

# A condensed history of Salmon Arm

Long before the Europeans came to the Shuswap the local First Nations enjoyed the area for hunting, fishing and gathering medicinal herbs and plants. They were a semi-nomadic people and there was no large settlement here.

In recorded history, explorer David Thompson mentioned a lake called 'Shuswap' to the west when he was going down the Columbia River in 1815.

Thirty-five years later a man named Tom Snass set up a trading post for Hudson's Bay Company at Pierre's Point.

Surveyors travelled through the Shuswap in 1884 to plan a new route for the Canadian Pacific Railway.

But things really started happening in 1885 when Dutch Charlie's, a brewery and gambling house, opened its doors for the railroad construction workers. It was near the present day Credit Union. It didn't last too many years before it was shut down by provincial police.

Two years later we see the first mention of the rich soil in the area. Just before the turn of the century the first non-Native settlers were building homes.

Perhaps one of the most significant dates in Salmon Arm history is 1891, when C.B.

Harris and J.D. McGuire planted the first apple trees. This would become Salmon Arm's main industry for years to come.

About this time we see a booming community of 28 people who were served by two stores and one ordained minister, Rev. James Calvert of the Methodist Church.

In 1895 Salmon Arm had its first hotel, named Cameron House after the owners, but it was later changed to the Coronation.

In 1897 Salmon Arm held its first fall fair.

The year 1900 was a big one for Salmon Arm as it marked the building of the first school right on the spot

where the present day city hall is.

The town's first doctor, Dr. Reinhart, put out his shingle in 1901 and in 1905 Salmon Arm was incorporated into a municipality.

Local residents enjoyed the new fangled machines called telephones in 1911. Before two decades had passed people could use the phone to find golf partners as the Salmon Arm Golf Course opened in 1928.

Askew's came a year later. It was a small meat and produce store to begin with but has become a downtown cornerstone.

By 1930 there were enough bad guys in town to warrant a court house.

The prosperous fruit industry went into

serious decline in the winter of 1949-1950 when temperatures plummeted to -35 Fahrenheit. The frost and cold killed off many of the fruit trees.

In the early 70s the city was hit first with water and then with fire. Salmon Arm had a major flood in 1972 and the next summer experienced the Fly Hills Fire. It was the worst fire on record until 1998 when the Mount Ida fire did its damage.

The mid 80s were better because the city got a new indoor pool and the longest curved wharf in B.C.

Salmon Arm has grown and prospered from the first settlement over a century ago. So many things have changed but in some ways it's much the same.

Case in point, the love of movies.

Salmon Arm residents have a long and proud history with movie theatres. The very first day electricity came to town local residents went to Rex Theatre to see some movies. That was back in 1907. There were movies before there was a library or a drug store or even a fire brigade.

Now, over a century later, Salmon Arm boasts of the Salmar Association, one of the few locally owned and operated theatres in North America. The Salmar is one of the last remaining theatres that still uses real butter and was one of the first movie theatres to buy a 3-D projector. So, you see, we really haven't changed all that much....



## SHUSWAP VISITORS' GUIDE

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[Salmon Arm Museum (1983.12.4)]

**Lakeshore News**



As Mayor, I take this opportunity, on behalf of Council, to welcome all visitors to our community. We are pleased that you have chosen to visit Salmon Arm, and know that you will enjoy the natural beauty, amenities and hospitality that we have to offer.

We are proud of our town and as you spend your time here you will no doubt understand why.

During your visit, please visit our business community and enjoy the friendliness of our residents. The Salmon Arm Chamber of Commerce has a wealth of information on the community and the Economic Development Corporation will supply you with information on business development in our area.

Enjoy your visit here and we hope you make plans to return.

Marty Bootsma, Mayor  
City of Salmon Arm



*Salmon Arm*