

## 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](http://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.

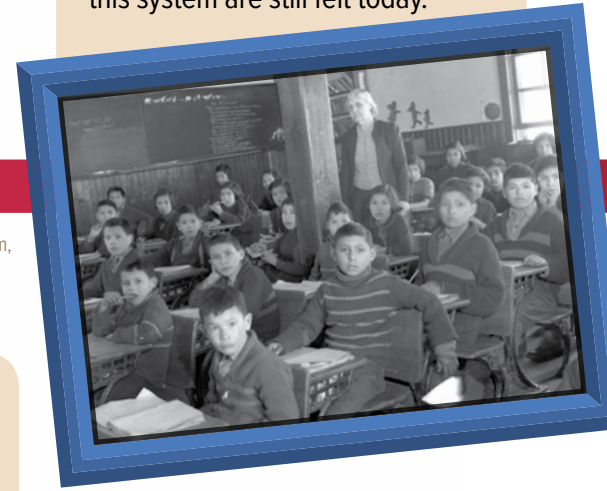
Cree students at their desks with their teacher in a classroom, All Saints Indian Residential School, Lac La Ronge, Saskatchewan, March 1945/Bud Gluz/National Film Board of Canada/PhotoArchive/PA-134110

**1883** The federal government approves the creation of three *residential schools* for Indigenous children in Western Canada. It is believed that separating the children from their families will facilitate their assimilation into European-Canadian society. The first residential school in Canada opened in 1831 and, for over a century, generations of Indigenous students were subjected to emotional, sexual and physical abuse. The effects of this system are still felt today.

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.



**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 peacekeeping force to maintain a ceasefire. This establishes *Canada's reputation as a peacekeeping nation*, and earns Pearson a Nobel Peace Prize.



**1876** Building upon existing legislation, the *Indian Act* gives the federal government extensive power to govern the lives of Indigenous peoples. Personal rights are severely restricted in order to assimilate Indigenous peoples into European-Canadian society. Among the devastating actions carried out are bans on many traditional ceremonies.

Canadian Corporal George Myatt in Sarajevo as part of the United Nations Protection Force/Image courtesy of George Myatt 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.

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

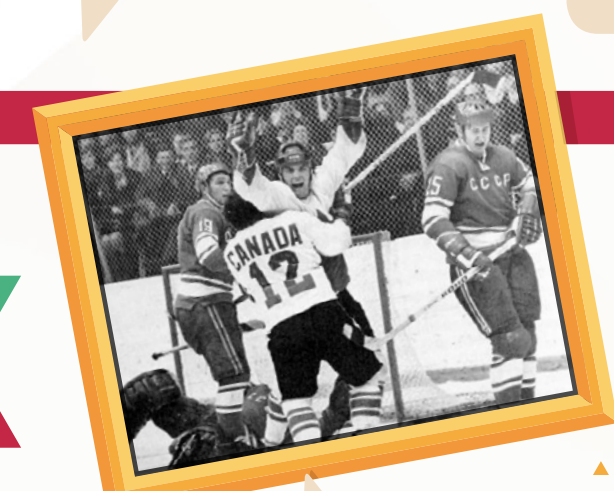


**1965** After years of flying the Red Ensign flag with its prominent Union Jack, Prime Minister Lester Pearson wants a new design that is "truly distinctive and truly national in character." After thousands of sketches and months of emotional debate, the *red maple leaf flag* is officially raised on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

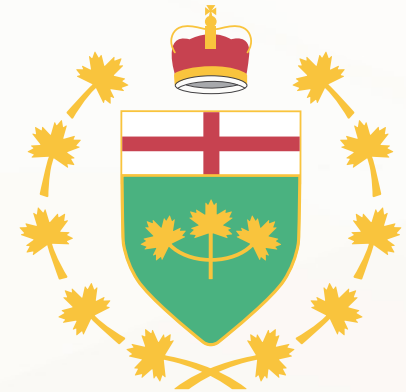
**1970** The kidnappings of two government officials by FLQ (Front de libération du Québec) separatists trigger the *October Crisis*. For the first time outside of a major conflict, the *War Measures Act* is invoked, suspending civil liberties. When asked by a reporter how far he would go, Prime Minister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

**1976** *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).

**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.



Paul Henderson's series-winning goal/Frank Lennon/Library and Archives Canada/608440339

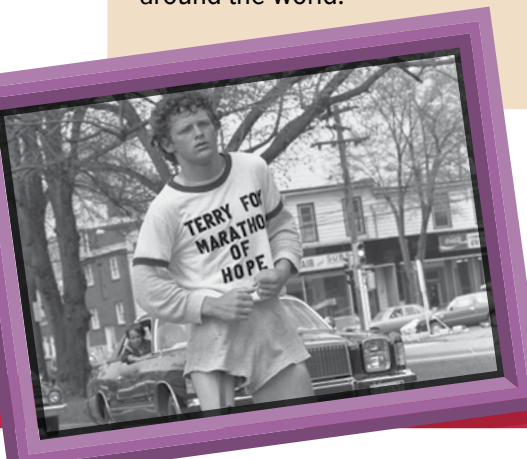


**1968** The *Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC)* is established as a media regulatory body. It oversees the implementation of Canadian content rules, which aids in the growth of Canada's music industry. A year earlier, the Canadian Film Development Corporation (later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

**1979** Canada announces it will admit 50,000 refugees from Vietnam. The *Vietnamese "boat people"* are among the more than a million who risk their lives escaping by sea following the Vietnam War. A sponsorship program for refugees provides support, such as language classes and access to health care, as they settle in Canada.

Terry Fox in Nova Scotia/ Reprinted with permission from The Chronicle Herald



**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.

**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.



**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.



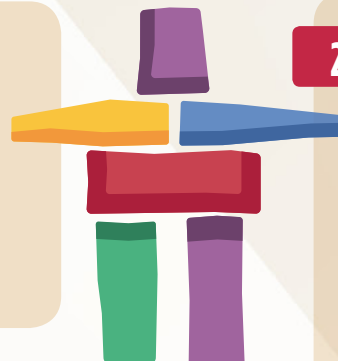
Two Canadian soldiers in a front line trench in the Hill 60 sector near Ypres, Belgium/ CWM 19920044-608/ George Metcalf Archival Collection/Canadian War Museum

**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.

**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).

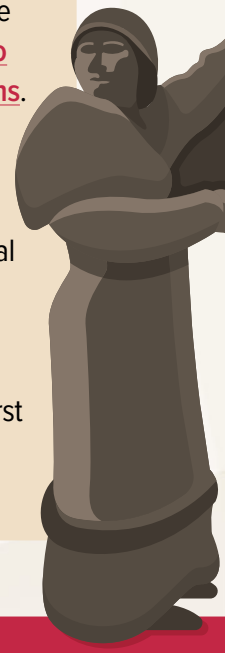
VOTES FOR WOMEN

**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.



**2006** The federal government apologizes for the *head tax* that was applied to Chinese immigrants between 1885 and 1923. The government will also recognize that the Québécois form a nation within a united Canada (2006), make a formal apology to Indigenous peoples for the devastating effects of *Residential Schools* (2008), and apologize to Sikh Canadians for the events surrounding the *Komagata Maru* incident (2016).

**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.

**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.



Residential school survivor Lorna Standingready 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** 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.

**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*.



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

**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.

**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.

**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.

**1979** *Lincoln Alexander* becomes the first Black Canadian to hold a Cabinet position when Prime Minister Joe Clark names him Minister of Labour. Alexander later serves as lieutenant-governor of Ontario and chancellor of the University of Guelph.

**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.



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

**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.

**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.

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](http://heresmycanada.ca).