

ABOUT CAMPBELL RIVER

HISTORY



Long before the arrival of the European settlers to the Campbell River area, the Coast Salish First Nations people occupied the shores of the Campbell River, living off the riches of the Salmon and the natural lush surrounding lands. The Salmon was a spiritual symbol to the First Nations people as they also referred to the Salmon as "K'u ta 'la". Today the Salmon is still a cultural and spiritual icon to the First Nations people of the region. The Coast Salish in the early 1800's left their villages and moved further south on Vancouver Island to what is now Comox and Qualicum. Later, the north island Laichwiltach people from the Kwagwiltz First Nations in Alert Bay migrated south into the vacated villages in Campbell River and at Cape Mudge on Quadra Island.

People say in the early 1500's the first European, Sir Francis Drake, arrived just south of Campbell River. Later, the word spread and in 1792 Captain George Vancouver landed on Quadra Island and Captain James Cook explored and landed nearby, in the Nootka Sound in 1778.

Cape Mudge on Quadra Island was named after Captain Vancouver's First Lieutenant, Zachary Mudge serving aboard the H.M.S Discovery. Many of the names of the Campbell River area occurred in the 1860's when a British Captain Richards, aboard the H.M.S. Plumper, was assigned to name and chart the area. The name Campbell River is said to be named after Captain Richards' staff surgeon, Dr. Samuel Campbell. It was not until the 1880's that the first European settlers seriously started to set up shop in the Campbell River area.

As early as 1911 conservation efforts had begun in the surrounding areas. Campbell River was fast becoming a big concern as it grew. The concern fostered into creating Strathcona Provincial Park to protect the environmental forests and wildlife of the area. Strathcona Park was British Columbia's first provincial park, spanning over 600,000 acres (250,000 hectares) and is to this day Vancouver Island's largest park.

The Elk Falls John Hart Dam hydro development project changed the landscape of the Campbell River area in 1948, thus creating what was needed for the community to prosper. In 1952 the Elk Falls Pulp and Paper Mill opened its doors on the point of Discovery Passage. Today it is one of Campbell River's largest employers.

Originally incorporated as a 'Village' in 1947, and later designated as a 'Municipal District', Campbell River received official 'City' status in 2005.



Seymour Narrows is a 5 km (3 mile) section of the Discovery Passage in British Columbia known for strong tidal currents.

Ripple Rock, within Seymour Narrows near Campbell River, was a marine hazard responsible for more than 20 large vessels and at least 100 smaller vessels being damaged or sunk. Before its destruction in 1958, Ripple Rock had claimed at least 114 lives. In 1931 a Marine Commission's findings brought a recommendation to remove Ripple Rock. Work began in November 1955. A camp established on Quadra Island was connected by causeway to Maud Island. An average of 75 men lived at the base camp; three shifts of hard rock miners working around the clock advanced six feet per day on a 570 foot (174 m.) shaft sunk from Maud Island. From the shaft, a 2,500 foot (762 m.) tunnel was driven to the base of Ripple Rock, where it divided into branches for the two pinnacles. From vertical tunnels 300 feet (91 m.) high there extended a series of "coyote" tunnels into which the explosives were placed. 1,400 tons (1,270 tonnes) of Nitramex 2H explosives (10 times the amount needed for a similar explosion above water) were packed into the drilled rock. Every possible effect of the world's largest non-atomic blast to date was carefully considered and precautions made. When Ripple Rock blew at 9:31:02 a.m. on April 5, 1958 the sight was incredible. 700,000 tons (635,028 tonnes) of rock and water erupted in a blast that reached a height of 1,000 feet (305 m.). The spectacle lasted less than 10 seconds before the debris was engulfed in a cloud of gas. Live television coverage, very new at the time, broadcast the event across the country. People in Campbell River saw the blast on the screen, but felt and heard nothing of the explosion only a few miles away. Cushioned by the water, the sound was heard only within a small area, and the tidal effect was slight. No damage was sustained. Careful monitoring by the Fisheries Department found that five orca, a school of porpoises, two sea lions and one fur seal seen near the area before the explosion were all seen again afterward, although understandably somewhat perturbed. As a result of the project, 45 feet (14 metres) of water instead of 9 (3 m.) now clears the south pinnacle at low tide, and 70 feet (21 m.) flows over the north. This mammoth undertaking is still considered a marvel of engineering.



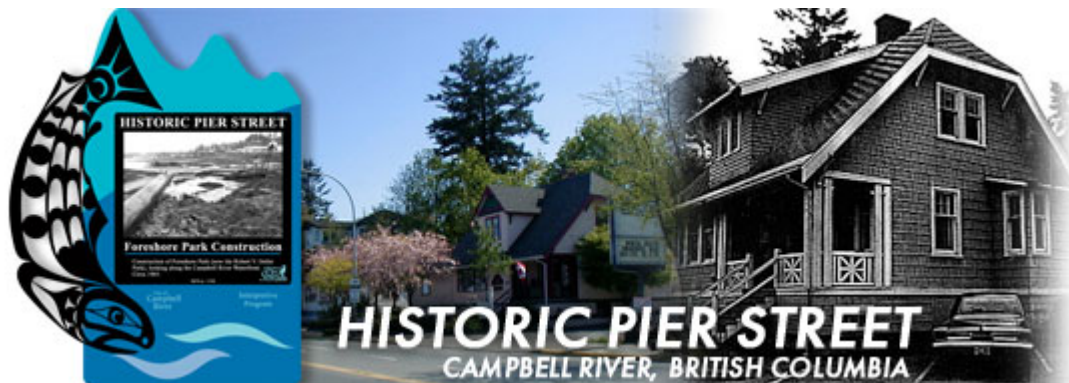


Historic Pier Street extends from the Museum at Campbell River to the tip of Robert V. Ostler Park. It includes such historical locations as the third Willows Hotel, built in 1901 by Frederick and Charles Thulin (now the site of the Bargain Shop), the former Courthouse, Police Station and Jail (later became Pier House B&B) and the Iaci Block (now the Foreshore Building). The first commercial wharf in Campbell River was located along Pier Street and Union Steamships stopped there to load and unload freight and passengers. The first barbershop, the first general store and the first café were also located along this stretch.

Stroll along the street, enjoying the charming ambiance that marine murals, wood carvings, flower barrels and carefully placed bundles of driftwood pilings bring. There are plenty of interesting shops to browse through and many community events are held in Ostler Park, or in other locations along Pier Street.

The Pier Street Farmers Market is held every Sunday from mid April through October in front of the Maritime Heritage Centre. The market has a wide variety of homemade wares, arts and crafts and fresh produce along with an enticing atmosphere, hot food and live music.

Following its motto “Celebrating our roots as we grow our future”, the Pier Street Association showcases the history of Campbell River on location in creating a “Historic Mile”. Campbell River’s history is made visible on more than 20 information panels, each containing a historical photo and a brief history of each place. Visitors receive a handout for a self-guided tour in the Museum, Visitor Centre, hotels and Pier Street stores and restaurants, which describes the historical trail and area.

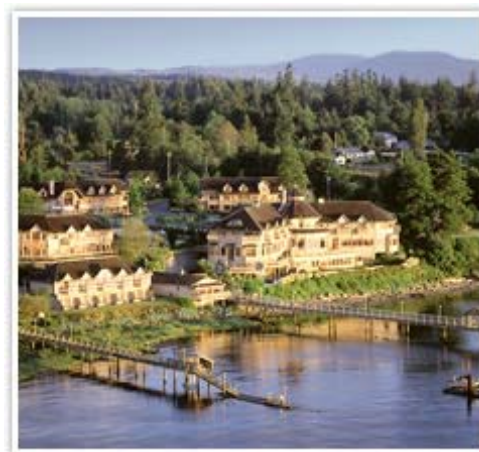


Big Rock is found just south of the 50th parallel along the Sea Walk in Campbell River. The Big Rock is a 10 meter tall glacial erratic. According to native folklore, the rock was originally a grizzly bear that claimed he could jump from the mainland to Vancouver Island. The Great Spirit told the bear he would turn to stone if he touched the water. The bear jumped across the strait and reached the island but, his back paw landed in the water. As warned, the bear turned to stone.



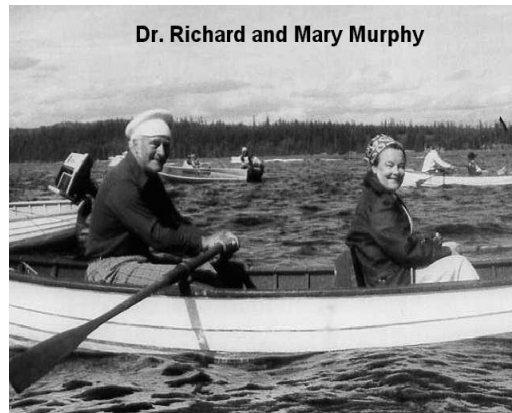
Painter's Lodge is a sport fishing icon. It opened in the 1920s with a few rustic cabins operated by Ned and June Painter on Campbell River Spit. Ned Painter was also associated with the famous Tyee Club and built wooden rowboats that he rented and sold to anglers. In 1938, the Painters moved their operation to the oceanfront where the resort now stands. June Painter worked steadfastly to ensure its success, and after ten years in their new location, the family sold the lodge. Tragically, in 1985, fire destroyed the historic lodge and its irreplaceable memorabilia. Before long though, Painter's Lodge was rebuilt.

Over the years, Painter's, as it is fondly called, has hosted a number of Hollywood celebrities including John Wayne, Bing Crosby and Bob Hope, and many others aspiring to join the legendary Tyee Club.





The Tye Club of British Columbia began in 1924 with a group of anglers who returned to Campbell River each year in pursuit of the elusive "Tye" - a coastal Indian word meaning, "the Chief", a Chinook salmon, 30 pounds or larger. You'll fish quietly in small, classic row boats, as no motors are allowed in the Tye pool. The rower will slip the boat into the currents and eddies of the pool, keeping a basic plug or spoon beating in the current. The angler must stay focused on the action of the lure as it is felt in the hand as much as being seen by the beating of the rod tip. With the slightest change in the beat, the hook must be set, fast and hard. The battle with a Pacific Chinook Salmon is on and anything can happen! If the fish is boated, and weighs 30 pounds or more, the catch is recorded and the angler becomes a member of the Tye Club.



Dr. Richard and Mary Murphy



Willows Hotel



The Willows Hotel, Campbell River, 1912, with Campbell River's first car in front.

A Campbell River landmark during the town's early years, the Willows Hotel served both an international sports fishing clientele and the rough and ready loggers from isolated camps. This permanent exhibit at the Museum shows the Willows' façade and entrance through which visitors step into the hotel lobby as it would have appeared c. 1914, complete with potted palms and ornate wallpaper.



Lobby of the Willows Hotel, Campbell River

The Museum exhibit faithfully re-creates the lobby as shown in this photograph