

Boeing 737 Introduction to Fulton Field (Kamloops Airport) Author: Neil Burton

The screaming of the engines of a Boeing 737 aircraft was first heard over the Kamloops area, fifty years ago, in 1968.

A large twin-engine jet, in the colors of yellow and forest green, colors of Boeing, swooped down to land on Fulton Field (Kamloops Airport) on Wednesday, August 14th, on the occasion of a familiarization flight orienting Canadian Pacific Airlines pilots to the new "bird".

That aircraft made several circuits of the Thompson River valley and made 4 landings on the airport.

The new 107-seat (?) Boeing aircraft would be replacing the DC 6 aircraft on B.C. scheduled services.

At that time, according to the Kamloops Daily Sentinel, travel time from Vancouver to Kamloops would be 28 minutes ramp to ramp. (Flight time on the DC 6 was said to be 1 hour.)

CPA had seven B-737 aircraft on order, with delivery, for the first expected to be in October, the 2nd in November and 3 more in December. Two more aircraft were expected to be delivered in March 1969. (Another article read 6 aircraft on order with one under option.)

The airline was expecting to have a B 737 in partial service on December 15 with scheduled service to Kamloops on December 22nd. The B-737 would be operating in CP Air's new color design.

(Note: Canadian Pacific Airlines would be introducing its "Half-Fare", for passengers over 65 years (space available, economy class), on its domestic routes on October 27, 1968.)

Kamloops' Mayor Peter Wing received word from the Canadian Transport Commission, via telegram, on Tuesday, November 5, that Pacific Western Airlines was given a Class 1 licence to operate between Vancouver, Kamloops and Calgary.

On Monday, November 18, a new Boeing 737 of CPAir (color scheme of orange, red and silver) landed at Fulton Field with Captain C.D. Lamb at the controls, when the airline was ironing out details (takeoff and landings) before a scheduled service in December. Plans were for the B-737 being used on a schedule to Prince George. In a photo appearing in the News Advertiser - November 20th, showing local Kamloops persons, and flight crew in the cabin, the only crew member named was stewardess, Frances Edmonds of Vancouver.

Pacific Western Airlines' new Boeing 737 flew into Fulton Field airport as a charter carrying the 80-voice British Columbia Telephone choir on Saturday, December 7, 1968.

PWA's inaugural Vancouver, Kamloops, Calgary "Stampeder" service was due to operate in the early morning of December 16, and would carry 35 Vancouver area civic, chamber of commerce and press representatives and board Kamloops dignitaries, Mayor Peter Wing, Ald. Tony Romano, city administrator Ted Chace, chamber of commerce president Ron Drinkwater and Jim Bevan, president of the Downtown Businessmen's Association for the onward flight on to Calgary. A return flight to Kamloops was planned for that same morning, where a civic luncheon, at the Canadian Inn, was planned

to host the Calgary officials, after a PWA ceremony. The Calgary officials were to stay overnight in Kamloops.

The planned inaugural "Stampeder" flight was cancelled due to low valley cloud following an early morning rain and warm air creating an inversion. Emissions of the refinery, pulp mill and sawmills might have added condensation to the ceiling.

A 23-pound Steelhead trout, caught by Ald. Romano was to be served, at the civic reception for guests, but had to be put on ice for another city function.

The Boeing 737 of PWA, in colors, white over silver, with mid-fuselage blue trim line and red over blue mustache logos began the "Stampeder" service on Tuesday, December 17. That first flight carried 34 passengers from Vancouver, 20 deplaning in Kamloops, while 12 passengers boarded for Calgary.

The stewardesses, wearing their western outfits, on this first "Stampeder" service were Elizabeth Angst and Susan de Silva.

PWA's schedule called for a Convair Javelin Jet-Prop operating westbound from Calgary through Kamloops to Vancouver in the morning and operating eastbound in the evening, while the B-737 would fly in the opposite direction to that of the Convair (Monday to Saturday). On Sunday, these aircraft would fly in the afternoon and evening only.

Fares for the "Stampeder" service were Vancouver-Calgary: \$34.00; Vancouver-Kamloops: \$19.00; and Kamloops-Calgary: \$22.00. Return fare was twice the one-way fare.

Menu on the "Stampeder" was the Ranchman's Eye Opener and Chuckwagon Breakfast -- Dust Cutter and Ranchman's Dinner served at appropriate times.

To accommodate these new B737 services to Fulton Field airport, the Department of Transport spent about \$80,000 for new airline check-in counters, passenger lounge area and more space for the restaurant. A new baggage pick-up area, under cover, was added.

The last scheduled Boeing 737 aircraft flight (equipment no. 767) of the CPAir-PWA-Canadian Airlines International era, passed westbound through Fulton Field on April 30, 1989. Two flight attendants working this trip were Karen Urquhart and Barb Roberts. (personal photo)

May 1st would see Time Air operating the former CAIL base.

#### Another Airline Landing at Fulton Field Airport

B. C. Air Lines, a division of CAE Industries Ltd., got the nod to operate an irregular air service from Vancouver to serve Kamloops to Mica Creek (the Mica Creek dam hydro electric project), from the Canadian Transport Commission on or about April 16, 1968. The airline couldn't carry passengers between Vancouver and Kamloops, nor, Kamloops to Vancouver.

The company leased a de Havilland Twin Otter aircraft to begin this service on or about May 15, 1968, and operated from Kamloops Aircraft's hangar due to crowding in the airport terminal.

(Researched using Kamloops Daily Sentinel and Kamloops News Advertiser.)

Research: Neil Burton - 02 December 2018.