

Territorial Evolution, 1870

Abstract

Rupert's Land and the North-Western Territory are acquired to form the Northwest Territories. The province of Manitoba is created. In 1877, boundaries of Manitoba are adjusted to conform to the Dominion Lands Survey System.

Canada's long and diversified settlement history is reflected in the two distinct patterns of boundaries that differentiate between eastern and western Canada. The eastern boundaries closely conform to natural features such as drainage basins, while the boundaries of western and northern Canada reflect the administrative organisation of these lands by, first, the Hudson's Bay Company and later the Government of Canada.

Canada

In 1670, a monopoly on fur trade had been given by the British Crown to a company known as the Hudson's Bay Company, headed by Prince Rupert. Along with the trade monopoly came the right to govern all the land with rivers draining into Hudson Bay. This land became known as Rupert's Land. With exploration, and thanks to the fur trade, the region came to be divided into two parts: Rupert's Land, which included all the lands draining into Hudson Bay, and the Northwest Territory, which included the lands draining into the Arctic and Pacific Oceans.



Figure 1: Photograph of the Railway in Lac Mercier, Quebec

The first colonization movement, dating from about 1870 to 1880, coincides with the first phase of industrialization in Quebec. Several present-day industrial regions were developed during other colonization periods.

Source: No de réf. : P1000, D1272, (06-M). Archives nationales du Québec.

After Confederation, people became more interested in these lands. They were considered to be a new frontier for settlement. When the Americans bought Alaska in 1867, Canadians worried that all the West might be lost to the United States. Serious negotiations between Canada and the Hudson's Bay Company to buy its vast lands began in December 1867. The Rupert's Land Act of 1868 authorized the British Crown to take over the lands of the Hudson's Bay Company, and then transfer them to the Dominion of Canada. According to the Act, Canada bought Rupert's Land for 300 000 pounds, while the Hudson's Bay Company kept its trading posts and 45 000 acres around them, and the right to claim one-twentieth of all the fertile land. Canada did not become the owner of Rupert's Land until 1870, and the lands were not transferred until 1871. The British Crown transferred ownership of the Northwest Territories to Canada at the same time as Rupert's Land.

Many people settled in Canada's West. Because of this, the fifth Canadian province, Manitoba, was created in 1870.

Northwest Territories

Although negotiations between the Dominion of Canada and The Hudson's Bay Company were settled in 1868, the transfer of title to this land did not occur until 1870. The Government Act under which this purchase was transacted is known as the Rupert's Land Act. (Prince Rupert headed the Hudson's Bay Company, and the land that this company owned was known as Rupert's Land and included all lands draining into Hudson Bay. The lands of the Northwest Territory, however, drained into the Arctic and Pacific Oceans).

Manitoba

Lord Selkirk had established settlements in the Red River Valley in 1811, and he had named the area Assiniboia. This settlement was given back to the Hudson's Bay Company in 1834, and the boundaries of Assiniboia were set by that Company as a circle about 100 miles wide with Fort Garry at the centre.

During the talks over the sale of the Northwest Territories, no one asked the people who lived there what they thought of the coming sale. The Catholic Métis of the Red River settlement feared that the arrival of many English-speaking Protestant settlers would mean the end of their culture, their way of life and their religion. When the government began to survey the land into quarter-sections, the Métis prepared to defend their rights. Their leader was a Métis named Louis Riel.

In the fall of 1869, the Métis seized Fort Garry, a Hudson's Bay Company fort, and formed their own government. Although the Canadian government finally understood the Métis people's fear for the loss of their rights, it had to deal with a very serious event first. Riel's rebel Métis government had imprisoned and executed Thomas Scott, who had opposed the Riel government. A company of soldiers, both British regulars and Canadian militia, under the command of Colonel Wolseley, was sent to make sure Canadian law was obeyed. The federal government agreed to negotiate with Métis delegates to discuss the entry of the Red River settlement into Canada. The results of the negotiations were the Manitoba Act and the end of the Red River rebellion. As the Canadian soldiers approached, Riel escaped to the United States.

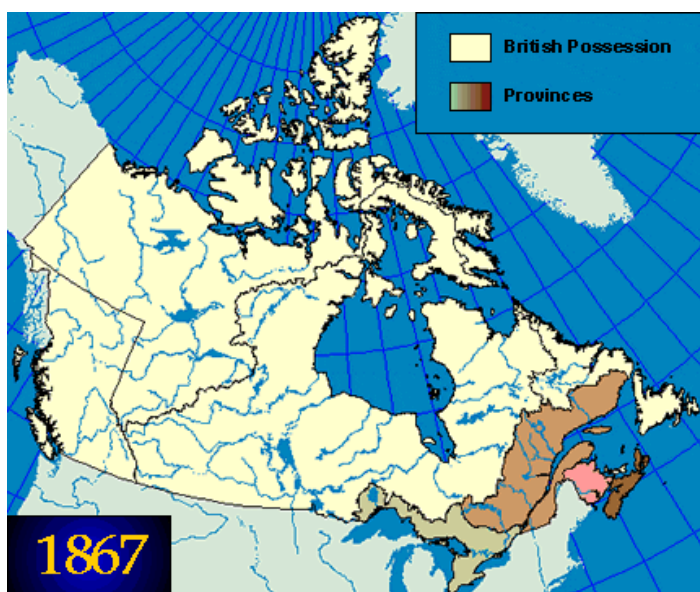
The District of Assiniboia became the province of Manitoba on July 15, 1870. The name "Manitoba" possibly comes from two Indian words -- Minne and Toba -- which mean "water prairie". The new province had the same kind of government as the other provinces, except that it guaranteed both French and English would be considered equal and be the province's official languages, it provided separate schools, and it set aside land for the Métis.

When the province of Manitoba was created, it had nearly double the area of the district of Assiniboia. Its boundaries, in 1870, were the 49th to 50°30' parallels of north latitude, and the 96th to 99th meridians of west longitude. The boundary between Manitoba and the United States followed the 49th parallel, which had been set as the international boundary in 1818.

Animation of the territorial evolution of Canada from 1867 to 1999

The animation, *Territorial Evolution 1867 to 1999_e.gif* is located in the animated gif folder.





Canada's boundaries are dynamic political structures that reflect the changing political, economic and cultural conditions of the country through time. This animation shows sequentially the history of boundary changes in Canada from Confederation to the creation of Nunavut.

Map Sources

Provinces and British Possessions, 1867

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Related Web sites (1999 – 2009)

Federal Government

Canada: A People's History

<http://www.cbc.ca/history/webdriver?MIval=EpisodeSum2.html&lang=E>

Episode summaries of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's documentary series about the history of Canada.

Government of Canada. Canada's Digital Collections. The Acadian Odyssey

<http://collections.ic.gc.ca/acadian/english/toce/toce.htm>

The History of Acadia and the Acadian Experience in Canada

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

<http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/>

Information on the Department and on services offered to First Nations People. See "Publications and Research" for recent data on Aboriginal population, First Nations Profiles, news on treaties and land claims, etc.

National Library of Canada and National Archives of Canada

<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/>

The National Archives of Canada authorizes the disposal of records by federal government institutions and specifies the terms and conditions for their long-term preservation when they have archival value or historic importance; offers advice and orientation to support government institutions in the business of information management and record keeping; and provides records storage facilities.

The National Library's Canadian Confederation Web site

<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/confederation/index-e.html>



Provincial/Territorial Government

British Columbia Archives

<http://www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca/index.htm>

Gouvernement du Québec. Archives nationales du Québec (available in French only)

<http://www.banq.qc.ca/accueil/>

Les Archives nationales du Québec conservent des milliers de fonds : 43 km de documents écrits, 7 000 000 de photographies, 800 000 cartes et plans, 53 000 heures d'enregistrements sonores, de films.

Government of Manitoba. Archives of Manitoba

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/>

Manitoba's rich documentary past is accessible to you at the Archives of Manitoba, which also houses the world-renowned archives of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Provincial Archives

<http://www.gov.nf.ca/panl/>

Government of Nunavut

<http://www.gov.nu.ca/Nunavut/English/departments/CLEY/>

Government of Ontario. Archives of Ontario

<http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/>

Government of Prince Edward Island. Department of Education. Public Archives and Records Office

<http://www.edu.pe.ca/paro/>

The Public Archives and Records Office of Prince Edward Island (PARO) acquires, preserves, and makes available for public research the records of the government of this province and private-sector papers and records deemed to be of lasting historical value.

Northwest Territories Archives

<http://pwnhc.learnnet.nt.ca/programs/nwtarchives.asp>

Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/nsarm/>

Provincial Archives of Alberta

http://www.culture.alberta.ca/preserving/paa_2002/index.asp

Provincial Archives of New Brunswick

<http://archives.gnb.ca/Archives/Default.aspx?culture=en-CA>

Saskatchewan Archives Board

<http://www.saskarchives.com/web/index.html>



Yukon Archives

<http://www.btc.gov.yk.ca/archives/index.html>

Other

Canadian Geographic's Mapping Canada

<http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/mapping/default.asp>

Canadian Heritage Gallery

<http://www.canadianheritage.com/index2.htm>

The Canadian Heritage Gallery is a very extensive collection of historical Canadiana on the Internet.

Historical Atlas of Canada Online Learning Project

<http://www.historicalatlas.ca/website/hacolp/>

This site is still under development but promises to be an excellent site for historical maps of Canada. All maps shown on the site have been adapted from the printed version of three-volume Historical Atlas of Canada.

Musée McCord Museum

<http://www.mccord-museum.qc.ca/en/>

Founded in 1921 by David Ross McCord, the McCord Museum conserves, studies and presents a remarkable collection of objects, archives and historical photographs, from the 18th century to the present.

The Hudson's Bay Company Archives

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/index.html>

The HBCA offers a wealth of information on the human and natural history of western and northern Canada and the western USA. Whether you are an historian, genealogist, ethnologist, environmental scientist or land claims researcher, the HBCA may be able to help.

Association of Canadian Map Libraries and Archives (ACMLA)

<http://www.acmla.org/>

ACMLA actively serves as the representative professional group for Canadian map librarians, cartographic archivists and others interested in geographic information in all formats.

