MINNIE H. BOUEN'S Canada

Documentary Record for Highschool



Context

Document 1: Groups and Identities Within the Eastern Townships

After 1867, Canada undergoes a period of reflection on its identity and its international image. How do Canadians perceive themselves? What role do they wish to play on the international stage? What type of relationship do they wish to maintain with Great-Britain and with the United-States? One thing is certain, and that is that two ideological and political concepts confront each other throughout the 19th century: imperialism and nationalism. At the turn of the century, a strong sentiment of Canadian national affirmation develops among the English-speaking population, whose members wished to be clearly distinct from the United-States, all while maintain close ties to the British Empire. This train of thought is both nationalist and imperialist. At the same time, French-Canadians are also experiencing a strong national sentiment of their own.

It is difficult to paint a homogenous portrait of the Eastern Townships as they were in this period. Certain rural environments were traditionally English-speaking, while others were exclusively French-speaking. In urban sectors, both groups lived side by side, but the American influence was strongly felt, be it within institutions or in the business sector. Within the English-speaking community, several groups gathered within various organizations. Individuals of British origins became members of the St.George Society; individuals of Irish origins became members of the St.Patrick Society; and individuals of Scottish origins became members of the St. Andrew Society.

In townships where the population was predominantly of British origin, such as the Sherbrooke, Compton or Richmond Townships, people were overtly loyal to the British metropolis throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. These were the golden years of Great-Britain's imperial glory, at the time the world's greatest empire. During events such as Victoria Day, the British flag, the Union Jack, hung over residents' houses. On the other hand, in villages where the population was predominantly of American origin, such as Stanstead or Barnston, one could see the Stars and Stripes, the American flag, flying proudly on the 4th of July, the American national holiday. In sum, one could infer the origins of the inhabitants of various areas within the Eastern Townships by observing the flags that were flown on days of historical significance.

Imperialism:

In Canada, imperialism was a partisan movement that promote maintained or renewed imperial ties. A nation is qualified as imperialist when it controls one or several others, as was the case with the British Empire. This can be a political or institutional domination, and is generally associated with colonialism.

Nationalism:

In Canada and in Quebec, nationalism was a partisan movement that sought to gain greater power for the nation, often at the expense of other groups. This school of thought promotes or defends a nation, that is, a group of individuals who share various common characteristics (ethnic background, language, culture, etc.)

Sources:

- / Kesterman, Histoire des Cantons de l'Est
- / Moisan, S., et J. P., Charland (2014), L'histoire du Québec en 30 secondes, Montréal: les éditions Hurtubise
- / Couturier, J. P (2000) Un passé composé. Le Canada de 1850 à nos jours, Moncton: les éditions d'Acadie (2^e édition)

Document 2: Hallmarks of the History of Anglophone Women

In the nineteenth century, girls of British origin were often educated according to Victorian (Queen Victoria) ideology. To stay busy and to readily find a husband, girls were introduced to the arts, to music, to foreign languages. The purpose of this education was, firstly, to allow them to become better wives and mothers; secondly, women were expected to contribute to an enjoyable family environment through their culture and knowledge.

In contrast, Catholic girls were raised to become women dedicated to a life of motherhood or of religion. French-Canadian girls were thus not as educated. Moreover, the 1880-1940 era represents, for the Anglo-Protestant community, a time when feminine political, social and educational movements developed at a rapid rate.

Hélène Margaret Johnson (1835-1863) is one of the first women to publish her poetry in a journal. Her first poems were published in 1859 in the Stanstead Journal.

• • • •

Nina May (Pickel) Owens is one of the first Canadian female artists. She was born in Bolton Centre in 1869. She played a particularly important role in Canadian art history as she contradicted popular beliefs and knowledge regarding women and artists at the turn of the twentieth century. Nina proudly displayed her domestic and artistic roles, and in doing so called into question conventional notions of femininity and of the exclusively male nature of the artistic sphere.



A Few Important Dates in Women's History:

- **1849** Canadian Parliament strips women of their right to vote on the pretext that they are too vulnerable.
- **1874** The Compton Ladies' College is founded. As of 1893, a preparatory class for McGill's entrance exams is offered by this institution. The course was based on the scholarly training given to girls in British colleges.
- 1889 Isabella Jacques is the first woman admitted to Bishop's University's Faculty of Medicine, located, at the time, in Montreal.
- 1890 The Christian Women's Union for Temperance is founded. This Eastern Townships women's organization fought for women's right to vote, among other things.
- **1893** The Women's Council of Montreal is founded. This is the first feminist organization founded in the Province of Quebec. Its purpose is to gain greater civil and political rights for women. It is largely made up of Protestant women.
- 1894 The House of Commons rejects a petition in favour of women's right to vote presented by the Christian Women's Union for Temperance.
- **1906** After having been called to service during the Boer War (1898-1902), nurses are officially admitted to the Canadian Armed Forces.

- **1910** The Quebec Women's Institutes are founded.
- 1917 During wartime, Canadian women who have a family member (spouse, son, brother, father) who served in the army are given the right to vote in the federal elections. In this same year, Ontario and British-Columbia grant women the right to vote in provincial elections.
- 1918 Canadian women who are not excluded on the grounds of their race or of their First Nations heritage and who are aged 21 and over officially obtain the right to vote at the federal elections, but cannot yet vote in provincial elections.
- **1940** The Province of Quebec grants women of non-Native descendance the right to vote.

Sources:

- // http://www.histoiredesfemmes.quebec/lignedutemps.html#notresite
- // Nina May (Pickel) Owens, 1869-1959: English Quebec's Early "Independent" Woman/Artist. / Lesley A. Tarasoff, JETS 32-33
- // Kesterman, J. P (1998) Histoire des Cantons de l'Est, Québec: les éditions de l'IQRC

Minnie H. Bowen and Canada

Document 3: Involvement of an Anglophone Woman

At the end of the nineteenth century, several community groups, women's groups among them, are present within the Anglo-Protestant community. Certain women fight for the right to vote; others provide support to widows, to children, to the poor, etc. Minnie H. Bowen, a prominent member of the Anglophone community of Sherbrooke, was an active member of several philanthropic, patriotic, religious and literary associations (Women's Auxiliary Missionary Society, the Sherbrooke Patriotic Association, the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, the Women's Conservative Association, the Canadian Author's Association, and the Sherbrooke Choral Society). Minnie Hallowell Bowen was born in Sherbrooke on February 4th, 1861. She was the daughter of John Hallowell, a lawyer, and of Helen Maria Clark. In 1890, she married Cecil Hale Bowen, son of George Frederick Bowen, lawyer and sheriff of the St. Francis district, and nephew of Edward Hale, shareholder of the British American Land Company and deputy of Sherbrooke. Minnie H. Bowen had two children, Lloyd H. and Rose Meredyth. She wrote and published six volumes of poetry; she also authored several literary texts published in various newspapers and periodicals. She died in Quebec City in 1942.

DOCUMENTS 4 AND 5: MINNIE H. BOWEN

(Photographs taken in the 1880s)



Eastern Townships Resource Centre / Minnie Hallowell Bowen fonds / P006-003-005-002



Eastern Townships Resource Centre / Minnie Hallowell Bowen fonds / P006-003-005-002

DOCUMENT 6:

Minnie H. Bowen and her daughter Rose Meredyth Bowen (1894)



Eastern Townships Resource Centre / Minnie Hallowell Bowen fonds / P006-003-005-002



DOCUMENT 7:

Minnie H. Bowen (Photograph taken in the 1930s)



Eastern Townships Resource Centre / Minnie Hallowell Bowen fonds / P006-003-005-002

DOCUMENT 8:

Poem by Minnie H. Bowen – To Canada

TO CARADA

(A Dream Poem)

Great Daughter of Britannia; in that place She made for Thee with splendid Motherhood, Stand firmly, as for ages She has stood ! Justice and Honour - symbols of thy race.

Behold 1 Thou hast the guerdon that the seas Bring ever lifting to the valled straits 1 They leave the wealth of Empire at thy gates, And rock thy murslings & Pledge thy faith with these &

The lone waste eloping to the frozen land, Tet holds thy brood upon her sterile breast. Who, in the glittering fever of their quest. Weigh Death with gold I Still let them feel thy hand!

The great world-granaries, where Earth's pure gold Teams in they center fields - they nourish Thee A stalwart race: Where bounty is so free The Nation's Soul must keep the firmer hold t

The Land that lies beneath thy Southern bounds, Wide-armed and great, and feeling overmuch Its greatness - let thy firm, yet gentle touch Greet One who heard the same far oradle sounds.

When bribe or threat (meet vanquisher of fools) Beset the ear - maintain thy way serene. And, worthy daughter of an Empire Queen-Give time for hearts to speak when passion cools.

That Fing is thine whose power the Nations feel Of storied deed for Honour, Right and Truth; Full-measured - give the glory of thy Youth To hold unstained and free, its high Ideal.

In firm allegiance to the Ancient Way Unite the sister-seas in Empire bands 4 The wealth of Earth is glowing in thy hands 4 Strong-souled and resolute 4 Behold thy Day 1



Eastern Townships Resource Centre / Minnie Hallowell Bowen fonds / P006-001

DOCUMENT 9:

Poem by Minnie H. Bowen – Canada, my country

CANADA, MY COUNTRY

Oh. the song that now comes ringing From the Northland- broad and free, Is a bonnie one for singing. And its lilt comes down to me; It is "Canada, My Country,"-How the homesick fancies turn Where the Elm Tree flashes golden, And the crimson Maples burn, Hear the tossing Pine-trees whisper In the land Canadians love. Where the Soil is free beneath us. And the skies are blue above; And it's "Canada, My Country ! " I am coming home to Thee, Though the half of Earth divide us, And the weary leagues of sea.

Where Atlantic surges shiver, Where Pacific billows swirl. She is set on Earth's gold circlet, She- the Jewel- She- the Pearl, And the Arctic Ocean guards her, Where the crashing icebergs frown, And she steps upon her prairies With the northlights for a crown. We can work- for You have taught us; We can live Life with the best, For your calm, deep strength is in us-We can die- at your behest: And it's "Canada, My Country ! " Though afar thy sons may roam, There is not a heart but pulses With the love of Thee- their Home.

Eastern Townships Resource Centre / Minnie Hallowell Bowen fonds / P006-001

Minnie H. Bowen and the Canadian Flag

Document 10: Minnie H. Bowen: A Woman in Search of a Canadian Symbol

From the time of Confederation until the establishment of an official, distinct Canadian flag, there was always some debate over what emblem would be best represent the Canadian people. The "flag issue," as it was known, first came to a head in the 1920s when Prime Minister Mackenzie King established a committee to find an appropriate design to represent Canada. Prior to this, Britain's Royal Union Flag (Union Jack) had flown over the parliament buildings (since 1904), but many people favoured the Red Ensign. Various versions of the Canadian Red Ensign functioned as the country's unofficial emblem, despite the fact that it had only been authorized for marine use and had no legal status on land.

The flag issue inspired a flood of letters to newspapers and magazines. Many individuals submitted proposals (designs on paper as well as cloth prototypes) in the hopes of creating an emblem for Canada, but it is difficult to imagine anyone more passionate and perseverant in this matter than Minnie H. Bowen.

Indeed, Minnie's interest in the flag appears to have begun early as the 1890s, when correspondence indicates her concern regarding Canadians' lack of a proper emblem, unique to the Canadian people. Her letters also testify to the fact that she had done extensive research on the history of flags – the British flag, in particular – and she understood the symbolism of design elements. When Prime Minister King formed a committee to find a suitable flag for Canada, Minnie was prepared. She had already put together her own proposal and established a clear argument for her design.

The symbolism of Minnie's design and her fervent belief that her flag should become Canada's national symbol are best expressed in her own words, as articulated in The Ottawa Evening Journal, September 25, 1930:

"It is a simple, clear design, easily distinguished, not to be mistaken for any other. It does not exalt any section or race, but represents the whole. It is rich in color,



striking in effect and in beauty would rank near the white ensign and the Union Jack. It does not go to the animal or vegetable kingdom for appeal, nor to the stars nor to race, with its precious inheritance of ideals, language and blood. These are lesser things. It appeals by the sign, which is the highest revelation of the spiritual world, devoted sacrifice. It would represent the heroic sacrifices by which Canada's history was made. First, those of the French explorers, settlers and missionaries, who, under their white banner, raised the cross in this land, followed by the sacrifices of all our pioneers, English, Scottish and Irish, and other races. By steadfastness, courage and devotion, these men and women gave Canada her soul."

Minnie Bowen died in 1942, years before the flag issue would finally be settled in 1965. Although Minnie's flag was not destined to become Canada's chosen emblem, it did hang for a time, during the 1930s, in the editorial office of the Sherbrooke Daily Record, where the public was invited to view it and express their opinion.

Minnie's flag is a symbol, not only of one woman's perseverant, literate and passionate campaign, it also speaks to deeply held convictions, sentiments of identification and unity with other provinces, devotion to country, and racial inclusiveness – attributes which certainly were shared by many of her peers, English-speaking Townshippers who helped shape their province and their country.

Text written by: Brenda Hartwell Jody Robinson http://100objects.qahn.org/content/minnie-h-bowen-canadian-flag-c-1920s

DOCUMENT 11: Poem by Minnie H. Bowen – *Canada needs a flag*

CANADA MAEDS A FLAG.

To distinguish Had IDAUVITY in the BAITISE ADVIAG and to most her needs as a Mation.

There is no DIBLOTALTY to the UNION JACK, inthis desire.

The UNION JACK belongs to the UNDIN CONNENTWALTH of Nations and is ABOVE the flags of the separate parts. It signifies the GREAT UNION from which somes their strength.

This Dealgn is suggested:

The white GROSS of SACRIFICS is placed upon the HaD AWSIGH This is the reverse of the WHITE AWSIGN.

The UNION JACE is preserved in the upper left hand canton as the Empire Bond. The white cross is not taken from the Union Jack which contains no Thite Greek Grees - The white under the red St.George's cross re recents the fields.

THEREFORE: BY HER CWF ACT as a MATICS within the Mirian, Callin would place her own cross upon the flag.

Eastern Townships Resource Centre / Minnie Hallowell Bowen fonds / P006-001

DOCUMENT 12

Poème de Minnie H. Bowen – The Flag

THE PLAG

2

ye do not need that one should teach us love Of our greatFlag - since that undying love Burns in our hearts, and underlies our thoughts 1 As some deep spring that runs beneath the hills Bursts suddenly to light and conscious power -Bo our devotion flows to meet the day When the emergent summons bids it rise.

The Flag has given us all we hold most dear; Honour and truth and purity and love-Courage and that strong purpose that shall dare The torturer's knife - or that long lassitude Of unmarked, dreary days, so Right be done; Because it is the Cross that in the Flag Brings all the beauty and the use of life And binds them into one. So men shall see

Eastern Townships Resource Centre / Minnie Hallowell Bowen fonds / P006-001



2600, College Street Sherbrooke (Qc) J1M 1Z7

Telephone: 819-822-9600, etx. 2647 Email: etrc@ubishops.ca Website: www.etrc.ca

PRODUCED BY THE EASTERN TOWNSHIPS RESOURCE CENTRE, 2019

Content and Production: Audrey St-Onge, Fabian Will Scientific consultation: D^r Sabrina Moisan, Jody Robinson Translation: D^r Julie Frédette Revision: Audrey Bélanger, D^r Julie Frédette Graphic Design: Julien Lachèvre, Fabian Will

Legal Deposit: Bibliothèque et Archives nationales Québec, 2019

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The ETRC's educational materials have been made possible through generous funding by the Secretariat for Relations with English-Speaking Quebecers (SQREA).



and



The contents of this guide may be reproduced and distributed for educational purposes only.