



The Ranching Story

Fur traders were the first newcomers to the Cariboo Chilcotin. They left few footprints. The Cariboo Gold Rush began in 1859, and while it lasted only a decade, it brought the cattlemen who found their futures, if not their fortunes, in the green gold of the Cariboo Chilcotin grasslands. Ranches established in the early days of the gold rush are still in operation. Alkali Lake Ranch is the oldest ranch in Western Canada.

The Williams Lake Story

The first white men came to the Secwepemc village beside the Lake with the fur trade in the mid-1880s. The lake was named for Secwepemc Chief William. It became the government centre for a few years during the gold rush but was bypassed by the Cariboo Wagon Road in 1863. What is now the city was a large ranch until the Pacific Great Eastern Railway arrived in 1919. An instant village sprouted in the wheat fields and Williams Lake became the service centre for the far-flung ranching community, and the largest cattle-shipping centre in the province. Today Williams Lake is the Cariboo's major service area. Ranching is still going strong but the forestry has become the major industry.

The Rodeo Story

Stampede or rodeos, began as friendly competitions between cowboys whenever ranchers and ranch hands gathered. The first formal Cariboo stampede was held in Williams Lake in 1920 and the lakecity became the Stampede Capital of B.C. Today many competitors are the third and fourth generation of First Nations and pioneer families to travel the rodeo road.



Cowboy Hall of Fame

Men on horseback have been working cattle for as long as history has been recorded. No one yet has found a substitute for a skilled horseman who knows how to handle cows. Whether in the arena or on the range, British Columbia cowboys are alive and well. The Hall of Fame honours rodeo cowboys, working cowboys, ranching pioneers, horsemen and cowboy artists.



Station house drawing by Dave Abbott

Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin

113 North 4th Avenue
Williams Lake, BC V2G 2C8
Phone: (250) 392-7404
Email: mccwl@uniserve.com
Website: www.cowboy-museum.com

June - August
Monday - Saturday
10 am - 4 pm

September - May
Tuesday - Saturday
11 am - 4 pm

Admission - Adults \$2.00

Acknowledgements of Support

City of Williams Lake
Cariboo Regional District
Signal Point Gaming
Community Arts Counsel

Groups Welcome
Public Bus Service



Museum



BC's only Ranching
Rodeo Museum



Home of the
BC Cowboy Hall of Fame
and featuring history
of Williams Lake
BC's Original Cowtown



- 1 Boitanio Park
- 2 Mountain Race
- 3 Pinchbeck Lower House
- 4 Pinchbeck Grave
- 5 Old Stockyards
- 6 Stampede Grounds
- 7 Tent City
- 8 Squaw Hall
- 9 Sacred Heart Church
- 10 Lakeview Hotel
- 11 Mackenzies Store
- 12 T.A. Moore Store
- 13 Bank of Commerce
- 14 Station House Gallery
- 15 Log Cabin Hotel
- 16 Johnson Barber Shop
- 17 Court House
- 18 Rifles Drug Store
- 19 Woodland Jewellers
- 20 Grand Central Hotel
- 21 Oliver Street Theatre
- 22 Hodgson House
- 23 W.L. Motors
- 24 St. Andrews Church
- 25 The Tribune
- 26 Forestry House
- 27 St. Peters Church
- 28 Smedley and Sharp
- 29 War Memorial Hospital
- 30 Parkside School
- 31 Ball Game (Kiwanis Park)
- 32 Moore House
- 33 Lignum's Planer Mill

To The Williams Lake
River Valley and Trails.

To The Airport
Quesnel and
Prince George

Welcome to the Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin

Enjoy a historic walk
through Williams
Lake and learn the
history of the stops
along the trail

Visit the Museum of the
Cariboo Chilcotin
for a complete history
of Williams Lake
and surrounding area



Williams Lake River

CARIBOO HIGHWAY

