

Historical Points and Local Resources for Camano Island and Stanwood

**A Presentation to the Camano Island Chamber of
Commerce - March 17, 2022**

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Two considerations for historical research:

- **What is your question you seek to answer?**
- **What is the story you are attempting to tell?**

Camano Island (*Kal-lut-chin*) and Stanwood (originally called Centerville) have been home to many people over time.

Already here were the indigenous people of the Stillaguamish River, including those who took the name of the river for their identity (the Stillaguamish), along with the Kikiallus, the Skagits to the north, and the Snohomish to the south.

Camano takes its original name *Kal-lut-chin* from the Snohomish tribe, which means: Land jutting into the Bay.

**Two Great Historical Resources for further
investigation**

**Hibulb Cultural Center & Natural History
Preserve, Tulalip Tribes**

<https://www.hibulbculturalcenter.org/>

Research Center, Washington State Historical Society (WSHS)

Information for on-site visits:

<https://www.washingtonhistory.org/research/research-center/>

COLUMBIA magazine:

<https://www.washingtonhistory.org/columbia-magazine/>

Much of the history of Camano and Stanwood has involved the water.

The two places have this as a shared connection.

Rivers, coastlines, waterways, floods, transportation, settlement, commerce, and the environment.

Many of the indigenous peoples traded with early Scandinavians and other settlers via dugout canoe. One of the first was Zacharias Martin Toftezen, a Norwegian who arrived in the area around 1865.

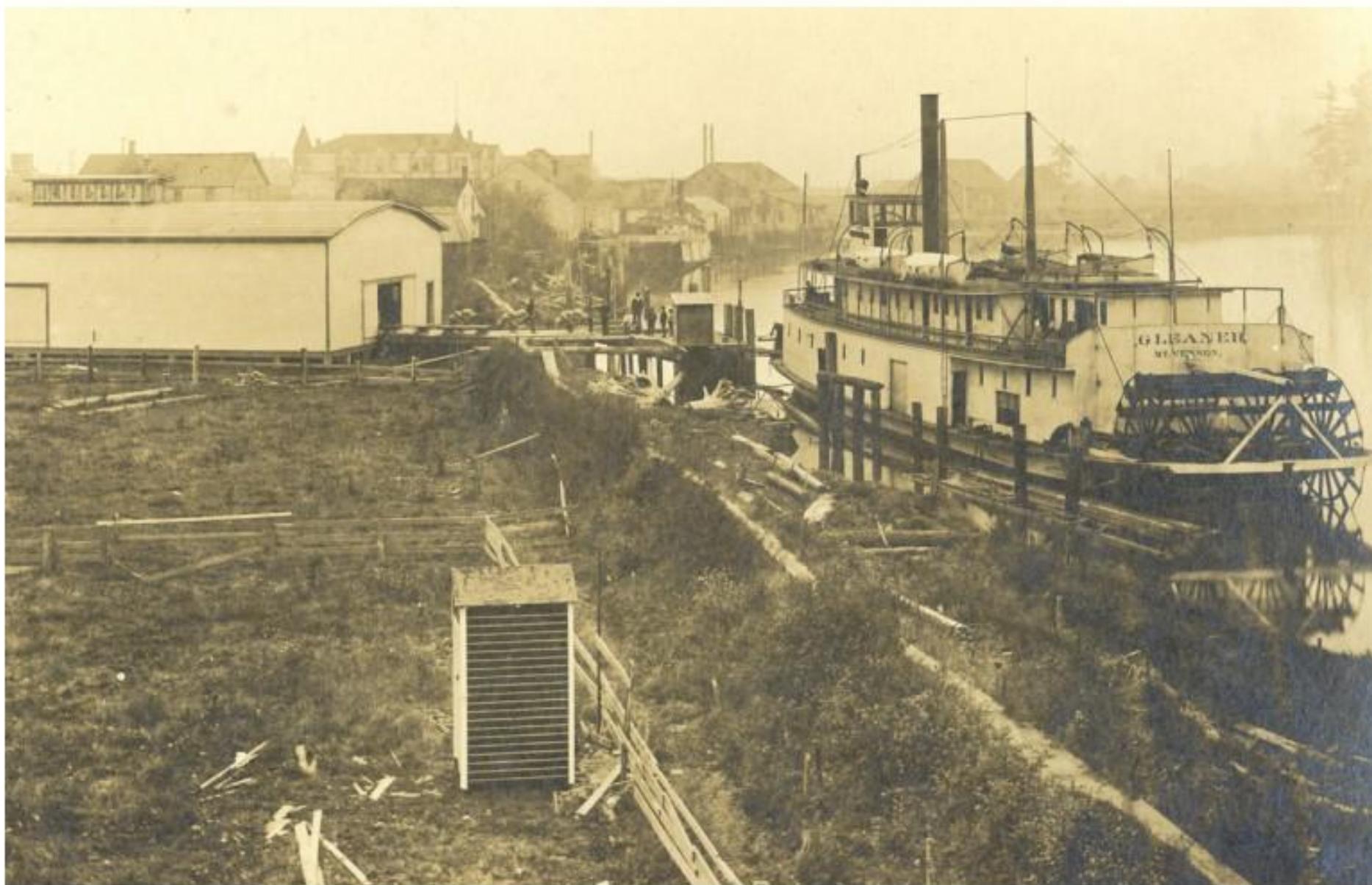


Stanwood waterfront, 1886. Photo by G.D. Horton. Courtesy SAHS collection.



Dugout canoe along Stanwood waterfront. Image courtesy Stanwood Area Historical Society, ID 943206.

Norwegian immigrant O.B. Iverson arrived in 1876 aboard the sloop ALBATROSS, and ended up settling on Leque Island with three other Norwegian homesteaders, who collectively bought the island and divided it up between them. The small island is located at the mouth of the Stillaguamish River, between Camano Island and present-day Stanwood.



Stanwood waterfront with Steamer GLEANER, ca. 1907. Courtesy SAHS collection.

**Two Great Historical Resources for further
investigation**

National Nordic Museum located in Ballard, Seattle, WA. The museum's collections and exhibits focus on the history of Nordic peoples who immigrated to the United States primarily from five countries: Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Iceland.

Visit information:

<https://www.nordicmuseum.org/>

Washington State Archives in Olympia, WA.

The State Archives are by appointment only, and contain an assortment of “primary source” materials – papers, maps, books and documents - related to the history of Washington both as a Territory and a State.

Visit information:

<https://www.sos.wa.gov/archives/>

The coastlines and harbors of Camano Island have afforded livelihood, business and pleasure activities over time.

Utsalady was a meager harbor on the north shore of Camano Island, with its main attraction a sawmill that had been in operation as early as 1853 (the same year Washington officially became a Territory) constructed by Thomas Cranney. The mill changed hands in 1876.

On December 5, 1890, Puget Mill Company closed the mill at Utsalady for good. However, lumber has continued to be a main export from the Pacific Northwest region to this day.

Utsalady became a jumping off point for sailing ships and then steamships bound for more exotic destinations, such as San Francisco.

In 1875 the steamship PACIFIC left Utsalady for San Francisco loaded with \$250,000 in gold from mining districts, a complement of passengers, and the first shipment of grain from the area.

On its way, the ship collided with another vessel at sea and was a total loss.

Five years later, this Camano harbor was graced by a stopover from President Rutherford Hayes and the First Lady aboard the steamer STAR in 1880.

Cama Beach on the southwest side of the Island was another area where residents and visitors alike came to enjoy Puget Sound with boating, fishing and clam digging on the beaches. The first resort to open here was in 1934 with about two dozen cabins for rental.

Today, Cama Beach is a State Park.



Cama Beach in 2013. Image courtesy of Joe Mabel.

Two Great Historical Resources for further investigation

Stanwood Area Historical Society in Stanwood, WA.

Exhibits and collections are open to the public
Wednesdays (1-4pm) and Saturdays (10-1pm)
and by appointment. Visit information:

<https://www.sahs-fncc.org>

Cama Beach State Park on Camano Island.

Cabins are available for public rental. Visit
information:

<https://www.parks.wa.gov/407/Cama-Beach-State-Park>

Exploration and Discovery play a role in history.

This is true whether it was done by travelers and pioneers who came to see Camano Island as a new place

And for the rest of us today seeking to learn the past history of where we live.

Captain Robert Gray becomes the first non-Indian navigator to enter the Columbia River, which he later names, on May 11, 1792.

He is followed by many to the Pacific Northwest.

Featured essay by Kit Oldham:

<https://www.historylink.org/file/5051>

**Another Great Historical Resource for further
investigation**

HistoryLink.org

Over 8,000 articles online about the history of
Washington. Site information:

<https://www.historylink.org/>

Contact information

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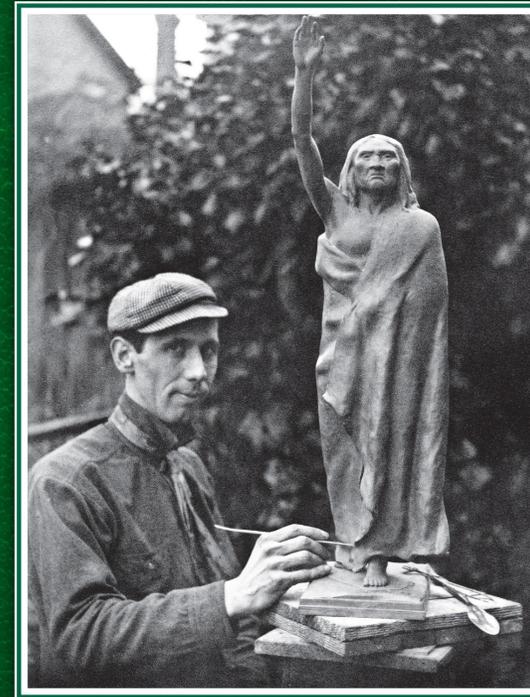
Coda: Medallion & Monument to
Captain George Vancouver at Crescent
Beach, WA
by sculptor James A. Wehn
(1882-1973)





THE FIRST SCULPTOR OF SEATTLE:

The Life and Art of James A. Wehn



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