



WESTERN CANADA
HERITAGE VESSEL
REGISTRY

Statement of Significance

Columbia III

1956



THE
MARITIME MUSEUM
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

Columbia III

Year built:	1956
Builder:	Star Shipyard (Mercer's) Ltd
Build Location:	New Westminster, B.C.
Vessel Type:	Coastal Mission Boat
WCHVR Category:	B.C. Historic Vessel
Owner(s):	Mothership Adventures Ltd. Ross Campbell, President

PRÉCIS:

Built in 1956 for the Columbia Coast Mission, and christened ***Columbia***, she served as a mission ship until retired in 1968. She is fondly remembered by many on the BC coast for her contribution to the social services on an otherwise isolated coastline. ***Columbia*** was then used as a charter boat (renamed ***Columbian***) until 1981, then privately owned until 2001 at which time she was re-named ***Columbia III***. In 2005 she was purchased for service as an eco-tourism vessel with Mothership Adventures Ltd and continues in that role to the present day, maintained and operated to the very highest standard.



Columbia III in the BC mid-coast

Statement of Significance

Columbia III was built for the Columbia Coast Mission to a design commissioned by Reverend Alan Greene, head of the Mission at that time from naval architect Robert Allan (Sr.) in 1955. Built by Star Shipyards (Mercers) Ltd in New Westminster, she was launched in 1956 as ***Columbia***. She was the third vessel in this mission service to bear that historic name, but ***Columbia*** as the registered name was carried over to each subsequent vessel.

Columbia is carvel-hulled, measures 66'-5" length overall with a 16' beam and is stoutly built of fir and yellow cedar planking over oak frames. She is powered by a 125 HP, 6-cylinder Gardner diesel engine which is still in the boat today (2026).

Columbia was the last in a long line of vessels operated by the Columbia Coast Mission, representing the Anglican Church of BC. Similar mission boats were operated by several other denominations. These vessels were a lifeline to the isolated communities of coastal B.C., serving as both a floating hospital and social beacon. From 1905 to 1969, people living in the remote settlements, logging camps, inlets and lonely bays of British Columbia's coast grew to depend on the ships and crews of the Columbia Coast Mission, founded in 1904 by Rev. John Antle. The services offered by the Columbia Coast Mission and this boat in particular are well-documented in several books, including "The Columbia is Coming", by Doris Andersen. ***Columbia*** is still celebrated in many communities for her distinguished social service to coastal B.C.

These mission ships, seventeen in all (including ***Columbia (I)*** built in 1905 and ***Columbia (II)*** built in 1910), plied Canada's rugged west coast year-round, bringing much-needed medical and social care to isolated outposts. Some Columbia ships were equipped as "hospital ships" and carried a doctor and a nurse. Babies were born, logging accidents attended to, and painful teeth pulled, all in a day's work. The ships and crew were also welcomed as communication links, bringing news and supplies and fostering a sense of community between coastal BC settlers who otherwise couldn't stay "in touch".

Columbia served the BC coast until she was retired in 1968 and was then used in a variety of coastal "workboat" services. From 1968-1984 she was owned by Jack Cash Boat Charter and re-named as the ***Columbian*** and thus lost her claim to the original name. From 1985-1988 she was owned by 281528 BC Ltd., of West Vancouver BC. From 1989-2001 she was owned by the same numbered company but registered in Victoria. In a state of some neglect, she was restored by Bill McKechnie of Victoria B.C. and renamed ***Columbia III***.

In 2005 she was purchased by Ross Campbell of Heriot Bay and adapted to the role she still provides today as the flagship of the eco-tourism trade on the BC coast, sailing under the banner of Mothership Adventures Ltd. Very much still in close to her original configuration, and beautifully maintained, she is widely considered to be among, if not the best-kept wooden vessel on the BC coast.

Statement of Significance for:

Coastal Mission Vessel *Columbia III*

**Prepared and acknowledged by the
Western Canada Heritage Vessel Registry**

Lead Assessor: Robert G. Allan

Signature: _____

Date: September 2, 2026

SOURCES:

- Mothership Adventures website:
<https://www.mothershipadventures.com/history-of-columbia-iii> __
- Nauticapedia: <https://www.nauticapedia.ca/browse.php?q=Columbia%20III>
- Robert Allan Ltd files



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