

## VAN ANDA and TEXADA CITY

Originally there were two communities at the location now known as Van Anda. Each village was associated with a mining venture. Texada City was founded by J.J. Palmer in 1897. Palmer was the owner of the Marble Bay Mine. Van Anda was founded in 1899 by Ed Blewett who controlled the Little Billie and the Copper Queen mines.

Para Street was the dividing line between the two communities. Para Street may have been chosen as the dividing line as it gave each town, and consequently each mine owner, a protected bay from which to ship ore. Texada City and the Marble Bay mine used Sturt Bay. The owners of the mines associated with Van Anda used Van Anda Bay.

Lots in both communities sold like “hotcakes”. In 1899 the population of Van Anda was reported to be in excess of 600 people and there were at least a similar number in Texada City. By comparison, the population of Texada Island today is about the same as Texada City and Van Anda together in 1899.

The two communities contained all the amenities one would expect. There were four hotels; the best known being the Marble Bay Hotel overlooking Sturt Bay. There was regular Union Steam Ship service. There were general merchants, at least one doctor, a newspaper, and laundry and bakery businesses. There was a church and an “Opera House”. School was held in a house and later moved to a dedicated building. The community boasts the oldest continually operating public school district in the province.

In 1940 the government re-surveyed the “twin cities”. The two communities were amalgamated into one town called Van Anda in 1943.

Peter Kenny

Texada Island Heritage Society

