

ANDERSON ISLAND TIMELINE

15,000 BC: Anderson Island is formed by the retreating Cordilleran Ice Sheet

? – 1900s: Indigenous peoples lived around the shores of Puget Sound. The Nisqually tribe and Puyallup tribe harvested shellfish on the island.

1792: On May 20, Peter Puget, a lieutenant in the 1791 British Exploring Expedition of Captain George Vancouver, takes shelter from a thunderstorm in Oro Bay, becoming the first European to record the existence of Anderson Island. Vancouver names Puget Sound for him and claims the sound for Great Britain on June 4, 1792.

1833: The Hudson's Bay Company, a British fur-trading company, establishes Fort Nisqually on the Nisqually delta near present-day DuPont.

1841: Navy Lt. Charles Wilkes, in charge of the United States Exploring Expedition, explores the area and names the island for Alexander Caulfield Anderson, his host at Ft. Nisqually.

1846: The British relinquish claims to land below the 49th parallel.

Leander Wallace stakes a claim on the south end of Anderson Island, on what would later become the Eckenstam farm. Wallace is killed in a skirmish at Ft. Nisqually in 1849.

1854: Nathaniel Orr files a claim for 150 acres on Oro Bay and Anderson Island. Orr builds a cabin but leaves the island in 1855 when war breaks out with the Indians.

1856: The Treaty War ends, making life on the island less tenuous, and the Nisqually reservation is established.

1870: The Christensen brothers become the first permanent settlers on the island.

1872: Christian Christensen and his new wife, Helda Cardell, begin a life on Amsterdam Bay on Anderson Island. They establish a wood yard to serve wood-burning steamers.

1877: John Ekenstam and his wife, Ann, and 7 children purchase 212 acres of the original Wallace claim on the south end of the island, and create a farm.

1881: Bengt and Anna Johnson purchase 400 acres at the north end of the island. They establish Johnson's Landing, a dock and wood yard for wood-burning steamers.

1882: Nels Magnus and Anna Peterson purchased 110 acres on East Oro Bay and establish a farm.

1883: The first schoolhouse is built. In 1890 it is moved to its current location. There were 11 students.

1889: Washington becomes the 42nd state on November 11.

1896: John Johnson and his wife Alma Marie, both Finnish immigrants, established the Johnson Farm. Their family of 2 will grow to 2 sons and 2 daughters.

1904: A new schoolhouse, “Wide Awake Hollow”, is built. The building is still standing.

1912: Ernie and Ellen Ehricke establish a grocery operation at Johnson’s Landing.

1914: Gus and Emma Carlson open the Oro Bay grocery store.

1917: The Anderson Island phone service is constructed to connect island households. The service does not connect to the mainland.

1920: The population reaches a peak of 141 residents. Then it begins to decline.

1922: Regular car ferry service begins on April 1. The Skansie brothers’ ferry *Elk* connects Longbranch, McNeil Island, Anderson Island, and Steilacoom.

1930: The Anderson Island Community Club is built – the original building is still in use in its original location.

1939: The 9-car ferry *Tahoma* replaces the *Elk* and begins regular service between Anderson Island, McNeil Island, and Steilacoom.

1961: Electricity finally reaches Anderson Island. In November, 44 houses are energized.

1966: The “Rivera Community Club, Inc.” begins development of 3,127 lots on land they had purchased on Anderson Island. The population of 90 residents finally begins to grow.

1967: The 18-car ferry *Islander* replaces the *Tahoma*.

1969: Dial telephones come to Anderson Island, finally connecting it to the mainland.

1975: The Anderson Island Historical Society is founded on the site of the Johnson Farm, which is donated to the society by Alma Ruth Johnson, niece of Oscar and Rudy Johnson.

1976: The 30-car ferry *Steilacoom* replaces the *Islander*.

1994: The 54-car ferry Christine Anderson replaces the **Steilacoom**. It is still in service.

2000: The island population reached 900 residents.

2017: The Historical Society Archival Building is dedicated.