

Historical Significance Narrative

The Williams house, built in approximately 1882, belonged to Cynthia Eddy and Charles H. Williams. (We do not know the builder.)

In 1877 they came to Bainbridge from Minnesota with James Ryan, who was Charles' uncle and Cynthia's stepfather. At that time, Eagle Harbor was a wilderness with large Indian villages on Wing and Bill Points, and the area now called Hawley, where they settled, was covered with logging roads.

In 1879 Cynthia and Charles were one of the two first couples married in Eagle Harbor -- in a double wedding ceremony. They built their house adjacent to Ryan's property, where the ferry building now stands, and their 160-acre homestead included all of what is now Wing Point and Hawley. They had seven children, who were born in the house: Clayton, Claude, Irene, Robert, Lee, Jim, and Lily. (Clayton was the first Caucasian baby born in Eagle Harbor.)

To earn a living, Cynthia and Charles developed an orchard and built a sawmill near the house, and they took in shipyard workers as boarders. Charles established the first steamship business from Eagle Harbor to Seattle and took passengers and freight on his boat, The Tolo. He also was appointed the first sheriff of Madrona, which was later named Winslow. Cynthia opened a small grocery store, which became Madrona's first post office -- and she was the

town's first postmistress. (There is a plaque dedicated to her and her post office in the ferry parking lot.)

Charles befriended the local Native Americans and allowed them to live on his property, where they dug clams to sell in Seattle. Each year, Charles plowed the beach with a team of horses in order to ensure a steady supply of clams for the next season.

After World War II, the house was occupied by another significant figure on Bainbridge: Charles Taylor, a well-known master shipbuilder. He set up a boatworks in front of the house and a marine railway, which hauled out small craft for bottom cleaning and repair on the lawn. Mostly, he constructed vessels of approximately 30-to-50 feet, including gill-net fishing boats and the Persees, a 55-foot yacht. (The boatworks has been torn down, but several concrete piers still remain on the beach and out in the water in front of the house.)