

THE WESTBANK EXPRESS

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WHERE DO I BEGIN:

DECOLONIZING THE OKANAGAN

By: Mackenzie Griffin

I would like to begin by stating that the Okanagan is located on the unceded territory of the Syilx (Okanagan) people. West Kelowna, specifically is home to Westbank First Nation, but the Okanagan Nation Alliance consists of seven communities in the area. These reserves are the Okanagan Indian Band, Osoyoos Indian Band, Penticton Indian Band, Upper Nicola Band, Upper and Lower Similkameen Indian Bands, and in Northern Washington State, the Colville Confederated Tribes. This is important to me because I believe the first step in decolonization and reconciliation is understanding whose land we are on.



Okanagan Nation Alliance Flag

I grew up off-reserve in a small town an hour and a half out of Edmonton. I am First Nations, but I didn't grow up surrounded by my Cree language, culture or traditions. Although my dad was white, he taught me much of what it means to be Indigenous and an ally and I cherish his knowledge greatly. However, it wasn't until I moved to the Okanagan to attend University that I really began to learn about my heritage and who I am as an Indigenous person.

You see being Indigenous means having a relationship to the land. It means our sense of identity is closely related to place, and that despite hundreds of years of colonization, Indigenous peoples have not gone away. In fact, many Indigenous peoples are speaking up and beginning the process of decolonizing. They are doing this by learning their language, listening to Elders and to our stories. Indigenous peoples are going back to the land, to our traditions and to our ceremonies. For example, the Columbia River Salmon Reintroduction began in 2019 and works to restore the Salmon population after Grand Coulee Dam which was developed in the 1930s and blocked the salmon's passage. People such as myself, are recognizing the strengths of their heritage and attempting to understand what it is they can do to decolonize. Still, the work of decolonizing does not begin and end with Indigenous peoples.



tmx[™]ulax[™] Land: Okanagan Nation Alliance



Now, I've heard the questions that follow many times. I'm not racist, and I didn't do anything wrong, so why should I have to pay for the misdeeds of my ancestors? I'm not Indigenous, so it's not my problem or the infamous; isn't colonization a thing of the past? To be honest, I hear you; no one wants to feel shame or guilt for something they feel they didn't do. Still, that doesn't negate the role that everyone must play in decolonization.



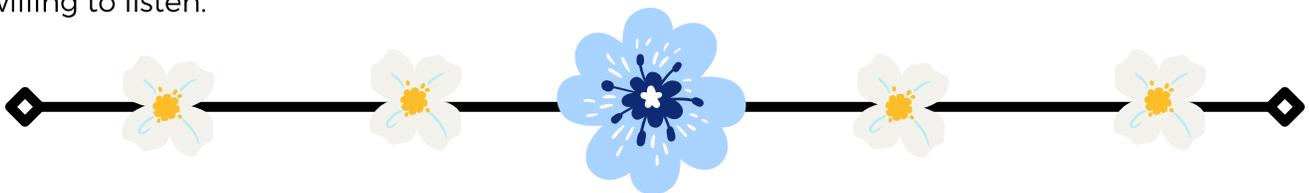
Social life of water - Okanagan Nation Alliance

So, let's say you're on this journey or are just starting out, but you don't know where to begin. What are some practical steps you can take towards reconciliation?

The first step is discovering whose land we're on. It begins with acknowledging our history from more than one perspective. The settler perspective is important because immigrants make up 21.5% of the population. We are, after all, a multicultural nation and proud to be so. Still, the Western settler perspective is not the only perspective that matters. For a very long time, the history of Indigenous peoples has been ignored and or silenced. So, listen to your Indigenous friends, families, coworkers and community members. Allow the voices of Indigenous people in your community to be heard. Share Indigenous events, art and culture you see in the community. Attend those events yourself.

Another thing you can do is research. Check out www.wfn.ca and www.sylx.org for more information about the Syilx (Okanagan) peoples. Read articles like "You don't call him Ogo-pogo, you call him by his name, n̓xa̓xaitk̓" by Kelsie Kilawna and check out indiginews.com for local Okanagan Indigenous news. Decolonizing is about recognizing one's own bias and misconceptions about Indigenous peoples. If you have questions, don't be afraid to ask them. Truly, we're all in this together.

So, say you've done your research, and you've started listening, what else can you do to begin decolonizing? Decolonizing is about coming back, back to the land, to our language and traditions. This means that part of decolonizing is honouring the land and listening to what it may have to teach us. Go on a hike, swim in the lake, plant a tomato in your garden, then spend time reflecting. We are beautiful, We are Okanagan because the land is beautiful. This is the Okanagan Nation Alliance motto, a truth greatly valued. When we care for the land, the land takes care of us. So, spend time on the land and listen to it. Take time away from your busy everyday life and enjoy everything it offers you, for there is always something the land is saying to you if only you are willing to listen.



Bibliography :

<https://www.statista.com/topics/2917/immigration-in-canada/#:~:text=Currently%2C%20annual%20immigration%20in%20Canada,of%20the%20total%20Canadian%20population.>

<https://www.sylx.org/about-us/>

<https://www.wfn.ca/our-community.htm>



LOCAL EVENTS

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

Yoga in the Vineyard

Sundays starting June 6th From 10 - 11 am
Where: Off the Grid Organic Winery
Cost: \$20
Register:
<https://www.offthegridorganicwinery.com>

Father's Day BBQ

Date: June 20th From 5 pm - 7 pm
Where: Grizzli Wineries
More: Live music by the Harshmellows, and BBQ by Let's Meat the Neighbours

Dirty Sundays Smith Creek

Date: June 13th & 27th From 9am - 12pm
Where: Meet @ Smith Creek Parking Lot
More: Visit westkelownatrailcrew.ca for more info

Live Music with the Treehuggers

Date: July 1st & August 19th from 5pm - 7 pm
Cost: Tables are \$20 to book
Where: Off the Grid Winery
Register:
<https://www.offthegridorganicwinery.com>

Father's Day Big Reds

Date: June 20th @ 6 pm
Where: Mission Hill Estates
Cost: \$180 per person
More:
<https://www.missionhillwinery.com/event/fathers-day-big-reds-dinner/>

Spirit of Syilx Unity Run

Suicide and Violence Awareness Run
Date: June 2nd - 7th
Where: Virtual via Zoom + Facebook
More Info + Registration on the Okanagan Nation Alliance Website

Grizzli Art Gallery: Tmixw-That Which Gives Life

Date: June 24th from 5 pm - 7pm
Cost: Free Admission
Where: Grizzli Estates
More: A Syilx Okanagan art instalment showcasing works from Suknaqinx artists David Wilson Sookinakin and Coralee Miller

Art in the Park

Date: July 3 - 4th 11am - 4pm
Cost: Free Admission
Where: Grizzli Estates
More: Two-day outdoor event to promote the arts community featuring a variety of Canadian artists, live music and wine.



WESTBANK MUSEUM NEWS

We're excited to announce that the beautification process for the Westbank Museum is underway. Work is being done to the front of the museum as well the South facing side compound and a mural is being put up on the North side of the building. Thank you to all of the sponsors and contributors to this important work.

RECIPE RELIC

Washington Salad (6 Servings)

Ingredients:

1/4 cup cold water
 3/4 cup hot water
 1/4 cup lemon juice
 1/4 cup maraschino syrup
 1/4 cup sugar
 1 envelope Knox Sparkling Gelatine
 1/3 Cup maraschino cherries
 1 cup celery, diced
 1/2 cup stuffed olives, sliced
 1/4 teaspoons salt
 1/3 cup almonds or other nuts



Directions:

Pour cold water into a bowl and sprinkle the gelatine on top of the water. Add sugar, salt and hot water and stir until dissolved. Add fruit juice. Cool, and when it begins to thicken, stir in other ingredients. Turn into small moulds that have been rinsed in cold water. Chill, and when firm, unmould on lettuce. Serve with preferred salad dressing .

The History of 1930s Gelatin Recipes:

The Washington Salad was one of the many unpalatable dishes within the Knox Gelatine Cookbook. Its array of colours, textures and flavours made for an interesting experience at the museum on Tuesday, May 18th. While this recipe may not look or taste particularly appealing, gelatin recipes were a popular dish in the 1930s. Because of this, the question on the museum employees' and volunteers' minds was: why?

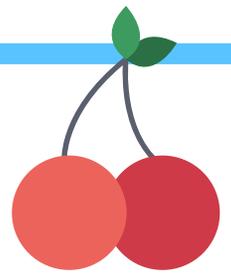
Apparently, by the 1930s more than 11 million women had entered the workforce. Women were looking for inexpensive and efficient recipes that were not time-consuming. As well, with the recent invention of the refrigerator, dishes that could be easily chilled and left alone were popular.

Another reason gelatin dishes were favoured by many was due to leftovers. Food waste was fairly nonexistent in the 1930s, and so, often, housewives would combine older ingredients into casseroles to create new and exciting dishes for members of their household.

Finally, a big question for everyone here was: why the assortment of colours and textures? Supposedly, the more colourful the dish, the more popular the hostess you were. If your dish was dainty, full of vivid colours and flamboyant swirls of mayonnaise, your dish was more attractive and appealing to diners. Back in the 1930s, this dish would score tons of brownie points at the next dinner party and we encourage everyone to try it out. Or not, we're not the boss of you.

This recipe was taken from the 1933 Knox Gelatine: Desserts, Salads, Candies and Frozen Dishes

Grahn, Emma. "Tasting the 1930s: An experiment with congealed salads and other one-dish wonders." National Museum of American History, Nov 2015, <https://americanhistory.si.edu/blog/tasting-1930s-experiment-congealed-salads-and-other-one-dish-wonders>



RAVE Reviews:

“
This concoction looked like the run off from an eavestrough on a miserable autumn day. And it somehow tasted worse. 2/10 Stars
 ”

“
It was the most weird, surprisingly unpleasant dish I've ever experienced. I can't believe anyone would eat that. It was probably the most offensive thing I've ever eaten.
 ”

FEATURED ARTIFACT 1965 Navy Uniform



Douglas Bruce Glenn served in the Royal Canadian Navy from 1940 to 1967. He began his career at 18 years old in 1940 in Nova Scotia but was later moved to serve at HMCS Star in Hamilton, ON. In 1965, Glenn went to the HMCS Beacon Hill, where he finished his career in the navy.

The HMCS STAR is a land-based naval establishment for training part-time sailors and as a major recruiting depot with over 7400s officers during the height of World War 2. Star was first commissioned in 1923 as the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve Hamilton Half Company and then in 1941 as the HMCS STAR. The STAR was named after Lord Melville/Star, a 14-gun brig from Kingston, Ontario, that served during the War of 1812. In 2013, the HMCS STAR celebrated its 90th anniversary. Today the naval reserve is used as a memorial and a place of learning about the Royal Canadian Navy.

The HMCS Beacon Hill was commissioned in 1943 at Esquimalt, British Columbia. It was brought to Nova Scotia after escorting HMCS Puncher from New Orleans to New York a few months later. Beacon Hill functioned mostly as an escort ship with trips to Bermuda, Northern Ireland, England and Scotland. The ship returned home on May 28th, 1945. In 1949 she was recommissioned for cadet training which continued until she was paid off in 1954 to become a Prestonian class ocean escort. The ship served on the West Coast until 1967. She was broken up for scrap in Sakai, Japan, the following year.

Douglas Bruce Glenn was one of the thousands of men and women who served in the Royal Canadian Navy, and we honour the sacrifices and contributions they've made to this country.



HMCS Beacon Hill K407 / 303

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<https://hamiltonnaval.ca/h-m-c-s-star/>

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<https://en.google-info.org/25017771/1/hmcs-star.html>

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