

# MINNIE H. BOWEN'S

Canada

**Teacher's Workbook**  
For Highschool



**QUEBEC AND CANADIAN HISTORY  
PROGRAM (2017)**

## Secondary Four, Creation of a Canadian Federal Regime (1840-1896)

### Description of Learning Task

This learning task aims to explore how the Canadian population, particularly the population of the Eastern Townships, viewed Canada at the time of the Canadian Federation. More specifically, these activities aim to explore the point of view of one of this period's most eminent Canadian women: Minnie H. Bowen. Several aspects will be examined through the analysis of several archival primary sources. For example, considering the social and political contexts of the time, how much weight can a woman's opinion have? How do individuals from different environments view Canada's relationship with Great-Britain? What are the prominent Canadian symbols and emblems? And what do they represent? These questions will lead students to reflect on the variety of groups of belonging that are present in the Eastern Townships.



## PERIOD AND SOCIAL REALITY

# Creation of a Canadian Federal Regime (1840-1896)

Starting in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, great changes start taking place in Canada. Economically, this period (1840-1860) is characterized by industrialization. Urbanism has impacts on working and living conditions. Different organizations created to fight against abuse and inequality start appearing (ex. unions, women's groups). Free trade with the United-States is also an important issue. Several demographic changes occur as the population becomes more mobile (ex. emigration to the United-States, emigration to Western Canada, immigration from the British Isles).

With the advent of Canadian Federation (1867), the Canadian Federal regime is formed within the British Empire. Several events, such as the Boer War, the arms race with Germany and the First World War, are at the heart of a great divide among the Canadian

population with regards to the implication Canada should have in these conflicts. Should Canada follow Great-Britain? Can the country be independent?

In Canada, but also in the Eastern Townships, two different ideologies confront each other: imperialism and nationalism. The Eastern Township's regional identity, much like the Canadian identity, is not a homogenous one. Several groups live side by side, and each seek to define themselves. Several nations are also present on the Canadian territory.

Thus, the aim of the activities presented in this document is not to underscore what separates these groups, but to understand one point of view, that of a woman living among the elite Anglophone community in Quebec.

## HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE

# Role of Women

18<sup>th</sup> century England is characterized by several changes: urbanization, industrialization, unionizing forces. These social changes fuel the first feminist demands. Suffragettes fight for the women's vote. In Canada, several groups and associations are also created. Within the Anglophone community, charitable or community organizations led by women are born. In the Eastern Townships, Anglophone women gather within philanthropic, patriotic, or religious associations, among others.

In the framework presented within this document, the point of view of one Anglo-Protestant woman who has access to the public space through Sherbrooke newspapers will be used to paint a portrait of women's status in this particular period.



## PEDAGOGICAL INTENT

### DEVELOP HISTORICAL THINKING

- / Draw upon documentary evidence (stemming from primary and secondary sources)
- / Adopt a historical perspective (historical point of view)

### DEVELOP COMPETENCY 1

Describe one period of Quebec and Canadian History

- / Establish historical facts
- / Identify historical figures
- / Identify actions and words

### DEVELOP COMPETENCY 2

Interpret a social reality

- / Identify and delineate the object of the interpretation
- / Specify the elements of context

## PROGRESS OF LEARNING ACTIVITIES

# Activity 1

### Context

- / Activating students' prior knowledge
  - // *The purpose of this activity is to allow students to identify the main characteristics of 19<sup>th</sup> century Canada, based on their prior knowledge.*
- / Timeline
  - // *The purpose of this activity is to establish links between three different perspectives:*
    - // *Individual, through the study of Minnie H. Bowen's life*
    - // *Collective, through the study of women's trajectories in that era*
    - // *National/International, through issues pertaining to foreign policy that divides the population.*
- / Groups present in the Eastern Townships and the common characteristics that unite them.
  - // *The purpose is to allow students to identify the diversity of social groups (actors) present in the Eastern Townships.*
- / Food for Thought
  - // *The questions presented in this section can be discussed in small groups or as a class activity. You may divide the students into several teams that will have the responsibility of discussing different questions.*

## Activity 2

### Minnie H. Bowen and Canada

#### / Minnie H. Bowen

#### / Food for Thought

// *There are several possible avenues of reflection and hypotheses. Students can highlight the fact that she was particularly intelligent, educated, that she came from an elite, Anglophone segment of the population, that her family was very prestigious, that she was very much involved in her community, etc. It is important, however, that students understand that Minnie H. Bowen's life was not typical of a woman's situation at that time, but that she may have served as a model for the women around her.*

#### / Minnie H. Bowen's Canadian Poetry

// *Divide students up into pairs so that they may analyze one of the two poems. Half of the class works on the first poem and the other half on the second. Have all the teams discuss both poems as a group and finish filling out the chart as a follow-up activity.*

// *Through a close reading of Minnie H. Bowen's poetry, this activity aims to explore the point of view of one of the actors of the era, that is, an Anglo-Protestant woman born to a wealthy Sherbrooke family. Analyzing the poems will allow the students to get a better idea of Bowen's view of Canada.*

#### / Food for Thought

## Activity 3

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

#### / Questions

// *The questions aim to identify the symbols that represent 19<sup>th</sup> century Canada according to Minnie H. Bowen's proposal for a Canadian flag.*

// *The last question serves to summarize the section. It aims to highlight the different symbols, values and ideas that are present in the writings of the eminent Eastern Townships woman.*

#### / Food for Thought

// **Return and Review:** Ask students to go back to the Canadian characteristics that they listed at the beginning of the activity. In pairs, they must choose 3 or 4 characteristics that they view to be most relevant to integrate them into the design of a flag.

// *Give students time to draw their own proposal for a Canadian flag as though they were living at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. This activity should make students feel a certain measure of historical empathy by asking them to create a flag based on the historical context of the social reality under study.*

// *Have students compare the various flag proposals brought forward by the teams in the class to Minnie H. Bowen's and highlight the diversity of representation according to social groups, among other things.*





2600, College Street  
Sherbrooke (Qc)  
J1M 1Z7

Telephone: 819-822-9600, ext. 2647

Email: [etrc@ubishops.ca](mailto:etrc@ubishops.ca)

Website: [www.etrc.ca](http://www.etrc.ca)

## **PRODUCED BY THE EASTERN TOWNSHIPS RESOURCE CENTRE, 2019**

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

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