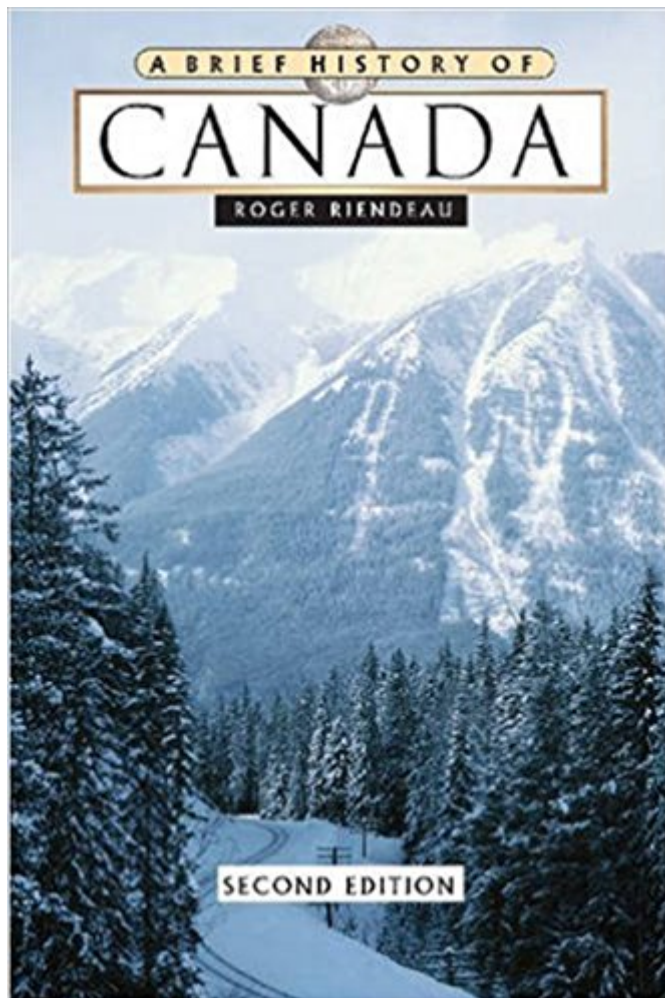


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A Brief History Of Canada



Synopsis

Canada is all too often considered a mere extension of the United States, and it is no accident that the Canadian-U.S. border is perhaps the most stable and peaceful on earth. Most Americans know little about our quiet neighbor's unique history - from its first sighting by the Norse to its full confederation in 1867 to today's social democracy. Now, including more material than ever with a brand-new look, *A Brief History of Canada, Second Edition* fills this gap with authoritative chapters that combine solid reference value with helpful analysis. Continuing through the rise and fall of the French and British empires to the foundations of Canadian nationhood and the present day, *A Brief History of Canada, Second Edition* provides unparalleled details in a single-volume reference. All material in this edition has been thoroughly updated and expanded to reflect the most recent

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Customer Reviews

All too often Americans dismiss Canadians as a nondescript people living above the 49th parallel with a boring history. On the contrary, as Riendeau (Univ. of Toronto) demonstrates in his credible analysis of the Canadian past, Canada has a history as vibrant as any in the world. The book covers a wide range of topics--geographical features, the Norse discovery, the fall of New France, nationhood, and finally, the modern era. Riendeau has written a good text enriched by photos, maps, and a bibliography for further reading. This is a worthy addition for public and academic libraries.--Larry R. Little, Penticton P.L., British Columbia Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"...a worthy addition for public and academic libraries." - Library Journal "This useful history...is a

model of what can be well done briefly with national histories...an enjoyable read." - Midwest Book Review"

Perfect condition. Great book with just enough history

I understand this is a very good book, but the type is so small and the line spacing so tight that I have to read it with a magnifying glass although I have 20-20 vision. I read a page or two and am thoroughly exhausted. What a shame that the publisher couldn't formatted the book with larger type and wider line spacing (and therefore longer), or put it in two volumes.

What do you think of when you hear the word Canada? Do you think about hockey? Canadian bacon (which is neither Canadian nor technically bacon, by the way)? Eskimos? Whatever pops into our heads when we think about our neighbor to the north, it most likely has nothing to do with the historical Canada. Roger Rienteau aims to correct that ignorance with this one-volume history of the Great White North. Within a few pages of this excellent history primer it becomes apparent that Canada is much more than beer and Michael J. Fox. The book is divided into five parts: the first section is the shortest, entitled, "Exploring the Northern American Frontier." This deals with topics such as geography (Canada is massive in size and encompasses extremes in climate and topography), the native population and a quick overview of their lifestyles and languages, and the earliest voyages to Canada from Viking explorers up to Jacques Cartier in the 16th century. The impetus for European exploration is one we were all taught in grade school-an attempt to open up a northern passage to Asia in order to save money and time moving products between Europe and China. The second section, "The French Empire in Northern America, 1608-1760," deals with the attempts by the French to exploit their toehold in Canada through fur trading. Along the way, Rienteau gives a highly detailed exposition on life in New France, with an emphasis on governmental functions and exploration into the Great Lakes regions. The French would ultimately fail to expand their control into Canada due to unsuccessful attempts to integrate trade and a lack of support from the French government. The next section, "The British North American Colonies, 1760-1867," deals with the era of British control over Canada. Probably the most important aspect of this era is that Canada eventually gained its independence peacefully, without having to resort to a violent confrontation with England as the United States did in the 1770's and 1780's. It was also during this time that Canada saw an enormous influx of British and Scottish settlers move into Canada. It was the descendents of these settlers who ran the Canadian state during the darkest

hours of the 19th and 20th centuries. The fourth section, "The Foundations of Canadian Nationhood, 1867-1931," sees Canada striking out on its own, while still maintaining important links to England. It is during this period that Canada begins to seriously confront the difficulties in creating a unified Canadian nation. An important event in this process occurred during the reign of the first Canadian leader, John A. Macdonald. Macdonald recognized the difficulties in bringing together regions with seemingly irreconcilable differences. It was his National Policy (a policy that included a protective tariff, a transcontinental railroad system, and a settlement policy for western Canada) that helped forge links that are still in place today. The final section, "Affluence and Anxiety in the Modern Era," is a dense examination of Canadian political turmoil beginning with the Canadian Great Depression of the 1930's (as bad as anything seen in the United States) to the early 1990's. Time and time again, the Canadian state dealt with the threat of disintegration, mainly from the French-Canadians in the province of Quebec. It is this section, more than any other, which shows us the miracle of Canada—a Canada that manages to stay unified despite numerous internal and external threats. One surprising aspect of the book is Canada's relationship with the United States. Americans don't recognize how hostile our country has been with the Canadians. As late as 1911, an American congressman said that he expected to see the American flag flying over the Canadian nation all the way to the Arctic Circle. The only sources mentioned in the book are a "suggestions for further reading" list towards the back of the book. One assumes Riendeau used primary sources (excerpts of important documents are included in sidebars in the text), but without footnotes, it is hard to tell. A lack of more detailed maps is troubling as well, especially when Canada is the second largest geographical expression in the world, making it absolutely necessary to include reams of maps. The title of the book should read, "A Brief Political and Economic History of Canada," as social history receives little coverage here. Relations between Europeans and Indian tribes of Canada is not really covered either. In these aspects, the book is not a comprehensive history of Canada. Other books should be consulted to get a fuller picture of this fascinating country.

Suppose you had to write an entire history of America in fewer than three hundred pages, including maps and photos, and aimed at readers who know nothing about it. Where would you start??@The founding of Jamestown? The centuries before that? How many pages would you devote to the Civil War and its causes? To the changes in everyday life?@brought about by the railroads? To the Depression? What would you leave out? What very complex and controversial issues like the Civil Rights Movement would you have to simply gloss over? Not easy, huh? Yet, this is exactly the task that Riendeau sets out to accomplish for the history of Canada. And for the most part he

succeeds! Riendeau begins his tale with a geographic survey of the land and shows that, logically speaking, the different parts that make up present-day Canada could never have joined together to form a country in the first place. Then he proceeds to tell us how that happened anyway. And while he is relating such events as the struggle between the French and British Empires for control of the land, confederation of the provinces, etc., he also gives us accounts of the War of 1812 as seen from Canadian eyes, and the influences of the American Civil War on the framing of Canada's own Confederation. Now look, I'm an American who has earned a B.A. in Modern World History, has traveled extensively to many other countries (though not Canada), and spends several hours a day reading newspapers. Before I read this book, I was sure I already knew Canada. Riendeau quickly annihilated that conceit with a fascinating barrage of facts, events, and social trends I'd never heard of right down to the very humbling tidbit that Mary Pickford -- Hollywood's top star of the early silent movie era -- and proudly known nationwide as "gAMERICA's Sweetheart" -- was in reality a Canadian! Okay, so this book is strictly Canadian History 101 to be laughed at by Canadians. But if all you've taken so far is Canadian History 000 like me, then this book forms a delightful introduction to the subject. And now Riendeau has got me eager to sign up for Canadian History 102. Not bad for so short and relatively easy a read!

My husband is Canadian and since we have discussed moving there to live in the near future, I decided I should do at least a little preliminary research on Canadian history. Where better to start than with a book entitled, "A Brief History of Canada," right? Ooooh noooo! For the person only interested in the barest facts, and those mostly involving constitutional history, this is the book for you. It's very encyclopedic and heavily focused on how the political structure of Canada got to where it is today. Not the meat and blood and bones of it all, not the blood, sweat, and tears; just the dull legality and "who's who" of it all. If you want to know that the maritime provinces hang together in self defense and that the French and English cultures blend about as well as vinegar and oil, you've got it in Mr. Riendeau's book. Personally I find that aspect of modern history stultifying. Although I'm aware that Canadian history does without a Revolution or a Civil War, I can't believe there is no human drama involved. The book is painfully dull and emotionally sterile.

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