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History and Topography of OKANAGAN



FOR THE
ACTIVE MILITIA IN
CAMP, MAY 1914.



BY
CAPT. F. V. LONGSTAFF
CORPS OF GUIDES

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Militia Camp

Vernon, B.C., May, 1914

HISTORY OF OKANAGAN.

Mission Settlement,

situated just North of Kelowna. This dates from about 1860, and in 1877 there were 17 families, principally of half-breeds speaking French, two French priests, a church, school and mission buildings. Mr. Joseph Christien reached the Okanagan in 1861 and settled near the Mission, coming via Hope.

Okanagan Lake

is 69 miles long. West side is more heavily timbered than the East. It seldom freezes over, but has been known to do so.

Coldstream.

So called from the very cold spring which rises there. In 1864 Mr. F. G. Vernon and Mr. C. Vernon began gold mining on Cherry Creek, (to East of Lumby) but soon after started farming and stock raising on 1000 acres on what is now the famous fruit ranch.

B. X. Creek.

About 1866 Mr. F. G. Barnard obtained the B. X. Ranch four miles

North-east of Vernon, which he used to raise horses for working the B. X. Express service on the Cariboo Road.

O'Keefe.

About 1866, Mr. C. O'Keefe and Mr. T. Greenhow settled at the head of Okanagan Lake. They brought cattle from Oregon. For a long period the nearest Post Office was at Ducks, fifty miles North. About 1876 a Post Office was established at Mr. O'Keefe's place and named "Okanagan."

Vernon.

On a Dominion Geological Map, dated 1888, by G. M. Dawson, the name "Priest Valley" is given to the spot where the City of Vernon now stands. At the same time the name Vernon is given to the spot where the Coldstream Ranch now stands. In 1885, Mr. W. R. Megaw established the first general store in the Okanagan, and the usual cross road village came slowly into being. Before this the Hudson's Bay Company had a store here.

Another Cherry Creek miner was Luc Girouard, a "forty-niner" who became possessed of the land upon which part of the City of Vernon now stands. He was Vernon's first post-master.

In 1890 the land was laid out as a townsite. In 1891 the Coldstream

Ranch was bought by Lord Aberdeen. In 1892 the Shuswap and Okanagan Railway was completed. In 1893 the town was incorporated.

Kelowna.

This means a Grizzly bear. The land belonged to B. L. Lequime & Co. who were located at Okanagan Mission. The same firm started in a store at the present site of Kelowna in 1893.

Duck Lake.

This is situated about 25 miles South of Vernon, on the East side of the road to Kelowna. The Hon. Price Ellison owns much of the land here and the school district is called after him. He mined at Cherry Creek in 1876, afterwards taking up farming near Vernon and becoming the largest producer of wheat in B. C. Elected to Provincial Legislature in 1898. He is now Provincial Minister of Finance and Agriculture.

Lumby.

After Moses Lumby, an early settler of Spallumcheen Valley, and a moving spirit in construction of Okanagan and Shuswap Railway. Died in 1893 while serving as the Provincial Government Agent at Vernon. It is a large exporter of hay and there are many French-Canadians settled here.

Armstrong.

In 1891 many inhabitants from Lansdowne moved to the railway and formed the town, named after Mr. Armstrong, who purchased most of the bonds of the Shuswap and Okanagan Railway. It is situated on the divide between the watersheds of the Fraser and the Columbia rivers.

Enderby.

Mr. G. R. Lawes was an early settler on the spot in 1885. Named after a place mentioned in a song, "Ring Out the Brides of Enderby," which was sung in Mr. Lawes' house. Incorporated 1905. A. L. Fortune, oldest settler in Northern Okanagan, who came overland from the East, took up land in 1863.

Penticton.

At South end of Okanagan Lake. About 1877 Mr. T. Ellis had a fine farm known as Penticton on the East side of the river. Mr. A. H. Wade started the first store in 1883. At that time goods had to come in via Hope, up the Cariboo Road. Townsite laid out 1892. Town was incorporated 1909. An early steamer on Okanagan Lake was built in 1890 by Mr. Ellis and called "Penticton." It was 23 feet long and used coal oil for fuel.

Peachland

came into being during 1897 through the energy of Mr. J. M. Robinson.

Summerland

was formed in 1906, also being organized by Mr. J. M. Robinson.

The Okanagan Pack Trail.

In 1821 the Hudson's Bay Company entered into British Columbia (then known as New Caledonia), not by the building of trading posts, but by the amalgamation of the two concerns (Northwest Company and Hudson's Bay Company) under the name of the Hudson's Bay Company. The first traders received their supplies from the East, overland from Fort William on Lake Superior and across the Prairie by canoe and portage and so to Fort St. James on Stuart Lake. The Pacific Fur Company had shown the feasibility of taking supplies from the coast to the interior of the Thompson District, by way of the Columbia River to Fort Okanagan (now in U. S.) and thence by pack horses overland via Okanagan River, Okanagan Lake and Grande Prairie to Fort Thompson (now Kamloops). In 1821 this route was adopted for carrying supplies to the forts in New Caledonia, a distributing depot being established at Alexandria on the Fraser, North of Kamloops. In 1841 the

Thompson district was added to New Caledonia. In 1842 the records show that pack trains of 200 to 300 horses used in this route wintered round Fort Kamloops. In the summer of 1858, Mr. Tucker, formerly of Tehama, California, who had arrived at the Forks (now Lytton) in a company of 160 men and 400 pack animals from the Dalles, had been 30 days on the trip and had a severe fight with the Indians on the road at Fort Okanagan, in which they lost three killed and wounded.

After the discovery of gold on the Thompson in 1858 a new class of people came in and a totally different class of conditions was created. The Cariboo Road was completed about 1864, and this put an end to the use of the Okanagan Pack Trail. In 1875-76 a Government wagon road was built from Kamloops to Okanagan Mission. The C. P. R. track came through the North end of the district in 1885, and the first through train from the East on the 7th November, 1885.

Mails.

Soon after 1870 Barnard's Express stage ran to Okanagan Mission via Kamloops from the coast.

**TOPOGRAPHY OF COUNTRY SITU-
ATED BETWEEN VERNON,
KAMLOOPS AND
SICAMOUS.**

About the North end of Okanagan Lake is an extensive region characterized by broad open valleys, separated by lower ranges of hills, and affording not only fine stock ranges, but much arable and fruit land. The valley holding Okanagan Lake is continued N.N.E. for thirty miles to the southern extremity of the Spallumcheen Arm of the many armed Shuswap Lake. This is known as the Spallumcheen Valley and is occupied by the towns of Enderby and Armstrong. By it, as before mentioned, the Shuswap basin has originally been drained to the Columbia River.

Running N.W. from the head of Okanagan Lake is a second wide valley, which in eight miles leads to the elbow of the Salmon River, and there divides into three valleys of equal width to itself. One running for some miles nearly parallel to the Spallumcheen Valley, eventually unites with it; a second runs northward to the Salmon Arm of Shuswap Lake, and is followed by the lower portion of the Salmon River. The third carries the upper part of the same river and extends westward to Grande Prairie.

The Coldstream Valley, which runs eastward from near the head of Okanagan Lake, is the last of these great depressions and will first be noticed.

Two miles North-east from the North end of Long Lake (now Kalamalka Lake) is the famous Coldstream Ranch (established about 1865 by Mr. F. G. Vernon and first used for stock raising) from the large springs which here issue, giving rise at once to a brook of some size, which flows into Long Lake. The wide Coldstream Valley is in connection westward, by low ground, both with Long and Okanagan Lakes.

The water supply for the City of Vernon is drawn from the B. X. Creek which flows down the North-west slope of Aberdeen Mountain which is eleven miles North-east from Vernon City.

The following lakes flow into Okanagan Lake: Long, Swan, Goose and Otter. Okanagan Lake is five feet higher in the spring and early summer than in the fall by reason of water from melting snow on the high lands.

The water from the Shuswap Lake flows west to the Strait of Georgia via the South Thompson and the Fraser Rivers. That from Okanagan Lake flows south by the river of the

same name, to the Columbia River in the United States, whence it flows west to the Pacific Ocean.

The present water parting between the Fraser and the Columbia River systems is at Armstrong, where less than a mile separates Wright Creek (Fraser) from Deep Creek (Columbia). Five miles to the North-west of O'Keefe is Round Lake, on the road to Kamloops, via Grande Prairie and Ducks, which is on the water parting between Salmon River (Fraser) and Deep Creek (Columbia). Again Lumby is just over the divide from the Columbia system in that of the Fraser, as Bissett Creek flows via Shuswap River, Mabel Lake, and Shuswap River into Shuswap Lake.

The four miles of valley between Vernon and Okanagan Landing is closely cultivated and much split up with fences.

The range country to the North-west of Vernon is about 9 miles long and goes up to 2600 feet above sea level. It is from two to three miles wide and the west side is an Indian Reserve. There is a short-cut road across the North end of these hills via Goose Lake to the Indian Village at the head of the West arm of Okanagan Lake.

The country to the South-west of the camp along the Kelowna road is called The Commonage and contains

about 25,000 acres. It is high bench land, and the sides adjacent to the lakes being very abrupt. The height of the land is about 1300 feet above the lakes. It is owned by the ranchers of the district; probably one-sixth of this area is under cultivation. Owing to the number of ranches into which it is cut up, there are numerous fences, chiefly of the "A" type, but which are gradually being replaced by the barbed wire pattern.

Grande Prairie

is a very old farming settlement on the way to Kamloops from Okanagan Lake. It is 32 miles from Vernon City and about 16 miles Southeast of Ducks on the main line of the C. P. R. The valley of the Salmon River running West to East, widens out to form the Prairie, an area of flat land some thousand acres in extent, on which some good farms are placed. This is evidently the filled up or drained bed of a lake. The elevation is about 2000 feet and irrigation here again becomes necessary.

The road to Kamloops via Ducks turns North at the Prairie and passing Monte Lake at 2300 feet, descends to 1157 feet in sixteen miles, through a drift-blocked valley.

There is a road about twenty miles from Salmon Arm to Armstrong, which comes via Canoe and Deep Creeks.

MILEAGE TABLE.

Sicamous to—	
Vancouver City	335
Montreal City	2563
Vernon City	46
Okanagan Landing	50
Vernon City to—	
Lumby P. O. (E)	16 ¼
Blue Springs (E)	26 ½
Cherry Creek (E)	34
Kelowna P. O. (S)	35
Grande Prairie (N.W)	40
Okanagan Landing (S.W.)	4 ½
O'Keefe Ranch (N)	8
Round Lake (N)	13
Okanagan Centre (S)	17
Coldstream Ranch (E)	4 ½

ALTITUDES.

Approximate Only.

Shuswap Lake—	Feet
High water	1154
Low water	1143
Sicamous Station	1160
Vernon City	1258
Okanagan Lake—	
High water	1138
Low water	1133
Long Lake	1278
Aberdeen Mountain	6100
Swan Lake	1288
Larkin Station	1330
Armstrong Station	1189
Enderby Station	1165
Coldstream Ranch	1576
O'Keefe Ranch	1200

