

VAN ANDA BOOM TOWN - 1900 (PART 1)

Van Anda's 1900 *Coast Miner* newspaper existed for less than a year. Regrettably, only fragments survive today but the few remaining articles offer a fascinating view of life in the "Boom Town."

The accomplishments of the Van Anda Copper and Gold Company were proudly listed on the front page: a smelter, sawmill, town ("without an empty house"), mine tramway, 450-foot wharf, warehouse, assay office, roads and a print shop.

Large advertisements promoted real estate investment in "the Mining Centre of North America." "Lots \$75 each and upward."

"Over 40 new houses have been built in Van Anda since July [1899] and still they come." The town was touted as the ideal location. "Indigestion and sleeplessness are unknown."

However, an article stated that the population boom created some "drawbacks to perfect happiness" with new buildings being erected before sidewalks could be built to them. Citizens were forced to walk on planks, "groping among stones and stumps" at night as there was no electric lighting.

Rooms at \$2/night could also be obtained at the Texada Hotel which claimed to be "the best equipped on the island."

Newspaper ads reveal that new businesses were opening all over town.

John McConville's Texada Store offered "the best quality of groceries, hardware, clothing, prospecting outfits, boots, shoes, dry goods, etc. All goods delivered promptly." The newspaper commented that his rival, the Van Anda Store, was "doing a larger retail business than most stores ... even in Victoria and Vancouver."

Free delivery of breads, cakes, pies and "all kinds of confectionery" was advertised by White & Tait's Van Anda Home Bakery.

According to the newspaper, the constant "tap-tap of hammers" from Mr Hamilton, the "shoemaker and mender," signalled that "there is nothing like leather." "So hurry up, you with weary soles or gaping uppers."

Mr Neis, the barber, advertised: "Get shaved ... by an expert. Everything new and clean."

Mr G McLeod opened a tailor shop "to supply Texadaites with up-to-date clothing." "We can bespeak a real stylish fit and first class workmanship."



The bustle of the boom town left a good impression on visitors. One visitor wrote: "There is a feeling of business throughout the place." He predicted that Van Anda was destined to become "one of the greatest copper producing centres of the world."

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