

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

University of Nebraska Press -- Sample Books
and Chapters

University of Nebraska Press

Fall 2013

Katie Gale

LLyn De Danaan

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/unpresssamples>

De Danaan, LLyn, "Katie Gale" (2013). *University of Nebraska Press -- Sample Books and Chapters*. 217.
<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/unpresssamples/217>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the University of Nebraska Press at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in University of Nebraska Press -- Sample Books and Chapters by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.



[Buy the Book](#)

KATIE GALE

A Coast Salish
Woman's Life
on Oyster Bay

LLYN DE DANAAN

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA PRESS | LINCOLN AND LONDON

[Buy the Book](#)

© 2013 by the Board of Regents of
the University of Nebraska

All rights reserved
Manufactured in the United States of America



Library of Congress
Cataloging-in-Publication Data
De Danaan, Llyn.
Katie Gale: a Coast Salish woman's life
on Oyster bay / Llyn De Danaan.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-0-8032-3787-2 (cloth: alk. paper)

1. Gale, Katie. 2. Coast Salish
Indians—Washington (State)—Biography.
3. Indian women—Washington
(State)—Biography. 4. Coast Salish
Indians—Social life and customs. I. Title.

E99.S21D43 2013

979.7004'97940092—dc23 [B] 2013009237

Set in Garamond Premier by Laura Wellington.
Designed by Nathan Putens.

*In fond memory of
Margaret “Midge” Ward, Quileute Nation*

*Dedicated to
David Whitener (1934–2012), Squaxin Island Tribe,
and Judy Wright (1939–2013), Puyallup Tribe of Indians
Historians and stewards of heritage and legacy
and
All of our grandchildren*

Special thanks to Pete Bloomfield

They reserved everything in the salt water and in the creeks and in the rivers and up on the hills, and that is what made the Indians agree to this treaty that was made, because they reserved all of this; they thought they were going to have it all to themselves.

DICK JACKSON, *Duwamish et al. v. United States of America*, U.S. Court of Claims, March 1, 1927

There is no need

For you to give

Back to us

What we already own

TED C. WILLIAMS (Tuscarora),

“Repatriating Ourselves”

Contents

List of Illustrations *xi*

1. My Lodestone *1*
2. First Salmon *5*
3. Where You Come From *15*
4. Indian Policy during Katie Gale's Time *18*
5. Sometimes I See a Canoe *26*
6. Oyster Bay *31*
7. The Duties of a Woman *43*
8. "Picking Grounds" and the Making
of Community *61*
9. The People in Her World *67*
10. Travels *75*
11. Katie Gale's Early Life *88*
12. The Kettle Connection *103*
13. No Crops of Any Consequence *115*

14. Relationships	126
15. Joseph Gale Was an Enterprising Man	146
16. The Marks upon Her Body	157
17. Katie Gale Goes to Court	168
18. Turn Around	189
19. Joseph's Complaints	194
20. The Oyster Bay School	203
21. Katie Gale Died under a Full Moon	210
22. A "Broad and Liberal Man" Meets His Death	218
23. The End of an Era	226
24. Winter Sister	240
Postscript	245
Acknowledgments	255
Chronology	265
Notes	273
Bibliography	291

Illustrations

IMAGES

Following page 114

1. Dick Jackson
2. Katie Gale's tombstone
3. Chief Kettle and Louis Yowaluch, or "Mud Bay Louie"
4. Louisa Tobin
5. Map with Salish designations of significant places around Oyster and Mud Bays
6. *A View of Arcadia*, by James Tilton Pickett
7. The stern-wheeler *Willie*
8. A float house on Puget Sound
9. John Leslie on the steamer *S. G. Simpson*
10. Katie Gale's home and oyster operation on Oyster Bay
11. Oyster Bay School, 1898

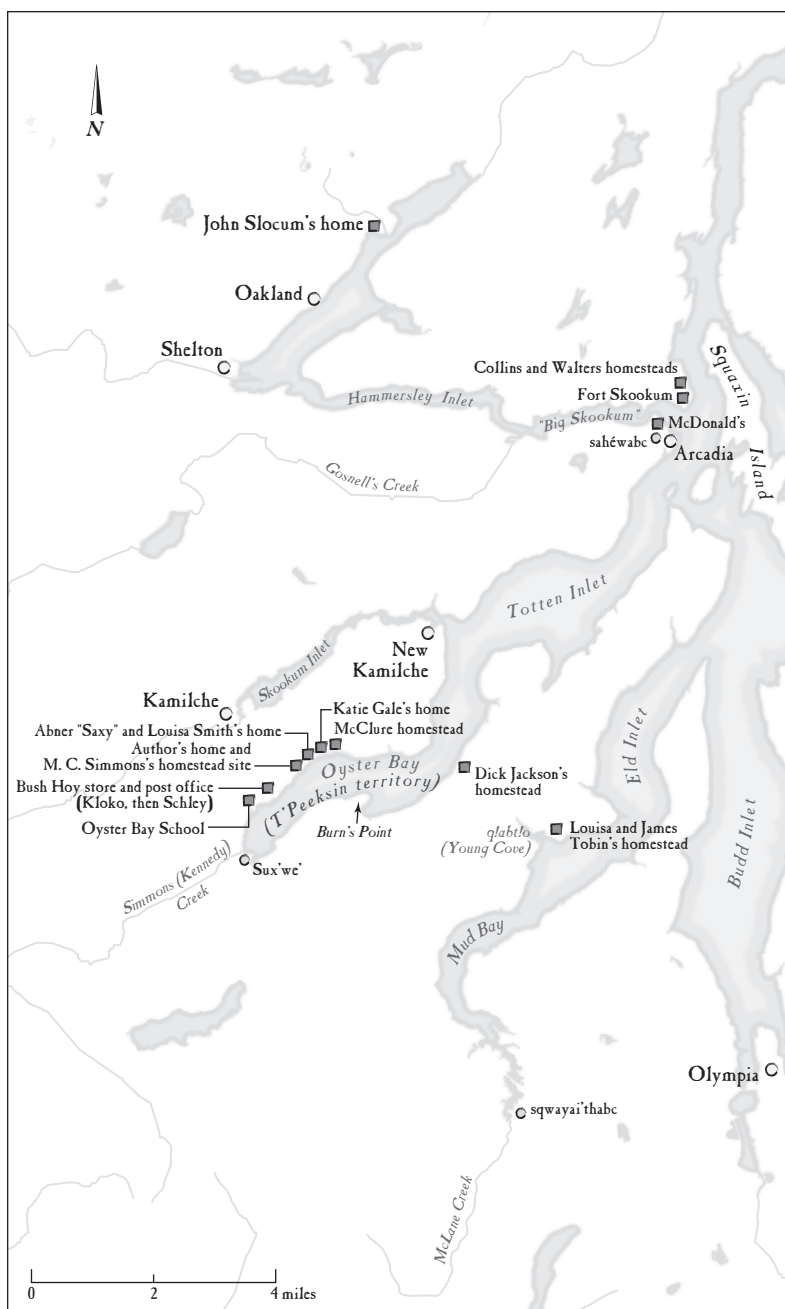
12. Wedding of James and Louisa Tobin's
daughter Katie to Edward J. Smith
13. The steamship *Willamette*, 1897

MAPS

1. Southern Puget Sound inlets and locales *xiv*

KATIE GALE

[Buy the Book](#)



Map 1. Southern Puget Sound inlets and locales of importance to the narrative.

1 *My Lodestone*

KATIE KETTLE GALE was born into violence in an era of violence. As a child, she was surrounded by people who had lost everything and to whom promises from the government seemed not to mean much. She was close to Chief Kettle, a man whom her kin, James Tobin, said was wary of Indian women marrying white men. His words and warnings must have been repeated to her often as life with her husband, Joseph Gale, a white man, became unbearable.

Pete Bloomfield was the catalyst for this story. Pete grew up at Kamilche Point on Puget Sound in Washington State, where his father, Charles James Bloomfield, had acquired an eighty-acre plot. Charles worked for the Olympia Oyster Company in addition to working his own land. Pete, born in 1923, started logging in the area in 1948. He had long remembered a day in the late 1950s when he was felling trees around Oyster Bay, scant miles from Kamilche Point. He had his own logging outfit then. It was called Bloomfield Logging Company. On that day he came across some tombstones deep in the woods. It was common for early homesteaders, ranchers, and farmers to bury their deceased near their home and on their own property, so there was nothing particularly unusual about his find. Many of these little plots have been long since forgotten and overgrown as land has changed hands and descendants have abandoned the rural life for other prospects. Most

of these graves are never visited and many have been desecrated; many tombstones have been broken or stolen and some graves have been dug up and robbed of their contents.

Pete's mind must have wandered back to that little plot on and off through the years. That memory just wouldn't go away. It was one of those things he always meant to do something about. So one day he got into his car and drove into downtown Shelton, the administrative seat of Mason County, Washington. He pulled up in front of the little repurposed Carnegie library building that contains the artifacts and documents cared for by the Mason County Historical Society Museum staff. Billie Howard, the director, was probably sitting, as always, behind a desk that allows her to see anyone who comes in through the door. Shirley Erhart was there if it was a Tuesday. Shirley is a bloodhound on the trail when it comes to finding great source material. She can spot in an instant something she knows I'll be interested in as she peruses newspaper files and dusty ledgers. Her memory for what she's seen and where she's seen it is enviable. I often receive the bounty of her serendipitous finds: a bundle of copied clippings in my mailbox along with a cheery note.

Stan Graham, a part-time employee of the museum and a retired assistant fire management officer, was there. He fought fires for the Olympic National Forest for twenty-nine seasons and then turned his attention to his longtime love, local history. He is a big, bright, inquisitive, and garrulous fellow. Stan listened to Pete carefully. He knew the spot Pete was talking about was near my house, so he gave me a call. Stan was aware that I'd worked for Puget Sound tribes for years and knew of my growing absorption with documenting the cultural and economic history of Oyster Bay. We had some common interests and I had mentored him through his effort to catalogue the prairies of the Olympic Peninsula. He helped me learn to read and use mid-nineteenth-century survey maps while I was working for the Puyallup Tribe of Indians.

On a summer day in 2004 Stan and Jan Parker, who also worked

at the museum, picked me up at my place. My house is on the way to the site, just a half mile from the driveway that leads to the Olympia Oyster Company, near where Pete had said he remembered seeing the markers. As we bounced along gravel roads in Stan's oversized pickup, I examined a small-scale map on which Pete had marked a huge black *X* with a felt pen. We had clippers, loppers, pruners, leather gloves, and a couple of cameras with us.

After a few inconclusive inquiries at company houses located on the incline above Oyster Bay, we hacked our way up a bushy hill we thought might be the right one. It had been enthusiastically overgrown with alders and blackberries since Pete's decades-old clearing.

Through vines and branches we saw, all at the same time, what we were looking for. We shouted to each other, "Look, we've found it." It seemed so unlikely. We were astonished at our own capacity for sleuthing. We had been given so few clues and the territory where the plot might have been was immense.

Now silent, aware that this was a sacred space, we walked toward the stones amid the ivy and brush. There were several visible. We knelt near the biggest block. This inscribed slab leaned against a gray, stout, moss-covered base. It took a few minutes to make out the letters through the lichen and discoloration on the monument. "The children of Mr. and Mrs. Johnson," it read, "Hattie and Henry." Henry died in 1895 at age seventeen. Hattie died in 1897 at age eighteen, according to the inscription.¹

We stood a few moments thinking about these children. We wondered out loud about the causes of their deaths and imagined the grief of losing, so close together in time, two nearly full-grown children. Then we saw another pillar. It was a column of cool, pink granite engraved in low relief with twin doves. It was lying, unbroken and still smooth as silk, on the ground beside its base. Stan lifted it. The face read, "Katie, wife of J. A. Gale, died Aug. 6, 1899, aged 43 yrs. Gone but not forgotten."

Katie Gale. It eventually made sense. Henry and Hattie were Katie's

children from before she married Joseph Gale, the “J. A.” noted on the stone. Katie was, I knew, the “Kitty” Gale talked about in late nineteenth-century accounts of life on Oyster Bay. She was an Indian woman who had her own oyster business and who stood up for her rights, the stories said.² She was known by other names, including “George” and “Kettle” and “Kittle,” I came to know later. But I’m getting ahead of myself.

At the moment I was simply thrilled. I had wondered for years about the woman I’d barely caught a glimpse of in an old memoir by Cora Chase and in the yellowed ledgers that recorded nineteenth-century tidal transactions in the Washington State Archives. I’d always believed there was a story to be told about Katie Gale. Now here was her grave, less than a mile down the road from my own Oyster Bay home. I went a bit crazy, I suppose, because Stan finally let me know I was hooting and pounding on his shoulders and back and maybe I’d like to stop now.

It was hard to stave off the excitement because, though I knew little about Katie, I was absolutely and instantly convinced that this was the opening of a new chapter for Katie and for me.