The first recorded laboratory pipette was designed by Joseph Black in 1769. It was a glass tube with a stopper that could be pushed to dispense liquid. The term "pipette" was coined by the chemist Joseph Louis Gay-Lussac, who used it in his 1824 publication to describe the device. The first mechanized pipette was invented by G.S. Riggs in 1903. It was a hand-operated syringe with a plunger that could be manually depressed to dispense liquid.

In 1955, Charles Lincoln Sprague developed the first foot-operated syringe. This design significantly improved the efficiency of pipetting, as it allowed for hands-free operation. In 1961, the first automated pipettes were developed by Foss Instruments, marking the beginning of the automation of pipetting.

The evolution of pipette technology continued with the development of micropipettes in the 1980s, which allowed for the precise dispensing of small volumes of liquid. The first multi-channel pipettes, which allowed for the simultaneous dispensing of multiple samples, were developed in the 1980s. This technology has become increasingly important in high-throughput screening and other applications requiring the rapid dispensing of large volumes of liquid.

Today, automated pipetting systems are widely used in research laboratories to improve efficiency and accuracy. These systems can be programmed to dispense different volumes of liquid, and can be controlled remotely. The development of microfluidics has also led to new applications for pipettes, such as the dispensing of very small volumes of liquid in microfluidic devices.