

FILLING UP ON TEXADA

There was little need for a gasoline service station on Texada until 1925 when the Van Anda postmaster purchased the first car on the island (a model-T Ford) and Pete Staaf acquired a Dodge truck for his Upper Gillies Bay farm.

At that time Fred Lowther and Bill Young operated the fuel tanks and Esso agency at Van Anda cove.

After the war Cecil May ran a B/A station and repair shop next to the creek in Van Anda (photo). His shop was crammed full with spare parts, the walls and ceiling blackened with soot emanating from the used oil that burned in the central 6-foot salamander heater.

As Cece had one of the few telephones in town, his station became a popular gathering place. A Christmas eve tradition was the shots of whisky knocked back from a (used) fuel line sediment bowl!



In the meantime Al Waters had taken over Lowther and Young's Esso agency with gas pumps (located next to the present Texada Market) only to see it destroyed by fire in December, 1957. Afterwards Ben Nicholas (Junior) pumped gas at "Benny's Esso" opposite the old Carter Brothers Sawmill site

Meanwhile in Gillies Bay Spence Hughes opened a gas station across from his Gillies Bay store (1956). Later it was the home of Bob Richie's taxi service while son, Don, manned the gas pumps and did repairs.

Fred Johnson established "Fred's Island B/A" and body shop in the centre of the island at "the Oasis" as well as selling used cars from the lot nearby.

It's hard to imagine now but Shelter Point was once the scene of intense log booming activity where Al Dolman provided fuel from his Home Oil franchise. It operated via a cash honour system.

Today's Centennial Service was established by Bob Jones in 1972 when he retired from logging. Bob looked after islanders' needs for 15 years as wife, Millie, monitored the activity at the crossroads from the office.

Despite the plethora of gas stations that once served the island, only one remains. Thank-you to John and Linda Holmes who took over the Centennial Service in 1987 and retired this summer.