

Lisabeula

By Bruce Haulman and Terry Donnelly

Originally named Hammersmark Landing after Thorkeld Hammersmark who homesteaded in 1883 and had a float anchored out where the Mosquito Fleet boats could stop, Lisabeula is a unique name not shared by any other community anywhere.

In 1890 John Brink bought five acres up the hill from the landing and soon began to think about a post office for the west side since the nearest post office was at Quartermaster more than three miles away on the other side of the island.

Brink applied for a post office for the growing community in 1892 and he became the first postmaster. In his application he named the new post office Hopville, which was not accepted by the Post Office Department because there was another Hopville, Washington post office. Brink told the Department any name would do and, according to Oliver Van Olinda, "the official who investigated the application ... glanced up from the paper, caught sight of two girls working in the office, one of whose name was Eliza, the other Beulah, and wrote in the name Lisabeula." Marjorie Stanley contends that Van Olinda was in error and that the name came from the two daughters, Elizabeth (Eliza) and Beulah, of George A. Butt who took over the post office shortly after Brink's appointment. Marjorie Stanley gathered this information from Mrs. Frankie Shattuck who knew the Butts, and from Mr. and Mrs. Warren Mackey who heard it directly from Beulah. Whichever account you want to recognize, Lisabeula got its distinctive name with the s pronounced like a z.

There were seventy-five residents served by this new post office, and the mail was delivered three times a week by the sternwheeler *Mary F. Pearley*. Several individuals served as postmaster from 1893 to 1904 when Anton Baunsgard became postmaster and moved the post office to the waterfront where Lisabeula Park is located today.



Therkelson Photograph – Vashon-Maury Island Heritage Museum

Anton and Emma Baunsgard and Anton's brother Maurice came to Lisabeula in 1902 purchased the waterfront at Hammersmark landing and built two large houses. Anton established a general store in one of the houses, and, when he became postmaster in 1904, moved the post office to the store. King County constructed the dock in 1907, and in 1912 Anton built a large two-story building on the waterfront to house the general store and post office with living quarters above. The original photograph was taken between 1907 and 1912, after the dock was constructed but before the waterfront store was built.



Myer Store, Lisabeula, Virginia II at the Dock – Vashon-Maury Heritage Museum

Nels Christensen, owner of the *Virginia* steamboats, married the Baunsgard's sister Margaret and purchased twenty-three acres of land from her brother Maurice that lay just to the south of Lisabeula. He moved his family to their new property in 1908 and after becoming frustrated with steamer service on the Westside formed the West Coast Transportation Company. The company purchased the *Virginia Merrill*, which was renamed the *Virginia*, the first of the *Virginia* boats that served the Westside for the next thirty-two years. Christiansen built the *Virginia II* on the beach at Christiansen Cove in 1912, In 1914 he purchased the *Typhoon* and renamed it the *Virginia III*. *Virginia IV* was renamed when Christiansen purchased the *Tyrus* in 1918, and the *Virginia V* was built across Colvos Passage at Maplewood in 1922. Today the area where Christiansen lived and headquartered his ferries is named Christensen Cove.

The Baunsgard's moved to Yakima in 1915 but the Lisabeula Post Office and store continued to serve the area until the post office was closed in 1935.

In the early 1920s John Webber purchased the property to fulfill his dream of developing a convention resort. He was affiliated with the 1st Presbyterian Church of Seattle and took down the two greenhouses seen in the original photograph to construct sixteen cottages. Two conventions were held, but in the mid-1920s the site was converted to a fishing and vacation resort. The wharf was expanded into a boardwalk along the beach and boathouses were constructed for the small rental rowboats visitors at the resort could use. The

resort was never a big success but continued to operate under several different owners including Ralph Bergh whose family inherited it after his death in 1976.



Lisabeula Dock, 1936 – King County Photo Archive

In the 1980's it was in disrepair and in 1986 the Vashon Park District, which was formed in 1983, acquired Lisabeula Resort as its first new park. The Park District demolished the old cabins and houses and developed the park as a waterfront park with parking, a grassy lawn area, and easy access to the beach. As Park Board Chair Ruth Anderson remarked at the time, "Wouldn't it be fitting if Lisabeula, a place that was born for the benefit of people, could come full circle and be that again?"



2010 Photograph – Terry Donnelly

The current photograph of Lisabeula Park was taken in 2010 and shows the area where the dock, store/post office, greenhouses, and farmhouse in the original photograph were located.