

# **BACK WHEN: Quarantine Stations, Part II: The Diamond Point station moves to Point Hudson**

*Editor's note: This month's Jefferson County Back When column is a continuation of last month's column published June 17.*

**AS THE YEARS** went by, the Diamond Point Quarantine Station began to deteriorate.

In 1925, the station was condemned because of lack of an adequate water supply, poor holding ground in the harbor during strong northerly winds, no auto connection to mainland communities, and excessive costs of wharfage and maintenance.

By this time there were eight framed buildings in use.

In 1928, Puget Sound shipping interests and state and civic leaders made the decision to build a new station at Point Hudson.

A final health crisis handled at the station occurred in 1928 and 1929, when as many as 400 passengers were detained due to an epidemic of spinal meningitis among passengers arriving from the Philippines and China.

In 1933, supplies were transferred to Port Townsend and stored in the recently vacated Marine Hospital building.

Diamond Point was placed on "caretaker status" with enough staff to aid in emergencies, and a quarantine ship was stationed at Union Wharf to handle "all normal demands" until the new station at Point Hudson was completed.

The Diamond Point Station was auctioned by the government in 1938.

Dr. Ray Crist and Herman Simpson bought the property for \$4,151.

After a succession of owners, in 1965, the land was sold to three men who formed the Diamond Point Land Co., for the purpose of subdividing and selling the property.

Many of the facility's structures were demolished or incorporated into the homes of new residents in the area.

In 1929, the Olympic Pile-driving Co. had built a dock at the foot of Madison Street (currently known as City Dock), from which it operated two scows.

In 1939, that company tore down the water tank at Diamond Point and transported it to Quincy.

Probably, at this same time, they also moved the small warehouse from Diamond Point to their Madison Street dock for storage purposes.

It now functions as the Pope Marine Building.

In the late 1940s the hospital building was destroyed in a fire.

The surgeon's residence was restored to its original appearance and placed on the National Register of Historic Places.



A gravestone marks the remains of unknown merchant seamen from Diamond Point Quarantine Station in the Redmen Cemetery in Port Townsend. (Jefferson County Historical Society)

There was a small cemetery at the station.

There are believed to have been 22 burials, probably mostly foreign seamen from quarantined ships.

Through the years researchers have come to believe that there were 11 men from the Philippines, one from Japan and one from China among them.

Three American servicemen who died from smallpox at the station in 1910 were disinterred and removed for burial at the National Cemetery in San Francisco in 1940.

The removal of the other remains on the property became something of a mystery.

In 1967, Judge Joseph H. Johnston of the Superior Court of Clallam County granted permission for the remains to be removed by Jensen, Richards and Olhava Inc of Poulsbo.

The Olympic Health Department issued a permit to move the remains to Sequim View Cemetery.

Further legal proceedings, in 1996, indicated that the remains had not been relocated, and a new court order was granted to Brad Jensen.

This order both decertified the Diamond Point land as a cemetery, and gave permission for removal of the remains to the Redmen Cemetery in Port Townsend to Jensen.

The gravesites had deteriorated throughout the years and fewer remains than anticipated were found.

Those that were located were buried at the Redmen Cemetery with a ceremony performed by the Rev. Donn Ring and a permanent grave marker provided by Jensen in 1997.

#### Quarantine station at Point Hudson

Plans for a new quarantine station at Point Hudson were announced in 1932.

The site had already been deeded to the government.

James Hermanson described the Point Hudson area, originally, as “a shallow tidal basin” which emptied and filled with the ebb and flow of the tide.

When the lumber mill was built in 1882, one of the natural inlets was deepened to facilitate movement of logs into this natural storage pond.

The pond extended back as far as saloon buildings along Clay Street.

The site had, at various earlier times, been used as a seasonal campsite by local Native Americans, several boat-building enterprises and the Point Hudson Lumber Mill. It was regarded as a “rough” part of the town.

The Port Townsend Leader announced: “The quarantine station as now designed will have its only land entrance from Jefferson Street, the dredging of the channel to the basin not allowing Water Street to extend much past where it is now graveled.

A view of dredging operations at Point Hudson looking toward the harbor mouth is shown July 3, 1934. (Jefferson County Historical Society)

“The dredging operation will include leveling off the entire tract, with the



greater part of the fill to the northward, a portion of which is now mostly under water.

“The buildings of the station will be situated north of Jefferson Street and north of the boat basin on the fill which is to be made from the dredging.”

Bids were to be accepted in July 1933 and construction to begin in August.

Delays occurred due to Depression-era economic pressures.

It wasn't until January of 1934 that the project was included on the federal government's public works program.

Government architects drew up plans for the station, including an elaborate landscaping plan.

Maj. H.A. Spencer was named surgeon in charge of the project.

Blueprints and landscaping plans at the Jefferson County Historical Society Research Center show the reason that James McCurdy, writing in 1934, said: “When the plans for the improvement of the site have all been carried out, the station will be one of the beauty spots of Puget Sound.”



The point had only been usable on its outer point and along what is now the edge of Jackson Street.

The new channel was to be dredged to a length of 900 feet and a width of 256 feet and deepened to provide a harbor for quarantine station launches.

Murch Brothers of Saint Louis won the bid as contractor.

They used Port Townsend subcontractors after the initial fill and dredging were done.

Lofthus Lumber Co. had the contract for lumber, plaster, cement and other building materials.

City Transfer provided sand and gravel.

Most of the buildings that make up Boat Haven today were completed by 1935.

The official opening of the station was celebrated in May 1936.

The station covered 15 acres with 10 buildings including a hospital with a 60-bed capacity, detention barracks for 250 and a disinfectant building, all built to modern standards.

Unfortunately, the timing was not good.

With the Port of Entry and Marine Hospital having already moved to Seattle, and with a yet more modern quarantine facility soon built there, the Point Hudson station was in operation for just a couple of years.

But the buildings and location have proved valuable for many uses since that time.

In 1938, Crist used the facility as a vocational school.

In 1939, the U.S. Coast Guard acquired the site as a training station and stayed on through World War II under command of the U.S. Navy.

The Navy built machine shops to service mine sweepers and patrol boats and purchased more land on the west side of the marina.

George McCleary took this photo of the Point Hudson Quarantine Station in 1936. (Jefferson County Historical Society)

Additional docks were built.

A signal tower building of two stories, with a tower for a signal light to contact passing ships and a carpenter shop were also built.



In 1946, the station was officially decommissioned and placed in caretaking status.

By 1947, it was transferred to the War Assets Administration as surplus property, then was transferred to an Army unit at Fort Worden for use as a training and logistics base for an amphibious assault unit, and was in use through the Korean War.

When Fort Worden was closed in 1953, the Army also deactivated Point Hudson.

Three years later, the Port of Port Townsend purchased Point Hudson from the U.S. General Services Administration.

From 1962 to 2002, a 40-year lease was in place, first held by former harbormaster Harry Horton, and later by the Point Hudson Co.

During that time, Point Hudson took on the boat-building, marina and tourist functions that are in effect today.

In 2002, the management of the property returned to the Port of Port Townsend.

More detailed information about Point Hudson's history is available in the book "Tracing Footsteps" by Pam McCollum Clise.

Today's regional quarantine station is the Centers for Disease Control Seattle

Quarantine Station near the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport.

Its jurisdiction is all ports in Washington, Idaho, Montana and Oregon.

Canadian pre-clearance ports are Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver, B.C., and Victoria.