



*H.B.C. Blockhouse, English Camp, San Juan Island*

## *San Juan Island*

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**T**HE island of San Juan, which is just across Haro Strait from Victoria, Vancouver Island, is one of the most beautiful islands of the Haro archipelago. It is a question which is the larger island, San Juan or Orcas island, the area of each being about sixty square miles. San Juan, however, is much the better known, as it gave its name to the bitter dispute known as the "San Juan Boundary Question."

It will be of interest to learn that the Hudson's Bay Company spared no effort to add this beautiful little island to the Empire.

After visiting this lovely little spot, it is easy to imagine the disappointment and vexation of the people of Vancouver Island when the German Emperor (William I), who had been appointed arbitrator, awarded the territory in dispute to the United States on the 21st October, 1872.

I understand that the Hudson's Bay Company first occupied the island in 1843, but at any rate in 1850, and for some years after, the Company used the island as a fishing station, putting up annually two or three thousand barrels of salmon.

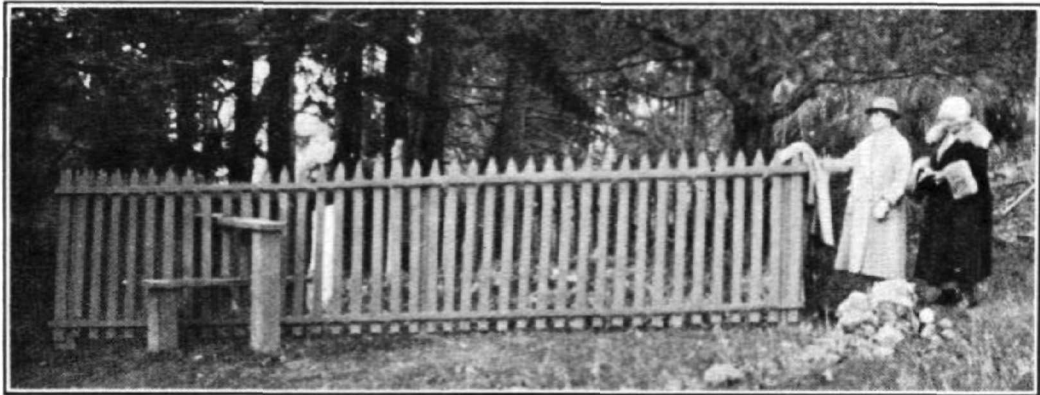
In December, 1853, the S.S. *Beaver* landed there the nucleus of a stock farm, a flock of thirteen hundred sheep. This last act called forth a sharp note from the American collector of customs to Governor Douglas, stating that the sheep were liable to seizure for non-payment of taxes. Governor Douglas replied that the island was British soil. It is evident therefore that the ownership of the island was in dispute from the early days.

In August, 1859, Brig.-Gen. W. S. Harney, of the American army, ordered Capt. Pickett with sixty marines to occupy the island. The indignation of the Company's officials at this act can be imagined. A. J. Dallas, who was at that time in charge of Fort Victoria, made a formal complaint under date 5th August, 1859, to His Excellency James Douglas, Esquire, governor of Vancouver Island.

As soon as the joint occupancy was decided upon, Capt. George Bazelgette, of the Royal Marines, with one hundred men were landed by the warships from Esquimalt. This joint occupancy continued until the boundary question was settled by arbitration in October, 1872.

It will be noted from the photographs, which were taken at English Camp, about three miles from Roche Harbour, that the Hudson's Bay Company's old block-house is still standing. The little cemetery on the slope of a high hill between Garrison Bay and Roche Harbour is the last resting place of twelve imperial service men who died during the joint occupation between 1859 and 1872.

The British association with the island of San Juan is not likely to be forgotten, as frequent pilgrimages are made to this little graveyard.



*Cemetery (Imperial Service Men), San Juan Island*