

Lake Country: Origins in Time and Place



*Lake Country Museum & Archives
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Lake Country Heritage and Cultural Society

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There are specific sites in Lake Country that convey a sense of the past and reflect the stories of the people who have lived there. The stories in this book have been selected to provide an introduction to Lake Country's history. Additional stories are available at the Lake Country Museum & Archives.

The Lake Country Heritage and Cultural Society thanks

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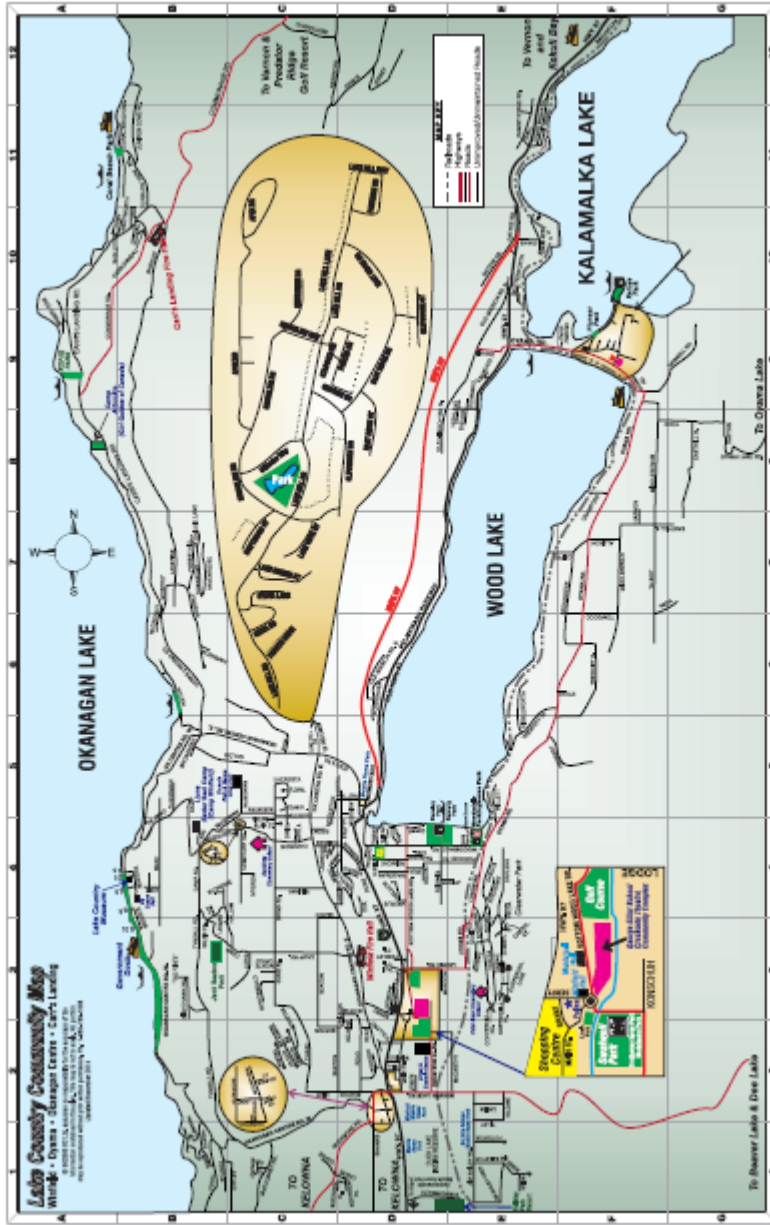
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The Land and the First People

The Okanagan valley was carved over millions of years by the forces of geology. Ancient fault lines, volcanoes, and massive glaciers shaped and re-shaped the land. We can see signs of this in the landscape today.

During the Cretaceous period, approximately 100 million to 65 million years ago, the continent of North America was split by a large shallow sea called the Western Interior Seaway. This sea covered thousands of square kilometers. The Okanagan valley was once oceanfront property.

Around seventy million years ago, the Earth's tectonic plates began to move rapidly. This drained the inland sea, built mountain ranges, and exposed ancient bedrock. The Rocky Mountains were a result of this fault line movement.

In the Okanagan, there are many fault lines. A series of zigzagging cracks known as the Okanagan Fault generally follow the shape of the lake. Many smaller fault lines are found throughout the region. Fault movement in the Okanagan also caused volcanic activity. Those old, inactive volcanoes now ring the valley as low hills. Long ago, Spion Kop, Knox Mountain, and Black Knight Mountain were all active volcanoes. The youngest and largest of these was Mount Bouche-rie. This volcano was the main feature in the valley. It was two kilometres high and ten kilometres wide.

More recent events carved the valley into its present shape. From one to two million years ago and again 15,000 years ago, huge glaciers covered the valley. A vast glacier reached to the peaks of the surrounding mountains. The weight of the moving glacier and the rocky debris underneath smoothed out the mountains to create the rounded hills we see today.

As the climate warmed, an enormous lake filled the valley. The sediment deposited from that lake left silt and sandstone throughout the valley. The melting ice formed lakes in the hollows. The turquoise colour of Kalamalka Lake is caused by glacial minerals.

About 9,000 years ago, after the glacier and its meltwater retreated, the first peo-

ple came to the Okanagan valley. Archaeologists believe that these people travelled northeast from the Columbia River valley to the south. Little is known about these first people, but history tells us that they were the likely ancestors of the Okanagan Syilx people today.

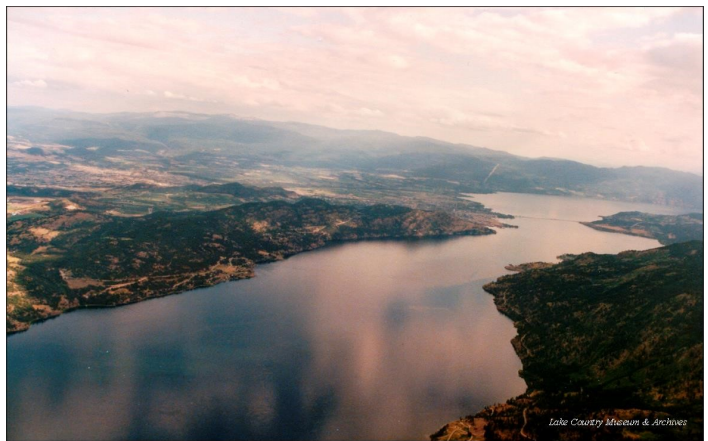
At the height of early Okanagan culture, 3,000 to 5,000 years ago, there were about 12,000 people living in the valley. The territory included the entire Okanagan valley and also the Arrow and Slocan lakes of the Kootenays.

The Traditional Okanagan people have a rich culture. Families and bands moved throughout the year to fish, hunt, or collect food. Although they returned to the same sites each year, only temporary camps were built. During the winter months the Okanagan people lived in permanent pithouse villages. Some winter villages were very small and some villages contained hundreds of pithouses.

In Lake Country, many artifacts have been found near lakes, suggesting that this area was a seasonal hunting and fishing area.

Tectonic plates: Pieces of the Earth's crust and upper mantle.

Pithouse: A dwelling partially dug into the ground with a wooden roof.



Okanagan Lake

LCMA

The Okanagan Syilx Portage Routes

Lake Country is home to the Okanagan Syilx people who have occupied the Okanagan valley for approximately 9,000 years. They travelled Okanagan Lake between winter villages at Penticton and the Head of the Lake (Vernon). The Okanagan people were known as great hunters, gatherers, and fishermen. Lake Country's bottom and riparian lands provided lush vegetation, grasslands, wild fruits, herbs and roots which in turn supported herds of deer and other game. Okanagan, Kalamalka, and Wood lakes provided abundant fishing. The late Ned Louis stated that "*a long time ago the people went to Oyama in the fall to fish in Wood Lake.*" Lake Country provided everything the Okanagan People needed during the warm months and they were able to gather, preserve, transport and store food items for the winter months. They were a semi-nomadic tribe and did not make a permanent home in the Lake Country area, but moved freely throughout Okanagan territory.

Oral histories identify a well-travelled portage route between Okanagan Lake and Wood Lake. This route was used for thousands of years to transport cottonwood canoes from the eastern shore of Okanagan Lake to the southwestern end of Wood (Pelmewash) Lake. Stone points and tools have been found at both ends of



LCMA

Okanagan Centre Road roughly follows the historic portage route

this portage route and a recent archeological dig at Wood Lake has uncovered artifacts suggesting a summer village or seasonal fishing camp was located here.

Another portage was located on the isthmus between Wood Lake and Kalamalka Lake. This location was called *Axts-luchus*, meaning, roughly, a narrow crossing with thickly entwined willows.

The Okanagan people facilitated this portage by laying down willows and saplings across the isthmus, across which they could transport the canoes more easily. After European contact, this site was named 'The Railroad', a translation of *Axts-luchus* and referring to the willow 'rails' found there.

The Syilx name for Lake Country is *K'lakokum*, meaning "small enclosed land" or "the land between".

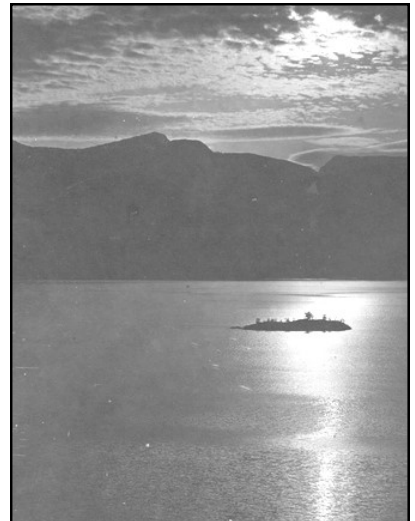


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Wood (Pelmewash) Lake, 1905, looking north toward Axts-luchus / The Railroad

Grant Island

Grant Island, as it is now known, was originally called *Nahun Wenox* meaning "mother of a child". Syilx oral history tells that long ago the island filled with air and broke off from the west side of the lake, floating toward the east side to its present location. Interestingly, *Nahun Wenox's* supposed original location has identical, jagged rock formations to those that are found on the island itself. Today, the island is a bird sanctuary.



Riparian: *The wetlands adjacent to lakes, rivers, and streams.*

Grant Island, 1900
Photo courtesy of the Greater Vernon Museum and Archives

Wood Lake Kokanee

Kokanee is a word from the Okanagan Syilx language, *kəkniʔ*. It refers to the land-locked lake populations of Sockeye salmon. Most species of salmon travel hundreds or even thousands of miles over a lifetime. Salmon are born in fresh water and live most of their adult lives in the ocean, returning to the fresh water stream to spawn. Only Kokanee salmon do not make this journey. They live their whole lives in a freshwater stream or lake. Stream-spawners migrate into lake tributaries in early September and complete spawning by mid-October. Shore-spawners migrate to spawning beaches along the lake shoreline and spawn from mid-October to mid-November.



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Wood Lake

Wood Lake is one of only three lakes in the Okanagan that has two species of Kokanee salmon, the stream spawners and the shore spawners. Although these two types of Kokanee share the lake, shore-spawning and stream-spawning Kokanee are distinct populations. The other two lakes containing both species of Kokanee are Okanagan Lake and Kalamalka Lake

Kokanee salmon vanish from Okanagan

CBC News May 30, 2012 12:53 PM PT

People who fish B.C.'s most important Kokanee fishery say the freshwater salmon have all but disappeared. Traditionally, Kokanee salmon have thrived in the Okanagan's Wood Lake but Anna Maria Ilinytsky, who has been fishing Wood Lake for more than a decade, says the fish just aren't biting. "Even last year was much, much less than the previous years, but this year is getting worse." Ilinytsky said algae are taking over Wood Lake. Pointing to a large bloom visible from the shore, she said it wasn't like this five years ago. "[There's] definitely something wrong with the lake." And provincial fisheries biologist Paul Askey agrees.

Askey says Wood Lake has always been nutrient-rich, which is why the Kokanee have traditionally thrived there, but too many nutrients from fertilizers or other sources can cause algae blooms. The blooms then die and decay on the bottom of the lake - robbing it of oxygen. "It seems like we might have gone past a tipping point in this last year, where it got too productive," said Askey. He says hot temperatures last summer caused the lake to warm and algae to

bloom, and that may have killed off many of the fish in the lake. "The Kokanee would prefer not to be in water that is 20 degrees and above up in the warm layers —and they couldn't go down to the cooler waters because all the oxygen had been depleted by decomposing algae," explained Askey.



Askey and biologists from the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund are doing a five-year study of Wood Lake, including a fish count in the fall to see how many Kokanee remain. Askey says recommendations from their study could include changes to the management of nearby streams vital for Kokanee spawning.

An algae bloom floats on top of Wood Lake, near Kelowna B.C. (Brady Strachan/CBC)

Kokanee bouncing back

Castanet News - Apr 13, 2015 / 1:49 pm

Wood Lake kokanee may not be large fish, but in terms of economic and social impact, the fishery is huge: worth an estimated \$1 million a year — all put at peril when the kokanee population crashed in the fall of 2011.

It's been determined that water quantity in Middle Vernon Creek and water quality in Wood Lake has been the major threat to kokanee populations. In dry years, there has been limited water available in the creek for kokanee to spawn and in the fall of 2011 numbers collapsed due to unusually warm water temperatures and low oxygen levels in Wood Lake.

With the help of the HCTF project, the kokanee population has been intensively monitored, both in Wood Lake and in Middle Vernon Creek. Angler surveys have also been conducted to estimate harvest. As well, hydrometric stations were set up with the help of the federal government and the Okanagan Basin Water Board at key points in the watershed, to assess the water balance and see where changes could be made to ensure adequate flows in late summer and fall help spawning kokanee survive.

Ward is confident that, armed with the watershed data from the past few years, they can improve the system's balance, controlling flows by changing releases from Beaver Lake so there's adequate water left in the lower part of the system in September when kokanee return to spawn. From that, a water management plan can be created which will help ensure the long-term survival of Wood Lake kokanee, but also take into account the needs of humans, aquatic plants that occur along the shores of Ellison Lake and other users along the way. "We're using an ecosystem-based approach. We've really made excellent progress and now we're seeing signs of recovery," comments Ward.

The Commonage

The word 'Commonage' was derived from the contraction of 'Common' and 'Pasturage', meaning common pasturage. This means "... a large tract of land set aside for grazing purposes".

Many white settlers were arriving in the Okanagan valley. It was important to provide both the settlers and the Syilx people a place to pasture their livestock. The Commonage area was, at that time, the vacant land available in the area. The area of the land planned for the Commonage was 25,114 acres. It extended from Okanagan Lake to Long Lake (Kalamalka and Wood lakes), north to today's boundary of Vernon, and south to Okanagan Centre.

On May 8, 1876 an agreement was made that the Commonage was to be reserved from pre-emption for the use of the Syilx people and the settlers for pastureland. This agreement was signed by Indian Reserve Commissioner A. C. Anderson; Dominion Commissioner Archibald McKinley, Commissioner for British Columbia; and Joint Commissioner G. M. Sproat.

However, in 1889, a new agreement was reached between British Columbia's Chief Commissioner of Land and Works and P. O'Reilly and the Indian Reserve Commissioner. The new agreement stated that the provincial government would take over the Commonage and in return it would establish an Indian Reserve on the west side of Okanagan Lake.

In 1893, the government had the land on the Commonage surveyed into quarter sections which were then put up for sale. This land attracted speculators, develop-



LCMA

Map of lands sold at the Commonage auction, 1893. Reproduced from LCMA manuscript Northern Okanagan Commonage

ers and farmers to locations on Okanagan Lake. Small farming communities developed on the Commonage, including Sunnywold (Carr's Landing) and Oyama.

Okanagan Indian Band Chief Murray Alexis of the Syilx Nation first brought its land claim for the Commonage lands forward in 1989. The land claim for title to the Commonage has yet to be resolved.

Pre-emption: A plot of land the settler could claim before the land was surveyed.

Land claim: A legal declaration by a First Nations band or government of desired control over areas of land. In Canada, land claims fall into two broad categories: comprehensive, known as modern treaties, and specific, which make claims based on pre-existing treaties, agreements, or reserves.

Acre: 66 feet × 660 feet (43,560 square feet), or approximately 4047 square metres.

Section: 640 acres. A quarter section is 160 acres.



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Sunnywold school picnic on the Commonage, 1910. The Commonage was also the location of Lake Country's first school.

The Vernon to Okanagan Mission Stagecoach Road

This route was first used by the Okanagan Syilx people following the contour of the lakes. Ranchers and settlers travelling up and down the valley used the same route. Late in the nineteenth century, the BC Government selected the route as one of the Okanagan first roadways. It was 'to be completed by January 1st, 1876'.



The Vernon to Okanagan Mission Stagecoach Road, 1890 ^{LCMA}

The road was completed in 1875 and followed a high level route. The road went south from Vernon over the Commonage and along Kalamalka Lake through to the Mission in Kelowna. The upper section of the route through Lake Country went from what is now Okanagan Centre Road East in Winfield to the Old Mission Road in Oyama. The mail stage along this route was operated by Walter Pritchard, Michael Healy, Sam Munson, William Scott (1907), and then by Jack Wyatt (1916).



Building the stagecoach road

Photo courtesy of the Greater Vernon Museum & Archives

The canal connecting Wood and Kalamalka lakes was completed in 1908. The level of Wood Lake dropped by four feet and exposed a shelf along the lakeshore. In 1910, the road was rebuilt from Oyama to Winfield along the lakeshore shelf, where it remained until recently. Today, the main route (Highway 97) is again at the higher level, roughly following the original stagecoach road. The lakeshore route is Pel-mewash Parkway.

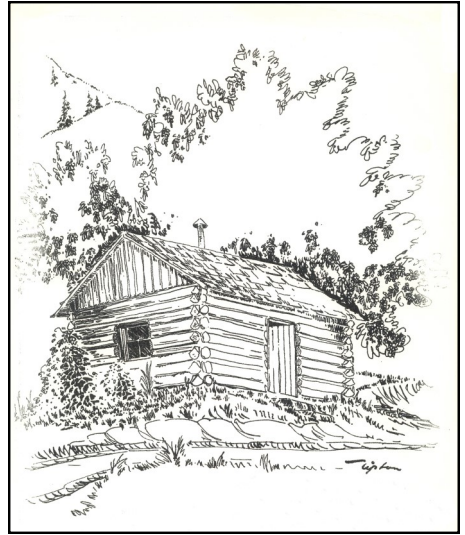
The Halfway House

The Halfway House was a one room cabin along the stagecoach road. It was built by Mark Howard, a local rancher, as a stagecoach depot on the lakeshore of Long (Kalamalka) Lake. The Halfway House was built in 1903 and operated for at least ten years. It fed and looked after the passengers and horse teams that traveled from Vernon to the Mission and Kelowna.

The Halfway House was located at Milepost 11 from Vernon. It wasn't halfway in distance from Vernon to Kelowna, but this distance was considered half of the effort for the horses. The horses had to climb up and over the Commonage hills coming out of Vernon.

The depot was owned and operated briefly by Mark Howard. Wilton R. Powley operated it from 1904 until about 1913. The stage owner then moved the depot to a location near Robinson Road west of Woodsdale Road.

Depot: A station or stopping place along a route.



The Halfway House LCMA
Sketch courtesy of Duane and Carol Thomson



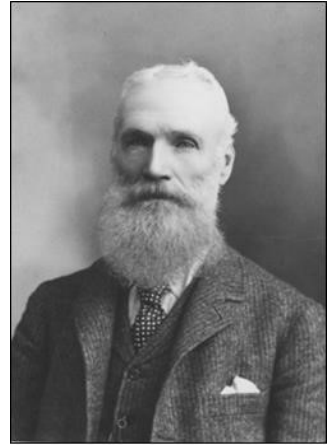
William Scott's mail stage, 1909

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Winfield's Early Days

Winfield's non-native settlement history goes back to the spring of 1871 when Thomas Wood arrived.

Thomas Wood was born in Bonavista, Newfoundland on March 1, 1841. He left his home in Newfoundland in 1861. He first tried prospecting for gold in various places and ended by driving a herd of cattle in partnership with Cornelius O'Keefe from California north to the Shuswap to feed miners in the Big Bend gold fields. He and his partners staked out land for cattle ranching at the head of Okanagan Lake.



LCMA
Thomas Wood

In 1871, Wood sold his share of the partnership to Tom Greenhow and set out on his own. He pre-empted 320 acres of land and established a new ranch on the hills and lower meadowlands to the east and south of Pelmeash Lake, which is now called Wood Lake. He built a cabin of logs and whipsawn lumber, and named it Winfield Lodge. His cattle ranch expanded quickly and within a few years his property covered 3800 acres.

On July 1, 1889 Thomas Wood married Ellen Florence "Nellie" Whelan. She was born in England, on October 6, 1861. Nellie's brother, George Whelan, was a pioneer rancher in the Ellison area. Nellie moved here to marry Thomas Wood, who was a neighbour of her brother George. Thomas and Nellie had four daughters, all born in the Winfield District: Florence (1890), May (1891), Ruth (1893), and Winnifred (1895).



Winfield Lodge, 1900

LCMA

Wood was practical and inventive. He improved his herd by importing good bulls and at one time he gathered bunch grass, threshed it and took the seed to Brent's Mill in the Mission where he had it ground into flour. In 1891, his ranch was at one end of the first private telephone line in the valley. The phone line started at the Postill ranch at the north end of Duck Lake, ran for 5 miles and cost \$55 per mile to install. Thomas Wood was also a Justice of the Peace from 1875 to 1890.

Wood was 61 years old in 1902 when he decided to retire from ranching. He leased part of his property to Price Ellison and sold some of it to others. He and his family moved to Victoria because of Nellie's poor health but Nellie died in Victoria in 1905. They had been married just 16 years. Thomas Wood died in Vancouver on October 27, 1931 at the age of ninety.

Thomas Wood's Winfield Lodge was demolished in 1923 to clear the way for the CN Rail line. His legacy remains in area place names, including Wood Lake and Woodsdale Road. In 1920, the growing district held a public meeting and chose the name of Winfield, after Thomas Wood's Winfield Lodge, for their community.

Whipsaw: *A saw used by two people*



LCMA

Cattle drive, Duck Lake, 1921

The Sternwheelers of Lake Okanagan

The steamboat days began in April 21, 1886 with a small ship called *Mary Victoria Greenhow*. She was the first steam-powered vessel on the lake.

At first the people on the shores of the beautiful lake depended on the steamboat service provided by local firms, but soon the CPR sternwheelers took over and a new way of life began. For many years the picturesque sternwheeler passenger ships traveled up and down Okanagan Lake. They played a large part in the life of their time. They are still remembered for their fine meals and comfortable accommodation.

The roads were very bad and the closest rail connected was at Okanagan Landing. The townsfolk, farmers and ranchers used these charming ships as their main means of travel. They went on special excursions and moonlight dance cruises. They went to picnics, regattas and farm fairs. To the settlers homesteading on the side of a hill, watching the boat coming round the point was a highlight of their daily lives. It meant mail, supplies and perhaps a chance to visit with friends and neighbours on the wharf. As one old timer put it, it made them feel far less isolated. For many, a round trip was the only vacation they could afford.



LCMA

SS Okanagan on Okanagan Lake. This ship was built at Okanagan Landing in 1907.

Such travel was easy. Even though it took more time than nowadays, it was much more relaxing. It was not uncommon for people to travel down the lake for dances, party all night, and come back the next day. One person recalled that it was an entirely different way of life. People didn't fret if the boat was late because they knew it would come some time. The crews were a 'fine bunch.' and often helped out beyond their duties.

Everyone spoke very highly of the superb meals. The tables were set with gleaming silver, spotless linen, and the CPR's own monogrammed china and glass. There was always local fresh fruit and vegetables, with milk and cream from Fintry Farms and other lakeside dairies. And the menu was large, with a choice of as many as eight meat courses.

There was a quietness and a serenity in lake travel in those days. The feeling of timelessness and tranquility when sailing on the old sternwheelers has become a long-ago memory, but one which many people still recall with delight.



LCMA

The SS Sicamous at Okanagan Centre wharf, 1926. Mr. James Gleed, postmaster is waiting at the dock to pick up the mail.

Source: Staff of Vernon Museum. Steamboats of the Okanagan. Vernon, BC: Vernon Museum, 1978. p. 1.

The SS Sicamous

The SS Sicamous was one of three CPR sternwheelers connecting the communities along the shores of Lake Okanagan. Launched in 1914, the SS Sicamous ran for many years. It connected the rail lines at Vernon and Penticton and numerous wharves, including Okanagan Centre. The sternwheeler operated until 1935 and is now permanently beached in Penticton as a part of a heritage shipyard.

Other luxury-class sternwheelers carrying fruit, produce, dry goods, and passengers were the CPR's SS Aberdeen and the SS Okanagan. Smaller boats, such as the SS Naramata, provided passenger service to other settlements around the lake.

The Grandview Hotel

The Grandview Hotel was the first hotel built in Okanagan Centre. It was beautifully constructed by Northcote Caesar in 1906, and it was located just steps away from the lake. In fact, the historic Grandview Hotel once stood in nearly the same location as the current Lake Country Museum.



The Grandview Hotel, 1909

LCMA

The hotel was stunning. Surrounded by trees, it had a wrap-around porch and many large windows which invited in the Okanagan sunlight. Caesar, a skilled craftsman, worked hard to build a hotel that would attract visitors from near and far. He was no stranger to woodwork and building design. Caesar had experience constructing everything from furniture to barns, and for this reason, the Grandview Hotel turned out as exquisitely as it did.

Unfortunately, Caesar's craftsmanship alone could not guarantee the hotel's success. According to Caesar's autobiography, the Grandview Hotel was expected to make a profit of \$70.00 a month, and for its first five months of operation, it did. However, as time went on, the hotel's monthly profit dropped dramatically, first to \$15.00, and then later to \$10.00. It is unclear exactly why the hotel's income plummeted so drastically over the years, but WWI was likely to blame.

However, despite not having many guests, the Grandview Hotel was a central part of the community. Henry and Lucy McFarlane, who lived in Okanagan Centre, chose the Grandview Hotel as the location for their wedding in 1918. Unfortunately, the historic building burned



LCMA

The Grandview after the fire of 1918

down shortly after the McFarlane's wedding took place. Fire completely engulfed the hotel, leaving behind nothing but the brick chimney surrounded by ash and rubble.

Okanagan Centre

For the first three decades of the twentieth century, Okanagan Centre was the commercial hub of the area that later became Lake Country. From the late 1800s to the 1930s, Okanagan Centre was one of the main shipping points for the central Okanagan and a major port for the sternwheelers. From this wharf, local apples, pears, and even cattle were shipped north to the railhead at Okanagan Landing and from there to points all over the world, while mail, supplies, and new settlers arrived.

By 1910, the town of Okanagan Centre had two hotels, the Grandview and the Westbury, a general merchant, and a hardware store. A school was opened in the newly-built church, and ground was broken for a packinghouse and a cannery.

In 1925, the Canadian National Railway connected Vernon to Kelowna through a rail line along Wood Lake. Gradually, the transportation corridor moved from Okanagan Lake and Okanagan Centre into the valley to the east and Winfield, and the railway and roads replaced the sternwheelers and freight barges.



LCMA

Main Street, Okanagan Centre, 1908

The Okanagan Valley Land Company

The Okanagan Valley Land Company planted most of the first orchards in Lake Country.

In 1892, two brothers, Homer and Vincent Maddock, bought thousands of acres of land. The land went from the Rainbow Ranche south to McKinley's Landing, and from Okanagan Lake east to the flats of Winfield and Thomas Wood's ranch. The brothers were absentee owners, who lived in Eastern Canada. They were active in the development of the area although they didn't move to Okanagan Centre until 1906.



LCMA

Homer Maddock

The two brothers sold their holdings to the Trusts and Guarantee Co. Ltd. of Toronto in 1907. That company set up the Okanagan Valley Land Company Ltd. and the Okanagan Centre Irrigation and Power Company Ltd. to develop and sell the subdivided lands. Property was sold as ten acre, twenty acre, or larger lots for apple orchards. In Okanagan Centre, lots sold to build houses were narrow, only twenty-five feet wide.

There was no water source for the bench lands in Okanagan Centre. The Maddock brothers and the Okanagan Valley Land Company worked hard to find a water supply. At the time, the pumps, which were wind powered, did not have the power to take the water for very long distances. They decided to run a water line from Beaver Lake. By 1909, the Okanagan Valley Land



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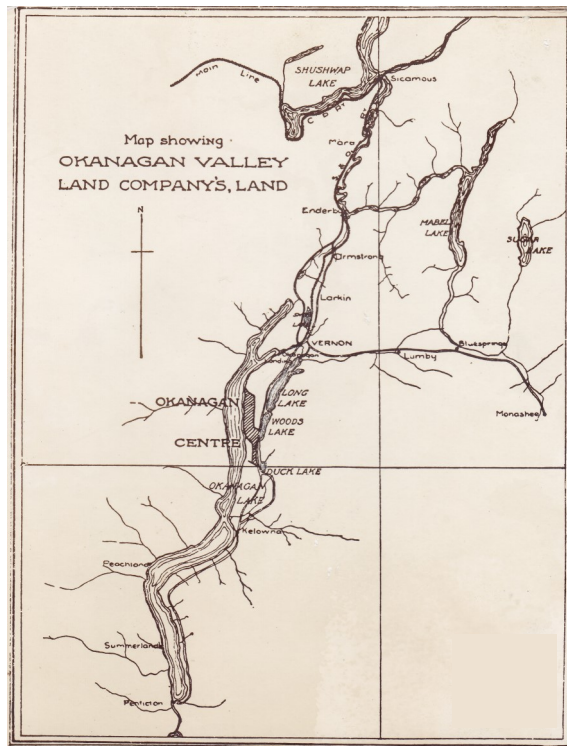
Early orchards, Camp Rd, 1909

Company had completed the main line of an irrigation system to Okanagan Centre. This water source became the water system for most of the areas of Winfield and Okanagan Centre. The Maddock brothers played a major role in this important project.

In 1908, the Maddock brothers gave a plot of land to the community for a cemetery.

Absentee owner: One who owns land but does not live in the community.

Acre: Approximately 4047 square metres.



LCMA

Okanagan Valley Land Company map



LCMA

Opening the Okanagan Valley Land Company office, 1908

The Japanese Worker's Camp

The Japanese worker's camp was built by the Okanagan Valley Land Company. The men and women who came from Japan to work in the first orchards lived there. The camp was located on Camp Road in Okanagan Centre, about where Seaton Park is today. From 1909 through the 1930s, many of the Japanese Canadian pioneers lived and worked at this camp.

The first Japanese pioneers arrived in Lake Country in the early 1900s, looking to work in the new orchards. They were young single men planning to work in Canada for a few years and then to return home to Japan. They brought with them many skills and a strong work ethic. They contributed a great deal to the success of the early orchards. Because of their experiences in the Okanagan and the beauty of the Lake Country region, many decided to stay and to build a life here.

Once established, many of these young men returned to Japan to marry and to bring their wives back to the Okanagan. Some of these workers moved to the Winfield area where they worked for the Okanagan Valley Land Company. Others moved to the Rainbow Rancho in Okanagan Centre. Many lived and worked



LCMA

Okanagan Valley Land Company worker's camp, winter 1909

on these fruit farms for years. Some were able to purchase land and develop their own acreages.

The first Japanese person to settle in British Columbia was a man named Manzo Nagano in 1877. By 1896, approximately one thousand Japanese had immigrated to BC. Four years later this number had grown to forty-five hundred, and was nine-

ty percent of all Japanese living in Canada. Between 1906 and 1907, a second wave of ten thousand more Japanese arrived in Canada and settled in BC. These first generation Japanese immigrants, or *Issei*, did not usually plan to stay. They came as sojourners, or *dekaseginin*, living simply and saving as much as they could, planning to return home.



LCMA

Names and location unknown

Immigrant: *A person who migrates to another country, usually for permanent residence.*

Sojourner: *One who stays temporarily in a place.*



LCMA

Eijiro Koyama

Eijiro Koyama immigrated to Canada in 1899, when he was only 18 years old. He worked first as a commercial fisherman and then for the railroad. Eijiro moved to the Coldstream Ranch in 1904 to manage the fruit tree nurseries. In 1916, Eijiro Koyama left the Coldstream Ranch and purchased property in Winfield.



LCMA

Denbei Kobayashi

Denbei Kobayashi began working at the Coldstream Ranch in 1907. He had a background in horticulture and soon became a nursery foreman. In 1909, Denbei left the Coldstream Ranch to work in Oyama and Okanagan Centre. He had a contract to plant 800 acres of fruit trees at the new Rainbow Ranche. The contract took three years to complete. It employed up to fifteen men and paid 4¢ for each tree planted.

Denbei and Hiro Kobayashi

The Rainbow Ranch

The Rainbow Ranch was one of the first independent fruit ranches in Lake Country. The history of the Rainbow Ranch began in 1893, when it was purchased by the Barr brothers at a land auction in Vernon. Originally part of the Commonage, the Barrs named it the 'Rainbow' because of the frequent rainbows spanning the property.



LCMA

Rainbow Ranch Orchard, 1910

In 1896, the Barr brothers sold the property to Northcote Henry Caesar and his partner, T. F. Valentine for \$2000.00. They planted hay and added to their income by logging, working at the Big Bend Mine, and transporting freight and passengers in their boat, *Wanderer*.

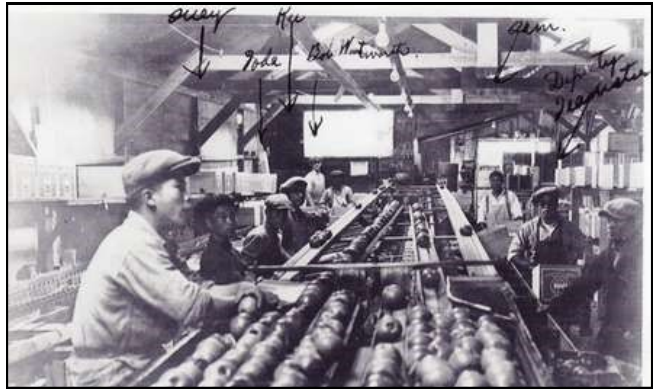
Until 1909, there were at least six different owners. At that point, J. E. McAllister (1/2 share), R. S. Dormer (1/4 share), and James Goldie (1/4 share) formed The Rainbow Ranch Ltd. Goldie was appointed manager for the absentee owners. The partners planted the first orchard. The Rainbow orchard was the first large scale fruit orchard in the Lake Country area.



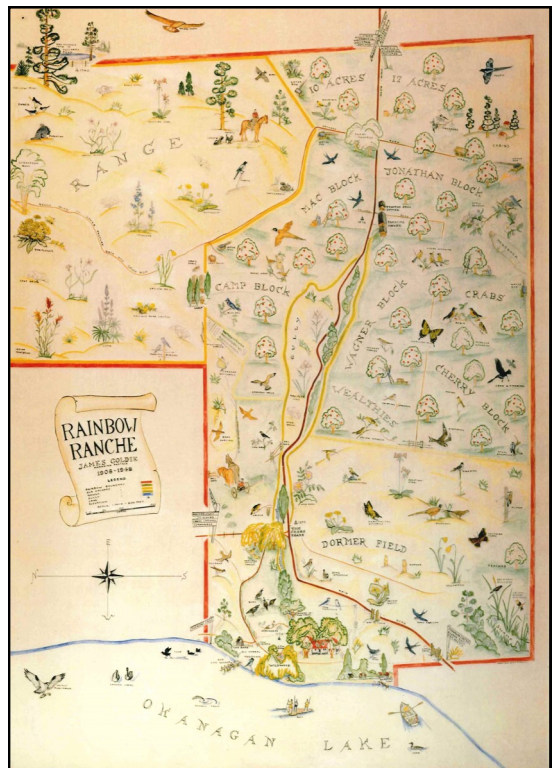
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SS Aberdeen in 1915, loading Rainbow Ranch fruit at the wharf at the foot of Pixton Road in Okanagan Centre. Man on the right is Rainbow Ranch Manager Jim Goldie.

With irrigation, fruit orchards soon covered the property, including 125 acres of apples. The Rainbow had its own packinghouse at the top of Rainbow Hill. When the packinghouse was in full operation it employed a large number of sorters and packers, most of whom were Japanese Canadians. The fruit was taken by wagon and team to the wharf at Okanagan Centre where it was picked up by one of the stern-wheelers and taken to the railhead at Vernon.



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Sorting apples at the Rainbow Ranche Packinghouse, 1920



Hand drawn map of the Rainbow Ranche, by Nancy Goldie

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The Rainsford Ranch and the Goulding Family

George Cassilis Goulding (1886 – 1943) was the son of a wealthy Toronto family. Rather than going to work in his family's millinery business, George moved west.

In 1906, he arrived in this area and boarded with the Lloyd family at Long Lake Farm. The following year, he purchased 377 acres on the Long Lake Farm property at

\$20.00 an acre and also bought additional range land above the property. He eventually owned 2,060 acres - 60 acres in orchard and the rest as rangeland. The land, known as the Rainsford Ranch, was located northwest of the Oyama isthmus, and extended from the lake up the hillside.

George Goulding, with his wife May and their three children, Florence (1911), Margaret (1913), and William (1916), had one of the largest orchards in the Oyama area. He had arrived and purchased his land just before irrigation was brought in.

The Gouldings also established a large horse farm on the Rainsford Ranch. Here they bred and raised horses which they sold to other ranches and to new settlers. Goulding hired John Sadler as ranch foreman in 1908, and the whole Sadler family of John, his wife, and their five sons worked at the Rainsford Ranch.

Ranching

Lake Country lies 95 kilometres north of Osoyoos, which is on the Canada - United States border. Osoyoos is situated in the only semi-arid desert in Canada

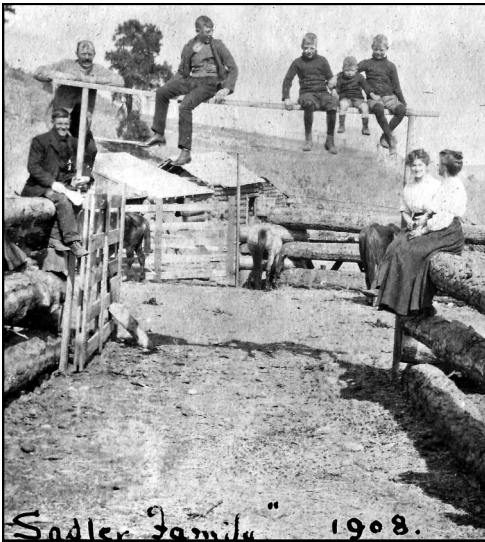


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Roping horses at the Rainsford Ranch, 1910

and it has the lowest rainfall in the country. This area is known as the arid biotic zone, and Lake Country is at the far north end. Irrigation has changed Lake Country's landscape from bunchgrass and ranches to orchards and vineyards.

Ranching was the major industry in the Okanagan before orchards. From the 1870s, when the first settlers began to arrive, through to about 1910, cattle ranches and rangeland for grazing took up most of the Lake Country area. Early ranches were located on both sides of Wood Lake and the west side of Kalamalka Lake, and the Commonage.



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The Sadler family at the Rainsford Ranch, 1908

Most of the ranchers could not survive on raising and selling cattle. They grew and raised their own food and earned extra income in other ways. Some of the ranchers supplemented their income by packing freight to the goldfields and to the mining areas of the Kootenays and northern British Columbia. Others grew cash crops such as hay. Ranchers who were located along the stagecoach road opened stopping houses, such as the Halfway House at Milepost 11, or small stores to supplement their income.

Millinery: *A maker of women's hats.*

Isthmus: *A narrow strip of land between two bodies of water.*

Arid biotic zone: *A desert landscape with very low rainfall.*

The Packinghouses of Oyama

The population of Oyama grew in the early 1900s. The introduction of irrigation changed the economy and local ranches began to switch to orchards. This created a demand for a local packinghouse. Oyama has access to transportation on Kalamalka Lake and the railhead at Vernon, and was a logical place for a packinghouse.

In 1913 the Vernon Fruit Union opened as a cooperative packinghouse which was supported by the Oyama growers. Stirling and Pitcairn opened an independent packinghouse on the canal in 1914. By 1916, individual orchardists entered the packing business. Dr. Irvine, W. T. Heddle, Jack Stevens, and Robert Allison all packed their own fruit. Heddle and Irvine has their own packinghouse near Dr. Irvine's house.

With increased production, hand grading at the Vernon Fruit Union was replaced by two grading machines and a storage plant. The Vernon Storage Co. opened in 1919 and the larger packinghouse was completed in 1921. By 1950, the Vernon Fruit Union packed 3000 boxes per day.



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*The VFU packing crew operating at the cannery building, 1914
Back Row: Winnie Brown, Mrs. Curfoot, Charlie Phillips, Alec Philips,
Sam Tyndall
Front Row: Floyd Whipple, Ted Fudge (Durham), 'Peggy' Rowan, Rowan
daughter, Martha Getty, Mrs. Rowan*

At the packinghouses the fruit was sized and graded, and apples considered not suitable for market due to bruises, blemishes, or poor colour were culled. In the early years, thousands of pounds of culls were dumped and left to rot. By WWI, small companies began dehydrating the culls and canning the dried fruit, and in the 1930s companies began processing the culls into apple juice.



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Bob Allison packing 'Bulldog Brand' apples in his orchard, 1925

Cull: *Something picked out and put aside as inferior.*



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The packing line at the VFU packinghouse in Oyama, 1940



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*Dumping Apples, 1930
Workers toss the culls off one side of the Vernon Fruit Union's packinghouse in Oyama.*

The Alvaston Jam Tin Post Office

Winfield's first official post office was named Alvaston. The first postmaster, Arthur Chatterton, named it after his father's home town of Alvaston, in Derbyshire, England. The name 'Alvaston' and the post office only lasted for ten years, from 1909 to 1919.



Few postmarks from Alvaston survive, most notably because the official post office wasn't located on the main road. It was more than a half a mile off the Vernon to Okanagan-Mission (Kelowna) stagecoach road, an inconvenient distance to travel to post a letter.

Instead, residents used the "Jam Tin" Post Office, where the Vernon to Kelowna mail coach picked up and dropped off letters. The Jam Tin post office consisted of a packing case by the side of the road, with a jam tin that held a small stock of stamps. Ingoing and outgoing mail from Alvaston was placed in the packing-case, left by or to be picked up by the mail stage. Users helped themselves to the stamps they needed and left the payment in the tin on the honour system.



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Art Gray and his mother at the Alvaston 'Jam Tin' Post Office, 1918. The Jam Tin is believed to have been located at the north-west corner of Davidson Road and Okanagan Centre Road East.

Letter from Dorothea Scott-Coward to Emily McDonnell
27 June, 1913

Okanagan Centre B.C. Canada , June 27th

Dearest Em

I have today received your letter of May 23rd (the quickest any of yours have come!) & the photo of the babies with Robert. I do like it & what a dear old thing Robert looks. Everybody here says "What a nice fellow." But my dear how determined both your blessed Pledges look. I begin to think you will be bossed in your declining years. You say again you hoped for a letter from me but did not get one. You never seem to get any of my letters. I wonder if the last one via Mother has reached you. I hope Mother has sent off the spoons for the babies' birthdays -- tho I fear they will be late for Peters birthday two years old poor lamb!

It is almost the anniversary of my starting out to this country. Tho I have had some fairly stiff times -- I have never a moment regretted coming, the only time I was at all wretched was my first few weeks with John. poor boy his health makes one forgive him everything, he is dreadfully ill really, I hardly think he can recover. You know the people out here don't look upon him as quite a sane person. Keep this to yourself. I have been careful to say as little as possible about him in my letters. He is far more quarrelsome than Ro & only people like my Bob -- (who are very few & far between) & who are too big in body & mind to trouble themselves about his lungs & only pity his unfortunate state -- put up with him. He has always meant to be kind to me -- but oh how patronizing in his ways!

You are a darling girl to send me a silk kimona. I shall be so glad of it & it sounds so pretty. I think I shall like Peach for a change from blue.

It seems feeble how I am independent & in such a good "posish" to give it up & become a ranchers' wife? But I know I am lucky for such a "straight" fine manly thing to like me at all. If the crops are good, he wants it to be in November. Everything here depends on the apples, peaches & tomatoes!!

Very much love,

Yr. loving D. S. C.

Fir Valley: Gold Mines and Ghost Town

Fir Valley was located about six kilometres east of Winfield off Beaver Lake Road on both sides of Clark Creek.

More than 100 years ago, it was a thriving pioneer community with a mill, mines, farms, settlers and its own schoolhouse. In the late 1800s, several families pre-empted land in the valley and built a settlement. Some of the first settlers were the Clarks who emigrated from south of Spokane, Washington. A few of their buildings still stand but are now on private land. Within a few years the McMasters, Dicks, and others arrived. They built roads, cabins, and barns, and they cleared the land and planted crops. An irrigation system was developed to bring water from Clark Creek to the fields. The settlers built a school, which they rebuilt three more times as each of the first three burned down.

What brought settlers to this remote area? One thought is that most of the prime bottomland surrounding Winfield was already privately owned. Another is that the groves of Poplar trees along Clark Creek indicated good soil for farming. Perhaps the real reason that drew the first settlers was a plan for the Midway to Vernon Railroad to go through the Fir Valley. Instead it was built from Midway to Rock Creek up the Kettle Valley before turning south and ascending to Penticton as part of the Kettle Valley Railway.



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The McMaster house and root cellar



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The Clarke family in Fir Valley, 1913

The geology of Fir Valley is very different from other areas of Lake Country. An ancient river channel containing placer gold lay buried under volcanic rock until eventually it was exposed by glacial action thousands of years ago. It was during the depression years of the 1930s that mining for gold began, and then stopped for the most part sometime in the mid 1940s. Records show only 75 ounces were accounted for during this time. East of Wood Lake there were several locations where gold was sought and in Fir Valley prospectors dug approximately eighty mines.

Emigrate: *Leave one's country to settle permanently in another country.*



LCMA

Ely & Hall Mine, Fir Valley

