

JOHN ALEXANDER MACDONALD



John Alexander Macdonald, born in Glasgow, came to Canada in 1820, at the age of 5, with his mother and dad. He was an alderman of Kingston, Ontario, at 29 and went on to become a Founding Father of Confederation and Canada's first prime minister. Some

Founding Fathers become marble statues as time goes by, but John A. has remained vivid. He was clever, flexible, occasionally very hard drinking, caustic, affable and able to take a new country of disputatious factions — Irish Catholics and Orangemen, French and English, conservatives and reformers — and make it work. He was booted out of office in 1873 (after it became clear that he had accepted campaign money from railroad promoters) but returned triumphantly in 1878. He served nineteen years as Prime Minister, and died in 1891, suffering a stroke after winning a close election.

A Simple Truth

Sir John A. Macdonald once put down a political rival by saying, "One strong point I admire about Sir Oliver Mowat is his handwriting."

Phobia

"Would you move away please, your breath smells terrible, it smells of water."

Sir John A. Macdonald

The Blues in the Night

Canadian Blues are not as rhythmic as the Memphis ones, but they are sometimes more amusing. They are the gallery proofs (blue lines) of the House of Commons debates, presented to members at the end of the day's session for possible alterations. The published version is called Hansard, the name of the firm that originally compiled and printed the proceedings of the British and Canadian houses of parliament.

Concession

In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a concession in Canada was not a licence to sell beer at a hockey match, but a solid 200 acres of land allotted to a worthy farmer. The first road built in a new township, running straight along the front edge of the concessions, was called the front road.



Last Minute Instructions to the Gentry of Montreal

"Ladies to wear low-necked dresses, without court trains. Gentlemen in full dress. Ladies whose health will not admit of their wearing low-necked dresses may, on forwarding to the A.D.C. in writing a medical certificate to that effect, wear square-cut dresses."

E.G.P. Littleton, Military Secretary to Lord Lorne, an official message to persons invited to an 1878 ball honouring the Governor General.

JANUARY

1980

JANVIER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1 <small>NEW YEAR'S DAY JOUR DE L'AN</small>	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
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