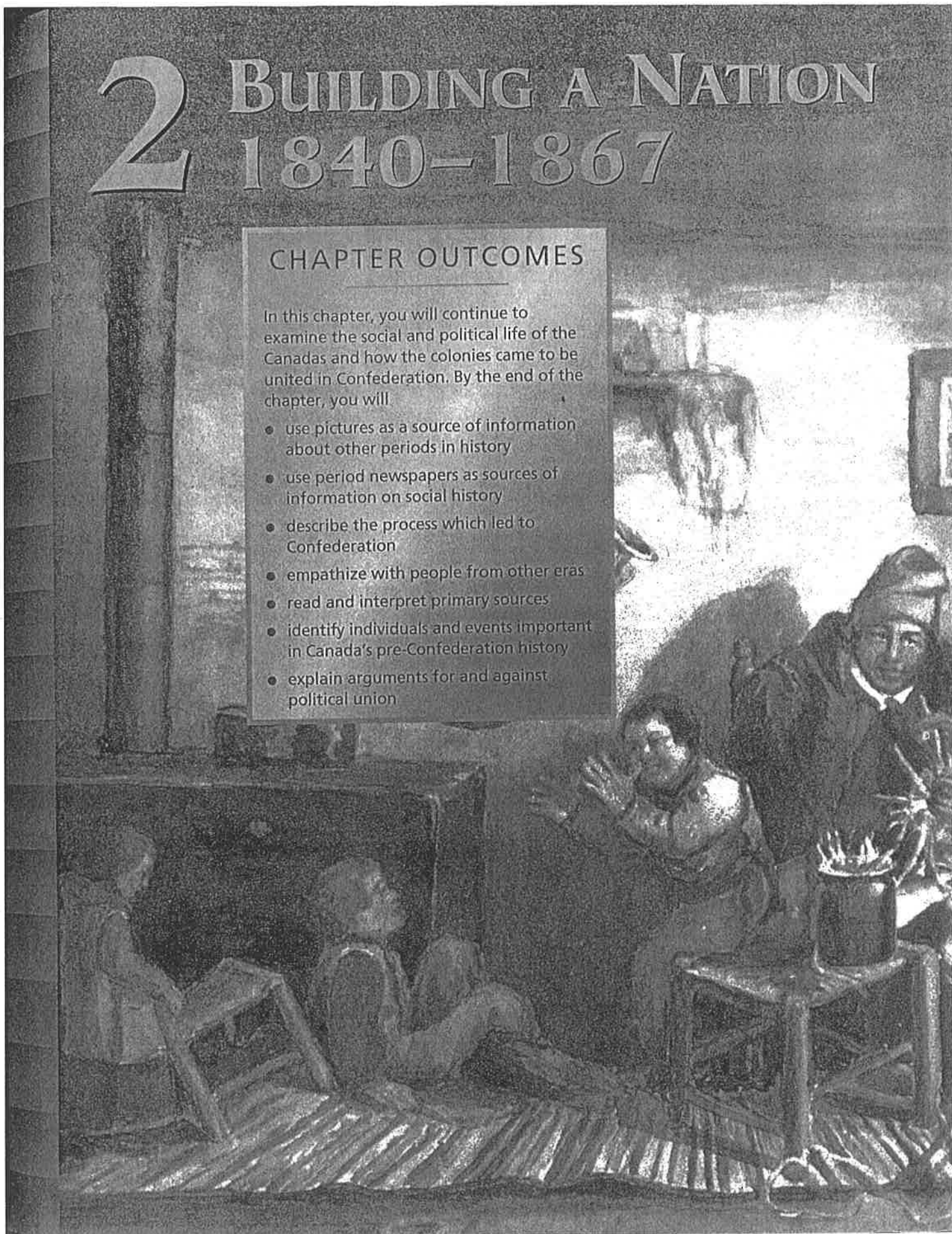


2 BUILDING A NATION 1840-1867

CHAPTER OUTCOMES

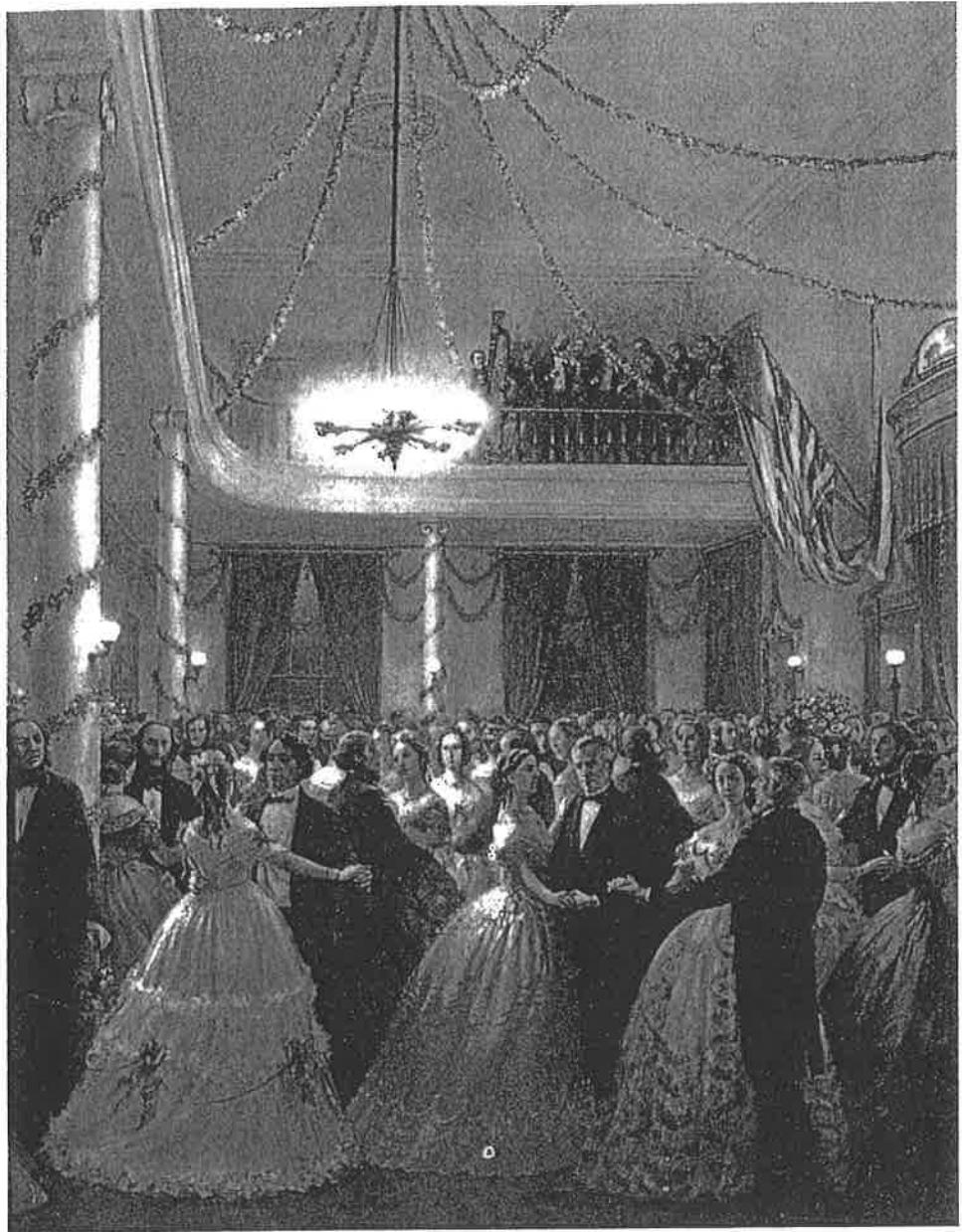
In this chapter, you will continue to examine the social and political life of the Canadas and how the colonies came to be united in Confederation. By the end of the chapter, you will

- use pictures as a source of information about other periods in history
- use period newspapers as sources of information on social history
- describe the process which led to Confederation
- empathize with people from other eras
- read and interpret primary sources
- identify individuals and events important in Canada's pre-Confederation history
- explain arguments for and against political union



TIME LINE

- 1837 • REBELLIONS TAKE PLACE IN UPPER AND LOWER CANADA
- 1838 • LORD DURHAM'S REPORT IS ISSUED
- 1846 • OREGON TREATY IS SIGNED
- 1846 • POTATO FAMINE DEVASTATES IRELAND
- 1850 • CROWN COLONY OF VANCOUVER ISLAND IS CREATED
- 1852 • JAMES DOUGLAS APPOINTED GOVERNOR OF VANCOUVER ISLAND
- 1854 • RECIPROCITY TREATY WITH US
- 1851 • BALDWIN-LAFONTAINE GOVERNMENT FALLS
- 1854 • CRIMEAN WAR BEGINS
- 1856 • GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY IS COMPLETED
- 1858 • COLONY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA IS CREATED
- 1861 • AMERICAN CIVIL WAR BEGINS
- 1864 • GREAT COALITION IS FORMED
- 1864 • CHARLOTTETOWN CONFERENCE TAKES PLACE
- 1864 • QUEBEC CONFERENCE IS HELD
- 1865 • AMERICAN CIVIL WAR ENDS
- 1866 • THE LONDON CONFERENCE IS HELD
- 1867 • CANADA BECOMES A DOMINION



[Those who support Confederation] are ... a few ambitious individuals, who feel our legislature too small for their capacity ... who feel anxious to strut in embroidered court suits ... and enjoy fat salaries far away from the provinces whose best interests are to be shamefully voted away in return for a fortnight's feasting ...

—EDITORIAL, *THE HALIFAX CITIZEN*, 1864

Have you ever felt as though you were being swayed from your better judgement in “return for a fortnight’s feasting”? A fortnight is two weeks, but hastily made decisions often haunt people for years. What does this statement say about anti-Confederation sentiment?

INTRODUCTION

The Rebellions of 1837 temporarily slowed the rush to settle Upper Canada. Soon, however, emigrants began to arrive by the thousands, and the population of English-speaking Canada surpassed that of French Canada. Concerned that their language and culture were under attack by the British government, politicians in French Canada formed political parties to defend their interests. After all, in his report, Lord Durham had recommended that English culture and values should prevail, and that the colonies should be joined in a union. If such a union were extended to include the Maritime colonies of Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Newfoundland—or even, after 1852,

British Columbia—French Canada would be forever under siege.

Canada West (formerly Upper Canada) grew rapidly after the rebellions. Toronto became a city with substantial buildings, businesses, banks, and busy thoroughfares. New roads linked bigger towns to the hinterland. Many new towns were incorporated, each with a row of brick or **clapboard** houses for the doctor, the dentist, and the leading merchants. As business grew, so did the challenges of getting goods to market and to the consumer. Canada West was an exciting place to be—a place of growth and opportunity.

As the British government became less interested in its colonies, it amended or cancelled

clapboard: horizontal boards, the outer “skin” of a house

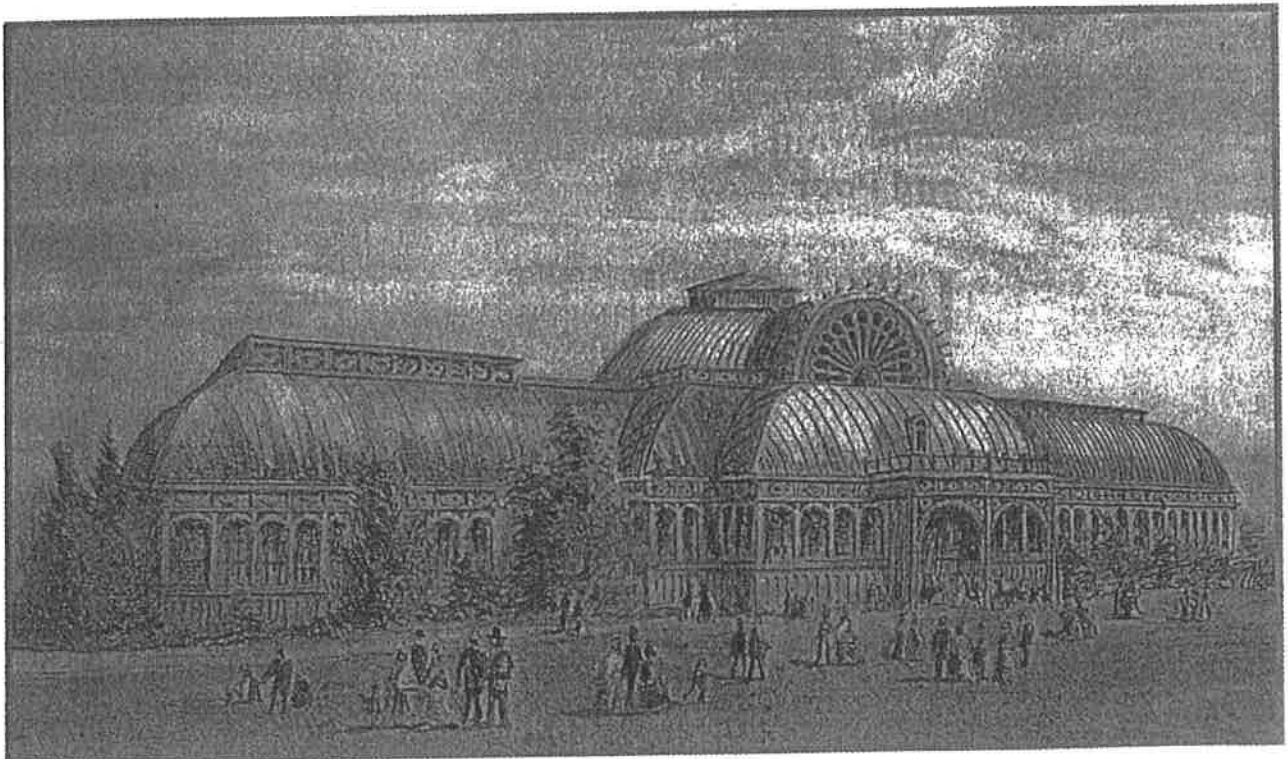


Figure 2-1 Toronto's Crystal Palace was fashioned after a similar building in London, England.

laws which had given them special benefits. Britain refused to finance new projects. Now colonial governments and private developers were responsible for raising cash to build new ships, canals, and railways. Some projects, such as an intercolonial railway, seemed to make more economic sense if the colonies were joined together. Many people believed that the union of all the colonies would make each stronger and richer. Not everyone agreed. The emergence of political leaders who powerfully articulated the advantages of union marked a turning point in the debate—as did the American Civil War, which posed a serious external threat.

This chapter is about the building of Confederation. In other words,

it is about the building of Canada. You will learn much about the politics and government of the era, but these are only one part of the story. You will also learn about the people of the time. Who were the men and women in those early photographs and paintings? They are long dead, but once they talked and ate and laughed and schemed and took holidays. They loved, grumbled, gossiped, listened to music, played games, cried, and feared disease and death. Try to see these people as they were—in many ways just like you, but also different. That is really what history is all about. When you come to understand that you too are living in history, not simply studying it, you will have built a bridge between the past and your present.

THE REIGN OF QUEEN VICTORIA

Immigrants, Rich and Poor

In the mid-nineteenth century, life in Canada could be luxurious or burdensome, depending on your social class. With money, education, and social standing, life was very good indeed. It was possible to make a vast amount of money and to keep most of it, since there was no income tax. The very rich, who lived lavishly in splendid houses with many servants, grew even richer after Confederation. On the other hand, many people had to struggle to make a living. Thousands and thousands of people lived below

the poverty line in tiny one- or two-room cottages. Workers, in general, were not paid well and worked long hours for little reward. There was no employment insurance, no universal health care, no government assistance as we know it today. If a person could not find work or became ill, he or she depended solely on relatives or the church.

Many of the new immigrants to Canada came from Ireland and Scotland. Most of these people were desperately poor and had little education. Some went to Toronto or to growing towns, where they could find work as manual labourers. Others rented land in return for part of the harvest. Rocky land with thin



Figure 2-2 This picture was taken at the end of the Victorian era in Toronto. It shows housing in one of the poorest sections of town.

soil was the cheapest, and poor immigrants bought land whenever they could. Near present-day Owen Sound, near Meaford and Orangeville, for example, areas today are still known as the "Irish Block" and the "Scottish Settlement." While it was true that new immigrants had opportunities in Canada that simply did not exist for them in the United Kingdom or Europe, in reality they often faced disappointment and hardship.

Many Irish immigrants were Catholics, while many Scots were Presbyterians. People in the establishment, however, belonged to the Anglican Church, which was the official church of the colonies. Most towns had at least one Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Catholic church. Indeed, religion was very important to the **Victorians**. Almost everybody attended services. Churches were, in effect, communi-

ties within communities. Their leaders made decisions about education, schools, and community matters, and church congregations served as one of the few agencies that helped the destitute. People gave to the churches and helped to build or improve them, often as a way to display their own wealth.

The Native Peoples

The original people of the Eastern Woodlands—the Native peoples—were often pushed aside in pioneer Canada, especially in southern regions of the colonies. Not only were aboriginal reserves located on the edges of the main settled areas, but the Native peoples tended to be forgotten and ignored, unless, of course, Europeans wanted to buy "Indian" lands or to employ "Indian" labourers.

One way or another, the Native peoples were forced to adjust to

Victorian: someone who lived during the era of Queen Victoria, from 1837–1901

Figure 2-3 An Ojibwa chief in the 1850s



the Eastern Woodlands, they turned to small-scale fruit and vegetable gardening and even started to shop at the local food stores. The Ojibwa had never grown a single crop, and they resisted any attempts to force them into farming. Other groups, such as the Mohawks along the Grand River, were long-time agriculturalists, and had their own local governments. They were well-equipped to deal with the colonial officials, merchants, and speculators who had recently appeared on the scene.

Around this time, land claims and territorial disputes were common. Land claims may be in today's news, but they are hardly new. Many claims have histories that go back more than a century. (You will read about one such British Columbia claim, and its resolution, in Chapter 7.) By mid-century, the Ojibwa who lived in the Lake Superior region were embroiled in a

European ways of doing things. The Algonkians, for example, had traditionally relied on hunting and fishing for food. With the growth of immigrant settlements throughout

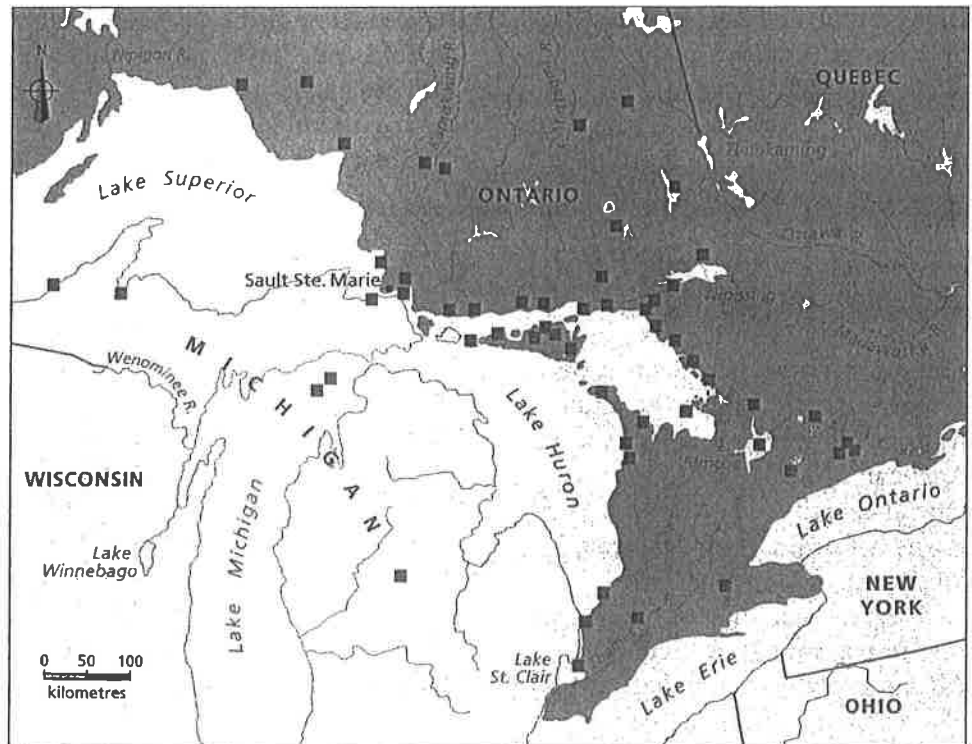


Figure 2-4 A map of Ojibwa reserves in the mid-1800s

land dispute with the new government over miners trespassing on their property. In 1845, the government had given several mining companies the go-ahead to explore the mineral wealth of the Shield. A few years later, it agreed to fund the mining operations. The new governor of the Canadas examined the Native claims and found they were "favourable to the Indians," but this could not stop the development of the Shield—or the encroachment on Ojibwa territory.

The Ojibwa also had reserves on on Lake Huron and Georgian Bay on the edges of European settlements. As settlers moved closer to their lands, they often pressured the Ojibwa to sell their best land. Sometimes, settlers and local governments challenged the terms of previous treaties. One late-century dispute over boundaries forced the Ojibwa to meet with the colonial government at Allenford, Ontario. In the end, the government backed down and accepted the Ojibwa interpretation of their treaty.

The government also tried to persuade bands to rent out good reserve lands, and would pay an annual fee in return for land it could sell to settlers. Since many Native



Figure 2-5 In 1995, the Ojibwa challenged the municipal government to return lands used as a golf course, one frequented by members of the Canadian military, at Ipperwash, Ontario. The confrontation escalated, and actions taken by both sides in the dispute resulted in a violent confrontation.

people were desperately poor, the struggle to hold onto their lands was difficult. Much of the territory that had been recognized in early treaties was eventually lost. But in spite of the tremendous pressure to change and **assimilate** into White society, Native culture remained essentially intact. Elders kept alive many traditions and oral histories, which persist to the present day.

to assimilate: to join the majority group and give up the traditions of one's own group

ACTIVITIES

1. Create an organizer or a web diagram to display information about new immigrants to Canada in the mid-nineteenth century. Show their country of origin, where they settled, and their church affiliation. As part of your web, include information on the lives of the rich and the poor.
2. a) Do you think it was possible for a Native person to adapt to Victorian society? Was such adaptation necessary? Was it right? Why or why not?
b) Why did the settlers not adapt to Native customs and traditions?
3. What economic, environmental, and social difficulties would Native communities face as they tried to preserve their own culture?

VICTORIAN ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Queen Victoria came to the throne in 1837, while she was still in her teens. During the years that she reigned, 1837 to 1901, her tastes, values, and behaviour set the standard. In fact, people who lived in Britain and the British Empire at this time are often called "Victorians." Most Canadians, and those who lived in other colonies of British North America, were British citizens and followed Victorian values. Even Americans adopted the tone and values of the period: Victorian ideals complemented their own beliefs about morals, hard work, success in business, and power. The Victorians had what we call "attitude." They were very sure

of themselves and had few doubts about their values and beliefs.

Victorian society was distinctly Christian. The people of this era placed a high value on personal modesty and on "gravity," a kind of seriousness, particularly as the century wore on. The queen was a model for the age. After Victoria's husband, Albert, died, she wore mourning clothes for the rest of her life. But the Victorian era was not grim—in fact, it was very optimistic. The British Empire grew larger and stronger, and its armed forces, particularly its navy, were almost beyond challenge. New discoveries in medicine, science, and technology were reported almost daily. In the

Figure 2-6 Queen Victoria appears at one of her Jubilees (in either 1887 or 1897). Notice that even during a celebration she is wearing black under her robe. Several poor Irish families are shown to the left. The Catholic Irish experienced many hardships under British rule.



latter half of the century, Victorian adventurers embarked on daring journeys. These romantic quests typically involved searching for the sources of the great rivers or other mysteries of the world. The journey of Walter Chedale and Lord Milton, excerpted in the opening "Window on the Past," typifies this yearning for romantic adventure. Understandably, newspapers were filled with accounts of British triumphs. Many Canadians enjoyed reading these stories because they thought of themselves as British. Most English Victorians had no doubt that they were superior to all other peoples, and that to be born British was "to win the lottery of life."

Victorian values included a strict moral code and an obsession with social status. The class system of Britain and Europe still operated in the US and Canada, but to a lesser extent. This meant that your occupation and social standing was still largely determined by family background and social connections. Although many Europeans had emigrated to North America to escape

the class system, they found no shortage of snobbery when they arrived.

Middle-class Victorians were very prudish, and they believed that people could be easily tempted to stray from proper behaviour. They were also extremely materialistic—they liked nice things, and spent freely on clothes, homes, and furnishings. The Victorian obsession with status extended to church buildings, which were often the largest and most important buildings in town. Many social activities took place on church property. Weddings and funerals were important community events, and helped people to build strong relationships with one another.

Fashion and Decor

Although Canadians were less formal than Europeans, keeping up appearances was important. Clothing indicated social status and Victorian values, so even labourers tended to dress formally. Women wore long dresses and aprons; men wore hats and ties, even to sporting events. The

DID YOU KNOW?

"Pale is good" has returned as a fashion statement, now that people are wise to the long-term effects of sun exposure. Too much exposure can cause both premature aging and skin cancer.

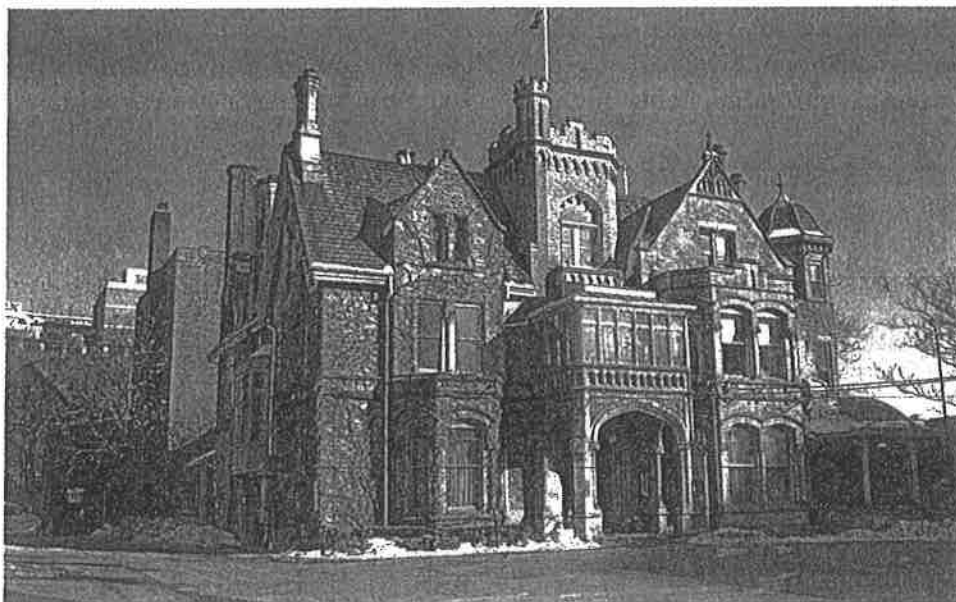


Figure 2-7 Architecture tells us much about the people of an era. After 1840, house styles in Canada West changed almost every decade, often copying English or US fashions. How do you think people earned the money to build large, lavish homes, such as this one, on Jarvis Street in Toronto? Now a restaurant, The Keg, this mansion was once the home of the Massey family.

Figure 2–8 A typical Victorian drawing room. Notice the heavy drapery and tassels.

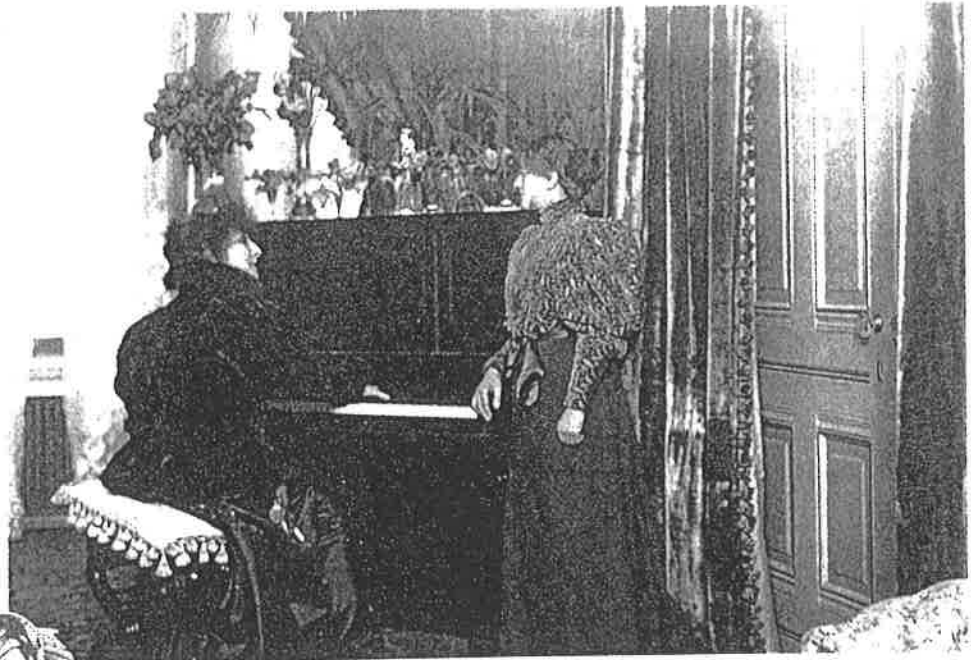


Figure 2–9 A Victorian hairbrush

wealthy dressed extremely well. Men wore long jackets and high, stiff collars; women wore long dresses made of the finest cloth, with high collars to protect their skin from the sun. **Parasols** and broad-brimmed hats were used for the same purpose. Unlike today, a tan was a sign that a person worked outdoors and was, therefore, lower class. No one ever tried to sport a tan.

Victorians were most demonstrative about wealth. Houses of the rich professionals and merchants were large and substantial, indicating the owners' importance in the community. Large houses were also necessary because large families were

common. Often grandparents and other relatives lived in the house, as did servants. Because houses were usually heated with coal or wood fireplaces, rooms were small, with doors to keep in the heat. Victorians loved heavy, decorated furniture, heavy curtains, and knick-knacks. To modern eyes, Victorian rooms would look cluttered and overdone. Of course, the poor could not afford large houses and rich furnishings. They lived in small houses in the poorer sections of town, or in the country; and they decorated with what they could afford. Grown children often lived with their parents, sometimes even after marriage.

parasol: a fancy umbrella to keep out the sun

ACTIVITIES

1. It is important, and fair, to judge people by the standards of their own time. Make a PMI chart for Victorian values and sensibilities. (Your teacher will review the PMI with you.) Assess your own bias after you have done so, and summarize your assessment in two or three sentences.
2. Is there anything in Victorian society that strikes you as a contradiction? If so, what is it?
3. Examine Figure 2–8. Imagine you are a magazine editor compiling a list of fashion and decor "do's" for trendy Victorians. Using this scene as a model, make a list of at least six "do's".

A NEW AGE OF SCIENCE AND MEDICINE

These three things, will, work and success, between them fill human existence.

—LOUIS PASTEUR

Science and technology dominated and shaped the Western world after 1860. In the nineteenth century, people were astonished as scientists and inventors made discovery after discovery, many of which seemed almost magical. Discoveries came so fast, and many ideas were so new, that understanding was often incomplete. Scientists debated the origin of disease, the causes of which were not well understood. When germs were first seen under a microscope in the 1870s, some scientists theorized that germs (“animalcules,” as they were originally called) grew spontaneously out of liquids. Other scientists thought that they were laid as eggs by insects. Educated people took a keen interest in science and its future. As empires and trade net-

works grew, people came into contact with new, and sometimes unexpected, forms of life. Newspapers and journals carried accounts of discoveries in Africa, northern Canada, and Asia—and to stir public curiosity, journalists often mixed fiction and fact.

Exciting medical discoveries were regularly featured in the news of the nineteenth century. Aspirin, antibiotics, antiseptics, x-rays, vitamins, and hormones were discovered in the latter half of the century. Although the pioneering work on vaccinations had been done at the end of the eighteenth century, it wasn't until the Victorian era that vaccinations became available to ordinary people. Science excited people, but it also frightened them—unlike today, few people had access to reliable information and news reports. People living in Canada's cities, however, were more likely to be aware of what was happening than those who lived in isolated communities.

DID YOU KNOW?

Smallpox was eradicated in every part of the world in 1980. However, the smallpox virus still exists in two locations, both of them laboratories.

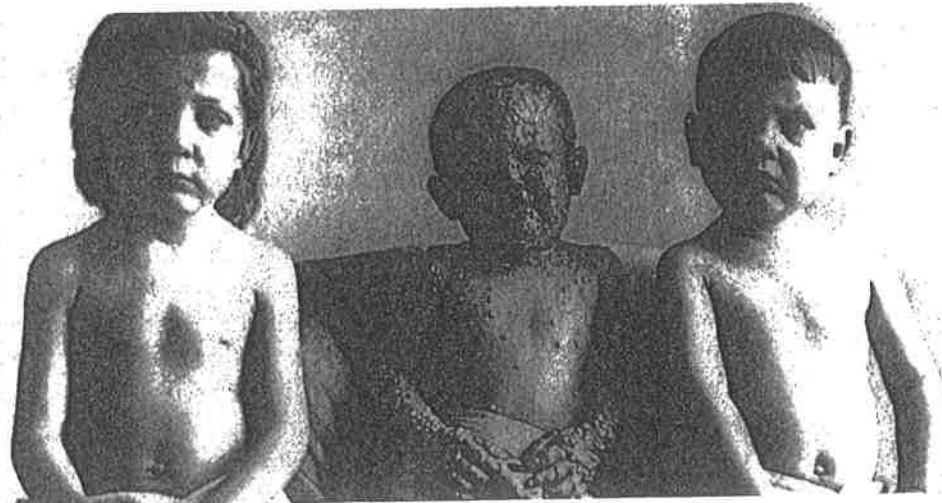


Figure 2-10 The child in the middle has smallpox, a terrible disease that left many scarred for life in the nineteenth century.

The Europeans Meet the Gorilla

Victorians were interested in learning more about the natural world, but they liked their news on the sensational side. This account, published in *The Gentleman's Magazine* in the mid-nineteenth century, describes the gorilla, an animal first encountered and described by a European, a French naturalist, in 1847. How does this account compare with what is known about the gorilla today?

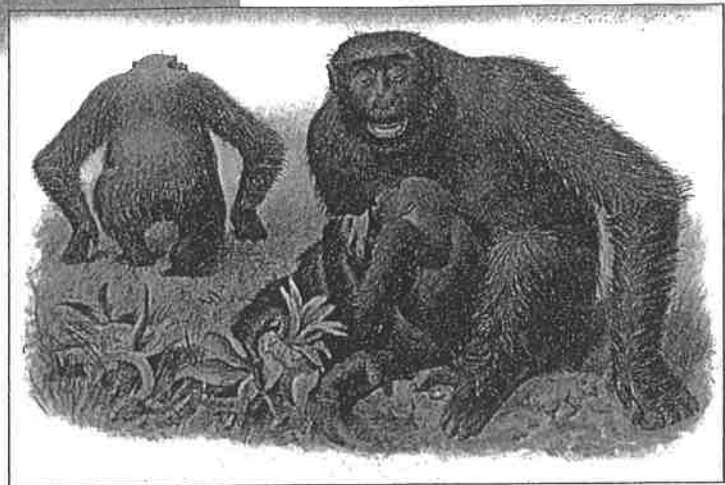


Figure 2-11 A Victorian-era poster of the gorilla. This one seems to have toned down the ferocity!



The gorilla is a fruit-eater, but as fierce as the most **carnivorous** animals. He is said to show an enraged **enmity** against men ... he shows a similar hatred to the elephant ... We are told that when the gorilla "sees an elephant busy with his trunk among the twigs, he instantly regards this as an infraction of the laws of property, and ... he suddenly brings his club down on the elephant's (trunk), and

drives off the alarmed animal trumpeting shrilly with rage and pain." His enmity to man is more terrible ...

The hideous aspect of his face (his green eyes flashing with rage) is heightened by the thick and prominent brows being drawn **spasmodically** up and down, with hair erect, causing a horrible and fiendish scowl. Weapons are torn from their possessor's grasp, gun-barrels bent and crushed in by

the powerful hands and vice-like teeth of the enraged brute. More horrid still, however, is the sudden and unexpected fate which is often inflicted by him. Two people will be walking through one of the woodland paths, unsuspecting of evil, when in an instant one misses his companion, or turns to see him drawn up into the air with a convulsed choking cry ...

carnivorous: flesh-eating

enmity: hatred

spasmodically: in spasms

carbolic acid: an acid compound present in coal tar that can be used as a disinfectant when diluted with water

suffrage: right to vote

People hoped science would find cures for the many serious and deadly diseases that afflicted society. Cholera, smallpox, typhoid fever, influenza, and tuberculosis were very common and killed millions of people in the nineteenth century. Children were particularly susceptible to rheumatic and scarlet fevers. Childbirth was very hazardous, and many women died as a result. Yet very little was known about disease or hygiene. Until

germs and antiseptics were discovered, doctors often infected patients during operations. Surgeons performed major operations without washing their instruments or, sometimes, even their hands. Operating rooms were never sterile, and smoking in an operating room was fairly common. So many new germs were introduced into a patient's body during surgery that it is astonishing that people survived surgery and recovered at all.

In 1857, a French scientist, Louis Pasteur, discovered the tiny organisms—the *bacilli*—that cause many diseases. Pasteur also discovered the cause of anthrax (a deadly disease that wiped out cattle and sheep and could infect humans), cholera, and rabies. He used **carbolic acid** as an antiseptic, and vaccinated people and animals against disease. Incidentally, Louis Pasteur did not become wealthy because of his discoveries, as medical researchers often do today. He chose instead to live a simple and generous life, and found satisfaction in his work.

Figure 2-12 This early Canadian photo shows conditions in hospital operating rooms in the mid-1800s. Because germs had not been discovered, the doctors have made no attempt to keep the room—or the patient, the instruments, guests, and themselves—sterile.



Breaking the Barriers: Emily Stowe

Emily Stowe, a Canadian woman, was one of the first female doctors in the British Empire. Born in 1831, she was provided with a good education by her Quaker parents. At sixteen, she became a school teacher, and at twenty-three, she became Canada's first woman school principal. Emily married John Stowe, and they had three children. When her husband became ill with tuberculosis, Emily Stowe realized she wanted to become a doctor. However, she couldn't pursue her studies in Canada—no Canadian medical school would accept a woman applicant in the mid-nineteenth century.

Stowe looked to the United States, and was accepted at the New York Medical College for Women. Upon graduating in 1867, she faced another barrier: She would have to practise illegally in Canada because Canadian law required physicians to do some training in Canada. Stowe bravely set up an illegal practice in Toronto. Finally, in 1880, the rules were changed and Emily Stowe was able to practise legally. In her spare time, she campaigned for women's **suffrage** (see Chapter 7) and other feminist issues, founded the Toronto Women's Literary Club, and helped establish the Toronto Women's Medical College. She died in 1903.



Figure 2-13 Emily Stowe was a feminist and one of the first female doctors in the British colonies. She became a physician in 1867, after studying in the United States. Many Victorians believed that women should never enter medical school because they might be corrupted as they studied the human body.

Using an Editorial as a Primary Source

Whether women should pursue higher education, including medical school, was a question frequently debated at mid-century. One newspaper published in Canada West reprinted this editorial from the *Edinburgh Review*. In it, the author argues for the admission of women to medical school.

Editorials in major publications are useful primary sources for the historian because they usually express an opinion that has attained some popularity. The fact that this editorial had been published in the United Kingdom and was reprinted by a local Canadian newspaper indicates how seriously people took the fight of women to educate themselves.



The question of the right or no right of women to avail themselves of a university education has been raised in a somewhat unexpected form at St. Andrews. A young English lady, Miss Elizabeth Garrett, visited St. Andrews during the summer, and intimated her desire to become a student of medicine.

This lady arrived in St. Andrews a few days ago and on Wednesday last applied to the Rev. Mr. Mcbean, secretary of the university, for a **matriculation ticket**, paid the usual fee, received the ticket, and signed her name in the matriculation book All this was very well, and just what might have been expected, from the distinguished and accomplished professors of this ancient and celebrated university. But, unluckily, they seem somehow to have

become alarmed at the idea of being first to take the lead ... in the so-called "innovation" of educating women in college, and in those branches of learning that have been generally confined to men, or at least not sought after by women. Accordingly, on Saturday the Senate [of the university] met and passed a resolution to the effect that the issuing of a matriculation ticket ... to Miss Garrett was not sufficiently authorized; that this novel question raised ought to be deliberately considered and decided; that the opinion of other universities and of lawyers should be taken.

It may be doubted that any Senate can exclude ladies from those universities that are established by law and funded by public money. Where do they find the right to do it? Girls are not yet pro-

hibited from attending parish schools—they are rather encouraged to attend. What difference is there, unless arising from custom, between parish schools and universities? We are not aware of any difference in law. Males are admitted and in Acts of Parliament the "male includes the female." It may have been decided by the Court of Session at some time or another that a woman was not entitled to a university education, but we have never heard of such odd decisions. Most likely the question was never raised and we presume that but for custom it is still open. A custom that regulates the measure of rights may be very important but when there has been no exercise of the right at all, there can be no custom, and it is not in every circumstance that non use of a right is followed by the loss of it ...

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. In point form, list all the arguments the writer makes in favour of admitting women to medical school.
2. What phrases are most effective in communicating the writer's viewpoint?
3. Knowing what you do about Victorian values, why do you think some people thought that women would be corrupted by studying the human body?

ACTIVITIES

1. In your opinion, what was the most important medical/scientific discovery of the Victorian era? Design a plaque to honour the scientist responsible. The plaque should include three or four sentences about the specific value of this discovery.
2. Who was Emily Stowe? What difficulties did she face and surmount?
3. Louis Pasteur did not become wealthy from his scientific discoveries. Should he be a model for today's scientists? Explain.

LEISURE AND TRAVEL

Victorian Canadians liked to be entertained. Those who lived in cities had many opportunities to go to parties, concerts, fairs, circuses, and shows. In the country, barn raisings, quilting bees, weddings, *ceilidhs* (parties with Scottish or Irish music, dancing and stories), barn dances, and other diversions were freely available. Books and magazines were very popular because many people could read. Stories were published in **serial format** so that people had to read the next week's issue to follow the story. Charles Dickens's stories were serialized, for example.

The Victorians had a taste for many amusements that are still enjoyed by modern Canadians—but some of their amusements would today be considered brutal or bizarre. Sports achieved a new popularity. Swimming for pleasure, a fashion started in Europe, quickly caught on in Canada. But so did "blood sports," such as bear-baiting and dog-and-bull fighting. Bare-knuckle boxing matches always drew plenty of spectators—the boxers would hammer away at each other, with bouts often lasting more than a hundred rounds. Boxing remained a brutal sport until

Britain's Marquis of Queensbury issued his famous rules for boxing in the 1860s. These rules, which recommend boxing gloves and limit the duration of rounds, form the basis of today's boxing etiquette. They are also unintentionally **droll** because they capture the Victorian spirit—proper, but fascinated with impropriety. Rule Five, for example, notes: "A man hanging on the ropes in a helpless state, with his toes off the ground, shall be considered down."

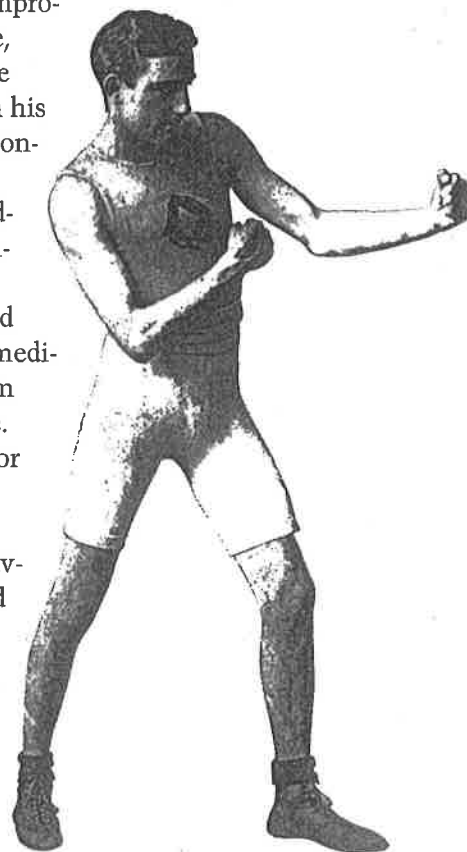
The Victorians loved medicine shows. The patent medicines sold at these affairs promised to cure anything and everything, but many of the medicines were actually made from alcohol, pepper, or turpentine. They would often intoxicate or nauseate people, but with no medicinal effect whatsoever. This was also a new era of travelling circuses. Many disabled people, including children, found jobs in the sideshows,

Figure 2-14 Bare-knuckle boxing was strongly discouraged with the publication of the Marquis of Queensbury's rules for boxing.

matriculation ticket: a piece of paper indicating that a student is enrolled in a course and will matriculate, or graduate

serial format: in weekly or monthly installments

droll: humorous



DID YOU KNOW?

The concept of the “teenager” was unknown in the Victorian era. It wasn’t until the middle of the twentieth century that the word entered common usage.

where people paid money to gawk at their handicaps. A travelling circus came to Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, during the conference on Confederation held in 1864. You will read more about this important conference later in this chapter.

Parlour Games

With no television or radio, no movies, videos, or recorded music, people relied on more personal ways to entertain themselves, particularly on winter evenings. They made music, held dances, talked, and played parlour games. Card games, such as **whist**, were very popular, as

were checkers and chess. Since large gatherings provided a venue where young people could meet each other in a socially acceptable way, games served as a natural icebreaker and entertainment. Some games were hundreds of years old and had been passed down through the generations. Those of Native, Black, French, and English ancestry had distinct cultural traditions and developed their own games. In time, many parlour games crossed cultural boundaries and were played in homes and halls everywhere.

These parlour games, for example, originated on L’ Ile Vert, a farming community on the St. Lawrence

whist: a card game for four players divided into two teams



Figure 2–15 Children formed a larger proportion of the population in Victorian times than today. Society was more youthful, since life expectancy was much lower than it is today and people tended to have large families. Victorian children amused themselves with games and outdoor activities, but most were expected to behave properly and to help out with family chores. What clues in this painting would help you identify the social class of these children?

River. Primarily tests of strength and coordination, these games would mainly have been played by men, but would have served the social purpose of allowing the sexes to mingle. What other social purposes might they have served?

Pulling Up The Stump

The first player gets down on his hands and knees; the second sits on the shoulders of the first and, facing toward his feet; he crosses his feet under the first. By giving some jerks, the second player tries to make the first player raise his hands from the floor and to tip him backwards.

Pulling the Leg

The two players lie side by side on their backs with the head of one by the feet of the other; they hold each other by the forearms and raise the left leg three times; the fourth time, they catch the other's leg and each tries to overturn the other.

Kissing His Thumb

The player, hanging by his right arm from a pipe or beam, must raise his body so as to kiss his thumb.

Getting Around

Leisure travel became immensely popular in the Victorian era. People with money to spare travelled to Europe or America whenever they could. There they experienced the nightlife, parties, and entertainments of great cities such as Paris, where they could see the most famous people in the world. Transatlantic travel became much easier after the invention of the steamboat, which reduced the time for an ocean crossing to a few weeks. The *Royal William*, built in Quebec in 1833 (see page 19), crossed the Atlantic in just seventeen days. A few years later, steamships made the



Figure 2-16 Victorian railway travel. Passenger cars were not comfortable by today's standards, but people still enjoyed themselves. How do these sleeping arrangements strike you?

crossing in less than two weeks. In our era, this seems like a very long time, but for people accustomed to crowded sailing ships that took five weeks to travel from Britain to Canada, the steamship was wonderful. And for those who could afford it, steamships had luxurious cabins and recreation facilities.

Changing Technology

The new steam locomotives made land travel more attractive for everyone, not just the wealthy. Imagine how thrilling it must have been to discover you could travel by train to some distant place in a fraction of the time it had taken just a few years earlier.

Railways and steamships also helped to build the **infrastructure** of Canada after 1830. Canada's first railway was the Champlain Saint Lawrence Railroad, which ran from La Prairie, a suburb of Montreal, to

infrastructure: the community systems that make travel, communications, and business easier: for example, roads, canals, transportation, and postal service

DID YOU KNOW?

The idea of a vacation was radically new in the nineteenth century, and it quickly became a status symbol. People often planned their trips years in advance.

Sarah Bernhardt, Superstar

The life of Madame Sarah Bernhardt may prove the greatest marvel of the nineteenth century.

—EDMOND DE GONCOURT, NOVELIST

Sarah Bernhardt, perhaps the most famous person in Europe, was one of the first “superstars.” Americans and Canadians who travelled to Paris to see her perform in a Victor Hugo play or in the Théâtre Français could tell their friends that they had witnessed one of the most magnetic performers of all time.

At the time of Confederation, most people in Canada would have recognized her name. She was also known as the “Divine Sarah,” “The Greatest French Woman since Joan of Arc,” or even “The Eighth Wonder of the World.” Marvelously talented, Bernhardt was an actor, sculptor, painter, art critic, singer—and extremely temperamental. She was fired from her first job for slapping the face of another performer and breaking an umbrella over the head of the doorman. Like some performers today, Bernhardt loved publicity and spread shocking stories about herself to attract attention. She let it be known, for example, that she slept in a coffin.

Sarah Bernhardt had an unusual and beautiful face, and a magnetic, forceful personality. People said she had the “eyes of a cat and the smile of a llama.” As a young woman, she was so thin that people joked that “an empty carriage pulled up at the stage door and Sarah Bernhardt got out.” As one of the most important people in Paris, Sarah Bernhardt was someone to know. In 1870, when the Prussian army was attacking Paris, Sarah set up a hospital and worked day and night as an administrator, fundraiser, and volunteer nurse.



Figure 2-17 The “Divine Sarah” shocked and fascinated the public, which gave her great power. As a public figure, her actions and accomplishments challenged the traditional Victorian view of women as being passive and dutiful. She was for some not only a “superstar,” but a role model.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. What are your criteria for a performer to be called “superstar”?
2. How would easier transatlantic travel and the rise of newspapers (see pages 71 to 72) help to create a superstar such as Sarah Bernhardt?
3. What entertainers today could be compared with Sarah Bernhardt? Why? Refer to your criteria in question 1.
4. How do bizarre, sometimes unflattering, details of a superstar’s life enhance the public’s interest in that person?

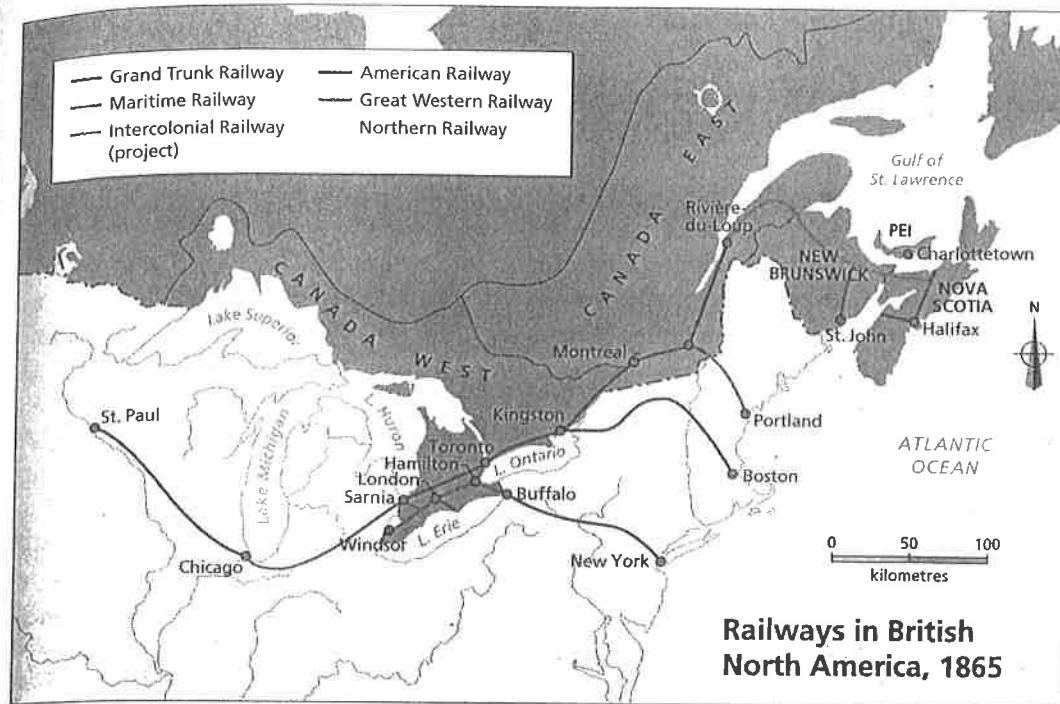


Figure 2-18 Canada entered the railway age after 1837. By the end of the nineteenth century, rail lines linked all the cities in Canada with each other, and with the United States. Today, many of those lines have been abandoned. In fact, many railway beds are now used for bike trails. What transportation system took the place of the trains? Why would another system be more efficient and profitable now, but not in earlier times?

Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, 40 kilometres southeast of Montreal. It was completed in 1836. The railway's steam locomotive, which had been built in England and shipped to Canada, transported people and freight at speeds of up to 48 kilometres an hour.

• By 1850, regularly scheduled trains moved goods and people at speeds of 80 kilometres an hour or more, and rail lines linked towns from Canada West to the Maritimes. The Champlain and Saint Lawrence Railroad, for example, was extended in 1852 to Saint Lambert, Quebec, and also travelled further into New York state. The St. Lawrence and Atlantic Railroad, completed in 1853, gave Montreal and other Quebec towns access to an ice-free port by connecting them to Portland, Maine. The railways had strict timetables, as much to avoid collisions on the same length of track as to accommodate passengers. For this reason, a train could arrive

late, but never early. Train engineers and brakemen were on the job throughout their shifts, even cooking their meals on a shovel in the steam engine's **firebox**.

firebox: the steam boiler

The Rise of Newspapers

In the mid-nineteenth century, every city and most small towns in Canada had one or more newspapers. In fact, newspapers had existed in Canada since the eighteenth century—*The Halifax Gazette* was the country's first paper, founded in 1752. The Victorian era saw the rise of the dailies—newspapers that are published every day of the week. The dailies began in Montreal in the 1840s. By 1873, Canada had forty-seven dailies. Because more and more people could read, and because so many people lived in cities, where access to information was considered important, dailies caught on rapidly.

Victorian newspapers had many features that we recognize in today's

DID YOU KNOW?

Professional sports would have been an unusual concept for Victorians. They recognized only a few professions, all of which required a university degree.

bushel: an old measure of dry goods equivalent to roughly 35 litres

peck: one-quarter of a bushel

Figure 2-19 Can the bumps on the human skull hold the secrets to the personality within? This drawing from the Victorian era demonstrates that the fad science of the day—phrenology—inspired much enthusiasm. How does this drawing reflect Victorian values and attitudes?



newspapers, but there were major differences. Professional sports, other than boxing and horse racing, were not a feature of Victorian life, so there was no sports section. Aside from the odd political cartoon, Victorian newspapers had no comics section. They had no professional advice columns, or horoscopes, and few non-news or special-interest features—“helpful hints” were an exception. Moreover, by today’s standards, they had limited sources of information. So how did they attract readers? They were one of the few sources of news from the outside world—the United States, the other colonies, and from places far from home. They were also far less inter-

ested in respecting people’s privacy. Local news was very important because people loved to know what their neighbours were up to. Court reports and the names, sentences and fines of offenders were usually published, and made for interesting reading. For example, William Wilson sold “spirituous liquor without a license” and was fined \$5.00. Mary Morrison used “abusive language” and was fined 25 cents.

People would buy newspapers only if they found them useful or interesting—as a result, self-help articles, recipes, and helpful hints were regular features. For example, “to remove the smell of paint from a room, place a vessel of lighted charcoal in the middle of the room and throw on one or two handfuls of juniper berries.” There were recipes for curing ham (“a bushel-and-a-half and a peck of salt is required for every 1000 pounds of pork”). There was late-breaking news on fad science, for example, phrenology (the science of personality study based on the bumps on a person’s head) and the water cure (the theory that water could cure all ailments).

Today, Victorian newspapers may seem hopelessly old-fashioned—as do steamships and steam locomotives. At the time, however, they were revolutionary, and they reshaped society.

ACTIVITIES

1. Describe all the ways in which Canada’s infrastructure developed after 1830. In your judgement, which contribution to infrastructure was most important?
2. Reread the section, Changing Technology, on page 69. What was the first railway in British North America? When was it extended, and to where? What does this say about trade links between Canada East and the US?
3. Urbanization is about the growth of cities and the change, for many people, from a farm-based to a city-based life. Describe the beginnings of urbanization in Canada, and list some of the changes you would expect to see.