***THE WAR OF PIGS (June 1859 – December 1859)***
1859, and the “Pig War '' has escalated far beyond a small border dispute into a full-on war between British Canada and the United States. So far, the US has only been focusing its efforts on the Island of Vancouver, which Canadian forces have moved into Washington but only a few miles past the US-Canada Border. The US has overpowered the British Navy on the seas, since the British cannot send new ships fast enough to replenish their stocks, as it requires them to go across the south Atlantic, and Canadian shipyards cannot work fast enough. Because of this, the US can also hinder the amount of Canadian and British Troops entering the island from the mainland. And the Empire has been forced to the southern end of the island. The United States Navy also barricaded the Salish Sea, which cut off the majority of supplies for the City of Vancouver, and many predicted the city would soon starve.

By the Winter of 1859 the British Empire has closely leaning towards surrender of the island. Even though upcoming president Abraham Lincoln was calling for peace, President Buchanan refused to budge saying, “…That here and now, the issue of American territorial sovereignty will be solved, and it will either favor this union or the Empire to the north.” The British and Canadian forces attempted to hold out until the new president was in office, but by winter, the US forces had surrounded the remaining British forces at the port of Sayward. It was here that the British forces, under Governor Douglas surrendered. Under the conditions of the surrender the British and Americans would share the waterways around the Island, but the Island itself and of course, the San Juan Islands, would belong to the United States.

The Territory of Vancouver was created under the military occupation of the United States Army. Of course, many Vancouver Island residents were not happy with this new arrangement, however, it would not take long for them to take arms once again and take their island back.

***CIVIL WAR INVOLVEMENT (1860 – 1865)***

In 1861 the war was now calming down, despite civil unrest on the island. And the focus of the nation was returning to the more explosive issue of slavery. Abraham Lincoln was now the 16th president of the union, and he has taken the reins of a nation in turmoil. Before he was even elected into office many states had already seceded from the union. As civil war was on the horizon, the Union army recalled many troops from the Vancouver Territory leaving a skeleton force behind to manage the land.

As more states began to join this new “Confederacy”, a group of Vancouverites calling themselves the Vancouver Freedom Brotherhood dispatched ambassadors to Canada and to the confederacy. They asked for assistance in a fight against the Union and fight for their freedom from the union. They offered to both groups to join them if they provided support in their uprising.

The British were hesitant to jump right back into the war they had just ended and refused to assist. However, the Confederacy was more than willing to assist anything that would be a thorn in the side of the Union. Sending supplies would prove difficult as transcontinental shipping was impossible and shipping would be extremely hard as the Union continued to blockade Confederate ports. The Confederates were able to supply experienced officers to the brotherhood to train them in guerilla warfare against the remaining union troops on the island. While the union had a small force on the island, there were some stockpiled supplies still on the island, which the Brotherhood soon began to steal from and capture.

In spring of 1861 with the Civil War now in full swing, the Brotherhood officially declared that they were the Vancouver Free State, independent from both Canada and the Union. Although they had not declared to be part of the confederacy, they may as well have been, as they now openly let Confederate troops on the island. The Confederate army formed the 1st Vancouver Volunteer Infantry, which consisted of many local Vancouverites and Independence fighters.

Lincoln knew that expanding the war to the Northwest would pull crucial resources away from the East. So he dispatched the 1st Oregon Volunteer Infantry and Cavalry to quell the confederate forces until the war in the east became more tenable.

For 3 years the Oregon Infantry would fight to keep Confederate forces, keeping them at bay while undersupplied and outnumbered at almost 1 Union soldier for every 3 Rebel soldiers. However, they heroically persisted, keeping the rebel forces from ever reaching the mainland. Lincoln was even so impressed by their actions that he personally visited the troops in 1864 and awarded many of them with various medals of valor. That same year, Lincoln would dispatch the 1st and 2nd California Regiment to reinforce the Oregon troops.

Even as the Confederate states began to surrender, the Vancouverites refused and fighting continued until 1866 when the last pockets of resistance were stamped out. The Vancouverite forces surrendered at Fort Rupert on November 14th 1866, with the Rebel Commander Colonel Joseph Finke, surrendering to Colonel George B. Currey in the house of a somewhat perturbed Mrs. Angela Stintz who insisted that all persons remove their shoes before entering the house to avoid tracking in mud.

After the surrender, the Island became part of the 7th Military district during reconstruction, the only region in the northwest to ever be placed under military occupation during the civil war. It stayed in this state until 1873 when it became an Unincorperated and Organized Territory. The first governor, Arthur Douglas, was elected in 1874, and was made the head of the territorial legislature. He ran on a platform of peace, stability and eventual statehood. His opponent, Fredrick Mitchel ran on a platform of revolution and independence, but he was arrested during a riot in Victoria. He continued to run from jail, but a narrow margin voted for Douglas as they preferred to have a governor actually be in the office.

***STATEHOOD (1903)***

After the civil war, there were a large group of individuals on the island who just wanted to continue with their lives, content with being part of the United States if it didn’t terribly affect their lively hood, which was primarily fishing, logging and as a trading port. Originally the United States had banned trading with Canada, however after the war reconstruction, that restriction was lifted, and Victoria returned to being an important trade port as many Canadian ships would stop on their way to the City of Vancouver.

However, there were many who still resented being part of the US and were angry at the British government for not getting involved in their movement for emancipation from the states during the civil war. Many of these people still considered themselves to still be part of the Free Vancouver Brotherhood, all through after the war their official numbers were significantly diminished, but many did agree with their cause.

At the turn of the century the territory was now fairly well established, and the new territorial legislature was beginning to present the question of statehood. There was a territorial referendum presented to the people of the island. This referendum however was the spark to a period of civil strife on Vancouver island.

But this time, many had moved to the state from the continental US, encouraged by a program of land claiming presented by the federal government. And many of these residents wanted to the same representation as those back in the states. However, a portion of native residents were outraged by the proposal, and many once again began to call for independence.

Here, the Brotherhood once again began to speak louder, calling for people to join its ranks and support independence. At the center of this movement was the new leader of the Brotherhood, Author Kennedy Jr, son of Arthur Kennedy Sr, head of the Vancouver Civil Authority, the de facto government of Vancouver Free State during the civil war. He would, and others would run for the Territorial legislature, and push for the referendum to include a vote for independence.

With the Brotherhood now controlling half of the Legislature, it was eventually decided that independence be included in the referendum. In 1901 the referendum was put on the ballot. At polling places people from across the island would come to vote on the topic, however, this mixing of opinions lead to conflicts. While most of them were tense but peaceful, some locations became centers of violent, especially in the city of Victoria.

The Victoria Riot occurred on September 13th of 1901. It started with Author Kennedy Jr himself entering the polling location to cast his vote on the referendum. It is unknown who, but an individual from the adjacent crowd threw a stone at the lawmaker, which hit is head causing him to call unconscious, although the injury would prove to be non-fatal.

This caused the entire crowd to go ecstatic, and fighting would begin in the area where the stone was thrown. The fighting soon spread onto the streets where news would begin to spread that Arthur Kennedy Jr was killed, however this was not true was he was transported to Victoria Hospital. However, this was not communicated to the rioters. The two sides began to start attacking each other in other polling places through the city and one polling place was even set on fire by an unknown party.

City police attempted to step in and divide the two groups when possible, however both sides would begin attacking police, claiming that they were fighting for one side or the other. Governor Douglas dispatched a message to Washington Governor Henry McBride for assistance, as Vancouver had no official territorial militia. The Washington State Militia was dispatched to the island where it attempted to quell the rioters peacefully.

This would prove unsuccessful so the would begin to fire on rioters who would not comply. This order was highly controversial, and was not ordered by Governor McBride, but by Colonel Harris, commander of the forces on the island. He was a noted supporter of Vancouver statehood and it was rumored that there was a targeting if intendance supporters although this was never substantiated.

The riot would calm down throughout the night and by the next day most had returned home, been arrested, or sent to the hospital. By the end of the week the votes were counted and the vote for statehood one by a narrow margin with 46.4% voting for Independence and 53.6% voting for statehood. In 1903 congress would officially welcome the State of Vancouver to the Union as the 46th State.