



Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site of Canada

HISTORY

Located on the South Arm of the Fraser River in the village of Steveston, the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site of Canada (NHSC) commemorates the history of *Canada's West Coast Fishing Industry*. Steveston, located in the southwest Richmond, was originally a farming community which developed into the most important fishing village on the West Coast of British Columbia. Today, much of the waterfront remains devoted to fishing related activities.

Steveston rose to prominence as a centrally located harbour for the West Coast Fishing Industry in the early 1870s as cannery and port facilities expanded along the Fraser River. Canneries were constructed to exploit the enormous salmon runs in the Fraser River, which through canning could be preserved for sale to emerging European markets. The salmon fishery boomed in the 1890s as companies secured capital to establish major canning and packinghouse facilities. The Gulf of Georgia Cannery was constructed in 1894 as part of this era of growth. Between 1894 and 1979 the Gulf of Georgia Cannery operated as a salmon cannery, a raw fish depot, a net loft and repair facility for the Canadian Fishing Company, a herring cannery, a herring reduction facility.

- 1894 Gulf of Georgia Cannery constructed under ownership of O. Malcolm and C. Windsor to can Pacific salmon. Dubbed the "monster cannery" by the Victoria Colonist newspaper, for being largest cannery building in BC (until 1902).
- 1895 Purchased by Malcolm and Windsor, who added a second canning line.
- 1897 A record year for the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, having canned 2.5 million pounds of salmon!
- 1926 Purchased by the Canadian Fishing Company.
- 1930 Canning operations cease due to the Great Depression, and Cannery used as a net loft for the duration of the Depression
- 1940 Herring Canning begins; small reduction plant included for offal.
- 1948-67 Canning herring ceases and plant's sole focus becomes herring reduction and production of fish meal and oil
- 1972 Plant reopens to process by-products from roe-herring industry
- 1970's Local community initiative started to save the Gulf of Georgia Cannery from demolition, led by the Steveston Historical Society.
- 1976 The Cannery is designated a National Historic Site by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada to commemorate the West Coast Fishing Industry.



- 1979 Reduction plant closes. Cannery is used as a net and gear storage facility by the Canadian Fishing Company.
- 1985 Ownership of Cannery building transferred to Parks Canada
- 1986 Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society is established
- 1987 Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society visitor centre is opened
- 1994 Canning Line exhibits opens to the public on the centennial of the cannery's construction
- 2000 Operations transferred from Parks Canada to the Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society
- 2001 Herring Reduction plant opens to the public