



**SUMMARY OF
A BRIEF CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF SKAGIT COUNTY
BY HERMAN CARROLL ANDERSON
Courtesy of the Skagit County Historical Society**

1774 -1778 Captain James Cook of England explored the Northwest Coast.

1803 Territory west of the Rocky Mountains, not part of the Louisiana Purchase, was vaguely claimed by Spain, Russia, England and later by the United States.

1812-1815 Second war with England. Treaty at end of war called for joint occupancy of the Northwest Territory from 1818 to 1827. Controversy continued until final settlement in 1827 which stipulated the present 49th degree boundary.

1848 The Northwest Territory, from the 42nd to the 49th parallel, became by name The Oregon Territory, including present-day Washington and Oregon.

1853 Oregon Territory was divided. North of the Columbia River became Washington Territory.

1855 Ebey, Beam, and Crockett families attempted to settle on the Skagit North Fork, but were driven off by Indians.

1859 William Munks settled on present-day March's Point.

1863 Arrival of Samuel Calhoun and Michael Sullivan as the first settlers in the vast Skagit Flats area. Pleasant Ridge and Bay View Hill were islands in a vast delta of mud flats, with sloughs, cattails and underbrush stretching from Conway Hill to La Conner, north to Edison and Blanchard and south to old Milltown. Areas east contained a wonderful growth of evergreen timber. With the building of dikes, the fertile Skagit Flats began to be settled with Calhoun and Sullivan leading with the first farms.

1867 Trading Post started by Alonzo Low in La Conner.

1869 John S. Conner purchased the Trading Post on the Swinomish Channel and named it in honor of his wife, Louisa Ann Conner. Skagit City founded.

1870 Jasper Gates and Joseph Dwelley homesteaded in the Mount Vernon area and started the first store.

1873 James and George Gaches started store in La Conner and the *Puget Sound Mail* (the oldest newspaper in the state) moved from Bellingham by James Power and started in La Conner.

1876 C.H. Mann opened store at Mann's Landing—later renamed Fir. Edison gets its first post office. Amos Bowman arrived in Anacortes area.

1877 Name of "Anacortes" derived from Amos Bowman's wife's name Anna Curtis Bowman. Clothier and English started first store in Mount Vernon. Charles Von Pressentin settled in Birdsvew.

1878 B.D. Minkler builds mill near Birdsvew. Joseph Hart and David Batey were the first settlers in Sedro Woolley area. After two years of work, the big log jam above the forks of the Skagit was cleared, thus opening the river to boat traffic.

1880 Heavy snowfall—30 inches in Mount Vernon.

1882 Regular boat service to Anacortes established on runs between Seattle and Bellingham.

1883 Avon became main shipping point for upper Skagit area. Skagit County separated from Whatcom County on November 28, 1883 with La Conner as the first county seat.

1884 County voters select Mount Vernon as the permanent county seat and elect as first commissioners Isaac Dunlap, John Eden and Harrison Clothier. River frozen over during very cold winter. Bay View one of the largest logging operations in the state. County population 2,816.

1885 Mortimer Cook opened a general store in Sedro. The town was first called "Bug" for uniqueness, then Sedro—Spanish for cedar.

1889 Washington, Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota became states. County population 6111 with 4408 males and 1703 females.

1890 La Conner and Mount Vernon incorporated. *Anacortes American* newspaper started. Indian smallpox epidemic. P.A. Woolley platted town site of Woolley northwest of Sedro. McMurray and Clear Lake started and grew with the coming of the railroads.

1891 Pioneer Association formed. Burlington platted and a post office established. Anacortes incorporated. Whitney station was built and became the hub of the northern portion of the Swinomish Flats. Big fire in center of Mount Vernon.

1892 Bridges across the Swinomish Channel at La Conner and across the Skagit River at Mount Vernon. Hamilton incorporated. Serious floods in late fall.

1893 Three years of economic depression begins. New courthouse built in Mount Vernon.

1897 Ed Pelton, a Socialist leader, started the "Equality Colony" on 500 acres east of Edison-Blanchard. Many County residents joined the mad rush to the Klondike goldfields in Alaska.

1898 Sedro and Woolley officially united. Volunteers off to the Spanish-American War.

1900 Logging operations, salmon canning and fishing industries as well as gains in milk production and farming lead to growth and prosperity. County population 14,272.

1902 Burlington incorporated and began fast growth.

1903 Great Northern railroad bridge between Mount Vernon and Burlington went down with large freight train.

1905 Concrete town site platted. Mount Vernon Telephone Company formed.

1907 County poorhouse opened. Women's Suffrage Association formed.

1913 First Riverside bridge built. On March 1 the county had 192 registered automobiles.

1915 Chuckanut road opened October 23.

1916 County-wide Prohibition in effect. Three feet of snow in January.

1918 Extensive flooding causes dikes to break, stopping rail service for several days. Serious influenza epidemic: all schools closed and gatherings barred.

1919 Nash, Buick, Dodge and Studebaker cars, GMC trucks, and Ford tractor introduced. Mount Vernon hospital opened.

1921 Darigold plant in Burlington started operation. Loaf of bread costs 9 cents.

1923 Radio broadcasts started. New Skagit County Courthouse built.

1925 Hamilton business district wiped out by fire. Skagit County leads nation in fertile soil tests. Highway to La Conner paved. 10,000 auto licenses issued in county.

1926 Skagit Valley College started in Mount Vernon high school building.

1930 Big Indian Pow-Wow at La Conner; Indians from Puyallup to Canada in attendance.

1933 Mount Vernon repealed its dry laws in March, followed by county-wide repeal in August.

1934 Deception Pass bridge built.

1936 Flood control plans started. Pioneer monument erected in La Conner.

1939 PUD enlarged to serve Mount Vernon, Burlington and Sedro Woolley.

1942 Japanese gathered and sent to a replacement center in California. Sedro Woolley starts big 4th of July celebration.

1945 World War II ends with Japanese surrender. Skagit County war casualties number 81.

1947 Drive started for a new hospital.

1954 Shell refinery started at March's Point. Riverside annexed to Mount Vernon.

1957 New La Conner bridge completed and new Anacortes highway built. Mount Vernon hospital opens.

1959 Skagit County Historical Society formed.

1960 Skagit County census 50,910

Complete copies of *A Brief Chronological History of Skagit County* are available for sale at the Skagit County Historical Museum Store.