

Schooner *Suva*
Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places



Prepared for the Whidbey Island Maritime Heritage Foundation
By Holly Taylor, Past Forward NW Cultural Services
August 2025



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Schooner Suva
other names/site number S/V Suva, Vessel No. 225008, WAZ5563G

2. Location

street & number Coupeville Wharf at 24 Front Street not for publication
city or town Coupeville vicinity
state Washington code WA county Island code 029 zip code 98239

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:
___ national ___ statewide ___ local
Applicable National Register Criteria
___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D

Signature of certifying official/Title Date
WASHINGTON STATE SHPO
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:
___ entered in the National Register ___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register ___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- private
- public - State
- public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

- building(s)
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
		buildings
		site
1		structure
		object
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

None

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE

TRANSPORTATION / water related

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE / museum

TRANSPORTATION / water related

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: FLOATING HISTORIC VESSEL

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: (hull): wood - teak

walls: (cabin): wood - teak

roof: (deck): wood - teak

other:

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary

The S.V. *Suva* is a wooden pilothouse staysail schooner designed by Leslie Edward "Ted" Geary in 1924, and built in Hong Kong in 1925 for Frank J. Pratt, Jr. of Coupeville, Washington. Her length over all is 68 feet including the bowsprit and boomkin, length on deck is 56 feet, and designed length at the waterline is 45 feet. Her beam (width at widest point) is 14 feet, and draft (point of greatest depth below the waterline) is six feet, six inches. She carries 1,700 square feet of sail. *Suva's* gross tonnage is 27, a measurement that refers not to the weight of the vessel but to the total enclosed volume that could be filled with cargo, a common metric for calculating vessel fees; her net tonnage is 18, which is the gross tonnage space minus the area that cannot be used for cargo such as living quarters and engine compartment. *Suva* was built predominantly of old growth Burmese teak, and displays an extraordinary level of craftsmanship in a traditional schooner form uniquely designed for sailing in the Salish Sea.

Hull

Suva's hull is constructed of two and a quarter inch square bent white oak frames on twelve-inch centers, with every fifth frame made of double sawn oak. Teak planks one and three-quarter inches thick were originally fastened to the frame with hand forged square iron nails, and these are being systematically replaced with galvanized steel screws. Seams are caulked with oakum. The teak keel timber, 13½ inches square, is bolted to the teak stem timber to form the bow, and the purpleheart horn timber to form the stern. Ballast is provided by a cast iron keel attached to the keel timber with sixteen inch bolts, supplemented by lead ingots in the lazarette below the aft hatch, and by cement poured into the lower frame bays and between other lower hull timbers.

The hull gracefully overhangs the water fore and aft, and the spoon bow exhibits a gentle outward curve above the waterline. The counter stern design includes an elliptical varnished teak transom displaying the vessel name and homeport as SUVA, COUPEVILLE, WA, topped by an open taffrail. Above the waterline, hull planks are painted white, with a decorative gold pinstripe below varnished teak gunwales. The name *Suva* appears in gold letters on both sides of the vessel below the gunwales, aft of the bobstays that stabilize the bowsprit. A black boot stripe at the waterline and dark red anti-fouling paint below the waterline help keep the hull free of algae, barnacles and other marine organisms. A three-blade bronze propeller and large wooden rudder power and guide propulsion, controlled by both indoor (pilothouse) and outdoor steering stations.

Deck, Cabin and Pilothouse Exterior

Suva's deck, cabin and pilothouse are crafted almost entirely of old growth Burmese teak. Continuous tongue and groove planks two inches wide and one inch thick laid bow-to-stern form the deck. Deck planks are unvarnished and soft gray in color, while all other exterior teak is varnished to a bright reddish-brown.

Bulwarks extend the hull five inches above the level of the deck. These are painted white, and topped by varnished teak gunwales or cap rails. *Suva's* sheer line – the curve of the gunwale or top edge of the hull from the midpoint toward both bow and stern – is described as "fair to the eye" or "gently sprung," meaning the deck curves slightly more upward toward the bow. Six small open scuppers on each side allow water to drain away from the deck. Aft of the bow, the hinged teak forward hatch with a centered porthole provides access to the forepeak below.

A low trunk-cabin just over 22 feet long, 7½ feet wide and 18 inches high fills the majority of the midship deck area. Six bronze rimmed portholes on each side light the cabin interior. The keel-stepped foremast

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passes through the deck immediately forward of the cabin, and the mainmast passes through the aft cabin top, leaving ample room for passengers to move about on deck. The cabin top has three teak hatches: near the forward edge, a square hatch with a centered porthole lights the forward cabin below; a butterfly hatch in the center provides a generous amount of light for the main cabin below, and aft of the mainmast and to port, a square hatch with centered porthole lights the galley below.

Aft of the cabin, a varnished teak raised pilothouse is *Suva's* most distinctive feature. Approximately seven and a half feet square, the pilothouse is built of two-inch thick teak. The front of the pilothouse extends slightly more than three feet above the cabin top and the aft side stands four and a half feet above the deck. Windows on all sides of the pilothouse provide clear sight lines in all directions. Three windows each measuring two feet wide by two feet three inches high form the forward, port and starboard sides of the pilothouse, with the center windows on the port and starboard sides sliding downward to open. The aft side of the pilothouse has a single window to port that also opens downward, a solid teak central panel, and a two-panel teak folding door to starboard that opens outward. Atop the pilothouse, wood fixtures known as screens display the vessel name along with port and starboard navigation lights.

A large teak box mounted on the aft of the pilothouse to port provides storage. A solid teak hatch aft of the pilothouse provides access to the lazarette, which is used for storage of equipment needed on deck, as well as additional ballast and two large stainless steel fuel tanks. On the aft deck, an outside steering station or cockpit is comprised of a teak binnacle (steering pedestal) to which a teak wheel is mounted; the wheel has a bronze rim around the perimeter. A bronze compass is also affixed to the steering box.

Masts, rigging and equipment on deck

Suva's foremast (approximately 58 feet above the waterline) and main mast (66 feet above the waterline) are both made of Sitka spruce. Booms that extend fore and aft of the foremast, and aft of the mainmast are all made of wood. The fore boom is controlled by a bronze traveler mounted on the cabin top just aft of the butterfly hatch. The main boom is supported on a boom crutch atop the pilothouse roof (or supported by the sails when they are raised) and extends 24 feet from the main mast to the aft rail. The bowsprit, which extends eight feet three inches in front of the bow, and the boomkin which extends just under four feet beyond the stern, are made of purpleheart (a tropical hardwood). All spars are painted white.

She is rigged as a Bermudan staysail schooner, with a complex system of steel-cable mast stays and halyards to raise and adjust the triangular mainsail, main staysail, fore staysail, jib, and large square fisherman sail. Most sails are made of Dacron by Northwest Sails & Canvas in Port Townsend. Rigging is controlled and secured with the aid of stainless steel winches, bronze chain plates and cleats, and other deck hardware both vintage and modern.

Two anchors, one 150 pounds and one 200 pounds, are raised and lowed from either side of the bow on three-eighths inch chains controlled by an electric windlass on the foredeck. Lifelines comprised of stainless steel stanchions with three sets of braided lines surround the outer edge of the deck, and are secured to a bronze bow pulpit and stainless steel stern railing. On the starboard side forward of the pilothouse, steel davits hold an eleven-foot lapstrake tender.¹ Heavy bronze davit mounts are bolted to the deck on both sides, allowing the davits and tender to be moved to the port side.

Other notable vintage deck hardware includes a teak boarding ladder, wooden pin rails used to secure lines, a bronze ship's horn enclosed in a teak case mounted on the cabin top just forward of the pilothouse's port side window, and a brass bell mounted to the front of the pilothouse between the center and starboard-side windows.

¹ *Suva* originally had two teak tenders. An additional tender associated with *Suva* was built at the Blanchard Boatyard in Seattle and was donated to the Whidbey Island Historical Museum by the Whidbey Island Maritime Heritage Foundation.

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Below deck cabin arrangement

Arrangement of cabins in this section is described from bow to stern, beginning with the forepeak or forward-most section that includes a small storage locker in the bow and a chain locker, forward of a collision bulkhead intended to protect cabin spaces. Aft of the bulkhead are fuel tanks to port and starboard, topped by storage bins for sails and supplies. The forward-most hatch provides egress from this space, and a solid teak door opens into the forward cabin. All interior woodwork is varnished teak.

Aft of the forepeak, the forward cabin (also called the fo'c's'le or forecastle) was traditionally used as the crew's living quarters. This cabin has a single berth (bed) to port and double berth to starboard, with four storage cabinets beneath and storage shelves overhead. The foremast is stepped through the center of the forward cabin, and the spruce splice on the foremast has been left unpainted so the craftsmanship of the scarf joint where the foremast was extended six feet in 2007 remains visible. Aft of the foremast, the height of the cabin ceiling increases to six and a half feet; this height is maintained continuously through the rest of the cabin and is expressed on deck as the raised trunk cabin. In all three cabin areas, large teak hanging knees four inches wide support the deck beams.

Aft of the forward cabin is the twelve-foot-long main cabin, with an enclosed head (toilet compartment) with hanging lockers and sink to port, accessible from both cabins. This is followed by a berth with drawers below. Opposite the head to starboard is a diesel stove for heat. A small bunk next to the stove originally served as a firewood storage box for the Franklin stove that heated the cabin. Aft is another full-sized berth with drawers below; both single berths are curtained off and fronted by settees with storage below. Wardrobe lockers are located on both sides of the aft section of this cabin. In the center of the cabin directly underneath the butterfly hatch is a four and a half foot long fixed drop-leaf teak table.

Aft of the main cabin, a doorway leads to the galley, which is nine feet long. The main mast is stepped through the galley immediately to port of the main cabin doorway, with a diesel cook stove next to it. The port side of this cabin is built out with dish racks, food lockers and other storage drawers. To starboard is a slide-out double berth with a wardrobe locker. Fresh water tanks are located below the floorboards of the main cabin.

Aft in the galley area is an enclosed space for the 140 horsepower Detroit Diesel 453 engine installed in 1960. The engine is enclosed in an insulated teak cabinet built into the aft portion of the cabin with a door in front and a panel on each side for access. On the port side of the engine compartment, a small doorway leads from the galley to an area beneath the raised pilothouse that provides access to the aft-end of the engine as well as other machinery, batteries, fuel tanks and equipment.

A three-step companionway to starboard leads from the galley up through a half-door to the raised pilothouse. Steering is centerline; a teak wheel with a bronze center is mounted on a set of bronze gears on the front of the teak steering console (the pilothouse's original indoor steering is mechanical, while the outdoor steering is hydraulic). The navigation console includes vintage engine controls and an original bronze compass, as well as modern navigation equipment. A hinged cover over the companionway extends the navigation console across the full width of the pilothouse when it is closed. A bronze chart lamp on an extendable accordion arm lights the console, and charts are stored overhead in teak racks. A small settee is behind the wheel to port, with storage underneath. Another three-step companionway and folding door to starboard leads from the pilothouse up to the deck.

Integrity and Changes Over Time

The Schooner *Suva* retains a remarkably high level of integrity as a wood recreational sailing vessel that has remained in constant use for one hundred years. *Suva* retains integrity of *location* and *setting*, having sailed in Puget Sound and the northern Salish Sea for her entire history. Originally homeported in Coupeville on Whidbey Island and moored off Good Beach in Penn Cove, *Suva* was later based in Seattle, Olympia and Port Townsend before returning to Coupeville in 2015. She is currently moored in the

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summers at the historic Coupeville Wharf (part of the Central Whidbey Island Historic District and the Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve), and in the off-season at the Oak Harbor Marina also on Whidbey Island.

Suva retains integrity of *design, materials* and *workmanship* through careful stewardship of the working vessel. The original 1924 design has been almost entirely preserved, and changes have been largely additive rather than alterations of original features. Original teak has been preserved wherever possible, in exterior and structural uses as well as interior finishes. When necessary, replacement in kind has been undertaken with purpleheart, a similar tropical hardwood, for key structural elements such as the bowsprit and horn timber. Integrity of workmanship has been retained and expressed through the high quality of craftsmanship that characterizes maintenance and repair work by master shipwrights at Lake Union Dry Dock in Seattle, the Port Townsend Shipwrights Co-op, and Emerald Marine Carpentry in Anacortes.

Integrity of *feeling* and *association* are conveyed by *Suva's* enduring presence as an elegant schooner cruising yacht in Puget Sound, especially in Penn Cove, and her sustained use as a sailing vessel associated with Coupeville's saltwater based, seasonal and recreation-oriented community identity.

Below is a summary of major restoration projects and key alterations to the vessel, including upgrades required to maintain Coast Guard certification to carry passengers.

1940: During Dietrich Schmitz's ownership, a modified sail plan was drawn by renowned Seattle yacht designer Ben Seaborn, and the original gaff rig was converted to Bermudan. The masts may have been replaced during Schmitz's ownership. Although no records have been identified to document replacement of the masts, sailing vessels of such vintage have typically had masts replaced. One source notes that the original masts were larger in diameter, and holes in deck were made smaller for the Bermudan rig, indicating that masts may have been replaced when the rigging was converted.²

1960: The 100 h.p. Hall-Scott gasoline engine was replaced by a 140 h.p. Detroit Diesel 453 engine. The original design specified a 30-40 h.p. Mianus kerosene engine, and a kerosene tank is shown below the aft starboard deck on drawings. However, it is unclear if this was ever installed, and the Hall-Scott may have been the original engine.

1968: *Suva's* main mast was repaired at Lake Union Dry Dock after she hit the Hood Canal Bridge.

1972: Alan and Vicki Schmitz made upgrades to improve functionality. The tiller on the aft deck was replaced by an exterior steering station, allowing the vessel to be controlled from either the pilothouse or the aft cockpit. An electric windlass was installed near the bow to raise both anchors. A roller reef jib was installed on the bow, making it easier to reel the headsail in and out. Some of the remaining block and tackle rigging was replaced with winches, and lifelines were added to the deck perimeter. A pressure water system was installed, and the icebox was replaced by an electric refrigerator in the galley.

1988: The Franklin (wood burning) stove in the main cabin was replaced with a diesel stove as the vessel's primary heat source.

2007: Yacht designer and shipwright Antonio Salguero drew a new sail plan for *Suva* to increase the forward sail area and improve maneuverability. Salguero and colleagues at the Port Townsend Shipwrights Co-op lengthened the foremast by six feet, lengthened the bowsprit by three feet, renewed the rigging, added a staysail as a second headsail, and increased the size of the jib.

2021: As part of a major hull restoration, shipwrights at Emerald Marine in Anacortes replaced *Suva's* horn timber, and replaced a portion of the original iron hull fasteners with galvanized steel per Coast Guard requirements. Ongoing maintenance and restoration projects are undertaken during the off season to ensure *Suva's* seaworthiness and to maintain certification.

² Havorn Marine Services Survey, 2015: 10.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION / ENTERTAINMENT

ARCHITECTURE

MARITIME HISTORY

Period of Significance

1925-1972

Significant Dates

1925, 1940, 1972

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Geary, Leslie Edward "Ted"

Quan Lee Shipyard, Hong Kong

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Narrative Statement of Significance

(Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

SUMMARY

The Schooner *Suva* was designed by renowned naval architect Leslie Edward "Ted" Geary of Seattle in 1924, and was built at the Quan Lee Shipyard in British Hong Kong, then shipped across the Pacific in 1925 to Coupeville, Washington. The vessel is documented by the United States Coast Guard, and has the Official Number 225008. *Suva* is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C as an outstanding example of a pilothouse schooner designed by a master naval architect. The design integrates an enclosed and raised pilothouse commonly found on workboats with the graceful lines of a cruising schooner, and represents an unusual hybrid form specifically adapted to the Pacific Northwest climate.

The *Suva* is also significant under Criterion A for its association with Central Whidbey Island's early 20th century shift from a settlement pattern focused on use of the natural environment for farming and logging, to a society and economy increasingly oriented around the environment as an aesthetic and cultural asset drawing tourists, summer residents and leisure seekers. Frank J. Pratt Jr.'s commissioning of the sailing yacht *Suva*, along with his construction of a summer residence above Ebey's Prairie, and nearly four decades of effort to preserve the surrounding landscape, are linked to the emergence of conservation and recreation, along with agriculture, as essential themes in the history of central Whidbey Island in the 20th century.

The period of significance (1925 – 1972) begins when the vessel was constructed for Frank J. Pratt Jr. and ends during the second generation of Schmitz family ownership following installation of the secondary steering station on the aft deck, which established the vessel's current physical appearance. *Suva* continues to function as an educational and recreational sailing vessel offering public cruises in Penn Cove and north Puget Sound from her home port in Coupeville.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SCHOONER

A schooner is generally defined as any sailing vessel having two or more masts with the taller mast aft, fore-and-aft rigged sails, and a bowsprit to anchor forestays and carry a headsail.³ Developed in the Netherlands in the 17th century, the schooner form was adapted by American shipbuilders to provide fast, reliable transportation:

The American coastal schooners were not deliberately designed to look beautiful, they were designed as vehicles of commerce with good carrying capacity, able to haul lumber, fish, coal, ice, stone, bricks, fertilizer, and the like, in all possible weather and at good speed. Thus a perfection of hull form was developed, and something completely functional as well as aesthetically beautiful was the result.⁴

The fishing schooners built in Gloucester, Massachusetts in the 1880s achieved particular fame as commercial vessels that also participated in sailing races. However, it was the fast pilot schooners, designed with cabins but not cargo holds, that were more easily converted to use as recreational boats. Eventually the graceful lines and legendary stability of these commercial vessels led to schooners being commissioned as recreational vessels for the wealthy.⁵

³ George Biddlecombe, *The Art of Rigging: Containing an Explanation of Terms and Phrases and the Progressive Method of Rigging Expressly Adapted for Sailing Ships* (New York: Dover Publications, 1990; orig. pub. 1925).

⁴ Don Launer, "Oh, How She Scoons!" *Good Old Boat magazine*, January/February 2001.

⁵ Charles G. Davis, *American Sailing Ships: Their Plans and History* (New York: Dover Publications, 1984), 27; "History of the Yacht," *American Sailing*, December 2017 americansailing.com/articles/history-of-the-yacht/; Roy Stevenson, "The Pacific Schooner Rendezvous: Windjammer Tales," *Classic Boat magazine*, October 2010. www.roy-stevenson.com/schooner.html

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The large and unwieldy engines and copious amounts of fuel wood or coal that powered steamers starting in the mid-19th century were too cumbersome to power most sailing vessels, but the advent of smaller internal combustion engines in the early 20th century provided a practical source of auxiliary power. This allowed yachtsmen to sail when the winds were fair and motor when they chose to, and most sailing vessels were equipped with gasoline (and later diesel) engines after 1914.⁶ Schooners and other sailing vessels rapidly phased out of commercial use after World War I, but remained popular for both racing and cruising, an elegant symbol of maritime recreation and engineering.

NAVAL ARCHITECT TED GEARY

Leslie Edward "Ted" Geary was an acclaimed designer of yachts in the first half of the 20th century, best known for his elegant fantail wooden motor yachts of the 1920s that were built predominantly at Puget Sound boat yards. Long before Geary earned recognition as a naval architect, he was celebrated in Seattle and along the West Coast as a designer and skipper of racing sloops, and sailboats remained a passion throughout his life. Geary designed the Schooner *Suva* in 1924 when he was approaching the pinnacle of his career as "the designer of choice" among the Seattle boating community.⁷

Geary was born in 1885, in Atchison, Kansas, to Walter Singleton Geary (recently emigrated from England, a music dealer and piano maker) and Selina Maria (Stephens) Geary. The family moved to Portland, Oregon in 1887, and then to Seattle in 1892. Geary demonstrated his love of the water at age nine when he rigged a gunny-sack sail to a ten-foot canoe he built for sailing on Elliott Bay. Then at age twelve he built a 16-foot shovel-nosed catboat called *Lark* with his friends Ted and Lloyd Johnson in which they circumnavigated Seattle, sailing on lakes, rivers, and the Sound, and portaging in between.⁸

In 1899 at age 14, Geary designed, and along with his friend Russell Wayland built, a 24' centerboard racing sloop they named *Empress*. For four years the two friends won many races while attending high school. As a student at the University of Washington's School of Engineering in 1905 at age 20, Geary designed and, with Ralph Emmons and the Johnson brothers, built *Empress II*, another 24' centerboard sloop. *Empress II* was never defeated and thrust the young designer and skipper into prominence on the local racing circuit.⁹

During his second year at the University of Washington, a bout of cholera interrupted Geary's studies, and while he recovered, he designed the 42' racing sloop *Spirit*. A committee of Seattle Yacht Club members formed a syndicate and raised \$3,000 through the sale of stock to support the construction of *Spirit* and her racing crew. With no professional sports teams in Seattle in the early 1900s, yacht racing regularly attracted spectator fleets, and race results were reported in the daily newspapers, turning Geary into a local celebrity.¹⁰

As the skipper of *Spirit*, Geary won the Dunsmuir Cup for the Seattle Yacht Club in a series of 1907 races against the Canadian yacht *Alexandra*. Designed by Scotsman William Fife, *Alexandra* was considered the fastest boat in British Columbia. The *Seattle Star* acclaimed Geary as the "boy wonder" and called his victory in the opening race "one of the most exciting finishes ever seen upon the water."¹¹ Newspapers throughout the region covered the races, including a story in the *Yakima Herald* that ran under the headline "Seattle Against Canada":

⁶ David R. MacGregor, *The Schooner Its Design and Development From 1600 to the Present* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2001), 88.

⁷ Thomas G. Skahill, "Ted Geary, More than a Naval Architect: Part I - From Sailing Canoes to Racing Records," *WoodenBoat* #137, July/August 1997: 56; "Last Port of Call for Skipper Ted," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, May 22, 1960: 22.

⁸ Skahill, "Ted Geary...Part I," 53; "Rites to be Held for Ted Geary," *Seattle Times*, May 20, 1960: 42; James R. Warren, *The Centennial History of the Seattle Yacht Club, 1892-1992* (Redmond, WA: Laing Communications Inc., 1992), 33.

⁹ Skahill, "Ted Geary...Part I," 54; "Three Boats That Will Represent Seattle in the International Yacht Races at Vancouver, B.C. Next Week," *Seattle Times*, June 25, 1905: 18.

¹⁰ The Center for Wooden Boats, "Legendary Vessels of a Maritime Genius - L.E. 'Ted' Geary," *Exhibition Booklet*, April 24 to May 1, 2005, Seattle, WA; *M.V. Malibu*, City of Seattle Landmark Nomination, 1998.

¹¹ "Names Yacht the *Spirit*," *Seattle Times*, May 14, 1907, 12; "Ted Geary's *Spirit* Takes Opening Race," *Seattle Star*, July 3, 1907: 2.

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The spectacle of a Seattle yacht, designed, built and captained by a 20-year-old boy, defeating Canada's finest sent a thrill through the entire northwest. Ted Geary is a splendid sample of the grit and skill of the northwest youth. Seattle, Washington, and all of the coast **states are proud of the...lad who outgeneraled in a yacht of his own Canada's best sailor in a boat designed by the world's greatest marine draughtsman.**¹²

Afterward, there was a plan to give *Spirit* to Geary, but he refused the gift. Instead, *Spirit* was sold at auction to timber baron Fred Stimson, brother of Seattle Yacht Club Commodore C.D. Stimson, and the proceeds from the auction helped send Geary to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).¹³ MIT began offering classes in marine engineering in 1886, and by 1893 it established the first American four-year college program in naval architecture, remaining one of the preeminent training programs for more than a century.¹⁴ During Geary's studies at MIT in 1909, a group of Seattle yachtsmen commissioned him to design and build *Spirit II* to compete in a series of races associated with the Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition. Geary won the first race, but a dispute between American and Canadian racing officials regarding the technical qualifications and official measurements of *Spirit II* led to the withdrawal of the Canadian contender, causing a rift between the two sailing communities that lasted four years. Eventually, both groups adopted the Universal Rule for rating racing boats that took into account the length at the waterline, sail area, shape of the hull and displacement, and they resumed competitive racing.¹⁵

Prominent businessmen and Seattle Yacht Club stalwarts, impressed with Geary's outstanding sailing skills and his ability to design boats, continued to support his education at MIT where he studied marine engineering and naval architecture, graduating in 1910. Geary returned to Seattle and opened an office in the Grand Trunk Pacific Dock on the waterfront. Historian Thomas Skahill wrote:

Many of his benefactors and admirers were influential in both the local lumber and fishing industries, and Geary was soon receiving commissions for commercial craft such as logging tugs, cannery tenders, fishing vessels, passenger ferries, fire boats, and fishery patrol craft. His business flourished from the start and, over the next two decades, evolved into a mature practice of handsome working boats.¹⁶

In the ensuing years, Geary repaid his MIT sponsors from the proceeds of his design work. During the 1910s, vessel design improved dramatically as college-trained naval architects like Geary became increasingly active, and technological advances expanded the range and reliability of marine engines. Geary experimented from the beginning of his professional career, with one industry publication noting that a new motor tug and cannery tender Geary designed in 1910 for the Hawk Fish Company "shows some departures from the accepted type of work boat, for many radical ideas were incorporated in her design."¹⁷ Canneries and other business clients replaced their old sailing vessels with new motor vessels, and it was reported in 1911 that Geary had designed the "largest and speediest gasoline cannery tender afloat," which was built by his old friends the Johnson Brothers and Norman J. Blanchard. By the end of that year, Geary reported, "at present I have on the boards nine fishing vessels, cannery tenders, halibut boats and cod fishers."¹⁸

Designing work boats provided most of Geary's income in his early years, but he also designed a handful of motor yachts and sailing yachts, including the 48' yawl *Ortona* in 1912 for Seattle architect John Graham Sr., and he remained devoted to sailboat racing. Geary's skill as a naval architect was honed by his experience as a skipper. In 1913 he designed the famed 38-foot R-class racing sloop *Sir Tom*, named

¹² "Seattle Against Canada," *Yakima Herald* July 10, 1907: 4.

¹³ "Seattle Against Canada"; "Leslie E. Geary, Pioneer in Boat Racing, Dies – Yacht *Spirit I* Made History," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* May 20, 1960, 44; "Spirit To Be Sold," *Seattle Star*, August 15, 1907, 2; Warren, 45.

¹⁴ Maynard Bray & Claas van der Linde, *Herreschoff: American Masterpieces* (New York: W.W.Norton & Co., 2017), 10.

¹⁵ Skahill, "Ted Geary...Part I," 54; Warren, 49, 50.

¹⁶ Skahill, "Ted Geary...Part I," 54.

¹⁷ Warren, 75; "Marine and Gas Engine Development," *Pacific Fisherman* Vol 8, No 12, December 1, 1910: 25.

¹⁸ "The Fast Cannery Tender and Patrol Boat "Kenmore," *Pacific Fisherman* Vol 9, No 6, June 1, 1911: 24; "L.E. Geary, Naval Architect, Engineer and Broker," *Pacific Fisherman* Vol 9, No 12, December 1, 1911: 22.

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in honor of the Scottish yachtsman and tea merchant Sir Thomas Lipton who donated a perpetual challenge cup for international racing to the Seattle Yacht Club. Built at the Blanchard yard on Lake Union, *Sir Tom* won the 1914 Lipton cup with Geary at the tiller, and turned back all challengers on the West Coast for the next 14 years.¹⁹ Geary earned legendary status in international R-boat racing, and was **described as "a natural sailor and a superb helmsman... ebullient, daring, and confident, he had an uncanny ability to sense wind shifts and gusts at considerable distances and thereby put his boat to best advantage."**²⁰

A disastrous fire at the Grand Trunk Pacific dock in 1914 destroyed Geary's office and all his plans including the design of the *Sir Tom*, but Geary quickly recovered and his work became more diversified across many vessel types. In 1915, he designed the *Chickamauga*, the first diesel-powered tug in the U.S. (listed in the Washington Heritage Register in 2001; sank and destroyed in 2013). During World War I, Geary worked for the Emergency Fleet Corporation and directed production of 93 wooden ships, including the 5,400 ton cargo vessels *Broxton* and *Snoqualmie*.²¹

Geary designed at least two racing schooners in the early 1920s, the 63' *Katedna* (later *Red Jacket*) in 1920 and the 58' *Aafje* in 1922. Motor yachts dominated his commissions during these years, and most were built at the Blanchard yard. Along with 50-65' commuter yachts for businessmen wishing to avoid public ferries, and 75' rum chasers for the government, Geary was increasingly tasked with designing large and elegantly appointed cruising yachts, including the *Sueja* (92'), *Wanda* (90'), *Samona* (115'), and *Westward* (86', listed in the National Register in 2007).²² Geary's work was regularly featured in *Pacific Motor Boat*, and he remained in the public eye as a celebrated skipper winning races with *Sir Tom*.

Geary's 1924 design for the pilothouse schooner *Suva* was unusual in several ways. Client Frank J. Pratt Jr. brought detailed and technical ideas for what he wanted in a sailing yacht. Pratt was not looking for a sleek, low-profile racing boat; rather, he wanted an enclosed pilothouse from which he could comfortably navigate Puget Sound and British Columbia waters in all weather. Most sailing yachts had an outdoor steering station on the aft deck, but *Suva's* helm was enclosed in a teak pilothouse that resembled the wheelhouses on the workboats Geary designed early in his career, representing a hybrid form that incorporated desirable qualities of multiple vessel types. Geary's earlier yachts often included some teak and other tropical hardwoods, known for both their rot-resistant qualities and their elegance when "finished bright" (highly varnished), but *Suva* was built almost entirely of teak, including structural members, decking, pilothouse and cabin exteriors, as well as interior finishes. Most notably, *Suva* was built at the Quan Lee Shipyard in Hong Kong, whereas almost all of Geary's previous designs had been built by the Blanchard Boat Company on Lake Union.²³ *Suva* is the only known pilothouse schooner that Geary designed, and she is an outstanding example of an unusual vessel type.

By 1926, Geary's commissions increased to the point that he employed assistant draftsmen in his office, and for the remainder of the decade, he designed ever larger and more luxurious cruising yachts. The elegant 100' *Malibu* was built at the Blanchard Boat Company for a California client, but many of Geary's subsequent designs were built at Lake Union Dry Dock and other West Coast shipyards.²⁴ One notable 1926 vessel was the *Sueja III* (now the *Mariner*), a 122' diesel yacht designed for Captain James Griffith who owned a shipyard on Bainbridge Island. According to a report in *Pacific Motor Boat*, "The frames and joiner work were prepared knocked-down in China, after which they were shipped to the United States

¹⁹ Bud Livesley, "Make Mine Water," *Seattle Times*, May 20, 1960: 26.

²⁰ Skahill, "Ted Geary...Part I," 54-55; John Caldbick, "Seattle Yacht Club," HistoryLink.org Essay #10176, 1/26/2013.

²¹ "Ted Geary Weds Kentucky Belle," *Seattle Times*, October 19, 1914: 8; "Seattle Naval Architect Designs New Wood Ship," *Cordova Daily Times* (Cordova, AK), September 7, 1918: 6; Skahill, "Ted Geary...Part I," 54, 56.

²² CWB exhibit catalog 2005; Skahill "Ted Geary...Part I," 59.

²³ Multiple sources confirm Hong Kong as the location where *Suva* was built, including an insurance certificate and bill of lading. Only one source – Skahill "Ted Geary...Part I," 59 identifies Quan Lee as the shipyard. This has not been verified, although Skahill had access to Geary family records for his research. One other Quan Lee-built sailing yacht has been identified, the 1921 ketch *Fayth*. www.yachtinghistory.org/pwyc

²⁴ Skahill, "Ted Geary...Part I," 60-61. Geary's assistants included H.C. Hanson, Carl W. Shield, Acme Mansker, and Ed Monk, Sr.

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and assembled and the vessel completed at the captain's own shipyards," suggesting that Geary and his clients experimented broadly with material sources and construction processes during this period.²⁵

1926 also saw the launch of Geary's famed R-boat *Pirate* (listed in the National Register in 2000), a direct successor of the *Sir Tom*, built at Lake Union Dry Dock for a California client. *Pirate's* hull is double-planked Burmese teak over western red cedar on white oak frames, with a teak deck. After winning several California races, *Pirate* was shipped to New York in 1929 where she became the first West Coast sailing yacht to compete on the Eastern Seaboard, winning a national championship.²⁶ In the last years of the decade, Geary designed a series of 96' motor yachts including *Principia*, *Canim*, *Electra*, and *Blue Peter*, all with plumb bows, fantail sterns, well-proportioned deckhouses, and sweetly curved sheer lines, cumulatively expressing "the Geary look."²⁷

As a naval architect, Geary's clients were among the most privileged members of society, but Geary was also dedicated to sail training and water-safety programs that made boating accessible to Seattle's youth. In 1928, he designed an 18' unsinkable sailboat known as the "flattie" that could be built inexpensively and sailed easily. Later renamed the "Geary 18" in his honor, the vessel type was described as "a fine manifestation of Ted Geary's basic tenets of simplicity, practicality, and longevity."²⁸

The year 1930 marked a major transition for Ted Geary. He served as the Commodore of the Seattle Yacht Club, but his most significant design commission the *Infanta* (now *Thea Foss*) was built at Craig Shipyard in California. Late that year, "the hard times drove him to Southern California, where the movie industry was booming and some of the wealth it generated was being spent on yachts."²⁹ A notice in *Pacific Motor Boat* stated that Geary planned to maintain an office at Seattle, and intended to travel to the Pacific Northwest on a monthly basis, but after that point most of his design commissions came from California clients. Geary continued racing, and was named Southern California Helmsman of the Year in 1935 after winning five of the most prestigious West Coast races, mostly as skipper of the *Pirate*. He is known to have designed two more sailing vessels in the 1930s, the *Tianda* (37') and the *Virginia* (39'), as well as a handful of modest motor yachts known as Lake Union Dreamboats.

During World War II, Geary worked at the Craig Shipyards in Long Beach retrofitting large vessels for the war effort. After the War, Geary retained his offices at Craig Shipbuilding, primarily overseeing restorations of requisitioned yachts. He remained connected to Seattle's boating community, and in 1957 he and Deitrich Schmitz were among a half dozen 50-year members honored by the Seattle Yacht Club. Geary died in 1960, and a series of obituaries in Seattle newspapers honored him as the city's most noted early-day racing skipper, a nationally famous designer of yachts, and a symbol of Seattle's dominance in pleasure boat building.³⁰ Seattle's Center for Wooden Boats celebrated Geary's legacy as a designer and skipper in a 2005 exhibit titled *Legendary Vessels of a Maritime Genius: L.E. "Ted" Geary*. As part of the exhibit, the Schooner *Suva* was moored at Lake Union Park for public viewing, along with the recently restored R-boat *Pirate*, the Schooner *Red Jacket*, and several Geary-designed motor yachts.³¹

Geary's innovative approaches to vessel design, informed by his expertise as a helmsman and his use of high-quality materials made him the most recognizable naval architect in the Pacific Northwest in the early 20th century. *Suva* conveys Geary's distinctive aesthetics, and his unique collaboration with client Frank J. Pratt Jr. produced a pilothouse schooner specifically designed for cruising in the waters of Puget Sound and the Salish Sea.

²⁵ Thomas G. Skahill, "Ted Geary, More than a Naval Architect: Part II - From Flatties to Motoryachts," *WoodenBoat* #138, September/October 1997, 50; C.A. Berst, "Sueja III New Pacific Coast Flagship," *Pacific Motor Boat* Vol 18, No 10, July 1926: 23.

²⁶ "Ted Geary R-Boat *Pirate*," *Classic Yacht News*, posted on March 31, 2023, classicsailboats.org/ted-geary-r-boat-pirate/

²⁷ Rick Etsell, "Ted Geary," *Classic Yacht Register*, Classic Yacht Association, classicyachtinfo.org/research/classic-motoryacht-designers-ted-geary

²⁸ Thomas G. Skahill, "Ted Geary...Part II," 49.

²⁹ CWB exhibit catalog 2005; Caldbick, "Seattle Yacht Club"; Etsell, "Ted Geary"

³⁰ Skahill, "Ted Geary...Part II," 54-55; Warren 198; "Last Port of Call for Skipper Ted," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, May 22, 1960: 22; "Rites to be Held for Ted Geary," *Seattle Times*, May 20, 1960, 42.

³¹ CWB exhibit catalog 2005.

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FRANK J. PRATT JR., CONSERVATIONIST AND YACHTSMAN

When "gentleman attorney" Frank J. Pratt Jr. commissioned a pilothouse schooner in 1924, he was 61 years old and had spent nearly half his life in Washington State, most of that time at Ebey's Prairie on central Whidbey Island. Pratt owned at least three yachts prior to *Suva*, read extensively on the history of sailing vessels, and made annotations in reference books about the exact qualities he sought in a "best boat." These notes indicate that Pratt likely collaborated with Geary to determine *Suva's* character defining features, including her lines, distinctive pilothouse, ubiquitous use of teak, and construction in Hong Kong. Pratt's admiration for the land and sea surrounding his adopted home on Whidbey Island extended beyond his leisure trips as a yachtsman to include decades of investment and effort to preserve Ebey's Prairie. The Pratt family's acquisition and stewardship of portions of the Ebey Donation Claims, including the Jacob and Sarah Ebey House and the Ferry House, led directly to the preservation of those iconic properties as the publicly owned centerpieces of the Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve.

Early Life and Move to the Pacific Northwest

Franklin Josiah Pratt Jr. was born in Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts in 1863, to a prosperous family. His grandfather Josiah Pratt Jr. farmed and learned the trade of tool manufacturing, making axes and other edge tools as well as complex mechanisms such as trip hammers. His father Franklin J. Pratt Sr. was a hardware merchant in New York with his firm Hawks, Pratt & Co., and worked for a period of time in New Orleans, before he returned to Massachusetts to serve as the revenue collector for the western region of the state.³² After graduating Amherst College in 1886, Frank J. Pratt Jr. married Lamartine Taylor in 1887. He studied law in an office in Greenfield, Massachusetts and was admitted to the bar in that state in 1890, working as a lawyer in Greenfield and New York City until 1897.³³ His first marriage ended in divorce, and in 1897 Pratt married Helen Palmer Tower (b. 1859), the daughter of businessman George F. Tower Sr., at the Tower family home in St. Louis.³⁴

The couple moved to Seattle, where they resided until 1900. Pratt had visited the Pacific Northwest previously, accompanying fellow attorney and Amherst alum Robert Lansing who served as counsel for the U.S. Bering Sea Claims Commission in 1896-97. According to his son, when Frank J. Pratt Jr. visited **Ebey's Prairie, he "fell in love with the country, and stayed... He was in Seattle first and then went to Whidbey Island with some friends on a whale hunting trip, and saw the area, that small plateau...back of the valley, and hoped to build there some day. And did."** Pratt entered briefly into law practice in Seattle, and soon after, he enlisted in the Washington Volunteer Infantry and served in the Spanish American War in 1898. Helen and Frank J. Pratt Jr. are listed in the 1900 census as Seattle residents.³⁵

Pratt Family at Ebey's Prairie

Helen and Frank J. Pratt Jr. relocated to Anacortes in early 1901 and began spending time on Whidbey Island, just fifty years after non-Native settlement of the area. For thousands of years, Coast Salish bands of Lower Skagit Indians lived in permanent winter villages in the vicinity of Ebey's Prairie, along the shorelines of Penn Cove and other areas of Central Whidbey Island, well into the contact and settlement

³² "Josiah Pratt," *Greenfield Courier and Gazette*, Greenfield, MA, May 23, 1887: 1 (www.findagrave.com/memorial/64816224/josiah-pratt); "Franklin J. Pratt – Death of Former Revenue Collector," *Greenfield Recorder*, Greenfield, MA, September 26, 1900, Pratt-Hanson Collection. No historical evidence has been found to substantiate a connection to the Pratt & Whitney Co. of Connecticut.

³³ *Alumni of Amherst College, 1885-1890*. Amherst, MA: Amherst College, 1901. <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/012103704>; "Services Are Held for Frank J. Pratt, Retired Attorney," *Island County Times*, January 4, 1940: 1, 3.

³⁴ National Register nomination for George F. Jr. and Carrie Tower House; William Hyde, "Tower, George Franklin," *Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis*, 1899: 2286 <https://archive.org/details/encyclopediaofhi04hyde>. Helen was the stepdaughter of Frank J. Pratt Jr.'s mother's sister, Martha Smith, making Helen and Frank cousins by marriage prior to their marriage ("Death of Mrs. Franklin Josiah Pratt," undated, Pratt-Hanson Collection).

³⁵ "Services Are Held for Frank J. Pratt..."; Robert Lansing later served as Secretary of State under President Wilson. (Office of the Historian, Foreign Service Institute, "Biographies of the Secretaries of State: Robert Lansing (1864–1928)," U.S. Dept. of State, history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/lansing-robert). Robert Y. Pratt, Seattle, WA, November 1, 1997, interviews by Theresa Trebon, Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve Oral History Project, Tape 1: 3; U.S. Census 1900, Seattle, WA, Precinct 1 (Ancestry.com); *Alumni of Amherst College*; Birth and death of daughter Helen T. Pratt occurred August 12, 1898 (Register of Births in Clark Co., WA, 1898, Ancestry.com).

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eras of the late 18th and 19th centuries. Much of the prairie land suitable for farming was claimed by European Americans under the Donation Land Claim Act of 1850, and the communities of Coveland and Coupeville were established soon after. Coupeville was formally platted in 1883, and the town's commercial district was mostly constructed by 1890. The U.S. Army established Fort Casey nearby at Admiralty Head in the following decade.³⁶

Steamers provided transportation to the mainland, and construction of the Coupeville Wharf in 1905 represented an important investment and amenity for the town, but the growing economic importance of the railroad on the mainland made Whidbey Island a bit of a backwater by the early 20th century. In 1901, boosters promoted the Island as a destination for visitors:

If you want to see New England, and cannot travel far, come over to Whidbey Island. So the contented and prosperous farmers on the island are fond of saying to their friends on the mainland. And truly there is much to remind one of a New England farming community in the fine fertile fields, the big comfortable-looking houses and barns, and the old orchards and gardens. ...Summer excursionists and tourists are coming to appreciate the island for its hospitable homes, its beautiful woods, fine bicycle paths, and most of all, for the beach.³⁷

The Pratts found a Whidbey Island community transitioning from the early settlement economy of farming and logging, to one based primarily on agriculture with an emerging identity as a seasonal destination for recreation.³⁸ The predominant assessment of the natural environment for its resource potential expanded to include an appreciation of natural beauty and an interest in its preservation, setting the stage for a new settlement pattern that included tourist resorts, summer homes, and recreational boating.³⁹

The *Whidbey News-Times* recorded several visits by the Pratts to Coupeville in 1901, including a comment that Mr. Pratt "knows a good thing when he sees it, and therefore likes Whidbey Island."⁴⁰ Seeking to **purchase a portion of the Ebey Donation claims near Coupeville, Pratt wrote to Isaac Ebey's niece Almira Enos, who had inherited the property:**

Mrs. Pratt and I on a visit to the island were very much captivated with the view of **landscape and sea from Ebey's Prairie... we know nothing about ranches as such, or soil and other conditions important to farmers. Our interest is chiefly a sentimental one for beautiful natural conditions.**⁴¹

By early 1902, the newspaper reported the Pratts' new summer home on the hill above Ebey's Prairie was nearing completion, and that Mr. Pratt was "much in love with Coupeville" as a seasonal residence. By March 1902, the Pratts were furnishing their summer residence and "preparing to thoroughly enjoy one of the finest bits of scenery that Nature has bestowed upon the face of the earth."⁴² The passing of Frank J. Pratt Sr. in 1900 likely provided an inheritance derived from financial interests in the hardware business, livestock, and mines in Louisiana and Colorado. In addition, income from the substantial estate of Helen's father allowed the couple to enjoy a measure of financial independence.⁴³

³⁶ Theresa Trebon, "Beyond Isaac Ebey: Tracing the Remnants of Native American Culture on Whidbey Island," *Columbia: The Magazine of the Washington State Historical Society* (Vol. 14 No. 3, Fall 2000), 6-12; Gail Evans-Hatch and Michael Evans-Hatch, "Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve – Historical Resources Study," prepared for the National Park Service, 2004, 15-19.

³⁷ Port of Coupeville, Wharf history: portoc.org/coupeville-wharf/coupeville-wharf-history/; November 22, 1901, the *Island County Times* editorial quoted in Evans-Hatch 2004, 262.

³⁸ Richard White, *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change: The Shaping of Island County, Washington* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980), 145.

³⁹ Evans-Hatch 2004, 203-204, 249, 261-263.

⁴⁰ *Whidbey News-Times*, February 22, 1901: 3; May 3, 1901: 3; July 5, 1901: 3.

⁴¹ Letter, Frank J. Pratt Jr. to Mrs. A. Enos, January 4, 1901, Pratt-Hanson Collection.

⁴² *Whidbey News-Times*, November 1, 1901: 3; February 14, 1902: 3; March 14, 1902: 3; March 28, 1902. House is located at 164 Cemetery Road in Coupeville.

⁴³ "Franklin J. Pratt...1900"; David J. Simmons, "George F. Tower Jr. and His Grand Avenue House." *Society of Architectural Historians Missouri Valley Chapter Newsletter*, Volume IX, No. 4 Winter 2003; Letter from Frank J. Pratt Jr. to David Williams, October 11, 1916, Pratt-Hanson Collection.

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The Pratts established a pattern of spending the spring, summer and fall at Hilltop, their beloved Whidbey Island home where they welcomed extended visits from friends and family, and spending the winter months in California. Frank J. Pratt Jr. took up hunting and fishing with Whidbey Island old timers, and got involved in Democratic Party politics. By 1904, Pratt acquired a launch named *Tuna* which he used for hunting trips, and for longer cruises to the San Juan Islands and Victoria with guests.⁴⁴ The Pratts added to their acreage on Ebey's Prairie, and were recorded as residents of the Coupeville Precinct in the 1910 census. The Pratts represented a kind of genteel leisure that set them apart from the hardworking farmers on the prairie. Local newspapers reported their comings and goings, such as in March 1912 when "Mr. and Mrs. F. J. Pratt arrived on the steamer *Calista* Tuesday evening and ... will spend the summer **here...They have brought a handsome 38-horse power Cadillac auto with them.**" Frank J. Pratt Jr. continued to identify himself as a lawyer by profession, although it is unclear if he practiced law after the 1890s. Helen Pratt died in 1913 in Redlands, California, and was remembered in Coupeville as "a kind **friend and neighbor... in her home** on the beautiful hill above Ebey's Prairie."⁴⁵

Frank J. Pratt Jr. affirmed his commitment to the Coupeville community through philanthropy in 1914, offering to donate half the funds needed to purchase a lot in town, and build, furnish and stock a public library. At the end of that year, Frank married Madeline "Lena" Kohne (b. 1884), daughter of a well-respected local family – her father had been lighthouse keeper at Fort Casey, and her mother was a member of the Jenne family who had farmed the prairie since the 1870s. Lena was an accomplished educator, having studied at Western Washington College, Washington State University, and the University of California, and then taught school in Coupeville and served two elected terms as the Island County Schools Superintendent. Lena and Frank J. Pratt Jr.'s only child, son Robert Yenney Pratt, was born in 1915.⁴⁶ The Pratt family continued to reside at Hilltop for most of each year, with Frank spending winters at a home he built in Redlands, California, or traveling to other warm climates.⁴⁷ Frank J. Pratt Jr. gained renown as Coupeville's "public spirited citizen" through donations to churches and the Red Cross, leadership during World War I as part of Island County's U.S. Public Service Reserve, and annual prizes and awards to Coupeville High School students for general improvement, athletics, and scholarship.⁴⁸

Although Frank J. Pratt Jr.'s primary hobby was yachting, discussed in the following section, he and Lena were both devoted to preserving the landscape and history of Ebey's Prairie. They dedicated considerable resources to acquiring much of the property originally claimed by Isaac and Rebecca Ebey and his parents Jacob and Sarah Ebey in the 1850s, and honoring the history of the Ebey's and other pioneer families who were among the earliest Euro-American settlers on Puget Sound. In 1917, the Pratts purchased 58 acres from Harold Ebey, the grandson of Isaac and Rebecca Ebey and great grandson of Jacob and Sarah Ebey. This property included the iconic Ferry House, built in the 1860s, as well as the site of Isaac Ebey's home, known as "the Cabins," which had been demolished some time before 1907. Reporting on the transaction, the *Island County Times* wrote that the property "is excellent soil, commands a beautiful view of the Straits, and the snow clad Olympic mountains, with a small acreage of natural timber on the farm, and is just the place to appeal to Mr. Pratt's ideals and love of natural beauty."⁴⁹ The Pratts leased the acreage

⁴⁴ *Island County Times*, August 15, 1902: 3; *Whidbey News-Times*, December 19, 1902: 3; May 6, 1904: 3; September 23, 1904: 3; October 21, 1904: 3.

⁴⁵ U.S. Census 1910, Island Co., WA, Coupeville Precinct (Ancestry.com); Kay Atwood, Gail Evans-Hatch and Michael Evans-Hatch, "Ferry House: A Building History," Prepared for the National Park Service, January 2001, 10; "A Tribute of Love and Respect," *Island County Times*, November 21, 1913: 1.

⁴⁶ "Public Library and Building for Coupeville," *Island County Times*, Nov 20, 1914: 1; "County Superintendent Lena Kohne Resigns," *Island County Times*, Dec 11, 1914: 1; "Madeline Pratt – Final Rites Held for Pioneer," *Island Telegraph*, December 16, 1965; *Island County Times*, Nov 26, 1915: 1; *Island County Times*, Mar 31, 1916: 1.

⁴⁷ Sources conflict regarding the Pratt residence. Most likely the original 1901-02 house was added onto in later years following fires ("Flames Destroy Home in Coupeville Thursday," *Whidbey News Times*, May 28, 1953: 1); other sources state that a new house was built in 1908 or the 1920s.

⁴⁸ "Noise like a piano," *Island County Times*, October 27, 1916: 1; "Red Cross Drive," *Island Co. Times*, July 13, 1917: 1; "Will Enroll Island County Labor," *Island Co. Times*, Jan 18, 1918: 1; "\$50 Prize Offered to Coupeville High," *Island Co. Times*, Nov. 25, 1921: 1.

⁴⁹ Atwood et. al., "Ferry House," 9-11; *Island County Times*, November 16, 1917: 1; "Lightning Strikes the Ebey House," *Island County Times*, July 19, 1918: 1; Kay Atwood, Gail Evans-Hatch and Michael Evans-Hatch, "Jacob and Sarah Ebey House & Blockhouse," Prepared for the National Park Service, January 2001, 2.

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to farmers and invested in upkeep at the Ferry House including repairing damage caused by a lightning strike in 1918.

In 1929, the Pratts purchased 317 acres from heirs of Jacob and Sarah Ebey that included the Ebey home known as Sunnyside, and the remnants of a blockhouse, both constructed in 1855-56 and located north of the Pratt home. A local newspaper expressed support for the Pratts' preservation efforts, and their **"respect for pioneer relics...as objects of value."** This property, along with their earlier purchase of the property around the Ferry House and other holdings on Ebey's Prairie, were placed into a trust for the benefit of their 15-year-old son Robert Pratt, with Lena and Frank retaining administrative rights to the trust.⁵⁰ At that time, Jacob and Sarah Ebey's great-granddaughter Edith Park wrote to Frank J. Pratt Jr., "I am very glad that Sunnyside has eventually passed into your keeping for I know you will follow out the plans made for the good of Robert. It has always pleased me to realize that his love for the place is lasting and sincere." Pratt responded:

It has always seemed to me that far too few persons hereabouts appreciate the lives and spirit of our early settlers or the desirability of preserving the few remaining evidences of **their lives here. ...I myself have always, since I came here over thirty years ago, felt great sympathy and admiration for the early settlers intensified by my acquaintance with a few of their surviving members. I always wished my own lot in life had been cast among the pioneers of this beautiful wilderness country, from the moment I first saw it. ...Sometimes I go to see the dunes, the forest or the bluff at Ebey's Landing, look out to sea at sunset or dusk and seem to feel the soothing influence of the spirits of those who first settled on these farms steady and renew my own spirit.**⁵¹

The Pratts commissioned two stone monuments designed by famed Seattle sculptor James Wehn to honor the area's early settlers, one on the road to Ebey's Landing and one at the Jacob Ebey blockhouse near Sunnyside, which they had restored. The blockhouse was documented for the Historic American Building Survey in 1934, along with the Ebey House, the Ferry House, and several other 19th century buildings in the vicinity.⁵²

Robert Pratt graduated from Coupeville High School in 1933, and from the University of Washington in 1937 with a degree in biology. He was an avid naturalist, and returned to the familiar surroundings of Hilltop after college, later moving to Seattle.⁵³ Hilltop was damaged by fire in 1935, and afterward the Pratts had a new wing built, in addition to repairing the damaged sections. The Pratts commissioned construction of two notable wood frame gable roof sheep barns on their expansive properties. The lower barn nestled at the edge of the forest near Hilltop was built by Fred Kreuger sometime in the 1930s, and another barn farther up the bluff to the northwest was built by Fred O'Dell in 1938.⁵⁴

Tragedy struck the Pratt family in 1939 when Frank J. Pratt Jr. took his own life. According to one report, "Mr. Pratt had been despondent for some time because of ill health." After his death, Lena Pratt resided at Hilltop for the rest of her life, becoming increasingly active in club work and serving as the President of the State Federation of Women's Clubs in 1944. She also continued acquiring land on Ebey's Prairie for conservation purposes, buying the 180-acre Jenne Farm from her aunt Agnes Jenne in 1940, in what was described as "one of the largest local real estate transactions in some time." Another fire in 1953 destroyed the original section of Hilltop, leaving only a portion of the 1930s construction intact, with substantial reconstruction. When Lena Pratt died in 1965, her son Robert Pratt took over responsibility for managing several hundred acres of open prairie and forest land on Whidbey Island, although his primary

⁵⁰ Atwood et. al., "Ebey House," 11; Flora Pearson Engle, "Recollections of Early Days," *Island County Times*, April 4, 1929, 1.

⁵¹ Letter, Mrs. Park to Frank J. Pratt Jr. March 5, 1929; Letter, Frank J. Pratt Jr. to Mrs. Park Sept. 6, 1930, Pratt-Hanson Collection.

⁵² "Tablet to Col. Ebey," *Island Co. Times*, April 20, 1928: 1; "Stone Will Keep Alive Sunnyside," *Island Co. Times*, April 4, 1930: 1; "Unveiling of Plaque Will Be Labor Day," *Island Co. Times*, Sept 4, 1931: 1; HABS WA-39-W-13, 16, 104. www.loc.gov/item/wa0021/

⁵³ Robert Y. Pratt interview, (Tape 1) 13-14; Robert married twice, to Jane Lytle in 1945, and to Helen Montgomery in 1956, who predeceased him, and he had no heirs (Pratt-Hanson Collection; www.findagrave.com/memorial/171140040/robert_yenney-pratt).

⁵⁴ "F. Pratt Home Catches Fire," *Island County Times*, Jan. 25, 1935: 1; "Frank Pratt Jr. Builds New Addition to Home," *Island Co. Times*, July 29, 1937: 1; Atwood et.al. "Ebey House," 11; Robert Pratt interview (Tape 3), 8.

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residence was in Seattle. "Holding an attitude of stewardship toward the land," according to one **assessment, "Pratt attempted to preserve the... family-owned properties as he remembered them in his youth."**⁵⁵

Properties owned by the Pratt Family include significant buildings and landscapes identified as contributing resources in the Central Whidbey Island Historic District, nominated to the National Register of Historic Places in 1972 by Jimmie Jean Cook of the Island County Historical Society with the support of the Island County Commissioners. Efforts to protect Ebey's Prairie from development began in the early 1970s, when a core group of activists formed The Friends of Ebey's and began advocating for landscape conservation. This group included Ken Pickard, the son of a local family who rented the Ebey House from Robert Pratt, Ken's wife Claire, and Albert Heath, a painter and friend of Lena Pratt's to whom she had left the Jenne Farm (he later traded this property to Robert Pratt for another property near Hilltop), and historian Jimmie Jean Cook. After years of intense public debate, in 1978, Congress established the 17,000-acre Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve "to preserve and protect a rural community which provides an unbroken historical record from 19th century exploration and settlement of Puget Sound to the present time." Over ninety percent of the property within the Reserve was privately owned, including more than 650 acres owned by Robert Pratt.⁵⁶

When Robert Pratt died in 1999, preservation advocates feared that some of the Reserve's most scenic land might be lost to development. Fortunately, much of the land was protected:

Pratt, who had refused to sell or develop his land throughout his lifetime, continued to care for it through his estate. Approximately 147 acres were donated to the Nature Conservancy, including 102 acres of beach and bluff property and Perego's Lake, as well as the Jacob Ebey House and Blockhouse, the Ferry House, and adjoining farmland.

The Nature Conservancy raised \$5 million to protect another 387 acres from the Pratt estate from being sold, including \$2 million raised through public donations. Portions of the property including key historic buildings were transferred to the National Park Service, conservation easements on the farmland were sold to that agency, and more than 500 acres of spectacular coastal bluff are managed by the Nature Conservancy as the Robert Y. Pratt Preserve at Ebey's Landing.⁵⁷

Pratt the Yachtsman, and the Schooner Suva

Frank J. Pratt Jr.'s admiration for the environment of the Puget Sound region included both the landscape of Ebey's Prairie and the sea and shoreline of what is now known as the Salish Sea – Puget Sound, the Straits of Georgia and Juan de Fuca, and British Columbia's Desolation Sound. Pratt's commissioning of a two-masted pilothouse schooner from naval architect Ted Geary in 1924 represents the culmination of his interests as a yachtsman in designing an ideal boat for his purposes and for the climate.

Prior to commissioning *Suva*, Pratt enjoyed three other cruising yachts. As noted in the previous section, Pratt's first yacht was a 36' motor yacht named *Tuna*, which he commissioned in 1903 for exploring the San Juan Islands and vicinity. Around 1909 he acquired the 50' ketch *Nootka*, on which he took extended cruises of a week or more, often accompanied by guests who were mentioned in the local newspapers. In April 1915, Pratt's guests included Rev. Robert Murray Pratt (no relation) from the Coupeville Congregational Church, "hence there will be no services at the church Sunday." Frank J. Pratt Jr. and guests also enjoyed week-long cruises in May and June of 1916 along the British Columbia coast.

⁵⁵ "Frank J. Pratt Jr. Is Suicide Victim," *Island County Times*, Dec. 28, 1939: 1; "Mrs. Pratt Heads State Federation," *Island County Times*, October 5, 1944: 1; "Mrs. Ed Jenne Sells Farm to Mrs. Pratt," *Island County Times*, October 17, 1940, 1; "Flames Destroy Home..."; **Ebey's Landing NHR Historic Structures Inventory 2006, "Frank Pratt House," 278; Atwood et. al. "Ferry House," 12.**

⁵⁶ Judy Lynn, *Front Street, Coupeville: An Oral History* (Ken Pickard Interview, April 18, 2012, 312-325; Ron Hanson Interview #2, September 4, 2012, 180-184; Coupeville, WA, 2015), Atwood et. al. "Ferry House," 13-14; Public Law No. 95-625 §508 (a).

⁵⁷ Patrick Connolly, "Protection for Ebey's Prairie," *Whidbey News Times*, January 26, 2000: 1; "Ebey's Reserve money in the bank," *South Whidbey Record* (Coupeville, WA), November 2, 2000; The Nature Conservancy www.nature.org/en-us/get-involved/how-to-help/places-we-protect/ebey-s-landing/

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At least one crew member served aboard *Nootka*: a 1916 newspaper reported that "Charlie Christopher, the little Swede who has had charge of Frank J. Pratt's fine yacht for the past seven years, had resigned his position and left last week to go to work on a larger boat. His place is being filled by a Mr. Thomas whom Mr. Pratt has engaged."⁵⁸ It is likely that Pratt retained crew for most of his trips aboard *Nootka* and subsequent sailing yachts, since he was generally photographed on board wearing three-piece suits and was therefore unlikely to be handling lines and rigging.⁵⁹ In 1915, Pratt acquired a one-acre parcel at Good Beach, on the southwest side of Penn Cove, where he had two gable front wood frame vernacular boathouses built. These were used to store his tenders, or large rowboats, used to access his sailing yacht moored in Penn Cove.⁶⁰

During World War I, Pratt wrote to the commanding officer of the Puget Sound Artillery District, who had previously been a guest on board *Nootka*, offering the use of the vessel for military purposes. He stated that the yacht has recently been re-planked at a shipyard on Bainbridge Island, and was "practically as good and strong as when she was newly built." Pratt described *Nootka's* 20 horsepower gasoline engine, ample cabin space for living quarters below deck, and an "enclosed teak and glass deck house for a wheel and chart house, so a crew would be given unusually good protection from the weather."⁶¹ One of Pratt's most frequent guests was the internationally known painter Paul Morgan Gustin (1886-1974), who sailed on *Nootka* and Pratt's later boats, and whose impressionistic scenes of nature and Indigenous people earned him the title "the Dean of Northwest Artists."⁶²

Pratt lamented *Nootka's* small size and slow speed, he later sold her to Ed Sims of Port Townsend. In 1919 Pratt purchased the auxiliary yawl *Quatsino*, designed by Edson B. Schock, from previous owner R.E. Montgomery of Victoria, B.C. Like her predecessor, *Quatsino* was 50' long, and Pratt replaced her engine with a new 25-55 horsepower four-cylinder Sterling engine. Reports on Pratt's purchase of *Quatsino* identified him as a member of the Seattle Yacht Club and "well-known in yachting circles on the Sound." In 1920 he changed vessel's name to *Saturna*, and during a cruise to Princess Louisa Inlet that summer, visited Saturna Island off Vancouver Island.⁶³

A south seas cruise in 1922 may have set the stage for the development of Pratt's final sailing vessel, the schooner *Suva*. This two-month voyage aboard the *S.S. Niagara* took Pratt to Australia, New Zealand, and the Fiji Islands, where he likely visited the British colonial capital of Suva. Pratt Street, named in honor of Lt. Col. Francis E. Pratt of the Royal Engineers, is a major thoroughfare in Suva. Although there is no known family connection between Frank J. Pratt Jr. and Col. Pratt of Suva, the city seems to have appealed to Frank, and he bestowed Suva's name on his next vessel.⁶⁴

Frank J. Pratt Jr. commissioned Seattle naval architect Ted Geary in 1924 to design a pilothouse schooner when Geary was approaching the height of his career, and was widely recognized for his innovative workboats, elegant cruising yachts, and sailing yachts for both racing and cruising. Three elements of *Suva's* design and construction are especially noteworthy: her distinctive pilothouse form, the ubiquitous use of teak as a building material, and her construction in Hong Kong. All three likely reflect Pratt and Geary's collaboration. The design of *Suva* not only showcased Geary's expertise as a naval architect and skipper, but also incorporated Pratt's preferences developed over more than two decades of cruising in the

⁵⁸ "A Fine Launch," *Anacortes American*, September 22, 1904; *Nootka* was described elsewhere as an auxiliary yawl, which differs from a ketch in the positions of the masts and rigging; *Island Co. Times*, April 23, 1915: 1; May 19, 1916: 1; August 11, 1916: 1.

⁵⁹ Judy Lynn, *Front Street...*Ron Hanson Interview #1, 176.

⁶⁰ Ebey's Landing NHR Historic Structures Inventory 2006, "Pratt Boathouses," at 1966 Madrona Way, Coupeville.

⁶¹ Letter, Frank J. Pratt Jr. to Col. John L. Hayden, March 20, 1917, Pratt-Hanson Collection.

⁶² *Island County Times*, May 11, 1917: 1; "Whidbey Island Paintings Exhibited in Seattle," *Island County Times*, January 18, 1918: 1; John E. Impert, *Painters of the Northwest: Impressionism to Modernism, 1900-1930* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2018), 21-25; Madge Bailey, "Paul Morgan Gustin," *The American Magazine of Art* 13, no. 3 (1922): 82-86. Gustin's work is presented in the permanent collections of the Cascade Art Museum, Frye Art Museum, Henry Gallery, and Seattle Art Museum.

⁶³ *Island County Times*, Jun 22, 1917: 1; *Pacific Motorboat*, "News of Yachts and Yachtsmen," November 1919 (vol. 12, no. 2), 29; February 1920 (vol. 12, no. 5), 28; September 1920 (vol. 12, no. 12), 34.

⁶⁴ "Home From His Ocean Trip," *Island County Times*, March 24, 1922: 1; Robert Y. Pratt interview (Tape 1), 5-6. Frank J. Pratt Jr. had an uncle named Francis Roscoe Pratt (1834-1915) of Massachusetts who is not the same person as Scotsman Lt. Col. Francis Edward Pratt (1832-1880) of the British Royal Engineers, appointed by Queen Victoria in 1876 as a member of the executive council of the Colony of Fiji.

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Pacific Northwest. Perhaps inspired in part by *Nootka's* enclosed teak and glass deck house, *Suva's* pilothouse resembles the wheelhouses on cannery tenders and other workboats. The pilothouse provides 360-degree visibility from an enclosed cabin, and was tall enough to allow the nearly six foot tall Pratt to stand comfortably at the helm.⁶⁵

Pratt's collection of maritime books indicate that he put a substantial amount of study and thought into the qualities that he sought in a schooner. Pratt's copy of the 1911 book *Fore & Aft: The Story of the Fore and Aft Rig* by E. Keble Chatterton includes several of Pratt's handwritten notes about particular qualities of sailing vessels, including their rigs and cabins. Next to the ketch-rigged yacht *Maud*, Pratt wrote "best boat in book for small cruiser," and elsewhere he wrote:

I have always thought that a rig halfway between schooner and ketch – that is with sails nearly equal in area but with the larger forward – would be the ideal cruising rig. Fig. 114 is the first realization of this that I remember to have ever seen. The drawing is beautiful, and with a different bow the lines would make a grand deep-sea yacht.

Elsewhere he made notes regarding deck house dimensions, propellers, and engines, and described a Breton fishing schooner as a "nice little craft with good lines."⁶⁶

Historian Thomas Skahill identified the Quan Lee shipyard in Hong Kong as the place where *Suva* was built, but no documentation had been found in the Pratt-Hanson Collection or elsewhere that corroborates this information. However, two fires at the Pratt home in the 1930s and 1950s may have destroyed correspondence or other evidence confirming and explaining this choice. *Suva* appears to be the only vessel Geary designed that was built anywhere other than Washington, California or British Columbia. While nothing is known about the shipwrights who built *Suva*, documentation has been preserved regarding her transit from Hong Kong to Coupeville.

A bill of lading dated June 9, 1925 records that "one auxiliary schooner yacht named *Suva* complete with masts, fittings, dinghy, etc., weighs approximately 65,000 pounds" was shipped on the deck of the *S.S. Tyndareus* from Hong Kong to Victoria, B.C. The shipper is identified as D. A. Purves & Company, and the recipient is Mr. Frank J. Pratt Jr. An insurance policy valued *Suva* at \$19,000. *Suva's* masts were stepped (raised and installed) at Victoria, although it is unclear whether these masts came from Hong Kong or were fabricated in British Columbia from locally harvested Sitka spruce, and she was sailed to Coupeville. Pratt signed an ownership oath for U.S. Customs on September 22, 1925 in Seattle.⁶⁷

Suva was featured as one of the new pleasure boats of 1925 in *Pacific Motor Boat* magazine, and described as a "56-foot auxiliary schooner designed by L.E. Geary and built in China for Frank Pratt of Coupeville, Wash."⁶⁸ Typical of the era, *Suva* was originally gaff-rigged, with a square sail set behind the main mast; she was later updated to a Bermudan rig with all triangular sails. The *Island County Times* reported that Pratt took his new schooner for a trial cruise in November 1925, and he often sailed *Suva* to the San Juan Islands and northward in subsequent summers. A typical trip was reported as local news:

Mr. Frank J. Pratt, Jr., returned on Saturday from a short cruise on his auxiliary schooner yacht in British Columbia waters. He reports a delightful cruise, with good weather all of the time and remarkably clear atmospheric conditions, giving wonderful views of the mountains and waters.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Schooner *Suva* drawings and plans, WIMHF Collection; Frank J. Pratt Passport Application, January 3, 1922 (Ancestry.com)

⁶⁶ *Fore & Aft: The Story of the Fore and Aft Rig* copy in the Hanson-Pratt Collection. This collection remains in the privately owned former Pratt Home at 164 Cemetery Road in Coupeville.

⁶⁷ Bill of Lading, Ocean Steamship Company Limited / China Mutual Steam Navigation Company Limited; British and Foreign Marine Insurance Company Ltd, Policy #A9897, Hong Kong, May 13, 1925, both documents in Pratt-Hanson Collection; Dept. of Commerce, Oaths for Enrollment and License of Merchant Vessel or Yacht, Ownership Oath, Frank J. Pratt Jr., Sept. 22, 1925. (Ancestry.com)

⁶⁸ "A Page Showing Some of the New Pleasure Boats of 1925," *Pacific Motor Boat* Vol. 17, No. 1, August 1925: 4.

⁶⁹ 1925 item reprinted *Island County Times*, Nov 28, 1935, 2; 1927 item reprinted as "Doings in Other Days," *Island County Times*, April 29, 1937: 3; "Pleasant Cruise," *Island County Times*, May 17, 1929: 1; "Cruising in B.C.," *Island Co. Times*, May 9, 1930: 6.

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The Seattle Yacht Club established an annual tradition of racing from Seattle to Coupeville, with the winner being the yacht that passed the Coupeville dock the closest to six o'clock, and *Suva* occasionally participated in this event, sharing her accustomed moorage in Penn Cove with the Seattle boats visiting for the evening.⁷⁰ Pratt invited an unnamed writer from the local newspaper to come along on a 1931 cruise aboard *Suva* that was described in vivid detail, starting with heading northward to Deception Pass with the flood tide. *Suva* then **"transferred from the hustle and bustle...to the quiet waters that form a magic network about the San Juan archipelago"** where all enjoyed "timber-scented off-shore breezes" on a short run to Roche Harbor where they dropped anchor the first night out. Early the next morning they were at Victoria seeing the sights, then back among the islands, visiting English Camp. They anchored at Deer Harbor the second night, and the next day "went ashore at Orcas, hired a car and drove over the most beautiful countryside road we have yet seen. There we made the acquaintance of Robert Moran, **master ship builder and nature lover...aboard the ship again and headed for Friday Harbor and American Camp.**" *Suva* cruised back through Deception Pass, and the "fairyland experience drew to a close."⁷¹

Robert Pratt occasionally accompanied his father on cruises, such as one trip when they "visited some very beautiful waterfalls and glaciers. At night the moon would rise over this glacier which was about the most beautiful sight" that Robert had ever seen. There is at least one photo of Lena Pratt on board *Suva*, but it appears that Frank often sailed with friends rather than his family. When he needed work done on *Suva*, Pratt cruised to Seattle, such as to have her bottom repainted with copper paint to prevent barnacle and mussel growth, or to investigate possible damage after the boat hit a floating log.⁷²

After Frank J. Pratt Jr.'s passing, family friend Rev. Benjamin H. Hart recalled, "Although Mr. Pratt had made three trips around the world, he loved most of all the country which he could reach on his boat, and the simple, natural, Island living. He always said he felt it a privilege to know and have such fine neighbors as those on Whidbey Island."⁷³

Later Owners of Schooner Suva

Accounts vary regarding how ownership of *Suva* was transferred from Frank J. Pratt Jr. to Dietrich Schmitz (1890-1970). The two men were likely acquainted through membership in the Seattle Yacht Club, and Schmitz served as Pratt's investment advisor. In one oft-repeated story, Pratt wished to give *Suva* to Schmitz, and although Schmitz declined to accept the schooner as a gift due to concerns about propriety, he later purchased *Suva* for \$1 in 1939. *Suva's* title record indicates that the executors of Pratt's estate actually transferred ownership of the vessel to Schmitz in 1940. However, a report on Opening Day of sailing season in May 1939 identified *Suva* as Schmitz's boat.⁷⁴

Dietrich and Margaret "Peggy" Schmitz were active members of Seattle's yachting community, and they moored *Suva* at the Seattle Yacht Club where Dietrich had been a member since 1907 and had served many years on the board of directors. A half-model of *Suva's* hull is part of the Seattle Yacht Club heritage collection.⁷⁵ Like the Pratt family on Whidbey Island, the Schmitz family also played a significant role in land conservation, in the West Seattle community, where Dietrich's parents Ferdinand and Emma Schmitz donated 35 acres to the City of Seattle in 1908 to establish Schmitz Park. The family later donated another section of property that became the Emma Schmitz Memorial Overlook and Me-Kwa-Mooks Park. Dietrich Schmitz was a respected member of Seattle's banking establishment, working at several local

⁷⁰ "Visting Yachtsmen," *Island County Times*, October 4, 1929: 1; "Seattle Yachts Race to Penn's Cove Harbor," *Island County Times*, September 22, 1933, 1.

⁷¹ "Waterway Wandering," *Island County Times*, Jun 12, 1931, 1.

⁷² *Island County Times*, September 18, 1931: 3; "Yacht *Suva* Goes to Seattle," *Island County Times*, May 5, 1933: 4; *Island County Times*, July 21, 1933: 4.

⁷³ "Services Are Held for Frank J. Pratt, Retired Attorney," *Island County Times*, January 4, 1940, 1, 3.

⁷⁴ Peggy Schmitz, "It Is A Comely Fashion To Be Glad," 217, ms. in WIMHF Collection; Ron Newberry, "Reacquainted with an old friend: Former owner blown away by first sail on *Suva* since 1985," *Whidbey News-Times*, June 21, 2016; Abstract of Title: S.V. *Suva*, Official No. 225008, United States Coast Guard; "Sailing Season On," *Seattle Times*, May 7, 1939: 25; Another *Seattle Times* article July 5, 1939: 14 stated that *Suva* remained under Pratt's ownership but was being used that summer by Mr. and Mrs. Edward Allen and Mr. and Mrs. Dietrich Schmitz.

⁷⁵ Warren, 198; Lisa Mighetto, Seattle Yacht Club Historical Committee, email to author 6/16/25.

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banks before serving as president of Washington Mutual Savings Bank from 1934 until 1967. He also served as both an elected member of the Seattle School Board and as a member of the Boeing Company board of directors for more than 30 years, and served as a trustee for many charitable organizations.⁷⁶ Schmitz was recognized as Seattle's First Citizen for 1955 and celebrated for "his outstanding service and leadership in the economic, educational and cultural life of the community."⁷⁷

Dietrich Schmitz completed two major rehabilitation projects during his ownership of *Suva*. In 1940, he commissioned yacht designer Ben Seaborn to draw a new sail plan, converting the schooner from a gaff rig to Bermudan rig or staysail, a common conversion at the time that permitted taller sails with less complicated lines that reflected changes in sail cloth technology.⁷⁸ Then in 1960, the Hall-Scott gas engine was replaced by a 140-horsepower diesel Detroit 453.⁷⁹

When Dietrich Schmitz died in 1970, his son Alan (1934-2012) who grew up sailing on *Suva* purchased the schooner from his father's estate. Alan's former wife Vickie (Lee) Schmitz (b. 1940) recalled her memorable first encounter with *Suva* in 1968, which was her first time sailing and her first date with Alan. Another sailing trip in the summer of 1968 was equally memorable for another reason:

On one of the couple's first dates, Alan Schmitz captained the *Suva* and thought the boat would fit underneath the Hood Canal bridge. He was wrong. The mainsail became wedged, the mast bent and cracked and his father was presented with a \$20,000 repair bill.

Vicki and Alan married later that year, and Vicki gave Alan a new mainsail as a wedding gift. Alan later purchased a roller reef genoa to replace the jib, which was easier to manage; both sails were made by Franz Schattauer in Ballard. Alan and Vicki Schmitz owned *Suva* from 1970 until 1982, enjoying many summers of sailing with daughter Julie and son Dietrich. Vicki recalled the family would take day trips around Bainbridge or Vashon Island from *Suva's* home base at the Seattle Yacht Club or summer moorage at Shilshole, and longer trips up north, often stopping at Buchart Gardens on Vancouver Island on the way home to relish the floral color after days of blue sky and blue water. They made several upgrades to *Suva* in the 1970s, including adding the outdoor steering station, remodeling the galley, and installing an electric windlass to help raise the anchors. Lake Union Dry Dock did all the work on *Suva* during the two generations of Schmitz ownership, including a haul-out every couple of years to clean and paint the hull.⁸⁰

William M. and Jo Ella Brandt owned *Suva* from 1982 to 2005, and moored her in Olympia. William worked in the banking industry and served as CEO of the Washington State Employees Credit Union for 20 years.⁸¹ He also served as the commodore and operations planner for the Wilkes Heritage Flotilla in 1987, an event commemorating the first U.S. government-sponsored exploring expedition to the Pacific Northwest and Puget Sound in 1841, held in conjunction with a Smithsonian traveling exhibit at the Washington State History Museum in Tacoma. *Suva*, along with the schooners *Adventuress* and *Martha*, and four other historic sailing vessels traveled more than 200 miles from south Puget Sound to British Columbia, stopping at several ports of call where Wilkes had named mountains, bays, and other geographic features almost 150 years earlier.⁸² In 2005, *Suva* was sold to Scott and Carol Flickinger, of Irondale in Jefferson County. During the Flickingers' ownership, designer Antonio Salguero revised *Suva's*

⁷⁶ Patrick Robinson, "Vicki Schmitz shares her family history and how it became part of West Seattle," *West Side Seattle*, March 7, 2024; Louis Fiset, "Dietrich Schmitz," HistoryLink.org Essay #7729, 4/24/2006; "Dietrich Schmitz Dies at 79," *Seattle Times*, April 11, 1970: 28.

⁷⁷ Boyd Burchard, "Schmitz Recalls Good Times and Bad," *Seattle Times*, December 28, 1937: 40.

⁷⁸ "Revised Sail Plan for *Suva*," Ben Seaborn, Seattle, 5-7-40, WIMHF Collection; Wooden Boat Forum, "Gaff Rig vs. Marconi" forum.woodenboat.com/forum/designs-plans, 2011.

⁷⁹ Robin Dudley, "Schooner *Suva* 2015," *Port Townsend Leader*, July 21, 2015.

⁸⁰ Newberry, "Reacquainted..."; Vicki Schmitz, Port Orchard, WA, May 30, 2025 interview with author, Judy Lynn, and David Young; Robinson, "Vicki Schmitz..."

⁸¹ "William Matthew Brandt 1933-2022," *The Olympian*, December 24, 2022.

⁸² Chuck Fowler, *Tall Ships on Puget Sound* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing Company, 2007), 102-105, 114.

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sail plan and led a team at Port Townsend Shipwrights Co-op who extended the foremast and bowsprit, installed new rigging, and recaulked the hull.⁸³

Port Townsend resident Lloyd Baldwin owned *Suva* from 2009 to 2015, and moored her at Point Hudson Marina. During his ownership, Baldwin received a visit from Alan Schmitz who "came to Port Townsend with armloads of goods for *Suva*, including the original blueprints."⁸⁴ Baldwin worked for Washington State Ferries with a week-on, week-off schedule, and during his off weeks he operated *Suva* as a charter boat, mainly day trips, but also some longer trips into Canada and the San Juan Islands. Passengers were dubbed "Suvaneers," and local community members often crewed as volunteers, including folks who also crewed on the Schooner *Adventuress*.

Maritime Heritage Foundation Ownership

In spring of 2015, Coupeville sailboat charter captain Mark Saia found *Suva* for sale on Craigslist and contacted Baldwin to discuss purchasing the boat, without knowing of her connection to Whidbey Island. Coupeville historian Lee James had researched the schooner and her association with the Pratt family, and this information helped inspire Captain Saia and a group of like-minded maritime heritage aficionados to form a nonprofit organization with the goal of acquiring *Suva* and bringing her back to Penn Cove.⁸⁵

Articles of Incorporation were filed March 26, 2015 for the Coupeville Maritime Heritage Foundation with the goal of preserving the Schooner *Suva* and promoting awareness of maritime history and culture. An early partnership with the 501(c)(3) Island County Historical Museum allowed the Foundation to receive donations toward the vessel's purchase price of \$105,000. Major contributors included the Coupeville Inn (Jerry Saia), Wiley and Ginny Vracin, and Vern and Martha Olson. The founding board of directors included President Wylie Vracin, Vice President Mark Saia, Secretary Jason Magee, Treasurer Vickie Chambers, and Trustee Jim Green. Mark Saia proudly served as the lead captain, and he was joined by Captain Kirby Stevens.⁸⁶ During the early years of the Foundation, volunteers refurbished the teak decks, overhauled electrical systems, replaced fuel lines, renewed upholstery, and began working toward achieving Coast Guard certification that would allow *Suva* to carry passengers.⁸⁷

In 2020, *Suva* received a Certificate of Inspection and began hosting public cruises of up to 29 passengers, and in 2021, the organization's name changed to the Whidbey Island Maritime Heritage Foundation. *Suva* has spent a century in Puget Sound waters, and her name has never changed. *Suva* is moored each summer at the historic Coupeville Wharf, under a Memorandum of Understanding with the Port of Coupeville. Free dockside tours are offered to visitors, along with ticketed cruises, private charters, and educational trips for area school and youth groups. She returns to Port Townsend annually for the Wooden Boat Festival. Each winter, *Suva* is moored at the Oak Harbor Marina where volunteers conduct annual maintenance. In commemoration of *Suva*'s 2025 Centennial, the Island County Historical Museum presented the exhibit "100 Years of Schooner *Suva*." On June 21, 2025 the Whidbey Island Maritime Heritage Foundation celebrated *Suva*'s Centennial with a party at the Coupeville Recreation Hall honoring the stewardship of former owners, and the legions of volunteers who keep *Suva* afloat.

⁸³ Jennifer Jackson, "Aboard the *Suva*: Schooner offers sail into local history," *Peninsula Daily News*, July 10, 2012; Email from Antonio Salguero (Coastwise Design) to Gary Pursell (Whidbey Island Maritime Heritage Foundation), November 20, 2024.

⁸⁴ Jackson, "Aboard the *Suva*..."; Robin Dudley, "Schooner *Suva* 2015," *Port Townsend Leader*, July 21, 2015.

⁸⁵ Evin Moore, "*Suva* Educational Season Delayed by Repairs," Northwestyachting.com December 4, 2019.

⁸⁶ Captain Mark Saia, email to author, June 24, 2025.

⁸⁷ Newberry, "Reacquainted..."

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White, Richard. *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change: The Shaping of Island County, Washington*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980.

Archival Collections and Public Records

Ancestry.com Collections: Census and Voter Lists; Birth, Marriage, and Death; Immigration and Travel

Abstract of Title: S.V. *Suva*, Official No. 225008, United States Coast Guard

Island County Historical Museum Research Collection

Pratt-Hanson Collection (Personal Collection of Ron Hanson, Coupeville, WA)

Whidbey Island Maritime Heritage Foundation Collection

Interviews

Ron Hanson, Coupeville, WA, June 20, 2025, interview by author.

Lee James, Coupeville, WA, June 20, 2025, interview by author.

Robert Y. Pratt, Seattle, WA, November 1 and 6, 1997, interviews by Theresa Trebon, Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve Oral History Project.

Gary Pursell, Coupeville, WA, numerous conversations in 2024 and 2025 with author.

Captain Mark Saia, Coupeville, WA, June 20, 2025, interview by Judy Lynn.

Vicki Schmitz, Port Orchard, WA, May 30, 2025 interview with author, Judy Lynn, and David Young.

Landmark Nominations

Central Whidbey Island Historic District, National Register of Historic Places, 1972.

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George F. Jr. and Carrie Tower House, National Register of Historic Places, 2005.

M.V. Malibu, City of Seattle Landmark Nomination, 1998.

M.V. Thea Foss, City of Seattle Landmark Nomination, 1998.

M.V. Westward, National Register of Historic Places, 2007.

Schooner Adventuress, National Register of Historic Places, 1988.

Schooner Martha, National Register of Historic Places, 2001.

Schooner Zodiac, National Register of Historic Places, 1982.

S.Y. Pirate, National Register of Historic Places, 2000.

Marine Surveys

ABYC Marine Surveyors and Consultants, *Suva Condition and Valuation Survey* File No. S451024D, Aaron Bandstra, 2024.

Havorn Marine Services, Inc., Survey #HM-4038 of yacht *Suva*, 2015.

Kingspoke Marine Surveying, *S/V Suva Inspection*, Zachary W. Simonson-Bond, 2020.

Newspapers and Periodicals

Island County Times

Pacific Fisherman

Pacific Motor Boat

Peninsula Daily News

Port Townsend Leader

Seattle Post-Intelligencer

Seattle Star

Seattle Times

South Whidbey Record

West Side Seattle

Whidbey News-Times

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Island County Historical Museum

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

Schooner Suva
Name of Property

Island County, WA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing	3	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing
2	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing	4	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing

Or Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	<u>48.2227° N</u> Latitude	<u>122.6882° W</u> Longitude	3	<u> </u> Latitude	<u> </u> Longitude
2	<u> </u> Latitude	<u> </u> Longitude	4	<u> </u> Latitude	<u> </u> Longitude

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Only the vessel, encompassed by extreme length and beam.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Boundary encompasses the entire area of the vessel as she floats at her berth or sails; location information is for moorage purposes only and is not included in the nomination.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Holly Taylor, Principal
organization Past Forward Northwest Cultural Services date August 28, 2025
street & number PO Box 13027 telephone 206-463-3168
city or town Burton state WA zip code 98013
e-mail holly@pastforwardnw.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Schooner *Suva*
Name of Property

Island County, WA
County and State

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Schooner *Suva*
City or Vicinity: Coupeville County: Island State: WA
Photographer: Jim Douglass Date Photographed: September-October 2024

Description of Photograph: Setting – summer moorage at the Coupeville Wharf, *Suva* at left (1 of 15)



Schooner *Suva*
Name of Property

Island County, WA
County and State

Description of Photograph: Port side with sails raised, in Penn Cove (2 of 15)



Schooner *Suva*
Name of Property

Island County, WA
County and State

Description of Photograph: Starboard side with sails raised, in Penn Cove (3 of 15)



Schooner *Suva*
Name of Property

Island County, WA
County and State

Description of Photograph: Starboard side with sails stowed, in Penn Cove (4 of 15)



Schooner *Suva*
Name of Property

Island County, WA
County and State

Description of Photograph: Hauled out – stern with transom, propeller and rudder visible (5 of 15)



Schooner *Suva*
Name of Property

Island County, WA
County and State

Description of Photograph: Hauled out – starboard side with hull and pilothouse visible (6 of 15)



Schooner *Suva*
Name of Property

Island County, WA
County and State

Description of Photograph: Dockside, detail of pilothouse and trunk cabin, port side (7 of 15)



Schooner *Suva*
Name of Property

Island County, WA
County and State

Description of Photograph: Detail, from the bow: forward hatch, foremast, and trunk cabin (8 of 15)



Schooner *Suva*
Name of Property

Island County, WA
County and State

Description of Photograph: Detail, aft steering station, main boom, and pilothouse door (9 of 15)



Schooner *Suva*
Name of Property

Island County, WA
County and State

Description of Photograph: Forward cabin, looking forward, with foremast visible (10 of 15)



Schooner *Suva*
Name of Property

Island County, WA
County and State

Description of Photograph: Main cabin, looking aft (11 of 15)



Schooner *Suva*
Name of Property

Island County, WA
County and State

Description of Photograph: Galley interior, looking forward through the main cabin and forward cabin. Mainmast (white) is visible in the center, and foremast (varnished) is visible in the background (12 of 15)



Schooner *Suva*
Name of Property

Island County, WA
County and State

Description of Photograph: Galley looking aft toward engine cabinet (closed) (13 of 15)

Description of Photograph: Galley looking aft toward engine cabinet (open) (14 of 15)



Schooner *Suva*
Name of Property

Island County, WA
County and State

Description of Photograph: Pilothouse interior, and companionway to galley (15 of 15)



Schooner *Suva*
Name of Property

Island County, WA
County and State

Map, Drawings and Historic Images

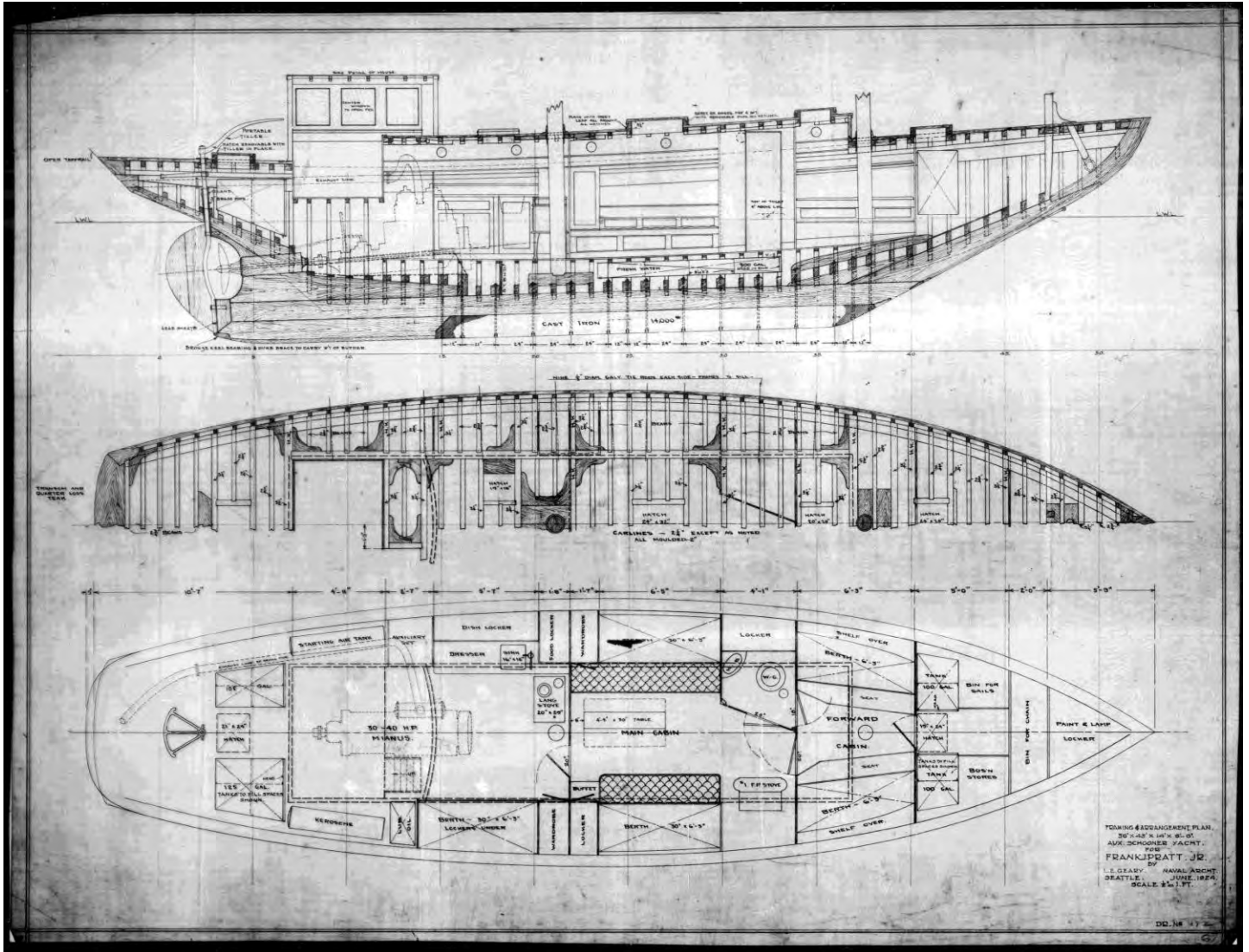
Locator map: Coupeville, WA 7.5 Minute Topo Map (detail) showing Coupeville Wharf at 24 Front St NW



Schooner *Suva*
Name of Property

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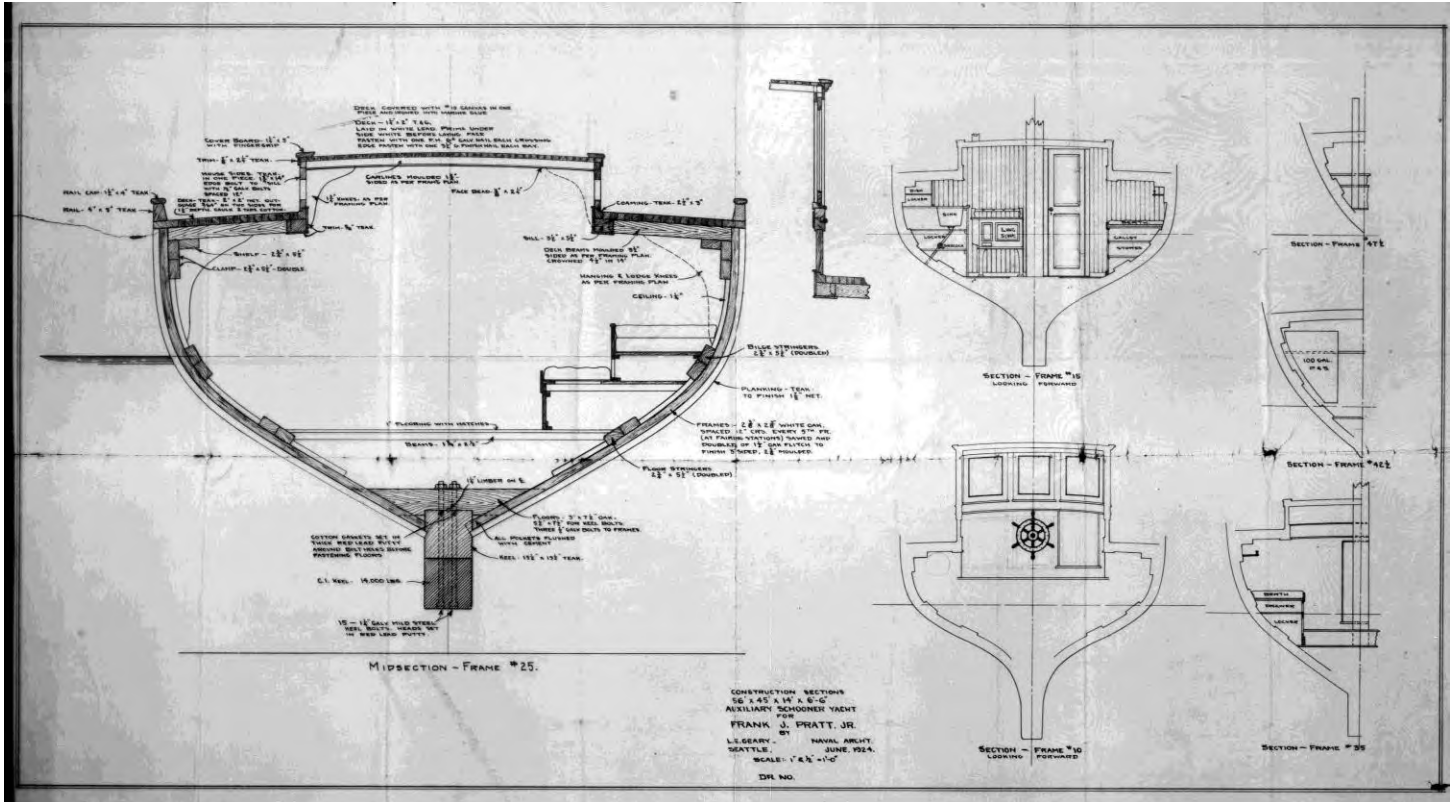
Drawings: Ted Geary, 1924, Framing & Arrangement Plan



Schooner *Suva*
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County and State

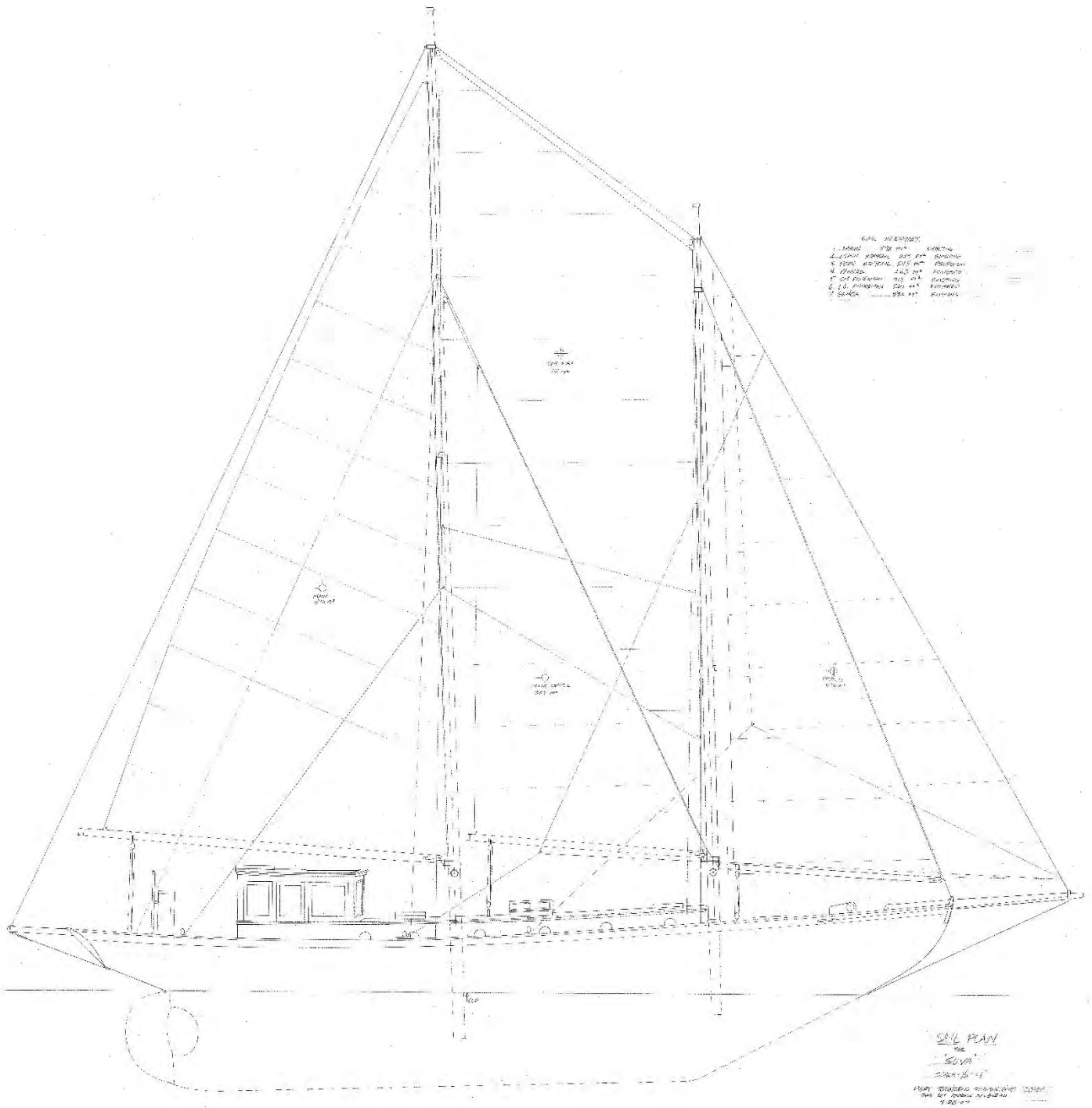
Drawings: Ted Geary, 1924, Sections



Schooner *Suva*
Name of Property

Island County, WA
County and State

Drawings: Antonio Salguero, 2007 Revised Sail Plan



Schooner *Suva*
Name of Property

Island County, WA
County and State

Historic photos: *Suva* in Penn Cove, ca. 1925 (Pratt-Hanson Collection)



Schooner *Suva*
Name of Property

Island County, WA
County and State

Historic photos: *Suva* in Penn Cove, ca. 1930 showing original gaff rigging (Pratt-Hanson Collection)



Schooner *Suva*
Name of Property

Island County, WA
County and State

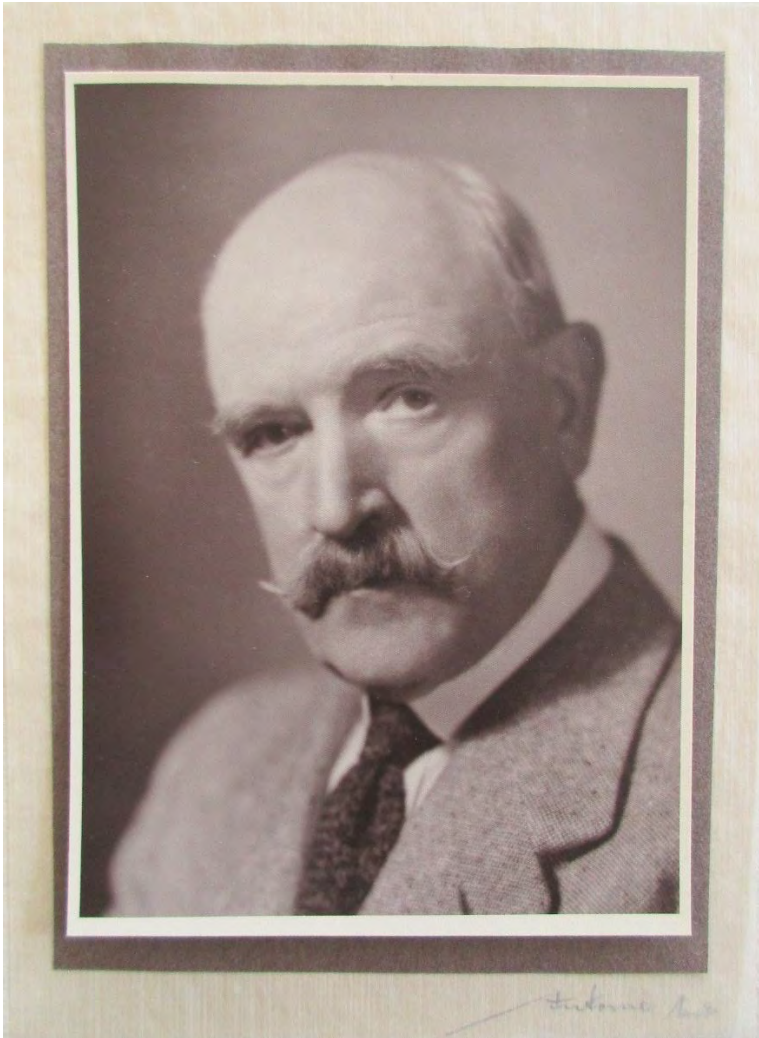
Historic photos: *Suva* going through the Locks, ca. 1930 showing original aft deck without exterior cockpit (Pratt-Hanson Collection)



Schooner *Suva*
Name of Property

Island County, WA
County and State

Historic photos: Frank J. Pratt Jr. and Madeline "Lena" Kohne Pratt, ca. 1930 (Pratt-Hanson Collection)



Schooner *Suva*
Name of Property

Island County, WA
County and State

Historic photo: *Suva* in Elliott Bay, sailed by Vicki and Alan Schmitz, 1976 (Schmitz Family Collection)



Schooner *Suva*
Name of Property

Island County, WA
County and State

Historic sketch: Paul Morgan Gustin, *Suva* in Princess Louisa Inlet, May 1930 (Pratt-Hanson Collection)



Property Owner: (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Whidbey Island Maritime Heritage Foundation, Peter Wells, President wells.peter.james@gmail.com
street & number PO Box 532 telephone 832-205-1828
city or town Coupeville state WA zip code 98239