



KINGS LANDING  
A HISTORY LESSON ON  
OUTDOOR WINTER  
RECREATION  
IN THE 1800S





# A HISTORY LESSON ON OUTDOOR WINTER RECREATION IN THE 1800s

## OBJECTIVE

- Learn about outdoor wintertime recreation in 1800s and compare it to now
- Be active outside
- Be creative with snow and other materials

## MATERIALS

- Buttons or pebbles (minimum of six)
- Sticks (two)
- Packable snow
- (Optional) scarf
- (Optional) carrot
- Top hat or bonnet OR the following craft items:
  - Cylindrical cardboard (toilet paper, paper towel, or another empty roll)
  - Black paper
  - Colourful paper
  - Glue stick



*Kings Landing artefact* – these covers would go over a person's footwear to add a layer of protection and insulation for the cold winters.

## INTRODUCTION

Outdoor winter recreation today in New Brunswick originated from not only traditional means of fun, but also transportation – some mail deliverers embarked on long journeys using snowshoes, skaters zipped along frozen river highways, and sleds were used to transport items.

This lesson links traditional outdoor winter recreation from the time of Kings Landing to the present while also getting out of the classroom.



## EQUIPMENT FOR WINTER RECREATION IN THE 1800s

### *Dress*

Heavy clothing was required to hold up against the harsh winter landscape. This included outer jackets and hand muffs made from pelts of animals such as the iconic beaver.

**Did you know?** In the early days of the fur trade, the Hudson's Bay Company used beaver pelts as a form of currency, set in what was called "Made Beaver," and continued to do so until 1955. One Made Beaver was equivalent to the value of an adult male beaver's pelt in good condition. In the 1860s, the company mass produced brass tokens, with the largest valued at one Made Beaver.



*Hudson's Bay Company brass token set. Jimtrethewey/Wikimedia Commons*

The Inuit invented snow goggles made of flattened walrus or caribou bone, antler, and ivory or wood to protect their eyes from the intense northern sun. Vision was reduced to slits so that there was little sun exposure. Europeans wore tinted spectacles to reduce glare, but complete protection from ultraviolet light did not happen until the Crookes lenses in 1913.



*Rudolph Martin Anderson  
Canadian Museum of History*



## *Skating*

Skates from the Victoria era were often curled blades (usually metal, iron, or brass) mounted onto wooden platforms that contained straps. One size almost fit all, and there was no difference between right and left feet. In 1833, the country's first skating club was established at Lily Lake in Saint John. Two decades later, Saint John's majestic Victoria Skating Rink was built. It was popular for its skating facilities with live bands and entertainment.



In 1863, the Dartmouth-based Starr Manufacturing Company debuted the Acme Spring Skate, which had a revolutionary spring lock mechanism to clamp onto the skater's boots.

Long distance skating was common on the Saint John River in the late 1800s, and it was sometimes possible to travel from Saint John to Fredericton in seven hours. In 1870, James A Whelpley from Saint John patented the Long Reach Skate.

The origin of hockey is a great debate in Canada. Some call Windsor, N.S. the "birthplace of hockey" based on a reference to playing "hurley on the long pond on the ice," in a fictional work by Thomas Chandler Haliburton, who went to King's Collegiate School there and graduated in 1810. There are many other accounts of ice gatherings resembling hockey throughout North America and England – the first officially organized game, according to the International Ice Hockey Federation, was played on March 3, 1875, in Montreal.



## *Snowshoeing*

Snowshoes were historically used by Indigenous peoples to travel and hunt. The frames were made of wood and the webbing laced from deer, caribou, and moose hide. Snowshoes were adopted by the Europeans when they arrived.

## *Skiing*

Modern skiing was brought over to North America by Scandinavians in the mid-1800s, but the sport did not rise to popularity in Canada until the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



## *Sledding*

The word "toboggan" derives from the Mi'kmaq word **tobakun**. Toboggans were typically made out of wood. Not only were sleds fun for sliding down hills, they were also traditionally used by Indigenous people to move items such as game. Large sleds, towed by horses or snow dogs, were also a form of transportation.



Ask yourself – how do these wintertime activities in the past compare to now? How has the equipment changed?

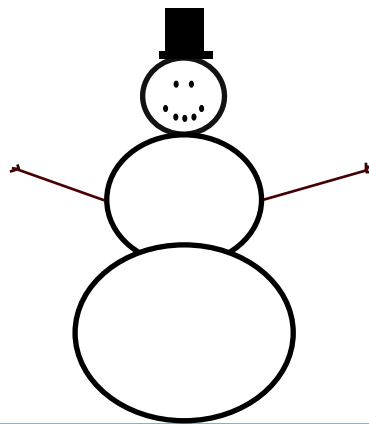
## ACTIVITY: MAKE A SNOWPERSON WITH VICTORIAN FLAIR

Did you know that great historical figures such as famed artist Michelangelo have made famous sculptures out of snow, only to later melt and disappear for the world to never see again? When there is wet and packable snow outside, it's time to get creative and enjoy the snow while it lasts. True to the Victorian Era, a snowperson needs a top hat. If you do not have one in your wardrobe, check out instructions from the [How to make the Snowman's Hat YouTube video](#) on crafting one using cylindrical cardboard such as a toilet paper roll.

1. Using packable snow, make your body by rolling three big snowballs – a base, middle and head – and stack them accordingly.
2. Stick onto the head rocks or buttons to make the eyes, nose, and mouth (optional to use a carrot for the nose).
3. Line up rocks or buttons on the body (either a single line or two for double-breasted).
4. Insert sticks into the body for arms.
5. Fashion a Victorian top hat or bonnet out of whatever materials you have, or use a head covering to keep your snowperson stylishly warm!
6. (optional) wrap a scarf around the neck.

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Go skating, skiing, or snowshoeing! If you do not have the gear, many local libraries, organizations, and government recreational departments offer loan programs.



### FUN FACT

The Kings Landing collections of artefacts contain skates, skis, push sleds, pull sleds, toboggans, sleds, snowshoes, winter clothes, winter scenes on artwork, and more!



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*Images not otherwise labelled are of artefacts in Kings Landing's collections.*