

History of Ashcroft

The first people to inhabit the Ashcroft area were the Interior Salish and were a semi-nomadic tribe. They roamed the hills, forests and valley of the interior plateau during the warm months, hunting and gathering herbs, berries and vegetables. In the winters they settled in the valleys near the mouth of rivers where the fishing was good and the weather wasn't quite as harsh.

- 1860s Thousands of prospectors came to this territory on their way to the gold rush in the Cariboo creeks.
Ashcroft Manor was one of the road houses they stopped at along the way.
Cattle ranches were established in this region during the gold rush.
- 1863 Two families, John Barnes and William Brink preempted land and the surrounding hills and began farming, ranching, planting fruit trees and growing grain. They married two sisters and settled down to raise their families.
- 1866 Perry Ranch is established.
- 1871 Boston Bill Sandford has a ten mile irrigation ditch built from the Bonaparte to the flat of the land named after him (Boston Flats) only to find he was too low.
- 1874 Cache Creek Boarding School officially opens.
- 1890 Closes and operates after that as a day school.
- 1886 The Canadian Pacific Railroad goes into operation out of Ashcroft.
A one-room log schoolhouse was built on a postage size school site.
The bridge was constructed across the river to connect the town with the Cariboo Road.
The BX Freight Company moved to Ashcroft at that time.
- 1888 The first annual fall fair was held. A building was erected to house the exhibits where the Village office is now located.
- 1889 Ashcroft Opera house was built. The property was donated to the town of Ashcroft from J.C. Barnes for the purpose of erecting a town hall. This hall became an Opera House where many groups of entertainers came to perform.
- 1891/92 Two churches were built.
- 1892 – 1982 A Chinese merchant, Chow Sing opened a store in China town and remained a fixture on Railway Street until it was torn down in the early

1980s.

- 1895 A circus was brought into Ashcroft July 22.
The town's first newspaper, The Ashcroft Journal was launched by Dr. Frank Stewart Reynolds, a native of Wisconsin.
Ashcroft citizens received the first furniture catalogue ever issued in the province of British Columbia, from Shelton and Co. Victoria.
- 1898 A new school was built for approximately 70 – 80 students.
Electricity and water was turned on by Ashcroft Light and Water Company. Lights for many years were turned on only at night and were turned off at about 1 or 2 a.m.
- 1898 F.W. Foster built an icehouse to supply customers with ice during summer months. It was packed in sawdust.
- 1898 Ashcroft's Courthouse was built and then pulled down in 1930.
- 1899 The town officially became Ashcroft. It was first called Barnes Station in recognition of the man that owned the surrounding land. Then it was changed to Ashcroft Station and later the 'Station' was dropped.
- 1899 First electric lights were in Ashcroft Trading and Clements Drug Store.
- 1907 Ashcroft sees its first automobile.
- 1909 First Boy Scout Troup.
- 1913 The Lady Minto Hospital built.
- 1916 More than half of the town was lost to a disastrous fire.
- 1918 Phones were installed in Ashcroft.
- 1920 A third classroom was opened and a new teacher was hired.
- 1924 The freight barn was converted into a cannery and 160 people hired to can tomatoes.
- 1950 A four-classroom Secondary School was built on the same site as the old school.
- 1956 Ashcroft has artificial ice for curling and the official opening of the Curling Rink was November – then had a fire in 1975.
- 1956 A huge body of ore was discovered in Highland Valley.

- 1960s Copper Mine opened in Highland Valley.
- 1973 Students began attending the new Secondary School in North Ashcroft and could manage 600 pupils.
- 1974 Ashcroft's first arena opened.
Ashcroft Hotel burned a second time.
- 1975 The Drylands Arena burned down.
- 1982 Fire destroyed much of the old Lady Minto Hospital Building and Fire broke out in the Copper Courts Racquet Leisure Centre shortly after it opened. More recent fires: The new Court House, which opened in 1983 and burned in 1995. On June 2, 2001 Ashcroft lost the Bailey Building entire block.
- 1991 Ashcroft's newest bridge was built.