Canadian historical fiction and biography

**Viking Exploration**


**New France**


**Fur Trade**

Manson, Ainslie. (1992). *A Dog Came Too*. This beautiful picture book depicts the 1793 journey of Alexander Mackenzie and his men overland to the Pacific Ocean. The focus is the faithful dog who did actually make the journey.

Thomas, Audrey. (2001). *Isobel Gunn*. This fictional account is based on the true story of a woman who came to Canada disguised as a man, and who worked as a fur trader until giving birth.


**Expulsion of the Acadians**


**Battle of Plains of Abraham**


**Loyalists**

Bradford, Karleen. (2002). *With Nothing But Our Courage: The Loyalist Diary of Mary MacDonald* (*Dear Canada Series*). Describes the fictional experiences of a family of Loyalists who settle in the colony of Quebec. Diary is accompanied by historical notes and photographs.


Crook, Connie Brummel. (2001). *The Hungry Year*. Twelve-year-old Kate cares for her two younger brothers in a wilderness cabin during the harsh winter of 1787.
Crook, Connie Brummel. (1995). *Meyers’ Creek*. Tells the fictionalized experiences of John W. Meyers and his family as they build a new life in the colony of Quebec. (A sequel to *Flight*)


Lunn, Janet. (1997). *The Hollow Tree*. Phoebe Olcott makes a dangerous journey to deliver a message carried by her cousin, Gideon, who has been hanged as a British spy during the American Revolution. She marries and settles on an island in Lake Ontario.

**War of 1812**

Bradford, Karleen. (1982). *The Other Elizabeth*. Elizabeth travels back in time to 1813 and saves the life of one of her ancestors.

Brandis, Marianne. (1992). *Fire Ship*. Describes the 1813 devastation of York by the Americans, from the point of view of Dan, a boy who has recently emigrated from the United States.


Pearson, Kit. (2002). *Whispers of War: The 1812 Diary of Susanna Merritt (Dear Canada Series)*. Describes the fictional experiences of Susanna and her family, who are living on the Niagara Peninsula. Diary is accompanied by historical notes and photographs.


**Immigration to Upper and Lower Canada**

Bilson, Geoffrey. (1982). *Death Over Montreal*. Jamie Douglas travels from Scotland, only to arrive in Montreal during a cholera epidemic. He helps a naturalistic healer with his work.

Lunn, Janet. (1986). *Shadow in Hawthorn Bay*. Mary Urquhart follows her cousin Duncan from the Highlands of Scotland to the wilderness of Upper Canada.


**Upper Canada/Canada West (1800-1860s)**


German, Tony. (1982). *Tom Penny and the Grand Canal*. Describes the adventures of sixteen-year-old Tom Penny during the “canal fever” period of the 1830s.


**Red River Settlement**

Matas, Carol. (2002). *Footsteps in the Snow: The Red River Diary of Isobel Scott* (*Dear Canada Series*). Describes the fictional experiences of Isobel and her family, who travel from Scotland to settle in Rupert’s Land. Diary is accompanied by historical notes and photographs.

**Child Labour**

Freeman, Bill. (1976). *The Last Voyage of the Scotian*. Meg and John are crew members on a windjammer which travels from Quebec to Jamaica with a load of squared timber, then onto Liverpool with a cargo of sugar-cane, and, finally, back to Halifax with a load of immigrants. (Sequel to *Shantymen of Cache Lake*)

Freeman, Bill. (1975). *Shantymen of Cache Lake*. Meg and John find work in the same Ottawa Valley lumber camp where their father died. They carry on his work of starting a union. Book provides many technical details about logging in the mid-nineteenth century.


**Underground Railway**


**Arctic Exploration**


**Cariboo Gold Rush**


Walsh, Ann. (1998). *The Doctor’s Apprentice*. Fourteen-year-old Ted MacIntosh is an apprentice to a doctor in Barkerville at the height of the gold rush and during the fire of 1868. (Sequel to *Moses Me & Murder*)


**Building the Canadian Pacific Railway**

Bright, Elizabeth. (2001). *Lambs of Hell’s Gate*. Mui travels from China and then up the Fraser Canyon in search of her brother.

Lawson, Julie. (2002). *A Ribbon of Shining Steel: The Railway Diary of Kate Cameron (Dear Canada Series)*. Describes the fictional experiences of twelve-year-old Kate, as she observes the building of the CPR through the Fraser Canyon. Diary is accompanied by historical notes and photographs.

**Riel Resistances**

**1869 & 1885**


**1885**

Boyle, B.J. (2000). *Battle Cry at Batoche*. The events of the 1885 Riel Resistance are viewed through the eyes of fifteen-year-old twins, whose uncle is a Hudson’s Bay Company employee, and a Cree boy, who are befriended by Gabriel and Madeleine Dumont.

Richards, David. (1993). *Soldier Boys*. Describes the experiences of a bugle boy with the Winnipeg Rifles and a Métis boy who meet at the battle of Fish Creek.


**“Home” Children (1860s-1930s)**

Harrison, Troon. (2000). *A Bushel of Light*. Fourteen-year-old Maggie, an orphan sent to Canada by the Barnardo Society, is trapped in an unhappy situation on an Ontario farm. She is torn between running away to find her twin sister and feelings of responsibility toward neglected four-year-old Lizzy.

Holeman, Linda. (1997). *Promise Song*. Orphans, fourteen-year-old Rosetta and her younger sister, Flora, travel from England to Canada. Upon arrival, the sisters are separated, but manage to reunite after many tribulations.


**Klondike Gold Rush**


Hughes, Monica. (1974). *Gold Fever Trail*. Two children travel from Victoria to the Klondike to find their father.

Turn of the Century


Tanaka, Shelley. (1996). *On Board the Titanic*. Tells a fictionalized story of two of the Titanic’s survivors. Lots of factual detail and explanations provided, as well as many photographs and original illustrations.

Wilson, Eric. (1997). *Trapped in Ice*. This novel is based on accounts of the ill-fated Canadian Arctic expedition of 1913.

Canada and World War One


Montgomery, L.M. (1920). *Rilla of Ingleside*. This poignant story describes the anguish of life on the homefront in rural Prince Edward Island. Rilla is Anne Shirley’s (of Anne of Green Gables) youngest daughter.


Winnipeg General Strike

Bilson, Geoffrey & Berg, Ron. (1981). *Goodbye Sarah*. Mary Jarrett’s father is an organizer of the General Strike. The family endures financial hardship and Mary’s relationship with her best friend is destroyed as a result of tensions related to the strike.

1920s


Ellis, Sarah. (2001). *A Prairie as Wide as the Sea: The Immigrant Diary of Ivy Weatherall (Dear Canada Series)*. Describes the fictional experiences of a British family who emigrate to Saskatchewan and their initial experiences there. Diary is accompanied by historical notes and photographs.


**Great Depression Period**


Taylor, Cora. (1994). *Summer of the Mad Monk*. Twelve-year-old Pip and his family cope with the difficulties of living in the Dust Bowl of rural Alberta. Pip suspects immigrant blacksmith is Rasputin, the infamous figure from the Russian Revolution.

**Chinese Immigrant Experiences**


Choy, Wayson. (1995). *The Jade Peony*. Set in Vancouver’s Chinatown in the late 1930s and 1940s, this novel describes the mingling of new immigrants with people who have lived there for many years. (Adult book)


Yee, Paul. (1994). *Breakaway*. Describes financial hardship and racial intolerance from point of view of Kwok-Ken Wong, an eighteen-year-old Chinese soccer player living on a mudflat farm by the Fraser River during the Great Depression.

Yee, Paul. (1986). *The Curses of Third Uncle*. Lilian Ho, who is living in Vancouver’s Chinatown in 1909, is learning New World ideas about possibilities for females. Novel is set against a backdrop of a struggle to overthrow the Chinese Emperor.


Canada and World War Two

McNaughton, Janet. (1994). *Catch Me Once, Catch Me Twice*. Describes home front in St. John’s, Newfoundland, 1942; family relationships, friendships, class issues, and anguish about a father who is missing in action overseas.


Japanese Internment


Kawaga, Joy. (1986). *Naomi’s Road*. A family is moved from Vancouver to an internment camp near Slocan, B.C. (Based on the adult novel, *Obasan*, by same author.)


Trottier, Maxine. (1999). *Flags*. After the neighbour of a young girl goes to an internment camp, she vows to remember his legacy.

Walters, Eric. (2000). *Caged Eagles*. Japanese-Canadian family from a fishing village on the northwest coast of British Columbia is sent to an internment centre in Vancouver, and then to a sugar beet farm in Alberta.

British Children in Canada

Bilson, Geoffrey. (1984). *Hockey Bat Harris*. David Harris is evacuated from Britain in order to live with a family in Saskatoon. There are tensions because he is worried about his mother in England and his father on active duty in Egypt.

Pearson, Kit. *Guests of War* series

*The Sky is Falling* (1989), *Looking at the Moon* (1991), *The Lights Go On Again* (1993). Norah and Gavin are evacuated to Toronto, where they live with a wealthy matron and her adult daughter. There, they confront adolescence, unfamiliar cultural mores, and people who cannot understand the emotional pain of those who have had firsthand experience of war.

Post-World War Two

Boraks-Nemetz, Lillian. (1994). *The Old Brown Suitcase: A Teenager’s Story of War and Peace*. Jewish girl adjusts to life in Canada, while dealing with memories and emotions related to her war experiences in Europe.

Carrier, Roch. (1979). *The Hockey Sweater*. This classic tale of Canada’s two solitudes is told from the point of view of a boy living in rural Quebec.


Hewitt, Marsha & Claire Mackay. (1981). *One Proud Summer*. The one hundred day millworkers’ strike in Valleyfield, Quebec, 1946, is described from the perspective of thirteen-year-old Lucie.

Ibbotson, John. (1993). *The Night Hazel Came To Town*. Describes the experiences of a copy boy working for the Toronto Telegram during the Cold War period of the 1950s.
Pearson, Kit. (1987). *A Handful of Time*. Twelve year old girl travels back to the 1950s, to one of her mother’s childhood summers at the lake.

Razzell, Mary. (1994). *White Wave*. Set in British Columbia, this novel traces a girl’s journey toward self-discovery, part of which involves coming to know her father, who returns from service in the Navy.


**Aboriginal Perspectives**


Maracle, Lee. (1993). *Ravensong: A Novel*. Seventeen-year-old Stacey lives in a Native village, but attends school in a nearby town. It is the early 1950s and she is struggling to learn how to balance the values of the two cultures.


Sterling, Shirley. (1992). *My Name is Seepetza*. This is a fictional account of one girl in an aboriginal residential school.

Taylor, Cora. (2002). *Buffalo Hunt (Our Canadian Girl Series)*. Angelique, a Metis girl living near Batoche in 1865, experiences a buffalo hunt.

**Story Collections**


Biographies


Other books in this series:
- Wilson, John. (1999). *Norman Bethune: A Life of Passionate Conviction*

- *Nellie L.* (1994). Childhood, ages 10 to 17
- *Nellie’s Victory.* (1999). Marriage, family life and political activism until 1914


MacLeod, Elizabeth. (1999). *Alexander Graham Bell: An Inventive Life*. Uses a visual approach. Surrounding the text on each double-page are photographs, newspaper excerpts, editorial notes, as well as a cartoon of Bell with a word bubble in which he makes a comment on the information provided.


Sixteen biographies in the first two books and 14 in the third, deal with women from different walks of life and different time periods. Black-and-white photographs and paintings depict the people and the times.

Non-fiction (Reference)