British North America in the mid-1800s

Who were the people of British North America?

People of BNA

- French people majority in Canada East
- British people majority in Canada West and Maritimes
- First Nations and Metis majority in the Prairies
- British and Americans majority in British Columbia

The Great Migration

- Many people moved from Europe in the 1830s and 1840s
- Poverty and food shortages forced them to emigrate
- Emigrate: Leave one's country to settle somewhere else

Newfound Diversity

- People from Netherlands, Germany and Ireland now part of Canada
- Irish came because of Potato Famine

Underground Railroad

- Slavery illegal in BNA since 1833
- 30 000 American slaves escaped
- Settled in Canada West and Nova Scotia

Harriet Tubman

- Born a slave in Maryland in the United States
- Escaped to Canada West
- Helped other slaves escape via Underground Railroad
- Made 19 trips to America between 1850 and 1860
- Helped about 70 people escape to Canada West
- Slave owners put a bounty on her head of \$40, 000 (\$750, 000 in modern money)

The First Nations

- Unknown how many people lived in the colonies
- Often lived on the fringes of settlement
- Once valued by the British and Hudson's Bay Company
- British for fighting
 - No longer fighting the Americans
- HBC for fur trade
 - Importance of fur trade had declined

What was life like in British North America?

Gender Roles

- Women responsible for domestic chores
- Men responsible for outside tasks
- Everyone helped with big jobs

Children

- Expected to do chores by age 5
- Girls learned to spin, knit, sew, cook, work in the garden, milk the cows and care for the younger children
- Young boys helped feed livestock and gather firewood
- Older boys cleared fields, built fences and harvested crops
- By 14 you were expected to work as hard as an adult

Harsh Realities

- No electricity
- No heat
- No air conditioning
- If you plug it in, you didn't have it
- No toilets
- No shower
- No running water

Daily Life

- Heat came from wood stove
 - Had to cut and haul wood daily
- Wood stove also used for heating water and cooking
- Light came from lamps and candles
 - Went to bed early with day light
- Had to gather water from outdoor hand pumps
- Used basins for washing
- Used outhouse or chamber pot for toilet

Education

- In the 1850s most kids stayed home to work
- In Canada West in the 1840s some schools were opened
 - Very few children attended
- Religious organizations offered schooling but charged money
 - o Most people could not afford it
- Public school made available in the late 1800s

Entertainment

- No television, internet, radio
- Newspapers popular
- People wrote letters
- Visited with family and friends
- People attended church regularly
 - Was a relief from the hard work of daily life and a good time to socialize

Social Characteristics

- Canada East was mostly French and Roman Catholic
- Canada West was mostly English and Protestant

- Black communities in Nova Scotia and Canada West
- First Nations people apart from Europeans
- Distinct class divisions
- Constant movement
 - People were always looking to improve their quality of life

Physical Features of British North America

- Vast Distances
- First Nations people had knowledge of routes to use
 - Showed them to Europeans
 - Needed knowledge since no roads, railways, canals or powerboats
 - Distance from Halifax to Vancouver is 5876 km
 - Took months to make journey in 1850s
 - Quickest route was around the southern tip of South America by boat
- Also major geographic barriers
 - o Mountains and water
 - Needed comprehensive transportation system

Climate

٠

- Climate affects how society functions
- Milder winters allows an area to work longer outdoors
- The length of seasons and amount of precipitation influences agriculture and the economy

Political Features of British North America

Political System of the Canada's in the 1850's

- Crown appointed the governor
- Governor usually British nobility
- Governor appointed the members of the legislative council and executive council

Laws

- Executive council decided what bills were introduced to the legislature
- A bill needed to be approved by the legislative assembly, legislative council and the governor to become law

Voters

- Male property owners
- Elected members of the legislative assembly

Legislative Assembly

- Canada East and Canada West had same amount of seats
- Sometimes caused political deadlock
- Two sides fought about best way to solve problems

Political Deadlock

- A situation where progress cannot be made because the parties involved do not agree
- Two main issues deadlocked the two sides: transportation and representation
- Transportation
- Canada West wanted to expand
 - Would increase trade and wealth
 - Spend government money
- Canada East wanted to stay the same
 - Would threaten identity
 - Resisted spending government money

Representation

- Canada West wanted representation by population
- Canada East wanted to retain equal representation

Maritimes

- Until 1784 only two colonies: Nova Scotia and P.E.I.
- 1784: Nova Scotia divided into three colonies
 - Nova Scotia
 - New Brunswick
 - o Cape Breton Island

Single Colony

- In the 1850s they wanted to rejoin New Brunswick and Nova Scotia
- Britain wanted one government for one colony
 - Less expensive
 - Greater influence
- Britain suggested to include P.E.I.
 - Save more money

Charlottetown Conference

- The colonies scheduled a meeting in 1864
- Would discuss creating a single colony

Newfoundland

- Sea crossing very difficult so seemed very distant
- Watched the Maritime movement with interest

British Columbia

- British Columbia and Vancouver's Island united in 1866
- Traditional British government system
- American influence
 - There for gold rush
- Thought it should join America
 - Rest of colonies too far away
 - Better than being a British colony

The Political System of the Canadas in the 1850s



Economic Features of British North America

Industrialization

- British North America became industrialized
- Industrialize: develop industries, especially manufacturing industries
- Spread was affected by geography, transportation and population
- Factories built in urban area

Canada East

- Industry flourished first in Montreal in 1840s
 - o Most industrialized city for next 100 years
- Expanded into Montreal suburbs by 1850s
- Used St. Lawrence River
 - o Turned water into steam

Workers

- Poor
- Uneducated
- Low wages
- Recent immigrants
- Lots of women and children
 - Paid less than men

Canada West

- Industry in 1870s
- Textiles and metalwork
- Caught up to Canada East by 1880s

Maritimes

- Shipbuilding important
 - Fishing
 - o Overseas trade
- Skilled workers
 - Carpenters, sailmakers
- Farming and logging
 - Lower population than the Canadas

The West

- Few industries until late 1800s
- Fur trade in Prairies
- Settlers banned
 - HBC did not want fur trade disrupted
- Forestry and shipping in BC