The Making of Canada

Ontario

Produced by the Cartographic Division
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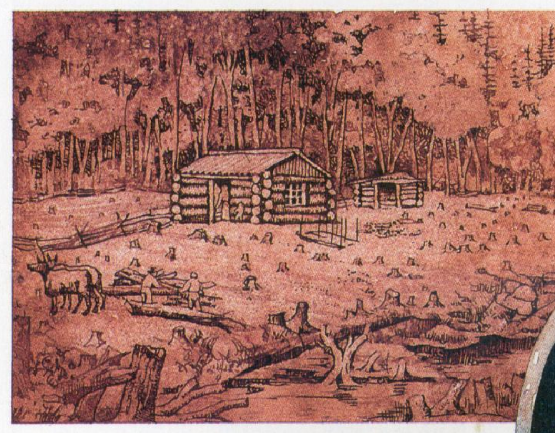
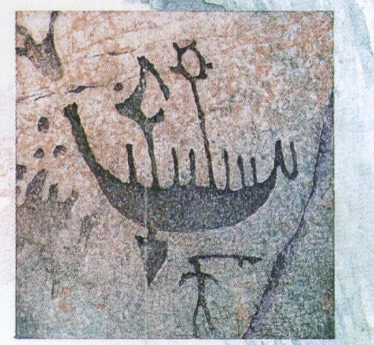
Horseshoe Falls, the Canadian side of Niagara Falls, draws 14 million visitors yearly. Meaning "thunder of water," Niagara is the only known word surviving from the Neutral people. Source: Niagara Falls, Canada, Visitor & Convention Bureau

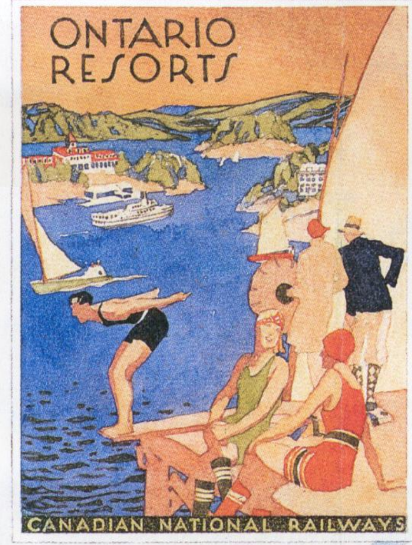
Joseph Brant, or Thayendanegea (1742?-1807), was a Mohawk chief and British Loyalist rewarded with land in Ontario for his people after the American Revolution. Source: New York State Library, Albany



John Graves Simcoe in 1791 became the first lieutenant governor of Upper Canada, envisioning the southern peninsula as a center of trade for the interior of the continent. The farming settlement he encouraged took off in the mid-19th century. Sources: Metropolitan Toronto Library Board (Simcoe); National Archives of Canada, Ottawa



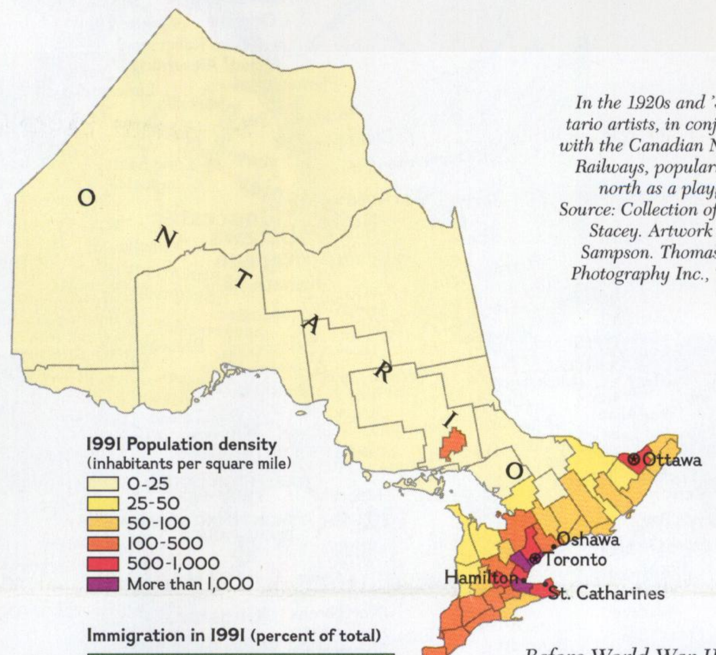
A birchbark canoe, three feet across, was carved on a white marble outcropping before the arrival of Europeans. The sacred site of 900 petroglyphs is preserved in a park near Peterborough. Source: Petroglyph Provincial Park

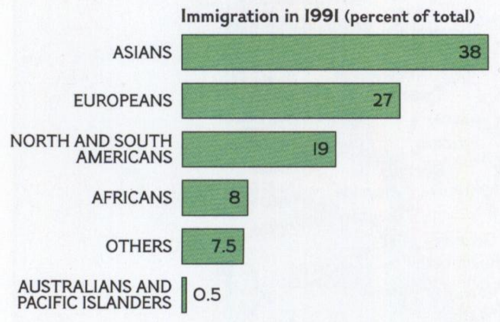


In the 1920s and '30s Ontario artists, in conjunction with the Canadian National Railways, popularized the north as a playground. Source: Collection of Robert Stacey. Artwork by J. E. Sampson. Thomas Moore Photography Inc., Toronto

An iron-and-steel plant at Hamilton contributes to Ontario's manufacturing strength.

Emblematic of Canada's largest metropolitan area, the CN Tower is the world's tallest freestanding structure, rising 1,815 feet above Toronto's waterfront on Lake Ontario.





Before World War II most immigrants hailed from Britain. More recent arrivals include Italians and Portuguese. Since the 1970s, immigration from the West Indies, India, and East Asia has grown greatly. Some 50 percent of all Ontarians live in the Golden Horseshoe that encompasses Oshawa, Toronto, Hamilton, and St. Catharines.

Take water—thundering falls, huge lakes and bays, rushing streams, canopies of snow. Mix with some of the oldest rocks on the planet. Lace with minerals—gold, silver, platinum. Fold in a strip of fertile soil 500 miles long. Top with conifers—spruce, pine, cedar—and maples so abundant that their leaf became the symbol of a nation. Place in the center of a continent with access by river to the sea. Result: Ontario.

Second largest province in the world's second largest country, Ontario is Canada's richest, most populous, and most urban province. Embracing an area greater than France and Spain combined, Ontario alone contributes 40 percent of the gross national product through services and goods: forest products and minerals from the north, automobiles and agriculture from the south. The province rivals Japan in exports to the United States.

On the Ontario Peninsula that reaches into the industrial heartland of the U.S., the province supports some 90 percent of its 11 million people. These lowlands of the Great Lakes Basin also supported one of the largest pre-Columbian populations in North America, perhaps as many as 65,000 native people. Then, as now, the main travel corridor was along the St. Lawrence, its tributaries, and the Great Lakes.

The St. Lawrence was "the one great river . . . into the heart of the continent. It possessed a geographical monopoly; and it shouted its uniqueness to adventurers," wrote Canadian historian Donald Creighton. French fur traders went up the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa River and, in competition with British traders out of Hudson Bay, helped open a continent.

Loyalists in flight from the American Revolution, French farmers pushing across the Quebec border, land seekers from the U.S. and Europe—all chased the economic promise of the fertile Ontario Peninsula.

Canals and railroads galvanized the province. A timbering town on the banks of the Ottawa River became the capital of the new Dominion of Canada in 1867. It was hoped that Ottawa, on the border of Ontario and Quebec, would bridge Canada's British and French heritages. With rail links Toronto boomed and is now the nation's manufacturing, media, commercial, and financial hub.

Yet Ontario's emotional center lies farther north—in the rugged landscape of the Canadian Shield, ancient granite bedrock scoured by glaciers that created 250,000 lakes. City dwellers retreat to cottages here year-round. The shield also has buried treasure—mineral resources. Its towering evergreens give way to muskeg and swamp, the "wet desert" of the Hudson Bay Lowlands, where caribou and polar bears roam.

Viewed by some Canadians as the monolith in the middle—home to a third of the country's people—Ontario is veined with variety, as intriguing as the shield's rare marble outcroppings—sacred sites to the land's first peoples.

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Each map shows present-day shoreline and drainage.

Copper from around Lake Superior went into grave offerings, weapons, and tools. Artifacts found from the central Ohio Valley to the Maritime Provinces show a wide trading network.

1 To 1600
First Presence, First Peoples

Coming into the land around the Great Lakes from the south about 11,000 years ago, people threaded their way through a boreal forest of spruce and jack pine. As herds of caribou moved north in summer to more open woodland, small bands of hunters and their families followed, perhaps also stalking Ice Age animals such as mastodon and mammoth. Camping along ancient shorelines of glacial lakes, these early inhabitants took advantage of the region's interlacing of land and water.

On both sides of the Great Lakes, in what is now Canada and the United States, native groups shared much in common, united by the lakes and the sinuous web of rivers; Ontario is an Iroquoian word meaning "big lake."

About A.D. 500 the Iroquoian-speakers living north of the lakes adopted cultivation of corn from their southern neighbors. For the next thousand years the Iroquoians of the lower Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence Valley—known by many tribal names—followed a way of life centered on the growing of corn and tobacco, beans, sunflowers, and squash. Women hoed vast fields that men had cleared of trees. Men hunted, fished, and, for furs from the north, traded surplus crops and goods such as fishnets woven from wild hemp and cloaks made from prized black-squirrel fur. By 1580 European goods—knives, axes, and muskets—filtered in from the Atlantic Coast.

Some 25,000 people lived between Lake Simcoe and Georgian Bay in the palisaded villages of the Huron Confederacy. The Neutral and the Petun, numbering about 40,000, built longhouses to the south and west. Another 30,000 people lived south of Lake Ontario and Lake Erie in the Erie tribe and the Five Nations that made up the Iroquois Confederacy.

Algonquian-speaking peoples sparsely occupied a huge territory to the north that stretched across the Canadian Shield from the Atlantic to the plains. Living in bands of up to a hundred families at riverside or lakeside, they were migratory hunters and fishermen. With canoes in summer and snowshoes in winter, they moved through a land of flowing streams, placid lakes, and prolonged cold.

By the time Europeans appeared, native people had woven a fabric of intertribal relations based on trade and military alliances.

2 1600-1790
New Arrivals, New Alliances

Out of the fur trade came Canada, and out of Ontario came fur, mainly beaver. In the early 1600s Samuel de Champlain, from his base in Quebec, struck fur-trading and military alliances for France with the Montagnais, Algonquin, and Huron—and was drawn into their age-old conflict with the Iroquois.

After the Iroquois defeated the Huron in 1649, the coureurs de bois, independent French fur traders, opened a line of trade westward, relying on native woodlore and birchbark canoes that could carry as many as ten men and thousands of pounds of fur. After the British defeated New France in 1760, French- and British-Canadian traders from Montreal vigorously expanded the early trade lines into the northwest. To compete, the British Hudson's Bay Company built inland posts. A murderous rivalry developed that eventually led to the collapse and absorption of the Montreal traders into the British fur monopoly.

The missionary order of Récollets came to the St. Lawrence Valley and Huron country as early as 1615. In 1639 Jesuits established Ontario's first European community, called Ste.-Marie among the Hurons. It ended in 1649 when Iroquois killed several priests and absorbed into their own tribe Huron they did not massacre.

French voyageurs sought furs and trading alliances with native peoples, meeting at trading posts in a spirit of rollicking camaraderie.

3 1790-1867
Migration, Expansion

A continuing stream of Loyalists fleeing the independent U.S., followed by U.S. farmers hungry for land, settled in southern Ontario. After the War of 1812 Canada's colonial British government discouraged Americans and set out the welcome mat for immigrants from Europe—farmers and craftsmen from the British Isles and Germany.

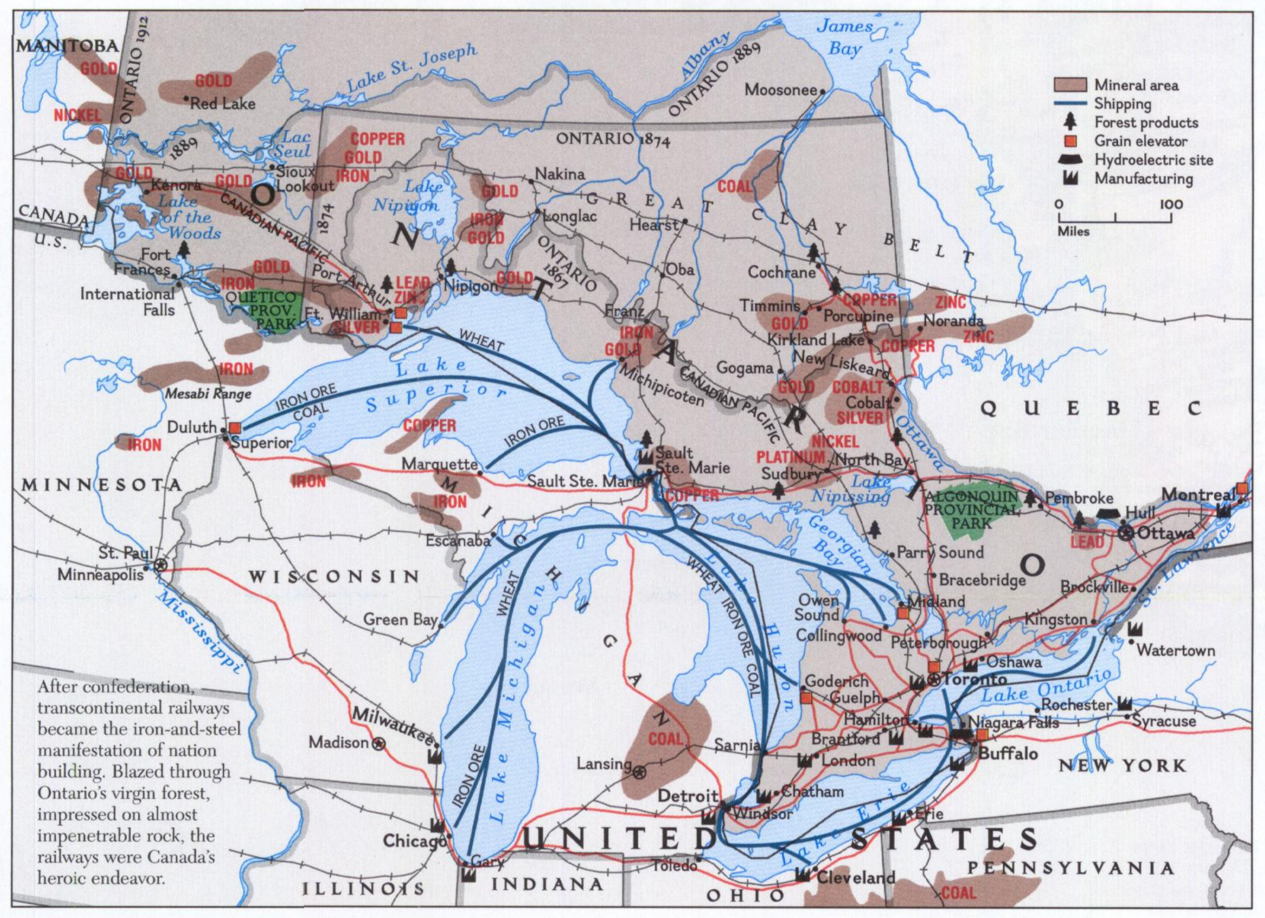
Indian trails gave way to pioneer avenues. Roads to Georgian Bay in the 1840s and into the shield in the 1850s preceded settlement. Surveyors laid out farm lots and roads, creating homesteads. People met at the mill, the general store, the smithy's forge, and church.

Canals were dredged from the 1820s to the '50s, when three major railways opened, including the Grand Trunk, which linked Toronto with Montreal. When the Dominion of Canada was created in 1867, Toronto and the urban belt were ready to expand rapidly.

Confederation in 1867 joined New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Canada (formed by the union of Upper and Lower Canada in 1841).

Facilitating shipping, the Welland Canal of 1829 bypassed Niagara Falls. In 1832 the Rideau Canal linked Ottawa and Kingston.

4 1867-1940
Great Transformations



After confederation, transcontinental railways became the iron-and-steel manifestation of nation building. Blazed through Ontario's virgin forest, impressed on almost impenetrable rock, the railways were Canada's heroic endeavor.

"Thrust like a wedge into the heart of a foreign country," as the *Canadian Almanac* noted, the Ontario Peninsula borrowed U.S. technology. Here were assembled all the components for a great manufacturing complex: transportation, a sizable workforce, a rich agricultural base, easy access to U.S. coal, and electricity from hydropower.

Ontario's leading position in Canadian industry was assured when 1879 legislation raised import duties and spurred U.S. companies to locate branch factories in the province to tap the Canadian market. Henry Ford's enterprise crossed the border in 1904, siting an automotive plant at Windsor.

Three transcontinental railway lines, beginning with the Canadian Pacific in 1885, bridged the shield. Mineral resources were exploited—notably nickel and copper at Sudbury in the 1880s. As transportation improved in the shield and technology advanced, new mines and pulp-and-paper mills grew up. At transshipment points on Lake Superior grain elevators spiked the sky; shipping on the Great Lakes expanded. When gold was discovered at Red Lake in 1926, bush planes became indispensable for prospecting the biggest gold rush since the Klondike.

5 1940-Present
Powerhouse of Canada

Though Ontario remains Canada's leading agricultural producer as well as its industrial engine—sending 85 percent of cars and trucks produced to the U.S.—its economic strength also now lies in banking, insurance, health care, tourism, and, with 17 universities, education. In Ottawa parliament debates questions of national significance, such as the cohesion of Canada itself, but Toronto is indisputably the province's leading city, with 4.5 million people in its metropolitan area.

An expanding urban complex, Toronto offers pleasant neighborhoods, good public transportation, and attractive parks. Manufacturing has moved to the suburbs, but the skyscrapers of major banks and other financial companies rise downtown. The city is the forum of English-speaking Canada, where books, magazines, and newspapers are published and radio, television, and film are produced.

With the increasing popularity of cross-country skiing and snowmobiling, the past 15 years have seen a discovery of the pleasures of winter in the shield. People vacation at four-season resorts or at winterized cottages.

A magnet for immigrants—most recently from the Caribbean and Asia—Ontario also has the greatest number of native peoples of all the provinces. While poverty persists, a cultural renaissance is under way, and native groups are pursuing land claims and asserting their right to self-determination. Satellite dishes and service towns, such as Sioux Lookout, connect remote homes to the world outside.

Ontario is home to numerous computer manufacturers and research facilities centered in Toronto, Ottawa, and Waterloo. The information industry may soon rival transportation as a major contributor to Canada's income.

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