

across Canada could compete. The Stanley Cup is awarded annually to the champions of the National Hockey League.

Celebration in Edmonton in 1847

The early Canadian artist, Paul Kane, spent the years from 1846 to 1848 travelling through the Canadian prairies, sketching the country and its people. He also kept a journal and this was part of his description of the Christmas dinner at the Hudson's Bay company post at Edmonton, Alberta in 1847:

"No table cloth shed its snowy whiteness over the board; no silver candlesticks or gaudy china interfered with the simple magnificence. The bright tin plates and dishes reflected jolly faces, and burnished gold can give no truer zest to a feast.

"At the head, before Mr. Harriett, the factor, was a large dish of boiled buffalo hump. At the foot smoked a boiled buffalo calf, a very small one torn from its mother's belly long before it had attained its full growth. This, boiled whole, is one of the most esteemed dishes amongst the epicures of the prairies.

"My pleasing duty was to help serve a dish of mouffle, or dried moose lip. The gentleman on my left distributed the white fish which had been delicately browned in buffalo marrow. The priest served the buffalo tongue, whilst Mr. Rundell, the assistant factor, cut up the beaver tails. There were also piles of potatoes, turnips and bread conveniently placed so each could help himself. Such was our jolly Christmas dinner at Edmonton, and long will it remain in my memory although no pies or puddings shed their fragrance over the table."

Christmas in Old Quebec

The French settlers along the St. Lawrence River in the seventeenth century were at least four months away from France during the summer months, and completely shut off during the winter when the river was closed to shipping by ice. Perhaps that was why the ceremonies and festivals of home were so dear to them, and none was more joyfully celebrated than the feast of Christmas. Here is how an historian described a Christmas in New France in 1658, when the colony was half a century old:

"At the feast, the Seigneur and his lady were seated in rough chairs at the head of a long table, which stretched the full length of the main room of the log manor-house. Ranged below them were lesser persons on crude benches. There

The Huron Carol, known as the first Canadian Christmas carol, has gained increasing popularity in Canada over the past three decades. It was written about 1641 by the Jesuit saint and Huron missionary, Jean de Brebeuf, in Quebec. After Brebeuf's martyrdom in 1649, Reverend Villeneuve, another missionary to the Hurons, wrote down the words of the hymn which was later translated into French by Paul Picard, a lawyer and member of the Huron tribe. The popular English translation now used extensively was published in 1942 by the Canadian Messenger of the Sacred Heart. When friends and families gather to sing the joyful Christmas songs and carols, they seldom pause to consider the origin of their selections. A few of the words may have been changed somewhat in translation, but the language of Christmas music is universal.

The Huron Carol

'Twas in the moon of winter time when all the birds had fled,
That Mighty Gitchi Manitou sent angel choirs instead.
Before their light the stars grew dim,
And wand'ring hunters heard the hymn:

"Jesus, your King, is born;
Jesus is born;
In Excelsis Gloria!"

Within a lodge of broken bark the tender Babe was found.
A ragged robe of rabbit skin enwrapped His beauty 'round
And as the hunter braves drew high,
The angel song rang loud and high:

"Jesus, your King, is born;
Jesus is born;
In Excelsis Gloria!"

The earliest moon of winter time is not so round and fair
As was the ring of glory on the helpless Infant there.

While Chiefs from far before Him knelt,
With gifts of fox and beaver pelt.

"Jesus, your King, is born;
Jesus is born;
In Excelsis Gloria!"

O children of the forest free, O sons of Manitou,
The Holy Child of earth and heav'n is born today for you.

Come, kneel before the radiant Boy
Who brings you beauty, peace and joy.

"Jesus, your King, is born;
Jesus is born;
In Excelsis Gloria!"

(Interpretation by J.F. Middleton)

was little silver plate in those days, but squares of birchbark and Indian bowls of polished basswood served the same purpose. Everyone carried his own knife. There were no forks, but bark spoons were provided.

"There were cakes of corn bread, great kettles of eels, salmon and beans all boiled together and served in the bowls. Then the same bowls were filled with a rich meat soup thickened with pounded nuts. Corn, peas and baked squash formed the next course, and then came the *pièce de resistance*. Great joints of roast venison were carved up, and deep squirrel pies were served. There were also baked pigeons, partridges, blackbirds and owls. For the dessert, there were cakes of maple sugar and a sweetmeat compounded of nuts and sunflower seeds served with a sauce of dried berries and boiling water."

Good Christmas cheer

The first record of a European-style Christmas in what is now Canada was observed in Port Royal on the Fundy shore of Nova Scotia in 1606. The settlement had been founded by Sieur de Monts and Samuel de Champlain who had set out from France in 1604, with a party of 120 emigrants, determined to establish

a French colony in the New World.

Their first settlement, founded in 1605 on an island at the mouth of the St. Croix River, turned out to be a disaster. The winter was much more severe than any of them had experienced in the temperate climate of France. Their food supplies ran low. Many of them suffered terribly from frostbite. And before spring arrived more than half of them had died from scurvy.

With summer, the remains of the colony moved across the Bay of Fundy to the Annapolis Basin and called their new habitation Port Royal. The leaders of the colony had learned something from their first winter. Champlain was particularly determined to maintain the morale of the settlers and to this end he established what he called *L'Ordre de Bon Temps* or The Order of Good Cheer. Under the rules of the order, each man in turn became Grand Master for the day, and had to organize meals and after-dinner entertainment: rivalry naturally developed with each man trying to outdo the others, and according to all reports the colony was a well-fed and lively place all winter long.

This was particularly true on Christmas day, when a special effort was made. The habitation was decorated with greenery

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