

Jean Baptiste LePage (1854 – 1939)

Causland Memorial Park

710 N Avenue

Anacortes, WA

Originally from Québec, Canada, LePage tried farming, university teaching, and surveying/mapmaking in Canada prior to discovering his true calling as a park designer. He came to Anacortes in 1919 with a commission to design this park, after having completed Columbia Gardens in Butte, Montana, an amusement park and gardens. There had already been a park in this Anacortes location; it had been known as the Great Northern Railroad Park in honor of the railroad that owned the land. It was sold to the city of Anacortes in 1903.

The original intent of this two-acre park, which was completed in 1921, was to honor the fifteen World War I veterans from Anacortes and the surrounding San Juan Islands. It is named for Harry Leon Causland of Guemes Island; the other fourteen veterans who lost their lives in World War I came from Fidalgo, Guemes, Sinclair, Decatur, and Cypress Islands. The park's mandate has expanded over time and it now honors veterans from all United States wars; as such, over the years new components have been added, including a flagpole donated by the Anacortes Kiwanis Club that was dedicated in 1996. Original funding for the park came from the Anacortes District Memorial Association, which formed in 1919 for this purpose, along with donations from the city and private individuals. It was anticipated to cost \$6,000, but the final cost was approximately \$20,000.

Causland Memorial Park is located between M and O streets and Seventh and Eighth streets. Decorative rock and mosaic work adorn most structures and walls within the park, including the undulating exterior perimeter walls as well as a bandstand, amphitheater, and terraces. LePage is said to have placed each rock by hand, setting them into a concrete mortar. He was assisted by volunteers not only in the installation of the rocks but in their collection: primarily white quartz, brown sandstone, and red truffleaceous argillite rocks from the nearby islands.

LePage lived with his wife Bernadette and their two daughters in Anacortes until the park's completion in 1921. The family later moved to Yakima and later to Oakland, California, where he worked at a private college.

Causland Memorial Park was entered on the National Register of Historic Places in 1981. Enhanced with picnic tables, ornamental plantings and terraces and a small grassy lawn, it is visited often by residents and tourists alike, and is the site for many family gatherings, pageants, and municipal activities.

Jo Farb Hernández