

**1846:** The first commercial lumber mill in British Columbia began operation at Parson's Bridge near Victoria.

**1858:** Gold was found in the Fraser River valley and the Cariboo Mountains. New towns took shape — New Westminster, Nanaimo and Alberni on the coast, Chilliwack in the Fraser valley and Barkerville and Quesnel in the gold fields. Farms were tilled in the grassy valleys of the Chilcotin, Fraser and Thompson rivers.

**1862:** Victoria, with a population of two

thousand, was incorporated as a town. Lumber mills on the Burrard Inlet shipped mill work to the United States.

**1871:** British Columbia joined the Canadian federation after being promised a transcontinental railway. It had a population of 11,500 whites and perhaps twice as many Indians.

**1881:** British Columbia had a population of 52,500, including 25,000 Indians and 3,500 Chinese. Victoria, still the main town and port, had 7,000 people and 169 small manufacturing establishments. It exported gold, coal, seal furs, canned fish and lumber.

**1885:** The Transcontinental Railway was completed. This bound the province to the rest of the country with literal bands of steel, and it made Canada (instead of just British Columbia) a Pacific trader. British Columbia gained a new significance in British Imperial strategy. Henceforth British troops moving to the far east from home would voyage to Halifax, ride across Canada by rail and then take ship at Vancouver.

**1886:** The first Atlantic cable was laid. An overland telegraph route that had been planned between New York and London by way of British Columbia, Alaska and Siberia was suddenly cancelled. It stopped at Telegraph Creek in the northwest corner of the province.

**1890s:** Farmers irrigated the Okanagan Valley in the dry southern interior and planted orchards as well as the towns of Kamloops and Revelstoke. Coal was discovered and mined at Crow's Nest Pass in the southern Rockies.

**1901:** Vancouver, with 30,000 people, had outgrown Victoria.

**1914:** The Panama Canal gave British Columbia a great boost. Vancouver began shipping lumber and prairie grain to Europe. It had almost 100,000 people. Prince Rupert, at the top of the coast, was now a major wheat port and an established railway terminal which aimed to be a new gateway to the markets of the Orient.

**1920s:** The Orient did not develop as rapidly as hoped but the United States did. Oil and grain were shipped to California in increasing bulk.

**1929:** Greater Vancouver had a population of 247,000.

**1940s:** World War II kept the ports busy but coal shipments declined.

**1950s:** Trade to the Orient became significant. Japan was a prized customer for coal and a significant investor in copper mines.

**1970-1980:** Everything grew.



*Sir Matthew Baillie Begbie was the founding father of justice in British Columbia. He was appointed judge in 1858 and worked his way up to become the province's first Chief Justice, a stern but fair-minded man. Once, when a jury acquitted a man Begbie thought guilty of murder, he congratulated the man on his deliverance and expressed the hope that if he returned to a life of violence, his first victims would be the members of the jury.*