Moran Brothers Shipyard.

Hanford, Cornelius Holgate, Seattle and Environs 1852-1924, Vol. 3 (Chicago and Seattle: Pioneer Historical Publishing Co., 1924), 206-212. Biog. note on Robert Moran.

Rosario, An Estate in the Pacific Northwest (undated, circa 1932). Printed text and album.

"Memoirs of Robert Moran, Pioneer Upbuilder," The Marine Digest, Vol. 21, No. 15 (November 14, 1942), 2; Vol. 21, No. 18 (December 5, 1942), 2; Vol. 21, No. 24 (January 16, 1943), 2; Vol. 21, No. 25 (January 23, 1943), 2. First publication of autobiography copyrighted in 1939 by Moran's son, Malcolm E. Moran.

Washington Biography Pamphlet and Clipping File (Robert Moran), University of Washington Library Special Collections.

"Rosario, Orcas Showplace: A House that was Built to Last," Seattle Times (June 19, 1960), Sunday Pictorial, cover, pgs. 11-16.

"Rosario: A Legacy of Beauty," Seattle Post-Intelligencer (March 1, 1964), Pictorial Review, pgs. 4-5.

Richardson, David, Pig War Islands (Eastsound, Washington: Orcas Publishing Company, 1971), 335-336.

Kertis, Mabel, Inventory Form, Washington State Inventory of Historic Places, October 1974.

Kertis, Mabel, correspondence (undated, received 7-23-76) concerning the predecessor settlement of Newhall based on items published in the Friday Harbor San Juan Islander in 1901. Mrs. Kertis lives in Eastsound, where she is a member of the Orcas Island Historical Society.

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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RECEIVED

APR 21 1977

DATE ENTERED

NOV 2 1978

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 1

Beginning at the base of the gasoline dock on Cascade Bay, proceeding due north to a point where the sloping terrain reaches an elevation of of 100 feet, then continuing along the contour line at the 100 foot elevation in a westerly and southerly direction to a point 950 feet east of the common line between Range 1 West and Range 2 West, Wilamette Meridian, then proceed due south 100 feet, then due east 240 feet, then due south to the extreme southern tip of Rosario Point.

