

# Heritage Driving Tour Lake Country BC



*The Heritage Driving Tour is available online at:  
<https://www.historypin.org/>*



**history**pin

*Lake Country Heritage & Cultural Society  
11255 Okanagan Centre Road West  
Lake Country, BC V4V 2J7*

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<https://www.historypin.org/>*

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## **Heritage Driving Tour of Lake Country, BC**

The Heritage Driving Tour is a circle tour with thirteen heritage stops and additional optional stops at local wineries and points of interest. The tour begins at the District of Lake Country Municipal Building, 10150 Bottom Wood Lake Road, but can start at any of the stops. The tour is a total distance of 48.6 km and will take approximately one hour without stops and up to four hours with stops.

The District of Lake Country is located in the Okanagan valley in British Columbia. It has evolved over the last two hundred years from the homeland of the Syilx First People to an area of cattle ranches and, with irrigation, to today's orchards and vineyards.

The District of Lake Country, incorporated as a municipality in 1995, is made up of four community wards: Oyama, Winfield, Carr's Landing and Okanagan Centre. Shortly after incorporation a referendum was held whereby the residents decided they wished to maintain their distinct neighbourhood communities, resulting in the formation of the only municipality in British Columbia that currently utilizes a ward constituency system. Lake Country has a rich and varied history and has the distinction of having the most lakeshore of any municipality in British Columbia.

For more information about the heritage sites in Lake Country, please view our other History Pins or visit [www.lakecountrymuseum.com](http://www.lakecountrymuseum.com).

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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. Throughout the Okanagan, we see signs of the forces and events that created the landscape today.

During the Cretaceous period, approximately 100 million to 65 million years ago, the Western Interior Seaway split the continent of North America. This immense, shallow sea covered thousands of square kilometers, and was home to ancient marine reptiles and prehistoric sea creatures. The Okanagan valley was once oceanfront property, resting on a shallow ledge of bedrock at the far western edge.

Approximately 70 million years ago, the area experienced a series of geologic events. The Earth's tectonic plates began to move rapidly, draining the inland sea, forming mountain ranges, and exposing ancient bedrock. Massive fault line movement uplifted the Rocky Mountains and the ancient western shore was raised and filled in by deposits of sediment.

In the Okanagan, fault lines still rift the land. A series of zigzagging cracks known as the Okanagan Fault roughly follow the shape of the lake, and numerous smaller fault lines are found throughout the region. Fault movement in the Okanagan also caused volcanic activity. The remnants of those volcanoes now ring the valley as low hills. Long ago, Spion Kop, Knox Mountain, and Black Knight Mountain were all active volcanoes, erupting with explosions of ash and sediment.

More recent events carved the valley into its present shape. From one to two million years ago and again 15,000 years ago, extensive glaciers shaped the valley and its lakes. During the Fraser Glaciation, the region was covered in a vast glacier that 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, the retreating ice of the Fraser Glacier created an ice dam and an enormous lake that filled the valley. The sediment deposited from that lake, Glacial Lake Penticton, created silt and sandstone terraces along many parts of the valley and the melting ice formed lakes in the

hollows. The turquoise colour of Kalamalka Lake is caused by glacial minerals.

Approximately 9,000 years ago, after the glacier and its meltwater retreated, the first people entered the Okanagan Valley. Archaeologists believe that these early people travelled northeast from the Columbia River valley to the south, which had been populated 2,000 years earlier. While little is known about these first people, 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, an estimated 12,000 people lived in the valley. Traditional territory included the entire Okanagan Valley as far south as the Colville River area in the United States, and also the Arrow and Slocan lakes of the Kootenays, approximately 72,000 square kilometres of land.

The traditional Okanagan people have a rich culture and a well-regulated social structure. Families and bands moved within traditional use areas 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. These winter villages ranged in size from only a few homes to villages containing dozens of pithouses.

In Lake Country, numerous artifacts have been found near lakes, suggesting that this area was well travelled as a seasonal hunting and fishing area. The Syilx Okanagan people today still have a strong relationship with the land and its forces.

*Okanagan Lake*



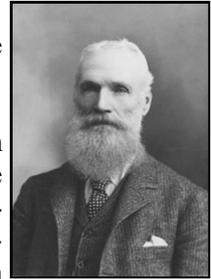
LCMA

**Stop 1 - Start the tour at the District of Lake Country Municipal Building, 10150 Bottom Wood Lake Road, Lake Country, BC**

## Winfield's Early Days

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

Thomas Wood, born in Bonavista, Newfoundland on March 1, 1841, left his home to move west 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 and Thomas Greenhow from Oregon 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.



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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 Pel-mewash (now Wood) Lake and eventually on the grazing land on the benchland east of the 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, who was 20 years his junior. Thomas and Nellie had four daughters, all born in the Winfield District: Florence (1890), May (1891), Ruth (1893), and Winnifred (1895).

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 for flour. In



LCMA

Winfield Lodge, 1900

1891, his ranch was at one end of the first private telephone line in the valley. The phone line started at the Post-till 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 90.



*Cattle drive, Duck Lake, 1921*

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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.

### ***Stop 2 - Jack Seaton Park, Camp Road***

*Turn right out of the parking lot and take the first exit (Berry Road) at the roundabout. Cross Highway 97, and at the junction turn right on Okanagan Centre Road East. Take the next left (Camp Road) and continue 1.5 km until you reach Jack Seaton Park on your left.*

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



*Early orchards, Camp Rd, 1909*

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## The Seaton Reservoir

The water used to irrigate the Okanagan Valley Land Company orchards arrived by wire wrapped pipe from the stream flowing out of Beaver Lake. It was stored in the reservoir just west of the entrance to Jack Seaton Park.



*Seaton Reservoir, 1950* LCMA

### ***Stop 3 - The Old Winfield Cemetery. Optional stops at Arrowleaf Cellars, Ex Nihilo Vineyards, and Blind Tiger Vineyards.***

*Continue west on Camp Road until you reach the junction with Davidson Road. Turn right on Davidson Road and continue north for .5 km to Cemetery Rd. Turn right on Cemetery Road to the Old Winfield Cemetery on the right hand side. (Note: Cemetery Road was spelled incorrectly on the first maps and the spelling has remained ever since).*



*Ex Nihilo Vineyards*  
1525 Camp Rd, Lake Country  
[www.exnihilovineyards.com](http://www.exnihilovineyards.com)



*Arrowleaf Cellars*  
1574 Camp Rd, Lake Country  
[www.arrowleafcellars.com](http://www.arrowleafcellars.com)



*Blind Tiger Vineyards*  
11014 Bond Rd, Lake Country  
[blindtigervineyards.ca](http://blindtigervineyards.ca)

## The Old Winfield Cemetery

The burial ground on Cemetery Road is known by several names, including “Old Winfield Cemetery” and “Okanagan Centre Cemetery”. It is the oldest local cemetery, dating back to about 1905. The oldest marked graves in this cemetery are those of Dr. Joseph Malloy (1863-1908) and Abraham Code (1842-1912). The most recent is that of Willis Newman (1908-1975).



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*The Old Winfield Cemetery, 1908*

The exact number of burials in this cemetery is not known, as burial records were destroyed in a house fire in the 1930s. The names and locations of burial of twenty-eight people are known. It is thought that ten other interments were made, but names and locations are not established. Burials in this cemetery reflect the local population, including a number of people of Japanese origin.

## The Japanese Worker’s Camp

The Japanese worker’s camp was built by the Okanagan Valley Land Company to house the men and women who came from Japan to work in the first orchards. The camp was located on Camp Road in Okanagan Centre, about where Jack 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, seeking work in the new orchards. They were young single men intending to work in Canada for a few years and then return home to Japan. They brought with them many skills and a strong work ethic, and they contributed a great deal to the success of the early orchards. Their experiences in the Okanagan and the beauty of the Lake Country region convinced many to stay and to build a life here.

Once established, many of these young men returned to Japan to marry and to bring their new wives back to the Okanagan. Some of these workers moved to the Winfield area where they



LCMA

*The Okanagan Valley Land Company Japanese Worker’s Camp, 1910*

worked for the Okanagan Valley Land Company; others moved to the Rainbow Ranche in Okanagan Centre. Many lived and worked on these fruit farms for years. Others were able to purchase land and develop their own acreages.



LCMA

The first Japanese person to settle in British Columbia was a man named Manzo Nagano, who arrived in 1877. By 1896, approximately one thousand Japanese had immigrated to BC. Four years later this number had grown to forty-five hundred, a population constituting ninety percent of all Japanese living in Canada. Between 1906 and 1907, a second wave of ten thousand Japanese arrived in Canada and settled in BC. These first generation Japanese immigrants, or *Issei*, initially came as sojourners, or *dekaseginin*, living frugally and saving as much as they could, planning to return home.

### Eijiro Koyama



LCMA

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

### Denbei Kobayashi



LCMA

Denbei Kobayashi began working at the Coldstream Ranch in 1907, and with a background in horticulture soon became a nursery foreman. In 1909, Denbei left the Coldstream Ranch to work in Oyama and Okanagan Centre where he took a contract to plant 800 acres of fruit trees at the new Rainbow Ranche. The contract took three years to complete, employing up to fifteen men.

Denbei and Hiro Kobayashi

Denbei Kobayashi built a packinghouse on Camp Road, Okanagan Centre, to sort and pack fruit from his orchard. The Kobayashi packinghouse was the first independent packinghouse in the area.



LCMA

*Kobayashi Packinghouse, 1929*

***Stop 4 - Okanagan Centre Beach and Heritage Marker. Optional stop at Gray Monk Winery.***

*Go back to Davidson Road, turn left until you reach Camp Road again. Continue west on Camp Road for 1.7 km. At the junction, turn left on Okanagan Centre Road West and continue a short distance to the Heritage Marker and public beach access on your right.*



*Gray Monk Winery  
1055 Camp Rd., Lake Country  
[www.graymonk.com](http://www.graymonk.com)*

*Established in 1972, Gray Monk is the oldest estate winery in British Columbia.*

## **Okanagan Centre Heritage Marker**

The Okanagan Centre Heritage Marker is located at the public beach in Okanagan Centre. It provides a brief history of Okanagan Centre with photographs of the first packinghouse and the Okanagan Centre wharf.



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Two children prepare to jump off one of the piers of the Okanagan Centre rail slip.



*Jumping into Okanagan Lake, 1953*

LCMA

## **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 Okanagan Lake. She was followed by a series of CPR sternwheelers beginning in 1893 with the launching of the SS Aberdeen.

For many years the picturesque sternwheeler passenger ships that travelled up and down Okanagan Lake played a large part in the lakeside community's life. They are still fondly remembered for their fine meals and comfortable accommodation. 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.

The roads were very rough, the railways never interconnected, and so townsfolk, farmers and ranchers alike used these charming ships as their chief means of travel. They went on special excursions and moonlight dance cruises, to picnics, regattas and farm fairs. To the settlers on otherwise isolated homesteads, the sight of the steamship 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.

Such travel was easy, for 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, they knew it would come sometime. The crews were a 'fine bunch' and many a time helped out beyond their duties.

Everyone spoke very highly of the superb meals. The tables were laid 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 stern-wheelers has become a long-ago memory, but one that many people still recall with delight.



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

LCMA

*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 connecting the rail lines at Vernon and Penticton and numerous landings and 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 SS Aberdeen and the SS Okanagan. Smaller boats, such as the SS Naramata, provided passenger service to other settlements around the lake such as Carr's Landing, Caesar's Landing, and the Rainbow Ranche, as well as excursions for tourists.



LCMA

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

### **Stop 5 - Lake Country Museum & Archives.**

*Continue south on Okanagan Centre Road West until you reach the Lake Country Museum on your left (there is a parking lot just beside the museum).*

## **The Okanagan Valley Land Company**

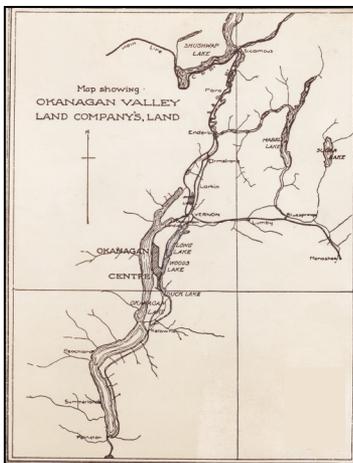
Land development in Lake Country was initiated by the Maddock brothers who, in 1892, bought up thousands of acres of land spanning a good part of Lake Country, an area from the Rainbow Rancho south to McKinley's Landing, and from Okanagan Lake east to the flats of Winfield



LCMA

Vincent and Homer Maddock were from eastern Canada, and are believed to have purchased the land in the Okanagan as absentee owners. They were instrumental in the development of the area although they didn't actually move to Okanagan Centre until 1906. They began development immediately thereafter, undoubtedly encouraged by earlier property developments in Peachland, Summerland and Naramata where irrigation infrastructure allowed for subdivision of rangeland into highly productive orchards.

*Opening the Okanagan Valley Land Company office, 1908*



LCMA

The two brothers sold their holdings to the Trusts and Guarantee Co. Ltd. of Toronto in 1907 to develop and sell the subdivided lands. That company set up the Okanagan Valley Land Company Ltd. and the Okanagan Centre Irrigation and Power Company Ltd. With CPR sternwheelers stopping daily at the community wharf, Okanagan Centre had access to the markets of the world and was ready to boom.

The Maddock brothers and the Okanagan Valley Land Company were instrumental in finding a water source for the bench lands in Okanagan Centre. At the time the

pumps, which were wind powered, did not have the power to take the water for very long distances. A decision was made to run a water line from the lakes above Fir Valley. By 1909, the Okanagan Valley Land Company had completed the main line of an irrigation system from Beaver Lake to Okanagan Centre. This water source became the domestic water system for most of the areas of Winfield and Okanagan Centre.

## 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



*Main Street, Okanagan Centre, 1908*

*LCMA*

the railhead at Okanagan Landing and from there to points all over the globe, while mail, dry goods, manufactured items, and new settlers arrived.

The Maddock brothers further subdivided a portion of their land into town site lots that were a mere 25 feet wide. These surveyed lots still exist, although many of the houses are built on parcels made up of several of these original narrow lots.

By 1910, the town of Okanagan Centre boasted two hotels, a general merchant, a Chinese laundry, and even a ‘red light’ district. A school was opened in the newly-built church, and ground was broken for a packing-house and a cannery.

In 1925, the Canadian National Railway connected Vernon to Kelowna through a rail link travelling through Winfield. 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.

## 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 boasted 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 woodworking 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 accommodating many guests, the Grandview Hotel was an integral part of the community. Henry and Lucy McFarlane, long-time residents of Okanagan Centre, chose the Grandview Hotel as the location for their wedding in 1918. Unfortunately, the historic building burned down shortly after the McFarlane's nuptials took place. Fire completely engulfed the hotel, leaving behind nothing but the brick chimney surrounded by ash and rubble.



*The Grandview Hotel after the fire, 1918*

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## Lake Country Museum & Archives

The Lake Country Museum, located at the shore of Lake Okanagan, houses artifacts, archival photographs, and collections from the District of Lake Country's earliest days.



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*Okanagan Centre School, 1930s*

The main building of the Museum is a historic two-room schoolhouse, where students were taught from 1932 to the mid-1980s. The museum also includes the Annex, an outdoor exhibit area, and the Wentworth Cabin, built by Cyril and Joseph Wentworth in 1906 and relocated to the Museum grounds in 1998. Through its exhibits and archives, the Museum tells the story of the District of Lake Country and its four wards of Winfield, Oya-ma, Carr's Landing, and Okanagan Centre. The Museum's artifacts include items from the Okanagan Syilx people, histories of the orchard, wine, and ranching industries, turn of the century living, and collections from the early Japanese community.

The Lake Country Museum and Archives are open year round. Admission is by donation.

### Museum Hours:

Mid-May to Labour Day: 10am to 4pm seven days a week

Winter hours: 1pm to 4pm, Mondays, Wednesdays, Saturdays

### Patio Café Hours:

Mother's Day to Labour Day, 9am to 5pm, seven days a week (weather permitting)



### ***Stop 6 - Gibson House, Kopje Park, Carr's Landing Road.***

*Go back (north) along Okanagan Centre Road West 2 km. At the junction, turn left onto Carr's Landing Road. Continue 5.4 km north on Carr's Landing Road to Kopje Park on the left.*

## Gibson Heritage House

George Middleton Gibson was born in England, November 28th, 1880. He came to Canada in 1904 with his friend Malcolm Parker Williams, who settled in Winfield. George worked on farms around Pritchard, where he heard of property that was for sale on Okanagan Lake. Delighted, he made arrangements and purchased it. George built a four room cottage, where he lived as a bachelor for seven years.



*Gibson House, 1920*

LCMA

Grace Chapman was born December 31st, 1889 in England. At the age of 22, she came to Canada, and worked as a ladies' companion to Mrs. Ward at Okanagan House nearby. Grace brought a telephone message to George one day, and that was how they met.

George and Grace returned to England to be married February 27th, 1913. While overseas, arrangements were made to build Gibson House, and Jim Gleed, Teddy Hare, and Cyril Wentworth were contracted as the builders.

George signed up with the Canadian Army in Vernon for the First World War, and upon arriving in England, transferred to the British Army. He was captured and held in prison in Lille, France for six months, which took a terrible toll on his health. George returned to Canada in 1919, where he found the farm in complete disarray. The fruit trees as well as some farm crops had to be replanted.

The Gibson property is now known as Kopje Park and the house is a heritage building and museum, restored through community donations.

### **Gibson House Hours:**

Open July and August - Saturday and Sunday, 12pm to 4pm

Kopje park is open in spring, summer, and fall during daylight hours. The parking area is closed during the winter.

## The Rainbow Ranche

The Rainbow Ranche was one of the first independent fruit ranches in Lake Country. The history of the Rainbow Ranche 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.

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*.

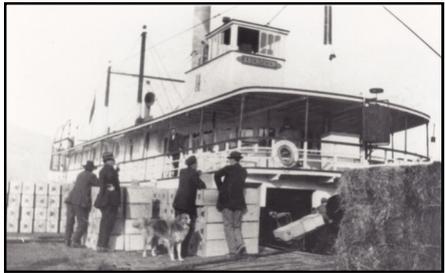
Until 1909, there were at least six different owners. At that point, J. E. McAllister (1/2 share), R. S. Dormer (1/4 share), and James Goldie (1/4 share) formed The Rainbow Ranche Ltd. Goldie was appointed manager for the absentee owners. The partners planted the first orchards.

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.



*Rainbow Ranche Orchard, 1910*  
Frank Hewer, one of the early owners of Rainbow Ranche kneels next to one of the trees in the newly planted orchard.

LCMA



*The SS Aberdeen loading Rainbow Ranche fruit at the wharf, 1919*

LCMA

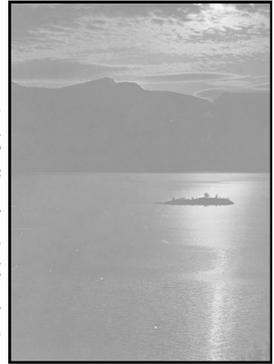


LCMA

*Sorting apples at the Rainbow Ranche Packinghouse, 1920*

## Grant Island

Grant Island is visible from Kopje Park. One of its original names was Nahun Wenox meaning “mother of a child”. The Okanagan Syilx people believed that the island originally broke off from the west side of the lake because it became filled with air and floated toward the east side to where it is now. Interestingly, Nahun Wenox’s supposed original location has identical, jagged rock formations to those that are found on the island itself. Today, Grant Island is a bird sanctuary.



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



*SS Okanagan in Whiskey Cove - 1910*

LCMA

### ***Stop 7 - Carr's Landing Heritage Marker***

*Continue north on Carr's Landing Road 1.5 km until you reach Marshall Park on the left.*

*Note: While there is ample parking at Marshall Park, the walkway to the Marker is not maintained.*

## Carr's Landing Heritage Marker

The Carr's Landing Heritage Marker, located at Marshall Park, tells the history of Andrew Carr and the early settlers.



LCMA

Carr's Landing was named for Andrew Carr (1841 - 1910) a Civil War veteran from Illinois. In 1894, Carr purchased 250 acres of land stretching east and south on which he planted fruit trees. He built a modest home on the slope above, where he lived with his wife, Agnes. Despite giving the community its name, Carr lived here a relatively short time. After a lengthy illness, he died at the age of 68. He is buried in the Vernon Cemetery.



*Andrew Carr, circa 1896*

*LCMA*

***Stop 8 - Coral Beach Park. Optional stop - 50th Parallel Estate Winery***

*Continue north on Carr's Landing Road 1km then turn left on Terrace View Road. Continue 0.9 km on Terrace View Road to Coral Beach Park.*



*50th Parallel Estate Winery  
17101 Terrace View Rd, Lake Country  
[www.50thparallel.com](http://www.50thparallel.com)*

***Stop 9 - Wood Lake, Pelmewash Parkway. Optional stop - Intrigue Wines.***

*Return south on Terrace View Road and Carr's Landing Road to Okanagan Centre Road East. At the junction, turn left and continue east on Okanagan Centre Road / Oceola Rd 2.5km to Highway 97. Turn left at the stoplight. Continue north on Highway 97 a short distance, then take the Pelmewash Parkway turnoff to the right. There are a number of pullouts and viewpoints of Wood Lake along Pelmewash Parkway.*



*Intrigue Wines*  
2291 Goldie Rd, Lake Country, BC  
[www.intriguewines.ca](http://www.intriguewines.ca)

*Intrigue Wines is located at the site of the former Rainbow Ranche packinghouse and has photographs and artifacts on exhibit in the wine shop.*

## The Commonage

Because settlement of the Okanagan Valley was taking place quickly, the Commonage was established to provide both the settlers and the Okanagan Syilx people a place where livestock could be pastured. The Commonage area was, at that time, the only tract of vacant land available in the area.

Commonage Road was initially merely a trail connecting the North and Central Okanagan. The early pioneers travelled the Commonage trail on horseback, transporting goods and mail to locations throughout the Okanagan. It was constructed as a road to service the community of Sunnywold that was established in the Commonage in the 1890s. Now it begins in Vernon and ends in Carr's Landing. The road on the east side of the Commonage was built in 1875 as the main stagecoach road connecting Priest's Valley (Vernon) to Okanagan Mission. Stagecoaches climbed out of Priest's Valley to the junction of present day Bailey Road from which they descended to travel along Kalamalka Lake to the Halfway House in Oya-ma.

On May 8, 1876 the Indian Reserve Commission issued a Minute of Decision reserving from settlement the tract of land between Okanagan, Kalamalka, and Wood lakes, and from Priest's Valley to Okanagan Centre, and area of 24,000 acres. This agreement bore the signatures of Dominion Commissioner, A. C. Anderson, Provincial Commissioner, Archibald McKinley, and Joint Commissioner, G. M. Sproat.

This agreement, made without consultation with the Okanagan Syilx, met the demands of the Westbank Indian Band for a land base, but deprived the Head of Okanagan Lake Band of substantial grazing land. In 1989, under the leadership of Chief Murray Alexis, the Okanagan Indian Band of the Syilx Nation brought its land claim for the Commonage Reserve forward. The land claim for title to the Commonage has yet to be resolved.



*Egg and Spoon Race , 1900*

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The government of British Columbia had the land on the Commonage surveyed into quarter sections which were then put up for sale by public auction in 1893. This tract of land attracted speculators, developers and farmers to locations along Okanagan, Kalamalka, and Wood lakes. Sale of the Commonage lands, along with the sale of Thomas Wood's rangeland on the east side of Wood Lake, was the impetus to the development of Oyama. A small farming community, Sunnywold, developed high up on the Commonage.

## The Okanagan Syilx Portage Routes

Lake Country is home to the Syilx Okanagan 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).



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*Sunnywold school picnic on the Commonage, 1910*

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 goods 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 this portage route and a recent archeological dig at Wood Lake has uncovered artifacts suggesting that 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.



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*Okanagan Centre Road roughly follows the historic portage route*

## The Alvaston Jam Tin Post Office

Winfield’s first official post office was named Alvaston, chosen by the first postmaster, Arthur Chatterton whose father’s family had come from the 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 contained a small stock of stamps. Ingoing and outgoing mail from Alvaston was placed in the packing-case, to be picked up or left 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 northwest corner of Davidson Road and Okanagan Centre Road East.*



*Wood Lake shoreline, 1936  
Pelmewash was the Okanagan Syilx name for Wood Lake. In 2013 the road along Wood Lake was named Pelmewash Parkway.*

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## Wood Lake Kokanee

Kokanee is a word from the Okanagan Syilx language referring 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.

Wood, Kalamalka, and Okanagan lakes host two types of Kokanee salmon – stream and shore spawners. The two populations are distinct. Stream spawners are much larger and they pair up to spawn in redds dug into the gravel of protected streams such as Vernon Creek. Smaller shore spawners behave very differently, likely because of predation. These salmon approach a rocky, crevassed lakeshore into which the females deposit their eggs. They are followed immediately by males who indiscriminately deposit milt over the eggs, perhaps hoping for the best result. The Kokanee immediately vacate the area before Lake Trout or Mergansers attack them.



*Wood Lake, 1905, looking north toward Oyama*

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### ***Stop 10 - Gatzke's Farm Market.***

*Continue north on Pelmewash Parkway 6km until you reach Gatzke's Farm Market on the left.*



*Gatzke's Farm Market  
Pelmewash Parkway, Lake Country, BC  
www.gatzkefarmmarkets.com*

## **The Vernon to Okanagan Mission Stagecoach Road**

This route was first used by the Okanagan Syilx people following the contour of the lakes, then by ranchers and settlers travelling up and down the valley. In the late nineteenth century the BC Government selected the route as one of the Okanagan's first roadways 'to be completed by January 1st, 1876'.

The route within Lake Country followed the Kalamalka lakeshore from present day Crystal Waters subdivision to the Halfway House stagecoach stopover located at present day Klub Kalamalka, hence climbing on the 'Old Mission Road' to the high level route of the Okanagan Syilx trail. It followed roughly the route of the new portion of Highway 97, proceeded through what is now The Lakes subdivision and emerged on present day Okanagan Centre Road East, hence to the western shore of Duck Lake. The mail stage along this route was operated successively by Walter Pritchard, Michael Healy, Sam Munson, William Scott (beginning circa 1907), and Jack Wyatt (1916).

When the canal connecting Wood and Kalamalka lakes was completed in 1908, the level of Wood Lake dropped by four feet, exposing a shelf along the lakeshore. In 1910 the provincial government decided to reroute the portion of the stagecoach road from Oyama to Winfield along the lakeshore, 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 now Pelmewash Parkway.



*The Vernon to Okanagan Mission Stagecoach Road, 1890*

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# Oyama

Prior to settlement, the Oyama isthmus was called ‘The Railroad’, likely referring to a corduroy or rail road made by the Okanagan people laying down willows and saplings to facilitate their portage crossing. In 1906, the name Oyama was suggested by Barbara and Elizabeth Irvine as the name for the new Post Office. This gesture of imperial enthusiasm was to honour the Japanese Field Marshal Oyama Iwao who led British-allied Japanese troops to victory over Russian forces in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904.



*Main Street, Oyama, 1942*  
*The Smith General Store and the Oyama Garage are on the right and the Log Cabin Tea Room is on the left. The road pictured is an earlier route that swung closer to the water where Pelme wash Parkway and Oyama Roads meet.*

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Transportation to the area was improved with the building of the Vernon-Okanagan Mission Road in 1875, and further developed when the navigation canal was constructed in 1908, allowing steamboat traffic between Kalamalka and Wood lakes. The Canadian National Railway completed its Kamloops to Kelowna line in 1925, building the rail bed along the exposed shelf on the east side of Wood Lake.



*Robert Allison's first winter, 1907*

A few settlers lived in Oyama before 1900, but in 1904 a number of new settlers arrived, building homes and planting orchards using irrigation water delivered from Oyama Lake. Water was delivered by flume to the east side in 1908, and by a wire-wrapped, siphon pipeline to the west side in 1909. The early orchardists planted tomatoes and other vegetables between the fruit trees as a cash crop. An orcharding community was established and Oyama grew, requiring an elementary school by 1911 and a high school by 1921.



*Oyama Fire Hall, 1958*

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**Stop 11 - The Oyama Community Hall and Oyama Heritage Marker**  
*Continue east on Oyama Road 1 km to the Oyama Community Hall on your left.*

## Oyama Heritage Marker

The Oyama Heritage Marker is located at the rear of the Oyama Community Hall. This marker recognizes the history of the Hall and the early community along the isthmus.



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## Oyama Community Hall

The Oyama Community Club was originally formed as the Kalamalka Agricultural Association, building a hall on a plot of land donated by Mr. Frank Rayburn. The first hall, built in 1913-1914, was officially opened January 23rd, 1914 by the Hon. Price Ellison. In the 1940s, the Kalamalka Agricultural Association became the Oyama Community Club, and over the years grew to encompass and operate the Memorial Hall, Pioneer Park, and the Oyama Cemetery. The original hall served the local community for over seventy years until 1984, when the new hall was completed on the same site. The Oyama Community Club and Pioneer Park are home to various community celebrations, meetings, and sporting events. The Memorial Hall upstairs contains a photo display and exhibits of Oyama's history.



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*Camel-back bridge over the Oyama Canal, 1913*

## Early Ranches

Ranching was the major industry in the Okanagan before orchards. From the 1870s, when the first settlers began to arrive in the area, through to about 1910, when irrigation was fully established, 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 was used for grazing.



*Branding cattle at the V V Ranch, 1913*  
Photo courtesy of the Greater Vernon Museum & Archives

Most of the ranchers could not survive on raising and selling cattle and were obliged to practice subsistence farming, growing and raising food and earning 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 potential cash crops such as hay. Ranchers who were located along the stagecoach road opened stopping houses or small stores to supplement their income, such as the Halfway House at Milepost 11.

George Goulding, the son of a wealthy Toronto family, established the Rainsford Ranch on property northwest of the Oyama isthmus and extended from the lake up the hillside. Goulding arrived in the Oyama area in 1906 and boarded with the Lloyd family at Long Lake Farm. The following year, he purchased 377 acres of 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 in hay and as rangeland. The Rainsford Ranch was a large operation, breeding and raising horses which were sold to other ranches and to new settlers.



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*The Rainsford Ranch, 1910*

## The Packinghouses of Oyama

The growth of Oyama in the early 1900s and the introduction of irrigation allowed for the development of orchards. This in turn created a demand for a local packinghouse.

In 1913 the Vernon Fruit Union opened as a cooperative packinghouse, supported by the Oyama growers. Stirling and Pitcairn opened an independent packinghouse in 1914, and by 1916 individual orchardists entered the packing business. Dr. Irvine, W. T. Heddle, Jack Stevens, and Robert Allison all packed their own fruit.

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 VFU packed 3000 boxes per day.

At the packinghouses the fruit was sized and graded, and apples deemed 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.



*Tossing the culls at the Vernon Fruit Union packinghouse, 1930.*

L.C.M.A.

### ***Stop 12 - The Oyama Cemetery.***

*Continue east on Oyama Road 0.9 km, then follow Oyama Road south 0.8 km until you reach the Oyama Cemetery on your right (14800 Oyama Road).*

# Oyama Cemetery

The property was formerly owned by the Reverend Arthur Vandeleur Despard, who donated the land to be used as a cemetery. The land was located next to the Anglican Manse. Reverend Despard's final resting spot is located at plot D13 in the cemetery.



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Rev. A. Despard

On December 5, 1955, the Oyama Community Club was granted the Oyama Cemetery property and have maintained it since then.

## ***Stop 13 - Winfield Heritage Marker / Swalwell Park. Optional stops - Reiswig Park, Beasley Park, Woodsdale Heritage Marker, the Lake Country Art Gallery and Art House.***

*Continue south on Oyama Road 5.7 km to Woodsdale Road. Turn right on Woodsdale Road and continue 1 km to Bottom Wood Lake Road. Turn left onto Bottom Wood Lake Road and continue 2.2 km to the second roundabout. Park at the Memorial Hall, at Memorial Park, or at Swalwell Park southeast of the roundabout.*

*The final stop is a park and walk site. Sites to explore are the kiosks, waterpark, skateboard park, and Middle Vernon Creek at Swalwell Park, the Memorial Park, the Heritage Marker, the walking trail and public art along the west side of Middle Vernon Creek, and Main Street, Winfield.*

## **Woodsdale Heritage Marker, Beasley Park**

The Woodsdale Heritage Marker is located in Beasley Park near the south shore of Wood Lake and tells the history of the Woodsdale community of Winfield.



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*Lake Country Art Gallery  
10356A Bottom Wood Lake Rd , Lake Country , BC  
www.lakecountryartgallery.ca*

*Hours: Wednesday 8am - 6pm, Thursday & Friday  
10am - 4pm, Saturday & Sunday 11am - 3pm*

## **Winfield Heritage Marker**

The Winfield Heritage Marker is located in the small park on the west side of the traffic circle. This marker tells the history of the early community of Winfield and Thomas Wood.



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Park at Swalwell Park to visit the Middle Vernon Creek walking trail and public art sculptures. The Lake Country Farmer's Market takes place at Swalwell Park, 3pm to 6pm every Friday during the summer.

## **Winfield Hall**

The first Winfield Hall was built in 1910 and served the community as both school and meeting place. The original hall was heated by a wood and coal furnace and was lit by gas lamps. For forty years, Winfield residents held Christmas concerts, Sunday school classes, and Farmer's Institute meetings in this building, which until 1921 also served as the local school.

In the autumn of 1948, construction began on a new Winfield Hall. Located beside the first one, the new hall opened in 1949 and was named the Winfield Memorial Hall in dedication to the local residents who had fought in World War I and World War II. Two years later, the first Winfield Hall closed permanently and was torn down, with some of the lumber used in final construction of the new hall.



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*Original Winfield Hall and School, 1910*

## Fir Valley: Gold Mines and Ghost Town

Fir Valley was located about six kilometres east of Winfield, up Beaver Lake Road. More than 100 years ago, it was a thriving pioneer community with a mill, mines, farms, settlers and its own schoolhouse, located on both sides of Clark Creek.



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*The McMaster house and root cellar*

In the late 1800s, several families pre-empted land in the valley and built a settlement. One of the first families were the Clarks, who had emigrated from south of Spokane, Washington. A few of their buildings still stand but are now on private land. Within a few years the McMaster and Dick families arrived, among others. Roads were built, structures erected, land was cleared and crops planted. An irrigation system was developed to bring water from Clark Creek to the fields. Eventually, schools were built, actually four in number, as three burned down.

What brought settlers to this remote area? One thought is that most of the prime bottomland surrounding Winfield had already been pre-empted. 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 Fir Valley. Instead it was built from Midway to Rock Creek, through the Myra Canyon, and became part of the Kettle Valley Railway.

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 commenced, only to cease for the most part sometime in the mid 1940s. Records show only 75 ounces were accounted for during this period. East of Wood Lake there were several locations where gold was sought, and in Fir Valley prospectors dug approximately 80 mines.



*Ely & Hall Mine, Fir Valley*

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For more information about the heritage sites in Lake Country, please view our other History Pins or visit [www.lakecountrymuseum.com](http://www.lakecountrymuseum.com).

