

# ALBERTA HISTORY

Educational Resource

September 2019

## Parliament Comes to Canada

Confederation in 1867 united Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. To extend the new dominion, the Canadian government took control of the vast fur-trading empire of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1870, calling it the North-West Territories. The area included what is now Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, the Yukon Territory, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories in addition to parts of what are now Ontario and Quebec.

## Tips for a Successful School Visit

- Review the Confirmation of Visit to ensure that all information is correct.
- Discuss expectations with students and volunteers. Teachers and parents are asked to turn off their cellphones, model good listening, supervise and remain with the students at all times.
- Ensure the bus driver is aware of the current drop off and pick up location (effective September 2018).

## What's Happening at the Legislature this Month?

02– [Final day of Where are the Children? Gallery Exhibit](#)

03– [School reservations/bookings open \(Winter 2020\)](#)

05– [Thursdays to be Discovered \(TBD\): Alberta Branded Workshop](#)

12– [TBD: Themed Tour](#)

19– [TBD: Escape Room](#)

26– [TBD: Movie Night](#)



Alberta Legislature (courtesy of the Legislative Assembly Office)

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- How Alberta Got Its Name
- Resource Links and Videos
- Classroom Activities
- Learning Outcomes

# A Brief History

The first people to live in what is now Alberta arrived following the last ice age, around 10,000 BCE. Communities developed in different ways depending on the landscape in which they lived and the available food sources. Extensive trading networks, settlements and cultural and spiritual practices flourished, and the population grew.

Fundamental changes began with the arrival of Europeans in North America after 1,500 CE. The introduction of horses, guns and new diseases, among other influences, had a major impact on Indigenous communities. The fur trade, mainly focused on beaver pelts, led to the establishment of posts, such as Fort Edmonton, that laid the foundation for permanent settlements.

The Hudson's Bay Company claimed ownership over the area, then known as Rupert's Land and the North-Western Territory, from 1670 until 1870, when it sold the land to the newly formed Dominion of Canada.

The rest of the area became the North-West Territories, administered by a Lieutenant Governor who was appointed by Ottawa. His priority was to negotiate treaties with the First Nations by which they would surrender their lands in return for reserves, food, shelter and other promises, including education and health care, so that a railway could be built to British Columbia and the prairie lands could be given to settlers.

## Did You Know?

The *Constitution Act*, 1871, provided for the creation of new provinces. All Acts which created provinces, beginning with the *Manitoba Act*, 1870, are part of our Constitution.

Originally the name Louise or Louiseland was considered for our new province, but Princess Louise Caroline Alberta was quite devoted to the memory of her father, Prince Albert, and wanted the name she had inherited from him to be used.<sup>1</sup>

Both Alberta and Saskatchewan became provinces on September 1, 1905.

## Territorial Governance

In 1872, the federal government passed the Dominion Lands Act to encourage the settlement of Canada's prairies. The federal government also built railroads and established the North-West Mounted Police. In 1875, the North-West Territories Act established a territorial government consisting of a Lieutenant Governor and a five-member council, all of whom were appointed by Ottawa. Initially the Dominion Lands Act was not greatly successful in encouraging the settlement of the prairies. Rather, the Act, combined with additional railway development and the decreasing availability of settlement lands in the United States, contributed to the settlement of the prairies in later years. Between 1901 and 1911 Alberta experienced a population boom, with its population increasing from 73,022 to 374,295.

The North-West Territories Act also provided for elected council members to replace appointed ones. By 1888 locally elected members outnumbered appointed ones, and the North-West Territories Council became the North-West Territories Legislative Assembly. By this time it had grown to 22 members plus three non-voting members, including seven from the provisional district of Alberta.



**Inauguration of Alberta as a province, 1905**  
(courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Alberta, A15486)

## Provincehood

Provincehood naturally followed population growth and elected representation. The settlers were geographically isolated from Ottawa and felt they should manage their own affairs. The Territorial Assembly gained control first over taxation and spending and later over the right to make the laws that governed the territories. Ottawa granted the territories responsible government in 1897, and in 1905 the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta were created.

Canada's Prime Minister at the time, Sir Wilfred Laurier, designated Alexander Rutherford to be the first Premier of Alberta, and the province was divided into 25 constituencies. The first provincial general election was held on November 9, 1905, with the Liberals winning 22 of the 25 seats. One of the Assembly's first decisions was to retain Edmonton as the permanent capital of Alberta.

## A Province Named Alberta<sup>1</sup>

Princess Louise Caroline Alberta was the fourth daughter of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Her husband, Sir John Douglas Sutherland Campbell, Marquess of Lorne, fourth Governor General of Canada, suggested the name "Alberta" in her honour.

Naming a district in western Canada after the Princess was in part a tradition. It helped convey a sense of royal presence and unity throughout the British Empire.

Sadly, the Princess never visited Alberta in her lifetime. However, we keep a bronze statue of her in the Legislature Building as a reminder of her impact on our province's identity.

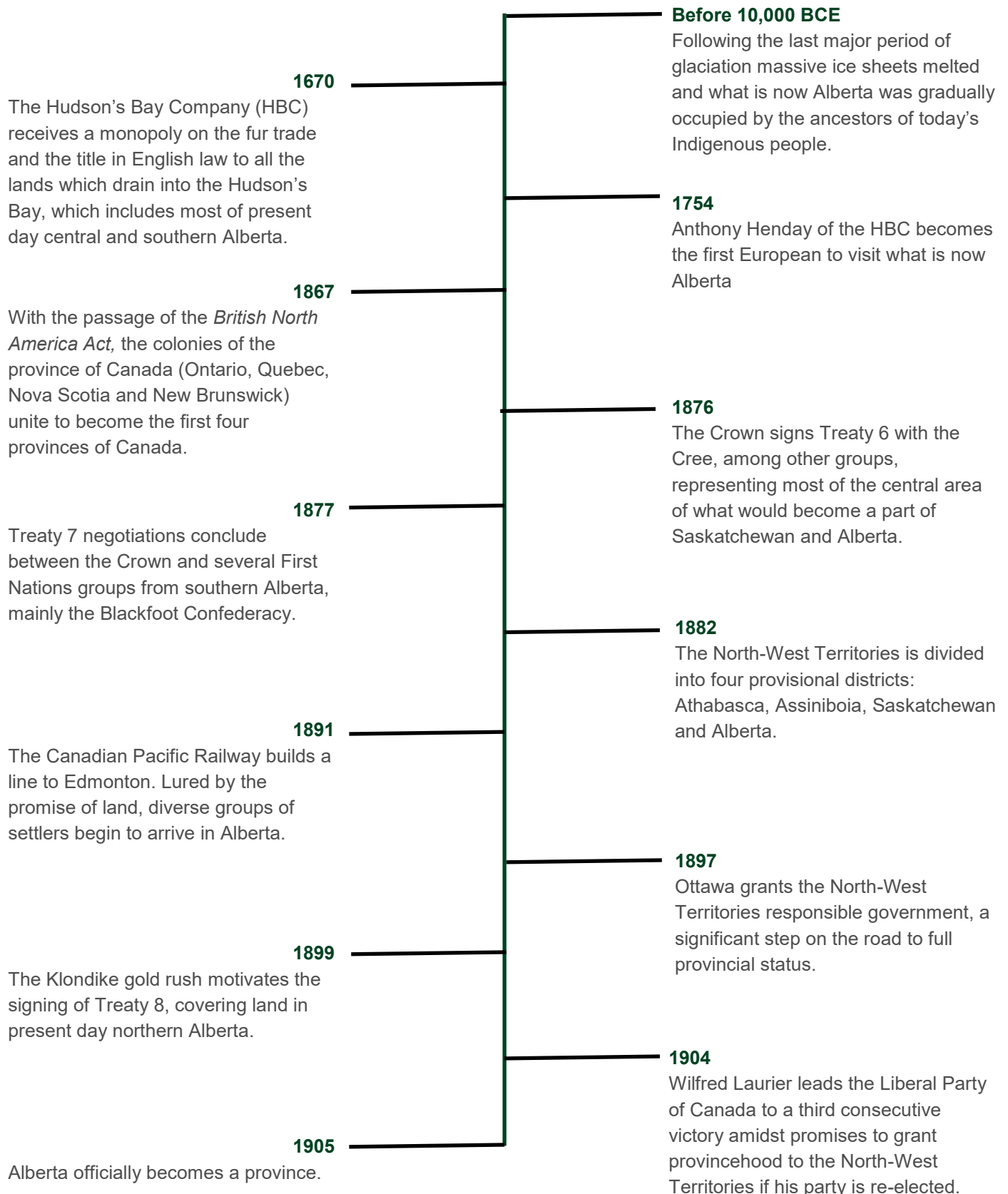


**Statue of Princess Louise Caroline Alberta**  
(courtesy of the Legislative Assembly Office)

*"I am intensely proud of this beautiful and wonderful Province being called after me, and that my husband should have thought of it."*

- Princess Louise Caroline Alberta<sup>1</sup>

# Becoming Alberta Timeline







Historic Fort Edmonton sits south of the Legislature Building site, 1912  
(courtesy of Glenbow Archives, NC-6-234)

## Activities

These three suggested activities ask students to consider how the formation of our province impacts how we view ourselves as Albertans today. Refer to the resource links and videos for more activities and background information.

## Evaluate

Examine the Becoming Alberta Timeline on the previous page. Choose which historical event was the most influential in the formation of the province of Alberta. Justify your choice. Which other important historical events could be included on the timeline?

## Compile

As a class, bring in or decide on objects to create a museum exhibit that showcases the history of Alberta. Be sure to include a description of why or how each object represents our province. Why is it important to society to preserve our history through objects and storytelling?

## Write

Imagine that you are at the signing of either Treaty 6, 7 or 8. Compose a letter to a friend describing the experience. How would your letter be different if you were writing it from the perspective of a settler versus a member of a First Nations group?

## Resource Links

[Ask an Expert](#)

[Citizen's Guide](#)

[Mock Legislature Resources](#)

[Princess Louise Caroline Alberta Biography](#)

[How Alberta Got Its Name](#)

[Alberta and Confederation](#)

[Alberta Becomes a Province](#)

[Alberta History](#)

[History of Planning in Alberta](#)

[Canadian Pacific Railway Student Resource](#)

[Alberta Treaties](#)

## Resource Videos

[Alberta's Political Beginning](#)

[Princess Louise Caroline Alberta](#)

[Canadian Pacific Railway](#)

[Alberta Treaties Road Trip](#)

[We Are All Treaty People](#)

# Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Understand how a knowledge of the history of Alberta, of Canada and of the world, contributes to a better comprehension of contemporary realities (Social Studies, Knowledge and Understanding)
- Apply historical and geographical skills to bring meaning to issues and events (Social Studies, Skills and Processes)
- Use historical and community resources to understand and organize the sequence of historical events (Social Studies, 6.S.2)
- Assess, critically, how the cultural and linguistic heritage and diversity of Alberta has evolved overtime by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues: How did British institutions provide the structure for the settlement of newcomers in Alberta (i.e. Assembly of the Northwest Territories)? (Social Studies, 4.2.2)
- Listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to explore thoughts, ideas, feelings and experiences. (English Language Arts, General Outcome 1)

Alberta Education Program of Studies

## Contact Us

Please let us know if you enjoyed this resource and if there are any other topics you would like to see covered.

Also, if you tried any of the suggested activities, we would love to see examples of your students' work!

### Visitor Services

3rd Floor  
9820-107 Street NW  
Edmonton, AB  
T5K 1E7

(780) 427-7362

[education@assembly.ab.ca](mailto:education@assembly.ab.ca)

Visit us on the web at  
[www.assembly.ab.ca](http://www.assembly.ab.ca)

Unless indicated otherwise, the included information has been taken directly from the Legislative Assembly Office's *The Citizen's Guide to the Alberta Legislature* (9th edition, 2016) or from the Legislative Assembly Office's Agora Interpretive Centre.

1. D. Blake McDougall, "Princess Louise Caroline Alberta", *Legislature Library*, August 20, 2019, <http://www.assembly.ab.ca/lao/library/louise/index.htm>

