

# History Nook

## Escape to Shaw Island, Pt. II

By: TOM WELCH



*The Orcas Hotel, where the shootout with the robber took place July 10th, 1913*

Searches of Shaw Island commenced, all residents were told to remove their boats from the beaches, and the U.S. Revenue Cutter 'Arcata', along with the Canadian patrol boats Faloma and Winamac, began patrolling along the shoreline. Local residents told of seeing the robber on the shores of Canoe Island, then at Burke's, a local marina and restaurant where he had eaten several meals. Still one step ahead of the Sheriff and his posse, the robber was next seen by the photographer McCormick from the deck of the 'Arcata' as he strolled out of the woods, walked into a small orchard, picked a few cherries then stepped into a boat on the beach. Rowing across a small bay, barely a hundred yards ahead of his shouting pursuers, the robber escaped once again into the woods of Shaw Island.

A few days later the robber's lair,



*US Revenue Cutter Arcata*

containing several bloody bandages, was located. Still no robber was found, but men at a fishing camp where he had eaten breakfast told the authorities he appeared to have some buckshot wounds on his neck and shoulder, and his coat was torn. Seen next at Hoffman's boathouse, the robber escaped before the posse surrounded and searched the building. Interviews with Shaw residents proved frustrating to the Sheriff because, as he later said, the robber 'had more friends on Shaw than he did, and nobody would give him any information'. The search continued for two weeks with no results, and the Sheriff finally gave up. In an article in the 'San Juan Islander of July 25, 1913, Sheriff Steven Boyce said he quit the search in disgust, that Shaw Islanders were aiding the outlaw and refusing to help the authorities, and that he believed the man was still on Shaw. So ended the last 'gunfight' on Orcas Island, with the successful escape of a lone, wily criminal to Shaw Island.

*Tom Welch  
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