Come with us as we go back 100 years

1910 ANACORTES

WELCOME!

It's time to journey to the far side of a century and let yourself linger in a very special year: 1910.

Just what was so special about 1910?

Halley's Comet was passing through after a 75-year absence and Washington women were blazing their own historic path toward winning the vote.

Anacortes folk were caught up in those events and more, generating plenty of home-grown excitement with a barn-storming evangelist, escaping convicts, anti-liquor crusaders, steamship groundings and a motorcycle-riding priest.

The town in 1910 was coming into its own as a thriving deep-water port with a flair for hosting a good time. Anacortes was a major supplier of seafood and also shipped out lumber, shingles, veneer, fruit, farm produce and more.

Smoke from its mills filled the air and numerous new residences were being built. Crowds from around the county came to town eager to share its celebrations.

In 1910, Anacortes’ hopes were visible in new buildings and businesses.

The Great Northern broke ground for a state-of-the-art depot, the Moyer (Keystone) building was re-built, the Post Office got a make-over and the Glass Factory was getting ready to roll.

The Anacortes American celebrated its first decade with a new home at the corner of 6th and Q Ave.
The cannon boomed at sunset...

...and the fun didn’t stop until the dance music died early on the 5th.

Beginning in 1890, Anacortes hosted spectacular 4th of July celebrations. The event in 1910 continued that tradition, being organized by a committee who swore the day would be a real “hummer.”

Visitors poured into Anacortes by boat and by train. At 10 AM the Grand Industrial and Fraternal Parade headed down Commercial Avenue to the martial tunes of the 14-piece Anacortes Marine Band. Mayor Burke and the captain of the gunboat Yorktown were followed by sailors, citizens of note and gussied-up autos and floats. About 100 children marched and sang.

The Davey Bros. float carried a banquet range complete with a cook who hurled large handfuls of dough into the crowd. The W.C.T.U. saw no reason to adopt a lighter tone for the day - its float was titled “Booze and Poverty.”

At 3:30, it was time for baseball as well as a chance to watch Chinese and Japanese contestants catch a greased pig (prize: the pig). Evening events on Commercial Avenue included a boy’s barrel race and a Fat Man’s Race (215 pounds minimum).

At least 1500 people oohed-and-ahhed over fireworks in Guemes Channel. Afterwards, those who still had a few sparks left danced the night away.

According to the American, July 4, 1910 was a day when the bald eagle “certainly screamed some in Anacortes.”
Andrew Carnegie was a Scottish immigrant and steel industrialist who believed that “the man who dies rich dies disgraced.” According to Carnegie, the rich were morally obligated to use their wealth for the common good.

Carnegie's appreciation for libraries began in boyhood when he worked twelve-hour days, six days a week in a cotton factory. But thanks to a citizen who opened his personal library to working boys, Carnegie was able to educate himself.

“It was from my own early experience,” he wrote, “that I decided there was no use to which money could be applied so productive of good to boys and girls who have good within them, and ability and ambition to develop it, as the founding of a public library in a community.”

Carnegie's method was to donate a public library on the condition that the receiving community provide a building site and a budget for operation and maintenance. In this way, over 2500 libraries were built throughout the English-speaking world.

In the days before Carnegie libraries, patrons had to depend on clerks to retrieve books from closed stacks. The Carnegie library design created an opportunity for people to browse open stacks and discover for themselves the books they wanted to read.

Each library was built with an imposing front staircase reflecting Carnegie's belief in elevation through learning. Similarly, the lamppost or lantern outside every library symbolized enlightenment.

Carnegie spent over $55 million of his fortune on libraries and is often referred to as the “Patron Saint of Libraries.”
In September, the three-masted *Fanny Dutard* sailed up Guemes Channel after four months away in the Bering Sea. Sailors danced on deck while others hung from the rigging, waving and shouting to the cheering crowd that thronged the wharf. The first of the 1910 cod-fishing fleet was home.

Cod was an Atlantic coast industry until J. A. Matheson came to Anacortes. In 1891 he built Puget Sound’s first codfish plant on Guemes Channel and sent the *Lizzie Colby* to fish the Bering Sea. When W. F. Robinson moved to Anacortes in 1897, he built a plant to process fish byproducts. Seven years later, he set up a codfish-curing plant that eventually became one of the largest on the west coast.

In 1910, both Matheson and Robinson had trouble signing crews for the 2000-mile trip north. Halibut fishers offered “enticing terms” and touted halibut as easier work. But by mid-April Matheson had signed a 37-man crew and sent the *Fanny Dutard* to the fishing banks. The schooners *Alice* and *Joseph Russ* sailed from Robinson Fisheries.

Although the *Joseph Russ* had brought in a world-record catch the previous year, the start of that journey had been plagued with problems. A hundred miles off Cape Flattery the curing salt began to melt. As the schooner turned back, she grounded on a reef near Port Angeles and had to be towed to port. Those incidents kept many from signing on again in 1910 and when the ship finally left port, it was with an almost completely new crew.

That crew, along with Captain Charles Foss, faced such severe weather up north that “one night in Unimak Pass I wouldn't have given five cents for the boat and the lives of all on board” said Foss. “The sea rolled mountain high and at times it seemed that we were on the bottom of the sea.”

Schooners fishing cod in 1910 also witnessed the “awe-inspiring” eruption of Shishaldin volcano in the Aleutians. Ash covered the ships and turned day into night. Lava streams 200 feet wide slid hissing into the water, sending up clouds of steam. “You couldn't blame anyone for thinking that the world was coming to an end,” said Foss, who brought home lava chunks that fell on deck.

Little wonder, then, at the crew’s exuberance when the *Fanny Dutard* came safely alongside the Matheson dock. Even the ship’s tiger-striped mascot leapt over the ship’s rail and raced to the top of the fish plant and down again. In another seven months, the crews would sail north again, but for now, it was good to be home.
100 YEARS
ANACORTES
CARNEGIE LIBRARY

Exhibit Thanks

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Mayor Dean Maxwell & City Council — Continuing Encouragement & Support

The majority of the photos used in this exhibit come from the museum’s Wallie Funk Collection.

Native son Wallie Funk became the editor of the Anacortes American in 1950 and quickly wrote a front-page editorial urging his hometown to preserve its history. The community responded and today the collection holds nearly 50,000 photos, thanks to the foresight of Mr. Funk.

Anacortes American

Town newspapers perform the vital role of chronicling a community’s history. We are grateful to the American for providing us with the complete 1910 edition!
However did people in Anacortes amuse themselves before computers, TVs, and i-Pods?

Very easily, thank you. In 1910, social opportunities were ample and amusements limited only by a lack of imagination.

If you were the sociable sort, you might have attended any number of gatherings to dance, play whist, listen to music, and stretch your mind with guessing games.

For outdoors fun, you might have picnicked on a neighboring island or hunted agates on local beaches. Perhaps you'd have gone to a summer lawn social and munched on homemade candy while your fortune was told by a witch. In July, you could have planned a trip to the Chautauqua on Whidbey for some “high class” entertainment.

In September, the Demonstration train rolled into Anacortes with five cars of farming exhibits. Several hundred folks would listen to instructors from the state college or browse the latest in incubators and milking machines.

A dime would get you a seat at the Rose Theater for a vaudeville show that might have featured a black-faced comedy act or “George Trump, the Legless Elberquist.” If your tastes tended differently, you could have watched a movie about the making of modern shoes.

Men were treated to at least one Opera House smoker in 1910, complete with boxing and wrestling bouts. They could also frequent any of nine local saloons or pass time at the Bismarck, a newly-opened pool and billiards hall. Men also had plenty of opportunity to enjoy the bonds of brotherhood as Anacortes boasted no less than 24 fraternal groups.

Women gathered together at the Maccabbee Sociability Club, the Happy-Go-Lucky needlework club, any number of auxiliary groups, and for those with a crusading bent, the Women's Christian Temperance Union.

People in 1910 may not have had the electronic perks we enjoy today but perhaps their lives were all the richer for it.
Everything Ads

Anacortes Ice Co.
Hay, Grain, Chops, Mill Feed

ANACORTES CREAMERY & PRODUCE CO.

Knapp & Ronneberger
FORD AUTOMOBILES

Anacortes Second Hand Store

For Sale--A $1500 House

BEARD'S
ABSTRACT, REAL ESTATE AND INSURANCE AGENCY

Melville Curtis...

Start Now to Own Your Home

Hotel Taylor
MADE & IMPORTED PRODUCE...

Bell Machine Works

Ferro Gasoline Engines

Hoffman Candy Kitchen
GOOD CANDY
Fresh Every Day

C. L. JUDD
Photographer

The Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company

Taggert-Jackson Company

Taggert-Jackson Company

F. V. HOGAN
Real Estate Rentals, and Insurance

Schreiber & Werner

For Sale--A $1500 House

Now is a splendid time to have those pictures taken.
The holiday rush is over, so we can take plenty of time to get acquainted and bring out your best points. Also we have some interesting things in new style mountings.

J. B. BELL
Anacortes, Wash.
It was February 1910 when Father Treunet came to town. A few months later the Anacortes American reported that the priest was “out speeding his recently arrived new American motorcycle. The machine is a beauty and the Rev. Father is thoroughly enjoying himself.”

As the first pastor of St. Mary’s Parish, Father Treunet guided his flock from 1910 to 1948. Born in France in 1871, Treunet was ordained in 1896, served in Nova Scotia for five years, then came in 1908 to Elma, Washington. After two years there at St. Joseph’s Parish, Treunet landed in Anacortes. It seems to have been a match made in heaven.

For his part, Treunet declared himself “very agreeably surprised” by Anacortes. “As near as one can judge, you have mills and manufactories here greater than those of most cities several times the size of Anacortes.

I like the town and I like the people I have met.”

Anacortes liked him back. The American pronounced Treunet a man of “pleasing personality and one feels instinctively at the first meeting that he is a churchman of liberal ideas and broad sympathies. Citizens of all creeds and of no creeds will heartily welcome Father Treunet.”

The little Catholic church was built in 1904 on the corner of 7th and N and moved to the middle of the block in 1910. It was in poor shape when Treunet arrived. The Father had the church re-plastered and repaired and wasn’t above picking up a paintbrush himself. After WWI, plans were drawn for the basement of a new church and it is an indication of the priest’s popularity that many non-Catholics gave generously.

In 1946, sixty priests, the Bishop, and the Anacortes community joined in celebrating the 50th anniversary of Father Treunet’s ordination. Two years later, the well-loved priest died of cancer.
They were buzzing like mosquitoes...

Water travel was a natural for those living on Fidalgo and Guemes Islands. In 1910, dozens of steamboats, from the 180-passenger ferry Rosalie to the sleek Yankee Doodle, chugged through local waters.

There were so many boats, in fact, they were dubbed the “Mosquito Fleet.”

A person could board the Utopia or City of Everett for a five-hour trip to Seattle, take the Taku II, Columbia or Falcon to Bellingham, or ride the Concordia out to the islands.

The boats moved not only people but whatever was needed to supply coastal communities. Many docked at Curtis Wharf, at the foot of O Avenue. Built by Melville Curtis in 1903 for the coal and the building supply trades, the wharf had a main dock, several warehouses, a ticket office, and an ice plant. Curtis eventually became the agent for the Inland Navigation Co. and towards the end of 1910 was signing papers to incorporate as the Curtis Wharf Company.

Steamboat travel could be a real adventure. In 1910 the Perdita had a fire on board, the Kulshan grounded at Ben Ure’s Island in Deception Pass, the Northwestern went on the rocks in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and the Chippewa ran aground off the south end of Lopez.

In March, an upstart company, the Kitsap Navigation Co. (KNC), instigated a rate war with the Inland Navigation Co. (INC) on the Bellingham-Anacortes-Seattle route. The INC slashed passenger rates from $1.25 to 25 cents for a one-way passage and the battle was on between the KNC’s Kitsap and the INC’s Chippewa.

“Rate wars on the Sound,” wrote the American, “have been of frequent occurrence and have always been waged with the most bitter persistence.”

Indeed. In April, about 40 steamed Kitsap passengers entered a “spirited complaint” to federal inspectors. They charged that the Chippewa endangered their lives by nearly crowding the Kitsap onto the rocks while trying to push ahead of her in Deception Pass.

In May, the rate war ended. The INC agreed to take its boats off the Seattle-Poulsbo run and the KNC withdrew the Kitsap from the Bellingham-Anacortes-Seattle run. The Chippewa remained on the route but the American regretfully reported that...
The waters around 1910 Anacortes were full of fish and the people who depended on them. Fish traps were set in Deception Pass, off West Beach, and through the islands. Purse seiners, cannery tenders, trap tugs and other fish boats buzzed about.

Although 1910 was expected to be an off-season for salmon runs, two mild-cure plants and five canneries – Porter Fish, Coast Fish, Fidalgo Island Packers, Alaska Packers, and Apex – were operating on Guemes Channel. Lee Wakefield, who in February purchased the controlling interest in Apex, felt confident his two-line cannery would pack a decent batch of sockeye.

Anacortes was a major supplier of seafoods in 1910, providing about one-fourth of the state’s salmon, two-thirds of the shrimp, and one-fifth of the crab. It also produced all of the glue made in Washington.

What does glue have to do with fish? Cannery wastes such as fish heads and skins were converted into glue, oil and fertilizer, mainly by two large plants: the Robinson Fertilizer Factory and the Russia Cement Company.

When W. F. Robinson came to Anacortes in 1897 he built a factory that produced glue from codfish skins. The glue was so superior it won the gold medal award at the 1907 Lewis & Clark exposition.

According to the 6/22/1911 Anacortes American, it was Robinson’s father who figured a way to turn fish wastes into glue. While slurping up a chowder dinner in Gloucester, the senior Robinson upset his bowl. Wiping up, he noticed his fingers stuck together. “I held up my hand to my wife and said, ‘Look at that. I feel certain that glue can be obtained from fish.’” Eventually Robinson developed a glue-making process later brought to Anacortes by his son. (Interestingly, William Le Page, who also lived in Gloucester, made glue from codfish skins in the 1870s, raising a question...did one copy the other’s recipe?)

Ten years after Robinson began manufacturing fish glue here, the Russia Cement Company (started by Le Page in Rockport, Mass) built a processing plant on Guemes Channel. But due to a poor market that year, the company postponed completing its Anacortes plant until 1910 when digestors and a two-story wing were added. That fall, Russia Cement began making LePage’s Glue and produced fertilizer from the dogfish that filled the local waters.

With its fisheries and by-products industries helping to feed and supply the country as well as foreign markets, Anacortes in 1910 more than lived up to its nickname, the “Gloucester of the...
The cultural heart of the community

In 1890, Anacortes book-lovers enjoyed a free reading room at 2nd and O Avenue. But by 1908 it was clear that the growing town needed something more.

Local lumber and shingle men pledged $500 toward a proper library, if the ladies of Anacortes could raise a quick $1000 and the city would provide annually for the library’s maintenance.

Bellingham’s librarian came down to promote the effort at a “large assembly” in the Opera House and the women raised $1044 by the June 8 deadline. Inquiries were made into the Carnegie Library program.

Despite a petition signed by 236 people opposing city funds for library maintenance, the Council in July 1908 voted 6-1 to adopt a Carnegie Library Resolution. The city would provide for the library’s maintenance at $1000 per year, as well as grant $1500 for books.

Carnegie, for his part, would donate $10,000, an amount based on census figures and averaging approximately two dollars per resident.

The day before Christmas 1908, the Anacortes American whooped: “Andrew Carnegie’s Christmas gift is a $10,000 library.”

On September 25, 1909 the Carnegie Library cornerstone was laid. A tin box was set in the stone’s base with a copy of the city charter and other documents.

The Carnegie building was completed in 1910. Throughout that year, a library committee worked diligently to secure book and magazine donations from local residents.

In December, the state librarian arrived to help classify and purchase books. Finally, the library opened on December 26th as a reading room only.

In early March 1911, the library began lending books, and on March 31 it formally opened as the Anacortes Carnegie Library. From that time to more than fifty years later, the Carnegie Library served Anacortes as the cultural heart of the community.
It took wood to cook the food, cradle the children, and carry the people over water. Wood built the homes and schools, the wharves, the churches, the town halls.

In the early years, communities that turned trees into wood products thrived. The large number of mills operating in 1910 Anacortes were evidence of a flourishing town.

In February, the Burpee and Coast mills were running full time. Rodgers Mill, closed for 18 months, blew its whistle again in March, summoning 200 men to work. A few months later, the G. E. Vincent Mill was at full capacity and Anacortes Lumber and Box shipped 450 tons of box shooks to Honolulu.

By mid-year, mills such as McGuire Cedar and Burke had all the work they could handle.

The Fidalgo Mill, shut down for several months for repairs, was getting ready to re-start, and the recently burnt Cavanaugh Mill hoped to be on line by August.

Wisconsin Cedar completed a new mill on the waterfront and planned to start sawing by September. Its request to lease a vacant street as a place for more kilns was approved by a city council “heartily in favor of doing any reasonable thing that will add to the facilities of Anacortes manufacturing plants.”

The majority of Anacortes mills produced shingles. Puget Sound Wood Products, which made turpentine, creosote, tar, fir oil and other items from wood wastes, could turn out 225,000 shingles a day. In 1910 the plant experimented with a new process in which the shingles were dipped in creosote immediately upon leaving the kilns, thoroughly soaking the wood and greatly increasing its longevity. The demand for the new shingles was so strong the company installed two more kilns in September.

The trees that supplied the local mills came largely from upriver Skagit County because, as early as 1905, most of the forests on Fidalgo were gone. In their place stood a community that would be sustained by mill work for nearly nine more decades.

Like any other business, the wood products trade had its challenges. Mill fires were common, and lumber prices bumpy. Even improvements to a mill’s equipment could have a downside for workers, if it meant less labor needed to run the mill. Or less male labor. The West Coast Lumberman growled “that possibly the time is coming when in place of a man sitting at the keyboard manipulating the air lifts, dainty typewriter operators, with ribbons fluttering in the breeze, white kid slippers on the pedals, and flashing eyes, will be dominating the keyboard, and the poor cut-off man will be digging potatoes.”
MUSEUM FINDS A HOME
The town library becomes a museum

In 1958, prompted by the efforts of Wallie Funk and others, Mayor Mustacich appointed a City History Board to ensure that Anacortes remembered its roots.

But it wasn’t until a decade later that local history buffs found a home.

The Carnegie building had become too cramped to serve a growing population and the Library Board began angling for the old hospital site a short distance away.

Seeing an opportunity, the History Board proposed converting the Carnegie Library into a museum.

When the library moved into its new quarters in 1967, the History Board, as well as the Anacortes Arts and Crafts Board, formally petitioned the Council to use the Carnegie building.

In February 1968, the Council designated the Carnegie as a Museum of History and Art. Volunteers started scrubbing, hammering and painting to prepare the building for its new dual purpose. The downstairs floor was shared with the arts festival folk and the History Board began looking for loans of family heirlooms.

The Carnegie building officially opened to the public as a museum on the weekend of August 3-4, 1968. About 500 people showed up to see the inaugural “Heritage Show” exhibit.

Library books and stacks gave way to mannequins in period gowns, Native American artifacts, an antique organ, items belonging to Anacortes’ first dentist, and the complete office equipment of a pioneer doctor.

The Anacortes Women’s Club planned to set up a Victorian parlor, special talks were scheduled, and a “Friends of the Museum” group formed. The Anacortes Museum was on its way.

If Andrew Carnegie could see his building now, a hundred years later, what would he think? The self-made man believed a public library could help a person succeed despite his past history. Perhaps he would agree that a museum offers equal value by helping one to remember and reflect on that history.
Business was brisk along the waterfront in 1910 and Keesling Shipyard was in the middle of it. “I am hiring men right along,” said C.C. Keesling, “and by the end of this month I expect that we shall have 20 or 25 shipwrights at work.”

Keesling was one of the most successful boat designers and builders in the Northwest. In 1910 his shipyard, located at the foot of R Ave where Dakota Creek Industries is today, was filled with boats in various stages of production or overhaul.

The yard launched the Swinomish, a 50-foot purse seiner, in February. In March, work began on a 72-foot boat for the Porter Fish Company and in May, another large fish boat was launched.

If the shipyard was busy year-long, so was the shipping industry. An English tramp steamer bound for Australia took 1,500,000 feet of lumber off the Anacortes Lumber & Box Company dock. The Watson unloaded sugar and carried away veneer, 500 cases of Anacortes Creamery and Fruit Cannery apples, and 8000 cases of salmon from Alaska Packers. The Queen loaded 100 tons of box shooks at the Great Northern dock, and the Buckman took 400 cases of apples off the Curtis dock.

Locals were proud of their booming waterfront and grew miffed at Bellingham for not giving Anacortes its due: “There is not another city on the coast in comparison to size and population that has as large a shipping industry as we have right here in little old Anacortes,” huffed the American. “It is an injustice to us to have larger cities take advantage of our shipping receipts and add them to their own.”

By November 1910 Anacortes’ customs receipts were the third largest in the state but that was small consolation. “No doubt Bellingham will come in as she always does, taking credit for our shipments and adding them to her own list as they are very prone to do that sort of thing…”

The tug Famous came in for repairs as well as several large scows from the Whidbey Island Sand & Gravel Co. In October, Keesling was designing models for two 65-foot boats.
Several teams in Anacortes were cracking the bat in 1910. Most were connected with businesses such as the mills and Anacortes Mercantile.

In June, the Mercantile team joined a lively game between the “Bachelors and the Married Men” to raise cash for the July 4th entertainment fund. The players posed with a paddle reading “The Bachelors have some experience with ‘bawls’ coming.”

Anacortes’ playing field was east of Commercial between 15th and 17th streets where games were sometimes stalled by a rising Fidalgo Bay tide.

Besides baseball, townsfolk enjoyed bowling matches, football, track meets, and a new athletic club that was developing “some famous boxers, wrestlers, aerialists, etc.” Basketball games were played in the Oddfellows Opera House.

The girls’ basketball team practiced hard under boys’ rules, boys’ names (Dick, Jimmie, Freddie, etc) and played “like real wide-awake boys.” They still lost.

July 1910 brought “one of the most unfair decisions” of the baseball season. When Anacortes heavy hitter Joe Chitwood came to bat in the ninth, the score stood 7-4 in favor of Concrete. The game was on Concrete's field and, according to the rules, if the ball went over the fence the batter had to stop on second until it was recovered.

With two men on base, Chitwood hit a fly-ball to just inside the fence, but the ball hit the fielder’s hand and bounced over. The umpire sent Chitwood back to second.

“Warhorse” Robinson followed with a wallop to left field that hit the ground and bounced into the fielder’s mitt. The ump turned to see the fielder throw to the second baseman, who touched the base with Chitwood between second and third. Unaware that the fielder had caught the ball on the bounce, the ump called both Robinson and Chitwood out.

Disgusted with their loss, the team swore that they wouldn’t play Concrete again, without “some assurance of fair play and a new umpire.”
The place was so lovely it was dubbed the “Rhododendron Garden of the Gods.”

Cypress Island's Secret Harbor became “a solid mass” of rhododendrons in May. That was according to Milo Coffelt, interviewed in 1977, who added “There's still lots of them there but nothing like it was”.

In 1909 the flowers were so abundant people clamored to make them the focus of an all-out celebration. In April, Mayor W. V. Wells declared “There seems to be a growing desire on the part of the citizens of this city as well as of the other portions of our county, to have a day set apart when the citizens of Skagit County may all join in the gathering of the rhododendron, and to make the occasion a county basket-picnic day.”

And what an occasion it was. That year nearly 500 picnickers boarded boats to the island, accompanied by “inspiring martial music” and welcomed by hot coffee and flower-filled glades.

Early in the morning of May 14, 1910, Harry Rickaby's launch the Sunny Jim carried the organizing committee to Secret Harbor to set up wash boilers full of free coffee.

On Fidalgo, crowds with basket lunches and 25-cent round-trip fares boarded barges that could haul 200 passengers per trip. One barge transported almost the entire town of Bay View (about 150 folks, band included).

Launches, row boats, sail and steam boats arrived from Orcas, San Juan, Bellingham, Coupeville and Seattle. The Great Northern pulled in loaded with picnickers from the Skagit Valley.

At the end of the day, as boats full of tired folks made their way home, “all that could be seen was a moving mass of pink blossoms” on the water.
Buried treasure. Smugglers. Murder. Those were the tales whispered about a deep tunnel cut into the rock above Deception Pass, portal to a unique time in Fidalgo’s history.

In 1910, convicts from the Walla Walla penitentiary worked at a state-owned quarry on the Fidalgo side of Deception Pass, gutting the steep cliff to build roads. Preparations began at the site in 1909, with machinery as heavy as a six-ton rock crusher hoisted 200 feet up the cliffside.

The tunnel was located behind the crusher house and burrowed deep into the cliff toward a future quarry site. Most of the rock was taken from the side of the cliff and carried by tramcar into the crusher, which could pulverize sixty tons of rock per hour. It was then shunted down gravity chutes to a screen house and bunkers at the water’s edge, where much of it was barged to the Seattle and Tacoma area.

A power house generated electricity with water pumped in from Pass Lake.

But what fired the imaginations of the kids who roamed Bowman’s Hill was the men who worked there.

In 1909, a law was passed to allow prison labor to help build the state’s roads. Funds were allotted for both rock-crushing plants and convict quarters in different parts of the state.

The Deception Pass location seemed ideal. The Jan. 27, 1910 Anacortes American reported: “Should a prisoner escape, it is only necessary to watch the bridges heading off Fidalgo Island.”

Islanders must have felt safe enough, for the paper recorded no protests about the prison labor. In fact, the ladies of the Anacortes and Mt. Vernon W.C.T.U.s threw a party for the convicts that Christmas.

But it wasn’t all tea & roses. In March 1910, there was a strike and the offenders were returned to Walla Walla. And despite the American’s assurances, there were several escapes.

By 1914 the quarry was largely abandoned. In 1922, it became part of Deception Pass Park and in 1924, the buildings were dismantled.

But the allure remained, drawing the curious to the cliff. In 2007, after a teenager fell to his death near the tunnel, park personnel sealed it with a gate. Now only bats know the secrets of the tunnel.
In 1910, Anacortes was matched evenly between saloons and churches (nine each).

The churches were intent on keeping a strong offensive and ministers regularly reported sermon highlights and church attendance in the local newspaper. But the news that really fired up the faithful in 1910 was T. H. Osborn's visit to Anacortes.

A drummer evangelist from Chicago, Osborn was being favorably compared to his contemporary, evangelist Billy Sunday. If Billy boils them, it was said, Osborn roasts them.

According to one who’d fallen under his spell, the preacher was at times “a soft southern zephyr, the next instance a melting chinook, and then a cyclone in power and vehemence.”

To host this force of nature, Anacortes built a wooden tabernacle 90-feet wide by 100-feet long at the corner of 5th and Q Ave. Volunteers set up the building in barn-raising fashion in less than two weeks.

A large and enthusiastic crowd greeted the preacher on May 22, then settled in for a month of revival meetings. A 50-voice choir thundered from the stage and “hundreds were on the anxious seat” as Osborn called them to account.

At the close, Osborn won at least 400 souls in Anacortes. The city showered him with roses and the preacher headed off to save Edmonds.

The tabernacle was put up for sale and by year's end, the building that had rocked with the sounds of salvation was turned into a hitching shed for farmers.

Still, 1910 saw a new church at Summit Park, a cornerstone laid for the Norwegian Lutheran Church, and plans made for a new Salvation Army church.

The saloons may have been full but the faithful were holding their own.
pushed for suffrage and warned about the
dangers of drinking.

1910 promised to be the year Washington women
would join their voting sisters in Wyoming, Utah,
Colorado and Idaho. As for turning Anacortes
dry, with nine saloons in town, that would be an
uphill battle.

Anacortes was aflutter with talk of Carrie Nation
descending with her hatchet. “Noted saloon
smasher will hit town with the comet” cried the
Anacortes American. But excitement gave way to
disappointment when a sick relative kept the
crusader home.

Undaunted, dry-town campaigners soldiered on.
In the 3/17 Anacortes American, a member of the
Women’s Christian Temperance Union prodded
drinkers to provide boys for the hungry maw of
the saloon. Noting that one family out of every
five needed to contribute its quota, she scolded:
“Are you selfishly voting to keep the saloon open
to grind up boys and then doing nothing to keep
up the supply?”

After losing a special election in August, the
“drys” rounded up enough names to put the issue
to a vote in the November general election. They
lost again, but not by much. Anacortes stayed wet
by a mere five votes.

In that same election, Washington became the
fifth state in the Union to grant women suffrage.
The amendment to the state constitution passed
by over 22,000 votes on November 8, with every
county in favor.

A week later, droves of women descended on the
clerk’s office to register for the city election of
December 6. Two more clerks had to be brought
in to handle a crush that kept them busy until
midnight. 320 women registered to vote.

Those who liked their liquor grew alarmed at this
turn of event. Even though the wet-dry issue had been
decided at the November election,
several candidates
for city offices were
running on the so-called “dry” ticket.

Talk ran high that
the dry candidates
would prevail, but
the vote proved
otherwise and only
two were elected to
serve.

On December 22,
the city council
adopted an
ordinance making it a
misdemeanor for any female to frequent saloons
and pool halls.

A few days later, the Equal Suffrage Club called a
meeting for January in the newly-opened Carnegie
Talk of the Town

Bad water and a cool comet...

In May 1910, giddy folks hoping to glimpse Halley’s Comet rose at 3 A.M. to mistake everything from a dock light to lantern-glow for the famous visitor.

But the focus wasn't wholly skyward. Gritty issues such as garbage collection and the town water supply were center stage. One ticked-off citizen singled out “that taffy top of a councilman” who scolded people for dumping garbage in inappropriate spots when the city hadn’t provided any alternative. As it was, the “grand contrivance of a garbage scow” that had cost taxpayers hundreds of dollars was rotting on the beach.

As for the water piped into homes, it was so bad, reported the Anacortes American, that “it requires some fortitude to take a bath in it.” Residents were disgusted, and any thirsty visitors who peered into a glass of water got “a shock that takes a heap of argument to overcome.”

The health officer showed up at a City Council meeting with jars of Cranberry Lake water filled with dead minnows, blood suckers, sticklebacks and more. Though it was dark outside, the demo was enough to send the Council and Mayor scurrying to Cranberry Lake. Equipped with lanterns, they inspected the lake’s filter and intake pipe, which led to a threat of court action if the water company continued to pipe from the lake or any other surface drainage for domestic use.

Eventually, Heart and Whistle Lakes became the source of the domestic water supply and Cranberry was tapped for industrial use.

Locals pushed for a hitching shed downtown for farmers to park their teams (got it) and proposed trading land with the Great Northern for a new high school site (didn’t happen). They urged the highway commissioner to get on with a new road along Fidalgo Bay or turn over state funds and let the county by-god do it. They talked about a bridge over Deception Pass (much too costly) and how to get more people to come to Anacortes (create a descriptive booklet).

Women assured doubting men that oh my yes, they wanted the vote and furthermore, could handle the responsibility. Passionate teetotalers argued with those who insisted no booze equaled no business. The “drys” pushed hard in two elections to purify the town, but in the end the Devil had his day. Anacortes stayed wet. And her citizens as fiery as ever.

From Yerkes Observatory, Wisconsin May 29, 1910

Halley’s Comet is visible every 75 to 76 years and the only naked-eye comet that might appear twice in a human lifetime. In 1910 the comet was due for another visit and Anacortes was on the lookout.
FATHER TREUNET
The first pastor of St. Mary’s Parish

It was February 1910 when Father Treunet came to town. A few months later the Ascomites American reported that the priest was "very pleased with his newly arrived new American motorcycle. The machine is a beauty and the Rev. Father is thoroughly enjoying himself."

As the first pastor of St. Mary’s Parish, Father Treunet guided his flock from 1910 to 1948. Born in France in 1871, Treunet was ordained in 1896, served in Nova Scotia for five years, then came in 1908 to Elma, Washington. After two years there at St. Joseph’s Parish, Treunet landed in Ascomites.

It seems to have been a match made in heaven. For his part, Treunet declared himself "very agreeably surprised" by Ascomites. "As near as one can judge, you have mills and manufactories here greater than those of most cities several times the size of Ascomites.

I like the town and I like the people I have met.”

Ascomites liked him back. The American pronounced Treunet a man of "praying personality and one feels instinctively at the first meeting that he is a churchman of liberal ideas and broad sympathies. Citizens of all creeds and of no creeds will heartily welcome Father Treunet."

The little Catholic church was built in 1904 on the corner of 7th and N and moved to the middle of the block in 1916. It was in poor shape when Treunet arrived. The Father had the church re-plastered and repaired and wasn’t above picking up a paintbrush himself. After WWI, plans were drawn for the basement of a new church and it is an indication of the priest’s popularity that many non-Catholics gave generously.

In 1946, sixty priests, the Bishop, and the Ascomites community joined in celebrating the 50th anniversary of Father Treunet’s ordination. Two years later, the well-loved priest died of cancer.