

WHAT SHAPED THE ATLANTIC COLONIES?

Have you ever wondered why Canada today is divided into provinces and territories? In 1850, British North America was made up of separate colonies and territories. The colonies were under the British government's political control and the territories were governed by the British Hudson's Bay Company. The Atlantic colonies were Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. The colonies farther inland were Canada East (present-day Québec) and Canada West (present-day Ontario). The Northwest region and New Caledonia were governed by Hudson's Bay Company. Britain established these colonies and territories on Aboriginal lands. As they were established, their Aboriginal inhabitants were often displaced.

Look at the map in **Figure 1.1**. How do you think the distances between these territories and colonies affected their relations with each other?

FIGURE 1.1 This map shows British North America and surrounding areas in 1850. **Analyze:** How strongly connected do you think the people in the Atlantic colonies felt to the rest of British North America?

British North America and Surrounding Areas, 1850



FIGURE 1.2 This 1865 drawing by Edward John Russell is titled *King & Jewett Mill, Thomas E. Millidge Shipyard, Saint John, New Brunswick*. **Analyze:** What details in the image convey that shipbuilding was a successful industry in New Brunswick?

Despite being located in the same region, the colonies of Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick were very different from each other. For example, Newfoundland was known for its fisheries. Prince Edward Island was known for agriculture. Nova Scotia was known for its shipping and coal mines. Forestry and shipbuilding were an important part of the economy in the Atlantic colonies in the mid-1800s, particularly in New Brunswick. Ships built in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia carried goods throughout the world. Examine **Figure 1.2**, which is a drawing of a lumber mill and a shipyard in New Brunswick. What does this drawing tell you about the relationship between forestry and shipbuilding?

BUILDING INDUSTRIES AND FORTUNES

Industry was booming in the Atlantic colonies in the mid-1800s. There were many opportunities for both working-class and middle-class people to make a living, but most struggled to get by. However, merchants, shipbuilders, and other businesspeople were able to develop successful businesses, which created a wealthy upper class.

Joseph Salter was a successful New Brunswick businessman and politician. In the 1850s, Salter's shipbuilding company was one of the largest employers in the Atlantic colonies. He was elected as the first mayor of the town of Moncton in 1855. But as times changed, so too did Salter's career. For example, when the demand for his particular ships dropped suddenly in 1859, he turned to mining. At first, he worked as an executive in a mining company in New Brunswick. Then he moved to Nova Scotia, where the large supply of coal offered more opportunities. Salter became wealthy from the many industries that continued to grow in Nova Scotia. Look at **Figure 1.3**, which shows a monument to Salter built by the city of Moncton, New Brunswick, in 1990. Why do you think there is a monument depicting Salter, rather than his employees?



FIGURE 1.3 This 1990 monument of Joseph Salter by sculptor Claude Roussel was built for the 100th anniversary of Moncton's incorporation as a city. **Analyze:** Why would Moncton create a sculpture of Salter on its 100th anniversary?

PRODUCING GOODS

In the mid-1800s, ports in the Atlantic colonies bustled with business activity. In New Brunswick, industries such as lumber, iron, and coal benefited from the shipbuilding industry. Examine the painting of the *Marco Polo* in **Figure 1.4**. The *Marco Polo* was known as the fastest ship in the world. It made a record-breaking trip to Australia in 1852. Over a hundred years after the ship sank, people were making movies and writing songs about it. What does this tell you about the importance of ships and shipbuilding to the Atlantic colonies?



FIGURE 1.4 This 1859 painting by Thomas Robertson shows the *Marco Polo*, a ship built in New Brunswick in 1851. **Analyze:** Why would the ship’s owners commission a painting of the *Marco Polo* sailing on rough waters?

FARMING AND FISHING

The mid-1800s were also an uncertain time for some people living in the Atlantic colonies. For example, Prince Edward Island had good agricultural resources. However, only about one-third of the farmers on the island owned their land. The rest were tenants who paid rents to the landlords for use of their land. Violent conflict sometimes erupted when landlords or their agents tried to remove tenant farmers who fell behind in their payments. To make a living in Newfoundland, people fished the rough waters of the north Atlantic. Fishing families were often in debt to wealthy merchants. The merchants controlled the industry by buying the catch and supplying the fishing families with food, equipment, and other goods.

CHANGING TRADE RELATIONS

During the first half of the 1800s, most of the goods produced by the Atlantic colonies went to Britain, the United States, the West Indies, and Latin America, rather than to the other British colonies in North America. Economic development and political events gradually changed these trading patterns. The boom in American railway building in the 1850s created more demand for goods from the Atlantic colonies. In 1854, Britain and the United States signed a trade agreement called the Reciprocity Treaty. This agreement allowed **free trade**, trade between countries with no taxes, of agricultural products and natural resources between British North America and the United States. Trade to the United States increased after the treaty. In 1861, the American Civil War broke out in the United States. The war was fought between the northern and southern states. You will learn more about it in Chapter 2. The war created an increased demand for agricultural products and other natural resources from the Atlantic colonies. At the end of the war in 1865, the United States ended the Reciprocity Treaty. The Americans began heavily taxing goods from British North America. As a result, people in the Atlantic colonies lost a valuable market for their products.

free trade trade between different countries without taxes or restrictions

How would the cancellation of the Reciprocity Treaty affect relations between the colonies in British North America?

CREATING A FLOW MAP

A flow map shows the movement of people or goods using arrows. The arrows begin at the source of the movement and indicate the direction of the destination. Sometimes the width of the arrows shows the quantity of movement. By reading a flow map, you can determine the direction and quantity of the movement, and assess any overall patterns in the movement.

Figure 1.5 shows the flow and value of timber-related goods out of the Atlantic colonies in 1850. Where were most goods being exported to? **Figure 1.6** lists the value of total exports to the United States from the Atlantic colonies in 1854, the year the Reciprocity Treaty was signed, and in 1865, the year the treaty was ended. Create a flow map for each year shown in **Figure 1.6**, and then compare them.

Colony	Exports to the United States in British Currency (£)	
	1854	1865
Nova Scotia	318 000	723 000
New Brunswick	97 000	361 000
Prince Edward Island	16 000	124 000

FIGURE 1.6 Value of total exports to the United States in 1854 and 1865, before the cancellation of the Reciprocity Treaty

Flow and Value of Atlantic Colonies’ Timber Exports in 1850

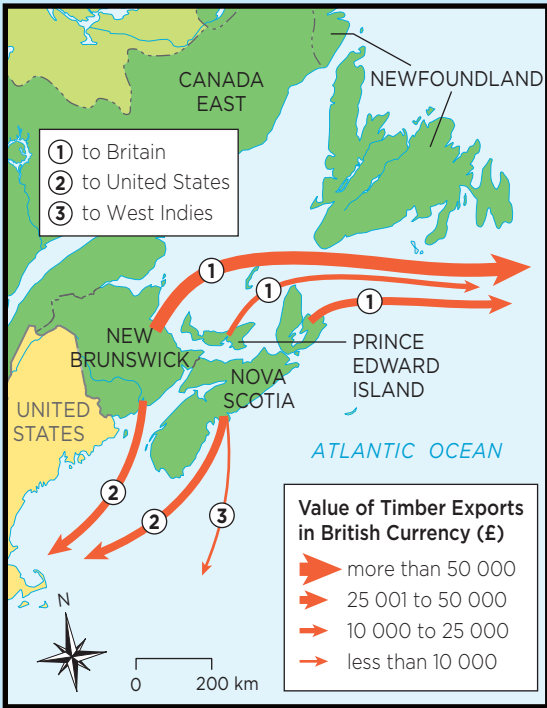


FIGURE 1.5 This map shows the movement and value of goods in the timber trade in the Atlantic colonies in 1850.

HOW TO CREATE A FLOW MAP

STEP 1 Choose a base map that includes the Atlantic colonies and part of the United States. Ensure that it has space for a title, legend, scale, and north arrow.

STEP 2 Choose a different arrow thickness to represent each category. The wider the arrow, the greater the total value of exports it represents.

STEP 3 Draw the arrows for your first map. For example, draw an arrow from the centre of Nova Scotia toward the coast of the United States. Draw the arrows for the remaining regions.

STEP 4 Compare your two maps. What conclusions can you draw by comparing these two maps?

STEP 5 Group the data into categories. For example, more than 500 000, 200 001 to 500 000, 50 000 to 200 000, less than 50 000.

STEP 6 Create a legend for your categories on your outline map.

STEP 7 Add a title, a north arrow, a scale, and labels to your map. Repeat the steps to create a map for the 1865 data.

WORKING-CLASS CHILDREN

Unless they came from a wealthy family, most children in the 1800s had to help their families make a living from an early age. Today, in some parts of Canada, children’s chores can still include farming activities. However, in the 1800s, children’s work was generally harder and more dangerous than children’s work today. As British North America became more industrialized and the demand for goods increased, more children spent their days in dangerous working conditions.

Children often did the same work as adults but for lower wages. They would work on farms and in mills, factories, and mines. Britain had laws that protected children in dangerous jobs such as mining. By 1842, boys under the age of 10 and all girls were banned from working in mines. The British North American colonies, however, did not have such laws. Children as young as 7 and 8 were often sent to work. By 1866, there were 449 boys working in coal mines in Nova Scotia, representing almost 15 percent of the mining workforce. In New Brunswick fishing communities like Miscou Island, girls as young as 10 worked for low wages cleaning and preparing the catch for fish merchants. They did this work in addition to their chores at home, such as looking after younger siblings and cooking.

MARTIN BUTLER

Born in New Brunswick in 1857 to a working-class family, Martin Butler was the youngest of 11 children. Like his siblings and many other children, Martin Butler spent his childhood working and contributing to the family income.

The Butlers were farmers, but farming alone could not support the family. Martin’s father and brothers often worked in the lumber industry in the fall and winter. When the Butlers could no longer find jobs in the lumber industry, they created shingles for roofs from discarded logs. Read **Figure 1.7**, an excerpt from Martin Butler’s recollections of his early childhood. How does Butler help us to understand how changes in industry impacted the lives of many children in the Atlantic colonies?

“There came still harder times ... the two eldest boys Ephraim and Benjamin [Martin’s brothers] got discouraged and ran away. Young as we were we had then to assist in making the living and many a time have my arms ached from swinging the heavy mallet used for splitting shingles.”

— Martin Butler, author and poet

Butler left home for the first time at the age of 11 to work for another family as a household servant and store clerk. He was paid room and board. Martin Butler is also an unfortunate example of the dangerous conditions of the workplace in the 1800s. At the age of 18, his right arm was caught in a piece of machinery. He lost his arm, but survived. He became a poet and printer later in life, and continued to work odd jobs to support himself.

How are the attitudes about child labour in the 1800s different from our attitudes toward it today?

FIGURE 1.7 This is an excerpt from Butler’s “Early Recollections,” written in 1890. He published stories about his childhood experiences in his own magazine, titled *Butler’s Journal*. **Analyze:** How did the Butler children feel about working for a living?

FIRST NATIONS LOSS OF TERRITORY

In the Atlantic colonies, the Mi’kmaq, Maliseet, and Passamaquoddy First Nations had signed Peace and Friendship treaties with the British government. These treaties guaranteed Aboriginal rights to hunt and fish throughout the region and to maintain a reasonable livelihood. At the same time, immigrants from Europe and the United States continued to arrive. They expected cheap and even free land. The government did little to protect the small territories reserved for First Nations. Read the quote in **Figure 1.8**. It is the petition of Mi’kmaq Chief Noel Briot to the government. What is Chief Briot asking for?

The government rejected Chief Briot’s plea. A commissioner responded that based on the government’s observations at the reserve at Burnt Church, First Nations people “are not well adapted to become valuable settlers.”

The colonists benefited from the industries that developed on what was once First Nations land. However, they rarely offered jobs to First Nations people to work in these industries. The local First Nations tried to earn a living in different ways. They used their skills to harvest maple syrup, berries, and other wild produce to sell to the colonists. They also made baskets, brooms, and barrels to sell, as shown in **Figure 1.9**. Why do you think colonists did not want to hire First Nations people to work?

FIGURE 1.9 This painting from the early 1800s by John Stanton is entitled *Maliseet Basket Makers*. It shows a group of Maliseet people making baskets to earn money. **Analyze:** What examples can you see in this painting of Maliseet people incorporating European customs into their lives?

“Your petitioners [the Mi’kmaq] do not wish any more of the land at Tabusintac [New Brunswick] sold but they most especially object to the sale of the marsh, without which they will be reduced to extreme poverty.”

— Chief Noel Briot, Mi’kmaq First Nation at Burnt Church and Tabusintac

FIGURE 1.8 This is an excerpt from the 1853 petition of Mi’kmaq Chief Noel Briot, asking the government to stop the sale of a piece of land situated on a Mi’kmaq reserve. **Analyze:** Why do you think the chief believes the sale of the land will cause extreme poverty?



CHECK-IN

1. **EVALUATE AND DRAW CONCLUSIONS** Why was the Reciprocity Treaty significant for the Atlantic colonies?

2. **CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE** How did the development of trade and industry affect the lives of First Nations people living in the Atlantic colonies of British North America?