



## The Settlers of Saskatchewan

Students will interview an elderly member of the community (possibly a family member) to learn the background of why they (or their parents) chose to come to Canada. Students will get a sense of what life was like when they first arrived. Emphasis will be placed on the importance of agriculture to the early settlers and compared to those whose families may have arrived in more recent times.



Two-three  
45 minute  
classes

### Outcomes:

DR4.1 Correlate the impact of the land on the lifestyles and settlement patterns of the people of Saskatchewan.

IN4.2 Describe the origins of the cultural diversity in Saskatchewan communities.

### Indicators:

DR4.1 g. Conduct an inquiry investigating how residents of Saskatchewan came to occupy the land that is now our province (e.g., First Nations, early Europeans, and Métis).

IN4.2 c. Trace and represent the history of European immigration to Saskatchewan including those who came for economic reasons (explorers, fur traders, homestead farmers) and religious reasons (Mennonites, Hutterites, Doukhobors).

IN4.2 d. Articulate reasons why European immigrants left their homelands and settled in Saskatchewan, with particular emphasis upon the local community and/or the individual student families.

IN4.2 g. Compare immigration patterns in Saskatchewan in the 19th and early 20th centuries to immigration patterns in the current era.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

\* optional: overhead,  
transparencies,  
and overhead  
markers

\* Handouts 6.1 - 6.8

### Questions to Guide Inquiry:

1. Why did Europeans come to Canada?
2. Why did Europeans settle in the west?
3. How did the arrival of the settlers change life for the First Nations and Métis people?
4. Why do people still immigrate to Saskatchewan today?
5. How is immigration to Canada different now than in the past?
6. What role did agriculture play for the early Europeans?
7. What would have been different for the settlers if they had arrived in a place with no local inhabitants?
8. What contributions have different cultures made to the province?



## Teacher Background

Many early settlers came to Canada for the promise of a better life, as an escape from poverty or war, or to have the freedom to practise their own traditions and religions. Settlement in Western Canada gave individuals and groups the opportunity to acquire land of their own, but adapting to climate, learning to farm, and breaking the land was very difficult work. Many people came to Saskatchewan, mainly from Eastern Canada, the United States, or Europe to fulfill their dream of owning their own land. (Immigration from Asian countries was discouraged at this time with the creation of huge “head taxes” that few could afford). By the late 1920s, much of the available agricultural land in Saskatchewan was settled.

Statistics are interesting in this province. Saskatchewan is the only province where the number of people of British or French background is smaller than the number of people from other ethnic groups. According to a 2006 survey, the ten largest ethnic groups in order were: German, English, Scottish, Irish, Ukrainian, French, First Nations, Norwegian, Polish, and Métis. Whereas most of the early immigrants to Saskatchewan were from Europe, recent immigrants tend to come from Asian countries. Among those who moved to Canada from 1991 to 2001 and who were living in Saskatchewan in 2001, 42% were born in Asian countries - typically China or the Philippines. Other countries that are common birthplaces among recent immigrants include the United States (11%), the various countries of the former Yugoslavia (9%), and South Africa (4%). People still immigrate to Saskatchewan for many of the same reasons as the original settlers, but most now settle in urban centres. With the exception of the Aboriginal population, all of Saskatchewan’s residents are either immigrants or the descendants of immigrants.

To examine these and other Saskatchewan’s statistics see <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/canada/Nunavut-to-Yukon/Saskatchewan.html>

## Before Activity

Do an informal classroom poll of students about which family member may have immigrated to Saskatchewan: parents, grandparents, great-grandparents. (Be aware to those of First Nations ancestry as you need to be sensitive to their ancestry as non-immigrant).



## During Activity

### Activity One

Tell students they will be interviewing an older person in their family or community who either immigrated to Canada or had ancestors who did. Brainstorm a list of questions together and decide on three or four questions for the students to write down and take with them to the interview. Questions may have to be adapted for the demographic you are teaching.

Some suggestions include:

-  Why did you or your family move to Canada?
-  Where did you or your family come from?
-  Why did you or your family choose to settle where they did?
-  What did your family do for a living when they first came?
-  Where were other people in the community from?
-  How did the people in the community help each other?

Ask students to bring in any pictures, books, or artifacts that their subject may be willing to share.

Allow students a few days for this activity. There will need to be an interval before Activity Two.

### Activity Two

Put each of the predetermined questions on the top of a large piece of butcher paper. Hang the papers in different sections of the classroom. First, have the class share a few interesting things they learned from the interviews and then place students in smaller groups to continue sharing. Students go to the butcher paper to record some of the things learned for each question. Have students walk around the room looking at what has been written. Ask them to identify similarities among responses.

### Activity Three

Have the students look at a few different cultural groups that came and settled in Saskatchewan. Once again, divide students into up to eight small groups and give each group a different handout (see Handouts 6.2 – 6.8) with information on a particular cultural group. (Note: You might choose to have them research online instead. See <http://multiculturalcanada.ca/Encyclopedia>.)

Each group will be given a copy of Handout 6.1 and will fill in the squares with information from their group's handout. A speaker from each group will share the information with the class. Groups could use an overhead transparency of Handout 6.1 instead of a paper copy.



## After Activity

Summarize with the students why people moved to Saskatchewan and how settlement has changed from early settlers (rural, farming) to today (urban, variety of careers). Discuss also how life changed for the First Nations people (hunting, gathering to some farming, reserve, or urban life). Ask students to reflect quietly for a moment about whether they think it was harder to immigrate to Saskatchewan in the past or today. After a brief time, ask them to turn to a partner and discuss their thinking.

## Assessment

### Teacher Checklist

- ✓ Can the student gather research information from the interview strategy?
- ✓ Can student reflect on his/her own learning?
- ✓ Does the student show understanding of why immigrants left their homelands and settled here?
- ✓ Can the student compare immigration in the past with today's immigration?

## Lesson Resources

An online encyclopedia of Saskatchewan facts including population profiles, information on language, religion, and immigration [www.nationsencyclopedia.com/canada/Nunavut-to-Yukon/Saskatchewan.html](http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/canada/Nunavut-to-Yukon/Saskatchewan.html).

An online encyclopedia of the origins, arrival, settlement, and culture of the people who make up Canada's diverse population [www.multiculturalcanada.ca/Encyclopedia](http://www.multiculturalcanada.ca/Encyclopedia).

This web-based learning resource provides information on homesteaders coming to Canada and establishing their communities [www.aitc.sk.ca/educational-resources/saskschools](http://www.aitc.sk.ca/educational-resources/saskschools).

## Cross Curricular Connections

### ELA

Develop interview and research skills.



## Further Investigation

Organize a class trip to Cannington Manor Provincial Park. The Park offers a number of educational programs about the history of settlement in this part of Saskatchewan.

A virtual tour is also a possible extension. See [www.virtualsk.com/current\\_issue/prairie\\_gentry.html](http://www.virtualsk.com/current_issue/prairie_gentry.html).

Have students visit [www.aitc.sk.ca/educational-resources/sask-schools](http://www.aitc.sk.ca/educational-resources/sask-schools) to summarize and extend on what they are learning.

### Math

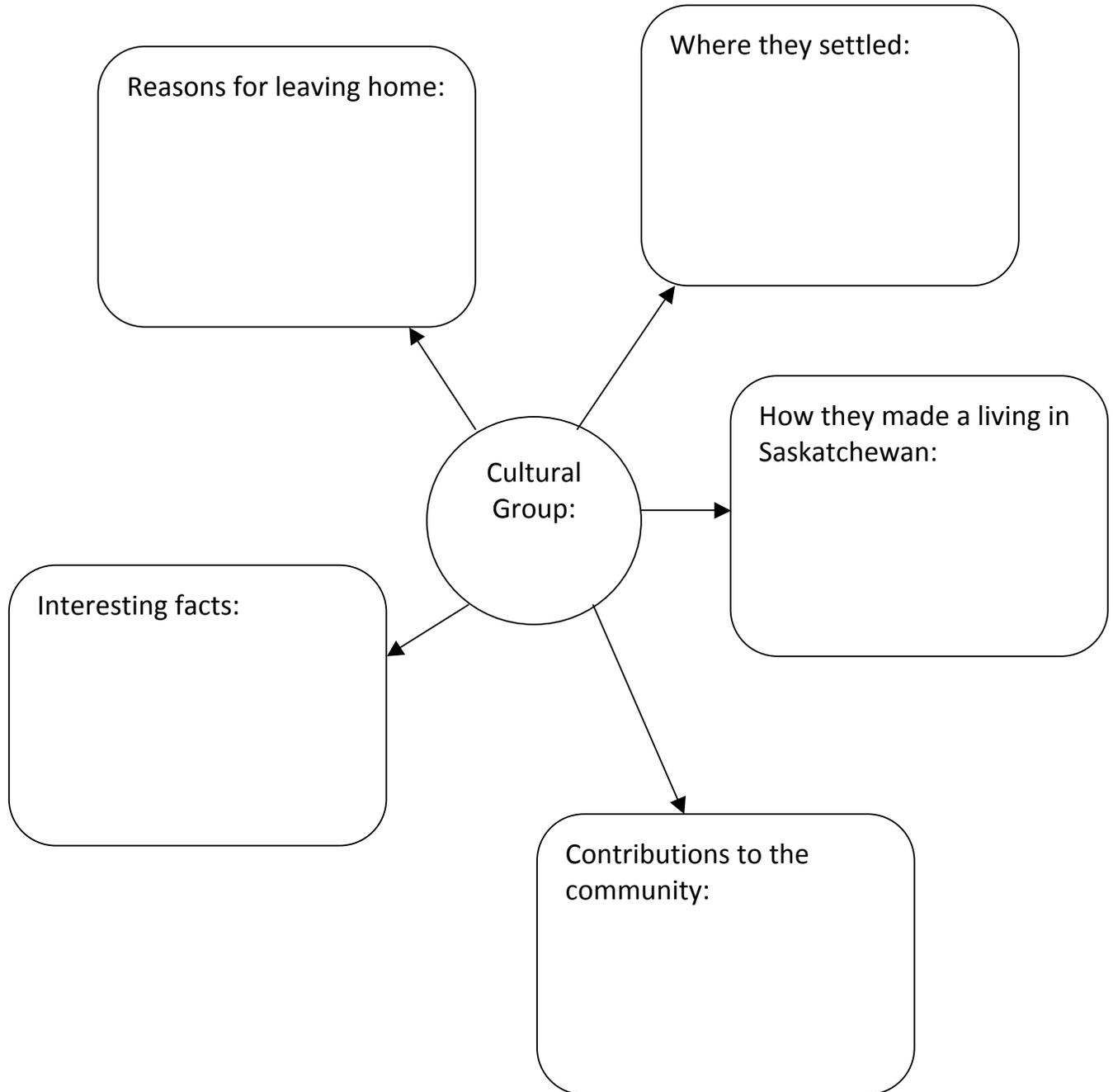
Look at percentages of cultural groups in Saskatchewan (Appendix 6.9). Have students make inferences about the pie chart.

### Health Education

Have an ethnic food party (check for allergies!) Have students bring in foods important to their own ancestry, or have a parent come in to demonstrate how to make some ethnic food (eg: perogies, lefse).



## Cultural Groups in Saskatchewan





## English Settlement in Saskatchewan

Many of the people from England who first began to settle in Saskatchewan knew very little about farming. They had moved to Canada because of the excitement of living in the “wild west”. A lot of these settlers came to escape the lack of jobs and the poverty that existed in England at the time.

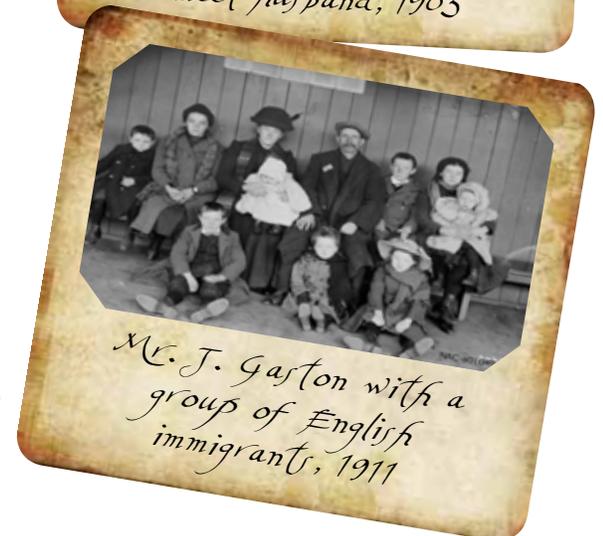


When the English first came to Saskatchewan, they formed colonies. One of the first (and likely the most curious) was called Cannington Manor in southern Saskatchewan. A number of English businessmen and landowners settled there. The other settlers would see them hunting with horses and dogs and playing cricket. They were behaving just like they had when they were in England. The settlement did not last long because when the rail line went through Saskatchewan, it missed the Manor, which made getting to and from the settlement too difficult.

Other colonies settled in Saskatoon, Yorkton, and Lloydminster. These colonies were very successful and grew quickly. They became very strong in politics, business, and the social scene. Schools insisted on students speaking English only. English churches were the most accepted. English traditions were the most popular.



*Mr. Corbett & family from Surrey, England, coming to meet husband, 1903*



*Mr. J. Gaston with a group of English immigrants, 1911*

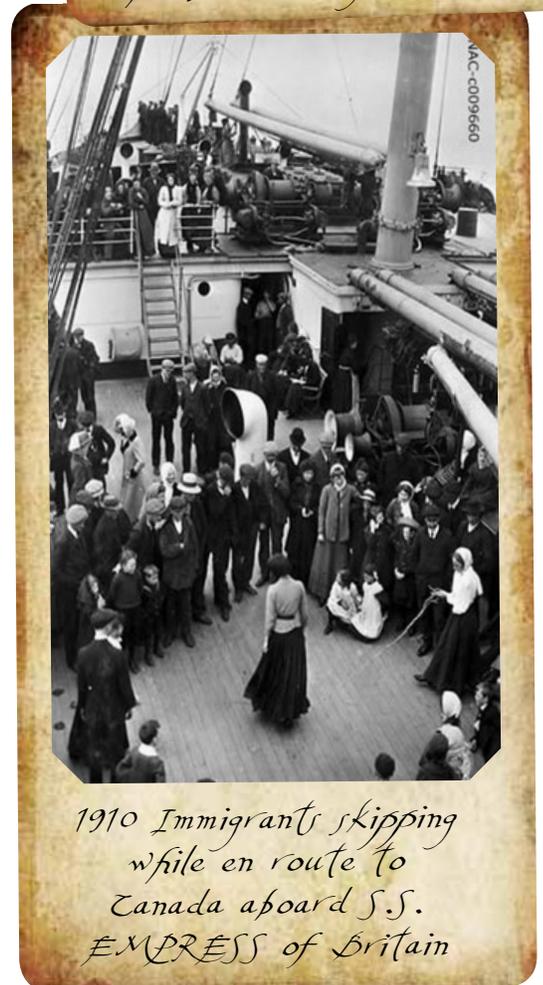


Today, much of our culture still follows the English traditions. Our main language is English, we celebrate Victoria Day\*, and we eat English foods such as bacon, roast beef, pork chops, mashed potatoes, and biscuits. We drink tea.

Many names of Canadian towns and cities are of English origin. In this province the capital city of Regina was named after Queen Victoria. (Regina is Latin for queen and Queen Victoria was often referred to as Victoria Regina). Prince Albert was named after her husband.

\*Victoria Day is a Canadian national holiday. This May holiday celebrates the birthday of Queen Victoria who was queen of Great Britain and the colonies from 1837 until 1901. Canada was a colony of Britain.

Adapted from: [http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/english\\_settlements.html](http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/english_settlements.html)



Historic photos accessed from <http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/DE/Sask100gallery/index.htm> and to be reproduced for educational purposes only.



## German (Hutterite) Settlement in Saskatchewan

Hutterite people were treated badly in Europe for many years. They were mistreated for their beliefs. Originally of German descent, many moved to Russia looking for a place where they could live and practise their religion. In 1874, one thousand Hutterites left Germany and Russia and moved to the United States settling in colonies in South Dakota. These colonies were farming communities where people lived and worked together. They shared everything as a group.

This way of life allowed them to maintain their culture, religion, language, and customs. The sharing of all resources exists up to the present day and is one of the things that make Hutterites different from other similar religions, like Mennonites. Hutterites are like the Mennonites in that they both came from the same region of the world (Germany and Russia) and they practised the same religion, but the Mennonites did not settle in colonies and share all their possessions.

In 1918, the United States wanted the Hutterites to fight in World War One. Since Hutterites do not believe in taking up arms (fighting) against anyone, they moved from South Dakota in the United States into Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.

Today there are about 46 colonies in Saskatchewan alone. All colonies live in rural areas and are farm-



*Immigrants awaiting  
medical examination*



ers. They keep up with the latest technologies, and have large, mixed farming operations, allowing them to stay competitive and successful as a group. Every person on a Hutterite Colony is assigned a job. Some assigned jobs include carpenter, chicken man, farm boss, business manager, seamstress, and head cook. Each person is in charge of his/her compartment, usually with one or two helpers. In recent years, many Hutterite colonies have started manufacturing items to add to their farm income. Colonies make and sell items like hog feeders, heaters, and chairs.

Hutterites follow many of their customs quite strictly. For example, they have a dress code or rules about their clothing and appearance. Their clothing is an important symbol of faith and identity. While the style of clothing is similar from colony to colony, the patterns and shade of the garments show which colony they belong to. Typically, men wear suspenders, usually black or dark trousers, and any kind of buttoned shirt. When men are married they grow a beard. Women wear below-knee-length dresses; younger women and girls wear more brightly coloured dresses than older women. Women must cover their heads at all times. Women traditionally wear a black, polka-dot- head covering. Girls between the ages of 3 to about 10 wear a bonnet-like head covering.

Adapted from [www.multiculturalcanada.ca/Encyclopedia/A-Z/m6/3](http://www.multiculturalcanada.ca/Encyclopedia/A-Z/m6/3) and <http://hutterites.org/faqs.htm>

Historic photos accessed from <http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/DE/Sask100gallery/index.htm> and to be reproduced for educational purposes only.



Modern seeding equipment on Hutterite colony



Hutterites make delicious meals!



## French Settlement in Saskatchewan

The French were one of the first groups of Europeans to live and explore Western Canada. This was because of the important fur trade. Many of the French Voyageurs\*, married First Nations women and their children were known as Métis.

From the 1850s until the North-West Rebellion in 1885, many small Métis communities came into existence. Some of these communities were on the old river routes of the fur trade, but most were widely scattered across the southern Prairies. Another wave of French-speaking immigrants came from Quebec, Europe, and the United States in the late 1800s and early 1900s. At one point, the French and Métis population far outnumbered the English. By the 1930s numerous settlements, communities, and parishes had been founded in which French was spoken.

The French settled all over the province, including the Qu'Appelle Valley, Meadow Lake, Cypress Hills, Spirit Wood, and Batoche. The early French and Métis were trappers and hunted bison. These populations started to turn to agriculture when there were fewer bison.





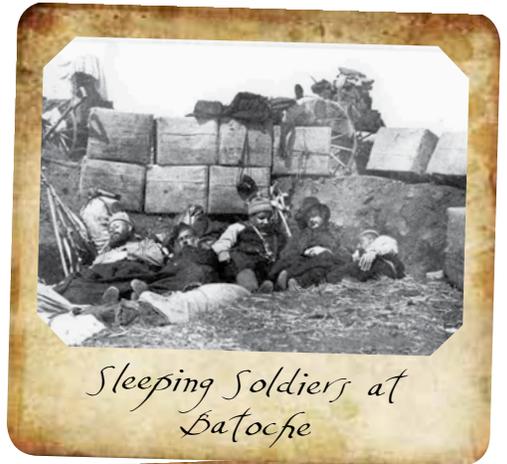
When the Canadian government began to divide up the land in Saskatchewan for settlement, the people in the village of Batoche had already settled the land, dividing it up into long, narrow strips that ran from the river. Because of this structure, all of the farmers had contact with the water and still had land beyond the riverbank for hay and grain. The government wanted to divide the land into square 160 acre sections, which the Métis did not like. The Battle of Batoche was a fight for the rights of the Métis to live as they were and protect their traditions. They did not win.

Some communities remained French and adapted to agriculture on the prairies, but over time, the English language was used much more than the French. Today, use of the French language is once again growing in some areas of Saskatchewan.

The French played a huge role in the settlement of Western Canada. An entire cultural group, the Métis, with its own traditions, song and dance, food, language, and dress was created. We see evidence of the French culture all around us, in our schools, food labels, TV and radio stations, and festivals.

Adapted from: [http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/french\\_and\\_mettis\\_settlements.html](http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/french_and_mettis_settlements.html)

Historic photos accessed at <http://scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy>, used with permission.





## German (Mennonite) Settlement in Saskatchewan

The Mennonites were a group of people, once German, who lived in Russia in the 1800s. They lived there, able to practise their own religion, speak their own language, have their own schools, and live peacefully without having to join the army, as they did not believe in fighting. In the 1870s, Russia began to change and wanted the Mennonites to change their way of life as well. This would mean the Mennonite people could no longer live the way they wanted to. A group was sent to Canada and the United States to see if it was possible to settle there. About 18,000 people chose to move. They settled in the central plains of the United States and Manitoba.

A few years later, many Mennonites from Ontario, Manitoba, and the United States moved to farming areas in Saskatchewan, building settlements between Saskatoon and Prince Albert.

Another group of immigrants (around 24,000) arrived in Canada from Russia in the 1920s. Most of these immigrants settled in western Canada along recently completed railway lines. Pioneering life on the Canadian prairies was difficult, especially for those who had been professionals in Russia (for example, teachers, lawyers, and doctors) and now had to get used to farming.





The first group of Mennonite settlers to come to Canada was mainly farmers. They spoke German, and tried to maintain their traditional ways by staying away from other cultures. The Mennonites, who came to Canada later, after World War II, were different as they mostly settled in towns and cities.

The Mennonite people do extremely well in many areas of the arts. Many are very good writers and a lot of poets in Canada are from Mennonite backgrounds. Music is an important part of church life, and many have developed skills in this area. Mennonites are often talented in the practical arts as well. Furniture and quilt making are very popular, and money raised from the sale of these works of art help others all over the world.

Mennonite communities are very generous. They work around the globe to help support communities in need.\*

\*The Mennonite Central Committee helps in disaster relief.



*Mennonite family sitting in front of a house*



*Mennonite children in a field*



## Scandinavian Settlement in Saskatchewan

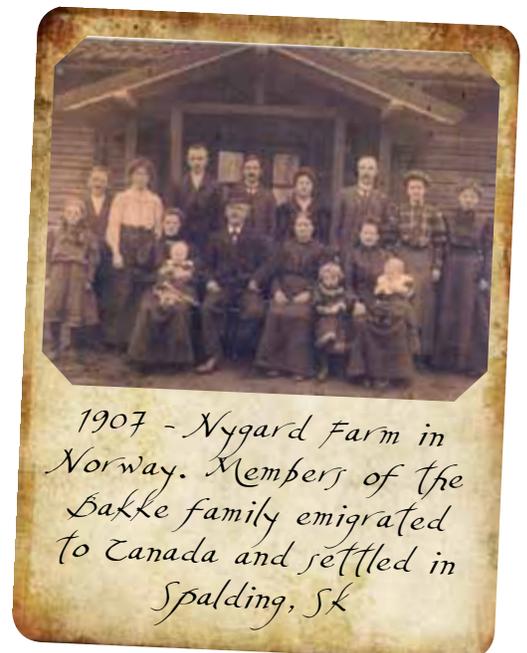
Scandinavians are people who come from Norway, Finland, Sweden, Iceland, and Denmark. Scandinavian immigrants came to Canada for different reasons. Some came for the adventure and promise of a better life, but many also came because of overpopulation. As an example, in Norway, only the oldest son inherited his father's land, and the rest of the children had to find work elsewhere. Few jobs meant that many Norwegians settled in North America. The Canadian government was offering free land\*, so many Scandinavians came to settle.



At first, Scandinavians, mostly Norwegians, settled just south of the border in the United States. Later, they moved north into Saskatchewan. They settled near Watrous and in the Birch Hills. There were also groups of settlers along the southern border and from Estevan north to Weyburn.

Getting used to the ways of a new country is never easy, but most Scandinavians adapted easily. Early immigrants mastered the English language and adjusted to their new lives extremely well.

There are still elements of Scandinavian culture alive in Saskatchewan today. There are Scandinavian clubs in many cities and towns around the province.



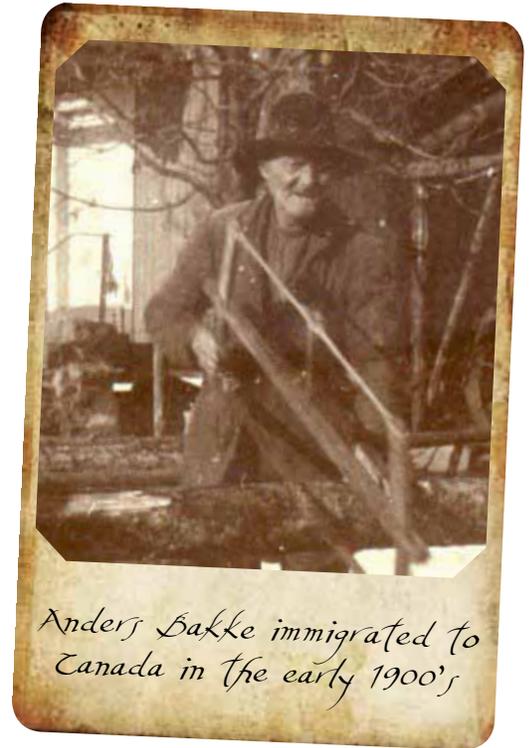


The Saskatoon club meets monthly to celebrate food and culture. In the village of Weldon, there is an annual Norwegian Heritage celebration. Many Norwegians still fly flags and celebrate Norwegian Independence Day on May 17th.

Scandinavians have made many contributions. One example is in the area of health care. In Canada, everyone can get health care when he/she is sick. This was not true at one time; this was not true at one time. Serious illness or death was often the result if Saskatchewan people could not afford to pay a doctor. This changed because of a Norwegian who settled in Saskatchewan. Mattian Anderson was the mayor of a town in southwest Saskatchewan. He had always fought for a proper health plan for the people. As mayor, he introduced a plan in his region to make sure everyone could receive the health care he/she needed. Soon other regions of Saskatchewan were doing the same. When Tommy Douglas was elected provincial leader of Saskatchewan in 1944, he used this same plan for all of Saskatchewan. Later, this system was used by the Canadian Government and has become the health system we have today.

\*actually there was a \$10.00 fee for the purchase of 160 acres (a ¼ section)

Adapted from: [www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~cansk/Saskatchewan/ethnic/norwegian-saskatchewan.html](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~cansk/Saskatchewan/ethnic/norwegian-saskatchewan.html)



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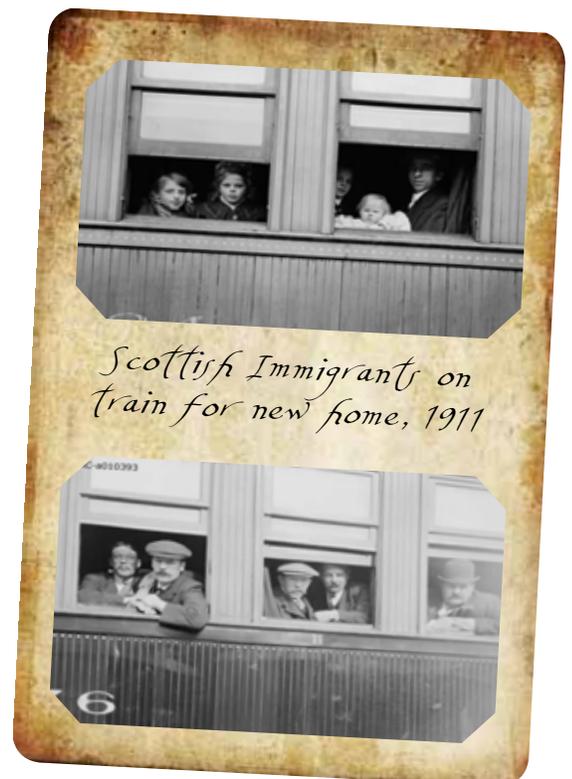
## Scottish Settlement in Saskatchewan

Scottish people first came to Canada during the time of the fur trade. Many of the Scottish fur traders married First Nations women and their children were known as English speaking Métis. (Métis means mixed). You can see the Scottish influence in the Métis culture in their music and food (bannock).

The Earl of Selkirk in Scotland wanted to help Scottish peasants and started settlements near Winnipeg, Manitoba in the early 1800s. Some of the Scots moved further west to Prince Albert, close to Batoche, where many of the Scottish Métis had settled.

Another wave of Scottish settlers came to Saskatchewan in the late 1800s. Scotland was over populated and there were few jobs. Canada offered the promise of both jobs and prosperity. This group of Scots settled near Moosomin and Wapella. Later groups settled near Dunrea, Pelican Lake, Abernethy, and Indian Head.

Scottish people continued to settle all through the province into the early 1900s. They were very good masons\*, and built fine houses and schools made of stone.





Many Scots played an important role in Saskatchewan's growth: Patrick Gammie Laurie founded a newspaper called the Saskatchewan Herald; Thomas MacNutt was the first Speaker of the Saskatchewan Legislature; Walter Scott became the first Premier of Saskatchewan and editor of the Regina newspaper; Archibald Peter McNab was Lieutenant-Governor from 1936 to 1944; and Premier T.C. Douglas led the provincial party which is now known as the NDP.

Today you can enjoy Scottish culture through pipe bands and the Highland games. Numerous Scottish place names are found throughout Saskatchewan, e.g., Stranraer, Buccleuch, McMichael, Macrorie, Ban-nock, Jedburgh, Glenburn, and Glenbogie.

\*These are people who build with stone or brick

Adapted from: [http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/scottish\\_settlements.html](http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/scottish_settlements.html)



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## Ukrainian Settlement in Saskatchewan

There were three waves of Ukrainian settlers to Canada and Saskatchewan. Some of the first Ukrainian immigrants settled around Rosthern, and later Hafford and Krydor. Most of the people who came from Ukraine at this time were peasant farmers, looking for a better life in Canada. The northern parkland area was selected because it provided three important natural resources:

- 🌿 wood used for building and fuel (wood stoves)
- 🌿 clean water for human and animals to drink
- 🌿 land for farming.

The climate and the land in Saskatchewan were similar to that in Ukraine, so the people adapted their farming practices quickly and easily. Many of them became successful grain and animal farmers, and even today continue to contribute greatly to agriculture in Saskatchewan.

Between 1924 and 1929, a second group of Ukrainians came to Saskatchewan. These people were not farmers, but refugees, labourers, and Ukrainian army members who had been involved in the war in Russia.





The third wave of Ukrainian immigration took place from 1947 to 1952. These settlers were mostly people who had been taken from homes in Ukraine to work as slave labourers in Germany during the Second World War. When the war ended, they did not want to return to their homes because of the Russian takeover of their country (Ukraine). These immigrants included skilled workers, professionals\*, scientists, and musicians. This last group mostly settled in the main cities in Saskatchewan.

Education was extremely important to the first Ukrainian settlers. When they settled, the building of a church and school were next in importance only to improving and clearing their land. Children were encouraged to attend school and receive as much education as they could. As a result, many teachers, lawyers, bankers, doctors, and other professionals in Saskatchewan are Ukrainian.

Ukrainian dancing is popular in Saskatchewan. There are many active dance groups in the province. Ukrainian people are well known for their choirs. Ukrainian food is very popular with almost everyone and includes such things as perogies, cabbage rolls, borscht, and kielbasa.

\*professionals are people like teachers, lawyers, and doctors

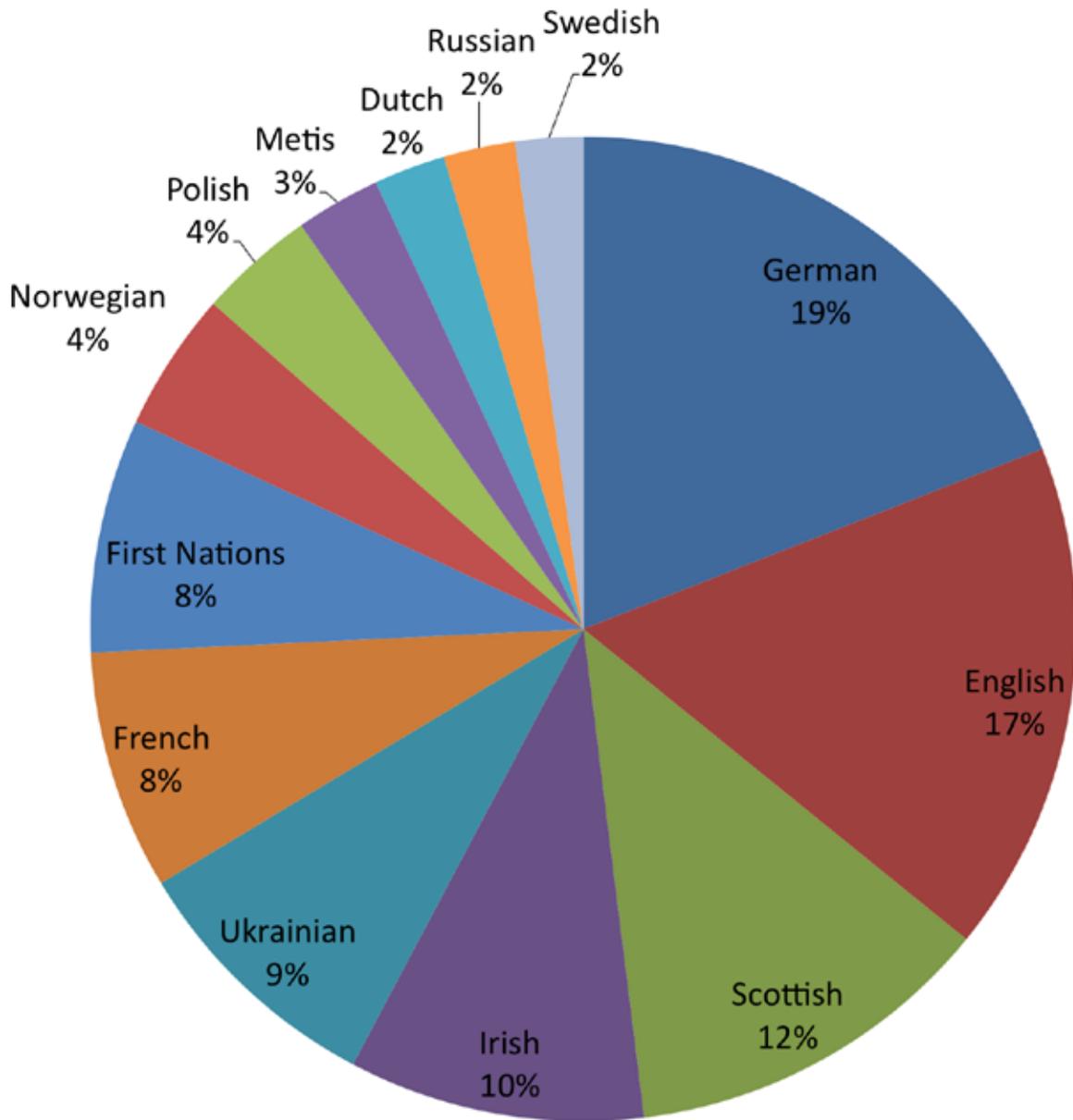
Adapted from <http://www.ucc.sk.ca/en/about/>

Historic photos accessed at <http://scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy>, used with permission.





## Ethnic Groups in Saskatchewan (2006)



Reference: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saskatchewan>