

groups along the lower Fraser River and in the adjacent Gulf and San Juan Islands. The reliance on salmon that characterized traditional Coast Salish culture continues to this day although varying degrees of access have been evident over the past century. It is no coincidence that early non-Native developments in commercial fishing also concentrated on the Fraser River runs, abundance and accessibility made this an area of special importance.

#### Non-Native Commercialization of the Salmon Fishery

Although marketing of the salmon resource was attempted by the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Langley as early as the 1820s it was not until reliable forms of preservation became available that large-scale commercial operations became feasible. Salmon canneries appeared on Puget Sound and the Fraser River in the 1870s but the industry was off to a slow start until it was discovered that Fraser River sockeye could be taken in abundance. Sockeye were the desirable species to can because of their bright red flesh. The entrepreneurs who developed the salmon industry in the late 1800s found an unlimited supply of the species and lack of regulatory measures meant virtually an unbridled use of the resource. As the Fraser River sockeye migrate through U.S. waters before entering the Fraser River just north of the border, they form the mainstay of the commercial fishing industry of both north Puget Sound and southwest British Columbia and have long been a point of contention between the two countries, resulting in two treaties which have allocated the resource between U.S. and Canadian commercial fishers since the 1930s (Boxberger 1988). Native labour was essential in the formative years of the industry. Possessing the requisite skills as fishers and processors Native participation was encouraged by the commercial interests. The