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CANADIAN UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

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Historical sketch

As Canada is not only a bilingual country but also has two traditions, two somewhat different systems of higher education have been developed. One is patterned on the French system before the secularization of higher education, in which the majority of the institutions are under control of Catholic orders or groups. The other is designed more according to English, Scottish, and United States practices, instruction being given to English-speaking students and the instructions being controlled by a variety of groups - religious denominations, governments, and private non-denominational bodies. Institutions comprising a third small group and giving instruction to both English-speaking and French-speaking students are operated or controlled mainly by Catholic groups. The first such bilingual institution to be established, the present University of Ottawa, developed from a Catholic college opened in 1848.

Until 1763 Canada was a French colony. Education was limited to institutions under religious auspices. The first institution where college-level studies were undertaken, according to available records, seems to have been the Collège des Jésuites, founded in 1635 in Quebec City, one year before the establishment of Harvard University (the first institution of higher education in the United States), and over 80 years after the creation of the first universities in Mexico and Peru. A complete arts course was probably given by the Collège by 1655.

Shortly afterwards, teaching in theology commenced, and at about this time the Séminaire de Québec was founded by diocesan priests. In 1852 the Séminaire was instrumental in the establishment of the Université Laval in Quebec City. A branch of Laval was opened in Montreal in 1878 and in 1920 it received a civil charter as the Université de Montréal.

Three King's Colleges (one at Windsor and later Halifax, Nova Scotia - opened in 1790; a second at Fredericton, New Brunswick - opened in 1829; and the third at Toronto, Ontario - opened in 1843, although chartered in 1827) were among the first English-language institutions founded. They were closely associated with the Anglican Church and through it with the dominant governing bodies at the time of their formation. Early attempts to limit enrolment to Church of England adherents and the movement towards responsible government in the provinces made these colleges targets of religious and political criticism and led to two of them becoming provincial universities (University of Toronto - 1850, and University of New Brunswick - 1859).

Many denominational colleges were also founded in Ontario and the Maritime Provinces, owing to the desire of various denominations to educate their young people in the atmosphere of their own faiths. These included such institutions as Acadia University,