

Cannery Row

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary



More to Explore



Displayed outside the City of Monterey Parking Garage are plaques that describe and illustrate the five principal marine species that were commercially harvested from Monterey Bay and processed on Cannery Row. Although sardines were the most noted fish to be harvested, others included squid, chameleon rockfish, chinook salmon and red abalone.

There are several bronze memorial sculptures throughout Cannery Row. John Steinbeck, Ed "Doc" Ricketts, Kalisa Moore "The Queen of Cannery Row" and the Cannery Divers' Memorial were all created by Sculptor Jesse Corsaut. Located in Steinbeck Plaza is the newest and most prominent, the Cannery Row Memorial, created by Sculptor Steven White. Nine life-size figures memorialize the people who have played an integral role in shaping the history of Cannery Row.



Along the recreational trail, there are three, full-color, larger-than-life-size murals of Monterey's cannery workers engaged in various activities. The murals were created from black and white photographs by Salinas muralist John Cerney. A fourth mural on McAbee Beach depicts two Chinese fishermen readying their boat for fishing.

Timeline

3000 BCE to 1769—The native people of the Monterey region, the Rumsien Ohlone, build small villages along the Monterey waterfront and fish the bay in boats made of tule, becoming Monterey's first commercial fishermen. They maintain a complex society dependent on fishing and hunting.

1542—Explorer Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo sights the Bahía de los Pinos, later named Point of Pines (Point Pinos) and rounds the Cannery Row area, entering Monterey Bay.

1602—Sebastian Vizcaíno lands at Monterey Bay in search of a harbor for Spanish galleons and claims California for Spain.

1818—French privateer and Argentinean revolutionary Hipólito Bouchard attacks, burns and briefly seizes Monterey. It is believed that Bouchard landed his longboats on what is now McAbee Beach.



1850s—On September 9, 1850, California enters the Union as the 31st state. Sometime in the early 1850s, a small group of Chinese fishermen and their families begin arriving in the Monterey area. They set up a fishing village that spreads between the current site of Hopkins Marine Lab and the Monterey Bay Aquarium. Portuguese whalers marooned in San Francisco because of the California Gold Rush establish whaling stations on Monterey Bay, including one along Cannery Row.

1874—In October of 1874, the Monterey & Salinas Valley Railroad Company begins operating one of the earliest narrow-gauge railroads in California. Now fishermen have a way to get fresh fish to large markets, like San Francisco. Other fishermen begin to arrive to fish, primarily for rockfish.

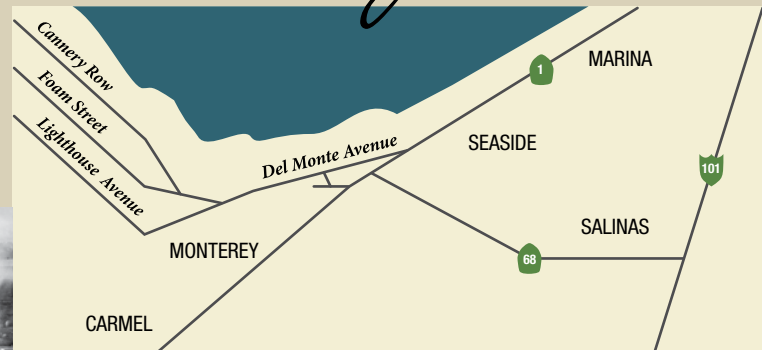


1880—The Southern Pacific Railroad buys the Monterey & Salinas Valley Railroad and builds the luxurious Hotel del Monte, "Queen of American Watering Places."

CONTINUED INSIDE

Historic Cannery Row

Getting Here



From Highway 1 North

Take Highway 1 south to Monterey. Look for the Monterey Bay Aquarium sign, and exit onto Fremont Street. Follow the brown directional signs on Fremont to Camino El Estero, and turn right. Just past the Visitor Information Center, turn left on Del Monte Avenue and continue (in the right two lanes) past Fisherman's Wharf, then through the tunnel to Foam Street. Follow the brown directional signs to Cannery Row parking and the Aquarium.

From Highway 1 South

Exit Highway 1 at Highway 68 West / Pacific Grove. Continue 4 miles to David Avenue, then turn right and follow David Avenue to the end. You'll see the Aquarium and signs for parking on Cannery Row.

From Route 68 West

Exit Highway 68 to Highway 1 south. Stay in the right lane after merging, and exit immediately onto Fremont Street. Follow the brown directional signs on Fremont to Camino El Estero, and turn right. Just past the Visitor Information Center, turn left on Del Monte Avenue and continue (in the right two lanes) past Fisherman's Wharf, then through the tunnel to Foam Street. Follow the brown directional signs to Cannery Row parking and the Aquarium.

PRODUCED BY: CANNERY ROW BUSINESS ASSOCIATION
TIMELINE: TIM THOMAS, FISHERIES HISTORIAN
CANNERY LABELS AND TEXT: KENT SEAVEY, HISTORIC CONSULTANT
HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPHY: MONTEREY PUBLIC LIBRARY, CALIFORNIA HISTORY ROOM

Historic Cannery Row

Walking Tour



TAKE A WALK BACK IN TIME

Interpretive Signs
Murals
Bronze Statues
Scavenger Hunt



A Brief History



It was an anonymous writer for the local Monterey paper who, in 1919, first coined the term "Cannery Row" when referencing what was then called Ocean View Boulevard for a story about Monterey's sardine industry.

Even before there was a Cannery Row, people lived and worked in this place, making a living by fishing Monterey Bay. The first real "commercial" fishermen were the Rumsien Ohlone, the native people of Monterey. Almost five thousand years ago, this peaceful community harvested abalone along the coastline and fished for sardines, anchovies and rockfishes in the bay, using small boats made of tule (a long reed that

grows throughout the Monterey Peninsula). The Rumsien people were also the first divers in the bay, as proven by evidence uncovered in ancient burial sites. Some of the males had what is known as "surfer's ear," a bony growth that closes the ear opening, indicating they spent a lot of time in the cold waters of Monterey Bay.

The first real cannery, The Pacific Mutual Fish Company, was owned and operated by Ootosaburo Noda, a Japanese businessman. By 1896, he had developed Monterey's first Japanese colony right on the row.

Soon other canneries followed, and the street bustled with workers who had roots from all over of the world. Eventually, these workers were responsible for making Monterey the "Sardine Capital of the World." At its height, there were 19 canneries and reduction plants, employing hundreds of workers and bringing in millions of dollars to the local economy.

During the Great Depression, the demand for sardines grew because they were a source of healthy and inexpensive food. The boats got bigger, and more and more sardines were pursed into the nets. Cheap labor was available to put them into cans or grind them for chicken feed. Everyone thought it would last forever—almost everyone.



Scientists from the California Department of Fish and Game, who had been monitoring the Monterey sardine fishery from the beginning, had seen early warning signs and tried to tell an indifferent industry. When the fishery finally did collapse, everyone wanted to know, "Where did all the sardines go?" The answer is we really don't know. Some say it was overfishing. Others say it was environmental. It was probably both. Today, the California sardine industry is fully recovered, and fishermen are catching sardines in the Monterey Bay once again.

Canning Label Scavenger Hunt

Timeline Continued



We've embedded reproductions of original canning company labels in the concrete sidewalks throughout Cannery Row. Can you find them all?



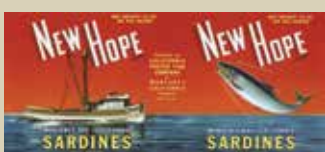
The San Carlos Canning Company, owned and operated by boat owners and fishermen, was established in 1927 and managed by Angelo Lucido. They canned sardines and squid.



The E. B. Gross Canning Company operated from 1919 to 1943. It was destroyed by an oil tank fire in 1924, then rebuilt.



Peninsula Packing Company was purchased from E. B. Gross Canning Company in 1943. They canned sardines, which were also called horse mackerel.



The California Frozen Fish Company was built by Sal Ventimiglia in 1945 on the site of the Japanese-owned California Fisheries Company which was founded in 1916.



The Enterprise Packers began operation in 1945 during World War II. They canned Captain Silver sardines.



The Oxnard Canning Company of S. A. Ferrante opened in October 1942 after the original cannery at Port Hueneme had been confiscated by the government for the war effort.



Originally built in 1917, the Japanese-owned and operated Great Western Sardine Company became the Sea Pride Packing Company in 1925. They canned sardines and squid.



G. Harper and A. M. Allen built the Mission Revival-style Monterey Canning Company in 1918 on the site of the former Chinese-operated Monterey Fish Canning Company (1910–1916).



The Hovden Food Products Corporation was established in 1916 by Knut Hovden, a Norwegian fish processing expert, who was considered “King of Cannery Row.”



By canning squid and tuna, Hovden Cannery managed to stay open the longest, finally closing its doors in 1973. It was the last sardine cannery on the row to close.



The San Xavier Canning Company was established in 1923 by Swiss immigrant Frank Raiter. In 1942, he built the reduction plant that you can still see today.



The California Packing Corporation bought the Pacific Fish Company in 1926. They operated the new sardine and squid processing business until 1962.

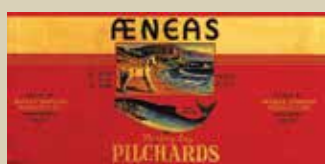


The Sea Beach Packing Company was a latecomer to Cannery Row. Constructed in September of 1945, it operated just nine years before it burned down in 1953.



The F.E. Booth Reduction Plant, designed by city engineer, Howard Severance in 1917, was the only brick fish processing facility built on Cannery Row. It produced fishmeal for chicken feed.

Hint: Prescott Street



The Aeneas Sardine Packing Company opened in 1945 and is the only cannery on the row to retain its original crossover from cannery to warehouse.



The Del Mar Canning Company, under the leadership of Ed David, operated from 1928 to 1947 on the site of an earlier 1916 Japanese-owned reduction plant. Besides sardines and squid, the plant packed rock cod.



1892—Sport fisherman J. Parker Whitney introduces the trolling line for salmon fishing and becomes the first known person to fish with a rod and reel in Monterey Bay.

1895—Japanese immigrant Otosaburo Noda recognizes Monterey Bay's potential for fishing salmon and abalone and sends for fishermen from Wakayama, Japan. He sets up the first Japanese colony in Monterey, right on Cannery Row.

1897—Because of J. Parker Whitney's trolling technique, Monterey fishermen began to make large landings of salmon. Frank Booth of the Sacramento River Packers Association comes to Monterey to check out its possible potential as a fishing port.

1900—H. R. Robbins opens Monterey's first sardine canning and reduction plant (and dance hall), located near Monterey's wharf.

1901—Hugh Tevis, a banking executive, builds a large estate for his new bride at the lower, southern end of Cannery Row. Unfortunately, Mr. Tevis never gets a chance to live in the home, he dies while on his honeymoon.

1902—Otosaburo Noda and Harry Malpas establish the Monterey Fishing and Canning Company, becoming the first cannery on what was then called Ocean View Avenue.

1903—Frank Booth buys out H. R. Robbins's cannery operations and begins experimenting with sardine canning. He becomes known as the father of the sardine canning industry in Monterey.



1905—University of California at Berkeley opens the Herzstein Laboratory, a small marine lab for use by the Department of Physiology. It was located at the northern end of Cannery Row where, the Monterey Bay Aquarium is today.

1914—War breaks out in Europe, and there's a large demand for canned fish for the war effort.

1916—Because of the war, Norwegian fisheries expert Knut Hovden opens his state-of-the-art cannery on Cannery Row, next to the University of California lab. Eventually, Hovden buys the property from the university, and it becomes the largest cannery on Cannery Row.

1919—The demand for canned fish during World War I leads Monterey's fishing and canning operations to become the area's primary industry, replacing tourism. In August, the California Department of Fish and Game opens an office at Hopkins Marine Station to be near the canneries so it can monitor the rapidly growing sardine industry.

1920—Knut Hovden's cannery burns to the ground. When he rebuilds, he introduces the use of steam to cook his sardines.



1924—On September 14, lightning strikes one of the Associated Oil Company's open oil tanks, and it explodes. The ensuing fire destroys several canneries.

1926—Due to a fishermen's strike, Knut Hovden,

Hovden's Cannery, brings in new technology in the form of two boats, the Mariposa and the Admiral. These newer and larger sardine boats, called purse seiners, enable the fishermen to make bigger catches with fewer men.

1927—Edward Ricketts, a marine biologist, opens a lab on Cannery Row.

1929—A scientist from the California Department of Fish and Game warns the sardine industry that it must take smaller catches or the fishery will collapse in the next 20 years. For the first time, a sardine season is put into place. In Monterey, the season is August 1 to February 15.



1930—Knut Hovden introduces the floating hopper as a better and faster way for the fishermen to unload their catch.

1935—At this time, there are 19 canneries and reduction plants employing 2,200 people. Monterey becomes known as the Sardine Capital of the World.

1938—There are 100 purse seiners fishing sardines in the bay.

1939—California Department of Fish and Game biologist Frances Clark again warns the industry that it must cut the fishery in half. When asked by the Monterey Herald where all the large sardines are? her reply is, “They're all in the cans,” a quote later used by Ed Ricketts.

1941—Fishermen bring in almost 250,000 tons of sardines in the 1941-42 sardine season! Before World War II, Sicilian and Japanese Americans dominate the fishing industry.

1942—Monterey's Japanese Americans are forced to relocate to detention camps.



1945—John Steinbeck's novel *Cannery Row* is published.

1948—In October, while on his way to the market, Ed Ricketts's car stalls on the railroad tracks at the corner of Wave and Drake Streets, and he is hit by the Southern Pacific Railroad train.

1950s—The sardine industry in Monterey collapses.

1958—The City of Monterey officially renames Ocean View Avenue “Cannery Row.”

The sardine fishery in Monterey and along the West Coast was the largest fishery of single fish in the history of the United States.



Interpretive Signs - A Detailed Historical Account of Life and Times on Cannery Row

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 Building Cannery Row | 6 The Spanish Community | 11 Science | 16 The Del Mar Canning Company | 21 Hurray for Hollywood |
| 2 Jone Quock Mui | 7 A Day in the Canneries | 12 Fiction | 17 Working Women | 22 The California Riviera |
| 3 John Steinbeck | 8 The Real “Docs” | 13 Giant Kelp Beyond the Breakers | 18 McAbee Beach | 23 Trains and Canneries |
| 4 The Filipino Community | 9 One Man, Two Worlds | 14 Fish Hoppers | 19 Monterey's First Fishermen | 24 Monterey Breakwater |
| 5 The Japanese Community | 10 Ed Ricketts's Backyard | 15 Silver Harvest | 20 Early Canning Processes | 25 Associated Oil Fire of 1924 |

Legend

- | | | |
|-------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| P Parking | B Bronze Statues | Public Beach |
| R Restrooms | M Murals | Original Railroad Tracks |
| ¢ Change | F Fish Species | Building |
| \$ ATM | Oil Tanks | Street |