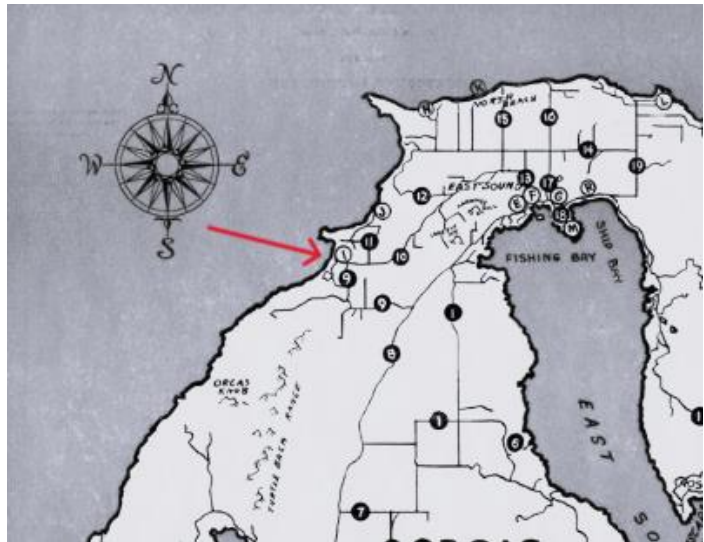


# West Beach, Orcas Island. Then and Now

## Scho:lh, Orcas Island, 98245

SAY WHAT? Where the heck is THAT?

Well, that would be its address if it still existed. For hundreds of years, until the early 1800's, it was a wonderful, fun, and happy vacation and meeting village of coastal Salish Native Americans. It was where West Beach Resort is now located.



At that time, abundant springs and creeks, plentiful oysters, clams, mussels, crab, bottom fish, game and salmon in schools of literally millions, made the location very attractive. A 200' longhouse was erected and Native Americans from all the islands paddled here to hunt, fish, clam, hold ceremonial festivities and just camp - often for weeks. Along the shore tons of salmon could be spotted drying in the sun, while moms and kids tended the smoking fires.

Large numbers of arrowheads, stone knives, grinding querns, and sinkers for nets have been found, indicating Scho:lh was once quite a center of native population. A Coast Salish descendant of a chief of Scho:lh told of a great whale feast. A huge whale drifted in and became stuck on the rocks on the north side of the village. The meat would be more than the villagers could consume themselves, so the chief sent his fastest paddlers to all the islands, including Vancouver, to invite all to a great feast. They came by the hundreds and stayed for weeks. All day and night great strips of meat were cut and roasted over wood fires - certainly the biggest picnic ever held in the San Juans! Huge whale bones were found along the beach, substantiating the story.



Sadly, according to Lummi tradition, the village met its end around 1800, when a war party of northern tribes (perhaps the Haida from Canada) came in canoes one night and surprised the villagers. Most of the men were killed and many women and children were taken prisoner. The few that escaped fled into the deep woods. They travelled at night in small groups, changing campsites every couple of days. They finally made their way to what is now Eastsound where they obtained canoes after several weeks and travelled to Vancouver. Many indications of old transient camps in the woods were found later by survey teams.



The village site has seen many transformations since then. It was homesteaded. It became a center for the trapping and selling of millions of tons of salmon. The government stopped this in 1931, but it was too late. Those enormous salmon runs have never recovered. It then became a large brickworks operation, a commercial orchard, and finally became what it is today: a happy vacation spot again!



### Photo Captions

Photo 1: Scho:lh village location, now the home of West Beach Resort. Photo credit: WashingtonRuralHeritage.org

Photo 2: Salmon drying over open wood fire. Photo credit: Anacortes History Museum, Samish Indian Nation

Photo 3: Post Scho:lh village, Kimple Brick Factory and the first cabin of what would later become the Resort. Photo: circa 1925. Courtesy of Orcas Historical Museum

Photo 4: Present day West Beach Resort, a new happy village

**Notes: there is an accent over the 'o' in Scho:lh – Please insert on each mention. Spelling and punctuation below:**

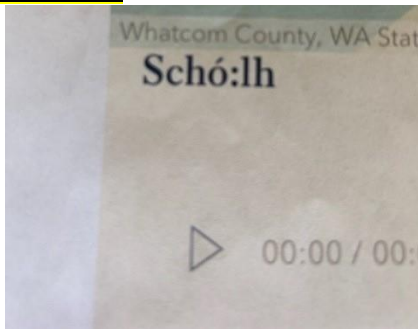


Photo 1: would like compass removed and a text with arrow reading:

**“SCHO:LH**

(now West Beach Resort)”