

History of Williams Lake

- 1842 Early Settlement of Shuswaps in the area of Glendale now known as Comer.
- 1859 The beginning of the gold rush. Chief William welcomed Thomas Davidson, the first known white settler of this area.
- 1860 The first Williams Lake settlement (Indian church, stopping-house, jail, government building, several homes and barns) in area now known as Corner. First police Constable, William Pinchbeck. Columneetza Lake renamed Williams Lake. Philip N. Nind, the first gold commissioner.
- 1862 Smallpox, two-thirds of the Indians died, including Chief William. Succeeded by his son, the second Chief William. Chief William and his people are forced to look for new land, more and more white settlers.
- 1863 The Cariboo Wagon Road built from 150 Mile House to Soda Creek, bypassing Williams Lake. The little community eventually died. Pinchbeck stayed in partnership with William Lyne, Built up a magnificent farm.
- 1866 St. Joseph's Mission established by the Oblate Fathers in the San Jose Valley south of Williams Lake. The Indian Band lived nearby.
- 1880 The government purchased 4,100 acres at the head of the lake. Indians moved on to this land.
- 1884 The Williams Lake Indian Band officially established Sugar Cane Reserve.
- 1888 Pinchbeck bought out Lyne and took over the whole enterprise.
- 1893 Pinchbeck died, the ranch bought by Robert Borland, a pioneer packer and trader.
- 1912 Borland sold the ranch to the Pacific Eastern Railway (PGE).
- 1913 The population of WL approximately 20.
- 1919 The coming of the PGE, the birth of Williams Lake. Bank of Montreal and Bank of Commerce.
- 1920 Ranchers ship cattle from railhead at WL. First Official Stampede. Rough buildings along Railway Ave (now Mackenzie) and Oliver Street.

- 1921 Disastrous fire wiped out half the business district.
- 1925 Williams Lake's first hospital. Stampede hall built on First Ave.
- 1927 First airplane landed (on a cow pasture).
- 1929 Williams Lake incorporated as a village, population approximately 300.
- 1930 Williams Lake new electric power station and 18 streetlights. Tribune (newspaper) started.
- 1931 J.A. Smedley, the village commissioner. Population 402.
- 1934 First temporary airport on what is now Ninth and Tenth Ave.
- 1938 First air service. (Cariboo to Prince George and Fort St. John) January 2, the first "Wrestling Day" holiday.
- 1940 WL population 900. The war years, several businesses and War Memorial hospital had to close their doors.
- 1942 First Fire Hall, 24-hour phone service, hospital reopens.
- 1945 The first public library.
- 1947 Daily mail service, Oliver Street paved.
- 1948 Ranching backbone of community, lumbering started, Lignum Limited's planer mill in WL.
- 1949 Population of WL 1180. The building of the War Memorial Arena started.
- 1950 Williams Lake Elementary School opened. The Cariboo Highway goes along Oliver Street and River Road to Soda Creek. Williams Lake – record for the largest single cattle shopping center in BC.
- 1951 The New War Memorial Arena opened.
- 1953 252 high school students in WL.
- 1954 The RCMP moved into the new Federal Building.
- 1955 Cariboo Highway paved between 150 Mile and WL. Shyline School opened. Williams Lake population was 1700.

- 1956 PGE link to North Vancouver completed. 120 sawmills and 8 planers in WL.
- 1958 87 sawmills and 14 planers in WL.
- 1959 New high school opened (WLJHS). First concrete sidewalks. Homes received Street numbers. Construction of Glendale School. Bylaw passed making Wrestling Day (Jan 2).
- 1961 New Chilcotin bridge – Sheep Creek Bridge opened. New million airport at Wildwood.
- 1963 Population of WL 2120.
- 1965 Williams Lake a town. Mountview, Popular Glade and Chilcotin Road Elementary Schools opened.
- 1966 The new golf course opened. Old golf course becomes Boitanio Park.
- 1968 Rudy Johnson Bridge completed, privately owned toll bridge.
- 1969 New Provincial Building opened. Mineral explorations start at Gibraltar Mines.
- 1970 Williams Lake Elementary School renamed Marie Sharpe Elementary School.
- 1971 Boitanio Mall and new grandstands at the Stampede grounds constructed.
- 1972 Copper production started as Gibraltar mines (270 employees).
- 1974 Anne Stevenson Junior Secondary School opened.
- 1978 Nesika Elementary School opened.
- 1981 The Sam Kecham Pool opened. Glendale area part of the town. Williams Lake a city.
- 1989 Both arenas in the Cariboo Memorial Complex are opened.
- 1993 NW Energy Corporation's Generating Plan, (burns waste wood to create electricity) operational.
- 1998 New Williams Lake Secondary School. New cattle stockyards. New Canadian Tire store. Gibraltar Mines closed.

1999

New Williams Lake Public Library. South Lakeside part of the city.
Gibraltar Mines purchased by Taseko Mines Ltd., mines status is “care
& maintenance”.