

BC, Mid 1800's

The influx of migrants into BC during the gold rush

British Columbia in the early 1800's was basically a nothing. Unmapped, uninhabited and untamed. There was no reason to go there, until James Douglas found gold in the Fraser river in 1858 sparking what we now call the Fraser River Gold Rush and ultimately, the creation of modern BC. Over the next 30 or so years, thousands of people came to BC from all over the world. China, Hawaii, Australia, Chile and America where the post common. James Douglas, becoming a wealthy prospector devised ways to grow the gold empire and saw America as a great opportunity. There were already hundreds of miners in California that would be eager to strike it rich in BC, as the Californian gold rush dwindled. After the population skyrocketed, we begin to see changes in the demographics, specifically shown when groups of migrants creat, and live in civilizations where their cultures are displayed. When this diversity is formed there are positive and negative impacts on the other settlements around. One prominent negative being disease. around 1862 a wave of smallpox devastated the migrant population and indigenous killing thousands. Two thirds of the indigenous population in BC where killed, bringing the ratio of them, to migrants up ten fold, which created a sense of superiority and controlling to the Europeans and Americans especially. This lead to a push for BC to join confederation and establish itself under British control, and to modernize it's colony and protect itself from other countries. British Columbia joined Canadian Confederation in 1871 and is now a diverse and popular mountainous destination, full of rich history. and we have the gold rush to thank for that.