

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Littellton

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

1. STATE Washington	2. THEME(S). IF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE, WRITE "ARCH" BEFORE THEME NO. Themes XIII & XXI Political and Military Affairs, 1830-1910
3. NAME(S) OF SITE American and English Camps (Pig War Site)	4. APPROX. ACREAGE 300 acres
5. EXACT LOCATION (County, township, roads, etc. If difficult to find, sketch on Supplementary Sheet) San Juan Island	
6. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PRESENT OWNER (Also administrator if different from owner) Mrs. Mary C. Davis and State of Washington	
7. IMPORTANCE AND DESCRIPTION (Describe briefly what makes site important and what remains are extant)	

The colorful "Affair of the Pig," arising directly from the protracted and bitter quarrel between Great Britain and the United States as to the sovereignty of the Oregon territory, brought the two great powers briefly to the brink of war in 1859. For thirteen years the two nations maintained armed forces in the disputed San Juan archipelago, and the question of sovereignty was resolved only by the Treaty of Washington in 1871 and the final arbitration of the question by the German Emperor in 1872. Then, for the first time in the history of the United States, the republic had no boundary dispute with Great Britain.

In assessing the Treaty of Washington Thomas A. Bailey has written: "We may conclude that it was the greatest triumph for arbitral methods that the world had yet witnessed. It provided for four significant arbitrations, three of them of major importance. [Bailey includes the San Juan question among the important ones.] It was one of those periodic purgations that dispelled every serious cloud in Anglo-American relations. It was not only [Hamilton] Fish's greatest diplomatic success, but it was also the most substantial accomplishment of eight long years of Grantism - an oasis of achievement in the desert of scandal."¹ Allan Nevins has called the Treaty of Washington "an event of cardinal importance in the history of the relations of the two English-speaking powers."²

The splendid physical remains of the American and English camps on San Juan Island thus appear to be the one site from which the larger stories of "54-40 or fight," the incident of the Pig War, and the important Treaty of Washington can be told.

¹ Thomas A. Bailey, Diplomatic History of the American People (New York, 1947), 422.

² Allan Nevins, Hamilton Fish: The Inner History of the Grant Administration (New York, 1937), 493.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Give best sources; give location of manuscripts and rare works)

Hunter Miller, ed., Treaties and Other International Acts of the United States (Washington, D. C., 1948), vol. 8, 281-443. This is a detailed and definitive history of the Pig War, includes an 1860 map showing locations of American and English Camps; Hubert Hower Bancroft, History of British Columbia, 1792-1887, (San Francisco, 1887) (vol. XXXII of Works),

9. REPORTS AND STUDIES (Mention best reports and studies, as, NPS study, HABS, etc.)

cont'd
p. 6

10. PHOTOGRAPHS* ATTACHED: YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	11. CONDITION Excellent Remains	12. PRESENT USE (Museum, farm, etc.) Farm and Park	13. DATE OF VISIT August 27, 1959 *
14. NAME OF RECORDER (Signature) Charles W. Snell	15. TITLE Historian	16. DATE April 10, 1961	

* DRY MOUNTED ON FAIRLY HEAVY PAPER. IDENTIFY BY VIEW AND NAME OF THE SITE, DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH, AND NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER. LOCATION OF NEGATIVE. IF ATTACHED, ENCLOSE IN PROPER NEGATIVE ENVELOPES.

(IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS NEEDED USE SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET, 10-317a, AND REFER TO ITEM NUMBER)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Page 2

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS
SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET

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STATE	NAME(S) OF SITE
Washington	Pig War Site

7. Importance and Description (cont'd):

Article One of the Oregon Treaty of June 15, 1846, provided that "From the point on the forty-ninth parallel north latitude where the boundary laid down in existing treaties and conventions between the United States and Great Britain terminates, the line of boundary between the territories of the United States and those of Her Britannic Majesty shall be continued westward along the said forty-ninth parallel of north latitude to the middle of the Channel which separates the continent from Vancouver's Island; and thence southerly through the middle of said Channel, and of Fuca's Straits to the Pacific Ocean; provided, however, that the navigation of the whole of the said channel and Straits south of the forty-ninth parallel of north latitude, remain free and open to both Parties. . ."

The difficulties that developed at San Juan arose directly from the fact that the treaty phraseology relating to the water boundary was not precise or certain. Due to inadequate maps, the actual geography of the waters between the continent and Vancouver Island was very imperfectly known in London and Washington in 1846. When actually laying out the water boundary in 1856, it was discovered to the Commissioners' surprise, that south of the middle of the Strait of Georgia lay a swarm of small but strategically located islands in the San Juan archipelago, and not one, but three channels. Each nation pushed its interpretation of the treaty boundary clause to the limit, and the Commissioners were therefore unable to resolve the question.

The islands had been uninhabited in 1846, but in 1850 the Hudson's Bay Company established a fishing station on San Juan, the largest island in the group. The Company followed up this step in December, 1853, by establishing a sheep farm with 1300 sheep, under its agent Charles John Griffin, on San Juan. In January of 1853 an act of the territorial legislature of Oregon included the San Juan archipelago in its Island County. The legislature of the newly organized Territory of Washington followed up this initial action by including the islands in its newly formed Whatcom County in March, 1853. In 1854 and 1855, with varying degrees of success, the U.S. Collector of Customs for the District of Puget Sound and the Sheriff of Whatcom County endeavored to assess the property of the Hudson's Bay Company on San Juan Island; the Company, claiming British sovereignty over the islands, resisted these American efforts. In 1855 the two nations reached an understanding whereby it was agreed that conflict should be avoided on San Juan until boundary difficulties could be solved by diplomatic means.

Minor incidents, however, continued to occur, and by 1859 at least 25 American citizens had settled on San Juan. The Hudson's Bay establishment there had also prospered, and the Company had some 5,000 sheep and 20 employees living on the island when matters came

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Page 3

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7. Importance and Description (cont'd):

to a head.

On June 15, 1859, an American named Lyman A. Cutler, a settler on San Juan Island, shot a pig (a black boar, to be precise) belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company that had been rooting in his vegetable garden. Cutler at once told the agent of the Company on the island, Charles J. Griffin, of the incident and offered to pay for the pig. Heated words, however, passed between the two men, and they differed widely on the value of the pig.

Alexander Grant Davis, director of the Hudson's Bay Company, its chief representative in the Northwest, and son-in-law of Governor James Douglas of British Columbia, arrived at San Juan on the Company ship, Beaver. On the 16th Davis, Griffin and several other men visited Cutler, and another heated discussion followed, during which Davis threatened to take legal proceedings against Cutler and to forcibly remove the American to Victoria for trial.

Aroused by this threat, the American settlers on San Juan Island petitioned Brigadier-General William S. Harney, U.S.A., in command of the Department of Oregon, with headquarters at Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River, for protection against the Northern Indians and the oppressive interference of the authority of the Hudson's Bay Company. The "Affair of the Pig" thus rapidly elevated into an international incident. Harney visited the island on a routine tour of inspection on July 9. Here he received the settlers' petition and, on July 19, ordered Captain George F. Pickett's Company of the Ninth Infantry, to the island.³ Pickett's troops arrived at San Juan on July 26 and landed the next day at Griffin's Bay, at the southern end.

On July 23, 1859, Governor Douglas appointed John Fitzroy de Courey a "Justice of the Peace and a Stipendiary Magistrate in and for the District of San Juan." This latter gentleman was sent to the island on the British ship of war, Satellite, a corvette, where he arrived on the evening of July 27, the same day that Pickett had landed on the island. The plot now thickened.

The Satellite left at once for Victoria with news of the American landing. British naval forces, based at Esquimalt, on Vancouver Island, near Victoria, consisted of five vessels, the Ganges, Tribune, Pylades, Satellite, and Plumper, with 167 guns and

³ This is the same Pickett who later attained fame as a Confederate General at Gettysburg.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Page 4

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS
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Pig War Site

1,940 men, commanded by Rear Admiral Robert Lambert Baynes. On the evening of July 29 the Tribune, under Captain Geoffery Phipps Hornby, rushed by Governor Douglas to San Juan to assert British sovereignty, came into the harbor. On July 30th Griffin requested Pickett to withdraw his troops from the island, and when the American officer refused, Pickett was then ordered by Griffin to appear before the British magistrate. On August 2, the Plumper, a surveying vessel, of light armament, arrived at San Juan with 46 Marines and 15 Royal Engineers, to be followed by the Satellite on the 3rd.

Pickett's company of 50 men and two howitzers were now faced by overwhelming British naval forces, and it is probably that only Captain Hornby's refusal to obey Governor Douglas's orders to land marines and eject the Americans prevented the shedding of blood, for in spite of the odds, Pickett appears to have been ready to fight. Instead of applying force, the three British captains offered Pickett a joint occupation of the island until the boundary question could be settled by higher authority. Pickett referred the offer to General Harney. On August 6 Lieutenant Colonel Casey, at Fort Steilacoon, was ordered to reenforce San Juan Island, and by August 13 the Americans had five companies of infantry, four of artillery, and a detachment of engineers, totalling 461, with eight 32-pounders and also some howitzers mounted in the entrenched camp that is now known as the "American Camp." An informal truce prevailed until word could be received from London and Washington.

In Washington President Buchanan learned of the incident with dismay. Lieutenant-General Winfield Scott, commanding general of the U. S. Army and then 74 years old, was sent post-haste to investigate the situation on the spot. Scott left New York on September 20, 1859, and arrived near Fort Vancouver on October 20. In accordance with the President's orders, Scott offered Governor Douglas a joint limited military-naval occupation of the island until diplomatic discussion could decide the question of title to the island. After considerable negotiation, this proposal was accepted, and it was agreed that one company (100 men) of each nation would occupy the island. On November 7 work on the fortified American Camp was stopped and all but one company withdrawn. Scott left for the east on November 11.

On March 21, 1860, under the terms of the agreement, one detachment of British Royal Marines was landed from the Satellite at the north end of San Juan Island and took up the position that is now known as the "English Camp." Scott's agreement was confirmed by the British and American governments on August 17 and 18, 1860.

From 1860 to 1872 the two military forces, with a good degree of mutual harmony, maintained law and order on the island. The troubles of the United States office in command during this period stemmed chiefly from the profitable business, conducted by American settlers, of selling liquor to the Indians and soldiers.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Page 5

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS
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The San Juan Boundary dispute was included as a part of the Treaty of Washington, 1871, and was referred by that agreement to the German Emperor for arbitration. On October 21, 1872, Emperor Wilhelm I of Germany upheld the contention of the United States regarding the San Juan Islands. The joint occupation of the islands ended on November 25, 1872, when the British withdrew their forces from the "English Camp." The last American troops withdrew from the "American Camp" on San Juan Island in July, 1874.

Condition of the Site

The English Camp is located on the north end of San Juan Island, immediately adjacent to Garrison Bay, and about ten miles north of the American Camp. The chief physical remains of the English Camp are the English Blockhouse, a small log structure, with overhanging upper story set diagonally across the lower room, and the two one-story frame barrack and commissary buildings. The blockhouse is still in good condition but the other two structures are in poor condition. These three buildings are situated on the 160 acre farm owned by Mrs. Mary C. Davis. The State of Washington owns 22 acres adjoining the Davis property.

The American camp is located 10 miles to the south of the English Camp, near the southern end and west coast of the island, and about three miles inland from Griffin Bay. The fortifications of the American Camp, but not the old Cemetery site, are included within the five acres owned by the State of Washington.

Bancroft describes these earthworks, which are still in good condition, as follows:

"The earthworks extended on the west water-front 350 feet, on the south-east 100, on the east 100, and on the north-east 150 feet, the north side being left open, with the garrison ground in its rear. The embankment had a base of 25 feet, with a width at top of eight feet. Inside of the redoubt were five gun-platforms of earth, reaching to within two feet of the level of the parapet, each 12 by 18 feet, two of them being at corners of the redoubt. The parapet was seven feet above the interior, and the slope of the interior 12 to 15 feet, the exterior slope being 25 to 40 feet, with a ditch at the bottom from 3 to five feet deep."⁴

Near this fortification once stood a number of houses used as quarters. One of these frame buildings, believed to be an original, still stands and is now utilized as a farmhouse. The site of the English Camp and the broader historical scene at both locations are not being threatened by proposed subdivisions.

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Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of British Columbia (San Francisco, 1887) 624-625, footnote 29.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Page 6

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS
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8. Bibliographical References (cont'd)

605-639; Allan Nevins, Hamilton Fish: The Inner History of the Grant Administration (New York, 1937), 385-399, 426-448, 471-493; L. B. Shippe, Canadian-American Relations 1849-1874 (New Haven, 1939), 240-246; Goldwin Smith, The Treaty of Washington, 1871: Study in Imperial History (Ithaca, New York, 1941); I-Mein Tsiang, The Question of Expatriation in America Prior to 1907 (Baltimore, 1942); F. W. Heway, W. N. Sage, and H. F. Angus, British Columbia and the United States (Toronto, 1942), 207; Hunter Miller, San Juan Archipelago: Study of the Joint Occupation of San Juan Island (Bellows Falls, Vt., 1943); and North West Water Boundary: Report of the Experts Summoned by the German Emperor . . . (Seattle, Wash., 1942); R. C. Clark, "The Diplomatic Mission of Sir John Rose, 1871," Pacific Northwest Quarterly, XXVII (1936), 227-242; J. P. Baxter, 3rd, "The British High Commissioner at Washington in 1871" Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings, IXV (1940), 334-357; Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People (New York, 1947), 416-417, 422; Bruce Hutchison, The Struggle for the Border (Toronto, 1955), 394-397, 399, 401; Warren G. Magnuson, "One Shot War with England," American Heritage Vol. XI, No. 3 (April, 1960), 63-64, 105-107.