

# THE CONCRETE HERALD

Formerly the Hamilton Herald Established Nov. 23, 1901. Oldest Paper in the Upper Skagit.

June 21, 1951

## CONCRETE HERALD ANNIVERSARY EDITION

### Rockport Began It's Career As Stopping Place for Tourists

The City Light throngs that made Rockport into quite a busy little community a few years ago was not the first time the town was a resort for tourists. In fact that is why it became a town. In 1892 Al Von Presentin opened a hotel and general store there for the travelers up and down the river. With the coming of the Seattle & Northern Railway he built the big hotel that still stands as the principle landmark of the town.

This modern stopping place was built in May 1901 at the enormous cost of \$4,500. Built on a solid foundation of rock, the building had 21 rooms, hot and cold water, a dining room, and a bar, all offering real comfort to the miners and tourists who visited the upper valley.

The town of Rockport did not take form until two or three years later and residents had to go to Sauk for their mail. In 1906 Rockport had quite a main street with the general store and hotel, Charles Cornforth's café, Horace Clalborn's saloon, Wm. Parry's livery stable, a boarding house operated by A. Young, the Hawkeye Shingle Co. and the Rockport Shingle Co. a school, a depot with telegraph and express office.

Rockport suffered the usual fires over the years which took a toll of most of the old buildings. The hotel, however, survived to be operated by the storied Hugo Bauman for many years. Later owners have been Nell

McLeod and the present proprietors Gurney and Tal Stafford.

Rockport had a brief but exciting gold rush in May of 1922 when rich gold-bearing ore was discovered along the City Light right-of-way a few miles above that community by a couple of former Alaskan miners who became interested in some of the rock blasted out for the railroad. Everyone in the upper valley dropped their usual jobs and headed for the gold field, which was on lands owned by Abb Clark of Rockport.

Hundreds of claims were staked by hopeful millionaires. The rush faded quickly when gold traces proved too few and far between.

Rockport's biggest and longest lasting boom came when City Light at Newhalem began their "tours" in 1928. During the years that followed thousands of visitors came to Rockport to take the train for Newhalem, where they were housed, fed and entertained in a well-conducted and economical tour of the Diablo dam and powerhouse.

When it became necessary to use the quarters at Newhalem for workmen on Ross dam and other projects, the tours were discontinued. It is expected that they will be resumed sometime in the future, but now the highway extends all the way to Newhalem and tours will likely start there.