The Construction of Colonial Identity in the Canadas, 1815-1867

Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Oxford

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Lady Margaret Hall

Hilary Term 2014

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the Foundation of Canadian Studies in the UK which has funded my Canadian Studies scholarship at Lady Margaret Hall and allowed me to conduct this research. The Beit Fund's generous travel grant gave me the opportunity to study at various archives in Canada without which it would not have been possible to complete this thesis. The staff at Lady Margaret Hall must also be thanked, for continuing to provide an excellent environment in which to study, and in particular, I must thank the principal, Dr. Frances Lannon, and the tutor for graduates, Dr. Allan Doig, for their continued interest in my work.

Above all my supervisor, Dr. John Darwin, deserves thanks for patiently and thoughtfully guiding me through the degree. He has continually pointed me in the right direction in terms of framing the topic in a manner which made studying it feasible and in providing insights that I would never have reached on my own. Feedback early on in the writing process from Dr. Judith Brown and Dr. Jamie Belich proved very valuable and has greatly improved the final thesis. The strength of the global and imperial history programme at Oxford has helped to broaden my horizons and helped me to locate my research within contexts that I had not previously considered and for that I thank those responsible for running both the global and imperial history seminar series and the transnational and global history seminar series. I am very grateful to Professor Richard Reid for providing valuable and timely feedback on a chapter I sent him with virtually no warning.

I would like to thank my family for providing my with the financial support necessary to continue to study and for their constant moral support throughout this process. I am thankful to the Oxford Ultimate Frisbee team for providing me with support and an outlet for social and athletic activities very different from the work required for this research. Finally, I would like to thank all the members of the Lady Margaret Hall MCR, past and present, who have made my time at Oxford so enjoyable and without whom I would never have managed to complete this undertaking.

Short Abstract

This thesis examines the construction and contestation of Anglo-Canadian identity from the end of the War of 1812 until Confederation in 1867. It argues that the conflict between English- and French-speakers in the Canadas was by no means inevitable but a function of the institutional and political circumstances of the time. It seeks to complicate the picture of the British in Canada by demonstrating that they were a diverse community of different groups, institutions and religions that only through struggle and the incentives of party politics were able to unify themselves into a single culture. The development of party politics not just coincided with the creation of Anglo-Canadian identity but played a fundamental role in creating it. Through the burgeoning newspaper industry, the Reform and Tory parties spread their ideas of what it meant to be British, loyal and Canadian to a widespread English-speaking audience. Canadian history in this period is better understood not in the traditional dualist framework of British against French but as the complex interactions of many different groups, including the English, the Scots, the Irish Protestants, the Irish Catholics, the Americans and the French-Canadians. The thesis seeks to deconstruct the terms 'British' and 'loyal'. Both terms were appropriated by various individuals and groups seeking to gain benefits by defining themselves as such. Until the early 1830s, attempts were made to include certain classes of French-Canadians within the broader British polity and identity. The 1837 rebellions marked the 'othering' of French-Canadians. Meanwhile the Upper Canada rebellions presented an enemy in the United States and a new strain of anti-Americanism, separate to that of the loyalists, was developed. By 1849, the moment of the rebellion losses crisis, the fundamental tenets of the Anglo-Canadian identity had been established: anti-Americanism, a concern about French political influence and a sense of kinship with English speakers across the province of United Canada. These three periods are shown to have played a crucial role in the development of an anglophone identity that encompassed the whole of United Canada.

Long Abstract

By the time of the British North America Act in 1867, an Anglo-Canadian national consciousness had come into being. While Canada may have lacked the confidence of its southern neighbour and its identity would long maintain a contested character, confederation represented the culmination of the Canadian national project rather than its beginning. This thesis has examined how English-speakers constructed, contested and negotiated their various identities from the end of the War of 1812 until the enactment of confederation in 1867. It Identities in the Canadas are shown to have been complex, multiple and even contradictory. Even the term 'Canada' referred to an area defined as much by the commercial and communication networks of the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes as by formal political boundaries. The use of the term 'loyalty' is also questioned. It has all too often been taken as a given. My thesis has built on the work of David Mills, demonstrating the importance of the rhetoric of loyalty, while highlighting that it was a tool used by politicians and individuals for instrumental purposes. Until 1849, when undermined by the Tory endorsements of the annexation movement, loyalty formed the dominant discourse of Canadian politics. Yet the meaning of 'loyalty' itself was strongly contested.

Through the rebellions of 1837-1838 the English-speaking populations of the two Canadas were brought together in their loyalty to Britain. They began to envisage themselves as a single political entity. Identities before the rebellion were limited, regional, and diasporic – they looked back to their places of birth more often than to their current homeland. After the rebellions, the experience of defending their homes against both internal and external enemies inspired political unity. The following decade resulted in the onset of responsible government. Only by governing themselves on domestic affairs could Canadians prevent further rebellions. With the appointment of Lord Elgin as Governor General and the election of a reform ministry led by Baldwin and Lafontaine in 1848, this was finally achieved. Its security was confirmed by events of the rebellion losses controversy the next year. This bill, which aimed to compensate Lower Canadians who had suffered losses of property caused by British troops and by loyalist volunteers during the 1837-8 rebellions, was seen by the Tories as a 'rebel-rewarding bill' and an insult to their loyalty. In anger, the Tories of Montreal rioted and burned down the parliament building. Later in the year, this combined with economic depression following the repeal of the Corn Laws, to ignite the anger of the Montreal merchants into signing an Annexation Manifesto, asking for peaceable separation from Great Britain and annexation to the United States. The Rebellion Losses Bill was debated throughout both provinces in the most vehement of terms. Divisions fell along political rather than ethnic lines as reformers supported the bill and the Governor, while conservatives condemned it in the strongest terms. The reversal of positions between reformers and conservatives from a decade earlier was at its starkest. 'Loyal' Tories now advocated annexation, attacked the (British) symbols and institutions of government and even insulted and attacked the Governor General, threatening his safety in Montreal, Toronto and other places throughout United Canada.

This thesis also seeks to complicate the traditional dualist image in Canadian historiography of a homogeneous British group in uncompromising opposition to the French-Canadians. The British are presented instead as a diverse conglomeration of different ethnicities, comprising the English, the Scots, the Irish and the Americans, as well as smaller minorities including those of Italian and German descent. Their uniformity was by no means a foregone conclusion, nor was their francophobia. The British comprised a wide array of religious

backgrounds, including Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians and Catholics. These religious differences were often the cause of conflicts. Instead, there were a series of shifting alliances between these different groups in response to the circumstances of the time. Before the 1830s, particularly in Montreal, the English-speaking elite appeared willing to incorporate French-Canadians of privileged backgrounds that shared their politics.

The positioning of two of these groups, the Irish and the Americans, is seen to be crucial in the development of the category "British" that would come to form the bedrock of Canadian national identity. The Protestant portion of the Irish population formed the least problematic of these groups. They were able to integrate themselves into the British moniker and the Anglo-Scottish elite in most cases with little difficulty. But even so, they presented an element of disruption. Irish Protestants brought with them the Orange Order, an institution banned in Great Britain, which seemed to represent the worst of the sectarian excesses of Ireland. Yet in the Canadas it became the quintessential Anglo-Canadian loyalist institution. More problematic were the Irish Catholics. They represented a dangerous 'third force' between the British and the French that could play a decisive role in provincial politics, particularly in Lower Canada. Indeed, they were seen as crucial to the success or failure of the rebellions by both language-groups. Through the active and tireless efforts of conservative propagandists Irish Catholic loyalty was ensured. Canadian Tories suppressed their traditional prejudices towards the Irish and held out the promise of patronage and membership within a welcoming British community to lure them away from the French *Patriotes*. Finally, the Americans represented a challenge to British authority. Most American-born immigrants in the Canadas were not loyalists or their descendants but later migrants who lacked the same attachment to the crown. Their loyalty was repeatedly questioned and they were often presented as aliens. The rebellions of 1837 seemed to confirm their disloyalty. After the rebellions, a legacy of anti-American bitterness pervaded Canadian society. Few Americans immigrated after the War of 1812 and after 1837, those who did faded into the wider anglophone community as they attempted to distance themselves from their American heritage by focusing on a 'loyal' and 'British' persona.

The 'British' were brought together into a single imagined political community, in the terms of Benedict Anderson, by the creation of two implacable 'Others'. These were the external enemy of the United States and the internal enemy of the French-Canadians (best demonstrated by the consistent use of the term 'French Domination' from the 1840s onwards). The threat presented by these two foes implored English-speakers to forget their differences and unite for self-interest and survival. In this context, the rebellions of 1837 were a conflict less about politics and reform than about race and national supremacy. This process of 'othering' was not inevitable. It appears that it was not even deliberate. Rather it occurred as an unintended adjunct to the emergence of a modern party political system in the Canadas. The constitutional structure of the two provinces, determined by Great Britain, played a key role in this development and hence a key role in identity development. The developing Reform and Tory parties sought to cultivate loyal constituencies of voters through networks of newspapers and patronage. These networks diffused ideas of belonging and identity from the centres of Montreal and Toronto to a much wider audience. Each party articulated their own concept of identity and imposed them on the public for electoral gain. An intensely partisan political climate contributed to an exclusive identity that began to view the French-Canadians as an internal 'Other'.

Through the examination of a wide range of newspapers in three communities – Montreal, the Ottawa Valley, and the London District of Upper Canada – the identities presented and created by English-speaking Canadians in the public sphere are examined. Each of these

places represented a very different environment. Montreal developed into the commercial metropolis of Canada. Its population, increasingly anglophone, was fundamentally divided between its English-speaking and French-speaking portions. When the rebellions came in 1837-8, Montreal represented a bastion of Anglo-Canadian loyalism amidst a sea of French-Canadian treason. As the site of arrival for many immigrants, ethnic relations in the city were complicated by the appearance of poor, ill-fed and sometimes disease-ridden Irish, English and Scottish settlers in great numbers. The Ottawa Valley was very different. Newly settled, isolated and utterly dependent on the Ottawa River, this region was a frontier where survival and subsistence often overtook the broader political concerns of either province. Its ethnic character was predominantly Irish, in contrast to the rest of Upper Canada. Nonetheless, when the rebellions came in 1837 and the rebellion losses bill in 1849, the responses of the people here largely mirrored English-speakers in both Montreal and the London District. The London District was a rural area with no large towns until the very end of the period. Ethnically, it had been originally settled by American 'late loyalists' and few from the British Isles before the 1830s. The sudden immigration of the British brought to the fore an ethnic tension that only dissipated with the failure of the Duncombe rebellion in the district. If three such different areas could demonstrate a unity of sentiment and identity then it supports the thesis of the development of a single Anglo-Canadian national identity over the period.

A number of events provoked issues of identity and nationality. The Alien Question during the 1820s threatened the position of American immigrants in Upper Canada and held great resonance in the American-dominated London District. After the War of 1812, the loyalty of Americans was questioned, and judicial decisions from the mother country meant that henceforth Americans were to be interpreted as aliens. This threatened their rights to both own property and vote that had been exercised without question for decades. The Montreal West Ward Election of 1832 represented the first stage in the hardening of ethnic attitudes as three innocent French-Canadians were shot dead by the British military. The Shiners' War from 1834-1837 brought ethnic conflict to the Ottawa Valley as French and Irish lumberers fought and disrupted the tranquillity of Bytown, from which the elites of that town were unable to acquire aid from the provincial government to prevent. Each case represented a local issue that had great significance in its own area but little resonance with the wider English-speaking community.

These three areas had very different experiences of the rebellions. Montreal was at the centre of the Lower Canadian rebellion, as minor conflicts broke out within the city between the Sons of Liberty and the Doric Club and the surrounding countryside rose in rebellion. Bytown, meanwhile, stood almost immune from disaffection, raising volunteers to assist with putting down the rebellion, but otherwise able to stand and watch as a passive observer to the events. The London District was at the centre of its own, lesser-known rebellion, as Charles Duncombe raised a group of disaffected rebels, primarily American and Canadian-born, who gathered in the county of Norfolk with the intention of joining Mackenzie's rebellion after rumours were heard of his victory in Toronto.

The rebellion losses crisis, by contrast, demonstrated the maturity of the Canadian political sphere. Here was a national issue that reverberated throughout the country. In each area, the events of the year were met with similar responses and similar language was used to describe them. In all three regions, reactions fell along party lines set by national political leaders. While the action in Montreal was the most dramatic, with the burning of the parliament building, the insults to the Governor General and the annexation manifesto, it was far from ignored elsewhere. The rebellion losses bill and its consequences, including particularly the British American League, dominated the news in both Bytown and London. Lord Elgin

visited all three of these places, and in each, he provoked controversy. In Montreal, he was forced to retreat to Monklands for his own safety. In Bytown, the preparation of an invitation to him led to the 'Stoney Monday Riot' in which reformers and tories clashed violently. In London these tensions were visible through the destruction of the triumphal arches by the mayor and his supporters.

This thesis therefore argues that through the development of party politics, a process which relied heavily on the networks created by the burgeoning newspaper industry, a discourse of loyalty and anglophone Canadian identity was disseminated throughout United Canada. The rebellions of 1837-8, through the events themselves and through their embittered, but sometimes controversial and ambiguous, legacy, are seen as crucial to this process of identity construction and negotiation. These three diverse locations are viewed as representative of broader developments occurring throughout Upper and Lower Canada during the period and the use of newspaper evidence helps to shed light on an under-studied aspect of pre-Confederation Canadian history.

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Abbreviations

Public Archives of Ontario – PAO

Library and Archives Canada – LAC

Journals of the House of Assembly of Lower Canada – JHALC

Journals of the House of Assembly of Upper Canada – JHAUC

Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada - JLAPC

Journals of the Legislative Council of Upper Canada – JLCUC

Chapter 1: Introduction

> 'The infusion of a national spirit carries with it the development and energy in each one of us means the country's progress. It must be our aim to awaken and foster this spirit ... And with a loyalty which glows in every Canadian heart, we are loath to dissever connection with the country to which we are bound by the closest ties of birth, affection and language ... if the inspiring motives in adopting these ideas are to love Canada and a desire for Canadian progress, it is not because we love the old land the less, but because with increasing intelligence and enlarging sympathies, we love the new better.'[1] – A. T. Drummond, 8th December 1873.

> 'I found two nations warring in the bosom of a single state: I found a struggle, not of principles, but of races; and I perceived that it would be idle to attempt any amelioration of laws or institutions until we could first succeed in terminating the deadly animosity that now separates the inhabitants of Lower Canada into the hostile divisions of French and English.' – Lord Durham, 1839.

Constructing Identity in the Canadas, 1815-1867

By the early 1870s A.T. Drummond, quoted above, a Canadian-born lawyer and merchant, represented the optimism of a youthful Canadian nationalist movement in the early years of Confederation.[2] The Canada First movement sought to imitate nationalist movements of other countries and in 1874 began publishing a journal entitled 'The Nation'. Yet how did such a strong Canadian identity emerge? It surely did not spring into existence unprovoked when the British North America Act was passed in 1867. Instead, the development of Canadian identity was a much longer process beginning in the early 19th century. This thesis will focus on the development of anglophone identity in the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada. Individuals from other parts of British North America are not seen to participate in this identity and its construction, at least not in any significant manner, before confederation. Through the burgeoning newspaper industry, the emerging Reform and Tory parties spread their ideas of what it meant to be British, loyal and Canadian to a widespread English-speaking audience and by doing so they had developed a consensus Anglo-Canadian identity in the Province of United Canada by 1849.

Not everyone was accepted into this new identity. Most obviously, the French-Canadians struggled to be incorporated. Many retreated into 'survivance', the maintenance of a distinct national culture within the newly created Canadian state. For many Anglo-Canadians, the French-speaking population were the 'Other' against which they defined themselves. The minority populations of Canada struggled to gain acceptance. Lord Durham's statement of 'two nations warring in the bosom of a single state' has had an exceptional impact upon the study of Canadian history. The idea that the reconciliation of the French-Canadians and Anglo-Canadians was impossible influenced has continued to dominate the interpretations of nineteenth century Canadian history to the present day. Yet in many ways this picture is flawed. The pre-confederation period saw a complex interplay of a variety of ethnic groups, of which the French-Canadians were just one. There were various attempts at cooperation and conciliation as well as assimilation.

The debate on Canadian identity has flared up once again. With the commemoration of the bicentennial of the War of 1812 and the upcoming centennial of the First World War, the power of history in forming Canadian identity has rarely been more controversial. The

[1] 'A Canadian National Spirit', a lecture delivered before the Young Men's Association of St. Andrew's Church, Montreal, December 8th, 1873 – A.T. Drummond, pp. 5-6, 13.
[2] G. Rose, *A Cyclopedia of Canadian Biography*, Vol. 2 (Toronto: Rose Publishing Company, 1888), p. 311-12.

Conservative government decided to focus on the War of 1812 as a key part of Canada's historical legacy.[3] Despite spending nearly $30 million on its commemoration, many Canadians remain unaware of its existence.[4] In academic circles, Alan Taylor has argued for the significance of the War of 1812 in forming Canadian national identity: 'Upper Canada and the United States had been incompletely separated by the American Revolution', but 'by producing a military stalemate, the war led to a sharper distinction between Upper Canada and the United States … In post-war Upper Canada, the people and their culture became more committed to the mixed constitution and to the union of the empire.'[5] There can be no question that the war of 1812 was a significant event in North American history. Yet many of the changes after the war were the result of vast waves of immigration from the British Isles and the development of a modern communications infrastructure. As a defining moment the War of 1812 is problematic. Most individuals living in the Canadas at the time of Confederation had neither lived through the war nor were they descended from its veterans. It is necessary to move beyond the simple paradigms of dualism and loyalism that have ruled the historical discourse so far. A more nuanced view, that incorporates the complexities of the diverse groups of Canada's peoples, is required. The pre-confederation era cannot be ignored any longer in discussions of Canadian identity.

Allan Smith attributed the emergence of Anglo-Canadian nationality to the 1820s as 'Upper Canadians had begun to think of their province, and the large British North American society of which it was a part, as potentially a great nation within the empire'.[6] William Morton located the development of nationalism in the achievement of responsible government in the 1840s, by which 'Canadians … had set out to be an associated, but equal, nation within the British Empire'.[7] Kenneth McNaught attributed the emergence of Canadian nationality to the 1860s.[8] Arthur Lower, too, argued that 'confederation, then, implied nationalism … the provinces were moving out of their narrow parochial orbit into the sunlight of national life.'[9] Marxist historians, such as Henry Milner, have argued for the crucial role of the post-confederation state in the creation of the Canadian nation. In particular it emerged as 'the fruit of the aspirations and machinations of the Montreal-based bourgeoisie.'[10]

For Gillian Poulter, nationalism's emergence in Canada was located in the post-confederation period: 'Canada's national awakening did not happen in the trenches of World War I or in the centennial air of Montreal's Expo '67. Rather, 'it was the 1885 North West Rebellion that marked Canada's cultural birth by extinguishing all internal boundaries and 'others' and by giving Canadians a sense of themselves as a transcontinental nation'.[11] The reviewers,

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[3] ' 'Little-known war' of 1812 a big deal for Ottawa', *Globe and Mail*, 27 April 2013.
[4] 'War of 1812 extravaganza failed to excite Canadians, polls show', *Globe and Mail*, 21 February 2013.
[5] A. Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels & Indian Allies* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), pp. 457-8.
[6] A. Smith, 'Old Ontario and the Emergence of a National Frame of Mind' in *Canada – an American Nation? Essays on Continentalism, Identity and the Canadian Frame of Mind* (Montreal and Kingston, 1994), p. 253.
[7] W. Morton, *The Canadian Identity*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1961) p. 40.
[8] K. McNaught, 'The National Outlook of English-speaking Canadians', in P. Russell (ed.), *Nationalism in Canada*, (Toronto, McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1966) p. 64.
[9] A. Lower, *Canadians in the Making*, (Toronto: Longmans, 1958), p. 292. See also A. Bailey, 'William Alexander Foster and the Genesis of English-Canadian Nationalism' in *Culture and Nationality: Essays* (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1972).
[10] H. Milner, 'Canada and the Crisis of the Quebec State' in C. Heron (ed.), *Imperialism, Nationalism and Canada: Essays from the Marxist Institute of Toronto* (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1977), p. 145.
[11] Review – *Becoming Native in a Foreign Land: Sport, Visual Culture, and Identity in Montreal, 1840-85*(Vancouver, 2009) – Gillian Poulter' – Jason Blake and Eszter Szenczi, *H-Canada* (April 2010)

however, make an important point: 'if there was a watershed, Canadians would have found it by now'.[12] Some have entirely rejected the premise of a Canadian identity: 'this unitary, infrastructural Canadian state was not (and is not) accompanied by a corresponding sense of a shared Canadian nationhood'.[13] This thesis is not about identifying the particular moment at which Canadian nationalism emerged, but about contributing to our understanding of the construction, contestation and interplay of various identities in nineteenth-century Canada.

It has often been argued that the trauma of the First World War, and of the battle of Vimy Ridge in particular, awoke Canada to true nationhood.[14] From newspaper articles to the exhibits of the Canadian War Museum, it is argued that participation in the First World War created the Canadian national character.[15] Jonathan Vance has argued of the great importance of the myth of the First World War in creating Anglo-Canadian nationality, even if it failed in its ultimate nation-building aims of uniting the French- and English-speaking communities.[16] Remembrance of the fallen, as much as independent Canadian victories, were responsible for Canada's understanding of itself as a separate nation.

Canadian identity has been seen as the construct of a cultural and political elite through deliberate means.[17] This thesis seeks to build on this idea by arguing that the deliberate construction of identities was pursued by a number of different political actors, most notably the Reform and Tory parties through the 1830s and 1840s. John A. Macdonald was not exceptional in his attempts to create a unified, national political party linked by complex networks of patronage. Instead, he followed a well-established trend of Canadian patronage politics. Politicians such as Macdonald understood the value of constructing politically useful identities. Historians of Canada have attempted to address three key issues: When did Canadian nationality (whether English-, French-, or pan-Canadian variants) develop? What are the characteristics and nature of this nationality? Why did it develop at this time and in this form?

The crucial role of Canada West in Confederation has been highlighted by P.B. Waite: only there was it 'a popular movement. It was imposed on British North America by ingenuity, luck, courage, and sheer force; its story has often been told in terms of political coalitions and colonial office despatches … Confederation had a vital public existence.'[18] Confederation must be understood in terms of its effects on ordinary people and not just as series of diplomatic conferences. Canada West, 'protestant in religion, empiricist in temper, expansionist in design' provided 'the driving energy which was gradually destroying the twenty-three year-old union of the Province of Canada. Its commercial strength growing as rapidly as its population, its land hunger unappeased, it was buoyant, aggressive, and powerful.'[19] To what extent was the Canadian identity defined by Upper Canada and Upper Canadians? If Waite's thesis is correct, Confederation represented a form of 'Greater

[12] Ibid.
[13] D. Cannadine, 'Imperial Canada: Old History, New Problems' in C. Coates (ed.), *Imperial Canada, 1867-1917* (Edinburgh: Centre of Canadian Studies, 1995), p. 7.
[14] For a discussion of the use of the Vimy Ridge myth, see D. Inglis, 'Vimy Ridge: 1917-1992: A Canadian Myth over Seventy Five Years', (M.A. diss., Simon Fraser University, 1995).
[15] J. O'Connor, 'How Vimy Ridge made Canada into a country of heroes', *National Post,* 13 April 2008.
[16] J. Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997).
[17] D. Smiley, *The Canadian Political Nationality* (Toronto: Methuen, 1967); A. G. Bailey, 'William Alexander Foster and the Genesis of English-Canadian Nationalism' in A. G. Bailey, *Culture and Nationality.*
[18] P. B. Waite, *The Life and Times of Confederation, 1864-1867: Politics, Newspapers and the Union of British North America* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), p. 323.
[19] Ibid., p. 117.

Canadianism', an imposition of the will and identity of one province over the entirety of British North America. It is in this framework that I seek to examine identity construction in the Canadas – as the laboratory in which identity experiments were conducted before being distributed across a continent to a new political entity.

A number of frameworks of Canadian history have been outlined by D. R. Owram.[20] One such was the Empire-to-Commonwealth thesis, espoused by many early twentieth century historians. George M. Wrong typified this approach, describing Canada as destined to take up role as an equal partner within the British Empire, writing that Canada would be 'bearing her share of Britain's burdens' and that 'we shall before long have highly trained you Canadians employed in the great task of governing India'.[21] This interpretation emphasized the key role of the British Empire in shaping the Anglo-Canadian identity. Canada was defined primarily by its link to Britain and it was this link that British North Americans held as all important for understanding their own identity. The British Empire gradually evolved into a commonwealth as Canadian nationality grew to the extent that it was ready for self-government. Donald Creighton emphasised that Canada was essentially British and that the key enemy was the United States. The staple trade of fur, timber and wheat inextricably linked the colony to the mother country and brought with it ties of identity as well as economics.[22] A variant of this school of thought has been revived in more recent years as the British connection has been re-examined by historians such as Philip Buckner and Ged Martin.[23]

In contrast to this interpretation was the colony-to-nation school of history. This school highlighted the development of a Canadian nationality in opposition to the British Empire. Owram writes that it 'celebrated the triumphs of local autonomy over the resistance of short-sighted British politicians', even though it 'did not rest on the harsh anti-colonial rhetoric seen in some nationalist historiography seen elsewhere in the Empire'.[24] As J.M.S. Careless wrote it 'chiefly concentrated on the paper-strewn path to national status, directing Canadian history to Colonial Office dispatches, the records of imperial conferences, and tense questions of treaty-making powers'.[25] Its main theme was 'the march of Canada to political nationhood, through many a parliamentary manoeuvre and struggle of words as colonial limitations were progressively overcome'.[26] They were fundamentally political in nature, giving little attention to the cultural aspects of the growth of Canadian national consciousness. Arthur Lower has typified this interpretation, from whose book this school of history takes its name.[27] George Brown, too, exemplified this school of history, writing of 'the empire in which Canada grew toward nationhood'.[28]

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[20] D. Owram, 'Canada and the Empire' in R. Winks (ed.), *Oxford History of the British Empire,* Vol. 5 Historiography (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
[21] G. Wrong, 'Canadian Nationalism and the Imperial Tie', *Proceedings of the American Political Science Association* 6 (1909), p. 107.
[22] See D. Creighton, *The Commercial Empire of the St. Lawrence, 1760-1850* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1937) and *Dominion of the North: A History of Canada* (London: Macmillan Press, 2nd ed., 1957).
[23] See P. Buckner and R. Douglas Francis (eds.), *Canada and the British World: Culture, Migration and Identity* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006), and G. Martin, *Britain and the Origins of Confederation, 1837 – 1867* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1995).
[24] Owram, 'Canada and the Empire', pp. 152-3.
[25] J. Careless, 'Frontierism, Metropolitanism, and Canadian History', http://www.canadahistory.com/sections/papers/careless.htm, Accessed 10/11/2010.
[26] Ibid.
[27] A. Lower, *Colony to Nation: A History of Canada* (Toronto: Longmans, 1946).
[28] G. Brown, *Canada in the Making* (Toronto and Vancouver: J.M. Dent, 1953), pp. 15-16.

Ramsay Cook argued that 'so large was the interpretative vacuum in Canadian history in the mid-1960s that the phrase 'limited identities' caught on almost at once'.[29] The earlier teleologies were gradually abandoned. The creation of a Canadian identity was no longer seen as inevitable. It was beset by difficulties and could be best understood 'through a series of regional, provincial, and other subgroupings' rather than through a single national history.[30] This new school of history has been described as the 'limited identities' school of history.[31] Gilles Paquet and Jean-Pierre Wallot exemplify this interpretation: 'The inhabitants of the political entity now known as Canada never developed anything but limited identities, but that paradoxically those limited identities, rather than reducing "national" communicative competence, may have improved it'.[32] Alongside this has been a recognition that the equation of Anglo-Canadian nationalism with pan-Canadian nationalism by many English-speaking historians can no longer be maintained. From the late 1970s onwards, the subject of the creation of Canadian identity has been engaged with a much greater degree of theoretical sophistication. The economic causes of nationalism were sought by Fernand Ouellet.[33] Colin Coates and Cecilia Morgan have approached the issue from new angles by viewing nationalism through the lenses of gender.[34] Suzanne Zeller has highlighted the role science in the imagining of a trans-continental Canadian national community.[35] This focus on 'limited identities' continues to this day and much Canadian history, such as that of the rebellions of 1837, suffers from a lack of ambition to provide broader, more sweeping accounts of periods and events.[36]

Historians have identified three key myths about the Canadian identity: the myth of the north, the myth of the land, and the myth of tolerance. The myth of the north is related to the climate of Canada as seen as producing a unique character. It saw all the members of Canadian society, both anglophones and francophones, as part of a distinctly northern race, and it was from this northern race that liberty had originally emerged. This could also be used to distinguish Canada from the 'southernness' of the United States.[37] The second myth emphasised the uniqueness of Canadian landscape. The land has been romanticised in Canadian literature and provided one of the key forms of uniting Canadians across its vast territory.[38] The third myth has been 'Canada's mythologised kindness to Aboriginal People', which was 'an important element in developing a national identity based on the notion of difference with the United States of America'.[39] Allan Smith argues that the 'metaphor of the

[29] R. Cook, 'Identities are not like hats', *Canadian Historical Review*, 81:2 (2000), p. 262.
[30] Owram, 'Canada and the Empire', p. 158.
[31] Ibid., p. 157, based on the article by J. Careless, '"Limited Identities" in Canada', *Canadian Historical Review*, 50:1 (1969): 1-10.
[32] G. Paquet and J.-P. Wallot, 'Nouvelle-France/Quebec/Canada: A World of Limited Identities' in N. Canny and A. Pagden (eds.), *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World, 1500 – 1800* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 96.
[33] F. Ouellet (tr. P. Claxton), *Lower Canada 1791 – 1841: Social Change and Nationalism* (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1980).
[34] C. Coates and C. Morgan, *Heroines and History: Representations of Madeleine de Verchères and Laura Secord* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).
[35] S. Zeller, *Inventing Canada: Early Victorian Science and the Idea of a Transcontinental Nation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1987).
[36] A. Greer, '1837-38: Rebellion Reconsidered', *Canadian Historical Review* 76:1 (1995): 1-18.
[37] For a discussion of this myth, see C. Berger, 'The True North, Strong and Free' in Russell (ed.), *Nationalism in Canada*.
[38] See C. Harris, 'The myth of the land in Canadian nationalism' in Russell (ed.), *Nationalism in Canada*.
[39] E. Mackey, *The House of Difference*: *Cultural Politics and National Identity in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), p. 14.

mosaic represents an attempt by Canadian nationalism to come to grips with a difficult, possibly intractable, fact of Canadian life'.[40]

The most important elements of the Canadian identity were anti-Americanism, the idea of Canada as a loyal colony and the hybrid nature of an Old World society transplanted into a New World.[41] During the nineteenth century, religion formed an important part of both French-Canadian and Anglo-Canadian identity. Sylvie Lacombe and Claude Bélanger have pointed to the importance of Catholicism in French-Canadian nationalism, at least after 1840.[42] Both have shared a sense of providential mission. Richard Jones described the French-Canadian variant as 'the idea that the French-Canadian community, both as French and as Catholic, was destined by Providence to fulfil a civilizing role on the North American continent'.[43] The Anglo-Canadian version was explained in racial tones. The Anglo-Saxon race was divinely ordained to be superior to all others. As J. M. S. Careless writes, 'In the 1850s, a fast-growing and aggressive society, aglow with prosperity and railway hopes, was conceiving a belief in its own transcontinental national destiny, as a second version of American national expansion'.[44]

Dualism has dominated the understanding of Canadian history. Historians have concluded that the causes are to be found in the emergence of two distinct nationalities, an English-speaking Canadian nation and the French-speaking *nation canadienne*.[45] This conception of Canadian history as dual has pervaded all major historical works on Canada.[46] Though the idea of dualism has been widespread in Canadian historiography, the simple division between English- and French-Canada can be problematic. Even the idea of French-Canada has not been consistent. A. I. Silver has highlighted the complex relationship between French-Canadians and Quebec. Two alternative conceptions of French Canada existed: one embraced all Franco-Americans and benefited from confederation; the other was a more narrow conception of French-Canada *as* Quebec.[47] Francophone historians have tended to think in terms of an ethnically-based nationalism. Anglophone historians, by contrast, have attempted to identify a civic nationalism, based on the idea of a 'cultural mosaic'.[48] Dualism could exist within a single nation as long as the rights of the French-speaking community were adequately protected. Lafontaine's success could be attributed to his success 'in persuading

[40] A. Smith, 'Metaphor and Nationality in North America', in *Canada: An American Nation?,* p. 130.
[41] On anti-Americanism, see J. Granatstein, *Yankee Go Home? Canadians and Anti-Americanism* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 1996).
[42] S. Lacombe, 'A Brief Overview of French-Canadian Nationalism'; and C. Bélanger, 'Quebec Nationalism'. Another aspect of English-Canadian religious identity is explored in J. Sturgis, 'Learning about Oneself: The Making of Canadian Nationalism, 1867 – 1914', in C. Eldridge (ed.), *Kith and Kin: Canada, Britain and the United States from the Revolution to the Cold War* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997).
[43] Jones, *Community in Crisis: French-Canadian Nationalism in Perspective* (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1972), p. 40.
[44] J. Careless, *The Union of the Canadas* (London: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 165.
[45] For example, see M. Brunet, 'Canadianisme et Canadianism' in *La Presence Anglaise et les Canadiens : études sur l'histoire et la pensée des deux Canadas* (Montreal : Beauchemin 1958).
[46] For clear statements of Canadian duality, see A. Lower, 'Two Ways of Life: The Primary Antithesis. of Canadian History: Presidential Address', *Canadian Historical Association, Annual Report*, 22:1 (1943), pp. 7-8, and more recently, R. Conlogue, *Impossible Nation: The Longing for Homeland in Canada and Quebec* (Stratford, ON: Mercury Press, 1996), p. 15.
[47] A. I. Silver, *The French-Canadian Idea of Confederation, 1864 – 1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982).
[48] Conlogue, *Impossible Nation*, pp. 20-1

French-Canadians of the fundamental premise that their nationality is best preserved and insured by the organic vitality of the British constitution'.[49]

There has been little understanding of how French-Canadian nationalism interacted with the various emerging and established identities of their anglophone neighbours. While this thesis has focused upon the Anglo-Canadian experience, it does attempt to demonstrate the crucial role the French-Canadian played in the Anglo-Canadian imaginary. In the case of French-Canadian nationalism, there have been two main schools of thought. The first interpretation, one widely accepted by French-Canadian nationalists, is that a French-Canadian nationality emerged during the early eighteenth century in New France, as the *Canadien* settlers established a new community in the North American environment. By the time of the Conquest, they already formed a unique community as demonstrated by Brunet.[50]

The other school of interpretation argues that French-Canadian nationalism has emerged in reaction to the British presence. It has been suggested that this occurred during the Conquest, the French Revolution, or during James Craig's "reign of terror".[51] Ouellet has seen the period after the Conquest as one of unusual harmony between English- and French-speaking Canadians.[52] For Sylvie Lacombe, French-Canadian nationalism was closely related to similar nationalist movements in Europe. It was a liberal nationalism, inspired by the same principles of contemporary nationalist movements in Europe.[53] This was the first of several phases in the development of nationalism. After 1840, it became 'a conservative idea dedicated to the preservation of the cultural features of the community'.[54] It moved from a liberal nationalism to a conservative nationalism whose defining feature was its relationship with the Catholic Church. The Church, for French-Canadians, 'played the role of a state'.[55] Claude Bélanger identified three phases of French-Canadian nationalism: a liberal nationalism from 1791 to 1840, an ultramontane nationalism from 1840 to 1960, and a social democratic nationalism from 1945 to the present.[56]

There has been little discussion of identity in Upper Canada before confederation. Two main accounts dominate the historiography. The first, by Jane Errington, argues that Upper Canadian identity was a hybrid identity between an American and British culture. Influenced by loyalists and American immigrants who flooded Upper Canada from the 1790s onwards, she argues that it is a mistake to see Upper Canada as a recreation of British society abroad.[57] Rather, the people of Upper Canada were intensely affected by their North American environment and their interactions with their neighbours in the United States. Yet they

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[49] J. Monet, 'French Canada and the Annexation Crisis, 1848-1850', Canadian *Historical Review,* 47:3 (1966), p. 264.

[50] M. Brunet in H. Neatby, 'Canadianism – A Symposium', *Canadian Historical Association, Annual Report*, 35:1 1 (1956), p. 79. See also R. Lahaise, Interview in G. Gougeon (ed.) (tr. L. Blair, R. Chodos and J. Ubertino), *A History of Quebec Nationalism* (Toronto, 1994), p. 15.

[51] For these interpretations, see Ouellet, *Lower Canada 1791 – 1841*; J.-C. Bonenfant and J.-C. Falardeau, 'Cultural and Political Implications of French-Canadian Nationalism', *Canadian Historical Association, Annual Report*, 25:1 (1946), p. 57; and Jones, *Community in Crisis*, p. 147.

[52] F. Ouellet, 'The Historical Background of Separatism in Quebec' in R. Cook, *French-Canadian Nationalism: An Anthology* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1969), p. 50.

[53] Lacombe, 'A Brief Overview of French-Canadian Nationalism', pp. 1-2.

[54] Ibid., p. 2.

[55] Ibid., p. 1.

[56] C. Bélanger, 'Quebec Nationalism', http://faculty.marianopolis.edu/c.belanger/quebechistory/events/nat-all.htm, Accessed 11/11/2010.

[57] J. Errington, *The Lion, the Eagle and Upper Canada: A Developing Colonial Ideology* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987).

retained their ties to Great Britain and viewed themselves as an important part of the empire. Upper Canadian identity was then something unique. Errington's study ends in 1828, yet many of the events key to the story of the development of Canadian identity– the rebellions of 1837-8, the achievement of responsible government a decade later and confederation in 1867, occurred after this end point. Furthermore this study is conducted largely in the years before the explosive growth of the newspaper industry and the public sphere in the Canadas. Errington's work has therefore necessarily focused upon identity formation amongst the Upper Canadian elite.

The concept of loyalism is crucial to understanding Canadian identity in this period. It is necessary not to simply assume that "loyalism" was synonymous with the United Empire Loyalists. In the Canadas of the nineteenth century, loyalty had a variety of nuanced meanings. As JoAnn Fellows has argued, 'it simplified a number of complicated concepts into a single-word slogan', that included loyalty to the king, to religion (meaning the Anglican Church) and respect for the law and the status quo. It would go on to form a powerful founding myth for the Canadian nation.[58] It could be expressed by fighting for the crown, signing an address of loyalty to the monarch or the Governor General, a commitment to Tory politics, or adherence to the British constitution. Joining a volunteer militia and particularly the defence of the crown, whether in 1776, 1812 or 1837, was a clear sign of one's loyalty. Loyalty delivered political and economic rewards in the form of land grants, compensation for losses during war, and appointments to office. As Bannister and Riordan have argued, 'loyalism encompassed much more than tacit consent'. It included public professions of loyalty and an ideology of monarchism that changed over time.[59] Donal Lowry has argued for the importance of the personal aspect of the monarchy that provided opportunities for Canadians (and members of the other Dominions) to express their loyalty in an uncontroversial fashion.[60]According to Norman Knowles, loyalism, or at least the loyalist myth, formed the foundation of Anglo-Canadian nationalism by the mid-19th century, as the Loyalists became 'a heroic set of founding fathers'.[61]

Yet loyalism did not imply a complete acceptance of the established order. Indeed, the debates over responsible government were largely framed within a loyalist discourse as David Mills has demonstrated.[62] Both a conservative and an opposition conception of loyalty developed. This Tory idea of loyalty stemmed from two distinct sources – the loyalists, who held 'an emotional compound of loyalty to King and Empire, antagonism to the United States an acute, partisan sense of recent history', and another 'more sophisticated viewpoint brought by Simcoe and his entourage, crystallised in the Constitutional Act of 1791: the Toryism of late eighteenth century England'.[63] Meanwhile, 'reform loyalty incorporated the belief in the need for greater provincial autonomy within the imperial system'.[64] Further complicating the

[58] J. Fellows, 'The Loyalist Myth in Canada', *Historical Papers/Communications Historiques* 6:1 (1971), p. 101.
[59] J. Bannister and L. Riordan, 'Loyalism and the British Atlantic, 1660-1840' in J. Bannister and L. Riordan (eds.), *The Loyal Atlantic: Remaking the British Atlantic in the Revolutionary Era* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), p. 8.
[60] D. Lowry, 'The Crown, Empire Loyalism and the Assimilation of Non-British White Subjects in the British World: An Argument against 'Ethnic Determinism' in C. Bridge and K. Fedorowich (eds.), *The British World: Diaspora, Culture and Identity* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), p. 99.
[61] N. Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists: The Ontario Loyalist Tradition and the Creation of Usable Pasts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), p. 5.
[62] D. Mills, *The Idea of Loyalty in Upper Canada, 1784-1850* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988).
[63] Ibid., p. 12.
[64] Ibid., p. 109.

situation was the presence of the 'late loyalists'. These were Americans who had immigrated to Upper Canada after 1791 lured by the promise of free land and low taxation. Upon swearing an oath of allegiance, they were accepted in as potentially loyal. The first Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, John Graves Simcoe, believed that their experience of British government would make them loyal while strengthening the province.[65]

While Mills's work has provided a useful starting point for the study of loyalty, a more comprehensive overview of loyalty, its discourse, its meanings and its workings is still required. This focus on loyalty has done little to help us understand how Upper Canadians could differentiate themselves from the mother country. Both Mills and Errington have focused exclusively on Upper Canada, to the exclusion of the possibility of a wider Anglo-Canadian community that embraced fellow English-speakers in the lower province. While these two works provide useful starting points for the study of Upper Canadian identity, they are unable to explain how such identities were formed and changed over the period.

Loyalty was inextricably linked with the idea of Britishness. The concept became increasingly associated with race during the rebellions era. French-Canadians found themselves on the wrong side of the loyalty divide whatever action they took, while anglophones, particularly in Lower Canada, were able to stretch the term to breaking point in describing themselves. A number of cases elsewhere in the British Empire have demonstrated the ambiguities of loyalism. After the Indian Mutiny, the British were determined to divide the population into rebels and loyalists and such labels acted as behavioural determinants, despite rarely characterising the population accurately.[66] Daniel Branch has demonstrated the instrumental nature of loyalism in the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya. When the Mau Mau revolt enjoyed success, few were willing to engage in the risky prospect of loyalist action. But after mid-1954 it became the preferred method for achieving the primary cultural and social goal of most Kenyans, self-mastery.[67] In both cases there are significant parallels to the Canadian case. The British and provincial governments were keen to divide the population into rebels and loyalists, but the inhabitants of both provinces moulded their definitions of loyalty in reaction to their social and political circumstances.

One important concept of loyalty was imported from Ireland, that of the Orange Order. Hooper-Goranson has noted its great impact in Canada West as 'Ontario, in fact, appears to have made more accommodation for the Irish than the Irish did for Ontario'.[68] In 1830, the Grand Orange Lodge of British North America was founded by Ogle Gowan at Brockville. Though a number of individual lodges had been present before this time, this allowed for a much greater degree of organisation and influence throughout Upper Canada. Strikingly, in 1823 the Upper Canadian Legislature had attempted to ban the order.[69] Less than fifty years later, the first prime minister of Canada was an Orangeman. The Order was a transnational phenomenon that 'reflected what Europeans would imagine to be a North American-style

[65] A. Taylor, 'The Late Loyalists: Northern Reflections of the Early American Republic', *Journal of the Early Republic* 27:1(2007), pp. 5-6.
[66] E. Brodkin, 'The Struggle for Succession: Rebels and Loyalists in the Indian Mutiny of 1857', *Modern Asian Studies* 6:3 (1972), p. 278.
[67] D. Branch, 'The Enemy Within: Loyalists and the War against Mau Mau in Kenya', *Journal of African History* 48 (2007): 291-315.
[68] B. Hooper-Goranson, ' "No Earthly Distinctions": Irishness and Identity in Nineteenth Century Ontario, 1823-1900', (Ph.D. diss., McMaster University, 2010), p. 46.
[69] D. Akenson, *The Irish in Ontario: A Study in Rural History* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984), p. 170.

frontier spirit'.[70] The Order attracted an extraordinarily wide following amongst English-speaking Canadians. Far from being limited to Irish Protestants, it embraced Scottish, English, and American immigrants too.[71] Malcom's description of the Order as 'sectarian animosity hidden under the guise of loyalism' overemphasizes the anti-Catholic nature of the organization.[72] For much of this period, the anti-Catholic tone of the Order in the Canadas was more muted than it had been in Ireland. This was most obvious in the unusual alliance between the leading Scottish Catholic, Alexander MacDonnell, and the leader of the Canadian Orange Order, Ogle Gowan, during the 1830s.[73] Only after the end of Gowan's tenure as leader did the order return to its anti-Catholic roots. It is likely that anti-Catholicism was never far beneath the surface of the Orange Order in Canada, but they were nonetheless far more willing to cooperate with their Catholic adversaries when necessary than their counterparts in Ireland. In the Canadas the Orange Order was the premier loyalist organization. As Malcom has argued, 'somewhere in their telling of the Loyalist story, Orangemen usurped the original Canadian Loyalist tradition.'[74]

The religious underpinnings of Canadian identity have not been ignored. In the Eastern Townships, John Little has highlighted the development of a shared religious culture with the bordering areas of the United States. There a synthesis of radical American and British conservative values took place as 'the republican non-conformist culture of the American settlers was confronted by the conservative religious institutions supported by the British colonial authority'.[75] McLaren has also noted the development of a shared print culture with the United States amongst the Methodists.[76] According to Westfall, while French-speaking Quebec society was infused with a powerful strain of ultramontanism, English-speaking Protestants developed a shared sense of a providentialist mission.[77] Whether through the temperance movement or education reform, moral concerns occupied a position of utmost importance in the Canadian mind. Whatever the doctrinal differences of this vast array of sects, they paled in comparison to the irreligiosity and immorality that threatened to overwhelm the frontier society of the Canadas. Therefore, 'in the period between 1820 and 1870, a distinctive Protestant culture took root in Ontario … By mid-century the animosity and bitterness that had divided the Anglicans and Methodists had begun to disappear, and the way was open for the development of an informal Protestant culture.'[78]

Nonetheless, the Canadas were a diverse place religiously. The Church of England during this period failed to establish any great hold on the faith of the Canadian people. Methodists, Baptists, Quakers and Presbyterians all vied for supremacy amongst the Protestant

[70] D. MacRaild, 'Wherever Orange is Worn: Orangeism and Irish Migration in the 19th and Early 20th Centuries', *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* 28/29 (2002-3), p. 109.
[71] A. Malcom, 'Loyal Orangemen and Republican Nativists: Anti-Catholicism and Historical Memory in Canada and the United States, 1837-1867' in Bannister and Riordan (eds.), *The Loyal Atlantic*, p. 217.
[72] Ibid., p. 221.
[73] See W. Kerr, 'When Orange and Green United, 1832-9: The Alliance of Macdonell and Gowan', *Ontario History* 34 (1942): 34-42.
[74] Malcom, 'Loyal Orangemen and Republican Nativists' in Bannister and Riordan (eds.), *The Loyal Atlantic*, p. 235.
[75] J. Little, *Borderland Religion: The Emergence of an English-Canadian Identity, 1792 – 1852* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), p. xiii.
[76] S. McLaren, 'Books for the Instruction of the Nations: Shared Methodist Print Culture in Upper Canada and the Mid-Atlantic States, 1789-1851', Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto (2011).
[77] W. Westfall, *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth Century Ontario* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), p. 5.
[78] Ibid., pp. 9-11.

population, and they were joined by significant numbers of Catholics amongst the Irish and Scottish highlander populations. This 'Protestant culture' should not be overestimated – religion was as often a point of divisive conflict as it was of unity in the mid-nineteenth century Canadas. It might also be expected that class would have played some role in identity, particularly as this was the period of the development of class consciousness in Britain at the time.[79] But the rural nature of both the Upper and Lower Canadian community during this period must not be forgotten. There were few large towns outside of Montreal, Quebec and Toronto. Even there, there is little evidence of the development of class consciousness. Where newspapers aimed at the lower orders of society were published they tended to minimise class issues. The *Montreal Transcript* was one such paper. It was a 'penny paper' intended to appeal 'the mechanic and farmer alike'.[80] Nonetheless, its editorials, letters received and general commentary of the news fell closely into the conservative paradigm of much of the Montreal press. Issues of class were studiously avoided while ethnicity and politics were at the forefront of discussions. Therefore it seems likely that religion and class played only a limited role in the Anglo-Canadian identity. The newspapers studied seem to support this conjecture. They tend to demonstrate a focus on political and ethnic issues. Though religious issues, in particular those relating to the establishment of the Anglican Church, held a deep resonance for many Upper and Lower Canadians, they did not seem to act as the defining method of political or cultural identification. An Upper Canadian was more likely to primarily identify themselves as 'British' or as a 'Reformer' than they were to think of themselves as 'Non-conformist' or 'Methodist', at least as far as can be determined from the newspaper evidence studied here. Therefore, this thesis has focussed upon the political and ethnic aspects of identity.

The nineteenth century in the Canadas saw the complex interplay of a series of different ethnic groups. These included the English, Irish, Scots, French-Canadians and Americans. These groups formed the cores of a series of constantly shifting alliances. For the English and Scottish, incorporation into a wider 'British' or Anglo-Canadian identity was relatively straightforward. By contrast, it was by no means a foregone conclusion that the Irish would be accepted into the wider British community. Before the 1837 rebellions, the alliances of these groups (usually described as 'British' or 'French') rapidly changed in response to political circumstances. The Scots and English formed the core of the British group and represented the political elite of the period, though in Upper Canada they were joined by a substantial number of American-born Loyalists and their children. At various times, they excluded the Irish, Americans and French-Canadians from the rewards of patronage and power that came with membership in the British community. Anglo-Canadians also brought with them strong identities from their homelands, as English, Irish or Scottish. Even this overstates the homogeneity of the 'British' people of Canada. Each group was beset by a series of divisions of its own. The Americans included loyalists and later immigrants with no special attachment to the British crown. Even the Scots varied greatly between the highlanders, often Catholic and Gaelic speaking who tended to congregate in ethnic enclaves such as Glengarry County; and the Protestant lowlanders who made up the majority of the Scottish elite of Upper and Lower Canada.

The Irish included both Protestants and Catholics, the former primarily composed of immigrants arriving in the 1830s after the passage of the Catholic Emancipation Act and the latter included the poverty-stricken Famine Irish who arrived in the late 1840s. In a later period, Mark McGowan has pointed out the complexity surrounding the English-speaking

[79] E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Penguin Books, 1963).
[80] *Montreal Transcript*, 28 September 1836.

Catholics of Toronto, who were of 'Scottish, English, American, Dutch and German origin' as well as of Irish descent, and 'these minorities joined "Irish" associations, attended the same schools, participated in the same religious societies, and worshipped at the same churches'.[81] These groups had fluid boundaries. On some occasions individuals crossed these boundaries with ease, but on others ethnic boundaries hardened and individuals became defined by their place of origin. This thesis seeks to examine why and how such boundaries changed in this way and how they could be manipulated by political actors to create a particular sense of identity. According to McGowan, 'from 1887 to 1922, English-speaking Catholics in Toronto submerged their overt ties to Ireland, embraced many of the values of Canadian society, and allowed their faith life to make some needed adjustments to the North American environment.'[82] This thesis would suggest that this was not the first period of such acculturation of Irish Catholics to 'British' or 'English-speaking' norms. A similar process was at work between the 1820s and the 1840s. McGowan's work would suggest the importance of understanding that identity construction was not a linear process but something that ebbed and flowed with the tides of immigration and the political, religious and socioeconomic circumstances of the time.

The diversity of this so-called 'British' population creates a definitional problem. It seems hardly appropriate to describe an Irish Catholic as an 'English-Canadian' or an American immigrant as a 'British-Canadian'. Therefore the term 'Anglo-Canadian' is used throughout this thesis to represent the anglophone nature of this community. While this term is imperfect – certainly a number of German-speakers, amongst other linguistic groups, did define themselves as 'British' – it should help to prevent confusion.

The performance of identity has been an important aspect of maintaining ethnic identities outside of the homeland and Canada was no different. Whether it was Irish Catholics celebrating on St. Patrick's Day, Irish Protestants marching on July 12th or Scots holding public dinners on Burns' Night, the performance of identity represented a crucial aspect of the nineteenth-century Canadian social milieu. The role of St. Patrick's Day as an opportunity to assert both an Irish and a Catholic identity has been explored by Rosalyn Trigger.[83] Not all of these celebrations were necessarily exclusive ethnic preserves. James Paxton has argued for the importance of merrymaking and cross-cultural sociability in Canadian society through events such as the militia musters.[84] In the isolated setting of the Upper and Lower Canadian frontiers, just as much as in the dense and rapidly growing urban centres, these entertainments formed a powerful expression of one's sense of identity. John Mackenzie has demonstrated how Nelson was appropriated by Canadians as a hero who could unite the English- and French-speaking populations of Canada.[85] In Montreal, Dan Horner has demonstrated how crowd politics were central to debates over power, authority and democracy. Crowd events presented an opportunity for elites to assert cultural authority but others used them to resist the status quo. By 1849, such practices were less welcome as

[81] M. McGowan, *The Waning of the Green: Catholics, the Irish and Identity in Toronto, 1887-1922* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), p. 7.
[82] Ibid.
[83] R. Trigger, 'Irish Politics on Parade: The Clergy, National Societies and St. Patrick's Day Processions in Nineteenth-century Montreal and Toronto', *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 37:74 (2004): 159-199.
[84] J. Paxton, 'Merrymaking and militia musters: Mohawks, loyalists, and the (re)construction of community and identity in Upper Canada', *Ontario History* 102:2 (2010) *HighBeam Research.* (December 5, 2013). http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-241672434.html
[85] J. Mackenzie, 'Nelson the Hero and Horatio the Lover: Projections of the Myth in Canada, the Cinema, and Culture' in H. Hoock (ed.), *History, Commemoration and National Preoccupation: Trafalgar 1805-2005* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 71.

politicians sought to hold the public sphere in check through a discourse of rationality, respectability and legitimacy.[86] Horner's insight that 'elites and middling people employed the streets as a theatre' can be applied to the Canadas more generally.[87] Understanding how identities were performed provides a crucial insight into how Canadians conceived of themselves.

Through the nineteenth century the meaning of 'Canadian' changed. At the beginning of the century, 'Canadian' was used almost exclusively to refer to French-speaking Canadians. Gradually, from the 1830s onwards in Upper Canada, the term 'Canadian', often prefixed by 'British', came to encompass English-speakers in certain contexts. How far were the English-speaking inhabitants willing to embrace such a term and what compelled them to do so? Embracing the term 'Canadian' by no means meant abandoning the identity of 'British' or its subordinate identities as Scottish, Irish or English. The role of the country's natural features – particularly St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes – in Canada's identity must also be considered. The country could be understood as the area to which one could easily travel by the natural waterways of the country – much as in Harold Innis' famous statement: 'Canada emerged as a political entity with boundaries largely determined by the fur trade … the present Dominion emerged not in spite of geography but because of it'.[88]

Methodology and Theory

The Canadas during this period were a diverse place. Three case studies provide a representative overview: the London District, the Ottawa Valley and Montreal. Montreal was the largest city in the Canadas and emerging as the economic metropolis for the region. It was ethnically divided between an unusually large English-speaking population and a Canadian-born French-speaking community. Over the course of this period, it became a majority anglophone city in the midst of a French-Canadian-dominated countryside. The London District, meanwhile, was a predominantly rural and agricultural area. Most of the district's population lived on farm lots, isolated from the wider community. Until the 1837 rebellions, the district was notable for its high proportion of American-born settlers. Few of these were of loyalist origin. The Ottawa Valley was the last of these regions to be settled. Its first settlers arrived on the Upper Canada side in 1818. Significant settlement did not begin until the construction of the Rideau Canal from 1826. The region was especially isolated being 250 miles from Toronto and 125 miles from Montreal. It had a substantial minority French-Canadian contingent while Irish (predominantly Catholic) immigrants formed the largest group within the region by the 1830s. The lumber trade was fundamental to its economy. By studying these three very different areas it should be possible to understand how identity developed and functioned within the Canadas. It should guard against the tendency to over-generalise from any one particular case. Both the London District and the Ottawa Valley remain understudied by the historiography and this thesis hopes to reintegrate these areas back into the wider narrative of pre-confederation Canadian history.

A series of events likely to provoke discussions of identity have been investigated. The period 1815-1867 is divided into three time periods: before the rebellions, the era of the rebellions (from their beginning in 1837 until the Union of the Canadas in 1841) and the period from the union of the Canadas until confederation. In the London District the rights of Americans to hold land and to vote was challenged during the 1820s through the alien

[86] D. Horner, 'Taking to the Streets: Crowd, Politics and Identity in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Montreal', (Ph.D. diss., York University, 2010).
[87] Ibid., p. 4.
[88] H. Innis. *The Fur Trade in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2nd ed., 1956), p. 393.

question. In Montreal, the 1832 west ward by-election brought forth a series of ethnic alliances which provoked questions of what it meant to be 'British'. In the Ottawa Valley, on the eve of the rebellions, the Shiners' War, in which Irish Catholics fought French-Canadians on the Ottawa River, took place from 1834 onwards. Each event helps to show how identity was conceived of in the pre-rebellion period. The rebellions of 1837-8 were a crucial period in the development of identity in the Canadas and hence are studied in each area. The rebellions presented two clear 'Others' in the Canadas against which the Anglo-Canadian community could define themselves. One was the French-Canadian population in Lower Canada. The other was Canada's old enemy, the United States. In the Upper Canadian rebellion, American 'patriots' launched a series of raids across the border. The rebellions also saw English Canadians from across Upper Canada join the militia to help suppress the rebellions or to turn back the American invaders. Finally, the responses to the rebellion losses controversy of 1849, including the annexation movement and the creation of the British American League, are examined for each location.

The main sources used are newspapers, but they are supplemented by a number of other materials. Government sources, including the Journals of the House of Assembly and the Legislative Council, the correspondence of the governor general and the colonial secretary, and official proclamations, are available, but provide little insight into how the Canadian people thought of themselves. More promising are the diaries and personal correspondence of settlers in the Canadas. While these can be useful more often they are filled with the mundane minutiae of everyday life. By contrast, it was through newspapers that identities were expressed and created. They had widespread circulation and present the best insight into public opinion during this period. The approach taken to selecting the newspapers was to examine every extant issue of the English language newspapers for each time period examined. There were a number of short-lived papers and focusing on the most successful could give an inaccurate picture. In 1849, when dailies and tri-weekly papers were becoming more common, a more selective approach had to be taken. Complete runs of some representative papers from each location were examined.

To approach this topic, a good understanding of the theory of nationalism and ethnicity is required. The term 'nation' has been notoriously difficult to define. In the 1970s Douglas Cole rightly bemoaned the lack of theoretical sophistication applied to the concept of nationalism when applied to the colonies of settlement.[89] Unfortunately, Cole's attempt to provide an alternative framework relied upon a simplistic conception of ethnic nationalism – the nation was 'an ethnic group whose characteristics … lead us to consider it a group apart.' These characteristics consisted of language, traditions, mores and culture, common descent and religion.[90] Consequently, for Cole, 'Canada probably never had a chance to develop its own nationalism in the nineteenth century' as it was stifled by the forces of 'the United Empire tradition, British patriotism constantly reinforced by immigration, the need for security from Britain against the United States, the presence of two near-equal ethnic groups, and, finally, the pan-British ideal. Canada never became a nation, except in a political and constitutional sense'.[91] Cole here seems unaware of the common distinction made by theorists between ethnic and civic nationalism as much of his argument suggests that at the very least a powerful strain of civic nationalism was present.

[89] D. Cole, 'The Problems of 'Nationalism' and 'Imperialism' in British Settlement Colonies', *Journal of British Studies* 10:2 (1971), p. 160.
[90] Ibid., p. 164.
[91] Ibid., pp. 180-1.

Benedict Anderson's definition of the nation is a valuable starting point: 'an imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign'.[92] It is not an objective entity defined by cultural characteristics but a grouping of people who have come to see themselves as a single community with a shared history and a shared future, inhabiting a defined territory, who desire self-government. Ethnicity is another imagined community, but one believed to be linked by biology (for example, as an extended kinship unit) with shared cultural traditions (which may have been recently invented or selected) and without any necessary connection to a territorial homeland or to political self-government. One of the most important issues in identity formation is instrumentalism. As Cornell and Hartman argued, 'one reason why the salience of ethnic or racial identities changes is that changing circumstances alter the utility of those identities. Any identity is potentially a resource or a handicap; it has potential benefits and potential costs'.[93] It is possible in the Canadian case that some groups, particularly the Irish, who wished to overcome negative stereotypes and discrimination of themselves as 'Irish', or American-born citizens who wished to express their loyalty, began to describe themselves as either 'British' or 'Canadian' because of the utility of these identities.

The most compelling arguments on the origins of nationalism have been made by Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson, Anthony Smith and Karl Deutsch.[94] Gellner has seen three main elements as necessary precursors to the development of nationalism – industrialisation, widespread education and the mobility of the people. Though the first is barely applicable to the case of the Canadas, as industrialism was only in an infant stage even by 1867, the other two elements are of value. From early in its history, a distinct effort was made in Upper Canada by colonial governments to provide an education for the public, leading to a relatively high level of literacy. Canadians were also a very mobile people. Few remained in the same place through their lives. These individuals often had connections with friends or family in different parts of British North America, in the British Isles, or across the border in the United States. While their day to day lives may have seemed intensely local, they were involved in networks that spread over a vast geographical area.

Anderson has argued that two elements, print capitalism and administrative pilgrimages, have been responsible for the development of nationalism. The former required the development of a national, vernacular print language and a culture of print through which the community begins to imagine itself as one whole. This was achieved especially through newspapers – by reading about the same events in the same way in different parts of the nation, newspaper readers come to see themselves as forming a single unified community. By administrative pilgrimages, he refers to those individuals employed in the colonial government who, by being posted to a variety of different geographical positions, came to envision their colony as one administrative unit. When they returned home, they spread these ideas to their local communities and nationalism was born.[95]

Karl Deutsch has argued that 'membership in a people essentially consists in wide complementarity of social communication. It consists in the ability to communicate more

[92] B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, revised edition 1991).
[93] S. Cornell and D. Hartmann, *Ethnicity and Race: Making Identities in a Changing World (2nd edition)* (Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press, 2007).
[94] E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press); Anderson, *Imagined Communities*; A. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986) and Karl Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1953).
[95] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

effectively, and over a wider range of subjects, with members of one large group than with outsiders'.[96] The growth of print culture and transport in the first half of the nineteenth century in Canada strengthened the bonds of social communication. Individuals became able to communicate more easily with other Upper or Lower Canadians than they were with others, such as Americans, or British people living outside of the Canadas. For Smith, 'the constituents of these identities and cultures – myths, memoires, symbols and values – can often be adapted to new circumstances by being accorded new meanings and new futures'.[97]

Much historiography has seen the relationship between colonial nationalism as antithetical. Phillip Buckner has effectively outlined how historians have addressed this complex relationship.[98] He argued, however, that these identities were often mutual. Canadians had a 'sense of imperial identity [that] was a source of pride'. The building of a 'new nationality' would 'embody the best of British culture and traditions'. The founders of confederation 'wanted to create a nation that would remain essentially British but also free to evolve its own national identity while remaining permanently allied with the mother country under the same crown.'[99] Berger has argued that 'Canadian imperialism was one variety of Canadian nationalism' which may well be true for the post-confederation period, but it is likely that the relationship between loyalty, Canadian nationalism and British imperial sentiment was more complex during the pre-confederation era.[100] Instead, Buckner's discussion of the 'desire to create a Better Britain' seems to be as applicable to MacDonald's predecessors as it is to the Fathers of Confederation.[101] Anglo-Canadian identity in this thesis is viewed as complementary, rather than antagonistic, to senses of British imperial identity. This would suggest the possibility of holding multiple identities.

In the Canadas before confederation, print culture meant newspapers. An independent literary tradition struggled to emerge amongst the Anglo-Canadian community before 1867. Where expressions of Anglo-Canadian creativity existed, they were showcased through the print culture they understood best – the newspaper. These literary endeavours were strongly supported by the existing networks of printers and publishers but failed to achieve traction in the wider market. Books in nineteenth century Canada were an expensive luxury for the elite. They were therefore unlikely to play an important role in the formulation of an Anglo-Canadian consciousness.

The most important study that engages in the widespread use of newspapers is P. B. Waite's *The Life and Times of Confederation*.[102] This thesis follows his valuable model, recognising the inherent partiality of newspapers as an historical source and their need to be supplemented by other sources where available, but also their value in understanding contemporary public opinion. He has noted that 'newspapers saw politics as the central focus of society. Politics was life itself, demanding loyalties, commanding convictions … the public supported many newspapers, and their very existence shows the strength and the variety of political opinion … Newspapers informed, but they also advocated. Their duty as they saw it was not so much to please as to encourage: to point issues, to shape policies, to

[96] Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication*, p. 71.
[97] Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, p. 3.
[98] P. Buckner, 'The Long Goodbye: English Canadians and the British World' in P. Buckner and R. Douglas Francis (eds.), *Rediscovering the British World* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2005), pp. 181-208.
[99] Ibid., pp. 184-6.
[100] C. Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), p. 9.
[101] Buckner, 'The Long Goodbye', p. 186.
[102] P. B. Waite, *The Life and Times of Confederation*.

forward causes.'[103] This was just as much the case in the Canadas in the 1830s as it was in the Maritimes in the 1860s. Newspapers provided the main arena for participation in the public sphere for most Canadians during the pre-confederation period. As Waite demonstrated in his study, newspapers were often the best reflection of public opinion. The issues they wrote about and the news they highlighted reflected the concerns of the wider public. The success of a newspaper in such a competitive environment required a certain level of responsiveness to trends in public opinion. While editors often had strong political stances, their readers were well aware of the political direction of the newspaper. They read newspapers to participate in a wider political community. Newspapers also illuminate the language and discourses used by contemporary Canadians. It was through newspapers that Canadians expressed their identity and their concerns about threatening 'Others'.

Furthermore, newspapers allowed the development of radical opinions and a wider involvement of the public in politics by providing a safe public space in which to formulate ideas and express opinions. By allowing for the publication of anonymous or pseudonymous letters newspaper readers could express their political ideas to a larger public audience without fear of retaliation. In this manner, individuals came to understand that many others shared their beliefs and that they belonged to a wider community of like-minded people. Moreover, any one could participate in the political discussion, whether elector or not. This may have encouraged a sense of the value and legitimacy of the role of all people in politics, irrespective of wealth, gender or ethnicity.

John Michael Bolton and Duncan Koerber have provided useful accounts of the development of the newspaper in the Canadas.[104] Neither historian, though, has looked at the identity implications of the newspaper industry. Until the 1820s, the only newspaper consistently published in Upper Canada was the government sanctioned *Upper Canada Gazette*. Its purpose was the relaying of official proclamations and laws to the wider Upper Canadian community. Editorial commentary and letter publications were non-existent. News was often culled from reports in other newspapers in the United States, Great Britain and elsewhere. The editor of the paper was appointed by the government as a King's Printer. The nature of the press changed substantially during the 1820s.[105]

Perhaps the most significant work published on Canadian identity as represented in the press is that of Linda Connors and Mary MacDonald.[106] Nonetheless, their focus on periodicals has left many potential sources untouched. The limited reach of relatively expensive periodicals in the Canada means that they provide insufficient source material for the understanding of identity in this period. They argued that the peoples of British North America 'continued to see themselves as emigrants whose frame of reference remained in territorial Great Britain, as emigrants whose frame of reference remained in territorial Great Britain'.[107] Yet this conclusion oversimplifies the matter. Being 'British' could mean a multitude of different things to different people, as the varied use of the term in colonial newspapers demonstrates.

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[103] Ibid., p. 324.

[104] J. Boulton, 'The spread and growth of newspapers in Ontario, 1781-1977' (M.A. Diss., Wilfrid Laurier University, 1977); D. Koerber, 'Communication as Mobilization: The Development of Newspaper-based Political Parties in Upper Canada, 1820-1841' (Ph.D. Diss., York University, 2009).

[105] D. Koerber, 'Style over Substance: Newspaper Coverage of Early Election Campaigns in Canada, 1820-1841', *Canadian Journal of Communication* 36 (2011), p. 437.

[106] L. Connors and M. MacDonald. *National Identity in Great Britain and British North America, 1815-1851: The Role of Nineteenth-Century Periodicals* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2011).

[107] Ibid., p. 204.

Newspapers reached a wide audience in nineteenth-century Canada. Literacy rates in the Canadas were unusually high. British immigrants to the Canadas often arrived with some school education and at least basic literacy. Research has demonstrated that the contemporary New England states had rates of literacy ranging from 80 to 100%.[108] Work on Quebec City has established that between 1750 and 1849 the marriage registers show that 39.9% of those married could sign their own name, which broke down into 48.4% of men and 31.5% of women.[109] These rates are likely to underestimate the total literacy as people learned to read before they learned to write. The literacy rates for Upper Canada were even higher.

Koerber references McNairn's work as he notes the high level of newspaper consumption in Upper Canada – he estimated that one in five families took a newspaper by 1829 and one in two families did so by 1841.[110] The reach of newspapers extended beyond those who bought them and even beyond the literate community. Canadians would read the paper out loud to their families in the home and to their friends in the tavern. Topics raised in the papers provided the topics of debate in the local community. Those who did not subscribe to a paper could also share one, a common practice in Upper Canada; or, if they lived near a town with a mechanics' institute, they could read the paper at the institute's reading room. Furthermore, it is unlikely that many were priced out of the newspaper market. Prices remained largely unchanged between 1800 and 1850. A yearly subscription was likely to cost £1 in both years - an eminently affordable fee for those interested. Circulation statistics significantly underestimate the impact of newspapers on the public and private lives of Canadians in these years.

Canadians did not just read their local newspapers. They read the newspapers representing their political party; and they read the papers that best presented the foreign news in which they were interested. Newspapers were primarily produced in the urban centres of the Canadas – Quebec and Montreal in Lower Canada; Toronto, Kingston, Niagara and later London in Upper Canada. However, newspapers were not only an urban phenomenon. Many had significant circulation outside of their immediate vicinity. A number of papers had agents throughout Upper Canada such as the *Colonial Advocate* and the *Montreal Gazette*. Correspondents outside of the host town were unusual, except in the case of reporting parliamentary proceedings. For the most part, editors relied on information relayed to them from their agents or personal contacts, leading to potentially biased, inaccurate and incomplete reports from areas outside of their own town. This has been well documented in the case of Toronto. Juliana Stabile has estimated a circulation figure of between 6000 and 8100 copies weekly for the seven most successful newspapers in the city in 1840, resulting in a total readership of these papers of between 30,000 and 45,000.[111] The city of Toronto at this point had a population of less than 15,000. The majority of these papers were read elsewhere in Upper Canada. Many also read papers published in the other British North American colonies and from the United States.

There was a complex relationship between owners, proprietors and editors in Upper and Lower Canadian newspapers of this period. Amongst the smaller papers, and particularly in the 1820s and 1830s, these roles were often merged into one person. William Lyon Mackenzie acted in all of these roles, administering the business of his newspaper as well as

[108] S. McLaren. 'Books for the Instruction of the Nation', p. 99.
[109] B. Curtis. 'Some Recent Work on the History of Literacy in Canada', *History of Education Quarterly* 30:4 (1990), p. 615.
[110] D. Koerber, 'Communication as Mobilization', pp. 14-15.
[111] J. Stabile, 'Toronto Newspapers, 1798-1845: A Case Study in Print Culture', (Ph.D. Diss., University of Toronto, 2002), pp. 401-3.

conducting editorial oversight, writing articles for the paper and soliciting letters from the public and information from his agents across Upper Canada.[112] He employed a small staff to help with the practicalities of printing the newspaper; but ultimately all decisions of importance fell to him. In such cases, newspapers could very much be the public expression of the opinions of one person. Mackenzie's *Colonial Advocate* was as much a clamorous articulation of his personal views as it was a paper of the Reform movement. In other cases, such as the *Montreal Gazette*, a more complex structure was present. The proprietors owned the paper separately from the editors. It was owned by the Scottish businessman, Robert Armour. The editors were chosen based upon their political affiliation more than their technical ability; and indeed, these editors changed on a regular basis – between 1820 and 1841, the *Gazette* was edited by David Chisholme, Alexander Christie and David Kinnear, amongst others.

Some newspapers eschewed politics entirely. Various nonconformist sects sought to engage their congregations through the public sphere. They provided advice on how best to conduct oneself in situations with respect to their religion. They provided entertainment and advice too. By the 1840s, it was commonplace for newspapers to include poetry, short stories, humorous anecdotes and longer articles of practical advice or philosophical interest. Many such articles were of a practical nature – the number of articles on agricultural techniques in many of these papers is striking, reflecting their large agrarian readership.

The Canadas 1815-1867

During the pre-confederation period, the political structure of the Canadas was defined by the Constitutional Act of 1791. This split the old province of Quebec into two new provinces; the predominantly French-speaking Lower Canada; and the English-speaking colony of Upper Canada. The intention, in the words of the first Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, was to create 'a perfect image and transcript of the British Government and Constitution.'[113] In Lower Canada the seigneurial system was retained. This was essentially a feudal arrangement, in which local aristocrats were granted land from the crown and tenant farmers, known as *habitants*, worked the land. While the *habitants* had freedom of movement, they were expected to pay fees (the *cens et rentes*) to the seigneurs from whom they rented the land and to perform unpaid labour for the seigneur for a number of days each year, the *corvée*, as well as to give the seigneur a percentage of their annual produce.[114] The system was not abolished until 1854.[115] By contrast, land in Upper Canada was granted through freehold tenure, just as in Great Britain. The Act of Union of 1841 re-united the Canadas under a single legislative structure.

The Canadas received representative assemblies, but fear of a repeat of the events of 1776 led the British authorities to limit the power of these assemblies while strengthening executive authority. At the highest level of government stood the Governor General, who administered over all of the British North American provinces. Below him were the Lieutenant-Governors, one for each province. They were the direct representatives of the crown and wielded significant powers of patronage. They were responsible for dissolving the House of Assembly; calling elections; nominating the executive and legislative councils; and

[112] Ibid., pp. 279-280.
[113] 'Simcoe to Portland, Kingston, 21 December 1794' in E. Cruikshank (ed.), *Simcoe Correspondence* (Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, 1923-7), Vol. 3, p. 235
[114] W. Marr and D. Paterson, *Canada: An Economic History* (Toronto: Gage Publishing Ltd, 1980), pp. 76-7.
[115] C. Harris, *The Reluctant Land: Society, Space and Environment in Canada before Confederation* (Vancouver: UBC Press), p. 262.

distributing the colony's land. Government during this period was 'an intensely personal' task, as Mark Francis has argued.[116] In theory at least, as Buckner argued, the governor possessed 'nearly all the prerogatives of a Tudor monarch' but in practice, with little support forthcoming from the Colonial Office, much of this authority was illusory.[117] The extent of their authority was severely undermined by the limited quantity of patronage available that was insufficient for a growing colony.[118]

Francis has argued that there 'were two basic authority patterns in the colonies, the rational and the visual'. The first presented the governor as 'the repository of communal values', the 'embodiment of monarchical virtues' and as the 'heroic idealized leader that monarchs were imagined to be'. Early attacks on the governors were based on this model by arguing that they failed to live up to this image. By the 1840s, this ideal had begun to change, as 'instead of claiming personal authority, governors started to portray themselves as merely symbolic representatives of the British monarch, or even as defenders of the abstract notion of sovereignty'.[119] As Helen Manning has written, 'in British North America the governors were confronted in each colony by an inner ring of appointed officials who believed (without any particular legal sanction) that they held their officers for life'.[120] These were the members of the executive council, a body appointed by the governors that were filled by local magnates, placemen and men perceived as 'loyal', however ill-fitting their qualifications may be. The Legislative Council acted as an equivalent to the House of Lords in Britain. Its members were appointed by the executive as there were no hereditary peers in the colony.

The House of Assembly was the primary representative body. Revenues were raised by taxation (primarily customs duties), the sale of land and the granting of licenses. From 1821 control over the provincial revenue was left in the hands of the Legislative Council, a far easier body for the executive to exercise influence over than the more popular Assembly.[121] Furthermore, the executive raised much of its revenue from the sale of large volumes of land to the Canada Company and the British American Land Company. These companies, rather than paying into the provincial revenues, paid their fees to the civil list, limiting the effectiveness of the Assembly as a check on the executive. In 1827 the Assembly of Lower Canada had met and refused to grant the supplies to the Governor General, Dalhousie. In response, he simply dissolved the House to obtain a more amenable Assembly.[122] The situation began to change in the 1830s. By this time, much of the land in both Upper and Lower Canada had already been sold. Customs duties provided the bulk of the revenue for these provinces. In 1831 the British Parliament passed the Howick Act which transferred the control of the permanent revenue (that which was raised from taxation) to the House of Assembly, with a fixed Civil List of £19,500 remaining to the executive.[123] In the years leading up to the rebellions, the Assemblies in both provinces, led by Reform majorities,

[116] M. Francis, *Governors and Settlers: Images of Authority in the British Colonies, 1820-60* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1992), p. 4.
[117] P. Buckner, *The Transition to Responsible Government in British North America, 1815-1850* (Westport, CT: 1985), p. 50.
[118] Ibid, p. 8.
[119] Ibid., p. 8.
[120] H. Manning, 'Who Ran the British Empire, 1830-1850', *Journal of British Studies* 5:1 (1965), pp. 89-90.
[121] 'Resolutions of Legislative Council, Lower Canada, 6 March 1821' in A.G. Doughty and N. Story (eds.), *Documents Relating to the Constitutional History of Canada, 1819-1828* (Ottawa: J.O. Patenaude, 1935), pp. 69-70.
[122] Buckner, *The Transition to Responsible Government*, p. 126.
[123] C.E. Fryer, 'British North America Under Representative Government' in H. Dodwell (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the British Empire, Volume 4* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929), p. 245.

exercised their power to prevent the government from using the provincial revenues. This created a deadlock that made government in Lower Canada near impossible. Nonetheless, as Buckner noted, 'the Canadas were the only transatlantic colonies with representative institutions where the executive had sufficient funds to be able to carry on the government in defiance of the wishes of the Assembly'.[124]

After the rebellions in 1837-8, the imperial authorities believed that a new system was necessary. Lord Durham presented two solutions. Firstly, the two Canadian provinces were to be united. This would help bring about the assimilation of the French-Canadians. Continued immigration from the British Isles would overwhelm the French-speaking population and they would have no choice but to conform to British customs. His second recommendation was a system of 'responsible government'. This meant appointing an executive council based on election results and the sanctioning of any bill passed by both houses of the legislature. Unlike the claims of its proponents, responsible government was not simply the application of the British system of government to the Canadian colonies. There was ministerial government in Britain, but until the 1830s ministers had been as much dependent on the king's patronage as upon the Commons for their authority. As Madden and Fieldhouse have argued, it was not 'an established constitutional form deliberately denied to the colonies: it was an experimental technique for avoiding friction between executive and legislature in Britain which had still to prove its utility and durability.'[125]

Zoe Laidlaw has described the critical transition in the 1830s 'from a residual desire to exert autocratic imperial control … to a pragmatic acceptance that effective management of the move towards greater colonial self-government was necessary.'[126] The imperial government increasingly saw their Canadian colonies as a burden rather than an asset. Many believed that the existing empire was too expensive in its current form and that amicable relations could continue with the colonies after separation.[127] British North America had 'become a considerable nation' and Westminster could not continue to indefinitely exercise autocratic control over the colonies.[128] While the colonies provided a valuable source of timber and grain in the era of the Napoleonic Wars, the rapid resumption of good trading relations with the United States undermined their value. In this situation, self-government and financial self-reliance were more appealing. Colonial administrators were to adhere to an ideal of 'good government', but the colonies were politically immature and lacking in the natural divisions of society that were essential for ensuring a successful balanced constitution.[129] It was desirable for the settler colonies to develop towards self-government and eventually independence, but this transition must be managed carefully. To achieve this, 'networks connecting metropolis to colony were the mainstay of day-to-day colonial governance,

[124] Buckner, *The Transition to Responsible Government*, p. 164.
[125] F. Madden and D. Fieldhouse (eds.), *Settler Self-Government, 1840-1900: The Development of Representative and Responsible Government. Select Documents on the Constitutional History of the British Empire and Commonwealth Volume IV* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), p. xxi.
[126] Z. Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections, 1815-45: Patronage, the Information Revolution and Colonial Government* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p. 5.
[127] F. Madden and D. Fieldhouse (eds.), *Imperial Reconstruction 1763-1840: The Evolution of Alternative Systems of Colonial Government. Select Documents on the Constitutional History of the British Empire and Commonwealth Volume III* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), p. 26.
[128] 'James Stephen to Lord Howick, 1837' in Madden and Fieldhouse (eds.), *Imperial Reconstruction 1763-1840*, p. 52.
[129] Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections*, pp. 7-8.

transmitting influence, patronage and information … trans-colonial networks encouraged the transmission of ideas, and experience, through the empire.'[130]

The new political system after 1841 changed little in practice. The Sydenham system, in which the Governor General acted as 'his own prime minister', brought with it uncomfortable echoes of the Family Compact policies a decade earlier. In 1847 the appointment of Lord Elgin as Governor General finally brought about the achievement of responsible government. Elgin acted 'above and aloof from politics .... He bequeathed to his successors a governorship sheared of the power and influence which he had wished to exercise …the only echo from his system was the ideal that the governor was the embodiment of the community's higher interests.'[131] The struggle for responsible government has been innovatively reinterpreted in recent years by Michel Ducharme. He has placed the rebellions of 1837, and more generally the reform movements that preceded them, in the transnational context of the Atlantic world. The 1791 Act encouraged conflict between the governors, councils and assemblies. The views of philosophers and politicians in Britain, the United States and France influenced their Canadian counterparts. Ultimately, the concept of "modern liberty" triumphed over that of "republican liberty".[132]

By the 1860s this system was under great strain. Governments were unable to maintain a majority for a substantial length of time. The necessity of coalitions between English- and French-speaking politicians made deadlock in the legislature a common occurrence. Representation by population became an increasingly important issue as the population of Canada West grew larger than that of Canada East. In response, Canadian politicians turned to the possibility of a federal union of all the British North American colonies. The importance of the 'deadlock', however, should not be overstated, as Ged Martin has argued.[133]

This was first discussed at the Charlottetown Conference of 1864 as the proposals were hammered out by representatives from the Canadas, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. In 1867, the British North America Act made confederation a reality. Traditionally, it has been argued that confederation occurred for five reasons: the need for defence against the United States; to aid the development of the Intercolonial railway; the end of reciprocity forced the colonies to look to each other as markets; Upper Canadians wished to annex the North-West; and an emergent feeling of nationalism.[134] Confederation also required the support of the British imperial government. Nonetheless, as Martin has argued, 'fundamentally, Confederation was the creation of a vigorous and confident Upper Canada, which saw it as the best way of escaping from the political log-jam of the existing province … without that dynamic Upper Canadian push, the British would no doubt have continued to wait in the wings for something in British North America to support.'[135] Waite has also described Confederation as 'a Canadian solution for Canadian problems'.[136] In this constitutional environment, where decisions by the British imperial parliament had a powerful impact upon the political structure of both Canadas, these institutional changes brought with them new ways for people to think about their identities.

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[130] Ibid., p. 14.
[131] Francis, *Governors and Settlers*, p. 258.
[132] M. Ducharme, *Le concept de liberté au Canada à l'Époque des Révolutions Atlantiques 1776-1838* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010).
[133] G. Martin, *Britain and the Origins of Canadian Confederation,* p. 5.
[134] Ibid., p. 24.
[135] Ibid., p. 294.
[136] Waite, *The Life and Times of Confederation*, p. 49.

The importance of patronage in Canadian politics has been widely appreciated by historians.[137] Power and prestige flowed downwards from the Governor General. To ensure loyalty and political support, offices and grants of land were given to the executive's most loyal and enthusiastic supporters. Commissions in the militia, government surveyors, justices of the peace and government contracts were the tools that politicians used to exert their will. Factional cliques at both the provincial and local level took root to best exercise this patronage. The two most significant of these were the 'Family Compact' of York and the Château Clique of Montreal and Quebec. Both were predominantly anglophone. They resembled the 'court' groupings of eighteenth-century English politics. They had a close relationship with the governor and were linked by a series of personal connections (hence 'family' compact). They were tied together through the liberal use of patronage and a common ideology. Loyalty, Anglicanism, and a belief in the necessity of maintaining British political dominance in Upper Canada formed the bedrock of their beliefs. The Compact consisted of individuals such as John Strachan, the bishop of York, John Beverley Robinson, the chief justice of the province, and Henry John Boulton, the Attorney General. The members of the compact were either British-born or descended from loyalists. Other Americans, perceived to be disloyal in the wake of the War of 1812, were excluded. The Château Clique was similar in composition, though it included a substantial number of wealthy merchants such as Peter McGill and John Molson.

The Family Compact of Toronto was mirrored by a series of similar factions through the rest of Upper Canada that had no necessary affiliation with the provincial government – such as the 'courtier compact' that surrounded Thomas Talbot in the London District or the Carleton Gentry based in Richmond in the Ottawa Valley.[138] S. J. R. Noel argued that grand patrons could be identified by the twin pillars of land and loyalism – and to be a grand patron, it was essential to be able to deliver on the promise of land.[139] But most patronage happened at a lower level – it was one in which 'no sharp distinction is drawn between economical and political functions, with the process of exchange between patrons and clients tending to be broad and multifunctional rather than narrowly contractual'.[140] Patronage has often been seen as a key difference between the 'chaotic, decentralized, coalition-based politics of the United Canadas and the increasingly disciplined, party-dominated politics that emerged after Confederation'.[141] Yet while judicious use of patronage may have helped first John A. Macdonald to solidify the ties that bound the Conservative party together, patron-client linkages were hardly an overlooked resource in the period before confederation.

The dominant political issue of the era was land. Initially, land grants had been given for free to loyalists and half-pay officers. Later immigrants paid the crown a fee for the land after the

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[137] See D. McCalla, *Planting the Province: The Economic History of Upper Canada, 1784-1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), pp. 174-5; G. Stewart, *The Origins of Canadian Politics: A Comparative Approach* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1986); J. Brebner, 'Patronage and Parliamentary Government', *Report of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association* 17:1 (1938): 22-30; and S. J. R. Noel, 'From Parties to Symbols and Entourages: The Changing Uses of Political Patronage in Canada' in A. Gagnon and A. Tanguay (eds.), *Democracy with Justice: Essays in Honour of Khayyam Zev Paltiel* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1992): 197-207.

[138] C. Read, 'The London District Oligarchy in the Rebellion Era', *Ontario History* 72:4 (1980): 195-209 and M.S. Cross, 'The Age of Gentility: The Formation of an Aristocracy in the Ottawa Valley', *Historical Papers/Communications Historiques* 2:1 (1967): 105-117.

[139] S. Noel, *Patrons, Clients, Brokers : Ontario Society and Politics, 1791-1896* (Toronto, 1990), pp. 67-8.

[140] Ibid., p. 76.

[141] S. Noel, 'From Parties to Symbols and Entourages: The Changing Uses of Political Patronage in Canada' in A. Gagnon and A. Tanguay (eds.), *Democracy with Justice,* p. 198.

introduction of the New South Wales system in 1825.[142] David Moorman has demonstrated how the administration of land in Upper Canada saw 'a transition in the system of governance, from the arbitrary to the uniformly regulated and from the quasi-feudal to the modern bureaucratic'.[143] From the 1820s onwards land companies bought up vast amounts of land from the crown to sell on to settlers. The British American Land Company in Lower Canada bought much of the land of the Eastern Townships and the Canada Company in Upper Canada bought the Huron Tract. Both companies elicited fierce criticism from the local population.[144] Land speculation plagued the Canadas. Members of the provincial governments, far from attempting to limit speculation, were enthusiastic speculators themselves.[145] Even more controversial was the system of land allocation. One-seventh of all the lands of the Canadas were "clergy reserves" – this land was reserved for the benefit of the established church. These were present in every township and were assigned in a chequered plan. This hindered the development of larger communities by their positioning. On those few occasions when the clergy reserves were sold, their sale was to the politically and socially privileged, who had the connections with the Family Compact.[146]

This period also saw the development of Canadian political parties. Before the 1830s, neither province had strong party organisations. Instead, they more closely resembled the eighteenth-century English system of 'court' and 'country' – a privileged faction in the favour of the governor attempted to maintain their position while the excluded struggled to achieve position and power. Factions, rather than party, were the rule for the thirty years after the Constitutional Act. As Stewart has warned, however, we must not take the analogy too far:

> 'the "court" orientation developed into a statist outlook by which administrations of the day deployed patronage and influence to shore up their positions, stimulated and participated in economic growth, and tried to free themselves as much as possible from close legislative supervision; the "country" tradition by this date implied an emphasis on elective rather than appointive officialdom, a desire to make executives more controllable by legislatures, and a penchant for small government frequently answerable to the electorate'.[147]

By the late 1820s more organised parties began to develop. In Lower Canada, French-Canadian reformers coalesced around the 'Parti Patriote', which established its manifesto in the 92 resolutions of 1834.[148] In Upper Canada, reform leadership was fractured between William Lyon Mackenzie, representing its most radical wing, and more moderate reformers such as represented by William Warren Baldwin of Kingston. Meanwhile the oligarchic groupings of the Family Compact and Chateau Clique began to develop a wider base as they created the 'Tory' and 'British' parties respectively. Patterson has noted that 'until 1824 electoral sentiment and political issues in all three regions were largely locally oriented. In each region radical factions emerged to contend with the other factions or "compacts" which were entrenched in the appointive offices of local government', but 'to secure and maintain such a majority they had to obtain electoral support that was provincial in extent. To that end

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[142] G. Patterson, *Land Settlement in Upper Canada, 1783-1840* (Toronto: C.W. James, 1921), p. 33, 148.
[143] D. Moorman, 'The "First Business of Government": The Land Granting Administration of Upper Canada', (Ph.D. diss., University of Ottawa, 1997), p. 2.
[144] C. Smith, 'The Role of Land Alienation, Colonization and the British American Land Company on Quebec's Development 1800-1850', (M.A. diss., McGill University, 1974).
[145] Craig, *Upper Canada*, p. 131.
[146] A. Wilson, *The Clergy Reserves of Upper Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1969), pp. 3, 13-14.
[147] Stewart. *The Origin of Canadian Politics*, p. viii.
[148] H. Manning, *The Revolt of French Canada 1800-1835: A Chapter in the History of the British Commonwealth* (London: Macmillan, 1962).

they needed to discover or invent long-lasting, widespread popularly significant issues and to devise political machinery by which these issues might be electorally exploited'.[149] These party political developments coincided with the emergence of a middle-class system of morality. As Cecilia Morgan has noted, the '"public man" rose above "private" selfishness and personal loyalties in order that he might unite the many factions of Upper Canadian politics and forge them into a unified body, working for the "common good"'.[150]

The right to vote was based on the same property qualification as in Britain, but the cheap availability of land meant that far more people were able to vote. As John Garner has argued, this franchise was 'tantamount to manhood suffrage in the circumstances of their new environment'.[151] As the availability of free land declined, so did the extent of the franchise. It was not only white men who participated in the formal exercise of democratic rights. There is evidence of women, blacks and first nations voting in elections in the Canadas. Hustings and elections provided an opportunity for participation in politics even by the disenfranchised. They came to these events to cheer on their favoured candidate and heckle opponents. Petitioning was a fundamental part of the political process and it was the primary form of public engagement for many Canadians. They petitioned for land claims, for improved transportation, for the creation of new districts and for provincial political issues, as has been demonstrated by Carol Wilton.[152]

Widespread newspaper coverage of political and social events was complemented by a strong associational culture. Canadians could join ethnic, occupational, charitable and religious societies and mechanics institutes in towns while agricultural societies predominated in rural areas. Taverns provided an important arena for political and social interaction – these institutions were widespread across Upper Canada from an early date, providing important stops on the roads between major towns as well as establishments to serve the local community. As Roberts has argued, 'in their casual, impromptu nature, tavern companies differed from the public as it was officially represented in parades and organized fetes ... the taverns supported an *informal* public life.'[153] The tavern also represented one area where minorities could participate almost equally in public life, and 'despite white Upper Canadians' attempt to marginalize First Nations and blacks, tavern sociability at times welcomed racialized others'.[154]

The Canadas experienced extraordinary demographic growth. Lower Canada grew from 335,000 inhabitants in 1814 to 1,111,556 in 1861. Upper Canada's growth was even more extraordinary, as the population rose from 95,000 to 1,396,091 in the same period.[155] For much of the 1820s and 1830s the British North American colonies were the preferred

[149] G. Patterson, 'Studies in Elections and Public Opinion in Upper Canada', (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1969), p. 1.
[150] C. Morgan, 'Languages of Gender in Upper Canadian Religion and Politics, 1791-1850', (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1993), p. 374.
[151] J. Garner, *The Franchise and Politics in British North America, 1755-1867* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), p. 5.
[152] C. Wilton, *Popular Politics and Political Culture in Upper Canada, 1800-1850* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000).
[153] J. Roberts. *In Mixed Company: Taverns and Public Life in Upper Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009), p. 5.
[154] Ibid., p. 118.
[155] Statistics Canada, *Censuses of Canada 1665 to 1871*, http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/98-187-x/4064809-eng.htm accessed 08/10/2013.

destination of British emigrants.[156] In 1837, the population of Upper Canada was 397,489. In less than 15 years, this had more than doubled to 952,004.[157] The vast majority of this increase came from immigration from the British Isles. This led to a significant change in the ethnic composition in United Canada as a French-speaking majority was replaced by an English-speaking one. It was also an extraordinarily mobile and transient population. Individuals first arrived in the port cities of Montreal and Quebec, where they often worked for a brief time, before moving further westwards and purchasing land of their own. Some continued on to the United States. But more chose to remain in the Canadas as pioneer farmers, urban craftsmen or local merchants. Migrants were influenced in their decisions to settle by ethnic and kinship networks. Throughout the Canadas ethnic enclaves began to emerge such as the Scottish Highlanders settled in Glengarry County. Alan Brunger has demonstrated how 'the Scottish and Irish were concentrated in peripheral parts of Upper Canada in the third quarter of the nineteenth century' with the Scots and Protestant Irish in the western peninsula and Catholic Irish in eastern Upper Canada.[158] Canadians presented a diverse spread of religions. Francophones were nearly homogeneous in their Catholicism. Meanwhile the Anglo-Canadians brought a panoply of dissenting and established religions from the mother country. These were joined by a number of sects from the United States. The 1842 census found that from a total population of 487,053, there were just 107,791 Anglicans. Meanwhile, substantial populations of Baptists, Catholics, Methodists (of British Wesleyan, Canadian and Episcopal varieties) and Presbyterians were present.[159]

The story of economic growth in the Canadas was uneven. Severe economic setbacks were experienced in the late 1830s with the combination of poor harvests and the international banking crisis in 1837. Between 1843 and 1847 an economic recovery was underway but its effectiveness was undermined by the removal of the imperial preference and the implementation of free trade by Great Britain. Until 1851 the Canadian economy remained depressed. During the 1850s and 1860s, the Canadas entered a period of exceptional prosperity, driven by railways, the expansion of the wheat economy, and reciprocity with the United States. Despite these changes, living standards for most Upper Canadians remained high for a pioneer economy and per capita farm income was about equal in 1826 and 1851.[160]

The Canadas remained a pre-industrial society for most of this period. Most people lived in rural areas and made their livings by farming, working in the lumber trade, or in the service industries that supported them. The dominant interpretation advanced for the Canadian economy during this period has been the Laurentian thesis. Harold Innis, its first proponent, argued that 'cheap water transportation favoured the rapid exploitation of staples and dependence on more highly industrialized areas in terms of fur, lumber, and finally wheat, pulp and paper, and minerals.'[161] In exchange for these primary resources, Britain sent back capital to the colonies. This was used to create transport and communications infrastructure in

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[156] J. Weaver, J. De Jonge and D. Norris, 'Transatlantic Migrations, 1831-1851' in R. Louis Gentilcore, D. Measner and R. Walder (eds.), *The Historical Atlas of Canada: Volume II: The Land Transformed, 1800-1891*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), Plate 9.

[157] Statistics Canada, *Censuses of Canada 1665 to 1871*, http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/98-187-x/4064809-eng.htm accessed 08/10/2013..

[158] A. Brunger, 'The Distribution of Scots and Irish in Upper Canada, 1851-1871', *The Canadian Geographer/Le Géographe Canadien* 34:3 (1990), p. 257.

[159] Statistics Canada, *1842 Census – Upper Canada – Table II – Population by Religions*. Accessed 09/10/13.

[160] F. Lewis and M. Urquhart, 'Growth and the Standard of Living in a Pioneer Economy: Upper Canada, 1826 to 1851', *William and Mary Quarterly* 56:1 (1999), p. 172.

[161] H. Innis, 'Transportation as a Factor in Canadian Economic History' in M. Innis (ed.), *Essays in Canadian Economic History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1956), p. 74.

Upper and Lower Canada. The economy was entirely dependent on the production of these staples. This left the Canadas with a specialised economy that was particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in the price of the staple good in the mother country. According to historians such as Marr and Patterson, Canadian economic growth has been determined by the autonomous demand for staple goods by foreign countries, in particular, Great Britain, and by Canada's ability to exploit this natural resource and export it.[162]

During this period, the fur trade had little importance. In 1821 the merger of the Northwest Company with the Hudson's Bay Company diverted the remaining fur trade away from the St. Lawrence route and through Hudson's Bay. The infrastructure and expertise that had been developed for the trade continued to remain important. With relative ease, the staple product was transferred from fur to timber. Timber was cut along the shores of the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa rivers and their tributaries. It was then floated along these rivers downstream to Quebec, where it was exported to the insatiable British market. After the long wars with France, the vulnerability of Britain's naval supplies, dependent on Baltic timber, had been exposed. To encourage Canadian development of timber, a tariff was imposed in Britain on its import. Canadian timber entered the market under the 'imperial preference', a far lower tariff that made their products competitive within the British market in 1810. As Arthur Lower has argued, this 'had prompt and decisive effects on the British North American colonies. The 'differential duties' … overcame the obstacles of distance and caused British demand to operate on colonial supply'.[163] One of the most significant effects was its impact on immigration. Fur had been a high value and low volume good while the manufactured items that were imported from Britain were generally less valuable and larger. Timber was very different – low value and bulky, it required large ships to transport it to the mother country. To make the voyage worthwhile, merchants sought a new good to transport to Canada. This brought about the emergence of cheap passenger fares across the Atlantic.[164] Throughout this period, Great Britain was the Canadas' primary export market, though the importance of the United States' market continued to grow, particularly after the advent of reciprocity in 1854. Canada's prosperity depended upon the maintenance of this system. The Repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 then came as a shock.

Lower has described the 'enormous "pull' of the great metropolis on the Canadian forest and its long series of secondary effects'. It led Canadians into the interior of the continent and prioritized the development of transport infrastructure, particularly through canalization of the St. Lawrence - Great Lakes river system.[165] The Lachine Canal at Montreal was completed in 1825, the Welland Canal on the Niagara Peninsula in 1829, and the Cornwall Canal in eastern Upper Canada in 1842. These were intended to provide an alternative route to export goods to the recently completed Erie Canal in the United States. Delayed by political opposition from the French-Canadians in Lower Canada and their inability to raise capital due to the small size of the state in Upper Canada, the entire system was not completed until the 1840s. By this time, in the United States railways were replacing canals as the most important method of transport. The lack of capital necessitated both the involvement of the provincial governments and the solicitation of investment from abroad. Nonetheless, this tragic view of the Canadian canal system as a tardy and ineffectual response

[162] W. Marr and D. Paterson, *Canada: An Economic History*, pp. 11-12.

[163] A. R. M. Lower, *Great Britain's Woodyard: British America and the Timber Trade, 1763-1867* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1973), p. 59.

[164] W. T Easterbrook and H. G. J. Aitken, *Canadian Economic History* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1956), pp. 199-200.

[165] A. R. M. Lower, *The North American Assault on the Canadian Forest* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1938), p. 58.

to the American development of the Erie Canal has been challenged by Douglas McCalla. For him, the improvements on the St. Lawrence were 'efforts to improve an established lake, river and land transport system rather than to create something where absolutely nothing had been before'.[166]

As Douglas McCalla has demonstrated, the economy of Upper Canada was far less dependent upon staples than once thought. In the early years military garrisons as well as fur trade outposts provided an important local market for agricultural produce. Furthermore, Canadians often traded with the United States. The rapid settlement of the midwest created demand for Canadian-produced timber and wheat. Moreover, the Canadas were absorbed into the hinterland of the industrialising north-eastern United States economy, especially that of New York. While the only exports before 1850 were timber, potash, furs and flour, production for domestic consumption 'was at least as vital to the economy's survival and expansion as these external dimensions of the economy … the local market gave Upper Canadians choices of what to produce and meant they were not dependent on a single export commodity'.[167] The idea of the isolated yeoman farmer is also somewhat mythical. Even within rural communities, farmers were linked to the surrounding economy through exports, the purchase of essential and luxury goods, many of them imported, and through lines of credit. The success of the pioneer farmer depended on the effective operation of communalism. In the early years of settlement, it was often impossible for a new farmer to produce enough to feed their family. The land needed to be cleared, a house erected and crops planted. As Peter Baskerville has described, 'many farmers also hired seasonal help, took in boarders, and invited friends and relations to work bees, where they would help out with some large job in return for generous quantities of food and drink'.[168] A small-scale manufacturing industry existed to service local needs. Capital was scarce and so most establishments, from grist mills to shoemakers, were small and employed few people, but they formed an essential part of the rural economy.[169]

A more convincing argument has been put forward by James Belich. He argues instead for a 'settler revolution' that occurred in two stages: that of 'explosive colonization' which allowed for the growth of huge settler cities in a single lifetime, and 're-colonization', which 'compressed space and reintegrated settler colony and metropolis'.[170] A series of regions in the Canadas, particularly in Upper Canada, experienced this phenomenon in which a new part of the region was rapidly colonized, experiencing a 'settler boom', such as the Eastern Townships in the late 1810s and the areas around Lake Ontario in the 1830s, before experiencing a bust and reintegrating with larger urban centres through an 'export rescue' in which a staple good was produced. This provides a useful corrective to the staples thesis and helps better to explain the patterns of settlement in the Canadas as well as the diverse nature of its economic activities.

The position of the Canadian economy was further complicated by the lack of available currency. There was a perennial scarcity of specie in the Canadas. Officially, the Halifax pound was the currency of the provinces but no coins were minted in the Canadas. In practice, a variety of different currencies were accepted as legal tender, including old French and Spanish silver coins, American dollars and British pounds sterling. Over the course of

[166] D. McCalla, *Planting the Province,* p. 122.
[167] Ibid., p. 6.
[168] P. Baskerville. *Ontario: Image, Identity, Power* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 78.
[169] McCalla, *Planting the Province*, p. 113.
[170] J. Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 9.

this period a number of banks developed, including the Bank of Montreal, established in 1817, and the Bank of Upper Canada in Toronto, established in 1821. These were private banks with the functions of issuing notes, providing credit and dealing in bills of exchange on London.[171] As private institutions that often struggled to stay afloat financially, the value and reliability of the bills they printed was often questioned. Many farmers and labourers turned to local merchants as a crucial source of credit. In exchange for their agricultural produce, they were given credit with the local storeowner.[172] This led to resentment against the merchant class which contributed to the discontent of the 1830s and rebellion in 1837 that has been well documented by Albert Schrauwers.[173]

Finally, the history of the Canadas during this period cannot be understood except in its broader continental context. The United States to the south presented both an adversary and an inspiration. In 1812, 1837-8 and 1866, Canada was invaded by its southern neighbour. Through the Erie Canal and the attraction of immigrants the United States competed economically with Canada. The democratic political system of America was still seen at this time as an experiment. Canadians held various and nuanced views of the United States. The economic success of America was often contrasted with the comparatively slow development of the Canadas. In consequence, Canadians advocated the adoption of some aspect of the American political system. At other times, issues of riots, slavery, and Jacksonian democracy seemed to confirm their worst fears about democracy and Americans.

The Canadas between 1815 and 1867 provided a background conducive to identity development. Improving transportation and communication networks, a powerful 'Other' in the United States and a vibrant political culture with rapidly developing party politics set the backdrop for the construction and contestation of identities. At the same time, large-scale immigration from the British Isles continued to challenge the ability of the inhabitants to form a singular culture. Previous allegiances did not slip away on setting foot in Canada. Instead, compromises had to be sought which did not challenge or overwhelm previous identities, but created new ones rooted in local experience. The questions to be addressed are how successful Canadians were at creating a united identity and to what extent could an individual hold multiple identities. Over this period Canadians struggled to define what it meant to be 'loyal', to be 'British' or to be 'Canadian'.

[171] A. Redish, 'Why Was Specie so Scarce in Colonial Economics? An Analysis of the Canadian Currency, 1796-1830' in M. Watkins and H. Grant (eds.), *Canadian Economic History: Classic and Contemporary Approaches* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1993), pp. 85-8.
[172] F. Lewis and M. Urquhart, 'Growth and the Standard of Living in a Pioneer Economy', p. 174.
[173] A. Schrauwers, 'Revolutions without a Revolutionary Moment: Joint Stock Democracy and the Transition to Capitalism in Upper Canada', *Canadian Historical Review* 89:2 (2008): pp. 223-256.

Chapter 2: Incorporation or Exclusion – the Canadas in the 1820s and 1830s

Between the end of the War of 1812 and the 1837 rebellions the Canadas developed rapidly. The frontiers of the southwestern peninsula of Upper Canada and the Ottawa Valley were settled by large-scale immigration from the British Isles. Meanwhile the city of Montreal grew into the Canadas' commercial metropolis. The first signs of discontent emerged in both provinces. The 'Family Compact' had established its dominance over Upper Canadian politics while the Patriote party under the leadership of Louis-Joseph Papineau began its battle with the 'British' party in Lower Canada. Relations with the United States remained largely positive, despite increasing worries about the nature of Jacksonian democracy.

Three major events had great relevance to identity formation in their particular locale – the 1832 by-election in Montreal, the alien question in the London District, and the Shiners' War in the Ottawa Valley. In Montreal, attempts were made to incorporate loyal and conservative French-Canadians into the anglophone elite. This election saw a battle over the allegiance of a third group, the Irish Catholics. A very different situation prevailed in the Ottawa Valley, where a similar mix of British, Irish and French-Canadian settlers existed. Conflict emerged between Irish Catholic lumbermen and their French-Canadian competitors in the timber industry. In the London District, the right of American-born settlers to vote and even to own property was challenged as the alien question flared into existence in the 1820s.

Yet each of these identity constructions were intensely local. Fear of American-born disloyalty was not shared in the Ottawa Valley or Montreal. Nor did the French-Canadian question have much relevance to the settlers of the London District. At this time politics followed a largely court/country model, based around the existence of local 'compacts' who controlled the distribution of patronage; and opposing factions who wished to gain control of this for themselves. It would take the trauma of the 1837 rebellions to provide an issue able to unite English-speaking Canadians from across both Upper and Lower Canada.

2.1 '… and then a most bloody riot ensued'[174]: Ethnicity, identity and the supposed Montreal Election Riot of 1832

After the resignation of John Fisher a tightly contested election between the Patriote candidate, an Irishman, Daniel Tracey, and the British party candidate, an American, Stanley Bagg, took place for the legislative assembly seat in the West Ward of Montreal. It lasted nearly a month, from April 25th to May 22nd. Tracey won by a mere handful of votes. Bagg refused to concede, but instead grudgingly withdrew from the election, claiming that his electors 'would not come forward being thus intimidated.'[175] The election was accompanied by violence throughout its course, but especially so at its end. Fighting occurred on the Place d'Armes on May 21 in sporadic bursts throughout the day. The magistrates, almost exclusively Bagg supporters, fearing an escalation of the high tensions into a full-scale riot, called in the military. As the Tracey supporters retreated down St. James' street, the military opened fire, resulting in the deaths of three French-Canadians. Both the coroner's court and the grand jury investigation into the shootings failed to satisfy the enraged Parti Patriote. An investigation was finally led by the House of Assembly, the one place "it would be carried on openly and without mystery".[176] This galvanised the Patriote movement into action and proved a spur to the 92 resolutions of 1834.[177] Issues of nationality and ethnicity ran high throughout the election, but they did not fall along a traditional axis of a French-English conflict. The Irish were welcomed into a largely French-speaking political community. The British, too, attempted to court the Irish vote through identity politics, but they did so with far less success than the Patriotes. The conservative party of Lower Canada at this time were usually described as the 'British' party or the 'bureaucratic' party, particularly by the Patriote press. I have followed this convention and references to the 'British' party in this and following chapters refer to the conservative political organisation of Lower Canada, and not to the wider British community.

Elections in Lower Canada were public and often violent affairs. The election demonstrated widespread public participation, as men and women from a wide variety of backgrounds exercised their right to vote, and by supporting their candidates simply by their presence or by taking a more active and violent role as "bullies". Conflict between supporters of opposing candidates was common, though full-scale rioting was unusual. "Bullies" were men hired to intimidate political opponents at hustings and elections. Their duties ranged from presenting an imposing display to barring electors from voting and even fighting political opponents. Each candidate was allowed to challenge the qualifications of any voter they suspected were ineligible. At the beginning of the election, this right was used sparingly, but by the last few days almost every voter was challenged.

The election of 1832 has been largely neglected by existing historiography, overshadowed by the later events of the decade. Most historians have accepted the magistrates' interpretation of events uncritically. William Henry Atherton wrote that the 'tone of the newspapers *Le Spectateur* at Quebec and *La Minerve* at Montreal is noticeably inflammatory in the demand

[174] Appendix JHALC, XLII, 1832-1833, M.24.
[175] *The Canadian Courant*, 23 May 1832
[176] Appendix JHALC, XLII, 1832-3, G.32.
[177] J. Jackson, *The Riot that Never Was: The military shooting of three Montrealers in 1832 and the official cover-up* (Montreal: Baraka Books, 2009), pp. 22-3.

for the redress of their grievances'.[178] This situation has been partially remedied in recent years as James Jackson has provided a comprehensive account of the events of the election, the shootings and the investigations conducted into it. Nonetheless, his account still leaves a number of areas to be examined, as he openly acknowledged: "I have avoided wider historiographical issues surrounding the events of May 21 such as the nature of civil-military relations at the time, their impact on society and political life, the role of ethnicity in what happened and the use made of public space".[179] Much of the historiography on the role of ethnicity in Lower Canadian history has tended to focus on the later 1830s after national associations such as the St. Andrew's Society had been created. Gillian Leitch has carefully examined how these societies were used as networks to enhance and perform national identity.[180] Similarly, Heather McNabb's study of the Scots in Montreal begins only in 1835.[181] This leaves a gap in the historiography during a crucial period of Lower Canada's political development in the 1830s.

Montreal was rapidly changing during the 1830s. The 1825 census gave a population of 31,516 for the city.[182] By 1831 this had increased to 43,773.[183] A large majority of Montreal's population in 1831 were Catholic – 32,533 in 1832, while 5,888 belonged to the Church of England, 3,643 to the Church of Scotland, 1,005 were Presbyterians, 517 Methodists, 105 Baptists and 52 Jews.[184] Unfortunately the census for 1831 does not give the place of birth for the inhabitants, so we are unable to find out what proportion of the Catholics were French-Canadian as opposed to Irish. In 1844, the district of Montreal contained 12,293 people of Irish birth compared to 33,903 French-Canadians, from a total population of 64,897.[185] Sherry Olson and Patricia Thornton have used the census data of 1842 to demonstrate that Irish Protestants made up 9.5% of the population, while Irish Catholics made up 20.4 percent. They also noted a different social status between the populations, as Irish Catholics were twice as likely to be labourers, while three out of four householders from the top 10 percent were Protestants.[186] The marriage registers for the 1830s showed that 56% of Irishmen could

[178] William Henry Atherton, *Montreal, 1535-1914: Volume II, Under British Rule, 1760-1914* (Montreal: S. J. Clarke Publishing, 1914), p. 142.
[179] Jackson, *The Riot that Never Was*, p. 21.
[180] Gillian Leitch, 'The Importance of Being *English*? Identity and Social Organisation in British Montreal, 1800-1850', (Ph.D. diss, Université de Montréal, 2006), p.3.
[181] Heather McNabb. 'Montreal's Scottish Community, 1835-65: A Preliminary Study', (M.A. diss, Concordia University, 1999).
[182] Statistics Canada. *LC Table I - Population, Sexes, Conjugal Condition, 1825 - Lower Canada* (table), 1825 - Census of Lower Canada (database), Using E-STAT (distributor). http://estat.statcan.gc.ca/cgi-win/cnsmcgi.exe?Lang=E&EST-Fi=EStat\English\SC_RR-eng.htm (accessed: January 14, 2013)
[183] Statistics Canada. *LC Table I - Dwellings, Population, Sexes, Conjugal Condition, 1831 - Lower Canada* (table), 1831 - Census of Lower Canada (Population/General) (database), Using E-STAT (distributor). http://estat.statcan.gc.ca/cgi-win/cnsmcgi.exe?Lang=E&EST-Fi=EStat\English\SC_RR-eng.htm (accessed: January 14, 2013)
[184] Statistics Canada. *LC Table III - Population by Religions, 1831 - Lower Canada* (table), 1831 - Census of Lower Canada (Population/General) (database), Using E-STAT (distributor). http://estat.statcan.gc.ca/cgi-win/cnsmcgi.exe?Lang=E&EST-Fi=EStat\English\SC_RR-eng.htm (accessed: January 14, 2013)
[185] Statistics Canada. *LC Table III – Birth Places of the People, 1844 – Lower Canada* (table), 1844 – Census of Lower Canada, Using E-Stat (distributor). http://estat.statcan.gc.ca/cgi-win/cnsmcgi.exe?Lang=E&DBSelect=A18444 accessed 01/11/2013.
[186] S. Olson and P. Thornton. 'The Challenge of the Irish Catholic Community in Nineteenth-Century Montreal', *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 35:70 (2002), p. 339.

sign their name, a number that would rise to 71% for the 1840s.[187] Unlike many North American cities, there was little ethnic segregation in Montreal as demonstrated by Rosalyn Trigger.[188]

By 1832 Montreal had established itself as the centre of journalism in the Canadas. In 1832 five major newspapers were supported by the city – the *Montreal Gazette*, the *Montreal Herald*, the *Canadian Courant*, *La Minerve* and the *Vindicator*. Through editorials and letters sent to these papers, a wide audience interacted on the issues of the day. The *Gazette, Herald*, and *Courant* represented the British party, while *La Minerve* and the *Vindicator* represented the Patriotes. The number of Scots involved in the Conservative press was, unsurprisingly, very high. As social, cultural and political leaders of the Anglophone community, it was only natural that they would dominate the press too. Through these newspapers they were able to define the acceptable positions on politics and what language was available to describe the world. It was through these Scottish editors that an intense language of loyalty was disseminated through the anglophone population of Montreal.

Ethnic tensions had been galvanised by events earlier in the year. In February, *La Minerve* published an inflammatory letter by Louis-Victor Sicotte. Sicotte criticised the system of government in Lower Canada and advocated independence for Lower Canada from Britain. The letter was far more radical than anything published before:

> 'a Revolution will perhaps be necessary ... In 1812 the Canadians flew to the frontiers for the defence of the country … there exists here two parties, of opposite interest and manners – the Canadians and the English. These first, born Frenchmen, have the habits and character of such – they have inherited from their fathers a hatred for the English; who in their turn, seeing in them the children of France, detest them. These two parties can never unite, and will not always remain tranquil.'[189]

The letter expressed its belief in the implacable hatred of the two linguistic groups of Lower Canada. The letter was also an attempt to appropriate the War of 1812 by French-Canadians. The War of 1812 was usually used as a test for loyalty by British loyalists. Here, the standard trope was reversed as French loyalists defended their homeland while the British did nothing. Such a letter was threatening not just to the tory elite, but to all English-speaking Canadians. Dr. Bardy at a meeting at St. Athanase to discuss the Montreal election 'riot' used this trope in much the same way: 'our fathers and a great number amongst you have preserved [Lower Canada] to His Majesty's Government by flying to the frontiers, exposing their lives and your own, whilst those who tyrannize over us this day, kept themselves securely and in a cowardly manner, sheltered from danger.'[190] The contest, in the minds of the Patriotes, was then not about loyalty as both groups could equally point to evidence of their allegiance.

Ethnic polarisation was mirrored by the *Courant* in the aftermath of the events of 21st May:

> 'And what madness has impelled La Minerve to stigmatise our noble defenders, as *murderers* and *assassins*, for the simple discharge of their sacred duty? … that these are BRITISH, is deemed sufficient justification for awarding to them insult and injury'.[191]

Discontent with the military's actions was written off as racial antipathy. British soldiers had simply done their job as the 'noble defenders' of the city. Such editorials were only likely to

[187] Ibid., p. 342.
[188] R. Trigger, 'The role of the parish in fostering Irish Catholic Identity in Nineteenth-Century Montreal', (M.A. diss., McGill University, 1997), p. 3.
[189] Translation by *Montreal Herald*, quoted in the *Montreal Gazette*, 23 Feb 1832.
[190] 'Meeting at St. Athanase', *Vindicator*, 1 June 1832.
[191] *Canadian Courant* 6 June 1832.

heighten ethnic tensions within the city. Both the British and the French-Canadians saw the other group as irredeemably opposed to them. Ethnic relations had been largely peaceful and cooperative since the conquest. In the 1830s, particularly after the events of this election, ethnic harmony rapidly gave way to discord.

The 1832 election controversy provided an embryonic stage for Anglo-Canadian identity as the Scottish and English communities melded into a single 'British' one in Lower Canada against the 'other' of French and Irish. While Irish Protestants were largely accepted into the Scottish-English fold, Irish Catholics found themselves excluded too. Both French-Canadians and Irish Catholics were perceived as a potential revolutionary threat to be contained by the British elite. The seditious Sicotte letter only confirmed these prejudices. The defining characteristics of this group were a British culture and conservative politics. Determined to maintain their privileged position, in 1832 they used the full panoply of state institutions to defend the conduct of the magistrates of Montreal and the officers of the 15th Regiment of Foot. Membership within the British community brought rewards of patronage. A series of stations were bestowed upon the politically loyal. A majority of the magistrates of Montreal were Anglophones. With only two exceptions, Joseph Roy and André Jobin, the magistrates indirectly or directly supported Bagg and subsequently exonerated the troops from all wrongdoing on May 21st.

The foundation of the British community in Montreal was the Scottish community. A Scottish-born elite ruled in Montreal, dominating both the political and social life of the city. The Scots of Montreal exercised a disproportionate influence to their numbers. Unlike the Irish, many had arrived before the War of 1812 and played a significant role in the fur trade. They exercised their claims to legitimacy through loud declamations of loyalty. They exercised their station through social activities: 'their Royal Montreal Curling Club is the oldest one on the Continent; that the Royal Montreal Golf Club; that the St. Andrew's Society of Montreal goes back to 1834; that our great local university bears the name of its original benefactor, James McGill the fur trader'.[192] Those of English, Irish Protestant, and American origin were able to participate in this Scottish-led culture.

The extent of ethnic conflict is nevertheless easy to exaggerate. Numerous examples help to demonstrate that the 'British' party was far from the homogeneous and monolithic entity that might be imagined. Benjamin Holmes was a Protestant Irishman and Daniel Arnoldi was the Montreal-born son of a German immigrant. The British party also included a number of French-Canadians. Acting as magistrates, like Jules Quesnel and Austin Cuvillier, as legislative councillor like Toussaint Pothier, or as coroner, in the case of Jean-Marie Mondelet, francophones actively engaged in the political project of the British party when it suited them. Jules-Maurice Quesnel had made his connections with the elite through the fur trade, working with the North-West Company, and even joining the Beaver Club, a hive of successful Scottish fur-traders, in 1818. Toussaint Pothier, a member of the Legislative Council, was also a fur trader in the Northwest Company and a partner of Peter McGill in the Company of Proprietors of the Champlain and St Lawrence Railroad. By contrast, Joseph Roy had no such connections. Due to his political betrayal in 1832, when he issued the arrest warrants for the two officers involved in the shootings, his position as magistrate was revoked. Membership in the British party could bring rewards, but these could be taken away at the first hint of inadequate political loyalty.

[192] Paul Hutchison, 'The Early Scots at Montreal', *Scottish Genealogist*, 39:2 (1982), p. 40.

However, when it came to exonerating the officers, the party quickly turned to an anglophone grand jury to acquire the desired verdict. Of the twenty-four grand jurors, seven were French-Canadian and seventeen British.[193] To achieve this, twelve jurors were drawn from Lachine, one of the smallest parishes, while eight came from the city of Montreal, one from Cote-des Neiges and three from Pointe-Claire.[194] Louis Gugy, the sheriff, had even requested a list of those qualified to act by law as jurors who were Protestant

It was not just the French elite that acted alongside the British party. The vast majority of the 'Bullies' were of French-Canadian origin, including such French-Canadian heroes as Joseph Montferrand. Montferrand was a legend in the French-Canadian community for his feats of physical strength and for his battles with Irish workers over the Ottawa Valley timber industry.[195] Some were immigrants from the British Isles, such as William Flynn and Bill Collins, but it was those such as Emmanuel-Xavier d'Aubreville, Louis Malo, François Dragon, Amable Hintz and Etienne Benêche Lavictoire, who appeared to have taken a leading role in their organisation. The authorities were aware of their use, even going so far as to recruit E.-X. d'Aubreville, François Dragon and Antoine Lafrenière as special constables. They had participated equally in the election of Olivier Berthelet, where 'Rottot told them that each man would receive ten shillings a day payable each night', but for which they had never been paid.[196] The majority of these bullies had little interest in politics but were simply attracted by the wages on offer. For those ranking higher in their organisation, the rewards could be significant. Lavictoire stated that Hintz 'was strong, a good fighter, and had been paid fifteen pounds for his service'.[197] It appears that the anglophone elite saw the poorer French-Canadian community of Montreal as malleable and functional tools that could be used to achieve their political ends. This positive, though contemptuous, attitude towards the French-Canadian habitants was demonstrated by the *Courant*: 'We know this people from a long residence among them; we are attached to them for their amiable and peaceable disposition, their good morals and their love of their country'.[198] It was only when a group of bourgeois reformers led by Papineau threatened their dominance in Montreal politics that the ethnicity of their opposition became relevant. This was one way to split the Irish-French alliance.

Nonetheless, this could be counter-productive. When they recruited special constables from the same group that they recruited the 'bullies', trouble followed. The special constables intimidated Tracey supporters and provoked disorder. Michel Jacques wrote: 'That a few moments after Mr. Tracey's departure, he heard someone cry "*Vive Tracey*" upon which a person armed with a Constable's Staff came to him, and said to him, there was no necessity to cry "*Vive Tracey*", and held him by the throat and … fell upon him with several blows with the staff, which threw him to the ground'.[199] James Jackson has also examined the extent to which these special constables were recruited from Bagg's bullies, finding at least eight of the special constables had been recruited as bullies by Lavictoire.[200] The special constables were not neutral public servants but agents for the election of Stanley Bagg. Surprisingly, the

[193] Jackson, *The Riot that Never Was*, p. 180.
[194] Ibid., p. 253.
[195] Gérard Goyer and Jean Hamelin, "MONTFERRAND, Favre, JOSEPH," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 9, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed November 3, 2013, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/montferrand_joseph_9E.html.
[196] Jackson, *The Riot that Never Was*, p. 220.
[197] Ibid., p. 224.
[198] *The Canadian Courant*, 26 May 1832.
[199] Appendix JHALC, XLII, 1832-3, M.10.
[200] Jackson, *The Riot that Never Was*, p. 224.

depositions given by the bullies to the House of Assembly did not find a counterpart on Tracey's side: 'Tracey certainly had a number of supporters who were very strong but they did not fall into the category of bullies … they were people of a quiet disposition who preferred to restore the peace, not to upset it.'[201]

Tracey's eventual success in this election can be attributed to the mobilisation of two distinct ethnic groups – the Irish Catholics and the French-Canadians. There were some anomalies. John Donegani, one of the 'zealous friends of Mr. Tracey' was a Canadian-born English-speaker of Italian descent. [202] His position demonstrates that immigrants from outside the British Isles could act as free agents politically, unconfined in their politics by ethnicity. The seat opened up by John Fisher's resignation had traditionally been held by an English-speaking member of the British party. In the previous election the Patriotes had not even contested the seat. Only through the mobilisation of a discontented Irish Catholic community, encouraged to believe that they shared a commonality of interest with the French-Canadians, could the West Ward's second seat became a political battleground.

In the first meeting for the election, Mr Cherrier spoke: Tracey was 'a friend to the country' and his was the only English-language paper 'which defended the cause of the Canadian.' Meanwhile, the Irish 'had shewn themselves always friends to the country in the worst crisis of Canadian affairs.'[203] Austin Cuvillier's attack on Tracey's candidature also focused on the role of the Irish: 'We know that no *Irishman* ever received a good word from him, and that he has at all times professed himself their enemy'.[204] Cuvillier was one of the most active supporters of Stanley Bagg in this election. A Patriote supporter until 1830, he actively worked to ensure Bagg's election through his role as a magistrate and through the employment of bullies.[205] Tracey's position as a representative of the Montreal Irish came through his newspaper, the *Vindicator*. It had been set up in 1828 explicitly to report on events in Ireland and to expound the cause of the Irish in Canada.

The *Herald*, too, tried to undermine Tracey's position as an Irishman. Doing so would draw the Irish population away from the Patriote party and into the welcoming arms of the British. It was necessary to represent the British party, and more generally, the English-speaking community of Lower Canada, as the natural allies of the Irish. The *Herald* argued that Tracey had joined the Patriote cause for personal advantage, not for the good of his countrymen:

> 'he is the strenuous advocate (now that he himself has got in) for shutting the door in the face of his fellow countrymen, and excluding them from the advantages which they might found, and he has found, in Canada … This country is the evident and easy refuge of the oppressed Irish population; they may find here instant employment, ultimate independence, and a cessation of past feuds and jealousies. Lower Canada seems marked out for the ultimate appellation of *New Ireland*, with quite as much propriety as that part of the United States called *New England*, and which it still retains.'[206]

The *Herald* equated Tracey's opposition to the British American Land Company to opposition to all Irish immigration. This article represented a vigorous attempt by the paper to court the Irish population and to assimilate them into the Anglo-Canadian community. There

[201] Ibid., p. 227.
[202] *The Canadian Courant*, 12 May 1832.
[203] *The Vindicator*, 13 April 1832.
[204] Ibid.
[205] Jacques Monet and Gerald J. J. Tulchinsky, "CUVILLIER, AUSTIN," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 7, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed February 20, 2014, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/cuvillier_austin_7E.html.
[206] Quoted in *The Vindicator*, 17 April 1832.

they could be controlled by a Scottish and English elite. The usual slurs found by this group against the Irish character were carefully avoided here.

The idea of a New Ireland is particularly interesting. The high level of Irish immigration into the Canadas from the 1830s until confederation is well known, but this recognition of it as a positive from the epitome of the Tory establishment press suggests an ambiguity that a simple model of a French-Irish alliance might obscure. As Sherry Olson and Patricia Thornton have argued, 'from as early as the 1820s, they constituted a third community, distinctive in its demographic behaviour and institutional alliances.'[207] As they represented a potentially powerful faction, men of English and Scottish origin suppressed their traditional prejudices and attempted to court Irish voters. They argued that they should see no incompatibility between being British and Irish. Over the course of this election, the Irish community were fought over by French and English leaders who attempted to use them for their own political purposes. The Irish were to be accepted into a broader British community which brought with it rewards of patronage and status – but in each case, the Irish element was undermined. In Lower Canada, despite their numbers, they struggled to assert their identity over the two prevailing ethnicities in the province. They represented a third bloc, not French-Canadian but not quite British either. In 1832 the Irish community lacked self-confidence and were bitterly fought over by the competing parties.

A similar situation was present in Quebec. There, 'by underlining the common experience of religion, *canadien*- and *patriote*-party candidates hoped to capture the Irish Catholic voters. Countering with a campaign founded upon language, the Crown, religious toleration and the increasing threat of French-Canadianism, Bureaucratic-party standard bearers sought to convince the Irish electorate that its interests were best served by those of "British origin"'.[208] In 1832, the battle for Irish votes and Irish hearts was wide open. The election of Tracey demonstrated that Irish Catholic voters tended to perceive themselves as oppressed peoples with more in common with their fellow victims, the French-Canadians. Guided by dynamic leaders such as Daniel Tracey, Irish Catholics refused to conform to the 'British' identity of Montreal. While it may have been expected that their shared Catholic religion would unite the Irish and the French, the reality was more complex. The Irish were often unhappy about having to attend services in French but in 1832 they had little choice. It was not until the late 1840s that the Irish gained their own church, St. Patrick's. It is likely that it helped to prevent this alliance of convenience and sentiment from becoming an assimilationist mechanism. By maintaining and fighting for their own institutions, the Irish first resisted joining a *canadien* identity. As politics polarised over the course of the 1830s, the weakness of Catholicism as a uniting factor was revealed. The British party then seized the opportunity to bring the Irish into their own fold.

Parallels with the situation in Ireland were often made. It was widely agreed by people of all political shades that Ireland had been mistreated. Tracey criticised the Canada Company 'because this was part of the system established in the Colonization of Ireland, in which countrymen had been planted, different in manners, habits and relations from the natives, for the express purpose of creating, and keeping up a separate influence' and 'as Irishmen, we should dread as the main cause of the calamities of our native country, and as men hoping to live tranquil and happy we can never wish to see renewed in this.'[209] The policies of the

[207] S. Olson and P. Thornton. 'The Challenge of the Irish Catholic Community', p. 333.
[208] D. De Brou, 'The Rose, the Shamrock and the Cabbage: The Battle for Irish Voters in Upper-Town Quebec, 1827-1836', *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 24:48 (1991), pp. 325-6.
[209] *The Vindicator*, 17 April 1832.

British American Land Company and the anglophone elite of Lower Canada were therefore seen as especially inimical to the Irish portion of the population. The misgovernment of Ireland was seen as an axiom, agreed upon even by more conservative commentators, such as 'An Old Countryman' who wrote into the *Montreal Gazette*:

> 'I am addressing you as Irishmen, men who, Englishman as I am, I will concede to you, laboured under disabilities in Ireland. *Do you do so here?* I unhesitatingly, and without fear of contradiction, say – NO, YOU DO NOT.'[210]

Similar language was used to describe French-Canadian grievances. For members of the British party, it was inconceivable that anyone, whether English, Irish Catholic or French-Canadian, could have real grievances of which to complain. 'CANADA is free from taxation of every description; no exciseman or tithe-proctor cross our thresholds: liberty of conscience is enjoyed; the utmost freedom prevails; prosperity and happiness reign among us.[211] For this writer, the habitant was not the issue, but the urban French bourgeoisie who made up the Patriote party and threatened revolution: 'We know that the country generally partakes not of these sentiments, and will disavow them; - the resolutions are of town manufacture, we are certain, and their authors are making tools of those who pin their faith too implicitly upon the factionists and never doubt the sincerity or propriety of what is recommended to them to pursue'.[212]

According to the 'True Irishman,' in Lower Canada, the Irish were better treated than in their homeland. Canada was the sanctuary from the travails of Ireland. Support for the Patriotes was nothing short of ingratitude:

> 'Many of you landed on our wharves, poor, destitute and friendless … the fountains of charity were again opened – your cause was pleaded from *protestant* pulpits, and Englishmen, and Scotchmen, and *protestant* Irishmen, again showered down their bounty upon you. Did not such kindness – did not such unprecedented liberality entitle your benefactors to expect *at least* gratitude from you? Countrymen, what return have you made?'[213]

It is also notable here that 'protestant Irishmen' were separated out from Catholic Irishmen. The former were perceived as part of a broader British community, no different to the English or Scots. This argument also demonstrated the power of clientelism in Lower Canada. The charity of the British population of the city was not given freely. It came with certain obligations, the most important of which was political loyalty. This demonstrated well the incorporative ideal of the Anglo-Canadian identity of the time. Protestant or Catholic, English or Irish, one could equally become a member of this community. All that was required in return was 'gratitude'. The courting of Irishmen by the British party was well underway.

Too strong a sense of Irish nationality had allowed them to be manipulated by an unscrupulous faction as they had been made 'the instruments of bad and vicious men.'[214] A letter to the *Gazette* from 'A True Irishman' implored his fellow countrymen to turn away from Tracey. He began by establishing his authentic Irish characteristics.' He described the Irish as 'national to a fault', and in agreement with the sentiments of 'An Old Countryman', it was their 'warm, unsuspecting character' that Tracey had 'abused to his own selfish and

[210] A notice 'To the Irish and Canadian People', *Montreal Gazette*, 24 May 1832.
[211] *Montreal Gazette*, 12 June 1832.
[212] Ibid.
[213] 'An Address to Irishmen' – A True Irishman, Montreal, 26 May 1832 in *Montreal Gazette*, 31 May 1832.
[214] A notice 'To the Irish and Canadian People', *Montreal Gazette*, 24 May 1832

wicked purposes'.[215] He argued that Tracey was not an Irishman worthy of their support. They had supported him simply for the fact that he was Irish, and he had betrayed them. By returning to the British party fold, the Irish could be fully accepted into the Anglo-Canadian community and consequently receive the multitude of benefits and patronage that came with membership:

> 'Do this, and I pledge myself that you will be faithfully and fearlessly supported by every Canadian, Englishman, Scotchman, and respectable Irishman in Montreal. Do this and you will regain the good opinion of your fellow citizens – do this and you will again participate in their friendly offices.'[216]

Only through political loyalty could they be allowed to receive the same benefits that English and Scottish men could expect due to their national origin. Attention was also given to the Irish demand for representation in the Assembly:

> 'He says, that the Irish say they have a right to be represented, and that not having one of their countrymen in the Assembly, their number in the country gives them a right to return one … but still they are represented in common with other British subjects.'[217]

The Irish here are essentially described as 'British'. According to the *Herald*, they could be just as adequately represented by an Englishman, a Scot or an American as by an Irishman. They belonged to a community that shared identical interests.

An account of the St. George's Day ball demonstrates the importance of performing identity in Montreal society during the 1830s as leading Scottish merchants such as John McGill dressed in highland garb.[218] The day's celebration was a chance for the English-speaking community to unite together under a series of common symbols. As Leitch argued, it 'provided an institutional framework for British identity' and that 'English identity was acting as an umbrella for all British groups and becoming indistinguishable from British identity'.[219]

An alternative performance of identity had been presented by the French-speaking portion of Montreal earlier in the year. The 'triumphal return' of the editors Ludger Duvernay and Daniel Tracey from their imprisonment in Quebec in February 1832 presented an opportunity to express the loyal identity of French Canada. These performances of identity were not meekly accepted by everyone. In the case of the triumphal return the *Gazette* wrote of a group determined to oppose any celebration:

> 'it is the intention of a numerous body, resident in the different suburbs, of BRITISH origin, whose national feelings have been frequently outraged by the indiscriminate abuse of all that is ENGLISH … to assemble together, and, excited by their national music, to march in a body to *Dalhousie Square*, to pull down the tricolor, and to substitute the flag of their own country.'[220]

The British were intolerant of a French-Canadian identity seen as directly opposed to their own. While individual French-Canadians could be accepted into the British elite, as a collective, with their own language, symbols and flags, they presented a threat. To be a part of the British community, unlike the Scots, who were allowed to dress in highland costume, celebrate St. Andrew's day and Scottish literature, the French-Canadians were expected to

[215] An Address to Irishmen' – A True Irishman, Montreal, 26 May 1832 in *Montreal Gazette*, 31 May 1832..
[216] Ibid.
[217] *Montreal Herald* quoted in *The Vindicator* 17 April 1832.
[218] *The Montreal Gazette*, 26 April 1832.
[219] Leitch, 'The Importance of Being English?', p. 187.
[220] *The Montreal Gazette*, 20 Feb 1832.

fully assimilate to British culture. The *Gazette* celebrated the abandonment of the more 'objectionable parts of the ceremonial' as 'the liberty pole and the tricolor are put away for more propitious times, and the BRITISH flag is to be substituted in their place'.[221] It was not appropriate to display French symbols in public in the minds of the British elite.

The idea of the French-Canadian habitant as naive and simple, but ultimately benign, was a trope that would continue through the decade, even surviving the trials of the rebellions of 1837. A small designing faction led by ambitious French-speaking merchants were leading astray the docile rural French:

> 'The faction … contradistinguished from the amiable and the honorable CANADIANS of FRENCH origin ... CANADIANS! you are deeply and equally interested with us of BRITISH origin in allaying the present ferments. Having no real ground of dissatisfaction with the administration of the Government, will you forsake a present good for a prospective evil?'[222]

For the *Gazette*, much like the Irish Catholics, the French-Canadians had been led astray by unscrupulous, self-interested leaders. This perspective informed the actions and opinions of the British elite of Montreal and helps to illustrate why attacks were rarely made upon the French-Canadian character itself. The strength of the 'Other' in the English-Montrealer's imagination was always limited and contested – it was only those who threatened the existing order that were opposed.

The language of patriotism in Montreal society was relatively weak, but did sometimes make its presence felt, even amongst the anglophone community. Residence within Canada was an important qualification for status within Montreal society. Bagg's statement to the electors emphasised this in an otherwise bland manifesto: 'Having resided in this Province from my infancy, and for the last twenty-four years in Montreal, during which time I have been more or less engaged in commercial pursuits, and have had numerous opportunities of becoming acquainted with the means of promoting the best interests of the country .... being, moreover, deeply interested in its prosperity, by having all my property in this Province, in which I hope to spend the remainder of my life'.[223] Acting in the best interests of the country – and not as a representative of one party – was important in legitimising one's candidature. Tracey was not just opposed because of his party affiliations, but because, in the words of Horatio Gates, he 'was a stranger, a man unknown to us'.[224] He was both outside the social circles of the British elite and a recent immigrant to the country – and therefore unable to properly represent Montreal. Bagg, on the other hand, as John Fisher stated: 'might be considered as a native of this country, he had resided 24 years in this city'.[225]

The events of 1832 thus illustrated the building of a series of ethnic alliances in Montreal for personal and political gain. The Scots, English, Americans and Irish Protestants formed an elite that supported the governor general, the executive and legislative councils and the status quo more generally. Their political loyalty was rewarded through a series of militia commissions, appointments as magistrates and seats on the legislative council. Some French-Canadians were accepted into this community, but only if they accepted conservative politics. The 'British party' in 1832, with its conglomeration of conservatives and supporters of executive power of all races, was the legacy of Dalhousie's approach to patronage politics. For him, politics, not ethnicity, were the great concern. The only group to be entirely

[221] Ibid., 23 Feb 1832.
[222] Ibid., 31 May 1832.
[223] *Canadian Courant*, 18 April 1832.
[224] Ibid., 21 April 1832.
[225] Ibid.

excluded were the Irish Catholics. As a result, the Irish Catholics turned to their co-religionists when urged on by their fellow countrymen. The British elite soon realised their mistake and courted the powerful and growing segment of the population of Irish-Catholic origin. They struggled against the impression held by many Irishmen that they held the same prejudices as their oppressors back in Ireland. But while the British party were unsuccessful in attracting Irish Catholics in the short term, they would do much to rehabilitate their reputation. Furthermore, by the uncompromising stance taken at the elections and the cover-up, they were able to turn perceptions of the events of May 21st from one of reformer against tory into a conflict of British against French.

The election of 1832 was the first in a series of events that would harden ethnic boundaries and make movement between the two groups harder. Politics would become more ethnically based over the next few years. The shooting of three French-Canadians and the following cover-up worsened relations between the French and English-speaking communities. Under the Governor Generals Lord Aylmer and Lord Gosford a policy of 'conciliation' was pursued by admitting Patriote leaders to high political office. It failed to pacify the radical opponents of the administration and served only to antagonise the British community of Montreal. The failure of this policy of conciliation can be at least partly attributed to the events of 1832. It created a perception, however false in reality, of an assimilative and unfeeling attitude towards the French-Canadians on the part of the Lower Canadian executive and their British party allies in Montreal. Only the radicalisation of the Patriote party and an increasingly exclusive definition of the French-Canadian nation would be enough to drive the Irish Catholics to switch allegiances. At this time, the Montreal merchant community was able to define the nature, culture and aims of the English-speaking community. In many ways, a growing divide was becoming evident between the 'British' party as represented by this community, and the Governor General and the executive council, which took their orders from Great Britain. Conciliation would only magnify this trend. For the time being, the Montreal merchants retained strong ties to Britain and they had little interest in promoting constitutional change. A more significant French-Canadian threat was required for them to begin to see the necessity of a united Canada.

2.2 The Alien Question and the London District

> 'Loyalty is an odd sort of a word, and really admits of many definitions, there is, for instance, a sort which consists in keeping up a connection with the party that have places to give away.'[226]

During the 1820s, Upper Canada was beset by its first serious contest over identity, the alien question. This issue was crucial in defining the role those born in the United States of America were to play in Upper Canadian society. There was no easy solution, and it was greatly complicated by the role of the imperial government in London. The crisis provided the impetus for the reform movement as the Family Compact appeared out of touch with the ordinary Upper Canadians. The alien question acted as an arena in which all sides determined to define what loyalty to the crown involved and what it meant to be a British subject. Despite this, reformers and tories were often frustrated by the actions of the government across the Atlantic that knew little of Upper Canadian realities. One would expect that the alien question to have had particular resonance in the London District. This region had one of the largest proportions of American-born subjects in Upper Canada. Gerald Craig highlighted the American nature of Upper Canadian society: it 'was as "republican" and as "Yankee" as anything to be found across the lakes.' Therefore, if 'Upper Canada was to become a place where genuine British feelings could flourish, the political power of the existing American population had to be curbed, immigration from the Mother Country encouraged, and educational and religious growth directed along correct lines.' [227] Furthermore, some leading reformers who made their political careers on the alien question came from the district – most notably John Rolph and John Mathews.

The alien question threatened to remove the rights of American-born subjects to vote and to own property. From 1783, whether loyalist or not, Americans had been encouraged to settle in Upper Canada.[228] They had lived freely with all the rights of British subjects before 1817 as 'in all civil transactions in the Province, they have invariable been considered as British subjects'.[229] After the War of 1812, the provincial government was increasingly wary of American settlers and did their best discourage their immigration. The lieutenant-governor, Sir Francis Gore, ordered judges to refuse the oath of allegiance to Americans entering Upper Canada. The alien issue first arose in 1817 when the colonial secretary in London, Lord Bathurst, ordered that immigrants from the United States were to be treated as aliens until they had been properly naturalized, according to the Naturalization Act of 1740. Were Americans already living in the province to be treated as aliens too? Disenfranchising such a large portion of the population was sure to cause controversy, but the implications for land ownership would have been devastating. It was not until 1821, however, with the election of Barnabas Bidwell, that the alien question really began to receive attention. A petition was raised against Bidwell, claiming that he was unfit to be a member of the House of Assembly, because of his prior misconduct in the United States, where he had been accused of embezzling money before he fled to Kingston, Upper Canada. He was also challenged because of his nationality – having been born in the United States, it was not possible for him

[226] W.L. Mackenzie, 'To the Canadian Public', *Colonial Advocate*, 10 June 1824.
[227] G. Craig, *Upper Canada: The Formative Years* (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart 1963), pp. 106-123.
[228] John Graves Simcoe. 'A Proclamation to such as are desirous to settle in the lands of the crown in the province of Upper Canada', 1792, https://archive.org/details/cihm_08592, accessed 26/10/2013.
[229] *JHAUC, 1825-6, 13 Jan 1826*, p. 74.

to stand for election in Upper Canada. Bidwell had sworn an oath of allegiance to the United States when he took on the position of treasurer in Berkshire County, Massachusetts.[230] At this point, there was no method for an American citizen to naturalize. The instructions for the provision of a naturalization bill by the Colonial Office were intended to provide relief for the many American inhabitants of Upper Canada rather than to persecute them.

The issue was further inflamed in 1824 when the British courts decided that persons remaining in the United States after 1783 were no longer British subjects. A number of naturalization bills were attempted in the provincial legislature, but continuing differences of opinion between the executive and the House of Assembly meant that they struggled to reach a compromise. Finally, in 1827 a compromise was reached which gave provisions for a bill that allowed all those who had received grants of land from the provincial government, had held office, had taken the oath of allegiance, or had arrived before 1820, to maintain their rights as British subjects.[231] Only those who had arrived later would have to naturalize by seven years of residence. The importance of this issue was highlighted by the *Gore Gazette*: 'it has been very significantly hinted to us "if aught in *favor* of the Alien Bill should appear in our proposed lucubrations, we should lose the greater part of our subscribers!"'[232]

Through this period the population increased steadily. The population of Upper Canada grew from 95,000 in 1814 to 177,174 in 1827.[233] The London District remained relatively under-populated with just 16,598 inhabitants in 1824. [234]At the end of the War of 1812, like much of Upper Canada, the population was still primarily American. Andrew Bonthius has noted that 'one estimate is that by 1815 more than 100,000 American-born inhabitants lived in UC and LC, accounting for as much as 80 per cent of the English-speaking population.'[235] Not only was the London District American, but unlike the populations on the shores of Lake Ontario, as Hugh Carruthers has demonstrated, it was not a loyalist population.[236] Many loyalists had not left the United States immediately in 1783. They arrived over the next few decades and were therefore hard to distinguish from the great influx of 'late loyalists' who had little attachment to the British Crown. They did not leave with the original exodus but rather trickled into Upper Canada in the remaining years. However, they represented only a small minority of the inflow of Americans into Upper Canada from 1791 onwards. Many Americans had sworn an oath of allegiance and fought for the defence of Upper Canada in the War of 1812. Rather than being rewarded for their loyalty, the alien question appeared to treat them as traitors.

Unfortunately, the censuses from this period do not provide the information for place of birth, but an idea of the various strengths of the ethnic groups in the region can be given from the following table of the members of the 2nd regiment of the Middlesex Militia in 1828 from

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[230] W. Riddell, 'The Bidwell Elections – A Political Episode in Upper Canada a Century Ago', *Ontario History* 21 (1924), pp. 236-7.
[231] P. Romney, 'Re-inventing Upper Canada: American Immigrants, Upper Canadian History, English Law and the Alien Question' in R. Hall, W. Westfall & L. MacDowell (eds.), *Patterns of the Past: Interpreting Ontario's History* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1998), pp. 95-8.
[232] *Gore Gazette*, 10 March 1827.
[233] Ontario GenWeb: http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~canon/research-topic-misc-population.html accessed 17/01/2012
[234] Statistics Canada. *UC Table I - Population, Sexes, and Ages, 1824 - Upper Canada* (table), 1825 - Census of Upper Canada (database), Using E-STAT (distributor), accessed 29/10/2013.
[235] A. Bonthius, 'The Patriot War of 1837-1838: Locofocoism with a Gun?', *Labour/Le Travail* 52 (2003), pp. 19-20.
[236] H. Carruthers, 'Americans in the London District of Upper Canada: Immigration and Settlement, 1793-1812', (M.A. diss., University of Western Ontario, 1968), pp. 132-3.

Malahide Township.[237] Though a large number do not have their place of birth given, many of these have the same names as other men in the list and were likely related, which would imply an even higher proportion of men born in the United States or the British North American colonies.

Table 1: Birth Places of the 2nd regiment of the Middlesex Militia, 1828

Place of Birth	Number	Proportion (%)
England	4	2.42
Scotland	4	2.42
Ireland	5	3.03
United States	44	26.67
Upper Canada	41	24.84
Lower Canada	8	4.84
New Brunswick	4	2.42
Nova Scotia	9	5.45
Other	1	0.61
Not Given	45	27.27
Total	165	100

As the table above demonstrates, those born in the United States represented the single largest place of origin. Many more had been born in Upper Canada or in another British North American colony. Of this group, a substantial number were likely to be descendants of Americans themselves. With such an ethnic composition it is only to be expected that the alien crisis would have had significant resonance in the London District.

The question of loyalty during the crisis has been explored by David Mills, who has argued that it 'forced Upper Canadians to make explicit their definitions of the loyal subject'.[238] Jane Errington similarly argued that for reformers 'loyalty ... was not determined by an accident of birth', but that it was 'essential for the many American-born Upper Canadians or former residents of the American republic and for their defenders in the House of Assembly to believe that loyalty could also be shown by actions and by hard work.'[239] John Garner has argued that the controversy over the alien question can be traced to the desires of the reformers and the tories to strengthen their own power base.[240] This provides an alternative interpretation to the historiographical consensus that presents the alien question as a simple (and unwise) persecution of the American-born population. It was instead a contest between two factions to manipulate the franchise to strengthen their own interests. The alien question was not simple mismanagement by a privileged elite; but a deliberate contest over what it meant to be a loyal British subject and an Upper Canadian.

The alien question emerged in the context of reaction against Americans provoked by the War of 1812. In 1816, the House of Assembly voted to punish those who had spent the war years in the United States by refusing to make land allotments to children of Loyalists unless they could prove that both they and their parents had remained loyal during the late war. No longer was it enough to have supported the British in the revolutionary war. Throughout the

[237] '1828 Militia Men of Malahide Township', *Elgin Country Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society*, http://www.elginogs.ca/Home/ancestor-indexes/military/1828-militia-rolls, accessed 29/10/2013.
[238] D. Mills, *The Idea of Loyalty*, p. 44.
[239] J. Errington, *The Lion, the Eagle and Upper Canada*, p. 167.
[240] J. Garner, *The Franchise and Politics in British North America,* p. 86.

period of the alien question the issue of war losses was a significant question in Upper Canadian politics. On 30th January, 1825, the two houses presented a joint address on the issue of war losses. They argued strongly for the loyalty of the Upper Canadians who had sacrificed much for the British Empire and expected to be reimbursed for their efforts. They had suffered 'the destruction of their buildings, the devastation of their farms and the spoliation of every description of personal property' and thereby been 'reduced to ruin.'[241] The provincial government lacked the funds to reimburse the losses entailed by the war:[242]

This inability to provide relief to those who had amply demonstrated their loyalty during the War of 1812 was certain to cause discontent. Those who had lost property in the war were primarily of American or Canadian birth – yet it was this very group which were being targeted in the alien crisis. The issue had especial resonance in the London District, one of the areas of Upper Canada that had been invaded, as demonstrated by the petition of George Ward from Long Woods in Middlesex County.[243] He was accused of disloyalty despite his participation in the militia and the loss of his property. Now, to add insult to injury, the very land he lived on could be taken away. Even worse, the provincial administration arbitrarily attempted to withhold land and compensation from their political enemies:

> 'That the promised bounty in land of His late Most Gracious Majesty, on account of meritorious service, during the late war, has been withheld from some persons entitled to it on account of their connection with the said convention, although they never have been tried by any lawful or constitutional tribunal whatsoever for the part they acted.'[244]

The legal position on Americans living within Upper Canada was ambiguous. The decision by Lord Bathurst in 1817 to treat all immigrants from the United States as aliens until properly naturalized by the act of 1740 implied that all Americans who had immigrated after 1783 were to be treated as aliens, a position later confirmed by the decision in the British courts in 1824. The Reformers and Tories held differing legal opinions on this issue. Reformers argued that in British common law a British subject could not renounce his nationality. By being born in the United States before 1783, or as the child of one such subject, any American residing in Upper Canada was therefore to be treated as a British subject.[245]

For the Tories, American immigrants had to naturalize as would immigrants from other any country. The encouragement of American settlers before 1812 was to be ignored. The American-born population, thought to espouse dangerous republican principles and threaten the British connection, represented a threat to be contained. Colonel Thomas Talbot, a leader of the London District compact, gives an idea of the mentality of the provincial elite during this period:

> 'on the 23rd two parties will present themselves. The one will be composed of Loyal men – the other of Disaffected men, of Republicans, of Revolutionists, and of Rebels. Let every man therefore ask himself this question. Shall I stand up on the same side with these Revolutionary Republicans – on the same side with these Rebels or shall I stand up on the side of Loyalty.'[246]

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[241] *JLCUC, 1825-6, 30th Jan 1826,* p. 88.
[242] *JLCUC, 1825-6*, *14 Jan 1826*, p. 53.
[243] 'Petition of George Ward, Paint Creek, Long Woods', 24 Jan 1825, *Upper Canada Sundries*, Vol. 70, 37148-58.
[244] *JHAUC, 1825-6, 11th Jan 1826*, p. 67.
[245] *JHAUC, 1825-6, 30 Dec 1825*, p. 51.
[246] 'Printed fly-sheet in support of the St. Thomas meeting, 1832' in J. Coyne (ed.), *The Talbot Papers* (Ottawa: Royal Society of Canada, 1909), pp. 121-2.

This polarizing discourse of loyalty was repeatedly used by the administration to attempt to undermine the position of the reformers, and it was very often successful.

The alien question arose primarily from the actions of the imperial government in Great Britain. As Craig has argued, the provincial executive attempted to separate the issues of land ownership from those of the franchise.[247] The Legislative Council attempted to pass "An Act to confirm and quiet in the possession of their estates, and to admit to Civil rights of subjects certain classes of persons therein mentioned" in December 1825, but were faced with a series of amendments by the House of Assembly.[248] The Assembly objected that 'some further measures should be adopted to prevent this new and alarming construction of the law from being enforced, to the prejudice, terror, and disfranchisement of a large portion of the inhabitants of this Province, who have quietly and loyally confided in the security and certainty of the laws as uniformly construed and administered for more than thirty years, and in the honor, good faith, and paternal care of His Majesty's Government'.[249] The attempt to disenfranchise the American settlers was therefore seen as both illegal and illiberal. The reformers followed the long British country tradition of resisting the tyranny of the executive. The loyalty (and therefore identity) of the American settlers was not to be questioned.

Reformers objected to the Tory definition of loyalty and emphasised the role of many Americans in the militia in the War of 1812. To them, the War of 1812 had clearly demonstrated their loyalty:

> 'That the meritorious and loyal conduct in defence of this Province, of such persons of this description as were called into actual service during the late contest with the United States of America, the gallantry with which they encountered the dangers ... proved that they justly appreciate the rights which they have so long enjoyed, and are fully entitled to the confidence, protection, and paternal care of His Majesty's government.'[250]

For reformers, an American-born subject could be just as loyal as a recent immigrant from the British Isles. Their proven defence of the country could only be held in their favour. Americans were not just loyal subjects, but necessary immigrants. The government should be artificially restricting immigration to British subjects. By doing so, they undermined the development of Upper Canada. The newly opened western states of the United States, such as Michigan, were often being chosen by settlers over Upper Canada, much to the detriment of their thinly populated province. The Americans were 'among the most useful, industrious and loyal subjects of His Majesty'.[251] As a result of the discouragement of American settlers, 'within these last few years, many thousands of families, with wealth and industry, instead of peopling the western territory of the United States, would have emigrated into this Province and added to our population and prosperity, had they not been unhappily discouraged by a change of policy.' Their experience of life under the British constitution would make them loyal subjects, whether they were born under British rule or not.[252] A liberal policy of immigration would ultimately strengthen, not weaken, the attachment to the mother country. Americans were not considered as disloyal aliens, but as potential British subjects who simply needed to be given the opportunity to display their loyalty.

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[247] Craig, *Upper Canada: The Formative Years*, p. 117.
[248] *JLCUC, 1825-6*, 14th Dec 1825, p. 29.
[249] *JHAUC*, *1825-6,* 30 Dec 1825, p. 52.
[250] Ibid.*,* p. 51.
[251] Ibid., 11 Jan 1826, p. 69.
[252] Ibid., 18 Jan 1826, p. 88.

The alien question also had great importance for the relationship of Upper Canadians with the imperial government. Both reformers and tories repeatedly referred the question back to Great Britain. The British government had appeared to create the alien crisis first through Lord Bathurst's instructions in 1817 but were nonetheless far more amenable to the reformers position by the late 1820s. As Craig argued, this came as a shock to the provincial administration: 'It was therefore with intense annoyance that the local executive received word that the Colonial Office intended to disallow the very bill it had asked for, and for reasons that could command very little respect at Govt House in York'.[253]

It appears that some of the more conservative members of the Upper Canadian elite, especially the loyalist and Canadian-born tories such as Hagerman and Robinson, had attempted to use the alien question to redefine themselves as British and loyal against a mass of disloyal American immigrants. The loyalists and Canadian-born were to be separated out from the general American-born population and categorised as British. Yet this was never really successful. Americans continued to vote and hold seats in the provincial parliament throughout the course of the crisis. Indeed, Marshall Spring Bidwell, whose father's election had provoked the initial crisis, became Speaker of the House of Assembly. Rather than distinguishing between loyalists and latecomers, the debate emphasised the loyalty of the vast majority of Americans. Its resolution in 1827 provided for such broad terms of naturalisation that almost all Americans residing in Upper Canada could instantly become British subjects with all the rights entailed therein.

Nonetheless, a simple narrative of English inclusion and American exclusion cannot fully address the complexities of this period. The leading reformers of the district, acting as the two representatives for the House of Assembly for Middlesex, were John Rolph and John Matthews. Both were born in England and appear to come from the background typical of the Family Compact. Matthews was a half-pay officer who had fought in the Napoleonic Wars and had a personal relationship with the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Peregrine Maitland.[254] John Rolph was an Anglican physician who knew the local Tory oligarch, Colonel Thomas Talbot, particularly well.[255] Rolph was the subordinate partner in a powerful patron-client relationship. He went so far as to organise the 'Talbot Anniversary' to honour the Colonel in 1817 and in return Talbot offered his patronage for the Talbot Dispensary in St. Thomas in 1824. This loyal anniversary included toasts to the King, to the Governor General and the Executive, and to Talbot himself.[256] A later toast was to 'the Memory of General Brock'. The War of 1812 held a powerful influence over the imaginations of the people of the London District and over Upper Canada as a whole. Isaac Brock was able to simultaneously personify Canadian heroism, British protection and loyalty, and resistance to American invasion.

These reform representatives of the district were hardly the disloyal Americans one might be led to expect. Yet both were on the receiving end of the ire of the Family Compact for their failure to adhere to Tory expectations. Despite their backgrounds, it was with little difficulty that Rolph and Matthews were able to obtain the support of the local American-born population. This suggests that the process of 'othering' the American population was only just beginning. By contrast, the provincial elite had initiated a project to differentiate Canadians from their southern neighbours. Targeting the potentially disloyal Americans of

[253] Craig, *Upper Canada: The Formative Years,* p. 121.
[254] 'Matthews, John' in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 6, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed October 29, 2013, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/matthews_john_6E.html.
[255] G. M. Craig, "ROLPH, JOHN," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 9, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed October 29, 2013, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/rolph_john_9E.html.
[256] 'Talbot Anniversary', *Supplement to the York Weekly Register*, 1 June 1822.

the London District appeared to present an effective method through which this could be achieved.

Matthews, in particular, had his loyalty questioned. One minor error of judgement would come back to haunt him. After drinking with friends at a theatre, he requested that 'Hail Columbia' and later 'Yankee Doodle' be sung. Then he, along with George Hamilton, cried 'Hats off' to the song. These patriotic American songs had been preceded by the far more appropriate 'God Save the King' and 'Rule Britannia'.[257] Here, more clearly than ever, was a conflict of identity between Reformers and Tories. For the Tories, only music celebrating the British Empire could be contemplated. For Reformers, representing a largely American and non-loyalist population, such American music did not cause offense. Charles Richardson felt and insulted and 'indignantly reflected that "I was no yankee and therefore would see them d—d first"'.[258] Matthews wrote a letter in his own defence in which he attempted to downplay his role in the occurrences of that night. So significant did Richardson feel this incident to be, that he felt the need to reply statement by statement to this letter.[259] According to John Beikie 'it ill accords with the character of Legislators to turn the national Airs of their own Country or of any others into frolic and fun'.[260] It is striking how even such an innocent act as requesting a song could become an issue of such virulence. Here, more conspicuously than ever, was a display of the 'Othering' of the United States and the exclusion from power and privilege of all those who did not adequately display their 'loyalty' by opposing its every cultural symbol.

It was not only the political leaders that came into conflict with this aggressively loyal British identity. The loyalty of the local American-born population was not aided by the performance of an aggressively pro-American identity. At Fort Norfolk, American independence was celebrated by the firing of a cannon. In response, those determined to enact a loyal, British, and anti-American identity, such as local Tory magnate Mahlon Burwell, informed attorney general John Beverley Robinson, a leading member of the Family Compact.[261] Rolph, meanwhile, after an impassioned speech on the Alien Question, was branded as a 'man with a vile democratic heart – one who should be sent out from the province'.[262] In Westminster Township on a board there was written the words "*Success to Upper Canada!*", encircled by a wreath of Roses, Thistles & Shamrocks (the symbols, respectively, for the English, Scottish and Irish). But 'this memento of the little veteran's loyalty was, it seems, fated to incur the displeasure of some Yankees from Delaware, who passing by on the evening of the 4th of June, demolished this unoffending monument of British feeling'.[263] Relations between the Americans and recent British immigrants were far from cordial.

For a deeply Anglican elite, nonconformist religions could be as threatening as Catholicism. Even the mild-mannered Quakers caused difficulties. For these pacifist worshippers, demonstrating their loyalty was much more challenging, as made evident by Peter Lossing's letter. Peter Lossing was a Quaker religious leader, born in New York State. He moved to Norwich, Upper Canada in 1810 and he had often proclaimed his loyalty and dislike of the

[257] Craig, *Upper Canada: The Formative Years*, p. 120.
[258] 'Charles Richardson to ____', York, 27 April 1826, *Upper Canada Sundries*, Vol. 77, 41559-62.
[259] 'Charles Richardson's remarks on Captain Matthew's statements', York, 29 April 1826, *UC Sundries*, Vol. 77, 41572-5.
[260] 'John Beikie to Hillier', 1 May 1826, *Upper Canada Sundries*, Vol. 77., 41579-81.
[261] 'A. A. Rapelje to J. B. Robinson', Vittoria, 1 March 1826, *Upper Canada Sundries*, Vol. 76, 4103.
[262] Quoted in M. Patterson, 'The Life and Times of John Rolph, M.D., (1793-1870)', *Medical History* 5:1 (1960), p. 18.
[263] *Gore Gazette*, 4 August 1827.

United States government to the Lieutenant Governor, though in politics he was largely a moderate reformer. His son followed him as a spokesman for the Norwich Quakers, but unlike his father, recruited men for Duncombe's uprising in 1837.[264] He described the indulgence given that allowed the Quakers exemption from militia service, but inquired 'whether the Indulgence mentioned is intended to embrace the children of these societies and others accredited members or brought up in the Society who may have come or may come into this province as actual settlers since the war'.[265] Here, a division was made between long-settled American inhabitants of Upper Canada, who had remained loyal during the war (even if they had not actually fought for the militia) and more recent immigrants who were perceived to be of more questionable loyalty.

The power of the local compact was demonstrated by the actions of Mahlon Burwell with regard to Singleton Gardiner. Gardiner was an Irishman who had lived for a time in the United States, before immigrating to Upper Canada in 1817. In 1822 Gardiner had his goods seized and he was immediately imprisoned due to his alleged failure to fulfil his quota of labour duty on the roads. Gardiner was insistent that he had already performed such labour and Henry John Boulton, the Solicitor General of Upper Canada at the time, wrote that 'if true, the conduct of the Justices has been certainly most unjust, illegal and oppressive'.[266] In a petition he described the abuses he had been subjected to as he was imprisoned, in his belief, because 'some of my friends had said in a public Company that they were determined to hold me up for a member of the House of assembly next Election'.[267] For Gardiner, though, it was the practical, rather than the political, implications that were most distressing. His absence would lead to poverty for his family. Gardiner's ideas were disturbing to the local elite. He compared the United States favourably with Upper Canada: 'a powerful commonwealth has arisen founded on the largest principles of political liberty which the world has even seen reduced to practice and exhibiting for the first time the cheering spectacle of 10,000 people flourishing under it and peaceable enjoying all the Blessings of a true representative Government. What a contrast does our neighbourhood exhibit to that which is above here we are obliged to suffer the most absolute tyranny and oppression that was ever thought of'.[268]

For many settlers the United States did not represent 'mob rule' but the triumph of the liberal principles supposedly embodied by the British Empire. Most of the inhabitants of this district then did not exhibit the anti-Americanism that became a fundamental component of the Canadian identity in later years. Multiple competing conceptions of identity were still at work and the decision as to whether to be 'British', 'Canadian' or 'American' remained unresolved. Furthermore, the cultural components of these identities remained fluid. For Gardiner, despite his positive comparison of the United States to Upper Canada, wrote 'we are determined not to be driven away from under that King and Government which our ancestors have Lost their Lives in supporting'.[269] In Gardiner's mind, and indeed, in the minds of many other reformers, one could remain loyal while criticising the government and praising the workings of the republican system of the United States. The alien question challenged such a conception of loyalty.

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[264] Ronald J. Stagg, "LOSSING, PETER," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 6, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed July 17, 2014, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/lossing_peter_6E.html.
[265] 'Peter Lossing to George Hillier', Norwich, 24 Dec 1821, *Upper Canada Sundries*, Vol. 54, 27583-4.
[266] 'H. J. Boulton to Hillier', York, 20 Jan 1823, *Upper Canada Sundries*, Vol. 59, 30925-8.
[267] 'Petition of Singleton Gardiner', Vittoria, 15 May 1823, *Upper Canada Sundries*, Vol. 60, 31830-3.
[268] 'Singleton Gardiner to Hillier', Port Talbot, 27 February 1823, *Upper Canada Sundries*, Vol. 59, 31197.
[269] Ibid., 31195.

This practical conception of politics was by no means only the preserve of the reformers. This was clearly evinced by the *Gore Gazette* in its opening issue. Politics was to be conducted so that 'the native energies of his country are in a course of rapid development … we feel a warm interest in the prosperity of the Province, and as there is nothing which we more ardently desire than to see the country of our adoption, like her venerable Parent, GREAT AND FREE'.[270] This demonstrates the complex mental juggling that many Upper Canadians of this period engaged in. They were actively concerned with the wellbeing and practical interests of the province and wished it to become just as successful and powerful as the mother country. Yet the only method through which this could be achieved was 'to be ardently attached to the principles upon which the institutions of the *British Empire* are founded'.[271] In the case of the alien question, as noted by the paper in a detailed essay on the subject, 'nothing short of an act of the imperial parliament can confer the privileges of a British subject on a person born out of its dominions'.[272] Whatever might be the beliefs and identities of Upper Canadians, they were ultimately subject to the dictates of the metropolitan government in London – a case that would continue at least until the granting of responsible government in 1848, and in many aspects, well beyond that.

Also notable in this crisis was the creation of longstanding political networks that would come to form the basis of provincial parties. Talbot noted that Matthews 'was supported by all the … Radicals, who were most industrious in haranguing the People amongst the most forward was that Vagabond McKenzie and as you may suppose "said the thing that was not" with respect to Burwell's conduct in the House of assembly & greatly fear that Gov'r will have a very troublesome set to manage'.[273] This provides an insight into the provincial elections of 1824 that is hard to discover elsewhere. It was not local issues so much as provincial ones that motivated electors. Mackenzie, as the emerging leader of reformers in Upper Canada, had clearly seen value in orchestrating a campaign that mobilised voters across the province. His paper was read widely in the London District as he sent copies to the inhabitants there (even if they were not subscribers).[274] Meanwhile, Talbot clearly believed his duty to be to aid not just his local ally, Mahlon Burwell, but to report these occurrences to the Governor and his clique in York. With the establishment of such party networks came the ability to disseminate common identities. With the development of the newspaper industry in the 1830s, the power of such networks was multiplied.

The strength of this emerging network can be seen from the widespread circulation of the *Colonial Advocate*. Reporting for December 30th, 1824, Mackenzie noted a total of 80 copies were circulated, including 19 at Port Talbot, 25 in Delaware, 9 in Oxford, 9 in Burford and 18 at Vittoria. High circulations could also be found in the Western District (23), the Gore District (154), the Niagara District (221) and the Home District (98).[275] The position being put forward by Mackenzie remained moderate at this point – 'we like American liberty well, but greatly prefer British liberty … we will die before we will violate that oath … We are in a state something like Ireland; a priesthood who do nothing, consume all, and the working clergy suffer thereby'.[276] The position of Ireland held a strong rhetorical sway over the inhabitants of the Canadas. Reformers in both the Canadas were determined to prevent Upper

[270] *Gore Gazette*, 3 March 1827.
[271] Ibid.
[272] *Gore Gazette*, 10 March 1827.
[273] 'Talbot to Hillier,' Port Talbot, 23 July 1824, *UC Sundries*, Vol. 67, 35658-60.
[274] 'Lawrence Lawrason to Mackenzie', London, Upper Canada, 18 July 1826, *Public Archives of Ontario* PAO MS516, p. 365-6.
[275] 'Present Circulation of the Colonial Advocate', *Colonial Advocate* 13 Jan 1825.
[276] 'The Editor's Address to the Public', *Colonial Advocate* 18 May 1824.

Canada from becoming a 'second Ireland'. Yet none of this came close to expressing the disloyalty and anti-colonial nationalism that would characterise Mackenzie's writings in 1837. Rather, reformers desired a political system that respected the unique circumstances of Upper Canada and the legacy its largely American-born population brought with it. As demonstrated above, they had no desire to sever the connection with Britain. The aspiration was 'to see in the pulpits and in the ranks at the bar and on the bench, in the senate and in the field, in the counting-house and in the navy, *our Canadian* Blairs and Fenelons; our Erskies and Rommilys; our Pitts, Foxes, Cannings, and Clintons; our Moores and Washingtons; our Nelsons and Duncans; our Burkes and Sheridans'.[277] The use of the term 'Canadian' is especially pertinent here. At this time, the term was almost exclusively used to refer to French-speakers. Yet already, Mackenzie was appropriating this term for the English-speaking community of Upper Canada. It appears that reformers were the first to begin to conceive of themselves as 'Canadian' as they were unable to successfully take control of the term 'British', monopolised as it was by their Tory opponents. It is likely, however, that Mackenzie had a far more developed sense of colonial identity than most of his compatriots.

One local writer, Edward Allen Talbot, however, saw things very differently. In a remarkably prophetic statement in 1824, he put forth for Upper Canada almost exactly the same thesis as Frederick Jackson Turner was to do seventy years later for the United States.[278] For him, there was no conflict between being British or American – rather the frontier led immigrants to become rapidly Americanised and lose the customs of their old homelands and ethnicities:

> 'It is very remarkable, that although the present population of this fine Province is composed of emigrants from almost every European nation, and from every state of North America, there should be so little difference in their manners, customs, and habits of life. Germans, Hollanders, French, English, Scotch, and Irish, after a few years' residence in Canada, forget their national customs and peculiarities and become in almost every particular, entirely assimilated to the people of America.'[279]

Nonetheless, this analysis likely reflects little more than the shock of arriving in a new environment. While it is true that these various nationalities were present, their distribution was hardly equal. Furthermore, such a common culture does not appear to have materialised in the manner he describes. Yet the London District at this point, in which he was resident, is far more likely to have shown this uniform culture due to the high proportion of long-settled North-American born inhabitants. He was not observing the effects of the frontier upon national character so much as a unique North-American identity specific to the region. Here, European-born immigrants were assimilating to an already-present American culture that was not present in other areas of Upper Canada to the same extent.

From the 1830s onwards, the Americans were quickly dwarfed by Irish, English and Scots as a proportion of the population. By the 1830s, Upper Canada was British in composition as well. These newly arrived Britons did not assimilate to the existing North American culture so easily. Rather the province's Americans were expected to assimilate to the varied cultures of the new immigrants, creating a new fusion of identity of the 'Upper Canadian'. British imperial authorities had intervened in a local crisis in a manner that had profound effects, first causing, and then helping to solve the crisis. As was to continue to be the case for decades to come, British directed legal and institutional changes had crucial impacts in stimulating the development of party politics in Upper Canada. These new forms of party were then to spread

[277] Ibid.
[278] See F. Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1920).
[279] Edward Allen Talbot, 'The Effect of the Frontier', 1824 in V. Robeson (ed.), *Documents in Canadian History: Upper Canada in the 1830s* (Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1977), pp. 64-5.

their particular conceptions of identity throughout Upper Canada. Over the course of this crisis, these ideas of identity were expressed through various conceptions of loyalty. To be an Upper Canadian was to be loyal – but what this meant was tightly contested by the inhabitants. Both ethnicity and party politics played their role in this process of negotiation. The conclusion of the crisis represented a solution that could recognise the American and loyalist roots of the province while maintaining that Upper Canada was to be a British province.

2.3 The Shiners' War in the Ottawa Valley, 1834-1837

Between 1834 and 1837 the Ottawa Valley region was beset by a series of violent disturbances that became known as the Shiners' War. The 'Shiners' were a group of Irish Catholic workers led by the local lumber baron, Peter Aylen. The enigmatic Aylen vigorously fought to expand his timber business by any means necessary, even encouraging his workers to attack the French-Canadian employees of his competitors. These battles on the Ottawa River spilled over into Bytown and the surrounding communities. The residents of the village came to view the summer and fall seasons with dread as they anticipated widespread disorder and violence. Yet this traditional picture of lawless raftsmen and stoic Bytonians neglects the true complexities of the conflict. Irish Catholics did fight French-Canadians on the Ottawa, but they were equally afraid of the Irish Protestant Orangemen that inhabited the surrounding countryside. At the same time it was an economic conflict over jobs, an ethnic struggle between the Irish and French, and a series of acts of resistance to the local elite. By subverting local law enforcement the Shiners were able to challenge the leadership of the 'Carleton gentry'.

Irish Catholics were not easily incorporated into Carleton County's British community. As in Montreal, they represented a third group, distinct from both the French-Canadians and the wider English-speaking community. Yet unlike in Montreal, the British elite viewed themselves as the protectors of local French-Canadians. Irish Catholics represented the greatest threat to social order and the elite responded by excluding them from patronage. As Fran Thompson has argued, the 'Loyalist-Anglo-Irish coalition had a vested interest in maintaining the status quo, and their definition of themselves as the dominant group'. They therefore promoted a 'moral panic' through the view 'that the Catholic Irish were a dangerous and criminal subgroup'.[280] French-Canadians acted as pliant workers who did not agitate for higher wages or better working conditions and they could be relied on to continue to provide a source of cheap labour in the valley. The failure of the Irish workers to do the same led to their exclusion.

The Ottawa Valley also saw a continuation of powerful diasporic ties with the homeland as arriving Irish immigrants continued to think of themselves as Irish. Unfortunately the sources available for this era were almost exclusively written by the Protestant elite of the region. Those who wrote, whether in the newspapers, in private diaries or in their correspondence with friends, family, colleagues and government officials, were almost exclusively of English, Scottish or American origin. Daniel O'Connor, the successful Irish Catholic merchant and magistrate, provides the one exception to this rule. As such, we can only gain a limited sense of the Irish-Catholic identity in the Ottawa Valley.

The lumber industry was of fundamental importance to the region. It dominated both the economy and the everyday life of its inhabitants. Unlike elsewhere in the Canadas, agriculture was limited due to poor soil fertility. Only a strip of land six miles wide along the Lac des Chats was truly suitable for agriculture.[281] By the 1830s there were a vast number of medium-scale timber merchants in the region, including the Wright family from Hull, John Egan of Aylmer, George Hamilton of Hawkesbury, Peter Aylen of Bytown, Joseph Papineau

[280] F. Thompson, 'Policing the Irish: Conflict and Culture in Bytown 1835 to 1837', M.A. Diss. (University of Ottawa, 1987), p. 181.
[281] C. Kennedy, *The Upper Ottawa Valley: a glimpse of history* (Pembroke, ON: Renfrew County Council, 1970), p. 107.

of Montreal, and Charles Shirreff of Fitzroy Harbour. By 1851, there were no fewer than sixty-eight lumber merchants on the Ottawa Valley. Not all timber merchants were equal, however. John Egan employed 3,800 men in the 1840s, far more than other timber producers.[282]

The industry relied on a transient shantyman population. They were recruited primarily in Bytown though others came from Arnprior, Renfrew, and Eganville. Some came from as far away as Gaspe.[283] Many had worked on the Rideau Canal before 1832 and then found themselves lacking both employment and capital. They were primarily of Irish Catholic or French-Canadian origin.[284] Countless workers arrived in Lower Town in September when the first shantymen were sent to the tributaries of the Ottawa. Over the course of the winter, the trees were cut. During the spring, the lumber was driven down the tributaries to the Ottawa. During the summer, timber was transported down the Ottawa and St. Lawrence rivers on great timber rafts to Quebec City.[285] They were paid at the mouths of the tributaries and able to return home from there. However, many chose to continue working as raftsmen. Their return to civilization in Bytown was marked by 'mass drunkenness and widespread fighting'.[286] Nonetheless, the extent of violence should not be overstated: 'the two years of Shiner violence was one of the few times that shantymen could be accused of directly harming ordinary citizens of the Valley; they usually fought only among themselves.'[287]

Between 1832 and 1843, the forest industry was regulated by the "Gatineau Privilege". It established geographical limits and quotas for timber merchants. Ruggles Wright, Tiberius Wright, Christopher Columbus Wright, Peter Aylen, and Thomas McGoey were each allowed to take 2,000 sticks of red pine per year from the Gatineau, while George Hamilton and C. A. Low, Hawkesbury sawmill partners, were allowed 12,000 saw logs a year.[288] After 1843 the Crown Timber Act was passed which ended this monopoly. Issues were licensed for cutting timber on ungranted land, which were sold at the Crown Timber Office in Bytown. Nonetheless, much timber was cut illegally, however.[289] The encouragement, or at least acceptance, of violence by employers in the early years may seem surprising. Yet the timber trade depended on two factors for profit – control of land on which to cut timber and control of the Ottawa River. The further upriver one was forced, the higher transport costs would be. Violent behaviour was a corollary to economic competition. After a time, however, it became clear that it was in their interests to uphold the law. Large scale timber operators such as Wright and Hamilton were concerned that continued timber poaching would destabilize their business and allow smaller operators to compete with them. Their previous disregard for the law and willingness to use violence on the Ottawa River was abandoned as they strove for respectability within their communities.[290]

The timber stands along the Ottawa River itself were soon exhausted. Lumber merchants moved to harvest the timber of the major tributaries of the Ottawa; most notably, the

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[282] D. Mackay, 'The Canadian Logging Frontier', *Journal of Forest History* 23:1 (1979), p. 11.
[283] Kennedy, *The Upper Ottawa Valley,* p. 167.
[284] Mackay, 'The Canadian Logging Frontier', pp. 12-13.
[285] D. Lee, *Lumber Kings and Shantymen: Logging and Lumbering in the Ottawa Valley* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company Ltd., 2006), p. 157.
[286] Ibid., p. 182.
[287] Ibid., p. 190.
[288] H. Parson, 'Pine to Pulp: The Timber Trade on the Gatineau River', *Up The Gatineau!* Vol. 3 (1977), http://www.gvhs.ca/publications/utga-pine.html, accessed 14/01/2014.
[289] D. Lee, *Lumber Kings and Shantymen*, p. 33.
[290] Ibid., pp. 37-8.

Gatineau, the Madawaska, the Bonnechère and the Petite Nation rivers. By 1847, the lumber industry reached as far west as the Mattawa River, where 2,000 square miles of timber licenses had been granted.[291] Therefore, the work of the lumber industry was conducted at a great distance from the majority of settlers in the region.

The Ottawa valley had only recently been settled. Carleton and Lanark counties remained uninhabited until the military settlements of Perth in 1816 and Richmond in 1818 were created. Bytown itself only began to grow with the building of the Rideau canal from 1826 until 1832. The area grew during the 1820s and 1830s due to immigration primarily from Ireland. The population of Carleton County grew from 2,116 in 1824 to 8,601 in 1834. Growth in Lanark was less spectacular, but still significant; from 7,900 in 1824 to 13,478 in 1834.[292] Settlers before 1829 were primarily Scottish immigrants. Glenn Lockwood has noted that the Irish immigrants were transplanted communities, emigrating en masse from the southeast of Ireland. The Protestants saw themselves as exiles: 'their surging exodus after 1829 betrayed widespread paranoia about the Roman Catholic majority around them gaining civil and religious recognition from government, a panic which sprang from ongoing tumult since before the turn of the century'.[293] In Bytown Irish Catholics formed a majority of the population. Nonetheless, Catholics and Protestants were largely segregated. Catholics, both Irish and French-Canadian, settled in Lower Town, while in Upper Town 'resided the senior army officers and the professional people' of Scottish, English or Irish Protestant origin.[294] The surrounding countryside had a noticeably different ethnic composition. Even in neighbouring Nepean Township Protestants outnumbered Catholics by more than two to one.[295] In the Ottawa Valley, settlement extended as far upstream as Arnprior in Renfrew County. Settlements on the Lower Canadian side of the border were few and far between as the inhospitable landscape of the Canadian Shield discouraged settlement. The Ottawa Valley region in this thesis is seen as focused around Carleton County and Bytown, but it also is seen to extend as far upriver as Renfrew County and to include Ottawa County of Lower Canada as well. Interactions between Hull and Bytown were common and it is clear that the elite and press viewed the area as a single linked region, so it shall be treated as such in this thesis.

[291] Kennedy, *The Upper Ottawa Valley*, p. 169.

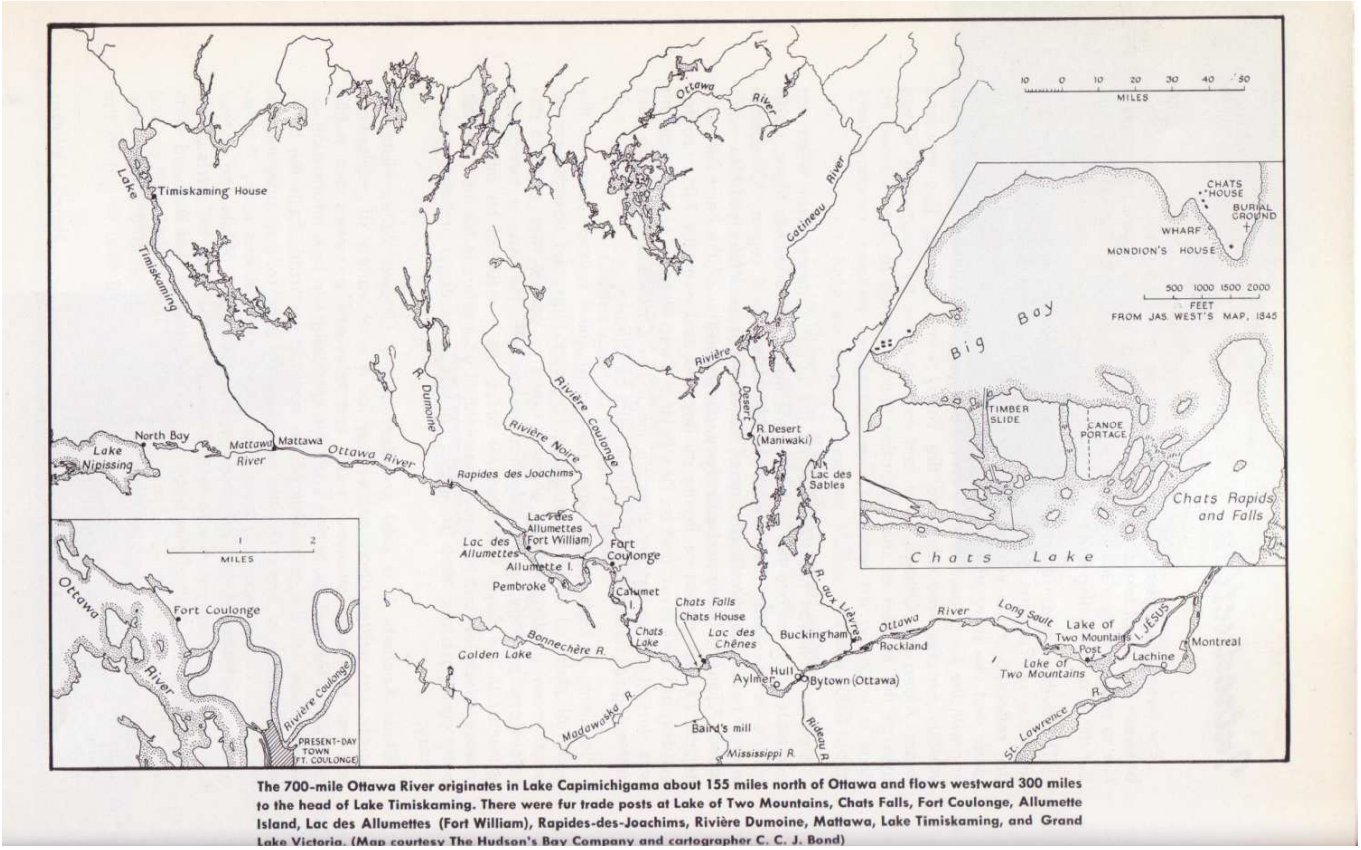
[292] Statistics Canada. *UC - Population, Sexes and Ages, 1824 - Upper Canada* (table), 1824 - Census of Upper Canada (database), Using E-STAT (distributor). http://estat.statcan.gc.ca/cgi-win/cnsmcgi.exe?Lang=E&EST-Fi=EStat\English\SC_RR-eng.htm (accessed: March 18, 2013) and Statistics Canada. *UC Table I - Population, Sexes, Ages, 1834 - Upper Canada* (table), 1834 - Census of Upper Canada (Population/Sexes/Ages) (database), Using E-STAT (distributor). http://estat.statcan.gc.ca/cgi-win/cnsmcgi.exe?Lang=E&EST-Fi=EStat\English\SC_RR-eng.htm (accessed: March 18, 2013)

[293] G. Lockwood, 'Eastern Upper Canadian Perceptions of Irish Immigrants, 1824-1868', Ph.D., University of Ottawa, 1987, p. 130.

[294] F. Thompson, 'Policing the Irish', p. 168.

[295] D. Mackay, *Flight from Famine: The Coming of the Irish to Canada* (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1990), p. 168.

Map 1: The Upper Ottawa Valley[296]



The 700-mile Ottawa River originates in Lake Capimichigama about 155 miles north of Ottawa and flows westward 300 miles to the head of Lake Timiskaming. There were fur trade posts at Lake of Two Mountains, Chats Falls, Fort Coulonge, Allumette Island, Lac des Allumettes (Fort William), Rapides-des-Joachims, Rivière Dumoine, Mattawa, Lake Timiskaming, and Grand Lake Victoria. (Map courtesy The Hudson's Bay Company and cartographer C. C. J. Bond)

The Ottawa Valley was particularly isolated. Hundreds of miles from Toronto or Montreal, the inhabitants of the valley struggled to relate their experiences to the wider province. On both sides of the border, the provincial government and the elected assembly were unresponsive to the troubles caused by the timber industry. The magistrates of Bytown solicited support from the government of Upper Canada, with little success, despite the severity of their problems:

> 'You are aware as well as ourselves of the difficulties which we have to surmount in the preservation of the public peace opposed by Gangs of armed ruffians ... we are confident that a desperate effort is intended to rescue the three Prisoners now in live custody on the route hence to Perth – No civil force at our command would suffice to secure the Persons of the Prisoners. We therefore venture urgently to entreat you will be pleased to aid us with a detachment of the Garrison'.[297]

Issues such as the alien question which had dominated politics in Upper Canada from Kingston to London had no resonance in the Ottawa valley. More problematic were the issues of law and justice. As part of the Bathurst district, the district capital, at which the jail, courts and local government existed, were located in Perth, more than fifty miles away. Before 1842, there was no courthouse, jail or sheriff in the town. There was no police force before 1847, when Bytown was incorporated as a municipality.[298] There was just one paid

[296] Kennedy, *The Upper Ottawa Valley*, p. 6.
[297] 'G. W. Baker, D. Fisher, D. R. McNab to Major Colman, Bytown, 27 March, 1837,' *Upper Canada Sundries*, Vol. 175, 96242
[298] Lee, *Lumber Kings and Shantymen*, p. 190.

constable.[299] Magistrates could swear in special constables when they anticipated particular disturbances. Sectarian antagonism limited the usefulness of this institution however. Catholics of Lower Town were unwilling to subdue the Shiners while Protestant constables were seen as the agents of the Orange Order. The magistrates noted that 'those constables who perform their duty, are always marked out for punishment'.[300] Special constables were paid a reasonable wage; but the requirement of enacting the law against one's own community militated against the zealous exercise of justice.

Lockwood has argued that 'the prevalence of group violence before 1841 should not be surprising in a region which to the northwest had a forest frontier, to the northeast the separate political jurisdiction of Lower Canada to which fugitives from Upper Canadian justice could flee, and to the south yet another political jurisdiction'.[301] Extradition mechanisms were not well developed and there was little cooperation between Upper and Lower Canadian authorities. When a criminal crossed the boundary to Lower Canada they effectively escaped from justice. This weakness in the state institutions of coercion left a vacuum that was filled by organizations of vigilante justice such as the Bytown Association for the Preservation of the Peace. This organization, created in 1836, consisted of two hundred armed individuals.[302] Nonetheless, it should not be thought that the Ottawa Valley existed in a state of anarchy. Weak state institutions were the rule on the settlement frontiers of Upper Canada. As Lockwood has noted, 'acts fully as violent as any of the Shiner depredations could be found in portions of the older settlements as revealed by the conflict between Irish canal labourers and Cornwall townspeople of Dutch, German and English extraction in 1836'.[303]

The Shiners' War was not the only occurrence of ethnic violence in the region. In 1824 the Ballygiblin riots took place at Morphy's Falls (now Carleton Place) in Lanark county. Here a riot between recent Irish settlers (both Catholics in the recently arrived Peter Robinson group and Protestants who had arrived earlier) and earlier Scottish settlers took place after a militia mustering. The Scots present at the tavern misread the toast to "loyal subjects" as a pro-Irish statement and as an unflattering reference to themselves.[304] A Scot then struck an Irish Protestant and the violence quickly escalated. On St. Patrick's Day, 1828, violence again flared in Bytown as 'a great concourse of labourers … paraded about the town, it is said, with the Emerald flag, the well known signal of defiance and fight with their countrymen who have enlisted themselves under the Orange banner.' Under the influence of these national and religious excitements, and "a little of the bottle", a serious riot occurred.[305]

Many Irish Catholics worked in the timber trade as loggers and raftsmen. They were led by the lumber baron Peter Aylen. Aylen had immigrated to Lower Canada as a runaway sailor

[299] Thompson, 'Policing the Irish', p. 206.
[300] 'Magistrates to Mr. Secretary Joseph on the Subject of the Bytown Riots', Bytown, 28 January 1837 in R. Reid (ed.), *The Upper Ottawa Valley to 1855: A Collection of Documents* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1990), p. 61.
[301] Lockwood, 'Eastern Upper Canadian Perceptions', p. 146.
[302] MacKay, *Flight from Famine,* p. 171.
[303] Lockwood, 'Eastern Upper Canadian Perceptions', p. 146.
[304] G. Lockwood, *Beckwith: Irish and Scottish Identities in a Canadian Community* (Carleton Place: Beckwith Township Municipal Clark, 1991), p. 101.
[305] *National Gazette* (Pennsylvania) of April 8, 1828 quoted in 'Bits of Bytown from early American and British newspapers', *Bytown or Bust*, http://www.bytown.net/bitsofbytown.htm accessed 18/03/2013.

before moving into the timber trade.[306] According to the Lower Canada Census of 1842, Aylen was an Irish Catholic, despite Cross's statement that his place of birth was Liverpool.[307] He obtained the support of the Irish raftsmen by offering them a number of benefits including jobs, in a market which saw French-Canadians as more skilled and more reliable; and lavish entertainments.[308] Aylen, unlike his employees, was a wealthy merchant who 'owned a fine home on Richmond Road and had a wife related to the cream of Bytown society'.[309] Aylen did not just condone the violence of his "Shiners", he actively participated in their conflict. He assaulted Daniel McMartin and attempted to murder the Irish Orangeman, James Johnston, before staging a coup at the Bathurst District Agricultural Society.[310]

The disorder from the Shiners' War sometimes spilled over into Bytown. In 1835 the Irish Catholic, Mr. McStravick, uninvolved in the timber trade, was murdered. Revenge was taken by Shiners on a tavern keeper, Mr Galipaut as they burned down his tavern.[311] Later in the year Peter Aylen, conducted a coup at the annual meeting of the Bathurst District Agricultural Society in August. He brought with him a number of his 'Shiner' employees and paid for the membership. With this new majority, he was elected president of the society and his employees filled the other executive positions, much to the dismay of the genteel members of the society. As Thompson has argued, 'the perceived proclivity to riotous, drunken behaviour and contempt for English authority was considered morally reprehensible. But when their behaviour affected the economics of the timber trade, was directed against the valued terrains of the respectable, such as the Bathurst District Agricultural Society, or involved a demand to be franchised when the vote was property based, then the Irish constituted a threat to the hegemony of Bytown.'[312] In 1837 rumours of an invasion of Bytown by Orangemen accompanied the arrival of a number of magistrates to arrest Peter Aylen. Violence was only narrowly avoided. Later in the year, a number of Shiners escaped from the Perth jail with the aid of Aylen and others.

The takeover of the Bathurst District Agricultural Society likely reflected Aylen's frustration at the exclusion of timber merchants (and Irishmen more generally) from the genteel society of the Carleton elite. Consequently, he became a villain in the eyes of the local elites. An account by the Bathurst courier of Perth, described an incident:

> 'For two or three days a mob of raftsmen, armed with guns and headed by Mr. Peter Ayling [Aylen] of Nepean, who had been arrested for an assault committed upon Daniel McMartin, Esquire, advocate, of Perth, paraded the streets of Bytown ... With some further trouble, Mr. Ayling was again secured, and to prevent any further rescue from the mob of "shiners", as they called themselves, over whom Ayling seemed to have much control.'[313]

For the Bathurt Courier, these Irish-Catholic workers were little more than aggressive thugs, but there could be no doubt that Aylen was behind their violence. It appeared that Aylen was

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[306] M. S. Cross, "AYLEN, PETER," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 9, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed March 25, 2014, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/aylen_peter_9E.html.
[307] 'Canada, Lower Canada Census, 1842' Index and Images. *FamilySearch*. http://FamilySearch.org : accessed 20/03/2013. Citing Library and Archives. Public Archives, Ottawa, Ontario.
[308] Cross, 'The Shiners' War', p. 3.
[309] MacKay, *Flight From Famine*, p. 168.
[310] Cross, 'Peter Aylen', *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* .
[311] Cross, 'The Shiners War', p. 13.
[312] Thompson, 'Policing the Irish', p. 189.
[313] 'Riot led by Peter Aylen', *Bathurst Courier* 25 June 1835 in Reid (ed.), *The Upper Ottawa Valley to 1855*, p. 55.

in full control of his 'shiners'. William Bell of Perth wrote: 'A band of lawless men called *Shiners*, mostly lumbermen, had, for a year or two, been setting the law at defiance ... in and about Bytown. Some of them had lately been captured and committed to prison, on various charges … they were all Irishmen, and it was painful to observe the gross want of moral principle which they exhibited.'[314] . Bell was a Scottish Presbyterian minister who helped to establish the Presbytery of the Canadas.[315] Common stereotypes of the Irish occasionally came into play. George Baker reported that: 'Yesterday, the Sabbath, the Canadians were stoned going to Church by the half drunken Irish Raftsmen'.[316] In this manner, the 'Shiners' were the 'Other' against which the local elite defined themselves. Baker was a captain of the royal artillery who settled in Bytown in 1832 and was postmaster from 1834.[317] Baker represented one of the most ardent voices of Tory loyalism in the city. The sentiments he expressed here were likely shared by most of the Protestant elite of the town.

French-Canadians were portrayed as victims of Irish Catholic violence, in sharp contrast to the situation in Lower Canada. This was by no means entirely justified, as the testimony of Andrew Leamy, a raftsmen working for Peter Aylen, demonstrated:

> 'the crew of which consisted of Five Irish and one Englishman, and about nine Canadians that when the Raft reached the Little River, the Canadians in coming on board the Raft fired one Pistol shot into the water alongside the Raft and another over it. When deponent and all the Irish were driven off the Raft and compelled to make their escape George Melancon the Englishman being alone allowed to remain – and the Canadians declared that none but Canadians should go down with the Raft for if the Irish attempted to board it again they would take their lives'.[318]

A similar incident was described by John Bulger.[319] These depositions suggested that the French-Canadian lumberers were as much instigators of the conflict as Irish Catholics. French-Canadians in both cases had attacked rafts and allowed French-Canadians and Englishmen to remain, while they forced the Irish to flee. Cross has argued that the Shiners' war was nothing more than a frontier phenomenon: 'these institutions – churches, leadership structures, social agencies – were often as weak as the police power, especially in frontier areas'.[320] More convincing, however is Reid's argument that the Shiners' War represented an extension of the wider political conflict between reform and conservative interests.[321]

There was also a substantial agricultural Irish Protestant population, particularly in Lanark county. They brought with them the Orange Order. The twelfth of July brought elaborate processions. William Bell, a Scottish Presbyterian minister, described the parade of 1833: 'At daylight we were awakened by their drum and fife, and even after the country members were seen pouring into the town, men, women and children'.[322] This was frowned upon: 'we were disturbed by the orangemen, who have not only disturbed the peace of Ireland, but of every

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[314] 'Trial of Shiners, 19 September, 1837, Journals of William Bell, vol. 11, pp. 138-9' in Reid (ed.), *The Upper Ottawa Valley to 1855*, p. 63.
[315] H. J. Bridgman, "BELL, WILLIAM (1780-1857)," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 8, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed January 16, 2014, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/bell_william_1780_1857_8E.html.
[316] 'G. W. Baker to Rowan, Bytown, 15th June, 1835', *Upper Canada Sundries*, Vol. 154, 84409.
[317] R. Serré, *Bytown at Your Fingertips* (Ottawa: Bytown Museum, 2011), p. 81.
[318] 'Depositions before Christopher James Bell and George William Baker of the District of Bathurst' in Baker to Rowan, Bytown, 6th August 1835, *Upper Canada Sundries*, Vol. 156, 85464-5.
[319] Ibid., 85464.
[320] Cross, 'The Shiners' War', p. 12.
[321] Reid, *The Upper Ottawa Valley to 1855*, p. xxxviii.
[322] 'Orange Processions – Journals of William Bell' in Reid (ed.), *The Upper Ottawa Valley to 1855*, p. 45.

place where they have come, all over the world.'[323] The funeral of James Gamble, an Irishman, after his murder by a Scot, presented another opportunity to perform identity. It brought out: 'all the Orangemen in the settlement, to the number of 2 or 300, marching two and two, with their sashes and other decorations.'[324]The Orange Order had not yet become the umbrella Protestant organization that it would develop into by the time of Confederation. Here a prominent Protestant objected to the Order. It was seen as an Irish, rather than loyalist, institution.

The large number of Irishmen present in the region made very visible their under-representation in the political and social elite. Hamnett Pinhey, in his address to the electors of Carleton, described this discontent:

> 'Another "bone of contention" … is that of *national origin*; the sons of Ireland are therein described as an unrepresented people, and an Irish elector remarked to me a day or two ago in Bytown, that in the House of Assembly Irishmen had not been represented, for there was not one Irishman in it. Quite unprepared for such an observation, never having myself regarded the natives of the Sister Kingdom but as the same "*people and kindred*" as myself'.[325]

Pinhey was an English immigrant who settled at Horaceville in March Township. According to Roger Hall, he was the 'ideal Upper Canadian settler: well educated, vigorous, able, youthful, patriotic, and, most important, wealthy'.[326] His politics were Tory though he often had disagreements with the half-pay officers of Richmond. Pinhey struggled to understand Irish ethnic solidarity. For an immigrant such as Pinhey, his identity as an Englishman could relatively easily be incorporated into a broader British one. His continuing attachment to his place of birth did not prevent an understanding of a broader community that existed under the banner of 'Britishness' in Upper Canada. But for the Irish immigrant his Irishness was an everyday fact of life that could not so easily be incorporated into this sense of Britishness.

Daniel O'Connor was one of the few Irish Catholics to successfully penetrate the closed ranks of the Bytown elite. O'Connor arrived in Bytown in 1827 after a circuitous route to settlement in the Canadas. He had fought in 'La Legion Irlandesa' in Venezuela under Simon Bolivar, which he viewed as an extension of the Irish nationalist struggle, before deciding to emigrate to North America.[327] He was often viewed with suspicion by his Scottish and English colleagues. George Baker wrote:

> 'In the case of Joseph Galipaut … Mr. O'Connor in seeking evidence, sought that only which would tend to criminate the unfortunate Prisoner, whose life had been twelve months in jeopardy, because he had evinced a spirit in self defence unusual to Canadians.'[328]

Accusations by the Irish Protestant Orangeman, James Johnston particularly upset him. He even complained to the Lieutenant Governor:

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[323] Ibid.
[324] 'Killing of an Orangeman', 28 November 1835, Journals of William Bell in Reid (ed.), *The Upper Ottawa Valley to 1855*, p. 57.
[325] 'Address to the Electors of Carleton' – Hamnett Pinhey, Horaceville, 24 June 1836 in *Bytown Gazette*, 30 June 1836.
[326] Roger Hall, "PINHEY, HAMNETT KIRKES," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 8, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed January 14, 2014, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/pinhey_hamnett_kirkes_8E.html.
[327] D. O'Connor, *Diary and Other Memoirs of Daniel O'Connor (and his family), One of the Pioneers of By-town (Now City of Ottawa) who settled there in 1827 when it was a wilderness* (Ottawa, 1901), p. 6.
[328] 'G. W. Baker to Rowan, Bytown, July 13, 1835', *Upper Canada Sundries*, Vol. 155, p. 84927.

> 'He lately wrote a thing of malevolent falsehood against the Catholic Clergyman of this place the Bishop McDonell accusing him of stirring up disturbancy between the Canadians & Irish when it is well known that the Rev. Gentleman done all in his power to preserve peace & order ... I believe his principal reason for attacking me in particular is, because I am an Irish Roman Catholic, & the only one in this or the adjoining which, who now has the honour of holding your Excellency's commission.'[329]

The conflict between Irish Protestants and Irish Catholics could easily flare up. Attempts to arrest Shiners could provoke other Irish Catholics residing in Bytown to interpret these actions as an ethnic action by Orange magistrates. The magistrates reported that:

> 'outrages were committed which caused a collision between some of the country people and the Raftsmen, in consequence of which a large party of the former came into town armed ... In the mean time reports were spread that orangemen were coming in to attack Catholics, in consequence of which the Raftsmen and some of the Inhabitants collected in great numbers armed '.[330]

The sectarian conflict between the orange and the green appeared once again. O'Connor was accused of partiality in his actions as magistrate. Baker and the other magistrates were not above implying he had undue associations with the Catholic Shiners: 'Mr. O'Connor did spread the report as stated: and His Excellency will at once perceive the Infinite mischief which must arise, from any attempt to engender feelings of Religious animosity'.[331] These reports suggest an atmosphere of great ethnic tension, not between the French-Canadians and Irish Catholics, but between Catholics and Irish Protestant Orangemen that could flare into violence with little provocation. Even here, however, the opposing groups were referred to as 'Raftsmen' and 'country people' rather than as Irish. This was not seen as a phenomenon of Irish violence – or at least it was not portrayed as such.

A local 'family compact' existed in Carleton County in the 1830s. Graeme Patterson has noted the existence of such local 'compacts' in the Johnstown and London districts.[332] Consisting primarily of English and Scottish immigrants, many of whom came from a military background, they monopolised the stations of local government. As the first settlers of the region, they believed in their natural right to govern over later immigrants. They had 'determined to construct in the forest a faithful representation of what they had left behind in Britain, but instead produced a distortion, an exaggeration. Exaggeration was in the nature of the construction. Like the cotton aristocracy of the southern United States, they emphasized so heavily those things which set them apart, those rationalizations of their place in society – honour, culture, breeding – that they parodied, rather than mirrored, English customs.'[333] It is hardly surprising then that Shiner violence in the mid-1830s aroused great panic amongst this self-proclaimed aristocracy. The fear of the magistrates was expressed by George W. Baker.[334]

George Hamilton was similarly disturbed by the actions of the Shiners. Timber merchants 'had recourse to hire bravos & ruffians of the lowest description, to intimidate the more peaceably disposed'. This had 'been the means of inducing a number of the very worst of

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[329] 'Daniel O'Connor to Sir John Colborne, Bytown, August 3rd, 1835', *Upper Canada Sundries*, Vol. 156, 85478-85.
[330] 'G. W. Baker and other magistrates to J. Joseph, Bytown, 13th March, 1837', *Upper Canada Sundries*, Vol. 175, 96048-9.
[331] Ibid., 96049-50.
[332] Patterson, 'Studies in Elections and Public Opinion in Upper Canada', p. 143.
[333] Cross, 'The Age of Gentility', pp. 109-110.
[334] 'Capt Baker and other magistrates asking increase of military force at this station to Lieut. Col. Rowan, Bytown, May 25, 1835', *Upper Canada Sundries*, Vol. 153, p. 84024-9.

Character (Irish) with that part of the Country.'[335] Again, the crucial role of employers in encouraging this ethnic conflict was highlighted. In response, the local elite set up a number of organisations, seeing that the inhabitants of Bytown were unlikely themselves to assist in overcoming the Shiners.[336] The peak of Shiner violence in 1835 prompted the establishment of the Bytown Association for the Preservation of Public Peace in 1835 and a year later the formation of the volunteer corps of the Bytown Rifles. In 1836 the Ottawa Lumber Association was established to regulate the lumber trade. As Michael Cross noted, the recreational violence of Shiners in the early 1830s was of little concern, but 'when such violence took on an organized nature, and began to threaten the established order or to turn to physical intimidation of the upper classes, it was treated much more seriously.'[337]

The origins and nature of the Bytown Rifles differed greatly from the various loyalist militias organised elsewhere in Upper Canada. Here there appeared to be almost no recognition of the increased provincial political tensions. The Bytown Rifles existed to overcome a very specific local problem – that of violence and disorder created by the seasonal visitations of raftsmen to the town. Such actions were far from popular, however: 'In consequence of the desire of GEORGE W. BAKER, Esq., to organize a Rifle Corps … and his wish to coerce and oblige the whole Male Population not exempt, to enter into his views, but in which, fortunately for us, he has not been supported by the Magistracy'. A preferred solution would have been military aid sent by the Lieutenant Governor.[338]

The creation of what appeared to be a political paramilitary was fiercely resisted. Even such upstanding members of the community as Nicholas Sparks, one of the wealthiest individuals in Bytown, signed the petition. More widely supported was the creation of the Bytown Association for the Preservation of the Public Peace. After 'numerous outrages' the previous year, the people urged:

> 'a subscription to be raised for the purpose of procuring an available Fund, for aiding the District appropriation, and for bringing to Justice those Miscreants who may again infest this Village and disturb the public tranquillity of the neighbourhood, by their repeated attacks on Persons and Property.'[339]

In some cases, only through the use of the law itself could the Carleton gentry establish control over society:

> 'The Magistrates hereby announce that it is contrary to law for any person to be armed, unless called upon by them to arm in support of the civil force under their direction, and that every person present at a Riotous or unlawful meeting is a Rioter unless (which is his duty) he does his best to put it down, and arrest the delinquents.'[340]

When recruiting special constables failed and no military assistance from the provincial government was forthcoming, more draconian laws such as these had to be enforced to restore the peace.

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[335] 'George Hamilton to Rowan, Hawkesbury, 1 June 1835', Ibid., Vol. 154, p. 84214.
[336] 'G. W. Baker to J. Joseph, Bytown, 9 December, 1836', *Hamnett Pinhey Hill Collection*, Vol. 19, Library and Archives Canada, p. 4786.
[337] M. S. Cross, 'The Shiners war: Social Violence in the Ottawa Valley in the 1830s', *Canadian Historical Review*, 54:1 (March 1973), p. 25.
[338] 'Petition of the Inhabitants and Freeholders of Bytown', Ibid., Vol. 22, p. 5823.
[339] 'To the Inhabitants of Bytown – James Gellie, William Stewart, John Barreille, Duncan R. McNab, Bytown, 31 March 1836', Ibid., p. 5832.
[340] 'The Magistrates of Bytown to the Inhabitants, Bytown, 11 March, 1837', Ibid., p. 5848.

Despite their common interests the Carleton gentry were split by factionalism. This was noted by Hamnett Pinhey in a long poem he wrote in 1832 recounting the election for the legislative assembly in Carleton County.[341] Politicians were willing to use ethnicity to mobilise political groups in these situations:

> 'And Steward of Bytown, is gone up to Fitzroy,
> To bring to the Poll M'Nab, the gallant Scotch boy,
> With all his friends, a mighty numerous clan
> He'll come with his Claymore and Mull and Bag-pipe man.
> Och; such a fight, if not today, tomorrow,
> Sure, we'll be after butchering each other!'[342]

The Highland Scots of the McNab settlement were seen to have peculiarly have kept their ethnicity with their Claymores and bagpipes. Perhaps this suggests that highlanders were less inclined to participate in a broader Anglo-Canadian identity than their lowland counterparts. But it also appears that Pinhey was here trying to contrast the more civilised gentry of March township, who had given up such symbols of ethnicity, with the antiquated highlanders of McNab, who brought violence and ethnicity to politics in much the same way that the Irish did. Religion was also used for political mobilisation. Pinhey complained: 'When they address themselves to Members of the Church of England and Scotland, they say I am a Methodist, when they address themselves to those electors called Methodists, they represent me as a Roman Catholic, and when they represent me to Roman Catholics, they assert that I am a Jew'.[343]

The existence of these ethnic tensions and social disorder did not prevent Bytonians from developing both romantic and practical appreciations for the land they inhabited. The Ottawa River formed a key feature of the Canadian landscape. It was particularly valued for its economic and communication potential: 'In the river Ottawa, Canada possessed one of her richest treasures, for by it the nearest and most direct communication could be obtained to the very heart of the Continent.'[344] The natural advantage of Canada's lakes and rivers were seen as crucial to progress: 'Her navigable streams are so numerous that she has only to choose for improvement those that will contribute most to her advantage, and the peculiar situation she occupies, being directly between the Ocean and the most extensive body of Lakes yet discovered on the face of the Globe, will enable her to turn that inland navigation to a purpose which must greatly increase her influence and prosperity'.[345] Yet if this advantage was not exploited, she could fall behind in competition with the United States: Canada 'would then become a mere thoroughfare from the Upper Lakes to the market of New York, instead of being herself their market and outlet to the ocean. Our cheering prospects would be dissipated, and Canada would be hurled, by her own hands, from the commanding position on which nature has placed her'.[346]

Across the Canadas the great rivers of the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa and the Great Lakes were emphasised as the defining geographical features of the country. But though they may be features of great natural beauty, they were celebrated for their ability to contribute to

[341] H. Pinhey, *The Carleton Election, or, The Tale of a Bytown Ram, an Epic Poem in Ten Cantos* (Ottawa: Printed for the author, 1832), p. 36.
[342] Ibid., p. 29.
[343] 'Mr. Pinhey's Address to the Freeholders of Carleton, at a public meeting held at Bytown on Saturday, 25 February 1832', *Hamnett Pinhey Hill Collection*, Vol. 11, Library and Archives Canada, MG24-I9, p. 3236.
[344] 'A sketch on the Division of Canada' A Colonist in *Bytown Gazette*, 28 July 1836.
[345] Ibid.
[346] Ibid.

economic development. The picture presented was not of immense, untameable nature, but one of lines of communication and settlement. At Bytown, the site of the meeting of the Rideau Canal and the Ottawa River, the very heart of the timber commerce of the country, this perception of nature could not be more visible.

The region had been blessed by investment from the mother country, combined with local enterprise, to make the region the '*Hotbed of improvement and civilization* in Upper Canada' as described by Hamnett Pinhey.[347] To some extent this reflected the phenomenon of boosterism common to most young settlements in North America, particularly as it was part of an election address. Nonetheless, the sentiments expressed were genuine. Pinhey, amongst others, believed that the water communications provided by the Rideau Canal and the improvements on the Ottawa River had the potential to transform the local economy. The region had also benefited from the high quality of immigrants received – this reputation had come from the half-pay officers. Their investment had benefited everyone: 'How many (once poor) settlers are now enjoying amongst us *ease* and *independence*, who owe it to their own prudence and industry, to the liberal wages they received as the reward of that industry, made applicable to the wants of their wealthier neighbours, these Half-pay Officers.'[348]

Nonetheless, the people of the Ottawa valley region actively sought the union of Upper and Lower Canada. They saw Canada as a natural unit, artificially divided in two by legislators: 'The division of Canada was a very deep incision, and must be completely closed before she can be vigorous and healthy … The two Provinces are like the Siamese twins who though apparently distinct are still so intimately joined that if the one be sick the other cannot be healthy and comfortable'.[349] It hurt the interests of both provinces by limiting the commercial uses of the Ottawa and the St. Lawrence rivers.[350]

A writer to the *Bytown Gazette* complained that:

> 'The ruling party in Lower Canada, blind to the real interests of the colony, neglect those advantages which nature has furnished, and terrified at the idea of British money, and British men being poured into the country, would oppose, with all their might, any measure which would have that tendency.'[351]

The ruling party referred to here was the radical *Parti Patriote* composed predominantly of French-Canadians. The fear was not of French-Canadian domination, but of French-Canadian inaction. As the ruling party in Lower Canada, they were unable to see the potential economic benefits of developmental projects such as canal building, blinded by their fear of increased British immigration and their eventual assimilation.

The people of the Ottawa Valley felt neglected by the government and political institutions of Upper Canada:

> 'Who can conscientiously congratulate us on having a patriotic and disinterested Legislature? Have they acted toward us as if they deemed us a section of the same Province … have not their financial appropriations been not only indiscreet but singularly *local* and selfish.'[352]

As the two Canadas formed one natural geographical unit that should be united politically as well as geographically, so too did Montreal form a natural capital and commercial metropolis

[347] 'To the Electors of Carleton', Hamnett Pinhey, Horaceville, 24 June 1836 in *Bytown Gazette*, 30 June 1836.
[348] Ibid.
[349] 'A Sketch on the Division of Canada', A Colonist in *Bytown Gazette*, 28 July 1836.
[350] *Bytown Gazette*, 24 Nov 1836.
[351] 'A Sketch on the Division of Canada', A Colonist in *Bytown Gazette*, 28 July 1836.
[352] 'Legislative Union of the Provinces' – Rideau to the Editor, *Bytown Gazette,* 16 March 1837.

for the country. Located near the border of the two provinces, at the very centre of the riverine communications network of the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa, goods and capital flowed easily to and from Montreal. There was an assumption that their neighbours in Lower Canada were just as eager for projects of improvement.[353]

For many though, and particularly the Irish, it was not so easy to forget the land of their birth. Daniel O'Connor wrote: 'by casting my lot in this part of Canada I might do well and make a comfortable home. Nevertheless I cherished the fond hope that in a few years I would again return to Ireland for good and end my days there'.[354] Once more time had been spent in the country, such homesickness for the old world began to disappear: 'As years rolled by, all desire to return to Ireland ceased, being quite happy and contented with our position and surroundings'.[355]

The Irish continued to follow the politics of their homeland. The Catholic emancipation movement and the repeal movement of Daniel O'Connell were closely followed. In Bytown, Daniel O'Connor created the Society of the Friends of Ireland. It was established by men:

> 'who can say without fear of reproach that they are *Irishmen*, and that they have the honor of being the first in Upper Canada, who came forward and proved themselves worthy of the name. Our children hereafter may proudly say. *They too! Were a branch of that great National Convention that freed poor Erin from her Iron Yoke*. – Why does the Irishman of Upper Canada look with apathy and indifference on the exertions that are making all over the Globe, to make Ireland as she ought to be, *great, glorious and free*? does he imagine, that his loyalty to his King and Country would be questioned?'[356]

By discussing and advocating Irish causes, Irish immigrants to Upper Canada in the Ottawa Valley were able to express their identity as Irishmen. Here O'Connor observed no contradiction between loyalty to the mother country in Upper Canada while advocating repeal for Ireland. Ireland was a misgoverned and oppressed country. Upper Canada, by contrast, was an extension of Britain and its natural possession. This was a sectional society, established for the achievement of Catholic emancipation: 'Let there be Emancipation societies established throughout the Province, and let it be no longer said, that the Irish People of Upper Canada are the last to join in obtaining the rights and privileges of their Catholic Countrymen'.[357] He suggested here the existence of an Irish Catholic diaspora – wherever Irish Catholics had immigrated, they remained part of a global community, whose duty was still to improve the lot of those they had left behind in Ireland. They were also likely to revisit Ireland in the near future.[358]

The events of the 1830s presented a complex picture of ethnic competition between four distinctive ethnic groups – French-Canadians, Irish Catholics, Irish Protestants, and the 'British', comprising the English, Scottish and American populations. Each group acted independently in their own self-interests. Conflicts occurred between all these groups, though somewhat stable coalition was present between the French-Canadians, Irish Protestants, and the British. The Irish-Catholics were left without an ally to turn to, and in response, they participated in disorder and violence aimed at challenging the status quo. Their

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[353] *Bytown Gazette*, 16 Aug 1837.
[354] D. O'Connor, *Diary and Other Memoirs of Daniel O'Connor,* p. 30.
[355] Ibid., p. 31.
[356] 'Address to the Inhabitants of Upper Canada' – at a meeting of the Society of the Friends of Ireland in Bytown, Upper Canada, held at the Mansion House Hotel, Wednesday 25 March, 1829 in *Daniel O'Connor Fonds* Library and Archives Canada, MG24-I107.
[357] Ibid.
[358] Ibid.

marginalisation was clearly represented by the ethnic segregation of Bytown, as Lower Town became a Catholic enclave while Upper Town became a Protestant haven. Therefore, Catholics uninvolved in the timber trade passively lent their support to the Shiners, refusing to arrest them, sheltering offenders and opposing the creation of institutions and organisations that would further entrench Protestant supremacy.

Patterson described in Leeds a 'confrontation of Irish national feeling with Upper Canadian nativism'.[359] This did not occur in the Ottawa region. Rather, the defences of the older community based around the Carleton gentry were repeatedly challenged by the influx of an Irish Catholic majority into the county. Much like in Montreal, where the Scottish-dominated 'British' elite proved reluctant to accept Irish-Catholics into their party, Irish Catholics in the Ottawa Valley found themselves excluded from the reins of power. Instead, they looked back to their homeland for their identity. Unlike in Montreal, English and Scottish origin settlers saw this overwhelming Irish Catholic tide as a greater threat than the passive French-Canadians. The British elite took a paternalist view towards the French-speakers of the Ottawa and sought to protect them from the depredations of the Irish.

There was little of that political development so prevalent elsewhere in the Canadas. Party politics remained unknown. Tory factionalism rather than the contest between Reformer and Constitutionalist determined electoral contests. The names of Mackenzie and Papineau remained unspoken in the valley. There was no evidence of a 'war of the races' between English-speakers and French-speakers in the Ottawa. The fault lines of religion were set. Tensions between Catholics and Protestants were high as evidenced by the numerous scares during this period. The Irish Catholics were not to be easily accepted into the 'British' moniker. The Shiners' War appeared to confirm many of the worst prejudices English and Scottish settlers held against them. As Fran Thompson has argued, 'The Catholic Irish, by their cultural practices, their riotous disregard for their poverty, their good humoured contempt for the gentility, were a threat to the sober, individual-success oriented Loyalists and Anglo-Irish. This allowed the ruling group to morally condemn them with a feeling of rectitude.'[360] What was notable in the Shiners' War was not the multiple occurrences of frontier violence (that, on balance, seem little worse than occurred in other frontier economies in North America), but the ethnicisation of this violence. The conflict was perceived as an Irish Catholic phenomenon.

Nonetheless, many of the tendencies that would characterise the region up to Confederation were already in place. Even here, the first glimpses of a tendency towards assimilation were present. Unlike in Montreal, there would be no difficulty in dissuading the Irish from associating with the French. Daniel O'Connell, an Irish Catholic, was accepted (albeit grudgingly) into Bytown's elite. The idea of unity between the Irish and the British had been noted by Hamnett Pinhey in his surprise that Irish under-representation in the House of Assembly could be an issue, as he considered the Irish and British as one and the same. The relative absence of the French-Canadian as an 'other' in contemporary discourse should not be interpreted as signifying any particular respect for them. Rather, they could easily be ignored. They presented a rhetorical trope with which to attack the Irish Catholic, but the elites of Bytown and Carleton County hardly viewed them as equals, as would be demonstrated in the coming years. This attitude could be described as contemptuous paternalism – as long as they remained docile and unthreatening, sympathy could be displayed for the francophones. Yet the few mentions of them give little agency to French-

[359] Patterson, 'Studies in elections and public opinion in Upper Canada', pp. 218-9.
[360] Thompson, 'Policing the Irish', p. 223.

Canadian workers and present a remarkably similar attitude to that shown towards the *canadien* habitant by English-speaking Montrealers.

Despite these hints towards future development, however, the Ottawa Valley remained a complex, unassimilated conglomeration of ethnic groups. There was no common Anglo-Canadian identity present here. Even the concept of 'Britishness' that played such a crucial role in uniting English-speakers throughout the rest of the Canadas had only limited effectiveness here. Geographical isolation and the unique importance of the timber trade to the region had a substantial impact on identity. According to Harold Horwood and Ed Butts, the passing of time 'eroded racial and religious intolerance' and the Shiners 'traded notoriety for respectability and gave the lie to the old stereotype of the Irishmen with a penchant for drink and fit only for hard labour and cracking heads.'[361] Yet there was more to this story than the passing of time. The Protestant elite needed a powerful motivation to ally with their Catholic foe. The common enemy of the French in 1837 would provide this. For the people of Bytown and the surrounding areas, it would take both an event that resounded throughout both Upper and Lower Canada, the rebellions of 1837, and the restructuring of the political arena, through the Union of the Canadas in 1841, to create a sense of commonality with English-speakers elsewhere in the provinces.

[361] H. Horwood and E. Butts, *Bandits and Privateers: Canada in the Age of Gunpowder* (Halifax, NS: Doubleday, 1987), p. 108.

Chapter 3: Identity and the Rebellions of 1837-8

In the winter of 1837-8 simmering discontent over despotic government, the unequal distribution of patronage, the administration of land and the enforcement of Anglican dominance finally boiled over into outright rebellion. Thousands of French-speaking *habitants* in the districts surrounding Montreal took up arms in November and engaged in a series of violent clashes with the British military and loyalist volunteers. A year later a second rising took place with American support in the eastern townships with no more success. The rising in Upper Canada amounted to little as a few hundred rebels under William Lyon Mackenzie in Toronto and Charles Duncombe in the London District were overwhelmed by the loyalist response. Their failures did not discourage American "Patriots" from conducting a series of raids across the border. Just as the rebellions turned the population against those who had instigated it, the events of the following year reminded Canadians of their common foe, the United States.

There has been a tendency to view the rebellions as separate and largely unconnected events. In a historical narrative which prioritises ethnic conflict between the British and the French, the Upper Canadian rebellion is often presented as the misguided actions of a fanatical demagogue. Donald Creighton's argument that 'in one important sense the rebellions were simply the final expression of the conflict between agrarianism and commercialism, between feudal and frontier agriculture and the commercial state' still rings true.[362] The links between Mackenzie, Duncombe and Papineau are well known. The motivations behind the rebels in both provinces were similar. There was a notable similarity between the conditions of the London District of Upper Canada and the Eastern Townships of Quebec. It was here that identity played a crucial role. When faced with a threatening French-Canadian other, they turned to quiescent loyalism as John Little has demonstrated. [363] With no such presence in the London District, the American-born population took up arms against the government.

In Lower Canada, tensions between the radical French-Canadian *Patriote* party and the conservative 'British Party' rose throughout the 1830s. In 1834 Louis-Joseph Papineau put before the House of Assembly the ninety-two resolutions. These were a list of grievances sent to the British Imperial Parliament but they were also intended as a manifesto of sorts. The resolutions included demands for an elected legislative council, full control of the province's finances to be handled by the assembly, and responsible government. A number of paramilitary organisations were created between 1835 and 1837, including the British Rifle Corps and the Doric Club on the conservative side and *Les Fils de la Liberté* on the Patriote

[362] D. Creighton, 'The economic background of the rebellions of eighteen thirty-seven', *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 3:3 (1937), pp. 333.
[363] J. Little, *Loyalties in Conflict: A Canadian Borderland in War and Rebellion, 1812-1840* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), pp. 102-3.

side. The latter, founded in September, consisted of about 800 members.[364] The Ten Resolutions sent in reply by Lord John Russell in March 1837 rejected the *Patriote* requests in their entirety and authorized the Governor General to spend the Canadian revenue without the consent of the House of Assembly. Over the course of the summer and autumn of 1837, a number of protest meetings were held in the countryside throughout Lower Canada, but they were particularly prominent and common in the Montreal district. The Patriotes initiated a movement of boycotting British goods. This culminated in the Assemblé de la Confédération des Six Comtés at St. Charles on 23rd-24th October 1837.

The conflict began in earnest on the 10th November when the cavalry were sent to Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu and exchanged fire with the rebels. The first major battle occurred when Wolfred Nelson successfully led an attack on the British at St. Denis on the 23rd November. The British successfully fought back at St. Charles two days later. The battles of the year ended with the defeat of the *Patriotes* at Saint-Eustache on the 14th December. At the beginning of the rebellions, there were just 3325 British regulars in Lower Canada.[365] By 1st August, the Montreal garrison included over 1,000 regulars and in Quebec City there were some 1,700 men. Approximately three hundred Patriotes were killed in the 1837 rebellions compared to just thirty from the government forces.[366] For much of 1838, it seemed that the rebellion had been thwarted. In November, rebellion returned as Wolfred Nelson came back to Lower Canada with 2,500 armed supporters.[367] His campaign began in the Eastern Townships and battles were fought at Odelltown on the 4th November, at Lacolle on the 7th and at Beauharnois on the 10th. This second rebellion was equally unsuccessful.

The rebellion in Upper Canada was a far smaller affair. In 1834 the Reformers had won a majority in the House of Assembly and stopped the supplies to the government. The arrival of the Lieutenant Governor Sir Francis Bond Head, intended as a conciliator, only antagonised the reformers due to his stubbornness and his blatantly partisan intervention in the 1836 election. Over the course of 1836 and 1837, a number of political unions were organised and township meetings held. When the Lower Canadian rebellion broke out, the British regulars stationed in Upper Canada were sent there to aid the suppression of the rebellion. On the 7th of December, approximately four hundred rebels joined William Lyon Mackenzie in a march down Yonge Street with the intention of taking Toronto. At Montgomery's Tavern they faced Colonel James Fitzgibbon and approximately 1000 loyalist volunteers who easily defeated them.[368] Just as Mackenzie's rebellion was ending, Charles Duncombe's was beginning. Misinformation led him to believe that Mackenzie had successfully taken Toronto. From the 7th to the 12th of December, rebels met and armed in the village of Scotland, in Norfolk county. On the 13th, they marched towards Hamilton where they met the loyalist forces under

[364] M. Zuehlke and C. Stuart Daniel, *The Nation's Battlefields from the French and Indian Wars to Kosovo* (Vancouver: Stoddart Publishing, 2001), p. 82.
[365] Directorate of History, Canadian Forces Headquarters 'Report on the Canadian Militia Prior to Confederation', (Ottawa: National Defence Headquarters, 1986) p.53.
[366] E. Senior, *Redcoats and Patriotes: The Rebellions in Lower Canada, 1837-38* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1985), p. 213.
[367] 'Report on the Canadian Militia Prior to Confederation', p. 84.
[368] Craig, *Upper Canada: The Formative Years*, pp. 241-250.

Allan MacNab. Before even a shot was fired, the ill-prepared rebels fled. In the Duncombe rebellion, Colin Read identified just 197 rebels and 57 more who aided them by means such as supplying weapons, forming 'home guards' and encouraging others to take up arms.[369]

In Upper Canada, though the rebellions were easily suppressed, peace did not come quickly. Mackenzie fled to Navy Island, from where he declared the creation of the independent republic of Canada. He was joined by a number of American sympathisers, led by General Rensselaer von Rensselaer. Estimates for the number present on the island range from 450 to 2000.[370] On the 29th December, the Upper Canadian militia destroyed the *Caroline*, an American ship aiding the rebels on Navy Island and inside Canadian waters. Sympathisers from the United States calling themselves 'Patriots' continued to attack the province throughout 1838. Between January and March, the Detroit-Windsor border experienced a number of raids, at Bois Blanc Island, Fighting Island and Pelee Island. Between the 21st and 23rd of June, Patriot attention was transferred to the Niagara Peninsula during the Short Hills Raid. Finally, between the 13th and 18th November, approximately 200 Patriots attacked the village of Prescott, near Kingston, in the Battle of the Windmill. They were crushed by a combined force of 800 militia and British regulars.[371] Support for these Patriots was widespread in the United States and the Hunters' Lodges had 40,000 members.[372]

Repression following the rebellions took on an odd mix of leniency and severity. The actions of the loyalist volunteers in both provinces were often tinged by vengeance and were subsequently unnecessarily harsh, involving the destruction of much property, and the unjust imprisonment and accusation of many individuals with no involvement in the rebellions. Yet the courts tended towards leniency. In Upper Canada trials were held at Toronto, Hamilton and London in response to the 1837 rebellions, and at Niagara and Kingston after the Patriot invasions. Almost 400 were put on trial in Upper Canada, of whom 300 were convicted but only twenty executed.[373] The vast majority of these cases resulted in a pardon or lenient sentence. The courts martial at Kingston and London resulted in 181 were convictions of 184 tried; resulting in 17 executed and 78 transported (to Van Diemen's Land). In Lower Canada, 106 were tried and 99 convicted resulting in 12 executions and 58 transported. Lord Durham issued a further ordinance by which over 150 prisoners were released and eight rebel leaders were exiled to Bermuda.[374] Even the most prominent leaders of rebellion – William Lyon Mackenzie in Upper Canada and Louis-Joseph Papineau in Lower Canada – were welcomed back into Canadian society and politics less than a decade after their treachery. The events of these years led the British government to significantly increase the strength of the military in both Upper and Lower Canada. By early 1840 there were nearly 11,500 British regulars in

[369] C. Read, *The Rising in Western Upper Canada 1837-8: The Duncombe Revolt and After* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), p. 165.
[370] Bonthius, 'The Patriot War of 1837-1838', *Labour/Le Travail* 52 (2003), p. 15.
[371] Zuehlke and Daniel, *Canadian Military Atlas*, pp. 86-7.
[372] Ibid., pp. 14-15, 30.
[373] J. Bumsted, 'The Consolidation of British North America, 1783-1860' in P. Buckner (ed.), *Canada and the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 56.
[374] F. Greenwood and B. Wright, 'Introduction: Rebellion, Invasion, and the Crisis of the Colonial State in the Canadas, 1837-9' in F. Greenwood and B. Wright (eds.), *Canadian State Trials, Volume II: Rebellion and Invasion in the Canadas, 1837-1839* (Toronto: Osgoode Society, 2002), p. 10.

Canada.[375] Upper Canada had also seen a great increase in militia participation. By November 30, 1838, there were more than 20,000 active volunteers from the province.[376]

In both cases ethnicity had played a key role in the rebellions. In Lower Canada, despite earlier alliances between the *patriotes* and Irish Catholics, the rebel armies were composed almost exclusively of French-speaking *habitants*. In Upper Canada rebellion remained the preserve of the North American-born, despite no discernible ethnic bias in reform politics before that date. This was accompanied by a sense of anti-British nationalism not shared by the vast majority of the population. In both cases, the leaders of these movements had fundamentally misjudged the provincial mood. Loyalism emerged stronger than ever from the rebellions.

[375] Bumsted, 'The Consolidation of British North America, 1783-1860', p. 55.
[376] 'Canadian Military History Gateway: Volume 2: 1755-1871', http://www.cmhg.gc.ca/cmh/page-437-eng.asp?flash=1 accessed 20/07/2014.

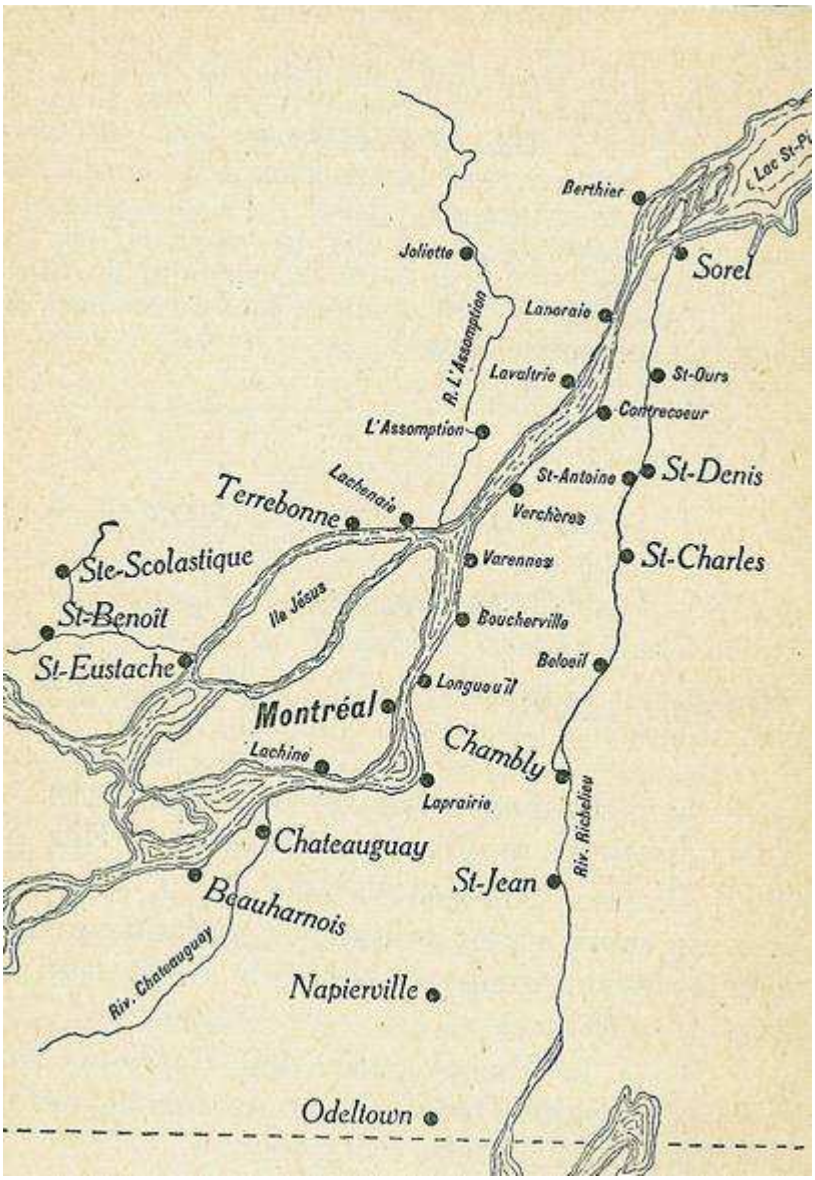
3.1 Montreal and the Rebellions of 1837

The rebellions of 1837 polarised the communities of Montreal. A dichotomy was formed between 'loyal' constitutionalists and 'disloyal' reformers. Politics increasingly fell along ethnic lines between English-speaking constitutionalists and French-speaking patriotes. Anglophones turned away from the increasingly radical Patriote party while French-Canadians avoided the loyalist militias. Through accounts of Patriote atrocities, the French-Canadian population were presented as a threat to the anglophone community. The rebellion provided a narrative of events that emphasised the continuing struggle between the loyal English community and the villainous French. The Durham Report described a nation riven by racial conflict. Yet this extreme animosity was a direct result of the rebellions. The actions of a minority of the French population seemed to confirm the worst fears of British Tories. Divisions between Scottish, English and Irish were forgotten as they were brought together under the designation of the 'loyal Briton'. Most notably, Irish Catholics gave up their previous Patriote allegiance and were accepted into this Anglo-Canadian community. Attempts to promote a civic form of Britishness, incorporating English- and French-speakers equally, as had been seen in 1832, were undermined by the rebellions. In 1832, the British party had co-opted many of the leaders of French-Canadian society as long as they were willing to accept anglophone Tory principles. French-Canadians, meanwhile, had brought in to their community English-speakers, and particularly Irish Catholics, who supported the Patriote cause.

The ninety-two resolutions in 1834 began the process of polarisation. The outright rejection of these resolutions by Lord John Russell in his Ten Resolutions of 1837 suggested to the Patriotes that constitutional action was insufficient.[377] Combined with severe economic depression, the Patriotes had many potential recruits for the rebellion. A number of protest meetings were held in the countryside, providing the Patriotes with an opportunity to convince a cautious, hesitant habitant population that rebellion was the solution to their struggles. Elinor Senior has provided a useful account of the events of the rebellions themselves.[378] According to Allan Greer, the rebellions constituted a rural revolt against an increasingly substantial seigneurial burden at a time of economic depression. The ideology of the *Patriote* party was simply grafted onto this discontent.[379]

[377] A. Greer, *The Patriots and the People: The Rebellion of 1837 in Rural Lower Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), pp. 137-139.
[378] Senior, *Redcoats and Patriotes*.
[379] Greer, *The Patriots and the People*.

Map of the Montreal region at the time of the 1837-1838 rebellions:[380]



Through the active use of the public sphere, the Anglo-Canadian elite in Montreal attempted to encourage British solidarity. To encourage British solidarity, a series of national associations were created. The St. Patrick's Society and the St. Andrew's Society were formed in 1834; and the St. George's and German Societies in 1835. The various English-speaking national societies, far from emphasising the ethnicities of Irish, Scottish and English, as might be expected, actually contributed to creating a unified Anglo-Canadian community in the city.[381] They shared a similar political outlook and celebrated each others' saint's days. This brought a united anglophone community into the public sphere which presented a formidable force when mobilised. Membership of the St. Patrick's Society was

[380] Map courtesy of 'Canadian Military History Gateway', http://www.cmhg.gc.ca/cmh/image-363-eng.asp?page_id=422

[381] G. Leitch, 'The Importance of Being *English*?', p. 1.

open to both Irish Protestants and Catholics, providing a channel of communication between the city's Protestant elite and its Catholic majority. Wayne Timbers has effectively demonstrated how the split between the Protestant and Catholic portions of the Irish community emerged in the 1840s with the rise of ultramontanism and evangelicalism. In 1837, Irish Protestants formed much of the leadership of the society while members of both denominations happily intermingled.[382] By being welcomed into the society, they helped to combat feelings of discrimination. In 1832, when Irish Catholics had played such a crucial role in election of the Daniel Tracey, the only advocates for their cause came from the Patriote ranks. By 1837, this situation had changed substantially. In the years before the founding of the St. Patrick's Society, expressions of Irish ethnicity had taken on a *Patriote* tone. On the 17th March 1834, a Saint Patrick's Day dinner was organised by the leading *Patriote* Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan and included such toasts as 'union among the Irish and Canadians'. Just one year later, Irish Protestants and Catholics intermingled and the society rapidly took on a constitutionalist and loyal aura.[383]

The St. Patrick's Society, much like its English and Scottish counterparts, firmly held to constitutional principles and may have played an important role in acting as a loyal counterweight to the Patriote forces demanding Irish Catholic allegiance. Furthermore, it held an equal rank to its sister societies in the St. Andrew's and St. George's Societies. As Gillian Leitch has argued, 'in times of unrest the British identity was amplified, without prejudice to the Scottish, English and Irish identities'.[384] The rebellion presented a spectacle in which all anglophones drew together as one loyal 'British' community. Contemporaries were keen to remark upon this: 'Can it be that Americans, and Englishmen, and Scotchmen, and Irishmen, are found almost to a man on one side in a political struggle?'[385]

The national societies provided an opportunity for residents of Montreal to celebrate the traditions of the land of their birth. The saints' days were welcome social occasions for the city's elite. A number of British party stalwarts found themselves in leading positions in these societies. Benjamin Holmes, an Irish Protestant banker and businessman, was president of the St. Patrick's Society from 1836 to 1838.[386] Peter McGill, a prominent Scottish merchant, was president of the St. Andrew's Society from 1835 until 1842, while George Moffatt presided over the St. George's Society from 1834 to 1841.[387] Traditional symbols of England, Ireland and Scotland were widely employed – roast beef and the rose for England, the shamrock for Ireland, and the thistle, Robert Burns, and Robert Bruce for Scotland. They celebrated each others' holidays, participating in the parades and dinners that accompanied them. The minutes of the St. Andrew's Society demonstrate one such occurrence: 'An application from the German Association to accompany them to Church on their Anniversary, the 3rd August, was agreed to, and the German, St. George's, St. Patrick's, and St. Andrew's Societies,

[382] W. Timbers, 'Britannique et irlandaise: l'identité ethnique et démographique des Irlandais protestants et la formation d'une communauté à Montréal, 1834-1860', (M.A. Diss., McGill University, 2001).
[383] K. James, 'Dynamics of Ethnic Associational Culture in a Nineteenth-Century City: Saint Patrick's Society of Montreal, 1834-56', *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* 26:1 (2000), pp. 47-8.
[384] G. Leitch, 'The Importance of Being *English*?'
[385] *Montreal Morning Courier*, December 25, 1837.
[386] Ibid., p. 50. See also, L. Ste. Croix, 'Benjamin Holmes,' *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 9, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003-, accessed March 25, 2014, http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=4499
[387] See R. Sweeny, 'Peter McGill', *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 8, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed March 25, 2014, http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=4069 and G. Tulchinsky, 'George Moffatt', *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 9, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed March 25, 2014, http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=4602.

marched in procession to the Protestant Episcopal Church.'[388] This was not an unusual occurrence.[389] There were two parts to the celebration of saints' days in Montreal: the first were the parades, as described above. The second was the public dinner. These were large-scale events hosted at local hotels or the houses of prominent individuals in which traditional foods were eaten and the symbols of their respective countries of origin displayed and celebrated.

As well as the national societies, more explicitly political organisations were formed. In 1835 the Montreal Constitutional Association was created, followed by the short-lived British Rifle Corps. The former brought together English-speaking Tories as a way to politically organise the British party. According to them, the British and Irish of Lower Canada had been 'subjected to the domination of a party, whose policy has been to retain the distinguishing attributes of a foreign race, and to crush in others that spirit of enterprise which they are unable or unwilling to emulate'.[390] This organisation brought together the Irish, Scottish and English into one group understood as 'British' that was persecuted by a French 'Other'. The British Rifle Corps was a paramilitary organisation, aimed at self-defence of the British community against the Patriotes, but was quickly disbanded by the Governor General. A year later, the Doric Club was created, another paramilitary organisation, but this one more disguised in its intentions. Allowed to survive, it antagonised the francophone community and represented the extreme wing of British loyalism. In September 1837, the Patriotes responded with the creation of *La Fils de la Liberté*, another paramilitary organisation that brought violent politics to the streets of Montreal and clashed with the Doric Club.

Through such participation in associational life, Irish Catholics were able to avoid becoming 'othered' as the French-Canadians had been. The Montreal Transcript noted that the Irish were 'in friendship, warm and enthusiastic; in love pure and constant; in generosity unrivalled!'[391] This is not to say that the route to acceptance was easy. The *Gazette* described 'a most extraordinary and unjustifiable attempt was made to convict SIR FRANCIS HEAD, Mr. Justice M'LEAN, and others, of a most "damnable conspiracy" against Irish emigrants.'[392] Notably, the accusation of a conspiracy against the Irish came from the *Vindicator*, a Patriote newspaper set up to advocate the cause of the Irish population in Montreal. With Irish Catholic support evaporating for the Patriote cause, such a story might claw back a few recruits from the grip of the British party.

The Irish Catholic population proved themselves loyal in the rebellions. Only a few outliers, such as Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan, took up arms against the government. The vast majority stayed at home. Some took up arms for the loyalists. In the general court-martial of Montreal in 1838-39, not a single person of Irish Catholic origin was tried.[393] This was aided in no small part by the Roman Catholic Church. The Church consistently adopted an anti-patriote tone and, unlike in Ireland, it encouraged its congregation to remain loyal. As noted by Maureen Slattery, whereas O'Connell's movement in Ireland gained significant institutional and organizational support from the church, in Lower Canada the church allied

[388] *A Summary of the First Fifty Years Transactions of the St. Andrew's Society of Montreal* (Montreal: McQueen and Cornell, 1886), p. 7.
[389] *Transactions of the St. Andrew's Society*, pp. 7-8.
[390] W. Robertson and J. Guthrie Scott, 'Address of the Constitutional Association of Montreal to the Inhabitants of British North America', January 1836.
[391] *Montreal Transcript*, 14 November 1836.
[392] *Montreal Gazette*, 12 September 1837.
[393] J. Colborne, *Report of the State Trials, Before a General Court Martial* (1839), volume 2, p. 567.

itself with the propertied interests and displayed "loyal neutrality".[394] Maurice Lemire has suggested that the loyalty of the Irish Catholics of Montreal can be better attributed to the unwillingness of leading Patriotes to take up arms until the last moment. The Patriote struggle was primarily rhetorical. If a revolution had truly been planned from earlier, the Irish Catholics of Montreal could have proved a decisive factor.[395] While there is perhaps some truth to this – notably Papineau was reluctant to take up arms, and he leaned heavily on Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan as a close advisor – it seems more likely that it was the active role that anglophone Tories took to ensure Catholic loyalty, rather than an absence of effort on the part of the *Patriotes*, that resulted in the Irish Catholics of Lower Canada maintaining their allegiance to the Crown. [396]

The *Vindicator*, the Irish Catholic newspaper that purported to represent the Irish Catholic community, provides a curious case. Its editor was one of the few anglophones to join the rebellion. Yet the subscribers to his paper appear to have remained loyal. How can this divergence be explained? Firstly, it must be noted that the failure to take up arms against the provincial government in November did not in itself imply an opposition to much of the ideology of the Patriote party. It is likely that many Irish Catholics desired an elected legislative council and opposed the systematic cronyism that infected provincial politics. And while some joined the volunteer militias, they seem not to have done so in the same numbers or with the same enthusiasm as their Protestant counterparts. Nonetheless, in the final reckoning, the Irish must be considered to have remained loyal. The *Vindicator* was also not the only actor calling upon Irish loyalties. James Jackson has noted how the growing strength of the Irish Tories of Montreal was represented by the publication of *The Irish Advocate* from 1835 to 1837. The Tories were just as aware as their reformist counterparts of the value of using newspapers to attract supporters.[397]

Once that decision to remain loyal was made there was no turning back. In the rhetoric of the era, the division between loyal and rebel was soon grafted on to the categories of 'British' and 'French'. Irish Catholics no longer constituted a true 'third element' in the politics of Lower Canada. In many ways, they resembled the Scottish Highlanders of Upper Canada during this year. Both were some of the strongest supporters of reform in the years leading up to 1837. Yet the vast majority of Irish Catholics in Lower Canada and Scottish Highlanders in Upper Canada refused to take the final step of rebellion.

The *Vindicator*, and English-speaking Patriotes more generally, attempted to downplay the racial connotations of the conflict. For them, this was a battle of ideology, not language: 'the war in Lower Canada is a war of *principles*. Reform *versus* Toryism; or, to speak more correctly, Democracy and responsibility in office, *versus* aristocracy and irresponsibility in office.'[398] It must be noted that the *Vindicator* did not actively preach disloyalty or rebellion. It was strident in its opposition to the government and repeatedly called for "organization"

[394] M. Slattery, 'Irish Radicalism and the Roman Catholic Church in Quebec and Ireland, 1833-1834: O'Callaghan and O'Connell Compared', *Canadian Catholic Historical Association, Historical Studies* 63 (1997): 29-58.
[395] M. Lemire, 'Les Irlandais et la Rébellion de 1837-8', *British Journal of Canadian Studies* 10 :1 (1995), pp. 8-9.
[396] E. Senior, *Redcoats and Patriotes,* p. 66, 82.
[397] J. Jackson, 'The Radicalization of the Montreal Irish: The Role of "The Vindicator"', *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* 31:1 (2005), p. 95.
[398] *The Vindicator*, 4 July 1837.

and the need to join the boycott of British goods.[399] It was keen to emphasise the constitutional nature of the movement.

The *Vindicator* repeatedly tried to convince Irishmen to join the Patriotes by its use of parallels to Ireland and in particular through reference to Daniel O'Connell. The Patriote cause was presented as the cause of O'Connell, and the 'O'Connell Irishmen' were exhorted to be 'up and doing'.[400] The *Herald* challenged the *Vindicator*'s interpretation of O'Connell. It attempted to show how it was merely manipulating his image for political advantage. He had been first presented as 'the great corruptionist of Ireland', but now the *Herald*, to gain the support of the Irish, 'would fain persuade us that because O'Connell supports the Queen and her Government in Ireland, we are bound to fall down and worship the Queen and her Government in Canada.'[401] The *Herald* then had attempted to co-opt the image of O'Connell as a loyalist. While it is difficult to tell just how successful this was, this attempt demonstrates that a sympathetic understanding of Irish issues was no longer the preserve of the *Patriotes*. O'Connell and the Irish repeal movement could be adapted to the politics of Lower Canadian Tories too.

The situation of Ireland was now shown to be improving greatly. In recent years it had been blessed by a conciliatory governor in Lord Mulgrave who had the interests of Irishmen at heart. Lower Canada, by contrast, continued to suffer under the jackboot of British oppression.[402] In 1832 the misgovernment of Ireland had become axiomatic. In 1837 O'Callaghan did his best to show the differences between Lower Canada and Ireland while Tories emphasised their similarities. Indeed, the issues were similar. The demand for responsible government 'has been rejected by the British Ministry, and its corrupt Parliament, on the same grounds that their opponents – the Tories – opposed Catholic emancipation, and now refuse municipal reform, to Ireland.'[403] In both cases a minority population exercised an unjust ascendancy over political power and used this to oppress the majority. O'Callaghan tried to present the Tories as the implacable enemy of the Irish emigrants. In an article entitled 'Further proofs of the love which the Tories bear the Irish', he described the use of troops on the Cornwall canals a year earlier to suppress rioting as 'one of the most cold-blooded conspiracies against *Irish* Emigrants that we ever read'. The troops had been brought in not because of any real violence, but to ensure that the Irish did not elect a Reform candidate.[404]

Surprisingly the common tie of Catholicism was rarely mentioned. This was likely due to the lack of institutional support from the Roman Catholic Church of Lower Canada for the Patriote party's platform. O'Callaghan rarely tried to play up the sectarian division amongst the Irish, instead preferring to focus on political issues. The Orange-Green divide that would become so important in later years remained largely absent.

The paper did not survive into the rebellions themselves. Before O'Callaghan had the chance to exhort his followers to rebel, the presses of the *Vindicator* were destroyed by the Doric Club. The final issue was published on 7 November 1837. Under these circumstances, perhaps it is not surprising that the *Vindicator* failed to maintain the Patriote disposition of the Irish Catholic population. It had repeatedly abhorred the actions of the provincial

[399] Ibid., 7 July 1837; 8 September 1837; 29 September 1837.
[400] Ibid., 22 Sep 1837; 20 October 1837; 31 October 1837.
[401] Ibid., 15 Sep 1837.
[402] Ibid., 3 November 1837.
[403] Ibid., 7 July 1837.
[404] Ibid., 8 September 1837.

government, whether in the purge of militia commissions and JPs during the summer of that year. But it had not advocated disloyalty. Unlike in 1832, the *Vindicator* could not claim a monopoly on representing the Irish. To be successful, it was necessary for the *Vindicator* to sever the tie between Britishness and Irishness. It attempted to do so by referring to the Scottish and English inhabitants of Montreal as 'Hanoverian': 'we would impress upon our countrymen to have nothing to do with the "Hanoverians" or their meeting. Let them not pollute themselves, their characters, or that of their nation … by any association with the orange brood which is about to make the day hideous by their presence next Monday.'[405] Yet this attempt smacks of desperation by O'Callaghan. On the eve of the rebellions the Irish Catholics had still not made their choice. From this appeal, it appears that they were strongly leaning towards a loyal position in common with other anglophones.

The *Gazette* reported on a substantial meeting in the *Place d'Armes* on the 23rd October. Loyal individuals from a variety of anglophone backgrounds assembled, bearing such diverse banners as 'Reform – not Revolution!', 'Draw the Sword, Scotland', 'Erin, ma Vourneen', 'The Land we live in', 'For God, our Queen and our country' and 'O'Connell's cry – the Queen and old Ireland'.[406] It was estimated that this particular meeting drew somewhere between 4,000 and 5,500 participants.[407] At these meetings, numerous speeches were made, condemning those Patriotes 'vomiting forth undisguised treason, and on false representations of the most malicious character, urging the French-Canadians to arm, throw off their allegiance and rush into open revolt'.[408] These banners suggest the presence of substantial numbers of Irish Catholics at the meeting. It is unlikely Protestants would have carried banners supporting O'Connell or written in Irish. While there were general exhortations to loyalty for all of the British population, conservatives were well aware of the need to secure Irish loyalty. One conservative, C. Sweeny, an Irish Protestant and member of the Montreal Volunteer Cavalry[409], made such a plea. 'Irishmen, incline not your ears to the seductive whisperings of the traitor, whether he approaches you in the shape of the ignorant, sycophantic, and deluded partisan of the French-Canadian faction, or the more cunning Yankee.' Loyalty was an Irish virtue and disloyalty would undermine the reputation of Irishmen everywhere:

> 'Never let it be said, that an Irishman would desert the banner of our young and lovely Queen, to seek disgrace and infamy under the shadow of the tri-colour. The Irish blood which now boils in my veins – the thick pulsations of my heart, inform my mind that such disgrace will never fall upon a true son of Erin, and convinces me on the contrary, that Irishmen will be true to themselves, true to their allegiance, true to their young, lovely and virtuous Queen, and staunch supporters of the Constitution'.[410]

For this 'resident Canadian', Irishness was equated with Britishness. The characteristics of a 'true son of Erin' were allegiance to the Queen and constitution – the same fundamental tenets of Britishness that were remarked on by anglophones throughout the Canadas. The extent of the British community was the 'ENGLISH, IRISH, SCOTCH and AMERICAN – all who boast of BRITISH extraction or who speak the ENGLISH language'.[411] The meaning of British, at least for the Tory community in Montreal that the *Gazette* represented, was determined by language above all. As long as one spoke English, they were 'British'.

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[405] Ibid., 17 October 1837.
[406] *Montreal Gazette*, 24 October 1837.
[407] *Montreal Mourning Courier*, 30 October 1837.
[408] *Montreal Gazette*, 28 October 1837.
[409] A Resident Canadian, *A Narrative of the Rebellion in the Canadas* (London: Ackerman and Co., 1838), p. 21.
[410] *Montreal Gazette*, 28 October 1837.
[411] Ibid., 30 September 1837.

Irish Catholic loyalty was also encouraged by the unique features of the Lower Canadian Rebellion. This was a predominantly rural rebellion. The Irish of Lower Canada had largely settled in urban areas, and particularly in Montreal. Persecution and political charivaris against English-speakers in those rural areas where the Irish did settle would hardly have endeared them to the rebel cause. Montreal, as the site of the military garrison, and a city with an anglophone majority, presented little opportunity for would-be rebels. The Catholic Irish, whatever their political persuasion, had remained loyal. Some undoubtedly did so for pragmatic reasons. But many others calculated that their interests lay closer to their British counterparts than their old French-speaking allies.

For the Americans of Montreal the situation was far less challenging. They remained able to define themselves as both British and loyal with little difficulty. The *Morning Courier* described a public meeting of the American citizens of Montreal on the 29th November 1837. It was their duty 'to counteract by constant and earnest effort, the designs of the treasonable and seditious.'[412] They were prepared to fight for the British government against the French rebels: 'we will promptly and fearlessly stand forward in defence of our adopted country in the hour of need – and we now declare ourselves in readiness by every means in our power, by our councils, our influence, and our physical strength, to aid in enforcing obedience to the laws'.[413] The French-Canadians had attempted to justify their rebellion by drawing parallels between the American Revolution and their own. The American population of Montreal completely refused to countenance such a comparison: 'as well from a knowledge of the political circumstances of the two Countries … as from an experience of the mild and equitable character of the local Government are enabled to declare totally unfounded and perversely false'.[414] This presents an important development in Anglo-Canadian identity. The American Revolution was perceived to be just, a result of misgovernment by the British. The lack of American loyalists who remained in Lower Canada made such a position tenable. The Americans of Montreal had largely emigrated after the revolution, not as loyalists, but as speculators, merchants and businessmen. They had arrived not because of a great love for the British Crown and political system, but because of individual commercial opportunity. Yet this had in no way lessened their loyalty to the British Crown in times of crisis. By the 1830s the American Revolution had lost its sting. In the minds of most British immigrants it was an unfortunate event caused by misrule. Nothing could be more explicit than the statement by the Scottish-born Rollo Campbell: 'The Canadas are *not* now where the Thirteen Colonies were in '76'.[415] This was used as a rhetorical attack against the *Patriotes*, who often claimed that they were as justified rebelling now as the Americans had been sixty years earlier.

Americans fell easily into the 'British' category due to their conservative politics and esteemed social status. Sometimes the press referred to 'British' and 'American' as different categories, but usually as allied groups with identical aims.[416] The *Transcript* wrote that 'it is most gratifying to witness the zeal with which they espouse, what is, in their estimation, the good cause'.[417] Similarly, the *Morning Courier* wrote of those 'American citizens *by birth*, - not merely sons of American *refugees*' who 'by years of actual experience have found British rule so thoroughly the reverse of all that is oppressive, that they are now among the heartiest

[412] *Montreal Morning Courier*, 30 November 1837.
[413] Ibid.
[414] Ibid.
[415] *Montreal Morning Courier,* 18 December 1837.
[416] See *Montreal Gazette*, 19 December 1837 and 21 December 1837.
[417] *Montreal Transcript*, 30 November 1837.

of its supporters against its hypocritical opponents'.[418] The late loyalists, condemned in Upper Canada as treacherous, were here actively welcomed by the British community. By having to make a choice in favour of British monarchical government over republican rule in the United States, the Americans of Montreal had demonstrated their loyalty. English-speakers in Lower Canada, however, looked on with dismay at responses to the rebellion in the United States. Support for the rebellion seemed to have emerged from a supreme misunderstanding of the causes of the rebellion and a misplaced sympathy with the Canadian *habitants*. The experience of the Hunters' Lodges only increased the tension between loyal Lower Canadians and the United States. Reports of the rebellions in the United States were 'conflicting and absurd', often exaggerating the successes of the Patriotes.[419]

Many anglophones demonstrated their loyalty through involvement in volunteer militias. In Montreal and the surrounding areas, hundreds if not thousands of (predominantly anglophone) loyalists joined volunteer units. A deliberate decision had been made not to raise the militia which would have included a large number of French-Canadians. By relying on volunteers, the British government could be certain that their loyalty was above reproach. In the past the provincial executive had been reluctant to raise volunteer units. In 1835 the 'British Rifle Corps', with 800 volunteers, had been briefly established before it was closed down by Lord Gosford. It was, however, seen by Catholics as 'an Orange plot against their religion'.[420] The alliance between Irish and French was still going strong. Religious identities as Protestant and Catholic overrode ethnic identities as English- or French-speakers and supplanted the later dichotomy of 'loyal' and 'rebel'.

By late 1837, the situation was very different. Vast numbers of recruits were found to aid the British redcoats in the suppression of the rebellion. Approximately 9,000 men volunteered for loyalist militias.[421] The various British ethnicities each raised their own volunteer units in a bid to demonstrate their loyalty. The *Transcript* included notices for the 'Royal Irish', 'Royal British' and 'Royal Scots' companies of the Montreal Light Infantry. These were volunteer units formed specifically to fight the rebellion. Montreal, through its loyal population, was to help defend those 'loyalists scattered throughout the country' by deploying its loyal volunteer militias to the surrounding district.[422] Much of the leadership for the Irish came from the Protestant portion of the community – much as the leadership in the St. Patrick's Society was primarily Protestant. Benjamin Holmes, Sydney Bellingham and John Samuel McCord all acted as officers for these militias.[423] As well as these ethnically based units, there was also the Montreal Volunteer Cavalry. This had been formed during the War of 1812. Members supplied their own horses, uniforms, and arms, and were not paid.[424] For many others though, participation in the militias was not selfless – they offered pay and rations on short contracts that would have been appealing to many, especially those living in cities such as Montreal. They would receive 1s a day as well as rations.[425] Nonetheless, French-Canadians were not entirely absent from these loyal proceedings – indeed, the British Rifle Corps was commanded by Major Clément Charles de Bleury – a Patriote who had been elected in 1832

[418] *Montreal Morning Courier*, 25 December 1837.
[419] *Montreal Gazette*, 13 December 1837.
[420] W. Brian Stewart, *The Ermatingers: A 19th-century Ojibwa Canadian Family* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007) p. 67.
[421] W. Timbers, 'Britannique et irlandaise', p. 78.
[422] *Montreal Transcript*, 22 November 1837.
[423] Timbers, 'Britannique et irlandaise', p. 78.
[424] Stewart, *The Ermatingers*, p. 67.
[425] *Montreal Morning Courier*, 30 November 1837.

but turned away from the party as it radicalised over the decade.[426] This occurrence must remind us that however far the ethnicisation of politics had proceeded it was still possible for French- and English-speakers to find common ground.

Nonetheless, ethnic polarisation did not go entirely unchallenged, as the *Courier* demonstrated:

> '*If*, indeed, the whole French population of Lower Canada, is to be exterminated, or rendered helots, - *if* the gallows is to groan under the burden of its wretched victims, - *if* loyal eyes are to gaze, and loyal hearts to beat, with unmixed delight at a scene of wholesale execution, such as no man, with the common feelings of a man, can picture to himself without a shudder … the sooner such loyalty enjoys the blessings of defeat itself, the better.'[427]

According to the Courier, it was the duty of the British population to ensure that loyalty did not have the connotations suggested here. Rebellion was to be condemned, but the extermination of the French-Canadians was a terrible measure, unbecoming of the British population. The growth of ultra-loyal language, in which only those who expressed pure hatred for French-speakers and reformers, did not sit well with moderates. The *Courier*, in a section entitled 'Political Glossary' commented on the increasingly extreme language that was used by the press in the polarised political climate. Some brief attempt was usually made to suggest a position of neutrality, such as the term 'No Alarmist', before a great display of invective, describing only 'the most alarming reports of *atrocity, pillage, massacres and extermination*' as the *Montreal Herald* would write of 'atrocities too *disgusting* and *beastly*'.[428] Though partisan and polemical writing in Montreal newspapers was not a new phenomenon in 1837, an escalation in the language used to condemn their French opponents now took place in editorial writing. While the *Courier* chose to remain apart from this war of words it seems clear that many English-speakers embraced it.

The ideas of British-as-loyal and French-as-Other was nonetheless one of the enduring legacies of the 1837 rebellions. What was contested was simply the nature of that loyalty and how a group excluded from the British community should be treated. For the first time the local press to begin to draw on the language of race. For the *Gazette* the French-Canadian controlled Assembly had as their object 'to injure all of the ANGLO-SAXON race', meaning by this term, immigrants of British and American origin. Any sympathy for the rebellion in the United States was puzzling, as this was an 'ANGLO-SAXON continent' whose 'wishes regarding the character and ANGLO-SAXON nationality of the continent must be the same'.[429]

The British community sought to affirm their self-confidence by making comparisons of the racial characteristics between themselves and the French-Canadians. The British were a forward-looking entrepreneurial race compared to the unambitious feudal French farmer. 'The English farmer', wrote William Evans from Cote St. Paul on the island of Montreal, 'does not owe his success to any advantage he obtained from the Canadian farmer, but by his superior skill, applied to the same materials, he obtains a product two or threefold as valuable

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[426] In Collaboration, "SABREVOIS DE BLEURY, CLÉMENT-CHARLES," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 9, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed January 23, 2014, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/sabrevois_de_bleury_clement_charles_9E.html.

[427] *Montreal Morning Courier*, 18 December 1837.

[428] *Montreal Morning Courier*, 6 November 1837.

[429] *Montreal Gazette*, 30 December 1837.

as that which the Canadian farmer did obtain.'[430] With the English-speaking population providing the economic engine of the country, it became only natural that its government should fall to them also: 'The interests of Canada will never be properly promoted by those who cannot, or will not be convinced, that the greater the produce that is annually created in the country, by the judicious management of old, and the settlement and cultivation of new lands, by men, no matter of what origin, must augment the means of happiness, and advances the prosperity of the whole community'.[431] Canadian farmers were as ill-suited to politics and government as they were to modern agriculture. Such a paternalist view of the French-Canadian population was common. Many British commentators believed they created a disproportionate amount of the wealth of Lower Canada, only to see it wasted at the hands of a French faction which they described as 'a deadening incubus on the spirit of commercial enterprise.'[432] To ensure that the French population could no longer cause such problems, the proposal to unify the Canadas was revived. A writer in the *Montreal Herald* had proposed 'it should be made imperative that every county, riding, town or ward, should return one member, a *British* or *Anglo Canadian by birth*' to ensure British predominance in a united Canadian legislature.[433] This was also one of the earliest attempts by the English-speaking community of Lower Canada to appropriate the language of 'Canadian' to the British. One could be a 'British' Canadian now as well as a 'French' Canadian.

During the rebellions in Montreal, the term 'Canadian' was applied almost exclusively to those of French origin. While in the Upper Province 'Canadian' was increasingly being used to refer to anyone born in the Canadas, and even in rare cases to 'British-Canadian' or 'English-Canadian', for English Montrealers, it meant francophones. An article by the *Gazette* juxtaposed 'British' and 'Canadian' as opposites – albeit with the slight possibility that a Canadian could be loyal. There was a 'Canadian party' aiming at 'Canadian supremacy'.[434] The French-Canadians had no real or legitimate grievances in the minds of the conservatives of Montreal. They had only 'imagined' grievances, dreamed up by politicians for individual gain. Adam Thom believed that they were desired only 'a large share of the public revenue in the shape of illegal contingencies and official emoluments'.[435] The real object was 'to overthrow the supremacy of Great Britain in these Provinces; not because of any grievance they suffer ... but with the view of establishing a republican form of government'.[436] For William Evans, and many other anglophone reformers, the desire for reform was strong. But 'Britons and Irishmen' would 'wish to obtain it by legitimate means, not at the cost of a Civil War, and the destruction of their fellow subjects.'[437] However legitimate French-Canadian grievances might be, their method of remedying them was harmful and counter-productive.

This 'othering' of the French-Canadian population was made all the more possible by the belief that the French-Canadian people were just as intolerant of British settlers as the anglophones were of them. The pronouncements of the Patriotes in the Assembly gave the

[430] 'To Canadian Agriculturists of French Origin' – William Evans, Cote Ste. Paul, December 18, 1837 in *Montreal Morning Courier*, 21 December 1837.
[431] Ibid.
[432] A. Thom, *The Anti-Gallic Letters, addressed to His Excellency Lord Gosford, Governor-in-Chief of the Canadas, by Camillus* (Montreal: The Herald Office, 1836), p. 8.
[433] *Bytown Gazette*, 21 February 1838.
[434] *Montreal Gazette,* 30 September 1837.
[435] Thom, *The Anti-Gallic Letters*, p. 2.
[436] *Montreal Transcript*, November 30, 1837.
[437] William Evans, 'To Canadian Agriculturists of French Origin' in *Montreal Morning Courier* 21 December 1837.

British population no reason to believe otherwise, as they did their best 'to limit the size of Lower Canada's anglophone minority by opposing, often in outrageously xenophobic terms, immigration from the British Isles.'[438] The *Gazette* wrote: 'The FRENCH majority of the Assembly had the power to alter [the seignories system] ... but did not choose to do so, on the ground that such alteration would facilitate and encourage the settlement of "*des etrangers et des intrus*", namely, ANGLO-SAXONS of EUROPE and AMERICA.'[439] Indeed, the rebellions could be 'traced to a national prejudice against the ENGLISH, and a deeply imprinted detestation on the mind of the FRENCH-CANADIAN, of every BRITISH institution.'[440] This emphasised the narrative of English defence against unprovoked French-Canadian aggression. It also suggested the irreconcilability of English- and French-Canadians. With the French part of the population so unwilling to accept anglophones into their community there seemed little reason to negotiate entry into any joint community. In the parishes of St. Benoit and St. Scholastique, there was an attempt to expel British residents from their homes.[441] Families of British origin could not be expected to 'relinquish the laws, the language, and the institutions of their forefathers, or to link themselves to a French faction, whose sole end and aim is to deprive them of every vestige of nationality – to tinker them into FRENCHMEN'.[442] According to the *Gazette,* the British must struggle to maintain their unique identity in the face of the threat of assimilation by the French majority. Anyone who chose to accept this assimilation had then betrayed his countrymen and therefore was condemned. Despite this, the condemnation of the anglophone leaders – Wolfred and Robert Nelson, Thomas Storrow Brown and Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan – was rarely described in these terms. Attacks upon them largely followed the mould of attacks on Papineau – as incompetent, undignified leaders, unworthy of even the *Canadien* habitant. The language of race was still in an embryonic phase. While the *Gazette* was clearly willing to use such terms, neither the *Transcript* nor the *Courier* referred to 'Anglo-Saxons', preferring instead to rely on the language of loyalty. This would have changed greatly by 1849 as the racial discourse pioneered by the *Gazette* was adopted by conservatives throughout United Canada.

Identity was also performed. The killing of Lieutenant Weir outraged the English-speaking community. He had been captured while delivering a message and was brutally executed by François Jalbert and a number of local villagers.[443] When his body was returned to Montreal, an outpouring of grief and sympathy for his family was unleashed. His funeral was one of the largest ever to occur in the city, bringing out the anglophone population who wished to express their solidarity with their countryman. The killing was an act of 'wanton cruelty' and 'the indignity offered to Mr. Weir's mutilated remains cry aloud for retribution – his death will surely not pass unavenged'.[444] Even twelve years later, in 1849, the funeral was remembered: 'the *largest* funeral was that of poor Lieutenant Weir, hacked to pieces in cold blood, by the blood-thirsty French-Canadian Rebels in 1837?'[445]

Henry Esson, a Scottish Presbyterian minister, gave a call to arms in an address he made to the 'British' population. He articulated an Anglo-Canadian identity that presented Lieutenant Weir as 'a martyr to his country'. He was a symbol of British loyalty and virtue – 'his memory is embalmed in our hearts – his name is enrolled in the list of the brave'. It was men

[438] Greer, *The Patriots and the People*, p. 133.
[439] *Montreal Gazette*, 30 December 1837.
[440] Ibid., 12 December 1837.
[441] Ibid., 21 September, 1837.
[442] Ibid.
[443] E. Senior, *Redcoats and Patriotes*, pp. 80-82.
[444] See the *Montreal Morning Courier*, 4 December 1837; *Montreal Transcript*, 30 November 1837.
[445] *Montreal Morning Courier*, 30 May 1849.

like Weir who had saved British Lower Canadians from the French menace: 'This land, this city more especially, owes a deep debt of gratitude to the deceased, and to the other brave men, who have turned the battle from our gates, redeeming us at the price of their own blood – at the peril of their own lives – from the most threatening dangers'. They had fought against 'one of the foulest, most wanton and unnatural rebellions' to defend their country. Weir had sacrificed himself for the glory of his country and provoked in Esson that most nationalist phrase, 'dulce et decorum est pro patria mori'. He addresses his audience as 'my fellow-countrymen, my brother Britons'. Here the ambiguity of the Anglo-Canadian identity is highlighted, always described as 'British' yet referring primarily to the English-speakers in Lower Canada and to a homeland in North America, not the British Isles.[446]

Similar use of the public sphere by the French-speaking part of the population, however, was seen as illegitimate:

> 'Political clubs and associations have been formed, at which the most seditious harangues are spouted, and resolutions of a treasonable tendency passed … The Sabbath and other holidays are appropriated to the exercise of fire arms and military movements. The streets of this populous, and hitherto loyal city, are degraded, and the peaceable citizens annoyed and disgusted, by juvenile processions bearing the tri-colour and other revolutionary banners'.[447]

When the French-Canadians assembled, it could only be for seditious purposes. Their parades were not equivalent to those of the British, but preparations for rebellion. They were 'juvenile' rather than respectable.

The misdeeds of the French-Canadian rebels were lavishly described. The events of 1837 were not just a rebellion, but a 'Civil War'.[448] The *Morning Courier* reported the murder of Mr. Chartrand, forced into a mock trial and then sentenced to death as a spy.[449] The Patriotes had applied a system of brutal intimidation in the district of Montreal in the months leading up to the rebellion. They 'raised at once the banner of national proscription. "Patriotism or expulsion", - "turn Canadian, or turn out" … BRITISH farmers who for upwards of twenty years had lived in the greatest harmony with their CANADIAN fellow subjects, found themselves suddenly and unaccountably excommunicated – all intercourse with them and their CANADIAN neighbours was abruptly broken off.'[450] The British found themselves no longer tolerated by their French neighbours in the rural parts of the district. Loyal French-Canadians were similarly intimidated – one who had sheltered anglophones had his house fired into, and another fled to Upper Canada.[451] Others who refused to join the rebel effort were merely robbed as in the case of Mr. L'Esperance of St. Charles, who had $236.50 stolen from him. He was, however, given a receipt for the money, before being imprisoned.

Despite the vitriol poured upon the French-Canadian population at times, most English commentators were keen to point out that the habitants were not a naturally violent or rebellious people. In this rebellion, they had displayed 'a new and most unnatural feature in the character of CANADIANS of FRENCH origin, which is totally at variance with their ancient loyalty, and wonted love of peace, good order, and sobriety of demeanour'.[452] The

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[446] 'Address delivered by Reverend Henry Esson, on the occasion of the Funeral of the late Lieutenant Weir, Friday, 8 December 1837', *Montreal Transcript*, 16 December 1837.
[447] *Montreal Gazette,* 17 October 1837.
[448] See *Montreal Transcript*, 30 November 1837.
[449] *Montreal Morning Courier*, 4 December 1837.
[450] *Montreal Gazette*, 21 September 1837.
[451] Ibid.
[452] *Montreal Gazette*, 9 September 1837.

Gazette argued that they had been misled by a few vile demagogues: 'they act more in conformity with the principles of a passive obedience, supposed to be due to persons whom they call their natural leaders, than to the native impulses of their own mind'.[453] At the meeting of the Americans of Montreal, a similar attitude was displayed: 'They are a confiding people. Being uneducated, they place their implicit confidence in their Notaries, their Doctors, and their Lawyers. It is this that has led them astray. Political party men as in other countries, have for political effect, represented their grievances as insupportable'.[454] If anything, the habitants must be pitied. The *Courier* argued that they were 'miserable dupes' would be left 'to bear the worst consequences of their [leaders'] rebellion'.[455]

Yet it would be a mistake to suggest that the attitudes of the British towards the French-Canadian habitants were particularly positive. A clear tone of contempt emerges in many of the discussions of the habitants. They were 'ignorant and credulous.'[456] It was the duty of the British to educate and 'raise the habitant from his present level'. The language used here was similar to that used against the Irish Catholic population five years earlier. French-Canadians were ill-educated dupes, being used by a self-aggrandising political class, much as the Irish-Catholics had been when they supported Daniel Tracey and the Patriote Party. Now that the Irish Catholics had joined the British fold, it was the French-Canadian habitants who were described in such a manner. French-Canadians were a backward and ignorant race, to be brought forward into the modern world through British liberality. Indeed, their 'antiquated and noxious French laws' were so backward that even France herself had abandoned it.[457] Not everyone agreed that the *habitant* could be raised to the level of a British subject. The *Gazette* argued that the character of the French-Canadian was fixed and so they could only be coerced into the right actions. They would sever themselves from 'all civil and political connexion with the inhabitants of this Province of BRITISH origin. This is a temperament indigenous to the FRENCH-CANADIAN. It is a law of his nature, and he cannot be weaned from it, except by force or compulsion. To reason or argue with him … would be to undertake an endless and fruitless task'.[458] By arguing that they could not be reasoned with, the *Gazette* was calling for a political solution that did not encompass the French part of the population. Only through a British ascendancy – whether by union of the provinces or by the disfranchisement of francophones – could tranquillity be achieved.

The *Morning Courier* described a sudden and fundamental change in Tory attitudes towards the French-Canadians: 'because at one place and another the mass of the population appear to have been led for a few days into active hostility to the troops, *presto*, the whole French population is a race of implacable Indian-like warriors, and their former apparent quiet and unconcern an Indian stratagem'.[459] Attitudes to the French population were then determined by their actions – their role in the British identity was a negotiation not just between the various English-speaking groups, but between the French-Canadians, through their actions as loyal habitants or dangerous rebels, in the assembly and in the seigneuries. In many ways, attitudes towards the French-Canadians resembled the ambiguity that most British immigrants held towards the native population. Most of the time, they were docile, out of sight and unthreatening, perhaps a simple, uneducated and unenlightened race (and always

[453] Ibid.
[454] *Montreal Morning Courier*, 30 November 1837.
[455] Ibid., 4 December 1837.
[456] Ibid., 25 December 1837.
[457] *Montreal Gazette*, 30 December 1837.
[458] Ibid., 16 December 1837.
[459] *Montreal Morning Courier*, 7 December 1837.

regarded as a single homogeneous unit). But they could also be powerful and dangerous warriors, uncontrollable and threatening if not carefully managed by British authorities.

Many conservatives had been outraged by the policy of conciliation pursued since the arrival of Lord Aylmer in 1830 and continued and extended by Lord Gosford. They believed that this policy, and the role of the governors general in particular, was responsible for the rebellion. By allowing the French-Canadians to maintain control of the Assembly and granting a series of concessions, they had led the French-Canadians to believe in the weakness of the British government. The *Transcript* wrote of the 'virtual disfranchisement of British Canadians, and the unmeasured ambition of the French faction'.[460] One writer to the *Courier* even went so far as to complain that the Governor discriminated against Anglo-Canadians in his appointments.[461] What is notable here is the extent to which this division between English- and French-Canadian had spread into every aspect of political life.

The grievances of the British were not just general complaints about 'French Domination' but included the existence of specific policies – feudal tenure and the absence of offices for the registration of mortgages.[462] These were serious and real grievances, in contrast to those of the French-Canadians, whose demands for an elective legislative council struck the British population as impudent and ungrateful. It was necessary to inform the mother country of this position through petitions.[463] The francophobe editor of the *Montreal Herald*, Adam Thom, argued that 'by granting the contingencies on any grounds, however weak or however strong, your lordship manifestly throws away the only peaceable means of inducing the assembly to grant English claims, however just, and to redress English grievances, however severe'.[464] Thom's discontent with the current situation seems to have mirrored that of leading Tories during the rebellion losses crisis. He wrote that the British population of Lower Canada, 'if placed under the legislative and executive control of a French faction, will remain, and that only for a time, subjects of Great Britain rather than from motives of policy and affection, than from a sense of duty and allegiance'.[465] According to Thom, independence or annexation would be the inevitable consequences of pursuing the policy of conciliation to its conclusion.

The *Courier* attacked the more extreme partisans of the Tories for their attacks on Lord Gosford, even at the cost to their own reputation: 'we were pointed at as trimmers, cowards, and what not, by men who seem to consider violence as the only measure of loyalty, and an unremitting abuse of every thing connected with British Government as conferring the sole title to the character of a loyal man'.[466] The conditional nature of conservative loyalty was demonstrated in these attacks on the Governor and his conciliatory government. According to the *Gazette*, referring to the provincial executive, they had been 'totally abandoned by a Government, to whom we have sworn both fealty and obedience' while the imperial government looked 'upon our efforts with indifference, and to slumber in unpardonable sloth and inactivity.'[467] Faced with the danger presented by French-Canadian rebels, the conservatives of Montreal would not act on their threats of rebellion and annexation as they

[460] *Montreal Transcript*, 5 December 1837.
[461] 'To the Editor of the Morning Courier' – Argus, 24 October 1837 in *Montreal Morning Courier*, 26 October 1837.
[462] 'Speech of James Holmes at the Place d'Armes, October 23, 1837' in *Montreal Morning Courier*, 30 October 1837.
[463] *Montreal Gazette*, 23 November 1837.
[464] Thom, *The Anti-Gallic Letters*, p. 3.
[465] Ibid., p. 9.
[466] *Montreal Morning Courier*, 6 December 1837.
[467] *Montreal Gazette*, 24 October 1837.

did in 1849, but nonetheless Tory disloyalty during the rebellion losses crisis was prefigured by their attitudes towards the executive in 1837, the highpoint of their loyalty.[468]

British identity implied a continued close connection with the mother country. To a large extent, the anglophones of Montreal, and particularly its conservative element, conceived of themselves as Britons abroad. They viewed themselves as belonging to the same nationality and character as Britons in the United Kingdom. According to the *Gazette* 'there never could exist for the future any very remarkable distinction between BRITONS on either side of the ATLANTIC'.[469]

It appeared to English-speakers that the experiment of granting French-Canadians self-government had failed. French-Canadians had imposed upon the British community a number of measures that counteracted their interests such as feudal tenure and continued to demand ever more. The British-Canadians could not wait for immigration to boost their numbers and eventually provide them with a majority. An immediate solution was required – either disenfranchising the French part of the population – a measure understood as foolhardy and impractical by all but the most extreme Tories, and one that would never be endorsed by London – or by uniting with the other British North American provinces to provide an anglophone majority. The latter solution was chosen with the union of Upper and Lower Canada in 1841. Even in 1837, some were advocating a more general union of the provinces to establish the character of British North America as unquestionably British. The address of the Montreal Constitutional Association was aimed to 'induce our sister provinces on this continent, to unite with us in devising some effectual method by which the inhabitants of LOWER CANADA of BRITISH origin, may be completely and forever emancipated from that ignoble tyranny, to which they have hitherto been subjected by a base and revolutionary faction'.[470]

The rebellions of 1837 and 1838 were conceived of as a battle between the French and the British. The division between French-speaker and English-speaker became more important than ever. English, Scottish, Irish and American drew together into one unit as each became the 'loyal Briton'. The Irish Catholics had proven themselves worthy of this designation and they no longer represented a 'third force' in Lower Canadian politics and identity. The British fought against a treacherous and rebellious French-Canadian 'Other' that was simultaneously terrifying and inferior, an instrument of oppression whose incompetence was demonstrated by their organisational failures during the uprising. Through the mechanism of national associations and other public institutions, the British population of Montreal used the newly emerged public sphere to reinforce their identity as loyal anglophones. The rebellion also provided an opportunity for the active demonstration of loyalty. One could join the Montreal Constitutional Association, the Doric Club, or the volunteer militias. French-Canadians were vilified as accounts of their atrocities were used to besmirch their character and they were increasingly seen as 'Other'. They could not be reasoned with. French and British could not be merged. French-Canadians were to remain outside of the emerging Anglo-Canadian identity. The French were not the only enemy that had emerged from the rebellions – the sympathy of the United States for the rebels was compounded by their support for the Hunters Lodges and the rebellions of 1838. Even American immigrants to Montreal were shocked by their compatriots lack of sympathy for the British in Lower Canada. Nonetheless, it was the United States as a government, and not individual Americans, that were subjected

[468] Ibid.
[469] *Montreal Gazette*, 21 September 1837.
[470] *Montreal Gazette*, 16 December 1837.

to criticism. The rebellions also created a militia myth with far more grounding in reality than the militia myth of the War of 1812 ever had. Individuals in Montreal and the surrounding countryside fought to defend crown and home from marauding French-Canadian rebels alongside British soldiers, contributing a large proportion of the military forces present. By acting as the garrison of Montreal, they freed up the regulars to engage in offensive actions against the rebels. Anglophone discontent with the British imperial policy was also revealed, as the British population complained of their 'grievances' and expressed their anger at Lord Gosford's policy of conciliation. The rebellions of 1837 had to a large extent created the situation that Lord Durham observed in his report: that of 'two nations warring within the bosom of a single state'.

3.2 The Ottawa Valley during the 1837 rebellions

The rebellions of 1837 had little impact on the lives of the people of the Ottawa Valley. Distant from both Montreal and Toronto, with a quiescent population composed primarily of more recent Irish and Scottish immigrants, they remained preoccupied with their own troubles. In particular, the Shiners' War continued unabated. That is not to say the rebellions had no effect – indeed, they had an important rhetorical role upon local attitudes – but they lacked the urgency and sense of danger that was present elsewhere. People living on the Ottawa engaged in many of the actions that their countrymen in Montreal and London did - enrolling in volunteer militias, joining constitutional associations, sending addresses of loyalty and support to the lieutenant governor – but it was easy to express loyalty when rebellion was not a realistic option. Such expressions of loyalty were necessary for the region to attain its ultimate ambitions – a union of the provinces with Bytown as its capital – but pragmatism, more than emotion, appears to have governed loyal responses from the Ottawa Valley.

The rebellions of Papineau in Lower Canada and Mackenzie in Toronto were viewed with disbelief by many. The relative weakness of reform sentiment in the region made it hard to believe that political grievances could provoke anyone to rebellion. The Ottawa Valley remained politically underdeveloped. While provincial political parties were developing elsewhere in both Upper and Lower Canada, Tory factionalism and parochial concerns remained at the fore of regional politics. There were few personal links between prominent individuals in the Ottawa and the renowned politicians of the Canadas. William Lyon Mackenzie had no equivalent of Charles Duncombe in Bytown. Louis-Joseph Papineau had no newspapers to support his cause. Even the Tories seemed remarkably independent. They had little interaction with Lord Gosford or Sir Francis Bond Head and had little to say about them.

The rebellion in Lower Canada was viewed as a far more serious occurrence. The rebellions provided an opportunity for the Irish Catholics to present themselves as loyal. They moved into the mainstream of the British community as they disproved fears that they would ally themselves with their French-speaking co-religionists. Similarly, Irish Protestants were able to demonstrate the value of the Orange Order as a loyal institution rather than a merely Irish or anti-Catholic society. Nonetheless, individual French-Canadians in the region were often sympathised with, particularly in their conflicts with the Shiners. While French-Canadians as a group were 'othered', the Ottawa Valley region lacked the bitterness of feeling that plagued the rest of the anglophone community. It was Papineau and other rebel leaders who were to blame for the rebellions in Lower Canada, but unlike in Montreal, they were not seen as representatives of their race.

The region was still not densely settled but growing quickly by this period. Assessment returns reported that the population of Bytown in 1837 was 1,300.[471] The rebellions marked the peak of the power of the Carleton gentry. Their expressions of loyalty and conservatism were now mirrored by the whole population and they could establish themselves as leaders in a time of crisis. The experience of 1837 helped to broaden the perspective of the region from a narrow parochial view to a wider provincial one. After the Union of the Provinces that followed the rebellions, Bytown was no longer neglected by the provincial government.

[471] 'Bytown in 1837' – Hamnett Pinhey Hill in *Hamnett Pinhey Hill Collection*, MG24-I9, pp. 4027.

Instead, it was able to focus upon enacting its interests through its aspirations to become the capital of Canada.

The coronation of Queen Victoria presented a unique opportunity to express loyalty. At Aylmer in August, a constitutional meeting was held for the county of Ottawa of Lower Canada, with toasts for 'the health of our young Queen Victoria' as well as a series of other standard toasts, including 'the Earl of Gosford', the 'Army and Navy', and 'Sir Francis Bond Head'.[472] Queen Victoria was especially popular, 'for perhaps no monarch called to rule the destinies of the British Empire ever ascended the throne with a larger share of popular favour on her side.'[473] She was viewed as 'Queen of our great Empire' – as relevant and important to those living in the Ottawa Valley as to those living in Great Britain.

The rebellions brought forth other expressions of loyalism from the Ottawa Valley. The Irish Catholic population proved to be as reliable as the Irish Protestants, Scots or English in their loyalty. The rebellions allowed the Irish Catholic population to become absorbed into the 'British' moniker. This was expressed clearly by Hamnett Pinhey, a long-settled English Tory: 'I am glad to see at least one scotchman inclined to favor the claims of Irishmen, for say what you will, they are loyal and brave to the back bone.'[474] Their loyalty proved to those who may have had concerns about the Irish character their worthiness as part of the British community. This may have reflected the high level of Irish immigration to the region that had occurred through the 1830s. As Hamnett Pinhey argued, it would be 'exceedingly indiscreet to shew a remarked neglect of our country men from Ireland', something that would not have been suggested outside of the Ottawa region.[475] While it is possible Pinhey here referred to Irish Protestants, his statements repeatedly placed the entire Irish community, both Protestant and Catholic, within the wider 'British' moniker. He seems to have had little fear of Irish Catholic disloyalty.

The Shiners' War continued to rage. The *Gazette* reported that 'one man of the name of Biggar ... became the chief object of attack. He was severely cut and bruised about the head ... Another old man, a Canadian, was severely hurt, having one of his ribs broke in the affray.'[476] Here the term 'Canadian' was used to refer to the French-speaking population. The Canadians were painted here as the innocent victims of wanton violence by Shiners. The *Gazette* described the 'wanton and unprovoked nature of this affair, the barbarity accompanying its perpetration, while it betrays the fatal depravity of the human heart, shows that there are characters prowling amongst us who require to be watched'.[477] Any suggestion that this violence was caused by 'Irish character' could not be presented by a paper such as the *Bytown Gazette*. Instead, the violence was blamed on intemperance: 'The number of unlicensed taverns and tippling shops of no ambiguous character, which afford places of resort for such persons, ought to put all those friendly to good order upon the alert to prevent or punish when committed, such disturbers of the peace'.[478] The Shiners' War gave Bytown and the Ottawa Valley a very parochial view. The focus had to be upon creating a peaceful and ordered society in the region. The development of local government and law and order institutions was of the greatest importance – this incident was 'striking proof of the dire

[472] *Bytown Gazette*, 16 August 1837.
[473] Ibid., 6 September 1837.
[474] 'Hamnett Pinhey to A. J. Christie', Horaceville, 25 April 1838 in *Hamnett Pinhey Hill Collection*, MG24-I9, pp. 928-31.
[475] Ibid.
[476] *Bytown Gazette*, 18 October 1837.
[477] Ibid.
[478] Ibid.

necessity for the erection of some building here where such delinquents could be detained in safe keeping'.[479] Nonetheless, some people from further afield in the region, such as William Bell, a Scottish Presbyterian Minister from Perth, did not hesitate to equate the Shiners with Irishmen in general. Describing the trial of various Shiners on the 19th September 1837, he stated that 'they were all Irishmen, and it was painful to observe the gross want of moral principle which they exhibited.'[480]

Some have gone so far as to suggest that the Shiners' War represented the peculiar manifestation of the rebellion in the Ottawa Valley. In a far more recently and less developed region, a rebellion in the form experienced in Lower Canada and around Toronto was unlikely to develop. The local economy was based on the timber industry, not farming. Yet the Shiners' War represented a series of acts of resistance by a disfranchised population against an entrenched elite. Richard Reid argued that 'in part it was a clash of established social groups representing conservative and reform interests, with the latter using Catholic lumber workers and the former Orange bully boys' and that 'if the Shiners' War was in part a political struggle, it explains why both the Bytown Association for the Preservation of the Peace and George Baker's Bytown Rifles, two heavily conservative organizations, had only limited effectiveness.'[481] This challenges the conventional historiography that has viewed the Shiners' War as an economic conflict over jobs, a social order problem or the actions of a few leading timber merchants such as Peter Aylen.[482]

In the loyalist context of the Ottawa Valley, with its parochial political character determined by the neglect of the Upper Canadian government, resistance to the political status quo did not manifest itself in outright rebellion but through challenges to the social order such as the Shiners' War. The takeover of institutions such as the Bathurst District Agricultural Society and the repeated attempts to break fellow prisoners out of jail suggest a symbolic attack against the local authorities. Meanwhile, many inhabitants of Bytown passively resisted the encroachments of the Carleton gentry by assisting the Shiners in various ways. They opposed the formation of groups such as the Bytown Rifles, they refused to act as witnesses against the Shiners and they failed to assist in local law enforcement, much to the dismay of the local elite. James Johnston wrote, referring to Peter Aylen, that 'there is not a constable in Bytown, who will undertake to arrest him'.[483] Aylen could not have escaped the law so easily without significant local support. This suggests that the less-privileged working population of Lower Town were able to resist the controlling pretensions of the Upper Town elite by refusing to arrest leading Shiners such as Aylen.

Traditional reform politics had little success in the Ottawa Valley. James Johnston began a newspaper in 1836 entitled *The Bytown Independent and Farmer's Advocate*, addressed to the Irish and reform communities, it survived only for two issues. Even Johnston engaged in the loyalist discourse:

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[479] Ibid.
[480] 'Trial of Shiners, 19 September, 1837, Journals of William Bell' in R. Reid (ed.), *The Upper Ottawa Valley to 1855,* p.63.
[481] Reid, *The Upper Ottawa Valley to 1855*, pp. xxxviii-xxxix.
[482] See M.S. Cross, 'The Shiners' War'; F. Thompson, 'Policing the Irish' and D. Lee, *Lumber Kings and Shantymen*.
[483] M.S. Cross, "AYLEN, PETER," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 9, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed March 25, 2014, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/aylen_peter_9E.html.

> 'Freeholders of the County, and merchants in Bytown, of the first standing, some of them born in the country, and fought and bled in defence of it; and others, whose fore fathers fought both by sea and by land in defence of our Mother Country.'[484]

For the reformer Johnston, it was essential for moderation to prevail in Lower Canada. The current climate 'if cherished, is highly calculated to drive both parties to such an extreme, as to turn this land of liberty the more highly favoured on the face of the earth at present into a land of confusion, famine and distress. And should ever this be the case, the blame lies at the doors of the subscribers to the *Montreal Herald* and Montreal *Vindicator* – the one endeavouring to outrival the other in falsehood and slander'.[485] It is noticeable that it was the Montreal newspapers that they looked to. This highlighted the importance of Montreal as the metropolis of the Canadas. This paper had been established above all to 'advocate the national character and interests of every true Briton – IRISHMEN and their descendants first on the list.'[486] This was a reform paper, but one decidedly opposed to rebellion: 'In Lower Canada, as well as in Upper Canada, there exist many injudicious laws, and many that should be amended or struck from the Statute book altogether; but the proprietor is of the opinion that this would be an arduous undertaking for 800 rebels with their rifles. The proprietor will, on all occasions, uphold the King and Constitution, by enforcing obedience to the laws.'[487] There was an assumption by some that Irish immigrants would naturally support the reform cause due to their experience of oppression in Ireland. They were expected to vote as a single block. This sentiment was clearly expressed by Daniel O'Connor in his address to the electors in Russell County after the 1834 election: 'With all these advantages over me, together with the defection of some of my own countrymen, whom I have strong reason to suspect were influenced in their opposition to me through religious bigotry and corruption, I had to retire from the hustings'.[488] It was his expectation that his own Irish background made him a suitable candidate for other Irish immigrants to support. Those who had opposed him had done so not because of ideological differences, but because of 'bigotry' and 'corruption'. There was an assumption that an Irish Catholic was a perfectly adequate representative for Irish Protestants, and vice versa. It was their Irishness that was the crucial component here and not their religion. He highlighted the components necessary for a good representative: 'I hope they shall find a liberal Irishman, better qualified than I am, standing forth as an advocate of the rights and privileges of all classes of His Majesty's subjects in this Province'.[489]

Nonetheless, some more traditional manifestations of reform sentiment did exist. A reform meeting was held in the village in 1834, but the nature of its participants is enlightening. This included two contrasting Irish Catholics: Daniel O'Connor, the respectable merchant who had been accepted into the local elite; and Peter Aylen, better known as the 'king of the shiners'.[490] Aylen was here acting in a traditional and respectable manner common to reformers across the country, just as the Shiners' War was beginning to take off. He endorsed James Johnston, an Irish Protestant Orangeman, as the farmers' candidate: 'this was the time for them to be unanimous in supporting a liberal, intelligent, and independent man to

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[484] *The Bytown Independent and Farmer's Advocate*, 24 February 1836.
[485] Ibid.
[486] Ibid.
[487] Ibid.
[488] 'To the Free and Independent Electors of the County of Russell, October 1834' in O'Connor, *Diary and Other Memoirs of Daniel O'Connor*, p. 32.
[489] Ibid.
[490] 'Reform Meeting at Bytown reported in *British Whig*, 17 June 1834' in Reid (ed.), *The Upper Ottawa Valley to 1855*, p. 265.

represent them.'[491] This endorsement suggested that sectarian conflict between Protestant and Catholic could be alleviated at times. Johnston seems to have felt a similar exclusion from the Bytown elite, as an Irishman rather than a Catholic, describing 'all my Scotch enemy' who continued to attack him.[492] Nonetheless, this brief alignment of Irish Protestant and Irish Catholic grievances did not last long. On the 9th March, 1837, Shiners broke into Johnston's house and Aylen attempted to kill him.[493] Religious animosity at times could be set aside but it remained the fundamental undercurrent of Ottawa Valley society.

Peter Aylen complained of the abuses, particularly that they had 'kept the loaves and the fishes to themselves', referring to the distribution of patronage, and used himself as an example – 'he had fought and bled for his country, and he neither got pension, land, or any office of honor, or emolument'.[494] This speech presents Aylen in a very different light. Here he presented himself here as the neglected loyalist. It is likely that he referred to his service in the Napoleonic Wars, though little evidence remains of his life before he arrived in Lower Canada. This was not the 'man of insatiable ambition' who was 'prepared to take any measures necessary to advance his interests' suggested by Michael Cross.[495] Here Aylen appeared as the loyalist reformer, active in the political scene with a view to more than pragmatic self-interest.

The Ottawa Valley region had a large half-pay officer community located in Carleton County and focused in the village of Richmond. They viewed themselves as a benevolent, paternalist aristocracy, working for the interests of the wider population. Hamnett Pinhey, in his address to the electors, attacked the Reform cause: 'It can no longer be conceded that the object of the disaffected is Revolution; and should the people, insensible to their own true interests, lose the opportunity now afforded them to *reform* their own branch of the Legislature, by excluding from Parliament every suspected Revolutionist, that awful day is not far off that will witness a flow of the best, as well as the basest blood in the Province.'[496] Here a local Tory played up the prospects of violent revolution to ensure the election of the conservative candidates, Lewis and Malloch. He was not afraid to exaggerate the dangers of factionalism amongst the Carleton County Tories to make his point: 'let us not risk on this important occasion a division of constitutional interests; for on the result of this Election, hinges (perhaps) the fate of the British North American Colonies.'[497]

There also existed a conservative rural Orangemen population, especially in Lanark and Renfrew counties. They expressed their solidarity with the British people of Lower Canada. The determination to keep the region loyal was expressed in a statement in the *Gazette* about the development of Gloucester Township in Russell County. It argued for the 'urgent necessity for its being peopled with men of sound political feelings'.[498]

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[491] Ibid.
[492] Richard Reid, "JOHNSTON, JAMES (d. 1849)," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 7, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed January 21, 2014, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/johnston_james_1849_7E.html.
[493] Ibid.
[494] Reform Meeting at Bytown reported in *British Whig*, 17 June 1834' in Reid (ed.), *The Upper Ottawa Valley to 1855*, p. 265.
[495] Cross, 'Peter Aylen' in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography.*
[496] 'Address to the Electors of the County of Carlton', *Bytown Gazette*, 16 June 1836.
[497] Ibid.
[498] *Bytown Gazette*, 29 November 1837.

As with conservatives throughout the country, the grievances of the rebels were viewed as illegitimate. James Smith, under the alias Happy Lawrie, described the contrast between 'the upright, vigorous and courteous conduct of Sir Francis Bond Head' and the 'mean, shuffling and unmannerly behaviour of his opponents'. Their grievances were viewed as ridiculous and he parodied them in detail, writing of the problems that 'perfect freedom', the 'taxes which we pay almost nominal' and the 'House of Assembly and a low Elective Franchise' caused.[499]

The Ottawa region was given less opportunity than Montreal or the London District to act out their loyalty, but when these opportunities did present themselves, Bytonians took full advantage. They sent loyal addresses to the Lieutenant Governor and raised a volunteer militia unit, prepared to fight the rebels of Lower Canada if required. In neighbouring Cornwall, the loyalty of the Catholic population was less assured:

> 'from what I have since heard I believe that none of the RCatholics are to be trusted ... I am inclined to fear that a spirit of disaffection exists among the R. Catholics generally which has not been hitherto suspected. A person in this neighbourhood has said that a grand effort is to be made this winter when the Troops cannot easily move about, and that 50,000 RCatholic Irishmen are ready to come in and assist when required ... In this Province all is quiet at present; but if the Rebels in LCanada shd by any accident gain any advantages, I believe they wd. find many friends here. Every person who is guilty of uttering seditious ought immedly. to be imprisoned.'[500]

Phillpotts reflected a common fear of Upper Canadian Protestants – that the Irish Catholic population would align themselves with their co-religionists, the French-Canadians, rather than with their fellow English-speakers. Such fears proved unfounded. The idea that 50,000 Irish Catholics were prepared to rise up in support of the rebellion seems ludicrous but reflected the fears of some Protestant Tories. In the Ottawa Valley region, however, such ideas were unusual. The experience of the Shiners' War had demonstrated that there was no love lost between French-Canadians and Irish Catholics. In Perth, the opposite conclusion was reached. Anthony Leslie, a Scot, wrote that 'never having my self heard the least whisper that there were any disloyalty amongst them', he took it upon himself to further investigate their loyalty. The Catholic priest of Perth, John MacDonald, told him 'that it was his firm belief that it was quite the reverse and they were loyal to a man' and when the local Catholics were informed of this distrust 'they were quite indignant that they should have been so cruelly slandered'.[501] However, the Catholics of Perth were predominantly of Scottish origin. The Scottish Catholics of Glengarry had proven their loyalty a number of times and did so again during the rebellions as they acted as overzealous volunteer militias that suppressed the Lower Canadian Rebellion.[502]

The Catholic population of Lanark county were unwilling to let rumours of their disloyalty persist and responded with a declaration of loyalty:

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[499] 'James Smith to the Editor of the Bytown Gazette', Bytown, 21 June 1836 in *Hamnett Pinhey Hill Collection*, MG24-I9, pp. 830-833.

[500] 'George Phillpotts to Sir John Colborne', Cornwall, 20 November 1837 in C. Read and R. J. Stagg (eds.), *The Rebellion of 1837 in Upper Canada: A Collection of Documents* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1985), p. 254.

[501] 'Anthony Leslie to John Joseph', Perth, 22 December 1837 in Read and Stagg (eds.), *The Rebellion of 1837 in Upper Canada*, pp. 263-4.

[502] M. Vance, *Imperial Immigrants: Scottish Settlers in the Upper Ottawa Valley, 1815-1840* (Toronto: Dundurn Press Ltd, 2012), p. 54.

> 'we love and venerate our Young Queen and Her Government; and that we are ready to join with her other Loyal Subjects to put down any Rebellious attempts that may be made to sever the connexion of this Colony from Great Britain and Ireland'.[503]

These Catholics were primarily of Irish origin, having first arrived in the region with the Peter Robinson immigration of 1825. Unlike in nearby Glengarry County, the Scots of the Ottawa Valley were Protestants. They presented a united front in religion against their Irish opponents. Nonetheless, these Scots were of a very different type to the prosperous merchants of Montreal. They were highlanders who continued to speak Gaelic and live much as they had back in Scotland.[504]

A public meeting was held at New Edinburgh, in Gloucester Township, for the purpose of responding to the rebellions to take 'into consideration how we can best render the good and loyal Constitutionalists of Lower Canada effective assistance if required, and to express our decided opposition to that rebellious spirit which prevails among that portion of the French-Canadians particularly designated as the *Papineau Faction*'. Here the mass of the French-Canadians were separated from that smaller and more dangerous unit: the rebels who had been 'duped' by Papineau, and were now 'traversing the country in *bands*, menacing the English population who reside among them, and threatening them with the destruction of property and loss of lives, unless they throw up the commissions they hold of their lawful Sovereign, and swear allegiance to *Papineau*.'[505]

Volunteer militias were organised to fight the rebels throughout the Ottawa Valley. In Bytown, the magistrates petitioned to create a 2nd Battalion of the Militia for the County of Carleton.[506] In Perth, one could find the Lanark Militia, 'one of the most Effective Corps in the Province'.[507] Further up the Ottawa in Renfrew County Archibald McNab offered the military service of his community for the purpose of suppressing the rebellions. On the 20th November he wrote that 'a number of my countrymen have called upon me, for they hope it will not be considered an intrusion in me, to assure you their War Pipe can still sound "The Pronach a' cach" – (the charge to battle). The Ottawa men are desirous to march, if necessary ... I beg leave to add that many respectable individuals, both Scotch and Irish, are equally ready to march from this quarter to support the honor of their country if need be.'[508] The Scottish and Irish populations were then equally loyal. This phrase is notable in suggesting that the rebellions were not just a battle about loyalty to the crown, but about defending their new homeland in the Canadas. The phrase is ambiguous enough for 'country' to mean either Great Britain or Canada, but it is not used in the more narrow sense of Scotland, Ireland and England, as the term often was in earlier years.

They demonstrated their solidarity with the people of Lower Canada, too. In Hull a subscription of $125 was raised to support those who had suffered from the rebellions of 1838 in Lacolle and Odelltown. They had suffered much during the rebellions, 'in constant dread of having their dwellings burned & their helpless children butchered by their cruel &

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[503] 'The Catholics' Declaration of Loyalty', in Read and Stagg (eds.), *The Rebellion of 1837 in Upper Canada*, p. 265.
[504] Lockwood, *Beckwith*, p. 29.
[505] *Bytown Gazette*, 29 November 1837.
[506] 'Various Magistrates of Bytown to Sir F. B. Head', Bytown, December 2, 1837 in Read and Stagg (eds.), *The Rebellion of 1837 in Upper Canada*, pp. 261-2.
[507] 'Col. Alexander McMillan to Col. Nathaniel Coffin', Perth, 10 November 1837 in ibid., p. 262.
[508] 'The Laird of MacNab Offers Support', Kingston *Chronicle & Gazette*, 27 December 1837 in ibid., pp. 260-1.

inhuman neighbours'.[509] As such, it was the duty of their fellow subjects in the Ottawa Valley to assist them in whatever way they could. The conservative nature of the region was emphasised by the loyal address sent to Sir Francis Bond Head on his resignation.[510]

The first reaction to the news of the Lower Canadian rebellion for many Bytonians was one of disbelief as best represented by the *Bytown Gazette*. Not just did the French-Canadians have no 'real grievances' but the *habitants* were seen as a peaceful and contented people. The same stereotypes of the *habitant* as a docile and uneducated farmer that were common in Montreal existed in Bytown. The *Gazette* wrote that 'some of the papers in Lower Canada, and a few of those of the Upper wishing that it might be so, are busied circulating stories of a menaced insurrection among the French-Canadians ... *we do not believe one word of them*.'[511] The French-Canadian had become 'honest' *Jean Baptiste*, someone who 'however much their ignorance may expose them to be misled by designing men ... is not so gross as to induce them to shed their blood, without tracing the cause in which they are embarked, and a very substantial reason for their facing an hostile foe'. The French-Canadians were 'a quiet industrious peasantry', and there were only two things that could rouse them to arms – 'to protect rights of which they are deprived, or to repel aggressions by which their conditions would be changed for the worse'.[512] In the minds of the people of the Ottawa Valley, neither of these conditions were fulfilled.

As well as the meekness of the French-Canadian character, rebellion seemed an impossibility because 'these agitators have not the means of revolting'. They were ill-trained and lacking the arms necessary to defeat the British government. They were not suited to leadership – they 'always give the decided preference to being led by British officers or those of British extraction.'[513] Surrounded by an ocean of loyalty, with discontent limited to a small vicinity around Montreal, surely Jean Baptiste would see that his interests lied with the English-speaking population. When the people of Carleton and Lanark counties looked across the border to Lower Canada, they saw only the tranquil population of the Ottawa Valley.

Their inability to win against the British government was not due to 'a want of courage' but to a lack of resources. Even if real grievances did exist, surely the French population of Lower Canada would not resort to rebellion, because they could not sincerely believe in its success. Indeed, when in combination with the British and adequately supplied, *Jean Baptiste* could be part of a formidable military force: 'when called upon to assist in repelling foreign invasion, their conduct in some instances where they met the raw undisciplined Yankee in hostile combat, and where they were supported by British prowess on which they could depend; and where they had an opportunity of paralising every nerve of their opponents by the Indian war whoop, the Canadians behaved well'.[514] The author painted a picture of a Canada encompassing every ethnicity during the War of 1812, with British, French and Indian working together to resist the American invaders. Though this might be perceived as an ideal of an inclusive identity, in which people of all races and languages could be tolerated, it is here used more to provide a contrast with the present day, where the French had undermined this alliance to go their own way.

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[509] 'John Mills to James F. Taylor', Montreal, 26 February 1839 in *LAC, Hamnett Pinhey Hill Collection*, MG 24-I9: 4798-800.
[510] *Bytown Gazette*, 21 February 1838.
[511] *Bytown Gazette*, 25 October 1837.
[512] Ibid.
[513] Ibid.
[514] Ibid.

The French-Canadian was not vilified in the same manner as in Montreal. The intimidation and atrocities by rebel forces was only lightly remarked upon, and then understood as the actions of a few individuals. The *Gazette* describes 'a vagabond of the name of Cote, assisted by a gang of miscreants, carrying on a system of terrorism among the loyal and peaceable inhabitants about St. Johns and Chambly'.[515] This statement appears to place the violence in St. Johns in the context of the Shiners' War. Social disorder and violence was conducted by lawless gangs rather than by a French-Canadian peasantry intent on the destruction of the British race.

The events of 1837 and 1838 also brought forward the issue of the union of the provinces with renewed vigour. Now, they expressed their views in strong terms and described the benefits it would bring in a language of assimilation. The Protestant elite of the region were especially motivated in their campaign for union. The timber merchants, in particular, would benefit from union. Improvements on the Ottawa River were already underway, but a series of rapids, waterfalls and other obstacles made transporting timber from further upstream the Ottawa challenging. Only a substantial investment from the provincial government could strengthen the industry. Neither the Upper nor Lower Canadian governments seemed particularly willing to do so. The Patriotes' control of the House of Assembly of Lower Canada prevented investment in any infrastructure in Lower Canada while the Upper Canadian government was bankrupt and far more willing to spend its resources on the more populated areas along the Lake Ontario and Lake Erie shores. Union would solve these issues by consolidating the provincial finances and emphasising the importance of the Ottawa region to the provincial economy as a whole. James Johnston, in an address to the freeholders of Carleton County, made clear the neglect they had experienced.[516] Therefore, in the Ottawa Valley the political effects of neutralising the French influence were far from the most important points in favour of union.

Nonetheless, they provided a powerful rhetoric to influence those outside the region. An article in the *Bytown Gazette* bemoaned the existence of 'the "baneful domination" of a French faction' in Lower Canada and viewed union as a necessary corrective to this situation. Others had opposed it because of the strength of the reformers in Upper Canada, who were expected to ally themselves with Papineau's faction. The 1836 election, however, had shown that Upper Canada 'in the selection of her members, has vindicated her claim to be called *A British Colony*'. Union would 'produce a majority in the Legislature, which would effectually keep down all discontented grievance mongers, and destructive planners'.[517]

Union of the Provinces, though by far the most popular constitutional change proposed, was not the only one to receive an audience. The idea of annexing the island of Montreal to Upper Canada was popular, but one writer to the *Bytown Gazette* proposed an unusual alternative: 'it might perhaps be expedient to suggest to His Majesty's Ministers, the propriety of annexing ... the Districts of the Ottawa to the Lower Province. There is nothing humiliating in it, nothing inimical to our interests; conservatism in the Lower Province would be strengthened by upwards of thirty thousand Britons'.[518] The limits of animosity to the French population were demonstrated here – an English-speaking, conservative Bytonian here argued for the integration of his region into a French-speaking province. It was more important that the Ottawa Valley region be integrated into a region in which its interests

[515] Ibid., 15 November 1837.
[516] 'James Johnston to the Freeholders of Carleton', March 1840 in Reid (ed.), *The Upper Ottawa Valley to 1855*, p. 268.
[517] *Bytown Gazette*, 28 July 1836.
[518] Ibid., 16 March 1837.

would be respected and acted upon, than left to fend for itself, forgotten by the Upper Canadian legislature.

The 1837-8 rebellions had an unusually limited impact in the Ottawa Valley region. They provided an opportunity for the local population to express their loyalty but in an unchallenging manner. The members of the region engaged in the discourse of loyalty while needing to take on few risks – they happily joined the volunteer militias and sent declarations of loyalty to the lieutenant governor, aware that their remote location meant that there was little chance they would be called into action. Catholic or Protestant, Irish or Scottish, they joined equally in these loyalist endeavours. Rebellion was universally condemned. Reform sentiment had been weak even before the rebellions. In the context of the Shiners' War, where French-Canadians were as often the victims of violence as Irish Catholics, when the rebellions occurred, they were not interpreted in a framework of French domination. As with the Upper Canadian rebellions, the Lower Canada rebellions of 1837 were viewed as the work of a disaffected minority, and not a commentary on the ethnicity of the individuals involved. The French population still represented 'Other', but this connotation lacked the bitterness and immediacy of experience that could be seen in Montreal.

Life continued in the Ottawa Valley much as it had before. The timber trade and its associated upheavals and altercations continued to be of prime importance for the community. A Protestant elite continued to exert its authority and influence in Bytown. The 'Carleton Gentry' reached the epitome of its power as it used the issues of loyalty raised by the rebellion to assume leadership over the community. Yet hints about the future development of identity were present. Irish Catholics had unquestionably demonstrated their loyalty. There could be no doubt in the future that in a contest against the French-Canadians the Irish would remain on the side of their fellow English-speakers. Whatever else Irish Catholics might be – drunken, disorderly, violent – they were a loyal part of the population. This was not yet enough for them to be fully incorporated into the British community of the region. The Protestant-Catholic divide continued to rage. But the influx of an even greater number of Irishmen to the Ottawa Valley over the coming decade would force this English elite into a more accommodating position. Eventually sheer numbers would overwhelm them. But in 1837, Irish Catholics, if not quite 'other', still differed from their Protestant neighbours. Ethnic and political divisions did not fall along provincial lines but along local ones. Party politics was almost non-existent within the region. In such a situation, no effective mechanism existed for creating a unified Anglo-Canadian consciousness. The constitutional division of the Canadas remained paramount. While the division between the Upper and Lower Province remained, Bytown remained its own parochial community. Union of the Provinces after 1841 would allow the Ottawa Valley to become fully integrated into the political, economic and social life of the Canadas in a way it had never before managed.

3.3 The 1837 Rebellion in the London District: Charles Duncombe and American Disloyalty

The London District was one of the few areas to experience open rebellion in 1837 as political tensions between Reformers and Tories exploded into violent conflict. A series of township meetings culminated in the raising of nearly three hundred men in rebellion in the village of Scotland. Encouraged by misleading rumours of William Lyon Mackenzie's success in Toronto, Charles Duncombe and Eliakim Malcolm gathered an army from December 7th to 12th before they marched on Brantford. In response, Allan MacNab raised a large loyalist volunteer force which was able to disperse the rebel force without the firing of a single shot. The disturbances for the southwestern peninsula did not end with the defeat of Duncombe's rebels. Throughout the next year, the region suffered from a series of invasions from the United States known as the Patriot War. American militias backed by exiled Upper Canadian rebels launched attacks into Upper Canada in Windsor, Niagara, and Prescott. Many loyalists of the London District found themselves involved in these battles. Throughout 1838 there was a constant fear of another uprising, encouraged by exaggerated claims of rebel strength and organisation, claims that loyalists were all too willing to believe.[519]

Unfortunately, little has changed in our understanding of the period since Allan Greer lamented the state of existing historiography in 1995.[520] Studies have continued to focus upon narrow and specialized research.[521] While these have provided valuable insights into the rebellions, larger studies that attempt to explain the causes of the rebellions and its effects on Canadian society remain absent. The Duncombe Rebellion has remained largely unstudied since Colin Read's valuable survey in 1982. The only alternative detailed studies were conducted by Fred Landon nearly half a century earlier. Landon recognised the extent of discontent in the London district but focussed his attention on the aftermath of the rebellions rather than its causes.[522] While he provided a detailed breakdown of the participants and of the events of those years, his final analysis oversimplifies the events by presenting the rebellion as a criminal conspiracy by Mackenzie and Duncombe, who seduced a population with no real grievances into rebellion.[523] We are still lacking an in-depth analysis of the causes of the rebellion in the region or an understanding of its consequences in the following years. This chapter attempts to provide a new analysis of the rebellions by highlighting the crucial role that identity played in determining allegiance over the period.

The experience of rebellion and invasion likely had a significant impact on attitudes towards both the United States itself and American-born inhabitants of Upper Canada. The Patriot War challenged preconceptions of their southern neighbour as a peaceful and benevolent

[519] Detailed accounts of the Duncombe Rebellion can be found in F. Landon, 'The Duncombe Uprising of 1837 and Some of its Consequences', *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* XXV (1931): 83-98 and C. Read, *The Rising in Western Upper Canada 1837-38*

[520] A. Greer, '1837-38: Rebellion Reconsidered'.

[521] See D. Carter-Edwards, 'Promoting a "unity of feeling": the Rebellions of 1837/1838 and the Peterborough region', *Ontario History* 101:2 (2009): 165-187; T. Dunning, 'The Canadian Rebellions of 1837 and 1838 as a Borderland War: A Retrospective", *Ontario History* 101:2 (2009): 129-141; J. Carter, ' "One Way Ticket to a Penal Colony": North American Political Prisoners in Van Diemen's Land', *Ontario History* 101:2 (2009): 188-221.

[522] See F. Landon, *Western Ontario and the American Frontier* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1941); and F. Landon, 'London and its Vicinity, 1837-38', *Ontario History* 34 (1927): 410-438.

[523] Read, *The Rising in Western Upper Canada*, pp. 205-210.

country. One important issue to consider is how far involvement in the various militias raised to suppress rebels and defend Upper Canada from Patriot invaders influenced the developing Upper Canadian psyche. It must also be explored to what extent recent British immigrants equated 'American' with 'rebel'. The extent to which the rebellions were a competition between a complex array of three different identities, rather than an ideological conflict or criminal plot by a disaffected minority must be further explored. The role of the rebellions as a catalyst to the development of loyal Anglo-Canadian identity by 'othering' Americans, both internal and external, as well as through the shared experience of defending Upper Canada through the participation in first province-wide political movements and then in the volunteer militias, remains a question to be answered. Finally, it must be considered not just what the role of minority populations in the rebellions was, but how their actions influenced the attitudes their white counterparts held of them.

An atmosphere of intense and bitter political conflict characterised the region, as noted by Adam Hope: 'In politics we have two classes of believers; both thorough bigots & perfectly intolerant in their views … In St. Thomas, politics operates like the Upas tree; - poisons everything around.'[524] Hope was a Scottish-born immigrant, a Unitarian with liberal reform principles who arrived in Upper Canada in 1834 and worked in Hamilton before moving to the London district in 1837.[525] Hope was not one of the leading reformers of Upper Canada, at least partly due to his recent arrival in the province, but his letters make clear that his sympathies lay strongly with them. Hope would have been a prime candidate to be recruited into Mackenzie's and Duncombe's rebellion – his politics were largely similar to theirs; he came from a marginal Dissenting religion and objected to attempts at Anglican establishment; and he held a great reverence for American republicanism, only objecting to the institution of slavery.[526] The question, then, is why such an individual would not only have remained loyal but actively fought in the Upper Canadian militia and so vehemently opposed rebellion. It is likely that Hope's experience can be used as a window onto the experiences of recent British immigrants more generally. The London District, like Upper Canada generally, received an upsurge of immigration during the 1830s. While Hope was just one of many of these immigrants, he can be seen as at least partially representative of their experiences.

Most of the rebels were farmers from rural townships, but so too was a majority of the population – and many who remained loyal and fought in the loyal militias came from these same areas.[527] The people of the London District had to suffer their own local 'family compact', comprised of local individuals of wealth and power. This compact included Thomas Talbot, who owned much of the land along the Lake Erie shoreline, Mahlon Burwell, a perennial Tory candidate at elections and surveyor, John Bostwick, another surveyor and landowner, John Harris, a half-pay officer and treasurer of the District, and Jean-Baptiste Askin, a Metis landowner holding a variety of offices. They monopolised the distribution of patronage, holding between them all the offices of importance.[528]

Their predominance was not uncontested. During the 1830s a significant reform movement had emerged. They described themselves as 'liberals' and followed Mackenzie's lead, contesting the clergy reserves, the Family Compact and its distribution of patronage and demanded the introduction of responsible government. They were led by their parliamentary

[524] 'Adam Hope to his father, Lake Ontario, 3rd September 1837' in Adam Crerar (ed.), *Letters of Adam Hope 1834-1845* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 2007), pp. 216-7.
[525] A. Crerar, 'Introduction' in Crerar (ed.), *Letters of Adam Hope*, pp. xi, xxxviii.
[526] Ibid., p. xxxviii.
[527] Colin Read, *The Rising in Western Upper Canada*, p. 12.
[528] C. Read, 'The London District Oligarchy'.

representatives Charles Duncombe, John Rolph and Eliakim Malcolm, but still presented a heterogeneous picture. The reform movement in Upper Canada can be seen partly as a transatlantic movement – they consciously looked to the British example for inspiration.[529] Following the success of the 1832 reform act in Britain, they adopted a number of its tactics – most notably, the use of political unions. In October 1836 the Toronto Political Union was created, followed by the creation of a series of 'vigilance committees' throughout Upper Canada, including one in the London District. They were radicalised by a series of events from 1836 onwards – first John Colborne's endowment of the forty-four rectories, then the intransigence of the British government in its reaction to Duncombe's petition, and finally by the actions of Sir Francis Bond Head during the 1836 general election.[530]

The news from Toronto was followed closely during the 1830s. The reform movement that had begun in Toronto under Mackenzie was easily spread to the London area. Mackenzie's newspapers, first *The Colonial Advocate* and then the *Toronto Constitution*, had a wide readership here, as demonstrated in an earlier chapter, while the district's reform representatives in the House of Assembly, John Rolph and Charles Duncombe, assumed positions of leadership in the reform party.[531] Rolph was well known as a leading orator in the assembly and had acquired the respect of Mackenzie. His participation in the rebellion, however, was reluctant and he had conflicts with Mackenzie over the use of force.[532] Duncombe led the deputation to present a petition of the reformers' grievances to Great Britain in the summer of 1836. The London District's reformers were therefore closely connected by a series of personal networks to the provincial capital.

By the late 1830s the district had begun to develop an influential regional press with widespread circulation. London had two newspapers in 1837, the *Gazette* and the *Times*, both with a conservative political slant, while St. Thomas had two of its own, the *Liberal*, a reform newspaper edited by John Talbot, and the *Journal*, a conservative paper. Political debates were understood by the public through the lens of the press. The *Liberal* had over 600 subscribers by November 1832, a remarkable achievement for a village with a population of little more than 900 in 1837.[533] The paper served the whole district as the only reform newspaper published west of Toronto during this period. Begun by Americans and for Americans, its views were radical.

This was a rebellion of British against Americans and of old settlers against new. The primary determinant of disloyalty was place of birth. The majority of those who took up arms against the government were born in North America. Some were descendants of loyalists; others were more recent American immigrants. Colin Read has discovered that of the 197 rebels involved in the Duncombe revolt, 75.5 % were American or Upper Canadian-born. Just 28 were born in England or Ireland. Similarly, a large majority of those who assisted the rebels were of North American origin, accounting for 84.4%.[534] It is hard to maintain that the rebellions in the London District were only an ideological conflict. Contemporaries were well

[529] B. Palmer, 'Popular Radicalism and the Theatrics of Rebellion: The Hybrid Discourse of Dissent in Upper Canada in the 1830s' in N. Christie (ed.), *Transatlantic Subjects: Ideas, Institutions, and Social Experience in Post-Revolutionary North America* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008), p. 420.
[530] For a detailed account of the events leading up to rebellion, see A. Dunham, *Political Unrest in Upper Canada, 1815-1836* (London: Longman, Greens & Co., 1927).
[531] Landon, 'The Duncombe Uprising of 1837', p. 84.
[532] J. Muggeridge, 'John Rolph – A Reluctant Rebel', *Ontario History* 51:4 (1959), pp. 226-7.
[533] Colin Read, *The Rising in Western Upper Canada*, p. 51. For the population of St. Thomas, see 'Adam Hope to his Father, Lake Ontario, 3 September 1837' in A. Crerar (ed.), *Letters of Adam Hope*, p. 215.
[534] Read, *The Rising in Western Upper Canada*, pp. 178-9.

aware of this division: 'the settlers are chiefly from the United States & native Canadians; - there is an almost total absence of European population. It is this, which has proved the curse of this part of the country … Hence they became the dupes of such a worthless traitor as Dr. Chas. Duncombe'.[535] The North American population of the London District seems to have had a distinct culture from that of more recent British immigrants. They read the same newspapers, associated with the same people, and displayed a striking ignorance of British affairs. The London District was unique in Upper Canada for its high density of American settlers who were not of loyalist origin. Much like the French Patriotes of Lower Canada, the American population of the London district were perceived as 'a base anti-British faction'.[536] The reform movement, with its many legitimate grievances and just cause, had been usurped by a republican, American leadership that had lost sight of the true value of the British constitution.

The reform movement, even in this region, however, was not just an American phenomenon. The Scottish Highlanders, in particular, had been prominent in the reform movement in the 1830s.[537] They had drawn the opprobrium of prominent Tory loyalists in the mid-1830s. The decision to take up arms against the government, however, was a distinctly American phenomenon. This should not necessarily imply a fundamental cultural difference between Americans and British immigrants. Fred Landon argued that American immigrants brought with them 'principles of democracy and the idea of religious liberty'.[538] While this may be true, so did many British immigrants, not least the Scottish Reformers. The North American population shared not just common networks of interest and personal affiliation, but also represented the longest settled part of the population. British immigrants tended to be newcomers, more optimistic about their chances of success in the new world, bringing ideologies, both radical and conservative, formed in the British Isles to Canada. The ties to the mother country, and therefore the duties of their allegiance, appear much stronger for those who had been born there than for American-born settlers who held only an abstracted conception of loyalty.

This distinction between loyal British immigrants and disloyal Americans was made clear in the London Gazette: 'The Scotch are not Revolutionists; they spurned the imputation and staid at their homes ... if the Westminster Radicals endeavour to hold their revolutionary meeting in Lobo, they will return to their own homes with sore heads and drooping spirits. Scotchmen glory in the name of reformers; but when an effort is made to impress upon the world a belief, that the Scotchmen of Lobo are actuated by a spirit of rebellion, it will raise their ire to such a degree that they will punish the authors of the slanderous imputation.'[539] The Scots were *loyal* reformers – however great their grievances may be, they would not take up arms against the government. Not all conservative commentators were so sure of Scottish loyalty. Thomas Talbot had attempted to exclude Highlanders from his settlement.[540] An equation between 'disloyalty' and 'Yankee' was created in the minds of many British loyalists as local militia commanders in Oxford, Middlesex and Norfolk counties repeatedly

[535] 'Adam Hope to his Father, St. Thomas, 24 December 1837' in Crerar, (ed.), *Letters of Adam Hope*, p. 246.
[536] Ibid., p. 250.
[537] Landon, *Western Ontario and the American Frontier*, p. 178.
[538] Ibid., p. 100.
[539] *London Gazette* 18 November 1837.
[540] 'John Elmsley to Thomas Talbot, Clover Hill, 24 May 1833' in Coyne (ed.), *The Talbot Papers*, p.154

complained of the difficulty of finding 'good' loyal men, surrounded as they were by Yankee traitors.[541]

Many, though, had more mercenary reasons for rebellion. Promises of land and wealth were alluring. One rebel, Charles Travers, received 'a circular stating that each man was to have 200 acres of Land and 12 dollars a month' – a settlement far more generous than what the provincial government provided to settlers at this time.[542] Participants in Duncombe's rebellion were also motivated by a misguided belief in the strength of their cause. They believed that in their own district those willing to rebel would provide substantial numbers. According to John Trunk, Duncombe had stated that 'Mackenzie had possession of Toronto and had 7,000 men and Dr. Duncombe had started from Oakland with 1500'.[543] These were large exaggerations, with the total number of rebels in the London District not exceeding three hundred.

The most prominent loyalists of the region were the Irish Protestants. Unlike the Scottish Reformers, most had been active supporters of the Tory party in the years leading up to the rebellions. They had brought with them from Ireland the Orange Order and with it the use of violent intimidation to spread conservative views. They proved themselves to be ultra-loyal during the rebellions. They attended constitutionalist township meetings and tried to suppress reform meetings. Attitudes towards the Orangemen were mixed, as Hope demonstrated: 'Orangemen I find may be very useful at an hour of emergency but after that the sooner they lay down their arms the better. They had a Drum & a fife to accompany them in their march & it was nothing but "Protestant Boys" & "croppies lie down" all the time so that the poor Catholics were sadly annoyed here.'[544] They would help prevent rebellion, but at the cost of anti-Catholic discrimination. They continued to perform their homeland identity in Upper Canada, much to the chagrin of other immigrants.

The rebellions to some extent changed the ethnic make-up of the region. There appears to have been an exodus of Americans to the United States in the wake of suspicion and harsh treatment at the hands of the provincial authorities.[545] Contemporaries noted this phenomenon too: 'Great talk & some move abt. the village today respecting Emigration to the west. From what I can learn those leaving Canada are chiefly young men who were active on the side of the Rebels.'[546] For the conservatives of the region, the rebellions had served to purge the disloyal from the community. However valuable immigration was, it was far more important that the members of Upper Canada society were of a loyal disposition. The exodus of Americans from the region was viewed by the authorities as a positive development – the disloyal Americans had proven themselves treacherous twice now – first during the War of 1812 when many had defected, and now again with rebellion.[547]

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[541] 'William Holcroft to Richard Bullock, Ingersoll, 6 July 1838' quoted in Read, *The Rising in Western Upper Canada*, p. 142.
[542] 'Records relating to the treason hearings by the magistrates of the London District, 1837-1838', *LAC RG5-B36* Vol. 1, p. 35.'
[543] Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 93.
[544] 'Adam Hope to his Father, Saint Thomas, 22 July 1838' in Crerar (ed.), *Letters of Adam Hope*, p. 295.
[545] J. Christopher Dudar, 'Reconstructing Population History from Past Peoples Using Ancient DNA and Historic Records Analysis: The Upper Canadian Pioneers and Land Resources', (Ph.D. Diss., McMaster University, 1998) p. 123.
[546] 'Adam Hope to his Father, St. Thomas, 27 May 1838' in Crerar (ed.), *Letters of Adam Hope*, p. 288.
[547] J. Bannister, 'Canada as Counter-Revolution: The Loyalist Order Framework in Canadian History, 1750-1840' in J-F. Constant and M. Ducharme (eds.), *Liberalism and Hegemony: Debating the Canadian Liberal Revolution* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2009), p. 121.

The primary method of mobilisation during the period of the rebellions was the use of township meetings. Read noted that 'Most historians of the period believe that the Reformers held about 200 meetings in Upper Canada in the late summer and fall of 1837. If that is correct, (which is certainly doubtful) then certainly the Liberals of the western peninsula were inactive'.[548] While he is probably correct that this number was an exaggeration, the people of the London District do not seem to be as lax in calling meetings as he suggested. Reform meetings were held at Sparta on the 9th September, at Bayham on the 23rd September and at Lobo in mid-November. Conservatives meanwhile held meetings at Westminster on the 6th October and at London on the 21st October. This suggests a remarkable level of public participation in provincial politics. The issues debated at these meetings were the same as those elsewhere in Upper Canada – clergy reserves, responsible government and the distribution of patronage. Those closer to the end of the year addressed the issues of republicanism and violent rebellion (or how to prevent it, in the case of the conservative meetings).

The partisan newspaper reports gave widely varying estimates of the numbers attending such meetings. The Middlesex meeting held in London was described as having only 65 or 70 participants by Charles Latimer, of whom several 'were persons who seeing a wagon in the middle of the Square or Market place with some persons round it might have supposed that some Sheriff's Sale or auction was going on', and if it was not market day, their numbers would have 'been reduced to 6 or 7'.[549] The Westminster Reform meeting of 6th October 1837 was described by the *Toronto Constitution* as having 1,000 men present.[550]

Many from the London District had involved themselves in fighting for the crown as well as against it. Some were compelled to do so when the militias were called up, others volunteered. The most prominent were Captain Andrew Drew and Rear-Admiral Henry Vansittart of Woodstock. Both were half-pay officers who had settled in Oxford County in the 1830s. In Oxford County, three militia regiments were created while the Woodstock Volunteers were raised by Captain Riddell.[551] Participation in the militia during 1837 and 1838 provided the opportunity for another iteration of the militia myth that had first emerged in reference to the War of 1812. The suppression of the rebellions and the subsequent defence against Patriot invasions had been conducted almost entirely by militias and loyalist volunteer units.

Even reformers such as Adam Hope joined the militia to defend Upper Canada: 'the St. Thomas volunteers were called out into active service ... About 50 or 60 political fanatics, chiefly young men from this township, had gone off in a body to join Duncombe, armed with rifles & tomahawks; this had a corresponding influence upon the loyal disposed inhabitants of St. Thomas who simultaneously resolved to arm themselves & follow the Rebels ... On the forenoon the of the 13th the Volunteers amtg to 50 & the Militia to about as many left St. Thomas ... I ... found myself in the ranks of the Volunteers with a good Yankee rifle on my shoulder'.[552] Here a strongly reformist Scottish immigrant found himself taking up arms to suppress the rebellion. They joined together with militias from the rest of the province – they

[548] Read, *The Rising in Western Upper Canada*, p. 78.
[549] 'Charles Latimer to John Talbot, London, 22 October 1837' in Read and Stagg (eds.), *The Rebellion of 1837 in Upper Canada*, p. 91.
[550] 'The Westminster Reform Meeting, 6 October 1837' in Read and Stagg (eds.), *The Rebellion of 1837 in Upper Canada*, p. 83.
[551] P. MacQuarrie, *For God and Home: A History of the Oxford Rifles, 1798-1954* (Woodstock: Woodstock Museum, 1998), pp. 25, 28-30.
[552] 'Adam Hope to his Father, St. Thomas, 24 December 1837' in Crerar (ed.), *Letters of Adam Hope*, pp. 242-3.

met with the Simcoe Militia first and later the bulk of Allan McNab's forces drawn from the Toronto and Hamilton areas.[553]

Through the events of 1838 they travelled across Upper Canada. They fought from the Detroit River to the Niagara. Andrew Drew played a crucial role in the Caroline affair while the St. Thomas Volunteer Cavalry fought in the Battle of Pelee Island.[554] Mackenzie, after his initial flight to the United States, returned to Upper Canada with a small force of American sympathisers to Navy Island in the Niagara River where he declared the independent republic of Canada. The ship the *Caroline*, manned by an American crew, attempted to supply them with weapons and provisions. On December 29, 1837, an Upper Canadian militia force, led by Andrew Drew of Woodstock, followed the *Caroline* into American waters, seized the ship and burned it.[555] American outrage was incomprehensible to the people of Upper Canada, who viewed this as a legitimate defence against American invasion – after all, 'the boat was levying war upon the British Empire'. Andrew Drew and the Canadian Militia were held up as heroes: 'the enterprise was one of noble daring & genuine bravery'. Tensions between the United States and Canada (and hence Great Britain) only escalated through 1838. Many feared that war would soon be the result. They were not to worry, however, because Canada could defend itself: 'Our people are in a state of rapid military organisation. 40,000 ay! Forty thousand armed men will soon be ready to dispute every inch against foreign invaders from whatever quarter they may come. Moreover we belong to an Empire that does not permit its subjects to be injured "with impunity"'.[556] The first line of defence was seen as the Canadian militia by Adam Hope, and no doubt by many other Upper Canadians in the district. The belief that they could raise such a number demonstrated Hope's confidence in the loyalty of the remaining population and a unity of purpose motivating the people of Upper Canada. Of course, it is unlikely that this would be possible in a province with a population of just 397, 489.[557] Similarly, the attack of the Michigan patriots on Essex County worried Upper Canadians. The actions of the patriot army were reported by the local press noting that 800 people were enrolled.[558] The London District militias were heavily involved in military actions along the Detroit border, as described by Adam Hope.[559]

The dispersal of the rebels did not end the advance of Colonel Allan MacNab's loyal force. They continued to advance into the London District where they enacted a series of punitive measures against the local population. As Fred Landon has noted, 'the inhabitants were for the most part originally from the United States and this fact, together with their disinclination to participate in militia training, served to brand them as disloyal in the eyes of extreme patriots. Here was an opportunity to teach the Quakers a lesson in patriotism'.[560] Their pacifism was seen as a challenge to British loyalty. As a result a number of transgressions, including the seizure of guns, horses and food, were enacted by the militia against the

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[553] Read, *The Rising in Western Upper Canada*, p. 94.
[554] For a description of the role of the St. Thomas Volunteers in the battle, see Stewart, *The Ermatingers,* pp. 86-8.
[555] MacQuarrie, *For God and Home*, pp. 28-30.
[556] 'Adam Hope to his Father, St. Thomas, 14 January 1838' in Crerar (ed.), *Letters of Adam Hope*, pp. 256-7.
[557] Statistics Canada. *UC Table I - Population, Sexes, Ages, 1837 - Upper Canada* (table), 1837 - Census of Upper Canada (Population/Sexes/Ages) (database), Using E-STAT (distributor).
http://estat.statcan.gc.ca/cgi-win/cnsmcgi.exe?Lang=E&EST-Fi=EStat\English\SC_RR-eng.htm
(accessed: May 27, 2013)
[558] *London Gazette*, 26 May 1838.
[559] 'Adam Hope to his Father, St. Thomas, 14 January 1838' in Crerar (ed.), *Letters of Adam Hope*, pp. 258-9.
[560] F. Landon, 'The Duncombe Uprising of 1837', pp. 86-7.

pacifists of the region.[561] In practice, most Quakers were no more sympathetic towards the rebellion than their British loyalist counterparts. The rebellion significantly enhanced religious tensions. According to Thomas Green, an Anglican priest, Quakers and Baptists had been found amongst the rebel ranks, while he was pleased to state that the Wesleyan Methodists and Anglicans had all remained loyal.[562]. These religions were seen as dangerous to the state. This formed part of a discourse that aimed to protect the privileges of the Anglican Church. The religious division of the rebellions likely only reflected its American character. Very few of those born in North America were members of the Church of England, so it is hardly surprising that Baptists and American Methodists were involved. Nonetheless, fears of Americans were not completely unfounded. Despite using the rhetoric of loyalty, Moore Stevens stated that if he were to move to the United States he 'might probably become a subject in which case he could not deprive himself of the opportunity to take up arms against Gt. Britain as the United States should be at war with her.'[563]

The use of the militia in the summer of 1838 in Oxford and Norfolk counties was seen as the excessive use of force by some, such as John Treffry, who believed that nothing more was needed to maintain the peace than the actions of the magistrates with a few special constables.[564] They billeted themselves upon the local population and requisitioned food, arms and wagons as it suited them. Such measures were hardly likely to endear them to the population. Alvaro Ladd was one of those who suffered from the unfounded suspicions of loyalists in the district. As an American he came under suspicion of treason and was sentenced to hang, despite his non-participation in the rebellion. Ladd, a reformer, had attended the Delaware township meetings. He was later pardoned, but his poor health was aggravated by his time in jail, leading to his death soon after his release. According to his sister-in-law, Jane O'Brien 'he has been convicted by a packed and partial jury'.[565]

Nonetheless, most of those arrested were soon released and pardoned. Common to most rebels was a claim that they had been misled by their evil leaders. A petition from those imprisoned in the London jail stated: 'having borne arms through the artifices of designing men we have been led into error and consequently into crime although we have not either or any of us been guilty of Murder, arson, or Robbery nor had we any hand in distraining any Government or private property.'[566] They may have raised arms against the government, but their only crime was to be convinced by Duncombe that they should meet him at Oakland. Surrendering or fleeing before any battle had taken place they were hardly to blame. Unlike the Lower Canadian rebels, they had not inflicted their demands on the local population. It was not just those imprisoned who took such an attitude, either. J. B. Askin, one of the members of the local family compact, confirmed this view: 'amongst those committed a number will be found, to have been induced under most plausable, insidious, and false representations to take up arms.'[567]

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[561] Read, *The Rising in Western Upper Canada*, p. 143.

[562] 'Letter from Rev. Thomas Green, London, 19 February 1838' in Read and Stagg (eds.), *The Rebellion of 1837 in Upper Canada*, pp. 364-5.

[563] 'Records relating to the treason hearings by the magistrates of the London District, 1837-1838', *LAC RG5-B36* Vol. 1, p. 30.

[564] 'Treffry to Sir George Arthur, Otterville, 2 Aug 1838' in Read, *The Rising in Western Upper Canada*, p. 143.

[565] 'Jane O'Brien to Isabella Crichton, London, 31 May 1838' in Dennis O'Brien fonds, University of Western Ontario Archives, AFC 14/1.

[566] 'Petition of Various Prisoners' in Read and Stagg (ed.), *The Rebellion of 1837 in Upper Canada*, p. 370.

[567] 'J. B. Askin to John Joseph, London, 22 December 1837', in ibid., p. 343.

Rebels and loyalists held very different conceptions of their identity. It is possible to identify three strands of identity by 1837. The first was a rebel conception of nationalism, which sought a clean break with the United Kingdom, the creation of a republic of Canada and eventual annexation to the United States. Their identity was bound up with Canada as a homeland and Britain held no powerful emotional pull for them. The second identity was that of recent British immigrants, who tended to view themselves as part of a British diaspora. They looked back to Scotland, Ireland or England as their homeland and often maintained regular contact with family or friends in the British Isles. Upper Canada was only their 'adopted home' – their true homeland lay back in the British Isles. They rarely expressed a desire to return, and only a few viewed themselves as in some form of exile, but they followed the British news closely and saw themselves as Britons abroad. The last strand was more complicated. It encompassed both loyal North American-born subjects and some of the longer settled British immigrants and their descendants. This loyal patriotism was an incipient form of Anglo-Canadian identity. It was strongly anti-American and pro-British, but individuals in this strand viewed themselves as Upper Canadian first and British second. The two were, to these people, inextricably linked. This group was primarily the preserve of loyalist reformers – those unwilling to follow Mackenzie and Duncombe in their final steps towards rebellion.

No one was clearer in expressing the identity of rebel nationalism than William Lyon Mackenzie. He addressed an article to 'Canadians! Brother Colonists!', and accused his enemies as such: 'Ye False Canadians!' that 'may plunder and rob with impunity – your feet is on the people's necks, they are transformed into tame, crouching slaves, ready to be trampled on.'[568] Here Mackenzie displayed one of his many miscalculations. He believed that the population shared with him a common conception of who they were. An accusation of being 'false Canadians' was unlikely to have much impact on recent British immigrants, many of whom would have expected the term 'Canadian' to refer to French speakers.

These nationalists complained of the misuse of Upper Canada's natural resources. The United States presented a far better use of a comparable environment: 'No man who has seen the Canada and the United States can long be at a loss as to what causes the contrast between the two countries. The curse of Canada is an *unprincipled* aristocracy, whose pretensions to superiority above other settlers, would disgust a dog. Many of these *would-be* aristocrats came out from the old country under the title of *half-pay officers* ... and then getting possession of a few hundred acres of wild land, thought themselves Lords of Canada'.[569] It was this attempt to recreate the British aristocracy that most offended the long-settled. Robert Davis, the writer of this attack, later joined the rebellion, but unusually for a rebel, he had been born in Ireland and arrived in the London District in 1819. The newly arrived half-pay officers received 'every office of trust and profit' and acted as 'slaves and sycophants to the Governor'.[570] He demonstrated little nostalgia for the country he had left behind. Instead, Canada required a new political system that would leave the evils of the old world behind. The contrast between Upper Canada and the United States did not appear to be between British liberty and American republicanism, but between oligarchy and freedom.

Duncombe was more reluctant to engage in rebellion but his Canadian nationalist sentiment was no less striking:

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[568] *Toronto Constitution*, 12 July 1837.
[569] 'Robert Davis on Half Pay Officers and the "Political Priesthood' in Read and Stagg (eds.), *The Rebellion of 1837 in Upper Canada*, p. 36.
[570] Ibid.

> 'when we see this Province under the dynasty of a foreign Governor and an Orange Oligarchy, retrograding in one year as much as it had advanced in five, the only interest in our oppressors have in the Province being the plunder they can amass and carry away with them ... although we may suffer for a time, we shall assuredly in the end prevail; "A nation never can rebel", those only are rebels who resist the will of the people; from them (the people) emanates all legitimate constitutional government.'[571]

In Duncombe's mind, Great Britain, despite possessing the power to do so, had failed to act to limit the excesses of the provincial government. The crown was to be the servant of the people – their allegiance was only required to a monarch who acted in their interests. Ultimately, the people of Upper Canada needed to act in the interests of their province. Under the current system, a local oligarchy was enriched at the expense of Upper Canada, and this was enabled by the actions of a 'foreign' governor. It is noticeable here that the term 'foreign' is used to describe Sir Francis Bond Head, a British subject. Only someone born in North America could view the Lieutenant Governor as essentially alien. They were justified in their rebellion as a nation seeking self-determination and it was from them, the Canadian people, which all legitimate authority derived. Ducharme's concept of 'republican liberty' could not be better expressed than it was here by Charles Duncombe.[572] Such views from the leaders of the rebellion would suggest that nationalism, as much as arbitrary government, had forced the Upper Canadians into rebellion.

This North American identity was used to undermine the authority of the reform cause. Conservatives played up this identity in the hope of dissuading recent British immigrants from joining the reform cause. An incident at the 1836 elections was reported by the *London Gazette*. It described 'the burst of indignation manifested by a group of the Loyal Sons of the Emerald Isle, who, whilst playfully displaying their National Banner, had it wantonly torn from them by men whose political minds dictated a super abundance of loyalty in shouting Reform, and exultingly debasing England's Flag by plunging it in the mud, dragging it through the Streets and at length tearing it into shreds.'[573] Reformers had directly attacked the symbols of British identity. The complete victory of the conservatives in this election, usually attributed to the unconstitutional involvement of Sir Francis Bond Head, corruption and intimidation by Orangemen, could also be understood as a failure to exploit the identity of their constituents effectively. This election has often been described as the 'loyalty' election and here we can see why with good reason.[574] While rhetorical attacks upon Orangemen appealed to a wide audience engaging in violence attacks upon the symbols of the mother country – especially the English flag – was unacceptable. Supporting reformers in such circumstances was tantamount to a declaration of disloyalty. It was far safer to remain neutral than risk being named a traitor.

The second strand, a diasporic identity that regarded the inhabitants of Upper Canada as Britons (or Englishmen, Irishmen and Scotsmen) overseas, was clearly expressed by a conservative writer from Woodstock. The 'hardy sons of England, Ireland and Scotland' had claimed 'asylum in this beautiful part of their own Sovereign's dominions' and in the face of rebellion, they 'must rally round the bold standard of real liberty, the Union Flag'. They were part 'of a great and enlightened community – of a nation whose prowess in deeds of arms, whose spirit and intelligence in the pursuit of commerce, and whose superior legislative capacity has placed our country among the most eminent of nations ... The glory of our land,

[571] 'Charles Duncombe to Robert Davis, Burford, 24 October 1837' in ibid., pp. 88-9.
[572] Ducharme, *Le Concept de Liberté*, p. 5.
[573] *London Gazette*, 27 July 1836.
[574] Craig, *Upper Canada*, p. 237.

the boast of the law under which we live, is, that it is fair and open for the free current of the lawful exertions of every individual in his lawful calling.'[575] The 'nation' he described was that of Great Britain. Upper Canada represented just one part of this great country. They were to rally around the British flag and enjoy British liberties. The situation in Upper Canada was comparable to that of the mother country: 'An attempt has been made in these Provinces to upset the integrity of the Upper Houses of Parliament as was also attempted in England towards the House of Peers'.[576] Upper Canada resembled Great Britain as much as possible. The reformers represented a challenge to this, and should be resisted for that reason as much as any other. The symbols of identity he employed were those of Great Britain rather than those of Canada. The writer referred to the 'proud spirit of Nelson' as well as 'our lovely and youthful Queen'.[577]

This conception of identity was reinforced by the physical culture of Upper Canada. Adam Hope noted that 'not a log house you enter in the remotest parts of the backwoods of Canada but there you find the fruits of British industry have reached before you; - the cutlery of Sheffield is there; - the woollens of Yorkshire are there; - and the Cottons of Glasgow & Manchester are there also. In the depths of a Canadian forest … I saw myself surrounded by the manufacturing products of my native country, and a feeling of patriotic pride insensibly steals over the mind when we reflect upon the fact that this vast country is almost wholly dependent upon British labour for a supply of the very first articles of civilised life'.[578] The transition to life in the new world was made easier by the continuity of the convenient articles of modern life that appeared to be transferred straight from the old. With this evidence of dependence upon Britain, it became harder for British immigrants to contemplate separation. By the late 1830s, it was more possible than ever to stay connected with one's homeland. Adam Hope was able to maintain a regular correspondence with his father living in East Lothian in Scotland, while following the local Scottish news and receiving Scottish newspapers. Developments in transportation had made this possible: 'Now when the Old & New world are connected by the wonders of steam communication – Fenton Barns is only 14 days journey from St. Thomas!!'[579]

The third strand of identity was a form of loyal Canadianism. It brought together a patriotism that linked a love of the land of Canada with loyalty to British institutions and forms of government. For this group, Upper Canada was often contrasted favourably with the United States. A poem by a Toronto loyalist, John Smyth, was reprinted across the Canadas, first in the *Montreal Herald* and soon afterwards in the *London Gazette*. His description of Upper Canada was as sympathetic as any nationalist construction of the Canada First movement forty years later:

> 'How beautiful and charming is the land
> Of our Province of Upper Canada
> Both magnificent and transcendant grand
> She is the Queen of North America.
>
> Our sweet land is the gem and bright flower
> That which adorns the Northern Hemisphere
> She will rise in fame, eminence, and power

[575] 'To the Loyal Inhabitants of the County of Oxford – A Conservative, Woodstock, Upper Canada, 9 November 1837' in *London Gazette*, 18 November 1837.
[576] Ibid.
[577] Ibid.
[578] 'Adam Hope to his Father, St. Thomas, 30 July 1837' in Crerar (ed.), *Letters of Adam Hope*, p. 205.
[579] 'Adam Hope to his Father, St. Thomas, 27 May 1838' in Ibid., p. 289.

And other lands will her constantly fear.'[580]

Upper Canada had as much to be proud of as her more powerful neighbour to the south. It was an impressive country in its own right, adorned by physical beauty and valuable resources. Upper Canada had a destiny to dominate the continent as its primary power. The reference to 'other lands' meant the United States. It had one characteristic above all that distinguished it from its southern neighbour by liberty:

'Look at the proud and pretended freedom
Of the United States, in which they glory;
Of their liberty and boasted wisdom,
As though they were all plenty, peace & joy.

A land of tyranny and of misery,
How lamentable it is for us to say
There is a nation that's without mercy
The sufferings of the poor to allay
At the present time there are two millions
Of our fellow creatures in slavery
Which is contrary to the world's opinion,
Kept by those tyrants in their knavery.'

Upper Canada had been shown the way by her British parent nation, 'England the famed empress of the world'. Great Britain was portrayed as a crusader for abolitionism, prepared to go to war against all who failed to free their slaves.[581] Anti-slavery was a key component of the emerging Upper Canadian identity. Such a tolerant attitude was confirmed in an article by the *London Gazette*, which used the accusation of racism as a means of undermining the claims of the *St. Thomas Liberal*: 'It is no wonder to us that he wishes to class the respectable of this Town with the blacks of Wilberforce colony, whose characters he might envy'.[582] Race, then, for the writers of the *Gazette*, did not imply character. The black population of the district could be just as respectable as their white counterparts. The poem above expressed a loyal Canadian identity. Upper Canada was not presented as a part of the British nation but as a colony allied and birthed from Britain, but one with its own destiny and its own pride. Loyalty meant continued participation in the empire. It was in both Canada's and Great Britain's interests that the connection between the two remained strong. Crerar has noted that for many Upper Canadians, slavery 'made a mockery of the notion that the United States was a bastion of democracy and of the inalienable rights of the individual'.[583] In a letter to his brother, Adam Hope notes that he appreciated much of American democracy, but it suffered from 'Slavery, that moral stain on American Freedom', while by contrast 'the moment the Slave of the South touches the Shore of Canada that instant he is a freeman'.[584] Here, the defender of true liberty was not the United States, but Canada, whatever the claims of the former.

In many respects, the two loyal strands of identity displayed remarkable similarities. Both emphasised the liberty of their homeland, contrasted themselves with the United States and supported ideas of loyal reform. Allegiance to the Queen and the British government was a crucial component of both. Their primary difference was in the idea of a separate, individual

[580] 'Ode to the Province of Upper Canada', *London Gazette*, 23 October 1837.
[581] Ibid.
[582] *London Gazette*, 28 October 1837.
[583] A. Crerar, 'Introduction' in Crerar (ed.), *Letters of Adam Hope,* p. xlvi.
[584] 'Adam Hope to William Hope, Hamilton, Upper Canada, 1 November, 1837' in Crerar, *Letters of Adam Hope*, p. 161.

destiny for Upper Canada. Often expressed through reference to the natural environment and economic development, Americans and Upper Canadians in the province saw Canada as a child maturing on its way to independence – presenting a peaceful alternative to the route that the United States had taken, but the ultimate destination was to be the same. They remarked on the peculiar conditions of the country that were an improvement from Britain itself. Canada was 'a place of refuge for the distressed. Whether he be from Ireland, or the poorhouses of England, or even the oppressed coloured men of the south, or their masters with their constitutions broken down by a southern latitude, - all are alike welcome to the green fields, the pure rivers & the shores of the magnificent Lakes of Canada, - we are a people peculiarly blessed'.[585] Key elements of the Anglo-Canadian perspective were already in place by this time. Canada was an open and welcoming community, defined by its tolerance, as well as by the Great Lakes and major rivers. Whatever political conflicts they might experience, the country's trajectory was upwards: 'I believe our country is progressing in every thing that forms the elements of national greatness & time will in a short space witness our noble country rich in moral & intellectual worth'.[586] Over time, the two loyal brands of identity would merge as it became clearer that Anglo-Canadian identity did not imply the destruction of ties to the mother country or the complete subordination of ethnic identities to an overarching homogenising project.

One group, however, was not encompassed by any of these larger identities. These were the First Nations who had demonstrated their loyalty by fighting for the British Crown during the rebellions. Most continued to live on reserves or autonomous territories. They integrated little with the surrounding white settler population. While the anglophone Canadians were busy forging their identity, the First Nations were active in creating their own. They were already beginning to envisage themselves as a single 'Indian' community protected by the British Crown, as this statement by the chiefs of the Six Nations suggests: 'We earnestly pray that the Great Spirit may take him [the Prince of Wales] under His father's protection – making him the pride of the British Empire, and the Support and Comfort of his red children, the Indians of British North America.'[587] They did not reference groups such as 'Iroquois', 'Mohawk' or 'Algonquin', but simply referred to the 'Indians of British North America', wherever they may be. They were proud of Great Britain: 'Your children venerate the Great banner, under which they have always fought – the flag of England – and cherish affectionately the memory of your Royal Parent, who was always the Red Mans friend'.[588]

Since the end of the War of 1812, the First Nations had struggled to maintain their autonomy and influence. The rebellions provided an opportunity to prove their value to the British government. Even three years after the rebellion, their participation was still mentioned: 'On a recent occasion when your Royal Authority was menaced in the Province by revolt and invasion, your red children at the call of the Governor, Sir Francis Bond Head, assembled under their Chief Thakawrente and accompanied the Gallant Militia under the direction of Sir Allan Napier MacNab to the frontier, resolved to imitate the example of their forefathers, to live or die, under the flag they revere, and maintain their connection with that Great Country of which they have always felt proud to be considered a Small branch.'[589] They believed they had not fought under Allan MacNab but alongside him. They were not a militia to be called

[585] 'Adam Hope to his Father, Montreal, 9 September 1837' in ibid., p. 222.
[586] 'Adam Hope to his Father, St. Thomas, 28 September, 1837' in ibid., p. 224.
[587] 'Address from the Six Nations Indians to Queen Victoria on the Birth of the Prince of Wales, 1841-2', *Sir Allan N. MacNab Papers*, PAO F38/6570/9.
[588] Ibid.
[589] Ibid., F38/6570/10.

up whenever the provincial government wished, but volunteers who had acted out of their sense of loyalty.

First Nations peoples were simultaneously feared and viewed with contempt. On the one hand they were a group to be civilized and made British citizens by conversion to Christianity and education. An article by the *St. Thomas Liberal* highlighted this view:

> 'We are sorry to say that the greatest part of [the Indians] as they pass along the streets are in a state of beastly intoxication. It is much to be regretted that the benevolent designs of our Government, as well as the unremitting exertions of the Christian Missionaries to ameliorate the condition of this ill-fated race, are rendered nearly abortive, by the cupidity of a few individuals who boast of the advantages of civilized life'.[590]

For the *Liberal*, the First Nations were not yet ready to enjoy all the privileges of British subjects. This paragraph removed agency from the 'Indians'. Their alcoholism was due to the actions of selfish white merchants. They were an 'ill-fated race', not just a group that had suffered in the past but a race destined to disappear. With such a perspective, the imperative of the provincial government and local philanthropists was to save their souls by converting them to Christianity. Ultimately any real effort to integrate them into society was futile.

'Indians' were feared for their military prowess, and their 'savagery' was a common trope. Veritas used this trope to provide satirical commentary: 'The Editor of the Liberal was spit upon, "grossly abused, kicked, dragged and beaten", and his life was sought after by the bloodthirsty mob. We could not have tho't even Indians, Savages, capable of such bloodthirstiness, and brutality. I did voluntarily exclaim, with Mr. Talbot, "If we are ever doomed to fall by the hands of savages may the God of Heaven let us fall among the scalping knives of the wildest Indians that ever roamed through the forest, rather than into the hands of an Orange and Tory mob: mercy might be doled out by savage Indians … but mercy never entered into the thoughts of those incarnate demons"!!!'[591] The writer here ridiculed the idea that Orangemen and conservatives could possibly be as violent or brutal as the 'Indian'. The involvement of First Nations in the militia was therefore controversial. For some reformers, the threat of scalping was a decisive factor in remaining loyal: 'I think the Indians would be encouraged by the Government and I have had too much trouble raising my family to have them scalped.'[592] As well as the Six Nations, the First Nations of the London District and surrounding areas had played their role in the suppression of the rebellions: 'I rejoice to be able to bear testimony to their devoted Loyalty, the Munsees, Moravians and Chippewas to a man are ready and willing to take the field.'[593]

The experience of the Duncombe rebellion in 1837 and the subsequent invasions from the United States during the Patriot War in 1838 then had 'Othered' Americans, in two different forms: the first was the dangerous external enemy, the United States, which had provided refuge for rebel traitors and then acted as a base from which to launch attacks upon Upper Canada. Adam Hope described 'We Canadians', who had 'a general <u>feeling</u> all over the country that the American Authorities have acted towards us in bad faith, that they have encouraged the expedition on foot against us, both directly & indirectly, and that all their

[590] *St. Thomas Liberal*, 18 October 1832.
[591] 'Veritas to the Editor', *London Gazette*, 27 July 1836.
[592] 'Elisha Hall to Dr. Duncomb, Oxford, 6 December 1837' in *Upper Canada Sundries*, *LAC RG5 A1,* Vol. 180, p. 99025.
[593] 'J. B. Clench to S. P. Jarvis, Colborne on Thames, 18 December 1837' in C. Read and R. Stagg (eds.), *The Rebellion of 1837 in Upper Canada*, p.326.

professions were hollow & insincere.[594] Even those who may have had more sympathy with the United States before the rebellions had become immersed in this general culture of anti-Americanism. All of the worst fears about democracy, federalism and republicanism appeared to be confirmed by the events of 1838. The federal government had repeatedly condemned the actions of the Patriots, yet taken no action, and appeared to be able to take no action, to prevent their incursions into Upper Canada. This was mob rule at its worst – American democracy seemed to be nothing more than anarchy. State governors acted on their own initiative and American military arsenals raided with impunity due to the inability of the American government to control its citizens. Never were the people of Upper Canada more thankful for their British constitution.

The second was the internal enemy of Americans who had immigrated to Upper Canada and proven their disloyalty. The rebellions of 1837 were a conflict between an aggrieved, long-settled North American-born population and a recently arrived British-origin population. Earlier political divisions between Reform and Tory collapsed when the issue became one of loyalty and rebellion. Those born in England, Scotland or Ireland remained loyal, participated in the militia when called upon to do so, and began to view the Americans as their enemy. Many Americans, meanwhile, supported the rebellion, either directly by taking up arms and joining Duncombe's army, or indirectly, through the provision of supplies, the sheltering of rebels and aiding their escape after its failure. There were few Americans of loyalist origin in the London District to complicate the issue. Americans could be universally branded as disloyal with few repercussions. Draconian suppression of the rebellions encouraged many Americans to emigrate. Their place in the district was filled by eager loyal immigrants from the British Isles. Minorities, despite their loyal performance during the rebellions, remained outside the wider loyal British community.

The London District during the rebellions had experienced a tripartite conflict of identities. Mackenzie, Duncombe and their American followers in the London District had subscribed to an anti-British, republican identity, one willing to encompass Americans, British immigrants and French-speaking Lower Canadians. British-born reformers meanwhile recoiled from this abrasive nationalism and developed a hybrid identity. Increasingly supportive of their adopted country, they saw much potential in it, sometimes even believing in its superiority to the countries of their birth. But its strengths were derived from Britain – Upper Canada represented the exercise of British liberties and British forms of government in the new world. The connection was an essential part of their identity. French-Canadians were not so much a dangerous enemy as a people that needed to be enlightened and educated into British ways. The final identity that conflicted was that of conservative British immigrants who viewed themselves as part of a British diaspora. They were fundamentally British, battling in this rebellion against an American 'Other'. There could be no Canada without Britain. Ideas of independence were not just premature, as in the reformers case, but fundamentally abhorrent. For them, Papineau's rebellion in Lower Canada had confirmed their worst fears. The French were fundamentally anti-British. For most people of the district, however, the French occupied only a small part of their mental space. Concern with the threat of the United States was foremost in the minds of the people of Middlesex, Oxford and Norfolk counties in 1838.

[594] 'Adam Hope to his Father, St. Thomas, 19 February 1838' in Crerar (ed.), *Letters of Adam Hope*, p. 267.

Chapter 4: Provincial Politics and the Rebellion Losses Crisis of 1849

During the year 1849 one issue dominated politics: the Rebellion Losses Bill. This bill, introduced by the Baldwin-Lafontaine Reform government, sought to secure compensation for Lower Canadians who had lost their property at the hands of British soldiers and loyalist militias during the rebellions of 1837-8. The question revived the inflamed ethnic passions of those years. The bill produced the first real test for responsible government in the Canadas, which had been introduced only a year earlier with the appointment of Lord Elgin. The crises demonstrated a unity of sentiment rarely seen in the Canadas. Attitudes towards the bill fell largely along partisan lines, rather than linguistic ones, demonstrating the increasing strength and organisation of these parties. Across United Canada protests were made through an unprecedented use of the public sphere. Hundreds of petitions were sent to the Governor General and to the Queen, either protesting the bill or approving of the conduct of Lord Elgin. Effigies were burned, parades were held, and in Montreal, the parliament buildings were burnt down. The year came to its conclusion with the development of a movement to annex the province to the United States.

The year represented the last gasp for the old 'Compact'-style Tories. Moderate conservatives, like William Henry Draper and John A. Macdonald, were briefly sidelined as ultra-Tories like Allan McNab and Henry Sherwood took leadership of the party. The Reform party had combined the French-speaking and English-speaking reformers into an uneasy alliance. Montreal, the centre of commercialism as well as the political capital, was at the centre of the events of 1849. The most violent events occurred here; and it was only in Montreal that the annexation movement held real sway. The repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 had led once again to economic distress, particularly for the merchants of Montreal. As Lord Elgin repeatedly noted it was essential to achieve a reciprocity treaty with the United States as soon as possible.[595]

Over the course of the rebellions of 1837-8, there had been much unnecessary destruction of property, particularly by the Loyalist volunteers in Lower Canada. Saint-Eustache and Saint-Benoit had been burned to the ground, while soldiers and volunteers looted most of the villages in which they had fought. An indemnity bill had been passed for Upper Canada by the conservative government under William Henry Draper in 1845. A sum of £40,000 was allocated for the losses incurred in the Upper Canadian rebellion. A commission was set up by the Draper-Viger government to enquire into the claims of Lower Canadians for the same purpose: they received total claims exceeding £240,000, though the commissioners believed that a more thorough enquiry would result in no more than the government needing to spend no more than £100,000 in satisfying legitimate claims. The conservative government left the controversial measure for their successors to deal with.

On 9th February 1849, a committee of the whole House of Assembly was formed to discuss the issue of rebellion losses. Sir Allan MacNab introduced an amendment to prevent 'any person who was in any manner implicated in the Rebellion, or who refused when called upon in suppressing it' from being paid.[596] The government rejected the amendment due to the difficulty of distinguishing between 'loyal' and 'rebel' in the confused atmosphere of the rebellion years. On the 23rd February, Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine introduced the bill,

[595] 'Elgin to Grey', Monklands, 3 June 1849 in A. Doughty (ed.), *The Elgin-Grey Papers, 1846-1852* (Ottawa: J. O. Patenaude, 1937), p. 363.
[596] *Montreal Morning Courier* 26 February 1849.

entitled ‘a bill to provide for the Indemnification of Parties in Lower Canada whose property was destroyed during the Rebellion in the years 1837 and 1838’ and authorized payments for legitimate claims up to £100,000. The bill excluded only those who had been convicted of treason and exiled to Bermuda. The bill was to be paid from the consolidated revenue of United Canada, while the Upper Canada losses had been paid from the tavern licences fund. On the 9th March, after heated debates in the legislature, the bill was passed in the Assembly by a vote of 48 to 17.[597] On the 25th April 1849 it was signed into law by the Governor General, Lord Elgin. The Conservatives of Montreal, angered by the bill, rioted in the streets and burned down the parliament building. A day later attacks were made on the houses of Lafontaine and the Inspector-General, Francis Hincks. On the 30th April, the Governor General himself was attacked and forced to retreat to his residence at Monklands.

A new conservative political organisation, the British American League, was created in Montreal in April. From the 25th to the 31st July, a ‘national’ convention was held at Kingston with the aim of deciding on what course the British people of United Canada should take to save Canada from its ‘present crisis’. The League rejected annexation as an option and advocated three principles: protectionism, retrenchment, and a union of the British North American provinces. During the autumn of 1849, Lord Elgin conducted a tour of Canada West and found that the disloyalty and extremism of the Montreal Tories did not extend to their counterparts in the upper province. Nonetheless, he was not always welcomed with open arms. On the 11th October, the annexation manifesto was published, calling for the peaceable separation of United Canada from Great Britain and its annexation to the United States. It was signed by 325 Montreal businessmen of both British and French-Canadian descent.

The loyalty cry of Canadian Tories seemed hypocritical as some of their number called for annexation. They had failed to disallow the bill or bring down the system of responsible government. The formation of the British American League provided the foundations for a new conservative party to be led by a younger, more diverse group. In this new party, it was not Montreal, but Kingston and Brockville, as represented by John A. Macdonald and Ogle Gowan, which would lead. Even at a local level changes were at work within the Tory party. Peter Way has noted that ‘the fissure gradually widened to the point that by 1849 it had undermined the traditional politics of the street forever. Tories sided with law and order over the Lodge’s mob tactics, signalling the transformation of Toronto from frontier town to middle-class city.’[598] Though the politics of the street would continue in the major cities of the Canadas for decades to come, it would no longer be supported by the authorities and their middle-class constituency, whether in Toronto or Montreal.

The crisis had a significant impact upon Canadian identity too. It brought to the fore the conflict between English- and French-speakers. It was moreover a truly national issue. Whether in London, Bytown or Montreal, commentators could talk about little else during the year. The virulence of the response in Upper Canada was notable. In London, the visit of Lord Elgin provoked the partisan mayor of the city into drastic actions. In Bytown, the proposed visit of the governor general led to a riot between Tories and Reformers known as ‘Stony Monday’. What was at stake was an issue of identity. In the mind of Canadian conservatives, the debate over rebellion losses helped to reinforce the equation of French with rebel. They were also repeatedly warned of the dangers of ‘French Domination’. Despite their overt political differences, Anglo-Canadians understood the essential content of their identity

[597] *JLAPC* , VIII, 9 March 1849, p. 142.
[598] P. Way, ‘The Canadian Tory Rebellion of 1849 and the demise of street politics in Toronto’, *British Journal of Canadian Studies* 10:1 (1995), p. 11.

as such: they were loyal (as the annexationists learned to their dismay); they were against excessive French influence; and they were anti-American. The relationship with Great Britain was not one of unconditional loyalty, but a contract between two partners. When the interests between the mother country and the colony clashed, however, Anglo-Canadians sided with the interests of their colony.

By 1849, there was both a public, provincial arena for politics and a common Anglo-Canadian identity. This could be expressed in different ways, but it no longer varied between political parties. A series of alternative visions for the future of Canada were presented – the annexationist vision met with little success, but aspirations to self-government in a variety of different forms were present too. Of these, the most notable would be that of a federation of the British North American provinces.

4.1 Rioting and the Annexation Movement in Montreal, 1849

The rebellion losses debates provoked intense political conflict in Montreal. The debates extended far beyond the halls of parliament as meetings were held, effigies burned, riots occurred and the parliament buildings were burned down. The annexation manifesto of October 1849 emerged from the ashes of the old political system. No longer able to monopolise the discourse of loyalty the Tories increasingly drew upon the racial language that had seen its inception in the 1837 rebellions. The opportunity of assimilating the French into the anglophone community was undermined by the language of 'French Domination'. The language of patriotism took on renewed importance. The 1840s, as evidenced by the Repeal of the Corn Laws, had demonstrated that the interests of Canada and of the mother country were not perfectly aligned. The imperial parliament's sanctioning of the rebellion losses act informed conservatives that they could no longer rely on the unquestioning support of politicians back 'home'. For the conservatives of Montreal, independence, or even annexation to the United States, could be contemplated. Canada's interests were to be paramount, whether through the newly-established responsible government, as reformers desired, or through a new political system such as that envisaged by the British American League.

Montreal had suffered from the brunt of the depression that had beset Canada in the years after the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846. It had produced 'a profound sense of crisis among leading Canadian businessmen'.[599] For the leading merchants of the city it threatened to undermine the entire basis of their wealth. Montreal had become the largest city in British North America, with a population of 57,715 in 1851. It had also become a majority anglophone city, with French-Canadians forming just 45% of the population.[600]

The rebellion losses bill intended to pay compensation for legitimate losses caused by the actions of loyalist volunteers and government soldiers during the 1837 rebellions in Lower Canada. This was interpreted by its opponents as a measure to reward the Lower Canadian rebels for their disloyalty.[601] On the 25th April Lord Elgin signed the bill into law. In response, the parliament building was burned down. Philip Buckner has argued that 'this agitation was in part artificial, led by those Tories who were afraid that they were doomed to perennial opposition'.[602] While this may be partially true, for many conservatives, and English-speakers more generally in Montreal, the question of rebellion losses raised fundamental issues of identity. Issues of race and nationality that had been at the forefront of politics in 1837 now returned with an immediacy and relevance unmatched since the rebellions. A number of solutions were pursued. Petitions were sent to the Queen for the recall of the Governor General. The British American League was organised from Montreal and soon expanded through the rest of the Canadian provinces.[603] In October a group of prominent merchants from the city published the Annexation Manifesto, calling for the

[599] D. McCalla, *Planting the Province*, p. 195.

[600] Statistics Canada. *52 LC Table III - Birth Places of the People, 1851- Lower Canada* (table), 1851-52 - Census of Lower Canada (General) (database), Using E-STAT (distributor).
http://estat.statcan.gc.ca/cgi-win/cnsmcgi.exe?Lang=E&EST-Fi=EStat\English\SC_RR-eng.htm
(accessed: June 18, 2013)

[601] Way, 'The Canadian Tory Rebellion of 1849', pp. 12-13.

[602] P. Buckner, *The Transition to Responsible Government*, p. 313.

[603] Atherton, *Montreal 1535-1914*, p. 168.

peaceable separation of Canada from the United Kingdom and its incorporation into the United States.

The events of 1849 helped to strengthen the 'British' or 'Anglo-Canadian' identity over its ethnic components. Whether English, Scottish, American, or Irish Catholic, English-speaking Canadians identified themselves strongly with the 'British' cause. The conflict over rebellion losses was conceived of as a battle between the 'British' and the 'French'. The English, Scots, Irish and even the Americans of Montreal were merged into a singular 'British' grouping (though not one that undermined their older ethnic heritages). They had , according to one writer, 'been too long a divided people; let Englishman, Scotchman, Irishman, German and American, stick to each other like a band of brothers.'[604] They would unite against the French 'Other' that threatened their interests, at least in the mind of this letter writer. The explicit aim of the Union of the Provinces had been to assimilate the French-Canadians. Clearly this had not happened. Meanwhile, the Irish, whether Catholic or Protestant, no longer suffered from lingering doubts about their loyalty from the English, Scottish and loyalist components of the 'British' population. French-Canadians now struggled to be incorporated into this British identity – even when they acted in concert with English-speakers of similar political persuasions.

These identity politics did not imply the ending of pragmatic political co-operation. Louis Hippolyte LaFontaine passed the rebellion losses bill only with the widespread support of the English-speaking reformers of Canada West. Meanwhile the predominantly anglophone annexation movement drew support from Papineau's *rouges*. Yet this should not be mistaken for a form of 'civic' Britishness in which French-Canadians could become full members of the British community, understood as fundamentally the same as their English-speaking counterparts. LaFontaine may have defended British institutions and done his best over the past decade to defend the Union of the Canadas and to work within its strictures. But while he defended the British constitution and the British crown he simultaneously argued for the survival of *la nation canadienne*. He believed that the best chance for the survival of French-Canadian culture and its ability to protect itself depended on the realization of responsible government *within* the British Empire. LaFontaine was no more interested in assimilating the French-Canadians to an anglophone 'Britishness' than Papineau. As Monet has argued, 'LaFontaine accepted the Union, and by winning responsible government, guaranteed for the *Canadiens* their right to be themselves … of such stuff then did French Canadians fashion their nationalism'. But this was 'an unemotional loyalty … securely rooted in self-interest'.[605]

There remained the *vendus* described by Monet, French-Canadians who supported the conservative party, but they represented only a very small minority of the total French-speaking population.[606] Most *vendus*, such as Colonel Gugy, had been accepted into the British community in the 1820s or early 1830s. The new Francophone political leaders, whether moderate Reformers like Lafontaine and Augustin-Norbert Morin, or radicals such as Papineau and Jean-Baptiste-Éric Dorion, cooperated with anglophone politicians to achieve their ambitions but saw little value in full participation in a 'British' or 'Anglo-Canadian' identity. Nor were the anglophones particularly accommodating. The somewhat surprising alliance between Papineau's *rouges* and the more extreme Montreal Tories during the annexation movement masked the deep ideological divisions between the two groups. As

[604] 'To the Editor of the Morning Courier' – A Volunteer of 1837, Montreal, 3 March 1849 in *Montreal Morning Courier*, 6 March 1849.
[605] Monet, *The Last Cannon Shot*, p. 399.
[606] Ibid., p. 8.

Monet has demonstrated, the French-Canadians were under no illusions about their exclusion from a more ethnically-based idea of Britishness. They had 'realized that the annexationists were inspired by hatred, not by true love of their country. The Tories wanted to crush "French Domination", the *rouges* the British connection and the Church'.[607] Ethnicity, and language, had become the foundations of Anglo-Canadian identity and both provoked and were inflamed by the rebellion losses crisis. The civic ideals of the 'British subject' could hardly compete with the emotional denunciation of 'French Domination'.

Conservatives presented the terms 'Tory' and 'British' as synonymous: 'what course is the British party to pursue to prevent the recurrence of a similar, or, if possible, a worse outrage; and what to avenge this insult? This is no question of party or of men … it is a question of deliverance from a tyranny under which we, for one, will not consent to live, if by any means we can free ourselves from it'.[608] By referring to the 'British party' they were not trying to encourage partisan politics, but to suggest that the current struggles over rebellion losses were a racial, rather than political, issue. The French were presented as 'Other', the oppressors of the British people of Canada. The British must unite to prevent themselves from being overwhelmed. The rebellion losses bill was perceived by conservatives across United Canada as an attempt to pay French rebels with British money. Of the 2,176 who were to be paid, just 171 were of British origin. For those of French origin, the belief was that 'nine-tenths of those claimants were directly or indirectly concerned in the Rebellion'.[609] The presence of those who had directly participated in the 1837 rebellions, such as Wolfred Nelson, in the government added insult to injury.[610] The *Montreal Herald* described: 'a Cabinet, who are known to have more or less support from those who were rebels in 1837 and 1838, and openly demand our money to pay those rebels'.[611]

The 'British' people of the Canadas were forced to serve under a system of 'French Domination'. This phrase was used consistently by Montreal conservatives.[612] In this context, the rebellion losses bill was representative of a greater conspiracy against the English-speaking population of the Canadas. Lafontaine's motive in introducing the bill was nothing more than 'hatred of the British'.[613] This language helped to define the French as an internal 'Other'. They were tyrants ruling over the British people aided by a few English-speaking traitors. Responsible government had enabled this situation. According to many Tories it was 'as impracticable in French-Canada as it has been found to be in Spanish-America'.[614] In their minds, French-Canadian votes would reward office-seekers and populists. According to the *Courier*, Lord Elgin knew 'nothing of the feelings of the British people here, but what Mr. Lafontaine knows – which is nothing at all'.[615] Lafontaine, as a French-Canadian, could not possibly understand the opposition of English-speakers to the rebellion losses bill. The English-speaking members of the government, such as Robert Baldwin, were nothing more than Lafontaine's lackeys. Lord Elgin was being fed a stream of misinformation from the

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[607] Ibid., p. 391.
[608] *Montreal Morning Courier*, 11 July 1849.
[609] Ibid., 17 April 1849.
[610] John Beswarick Thompson, "NELSON, WOLFRED," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 9, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed February 16, 2014, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/nelson_wolfred_9E.html.
[611] *Montreal Herald*, 13 March 1849.
[612] See *Morning Courier*, 17 March, 1849; 20 March 1849; 14 April 1849; 8 May 1849; 25 June 1849; 14 August 1849.
[613] 'Sydney Bellingham to George Moffatt', Montreal, 30 April 1849 in *Montreal Morning Courier*, 1 May 1849.
[614] *Montreal Herald*, 13 March 1849.
[615] *Montreal Morning Courier*, 1 May 1849.

representative of the French-Canadian people. Elgin's understanding of the crisis came through the government and so he was presented by the conservative press as a party man – the symbolic head not of Canada but of the Reform party.

'French Domination' was a malleable concept. The conflict was read by the *Witness* as a battle between British Protestants and French-Canadian Catholics. This evangelical Protestant newspaper viewed 'French Domination' through the lens of religion. They 'saw one after another of the Popish charters passing through Parliament in direct opposition to the consciences and convictions of very many who were enacting them, and who knew that they were thus riveting the yoke of the church of Rome upon the neck of the inhabitants of Canada for all time coming'.[616] The rebellion losses bill made no reference whatsoever to religion, and religious issues and been almost entirely absent from its debate. But 'French Domination' was a broad enough concept that it could easily be adapted to the specific needs of a community. For the *Witness* the concept was reworked to become that of 'Popish' or Catholic domination.

Many conservatives viewed the burning of parliament as legitimate. The Montreal conservative press defended the actions of the rioters and even sought to put the blame on the reformers. It was 'the most formidable riot ever witnessed in this, or we should say, in any other country.' But despite the extremity of these actions, it was 'the conduct of the majority of the Members themselves' that was 'of the most pusillanimous description'. Flight from a violent mob was condemned by the conservative press. The real cause, as the 'respectable persons' present claimed, lay with the Government, 'who first irritated the people to madness by a most unprecedented and insolent outrage on their loyalty, and then neglected all means for the preservation of the public peace!'[617]

The burning parliament was a welcome symbol of defiance against the political system. The Governor General's assent to the bill was the 'first blow struck against British Connexion'.[618] Lord Elgin was 'the man who lost for England the noble Colony won by the blood of Wolfe'.[619] The burning of parliament represented merely the beginnings of aggressive popular conservatism. The attacks upon the person of the Governor General were even more shocking. Elgin reported simply that he was 'brutally assaulted'.[620] The *Courier* condemned this attack, in which 'the crowd collected and threw a number of eggs, and, we believe, some stones at the carriage'. For those who still wished to maintain a semblance of loyalty, this was unacceptable, as 'every stone thrown at the Governor is an insult to the Queen, whom he represents, and who is, we know, the object herself of the love and devotion of the very people who thus outrage her Representative'.[621] This suggested two possibilities – firstly, that the Governor General was not regarded as an appropriate representative of the crown. Indeed, before the sanctioning of the bill in Great Britain, this was likely the position of most Anglo-Canadians. The second possibility was more worrying. It suggested that Canadians no longer felt obliged to respect the monarchy and its representatives. Their loyalty had become little more than a façade.

Many conservatives felt justified in rebelling. They were exercising their right to rebel against tyrannical government. The *Courier* wrote: 'that, after this atrocious injury, we do not

[616] *Montreal Witness*, 30 April 1849.
[617] *Montreal Morning Courier*, 28 April 1849.
[618] Ibid., 26 April 1849.
[619] Ibid.
[620] 'Elgin to Grey', Montreal, 5 May 1849 in *Elgin-Grey Papers*, p. 352.
[621] *Montreal Morning Courier*, 1 May 1849.

conceive that we owe the slightest particle of affection to the English Crown; all allegiance is valueless, because it is despised. If the Sovereign of England is led to believe that it is more the interest of the Empire to preserve the affections of her French, than of her British subjects, in Canada, let her take all steps to do so … but no man can blame those British subjects … to declare their independence of a Power which can so insult them.'[622] For them, tyranny came from two directions: from the local government of 'French Domination' which sought to undermine the traditional rights of the British subject in the Canadas; and from the imperial parliament, which gave sanction to this local tyranny. Charles Smith, in his introduction to a poem commemorating the occasion, put forth a defence of these treasonous actions: 'When a civilized, brave and Loyal People are goaded to desperation ... Madness by the unjust and tyrannical acts of their rulers, they are justified in rising up in arms against them.'[623] The poem as a whole reflected on the legacy of the 1837 rebellion:

> 'Shall Weir and Moodie
> Ever be forgot!
> Shall we be free my friends,
> Or shall we not?
> Shall Chartrand's blood that justly
> Cries revenge,
> Cry out in vain?
> Shall we be men and Britons,
> Let's be plain?
> Or Shall we still, in bondage,
> Fast remain?'[624]

Memories of the sacrifices of loyalists in 1837 remained strong. Rewarding the rebels (as the indemnity bill did in the popular imagination) was an unthinkable act and could only have emerged through French Domination. The past was invoked to justify their opposition to the bill:

> 'Did Wolfe and his brave followers
> Bleed in vain,
> Before Quebec on Abraham's
> Bloody plain
> Did they lay down their lives
> That we should be
> Bondsmen to Frenchmen!'[625]

Throughout both the poem and the play that follows, the distinction between British loyalists and French rebels was maintained. The actions of April 25 were continually justified, while Lord Elgin was presented as a pusillanimous figure, hiding behind his hypocritical phrase of "dignified neutrality".[626]

Participants at a meeting at Huntingdon, in Beauharnois County were not afraid of making threats against the British government. It was resolved that passing the rebellion losses bill would 'entail on this Province the horrors of a civil war, and array against the Crown that sanctions it those lusty arms and loyal hearts that have again and again, on many a battlefield, both against Foreign invaders and domestic traitors, preserved these Colonies an appendage

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[622] *Montreal Morning Courier*, 4 July 1849.
[623] Charles Smith. *Rebels Rewarded, or the Rebellion Losses Bill Signed and the Destruction of Both Houses of Parliament by fire!!* (Montreal, 1849), p. 3.
[624] Ibid., p.6.
[625] Ibid.
[626] Ibid., p. 24.

of the British Empire'. The *Courier* agreed, arguing that 'while there is axe or rifle on the Frontier, and Saxon hands to wield them, these losses will not be paid'.[627] These statements demonstrated the odd contradiction in conservative thinking in 1849. They threatened rebellion if their demands were not adhered to even as they emphasised their past loyalty. In their own minds at least, they were prepared to take up arms against the British government to prove just how loyal they were. The passing of the rebellion losses was perceived throughout conservative English-speaking Canada as an 'insult'.[628] It was of such an extreme nature that it had removed the obligation of Anglo-Canadians to display loyalty to the British monarchy. The Tories of Montreal did not desire a mere change of government. What was required was 'a Revolution – a Revolution involuntarily forced upon us by the audacity of a political faction.'[629] The image of the unwilling revolutionary permeated conservative political discourse in 1849. Unlike the French-Canadians of 1837 who had rebelled with no real grievances, the Tories of 1849 had been given no alternative.

Alongside ideas of French Domination came a newly powerful language of race. It had been used before in 1837 to strengthen the resolve of the loyalists against a French-Canadian rebellion and it was again used in 1849 to unite the British population against the French-Canadians. The idea of 'Anglo-Saxon' was often confused and sometimes contradictory, but certain characteristics were evident throughout all usages. Race was conceived as innate. According to the *Courier*, the term was 'used to designate the people of England, the Lowlands of Scotland, and part of the population of the North of Ireland, in contradistinction to the Celtic Irish, Highland Scots and French'. This was not, however, a useful designation for Canadian conservatives, who wanted to incorporate the Irish and Scots into a wider British community. Therefore, the term 'Anglo-Saxon' was 'evidently used in a wider sense to distinguish the population of *British* from that of *French* origin'.[630] The use of the term Anglo-Saxon was championed by conservatives. By describing themselves as 'British' they put themselves in an awkward position. The term 'Anglo-Saxon' held many of the same connotations as British but without its allegiance. It also suggested a union with the Americans. North American history could be reinterpreted as a battle between the Anglo-Saxon and Gallic French races. In such a context the United States was seen as an ally rather than an enemy. As shown above, however, this did not imply a wholesale abandonment of the term 'British'. The two were often used as synonyms and while the usage of the term 'Anglo-Saxon' did imply some detachment from the mother country, it was used frequently by both loyal moderates and extreme Tories who supported annexation.

Lord Elgin deeply regretted the anti-French language that pervaded Montreal political life.[631] The rebellions of 1837 represented one of many battles between the Anglo-Saxons and French-Canadians. The recurrent image of civil war informed contemporary articles on the controversy. The *Witness* wrote that 'the French papers state that the Roman Catholic churches are to be burned', while English-language conservative papers 'reported that the Government is arming the Canadians with cutlasses and pistols, which we trust will prove equally unfounded, as no measure could render the danger of civil war more imminent'.[632] Even moderate Tories believed that Canada had come close to civil war in 1849, as Mr.

[627] *Montreal Morning Courier*, 8 March 1849.
[628] Hallowell, 'The Reaction of Upper Canadian Tories to the adversity of 1849', pp. 42-3.
[629] 'Sydney Bellingham to George Moffatt', Montreal, 30 April 1849 in *Morning Courier*, 1 May 1849.
[630] *Montreal Morning Courier*, 31 March 1849.
[631] 'Elgin to Grey', Montreal, 9 July 1849 in *Elgin-Grey Papers*, pp. 393-4.
[632] *Montreal Witness*, 30 April 1849.

Bockus had noted at the Kingston Convention of the British American League.[633] Not all conservative commentators had lost hope for ethnic cooperation, though they had largely agreed on the concept of race as natural, inherent and unalterable and the impossibility of assimilation. The *Witness* argued that reconciliation was necessary:

> 'The deeper the injuries or insults inflicted in a moment of excitement on either side the more difficult it will be to heal them afterwards, and to prevent retaliation; and let us only conceive what a place Canada would become were the powers of each race consecrated to the infliction and retaliation of injuries on the other. It is equally impossible to annihilate either race, - it is impossible to banish one or other, and it is equally impossible by any change, or under any system of government which the nineteenth century will tolerate to shut out either from political influence by disfranchisement.'[634]

This evangelical paper argued that the English-speakers of Montreal should focus upon practical solutions to their problems rather than the perpetuation of racial strife. For the *Witness*, the question was how could they live together – suggestions of disfranchisement, assimilation, or the removal of the French-Canadians in Canada East were impractical fantasies. Most conservatives agreed that assimilation was impossible. The *Transcript* argued 'the two races cannot amalgamate'.[635] Similar sentiments were expressed by the Irish Protestant, Sydney Bellingham.[636] For him, the intention of the rebellions had been 'the establishment of a French-Canadian ascendancy. It was a war of races – French against British'. Union alone could not resolve these differences, and suggestions that the Irish Catholics were allied to Lafontaine and his Reform ministry were unfounded.[637]

The most extreme expression the Tories gave to rebellion was the annexation movement. The annexation manifesto was published on 11 October 1849. It advocated the peaceable separation of the Province of United Canada from Great Britain and its annexation to the United States. A number of prominent merchants, including Benjamin Holmes, John Redpath, William McDougall and John Molson, signed the manifesto.[638] The annexation movement to some extent represented an outburst of frustration at the repeal of the Corn Laws. Certainly, this was the view taken by Lord Elgin: 'The most important matter by far if we desire to allay political discontent in these Provinces is the establishment of reciprocal freedom of trade with the States.'[639]

Conservative loyalty was not encouraged by statements from the imperial government. It appeared that Great Britain had no more love for Canada than the Tories did for the Governor General. Canada was seen in the mother country as a burden to be released as soon as was possible. The British American League wrote that the 'British cabinet itself invites us to action and points to self-reliance'.[640] A prospectus for a pro-annexation journal in Montreal made a similar statement: 'the permanent subjection of the Canadian Provinces to British rule has ceased to be the doctrine of any class of British Statesmen. The termination of Colonial dependence can only be delayed so long as, split up into hostile parties, and torn by internal

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[633] 'Proceedings of the British American League, 27 July 1849' in *Montreal Transcript*, 31 July 1849.
[634] *Montreal Witness*, 30 April 1849.
[635] *Montreal Transcript*, 5 May 1849.
[636] 'Sydney Bellingham to George Moffatt, Dunany Cottage, 4 May 1849' in *Montreal Morning Courier*, 5 May 1849
[637] 'Sydney Bellingham to George Moffatt, Dunany Cottage, 15 May 1849' in ibid., 19 May 1849.
[638] W. Tetley, 'Cornelius Krieghoff, the Shakespeare Club and the Annexation Manifesto', http://www.mcgill.ca/files/maritimelaw/krieghoff.pdf, accessed 18/02/2014.
[639] 'Elgin to Grey', Montreal, 3 September 1849 in Doughty (ed.), *Elgin-Grey Papers*, p. 466.
[640] 'Address of the Central Committee of the British American League to their Brethren, Countrymen and Fellow Colonists' in 'Elgin to Grey', Toronto, May 10, 1850 in ibid., p. 656.

dissensions, the people of Canada shall continue to waste their energies upon fruitless expedients and to neglect using the power, they inherently possess, of applying a heroic remedy to their manifold ills.'[641] The colonial relationship was conceived as that between a mother and her child. Canada had now outgrown the need for dependence on the mother country. Continued dependence was a hindrance to the achievement of her own glory, and it seemed that the parent, Great Britain, understood this too – made clear by Lord John Russell's speech in 1850.[642] Separation did not imply ill will. It was simply the natural progression of colonies. The interests of the parent and the child at times conflicted; indeed, free trade was 'a death blow to the Colonial connexion'.[643] Canada could not expect England to restore the imperial preference and damage her own interests. They must take separate paths for the good of both countries.

Canada suffered while the United States prospered: 'The enervating influence of Imperial rule is felt in every department of life. The intellectual inferiority of the Canadian Colonist to the American Citizen, is but too well established by comparative statistics of art, science, literature and education'. To establish a distinctive and impressive Canadian intellectual life, the tie with the mother country must be severed.[644] This call for independence was an unusually explicit expression of nationalism. The implication was that Canada's interests were to take precedence over Great Britain's. For Canada to achieve its destiny it must be independent. Beyond economics, what mattered was the belief that Canada's destiny was to be determined by her own people, not by her colonial master. The colonial connection was no longer assumed to be inherently good. It was rather something to be negotiated, and if necessary, abandoned.

Not all conservatives, even in Montreal, believed that independence and annexation were in Canada's best interests. The more moderate Tory papers did not find sufficient cause for ending the British connection. According to the *Transcript*, 'Canada has now in prospect all that Canada has ever asked, and with a prudent use of her resources, might hope for a long and prosperous career, in connexion with the great Empire under whose dominion she is placed'. Canada had 'everything to hope from her connexion with Great Britain ... with identical interests, and bound together by the ties of a common origin, there is nothing to disconnect them.'[645] For the *Transcript*, differences between the colony and the mother country were uncharacteristic. They derived from misunderstanding rather than malice. For Canada to maintain its freedom and to achieve future glory, it must remain an important part of the British Empire. Even free trade could be supported because of the great benefits it brought to the people of England. Moral considerations motivated some commentators in their understanding of the annexation issue. Even if the loyalty question could be overlooked, and annexation would provide economic benefits to Canada, the question of slavery remained. It was widely condemned as a moral stain upon the United States, and annexation would extend that stain to Canada. The *Montreal Witness*, an evangelical newspaper, wrote that 'the money thus raised by duties on our importations, would be taken to Washington to be spent there, perhaps in annexing the rest of Mexico, with a view to extend the area of slavery, or Cuba, with a view to increase the slave power'.[646] Canada would become implicit

[641] 'Exposition of a design to establish in the city of Montreal a journal, intended to advocate the peaceable separation of Canada from Imperial Connexion' in 'Elgin to Grey', Montreal, 25 June 1849 in ibid., p. 384.
[642] See 'Elgin to Grey, Toronto, 23 March 1850' in Doughty (ed.), *Elgin-Grey Papers*, pp. 608-609.
[643] Enclosed in 'Elgin to Grey, Montreal, 25 June 1849' in ibid., p. 385.
[644] Ibid.
[645] *Montreal Transcript*, 31 May 1849.
[646] *Montreal Witness*, 26 February 1849.

in the sins of slavery and manifest destiny by annexation. Though it would provide some counterweight by increasing the number of free states in the union, the loss of a safe haven for escaped slaves would be a terrible evil.

In contrast to the annexation movement, the British American League was an impressive organisational effort by the conservative English-speaking population of the Canadas. It brought together conservatives from across United Canada to participate in a national convention in Kingston.[647] As for conservatives throughout the Canada West and Canada East, it was French Domination that was responsible for the ills of the province:

> 'It is evident, from the known character of our race, that patient submission to any ascendancy founded on feelings of nationality alone, and not actuated by any generous or progressive principle, never has been, and never will be, for any length of time, endured by Britons. It is equally apparent that whatever may be the energy of determination of the Anglo-Saxon race inhabiting this Colony, it has hitherto been diluted and weakened by the absence of all systematic combination.'[648]

The significance of this organisation was in its creation of a national political structure for the conservative party. A manifesto of clear principles was created. Conservatives throughout United Canada would subscribe to these principles. Its three core principles were protectionism, retrenchment and a union of the British North American Provinces.[649]

For opponents of the British American League, the organisation was something sinister. Lord Elgin saw it as the spearhead of the annexation movement.[650] In the eyes of the *Transcript*, however, the results of the League Convention were pleasantly surprising – it had exhibited 'the spirit of moderation and loyalty', only because it had been 'guided by very able and very patriotic men'.[651] It could easily have endorsed annexation but instead it had proved the nail in its coffin by presenting more amenable alternatives. They had provided a blueprint for confederation.

> 'At present, we are strangers to each other; though the British flag floats over each, it can hardly be said to unite us. Yet union is our natural condition – a condition of our political relation. If to-morrow, one were to be attacked, we should have to unite for mutual defence; and why not for mutual political and commercial advantage as well as for war? ... no assembly of English delegates should afford to overlook such a Union as a necessary step towards the maintenance of British Institutions on this Continent. Until we have formed such a Union, it is impossible that our destiny as dependencies of the British Empire can be completed, and he who would oppose such a Union can only do so because he hates British institutions in his heart.'[652]

Some statements made at the League presented an explicitly Anglo-Canadian nationalist take on events. Mr. Vankoughnett, of Toronto, described an Anglo-Canadian nation based upon an Anglo-Saxon racial background He believed that in time, Canada would become a 'nation', as colonies must inevitably:

> 'we must all look forward to the time when these colonies like all colonies must become a nation. It became our duty as the germ of the great nation that is to be to look into the future and provide for generations that are to follow us ... Unless you were to drive the French-Canadians into the ocean –

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[647] An account of the League's development and proceedings can be found in Creighton, *John A. Macdonald: The Young Politician, The Old Chieftain* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), pp. 140-146.
[648] 'To the inhabitants of Canada' – British American League in *Morning Courier*, 21 April 1849.
[649] 'Address of the Central Committee of the British American League to their Brethren, Countrymen and Fellow Colonists' in 'Elgin to Grey', Toronto, 10 May 1850 in *Elgin-Grey Papers*, p. 655.
[650] 'Elgin to Grey', Montreal, 23 April 1849 in Ibid., pp. 347-8. See also 'Elgin to Grey', Monklands, 17 June 1849, p. 374.
[651] *Montreal Transcript*, 7 August 1849.
[652] Ibid.

> what will you do with them? There was no intention to oppress or destroy them, but we would have them made to feel the sentiments of British freemen and understand British principles ... When by a union of the Provinces, there was brought Anglo-Saxon on the west, and on the east, and on the south, to bear upon the Frenchman; he could not withstand the influence of Anglo-Saxon personal independence, not in feeling a portion of it.'[653]

Peaceable separation from Great Britain would occur in time. There was no need for this separation to resemble that of the United States – there was to be 'no rude shock'.[654] Vankoughnett instead envisaged a political structure much like the present commonwealth – a group of allied, but independent, nations under a single monarch.

Canada then had a destiny to embrace all of the British North American provinces in a single political union. Union was presented here as more than just a solution to French Domination (though clearly this was one important motivation). It was a natural direction for the colonies to pursue. It was not envisaged as a method of obtaining independence but as a means of preserving British institutions on the continent. A common relationship with Britain had not created a close bond between the various peoples of British North America. Only through union would this be achieved. The Maritime provinces were never mentioned directly. Union was then envisaged primarily as a method of strengthening Canada. A popular alternative to confederation was repeal of the union. For the Tories of Canada East this presented a difficult challenge. Repeal would leave the English-speaking population of Canada East stranded in a sea of French-speakers. French Domination may be removed from the upper province but it would be made even more intolerable for those who lived in Montreal. Modifications to the plan were suggested – it was proposed that Montreal, the Eastern Townships and the townships along the north of the Ottawa Valley would be annexed to Canada West.[655]

Strong feelings on the rebellion losses crisis were by no means limited to the political elite. In 1849, Montrealers involved themselves in politics in a number of ways. The press continued to thrive. The city supported no fewer than six English and three French papers, as well as intermittent periodicals such as *Punch in Canada*. Whether through national societies or charitable or religious organisations, the people of Montreal had a number of outlets through which they could express themselves. The understanding of the events of the year was mediated through the press. The question of rebellion losses also united the people of Montreal with the people of Canada West to an extent not seen in earlier years. The Montreal papers were keen to point out the opposition to the Governor General (or, for the reform papers, the support for his actions) that came from the upper province.[656]

The most politically involved of the national societies was the St. Andrew's Society. They celebrated St. Andrew's Day with a parade during the day and a dinner during the evening. Unlike earlier years, however, this year's celebrations were dominated by the discussion of contemporary provincial politics. A special meeting was held in May to remove Lord Elgin from the society. He had 'so conducted himself in his Government as to insult and outrage, the feelings of every British subject in Canada, and to disgrace the Scottish name' and could no longer remain a part of the Scottish community of Montreal. According to the society 'it was felt humiliating to the pride of Scotchmen, and to the glory of Scotland, that one of her Noblemen had been found so destitute of proper ideas of his duty, as to put his name on an Act which, for infamy, is unparalleled in history'.[657] The Scottish elite of Montreal had

[653] 'Proceedings of the British American League', *Montreal Transcript*, 2 August 1849.
[654] Ibid.
[655] *Montreal Morning Courier*, 3 May 1849.
[656] See *Montreal Morning Courier*, 27 February 1849.
[657] Ibid., 1 May 1849.

reacted rapidly to the news of his signing the bill, removing him from the society less than a week after Elgin had assented to the bill. Members from both the St. George's and St. Patrick's Societies were present at the dinner, though unsurprisingly the invitation to the Société de St. Jean-Baptiste was left unanswered.[658] Loyal statements were repeatedly made including a request for the Queen to visit the British North American colonies and a toast for the British army and navy. Many other social organisations were loosely organised along the basis of ethnic affiliation, such as the Montreal Thistle Curling Club. They too condemned the actions of the Governor General and removed him from the society.[659] The funeral of Benjamin D'Urban, the commander of the British forces in North America, brought forth great numbers to mourn his death.[660]

The numbers given in petitions were often questioned. According to the *Transcript*, those who had signed the pro-government petitions consisted 'chiefly, of *habitants*, young children, and men compelled to affix their signatures'.[661] It is notable that the writer considered the French-Canadian *habitant* as an illegitimate source of signatures. This could be due to a belief that the *habitant* was illiterate or uneducated and therefore unable to understand what he had signed. Contemporaries well understood the rhetorical power of petitions. The *Courier* asked its readers to 'let us know the number of Petitions and the number of signatures, and the people of Canada will have an opportunity of knowing with what respect a *soi disant* liberal Government treats the rights of the people to petition against an unpopular measure'.[662]

Popular politics were also expressed violently. The burning of the parliament building was simply one of many examples throughout the year. One riot on the occasion of a dinner held at Lafontaine's house nearly erupted into a pitched battle. The crowd attempted to force its way into the house and soon shots were fired both into and out of the house.[663] The *Witness* condemned such expressions of popular feeling: 'if not indignantly frowned upon and energetically put down, in the first instance, it may become the common mode of expressing dissatisfaction whenever a crowd, on any side of politics, consider themselves aggrieved.'[664] In Montreal political controversy brought with it violent rioting.

An organisation known as the Briton's Club, attempting to maintain its aura of respectability, informed the public 'that they are directly opposed to the disgraceful riots, and still more disgraceful attacks on person and property, now prevalent in this city; and that if a member of the club were known to act with, or join the disturbers of the public peace, he would be immediately ejected.'[665] Unfortunately little is known about this organisation and references to the institution are scarce. It seems likely that it was one of a multitude of social organisations organised on the basis of ethnicity that had sprung up in Montreal in the 1840s. While the sentiment behind the disturbances was often supported by the institutions of the 'loyal' and the 'British', they were unwilling to compromise their own positions by supporting less respectable expressions of discontent. This statement was a defensive

[658] *Montreal Transcript*, 4 December 1849.
[659] *Montreal Morning Courier*, 28 April 1849.
[660] *Montreal Morning Courier*, 30 May 1849.
[661] *Montreal Transcript*, 17 May 1849.
[662] *Montreal Morning Courier*, 5 April 1849.
[663] *Montreal Morning Courier*, 16 April 1849. A more detailed account can be found in 'Inquest on the Murder of William Blakely Mason, 23 August 1849', quoted in *Montreal Transcript* 25 August 1849.
[664] *Montreal Witness*, 30 April 1849.
[665] *Montreal Transcript*, 18 August 1849.

measure – just days before the *Transcript* had reported the involvement of a number of men from the Britons Club involved in the attack on Lafontaine's house.[666]

The rebellion losses controversy had invaded every aspect of public and political life in 1849. Whether it was members of the legislative assembly debating the bill in parliament, national societies condemning the conduct of Lord Elgin, or Montreal's working classes joining riots on the streets or signing petitions to the Queen, no one could escape the phenomenal impact of this bill. The later events of the year, in particular the annexation movement, which brought forth questions of allegiance and loyalty that turned the identities of a decade earlier on their head, arose directly out of the questions raised by the rebellion losses bill. This 'mere act of justice' had cemented the legacy of 1837 in Canadian history. It had become just as important in the narrative of the Anglo-Canadian identity as the conquest of Quebec, the American Revolution or the War of 1812. The political crisis demonstrated two conflicting interpretations of the rebellions – a reformist conception of justified rebellion; and a conservative conception that saw the rebellion as an unprovoked racial conflict perpetuated by its losers to the present day.

The atmosphere of ethnic tension continued to rise over the course of the year. The political conflict, especially in Montreal, was redefined as one between the British and French populations. An intensive racial language, pitting the 'Anglo-Saxon' against the French, returned as a method to discredit English-speaking reformers. English-speakers throughout the city felt betrayed at the actions of their representatives, who seemed to be following a program of 'French Domination' and failing to represent their interests adequately. While not everyone was willing to accept this newly racialised political sphere it held significant rhetorical power. Reformers had little success in contesting the narrative of events put forward by the Tories until the signing of the annexation manifesto in October. Until then, even with the burning of the parliament building, Tories simultaneously presented themselves as patriots acting in the interests of the Anglo-Canadian community, and offended loyalists who had put down the French rebellion of 1837. The annexation movement served to undermine the Tories of Montreal. This allowed the reformers to present themselves as loyal. Now they had the backing of the Governor General and the imperial parliament, while their political opponents advocated nothing short of treason. As a consequence, political leadership of the Tory party moved from its centre in Montreal to Kingston, as the principles of a new party were hammered out at the British American League convention.

Despite initial appearances, the events of 1849 marked the triumph of ethnically-based identity that ultimately made the political system of the Union of the Canadas untenable. Most English-speakers were unhappy with the 'rebel-rewarding bill', even if they refused to condone the violence that beset the city. In the rhetorical context of 'French Domination', the diverse communities of English, Irish, Scots and American that made up the anglophones of Montreal drew closer together into a single unit of 'British' or 'Anglo-Saxon'. The British American League, once it was understood that it was not simply a part of the annexation movement, was applauded by the British community for attempting to find long-term political solutions to the current situation.

The interests of Great Britain and Canada were no longer assumed to be automatically aligned. Whether Reformer or Tory, it was believed by everyone that Canada's interests were to take precedence over those of Great Britain. This did not entail ill-will towards Britain. Rather, it meant devising a political system through which Canada's interests could best be

[666] Ibid., 16 August 1849.

pursued. For the British American League, perhaps the most significant organisation to emerge from the troubles of 1849, this system was the union of all of the British North American provinces. Seen as a method both to check ‘French Domination’ and a way to achieve Canada’s destiny as a powerful nation, the League’s proposal would be repeatedly revisited over the next two decades.

4.2 Stony Monday – the Rebellion Losses Controversy in Bytown

By 1849, the village of Bytown had grown into a substantial regional centre for the Ottawa Valley. No longer merely the outpost of a transient lumbering community beset by seasonal violence, the town was well on its way to establishing itself as a respectable alternative to the likes of Kingston and Toronto as a potential seat of government for the United Canadas. Swelled by the Famine migration, the region's population had exploded and taken on an even more Irish culture. In 1847 Bytown was incorporated as a town. By the 1851 census, the town had reached a population of 7,760. Its Irish character had become increasingly marked, too, as 2,486 inhabitants had been born in Ireland. The French-Canadian population had grown to a significant size as well with 2,056 French-speaking inhabitants. Most of the remainder of the population were English-speakers born in Canada West, of whom there were 2,420 inhabitants.[667]

Union brought several benefits to Bytown. It became the primary thoroughfare for trade between Canada West and Canada East, as goods travelled through the Rideau Canal and the Ottawa River on their way to Montreal and the Atlantic, attempting to bypass the hazardous rapids of the lower St. Lawrence. Politically, too, they had more influence as they were able to unite with convergent interests on the north side of the river in Canada East. The end of the rebellion brought with it the acquisition of a long-sought goal for Bytonians – the creation of a new district in 1838, the Dalhousie District, with Bytown as the District Town.[668] The District encompassed Carleton County and proved a much more adequate administrative unit for its growing population. The district was represented in provincial politics by one legislative assembly member for Bytown and one for Carleton County.

Communications had also improved, as the Ottawa River was developed, the roads of the Bathurst district were enhanced and the arrival of the telegraph and the railroad were expected in the near future. For Bytown, the telegraph was 'a matter of vital importance'.[669] The Bytown and Montreal Telegraph Company was set up in 1849, though the line was not completed until 1851. The first railway in the region did not arrive until 1854 with the Bytown and Prescott Railway.[670] At the time of the rebellion losses crisis, then, the inhabitants continued to rely on more traditional methods of contact, in particular, the newspaper. While the timber industry would continue to play an important role in local economics, the valley had begun to diversify. The Shiners War, which had undermined Bytown's claims to respectability since its inception, had ended and the arrival of raftsmen no longer provoked fears of public disorder.

The concerns of Bytown in 1849 mirrored the rest of United Canada. The rebellion losses controversy dominated the news, making an appearance in the news or editorial content of the *Bytown Packet* in almost every issue. Town meetings were held on the bill, effigies were burned, and a riot occurred on the occasion of a meeting to propose an address to Lord Elgin. Unlike in the 1830s, where even the rebellion appears to have passed largely unnoticed, the

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[667] Statistics Canada. *52 UC Table III - Birth Places of the People, 1851- Upper Canada* (table), 1851-52 - Census of Upper Canada (Population/Agriculture) (database), Using E-STAT (distributor). http://estat.statcan.gc.ca/cgi-win/cnsmcgi.exe?Lang=E&EST-Fi=EStat\English\SC_RR-eng.htm (accessed: June 14, 2013)

[668] *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Carleton County* (Toronto: H. Belden & Co, 1879), p. iv.

[669] 'Mr. Barry's Lecture on the Electro-Magnetic Telegraph' in *Bytown Packet*, 17 February 1849.

[670] R. Serré, *Bytown at Your Fingertips*, pp. 15-16.

Ottawa Valley of the late 1840s was intensely involved in provincial politics. The unique situation of the region as an Irish region, composed of conflicting parties of Orangemen and Catholics, gave an unusual tinge to the events of the year. It must be examined how far we can accept M. S. Cross's interpretation of the violent eruptions of September 17th, 1849, known as 'Stony Monday' as essentially a sectarian conflict.[671] The diffusion of ideas about race, annexation, responsible government and the role of the governor general from the metropolitan centre of Montreal must be explored. The question of how far a common political language existed amongst Anglo-Canadians across United Canada can be tested by its penetration into the previously isolated and parochial Ottawa Valley. This conflict could be perceived in insular terms of particular local relevance, as between Catholics and Protestants, between Irish and British, or more simply still, between the forces of law and order and anarchy. It could even have been interpreted in the framework of the Shiner conflict that had dominated political and social discussion for much of the past decade. Yet it appears that this did not occur as Bytonians employed the provincially recognised dichotomies of Toryism against Reform and British against French.

The importance of the rebellion losses bill in crystallising political differences must be examined. The question of whether conceptions of identity were informed by politics must be considered. Civic ideas of nationalism, which prioritised the state, may have been more welcome to reformers, while race increasingly became an issue of concern for conservatives. How far did such civic forms of identity resemble the loyal Canadian strand of identity discussed in earlier chapters? Did English-speakers still believe that assimilation or co-existence with the French portion of the population was possible? Differences between the various English-speaking populations of the region could be subsumed under the banner of 'British' as had happened in Montreal in 1837. Nonetheless, the 'Irishness' of the region may have presented an important challenge to this possibility. Their belief in discrimination by an English and Scottish elite was certainly notable, as they lamented their lack of representation in the magistracy, the militia and in regional government appointments.[672]

The rebellion losses controversy helped unite the conservatives of Carleton County as they recognised the increasing threat they faced from Reformers. According to Cross this period saw 'the fall of the gentility' and a 'leadership void in the community.'[673] Bytown and its environs were no longer unchallenged Tory strongholds. John Scott, the first mayor of Bytown, a Reform candidate, was elected to the legislative assembly in the 1847-8 general election.[674] Meanwhile, Lanark County repeatedly elected the prominent reformer Malcolm Cameron to the assembly. The gulf between Reformers and Tories could not be wider. One reformer, upon entering a Tory meeting, was described as a 'damned rebel'.[675] In this, as in other matters, how far did the Ottawa Valley reflect the rest of the Canadas? Polarisation along party lines had largely been absent in the turbulent decade of the 1830s. Its existence in 1849 would suggest the region's integration into a national political arena.

Political participation seems to have fallen along religious lines. Lockwood has noted the intense piety of the Irish Catholic portion of the population.[676] Catholics, whether Irish or French-Canadian, tended to gravitate towards the reformers while Protestants, whether

[671] M. S. Cross, 'Stony Monday, 1849: The Rebellion Losses Riots in Bytown', *Ontario History* 43:3 (1971), p. 190.
[672] Lockwood, 'Eastern Upper Canadian Perceptions', pp. 353-4.
[673] Cross, 'Stony Monday, 1849', p. 177.
[674] Serré, *Bytown at Your Fingertips*, p. 109.
[675] 'The Meeting – Turgeon's Picture' March 1, 1849 in *Bytown Packet*, March 10, 1849.
[676] Lockwood, 'Eastern Upper Canadian Perceptions', p. 235.

English, Scottish, American or Irish, leaned towards the conservatives. Bytown was one of the few parts of Canada West where the majority of the population was Catholic, with 4,798 Catholics out of a total population of 7,760.[677] There was some division along ethnic lines too, but it was far less pronounced. Scottish and English immigrants tended to support the conservative position while the Irish and French the reform position. French-Canadians, unsurprisingly, were often ardent supporters of the Reform government and the Rebellion Losses Bill. Linda Fitzgibbon's work on the Sisters of Charity has shown how during the late 1840s the Irish and French-Canadians enthusiastically cooperated and established successful institutions including bilingual schools and hospitals. The Irish members of the sisters of charity even accepted the need to become fluent in French.[678] Such cooperation continued into the 1851 municipal election as religion, class and politics became closely correlated in the town.[679] Nonetheless, tensions between anglophones and francophones were still present. This was made particularly clear by Joseph-Balsora Turgeon, who was to become Bytown's first francophone mayor in 1853, in a letter written to the *Packet* on the issue of French teachers being paid less than their English counterparts. He wrote 'have they not a claim to be taught their mother tongue?' Nonetheless, even in this letter of protest the Irish Catholic-French-Canadian alliance was evident: he questioned: 'Is Canada to be a second Ireland? Is it tyranny or history, prejudice or ignorance … that has led them to take such a step'?[680]

On the conservative side, substantial numbers of Irish Protestants had proven to be some of Toryism's strongest advocates in the Ottawa Valley.[681] Irish Protestants had been tricked by conniving Scots and Englishmen, according to local reformers: 'A Scotch Tory or an English Tory will bamboozle and hoodwink a thousand Irish Tories to day, and laugh in his sleeve at their *gullibility* tomorrow'.[682] The Irish should unite with their fellow countrymen, rather than forming 'the lower order of Tories' who were 'most violent and reckless' and incited to deeds of violence.[683] Nonetheless, religion was not the sole determinant of political affiliation. One of the earliest historians of the region, Andrew Wilson, noted the participation on Stony Monday of 'Radical Protestants and Roman Catholics' on one side, against 'Conservatives' on the other.[684]

One perception denied the importance of race. The reform paper of Bytown, the *Packet*, expressed a civic ideal of Anglo-Canadian identity: 'neither should it look to Race, Position, or Chance, which results therefrom. Make men and Nations great, and silly are they who would of civilized Nations cry up the superiority of one Race over another'.[685] One's origin was not a requirement to become part of the national community. Instead what mattered was patriotism and committing oneself to the improvement of the country. French, English, Irish and Scots could all form part of such a community. This was likely a response to the atmosphere of increased ethnic tension between anglophones and francophones. For the

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[677] Statistics Canada. *52 UC Table II - Population by Religions, 1851- Upper Canada* (table), 1851-52 - Census of Upper Canada (Population/Agriculture) (database), Using E-STAT (distributor).
http://estat.statcan.gc.ca/cgi-win/cnsmcgi.exe?Lang=E&EST-Fi=EStat\English\SC_RR-eng.htm
(accessed: June 14, 2013)

[678] L. Fitzgibbon, 'Ordered Compassion: Irish Members of the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa in the Mid-Nineteenth Century', M.A. diss., (Carleton University, 2002), pp. 2, 7-8.

[679] Cross, 'Stony Monday', p. 179.

[680] 'How we are dealt with in Bytown' – J.B. Turgeon, Bytown, May 1849 in *Bytown Packet*, 12 May 1849.

[681] Lockwood, *Beckwith*, p. 226.

[682] *Bytown Packet*, 17 March 1849.

[683] Ibid.

[684] A. Wilson, *A History of Old Bytown and Vicinity* (Ottawa: Ottawa News Office, 1876), p. 47.

[685] *Bytown Packet*, 19 May 1849.

triumphant reformers, ideas of race were outdated: 'A Free Government knows no difference between Anglo-Saxon and French-Canadian – all must have equal Political Rights, otherwise they cannot "act as brethren having a common home."'[686] The French-Canadian population could hardly be expected to participate in a positive and productive manner to the improvement of the nation if they were denied their basic political rights. Only by the two races working together could United Canada achieve its destiny. This position – which highlights the ability of people of any ethnic background to participate in the Upper Canadian identity – seems to closely resemble the loyal Canadianism of reformers during the 1837 rebellions in Upper Canada. The colony was to become its own great entity, defined by the productive cooperation between English- and French-speakers, that took for its inspiration the tolerance of Great Britain. Nonetheless, these statements should not be taken purely at face value. They may share the same homeland and were forced to work together for its improvement, but this did not necessarily imply that they were the same people. Citizenship, and ideas of belonging to a common homeland in Canada, could be shared between French- and English-speakers, but this civic nationalist rhetoric likely demonstrated as much a response to the conservative discourse of race as it did a genuine commitment to a civic conception of Britishness.

Reformers mirrored the approach of their compatriots across United Canada. Clearly well aware of the Tory accusations that this was a 'government of the rebels' they responded, in common with Reformers throughout the province, by attempting to turn the focus back on the Tories of that period, whether it was on the Family Compact and Chateau Clique or their more humble supporters. The rebellion losses crisis was a chance to highlight the unwarranted barbarism of the loyalist volunteers of the rebellion era. A reformer writing to the *Packet* argued the government should pay for:

> 'just losses – that is to say, such as the proper of honest and loyal inhabitants that had been wantonly and maliciously destroyed by a pack of Volunteer whelps, for the gallant soldiers of the country were too brave for such mean acts … Was it not just and honest that Reformers who had not taken up arms against Her Majesty's Government, but who had fled to the wild woods for protection, should be remunerated in some way or other for injury done to their properties … Was it not right that the Churches had been sacrilegiously destroyed by some of these loyal Volunteers should be restored?'[687]

Reformers who had not volunteered in 1837 were not, as the Tories had suggested, rebels, but 'just and honest' and they fled from a terrible enemy, the Tory loyalist. It was not rebel atrocities, but loyalist atrocities, that must be compensated for in the present day. Loyalists, as much as rebels, could be responsible for degradations and atrocities. The soldiers of the British government were not responsible for such actions – they were too well trained and of too good a character to engage in such violence. This provided another chance to present the Reformers as loyal, emphasising the British connection here even while condemning the actions of many of those involved in putting down the rebellion. True loyalty for them did not require one to take up arms for the government. Non-participation in the rebellion was perceived as more than adequate proof of one's allegiance.

The changing nature of the content of the loyalty term can be seen particularly from attacks on the Orange Order's previously unimpeachably loyal credentials. The *Orange Lily and Protestant Vindicator* complained of the treatment they had received due to their conservative politics:

[686] 'For the Packet', Equal Rights, 21 June 1849 in *Bytown Packet*, 30 June 1849.
[687] 'The Meeting – Turgeon's Picture', 1 March 1849 in ibid., 10 March 1849.

> 'Because the Orangemen, side by side with their brother Britons, dared to remonstrate against injustice, and petition against legislative iniquity, they were branded by the leaders of a dominant faction, as rebels and traitors to their country – because they ceased to look with respect and veneration upon the representative of a Crown, which his actions had stained and disgraced, they were impeached with disaffection and howled at by the democratic beagles of an unprincipled press, as the enemies of the state.'[688]

Here the trope of disloyalty and rebellion that had long been employed against the reformers was reversed and used to tar the character of that most loyal group, the Orange Order. It seems unlikely that Orangemen, even in Montreal, participated in the Annexation Movement and the *Lily*'s complaints here were justified. Nonetheless, simply association with the conservative party had made this such a plausible complaint that this newly established newspaper felt compelled to re-establish in the minds of the reading public the loyal credentials of the Orange Order.

Political affiliation to wider provincial parties was by no means limited to the reformers. Little more than a decade earlier the terms 'party' and 'faction' were almost interchangeable. Newspaper editors presented their credentials as neutral observers (though it is likely that few readers truly believed such statements) while party politics were studiously avoided even as polarisation grew between reformers and tories. In 1849, there was no such ambiguity. The *Ottawa Advocate* made repeated references to 'the Conservative party', who had 'reason to rejoice at the signal triumph gained on Monday', who were called to solidarity as 'the conservative party in this, as in every other case, were first attacked' and so it was their duty that 'no Conservative will forget himself'. The paper denied that the events of Stony Monday were a Shiner insurrection.[689] They were instead physical manifestation of the ideological battle between Reformer and Tory that was being played out across United Canada.

In place of the language of loyalty came a racialised discourse that pitted the French against the 'Anglo-Saxon'. The 'Anglo-Saxon' merged together the Scot, the Englishman, the Irishman and the American into a single race, fighting for its survival against the machinations of a fundamentally different Frenchman. While such language had been present in Montreal during the era of the rebellions, it only became a powerful phenomenon in the Ottawa Valley during the late 1840s. Conservatives willingly accepted this new language. Reformers, on the other hand, tended to ridicule it: 'From the many invocations that have been lately addressed by the Conservative Press to the Anglo Saxons, Britons, and sons of Britons, to "awake I arise" one would imagine that the whole tribe of Britons had been imitating the Bears the past winter, and had taken to themselves a quiet snooze, at the same time complacently licking their paws by way of sustenance'.[690] They viewed the controversies of the year as political and so had little use for this racial language. They denied the existence of 'French Domination' and the attempts to link all anglophones together as 'Anglo-Saxon' appeared to be a Tory machination to distract people from the real issues – those of responsible government and reciprocity. There had been no fundamental change in the last few years that they could point to, that meant the British population needed to now be awakened. Such a position of 'Anglo-Saxon' brilliance was ridiculed by the *Packet* as they asked 'were the Medes and Persians, the Egyptians, the Grecians, the Romans, "Anglo-Saxons"'?[691]

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[688] *The Orange Lily and Protestant Vindicator*, 1 August 1849.
[689] *Ottawa Advocate*, 19 September 1849.
[690] *Bytown Packet*, 5 May 1849.
[691] Ibid., 26 May 1849.

It would be too simple to suggest that reformers viewed their French-Canadian counterparts as equals however. While they advocated political cooperation and incorporation of the French-Canadian peoples, they too held a number of stereotypes about French-Canadians. They were a 'talented and industrious race', but, much as others described the Irish, 'when led by the demagogues of *L'Avenir* school we fear that they will deteriorate: governed wisely, as they now are, their attention will be turned towards the higher branches of Manufacture and Education; but led away by Students just out of College and unprincipled Politicians, they may manufacture *Sabets* and Straw Hats'.[692] *L'Avenir* was the radical paper published by Papineau and represented the viewpoint of the *rouge* party of Canada East. Only through the guidance of paternalistic Britons could the French-Canadians achieve great things. They were especially susceptible to the deceptions of demagogues. On this, reformers largely agreed with their conservative opponents. The rebellions of 1837 were proof enough of the simple character of the French-Canadian *habitant*. Papineau, through his newspaper, had once again raised his head as a dangerous villain who would lead the humble, innocent, but naïve French-Canadians astray.

Much like in Montreal, the greatest fear for these Anglo-Saxons was 'French Domination'. One Tory, writing to discontinue his subscription to the reformist *Packet*, felt it was his 'duty as a British subject, and in justice to my feelings as an Englishman' to 'resist French domination and tyranny.'[693] For Tories such as Thomas Wilson, the British population suffered under an unjust form of government that submerged their interests beneath those of the French. This was a struggle of national survival. Much as the French were fighting for 'survivance', the maintenance of their own customs and language, so too were the British fighting for their own culture. The policy of conciliation that had been so maligned by the Tories of Lower Canada in the late 1830s appeared to be revived by Lord Elgin in 1849. The concept of 'French Domination' was prevalent throughout the Canadas in these years.

The Orange Order was just as violent in its denunciation of 'French' rule. As expressed by the *Orange Lily*, the British population suffered 'under the despotic rule of a French faction opposed to British principles' which was supported 'by a clique of apostate reformers from Upper Canada'. This critique was tied to anti-Catholicism: 'the [British American] League contemplates the curtailments of the unhallowed power of a French-ridden and disaffected faction, whose public acts have ever been, when practicable, subservient to the propagation and progress of Popery'.[694] Here the language of racial treachery combined with that of strident Protestantism and loyalism to create a potent mix. Nonetheless, the Orange Order for the most part simply echoed the criticisms of the Reform party that resounded throughout the conservative provincial press and fitted in its own ideological slant where appropriate. The primary opposition to the government was its 'anti-British' nature and not its Catholicism.

The growth of racial identities did not, however, completely undermine the power of ethnic identities. Indeed, Scottishness was contested by both political parties. For Reformers, the actions of the Montreal Tories were unbecoming of true Scotsmen. For Tories, Lord Elgin had betrayed his heritage as a Scotsman. The debates of the Montreal press were repeated in Bytown and the *Montreal Gazette*, edited by the Scotsman William Gordon Mack, came in for particular criticism:

> 'he does *not possess*, at least, a sterling, genuine Scotch heart.... I can only be astonished at and disgusted by the barefaced and egregious effrontery of MACK in his doings to desecrate the name of

[692] Ibid., 16 June 1849.
[693] 'To the Editor' – Thomas Wilson, Lochaber, 7 March 1849 in ibid., 24 March 1849.
[694] *Ottawa Argus*, 1 August 1849.

> Bruce or Wallace in a cause to which were they now living they would be decidedly hostile. – Bruce and Wallace!! Natures and Scotland's noble and most endeared and chivalrous sons; they did not struggle, as the Canadian Tories do to maintain illicitly and unconstitutionally the rude administration of a *Faction* and *Compact*.'[695]

Scots were presented as naturally liberal people. Struggling to preserve privilege, as the Montreal Tories now did, went against their very nature. The heroes of Scottish history, had fought for liberty and against oppression - and it appeared now that, in Montreal at least, they had become instruments of that oppression. A reformer may emphasize their Scottishness to increase the connection between themselves and the Governor General. By discussing such widely revered Scottish heroes as Bruce and Wallace, they hoped to attract wavering Scots to their cause. Attempts to present the current conflict in terms of British against French were counter-productive to the reformer cause. More recent immigrants were more likely to respond to language of this type. Local Tories attempted to appropriate Scottishness for themselves. They must 'endeavour to create a disrespect for Lord Elgin – say that he is not a legitimate *Bruce'*.[696] As a descendant of Robert the Bruce, Lord Elgin held a strong rhetorical position. His actions, simply by virtue of his ancestors, reflected on what it meant to be Scottish. To maintain an effective rhetorical attack against him, this must be turned against him. He had to be portrayed as unworthy of the name 'Bruce' and hence unworthy of all Scots. While the political battle was largely about the interests of Canada, by appealing to older ethnic identities such as 'Scottish' or 'Irish', local commentators were able to broaden the appeal of their political tirades.

Irishness continued to have great importance to the region. This was celebrated through St. Patrick's Day and the 12th July. In Bytown the Irish dimension of the day was downplayed and instead it was used to express Catholic solidarity. There was a 'procession of the several Irish and French Temperance Societies' during the day.[697] Temperance societies were involved in the processions to combat the stereotype of the drunken Irishman. Temperance was a sign of respectability in contemporary Canada and helped to present the Irish (and French) Catholic as a positive contributor to society in contrast to the violent and drunken Orangemen who disturbed the peace every July 12th.

The people of the Ottawa Valley still sought news from the country of their birth. The Young Ireland movement attracted attention and the *Packet* drew attention to the publication of *The People*, a newspaper focused on Irish politics published in New York.[698] St. Patrick's Day presented another opportunity to look back towards Ireland as a toast was made to 'the memory of Daniel O'Connell' in 'solemn silence'.[699] Nonetheless, this movement was not followed nearly so closely as O'Connell's repeal movement had been. The arrival of Famine immigrants in the region helped remind them of the travails suffered by the Irish in their homeland, but the rebellion losses controversy provided an immediacy to provincial politics that could not be matched by the distant troubles of Ireland. The increasingly large proportion of the population that had been born in Canada, making up 58% of the population of Carleton County, is likely to have further distanced public opinion from the politics of the British Isles.[700] However, even on St. Patrick's Day, a number of toasts were made earlier in the evening relating to local matters, including toasts to the Governor General, the Sister

[695] 'To the Editor of the Packet' – Organ, Gatineau, 5 March 1849 in *Bytown Packet*, 17 March 1849.
[696] 'To the Editor of the Packet' – Cato in *Bytown Packet*, 16 June 1849.
[697] *Bytown Packet*, 17 March 1849.
[698] Ibid.
[699] *Bytown Packet*, 24 March 1849.
[700] Statistics Canada, UC Table III, Birth Places of the People.

Societies, the Press and 'Canada, the land of our adoption'.[701] Further up the Ottawa, in Campbeltown, a similar pattern can be observed in the toasts.[702]

The British American League for some conservatives, presented the remedy for French-Canadian rule. William Pittman Lett, the editor of the *Lily*, was one of the representatives of the League. But the institution faced serious opposition from much of Carleton County. The Irish had been severely under-represented in positions of importance: 'Here is evidence of Anglo-Saxon energy. In a County "Irish to the back bone" the League, - composed, no doubt, of poor deluded Irishmen for the most part, - the Irishmen are shorn of the honors; but if any fighting or rioting is to be done, the Irish are the b'hoys.'[703] All attempts at presenting the British American League as a pan-British movement failed when in reality its ethnic composition was no different than that of the local elite. The Irish, at least in Carleton County, were relegated to the role of Orange enforcers, doing the violent bidding of Scottish and English leaders. As a national institution, this does not appear to have been the case, as individuals such as Ogle Gowan, the Irish Protestant immigrant from Brockville, took on leading roles in the League. Locally, though, the League appeared to be an attempt to revive the political fortunes of the Carleton gentry. Its 'strangest feature' was 'the facility with which the Scotch Tories ride rough shod over their more powerful but less intelligent co-Leaguers, the Irish Tories'. They were 'not satisfied with excluding Irishmen from every Office in the League worth having, they would not listen to the name of an Irishman as a Candidate for that body and forced upon them one who, of all others, held the least claim ... Irish Tories form the great bulk of the 'League', and yet they are unhonoured and unknown'.[704] The British American League, by failing to give its patronage to the local Irish population, had alienated the Irish of Carleton county. One writer was even more incensed by what he termed 'Scotch domination' in the League. Any Irishman who joined it 'must bear in mind that he is a traitor to himself – a traitor to his Countrymen, and an enemy to his Country'.[705] While growing patriotism can be discerned in the Ottawa Valley, ethnic identity remained a powerful force.

Some were frustrated instead by the ineffectualness of the League and the Kingston conference. For one ex-conservative, it was 'a set of men burning with anger, and smarting under deep disgrace and repeated disappointments, and uncurbed by any moral or religious restraints', that was 'determined by these means to delude the public, and by their assistance to carry out their unholy schemes'. They intended to bring the horrors that had recently plagued Montreal to the country as a whole, through 'the creating of rankling strife, disunion and the deepest hatred between those who are living together as brethren, in the land of their adoption – to some the land of their birth, - children of the same common parent, who have lived together in harmony heretofore, and in the enjoyment of peace and good will. The creating of such a strife, - a national antipathy among brethren of the most cruel, the most inhuman kind, that could not fail to be productive of a fearful amount of misery, of crime and bloodshed.[706] Another saw the League as a 'Political Secret Society', with the Orange Order forming the best comparison.[707] Despite this, many people from the Ottawa Valley participated in the actions of the British American League.

[701] *Bytown Packet*, 24 March 1849.
[702] Ibid.
[703] Ibid., 12 May 1849.
[704] Ibid., 16 June 1849.
[705] 'To the Loyal Irishmen of Carleton County' – Justitia in *Bytown Packet*, 24 June 1849.
[706] 'To the Editor of the Packet' – Cato in ibid., 19 May 1849.
[707] 'For the Packet' – Equal Rights, 21 June 1849 in ibid., 30 June 1849.

The Ottawa Valley region, though generally more moderate in its responses to the crisis than their Montreal counterparts, was not immune from annexationist sentiment. Ruggles Wright, a leading lumber merchant from Hull, stated 'The present ministry is a greater set of scoundrels than the last --- the sooner this part of the country is annexed to the United States, the better, and I sincerely trust that day is not far distant. I for one would turn out at a moments notice to aid in accomplishing this object.'[708]. The *Ottawa Argus*, a conservative paper from Aylmer, received two letters from unnamed Reformers supporting peaceable separation with Great Britain and annexation to the United States.[709] This does not, however, suggest any great level of support for annexation amongst the Reform populace.

Underlying all these cases, whether supporting the British American League, annexation, or condemning the actions of the Montreal Tories, was a powerful language of patriotism. It appeared that a form of Anglo-Canadian identity had replaced loyalty as the defining paradigm of Canadian politics. The language of 'A Reformer' was unmistakably nationalist. It was hostile to the subordination of United Canada to Great Britain as Canada had 'been kept in a state of degradation' by the mother country. Annexation would provide a number of economic benefits, but more importantly, 'it would elevate colonists from the despicable posture of mean sycophants and paltry petitioners to the proud attitude and dignity of freemen'. It was 'beneath the dignity of Canadian freemen to be tied by the neck to the tail of a British lion'. The battle was underway between 'the rights of humanity and the tyranny of foreign domination.'[710] Such a solution to Canada's ills was clearly unusual; such patriotic language was not. Another writer in favour of annexation referred to 'the canadian people', referring to the English-speaking portion of the population, multiple times. They had a 'destiny as a free nationality' that 'may be delayed but not destroyed'.[711] This represented a striking change in language. In the past decade, the term 'canadian' had meant French-speaker. An idea of English-speakers in the Canadas as not just a collective unit and imagined community but as a nation with its own rights was a far cry from the loyalist paradigm of the 1830s. Then, the Orange Order's conception of loyalty, as expressed by the *Orange Lily*, had dominated: 'Loyalty to the British Government … is not an acquired feeling. It is born with them. It is not a sentiment which owes its existence to interest.'[712] Nonetheless, this position by the *Orange Lily* seems not to reflect the sentiments of most Canadians. For them, loyalty *did* now depend on common interests. Fortunately for loyalists, most were able to agree that their interests either aligned or could be easily reconciled.

For most Canadians, however, annexation was unthinkable. Whatever respect they held for the United States political system was undermined by the institution of slavery.[713] To be British (or Canadian) was to be opposed to slavery. The conservatives had undermined themselves as potential representatives of Canada by allying themselves with the pro-slavery United States. A poem on the 'Bruce of Canada' (referring to Lord Elgin) celebrated Canada in terms of freedom similar to those often used to describe England:

> 'Canada, you nourish men
> Who the Lordling's place to gain

[708] 'Ruggles Wright Jr to Ruggles Wright Sr', Hull, 14 July 1849 in LAC, *Philemon Wright Family Fonds*, MG24-D8, Vol. 30, 12632-5.
[709] *Ottawa Argus*, 6 March 1850.
[710] 'To the Editor of the Ottawa Argus', A Reformer, Ottawa, 20 February 1850, in Ibid.
[711] 'To the Editor of the Ottawa Argus' – Annexation, 25 February 1850 in Ibid.
[712] *The Orange Lily and Protestant Vindicator*, 1 August 1849.
[713] *Bytown Packet*, 16 June 1849. See also *Bytown Packet*, 7 July 1849 urging annexationists to form an independent republic rather than joining with the slaveholding United States.

Would rivet on the galling chain
Of base slavery.

Apex of Aristocracy,
To some despotic country flee,
Teach your minions slavery;-
Not in Canada

Where the flag of freedom waves –
Canada can't nourish slaves-
Lordlings here will find their graves
For we must be free

Sons of freedom, rally then –
Guard your rights against the men
Who league to rivet on the chain
Of base slavery'.[714]

The anti-slavery cry appears to have become a fundamental part of the Canadian political discourse. It was one of the few political issues that both Reformers and Tories could agree on. Whether in the London District, in Montreal, or in Bytown, Canadians viewed slavery as morally wrong. It distinguished their province as superior to the United States. Even those who supported annexation had little love for the institution of slavery. Throughout the song a double meaning was intended for slavery. It referred to the oppression of the Family Compact in the pre-rebellion years as well as to the institution of black slavery in the United States. The 'flag of freedom' was that of Britain. It was one of Canada's most proud inheritances. 'Canada' as conceived by reformers had no use for 'lordlings' aiming to recreate an aristocracy. By comparing Tory politicians with American slaveholders, this writer aimed to evoke feelings of revulsion amongst his readers.

The politics of the Ottawa Valley in 1849 were acted out in the public sphere. They people of the region held township meetings, wrote petitions and paraded in the streets. They participated in the British American League and in the local press, and some even burned effigies of the major political actors. Both the reform and the conservative press were encouraged by these outbursts of popular opinion. This was a far cry from the paternalist oligarchy of the Carleton gentry of the 1830s. Now the 'public', conceived of in an inclusive fashion, incorporating men (though not women) of all ethnicities and classes, were expected to play an active role in provincial politics. The two Tory papers, the *Advocate* and the *Gazette* styled the meeting on the rebellion losses in Bytown in February a "glorious triumph of constitutional principles", one of 'the most respectable' that 'was ever held in Bytown'.[715] Of course, reformers were unwilling to let such a position go unchallenged. The meeting could not be seen as a legitimate expression of popular opinion because 'it was nothing more nor less than a row' and the resolutions it passed were passed only 'by those who remained after they had abused and driven away a great part of those who composed the Meeting'.[716], In practice, most public meetings failed to live up to their ideals of representativeness and non-partisanship. There was a significant divergence between the ideal of the town meeting and its practice. It was necessary, if the opinions presented in the resolutions passed did not match one's own, to question the legitimacy of the meeting. No one was willing to let one party's interpretation of events represent Bytown's reaction as a whole to the rebellion losses controversy. The numbers who participated are almost certainly exaggerated, but if the

[714] 'Song' – Edgar, Bytown, 28 June 1849 in *Bytown Packet*, 1 July 1849.
[715] 'The Meeting – Cato's Picture', 27 February, 1849 in ibid., 10 March 1849.
[716] Ibid.

Packet and the *Advocate* are to be believed, Carleton County sent a petition to the Queen calling for the recall of Lord Elgin with over 2,500 signatures, while the County of Ottawa, on the other side of the river, sent an address approving of the Governor General's conduct with 4,550 signatures. While it may be unwise to suggest these numbers adequately reflected the proportion of reform and conservative sentiment in the region, they do demonstrate widespread participation in public meetings on issues of provincial politics.

The most extreme example of this was the riot that occurred on 'Stony Monday' on 17 September 1849.[717] The events began with the holding of a town meeting to create an address to present the Governor General upon his arrival in Bytown. This was initially intended to be a non-political address, but conservatives were easily led to believe that this was a Reformer trick. In the minds of many Tories the actions of the Governor General had been overtly partisan. It was not possible to present a non-political address to him. Any statement of approbation for the Governor General implied tacit acceptance of the system of responsible government. The name Elgin had become inextricably intertwined with the Rebellion Losses crisis.

Held in reformist Lower Town, the local Tory population did all they could to undermine the meeting. They agreed to hold their own conservative meeting on Wednesday, September 19, 1849 to present a counter-address. To ensure their victory, they brought in supporters from the surrounding countryside.[718] The *Advocate* in its defence of the actions of the conservative party on Stony Monday, wrote that the riot was started by 'a Raftsman from the Gatineau'. This was a clear attempt to discredit the Reform party of Bytown. They were violent Shiners, not engaged in rational political debate, but they represented nothing more than a continuation of the disorder that had disturbed the Ottawa Valley for the past two decades. The conservatives, meanwhile, were 'indignant Britons' and the implication was that their Reform opponents could not lay claim to the term 'Briton'. Many of the reformers involved were French-Canadians, which allowed the *Advocate* to present the events of Stony Monday as a battle between British and French, while never needing to explicitly mention the French presence. Turning out to support the conservative party was not just a political virtue, but a national one, too – it was 'the Britons of Carleton' that 'turned out nobly to assert and defend their rights'.[719] Even the mayor was not immune to the polarised politics of the day. According to Hugh McLachlin, 'there was a great deal of party feeling shewn that day by our worthy Mayor for at the time he was leading the soldiers round to where the row was instead of taking the first party they came to who were breaking the Peace ... all the prisoners that were taken were from the Reform party'.[720] The controversies surrounding public officials were no longer related to law and order but to political partisanship in terms of the umbrella categories of 'Reform' and 'Tory'.

The events of 1849 brought forth a new passion for provincial politics in the Ottawa Valley. Its inhabitants were polarised between Tories and Reformers. The language and violence of the Montreal parties spread with ease to Bytown and the surrounding areas. Reformers were the 'rebel-rewarding party' while Tories were 'Annexationists', 'Leaguers' and 'Office-Seekers'. The treasonous actions of the Montreal Tories led the Ottawa contingent of the party to look to Canada West, and particularly to the British American League, for leadership. This represented the beginnings of a new conservative party, substantially

[717] An account of the events can be found in Cross, 'Stony Monday'.
[718] *Ottawa Advocate*, 19 September 1849.
[719] Ibid.
[720] 'Hugh McLachlin to Daniel McLachlin', Bytown, 20 September 1849 in LAC, *Hamnett Pinhey Hill Collection*, MG24-I9, Vol. 20, pp. 4959-60.

different to the ‘Family Compact’ remnants that had made up the Tories of the 1840s. An attempt to restore the gentry’s power through the means of the League was contested from the start as it was presented as an anti-Irish institution by reformers. By 1849 the Ottawa Valley had been fully integrated into provincial politics. The categories of ‘Reformer’ and ‘Tory’ overshadowed those of ‘Shiner’ and ‘magistrate’ that had predominated in the 1830s. The rebellion losses controversy was reported on in almost every copy of the *Bytown Packet* from the bill’s introduction in February until the publication of the Annexation Manifesto in October. The difficulties surrounding the lumber trade and the peculiarly Irish character of Carleton County were not entirely forgotten, but the issues that occupied the minds of the people of the Ottawa through 1849 were largely the same as those in Montreal or London, Canada West. Widespread participation in township meetings and the Stony Monday riot demonstrated that these issues were relevant to everyone, not just a political elite. This represented not just a temporary reaction to the crises of 1849 but a fundamental development in the politics of the Ottawa Valley. The choice of Ottawa as the capital of Canada in 1857 was a deliberate, calculated move that had been made possible by the region’s integration into the provincial political sphere.

Meanwhile, the reform party saw the emergence of a French-Irish Catholic alliance that had been challenged during the years of the Shiners’ War. Located in Lower Town in Bytown, they fought together on Stony Monday against their conservative and Protestant foes. Politics had increasingly taken on an ethnic dimension, as the languages of race and ethnicity were variously used by political actors to advance their interests. Increasingly, debates over the rebellion losses bill were portrayed as a conflict between the ‘Anglo-Saxons’ and the ‘French’. Tensions between Protestants and Catholics were common, but they were ultimately less relevant than the new ethnic politics of the day. Despite the reformist alliance between the Irish and the French, it appears this alliance was based on convenience, not mutual respect. The tropes that had dominated the newspapers of 1837 with reference to the French-Canadian *habitant* continued its legacy even amongst the reformers. While they believed French-Canadians should be granted equal political rights, this was to ensure their quiescence and allow English-speaking leadership. The risk was that they would fall into the hands of a demagogue like Papineau if the increasing divide between ‘British’ and ‘French’ continued to drive them away. The Annexation movement reminded reformers that the United States was an Other, not to be trusted and it was to be condemned for its advocacy of slavery. For the Tories, however, the French presented the most dangerous Other as the rebellion losses bill was presented as undeniable evidence of ‘French Domination’.

4.3 The Rebellion Losses Question in the London District

As far away as London, Canada West, the rebellion losses bill was vigorously debated. Followed by the Governor General's tour of Canada West, the formation of the British American League, and the annexation movement, the issue continued to resonate throughout the year. It tied into ideas of race and ethnicity, into the new political system of responsible government, the spectre of 'French domination' and the future of Canada as a political entity. It also created clear 'Others' for the population of the London District to focus on – Reformers, basking in their new status as loyal British subjects, turned increasingly against the United States and their annexationist supporters in Canada East. Conservatives, threatened by the new political system, drew together into a newly racialized 'Anglo-Saxon' collective, who shared more with the Americans south of the border than with the French-Canadians within United Canada. The rhetoric of loyalty lost its power as both reformers and conservatives co-opted the term and stretched its meaning to breaking point. Politics were redefined as the old Tory party lost much of their credibility. New languages of race, patriotism and rights replaced it. One manner through which this was spread was the recently established British American League. Gerald Hallowell argued that the League 'though weak and insignificant as to immediate political results, provided some constructive and Canadian solutions; it fulfilled a basic need in the Upper Canadian Tory psyche'.[721] This is no doubt true, but Hallowell does not go far enough. The League has too often been dismissed by historians due to its ultimate failure. It must be examined as much for what it represented as for what it achieved. The League was more than just a psychological bandage for the damaged ego of the old Tory party. Conservatives at the time saw it as the beginning of a national movement, essential for revitalising both the country and their party. In the London district, as elsewhere, local branches were created and representatives were sent to the convention in Kingston.

The district had its own controversies resulting from the rebellion losses crisis. The conservatives of the district, disgusted at his conduct, refused to condemn the various insults and attacks laid on the governor at Montreal. In October 1849 Lord Elgin visited London as part of his tour of Canada West. His visit to London was eventful. Led by the mayor, Thomas C. Dixon, a group of Tories and orangemen from the surrounding townships tore down the triumphal arches erected by reformers. The year ended with municipal elections in London. Here the same provincial political issues filtered down to the local level. In the past, local government had focused on personal character and local issues. It was now brought into the provincial public sphere as another arena for the contest between national political parties.

The 'London District' as used here continues to refer to the counties of Middlesex, Oxford and Norfolk rather than its new boundaries after the creation of the Brock and Talbot districts in 1837. London was linked into a widening communications network, particularly through the telegraph, which had reached London by 1847.[722] While the railroad had not yet reached the district, its impact was widely discussed, and the increased use of steamboats made the district far more accessible than it had been two decades earlier. The district was now well

[721] G. Hallowell, 'The Reaction of Upper Canadian Tories to the adversity of 1849: the annexation crisis and the British American League', *Ontario History* 62:1 (1970), p. 41.

[722] F. H. Armstrong and D. J. Brock, 'The rise of London: a Study of Urban Evolution in Nineteenth Century Southwestern Ontario' in F. Armstrong, H. Stevenson and J. Wilson (eds.), *Aspects of Nineteenth-Century Ontario: Essays Presented to James J. Talman* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), p. 92.

served by a partisan press. Reformers could read the *Canadian Free Press* or the *Western Globe*, both published in London, while Tories had the *London Times*, the Woodstock *British American* and the *Oxford Star* to satisfy their needs.

The London District had a diverse distribution of national origins. According to the census of 1848, the District had a population of 41,986. The town of London had grown from a small village into Canada West's fifth largest urban centre, with 4,668 inhabitants.[723] In the district, 3,685 came from England and Wales, 5,272 from Ireland, 3,727 from Scotland, and 2,640 from the United States. But by far the largest group were English speakers born in the province, of which there were 25,817.[724] By 1849 it had begun to lose its American tinge due to the dual phenomena of immigration from the British Isles and the exodus of many American-born Upper Canadians following the rebellions of 1837. In London only 354 inhabitants had been born in the United States. Those born in Upper Canada were the largest group, with 1,677 members, closely followed by the 1,207 Scottish inhabitants and the 801 people of English and Welsh origin. Noticeably absent were the Irish making a proportion of 7.8%, despite representing 12.5% of the district's population.[725]

The Conservative party of Canada in 1849 was the direct descendant of the Compact Tories of the 1830s. Its leader was the virulent francophobe Allan MacNab of Hamilton. MacNab had led the militia in putting down the Upper Canadian rebellions of 1837.[726] The party continued to support the Church of England, the clergy reserves and executive authority; they opposed the introduction of responsible government; were fiercely anti-democratic; and above all, they were opposed to 'French Domination'. Though McNab led the party, much of its influence was based in Montreal. At this time John A. Macdonald remained quiet. He participated in organising the convention of the British American League in Kingston but made no play for the leadership of the party.[727]

The local party was fractured. Its representative in the Legislative Assembly was the moderate John Wilson, who came under fire for his support of the Governor General later in the year. Some of its most influential members were hardliners such as the mayor, Thomas C. Dixon, and the merchant Lawrence Lawrason. Much of the district's politics was conducted at the Eldon House in London, the home of the half-pay officer and district treasurer John Harris. As Fred Landon has noted, 'Upper Canada's old-time Toryism died a hard death in 1849, unrepentant to the last … In a medley of riot and violence it as at length so thoroughly discredited that a sense of decency drove its forward-looking elements into alliance with the more moderate of their opponents'.[728] A realignment of politics took place which brought the Tories of the region into closer contact with their compatriots throughout United Canada.

Union of the Canadas had brought the English-speaking peoples of Canada West into regular and sustained political contact with a people of different culture, religion and language for the

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[723] Statistics Canada. *UC Table I – Dwellings, Families, Population, Sexes, Conjugal Condition* (table), 1848 - Census of Upper Canada (database), Using E-STAT (distributor). http://estat.statcan.gc.ca/cgi-win/cnsmcgi.exe?Lang=e&ESTATFile=/ESTAT/English/A18485T1.HTM accessed 14/02/13

[724] Statistics Canada. *UC Table III - Birth Places of the People* (table), 1848 - Census of Upper Canada (database), Using E-STAT (distributor). http://estat.statcan.gc.ca/cgi-win/cnsmcgi.exe?Lang=e&ESTATFile=/ESTAT/English/A18485T3.HTM accessed 14/02/13

[725] Ibid.

[726] P. Baskerville, "MacNAB, Sir ALLAN NAPIER," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 9, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed February 14, 2014, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/macnab_allan_napier_9E.html.

[727] Creighton, *John A. Macdonald*, p. 139.

[728] F. Landon, 'An Upper Canada Community in the Political Crisis of 1849', *Ontario History* 26 (1930), p. 461.

elites of the province. For the majority, French influence could be seen in the taxes they had to pay, the legislation passed, and particularly, through the reporting of the events of French-speaking Canada East in their local newspapers. The influence that the French population exercised over the English-speaking population was seen as intolerable:

> 'it is the anomaly of French domination, in an English Colony, rather than the antagonism of race or tendancies, which at the present moment rouses indignation and creates alarm. A state of things so unprecedented and conflicting, cannot be always endured. A remedy must be found, or the incubus must be thrown off: the Gordian knot must be untied, or else it must be cut.'[729]

A French-speaking population exercising the rights of free-born Englishmen was the 'anomaly' to which the *Times* referred. This was a perspective that particularly appealed recent British immigrants: 'Blaming political situations on French-Canadian domination was a rhetorical strategy often pursued in the United Province because it worked: many Upper Canadians imagined their community as struggling under the yoke of external domination by a people foreign in language and religion, a perspective readily adopted by incoming waves of immigrants to Canada West whose identity as Britons was anti-French and anti-Catholic'.[730] This idea of 'French Domination' saturated conservative political discourse in 1849 and can be largely attributed to two events: the Union of the Canadas and the achievement of responsible government. In the 1830s, this concept was virtually non-existent in Upper Canada. In Montreal complaints of 'conciliation' had been common but a unified ideology that suggested Lower Canada suffered under the tyrannical government of French-Canadians did not exist. Ultimately, the governor general, the British connection and the unelected executive and legislative councils provided an important bulwark against 'French Domination'. Responsible government removed these protections and now, with the Union of the Canadas, extended the system to Canada West. The French as 'Other' now had a direct relevance to English-speakers across the Canadas. In 1837 it had seemed that the British had triumphed over French-Canadian nationalism. By 1849, that victory seemed hollow. French rebels sat on the government benches and Lord Elgin did nothing to prevent the passing of pro-French and anti-British legislation in the minds of Tories.

The Rebellion Losses Bill was the culmination of a series of measures conducted by the 'French' government. It was not a bill to pay for the just losses caused by the rebellion, but a 'rebel-rewarding measure'.[731] The presence of English-speaking reformers in the government was either ignored or they were described as traitors or lackeys. 'Radicals' were no different to the French, and certainly could not be viewed as loyal. In the minds of the conservative faction, '*the party which rebelled against the Crown in 1837, now governs the country*.'[732] This belief in French-Canadian over-representation did not reflect the facts – four out of ten members of the cabinet were of French origin while in the Legislative Assembly twenty-eight out of eighty four representatives were French-Canadian.[733] In truth, this was not a system of 'French Domination', but a government that effectively represented the composition of the country.

The French-Canadians had, according to conservatives, 'been twice conquered, once as foreign enemies, and once as rebels'.[734] The rebellions of 1837 represented one more battle in

[729] *London Times*, 6 April 1849.
[730] I. Radforth, 'Political Demonstrations and Spectacles during the Rebellion Losses Controversy in Upper Canada,' *Canadian Historical Review* 92:1 (2011), p. 10.
[731] *London Times*, 16 March 1849.
[732] Ibid., 4 May 1849.
[733] The *Long Point Advocate*, quoted in *Canadian Free Press*, 10 April 1849.
[734] *London Times*, 6 April 1849.

the war between British and French. The events of those years were not perceived as outbursts of political, social or economic discontent; but rather the rising of one race against another. The British had won this war – it was therefore only just that they should exercise political domination over their enemies. For some, such as member of the legislative assembly Phillip Vankoughnett, only the most extreme solutions would suffice:

> 'Unless you can drive the French-Canadians into the ocean, butcher and exterminate them, he asked in Heaven's name what was to be done with them!'[735]

One of the most obnoxious parts of the rebellion losses bill was its requirement for funding from Canada West as well as Canada East. It was presented by Tories as evidence that the French-Canadians could force Upper Canadian loyalists to pay French rebels. High-profile rebel claims undermined the government's argument that the act would not be used to pay for the losses of those who had rebelled in 1837: 'Dr. Wolfred Nelson, who headed the rebels at St. Eustache and St. Dennis, claims £23,109; and every rebel … demands compensation not only for property destroyed but also for loss of time'.[736] Only those who had been banished to Bermuda were excluded from receiving compensation. It was difficult to establish who had been involved in the rebellion without setting off a potentially disastrous witch-hunt. Conservatives saw a great difference between the Upper and Lower Canadian losses bills:

> 'those of U. Canada were taken for the payment of her Rebellion claims, those of Lower Canada were, and are to this day, made use of for local purposes. If this be not payment from a local source, irrespective of the general revenue, we know not how the purpose could have been carried out. Howbeit, let the Frenchmen pay the most outrageous of their claims *in the same way*, and Upper Canadians will consider it local payment and leave them alone in their glory'.[737]

In the case of the Upper Canadian rebellion losses bill of 1845, the question could never be interpreted in the context of 'French Domination'. The interests of the loyal 'Upper Canada' were to be paramount. It was intolerable for the government to enforce the English-speaking community to pay rebels compensation. This bill could not have come at a worse time due to 'the exhausted state of the provincial exchequer.'[738] The material improvement of United Canada and its economic welfare had been set back by the extravagance of a self-interested French-Canadian government. Even were the payments to be made palatable, it was seen as an expense the province could ill-afford.

Even worse, the Governor General himself, usually the staunch ally of the Conservative party in the Canadas, had allied himself to this French conspiracy. He had 'Frenchmen, Radicals and Aliens on his side, and British people against him'.[739] It was hard to view Lord Elgin as the appropriate representative of the Queen. Many calls were made for him to return to Britain, while appeals were made to the Queen to reject the bill herself.

The English-speaking peoples of Canada East were seen as part of the same community. According to the *Times*, it would be a tragedy for them to be abandoned to French domination, even if repeal of the Union of the Provinces could be achieved:

> 'In French-Canadians, then, it appears the Conservatives see their "bane and antidote" both before them; - oppression on the one hand, emancipation, on the other. The choice, obvious as it must be, is, nevertheless, alloyed, with one of painful regret; and that is, the abandoning of Lower Canadian

[735] P. M. Vankoughnett quoted in *The Western Globe*, 25 August 1849.
[736] *London Times*, 16 February 1849.
[737] Ibid., 16 March 1849.
[738] *British American*, 23 June 1849.
[739] *London Times*, 15 June 1849.

> Conservatives to French tyranny. This is, doubtless, an evil in the repeal alternative deeply to which self-preservation alone could justify. In the event of separation, let all who may be able to remove to Upper Canada; we have room enough for them and abundant scope for capital and enterprise.'[740]

English Canada was now viewed as an emotional and political unit. A natural affinity was assumed between the Conservatives of both Canada West and Canada East. Upper Canada was the centre of the Anglo-Canadian community in the conservative mind and French-Canadians were the enemy that threatened its very existence. As demonstrated above, many English-speaking Canadians feared leaving the English-speakers of those areas in the midst of a francophone-dominated political entity. Therefore, an extended Upper Canada, that included Montreal and sometimes the eastern townships, provided an elegant solution:

> 'With an immense track of rich productive country abounding in Lakes and Rivers, and settled by a hardy Anglo-Saxon race, yearly augmenting by emigration, Upper Canada has all the elements of wealth and greatness, and needs no other alliance than that of the parent state. The chief obstacle presenting in the question of separation is the want of a Port of Entry, and this desideratum it is proposed to supply by asking Montreal.'[741]

In this view, presented by the conservative *London Times*, the imagined community was that of Upper Canada. Unable to function as it was, it required the port of Montreal, with its access to the St. Lawrence and the transatlantic trade, to become a viable nation. With that achieved, there were no limits to what could be accomplished. Lower Canada was seen as a separate entity. It was a farming country, defined by boundless land and possessing a natural communications network through its riverine pathways.

A reformer, by contrast, articulated a vision of the Canadian nation that embraced both provinces:

> 'From Gaspe to Sandwich the alarm has been sounded. Up, then, strong hands and loyal hearts! The loaves and fishes are in view! By a persevering loyal rage, you may perhaps succeed to power. Then the halcyon age –the Tory Millennium – will commence. Rectories, clergy reserves, and a host of blessings will be showered on the happy Canadian.'[742]

He described the eastern and western extremities of United Canada as the extent of the nation. The term 'Canadian' here is used, notably, to refer to English-speaking peoples. This is noticeably different from earlier uses of the term which saw the word as describing only those of French origin.

The rebellion losses crisis created an increasingly racialized discourse. It was begun by Tories attempting to motivate their followers. The focus on race highlighted the division between French and British above all other demarcations. French-Canadians were fundamentally different to the British:

> 'Notwithstanding all the pains that have been taken, in order to effect an amalgamation of policy, or to establish a community of interest, the French and the Anglo-Saxon race in Canada remain as hostile and distinct as do the Parent States in Europe.'[743]

In the view of the *Times*, one could be British, as well as English, Scots or Irish, but together with English-speaking peoples across the world they shared a racial heritage as 'Anglo-Saxons'. This was a new term, rarely used before the rebellions. It was also useful for those supporting closer affiliation to the United States as it suggested unity between the peoples of

[740] Ibid., 6 April 1849.
[741] Ibid.
[742] 'To the Editor' – C., *Canadian Free Press*, 27 February 1849.
[743] *London Times*, 6 April 1849.

Great Britain, Canada and America. The term 'Anglo-Saxon' was increasingly used by conservatives during 1849 to replace that of 'British'. It was a militant expression of an independent identity: 'No Governor or Government in the world will ever be able to prostrate the Anglo-Saxon race in Canada beneath the feet of Frenchmen and rebels.'[744] The rebellion losses bill was chosen by the conservatives as a battleground of race. It was an issue upon which the survival of the 'Anglo-Saxon' people would depend.

The French-Canadian was now described as such: 'Jean Baptiste is as far from being a convert to the superior statesmanship of the party in power as that party is of possessing legislative talent sufficient to rule a free and enlightened people'.[745]

> 'Democracy, to them, is a matter of minor importance. Trade and commerce they neither know nor care anything about. Their whole soul is concentrated in the grand scheme of nationality, and they look upon annexation as the only means by which they can grasp that much loved phantom.'[746]

This statement formed part of a trope commonly used by English-speaking Canadians. The French-speaking population were anti-British, nationalistic and anti-commercial. Those who supported the government were not just radicals, but traitors to their race. According to the *Times*, those who signed addresses of support to Lord Elgin were if 'not actually French', still 'about as alien and as hollow-hearted, just as anti-British and contemptible' as inhabitants of St. Nicolet, St. Roch, or St. Gregorie.[747] There was no greater traitor than the Governor General himself:

> 'On the one hand, a British nobleman, a British Governor, proscribed and expelled by his own countrymen; on the other, receiving the powerless sympathy and proferred protection of degenerate Frenchmen!'[748]

The Annexation movement presented the greatest challenge to the rhetoric of loyalty. The duty that Canadian conservatives had to Britain had been undermined by Britain's sanctioning of the rebellion losses bill. This had brought about a rift between metropole and colony. The lack of support from the English press was galling:

> 'From the singular and sarcastic use of the terms "loyal" and "royalist" in the articles of the *Times*, it would seem that loyalty is to be considered as one thing in England and another thing in Canada ... That in one place it is to be looked upon as essential to the support of the Crown and dignity of the Sovereign, and in the other a mere party cry by which selfish and designing men beguile their fellow mortals and raise themselves to place and power.'[749]

Now challenged by the metropole, conservatives thought it prudent to turn to a newly powerful language of race. By acting against the interests of the Anglo-Canadian community, they felt Britain had demonstrated its indifference to their brethren across the Atlantic. Only by their own actions could conservatives save Canada from misgovernment. The connection with Great Britain was now an issue to be considered. In an article entitled 'Canadian Independence', the British American wrote:

> 'Insulted by their rulers at home, degraded and undervalued by the Whig government of England, and hated by the intolerant faction of rebels whose losses they are now called upon to pay; the loyalists of Canada would gladly hail almost any change in the existing state of affairs, which would free them

[744] Ibid., 27 April 1849
[745] *British American*, 20 January 1849.
[746] Ibid., 11 August 1849.
[747] *London Times*, 18 May 1849.
[748] Ibid.
[749] *London Times*, 27 April 1849.

> from the tyranny which compels them to be the slaves of bigoted Frenchmen and their misguided confreres .... We do not like the idea of a separation from England, much less of annexation to that hot-bed of slavery, vice and corruption, the United States; but ... if England considers the North American provinces as a drag upon her prosperity, the sooner she cuts them adrift, the better.'[750]

Support for independence in such a manner was unusual in the London District. Nonetheless, the letter displayed many of the same objections to annexation that common amongst those who championed the British connection. The issue of slavery made annexation into as much a moral as practical issue. This perception of slavery was commonplace throughout the Canadas. An anti-slavery discourse permeated United Canada and was just as evident in Montreal as in London. After loyalty, slavery formed the primary objection to annexation with the United States. Joseph Forbes, a veteran of the War of 1812, and a conservative, echoed this idea. He looked up to 'the Red Cross banner of Old England – conscious that beneath its furls true freedom reigns, and that the taint of slavery is unknown where my beloved Sovereign wields her sceptre.'[751] Anglo-Canadians were establishing an image of their community as tolerant and morally superior to their southern neighbour.

Edward Ermatinger, in his discussion of the destruction of the parliament buildings in Montreal, made such a statement: 'And the substantial men I see round me are a part of the *Tory mob* of Canada, merely because they are too independent and too loyal to wink at treason, and to be robbed and taxed to feed hungry partizans and dishonest traitors ... Gentlemen, we are part of the *Tory mob* of Canada, and we sympathise with the *Tory mob* of Montreal'.[752] The use of the perjorative term 'Tory mob' here demonstrated that Tories in London would be judged by their opponents on the basis of the actions of Tories in Montreal as much as by what they did themselves. This brought conservatives across United Canada to view themselves as a single, national political unit – aided, no doubt, by the reporting of these events in local newspapers. Nonetheless, solidarity with Montreal conservatives did not imply support for annexation. As S. F. Wise has argued, 'most Canadian Tories scrambled to dissociate themselves from the ultimate heresy of the Montreal group.'[753] The conservatives of the London District were as fiercely anti-annexationist as reformers:

> 'when men whose declarations of loyalty and attachment to Great Britain, a few months ago, were sounded through the length and breadth of the Province, have unmasked themselves to the world, and now advocate the dismemberment of the empire and annexation to the United States, it is incumbent on all true lovers of British connexion to rally forward in one formidable phalanx; so that their determination to maintain British supremacy at all hazards may strike dismay into the ranks of the annexation horde'.[754]

They were also hesitant to believe that conservatives anywhere would support such principles:

> 'The Radical papers are felicitating themselves with the thought of a Tory agitation for annexation. The conception is altogether their own: Conservatives have no more idea of uniting with the States than they have of fraternising with Frenchmen or Radicals.'[755]

The position of the Tories as a legitimate political party was severely undermined. A writer to the *Canadian Free Press* argued that they were loyal only to their own interests, and in

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[750] *British American*, 14 July 1849.
[751] 'Joseph Forbes to the editor', Dereham, 14 May 1849 in ibid., 26 May 1849.
[752] 'Mr Ermatinger's Speech at the St. Thomas Meeting' in *London Times*, 18 May 1849.
[753] S.F. Wise, *God's Peculiar Peoples: Essays on Political Culture in Nineteenth-Century Canada*, (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1993), pp. 117-8.
[754] *London Times,* 23 November 1849.
[755] Ibid., 30 March 1849.

particular, to their leader, Allan McNab: '*If he had said, - His liberty as one of McNab's subjects should not be trampled upon*, would it not suit better'.[756] Reformers were quick to equate the League with the annexation movement: 'There were some who spoke of rendering Canada independent of Great Britain.'[757] Its national ambitions were merely a disguise and its loyalty severely in doubt:

> 'they begin for the people of Canada, but soon fall into their own snare of party exclusiveness, and Tory aggrandizement. The Anglo Saxon, Scotch and Irish Liberals, must fall before this small, restless and blustering faction, there is not a *true Briton* in the Empire that will countenance such an iniquitous and pernicious clique.'[758]

The language of the 'true Briton' was used again by reformers. The League did not represent the nation; it was merely a 'clique'. Yet to view the League as nothing more than the last gasp of the Conservative party would be a mistake. It was unapologetically nationalistic. Its propaganda 'provided the Canadian people with their first education towards nationhood.'[759] It invited members of all political persuasions (though those who attended were unsurprisingly all conservatives). The League sent members from across Canada East and Canada West as representatives to a meeting in Kingston, setting up local branches, including one in the Talbot District.[760]

The League had also proposed a series of radical constitutional reforms. They argued for an elective legislative council. These democratic reforms had become palatable because they were now proposed for only an English-speaking community. According to Hallowell, due to 'the increased spirit of democracy throughout the League, it was no longer possible for the ultra-Tories to brush aside elective institutions as a dangerous American innovation.'[761] Furthermore, the mother country had proved itself unable or unwilling to adequately protect their interests. With the potential of a reform-appointed legislative council the only way to ensure continued relevance was by courting popular opinion and harnessing it through the means of an elected legislative council.

The issues of the year were by no means only the preserve of an elite group of politicians. Popular conservatism was expressed through township meetings and petitions signed in condemnation of the Governor General's conduct. Effigy burning, amongst other activities, provided an opportunity for people to express solidarity with those of similar political opinions. A writer from Woodstock expressed the importance of effigy burning as an expression of political sentiment:

> 'I noticed the burning of Hincks in effigy, in London, on the occasion of the Rebellion Losses' Meeting. Now although I am very glad of this exhibition of the spunk of the Middlesex "boys" I feel very jealous of them for taking the honour out of the Oxford "boys" hands; and in case any one should be inclined to cast any imputation of tameness on us, I take it on myself to assure you that the Oxford "boys" are ready for *any emergency*; and as for the minor act of burning the effigy of such a worthless scum of the human race as Hincks, we can do *that* when we think the proper time has arrived.'[762]

These events presented the strange contradiction of a supposedly loyal population symbolically threatening the lives of constitutionally appointed representatives of the

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[756] 'To the Editor', - A looker on, London, 10 March 1849 in *Canadian Free Press*, 13 March 1849.
[757] *Canadian Free Press*, 8 August 1849.
[758] 'British American League *alias* The Exterminators' – C. in ibid., 15 May 1849.
[759] Hallowell, 'The Reaction of Upper Canadian Tories to the adversity of 1849', p. 54.
[760] *British American*, 26 May 1849.
[761] Hallowell, 'The Reaction of Upper Canadian Tories to the adversity of 1849', p. 52.
[762] 'To the Editor' – One of the Oxford "Boys", Woodstock, 6 March 1849 in *London Times*, 9 March 1849.

provincial government. According to Ian Radforth, such actions can be described as 'muscular conservatism'. They 'were relatively unconstrained by the meeting hall's rules of order and that their robustness and even lawlessness derived from a construction of masculinity that validated public assertiveness and physicality. Muscular conservatism ran counter to the etiquette of deliberative democracy'.[763] Figures such as LaFontaine, Francis Hincks and Allan McNab had attained such notoriety that they were burnt in both Montreal and London.

The events of 1849 appeared to strengthen the power of political parties. It became harder for those, such as John Wilson, who did not fit into this system, to act as an independent. While in the past political independence had been praised as a virtue, now he was a 'loose-fish … incomprehensible; more varied in political hue than the chameleon.' He had betrayed his constituency and unfairly equated the London branch of the party with a few extremists in Montreal: 'To be candid, Mr. Wilson, why have you mixed up the Conservatives of London with the madmen of Montreal? Have you so soon forgotten the demonstration at the Town Hall, and the unanimity of sentiment there enunciated?' The conservative voters of London were told: 'with-hold your support from him, a fitting candidate will be in the field in due time. Not a "loose-fish" but a *genuine Conservative!*"[764] Candidates were no longer elected on the basis of their character but on the basis of their party affiliation. John Wilson's moderate conservatism forced him to resign his seat and fight for re-election. By condemning annexation and other extreme reactions of the Montreal Tories to the rebellion losses crisis he lost the support of the conservative press:

> 'Mr. Wilson now comes forward to solicit the suffrages of the Electors in the guise of a *Turn Coat* ... He was sent to Parliament as the Conservative member for London, and he dare not gainsay it. We have before, charged him with "seceding from the Conservative party".'[765]

This party system extended down to the local level. The municipal elections too were to be determined by events on a national stage and not those of local interest. The *Times* asked:

> 'At the next Municipal elections, will the electors send to the Council Board, men … who, contrary to the wishes of the inhabitants, dared to invite Lord Elgin to place himself at the head of a party demonstration, the results of which have cast a stain upon the community?'[766]

John George Vansittart had been dismissed from his office after misconduct as returning officer, a partisan act by the newly elected Reform ministry.[767] He stood as the conservative candidate in the election for Oxford County in 1851. He based his fitness for office not primarily upon his political principles but upon his patriotism. He was 'determined to advocate impartially the just rights and wishes of *all*, irrespective of party, of origin, and of creed. I believe, that as sectional differences always retard general improvement, they should be lost sight of by every Canadian who desires to advocate the prosperity of his country and his home. I gladly own *this* to be my country – I look upon *this* as the home of my children – *Her* interests are *my* interests – Her *name* shall be *my watchword* – Her emblem, my colours – and if need be, I am ready to nail them to the mast.'[768] Again we see the language of patriotism that views the English-speaking community as 'Canadians' and their homeland as Canada.

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[763] Radforth, 'Political Demonstrations and Spectacles', p. 5.
[764] *London Times*, 14 December 1849.
[765] Ibid., 14 December 1849.
[766] Ibid., 23 November 1849.
[767] G. Emery, *Elections in Oxford County, 1837-1875* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), p. 56.
[768] 'Jno. Geo. Vansittart to John Jackson', Bisham Hill, 26 Sep 1849 in *London Times*, 23 November 1849.

Ultimately, though, the new form of party politics was best expressed by the success of the reformer Francis Hincks. Reform sentiment was strong in the district. Important local reformers included George Goodhue, a wealthy merchant and legislative councillor and William Notman, the representative for Middlesex in the Legislative Assembly. Hincks was one of the most noteworthy politicians of the era. An Irish Protestant immigrant, he was the inspector-general of United Canada in 1849 and acted as premier from 1851 until 1854. He had spent time in Montreal, where he edited the *Pilot*, before moving to Toronto. He was repeatedly elected as the member for Oxford County in the Legislative Assembly.[769] The success of non-residents in Oxford County from Hincks onwards was remarkable, as they won seventeen of Oxford's twenty three elections until 1864.[770] A provincial party had proven its ability to choose candidates for its constituencies and to place its most important politicians, such as Hincks, in 'safe' seats such as Oxford. Gordon Stewart has noted that 'the Canadian colonies by the 1850s had arrived at a political culture quite different from those in monarchical Britain and republican America.'[771] There can be no doubt that the events of 1849 played an important role in creating this political culture. This is not to say that 'loose-fish' did not continue to exist and play an important role in Canadian politics of 1849 – clearly, many of them remained, and the transition to party politics in United Canada was far from an instantaneous or painless process. The role of ideology, too, should not be overstated: patronage would continue to play a key role in Canadian politics for decades to come. But parties had become the primary mode of political operation. It was the loose-fish that were now the exception, rather than the rule.

Reformers' held an inclusive conception of the Anglo-Canadian identity. It would not be defined by race or religion but by politics and the desire for improvement:

> 'They require no Leagues nor secret associations - no violence nor house-burning. Their interest lies in justice, mercy, and peace –be they Scotch, English, Irish, Dutch or French, - Protestant or Catholic, Orangemen or Ribbonmen, they have, in reality, only common interest, and that is peace and the right to the fruits of their own industry.'[772]

This suggested a civic conception of the community based on the interests of the state and the country rather than on race. This was not the Protestant Anglo-Saxonism of their Tory opponents, or the Protestant nationalism of contemporary Great Britain. Everyone was welcome within the Reform party and their only duty was to create a better Canada. The exclusion of French-Canadians and the existence of such a phenomenon as 'French Domination' was contested by reformers. They were disgusted by conservative attempts to appropriate the word 'British' for themselves:

> 'these are the men who seek to monopolise to themselves the title of "British" and who claim the right to lord it over the inhabitants of the Province – these the men who boast of their numerical strength, and threaten to rend asunder the ties which connect us to the parent land … these the bullies who speak of coercing the people of Canada, and the Government of Great Britain, into submission to them by force of arms!'[773]

Reformers only tentatively embraced the language of race. In reporting on the Convention for the British American League, the *Western Globe* wrote:

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[769] William G. Ormsby, "HINCKS, Sir FRANCIS," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 11, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed February 14, 2014, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/hincks_francis_11E.html.

[770] Emery, *Elections in Oxford County*, p. xvii.

[771] G. Stewart, *The Origins of Canadian Politics*, p. 1.

[772] The *Huron Signal*, quoted in *Canadian Free Press*, 5 June 1849.

[773] 'Long Point Advocate' quoted in ibid., 10 April 1849.

> 'However on the whole there was a commendable unanimity on the point that the French-Canadians as a people are an intolerable nuisance, because they think for themselves, pursue their own course, and will neither be brow-beat, nor humbugged by the Anglo-Saxon generation.'[774]

Instead, they preferred to use the traditional rhetoric of loyalty that had newly become available to them. The actions of the Tories in Montreal by burning down the parliament building had undermined their claims to loyalty and conversely presented an opportunity for reformers to usurp this language as they described the 'Montreal Traitors'.[775]

Despite the growing power of these wider conceptions of identity, ethnic identity continued to have relevance. Performances of Scottish and Irish identity remained popular on saints' days and other national holidays. Lord Elgin's ethnicity as a Scot was brought into play. Reformers turned to his Scottish heritage, referencing a series of well-known symbols, to attempt to bolster his position:

> 'the royal blood of the immortal Robert Bruce, King of Scotland of glorious memory and imperishable fame – the Bruce of Bannockburn, liberator of Scotland, the restorer of her monarchy and liberties ... you cannot fail to view the outrage committed on His Excellency's person, by the Canadian Tories in any other light than as a Scotch national insult'.[776]

Yet the 'outrages' upon Lord Elgin were more than an insult to just Scots:

> 'You are well aware that royal blood of England and Scotland is concentrated in the person of Her Majesty, and that an insult proferred to her representative, is a direct insult to her, and consequently to the whole British empire collectively'.[777]

The actions of the St. Andrew's Society of Montreal were frowned upon. The *Western Globe* reported that the Highland Society of Brock had unanimously voted in Lord Elgin as an Honorary Member, and the St. Andrew's Society of Woodstock sent an address of confidence to the Governor with only two dissenting voices.[778]

In giving notice of the St. Patrick's Day events in Woodstock, the British American wrote: 'It is expected that IRISHMEN and the SONS of Irishmen will punctually attend, and not remain behind hands on this their National Festival'.[779] It was not just recent immigrants from Ireland who were expected to celebrate their Irish heritage, but their Canadian-born children as well. This was a specific day set aside for celebrating the old country, as were the St. Andrew's day and St. George's day celebrations. It did not need to contradict any growing Canadian identity but could become a part of it. On St. Patrick's Day, they were Irishmen. On other days of the year, they could be British or Canadian as it suited their interests.

For the London District, however, with its large Protestant Irish population, the most notable aspect of the Irish ethnicity was the Orange Order. The traditional stereotype of the Irishman as violent and unthinking dupes remained. Lord Elgin described:

> 'a band of devoted Orangemen trained to violence who reside in the back township & are brought in when their services are required, he can make a kind of emeute when he pleases.'[780]

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[774] *Western Globe*, 25 August 1849.
[775] Ibid., 23 May 1849.
[776] 'To the True-hearted Briton in the County of Middlesex', *Canadian Free Press*, 3 July 1849.
[777] Ibid.
[778] *Western Globe*, 23 May 1849.
[779] *British American*, 10 March 1849.
[780] 'Elgin to Grey', London, C.W., 4 October 1849 in Doughty (ed.), *Elgin-Grey Papers*, p. 508.

Irishmen were brought in by both sides (Catholics for reformers, Orangemen for conservatives) to intimidate the opposition. Referring to the visit of Lord Elgin to London, the British American wrote:

> 'While this was taking place, some disturbance occurred in the streets, caused by a party of Irish Roman Catholics, who had been brought in from the township of Biddulph for the purpose of intimidating the Conservatives'.[781]

Describing the Middlesex county rebellion losses meeting, *Canadian Free Press* wrote:

> 'The Orangemen were to be brought in from this and the adjoining Townships, and were to be at their posts, prepared "to die" but not to surrender'.[782]

This description suggested that they had little agency. Orangemen were 'brought in' by English- or Scotsmen. Irish Protestants nationally had an increasingly important role, as demonstrated by Ogle Gowan in Brockville, one of the leaders of the British American League. [783] In the London District, however, as shown above, Irishmen continued to be viewed as tools to be manipulated by conniving British politicians.

It was primarily through petitions and township meetings that most people participated in politics. A vast number of individuals signed petitions either condoning the actions of Lord Elgin in sanctioning the bill. The numbers given by the papers cannot be assumed to be particularly accurate – accounts of dubious and corrupt practices amongst those obtaining signatures were widespread. The *Western Globe* noted the exaggeration of the number of signatures: 'The petitions were 70 or 80 in number', with the Montreal *Gazette* claiming 23,700 signatures, the Montreal *Herald* claiming 42,000 signatures, and the Toronto *Patriot* claiming 200,000. 'The whole male adult population of Upper Canada is about 150,000, and he would have us believe that 200,000 signed the petitions – 3 per cent more than are actually in existence'. On the reform side, 'Let us see how the Addresses of confidence in Lord Elgin compare with the Tories. Four addresses alone, viz., those from Toronto City, Leeds, Niagara, and Oxford counties, will have as many signatures as the whole 70 or 80 petitions of the Tories'.[784] While it is difficult to know truly how many were involved, there can be no doubt that petitioning was a major part of political and community life in Canada, and one way of participating in the imagined political community of Canada.

The Middlesex meeting 'consisted of about 1000 persons principally from the Townships of London and Westminster'. It was not free from disturbance as 'the Orangemen in the neighbourhood mustered under a party flag', but it provided an opportunity for members of the county to express their opinions on the rebellion losses legislation.[785] One handbill did not hold back in its language:

> 'Wide Awake! – Turn out the whole! The Rebel rewarding Traitors of the London District have called a public meeting, to be held at St. Thomas, on Wednesday the 9th May, instant, for the purpose of expressing their approval of the Governor General's conduct in giving the Royal assent to the villainous Bill for paying the French rebels of 1837 and '38. Let every man be at his post, and put the meeting down! No delay! – No surrender! God save the Queen!'[786]

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[781] *British American*, 6 October 1849.
[782] *Canadian Free Press*, 6 March 1849.
[783] D. Akenson, *The Orangeman: The Life & Times of Ogle Gowan*, (Toronto: James Lorimer & Co., 1986), pp. 260-262.
[784] *Western Globe*, 23 May 1849.
[785] *Canadian Free Press*, 6 March 1849.
[786] *London Times*, 25 May 1849.

This was seen as an expression of Tory disloyalty. As noted by the *Free Press*, 'in '37 or '38 such an exhibition would have secured for the unfortunate exhibitor a lodging in jail for six months'.[787]

Lord Elgin's tour of London was marred by disturbances:

> 'The cutting down of the arches in London is the only unfavourable incident I have yet met with … The operators were a small knot of orangemen, brought in from some of the neighbouring Townships where they have settlements. Addresses of a very strong & favourable character were presented by the Dt Council … by the Town Council, the Mayor alone dissenting – the Mechanics institute – the school children who assembled to the number of 500.'[788]

A vast array of different groups here – the municipal and local governments, the Mechanics institutes, orangemen, and even school children – expressed their political positions in a direct manner by escorting or opposing the mayor and by presenting addresses to him. This all occurred over a provincial issue that would have little practical impact on the people of the district. This suggests that it was the identity implications of the Rebellion Losses bill that brought people to act out their politics in the streets.

Participation in such events was widespread: 'It was a truly splendid demonstration, alike worthy of the distinguished nobleman in whose honour it was made, and of the glorious old County, by the inhabitants of which it was projected ... There could not have been less than two thousand persons present'.[789] With a population of just 18,082 in the district, such a high turnout demonstrates how the visit of the governor could be a truly popular event.[790] The birth of his son in Canada only increased the attachment of the people to the person and family of the Governor General:

> 'That your Excellency and your noble Countess, the worthy daughter of an illustrious nobleman, whose memory will be forever cherished by the Canadian people, together with our own Canadian Bruce, may long live to enjoy every blessing from the author and giver of all good, is the sincere and hearty prayer of your Excellency's attached and humble servants.'[791]

They were here the 'Canadian people', and Lord Elgin's son was the 'Canadian Bruce' – a part of their community but at the same time a link back to Britain's (and Scotland's) great heritage.

The year 1849 had brought fundamental changes to Canadian politics that was well reflected by events in the London District. As the Tories could no longer assume to be the party of government, they were forced to create a deeper, more robust party system that engaged with public opinion. Identity politics through race, the rebellion losses bill, and the British American League all presented opportunities to do so. This realignment of politics appears to have been long lasting. The 1851 election, 'as exemplified by Vansittart's middle-ground position on establishment religion and well-organized campaign, a moderate, pragmatic Conservative *party* had replaced the internally divided High Tory *faction* of the 1840s.'[792] Meanwhile, the old symbols of loyalty were redefined as equally available to all members of

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[787] *Canadian Free Press*, 6 March 1849.
[788] 'Elgin to Grey', Niagara Falls, 7 October 1849 in Doughty (ed.), *Elgin-Grey Papers*, p. 518.
[789] 'Elgin to Grey', Niagara Falls, 24 September 1849 in Doughty (ed.), *Elgin-Grey Papers*, p. 490.
[790] Statistics Canada. *UC Table III - Birth Places of the People* (table), 1848 - Census of Upper Canada (database), Using E-STAT (distributor). http://estat.statcan.gc.ca/cgi-win/cnsmcgi.exe?Lang=e&ESTATFile=/ESTAT/English/A18485T3.HTM accessed 14/02/2013
[791] 'Elgin to Grey', Niagara Falls, 24 September 1849, in Doughty (ed.), *Elgin-Grey Papers*, p. 491.
[792] G. Emery. *Elections in Oxford County, 1837-1875*, p. 83.

Canadian society. The excitement aroused by the rebellion losses bill led conservatives to engage with the public sphere to an unprecedented degree. They vigorously courted public opinion through township meetings, petitions, the press and they even invited the direct participation of the public through democratic institutions in the British American League. They had encouraged aggressive outbursts of 'loyalty' through such acts as effigy burning, much to the dismay of their more moderate members. Reformers meanwhile advocated an inclusive, civic conception of Britishness that did not try to exclude French-Canadians. Popular politics formed an important part of their activities too, as demonstrated by the turnout for the Governor General's visit in October. In the cases of both parties, newspapers did not just report on the events occurring in Montreal but mirrored the partisan language and the attitudes presented by editors of the parties they belonged to.

To replace the language of loyalty, a new rhetoric was required. This was the language of race. An Anglo-Saxon population was pitted against a French-Canadian population within a single state. To survive, Anglo-Saxon Canada had to overcome 'French Domination'. Britain had proved itself unwilling to intervene in such local affairs and so Tories were forced to consider alternatives – these ranged from annexation to repeal of the union, but the creation of the British American League led to many believing that the most effective measure for saving English Canada was confederation. Smaller-scale ethnicities lost their power as identities as identity was increasingly framed in terms of 'British' or 'French'. Such views were expressed just as clearly in the London District as in Montreal as the local and the national merged together into a hierarchical political framework. Both Tories and Reformers sought to impose from the top-down a set of identities on the inhabitants of the district that would work towards their own political benefit. For the conservatives, this involved an othering process against French-Canadians and a rehabilitation of Americans into their community, as well as a racialist conception of Canada as an Anglo-Saxon entity. Meanwhile reformers called for an inclusive concept of identity that eschewed the language of race for the language of loyalty and anti-Americanism while accepting the possibility for cooperation with the French-Canadians of Canada East. Ultimately, the year 1849 had proven the spark for Anglo-Canadian consciousness.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Over the course of the two decades after the rebellion losses crisis, the sense of a unique Anglo-Canadian identity became more solid and influential. No longer the amorphous concept of the rebellions' era, anglophones were proud to pronounce themselves 'Canadians'. This concept combined a peculiar mix of sentiments of loyalty to the British crown, patriotic appreciation of the land they inhabited, and a sense of difference from two fundamental 'others': the French-Canadians who challenged them at every turn, and the United States, that persistently threatened to invade. There was seen to be no contradiction between being intensely 'British' and simultaneously proud of 'Canada'. To participate in the Anglo-Canadian identity was to support the connection with the mother country. Those who advocated anti-colonial nationalism, such as William Lyon Mackenzie and his fellow rebels in 1837, had been met by an overwhelming display of loyalty to Britain from the populace at large.

The people of the Canadas prioritised their own well-being over the interests of the empire. While this may not be surprising, it does emphasise that the continual references to their 'British' loyalty and identity may be somewhat misleading. The meaning of 'British' in the Canadas was often very different from that understood by contemporaries in the metropole. It formed part of a wider loyalty discourse that was used to justify the actions of the speaker and to strengthen their credentials. The lack of cultural outputs in the form of novels, poetry, paintings and other forms of art should not be taken to represent a lack of Canadian national feeling. It was a reality that contemporary commentators deplored and battled against. They felt strongly that Canadian nationality needed to be buttressed by a Canadian literature and so they actively supported the works of the few Canadian artists and writers that they could.

The natural features of the landscape formed an important part of the Canadian identity. Canadians identified their homeland by its mighty rivers, particularly the St. Lawrence River and the Ottawa River, and by the Great Lakes. Another universal facet of life for Canadians was the extent of the great wilderness of forest that was as predominant in the southwestern peninsula of Upper Canada as along the well-settled shores of the St. Lawrence River. Settlers everywhere had to spend much time clearing the land to create an environment suitable for farming. The rivers and lakes of the Canadas were essential not just for the 'commercial empire of the St. Lawrence' but for the everyday transport and communications of the ordinary settlers. This riverine system was as important to the population in the pre-confederation period as the railroad system was to be in the post-confederation period. If the 'new nationality' was created by a railroad or two (the Intercolonial and the Canadian Pacific), then the early Anglo-Canadian identity was the product of the rivers.

Nonetheless, the St. Lawrence did not inevitably lead to a common identity. In fact, where the staples thesis rings most true, in areas such as the Ottawa Valley, integration into a common identity seems unrelated to economic factors. The staples thesis would suggest stronger ties with Britain until the end of the mercantilist system in the mid-1840s. But this is misleading – strong emotional ties across the border had existed for many years prior to the rebellions and a sense of British neglect and betrayal was common amongst some groups throughout this period. Yet in 1849, the most striking response to the situation was not the annexation movement but the utter condemnation of it by English-speaking Canadians. Lord Elgin was not condemned because he was foreign, but because he was insufficiently British.

These ‘Anglo-Canadians’ were a diverse group of people. The dichotomy between English- and French-Canadian has been too often accepted uncritically in the literature. While many have recognised the importance of ethnic groupings in their migration and initial settlement in the Canadas, this has rarely translated into an understanding of how these different groups interacted over the key political issues of the day.[793] In the pre-confederation period, and particularly before the rebellions, Canadian history is better understood as a set of complex interactions between numerous distinctive ethnic groups. The story of the development of Canadian identity is about how these groups came together. The Irish, who clung strongly to their identity in Ireland, found themselves eager participants in the Canadian national project.

The Scots exercised significant power in the Canadas both politically and economically. The ‘British’ party in Montreal could more accurately be termed a Scottish party as the various economic, social and political magnates of the city were Scottish immigrants. In Upper Canada their visibility was more limited but their great influence could be seen on both sides of the political spectrum through individuals such as William Lyon Mackenzie and John A. Macdonald. If anything, it was the English who were curiously absent. They have been, with good reason, described as ‘invisible immigrants’.[794] Many exercised positions of power too, but they appeared to align themselves entirely with the Scots.

The Americans occupied the most ambiguous position of the English-speakers in the Canadas. At the same time they were demonised in Upper Canada through the alien crisis, Americans were graciously welcomed into the social and political elite of Montreal. The position of the Americans in the Canadas was further complicated by the legacy of the loyalists. Some, indeed most, of the loyalists and their descendants represented the most conservative elements of Upper Canadian society. They were well represented in the family compact. Yet they found themselves continually challenged by immigration from the British Isles. Their status was undermined as the patronage that had traditionally flowed towards them now went to recent arrivals from Britain. Their control over conservative politics had disappeared by the 1850s, replaced by the new politics of Irish Orangemen and Scottish immigrants.

The final ethnic group of significance were the French-Canadians. The conflict between anglophones and francophones was far from inevitable. Indeed, bilingualism was common for many of the earlier settlers. A peaceful coexistence between the two groups marked the early decades of the nineteenth century. The French-Canadian elite were incorporated into the British party as individuals such as Austin Cuvillier demonstrated. Similarly, at the lower end of the social spectrum, the bullies who prevented voting for the Patriote candidate in 1832 were largely French-Canadian. The conflicts that began in the 1830s were primarily over political lines, not national, linguistic or ethnic lines. This explains the ability of French-speakers to effectively recruit Irish Catholics to their cause during that decade. Yet radicalisation and rebellion made it impossible for most Anglo-Canadians to continue to view the francophones with tolerance. Conservative politicians presented the rebellion as the inevitable culmination of the tendencies of the French character. Anglo-Canadians, shocked by the reports of violence around Montreal they read in their newspapers, were inclined to agree.

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[793] For example, see B. Elliot, *Irish Migrants in the Canadas: A New Approach* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001); D. Akenson, *The Irish in Ontario*; P. Rider and H. McNabb (eds.), *A Kingdom of the Mind: How the Scots Helped Make Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2006).

[794] Belich, *Replenishing the Earth*, p. 61.

These various ethnic groups formed a complex spectrum of shifting alliances. The only stable relationship throughout the period was between the English and Scots as they remained respectful of each other and usually politically allied. At various times and places in the pre-confederation period, the Scots, Irish, Americans and French all found themselves at odds with one another. These alliances did not strictly correspond to political parties. Rather, they aimed to create a certain impression of other groups. The Irish were initially viewed as a threat to the established order in Upper Canada. The press reported on stories of Irish violence, from St. Patrick's Day and 12th July marches in Toronto to the Shiners' War in the Ottawa Valley. Yet when the extent of their numbers and their influence was recognised, the establishment was quick to incorporate Irish Protestants. Irish Catholics were less easily incorporated, but the position of Daniel O'Connor within the Bytown elite demonstrates that it was not impossible. In eastern Upper Canada, the overwhelming predominance of Irish settlers forced the local elite to recognise this situation, rather than allow the Irish to become discontented and join the French rebellion. The Orange Order soon became a crucial weapon in the arsenal of the English and Scottish-dominated family compact. By the late 1840s Irish Protestants found themselves in positions of power across United Canada – from Francis Hincks as Inspector General in 1848 (and in the 1850s as co-premier) to Ogle Gowan, leader of the British American League. By 1849 the anglophone groups had decided to participate together in a broader 'British' or 'Anglo-Canadian' identity. This did not prevent internal conflicts within the group, such as the ever-present divide between Irish Protestants and Irish Catholics, but it did provide a broader umbrella identity which they could assert when required. The French-Canadians had become the internal 'Other' against which the various other ethnic groups were able to define themselves.

The rebellions of 1837-8 brought great changes to the distribution of these alliances. Two broad coalitions of identity developed with Anglophones on one side and Francophones on the other. This should not be overstated – political cooperation between the two groups remained common throughout the Union of the Canadas and each group held within it significant tensions boiling beneath the surface. Nonetheless, ethnic boundaries *had* hardened. A French-speaker would have found it far more difficult to be accepted in the British community and to participate in the Anglo-Canadian identity after the rebellions. Meanwhile, the rebellions in Upper Canada were presented as the machinations of Americans and American sympathisers. In the southwestern peninsula of Upper Canada, bitterness towards Americans continued long after the rebellions finished. Upper Canadians reacted by joining loyalist volunteer militias to put down the rebellions. Those in eastern Upper Canada raised units, sent petitions to the governor and showed themselves ready to cross the border to put down the Patriote Rebellions. Those in western Upper Canada took up arms to resist the uprisings of Mackenzie and Duncombe and later fought American invaders along the Detroit, Niagara and Lake Ontario frontiers. In the case of Upper Canada, militia participation had an even greater effect on identity as the rebellions were put down without assistance from British regulars.

Identity should be understood as an evolving and dynamic mental framework. The form of Anglo-Canadian identity that had emerged by 1867 was neither universal nor complete. This identity was a process, continually responding to the varying circumstances that individuals and institutions faced on a daily basis. Between 1815 and 1867, a number of events forced individuals to reconsider how they thought of themselves. The answer is not to reject the broader categories of nationalism and imperialism and to retreat into the conceptually simpler realms of limited identities as J.M.S. Careless has argued for.[795] Rather, identity in the

[795] Careless, '"Limited Identities" in Canada'.

Canadas can be best understood as a set of shifting federal identities. These were not competing identities of which individuals had to choose just one, but a series of identities that could comfortably coexist with each other. Local identity was complemented by a provincial or national identity, which in turn was complemented by an imperial identity. It was possible to hold all three of these identities simultaneously, though based on the circumstances of the moment, one was likely to hold sway over the others. Unlike much postcolonial nationalism, in Canada nationality was rarely antagonistic towards the mother country. Even the annexation manifesto asked for permission to secede from Great Britain.

Arthur Lower argued that 'in 1870, or thereabouts, everywhere else but in Ottawa we find 'Ontarians', 'Nova Scotians' and others such. Even those who, like the *Canada Firsters* longed for a national state, looked for one in their own image: only at Ottawa, among the politicians and their associates was it imperative to think in new terms, in terms applicable to all of the new Dominion'.[796] But the development of 'Ontarians' or 'Nova Scotians' was hardly inevitable. It was a long and complex process of identity negotiation between a variety of different ethnic groups. Secondly, the term 'Ontarian' may be misleading – as demonstrated above, by confederation English-speakers from both of the Canadian provinces thought of themselves as a single people. English-speakers from Montreal hardly thought of themselves as 'Quebeckers' in 1870. Nonetheless not all identities could fit neatly into the 'British Imperial' or 'Anglo-Canadian' label. What had been decided by 1867 was which identities were acceptable within the broader category of 'Anglo-Canadian'. Ultimately, all the English-speaking ethnic groups – the Scots, the English, the Americans, the Irish Protestants and the Irish Catholics – were accepted, while the French-Canadians, despite early efforts at incorporation, were excluded. Irish Catholics, it was now accepted, constituted an important part of the loyal Canadian community in a manner in which they were never accepted in the British Isles.

In the 1820s and 1830s, each of the areas studied (the London District, Montreal and Ottawa) experienced significant crises that brought issues of identity to the fore. Each of these were primarily local issues. The Montreal election at first sight appears to have suggested a very weak sense of ethnic loyalty as English, Scottish, French and American conservatives cooperated against French and Irish reformers. But it created a legacy of bitterness amongst French-Canadians that encouraged the strengthening of French-Canadian nationalism. A sense of inter-ethnic harmony would no longer be possible in the years after the rebellion. The alien question raised the issue of the position of American-born immigrants in Upper Canada. The Shiners War presented an opportunity to portray Irish Catholics as the violent thugs they were so commonly stereotyped as. Yet it forced an uneasy cooperation between the English and Scottish elite and the local French Catholic population, an unstable alliance that was again challenged during the rebellions era.

The rebellions themselves brought an unprecedented unanimity of sentiment amongst the English-speakers of the Canadas. Whether English, Irish, Scottish or American, anglophones condemned the rebellion as unnatural. French demagogues who could not appreciate the benefits of a British constitution were blamed for the unrest. It was even questioned whether they were deserving of living under such an arrangement. Was coexistence possible when they displayed such ingratitude? The few rebels in Upper Canada had been misled by Americans and republicans seeking to overthrow British rule. Those who rebelled in Upper Canada were the long-settled, North American born, despite a disproportionate presence amongst the leadership of those born in the British Isles. While Colin Read has usefully

[796] Lower, *Canadians in the Making*, p. 292.

brought this to the attention of historians, this thesis has argued that they held a very different conception of Canadian identity to their recently settled counterparts. The long-settled American-born were far more willing to embrace a form of anti-colonial nationalism that desired independence or even annexation, with or without the consent of the British government. Most reformers, who shared their grievances and continued to attend revolutionary meetings up to the very eve of the rebellion, could not endorse such a position. Therefore Reformers and Tories united in their loyal participation in the militia and in ever more grandiose statements of loyalty. When Lord Durham proposed the union of the provinces it was welcomed as the only acceptable solution. The system of conciliation of the French-Canadians had proven unworkable – there could not be 'two nations warring in the bosom of a single state' – only one of those two nations could survive. For conservatives, the rebellions had been more than the impudence of a small group of the discontented – it had been a war for national survival.

In 1849 the rebellions were again brought to the fore in public debate through the indemnity bill. Across United Canada the issue was debated by everyone in the same terms. Reform newspapers in London commented on the situation in much the same way as those in Montreal. The Tory papers of Ottawa reflected those of Toronto. The rebellion losses bill created such an uproar because of its implications for Anglo-Canadian identity. United Canada, defined by its loyalty, could not be seen to sanction rebellion. This issue was of more than political or economic importance – it was about defining who Canadians were. Hence reformers did not try to justify the rebellion (though they would note that the rebels did have legitimate grievances), but rather attempted to demonstrate that the bill would not reward rebels. They did their best to present the issue not as an issue of ethnicity but as one of justice to individuals – the poor but loyal Canadian habitant was no threat to the Anglo-Canadian community. Tories, by contrast, made the issue into a conflict between the English and the French. It was the clearest sign yet of 'French Domination'. National survival was again at threat, but this time, the insidious threat came from within the state itself. Even worse, it was sanctioned by the governor general. Some Tories from Montreal, so incensed by the conduct of the Governor General and the British Parliament in allowing the bill to pass, decided that independence or annexation to the United States was the only method remaining to maintain the Anglo-Canadian identity. Through a convoluted argument they presented the annexation manifesto as the epitome of loyalty. They had not abandoned the Queen, but rather the Queen had abandoned them and so badly insulted their loyalty as to make it worthless. In such a manner, they would better preserve a British state and British ideals through annexation to the United States. Outside of Montreal, condemnation of the annexation manifesto was nearly universal. The rebellions of 1837 had established the foundations of the Anglo-Canadian identity but it took the urgency of the debate on repaying those losses to cement it in Canadian history.

The annexation movement was not the only response to the national crisis of 1849. The importance of the formation of the British American League should not be underestimated. Though ultimately unsuccessful in achieving its aims, it represented a fundamental shift in the attitudes of conservatives throughout United Canada and demonstrated the aspirations of the Anglo-Canadian identity more clearly than ever. The fundamental tenets that defined the Canadian Dominion in 1867 were all put forward by the League in its manifesto: a union of all the British North American provinces; a commercial policy of protectionism; and retrenchment in public spending. It also reinforced the connection with the mother country despite an initial flirtation with the idea of annexation. John A. Macdonald understood its importance: 'From all parts of Upper Canada and from the British section of Lower Canada and from the British inhabitants in Montreal representatives were chosen. They met at

Kingston for the purpose of considering the great danger to which the constitution of Canada was exposed … The effects of the formation of the British American League were marvellous. Under its influence the annexation sentiment disappeared, the feeling of irritation died away and the principles which were laid down by the British North American League in 1850 are the lines on which the Liberal Conservative party has moved ever since.'[797] It failed to attract the bipartisan support it had hoped to but it did lead to the creation of a new conservative party. The leadership of the compact Tories was undermined while the professionalism of the League helped promote new leaders such as Ogle Gowan and Macdonald. It was also a truly national movement, as Macdonald noted above – English-speakers from across United Canada met to obtain a solution to what they perceived as a national crisis. The true significance of 1849 then was the creation of a national political arena. No single issue had achieved such widespread resonance in the past. A reformer in Montreal believed the same as a reformer in London. There was no such imagined political community in the 1830s. For better or worse, by 1849 the inhabitants of United Canada had imagined that the area in which they lived represented a natural and important political unit. An issue that affected one area affected them all.

Responsible government can be seen as the culmination of a movement for self-government. Canadians, on the whole, had little interest in creating a more democratic system. This could not be made clearer than in their condemnations of the mob rule of Jacksonian democracy to the south. Furthermore they made no efforts to expand the franchise – in fact, during this period, greater restrictions were imposed on the franchise. In Lower Canada, women lost their right to vote as they were gradually excluded from the political sphere. Responsible government was ultimately about two things: the right for the people of United Canada to govern themselves with minimal interference from the imperial government; and the belief that the origins of patronage should be located in Canada rather than Great Britain. Opposition to the principle of responsible government from conservatives derived not from a principle of colonial self-government, which they largely supported, but due to the implications it held for conservatism locally. Responsible government was seen as a mechanism both to establish parties as a fundamental component of the political fabric of the Canadas and as a crude mechanism by which Reformers would obtain control over the levers of patronage. When Great Britain interfered in Canadian politics against the interests of conservatives, they were just as vocal in their demands for the right of Canadians to govern themselves according to the British model. But before 1849, conservative interests and British imperial interests had closely aligned.

The Anglo-Canadian identity had not simply emerged as a natural result of these crises however. It was deliberately created and contested. I have already shown how the various ethnic groups that made up the 'British' in Canada acted in cooperation or conflict with each other for their own benefit. But the truly important actors who influenced this were the political parties. The story of the development of Canadian identity cannot be detached from the development of party politics in the Canadas. Indeed, the timescale appears almost identical – fluid, amorphous networks of individuals with similar interests in the 1820s became far more solid entities in the forms of "Reform" and "Tory" parties in Upper Canada and "Patriote" and "British" parties in Lower Canada in the 1830s, followed by the establishment of far more solid and professional parties in the 1840s after the Union of the Canadas. These parties actively solicited and encouraged the creation of those identities that benefitted them. They defined what it meant to be loyal, what it meant to be British and what

[797] John A. Macdonald, quoted in C. D. Allin, 'The British North American League, 1849', *Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records*, 13 (1915): pp. 3-4.

it meant to be Canadian in their own interests. Election appeals were made to 'patriotic Canadians' by reformers and to 'loyal Britons' by Tories. The appeal to Canadian identity by reformers and their increasing electoral success represented a powerful dialectic in the development of Anglo-Canadian identity.

To become a Reformer or a Tory to some extent meant becoming a Canadian. It implied engagement with a national political sphere. The Reformers were the first to use the language of Canadian patriotism but internal tensions in the 1830s between moderate and radical strands of their ideology left the identity they attempted to disperse as confused and unclear. Another strand, represented by Mackenzie's radicalism, sought Canadian independence and undermined one of the fundamental aspects of the identity that emerged later – loyalty to Britain and the British Empire. Another, led by Robert Baldwin, encouraged a reform based movement that emphasised the interests of the inhabitants of Upper Canada within an imperial system. They desired the application of British principles of rule to their own province. As British subjects, they had all the rights of the free-born Englishmen, and responsible government was the application of these British ideals of government to Canada. Yet at the same time they believed that the government of Great Britain, four thousand miles away, was unable to effectively administer their province. Canadian interests were to take precedence if Canada was ever to become an equal partner in the British Empire. The Tory party was more reluctant to embrace this ideology and tended to stick to a discourse of Britishness. Though the rebellions were unanimously condemned this did not imply an unquestioning acceptance of the status quo. Many English-speakers, particularly in Upper Canada, were critical of the old political system and the actions of the governors. The Tory party of the 1840s increasingly seemed to be an anachronism, a throwback to the bad old days of the Family Compact and the Château Clique. But despite this use of language and their emphasis on their British heritage, in practice they prioritised provincial interests over those of the British Empire. Lord Gosford was criticised for his policy of conciliation towards the French-Canadians in the 1830s, a directive that came from the Colonial Office in London, while the Repeal of the Corn Laws and the ending of the imperial preference were widely condemned by the merchants of Montreal.

Through the use of newspapers (a partisan political instrument throughout this period) they were able to spread these identities to a wide audience, made possible by the high extent of literacy in the Canadas and the explosive growth of the newspaper industry from the 1830s. Print culture in the Canadas meant newspapers. And it was not the shared experience of reading a single, national newspaper that created a sense of common identity for English-speaking Canadians. Rather, it was the use of a variety of different newspapers, linked by party political connections to central nodes in Toronto and Montreal, by the developing political parties, that actively and deliberately spread identities that would benefit their electoral prospects. It so happened that in the years after the Union of the Canadas that this meant, in the case of both Reformers and Tories, an increased emphasis on differentiating Canadians from Americans and from French-speakers. Newspapers, too, led the cultural drive for Canadian nationalism. It was in newspapers that the first works of literary creativity were published – poetry, short stories and essays by Canadian-born writers were emphasised and editors made calls for the development of an artistic culture in Canada to rival that of Britain or the United States. Finally, they allowed Canadians to interact more easily with one another. They included advertisements, notices of meetings and announcements within their pages. The burgeoning public sphere could not have developed without the facilitation provided by the newspaper press. Editors and their agents attended meetings of philanthropic societies, national societies and the lectures of mechanics' institutes and reported on them in

their papers. Through these various means, newspapers formed both the locus and the mechanism by which Canadian identity was constructed, negotiated and disseminated.

The role of patronage in this process should not be underestimated. John A. Macdonald's use of patronage to construct both a national conservative political party and to help engender Canadian nationalism in the 1870s was not unique, but the refinement of a technique that had long been common in the Canadas. Canadian politicians, from Mackenzie to Baldwin and Strachan to Gowan had used similar methods throughout the pre-confederation period. It is not clear that the 'administrative pilgrimages' of Benedict Anderson's model of nationalistic development hold much relevance for the Canadas.[798] Representatives of the House of Assembly were often drawn from local communities and travelled to York or Quebec, and later to Montreal or Kingston, where they experienced the great diversity of opinions and circumstances expressed by representatives from across first Upper or Lower Canada, and later United Canada. But it is not clear that they spread new conceptions of the nation. For much of the period, election campaigns were rooted in local issues rather than national ones. They therefore focused on presenting themselves as the best advocate for their district and tended to minimise the interests of other communities. The greatest changes in this system came instead from the arrival of national political parties. They set the political agenda and expected conformity to the party's principles from their candidates. In some cases, such as that of Francis Hincks in Oxford County, they parachuted in preferred candidates into 'safe' constituencies. Yet in some respects much of the model is true. Ambitious politicians and administrators only obtained office in the colony in which they were born (though there was some movement between Upper and Lower Canada). There was no opportunity to rise to positions of significance in the metropole or elsewhere in the empire. However, it appears that this was the case not so much because of discrimination against 'creoles' suffering from a 'shared fatality of trans-Atlantic birth' but rather from the time spent living at such a distance from Britain. British-born migrants to the Canadas were no more likely to experience such success. Governors were not just British-born, but recent British residents. This would imply that even British migrants would soon fall into this 'looping climb', in which the 'highest administrative centre' to 'which he could be assigned, was the capital of the imperial administrative unit in which he found himself'.[799]

The most important use of patronage was to link the political centre to the regions. The distribution of patronage in the Canadas was incredibly centralised. It ultimately all lay with the provincial executive. But to function effectively, it required the cooperation of local elites. This meant that individuals with close relationships to the political centre, such as Mahlon Burwell in the London District or Hamnett Pinhey in the Ottawa Valley, were largely responsible for the distribution of district, county and municipal offices by recommending some individuals as magistrates, treasurers or militia captains and sullying the reputations of others. The importance of individuals locally was then to some extent predicated on relationships with a provincial elite. This provided the political centre with an immense influence on a series of geographically dispersed settlements. In practice the Canadas, from an early date, were united far more than the everyday experience of pioneer settlers would suggest. The significance of patronage would then mean that the constitution and the institutional structures it specified would be of great importance in the development of identity in these provinces. Before 1841, the structures of patronage tended towards the development of separate Upper Canadian and Lower Canadian identities. This left English-speakers in Lower Canada in awkward position – entirely dependent on the goodwill of the

[798] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp. 55-57.
[799] Ibid.

executive, they were largely excluded from the House of Assembly by the French-speaking majority, and they did not fit easily into either Upper or Lower Canada. This dependence on a British-born executive left them looking back to the mother country for their identities. Even the Americans of Lower Canada sought to redefine themselves as 'British'. There was no opportunity for a new Anglo-Canadian identity while their lifeline in the sea of French-Canadians remained the Governor General and his Chateau Clique. Nonetheless, the anglophones of Lower Canada continually found to their dismay that the interests of Britain and their interests were not identical. They attempted to resolve this awkward dilemma through Union in 1822, though without the support of Upper Canadians or the British imperial government this project was doomed to failure. The eventual Union in 1841 resolved the issue and made it clear that henceforth there would be a single English-speaking community in the Canadas.

The political structure introduced by the Union of the Canadas, despite its ambitions of assimilation, served only to increase ethnic antagonisms. Two populations, of almost equal size, stood off against each other in the house of assembly. On one side was a rabidly anti-French Tory party whose formative experience was the tense atmosphere of the 1830s and particularly the rebellions. On the other side stood an uneasy alliance of convenience between the reformers of Upper Canada and the moderate *patriotes* of Lower Canada, many of whom had been involved in the rebellion themselves. Little united them politically apart from the belief in responsible government. For Tories, this principle was so abhorrent not because they believed it was a form of democracy or republicanism, but because it would give the French an unprecedented influence in politics – in particular, the ability to rule over the English-speaking population of Lower Canada. The term 'French Domination' was more than just rhetoric on their part. They genuinely believed that the way of life and rights of English-speaking Canadians were under threat. While it is true that there never was a clear cut equation between French-Canadians and Reform or Anglo-Canadians and Toryism, these provided the general fault lines of politics. After the Baldwin-Lafontaine government Canada West began to develop its own radical tradition that had no place for francophones. Politicians may have been forced to create coalitions that crossed linguistic lines but this failed to result in assimilation. By Confederation, it was clear that paralysis had come over Canadian politics, due to the intractable split between French- and English-speakers, something represented by the debates over representation by population.

In this context, in which the political parties are seen as the key actors in the construction of Canadian identity, it was only natural that the British metropolitan government was to have a decisive impact. The party structures were crucially defined by the political structures in place. This meant the existence of two separate provinces before 1841 and a united Canada after, but it also meant the Family Compact and the Chateau Clique in the earlier period and responsible government for the latter. Britain, though largely unintentionally, played a crucial role in defining Canadian identity. The development of the Anglo-Canadian community can be seen primarily as the result of a series of institutional changes in the government of the Canadas. Time and again it was the actions of the British government, from the Quebec Act in 1774, to the Constitutional Act of 1791, the Union of the Canadas in 1841 (through the work of the British-appointed and instructed Governor General, Lord Sydenham), the enactment of responsible government in 1849, and finally, the British North America Act of 1867, that fundamentally changed the nature of Canadian politics. The most crucial of these was the union of the Canadas in 1841. By placing both Upper and Lower Canada under a single government with one legislative assembly, it forced Upper Canadians into close and repeated contact with the French-Canadian other. Before the rebellions, the parties had focused on more narrowly provincial measures, such as the alien question of the 1820s in

Upper Canada, or opposition to the seigneurial system in Lower Canada. Now these questions were made national. The Union brought forth the possibility of 'French Domination'. English-speakers were forced to unite to prevent such an outcome. The conflict between Reformers and Tories was not over whether rule by French-speakers was acceptable, but how far it truly existed and what measures could be used to contain it.

By 1849, United Canada was a very different place than it had been at the end of the War of 1812. Its population had grown immensely. It was now united in a single province in which English-speakers and French-speakers were compelled to work together if they wished to achieve stable government (and the instability and deadlocks of the next two decades demonstrated the difficulties they experienced in doing this). The population of Canada West was rapidly approaching that of Canada East. French-Canadian fears of swamping by immigrants from the British Isles were more justified than they ever had been. The population was becoming not just more British, but more Canadian. A majority of the inhabitants of Canada West were now born in the province. The development of the Anglo-Canadian community could then be seen to have occurred as the natural result of the origins of its inhabitants. Though intensely loyal, most had never visited Britain and did not conceive of Britain as their homeland in the manner that their ancestors had.

Space and time had been compressed by the development of new transport and communications networks. A system of canals now linked Lake Erie to the St. Lawrence River and to the Atlantic. Roads had been developed across the province. While in 1815 many had been little more than dirt-trails, impassable in spring and uncomfortable even in the best weather, they now formed an important function for local markets and made travel by land a real possibility. For the largest cities, the telegraph now linked them into a continental communications network. Finally, the public sphere had blossomed into a lively arena. Newspapers could be found in every town, small or large, and were read by vast swathes of the population. The trappings of civil society were all around – mechanics institutes, national societies and agricultural associations formed part of the day to day life of many inhabitants.

Yet while these factors contributed to the emergence of an Anglo-Canadian identity, they were not primarily responsible for it. Rather, they contributed an important set of preconditions for the development of identity. The new transportation network enhanced the ability of Canadian settlers to travel around their province, but mobility was not dependent on it. From at least as early as the 1820s, the Canadian population had been extraordinarily mobile. Few migrants stayed for long at the point of their arrival. Many continued to follow the opportunities presented by cheap land until they found an area in which they were happy to make a more permanent settlement. More important for identity development was the growth of civil society and the public sphere, particularly newspapers. These provided the crucial mechanism through which identity could be disseminated, as demonstrated above. This was the most important change in this period. In 1815, newspapers were almost non-existent. Only the *Upper Canada Gazette*, in practice little more than a dull sheet presenting proclamations and laws with little resemblance to the papers that would follow, existed in the upper province while newspapers were limited to Montreal and Quebec in Lower Canada. The existence of these factors did not make the development of an Anglo-Canadian identity inevitable. It is likely they encouraged some stronger sense of identity amongst the inhabitants of Upper and Lower Canada but what form this would take was still undecided. Improved transport networks enhanced communications not just within the Canadas, but back home across the Atlantic and to the south across the American border as well. The Anglo-Canadian nation was then not an inevitable development that emerged out of economic, demographic or infrastructural changes.

Anglo-Canadians defined themselves more by what they were not than what they were. They faced two intractable 'Others' in the French-Canadians and the Americans. They believed themselves to have a series of defining characteristics, but on the whole, these did little to distinguish them from their British ancestry. Their defining characteristics included loyalty, tolerance and a commitment to freedom. Yet all of these referred back to the British homeland. Their freedom derived from a belief in the rights of the free-born Englishman (that had first been extended to the Scots, Welsh and Irish and were now extended to Canadians) rather than from Enlightenment ideals of the equality of all men. In terms of religion, they were Protestant but far more than their forebears, they were tolerant of difference. Catholicism did not exclude one from the Anglo-Canadian community – most critiques of French-Canadians or Irish Catholics were based not upon their religion but upon the characteristics of their ethnic character. Attacks on churches of whatever religion were condemned by all respectable citizens. Yet this diversity of religion also proved a challenge to the creation of identity. Anglicans were forced to make room for Methodists, Quakers, Episcopalians and Baptists as well as Catholics. Religion could not be the defining characteristic of the Anglo-Canadian. Westfall has described the development of a sense of providentialism amongst the people of Ontario.[800] Yet this idea of religious mission rarely comes through in contemporary writings, whether in the newspapers or in personal letters. The temperance movement was widespread, as were concerns with education, but it is not clear that they had a major impact on how Anglo-Canadians thought of themselves. The issues that concerned people beyond the everyday were primarily political and related to the two 'others' discussed above. To view the French-Canadian as 'other' did not imply a determined and unceasing hatred of everything French.

What was required was simply recognition of the differences between English- and French-speakers. Despite the assimilationist ambitions of the Durham Report and the Union of the Canadas, most of the inhabitants of United Canada had long since abandoned hope that the French-Canadians would eventually become British, given high enough immigration from the British Isles and the creation of appropriate institutions. Conservatives wished to limit the influence of the French and to prevent 'French Domination', in other words the enactment of French-Canadian interests over those of Anglo-Canadian interests. Reformers, meanwhile, sought justice for the French-Canadians. But they were likely to see this as a means of conciliation. Certainly they saw cooperation between French- and English-speakers as valuable in achieving progress. They were not, however, to become one community united by sentiment and character. Cooperation was a practical method to achieve the best outcome for the English-speaking community. Supporting the Rebellion Losses Bill, for reformers, was a matter of humanitarian justice.

The English-speaking community of the Canadas did, however, manage to create for themselves a narrative of shared history. They looked proudly back to the conquest of 1759, the flight of the loyalists after the American Revolution and the War of 1812 as key moments in the formation of their nation. In 1837-8 the rebellions were added to this. In each of these cases, Canadians demonstrated their loyalty to Britain, their ideals of a balanced constitution and their willingness to fight for what they believed in. Each event was reinterpreted through the 'militia myth', none more so than the War of 1812. The War of 1812 was no longer part of a wider imperial struggle between Britain and the United States, but a war of national defence to protect Upper and Lower Canada. It was won not by the efforts of British regulars but by the heroic actions of Canadian militiamen.

[800] Westfall, *Two Worlds*, p. 204.

A relatively successful attempt was made to provide a racial foundation for the Anglo-Canadian identity, based upon the ethnic ideal of Anglo-Saxonism. But far from providing a unique basis for their identity, it linked them closer to English-speakers in Great Britain and the United States. In practice, the Anglo-Saxon ideal was more about demonstrating that they were not French than anything else. It would take a further redefinition of this ideal, as expressed by the Canada First movement with its focus on northerness and the Canadian environment and landscape, to make racial characteristics an important part of Anglo-Canadian identity. Nonetheless, though the introduction of this racial discourse was at first contested and its usage initially fell along party political lines, it eventually found widespread acceptance.

The United States exercised a powerful influence on the Canadian imaginary during this period. Anti-Americanism was to become a key component of the Anglo-Canadian identity. Yet despite the bitter legacies of the American Revolution and the War of 1812, this ideology was far from securely cemented for much of the pre-confederation period. Indeed, ambiguity rather than outright hatred tended to characterise Canadian impressions of their southern neighbour. Furthermore, the greatest hatreds were reserved for the government of the United States and for the republican ideology it represented, rather than for individual Americans. Nonetheless, over the course of this period America and Americans were gradually 'othered'. Those of American-origin in Lower Canada were assimilated into the label 'British' or 'British' Canadian and their American birth, as in the case of Stanley Bagg, was conveniently forgotten. American origin was a handicap in politics, commerce and society more generally in the Canadas and so Americans tended to redefine themselves in terms of their new province and their loyalty to Britain. This did not happen to the same extent in the years before the rebellion in the London District and helped contribute to their disloyalty during 1837 and the subsequent exodus of Americans from Upper Canada. The United States could be seen as a source of inspiration, a failed experiment or an implacable enemy. Its remarkable economic prosperity and success at attracting immigrants suggested to contemporary inhabitants of the British provinces that there was something about its political system or culture that had led to its success. The reasons given for this varied. Few believed that the Americans were possessed of any exceptional characteristics that allowed them to work harder to achieve economic success. Rather, Anglo-Canadians had been obstructed by the French majority in Lower Canada, or by the machinations of a corrupt Family Compact in Upper Canada. As an experiment, for most Canadians, the jury was still out. Jacksonian democracy could look like mob rule. Riots undermined the American political system. Battles between states and the federal government made the state look weak. Yet at other times it seemed to be the epitome of freedom. Canadians were not rooting for the American system to fail so much as examining it with curiosity as an alternative system to have emerged from the British political tradition. Some aspects they applauded; others they abhorred. Only on the issue of slavery could Canadians unanimously condemn the United States. How could a nation that defined itself by liberty condone such an institution?

Canadians tended to generalise about the United States from actions taken by smaller units, whether states, state governors or individuals. The raids of the Hunter's Lodges in 1838 were viewed as an attack by the United States rather than as the criminal activities of a minority. At best, it represented the inability of a democratic, federal government to control the actions of its citizens. More commonly, though, as demonstrated by the Caroline incident, it was seen as part of a covert war being enacted by the United States against Canada. State governors failed to restrain their citizens and at times even seemed to encourage them. Patriots were rarely prosecuted. Fugitive rebels were not extradited. The outrage in American newspapers

over the Caroline affair was mirrored by Canadian disbelief at Americans invading their province while a state of neutrality was supposed to exist between them.

Finally, it must be examined whether the Anglo-Canadian identity formed during this period was truly the 'mosaic' that some historians have argued. Cole Harris argued that 'British North America was a mosaic of diverse peoples not only because it was composed of immigrants from varying backgrounds, but also because there was little means of mixing them up.'[801] Yet the findings of this thesis would suggest a remarkable degree of unity and assimilation occurring amongst Anglo-Canadians by the end of this period. While assimilationist impulses may not have been quite as aggressive and clear-cut as in the case of the United States, there remained a very strong tendency to enforce conformity to a 'British' norm. Those who did not do so, whether Irish Catholics in 1830s Bytown, French-Canadians in the rebellions era, or Montreal Tory merchants in 1849, struggled to find acceptance in the wider English-speaking community. Diasporic identities did not disappear but their performance and use was closely regulated. They could be accepted so long as they did not constitute a threat to the wider order. In some cases, such as the Orange Order, these diasporic identities actually became part of a more general Canadian identity. The Orange Order was reinterpreted through its focus on loyalty to Britain rather than sectarian conflict between Irish Catholic and Irish Protestant. Perhaps, then, it is time to move past the dichotomy of 'mosaic' and 'melting pot' when comparing the formation of identity in Canada and the United States. These terms are more applicable to the modern situation than they were to the experience of the first half of the nineteenth century. This assimilation, however, was not a result of a common frontier experience. Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis is not applicable to the Canadas between 1815 and 1867, despite much of Upper Canada largely resembling the American midwest on which he based his thesis. As has been demonstrated above, the experiences of settlers in the Canadas were wildly divergent based upon their place of settlement. The frontier experience of the raucous Ottawa Valley in the 1830s was nothing like that of bustling, urbane Montreal or the agricultural London District. If 'Canadianisation' took place, it occurred in a top-down manner, as emerging party networks of Reformers and Tories presented their conceptions of an Anglophone Canadian identity through the press. The construction of a modern party system in the Canadas was inextricably linked to the development of an Anglo-Canadian identity.

This thesis has only begun to touch on the construction of identity in British North America during this period. Future research is needed to see if similar patterns can be discerned in the Maritime Provinces. Popular opposition to confederation has been well documented there – if a similar process can be distinguished in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, it would help to explain this opposition – these provinces may have established their own unique and independent identity that was threatened by the expansion of a Canadian identity eastwards. Similarly, the development of Canadian national identity can be better charted through the early period of confederation – the First World War and Vimy Ridge can be viewed from the context of a culmination of English Canadian identity rather than a beginning. This thesis has also been necessarily limited to a few geographic case studies and particular moments in time – attitudes in Toronto, Kingston, Quebec and the Eastern Townships would prove enlightening.

The events of 1849 created a major realignment in Canadian politics as the moderate reformers joined into a new conservative party that emerged from the conferences of the British American League, while the radicals broke off and formed the new party of the Clear

[801] Harris, *The Reluctant Land*, p. 465.

Grits led by George Brown, a newspaper editor. The remaining two decades before confederation could use further examination. Further events were likely to have provoked expressions of identity – in particular, the American Civil War and the Fenian Raids that followed soon after its conclusion. This thesis has also focused primarily on the Anglo-Canadian experience, and while it has attempted to present a portrait of what the ordinary Anglo-Canadian felt rather than just the elites, their experience cannot be viewed in isolation. Its development was inherently part of a dialectic with both the French-Canadians and the Americans, and it would be fruitful to research Canadian identity development within this context. Finally, the role of other European settlers, particularly the German-speaking populations of Upper Canada, have not been examined in this thesis. While the Germans only constituted a small portion of the population and it appears that they were largely incorporated into the English-speaking community. The role of the German community could benefit from further research. Indeed, it was during this period that distinctive German communities seem to have developed in areas such as Waterloo as suggested by the existence of German language newspapers such as *Deutsche Canadier* in Kitchener. Finally, the role of minority populations, in particular that of the First Nations and the black populations of both Upper and Lower Canada, would prove a very interesting addition to this research, both in how they responded to the growing strength of this Anglo-Canadian nation and how they contested or resisted the identities imposed upon them by white settlers.

Appendix – Newspapers of the Canadas

Montreal

Montreal Gazette, **Montreal**, 1778 – present

The *Gazette* was the oldest, and one of the most successful, newspapers published in the Canadas. It was set up as a French language newspaper by Fleury Mesplet in 1778 though soon after became bilingual. In 1822 it became an English-only paper after its purchase by Thomas Andrew Turner. It began as a weekly paper, but was published three times a week during the period under study. By 1849 it had become a daily and was edited by the Scottish-born James Moir Ferres. The *Gazette* assumed the character of a strongly conservative viewpoint.

The Canadian Courant, **Montreal**, 1807-1834

The Courant was a weekly Tory paper that strongly supported the actions of the military and the civil authorities in the events surrounding the west ward election of 1832. It was edited by the American-born Nahum Mower until 1829, when it was taken over by two Irishmen, Benjamin Workman and Ariel Bowman. They continued to espouse British constitutional principles.

The Vindicator, **Montreal**, 1828-1837

This paper was set up by Daniel Tracey, an Irish Catholic immigrant, in 1828. It was published three times a week. Its purpose was to advocate the interests of the Irish in Montreal and to provide news from Ireland for immigrants in the province. Throughout its run, the *Vindicator* represented the only English-speaking Patriote newspaper. It consistently opposed the policies of the executive of Lower Canada. Tracey was followed as editor by Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan. Its proprietors were leading French-Canadian *Patriotes*. In 1832 it was owned by E. B. Fabre & Co. O'Callaghan continued to support the Patriote cause even into active rebellion in 1837. The final issue of the paper was published on November 6th, 1837, after the destruction of the press office and the types by Montreal Tories.

Montreal Herald, **Montreal**, 1811-1957

This paper was set up by William Gray, a Scottish Presbyterian, in 1811. It was published twice a week. It was continually the most virulent conservative paper in the city. Archibald Ferguson owned the paper between 1828 and 1834. During this time it was edited by Mr. Scott. Ferguson sold the *Herald* to Robert Weir, Junior, who employed first Adam Thom and then David Chisholm as editors. From 1843 until 1856, James Potts was editor. Both in proprietorship and editorship the *Herald* was Scottish, Protestant and conservative.

Montreal Morning Courier, **Montreal**, 1835-1851

The *Morning Courier* was a conservative paper published three times a week initially and daily thereafter. It was founded by the American Rollo Campbell in 1835 and published daily. From 1837 it was edited by the English-born Christopher Dunkin.

The Montreal Transcript, **Montreal**, 1836-1865

This was the first penny paper in the Canadas and targeted the literate working classes of the city. It was moderately conservative and published three times a week. It was established by John Lovell and Donald McDonald in 1836.

The Montreal Witness, **Montreal**, 1846-1938(?)

The Witness was established by John Dougall, a Scottish immigrant who arrived in Canada in 1826. This was a Protestant evangelical newspaper published weekly with a decidedly religious purpose. It advocated temperance and provided information on a variety of religious and literary topics. Though largely apolitical, it was strongly anti-Catholic.

The Montreal Pilot, **Montreal**, 1844-1862

The *Pilot* was a Reform newspaper set up by Rollo Campbell, a Scottish immigrant, in 1844. This paper was owned by Francis Hincks, a leading Reform politician. The *Pilot* was published three times a week. In 1862, financial difficulties forced Campbell to shut down the paper. It was the one English-language newspaper in the city to support the Reform government in 1849. Its offices were wrecked in the riots that followed the passing of the bill in April of that year.

The Ottawa Valley

Bathurst Courier, **Perth,** 1834-1857 (preceded by the *Bathurst Independent Examiner*, 1828-1834, continues to present day as *The Perth Courier*)

It was established as a weekly newspaper by John Cameron in 1834, and continued after his death by his younger brother, Malcolm Cameron, a rising reform politician. The paper served much of the Ottawa and Rideau Valley regions and claimed five hundred subscribers in 1829.

Bytown Independent and Farmer's Advocate, **Bytown,** 1836

This short-lived paper was owned and edited by the Irish Protestant Reformer, James Johnston. Johnston was well known for his anti-Catholic views in the Bytown community. The *Independent* only published two issues.

Bytown Gazette, **Bytown,** 1836-1845

The *Gazette* was Bytown's primary newspaper during the rebellions' era. It was established as a weekly by the Scot, Alexander James Christie, who had learned his craft working at the Montreal *Gazette*. It tended to take a moderate conservative position and continually advocated for the union of the provinces and for Bytown's potential as the national capital.

Bytown Packet, **Bytown**, 1845-1851 (continued as *Ottawa Citizen* to present day)

The *Packet* was established by William Harris. In 1846 it was sold to John Bell and Henry J. Friel. In 1849 Robert Bell purchased the paper. The *Packet* was the most widely read newspaper in the Ottawa Valley region during this period. Its politics were strongly reformist.

Orange Lily and Protestant Vindicator, **Bytown**, 1849-1854

The *Lily* was a semi-monthly conservative paper edited by William Pittman Lett that acted as an advocate for the Orange Order in the province. It was fiercely loyalist, Protestant and anti-Catholic.

Ottawa Advocate, **Bytown**, 1842-1849 [?]

Few issues of this newspaper have survived. It appears that it was a strongly conservative paper. Initially owned and edited by Dr. John George Bridges of March Township, it later became an Orange institution, operated by Dawson Kerr and William Pitmann Lett.

Ottawa Argus, **Aylmer**, **Canada East** 1850-1854

The *Argus* was a reform paper published in the largely English-speaking village of Aylmer, Canada East, upriver from Bytown, by T. Watson. Few copies have survived.

The London District

The Upper Canada Times and London District Advertiser, **London**, 1836

The *Times* was a conservative paper that opposed the manoeuvrings of the Reform party in the provincial assembly and was published weekly. The paper does not appear to have survived long.

The London Times, **London,** 1845-1852

This was a strongly conservative paper published weekly that utterly condemned the actions of Lord Elgin in failing to disallow the Rebellion Losses Bill.

London Gazette, **London,** 1836-1847

It was published weekly by T. and B. Hodgkinson. The *Gazette* was a moderate conservative paper that expressed its discontent with the 'ungrateful' agenda of reformers in the province.

The True Patriot and London District Advertiser, **London,** 1834

This weekly paper was of Tory persuasion and had the masthead "Pro Rege, Lege, Grege" – "For the King, the Law, and the People". Few issues were published.

Canadian Free Press, **London,** 1847-1852 (continued as *London Free Press* to present day)

This was founded in 1847 by William Sutherland as a weekly Reform newspaper. In 1852 it was purchased by Josiah Blackburn and renamed as the *London Free Press*.

Western Globe, **London,** 1845-1851

This paper was established by George Brown as a complement to his Toronto newspaper, *The Globe*. Strongly reformist in political orientation, the *Western Globe* argued for responsible government and supported the Reform ministry of Baldwin and Lafontaine.

St. Thomas Journal, **St. Thomas,** 1831-1837

The *Journal* was established in 1831 by George and Thomas Hodgkinson. It had a strong Tory disposition in its politics.

St. Thomas Liberal, **St. Thomas,** 1832-1837

The *Liberal* reflected the powerful reform sentiment of Middlesex in the years before the rebellion. Published by John Kent & Kipp in 1832, in 1837 it became another victim of Tory violence as its offices and press were destroyed. It was edited by John Talbot.

The St. Thomas Standard, **St. Thomas,** 1844-1846

This paper was established by the conservative Edward Ermatinger but only lasted two years as he believed that his purpose in publishing the paper had been completed by this point. That purpose was "to rescue this fine District from the power of a rampant radical majority". Ermatinger was a prominent merchant of St. Thomas who had previously served in the Hudson's Bay Company.

Oxford Star, **Woodstock**, 1848-1849

The *Oxford Star* was a reform newspaper published in the conservative stronghold of Woodstock in Oxford County.

The British American, **Woodstock,** 1848-1853

This paper was a weekly conservative paper that continued the tradition of the *Woodstock Herald* that ceased publishing earlier in the year. It was published by George W. Whitehead and edited from 1849 to 1853 by John McWhinnie. In 1854 it merged with the *Western Progress*.

Middlesex Standard, **St. Thomas,** 1849-1850.

This was a weekly conservative paper published by Marcus Gunn. Gunn was a Scottish immigrant by way of Nova Scotia who arrived in the London District in 1844. This paper followed on from the *St. Thomas Observer* but was equally unsuccessful.

The Evangelical Pioneer, **London,** 1848-1850

This was a religious newspaper set up to spread evangelical Christian principles to the local population. It remained largely aloof from politics. In 1850 it moved from London to Toronto where it could find a wider readership.

Toronto

The Colonial Advocate, **Toronto**, 1824-1834

William Lyon Mackenzie, a radical Scottish immigrant responsible who led the Upper Canadian rebellion in Toronto in 1837, published this reform newspaper throughout its existence. It was distributed widely across Upper Canada, and some copies even crossed the borders into the United States, Lower Canada, Nova Scotia and Great Britain. The number of subscribers can be estimated as approximately 750 to 950.

The Constitution, **Toronto,** 1834-1837

After Mackenzie abandoned the *Advocate* he soon set up a new paper, the *Constitution*. Its tone was similar to his previous paper and seems to have reached an equally broad and geographically dispersed audience. Until 1837 his increasingly radical position filtered through into his journalism. By calling for the creation of political unions and the reporting of township meetings throughout the province, it played an important part in the early organization of the rebellions.

Ancaster

The Gore Gazette¸ **Ancaster**, 1827-1829

This was a moderate reform paper published by George Gurnett. Gurnett was an English immigrant by way of Virginia and later became Mayor of Toronto. It was a moderate reform newspaper though Gurnett often disagreed with Mackenzie.

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