Description Report

Harbor of Anacortes, Wash.

Sheet No. 1: Registry No. = 2111
Sheet No. 2: = 2112
Sheet No. 3: = 2113

1892

J. J. Gilbert
Descripive Report

Harbor of Anacortes, Wash

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

Recorded No. 2111, 2112, and 2113, — 1872

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The survey of the water front and harbor of
Anacortes was made for the Washington State
Fide 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
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 “Cappoite.” 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 pine logs or trunks being burned and millions of feet of fire 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 eastern 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 railroad track follows a trestle, just
shifting this point on the south, while a bridge
extends along the west 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 is very wide and the water very
shallow. The southwesterly from Camsate runs bare
at low tide—It is chiefly used to store the logs
for the sawmills located here.
Camsate, the rocky islet, 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 Camsate the shoreline is low, gradually
rising toward Ship Harbor. The beach is gravel,
the water fairly bold, and the tidal currents
very strong. Shamrock Point is high, with booster
beach, and the shoreline of Green Point, around to
Flounder Bay is very, very 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 lighthouse and wharf
has been built on this spit, and a railroad
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 Burns Bay are high, the beaches wide and mostly sandy, with some gravel & boulders near the shore-line.

Anaehs was a busy city of 5000 or 6000 people, during the brief boom days. Brick stoves, 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 sawmills, three in number, a brick yard on Tidalgo Bay, and the sale of real estate. Yet 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. F. Gilbert

Joseph O. A. Sawyer