

# MAPPING CANADA



French explorer Samuel de Champlain created this map in 1612. (It's missing P.E.I. completely!) Notice how the seas are filled with fish to encourage Europeans to sail over.

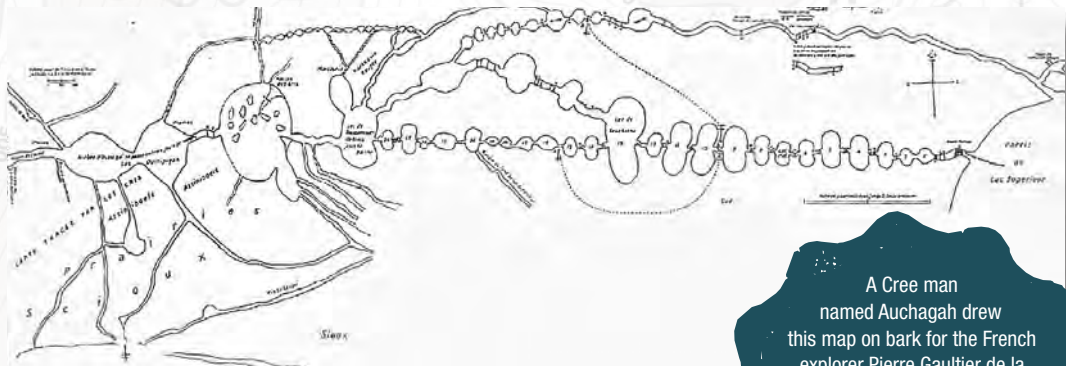
## WHAT DOES THE TERRITORY WE NOW CALL CANADA LOOK LIKE? DEPENDS WHO YOU ASK ... AND WHEN.

**W**e're used to seeing maps that seem like we're looking down on the land from above. And they often have things on them you can't see in real life, like borders. Indigenous peoples have had their own ways of creating and passing on information about the land for countless generations. We don't have many examples of early Indigenous maps, though, because they were usually drawn in the earth or snow, on bark or whatever else was around. Starting when they were very young, keepers of these maps memorized the details of vast areas and shared them, along with related stories. The first Europeans were amazed at how much these knowledge keepers knew and remembered. And of course it was the colonizers from abroad who started fencing off property and creating borders where Indigenous peoples treated the land as something to be shared, not divided up and owned. It's important to remember that there are lots of ways to think about how we depict a place or show a route.

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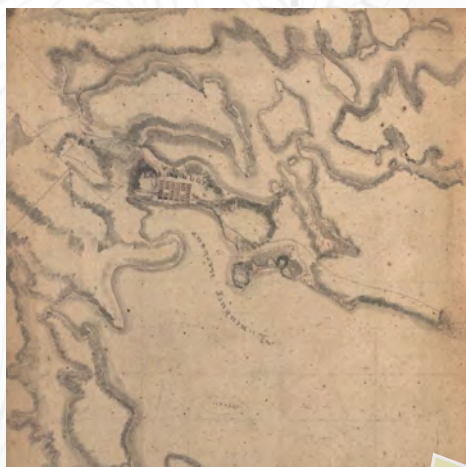


A Cree man named Auchagah drew this map on bark for the French explorer Pierre Gaultier de la Vérendrye around 1730. It only shows what's important — the lakes and rivers his people paddled to get from what we know as Lake Superior on to Lake Winnipeg and beyond.



This 1743 French map shows how little Europeans knew about the Arctic and what is now western Canada.

**THE GREAT MAP** was an enormous project by cartographer William Mackay. Published in 1834, it was the first printed map to show the whole interior of Nova Scotia. It was more of a good map than a great one, but it was still pretty impressive. This tiny portion of it shows the town of Lunenburg.





A centuries-old mistake means there's a tiny piece of the United States entirely surrounded by Canadian land (southeastern Manitoba and northwestern Ontario) and Lake of the Woods. The community is home to about 120 Americans. Technically part of the state of Minnesota, it is known as Northwest Angle.

Isn't this 1851 map beautiful? Check out all the decorative touches.



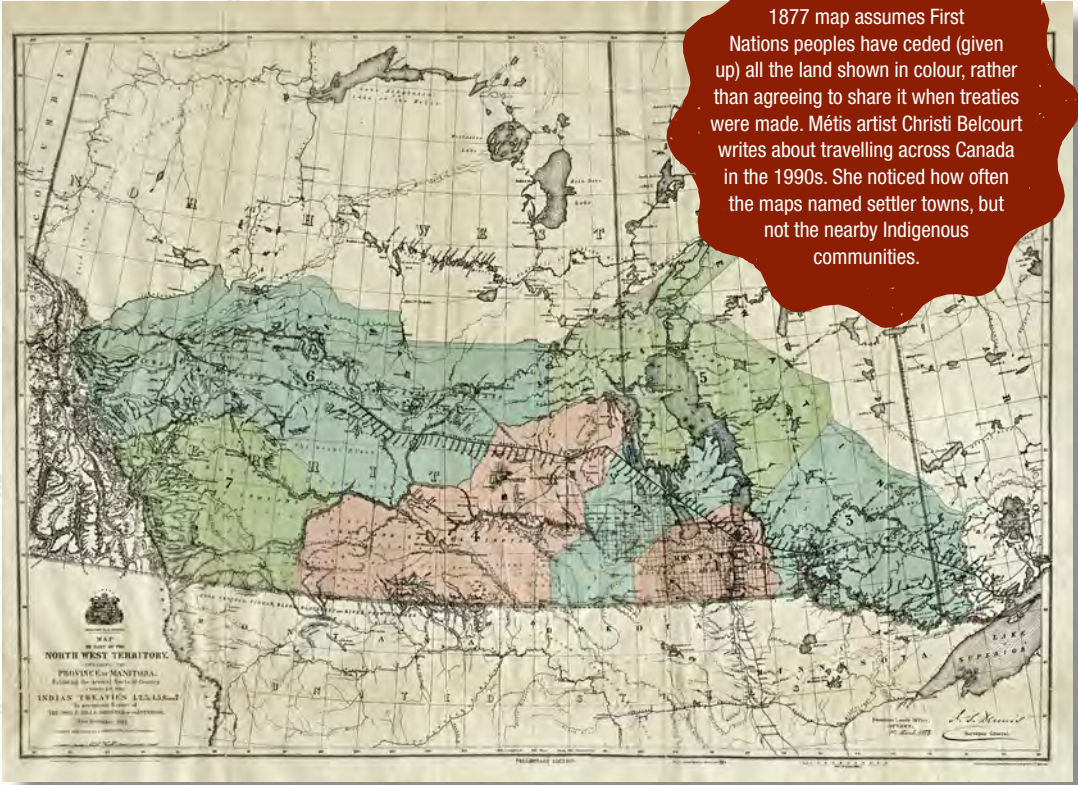
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**PRINTERS PUBLISHED MAPS OF COUNTIES, LIKE THIS ONE FROM 1862, AND COLLECTIONS CALLED ATLAS. THEY MADE MONEY TWO WAYS: CHARGING BUSINESSES TO BE INCLUDED AND GETTING CUSTOMERS TO PAY FOR THE FINISHED PRODUCT.**







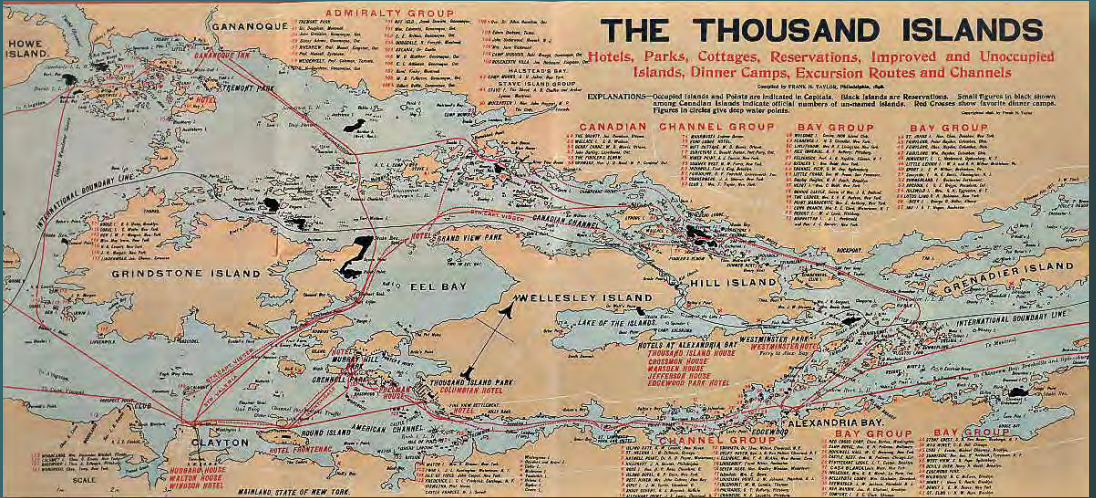
The title of this 1877 map assumes First Nations peoples have ceded (given up) all the land shown in colour, rather than agreeing to share it when treaties were made. Métis artist Christi Belcourt writes about travelling across Canada in the 1990s. She noticed how often the maps named settler towns, but not the nearby Indigenous communities.

**A MAP'S SCALE SHOWS HOW THE SIZE OF SOMETHING ON THE MAP RELATES TO ITS SIZE IN THE ACTUAL WORLD. FOR INSTANCE, IF A MAP HAS A SCALE OF 1: 100,000, THAT MEANS ONE CENTIMETRE ON THE MAP EQUALS 100,000 CENTIMETRES, OR ONE KILOMETRE, IN REAL LIFE.**

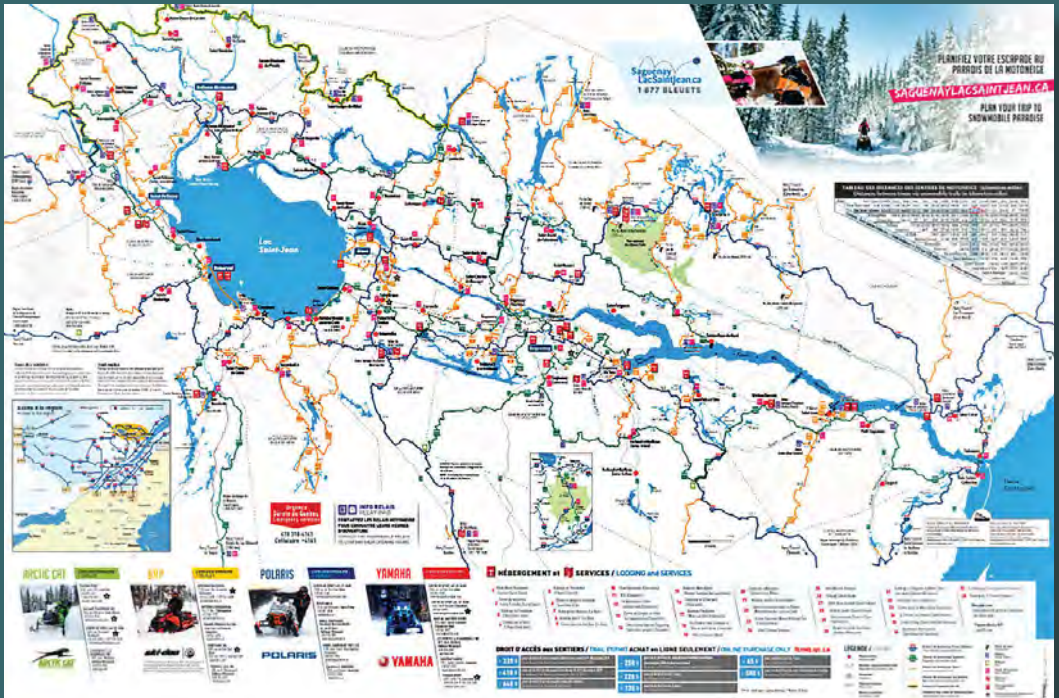


This style of map, known as a bird's-eye because of its viewpoint, was an extremely popular item to hang on a house's walls in the late 1800s and early 1900s.





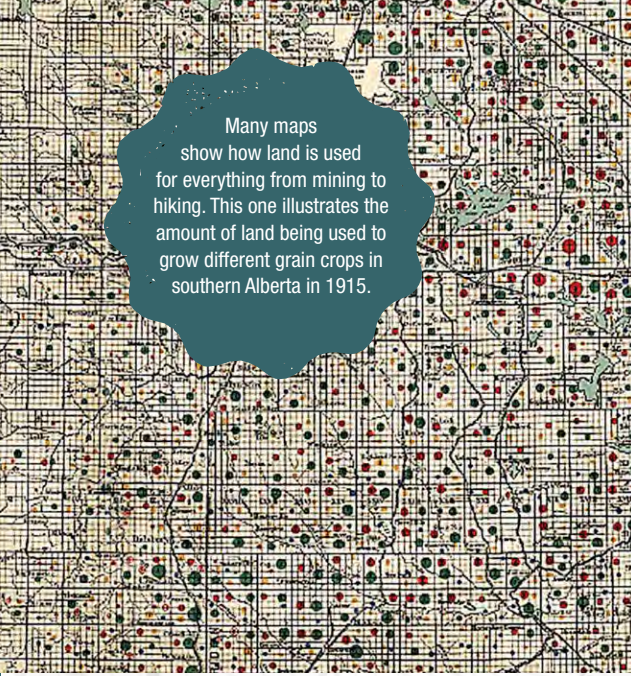
TOURIST MAPS ARE NOTHING NEW. THE ONE FOR EASTERN ONTARIO'S THOUSAND ISLANDS REGION (ABOVE) DATES BACK TO 1898. THE SNOWMOBILER'S MAP OF QUEBEC'S SAGUENAY-LAC ST. JEAN AREA (BELOW) CAME OUT IN 2019. THESE MAPS HIGHLIGHT THINGS VISITORS WOULD WANT TO KNOW WHEN THEY'RE ON VACATION.



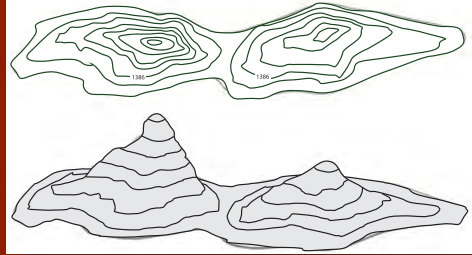
Numerique Band, Public Domain



Many maps show how land is used for everything from mining to hiking. This one illustrates the amount of land being used to grow different grain crops in southern Alberta in 1915.



THE CURVY LINES YOU SEE ON SOME MAPS CONNECT POINTS AT THE SAME HEIGHT. WHEN YOU SEE A LOT OF THESE CONTOUR LINES CLOSE TOGETHER, IT MEANS THERE'S A STEEP DROP OR CLIMB IN THE LANDSCAPE. THEY ALSO SHOW THE SHAPE OF SOMETHING LIKE A MOUNTAIN OR CANYON.



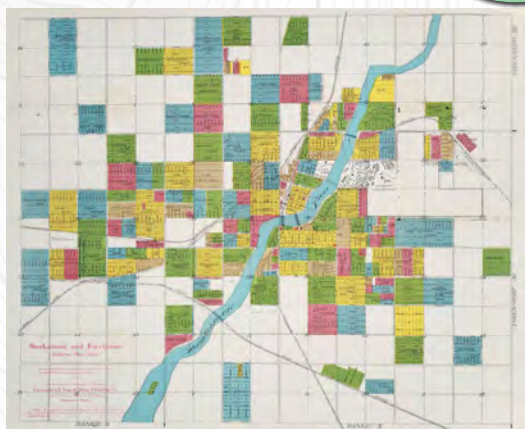
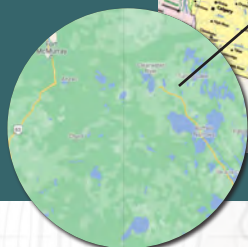
INSURANCE COMPANIES CREATED INCREDIBLY DETAILED MAPS OF CANADIAN CITIES, KNOWN AS FIRE INSURANCE PLANS. THEY SHOWED THE SHAPE AND HEIGHT OF EVERY BUILDING, ALONG WITH THE MATERIAL IT WAS MADE FROM AND WHAT IT WAS USED FOR. AND IF PEOPLE WHO WERE FROM CHINESE, JAPANESE OR INDIAN BACKGROUNDS USED THE BUILDING, THE PLAN SHOWED THAT, TOO.

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**THE BORDER BETWEEN SASKATCHEWAN AND ALBERTA IS A STRAIGHT LINE. ALTHOUGH THE ONE BETWEEN SASKATCHEWAN AND MANITOBA LOOKS JUST AS STRAIGHT, IT'S ACTUALLY A SERIES OF WEST-NORTH-WEST-NORTH-NORTH ANGLES.**



These maps, both from around 1910, show how differently Saskatchewan (above left) and Quebec (above right) laid out properties.



During the First World War, Canadian soldiers drew detailed maps showing their trenches — long tunnels open at the top — through France, Belgium and elsewhere.



**FREE MAPS LIKE THE ONE ON THE RIGHT BECAME POPULAR IN THE 1940S. GOVERNMENTS GAVE THEM OUT TO ATTRACT TOURISTS. GAS STATIONS GAVE THEM OUT TO ENCOURAGE DRIVERS TO STOP FOR FUEL AT COMPANY LOCATIONS.**



**FOR A LONG TIME, PEOPLE BELIEVED THIS IMAGE, KNOWN AS THE VINLAND MAP, SHOWED NORSE SETTLEMENTS. THAT WOULD HAVE MADE IT THE EARLIEST DEPICTION OF WHAT IS NOW NORTH AMERICA, WHICH MADE SENSE GIVEN THAT THE PARCHMENT WAS ALMOST 600 YEARS OLD. BUT LATE IN 2021, SCIENTISTS PROVED THE INK HAD INGREDIENTS THAT HAD BEEN AROUND FOR NO MORE THAN A CENTURY. THE MAP WAS A FAKE.**