

Canada and Confederation

1. **Canada 150** <http://canada.pch.gc.ca/eng/1468262573081>
2017 marks the sesquicentennial birthday of Canada's Confederation in 1867. December 31, 2016 will mark the kick-off to year-long celebrations across Canada to mark the special historical occasion. Learn more about planned festivities at this site.
2. **Canada, A Country by Consent: Confederation** <http://www.canadahistoryproject.ca/1867>
Canada is not a country based on ethnic uniformity like many countries. It is not a country forged by the fires of civil war or wars of unification. It is a country which has evolved and been held together by the agreement and will of the various groups who have helped build it over the years. It is a country by consent. The impressive content of this online textbook is organized into 27 chapters, many with an audiovisual introduction. The text was vetted by specialists in Canadian history and enhanced with additional film clips, interviews, essays by guest historians, hundreds of archival images, satellite maps and definitions.
3. **Canada History: Confederation** www.canadahistory.com/sections/eras/confederation/Confederation.html
July 1, 1867 was the culmination of many dreams, considerable debate and effort, and a triumph of political compromise. Learn how John A. Macdonald, George Cartier, George Brown and many others recognized that a larger union was needed... was it, in part, from fear of growing American military power and territorial ambitions?
4. **Confederation (The Canadian Encyclopedia)** www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/confederation
The Dominion of Canada wasn't born out of revolution, or a sweeping outburst of nationalism. Rather, it was created in a series of conferences and orderly negotiations, culminating in the terms of Confederation on 1 July 1867. This resource by Historica Canada offers a clear and concise history of Canada's development and offers regional perspectives of the political process. Be sure to dig deeper into the links for people, places, events and things.
5. **Confederation for Kids** <https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/confederation/kids/023002-2000-e.html>
This Library and Archives Canada website reveals the story of how the colonies in British North America came together to become Canada, and how Canada has grown since. Although intended for students aged 9 to 13, it can help all who want to learn more about how Canada became a country. Connect to a lesson called "Building a Nation" (Ages 11+) that has students learn about Canada (past and present) as they renegotiate Confederation. It includes 9 handouts and comprehensive teaching strategies [see the LAC's Learning Center at: <https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/education/008-100.01-e.php>].
6. **Fathers of Confederation** <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/collection/fathers-of-confederation>
This site provides digital archive access to information and images of the 36 men traditionally regarded as the Fathers of Confederation—those who represented British North American colonies at one or more of the conferences that lead to Confederation on 1 July 1867, including the Charlottetown Conference (September 1864), the Québec Conference (October 1864) and the London Conference (1866–67). It includes access to videos, including "Heritage Minutes".
7. **How Canadians Govern Themselves**
<http://www.lop.parl.gc.ca/About/Parliament/SenatorEugeneForsey/Home/Index-e.html>
Freely download this booklet first published in 1980. The text explores Canada's parliamentary system—from the decisions made by the Fathers of Confederation to the daily work of parliamentarians in the Senate and House of Commons. Useful information on Canada's Constitution, federal judicial system, and provincial and municipal powers is gathered together in this one resource. The website also offers interactive learning opportunities for students by including games, videos, pictures and animations that reflect the book's themes. Note: Order hard copy classroom sets: info@parl.gc.ca / 1-866-599-4999.
8. **Irish America** <http://irishamerica.com/2012/03/the-day-the-irish-invaded-canada>
In the 1840s, more than a million Irish emigrated from Ireland to North America. American "Fenians", founded primarily to raise funds and obtain weaponry to send back to Ireland for rebellion against English occupiers back home, adopted a new strategy at the close of the Civil War. They would fight for Irish freedom in British Canada but failed. It pushed the colony to Confederation.
9. **Our Country, Our Parliament**
www.lop.parl.gc.ca/About/Parliament/Education/OurCountryOurParliament/pdfs/Booklet-e.pdf
This e-booklet published by the Library of Parliament provides an introduction to Canada's confederation and an explanation of its

50+ Session-Related Internet Resources compiled by T. Storer, PNW NRC on Canada, Western Washington University

parliamentary form of government. Although intended primarily for ESL students in grades 9-12, the content can be easily adapted for use with students in other grade levels. The content complements provincial and territorial social studies and civics curricula. The resource can be downloaded for free (see URL above) and an online teacher's guide is available at:

<http://www.lop.parl.gc.ca/About/Parliament/Education/OurCountryOurParliament/TeacherGuide/index-e.asp>.

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10. Ridgeway: The American Fenian Invasion and the 1866 Battle that Made Canada <http://www.ridgewaybattle.ca>

This website reflects Peter Vronsky's book of the same name and offers great student online access to details about the invasion of Canada on June 1, 1866 by Irish-American Fenian insurgents from their bases in the United States. The "Ridgeway Nine" were Canada's first soldiers killed in action and, though it was the last battle fought in Ontario against a foreign invader, the Macdonald government covered-up what happened so thoroughly that most Canadians today have still never heard of this battle.

A FEW READING RESOURCES

Recommended Fiction (and Non-Fiction)

- Berton, Pierre. (). *The National Dream*. [Non-Fiction] Berton, Canada's foremost popular historian, provides interesting insights and rich detail in all of his books. Here (and in his book *The Last Spike*), his focus is on how a national railway was needed to connect the Dominion of Canada from sea to sea. Without it, the Colony of British Columbia would not enter into the union.
- Henderson, Gordon. (2014) *Man in the Shadows*. Set against the backdrop of Confederation, this historical novel imagines a cross-border plot to assassinate key Canadian political figures — with complicity at the highest levels of the U.S. government — in an attempt to destabilize the new country.
- Johnston, Wayne. (1998). *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams*. This ambitious novel is based on the true story of Joey Smallwood, the underdog-turned-politician who joined Newfoundland into the Confederation in 1949. At the heart of the story lies pressing questions about the true merits of confederation as well as the questionable tactics used to gain political favor at the time.
- MacDonald, Cheryl. (2015). *Canada under Attack: Irish-American veterans of the Civil War and their Fenian Campaign to Conquer Canada* [Non-Fiction] This book reflects recent scholarship and provides a short overview of the drama and conflict of the times. These events place a different light on the atmosphere around the negotiations by politicians that led to the Confederation deal in 1866-67. The author describes how the Fenians mounted attacks in what is now Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and New Brunswick. Among the many colorful characters are Canada's first spymaster, Gilbert McMicken, and Thomas D'Arcy McGee, a one-time Fenian supporter who became a key colleague of John A. Macdonald -- until McGee's assassination in Ottawa by a Fenian sympathizer. Key American politicians remain in the background.
- McGregor, Al. (2012). *A Porous Border: A Novel of Canada and the American Civil War*. A chance encounter leads a young Canadian into the maelstrom of the American Civil War. As Northern armies weave a path of destruction across the south, an embattled Confederacy launches a campaign of terror and insurrection from the British colonies and drives the colonies toward their own Canadian Confederation. Based on actual events, this novel is a sweeping drama of the turbulent era that changed North America.
- McGregor, Al. (2014). *To Build a Northern Nation: A Novel of Canada and post-Civil War America*. This novel continues the story begun in *A Porous Border* and traces events on both sides of the border through its characters: Owen Wilson, a Union army veteran drifts into the Irish Fenian movement; Sillery Fraser is a former slave with a dangerous secret; and Paul Forsey, a government clerk, can see the threats facing a new country.
- Rohmer, Richard. (2013). *Sir John A.'s Crusade and Seward's Magnificent Folly (Britain's Real Downton Abbey and Canada's Birth)*. This novel is set in late 1866, when John A. Macdonald and other Fathers of Confederation arrive in London to discuss Canada's self-governance with Britain. Macdonald and two colleagues stay briefly at Highclere Castle (aka Downton Abbey), the stately home of the Fourth Earl of Carnarvon, Britain's colonial secretary. That's historical fact. The rest imagines the talks about legislation to give Canada autonomy, the danger of Irish Fenian plots, and Russia's proposed purchase of Alaska. Later, a fire partially destroys Macdonald's hotel room in London and the future prime minister, trying to curb his fondness for alcohol, woos and marries his second wife, Agnes. Secret deals, romance, and international intrigue make this a rousing tale.
- Urquhart, Jane. (1993). *Away*. This narrative spans three generations in an Irish family who came to Canada in the 1840's as a consequence of the devastating and horrific conditions of the so-called "Famine". A stroke of fate entwines the family's life with D'Arcy McGee and tragic consequences follow.