Descriptive Report

Harbor of Anacortes, Wash

Sheets No. 1, No. 2, and No. 3

Recorded No. 2111, 2112, and 2113.

1872

J. J. Gilbert
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Harbor of Anacortes, Wash
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1892

The survey of the waterfront and harbor of Anacortes was made for the Washington State Fish and Oyster Commission.

The city of Anacortes, as incorporated, has a longer stretch of waterfront 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 On Childs, a brother-in-law of Mr. Bowman had a store, maintained a rough wharf and was postmaster. There were several fine farms a mile or two back, and it was here they brought their goods for shipment.

Mr. Bowman, a bright educated woman.
took great pride in the high rocky head on the Bowman Claim, and gave it its name "Cappaute." 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 laid and graded, immense tracts were cleared of timber, the five logs or trunks being burned and millions of feet of pine lumber destroyed in the mad haste to throw more lots upon the market. The Rail Road Company took a hand and built five 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, halfway up the bay is a long narrow, wooded point extending nearly or quite halfway across the
Bay. The rail road track follows a trestle, just
skirting this point on the Southe, while a bridge
extends along the western side of it and thence across.
Accommodating beams and an electric car line.
From the point Northward the shore is somewhat higher.
But the beach is very wide and the water very
shallow. The bright S.W. from Capsaute runs bare
at low tide. It is chiefly used to store the logs
for the two mills located here.
Capsaute 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 per-
pendicular. and the water is quite deep off it.
Leaving Capsaute the Shoreline is low, gradually
rising toward Ship Harbor. The beach is gravel,
the water fairly bold, and the tidal currents
very strong. Shannon Point is high, with boater
beaches. 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 separated from Burrows Bay by a long
narrow gravel spit. A wharf and wharf
has been built on this spit. and a rail road
track extended to this point.
Coming via Ship Harbor and across the neck.
Neither the wharf nor the track will ever be utilized. The shores of Burrard Bay are high, the beach level and mostly sandy, with some gravel boulders near the shore line.

Aurora was a busy city of 500 or 600 people, during the brief boom days. Brick ovens, and hotels were built, and some very good residences witness the cordiality 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. There in number, a brick yard on Tidalgo 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.

J. J. Gilbert

Witness, Q. F. Sancy