

# Immigration: A New Home in Canada

The Last Best West

**Did you or any of your parents or grandparents travel from another country to live in British Columbia?**

Chances are, there will be many different answers to this question because the families that make up the people of what is now Canada and British Columbia have many different backgrounds.





1905/1906. Antoine Pierre and part of his family (Rosie, Sarah, Annie, Charles, Julie, Andrew or Angus, and Susan) catching Kickininee (Kokanee) fish in Trout Creek.

Before 1774, the people living in what is now Canada and North America, including where we are today, were Indigenous peoples. Right now, we are on the unceded traditional territory of the Syilx or Okanagan people.





Explorers sailed to Canada from Spain, Britain, France, Russia, and China for adventure.

They also came to claim new lands for their countries, trade for furs to make into hats and coats, earn money, or maybe even find a sailing route across the top of the North American continent called the North West Passage.



Indigenous peoples were instrumental in the fur trade, as they helped the Europeans survive in the unfamiliar land and would trade furs for other goods. <sup>5</sup>

The Hudson's Bay Company established forts to support its trappers and traders. These fur trading areas soon became British colonies.





Many people came to British Columbia for the money to be made in the fur trade, to farm, to prospect for gold, or to help build railways like the Canadian Pacific Railway.

# CANADA WEST

THE LAST  
BEST  
WEST



In the late 1800s, the government of Canada was afraid of American interference, for they too were after this country's riches.

The government also wanted organized growth in trade and industry, so they started advertising for settlers to come and build up the West.



# CANADIAN PACIFIC

## THE BEST WAY TO YOUR OWN FARM IN CANADA

PASSAGE  
MONEY  
ADVANCED.



LOANS  
FOR FARM  
PURCHASE.



BRITISH  
SETTLERS  
ON THEIR  
CANADIAN  
FARMS.



## THREE THOUSAND BRITISH FAMILIES WANTED FOR CANADA.

### A SPLENDID OPPORTUNITY:

- FOR the family farming a holding too small to adequately provide support or for the future of their children:
- FOR farm workers and married sons and daughters of farmers having no occupation other than farming, and unable to secure land at home:
- FOR any family in which either the husband or wife has had farm experience, and one or more of whose children are of working age.

**FARMS READY FOR OCCUPATION IN SETTLED  
DISTRICTS near RAILWAYS, MARKETS & SCHOOLS**

**FREE PASSAGES FOR CHILDREN.**

They started a new plan to get 8  
settlers to come to Canada.

In 1872, the Dominions Land  
Act was passed. It granted free  
land to settlers so long as they  
built a home, planted crops, and  
lived on the land for at least  
three years.

Despite this, a very low number  
of immigrants arrived before the  
late 1890s.



Free land was offered to farmers and farm workers in Britain, the United States, and Europe.

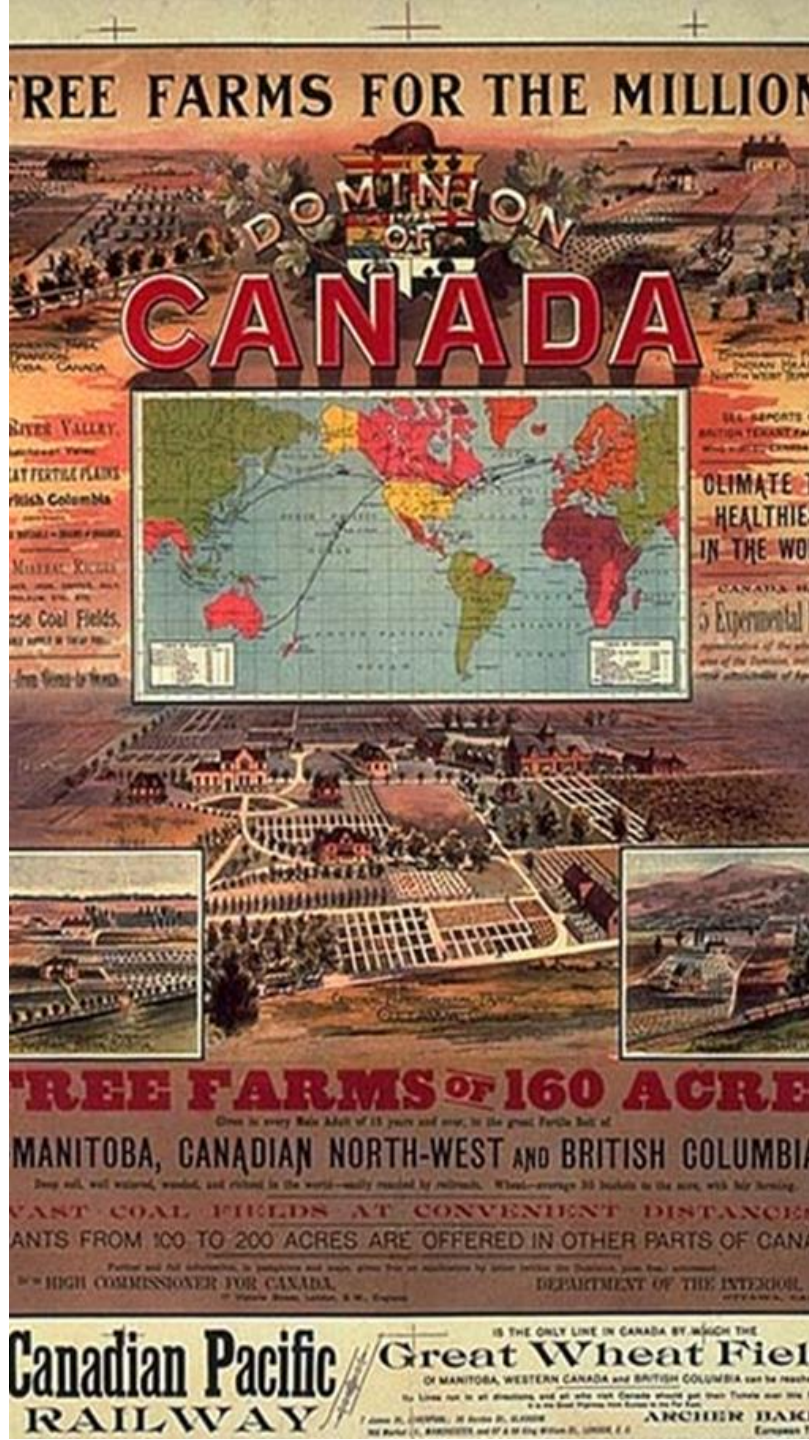
These were the only immigrants targeted by the government, apart from domestic servants (household workers). This land was essentially stolen from Indigenous peoples.

G.  R.

OVERSEA SETTLEMENT OFFICE.

**CANADA**  
**WANTS WOMEN**  
**FOR HOUSEHOLD WORK.**  
**SOME DOMESTIC EXPERIENCE REQUIRED.**  
**ASSISTED PASSAGES**  
**FOR APPROVED APPLICANTS.**  
**GOOD WAGES.**  
**EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEED.**  
**APPLY TO**

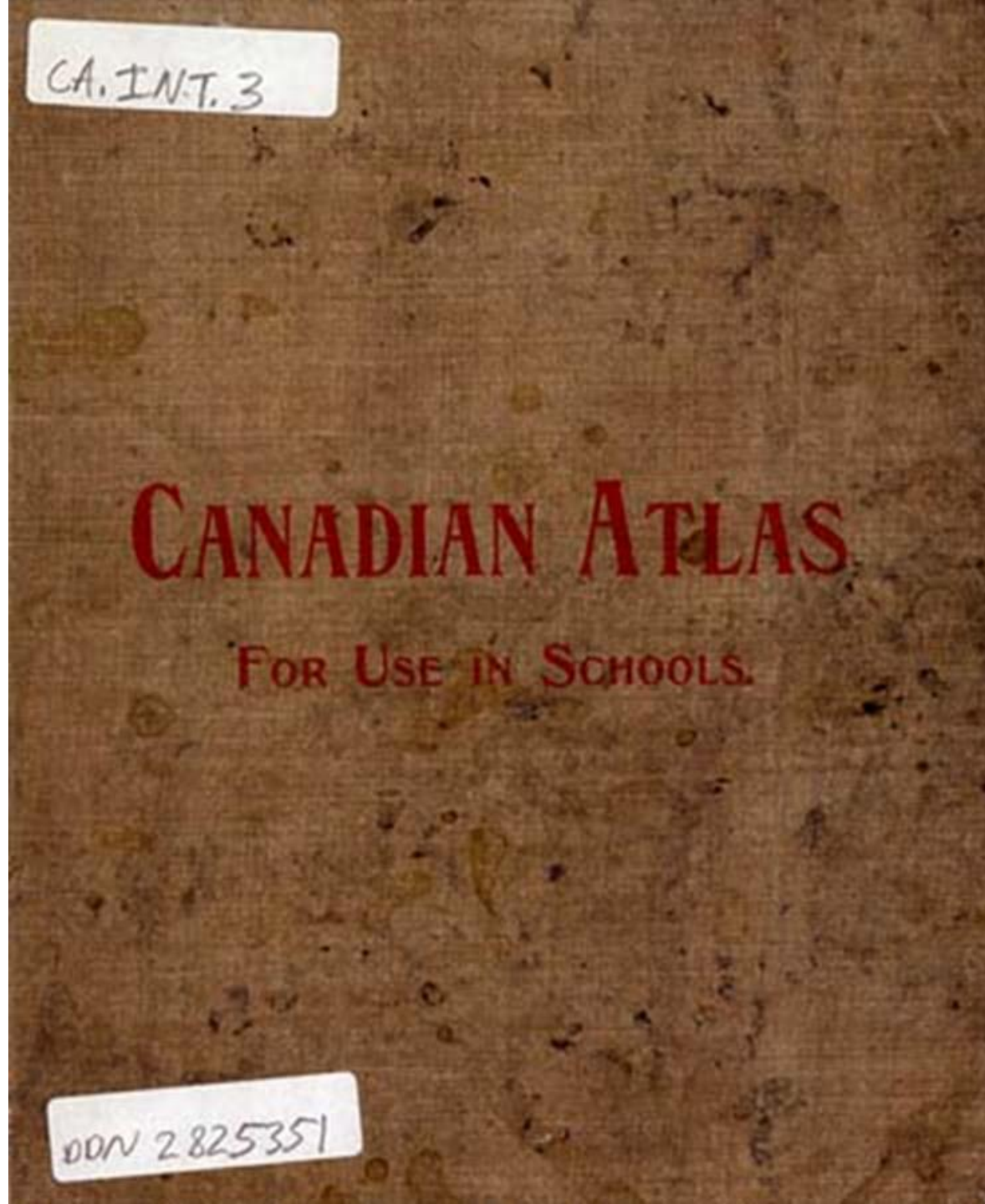




The Canadian Pacific Railway and other rail and ocean transportation companies helped to promote government land in western Canada to would-be immigrants.

The posters, pamphlets, and atlases, some of which were printed in a dozen European languages, “painted a rosy picture” of life in this new “Promised Land.”





This battered and ink-stained Canadian Atlas was one of the most successful advertising schemes used to reach possible British immigrants. Used by children in their schools, they would bring the books home where their parents would see them. In the atlas were the names and addresses of Canadian agents in Britain where they could get more information about Canada.

The journey that brought the settlers from their homeland was often long and difficult. Immigrants from Europe spent up to a month at sea, some travelling on crowded ships.







This was followed by a four-day trip to the West in railcars, some of which were only equipped with wooden benches.

Why did more than two million people leave their homelands for an uncertain future in Canada?

Some say it was to find a money-making opportunity, or the desire for religious freedom (like the Doukhobors in the photo), or a search for a more free and independent life.







However, many immigrants came here to earn enough money to improve the lives of their families in their home countries and then return home.

Many others decided to bring their families to share the new life and opportunities they found in British Columbia and Canada.





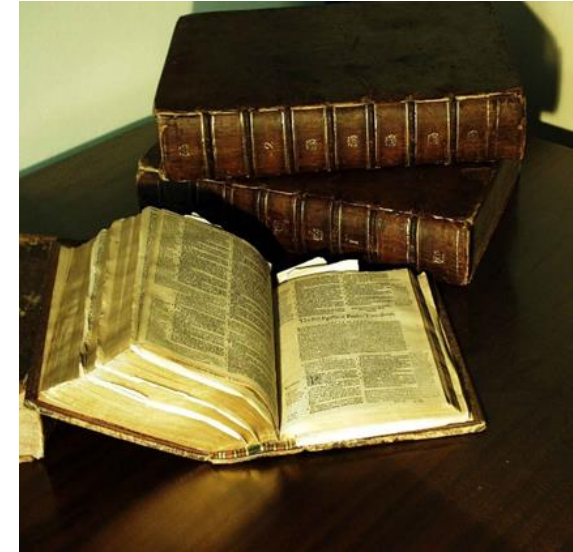
In 1901, the people living in the Okanagan Valley were:

- British (the largest group)
- followed by Indigenous peoples
  - Chinese
  - Japanese
  - French
  - German
  - Scandinavian

An estimated 90% of Indigenous peoples died from the diseases that immigrants brought with them.



Some of the possessions that immigrants brought to their new land included clothing and household goods, religious books, and carpentry tools.





The first Japanese immigrants came to British Columbia in 1877.

They were attracted here, rather than other regions of Canada, because of jobs in the fishing and lumber industries.





While many of the immigrants wanted their new country to prosper, they also arrived with hopes and dreams of their own.

Some achieved them, others did not. However, they all left their legacy: their children, their buildings and towns, their languages, and their customs.

1936. Graduating class of the Japanese School.

Some problems immigrants faced in the Okanagan included:

- Finding work
- Little pay
- Learning new trades or how to be orchardists

Many things advertised by the promoters were not really true, such as “Grow fruit and grow rich!” It took many years for orchards to produce fruit. Many had to find other work to support their family.



Bob Yamabe and G.N. Right picking and packing cantaloupes at the Gartrell Farm in 1927.



Some problems facing immigrants in the early 1900s included:

- Travelling to Canada
- Discrimination (some would not hire Chinese or Japanese people)
- A “Head Tax” (cost of \$50 to come to Canada) placed on Chinese immigrants



1928. Parents and students of the Japanese School held at the Japanese Hall near Eneas Creek.



1934. Japanese Farmers Association.

There was an agreement with the Japanese government limiting the emigration of Japanese to Canada to 400 per year.

Some immigrants were said to be “undesirable” and some were “prohibited” from entering Canada.

A border inspection was created on the U.S. – Canada border.



**Would immigrants coming to Canada now face these same challenges?**

**What challenges do you think they might face today?**