



history

Photo: Campbell River Museum – Boats at Quathiaski Cove

A child of the forest and sea.

Campbell River hugs Vancouver Island's mid-east coast, bordered on the west by the snow-capped rugged mountains of central Vancouver Island and on the east by the islands and waterways of the Inside Passage. The river, which gave the settlement its name, flows out of the forest into a channel renowned for spectacular fishing.

*History buffs and the curious will
enjoy our rich history.*

First Nations peoples have lived in this area for at least 8,000 years. The abundant forests and waterways amply provided sources of food, clothing and shelter. In villages connected by their ocean highway, the indigenous peoples developed rich cultural traditions which remain alive, visible and vibrant today.

In the late 1700s, both British and Spanish ships were exploring the complex waterways of the BC coastline.

In 1792 the 'Discovery', under Captain George Vancouver of the British Royal Navy, became the first European vessel to visit what is now called Discovery Passage. The explorers visited a number of native villages in the area. It is believed these were then populated by Salish speaking peoples, but it is possible that the Lekwiltok had already begun their southward expansion into this area. Certainly by the mid-1800s the Lekwiltok controlled the strategic trading position and rich salmon grounds of Discovery Passage from their villages at Campbell River and Cape Mudge.

During the latter half of the 19th century, loggers were attracted to the area's massive stands of timber, settlers began to farm, and sportsmen the world over were lured here by reports of huge salmon and abundant trout. Charles and Fred Thulin, two enterprising brothers from Sweden, built a hotel in the wilderness and the future town of Campbell River was born. Quickly outgrown, the first Willows Hotel was replaced by a grand structure that remained a coastal landmark for half a century. In 1910, a large party headed by BC's Commissioner of Lands stayed at the surprisingly sophisticated accommodation before setting out



Photo: Campbell River Museum

on an exploratory survey of central Vancouver Island. Their expedition resulted in the establishment of BC's first provincial park the following year. Spectacular Strathcona Provincial Park includes the well-known Comox Glacier, the highest peak on the island (the Golden Hinde) and the highest waterfall in Canada (Della Falls).

While Campbell River grew as a service area surrounded by large logging camps, it also played host to increasing numbers of visitors bent on catching mighty Tyee salmon. In 1924, to regulate and protect the sport, the Tyee Club of British Columbia established a set of rules that called for skill and restraint, principles which are continued by the Club to this day.

Sportsman and pioneering conservationist Roderick Haig-Brown (1908-1976) wrote books known the world over from his home on the banks of the Campbell River. Renowned for his eloquence on fly fishing, Haig-Brown was ahead of his time in his concern for the environment and became an active spokesperson for the principles of conservation, particularly regarding rivers and salmon. The family home is now the Haig-Brown Heritage Site dedicated to preserving the author's influence and legacy.



History sites

Photo: Angela Gage - Fotowest

Museum at Campbell River

470 Island Hwy
www.crmuseum.ca
250-287-3103

*For those who
like to relive
the past...*

Haig-Brown House B&B and Heritage Site

2250 Campbell River Rd
www.haig-brown.bc.ca
250-286-6646