



William C. Wonders Map Collection
 University of Alberta Libraries

CANADA F-102 (1883) [ARCH]

BRITISH AMERICA.

DESCRIPTION.

(See Map Questions on Page 63.)

1. **British America** is a little larger than the United States, and embraces all the northern portion of North America except Alaska, Greenland, Iceland, and two small islands south of Newfoundland which belong to France.

2. **Surface.**—The western part is crossed by the Cordilleras, which are composed of plateaus traversed by two great mountain ranges, the Rocky Mountains and the Coast Range; these trend parallel with the Pacific coast. The Appalachian Mountains terminate near the mouth of the St. Lawrence, in the extreme south-east, and, with some low mountains north of that river, render the surface of that region somewhat broken. Nearly all the remaining portion of this vast territory is an apparently level plain, broken along the water-sheds by isolated hills or low ranges.

3. **Rivers and Lakes.**—There are three principal river systems—the St. Lawrence, the Nelson, and the Mackenzie. Each system contains many lakes, several of which are among the largest in the world.

(1) The St. Lawrence River, together with the Great Lakes, forms the most important. It is navigable for the largest ocean steamers to Montreal, and for large lake steamers throughout its course.

(2) The Nelson River is the outlet of a cluster of lakes, of which Winnipeg, about the size of Lake Erie, is the largest. The Saskatchewan, the Assiniboine, and the Red River of the North belong to this system, and, with the lakes, are navigable during the summer.

(3) The Mackenzie system lies so far north that it is blocked with ice most of the year.

In many places the surface is so nearly level that the lakes have two outlets, flowing in opposite directions; and, thus, travelers are enabled to make journeys in canoes entirely across the country.

4. **Climate.**—The climate of the greater part of British America is very severe. Snow is common from November until May, while the short summers are quite hot. The rain-fall is greatest on the coasts in the south-east and the south-west.

In the northern half, the ground remains frozen a short distance below the surface, even in summer, and moss and stunted shrubs are the only vegetation. The warmest portions of the southern part are along the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, and about the Great Lakes.

5. **Vegetation.**—Much of the St. Lawrence valley is covered with forests of pine, oak, elm, and maple. A broad belt of valuable timber extends north-west from Lake Superior to the Rocky Mountains. Much of the south-west, especially the islands and the seaward slope of the Coast Range, is also densely wooded.

6. East of the Rocky Mountains are extensive prairies, which, in the south-west, afford fine grazing ranges; while, to the north

and east, the rain-fall is greater, and root crops, wheat, and barley are cultivated. The soil of the St. Lawrence valley is fertile; wheat, oats, and fruits are the staple crops.

7. **Animals.**—Wild animals are more plentiful in British America than in the United States, and, on account of the colder climate, their fur is thicker and more valuable. The fisheries of the Atlantic and Pacific coasts are very important.

The principal fur-bearing animals are the bison, the bear, the wolf, the seal, the beaver, the otter, the fox, the raccoon, the marten, the mink, the ermine, and the squirrel; while, in the north, are found the moose, the wapiti, the reindeer, the white fox, and the polar bear.

The principal salt-water fish are the cod, haddock, mackerel, herring, salmon, and halibut. The lakes and interior rivers abound in white fish, sturgeon, trout, and muskallonge.

8. **Minerals.**—The mineral resources of British America are but partially developed. Coal is mined in many localities, and gold in the west; while silver, iron, copper, and salt are known to exist.

9. **Inhabitants.**—The population is over five millions, or about the same as that of the state of Pennsylvania.

About one half are of French and Irish descent; the remainder are descended chiefly from English and Scotch immigrants. Two per cent (85,000) of the population are Indians, in the west, and Esquimos, in the north.

10. **Occupations.**—The principal occupations are lumbering and the chase of fur-bearing animals. Agriculture receives much attention in the south, and catching and curing fish, along the south-eastern coast.

11. **Government.**—British America consists of the Dominion of Canada and the province of Newfoundland.

12. The Dominion of Canada is a union of the seven provinces of Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Manitoba, and British Columbia; the territories; and the Districts of Keewatin, Athabasca, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Assiniboia.

A Governor-general is appointed by the British sovereign. Parliament consists of a Senate and a House of Commons. The senators are appointed by the Governor-general. The members of the House of Commons are chosen by the people. Each province has an independent local government.

QUESTIONS.—1. How does British America compare with the United States in size? What part of North America does it embrace?—2. What mountains in the west? In the east? What is said of the surface in the remaining portion?—3. What are the chief river systems? What is said of the lakes?—4. What is said of the climate?—5. Of the forests?—6. Of the prairies? Of the St. Lawrence valley?—7. Of the wild animals and the fisheries?—8. What minerals are mined, and where?—9. What is the population? What state in the Union has about the same number?—10. What are the principal occupations?—11. How is British America divided for purposes of government?—12. What divisions compose Canada?

