Women in Time

Showcasing the Incredible Achievements of Canadian Women

Compiled by: UFCW Local 1400 and revamped for Prairie Arctic Regional Council
To remove Aboriginal children from their parents and communities.

Children could not practice their spiritual beliefs or rituals.

Objectives were to: Christianize, teach the 3 R’s, develop children into farmers and housekeepers.
Harriet Tubman

- Made 19 trips through the safe houses of the Underground Railroad and led more than 300 slaves to freedom.
Mary Ann Shadd (Cary)

- With the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act she emigrated to Canada and opened a school for fugitive children.
- Wrote for the newspaper Voice of the Fugitive, an anti-slavery newspaper.
- In 1853 became the first black woman in North America to found and edit a weekly newspaper – Provincial Freedom.
- At 46 she was the first female law student at Howard University. But she was not allowed to graduate and claimed sex discrimination as the basis for the denial.
- Continued teaching to support her family.
- Returned to Law School in 1883 and was awarded her LLB in May 1883.
- At 60 she embarked on her legal career and practiced until her death.
North America was experiencing the birth of a new movement – the first stage of feminism. Women became involved in volunteer work with the creation of parks and recreation programs for children and improved public health. Women were also involved with organizations such as the “temperance movement” which advocated the prohibition of alcohol. Organized women movements did not originally advocate for women’s right to vote, however it became a way to be heard within democratic process.
The Women’s Suffrage Movement called on the Canadian government to extend the vote to all women.

Prior to the suffrage movement it was illegal for women without property to vote.

Throughout Canada, women from many sectors mobilized to advocate for the right to vote.
Grace Annie Lockhart

- Graduated from Mount Allison University, becoming the first woman in the British Empire to earn a university degree.
Dr. Emily Stowe

- A pioneer physician who was the first female Canadian to practice medicine in Canada.
- Created Canada’s first suffrage group.
Clara Brett Martin
After a very long fight, she became Canada’s first lawyer and the first woman to practice law in the entire British Empire.
Overcame editorials opposing women lawyers on the grounds that the physical attraction between them and judges and juries would be intolerable.
Lobbied for a bill in the Ontario legislature that would overturn the Law Society of Upper Canada’s regulations barring women because only “persons” could be admitted.
14.4% of women aged 14 years and older were part of the labour force.

Women worked mainly as domestics, labourers, seamstresses, or teachers.
1907

- Bell Operators went on strike to protest long hours.
- Valleyfield Textile Strike, Quebec
- Workers demanded shorter hours of work, a living wage, and an end to abusive treatment by shop foremen.
- Shut down the industry for 10–days.
- Although the Valleyfield workers lost their strike – partly because of their militancy – conditions improved in the textile industry.
The Criminal Code was amended to criminalize the abduction of women.

Before this, the abduction of any woman over 16 was legal, except if she was a heiress.

Fact: the maximum penalty for stealing a cow was much higher than for kidnapping an heiress.
At the first International Women’s conference in Copenhagen, German socialist Clara Zetkin submits for the creation of an International Women’s day. Later declared as March 8.

Quebec legislation reduced the working hours for women in the textile industry from 60 to 58 hours per week. The first of other legislative amendments to reduce women’s work week.
The March 25th, 1911 fire caused 146 deaths of garment workers ranging in ages from 11 to 48 years old, 129 of those that died were Women.

The fire led to legislation requiring improved factory safety standards.
Strike by women textile workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts, calling for “Bread and Roses.”

“Bread and Roses” have come to symbolize women’s demand for equality and dignity. A song by the same name is written and becomes an anthem for women in the labour movement in Canada.
Strike History: Initially thought of as docile and subservient, the 'Bread and Roses' women quickly gained the notorious title among mill owners of "radicals of the worst sort." "One policeman can handle 10 men," Lawrence's district attorney lamented, "while it takes 10 policemen to handle one woman." In the words of one horrified Lawrence boss, the women activists were full of "lots of cunning and also lots of bad temper. They're everywhere, and it's getting worse all the time." We love this!

Bread and Roses
100 year Celebration of the IWW Patterson Silk Strike, New Jersey
During WWI women worked in ammunitions factories while the men went off to war. There was an increase in women working in all sectors, such as factories and offices. Not all women had equal access to work, employers were looking to hire single women. “Mothers and wives need not apply.”
Helena Gutteridge

- Ensured that equal pay was written into the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council constitution.
- Her work to bring together women’s groups and labour activism resulted in BC’s first minimum wage act in 1918.
White women from Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan were legally allowed to vote in their province.

*Emily Murphy* Became Canada’s first female judge.
White women from Ontario and British Columbia were legally allowed to vote in their province.
After a long struggle, white Canadian women won the right to vote in federal elections.
1919

- White women in New Brunswick achieved the right to vote in their province.
The Winnipeg General Strike began on May 15. Within hours, nearly 30,000 workers had left their jobs and closed the city’s factories, crippling trade and stopping trains.

An early organizer and president of the Women’s Labour league, she was one of the strikes leaders.

In 1917, helped the Retail Clerks unionize women working in department stores throughout Winnipeg.
Emerged in Canada prior to WWI and modeled on the British Women’s League, the group developed to defend the struggles of women workers and support the labour movement.

Members were working-class housewives, some were wage-earning women; many were Finnish, Yiddish, or Ukrainian.

Radical for its time, it supported equal pay, maternity care, and birth control.

Exposed inadequacies of minimum wage laws.
Prior to the 1970’s, divorces were finalized by the Senate. Family assets were generally the property of the husbands and sons in a family. Therefore, it was difficult for unmarried women to care for their children. Judge Emily Murphy and others decided that if women were members of the Senate, decisions regarding the family would be more equitable.
British Columbia passed legislation granting women six weeks maternity leave before and after giving birth. It was not until 1964 that any other Canadian jurisdiction legislated maternity leave.

17.7% of women 14 years and older were part of the labour force, mainly in office work.

Alberta was the first province to have public health nurses, municipal hospitals and free dental and medical care for kids.
1921

Agnes Macphail
- First Canadian Member of Parliament, began several successful campaigns, including prison reform and establishing old age pensions.

Nellie McClung
- Elected to the Alberta legislature where she campaigned for old age pensions, mothers’ allowances, legal protection for widows, better factory conditions, minimum wage, and birth control.
White women in Prince Edward Island win the right to vote in their province.
The federal divorce law was changed to allow a woman to divorce her husband on the same grounds that a man could divorce his wife – adultery.

In Newfoundland, white women 25 years and older win the right to vote.
Canada’s Olympic Team included women for the first time.

Ethel Catherwood
Clearing Bar
August 3, 1928

Anna Dexter
Queen of the airwaves as Canada’s first woman radio broadcaster.
Emily Murphy

- Urged the Government of Canada to appoint a woman to the Senate – without success.
- Government cited Section 24 of the *British North American Act (BNA Act)* which said that only “qualified Persons” may be summoned to the Senate. Inferring that women were not “qualified persons”, women were therefore ineligible for the Senate.
Emily Murphy

- In August 1927, Emily Murphy and four Alberta women – Nellie McClung, Henrietta Muir Edwards, Louise McKinney and Irene Parlby petitioned the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council of Great Britain for clarification on women’s eligibility to the Senate.
- On October 18, 1929 the Committee ruled that Section 24 of the BNA Act should apply equally to women. The Lords stated that they “…unanimously came to the conclusion that the word ‘persons’ in Section 24 includes members both of the male and female sex.”
- They also stated that the exclusion of women from public offices was “a relic of days more barbarous than ours.”
- Women were now “persons” under the law and eligible for nomination to the Senate.
Emily Murphy

- A prominent suffragette and reformer.
- Appointed a police magistrate in 1916, the first female police magistrate in the Commonwealth.
- She wrote books/articles under the name Janey Canuck.
Henrietta Muir Edwards

- An activist advocating public libraries, mothers’ allowances, equal parental rights, divorce and penal reform.
- Helped establish the National Council of Women (1893) and the Victorian Order of Nurses (1897).
- Published Canada’s first magazine for women – “Women’s Work in Canada.”
Louise McKinney

- Organizer and staunch supporter of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union.
- Became the first woman to sit as a Member of Legislative Assembly in Canada.
- She was elected in Alberta in 1917 during the first election in which Canadian women could vote or run for office.
Irene Parlby

- An advocate for rural women in Alberta, she was elected to the Alberta Legislature in 1921.
- Appointed the first female cabinet minister in Alberta, the second in the Commonwealth in 1921.
- She successfully sponsored the Minimum Wage for Women Act (1925).
- Spent her life supporting initiatives to improve the lives of women and children.
‘The Famous Five’

Nellie McClung

- A novelist who wrote 15 books.
- Social reformer, suffragette, and famed Canadian journalist.
- Led the first campaign to enfranchise North American women, beginning with Western Canadian women in the early 1910’s.
- A Liberal Member of the Alberta Legislature for Edmonton from 1921 – 1926.
19.4% of women aged 14 years and older were part of the labour force.

In some cases, they were the sole support of their families when their husbands were forced into unemployment because of the economic crisis of the 1930s.
Another change to the federal divorce laws allowed a woman – deserted by her husband – to sue for divorce after two years of being abandoned from the town her husband lived in before separation.

Before, a woman’s legal residence was wherever her husband lived, even if she did not know where he lived.
1930

*Cairine Reay Wilson*

- The first female appointed to the Senate of Canada largely due to the hard work of the Famous Five.
Annie Buller

- Saskatchewan labour activist who spent a year in jail for setting up a defense fund for striking workers.
- She later managed two newspapers and fought for the rights for working-class women.

Annie Buller addressing a crowd in Bienfait two days prior to the Estevan Riot
1932

Dr. Elizabeth Bagshaw

- Directs Canada’s first family planning clinic, which was illegal at the time.
1936

*Dorothea Palmer*

- Arrested for telling women about birth control.
Léa Roback

Hired by the International Ladies Garment Workers’ Union, she helped organize a strike of 5,000 workers in the garment industry, one of the first union struggles for women in Quebec. In 1943 she helped secure the first union contract for over 4,000 workers at a RCA Victor munitions plant, nearly half were women.

Léa Roback. (1903-2000)
All provinces except Nova Scotia expanded minimum wage laws to also apply to men.
Female labour was once again needed to keep production going in factories, shipyards and ammunition plants.

At first only single women were recruited. As the demands for wartime production grew, childless married women and then women with children were recruited.

Incentives such as day care and tax breaks were used.

Women were also needed in the army and were encouraged to volunteer in support services and nursing.
1939 – 1945 – World War II

- Without their contribution, the Canadian economy would never have been sustained.
- This war further raised awareness among Canadians of the important contribution women made outside the home and challenged preconceived ideas about the inability of women to take on so-called “men’s” jobs.
- It also gave many women temporary financial and personal independence, and made married women realize that they could work outside the home without neglecting their children.
In Quebec white women win the right to vote.
Eileen Tallman
- Organized the first Canadian bank strike.
- Organizer during the first attempt to unionize the Eaton’s department stores in Canada in the 1950s.
Madeleine Parent

- Headed the unionization movement for Dominion Textile plants in Valleyfield and Montreal.
- 1946, more than 6,000 cotton workers succeeded in forming a union.
- Founding member of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women representing Quebec for eight years.
Restrictions on Chinese women entering Canada were relaxed.

Even though Chinese men died during the building of Canada’s railroad since the 1860s, they were not permitted to become Canadian citizens until 1946.
Married women were unable to hold jobs in the federal public services before this date.
Chinese, Japanese, and Black women were legally allowed to vote federally.
First Female Journeyperson Carpenter registered with the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship Board.
1950s

- Slightly less than one quarter (24.4%) of women aged 15 years and older were part of the labour force.

**Mary Ann Shadd**
- Born in 1823 in America as a free Black woman.
- Moved to Windsor in 1851 and became a passionate abolitionist.
- Fought for integration in Canada when the public was against it.
- Established the first integrated school where people of all colours were allowed to learn side-by-side.
The International Labour Organization (ILO) passed Convention 100 providing for “equal pay for equal work.”

Between 1951 – 1959 the federal government, and a number of provinces, passed legislation in line with Convention 100.

Canada did not ratify Convention 100 until 1972.

Aboriginal women were legally allowed to vote if they were willing to lose their native status.
1955

- Restrictions on married women in the federal public services were removed. In the past, women public service employees were fired upon marriage.
- This occurred only 45 years after a 1910 report concluded "where the mother works, the baby dies."
- Women from Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, and other Caribbean nations were recruited as domestics and granted landed immigrant status.
Huguette Plamondon

- Member of UFCW/Packinghouse workers.
- First woman elected Vice-President of the CLC.
Birth of the women’s liberation movement. Women demanded:

- Equal wages for equal work
- Elimination of sexual harassment
- Equal job opportunities
- Elimination of sexual exploitation from pornography.

Women challenged the traditional beliefs of the role of women in society.

In the 1970 *Royal Commission on the Status of Women* it was reported that 167 recommendations were needed to improve the lives of women.
Women in the military had to quit to get married. It was not until 1971 that women in the military were allowed to keep their jobs and get married.
1960s – “Scoop”

- Refers to the adoption of First Nation and Métis children in Canada.
- Highest number of adoptions took place in this decade.
- Children were literally scooped from their homes and communities without the knowledge or consent of their families.
- Were given to white middle-class parents.
Before 1960 Aboriginals were not considered citizens and could not vote.
In order to vote they must deny their First Nation heritage and give up their Indian status.
When an Indian man became enfranchised so did his wife and children.
Amendments to the Criminal Code: information on birth control legalized abortion in certain circumstances.

Elizabeth Bagshaw
(1881-1982)
Medical director of the first birth control clinic in Canada
1970s

- 39.9% of women aged 15 years and older were part of the labour force.
- Annual earnings of women working full-time represented only 59.7% of those of men.
- Women’s shelters are formed.
1970

- Numerous strikes for maternity leave and parental leave conducted across Canada.
Quebec finally allows women jurors after eight Quebec women were jailed earlier in the year for protesting the all-male jury law.

The federal government amended the Canadian Labour Code to: prohibit sex discrimination; reinforce equal pay for equal work; and establish a 17-week maternity leave.
1972

Rosemary Brown

- British Columbia’s New Democratic Party (NDP) Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA).
- First black woman to be elected to political office in Canada.
First rape crisis centres in Canada opened – in Vancouver and Toronto.

This was 73 years after women were put in “insane asylums” for claiming their husbands abused them.

**Pauline Jewett**

First woman president of a co-educational university – Simon Fraser in Burnaby, BC.

This was 100 years after women were not even allowed to enroll or graduate from most universities.

Became a Member of Parliament focusing on issues of peace, disarmament, and women’s equality.
Supreme Court rules that the Indian Act has the right to take away Treaty rights from First Nation Women marrying non-status men.

First Nation women who married non-status men were no longer considered to be Indian within the Act, nor were her children.
The RCMP hired its first woman.

One hundred years after a 1874 magazine stated, “a women’s first and only place is in her home.”
First CLC Women’s Conference.
The Canada Labour Code is amended to prohibit layoff or dismissal because of pregnancy in federally-regulated industries.

The first “Take Back the Night” march was held in Vancouver.
A 1957 rule disallowing women fishers working with their husbands from receiving UI benefits was overturned.

**Alexa McDonough**
- First woman to be elected leader of a provincial political party holding seats in the legislature (Nova Scotia).

**Jeanne-Mathilde Sauve**
- First woman chosen as Speaker of the House of Commons.
- An Aboriginal from Saskatchewan, she served as until January 15, 1984.
- Became the 23rd Governor General of Canada.
Concerned about women’s rights being excluded from the proposed new Charter of Rights 1,300 women met and lobbied Members of Parliament.
The result was the inclusion of women’s rights in Canada’s constitution.
Canadian Constitution Act declares that Aboriginal and Treaty Rights are guaranteed equally to men and women.

**Margaret Mitchell**
NDP MP for Vancouver East was laughed at in the House of Commons when she raised the issue of violence against women. The outcry from women brought national attention to the issue.
1983

- Rape laws were broadened to sexual assault laws and for the first time made it a criminal offence for a man to rape his wife.
- In Ontario, police were directed by the Attorney General to lay charges in domestic violence cases. Before this, men usually faced no consequences for beating their female partners.
- The Canadian Human Rights Act prohibited sexual harassment in workplaces under federal jurisdiction.
- Before this, women in these workplaces had no legal recourse if their employers demanded sexual favours.
Election of six women for “affirmative action seats” at the CLC Council.

Three from the private sector and three from the public sector.
Aboriginal Women who lost their status when they married a non-status person were able to get their status again as well as their children, but the grandchildren were not able to get their status till 2011.
In 1971, serving as Ontario’s Women’s Association President she launched an unsuccessful court challenge to overturn sex discrimination in the Indian Act.

The law was changed so that Aboriginal women who married non-status men could retain their Indian status.
Sharon Wood

From Canmore, Alberta. First Canadian woman to reach the summit of Mount Everest. A century before, women were discouraged from any sport by doctors who claimed sportswomen’s uteruses would shrivel and they would become mentally ill!

Sharon Wood with son Luke at four days old.
Shirley Carr

- Chosen to lead the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) which today represents over 2.3 million workers.
1986 – November

- First Sister and Journeyperson that joined UBCJA Local 343
Pay equity complaints are filed by individual Bell Canada employees.

**Bertha Wilson**

- The first woman Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada.
- Wrote one of the majority judgments which struck down Canada’s restrictive abortion law.
- When she had first applied to law school, a professor told her to go home and take up knitting.
December 6, 1989 at the Ecole Polytechnique de Montreal, 14 female engineer students were massacred by a man who believed he was killing feminists.
Audrey McLaughlin

- First female leader of a federal political party with sitting members – NDP.
- She was first elected in 1985 to the House of Commons as the MP for Yukon.
First Female Journeyperson Millwright registered with the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship Board
1990s

- 52.6% of women aged 15 years and older were part of the labour force.
Bell Canada, CEP and CTEA undertake a Joint Pay Equity Study.

Canadian Human Rights Commission agrees, at the parties’ request, to use the joint study as the basis for assessing pay equity complaints.

Final Report of the joint study finds that women are underpaid.
Rita Margaret Johnson

First woman in Canada to serve as a premier of a province after she succeeded Bill Vander Zalm in British Columbia (April 2, 1991).

Rita Margaret Johnston
First woman Premier in Canada.
Born in Melville, Saskatchewan on April 22, 1935.
First Sister to join Millwrights Local 1443
Canada’s refugee guidelines were changed to include women facing gender-related persecution.

Kim Campbell

- Served as the 19th Prime Minister of Canada from June 25–November 4.
- Ran for Progressive Conservatives in Vancouver Centre in 1988.
Tawney Meiorin

- British Columbia forest firefighter
- The Supreme Court ruled that job standards and tests cannot solely be based on capabilities that would favour men.
- Tawney had been laid off after a completely satisfactory job performance due to a new physical fitness test based on men’s abilities, and having little to do with the ability to actually do the job.
2000

- 58.9% of women aged 15 years and older were part of the labour force.
Anti–globalization protesters took to the streets in Quebec to protest against the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA).

Women were protesting against the lack of protection of social policies in the agreement.

Women in Canada and Mexico are in solidarity with each other to fight against the global economy.
Louise Charron, born 1951 in Sturgeon Falls, Ontario.

Rosalie Abella, born 1946 in displaced persons camp in Stuttgart, Germany; first Jewish women in the Supreme Court.
2009 – March

- Saskatchewan’s first Sister Journeyperson Scaffolder registered with Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Member if United Brotherhood of Carpenters Local 1985

- Heather Hamilton-Peebles
2009 – September

- First Sister Journeyperson for Local 1443
  Krista Gibson
First UBCJA Local 1985 Sister to receive her Journeyperson status through the partnership with Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies

Indenture date: November 22, 2004
Red Seal Certification date: June 2nd, 2010
Visible Minority

- Roughly one Canadian in five (just over 20%) would be a visible minority person.
- Doubling the visible minority population by 2017
- There will be 8.5 million visible minority persons. This would be an increase of 111% from 2001.
- The immigrant population will number 7.6 million. Immigrants would then account for 22%, equivalent to the highest level observed in the 20th century.
Minority Groups

- 4.4 million Canadians would be members of the South Asian or Chinese visible minority group.
- The South Asian population shall catch up and surpass the Chinese group. Each group’s population is likely to climb to 2.2 million.
- The Black or African-Canadian population will almost double to 1.2 million people, compared with about 671,000 in 2001 = 3rd largest group.
- Graphically, this is what we will look like in 10 short years from now with African-Canadians followed by Filipinos, Latin Americans, South East Asians, and Arabs.
- Arabs shall also more than double their numbers by 2017.
The changing face of Canada

Labour exit and entry by age

- Median age of the visible minority population will be 35.5 years.
- For every 100 visible minority persons old enough to leave the labour force (55–64 yrs), there would be 142 old enough to join the labour force (15–24 yrs).
- The rest of the population: 75 potential entries for every 100 potential exits.
The changing face of Canada

Place of Residence

- As in 2001, centred in Ontario and British Columbia = 57% and 20% respectively. In British Columbia nearly one of every three people would be a visible minority.
- Almost 75% of visible minority person will be living in one of Canada’s three largest metropolitan areas – Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal.
- In 2004, the United Nations ranked Toronto second, behind Miami and Florida among cities with the largest population of foreign born residents 49%!
- By 2017, Toronto/GTA: South Asian (56%).
  - Vancouver: Chinese (47%).
  - In Montreal, high proportion of African Canadians (27%) and Arabs (19%).


Despite the gains of the past century, Canadian women continue to face many challenges in the new millennium. They include:

- Balancing work and family responsibilities
- Recognition for the unpaid care giving work
- Eliminating the wage gap between women and men
- Increasing the participation rate of women in non-traditional fields
- Addressing the increasing phenomenon of feminization of poverty
- Impact of the aging population
- Globalization on the quality of life of women.
To meet the challenges ahead, we must build on the achievements of our foremothers to advance equality for women in Canada, and follow their example to ensure a new millennium that is fair and equitable for all Canadians.
Prairie Arctic Regional Council

Winnipeg
204-774-1609

Regina
306-585-0900

Saskatoon
306-382-4355

www.myparc.ca