

HISTORICAL NOTES ON THE WYATT HOUSE AND THE WYATT FAMILY

In 1909, Captain Cypriot Wyatt, an early Puget Sound ferry master, built the house at Wyatt Way and Madison Avenue in Winslow, Washington as a home for his growing family. At that time, Eagle Harbor was the site of considerable ship building activity, and Captain Wyatt - in addition to his ferry piloting work - had become a partner in the "Eagle Harbor Transportation Company". This firm built several of the famous "Mosquito Fleet" ferries.

Captain Wyatt had moved to the Seattle area with his parents from Iowa in 1889. He was twelve years old. Four years later, he took to the sea, serving first as a deck hand on the steamship Delta. As he gained in experience, he became a respected seafarer, and plied the Sound from Tacoma to Vancouver on many of the early steamboats. Later, as Captain, he commanded the Florence K, Bremerton, Burton, Reliance, Vashon II, City of Victoria, MV Quinalt and the first SS Bainbridge, which was christened by his daughter Ellen in 1915.

A large and jovial man, "Cyp" Wyatt was well known for his exuberant use of the steam whistle as he approached Eagle Harbor - particularly on the last run of each day. His eldest son Jack followed in his footsteps, with the result that there was a period of over 60 years in which at least one of the ferries operating around the Sound was under the command of a Wyatt.

The Wyatts had another son, Bob, who founded the Wyatt Bakery at the corner of Winslow Way and State Highway 305. During the Depression, Bob closed the Bakery and moved to West Seattle where he became a successful steamfitter. Now retired, he still resides in Seattle.

The Wyatts had two daughters, also. Ellen "Dolly" Wyatt became Mrs. Harold Woodman. She passed away in the 60's. The youngest of Captain Wyatt's children is Mrs. Ethel Dahl, who resides in Hansville. Captain Jack Wyatt's son, Jim, still resides on Bainbridge Island.

Winslow's Lincoln School had just been constructed at Winslow Way and Madison Avenue (now the site of Winslow Green) when Captain Wyatt decided to build his house. He engaged the same carpenters who had built the school and had them erect this fine example of a Victorian farmhouse one block north. The house was built entirely of fir, all of which was probably felled and milled on the island. The structure is of the "balloon" type in which most of the weight is borne by the outside walls, making the interior arrangements more flexible.

The magnificent fir tree adjacent to the building was transplanted there by Jack Wyatt about 1910, making it several years older than the house itself. The stately poplar and Horse Chestnut trees lining the South edge of the property (Wyatt Way) were reportedly there when the house was built. They are now estimated to be approximately 100 years old. Around the grounds are numerous old fruit trees, most of which still bear delicious fruit of many varieties.

The house was occupied by members of the Wyatt family until the death of "Cyp" Wyatt's wife in 1964. In the late 70's, it was used as the headquarters of Helpline/fishline, a charitable organization. After Helpline moved to its own building in 1982, the Wyatt House remained vacant and in increasing disrepair until it was purchased by Signature Properties in late 1984.

Between November 1984 and March 1985, the structure was renovated from the foundation up and redesigned internally to provide six professional office suites. The original structure was found to be fundamentally sound, and the building was enhanced by the addition of modern plumbing, wiring and heating systems, energy-efficient windows and doors (including four skylights) and upgraded insulation. While completely modernizing the building, the developers made every effort to retain the historical character of the building. This included restoration of the entry foyer with its leaded glass windows, french doors and warm woodwork. In addition, the exterior and grounds are maintained in their original configurations as much as possible.

Photographs of the original house, Captain Cypriot Wyatt and many of his vessels are on display in the entry foyer and main stairway of the Wyatt House through the thoughtful cooperation of members of the Wyatt family.

These notes were prepared by W.T. Bayha, President of Signature Properties on March 12, 1986. They are based on interviews with surviving members of the Wyatt family - in particular, Bob Wyatt - and on various articles published by the Kitsap County Historical Society.