orm No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JUN 15 1977
DATE ENTERED FEB 14 1978

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Double-ended Columbia River Gillnet Boat

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
Altoona Cannery — NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN
Altoona — VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
#3 - The Honorable Donald L. Bonker

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
Washington	53	Wahkiakum	069

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	X PUBLIC	__OCCUPIED	__AGRICULTURE	__MUSEUM
__BUILDING(S)	__PRIVATE	__UNOCCUPIED	__COMMERCIAL	__PARK
__STRUCTURE	__BOTH	X WORK IN PROGRESS	__EDUCATIONAL	__PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	__ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
X OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	X YES: RESTRICTED	__GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	__YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	__TRANSPORTATION
		__NO	__MILITARY	X OTHER: In Storage

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Wahkiakum County Fair Board

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
Skamokawa — VICINITY OF

STATE
Washington

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. N/A

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
None

DATE

__FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
__EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	__UNALTERED	__ORIGINAL SITE
__GOOD	__RUINS	X ALTERED	X MOVED DATE_____
X FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Columbia River gillnet boat is a class of commercial fishing vessel in common use on the Columbia River since its introduction in the late 1860's. It is a small boat averaging about twenty five feet in length and set up for a crew of two men. In terms of its hull configuration, interior organization and superstructure, the boat is designed exclusively for use in the gillnet fishery.

This nomination concerns an archetypal example of the gillnet boat built between 1913 and 1916. It has a length of 26 feet, a beam of 72½ inches and a carvel-built hull consisting of Port Orford cedar planks on white oak ribs. The decking, cabin, and pilot house are also of cedar construction, while oak is used throughout the boat wherever increased strength and durability are necessary, such as in the keel, combings and guards, and in the bow and sternposts.

The hull is double-ended or sharp at both the bow and stern, with a rounded V-bottom and a deck that rises gently fore and aft. When viewed from above, the hull outline appears as a roughly symmetrical pointed oval tapering a bit more gradually at the stern.

Oak guards rim the upper edge of the hull where it joins the narrow deck or washboards. Along the inside, the deck terminates in a raised combing which flares outward crossing the deck at the fish locker just forward of the cabin were it forms a guiding edge for the net chute.

Of particular interest in the construction of this vessel is the decking itself, which consists of narrow cedar strips laminated edge to edge and bent to the curvature of the hull. Caulking cotton packed between the strips makes the deck water tight. This is a rare feature characteristic of the earliest gillnet boats and a method of construction considered obsolete for more than 50 years.

The cabin and pilot house are positioned well aft of center to provide working space near the bow. Both structures are half drum-shaped around the front and square across the back. The pilot house sits atop the cabin like a clerestory or second tier providing a nearly unobstructed 180^{o} view for a man standing at the helm.

The engine, now missing, was originally mounted on the floor of the cabin. The earliest power plant used in these boats was a massive 5 to 7 horsepower, one cylinder, two cycle, gasoline motor weighing several hundred pounds. It is said that in the early years these engines were generally thought of as auxilury power due in part to their hard starting, lack of dependability and the high cost of fuel. They were mostly relied upon for running long distances or when bucking the tide. Otherwise the fishermen preferred to row the stout 25 foot craft. Although most other boats in use during this period were converted to gasoline motors, the construction of this boat indicates that it was originally fitted with an engine.

In terms of its functional organization as a working vessel, this type of gillnet boat is referred to as a bow picker, which means that the net is retrieved from the forward part of the vessel where it is piled systematically in bights (folds laid back and forth on the bottom of the boat). The open part at the front of the vessel is termed the net room,

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which also serves as the work area. The fisherman stands in the bow where he pulls the net in across a roller fastened to the starboard gunwale. As the 200 fathom net is emptied of fish, it is carefully folded just forward of the fish locker, which extends across the widest portion of the vessel immediately in front of the cabin. By storing th net in this fashion it is possible when laying out the net to lay it back over the stern without readjusting its position. Another roller is located on the forward edge of the fish locker which helps to move the net up on to the deck before it is pulled along the net chute and dropped over the stern a length at a time.

Presently this particular gillnet boat is missing a number of fittings, although it has been modified very little since it was first completed. In addition to the engine, the propeller, the propeller shaft and rudder are gone. So is most of the original picking gear, consisting mostly of net rollers. The cabin door, steering wheel, handrails, chafi irons and all brass hardware items have been removed. Fortunately most of these are replaceable standard components that vary only slightly in their design over the years. A careful restoration program has already begun using fittings salvaged from other boats of a slightly later period, and possibly an engine of a type similar to the original equipment.

More importantly, the hull and superstructure are in sound condition and have never been modified. Most of the essential wood fittings are intact including the guards, combings, pin blocks, and oar lock blocks. During the many years the vessel was in service the onl major improvement or modernization consists of the installation of a power roller driven off the engine with shafts and gears. This was probably added in the 1940's to assist in retrieving the 1200 foot net, which was previously pulled in by hand.

The boat is now located inside of an old cannery building resting on a wooden cradle. Following restoration it will be moved to Skamokawa, a nearby fishing community, where it will be installed in a permanent interpretive display.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION	
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE	
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE	
__1600-1699	__ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER	
__1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION	
X 1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	X INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		__INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1913 - 1916 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Wilson Shipyards, Astoria, Oregon

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built between 1913 and 1916, this double-ended Columbia River gillnet boat represents the second generation in the development of a specific type of fishing vessel designed for commercial salmon gillnetting on the Columbia River. Its construction characteristics and early date indicate that it would have been among the first of the gillnet boats built for a gasoline engine.

Earlier versions of the Columbia River gillnetter were open sailboats from 22 to 24 feet in length. The first of these actually used on the Columbia River was built in 1869 by J. J. Griffin of San Francisco for George and Robert Hume. Previously, Griffin had constructed a similar vessel for a Sacramento River fisherman nicknamed "Greek Joe". Prior to this time, Whitehall boats and skiffs were generally used in the west coast salmo fishery, although they were not particularly well suited to this purpose. The salmon gillnet boat as conceived by Griffin was unlike any other type of small craft then used in United States fisheries.

In a detailed description of the gillnet boat, which was by then in common use along the west coast of the United States from lower California to Alaska, J. W. Collins writing in the 1890 Bulletin of the United States Fish Commission made the following observations.

> *It is an open, carvel-built, centerboard craft, sharp forward and aft, the ends being shaped nearly alike moderately concave at and below the water line, and with rather full convex lines above water. It has a long, low floor, round bilge, and flares slightly at the top. It has a very shallow keel, and has little or no rake to the stem and stern post, both of which are straight, with the exception of the rounded fore foot. It is decked for 2 or 3 feet at each end, and has washboards extending along both sides. A coaming 2 or 3 inches high runs around on the inner edge of the washboards and the decked spaces of the bow and stern, making the open part of the boat of an oval form. It has four thwarts, and three rowlocks (each with single thole-pin) on each side. A single mast, upon which is set a spritsail, is stepped well forward. Oars are carried and used when there is no wind.*

Collins refers to this as the Columbia River salmon boat, noting that it was most commonly encountered on the Columbia River.

Collins also points out that the fishermen would rig their sail as a temporary tent when gone from home for extended periods. One end of the mast was supported on the tiller which was tilted up for that purpose, the mast then became a ridgepole and the canvas was spread over it between the gunwale. Using this device it was possible to sleep on the

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Andrews, Ralph. Fish and Ships, Seattle, Superior, 1957

Browning, Robert. Fisheries of the North Pacific, Anchorage, Alaska, 1974.

Collins, J.W. "The Fishing Vessels and Boats of the Pacific Coast", Bulletin of the U.S. Fish Commission, Volume 10, 1890.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY N/A

UTM REFERENCES

Longitude - 123° 39' 15"
Latitude - 46° 15' 58"

	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
A			
B			
C			
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE
Jacob E. Thomas, Historic Preservation Specialist - with Kent & Irene Martin

ORGANIZATION
Office of Archaeology and Historice Preservation

DATE
April, 1977

STREET & NUMBER
P. O. Box 1128

TELEPHONE
(206) 753-4116

CITY OR TOWN
Olympia

STATE
Washington 98504

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE X LOCAL ___

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE James M Warren

TITLE
Acting State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE
June 8, 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Robert B. Pettus

~~DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION~~ KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 2/14/78

ATTEST: Charles Adams

~~KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER~~

DATE 2.9.78

GPO 892.453

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floor of the boat out of the weather while anchored near shore. Also, each of the boats was equipped with a small oil cook stove for heating canned food from a supply kept on board.

The double-ended design is particularly suited for fishing in rough water as such a small vessel has relatively little freeboard. With its net out, the boat drifts for considerable periods and is subject to the effects of waves pounding from either direction. A stern design that divides the waves allowing them to pass on either side of the boat is more seaworthy under these conditions than one with a square transom that stops a portion of each wave abruptly. A large wave might wash over a square stern, where a similar wave would pass a double ended craft without any serious effects.

With the introduction of the gasoline marine engine in the early part of this century, the use of sails in the gillnet fishery was slowly discontinued in favor of one cylinder inboard motors. At first, sailboats were simply converted by installing a gasoline engine, but shortly after 1910 boats were designed to be fitted with a motor and the sail was eliminated entirely. As there was no sail to interfere, these newer boats were equipped with a small cabin and pilot house, although they retained the same basic doubl ended hull configuration that had been preferred for the past 40 years.

In the late 1930's, however, when marine engines became more common and reliable, the double ended hull was gradually phased out and the square stern came into general use. This refinement provided a slightly better hull speed, although admittedly it did not make as good a "sea boat". However, with an improved source of power, stability in rough water became less of a concern as most of the fishermen operated fairly close to shore. Squaring off the stern did not otherwise affect the basic design of the vessel of its functional organization. Further improvements during this period included the introduction of a power driven roller to assist with the difficult work of hauling in the net.

Later hull modifications in the 1940's were made in response to the availability of far more powerful engines. The stern was further widened and flattened across the bottom much like a power launch with a planning hull. Again, this had little effect on the working arrangement of the boat. It was still easily recognizable as a gillnetter.

The net itself has been greatly improved in recent years and this new development has been accompanied by important changes in the pattern of fishing activity. The earliest fishing gear consisted of linen nets which could be fished only at night or during periods of muddy water when the fish could not see well enough to avoid them. Later, with the introduction of synthetic twines in the net fishing industry, it became possibl to fish during daylight hours even in clear water. The basic design of the gillnet, however, including its size, shape and type of mesh are essentially unchanged since it was first used in the west coast salmon fishery.

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The first commercial cannery on the Columbia River was built in 1866 on Eagle Cliff in Wahkiakum County. Until the early part of the century a great majority of the gillnet boats were the property of the canners on the River; they were rented to the fishermen which made it easier for men of limited means to work in the fishing industry. The effect and in fact the purpose of this practice, was increased production in the canneries.

During the early years many of these boats were actually constructed at shipyards in San Francisco, although a significant number were built on the Columbia River, and some in boatyards operated by the canneries. The subject of this nomination is a gillnet boat that has always been privately owned. Constructed at the Wilson Shipyards in Astoria, Oregon sometime between 1913 and 1916, it was built for one of the owners of the shipyard which no longer exists. In 1917 it was sold to a Mr. Jacobson, who traded his sailboat for it because it had a motor. The chain of ownership since then has been established to the present.

Salmon fishing is today a million dollar industry in Wahkiakum County, and it was one of the earliest commercial activities in the area. Other variations of the gillnet boat have come into use, in particular a stern picker with a power operated reel located aft of the cabin designed to roll in the net with a minimum of effort. But the basic hull design is still preferred as nothing has been developed in over a century that is better suited to the purpose of gillnet fishing.