



THE WESTBANK EXPRESS

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The SS Aberdeen

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Before bridges and major highways, travel across the Okanagan was limited and dangerous. As settlements along the lake were beginning to grow, the need for an established transport system arose. Treacherous horseback rides through the mountain trails or canoeing across the lake were no longer viable for trade and safe reliable travel.

As a result, the SS Aberdeen was constructed. Built by the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), the SS Aberdeen set out on its maiden voyage on May 22, 1893. This steamer, being the first of its kind on Okanagan Lake, was integral to modernized transportation for both passengers as well as cargo, such as fruit, lumber, and supplies.



SS Aberdeen at Westbank Wharf

The SS Aberdeen was named after John Campbell Gordon, the seventh Earl of Aberdeen. John owned the Coldstream Ranch in Vernon and pioneered commercial fruit growing in the region. The Aberdeens encouraged immigration to the Okanagan Valley, selling small plots of land to new arrivals for use as fruit farms. In the same year as the SS Aberdeen's maiden voyage, John was appointed governor-general of Canada.



John Campbell Hamilton, Earl of Aberdeen

So, what did the SS Aberdeen look like? The SS Aberdeen was 44.5 meters long and 9 metres wide. It had a passenger capacity of 250 and a cargo capacity of 180 tonnes (that is 396,832 pounds!). The first deck held the machinery, boiler, freight, and the crew quarters which slept eight. The second deck was comprised of a dining room, woman's saloon, smoking room, spare room, stewardess' room, pantry, eleven staterooms, and the purser's* office.

The steamer travelled between Okanagan Landing and Penticton, with a total of nineteen stops along the way. Passengers wanting to hitch a ride stood on the shore and waved a white cloth during the day or lit two fires at night.

*The crew member responsible for the handling of money on board.

This signalled the captain to pull into the dock for passenger pickup. The Aberdeen was in service from 1893 to 1919 when larger steamships were built such as the SS Okanagan and SS Sicamous.

The first captain of Aberdeen was Captain J. Foster who was a former mate of the SS Islander. R. Williams was the first mate, H. Fawcett was purser, and W.B. Couson was the first engineer.

Another noteworthy captain was Captain Joseph Weeks, who had initially joined Aberdeen's crew as a deckhand. Mr. Weeks later went on to command the SS Aberdeen and York before becoming the last captain of the SS Sicamous. Captain Weeks.



Crew working on the SS Aberdeen

"...the Aberdeen was the one that did the real pioneering as I am in a position to say having filled all positions on her at different times. Sometimes, even now, while we are loading or unloading cargo at different places if time allows, it is quite refreshing to take a walk around and see, houses, wire fences and many other things that was brought in on the old Aberdeen {...} and now to think that the end of the steamers is only a short while off as they must inevitably make room along with the railways for the motor on the road and the plane in the air."

Check out the SS Sicamous Heritage Park in Penticton for more information about the steamships that travelled along the Okanagan Lake!



Postcard of SS Aberdeen, 1895



SS Aberdeen crew, date unknown

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LOCAL EVENTS

Note: Due to Covid-19, these events are subject to changes or cancel without notice

Spring Okanagan Wine Festival

Apr. 30 @ 12:00 pm - May 17 @ 5:00 pm
 Various Okanagan wineries
 Cost: Varies

Numerous wine tastings during its multi-week run. Focuses on wines produced in the Okanagan.

Craft Culture Spring Market

May 30 @ 12:00 am - May 31 @ 12:00 am
 Kelowna Curling Club
 Cost: TBD

Featuring local vendors including crafts, food, and drinks

WESTBANK MUSEUM NEWS

The Westbank Museum is proud to announce that we have launched our new and improved website! Here you can find information on Westbank history, membership, previous Westbank Express issues, and much more. Visit <https://westbankmuseum.com>

RECIPE RELIC

Springtime Fancy Cake (1953)

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup shortening
- 2 cups sifted cake flour
- 2 1/2 teaspoons double-acting baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/3 cups sugar
- 7/8 cup milk (1 cup minus 2 tablespoons)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 eggs, unbeaten

Directions:

Sift dry ingredients onto shortening. Add vanilla to milk. Add 2/3 of the liquid. Beat one minute (count 150 strokes per minute). Add remaining liquid and the eggs. Beat 2 minutes. Turn into deep 8-inch layer pans. Bake in a moderate oven, 375 (F) for 25 minutes. Frost top and sides with green-colored buttercream frosting. With scissors, cut flower petals from marshmallows and cut gumdrops for centers.

ZZ Top with Cheap Trick

Apr. 24 @ 7:00 - 10:30 pm.
 South Okanagan Events Centre
 Cost: Varies

Enjoy a night of rock with this humorous group from Texas. Note: This event is held in Penticton.

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www.MrMozzarellaPizza.com



This recipe was taken from clinkamericana.com

FEATURED ARTIFACT

The Spinning Wheel



With the pandemic raging on, society has turned to new crafts and hobbies to keep busy. The art of spinning wool has made a resurgence among all generations. As a result, the sale of spinning wheels is at an all-time high.

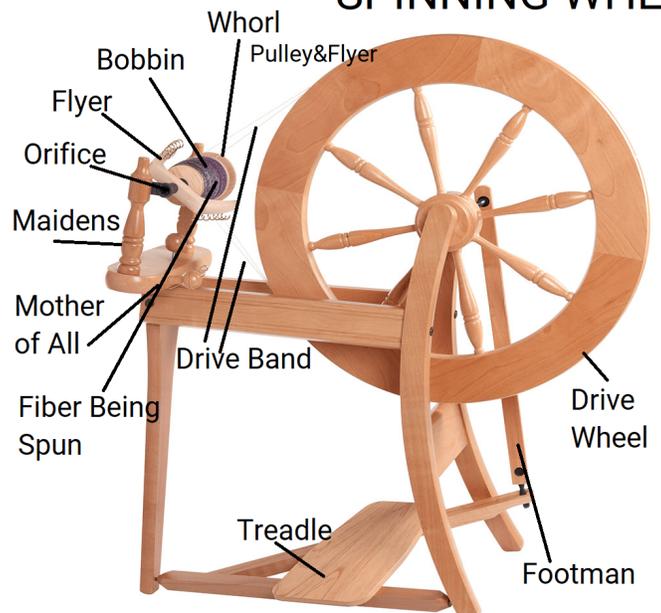
The Westbank Museum is fortunate enough to have a beautiful spinning wheel (pictured left). This particular style is called a Saxony Wheel, which is the most common style. Often referred to as the "Cinderella Wheel," the elements are arranged horizontally, unlike the Castle and Norwegian wheels which are stacked vertically. As you can see in the photograph, the Saxony Wheel has the large wheel situated above the treadle, with the flyer on the far end. This style of wheel also has three legs while other types of wheels may have four. The museum's wheel also has no shortage of character. The duct tape and hot glue speak for themselves, but it is actually still in great working shape.

So what exactly is a spinning wheel? Invented in the 14th century, this tool was used to spin wool fibre into yarn. It was fundamental for the textile industry before the Industrial Revolution, and it paved the way for future textile machinery such as the Spinning Jenny- which allowed the worker to spin eight spools or more at once- as well as the Spinning Frame which produced stronger thread than both the wheel and the Jenny.

While spinning fibre into yarn may seem simple at first glance, it is actually very intricate. However, with practice and patience, you could become a master spinner. Your teenager will be thrilled to discover that you have spun enough yarn to knit matching sweaters for the whole family!

For an educational and easy to follow tutorial on spinning wheels, we suggest checking out Jillian Eve's YouTube video, "How To Spin Yarn On A Spinning Wheel the First Time."

THE PARTS OF A TRADITIONAL SPINNING WHEEL



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