

# **AN OVERVIEW OF NEW BRUNSWICK SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION, 1980-1990**

## **INTRODUCTION AND HYPOTHESIS**

The period between 1980 and 1989 was one of both social and technological advancement; in the Canadian and New Brunswick context great progress was made in both of these domains. In the context of New Brunswick education, in particular in the realm of social studies, a notable shift took place over the course of the decade. At the beginning of the decade there were proposals for a reformed social studies curriculum, one that would move away from the fact and knowledge based history courses in place at the time towards a more global social studies based approach that in many ways resembles the style of social studies course being taught in New Brunswick today. As the decade progressed, this new approach to social studies would encompass different world views and perspectives towards both events of the past as well as current day issues. Further, it would take into account the changing *visage* of the Canadian and Maritime identity, or rather, identities plural. This new focus would attempt to do so by linking social studies curriculum to students' own lived experiences and incorporate those of other ethnic groups present in Canada's past and modern day make-up. While these efforts to include other perspectives on social studies would appear cliché and rather superficial at the beginning of the decade, they would become much more concrete and authentic by the end of the 1980s and would, in turn, set a new standard for multicultural education in the 1990s.

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## **“HERE I GO AGAIN” - SCHOOL FACTS FOR A NEW DECADE**

Whitesnake's 1980s hit *Here I go again* talks about gathering up the courage to venture into unknown territory. Like at the beginning of most decades, we never can tell what the upcoming ten years will have in store for us. We can only guess at the beginning of the decade and then look back and reflect at the end of it; that is what we will do here with some statistical figures and conclusions regarding student enrolment and school numbers in the 1980s.

To get a general idea of what schools, school districts, student enrolment numbers etc. looked like in New Brunswick, listed below are some statistics published by the New Brunswick Ministry of Education towards the beginning and end of the decade.

### **PUPIL ENROLMENT BY LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION AND GRADE LEVEL, 1981**

| Grades      | French | English | Immersion | Total   |
|-------------|--------|---------|-----------|---------|
| 1-6         | 24,590 | 42,641  | 5541      | 72,772  |
| 7-9         | 11,942 | 22,349  | 2,783     | 37,074  |
| 10-12       | 11,153 | 24,159  | 336       | 35,648  |
| Other       | 489    | 1,294   |           | 1,783   |
| All schools | 48,174 | 90,443  | 8,660     | 147,277 |

## **SCHOOLS BY LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION, 1981**

| French | English | Eng. & Fr. | Eng. & Immer. | Total |
|--------|---------|------------|---------------|-------|
| 152    | 241     | 4          | 55            | 453   |

So, for the 1981-1982 school year there were 147,277 students enrolled in a total of 453 schools. There was a total of 7568 full time teachers employed for this school year. Now let's take a look at a slightly more detailed picture of New Brunswick schools, student enrolment etc. towards the end of the decade.

## **PUPIL ENROLMENT BY LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION BY DISTRICT, SEPTEMBER 1988**

| District          | French | Total  |
|-------------------|--------|--------|
| 7                 | 5,277  | 5,277  |
| 33                | 5,880  | 5,895  |
| 41                | 5,170  | 5,170  |
| 13                | 7,987  | 7,987  |
| All Fr. districts | 45,396 | 45,417 |

This table shows some of the more populous Francophone districts in the province and their enrolment numbers. The Francophone districts in 1988 are different from today's; however the larger enrolment numbers make sense given the linguistic demographic make-up of New Brunswick regions. Here are the areas corresponding to the most populous districts described above:

District 7: Tracadie-Sheila in the Acadian Peninsula.

District 33: Edmundston in the Madawaska region.

District 41: Bathurst region and Acadian Peninsula region

District 13: Shédiac in the Southeastern region.

| District          | English | Immersion | Total  |
|-------------------|---------|-----------|--------|
| 20                | 14,224  | 1,362     | 15,586 |
| 26                | 8,200   | 2,575     | 10,775 |
| 15                | 6,992   | 5,140     | 12,132 |
| 8                 | 3,737   | 592       | 4,329  |
| All En. districts | 74,651  | 16,219    | 90,870 |

This table shows some of the more populous Anglophone districts in the province. Like the Francophone ones, the high enrolment rates reflect general population numbers in certain areas of the province and their linguistic make-up. Here are the districts as they were in the 1980's.

District 20: Saint John and surround area.

District 26: Fredericton and surrounding regions.

District 15: Moncton and surrounding regions.

District 8: Miramichi and surrounding regions.

It is interesting to note that the numbers in the Francophone school districts stayed almost the exact same as their total enrolment numbers. The Anglophone districts however have an additional column that shows how many students were enrolled in Immersion programs. So, the numbers listed as enrolled in English schools is usually lower than the district's total student population as it does not account for those students enlisted in French Immersion.

The total student population for the province of New Brunswick for the 1988 year was:

English: 74,672      (178 schools)

French: 45,936      (148 schools)

Immersion: 16,219      (100 schools)

Total: 136, 287      (428 schools)

The following observations regarding the beginning and end of the decade can be made. First, the total student enrolment numbers fell over the course of the decade as did the number of schools. The decline in the number of schools may be a result of consolidated schools being introduced which increased in number during the 1980s and caused the closing of smaller schools as consolidated schools grouped several smaller student bodies together in the same school building. We can see this today with some mega high school such as Leo Hayes in Fredericton which has a catchment area serving several outlying communities. Also noteworthy is that while the number of students enrolled in English language schools went down the number of students enrolled in immersion programs, as well as the number of schools offering immersion, doubled respectively. While some 8000 students were enrolled in 55 immersion schools at the beginning of the decade, they were over 16,000 students in 100 schools towards the end of the decade. This may explain in part the rather substantial decline in student enrolment in Anglophone schools over the decade. An increased awareness in the advantages of bilingualism among parents? Richard Hatfield's favourable view towards the province's Francophone population? We will explore this later on.

Second, in percentage figures, the student enrolment as recorded in 1988 is congruent with today's demo-linguistic make-up of the province. The Francophone enrolment was 33% of the province's student population and the Anglophone enrolment was 66% of the province's student population. These two figures are almost identical to the present day linguistic figures of the province as a whole. For this same year, there were a total of 15 Indian reserves and 849 native students attending provincial schools. As for the teacher population, there were 7,829 teachers working in New Brunswick in 1988.

### **“START ME UP”: THE BEGINNING OF 1980S EDUCATION IN NEW BRUNSWICK**

Perhaps it was the Rolling Stones who said it best at the beginning of the decade with their 1981 hit single, *Start me up*. This saying may have paved the

way for technological, political and societal breakthroughs and novelties of the 1980s, but did it resonate into education? Let's take a look!

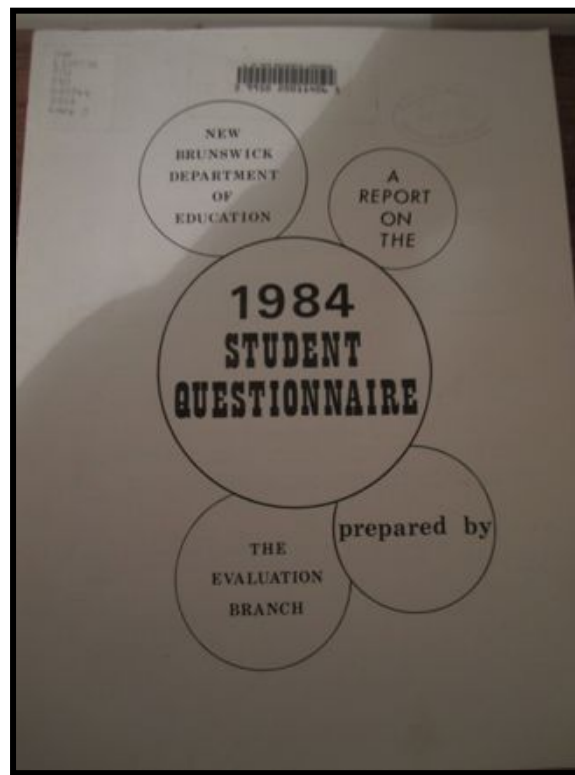
In this section we will examine a few documents published by the New Brunswick Department of Education in order to get an idea of what was happening in Social Studies education in the 1980s.

## **DOCUMENT 1: THE ANNUAL REPORT**

According to the 131<sup>st</sup> Annual Report published by the New Brunswick Department of Education the hopes were high for changes to be brought about in New Brunswick education. In the section Program Development and Implementation there are 52 proposals in the subsection Major Activities for the 1982 year. However, the vast majority of these changes concern French language education and immersion programs, physical education courses' incorporation of a healthy living component, a new sexual education course, and a few technical projects such as continued development of typewriting classes, a wood harvesting project and a defensive drivers pilot program. For the traditional academic subjects, almost all have proposed curriculum revisions or new curriculum implementations altogether.

So where does Social studies fit into all that? Of the 52 proposals in the Major Activities section (p.13-15), Social Studies is concerned in only five of the proposals. It is however interesting to note that while elementary and junior high school programs suggest new and revised curriculums to be implemented during the year, the high school level proposes a Canadian Studies course as opposed to a history course. Section 3.d. of the 1982-1983 Report talks of "*the continued piloting of new textual materials of a proposed Canadian Studies course at 102 level.*" Lastly, the section *Future Activities* of the Report mentions thrusts in the areas of computer use in the curriculum, Music Education in the elementary school, library and Media support programs and Physical Education in junior high and Second Language curriculum. In short, Socials Studies does not seem to be a huge concern for the Department of Education, although a push towards a more Canadian Studies based curriculum rather than one based on history, is proposed.

## **DOCUMENT 2: STUDENT OPINIONS ON SOCIAL STUDIES**



The second document we found interesting was an annual document published entitled, *"A Report on the Student Questionnaire."* For most years in the 1980s The New Brunswick Department had students fill out a questionnaire relating to their general attitudes towards their school, their education and subjects taught. The Department of Education would then compile students' questionnaire answers and publish them in an annual report. We will provide here a random sample of questionnaire results for the 1984 school year. We have chosen to do so as the results reflect students' attitudes towards Social Studies in general, in particular in comparison to other subjects. The questions along with students' answers are listed here below:

I feel that the subject I am now taking is interesting (Yes responses)

|                | Grade 5 | Grade 8 | Grade 11 |
|----------------|---------|---------|----------|
| Art            | 81      | 69      | 79       |
| English        | 68      | 61      | 62       |
| Home Economics | -       | 71      | 91       |
| Science        | 71      | 59      | 75       |
| Social Studies | 72      | 61      | 67       |

Do you like the subject you are now taking? (Yes responses)

|                | Grade 5 | Grade 8 | Grade 11 |
|----------------|---------|---------|----------|
| Art            | 86      | 73      | 89       |
| English        | 76      | 68      | 68       |
| Home Economics | -       | 86      | 88       |
| Science        | 78      | 64      | 72       |
| Social Studies | 78      | 65      | 65       |

I feel that the subject I am now taking is useful (Yes responses)

|                | Grade 5 | Grade 8 | Grade 11 |
|----------------|---------|---------|----------|
| Art            | 70      | 66      | 86       |
| English        | 76      | 83      | 82       |
| Home Economics | -       | 73      | 92       |
| Science        | 77      | 76      | 83       |
| Social Studies | 70      | 74      | 70       |

I feel that the subject I am now taking is hard (Yes responses)

|                | Grade 5 | Grade 8 | Grade 11 |
|----------------|---------|---------|----------|
| Art            | 20      | 30      | 40       |
| English        | 40      | 56      | 51       |
| Home Economics | -       | 44      | 49       |

|                |    |    |    |
|----------------|----|----|----|
| Science        | 38 | 47 | 55 |
| Social Studies | 36 | 53 | 55 |

I feel that the subject I am now in requires a lot of work (Yes responses)

|                | Grade 5 | Grade 8 | Grade 11 |
|----------------|---------|---------|----------|
| Art            | 40      | 21      | 40       |
| English        | 40      | 56      | 51       |
| Home Economics | -       | 33      | 46       |
| Science        | 38      | 47      | 55       |
| Social Studies | 36      | 53      | 55       |

I feel that the subject I am now in is confusing (Yes responses)

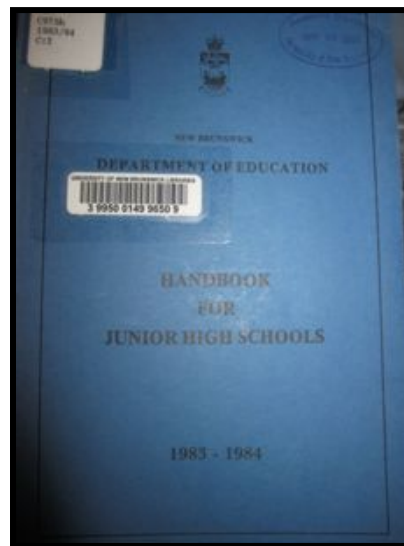
|                | Grade 5 | Grade 8 | Grade 11 |
|----------------|---------|---------|----------|
| Art            | 27      | 20      | 17       |
| English        | 20      | 27      | 23       |
| Home Economics | -       | 27      | 16       |
| Science        | 25      | 42      | 60       |
| Social Studies | 18      | 23      | 39       |

We found the questionnaire results to be extremely interesting and very telling of students' general attitudes towards Social Studies as a subject. Students at the elementary, middle and high school levels found Social Studies less interesting than most all other subjects except English. Social Studies was also listed among the bottom of the list when students were asked if they liked the subject or not. Even a subject traditionally thought of as more "academic," science, ranked higher than Social Studies in students' responses. In regards to the usefulness of a subject, most all subjects were perceived as useful. Over 80 percent of the high school pupils surveyed reported English, French and Math (not shown here) and science subjects as being useful. While Social Studies did rank relatively high with 70% yes responses, it still was deemed less useful than

the aforementioned subjects. Students also found Social Studies required a lot of work, more than English, an equal amount of work to Science and only slightly more than Home Economics. Lastly, students found Social Studies to be one of the more confusing subjects, although not as confusing as Science.

While students' opinions towards Social Studies did not seem to be overly negative, they were however less favourable in comparison to other school subjects. It seemingly was perceived as less useful and less interesting than other subjects (particularly at the high school level). Further, it was not as liked as other subjects, thought of as harder and requiring a lot of work. It is also interesting to note that the numbers for middle school years are similar.

### **DOCUMENT 3: HANDBOOK FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS**



The third document we will take a look at is entitled "*Handbook for Junior High Schools*." It is a document published by the New Brunswick Department of Education for the 1983-1984 year. It resembles somewhat of a how-to book for subject teaching at the junior high level. Each subject is broken down and examined in a chapter. Here are some of the key points taken from the chapter on Social Studies chapter:

- **A move towards student needs orientation.**

“Yet the traditional social studies curriculum has not taken the characteristics of students into account. Rather, it has attempted only to transmit a body of knowledge which only emotionally and intellectually mature students could successfully consume. Unfortunately, most junior high school students quite literally could not pause long enough to determine the importance of the information they were being taught” (p.62)

“Rather than emphasizing the memorization of isolated facts, the [new] curriculum challenges students to interpret data, build concepts and generalizations and analyze social phenomena in the light of their personal experiences” (p.63)

“The program takes into account the interests of junior high students [and asks] students to examine the roots and characteristics of Canadian society and then to discover their own identity in terms of both local and national settings. This attempt to make social studies more personal should help motivate students” (p.63).

- **Interdisciplinary Orientation**

“The social studies curriculum attempts to include material from other social science disciplines while at the same time broaden the meaning of historical study” (p.63).

“Social studies must deal with human groups and their relationships with the environment...broaden students’ concept of history [and] get students thinking critically in three categories: where we are now, where did we come from, where we are going” (p.63)

But it is perhaps the last line in this section of this chapter that best demonstrates the move from traditional history classes to more social studies style classes that was underway during the 1980s.

“Consequently, while history retains an important place in the curriculum it is augmented by other disciplines which provide knowledge about people and their society” (p.63)

The manual outlines other changes to be made to social studies curriculum such as an emphasis on skills orientation (students attaining library research skills, discovery orientation (students being active learners as opposed to passive lecture listeners), concept orientation (students learning to group events into categories), value orientation (students examining their beliefs, values and who they are) and resource orientation (students using a wide range of resources beyond the textbook) (pp 63-66).

Lastly, the manual has a section on teaching about cultural diversity. The ideas presented in this section are commendable; however, in analysing textbooks from the early 1980s, they do not seem to be quite yet in place. We will see a more palpable move towards promoting cultural diversity towards the end of the decade and in the early 1990s. Listed below are some of the points recommended for the cultural diversity component of social studies:

“A persistent social studies theme throughout the three junior high school years is the examination of cultural differences and the development of student appreciation of cultural diversity” (p.66).

The section warns however about the dangers of whitewashing cultural differences, “an unfortunate practice that has too long characterized North American education.” The handbook then states that in order to avoid the whitewashing trend teachers will have to “rethink their relationships with different ethnic groups” in order to present several takes on history and not simply the Anglo-Canadian perspective which, according to the handbook, “[has] cheated students when they learn only one side of Canadian history, when they are exposed to only one literary tradition, when they examine only the Western ethnic” (p.66). This section concludes in saying that if education is not diverse,

then school experiences will not be honest or meaningful for either the mainstream students or the students of a different social, religious and cultural background (p.66).

According to the handbook, it seems that social studies was undergoing a sizable structural change, short of being completely revamped. There was clearly a move towards a more multifaceted, interdisciplinary and multicultural approach the subjects teaching. We will see how this was implemented in our resource analysis section as we examine a sampling of textbooks published and in use during the 1980s.

### **“I WANT A NEW DRUG”: CHANGES IN SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM IN NEW BRUNSWICK RESOURCE ANALYSIS**

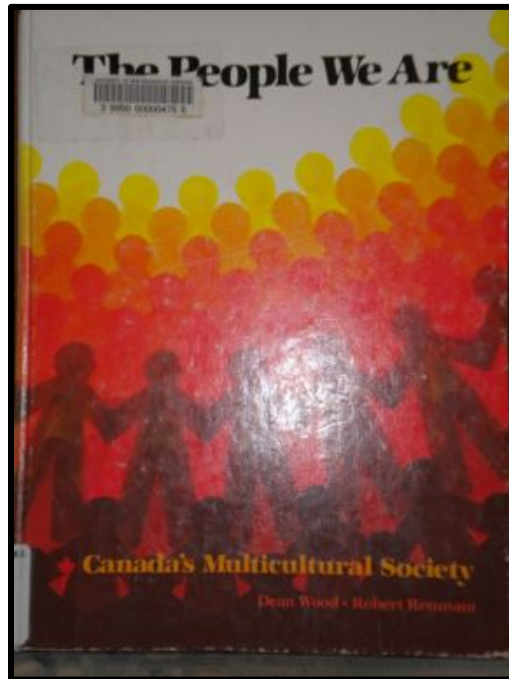
Huey Lewis and the News were not the only ones in need of a change in the 1980s. Social studies curriculum too needed some sort of “new drug,” a breath of fresh air, an overhaul in its general structure. In this section we will take a look at some changes being made to social studies curriculum that took place during the decade.

As stated in the previous section, there appeared to be a shift in New Brunswick social studies curriculum, a movement away from traditional knowledge based history courses and towards a more diverse, interdisciplinary, and modern domain, social studies. In most of the Department of Education documents we found published in the latter half on the 1980s, social studies is the common term used to describe the subject and the discipline of history seems to have almost vanished as a subject, yet remained as a component of social studies curriculum. In this section we will analyse and discuss a few social studies textbooks in use in the 1980s that show this movement towards the more modern, relevant and multifaceted approach to the subject.

Our first two textbooks were published in the beginning half of the decade and, while they make a noble effort to incorporate native and other ethnic groups' histories, they do so in an extremely simple and superficial manner. The following

textbooks however, all published in the latter half of the decade, present alternative perspectives on social studies and history with a much more objective and comprehensive viewpoint.

### **TEXTBOOK 1: THE PEOPLE WE ARE**



The social studies textbook, *The People We Are*, is centered on the theme of Canada's Multicultural Society. The table of contents lists elements that contribute to Canada's multiculturalism such as diversity, immigration, social and cultural changes. Chapter two of the text begins with covering *The Early Inhabitants* of Canada. In the table of contents, this section outlines that Canada's earliest inhabitants, referred to as "The Native Peoples" will be covered from page 23 to 26. When on page 23 however the reader is left with only two paragraphs of material on Canada's native people. The majority of material in the section is then dedicated to European immigrants and settlers who came to Canada staking their claim in land.

The minimal paragraphs on native people inform the reader of their importance in history and the development of a country. "Although they were overpowered by the force and push of European technology and settlement, the

Native peoples did not lose their cultures” (Wood 23). The book does not however then speak of what their cultures included or still include.

The textbook gives a sad account of an important facet of Canada’s history and people. It is nothing more than a general overview that could easily be left out. The textbook faintly attempts to make the reader aware of the native peoples’ importance in history and in society. “Despite centuries of exploitation and mistreatment, a strong Native identity has survived to assert its place in Canada’s multicultural society” (Wood 23). Yet with this strong statement there is no information or content covered on the Native identity.

Native peoples are only mentioned at one other occasion in the textbook, in chapter seven, *Land Claims for Native Peoples*. Terminology from Native people to Indians has changed in this chapter. This section is covered in four pages, the largest amount of material dedicated to Native peoples in the book. Along with now dated terminology there is an undertone of greed when reading this section. Much of the discussion revolves around declaring your “Indian” status and cash settlements.



| Chapter                                               | Page |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 1. The First Peoples                                  | 1    |
| 2. The First Peoples: A History of the First Peoples  | 1    |
| 3. The First Peoples: A History of the First Peoples  | 1    |
| 4. The First Peoples: A History of the First Peoples  | 1    |
| 5. The First Peoples: A History of the First Peoples  | 1    |
| 6. The First Peoples: A History of the First Peoples  | 1    |
| 7. The First Peoples: A History of the First Peoples  | 1    |
| 8. The First Peoples: A History of the First Peoples  | 1    |
| 9. The First Peoples: A History of the First Peoples  | 1    |
| 10. The First Peoples: A History of the First Peoples | 1    |

The table of contents leads to believe that three pages will be dedicated to Native peoples and cultures.

However, in the chapter, we found that Native content was summarized in nothing more than a small two paragraph entry.



**THE EARLIEST INHABITANTS**

**The Native Peoples**

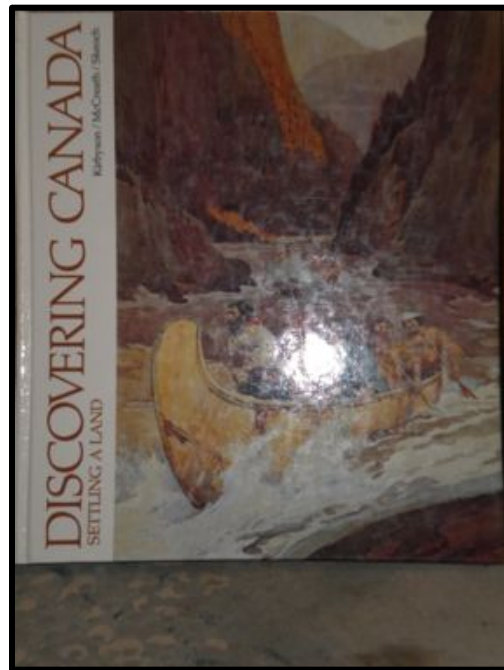
The first peoples, Indians and Inuit, arrived in North America thousands of years ago, probably over the land bridge between Siberia and Alaska. They slowly worked their way south, and crossed by the time the first permanent settlements had been established. There were approximately 200,000 Native peoples and communities that lived in North America. They lived in the forests of the east, in the prairies of the center, and in the tundra of the north. They developed a rich variety of cultures and traditions, each suited to its particular environment.

It is impossible to have a clear understanding of the place of the Native peoples in Canadian society. Although they were recognized by the first and great of European technology and agriculture, the Native peoples did not have their own culture. They were, and still are, many different groups, and each had, and still has, a distinctive society and culture. Despite centuries of exploitation and mistreatment, a strong Native identity has survived to assert its place in Canada's multicultural society. Even their present position in Canada's first nations, with claims to land and special rights, Canadian Native peoples are making a strong case for their culture of survival and identity.

**The First European Inhabitants: The French and British**

The first European to explore the interior of Canada was French, in the early 16th century. He was a French explorer, Jacques Cartier, who was sent by the French king to find a route to the Indies. He discovered the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the St. Lawrence River, and he was the first European to see the Great Lakes. He was the first European to see the Mississippi River, and he was the first European to see the Rocky Mountains. He was the first European to see the Pacific Ocean, and he was the first European to see the Atlantic Ocean. He was the first European to see the Arctic Ocean, and he was the first European to see the Antarctic Ocean. He was the first European to see the Earth, and he was the first European to see the universe.

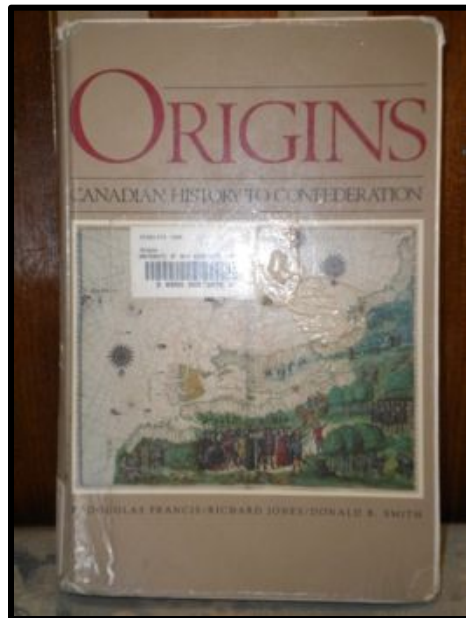
## TEXTBOOK 2: DISCOVERING CANADA: SETTLING A LAND



The social studies textbook *Discovering Canada* tries to take a different view of native history by storytelling. Many of the sections begin with a story from the native point of view that was happening at the time. Although this is an interesting approach, most of the material covered is superficial. “The moose would plunge on, until it grew weak from fatigue and loss of blood. Then Waqan would end the contest with his spear” (Kirbyson 52). This story provides no incite on native people, their life, hardships, or history. It is a stereotypical story of a young man hunting moose and game.

At the beginning of the textbook it is recognized how hard it would be to cover all material on Native people in one chapter. The text does not seem to need to select certain issues to focus on, yet the information covered is very superficial; generic information and facts about native life around Canada is described but detailed sparingly. This textbook also uses the term Indian throughout the chapter while mentioning *Native people* in quotations.

## TEXTBOOK 3: ORIGINS: CANADIAN HISTORY TO CONFEDERATION



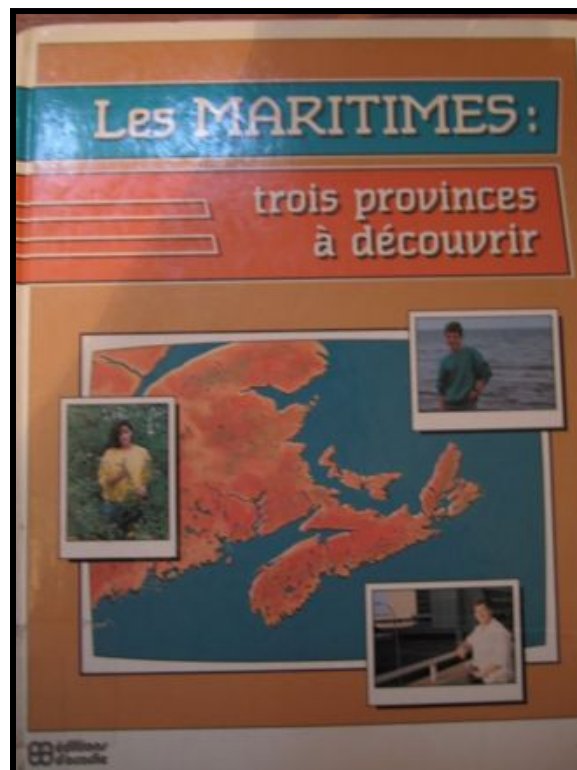
The textbook *Origins: Canadian History to Confederation* goes beyond superficial information about Native people of Canada. The book delves deeper into the issues and recounts the encounters between Native people and newly arrived settlers. “Violence and brutality characterized the first recorded contact between Europeans and Canada’s native peoples” (Francis 21). The book goes beyond information of what Natives peoples wore, ate, and how they survived. It also examines issues of contact, influence and disagreements between Natives and Europeans; in doing so, one can better create a picture of the discussed period in history.

The book integrates both Native people and European settlers together to create the unit. Further, it tries to as accurately as possible depict each group’s particular attitudes and viewpoints towards the other. It also includes such issues as religion and conformity, and in doing so gives an alternative perspective to the typically described events that occurred during the early immigration periods. “... [T]he Europeans voyaged overseas to convert the “heathens” to Christianity” (Francis 24). Terminology such as “heathens” used to describe Native people

depicts the attitudes Europeans held towards them and thus conveys prejudices of the time.

Native people are included in much of the text throughout the book. Topics of war, resistance, land, and raids all include the treatment of native people in Canada.

## **TEX BOOK 4: LES MARITIMES: TRIOS PROVINCES À DÉCOUVRIR**



A textbook that seems slightly different from the others is one published by *les éditions d'acadie* that was used in the francophone schools districts of New Brunswick as well as in Nova Scotia's and Prince Edward Island's Francophone schools. Firstly, it is an example of the moving away from traditional history based courses. Published in 1987, it has a much more Social Studies (as we know it to be taught today) feel to it and, in particular, a regional focus as it concentrates exclusively on the history, peoples, regions, industries etc. of the three maritime provinces. It is its presentation of Maritime peoples, in particular First Nation and

other minority groups living in the three provinces that distinguishes this book from many others we looked at.

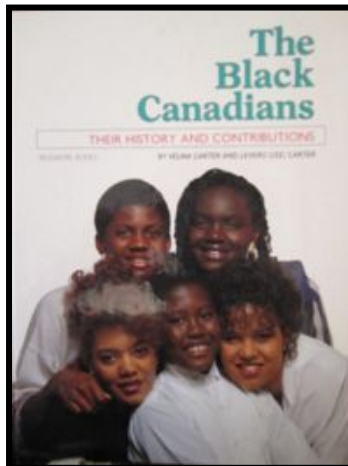
The chapter dedicated to the “peuples fondateurs” of the Maritime Provinces is divided into first nations groups, the Acadians, the Loyalists and other groups of British descent and finally other groups that have populated the Maritimes in later years. The chapter on the Native populations is ten pages long, the same length as the chapter on the Acadians and longer than the chapters on people of British descent and the newly arrived groups. This is probably the most equal representation of Native populations in all the textbooks we examined. First, the terminology used to describe First Nations groups is mostly the same as today's. Second, the chapter speaks of the different groups of First Nations and does not simply categorize them all as belonging to the same group. Third, it is interesting to note that in a book created by Acadian editors, released by an Acadian publisher and targeted towards a mostly Acadian student audience, the historical emphasis placed on First Nations groups is the same as that of the Acadians. Further, this textbook is one of the few we found that mentions First Nations populations at later points throughout the text, showing them in the modern day context. Of particular interest is the rather in-depth section dedicated to First Nations and political power in chapter 5.3, “*Les différents ordres de gouvernement*,” which details the powers of a band council and speaks of First Nations increased political autonomy as well as their auto-determination to be a self-governing people (Editions Acadie pp. 198-202).

Lastly, this particular textbook places great importance on culture, in particular Acadian culture. Chapter six, entitled “*Arts et culture*,” focuses exclusively on culture and what Maritime Acadians have contributed to it. An emphasis on Acadian advancements, progress and issues is a common theme throughout the book. This seems to relate to the idea of relating social studies to students own identities both locally and nationally as outlined in the Handbook for Junior High Schools. In short, this textbook is probably the most complete “social studies” style text that we were able to find; even by today's standards it still remains fairly politically correct in its language, and presents a thorough and fairly objective coverage of Maritime themes both past and present.



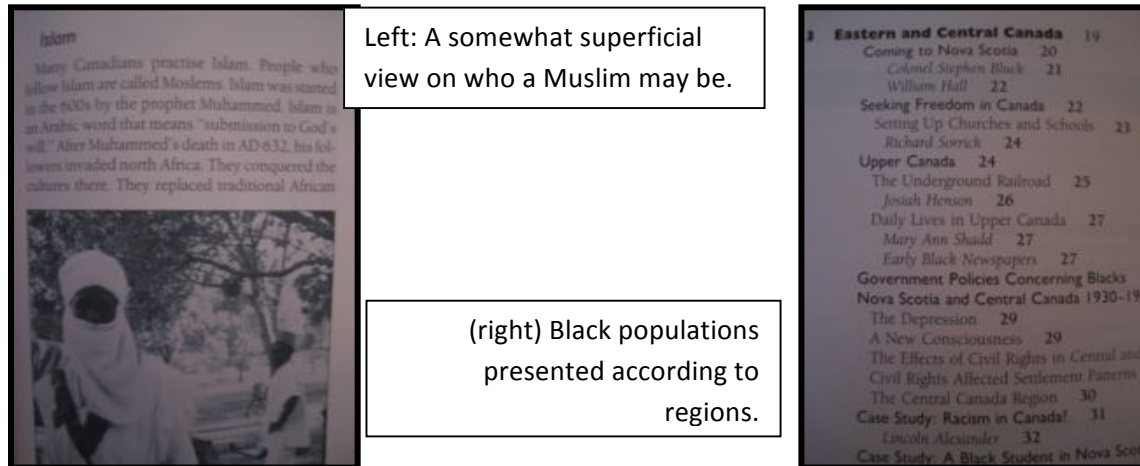
Chapter dedicated to arts and culture of the Maritime Provinces.

## TEXTBOOK 5: THE BLACK CANADIANS

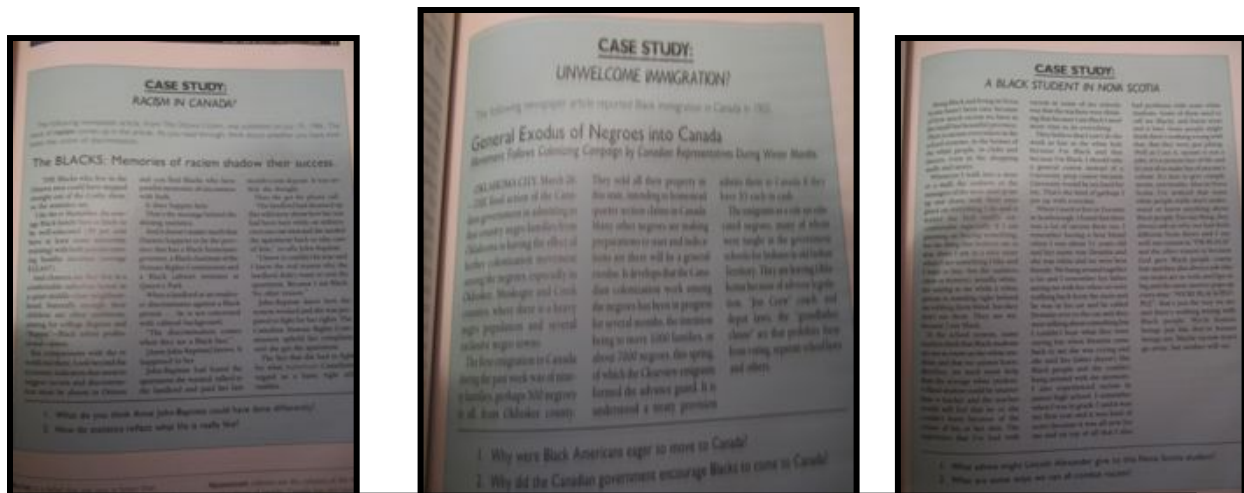


*The Black Canadians*, like the previous textbook, was published towards the end of the decade, in 1989. It was one book of the *Multicultural Canada Series*. Compared to most other books published during the 1980s that we examined, this textbook does an excellent job at highlighting both successes had and obstacles encountered (racism is dealt with in several chapters) by the various black communities across Canada. The book touches on black cultures around the world, their religions, beliefs and customs and then describes each black population across Canada from the eastern Canadian black population in Nova Scotia, to other populations in central Canada, the Prairies and British Columbia. The book describes where each group has migrated from (Africa, the Caribbean, and the southern United States etc.) and what they have contributed to the

region where they established themselves. Despite a few simplifications or generalizations (the section on Islam and the Arabic language are rather scarce in detail and are present a very superficial view of both) the textbook is fairly comprehensive for a high school level text.

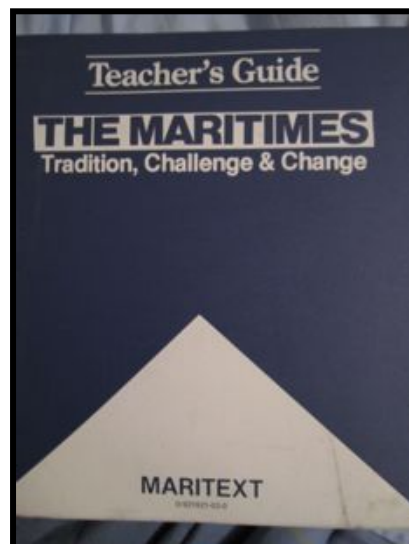


There is however one aspect about the textbook that we questioned: because the book is published as a part of an independent series on different cultures, what was the coverage of these cultures like in the main textbooks used in classes? *The Black Canadians* was most likely a complimentary textbook to have in the classroom, but was not the standard one used. Were black populations in Canada or any other ethnic population for that matter, given equal or even adequate coverage in the traditional social studies textbooks, the ones that were not complimentary? If a school could not afford the *Multicultural Canada Series* or a like book set, how present then were other cultures in social studies curriculum? The fact that the book was published as a separate text led us to believe that perhaps other cultures were not well integrated into mainstream textbooks. That said, the fact that a multicultural based textbook series was released towards the end of the decade will augur well for further movements towards a more multicultural based education that will be introduced in the 1990s.



Case studies presenting instances of racism in Canada's past (left and centre) and even in modern day school experiences as lived by black students (right).

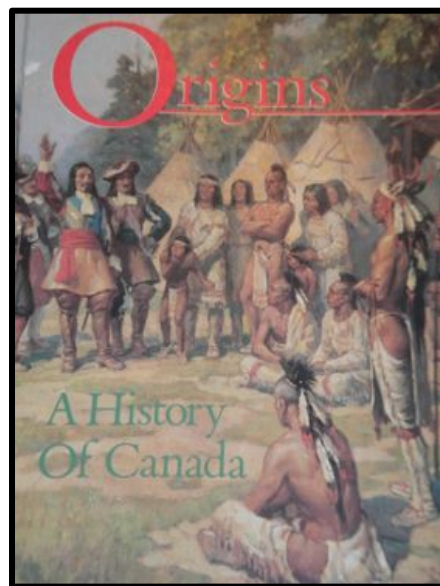
## TEXTBOOK 6: THE MARITIMES TRADITION, CHALLENGE & CHANGE (TEACHER'S GUIDE)



*The Maritimes Tradition, Challenge & Change*, was a textbook published in 1987. It was a comprehensive text dedicated entirely to the Maritime Provinces. It focused on the history, founding populations, economy, present day issues and regional identity of the three Maritime Provinces. Its content seems very similar to the textbook *LES MARITIMES: trois provinces à découvrir*, with less emphasis however on the Acadian identity. Yet it does promote the overall Maritime

identity and smaller regional ones within. Chapter five in this text, entitled “Maritime Cultural Life: People with Roots,” presents the idea of Maritime culture and what shapes it. It compares culture to the grammar of a language: something people who know it use without having to be consciously aware of the rules which govern it. An interesting analogy. The chapter deals with the aspects of Maritime cultural expression important to the region such as local histories, theatre, artefacts, language, festivals, stories and songs. In section five, there is an emphasis placed on Mi’kmaq culture and the language that forms it; although the amount of content dedicated to this minority group is not very extensive, it nonetheless shows an inclusion of minority groups as we saw also present in the two textbooks discussed above. Also, the importance placed on regional Maritime culture and how tradition and innovation inform cultural expression and contribute to it is yet another example of the multifaceted and multidisciplinary focus of social studies that was emerging particularly in the late 1980s. No longer were students concentrating solely on the facts and dates of a time-lined traced history; they were now learning about artistic, written and oral expression and how these elements had in and by the past moulded the culture and traditions that made up and expressed the present day region they were living in.

## **TEXTBOOK 7: ORIGINS: A HISTORY OF CANADA**



Near the end of the decade textbooks are clearly striving to include more Native heritage. The social studies textbook, *Origins: A History of Canada*, dedicates the first 50 pages to Native society and their contribution to Canada. The book covers an extensive view on Native life, environment, language, religion and survival tools. The book's use of pictures and paintings depicts life before European contact and after. Although extensive in its coverage the book still uses the term Indian to identify Native people. "The Indians of the Eastern Woodlands learned to make the utmost use of whatever animal they came across" (Boiteau 37).

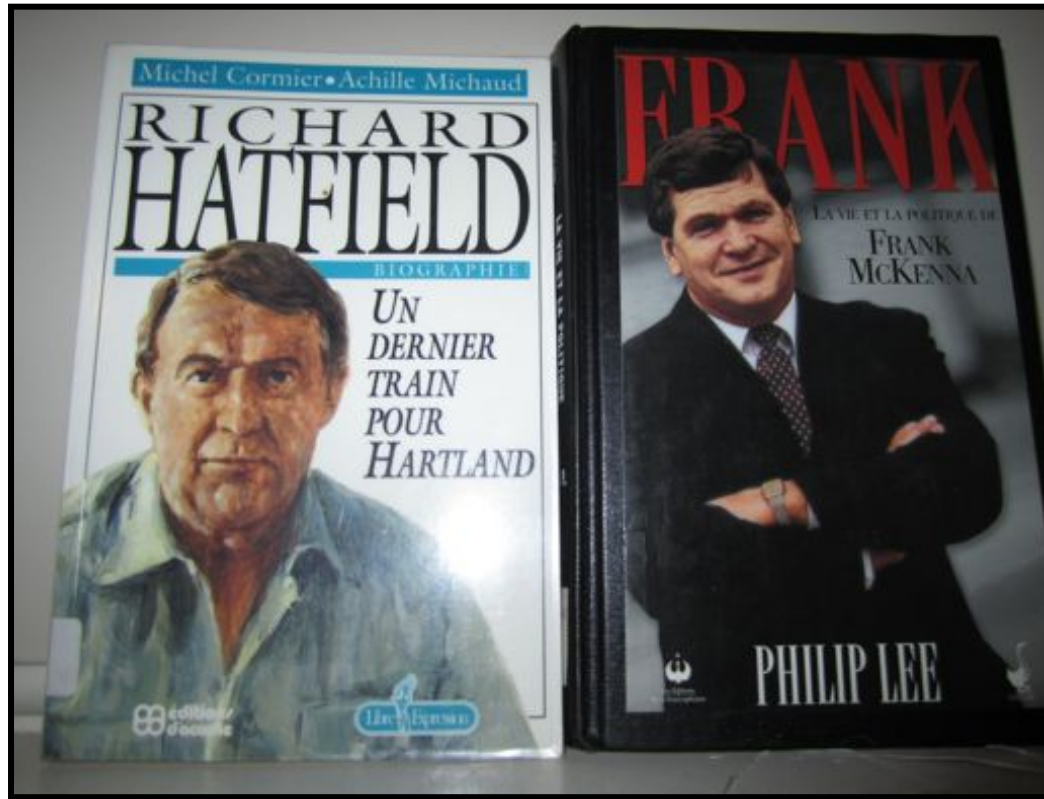
One particular chapter unit discusses Christopher Columbus and his perception of Native peoples. It also describes his first encounters with Native peoples in order to explain why the term Indian came about as accepted vocabulary. "He called the people he met "Indians" because he thought he had reached India" (Boiteau 25). While many textbooks will mention Native peoples as an alternative term, they nevertheless use the word Indian when discuss them. The *Origins* textbook discusses terminology and uses it to heighten students' awareness of correct language to be used when discussing past events. The book does still use the term Indian along with native people, however it also introduces the term *The First Nations*, a first among all the 1980s published textbooks we found. This book most closely resembles a textbook we may find in today's social studies classroom with regards to both its content and its terminology.

Finally, this textbook takes an integrated approach in covering Native people and European settlers whereas many other textbooks keep them separate. Native coverage takes place in much of the first three chapters of the book but does not stop there. Native people are mentioned again in chapters six, eight and ten and are integrated into other important historical movements taking place at the time. Further, it is worth noting the textbook's title itself provides a slightly more unbiased approach to the teaching of Canadian social studies and Canada's history. By referring to the book's content as *a* history of Canada, it is not suggesting that its presented version is the absolute truth or the only interpretation of the country's past.



In *Origins: A history of Canada*, a much larger amount of material is dedicated to Native peoples and cultures, chapter five being an excellent example. The terminology used in this chapter is similar and in many instances the same as terminology used today when referring to First Nations peoples.

## **“EVERYBODY WANTS TO RULE THE WORLD”: NEW BRUNSWICK PRIME MINISTERS IN THE 1980S**



Tears for Fears may have sung about who was ruling the world, but who was ruling New Brunswick at the time? The New Brunswick tradition of decade long Prime Ministers continued during the 1980s as only two had the chance to govern the province during the decade. The first carried New Brunswick from the 1970s into the more socially just 1980s and the second paved the way to lead the province into the technologically charged 1990s. We will take a look at these two Prime Ministers' contributions in this section.

For the first half of the 1980s, New Brunswick's Prime Minister was Richard Hatfield. A seemingly natural successor to some of Louis Robichaud's reforms of the 1960s and 1970s, Hatfield was an equal defender of the Acadian population's language rights and fought for social equity between Anglophone and Francophone population groups of the province. He wanted New Brunswick to become an important player in the national politics arena and felt it could be so

because of the province's perfect incarnation of Canada's bi-cultural identity and the relative social harmony that had come to exist between the two founding groups (the French and English) present in New Brunswick (Cormier & Michaud 1991)

However, in 1987, a drastic change took place in the make-up of New Brunswick's political make-up. After the decade long reign of Richard Hatfield's conservatives (of which the last few years had been tainted with scandal, accusations of favouritism towards the Acadian populations and divides among the traditional Anglophone base in the southern parts of the province), New Brunswickers were ready for a change, a big one. So, come the 1987 elections the Liberal party was voted into power and succeeded in winning every seat in the province. The following passage from *Frank: La vie et la politique de Frank McKenna*, describes the particularity of this situation.

Le balayage avait laissé McKenna dans une position sans précédent dans l'histoire du Canada... Dans une démocratie à parti unique, percevoir une intention de bonne volonté envers les vaincus était essentiel. C'est pourquoi les libéraux apportèrent quelques changements aux procédures habituelles à Fredericton pour permettre à l'opposition de véhiculer son message... Toute législation d'importance était soumise au Comité de modifications aux lois, où des membres de l'opposition pouvaient se présenter aux audiences publiques. Le premier ministre promit de rencontrer la presse et permit aux réseaux de télévision de couvrir les débats à l'Assemblée législative (Lee, 273).

Among Frank McKenna's priorities for New Brunswick, health and education were deemed highly important. McKenna wanted to build an educated work force, one that was able to read and write; he believed that only education would be able to transform the province's economy for the long term. While McKenna managed issues and expenses related to healthcare, "il est devenu un incroyable défenseur de l'alphabétisation" (Lee p.220).

When the liberal party took office, New Brunswick ranked third in illiteracy rates among all the Canadian provinces and territories. McKenna was shocked

that the school system was producing illiterate graduates and was convinced that citizens that did not know how to read or write would continue to be left behind, in particular in the abundant job field of information technology that McKenna saw as essential for the New Brunswick economy. This push towards an economy based on the information technology industry would come more to fruition in the second term of McKenna's govern in the mid 1990s; it was during this second term that the Ministry of Education would spend millions of dollars to install computers in classrooms and, in 1996, all New Brunswick schools would be connected to the internet. In this sense, New Brunswick was a fore-runner for technology in the classroom in comparison to the other provinces. Further, the community colleges radically changed and no longer concentrated as heavily on trades, but rather information technology. In short, the education reform under the McKenna government was centered on the creation of a workforce for an information-technology based economy that would see the day in post 1980s New Brunswick politics (Lee 292).

Now, are we getting ahead of ourselves here? Yes and no. Although some of the aforementioned changes under the McKenna government didn't come into effect until the 1990s, we have chosen to mention them here as the ground work for these changes (much like the ground work for the increased emphasis on multicultural perspectives in social studies education), was laid in the latter half of the 1980s.

## **BROADER SOCIAL CONTEXT**

### **IN NEW BRUNSWICK**

- The Parti acadien, a political party with hopes for acadien nationalism and the formation of a separate Acadian province within Canada, ran ten candidates in the 1982 provincial election. However, the party would shortly thereafter disband.

Below: A photo of members of the Parti Acadien.

Right: Proposed logo for Le Parti Acadien.



The Parti Acadien's proposed division of New Brunswick in hopes of creating an Acadian province within Canada. The nationalist movement of this party took most of its inspiration and ideas of separation to attain greater autonomy from the Quebec independence movements also taking place at the time.

- New Brunswick's telecommunication industry explodes under Frank McKenna, for whom job creation was a priority.
- Richard Hatfield helped Pierre Trudeau in repatriating the Canadian constitution and in creating the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
- Hatfield helped create equality between the provinces, Acadian minority and English Canadian majority.

## IN CANADA

- Charter of rights and Freedoms, 1982.



- Brian Mulroney introduces GST tax.



- Canada's government becomes Conservative after long liberal rein of eleven years.



- Mulroney government proposes and enacts NEFTA with US and Mexico.

- Increased immigration in Canada, in particular from Asian countries.

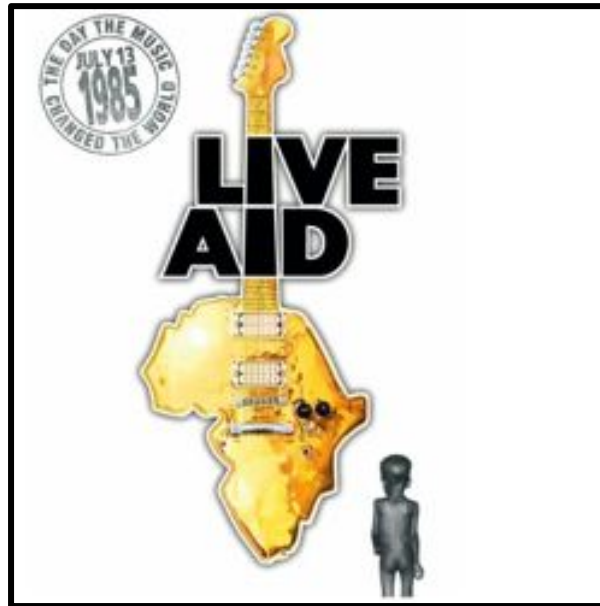


- The groundbreaking series *Degrassi High* airs on CBC and raises awareness of controversial issues.



## IN THE WORLD

- Increased awareness of issues plaguing the African continent, in particular famine.



- Kuwait war under Bush administration.



- Margaret Thatcher becomes Great Britain's first female Prime Minister.



- The battle of the Falklands, between Britain and Argentina, occurs under her rein.
- The Cosby Show becomes the first sitcom to depict an affluent African American family.



- Tiananmen protests and massacre occur in Beijing in the Peoples Republic of China, killing hundreds of soldiers, policeman, and civilians. Following the conflict, widespread international condemnation of the PRC government's use of force against the protesters.



## **“THE FINAL COUNTDOWN”: CONCLUSION**

Europe’s “The Final Countdown” spoke about heading for Venus and New Brunswick too was soon to head into equally as uncharted territory, the 1990s. Would changes and reforms made over the 1980s be retracted? Or further promoted, bringing on even greater technological and social change?

The decade of the 1980s was an interesting one. It was not necessarily characterized by large-scale social movements as seen in the 1960s, or by a significant world war as seen in the 1940s. Drawing a conclusion regarding the 1980s therefore seems difficult. It seems however that we could state that the 1980s, in a way, was a “stepping stone” decade. Technological changes and innovations that would be launched in the 1980s would become more and more present, if not mandatory, in the 1990s. Social and economic changes proposed during the decade would continue into the 1990s and many are still in effect.

As for social studies, we can perhaps draw the same conclusion. Social studies in New Brunswick started out as a neglected area of interest and education. Over the course of the ten year period it would become however more *socially* diverse. The coverage of existing population groups would be enriched and the incorporation of newly arrived groups would be promoted. Although this may seem slightly banal at first, this new appreciation for cultural diversity would spur continued reforms in education material in the 1990s and continues to do so

today. To imagine a modern-day Canadian social studies textbook that does not discuss the contributions of the multiple groups that have come to form Canadian tapestry now seems unfathomable. Now 20 years past, the 1980s (along with its amalgam of hit music) still resonate with us today.

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