

Calgary History

Fort Calgary

Nestled in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, the site occupied by present-day Calgary had a natural appeal to the traders, farmers and ranchers who settled this country. By the mid-19th century, the Dominion of Canada was taking shape, and was looking to solidify claims to the rich foothills plains. Settlers began arriving en masse.

In 1875, a 50-member detachment of the North-West Mounted Police was dispatched to the area, building a fort at the junction of the Bow and Elbow rivers. It was named Fort Calgary after the police commissioner's ancestral home in Scotland.

The Railway Arrives

In 1883 the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) reached Fort Calgary as it steadily made its way west across Canada. The steel rails would eventually link the young country from east to west, and would also guarantee Calgary its future.

In 1884, the fort became a town, and was well on its way to becoming an impressive western centre. Within another 10 years, the town's population had reached 6,000, and Calgary became a city.

Oil Town

In 1914 reserves of oil were discovered outside the town limits. The world needed the fuel desperately then, and Calgary had plenty. With the discovery, the city was destined to become the major North American energy centre that it is today.

Since its formation as a city, there have been a few periods of economic turmoil, but for the most part, Calgary has continued to grow: geographically, economically and socially.

The city remains the centre of Canada's energy industry, and other Calgary industries are gaining strength and international recognition.