

**THE  
WEEDA  
NEWSLETTER**



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The Columbia III, by Tim Woodland

## Columbia III Settler's History Tour

Sept. 30 - Oct 6th, 2007

Led by Jeanette Taylor and crew of the Columbia III

The Columbia III, launched in Vancouver in 1956, was one of several ships of the Columbia Coast Mission, founded by Rev. John Antle in 1904 to provide mission and hospital services to isolated residents on BC's remote coast.



For a quick history of the Columbia III and Columbia Coast Mission read:

<http://www.mothershipadventures.com/articles/mariner1.pdf>

Hospitals were opened in Rock Bay north of Campbell River, Alert Bay, Texada Island and the Sunshine Coast; and churches were supported in coastal villages including Alert Bay and Whaletown, on Cortes Island.



For more detailed information read Michael Hadley's "God's Little Ships" or Doris Andersen's "The Columbia Is Coming!"



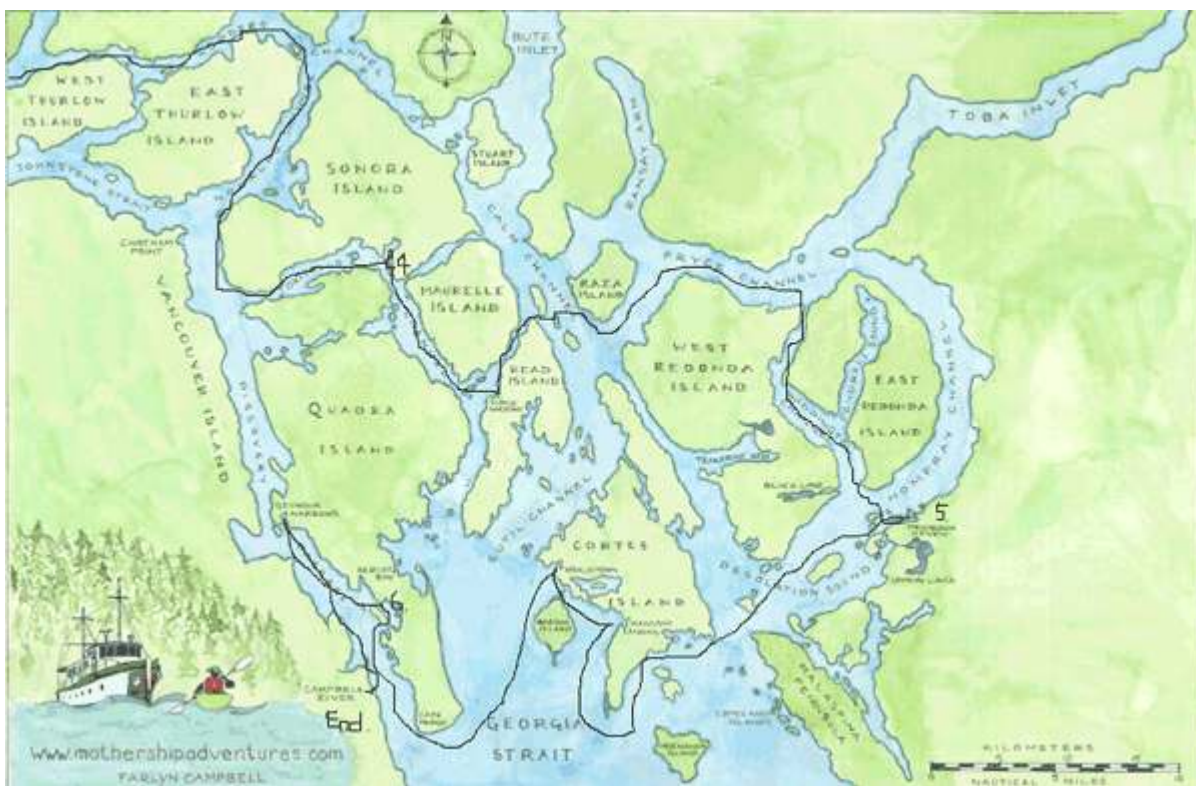
Owner/Capt. Ross Campbell presented with Harry Heine's original cover artwork for "The Columbia Is Coming!"

Coming!" showing injured loggers being rescued by an earlier Columbia.

### Map 1: Days 1 - 3 Port McNeill to Port Neville



### Map 2: Days 4 - 7 Port Neville to Campbell River



#### Day 1

Our trip began from Port McNeill where 9 guests, historian Jeanette Taylor, and crew Ross, Fern, Miray & Farlyn Campbell cast off for Sointula and Alert Bay, our first overnight moorage.



A close look at this stained glass window in Alert Bay's Christ Church reveals the Columbia III.

### Day 2

Day 2 began with rain, Native history, and a tour of the U'mista Cultural Center in Alert Bay, <http://www.umista.ca/> then on through the Broughton Archipelago to Billy Proctor's Museum in Echo Bay.



Billy has been a handlogger and fisher for years on this part of the coast, and more recently has worked with people like Alexandra Morton to understand and preserve the habitat. He joined us on Columbia III for dinner and stories of his life.

Billy's "Heart Of The Raincoast" and "Full Moon, Flood Tide" are excellent local reads.

<http://www.harbourpublishing.com/book.php?id=479>

Finally, a visit to the Simoom Sound Post Office, which was moved to Echo Bay in the 1940s. Current Echo Bay owner & Postmaster are retiring after 20+ years so new faces for 2008. This was the first of 5 coastal Post Offices from which I was able to mail myself a letter. All were picked up by float plane, which has replaced the old Union Steamships/Columbia service.



### Day 3

Day 3 included more rain, Native pictographs on isolated rock walls, more great food, and a visit with Lorna (nee Hansen) Chesluk, 3rd generation Hansen and Postmistress at the Port Neville Post office. Her grandfather opened the first Post Office in 1895. It moved into the new store in 1924, and into its own building in 1960. The 'OPEN' sign greets boaters at the wharf.





En-route we cruised past the Minstrel Island Post Office, which is no longer on Minstrel Island but moved to Chatham Channel. Coastal character 'Bing' (seen here with Fern & Ross) took my letter with his own as he was on his way to the Post Office.



#### Day 4

From Port Neville to Diamond Bay on Sonora Island, with more pictographs, exploring trails and forgotten old fishing & logging equipment, and a sunset!



The day ended with another superb meal and a mystery project: to make our own pictograph rocks to contribute to tomorrow's visit to the Octopus Islands Museum.



### Day 5

Octopus Islands, Surge Narrows, Desolation Sound, Prideaux Haven. We contributed our pictographs to the funky Octopus Islands Museum, took our usual 3 daily trips in the zodiac to hike and explore, including Surge Narrows with its Post Office and School. The school runs 4 longer days per week, to ease daily boat



transportation of students from numerous isolated homes. The Post office is open Mon/Wed/Fri., and on Thursdays the Postmistress becomes the school's art teacher.



Surge Narrows Post Office left of center.

### Day 6

Cortes & Quadra Islands. An 1892 gravestone (didn't fit on yesterday's page) which took a half hour search from a locator ribbon and a stream, the sun! Views of Mount Denman on the mainland north of Powell River, more zodiac, and Whaletown with my vote for the prettiest Post Office in BC.

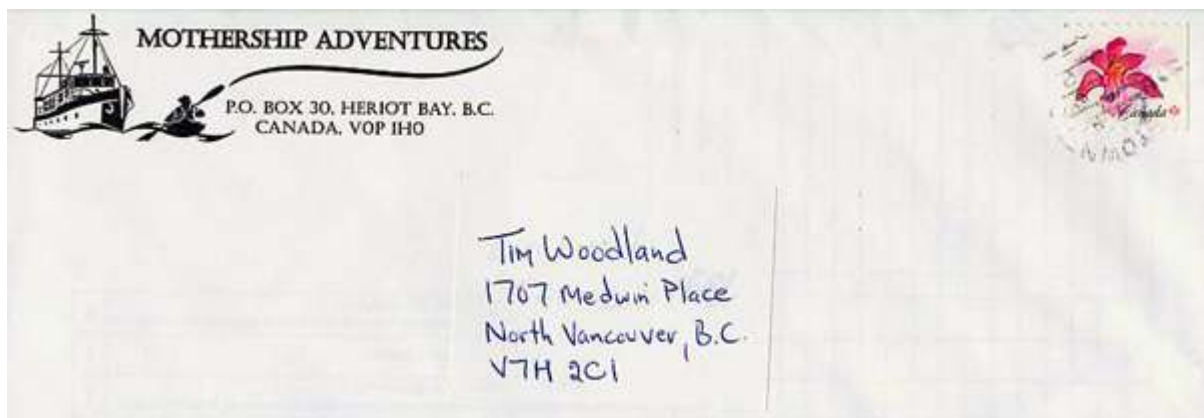


The Whaletown Post Office. Note the bird house decorated as - the Whaletown Post Office.

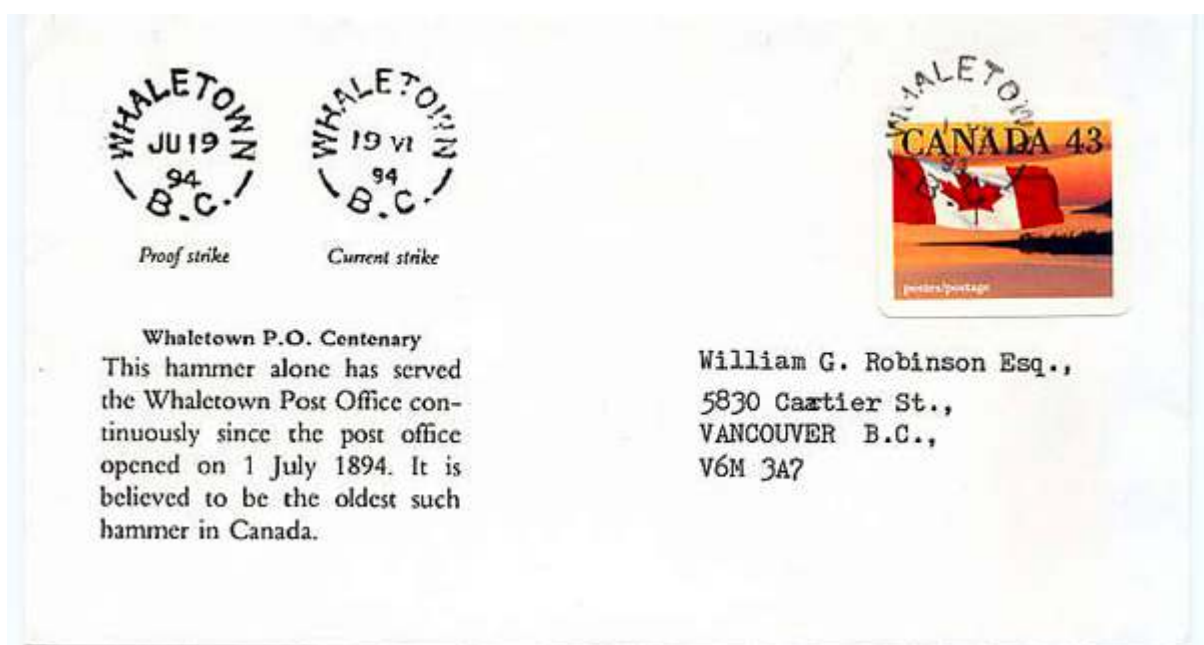




This Post Office still uses a split ring hammer - mine must have been near the bottom of the pile, it didn't get much ink.



Here is a better example:



### Day 7

The trip ended with a visit to the oldest house on Quadra Island; an apple press fresh juice demonstration; a trip to the workers camp and scene of the 1958 Ripple Rock explosion in Seymour Narrows, the largest non-nuclear detonation on earth and first CBC nationally televised program; and sadly to the marina in Campbell

River for good-byes.

For more of Jeanette Taylor's coastal history, check out "River City: A History of Campbell River and the Discovery Islands" from your local library or favorite book store.

<http://www.harbourpublishing.com/title/RiverCity>

#### Coastal mail service

Canada Post refers to these as 'Air Stage Offices - *An Air Stage Office is a Post Office to or from which all mail must be airlifted for more than six (6) months of every year as a viable surface transportation alternative is not available. These offices are generally confined to remote or isolated communities.*



They are serviced with mail pick up and delivery by companies such as Corilair. See <http://www.corilair.com/>



### COLUMBIA COAST MISSION

Ken Ellison has supplied an interesting item on the Columbia Coast Mission ship the M.S. COLUMBIA. Much of his information is taken from Michael Hadley's book "God's Little Ships", which Ken recommends most highly.

The MISSION SHIP COLUMBIA was built in 1910 by the Westminster Marine Railway Company of New Westminster for the Anglican Church of Canada. It was designed to be used as a mission boat along the B.C. coast and included a small hospital and a chapel. The Columbia Coast Mission was started, in 1904, by Rev. John Antle, a transported Newfoundlander, to provide spiritual guidance among the settlers, loggers and fishermen of the coast. In the 1930's the M.S. COLUMBIA was sold and re-named the WAYWARD LADY and is reported to have been used as a rum runner.

To the postal historian the M.S. COLUMBIA is interesting in that it also carried mail at a charge of 1 cent per letter. A special postage stamp showing the COLUMBIA was produced, although it is reported that the stamps were actually issued to raise money for the mission. Between 1928 and 1930 the M.S. COLUMBIA also applied a brown hand stamp to the mail it carried. On reported covers the marking is used as a "way mail" marking rather than to cancel the stamp and as a result is not listed in Ludlow. A number of other Anglican Mission Ships, including the M.S. RENDEZVOUR, the M.S. PREDNA, and the United Church ship the THOMAS CROSBY, all served on the B.C. coast but no markings from any of these boats have been reported.



We sold this Columbia Coast Mission lot about six months ago on our bidboard.