

The Rockies

The Rocky Mountain Trench, which separates the Rockies from the interior ranges, runs from the southeast corner of the province, northwest to the north central edge. The Rockies themselves are stunning and have been featured in numerous cigarette ads.

Peace River

The Peace River country in the northeastern part of the province is the most rural part of British Columbia. British Columbia Railway, which is provincially-owned, now connects it to the coast. The river rises as the Finlay in the Rockies and flows northeast, through Wood Buffalo National Park into Alberta. In the B.C. sector large-scale farms produce barley, oats, wheat and forage seeds. Since 1952 the region has been a major producer of natural gas and oil. A pipeline connecting it to Kamloops and Vancouver was laid in 1957.



Sunrise in the Rockies.

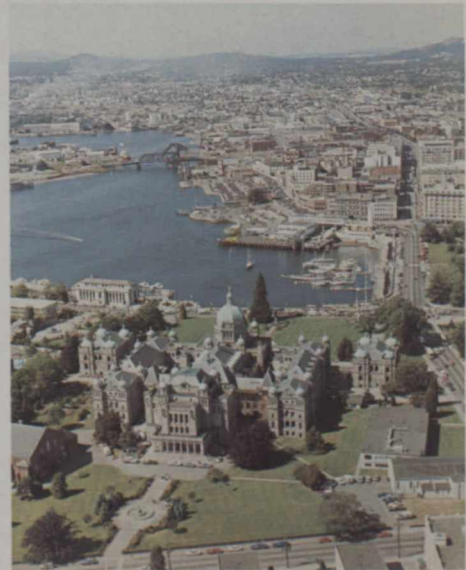
A Brief History of British Columbia

The first European to see the Queen Charlotte Islands and Vancouver Island was a Spanish explorer, Juan Perez, who sailed the coast in 1774. Four years later Captain James Cook, an Englishman looking for the Northwest Passage, arrived at Nootka Sound. To counter territorial claims made by Spain, Great Britain sent Captain George Vancouver in 1792 to survey the coast.

B.C.'s early history (like the history of most of Canada) revolved around the fur traders. The North West Company's Alexander Mackenzie reached the Pacific near Bella Coola in 1793 and Simon Fraser established Fort McLeod on McLeod

Lake in 1805. Three years later Fraser followed to the sea the great river that now bears his name. In 1807 David Thompson, another North Wester, built Kootenay House, the first trading post on the Columbia River. In 1821 the North West Company and Hudson's Bay Company merged, and in 1824 the governor of Hudson's Bay, George Simpson, visited the Pacific Coast and founded new posts.

1843: The Hudson's Bay Company built Fort Victoria on Vancouver Island and a British Colonial government was established there. The settlement eventually had seventy-nine dwellings, twelve stores, three very large farms and six hundred inhabitants. There was an adjacent village of seven hundred Indians.



Victoria then (left) and now (right).