

INTRODUCTION

"Those who do not read and understand history are doomed to repeat it."
Harry Truman

We are fortunate in British Columbia to have a rich heritage with which to teach our children. The B.C. Packers story is one that incorporates history, culture and economy into the fabric of our province.

Their story, our story, begins in 1902 when the B.C. Packers Association purchased some canneries in Steveston. Prior to 1902 canneries in Steveston were owned by the ABC Canning Company, J.H. Todd and Sons and Marshall English.

As you begin your exploration of this site consider the following three questions:

How would British Columbia be different today had we not have had B.C. Packers?
Why was Steveston the hub of action?
Why is it significant for us to study these people and their experiences?

Before beginning work with the site:

- Introduce students to the features and symbols they will encounter as they navigate through the site by directing them to the classroom set-up section under Learning Resources.
- Provide many opportunities for students to read for a variety of purposes. For example: have them read magazines, newspapers, reference materials and visual images.
- Refer to the Bibliography, Glossary and External Links found in the Learning Resources Section to provide background information to you and your students.
- As you watch the introduction and the loading of the site, observe the map as it focuses in on Steveston. What kind of process is that? Why do you think it was done that way? Think about what it might have been like to live in each of the locations shown. Watch the beginning more than once and have students list all that they see in each frame, then share with one or more students. The main page illustrations come from those three images at the beginning. In a group of 4- 6 students, list what you see in the pictures and why these images might have been selected.

Later on in the study invite students to create their own main page for "In Their Words" using images from this site or other archival sites to highlight images they feel are powerful.

MODULE 1: FISHING AND THE FLEET

"History is the memory of things said and done."

Carl L. Becker

As you read through this section consider the following questions to help guide your information collecting and thoughtful reflection:

- What are the qualities demonstrated by the fisherman associated with B.C. Packers?
- Which form of fishing was the most effective method?
- Why were there so many different nationalities associated with the fishing industry?
- Why is it important to learn about the history of B.C. Packers and their contribution to the economy of our province?
- Who were the most important workers in the cannery?
- How did B.C. Packers help develop the landscape of our province?
- What impact did the eventual closure of the cannery have on coastal B.C.?

Some key names that were connected to the cannery business include; Alexander Ewan, William Watts, Alexander Watson, Henry Doyle, Marshall English and H. Bell-Irving. Find out what influence each of these men had on the development of the canning industry in British Columbia. Write a short paragraph about each and draw or paint a portrait to illustrate it.

After reading about what life was like as a fisherman, make a list of the qualities you think fishermen should have in order to be successful. Write a paragraph or two that delves deeper into the lives of fishermen.

In preparation for reading about fisherman and their role in the life of B.C. Packers have students look through the pictures in this section. Once they are familiar with them, use charcoal, brown pencil crayon or watercolours to create a portrait of what they feel would be a portrait of a fisherman of this era. Display them.

Read through the words of actual fishermen to get a sense of what fishing was like in the early days. With 16 excerpts in this section, assign a student to read aloud their selection and a student to explain the passage in more detail. After listening to these excerpts, have students create short vignettes or skits which bring the information to life.

An outdoor magazine is running a series of articles on the different forms of fishing. Divide the class into 6 groups and assign each a different fishing technique described in this section. Each article should contain an explanation of the type of fishing along with connections to its use on the Fraser River.

Between 1900 and 1960, new technologies were transforming the fishing industry. Use a chart like P-M-I (plus, minus, interesting) for example, to help gather information regarding these changes. Then using that information respond to the following statement:

“The advent of motors on boats led to the demise of the fishery.”

Conduct a debate or panel discussion with representation from both sides of the argument. Support your position with fact.

Design the front page of a newspaper that would have been published during the early years of B.C. Packers. Include such information as new machinery for the canning line, number of salmon caught, introduction of a new group of immigrants to cannery life or an in-depth look at the developing economy in British Columbia. Design a front page using the same topics near the end of the existence of B.C. Packers.

Compare and contrast the fishing techniques used in B.C. in the early 1900s with those in Japan during the same time period. Create a chart or web to illustrate your findings. Today trolling, seining and gillnetting are the three forms of fishing used by commercial fishermen. Find out how each one functions and write a paragraph describing the steps involved. Compare each type and decide which is the most effective. Brainstorm why these three are the only ones still used in our waters. Find out if that is the same for the east coast fishery.

Develop a list of vocabulary that is new to you and put the words in categories or groupings. You will continue to add words to your list from each of the other three sections and create a picture dictionary at the end of the website exploration.

The UBC Digital Library contains several thousand photos from the Fisherman Publishing Society Collection <angel.library.ubc.ca>. Look through some of them and create a drawing of a fishing boat you feel would be typical of ones used during the 1940s in the Fraser River.

MODULE 2: COMPANY AND ITS PEOPLE

“The essential matter of history is not what happened but what people thought or said about it.”
Frederic William Maitland

As you read through this section consider the following questions to help guide your information collecting and thoughtful reflection:

- Why was the coast of British Columbia an ideal location for a series of fish canneries?
- What major Canadian events occurring between 1880-1914 affected the fishing industry?
- How did war impact the workforce of the cannery?
- How do the names of the various canneries live on today? What significance does that have for us?

- What hardships and challenges did immigrants to British Columbia face? Why did they choose to move from their homelands?
- Why were the First Nations so connected to salmon fishing and the cannery?
- What impact did immigration have on the fishing industry and British Columbia at the turn of the 20th century?

The photos on the front page of this section represent a snapshot of the people who worked at B.C. Packers. Look carefully at the photos on this page, then create a caption and/or dialogue for three of the pictures. Using this information as a starting point, search through this section to learn more about these people. Select one group to write about in detail.

Choose one of the ethnic groups who worked at the cannery and gather more information about that group. Using historical data, find out about their immigration procedures, living and working conditions in Canada, number of immigrants from their country who came to Canada and their reasons for wanting to come to Canada.

During World War II, the Japanese Canadians lost everything and were sent away to live in the interior of B.C. Go to one of the several websites listed on the Resources Section of this site to learn more about the internment years. Write journal entries as if you were there with them, describing your thoughts and feelings about the living conditions, physical and emotional treatment and the loss of everything. This was the second time the Japanese Canadians were discriminated against, the first time being in the early 1900s.

Describe the differences between the changing roles of men and women in this industry. Compare them to the current roles of men and women in society today.

The United Fisherman and Allied Workers Union, formed in 1945, is still an active union today. Compare its mandates then and now. Unions are created to protect the rights of the worker. Discuss the challenges facing a new union.

The UBC Digital Library contains photos from the Japanese Canadian Photo Collection <angel.library.ubc.ca> Look through this collection to gain a broader sense of what life was like for Japanese Canadians. Write down your thoughts about the way Japanese Canadians were treated from 1906 to the present day.

Go to the Locker Room and listen to the stories of the seven workers. Create a web or chart which lists the common threads each share. Select one worker you find most interesting and find out more about their life and the impact working in the cannery had on it.

MODULE 3: CANNING AND PROCESSING

“We learn by example and by direct experience because there are real limits to the adequacy of verbal instruction.” Malcolm Gladwell

As you read through this section consider the following questions to help guide your information collecting and thoughtful reflection:

- How is salmon canning today done differently from the way it was in the early years?
- How did the distribution network for canned salmon develop?
- What was the significance of the cannery to the economic development of British Columbia?
- Why did they eventually disappear from the coasts of British Columbia?

Listen to the 1905 transcript by Henry Barker describing the fishing season and write a response to what he said. Select who your audience might be: local politicians, the public or customers of the cannery. Write a letter, create a podcast or audio response to its content.

View the steps it takes to canning salmon, from the unloading off the boat to packing cans in cases. Create a flowchart or web detailing the processes involved and the most important components in each step.

Canneries existed up and down the B.C. coast, not just in Steveston. On a map of British Columbia label the names of major water bodies, canneries, cities and towns the canneries were close to. In small groups discuss why these locations were chosen over other possibilities.

MODULE 4: PRODUCT AND PROMOTION

“Advertising is the greatest art form of the twentieth century.”
Marshall McLuhan

As you read through this section consider the following questions to help guide your information collecting and thoughtful reflection:

- Why is it so important to advertise your product?
- What significance did the variety of canned fish labels have on their sales?
- Why was it called the “Clover Leaf Brand?”
- What led to the expansion of their product line?
- How did they advertise their products and become one of the largest marketers of fish in the world?

Listen to the advertisements for Clover Leaf and Rupert Brand fish products. Analyze their content using The Code of Advertising Standards from The Media Awareness Network www.media-awareness.ca . Discuss your findings as a group. Write a new interactive advertisement that might be on a website or a traditional radio spot. Create a storyboard with your ideas and refer to what you have learned about the product as well as the standards to follow.

Host a food drive where you only collect tins of fish. As the donations come in, use them to build a fish boat or cannery building. Take photos of your work along the way to use in an advertisement for giving to the community. Donate the tins to the local food bank.

Watch the “Silver Harvest” video and write down your impressions of the content in relation to the time it represents. Comment on style of clothing, language used and food preparation. Create a Venn Diagram showing the similarities and differences between the video and today.

Look at the poster that shows all the Clover Leaf canned salmon was sent to England during World War II to feed the soldiers and civilians. Read it carefully and list the different techniques and language it uses to get the message to the public. Create a series of three or four political cartoons that send out the same message as the poster.

Bring in labels from cans of salmon and other canned fish and display them together. Gather current Clover Leaf labels and compare to the ones on the site. What has changed over time, what has stayed the same, what makes it a visually appealing label? Design a Clover Leaf label to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of B.C. Packers.

The packaging for Clover Leaf and Rupert Brand products was always very visually appealing and eye-catching. Discuss why you think this was the case as you look at samples of these products and decide which specific techniques were used.

CONCLUSION

“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new lands, but in seeing with new eyes.”
Marcel Proust

As you end your journey through the B.C. Packers story, discuss the following three questions that you were introduced to you at the beginning of the website:

- How would British Columbia be different today had we not have had B.C. Packers?
- Why was Steveston the hub of action?
- Why is it significant for us to study these people and their experiences?

Share what you have learned with others by creating a portfolio, journal, Keynote or PowerPoint presentation, video or podcast.