



# REFERENCE PAPERS

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### BOOK PUBLISHING IN CANADA

Books have been published commercially in Canada for less than 100 years, and it is only within the past 30 years that publishing has developed into an important industry; indeed, much of the growth has taken place since 1939.

So rapidly has Canada matured in recent years that it is easy to forget how short a time it is since its pioneer days. In 1540, when the first book was printed in Mexico, Canada was virtually unknown to the white man, having been claimed just six years earlier for the King of France by Jacques Cartier. A century later when the first book was printed in the American colonies the entire population of New France was only 240 people. It was not until 1751 that the printing press was introduced into Canada, and in 1765 the first book was produced--the Catéchisme du diocèse de Sens, printed in Quebec.

Canada is a land of two cultures and two official languages. A French possession for 150 years, it was ceded to Great Britain in 1763. As a result of this duality publishing in Canada is sharply divided into two distinct branches, with Toronto the centre of English and Montreal the centre of French publishing.

To understand the development of publishing in this country it is necessary to glance briefly at the early history of printing, for unlike older countries where books were made long before printing was invented, in Canada printing came first and publishing grew out of it.

#### Early Printing in Canada

As far as can be ascertained there was no printing press in Canada (i.e., New France) during the French regime. The first press was brought to what is now Canada by a New England colonist, Bartholomew Green Jr., son of Bartholomew Green who printed Boston's first newspaper. Green landed at Halifax, Nova Scotia in 1751, three years after it had been founded as a military base by the British government. He died a few weeks after his arrival, and to his partner, John Bushell, fell the honour of doing the first printing in Canada. On March 25, 1752, the first issue of the Halifax Gazette appeared from his press.

This pioneer Canadian newspaper was merely a leaflet which provided the early colonists with a weekly summary of news and important events. Transportation facilities were primitive and among the small population there was a relatively low standard of literacy. The original number of subscribers to the paper was 72, among the 4,000 inhabitants of Nova Scotia.

From this modest beginning printing and journalism spread rapidly through the Maritime provinces which long held the lead in Canadian journalism.

Printing began in Quebec in 1764 with the appearance of the famous Quebec Gazette printed by William Brown and Thomas Gilmore, who brought their press from Philadelphia, and in Montreal some years later with a few pamphlets printed by Fleury Mesplet. The Quebec Gazette, a weekly paper printed at first in two columns, French and English, continued to appear for 110 years, a remarkable record for a pioneer publication, and one almost equalled by the Halifax Journal which was established in 1781 and appeared for 90 years.