

HOW WERE COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY IMMIGRATION?

What pushes people to leave one country for another, and what is the impact of their arrival in a new country? The immigrants who came to Canada after 1815 left their homes hoping for a better life. The large wave of immigration to Canada in this time period had many consequences for community life.

IMMIGRATION TO CANADA FROM BRITAIN

In addition to former soldiers, thousands of people moved to Canada after 1815. This caused a huge population boom. Between 1815 and 1840, the population of Upper Canada grew from 100 000 to over 400 000. Lower Canada experienced similar population growth. Most people came from England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

Poverty and overcrowding were an increasing problem in Britain. The **Industrial Revolution** led to the rapid growth of technology and changes in how goods were manufactured. Tasks that had required manual labour could now be completed using machines and other technologies. Living conditions deteriorated as more and more people left their rural communities to find work in towns and cities. The British government saw Canada as a way to rid Britain of poverty and overcrowding. Potential immigrants saw Canada as a way to get ahead economically or socially.

TRAVELLING BY SHIP FROM BRITAIN TO CANADA

Crossing the Atlantic Ocean by ship was the only way to travel from Britain to Canada. Many travelled by timber ship. Timber ships were built to carry lumber. But during the immigration boom, these ships were often used to carry immigrants from Britain to Canada. Immigrants would live for weeks in parts of the ship that were designed to hold timber, not people. The ships would then be loaded with timber and head back to Europe. Look at the painting in **Figure 7.10**. It shows the Montréal harbour in 1830 and the loading of a timber ship. How do you think immigrants felt knowing they were boarding a large ship that was not built for passengers?



Industrial Revolution the rapid transition to new manufacturing processes in the 1700s and 1800s

FIGURE 7.10 *View of the Harbour, Montreal, 1830* was painted by Robert Auchmuty Sproule in the same year. **Analyze:** How different do you think this scene would have looked when immigrants were disembarking the same ship?

Until the mid-1820s, the British government provided some financial aid and free land grants to encourage immigration to Canada. However, most immigrants paid for the move with their own money. The fee for first-class sea travel was expensive. Thousands of people who could not afford first class braved terrible living conditions to get to their new home. The journey to Canada could take four to eight weeks.

Up to 250 passengers could be packed into a ship at a time. One in every 28 immigrants died on board from disease. Read the account in **Figure 7.11** by Stephen E. De Vere. De Vere was a British official who travelled on a ship to investigate and report on the living conditions on board. Why do you think the British government would allow people to travel in such terrible conditions?

“Hundreds of poor people ... huddled together without light, without air, wallowing in filth and breathing a fetid [stinking] atmosphere, sick in body, dispirited in heart.... The food is generally ill selected and seldom sufficiently cooked.... The supply of water, hardly enough for cooking and drinking, does not allow washing.”
— Stephen E. De Vere, British official

FIGURE 7.11 De Vere describes his 1847 voyage to Canada in this excerpt from a letter he wrote to a British official. **Analyze:** What might have led people to call these vessels “death ships” or “coffin ships”?

CHANGES IN UPPER AND LOWER CANADA

By 1840, the population boom was affecting the population makeup in Lower Canada. In Montréal, the increase in British immigrants meant that less than half of Montréal’s population was now made up of Canadiens.

Québec City was the most popular landing destination in Canada, but thousands moved on after their arrival. Those who planned to settle in Upper Canada had to pay for another boat ride to get to their “free” land. The Rideau Canal was a favourite route for people travelling to Upper Canada. Examine **Figure 7.12**, which shows people on boats passing through Jones Falls, which is part of the Rideau Canal. How do you think the canal influenced the growth of communities along its route?

What consequences do you think the British immigration had for Canadian culture?

FIGURE 7.12 This 1838 painting, *Jones Falls* by Philip John Bainbrige, shows people travelling along the Rideau Canal. **Analyze:** What challenges could immigrants have faced travelling in small boats rather than in large ships?



READING A POPULATION GRAPH

A graph can be used to show a change in population over a period of time. A population can increase due to births or immigration (people moving to a country from another country). A population can also decrease due to deaths or emigration (people leaving a country to live in another country). On a population graph, the x (horizontal) axis usually shows a period of time. The y (vertical) axis usually shows the population. By plotting data on a line graph, we can get a visual picture of any changes in population:

- An increase is shown by an upward trend from left to right.
- A decrease is shown by a downward trend from left to right.
- No change is shown by a flat horizontal line.

The population of Canada grew significantly after 1815. We can use a graph to look at the change in total population, the change in the population of a specific region or city (for example, Upper Canada or Montréal), the change in the population of a specific group (for example, British or French), or the country where immigrants have come from. **Figure 7.13** shows the changes in population in two Canadian cities from 1800 to 1850.

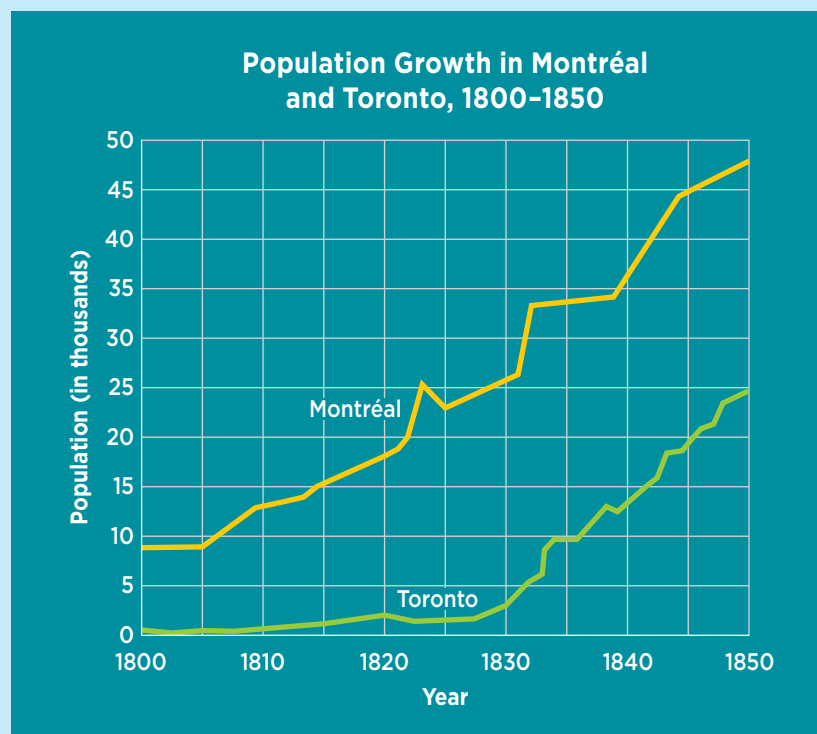


FIGURE 7.13 This graph shows the population growth in Montréal and Toronto from 1800 to 1850.

HOW TO READ A POPULATION GRAPH

STEP 1

Look at the graph in **Figure 7.13**. What does the title of the graph tell you? What data is shown?

STEP 2

Look for patterns in the graph. Do the lines show an upward trend or a downward trend, or do the lines stay the same? What does this tell you?

STEP 3

Identify any years that had significant changes in population. What do you think caused these changes in population?

THE CHOLERA EPIDEMIC

Cholera is a contagious and often-fatal disease that results in fever, diarrhea, and dehydration. In 1832, cholera was one of the diseases that was carried to Canada on immigrant ships.

The outbreak of cholera prompted a wave of panic. At the time, no one knew what caused cholera or how to prevent and treat it. Some people thought that it was caused by an invisible bad air, and that burning fires could destroy it. Others thought that it was caused by bad living conditions. By the end of October 1832, the disease had claimed 7500 lives in Québec City and Montréal. It wasn't until the 1850s that it was discovered that cholera was caused and spread by contaminated water or food.

Health boards were established to care for those with the disease and also to inspect immigrant ships. Examine the cholera bulletin in **Figure 7.14**. What impact do you think news of the cholera epidemic had on the people who were living in Canada and the people who were arriving to start a new life?

John Capling moved to Canada with his wife and 11 children. Read the quote in **Figure 7.15** by Capling. How did the cholera epidemic impact him and his family?

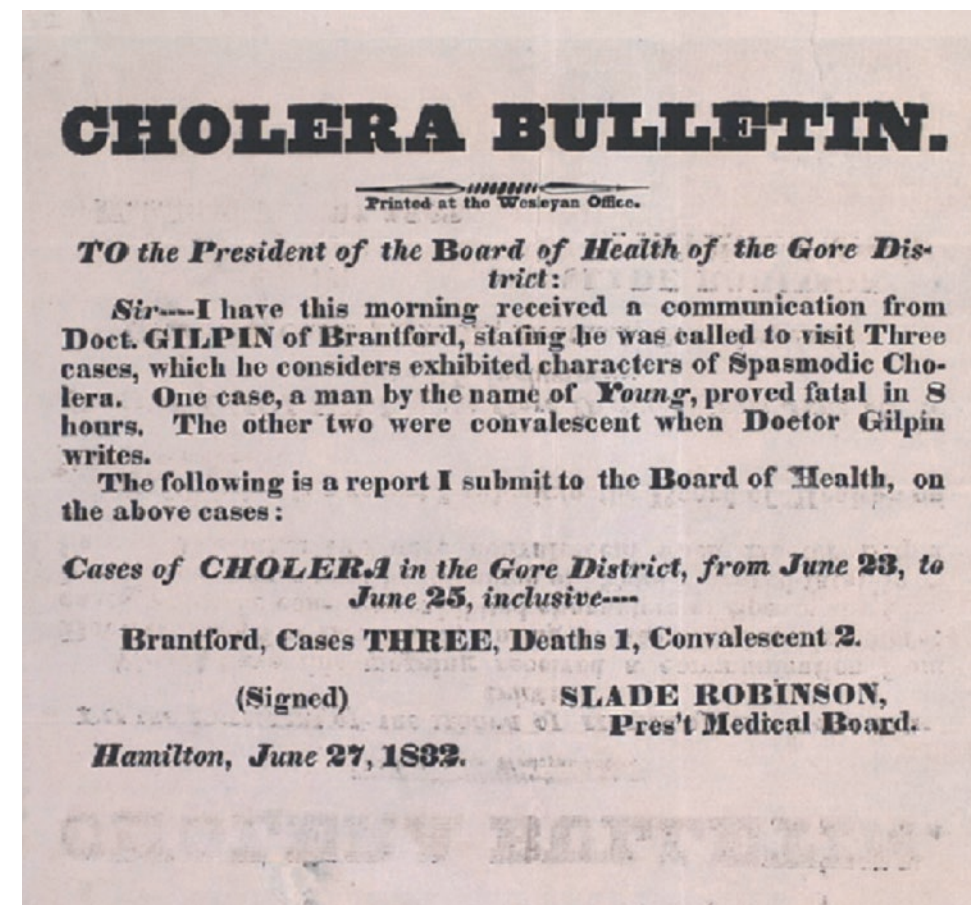


FIGURE 7.14 This bulletin was sent to a board of health in Upper Canada on June 27, 1832. It describes the effects of cholera in the community. **Analyze:** Why do you think the boards of health were unsuccessful in stopping the disease?

“I lost my poor little Mary for the first, then my poor dearest wife, then my two youngest, and little Edmund, all in the space of eight days... The complaint was the cholera morbus; they all die in the space of a fortnight... But I will not persuade any one to come, tho' I can see much better prospects here than in England.”

— John Capling, immigrant from England

FIGURE 7.15 After moving to Canada in 1832, Capling wrote this letter to his brother who lived in England. **Analyze:** What reasons do you think Capling may have had to feel that Canada was a better place to live than England, despite the tragedy of losing so many members of his family?

CHALLENGES OF CREATING COMMUNITIES

The increase in population meant that more people were clearing new land. However, settlers and immigrants were not always prepared for life in Canada. As you learned in Chapter 5, rural life in the backwoods of Canada meant long days of hard labour. There was little time for socializing, and homes were often separated by several kilometres of forest. For weeks at a time, settlers might see no one except their immediate family. Examine the cartoon in **Figure 7.16**. How was the experience of these immigrants living in Canada the same as or different from your own?

FIGURE 7.16 *The Emigrants' Welcome to Canada, 1820* shows an immigrant arriving, unprepared for life in Canada. **Analyze:** What is the artist's view of immigrants who are coming to settle in Canada?



ISOLATION AND HARDSHIP

Once they had arrived, many immigrants wrote letters to their family and friends back in Europe. These letters help us understand what everyday life was like. They also give us a unique and personal glimpse into the past.

When sisters Catharine Parr Traill and Susanna Moodie came to Canada, they began to record their experiences for their loved ones back in England. The sisters moved to Upper Canada with their husbands around the same time, in 1832. Parr Traill and Moodie are two of Canada's first female authors. They turned their diaries and letters about their new life in Canada into books that became popular in Canada and Britain.

The Backwoods of Canada by Parr Traill and *Roughing It in the Bush* by Moodie detail the isolation and difficulties that many settlers faced. Although they did not immigrate together, the sisters lived on neighbouring farms. Compare Parr Traill's impression of Canada in **Figure 7.17** to Moodie's account in **Figure 7.18**. What do these two excerpts suggest about the sisters' experiences when they settled in Canada?

“Much as I had seen and heard of the badness of the roads in Canada, I was not prepared for such a one as we travelled along this day. Indeed, it hardly deserved the name of a road.... Sometimes I laughed because I would not cry.”
— Catharine Parr Traill, backwoods settler

“I was rendered so weak by want of proper nourishment ... with kindly presents from neighbours—often as badly off as ourselves—a loin of a young bear, and a basket containing a loaf of bread, some tea, some fresh butter, and oatmeal, went far to save my life.”
— Susanna Moodie, backwoods settler

FIGURE 7.17 This excerpt was written upon Parr Traill's arrival in Canada in 1832. The letter was included in her book *The Backwoods of Canada*, published in 1836. **Analyze:** Why would Parr Traill write to her family in England about the roads in Canada?

FIGURE 7.18 This excerpt from Moodie's book *Roughing It in the Bush*, published in 1852, is about an incident that occurred after she gave birth. (The word “bush” is another term for the backwoods.) **Analyze:** Why do you think neighbours sometimes relied on each other to survive?

In 1837, Anne Langton emigrated from England with her parents and aunt. Upon their arrival, they stayed with Anne's brother John, who had moved to Upper Canada in 1833. Langton and her parents soon built their own home nearby. To record her surroundings, Langton wrote journals and letters and created sketches. **Figure 7.19** shows a sketch of her brother's house in 1837. Why do you think Langton created all these records?



FIGURE 7.19 *End view of John's house, Canada, 1837* was sketched in the same year by Anne Langton. **Analyze:** What details in this illustration tell you what life was like for settlers in the 1830s?

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND WORKING LIFE

The population boom resulted in rapid economic growth. In particular, the timber and wheat industries were very successful. The Industrial Revolution eventually reached Canada. Canada's first bank, the Bank of Montréal, was founded in 1817 in response to the growing economy. Read another excerpt from Parr Traill's book in **Figure 7.20**. Why do you think she had this optimistic view of her new home?

The influence of the Industrial Revolution can also be seen in the construction of Canada's first public railway in 1836. A huge celebration marked the occasion. The Champlain and St. Lawrence Railroad was built in Lower Canada to connect the St. Lawrence River Valley with Lake Champlain. Lake Champlain is located in present-day Québec, as well as Vermont and New York in the United States. Look at the engraving in **Figure 7.21**. How do you think the introduction of the railway changed life for people living in Canada at the time?

People began moving to the growing cities to find jobs. Workers were in high demand, especially in Upper Canada. Because of this demand, some poor immigrants were welcomed as a source of cheap labour. Labourers, such as those who worked on the Rideau Canal, were often the poorest immigrants from Ireland and Scotland.

However, William Robinson, an established settler in Upper Canada, had trouble finding workers for his farm. Many immigrants were escaping bad working conditions in Britain and wanted to run their own farms. Read **Figure 7.22**, an excerpt from a letter that Robinson wrote to an emigration society in England to ask for help finding employees.

FIGURE 7.20 Parr Traill wrote this comment in her book *The Backwoods of Canada*, published in 1836. **Analyze:** What does Parr Traill mean when she describes Canada as "the land of hope"?

"Canada is *the* land of hope. Here, everything is new; everything going forward; it is scarcely possible for arts, sciences, agriculture, manufactures, to retrograde [move backward]; they must keep advancing."
— Catharine Parr Traill, *backwoods settler*



FIGURE 7.21 This engraving is based on an 1836 drawing by John Loye of the Champlain and St. Lawrence Railroad, the first public railway in Canada. **Analyze:** What are some advantages of travelling by train versus travelling by horse or wagon?

FIGURE 7.22 This excerpt is from an 1836 letter that Robinson wrote to an emigration society in England to help him find labourers. **Analyze:** What can you infer are the problems he has had finding reliable workers in Canada?

"I will give employment to two men who have wives and children who are of good reputation for sobriety, honesty, and diligence. The wages that I offer to these men are 30 pounds per annum [year], with a house rent-free, as much fuel as they wish and the keep of a cow winter and summer."
— William Robinson, *settler in Upper Canada*

IMPACTS OF SETTLEMENT ON FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES

First Nations peoples continued to struggle after the War of 1812. By 1815, they were already outnumbered, 10 to 1. Much of their land had been taken for the new immigrant settlements in the colonies. The economic growth and development during this period also affected their relationship with the land. The Mississauga Nation, in Upper Canada, was one of the First Nations affected by the increase in settlers. They wrote to the lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada for help. Read **Figure 7.23**. What problems are the Mississauga describing?

"White men seize our furs, and take them from us by force, they abuse our women and violently beat our people... That we are poor in lands ... much of our hunting grounds are covered by white settlement, and the small remainder left to us are invaded by the hunters from Lower Canada."
— Mississauga Nation of Rice Lake

FIGURE 7.23 This excerpt is from the petition to Sir John Colborne from the Mississauga of Rice Lake in the New Castle District, 1829. Colborne was the lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada. **Analyze:** What does this tell you about the impact of settlement on the Mississauga of Rice Lake?



FIGURE 7.24 This portrait of Peter Jones was painted by English artist Matilda Jones in 1832. **Analyze:** What do you notice about how Jones is dressed in this portrait?

Mississauga Ojibwe Chief Peter Jones (known in Ojibwe as Kahkewaquonaby) is shown in **Figure 7.24**. He converted to Christianity in 1823 and became a Methodist minister. The Mississauga were close to collapse due to the impact of European settlement. Jones helped his people adjust to the presence of Europeans. He was the first to make Ojibwe a written language, and he translated the Bible and various hymns into different First Nations languages. How do you think these kinds of changes affected community life among the Mississauga?

CHECK-IN

- COMMUNICATE** Create a memorial or plaque to recognize the efforts of an individual or a group of people from this time period. Why is the individual or group worthy of remembering? What memorials already exist? How does your memorial contribute to educating the public about our heritage?
- CONTINUITY AND CHANGE** How was life changing for First Nations peoples at this time? How was it staying the same?
- INTERPRET AND ANALYZE** Did the rewards outweigh the challenges for immigrants and settlers at this time? Make a t-chart to analyze the evidence.