

## Pastimes

Many pastimes were similar whether people lived in urban or rural areas. People enjoyed playing or watching outdoor sports, doing crafts such as needlework or carving, making music with friends, reading or storytelling, and playing games. Some pastimes were part of people's traditions. For example, snowsnake was a popular game with many First Nations boys and men. The object of the game was to see how far you could slide a large stick along the snow. Scottish settlers found the long Canadian winters ideal for playing their favourite sport, curling.

## The Invention of Hockey

In the mid-1800s, people in BNA first started using the word *hockey* to describe a game played on ice. It was so much fun that boys were missing school in order to play. Some people said it was too rough and should be forbidden!

Historians debate whether the first "official" hockey game was played in Windsor (Nova Scotia), Halifax (Nova Scotia), Montreal (Quebec), or Kingston (Ontario). We know for sure that, in the early 1800s, people in the Maritimes were playing a game called hurley-on-ice. The name *hurley* comes

from an Irish game that involves hitting a ball with a stick. The Mi'kmaq also had their own version of the game. They traditionally played on skates made from the bones of animals strapped to their moccasins. For many years, hockey sticks made by Mi'kmaq carvers were considered to be the best you could get. If you're interested in sports, you might want to do some research to decide for yourself which town should be called the "Birthplace of Hockey."

## Special Events

People living in cities had more opportunities to go to special events, such as musical performances or plays. There was also a variety of sports clubs and organized competitions. In rural communities, colonists often had "work bees" where everyone made a party of getting together to get something done, such as building a barn or making quilts.

This illustration shows a French-Canadian get-together. People in rural communities all over British North America very much looked forward to a chance to visit their neighbours. Homes were quite far apart and travel was difficult, so a get-together was a special treat.

