

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

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RECEIVED DEC 8 1976

DATE ENTERED AUG 29 1977

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

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Roche Harbor

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

San Juan Island

VICINITY OF

2nd - Lloyd Meeds

STATE

Washington

CODE
53

COUNTY

San Juan

CODE

055

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input 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	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<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 type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Resort

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Mr. Neil A. Tarte, President and General Manager (206) 378-2155
Roche Harbor Company

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Roche Harbor

VICINITY OF

STATE

Washington 98250

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		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

GENERAL STATEMENT

Roche Harbor Historic District encompasses the best preserved portion of the small town developed by the Roche Harbor Lime Company on a protected cove on the northwest tip of San Juan Island, off the coast of Washington. Included at the south end of the 140 acre district are a majority of the quarries, the remains of two batteries of lime kilns, and a shipping pier - all that is left of a sizable plant which around the turn of the century came to be a leading producer of calcined lime in the West. At the core of the district sixteen historic frame buildings range along the slopes rising from the crescent of waterfront. The northernmost portion of the district embraces a cemetery and the family mausoleum erected by the company's president and manager for fifty years, John S. McMillin. Most of the alterations within the district date from 1956, at which time the company's 4,000-acre empire was relinquished by the McMillin heirs and Roche Harbor was revived by its present owners as a small boat haven and resort. As a means of enhancing the community's current role, several recreational facilities, including a large outdoor swimming pool, have been added within the district. At the same time, historic structures were preserved and utilized insofar as possible. The old Hotel de Haro, for example, continues intact as Roche Harbor's hostelry and focal point. Other adaptive-use restoration projects are contemplated for the future.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Roche Harbor is situated in T.36N., R.4W., of the Willamette Meridian. Within the township, the 140-acre district occupies portions of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 14, portions of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 23, a fraction of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 13, and a fraction of the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 24.

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. San Juan, measuring about 15 miles long by 7 miles wide, is the westernmost of these. It fronts on Haro Strait, which was charted by Spanish sub-lieutenant Manuel Quimper under command of Francisco Eliza in 1790. The "Canal de Haro" designated by Quimper honored first mate Gonzales Lopez de Haro.

Roche Harbor is situated off Haro Strait at the northwest tip of San Juan Island. The deep bay, one of the most sheltered in the archipelago, is protected at the mouth by smaller islands. It was named in 1858 in honor of British naval officer Richard Roche, who at the time served on the North Pacific station as 3rd lieutenant under Boundary Commissioner Captain J. C. Prevost.

PHYSICAL FEATURES OF THE DISTRICT

The former company town was laid out along a cove approximately 2,000 feet across. The crescent is defined by a northern point of the San Juan mainland and a peninsula lying between Roche Harbor and Westcott Bay on the south. On the neck of the peninsula is the quarry site, a high ridge, or limestone formation now ca. 210 feet in elevation. The plant was situated at the northwesterly corner of the peninsula, where the ridge falls off toward the harbor. Two batteries of brick-lined furnaces, or kilns at the foot of the ridge were top-loaded with broken rock via chutes from tramways above. Below the kilns, at grade level,

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in a curved configuration conforming to the toe of the hill, were multi-storied sheds enclosing firing platforms, barrel assembly, packing and storage rooms. The shipping pier, or main dock projects into the harbor from the plant site at a north-westerly angle. The auxiliary barge-loading wharf is no longer extant. Along this industrial section, including especially the area beneath the dock, the waterfront has been filled somewhat in intervening years. The central portion of Roche Harbor's shoreline initially was built out by McMillin some 70 to 80 feet to a sea wall of boulders and sandstone.

Between the limestone ridge and a knoll to the north which is 146 feet in elevation is a narrow, steep slope on which were erected, in descending order, a stable, work sheds, hen houses, residences of company officials, offices, the hostelry, laundry, mechanic's garage, and so on. On the west slope of the knoll, facing the waterfront, is the church. Below it, a bunkhouse, now gone, was partially extended over the water on pilings (it had been moved to that location from its original site immediately north of the hotel). North of the knoll is a broad plain which spreads down to the shoreline. This gentle slope was cleared for construction of four tiers of workers' cottages. The road from Friday Harbor, San Juan County seat on the opposite end of the island, enters Roche Harbor at the crest of this slope. The original access road to company headquarters led from this point around the base of the central knoll and along a shelf above the waterfront, thence inland slightly past the facade of the Hotel de Haro. On the beach, on the far side of the workers' cottages was the repair yard for the company's fleet. North of the cottages and the shipyard the mainland gradually rises to an elevation of 192 feet. On the northwesterly slope of this hummock, above the community cemetery, McMillin erected his family mausoleum of limestone and cement.

The hillsides surrounding Roche Harbor, once logged off, are now covered with brush and second growth timber. From its domain of 4,000 acres, the company supplied much of its own cordwood for firing the kilns. Contrasting with the broken forest backdrop is a formal garden in front of the hotel, part of which was developed on waterfront fill. As restored, this fenced forecourt is planted with lawn and trimmed with a lush array of flowering shrubs and bedding plants. The central walkway through it is shaded by a pergola, the overhead members of which were once inscribed with farewell phrases intended for McMillin's departing guests. Several mature horse chestnuts are interspersed throughout the hotel grounds and along the old roadway in front. Shade trees which, in the 1920s, screened the south end of the hotel from nearby plant activities have since been removed. The old road in front of the hotel has been closed to automobile traffic recently and developed as a plaza with pavement of fire brick from the kilns.

RELATED FEATURES OUTLYING DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

There are three historic sites associated with Roche Harbor's heyday which nevertheless are excluded from the district because they have been irrevocably changed. "Jap Town," the settlement of Japanese hired by McMillin for domestic service, was located at the south end of the cove at the foot of a small inlet west of the quarries. None of the twenty or more light frame dwellings remains. The area presently is being developed for condominium use.

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The Staveless Barrel Factory (ca. 1897) by which McMillin sought to make his manufacturing, packing and transshipping operation self-sufficient and, thereby, more profitable, was located on the point at the north end of the cove. The factory and its dock were destroyed by an arsonist in the early 1920s and never rebuilt. The site is now occupied by a private residence built by the subsequent owners in 1959.

"Afterglow Manor", a large tile-roofed framehouse in the Mediterranean tradition, replete with carriage house and gardens, was built for McMillin's eldest son, Fred, in 1910. It was located on the far side of the north point on a strand known as Afterglow Beach, so-named for the spectacular play of light reflected in Spieden Channel during sunsets. The house burned in the early 1940s, some twenty years after Fred McMillin's untimely death. Afterglow Beach is now a platted subdivision. Remnants of the estate's orchards may be seen there still, however.

Among lesser sites throughout the company's holdings is a small, nine-hole golf course which was maintained for a time for the benefit of McMillin's guests. It was situated east of the workers' cottages, between the road to Friday Harbor and the innermost cover of Westcott Bay. In time, it was utilized as a grazing pasture (company property included livestock and farms). Although the area is still cleared and retains its contour, it has not been used for recreational purposes for many years.

PRIMARY BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

Kilns

The oldest remnant of the lime factory is a pair of conventional masonry furnaces at the base of the quarry ridge, directly behind the dock. They are approximately 16 feet square at the base and rise to a height of about 35 feet. Local tradition concerning British marines notwithstanding, they undoubtedly were erected by the Scurr Brothers around 1881. The Scurrs were the first to burn lime at Roche Harbor on a commercial basis. Prior to that time, it is understood that British soldiers garrisoned a little more than a mile due south, below Westcott Bay, burned Roche Harbor lime in crude pot kilns during their occupation of the island 1860-1872.¹ What lime was not used by the soldiers for their own needs (presumably, chiefly mortar and plaster) is said to have been shipped out on British merchant vessels and gunboats in whatever packing barrels came to hand.

Soon after John McMillin acquired the small, faltering operation on behalf of the Tacoma and Roche Harbor Lime Company in 1886, three steel-clad kilns were erected alongside the stone kilns, which were reinforced with timber for continued use. The receptacles of the kilns were lined with firebrick, common brick and gravel. This expanded complement, later known as Battery No. 1, produced 750 barrels of lime a day. The battery eventually was discontinued as business declined in the 1930s.² Yet, while deteriorated and, like the quarries, overgrown with brush, it is more nearly intact today than the later, main battery. At either battery site the sheds which sheltered the fireboxes and cordwood supplies, barrel-assembly and grading and packing operations were removed long ago, as was the

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elevated track for ore cars and the dump trucks which replaced the cars as time went on.

McMillin had the second battery built in the later 1890s as a contiguous unit of eight steel kilns. It was located around the toe of the hill from Battery No. 1, slightly south of the dock. With the addition of Battery No. 2, the plant's daily output surged to 1,500 barrels. Today, the stone foundation (what appears to have been the coolers with their series of arched out-take openings) and a dilapidated, one-story powerhouse shed offset to the north end are all that remain of the main battery.

Miscellaneous

A concrete water tank with a capacity of 136,300 gallons is located on the hillside above lime kiln Battery No. 1, at an elevation of 103 feet. Around the turn of the century, when the hillsides had been logged off for fuel, the water tank was a prominent feature in the landscape. Today it is essentially screened from view. Later, a 14,000 gallon gasoline tank also was erected on the hillside.

Main Dock and General Store

On the main dock adjacent to the lime plant, barrels of lime were stored in longitudinally oriented sheds with gable roofs to await loading onto company ships and other vessels. On July 28, 1923, the combustible stock was ignited by a blaze which spread from a cooper's forge on shore. The dock and the miscellany of aging frame buildings which made up the plant were destroyed. They were rebuilt later in the same year, making increased use of fire-resistant corrugated metal cladding. The outer three fourths of the 300 foot long dock was covered with a single flat canopy, supported by posts and braces, which was open on the end and sides. Abutting the warehouse on the inland end was a large, two-story frame general store building with flat roof, balustrade and pent eaves shading second story windows. On the second story was an office and a spacious assembly room, or auditorium, with slender cast-iron columns supporting longitudinal beams. A second story wing projecting as a central ell over the lime warehouse served as a clubhouse for McMillin's frequent yachting guests.

What remains of the general store today is precisely the north half. Its balustrade also has been pared away. In addition, the lime warehouse has been enclosed and partitioned into a variety of utility areas to accommodate Roche Harbor's modern-day boating guests.

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The main dock doubled as a ferry terminal during the time that Roche Harbor was the landing point on San Juan Island for regular ferry runs between Sidney and Anacortes on the Washington mainland, 1926-1930. Other traditional services provided at this location since the company's later days are gasoline filling stations for boats and automobiles and a customs office.

Hotel and Church

When McMillin arrived in 1886 to take over the lime works established by the Scurr Brothers, there were four buildings at Roche Harbor in addition to the stone furnaces.³ The foremost of these was a sizable bunkhouse, a two-story building parallel to the waterfront. It had a gable roof and a double piazza with chamfered posts and railings with plain, square balusters which extended across the front and around the ends. On the basis of a contemporary photograph of the Scurr's bunkhouse, the building appears to have measured roughly 20 by 40 feet.⁴ Its facade had three regular bays. On either story the doorways were centered between double-hung sash windows with multiple small panes. It appears that the outside walls may have been sheathed with wide, lapped boards. On the forward slope of the roof, near the ridge on the south end, was a brick chimney with corbeled cap. Below it, at the eaves, was a bell of some sort on a wheel mount. Clearly, it was this building which McMillin expanded as the Hotel de Haro.

There is an oral tradition, perpetuated in recent literature, that the hotel was constructed around a Hudson's Bay Company trading post dating from 1845. Indeed, hewn timber was discovered in the wall structure in the course of refurbishing the hostelry after the company's sale was transacted in 1956. Moreover, until recently, a small log cabin of uncertain date and origin stood near the workers' cottages. On the other hand, neither the crude cabin nor the log walls of the south portion of the hotel appear to bear much resemblance to the post-in-the-sill technique typical of Hudson's Bay Company construction. It is known that as the boundary dispute unfolded, Governor James Douglas was unable to confirm from records that the Hudson's Bay Company had settled anyone on San Juan Island, however, tentatively, before 1850.⁵ The salmon-curing stations and livestock farm established by the British company after that date were located on the less densely forested south tip of the island. Until clearer evidence of an early trading post at Roche Harbor comes to light, it seems preferable to assume no more than that the Hotel de Haro has as its core the bunkhouse built by the Scurr Brothers around 1881.⁶

As enlarged and updated by McMillin, about 1887, the hotel achieved an Italianate air. With its added third story it boasted as many as twenty-two guest rooms. With expansion of the north end and rear, it measured approximately 38 by 81 feet, not including single-story lean-tos on the rear and north end and a three foot wide triple piazza, or veranda which extended across the front and south end.⁷ The roof, disguised on the south elevation by a false parapet, is a single-pitched tarred incline rising from rear wall to front. At the north end of the facade, the veranda terminates in a three-tiered polygonal bay with upper deck railing which appears to have been merely decorative in intent. A belfry, square in plan, with a railing and shingled pyramidal roof, was erected at the southwest

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corner of the roof in the place formerly occupied by the Scurr Brothers' "bell". Early views indicate that no bell was ever installed in the superstructure, however. Its finial is no longer in place. The principal chimney stack, that of the fireplace in the south wall, was elongated. Assorted smaller stove flues were added.

The exterior appears to have been entirely re-clad when the building was enlarged. Drop siding and plain corner boards were used. The new eaves were carried by jig-saw brackets with drop ornaments attached to the wall plane along a shallow tongue-in-groove frieze laid in diagonal patterns. Scrolled brackets were also added to porch posts. In the older section, several doorways were opened adjacent to existing windows to provide additional access to the veranda, but fenestration remained essentially formal. Original membering of the double-hung sash windows was six light over six. From an early date, ivy vines trailed along the veranda and required intermittent trimming. Around 1920, when the garden forecourt was being fully developed, a pergola with rustic peeled-log uprights was added at the southwest corner in front of the grade level veranda. With this, the hotel's porches became a luxurious bower further buffered by shade trees.

A parlor occupied the south portion of the ground story. It had a brick-faced fireplace in the end wall and a pair of transverse beams supported by peeled-log posts and pilasters. Originally, a large dining room occupied the north end. It appears that tongue-in-groove wainscoting may have been used in these public rooms, for such wainscoting is still found in the stair well. The stair case, leading upstairs from the parlor, has a conventional, sturdy balustrade of the 1880s with newel posts with vasiform turnings. For the most part, plain baseboards were used in upper floors. All window and door trim was plain. The hotel kitchen was contained in a single-story lean-to on the south end of the rear elevation. The laundry and washroom were detached in a shed behind it.

After Roche Harbor was acquired for resort development in 1956, the hotel, which had been closed since 1942, was the major restoration project undertaken by the new owners. It was reopened as hostelry in 1960. A majority of the ground story was repartitioned for new uses, but much of the original parlor space on the south remains in use as a lobby and registration area. Dining facilities were removed, and plumbing and electrical wiring were upgraded. Upstairs guest rooms, eleven on each floor including four suites with baths, were kept intact, although walls were covered with sheet rock and papered.

A staunch Methodist, McMillin saw that a church was erected soon after his arrival. It was sited on the west slope of the knoll between the hotel and workers' cottages. A simple frame structure with clapboard siding, boxed cornice, gable roof, and belfry (now louvered), it measures approximately 25 by 44 feet and is oriented longitudinally on its narrow site overlooking the harbor. The entry centered in the west end is reached by a double, or divided stairway. The door is surmounted by a lancet window and is bracketed by an elongated double-hung sash window on either side. There are three bays in either side elevation. Initially, the building was used also as a school. A simply-finished nave is the sole interior space. When the church was restored after 1956, a tiny sacristy was built onto the east end of the north elevation, an altar and new pews were added, and the building was reconsecrated the Catholic Chapel of Our Lady of Good Voyage. Carillon bells

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were later installed in the belfry as a memorial to Reuben J. Tarte, founder of Roche Harbor Resort.

McMillin Residences

It is recalled that throughout his early career at Roche Harbor, company manager John McMillin took up quarters in the hotel. Some time between 1910 and 1920 several frame buildings in the area immediately north and westerly of the hotel were re-arranged. First, a bunkhouse near the north end of the hotel was removed and resited on pilings on the shoreline between the church and workers' cottages. The vacated spot was then developed as an alfresco banquet court complete with stone fireplaces.

A two-story building on the waterfront, identified in photographs in the present owner's collection as the original customs house, was retained in situ, and McMillin had a large, three-story clapboarded house constructed at the south end of it for his personal use.

Despite the status which the lime baron enjoyed, the new home was comparatively devoid of architectural pretension. It was, but for a few decorative elements, a straight-forward construction which merged well with the white-washed utilitarian structures of the factory town. The interior was no less modest. It was furnished comfortably, if not splendidly, with solid pieces. Ceilings were somewhat low, and woodwork rather plain. The latter consisted of tongue-in-groove wainscots, four-panel doors with plain surrounds, and picture molds. Wallpaper was finished with paper friezes, or borders.

Rectilinear in plan, the house had a steeply-pitched gable roof with a cross-axial gablet on the west, or waterfront elevation. Overhanging eaves were carried by oversized brackets, and the spandrels of end gables were given pierced decoration no doubt patterned after half-timbered effects then in vogue. The west elevation featured a two-story polygonal bay with railing and deck accessible from a central third story opening. Verge boards on the west gablet were scalloped, possibly in imitation of the frontal gablet of the Rural Gothic company doctor's house. The steps and unroofed porch of McMillin's house were on the south end. The deck had a semi-circular bay with railing at the south-east corner, over which a striped conical canopy was raised on a metal framework in fair weather. It was from this vantage point that Mr. and Mrs. McMillin enjoyed a view overlooking the harbor and the formal garden just coming to full development in the 1920s.

McMillin's residence and the former customs building which had become its north wing (presumably for office purposes), were remodeled as a restaurant and lounge for the resort development and opened in 1957. The majority of the main block remains intact externally. The north wing, however, has been extensively modernized.

On the knoll above the original access road and the John McMillin house is a two-story frame residence with gable roof, dormers, and a veranda with deck and railing which apparently was sited there in the 1920s for the use of McMillin's younger son, Paul, who was by 1922 his father's sole male heir. It is believed that, prior to this time, the

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building had occupied a side-hill site at water grade, off the northwest corner of the hotel. If this is so, the original two and a half story building (to which a double, wrap-around piazza eventually had been added) was substantially remodeled upon its relocation. In any event, Paul McMillin's residence was given an up-to-date pigmented stucco surface which was exceptional among the white painted clapboarded buildings of Roche Harbor.

Doctor's Residence and Neighboring Bungalow

On the slope above the hotel, overlooking the harbor, are two dwellings remaining from the historic period. The older of these is a two-story clapboarded house in the Rural Gothic tradition built for Victor J. Capron, company physician who arrived at Roche Harbor in 1898. Much like a simplified version of a Calvert Vaux design for a "symmetrical country house," the gable-roofed building has a formal rectilinear plan with a central second story bay overhanging a front porch which extends the length of the facade. The frontal gablet is finished with decorated verge boards and finial and is lighted by coupled double-hung sash windows with round arch heads under a single round-arched hood mold. There is one bay on either side of the facade's central projecting section, and there are two bays of conventional double-hung sash windows with six lights over six in either end elevation. A tall brick chimney with corbeled cap is at the ridge, offset from center over the south rooms. Lean-to additions are on the rear. The immediate site retains much of its period landscape features, including a variety of mature evergreens and flowering shrubs.

While the building's exterior is intact, its interior was repartitioned in the early phase of resort development and was temporarily used as a dormitory for members of the restaurant serving staff. Future plans call for restoration of the doctor's residence.

Neighboring the doctor's residence on the south is a one and a half story clapboarded bungalow which probably dates from the period between 1910 and 1920. Oriented longitudinally on its site, the rectangular bungalow has a modified gambrel roof which overhangs a front porch.

Workers' Cottages

Twenty simple frame cottages for married workers and their families were erected in neat, staggered rows on a cleared slope north of the central knoll which divides the townsite. A plat of the village in the present owner's collection (dated December 1935) shows that unpaired lanes fronting each of the four rows were given the names "Waterfront", "Maple", "Hemlock", and "Alder".

It is not known whether or not the cottages were built in different periods, but the ten which stood in the two rows nearest the waterfront differed from those of the upper two rows. The former were one and a half stories in height and had double-pitched roofs and rectangular plans oriented longitudinally. All but one of the ten box-like cottages

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which comprised the upper rows are still standing. They are single-story cottages, nearly square in plan, with hipped roofs and front entries offset to one side. These cottages were refurbished for use as rental units when Roche Harbor became a resort in the 1950s. Originally, water was supplied from four wells, and each compact lot contained several back buildings and sheds. Shade trees and shrubbery modified the regular pattern.

Another row of about a dozen cottages which stood perpendicular to the waterfront along the base of the knoll to the south is no longer extant. It was separated from the main village by the original access road.

Mausoleum

In 1936, at the age of eighty-one, John McMillin turned his attention to construction of the family mausoleum - a tholos, or circular temple-like monument of local limestone and cement on an elevated site northeast of the workers' cottages and cemetery. Before the second growth timber reached its maturity, the site commanded a panorama of Afterglow Beach and Haro Strait beyond. The entrance to the mausoleum precinct is marked by a masonry gateway with filigree arch bearing the title "Afterglow Vista". The restraint which McMillin had exercised in constructing his own residence in the heart of the company town some sixteen years or more earlier was now abandoned. The project was a means for the company founder to honor his deceased older son and to express his personal views about life and death.

In designing the structure, McMillin (a Mason of the 32nd Degree) drew upon the symbolism of Freemasonry as well as his own concept of family unity. Flights of three, five and seven steps ascending the tholos mound are understood to be allusions to the three stages of life, the five orders of architecture, and the seven liberal arts. The colonaid is formed by seven fluted Tuscan columns thirty feet in height, the seventh of which is broken to signify the broken column of human life and, specifically, the severed life ties of the builder. A concrete architrave with trefoil arches was intended to support a bronze dome surmounted by Maltese cross. The latter would have represented McMillin's life-long devotion to Sigma Chi fraternity (he was the first grand consul). However, the \$20,000 custom order for the dome was cancelled at the last minute as an extravagance which could be ill-afforded. In the center of the stone-paved floor were crypts where ashes were to be inurned. These took the form of six chairs arranged around a round table in imitation of the family dining style. The device was to symbolize reunion after death. Appropriate inscriptions were added to each of the stone chair backs. Reportedly, the ultimate refinement of this elaborate monument was orientation in such a way that each June the setting sun shone through the broken column on the west onto the crypts of the family head and his wife on the opposite side.

The project was completed, without dome, in the spring of 1936 at a cost of \$30,000. John S. McMillin died the following November, and his remains were placed in the mausoleum to join those of his son Fred (1880-1922). Other family crypts were filled

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as time went on. The monument is still maintained as a feature of the resort, though the natural forest setting which McMillin preferred has enveloped it.

NEW CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATED WITH THE RESORT

Several new facilities have been added since Roche Harbor's acquisition for recreational development in 1956. Projects in the category of general site development within the historic district were the grading of new access roads, clearing away of dilapidated structures and debris, filling in of the area under the main dock, and the expansion of small boat moorage facilities. In addition, the area where workers' cottages once stood along the waterfront now contains a large outdoor swimming pool. In that area lawn tennis courts and a seasonal horseback-riding concession also are maintained at present. Several new utility sheds have been added on the upper slopes of the townsite. One such structure (standing on the site of a cottage in the topmost row which had been used as a schoolhouse) is a service building for a 4,000 foot air strip, the longest in the San Juan Islands. The air strip stretches out to the east wholly outside of district boundaries. A miscellany of sheds and trailers is found on the slope above the hotel, and a small, two-room office building recently erected on the hotel grade, abutting the masonry foundation wall of lime kiln Battery No. 1.

Among future developments under consideration for the area within the district are the refurbishing of the lime warehouse on the main dock as a complex of small shops, expansion of restaurant facilities, and construction of a new hotel unit at the foot of the stone lime kilns. Plans contemplated for company property surrounding the historic district include development of several subdivisions and a condominium-townhouse complex and expansion of the golf course to 18 holes.

¹"From Barren Rock to Lime: Roche Harbor, Washington," Wilhelm's Magazine, The Coast Vol. 6, No. 3 (September 1903), 79. Also: McDonald, "Roche Harbor In Transition," page 4; and Richardson, Pig War Islands, page 128.

²The battery was discontinued by 1938, at least, per notation on plot plan of Roche Harbor Lime and Cement Company plant drawn for Royal Insurance Company, Ltd., Seattle, Washington, and dated April 1, 1938. Collection of present owner.

³"News of the Northwest," The Pacific Magazine, Vol. 3, No. 8 (April 1891), 432.

⁴The photograph was published in Lucile McDonald's "Roche Harbor in Transition," Seattle Times (January 4, 1959), Magazine Section, page 5. The print from which the vaguely-identified newspaper illustration was made is somewhat retouched, as certain details are indistinct. It may be consulted at the newspaper's library. No source is given.

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⁵David Richardson, Pig War Islands (Eastsound, Washington: Orcas Publishing Company, 1971), 32. James Douglas, Hudson's Bay Company agent on Vancouver Island and Governor of the Crown Colony of Vancouver Island and British Columbia 1851-1863, insisted that the Hudson's Bay Company had taken possession of San Juan Island as far back as 1845, but he admitted that there was no written record of any such activities by the company's people prior to 1850. Hubert Howe Bancroft, in his History of British Columbia 1792-1887 (page 612), mentions the claim of British Colonial authorities concerning priority of occupation of San Juan Island. It was based on the generalization that the Hudson's Bay Company had "kept their herds" on the island "ever since the establishment of Fort Victoria in 1843."

⁶This is the conclusion drawn by Richardson, Pig War Islands, page 283.

⁷These approximate dimensions are taken from the plot plan of the hotel, drawn to scale, in the Royal Insurance Company, Ltd., map of Roche Harbor dated April 1, 1938. Collection of present owner.

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 type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Company Town Labor Relations	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1881-1936 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Anonymous

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

GENERAL STATEMENT

Roche Harbor Historic District is significant to the state and to the nation as a partially intact company town on a remote off-shore island which, from the turn of the century to the Great Depression, was the center of the lime industry on the West Coast. The key to the success of the operation on the northern tip of San Juan Island was that a seemingly inexhaustible vein of exceptionally pure limestone lay adjacent to a protected harbor readily accessible to ocean-going vessels. The rich lime deposit at Roche Harbor, the best of several veins in the San Juan Archipelago, was first exploited on a commercial basis by the Scurr Brothers in 1881. However, the major period of development, in which lime was quarried, calcined and barreled for transshipment in a single, efficient operation, occurred under the leadership of John S. McMillin, president and manager of the Roche Harbor Lime Company from 1886 to 1936. Sixteen historic buildings still standing at the core of the 140 acre district date from the McMillin era, although the Hotel de Haro incorporates a bunkhouse which predates 1886. Following a period of decline and eventual sale of the company's vast holdings on the island in 1956, the unincorporated town regained importance in a new industry, that of tourism and recreational boating. Owing to its proximity to Vancouver Island (the resort is no more than 10 or 12 miles from the international ferry terminal at Sidney), Roche Harbor retains for the benefit of Canadian boaters the sub-port of entry status it formerly held as an industrial site.

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 States Exploring Expedition under Lt. Commander Charles Wilkes, in 1841. British Royal Navy exploration of the archipelago dates 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

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Interview, May 13, 1976: Mr. Walter A. Arend, Friday Harbor, San Juan Historical Society representative and former resident of Roche Harbor.
- Interview, May 14, 1976: Mr. Neil Tarte, President and General Manager, Roche Harbor Company; Manager, Roche Harbor Resort. Collection includes company records, photos.
- Meany, Edmond S., Origin of Washington Geographic Names (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1923; reprinted 1968 by Gale Reserach Company, Detroit). (continued)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 140 acres, more or less
 UTM REFERENCES

<u>9</u> A <u>1,0</u> <u>4</u> <u>8,8</u> <u>9,7,0</u> <u>5,3</u> <u>8,4</u> <u>5,9,0</u>	<u>E</u> <u>1,0</u> <u>4</u> <u>8,8</u> <u>6,1,0</u> <u>5,3</u> <u>8,3</u> <u>9,3,0</u>
ZONE EASTING NORTHING	ZONE EASTING NORTHING
<u>D</u> C <u>1,0</u> <u>4</u> <u>8,8</u> <u>5,9,0</u> <u>5,3</u> <u>8,3</u> <u>0,0,0</u>	<u>C</u> D <u>1,0</u> <u>4</u> <u>8,8</u> <u>8,7,0</u> <u>5,3</u> <u>8,3</u> <u>0,0,0</u>
ZONE EASTING NORTHING	ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(See continuation sheet)

Beginning at a point on the centerline of Roche Harbor Road at its western terminus, or gateway to Roche Harbor; thence southerly along centerline of dirt road which circumscribes limestone quarries to the fork northerly of the south boundary NE $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 23, T.36N., R.4W., W.M.; thence westerly and northerly along centerline of said dirt road to the fork northerly of the south boundary NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 23; thence northerly along centerline of westernmost fork of dirt road to point of intersection with west boundary NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 23; thence north along said boundary and along west boundary of SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 14 to point of inter-

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

June 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

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

Arthur M. Skolnik

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

November 30, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

W. J. [Signature]

DATE

8/29/77

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST

Charles [Signature]

DATE

8.25.77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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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 now precisely defined.

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.

EARLY SETTLEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT AT ROCHE HARBOR

San Juan County is an historic center of the lime industry in western Washington. The most prominent of a number of limestone veins in the archipelago runs across Orcas Island and through the northwest corner of San Juan Island. A part of that vein, the immense ledge at Roche Harbor, was found to be a deposit of very pure and compact grey limestone which would produce the highest all-round grade of lime for a variety of building purposes and manufacturing.

According to local tradition, the first burning of lime at Roche Harbor was a make-work operation conducted in crude pot kilns by British soldiers during the period of joint occupation of the island 1860-1872. English Camp, where the soldiers were garrisoned, was located on Garrison Bay little more than a mile due south of the ledge. What lime was not used by the marines for their own needs (presumably, chiefly mortar and plaster) is said to have been shipped out on British merchant vessels and gunboats in whatever packing barrels came to hand.

Lime burning by the settler community on San Juan Island was commenced as early as 1860, presumably at the exposed deposit in cliffs near Lime Kiln Light on the southwestern shore. However, full-scale commercial lime works were not attempted until after the international boundary question was resolved in 1872. In 1873 the San Juan Lime Company was reorganized and expanded by James McCurdy, N. C. Bailey and others. By 1879 lime was being produced

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on Orcas Island also. The Roche Harbor deposit, meanwhile, remained largely unexploited by the early settlers.

In 1872 Joseph Ruff settled a 160 acre claim at Roche Harbor which was patented five years later. Shortly thereafter, in 1879, the claim was acquired by Israel Katz, a merchant and entrepreneur, who soon relinquished his holdings to an Irish emigre named Robert Scurr. Scurr had arrived on San Juan via Wisconsin and gold fields in California and on the Fraser River in British Columbia. He was soon joined by a brother, Richard. Together, the Scurr Brothers cleared a hundred acres at Roche Harbor, raised sheep and hay and planted an orchard. Around 1881 the Scurrs ventured into lime production on their holdings. They constructed the two masonry furnaces which are still standing. Their split-cedar barrels of lime sold for \$.50 each, and the operation scarcely broke even.² In addition to the kilns and a rudimentary dock, the Scurrs' development consisted of a sizable log headquarters-and-bunkhouse and several outbuildings. Between 1882 and 1884 a part interest in the property was sold to three Ross Brothers. Thereafter, the operation apparently changed hands once before being acquired in its entirety by the Tacoma and Roche Harbor Lime Company in 1886.³ In 1889 the Scurrs patented another tract adjoining the former Ruff claim and went into fruit-raising, one of the mainstays of San Juan County economy.

THE ROCHE HARBOR LIME COMPANY

Exploitation of the Roche Harbor deposit on a profitable scale dates from 1886, at which time John S. McMillin completed negotiations for acquisition of the lime works and related property for a sum of \$40,000.⁴ McMillin, a lawyer by training and profession, sought investment opportunities upon his arrival in Tacoma in 1884. He acquired a substantial interest in the Tacoma Lime Company and managed its works in the Puyallup Valley in Pierce County. It was while scouting promising quarries for the Tacoma-based concern that McMillin discovered the desposit at Roche Harbor. His firm was reorganized and incorporated as the Tacoma and Roche Harbor Lime Company with McMillin as president and general manager. In 1886 McMillin moved his family to Roche Harbor, where he shaped the new venture. In time, his sons joined in the supervisory responsibilities.

With its initial complement of stone and steel-clad kilns, the company produced 750 barrels of lime a day. The plant's daily output surged to 1,500 barrels after a second battery of eight steel kilns was put into operation shortly before the turn of the century. Until it was destroyed by fire in 1923 and rebuilt, the lime warehouse on the end of the main dock carried the following painted legend: "Largest Lime Works in the West - Capacity 1500 Barrels per Day."

Roche Harbor lime was first shipped to the growing cities on Puget Sound and to Portland, Oregon's inland port and metropolis. By the turn of the century, the company was shipping its product to San Francisco, and thereafter the market expanded along the entire Pacific Coast from Alaska to Panama; to Hawaii, and to the interior as far as the Mississippi River.

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It is said that much of the lime sold to California interests after the turn of the century was used in the manufacture of cement required to rebuild San Francisco after the devastating earthquake and fire of 1906. Because lime was necessary also in the production of steel, one of the company's largest accounts was the Bethlehem Steel Corporation. At its peak, before the stock market crash of 1929, the company is said to have had a net worth of \$1.1 million.⁵ Its domain spread over 4,000 acres and embraced twelve miles of shoreline.

The deep bay fronting the plant was a distinct advantage, for ocean-going vessels and barges could be loaded directly from the company's docks. In addition to the ships which collected cargoes at Roche Harbor on a regular basis, there was a company fleet made up of two 3-masted schooners (Star of Chile and Archer), a brigantine, barges, tugs, and assorted work boats and smaller craft. The brigantine William G. Irwin made monthly runs to San Francisco, and the steam tugboat Roche Harbor regularly towed barges to Seattle. The only remnants of the company fleet still present in the district are the Roche Harbor's wrecked hull on the beach at the shipyard site and its wheel house, which was mounted on the end of the main dock.

Another of the enterprising facets of McMillin's operation at Roche Harbor was the Staveless Barrel Company. (Charges of impropriety in setting up the company and certain other fraudulent practices lodged in U. S. District Court in Seattle in 1906 were widely publicized. In 1908 McMillin was absolved by the court of any wrong-doing as charged by minority stockholders, but in the interim he had resigned his post on the State Railway Commission which controlled transportation rates, and his vast empire had been reassessed for tax purposes in closer conformity with its true value.) In the wake of the Silver Panic of 1893, McMillin bought out several investors inexpensively and wound up with a controlling interest in the company. In the meantime, he had learned of a newly-invented machine which, by revolving fir or cedar logs against a shaped knife, made staveless barrel halves which could be sealed together. McMillin recommended to company directors that they purchase patent rights to the invention, but when the proposal was turned down, he and several associates formed a separate company which proceeded to contract for the manufacture of hogsheads needed for shipment of the calcined limestone. The factory erected on the north point of the cove in 1897 turned out 4,000 barrels a day from a ready supply of timber. It was observed in 1903 that there was but one other such factory known to be operating in the United States (in Michigan).⁶ The staveless barrel factory at Roche Harbor was destroyed by an arsonist in the early 1920s and never rebuilt.

While the lime plant at Roche Harbor provided the biggest payroll in the county, by far, it was not without competition. McMillin's chief rival in the vicinity was the Henry Cowell Lime and Cement Company based in Santa Cruz, California. Cowell's concern had acquired the former San Juan Lime Company operation at Lime Kiln Light as well as two plants of the Orcas Lime Company on Orcas Island. In 1923, the year in which McMillin's plant and dock burned, the Orcas Lime Company opened a quarry and kiln merely half a mile south of Roche Harbor, between Westcott Bay and Mosquito Pass. Apparently, it was a bitter irony that McMillin's son-in-law eventually sold his interest in the Roche Harbor Lime Company

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to Cowell. Not wanting his competitor as a stockholder at that point, McMillin is said to have maneuvered to allow Cowell the least possible profit from the transaction.⁷

THE MANUFACTURING PROCESS

Roche Harbor limestone carries up to 98.32 percent pure carbonate of lime. It is among the purest limestone found anywhere in the world. Apparently it was quarried as building stone, and some was processed to a powdered state. However, the predominant form of the product was chunks of calcined, or baked lime which were graded and shipped out in barrels for a variety of industrial uses, including the manufacture of steel, cement, glass, plaster, paper, bleaching and cleaning compounds.

In the early years, stone mined by compressed air drills was loaded at the quarry site into ore cars which descended on a gentle-graded tramway to the kilns. Mules were used to haul the empty cars back to the quarries, but were soon replaced by locomotives. Eventually, the cars were supplanted altogether by gasoline-powered dump trucks. Once above the kilns, the broken rock was dumped from the tramway down timber chutes into steel-clad receptacles lined with firebrick. At the heart of the kilns were fire-boxes of burning wood generating an intense heat of 2800°F. Calcination, the process in which oxygen units with carbonate of lime, occurred as this heat passed through the stone. Thus converted to lime, the burned rock was funneled down to coolers below the fire-boxes, and from this level it was drawn out, via chutes, examined for imperfectly burned pieces, and emptied into barrels on scales. Once graded, the filled barrels (weighing 200 pounds each) were headed, stamped with the company's brand, and transferred to the warehouse ready for shipment. Each "draw" produced from 12 to 20 barrels. It has been estimated that, when both batteries were in operation, the plant consumed 64 cords of wood per shift.⁸

By the 1930s, only the best and most readily obtainable stone was being quarried at several large sites. The company lacked the resources to keep pace with mining technology, and as a consequence of the waste the once-profitable operation headed into decline.

SOCIAL LIFE IN THE COMPANY TOWN

At the peak of company fortune, in the 1920s, Roche Harbor's population numbered 800 persons. In terms of population, the community then was as large as Friday Harbor (San Juan County seat at the opposite end of the island) is today. Quarry and factory workers were domiciled in bunkhouses and cottages. Japanese employees, almost exclusively hired for domestic service, lived in a separate community on the south side of the cove near the quarries.

Employees normally were paid in scrip which was redeemable at the company's general store. However, wages could be drawn in cash if necessary. A school was maintained for children of the workers in the church and, later, in one of the cottages. A company physician was in attendance, and services in the Methodist church were conducted on a circuit-riding basis. McMillin apparently held a tight rein on community life. Drinking was prohibited

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except, perhaps, on general holidays. He kept the labor movement under control by hiring replacements for striking crews. While McMillin's approach was predictably autocratic, he was not without compassion. He is credited with making jobs for as many islanders as possible during the Depression. The elaborate family mausoleum completed in 1936 is felt to have been, in part, one of several make-work projects conceived to provide employment.

Though for a time Roche Harbor was a regular stopping point on the ferry run from Vancouver Island to the Washington mainland, it was always somewhat remote. Life there was circumscribed, but enlivened from time to time by the entertainments on which McMillin seemed to pride himself. The Fourth of July was a time of general festivity, and the first week in August was reserved for elaborate harvest fetes attended by as many as 450 persons - chiefly McMillin's friends and associates in the lime and cement business. With its stone fireplaces, the tree-shaded banquet court adjacent to the hotel would be strung with lanterns and set up with tables, chairs and a stage on these occasions. Salmon barbecues were also held on points and islets in the vicinity, and barges imaginatively decked with evergreens attached to a framework were used to tow guests forth and back. McMillin's 50 foot yacht, Calcite, was also used for entertaining guests as well as for family vacations.

Among the most memorable of red-letter days at Roche Harbor was July 13, 1906, on which date President Theodore Roosevelt visited his Republican Party associate in the course of a hunting expedition. Reportedly, the destroyer U. S. S. Jones delivered the president to the company town for an overnight stay marked by a noontime salmon barbecue, and alfresco banquet and ball.⁹ The signature of "Theo. Roosevelt, Washington, D.C.," made on that date still may be seen in the guest register of the Hotel de Haro.

THE DUKE OF SAN JUAN - A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John Stafford McMillin (1855-1936) was born at Sugar Grove, Tippecanoe County, Indiana. His father's family, of Scottish derivation, had arrived there after emigrating to Virginia in an early period. At the age of sixteen, McMillin entered Indian Asbury University at Greencastle (later DePauw) and was graduated with a bachelor of arts degree in 1876. In 1879 he was awarded a master's degree at DePauw and delivered the master's oration for that year. In the meantime he had been reading law in the office of Judge David P. Vinton in Lafayette, Indiana, and had been admitted to the bar in 1877, the same year in which he was married to Louella Hiett. In 1884, McMillin brought his wife and young son to Tacoma, Washington Territory, where he was promptly admitted to the territorial bar. However, owing to his pursuit of local investment opportunities, his career was from that point forward devoted to the lime industry. Other offspring, another son and a daughter, followed upon the McMillins' settling at Roche Harbor.

McMillin's domination of San Juan Island affairs soon earned him the nickname "Duke of Jan Suan."¹⁰ The "duke" was a dominating person in physical terms as well. He was over six feet, three inches in height and weighed 265 pounds. Apparently, it was consistent with his sense of history and purpose that he kept a professional photographer on the payroll to

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make occasional portraits and record significant events at the West's largest lime plant.

At Roche Harbor McMillin nurtured a hobbyist's interest in poultry farming and raised prize-winning chickens, ducks, turkeys, and rabbits. He was awarded an honorary doctorate by the College of Puget Sound in Tacoma in 1932. Other life-long interests of McMillin's were Sigma Chi fraternity (of which he was first grand consul), the Masonic Order and the Republican Party. He was a delegate to every territorial and state Republican convention since 1886, and usually was a member or chairman of the platform committee. While a hoped-for seat in the U. S. Senate was elusive, he had no trouble exerting his influence in local politics. McMillin's association with Theodore Roosevelt began when he was a delegate to the national convention at Chicago which unanimously nominated the latter for the presidency in 1904. McMillin supposedly was appointed to the committee which formally notified the incumbent of his nomination by calling at his home at Oyster Bay, New York. 11

EVENTS FOLLOWING McMILLIN'S DEMISE

In his later years, McMillin consigned more and more of the company's management to his remaining son, Paul. Following his father's death in 1936, Paul McMillin (1886-1961) struggled with a declining business, but, with greatly reduced crews, he managed to keep the kilns in operation until shortly after the Second World War. Finally, in 1956, the deserted company town and its surrounding domain was sold for development as a boat haven and resort to retired Seattle business leader Reuben J. Tarte, who had founded a transport and warehouse corporation in 1931 and later introduced the innovative "piggyback" railroad flatcar.

As McMillin had aspired to do before him, R. J. Tarte involved his entire family in the development of Roche Harbor. He was joined in the venture by his energetic wife, Clara, his son, Neil, and his two sons-in-law and their respective families. Under his direction, McMillin's residence was opened as a restaurant in 1957, the church and formal garden were restored, and the Hotel de Haro was reopened for the first time in eighteen years in 1960. Other historic elements, such as the workers' cottages were utilized, and facilities appropriate to the town's new purpose were added.

Upon his father's demise in 1968, Neil A. Tarte assumed leadership of the multi-faceted enterprise. A separate company was formed for purposes of subdividing and selling real estate for vacation homes. The construction of a 4,000 foot airstrip dramatically increased Roche Harbor's accessibility to business conferees as well as vacationers, and business evolved on a year-round basis. The seasonal influx of boaters and vacationers notwithstanding, the number of Roche Harbor's permanent residents is yet small - a fraction of the population of San Juan Island currently listed at 2,000. Although lime is no longer burned at the former company town, the site's industrial function apparently is not entirely eclipsed, as limestone has been quarried there on a modest scale in the intervening years to supply building facings and crushed rock for road beds.

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¹"From Barren Rock to Lime: Roche Harbor, Washington," Wilhelm's Magazine, The Coast, Vol. 6, No. 3 (September 1903), 79. Also: McDonald, "Roche Harbor in Transition," page 4; and Richardson, Pig War Islands, page 128.

²Lucile McDonald, "Roche Harbor in Transition," Seattle Times (January 4, 1959), Magazine Section, page 4. Also: Richardson, Pig War Islands, page 240.

³McDonald, ibid. Edward Sanderson Smith was the interim owner, according to this source. He paid the Scurrs and Rosses \$75,000 for real estate, the lime works and barrels.

⁴David Richardson, Pig War Islands (Eastsound, Washington: Orcas Publishing Company, 1971), 282.

⁵Lynette Evans and George Burley, Roche Harbor: A Saga in the San Juans (Everett, Washington: B and E Enterprises, 1972), 34-35, 19.

⁶Richardson, Pig War Islands, pages 288-291, 284. Also: Evans and Burley, Roche Harbor: A Saga in the San Juans, page 52; and "From Barren Rock to Lime: Roche Harbor, Washington," Wilhelm's Magazine, The Coast, Vol. 6, No. 3 (September 1903), 82.

⁷McDonald, "Roche Harbor in Transition," page 5.

⁸"From Barren Rock to Lime: Roche Harbor, Washington," Wilhelm's Magazine, The Coast, Vol. 6, No. 3 (September 1903), 81. Also: Evans and Burley, Roche Harbor: A Saga in the San Juans, pages 45-46.

⁹Evans and Burley, Roche Harbor: A Saga in the San Juans, page 24.

¹⁰Frank G. Carpenter, "'Duke of San Juan' Tells Big Salmon Stories," Seattle Post-Intelligencer (November 20, 1904), Sec. 3, pg. 5. The article has a Chicago dateline.

¹¹Clinton A. Snowden, History of Washington (New York: The Century History Company, 1911), 29.

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- Walbran, John T., British Columbia Coast Names 1592-1906: Their Origin and History (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1972). First U. S. printing. Originally published Ottawa, 1909.
- The West Shore, Vol. 15, No. 7 (July 1889), 408. Lithographed illustration of lime works at Roche Harbor, Washington. No text.
- "News of the Northwest," The Pacific Magazine, Vol. 3, No. 8 (1891), 431-432.
- "From Barren Rock to Lime: Roche Harbor, Washington," Wilhelm's Magazine, The Coast, Vol. 6, No. 3 (September 1903), 78-82. Good illustration of plant prior to changes.
- Carpenter, Frank G., "'Duke of San Juan' Tells Big Salmon Stories", Seattle Post-Intelligencer (November 20, 1904), Sec. 3, pg. 5. Dateline, Chicago.
- Snowden, Clinton A., History of Washington (New York: The Century History Company, 1911), 26-29. Biographical note on John S. McMillin.
- Peterson, H. Gardner, "San Juan Memorial High on a Hilltop," Seattle Times (May 30, 1948), Magazine Section, pg. 11.
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- Morgan, C. T., The San Juan Story (Friday Harbor, Washington: San Juan Industries, 1966).
- Murray, Keith A., The Pig War (Tacoma: Washington State Historical Society, 1968).
- Collins, Alf, "Discreet Expansion for Historic Roche Harbor," Seattle Times (December 21, 1969), J1.
- Richardson, David, Pig War Islands (Eastsound, Washington: Orcas Publishing Company, 1971) Notes on John S. McMillin pgs. 282-293; 334-335.
- Evans, Lynette, and Burley, George, Roche Harbor: A Saga in the San Juans (Everett, Washington: B and E Enterprises, 1972). Definitive summary. Some misinformation, however.
- Green, T. M., "The Limestone Kilns Stand Empty Today," Seattle Times (March 10, 1974), Sunday Pictorial, pgs. 18-19. Perpetuates misinformation.
- Arend, Walter A., preliminary National Register nomination forms on Stone Lime Kilns, Hotel de Haro, and Our Lady of Good Voyage Chapel (Methodist Church), August 26, 1975.

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section with north boundary of SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 14; thence east along said boundary approximately 660 feet; thence north to point of intersection with north boundary SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 14; thence east along said boundary to point of intersection with section line between Sec. 14 and Sec. 13; thence south along said section line to point of intersection with northernmost dirt road to Afterglow Beach; thence southeasterly along centerline of said dirt road to point of beginning, the whole embracing 140 acres, more or less, including approximately 20 acres of the harbor.

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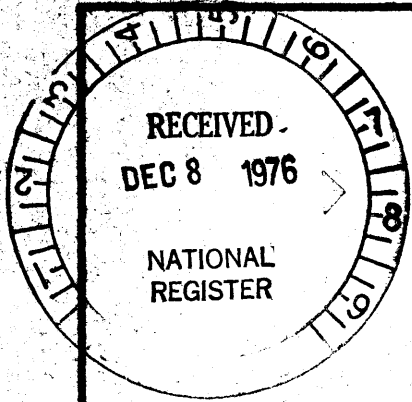
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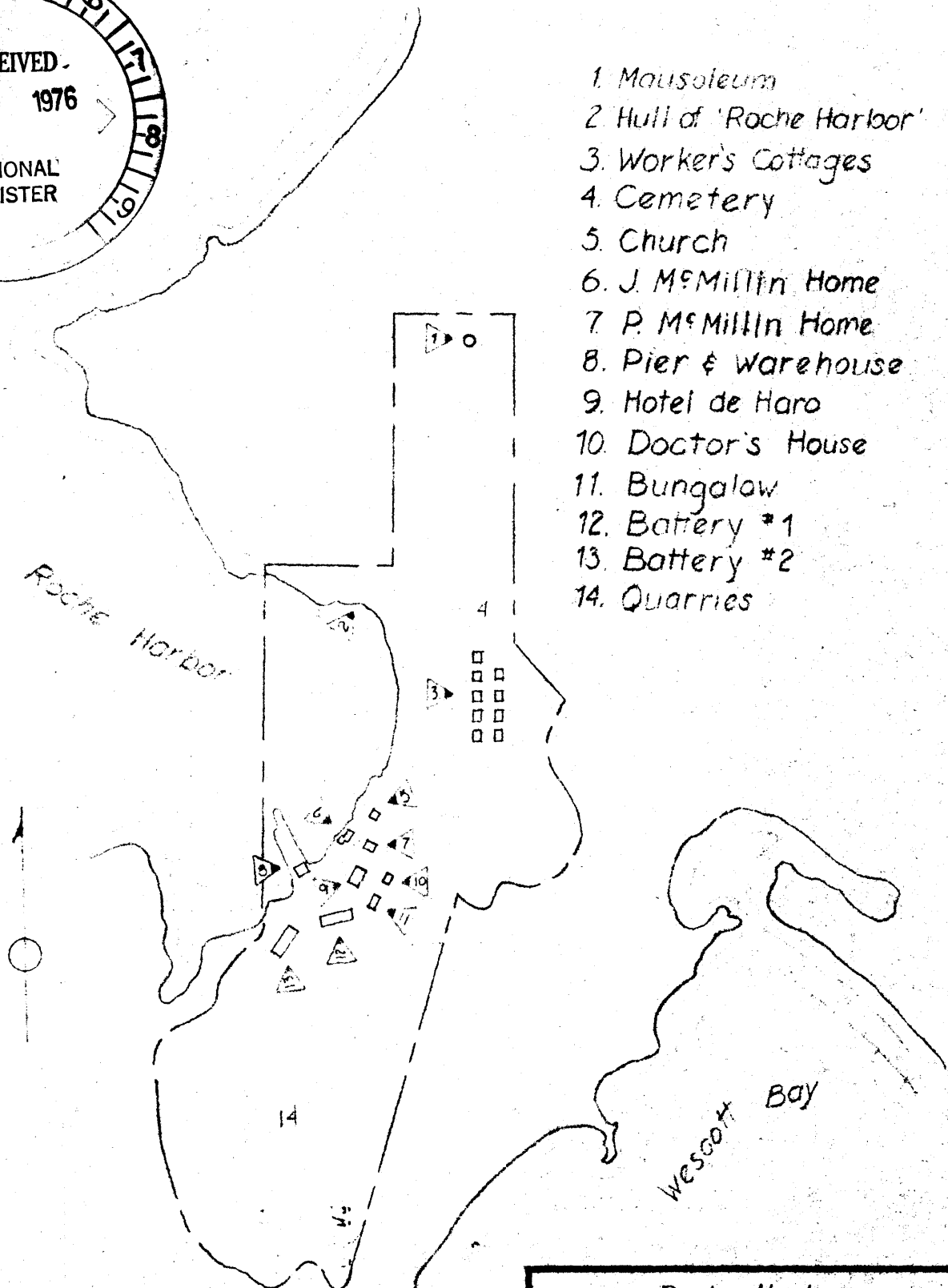
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F. B.
10 489290/5383780

F. P.
10 489170/5384590



- 1. Mausoleum
- 2. Hull of 'Roche Harbor'
- 3. Worker's Cottages
- 4. Cemetery
- 5. Church
- 6. J. McMillin Home
- 7. P. McMillin Home
- 8. Pier & Warehouse
- 9. Hotel de Haro
- 10. Doctor's House
- 11. Bungalow
- 12. Battery #1
- 13. Battery #2
- 14. Quarries



Roche Harbor
Historic District
- Sketch Map -

**WASHINGTON STATE
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

DRAWN BY _____ SCALE 1" = 1950'
DATE 11.76 DRAWING NO. _____