

# INTRODUCTION

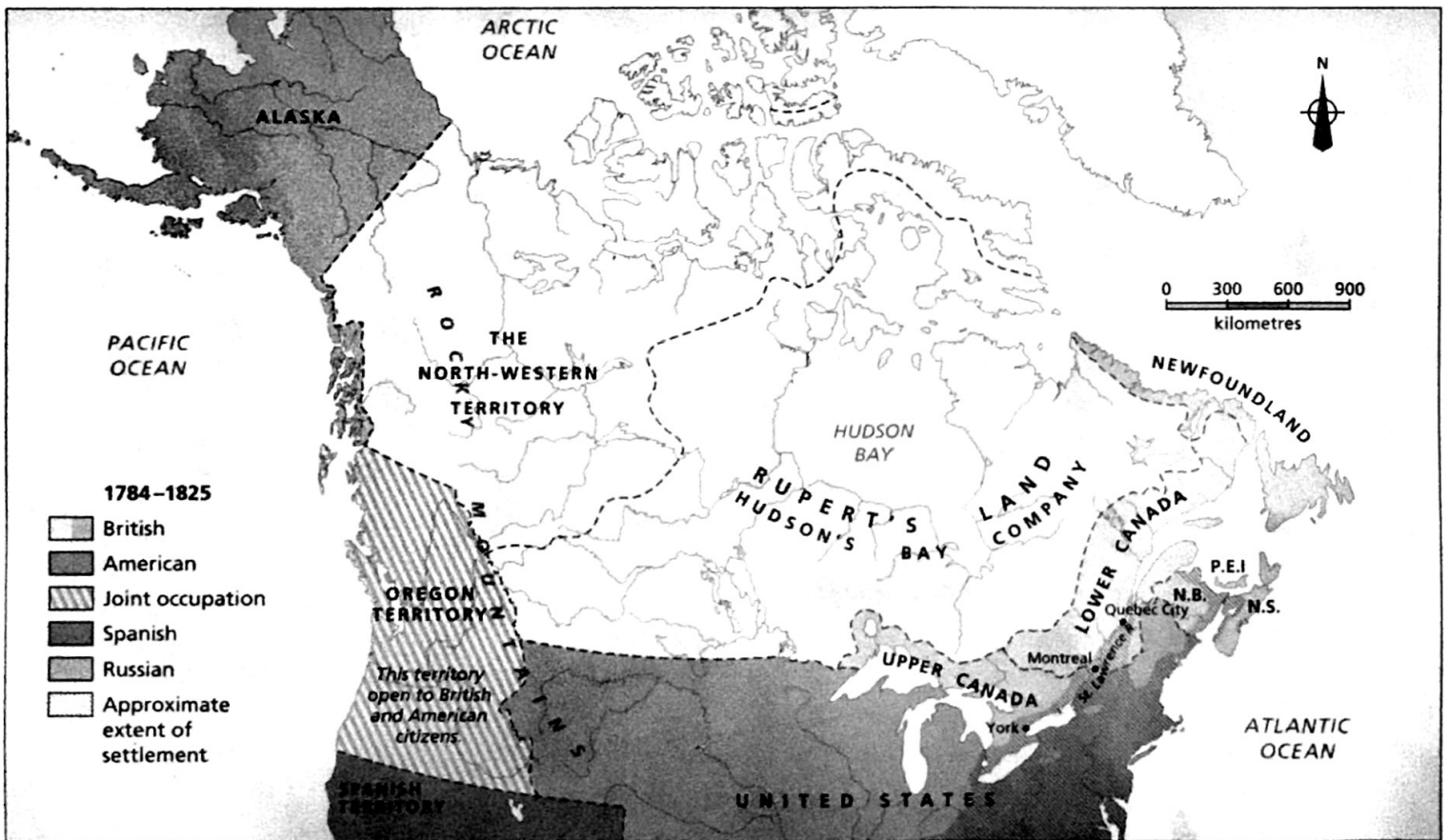
**Upper Canada:** “up” the St. Lawrence River; part of present-day Ontario

**Lower Canada:** “down” the St. Lawrence River; part of present-day Quebec

At the dawn of the nineteenth century, Canada was not the developed, prosperous country it would eventually become. Its vast spaces, often rocky and forbidding to farmers, and its cold winters made northern and western Canada far less attractive to settlers than the United States. For many years, these regions, including British Columbia, were inhabited by the Native peoples and a small group of daring fur traders, and no one else.

In the east, Canada was certainly growing. The population of **Upper Canada** (now southern and eastern Ontario) had risen rapidly

after the end of the War of 1812, as immigrants from Europe and the United States arrived to take advantage of cheap land. **Lower Canada** (Quebec along the St. Lawrence), and the Maritime provinces (now Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick) prospered from close ties to Britain and New England. However, many Native peoples were dying of diseases introduced from Europe, and everywhere they were being forced out of good farmland. Although this was a great injustice, most settlers paid little attention to their plight.



**Figure 1-1** In 1825, the map of present-day Canada looked very different from what it does today. British North America consisted of six colonies—Upper Canada, Lower Canada, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland. The Hudson’s Bay Company controlled a huge amount of land in the Northwest, and Canada and the US claimed an area that is now part of British Columbia and California. Russia controlled present-day Alaska.

Around this time, many people viewed the United States as a possible enemy of Canada. Like today, Canadians had many interactions with Americans. In fact, many early settlers were Americans, and trade with the United States was important. But Canada had been invaded during the American Revolution and again during the War of 1812. These attacks, and the threat of others, reinforced ties to the British Empire. Community leaders were often members of **Loyalist** families, pensioned British army officers, or other members of the gentry. The lingering American threat had important consequences for Canada, as you will read in this chapter and in Chapter 2. Ironically, however, it helped Canadians to see themselves as different, which helped to foster a Canadian national identity.

The efforts of the ruling classes

in Upper and Lower Canada to accumulate wealth and power, and to keep American-style government out of British North America, had other consequences for Canada.

Britain had tried to copy its own society in its Canadian colonies, complete with gentlefolk with large estates. But immigrants from the United States believed in equal opportunity for all. British snobbery also angered immigrants from the British Isles, who had hoped to escape the rigid class system of their homeland. Unfair land policies, and bad government, set the stage for violent confrontations between the classes. In French Lower Canada, the French deeply resented the ruling class, which was English.

Eventually, rebellions broke out in both Upper and Lower Canada. You will learn much about these rebellions in this chapter.

**Loyalists:** Americans who did not support the American Revolution and who remained loyal to Britain

## CANADA: THE LAND

Last year, you learned about Canada's early history, and how Canada's vast size affected its development as a nation. Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King (1874-1950) once remarked that while other countries have too much history, Canada has "too much geography."

Although you will learn more about the geography of the regions of Canada in later chapters of *Horizons*, it may be helpful to remember what our country looks like before examining its history and cultures.

**Figure 1-2** The Rocky Mountains viewed from the western side



**the Riviera:** a top vacation spot on the Mediterranean coasts of France and Italy

Canada is a northern country. Most of it lies between 50 degrees and 70 degrees latitude and every part of it knows winter. Most Canadians live in towns and cities close to the southern border. Historically, this region was attractive because of its proximity to the United States. And, of course, the weather is warmer here. Windsor, Ontario lies just north of 42 degrees latitude—farther south than the **French Riviera!**

Canada is also a vast landscape, which is easier to say than to imagine. Leaving from Vancouver or Victoria, you could drive all day for four days and yet be only two-thirds of the way to the East Coast. It takes a full day to drive from Vancouver to Prince George—which is only half the distance to British Columbia's northern border. It is as far from Vancouver to Toronto as it is from Vancouver to Canada's northern boundary in the islands of the high Arctic. Canada is the second largest nation on Earth, with a total land area of 9 916 140 square kilometres.

If you were to set off on the Trans-Canada Highway from Vancouver for Halifax, what would you see? Early in your journey, you would notice that the highway runs

through the fertile Fraser Valley and then into its great canyon. This is one of the few gates through the grey walls of the Coast Mountains. Like many mountain highways, the Trans-Canada in British Columbia often follows river valleys. The road crosses the Interior Plateau, then climbs into the Rockies. Other roads lead south into the deserts and dry lands of the Okanagan, or the steep-walled lake country of the Kootenays.

The Rockies form Alberta's western wall. The Trans-Canada passes through them, using the Kicking Horse Pass, and then crosses Banff, before descending into the foothills and on to Calgary. You've been driving for two days now. From Calgary, the highway crosses the southern prairie, moving quickly past oil wells and ponds filled with waterfowl. It's a long day. Once you pass Medicine Hat and Regina, you're ready to cross the old lake bed of Lake Agassiz (flat as a pool table and dark with rich, black soil) before arriving in Winnipeg.

Beyond Winnipeg, the prairie changes. Rocks start to appear—you haven't seen any for a thousand kilometres or more. The Trans-Canada probes the edges of the Canadian



**Figure 1-3** Calgary, Alberta



**Figure 1-4** Rock and forest—the Canadian Shield

Shield, a massive core of ancient granite that stretches from Manitoba to the distant edges of Quebec. Farms are much smaller at the edges of the Shield, and soon there are no farms at all. This is a country of deep forests and thousands of lakes—a landscape the **Group of Seven** made famous. You will travel through these forests for a whole day before you reach the shores of Lake Superior.

The highway follows the shore of Superior for many kilometres, curves around its corner, and strikes south for Sault Ste. Marie. East of the “Soo” you spot farmland again—a long, lakeside finger of it. The Shield appears again, then Sudbury. You can’t miss the city’s “Big Nickel,” a sign of the mineral wealth of the region. After lunch, you drive southeastward to Ottawa, or south past Lake Simcoe, just north and east of the Industrial Heartland, which includes Canada’s largest city, Toronto. The Trans-Canada skirts this region and travels on to Montreal, on the St. Lawrence. You have now been on the road for six days.

Canada’s second largest city is full of history. Many people love Montreal because it feels like a

European city, and because it is so cosmopolitan. Now the highway leaves the city and heads east, passing along the southern shore of the expansive St. Lawrence River. Near Gaspé, it veers towards New Brunswick and the Saint John River Valley—renowned in fall for the glorious colours of the leaves of its maples. In the spring, the burnt, sweet smell of the sugar shack fills the woods. From New Brunswick, the Trans-Canada heads through Nova Scotia, the old city of Halifax, and up the peninsula to the ferry for Newfoundland. Here the journey will end, in St. John’s. After nine days, you have reached your final destination. You have travelled Canada from coast to coast.

**the Group of Seven:** a Canadian group of painters renowned for their dramatic landscapes

**Figure 1-5** A bridge on the Hammond River in New Brunswick





# THE LAND OF YESTERDAY

**Métis:** someone of French and Native ancestry

Canada's history has always been affected by its geography. Following the War of 1812, settlers poured into Upper Canada, attracted by rich and relatively inexpensive farmland. Quebec, then called Lower Canada, continued on its steady course, its economy based on farming practices that had endured for more than two hundred years. Its trading capital, Montreal, attracted Scottish and American entrepreneurs

The Maritimes, well-settled and stable, were a shipbuilding centre and traded with Britain and New England. Newfoundland prospered in its age-old economy based on fish and timber. By 1800, about 16 000 people lived along the coast of Newfoundland and fished for a living. In the north and west, from northern Labrador to the Rocky Mountains, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) claimed all lands drained by rivers flowing into

Hudson Bay. In competition with the HBC, the North West Company fought for control of the southern fur trade and trade beyond the Rockies, and set up posts wherever it could. Russians and Americans, and even the Spanish for a time, claimed the coast of British Columbia.

Most immigrants to British North America wanted to farm. The fertile soils of Upper Canada, and the groves of timber-producing hardwoods, were very attractive. Of course, the lands closest to the United States and to the waterways were most desirable. These were all in the south. North of present-day Barrie, the rocky Canadian Shield was a barrier to agriculture. Even the woodlands south of Georgian Bay were often rock-strewn, and the climate was not ideal for agriculture. This was an era of few roads, and it often took days to travel 100 kilometres. Land just 50 kilometres away from York, Cornwall, or Niagara was considered to be remote.

**Figure 1-6** This painting shows the rustic living conditions of Canada's early settlers.



## Land for the Fur Trade

Most Europeans accepted that the lands west and north of the Great Lakes were reserved for the fur trade. In 1820, probably fewer than a dozen people lived west of the Great Lakes who were not Métis or Native, or who didn't work in the fur trade. Most aboriginal people and Métis were connected in one way or another to the "trade." Even if European or American immigrants wanted to farm the West, they usually did not, because the fur traders, the Native peoples, and the Métis



**Figure 1-7** The culture and economy of the fur traders and the western Native peoples would eventually conflict with the goals of settlement.

were determined to prevent settlement. Pioneers want boundaries, surveys, roads, canals, schools, and—most important—land of their own. These goals conflicted with the cultures, lifestyles, and economy of the westerners. The fur traders would become the natural allies of the Native peoples and the Métis against settlement. All three groups had everything to lose and nothing to gain from settlement, as you will read in Chapter 4.

Furs had been a precious commodity in Europe and Asia ever since the first furs had been brought back from Canada during the sixteenth century. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, fur-trading companies were locked in a struggle for survival that would not end until the two largest companies merged in 1821. Although independent traders dealt in furs, only the big companies with **monopolies** made a lot of money.

The largest company, as you have learned, was the Hudson's Bay Company. With a royal charter and a government monopoly, the Company held the exclusive right to trade furs in its vast territories. It could—and did—punish anyone

found trading in its region. The Company's monopoly was seriously threatened by the French until the fall of New France in 1763. Afterwards, traders—most of them Scots—took up the old French trading networks. As the so-called "Montrealers," and then as the North West Company, these traders took on the Hudson's Bay Company and tried to break the monopoly.

**monopoly:** exclusive ownership because of legal privilege

**Table 1-1** Recorded Fur Sales for One Year

	Item	Price in pounds
124 000	Beaver skins	£ 69 922
14 000	Bears skins	£ 15 177
9 200	Otters	£ 22 892
4 600	Fishers	£ 1 365
52 000	Martins	£ 12 085
9 400	Wolves	£ 6 323
450	Wolverines	£ 392
9000	Cats (probably lynx)	£ 4 131
11 000	Minks	£ 1 294
7 000	Foxes	£ 2 836
113 000	Raccoons	£ 15 533
80 000	Musquash (Muskrats)	£ 2 223
14 000	Elks	£ 8 170
142 000	Deers	£ 34 416
2 000 lb. (900 kg)	Castoreum (beaver scent glands)	£ 1 518

**Table 1-1** lists the Colonial Office's recorded fur sales in London for one year in the mid-1800s. Remember that the average wage in Britain at the time was less than £1 a week.

# ACTIVITIES

1. Refer to the text on pages 11 to 13 and use an atlas to do the following. Your teacher will provide you with an outline map of Canada.
  - a) Plot the route of the trip described on pages 11 to 13 on the outline map of Canada. Include lakes, rivers, and other physical features, such as the Rocky Mountains, and cities.
  - b) Measure the distances between the cities.
  - c) How far is it from Victoria to Winnipeg? From Winnipeg to Sudbury? From Toronto to Halifax?
  - d) Place all the cities in one column. In another column, write the distance of that city from Vancouver in kilometres.
2. Find a map of the physical regions and the vegetation zones of Canada in your atlas. Which physical regions do you pass through between Vancouver and Toronto? Which vegetation zones do you pass through between Victoria and Calgary?
3. Using the atlas and your own knowledge base, identify an interesting **landmark** between Victoria and Winnipeg. Why is it interesting? Design a postcard that shows this feature on one side. On the other side, write to a friend in Vancouver and describe the landmark.

## UPPER CANADA

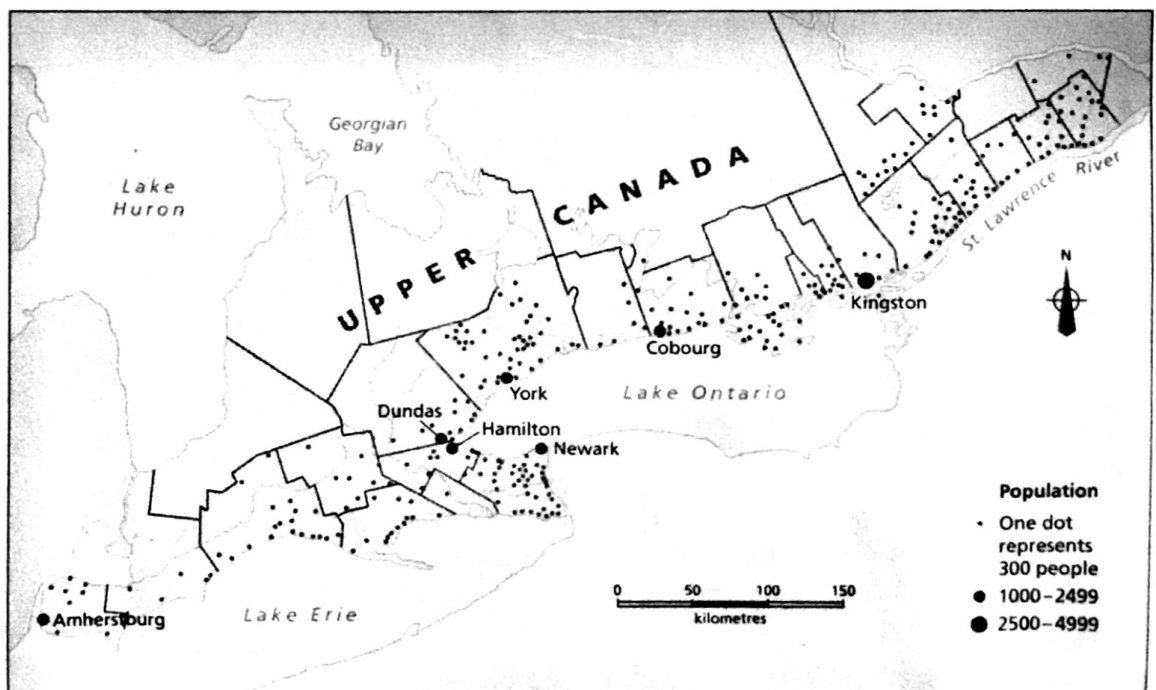
**landmark:** any prominent feature of the landscape, natural or human-made, that identifies the locality

**physical map:** a map that shows the major physical features of a region, including mountain chains, lakes, rivers, and so on. Physical maps use colour to show the varying height of the land

In the early nineteenth century, Upper Canada was the newest and most undeveloped of the colonies of British North America. During the War of 1812, it had almost fallen to the Americans, who made up its largest group of settlers.

There were few roads; even the military routes—Yonge and Dundas, for example—were just tracks through the bush. Places at a distance of 30 or 40 kilometres from the village of York (the capital) were considered to be remote. The forest cover was

**Figure 1-8** Settlers were attracted to British North America by advertising campaigns and word of mouth. According to this map from 1825, where did most people choose to live? Now examine a **physical map** of southern Ontario and Quebec. What geographical features helped to determine settlement patterns? Compare the modern map with the 1825 map, and summarize your observations.





heavy, with great giant oak, walnut, ash, hickory, and maple trees. Native peoples had occupied this land for thousands of years, but to European settlers Upper Canada was a wilderness. Clearing the land was their first task, and it took time. No more than one hectare could be cleared in a year. Normally, it would take a family twenty or more years to clear a 25-hectare farm—a little larger than a city block.

What was it like to live in Upper Canada in the 1820s? If you could travel back in time, the first thing you would notice would be the quiet of the land. Those of us who live in today's cities are accustomed to non-stop noise; we live with a sort of background din. To pioneers, noises from animals, steam-powered saw mills, or perhaps a smithy would be

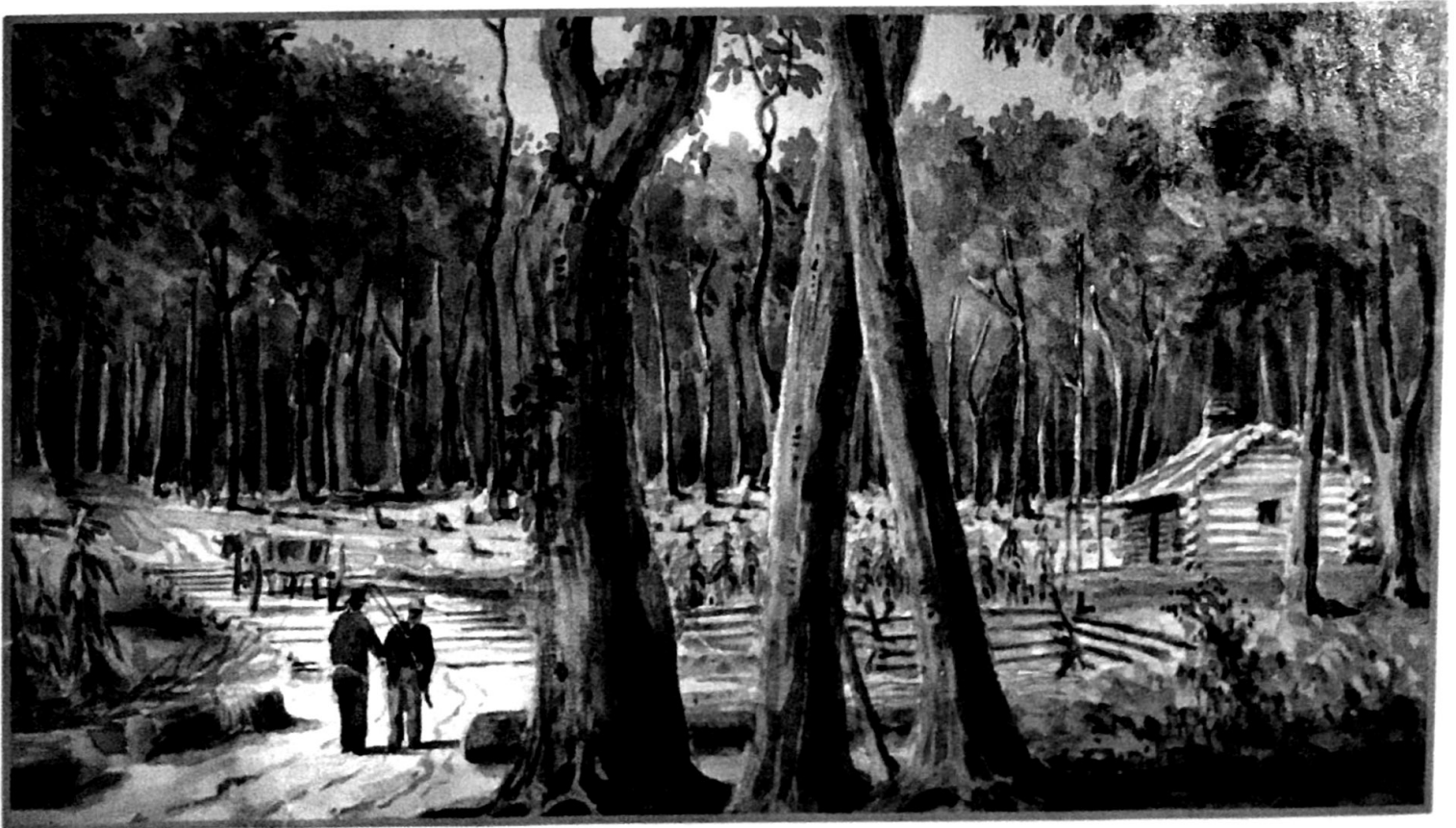
considered loud. The sound of fiddles and musical instruments at occasional parties or important social events, such as weddings and christenings, was a treat.

It was much more common to help and visit one's neighbours than it is today. People looked forward to going to church, or to being visited by a travelling member of the clergy. Sometimes communities set up a small school and hired a teacher, often paying for the service with produce, lodging, and meals. Life was hard. It took years to raise a crop that would not be entirely consumed by the family or sold to pay off debt. Almost everyone was in debt at one time or another to merchants, and **mortgaged** their next crop to obtain supplies.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

*Oil for lighting lamps was expensive, so lights did not burn late into the evening. This was not an inconvenience, since everyone worked from dawn until dusk and went to bed right after evening meals and prayers.*

**to mortgage:** to use as security on a loan



**Figure 1-9** Most settlers in Upper Canada had large families, but they lived in tiny cabins, like this one near Chatham, Ontario. It was common for a dozen or more people to live squeezed into only two small rooms. Occasionally, a loft would provide a third room. There were, of course, no indoor bathrooms, no closets—and no separate kitchen. Windows, often made of oiled parchment, were translucent but not transparent.



# A Barter Economy



**Figure 1-10** This Russian woman has some shoes to trade. What product or service might she accept as a fair exchange?

## DID YOU KNOW?

One reason cash was rare in the Canadas was that there were few lenders. The Bank of Upper Canada, for example, wasn't chartered until 1821. Most money came from merchants and small-town money lenders.

Modern people live in a **money economy**. This system differs greatly from the economy that operated in Canada during the early 1800s. At that time, most people living outside larger settlements participated in a **barter economy**. People barter when they exchange goods and services, rather than using money. For example, a farmer might pay a blacksmith, carpenter, or doctor for their work with wheat or maple sugar. First, the services and products were valued in dollars, and then the exchange was made. More than 70 percent of all transactions were made through bartering.

Bartering may seem like a difficult, inefficient way to do business, but prices for products and services were fairly fixed. Studies have shown that the price of a bushel of wheat, for example, varied little throughout Upper Canada during this period.

Barter economies persist today. During financial crises, such as the upheaval in Russia following the collapse of the former Soviet Union, bartering re-emerged as a way of distributing goods and services. Today, in Canada, struggling small companies often barter products or services with each other. For example, a small printing company might trade photocopying services for free advertising in a small newspaper.

However, Revenue Canada wants to know about these cashless transactions. Both parties must issue a tax slip stating the value of the product or service in cash, and both parties must report the amount received as taxable income.

**money economy:** an economy that uses cash

**barter economy:** an economy that works by trading of products and services

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

- As a class, brainstorm some advantages and disadvantages of bartering from the standpoint of three entities:
  - Canadian teenagers
  - Canadian small-business owners
  - the Canadian economy
- Students in younger grades often barter goods. Why might this be so?
- Why does Revenue Canada want to keep track of bartering in the modern Canadian economy? What would happen if it didn't?

## The Importance of Social Class

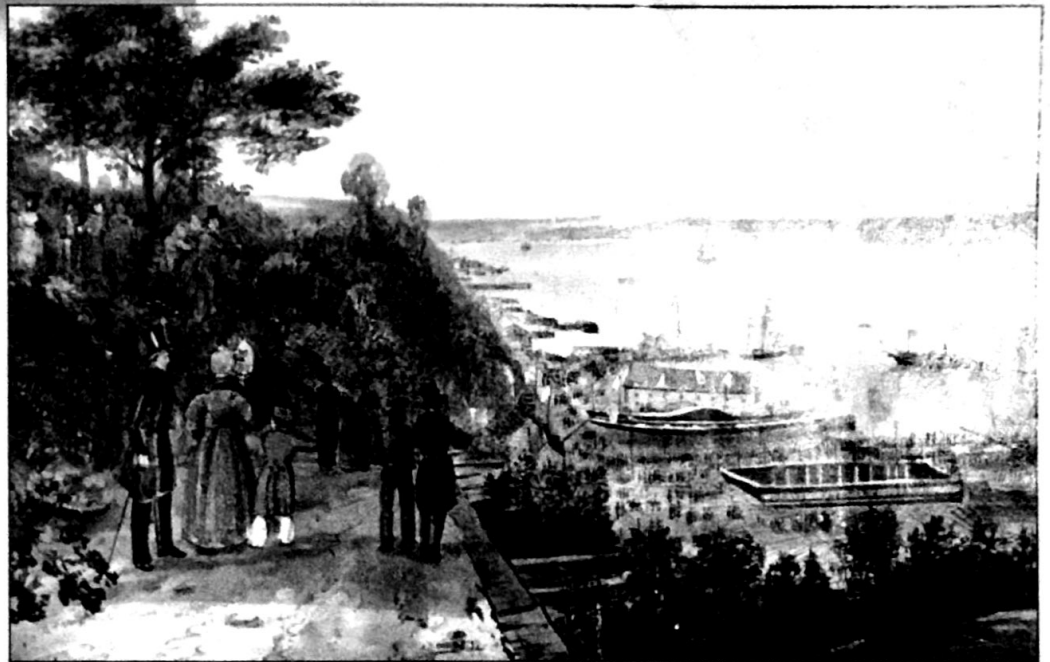
Social class and financial means would often determine how an immigrant reacted to the experience of moving to Upper Canada. But Upper Canada also had a way of levelling people, of making them change their priorities. Many younger children of English aristo-

crats or pensioned-off army officers came with their families to settle in the colony. To their chagrin, they found they had to do most of the back-breaking labour of building and maintaining a farm themselves. Cheap labour and good, respectful servants were hard to come by. In Europe, overpopulation and a lack of labour laws made poorer people desperate for employment, so upper-

## The Family Compact

Some settlers of Upper Canada saw themselves as superior to others. The Family Compact, for example, was a small group of officials who helped run Upper Canada. They were descendants of the Loyalist settlers and believed in the rightness of the aristocracy and the importance of ties to Britain. They made up most of the Executive Council, and had control over government budgets and appointments. On a social level, members of the Family Compact were snobbish in the extreme.

Even aristocratic visitors from Britain had a hard time breaking into this group, which operated like a private club. All members knew one another, and were



often related. They even dressed alike. Susanna Moodie, the pioneer author, described them in the excerpt that follows:



They dress well and expensively, and are very particular to have their clothes cut in the latest fashion. Men and women adopt the reigning mode so universally that they look all dressed alike ... If green was the prevailing colour, every lady would adopt it, whether it suited her complexion or not; and, if she was ever so stout, that circumstance would not prevent her from wearing half-a-dozen more skirts than was necessary, because that absurd and unhealthy practice has for a long period prevailed.

**Figure 1-11** Members of the privileged upper class were known as the "Family Compact" in Upper Canada and the *Château Clique* in Lower Canada. In this painting, some members of the *Château Clique* watch the launch of the *Royal William*. Steamships were a new technology in the 1830s, and an important step forward in transportation for the colonies. Family Compact and *Château Clique* members invested in ships and canals. They used their influence to get government backing of these projects, and benefited financially from their success.

**Figure 1-12** Settlers often worked together to cut trees and burn slash, as this **romanticized** picture shows. In reality, this was back-breaking, dirty work. Slash—the dead branches, roots, and debris—was piled, left to dry, and burned a year or two after cutting. The ashes were sold to make potash and **lye**, which were then sold to make fertilizer and soap. Logs were sold to timber merchants. These, along with tobacco, barley, oats, and rye, were the first cash products of the new farm.



**to romanticize:** to make something look good, satisfying

**lye:** the liquid that is leached from wood ashes and is used to make soap

**land speculators:** those who buy property at a low price and sell it at a higher price without spending much of their own money

class people could live apart from the so-called lower classes. This was not the case in Upper Canada. Most settlers found they needed their neighbours, and socialized with them, no matter what their background. Some people, of course, continued to think of Britain as their real home. Educated people in particular were very interested in English culture. They did not see themselves as Canadians, but rather as English people settling a new land.

## The Problem of Land

Almost everyone who came to Upper Canada had some interest in farming. Most people wanted land, and they wanted to be farmers on their own freehold farms. Other people were engaged in farm-support businesses or industries, such as blacksmithing and wagon-making. But many settlers arrived to find that much of the good land was already taken up by absentee landowners and speculators. This was not what they had been led to expect. Advertising campaigns in England—and later in other parts of Europe—

had led people to believe that they could get good, cheap farmland, with easy access to towns and markets. Problems associated with restrictions on land, and poor roads, caused great hardship for many, and much discontent. Even people from privileged classes in Britain found they had been duped. Land problems were at the root of the general dissatisfaction felt towards the colonial government, and a major cause of the Rebellion of 1837 in Upper Canada, as you will read later.

Many members of the Family Compact were **land speculators**, and profited immensely from this activity. Speculators took ownership of large areas of prime land in the southern part of Upper Canada, close to the Great Lakes and the United States. Like most commodities, the value of land is governed by the law of supply and demand. The less good land that is available, the higher its value. By keeping huge parcels of land off the market, speculators made money on land they sold, while keeping more land in reserve. The supply problem was further complicated by crown and clergy reserves.

### DID YOU KNOW?

*Breweries were among the first industries to be established in the Canadas. John Molson, only eighteen at the time, owned a small brewery in Montreal in 1786. John Kinder Labatt came to Upper Canada in 1833 and invested in a brewery near London, Ontario, in 1846. Today, both names are synonymous with Canadian beer.*



## Clergy and Crown Reserves

Crown and clergy reserves were blocks of land set aside to provide income (through sale or rent) for the government and for the Anglican Church—in total, two-sevenths of all the land in Upper Canada. For the most part, these lands lay idle. And because they were scattered through the townships and were not cleared, the reserves blocked road development, causing much grief to settlers. Farmers had to wind their way around reserves if they wanted to travel anywhere—a waste of time and a source of irritation. Moreover, the reserves often tied up prime, arable land. Because of the economics of supply and demand, this caused the value of land to rise even higher.

## The Role of the British Government

Upper Canada's land problem was partly created by the attitudes of the British government and its desire to duplicate the English model of landowning. England was a land of large estates controlled by aristocrats. The government believed this group could best rule the country. Privileged owners of large blocks of land in Canada were also more likely, in the British government's view, to maintain strong ties with Britain and its institutions. This idea was completely contrary to the **republican** views of immigrant farmers, especially those from the United States. They felt that people should be able to succeed on their own efforts and that many of the principles of British policy towards the Canadas were discriminatory and anti-democratic. This was absolutely true. The last thing

Britain wanted was to allow her British North American colonists to adopt American attitudes and values. Had not the Thirteen Colonies (the United States) successfully rebelled against Britain? One upper-class British immigrant remarked:

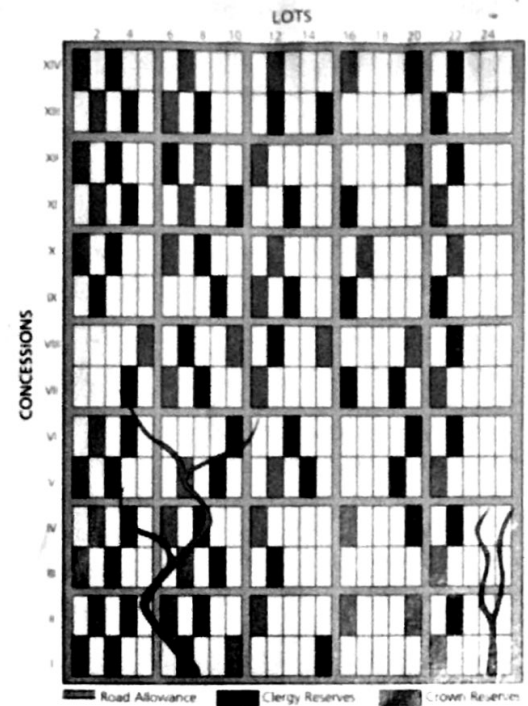


Possessing farms which render them independent of the better classes of society they can, within limits, be as bold, unconstrained, and obtrusive as they please, in their behaviour towards their superior ...

Another wrote:



These emigrants, having generally been of the lowest class of society in their respective countries—and consequently mere cyphers [of no importance] in their own immediate spheres, as soon as they arrive in Canada, begin to assume an appearance of importance ... They are (tireless) in acquiring a knowledge of The Rights of Man, The Just Principles of Equality, And The True Nature of Independence, and, in a word, of everything which characterizes an American; and they quickly become divested of common manners and common civility, and not uncommonly of common honesty too—indeed this latter virtuous quality is rather uncommon on this side of the Western Ocean.



**Figure 1-13** A typical township in Upper Canada. One clergy reserve could be as large as ten farms.

**republican:** democratic, without a monarch as head of state



## DID YOU KNOW?

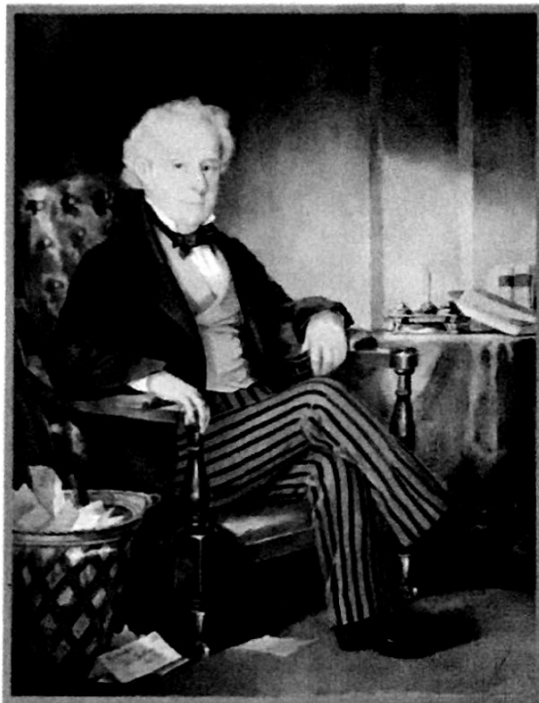
A few communities, such as Sturgeon Lake in Upper Canada, were settled almost entirely by well-educated people. Two-thirds of the men at Sturgeon Lake had university degrees, indicating that they were Anglican—the official church—and members of the gentry. Women did not take degrees, but were usually educated by tutors.

Britain's plans for Upper Canada were first implemented by its first governor, John Graves Simcoe, but they continued even after the War of 1812. It proved difficult to attract true aristocrats to backwoods Canada, but many retired army officers and their families, who were members of the gentry, were interested.

English law favoured the first-born son in a family, who received the bulk of an estate when a landowner died. Younger sons joined the army or the Church, and they could not hope, under normal circumstances, to be major landowners

in Britain. In Canada, the situation was different. Thousands of hectares were available to “take up” and develop. The government also allowed land companies, such as the Canada Company, to acquire vast tracts of prime land at a very low price. The Canada Company, with Family Compact connections, purchased lands that stretched from Lake Ontario to Lake Huron. In exchange for 1 million hectares, it agreed to pay the government £295 000 pounds over sixteen years! Although these terms were indeed generous, the Canada Company was responsible for attracting settlers. Even so, many speculators could double their money within ten years. In 1815, almost 50 percent of all farmland in western Upper Canada—the best available land because it was level, with deep soil and few rocks—was owned by speculators.

**deferential:** showing respect



**Figure 1-14** Colonel Thomas Talbot acquired 2106 hectares around 1810. Within a few years, he controlled a wide swath of prime land where the cities of London, St. Thomas, and Chatham are now situated. The Talbot Settlement consisted of 30 000 people by 1830. Talbot personally interviewed each settler who wanted to take up residence on his land. If a settler did not meet his standards (Talbot preferred soft-spoken and **deferential** people), he would rub that person's name off his map and the land would go to someone else.

## ACTIVITIES

1. Colonists often came to Upper Canada expecting to obtain land easily. Identify three barriers they actually faced. What role did the British government play in land disputes?
2. How did moving to Upper Canada level people?
3. Which group maintained its ties to the British aristocracy? If you were a member of this group, in charge of admitting new members, what qualifications would you insist people have? Provide a reason for each one.

# THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE

No one who lived in British North America or in Lower Canada could have been prepared for the waves of immigrants who arrived at the close of the War of 1812. Most of these immigrants settled in Upper Canada. Some settled in Lower Canada's **Eastern Townships**, between Quebec and Montreal. The long-settled—and French—St. Lawrence corridor was unavailable. Here, life based on the seigneurial system continued as it had for generations. But Six Nations' leaders, such as the leaders of the Mohawks along the Grand River in Upper Canada, had to remain vigilant so that their lands would not be sold off by Britain. Other Native leaders signed treaties in attempts to

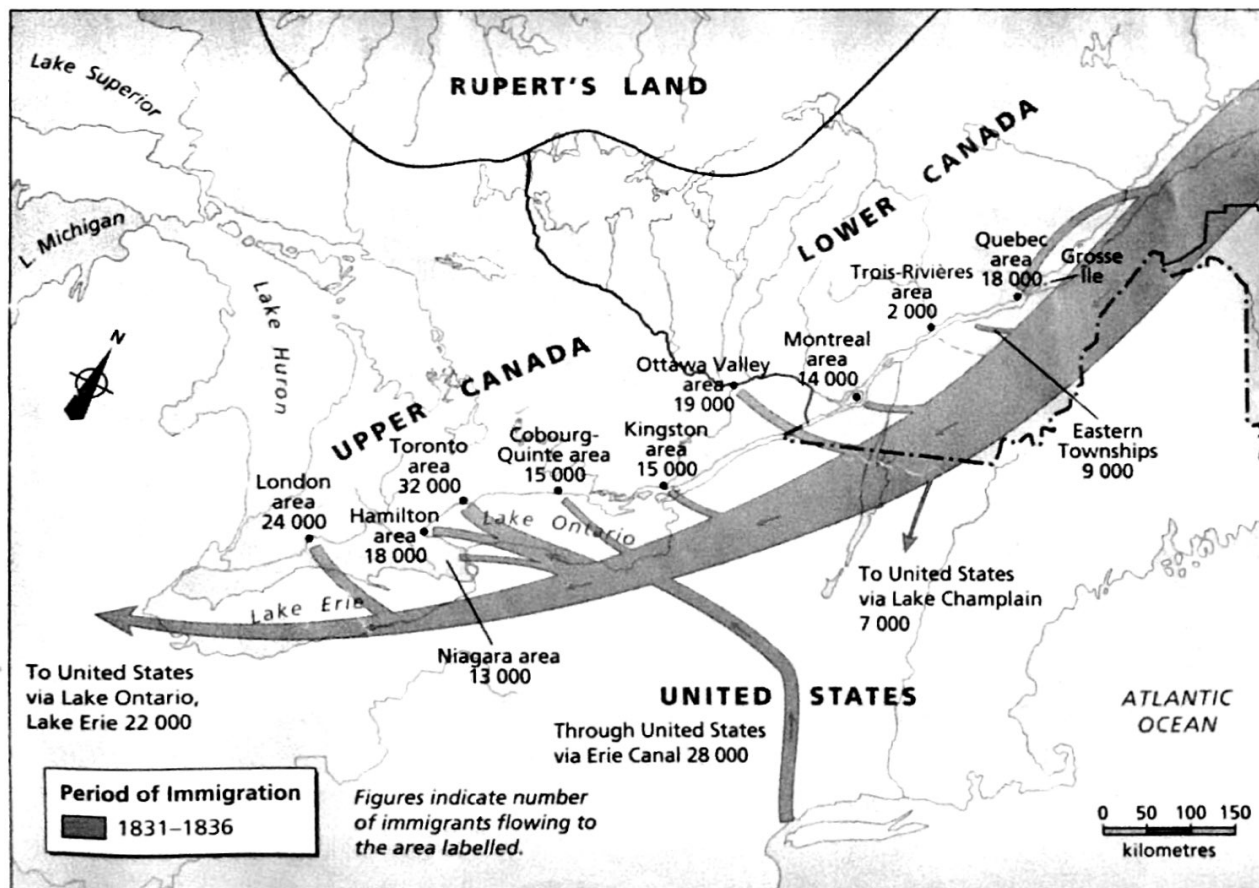
secure territory for their people. Surveyors always came before the settlers, dividing the land into townships, and laying out the routes for future roads.

- Immigrants came primarily from Great Britain or the United States, but some came from European countries, attracted by widespread advertising campaigns. Potential buyers were wooed with promises of cheap, fertile land, close to towns and markets. Colourful posters, embellished with advertising **copy**, painted an optimistic picture of life in Canada.
- The first rude awakening was the journey across the Atlantic. Moving to Canada was a costly and emotional venture. People spent all the money they had on the trip and

**The Eastern Townships:** the region of south central Quebec between Montreal and Quebec City

**copy:** the print part of a poster or advertisement

**anglophone:** English-speaking



**Figure 1–15** This map shows the number of immigrants who came to Upper and Lower Canada, and to the United States, between 1831–1836, and where they settled. Notice the number of people who moved to the Eastern Townships of Lower Canada, which included Montreal and Quebec City. By 1831, Quebec City was 45 percent **anglophone**. As you continue reading this chapter, think about the effect this might have on the rest of Lower Canada.

**YOU KNOW**

*Immigrants could starve if they had not brought along enough food for the journey. For a family with children, this was a huge amount of food.*

on supplies for a year or two of life in the colonies. New settlers also had to be prepared for long separation from family and friends. It took more than a month to travel by ship to Canada—a sea journey which many immigrants did not survive. Moreover, most settlers probably assumed they would never see their loved ones back in Britain or Europe again. Such separation is difficult for us to understand today. Those who embarked on the journey to Canada were brave and resolute—and sometimes desperate, especially the poorest people, who came in the infamous **coffin ships**.

## Deadly Journeys

The overpopulated cities and countryside of Britain supplied Canada with many new immigrants. For poor and displaced **tenant farmers** from Ireland and Scotland, the chance to own a farm was very attractive, as was the chance to escape the stifling class system of the old country. But few of these

people could afford to travel, as could members of the upper class, in above-deck cabins on pleasant sailing ships. Instead, they travelled in **steerage** in filthy, overloaded cargo vessels. For many, it would be their last journey.

Cargo vessels regularly transported lumber and other products from North America to Europe. On the return voyage, however, they would sail empty. It quickly became apparent to ship owners that a profit could be made if below decks were converted to carry passengers. Tiers of bunks were built where cargo would otherwise be stowed. Other than pots and tubs, no bathroom facilities were constructed, and the poor hygiene posed a serious health risk. Steerage passengers were squeezed into extraordinarily close quarters, which encouraged the spread of contagious disease. Cholera and other deadly plagues killed many before they ever reached Canada's shores. In 1832, for example, half of all immigrants who did make it to Canada were seriously ill.

**coffin ship:** a death ship.

Many people died while travelling in steerage. The bodies were dumped overboard.

**tenant farmer:** a farmer who works the land owned by another

**steerage:** below deck, where cargo is usually stored

**Table 1-2 Immigration to Canada from Great Britain 1815-1850**

1815	680	1827	12 648	1839	12 658
1816	3370	1828	12 084	1840	32 293
1817	9797	1829	13 307	1841	38 164
1818	15 136	1830	30 574	1842	54 123
1819	23 534	1831	58 067	1843	23 518
1820	17 921	1832	66 339	1844	22 924
1821	12 955	1833	28 808	1845	31 803
1822	16 013	1834	40 060	1846	43 439
1823	11 355	1835	15 573	1847	109 680
1824	8774	1836	34 226	1848	31 065
1825	8741	1837	29 844	1849	41 367
1826	12 818	1838	4577	1850	32 961





Figure 1-16

The emotionally and physically challenging experience of emigrating to Canada is captured in these period illustrations, which show (clockwise) desperate crowds in the shipping agent's office (**Figure 1-16**); the grim conditions in steerage (**Figure 1-17**); and the docks teeming with people ready to board overcrowded ships to go to Canada (**Figure 1-18**). What advice would you give a family member embarking on such a journey?



Figure 1-17

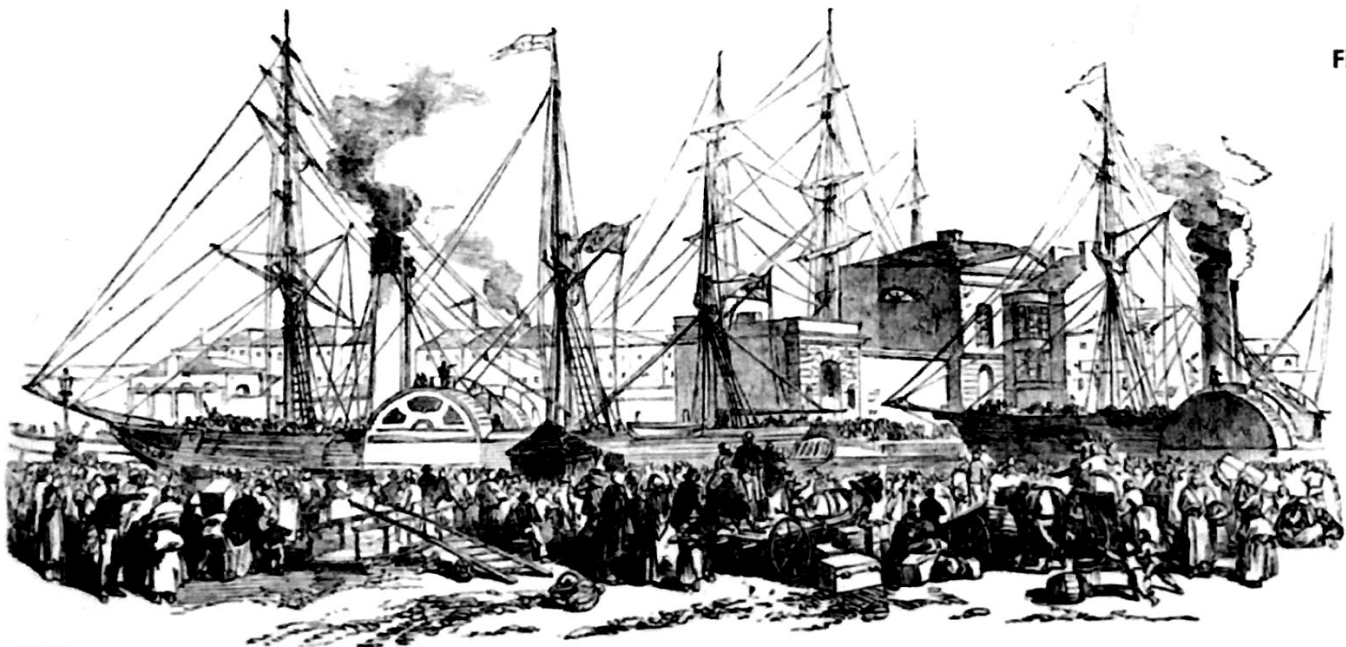


Figure 1-18



### DID YOU KNOW?

*Celtic music is one of the main stems on which modern popular music grows and is part of the legacy of Irish and Scottish immigrants.*

**Gaelic:** the language of the Celtic highlanders of Scotland

**Celtic:** the early Indo-Europeans of the British Isles

## The Multiculturalism of Pioneer Canada

Most of the better-known journals and accounts of life in British North America during pioneer days were written by relatively well-to-do English people. However, most settlers in Upper Canada were not English. Americans did not consider themselves to be English, nor did the Scottish and Irish, many of whom spoke **Gaelic**. They brought their own distinct cultures and values to Canada, including their own church traditions. Even the music of pioneer Canada was more **Celtic** than English.

In the past, the histories of Native peoples, and Irish and Black

immigrants, have been mostly ignored in accounts of Canada's history. This tells us a great deal about how history is actually written. Historians create our official memories. If they ignore the contributions of some groups, while highlighting the contributions of others, how accurate can that history be? By detecting this kind of discrimination, we learn to pay more attention to the ignored groups—and we learn about the values of the time in which those histories were written. By our standards today, nineteenth-century Canadians were racist, the more so because they believed that Europeans had a duty to “civilize” the world. For example, a newspaper article that appeared in the *Owen Sound Comet* in June 1851 captures the idea of the English “destiny”:



In another half-century, therefore, the predominance of the Anglo-Saxon race, terming it in a general way, will be a thing to admire beyond all common admiration. There will be the British Isles with their family of fifty millions or so, and our Northern Continent, with eighty millions or thereabouts, and this South Pacific branch of the English-speaking household—say thirty millions at least; and these three branches of mankind working away in the illumination upwards of the nations—taking the lead in all things, by sea and by land, and lugging the civilization of the world with them!

Ideas like these were taught in schools and churches for many years—even well into the twentieth century, so it is hardly surprising that the contributions of many cultural groups were neglected. As a



**Figure 1-19** Canadian fiddler Natalie MacMaster has drawn from Celtic traditions in music.

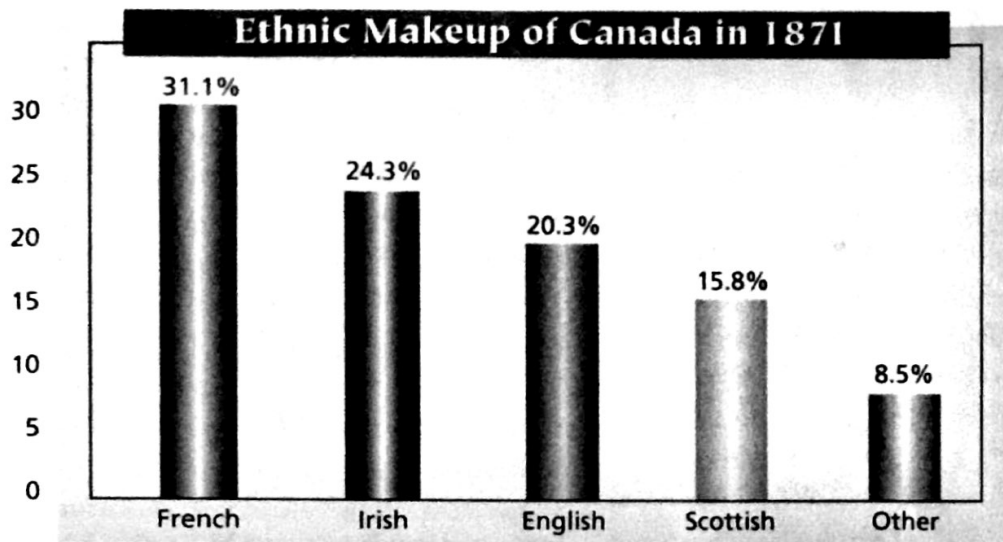


Figure 1–20 Ethnic groups in Canada by percentage, 1871

result, it is very hard to find accounts of Irish contributions to Canadian history, or those of the Native peoples. And it would be impossible in a book such as *Horizons* to tell everyone's story. That would take volumes. Still, it is tragic that the people not included in our official histories have become almost invisible. For example, many Canadians are unaware that Black men and women have been part of Canada's history almost since its beginnings because so few of their stories have been told.

## Black Canadians

It may be hard to imagine, but slavery existed in New France during the late-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In addition, many Loyalists brought African slaves with them to Canada during the American Revolution. The deep wound that slavery has created in North American society will not be easily healed, as we now know. However, slavery stopped working in Canada long before it did anywhere else in North America. Slavery was abol-

ished everywhere in the British Empire in 1833, but courts in Lower and Upper Canada refused to support slavery long before that. One major factor was that most Black Canadians were free—in fact, many Black Americans had fled the slave states south of the border to find freedom in Canada. As well, during the Loyalist wave of immigration, many Black Americans came to Canada as free men and women, and as loyal subjects to the British throne. They were promised land in exchange for their loyalty.

In 1837, the Black Militia fought against the rebels in Upper Canada, led by William Lyon Mackenzie. You will read more about this important event in Chapter 2. Most Black pioneers believed that a victory for the rebels would result in American domination of Canada, and slavery. Following the rebellions, one member of the militia, Josiah Henson, became an educator and church minister, and a leading member of the growing Black community. He eventually established a technical school in Dresden, Ontario.

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
 "Nova Scotia" is Latin for "New Scotland."

## Time Line 1-1

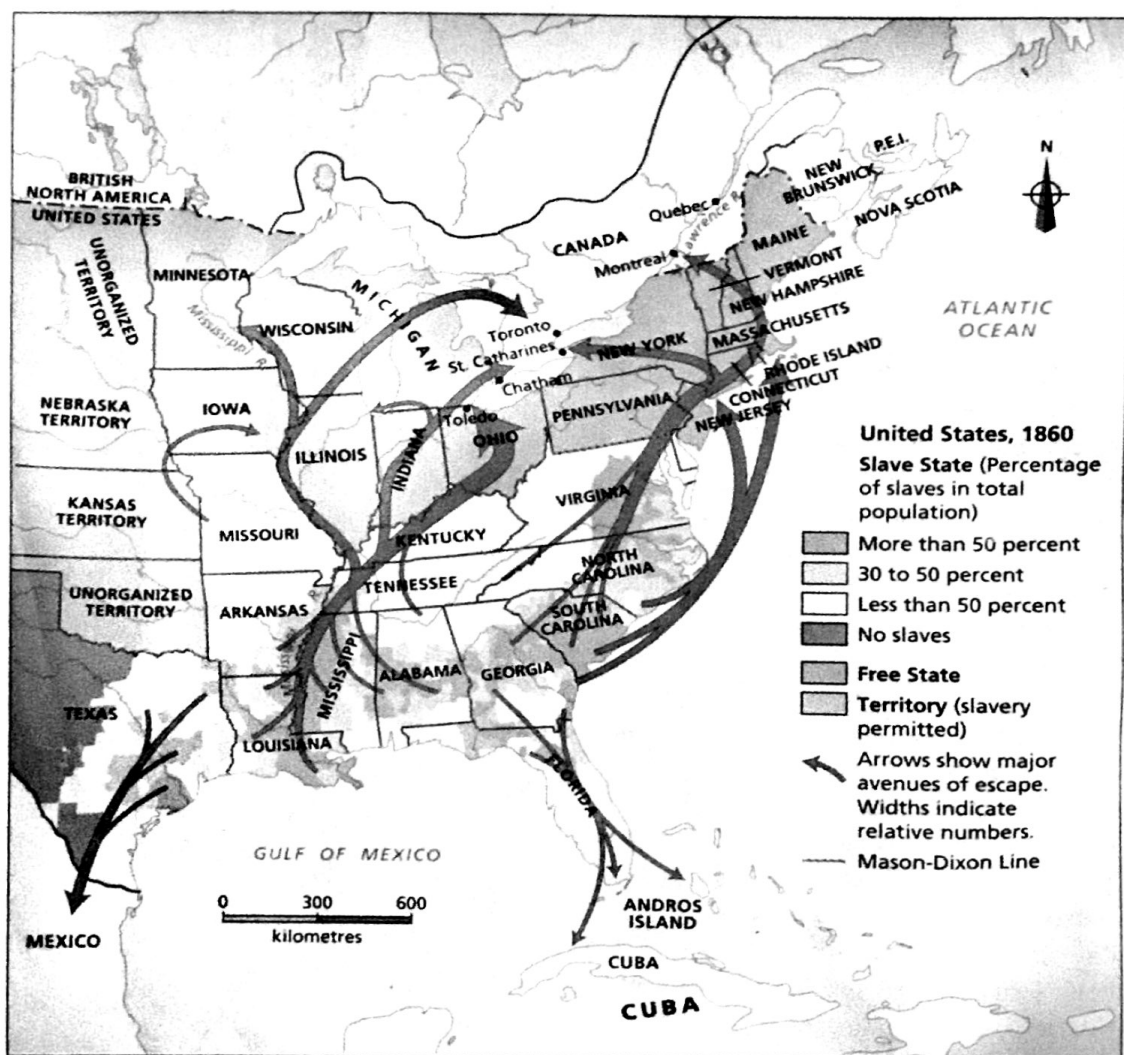
### A Partial History of Black Canadians

- 1606** Mathieu de Costa becomes interpreter for Samuel de Champlain.
- 1776-83** Black Loyalists immigrate to Canada.
- 1812** Black Loyalists fight in the War of 1812.
- 1837** The colonial government forms Black Militia units.
- 1851** The *Provincial Freeman* newspaper is founded in Windsor.
- 1853** Mary Shadd becomes the first woman editor in Canada.
- 1851** The North American Convention of Colored Freemen is held in Toronto.

## The Underground Railroad

Upper Canada became a refuge for Black Americans escaping slavery. Men and women travelled secretly through a network of secret trails and pathways called the "Underground Railroad," and found sanctuary in anti-slavery homes, usually those of Quakers and Methodists. The fugitives often travelled hundreds of kilometres on foot, staying with Quakers and Methodists, who thought slavery was a sin against God and humankind. Harriet Tubman, a Black activist, helped thousands to escape this way. Josiah

Henson came up through the "railroad" with his whole family. One slave, Henry "Box" Brown, actually shipped himself—in a wooden box—to Philadelphia from Virginia. Travelling the Underground Railroad was risky. If caught, escaped slaves were handed back to their masters and severely punished. The fugitive slaves came to Upper Canada hoping to build new lives and to be free of fear. Many settled in the larger towns, but new Black communities were also founded by the fugitives. The excerpt that follows describes one such community near Lake Simcoe.



**Figure 1-21** Safe houses which American slaves used to escape to Canada. How do you think slaves in the Deep South might have learned of the existence of the Underground Railroad?



In every town in the United States the free negroes, who were very numerous and possessed considerable property, were called upon to give security for their good behaviour or to leave the country. No cause is assigned for this requisition ... They therefore deputed two of their number to seek a settlement for them in Canada. They have accordingly procured a large tract in the north of Lake Simcoe, and 1,100 have already come over to Canada and nine-hundred more are prepared to follow in the spring, and, as the matter is said to have been generally taken up, it is probable that it will not end there ...

Unfortunately, few Black people found acceptance in Canada. Nor did they find a place in government for more than a hundred years. For years, they lived as communities within communities, sometimes just a half-dozen families in small towns here and there. Many took up land in the more remote parts of the country and were part of the pioneer experience of Upper Canada.

In fact, there were communities of Black men, women, and children in every colony in British North America. Those who came during the Loyalist wave of immigration settled in the Maritimes, where there are large communities today. The renowned preacher, David George, for example, arrived with 1232 others in the early 1780s. Many Black Maritimers are descended from these settlers. In British Columbia, there were several Black communities, including Saltspring Island. Some Black settlers remembered their lives before slavery, and wanted to see their African homelands again, as did Richard Pierpoint, a Black Loyalist, who wrote the poignant letter that appears at the right.



**Figure 1-22**  
Maritimer Lucy Mitchell was known for her great sense of style. She lived in Nova Scotia in the nineteenth century.

The Petition of Richard Pierpoint, now of the Town of Niagara, a Man of Colour, a native of Africa, and an inhabitant of this Province since the year of 1780.



Most humbly showeth,  
That Your Excellency's Petitioner is a native of Bondu in Africa: that at the age of Sixteen Years he was made a Prisoner and sold as a Slave: that he was conveyed to America about the year 1760, and sold to a British officer; that he served his Majesty during the American Revolutionary War in the Corps called Butler's Rangers, and again during the late American War in a Corps of Colour raised on the Niagara frontier. That Your Excellency's Petitioner is now old and without property; that he finds it difficult to obtain a livelihood by his labour; that he is above all things desirous to return to his native Country; that His Majesty's Government be graciously pleased to grant him any relief, he wishes it might be affording him the means to proceed to England and from thence to a Settlement near the Gambia or Senegal Rivers, from whence he could return to Bondu..."

York, Upper Canada  
21<sup>st</sup> of July 1821