

Researcher: David Stevenson

Interviewed: January 22, 1976

FISHERMAN: Bob Smith,
1527 - 53 A Street,
Tsawwassen, Ladner, B. C.

943-7221

- Born on Lulu Island at Steveston Hwy., near the golf course in 1906.
- His father was a fisherman and also worked for Imperial Cannery in the net loft.
- He started fishing in Rivers Inlet 1926 with Wallace Fisheries, as wharfman, then to the Balmoral Cannery on Skeena River in 1933.
- Lots of fish in those days.
- Worked in canneries all over Queen Charlottes, Skeena River, Canadian Fish and B. C. Packers.
- Converted a sailboat on the Skeena into a gillnetter with a Chev engine, came down to Fraser took 16 days from the Skeena River.
- Fished with it for 4 or 5 years.
- Describes the conversion of the sailboat into a gillnetter.
- Returned to cannery work.
- Built another boat at Nelson ship yards, a bigger one---31 ft. at the time of the return of the Japanese.
- Nets these days are more effecient (tape becomes inaudible).
- Catches have become smaller, problem of conservation, not enough fish to catch.
- 12 mile limit is not enough.
- Long hours fishing in the old days, pulling the net by hand until drums were used.
- He stays mostly in the river now.
- Was a Union member from the start.
- Talks of early union organizing difficulties.
- Talks of Japanese internment, too bad they had to lose their nets, gradually they returned to the Coast.
- There was not much discrimination between Indians and Japanese and Whites.
- Housing conditions are described.
- Houses were improved in 1926-27 for Japanese, Indians & Whites.

- Safety measures improved with the union.
- Bookkeepers were the first-aid men.
- American Can replaced the canning by hand.
- There's more independence from the canneries now.
- Fraser River has changed a lot.
- Pollution affects the fingerlings especially dog-salmon.
- Fishing regulations are a help but the fisheries department needs more money for its programs.
- Salmon enhancement programs have been worthwhile.
- Buy-back program has not been successful...too many seiners now.
- Future of fishing is o.k. if there is more money put into it and the 200 Mile limit is enforced.