

HISTORICAL TIMELINE

Introduction for Students and Educators

In 2017, Canada turns 150! In marking Canada's sesquicentennial, *Historica Canada* is highlighting 50 events that have helped shape our country since Confederation. At the same time, it is important to note that the human history of what is now known as Canada began well before 1867. Indigenous peoples lived on this land long before European contact, and have histories that significantly predate modern Canada. We can look back upon many proud moments in our history, but must also examine many critically.

We encourage teachers and students to use this timeline in conjunction with the *Here's My Canada learning tools* to create a more complete picture of what Canada means to us today. We hope it will help to provide guidance for your 30-second video submissions to the *Here's My Canada contest*.

Although we make reference to "Canadians" throughout this learning tool, we encourage video submissions from anyone living in Canada, as well as citizens at home and abroad!

Look for this symbol to find connected Heritage Minutes at heritageminutes.ca

1867 Enacted on July 1, 1867, the *British North America Act* establishes the Dominion of Canada. It creates the framework for governing the country and gives the House of Commons and the Senate the power to "make laws for the peace, order and good government of Canada."

Delegates who gathered at the Charlottetown Conference to consider the confederation of the British North American Colonies/ Library and Archives Canada/PA-09106



1873 As Canada assumes control of its newly acquired Western territory, the *North-West Mounted Police* is established to maintain order and assist settlers. The red-coated "Mountie" becomes a symbol of Canada. The force is renamed the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in 1920.

Cree students at their desks with their teacher in a classroom, All Saints Indian Residential School, Lac La Ronge, Saskatchewan, March 1945/Bud Gluzo/National Film Board of Canada/PhotoIstique/PA-134110



1871 The first of a series of 11 *numbered treaties* is signed between Indigenous groups and the federal government. Signed over 50 years, these treaties outline hunting and fishing rights, reserve lands and other material support promised to Indigenous peoples in exchange for the surrender of their traditional lands. These treaties continue to be controversial due to differing interpretations by parties involved.

1956 The Egyptian government takes control of the Suez Canal, and Great Britain and France plan to seize it back. Working through the United Nations, future Prime Minister Lester Pearson develops the idea for a ceasefire. This establishes *Canada's reputation as a peacekeeping nation*, and earns Pearson a Nobel Peace Prize.



Canadian Corporal George Myatte in Sarajevo as part of the United Nations Protection Force/Image courtesy of George Myatte and The Memory Project

1960 Changes to the *Indian Act* allow *First Nations peoples* the right to vote without losing their Indian status or treaty rights. Removing these conditions had been previously discussed in 1950 when Inuit peoples received the vote.



1965 After years of flying the Red Ensign flag with its prominent Union Jack, Prime Minister Lester Pearson wants a new design that is "truly distinctive and truly national in character." After thousands of sketches and months of emotional debate, the *red maple leaf flag* is officially raised on Parliament Hill for the first time.

Relocation of Japanese Canadians to internment camps/Library and Archives Canada/C-046355



1942 Following the Japanese strike on Pearl Harbour, fear of attacks on British Columbia prompts the federal government to remove 22,000 Japanese Canadians from coastal areas. Japanese men, women and children are interned in camps for the remainder of the war. An apology for Japanese internment is made in 1988. Similar actions had taken place in 1914, with the internment of nationals from Germany and the Austro-Hungarian and Turkish Empires.

1946 *Viola Desmond* is dragged out of a Nova Scotia movie theatre and charged by police after she refuses to move from the main floor of the theatre to the balcony, where Black patrons were segregated. Her decision to fight her charges rouses the public and raises awareness of the racism experienced by Black Canadians. The Nova Scotia government posthumously pardons her in 2010. She will be featured on Canada's 10\$ bank note as of 2018.



1962 The Saskatchewan *Medical Care Insurance Act* comes into effect, providing the first *socialized medicare* program in the country. A national medicare program is legislated in 1966, and is to this day considered an important part of Canadian identity.

1963 The *Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism* begins to consider giving English and French equal status. It is hoped that this will provide opportunities for speakers of both languages to participate in institutions affecting both groups. In 1969, the *Official Languages Act* makes Canada a bilingual nation.

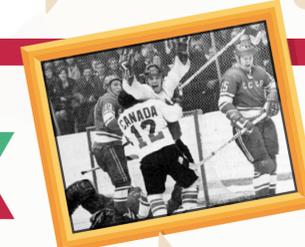
"Desmond Case Heard, Decision is Reserved"/The Halifax Chronicle, 11 January 1947, page 10/NSA Newspaper Collection (scan 201501078)

1967 Canada celebrates the *100th anniversary of Confederation*. The main event is Expo 67, a fair welcoming the world to Montreal. The centennial logo lingers on in the many special projects conceived in towns of all sizes across the country.



1967 Stating that "there's no place for the state in the bedrooms of the nation," federal justice minister Pierre Trudeau introduces a series of *amendments to the Criminal Code*. The revisions decriminalize homosexuality in private between consenting adults, and provide for legal abortions performed by doctors in hospitals, under certain conditions.

1968 The *Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC)* is established as a media regulatory body. It oversees the implementation of Canadian content rules, which aids in the growth of Canada's music industry. A year earlier, the Canadian Film Development Corporation (later Telefilm Canada) had been established to foster and promote a national feature film industry.



1972 The eight-game *Summit Series* between the best Canadian and Soviet hockey players takes place. Overconfident, the Canadians are shocked when the Soviet team wins three of the first five games. The Canadian team eventually wins the series in dramatic fashion, scoring the winning goal with 34 seconds to go in the final game.



1970 The kidnappings of two government officials by FLQ (Front de libération du Québec) separatists trigger the *October Crisis*. For the first time outside of a major conflict, the *War Measures Act* is invoked, suspending civil liberties. When asked by a reporter how far he would go, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau responds, "Well, just watch me."

1976 After years of gradual reform that reduces discriminatory practices, the *Immigration Act* modernizes immigration policy. Among the changes is the creation of three classes of admissible immigrants (points system, families and refugees). This marks the first time refugees are included in regular rules, which encourages resettlement programs.

1976 *Montreal hosts the Summer Olympics*, the first Canadian city to do so. While Canada finishes 27th in the medal count, the Games demonstrate that Canada is capable of hosting a global sporting event. Subsequently, the Winter Olympics are hosted by Calgary (1988) and Vancouver-Whistler (2010).



1885 A 26-km² area of hot springs in the Rocky Mountains is reserved by the federal government for public use. Banff becomes *Canada's first national park* in 1887. Currently, Parks Canada oversees over 200 parks, historic sites and marine conservation areas.



Hon. Donald A. Smith driving the last spike/Alexander Ross/Library and Archives Canada/C-003693

1885 The "*last spike*" of the Canadian Pacific Railway is hammered at Craigellachie, BC, fulfilling a promise to connect British Columbia to Eastern Canada via a transcontinental railway. Among the workers who built the railway were 15,000 labourers from China, many of whom died during the railway's construction.



1980 Having lost his right leg to cancer, Terry Fox launches his cross-country *Marathon of Hope* to raise money for cancer research. Spanning 143 days, his journey captures the hearts of Canadians. Due to his declining health, Fox is forced to stop the marathon early. His legacy continues today through Terry Fox Runs held annually around the world.

1908 Written by Prince Edward Island native Lucy Maud Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* is an instant bestseller in North America. Translated into numerous languages and sold around the world, the novel remains an iconic piece of Canadian literature.



1981 Canada had entered the space age in 1962 with its first satellite, Alouette 1. Two decades later, the *Canadarm*, a remote-controlled mechanical arm used to maintain satellites and position astronauts, is launched. It demonstrates Canada's leadership in space technology, inspiring later innovations in robotics.



1914-18 Canada participates in the *First World War*. The role of the Canadian Expeditionary Force in the Allied victory at Vimy Ridge is credited as the "birth of a nation." The 1917 Halifax Explosion, the largest human-made explosion at that time, kills nearly 2,000 people. As a "total war," the First World War impacts virtually every Canadian in some way.

Two Canadian soldiers in a front line trench in the Hill 60 sector near Ypres, Belgium/ CWM 19920044-608/George Metcalf Archival Collection/Canadian War Museum

1892 Lord Stanley of Preston, the governor general of Canada, donates the Dominion Challenge Cup, to be awarded to the top Canadian hockey team. Now called the *Stanley Cup* in honour of its donor, the trophy is awarded to the winning team of the National Hockey League playoffs.

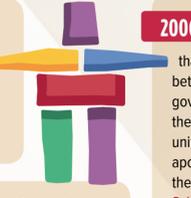
1896 The discovery of gold along the Klondike River in August 1896 causes people to rush to the Yukon to seek their fortune. The *Gold Rush* inspires works like Robert Service's poem "The Shooting of Dan McGrew," and opens the North to future mineral exploration.

1914 The *S.S. Komagata Maru*, a vessel carrying mainly Sikh passengers from India, arrives in Vancouver. All but 22 of the 376 passengers are refused entry due to restrictive immigration laws. After sitting in harbour for two months, the ship is forced to return to India, where it is greeted with violence; 20 passengers are killed and all but 27 are imprisoned. Canada apologizes for its actions in 2016.

1917 Mothers, sisters, and wives of soldiers, along with women serving in the military, are granted the right to vote federally under the *War-time Elections Act*. Wider *sufrage for women* is granted at the federal level the following year, though many women belonging to minority groups are still excluded. Granting voting rights provincially is a long process, stretching from 1916 (Manitoba) to 1940 (Québec).



1920 Seven Toronto-based artists, frustrated with the conservatism of Canadian art, exhibit their work as the *Group of Seven*. Their interpretations of Canadian landscapes, especially the North, gain international attention and create a new domestic artistic vision. Their promotional activities and teachings stimulate the growth of Canadian galleries and art institutions.



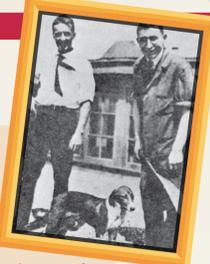
1921 Agnes Macphail becomes the *first woman elected to the House of Commons*. She champions prison reform, suggesting increased education and decreased corporal punishment. Later, as a provincial legislator, Macphail successfully lobbies for Ontario's first pay equity legislation, which passes in 1951.



1927 The *Famous Five*, a group of five women activists, petition the federal government to ask the Supreme Court if it is constitutionally possible to appoint female senators, as laws traditionally define a "person" as male. The Court's refusal in the *Persons Case* is reversed by the British Privy Council in 1929, marking a significant milestone in the fight for women's rights.



1929 The collapse of the American stock market sets off the beginning of the *Great Depression*, which ravages the Canadian economy. Savings vanish and millions are unemployed during the "Dirty Thirties." Circumstances are especially harsh in the Prairies, where drought worsens conditions. The severity of the situation inspires the creation of social welfare programs.



Dr. Frederick Banting (right) and Dr. Charles Best/Library and Archives Canada/C-001350

1922 Using an experimental pancreatic extract, Frederick Banting and Charles Best successfully restore the health of a 14-year-old diabetic youth named Leonard Thompson at the University of Toronto. Their *development of insulin* extends the lives of people with diabetes, allowing them to control the effects of the disease. Their work earns a Nobel Prize in Medicine.

2015 The final report of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* provides a detailed account of the abuse endured by Indigenous peoples at residential schools. It includes 94 calls to action that direct governments to adjust policies in order to repair the legacy of harm, and outlines steps to create reconciliation among all people.



Residential school survivor Lorna Standinggreasy is comforted by a fellow survivor during the closing ceremony of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, at Rideau Hall in Ottawa on June 3, 2015/Sean Kilpatrick/Canadian Press

2015 In reaction to the humanitarian crisis in Syria, Canada commits to resettle tens of thousands of *Syrian refugees*. Between November 2015 and February 2016, over 25,000 people are brought to Canada through government assistance and private sponsorships.

2003 The Ontario Court of Appeal declares that laws stating marriage must be between a man and a woman violate equality rights. Hours after this announcement, Michael Leshner and Michael Stark become the first legally wed same-sex couple in Canada. Federal legislation passed in 2005 makes Canada the fourth nation to *recognize same-sex marriages*.



Protesters that followed the bathhouse raids/ Photograph courtesy of Gerald Hannon and the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives

1980 Initiated by the Parti Québécois, the first of two *Québec referendums* is held. It asks Québec voters whether or not to approve negotiations leading to the province's sovereignty. The "No" side wins with 60 per cent support. After the failure of two constitutional accords, a second vote in 1995 narrowly approves the province remaining in Canada with 50.58 per cent support.

1982 The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* is enacted as part of the Canadian Constitution. It safeguards freedom of expression and movement, equality, usage of official languages, and legal rights for Indigenous peoples, minorities and those accused of crimes.

1981 Four *Toronto bathhouses* are raided by police, with charges laid against nearly 300 men. Tired of being targeted by law enforcement, Toronto's gay community marches through the city's downtown to protest police brutality. It is a turning point in the fight for LGBTQ rights, and inspires Pride celebrations across the country.

1939-45 Canada participates in the *Second World War*. More than 900 Canadians die in the unsuccessful Dieppe raid in 1942. On D-Day in 1944, 14,000 Canadian soldiers storm Juno Beach, pushing farther inland than any other Allied force that makes beach landings during the attack. The operation plays a key role in liberating northwestern Europe from German control.



What events do you think will shape Canada in the next 150 years? Will you be a part of them? Share your thoughts by entering the *Here's My Canada contest* at heresmycanada.ca.