Inspector Rex's History Snippet #46

St. Petersburg -> Petrograd->Leningrad->St. Petersburg

The History

Swedish colonists built Nyenskans, a fortress at the mouth of the Neva River in 1611, which was later called Ingermanland, which was inhabited by Finnic tribe of Ingrians. The small town of Nyen grew up around it.

At the end of the 17th century, Peter the Great, who was interested in seafaring and maritime affairs, wanted Russia to gain a seaport to trade with the rest of Europe. He needed a better seaport than the country's main one at the time, Arkhangelsk, which was on the White Sea in the far north and closed to shipping during the winter.

On 12 May [O.S. 1 May] 1703, during the Great Northern War, Peter the Great captured Nyenskans and soon replaced the fortress. On 27 May [O.S. 16 May] 1703, closer to the estuary (5 km (3 mi) inland from the gulf), on Zayachy (Hare) Island, he laid down the Peter and Paul Fortress, which became the first brick and stone building of the new city.

 The city was built by conscripted peasants from all over Russia; several Swedish prisoners of war were also involved in some years under the supervision of Alexander Menshikov.

Tens of thousands of serfs died building the city.

Later, the city became the centre of the Saint Petersburg Governorate. Peter moved the capital from Moscow to Saint Petersburg in 1712, 9 years before the Treaty of Nystad of 1721 ended the war; he referred to Saint Petersburg as the capital (or seat of government) as early as 1704.

In March 1917, during the February Revolution Nicholas II abdicated for himself and on behalf of his son, ending the Russian monarchy and over three hundred years of Romanov dynastic rule.

On 7 November [O.S. 25 October] 1917, the Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Lenin, stormed the Winter Palace in an event known thereafter as the October Revolution, which led to the end of the post-Tsarist provisional government, the transfer of all political power to the Soviets, and the rise of the Communist Party.[32] After that the city acquired a new descriptive name, "the city of three revolutions", referring to the three major developments in the political history of Russia of the early 20th century.

In September and October 1917, German troops invaded the West Estonian archipelago and threatened Petrograd with bombardment and invasion. On 12 March 1918, the Soviets transferred the government to Moscow, to keep it away from the state border. During the ensuing Civil War, in 1919 general Yudenich advancing from Estonia repeated the attempt to capture the city, but Leon Trotsky mobilized the army and forced him to retreat.

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Bolsheviks celebrating 1 May near the Winter Palace half a year after taking power, 1918

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St. Petersburg -> Petrograd
St. Petersburg saw its first name change in 1914 when World War I broke out. The Russians thought that the name sounded too German, and it was given a more "Russian-sounding" name.
- The *Petro* start of the name retains the history of honouring Peter the Great.
- The *-grad* portion is a common suffix used in a number of Russian cities and localities.

Petrograd -> Leningrad
Vladimir Ilyich Lenin led the Bolsheviks, and in 1922 the Soviet Union was created. After Lenin's death in 1924, Petrograd became known as Leningrad to honour the former leader. On 26 January 1924, five days after Lenin's death, Petrograd was renamed *Leningrad.*

Leningrad -> St. Petersburg
The dissolution of the Soviet Union occurred on 26 December 1991, officially granting self-governing independence to the Republics of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). As Communism began to collapse, Leningrad changed its name back to St Petersburg. Dropping Lenin's name meant abandoning the legacy of the Russian revolutionary leader. Communists fiercely opposed the change, but the Orthodox Church supported the idea. On 12 June 1991, simultaneously with the [first Russian presidential elections](), the city authorities arranged for the mayoral elections and a referendum upon the city's name, when the name reverted to Saint Petersburg. The turnout was 65%; 66.13% of the total count of votes went to [Anatoly Sobchak](), who became the first directly elected [mayor of the city]().

THUS

**St. Petersburg 1703-1917
-> Petrograd (1917-1924)
->Leningrad (1924-1991)
->St. Petersburg (1991-**