

# Group forms to save historic Coupeville house

**By Megan Hansen**  
Editor

In a town filled with historic treasures, some are out for the world to see while others are hidden in plain sight.

Amongst the hustle and bustle of downtown Coupeville, lies a hidden gem within the historical community.

The Haller House, located on the corner of North Main and Front streets, hides behind tall trees and overgrown shrubbery.

It has been uninhabited since 2006 and still maintains most of its historic integrity.

Put on the market in 2012, a group of Whidbey history lovers formed a group with hopes of purchasing the home and turning it into a

public museum.

Historic Whidbey is planning an open house to help raise money for the purchase. The open house will be 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 21 in the lot between the home and Cook's Corner Park.

The open house will include small tours inside parts of the house, informational displays and Mike Vouri of San Juan Island National Historical Park will speak on the colorful military history in the 1850s, from the Treaty Era through the Pig War and Civil War – a little-known history in which Granville Haller played a significant role.

Lynn Hyde, who works for Ebey's Reserve, took on the project outside of her 9 to 5 job.

With the help of for-

mer reserve historic architect Annie Matsov, Hyde and Matsov nominated and successfully had the house named to a list of Most Endangered Properties in Washington state.

Working with the current homeowner, the group has halted the house from going back on the market until Nov. 1.

"We're hoping we can raise enough to establish a lease-to-own," Hyde said.

Hyde said they hope to raise between \$45,000-\$50,000 by November.

The house was previously on the market for \$475,000, but the group and homeowner have not established a sale price.

The group has brought in historic architects and historic landscapers to assess the property's historic standing.

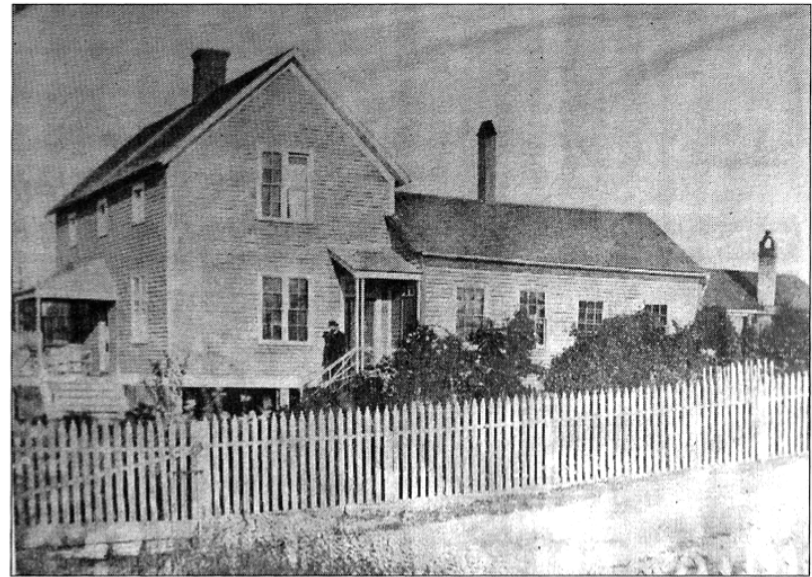


Photo provided

*An undated photo shows Colonel Granville O. Haller outside his Coupeville home. He left the area in 1879 and his house still stands.*

"We don't have any way of knowing what it's going to cost (to preserve)," Hyde said.

Built in the 1866, the group hopes to restore the house to its original appearance.

The group also has the sponsorship of the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation, enabling them to launch their capital campaign. Any funds will be filtered through the trust.

Colonel Granville O. Haller himself was a significant figure in the Euro-American settlement of the Pacific Northwest.

In a town of sea captains and farmers, his story is

unique in Coupeville's early chronicles. Sent to the Pacific Northwest by the U.S. Army during Washington's treaty period in the 1850s, he later was a player in the "Pig War" (the last boundary dispute with Great Britain on the West Coast) and the Civil War, where he served with the Union Army, most notably in the battle of Gettysburg.

After the Civil War, Haller returned to the Washington Territory and, after buying a parcel of land from Capt. Thomas Coupe, he opened one of the earliest mercantile establishments on Front Street.

As Island County Trea-

surer and founder of Masonic Temple #15, Haller was an active participant in the early growth of Coupeville.

Over 150 years, different generations have lived in the home. It has a single toilet and a kitchen sink. It also has limited electrical.

"The idea is to turn it into a museum focusing on the elements of the region when Haller was living here," Hyde said.

The focus of the proposed museum is not represented in any other museums in the area, she said.

For more information go to [www.historicwhidbey.org](http://www.historicwhidbey.org)