

# Museum Corner: A Page From History

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## Looking Back: Ashcroft Tomatoes

The growers who had produced the famous Ashcroft potato, were comprised mainly of Chinese. They were expert gardeners and irrigators, and were ready to take on a new crop. They leased land from the ranchers on a crop-share basis and in 1924 planted a few acres of tomatoes. The quality and production was remarkable and they were eager to expand!

At this time conditions in Ashcroft were depressed, the freighting service had come to an end, and the BX Co was ready to dispose of its assets. Selling the unused property seemed to be hopeless and a new idea was born!

After meeting with the growers and ranchers the BX Co decided that they would finance, operate and convert an empty freight barn into a tomato cannery.



On April 9, 1925, work began on the Cannery, with production scheduled for August. Construction went smoothly and the factory was ready by harvest in early August. The whole undertaking was to be a community affair with local labour given the preference. Its goal for the first year of producing 20,000 cases of 28 ounces tomatoes was fulfilled.

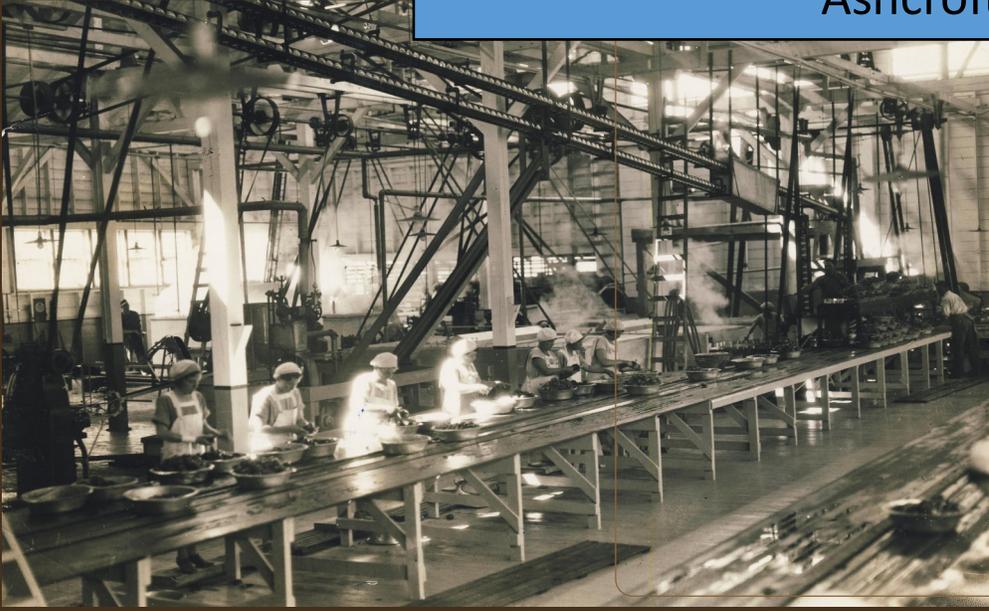
### **CANNERY WORKERS WANTED**

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*Starting Early in August, we will require about forty girls to peel and sort Tomatoes in our Cannery at Ashcroft, B. C.*

*Applications received now. Write for Particulars.  
Ashcroft Cannery Ltd. - - - - Ashcroft, B. C.*

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## Ashcroft Tomatoes continued....



Inside the cannery



A visit to the cannery when it was in full operation gave one an idea of the magnitude of the undertaking. There were rows of uniformed girls peeling tomatoes, and local men stationed here and there in charge of the various units of machinery. There was the hiss of steam, the hum of machinery, belts driving the machines... the huge smoke stacks poured out coal smoke that made the steam to process the best tasting tomato ever produced. (Ashcroft Journal 1961)

In the mid 30's approximately 3000 acres of land from here to Spence's Bridge was filled with tomatoes supplying the cannery. During the war years the price of land went up, and acreage under tomatoes decreased to about 800 acres..

By 1957 competition from American tomato products made the Ashcroft operation an unprofitable one. After a great deal of study a decision was made to shut the plant down.

In 1961 the cannery was demolished to make room for the Sand n Sage Hotel.

The Ashcroft Museum is open from Monday to Sunday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Come on down and learn some fascinating history about the area.

Located at 4th and Brink.

250-453-9232

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