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Descriptive Report

Harbor of Anacortes, Wash.

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1892

J. J. Gilbert

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Descriptive Report

Harbor of Anacortes. Wash

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1892

J. J. Gilbert

Descriptive Report
Harbor of Anacortes, Wash
Sheets No 1, No. 2 & No. 3.
1892

The survey of the water front and harbor of Anacortes was made for the Washington State Tide Land Commission.

The city of Anacortes, as incorporated has a longer stretch of water front than any other city in the State, it includes all the shore line of Fidalgo Bay, a large part of Burrows Bay, and all between.

Amos Bowman was the first man who believed in and worked for a city at this point. I am not sure just when he settled here, but it was at least in the Early Eighties.

When I camped at Anacortes, while surveying this region in 1886 Amos Bowman was living here with his family, also a brother kept a so called hotel, and Dr. Childs, a brother-in-law of Mr. Bowman had a store, maintained a rough wharf, and was post-master.- There were several fine farms a mile or two back, and it was here they brought their goods for shipment.

Mrs. Bowman, a bright-Educated woman,

took great pride in the high rocky head on the Bowman Claim, and gave it its name "Capsante" Mr. Bowman was a civil engineer and had long been employed on the Geological Survey of Canada; he was the engineer who laid out the town of Anacortes, and also gave its name. With the advent of "Boom" times the town was enlarged, streets were opened and graded, immense tracts were cleared of timber, the fine logs or trunks being burned and millions of feet of fine lumber destroyed in the mad haste to throw more lots upon the market. The Rail Road Company took a hand and built fine wharves and warehouses, and a rail road was built to connect with the Seattle, Lake Shore and Eastern at Wooley, on the Skagit river.

The shore-line, beginning near Marsh Point, is rather low, and extends around Fidalgo Bay; all around this bay the shores are rather low, and the entire head of the bay is bare at low tides, the bottom is muddy and sandy, soft but not sticky. On the West side, half way up the bay is a long narrow, wooded point extending nearly or quite half way across the

bay. The rail road track follows a trestle, just skirting this point on the South, while a bridge extends along the North side of it and thence across, accommodating teams and an Electric car line.

From the point Northward the shore is somewhat higher, but the beach very wide and the water very shallow. The bight S.W. from Capsante runs bare at low tide - It is chiefly used to store the logs for the Saw Mills located here.

Capsante, the rocky head, is almost, and probably not so very long ago was altogether, an island. It is sandstone, with a little soil here and there and some timber. The East face is nearly perpendicular, and the water is quite deep off it.

Leaving Capsante the Shore-line is low, gradually rising toward Ship Harbor. The beach is gravel, the water fairly bold, and the tidal currents very strong. Shannons Point is high, with boulder beach, and the shoreline of Green Point, around to Flounder Bay is rocky, with little or no beach.

Flounder Bay runs bare at extreme low tide, it is seperated from Burrows Bay by a low, narrow gravel spit. A wharf and warehouse has been built on this spit, and a rail road track extended to this point, from Anacortes.

coming via Ship Harbor, and across the neck. Neither the wharf nor the track will ever be utilized. The shores of Burrows Bay are high, the beach wide and mostly sandy, with some gravel & boulders near the shore-line.

Anacortes was a busy city of 5000 or 6000 people, during the brief boom days. Brick stores, and hotels were built, and some very good residences witness the credulity of the inhabitants. It has dwindled away since then, and at present (1900) - there is little aside from the Salmon Canneries, located there in recent years, to keep the town alive.

The principal industries in 1892 were the Saw Mills, three in number, a brick yard on Fidalgo Bay, and the sale of real estate, but even at that date all these enterprises were declining.

If it were a good location for a great city, no finer site could be desired. Enough level ground for business, and the balance gently rising ground. But I can see nothing to warrant a large city here, and have no doubt its glory departed, forever, with the Boom of 1890.91

J. J. Gilbert
Assist. U.S. Survey