

**HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL TEACHING RESOURCE  
FOR *THE PROMISE OF CANADA*, BY CHARLOTTE GRAY**

### *Author's Note*

Greetings, educators!

While I was in my twenties I spent a year teaching in a high school in England; it was the hardest job I've ever done. So first, I want to thank you for doing one of the most important and challenging jobs in our society. And I particularly want to thank you for introducing your students to Canadian history, as they embark on their own futures, because it will help them understand how our past is what makes this country unique.

When I sat down to write *The Promise of Canada*, I knew I wanted to engage my readers in the personalities and dramas of the past 150 years. Most of us find it much easier to learn about ideas and values through the stories of the individuals that promoted them. Most of us enjoy history more if we are given the tools to understand what it was like *back then*—back when women didn't have the vote, or back when Indigenous children were dragged off to residential schools, or back when Quebecers felt so excluded that some of them wanted their own independent country. I wanted my readers to feel the texture of history—the sounds, sights and smells of our predecessors' lives.

If your students have looked at my book, I hope they will begin to understand how the past is not dead: it has shaped the Canada we live in today. I hope they will be excited to meet vivid personalities who, in their own day, contributed to a country that has never stopped evolving.

This Teaching Resource is intended to amplify my words, so that you and your students can get to know better the individuals I wrote about. Through debates, games, interviews and other strategies, you can make history an interactive experience. The past will come alive.

Thanks again for your valuable work, and good luck!

Charlotte

## PART 1: LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS

### Chapter 1. A Tapestry of Peoples

In Alastair Sweeny's article *Confederation's true father? George-Étienne Cartier* (*Globe and Mail*, January 3, 2014), Sweeny opens by saying, "Sir John A. Macdonald was infinitely charming and crafty, but Confederation was not his achievement. Indeed, it could have happened without him. The real driver of Confederation was Macdonald's colleague, his 'Siamese twin,' Sir George-Étienne Cartier."

[www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/confederations-true-father-george-etienne-cartier/article16177890](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/confederations-true-father-george-etienne-cartier/article16177890)

**Class debate:** In your opinion, who was the real Father of Confederation, and why?

### Chapter 2. Mountie Mythology

At the peak of the gold rush in 1865, John Galbraith established a ferry service across the Kootenay River; a settlement ensued known as Galbraith's Ferry. Samuel Steele and seventy-five North West Mounted Police were called in to resolve a dispute in 1887, and the community changed its name to Fort Steele shortly after. Later, knowing that the railway was coming through, residents of Fort Steele migrated to the fledgling community of Cranbrook to be closer to the rails. The Sam Steele Society has held Sam Steele days since 1965, the same year that Fort Steele received funding to establish a heritage town. [www.samsteeledays.org](http://www.samsteeledays.org) and [www.fortsteele.ca](http://www.fortsteele.ca)

**Questions for the class:** What impact has the legacy of Samuel Steele had in this region, and why? What are some other Canadian historical figures who have forts, communities, festivals, attractions, or events bearing their name?

### Chapter 3. Looking Inward

When people think of Emily Carr, they usually think of her as an artist famous for her paintings. However, Carr was also an accomplished writer. From *The Book of Small* included in this link, read one of these two stories: "White Currants" or "Time."

<http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks04/0400201.txt>

**Questions for the class:** How does Carr use words to paint a story? What writing techniques does she use to give her stories a pulse? From these stories, come up with five tips to improve your non-fiction writing.

### Chapter 4. Beaver Tales

Harold Innis wrote *The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History*. The full text can be found here:

[www.ourroots.ca/toc.aspx?id=9135&gryID=ef69dd96-64ab-4d49-8774-15563e46caa4](http://www.ourroots.ca/toc.aspx?id=9135&gryID=ef69dd96-64ab-4d49-8774-15563e46caa4).

**Activity:** The introduction is titled “The Beaver.” Create a trivia game (or a quiz show) about beavers based on this chapter.

**Activity:** The Fur Institute of Canada says that the fur trade is part of Canada’s resource-based economy and one of Canada’s oldest and most historically significant industries. From the site’s page titled *Canada’s Fur Trade: Fact & Figures*, what five things pop out as points of interest, and why? <http://fur.ca/fur-trade/canadas-fur-trade-fact-figures/>

## **PART 2: A DIFFERENT KIND OF COUNTRY**

### **Chapter 5. Caring for Each Other**

In 2004, CBC held a cross-Canada competition to select “The Greatest Canadian.” The result? Tommy Douglas was voted as “The Greatest Canadian.” From CBC’s archives, here is the announcement <http://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1402807530>.

**Questions for the class:** Why do you think Canadians bestowed this honour on Douglas? Based on what you now know about Douglas, what things strike you about this man as being unique? If the CBC were looking to start another contest, whom would you nominate today to be “The Greatest Canadian,” and why?

### **Chapter 6. Landscaping a Literature**

Margaret Atwood is a serious writer. But she’s not always serious; her dry wit is legendary. Atwood’s home page is full of factual information, useful advice, and humorous inserts.

**Activity:** Can you find the humour sprinkled throughout her site? Give three examples, and comment on this aspect of her personality. <http://margaretatwood.ca>

**Activity:** Here are fifteen snippets from conversations with Margaret Atwood. What three stand out in your mind, and why? <http://mentalfloss.com/article/66083/15-powerful-quotes-margaret-atwood>

**Activity:** If you had a chance to interview Atwood, what three questions would you ask her, and why?

### **Chapter 7. Establishing Our Rights**

Bertha Wilson has left an indelible mark on the Canadian judicial system. Not surprisingly, her legacy lives on. One organization that is dedicated to upholding the values Wilson exemplified is The Wilson Moot. <http://thewilsonmoot.com/index.html>

**Activity:** Create a class presentation about The Wilson Moot, including an interview with the Director, the Administrator, or the Coordinator of the organization.

### **PART 3: STRAINING AT THE SEAMS**

#### **Chapter 8. Silent No More**

In 1990, Canadian journalist and author Roy MacGregor wrote this article titled “The Feather, Elijah Harper and Meech Lake” for the *Ottawa Citizen*. It was reprinted with permission on The Aboriginal Multi-Media Society (AMMSA) website (Vol. 8; Issue 8). [www.ammsa.com/node/17819](http://www.ammsa.com/node/17819)

**Questions for the class:** In your opinion, what is the significance of the eagle feather? Is there an elder in your region with whom you could talk about this? If so, do so and make notes to share with your classmates.

Gray closes this chapter by stating in part that Harper is the symbol of Indigenous people’s 150-year battle to shed the role of victims and become part of the national dialogue. “Elijah Harper enlarged our field of vision.”

**Questions for the class:** Has reading about Elijah Harper enlarged your field of vision? If so, how so? If not, why not?

#### **Chapter 9. What Does the West Want?**

Preston Manning is still very active and continues to write frequent commentaries on current issues, for example: “Getting to the roots of populist uprisings” [www.manningcentre.ca/column/getting-to-the-roots-of-populist-uprisings](http://www.manningcentre.ca/column/getting-to-the-roots-of-populist-uprisings) and “Canada’s elites could use a crash course in populism” [www.manningcentre.ca/column/canadas-elites-could-use-a-crash-course-in-populism](http://www.manningcentre.ca/column/canadas-elites-could-use-a-crash-course-in-populism).

**Activity:** Write a 300-word commentary in response to one of these articles.

#### **Chapter 10. Secret Handshake**

In this section Gray rounds up an eclectic collection of Canadians: artist and writer Douglas Coupland, musician and host of *q* Shadrach Kabango, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, journalist Lise Bissonnette, business innovator Annette Verschuren, and the mayor of Calgary, Naheed Nenshi, and she ends the chapter with her own musings as an immigrant.

Early in this chapter Gray writes, “The writer and artist Douglas Coupland describes our collective sense of being Canadian as “a secret handshake.” At the end of this chapter Gray provides her own reflections on being Canadian. Her closing line reads, “Sometimes the secret handshake is with our own history.”

**Questions for the class:** What do you think Coupland means by his statement? What do you think Gray means by hers?

**Activity:** What is *your* definition of being Canadian? Define your understanding by writing a short essay, poem, song, or creating a poster illustrating what it means to be Canadian.

**Activity:** Interview three people, asking them what they think it means to be Canadian. Present your findings to your class.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

Historica Canada: the country's largest organization dedicated to enhancing awareness of Canadian history and citizenship. [www.historicacanada.ca](http://www.historicacanada.ca)

Canadian Time Line: -75000000 to 1999. The menu has several subsections under: eras, politics, places, documents, culture, maps, and war. [www.canadahistory.com/timeline.asp](http://www.canadahistory.com/timeline.asp)

Canada History Project *A Country by Consent* is a national history of Canada which studies the major political events that have shaped the country. [www.canadahistoryproject.ca/index.html](http://www.canadahistoryproject.ca/index.html)

*Dictionary of Canadian Biography:* includes upwards of 8,500 biographies, in both French and English and the collection grows every week. [www.biographi.ca](http://www.biographi.ca)

*The Canadian Encyclopedia:* over 19,000 articles and 30,000 multimedia items including images, maps, games, audio and video—focused on Canada's events, people, places and things. [www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca)

### Videos, sites, and interviews specifically related to the people discussed in *The Promise of Canada*

Sir George-Étienne Cartier, biography from Library and Archives Canada.  
Cartier, Sir George-Étienne, "People," Library and Archives Canada.  
[www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/confederation/023001-4000.12-e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/confederation/023001-4000.12-e.html).

An extensive archive that documents the life and career of Samuel Benfield Steele 1870-1978.

Bruce Peel Special Collections & Archives, "Sir Stanley Benfield Steele Family Archive," University of Alberta.  
<https://bpsc.library.ualberta.ca/collections/sir-samuel-benfield-steele-family-archive>.

Gutenberg.org provides over 54,000 free eBooks including many of Emily Carr's, such as, "Beginnings," *The Book of Small*.

Carr, Emily. "Beginnings," *The Book of Small*. (1942). Project Gutenberg. 2004.  
<http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks04/0400201.txt>.

Harold Innis, biographical material from Collections Canada.  
Innis, Harold Adams, "People," Library and Archives Canada.  
[www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/innis-mcluhan/030003-1000-e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/innis-mcluhan/030003-1000-e.html).

A condensed biography about Tommy Douglas.  
CBC Learning: Canada, A people's history. *Fighting from the homefront*. Tommy Douglas. 2001.  
[www.cbc.ca/history/EPISCONTENTSE1EP14CH3PA5LE.html](http://www.cbc.ca/history/EPISCONTENTSE1EP14CH3PA5LE.html).

Background information on CBC's Competition "The Greatest Canadian."  
"The Greatest Canadian." Wikimedia Foundation. Modified March 26, 2017.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Greatest\\_Canadian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Greatest_Canadian).

An insightful interview with Margaret Atwood.  
Morris, Mary interviews Margaret Atwood, "The Art of Fiction No. 121." *The Paris Review*, Issue 117, Winter 1990. [www.theparisreview.org/interviews/2262/margaret-atwood-the-art-of-fiction-no-121-margaret-atwood](http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/2262/margaret-atwood-the-art-of-fiction-no-121-margaret-atwood).

Margaret Atwood on *George Stroumboulopoulos Tonight*.  
Stroumboulopoulos, George interviews Margaret Atwood. *George Stroumboulopoulos Tonight*. September 27, 2013.  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqahhKuoET4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqahhKuoET4).

A thoughtful profile written by Sandra Martin in the *Globe and Mail* two days after the death of Bertha Wilson.  
Martin, Sandra. "Bertha Wilson 83." *Globe and Mail*. April 30, 2007.  
[www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/bertha-wilson-83/article1075258/?page=all](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/bertha-wilson-83/article1075258/?page=all).

"Justice In Her Own Right: Bertha Wilson and the Charter of Canadian Rights and Freedoms," *Supreme Court Law Review* (2008).  
Cameron, Jamie, ed. *Reflections on the Legacy of Justice Bertha Wilson*. Toronto: *LexisNexis Canada* 2008. Reprinted with the permission of the S.C. L. R.  
[http://sns-production-uploads.s3.amazonaws.com/assets\\_ca/Reflections%20on%20the%20Legacy%20of%20Justice%20Bertha%20Wilson.pdf](http://sns-production-uploads.s3.amazonaws.com/assets_ca/Reflections%20on%20the%20Legacy%20of%20Justice%20Bertha%20Wilson.pdf).

Inspired by Elijah Harper, librarian Monique Woroniak makes changes.  
CBC Radio. *Unreserved*. August 28, 2016.  
[www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/building-an-ally-non-indigenous-people-share-their-stories-of-bridge-building-1.3430628/elijah-harper-inspired-winnipeg-librarian-to-make-change-1.3432256](http://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/building-an-ally-non-indigenous-people-share-their-stories-of-bridge-building-1.3430628/elijah-harper-inspired-winnipeg-librarian-to-make-change-1.3432256).

Reminiscence by former Manitoba Grand Chief Phil Fontaine, twenty-five years after Elijah Harper said no to Meech Lake Accord.

CBC Radio *News*, Manitoba. “Retired indigenous leader Phil Fontaine remembers a powerful moment for First Nations.” 2015.  
[www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/25-years-since-elijah-harper-said-no-to-the-meech-lake-accord-1.3110439?cmp=abfb](http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/25-years-since-elijah-harper-said-no-to-the-meech-lake-accord-1.3110439?cmp=abfb).

An interview with Preston Manning with John Geddes, for *Maclean's*.  
Geddes, John. “Q&A: Preston Manning on Canadian populism in the age of Trump,” *Maclean's*, February 24, 2017.  
[www.macleans.ca/politics/ottawa/qa-preston-manning-on-canadian-populism-in-the-age-of-trump](http://www.macleans.ca/politics/ottawa/qa-preston-manning-on-canadian-populism-in-the-age-of-trump).

*Generation A*: Ten questions for Douglas Coupland.  
The author of *Generation A* answers ten questions ranging from if he would miss bees if they disappeared to if *Generation A* is a sequel. Simon & Schuster Books. December 3, 2009.  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJDI--Xc7vc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJDI--Xc7vc).

Shadrach Kabango moves on to new career.  
Friend, David. “Shad gets back to music after ouster from CBC’s *q*.” *The Star online*. August 31, 2016.  
[www.thestar.com/entertainment/music/2016/08/31/shad-gets-back-to-music-after-ouster-from-cbcs-q.html](http://www.thestar.com/entertainment/music/2016/08/31/shad-gets-back-to-music-after-ouster-from-cbcs-q.html).

Meet Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.  
Liberal Party of Canada. 2017. Authorized by the Liberal Agency of Canada.  
[www.liberal.ca/rt-hon-justin-trudeau](http://www.liberal.ca/rt-hon-justin-trudeau).

Lise Bissonnette overview.  
Dion, Jean. “Lise Bissonnette, toujours la passion du présent.” *Le Devoir*. November 19, 2016.  
[www.ledevoir.com/societe/actualites-en-societe/485137/lise-bissonnette-toujours-la-passion-du-present](http://www.ledevoir.com/societe/actualites-en-societe/485137/lise-bissonnette-toujours-la-passion-du-present).

Annette Verschuren mini biography.  
Leung, Iris. “Annette Verschuren.” *Historica Canada*. September 13, 2016.  
[www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/annette-verschuren/](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/annette-verschuren/).

Meet Naheed Nenshi, Mayor of Calgary.  
Re-elect Naheed Nenshi for Mayor Campaign. 2017.  
[www.nenshi.ca](http://www.nenshi.ca).