Description Report

Harbor of Bremerton, Wash.

Registry No. = 2108

1892

J. J. Gilbert
Descriptive Report

Harbor of Eleonore, Wash

1872

Register No. 2108

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Description Report—
Harbor of Laconner, Wash. —
1892. —

This survey was made for the Washington State Tide Land Commission, and under its direction, and for the purpose of complying with the law of the State requiring the establishment of Harbor Lines along the water front of cities, and for a distance of one mile beyond the city limits.

Laconner is a small town on the Swinomish Slough, and it exists because of the Swinomish tide lands. Originally these tide flats, which extend from Kagit Bay to Padilla Bay, with an average width of three or more miles, were subject to overflow, but about 1870, some one experimented by diking, and found the reclaimed land to be marvelously productive. The Swinomish Flats were soon taken up and reclaimed, and Laconner was built. It being the point most suitable for wharves, the town was laid out by Mr. Connor, and was named for his wife, Mrs. B. A. Connor. It is built largely on a rocky hill, which was an islet before the flats about it filled and became Marsh.
And when Padilla Bay and Stugit Bay form one continuous body of water.

During the earlier years, and until the boom times, the Swinomish slough was the usual route from Seattle to Whatcom. It was necessary to run the slough where the tide was in, and the channels into it, from each end, were narrow, shallow, and crooked.

The entrance from Stugit Bay, or as more familiarly known, Possession Sound, is through a narrow channel to the west of the rocky island at the mouth of the Swinomish. This entrance is known by all steamboat men as “the hole in the wall.” The entrance is very narrow, and the shores are rocky.

There is no channel through the broad opening to the east of the island, but there is water enough all over the flats at high tide for light draught craft. After passing through the “hole in the wall” the left-hand shore is a low bluff—opposite the town of Deception it becomes rocky and high, with a flat in front on which is an Indian village. All the land west of the slough is Indian reservation. The port at the mouth of the unnamed slough, east of the Swinomish, is high, rocky, sheer-like, surrounded by marsh.
Through the Scruminish Slough the border is made and a high dike extends the whole distance. Sometimes close to the slough, sometimes a short-distance back.

The fertility of the diked land is wonderful, producing 150 bushels or more, of oats, to the acre, and for many years the tonnage of the shipments from Lacoumer exceeded that of any other port on the Sound, excepting the Milling ports.

The population of Lacoumer is small, only a few hundreds, and its business is the shipment of grain, and supplying merchandise to the farmers. There were one or two small hotels and two or three large stores, besides several small shops, in 1892.

Since 1892, the Government, through the U.S. Engineers, has improved the entrance to Lacoumer by dredging a channel across the flats in Possession Sound, and another inside the "Hole in the Wall." I have not seen these improvements and cannot describe them more definitely.

The Slough in 1892 seemed to me to have been shoaling. For at extreme low tides I found there was not enough water to float a row-boat, drawing but one foot, only a short-
distance across the town. At the wharves, however, the water was quite deep.

Le Comer has passed its zenith, and will continue to be a small country town.

Doubtless much of the grain, already, finds its way to market over the rail roads.

J. J. Gilbert
Ass't Capt. G. S. Fanny