



Canadian History for Dummies

Will Ferguson

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A wild ride through Canadian history, fully revised and updated! This new edition of *Canadian History For Dummies* takes readers on a thrilling ride through Canadian history, from indigenous native cultures and early French and British settlements through Paul Martin's shaky minority government. This timely update features all the latest, up-to-the-minute findings in historical and archeological research. In his trademark irreverent style, Will Ferguson celebrates Canada's double-gold in hockey at the 2002 Olympics, investigates Jean Chretien's decision not to participate in the war in Iraq, and dissects the recent sponsorship scandal.

Canadian History for Dummies Details

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Author : Will Ferguson

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From Reader Review Canadian History for Dummies for online ebook

Andrea says

Just what you'd expect from a Dummies/Ferguson collaboration. I thought before delving into denser works it would help to have a high school history refresher course, and this did the trick.

Michael Dorosh says

Fails from the perspective of emphasizing the importance of military history. Written in a style conducive to imparting information to newcomers to the field, it unfortunately concentrates far too much emphasis on the wrong areas. I'm speaking specifically of the Second World War chapter; Canada played a vital role in three major operations in NW Europe - Normandy, the Scheldt and the Rhineland. Normandy is mentioned in passing and the latter two are not mentioned at all.

The focus of the chapter is on Dieppe - two entire pages. While Dieppe is of course a focus of national attention, it was not the only chapter in military history and the book is very misleading by suggesting that it was. Canada had five divisions in the field by 1944, fighting for 22 months in Italy and 11 months in NW Europe. Why a 9 hour battle would get two pages and some 33 months of fighting get only a brief paragraph describing the casualty rates in Italy is beyond comprehension.

A page is also devoted to Conscription - and the information presented is accurate and again, well written - but again highlights failed policy rather than successful military operations. Another two pages are devoted to the Internment camps and the Holocaust. Important subjects, but again done at the expense of our positive military achievements.

The Battle of Normandy destroyed the German Army in France beyond recovery. The Battle of the Scheldt cleared the waterways to Antwerp and allowed desperately needed supplies onto the continent at a location much closer to the front. The Battle of the Rhineland paved the way for the final crossing of the last major obstacle to a general Allied advance into Germany itself. These were dramatic battles in which Canadians paid a grave cost and yet acquitted itself very well. None of this is mentioned in the book, and those truly ignorant of history - the people this book is aimed at - would have no clue what the Canadian military achieved and instead walk away with the understanding that Canada's Second World War effort was largely a litany of failed political decisions, interspersed with the occasional massacre of our own men.

Disappointing, especially since other areas are covered in better detail by the same author. Perhaps the fault lies with the editor, but either way, I recommend caution in purchasing this book, especially if interested in military history.

Abbey says

This enormously entertaining (and just enormous) softback in the "For Dummies" series was a real Hoot!! It was my first of that series and, heck, if that's the way all these things are written, then sign me up for a half-

dozen or so more! And if the sly humor of Ferguson is to blame (grin) then I'll gladly read anything he's written too. His beautifully anarchic sensibilities coincide nicely with my own.

While most of my grandparents came to Boston from Canada in the late 1890s and early 1900s, my education while a fairly good one, never covered much of The Basics re. Canada, kwim? Thankfully this wonderful tome addresses that gap. Filled with extremely accessible short bits and interesting paragraphs packed full of information that isn't dull or stultifying, pretty much everything is presented in an off-hand manner, with a lot of humo(u)r and/or satirical tone. I loved it. YMMV.

There is even a beautifully synopsisized version of the Table of Contents, with everything right at a glance, a feature of formatting that most of this volume seems to follow; it's all very practical, lots of fun, and never boring. The short-version of the TOC is called Contents at a Glance:

Introduction

Part I: When worlds collide

Part II: The Rise of New France 1608-17016

Part III: The Fall of New France 1701-1766

Part IV: Canada: The Failed Republic? 1766-1838

Part V: The Roads to Confederation 1838-1891

Part VI: The End of "English" Canada 1891-1929

Part VII: Dark Days 1929-1959

Part VII: Noisy Evolution 1960-1993

Part IX: Toward a One-Party Rule 1993-2005

Part X: The Part of Tens

note: this section is a bunch of crib sheets, each listing ten facts of Things You Ought to Know, especially helpful for cramming before tests. Includes:

Great Canadian Quotations

Five Important English and French Pairs

Ten Important Aboriginal Leaders

Ten Political Firsts for Canadian Women

The Ten Prime Ministers You Need to Know

and there's a thorough (as of 2005) Appendix of Online Resources at the end as well.

Oh, and Ferguson thoughtfully includes, right at the front of the book, a Cheat Sheet (that's what HE calls it) entitled

"A Timeline of Important Events in Canadian History" so, should you not even want to read the book itself, you could likely get by just with that. But I'd encourage you to give the book itself a try because it's truly a lot of fun. And it is, definitely, as Ferguson (or maybe The Dummies folks) indicated on the cover, "A Reference for the Rest of Us!".

Jim Gallen says

"Canadian History for Dummies" follows the usual "Dummies" format of dividing its subjects into chapters, in this case chronologically. Multiple topics are included in each chapter. The Second Chapter, "First Contact" (between First Nations and Europeans), for example, has a few paragraphs on the Northwest

Passage, the voyages of Martin Frobisher, the explorations of Jacques Cartier and the settlements of Samuel de Champlain and the fate of Henry Hudson.

I read this as part of my preparation for a one night continuing education history of Canada class and am very pleased with it. The writing style is leavened by humor and flows smoothly enough to hold the reader's interest. There is plenty of information that is thematically so as to facilitate understanding of the major concepts of Canadian history while providing supporting facts. Although the second edition is dated, It the most valuable resource I found while conducting my research.

Regan says

Overall this book is a great way to brush up on Canadian History, and the author's sense of humor makes for a few laughs along the way as well. Starting with the prehistorical crossing of the Asia-Alaska Land bridge, the author covers Canada's history up to 2005. The sections are not strictly split into 17th century, 18th century, etc. It is more cleverly divided into important eras of Canadian History, such as "Roads to Confederation (1838-1891)" which details history from the aftermath of the 1837 rebellions until the end of the MacDonald era. The earlier sections of the book focus on particular events and places, such as the '7 Years War' or 'Acadia'. The last section focuses mainly on the 20th century prime ministers and their causes and effects on Canadian History.

The book is mostly sequential, although the author doesn't stop in the middle of one story to talk about another for the sake of having everything in chronological order. The author emphasizes the three main themes of Canadian History: Relationship with First Nations, Separatism, and the economic influence of the US. The book is largely focused on events in Quebec and Ontario. True, this is where the influence has historically stemmed from in Canada, but I would've liked to see a bit more attention on what was happening in other parts of the country, and a bit more information on some of the major treaties.

It was a great read, and I will definitely be looking for more works by this author.

Diogo Jesus says

Loved to get to know the history of Canada in a light way. Myths, alternatives, hypothesis, connections - nice

Marie says

Consider me an American who loves anything having to do with Canada. This is a great starter book for anyone (American, Canadian, or whatever) interested in learning a bit about Canadian history. Much of what's in here is very eye-opening. It definitely helped answer some other previously-unanswered questions I had about why Canada is the way that it is today.

Brian Trueblood says

Good overview. Fun to read

Bob says

Pretty good, but...

It's a very good read, and I got a very good overview of the subject. But I was surprised by the amount of author opinion, and as another reviewer on Amazon noted, more maps would be helpful.

Denise Junker says

This book moved slowly for me. I did not like the author's injection of his own story, even if it wasn't much. I did like that the moments of opinion were highlighted with "Disagree" icons. Most history books include opinion moments like they were facts. This series and the "The Complete Idiot's Guides" do help a person out by highlighting patterns and on-going issues. Plus, the summary card is really helpful. I'll keep the summary card and toss the rest of the book.

Jacqueline says

Very good coverage of pre-1914, but after that point the author's political leanings begin to color his interpretation of events and their ramifications. I get it, you don't like the Liberals or the Conservatives. That's fine, but don't call Paul Martin's power-grab a coup d'etat--that gives the reader the impression that either Canada is a banana republic (which it is not) or that Martin is some kind of political mastermind (which he was not).

Ross Vincent says

Being have Canadian, and educated in the Texas (a nation practically unto itself), I am sadly lacking in education and knowledge about my Roots. I knew a bit about Montreal - from having lived there, and the stories told to me by Mom and from reading, but the rest of the country- nope, not familiar at all.

Which is why this book was a GREAT stepping stone into learning more about the Great White North. (Sort of like a History 101/ 102 class - you learn the broad picture, and gives you insight into the more specific details, if you want to explore more).

Emily says

As an American Canadian junkie, and a Will Fergusson junkie, this book was top notch. Fun, quick-witted, and a quick read to boot! If you have ever wondered about the Canadian side of North American history, this book has a fabulous side-by-side comparison with the U.S. of A. Warning: we are total jerks!

Vickie says

I love this book! I savored it. Mr Ferguson writes with humor and rare perception. He brings the history of an amazingly diverse nation together and makes it all so very interesting. I found this book by happenstance in the library and as I was planning an extended trip through the west of Canada, I decided to read some history. It may be my favorite book of the year.

Patrick says

Wonderful!! Don't look down your nose at this book. All the information is easy and clear with helpful editorial comments to help understand the nuances and differing opinions. I can now go back to reading more widely about Canadian History with a sound understanding of the timelines and a handy reference. I couldn't recommend it more. Next, I'm going to see if there is a Russian History of Dummies, and I'm betting there is. How many wonderful books did I put down because I did not have an adequate reference for Russian History? I praise the day I set my inner Dummy free!!
