A Concise History of Canada

Margaret Conrad’s history of Canada begins with a challenge to its readers. What is Canada? What makes up this diverse, complex, and often contested nation-state? What was its founding moment? And who are its people? Drawing on her many years of experience as a scholar, writer, and teacher of Canadian history, Conrad offers astute answers to these difficult questions. Beginning in Canada’s deep past with the arrival of its Aboriginal peoples, she traces its history through the conquest by Europeans, the American Revolutionary War, and the industrialization of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, to its prosperous present. As a social historian, Conrad emphasizes the peoples’ history: the relationships between Aboriginal and settler, French and English, Catholic and Protestant, and rich and poor. She writes of the impact of disease, how women fared in the early colonies, and the social transformations that took place after the Second World War as Canada began to assert itself as an independent nation. It is this grounded approach that drives the narrative and makes for compelling reading. In the last chapter, the author explains the social, economic, and political upheavals that have transformed the nation over the last three decades. Despite its successes and its popularity as a destination for immigrants from across the world, Canada remains a curiously reluctant player on the international stage. This intelligent, concise, and lucid book explains just why that is.

Margaret Conrad is Professor Emerita at the University of New Brunswick in Canada. Her publications include Atlantic Canada: A History, with James K. Hiller (2010); History of the Canadian People, with Alvin Finkel (2009); No Place Like Home: The Diaries and Letters of Nova Scotia Women, 1771–1938, with Toni Laidlaw and Donna Smyth (1988); and George Nowlan: Maritime Conservative in National Politics (1986).
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CONTENTS

List of Illustrations  
Acknowledgements  

Introduction: A Cautious Country  
1 Since Time Immemorial  
2 Natives and Newcomers, 1000–1661  
3 New France, 1661–1763  
4 A Revolutionary Age, 1763–1821  
5 Transatlantic Communities, 1815–1849  
6 Coming Together, 1849–1885  
7 Making Progress, 1885–1914  
8 Hanging On, 1914–1945  
9 Liberalism Triumphant, 1945–1984  
10 Interesting Times, 1984–2011  

Notes  
Guide to Further Reading  
Index
ILLUSTRATIONS

MAPS

I.1 Canadian provinces and territories in the twenty-first century page 9
1.1 Aboriginal peoples in 1500 17
3.1 North America, 1713 65
4.1 North America, 1763 82
6.1 Canada in 1867 151

IMAGES

1.1 Ivory maskette from a Dorset archaeological site 13
1.2 Indian Hunters, Pursuing the Buffalo in the Early Spring 21
1.3 Iroquois women preparing corn 24
2.1 The cod fisheries in Newfoundland 33
2.2 Champlain’s map of New France, 1632 43
2.3 Missionaries teaching Christianity to Mi’kmaq 45
3.1 Louis XIV 52
3.2 Canadien militiaman 62
3.3 A Plan of the Harbour of Chebucto and Town of Halifax, 1750 73
3.4 The Death of General Wolfe 77
4.1 Cartoon, London Magazine, July 1774 84
List of Illustrations

4.2 A Moravian missionary meeting with the Inuit in Nain, Labrador 88
4.3 A black woodcutter in Shelburne, Nova Scotia 92
4.4 York, 1804 97
4.5 Interior of a Nootka house 102
5.1 Shanawdithit’s depiction of Beothuk culture 110
5.2 Clearing the town plot, Stanley, New Brunswick, 1834 114
5.3 Methodist camp meeting, Grimsby, Canada East, 1859 120
5.4 The Insurgents at Beauharnois, Lower Canada, 1838 125
5.5 The Burning of the Parliament Building in Montreal, c. 1849 129
6.1 Cariboo Wagon Road 144
6.2 Fathers of Confederation, 1864 148
6.3 Louis Riel in the witness box, 1885 162
6.4 Workers driving the last spike on the CPR 162
7.1 Immigrant recruitment poster 165
7.2 Galicians at immigration sheds in Quebec City 171
7.3 Home children arriving in Canada 173
7.4 Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier in Saskatchewan 191
8.1 Canadian soldiers returning from the Battle of the Somme 197
8.2 Miners’ houses and family in Glace Bay 205
8.3 Unemployed men joining the On-to-Ottawa Trek 209
8.4 Relocating Japanese Canadians 220
9.1 Canadian Voice of Women for Peace (VOW) demonstration 236
9.2 Walrus Hunters on Sea Ice 239
9.3 Aislin cartoon, O.K. Everybody Take a Valium! 248
9.4 Anti–Vietnam War protest at the Toronto Consulate, October 1968 250
9.5 Signing the Constitution, 1982 256
10.1 St. Patrick’s Day harmony 261
10.2 Mohawk Warrior at Oka 282
10.3 Citizenship ceremony at Pier 21 286
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