

History of Penticton

- 1865 The Penticton area was first inhabited by the Okanagan Natives, a branch of the Interior Salish. They were traditionally a hunting and gathering society, but by the time the white settlers arrived, they became proficient stock raisers and crop growers. The name Penticton was derived from the native word 'pentktn' which means "a place to stay forever".
- 1865 Tom Ellis was the first non-Native settler in the area. He was originally from England, and planned the formulation of the new town.
- 1890 The first hotel ("Penticton Hotel") was built, which later burned down in 1925.
- 1892 A town site was laid out around the Smith Street area. The street is now called Front Street, home to many unique stores and boutiques. Smith Street was named after C.S. Smith, who owned a sawmill and supplied much of the lumber used to construct the original buildings. This was home to many buildings that no longer exist, but which then housed the businesses of the day: Livery barns, blacksmiths, barbershops, bakershops, hotels, etc.
- 1902 The first schooling took place in a small cabin hidden among the trees on Vancouver Avenue.
- 1904 The first long distance phone lines were established, joining Princeton and Penticton. By 1909 there were 40 telephones in use in town.
- 1906 The first newspaper in Penticton was published by W.J. Clement. subscription to the newspaper cost just one dollar (payable in advance).
- 1907 Penticton had grown to the bountiful size of 600 residents, and was officially recognized by the British Columbia Government as a municipal district.
- 1910 Population of 1100.
- 1911 Penticton Lumber company opened the first sawmill in the area.
- 1912 Homes in the area had running water for the first time. A long distance telephone line was established between Penticton and Vernon.
- 1912 Penticton High opens. The original building has expanded and is now called Penticton Secondary with approximately 1500 students attending.

- 1914 The S.S. Sicamous was known as the Queen of the Lake. She was built in Port Harbor in Ontario and assembled in Okanagan Landing. Launched in May 1914, the 200-foot long paddle steamer used approximately 17 tons of coal per trip. The last commercial run was in 1936. Today the S.S. Sicamous can be seen on the shores of Okanagan Lake in Penticton.
- 1915 The Kettle Valley Railway was complete and the first passenger train arrived. At the time of construction, the population increased to about 1500 people.
- 1916 The first fire truck was built.
- 1919 After WWI the first orchards planted in Penticton had come into full production. About 2.5 million boxes of apples were produced at \$60 a ton.
- 1921 Population of 4000.
- 1920's The early days were difficult for road travel, but with the proliferation of the automobile and the constant increase in population, road-building was in full-force by the 1920's.
- 1927 Naramata Elementary School opens.
- 1936 The Penticton Post Office and Federal building was built on Main Street. The building is still in use today.
- 1937 Kaleden Elementary School opens.
- 1938 Site of Penticton airport was established. It was first used for military planes during the War and by Trans Canada Airlines as an emergency location.
- 1941 Population of 5743.
- 1946 Naramata, Kaleden and Penticton school districts were amalgamated into one school district.
- 1948 Penticton gained city status. The first radio station was established.
- 1950 Major improvements to the highway (both north and south of the city) and the opening of the Hope Princeton Highway in 1949 had a huge impact on the surrounding community and tourism.
- 1952 Carmi Elementary School opens.

- 1955 The Penticton Vee's hockey team brought home the World Cup after defeating the USSR 5-0.
- 1956 Cable TV came to Penticton with the installation of an antenna on the top of Blue Mountain. The first movie theater opened downtown, called the "Pen-Mar".
- 1957 West Bench Elementary School opens.
- 1959 A group of ski enthusiasts worked together to form Apex Alpine. In 1961 the first Pomalift was installed, 1968 the first T-Bar, and 1971 the first chairlift.
- 1964 Uplands Elementary School opens.
- 1967 Greenwood Forest Products opened their mill.
- 1970 Columbia Elementary School opens.
- 1971 The Queen visits Penticton.
- 1972 The Agricultural Land Reserve was established to put an end to city sprawl to save the orchards.
- 1974 The Cherry Lane Shopping Centre first opened.
- 1976 Parkway Elementary and Queens Park Elementary Schools open.
- 1989 The last train left Penticton and the CPR yards were demolished and rails pulled up leaving the city without rail service for the first time in 75 years.
- 1992 Wiltse Elementary School opens.
- 1997 In 1997 work began on a state of the art sewage disposal system to help protect Okanagan Lake and improve nearby developments.
- 2007 Continues to be a major tourist destination in the Southern Interior and now has a population of about 33,000 people.