

ANACORTES ROTARY HISTORY

Chapter 2 – Anacortes in 1922



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The Charter for the Anacortes Rotary Club was signed on December 22, 1922. The 17 charter members were already established in the City, some for several years. This was a group of respected community leaders, all committed to Rotary's mission.

The November 30, 1922 edition of the Anacortes American (AA) proclaimed, "Rotary represents simply the idea of service, the chief pledge of members being to see that they shall consider 'Service Above Self,' and that by their example, and their work for the community, their business or profession, and toward individuals they shall give practical demonstration of the fact that 'He profits most who serves best.'"

So, what was life like in Anacortes in 1922? In many ways, life in Anacortes was similar to life in many small American cities, all faced with turbulent national social, cultural, economic, and health challenges. Interestingly, however, Anacortes found itself rising in stature in some ways that may not have been expected.

A couple of cases in point plus additional items of interest:

- In the August 10, 1922 edition of the AA was an article titled, "Industrial Anacortes The Payroll Town of the Pacific Northwest." "In proportion to population, Anacortes has the biggest payroll of any city in the Pacific Northwest, the payroll of this city of 5,000 people being more than \$173,000 monthly."
- The November 16, 1922 AA carried an article titled, "Anacortes is now Greatest Log Distributing Point in America." Stunning. The Chamber of Commerce was duly notified.

- In 1922 a new Ford Runabout (with starter and demountable rims) could be had for \$364. A fancy pair of Stapp Brothers shoes for \$7.50. A gallon of gas for 11 cents. From JC Penney's, the "Go Getter" men's hat for \$2.98. A 20 inch Mascot wood heater for \$18.50.
- The May 4, 1922 AA's front page tells the story of the awful attempted armed attack on a respected lawyer and judge on seventh street, close to today's City Hall. This story's unexpected twists and turns are worth exploring. More to come.
- Roaming cows and earwigs topped the list of local pests.
- The March 16, 1922 AA headline says of Anacortes, that it is "The Clean Town that Cleans Up on the Tourist Crop."
- Beginning in 1918, Anacortes physician, H. E. Frost, offered a simple treatment for Spanish Influenza as promoted by the New York Medical Journal "Put a tablespoon full of spirits of turpentine in a pint of water and keep the mixture boiling on the stove."
- July, 1922 was the second driest month in Washington State history. The July 7, 1922 AA carried an article about forest fires. "While there are destructive forest fires raging in every county west of the Cascades, there are none on Fidalgo Island," no doubt, in part, because of the protection offered by the Swinomish Slough.

1922 sits amid multiple episodes of great catastrophe and stunning expansion. Just four years earlier, WWI had destroyed the lives of 16M people, causing economic and political instability for years. Just two years earlier, Spanish Influenza had ravaged the world, infecting 500M people, killing 20M-50M, with the peak mortality age being 28. Just two years earlier, the era of Prohibition began in the US. The Roaring 20s, known for lifestyle changes and booming economic growth was underway in grand style. Just seven years later, the Great

Depression took much of that away. Life in Anacortes was certainly touched by all of those forces, although probably somewhat sheltered by its location.

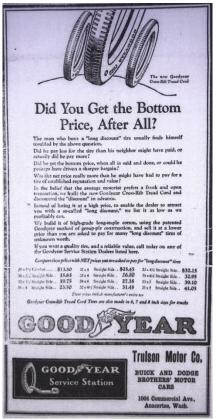
Anacortes in 1922 can be quantified in several categories:

The Cost of Living – Across the country, the average cost for a new house was about \$7,000, average annual income was about \$2,000, and a postage stamp was 2 cents. Sugar was 7 cents per pound, coffee 15 cents, bacon 17 cents, and a loaf of bread was 9 cents.

More specifically, in Anacortes, advertisements in the AA provide a good look at the cost of goods and services.







(AA - February 23, 1922)

(AA - 1922)

(AA - July 13, 1922)

As happens from time to time, even today, retail establishments go out of business for a variety of reasons. The story of one of those businesses, the J. C. Leadbetter Jeweler store (of Leadbetter Clock fame), was one example. An advertisement in the AA in May, 1922 speaks of a "Going Away Sale." "I am

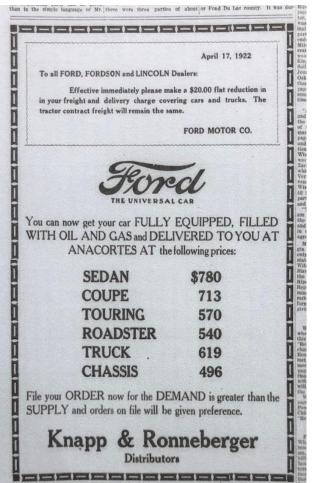
quitting business in Anacortes and leaving the City." Through the end of December, ads regularly appeared, perhaps indicating a different owner.



More advertisements demonstrate 1922 product descriptions and/or prices.



(AA – October 26, 1922)



(AA - April 27, 1922)



(AA – December 7, 1922)



(AA - August 3, 1922)

<u>Public Health</u> — Although Spanish Influenza lasted from February, 1918 through April, 2020, other influenza strains continued to harass the world's population, including that of Anacortes. In 1918, Anacortes physician, Dr. Frost, as mentioned, encourage residents to boil turpentine in water to help battle Spanish Influenza, and also urged citizens "to wear masks, to keep them clean and disinfected, to refrain from spitting, and as much as possible to remain at home and avoid crowds." A February 9, 1922 AA article titled, "Epidemic Of Flu Declared," informed residents that the Red Cross was instructed to "take cognizance and give assistance."

As is the case today, Washington State and its counties kept meticulous records regarding various diseases' case and death statistics, including Diphtheria, Scarlet Fever, Measles, German Measles, Whooping Cough, Small Pox, Tuberculosis, Chicken Pox, Mumps, and Polio.

Life expectancy in the US in 1922 was 54.1 years.

<u>Crime and Punishment</u> – In addition to typical categories of crime in Anacortes, a new, unique, controversial, and well-intentioned but counter-productive category became a regular newsmaker from 1920 to 1933, the "prohibition" years. Headlines including the words, "Booze Runners" became common fare.

The November 30, 1922 edition of the AA tells the story of a booze runner tangling with pirates. It didn't end well ... for the booze runner. The schooner, *Daisy*, traveling from Vancouver with booze worth \$50,000 was captured near Active Pass. "The crew of the schooner were held up and the owner of the liquor who had the schooner chartered, was beaten up, bundled into the speed boat and given the choice to be landed at Turn Point, Stuart Island, or thrown overboard." Stuart Island, it was.

October 26, 1922's AA carried the headline, "Police Seize Wedding Wine." The perpetrator, Charles Premosig paid a heavy fine. "Chief of Police Fleming raided the Premosig home at Tenth and N avenue the evening before and trucked to the police station some three 50-gallon barrels, three 30-gallon barrels and a flock of

five-gallon kegs, jars and bottles of wine," all of which were, according to Mr. Premosig, intended for his family's consumption at the wedding of his brother.

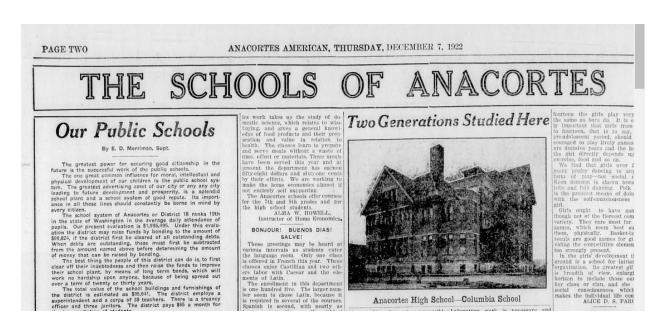
As already mentioned, the AA's May 4, 1922 edition carried a disturbing front page crime story with disturbing details, and an even more disturbing outcome.

Respected attorney, former Skagit County Prosecutor and former Skagit County and San Juan County Superior Court Judge, George Joiner, was confronted on 7th Street, close by his 6th Street office, by a man with a purpose, and a gun. F. W. Dost fired his 25 caliber Colt revolver at point blank range ... and missed. Before he could fire again, he was tackled and subdued.

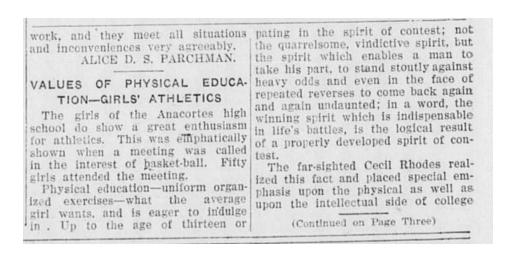
It turns out that Judge Joiner had ruled on two occasions in favor of Mr. Dost's wife during tumultuous divorce proceedings. That was enough to set the stage for Mr. Dost's attempt to take the life of Judge Joiner. It took about seven months for the case to make its way through the legal system. According to the December 14, 1922 edition of the AA, "Monday F. W. Dost pleaded guilty of assault in the second degree upon Judge George A. Joiner, on May 4 last, and was sentenced by Judge Alston, of Snohomish superior court, to serve not more than 14 months and not less than one year in the penitentiary, the sentences being suspended upon Dost agreeing to go to California at once." Mr. Dost complied immediately.



<u>Education</u> – Pages 2 and 3 of the December 7, 1922 edition of the AA are devoted entirely, with a sprinkling of advertisements, to the entire school system in Anacortes. Seldom could one find such a comprehensive description of each school, each field of study, school finances, sports, and recommendations from community members, including three, who in 15 days would become charter members of the Anacortes Rotary Club.



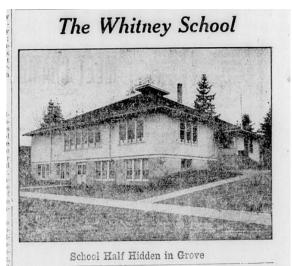
The Columbia School had three components including Anacortes High School (210 students and 11 teachers, who taught courses such as English, History, Mathematics, Home Economics, Languages (Castilian (Spanish), Latin, and French), Manual Training, Commercial, Science, and Athletics for both boys and girls).

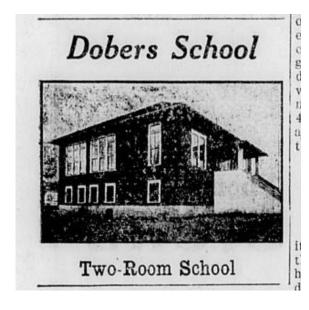


In addition, the Columbia School provided for 116 "departmental pupils," and about 75 students in grades 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Nelson School (grades 1-8) had about 300 students. Whitney School (grades 1-6) had 280 students. Dobers School (40th & M) (grades 1-6) had 43 students. Cap Sante School (grades 1-4) had 28 students.









<u>Fashion</u> – A taste of 1922 fashion in Anacortes can be viewed in AA advertisements.



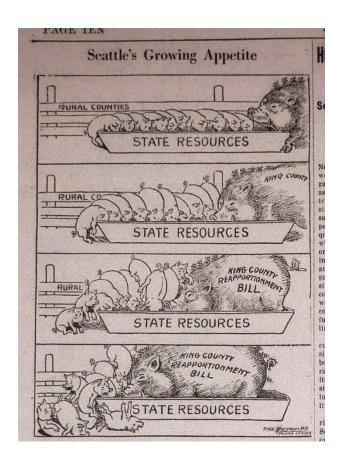








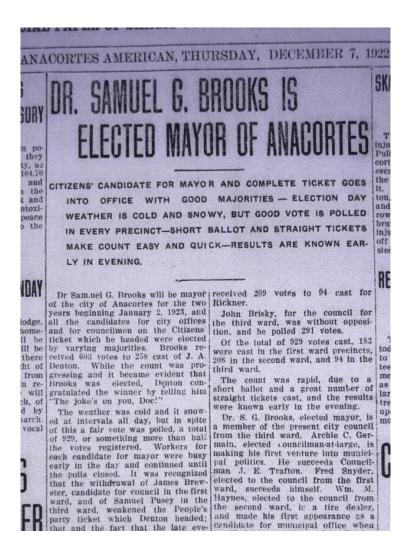
<u>Government & Politics</u> – In the May 18, 1922 AA appeared a political cartoon, probably as applicable today and in 1922, related to increased taxes and the allocation of those taxes between rural and urban areas.



The September 14, 1922 edition of the AA reports the passage of Anacortes' 1923 Budget - \$48,000.

City Budget for Passed l	r 1923 as by City Cou	ncil	
Estimate of amounts required to meet the public expense for the year 1923. For the City of Anacortes, as is provided for in Chapter 138 of the Session Laws of 1909. Notice is hereby given that the city council of the City of Anacortes did on the 5th day of September, 1922, meet in regular session and did at said session estimate the probable expenses of the City of Anacortes, Skagit County, Washington, for the year 1923, to be the amounts as shown in the itemized statements as printed below; also an estimate of the probable receipts from the sources of revenue other than from direct taxation; and the amounts proposed to be raised by direct taxation of real and personal property within the	Fire Department Police Streets Publishing Health Sewers Lights Elections Library Parks Road and Bridge Retiring '14-'15 C. E. Wts Acquiring Lowlands Contingent RECEIPTS Direct taxation, 15 mills on valuation of \$1.963.871.00, 3	900,00 9,819,36 1,767,48 7,266,92 48,289,02	

Skagit County was home to numerous political parties, including Republican, Democrat, Farmer-Labor, Socialist Labor, Workers Party. Anacortes added at least one more – the Citizens' Party, headlined by successful candidate for Mayor, Samuel Brooks.

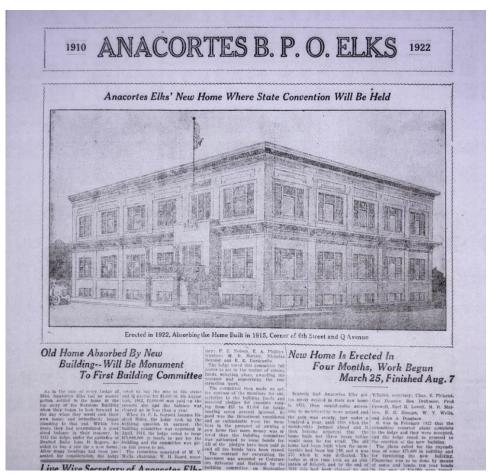


<u>The Elks Club</u> – While 1922 is of great importance to Anacortes Rotarians because of the 17 community leaders whose Rotary club was chartered on December 22, 1922, the star civic organization of 1922 was clearly the Elks Lodge. Founded in 1910, the organization bought property at 6th and Q (currently the home of City Hall), and in 1915 constructed a large two story lodge. In 1922, because of continued growth, the Elks absorbed the 1915 building, adding a third floor. In 1922, the lodge's membership was 1260, at a time when the total population of

Anacortes was close to 5300. Four future charter Rotarians, Ben Driftmier, Gus Hensler, E. E. Haugan, and John Douglass, were members of the building committee. Elks members contributed and 7% bonds were available to the public.



(1915 Elks Building (Anacortes Museum))



(1922 Elks Building (AA))

The August 10, 1922 edition of the AA was an astonishing 28 pages long, and the story of the Anacortes Elks Lodge dominated many pages. Advertisers included verbiage about the Elks in most ads.



<u>Anacortes – Sidney Ferry</u> – Ferry service between Anacortes and Sidney, B.C. began in 1922 and would celebrate its Centennial in 2022, along with Anacortes Rotary. The international service began successfully and chaotically. Several boats of various sizes, with various destinations, served in the early years.



(The Harvester-King (8-10 autos))

<u>Deception Pass State Park</u> – 1922 also saw the official dedication of this park in July.





Miscellaneous Happenings in 1922

As mentioned, Anacortes was known at the "Payroll Town of the Pacific Northwest."

As mentioned, Anacortes became the greatest log distributor in America.

The fishing industry continued to be a national leader in production.



Women salmon cannery workers, Apex Fish Company, Anacortes, August 17, 1913 Photo by Asahel Curtis, Courtesy Washington

Photo by Asahel Curtis, Courtesy Washingtor State Historical Society (1943.42.27677)



n October 14, 1891, the schooner *Lizzie Colby* lands the first load of Bering Sea cod at the Anacortes wharf of J. W. Matheson's newly constructed cod fish curing plant. This ushers in a new industry for the Skagit County city, in which fish will not only be caught but also processed or canned. Fish processing in Anacortes begins with cod and diversifies, with salmon canning growing into the largest production. By 1922, twelve canneries and curing plants will stand along Guemes Channel, bringing in millions of dollars of profits and wages to the city. The industry will face dramatic changes, but three large Anacortes seafood plants will continue the tradition in the twenty-first century.

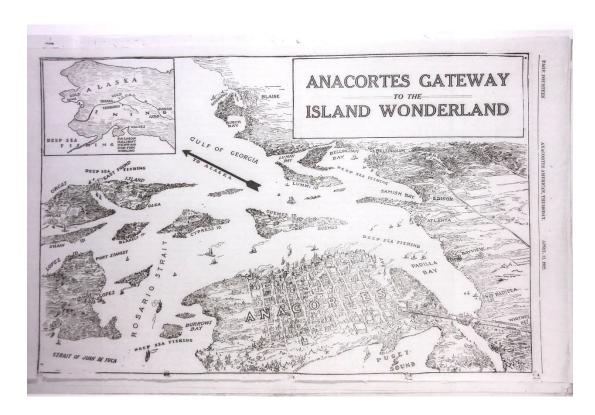
Captain Matheson Arrives

J. W. Matheson, who hailed from Massachusetts, arrived on Puget Sound eager to find a base for his schooner *Lizzie Colby*, which would soon be employed in the cod fisheries off the coast of Alaska. At this point San Francisco, whose ships made yearly trips up to the rich northern waters, was the only cod fishing center on the West Coast of the United States. Matheson anticipated that a base on the Sound would have a competitive advantage over the San Francisco fishermen. He chose Anacortes and quickly ingratiated himself with the townspeople by praising the town's potential and mocking the Seattle interests whose paper had assumed that he would base his operations there.

Milling operations dominated the Fidalgo Bay waterfront.



Tourism was big business.



Anacortes' population of about 5300 was larger than Mt Vernon's, which was 3300.

Some wooden sidewalks still remained on Commercial Avenue.

The "Cap Sante Waterway" was still in the planning stages. Future charter Rotarians, Gus Hensler, Douglass Allmond, and Wally Funk were involved in the planning.

The Women's Improvement Club helped raise funds to purchase the Green Point property for Washington Park.

105 orphans from the Near East and Armenia were allocated to Skagit County, with several headed to Anacortes.

On the world scene, 1922 provided memorable items:

The Eskimo Pie was patented.

Reader's Digest was first published.

The first successful Technicolor movie was shown.

King Tut's tomb was found in Egypt.

Toronto General Hospital was the first to inject insulin for diabetes. Births in 1922 include Betty White, Charles Schulz, Judy Garland, and Eva Gardner.

Anacortes Rotary was born during the year 1922, a year of hope, challenge, change, and growth. From that year to this, Anacortes Rotarians have succeeded in keeping focused on the mission – "Service Above Self."