Descriptive Report

Whatcom Harbor, Wash

Registry No. 2069

1891

J. J. Gilbert
Descriptive Report
Whale Cove Harbor, Wash
Sheet Register a 2069
1891

J. J. Gilbert
Descriptive Report -
Whale Creek Harbor, Wash
1891.

The topographic and hydrographic survey of Whale Creek Harbor, was made for the State
Tide Land Commission, and includes the location
of the Shore-line, the City Streets—especially those
bordering on the shores, the location of the old
Meander lines, and the hydrography.

The survey is on the scale of 1:5000.

Beginning at Whale Creek, which is the outlet
of Lake Whale, the Shore-line gradually rises
to the N.E., and is a continuous bluff. Much of it
broken, to the end of the sheet. Except at the
mouth of Squallicum Creek, at the mouth of which
is a narrow gravel spit. On the other side of the
Bay, S.W. from Whale Creek, the bluff is also broken
and quite high, clay at first, but changing to
Sandstone toward Fairhaven.

The beach is gravel close to high water mark,
and outside it is sand. The head of the Bay, in
front of the City front bare at low tide, and is
a hard sand. Two long wharves from the
City front made out to whom a depth of 16 to 18
feet of water, at low tide, is found.
There is a Rail Road Tracte Belonging to the Great Northern Railway Co. across the flats in front of the City. From the flat at mouth of Squalicum Creek to the base of the Scheme Wharf. Thence the track is along the shore to Fairhaven.

The town is largely built on the flat, bluff, north and east from Whalem Creek, and also S. E. from the creek for about one mile.

Half a mile S. E. from the creek are the old Bellingham Bay Coal Mines, which were extensively operated from 1860 to 1879. When the mines took fire, and have since been abandoned. The coal was of an inferior quality.

At the present time, the Blue Canyon Coal Mine on Lake Whalem is in operation. The bunks are on the Bay, S. E. from the old mines.

The principal industry is in lumber. Besides some small saw mills and shingle mills along the city front, are two large lumber mills, one at Scheme, just S. E. from landing, and the other at Bellingham, rather more than half way to Fairhaven. At the time of the survey the last named mill was closed, receiving a subsidy for not running.

Historical

In 1852, William Pattle, while looking for
Spar lumber landed in Bellingham Bay. Noticing some fragments of coal on the beach, he searched and discovered a ledge nearby. Pattle posted the usual notice of a claim, and went away to arrange for opening his mine.

During his absence, Henry Rosler, looking for a saw-mill site, arrived on the schooner William Allen, from San Francisco. With him came R. E. Peabody, Edward Eldridge and five others. These men took up claims around the head of the bay and formed the "Whatcom Milling Co." - The name was the Indian name of the locality. More coal was discovered on the claim next to Pattle's.

During the Indian War of 1855-6, a fort and blockhouse was built on the bluff about one mile N.E. of Stedman Creek, and a company of U.S. troops stationed there. The old blockhouse and part of the fort still exist.

This whole region was surveyed by me in 1887, but that was before the day of Descriptive reports. As these sheets were made originally for the State of Washington, I did not understand that Descriptive Reports were required, and none were furnished. Now (1900) after nearly
Nine years, with not even the original facing at hand to consult. I am compelled to
trust to my memory, aided by a look at the
published charts.

The hydrography was done by steam launch
and row boat. The only danger discovered
was Star Rock, on which there is about 5 feet at
low tide, it is a small rock, and was never
suspected, although in the direct line of steamers
landing at or leaving Bellingham Wharf, until
struck, with a short time before the survey, by
the Steamer Geo. E. Starr. It is between 300 and
400 yards of the Bellingham Mill Wharf.

The Bay is not a perfect harbor. The best
protection is along the Scheme shore.

While the Bay becomes rough in W. E. and
W. S. Storms, for the small craft usually
found in these waters, it would scarcely
be considered rough for deep sea-going
ships and here they

J. J. Gilbert
Asst. Capt. Fer. Samu