Description Report

Fairhaven Harbor, Wash.

Registry No. = 2070

1891

J. J. Gilbert
Descriptive Report

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This survey was made for the Washington State Tide Land Commission.

Fairhaven proper is situated on a small bay at the S. W. point of Bellingham Bay, a little more than two miles from the mouth of Lethaboo Creek.

The town was first laid out about 1886, by Dan Harris, who built a wharf and small public house, in 1887 when I made the original survey of this region. There were no streets. Perhaps half a dozen lots had been sold, and three or four small cabins had been built.

A year or two later the boom came, a transit company bought out Harris, and adjoining claims, and laid out a great city reaching to the head of Chuckanut Bay. The advent of the Great Northern Railroad gave the new city a start, streets were graded, brick buildings erected, wharves, warehouses, and saw mills lined the waterfront. An electric road was built to Lethaboo, and prosperity seemed assured.

In 1891, it was a busy place, with stores of all descriptions, and the finest hotel on
Puget Sound. The timber was cleared all the way to Chuckanut Bay, and all platted in town lots. The boom was of short duration and now, 1907, it is a small town.

The best anchorage and shelter in Bellingham Bay is in the small bay in front of Fairhaven.

The entire shore-line, except a little in the bay and west of it is sandstone. For 1/2 miles south of the bay it is covered with clay and then is quite a bluff around the double bluff half way to Chuckanut Bay entrance. Beyond the bluff and around to the low marshy land at Chuckanut Creek. The shore line is perpendicular sandstone bluffs and cliffs, carved and smoothed by the action of wind and wave.

The beach is gravel, boulders, and sand from the N. limit of the sheet to the end of the bluff in the double bluff. But around the point into the Chuckanut there is no beach, all is rock, and very nearly perpendicular. There are places where the largest ships might safely lie broadside to the rocks, as to a beacon. Just across Chuckanut Bay from the point are the stone quarries, it is a fine bleached sandstone, and used very extensively for building. The Cessna houses at
Post-Forested. Astoria and Portland were built of this pine. As was the Court-House at Olympia; it is extensively used for trimmings in Seattle.

Southwest from the city Wharves, there is quite an extensive shoal, really forming a danger to steamboats coming to Fairhaven and Whatcom. Because such shoals are not common, and there is a tendency to keep close to the shore to avoid the strong tidal currents.

The head of Chuckanut Bay is bare at low tide. The bottom is sand.

A small stream of water, or rather two small streams close together, empty into the head of Chuckanut Bay. Another small stream empties into the little bay at the Fairhaven Wharves. This last stream is the outlet of Lake Padden 2 1/2 miles back.

Fairhaven is to all purposes a part of Whatcom, and efforts have been made to have them united, but that has not yet been accomplished.

The hydrography was done four steamboats, and write a small boat.

J. J. Gilbert
Assist. C. H. Survey