

# History Nook

## Salubria

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For the Orcas Island Historical Museum

The small white house situated at the head of what was then known as Stockade Bay, now called Buck Bay, was once the home of a brave and widely acclaimed American mariner. In the fall of 1897, word reached the U.S. that 265 American seamen were aboard eight whaling ships trapped in the Arctic field ice north and west of Point Barrow, Alaska. The vessel owners appealed to the President, who ordered the Treasury Department, in charge of the Revenue Cutter Service, to attempt to rescue the men. The nearest vessel available was the Cutter Bear, commanded by Captain Francis Tuttle, only recently returned from patrol duty in the Bering Sea and now at Port Townsend.



Captain Tuttle recruited an all volunteer crew, re-provisioned the vessel, and embarked in November of 1897 to rescue the trapped whalers. Sailing north against winter gales, unrelenting cold and ice, and fighting great hazards, the Bear reached Cape Vancouver, Alaska. Unable to sail further north, Captain Tuttle dispatched a rescue party overland, directing them to enlist the local natives and purchase a small herd of reindeer.

The Overland Relief Expedition, as



it became known, embarked from the Cutter Bear on December 16, 1897, and arrived at Point Barrow on March 29th, 1898. After traveling over 1500 miles in the Arctic darkness, braving fierce cold and wild, relentless storms, the men succeeded in delivering 382 reindeer to the starving whalers. Thus provisioned, the men were able to survive until the ice broke up and they could sail home.

Captain Tuttle and his crew were celebrated far and wide, having completed a rescue mission many thought to be impossible. His many friends included Robert Moran, who built an apartment in his mansion, Rosario, for the Captain. Captain Tuttle's daughter lived in the small white house, named Salubria, at Stockade Bay, where Captain Tuttle lived for many years.

Travelers through Olga today can still see the remains of Salubria's fire place and chimney, resting on a small hill, looking out over the bay. Captain Tuttle no doubt considered our island a safe and harmonious refuge from the wild adventures of his Arctic rescue.

—Photos courtesy of [www.uscg.mil/history](http://www.uscg.mil/history)

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