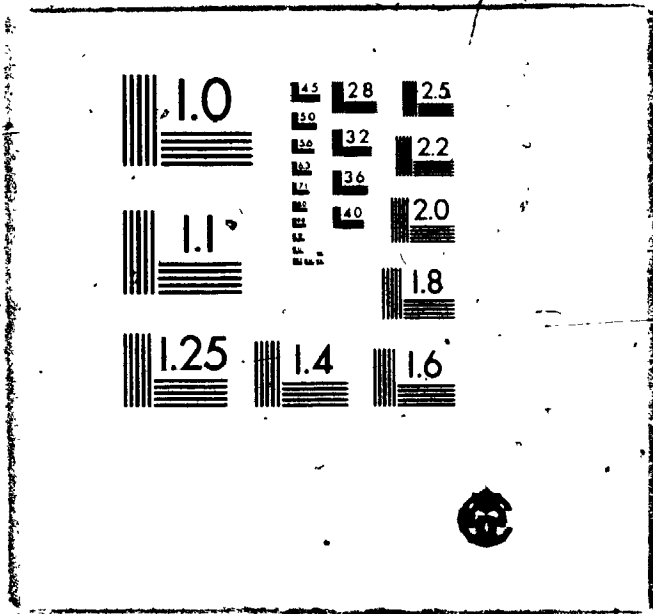


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ATTITUDES TO SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND SOCIAL

MOBILITY IN UPPER CANADA

(1815 - 1840)

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History in the  
Department of History, Carleton University

by

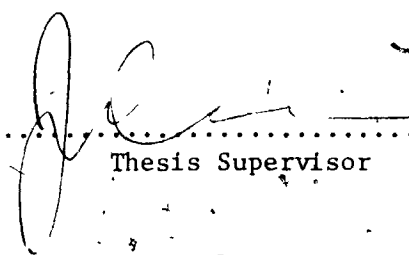


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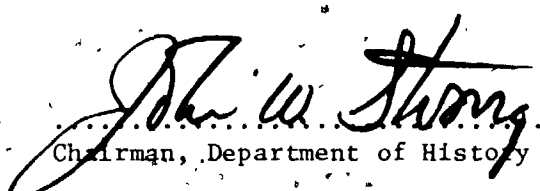
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The undersigned recommend to the Faculty  
of Graduate Studies and Research acceptance of the thesis  
"Attitudes to Social Structure and Social  
Mobility in Upper Canada (1815-1840)"  
submitted by Peter A. Russell, M.A.,  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy



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Thesis Supervisor



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July 6, 1981

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Responsibility for all errors and omissions is mine.

ABSTRACT

"Attitudes Toward Social Structure and Social Mobility in Upper Canada (1815-1840)" is an examination of the prevailing views of contemporaries about what social mobility was possible and desirable in their society. Part I describes in systematic form how Upper Canadians saw their own prestige hierarchy, to set the context in which attitudes towards social mobility functioned. Each of the five occupation categories - manual labour, farming, the professions, commerce and government service - were found to have their particular differentials which separated out reasonably distinct levels within the various categories. The status of women required particular attention both because those who were gainfully employed were confined to particular occupations, and because most were not so employed, but rather gained what social standing they had from their husbands by proxy. The several levels in each occupational category were collated into a single hierarchy of social status using a five level model of Dependence, Quasi-dependence, Independence, Marginal Respectability, and Respectability.

Part II examined seven factors which Upper Canadians identified as of consequence for social mobility and compared the influence attributed to each. One's sex largely determined what opportunities were available.

Marriage was significant to men, but absolutely crucial to women. Education in its various aspects was important, especially to artisans, the professions and those seeking to be recognized as Respectable. Religious denomination was a much debated factor, although it did not seem to have much weight except for Irish Catholics. Ethnic prejudice set up barriers of varying intensity, which were greatest towards the Irish. Race formed a more absolute block to social acceptance. Though of very limited availability political patronage was heatedly discussed, so much so as to undermine its effectiveness as a means of upward mobility. Upper Canadians considered character very important to anyone's chances for advancement, while not being either clear or all of one mind in what they meant by the term. These seven factors were evaluated for the influence each could have had in contemporaries' minds, especially with respect to different social goals.

Part III set out the predominant theories in the popular attitudes towards social mobility in Upper Canada. The almost universally shared social myth of the colony was that by its offer of plentiful land and well-paid work, it was the "poor man's country" where the poor of Europe could become independent. Upper Canadians used three key images to represent certain realities they saw in the social mobility about them - the 'ladder' of steady, upward progress;

(iii).

the 'wheel of fortune' that might have suddenly cursed or blessed; the 'mushroom' of unwanted and unwarranted sudden advancement. Finally Upper Canadians saw their society as one which was both stable in its social hierarchy of positions and open to personal mobility by the deserving.

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PART I THE PERCEIVED SOCIAL STRUCTURE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL STRUCTURE



To study attitudes towards social mobility in Upper Canada one needs to appreciate that it was a dynamic society. Britain's first inland colony, it made available large tracts of good land in a temperate zone. During the great emigration from Britain that began in 1815 and lasted to mid-century, Upper Canada was one of the major recipients.<sup>1</sup> Before the War of 1812, the colony had a population of about 77,000, principally of American origin. By 1840 it had 427,000 settlers, and by 1851 952,000, the great majority from the British Isles.<sup>2</sup> This migration hit its peak between 1828 and 1835, when the population increased nearly 100%, from 185,000 to 335,000.<sup>3</sup> Not only were immigrants flooding in to seek new opportunities to improve their social and economic condition, the native-born Upper Canadians were no less ambitious.

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- (1) Norman Macdonald, Canada 1763-1841, Immigration and Settlement, Longmans, Green and Co., London, 1939, pp.26,512; Helen I. Cowan, British Emigration to British North America, The First Hundred Years, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1961, pp.185-190; W.A. Carruthers, Emigration from the British Isles, P.S. King and Son Ltd., Westminster, 1929, pp.143-160,246,305.
  - (2) J.M.S. Careless, Union of the Canadas, McClelland and Stewart Limited, Toronto, 1967, p.150.
  - (3) Fred Landon, Western Ontario and the American Frontier, McClelland and Stewart Ltd., Toronto, 1967, pp.11-21; I.C. Hutton, "The Baldwins Become Reformers", M.Phil. thesis, University of Toronto, 1970, p.2.

The focus of this study is on social mobility in a rapidly expanding society. After the Rebellion of 1837 and the subsequent union with Lower Canada in 1840, Upper Canada (or Canada West as it became) entered a new era of consolidation. While some pioneer settlement continued, the growing shortage of quality farm land changed the nature of that frontier. Land prices rose markedly after 1840, forcing farmers to change their attitudes towards their prospects and above all those of their sons.<sup>4</sup> Social maturity paralleled the economic. Church and school organization became more formal and regular, for example.<sup>5</sup> The great impetus to expansion that began with the large post-1815 migrations from Britain provided perhaps unique opportunities for a quarter century that fueled the ambitions to rise of both emigrants and native born.

An analysis of how these ambitions functioned socially must begin with an examination of the reigning perceptions of social mobility. How was one supposed to get ahead? What factors governed upward and downward mobility? Such questions lead to an assessment of the society's overall openness to mobility - in its own eyes. But to talk about "up"

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(4) David Gagan, "Land, Population, and Social Change: the 'Critical Years' in Rural Canada West", Canadian Historical Review, volume 59, No.3, 1978, pp.297,299-300,313-316. See also, Jean R. Burnet, Ethnic Groups in Upper Canada, Ontario Historical Society, Toronto, 1972, pp.45-48.

(5) J.L.H. Henderson, (ed.), John Strachan: Documents and Opinions, McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 1969, pp.228-265. Careless, op. cit., pp.31-33,35. F. Henry Johnson, A Brief History of Canadian Education, McGraw Hill, Toronto, 1968, pp.31-33, 36-43.

and "down" in society assumes some reference point. Indeed it implies the assumption of a social hierarchy, whether simple or complex.<sup>6</sup>

Implicit in the social attitudes of those Upper Canadians who left evidence there was a sense of prestige stratification in their society. Part of the contemporary concept of social mobility was the perception that a set of ranks existed, up and down which individuals moved. Any presentation of popular attitudes needs to include a description of that layered view of society. Moreover since some concept of social hierarchy is necessary to give content to the term "social mobility", this study begins with an attempt to elucidate that sense of stratification into a systematic form. The resulting presentation is simply a way of organizing a variety of perceptions of status that contemporaries had.

Was there any general agreement in the community that a single hierarchy of status existed, that its various ranks could be distinguished, and which factors contributed to a person's social prestige? A number of modern comparative studies have demonstrated both the possibility and the stability of empirically established social status hierarchies. In an over-view of twenty-five years of occupational status research, A.F. Davies examined more than a score of surveys of the relative prestige attached to different ranges of occupations. He concluded that there did indeed exist a social consensus on the occupational status of most jobs,

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(6) P.A. Sorokin, Social and Cultural Mobility, Free Press, New York, 1959, p.4.

irrespective of the individuals asked, whatever their own occupation. However in the comparative data, some of the comparisons were more informed than others. The differences which people detected in employments nearer their own may have held more significance than those with which they were less familiar.<sup>7</sup> B.R. Blishen developed a socio-economic index for occupations in Canada that has demonstrated stability in occupation status over time. It produced results by use of an index derived from income and education, very similar to those taken from surveys of popular attitudes towards various occupations.<sup>8</sup> The work of such sociologists and social psychologists seems to indicate it is possible to construct a scale of occupations in the order of their perceived social status. But to attempt to establish that a similar consensus of opinion existed in the nineteenth century

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(7) A.F. Davies, "Prestige of Occupations", British Journal of Sociology, volume 3, 1952, pp.141-146.

(8) B.R. Blishen, "A Socio-Economic Index for Occupations in Canada", in B.R. Blishen et al., Canadian Society: Sociological Perspectives, MacMillan of Canada, Toronto, 1968, pp.741-793. See also Reinhard Bendix and S.M. Lipset (eds.), Class, Status and Power, Free Press Glencoe, 1953; A. Inkeles and Peter Rassi, "National Comparisons of Occupational Prestige", American Journal of Sociology, volume 61, No.4, January 1956, pp.329-339; R.W. Hodge, P.M. Siegal and P.H. Rassi, "Occupational Prestige in the United States", American Journal of Sociology, volume 70, No.3, November 1964, pp.286-302. D.C. Jones, "Social Grading of Occupations", British Journal of Sociology, volume 51, March 1950, pp.35-55; and Jacob Tuckman, "The Social Status of Occupations in Canada", Canadian Journal of Psychology, volume 1, June 1947, pp.71-94.

requires a different methodology.

Michael Katz and the Canadian Social History Project have made a major effort to adapt the social science approach to nineteenth century Canada. In their study of Hamilton, through machine-linked census data and similar records, they have confronted the problems of comprehending and describing social status stratification.<sup>9</sup> In the published results of their research, Katz has looked at four factors that could usefully delineate that status - occupation, wealth (or economic rank), property and servant holding. He found that certain modern sociological conventions had to be discarded. With regard to the four factors, he seriously questioned the primacy given to occupation alone.

Only in certain instances - the propensity of upwardly mobile young men to own houses, or the employment of servants by people moving upward or downward on both occupational and economic ranks - did strong connections exist between the dimensions of mobility . . . [That] certainly should give pause to anyone tempted to infer general social mobility from occupation title alone. . . . The relative independence of each of these measures, which one would expect to show strong and consistent relations with one another, stands out as striking.<sup>10</sup>

Finding occupation and wealth, in particular, to be independent of each other, he recommended a "mixed" measure of status. ". . . An adequate index of social mobility must encompass all four measures of

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(9) Michael Katz, The People of Hamilton, Canada West - Family and Class in a Mid-Nineteenth Century City, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1975, pp.7-15, 142, 187.

(10) Katz, ibid., pp.159-160. Emphasis added.

mobility."<sup>11</sup> In the system of classification used here, "occupation" is used somewhat more precisely to join occupation to economic status (whether income or property). Thus instead of simply "farmers", there are "squatters", "pioneer farmers", "yeomen (or independent) farmers" and "wealthy farmers". In that way the occupation label indicates not only what the person did, but the economic (and occasionally, legal) status as well. Katz took the labels as given in the census and other data. The procedure used here is perhaps more arbitrary, in the sense that the labels, though taken from contemporary vocabulary, are applied to people as descriptive when they themselves had not used the term. For example when Robert Hampton wrote the provincial secretary to buy the land which he had been farming without title, he did not say, "I am a squatter". Yet that in fact was his status.<sup>12</sup> The problem which Katz has indicated - the variation of economic rank within an occupation cross-cutting the occupational status hierarchy - was long ago recognized by the pioneer in studies of social mobility, P.A. Sorokin:

Occupational stratification, then, manifests itself in these two fundamental forms: namely, in the form of a hierarchy among the principal occupational groups (inter-occupational stratification) and in the form of a stratification within each occupational class (intraoccupational stratification).

(11) Katz, ibid., p.160.

(12) Katz, ibid., pp.8, 71-73. Petition of Robert Hampton, November 11, 1819, Upper Canada Sundries (hereafter, "USC").

(13) Sorokin, op. cit., p.99. See also Katz, op. cit., p.71.

Most of the "occupational labels" utilized here combine the occupational and economic factors, with others occasionally implicit. For example the terms "squatter" and "pioneer farmer" made a distinction primarily on the legal claim to the land, rather than to its stage of development. Since servant holding applied to the upper part of the social scale and was largely a function of income, it has been used as a separate and subordinate factor to rate individuals in the hierarchy. This differentiated approach to occupation allows the use of a combination of factors in a compact yet readily intelligible form.

A word of caution is necessary about the precise meaning of the occupation labels even in the differentiated sense in which they are here used. Some still retain a disconcerting broadness. The category "labourer" shades down almost imperceptibly into domestic service on one side, and up to the nascent yeoman farmer (i.e. pioneer) on the other. A hired hand on a farm might have been logging in the field one day and peeling potatoes the next. For some the distinction would have been too fine to draw, or have existed intermittently at best. Yet there was a clear difference between a "skilled chopper" who logged for several farmers in the township (and would probably not be asked to do anything less) and the raftsmen on the Ottawa River on the one hand, and a domestic servant on the other. For some the distinction was quite real. A similar sort of ambiguity to that which blurred downward from labourers to servants could blur upwards from labourer to pioneer. To the casual observer two men logging another's field were both labourers. But a

concrete distinction can be made in that one went home only to a shanty, whereas the other went home to a shanty on his own farm. In a sense the labourer kept his wage-surplus as savings, while the pioneer invested it in his land to make it into a farm. Some of the occupational labels therefore must be understood as making rather qualified distinctions.

The clues relevant to estimating occupational status in the twentieth century must be reassessed when one turns to the social structure of early nineteenth century Upper Canada.<sup>14</sup> One can look for contemporary analyses of status and for anecdotal references to hint at the popular esteem in which various occupations, and grades within occupations, were held. Obviously, the modern systematic survey is impossible. Income and education, where known, would be valuable help. For most shopkeepers and merchants, and all farmers, the amount and quality of property held will be a surer guide than income in a particular year (even if it could be known). Education as a social differential will be useful only for a small part of that society: mainly the professions and to some extent commerce. A manual labourer's skills served as a differential, as well as any property held in connection with his work. One variable seldom used in modern studies will be of considerable importance for part of the social hierarchy. Pamela Horn has found "the keeping or not keeping of domestic servants as the dividing line

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(14) Katz, op. cit., p. 14.



between the working classes and those of a higher social scale."<sup>15</sup> Moreover, "the number of domestics was regarded as a rough guide to status within the ranks of the socially superior."<sup>16</sup> Contemporary comment on popular esteem whether offered anecdotally or systematically, income (actual or inferred), education, working skills, property, and servants have been used to sketch a hierarchy of social status for Upper Canada.

Before proceeding to that sketch, a further caution is needed about the data used. What makes particular expressions of opinion into "a popular attitude"? The most obvious answer is to pile up as many people expressing the same view as possible (with as few contrary instances as possible). For most factors that pattern of opinion can be solidly established from a wide variety of sources. However there are some aspects of contemporary opinion, which while important for a full understanding of the subject, were not widely commented upon. In such cases it is not only the bulk of evidence which matters, but the generality of the expression of opinion. People could have expressed their view first, in such a way that they clearly thought what they said was commonly believed, rather than merely their own point of view. Second, a person might have articulated an opinion in a public discussion (for example in

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(15) Pamela Horn, The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Servant, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1975, p.17. See also Katz, op. cit., pp.141, 151, 159.

(16) Horn, ibid., p.18.

a newspaper) in such a way that the readers were clearly assumed to share the same value. As an example of the first, John Galt wrote of certain settlers in Upper Canada, "The Scottish Highlanders can hardly yet be regarded in any respect different from their well known character in Britain".<sup>17</sup> William Lyon Mackenzie, reporting on the trial of a Niagara district merchant for smuggling, noted that his house had been searched during his absence, only his wife being at home: ". . . the most troublesome person that an officer of justice can have to deal with, is a lady . . .".<sup>18</sup> His passing remark assumes the reader will readily agree that women are meddlesome, probably irrational, creatures that will not stay out of a man's way. This discussion leads to broader questions of the use of evidence.

A variety of different types of sources have been used for this study, each of which has its particular advantages and limitations. The most intimate and, at times, ambiguous type of evidence comes from surviving private correspondence. It unquestionably gives us the individual contemporary opinions of many persons (though not from anything like the entire social spectrum). Yet these opinions may be entirely personal, reflecting no general attitude in society at all. With this sort of evidence, especial attention is needed to discover the generality of any opinion.

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(17) John Galt, "A Statistical Account of Upper Canada", The Philosophical Magazine, volume 29, No.113, October 1807, p.9.

(18) Colonial Advocate, August 5, 1824.

In 1816 L.P. Sherwood wrote the provincial Adjutant-General to oppose any lessening of militia officers' authority. Sherwood was a lawyer and a member of the assembly, subsequently a Puisne Judge of King's Bench. However he spoke first of all as a militia officer concerned to maintain the level of discipline attained in wartime. ". . . Experience shows that it is more difficult to support due subordination in a Militia Corps in time of peace than in time of war." The penal clauses and summary power of trial by court-martial ought to be retained, he argued, to keep up the efficiency of the units.

Should the Legislature from unfounded motives of unity diminish the power and authority of the officers, there will be an immediate decay of all military ardour, and useful emulations. Insubordination and want of discipline will soon follow.<sup>19</sup>

Although a magistrate himself, he opposed replacing the military courts with civil courts to enforce obedience in militia units.<sup>20</sup>

What standing did Sherwood's opinions have? They are certainly significant as the views of an important leader in Upper Canada society. But they are private opinions, submitted by letter to the government officer concerned. Moreover, Sherwood appears aware that his views are not generally held. Rather the provincial legislature is about to rescind the powers "from unfounded motives of unity". Were his

(19) L.P. Sherwood to Col. Coffin, January 22, 1816, UCS.

(20) The low standing of militia discipline and its officers' status can be seen in Anna Jameson, Winter Studies and Summer Rambles, Saunders and Otley, London, 1938, volume 1, p.302. Christian Guardian, May 2, 1838. Col. J.S. Macaulay to S.P. Jarvis, March 16, 1838, Jarvis-Powell Papers.

ideas of militia officers ranking above the Justices of the Peace. echoed by several others, they might be elevated to the level of "a widely held opinion", but without further support Sherwood's opinion remains simply his own.

The accounts of various travellers through Upper Canada, and of emigration promoters are quite a different type of source from the correspondence of residents native to the colony. Statements from these may be observations of what they saw or opinions either their own or common ones absorbed from colonists with whom they spoke. Dr. John Howison after his summer tour of Upper Canada was severely critical of its inhabitants and their ways. He noted the number of Church of England, Church of Scotland and Roman Catholic clergy, and the towns where their services were held.<sup>21</sup> To that observation he added this opinion of the "Itinerant Preachers":

Adverse to British Institutions and to British Principles, and possessing a considerable influence over the minds of their congregations, I fear that the hope of making Proselytes to Republicanism is quite as powerful a stimulus to their activity, as that of making converts to Christianity.<sup>22</sup>

In so saying, Howison was expressing a view common to a number of those in the colony, from whom he got at least a reinforcement, if not the idea itself in the first place. At times travellers clearly expressed their own preconceived notions that had little to do with the state of opinion in the colony. Unfortunately few were so explicit as Mrs.

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(21) John Howison, Sketches of Upper Canada, George B. Whittaker, Edinburgh, 1825, pp.139-140.

(22) Howison, op. cit., p.141.

Anna Jameson in distinguishing their personal view from the popular opinion of the colony. After making the common comment of Europeans in Upper Canada, that trees should not be hewed down indiscriminately but selectively to preserve the most beautiful, she added, "The pity I have for the trees of Canada, shows how far I am yet from being a true Canadian".<sup>23</sup> David Wilkie showed a similar concern that his account could not be taken as definitive.

Tourists who leave home with the professed intention of spying out the land, for the purpose of returning home and giving to the world the result of their travels, in the shape of advice to intending emigrants, are often sadly imposed upon, and that in many ways. They pass from place to place, and must either rely upon simple observation, or the report of others. When the latter meets their own views, the point is settled satisfactorily to their mind. But when they differ, they either give up the point, follow their own opinions, or make a compromise between the two.<sup>24</sup>

That caveat registered, it is not so great a deterrent to one studying popular attitudes. Travellers are often valuable for the common opinions which they recorded, and that all the more readily as they were outsiders. Further, there were numerous visitors all publishing their views which allows conflicting impressions to be aired. Indeed some writers concerned themselves to directly refute, or qualify

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- (23) Jameson, op. cit., volume 2, p.102. For less self-aware regrets about the passing of majestic forests, see Colonial Advocate, July 29, 1824 and John Galt, The Literary Life and Miscellanies of John Galt, William Blackwood, Edinburgh, 1834, volume 2, p.90.
- (24) D. Wilkie, Sketches of a Summer Trip to New York and the Canadas, Anderson and Hill, Edinburgh, 1837, p.165. See also Jameson, op. cit., volume 1, p.277 and Thomas Rolph, Comparative Advantages Between the United States and Canada for British Settlers, Smith, Elder Co., London, 1842, pp.5-7.

others - E.A. Talbot criticized Dr. Howison, Charles Fothergill, and Captain Charles Stuart; Patrick Shirreff disputed Adam Fergusson's account; and Dr. Thomas Rolph denounced Capt. Allardyce Barclay and Thornton Leigh Hunt.<sup>25</sup> By careful reading to see what sort of statement they are making, by checking their own qualifications on claims or statements made, and by setting various accounts against each other, considerable information about what attitudes were common can be winkled from the travellers' and emigrant promoters' accounts.

The third major source for Upper Canadian opinions was the newspapers and magazines. Like the travellers' and emigration promoters' accounts these were public not private expressions of attitude. At times the views expressed were highly personal, either because one individual wrote almost everything that went into the paper (as with Francis Collins of the Canadian Freeman or William Lyon Mackenzie's Colonial Advocate), or the paper served to air strong personal views of others. As an example of the latter, an anonymous "D" wrote to the Christian Guardian on the subject of "Women Speaking and Praying in Social Religious Meetings". The writer was for it, although the paper usually was not.<sup>26</sup> However, while advocating women's right to speak, the correspondent was clearly defensive, conscious it was not widely

(25) E.A. Talbot, Five Years' Residence in the Canadas, Longman et. al., London, 1824, volume 1, p.vi; volume 2, pp.62, 192-193. Patrick Shirreff, A Tour Through North America, Ballantyne and Co., Edinburgh, 1835, pp.374-377. Rolph, op. cit., 1842, p.5-7.

(26) Christian Guardian, December 5, 1829; August 24, 1836.

approved procedure.

But will anyone justify the traditions of the [Jewish] Elders, and bring them as proof equal to scripture authority against the practice for which we contend? If so, then prohibit culture to the female intellect - demolish our female seminaries, and teach her only to spin. Shut up her mind to the obligations and comforts of religion, and secure to her all the intellectual and moral degradation of which she is capable.<sup>27</sup>

The idea of women exhorting a mixed audience was "the practice for which we contend" - the "we" demonstrating the self-conscious existence of the minority view-point. Quite different was the invitation of the Patriot, to one and all, to attend the York Mechanics Institute in order,

. . . that knowledge instead of being confined as it has been in ages past, in the walls of Colleges, and only accessible to the favourites of fortune - or limited to some section of a Country - may be as the light and air of heaven, the enjoyment and property of all.<sup>28</sup>

The editor clearly assumed all his readers shared his own positive view of education. They only needed to be made aware of its availability - not convinced of its utility - to draw them to the evening lectures of the Mechanics Institute.

An objection could be made to all the various types of sources - correspondence, travellers' and emigrant promoters' books, newspapers and magazines - that they represent merely one section (and perhaps a small one) of Upper Canadian opinion. The weight of the well-educated,

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(27) Christian Guardian, April 8, 1835.

(28) Patriot, March 4, 1834.

the wealthy and the powerful - the overlapping spheres of high status - it could be said, is not counter-balanced by the uneducated, the poor, and the powerless. Since the sources for a study of opinion in this period are largely confined to the literate, there cannot help but be a bias within the data available toward the more well-to-do, and hence those with more chance of sharing in social authority. In part this has been corrected by paying special attention to the sources which are available for the more impoverished settlers, especially emigrants' letters to their homelands. However these sources are not as extensive as those left by the more socially prominent nor is the range of subjects discussed so broad. For most of the statements made, then, the bulk of the evidence does come from the upper end of the social scale. Yet from a comparison of the less ample sources for the poor with the voluminous ones of the affluent there does not appear to be a complete discontinuity between the two. Rather there are different shadings of emphasis. That should not be surprising, particularly for newspapers. A sizeable proportion of people in the colony read - or had read to them - newspapers such as the Christian Guardian and the Colonial Advocate.<sup>29</sup> As both of these editors, Egerton Ryerson and William Lyon Mackenzie, frequently toured parts of the province and depended upon their readers for their papers' success, their attitudes

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(29) F.M. Quealey, "The Administration of Sir Peregrine Maitland, Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, 1818-1828", unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Toronto, Toronto, 1968, pp.190-200, for a critical view of newspapers' circulation and importance in Upper Canada.



were continually informed by contact with all sections of the population.<sup>30</sup> While the available sources on Upper Canadian opinions emanate preponderantly from the higher ranking, these can often be checked against the existing, more limited sources from the poor for differing emphasis. Moreover, the published views of recognized opinion leaders such as popular newspaper editors were not expressions merely of elite attitudes, but were influenced by their non-elite readers.

However even when the attempt has been made to correct the bias towards the most advantaged, the fact remains that the bulk of the material cited to illustrate "common attitudes" originated in the middle and upper ranks of colonial society. That limits the generality of claims which can be made for the conclusions of the study. Yet even if it were not conceded, as has been argued, that there were no major discontinuities between perceptions of social mobility held by the low and the high, the literate, which encompassed the social elite, are still worth examination. The views of the power holders of what made for upward mobility would have decisively affected the chances for actual mobility of the less articulate at the bottom. If the members of the District Land Board or the Quarter Sessions Court held "character" to be important, then it was important to the applicant for a land grant or a tavern license, whether he or she personally valued it or not. The values of the social elite then hold an interest for us greater than its mere proportion of the population.

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(30) Colonial Advocate, July 1, 1824; January 3, 1828; September 16, 1830; December 13, 1832. Christian Guardian, November 28, 1829; July 31, 1839.

The fact that the sources are drawn disproportionately from the higher levels of Upper Canadian society introduces a further complication. Since all religious and ethnic groups were not equally represented at every stratum of society, denominational and ethnic biases of the dominant groups at the top end receive greater emphasis. Consequently three types of bias - class, ethnic and denominational - need to be untangled when assessing the evidence of contemporaries. It becomes difficult to know at times when American-born Methodists or Irish Catholics are being subjected to ethnic or religious prejudice. Second, less common were class biases compounded, or in some cases perhaps mitigated by, ethnic animosities. John McTaggart remarked of the Rideau Canal workers, "You cannot get the low Irish to wash their faces even were you to lay before them ewers of crystal water and scented soap . . ." <sup>31</sup> But towards Irish of his own class, presumably he would have laid no such charge. Not only is it the dominant ethnic groups which leave the most extensive records - simply because they were dominant, they owned the newspapers and got their books published - but again because they were dominant they felt the most free to give vent to their ethnic prejudices. The occasional members of a low status and minority ethnic group who could have voiced opinions publicly were unlikely to further injure their position by insulting an already hostile and powerful majority. While the existing sources are

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(31) John MacTaggart, Three Years in Canada, Henry Colbourn Ltd., London, 1929, volume 2, p.242. See also Susanna Moodie, Life in the Clearings, Macmillan of Canada, Toronto, 1959, pp.238, 277.

imperfect for giving a mirror image of attitudes toward various ethnic groups, they do serve to reflect the most powerful prejudices, that is, those prejudices which were most likely to become socially operative against another's upward mobility. The emigrant Irish cottier's antipathy towards an English gentleman is the type of attitude least likely to have been recorded. It would also have been that least likely to have any effect on someone else's upward mobility. The recorded attitudes towards ethnicity as a factor in social mobility not only show a hierarchy of prejudice, they reflect the degree to which such attitudes held power to influence the lives of others.

The method of gleaning contemporaries' comments on social mobility at least has the virtue of using unsolicited material. Since the remarks cited were made freely, the suspicion is avoided that people were compelled to go through a ranking exercise (and to think in terms of social stratification) that they would never have done themselves.<sup>32</sup> The comparisons used in this study as evidence were those people made themselves, deliberately or in passing comment.

Describing the social hierarchy and its operation necessitates a resort to certain controversial terms. In particular, "class/stratum", "status", and "mobility" must be precisely defined and clearly understood. "Class" has been and is used in several different senses. Its use may be scalar, to indicate relative position to other classes,

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(32) Davies, *op. cit.*, p.144. Joseph Lopreato and L.E. Hazebrigg Class, Conflict and Mobility, Chandler Publishing Co., London, 1972, pp.165-167.

i.e. the lower class. It can be used in a functional way, to indicate a function in the division of labour, i.e. the working class. Finally "class" may be used subjectively, to describe that which has class consciousness. Upper Canadian and contemporaries who commented on Upper Canada appear to have used "class" exclusively in the scalar sense. Since the intention here is to study Upper Canadian attitudes and since "class" now carries powerful suggestions of class consciousness, of classes as self-conscious entities, the terms "stratum" or "level" are used in preference to "class".<sup>33</sup>

The word, "status", has a very general meaning, in which much of its value lies. That valuable generality must be preserved, particularly from too ready an identification with either wealth or political respectability. How could one have been wealthy and not have had a high social status? A large-scale, efficient timber stripper might enjoy quite a high income cutting lumber from Crown lands or private holdings. But his social standing was dubious.<sup>34</sup> By the letter of the law he was a criminal, while he might claim some shadow of legality for his proceedings.<sup>35</sup> Michael Katz noted that the only two

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(33) See for example, E.P. Thomson, The Making of the English Working Class, Pelican Books, Harmondsworth, 1975; Stanislaw Ossowski, Class Structure in the Social Consciousness, International Library of Sociology and Social Reconstruction, London, 1963.

(34) L. Heyden to W.W. Baldwin, December 3, 1839, W.W. Baldwin Papers, R. Birdsall to John Macaulay, January 28, 1822, Macaulay Papers, H.J. Boulton to P. Maitland, May 28, 1822, UCS.

(35) Cyrus Marsh to Ed. McMahon, December 17, 1816; Thomas Lightfoot to George Hillier, November 28, 1818, UCS.

financially successful business-women in Hamilton were "madams": "in their case social respectability did not accompany wealth".<sup>36</sup> Susanna Moodie, an acute observer of the society, in which she settled, remarked on the broader implication, that mere wealth did not secure social position.

Uneducated, ignorant people often rise by their industry to great wealth in the colony; to such the preferences shown to the educated man always seems a puzzle. . . . They cannot comprehend the mysterious ascendancy of mind over mere animal enjoyments. . . .<sup>37</sup>

Social status, of a certain rank, required the manners and education to suit that rank. Conversely, one could be poor, yet respectable.<sup>38</sup>

One might even be a "gentleman" without means. J.B. Robinson, the former Attorney-General, just appointed Chief Justice, explained a government appointment going to Dr. Sampson, who

. . . is either painfully straightened, or likely to be so - he is a worthy man - and a Gentleman with much to approve about him, but certainly with no special pretensions to the office of Collector [of Customs] .<sup>39</sup>

Another problem is the possible identification of "status" with political respectability. While writers concerned with political conflict often described their opponents in harsh terms, yet a careful

(36) Katz, op. cit., p.57.

(37) Moodie, Life, op. cit., p.41.

(38) Colonial Advocate, May 23, 1825.

(39) J.B. Robinson to John Macaulay, December 13, 1828, Macaulay Papers.

reading shows an awareness that social standing could stand independent of political winds. William Lyon Mackenzie, the most noted polemicist in Upper Canada, could say of Col. William Allan:

The Colonel has a rough exterior, but possesses a very feeling heart, and has often, where he had either control or influence, prevented prosecutions and executions against poor and embarrassed individuals. It is not of him one complains; if any one ought to have fifty profitable trusts, he is the man. . . . 40

Mackenzie, while decrying the rapacity and lack of scruple in lawyer Henry J. Boulton, could pause to note of his conduct during a trial, "his defence induced us to form a more exalted opinion of his cleverness and legal attainments than we had formerly entertained".<sup>41</sup> Similarly John Strachan, the leading Anglican cleric, whose bitterness in political conflict could equal Mackenzie's, wrote of editor and assemblyman Hugh Thomson, "he is a great demagogue, of sad affrontery but a man of parts".<sup>42</sup> Another master of polemic, Thomas Dalton, could temper his assaults on Marshall S. Bidwell with a recognition of his ability as a lawyer and character as a gentleman.<sup>43</sup> Status, on the one hand, cannot be reduced simply to wealth, and on the other, could be perceived apart from hostile political characterizations.

(40) Colonial Advocate, August 19, 1824.

(41) Colonial Advocate, May 23, 1825.

(42) John Strachan to John Macaulay, August 31, 1820; see also Robert Stanton to John Macaulay, April 5, 1828, Macaulay Papers.

(43) Patriot, June 24, 1834; September 22, 1837.

Social status was seldom absolute. Where a person lived in the province could have had a substantial effect on where one's occupational status placed one in the social scale. In a complex and highly differentiated society like that of Kingston, the grammar school teacher, the shopkeeper of £700 capital, and the master mechanic would have held places of marginal respectability. Each would be overshadowed by the presence of others in the commercial or professional hierarchies of greater standing with indisputable claims to respectability. In comparison with them the teacher, shopkeeper and mechanic would have occupied lesser social places. But in the far more rudimentary society of a district town like Simcoe in Norfolk County, these three would have held more esteemed places. The grammar school teacher would have been amongst the highest ranking professionals, with legitimate expectations of being a justice of the peace or even district judge.<sup>44</sup> The shopkeeper of £700 would have found himself in charge of the largest business in the area, seriously considered as possible assemblyman. Similarly the mechanic would have been able to enjoy the position of being amongst the most wealthy of the town's inhabitants, a valued patron of church and school, eligible for some public trust, such as militia command.<sup>45</sup> Especially in the grey area above the securing of

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(44) Note for example, J. Mitchell to George Hillier, January 31, 1820, UCS.

(45) Christian Guardian, February 6, 1839. See also D.J. Brock, "The Account of Two Families who settled near Simcoe, 1834-1835", Ontario History, volume 58, no.1, March 1966, p.56.

economic independence for self and family, the geographical location of a person's settlement could have had a considerable impact upon their relative social status.

Historical studies of social mobility and attitudes towards it need to be clear about what "mobility" means in that context. P.A. Sorokin in his classic work described vertical social mobility as "the relations involved in a transition of an individual . . . from one social stratum to another".<sup>46</sup> Michael Katz has pointed out the dangers of posing the wrong questions. He cited Philip Abrams' comment, "a high proportion of sociological research is in fact research on myths which sociologists have invented" (or inherited Katz would add).<sup>47</sup> That has been the case in several studies of historical social mobility.<sup>48</sup> A preoccupation with the "rags to riches" myth has led to an emphasis on individual mobility (as Katz notes) and on the spectacular success (or, more rarely, failure) story.

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(46) Sorokin, op. cit., p.133.

(47) Katz, op. cit., p.9.

(48) Edward Pessen, Riches, Class and Power Before the Civil War, D.C. Heath and Co., Lexington, 1973, especially Part II. Irwin G. Wyllie, The Self-Made Man in America, The Myth of Rags to Riches, Free Press, New York, 1954. John G. Cawelti, Apostles of the Self-Made Man, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1965. However, for a critical view of the study of social mobility as elite recruitment, see David S. Smith, "Cyclical, Secular, and Structural Change in American Elite Composition", Perspectives in American History, volume 4, 1970, pp.351-374. For a recent Canadian example of elite recruitment study, see R.J.Burns, "God's Chosen People: The Origins of Toronto Society, 1793-1818", Canadian Historical Association Historical Papers, 1973, pp.213-224.



But "mobility means all mobility. The so-called "short distance" mobility has just as much historical interest (and perhaps more importance for understanding social attitudes) than the Horatio Algiers. In examining the evidence for popular attitudes toward social mobility, this study is concerned with all such, not just the narrower questions of what was - in effect - elite recruitment.

The perceived social hierarchy of Upper Canada can be sketched as five strata - Dependent, Quasi-dependent, Independent, Marginal Respectable, Respectable. Each contained occupations linked by common references or possession of certain common criteria. (See diagram). Those of the Dependent group were persons dependent directly on the will of one other person. Examples of such would be the pauper dependent upon the benefactor, the servant dependent upon a master or mistress, the squatter dependent upon the landowner (at least for a claim to land). In the first two cases, income (in kind as likely as cash) would seldom if ever have exceeded around £20-25, in the pauper's case likely having been provision of bare subsistence.<sup>49</sup> Neither would have possessed any property. Most squatters appear to have had little income beyond the subsistence which they could raise. Custom established that squatters owned the "improvements" which they made on their illegally occupied land. However both

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(49) See for example, Talbot, op. cit., volume 2, p.241; Jameson, op. cit., volume 1, p.269; Adam Fergusson, Practical Notes Made During a Tour in Canada, William Blackwood Ltd., Edinburgh, 1832, p.287; and Thomas Rolph, The Emigrant's Manual, Cunningham and Mortimer, London, n.d., pp.80-81, on servants; and on paupers, see "Account-book of the Society of Friends for the Relief of Strangers, 1822-1828", Allan Papers.

their right in law to those and any claim they might wish to make on the land depended on the will of the landowner. Consequently, while the squatter might potentially be fairly well off and free of any day-to-day personal supervision, he paradoxically was retained in the Dependent group by the landowner's legal rights.<sup>50</sup>

Above this group, and not wholly distinct from it, was the Quasi-dependent stratum. In this, dependence was eased by some claim to property, by some skill, or by shifting the dependence to an institution. The pioneer farmer, whether tenant, location ticket holder or owner, had some legal claim to the land he occupied. The labourer, as "chopper", "cradler" or raftsman, had some skill (though not a trade) that was in demand. The common school teacher might also possess some skill such as literacy; but more importantly differed from a domestic tutor by having shifted dependence from one person to a corporate body. Those with some skills to offer usually had a marginally higher income range, compared to the Dependents, of £25-35.<sup>51</sup> The pioneer's advantage lay entirely in his legal security. It was quite possible that a squatter of longer residence would have more land cleared and hence a greater income. Skill, or skill combined an institutional environment, and property marked off the Quasi-dependent from those below them.

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(50) Robert L. Jones, History of Agriculture in Ontario, 1613-1880, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1946, pp.67-68. Ebenezer Lander Petition, November 7, 1815; George Ryerson to Major Halton, December 5, 1815, UCS.

(51) See Chapter 5.

The Independent group included those who were independent of any other person's will, by virtue of property or skill sufficient to support them. The yeoman farmer had enough land in cultivation that he no longer needed to hire out to others to feed his family. The pedlar and tavern keeper could make a living upon their small stock of capital. The itinerant, less educated minister supported himself by his preaching skill. The journeyman in his trade skill and perhaps also his settled residence could command a higher rate than the farm or day labourer. The scarcity of tradesmen, further, worked to lessen the dependence aspect of his employment by another. It was unlikely that any in this group would have had servants. But the high point on the income range, of £40-70, could possibly allow for a single "maid-of-all-work".<sup>52</sup>

It was the Marginal Respectable group that constituted the real beginning of the servant-keeping strata. To receive the minimum £100 income which characterized that group, occupations depended upon education, capital of around £400-£500, or a combination of skill and capital.<sup>53</sup> A grammar school teacher, even an undistinguished lawyer, or a regularly trained doctor by their education had the necessary income for this group. A miller, shop- or inn-keeper by owning, or a "clerk" by managing, the necessary amount of capital were included. A well-to-do farmer and a

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(52) See Chapter 5.

(53) See Chapters 3 and 5.

mechanic with his own manufacturing shop combined skill and capital to have the needed material basis for inclusion. However both of the latter could find their positions in some question depending upon their education or character.

The Respectable group were able to afford a "household", usually meaning two, three or more servants with an income of at least in the neighbourhood of £ 200.<sup>54</sup> The difference between this and the Marginal Respectable group was mainly one of scale: more education; more distinction in the education, or more capital. A further factor which sometimes operated in that transition was the holding of valued public trusts - militia command, appointment to grand juries or the magistracy. Such served as and were looked for as public marks that the broad grey area separating Marginal Respectable from Respectable had been crossed.

The five groups are actually three clearly distinguishable levels - Dependent, Independent and Respectable. Between them existed two vaguer, buffer or transitional groups - Quasi-dependent and Marginal Respectable.<sup>55</sup> The titles of the first three are the terms which Upper Canadians used to describe the occupations that were commonly included or ranked with each. The second two titles have been artificially created to describe social groups perceived at that time, whose identity was

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(54) See Chapter 5.

(55) A capitalized initial letter indicates the word (i.e. "Dependent", etc.) is used as a label for one of the levels of social status rather than in its common usage.

apparently never clear enough to merit a contemporary label. This brief sketch is offered as a summation of what people in that place and era saw as the prevailing social hierarchy in their colony.

The next four chapters will elaborate on that popular conception of social stratification and offer evidence for its ranking. Chapter Two looks at the differentials within the manual labour and farm occupation groups and the distinctions between levels and occupation groups and the distinctions between levels and occupations in these groups. Chapter Three examines the professions, commerce, and government service for similar differentials and distinctions. The status of women both within and outside of the occupational hierarchy of status will be reviewed in Chapter Four. Finally, Chapter Five offers the evidence and argument for the ranking together of different occupations into the five strata. Once the occupational status hierarchy has been outlined, the study moves to the factors that were considered to influence social mobility in Part II, and the overall attitudes toward social mobility held in Upper Canada in Part III.

<u>LEVEL</u>	<u>OCCUPATION</u>	<u>INCOME RANGE</u>
<u>RESPECTABLE</u> (three or more servants)	manufacturer, merchant, wealthy farmer, clergy, barrister, government department head	£200 - £300
<u>MARGINAL RESPECTABLE</u> (one or two servants)	shopkeeper, miller, inn-keeper, doctor, attorney, mechanic, grammar school teacher, well-to-do farmer	£100 - £150
<u>INDEPENDENT</u> (probably no servants; perhaps one female)	tavern keeper, pedlar, preacher, small-scale farmer, settled skilled journeyman	£40 - £70
<u>QUASI-DEPENDENT</u> (no servants)	common school teacher, pioneer farmer, labourer, "broken-down" mechanic	£25 - £35
<u>DEPENDENT</u>	squatter, servant, pauper	£18 - £22

CHAPTER 2

MANUAL LABOUR AND FARMING

### Introduction

The great majority in Upper Canada worked with their own hands to make a living. They worked on their own farms or on someone else's. They worked in a village or town for someone else or on their own in a trade. An observer with some detachment noted this as a contrast to European society. ". . . The people in this country though above want (they) [sic] are not opulent, and the most respectable support their families by daily industry . . ." <sup>1</sup>

Upper Canada was predominantly agrarian. Even in the Home District in 1832, the colony's largest town held only 5,505 of the district's total population of 36,663. <sup>2</sup> In rural townships most of the adult male family heads were farmers. For example in Beverly in 1822 there were 62 farms assessed for tax compared with 97 male heads of families reported in the census. <sup>3</sup> Given that a proportion of sons would have been working their father's land, the great majority of rural people were farming.

Within the broad category of "farmer" there were several important sub-groups. These rested upon two major criteria. The first was the

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- (1) Rev. Wm. Smart to the London Missionary Society, November 20, 1811, London Missionary Society, Selected Papers, 1789-1836. See also, Canadian Christian Examiner, April 1837, p.47; August 1838, p.238.
  - (2) Upper Canada House of Assembly Journal and Appendix, 1832-1833, "Population Returns", p.185.
  - (3) Public Archives of Canada (PAC), R.G.5 B26, volume 1; Ontario Archive (OA), Beverly Assessment Roll, 1822.



nature of the agriculturalist's claim to the land he tilled, from squatter to outright owner. The second differential was simply the amount of land cleared for cultivation. By these two criteria the economic and social stratification of the farming community can be analysed in some depth.

Rural townships also contained villages with stores and mechanics' shops (i.e. blacksmith, harness-maker). As well there were landless farm labourers most often living with their employer, but sometimes living in a village. These latter tended to be a highly fluid population. They flowed in with the spring emigrants' arrival and ebbed as year by year numbers took up land on their own. As emigration eased or accelerated their proportion of the population expanded and contracted irregularly. While precise information is lacking, the total intake of settlers gives some idea of the volume. In 1815-1826 it is estimated 37,000 came to stay in Upper Canada, amidst a population of 118,000 by 1818.<sup>4</sup> After falling away in the later 1820's, emigration peaked in the early 1830's, declining again as the decade passed. While many of these went straight onto the land as owner-occupiers, many did not. Some part of that flow also included tradesmen. But again the relative proportion is difficult to know or even estimate. One might safely assume mechanics were scarcer than labourers, from the frequent

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(4) H.J.M. Johnson, British Emigration Policy, 1815-1830, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1972, p.1n.

appeals for skilled tradesmen.<sup>5</sup> Both labourers and tradesmen, however, one estimates their numbers, were a far smaller proportion of the total population than farmers.

Amongst those regarded by contemporaries as manual labourers, there existed distinct levels. These were marked off from each other first by the possession and then by the degree of trades skills. Other criteria which distinguished one sort of labourer from another were being employed vs. being an employer occasionally, established residency, and property. These four combined to establish the social standing of mechanics, journeymen, labourers, and servants.

Farming and manual labour were the two occupational hierarchies that between them contained the great bulk of Upper Canada's population. Within each there existed ascending levels, that were marked off from each other by certain criteria. After examining the evidence for and the operation of those criteria, the chapter concludes with a discussion of some differences between the two hierarchies.

#### Manual Labour

The principal factors which separated the occupations within the manual labour category were the degree of personal service, working skills, property, employing others, and established residency. Income was largely a function of these. The first differential applied mainly

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(5) See, for example, Capt. Owen to Lt. Governor, June 12, 1816; UCS; Upper Canada Herald, January 20, 1830; March 3, 1830. Patriot, October 23, 1835. Kingston Chronicle, January 22, 1819.

to the occupation of servant, distinguishing it from closely related occupations. A servant was someone in service, to the person of the employer. This attendance to the personal needs of the employer or of others in the household carried with it a particular social stigma. Susanna Moodie described the servants' lot as "menial employments" consisting of "all the coarse drudgery".<sup>6</sup> Her neighbour replied to her offer to hire: "If you can't milk, it's high time you should learn. My girls are above being helps".<sup>7</sup>

The second, and more pervasive differential was working skill. It separated different occupations, as well as different levels within a single occupation. Amongst servants, a good cook could command more respect (expressed in her duties being limited to the kitchen) and a higher salary than the much pitied "maid-of-all-work". Where a cook could command as much as £2 a month, the common wage for the unskilled female servant ranged from 12s 6d to £1 5s.<sup>8</sup> The master miller

(6) Moodie, Life, op. cit., p.158.

(7) S. Moodie, Roughing it in the Bush, McClelland and Stewart Ltd., Toronto, 1962, p.128. Talbot, op.cit. volume 1, p.168.

(8) In the interest of facilitating comparisons, all wage rates are stated in "pounds currency". Where the original figures were in dollars (as in eight cases), the unconverted wage rate is given in the footnote. The exchange rate commonly cited over time was \$1.00 to 5s currency. See Gourlay, op. cit., p.102 (1817); Fergusson, op. cit., pp.281-283 (1831); and Rolph, op. cit., p.83 (1840). However Shirreff offers \$1.00 to 4s 3d in 1834 (p.iii). No other source appears to support this high value for the dollar.

In this specific case the £2 represents \$8 and 12s 6d - £1 5s \$2.50-5.00. John Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, September 28, 1839; Ann Macaulay to John Macaulay, October 4, 1839, Macaulay Papers, S.R. Mealing (ed.), Robert Gourlay, Statistical Account of Upper Canada, McClelland and Stewart Ltd., Toronto, 1974, pp.130, 271, 277, 291.

could expect £100 a year, while his junior might get only £60.<sup>9</sup> Between occupations skill (perhaps more than market demand) set up income differentials. Painters, bricklayers, and coopers were offered 6s 3d to 7s 6d per week, while mill-wrights, cabinet makers, and white-smiths could have looked for 7s 6d to 10s.<sup>10</sup>

Ownership of property constituted another differential. However the property in question was that related to one's occupation; not, for example, owning one's own home. (The cheapness of materials and the availability of community help meant that even the poorest could have some sort of dwelling of their own outside the largest towns.)<sup>11</sup> The independent mechanic could expect to own the shop in which he worked.<sup>12</sup> Related to the ownership of property was the idea of being known, an established resident. This appears in the preference for 'settled' workmen as against transient labourers. John Strachan preferred to pay the high wages of 2s 6d a day plus board to a known bricklayer rather than hire unknown workmen. "There are numbers asking for the job every day at a much cheaper rate, but they are not known and cannot give

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(9) Rolph, n.d., op.cit., pp.80-81.

(10) Ibid.

(11) R.C. Harris and John Warkentin, Canada Before Confederation, Oxford University Press, London, 1974, pp.130-132. J.J. Mannion, Irish Settlements in Eastern Canada, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1972, pp.143-146.

(12) See, as an example, Duncan Campbell to W.W. Baldwin, November 5, 1840, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

security for the goodness of the chimney."<sup>13</sup> Involved in the ownership of the place of work was the self-employed artisan's function as an autonomous manager of a business. In purchasing raw materials, selling the finished product, and more generally, deciding upon the best use of his own time, he resembled the merchant more than other members of the manual group.

A further dimension to that entrepreneurial side was the possibility of employing others to labour in his shop. One tailor in Toronto advertised to engage 8 or 9 men.<sup>14</sup> However for most mechanics outside the largest towns the importance of being an employer was limited since the role was not necessarily a constant one. A mechanic might both hire and be hired in the course of the same year. For example to meet a government contract, a carpenter might hire several journeymen, but once it was completed, he might be hired (to be sure with his own tools and perhaps his own apprentices) to work for a private individual. When reporting on mechanics' earnings it was common to give both a wage for hiring out to others by the day or week, and job rates which assumed the mechanic would have been working in his own shop. As one of the respondents to Robert Gourlay's 1818 questionnaire tersely expressed the options: "Blacksmiths generally have shops of their own, and earn fr

(13) Here the 2s 6d represents \$2.00. John Strachan to (?). June 6, 1817, in George Spragge (ed.), John Strachan Letter Book, 1812-1834, Ontario Historical Society, Toronto, 1946, p.132. Also see Katz, op. cit., pp. 122-134, on transient and resident workers.

(14) Patriot, December 11, 1835.

£1 to £2 per day. Carpenters and masons, 10s per day, with board and lodging; and when they work by the piece they calculate on more".<sup>15</sup>

Twenty-two years later there were still two rates, expressive of the two contrasting roles of the artisan. Tradesmen made 1s 6d to 5s per day more if they did job work rather than day work.<sup>16</sup>

To escape altogether the stigma of being a tradesman a master mechanic would have had to own a shop in which he was a regular employer (and never an employee) of labour probably to the extent of no longer being directly involved in the manual labour himself. In that way he might avoid the designation "mechanic" and appear as a manufacturer. Managing and occasionally employing were criteria for the top of the manual labour hierarchy.

Income operated not so much as a differential between types of employment as a measure of those other factors, such as skill. The contrasting wages offered to a servant and a mill-wright reflect their very different level of skills above all. Income thus can serve as a useful barometer of social status, while not itself being an actual factor in determining that status.

Three factors influence the comparability of various wage rates - the type of rate, the season, and accommodation (or the workers' 'overhead'). Just as one must always compare the rates of the same type of

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(15) Gourlay, op. cit., p.130; see also p.219.

(16) Rolph, n.d., op. cit., p.81. See also Fergusson, op. cit., p.161.

job at various times to establish a valid trend, so the type of rate being discussed must always be the same. There existed a hierarchy of pay for most occupations which ran from highest to lowest, from the most short term employment to the most secure. The highest rates were per job or for piece work. The next was day rate, then that per month, and lastly for the year. Canada Company Commissioner, Fred Widder remarked, "It may be taken as a general rule, that all tradesmen working by the job, will earn from 1s 6d to 5s per day more than by day work".<sup>17</sup> Farm labourers could earn 5s a day in harvest, but their average monthly rate was £2 10s.<sup>18</sup> A second factor particularly affecting farm workers was the season: summer rates per month were considerably higher than winter rates. Their annual rate was an over-all average of the two types. The third element which affected all employed labour was accommodation. If left to find their own, the labourers' wages were proportionately higher. One comprehensive table of wage rates concluded with the note, "Deducting 10s for the towns and 1s 6d for the country, per week, will show the rate of wages with board and lodging".<sup>19</sup> Accommodation sometimes stretched beyond food and shelter to include "laundry" and even "mending".<sup>20</sup> A related factor for blacksmiths was

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(17) Rolph, n.d., op. cit., p.81.

(18) Ibid.

(19) Ebid.

(20) Charles Barclay (ed.), Letters from the Dorking Emigrants, J. and A. Arch, London, 1833, p.44.

the supply of iron - the rate depending on whether it had to be "found" for the mechanic.<sup>21</sup> Those factors need to be considered when comparing wage rates over time.

To see the wage rates in context, we need to be aware of the cost of living and the length of working time. Most of those who worked for wages had their board and lodging supplied by their employer throughout the period. Farm and day labourers, in particular, were largely insulated from fluctuation in living costs. Most tradesmen appear to have paid for their own accommodation and meals. However, even for these there was no significant trend to the erosion of purchasing power. While prices varied from time to time, and place to place, there was not even a mild inflationary trend.

	1818 <sup>22</sup>	1822-24	1840 <sup>26</sup>
Wheat (bu.)	6s	4s 6d <sup>23</sup>	3s 1½ - 5s (3s 6d. common price)
Flour (per barrel)	-	30s <sup>23</sup> (196 lb.)	(best - 20s to 21s 3d) (second - 15s 3d to 18s 9d 186 lb.)
Pork 200 lb. per lb.	-	£2 14s <sup>24</sup> - 5s <sup>23</sup> 6d <sup>25</sup>	(£2 6s 6d) 4d
Potatoes (bu.)	-	2s <sup>23</sup> - 2s 6d <sup>25</sup>	1s 3d - 10d
Butter (lb.)	1s 4d	-	8d
Cheese (lb.)	10d	-	5d

(21) Gourlay, op. cit., pp.159, 164, 277.

(22) Gourlay, op. cit., p.291.

(23) John Howison, Sketches of Upper Canada, Geo. B. Whittaker, Edinburgh, 1825, pp.250, 263.

(24) E.A.Talbot, Five Years' Residence in the Canada, Longman, et.al., London, 1824, volume 2, p.181.

(25) John Gemmel to Mrs Gemmel, March 2, 1822, Gemmel Papers.

(26) Rolph, n.d., op. cit., p.83.



The exception was land prices which went steadily up.<sup>27</sup> However, this affected wage-earners' future capacity to 'escape' the labour market into farming rather than their day-to-day cost of living.

There is little direct evidence as to the length of time worked by labourers or tradesmen. Lower class emigrants with some experience wrote home that the new land offered "plenty of good situations" with "plenty of employment".<sup>28</sup> Part of the new emigrants' problem in getting work seems to have been acculturation, both of attitudes and skills. In the late 1820's John MacTaggart, a British engineer on the Rideau Canal, commented,

Neither is employment readily obtained; a common labourer can find nothing to do for almost six months in the year, until he has learned how to wield the hatchet. He may then find employment in the woods [i.e. clearing land for farmers]. . . .<sup>29</sup>

As well as picking up that rudimentary skill, MacTaggart saw barriers in the ambitions excited by the new land's promise.

Poor ignorant people, too, when they arrive in such colonies, are apt to feel themselves considerably elevated, and will not condescend to toil for mere bread until reduced to the last stage of poverty. 30

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- (27) Lillian Gates, Land Policies of Upper Canada, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1968, pp.154, 226, 252. See also Rolph, op. cit., p.72, Howison, op. cit., pp. 248-249 and Gourlay, op. cit.
- (28) John Gemmel to Andrew Gemmel, May 21, 1823; same to same, November 8, 1824; Gemmel Papers. See also Barclay, op. cit., p.40.
- (29) John MacTaggart, Three Years in Canada, Henry Colburn Ltd., London, 1829, volume 2, p.242.
- (30) MacTaggart, op. cit.; volume 2, p.253.

Fred Widder made a similar observation in 1840.

A great error is committed by the emigrant in asking exorbitant wages on his arrival; and if they would be contented with 30s or 40s per month and their board, they would get abundance of opportunity to engage, but their views are generally by far too extravagant. 31

The implication of these statements is that if the newcomers had been willing to accept an initially lower rate (while getting "on the job" training as a farm labourer), there was no shortage of work. However tradesmen were advised in the early 1820's to take up farming as a sideline. E.A. Talbot wrote to the mechanics intending to emigrate,

Since the population of the country is too thin to allow of his having constant employment in his peculiar calling, he may fill up the intervals by attending to his farm, and thus derive double the advantage possessed by the mere agriculturist or the mere mechanic. 32

The constant references of contemporaries to the shortage of labour seem to indicate that employment was constant except for tradesmen in rural areas. As the population became more dense with the acceleration of settlement in the 1830's it seems probable that employment became more steady for them, except for sharp temporary downturns as in 1836-37. The prevalence of month and week rates over day and job rates further implies that even outdoor artisans like carpenters were paid regardless of whether climatic conditions allowed them to work at full capacity.

The differentials between the several levels and occupations in the manual labour hierarchy will be applied from the bottom up. Beginning

(31) Rolph, n.d., op.cit., p.92. See also Barclay, op. cit., p.23.

(32) Talbot, op. cit., volume 2, p.247, See also John Gemmel to Andrew Gemmel, June 23, 1823, Gemmel Papers.

with servants, through labourers, to journeymen and mechanics, each will be defined in terms of the group below. Finally the limitations on the social standing of mechanics, at the topmost level of the hierarchy, will be discussed.

To define the distinction between a servant and a labourer, several factors can be called upon. First is the degree of personal service. A labourer was hired for a particular job, usually outdoors, on another's property. A servant was at someone's beck and call, usually indoors, to do whatever tasks of personal service might be commanded. It was possible for servants to specialize (e.g. as a cook) and so limit their responsibilities. However Upper Canada offered few opportunities for those with special training in domestic service.<sup>33</sup> Labourers seldom lived in the employer's residence, except in the country. Servants were a part of the master's household with almost the status of a child, particularly in the case of younger female servants, who made up the great majority of the occupation. The labourer enjoyed a greater personal freedom from direction, and often (as a male) had his own household.

While the wages for both servants and labourers varied, depending on time, place, and persons involved, the latter were usually paid more than the former. At the very bottom of the pay scale for servants were

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(33) John Strachan to Archbishop Whately, of Dublin, September 24, 1832, R.C. Good, "Letter Book of John Strachan, 1827-1834". unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Toronto, 1940, p.307.

the indentured children. For £40 and a promise to provide food, clothing shelter, moral instruction, and some education an employer could have had the services of a minor for five years.<sup>34</sup> However the true comparison between servants and labourers must be made in the wages offered to adults, or at least very senior adolescents.

The sources on wage rates are anchored in two comprehensive lists for the beginning and end of the period. The first is Robert Gourlay's survey of 1818. While covering only a half dozen occupations, his questionnaire was widely distributed. As a result it gave the most all-inclusive comparisons of rates in different places for the same employments.<sup>35</sup> The second is a chart compiled by Fred Widder, Canada Company Commissioner, issued in November, 1840. Both of these can be supplemented by other accounts in the same or adjacent years. As well, for the early 1820's and the early 1830's there are numerous travel accounts that offer occasional evidence on wage rates. Correspondence within the colony and emigrants' letters home also provide instances of what was paid in specific cases. It is thus possible at times to balance general statements about wage rates for the whole province against examples of what was actually being paid to individuals in various districts.

The occupation of servants was fundamentally divided along lines of

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(34) Indenture between Ann Macaulay and Ann Dogherly, n.d. (1814); Macaulay Papers.

(35) Gourlay, op. cit., pp.10-11, 382-3.

sex. The rates for men had no relation (except for being consistently higher) to those of women. A comparison between an average wage for all servants and the wage for labourers would be greatly distorted. Most servants were women. Some part of their lower status and wages (vs. labourers, all male) was due to their being female. An examination of the trends in their wages must take into consideration reasons for their pay pattern being so different from that of male servants. It is the latter which will provide the more accurate contrast with farm and day labourers.

Female servants experienced a marked fall in their income throughout the period 1818 to 1840. Where Gourlay reported a range from 20s to 30s a month, Widder's schedule offered only 16s to 24s in 1840.<sup>36</sup> The occasional reference to women's wages in the intervening years all confirm this downward trend to a greater or lesser extent.<sup>37</sup>

Location influenced women's wages. Gourlay's survey shows the higher wages in the western townships (Sandwich, Malden, Raleigh, Dover), while the more eastern were lower (Haldimand, Wolford, Lansdowne,

(36) Gourlay, op. cit., pp.130, 132, 135, 138, 189, 233, 242, 259, 263, 271, 277, 291. Rolph, n.d., op.cit., pp.80-81.

(37) John Gemmel to Andrew Gemmel, April 30, 1824, Gemmel Papers, Howison, op. cit., p.249. Andrew Picken, The Canadas, Effingham Wilson, London, 1832, p.36. John McGregor, British America, William Blackwood, Edinburgh, 1853, volume 2, p.441. Patrick Shirreff A Tour Through North America, Ballantyne and Co., Edinburgh, 1835, p.190. William Cattermole, Emigration, Simpkin and Marshall, 1832, pp.13, 205. Adam Fergusson, Practical Notes During A Tour of the Canadas, William Blackwood, Edinburgh, 1833, pp.161, 287, 370. Jameson, op. cit., volume 1, p.267, volume 2, p.169. John Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, March 9, 1837, Macaulay Papers, William McVity to W.W. Baldwin, December 12, 1840, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

Bastard, Charlottenburgh). If employed at spinning women could make about one shilling a week extra. In fact skill was the critical factor for women employed in domestic labour. By the late 1830's cooks could command from 24 to 32 shillings a month.<sup>38</sup> By contrast the ordinary female servant's wages had fallen so far that the bottom of the 1818 range was close to the top of the 1840 range.

For male servants the picture was just the reverse. While the evidence is less ample, the trend which emerges is clear. The average rate noted by Widder in 1840 is almost twice the lowest offered in 1823. The travellers' accounts of the early 1820's mention a range of monthly rates from 28s to 32s.<sup>39</sup> A decade later the same sort of source displayed a very substantial rise for the same rate, to 30s to 52s.<sup>40</sup> Widder's single monthly rate of 50s in 1840 falls at the uppermost end of the early 1830's range.<sup>41</sup>

What lies behind this considerable rise is the fact that male servants' wages had been very low in the immediate post war years. Over the period they rose to meet the general level offered for unskilled

(38) Jameson, op. cit., volume 1, p.269; volume 2, p.169. Rolph, n.d. op. cit., pp.80-81. John Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, September 28, 1839, Macaulay Papers.

(39) Talbot, op. cit., volume 2, p.241; Howison, op. cit., p.273. See also John Strachan to John Macaulay, April 28, 1823, Macaulay Papers.

(40) Fergusson, op. cit., pp.287, 370. Jameson, op. cit., volume 1, p. 269; volume 2, p.169. Mark Stark to Mrs. Stark, August 18, 1834, Stark Papers. John Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, March 9, 1837; same to same, April 11, 1839, Macaulay Papers.

(41) Rolph, n.d. op. cit., pp.80-81.

male labour. John Strachan noted in 1823 that the availability of employment on the Erie Canal had driven up servants' wages - and hoped for a flood of immigration to drive them down again.<sup>42</sup> But increased immigration could bring in more servant-hiring families than men willing to be servants. As well the acceleration of settlement on the land may have drawn away men from domestic service with ambitions of becoming farmers. William Patterson was one servant with such ideas. His former commanding officer wrote,

The bearer of this letter, was a soldier of our Regt. & has been my servant for about 2 years:- he has purchased his discharge & is now on the eve of returning to York, to seek a situation as indoor Servant. . . . His ultimate intention is to avail himself of his military grant of land, but in order to do this in a suitable manner he is anxious to be in service for 2 or 3 years to enable him to realize a little money. 43

Cheap land opened possibilities for men that were not there for women. The expansion of the servant-holding class could not even apparently keep their wages stable. The only employment available for unskilled women was domestic service. No competing opportunities worked to produce labour scarcity and higher wages.

Farm labourers' wages were commonly listed by the day (for harvest), the month, and the year. The monthly rates varied from summer to winter,

(42) John Strachan to John Macaulay, April 28, 1823, Macaulay Papers.

(43) Capt. Wm. Castle to Wm. Allan, June 29, 1833, Allan Papers.

while an average monthly rate or an annual rate was also sometimes given. The limits of the range in Gourlay's data were clearly affected by geographical location. The highest range - up to £37 - and the highest summer wage of £4 10s were offered in the townships of the Western District (Sandwich and Malden). The lower rates - £2 to £3 - (for winter and summer respectively) were in lakeside townships of Gore District (East and West Flamboro' and Ancaster) and in the Johnstown District (Wolford, Bastard).<sup>44</sup> Widder's single provincial figures of £2 and £2 10s for winter and summer rates, with a £30 annual average range do not allow us to explore the reasons for the range he gives.<sup>45</sup>

However in 1834 Patrick Shirreff, a Scottish farmer, made a careful tour through the colony. His account notes the farm wages for different areas he visited. At Prescott he found the summer wage per month at £2. Further west, in the well-developed York and Simcoe Counties the summer rate was £2 10s. When he travelled back from the lake to Peterboro' the summer wage was £3 a month, while the annual wage was £30. Once he was as far west as the Talbot Settlement, even on the lakefront the annual wage was £30.<sup>46</sup> The further west, and the further back from the lake- or water-front, the scarcer labour became and the

(44) Gourlay, op. cit., pp.130, 132, 135, 138, 186, 187, 199, 242, 259, 271, 277, 291.

(45) Rolph, n.d., op. cit., pp.80-81.

(46) Shirreff, op. cit., pp.117, 125, 149, 182. Here read \$8.00 for £2, \$10.00 for £2 10s, \$12.00 for £3. and \$120.00 for £30.



higher the pay.

What trend appears over-all in farm labourer's wages? The range in monthly rates narrowed downward. The average summer rate for 1840 was 10s less than the lowest offered in 1818. The annual rate range became narrower, due to the highest wages of 1818 (up to £37) no longer being offered. The bottom of the 1840 annual range compared to that of 1818 showed no decline. The 1840 average winter rate equalled the top winter rate of 1818. From this we might infer that labour scarcity in remoter areas and in the summer months had eased due to immigration, thus depressing the top wages offered. But the most surprising aspect is the fundamental stability of the wage rates. In spite of the enormous inflow of people, the bottom of the farm labourers' wage scale (the lowest of the annual range and the winter rates) did not decline.

Unfortunately neither Gourlay nor Widder gave rates for day labourers. However, there are fairly general statements about such rates for years close to the limits of this study. An 1820 letter from the Provincial Surveyor-General set out the costs of surveying a road to Lake Simcoe. Axemen received 2s 6d a day, while chain bearers got 3s 6d. Both were allowed 1s 6d a day for rations.<sup>47</sup> That range represents the best judgment of a well-informed official as to the prevailing level of wages, for at least the Home District. Unfortunately the other end of the period is

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(47) Thomas Ridout, to Major Hillier, April 14. 1820, UCS.

not so firmly anchored. The figure 3s 9d per day was offered by John Strachan in an estimate of costs for work on King's College.<sup>48</sup> He stated that to be "the common wages". But for where? Toronto, obviously. But how did that rate relate to a province-wide average? Given that it was a figure for spring and summer, in the town where most immigrants were likely to land looking for work, it might be taken as low. This impression is reinforced by evidence from a farmer's letter written the following spring showing day labourers around Lake Simcoe receiving 4s a day.<sup>49</sup> Between those two points in time there appear numerous ranges in travellers' accounts and emigrants' letters - none of which go below the base rate of 1820.<sup>50</sup> In some of these, the range is due to a variety of locations where the work was located; in others no doubt it reflected the contrasting abilities of the persons hired. But the rates over-all demonstrate a remarkable stability. The apparent trend over time is for an increase: the top rate of 1820 became the "common wage" of 1839.

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(48) John Strachan to Sir George Arthur, April 23, 1838, Strachan Papers.

(49) Wm. McVity to W.W. Baldwin, July 15, 1840, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

(50) John Gemmel to Andrew Gemmel, April 30, 1824, Gemmel Papers. Mary McNicol and John Tolmie to James McNicol, August 2, 1831; John McIntosh to James McNicol, May 8, 1833, Manuscript Acc. 7020, Scottish National Library. Talbot, op. cit., volume 1, p.337; volume 2, p.188. McGregor, op. cit., volume 2, p.441. Picken, op. cit., p.xlii, 36. Cattermole, op. cit., p.172.

The wages of farm and day labourers admit no comparison to those of female servants. The range of £2 to £2 10s was far above even the highest paid to the most skilled domestics - the cook's £1 12s a month. The rise in male servants' wages by 1840 brought them to a level comparable to the farm labourer. Yet the top of the male servants' range - £1 10s to £2 per month - only met the bottom of the farm labourers'. Consequently the labourer could expect to have some edge in income over the male servant, with the possibility of higher wages in harvest time or in the lumber trade (if he were willing to travel), in addition to more freedom from personal control.

The distinction between labourer and journeyman was one both of skill and of relation to a particular trade. The labourer offered himself for any manual work, even though he might have developed some proficiency for a particular task (chopper, cradler, raftsmen). The skilled workman had a trade. Whether a printer, bricklayer, or cooper - he was a journeyman or equivalent in some trade. That identification, with its sense of craft guilds, meant a tendency to collective action to petitions against competition from imported goods and prison labour, short time agreements, and, by the 1830's to strikes.<sup>51</sup> The journeymen's

(51) Canadian Freeman, December 6, 1827. Weekly Register, June 5, 1823. Ben Wright to John Macaulay, February 19, 1834; same to same, February 24, 1834; Nelson Cozens to John Macaulay, March 27, 1834, Macaulay Papers. Susanna Moodie, Life, op. cit., p.8. Constitution, October 26, 1836. F.H. Armstrong, "Reformer as Capitalist: William Lyon Mackenzie and the Printers' Strike of 1836", Ontario History, volume 59, September, 1967, pp.187-196. Gregory Kealey, "Artisans Respond to Industrialization: Shoemakers, Shoe Factories and the Knights of St. Crispin in Toronto", Canadian Historical Association Historical Papers, 1973, pp.136-137.

skill and the solidarity of the trade had their financial rewards.

The various trades in Upper Canada numbered in the dozens. But only a few were common enough for their wage rate to be frequently noted: carpenters, blacksmiths, bricklayers and masons. Some more limited comparisons can also be made for journeymen printers, painters, and tailors. In contrast to farm labourers and servants, tradesmen's wages appear less affected by the work location. The four prominent skilled trades show a marginal decline over time. Carpenters saw the range of day rates offered to them narrow from 5s to 10s in 1818, to 5s to 7s 6d in the early 1830's, then 6s 6d by 1840.<sup>52</sup> Blacksmith's wages seldom included bed and board, but sometimes stated materials (i.e. iron) were to be supplied. But often however, materials were not mentioned at all. Their day rate ranges also narrowed, from between 3s 6d and 10s in 1818, to 5s to 8s 6d in the early 1830's, then 6s 6d to 7s 6d by 1840.<sup>53</sup> Masons' average day rates declined from 8s 4d in 1818 to 7s 6d in 1840.<sup>54</sup> The bricklayers' average day rate of 1818 was

(52) Gourlay, op. cit., pp.130, 132, 135, 138, 148, 156, 161, 167, 242, 245, 259, 263, 277, 291. "Estimate . . .", May 26, 1820, UCS. Talbot, op. cit., volume 2, p.188. Cattermole, op. cit., pp.92, 94, 183. Fergusson, op. cit., pp.161, 370. Rolph, n.d., op. cit., p.80.

(53) Gourlay, op. cit., pp.130, 132, 135, 138, 156, 159, 164, 219, 242, 245, 259, 277, 291. "Estimate . . .", May 26, 1820, UCS. Cattermole, op. cit., pp.94, 183. Fergusson, op. cit., pp.161, 187. Rolph, n.d., op. cit., p.80.

(54) "Estimate . . .", May 26, 1820, UCS. Gourlay, op. cit., pp.130, 132, 135, 138, 156, 161, 167, 242, 249, 259, 263, 277, 291, Shirreff, op. cit., pp.117-128. Fergusson, op. cit., pp.161, 370. Rolph, n.d. op. cit., pp.80-81. Cattermole, op. cit., p.183. He notes this was "an extreme case".

7s 6d, which by 1840 was the top of the range of day rates, 6s 3d to 7s 6d.<sup>55</sup>

Some more scattered evidence is available for three other trades - printers, painters, and tailors. Several of these references are to specific instances, not over-all provincial rates or anything that could be taken to be such. The rates for these trades, presented with due qualifications for their ambiguities, provide nonetheless additional evidence on the over-all level of wages for skilled labourers.

Given the prominence of newspapers as sources for Upper Canada history, it is surprising we know so little about the wages of those who produced them. Such rates as are mentioned come to notice because they were, or were considered to be, exceptional. A continuing complaint of those who operated newspapers was the scarcity of "hands" and their consequent high wages and independent behaviour.

All this is bad enough, but there is one circumstance connected with a country newspaper which is still worse: namely, the slavish dependence of masters upon their journeymen . . . A master printer is not like a carpenter or a shoemaker, who can at all times find abundance of working people in his calling. There are but few operatives. . . .<sup>56</sup>

William Lyon Mackenzie was not alone in his complaint.<sup>57</sup> The two

(55) John Strachan to Mr. (Bowering,?), June 16, 1817, Spragge, op. cit., p.132. Gourlay, op. cit., p.233. Howison, op. cit., p.62. Picken, op. cit., p.xliv. Cattermole, op. cit., p.92. Barclay, op. cit., p.25. Fergusson, op. cit., p.370. Rolph, n.d. op. cit., pp.80-81.

(56) Colonial Advocate, April 27, 1826.

(57) See for examples, Stephen Miles to Ed MacMahon, October 15, 1814; J.M. Flindall to the Lt. Governor, July 10, 1816, UCS. Christian Guardian, December 12, 1829.

references to printers' wages reflect these tensions.

A prospective King's Printer in 1816 considered it impossible to operate without a substantial subsidy, given the high wages of £2 7s 6d that had to be paid.<sup>58</sup> Twenty years later Mackenzie fired six of his printers for demanding a dollar a week raise. Since it was indoor work, and constant employment, he regarded the printers' £1 5s a week as the equivalent of £2 or £2 5s to carpenters who had to work outside, lost time in rainy weather, and had to supply their own tools.<sup>59</sup> Taken together these two instances show a decline in York/Toronto of the printers' rate from an immediate post-war high to a substantially lower level, even in the expanding economy of the mid-1830's.

Any comparison of painters' wages must be even less firmly grounded. The early period is represented by a single case of a contract let at Kingston for a day rate of 7s 6d.<sup>60</sup> For 1840 Widder provided a range for provincial rates, from 6s 3d to 7s 6d.<sup>61</sup> The most that the 1820 figure could represent is the approximate level for Kingston and district. In so far as anything meaningful could be deduced from this data, painters' rates appear to have been more or less stable over time.

The evidence for tailors' wages is rather better. A range of weekly

(58) J.M. Flindall to Lt. Governor, July 10, 1816, UCS. £2 7s 6d here represents \$9.50.

(59) Constitution, October 26, 1836. For £2 read \$8.00, for £1 5s, \$7.00, for £2 5s, \$9.00.

(60) "Estimate . . .", May 26, 1820, UCS.

(61) Rolph, n.d. op. cit., pp.80-81.

rates from 30s to 50s including board and room offered by a traveller can usefully be compared to the day rate of 7s 6d without board and lodging given by Widder.<sup>62</sup> Remembering that if hired by the week, the tailor would receive slightly less than by day rates, nonetheless we can infer a (probably high) weekly rate of 45s from Widder's figure. As the derived 1840 rate falls well inside the range for the early period, there appears on this limited evidence to have been some stability in tailors' rates.

The seven skilled trades all offered wages well above those available to the unskilled farm or day labourer. While labourers of any description could have seldom expected to have gotten better than 50s to 60s even for one of the prime summer months, tradesmen could get that much in a week. The farm labourers' harvest day rate could scarcely match the bottom of the journeymen's usual day rate. Acquiring a trade skill, then, constituted a major advance in the working man's income earning potential.

To those hiring labourers and skilled workmen there was a subtle difference in regard to the relative independence of each. The Ernestown Auxiliary Compassionate Society sought to relieve the distress of emigrants who had accumulated in Kingston during 1818-1819 by relocating them where they could earn their own keep. To this end, it sought "to enquire what Farmers are in want of labourers, and what neighbourhood is in want of Mechanics. . .".<sup>63</sup> Where labourers would be employed by an

(62) Talbot, *op. cit.*, volume 2, p.16. Rolph, *n.d. op. cit.*, p.80.

(63) Kingston Chronicle, January 22, 1819.

individual farmer and be subject to his control, the skilled artisan was employed by the community as a whole. In criticizing the rapacity of those "making haste to be rich", a writer in the Canadian Christian Examiner noted,

They exact from their servants and labourers an undue portion of service, without cause diminish their wages, and withhold what is due to the tradesman, that they take advantage of any speculation that may seem to promise an increase of their gain. 64

Servants and labourers were seen as directly at the mercy of the employer: their work could have been arbitrarily increased and their wages reduced. But the tradesman had a "due", a debt owed. The tradesman was not under the employer's control. Neither his hours nor his rates could have been unilaterally altered. As with any person with whom one had commercial dealings, there was an account to be settled. The skill, the prestige of the trade, and the attendant income gave the skilled workman the basis for independence.

The distinction between mechanic and journeyman was ostensibly one of skill, but in practice one of function. The mechanic was supposed to be the master of the trade, and as such, he would be responsible for the training of apprentices and directing the journeyman employed in his shop. But in Upper Canada, especially away from the main towns, a skilled journeyman could set himself up as a mechanic and hope to prosper, due to the short supply of skilled tradesmen. At first he might only have his own labour in his own shop, and might even earn less than as an employee in another's business in a town. In time, however, if his locale became

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(64) Canadian Christian Examiner, February 1838, p.57.



heavily populated, he might well expand his shop hiring others to work for him as apprentices and journeymen.<sup>65</sup> The most usual distinction, then, between mechanic and journeyman was that of functioning as an independent artisan and even employer.

While common association in a trade gave masters and journeymen a shared interest in petitions to prevent competition and in short time agreements, the subordination of one to the other set up inevitable tensions. These could as often centre on working conditions or the condition of the worker, as on wages or hours. William Lyon Mackenzie reflected on the troubles of his newspaper. "A large newspaper requires many hands; if one or two desert you, you are most awkwardly situated."<sup>66</sup> Mackenzie considered journeymen printers uncommonly given to drunkenness.

You must oftentimes introduce among your apprentices men who will make the printing house a scene of drunkenness and disorder; and, if you quarrel with them, your paper stops, and yourself must go off to the United States to hire at any price, Yankee "helps" in their place, real water drinkers, but as stiff, as self-important, and as calmly insolent in their behaviour, as if they had, each, in his own proper person, achieved their national independence. . . .<sup>67</sup>

Mackenzie, as master, has three grievances here. His journeymen are unreliable (due to drinking), insubordinate (in the case of the Americans), and corrupt the apprentices for whose character he is responsible. In

(65) Upper Canada Herald, June 16, 1830; August 11, 1830. Christian Guardian, January 16, 1830; July 25, 1838. Patriot, August 15, 1837.

(66) Colonial Advocate, April 27, 1826.

(67) Ibid.

the 1830's Mackenzie's quarrels with his workmen were a contributing cause in a strike. Mackenzie denounced the printers' union as raising divisions within the trade where there ought to be unity, and as seeking to combine to force up wages.<sup>68</sup> In this type of conflict the distinction between mechanic or master and journeyman became all too clear.

For the occupation of mechanic, character - always significant for determining social standing - was of critical importance. The "respectable mechanic" stood at the edge of what has been termed the Respectable group. In the common references to the 'pillars of society', mechanics usually appear with the other property holding occupations. Mr. Romanes, writing back to Scotland of local sources for church fund raising, noted: "A number of farmers, merchants [and] tradesmen £5 each and upwards"<sup>69</sup> W.H. Merritt in an election address noted that mechanics suffered, along with farmers and shopkeepers, from lack of credit.

With us, the lack of credit compels the mechanic to obtain his material on trust - pay high prices for an inferior article (if boards, or hides, to season or tan requires time,) which have to be manufactured - the time comes round, and a hasty sale is frequently made at a loss, to meet the payment for the materials. Independently of these disadvantages, he cannot pay his workmen promptly - has to employ inferior artisans, and thus contends with embarrassments in every stage of his operations.<sup>70</sup>

(68) Constitution, October 26, 1836.

(69) Mr. Romanes to Rev. Burns, May 30, 1835, Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence.

(70) W.H. Merritt's address to Haldimand Freeholders, October 1836, W.H. Merritt Papers.

Here the mechanic appeared as a small scale manufacturer, with problems buying raw materials, selling the finished product, and meeting his payroll. David Philips, a cooper in Simcoe, Norfolk County, planned to purchase two town lots, "to erect a large Building for a Mechanics shop", and pay for the lots within three years.<sup>71</sup> Such ambitions were not unreasonable, as a mechanic could have expected to earn about \$150 to \$170 a year.<sup>72</sup>

Yet the mechanic was only on the edge of the Respectable group. Susanna Moodie, noting the social accomplishments of Canadians, observed "You will find a piano in every wealthy Canadian's house, and even in the dwellings of most of the respectable mechanics."<sup>73</sup> The badge of social refinement was to be found even so far down the social scale as the "respectable mechanics". Elsewhere in Moodie's writings the mechanic's position was even more tenuous. He was known for "his dirty, slovenly appearance", was ranked amongst labourers and servants (though ranked first), and contrasted to "gentlemen" as a higher level.<sup>74</sup> The latter contrast can also be found in a letter by W.W. Baldwin. He sought to

(71) Duncan Campbell to W.W. Baldwin, November 5, 1840, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

(72) Mark Stark to Dugald Bannatyne, October 20, 1836, Stark Papers. Gourlay, op. cit., pp.241, 291. William Holton to Sir P. Maitland, November 7, 1818, UCS.

(73) Moodie, Life, op. cit., p.64.

(74) Moodie, Roughing, op. cit., p.177 and Life, op. cit., pp.7, 15.

deflate the ambitions of an affectionate mother for her son. ". . . She wishes him to be in a store and make him a gentleman - I have almost persuaded her to bind him to Mr. Castles or Cushman the architects . . . "75 These architects were considered tradesmen, by Baldwin, however much possessed of skill and integrity they were. It took Baldwin's considerable persuasive powers to convince Mrs. Doyle that John should be a tradesman rather than a gentleman-shop-keeper.

The limitations upon the mechanic's social status made him vulnerable in political conflicts. John S. Baldwin, the wealthy York merchant, reputedly refused to vote for George Duggan in 1825 because he considered a tradesman unfit to serve in the legislature.<sup>76</sup> Even to have once been involved in manual labour left one open to social sneers. Francis Collins decried George Gurnett's social pretensions as a newspaper editor, recalling he had once been "a man of leather".<sup>77</sup> W.L. Mackenzie later ridiculed Gurnett as a mayor of Toronto "by invidious reference to [his] former trade" as a tanner.<sup>78</sup>

The mechanic's hold on his place in society was dependent on his

(75) W.W. Baldwin, to Q. St. George, December 17, 1819, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

(76) T.W. Acheson, "John Baldwin: Portrait of a Colonial Entrepreneur" Ontario History, volume 61, September 1969, no. 3, p.160. See also Talbot, op. cit., volume 1, p.401.

(77) Canadian Freeman, April 16, 1829.

(78) Patriot, January 30, 1837.

maintenance of a respectable character. If he lost that, he did not simply slip back to the rank of a skilled workman. The "broken-down" mechanic was regarded as on almost the same level as the labourer. A Church of Scotland minister, reflecting on the debased state of the common schools, observed: "Almost any broken-down mechanic or even labourer is thought competent to teach in one of our Common Schools".<sup>79</sup> Having lost his position as a directing mechanic through the failure of his personal character, the "failed" mechanic ranked below the dependable journeyman. One can reverse the minister's images to check the mechanic's position, as it were, from the bottom up. He had been describing the case of a man who had possessed a store, then a "good farm", but lost both because of intemperance. The man had been reduced to teaching - an occupation fit for labourers and broken-down mechanics. Thus he set up an implicit pair of contrasts; the store-keeper, owner of a good farm and the respectable mechanic vs. the teacher, the labourer, and broken-down mechanic. The "respectable mechanic" who stood at the peak of social status in the manual labour category, depended not only on his skill and his function in directing manufacture, but, as important, his character to maintain that position.

From servant to master mechanic, the manual labourers as their title implies were united by the fact that they earned a livelihood by working with their hands. What separated out the various ranks

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(79) Rev. Wm. Rintoul to Rev. Burns, August 13, 1838, Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence.

within the hierarchy were the degree of personal service, working skills, property, employing others, and residency. Independence and income acted as measures of these factors working in combination. From the very direct and personal submission of the servant to the master or mistress, to the labourer's more task-oriented submission to an employer, to the skilled journeyman's power to settle wages and hours through the trade, to the mechanic's independence as autonomous artisan and even employer, the hierarchy ranged from the Dependent to the Marginal Respectable level. But even at the top social status was limited. Working with one's hands was a social handicap for which only consistent maintenance of good character could compensate.

### Farming

Most people in Upper Canada earned their living by farming. Most emigrants who remained in the province took up farms. The overwhelming predominance of farmers noted earlier, was evident in the fears of other occupations and interests that their needs would be overlooked by public authorities.<sup>80</sup> But there existed a great diversity amongst farmers in terms of wealth and social position. With so large and important a group, therefore, it is critical to find differentials that allow for some analysis of the Upper Canadian farm community.

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(80) Robert Stanton to John Macaulay, March 12, 1835. Macaulay Papers. York Weekly Post, April 5, 1821. Weekly Register, December 11, 1823. By contrast Mackenzie was alarmed farmers would not have sufficient weight in spite of their number, Colonial Advocate, November 24, 1831.

In assessing the relative social standing and wealth of those in the category of "farmers", the relevant differentials are the legal status of tenure to the land and the land itself - how much land and how many acres cleared. Of the several possible factors none were as significant. Buildings, livestock and equipment did not vary greatly between established farms whether medium or small. With his neighbour's help in a house-raising or barn-raising "bee", the pioneer farmer soon had the few buildings needful to his operation. Such variations as did exist, for example between the first log cabin and a later brick house, were reflections of the farm's prosperity not its source or first measure. As Adam Fergusson, a large land holder who settled near Hamilton, remarked, the barn was "the test of a thriving colonist".<sup>81</sup> Farm equipment was limited to axes and a harrow, livestock to a yoke of oxen (an important step for the pioneer in land clearing), a few cows, pigs and poultry to provide milk, meat and eggs.<sup>82</sup> Writing to his family in Scotland George Forbes said defensively of his new farm, which had just such limited holding as have been described, "You will think that a very small stock for a farm but it is as much as I can winter until I get more clearance".<sup>83</sup> The province offered little market for commercial livestock and consequently farmers usually found

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(81) Fergusson, op. cit., pp.122-123.

(82) Howison, op. cit., p.262.

(83) George Forbes to John Forbes, October 23, 1854, Forbes Papers.

it uneconomical to tend more cattle, sheep or hogs than necessary for family use.<sup>84</sup> Some soil was better for a diversity of crops. But since wheat was the staple, and it grew well even on second rate land, soil variations did not count as a major factor in farm prosperity, outside those eastern townships within the southern tip of the Pre-Cambrian Shield.<sup>85</sup> Rating farms by income would not have served as a reliable index, since that could have fluctuated widely for all farmers from year to year depending on the yield and market price. The key to a farmer's wealth was most commonly then the number of cleared acres in crop.

The most clear-cut index of farmers' status was their legal tenure to the land. At the very bottom ranked the squatter who had none.<sup>86</sup> Even in this lowly category there existed variations. There were semi-migrant squatters who stripped the best timber from vacant lands, took off a few good crops from the natural clearings, and then moved on. Their income might have been fairly high from year to year, but their social status (not to mention that their legal status was that of criminals) could not rank at all high.<sup>87</sup> Viewed with more sympathy

(84) Jameson, op. cit., volume 2, p.211; Talbot, op. cit., volume 2, p.198; Shirreff, op. cit., p.369; Picken, op. cit., p.294; Cattermole, op. cit., p.41.

(85) McTaggart, op. cit., volume 2, p.280. Talbot, op. cit., volume 1, p.159; McGregor, op. cit., volume 2, p.439; Cattermole, op. cit., p.41.

(86) Colonial Advocate, July 8, 1824.

(87) R. Birdsall to John Macaulay, January 28, 1822, Macaulay Papers.  
L. Heyden to W.W. Baldwin, December 3, 1839, W.W. Baldwin Papers.



was the "honest settler" who squatted and developed a farm of his own on land not his own probably because he could not afford to purchase or lease. These were usually granted public (as well as private) indulgence from time to time, which demonstrated a widespread sympathy for their circumstances.<sup>88</sup> The usual settlement between the Crown, or a private land owner was to either pay the squatter for his improvements (i.e. building, cleared land), or offer to sell him the lot at the price of uncleared land.<sup>89</sup>

Upper Canada had relatively few tenant farmers, especially when contrasted to the British pattern of agriculture.<sup>90</sup> The government made repeated attempts to raise revenue by leasing Crown and Clergy Reserves but none of these had much success.<sup>91</sup> As John Strachan finally concluded,

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(88) The sympathy for squatters was not, however, universal. James Harvey to W.W. Baldwin, March 2, 1837, W.W. Baldwin Papers. Moodie, Roughing, op. cit., p.67.

(89) H. Pearson Gundy, "The Family Compact At Work: the Second Heir and Devisee Commission of Upper Canada, 1805-1841" Ontario History, volume LXVI, no. 3, September 1974, p.140. Jones, op. cit., p.67. John Strachan to John Macaulay, August 27, 1821, Macaulay Papers. Gates, op. cit., p.211.

(90) See for example G.E. Mingay, English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1963, p.26; and F.M.L. Thompson, English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., London 1963, pp.2-13. Jones, op. cit., p.62n.

(91) John Strachan to Bishop Mountain, February 26, 1821, Spragge, op. cit., p.212. See also Gates, op. cit., pp.164-165, 197-199.

a leasing system of any type was bound to fail with so much land available from the Crown itself, Loyalist and militia grants, and private speculators, given the preference of settlers for owning their own land. The easy availability of land, moreover, made rents so low that they could barely cover the cost of collection.<sup>92</sup> Between 1802 and 1827 the provincial government was able to make only 1,232 leases, which amounted to only 15% of the Crown Reserves.<sup>93</sup> Even of those who took leases, many were already established farmers wishing to expand their holdings to a neighbouring lot. Thus the number of solely tenant farmers would have been even lower than the number of leases.

Private landowners did not have any better experiences with tenant farmers. Emigrants with capital were warned not to attempt anything like English tenant farming.<sup>94</sup> The soundness of this advice was shown in the sad experience of many.<sup>95</sup> Those who found themselves with vacant farms on their hands were reluctant to lease, even preferring in some cases to have no one on the farm to having a tenant.<sup>96</sup>

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(92) Canadian Freeman, October 11, 1827.

(93) Gates, op. cit., p.165.

(94) Moodie, Roughing, op. cit., pp.118-9. John Strachan to Dr. Barclay, April 15, 1831, Good, op. cit., p.211.

(95) James Aitchison, to John Aitchison, January 25, 1836, Aitchison Papers. Thos. Traill to Patrick Fotheringhome, November 1, 1836, Traill Letters. Samuel Wilmot to Thos. Ridout, December 26, 1816, UCS.

(96) James Aitchison to Mrs. Wm. Aitchison, June 30, 1836, Aitchison Papers. J.G. Howard to Sidney Mountcastle, October 11, 1833, Howard Papers. Ann Macaulay to John Macaulay, October 7, 1838, Macaulay Papers.

John Macaulay wrote of one person, "rather than have such a tenant I would prefer the lot becoming a common".<sup>97</sup> Indeed tenants themselves did not care for the system either - sometimes simply quitting, other times attempting to turn the lease into a purchase.<sup>98</sup> Rather than rent a lot the more common pattern was for tenants to farm it on shares. William Cattermole described this in his emigrant manual, and the usual assessment of it.

. . . The tenant is furnished with horses, oxen and agricultural utensils, by the owners, who receive one-third or one-half of the produce as the parties agree to. I have no great opinion of the plan, if anything else can be found to do, as I generally see the emigrant does not rise as quick as when left to his own resources.<sup>99</sup>

It seems that those who were tenants, either had their own farm as well, or soon moved on to become owner-occupiers.

Next in the hierarchy of tenures - in fact the bottom rung of those having a legal claim to the land itself - were the location ticket holders. These persons were granted conditional rights of occupation from the Crown for a certain piece of land, to be identified by the location ticket given them by the Surveyor-General's

(97) John Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, November 30, 1838, Macaulay Papers.

(98) Robert Murray to Dr. Lee, June 11, 1839, Lee Papers. Colonial Advocate, September 2, 1824. "Reminiscences of Mrs. White . . .", Ontario Historical Society Proceedings and Records, (hereafter "OHSPR"), volume 7, 1906, p.156.

(99) Cattermole, op. cit., p.85. Howison, op. cit., p.250. Rolph, n.d. op. cit., p.77. R. Jones, op. cit., pp.62n, 68. Cattermole included in his guide a letter from a newly arrived British farmer, Edward O'Brien, whose views were based on the assumption that a pattern of rents would soon emerge, around 7s 6d to 10s an acres. But Cattermole himself knew better.

department. In a stated number of years, they were to occupy their lots, clear a certain number of acres and pay the fees to obtain clear titles.<sup>100</sup> By definition these would have been pioneer farmers cutting their farms out of the Upper Canadian bush. Their first few years would be ones of investment in building and clearing, before the farm could possibly yield an income or even sustenance. The legal (and, implicitly, social) status of such persons formed a major debate during the 1820's on the question of the franchise.

In the early 1820's a series of contested elections raised the question: can the holder of a location ticket vote? The Solicitor General considered that "...Location Tickets gave the holder who was resident upon the land an equitable freehold, and consequently he had a right to vote . . ."<sup>101</sup> Moreover, he argued, since these people were required to pay taxes on the land, they ought to be able to vote as freeholders. Against this was ranged a fear of executive influence in elections. W.W. Baldwin thought,

. . .the Crown might issue Location Tickets to put in a favourite Candidate whenever, and in such quantities, as they pleased. This was the great mischief to be dreaded. Every voter should be free unshackled, and possessed of a settled home. 102

(100) Gates, op. cit., pp.123-127.

(101) York Weekly Post, March 8, 1821. In the Weekly Register, August 4, 1825, an editorial added the qualification that the full settlement duties had to be completed to claim an equitable freehold.

(102) York Weekly Post, March 19, 1821.

The reference in the last sentence to voters having property was amplified by James Gordon, the member for Kent, who usually voted with the government side.

. . . He should doubt the wisdom of including in such extension [of the franchise] the number of strangers who were daily flocking in upon them, before they became permanently established and possessed of such a stake as could be deemed a sufficient pledge for their future good conduct, and interestedness in the general prosperity of the Colony. In many sections of the country, they already outnumbered the old inhabitants, and might very soon do so in all, which would enable them to return whomsoever they pleased, possibly a person who might feel very little interest in its welfare. 103

By its decisions in 1821, the House of Assembly disenfranchised the location ticket holders. In 1828, the Colonial Office ruled that those ticket holders who had completed the settlement conditions, but had not paid the fees necessary for patent to issue, could vote.<sup>104</sup> Nonetheless, the Assembly debates showed that members of all factions placed a high value on property ownership, to the point of excluding any whose claim to ownership could be called into question.

The final and most various legal class of farmers were those who held patented land. While their legal status was quite clear, as absolute possessors of the soil and franchised voters, it tells nothing of their economic status. One might have purchased outright a tract of wild land and begun to clear it. For several years that person could have been in an economic position inferior to that of a well-

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(103) York Weekly Post, March 19, 1821.

(104) Upper Canada Herald, March 4, 1828.

established squatter on the next lot. Another might have purchased an extensive and profitable farm as a business venture. Yet another might have struggled through as a location ticket holder clearing the land, farming it for years before earning enough extra to pay off the patent fees, and obtain clear title to his own farm. To learn anything substantial about a farmer's social status, having obtained a land patent, we must turn to the other differential - the value of the farm measured in cleared acres.

To understand economic stratification within the Upper Canadian farm community, we need to have some idea of how cultivated farm land was distributed. A survey of tax assessment records for a number of townships in three districts between 1812 and 1842 gives evidence from a sample of the farm community. Since the objective is to learn about the earning power of those in agriculture, the attention is focused on farmers - not on pioneers, whose primary interest was clearing the land, nor on land speculators. The pioneer's principal return from his work came in the appreciated capital value of his farm, not from any cash crop he might raise incidental to his main purpose.<sup>105</sup> The speculator's gain came from the enhanced value of his lands as the neighbouring farms were cleared. The farmer's economic position depended on the amount of cleared land he had to cultivate.

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(105) On pioneers, see Jones, op. cit., p.54. E.C. Guillet, The Pioneer Farmer and Back-woodsman, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1970, volume 1, pp.303-306. See also S. Strickland, Twenty-seven Years in Canada West, M.G. Hurtig Ltd., Edmonton, 1970, volume 1 p.136.

The available statistics are used selectively to focus on the data most useful for learning about farmers. There exist assessment rolls for about 70 townships in Upper Canada between 1812 and 1842.<sup>106</sup> As many of these townships were sparsely populated - and would have included many pioneers - it is desirable to narrow the study to such townships as would be likely to have the highest concentration of farmers. After an examination of the 1836 census for population and cultivated land, it appears that a division can be made between "unsettled" and "settled" townships. The latter are defined as having about or over 2,000 in population, with 5,000 or more acres in cultivation. By this standard there were 75 settled townships.<sup>107</sup> Assessment rolls are available for parallel years from 1812 to 1842 for eleven of these, and from 1822 to 1842 for 16 of those townships, or (in the latter case) 21.3% of the total. To have data on one in five settled townships seems a solid base. Further, the six counties in which the townships are located represent a wide section of the province. Only the Niagara region and the Lake Erie shore are not represented.

Some line needs to be drawn between the pioneer clearing as well as the land speculator's mandatory clearing to establish title, and the settled farm. The settlement regulations in land grants usually required a three-acre clearing after a period of years. There is evidence in

(106) The available assessment rolls are listed in the Public Archives of Ontario, R.G. 21.

(107) Appendix to the Legislative Assembly Journals of Upper Canada, 13th Parliament, 1836-37, no. 8 and no. 9.

comments of the period that those speculating would have a small clearing made just to secure their patent.<sup>108</sup> As well there appeared in the tax rolls many small holdings of an acre or less, that appear to be labourers' or artisans' garden lots rather than farms. While an argument could be made for drawing a line at 3 acres or less, this study, to obtain the most comprehensive estimate of the number of farms, sets one acre or less as the boundary between pioneer, labourer or speculator and the farmer.

The valuation part of Upper Canada's assessment law set up an honour system, which operated under certain constraints. Each ratepayer was to give the assessor (appointed by Quarter Sessions) a statement of his or her own rateable property. The assessor was responsible for compiling these statements into an accurate list, which he deposited with the Clerk of the Peace, for public inspection prior to the spring Quarter Sessions. The assessor had to swear under oath as to the accuracy of his list, and was subject to a fine if it were proven false. The ratepayer took no oath as to the accuracy of the statement given and was subject to no penalty if it were found to be false.<sup>109</sup>

The ratepayer's own statement of rateable property was taken as valid subject to two checks. Although nowhere specifically required to do so in the legislation, the assessor had an interest in keeping the

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(108) Gates, op. cit., pp.20, 129-130. Strickland, op. cit., volume 1, pp.88-89.

(109) Statutes of Upper Canada, 1819, chapter VII.



ratepayers' statements reasonably accurate, especially in keeping them from drastically under-estimating their property. First, the responsibility for the accuracy of the total list fell on the assessor. It was he, not the ratepayer, who would be in trouble if it were found gravely wanting. Second, the assessor's remuneration was based on the property tax. He was paid £4 for every £100 collected in assessment. Thus the assessor's personal interest in avoiding trouble with the law and in obtaining a fair return for his work would incline him to use moral suasion with any ratepayers inclined to radically undervalue their own holdings. The second monitor upon the honour system came in the public posting of the assessor's list for the township. A person's neighbours would be likely to object to someone with the same size farm attempting to get away with paying less tax by deceiving the assessor.

The Assessment Act of 1819 defined cultivated land as "every acre of arable, pasture, or meadow land", which it rated at 20 shillings each. Uncultivated land was rated at 4 shillings per acre.<sup>110</sup> Since the rate for uncultivated land was 1/5 that for cultivated, it made a great difference to each ratepayer how much land was considered in each category. Given that the Act placed the power of deciding on this division in the hands of the ratepayers, we may assume that the estimates of cultivated acreage were consistently conservative, subject to the constraints of the assessor's and the neighbours' scrutiny.<sup>111</sup>

(110) Ibid., chapter VII, section 11.

(111) Jones, op. cit., pp.4, 70-72. Strickland, op. cit., volume 1, pp.165-166.

The pattern which emerges from the survey, shown in the table would seem to indicate that, far from being homogeneous, farmers varied greatly in the amounts of cultivated land they held (and, by inference, income). The large peak at the left of the graph represents about half of all farms, which had 30 acres cleared or less. The gradual "tail" to the right shows a substantial minority of just under 1/5 with holdings between 50 and 100 acres cleared. Last, the small peak (really a false peak) on the right indicates a minority of 2-5% - present in every settled township - that held over one hundred acres of cultivated land.<sup>112</sup> That pattern is of some significance for an understanding of the social structure of the Upper Canadian farm community.

To estimate the income capacity of the larger farms it is necessary to make certain, quite reasonable, assumptions. Given a farm of 100 cleared acres that could have been devoted to wheat, with a modest yield of 20 bushels per acre and a good (but not exceptionally high) price of \$0.75 per bushel, then that farmer's theoretically possible gross income would have been \$1500.<sup>113</sup> That compares favourably with the public salary of \$1,200 paid such high officials as the Attorney-General or the President of King's College in York.<sup>114</sup> While

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(112) The 'false peak' really represents the total of all farmers over 100 acres, which would actually be a tiny 'tail' off to the right.

(113) Jones, *op. cit.*, pp.90-97, 123. Howison, *op. cit.*, pp.236, 291. Gourlay, *op. cit.*, pp.130, 133, 136, 139, 150, 188, 199, 202, 242, 260, 263, 278.

(114) Bathurst to Maitland, March 31, 1827, Strachan Papers. J. Colborne to Home Secretary, July 10, 1829, C042, PAC "Q" Series, volume 352, pp.4-10.

this income figure is speculative, it serves to show the approximate range for the income potential of a large cleared farm. In bad years (for price or yield) even the most substantial holding might not have given a high income. Yet to possess such a farm, whatever the short-term return, marked a person as someone of means.<sup>115</sup>

The existence of so potentially wealthy a group of farmers in every settled township puts a new light on the attitudes of small farmers. Most settlers had as much land on their farms as the wealthiest had under cultivation. But they did not have it cleared. Consequently the premise of social mobility was there for almost every small holder: if he could just get his lot cleared, he might hope to be well-to-do as all but the richest people in the province.

A social status hierarchy amongst farmers can be sketched from contemporaries' perceptions of two differentials. The first was the nature of the individual's legal claim to the land. The second, more ambiguous, was the quantity of land cleared for tillage. For the second, the expressed opinions of Upper Canadians must be fleshed out by reference to empirical data on the distribution of cultivated land.

From what has been said already about legality of tenure as a differential, the distinction between the squatter and the pioneer farmer will be clear. Either as owner, location ticket holder or tenant, the pioneer had some legal claim to the land.

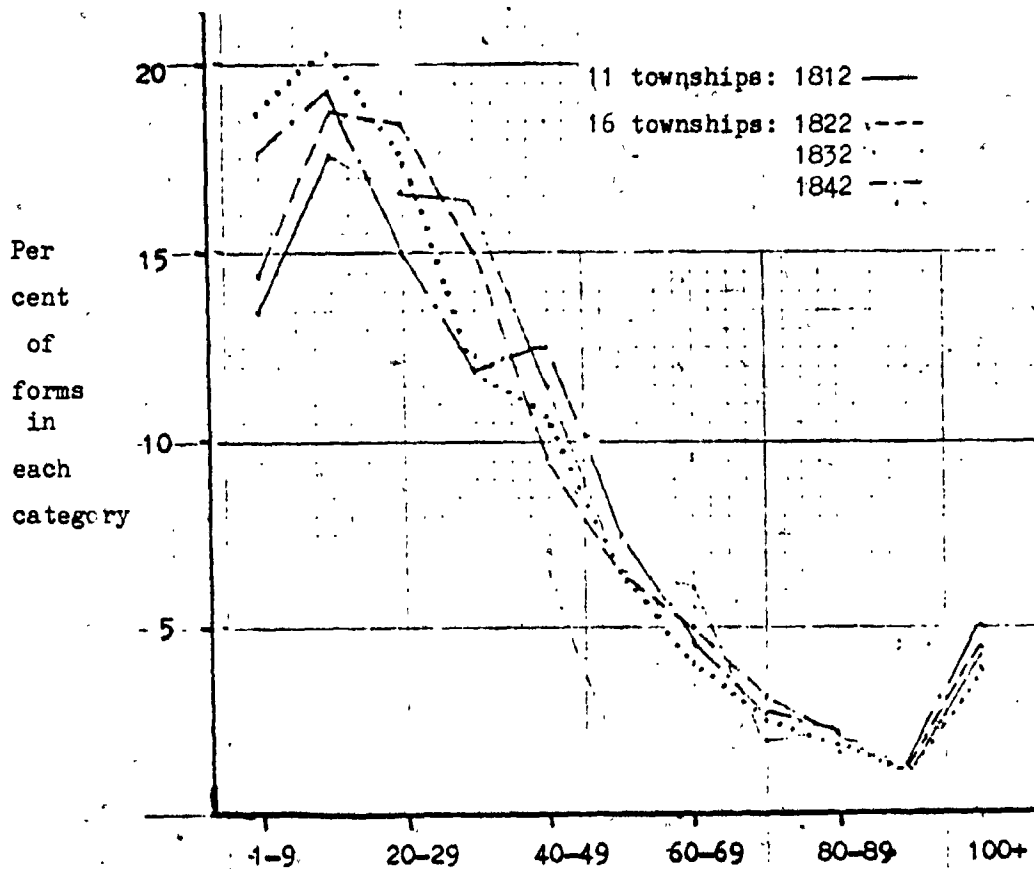
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(115) See for example, York Weekly Post, March 22, 1821; United Empire Loyalist, October 24, 1826; Colonial Advocate, August 8, 1827; Constitution, May 24, 1837.

TABLE I: Distribution of farms by size in number of arable acres for 11 townships from 1812 to 1842, and for 16 townships from 1822 to 1842.

		Number of farms in each year			
		1812	1822	1832	1842
Number of arable acres	1-9	149	497	703	965
	10-19	194	429	700	1125
	20-29	173	288	648	1170
	30-39	176	241	463	985
	40-49	123	239	405	723
	50-59	70	141	235	527
	60-69	71	87	163	377
	70-79	20	59	106	220
	80+	<u>85</u>	<u>159</u>	<u>252</u>	<u>548</u>
		1061	2140	3675	6640

TABLE II: Distribution of farm size by percentage



The pioneer was not completely dependent on another's good will in some future settlement. Even though he could be reasonably sure of some compensation for it, the squatter lived under the prospect that he could have been forced off the farm he had made. The pioneer had crossed (or was crossing - depending on one's view of location tickets) the critical line of property. In James Gordon's words, the pioneers had or would soon have "such a stake as could be deemed a sufficient pledge for their future good conduct, and interestedness in the general prosperity of the Colony."<sup>116</sup>

However, squatters' status could vary depending upon the locale. On the very edge of settlement, the newest townships' most substantial holdings might well have belonged to long established squatters, whose farms had been begun perhaps even before the survey. In the townships' first years, therefore, its economic elite might have all been squatters. The most recent arrivals, though perhaps all having clear legal title, would have been in an inferior economic position.<sup>117</sup> At that point the squatter commonly either sold his improvements and moved on, or purchased title to the land. In the first case, he perpetuated his marginal social status, in return for financial gain. In the second, he assumed a legal status commensurate with his economic standing. In the latter

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(116) York Weekly Post, March 22, 1821.

(117) See for example Ebenezer Landers to Lt. Gov., September 30, 1815; G. Ryerson to Major Halton, December 5, 1815; and Samuel Copeland to Samuel Smith, October 17, 1817, UCS. The first had 25 acres, the latter 40 acres cleared.

case, the "squatter" label was only transitory and formed no significant barrier to social advance.

It is more difficult to make the distinction between the pioneer and the small-scale farmer, because it is one of degree. The pioneer was someone with only a small clearing made, probably less than ten acres. His time would be largely devoted to clearing. If he lacked the capital to sustain himself and his family while clearing, as was often the case, he would have had to hire himself out to earn enough for subsistence.<sup>118</sup>

By contrast the farmer possessed around 15 or 20 acres of cleared land and spent the major part of his time farming his own land.<sup>119</sup> Kenneth Kelly, from his study of Simcoe County, estimated that the pioneer made the transition to commercial farming once he had 10 to 12 acres cleared, where markets were accessible.<sup>120</sup> In terms of time of settlement, said William Cattermole, "I believe most land required three years to get into profitable cultivation . . ."<sup>121</sup>

However, as Kelly had noted, where the farmer lacked capital this could take considerably longer. The small-scale farmer would be able to feed his family from its produce and purchase most immediate

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(118) Mrs. Agnes Turnbull to Mrs. W.W. Baldwin, February 12, 1838, W.W. Baldwin Papers, Adam Hope to George Hope, October 8, 1849, Hope Papers. M'Gregor, op. cit., volume 2, p.534. K. Kelly, "Wheat Farming in Simcoe County in the mid-Nineteenth Century", Canadian Geography, volume 15, number 2, p.96. Jones, op. cit., pp.60-61.

(119) Strickland, op. cit., volume I, p.167.

(120) Kelly, "Wheat Farming", op. cit., p.96.

(121) Cattermole, op. cit., p.111 and Strickland, op. cit., volume 1, p.162.

necessities by selling his grain. While he might still hire out, it would be occasional not routine, and a matter of some choice. The legal status of the small holder would not necessarily be any different from that of the pioneer. But the farmer had established his independence. By virtue of his property he could make enough to support himself and his family independent of another's will, earning the title of yeoman farmer.

Again, the distinction between a small-scale and a medium-sized farm is a difficult one to make with precision. A person with 50 acres in cultivation clearly had a more secure economic position than one who had only 20 acres arable. All the intervening gradations can only be sorted out in terms of greater or lesser. Between farming his own land, and doing a bit of marginal clearing, the "medium-sized" farmer would not have time to hire out.<sup>122</sup> Nor would he likely be under any necessity to do so. Taking the standard offered earlier of a 20 bushel per acre yield and a \$0.75 per bushel price, a farmer with 50 acres of wheat would have had a theoretical income potential in the range of about \$190 annually. He would have been able to hire servants or labourers if he chose. Given that level of income, even had the settler begun as a location ticket holder, as owner of a medium-sized farm he could easily have completed all the necessary fee payment to obtain clear title.

From first settlement on the land to the stage of "medium-sized"

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(122) Shirreff, op. cit., p.385.

farmer was usually estimated at 10 to 12 years. John M'Gregor in his account of Upper Canada, considered that after ten years the farmer could expect to have 25 to 30 acres cleared, as well as oxen, cows, a pair of horses, and a wagon.

This is no extravagant calculation. I could name hundreds who began in abject poverty, and who have in the same period, accumulated, by a steady industry, fully as much as I have stated. 123

Mr. Robertson, an Edinburgh area farmer who came to Upper Canada in June 1830, noted that the pioneer could sustain himself by observing the success of longer established settlers.

When he goes . . . to his next neighbour's house, and sees him, if he has been ten years in his farm, with plenty of every thing that he needs, his farm well cultivated, and no debt, knowing that he was in the same position formerly that he is in now, this cheers him up. 124

George Forbes, newly arrived in the colony, contrasted his fare with "them that got farms about 10 or 12 years that they have much better".<sup>125</sup> These comments appear to reflect a level of prosperity well beyond the small-scale farmer's subsistence.

The gradual nature of the change in a backwoods lot from a pioneer clearing to a 40 to 50 acre farm makes difficult the task of interpreting contemporary references to contrasting types of farms. Clearly

(123) M'Gregor op. cit., volume A, p. 549.

(124) Fergusson, op. cit., p. 367-8.

(125) George Forbes to John Forbes, January 18, 1846, Forbes Papers.



people did make distinctions. William Lyon Mackenzie offered this picture of social development to his readers.

You observe the progress of art from the log hut of the squatter, to the legal settler; the comfortable farm house; the village just bursting into existence, and the flourishing town with its gilded spires, bustling streets, and active industry. 126

George Forbes noted the progression in accommodation in more detailed but less poetic language. "The houses in the country are generally built of wood[;] some built of round trees[,] others hewed square and others with sawed boards and some brick [; ] very few stone."<sup>127</sup> From the log cabin, to the house of squared logs, then the clapboard farm house, to the peak of brick or stone, he was describing an ascending order of more expensive accommodation that reflected greater economic and social status. That succession could mark the difference between farms at any given moment. It could also show the stages through which a single successful farm had gone, where the older buildings still stood in the farm yard adapted to other purposes.<sup>128</sup> Other writers mention "influential and wealthy farmers", "leading farmers", "the secondary class of farmers", and make contrasts between "large farmers" (who kept carriages, drove splendid horses and ate well) as against the "backwoods farmer" (who had only potatoes and pork - and sometimes

(126) Colonial Advocate, July 8, 1824.

(127) George Forbes to John Forbes, June 21, 1846, Forbes Papers.

(128) Mannion, op. cit., pp.146, 158.

no pork).<sup>129</sup> However it is difficult to assign quantitative weights to such expressions. Perhaps all we can do is to set somewhat arbitrary medians. In terms of the graph already presented showing the distinctions of cultivated farm land, those farms which were part of the large peak and all included to its left, holding 20 acres or less, could not have been considered "wealthy" or "large farms". By the same token, anyone with more than 40 acres cleared, the one fifth of the total represented by the gradual rightward slope, would not be ranked in the "secondary class" of farmers. A distinction was no less real for being difficult to precisely define.

The contrast between a medium-sized and a large farm is similarly blurred. Clearly there was a difference in income between those with 50 acre farms and those with 100 acre farms. Dr. John Howison, who toured the colony in the early 1820's, noted a contrast between what most settlers had cleared in Glengarry County and what the most prosperous had. "Few of the settlers have more than sixty or seventy acres cleared, and the generality only thirty or forty."<sup>130</sup> But no clear line of demarcation between the two is evident. Certainly to have a large farm was a desirable end. Ever aware of comparative profitability, the Rev. Mark Stark assessed farming thus -

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(129) John Rolph to W.W. Baldwin [1828?] , W.W. Baldwin Papers, United Empire Loyalist, October 24, 1826. Moodie, Roughing, op. cit., p.188. Moodie, Life, op. cit., p.68. Wm. B. McVity to W.W. Baldwin, January 14, 1840, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

(130) Howison, op. cit., pp.35, 150.

I think farming if properly managed will pay very well notwithstanding the high rate of wages [. ] with a good farm of 100 acres I shd. not fear being [unable] to make a comfortable living - . . . . 131

The known earning power of a large farm made it much easier for its owner to obtain credit - much to Mackenzie's distaste.

The apparent ease with which a wealthy farmer can command money for himself or his friends by merely signing his name on the face . . . of a promisory note is real to too many of the agricultural community, and ruins the independence & breaks the peace of thousands . . . . 132

The wealthy farmer undoubtedly had the income to be a gentleman. 133

The two employment hierarchies of manual labour and farming can be usefully compared, as they had two critical aspects in common. Both spanned the social scale from the very bottom to nearly the top. In the Dependent stratum the servant and the squatter were alike at the mercy of another's personal will. The servant's dependence was compounded by the element of personal service to the employer and the low income attendant to lack of skills. By contrast the squatter, with a farm of sorts usually far from anyone else, was on his own, except for the critical legal dependence on the landowner's good will. With respect to income, the long established squatter could have been better off than a neighbouring pioneer farmer. Yet the latter's possession of some legal claim to the land he worked - whether as owner,

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(131) Mark Stark to Mrs. Stark, May 10, 1838, Stark Papers.

(132) Colonial Advocate, August 8, 1827. See also William Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, November 14, 1833, Macaulay Papers.

(133) J.B. Robinson to John Macaulay, March 29, 1826, Macaulay Papers.

tenant, or location ticket holder - set him (at least for a time) in a higher level of social status. In that Quasi-dependent level, the pioneer at times appeared identical to his social equivalent in the manual labour hierarchy - the farm labourer. The two could literally be seen working together in another's field. Both were dependent upon their wages, the pioneer to support self and family while clearing his own land; the labourer for support and also often for savings. Both gained some marginal social advantage over the servant by their greater working skills such as chopping or harvesting (with consequent income differentials) and relatively more freedom from personal direction. The journeyman by his skill; by his association with a trade (and often residency) was able to earn his living with a substantial measure of independence. His wage rates and hours in particular were not dependent upon the whim of an individual employer. As well, the scarcity of his skill meant a marked difference in income over the unskilled or semi-skilled labourer. The yeoman farmer, whose farm provided sufficient support that he need not hire out, stood as the farm hierarchy's equivalent of the journeyman.

Between those who had established their independence and those who attained respectability lay a grey area of "marginal respectability". Master tradesmen, though at times employers with their own shops, seemed to have been held in that stratum by their association with manual labour. With them were those increasingly prosperous farmers whose income, or more commonly whose social skills, had not improved

to the point of winning the public trusts associated with respectability. Unlike that of the manual labour hierarchy, the peak of the farming hierarchy did offer an entrée in economic and social terms into the stratum of Respectability. Large scale farmers with 100 acres or more in cultivation (and the requisite social skills) had an unquestionable claim to be considered in deciding who were or were not gentlemen.

The ambiguous position of the mechanic, calls for further comment, in light of his comparative status vis a vis the most prosperous farmers. As Michael Katz has noted, it is difficult now for us to see wealthy mechanics in particular as part of the manual labour group. They appear to us as well-to-do businessmen.<sup>134</sup> Nonetheless, their contemporaries in Upper Canada saw them differently, whether it was W.W. Baldwin classifying York's most respectable architects (or "master builders") below shopkeepers, or Susanna Moodie contrasting mechanics, as well as labourers and servants with "gentlemen".<sup>135</sup> The Christian Guardian indignantly reported a duelling episode among the Port Credit militia officers which points to the uncertain social position of even the most successful artisans. The challenge was issued by a saddler who, perhaps because of the scarcity of more established social leaders in a rural area, held a captain's commission. It was rudely rebuffed by the Anglican rector's son "of no particular profession": "It was

(134) Katz, op. cit., pp.71, 139-40, 179.

(135) Moodie, Life, op. cit., p.15.

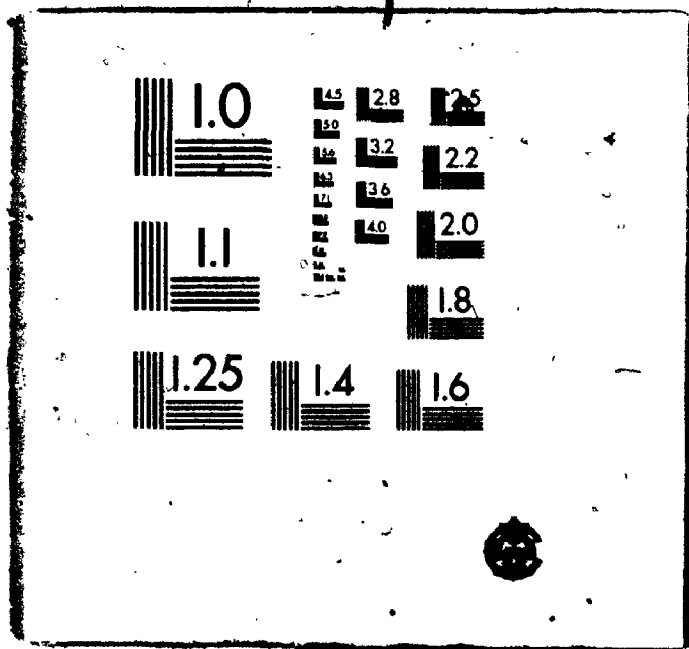
not the fashion in my country to send a Saddler with a message to a Gentleman". The Guardian commented, "So then a gentleman pauper ranks higher than an industrious and independent mechanic, even though the latter be a Captain in the Army?" The report concluded with a regret that the mechanic felt the necessity "to prove himself a gentleman hero".<sup>136</sup> The saddler seems to have understood his social position rather differently. Having achieved public visibility as an officer in spite of his occupation, he could not afford to appear unwilling to fulfill all the social customs attached to it. For him it was still necessary to prove that he was a gentleman by a duel.

Part of the limitation upon the mechanics' status can be related to their continued association with a manual trade. As Moodie's reference indicates, the most skilled artisans had a customary social link to journeymen and apprentices. To be a labourer - even a skilled one, with property, at times perhaps employees - remained a lower social station than to be a farmer. The poorest pioneer was held to be an incipient yeoman farmer - an independent proprietor in the bud. Michael Cross in his studies of Carleton County noted the efforts of those who were not farmers to associate themselves with "the agrarian myth, so important a part of the gentle ideal as imported from Britain."<sup>137</sup> Town elites elsewhere took leading parts in the

(136) Christian Guardian, February 6, 1839.

(137) M. Cross, "The Shiners' War: Social Violence in the Ottawa Valley in the 1830's", Canadian Historical Review, volume 54, number 1, March 1973, p.17.

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"gently" Agricultural Societies of the 1830's.<sup>138</sup> Reinforcing the higher prestige of the farming as against the manual labour hierarchy was the relative insecurity of the mechanics at the top of their occupational group. Since the demand for trades skills could prove variable, the mechanic of today might be tomorrow's journeyman. Employing others was commonly an occasional thing at best for most mechanics, especially those outside the largest towns. Even owning their own place of work gave little security, as it represented nothing like the capital investment of a large or even a middle-sized farm. The stigma of continued association with manual labour in the trades, especially against the prestige of the farming ideal, reinforced by the economic insecurity of market-dependent skills, represented a status barrier which blocked the way to full and unquestioned respectability for even the most successful mechanics before 1840.

Both the farming and manual labour hierarchies were considered to hold the promise of independence and ultimately even substantial prosperity to those who proved "worthy". Yet any social advance beyond independence would have been difficult. As the case of the mechanics illustrates, being a gentleman was a matter of more than money.<sup>139</sup> Even wealthy farmers were men whose gentility might be called into question, relative to key social skills such as literacy.

(138) A.S. Saunders, "Yonge Street Politics, 1828 to 1832", Ontario History, volume 62, number 2, June 1970, p.105-113. Jones, op. cit., pp.156-157, 162-164.

(139) Moodie, Life, op. cit., p.41. See also T.D. Appleby to Henry Yager, March 13, 1835, Yager Papers.



In the next chapter we turn to a different sort of a person - gentlemen whose wealth was in question.

CHAPTER 3  
THE PROFESSIONS, COMMERCE AND  
GOVERNMENT SERVICE

### Introduction

Manual labour and farming constituted the livelihood of the great majority of the Upper Canadian population. Other groups largely functioned to serve that majority. They existed to teach, heal, preach, pursue litigation, to forward produce and supply needed goods, to process farm products for foreign or local use, and to provide order. This minority can be sorted into the professions, commerce, and government service. Although small in numbers, it provided a disproportionate share of the social elite, and most of the political elite in Upper Canada.

The common professions found in Upper Canada were doctor, lawyer, minister, teacher, and perhaps surveyor. What bound them together as a group, separate from the skilled trades, was the necessity of at least professing to have some formal education (or its equivalent) and the absence of any manual labour. For some professions, the specific skills demanded may have been acquired (especially in the early years of the province) through an apprenticeship system, not unlike that of mechanics. However entrance to those apprenticeships required some level of grammar school education, in contrast to the trades apprenticeships. On a day-to-day basis what separated the two groups was that the mechanic laboured with his hands, while the professional did not.

Commerce embraced all who made their living primarily through buying and selling, rather than producing. The mechanic and the farmer might retail their products, but only as a consequence of making them. Pedlar, tavern- and inn-keeper, miller and shop-keeper, clerk and merchant-manufacturer earned a livelihood through commercial exchange, the volume of which depended upon the amount of capital at their command.

Unlike the professions or commerce, government service does not characterize a discrete set of occupations. Moreover, such occupations as were held in government service were seldom the basic source of a person's social prestige. They could often be rather a measure of prestige gained from another source, usually political connections. Yet it was possible to have a career in government service. When J.S. Howard was dismissed as Toronto's postmaster by Governor F.B. Head on an accusation of political partisanship, he cited his eighteen years in public office as his life's work. "Those years were the prime of my life; in them I became unused to private business, and unfitted for it. Contented and unambitious, I felt settled in my office."<sup>1</sup> However, the more common pattern, at least outside the provincial capital, was part-time public employment. In those cases, the appointment only confirmed or augmented a social status already in existence.

The three employment hierarchies will be examined in succession. A number of factors operated within each to differentiate the various

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(1) Christian Guardian, April 6, 1839.

occupations it contained. The contemporary evidence for those differentials indicates the horizontal stratification within the professions, commerce, and the government service. The conclusion will set these occupational types against those of the farming and manual labour hierarchies to elucidate the contrast of the Independent and Respectable levels.

#### The Professions

The major differentials shared by the professions were education, certification, ability, and residency. Some professions were sharply differentiated; others more gradually. Various differentials held different weights in different professions. But for each, the starting point had to be education.

Education was what defined a given profession. One was a teacher, surveyor, minister, lawyer, or doctor according to what kind of education one had, or claimed to have. To some extent, education also distinguished between the various ranks of a single profession. Upper Canada, with its dispersed population and lack of skilled people, had a continuing anxiety about those either pretending to have a certain professional education which they did not have, or offering some substitute for it. University educated ministers worried about illiterate preachers claiming to act from a divine revelation of inner light.<sup>2</sup>

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(2) Canadian Christian Examiner, October 1838, p.307 and Alexander Ross to Rev. Burns, December 30, 1829, Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence. See also Moodie, Roughing, op. cit., p.158.

Licensed physicians sought to suppress quacks and "herb doctors".<sup>3</sup>

Yet those who sought to imitate the professions only demonstrated that it was at least some claim to possession of a certain knowledge that set one apart.

Each profession had some system of certification, however effective or ineffective it might be in practice. For lawyers there was a law society; for surveyors, the government examination; for doctors, the Medical Board; for teachers, the local and district school boards culminating in the General Board of Education (while it lasted, 1823-1832); for preachers, church ordination. The first two were the most effective. One could not practice law, or survey land for public authorities without the appropriate certification. The Medical Board was intended to have the same effect but it did not. Many unqualified people continued to practice medicine without reference to it. Even some qualified practitioners operated without licences from it.<sup>4</sup> District school boards generally had more success having a say over who would teach in the grammar school. But common school boards, handicapped by lack of funds, often had to take whoever offered at the lowest rate. Conditions were most diverse for the clergy. Various denominations set varying levels of qualifications - from possession of a University degree and the character of a gentleman, to a public profession of an inner calling. Moreover, in the

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(3) Wm. Canniff, The Medical Profession In Upper Canada, 1183-1850, William Briggs, Toronto, 1894, pp.35, 69, 74-75.

(4) Ibid., p.593. John Rolph to W.W. Baldwin, May 5, 1829, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

rudimentary society of Upper Canada some denominations did not have the ecclesiastical organization to provide for ordination. Consequently some preached without any ordination.<sup>5</sup> All shades of differences then existed between the effectiveness of certification in the various professions.

A less tangible differential was professional ability. Usually the ability was considered to be a product of the education, and so the two aspects were closely related. But a well established reputation for competence could supersede education in some instances. In the debates on suppressing unlicensed medical practitioners, several members of the House of Assembly defended those whose good local reputation had earned them a measure of respect.

. . . He knew many of those persons who might be termed Quacks, who were very proper and useful persons - and stopping their practice, had deprived parts of the Province of all medical assistance. There were many good characters who had heretofore practiced - and the people wished them to continue and he saw no reason why they should be refused a license on producing a good character. 6

Education alone did not make a minister. Even those denominations which prized highly educated clergy, insisted upon men who were "popular preachers".<sup>7</sup> An integral part of the reputation for ability

(5) Rev. F. Tremayne to Bishop of Quebec, December 21, 1837, Strachan Papers.

(6) York Weekly Post, March 1, 1821.

(7) John Strachan to Bishop of Chester, March 4, 1831, Good, op. cit., p.170. John Strachan to Rev. Dr. Owen, November 1, 1812; same to same, January 1, 1814, - same to same, February 24, 1815; Strachan Papers. J. Morris to Rev. Burns, January 9, 1836. Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence. Elizabethtown Petition, October 22, 1810, London Missionary Society, Selected Papers. John Macaulay to Helen Macaulay, January 29, 1837, Macaulay Papers.

in a profession was the fact that the person had an established residence in a neighbourhood.

Residency was a controversial differential. To some the itinerant pedlar, preacher or medicine man was by that fact a fraud and liable to be a disturber of the peace.

These men (most brutal, generally speaking, in their manners, and in their conduct immoral in the highest degree) go from house to house like pedlars, dealing out their poisonous pills and herbs, and holding out to the gaping ignorant the advantages of a republican government. 8

Probably most derided for this were the Methodist circuit riders.<sup>9</sup>

However given the dispersed nature of Upper Canada's population, some method was needed to ensure that those outside the densely settled areas were not deprived of all professional attention. Some defended itinerants on grounds of the qualified professionals' greed and sloth which kept them in the settled areas.

Professional gentlemen were few, they charged high prices and were unwilling to go to distant parts, especially while people were poor; the people who heretofore practiced Physic

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- (8) Kingston Gazette, May 25, 1816, as cited in Canniff, op. cit., p.34. See also Patriot, October 12, 1838, in Canniff, op. cit., p.111; Jameson, op. cit., volume 1, p.298. Canadian Freeman, January 20 and 27, 1831; Christian Guardian, February 24 and September 14, 1836; and John Cruikshank to Dr. Lee, November 4, 1829, Lee Papers.
- (9) York Weekly Post, February 22, 1821. "A Report on the State of Religion . . .", March 1, 1815, Spragge, op. cit., p.75. John Strachan to Rev. Anthony Hamilton, August 14, 1828, Good, op. cit., pp.27-31. Christopher Hagerman to John Macaulay, February 17, 1821, Macaulay Papers. Canadian Christian Examiner, April 1838, pp.115.



and Surgery in different parts of the Province should be allowed to practice - they did as much good as regular Military Physicians or any others. 10

In time the professions responded to the needs of remote settlements. The Church of England and the Church of Scotland commissioned missionary ministers to travel a definite circuit supplying numerous isolated congregations.<sup>11</sup> Doctors established rural practices, spending more time on horseback than in treating patients.<sup>12</sup> With the introduction of a property tax in 1841, the common and grammar schools became much more secure and expanded to offer regular schooling to youth in most parts of the province. With the spreading of professional services into remote areas, the roving dispensers of health, physical and spiritual, became marginal figures in Upper Canadian society.

For teachers the important differential was education. Upper Canada had a two-tier system of common schools for elementary education and grammar schools for classical education. Atop these, it placed aspirations for a University. The common schools had the greatest

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- (10) York Weekly Post, February 22, 1821. On the religious aspect, Colonial Advocate, August 19, 1824. See also Colonial Advocate, September 13, 1828. Canadian Christian Examiner, March 1838, pp. 68-69. Matthew Leech and Robert Mason to Rev. Burns, November 25, 1829, Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence.
- (11) Rev. Richard Flood to Bishop of Montreal, October 1, 1839, Sarachan Papers. John Crooks to the Glasgow Presbytery Moderator, January 8, 1829; Wm. Morris to Rev. Daniel Welsh, December 6, 1829, Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence.
- (12) Canniff, op. cit., p. 70.

range of teacher qualifications. The basic standard hoped for was literacy and good character.<sup>13</sup>

However there was no regular financial support for common schools or their teachers in the form of local taxation. Even the government grant of £20 - £ 25 for the teacher's salary was not assured, as it depended on maintaining at least twenty students.<sup>14</sup> It is no surprise then that the quality of common school teachers was so low. People frequently commented upon the dismal character of the teaching profession.

In a few years, as the neighbourhood improved, School Teaching was introduced by a few individuals, whose bodily infirmities prevented them from hard manual labour. At 7 years of age I was one of those who patronized Mrs. Cornahan, who opened a Sylvan Seminary for the young. . . .-from thence I went to Jonathan Clark's and tried Thomas Morden - lastly William Faulkner . . . - You may suppose, that these gradations to Parnassus was [sic] carried into effect because a larger amount of knowledge could be obtained; - not so - for Delworth's Spelling Book and the New Testament were the only two Books possessed by these Academicians. 15

John Steele, a settler in Cramahe, noted of the province that "the majority of the teachers are sadly deficient in learning . . ." <sup>16</sup>

The Christian Guardian called for a new kind of teacher who would

"eschew the practice of engaging in this business for the sake of pass-

(13) Canadian Christian Examiner, July 1839, p.252.

(14) Wm. B. McVity to W.W. Baldwin, April 10, 1838, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

(15) "Reminiscences of Hon. Henry Ruttan of Cobourg; C.W." William Hamilton Merritt Papers.

(16) John Steele to Charles Bowman, December 6, 1827, Lee Papers.

ing away the tedious days of winter, or picking up a little money . . ."<sup>17</sup> Even where qualified teachers could be obtained, the school boards did not always pay them.<sup>18</sup> John Strachan in 1815 had hoped to provide a salary of £80 a year for common school teachers - £50 from the parents and a £30 grant from the government.<sup>19</sup> But qualified teachers did well to get an offer over £35 - and whether that would be paid was another question.<sup>20</sup> It seems most common school teachers could expect only the salary equivalent to that of a day labourer.<sup>21</sup>

More well-to-do parents in urban centers had better opportunities for their children. Not only did they have competent teachers for the basic elementary education, but for music and dancing as well. For this they paid from 7s 6d a month for a young girl to £12-15 a quarter for an older boy. Miss Parson's elementary "Day School for Young Ladies" in Kingston charged £6 5s per quarter for a full course that

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- (17) Christian Guardian, December 4, 1830; see also February 4, 1835 and June 26, 1839. Jameson, op. cit., volume 2, p.218.
- (18) Wm. B. McVity to W.W. Baldwin, January 15, 1839, W.W. Baldwin Papers. Wm. Morris to John Hopkirk, n.d., Morris Papers.
- (19) Spragge, op. cit., p.77.
- (20) Wm. B. McVity to W.W. Baldwin, January 15, 1839, W.W. Baldwin Papers. John Strachan to Dr. Summer, June 11, 1830, Strachan Papers.
- (21) Canadian Freeman, February 8, 1827. See also Mr. MacNaughton to Rev. Burns, July 12, 1834; Rev. Wm. Rintoul to Rev. Burns, August 13, 1838; Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence. Canadian Christian Examiner, March 1839, p.90.

included French and Dance, as well as plain and ornamental needle work, History, Geography, English, and Music.<sup>22</sup> But rural (and poorer urban) parents lacked the means to maintain even minimally qualified teachers in every township.

With the universal lament over the quality of common school teachers went a strongly expressed desire to see their status and salary greatly improved.

. . . If you make ample provision for the support of Common Schools, the business of Common School teaching will soon become respectable; gentlemanly persons will engage in the business, and your children may be prepared at your own doors for admission to the higher Seminaries of learning . . . . 23

But even in these calls for better common schools, there exists an ill reflection on the extant teaching profession. Teachers were not "respectable", could not be thought of as gentlemen.

Grammar schools had a much more secure foundation. Consequently their teachers enjoyed a higher standing in society. The government provided a \$100 annual salary, in addition to whatever the teacher might get in tuition from the parents, or earn on the side. As well,

(22) Upper Canada Herald, June 20, 1832. See also John Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, September 23, 1839; same to same, October 18, 1839; Macaulay Papers; W. Allan to A. Macaulay, April 24, 1835. Allan Papers; Fergusson, op. cit., p.156; Patriot, November 9, 1838; Christian Guardian, November 30, 1836.

(23) "To The Free and Independent Electors of Oxford" (1834), Duncombe Papers. See also W. Morris to John Hopkirk, (n.d.), Morris Papers; Canadian Christian Examiner, March 1839, p.90; July 1839, pp.251-2.

the government appointed district school boards composed of eminent citizens charged with oversight of the grammar school.<sup>24</sup> Occasionally the government also supplied allotments of text books.<sup>25</sup> All this support was designed to maintain a teacher able to impart to his students the rudiments of a classical education.

The grammar school teacher or master of a private classical school served as a "jack-of-all-trades" - a fact which drew some criticism.<sup>26</sup> He taught Latin, Greek, Mathematics and Philosophy, and frequently practical courses as well, such as bookkeeping and surveying.<sup>27</sup> In addition to the respectability he gained as a man of classical attainments, the grammar school teacher drew a considerable, though varying, salary. John Strachan, combining the position of district school master and Anglican minister at Cornwall had £ 500 a year. William McLaren of Grantham Academy in St. Catherines received just over £300 a year, £100 from the government grant and over

(24) "A Report on the State of Religion . . ." March 1, 1815, Spragge, op. cit., p.75. See also Midland Board of Education Report, May 22, 1819; Ottawa District School Board Report, January 5, 1821, UCS. John Strachan to Dr. Sumner, June 11, 1830, Strachan Papers.

(25) John Strachan to James Strachan, February 4, 1817. Spragge, op. cit., p.127.

(26) Canadian Christian Examiner, March 1837, p.49, John Strachan to Dr. Brown, October 15, 1804, Strachan Papers.

(27) Farmers' Journal and Canal Intelligencer, August 5, 1829, in the William Hamilton Merritt Papers, John Strachan to Charles Jones, March 14, 1807, Charles Jones Papers.

£200 from pupils' tuition.<sup>28</sup> John Cruikshank wrote of his institution at Kingstons,

Laterly the school has much exceeded the expectations I had formed of it; and to one properly qualified for the office and who would devote himself to teaching for an ultimate object, I think it might yield £250 cur. p.an., now that it has in some degree assumed the form of an establishment.<sup>29</sup>

The grammar school teacher or his equivalent, then, possessed both the education and the income of a gentleman.

College professor for Upper Canada was largely a prospective category. The university promoters hoped to attract distinguished classical scholars and outstanding professional gentlemen to lecture on law and medicine.<sup>30</sup> Strachan, in his repeated draft budgets for King's College, anticipated salaries from £200 to £300 for professional men lecturing part time, to £450 to £500 for professors who would

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- (28) W. MacLaren to William Hamilton Merritt, January 12, 1833, William Hamilton Merritt Papers. John Strachan to Dr. Brown, October 9, 1808, Strachan Papers. Christian Guardian, May 11, 1836. E.J. Hathaway, "Early Schools of Toronto", OHSR, volume 23, 1922, pp.312-327. Fergusson, op. cit., p.156.
- (29) John Cruikshank to Dr. Lee, November 4, 1829, Lee Papers. J.B. Robinson to John Macaulay, March 29, 1826, Macaulay Papers.
- (30) Canadian Christian Examiner, October 1839, p.302. Canniff, op. cit., p.671. John Strachan, draft letter on founding McGill College, February 14, 1815, Strachan Papers. C.B. Sissons, Egerton Ryerson: His Life and Letters, Oxford University Press, Toronto, 1937, volume 1, pp.285, 313.

head departments.<sup>31</sup> Although no university went into operation in the colony before 1840, it is worth noting the plans of Anglicans, Methodists and Presbyterians to see what they intended as the capstone of the Upper Canadian educational system.

Certification meant little for those who taught. Common school boards took what they could get - sometimes that meant taking the lowest bidder.<sup>32</sup> The district school boards and the boards of the prospective colleges and the university looked for the credentials of a classical education. That meant a degree or certificate from a British university.

Similarly, the teacher's ability had comparatively little to do with his or her status. The difficulty of travelling and the expense of boarding meant parents had to be content with what was available locally. Even the best schools were not all that was desired.

...Though the School falls very short of what I could wish it it is yet the best in the Province - Doctor Strachan is very clever, but his public duties as Executive Councillor injure the school much -. 33

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- (31) Lord Bathurst to Sir P. Maitland, March 31, 1827; "Substance of a Plan for commencing the University of King's College". (John Strachan), 1837; "Report by the President for bringing King's into speedy operation". April 26; 1837, Strachan Papers. Canniff, op. cit., p.97. W.R. Riddell, The Legal Profession in Upper Canada at Early Periods, Law Society of Upper Canada, Toronto, 1916, pp.41-45.
- (32) Mr. MacNaughton to Rev. Burns, July 12, 1834, Glasgow Colonial Correspondence.
- (33) W.W. Baldwin to Q. St. George, September 2, 1818, W.W. Baldwin Papers. See also Canadian Christian Examiner. March 1839, p.91.

People looked for a gentleman of good character, piety and a cultivated mind.<sup>34</sup> It was assumed that given these, he would be able to teach.

Residence was not a relevant differential for teachers. While a teacher might shift from one neighbourhood to another, hoping to get more pupils, the site of the school and the teacher's residence (frequently the same building) were fixed. However faced by the lack of qualified teachers, some suggestion was made of training a number of persons, who would then travel a fixed circuit, teaching at each school for one month at a time. In this way, more people would have an opportunity to gain a classical education. By compelling the common school teachers to attend, their standard of teaching could also be upgraded.<sup>35</sup> Like the extended rural practice of the country doctor and the missionary circuit of the minister, this proposal was intended to provide a higher quality of professional service to those who lived in sparsely settled areas.

In making distinctions amongst clergy, the differential of education was both important and controversial. This is especially evident in the antipathy which developed between the Church of England and the Church of Scotland on one hand, and the Methodist groups and, to a lesser extent, the Baptists on the other. In defending his "Ecclesiastical Chart" of 1827, John Strachan said of the Methodist ministry,

(34) "To the Free and Independent Electors of Oxford". (1834) Duncombe Papers. Canadian Christian Examiner, July 1839, p.252.

(35) Canadian Christian Examiner, March 1839, p.91.



It appears that of this number 118 about 42 are traveling Preachers who possess the chief authority and influence. The remainder are local Preachers and are principally farmers and mechanics who are admitted to exhort or Preach after a very short noviciate . . . . 36

A Presbyterian writer described his visit to a camp meeting and expressed his shock at the Methodist preacher's ignorance of the English language.

Certain ready-made expressions were always at hand to fill up a vacancy, and to keep up a continuity of sound . . . the word (beloved) was generally pluralized into beloveds. This was but one of several grammatical beauties which I heard for the first time.

The expression, eternal world, did good service that night. It gave a sonorous ending, I am safe to say to every third sentence. The use made of the names of the Deity was absolutely shocking. He was never spoken of without employing two or three of his most august epithets. The most common assemblage was "The Great, Eternal Jehovah God." This was often employed to give weight to a sentence which the preacher felt was next to nonsense. 37

But against these accusations of ignorance were laid the energetic missionary exertions of the dissenting sects - above all the American Methodists. William Lyon Mackenzie, aghast at the popular immorality revealed at the Niagara assizes, cried out,

When will this country be blessed with an apostolic gospel ministry? Men who will not think it their duty to associate

(36) Good, op. cit., p.29.

(37) Canadian Christian Examiner, October 1838, p.307. See also Colonial Advocate, May 27, 1824; June 16, 1825. Moodie, Life, op. cit., pp.108-115. "Sudden Death", March 30, 1831, William Hamilton Merritt Papers. Alexander Ross to Rev. Burns, December 30, 1829, George Romanes to Rev. Burns, June 25; 1833, Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence. J.L.H.Henderson, John Strachan: Documents and Opinions, McClelland and Stewart Ltd., Toronto, 1969, pp.95-98.

only with the wealthy and the powerful, the rich and the great, but who will labour in the extensive vineyard which this country offers; who will follow the example of the early Christians; who will often visit the hut of the laborer, the log house of the poor emigrant, the bed of the distressed, and the hovel of the wretched . . . .

After which he added the significant coda: "If it were not for the American Methodist clergy, where would this country be?"<sup>38</sup> An anonymous letter writer summed up his defense of Methodists: "Their Preachers although not all classically educated, are men of exemplary piety, zeal and devotion to the cause of Christ. . . ." <sup>39</sup> But the qualification implicit in "although" betrays the felt need to have clergy who had that classical education as well as piety, zeal and devotion.

The clearest evidence of a non-denominational concern for an educated clergy was the American Methodist concern to found an academy in Upper Canada, one important task of which would be to educate future ministers.<sup>40</sup> The Methodists' own paper, the Christian Guardian, could at times be on the defensive about the education of the preachers.

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(38) Colonial Advocate, August 19, 1824.

(39) Canadian Freeman, October 25, 1827; see also January 27, 1831. Colonial Advocate, May 11, 1826. Canadian Freeman, January 27, 1831.

(40) Sissons, op. cit., volume 1, pp.150-155, 379; Catholics and Presbyterians also founded colleges, both at Kingston.

It is vain, it is foolish, for men of weak or indolent minds . . . to say that Christianity possesses an inherent glory which rendered her independent of the aid or illustrations of science. 41

The high value placed on educated clergy even affected the Primitive Methodists, who were known in England for their suspicion of educated clergymen. Indeed one congregation there had flatly stated that in considering a new preacher, "We prefer Heat to Light."<sup>42</sup> But in Upper Canada they sought to obtain respectable and learned preachers to fill the place left by the withdrawal of the Wesleyan Methodists.<sup>43</sup>

Ordination as a means of certification had little meaning in Upper Canada. The multiplicity of denominations and the weakness of ecclesiastical organization meant that almost anyone who wanted to take up preaching could, given a little time and perseverance.<sup>44</sup>

Across all denominations there existed a clear consensus on what constituted an able minister. He should be a popular preacher, pious and devout, mild mannered and conciliatory in temperament, with great stamina for travel. One Presbyterian wrote,

Unless the Ministers who come here are men of decided piety, firmness, talents, great prudence, and strong of body, they will not be happy, useful, or respected. It would be well to caution worldly minded ministers

(41) Christian Guardian, December 2, 1835; see also December 5, 1829 and March 15, 1837.

(42) John Douglas Hoover, "The Primitive Methodist Church in Canada, 1829-1884", unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1970, p.40.

(43) Ibid., pp.84-87, 104.

(44) Moodie, Roughing, op. cit., pp.120, 158. See also Rev. F. Tremayne to Bishop of Quebec, December 21, 1837, Strachan Papers.

against coming to the interior of Canada, it would not suit them. 45

This closely paralleled John Strachan's views.

. . . He will be a zealous active and acceptable Preacher - Gentlemanly in his manners and of fair literary attainments all which are qualifications necessary to his success in this country. . . . 46

Clergy were expected to visit the destitute and sick to attend to their needs.<sup>47</sup> As was seen in the case of the Methodists, someone with all these attributes could claim attention, even though lacking education - but not without feeling the want of that education.

Residence was a controversial differential for clergy. In particular the Methodist system of circuit riders was viewed with suspicion. Attorney-General Robinson, on the question of licensing ministers to marry, observed of the Methodists,

. . . He thought they also showed a greater zeal generally than other sects, and would grant them all rights, if they were as responsible as the ministers of the established Church, but they frequently changed their situation, and might go to the States and remain there. 48

(45) Rev. McAlister to (Rev. Burns?), May 25, 1831, Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence.

(46) John Strachan to Bishop of Chester, March 4, 1831. Good, op. cit., p.170. See also James Morris to Rev. Walsh, June 19, 1829; Rev. Alex. Ross to Rev. Burns, May 25, 1830; Thomas Wilson to Rev. Walsh, August 10, 1831; James Morris to Rev. Burns, January 9, 1836, Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence. Elizabethtown Petition, October 22, 1810, London Missionary Society, Selected Papers.

(47) W.B. McVity to W.W. Baldwin, April 10, 1838, W.W. Baldwin Papers. John Strachan to Mrs. Brown, September 28, 1833, Strachan Papers. Colonial Advocate, August 19, 1824.

(48) York Weekly Post, February 22, 1821. See also Canadian Christian Examiner, April 1838, p.115.

Anna Jameson in her travels found even Methodists who were unhappy with the circuit system.<sup>49</sup> This sentiment must have been fairly widespread as the Christian Guardian felt the need to address it directly (revealing an awareness of the system's drawbacks as it did).

But the yielding up of one's own taste, and inclinations, and interests, in regard to both preachers and people is an inseparable accomplishment of the itinerant system. It is one of the heaviest crosses, as well as one of the greatest blessings. 50

The travelling of the preachers evoked dissatisfaction both within and without the Methodist communion. But in time, other denominations found that to extend religious services to the most people, some type of mission circuit was necessary.<sup>51</sup>

Education was the most significant differential for doctors. That education could be obtained in diverse ways. One could get regular medical training in the British armed services, various British and European universities, a number of colleges of physicians and surgeons (mainly in the British Isles), at American medical schools, or by apprenticeship to a medical practitioner in the colony. Outside the sphere of regular training, there were "empirics" practicing folk medicines and "herb doctors" (later called "Homeopaths"). Each type of education had its own controversial aspect and will be examined in

(49) Jameson, op. cit., volume 1, p.298.

(50) Christian Guardian, July 11, 1838; see also December 11, 1839.

(51) cf. footnote eleven.

turn. Since education was the most vital differential for doctors these controversies at their root revolve around the definition of what was a doctor.

The focus of the controversies over what education was appropriate to a doctor after 1818 was the Upper Canada Medical Board and its successor (in 1838) the Upper Canada College of Physicians and Surgeons. As we shall see later, the Board and then the College were not the focus because they controlled definitively who could practice. Rather it was before them that the debate on who ought to practice was carried on. The first controversy was whether unnecessary distinctions were being made between British and American trained applicants for certification. William Lyon Mackenzie accused the Medical Board of rejecting applicants from U.S. medical schools, on political grounds. For fear of "tainted loyalty", good doctors were denied the license they needed to practice, he alleged.

The medical board of Upper Canada! tremble ye uninitiated! if Birmingham Hutton had been a reporting member at that board . . . the world would be enriched with debates on Physics and surgery, well worthy of being handed down to the very latest posterity. From Pitking Gross, down to Freeman Riddle, those important professors of the healing art who have arrived without Ten Guinea St Andrews or Aberdeen M.D. Diplomas in their pockets, have had to encounter the jaw bone of Sampson, the quantum suff of a Horne, and the slipslopic queries of that modern Hippocrates, Doctor Judge Clerk Powell. 52

The records of the Medical Board, however, show that seven of the

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(52) Colonial Advocate, May 27, 1824.

first unsuccessful applicants were urged to develop their abilities further by attending medical lectures in New York.<sup>53</sup> The Board appears to have accepted some candidates with American training and to have rejected some with British or European training.<sup>54</sup> The Board set out its own curriculum in 1832 on which to examine applicants and declared its intention in 1834 to examine every candidate no matter what credentials were offered.<sup>55</sup> Much later than Mackenzie's criticism, a public meeting of physicians in Toronto early in 1836 accused the Board of favouring the London College of Physicians and Surgeons, as against those of Dublin, Edinburgh and Glasgow.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, the Board itself appears to have been unhappy with the process of which it was a part. In its petition to the Lieutenant Governor asking for immediate establishment of a medical faculty at King's College, it lamented that youth in the province sent abroad for their medical education "often return unqualified".<sup>57</sup>

A second charge emerged from that 1836 public meeting of physicians in Toronto. Doctors not connected with the Board or its members claimed that their apprentices were completely at the mercy of those

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(53) Canniff, op. cit., p.50.

(54) Canniff, op. cit.; pp.58, 75, 78.

(55) Canniff, op. cit., pp.62, 78.

(56) Canniff, op. cit., p.88. Patriot, January 4, 1836.

(57) Canniff, op. cit., p.97.

on the Board. They thought it wrong that,

. . . two or three medical practitioners holding their inquisitions in utter darkness should have from year to year the power of pronouncing without appeal, on the professional merit of their own pupils, or those of others with whom they may possibly be at variance. 58

There are several things that should be noted about this statement.

There were more than two or three doctors on the Medical Board - indeed more than that number usually attended.<sup>59</sup> Second, the Board was shortly after this protest enlarged, although it did not include the most prominent of the dissidents.<sup>60</sup> However, the central problem of a few judging the competence of all students (including their own) was not satisfactorily dealt with until 1838 when the licencing function was given to the profession itself, acting through the newly created Upper Canadian College of Physicians and Surgeons.<sup>61</sup>

Quite outside the question of judging the relative merit of various systems of regular medical training, lay the problem of those who practiced medicine with irregular training. The most important of these, and the first to have their status recognized in law, were female midwives. Initially, the law covering Upper Canada had

(58) Canniff, op. cit., p.87.

(59) Canniff, op. cit., pp.51-67.

(60) Canniff, op. cit., pp.88-89 citing the York Courier, p. 9, 1836.

(61) Canniff, op. cit., pp.113-117.



prohibited anyone from practicing midwifery - along with pharmacy, physic and surgery - without due examination and license.<sup>62</sup> However the 1815 Physic and Surgery Act modified this position,

. . . Nothing in this Act contained shall extend or be construed to extend to prevent any female from practicing midwifery in any part of this province, or to require such female to take out such license as aforesaid. 63

The Medical Board after 1818 continued to examine and license men to act as midwives.<sup>64</sup> Women could legally practice without examination or license, on the basis of their reputation for competence.<sup>65</sup>

Lastly we come to the most difficult and amorphous group: those who had some skill and local reputation for healing. These people had their public defenders.<sup>66</sup> All made some claim to superior knowledge, whether "folk medicine" or the "vegetable cures" of "Dr. Thompson". In time some of these gained legal status as homeopaths.<sup>67</sup> But in the Upper Canadian period, they existed in a gray area that included the most fraudulent quacks. However nebulous the group was, and disreputable as some of its members were, it illustrates an important

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(62) Canniff, *op. cit.*, pp.16-22, although the 1788 Ordinance only required midwives in towns to be licensed.

(63) Canniff, *op. cit.*, p.31.

(64) Canniff, *op. cit.*, pp.51, 62.

(65) W.B. McVity to W.W. Baldwin, March 4, 1840; same to same, June 17, 1840, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

(66) York Weekly Post, February 22, 1821.

(67) Canniff, *op. cit.*, pp.71-74.

point about the medical profession. To practice medicine one needed to have, if not a special education, at least a claim to the equivalent of one.

As already indicated, certification was not of great importance to the medical profession. Prior to 1818 there had been several attempts to legislate a regulatory system for doctors. All had been ineffective. The Medical Board at least left a record of its operations, which appear to have been more successful relative to its predecessors. The fine for unlicensed practice was raised from £10 to £100.<sup>68</sup> Yet so prominent a person as Dr. Rolph could practice without a licence until 1829, and then be appointed to the Medical Board three years later.<sup>69</sup> Individual doctors tried to prosecute their illegal competitors. After its establishment in 1838, the College of Physicians and Surgeons undertook to sue unlicensed practitioners as a corporate body.<sup>70</sup> These efforts did not enjoy great success. Doctors not recognized by the Medical Board successfully sued patients for payment of their fees. They even received government appointments as Surgeons to militia units. As late as 1871 perhaps as many as one fifth the doctors practicing in Ontario were not licensed.<sup>71</sup> Certification then was not a formidable barrier to medical practice.

(68) Canniff, op. cit., pp.16-51. Christian Guardian, June 26, 1839.

(69) Canniff, op. cit., p.593. John Rolph to W.W. Baldwin, May 5, 1829, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

(70) Canniff, op. cit., pp.35, 133.

(71) H.E. MacDermot, One Hundred Years of Medicine in Canada, 1867-1967, McClelland and Stewart Ltd., Toronto, 1967, p.19. Canniff, op. cit., p.125.

While having a special education (or a claim to the equivalent) was important, the practitioner's reputation to a certain extent depended on known ability. Here we can find the key to distinguish between the three levels of those who practised medicine in Upper Canada. On the very bottom were the "empirics" or quacks who had no training at all. They were simply imposters.

. . . The Province is overrun with self-made physicians who have no pretensions to knowledge of any kind, and yet there is no profession that requires more extensive information. . . . Regular practitioners . . . are elbowed out of their practice by men who can neither read nor write so as to be understood. 72

A clear picture emerges of the "empirics". They were not gentlemen, had no training, were American itinerants, wanted to make money, and had no other talent than selling.<sup>73</sup> Indeed they could best be regarded as pedlars of unpatented medicine - who made exaggerated claims at times about themselves as well as their wares.

Separate from the "empirics" were a group who had some training in medicine. We have already noted that female midwives could legally practice without examination or licence, on the basis of their local reputation. In a remote area, such a person could be called upon for other medical services. One of these was Jane McVity who wrote to W.W.

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(72) Canniff, op. cit., pp.27-28 citing the Kingston Gazette, March 1812. See also Christian Guardian June 26, 1839 and Patriot, October 12, 1838.

(73) Canniff, op. cit., pp.15-16.

Baldwin,

. . . Doctors and lancets are scarce in this part of the world but I was able to substitute a needle and it pleased God that I succeeded in every case but one Child out of the many that has been vaccinated for Smallpox had missed, the people from all directions come to request a little for their children. - 74

The Medical Board issued a number of partial licenses, the most usual exception being surgery.<sup>75</sup> But it is unlikely that such persons working in the backwoods were able to keep their practice strictly to the limits of the license. While some doctors inveighed against "licensed quacks", it is probable the exigencies of the pioneer settlement often left the choice as one between no medical care and that of the person with at least some medical knowledge.<sup>76</sup>

Lastly we come to the certified doctor with regular medical training. He was trained in all areas - pharmacy, midwifery, physic and surgery.<sup>77</sup> The length and expense of that education formed one of the doctors' strongest claim to be a respectable gentleman.

It is an incontestable fact that we are all created patients, but few of us are born physicians, and that education and studious practice as well as just judgment of diagnostics and the efficient operative qualities of prescriptions, form the necessary parts of fortunate and conspicuous practitioners. 78

Their claim to wealth was somewhat more variable. It seems

(74) Jane E. McVity to W.W. Baldwin, February 26, 1842, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

(75) Canniff, op. cit., p.51 et. seq.

(76) Western Mercury, May 31, 1832.

(77) Canniff, op. cit., pp.58, 62-64.

(78) Canniff, op. cit., p.25 citing the York Gazette, October 8, 1808. See also Western Mercury, May 31, 1832.

probable that any doctor who stayed in a town or a densely settled area would make a quite comfortable living. One doctor at Niagara claimed to have built up a practice yielding \$1,100, but added that it was not all paid in cash.<sup>79</sup> Doctors were criticized for preferring the high returns of urban practice to attending the needs of rural poor and pioneer.<sup>80</sup> Here again we encounter the problem of providing professional services in thinly settled areas. Those doctors who did attempt to work in remote areas had financial problems, which they frequently solved by taking up another occupation - lawyer (John Rolph), farmer (Charles Duncombe), shopkeeper (A.J. Christie).<sup>81</sup> They found their practices hemmed in by "empirics" of various sorts.<sup>82</sup> Yet in spite of such a relative financial deprivation the rural doctor's social position was more secure due to the paucity of "respectable society".

For lawyers, education was second to certification as the demarcation line of the profession. When Upper Canada's legislature enacted English law for the province in 1792, there were only two trained

(79) Canniff, op. cit., p.70. See also Macdermot, op. cit., p.21.

(80) Canniff, op. cit., p.111 on 1839 tariff.

(81) C.C.J. Bond, "A.J. Christie, Bytown Pioneer . . .", Ontario History, volume 56, number 1, March 1964, pp.16-36. John Mugeridge, "John Rolph - A Reluctant Rebel", Ontario History, volume 51, number 4, Autumn 1959, pp.217-229. Colin Read, "The Rising in Western Upper Canada, 1837-1938: The Duncombe Revolt and After", unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Toronto, Toronto, 1974, pp.1-8.

(82) Canniff, op. cit., pp.25, 35.

lawyers in the province. Most of the pleading was done by "attorney per procuratione", that is by power of attorney.

So long as the Courts were presided over by laymen, they were rather informal, the practice was simple and litigants could conduct their own case or have them conducted by non-professional agents. Lawyers were not needed. . . . 83

However in 1794 the informal Court of Common Pleas was abolished, and a Court of King's Bench established. The same bill authorized the Lieutenant Governor to license up to sixteen persons to act as lawyers who "from their probity, education and condition of life [are] best qualified".<sup>84</sup> The "education" referred to no special training, though those appointed had served prior to the act as "attorney per procuratione". In 1797 a Law Society was established with provisions for the education of persons to law by articling to a lawyer. But in 1803 another act of the provincial legislature empowered the Lieutenant Governor to appoint up to six men who "from their probity, education and condition of life [he] shall deem fit and proper to practice the profession of law. . . ." <sup>85</sup> What made a person a lawyer was the proper certification either by the governor, the Law Society or the courts.

The provisions for the education of lawyers in Upper Canada

(83) W.R. Riddell, The Courts of the Province of Upper Canada or Ontario, Macmillan Co. of Canada, 1928, volume 2, p.88.

(84) W.R. Riddell, The Legal Profession in Upper Canada Early Periods, Law Society of Upper Canada, Toronto, 1916, p.8.

(85) Ibid., p.15.

evolved slowly. The 1797 act founding the Law Society provided that a person could be called to practice only after being registered on its books for five years. (Lawyers who entered the province from elsewhere in the Empire presented their credentials to the Court of King's Bench.) During that time the student articulated with a lawyer. These "masters" were given complete charge over their students. Their certificate was all that was required initially for the student to be called after his five years on the books. The act of 1797 introduced the division between barristers (described above) and attorneys. A student could practice law as an attorney with only three year's on the society's books, and five years of articling. That attempt to split the profession did not succeed: in 1797 - 1822 of 42 barristers, only 3 did not also become attorneys; of 42 attorneys, only 3 did not become barristers. The Society gradually increased its own requirements for barristers. After 1819 all persons joining the Society had to demonstrate competence in English and Latin grammar by a test (based on translating a section of Cicero's Orations). By 1825 all law students faced comprehensive examinations in Latin prose and poetry, and mathematics. An 1828 regulation compelled all students to spend at least four terms of their articling at York. The result of these rules regulating barristers was to effect the division of the legal profession into higher and lower branches.

The Attorney paid no fee, passed no examination and was not subject to discipline of the Law Society: no greater temptation could be laid before the ignorant aspirant. 87

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(86) Ibid., p.13

(87) Ibid., pp.15-18.

By 1840 of 267 lawyers practicing in Upper Canada 119 were attorneys only, while 146 were both barrister and attorney.<sup>88</sup> Thus education served as a differential between different kinds of lawyers, all of whom owed their professional status to the same system of certification.

Parallel to the distinction between the barrister and the attorney in terms of education, runs a popular distinction based on ability. Dr. John Stuart wrote to his young ward, John Beverly Robinson,

There is no medium in the Profession you have chosen; you must either rise to Eminence and Respectability, or sink to the level of a pettifogging Attorney, in some obscure Part of the Country. . 89

William Lyon Mackenzie noted the same contrast, and bemoaned the lack of "Eminence and Respectability" in those lawyers who sat in the House of Assembly.

There are several lawyers in the house: would to God that a Sir Samuel Romilly, or a Sir James Macintosh, could be found among them! A lawyer of eminence, who can rise above the trammels of his profession; who can devote his talents, his experience, his deep research, and, in fact, the whole powers of his mind, to the prevention or alleviation of the miseries incidental to mankind. . . . 90

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(88) Ibid., p.18.

(89) Dr. John Stuart to John Beverly Robinson, June 30, 1808, J.B. Robinson Papers. See also John Beverly Robinson to John Macaulay, September 3, 1810. Macaulay Papers.

(90) Colonial Advocate, January 20, 1825. See also Colonial Advocate, June 3, 1824; June 10, 1824; July 8, 1824; May 7, 1827; and Canadian Freeman, June 5, 1828, citing the York Observer.



Mackenzie viewed most of those "pale cadaverous lawyers" who sought public office as doing so from need, hence unable to maintain any independence.<sup>91</sup> An exact "fit" of the two types of distinction - one based on education, the other on ability - is not possible given the evidence available. It seems likely that attorneys, who avoided the discipline of the Law Society and the examination, fell into the category of "a pettifogging Attorney". No such clear statement can be made about those who were barristers. It is most likely though that such "Eminence and Respectability" as was to be found would be found amongst the ranks of the barristers.

Those critical of the legal profession usually made clear that they had an underlying respect for it. William Lyon Mackenzie for all his many strictures on the evils of "needy attorneys" did not hold the occupation of lawyer against a person.<sup>92</sup> He disassociated himself from Charles Fothergill's attack on the legal profession itself, a product of Fothergill's campaign for election against G.S. Boulton, a lawyer.<sup>93</sup> James Wilson, assemblyman for Prince Edward County, was perhaps the most vituperative critic of lawyers, or the professions as a whole for that matter.

We had too many lawyers already; the growth of these, and Established Clergymen and Doctors was oppressive to the country, and there appeared to be no end to the troubles and afflictions they brought upon people . . . The people had better settle their differences by Arbitration, and save bills of cost. 94

(91) Colonial Advocate, June 10, 1824; July 8, 1824.

(92) Colonial Advocate, May 27, 1824.

(93) Colonial Advocate, July 1, 1824.

(94) Upper Canada Herald, January 30, 1827. Canadian Freeman, January 18, 1827.

Even its most severe opponents at least gave the legal profession the respect of fear.

The issue of residence as a differential arises in a particular way for lawyers. Some, of course, always went on circuit with the higher court. For the lawyer, the residence differential was not a matter of itinerant vs. fixed residence, but rather where that residence was fixed. Mackenzie sneered at the "practicing village attorney" who sought to boost his status by gaining minor local government appointments.<sup>95</sup> Francis Collins, in assailing Christopher Hagerman, pointed to his beginnings as a rural lawyer.

Your early habits, as a village lawyer . . . -- the shallowness of your provincial education -- the want of legal research and legal experience, your practice having been chiefly confined to petty country courts -- . . . all conspire to show that you are unqualified for the Bench. . . . 96

The small town or rural lawyer was held unfit for the bench because his location away from the main courts was thought to have deprived him of the opportunity for the necessary professional development. John Strachan looked for a position in Lower Canada for one of his sons to practice law.

. . . As my second son has also made choice of that Profession I am rather against their coming in contact as must be the case were he to study in this Province as York is the only place where they could with propriety settle. 97

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(95) Colonial Advocate, August 19, 1824.

(96) Canadian Freeman, January 15, 1829.

(97) John Strachan to James Reid, November 7, 1831, in Goold, op. cit., p.273.

It was the fear of some critics of the provincial executive that "needy lawyers" sought election only to relocate at York with the assistance of government patronage.<sup>98</sup> Consequently, analogous to the division of barrister from attorney, and that of 'gentleman at law' from 'pettifogging attorney' in popular estimations of ability, was a division between the 'big city' lawyers and the small town pleaders and notaries.

The last occupation to be considered as a profession is that of surveyor. It makes an interesting contrast to those of teacher, clergy, doctor and lawyer as a marginal case. We will first treat it as a profession for the purposes of comparison before turning to the question of whether or not it was a profession in the full sense of the term.

Education was an important factor in defining what a surveyor was. While not officially regulated, there was a system of apprenticeship to learn the skills of surveying. Most of Upper Canada's earliest surveyors had received their training during military service.<sup>99</sup> Subsequently young men learned their skills under a surveyor of note, such as Reuben Sherwood.<sup>100</sup> This education likely consisted of a great deal of practical work, supplemented if possible by reading one

(98) Colonial Advocate, July 8, 1824; June 10, 1824. Canadian Freeman, December 1, 1825.

(99) D.W. Thomson, Men and Meridians: The History of Surveying and Mapping Canada, Queen's Printers, Ottawa, 1966, volume 1, pp.226, 236.

(100) Ibid., p.233.

or other of the notable texts available on surveying.<sup>101</sup>

The certification procedure for surveyors was established very early and changed little before 1840. In 1785 an ordinance under the Quebec Act provided that every person wishing to survey must be examined by a public authority before his appointment to any government post. The same statute required the surveyor to make field notes on all surveys. In the event of his death, the notes were to be deposited with a court of public inspection.<sup>102</sup> With the creation of Upper Canada in 1791, this provision became law in that province.

The education needed and the certification procedure formed no great barrier to anyone who wanted to be a surveyor, although a \$500 bond was required. As a result it seems from the correspondence of those responsible for contracting, there were numerous applicants.<sup>103</sup>

For surveyors, "ability" must be taken to include "connections", or the ability to get contracts. Residence does not supply any distinctions amongst surveyors. One might live on a farm or in a town between surveys. While on the job, all lived in the bush, far from the established settlements.

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(101) A.W. Richeson, English Land Measuring to 1800: Instruments and Practices, The M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, 1966, pp.150-159.

(102) Thomson, op. cit., p.223.

(103) Christopher Hagerman to John Macaulay, September 10, 1821, John Strachan to John Macaulay, October 4, 1821. Macaulay Papers. Thomas Ridout to Ben Geale, May 26, 1818; Thomas Ridout to George Hillier, January 18, 1819, UCS. See also Colonial Advocate, July 1, 1824.

Was surveying a profession? There seem to be points both for and against it. The low entrance requirements and (over time) the low demand resulted in intense competitive bidding for contracts. The pay was low (5s a day for Mahlon Burwell in 1809) and sometimes deferred. In 1819 Lieutenant Governor Sir Peregrine Maitland wanted to resume surveying but had no funds. Instead of salaries he offered 4½ per cent of the land surveyed to the surveyor as payment.<sup>104</sup> That offer raises the question of whether surveying was even an occupation. The assumption implicit in paying someone with an investment is that they have other means to support themselves while working. Moreover since government contracts did not supply continuous employment surveying itself was a some-time occupation. Finally, the job was one of arduous physical labour, isolated from all society except that of the surveying crew.<sup>105</sup>

Against this negative view are a number of positive features about surveying that appear to place it in the class of professions. The function of the surveyor was the organizing head of a work crew, whom he recruited and paid. In this directing function he stood in a position analogous to that of a military officer. Indeed, this impression was reinforced by the fact that a number of surveyors were

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(104) Gates, op. cit., p.158. See also Joel Stone to Robert McLean, May 10, 1815, Charles Jones Papers. Alex McDonnell to F.P. Robinson, July 28, 1815; Thomas Ridout to William Halton, October 7, 1815; Reuben Sherwood to Thomas Ridout, June 18, 1816; Thomas Ridout to George Hillier, April 14, 1820, UCS.

(105) Thompson, op.cit., pp.243-244.

former army officers, had received their training in the army, or held rank in the provincial militia.<sup>106</sup> To become a surveyor one had to undergo an apprenticeship that presupposed some grammar school education and a government examination not unlike that of a lawyer. Finally, the surveyor worked in government service (or at least on government sponsored projects).

To be a surveyor did not of itself seem to confer professional status. Surveying had not yet apparently emerged as a separate professional occupation apart from military service or engineering. There were prominent people who did surveying - John Bostwick, Mahlon Burwell, Z. Burnham, Reuben Sherwood. But the fact that surveying was done by high status people did not make it a high status occupation. First, it was not an occupation, it was a side line. The intermittent nature of the work and the use of a deferred form of payment show that one could not have expected even to make a living as a surveyor. Moreover to get the potentially lucrative contracts a person needed connections. For those who had the connections, it made sense to develop surveying as a side line. But anybody without connections would have found it difficult to use his surveying skills. Anyone without another source of income would likely have found it impossible to make a living as a free-lance surveyor.

The foregoing analysis has attempted to show the operation of various differentials within occupations, without showing the status

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(106) Thompson, op. cit., p.237.

of those occupations relative to each other in the professional hierarchy. By and large that latter task will be left to Chapter 5. There the examination of the horizontal links across employment hierarchies provides the more suitable place to compare the status which contemporaries assigned to minister and barrister, for example, compared to mechanic, squatter or miller.

Nonetheless, considering all professions together there appears a critical boundary to their status that needs to be dealt with prior to the examination of individual occupations' status. The key to every profession, to enter and to practice, was knowledge. To be able to effectively claim such knowledge gave one a certain assured position of status, though perhaps not the income to go with it. The education, presumed or actual, needed to be a professional placed its possessor most often in the Marginal Respectable or Respectable state. Even the untutored preacher and lowly common school teacher gained status, above their income level by association with the higher levels of the profession. Among the base motives which the Christian Guardian feared might move some to take up teaching was, "wearing the honourable title of "master" among his neighbours".<sup>107</sup> Preacher and teacher might earn no more than a servant or a squatter, but their social position was more esteemed. Knowledge and education formed the boundary to the professions, that actuated a powerful upward pull even on their lowest members, in contrast to the trades where even the most

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(107) Christian Guardian, December 4, 1830.

skilled, successful mechanic was vulnerable to the downward pull on status of his association with manual labour:



Commerce

Those who lived by buying and selling commodities had their own social ranking based on a number of differentials. One's status as a vendor depended upon whether one had a fixed place of business or was itinerant. It also was related to the character of the business in which one was involved. But the key differential was the amount of capital one could command, either by ownership or as a manager. While people appear to have had no great respect for the abilities of the shopkeeper or merchant, there was somewhat more for the manufacturer. From a consideration of these differentials arises a hierarchy of commercial respectability.

People held the resident shopkeeper in higher regard than the travelling pedlar. "If a mechanic /as vendor/ set up in a neighbourhood, he would be known by the quality of his work."<sup>108</sup> But the traveller and his goods were an unknown. John Macaulay advised his mother to travel as far as New York for a proper set of dentures. "You would in this way I should imagine ensure a much better set than by bargaining with any of the itinerant Dental Tinkers."<sup>109</sup> Francis Collins welcomed the candidacy of two respectable merchants for the House of Assembly, as they would "lend their aid to improve the present system of peddling, and to elevate it to something like the science of

(108) York Weekly Post, February 22, 1821.

(109) John Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, October 5, 1839, Macaulay Papers. See also J. Strachan to [?], June 16, 1817, Spragge, op.cit., p.132. Cannif, op.cit., p.34. John Strachan to Simon McGillivray, November 1, 1822, Strachan Papers.

commerce."<sup>110</sup> For the backwoods farmer there might be no alternative to the pedlar. But where local shopkeepers established themselves they soon won preference.

The character of a business could influence a shopkeeper's standing, if connected with the liquor trade. Tavern-keeping, in the eyes of many, was not a respectable occupation.

The power to retail spirituous liquor is a most dangerous one, and is most anxiously sought for by the unprincipled for the sake of making money indifferent to manner, time or effect upon their customers - I will say their victims.

- There are many trades, and it is said they must all live, but with every allowance for the force of circumstances, I do pronounce the trade or calling of such persons . . . of the most desperate character, and their establishments nuisances - just such as may be said to devour Widow's houses. 111

This sentiment clearly came from a commitment to the temperance movement. Yet its influence was more general, as can be seen in legislation of the time. Tavern owners were forbidden from suing their customers for liquor debts.<sup>112</sup> They were placed under strict regulations from the local Quarter Sessions.<sup>113</sup> Not only was the activity of selling liquor considered by some a morally questionable one, but

(110) Canadian Freeman, October 7, 1830. See also Talbot, op. cit., volume 1, p.168.

(111) Jacob Keefer to William Hamilton Merritt, July 5, 1841, William Hamilton Merritt Papers. MacTaggart, op. cit., volume 2, p.203.

(112) York Weekly Post, April 19, 1821.

(113) Home District Quarter Sessions, December 20, 1818; "Rules and Regulations . . . 1842", Charles Jones Papers. York Weekly Post, February 22, 1821; March 1, 1821. J.E.Jones, Pioneer Crimes and Punishments, G.N.Morang, Toronto, 1924, pp.165-169.

it was viewed more generally as being associated with the very lowest class of people.

. . . Houses of this description were frequently disorderly, and a great nuisance in many places, particularly in Kingston and York . . . It was only the lower order of persons who frequented these beer-houses, and every description of crime originated in them. 114

Yet all liquor vending did not come under these severe strictures.

In contrast to the lowly tavern, the 'respectable inn' was seen as a social necessity and a laudable calling. The innkeeper was viewed as a benefactor to the weary traveller.

. . . When a man is in a strange place and has no friends to entertain him, he may then partake of the provision of an inn. - . . . being abroad . . . he resorts to the only asylum within his reach. An inn and a tavern or drinking house thus stand in very different predicaments. The inn becomes a blessing to the lawful traveller while removed from his own home, but the tavern is a snare to a neighbourhood. 115

Indeed, those who defended taverns based part of their case on the argument that taverns provided accommodation to travellers too poor to afford the inns.<sup>116</sup> Inns then were doubly more respectable. First, their primary function was to provide accommodation to travellers. Second, they attracted a more respectable type of traveller.

In spite of their sometimes disreputable nature, taverns flourished, defended by a number of arguments as to their necessity. As

(114) York Weekly Post, March 29, 1821. See also Canniff, op. cit., p.34. "Temperance Association, Brockville", 1844, Charles Jones Papers.

(115) Canadian Christian Examiner, December 1839, p.366.

(116) York Weekly Post, March 21, 1821, and March 29, 1821.

already noted; taverns were held up as the "poor man's inn" providing at least some accommodation for the poor traveller.<sup>117</sup> Taverns were seen, even by their opponents, as a means of support for the infirm or the widowed.<sup>118</sup> Finally, taverns were defended as providing emergency medicinal aid, in the form of whiskey.<sup>119</sup> Requiring only a modest fee and little capital, the tavern represented the lowest rung on the hierarchy of vendors with fixed places of business.

The key differential in commerce was the amount of capital one controlled. In fact it reinforces those which we have already considered. Pedlars and tavern-keepers were not only, respectively, itinerants and engaged in what many might consider a disreputable line of business, they had very little capital. The pedlar had only the stock of goods he carried with him. The tavern-keeper needed only a log hut to vend his brew. Over the spectrum from the lowliest to the most opulent there was a gradual increase in the amount of capital commanded. However, the gradual nature of the slope does not prevent our discerning some points of demarcation. To begin shop-keeping on a modest scale required about £150 to £500 investment in either cash or credit. John Strachan and Edward Ellice Sr., writing to Europeans of means, offered the higher figure as desirable.<sup>120</sup>

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(117) Ibid.,

(118) York Weekly Post, March 29, 1821. "Temperance Association, Brockville, 1844", Charles Jones Papers.

(119) York Weekly Post, February 22, 1821. For the curative properties of whiskey, see MacDermot, op. cit., p.22.

(120) John Strachan to Rev. Towle, January 21, 1833, Good, op. cit., p.330. See also John Strachan to James Strachan, September 19, 1831. Good, op. cit., p.250. E. Ellice Sr. to William Allan, March 14, 1832, Allan Papers.

William Dunlop and William Lyon Mackenzie suggested the lower as the least necessary to commence.<sup>121</sup>

Once in business, the ambitious man was liable to branch out into any other line that looked profitable. As the astute Rev. Mark Stark observed,

The possession of capital (or credit) is in fact necessary to the prosecution of any business to any extent in this country - Wages are so high - credits so long - and bad debts so common - The mere profits of a Grist Mill or Saw Mill to one who has not the means of speculating in Wheat and carrying on all the concomitant establishments - of Distilling, feeding Pork - etc. are little better than a labourious wage, . . . 122

Perhaps the most common diversification for shop-keepers was to set up a grist mill on the side. They commonly had to accept grain instead of cash for goods sold. In turn they converted their grain to flour and attempted to sell it or exchange it for merchandise.<sup>123</sup>

John McTaggart described at length the sort of diversified operation that could grow out of a mill.

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(121) William Dunlop, Tiger Dunlop's Upper Canada, McClelland and Stewart Ltd., Toronto, 1867, pp.70,149. Colonial Advocate, March 8, 1827. See also Adam Hope to Robert Hope, July 30, 1837; Charles Hope to Robert Hope, September 13, 1840, Hope Papers.

(122) Mark Y. Stark to Miss Young, December 14, 1840, Stark Papers.

(123) W.W. Baldwin to Q. St. George, April 15, 1816; same to same, June 17, 1816; W.W. Baldwin Papers. T.W. Acheson, "The Nature and Structure of York Commerce in the 1820's," Canadian Historical Review, 1969, volume 50, p.415.

He has a grist-mill to grind his own and his neighbours grain; -- a saw-mill, wherewith he furnishes boards for those who are building houses in the village . . . He has likewise a fulling and carding-mill, for preparing woollen yarns for clothes of home manufacture; a smithery and trip-hammer . . .; also an ox-shoeing stall, or place where the oxen are fixed by belts, and their feet by chinks until they are shod. These engines he obtained by procuring for himself, in the first place, a mill-seat . . . But mills alone by no means complete the finished establishment. A distillery is a thing quite indispensable, so that raw grain whiskey may be produced at a couple of shillings per gallon. . . . A tannery is also an appendage; while a store may finish the list. 124

Each of these steps represented an expansion of the businessman's capital, although he had to guard against over-expansion.<sup>125</sup>

The stages in the growth of a shop-keeper's capital can be seen as the beginning with a small retail store requiring perhaps £200 - £500, diversifying in time into milling, asheries or distilling, and land speculation, finally branching out to set up other stores in neighbouring areas. By the last stage the shop keeper had made the transition to a "wealthy merchant". He did so not only by the augmentation of capital but also by the diversity of function - from retail trade alone, to retail and wholesale, processing and (in the case of distilling) light manufacturing.

Regard for the businessman's ability forms another differential

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(124) MacTaggart, op. cit., volume 1, pp.197-198. See also Colonial Advocate, September 2, 1824; William Willcocks to John Russell, February 1, 1807, W.W. Baldwin Papers, Petition of J. Smith, November 3, 1818, UCS.

(125) David Stegman to Q. St. George, July 9, 1818, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

amongst those engaged in commerce. People did not hold the shop-keeper's abilities in very high regard. He was seen as making money by a routine, unimaginative process. "In business, money is to be made slowly by regularity and the quiet virtues and losses must be counted on, which must be submitted to patiently."<sup>126</sup> John Strachan, advising a young couple to set up a small rural store, commented, "Nothing is required but attention as to whom they deal with and correctness of accounts."<sup>127</sup> Beyond being sober, cautious and conscientious, the shop-keeper apparently had little to do in acquiring his "sleepy prosperity".<sup>128</sup>

Ranking below the merchant, on par with the smaller shop-keeper, was the "clerk", or manager of an independent retail store owned by the merchant. As the shop-keeper expanded, he not only diversified his function (from retail sales to retail, wholesale, processing, and light manufacturing) but also his location. To operate another store at a place many miles distant from the owner's scrutiny required a trusty manager. W.W. Baldwin was left as trustee by Q. St. George to oversee his large merchant business, which included several branch stores, apart from the principal one in York. The clerk St. George left in charge of the Dundas store died, and Baldwin was required to hire a new one. In his negotiations, Baldwin found he had to give a

(126) Wm. Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, August 10, 1835, Macaulay Papers.

(127) John Strachan to Rev. Towle, January 21, 1833. Good, op. cit., p.330. See also Colonial Advocate, April 28, 1825.

(128) Colonial Advocate, April 28, 1825.

raise of \$150 to have the man he wanted,

I have no reason to doubt Simon's integrity, sobriety or attention. Indeed I have a good opinion of him in all these particulars though it seems in the present case he has taken advantage of his own value and my want of him and has exacted this additional allowance - . 129

While the shop-keeper's virtues might not have ranked high in popular estimation, when it came to finding someone to manage a store with over £7,000 in goods on hand, those "quiet virtues" could be worth a great deal.

The clerk was not only valued as a trusted employee but was also viewed as a potential partner in the business. The classic case - certainly the most eminent - was that of John S. Baldwin. He began as an apprentice clerk to Q. St. George, the largest merchant in Upper Canada. When Q. St. George returned to France at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, J.S. Baldwin rose to be the clerk of the York store, the largest of St. George's holdings and partner with Jules Quesnel. The two Canadian partners eventually bought out St. George entirely.<sup>130</sup> From the negotiations between Kingston merchant, Macaulay, and a former clerk, it becomes evident that a partnership was the expected result of faithful clerking.

I received your last friendly letter . . . Twas very candid - but the idea of again becoming tied for any

(129) W.W. Baldwin to Q. St. George, May 13, 1819. W.W. Baldwin Papers.

(130) T.W. Acheson, "John Baldwin: Portrait of a Colonial Entrepreneur", Ontario History, September 1969, volume 61, no. 3, pp.153-166.



length of time to the Service of the Shop, without some flattering prospect of ultimately reaping the benefit of so long a servitude, was unwelcome. 131

The clerk's present employers had offered that "flattering prospect" of becoming a partner after two years of managing their store at Fort Covington. However, he did not rest complete confidence on his employers, as he (and apparently others) had been disappointed before. "If the end prove unfortunate, I'm determin'd never again to court a jade by whom so many poor mortals have been jilted."<sup>132</sup> While partnership was a common expectation of clerks, it was perhaps not as commonly fulfilled.

Manufacturers, or large scale investors, generally were seen in a better light than shop-keepers and merchants. The capitalist was seen as possessing "a proper enterprizing spirit" which benefited "the public good". This attitude is evident in the Assembly debates over bills to encourage steam boat building and paper mills.

. . . Nothing could be more proper than to encourage such persons as the Proprietors of the Steam Boat Frontenac, who had expended so much capital for the public good and convenience. 133

Even the bills' opponents lauded the work of the capitalists, declaring they would "be happy to encourage all enterprize".<sup>134</sup> The capitalist was a public benefactor in creating employment, reducing the costs

(131) Nelson Cozens to John Macaulay, April 11, 1824, Macaulay Papers. On the progress of another clerk; see Colonial Advocate, June 10, 1824 and Constitution, February 8, 1837.

(132) Ibid.

(133) York Weekly Post, March 8, 1821; March 15, 1821, See also, Colonial Advocate, July 4, 1833.

(134) Ibid.

to other citizens (by ending the need to buy expensive foreign goods), and, more generally for turning "the wilderness into civilization".<sup>135</sup>

William Lyon Mackenzie wrote,

Mr. Richard Woodruff, an opulent merchant of St. Davids . . . is building a steam mill on a large scale . . . It is a sincere pleasure to us to record instances like this of Canadian enterprise and public spirit. 136

The Christian Guardian lauded the efforts of William Hamilton Merritt to bring the Welland Canal into operation.

Mr. Merritt has been unwearied in his exertions in devising means "to unlock the resources of the country", and it is earnestly to be wished that his expectations may yet be realized. 137

It later welcomed news of prospective railways, saying they would benefit the "public good" as well as the owners' private interests.<sup>138</sup>

William Dunlop noted that a hemp mill had been constructed by "one enterprising and public-spirited gentleman".<sup>139</sup> The Patriot warmly commended the businessmen responsible for the Niagara Dock Company.

We have seen with pleasure and surprise, this noble work, which has been effected by a private company consisting of only a few individuals, whose spirit of enterprise is beyond all praise. 140

The manufacturer, then was definitely high on the capital scale ("an

(135) Weekly Register, November 27, 1823. See also Colonial Advocate, October 21, 1824; September 30, 1824. "Draft Bill . . ." n.d. (1821) Macaulay Papers.

(136) Colonial Advocate, June 3, 1824. See also July 1, 1824.

(137) Christian Guardian, February 13, 1830.

(138) Christian Guardian, August 26, 1835.

(139) Dunlop, op. cit., p.129.

(140) Patriot, July 10, 1835.

opulent merchant"), but more than that he was considered to be a public benefactor for risking that capital in a manufacturing venture, unlike the more pedestrian merchant.

That hierarchy of commercial respectability, from pedlar to capitalist, was disturbed by the intrusion of a new form of business organization in the 1820's -- the limited liability corporation. The shop-keepers, inn-keepers, millers, merchants and manufacturers all controlled their property directly, by simple ownership, by partnership, or - rarely - by a joint stock company. Another form of association emerged in Upper Canada after the War of 1812 - the chartered corporation. It was created by a political act, since the charter had to be legislated. It limited the liability of each of its investors to the amount each had invested. The outstanding early examples were the Bank of Upper Canada (1821-1822), the Welland Canal Company (1825), the Cataraqui Bridge Company (1827), and chartered from Britain, the Canada Land Company (1826).

Corporations were centers of controversy. The well known opposition of William Lyon Mackenzie to all forms of chartered corporations needs no extensive discussion.<sup>141</sup> Other critics of the provincial executive were hostile toward corporations as tools of that executive, designed to foster monopoly.<sup>142</sup> But, even the allies of the executive

(141) L.J. Gates, "The Decided Policy of William Lyon Mackenzie", Canadian Historical Review, volume 40, number 3, 1959, p.198. Colonial Advocate, December 16, 1824; August 8, 1827; June 26, 1828; August 1, 1833; Constitution, November 15, 1837.

(142) Upper Canada Herald, February 13, 1827. Canadian Freeman, January 17, 1828. C.L. Vaughn, "The Bank of Upper Canada in Politics, 1817-1840", Ontario History, volume 60, number 4, 1968, pp.189, 192.

circle shared misgivings about the new form of business organization. Both John Beverley Robinson and John Strachan initially reacted against the Canada Company. Robinson saw it as a ruthless, money-making venture without restraint.

. . . All that is to be apprehended now is that they will expend as little capital in the Country as they can - introduce Yankey settlers - and endeavour to force [?] and exact an influence with the people and the legislature in opposition to the Gov't. - . 143

As more banks were chartered in the 1830's, many who opposed his politics began to echo Mackenzie's fears of "paper money". Ann Macaulay wrote to her son, a high official at Toronto, ". . . Lands are safer than Banks to invest money in these precarious times . . ."144 Even John Strachan grew to fear the rapacity of the Bank of Upper Canada with which he had been closely associated.

. . . I cannot conceal from myself that there has been in many respects a want of liberality in the Institution here - Had the present branch been established three or even two years ago at Kingston we should never have been troubled with the Commercial bank - the bonuses too which ought to have been kept to meet times of difficulty have excited envy and given strength to the cry of Monopoly - add to this the worst of all the rapacity of their Law Agent. - 145

Given such a broad feeling of distrust and suspicion of corporations,

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- (143) J.B. Robinson to John Macaulay, July 29, 1826. Macaulay Papers.  
 (144) Ann Macaulay to John Macaulay, November 6, 1837; T.A. Stayner to John Macaulay, May 14, 1836, Macaulay Papers.  
 (145) John Strachan to John Macaulay, February 28, 1831; John Strachan to John Macaulay, May 3, 1831. Macaulay Papers.

it is to be expected some wanted to place limits on the new business form.

Attempts at political control of corporations came naturally as they were political creations. William Lyon Mackenzie's lonely but fierce attacks on the idea of limited liability won few converts outside his own immediate followers.<sup>146</sup> That principle had gained general assent as necessary to accumulate the capital needed for certain projects. But critics of corporations attempted to exercise some control over them by certain clauses in their charters. These might require the corporation to operate with its accounts open to the public, or to limit its profits in some way. Marshall Spring Bidwell attempted to amend the Cataraqui Bridge Company charter to limit its profits to 25%.

The Legislature should guard not only the right of a company incorporated with exclusive privileges, but also the rights and interests of the rest of the community. . . . The Legislature should never incorporate a company with powers and for purposes of a pecuniary nature, and especially with authority to levy taxes upon the community, in the form of tolls, without requiring periodical statements of their expenditures and income. 147

The problem with this attitude was that it effectively deterred many investors from committing themselves to the corporation. The Kingston Chronicle commented,

Who, indeed, would become a stockholder in a bank, the whole transactions of which might be rendered

(146) Gates, "Decided Policy", op. cit., p.193.

(147) Upper Canada Herald, February 13, 1827.

the subject of public scrutiny and debate in Parliament at anytime when a majority, inimical to the Institution, might move for an inquiry? A certain degree of privacy is undoubtedly as necessary for the management of the affairs of a Bank as of any other establishment of a commercial nature . . . . 148

In the long run the desire for economic expansion and the attendant need for capital accumulation on a large scale to develop transportation and resources compelled the acceptance of the limited liability chartered company. The failure of the political attempts to control the corporations left their managers to run their affairs and work out the problems of the new type of organization by themselves.

As a new form of business organization, the corporation was drawn toward conflicting older models of operation as it sought to find its own way. For those corporations which had close connections with the inner circle of the executive and legislative councils, the obvious model for operation was that of government. Consequently in promotions of corporate employees, political connections on the model of government patronage competed with the claims of merit. John Macaulay wrote to the Bank of Upper Canada president, William Allan, to oppose the appointment of a Brockville agent from one of the prominent local families.

- In fact these good folks seem to wish to engross all the offices - I hope however the Bank will not forget in its appointments, its own subordinate officers - the young men trained up in its own business - They certainly have claims for advancement, when appointments are made, and it is clearly

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(148) Kingston Chronicle, May 14, 1819.

in the interest of the Bank to act on this principle

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Here the bank, in the mind of one of its officers, struggles to emerge as a separate entity from the government which created it. The bank had its own interest (developing and rewarding a trained staff) and its own criteria of promotions (efficiency). In a similar way, corporations had to develop an identity separate from those of their employees. The model of the independent owner with complete discretion over his own property led some employees to deal irresponsibly with corporate funds, and some stockholders to attempt private direction of corporate employees. William Allan, as Commissioner of the Canada Land Company, wrote to his board of directors to justify the claims made against the Company by a merchant from the time of his predecessor, John Galt.

. . . He furnished certain articles under orders from diffr. clerks - which he proved was [sic] Sanctioned by Mr. Galt at that time - such was the loose manner business was done - and such was the description of some of the Clerks then employed they had it in their Power to order things under the Head of being for the Company when in fact it was for there [sic] own private concern. - 150

Not only did employees need to learn the difference between what was their's and what was the corporation's, some stockholders needed that lesson too. John Macaulay as Agent for the Bank of Upper Canada at

- (149) John Macaulay to William Allan, March 26, 1832; same to same, August 18, 1834; same to same, August 19, 1834. Allan Papers.
- (150) William Allan to the Governor of the Canada Company, et. al., May 15, 1830; same to same, October 19, 1829; same to same, December 5, 1829, Allan Papers.

Kingston, found himself buffeted by messages from the Cashier at York as well as private letters seeking to influence him, from certain directors. As Bank president, Allan moved to close off these unauthorized channels of attempted authority by making one line sovereign. ". . . In future, nothing is to be considered as coming from the Bank, unless it is officially sent as an Extract from the Minutes - ."151 Each corporation had to develop its own identity apart from the government which created it, the stockholders who funded it and the employees who did the work.

How did the corporation affect the commercial hierarchy? Its clerks obviously had no hope of becoming partners. Since the clerks often worked under the direct supervision of a manager, they were not expected to have the same qualities as the merchant house clerk.

William Allan set out his requirements in hiring clerks for the Canada Company:

Any young Man, that could be well recommended (and not only that but by experience was known ) to be well evinced in Keeping Books, and above all wrote a good, fair, and ledgible [sic] hand . . . . 152

The need for a careful manager had been replaced by a need for good penmanship. The limit of the corporate clerk's ambition was to become the manager of a separate branch. In other words, the end of the corporate clerk's ambitions was what the merchant house clerk already had.

(151) William Allan to John Macaulay, November 6, 1823; same to same, September 2, 1833, Macaulay Papers.

(152) William Allan to Messrs: Hart Logan and Co., August 11, 1831. Allan Papers.



Although the stockholder had the same function in principle as the manufacturer - that of capitalist - he did not share the same prestige. Each individual's investment was small. The total wealth of the corporation did not associate with any particular stockholder. Moreover, by the principle of limited liability, none of these investors stood any "heroic risk". Instead they were definitely perceived as deploying their money for private gain not the public good.

The Directors of the Bank of Upper Canada here are altogether to blame if they have excited the cupidity of the whole Province by their high Dividends and bonuses - instead of keeping a large reserve of Profits as a refuge in case of loss and their greed is such for I call it nothing else that they would not apply for an increase of Capital till the whole amount of former Stock was paid in. 153

That frank recognition of the paramount role of private interest deprived the corporate stockholder of the prestige of the capitalist-manufacturer.

Those responsible for managing the affairs of the corporation stood to gain some prestige by the association, but it was of necessity a temporary status. The directors and chief executive officer of a corporation were subject to election. Consequently they could lose their positions every few years. Even when they did not, people could

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(153) John Strachan to John Macaulay, May 3, 1831, Macaulay Papers.  
See also Weekly Register, June 24, 1824.

speculate that they would, or even attempt to remove them.<sup>154</sup> Consequently the prestige of the corporation's capital did not settle on any one person or group. In fact as well as in law, the charter called into existence a new person, in whose shadow lived all those who worked with it.

The world of commerce had its distinct hierarchy of status. The primary criterion for distinguishing the levels was the amount of capital possessed or controlled. The pedlar and the tavern-keeper were on the bottom since they had the least possible stock necessary to go into business at all. Their inferior status was reinforced by other factors -- transiency in the pedlar's case and association with the more disreputable aspects of the liquor trade in the tavern-keeper's. The small scale shop- and inn-keepers and miller possessed the minimum capital of around £200 to £500 to begin a "respectable business". These hoped to see their investment grow through expansion into other activities, and then into other settlements. To manage the extensive holdings of the prosperous merchant, clerks of considerable ability were necessary. As the most well-to-do merchants began to invest in

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(154) C.L.C. Allinson, "John Galt", OHSFR, volume 30, number 4, fall 1934, pp.44-46. John Galt, The Literary Life and Miscellanies of John Galt, William Blackwood, Edinburgh, 1834, volume 2, pp. 38-39. T.W. Acheson, "John S. Baldwin", op. cit., pp.159-60. T.W. Acheson, "The Nature and Structure of Youth Commerce", op. cit., pp.423-25. Vaughn, op. cit., pp.192-3. William Allan to John Macaulay, April 12, 1830; same to same, June 9, 1835, Macaulay Papers.

larger scale undertakings, they assumed the prestige of capitalists, spear-heading economic development in the colony. That hierarchy first began to experience some erosion in 1815-1840 with the evolution of the first chartered corporations. These simultaneously diminished the prestige of the investor and the opportunities and prestige of clerks. The cross reference to these horizontally ranked levels with the other employment hierarchies will be taken up briefly in the conclusion and more fully in Chapter Five.

### Government Services

In considering occupational status in government service, any attempt to establish a hierarchy is complicated by the fact that a person's primary attribution of status may not have come from the job. Government positions in the main were filled by appointment, usually of the lieutenant governor, on the recommendation of some one in the governor's confidence. There were no competitions, and seldom any interviews. People quite openly campaigned for appointments for their friends and relatives as well as themselves.<sup>155</sup> A government appointment - even part-time - would augment a person's status, but seldom by itself define it. The job one got often depended on one's status (as expressed in terms of connections), rather than one's status depending on the job.

Part time offices were highly valued for the status they gave, in terms of added authority or income, and as evidence of official favour. The young John Strachan noted the passion for official place and the motives behind it.

An Honourary degree . . . would be of great service to me here, for altho' there are no distinctions of

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(155) As examples see the following: C.A. Hagerman to John Macaulay, September 10, 1821; John Strachan to John Macaulay, December 4, 1828; Macaulay Papers. John Strachan to Dr. James Brown, October 20, 1829; Strachan Papers. John Strachan to Hon. John Richardson, May 29, 1814; "Extract of a Letter to the Priest", September 25, 1815; John Strachan to Lt. Col. Nicol, May 3, 1819, Spragge, op. cit., pp.64, 92, 191. William B. McVity to W.W. Baldwin, July 31, 1841; same to same, January 22, 1848, W.W. Baldwin Papers. Richard Bullock to William Allan, September 14, 1836, Allan Papers.

rank in this country, no people are so fond of them. If a fellow gets a commission in the Militia however low he will not speak to you under the title of Captain. Squires and Colonels we have without number - the same pervades persons of sense, from custom . . . , 156

Fifteen years later a young William Lyon Mackenzie observed the same phenomenon, in examining one of his opponents in Ancaster. ". . .

Mr. Loder is a very rich man; and he doubtless would like a little brief authority as a magistrate, or as a colonel."<sup>157</sup> However, there could come a point when the penny was worth more than the whistle.

Dr. W.W. Baldwin resigned as District Court Judge which had yielded him only \$10 to \$12 a year, when the Legislature required all such judges to curtail their law practice.<sup>158</sup> That incident gives an indication of the secondary role of the government appointment compared to Baldwin's primary commitment to practice law, from which his occupational status derived.

The variety of part-time appointments that the government made included three rather different types. There were some that were not only without any salary, but entailed expense on the appointee. An example would have been militia commissions. A militia officer had to maintain a certain uniform and equipment, but received no pay unless on active duty. John Scott of Waterloo township as militia surgeon had to

(156) John Strachan to Dr. Brown, October 9, 1808, Strachan Papers. Howison, op. cit., pp.188-189.

(157) Colonial Advocate, September 2, 1824. See also Colonial Advocate, August 26, 1824.

(158) W.W. Baldwin to President Smith, June 15, 1818, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

spend \$15 on his uniform and accoutrements.<sup>159</sup> The appointments were coveted nonetheless for the additional status which they conferred.<sup>160</sup> Secondly there were positions that had some small revenue attached to them, such as Justice of the Peace, local post offices, and small customs houses. While the importance of some cash income is not to be dismissed, these were sought primarily for their status as badges both of social and political respectability. Finally there were some appointments that offered substantial earnings. While episodic and occasionally deferred, the surveyor's contract could ultimately produce a rich return. The customs collectorship of a large, busy port could offer a comfortable livelihood.<sup>161</sup> With these economic benefits ranked on a par with the social and political benefits.

Such part-time appointments had greater significance away from the large towns. In small communities, some evidence of government favour, even in the unremunerative militia commission or grand jury duty could

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(159) John Scott to George Redford, September 18, 1840, Redford Papers.

(160) See for example, L.P. Sherwood to Col. Coffin, January 22, 1816; Petition of Thomas Mears, Philo Hall, et. al., January 1, 1821, UCS. Jeff Scott to Charles Jones, May 1, 1823; N. Coffin to Charles Jones, October 15, 1823; O.R. Gowan to Charles Jones, July 15, 1832; J.S. Schofield to Charles Jones, December 19, 1837; J.K. Hartwell to Charles Jones, August 20, 1838, Charles Jones Papers. John Macaulay to Col. Coffin, June 20, 1821; J.M. Strachan to John Macaulay, February 10, 1838, Macaulay Papers. Upper Canada Herald, March 16, 1831.

(161) John Macaulay to J.B. Robinson, July 1828; John Macaulay to George Hillier, July 11, 1828; John Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, March 16, 1837; same to same, September 30, 1838, Macaulay Papers.

be a substantial boost to a person's social standing. As noted previously, the economic benefits of even minor fees ought not to be underestimated. The village merchant who became the local postmaster or customs officer found business naturally gravitated to his store, drawn by the need for government services. In a time when almost all the population lived in small communities, away from the towns, the importance of the multitude of part-time offices must be justly estimated. They played a vital part in augmenting or registering the social status of successful applicants.

To construct an occupational hierarchy within government service we must narrow the occupations considered to those full-time jobs which were the holder's primary source of status. Even these jobs, in an era of unfettered executive discretion in appointments, would have had an element of patronage involved. That is, no one was likely to get any government job without some connections, i.e. some pre-job status.<sup>162</sup> Within the structure of an occupational hierarchy, that factor can be recognized as one of the differentials determining status.

The most tangible differential in government service was the formal hierarchy of various ranks. For a senior clerk in a government department that position determined both salary and responsibilities. That hierarchy allows us to describe the structure of government departments in general. A similar structure in the court system serves a

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(162) John Macaulay to John Kirby, September 29, 1837, Macaulay Papers. In a similar vein, see John Strachan to Archbishop Whately, September 24, 1832, Good, op. cit., p.307 and Moodie, Roughing, op. cit., pp.54, 144.

similar function. While the differential of connections may have been paramount for a given individual's status, the formal hierarchy of rank set the status of most persons in government service.

The judicial system consisted of a hierarchy of courts. The persons who presided over those courts or worked for them naturally found their status largely determined by that hierarchy. The part-time Justices of the Peace, sitting either as a Court of Requests, or as Quarter Session, with their attendant Clerk of the Peace were at the bottom of the scale. They were part-time, usually chosen without regard for any legal training, and had very limited jurisdiction. When the lay J.P.'s were replaced in 1841 by a single district court judge forming a Court of Requests, his salary was set at £100 to £200, and the Clerk of the Peace got £20-£100.<sup>163</sup> Above the lowly J.P.'s were the District Court Judges whose court had a jurisdiction up to £40 (except where the title of land was in question). By the 1841 Act reorganizing the court system, district judges were to receive salaries from £150 to £500. Their clerks got £70 - £190. Only barristers were eligible for appointment to the district bench.<sup>164</sup> The province's high court was the Court of King's Bench whose justices received £1,100 a year.<sup>165</sup> From its ranks the governor often drew his closest legal

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(163) Riddell, The Courts, op. cit., volume 2, chapter 10.

(164) Ibid., chapter 9.

(165) Ibid., chapter 11.



advisor.<sup>166</sup>

The government departments show a similar straightforward ranking. At the bottom were door-keepers and office messengers. These people were in fact servants to those who worked in higher ranks in the government departments, and were paid top servant's wages (£22 10s - £25). Next in line were the various clerks, who as their rank and responsibilities increased were paid higher wages: junior clerk (£125 - £150), senior or first clerk (£166 - £182), and the chief clerk sometimes listed as the assistant to the department head (£200 - £280). The department heads who were responsible for the management of their staff received salaries varying from the Adjutant General (who would usually have been drawing an army pension) at £364 to the Surveyor General, who headed the largest department, at £600.<sup>167</sup> At the peak of the government hierarchy was the governor's Executive Council whose members received a salary of £100 (in addition to whatever other official salary they might have had), and security of tenure "during good behaviour" until 1839.<sup>168</sup> The hierarchy of government service by its clear

(166) Riddell, The Courts, op. cit., ch.7. J. Strachan to W.D. Powell, August 18, 1817; same to same, December 23, 1817; Spragge, op. cit., pp.134, 149-150. "Notice of the progress of William Dummer Powell, Chief Justice of the Province of Upper Canada", (n.d.) Jarvis-Powell Papers. pp.57-60. John Strachan to J.B. Robinson, February 29, 1816, J.B. Robinson Papers.

(167) Appendix to the Journals of the House of Assembly of Upper Canada, 1828, "Public Accounts"; Appendix to the Journals of the House of Assembly of Upper Canada, 1829, "Public Accounts"; J. Joseph to John Macaulay, October 3, 1836, Macaulay Papers.

(168) John Strachan to John Macaulay, February 8, 1836; John Macaulay to J. Joseph, October 6, 1836; John Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, February 18, 1841, Macaulay Papers.

relation of duties to salary provides a ready guide to enable us to compare it with the other occupational status hierarchies previously examined.

### Conclusion

The three employment hierarchies in this chapter, contain within them a series of occupations. These can be sorted into horizontal scales of status, within professional occupations, between various commercial activities, and through the formal structures of government departments. The distinction between levels is made through differentials which contemporaries applied to the status of each other.

The professional hierarchy included those who preached, healed, sued, taught, and perhaps, surveyed. Distinctions between levels of those various professions were based on education, ability, certification and residency. The part each of these played varied from one occupation to another, although education was always the key.

The primary differential in the commercial hierarchy was the amount of capital one could command. For the lower level, subsidiary factors of residency and the taint of the seedier portion of the liquor trade also entered into considerations of social ranking. At the top, the wealthy merchant shaded into the capitalist, when he benevolently invested in large scale development activities. However the emergence of the chartered corporation tended to eclipse the extra status of the capitalist by diminishing the element of "heroic risk".

Government service operated mainly to enhance already existing

social status. That was particularly the case with the great number of part-time positions located away from larger towns. Among the full-time public employees, the government's departmental (or court) structure largely determined the ranking of various positions. Political connections and the formal structure stood as the primary differentials in allocating status amongst those in public employment.

These three hierarchies stand in sharp contrast to the two examined in the previous chapter. Farming and manual labour spanned the social scale from the Dependent level to the Marginal Respectable and Respectable levels. However most of the people in those two hierarchies were struggling towards or holding Independence. A small minority of each endeavoured to extend beyond that towards Respectability. In the three groups here considered, almost all began at the Independent level (the exception being the few servants in government service and common school teachers). Most of the occupations and types of business lent those in them some claim to Respectability. Education, capital, or "the indefinable attributes of a gentleman", lifted most of those in the professional, commercial and government service hierarchies, not only beyond the necessity of manual labour to earn a living, but into the topmost end of Upper Canada's social scale.<sup>169</sup>

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(169) Cross, "Shiners' War", op. cit., p.109.

CHAPTER 4

THE STATUS OF WOMEN

The status of a female person and the roles which she could take in Upper Canadian society were severely circumscribed by the fact that she was a woman. Most were by the customary role of wife placed outside the occupational status hierarchy. They were linked to it only tenuously through the husband's standing. Those women who did seek to earn their own livelihood found their opportunities sharply circumscribed by attitudes toward their sex.

Weak intellect and an unstable frivolous attitude characterized women in the common mind. Their status in popular opinion, and often in law, was near to that of children - dependent persons, frequently not responsible for their own conduct. Yet somehow they were also taken to be the moral guardians of the family, especially the children. Indeed women's roles were almost wholly confined to the family. Marriage and child-rearing stood as a woman's destiny. Even when women did find employment outside of marriage, these jobs were only analogous extensions of the wife-mother role. That view of women - as far as the written record shows - was accepted by most women, with a few notable though partial exceptions. Since women constituted just under half of the Upper Canadian population, it is necessary to examine the commonly held picture of women's nature, and the status and roles which that picture allowed women to have.

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William Lyon Mackenzie reprinted an article in his Colonial Advocate, entitled "Rules for a Young Lady". Among other instructions, the piece counselled caution in reading, lest the young lady strain her mind with "heavy thoughts".<sup>1</sup>

The Weekly Register reprinted in a short item from "a London paper" which ridiculed "Ladies who seek after learning". The studies specified were chemistry, geography and algebra.<sup>2</sup> Upper Canadians did provide some education for their daughters, especially when they aimed at respectability.<sup>3</sup> However it was education of a particular sort. Mackenzie described the school set up by Quaker dissidents north of York "for the instruction of young females in knitting, sewing and spinning".<sup>4</sup> Some admixture of elementary subjects was more usual. Thus Mrs. Bickerton's "Boarding School for Young Ladies at Bath" had a much lengthier curriculum.

Grammar, Geography, History, Writing, Arithmetic, Music, French, Drawing, Landscape, Velvet and Oil Painting, Embroidery, and a variety of fashionable and ornamental works.<sup>5</sup>

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- (1) Colonial Advocate, April 21, 1831. See also Mackenzie's Weekly Message, July 28, 1853.
  - (2) Weekly Register, November 6, 1823.
  - (3) See for example, Christian Guardian, December 4, 1830; Patriot, June 13, 1834; January 5, 1838; January 1, 1839.
  - (4) Colonial Advocate, September 13, 1828.
  - (5) Upper Canada Herald, May 4, 1834.

That emphasis on the "fashionable and ornamental" was a continuing theme in advertisements for female schools.<sup>6</sup> The most advanced education that a woman could receive placed the greatest stress on social skills and graces rather than academic content.

Women's presumed lack of intelligence was thought to be compounded by their instability. After the American armed forces withdrew from their raid on York, John Strachan wrote to a Montreal correspondent, "We are now quiet and the Ladies are recovering from their terrors."<sup>7</sup> But women's excitable nature was not just a charming weakness that called for male protection. It posed a social danger to a critical institution - marriage. Women appeared likely to be led into error from inconsequential reasons. They could be charmed by a uniform, no matter how unfit for marriage the man in it might be.<sup>8</sup> Even a woman of "taste and sense" could be deceived into marrying a "brute".<sup>9</sup> A woman's instability could also be a trap to men. S.P. Jarvis recounted an incident in which he felt threatened by the eccentric behaviour of Mrs. Widmer.

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(6) Patriot, June 13, 1834; January 5, 1838 and January 1, 1839.

(7) John Strachan to John Richardson, May 10, 1813, Spragge, op. cit., p.37.

(8) H.W. Wilkinson to John Macaulay, May 3, 1808; John Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, November 10, 1837, Macaulay Papers. See also Isaac Swazie to General Drummond, May 6, 1815, UCS.

(9) H.M. Herchmer to John Macaulay, November 13, 1835, Macaulay Papers.

I cannot repeat half of what she said; and to tell you the truth, I was afraid, ugly as she is, to lead her on too far as you may imagine knowing my strict principles of morality when I describe to you her dress . . . As she sat between me and the window she might almost as well have been naked. I at last began to feel uncomfortable, lest Widmer should come home . . . . 10

Women's inability to make sensible decisions in such a crucial area as marriage made their instability of character a social problem as much as a personal danger.

Given the view of women outlined it comes as no surprise to find that women were not held responsible for their actions in certain instances. Chief Justice William Campbell gave the following charge to a grand jury, respecting a husband and wife accused of larceny.

Should the wife have participated in this crime with the knowledge of, and under the control of her Husband; it will be your duty to find no Bill against her; but if it appear that she was the sole and uncontrolled actor in the felony, she must bear the consequence of her own guilt. 11

Here a woman acting with her husband (according to the charge made) is assumed to be 'his creature'. She can only be held responsible if she is proved "the sole and uncontrolled actor". There could have been no suggestion that he might have been under her control, not was there admitted the possibility that both could have willed the criminal act equally. In part that assumption followed from the view of women as not responsible, and in part from the perhaps paradoxical conviction

(10) S.P.Jarvis to Mrs S.P.Jarvis, November 21, 1823, Jarvis-Powell Papers.

(11) United Empire Loyalist, October 21, 1826.



that they were more moral than men - or at least more innocent of evil.<sup>12</sup>

While the family and children stood as the focus of a woman's life, she could be regarded as incompetent even in that sphere. M.S. Bidwell's Guardian Bill of 1827 proposed that a judge be enabled to appoint legal guardians for children upon the death of their father.<sup>13</sup> Indeed women themselves could be viewed as almost children. John Macaulay wrote to his mother, advising her against purchasing his wife - a woman of middle age - a frivolous watch.<sup>14</sup> This is the more striking, as in other instances, Macaulay showed deference to his wife 'in her proper sphere'.<sup>15</sup>

If a wife could be seen as a child, she could also be relegated to an even lower level. The Canadian Freeman, in telling the tale of an elopement, described the bridegroom - a servant - as boldly claiming "his property" when the parents resisted.<sup>16</sup> The censorious E.A. Talbot claimed that,

. . . particularly in the new settlements, the demand for women is so great, that the father of what is termed a spry lass frequently sells her to the highest bidder, and sometimes obtains for her a valuable compensation. <sup>17</sup>

(12) For example see Moodie, Life, op. cit., p.157.

(13) Upper Canada Herald, March 27, 1827.

(14) John Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, May 17, 1838, Macaulay Papers.

(15) John Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, September 22, 1837, Macaulay Papers.  
John Macaulay to W. Allan, October 15, 1836, Allan Papers.

(16) Canadian Freeman, April 17, 1828. Colonial Advocate, September 2, 1824.

(17) Talbot, op. cit., volume 2, p.33.

Talbot then says that this practice is not general. Women consider themselves independent at the age of eighteen.

But until she is eighteen years old, she is considered by the father as his bona fide property, and he seldom consents to her union with any man, excepting under circumstances like those to which I have alluded. 17

Regardless of how one reconciles his first statement that this is not general to his second of "he seldom consents", Talbot was evidently observing something which did take place. If women's legal status was comparable in some ways to that of children, in certain circumstances custom over-rode even these few rights.

The view of women which has been outlined was one apparently generally shared by women themselves. It could be argued that some of the self-deprecating references used by women, especially those in letters to men, were attempts to manipulate the image of women to their own advantage. While there may indeed have been an element of that, the weight of the admittedly fragmentary evidence supports the contention that most women who have left evidence shared the common view.<sup>18</sup>

The most extensive reflections, from one who settled in Upper Canada, on the relative status of men and women are found in the writings of Susanna Moodie. These tend to confirm the composite picture of

(17) Talbot, op. cit., volume 2, p.33.

(18) As examples see: Mary Elmsley to Alexander Wood, December 6, 1811; Wood Papers. Margaret Powell to W.D. Powell, January 31, 1807; Jarvis-Powell Papers. Ann C. Macaulay to John Macaulay, September 21, 1833; Maria Herchmer to John Macaulay, October 14, 1835; Maria Herchmer to John Macaulay, November 15, 1835, Macaulay Papers. See also Robert Keate to D. Wright, April 14, 1819, UCS. Alexander Durean to W.W. Baldwin, August 16, 1841, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

women's self-image drawn from incidental references in correspondence.

In her earlier, more personal, Roughing it in the Bush, she reacted in despair to her husband's breaking his leg.

. . . When I saw him on whom we all depended for subsistence, and whose kindly voice ever cheered us under the pressure of calamity, smitten down helpless, all my courage and faith in the goodness of the Divine Father seemed to forsake me, and I wept long and bitterly. 19

In Life in the Clearings she took a more reflective view of the colony, noting its matured state. She began this account with a plea for special consideration as a woman writer.

Allow me a woman's privilege of talking of all sorts of things by the way. Should I tire you with desultory mode of conversation, bear with me charitably, and take into account the infirmities incidental to my gossiping sex and age. 20

She mentions the "political changes in the colony", and the expansion of public services. But then she demurs.

As a woman, I cannot enter into the philosophy of these things, nor is it my intention to do so. I leave statistics for wiser and cleverer male heads. But even as a woman, I cannot help rejoicing in the beneficial effects that these changes have wrought in the land of my adoption. 21

She disavowed any intention of supplying the "commercial calculations and statistical details" of most books on Canada.

Women make good use of their eyes and ears, and paint scenes that amuse or strike their fancy with toler-

(19) Moodie, Roughing, op. cit., p.207.

(20) Moodie, Life, op. cit., p.4.

(21) Ibid., p.38.

able accuracy; but it requires the strong-thinking heart of a man to anticipate events, and trace results from particular causes. Women are out of their element when they attempt to speculate upon these abstruse matters - are apt to incline too strongly to their own opinions - and jump at conclusions which are either false or unsatisfactory. 22

Moodie saw herself wholly dependent upon the male. Not only was this an economic and emotional dependence on her husband, but a wider reliance on "wiser and cleverer male heads", "the strong-thinking heart of a man". Against this she would not rely on her own "desultory mode of conversation", her "fancy" or opinions. Both from incidental references and the more carefully thought through views of Susanna Moodie, it appears that women in Upper Canada had largely internalized the image of having weak intellects and unstable characters.

A certain contrast can be made between the views of Moodie and others, and the account of Anna Jameson, wife of the Attorney-General. Resident only a brief time, Jameson's perspective was more that of a traveller than an emigrant, as she was herself aware.<sup>23</sup> Unlike Moodie, she held women to be competent to deal in public affairs, when well informed.

I am not one of those who opine sagely, that women have nothing to do with politics. On the contrary; but I do seriously think that no one, be it a man or woman ought to talk, much less write on what they do not understand. 24

(22) Ibid., pp.207-208.

(23) Jameson, op. cit., volume 2, p.102.

(24) Ibid., volume 1, p.104; see also p.ix and volume 2, p.100.

In her literary commentaries, she set out her views of women's character. She opposed the idea of women as solely passive, of patient suffering as the highest female virtue. She described Goethe, like Lord Byron, as "a little of the bashaw persuasion". "I think it a proof that if he did not understand or like the active heroism of Amazonian ladies, he had a very sublime view of the passive heroism of female nature."<sup>25</sup> The root of this view lay in men's preferred attitude toward women as dependents to be protected, rather than persons to be respected. Of the character "Phaon", she wrote, "His first love is the woman to whom he does homage; his second, the woman to whom he gives protection. Nothing can be more natural: it is the common course of things."<sup>26</sup> At the same time she perceived and regretted that women were living by these codes. Her comment on one of Sternberg's heroines was, "The more fool she!", I thought . . . 'to die for the sake of a man who was not worth living for!' but 'tis a way we have."<sup>27</sup> Her strong, continuing interest in women's status led to a closer critical examination of Upper Canadian women's place than any other account.<sup>28</sup> In particular, she looked for strong women taking an active part in their communities such as the mulatto woman who headed the resistance to deporting an escaped slave at Niagara and the Indian women who had become warriors and chiefs.<sup>29</sup>

(25) Ibid., volume 1, p.125.

(26) Ibid., volume 1, p.287.

(27) Ibid., volume 2, p.20.

(28) Ibid., volume 2, pp.65-66.

(29) Ibid., volume 2, pp.45-47; volume 3, pp.77-80.

In her observations and conversations on women's place in marriage, Jameson was perplexed at the continuing failure of marriage in the new and more equitable social setting.<sup>30</sup> She concluded that there was an inequality at the root of relations between men and women which continued to plague marriage as an institution even in the midst of material equality.<sup>31</sup> The isolation in which that fundamental critique of women's status and marriage existed serves to emphasize the homogeneity of the consensus, best articulated by Moodie.

What was the woman's role within marriage? She was the household manager.

Her eye must be everywhere in her own proper sphere; her authority everywhere in her retired dominion; her hand on every spring in all the departments of domestic labour. And a cheerful submission to the incessant watchfulness and care, constitutes one of the prominent excellencies of her character. 32

Even on the farm, the wife's principal concern was the household. Adam Fergusson, an observant traveller, recounted one Scottish settler's grievance against native-born women's reluctance to do any regular field work.<sup>33</sup> Within "her retired dominion", she could act with considerable autonomy. John Macaulay deferred to his wife in hiring servants (even when it meant considerable delay) and in choosing a place to live. He wrote to his business colleague, William Allan,

(30) Ibid., volume 3, p.10-11.

(31) Ibid., volume 3, p.14.

(32) Christian Guardian, November 2, 1829.

(33) Fergusson, op. cit., p.132; see also p.234, and Talbot, op. cit., volume 2, p.49.

about moving to Toronto.

- I must leave a good deal to my wife, who is anxious for a healthy part of town - She has heard such accounts of the dangers which children encounter in Toronto from measles, scarlet fever and other ills that infant flesh is heir to, that I should not venture to engage any premises, unless "by and with the advice and consent" - I am bold enough to suppose that Mrs. Allan will approve of this course. 34

The wife's absence or incapacity occasioned worries about the husband's inability to manage the house, and the need for some wife-substitute in the form of a female relative or authoritative, honest servant.<sup>35</sup>

Rev. Mark Y. Stark, in describing his fiancée to his mother, assured her:

. . . Although once living in wealth she has been educated in habits of the strictest moderation and economy and is qualified both to direct and assist in the care of the household concerns - . 36

Yet while the wife could manage the operation of the household, this did not imply any general part in the family finances, or even a knowledge of such finances. Rev. William Macaulay of Hallowell experienced frequent financial difficulties. Archdeacon John Strachan, seeking to end these embarrassments, advised that his wife be told about them. Perhaps she then could influence William to be more prudent.

(34) John Macaulay to Wm. Allan, October 19, 1836, Allan Papers.

(35) Ann C. Macaulay to John Macaulay, December 5, 1838; same to same, May 7, 1840, Macaulay Papers.

(36) M.Y. Stark to Mrs. Stark, May 14, 1835, Stark Papers.

Were the state of his affairs, debts and resources explained to his wife and any scheme of extrication proposed at the same time her influence might operate much in bringing all things round. 37

While Strachan was not well informed about the situation of this family, he felt confident that Ann C. Macaulay would not know her husband's situation.<sup>38</sup> The inference appears to be that wives generally did not know the financial state of their husband's business or farm. Second, Strachan believed that the wife would have influence on her husband's business conduct if she were informed. That suggests that while the family's livelihood was considered at normal times a male prerogative, the wife could be expected to take some part in deciding on family finance in times of troubles.

As well as being the household manager, the woman was to be the moral instructor of the children. The Christian Guardian in condemning the employment of nannies in place of mothers to nurse the infants expressed the mother's teaching role in nearly mystical terms. "The power of a nurse over a child by infusing into it, with her milk, her qualities and disposition, is sufficiently and daily observed . . ."<sup>39</sup> Similarly, if the children did not turn out well, the mother received full measure of the blame.

(37) John Strachan to John Macaulay, August 5, 1830, Macaulay Papers.

(38) John Strachan to John Macaulay, August 5, 1830, Macaulay Papers; see also James Aitchison to Mrs. Wm. Aitchison, October 4, 1837; Rev. Wm. Proudfoot to John Aitchison, August 17, 1838, Aitchison Papers.

(39) Christian Guardian, November 21, 1829. See also W.H. Merritt to Wm. Allan, June 1, 1836, Allan Papers.



. . . His mother is now paying the price of her folly in foolishly indulging him in every wish, however ridiculous or extravagant it might be. I have heard my grandmother say, she had never seen a family of children so spoiled as they were. 40

At times the woman's presumed virtue might even be brought to bear upon her husband. William McVity, striving to maintain his newfound dignity as Clerk of the Peace, fell from the narrow path and was overcome by brandy in a local tavern. In profusely apologizing to his political patron, W.W. Baldwin, he fretted about what reception he would receive upon returning to his wife. " - And how to face her and my dear little children I know not - I know she would never upbraid me, but her silence would be a reproach to me".<sup>41</sup> But even as moral guardian the woman had only influence. Her reproach would be silence. The husband was indisputably the head of the family. In the event of his death the children would need legal guardians.<sup>42</sup> While the wife might be the moral guardian, the father was expected to lead the family worship.<sup>43</sup>

In summary, a wife was to manage funds the husband allocated to the running of the household, and enforce with the children those moral precepts which he enunciated in family worship. Only in the event of his faltering in his roles did the wife appear to have any legitimate 'influence' in the family's direction.

(40) Maria Kirby to John Macaulay, February 1, 1832, Macaulay Papers.

(41) W. McVity to W.W. Baldwin, February 7, 1843, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

(42) Upper Canada Herald, March 27, 1827.

(43) Canadian Christian Examiner, March 1837, p.2.

As one would expect in any large social unit, there existed exceptions to the general pattern. And yet each of them - as evident exceptions - testify to the power and pervasiveness of that pattern in women's status and roles. There was a particular legal anomaly in that women (who had the property qualification necessary) could vote. Women occasionally took employment outside the home, or at least outside their own home. Certain women took a directing role in works of charity. (The latter activity was not marginal to the poor but central in an era long before the rise of the "Welfare State"). An examination of these exceptions shows both the limited extent of any variation from the general social pattern and thereby the strength of that pattern in determining women's prospects.

The Constitutional Act of 1791 declared that any person could vote who possessed a freehold worth a certain amount. The act did not specify that voters had to be male.<sup>44</sup> Some women in both Upper and Lower Canada did exercise their franchise, either as widows holding property in their own name, or as co-owners with the husband. A House of Assembly committee investigation of a contested election in 1821 noted as unexceptional a number of women voting.<sup>45</sup>

However not everyone took so generous a view. John Strachan wrote John Macaulay, evidently in reply to an enquiry from him about women voting in the County of Lennox and Addington. "I think it absurd for

(44) Craig, Upper Canada, op. cit., p.18.

(45) York Weekly Post, April 5, 1821. See also "To the Ladies Freeholders on the County Front", Amos Ansley, May 28, 1820, UCS.

Women to vote, but if the candidates agree, it is a matter of no moment. They have not however any right to vote."<sup>46</sup> Strachan erred, if he meant that women who met the property qualifications could not vote. It is interesting to note that he despaired of stopping the practice, since the candidates - presumably wishing to meet popular opinion - would not object.

In practice women's voting was a seldom acknowledged legal anomaly. Most election addresses were addressed to "Gentlemen" or "Yeomen".<sup>47</sup> How could one have come to terms with the contradiction of persons viewed as dependent acting as independent freeholders? This situation, which Strachan had pronounced "absurd", came to an end in 1844. The Province of Canada, following through an Assembly decision on a contested election for Halton, legislated women out of the franchise.<sup>48</sup> That effectively ended the legal anomaly.

When women sought employment outside their own homes, it most commonly was in a "service-oriented" occupation, as a kind of mother/wife surrogate. Thus while in one sense women having jobs constituted an exception to the pattern of women confined to family and home, in the other more important sense the type of occupation which they were able to enter only confirmed the established view of what sort of thing

(46) John Strachan to John Macaulay, June 26, 1820, Macaulay Papers.

(47) Upper Canada Gazette, April 1, 1824; May 20, 1824.

(48) Catherine L. Cleverdon, The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1950, p.16. John Garner, The Franchise and Politics in British North America, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1969, pp.155-160.

women ought to be doing. Consequently women took employment as servants, prostitutes, teachers (usually only of female children), occasionally as preachers in certain small denominations, and in particular types of business.

Being a servant was considered an acceptable occupation for a young woman with no social position and no immediate prospects of marriage.<sup>49</sup> It might also become a necessity due to the destitution of herself or even of her husband.<sup>50</sup> In the employer's household the servant performed all the base tasks assigned in other homes to the wife.<sup>51</sup> In a larger household where more distinction existed between the roles of various servants, the cook or housekeeper could even manage the house (or kitchen) accounts, where the wife was absent or incapacitated.<sup>52</sup> These roles were all part of the clearly defined female pattern.

While there is not an abundance of material on prostitution in Upper Canada, what exists is sufficient to say it was present. Most references occur in accusations about someone else being or seeing a prostitute.<sup>53</sup> That such accusations had some foundation in fact on

(49) Archbishop to Dublin to John Strachan, June 2, 1832, Strachan Papers. See also Cattermole, op. cit. p. 205.

(50) Hathaway, op. cit., pp. 55-56. See also E.C. Bolton to W.W. Baldwin, April 10, 1830, (1838?), W.W. Baldwin Papers.

(51) Moodie, Life, op. cit., pp. 158-159, Jameson, op. cit., volume 3, p. 305.

(52) John Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, May 7, 1840, Macaulay Papers.

(53) "Wm. McCormick's Journal of his Trip to Ireland, 1823-25", McCormick Papers; Reuben White to Henry Yager, February 26, 1835, Yager Papers; Nelson Cozens to John Macaulay, August 12, 1823, Macaulay Papers. Canadian Freeman, January 1, 1829. Patriot, April 8, 1836.

occasion may be inferred from the deference with which they were sometimes received.<sup>54</sup> Newspaper reports of court proceedings noted convictions for "lewd, disorderly conduct".<sup>55</sup> These references seem to indicate that "houses of ill-fame" were the domiciles of individual prostitutes, rather than containing a group of women under the direction of a "madam". In a society with marginally more males than females, prostitution was likely to have been a profitable venture.<sup>56</sup> While its presence was held to undermine the home and family life, it stood as no challenge to the basic view of women held in that society.

Placing prostitutes in the social scale is complicated both by the scarcity of detail about them and the conflict between their social and their economic status. The contemporary evidence shows prostitutes, like timber-stripping squatters, to have been seen as criminals, even though in neither case was much done to stop their activities. As criminals "who led the unwary into the snares of vice" (as William Lyon Mackenzie saw them), prostitutes could not have been lower in the society.<sup>57</sup> However, their economic position was more ambiguous. No reasonable estimate of income seems possible on the basis of the limited evidence available. No doubt they had more personal freedom than

(54) Nelson Cozens to John Macaulay, October 15, 1823, Macaulay Papers.

(55) Canadian Freeman, April 22, 1830. See also Patriot, December 12, 1834; Upper Canada Herald, August 24, 1832 and September 8, 1830.

(56) Jameson, op. cit., volume 2, pp.147-154; volume 3, p.42. Talbot, op. cit., volume 2, pp.27, 40. Shirreff, op. cit. pp.165-66.

(57) Patriot, December 2, 1834. Edith G. Firth, The Town of York, 1815-1834, The Champlain Society, Toronto, 1966, pp.285-286.

female servants but this does not appear to have enhanced their status. The entrepreneurial nature of their work might seem to place them in the Independent level with pedlars and tavern-keepers. But the heavy social stigma of their occupation prevented any from viewing them in that stratum. At best the combination of their very low social and perhaps higher economic status could be judged to put them in the Quasi-dependent level.

Women had marginal opportunities in teaching. They apparently had a small but persistent foothold in the province's privately operated common schools.<sup>58</sup> Anna Jameson remarked that the women taught only in towns.<sup>59</sup> However the first school opened in pioneer Whitby township in 1811 was held by Miss Cross.<sup>60</sup> These women seemed to have been excluded from the government subsidy to common schools, for in 1837 John Smith in his public letter on education, remarked, "I think schools taught by females should, on conforming with the regulations, share in this provision".<sup>61</sup> None of the extensive lists of teachers supported by the District Education Boards contains even a single

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(58) R.D. Gidney, "Elementary Education in Upper Canada: A Reassessment" in Michael B. Katz and Paul H. Mattingly (ed.), Education and Social Change, Themes from Ontario's Past, New York University Press, New York, 1875, pp.3-13. Hathaway, "Early Schools in Toronto", OHSPP, volume 23, 1922, pp.319-320.

(59) Jameson, op. cit., volume 2, p.218.

(60) Johnson, Ontario County, op. cit., p.62.

(61) Patriot, January 31, 1837.

female name.<sup>62</sup>

It appears that 'genteel' young ladies were employed in grammar schools or their equivalent for the instruction of girls. Separate programs for females did not usually endure, either because they were merged with the male courses due to modest means, or dropped altogether.<sup>63</sup> Grantham Academy in St. Catherines began its existence with a "Female Department" offering a limited range of subjects, under Miss Cornelia Converse in 1829.<sup>64</sup> In 1835 there was no such department, and no women were teaching.<sup>65</sup> By 1837 a Miss St. John had been engaged and taught a separate section from the two male teachers.<sup>66</sup> In the 1840's the Burlington Ladies' Academy was founded at the head of Lake Ontario. It had a lengthy and successful career. However its predecessor attempted by the Street sisters under Lady Colborne's patronage in 1834 did not last a year.<sup>67</sup> Consequently most women teachers had little security

- (62) See for example, "Home District School Board", December 31, 1817; "Report of London District School Trustees", December 31, 1817; "Eastern District School Report", January 29, 1818; "Midland District Board of Education", February 2, 1818; "Ottawa District Board of Education", February 9, 1818; "Home District Board of Education, June 13, 1819; "Ottawa District Board of Education", June 28, 1819; "Home District Board of Education, January 1821; "Ottawa District School Board", January 5, 1821, UCS.
- (63) Marion V. Royce, "Argument over the Education of Girls -- Their Admission to Grammar Schools in this Province", Ontario History, volume 67, no. 1; March 1975, pp.1-3. See also Jameson, op. cit., volume 2, p.217 and Cattermole, op. cit., pp.95-96.
- (64) Farmers' Journal and Canal Intelligencer, August 5, 1829, clipping in W.H. Merritt Papers.
- (65) "Memo", March 31, 1835, W.H. Merritt Papers.
- (66) W. Cocell to W.H. Merritt, January 13, 1837, W.H. Merritt Papers.
- (67) M.Y. Stark to Mrs. Stark, December 20, 1834, same to same, May 14, 1835, Stark Papers.

or expectation of long employment.

In all these cases the children were being taught by a female in a clear extension of the mother's role as moral guide. Moreover, the children taught were female: the 'lady teacher' was not to have authority over even young males. As a teacher the woman would have had even less authority than the mother for which she was the substitute figure. When teaching in her own home, the woman teacher's school was not yet clearly even a public institution. Not until the 1840's with a reliable tax on land, did education unambiguously cease to be a private activity. Through to the 1830's the woman who taught could seldom have expected lasting employment. She would not likely have had authority over male children. Operating out of her own house, she was seldom visibly a professional.<sup>68</sup>

If women had only precarious opportunities in teaching, their chances in the ministry were even slimmer. Only a few small denominations, such as Quakers and the Primitive Methodists had women preachers. Women began preaching in the newly formed Methodist group partly due to the shortage of men and partly due to an early heavy emphasis on the Holy Spirit selecting those who were to preach. In time the formalization of clergy and the decline in spontaneity, edged women out of their role in the denomination. In fact they were never accepted as full equals to the men who preached: on the circuit plan the women

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(68) Alison Prentice, "The Feminization of Teaching", in S.M. Trofimenkoff and Alison Prentice (ed.), The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History, McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 1977, pp.49-55.



appeared as initials, while the men's names were written in full.<sup>69</sup>  
 By contrast during an 1821-1822 missionary tour through Upper Canada  
 by four Quaker preachers, two women and two men, it was Jemima Burson  
 who was the leader.<sup>70</sup> A number of women who emigrated to Upper Canada  
 from Britain continued to preach under Primitive Methodist direction.<sup>71</sup>  
 But no new women preachers were 'called', and the phenomenon died out  
 with that generation.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, the largest Methodist group in  
 the colony, allowed no women to preach. However, there was a demand  
 from some women to take the role of "exhorter" in local meetings. A  
 certain "D", in defense of "the practise for which we contend", re-  
 viewed the case against women speaking in religious meetings. She  
 claimed no right to teach, for that would assume an improper authority  
 over men. But this should not mean total silence for women.

Is it not supposed consistent with all due subordin-  
 ation, that the wife whose eyes and heart have been  
 opened to receive the truths of the Gospel, to in-  
 struct her enquiring husband in the way of life?  
 Suppose that in a prayer meeting, her husband,  
 brother, and other relations should be present,  
 and she should entreat them with great tenderness  
 to flee from the wrath to come, would this be  
 usurping authority over them? -72

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- (69) John D. Hoover, "The Primitive Methodist Church in Canada, 1829-1884", unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1970, pp.22, 27-28.
- (70) Leslie R. Gray, "Phoebe Roberts' Diary of a Quaker Missionary Journey to Upper Canada", Ontario History, volume 42, 1950, pp.7-42.
- (71) Primitive Methodist Magazine, 1831, "American Missions, Journal of Wm. Summersides".
- (72) Christian Guardian, April 8, 1835.

The common and decisive reply to that sort of appeal was that the woman ought to promote Christianity "not by eccentric efforts - not by starting out of your sphere . . . , not by preaching, but by living . . . ."73

Women preachers received a mixed reaction from their male audience. To those in the same denomination, the heroic exertions of women preachers were a wonder and a welcome reassurance to their faith.

Many a time she [Ann Robins] carried an infant in arms to an appointment, miles from her residence, and handing it to one of the congregation while she conducted the service, has, at its close, resumed the precious burden, and walked home again. 74

However, men outside the denomination were more skeptical. During his confinement as a prisoner of war, Mahlon Burwell sampled the talents of local preachers.

Went to the Court House to hear a Quaker woman Preach, but was not much edified by her feeble efforts and ejaculations. She was accompanied by a venerable old Gentleman of that society who was not a preacher . . . . 75

He clearly sets out the image of someone outside the domain of their competence. He is not virulently hostile, but rather unimpressed at "her feeble efforts". By contrast at a much later date, William Lyon Mackenzie resorted to pointed ridicule at the sight of women

(73) Christian Guardian, December 5, 1829.

(74) Primitive Methodist Magazine, December, 1853, "Obituary", p.476. Dunlop, op. cit., p.24; Patriot, April 11, 1837, Jameson, op. cit., volume 1, p.76; volume 3, p.41; John May, "Bush Life in the Ottawa Valley Eighty Years Ago", OHSR, volume 12, 1911, p.157.

(75) "Journal of Col. Mahlon Burwell, Burwell Papers; pp.37-38.

preaching.<sup>76</sup> While a woman as a preacher might be considered as another extension of the mother as moral guide, there was apparently too much power bound up in the role of minister for any but the most committed males to accept a woman in that place. And while the 'lady teacher' commonly taught only female children, the 'lady preacher' presumed to preach to all, men as well as women.

A common entrepreneurial venture for women was in providing accommodation - food and lodging. This was a clear extension from the role of wife as hostess in her own home. The range of businesses ran from the respectable boarding house, through various degrees of inns, to the most rudimentary of taverns. The most distinguished of the boarding houses were fit to accommodate the members of the Assembly during the parliamentary session in York, or the visiting judiciary and crown lawyers in the district towns.<sup>77</sup> At the other end of the scale were women reduced to selling liquor without a license to support themselves and their families.<sup>78</sup> They pleaded exemption from fines because of their poverty. Indeed keeping a lowly tavern seems to have been viewed even by critics of 'drink' as a necessary evil, a sort of pension, especially for widows.<sup>79</sup> Whether providing a

(76) Mackenzie's Weekly Message, July 28, 1853.

(77) For instances of this see, Patriot, April 11, 1837; September 1, 1837; John Marks to John Macaulay, October 20, 1836, Macaulay Papers.

(78) Petition of Isabella McCosh, June 12, 1819; Thomas Mears to George Hamilton, September 5, 1820, UCS.

(79) "Temperance Association Brockville", 1844, Charles Jones Papers.

place for the Chief Justice or the poorest immigrant, or even just the thirsty, these women performed a function very much a part of the common understanding of their proper role. This continuity is brought out in Susanna Moodie's second encounter with a certain "Mrs. S.". At their first meeting, Mrs. S. had been keeping the hotel at Cobourg, where she had welcomed the newly arrived Moodies to Upper Canada. In the second encounter, Susanna and family are leaving the farm, in order that her husband may take the post of Sheriff of the new Victoria District. They stopped at a cottage to warm the children from the winter's cold, when Mrs. S. recognized them and invited them to come in. Although no longer in business, Mrs. S. settled them in just as if she were.<sup>80</sup> Whether as a hotel proprietor or a friend on a cold night, Mrs. S's function did not change, nor did it vary from the common view of a woman's place.

A second line of business in which women engaged was shop keeping. A list of businesses licensed in the Home District for 1839 showed one woman among 18 shopkeepers, but five amongst the 38 innkeepers.<sup>81</sup> In Kingston, Miss Read operated a general store offering "for sale a large assortment of looking glasses, Bibles, Testaments, and story Books, Ladies shoes, Perfumery and Dry Goods".<sup>82</sup> Perhaps the most intriguing combination was the Widow Fergusson and her daughter, Miss Donovan, who advertised together: the former as a nurse, the latter as an undertaker.<sup>83</sup>

(80) Moodie, Roughing, op. cit., p.233.

(81) Patriot, February 15, 1839.

(82) Upper Canada Herald, June 22, 1831.

(83) Upper Canada Herald, April 28, 1830 and Decmeber 15, 1830.

A common line of business for women was dressmaking.<sup>84</sup> The mother making clothes for herself and her family performed the same function as the dressmaker in her shop. There was a difference however. Like the women who ran an inn, the milliner or dressmaker received payment for their services. With that income they might not only have been supporting a family, but managed a business as well: paying rent, purchasing supplies, perhaps hiring help, deciding on prices to be charged. Even though the businesswoman might be confined to fields analogous to the tasks of the housewife, she nevertheless had established an independence of all direct male control quite at variance with the common notion of what women ought to have been.

What part did women take in the major economic activity of Upper Canada - farming? On the margin of the forest, there were instances of the wife assisting the husband with field work, or taking his place when he was away. Mrs. Agnes Turnbull described her work, when necessity drew her husband away. "Owing to my husband's being hired out I was obliged to be farmeress in the bush. I planted eight bushels [of potatoes] and from that we had a produce of eighty . . ." <sup>85</sup> Susanna Moodie's well-known account describes her reluctance to accept the reality of pioneer life.

My husband and I had worked hard in the field, it was the first time I had ever tried my hand at field

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(84) For example, see Canadian Freeman, August 26, 1830; Christian Guardian, February 8, 1837; November 1, 1837; November 28, 1838; September 12, 1837; January 2, 1838.

(85) Mrs. Agnes Turnbull to Mrs. W.W. Baldwin, February 12, 1838, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

labour, but our ready money was exhausted . . . we could not hire, and there was no help for it. I had a hard struggle with my pride before I would consent . . . 86

However the farm wife's contribution to field labour, while significant - especially in the crucial periods of seeding and harvest - was limited by the other necessary tasks of the farm home. Spinning, weaving, sewing clothes for all the family, preserving and drying fruit, hauling water, making butter and cheese, tending livestock, keeping the fires going and the woodpile stocked, as well as cooking, washing and caring for the children left the pioneer farm wife with little time to spare for field work.<sup>87</sup>

At the far end of the scale, in Upper Canada's social hierarchy from the pioneer farm wife were those women whose male connections placed them at the height of respectable female society. For such persons the tedium of house keeping was largely given over to servants. They had no need to seek employment and would have lost social prestige if they had. These women took the lead in establishing and administering the charitable societies that provided for the poor and destitute, for whom individual private charity could not suffice. In principle their direction of such organizations was an extension of the

(86) Moodie, Roughing, op. cit., p.166. See also Richard Bullock to Capt. Fowler, December 14, 1818; "Declaration of Richard Bullock", December 20, 1819, UCS.

(87) Jones, op. cit., p.21. Moodie, Roughing, op. cit., p.129. Edwin C. Guillet, The Pioneer Farmer and Backwoodsman, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1970, volume 1, pp.130-142. Mrs. Jane E. McVity to W.W. Baldwin, February 26, 1842, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

fostering maternal care to society's unfortunates that every mother would provide for her children. In practice the benevolent societies collected comparatively large amounts of money, distributed it to whom they chose, and made decisions about the nature of public welfare - all under the direction of women.

The charitable societies established by women did not have a monopoly in the work, nor were they invariably the first in the field. In Kingston the magistrates had organized a Compassionate Society in early 1819.<sup>88</sup> Not until two years after that did "the Ladies in Kingston" establish their Female Benevolent Society.<sup>89</sup> The York Society of Friends for the Relief of Strangers appears to have begun work in 1817.<sup>90</sup> A society for the Relief of Poor Women in Childbirth was set up by "a few of the Ladies of York" in 1820.<sup>91</sup> A clothing society was also in existence by the end of the 1820's.<sup>92</sup> Why women established their own charity organizations is unknown. Women may not have been permitted any extensive role in existing societies. It seems evident that for whatever reason the 'leading Ladies' in the two major urban centers decided to create their own structures to raise and distribute funds to the poor.

(88) Kingston Chronicle, February 19, 1819.

(89) "Female Benevolent Society", April 1821, Macaulay Papers.

(90) John Strachan to Z. Mudge, December 19, 1829, Good, op. cit., p.113.

(91) "Minutes of the Society for the Relief of Poor Women in Childbirth", October 21, 1820, Jarvis-Powell Papers.

(92) "Lady Colborne's Paper", n.d., (1830), Good, op. cit., pp.122-125. Firth, op. cit., p.235.

The Female Benevolent Society of Kingston has left the most extensive constitution of the various women's groups. An examination of it allows some insight into the attitudes of those establishing it: To be a member required an annual subscription of 10 shillings.

Ladies who do not wish to become Members, yet are willing to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and minister to the sick, through the medium of the Society, will be permitted to subscribe, and Gentlemen's contributions as donors will be thankfully received. 93

This ingenious passage does two things. It establishes two levels of membership: Those women who have the deciding voice in the organization (10s members), and those less well-to-do subscribers who contribute but have no vote. It also gently but firmly excludes all men, except in the passive role as "donors". The objects of the Society's concern were to have been "the sick poor . . . indigent women, with small children. . . the aged and the infirm".<sup>94</sup> The keynote of the organization's structure was to ensure efficient operation even if only a few were active. Quorum for monthly meetings was three (to always include the secretary and the treasurer), the annual meetings, twelve. The "Directress, secretary and treasurer, with twelve managers [were] to be elected annually by plurality vote". It would be these women who carried on the work of the society, visiting and judging the poor.<sup>95</sup> Later amendments provided that the secretary should "open a correspondence with

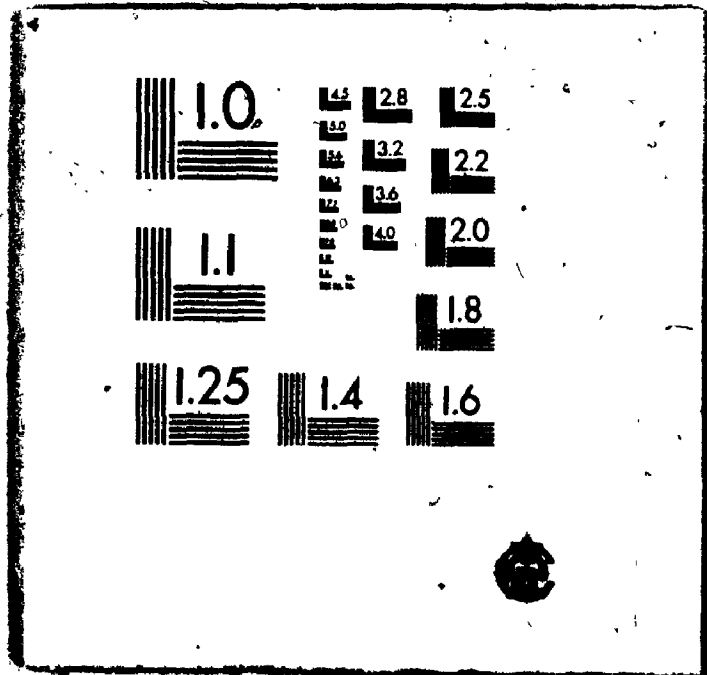
(93) "Female Benevolent Society", April 1821, Macaulay Papers.

(94) Ibid.

(95) Ibid.



# 3



CHAPTER 5

THE LINES OF SOCIAL CLEAVAGE:  
INDEPENDENCE AND RESPECTABILITY

benefit of the immigrant poor. From 1822 to 1828 its expenditures rose from £127 to £182 a year.<sup>102</sup>

Parallel to that society, in 1820, "a few of the Ladies of York" had taken the initiative to begin a charitable society of their own to deal with the problems of poor women in childbirth. In the era before modern medicine and the expansion of public health facilities, pregnancy was a leading cause of death among women. Indeed one petition to the Crown asked clemency for two men on the ground, among others, that their sister "who now in a state of pregnancy is not likely to survive".<sup>103</sup> Especially in rural areas, competent mid-wives were hard to get. It was not unknown for the elder children to be the only assistants at the birth of the younger.<sup>104</sup> The York Society for the Relief of Poor Women in Childbirth was primarily to be a fund raising organization. It was an exclusively female society with two classes of members. Those who subscribed £2 or more were the "Governesses", others who subscribed any amount less were ordinary members.<sup>105</sup> The Society initially had thirty-three subscribers, twelve of whom qualified as "Governesses".<sup>106</sup> In a striking parallel to the Kingston

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(102) "Account-book of the Society of Friends for the Relief of Strangers, 1822-28", Allan Papers.

(103) "Petition on behalf of Samuel and Stephen Hartwell", July, 1814, UCS.

(104) W. McVity to W.W. Baldwin, June 17, 1840, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

(105) "Minutes of the Society for the Relief of Poor Women in Childbirth", October 21, 1820. Jarvis-Powell Papers.

(106) Ibid.

Female Benevolent Society, it was an exclusively female group, with two classes of members, control firmly vested in a small group of the more well-to-do women.

By their work in charitable and religious organizations, women of means took a role in society which, while in one way part of the general view of women, in fact gave them power beyond anything reconcilable with that view. They created wholly autonomous women's organizations whose direction was vested in a small group of well-to-do women who made a substantial commitment of time and money. Nevertheless, these women's positions all depended upon male connections. If a wife was so lucky as to have her husband die leaving her control of a prosperous business, she might continue her status. But if the husband fell from social grace through bankruptcy or some political or personal blunder, she fell with him. When George Markland was dismissed as Inspector General in 1838 on charges of homosexuality, his wife went with him into obscurity and social exile.<sup>107</sup> Judge J.W. Willis, by his charges against the Court of King's Bench and the Attorney-General effectively destroyed his career in Upper Canada.<sup>108</sup> While the issue still hung in the balance, he and Lady Mary Willis enjoyed considerable social eminence amongst genteel critics of the provincial executive. But with the adverse settlement of his case, he had to withdraw from the colony permanently; while Lady Mary found herself

(107) John Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, July 8, 1838; same to same, November 20, 1838, Macaulay Papers. R. Burns, "Queer Doings - Attitudes Toward Homosexuality in 19th Century Canada", Our Image - The B.P. Supplement, number 6, December-January 1976, pp.4-7.

(108) Dunham, op. cit., p.113.

socially isolated.<sup>109</sup> However much power "the ladies" were able to exercise through women's organizations, they enjoyed it only on the strength of their male connections, present or - in the case of widows of prominent men - past.

The principal institution in which women's status and roles were bound up was marriage. An examination of criticisms of it from those women born in or settled in Upper Canada centers on complaints against "the system" and its operation rather than particular individuals. Probably the most poignant cry came from young Mrs. Ann Powell, on the prospect of her sister's visit.

At no period of my life could her presence be more desirable than it is and will be in the various changes I have known. There never was a time when in a few minutes I could not procure the conversation of a female whose sentiments were similar to my own. Out of my own home there is not a person within twelve miles that I can call a companion and happy as a promising family can make a mother, I sometimes feel a weariness of spirit which cannot be avoided. 110

Some women experienced more physical pains from their marriages than that "weariness of spirit". In such cases women appeared to have been willing to reach for legal redress rather than accept abuse.

Mrs. Elizabeth Elrod appeared in Court / Home District Quarter Sessions 7, and prayed Surety of the Peace. Ordered that John T. Elrod do enter into recognizance to keep the Peace towards his wife Elizabeth and his family, and to remain in Custody of the Sheriff until

(109) Robert Hatt, "Judge Willis and the Court of King's Bench in Upper Canada", Ontario History, volume 69, no. 1, March 1973, pp.19-30. John Strachan to John Macaulay, May 4, 1829, Macaulay Papers.

(110) Anne Powell to Mrs. Inman, March 26, 1789, Jarvis-Powell Papers.

such Surety is given. 111

Occasionally a man could reflect on the burdens which marriage could place on a woman.<sup>112</sup> However no indigeneous writer could match the intensity of Anna Jameson's criticism of marriage as it operated in Upper Canadian society.

The occasional references to the dissatisfactions of marriage, and exceptions taken to the conventional woman's role more generally, are a small minority. Given the extensive amount of women's correspondence that survives and the prominent part marriage arrangements play in that correspondence, there was very little criticism apparent. Women of means organized charity societies that gave them opportunities that could never be found in their allotted circle of home and family. Young women sought education in spite of the school system's apathy or resistance toward their ambitions. These form an indirect challenge to the common negative image of women. But taken on balance with the other evidence, women appear to have accepted the general social position accorded to their sex.

Since the key institution in the society's concept of women was marriage, a closer examination of its operation is necessary to fully understand women's status in Upper Canada. Marriage had several social functions with respect to both men and women. It operated as a means

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(111) Home District Quarter Session Minutes, Toronto, 1910, volume 3, July 13, 1819; see also July 19, 1822, and July 24, 1823.

(112) W. Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, November 14, 1833, Macaulay Papers.

of property transfer. The wife was expected to produce male heirs to inherit the husband's property and carry on his name.<sup>113</sup> E.A. Talbot lamented that this desire for male offspring had destroyed respect for chastity.

An unmarried female with a baby in her arms is as much respected, and as little obnoxious to public animadversion, as she would be, had she preserved her virtue . . . A man who has the good fortune to meet with a wife, who, on the morning of her marriage, presents him with a pair of thumping boys; considers that in a few years' time they will amply compensate him by their labours for the sacrifice which he makes of "a few mistaken and absurd notions imported from some European nunnery." 114

It was also hoped that she would bring some property into the marriage, which would pass under the husband's control.<sup>115</sup> That was so much the practice, and was backed by such a force of public opinion that wives who tried to keep their property in their own right had a difficult time.<sup>116</sup> After a man's death his widow might be expected to carry on the man's estate, usually for the benefit of his children.<sup>117</sup> In each

(113) See for example John M. Nixon to John Macaulay, November 18, 1837; "To my infant Neice", by Ann C. Macaulay, November 10, 1834; Ann Macaulay to John Macaulay, December 26, 1838; John Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, April 10, 1840, Macaulay Papers. Capt. George Fowler's Memorandum, October 9, 1820, UCS.

(114) Talbot, op. cit., volume 2, p.40.

(115) John Strachan to Robert Sketon, January 9, 1813, Spragge, op. cit., pp.34-35. Gates, op. cit., pp.21, 64 on the UEL right to daughters upon their marriage: a state dowry.

(116) For a marriage contract that retained the woman's property in her name, see the Marriage articles of Wm. C. Gwynn and Ann Murray Powell, May 4, 1839, Jarvis-Powell Papers.

(117) Wm. McCormick to Mrs. McCormick, September 24, 1823, McCormick Papers. See also Alexander Duncan to W.W. Baldwin, August 16, 1841, W.W. Baldwin Papers. Probate of the Will of Robert Macaulay, October 16, 1800, Macaulay Papers.

of these roles the woman's position was subordinate, providing for some need of her husband, maintaining her own property with difficulty.

Marriage answered certain social and economic needs. For men in professions and official circles, a socially skilled wife was a necessary auxiliary to get on.<sup>118</sup> For pioneer farmers, the aid of a wife was deemed essential. To enable him to specialize in clearing and planting, to provide extra labour in times of harvest, and above all to provide the children to ease the labour of coming years, the farmer had to have a wife.<sup>119</sup> For the wife, the husband was the source of her financial support (except in the few cases where the woman had and held substantial property in her own name). Susanna Moodie referred to her husband as "him on whom we all depended for subsistence".<sup>120</sup>

The husband's absence or death formed a constant theme in petitions or 'dunning' letters from women to men.<sup>121</sup> Yet while both parties to the marriage contract could have expected to benefit, women's dependence

(118) "Notice of the Progress of William Dummer Powell, Chief Justice of the Province of Upper Canada", n.d., Jarvis-Powell Papers. See also M.Y. Stark to Mrs. Stark, December 20, 1834, Stark Papers.

(119) Colonial Advocate, January 13, 1825. See also Jones, op. cit., pp.21, 82. Howison, op. cit., p.253. Picken, op. cit., pp.21-22.

(120) Moodie, Roughing, op. cit., p.207.

(121) For examples, see Petition of Nancy Smith, August 26, 1818; Robert Keate to D. Wright, April 14, 1819; Petition of Isabella McCosh, June 12, 1819; W.D. Powell to George Hillier, September 22, 1820; Thomas Mears to George Hamilton, September 15, 1820, UCS. Maria Herchmer to John Macaulay, October 10, 1835, Macaulay Papers; Mrs. Jane E. McVity to W.W. Baldwin, February 26, 1842, W.W. Baldwin Papers.



upon it was far greater.

Adultery and bigamy appeared to several observers in Upper Canada to have been major social problems. W.L.<sup>122</sup> Mackenzie was jolted by his first visit to the District Assizes where such cases were being tried. He was further shocked to hear the Attorney-General state that these "low morals" were common in the province.<sup>122</sup> John Beverley Robinson wanted corporal punishment to serve as a check on adultery and bigamy. "I am aware that a reproach rests upon us as a country from the abominable state of morals in these particulars . . ."<sup>123</sup> The debates on a succession of Marriage bills in the 1820's revealed<sup>o</sup> that several members considered bigamy as a serious and common practice. Mahlon Burwell argued for a Marriage Confirmation Bill as,

. . . it would be the means of putting a stop to the infamous practices which had heretofore been too much in vogue, of persons conveniently taking wives for a time, until they happened to see females more pleasing to their fancy, and then turning their first wives and children adrift with impunity. 124

Some evidence supports Burwell's dark vision: the Home District had two trials for bigamy within six months.<sup>125</sup>

In view of the above it may be surprising to find that divorce was apparently viewed by some women with horror. However their attitude

(122) Colonial Advocate, August 19, 1824.

(123) J.B. Robinson to John Macaulay, December 8, 1835, Macaulay Papers. Talbot, op. cit., volume 2, pp.113-117.

(124) Kingston Chronicle, March 4, 1822.

(125) Home District Quarter Sessions, op. cit., January 16, 1822; and July 24, 1822. See also John Norton to W.W. Baldwin, n.d. (Spring, 1828), W.W. Baldwin Papers.

is not really inconsistent with the views of Burwell or Robinson. W.H. Merritt, as a new member of the legislature, had asked Rev. James Clarke to act as a sounding board of local opinion on certain bills which came before Merritt in the legislature. When he wrote his comments on the Divorce Bill, Clarke claimed to be speaking for the women of the Niagara Area: "Your female constituents unanimously condemn the Bill, as being partial". In their view, as reported by Clarke, a divorce bill would give men freer rein to abandon their wives by undercutting the pledge "till death do us part".

. . . it is this unconditional pledge alone that can keep the husband and wife mutually, on an equal footing - let your Divorce Bill repeal this clause "till death do us part" - and the wife is no longer an equal, but a slave. 126

It would only be men who would be able to use the bill, and they would use it whether their wives were guilty or not. "False witnesses can be found to convict the most innocent, when power opposes the weak - ."127 Clarke and his female informants took no less dim a view of men's character than Burwell or Robinson. They sought protection for women in a legally binding marriage.

The social status and roles available to women in Upper Canada were severely circumscribed by a commonly held view of women as weak creatures. They were seen as inferior to men - unintelligent, unstable in character and irresponsible. The center of their life and hopes was

(126) James Clarke to W.H. Merritt, January 9, 1834, W.H. Merritt Papers.

(127) Ibid.

marriage. The woman would be fulfilled in her role as wife, mother and homemaker. The exceptions to that view all tended to confirm it. Where women were able to find employment it was in occupations that were extensions of the wife-mother role: servant, prostitute, teacher (of female children), or (rarely) preacher. Their business opportunities were similarly confined: taking in boarders, inn- or tavern-keeping, milliner or dress shop. A few women had male connections which gave them a relatively high social standing. Some used this vicarious status to take the lead in volunteer charity and church work. While these roles in principle fell within the concept of fostering maternal care, in practice these women found scope for their ambitions and abilities to hold and use power. Despite marginal exceptions - such as the powers exercised in charity groups, and a nominal claim of some to the franchise - the roles of women generally conformed to social expectations. Women's attitudes appear to show an acceptance of the general view of their presumed disabilities, with the exception of a few who objected to these views applying to themselves.

Marriage, consequently, was the central institution in women's lives. Most women in Upper Canada had occupational status only by proxy. Whether the husband was a squatter or Attorney-General, whether he rose or fell, her status existed as an extension of his. From the limited records available, there appears to have been a division of labour between the household and the husband's employment, that gave the wife a reasonably clear role. However popular concern over the

abuse of marriage - especially the abuse of women in marriage - was manifest in debates over adultery, bigamy and divorce. Marriage served several social and economic functions, such as property transfer, and met certain social and economic necessities. Both men and women benefited from those functions. But for men, marriage was only important; for women, it was crucial.

CHAPTER 5

THE LINES OF SOCIAL CLEAVAGE:  
INDEPENDENCE AND RESPECTABILITY

### Introduction

Two of the foregoing chapters outline the status hierarchies that Upper Canadians perceived within five occupational groups: manual labour, farming, the professions, commerce, and government service. This chapter attempts to collate those five, to integrate them where possible into a single hierarchy of occupational status. If this can be done approximately, it will help to identify the successive rungs of the social ladder. That is the essential first step to an examination of how people moved up and down that ladder, i.e. social mobility.

This chapter is structured as a set of four paired contrasts. Each social level is contrasted to the one above it, comparing the criteria which define the two levels, then contrasting the occupations in one with those in the other, and finally looking at the factors which bind together the occupations of the higher level. These consist of statements linking two or more occupations as equivalent in status, or implying a structured relationship of some other sort. Second, there are common features of certain occupations (or identifiable sections within such) that link them together horizontally across the vertical hierarchies. Employing servants, as well as the lumber

employed, is one instance of that type of factor. Another is a common income range, where probable ranges of incomes can be established for two or more occupations. In this way we can make explicit the perceived single social hierarchy of occupations for the province.

#### Dependents and Quasi-dependents

Those in the Dependent level were quite simply persons dependent on the personal will of one other person. Included in this would be paupers, servants and squatters. Their inclusion in a common level ought not to be taken as indicating a status equality between them. Rather, they are associated by a common criterion which indicates a differential between them and all others, greater than any existing amongst them. The pauper was dependent on the benefactor to provide daily subsistence.<sup>1</sup> The servant, usually residing in the house of the master, did whatever work the master directed to be done, when and how the master directed.<sup>2</sup> As the servant had somewhat more status than the pauper - in providing some service for the remuneration received - the squatter had more personal independence from day to day

(1) John Strachan to Z. Mudge, December 19, 1829, Good, op. cit., pp.113-114. "Lady Colborne's Paper": (n.d.), Good, op. cit., pp.122-125, on the system of relief "tickets". Kingston Chronicle, January 22, 1819.

(2) John Bethune Jr. to John Macaulay, August 9, and 16, 1813; "Indenture between Ann Macaulay and Ann Dogherty to indent Thomas Dogherty" . . . , (n.d.); "Articles of Indenture between Ann Macaulay and Leonor Smith for J.J.A. Smith", December 9, 1818; Ann Macaulay to John Macaulay, August 8, 1838, Macaulay Papers.

than the servant. Most squatters, more particularly those living in or very near settled areas, earned no more than subsistence from their small clearings. Some moved beyond the first rude "log hut" while still squatters to enjoy a little cash income from their farms.<sup>3</sup> But the squatter's position - not just his claim to land, but his status in law as a trespasser - all depended upon the good-will of the owner of the land on which he had made his clearing.<sup>4</sup> Thus while one can see a form of hierarchy distinguishing pauper, servant, and squatter, they were all dependent on the will of one other person.

Quasi-dependents were those who were able to temper their dependence in some way. Their differences from the Dependents - as the label implies - were largely a matter of degree. The day labourer by moving from one employer to another, (as might a servant, indeed) and often from one type of employment to another (harvesting to the timber trade to construction), eased his personal dependence on any one employer. By seeking the jobs with the highest wages, he also earned more than even a male servant likely would have been able to do. Dependence could have been softened by having some claim to property, or a skill, or at least by being dependent on an institution rather

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- (3) MacTaggart, op. cit., volume 2, p.293. Colonial Advocate, July 8, 1824. David Wood, "The Woodland-Oak Plains Transition Zone in the Settlement of Western Upper Canada", Canadian Geographer, volume 5, 1961, pp.45-47.
- (4) MacTaggart, op. cit., volume 2, p.293. James Harvey to W.W. Baldwin, March 2, 1837; L.Heyden to W.W. Baldwin, December 3, 1839; W.W. Baldwin Papers.



than an individual. A pioneer farmer might be compelled to work on another's land to support himself and his family. But he had his own home and household, and the prospect of a farm of his own. The failed mechanic, in thinly settled areas particularly, had in his skill something to distinguish him from other unreliable labourers. Common school teachers might earn as little or less than labourers and be looked down on as avoiding or at best being incapable of hard physical labour, but their dependence rested on a school board rather than one person. Such distinctions may not always seem very great, but their importance becomes clearer when we turn to the evidence of contemporary opinion.

By comparing references to different occupations, we see the operation of our distinctions separating employments into different status strata. We first turn to the implicit hierarchy within the Dependent level. Dr. Baldwin related the story of a woman who had been paradoxically saved from the "poor house" by typhus, which enabled her to find employment as a washer-woman. She had resolved to leave, and go looking for employment.

But just before she left she came down with typhus, and Dr. Widmer took her to the hospital. There she recovered and was hired to do the wash at \$5.00 a month. - Thus you see Providence has put her in a way to earn her bread if only she will have good sense enough not to throw it away - the affliction of the fever was a great blessing to her.-. 5

A bout of typhus was "a great blessing" as it enabled a pauper to become a washer-woman at \$5.00 a month.

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(5) W.W. Baldwin to Mary Evans, May 31, 1842, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

The existence of a "poor house" or "emigrant shelters", and various poor relief societies ought not to be seen as lessening the degree of personal dependence of paupers on their benefactors. That may be seen from the regulations proposed by Lady Colborne for the York Society.

That no Stranger or other distressed person shall be relieved by private individuals on his presenting a petition, but that such applicant shall be furnished with a ticket to be presented to the Directors of the Society . . .

That a Steward shall be appointed . . . to inquire into the situation and Character of those who present tickets . . . That a committee will be elected by the subscribers who will attend daily in rotation to inspect the Establishment. That as soon as any stranger is admitted for temporary residence if he be in good health he shall be expected to search for employment or do any that can be provided for him while his family will be taken care of till he can support himself. That any Stranger admitted who is not quite destitute will be expected to pay in proportion to his means for the assistance that he and his family receive - . . . 6

The servant's life was subject to a similar close scrutiny by the master. Not only their work habits, but the details of their personal life were subject to supervision and discipline.<sup>7</sup> The squatter was free of that kind of control, but the product of all his labour was

(6) "Lady Colbourne's Paper" (n.d.), Good, *op. cit.*, pp.123-124. See also "Account-book of the Society of Friends for the Relief of Strangers, 1822-1828," Allan Papers.

(7) John Bethune Jr. to John Macaulay, August 9 and 16, 1813; Ann Macaulay to John Macaulay, July 26, 1838; John Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, May 7, 1840, Macaulay Papers. Ann Powell to Mrs. W.D. Powell, September 6, 1818, Jarvis-Powell Papers.

at the complete discretion of another.<sup>8</sup> On the day of reckoning, the squatter depended on the good-will of the land owner, just as much as the pauper relied on the benefactor, or the servant on the master.

Contemporary comments on the relative status of occupations in what are here called Quasi-dependent and Dependent levels tend to support the distinctions that have been made. E.C. Bolton, a school master supplicant, wrote to W.W. Baldwin,

. . . in consequence of my School being so small, - the whole of the winter with the dearness of provisions I have been in very great distress and obliged to give up house-keeping for some time, my Wife has gone out to Service and my son - and I am now living with a friend. - 9

The teacher's family have been reduced to domestic service by great want. The pioneer farmer was clearly separate from the servant and pauper by virtue of his property. If a freeholder, he had the right to vote. If a location ticket holder, he at least had some claim to the franchise, although it might be challenged.<sup>10</sup> He might be compelled to hire out to feed the family, but his labour went for an

(8) Jones, op. cit., p.67. MacTaggart, op. cit., volume 2, p.293. James Harvey to W.W. Baldwin, March 2, 1837, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

(9) E.C. Bolton to W.W. Baldwin, April 16, 1830, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

(10) York Weekly Post, March 8, 1821; March 5, 1821; March 22, 1821. Weekly Register, August 4, 1825. Upper Canada Herald, March 4, 1825.

investment rather than just subsistence. Mrs. Agnes Turnbull described her situation and that of her husband on their pioneer farm,

. . . Since we came up here he has been oblige [sic] to hire out a good deal and by a little industry and perseverance we are now able to pay our land [,] provision of all kinds are very high. . . . 11

While the pioneer farmer was clearly distinguishable from servants and labourers by his claim to own land, there is no such clear line between the servant and the labourer. The mobility and marginally higher income of the labourer are not nearly so tangible as a title to land. Contemporaries made some distinctions between domestic service and field labour. In one of his settlement novels, John Galt wrote of a particular character, ". . . instead . . . of being a mere domestic, it would have been greatly better for him, had he been acquainted with some slight knowledge of a useful trade."<sup>12</sup> To acquire even the basic skills of a "chopper" or "cradler" made a difference in the salary between a male servant and the farm labourer.<sup>13</sup> Additional evidence for ranking labourers as Quasi-dependents comes not from comparisons with servants, but in reference associating them with teachers.

Francis Collins in one of his frequent polemics against Sir

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- (11) Mrs. Agnes Turnbull to Mrs. W.W. Baldwin, February 12, 1838, W.W. Baldwin Papers.
- (12) Galt, Bogle Corbet or, The Emigrants, Henry Colburn and Richard Bellamy, London, n.d., volume 3, p.136. Moodie, Roughing, op. cit., pp.101, 128, and 149, with pp.109, 119.
- (13) Talbot, op. cit., volume 1, p.337, volume 2, pp.240-241.

Peregrine Maitland and Archdeacon John Strachan claimed that even well-educated teachers made no more than labourers, and some were reduced to hiring out to clear land.

Some of the ablest classical and mathematical scholars in this Province are spinning out a wretched thread of existence in teaching School, at a hire below that of the common labourer, and many of them compelled to make a living by chopping . . . .<sup>14</sup>

Coming from such a partisan source that accusation may be suspect. But while one may discount the extreme nature of Collins' statement, its essence is confirmed by other observers, writing for private not public audiences.

We have schools; but the teachers are engaged by the year and the cheapest is the successful candidate - so you may get what sort of teachers they are. You cannot get a good teacher as long as a man can make a more comfortable living by day labour in any farmers employ. <sup>15</sup>

All these observers considered that teaching ought to have better pay and more status than day labour; all agreed it did not.

Contemporary statements linking occupations together do not embrace all those that have been grouped together in levels. But they provide some associations (i.e. teachers, labourers). Similarly where income ranges can be reasonably estimated, they include only some of the occupations considered. Squatters and pioneers allow little scope for income estimation. However some comparisons of

(14) Canadian Freeman, February 8, 1827.

(15) Mr. MacNaughton to Rev. Burns, July 12, 1834, Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence.

income are possible for paupers and servants in the Dependent level, and labour and teachers in the Quasi-dependent level.

Something of a demarcation line appears between the income of paupers and servants on the one hand, and labourers and teachers on the other. As we would expect, the distinction is least clear between well-paid male servants and the less well-paid amongst the labourer group. The York Society of Friends for the Relief of Strangers during the 1820's paid out a monthly sum for assistance comparable to a yearly income of £18-21.<sup>16</sup> Given the concern in that type of organization for economy, it is unlikely these payments were much above those made by individual benefactors in acts of private charity.<sup>17</sup> The top wage for a male servant was in the range of £24-£25 a year; women servants did well to get around £12-£18 a year.<sup>18</sup> Both would get board and lodging as well as their wages. Robert Gourlay's 1818 survey showed day labourer's wages ranged from a low of £25 up to £37. In the 1830's such wages varied from £25 to,

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(16) "Account-book of the Society of Friends for the Relief of Strangers, 1822-1828", Allan Papers.

(17) Kingston Chronicle, January 22, 1819. "Lady Colbourne's Paper", (n.d.), Good, op. cit., pp.122-125.

£30.<sup>19</sup> By the Common School Act of 1816, the common school teacher was to receive a government grant (under certain conditions) of £25 plus whatever the parents paid in fees. John Strachan had hoped for a teacher's salary of £80 a year for common schools.<sup>20</sup> However, with the rejection of his proposals, and the decline in government revenue in the early 1820's, most teachers received less than £25 from the central government.<sup>21</sup> John M'Gregor in his 1833 account of Upper Canada stated that the government payments to elementary teachers ranged from £5 to £12 10s.<sup>22</sup> In addition to that teachers received fees from parents. \$2.00 a quarter for English reading for example was basic. Depending on how high the fees were, how many pupils attended, and whether the parents paid regularly or at all, the teacher's total salary could vary greatly. W.B. McVity, a man of some

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(18) John Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, March 7, 1837; same to same, April 11, 1839; same to same, September 25, 1839; Ann Macaulay to John Macaulay, October 4, 1839, Macaulay Papers. See also Mark Y. Stark to Mrs. Stark, August 18, 1834; Mrs. Agatha Stark to Mrs. Street, August 24, 1841, Stark Papers. Gourlay, op. cit., pp.130, 132, 135, 138, 185, 233, 235, 242, 259, 263, 291.

(19) Gourlay, op. cit., pp.130, 132, 135, 138, 186, 187, 199, 242, 259, 291. Jones, op. cit., p.55 n. Moodie, Roughing, op. cit., p.174. John Strachan to Sir George Arthur, April 23, 1839, Strachan Papers. Rolph, n.d., op. cit., pp.80-81.

(20) "Report on Education", February 26, 1815, Spragge, op. cit., pp.77-78.

(21) M'Gregor, op. cit., volume 2, p.434.

education, was offered £37 10s to teach at Chatham in 1839. He went, but quit after a year as he was never paid.<sup>23</sup> Given the frequent remarks as to the low quality of teachers, it seems likely most were paid less than McVity was offered. In summary, paupers and servants in the Dependent level probably received the equivalent of £15-25 a year, while labourers and teachers in the Quasi-dependent level received £25-£37 a year.

Those in both strata considered here are dependent on the will of another person. But the Quasi-dependent had some factor to soften that dependence. Labourers had greater mobility and marginally higher income than servants, from whom they were often difficult to distinguish. Others had some claim to property or skill, or at least were dependent on an institution rather than a person. Contemporary observers grouped labourers and teachers as comparable in at least economic status. Income tends to separate the paupers and servants from the teachers and labourers. These criteria taken together, with all their limitations, permit us to speak of the Dependent and Quasi-dependent levels as two reasonably distinct entities.

#### Quasi-dependents and Independents

A person was of the Independent level when independent of another's personal will, by virtue of property or skill sufficient to support one's self (and family, as the case might be). There is apt to be

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(22) F. Quealey, "The Administration of Sir Peregrine Maitland, Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, 1818-1828", Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Toronto, Toronto, 1968. p.487.



some confusion over the word "independence". A common usage of it was in politics to describe those not under the influence of a patron to the extent of being unable to use their own best judgement on some question.<sup>24</sup> However, it was also used in a related way to describe "a man of independent means".<sup>25</sup>

When used to describe someone's social position, "independence" embraced both economic and social standing. John M'Gregor described the relation between the two aspects in his portrayal of the colony.

The inhabitants of Upper Canada are with few exceptions, obliging, industrious and religious; and the great body of the people form an independent yeomanry, whose condition gives them a freedom of manner, and a boldness of opinion in matters which they consider to be right, very different from the language of servility and hypocrisy which prevails in countries where the inhabitants are generally in a state of dependence. 26

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- (23) Wm. B. McVity to W.W. Baldwin, February 8, 1839, W.W. Baldwin Papers. He was promised a total of \$62 10 - \$37 10 for teaching and \$25 for the post office. John Steele to Charles Bowman, December 6, 1827; George Sheed to Dr. Lee, December 6, 1827, Lee Papers.
- (24) For instances of this see: Colonial Advocate, May 27, 1824, August 8, 1827; March 1, 1832; Canadian Emigrant, March 15, 1834; John Strachan to John Beverley Robinson, February 27, 1823, Strachan Papers; John Strachan to Sir Frances Gore, May 22, 1817, Spragge, op. cit., p.139; and "Memorandum of an interview with Sir George Arthur", November 24, 1839, Macaulay Papers.
- (25) John Strachan to Dr. Brown, August 25, 1799, Strachan Papers. "Live of Col. Bishoppe", December, 1813, Spragge, op. cit., pp. 7-8. Colonial Advocate, July 1, 1824. "Notice of the progress of William Dummer Powell, Chief Justice of the Province of Upper Canada", (n.d.), Jarvis-Powell Papers. Peter McNaughton to Rev: Burns, August 21, 1833, Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence.

The most common meaning of "independence" appears to have been earning one's livelihood free of any other's control. Thus William Aitchison, an Edinburgh brewer, sent his son to Upper Canada in hopes he could maintain himself "independent of being a burden on me . . . that your eyes would open to the misery of dependence . . ." <sup>27</sup> The promise of prosperity recurred in reference to "comfort and independence" attained by those who settled on the land. <sup>28</sup> Yet as M'Gregor noted, it was not just prosperity that "independence" connoted, but a change in social position as well. Not everyone appreciated the resulting changes in manners as M'Gregor did. Dr. John Howison in his tour of the Scots in the Talbot settlement observed,

They soon begin to attain some conception of the advantages of equality, to consider themselves as gentlemen, and become independent; which, in North America, means to sit at meals with one's hat on; never to submit to be treated as an inferior; and to use the same kind of manner towards all men. <sup>29</sup>

The relation of independence to economic position meant it could be achieved only from certain occupations. The established farmer and

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(26) M'Gregor, op. cit., volume 2, p.444.

(27) William Aitchison to James Aitchison, March 2, 1834, Aitchison Papers. See Picken, op. cit., p.344; Rolph, (1842), op. cit., p.13; Gemmill to Andrew Gemmill, December 17, 1826, Gemmill Papers; George Forbes to John Forbes, April 20, 1849, Forbes Papers.

(28) Adam Fergusson to Dr. Lee, December 16, 1834, Lee Papers; Fergusson, op. cit., pp.132, 157, 160, 313. Barclay, op. cit., p.5. Patriot, March 6, 1832. M'Gregor, op. cit., volume 2, p.517. Talbot, op. cit., volume 1, p.155; volume 2, pp.100-107. Howison, op. cit., p.252. John Scott to Andrew Redford, August 29, 1835, Redford Papers.

the mechanic could be independent; a labourer could not.<sup>30</sup>

What would be the difference between a Quasi-dependent and an Independent calling? As we have noted, the pioneer farmer, although having a legal claim of some type to land, could have continued to have been dependent on his wages as a labourer to feed himself and his family, while starting to clear his property. In a number of years he would have enough acres ready for cultivation on his own farm to support his family. John M'Gregor, in his description of the colony, observed the common progression from pioneer hiring out to independent yeomen. "By working part of their time for wages, and the rest on the land which they may settle, they soon find themselves in a comfortable position."<sup>31</sup> He might still hire out occasionally, to acquire, say, the use of a neighbour's ox team, or extra cash. But he would be under no necessity to seek employment on a regular basis. Indeed it would be more in his interest to concentrate on clearing and farming his own land. Since he was no longer under the necessity of working for his neighbours, the farmer had become independent.

To be included in the Independent level, one needed at least enough property to support oneself (and any dependents). That minimum took in the pedlar, the tavern-keeper, and the small farmer. The pedlar had a small stock of goods, often carried on his back, sometimes

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(29) Howison, op. cit., p.188. See also Shirreff, op. cit., pp.49, 74. Jameson, op. cit., volume 2, pp.111. 113.

(30) Christian Guardian, December 7, 1836; February 6, 1839. Alex. Sutherland to J. Sutherland, September 8, 1849, Sutherland Papers.

a horse, more rarely two horses.<sup>32</sup> His modest capital and a skill for selling it were his principal assets. Indeed, the common fear was that the latter was his principal asset, the quality of his goods being suspect.<sup>33</sup> The tavern was the fixed retail outlet requiring the least amount of investment. The building needed to be no more than a shanty, which could be built on a road allowance, or in winter even on river ice (to catch the sleighing trade).<sup>34</sup> The stock of goods on hand was not diverse, and could be fairly readily obtained on credit.<sup>35</sup> While its owner did not enjoy a high social rank or associate with the more respectable in the community, he or she could make a modest living that required little physical effort.<sup>36</sup> To define the yeoman farmer as distinct from the pioneer farmer, we need to make some estimate of the approximate amount of cleared acreage needed to support a family. Assuming, as was done earlier, a price of about \$0.75 per bushel for wheat and a yield of 20 bushels to the acre, farms with 15 to 20 acres in wheat would have had the potential to produce about \$50 to \$75 a year. The wages of a day labourer, approximately between \$30 and \$40, had to support him and any dependents he might have. Consequently the revenue from a 15-20 acre farm most probably could have fed a family

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(31) M'Gregor, op. cit., volume 2, p.534; see also Adam Hope to George Hope, October 8, 1849, Hope Papers and Jones, op. cit., pp.60-61.

(32) Appendix to the Journals of the House of Assembly of Upper Canada, 1829, "Public Accounts", Pedlar's Licenses".

(33) Canniff, op. cit., pp.34, 74-75. York Weekly Post, March 1, 1821.

(34) MacTaggart, op. cit., volume 2, p.203.

(35) York Weekly Post, March 29, 1821.

and paid the expenses of the farm itself. In considering the farmer's yearly income, it makes only a little difference whether his lot had 50, 200 or 400 acres. At some point the owner of a large lot might make a substantial sum selling, say, half his lot. But such wind-falls could not be counted on annually. Whatever occasional revenue he might get from selling part of his land, some lumber, or potash, the farmer's regular income was directly related to the number of acres he had clear.

Some people supported themselves by a skill or a trade. Skilled settled workmen - such as journeymen printers, saddlers, carpenters, cordwainers, or bricklayers - were known in their neighbourhood and had a specific, scarce skill to sell. That skill commonly associated them with a trade, which added the prestige of association to a collectivity capable of concerted actions (short-time agreement, petitions, strikes).<sup>37</sup> Their trade association also gave them an element of security in mobility. They could go from one place to another and be accepted, not just as migrant labourers, but as certified tradesmen.<sup>38</sup> The scarcity

(36) Ibid., see also Jacob Keefer to W.H. Merritt, July 5, 1841, W.H. Merritt Papers. Canadian Cristian Examiner, December 1839, pp. 365-366.

(37) Canadian Freeman, December 6, 1827. Weekly Register, June 5, 1823. Benjamin Wright to John Macaulay, February 19, 1834; same to same, February 24, 1834; Nelson Cozens to John Macaulay, March 27, 1834; Macaulay Papers. Susann Moodie, Life, op. cit., p.8, Constitution, October 26, 1836. F.H. Armstrong, "Reformer as Capitalist: William Lyon Mackenzie and the Printers' Strike of 1836:." Ontario History, volume 59, September 1967, pp.187-196. Gregory Kealey, "Artisans Respond to Industrialism: Shoemakers, Shoe Factories and the Knights of St. Crispin in Toronto", Canadian Historical Association Historical Papers, 1973, pp.136-137; p.144 on their loss of "independence".

of the skill and the potential of mobility gave the tradesmen leverage to obtain higher wages than day labourers.<sup>39</sup> In the comprehensive list of wages compiled by the Canada Company commissioner in 1840, the top summer wage for farm labourers was £2 10s per month, while carpenters, coopers, painters, and blacksmiths received from 6s to 7s per day.<sup>40</sup>

Similar to the skilled workman was the preacher. By the word "preacher" are designated those who were accepted as skilled in preaching, probably without much education, certainly no formal theological training. The preacher might simply be accepted by the people of the neighbourhood.<sup>41</sup> The Methodist Episcopal Church, however, ordained both circuit riders and "settled preachers", requiring no more than a profession of faith and a short apprenticeship as class leaders and exhorters.<sup>42</sup> Consequently the preacher might have no more education than any of his listeners, but by popular assent or ordination he held a position of some eminence and was entitled to a living, however meagre it might be in practice.

Contemporary comparisons of occupations in the Quasi-dependent and Independent classes provide some evidence for the distinctions set

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(38) Colonial Advocate, April 27, 1826.

(39) John Strachan to (?), June 6, 1817, Spragge, op. cit., p.132. Gourlay, op. cit., pp.130, 132, 291.

(40) Rolph, n.d., op. cit., pp.80-81.

(41) Moodie, Roughing, op. cit., pp.120, 158.

out above. The most direct comparisons are those made between clergy and teachers. R.H. Close wrote to Milton Badger that he had had to give up preaching for the Congregationalists since he had not received his last quarterly payment. To sustain himself and pay his debts, he had to take up teaching in a common school.

I have been teaching in a school since March last, I have received enough by that to furnish me clothing and other necessary things and have diminished our debt fifty dollars - This looks like doing any thing for money. 43

It is a striking complement to this statement that few if any of the itinerant Methodist Episcopal preachers when they "located" (i.e. settled in one neighbourhood) took up a common school teaching, the great majority preferring to farm.<sup>44</sup> The contemporary evidence implies an edge in social standing for preachers over teachers.

Some evidence can be adduced to show yeomen farmers and tradesmen were seen as above labourers and servants. A newly established Church of Scotland minister was quite disgusted with the farmers in his congregation. He considered them to be on the same level as labourers in Scotland, and had little sympathy for their self-image.

They boast of their equality, of their independence and liberty - I do not well know what they mean by equality, independence and liberty. They seem equal in poverty, in ignorance and in indifference to religion. They seem to think they depend neither on God nor man -. 45

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(42) Clark, op. cit., p.299.

(43) R.H. Close to Milton Badger, July 13, 1838, American Home Missionary Society Correspondence.

(44) John Carrol, Case and His Contemporaries, Warwick and Rutter, Toronto, 1861, volume 1.

While Rev. MacNaughton did not, in his initial impressions, consider these farmers above labourers, they clearly saw themselves to be "independent". A writer in the Canadian Christian Examiner while depreciating those who "made haste to be rich", incidentally set up a contrast between "tradesman" and "servants and labourers". The former might be injured by an unjust withholding of "what is due"; but the latter could find both their wages and their time of work altered without cause or warning.<sup>46</sup> The tradesman was one with whom one did business. Servants and labourers were under one's personal direction and control. Both the yeoman farmer and the tradesman were considered to have the means to earn their livelihood outside the personal control of another.

In examining the income of Independents one must remember that their position did not entirely depend on how much they made, but as importantly as on how they made it. Members of the Methodist Episcopal and Primitive Methodist clergy were sometimes paid no more than day labourers, which would put their income in line with common school teachers above whom they nonetheless were ranked in status. The Primitive Methodist preachers at first were paid £42 8s a year, later raised to £80 for a married man.<sup>47</sup> Egerton Ryerson as a married itinerant preacher received £62 a year.<sup>48</sup> A small scale farmer, to be

(45) Peter MacNaughton to Rev. Burns, August 21, 1833, Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence.

(46) Canadian Christian Examiner, February, 1838, P.57.

(47) Hoover, op. cit., pp.80-84, 107, 112-113.



relieved of the necessity of hiring out, needed 15-20 acres cleared to devote exclusively to a cash crop that might have yielded £50-75 a year. If we may take as accurate William Lyon Mackenzie's statement about wage rates for journeymen in Toronto, they would have made about £70-90 a year in 1836.<sup>49</sup> In general, the range of incomes for the Independent level appeared to have been about £50-90. Those on the bottom end of that range would not be sharply distinguished in their income from the more affluent members of the Quasi-dependent level, whose range was from £25-£37. However the key for assigning an occupation to the Independent rather than the Quasi-dependent level was not just income, but the ability to make a living independent of the will of another person, either by virtue of property held or skill associated with a trade or profession.

#### Independents and Marginal Respectables

The Respectable level consisted of those who had or could afford servants.<sup>50</sup> In addition, there were certain attitudes and behaviour - intangible factors - that people wanted to find in the Respectable strata. But it was income which formed the indispensable component. The gradations within the level were much influenced by the number (and sex) of the servants employed.

For any nineteenth-century family in Great Britain with social pretensions at least one domestic servant was essential . . . Beyond the basic minimum of one,

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(48) Sissons, op. cit., volume 1, p.123.

(49) Constitution, October 26, 1836.

the number of domestics employed was regarded as a rough guide to status within the ranks of the socially superior . . . Higher up the servant-keeping scale came the professional classes, doctors, clergymen, bank managers, and the more substantial businessmen, who would probably aim to employ about three servants, since this was regarded as the minimum necessary if the household were to be 'complete in all its functions'. 51

The Marginally Respectable are here taken to be those whose income could provide one (at the very most, two) servant.

In his study of English society, W.L. Burn noted the necessity felt in the nineteenth century to elasticise the concept of respectability.

If a strict definition were insisted upon, then there were not enough gentlemen and ladies to do what they were expected to do; in some districts there were none at all. But here the anxiety of the English to imitate their social superiors saved the situation. If a small town contained no gentlemen as the word was understood in the country club, then the solicitor, the brewer, the doctor stepped into the breach; elsewhere the prosperous farmer or shop-keeper might have to serve; or someone who exhibited just a little more decorum, possessed a little more money than his neighbours, would have the role thrust upon him. Perhaps the secret lay in the tendency we have noticed to annex moral attributes to the gentleman. . . . 52

In Upper Canada, many who had established an independence sought to enhance their status by becoming respectable. To the "moral

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(50) Horn, op. cit., pp.17-20, 25-27. See also J. Jean Hecht, The Domestic Servant Class in Eighteenth Century England. Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1956, pp.8-9, 67-68. Theresa M. McBride, The Domestic Revolution: The Modernisation of Household Service in England and France, 1820-1920, Holmes and Meier Publishers Inc., New York, 1976, pp.10-11, 18-20.

(51) Horn, op. cit., pp.17-20.

attributes" of the gentleman were added some education and either property or a relatively substantial income to create some claim to respectability. Upper Canadians thus sought to fill the vacancy in their social order caused by the absence of a gentry. William Lyon Mackenzie, like others, despaired of creating in the new province an exact replica of British society.

. . . Nearly eleven years' experience . . . has fully satisfied me that the English landed aristocratic system will not soon take root in Upper Canada. Power and property will gravitate to each other by an unerring law of nature, but it is evident you will make them change hands oftener than in Great Britain. 53

In place of that continuity through landed gentry, Mackenzie looked for a substitute enfranchised by those "moral attributes" and education (he elsewhere added property).<sup>54</sup>

There is a natural aristocracy among men, founded on virtue and talents; and there is an artificial aristocracy, founded on wealth and birth, without either virtue or talents. Perhaps in place of such of the latter class as fill the offices of your government, . . . it would be wise to select the natural aristocracy of the country, for the instruction, the trusts, and the government of society. 55

Susanna Moodie similarly looked for the emergence of an indigenous elite to serve as a gentry.

The farmer, in his homespun, may possess the real essentials which make the gentlemen - good feeling, and respect for the feeling of others . . . Uneducated ignorant people . . . cannot comprehend

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(52) W.L. Burn, The Age of Equipoise, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1964, p.264.

(53) Colonial Advocate, September 16, 1830.

(54) Colonial Advocate, July 8, 1824; December 6, 1825.

(55) Colonial Advocate, September 16, 1830.

the mysterious ascendancy of mind over mere animal enjoyments; yet they have sense enough, by bestowing a liberal education on their children, to endeavour, at least in their case, to remedy the evil. 56

In a frontier province, people needed to stretch the European idea of respectability in order to recruit a substitute for the gentry that would take on the responsibilities of that group in the new social order.

Along side the desires for a gentry and the aspirations of some to rise to that rank, there existed fears of a false respectability. Especially suspect were people who claimed rank by virtue of government preference. As one would expect, the critics of the provincial executive were particularly sensitive to such ambitions. In one graphic passage the governor is warned to stay,

. . . aloof from the influence of a band of evil counsellors . . . a mushroom gentry . . . who have started from the very dregs of society, and by their low cunning and sordid views have raised themselves into power and office. . . . 57

William Lyon Mackenzie condemned the "upstart nobility".<sup>58</sup> Francis Collins sneered at the executive circle as a "Clerkarchy".<sup>59</sup> But supporters of the executive too could have their suspicions about those ambitious for rank.<sup>60</sup>

(56) Moodie, Life, op. cit., pp.40-41.

(57) Upper Canada Herald, July 4, 1826.

(58) Colonial Advocate, August 5, 1824.

(59) Canadian Freeman, January 18, 1827.

(60) John Strachan to Simon McGillivray, November 1, 1822, Strachan Papers. Robert Stanton to John Macaulay, January 29, 1826, Macaulay Papers.

There existed a tension between the desire for a gentry, even one that required a stretching of the received notions of respectability, on the one hand, and on the other, a suspicion that some were claiming a rank to which they had no title. The area in which that tension operated was the Marginal Respectable level. Those occupations which lay within it had property, education, income, or some combination of them to ensure independence. In certain thinly settled neighbourhoods, such occupations might place a person at the head of local society. In others, one with the same qualifications might be hard pressed to maintain even a claim to respectability. The ambiguity of one's hold on that respectability was the distinguishing mark of the Marginal Respectable group.

The controversy surrounding "respectability" did not at all deter people from using the term in describing certain of those around them. Indeed there ran through Upper Canadian society a consciousness of respectability in some, contrasted to other of "inferior" circumstances. An Anglican Minister reported of his congregation - "The number of Episcopalian families of respectability amounts to only seven or eight, and about an equal number of families in inferior circumstances."<sup>61</sup> James Morris, a notable Presbyterian layman, appealing for clergymen to be sent out from Scotland, noted the social ranks of the congregation.

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(61) Rev. Wm. Morse to the Bishop of Montreal, September 17, 1839, Strachan Papers. See also John Strachan to Archdeacon George Mountain, December 31, 1827, Good, op. cit., pp.12-14.

- It is most important that the young man who is to be selected be genteel in his address and a popular preacher. Many of those who will be his hearers are persons who have been accustomed to respectable society and I hope their clergyman will not suffer by comparison with any of the English Ministers. 62

Rev. George Romanes was pleased to write of his Hamilton congregation,

The members of our Church are not only numerous, but generally respectable in character and station in society, and many of them occupy the most influential stations in their respective neighbourhoods. 63

Susanna Moodie, ever a sharp observer of social customs, noted the respectful separation of social groupings at public entertainments.

Balls given on public days . . . are composed of very mixed company, and the highest and the lowest are seen in the same room. They generally contrive to keep to their own set - dancing alternately - rarely occupying the floor together . . . As long as they are treated with civility, the lower classes show no lack of courtesy to the higher. 64

While few attempted to define that respectability, most considered that they could recognize it.

One can occasionally find an even more sharply defined understanding of the levels of respectability. A Presbyterian minister recorded his regret at the decline in standing of a young man placed under his supervision.

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- (62) James Morris to Rev. Mr. Walsh, June 19, 1829; see also Wm. Morris to Rev. D. Walsh, February 8, 1830, Colonial Society Correspondence.
- (63) George Romanes to Rev. Burns, June 25, 1833, Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence.
- (64) Moodie, Life, op. cit., p.64. See also the Colonial Advocate, August 5, 1824.

He quarrelled with the servant where I got him first placed and then he found out a place for himself with which he says he is pleased. The person is as far as I can hear a very respectable man though quite uneducated. The loss is that none of the better class of People would receive a young man into their house in the way he is . . . . 65

Note that the young man had not taken up with disreputable company. The man he now boarded with was "very respectable . . . though quite uneducated". Yet by the company of such an ambiguously situated man, the youth had barred himself from "the better class of People". Here is some evidence for the existence of a somewhat respectable strata, below the level of "the better class of People".

The material basis needed for a person to make a claim on respectability were education, property, or certain types of skill. If one's claim was based solely on education, then one needed to have at least the rudiments of a classical education with possibly some other training as well. An attorney would have had to have attended a grammar school before beginning his years of articling. Indeed the first test proposed by the Law Society consisted of translating passages from Cicero's Orations.<sup>66</sup> The grammar school teacher would have been expected to master all of the classical curriculum, since he was

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(65) Rev. Mark Y. Stark to Mrs. Stark, December 20, 1834, Stark Papers.

(66) Riddell, Courts, op. cit., volume 1, p.80.

expected to teach it all.<sup>67</sup> Candidates for positions as clerks in government offices were expected to be literate, with some emphasis on the mathematics of book-keeping. Clerks learned the details of their tasks on the job and tended to move up: the three "first clerks" of the Surveyor-General's Department all eventually served as Surveyor-General.<sup>68</sup> The income of the attorney varied with his practice, and the degree of his involvement in other money-making ventures.<sup>69</sup> The grammar school teacher was assured the government grant of £100 a year, in addition to whatever tuition he might be able to get. William McLaren as the head of the successful Grantham Academy in St. Catharines earned an annual total of about £300 during the mid-1830's.<sup>70</sup> Government clerks below the rank of deputy had salaries ranging from £116 to £182, depending on rank and department.<sup>71</sup>

The property required to allow a person a claim to respectability varied with the type of enterprise. The most difficult to pin point is the farmer. Assuming, as before, a price of \$0.75 per bushel for wheat and a yield of 20 bushels to the acre, a farm with 30 to 40 acres

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- (67) Canadian Christian Examiner, April 1837, p.49. Farmers' Journal and Canal Intelligencer, August 5, 1829, in W.H. Merritt Papers.
- (68) F.H. Armstrong, Handbook of Upper Canadian Chronology and Territorial Legislation, Lawson Memorial Library, London, 1967, pp.24-25.
- (69) Dr. John Stuart to J.B. Robinson, June 30, 1808, J.B. Robinson Papers. M.S. Cross, "The Age of Gentility: The Formation of an Aristocracy in the Ottawa Valley:", Canadian Historical Association Report, 1967, pp.111-113.
- (70) Wm. McLaren to W.H. Merritt, January 12, 1833, W.H. Merritt Papers.
- (71) Appendix, 1829, "Public Accounts".



devoted entirely to wheat would give an annual potential income of \$110 to \$150. After covering the expenses of the farm, and the needs of himself and his family, the farmer with a farm in or near that range would have had the needed surplus to hire servants. Some evidence seems to indicate that farmers, especially those born in Upper Canada, seldom hired domestic servants, preferring to engage part-time labourers to assist in clearing.<sup>72</sup> Whether the well-to-do farmer hired servants or labourers, he would have had the economic basis to claim more than independent standing.

The shop or inn-keeper, saw - or grist mill-owner had a reasonable expectation of respectable status. Young men were commended to take up business as a route to a respectable position in society as well as an ample living. John Strachan wrote to the young Thomas Cartwright,

You will likewise remember that you return to apply yourself to Business which is necessary as well to give you a proper place in Society as to supply the means of living comfortably to which your private inheritance is not adequate. 73

W.W. Baldwin found himself compelled to down-grade the expectations of a Mrs. Doyle who was inordinately fond of her son, John.<sup>74</sup> Instead of entering a shop as an apprentice clerk, aiming to become a shop-keeper and a gentleman, John Doyle was apprenticed to a master-builder,

(72) "Life of Col. Bishoppe", December 1813, Spragge, op. cit., p.7, Jones, op. cit., p.55 n.

(73) "Instructions to Mr. Thomas Cartwright", September 11, 1815, Spragge, op. cit., p.100.

(74) W.W. Baldwin to Q. St. George, December 17, 1819, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

with the opportunity of one day being a mechanic himself.

The property that formed the basis for a businessman's claim to respectability would have varied. John Strachan estimated that a capital of \$400 was necessary to set up a shop in a more remote part of the province.<sup>75</sup> Rev. Mark Stark advised against beginning with less than \$500, and even then there ought to have been available some means of supplement income at the outset.<sup>76</sup> But if one did not own the property, to be an independent manager, or "clerk" gave nearly equivalent status. The added element in the case of the clerk (in lieu of actually owning property) was a much valued expertise and honesty in handling the store reliably.<sup>77</sup> Whether as clerk or owner, the businessman had a serious claim to be considered for the respectable levels.

The category with the most precarious hold on respectability was that of mechanics. Like a businessman, he bought (raw materials), sold (finished goods), sometimes had a payroll to meet, and might have owned his place of business.<sup>78</sup> His income would have been substantial,

(75) John Strachan to Rev. Towle, January 21, 1833, Good, op. cit., p.330.

(76) Mark Stark to Miss Young, December 14, 1840, Stark Papers.

(77) W.W. Baldwin to Q. St. George, May 13, 1819, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

(78) For instances of this see William Hamilton Merritt's Address to the Haldimand Freeholders, October 1836, W.H. Merritt Papers; Duncan Campbell to W.W. Baldwin, November 5, 1840, W.W. Baldwin Papers; Jameson, op. cit., volume 2, pp.84, 90. Colonial Advocate, April 28, 1825, April 27, 1826; Constitution, September 21, 1836; and Canadian Freeman, October 7, 1830.

by various accounts ranging from £70 to £200.<sup>79</sup> But the mechanic made at least part of his living by manual labour. He was reputed by some to have a slovenly appearance.<sup>80</sup> Inmates of the Kingston penitentiary were trained in the trades, which raised this defensive cry -

. . . A man who is fitted to become a good and respectable mechanic is equally fitted to become a doctor, a lawyer, or even a clergyman; but would not society at large raise its voice indignantly against the idea of criminals being introduced into any or either of these professions. 81

But most people were not shocked by the association of prison inmates and even the most respectable of trades. In her discussion of the refinements of the "higher classes", Susanna Moodie made the illuminating observation already referred to that, "You will find a piano in every wealthy Canadian's house, and even in the dwellings of most of the respectable mechanics".<sup>82</sup> Here the 'respectable mechanics' are presented as the lowest rung of the wealthy or higher classes: "even" most of their houses are graced by pianos. Amongst the grammar school teachers, attorneys, businessmen, and well-to-do farmers, it was only the mechanic who was commonly referred to as "the respectable mechanic",

(79) Gourlay, op. cit., pp.130, 132, 291. Mark Stark to Dugald Bonnatyne, October 20, 1836, Stark Papers. Rolph, n.d. op. cit., pp. 80-81.

(80) Moodie, Roughing, op. cit., p.177. Jameson, op. cit., volume 2, p.84.

(81) J. Jerold Bellomo, "Upper Canadian Attitudes Towards Crime and Punishment (1832-1851)", Ontario History, volume 64, No. 1, December, 1972, p.26, citing the British Whig, of November 23, 1849.

(82) Moodie, Life, op. cit., p.64.

presumably to mark him off from the other, less distinguished, tradesmen with whom he worked.

There do not exist an abundance of contemporary references distinguishing occupations in the Marginal Respectable level from those of the Independent level. The best documented contrast is between mechanics and their journeymen. William Lyon Mackenzie, as a master printer, reflected on the scarcity of journeyman printers (in contrast, he thought, to carpenters and shoemakers), their tendency to drink, and their insolence.<sup>83</sup> William B. McVity, presenting his credentials for appointment as emigration agent, set out what he considered the necessary groups to be encouraged to move to Upper Canada.

. . . Humane and intelligent agents would be appointed to direct, and given [sic] them information on their landing . . . so that Emigrants, whether capitalist, farmer - mechanic or labourer - might get the desired advice at once - . 84

In his hierarchy, there are a set of paired contrasts, the "mechanic" being placed prior to the labourer. Within the trades the distinction of master and journeyman could clearly be seen.

Inns were distinguished from taverns by function as well as by scale. The tavern was often exclusively, always primarily, a place to

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(83) Colonial Advocate, April 27, 1826, Constitution, September 21; 1836; October 26, 1896. See also Kealey, op. cit., pp. 136-37 on divisions in the shoe trade.

(84) Wm. B. McVity to W.W. Baldwin, October 19, 1840, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

drink (and eat, as chance would have it). Its clientele thus were gathered for a purpose which a growing segment in society thought in itself disreputable. Their conduct was almost universally depreciated.<sup>85</sup> The inn provided lodging and meals, as well as opportunities to drink.<sup>86</sup> By the simple necessity of the greater space required to provide sleeping accommodation and victuals, it had to be larger than the simple ale-house. The inn stood above the tavern in popular esteem as serving a more respectable function, for a more respectable clientele, and having a more substantial capital investment to do so.

While contemporaries made distinctions between larger and smaller farms, one has little evidence that would attach their terms to a specific farm size, or even range of sizes. John Rolph promised W.W. Baldwin the support of "the influential and wealthy farmers" in his district for an upcoming election.<sup>87</sup> The United Empire Loyalist called on "some of our leading Farmers" to promote agricultural societies.<sup>88</sup> William Lyon Mackenzie wrote about "wealthy farmers", "rich farmers" and indebted farmers.<sup>89</sup> Susanna Moodie referred to a "secondary class of farmers", and contrasted the diets of large - and small-scale farmers.<sup>90</sup> Looking at the distribution pattern of farm land, one can

(85) Colonial Advocate, July, 1829. York Weekly Post, March 29, 1821. Jacob Keefer to W.H. Merritt, July 5, 1841, W.H. Merritt Papers.

(86) Canadian Christian Examiner, December 1839, p.366.

(87) John Rolph to W.W. Baldwin, (1828?), W.W. Baldwin Papers.

(88) United Empire Loyalist, October 24, 1826.

(89) Colonial Advocate, July 8, 1824; August 5, 1824, August 8, 1827.

(90) Moodie, Roughing, op. cit., p.188; Life, op. cit., p. 68.

only estimate that the concentration of small farms under 20 cleared acres made up the "inferior" class, while those called "wealthy" would likely have had more than 30 or 40 acres in cultivation.<sup>91</sup>

The commonest contemporary association of occupations in the Marginal Respectable level linked farmers and mechanics, or farmers, merchants and mechanics. John Strachan, seeking to depreciate the Methodist local preachers, wrote that they were "principally farmers and Mechanics who are admitted to exhort or Preach after a very short noviciate . . ."<sup>92</sup> Susanna Moodie classed "farmers and respectable mechanics" together, for a similar purpose of showing them to be uneducated.<sup>93</sup> Both the farmer and the mechanic made what could have been a quite prosperous living, by hard physical labour, which according to the custom of the time would have left them little opportunity for "mental improvement".

The broadest references from contemporary sources associate farmers, merchants, and mechanics. Mr. Romanes described just those three as the source of contributions for the church at Smith's Falls.<sup>94</sup> As the wealthier elements in the communities, it was farmers, merchants, and artisans who could afford to pledge \$5 or more to promote a community project such as the church. In a somewhat more complex

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(91) cf. graph in Chapter Two.

(92) John Strachan to Rev. Anthony Hamilton, August 14, 1828, Good, op. cit., p.29.

(93) Moodie, Life, op. cit., p.147.

(94) Mr. Romanes to Rev. Burns, May 30, 1835, Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence.

reference, referred to in a previous chapter, Rev. Wm. Rintoul of the Church of Scotland set up two contrasting social strata, of which the upper is here most significant. He described the decline of a man of his acquaintance due to drink.

. . . He had been at one time a store-keeper in one of our towns, he had afterwards possessed and cultivated a good farm in this neighbourhood - but, all had passed from his hands . . . A short time before the visit referred to, he had been keeping a school which you should know - . . . is an employment of the meanest and most ill-requited kind in Upper Canada. Almost any broken-down mechanic or even a labourer is thought competent to teach in one of our Common Schools. 95

The lower of the two strata is readily visible: common school teacher, labourer, and slightly above these ("even"), the "broken-down mechanic". The higher includes the store-keeper and the owner of "a good farm", as well as, implicitly, the respectable mechanic, in contrast to the "broken-down" one. These contemporary witnesses offer some support for the inclusion of farmers of a certain type, store-keepers and (respectable) mechanics together in the Marginal Respectable level.

Estimates of income are available for a number of occupations in the Marginal Respectable class. Grammar school teachers received a government grant of £100 plus whatever the parents paid in fees. Government clerks received between £116 and £182 a year. Estimates of mechanic's incomes range from a low of £70 up to £200. The well-to-do farmer has here been defined as having an income in the neighbourhood

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(95) Rev. Wm. Rintoul to Rev. Burns, August 13, 1838, Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence.

of £110-15. Excluding the very lowest estimate from a mechanic's income (for Gourlay's 1818 survey), the range established in these comparisons runs from about £100 to as high as £200. That coincides with the minimum considered necessary to engage a servant.<sup>96</sup> Thus one criterion of the Marginal Respectable level serves to reinforce another.

#### Marginal Respectables and Respectables

The Respectable level contained those occupations (or strata of occupations) able to afford a "household", of three or more servants.<sup>97</sup> In general terms, the people of that level were those whose respectability was not in normal circumstances open to question. By their property, position or eminence in a profession, those of the Respectable level had an undeniable claim to respect, even from those who disliked them or disagreed with them.<sup>98</sup> Unlike those in the Marginal Respectable level, their status was never seriously in question, short of something like an overt criminal act.

The merchant and manufacturer (or capitalist) secured their claim on respectability by extensive holdings - whether saw or grist mills, stores, foundries or factories. (The distinction used here between "merchants", as the wealthier and large scale operators in

(96) Horn, op. cit., p.27.

(97) Ibid. See also John Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, March 30, 1840, Macaulay Papers.

(98) Colonial Advocate, October 21, 1824; May 23, 1825. Robert Stanton to John Macaulay, April 5, 1828, Macaulay Papers. John Strachan to C.A. Hagerman, January 29, 1834, Good, op. cit., p.364.



wholesale-retail trade, and "shopkeepers", as the smaller, exclusively retail sellers, was not consistently made by contemporaries.) That extensive property did not guarantee high income, particularly in hard times, or when the merchant or capitalist over-extended his means.<sup>99</sup> Indeed one of the chronic problems of Upper Canadian business was the property-rich, cash-poor nature of its most prominent enterprises. William Allan, as its president, recounted the difficulties of the Bank of Upper Canada in dealing with them.

It is often said at our Board when notes are objected to that such and such persons is [sic] worth Thousands of Pounds - It is very true many have large property they value at that rate, but notwithstanding they cannot command £100 - unless by having recourse to the Bank. 100

The income of the greatest concerns is difficult to pin point. T.W. Acheson estimated that the York merchants in the wholesale-retail trade made about 15% profit on average.<sup>101</sup> Rev. Mark Stark, a shrewd observer in financial matters, considered an acquaintance with £6000 invested to have an income of £600-£700 a year.<sup>102</sup> The respectability

- (99) T.W. Acheson, "John Baldwin . . .", *op. cit.*, pp.155-158. G.H. Detlor to Q. St. George, July 11, 1817, W.W. Baldwin Papers.
- (100) William Allan to John Macaulay, August 31, 1833, Macaulay Papers. See also John Macaulay to William Allan, May 9, 1832, Allan Papers. George Romanes to (?), April 4, 1836, Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence.
- (101) Acheson, "The Nature of York Commerce", *op. cit.*, pp.418-423.
- (102) Mark Stark to Miss Young, December 14, 1840, Stark Papers.

of the merchant and capitalist was anchored in their investment, not necessarily on the return which they got from it.

Certain government positions carried with them the rank and salary of indisputable respectability. Of course no one ever obtained such positions without achieving some eminence before hand, not to mention the indispensable political connections. Department heads (and their deputies) received salaries ranging from £366 for the Adjutant General (£200), £400 for the Receiver General (£182), to £600 for the Surveyor-General (£405).<sup>103</sup> Puisne Judges of King's Bench got £1,000 a year, while after 1841, District Judges received salaries ranging from £150 to £500.<sup>104</sup> Salaries at that level in addition to the considerable responsibilities affecting the whole province taken on by, say, a Puisne Judge or the Surveyor-General ensured their social prominence.

Amongst the Respectable level were the most prominent of the agricultural community. The wealthy farmer, to match the income of others in his level, would have probably had to hold over 60 cleared acres in addition, most likely, to extensive wild lands sufficient to yield a regular supplement to his farming income. As may be seen from the study of sixteen townships noted in Chapter Two, approximately two to five per cent of the farmers in each settled township would have been in this class. That would have made them the largest single

(103) Appendix, 1829, "Public Accounts". John Strachan to John Macaulay February 8, 1836. Macaulay Papers. John Strachan to Sir George Arthur, April 23, 1838, Strachan Papers.

(104) Riddell, Courts, op. cit., volume 2, chapter IX.

occupational group in the Respectable level in every community, aside from the large towns.

Eminence in one's profession ensured not only a substantial income, but also a respected place at the head of society. The educated clergyman - in the Churches of England and Scotland, a university graduate → was considered to be a gentleman. Indeed much of the discussion about clergy salaries centered on the income necessary to live as a gentleman. John Strachan in 1815 protested against the £150 granted to Anglican Ministers.

But such a sum in this country is totally inadequate to enable a Clergyman to maintain that respectable situation in Society which is essential to his usefulness . . . It will be requisite therefore for Government to double their allowance . . . 105

Of course Strachan was here making a plea for higher wages. One need not believe everything he says - especially his related claim that "common servants" made over £75. That he thought it necessary to link clergy salaries to the employment of servants demonstrates in passing the association of respectability and servant-employing. However, Strachan remained fairly consistent in his idea of what a clergyman's salary ought to be, regardless of whom he addressed. He wrote the Bishop of Chester to scout for a young missionary, who ought to be "Gentlemanly in his manners".

. . . This being a new country much will depend upon himself but unless he can be content with looking forward to a Country Mission of £200 with

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(105) "A Report on the State of Religion . . .", March 1, 1815, Spragge, *op. cit.*, p.74.

an opportunity of being continually useful he is not qualified to come to Canada . . . I desire that he be single because a Gentleman with a Family could not properly live in this place on the allowance I offer . . . 106

Church of Scotland Ministers received £112 or thereabouts during most of the 1830's, and at least one thought £200 "a considerable sum".<sup>107</sup> A number, like the Rev. Mark Stark, endeavoured to supplement their church income by teaching.<sup>108</sup> The educated clergyman would not have been receiving less than £100 with £150-£200 a more common expectation.

The eminent lawyer was marked out by both a measure of financial independence and professional respect. W.W. Baldwin reacted angrily to an accusation that he had taken up the post of land agent for some settlers in Cavan township to make money.

I am not settling that Township upon terms of receiving one hundred or fifty acres to myself for every settler. - I am not a superintendent regarding my own interest and neglecting that entrusted to me - nor am I a petty attorney drawing petitions and attending Council with the view of extracting from these poor wanderers their last Dollar for my agency - no Sir - My labour has been gratuitous - My only interest the pride I should feel in being at all . . . instrumental to the improvement of that part of the Country . . . 109

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- (106) John Strachan to the Bishop of Chester, March 4, 1831, Good, op. cit., p.170. John Strachan to Rev. C. Matthews, March 10, 1831, Good, op. cit., p.181.
- (107) Rev. Wm. Rintoul to Rev. Burns, July 27, 1831; George Romanes to Rev. Burns, October 14, 1834, Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence.
- (108) Mark Stark to Mrs. Stark and Miss Young, August 24, 1833, Stark Papers.
- (109) W.W. Baldwin to the Secretary of the Executive Council, October 30, 1817, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

William Lyon Mackenzie looked for eminent lawyers, not the needy, to seek office. Only those could have maintained their political independence ought to have sought election.<sup>110</sup> The eminent lawyer commanded the professional respect of all. H.J. Boulton's performance in the court room could win grudging praise from even his inveterate political opponent, William Lyon Mackenzie.<sup>111</sup> M.S. Bidwell's prominence at the Bar won him the post of Bank of Upper Canada Solicitor at Kingston, an appointment from the hand of his vehement political opponents.<sup>112</sup> While political foes might declaim against a man's policies or even his character, he could hold an undisputed professional reputation.

The doctor, regularly trained and licensed, who established his practice in a densely settled area was more certain of a secure status of respectability than an ample income. Certainly the fees set in 1839 by the new College of Physicians and Surgeons would have allowed a physician a considerable income.<sup>113</sup> It goes without saying that the doctor's skills were highly valued. Moreover doctors gained status for having "gone through a course of studies in order to qualify themselves for this arduous profession".<sup>114</sup> While the country doctor

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(110) Colonial Advocate, January 20, 1825; June 10, 1824; May 7, 1825. Weekly Register, February 12, 1824.

(111) Colonial Advocate, May 23, 1825.

(112) William Allan to John Macaulay, September 3, 1833, Macaulay Papers.

(113) Canniff, op. cit., p.111.

(114) Canniff, op. cit., p.28.

might find his practice hemmed in by "empirics", his status as an educated man was secure.

The accomplished classical scholar found little opening in Upper Canada. Not until near the end of its existence as a separate province, did Upper Canada offer any institution of learning above the district grammar school. However in the plans laid for the future King's College, as well as the Upper Canada Academy (Victoria College), the professors clearly ranked as men of distinction. Their salaries were projected to be in the £200-£400 range, and provision was made for engaging servants on their behalf.<sup>115</sup> By two key criteria, then, the college professor was prospectively included amongst the Respectables.

Contemporary comparisons support a number of the distinctions made here between those occupations (or strata of occupations) of the Marginally Respectables and those of the Respectables. As noted in the section of Chapter Three on the professions, the eminent lawyer (or barrister) was commonly ranked above the "petty" or "needy" attorney.<sup>116</sup> John Strachan reluctantly accepted a persistent young man to study for the Anglican Ministry with the significant reservation: "If he should get into the Church he may be more usefully employed in one of the District Schools where we shall have need of Churchmen."<sup>117</sup> A minister

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(115) "Report by the President for bringing King's into speedy operation", April 26, 1837, Strachan Papers.

(116) Colonial Advocate, July 8, 1824. Dr. John Stuart to J.B. Robinson, June 30, 1808, J.B. Robinson Papers. Riddell, Profession, op. cit., p.18.

(117) John Strachan to George Mountain, December 31, 1828, Good, op. cit., p.48.

who was considered not quite up to standard could make do as a grammar school teacher. Conversely, a district teacher could upgrade himself to become a minister.<sup>118</sup> The merchant clearly ranked above the clerk, both as one employed the other, and as the clerk's ambition was to become a merchant, or at least partner in a merchant house.<sup>119</sup> No direct evidence has been found to show the well-to-do merchant or capitalist having higher status than the shop-keeper, miller or inn-keeper. Rather, a logical case has been made that the greater capital of the former would rank them above the latter. That can be supported by several indirect references. John Strachan scorned the type of businessman involved in the 1822 agitation for union with Lower Canada.

There are some names on the Committee which we old standards do not consider of much weight, indeed it was a matter of surprise that persons engaged two or three years in Commerce without any fixed property and perhaps strangers in the Country should have appeared as leaders in a matter of so much importance. <sup>120</sup>

Strachan would not have objected to merchants of respectability - a Thomas Street or an Alexander Wood - taking a lead, but never a newcomer selling out of a rented shop. A further bit of evidence is derived from parents' intentions for their children. Robert Baldwin Senior and John Strachan did not set up those of their sons who had

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(118) John Strachan to Bishop Stewart, October 14, 1829, Good, op. cit., p.102.

(119) Nelson Cozens to John Macaulay, April 11, 1824. Macaulay Papers.

(120) John Strachan to Simon McGillivray, November 1, 1822, Strachan Papers. See also, "Remarks", Spragge, op. cit., p.91.

an interest in commerce as shopkeepers - though both parents undoubtedly had the capital to do so. They apprenticed their sons as clerks to respectable merchant houses.<sup>121</sup> That appears to be a clear choice of the more respectable pursuit (clerk to merchant) over the lesser (shopkeeper).

The need for servants also bound Respectables together. A Church of Scotland minister received a government grant gratefully, for "Without it I could not have met necessary expenses - Servants wages - house [ ] furniture - and clothing are so exorbitantly rated".<sup>122</sup> He was not the only person to consider that servants were as necessary for the respectable clergyman as clothing and shelter.<sup>123</sup> Government officers with the rank of department head were expected to keep servants.<sup>124</sup> The plans for the establishment of King's College included servants to attend the professors who resided at the University.<sup>125</sup>

- (121) John Strachan to John Fisher, March 31, 1834, Good, op. cit., p.371. Acheson, "John Baldwin", op. cit., pp.153-155. See also John Strachan to James Strachan, June 18, 1820, Spragge, op. cit., p.202.
- (122) Rev. McAlister to Rev. Welsh, May 25, 1831, Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence.
- (123) "A Report on the State of Religion . . .", Spragge, op. cit., p.24. Mark Stark to Mrs. Stark, August 18, 1834, Stark Papers.
- (124) John Macaulay to Helen Macaulay, September 26, 1837; John Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, September 28, 1839; same to same, March 30, 1840, Macaulay Papers.
- (125) "Report by the President for bringing King's into speedy operation", April 26, 1837, Strachan Papers.



The need for servants came to be made explicit for clergy, government officers and professors as each depended on a salary which left a public record, unlike doctors, wealthy farmers, merchants, or capitalists.

References binding together the occupations of the Respectables do not abound. William Lyon Mackenzie, speaking of the British House of Commons as a model for Upper Canada, set out a terse description of those most respectable, and in his view, most fit to represent the people.

. . . In the British house of commons the far greater number of members are country gentlemen, merchants of the first respectability, naval and military men of long experience and high character, manufacturers of wealth and opulence, with a few bankers, and some lawyers of eminence in their profession . . . .126

That comprehends almost every occupation here grouped in the Respectable class. In contrast, when James Wilson attacked those he saw as dominating the agricultural community, he provided a reverse image of those whom he considered taken as respectable.

We had too many lawyers already; the growth of these, and Established Clergymen and Doctors was oppressive to the country, and there appeared to be no end to the troubles and afflictions they brought upon the people . . . .127

His antipathy was directed at the professions in the Respectable level, as against all farmers. He thought highly of manufacturers, which

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(126) Colonial Advocate, May 7, 1827.

(127) Upper Canada Herald, January 30, 1827.

implies a contrast between those who provided services, and those who produced goods.<sup>128</sup> Notwithstanding that distinction, Wilson saw doctors, lawyers, established clergymen, manufacturers, and, presumably, prosperous farmers as included in the ambit of respectability (only the latter two being 'truly' respectable in his view). Addressing "youth", the Christian Guardian evidenced a distinction between commerce and the professions on the one hand and on the other the top-ranking manual labourers.

Strive to excel in the business or profession to which your life is to be devoted . . . It is quite a laudable ambition for a man to aspire to eminence in his secular vocation . . . Even as a tradesman, you should endeavour to be distinguished. 129

Another example is much less precise. While expounding the value of a college education, a writer for the Canadian Christian Examiner noted that some had reached the top economic rank without it. "Many of our countrymen have risen to prosperity both in agricultural and commercial pursuits . . ." <sup>130</sup> Farming and business here appeared as the routes to wealth, indicating that the most well-to-do merchants and richest farmers would be found in the first rank of society. These references indicate some support for the linking of occupations made to form the category of the Respectables.

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(128) York Weekly Post, March 8, 1821. Canadian Freeman, January 8, 1827.

(129) Christian Guardian, December 5, 1829; see also January 7, 1835.

(130) Canadian Christian Examiner, November, 1839, p.347.

The income necessary to support one's status amongst the Respectables ranged from an indispensable base to the upper limit of wealth in Upper Canada. Respectable clergy and doctors at times had trouble securing the funds required to support their social station. The educated clergyman often taught school on the side to make the extra income necessary to support his status. The doctor to ensure a high income, had to settle in a populous part of the province. As well he might have found it necessary to develop a more lucrative side-line in farming or business. At times he would have been obliged to keep his territory clear of unlawful competitors by suing unlicensed practitioners.<sup>131</sup> The minimum income for respectability is perhaps best delineated in the correspondence on clergy salaries. The basic for the Church of Scotland Minister in the 1830's was £112, on top of which were laid any independent earnings from teaching or perhaps farming.<sup>132</sup> Government officers' salaries went from £366 up to £600. The proposed salaries for college professors fit neatly into that range.<sup>133</sup> Given servant wages of £15-25, a minimum salary of £150 to £200 appears to confirm the conjunction of respectability with the employment of servants.

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(131) Canniff, op. cit., pp.39, 70-71. Mark Stark to Mrs. Stark and Miss Young, August 24, 1833, Stark Papers. Peter MacFarlain to Rev. Burns, June 27, 1835, Morris Papers.

(132) Alexander Ross to Rev. Burns, December 30, 1829; Wm. Morris to Rev. Welsh, February 9, 1830; George Romanes to Rev. Burns, October 14, 1834, Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence.

(133) Appendix, 1829, op. cit., "Public Accounts"; John Strachan to the Bishop of Chester, March 4, 1831; John Strachan to C. Matthews, March 10, 1831, Good, op. cit., pp.170, 181.

### Conclusion

The variety of Upper Canadians' perceptions of social status can be organized into a systematic form, reconstructing approximately the prestige hierarchy of the colony. At the bottom stood paupers, servants and squatters in the Dependent status. Their economic position ranged from mere subsistence in the case of paupers and some squatters up to that plus a very modest income of around £20 for male servants and perhaps the most prosperous squatters. In social terms all were dependent on the will of one other person, whether benefactor, master or landowner.

Above that stratum was the Quasi-dependent level, comprising labourers, pioneer farmers, and common school teachers. These eased their dependence through shifting it to an institution, possession of property, or some working skill. The economic counterpart to that social advantage was a marginally higher income range of £25 to £35.

The yeoman farmer, pedlar, tavern-keeper, preacher and settled tradesman had the means through property or skill to earn a living independent of the personal will of another. The upper limit for the income of the Independent level - £40 to £70 - might allow for the hire of a single, female servant. However it was their economic independence, rather than their servants that formed the foundation of their social standing.

The shop- and inn-keeper, miller, "clerk", doctor, attorney, grammar school teacher, respectable mechanic and well-to-do farmer all

stood on the threshold of respectability. With an income of £100 to £150, they could afford to hire servants. However they remained in the Marginal Respectable level, unless something else moved them indisputably into the Respectable level. For the farmer and the businessman for example it might be a further growth in their investment base, clinched socially at some point by a key appointment to militia command or the bench of magistrates.

These five strata are an arrangement of the available data of contemporary views of social stratification that derives its rationale from the expressed attitudes and observations of contemporaries, as well as logical extensions of those observations. The terms "dependent", "independent" and "respectable" and their meanings are derived from contemporary usage. "Quasi-dependent" and "Marginal Respectable" are labels invented to cover vaguer transitional groupings. These levels appear to have existed in the minds of Upper Canadians, but not so clearly as to have been given specific names.

With all its attendant limitations, this hierarchy of social status served an important purpose. It provides the necessary scale to make the term "social mobility" meaningful. One must have some sense of "top" and "bottom" to make anything out of mobility as "up" and "down". Since this particular scale appears to be consistent with Upper Canadians' perceptions of rank and status it seems the most appropriate to a discussion of their attitudes toward social mobility and the factors that influenced it.

OCCUPATIONAL STATUS HIERARCHY

SOCIAL STRATA	EMPLOYMENT HIERARCHY			<u>Manual Labour</u>
	<u>Farming</u>	<u>Commerce</u>	<u>Professions</u>	
Respectable	wealthy farmer	merchant manufacturer	barrister minister professor	
Marginal	well-to-do farmers	miller inn-keeper	grammar school teacher doctor attorney	mechanic
Respectable				
Independent	yeoman farmer	tavern-keeper pedlar	preacher	journeyman
Quasi- dependent	pioneer		teacher	labourer
Dependent	squatter			servant

PART II POPULAR CONCEPTIONS OF FACTORS IN SOCIAL MOBILITY

CHAPTER 6

FACTORS OF SOCIAL MOBILITY



The study of popular attitudes towards social mobility can be facilitated by examining those attitudes in terms of their components as they influenced individuals' or groups' social movement. That is, the very general question, "what attitudes did people have towards social mobility?", needs to be elaborated. What attitudes did people have towards more specific aspects of mobility - in particular toward the factors which could promote or retard upward social movement, or produce outright downward mobility? Each factor must be given detailed consideration in its own right. Such a dissection of attitudes gains precision by giving greater attention to each of the various factors. However it may distort their roles if each were only treated in isolation. In part this problem is dealt with by the subsequent chapter on the comparative influence each factor had on social mobility. Within the limit of that qualification, the description and analysis of the separate variables allows a more precise treatment of their nature and function in the common mind.

This chapter reviews six aspects of the popular attitude toward social mobility. Whether a person was male or female mattered profoundly to Upper Canadians in estimating someone's chances of get-

ting ahead. The amount and type of education which anyone had (or claimed) was considered important. Both religious denomination and more generally the profession of some Christian religion were thought influential by many especially for particular avenues of social advance. Upper Canadians often held an individual's ethnic origin to be of consequence for opportunities of economic and social success. They were even more emphatic about the deleterious effect upon any perceived as being from another "race". Finally, an articulate section of Upper Canadian opinion debated at great length the role of political patronage. The part each of these aspects played in the popular mind gives an insight into attitudes toward social mobility.

A seventh factor which loomed large in the minds of contemporaries was "character". From its usage, the term clearly meant different things to various people in an assortment of circumstances. Such a range of personal attributes could be encompassed by that simple word that it requires particular attention to see as clearly as possible what elements within the general usage were thought to do what. Indeed sometimes the meaning is quite unclear. That very ambiguity and the prominence of character in so many contexts points to the need for an extended treatment in a separate chapter.

#### Sex, Marriage and Mobility

From Chapter Four's description of the circumscribed social

status and roles seen as acceptable for women, the severe limitations consequent upon women's social mobility follow logically. The focus in this chapter is on the extent to which women could improve their social positions even within the confines of prevailing attitudes. The related influence of marriage on the mobility of both men and women is the second aspect treated here. The types of occupation open to women operated as an effective ceiling on their independent social ambitions. Yet it is to these narrow channels which we must turn our attention to see what mobility was possible.

The great majority of women who were gainfully employed in Upper Canada were servants. For young women from families of destitute emigrants, 'service' offered a chance to leave home and earn an income.<sup>1</sup> But the "situation" seldom led anywhere. The number who found employment in service beyond the "maid-of-all-work" category was minute.<sup>2</sup> For most women who sought some form of economic autonomy, the only occupation available put them firmly at the Dependent level.

While the social standing of prostitutes was considerably more

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- (1) Adam Hope to George Hope, October 8, 1849, Hope Papers. Katz, op. cit., pp.27-28, 270-272. John Gemmill to Andrew Gemmill, June 23, 1823, Gemmill Papers. See also Mary and Arthur Stock to John Colquhoun, December 10, 1823, Stock Papers.
  - (2) John Strachan to Archbishop Whately, September 24, 1832, Good, op. cit., p.307. For an exception of sorts, see Moodie, Life op. cit., p.158.

ambiguous than female servants, their chance of improving their lot was not much better. They might have been considered to have had somewhat greater earning potential. Yet the prospect of transmitting any economic edge over the reputable female servant into a better social position was radically undercut by the stigma attached to prostitution. In a way similar to the role seen for dishonesty in business, defiance of norms in sexual behaviour could only have produced a measure of economic mobility (as may have been the case with the two ~~brothel~~ keepers noted by Katz in Hamilton) but there was almost no chance for the corresponding social mobility.<sup>3</sup> Much less ambiguously placed in the Quasi-dependent level are the women who taught the equivalent of common schools. The enrollments in these had to be very low since they most often seemed to have operated out of the woman's home.<sup>4</sup> Therefore both by income and by occupation women common school teachers would have been placed firmly in the Quasi-dependent level.

Emigrant women, educated outside the colony, usually initiated

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- (3) Katz, op. cit., p.56. Jameson, op. cit., volume 1, pp.269-70. See also Moodie, Roughing, op. cit., pp.140-143; and Life, op. cit., pp.9-10. Hathaway, op. cit., p.56. See also E.C. Bolton to W.W. Baldwin, April 10, 1830 (1838), W.W. Baldwin Papers and Moodie, Life, op. cit., pp.158, 273. Patriot, December 12, 1834.
- (4) Prentice, op. cit., p.50. See also Upper Canada Herald, June 20, 1832.

the episodic and transient distaff attempts at founding better than common schools.<sup>5</sup> Denied the means to improve their qualifications by the almost complete closure of grammar schools to females, those women native to the colony had next to no chance of advancing in the teaching profession before 1840.<sup>6</sup>

Scattered through the middle range of Upper Canadian society were a small number of women, mainly in the towns, who held their economic positions in their own right. There were the very few women teachers who gave the equivalent of a better than common school education, either privately or sporadically through an institution like Grantham Academy. Given the entrepreneurial aspect of some of these ventures which appear to have been nearly grammar schools, they might be considered above the Independent level. However against this, must be balanced the question of whether these were either full time or lasting engagements. While not always dependent on an external authority, these positions seemed too unstable to be classified as beyond the Independent level.

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- (5) See for example, Rev. Mark Stark to Mrs. Stark, May 14, 1835, Stark Papers. Upper Canada Herald, March 17, 1830.
- (6) Farmers' Journal and Canal Intelligencer, August 5, 1829 (clipping); "Memo", March 31, 1835; W. Crockell to W.H. Merritt, January 13, 1837, W.H. Merritt Papers. M.Y. Stark to Mrs. Stark December 20, 1834; same to same, May 14, 1835, Stark Papers. John Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, September 28, 1839; same to same, October 13, 1839; same to same, June 22, 1840; John Strachan to John Macaulay, December 4, 1828, Macaulay Papers. Patriot, June 13, 1834; January 6, 1835; August 23, 1836; March 2, 1838; November 9, 1838. Upper Canada Herald, March 17, 1830; April 13, 1831; August 16, 1831; November 16, 1831; June 20, 1832.

Clearly in the independent strata were two contrasting occupations for women - tavern-keeping and preaching. The latter are rare, confined to a couple of small denominations, such as the Quakers and Primitive Methodists.<sup>7</sup> Women as tavern-keepers were more common. Most districts probably had such establishments.<sup>8</sup> Among the Marginal Respectables would have been those few women who owned and managed substantial inns, as well as the occasional dressmaker or milliner in large towns like York or Kingston. The woman who ran an inn had most likely inherited the capital, if not the establishment itself, from a deceased husband.<sup>9</sup> Entry into millinery or dressmaking was regulated not only by the need for capital, and the requisite skills, but most of all by the existence of a market for the finished product. In a frontier society such as Upper Canada there were, for example, only a small, though increasing, number of women who could afford to purchase hats, and thus very limited opportunities for those who had the skill to make them.<sup>10</sup>

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- (7) Hoover, op. cit., pp.22, 27-28. Primitive Methodist Magazine, "Journal of Wm. Summersides", 1831; December 1853, p.475. "Journal of Col. Mahlon Burnwell", pp.37-38, Burwell Papers. L.R. Gray, "Pheobe Roberts' Diary . . .". Ontario History, volume 42, 1950, pp.7-46.
- (8) Petition of Isabella McCosh, June 12, 1819, UCS.
- (9) Robert Moore to Robert Barrie, May 14, 1820, UCS. See also Canniff, op. cit., p.34. MacTaggart, op. cit., volume 2, p.41. Patriot, April 11, 1837.
- (10) Canadian Freeman, August 26, 1830; November 25, 1830. Patriot, November 29, 1833; December 20, 1836; August 1, 1837; September 12, 1837; January 2, 1838. Upper Canada Herald, June 22, 1831. Christian Guardian, February 8, 1837; November 1, 1837; November 28, 1838; October 23, 1839.

As teacher, preacher, tavern- or inn-keeper, milliner, or dress-maker, women had scarce any openings if they sought to support themselves above the Independent level. They could rarely gain access to the necessary capital for business. There existed only a limited market for the (trade) skills thought appropriate for women. Beyond business in the trades open to women, and the marginal teaching and preaching at the lowest level of the professions, the great obstacle to women's mobility was education.

In Upper Canada it was commonly believed that women, either because of their feeble intellect, or because of their special role in the family, did not require - indeed, perhaps could not stand - any but the most minimal education. That view meant women were denied access to an important means of upward social mobility. A woman's 'education' (as far as it went) was not to be a means to rise on her own, but was to fit her for her situation. A woman's education had to be carefully monitored to ensure that it neither put undue strain on her limited faculties nor unsuited her to the place fixed for her in society.

While there was some ambiguity as to women's proper place in secondary education, there was none at all when it came to university or any professional apprenticeship.<sup>11</sup> In fact women did enter the professions as teachers, preachers, and mid-wives - but always at the

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(11) Draft letter on McGill University, February 14, 1815, Strachan Papers. See also the Canadian Christian Examiner, April 1837, pp.44-45; February 1840, pp.53-54. Royce, op. cit., pp.1-13.

very lowest level and usually without the possibility of any formal instruction that might have enabled them to rise from that level,<sup>12</sup>

Given the severely circumscribed opportunities for upward mobility available in the occupations open to them, it is no surprise to find women's main hope for any social advancement lay in marriage. Being perceived as weak and dependent, the woman was to find a man to protect and support her, to 'give her children'. Marriage and the family held the fulfillment of all a woman could aspire to. Ann C. Macaulay of Hallowell summed up the prospect in a poem to her newborn niece.

And may'st thou find a Husband meet,  
and be a happy Wife;  
Unto thee, be children given -  
and when thy course is run,  
Laying down thy life with cheerfulness,  
thou wilt say, "Thy will be done." 13

A woman's hopes for upward mobility were bound up in the prospect of marrying someone of better circumstances. Mrs. J.S. Howard wrote to a friend in Goderich urging her to send her two daughters to Toronto by the new railway.

. . . . If they change about it will do them both good . You must consider they are both growing up and if they see no change they will be likely to marry young as many of your neighbours' children have done, and with a very poor prospect of a living, when by a change they will perhaps do better . . . .14

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- (12) For example, on mid-wives, see Canniff, op. cit., pp.16-51.  
 (13) "To my infant niece", by Ann C. Macaulay, November 10, 1834, Macaulay Papers.  
 (14) Mrs. J.D. Howard to Mrs. Sidney Mountcastle, July 6, 1847, Howard Papers.



Trains not only increased travel mobility, but also the prospect of social mobility by giving young women (especially in rural areas) a larger pool of potential mates from which to draw.

But while a woman might be able to improve her status by "marrying up", too great a social difference might injure the man's position, and thus forfeit the woman's anticipated gain. Contemporaries were very conscious of whether some man of importance had married "below his station". Anna Jameson in her travels visited a certain "Admiral V-".

The good admiral . . . has recently astonished the whole neighbourhood . . . by taking to himself a young, very young wife, of a station very inferior to his own. There have been considerable doubts in neighbourhood as to the propriety of visiting the young lady . . .<sup>15</sup>

Here the damage to the young lady's status is made explicit: she may face a social boycott from the other women. Thus a woman's prospects of "marrying up" could exist only to a limited degree.

Since women's hopes to rise in society were tied up in the husband - his status at the time of marriage and his social progress thereafter - wives had a massive stake in their husband's position. When Daniel Jones, of Brockville, was inexplicably knighted in 1836, a puzzled observer asked, "Whose ambition is this, his own or his wife's . . .?"<sup>16</sup> Similarly when the husband fell from favour or

(15) Jameson, op. cit., volume 2, pp.126-127. See also Mrs. E. Middleton to W.D. Powell, January 14, 1809, Jarvis-Powell Papers and MacTaggart, op. cit., volume 2, p.227; John Galt, Corbet, op. cit., volume 3, p.68. Shirreff, op. cit., p.165.

(16) T.A. Stayner to John Macaulay, May 14, 1836, Macaulay Papers.

respectability, the wife's position was destroyed as well.<sup>17</sup> The status a woman might enjoy as wife of a successful man was only by proxy; built on his success, it perished instantly with his failure.

By contrast, for men marriage was an auxiliary rather than a primary means of upward mobility. To be sure the role a wife could play in securing a man's economic or social position was often noted. For the great majority of native-born and immigrants who sought to attain Independence by starting a pioneer farm, a wife was considered indispensable. The Colonial Advocate printed the assessment:

A bachelor has no business in the Backwoods; - for in a wild country, where it is impossible to hire assistance of any kind, either male or female, a man is thrown entirely on himself. Let any one imagine the uncomfortableness of inhabiting a log cabin, - where one is obliged to cut wood, clean the room, cook one's victuals, etc. etc., without any assistance whatsoever . . . . To a family-man the case is different. When isolated from the world, as everyone must expect to be who goes to the backwoods, he has an immense resource in domestic enjoyments, and particularly in the care and education of his children. 18

Various travellers noted the critical function of the wife as help-mate and bearer of children.<sup>19</sup> These observations are reflected in

- (17) See for example comments on Lady Mary Willis and Mrs. George Markland, John Strachan to John Macaulay, May 4, 1829; John Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, July 8, 1838, Macaulay Papers.
- (18) Colonial Advocate, January 13, 1825.
- (19) Howison, op. cit., p.253. M'Gregor, op. cit., volume 2, p.448. See also T. Radcliff (ed), Authentic Letters from Upper Canada, Macmillan Company, Toronto, 1953, pp.7-8. Shirreff, op. cit., p.166. See also Pitken, op. cit., pp.21-22.

comments made by the poorer emigrants. John Gemmill, an unemployed sawyer, having settled on his lot, advised younger members of his family to come out, but that "if you do not bring a wife with you, that you will remain an old batchelor . . ." <sup>20</sup> For the poorer settlers, a wife could mean not only help now and in future (from the children), but also an acquisition of property. Susanna Moodie recorded the story of "Willie Robertson . . . married to a Canadian woman, neither young nor good-looking, an' verra much his inferior every way; but she had a guid lot o' land in the rear o' his farm." <sup>21</sup> For the many men hoping to advance to Independence by pioneer farming, a wife, the children she might raise or even her property could be valuable assets.

For those whose success or ambitions carried them past Independence towards Respectability, here at times arose a conflict between the man's station in society and the wife's social skills. E.A. Talbot saw a growing social gap between the successful men in Upper Canada and their wives. <sup>22</sup> Anna Jameson observed the difficulties of the emigrant gentry in finding "suitable" wives. It was no good to take a well-born wife into a rude society. ". . . They may be said to live in a perpetual state of inward discord and fretful

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(20) John Gemmel to Andrew Gemmel, September 17, 1823, Gemmel Papers. See also George Forbes to Mr. and Mrs. Forbes, October 30, 1848, Forbes Papers. George Forbes to John Forbes, April 20, 1849, Forbes Papers.

(21) Moodie, Life, op. cit., p.192.

(22) Talbot, op. cit., volume 2, p.23.

endurance -"<sup>23</sup> She listened sympathetically to the protest of one such young gentleman: ". . . Marry one of the women of the country - one of the daughters of the bush. No, I cannot; I must have something different . . ."<sup>24</sup> What he and many other men sought was a socially accomplished, well-connected wife to complement and perhaps even secure their social position.

For the man who aimed at achieving Respectability the right wife would have been an important social asset. W.D. Powell, as an ambitious young lawyer in a new colony, considered his prospects brightened considerably when his wife joined him there. "The presence of an amiable woman was doubtless favourable to the progress in Society of himself . . ."<sup>25</sup> But wives were often expected to aid their husband's upward social movement in more tangible ways than their social graces.

It has been commonly remarked upon that the York elite, and its allied local elites, tended to inter-marry, giving some substance to the sobriquet, "Family Compact".<sup>26</sup> To some degree that inter-marriage only reflected the existence of a set of social relationships between

(23) Jameson, op. cit., volume 2, p.147. See also Shirreff, op. cit., p.165 and Christian Guardian, November 20, 1830.

(24) Jameson, op. cit., volume 2, p.152.

(25) "Notice of the Progress of William Dummer Powell, Chief Justice of the Province of Upper Canada," n.d., (1818?), Jarvis-Powell Papers. See also Jonas Jones to John Macaulay, October 30, 1833, Macaulay Papers.

(26) Robert E. Saunders, "What was the Family compact?" Ontario History, volume 49, 1957, pp.165-178. Dunham, op. cit., pp.41-43. Alison Ewart and Julia Jarvis, "The Personnel of the Family Compact, 1791-1841," Canadian Historical Review, volume 7, number 4, 1926, pp.209-221.

various families, and perhaps also a sense of belonging to an elite apart from the farmers, mechanics, tavern- and shop-keepers.<sup>27</sup> However, for "new men", the right marriage could provide the necessary social connections (and at times more material benefits as well) for a further advance in the social hierarchy.<sup>28</sup>

Marriage could occasionally affect men in a negative way. Men, especially if prosperous, were expected to get married. Those who did not came in for some criticism. In a letter to his friend, John Macaulay, J.B. Robinson enumerated several reasons why he was not

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(27) For an example, young J.B. Robinson being invited to read Romeo and Juliet to the Jarvis sisters, J.B. Robinson to John Macaulay, May 6, 1809, Macaulay Papers. See Robert J. Burns, "The First Elite of Toronto: An Examination of the Genesis, Consolidation and Duration of Power in an Emerging Colonial Society", Ph. D. thesis, University of Western Ontario, London, 1974, chapter III and V, pp.60ff, 85ff. John Strachan to Dr. Brown, August 27, 1805, Strachan Papers.

(28) Note the role of marriage in clinching a place in the local elite for the careers of John Strachan, Thomas Mercer Jones, James Aitchison and John Joseph: J. McGill to John Strachan, May 13, 1813, Strachan Papers. John Strachan to John Richardson, September 30, 1812; same to same, May 10, 1813; John Strachan to Dugold Stewart, (winter) 1814; John Strachan to John Richardson, May 29, 1814; John Strachan to W. McGillvray, May 2, 1815, Spragge, op. cit., pp.17, 37, 58, 64, 83. J.B. Robinson to John Macaulay, July 25, 1826, Macaulay Papers. Clarence Karr, The Canada Land Company: The Early Years, Ontario Historical Society, Ottawa, 1974, pp.43-45. R.D. Hall, "The Canada Company, 1826-1843", unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Cambridge University, Cambridge, 1973, p.281. William Aitchison to James Aitchison, March 2, 1834; James Aitchison to Mrs. William Aitchison, October 4, 1837; William Proudfoot to John Aitchison, August 17, 1838, Aitchison Papers.

likely to be preferred for a prime patronage post, Customs Collector at Kingston.

You are thought (I hope justly) to be very rich, because all the world knows you to be very industrious and prudent - then you have a tolerable present support, and from your deficiency in fulfilling one of the cardinal virtues, you have but yourself to support. 29

Well-to-do men who had not married could be seen as selfish, not fulfilling their full social responsibilities.

The choice a man made in marrying could also occasionally injure his prestige, if he were already in a high status position. At the top of the social and political elite in the colony it was apparently possible to get too closely inter-married. Jonas Jones of Brockville found his quest for appointment to the Court of King's Bench blocked by objections that, since he was closely related to someone already serving, it would not seem proper to elevate him to the province's highest Bench at that time.<sup>30</sup> However, Jones was eventually appointed puisne judge. A bad marriage, no marriage, or too much inter-marriage thus offered in most cases only a marginal handicap to the standing of high status men.

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(29) J.B. Robinson to John Macaulay, July 19, 1828, Macaulay Papers. See also Jameson, op. cit., volume 1, p.203.

(30) Quealey, op. cit., p.81.

The contrasting sex roles of men and women constituted a critical factor in social mobility. The common attitudes toward women restricted their occupational mobility mainly to domestic service, with minor openings in a few other areas such as teaching, victualing and specialized "female" trades, i.e. milliner. Part of that prevailing view of women's character was the assumption that they were unsuited to advanced or practical education. That effectively barred what for men could have been a major route up the social scale. As a consequence women were left with no attractive or functional alternative to marriage.

While women could 'marry up' this had its limitations. The status which a 'good match' might gain was only held by proxy: all depended on the man. If he fell, so did she. A woman could only expect to marry a certain distance up the social hierarchy. If she over-reached, the difference might injure the man's status, thus forfeiting the woman's expected great gain.

For many men marriage was an economic necessity, to procure the necessary domestic support for farming or some other occupation. To the rising native-born and the emigrant gentry, it was important to find the proper wife to accord with one's social pretensions. Poorer men were liable, if they thought of marriage in terms of status, to marry for economic rather than social security. While in some ways marriage could be a negative factor in men's mobility, the person they married was seldom a critical factor.

### Education

The level of an individual's education on the one hand could have set bounds on that person's upward mobility, and on the other could have opened certain opportunities. For those in the professions education constituted an important differential. Often the extent or the quality of the education determined the individual's status within the profession, for example between the common school and grammar school teachers. Similarly it was education, in the sense of training, through the apprentice system that offered the unskilled access to the higher wages and status of a journeyman or mechanic. Even without providing the skills to enter some occupation, an education - especially an acquaintance with the classics - enhanced one's social status, being a necessary component of gentility. But where a professional education or apprenticeship in a trade made certain opportunities available, the lack of all education foreclosed others. The various controversies over public support for schools, by contrast, reveal that education was not highly valued as a social good, however much it was prized in or by individuals.

Upper Canadians particularly regretted the lack of education in many of their wealthy farmers and merchants. Specifically, illiteracy formed a barrier to the advance of otherwise respectable, well-to-do citizens into appointed positions of local authority and prestige. Adjutant-General Coffin had to cope with the resignation of a militia officer who had been passed over for a promotion. He wrote privately



to the man's commanding officer,

The poor fellow was under the necessity of employing some one to write his letters, but it appears he did not let his friend see how he wrote Regiment under his signature: - Surely that is sufficient to convince the poor Man that he is not qualified to be a Field Officer -

After being in a Regiment so many years not to be able to write the word - Perhaps you may laugh the poor man out of the idea of resigning . . . .31

Ample property and good character could not by themselves invariably get a person onto the Bench of magistrates. Attorney-General Robinson, in his list of prospective J.P.'s noted by one person's name, "a good man, but illiterate".<sup>32</sup> Education from the simplest rudiments to the most complex professional training constituted an important factor in social mobility.

Given that education was an important factor, then access to education must also have been important as an avenue of social mobility. However the debates over the degrees of access to education have commonly focused on the schools.<sup>33</sup> But these were only part of Upper Canadian educational opportunities. For most of its history

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- (31) N. Coffin to C. Jones, October 15, 1823; see also, Col. Coffin to C. Jones, October 14, 1828, Charles Jones Papers. See also Kingston Chronicle, August 1, 1823.
- (32) J.B. Robinson to Col. MacMahon, December 2, 1814 UCS. See also Harry Leith to Dr. Lee, July 21, 1827, Lee Papers.
- (33) George W. Spragge, "John Strachan's Contribution to Education, 1800-1823", Canadian Historical Review, volume 22, 1941, pp.147-158. Alison Smith, "John Strachan and Early Upper Canada, 1799-1814", Ontario History, volume 64, no. 1, March 1972, pp.45-63. Susan E. Houston, "Politics, Schools, and Social Change in Upper Canada", Canadian Historical Review, volume 53, 1972, pp.249-271.

Upper Canada had a three-part system of education. The "common school" or "township school" and its privately run counterparts had as their objectives producing literate and numerate students.<sup>34</sup> The "grammar school", often called "the District school", was intended to provide a basic classical education as a preparation for certain professions, especially the law and the Church. In response to parents' demands these also offered elementary instruction in certain "vocational" subjects, especially bookkeeping and surveying.<sup>35</sup>

Apart from the common schools and the grammar schools as systems of education, there was professional and trade training by means of apprenticeships. While a number of those aspiring to the medical profession left the province to attend universities, many studied under local doctors as assistants.<sup>36</sup> John Strachan himself received all the formal instruction in theology he ever got in the house of Rev. John Stuart of Kingston.<sup>37</sup> As late as the 1840's Strachan as bishop was still directing young men to live with senior clergy to be tutored.<sup>38</sup>

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(34) "Reminiscence of Hon. Henry Ruttan of Cobourg", W.H. Merritt Papers. See also Mr. MacNaughton to Rev. Burns, July 12, 1834; Rev. Wm. Rintoul to Rev. Burns, August 13, 1838. Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence, Canadian Christian Examiner, March 1839, pp.90-91.

(35) John Strachan to Dr. Brown, July 13, 1806, Strachan Papers. Clipping from Farmers' Journal and Canal Intelligencer, August 5, 1829, W.H. Merritt Papers.

(36) Canniff, op. cit., pp.56-62. Roderick MacLeod to Ed MacMahon, September 22, 1817, UCS. Patriot, July 22, 1834. Firth, op.cit., pp.176-177.

(37) William Smith, Political Leaders of Upper Canada, Books for Libraries Press, Freeport, 1968, p.160.

(38) A.N. Bethune to John Strachan, October 24, 1842, Strachan Papers.

Before 1841 one can only speak of government aid, to what was essentially a private school system. The 1807 Grammar School Act and the 1816 Common School Act merely provided modest sums to encourage parents' support of schools. The parents or the teacher had to supply and maintain the building in which instruction took place. The government grant (to a school that met the government requirements) was meant to be a subsidy not a salary. Parents had been expected to continue paying fees for their children's education.<sup>39</sup> Whatever part access to education had in the opportunities for social mobility, government involvement in increasing or limiting that access must be seen as marginal.

A second consideration that must be held in view when examining controversies over education is that they often centered on the kind of education for which state aid was necessary. From the 1808 Assembly revolt of Messrs. Dorland, Rogers and Howard to the 1830's attacks of the Christian Guardian and Dr. T.D. Morrison in the Assembly, the critics of the provincial executive assailed grammar schools, in favour of common schools.<sup>40</sup> Government aid was viewed as a subsidy given to the well-to-do, who could afford to pay for their own children's education. Implicitly, the critics argued that the little money spent on

(39) Home District Board of Education Report, June 13, 1819, UCS.

(40) "To the Freeholders Electors in the province of Upper Canada" by "A Sincere Friend," n.d. [about 1808] Charles Jones Papers. See also Hodgins, op. cit., volume 1, pp.76, 77. D.M. Rogers to the Lieutenant Governor, December 4, 1814, UCS. Christian Guardian, February 4, 1835; January 21, 1835; March 1, 1837. Correspondent and Advocate, September 14, 1836. Upper Canada Herald, March 3, 1830. Patriot, March 6, 1835.

education ought to go to those most in need. The cost of fees and (for most pupils) of boarding meant in their view that only the wealthy could use the grammar schools. By contrast common schools were near the home, and fees were much less. However, the consequence of such a policy, of which these critics do not seem to have been aware, would have been to restrict access to the classical education needed for professions to the more wealthy.

Men like Rogers, Howard and Morrison thought of the common school as the local school that should be available to everyone. Strachan considered the grammar school (as opposed to Upper Canada College) as the local school.<sup>41</sup> Behind this difference perhaps lay a view by the former that only the common schools deserved public support. First, this was because all could attend. Second, these would as a consequence serve the poorest who needed help. In their view the grammar school was an expensive extra which those who could afford it might take. But to Strachan the whole school system ought to be open to the able regardless of their financial resources.<sup>42</sup>

Within the framework of the prevailing assumptions of the primacy of parental support in education and the differing views as to the proper objects for such government aid as was available, several controversies

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(41) "Memorial to Lieutenant Governor from Magistrates etc. of the London District" Good, *op. cit.*, p.188, with the note, "The following Given to Burwell April 4, 1831 with the letter", in Strachan's hand.

(42) "Report on Education", February 26, 1815. Spragge, *op. cit.*, pp. 75, 77, 79. "Extract of a memorandum . . .", February 1822, Strachan Papers. See also, John Strachan to John Macaulay, May 12, 1831, Macaulay Papers.

occupied the public following the War of 1812. The financing, religious affiliation, and social aims of the schools system all divided Upper Canadians. The debate thus generated throws some light on general attitudes towards the use of education as a means of social mobility.

Through most of the period from 1815 to 1840 almost all political leaders in the colony who interested themselves in education at one time or other chased the chimera of a comprehensive system of schools financed without taxation. The repository of those hopes was the school lands endowment of 1798. The expectation was that as people moved into the province, the price of land would rise. Then by either sale or lease, the school lands would yield a painless revenue.<sup>43</sup>

While John Strachan, as the colony's leading educational administrator had discovered the fallacy of that hope by the end of the 1820's, his critics continued to hold to it, blaming him and his political allies for its failure.<sup>44</sup> The pressure of events during the later 1830's wore down that comforting view. The Assembly's failure to utilize its control of public lands after 1831, and the sense of social crisis following the 1837 Rebellion, eventually dispelled the fantasy of a school system funded only by landed endowment. That such dubious economics endured as public orthodoxy for so long is further evidence that education was considered a 'marginal social good' in Upper Canada.

(43) "Draft Petition to Gov. Maitland and the Legislature", 1818, Strachan Papers. Hodgins, op. cit., volume 1, pp. 25, 68, 164-174.

(44) "Extract of a memorandum . . .", February 1822; "Memorial of the House of Assembly . . .", December 4, 1833, Strachan Papers. "Report on Education", February 26, 1815, Spragge, op. cit., pp. 75-79. "Memorial to the Lt. Governor . . .", April 4, 1831, Good, op. cit., pp. 186-188. Brockville Recorder, April 7, 1831. See also the Canadian Freeman, February 8, 1827.

Probably most of the writing done in the province concerning schools was rooted in religious controversies. However, on the fundamental question there existed remarkable unanimity: education must have a religious component.<sup>45</sup> Up to and through the 1830's denominational divisions decisively affected every school proposal. The resolve, for example, on one side to block King's College and if necessary close Grantham Academy on the other to attempt to deny areas school teachers, rather than let any other denomination gain advantage illustrates a clear submission of education - and all its possibilities for social mobility - to the demands of sectarian rivalry.<sup>46</sup>

The long debate over the relative merits of grammar vs. common schools - with its implicit conception of the social aims of schooling - was smothered rather than resolved in the late 1830's. The great wave of immigration into Upper Canada during the early 1830's, the prominence of unruly, destitute Irish in that migration, the 1837 Rebellion, and the border raids and alarms of 1838 and 1839 profoundly disturbed the public mind.<sup>47</sup> That sense of crisis gave considerable weight to

(45) Canadian Christian Examiner, June 1838, p.169; January 1839, p.7; November 1839, p.346. Christian Guardian, December 5, 1829; April 29, 1835. Volunteer, May 10, 1842. See also Constitution, July 12 and 19, 1837. John Strachan to the Bishop, September 30, 1816. Spragge, op. cit., p.126.

(46) John Strachan to Bishop Stewart, November 5, 1827; John Strachan to Archdeacon George Mountain, December 26, 1827, Good, op. cit., pp.9-10.

(47) R.D. Gidney, "Upper Canadian Public Opinion and Common School Improvement in the 1830's", Histoire Sociale, volume 5, no. 9, April 1972, pp.48-60. Houston, op. cit., pp.249-271. J.K. Johnson, "Colonel James Fitzgibbon and the suppression of Irish Riots in Upper Canada", Ontario History, volume 58, no.3, September 1966, pp.139-155, especially p.154 and J.J. Bellomo, "Upper Canadian Attitudes Towards Crime and Punishment (1832-1852)", Ontario History, volume 64, no. 1, December 1972, pp.11-17.

the move toward a comprehensive tax-supported school system.<sup>48</sup> The effect of the 1838-1841 revolution in attitudes towards school finance was to open the lowest reaches of the school system to all by its expansion through the 1840's. But the intention of those promoting that revolution had little to do with increasing any one's potential for social mobility. The goal of social order called for a citizenry educated to its duties.<sup>49</sup> Such increased mobility as the new common schools fostered was largely incidental to their main purpose.

The central debates over education in Upper Canada up to the 1830's focussed on finance, denomination, and latterly public order. In none of these did a concern with opportunities schools could have offered for upward mobility over-ride the more basic interest of economy, denominational supremacy, or social discipline. The number of opportunities that a school education could open of course was severely limited by the pioneer nature of Upper Canada. Even an educated person could find that the most attractive economic opportunity lay in farming not in any liberal profession. Since the number of places to which schooling could give access was relatively small, it became more easily overshadowed by sectarian, partisan, and financial disputes. As a result, the state played only a small role in facilitating access to schools at any level. The burden of the expense fell on the parents, or other

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(48) Houston, op. cit., p.231. See also Gidney, op. cit., pp.53-60 and Bellomo, op. cit., pp.12-17.

(49) Canadian Christian Examiner, January 1839, p.7. See also Patriot, December 21, 1838; January 22, February 22, April 5, and May 17, 1838. Western Herald, December 25, 1838. Kingston Chronicle, December 21, 1839. Church, December 26, 1840.

relatives of the student. That cost formed a significant barrier, though of varying difficulty, at the various levels of the educational system.

To obtain an education was expensive. Depending on the sort of education one sought, the expense might be lesser or greater. The common schools varied greatly in quality and in cost. With the advent of the government subsidy for common schools in 1816, some areas appear to have dropped all fees, allowing the teacher only the £25 as salary.<sup>50</sup> The fees charged by the province's best common schools ranged from £1 10s to £25 a year.<sup>51</sup> Given that common schools were almost always within walking distance, the fee was likely to have been the only direct expense. Parents who expected assistance with their farm or business would, of course, have the indirect loss from the foregone value of the children's work.<sup>52</sup> Except for York and Kingston, which did have cheaper schools than those mentioned, the cost of elementary education was within the range of the Quasi-dependents and Independents.<sup>53</sup> However, those whose earnings were at the bottom of the former level might only have been able to afford an education for one or two of their

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(50) Home District Board of education Report, June 13, 1819, UCS. See also Rev. MacNaughton to Rev. Burns, July 12, 1834, Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence.

(51) Clipping from the Farmers' Journal and Canal Intelligencer, August 5, 1829, W.H. Merritt Papers. Wm. B. McVity to W.W. Baldwin, April 10, 1838, W.W. Baldwin Papers. Upper Canada Herald, November 16, 1831; June 20, 1832. John Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, September 1839; same to same, October 10, 1839, Macaulay Papers.

(52) Joseph Ryerson and William Hutchison to George Hillier, January 9, 1821, UCS. See also "Reminiscences of Hon. Henry Ruttan of Cobourg" n.d., W.H. Merritt Papers.

(53) Hathaway, op. cit., pp. 112-117.



children. Except for the very poorest in Upper Canada, the cost of a common school education would not have been an obstacle to the upward mobility of their children.

Grammar school fees also showed marked variations. They ran from £2 10s to £10, though the combined annual fee, board and room ranged from £25 to £60.<sup>54</sup> In almost every case the cost of boarding had to be added to the expense of education that would have varied from place to place, and might have been paid in produce rather than cash.<sup>55</sup> But taken together the fees, the cost of boarding, and the foregone value of a young man's labour represented a sizeable investment. In most cases it would have been beyond the power of any person below the Independent level.

The costs for entering the professions varied from one to another. As well, one's standing within certain professions depended upon education as a differential of competence and status. Law and medicine presented the most substantial barriers to entry. Fees charged to law students rose to over £30 during the period.<sup>56</sup> One Royal Navy surgeon charged £50 fees for entrance to his "Medical Academy" at Kingston.<sup>57</sup> Teaching or the ministry might require greater or lesser resources

(54) Farmers' Journal and Canal Intelligencer, August 5, 1829, clipping in the W.H. Merritt Papers. Patriot, December 18, 1838; August 23, 1836; January 15, 1839. Upper Canada Herald, May 4, 1831; September 21, 1831. Patriot, July 10, 1835; June 6, 1837.

(55) Patriot, December 18, 1838. "Memorial to the Lt. Gov. from the Magistrates of the London District", April 4, 1831, Good, op. cit., pp.186-187.

(56) Riddell, Legal Profession, op. cit., pp.8-40

(57) Patriot, July 22, 1834. Roderick MacLeod to Ed MacMahon, September 22, 1817, UCS.

depending upon the level for which one aimed.<sup>58</sup>

Any attempt, however, to set a lower limit for access to educational opportunities must take into account the factor of determination. Certain barriers were too great to cross: the son of an Ottawa River Irish raftsman was very unlikely to have the economic backing to become a lawyer. Yet there were other barriers not so formidable as to block all hope of movement to the most determined. A willingness to sacrifice for oneself, or more often one's children, created opportunities for upward mobility through education for the Independents (and the farmers of the Quasi-dependent level).<sup>59</sup> John Strachan for example yielded to a young man's appeal, evidently impressed by his firm resolution.

I have endeavoured to dissuade him from [further study] tho' he appears a fine young man, as he has little or no means, but he says his Brother and Mother will support him, that he looks for no promise, no other encouragement than my occasional direction and instruction - that this will keep alive hope - . . . In fine his appeal was such as I could not conscientiously resist any longer. 60

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- (58) Petition of John A. Murdock, January 4, 1820, UCS. Rev. Wm. Rintoul to Rev. Burns, August 13, 1838, Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence. Moodie, Roughing, op. cit., pp.120, 158. John Strachan to Rev. Anthony Hamilton, August 14, 1828, Good, op. cit., pp.27-29.
- (59) A pioneer farmer in the Quasi-dependent level could have looked forward to his movement into the Independent level as he cleared his land. For many pioneers, their social position was a temporary (or short term) condition. Consequently they could plan a more ambitious future for their children than, say, a person stuck in common school teaching.
- (60) John Strachan to George Mountain, December 31, 1828, Good, op. cit., p.48.

Desire as well as means affected the education to which a person would gain access.

Just as education itself often served as a factor in social status, access to opportunities for education was a factor in social mobility. For those who had achieved in farming or business a marginal respectable standing, at least literacy was expected to assume the positions of social prestige they expected: magistrate, militia officer, grand jurymen. Debates over the denominational affiliation, finances, and social aims of the school system demonstrated a continuing belief in the primacy of the parents' or the individual's part in financing all education. Only at the end of the period did the over-riding concern for social order lead to public acceptance of a comprehensive tax-supported school system. The controversy over the allocation of the limited amount of government aid available revealed a division about priorities. Some wanted the basics provided to all, and anything else could be done privately. Others, principally represented by John Strachan, looked for a comprehensive free school system to open opportunities for the brightest boys to go as far as they could.

#### Religion

To determine the role which attitudes toward religion played in relations to social mobility we need to look at several questions. Did one's denominational affiliation influence one's social status? Could members of a denomination raise their status as members by collectively changing the public position of their church? What effect did having

no religious profession have on one's status? The answers found will not be clearly defined, but rather amorphous, as befits what was often a marginal factor in social mobility.

Almost all writing generated by the controversies of the 1820's and 1830's dealt with the public status of denominations themselves, not of persons in one or the other of the denominations. If a denomination gained a greater degree of public recognition, then one would have to say that those in that denomination had also had their status enhanced. While there is little evidence of people changing denominations to improve their social standing, large numbers in heavily settled areas appeared active in petitioning, voting, and letter writing to improve the standing of their particular denomination.<sup>61</sup> One may view the denominational contention, then, as a collective struggle by those within various denominations, especially the clergy and most prominent laymen, for public recognition, and a corresponding resistance to that recognition from other denominations.

To keep the various denominational claims in some perspective, it is useful to note the following "religious censuses".<sup>62</sup>

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(61) See for example, F. Bond Head, A Narrative, ed. S.F. Wise, McClelland and Stewart Ltd., Toronto, 1969, p.208; John Macaulay to Helen Macaulay, January 29, 1837, Macaulay Papers; Sissons, op. cit., volume 1, pp.162-164; John Strachan to Gen. de Rottenberg, September 6, 1813; "Memorandum on the Religion of the Province for the Lt. Governor", January 18, 1820, Spragge, op. cit., pp.43, 200; on the scarcity of individual denominational changes.

(62) Robert McGill to Rev. Welsh, August 16, 1830, citing the Christian Guardian, Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence. H.F. Binnington, "The Glasgow Colonial Society and its Work in the Development of the Presbyterian Church in British North America, 1825-1840", doctor of theology thesis, University of Toronto, 1960, p.199.

	<u>1830</u>	<u>1839</u>
Methodists	38,800*	61,000
Presbyterians	30,000	78,000
Church of England	16,500	79,000
Baptists	16,500	12,000
Roman Catholics	15,000	43,000
Quakers	15,000	-
Mennonites and Tunkers	12,000	-
Wesleyan and Dutch Reformed	10,000	-
"Nothing"	38,000	67,000
Others	-	34,700

(\* This was adherents; members were 9,000)

Some of the names used admit of a certain latitude.<sup>63</sup> Consequently the census names need not necessarily be taken as indicating homogeneous church organisations.

(63) Under "Presbyterians" would have probably been grouped supporters of the Church of Scotland, Scottish Seceding Presbyterians, Irish Presbyterians as well as American Presbyterians and perhaps even Congregationalists. The term "Methodist" had even wider scope. There were British Wesleyan Methodists, Primitive Methodists, Bible Christians, and Old Connexion or Kilhamite Methodists. The first (and most important) of these had made a formal agreement with the American Methodist Episcopal Confederation in 1820 that almost all Upper Canada would be regarded as in the jurisdiction of the latter. In 1828 the Upper Canadian Methodist Episcopal Conference ended all ties with its American parent. At about the same time it suffered an internal division, when the followers of former Elder Henry Ryan left to set up the Canadian Wesleyan Methodist Church. When the Methodist Episcopal, under the influence of the Ryerson brothers, decided to unite with the British Wesleyan Methodists in 1833, some of its members refused to accept the union. They established a continuing Methodist Episcopal Church which drew away a substantial group.

Most of the controversy concerning the relative public status of various denominations centered on the claims of the Church of England to be the established church of Upper Canada. Following the War of 1812, the vigorous championing of Anglican claims by John Strachan was met by growing resistance from other denominations, first the Church of Scotland represented by William Morris, and then by the Methodists under the leadership of Egerton Ryerson. A variety of issues emerged: control of the Clergy Reserves, the right to perform marriages, a church's legal ability to hold land, and the superintendence of education.<sup>64</sup> From the very full debate over all these issues emerged a series of views on church-state relations, giving varying statuses to the different denominations, and by extension to their members.

The prevailing view before 1812, and one which was vigorously asserted by Strachan and his followers in the provincial administration after the war was that Upper Canada had a "liberal establishment". The Church of England had a right to government support, and a special legal status concerning marriage and property holding.<sup>65</sup> But this was a liberal establishment, avoiding all the more irritating aspects of the English Church. There were no laws to interfere in any way with the organization or operation of any other denomination.<sup>66</sup> In fact,

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(64) Landon, *op. cit.*, pp.71-132. Alan Wilson, The Clergy Reserves of Upper Canada: A Canadian Mortmain, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1968.

(65) John Strachan to Bishop Mountain, February 26, 1821, Spragge, *op. cit.*, p.214.

(66) Christian Guardian, March 17, 1831.  
R.D. Cartwright to George Gray, February 15, 1838, Strachan Papers.

Strachan considered that the state ought (as a matter of policy, not of right) to assist other denominations which would also promote social stability.<sup>67</sup> Consequently, the liberal establishment position saw a hierarchy of denominations. The Church of England was the established Church having a legal right to pre-eminence. Below it were other "respectable" denominations which the state countenanced as a matter of policy to ensure social stability. Finally, there were those denominations which, while not actively suppressed, functioned without any public recognition - Methodists, Baptists, Mennonites, Quakers, Tunkers, and Congregationalists.

A second view of church-state relations emerged in William Morris' campaign for a "dual establishment" embracing both the Church of Scotland and the Church of England. The partisans of the Church of Scotland claimed that the implication of the Act of Union in 1707 was that two churches had been established for the empire as a whole, not just in Great Britain.<sup>68</sup> There emerges from the dual establishment view a three-fold division of social respectability. The established churches of England and Scotland stood at the head, each with a legal right to state support. Beneath them were those respectable faiths which the government might assist for state reasons: Roman Catholics and Wesleyan Methodists. Beneath these, enjoying no more than a negative tolerance

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(67) John Strachan to General de Rottenburg, September 6, 1813; "A Report of the State of Religion : . . .", March 1, 1815, Spragge, op. cit., pp.43, 74-75. Robert Stanton to John Macaulay, July 15, 1826, Macaulay Papers.

(68) Canadian Christian Examiner, March 1838, p.66. Wm. Morris to M. Mearns, March 20, 1826, Morris Papers.

from civil government were American Methodists, Baptists and "obscure sects".

Against the claims of the Church of England and the Church of Scotland, there emerged a third view of a plural Protestant establishment. State aid was still considered right and proper, but to limit it to one or two denominations was unjust and socially disrupting.<sup>69</sup> While this view had no one pre-eminent advocate, it enjoyed considerable popularity amongst the moderate supporters of the provincial executive in the Assembly, especially during the sessions of 1830-34 and 1836-39.<sup>70</sup> The last step, to the broadest possible plural establishment, was to include Roman Catholics in a "christian establishment". That fourth view emerged quite late in the Clergy Reserves debate, under the sponsorship of Charles Poulett Thomson, the future Lord Sydenham.<sup>71</sup>

These proceedings four positions shared a common assumption that government had a duty actively to promote religion, whether through one church, two, several or all christian denominations. As a correspondent of the Kingston Chronicle expressed it:

. . . Old establishments have been occasionally swept away by the violence of change - but what then? They were almost immediately supplanted by others. The latter have differed materially from the former

(69) Upper Canada Herald, June 20, 1826.

(70) Upper Canada House of Assembly Journal 1831, pp.94-95, March 12, 1831. J.S. Moir, Church and State in Canada, 1627-1867, McClelland and Stewart Ltd., Toronto, 1967, pp.189-196.

(71) Canadian Christian Examiner, September 1839, p.274. Christian Guardian, February 20, 1839.



in their tenets . . . but amid all changes, the principle of an establishment - of a connection between Church and State has escaped unimpaired. It has been experienced, over and over again, that the idea is in human nature, and cannot be eradicated. 72

It was precisely that 'natural connection' which the voluntarists denied. They argued that each denomination should depend solely on the contributions of its adherents. No denomination should receive government aid, or enjoy any special legal prerogatives. During the 1820's the most forceful and powerful exponent of voluntarism was Egerton Ryerson, editor of the Methodist Christian Guardian.<sup>73</sup>

Looking at the period, 1815-1840, as a whole, one sees the liberal establishment view successfully challenged by a variety of alternatives. The inability of the Church of England to hold its legal position revealed its weakness: its claim to superior social status had not been accredited by most people in Upper Canada. The social standing of persons in their own communities rested largely on their occupation, education and character. The attempt to artificially produce a higher status for the Church of England (and, to a certain extent, the Church of Scotland) by law failed in the long run. Legal and political considerations could affect only part of the social status which a denomination had. For the politically active, such as Strachan and Rolph, such considerations could bulk large in the

(72) Kingston Chronicle, July 7, 1826.

(73) Christian Guardian, December 26, 1829; February 20, 1839. However the Methodist Episcopalists did receive some government money; Christian Guardian, April 13, 1836; Sissons, op. cit., volume 1, p.485.

assessment of a particular church at any given point in time.<sup>74</sup> But in the flux of politics such assessments seldom endured. What did endure was the character of those in a denomination.

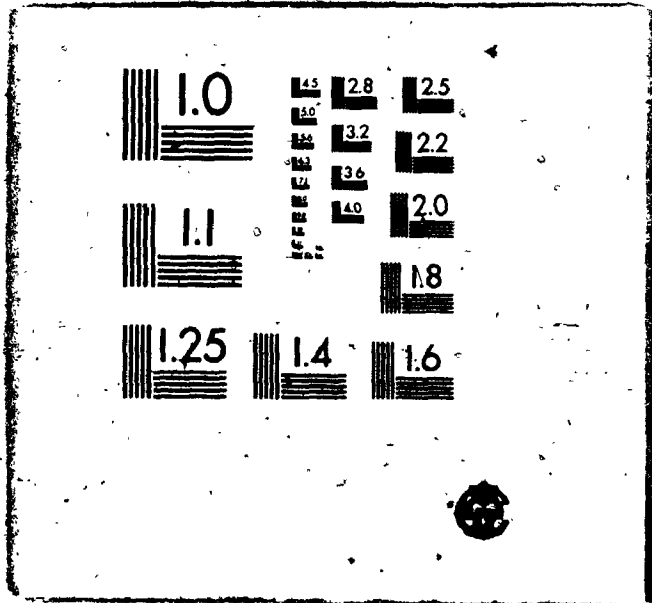
For a time, however, the Church of England did hold its legal prerogatives even though under attack. That, and the predominance of Anglicans in the provincial administration, led many to accuse the government of showing a preference in allocating patronage and promotions to members of the Church of England.<sup>75</sup> Was there a favoured church to which one could have belonged to have increased one's chances of official promotion? A broad survey of patronage letters, from both those seeking patronage and those arranging it, indicates it was a rare factor in considering people for positions, amidst a host of other factors on which recommendations were based.<sup>76</sup> As sectarian quarrels

(74) For Strachan in varying moods on the Methodists, see: John Strachan to Dr. Brown, July 13, 1806, Strachan Papers; John Strachan to John Macaulay, April 10, 1820; same to same, August 20, 1820, Macaulay Papers. For his shifting opinions of the Presbyterians, see: John Strachan to Lord Teignmouth, November 1, 1812, Spragge, op. cit., p.24; John Strachan to Robert Cartwright, June 27, 1831, Good, op. cit., p.231. He could both support and in turn oppose Catholics: "A Report on the State of Religion. . .". March 1, 1815, Spragge, op. cit., p.75. John Rolph initially upheld the Anglican Church, then turned against it, supporting the Methodist Episcopalians: Colonial Advocate, January 27, 1825; Upper Canada Herald, March 1, 1825; Robert Stanton to John Macaulay, December 17, 1826, Macaulay Papers; John Muggeridge, "John Rolph - Reluctant Rebel", Ontario History, volume 51, 1959, pp.217-229.

(75) Canadian Christian Examiner, March 1838, p.70. Colonial Advocate, January 13, 1825. H. Grant to Dr. Lee, May 26, 1828, Lee Papers. Christian Guardian, February 6, 1830; see also January 30, 1830.

(76) See as examples, Christopher Hagerman to John Macaulay, September 10, 1821, Macaulay Papers. Richard Bullock to William Allan, August 26, 1836, Allan Papers. W.B. Robinson to John Macaulay, April 2, 1838, Macaulay Papers. William McVity to W.W. Baldwin, June 23, 1841, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

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heated up in the 1820's, Strachan sought to bar non-Anglicans from teaching positions, without success.<sup>77</sup> Indeed, as his desire to exclude all "dissenters" increased, he found his capacity to influence appointments decreasing.<sup>78</sup> By 1830 Strachan was routing his correspondence through John Macaulay in Kingston, fearful that York's new Methodist postmaster would spy on him.<sup>79</sup> There is little direct evidence in officials' correspondence of any systematic religious bar to appointments in the government.

While critics of the provincial administration accused it of practicing religious favouritism, it should be noted its supporters considered Upper Canada marked by a broad religious liberty. Jonas Jones spoke of "the equal privileges of all sects".<sup>80</sup> Christopher Hagerman declared,

In this country difference of religion imposed no political distinction; Protestant and Catholic were justly and happily entitled to the same privileges  
 . . . . .81

In his lectures promoting immigration to the colony, William Cattermole

(77) John Strachan to Bishop Stewart, November 9, 1827; John Strachan to George Mountain, December 26, 1827, Good, op. cit., pp.9, 10. But note Purdy, op. cit., p.47.

(78) John Strachan to John Macaulay, December 15, 1828; John Strachan to John Macaulay, May 3, 1831, Macaulay Papers. Quealey, op. cit.; pp:113-121, 326, 456-457, 461, 520, 616.

(79) John Strachan to John Macaulay, January 18, 1831, Macaulay Papers.

(80) York Weekly Post, February 22, 1821.

(81) Kingston Chronicle, May 20, 1823.

asserted, "you will as frequently see a Catholic magistrate on the bench as an episcopalian, being all eligible to that office . . ." <sup>82</sup> Opinion as to whether attitudes toward one's religious denomination influenced official favour varied according to a person's political perspective.

While there is no substantial body of evidence to support it, a reasonable supposition would be that joining the church to which most of those in power at York belonged might give an ambitious person valuable contacts, useful for soliciting the ever needful letters of recommendation. Even granting that, however, it does not follow that the Church of England would have invariably been the most favoured church. The recommendations for many posts of a local nature came from those in the local community trusted by the provincial executive in York. These might happen to be Catholic, Presbyterian, Quaker or Methodist, depending on the area. <sup>83</sup> The quest for official favour, expressed in government jobs and contracts, would not uniformly lead one to the Church of England.

(82) Cattermole, op. cit., p.108. Patriot, November 7, 1834.

(83) On the pattern of local elites, see S.F. Wise, "Upper Canada and the Conservative Tradition", in M. Zaslow (ed.) Profiles of a Province, Ontario Historical Society, Toronto, 1967, pp.20-32. Quealey, op. cit., p.132. Wm. Morris to M. Mearnes, May 11, 1825; James Crooks to Wm. Morris, May 19, 1839; John Hopkirk to Wm. Morris, December 2, 1839; Allen MacLean to Wm. Morris, September 11, 1843, Morris Papers. John Strachan to Alexander McDonnell, September 25, 1815; Spragge, op. cit., p.92, John Strachan to Z. Mudge, May 22, 1830, Good, op. cit., p.122. Alexander McDonnell to F.R. Robinson, July 28, 1815, Alexander McDonnell to George Hillier, April 24, 1820, UCS. J.E. Rea, Bishop Alexander MacDonnell and the Politics of Upper Canada, Ontario Historical Society, Toronto, 1974, pp.118-134.

Nonetheless to contemporaries it appeared that the strong Anglican influence in the provincial executive shaped the appointments over which it had direct control. As the Presbyterian magazine put it, "The English church has been the channel, through which official favour and patronage has flowed"<sup>84</sup> That influence could actively reinforce the Anglicanism (where it predominated) of local office-holders. Backed by York, these were enabled to resist for a time pressures to share local patronage. C.C.J. Bond has identified Anglicanism as important to Dr. A.J. Christie's rise in early Bytown society.<sup>85</sup> The pressures brought by large-scale and more diverse settlement in the Ottawa Valley led, over a decade, to a broader distribution of power.<sup>86</sup> H.V. Nelles has traced a similar decline in the Niagara District social and economic elite. There also a major expansion of the population and new economic forces brought to prominence "new men". "By 1837 power had passed to the new men in Niagara; they held all of the elective positions and like the Methodists, they were becoming "respectable"."<sup>87</sup>

(84) Canadian Christian Examiner, March 1838, p.70.

(85) C.C.J. Bond, "Alexander James Christie, Bytown Pioneer. His Life and Times, 1787-1843", Ontario History, volume 56, no. 1, March 1964, p.29.

(86) M.S. Cross, "The Age of Gentility: The Formation of an Aristocracy in the Ottawa Valley", Canadian Historical Association Annual Report, 1967, p.111; and his "The Shiners' War: Social Violence in the Ottawa Valley in the 1830's", Canadian Historical Review, volume 54, no.1, March 1973, pp.8-9.

(87) H.V. Nelles, "Loyalism and Local Power, the District of Niagara, 1792-1837", Ontario History, volume 58, no. 2, 1966, p.114. See also Elva M. Richards, "The Joneses of Brockville and the Family Compact", Ontario History, volume 60, no. 4, December 1968, pp.180, 184.

While its influence waned and varied from one district to another, the prestige attached to membership in the Church of England could have offered some assistance to those seeking a certain kind of upward mobility.

It should be noted that in the quotation cited above, Christopher Hagerman limited himself to saying that "no political distinction" had been set up between Protestant and Catholic. The Quebec Act of 1774 meant "Catholic emancipation" in practice for the new colony of Upper Canada.<sup>88</sup> There existed however a substantial popular prejudice against Roman Catholics. This was expressed frequently in the strongest terms. For example, the Christian Guardian declared,

The very absurdities of such a religion rendered it less unacceptable to men whose decided hostility to truth inclines them to view with complacency whatever obscures its beauty . . . .<sup>89</sup>

Other newspapers reflected similar attitudes. William Lyon Mackenzie's Colonial Advocate denounced the Pope - described as "the Virgin Mary's petticoat embroider" - as a tyrant.<sup>90</sup> What gave special weight to these prejudices was that Catholics coming into Upper Canada faced a predominately Protestant social hierarchy.<sup>91</sup> With the significant

(88) Gates, op. cit., pp.5-9. Riddell, The Bar and the Courts, op. cit., volume 1, pp.6, 35.

(89) Christian Guardian, May 1, 1839; see also November 20, and November 27, 1830; September 16, 1835; January 25, 1837; May 10, 1837; June 7, 1837; July 5, 1837; October 23, 1839.

(90) Colonial Advocate, December 16, 1824; for his later views on Catholics, see F.H. Armstrong, "The York Riots of March 23, 1832", Ontario History, volume 55, no. 2, June 1963, pp.61-72. Other newspapers venting anti-Catholic sentiments were the Canadian Christian Examiner, September 1839, p.274 and the Weekly Register, April 10, 1823, and September 2, 1824.

exceptions of the Baby family in the Western District and Bishop MacDonnell in the Eastern District, almost all of the political office holders and men of influence were Protestant. It seems probable on the basis of the over-all population figures that most merchants and tradesmen were also Protestant. Thus those with anti-Catholic prejudices were in a position to injure mobility especially of incoming Catholics who settled outside areas where Catholics had an established place in the local hierarchy.

The intensity and pervasiveness of the hostility directed toward Catholics set that particular prejudice apart from others which operated between the various Protestant denominations. By the late 1830's there was a substantial measure of support for a broad Protestant establishment. But the proposal to include the Catholic Church in an even broader Christian establishment aroused little but antipathy beyond the political circles that first floated the idea.<sup>91</sup>

That greater prejudice had a greater opportunity to affect social mobility. The rapid rise in Catholic immigration could not be readily absorbed through the existing "Catholic enclaves" of settlement and power. Moreover, the large numbers aroused fears which heightened anti-Catholic hostility. The Irish Catholics bore the brunt of that prejudice - their ethnic origin serving to reinforce it in several ways.<sup>92</sup>

(91) See Canadian Christian Examiner, September 1839, p.274 and Christian Guardian, February 20, 1839.

(92) J.B. Robinson to R.W. Horton, February 19, 1824, C.O. 384/12. Kingston Chronicle, May 30, 1823. See also John Strachan's fears in his letter to J.B. Robinson, June 10, 1822, J.B. Robinson Papers and John Strachan to Bishop Mountain, November 10, 1817, and same to same, March 12, 1819, in Spragge, op. cit., pp.141, 190.



Catholicism, especially for the Irish, became increasingly a hindrance to upward social mobility.

While the choice of denomination was not always or necessarily critical for a person's status, the profession of some Christian religion was. Upper Canadians identified irreligion with immorality. W.L. Mackenzie defended his Colonial Advocate in a letter to assemblyman Charles Jones. "I have in the Advocate, recommended religion, I have never I think admitted the usual immoral trash which fills newspapers, to pollute its columns."<sup>93</sup> To be irreligious and moral was a contradiction of terms.<sup>94</sup>

In the political conflicts within Upper Canada the charge of irreligion was used in attempts to discredit opponents. The Christian Guardian accused Thomas Dalton, the editor of its rival, of being a rationalist and admirer of Thomas Paine in an editorial, "Infidelity in Canada".<sup>95</sup> The Cobourg Reformer labelled Dalton an "infidel" who had to be "reclaimed".<sup>96</sup> He denied this, and complained that,

. . . if an individual be but suspected of doubting the minutest particle of the wretchedest dogma, issued in the abused name of Christianity, he is hooted as something dangerous in society. <sup>97</sup>

A.H. Burwell, an Anglican clergyman, wrote to John Macaulay opposing

(93) W.L. Mackenzie to Charles Jones, December 1, 1824, Charles Jones Papers.

(94) See, for example, the assumption in W.W. Baldwin to Q. St. George, October 29, 1815, W.W. Baldwin Papers; or Christian Guardian, December 5, 1829.

(95) Christian Guardian, November 20, 1830.

(96) Patriot, December 7, 1832.

(97) Patriot, January 21, 1830.

the appointment of George Gurnett of Hamilton as editor of a proposed newspaper. "I believe him, from things heard long ago, to be deficient in the foundation of moral rectitude, for I have long understood that he is a "free-thinker."<sup>98</sup> One of the Bidwells (either Barnabas or his son, Marshall) fell under a similar suspicion.<sup>99</sup> The politically ambitious, at least, had to avoid even the appearance of scepticism or irreligion.<sup>100</sup>

Inter-denominational prejudice was pervasive in highly sectarian Upper Canada. However much of the antipathy failed to become socially operative. That is not to say some people did not discriminate against others by reason of their denomination. Rather, the question is one of a discernible social pattern to the discrimination. With the coming to Upper Canada of proportionately more Roman Catholics in the later 1820's and 1830's such a pattern began to emerge. The numbers entering the province both amplified the formidable prejudice against Catholics, and reduced the capacities of the few highly placed Catholics to integrate the newcomers. Consequently being a Catholic, especially for the Irish, became in time an even greater social liability.

Religion could operate in certain circumstances to affect a person's social mobility. To profess no Christian religion at all was a major handicap for any who had political or social ambitions to attain

(98) A.H. Burwell to John Macaulay, September 30, 1831, Macaulay Papers.

(99) Weekly Register, December 4, 1823.

(100) Robert Baldwin to W.W. Baldwin, November 27, 1836, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

Respectability. Until the competition of other denominations eroded it, the Church of England had a position of some legal privilege. That and the predominance of Anglicans in the provincial executive was thought to give Anglicans more, and others - especially "radical dissenters" - less, chance in government patronage that was controlled from the capital. Finally, Catholicism, especially for the incoming Irish formed the most formidable of all the denominational barriers to upward mobility. Religion could be a matter of indifference or importance depending on what a person believed, how high he wanted to get and when the attempt was made.

#### Ethnicity

Upper Canada's settlers represented a variety of ethnic origins. At an 1824 election day gathering William Lyon Mackenzie had revelled in the diversity of the crowd.

. . . There were Frenchmen and Yankees, Irishmen and Mulattoes, Scotsmen and Indians, Englishmen and Canadians, Americans and Negroes, Dutchmen and Germans, Welshmen and Swedes, Highlanders and Lowlanders . . . .101

However the mixture of different cultures and cultural values set off a series of prejudices that Upper Canadians recognized as important to individuals' chances of benefitting from the new society's opportunities. Ethnicity was thought an important factor in social mobility just because it was unimportant for some but not for others. While being a member of the 'right' group in itself was liable to convey little direct advantage, being in a 'wrong' group was seen to convey perhaps

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(101) Colonial Advocate, September 2, 1824.

heavy penalties. That heaviness varied considerably among the ethnic components of Upper Canadian society.

The earliest and most enduring clash of cultural values occurred between those who came from and adhered to the values of the American Republic and those who came from and wished to remain linked with the United Kingdom. Jean Burnet described this confrontation vividly in her summary of the development of Upper Canada's religious organizations.

The early settlers of Upper Canada came from America, and the American religious traditions established themselves firmly in the province before any large-scale overseas immigration occurred. When British settlers did come into the region, religion was one of the fields in which democratic American impulses clashed most notably with Old World conservatism. The frontier influences were expressed most forcibly in the Methodist Episcopal communion, the conservative interest in the Church of England, but the different views were also reflected within the Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist movements. 102

It is necessary to stress that this was a clash of values as much as of peoples. That emerges clearly from an attack by Archdeacon John Strachan on the Methodists' activities in Upper Canada.

. . . Nor does it seem not to appear of much consequence to what nation the American Preachers belong as such only are selected as suit the purpose of the Chief Leaders and accordingly some who call themselves British subjects are found as virulent against our Church as native Americans. 103

To be British here meant not merely to be born in a certain place, but to hold certain values, especially for Strachan with regard to religion. It was possible for a person to adhere to different values from those

(102) Burnet, op. cit., p.107. On the specific values in conflict, see Burnet, op. cit., pp.108-116.

(103) John Strachan to Anthony Hamilton, August 14, 1828, Good, op. cit., p.31.

dominant in his place of birth. Mahlon Burwell was born and raised in New Jersey. He sat for sixteen years in Upper Canada's House of Assembly as a staunch upholder of the British connection. William Lyon Mackenzie was born and raised in Scotland. He sat, off and on, over a period of eight years in the Assembly as an increasingly American-oriented critic, and led an armed uprising to sever the British connection. In Mackenzie's case, it has been shown clearly that he drew on the traditions of Scottish and English Radicalism, from which he graduated to a full acceptance of American republicanism.<sup>104</sup> In a similar way, there existed a minority strand in American political culture which looked for a balanced constitution and a stable, hierarchical society. That view could be found amongst some of the United Empire Loyalists, and later, Federalists, as well as assorted anti-democrats and anglophiles. Such a perspective came to Upper Canada particularly in two New York newspapers, The Albion and the Commercial Advertiser.<sup>105</sup> Nevertheless, these were definitely minority strains in

(104) Colonial Advocate, June 10, 1824. Constitution, February 8, 1837. A.W. Rasporich, William Lyon Mackenzie, Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada Ltd., Toronto, 1972, pp.1-8. G.M. Craig, "The American Impact on Upper Canadian Reformers", in J.K. Johnson (ed), Historical Essays on Upper Canada, McClelland and Stewart Ltd., Toronto, 1975, pp.317-337. Lillian Gates, "The Decided Policy of William Lyon Mackenzie", Canadian Historical Review, 1959, volume 40, pp.400-500. Frank Thistlethwaite, The Anglo-American Connection in the Early Nineteenth Century, Russell and Russell, New York, 1959, pp.40-74.

(105) Craig, Upper Canada, op. cit., pp.328-332. Wise, "Upper Canada and the Conservative Tradition", op. cit., pp.20-32. Terry Cook, "John Beverley Robinson and the Conservative Blueprint for the Upper Canadian Community", in Johnson, op. cit., pp.338-360. L.F. S. Upton (ed), The United Empire Loyalists, Copp Clark Publishing Co., Toronto, 1967, pp.11-26, 85-125, 162-172.

their own political cultures. After due qualifications, Burnet is correct to speak of a British-American conflict. The values dominant in the minds of most emigrants would have been the ones dominant in the culture taken altogether. While not every person in an ethnic group might have upheld the values dominant in the group as a whole, the conflict of values manifested itself as a conflict of peoples.

To those critical of Americans, they were a people concerned with money before all else. As Edward Talbot put it, "their God is a golden eagle".<sup>106</sup> As a consequence, their democratic system of government had fallen prey to venal corruption, degenerating into mob rule. During the 1837-38 border raids, the Canadian Christian Examiner remarked,

Such acts often recurring unchecked, would soon sink us to the level of the miserable, lawless system that prevails so extensively among our neighbours, and which indicated a most diseased condition of the body politic. 107

Was this British-American clash a factor in social mobility?

Certainly there were people who wanted to use such divisions politically. George Hamilton assailed the official circle in the Ottawa District for their "dissemination of American principles amongst us".<sup>108</sup> He called for the dismissal of these "traitors", as by their conduct they had betrayed their public trusts. Hamilton received a very chilly response.<sup>109</sup> The provincial administration was not to retain this lofty

(106) Talbot, op. cit., volume 1, p.79. See also MacTaggart, op. cit., volume 1, p.221. Canadian Christian Examiner, January 1839, p.3.

(107) Canadian Christian Examiner, June 1839, p.190. See also M.Y. Stark to Miss Marion Bannatyne, October 4, 1836, Stark Papers. Patriot, August 19, 1834.

(108) George Hamilton to George Hillier, July 17, 1820, UCS.

(109) J.B. Robinson to George Hillier, August 2, 1820; J.B. Robinson to George Hillier, October 31, 1820, UCS.

attitude for long, as the political quarrels heated up during the 1820's. Indeed the most adept and successful practitioner of the anti-American politics proposed by George Hamilton was to be a governor, Sir Francis Bond Head.<sup>110</sup>

Before Hamilton's 1820 letter, the bitter reaction to the American invasions during the War of 1812 had produced two major legal bars to further American migration into Upper Canada. The colony's post-war Administrator, General Drummond, and then Governor Francis Gore at the direction of the Colonial Secretary ordered magistrates not to administer the oath of allegiance to any American, to prevent Americans from taking up land (since it was difficult to secure a title to land without taking the oath of allegiance).<sup>111</sup> Since acquiring and developing land was the most common means of rising in Upper Canada, these actions represented an attempt to create a major barrier to the social mobility of Americans.

A second enactment of 1816 attempted to close off another occupation to Americans. The Common School Act of that year offered a small subsidy to township school boards which raised a certain amount themselves and hired teachers who were British subjects.<sup>112</sup> While common

(110) Craig, Upper Canada, op. cit., pp.235-237. F.B. Head, A Narrative, S.F. Wise (ed), McClelland and Stewart Ltd., Toronto, 1969, pp. 22-31.

(111) Craig, Upper Canada, op. cit., pp.89-90. Dunham, op. cit., p.48, Landon, op. cit., pp.44-45. William Dickson, a prominent land holder and Niagara J.P. was dismissed by Governor Gore for continuing to administer the oath in defiance of instructions. Wm. Dickson to Lt. Col. Cameron, April 27, 1817, UCS.

(112) John Burr to Ed. MacMahon, January 20, 1817, UCS.

school teaching by no means constituted a great opening for upward mobility, its closure to Americans excluded them from one of those professions with the most minimal entrance requirement.

An understanding of the complex legal framework around what came to be called "the alien question" is essential to comprehend the confusion which the issue generated. In English common law no person born a British subject could deny or be denied his or her nationality by unilateral action of either that person or the Crown.<sup>113</sup> But by recognition of American independence, Great Britain made aliens of all its subjects who became citizens of the United States. Aliens, by common law, were prohibited from holding real property, and thus from exercising the franchise. The status of those Americans born of British parents who remained in the United States after 1783, however, was also governed by a British statute which allowed the children and grandchildren who were born abroad of British fathers to retain the status of British subjects.<sup>114</sup> The attempts to stimulate settlement in Upper Canada obscured the issue further. The British Parliament passed an act inviting Americans to take up land in British North America. Governor Simcoe issued a proclamation inviting Americans to Upper Canada offering grants of free land.<sup>115</sup> If any American could come into the province and receive 200 acres of land merely upon paying the fees and taking the oath of allegiance, how could he be an alien?

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(113) Garner, op. cit., p.164. Dunham, op. cit., pp.73-74.

(114) Ibid.

(115) Gates, Land Policies, op. cit., pp.26-31.



The controversy ended in 1828 with the passage of the Naturalization Act which secured Upper Canadians of American origin in their rights as British subjects.<sup>116</sup> Before this act, several bills were debated containing a variety of provisions. One of these, passed by the Legislative Council, proposed that Americans could be naturalized, but that this would only entitle them to hold property, not to vote. While nothing like this ever became law, to have such a proposal debated stirred deep emotions. As an irate correspondent wrote to the Canadian Freeman,

Is it just - is it "equitable" + to reduce the acknowledged subjects of half a century to a level with the alien of last year, when painful requisitions are to be complied with? Is it "equitable" to compel men who waded thro fields of blood and slaughter . . . in the late war . . . men, had it not been for whose unshaken allegiance and intrepid valour, the British would not now possess a foot of ground in Upper Canada, from which to drive an alien. 117

Thanks to the "alien question" the largest ethnic group in the province had their property rights and political rights thrown into question for most of the decade.

While some upholders of British values were trying to resist American penetration of Upper Canada by the "alien question", some of the American persuasion were trying to limit the impact of British emigration into the province by questioning the location ticket holders' right to the franchise. Those who received a land grant from the Crown were given a ticket which showed the location of the lot and stated

(116) Gates, Land Policies, op. cit., p.120.

(117) Canadian Freeman, March 1, 1827; December 1, 1825.

the conditions on which it had been granted. Upon the payment of the official fees and completing of all settlement duties, the settler obtained a patented deed to the land. Between the time a settler began his farm to the point at which he could have clear title by performing the duties and paying the fee was often a number of years.<sup>118</sup> Could he vote during that time? Against the wishes of the provincial executive, the Assembly sought to disenfranchise location ticket holders. Even after the question had been settled by the Colonial Office, the provincial executive's critics continued to keep a close watch on the franchise to limit the voting strength of the newly arrived British settlers.<sup>119</sup>

The fears of a renewed American migration into Upper Canada after 1815 and the fears of a rapid British immigration in the late 1820's and 1830's were two parallel examples of nativist reaction. In both cases some of those in the colony feared they would be swamped by newcomers who did not share their values. The attempts to impede Americans taking up land, teaching in schools, or, by raising the "alien question", to disenfranchise American-born settlers represent the efforts of those who considered themselves loyal to the British connection and all that it implied to them. The attack on location ticket holders' franchise and opposition to assisted emigration plans represented the parallel fear. Newly arrived British settlers were thought to lack commitment to the new community and its values, perhaps even to lack the independence to express their opinions. As William

(118) Gates, op. cit., p.125. Maltby, op.cit., pp.120-121, Barnett, op.cit., pp.73-79.

(119) Correspondent and Advocate, October 19, 1836.

Lyon Mackenzie expressed it,

We of Upper Canada are less anxious to encourage by specious misrepresentations a vast influx of settlers from Europe, ignorant of the situation of the country, and therefore too apt to be careless of its true interests . . . .120

The partisans of each side in turn adopted a nativist stance to protect their group's position within the colony against a prospective challenge from migration by the other.

Within the stream of British immigrants to Upper Canada after 1815 there was neither ethnic homogeneity, nor universal mutual good will, nor yet random dislike of "outsiders". British settlers came into cultural conflict not only with Americans, but also with each other. Within these attitudes lies a discernible pattern of ethnocentricity. The group subject to the strongest aversion were the native Irish.<sup>121</sup> The next group in order - encountering far less hostility - were the Scots. The English drew the least critical comment. While the Welsh had traditionally been subject to discrimination in Britain, they apparently did not come to Upper Canada in sufficient numbers to draw particular adverse comment.<sup>122</sup> That pattern comes into sharper

(120) Correspondent and Advocate, January 7, 1836. See also Sissons, op. cit., volume 1, p.232 for Mackenzie's attack on "soupkitchenites". Members of the provincial executive had just such hopes. See C.A. Hagerman to John Macaulay, April 17, 1832, Macaulay Papers, cited in Dunham, op. cit., p.137.

(121) The term "Irish", is used here to designate all those originating from Ireland. This group was made up of three elements, the native Irish (almost entirely Roman Catholic), the Scots-Irish of the Ulster plantation, and the Anglo-Irish; Katz, op. cit., pp.2-3, 163-165, 208.

(122) Patriot, June 20, 1834. Also see A.J. Röderick (ed), Wales Through Many Ages, Christopher Davies, London, 1973. F.T.Rosser, "Squire Matthews of Southwold and Stamford", Ontario History, volume 47, number 1, 1954, pp.14-22.

focus through an examination of specific qualities assigned to the groups subject to the most negative attitudes.

Contemporaries in Upper Canada described native Irish as careless, improvident, dirty, disorderly, and proud.<sup>123</sup> The carefree nature and recklessness that were observed could be taken by some as good humour and generosity.<sup>124</sup> However Thomas Dalton was almost alone in his abundant praise of the Irish.<sup>125</sup>

The term and attributes, "Irish", were most commonly used of both native Irish and Scots-Irish. When observers occasionally did make some distinction, it was on the basis of religion.<sup>126</sup> That points up the fact that the native Irish confronted a two-fold prejudice. First, they were Roman Catholic. That need not by itself have been a crippling debility. But, second, they were Irish. The combination had the

(123) Moodie, Life, op. cit., p.9-10. Colonial Advocate, July 8, 1824; August 5, 1824; September 30, 1824. "Journal of his trip to Ireland, 1823-25". p.29, McCormick Papers. Jameson, op. cit., volume 1, p.269. MacTaggart, op. cit., volume 2, pp.243-44. Adam Hope to Robert Hope, July 23, 1840, Hope Papers, Moodie, Roughing, op. cit., pp.111-113. Strickland, op. cit., volume 1, p.138. Ann Macaulay to John Macaulay, February 11, 1838, Macaulay Papers. Adam Fergusson to John Dunlop, August 20, 1835, J.C. Dunlop Papers. On the political manifestations of this prejudice, see William Buell to A.N. Buell, January 28, 1834. William Buell Papers and Sissons, op. cit., volume 1, p.352.

(124) Jameson, op. cit., volume 1, pp.4, 109; volume 3, pp.8, 41.

(125) Patriot, October 12, 1839. Moodie, Roughing, op. cit., pp.10-11. Weekly Register, May 1, 1823. Burnet, op. cit., pp.53, 67. Talbot, op. cit., volume 1, p.viii.

(126) Christian Guardian, April 6, 1839. Harry Leith to Dr. Lee, July 21, 1827, Lee Papers. Before 1830 most Irish came to the colony from Ulster. John J. Mannion, Irish Settlement in Eastern Canada, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1974, p.24. H.J.M. Johnson, British Emigration Policy, 1815-1830, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1972, pp.7, 7ln.

effect of reinforcing and magnifying each barrier to social acceptance. The Protestant Irish had their ethnic origin in some part mitigated by their religion. However upon the native Irish fell the full weight of ethnic prejudice compounded by religious prejudice.

The strictures upon the Scots were not only less severe, they were of an altogether different character. The Scots were viewed as "clannish" and greedy.<sup>127</sup> The close-knit relationships between Scottish merchants and the solidarity of Scottish farm communities have been often noted.<sup>128</sup> This strong feeling of kinship was traced to no noble motive, but to greed.<sup>129</sup> Amongst the Scots the most criticised were the Highlanders. Much of this hostility came from Lowland Scots.<sup>130</sup> However, these opinions could also be taken up by others.<sup>131</sup> In general the Highlanders, apart from dirtiness, seemed to suffer from being

(127) Jules Quesnel to W.W. Baldwin, January 19, 1823, W.W. Baldwin Papers. John Galt, Bogle Corbet, Colburn and Bentley, London, n.d., volume 3, p.83. Jameson, op. cit., volume 2, p.214. "A Huron Settler", (1839?), Allan Papers. Howison, op. cit., p.196. Canadian Freeman, December 2, 1830.

(128) Craig, Upper Canada, op. cit., p.61. Burnet, op. cit., pp.21-22, 32, 77-78, 93-94, 101-102. Colonial Advocate, January 17, 1833.

(129) Upper Canada Herald, July 11, 1826. Canadian Freeman, November 8, 1827. Moodie, Life, op. cit., p.37. Robert Stanton to John Macaulay, July 15, 1826, Macaulay Papers.

(130) See for example, the remarks of John Galt from Ayreshire: Galt, Corbet, op. cit., volume 3, p.83; "A Statistical Account of Upper Canada", The Philosophical Magazine, volume 29, number 13, October 1807, p.9.

(131) M'Gregor, op. cit., volume 2, p.445. Jameson, op. cit., volume 2, p.214. See also Adam Hope to George Hope, October 8, 1849, Hope Papers, against the honesty of Highlanders.

the most "Scottish" of the Scotch.

Resentment towards Scots became acute when they held or aspired to positions of authority. During the War of 1812, Charles Jones endeavoured to entice men from another District to serve in his militia Regiment. He counselled his correspondent,

. . . if they will not accede to this proposition of ours ward / warn them to keep back until the question is finally determined - unless they prefer being under the command of Scotch men. 132

As the pre-eminent Scotsman in the colony, John Strachan had to accept slighting ethnic references from both bishop and governor.<sup>133</sup> While the Irish were despised for what was deemed their unprogressive nature, the Scots were resented for their success.

Persons of English origin were criticized the least, and such adverse comment as appeared was relatively mild. They appear to others as rather formal in manner, strongly attached to custom.<sup>134</sup> To those with more familiar habits of conduct this made the English seem either arrogant or dour.<sup>135</sup> As an ethnic group, the English appear to have

- (132) Charles Jones to Charles C. Farnon, April 20, 1813, Charles Jones Papers.
- (133) Bishop of Quebec to John Strachan, September 25, 1809, Strachan Papers. Dunham, op. cit., p.119. C.R. Sanderson (ed.), The Arthur Papers, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1957, volume 2, p.116. George Arthur to J.B. Robinson, April 11, 1839.
- (134) Moodie, Roughing, op. cit., pp.139, 181. Burnet, op. cit., pp.18-20. Weekly Register, July 24, 1823.
- (135) Moodie, Roughing, op. cit., p.139; Life, op. cit., p.4. Canadian Freeman, November 8, 1827. Like the English, native Canadians attracted little adverse comment from other settlers (as distinct from travellers). They were perceived most often in terms of their parents' origins. Burnet, op. cit., pp.7, 75. Moodie, Roughing, op. cit., p.140.

met very little publicly expressed hostility in Upper Canada.

The mildness shown to the English and the severity - greater or lesser - shown to Irish and Scots, raises the question of perspective. The anti-Irish comments came from English and Scots alike; the anti-Scottish, from the English (and Irish, on occasion). The few adverse comments of the English originated with Irish and Americans. The volume and intensity of hostility from the English and Scots towards the Irish was by and large not reciprocated as far as the available records shows. However, since most of the surviving evidence comes from the native-born, English or Scots commentators, there is little scope for expression of hostile opinions towards those groups. Yet where a "low status ethnic group" spokesman had ample opportunity to reply in kind there are few cases where he did so. For example the attacks upon the Irish for being Irish made by William Lyon Mackenzie and John MacTaggart find no counterpart in the writings of the Irish Catholic editor, Francis Collins. In the one 'ethnic' story that appeared in his Canadian Freeman, Scots are indeed pictured as greedy, and English as dour, but then, Irish are shown as wild.<sup>136</sup> James Fitzgibbon was the son of an Irish cottar, provincial Assistant Adjutant General, and deputy provincial grand master of the Masonic Order. In an address to members of his order, he noted and spoke against existing ethnic stereotypes.

(136) Canadian Freeman, November 8, 1827. Note also the oblique nature of Gowan's antipathy in his call for a "Royal Irish Brigade", in Adiel Sherwood Papers. "To the Loyal Irish of the County of Leeds", Ogle R. Gowan, December 11, 1837.

Our population being made up of persons of many nations, languages and religions, need we wonder at sometimes hearing the offensive terms of insolent Englishmen! selfish Scot! savage Irishman! cunning Yankee! And do not we all know most valuable characters of these several nations? 137

The symmetry of Fitzgibbon's prose, however, did not reflect a working of ethnic prejudice equally upon each group. Antipathy towards the native Irish was more severe, and affected their social prospect more directly.

The Roman Catholic Irish were, relatively, the newcomers. Other groups were to a greater or lesser extent in place - established on farms, in business, or in government office. Consequently their prejudices operated to greater effect upon the upward mobility of the Irish, than whatever prejudices the Irish may have had could have done toward any other group. Lord Durham noted that practical exclusion of Irish Catholics from public offices at all levels.<sup>138</sup> John Strachan, the leading Anglican cleric and first bishop, showed a definite hostility to Irish clergy which must have hindered their advancement.<sup>139</sup> W.L. Mackenzie, when Toronto's first magistrate was accused of prejudice

(137) Weekly Register, July 24, 1823. Jameson, op. cit., volume 1, pp.128-134.

(138) G.M. Craig, (ed), Lord Durham's Report, McClelland and Stewart Ltd., Toronto, 1963, pp.79, 84, 93, 98. However, his principal informant was Anthony Manahan, a member of the provincial assembly and the rule-proving exception to his own argument. He had been appointed Crown Land Agent for the Midland District in 1837 (a part-time job) and in 1841 would become Customs Collector for Toronto. As a well-educated businessman with two friends on the Executive Council, Manahan proved by his experience that an over-whelming combination of right attributes could ultimately overcome an Irish Catholic. P.A.C., R.G. 5 (Provincial Secretary's Office), volume 133, no. 8112; R.G. 4, volume 542.

(139) John Strachan to Archbishop Whately, April 28, 1834.



against the Irish charged in his court, as had been the former, appointed magistrates.<sup>140</sup> At a higher level in the judicial hierarchy, Chief Justice J.B. Robinson manifested antipathy towards the Irish, even while favouring to some extent their settlement in the colony.<sup>141</sup> Later Michael Katz found Irish Catholics appeared disproportionately fewer in trades and business. He suggests that this was the result of systematic discrimination, such as has been illustrated above.<sup>142</sup> Ethnocentricity did not affect all British emigrants equally.

While the great majority of Upper Canada's population originated in Britain and the United States, there were small groups of other national origins. Of these, Germans, Dutch and French were numerous enough to have drawn more than isolated comment.<sup>143</sup> The first barrier which these people faced was language. That need not necessarily have had any prejudice implicit in it. However prejudice could quickly join the language barrier. William McVity, as a Clerk of the Peace in Simcoe County, complained that the local officials had too little influence under the new Jury Act.

. . . They could have returned many persons much better qualified in point of intelligence than some of those selected, had a discretionary power been given, but

(140) Patriot, June 6 and 20, 1834. Canadian Freeman, June 12, 1828.

(141) J.B. Robinson to R.W. Horton, February 19, 1824, C.O. 384/12.

(142) Katz. op. cit., pp.65-68, 208.

(143) Of course a number of the German and Dutch speaking immigrants to Upper Canada were born in the United States, or had lived there for a time. They are here considered still to be, say, German, if they had retained their language and culture. A.B. Sherk, "The Pennsylvania Germans of Waterloo County, Ontario". OHSFR, 1906, volume 7, pp.98-109.

were obliged to return some Highland Scot, and Frenchmen, who could not speak English . . . .144

The inability to speak English of Gaelic-speaking Highlanders and French Canadians had been translated into a matter of intelligence. Generally those who migrated to a predominantly English-speaking community were expected to learn English as a first step to social integration.<sup>145</sup> However something that could be read as a challenge to authority from someone in those groups aroused a vehement nativist reaction.<sup>146</sup>

Ethnicity formed a pervasive, sometimes powerful, non-rational discriminatory barrier to social mobility. The prejudice against Irish Catholics greatly hindered their advance in both economic and social status. The American settlers who came into the colony faced legal barriers against access to land and entry to the teaching profession. Scots, and more especially the English, appear from the sources available to have confronted far fewer such obstacles.

#### Race

People considered to be of a different race than Caucasian confronted attitudes that operated as formidable barriers to their social mobility. Racial prejudice was strongly rooted amongst those of Caucasian origin, both established settlers and immigrants into the colony.

(144) W. McVity to Robert Baldwin, December 26, 1850, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

(145) W.W. Baldwin to Q. St. George, October 29, 1815, W.W. Baldwin Papers. Kingston Chronicle, March 26, 1823; January 3, 1823. Patriot, April 27, 1841.

(146) John Scott to George Redford, September 18, 1840, Redford Papers; Patriot, July 14, 1835.

Attitudes towards race formed on the whole more rigid barriers to social mobility than those towards ethnicity, even towards the Irish.

It is unlikely that any would object to black and native Indians being included in the category "race". There might be some question as to Jews. In the eyes of nineteenth century popular culture, Jewish people, while in Europe, were not of it. The persistence of the ghetto symbolized the isolation of Jews from the common life of other European peoples.<sup>147</sup> In Upper Canada, Jews appeared as a separate "race", because like the Indians and blacks they were outsiders. No one considered them a normal part of white society.

Between 1812 and 1840 the common view of Upper Canada's native people altered from 'savages to be feared' to 'children to be protected'. Although most Indians allied with the British in the War of 1812, Upper Canadians viewed them as a menace.<sup>148</sup> Combined with the fear of Indians was a large measure of respect for their character as warriors. Wrote Strachan, "They are a fierce, independent people, incapable of submitting to control: they are easily led but will never be driven."<sup>149</sup>

(147) Encyclopedia Judaica, Keter Publishing, Jerusalem, 1971, pp.342-546. The Jewish Encyclopedia, Funk and Wagnalls, New York, 1903, volume 5, pp.652-655. Cecil Roth, A History of the Jews in England, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1964, pp.123, 181.

(148) Wm. McGillivray to Col. Baynes, November 6, 1812, Strachan Papers. Wm. Smith to George Bunter, September 17, 1812, London Missionary Society Correspondence.

(149) "Life of Col. Bishoppe", December 1813, Spragge, op. cit., p.6. Also, "Letter to the Right Honourable the Earl of Selkirk on his projected Colony on the Red River", Spragge, op. cit., p.2; Patriot, October 2, 1838; November 30, 1838.

The Treaty of Ghent confirmed American control over the Old North West, ending Indian hopes of establishing a territory of their own. Within Upper Canada the rapid influx of immigrants pressed against the Indian settlements destroying any possibility of continuing their traditional way of life. Military defeat in the war combined with population pressures to reduce the Indians from the status of allies to that of dependents.<sup>150</sup> In spite of the success with which some Indians made the transition from a hunting to a farming economy, in their new status of virtual wards of the government, they were viewed as of nonage.<sup>151</sup>

However the relationship of the government (and by extension, all Europeans) and the native peoples was not thought of as a permanent tutorage. The great aim of government and the various religious groups' activities was "the instruction and civilization of the natives of this Country".<sup>152</sup> After 1830 the Indian Department in Upper Canada began a

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(150) Charles Stuart to George Hillier, December 1, 1818, UCS. "Report on the Religious State of the Indians", December 2, 1837, Strachan Papers. Fergusson, op. cit., pp.135-137. John Strachan to the Church Missionary Society, March 23, 1829, Good, op. cit., p.65.

(151) John Carey to John Strachan, January 20, 1828; John Strachan to Ann Strachan, August 10, 1842, Strachan Papers. Christian Guardian, November 27, 1830; February 6, 1830. Patriot, March 27, 1838. See also Constitution, November 15, 1837; "Report on the Religious State of the Indians in Upper Canada", December 1837; Rev. Fred'k A. O'Mara to John Strachan, October 7, Strachan Papers; and Christian Guardian, March 21, 1838.

(152) T.G. Anderson to Mr. Patrick, November 6, 1828, Strachan Papers.

re-organization, to change its role from pacifying potential military allies, to a new policy that would transform the Indian "from a migrant or semi-migrant savage to a settled, civilized Christian, equipped with all the moral and mechanical skills necessary to compete in the European world of Upper Canada."<sup>153</sup> However with this belief in the possibility of the Indians' acculturation, went an undiluted contempt for their way of life, language and culture.<sup>154</sup>

The exception to this pattern of restricted opportunities was the Brant family of the Grand River Reserve. During the American Revolution a Mohawk chief, known as Captain Joseph Brant to the British, had emerged as a powerful and effective leader among the Iroquois Six Nations who were allied to the British.<sup>155</sup> Brant led the largest group to the Grand River valley. He invited several families of whites

(153) R.J. Surtees, "Development of an Indian Reserves Policy in Canada" in J.K. Johnson (ed.), Historical Essays on Upper Canada, op. cit., p.267.

(154) Christian Guardian, November 27, 1830; February 6, 1830. Upper Canada Herald, August 25, 1830. Christian Guardian, December 5, 1829. T.G. Anderson to (John Strachan?), March 20, 1829, Strachan Papers. M'Gregor, op. cit., volume 2, p.459. Fergusson, op. cit., p.138. Christian Guardian, July 31, 1839. T.G. Anderson to S.P. Jarvis, March 14, 1843; "Petition of Indians at Tyendinaga", September 7, 1843, Strachan Papers. John Strachan to the Church Missionary Society, March 23, 1829, Good, op. cit., p.68.

(155) C. and J. Thomas, "Reminiscences of the First Settlers in the County of Brant", OHSPP, volume 12, 1911, pp.58-71.

to settle with his own people, to provide services such as mills and stores. In time, two important changes occurred. The Brant family translated their tribal and military authority into land ownership on a large scale. Second, the Brants inter-married with important local white families, producing a line of chiefs increasingly more white in terms of both their parentage and culture.<sup>156</sup> This continuing process of inter-marriage created a local elite of mixed blood in the Grand River valley, living as whites, gaining status both as substantial land holders and as leaders of the major racial community in the area. However for the rest of the Six Nations, land granted to the group went to promote the status of a leadership that with each generation lived further away, in cultural terms, from Indian life. The descendants of Captain Joseph Brant became successful in the colony's dominant society, but at the cost of their own people.

An acceptance of a common humanity manifested itself in a degree of inter-marriage between Indians and European settlers. When William J. Kerr M.P. married the daughter of Joseph Brant, the Colonial Advocate warmly noted this union with "a Mohawk princess".<sup>157</sup> For less notable Indian families intermarriage was still possible though less highly regarded. Col. John Clark recalled that Cognac Johnson, a Mohawk of the Six Nations, had married a white woman. Their daughters had all married well, he remarked, "there being a scarcity of ladies in those days".<sup>158</sup>

(156) Upper Canada Herald, September 5, 1832.

(157) Colonial Advocate, September 30, 1824.

(158) "Memoirs of Col. John Clark, of Port Dalhousie", OHSPR, 1906, volume 7, p.184. The Johnson sisters did indeed marry well, to a doctor, a lawyer and a magistrate (two of whom served as members of the provincial parliament).

The note of apology indicates Clark considered the marriage not quite the best that could have been made.<sup>159</sup> Intermarriage, even though carrying some social stigma in particular sorts of cases, demonstrated the limited nature of racism towards Indians.

Even a modest degree of intermarriage under some constraints of social disapproval marked off the status of the Indian sharply from that of blacks in Upper Canada.

There was a runaway nigger from the States came to the village . . . Well, after a time he persuaded a white girl to marry him. She was not a bad-looking Irishwoman, and I can't think what bewitched the creature to take him. Her marriage with the black man created a great sensation in the town. All the young fellows were indignant at his presumption and her folly, and they determined to . . . punish them both for the insult they had put upon the place. . . . They went so far as to enter the house, drag the poor nigger from his bed . . . almost naked as he was, rode him upon a rail, and so ill-treated him that he died under their hands. 160

Upper Canada - to 1834 - was a slave society in the sense that the status of free blacks had always to be seen in the context that others of their race, solely on the basis of race, were in servitude. The 1793 "Act to prevent the Further Introduction of Slaves and to limit the Term of Forced Servitude within the Province", as its title suggested, prohibited further importation of slaves and provided for a very

(159) MacTaggart, op. cit., volume 2, pp.226-227. See also John Gemmel to Andrew Gemmel, September 17, 1823, Gemmel Papers.

(160) Moodie, Roughing, op. cit., p.147. Burnet, op. cit., pp.67-68.

gradual abolition over the course of a generation. However some Loyalists had already brought in a number of slaves. There were enough in Upper Canada to hold slave auctions in York.<sup>161</sup> Even for the black who had won freedom, that freedom carried with it heavy qualifications.

There was a pervasive popular antipathy towards black people in Upper Canada.<sup>162</sup> The widespread hostility towards blacks decisively affected their opportunities for social mobility. As fugitive slaves, blacks got a certain amount of sympathy and assistance from those who were strongly abolitionists. Governor Maitland provided free land to a group of escaped slaves, whom the American Secretary of State had demanded to be returned.<sup>163</sup> In response to an inquiry about mass emigration from Ohio, a black delegation were reportedly told by Governor

- (161) D.B. Hill, "Negroes in Toronto, 1793-1865". Ontario History, volume 60, no. 2, June 1963, pp.73-80. "Reminiscences of Hon. Henry Rutton of Cobourg, C.W.", William Hamilton Merritt Papers. "Affidavit of Capt. Henry Bird", August 14, 1784, Jarvis-Powell Papers.
- (162) Wm. B. McVity to W.W. Baldwin, December 26, 1850, W.W. Baldwin Papers. Catherine F. Lefray, "Recollections of Mary Warren, Breckenbridge of Clarke Township", OHSPR, 1902, volume 3, p.113. Patriot, March 6, 1832. G.M. Craig (ed.), Discontent in Upper Canada, Copp Clark Publishing Co., Toronto 1974, p.69. Moodie, Roughing, op. cit., p.150; also pp.82, 131, 147; Life, op. cit., pp.26, 70, 157. Quarter Session Minutes, Home District Clerk of the Peace, July 13, 1819; see also November 21, 1823. Upper Canada Herald, August 24, 1831.
- (163) J.B. Robinson to Sir P. Maitland, July 8, 1818, UCS. William Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, March 12, 1841, Macaulay Papers. Hill, op. cit., pp.73-74. Landon, op. cit., pp.193-194. W.R. Riddell, "Some References to Negroes in Upper Canada", OHSPR, 1913, volume 14, p.144.



Colborne, "Tell the Republicans on your side of the line that we do not know men by their colour. If you come to us, you will be entitled to all the privileges of the rest of his Majesty's subjects."<sup>164</sup> Money was raised to promote settlement communities in Upper Canada where escaped slaves could adapt to the ways of freemen.<sup>165</sup> But for most blacks living in Upper Canada - including escaped slaves, once their immediate connection with the institution of slavery had dimmed in memory - a solid block of racial prejudice in the public mind limited their opportunities. They took up those occupations with the easiest entry, becoming labourer and farmers. The end of the free land grants cut off most blacks, as it did most of the Irish, from the primary economic means of upward social mobility.<sup>166</sup> The Canada Company, having at its disposal over a million acres of land, refused to sell to blacks, in deference, it said, to adverse white opinion.<sup>167</sup>

Apart from the land, Upper Canada offered blacks few economic opportunities. Unless he brought in a trade with him, the black was unlikely to find entry to one in the colony. At Niagara, blacks found employment as hotel waiters and tour guides at the Falls.<sup>168</sup> While

(164) R. Winks, The Blacks in Canada, A History, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal, 1971, pp.155-156.

(165) Winks, op. cit., pp.156-162.

(166) Burnet, op. cit., pp.27-29, 46-48. Hill, op. cit., pp.80-86.

(167) Karr, op. cit., p.81. Winks, op. cit., p.161.

(168) Winks, op. cit., p.146.

paid the same wages as whites in these occupations, blacks remained in a confined "job-ghetto". Michael Katz found that 80% of Hamilton's blacks in 1851 were in the lowest economic strata. Generally scarce in the various trades, they constituted 67% of the city's barbers.<sup>169</sup> Racial prejudice largely restricted blacks to servant-like occupations (waiters, barbers), except for the few who came into the colony with a trade, capital or some education.<sup>170</sup> Given that most blacks came into Upper Canada to escape slavery, the great majority were unlikely to have any of these advantages.

In dealing with anti-semitism in Upper Canada one confronts a curious fact. Anti-Jewish statements were common in a province with practically no Jewish people in it.<sup>171</sup> A racial antipathy of considerable clarity thus existed with next to no people against which to direct it. The key to the apparent mystery is that the popular anti-semitism so pervasive in Britain had embedded itself in the language.<sup>172</sup> Where that language went, so did the prejudice in it, even when there were no persons against whom it might be used.<sup>173</sup>

(169) Katz, op. cit., pp.62, 65.

(170) Winks, op. cit., pp.328-329. Hill, op. cit., pp.75-80. For the career of William Augustus, see Christian Guardian, January 17, 1838; April 11, 1838.

(171) B.G. Sack, History of Jews in Canada, Harvest House, Montreal, 1965, pp.114-115.

(172) Encyclopaedia Judaica, Keter Publishing, Jerusalem, 1971, p.170.

(173) Wm. B. McVity to W.W. Baldwin, November 15, 1837, W.W. Baldwin Papers. See also MacTaggart, op. cit., volume 1, p.321. Paul Baldwin, "The Political Power of Colonel Thomas Talbot", Ontario History, volume 62, no. 1, March 1969, p.17. Patriot, March 22, 1833; September 2, 1834. Upper Canada Herald, June 6, 1826.

The one reference to a group of Jews actually in Upper Canada comes in Mackenzie's Colonial Advocate. Three Jews had been arrested for fraud and brought to York for trial. They were evidently newly arrived immigrants to the province, and Mackenzie remarked on the strangeness of their appearance. Then, in the manner of a circus barker, he invited one and all to attend the trial.

. . . Our readers may come to court where legal sentences and Jewish cunning will be set in array against each other for a pitched battle. 174

Unlike the Irish or blacks - who were commonly accused of being stupid, careless or lazy - the Jews (like the Scots) were feared for their industry which was called greed and their prudence renamed cunning - whether or not they were actually in the province.

Race posed substantial barriers to the upward mobility of those minorities in the colony that were not considered to be Caucasian. These were less for the Indians, who were in some sense redeemed in the popular mind by their herioc past, than the blacks. However while most European settlers granted Indians' capacity to adopt 'civilization', their demand that it must be done showed contempt for the native people's own culture. Although assimilation into white society was frequently held to be the Indians' only prospect of achieving a high level of prestige, it was in fact almost impossible for an Indian to shed his or her origins and be accepted among whites as a social peer. Only in exceptional circumstances and where Indian families held large amounts of land as tribal trustees was a romantic view of the Indians' past or

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(174) Colonia Advocate, October 9, 1828. For his condemnation of "Jew usurers", see Mackenzie's Weekly Message, January 11, 1856.

nature likely to assist in the acceptance of an individual Indian, without disadvantage, into white society. For blacks the racial barrier was in one way more nearly absolute. Although they could gain some initial sympathy, as refugees from slavery, that counted for little in the longer term against the profound racial prejudice toward them that pervaded Upper Canada. Their lot was often that of a free, but isolated existence, with consequently limited possibilities of upward mobility. Within that separate existence, enterprising individuals could find a wider range of occupations and more chances of prosperity than were available to the Indian, but prosperity did not lead to acceptance in white society. The root of the paradox of blacks finding greater economic yet less social opportunity in Upper Canada was perhaps that the escaped slaves had already undergone assimilation, whereas the Indians had to struggle with the cultural disorientation attendant upon the destruction of their way of life while at the same time trying to secure a livelihood in the new environment created by European settlement. The reducto ad absurdum of racial prejudice was the antipathy towards the Jews - a prejudice virtually without victims to practice upon.

#### Political Patronage

One of the most discussed avenues of social mobility in Upper Canada was political patronage. It bulks exceptionally large in the extant evidence of newspapers and in correspondence both private and

public.<sup>175</sup> A question arises whether the competition for the relatively few posts available in the colonial society was so important to the general population as this concern would suggest. The amount of controversy about patronage points to a possible limitation upon the status it could confer. The means of obtaining political appointments and the goals of those seeking them tell a good deal about their role in individuals' social mobility.

Political patronage as a term is used to describe any position or contract the appointment of which was in the control of a political authority (whether the lieutenant governor, the assembly, or a lower official such as a road commissioner) or was likely to be influenced primarily by a political authority. The use of patronage by individuals as a means to further their social or economic fortunes is the prime focus. The role of patronage in recruiting, controlling or

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(175) For examples see Colonial Advocate, January 13 and 27, April 18 and 28, December 28, 1825 on W.L. Mackenzie's concern for patronage from the Assembly to support his paper; and John Macaulay to J.B. Robinson, July 1, 1828; John Macaulay to George Hillier, July 11, 1828; John Strachan to John Macaulay, July 10, 1828; J.B. Robinson to John Macaulay, July 19, 1828; J.B. Robinson to John Macaulay, August 21, 1828; George Hillier to John Macaulay, September 17, 1828; J.B. Robinson to John Macaulay, November 28, 1828; John Strachan to John Macaulay, December 4, 1828; John Macaulay to Sir John Colborne, December 9, 1828; J.B. Robinson to John Macaulay, December 13, 1828; John Strachan to John Macaulay, December 19, 1828; J.B. Robinson to John Macaulay, March 28, 1829; George Marchland to John Macaulay, April 27, 1829; John Strachan to John Macaulay, May 4, 1829; J.B. Robinson to John Macaulay, May 25, 1829; Macaulay Papers, all dealing with John Macaulay's quest to be appointed Customs Collector at Kingston.

rewarding supporters is not considered.

As a factor in social mobility, patronage lacks the autonomy of the others. In many cases a patronage appointment came as recognition of a social status secured by other factors. Yet the appointments were sought at times clearly to establish rather than acknowledge a social position (especially where personal connections were the prime basis for the claim). Moreover the variety of posts in the hierarchy of government services offered an important ladder of promotion, up which patronage was the means to rise.

There appear to have been two principal ways in which persons strove to gain patronage appointments. The first, and most prominent, was through the cultivation of personal connections. At the highest level, this meant acquaintance and alliance with the person who controlled appointments. More commonly it meant having allies who knew someone who made appointments.<sup>176</sup> The primary basis of patronage application was some personal connection.

The massive migration into Upper Canada in the early 1830's brought with it many office-seekers whose demands outstripped the supply of government posts. As competition became more intense recommendations

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(176) For examples see: Nelson Cozens to John Macaulay, February 28, 1822, Macaulay Papers. R.C. Horne to Ed. MacMahon, November 18, 1816, UCS. Colonial Advocate, September 16, 1824. J.B. Robinson to John Macaulay, July 9, 1834, Macaulay Papers. Mahlon Burwell succeeded in getting another "radical" made a J.P. on the basis of personal acquaintance. Read op. cit., p.6.

had to be more direct. Personal acquaintance rather than a distant patron became crucial. Even as Surveyor-General John Macaulay could not get his young in-law from Britain any position in Toronto.<sup>177</sup> As time passed, the personal nature of the recommendation had to become more intimate, in order to have any chance of success.

As well as who you knew, what you knew (or more often what you had done) also formed an important basis for securing patronage. For many of the humblest of the Crown's petitioners there could have been no possibility of any personal acquaintance with any person of authority. As a result their letters cited their abilities or their long and loyal service in some minor position.<sup>178</sup> The service most commonly cited was military.<sup>179</sup>

The abundance and variety of requests for positions raise the question of the patronage-seekers' goals. Why did people want to hold the variety of government posts and contracts that were so ardently pursued? In all cases, there was an element of prestige. But allied to that status were two rather different adjuncts, depending upon the nature of the appointment. On the one hand there were positions which promised status allied with power. Commissions of the Peace, militia commissions, appointment as surrogate judges, and road commissioners all conveyed a high social visibility because they conferred a certain

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(177) John Macaulay to John Kirby, September 29, 1837, Macaulay Papers.

(178) John Newborn to the Lt. Governor, February 2, 1818, UCS.

(179) For example, John McDonnell to Duncan Cameron, February 2, 1818, UCS.

measure of power on the recipient. In few of these cases were the financial rewards likely even to compensate for the expenses of the post.<sup>180</sup> On the other hand there were appointments which offered status with definite economic benefits. These included such positions as customs collector, sheriff, postmaster, King's printer, Assembly printer, and on the humbler level, jailer and tax assessor.<sup>181</sup> The two types of appointment represented goals that while similar were not identical.

Yet despite all of this scrambling for public office, there were limits on the type of status that patronage could bring. The competition for official favour in its most tangible form generated intense controversy over political appointments. Indeed this is the key to explaining the very large amount of writing devoted to the subject. Some of this competition was between persons of the same views (factional quarrels), while in other cases it was between rival of different political views (political quarrels) - though the two types were not always so clearly separate.<sup>182</sup>

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(180) James Cawdell to George Hillier, December 3, 1818; F.H. Cumming to George Hillier, April 3, 1822; see also John Newborn to the Lt. Governor, February 2, 1818, UCS.

(181) George Rolph to George Hillier, December 4, 1818; J. Mitchell to George Hillier, November 1, 1820; same to same, January 31, 1820; same to same, January 25, 1821, UCS. John Macaulay to George Hillier, July 11, 1828, Macaulay Papers.

(182) J.B. Robinson to J. Macaulay, July 19, 1828; John Strachan to J. Macaulay, December 4, 1828; George Markland to J. Macaulay, March 23, 1829, Macaulay Papers. For other examples of factual quarrels see, Rea, op. cit., pp.88-90, 195-202. Neil McLean to W.D. Powell, September 18, 1817, UCS. Stephen Benson to Henry Yager, April 2, 1835, Yager Papers.



The intense competition and controversy surrounding political patronage point up the anomaly of the status it conveyed. A government appointment could enhance, or at the very least publicly register, a person's social status in the community. In some cases it could even serve to buttress that status financially. Yet while on the one hand such awards appeared to advertise one's independence or transition to respectability, the appointment itself on the other hand could be interpreted as a kind of dependence, on government favour. The remarks on the dependence of office-holders come from two contrasting sources, each quite different in tone.

Critics of the provincial government tended to see anyone receiving public money as corrupt, or at least vulnerable to dishonourable influence. William Lyon Mackenzie expressed it clearly, objecting to the candidacy of James Small, son of the executive council's clerk.

He hopes that it will not be objected to him that he is the son of an old servant of the crown. In our opinion it is a most serious objection; his father holds very lucrative situations under government, and at the pleasure of the government. The son in the course of doing his duty to his constituents might in parliament be obliged to sit quietly where he would otherwise speak, lest by doing his duty to his country, he might offend power and thus cause his father to be removed in his old age. - We would like him better if he were the son of a man who had never touched a shilling of the public money. 183

The holders of government posts and their families showed a marked awareness of their dependence upon continuing official favour. Jeremiah

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(183) Colonial Advocate, May 27, 1824; see also July 1, 1824; June 16, 1825; October 30, 1828. Canadian Freeman, November 8, 1827.

Powell wrote bitterly "that the late Lord Dorchester introduced my Father to a fatal dependence on the Crown", by making him a judge.<sup>184</sup>

Dismissal from public appointments was an accepted means for the government to exert a crude kind of social discipline. The dismissals of Joseph Willcocks, C.B. Wyatt, and Judge Robert Thorpe in 1807, of William Dickson as J.P. in 1817, the "Gourlayites" in 1819, Judge George Ridout, W.W. Baldwin, and James Small in 1836 do not represent major turnovers in the whole public service, but served to remind all appointees of their dependence on the continuing favour of the Crown.<sup>185</sup> While some of these dismissals could be seen as oppressive by the critics of the provincial executive, they clearly did not foreswear the idea. Upon hearing of the attack upon the offices of the Colonial Advocate, the Upper Canada Herald demanded,

Let him [the governor] dismiss from office every individual concerned in it, and strike forever from the commission of the peace, the two mock police magistrates, who are said to have lent their countenance to the perpetrators, if the act be proved. 186

The prevalence of that attitude could only enhance the dependence of those in the patronage system.

Those aware of the limitations upon the status that patronage could bestow were not deterred from seeking it. For some, the object

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- (184) J. Powell to George W. Murray, June 21, 1808, Jarvis-Powell Papers.
- (185) Craig, op. cit., pp.59-62, 91, 98, 241. Robert Baldwin to W.W. Baldwin, September 24, 1836, W.W. Baldwin Papers.
- (186) Upper Canada Herald, June 20, 1826. See also W.W. Baldwin to J.B. Robinson, May 31, 1828, W.W. Baldwin Papers and John Strachan to Samuel Smith, July 3 1818, Spragge, op. cit., p.169.

of their ambition was a position of some power, that would confer "a little brief authority", a reference to William Shakespeare's Measure for Measure, used scornfully by both Charles Jones and William Lyon Mackenzie.<sup>187</sup> The citation of Shakespeare is apt, for the character of whom the line is spoken was a temporary substitute in office. Even judges held their places at the discretion of the Crown. Others pursued appointments equally or primarily for the expected economic reward. Both sorts of patronage could definitely confirm or enhance one's social status, by the augmentation of power, economic resources, or some combination of both. A review of the durability of office holders to 1840 shows that most experienced lengthy tenure in their appointments.<sup>188</sup> Yet the type of status lacked total security and was vulnerable to accusations that it had been bought at the price of one's integrity. In reaction to the second liability, office holders sought to emphasize that the appointment had come as an unsought recognition of service.<sup>189</sup> These attempts to sever the status of appointments from its controversial political roots illustrate one limitation of the prestige to be had from patronage. The other - absence of security - was linked to it. Together they produced an uncertainty that meant patronage could prove neither a reliable upward progression toward nor a certain possession

(187) "Free and Independent Electors of the County of Leeds", n.d. 1816, Charles Jones Papers; Colonial Advocate, August 26, 1824.

(188) See F.H. Armstrong, Handbook of Upper Canadian Chronology, Lawson Memorial Library, London, 1967.

(189) John Strachan to Lt. Col. Miller Clifford, April 25, 1816, Spragge, op. cit., p. 108. W. McVity to W.W. Baldwin, March 4, 1840, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

of social status.

Political patronage could have come as a confirmation of a social status based upon years of community service and a secure economic basis or as a reward for active political support. It could provide the material means as well as social role for respectability. Indeed, patronage's value lay primarily in assisting individuals to move from Independence to Respectability. Political patronage functioned, then, in a variety of ways to confirm or enhance the social mobility of individuals, subject to the constraint of partisan controversy which emphasized the political dependence and possible uncertainty of such status.

#### Conclusion

People's attempts to succeed in Upper Canada were refracted in the eye of popular opinion into a number of distinct aspects. Each of these affected individuals in various ways, together contributing to the differentiating experiences of social movement. An understanding of attitudes to social mobility as a whole requires, then, attention to the operation of the parts. In seeing the operation of the six aspects more clearly, we can grasp the totality more surely.

There existed a profound difference between male and female experiences of social mobility in Upper Canada. A man might or might not proceed without a wife, while conscious of the considerable advantages that might result from marriage. For women marriage was essential,

the primary means of mobility. To be female and alone in Upper Canada was to be confined to the lower ranks of the social scale. None of the other variables in the equation of social mobility - education, religion, ethnicity - could have over balanced that fundamental liability. Even women who might have appeared to hold a high social position did so only on the strength of their male connections. If the man lost status, so did the woman. No woman on her own could have risen far in Upper Canada.

The common view of the educational system held that an individual might advance socially by striving and succeeding in it. There existed a hierarchy of schools, and from each issued those equipped with the knowledge appropriate to each social rank. As the Canadian Christian Examiner put it,

We want Colleges for the learned professions, Grammar Schools for the middle class, and Common Schools, something better than those now in operation, for the great body of the people. In all civilized countries there have been, and no doubt always will be, three classes, or ranks in society - . . . and if so, there ought to be three classes of schools to correspond, affording an opportunity to all to ascend as high in the ranks of literature as their circumstances will permit. 190

The articulation of a fixed set of social ranks - and the insistence that all accept these as divine given - must not be seen as a prohibition on individual striving for success. The frequent calls for an education in one's duties and acceptance of one's place were aimed at

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(190) Canadian Christian Examiner, July, 1838, p.252.

critics of the hierarchical idea of society.<sup>191</sup> It was open to an individual to better himself, as long as he accepted that his failure could not be set down as society's fault. Thus the Presbyterian writer here looks for schools to afford "an opportunity to all to ascend as high . . . as their circumstances will permit". The ambiguity of "circumstances" - was it mental ability alone, or the ability to pay? - reflected an uncertainty uncharacteristic of most of the period. Upper Canadian society as a whole did not show a willingness until very late to devote major social (vs. individual) resources to education. Consequently education with all its potential for facilitating social mobility remained largely a private rather than a public matter. Every individual had to make his way as best he could.

Rather than leaving one church to join another, people who were politically active in heavily settled areas were inclined to act together to raise the status of their own church, and thus improve their relative status collectively. These sectarian struggles pulled down the artificial, legal supremacy held by the Church of England (and aspired to by the Church of Scotland), a victory symbolized in the 1831 Marriage Act and the 1840 Clergy Reserve Act which embodied the idea of a "christian establishment". While it lasted, the Church of England's special position might have conferred a preferred place to Anglicans seeking government jobs, at least in some areas. There may

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(191) Christian Guardian, November 21, 1829. Church, March 3, 1838; May 22, 1841.

have been some marginal disability in associating with "radical dissent" - Methodists (other than Wesleyan) and Baptists - in the 1820's or before, particularly in urban centers such as York and Kingston, if one expected to benefit from official favour. However the operation of denominational prejudice against any particular group was mitigated by the mixed nature of the political and economic hierarchies. Where all major denominations had a share in power, either provincially or locally, no one denomination could have been an outcast. But Irish Catholics came close to being just such outcasts. The combination of denominational with ethnic prejudice and the arrival of greater numbers than the Catholic "enclaves" in the province could absorb resulted in these people facing formidable barriers to their social and economic success. Of all the barriers of popular prejudice towards the various ethnic groups the most severe hostility faced the native Irish. The poorest Irish settlers were described as particularly dirty and disorderly. For the native Irish, ethnic prejudice combined with and was amplified by anti-Catholic prejudices; while the protestant Scots-Irish found the stigma of this origin lessened by their religious persuasion. The combination of class, ethnic and religious antipathies placed the impoverished Irish Roman Catholic at the bottom of the social scale among British immigrants.

A more moderate hostility was directed toward recent American immigrants (or even, on occasion, Americans for some time resident in Upper Canada). Arising out of animosities from the War of 1812, legal restrictions were placed on Americans taking up farms or teaching in schools. The very strong prejudice felt in some sections of the

province led to agitation over the "alien question" through most of the 1820's. That agitation threw in doubt the property and voting rights even of American settlers of long standing, possibly a more effective deterrent to American migration to Upper Canada than the legal restrictions of 1816. However most American immigrants were cushioned from personal encounters with such antipathies by the number of American-born settlers already in the province, their part in founding many of the early settlements, and their continuing dominance in some areas. Yet the depth of cleavage between British and American constituted the most acute political (as distinct from social) division in the colony. Where the Irish faced the most severe barriers as individuals and as a group, the powerful position of the American-born within the colony made them potentially the most socially disruptive, from the British point of view.

Scots drew less negative comment than either Americans or the Irish. Yet there existed a definite hostile view of their 'national character'. In contrast to the Irish, almost never was a distinction made between Roman Catholic and protestant Scots. Not only did they face a less powerful prejudice, but its operation against them was lessened by the presence of Scots in positions of influence as employers, in government and business.

Ethnic groups other than those from the British Isles or the United States who did not have English as a language initially faced a different sort of barrier. That could quickly be compounded by ethnic



prejudices, especially towards newly arrived settlers. These were commonly expected to find land or employment and work at that, leaving the direction of public affairs to the longer resident or at least English-speaking members of the community.

The ethnic diversity which characterized Upper Canada produced a degree of social friction, which did not operate equally upon all. Different ethnic groups received far different treatment from the community as a whole. That differential demonstrates, indeed, how critical a variable ethnicity could be in social mobility.

Racial prejudices varied from one minority to another in intensity and in its effects. Indians faced less antipathy on account of their race. Once their military power had gone, the qualities which had been attributed to them in their traditional culture could be admired without fear. However Indians were confronted with a determined hostility toward their way of life.

Blacks, whether singly or in groups suffered from social segregation. That situation not only served to accentuate their separateness, it denied blacks access to opportunities in the larger community, whether in terms of finding jobs, establishing businesses, or rising to positions of authority in ecclesiastical hierarchies. Blacks in Upper Canada, as they emerged from slavery, were greeted by abstract sympathy and concrete aversion.

For the newest of newcomers - the Jews- the New World promised no fresh start but the old prejudices planted before their arrival. It is

difficult to demonstrate within the time limits of this study how anti-semitic popular attitudes operated upon individual Jews. So few had entered Upper Canada by 1840 that little evidence exists as to how those attitudes affected them.

Political patronage offered a means of social mobility, though one clouded by controversy. It could be attained commonly by the operation of a network of personal acquaintances leading to the person in authority, or less commonly by the operation of claims upon the government for loyal service. Both the small proportion of the population that could ever benefit and the restricted number who had the necessary contacts to apply for it, limited the scope for social advance through political appointment. Over time the increasing influx of immigrants made competition more intense, and personal connections to succeed had to be more direct and intimate. While all patronage seekers sought status by visibly receiving government favour, their goals divided them into two classes. There were those interested primarily in prestige and power - such positions as justice of the peace or militia command. Others sought equally, or in some cases, primarily, the economic advantage of being customs collector, postmaster, or sheriff. The considerable controversy surrounding political appointments points to the limits of patronage-derived status. Paradoxically, while a certain office might confirm your social status at the Respectable level, it could leave you vulnerable to charges of

political dependence. Indeed, beyond the partisan rhetoric of corruption, those inside the patronage system sometimes saw in themselves a "fatal dependence on the Crown". That political dependence accentuated the possibly uncertain endurance of patronage status. It could prove to be "a little brief authority".

A review of the separate aspects of popular attitudes towards social mobility shows that the effect of one could vary greatly compared to others. The weighing of the relative weight that ought to be assigned to each aspect, and their diverse ways of influencing individuals' mobility are the subject of a subsequent chapter. However, first our attention turns to a seventh aspect whose peculiar nature requires a more extended treatment - "character".

CHAPTER 7

CHARACTER AS A FACTOR IN SOCIAL MOBILITY

Character as a factor in attitudes towards social mobility requires separate treatment both for the importance which contemporaries attached to it and for the ambiguities inherent in the term. Its constant repetition and the central position it was often given in advertisements, letters of recommendation, and other assessments of individuals show its importance. By distinguishing between the general and specific ways in which it was used, and the elements it was commonly thought to include, character can be given the more precise meaning necessary for analysis.

There were certain qualifications which an individual could have possessed that were considered to assist upward mobility, or aid in keeping a social position. Lack of these, or possession of their opposites made upward mobility difficult, and downward mobility likely. These discrete qualities were usually referred to in their totality as "character".

Could an illiterate Irish Catholic have a good character? It seems to have been possible. Rev. Mark Stark wrote of his farm hand,

He is a good faithful creature though an Irishman and Roman Catholic - He is very slow in the gumption in regard to any thing new and requires overlooking but in ordinary matters he goes on well-. 1

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(1) M. Stark to Miss Young, June 4, 1842, Stark Papers.

However the obviously grudging nature of the attribution shows the resistance of the writer. In the case of some people "character" was a thing to be demonstrated by them before they would be accepted as ordinary citizens. William Lyon Mackenzie observed of the escaped slaves who had settled in Upper Canada,

. . . but although not a few are drunkards, spend-thrifts, addicted to low cunning, and so forth, yet I have found here and there a respectable, well-behaved, thrifty and intelligent family of blacks farming in the woods . . . . 2

Character in its more general and ambiguous uses especially must be watched carefully as it may be found functioning as a proxy for something else.

Upper Canadians appear to have used the word, "character", as a catch-all for a diverse selection of personal qualities. It is often difficult to know exactly to what they were referring when they used the word. A petition on behalf of a young man sentenced to hang for horse theft pleaded,

That the parents of the said Dennis Sullivan are residing in this province and are of good character, and that from the former conduct and character of the said Dennis Sullivan during his employment with several respectable persons . . . (we) hope that his conviction and sentence . . . will have such an effect upon him . . . his future conduct will prove deserving of (a pardon) . . . . 3

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- (2) Colonial Advocate, December 8, 1825. See also Fergusson, op. cit., p.122.
- (3) Wm. Campbell to George Hillier, November 11, 1820; see also J.B. Robinson to Major Loring, September 8, 1814; Charles Fothergill to P. Maitland, September 26, 1820; UCS. Col. Harvey Maitland to C.A. Hagerman, September 4, 1821; John Macaulay to Col. Coffin, June 20, 1821, Macaulay Papers.

In other references the context is more helpful. Charles Stuart of Sandwich considered that the main requirement for agents dealing with Indians ought to be good character.

These agents should be persons particularly worthy of confidence; not from their wealth or rank or temporal claims or interest; but from the real nature of their individual characters; and of these, as far as possible, genuine christian piety should be the basis . . . . 4

Ogle R. Gowan, later Grandmaster of the Orange Lodge, wrote a warm recommendation to support a militia appointment for one John Neil.

. . . I consider him a Loyal, Honest and Industrious man of good moral character, and the worst I ever heard against him, was that his father was a Roman Catholic. 5

The Brockville trial of John Wilson and Simon Robinson of Perth for duelling brought this comment from the reporter:

The admirable character given to the prisoners, by all parties, the amiability of disposition, and the moral excellence of both the young gentlemen, contrasted to their present situation, seemed to draw forth a tear of sympathy, from every eye. 6

William Hamilton Merritt in an 1836 election address called for a new system of banking "whereby every industrious man can obtain as much money as his business requires, provided he is a man of character and integrity, and can produce good security".<sup>7</sup> John Macaulay wrote of a new cook,

. . . she has defects, of course, in her character against which we have to guard, such as an occasional

(4) C. Stuart to George Hillier, December 5, 1820, UCS.

(5) Ogle R. Gowan to Charles Jones, July 15, 1832, Charles Jones Papers.

(6) Patriot, August 30, 1833.

(7) "Address to Haldimand Freeholders", October, 1836, W.H. Merritt Papers.

dispute with another servant but she is represented as being honest and sober to as great a degree as her class of persons can reasonably be expected to be. 8

Character referred to a constellation of what were considered moral virtues - industry, honesty, sobriety, strict sexual mores, loyalty, piety. But at times a reference to "character" might be to any one or more of these, or the specific aspects could be referred to independent of the term itself.

However the ambiguity of its use must not obscure character's importance as a factor in social mobility. It frequently formed the basis for recommendations for hiring or promotions. The Deputy Post Master General, T.A. Stayner, welcomed John Macaulay's suggestion for a successor at the Kingston Post Office.

. . . Mr. Deacon has personal claims - from the length of service in the Department and the excellence of his character and conduct whilst officiating as your Clerk. 9

An advertisement for a common school teacher concluded, "None need apply but a man of good moral character".<sup>10</sup> (No education qualifications were required). John M'Gregor reflected much contemporary opinion when he contrasted the success in farming "by steady industry" of some to those who failed through "their improvident character and indolent

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- (8) John Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, May 2, 1840, Macaulay Papers.
  - (9) T.H. Stayner to John Macaulay, October 12, 1836; see also Horace Hills to John Macaulay, February 1833, Macaulay Papers; Capt. Wm. Castle to Wm. Allan, June 29, 1833, Allan Papers; Thomas Appleby to Henry Yager, March 13, 1835, Yager Papers.
  - (10) Christian Guardian, February 3, 1836. See also Patriot, January 8, 1839; Upper Canada Herald, March 14, 1832.



habits.<sup>11</sup>

Character was not an aspect of a person that was fixed by birth. It could be cultivated over time, either from childhood, or in the course of a personal rehabilitation. The Christian Guardian urged ambition upon the young, pointing to the moral virtues as part of what was necessary to realize their dreams.

It is astonishing how few rise to eminence in their calling, either in trade or in the professions. The summits are gained by a very small number; the multitude grovel below. Why? Because they did not seek or begin to ascend during their apprenticeship. . . . 12

William Lyon Mackenzie held up the example of a childhood friend of his, a successful mechanic despite losing the use of both legs at an early age,

From this brief history of James Sandy, we may learn this instructive lesson, that no difficulties are too great to be overcome by industry and perseverance. . . . 13

The Christian Guardian noted and praised those who had fallen, but were struggling to redeem their characters.

. . . Several almost ruined drunkards . . . have renounced the use of ardent spirits, and have maintained, for some months past, an entire abstinence from all intoxicating liquor. 14

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- (11) M'Gregor, op. cit., volume 2, p.550. See also Patriot, February 21, 1834; January 20, 1837; March 16, 1838; Upper Canada Herald, March 14, 1832.
- (12) Christian Guardian, December 5, 1829; see also December 14, 1830 and July 19, 1837.
- (13) Colonial Advocate, December 16, 1824.
- (14) Christian Guardian, February 13, 1830.

Justice William Campbell remitted a severe sentence of whipping for a man who had pleaded guilty to a charge of theft, because of the man's evident intention to reform.

(He) . . . appeared to be a penitent, which marks of contrition induced me to award a lighter punishment than I would otherwise have done. 15

One required little intelligence, no wealth or previous social position to have (or aspire to) possession of a good moral character. It thus appears as one of the most equalitarian of factors in a study of social mobility.

What was meant by character can be analysed in two parts. To begin with, there were the 'common place' virtues upon which all were agreed. Everyone wanted to see these in everyone else with whom they had to deal, whether that person were a servant or a magistrate. Foremost amongst such valued qualities were industry and honesty. The second, more controversial, aspect of character could be called the 'virtues of moderation'. While there was often a concensus on the need for moderation (say, in drinking) a substantial disagreement existed over the degree of moderation that was necessary.

The most frequently mentioned and apparently most highly valued of the 'common place' virtues was industry. In part this may have been because Upper Canada was seen as a special place where this otherwise neglected characteristic might flourish. Thomas Dalton made a common comparison in his newspaper when he contrasted the lot of the poor in

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(15) Wm. Campbell to George Hillier, April 22, 1822, UCS. John Macaulay to Samuel Hoars, February 22, 1834, Macaulay Papers.

Britain with the prosperity that awaited them,

. . . in a land where industry meets its due reward, notwithstanding they may have been involuntarily subjected to the condition of receiving parochial aid, or perishing in other lands, where competition of labour leaves thousands and tens of thousands unemployed. 16

The promise of land beckoned to all who had the determination and perseverance to take advantage of it.

On every side the heart is cheered by the pleasing prospect of universal prosperity; abject poverty is a thing unknown, and industry is sure to meet with a rich and lasting reward; everyone is blessed with plenty and cheered with hope. 17

Given that view of its society, it is not surprising that the Christian Guardian would single out industry as a prominent virtue. It advised that those "with moderate talents, by a persevering industry are gradually raised from obscurity, so as often to attain the highest honours", defeating others with greater natural abilities and better social connections. 18

However, as one would expect from a religious newspaper, the

- (16) Patriot, February 21, 1834. See also Jameson, op. cit., volume II, p.236; Picken, op. cit., p.28; Cattermole, op. cit., p.114.
- (17) George Romanes to Rev. Burns, June 25, 1833, Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence. See also John Strachan to Dr. Brown, October 21, 1809, Strachan Papers; Patriot, March 16, 1838; Upper Canada Herald, March 14, 1832; MacTaggart, op. cit., volume 2, p.298; Talbot, op. cit., volume II, p.100; M'Gregor, op. cit., volume II, p.517; Socket, op. cit., p.16; Barclay, op. cit., p.5; Fergusson, op. cit., p.132.
- (18) Christian Guardian, April 29, 1835.

Christian Guardian did not commend diligence without honesty.<sup>19</sup> None would be surprised to see employers demanding honesty of their servants. Thus Ann Macaulay, a well-to-do Kingston widow, looked for a man-servant characterized by "honesty, industry and sobriety".<sup>20</sup> An advertisement for a porter warned, "none need apply but such as can be recommended for honesty and sobriety".<sup>21</sup> But the same demand was made for high offices of trust on the upper end of the social scale. In setting out the three most important characteristics of assemblymen, Charles Jones began his election address by saying,

. . . they ought to possess "probity" in order that they may be proof to withstand . . . any temptation to barter away the lives, liberties and property of their constituents . . . They ought to possess "Fortitude" to have as a supporter or auxiliary to their probity . . . .<sup>22</sup>

A prospective supervisor for the construction of the Kingston Penitentiary was recommended for his "unimpeachable probity".<sup>23</sup> Honesty was looked for in militia officers.<sup>24</sup> The absence of honesty was equally

(19) Christian Guardian, April 29, 1835.

(20) Ann Macaulay to John Macaulay, January 21, 1837; see also John Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, May 7, 1840, Macaulay Papers.

(21) Patriot, January 8, 1839.

(22) "Election Address", n.d., Charles Jones Papers. See also Advocate, March 13, 1834.

(23) Horace Hills to John Macaulay, February 1833; see also the recommendation for an engineer, J.B. Robinson to John Macaulay, April 2, 1838, Macaulay Papers.

(24) John Rolph to Major Halton, February 7, 1816; John Rolph to Col. Coffin, May 24, 1816; Col. Coffin to John Rolph, June 8, 1816, UCS; and Ogle R. Gowan to Charles Jones, July 15, 1832, Charles Jones Papers.

condemned whether in servant or merchant.<sup>25</sup> Industry and honesty, then, stand together as the two pre-eminent unqualified virtues that Upper Canadians identified as part of the general term "character".

A variety of other virtues were also encompassed in character. These varied from person to person. Frugality or economy was often mentioned, usually linked to other characteristics. The Kingston Poor Relief Society declared its aim "to promote industry, economy and sobriety among the lower orders".<sup>26</sup> The Christian Guardian called upon the wealthy to set an example of economy for the rest of society.

To shun luxury and profusion is so far from being a subject of shame to any rank whatever, that, on the contrary, it adds lustre and dignity to the highest rank and birth. 27

Rev. Mark Stark, in describing his fiancee to his mother, assured her,

She as well as all the family are accomplished and although once living in wealth she had been educated in habits of the strictest moderation and economy  
 . . . . . 28

Unlike frugality, intelligence or "good natural talents" was less mentioned and most often used in reference to holders of public trusts, rather than lesser social positions.<sup>29</sup> Conversely neatness and.

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- (25) John Bethune to John Macaulay, March 16, 1814, Macaulay Papers. Talbot, op. cit., volume 2, p.72.
- (26) Kingston Chronicle, May 14, 1819; see also January 22, 1819.
- (27) Christian Guardian, December 5, 1829.
- (28) Mark Stark to Mrs. Stark, May 14, 1835, Stark Papers.
- (29) Horace Hills to John Macaulay, February 1833; J.B. Robinson to John Macaulay, March 29, 1826, Macaulay Papers, Christian Guardian, February 6, 1839.

cleanliness tended to be explicitly demanded more of the lower orders. The Female Benevolent Society, in attending upon the poor, intended ". . . to stir them up to industry, order, neatness and economy, in order to make them useful to their families and better members of society".<sup>30</sup> Anna Jameson, while praising Irish-born servants as "in general honest, warm-hearted and willing", noted with regret that "they are not the most eligible persons to trust with the cleanliness and comfort of one's household".<sup>31</sup> Tavern keepers were instructed to be clean, as well as honest, sober, civil and loyal.<sup>32</sup> The highest in the social scale to have their neatness (or lack of it) commented upon were Highland Scots farmers.<sup>33</sup> On the evidence it would appear that all were expected to be frugal, while the higher up were to be intelligent and the lower down to be clean.

A further essential aspect of good character, though seldom explicitly referred to, was a strict code of sexual conduct. Servant girls who became pregnant when not married had clearly had their character destroyed.<sup>34</sup> Young ladies could ill afford to fail under even the

(30) "Female Benevolent Society of Kingston", n.d., (1820), Macaulay Papers.

(31) Jameson, op. cit., volume 1, p.269.

(32) "Rules and Regulations . . . 1844", Charles Jones Papers.

(33) Howison, op. cit., p.35. Jameson, op. cit.; volume 2, p.214.

(34) Ann Powell to Mrs. W.D. Powell, September 6, 1818, Jarvis-Powell Papers. Ann Macaulay to John Macaulay, July 26, 1838; same to same, August 8, 1838, Macaulay Papers.

suspicion of any sexual activity before marriage.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, S.P. Jarvis worried about a possible threat to his virtue from the eccentric Mrs. Widmer.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, later in his life as Indian Superintendent Jarvis faced a demand that he be dismissed from office for lacking "strict principles of morality". In 1842 a petition of the Snake Island Chiefs declared,

We have reason to fear too much of the good presents . . . are paid away by Col. Jarvis for wages of prostitution . . . The annual distribution of presents . . . is a scene of licentiousness of the most profligate degradation. 37

While not so often directly referred to, proper sexual mores probably ranked with industry and honesty as indispensable for good character. Thrift or economy, and in a less general way, intelligence and cleanliness, constituted other aspects which were occasionally mentioned as part of character.

The complex of values known as "character" was urged upon everyone. For some, however, there might have been different shading or emphasis than for others. Paupers, standing at the very bottom of the social order, were the subject of everyone's exhortation, covering all aspects of their lives.

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(35) W.B. Robinson to S.P. Jarvis, January 20, 1822; Mrs. W.D. Powell to Eliza Powell, February 3, 1822; Eliza Powell to Mrs. S.P. Jarvis, February 18, 1822; same to same, June 12, 1822, Jarvis-Powell Papers. Christian Guardian, December 4, 1839.

(36) S.P. Jarvis to Mrs. S.P. Jarvis, November 21, 1823, Jarvis-Powell Papers.

(37) "Memorandum of the Snake Island Chiefs at the Credit River to the Governor General", November 9, 1842, Strachan Papers.

. . . We should individually and unitedly exert our influence to discourage idleness and intemperance, and other usual causes of pauperism; and to recommend and promote habits of sobriety, frugality, industry and application to some honest employment for a livelihood. 38

Servants stood only somewhat higher. Capt. William Castle wrote on behalf of a "valuable man", "I can safely recommend him for perfect honesty and sobriety."<sup>39</sup> Rev. William Macaulay wrote of Margaret McBride, whom he hired for his mother, as "a thorough worker and trusty".<sup>40</sup> The same characteristics were looked for in a junior clerk, and he was in trouble if they were not to be found. John Bethune Jr. sent John Macaulay a new clerk, David McMartin, whom he had trained in his store, with the admonition, "keep a strict rein upon him as he is naturally a little inclined to indolence".<sup>41</sup> However David's great failing turned out to be dishonesty not lack of industry. An injured Bethune later wrote Macaulay, "I never saw the smallest symptom of dishonesty about him . . . but he had no temptations here to be dishonest without detection".<sup>42</sup> Other young people, especially students, were

(38) Kingston Chronicle, June 18, 1819. "Female Benevolent Society of Kingston", n.d. (1820) Macaulay Papers.

(39) Capt. William Castle to Wm. Allan, June 29, 1833, Allan Papers. Ann Macaulay to John Macaulay, January 23, 1837, Macaulay Papers.

(40) William Macaulay to John Macaulay, September 15, 1838; John Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, May 7, 1840, Macaulay Papers. Mark Stark to Mrs. Stark, August 18, 1834, Stark Papers.

(41) John Bethune to John Macaulay, September 17, 1813, Macaulay Papers.

(42) John Bethune Jr. to John Macaulay, March 16, 1814; for contrast, see John Macaulay to J.Y. Cozens, August 29, 1819, Macaulay Papers.



told to lay the foundation of future greatness by zeal at their studies, Rev. John Stuart wrote to young J.B. Robinson, the future Chief Justice,

Neither, I hope, need I caution you to turn them [his studies] to your future profit, by industry, assiduity and a strict regard to moral conduct. I trust that your own good sense will suggest to you, that you are now laying the foundation of the character which you will sustain through life . . . .43

As a teacher, John Strachan pointed out to his students the benefits which education could have for shaping their character in the proper way.

. . . One of the greatest advantages you have derived from your education here, arises from the strictness of our discipline . . . [next] we place those habits of diligence and application to which you have been accustomed in the prosecution of your studies . . . These habits . . . are certainly the foundation of all future excellence; for how can any person advance in his professional studies or transact business with correctness and dispatch, unless he be accustomed to application [?] 44

For young men generally, the Christian Guardian advised that, " A watchful regard to his character in early youth will be of inconceivable value to him in all the remaining years of his life".<sup>45</sup> Paupers and servants, junior clerks, students and young people in general ought to have developed industry, honesty and self control, in the

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(43) Dr. Stuart to J.B. Robinson, April 23, 1805, J.B. Robinson Papers. Ann Macaulay to John Macaulay, October 1807, Macaulay Papers.

(44) Address to Cornwall students, 1807, cited in J.D. Purdy, "John Strachan and Education in Canada, 1800-1851", University of Toronto Ph. D. Thesis, 1962, pp.60-61.

(45) Christian Guardian, November 6, 1839; see also December 4, 1830 and July 19, 1837.

view of their elders and betters.

Good character was also urged upon and considered necessary for those at the upper end of the social scale. John Strachan advised the utmost industry on Rev. James Podfield, a new Anglican minister.

" - The duty will be arduous and incessant and must be entered upon in humble dependence upon divine aid, with all your heart otherwise it will not prosper."<sup>46</sup> John Crooks, a leading Presbyterian layman, wrote to

the Moderator of the Glasgow Presbytery pleading for qualified ministers to be sent "that we may no longer be reproached with having drunkards and worthless ones to teach us and minister in holy things".<sup>47</sup> With a

different sort of minister, James Morris, another prominent layman, was confident that material support would be forthcoming. "If he is energetic, pious, and popular as a preacher, he will soon command a most respectable congregation."<sup>48</sup> Thomas Dalton, in his newspaper attacks

on the Methodist Episcopal Church, returned incessantly to charges of sexual immorality amongst its preachers.

What do the whole tribe of Preachers of the sect of which it [Christian Guardian] - is the organ, and to the gross deceptions of which it is the pander, but

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(46) John Strachan to James Podfield, June 9, 1839, Strachan Papers. John Strachan to the Bishop of Chester, March 4, 1831, Good, op. cit., p.170. John Strachan to Charles Stewart, January 11, 1819, Spragge, op. cit., p.187.

(47) John Crooks to the Moderator of the Glasgow Presbytery, January 8, 1829, Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence.

(48) James Morris to Rev. Burns, January 9, 1836; also William Morris to Rev. Welsh, February 9, 1830, Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence.

meddle eternally with other men's matters, ay, and with other women's too!! 49

Further, magistrates were expected to be persons "such as are . . . active and attentive to the discharge of the duties of that important office".<sup>50</sup> Thomas Appleby of Belleville recommended Richard Lazier as a Justice of the Peace, citing several grounds for his appointment.

I name Lazier because he is a young man of good education and one who endeavours to inform himself both in law and useful knowledge and is endeavouring to make himself respectable both in conduct and in property . . . . 51

Along with education and property, Appleby considered respectable conduct as essential for a magistrate. It was for failure of character that magistrates were frequently attacked. Anna Jameson observed, "It appears to me that the government should be more careful in the choice of the district magistrates . . . A person who acted in this capacity was carried from the pavement dead drunk".<sup>52</sup> The editor of the Weekly Register denounced a magistrate, who had abandoned his family to live with a young woman sent to be a companion to his daughters, as "a monster in vice and depravity". He went on to emphasize in general terms the necessity of good character in those at the head of society.

- (49) Patriot, March 22, 1833; June 21, 1833; July 12, 1833; November 1, 1833; February 22, 1839. See also Howison, op. cit., p.150 and Moodie, Life, op. cit., pp.108-115.
- (50) James McNabb to Lt. Col. Cameron, March 31, 1817; J.B. Robinson to Ed. MacMahon, December 2, 1814, UCS.
- (51) Thomas Appleby to Henry Yager, March 13, 1835, Yager Papers.
- (52) Jameson, op. cit., volume 2, p.147. Christian Guardian, February 13, 1830, December 5, 1829.

Vice to the discerning eye assumes in the different grades of society, different degrees of malignity. Most of our habits are those of imitation; and we naturally look up to those above us in external rank for patterns of our conduct . . . Those who bear the political fabric upon their shoulders, stand, as it were, a mark for public opinion to shoot at . . . Their conduct is equally public property, but their bad example is far more pernicious, because it silently and imperceptibly goes to sap the foundation of all civil polity, by corrupting the public mind, and weakening the necessary restraints upon vicious principles, which alone are capable of retaining men in the bond of society. 53

Character, then, was demanded both of those at the top end of the social scale such as clergy and magistrates as well as of paupers, servants, and clerks. There were certain universally acknowledged characteristics that enhanced a person in the estimation of other, no matter what his or her station might be.

Industry, honesty and strict moral behaviour, economy and cleanliness more particularly for the lower orders, made up the common place virtues attributed without serious debate to "good character". The second component of character might be termed the 'virtues of moderation'. Over these there was a measure of controversy. While everyone might agree on the principle of moderation in a certain thing, there could yet be sharp differences as to the necessary or desirable degree of moderation. The most notable example of that type of debate was over temperance. To some Upper Canadians, "temperate" meant total

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(53) Weekly Register, May 29, 1823. See also Colonial Advocate, July 1, 1824, July 29, 1829 and Mackenzie's Weekly Message, February 19, 1858.

abstinence: no alcohol in any form at any time.<sup>54</sup> Others thought beer, ale and wine ought to be permissible, but saw distilled liquor as the curse of the human race. Thomas Dalton, a brewer turned newspaper editor, urged the substitution of beer, "a mild, innoxious, palatable, and sustaining beverage, for the rank and poisonous prevalent potations". It is perhaps not surprising that a former brewer would think, "beer is the only article which with any show of feasibility can be flown to, for refuge from the two-edged sword of the devastating Demon . . .".<sup>55</sup> Still others considered temperance to be moderation in the use of liquor. William Lyon Mackenzie believed in temperance, especially for his own employees, while at the same time he could compliment Mr. Hollywell on the quality of his beer and yearn to sample some of the fine whiskey being produced at Montreal.<sup>56</sup> Only incurable drunkards, in that view, had need of total abstinence. Such a position could never satisfy the sterner members of the temperance societies. The Christian Guardian declared,

By temperance societies, however, we do not mean tippling, or moderate drinking societies; we mean societies whose members do not so much as "taste, touch the unclean", the poisonous, the accursed thing. 57

(54) Christian Guardian, January 2, 1830. M.A. Garland and J.J. Talman, "Pioneer Drinking Habits and the Rise of Temperance Agitation in Upper Canada prior to 1840", OHSRP, volume 27, 1931, pp.352-55.

(55) Patriot, March 25, 1830. York Weekly Post, March 29, 1821.

(56) Colonial Advocate, December 16, 1824; May 23, 1825; April 27, 1826. Constitution, September 21, 1836.

(57) Christian Guardian, July 3, 1839; December 26, 1829.

Those who did not go the 'whole way' with the militants replied in kind. The Canadian Christian Examiner derided the pomposity of a temperance sermon in which all who refused to join the society were condemned as furthering the devil's work by their shameless apathy.<sup>58</sup> Susanna Moodie disapproved of the methods used by some societies.

It is to be questioned whether the signing of any pledge is likely to prove a permanent remedy for this great moral evil. If an appeal to the heart and conscience, and the fear of incurring the displeasure of an offended God, are not sufficient to deter a man from becoming an active instrument in the ruin of himself and his family, no forcible restraint upon his animal desires will be likely to affect a real reformation. 59

Rather surprisingly, in view of her comment of futility of "forcible restraint", Moodie's own cure was to jail incurable drunkards with lunatics, whom they closely resembled in her mind. Even the Methodists began to worry that the zeal of the temperance societies had gotten out of hand. Some clergy cautioned that the societies should not hold their meetings on Sundays, or at other times which would conflict with church activities.<sup>60</sup> No one now would likely accuse Susanna Moodie or the Methodists of the 1830's as being partial to excessive drinking. But the agreement in condemning it could not be taken to mean any agreement on exactly what was "excessive". As a result "temperance" must be

(58) Canadian Christian Examiner, volume 1, no. 1, March, 1837, pp.8-9. Patriot, December 17, 1829; March 25, 1834.

(59) Moodie, Life, op. cit., p.46.

(60) J.M. Clemens, "Taste Not; Touch Not; Handle Not: A Study of the Social Assumptions of the Temperance Literature and Temperance Supporters in Canada West Between 1839 and 1859:", Ontario History, volume 64, 1972, pp.146-7.

seen as a virtue of moderation. Nearly everyone agreed on the principle, while sometimes bitter arguments continued over the degree of moderation.

While temperance stands as the most obvious example of a virtue of moderation, others existed. The most prominent of these was gambling. As there is not so much writing on the subject distinctions between a variety of attitudes are not possible. Some clearly opposed it. William Lyon Mackenzie wrote of "gaming", "Never indulge a propensity to this vice; in whatever station of life you are placed, you can be better employed than shuffling cards or rattling a dice box."<sup>61</sup> The Christian Guardian seconded another newspaper's call for the Justice of the Peace to suppress the horse races at Niagara and "their abominations".<sup>62</sup> John Strachan's son, however, apparently gambled with his father's knowledge, and could call upon his father and his father's friends to lend him money to pay off gambling debts.<sup>63</sup> The correspondence surrounding the incident is extensive, yet no note of disapprobation

(61) Colonial Advocate, September 30, 1824. On his own determination to give up gambling, see Colonial Advocate, June 10, 1824.

(62) Christian Guardian, September 30, 1835; September 17, 1834.

(63) John Strachan to John Macaulay, December 14, 1829; George Markland to John Macaulay, December 27, 1829; John Strachan to John Macaulay February 15, 1830; same to same, August 5, 1830; same to same, August 16, 1830, Macaulay Papers. John Strachan to J.M. Strachan, July 24, 1830; John Strachan to George Markland, August 16, 1830; John Strachan to J.M. Strachan, August 30, 1830; Good, op. cit., pp.128ff.

as to gambling found expression. By contrast Joseph Herchmer's conduct at York was deplored, for gambling along with other activities. Ann Macaulay, a socially prominent widow, wrote about this scion of one of Kingston's leading families,

I have always had fears about him, and am sorry to say, my suspicions will prove but too true . . . he drinks and gambles and stays out at nights so you may judge what hope there is . . . . 64

It is highly doubtful John Strachan, George Markland or John Macaulay would have approved of anyone who gambled away their livelihood. Yet they could be quite sympathetic to young J.M. Strachan who gambled to the point of having a debt of over £75 to pay off. Clearly gambling was viewed differently by different people. 65

Character constituted a catalogue of attributes. Some were universally admired and urged upon everyone - industry, honesty, economy and strict moral conduct. Others were also commonly praised but selectively urged upon those seen as in particular need of them - for example, cleanliness for the poor. However another element in character were the virtues of moderation such as sobriety. Upon these there was a broad agreement on the principle of restraint but little on the degree which was necessary. The ambiguity of character as a factor in social mobility was thus compounded by controversy over some elements in it.

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(64) Ann Macaulay to John Macaulay, May 2, 1825, Macaulay Papers.

(65) A further example of a virtue of moderation can be seen in attacks on gluttony, Upper Canada Herald, July 11, 1826. Moodie, op. cit., pp.109-11, 118-119.



Assuming a person possessed a good character, to utilize that possession in order to rise in society, he or she had to be known. In a time when communities were largely isolated from each other, an individual did not need to move very far to be amongst strangers. Moreover, during the flood of immigration into Upper Canada during the late 1820's and the 1830's there appeared a host of people all claiming to have respectable characters. Henry Yager, as leader of the Belleville Lodge, published a notice to beware a certain bigamist, Z.S. Briggs, who,

. . . for a short time conducted himself with propriety as to gain the esteem of those with whom he became acquainted; professing himself to be a Freemason, and his conduct being apparently unexceptionable. 66

Briggs married the daughter of Thomas Appleby, then fled when his prior Connecticut family became known. The next year in the same district, a man pretending to be a watchmaker collected a large number of watches for repair and then absconded.<sup>67</sup> J.B. Robinson, when Solicitor-General for Upper Canada, reflected on the brusque treatment he received when dealing with an office where he was not known.

This little incident leads me to consider how much more cautious and reserved in his conduct even in trifles a man should be where he is among strangers, and where the influence of the respectable character, and known good disposition he may have, is consequently not felt. 68

(66) Upper Canada Herald, September 29, 1830.

(67) Upper Canada Herald, June 29, 1831.

(68) Diary, September 23, 1815, J.B. Robinson Papers.

William McCormick, an Upper Canadian assemblyman travelling to Ireland, recorded the radical change in his regard for a female fellow passenger on the testimony of a person also unknown to him.

We had in company with us a handsome lady who kept company with us to Albany whom by information of a man who joined us at the Little Falls proved to be one of pleasure as he said he had proved - if it had not been for his story she might have passed at least with me for a virtuous girl. So much for the generosity of man . . . . 69

In such a society it was essential to have some connection to a person of note in the community into which one moved. Consequently letters of recommendation and references became important testimonials to somebody's character. Teachers wrote letters on behalf of their students; employers for their clerks. Patrons wrote to introduce former dependents to new patrons.<sup>70</sup> Even well-known persons were checked in case some lapse in their character should have discredited them. Both George Hillier, the governor's private secretary, and John Strachan were concerned to run down a rumour that Kingston assemblyman Christopher Hagerman might have been guilty of "some flagrant breach of decorum",<sup>71</sup>

(69) "William McCormick's Journal of his trip to Ireland, 1823-25", p.21, McCormack Papers.

(70) John Strachan to Charles Jones, March 4, 1807, Charles Jones Papers. John Strachan to George Mountain, December 31, 1828, Good, op. cit., p.48. John Strachan to John Fisher, March 31, 1834, Good, op. cit., p.371. John Bethune Jr. to John Macaulay, August 16, 1813. W.B. Robinson to John Macaulay, April 2, 1838, J.Y. Cozens to John Macaulay, August 16, 1813. Macaulay Papers. "Biography of Robert Baldwin Sr.", volume 2, W.W. Baldwin Papers. M.Y. Stark to Mrs. Stark, August 24, 1833; same to same, December 20, 1834, Stark Papers.

(71) George Hillier to John Macaulay, April 28, 1823; John Strachan to John Macaulay, April 28, 1823, Macaulay Papers.

John Strachan was unwilling to let any potentially useful contact lapse once it had been made. As he candidly wrote to one correspondent, "I am unwilling to remain forever dead to your recollection . . ."<sup>72</sup> However a letter of recommendation no matter how warmly it might commend one's character, was no substitute for being personally known. Even as Surveyor-General, John Macaulay could not get a position as a clerk in the Receiver-General's office, for a young in-law who had not been "on the spot".<sup>73</sup> Letters would serve only to distinguish one person from others who did not have them. Someone of known character had the edge over those strangers who were merely recommended.

A reputation for good character could be subject to changing political temperatures, because in some part reputations - on a political level - was an aspect of connections. Robert Randall, in W.L. Mackenzie's account of the involved legal battle between Randal Boulton, appeared as a distinguished Virginia gentleman. In the less sympathetic eyes of Robert Stanton, "he is the most ruffian-like looking fellow in the House of Assembly . . ."<sup>74</sup> Such a varying assessment really only applies to a particular part of character. It was a highly

- (72) John Strachan to Madame de Rottenburgh, May 2, 1814, Spragge, op. cit., p.62. John Strachan to Sir John Campbell, April 28, 1834, Strachan Papers.
- (73) John Macaulay to John Kirby, September 29, 1837; John Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, September 23, 1837; same to same, September 9, 1837, Macaulay Papers.
- (74) Colonial Advocate, June 16, 1825. Robert Stanton to John Macaulay, January 29, 1826, Macaulay Papers. Canadian Freeman, October 28, 1830. For a similar contrast on W.W. Baldwin, see Robert Stanton to John Macaulay, July 18, 1828 and same to same, November 11, 1828, Macaulay Papers as against Hutton, op. cit., pp.21-41.

'partisan critique which extrapolated supposed 'vicious principles' into questions of honesty and intelligence. As political fortunes and opportunities fluctuated so did "political reputations", as seen in the careers and conflicting assessments given at various times of William Morris, Robert Nicol, Thomas Dalton, Charles Fothergill, and Hugh Thomson.<sup>75</sup> Thus while character and political reputation might

- (75) William Morris - against: John Strachan to Col. Burrell, September 26, 1831; John Strachan to Christopher Hagerman, January 29, 1834, Good, op. cit., pp.254, 365; George Markland to John Macaulay, December 28, 1823; Robert Stanton to John Macaulay, January 8, 1834; William Macaulay to John Macaulay, February 5, 1840, Macaulay Papers; - for: Robert Stanton to John Macaulay, December 16, 1834; same to same, March 12, 1835. Macaulay Papers; Patriot, January 30, 1835; John Hopkirk to Wm. Morris, December 2, 1839; A. McLean to Wm. Morris, September 11, 1843, Morris Papers. Robert Nicol - against: C.A. Hagerman to John Macaulay, February 17, 1821; J.B. Robinson to John Macaulay, February 19, 1821; C.A. Hagerman to John Macaulay, January 6, 1822, Macaulay Papers; - for: John Strachan to John Macaulay, January 21, 1822; George Hillier to John Macaulay, April 6, 1822; C.A. Hagerman to John Macaulay, February 17, 1823; Robert Nicol to John Macaulay, March 24, 1824, Macaulay Papers; John Strachan to J.B. Robinson, February 29, 1866, J.B. Robinson Papers; John Strachan to (Rev. Addison?), October 1817, Spragge, op. cit., p.147. / Thomas Dalton - against: John Strachan to John Macaulay, November 18, 1821; Robert Stanton to John Macaulay, March 27, 1828; same to same, April 5, 1828; George Markland to John Macaulay, December 27, 1829, Macaulay Papers. - for: John Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, February 19, 1838, Macaulay Papers. Charles Fothergill - against: Robert Stanton to John Macaulay, March 17, 1830, Macaulay Papers; Charles Fothergill to W.W. Baldwin, August 26, 1828, W.W. Baldwin Papers; Upper Canada Herald, July 4, 1826; - for: Charles Fothergill to Lt. Governor, March 29, 1817; George Hillier to Charles Fothergill, December 7, 1818; Patriot, March 6, 1832. Hugh Thomson - against: John Strachan to John Macaulay, November 18, 1821; George Markland to John Macaulay, June 5, 1823; Robert Stanton to John Macaulay, June 29, 1826, Macaulay Papers; - for: John Strachan to John Macaulay, January 18, 1830; Robert Stanton to John Macaulay, April 16, 1854, Macaulay Papers.

interact, it was character that stood as the more enduring aspect of the person.

How important a factor was character in social mobility? In general character was a prerequisite to consideration by others. The part it played depended on where a person began in the social order. For those in the lower reaches of the social scale, and immigrants entering at that level, character was quite necessary. To obtain and retain a land grant - the bottom rung of the farming hierarchy - one needed evidence of good character, as well as of land cleared.<sup>76</sup> To hold that grant, and to make any headway toward becoming self-sufficient on it, one was thought to need certain personal attributes. John M'Gregor in his survey of Upper Canada noted that once on the land, "The settlers who thrive soonest are men of steady habits, and accustomed to labour".<sup>77</sup> Dr. Thomas Rolph in comparing the United States to Upper Canada for emigration, pointed to the success of the poor Irish in Cavan township who "had not the advantage of any capital; that deficiency was supplied by the industry and activity of a sound and healthy population".<sup>78</sup> To get a tavern license - the lowest rung on the commercial hierarchy - one needed to be accepted as being of solid character.

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(76) Sam Copland to Samuel Smith, October 17, 1817; Ralfe Clench to George Hillier, March 25, 1819; Petition of J.M. Findall et al, and declaration of Richard Bullock, December 22, 1819; Petition of Robert Lucas, December 8, 1820, UCS.

(77) M'Gregor, op. cit., volume 2, p.526.

(78) Rolph, op. cit., 1842, p.19.

Bill Flint came before the meeting of the Magistrates in Dec. 1816 and was refused a certificate for good reasons, viz., that he was not a good character, and that he was not a sober man - and that his object was merely to keep a dram shop, not accomodation . . . .79

Even once a business had been established, it could be lost by a fault in the person's character, especially drunkenness.<sup>80</sup> In the hiring of teachers trustees were as concerned (at times more concerned) with the prospective appointee's moral character as with his knowledge of the subjects to be taught. A group of school trustees wrote in 1819,

. . . . We have examined certain Certificates of Character produced by Mr. James which appear satisfactory & that having been examined as to his Talents and Education by Persons competent to decide he is deemed well qualified . . . . 81

To enter the Quasi-dependent and Independent levels, beginning at the bottom of the farming, business, or professional scales, as a pioneer farmer, tavern-keeper, or common school teacher, a person needed to show a good character in order to be considered for the land grant, tavern license, or teaching position.

For those who had made the first critical move up the social scale to farmer, inn-keeper, merchant, or teacher, the next major step in social rank was to be appointed as grand juror, militia officer, or

- (79) John Bathune to S.P. Jarvis, June 5, 1818, UCS. Home District Quarter Sessions, "Minutes", December 20, 1818.
- (80) W.W. Baldwin to Q. St. George, October 26, 1816, W.W. Baldwin Papers. Wm. Rintoul to Rev. Burns, August 13, 1838, Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence.
- (81) Neil McLean et al., to George Hillier, August 23, 1819; J.B. Robinson to S.P. Jarvis, June 18, 1818; Neil McLean to D. Cameron, October 3, 1817, UCS.

magistrate.<sup>82</sup> Certainly to act as a justice of the peace, one was expected to maintain a good character. J.B. Robinson, as acting Attorney-General, reviewed the nominations made for the bench of magistrates in the District of Johnstown, striking out a number for their character.

James Breakenridge - an old magistrate, but I fear a very exceptionable character - scarcely a Session passes witht. an Indictment being preferred agt. him for some offense . . . Henry Bogart - a man of low character & by no means respectable . . . Benoni Wiltse - now in Gaol - by sentence of Court Martial - a weak, old man. 83

For those in the Independent and Marginal Respectable levels who wanted to gain the offices of public trust that could mark their entrance into the Respectable rank, good character was a necessary precondition.

For some people, even to maintain a certain social position demanded a publicly evident good character. For women public respectability was the sine qua non. In the passage already cited of William McCormick's encounter with "a handsome lady", her status altered radically on the testimony of a man, equally unknown to McCormick. She sank in his estimation from a respectable lady to a "woman of pleasure"

(82) Colonial Advocate, September 2, 1824; John Newburn to the Lt. Governor, February 2, 1818; J.M. Cawdell to George Hillier, December 3, 1818, UCS.

(83) J.B. Robinson to Ed. MacMahon, December 2, 1814; Wm. Campbell to Lt. Governor, September 29, 1819; J. Mitchell to George Hillier, July 17, 1820; same to same, October 12, 1820, UCS. Christian Guardian, December 5, 1829; February 13, 1830. Jameson, op. cit., volume 2, p.147. O.R. Gowan to Charles Jones, July 15, 1832, Charles Jones Papers.

in the space of one assertion.<sup>84</sup> Mrs. Baker nearly lost her legally founded claim to compensation for her boarding house near Kingston because of an assessment of her character: ". . . the trouble is that she has the misfortune to be everything but what she ought to be . . ."85 The Attorney-General in the end recommended in her favour, for the sake of her late husband's good character. In a similar way, as noted previously, a mechanic's social position turned to a large extent on his character. In being recommended for some benefit from the Crown, it was not sufficient to state that a mechanic was skilled in his trade and a loyal citizen. His character almost always formed a part of the application. Thus in Lt. Col. Pilkington's recommendations for a number of men formerly employed by the Royal Engineers, attached to each one's name was a character reference.

. . . A good tradesman and a respectable Character  
 . . . a good Tradesman, steady, industrious, sober  
 . . . a steady trustworthy Man and of very good  
 character . . . an experienced good workman, steady  
 & sober . . . 86

By contrast, when aliens had to be reported to the government, it was mechanics - not school masters or farmers - whose character formed part of any negative report. A local magistrate, Joel Stone, noted two men of whom he thought little, in the Midland District.

(84) "Wm. McCormick's Journal of his trip to Ireland, 1823-25", p.21, McCormick Papers. Jameson, op. cit., volume 2, p.26.

(85) J.B. Robinson to (?) October 12, 1820; Robert Moore to Robert Barrie, May 14, 1820, UCS.

(86) Robert Pilkington to Lt. Governor, May 1, 1815; R.S. Curtois to George Hillier, October 23, 1819, UCS.



John Van Order . . . at the Blacksmith business. . .  
 a good mechanic - still a drunken fellow - . . . Able  
 Austin, a Drunken Shoemaker. . . has not supported a  
 good Moral Character. 87

As with the case with women, a wide gulf separated the "respectable mechanic" from the "broken-down mechanic". Other occupations did not present so wide a gap on the basis of character alone. Susanna Moodie noted, and deplored, the relative unimportance of character to merchants and those in the professions.

There is a great deficiency among our professional men and wealthy traders of that nice sense of honour that marks the conduct and dealings of the same class at home . . . Professional men are not ashamed to be seen issuing from the bar-room of a tavern early in the morning, or of being caught reeling home from the same sink of iniquity late at night. 88

If a saddler or his wife had been seen at that state, they would shortly be known as "a broken-down mechanic" or "a fallen woman" respectively.

A person's character played a vital part in winning special consideration in the event of being convinced of a crime. The judge or the justice of the peace when commenting on their own sentencing often took the guilty person's character into consideration. W.D. Powell explained his lenience toward two men convicted of assault when reporting to Sir F.P. Robinson, the acting Administrator of Upper Canada.

(87) Joel Stone, "Return of Aliens for Leeds and Lansdowne twp.", November 27, 1815; see also John Kirby to Lt. Col. Cameron, November 25, 1817, UCS.

(88) Moodie, Life, op. cit., pp.41, 45.

- Both the Convicts are labouring farmers of the Neighbourhood and Schenk, especially, of universal good character, appearing by the Evidence to have been overawed by Baker . . . . 89

Powell in essence offers three reasons for the light sentence - they are farmers (property holders, known in their community), have good characters, and acted under the influence of a third party, Baker. Similarly Justice William Campbell took a more generous view than he usually did of a case of neglect of duty. "I would have imposed a much higher fine on the Gaoler were it not for the very good character given him by several respectable persons."<sup>90</sup> The convicted person's character frequently formed the basis of petitions to grant clemency.<sup>91</sup> If a prisoner did not have a previous good character, the next best thing was devout contrition, as the promise of a better character to come.<sup>92</sup> Good character not only assisted rising to and holding an established social position, it helped to counteract the downward mobility usually associated with a criminal conviction.

A few persons were so highly placed in society that they could possess what in others would have been considered a fatal character flaw, without the usual immediate consequences. William "Tiger" Dunlop was a medical doctor trained in Scotland, a veteran of British military service, an official of the Canada Land Company and a large land holder

(89) W.D. Powell to F.P. Robinson, September 26, 1815; Petition of Richard Arnold et al., March 3, 1818, UCS.

(90) Wm. Campbell to George Hillier, November 11, 1820, UCS.

(91) See, for example, J.B. Robinson to Major Loring, September 8, 1814; Grand Jury Petition on behalf of Duncan Campbell (n.d. - September 1814); Thomas Scott to Lt. Governor, November 26, 1814; Petition on behalf of Angélique Pillotte, September 15, 1817, UCS.

(92) W.D. Powell to Lt. Governor, April 13, 1817; W. Campbell to George Hillier, April 22, 1822, UCS.

in the Huron District.<sup>93</sup> Colonel Thomas Talbot, "the lake Erie land baron", controlled as much as 68,000 acres of prime land at one time. The provincial government's principal agent in the London District; he was a political power in his own right.<sup>94</sup> Col. Talbot and Dr. Dunlop both drank heavily and publicly. Respectable society looked askance at this behaviour, but stopped far short of condemnation.

I fear both Dr. Dunlop & the Captn. [his brother] are going to distraction as fast as they can - through drinking and dissipation. It has been the Drs. failing but he is now far worse than ever & his constitution is sinking under it. 95

For people as highly placed as Talbot and Dunlop drinking might have been a drain on their social prestige, but other factors were needed to produce a decline in social status.

The fall of George Markland, on a charge of sexual deviance, is more difficult to analyse. Markland had enjoyed a rather rapid rise into high government offices, largely due to the influence of his

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- (93) Carl F. Klinck (ed.), Tiger Dunlop's Upper Canada, McClelland and Stewart Ltd., Toronto, 1967, pp.ix-xiv. Iona A. Stewart, "Robert Graham Dunlop - A Huron County Anti-Compact Constitutionalist", unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Toronto, 1947, pp.9-20. Robina and Kathleen Lizars, In the Days of the Canada Company, Mika Publishing, Belleville, 1973, pp.20-23, 151-190.
- (94) Paul Baldwin, "The Political Power of Colonel Thomas Talbot", Ontario History, volume 61, no. 1, March 1969, pp.9-18. F.C. Hamil, Lake Erie Baron, Macmillan Co. of Canada, Toronto, 1955. Edward Ermatinger, Life of Colonel Talbot and the Talbot Settlement, Mika Silk Screening Ltd., Belleville, 1972.
- (95) M.Y. Stark to Dugald Bannatyne, October 20, 1836, Stark Papers. Moodie, Life, op. cit., p.12. Jameson, op. cit., volume 2, pp. 200-201. Shirreff, op. cit., pp.175, 184.

former teacher, John Strachan. He was appointed to the Legislative Council in 1820 and to the Executive Council in 1822. He served on the Board of Education after 1822, as registrar of King's College after 1827 and secretary to the Clergy Reserve Corporation after 1828. He reached the height of his public career in 1833 when he was appointed Inspector-General of Public Accounts. However from his early days in Kingston, Markland had had a reputation for being effeminate.<sup>96</sup> In August, 1838, he was compelled to resign all government positions following an Executive Council investigation into a charge that he had had a homosexual relationship.<sup>97</sup> But in the testimony presented to the Executive Council was evidence that Markland had been under the same suspicion two years previously. This has led one person on careful examination of the case to conclude, "high ranking government officials did not object to Markland's alleged homosexuality, but rather to its becoming publicly known".<sup>98</sup> If that was the case, then sexual aberrations (which would have been considered as faults in character) when occurring amongst the top rank in society would not in themselves have destroyed a career. It was exposure to the general public that proved fatal.

If a person held a prominent enough social position, he could

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- (96) J.B. Robinson to John Macaulay, July 24, 1810; H.W. Wilkinson to John Macaulay, May 3, 1808, Macaulay Papers.
- (97) John Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, August 31, 1838; same to same, September 30, 1838, Macaulay Papers. Robert Burns, "Queer Doings - Attitudes towards homosexuality in 19th Century Canada", Our Image - The B.P. Supplement, no. 6, December-January 1976, pp.4-7.
- (98) Burns, op. cit., p.7.

drink heavily, be known to drink, and defend such habits while still holding that position. He might be involved in proscribed sexual practices, and continue in high social esteem unless these became known outside the uppermost social circle. A clerk wrote an extraordinary letter to his former Kingston employer, John Macaulay, accusing several leading figures in the town of habitual drunkenness, sexual immorality and dishonest business practice. He did so apparently to clear himself in Macaulay's eyes from the imputation of having written another lesser scandal letter which had been published. At the end of his list he concluded,

These, Dear Sir, are a few of the many now undreamt of tales by which wonder may still be excited, disquietude bred, and strife fully feasted . . . A public repetition of such events however well authenticated, would be most reprehensible, and it follows thence that a share of merit is due me for having secreted them so long. 99

Whatever the truth of the clerk's accusations, his attitude was clearly that persons of high social station could continue in place in spite of serious character faults, so long as these did not suffer "a public repetition". Things that would have seriously compromised the character of someone in a lower social echelon, could have less effect on those at the top.

Good character was necessary in order to be able to rise, to hold a social position (especially for women and mechanics), and to limit the downward mobility usually consequent upon a criminal conviction. But contemporaries also saw that "bad character" could be useful for

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(99) Nelson Cozens to John Macaulay, August 12, 1823; same to same, October 15, 1823, Macaulay Papers.

one's upward mobility. There was fear that some were getting ahead by dishonourable means in business, by barter or in the new system of banking. Edward Talbot, who lived for a time in the Talbot Settlement, was only one who looked at barter or "store-pay" as a mere cover for sharp dealing.

For want of current coin in Canada, a system of barter exists; and, from the manner in which this is conducted, it is evidently destructive of those honourable feelings which should govern the intercourse of mankind. 100

Political figures of diverse views united in opposing the idea of limited liability bank charters that might permit unscrupulous businessmen to rise by rash speculations. William Morris, a firm supporter of the provincial executive, declared himself,

. . . opposed to increasing the number of banks except it was done with extreme caution . . . he would ask . . . if they would increase the circulating medium of the country to \$300,000 without sufficient security. To increase the fictitious capital to so great an extent was dangerous and would, he was fearful, facilitate dangerous speculations. 101

More than in general references to dishonesty in business this fear of mobility by "bad character" became articulate in suspicions of Americans. William McVity wrote of the American merchants he dealt with in his trip to Chatham, "all along the American line they cheat and impose on travellers without ceremony".<sup>102</sup> J.B. Robinson related

(100) Talbot, op. cit.; volume 2, p.72. Shirreff, pp.128, 387.

(101) Patriot, December 10, 1833. Colonial Advocate, August 8, 1827. Correspondent and Advocate, July 30, 1835. T.A. Stayner to John Macaulay, May 14, 1836, Macaulay Papers.

(102) W. McVity to W.W. Baldwin, November 15, 1837, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

another's experience, concluding that,

. . . in all his transactions with them he found them uniformly liars - entitled to no credit when they dare mistate without being held in security for the truth of their story. 103

John Macaulay noted of his own business dealings with Americans in Upper Canada, "These Yankees are slippery folks and not often worthy of much confidence".<sup>104</sup> The advancement of American immigrants by their success in business was often viewed as a result of their lack of character, in particular, honesty.<sup>105</sup> While they disapproved of it, Upper Canadians thought "bad character" could also serve to improve a person's social position.

Character was seen to offer the most equalitarian road to upward mobility. Honesty, industry, sobriety, and thrift could be cultivated by anyone regardless of previous social position or natural mental endowment. For those entering the colony with low status or those beginning within it from the pioneering stage, character was considered as essential to make a start toward independence. It continued to be valued highly whether the person was successful or not.<sup>106</sup> For those who began in or reached middle ranks, character was necessary in order to be able to make the move into positions of greater social prestige such as the magistracy. To women and mechanics in particular,

(103) "Diary", October 10, 1815, J.B. Robinson Papers.

(104) John Macaulay to Helen Macaulay, June 2, 1834, Macaulay Papers. MacTaggart, op. cit., volume 1, p.221.

(105) Butnet, op. cit., pp.11, 82-83.

(106) Consider the self image of a marginal man, in H.P. Gundy, "Gilbert Purdy - Pioneer Jack-of-all-trades", Ontario History, 1957, volume 49, pp.181-186.

"a good character" made all the difference between social disgrace and respectability. The consequences of a court conviction could be mitigated where the person concerned had respectable testimonials of good character. For the few in the top rank of society, character was desirable, but not an absolute necessity. Certain faults in character could be tolerated. These might undermine an individual's standing but were unlikely by themselves to destroy it. The contrasting careers of Dr. Dunlop and George Markland demonstrate how an initial high status could protect a person from the usual consequences of 'bad character' - at least for a time. Good character therefore did not operate in so equalitarian a manner as a factor of downward mobility for those at the higher end of the social scale. While good character was considered a prerequisite for rising or holding one's position, Upper Canadians also saw that a certain amount of mobility could also be had from "bad character", particularly in business. In these diverse ways character was perceived to function as an important factor in social mobility.



CHAPTER 8

COMPARATIVE INFLUENCE OF VARIOUS FACTORS  
IN ATTITUDES TOWARDS SOCIAL MOBILITY

What combination of the elements so far considered would have given someone the best chance (or the least) to get ahead in Upper Canada? The various factors in social mobility which have been considered in the previous two chapters can be integrated into a comprehensive description of their inter-relationship. No claim of definitive character is made for that description. As one social historian expressed it, "Social mobility is a multidimensional concept. It has rarely been defined precisely, and because of its vagueness the weight of its component parts is open to dispute."<sup>1</sup> Certain conclusions however can be drawn about the relative importance of various factors. As well distinctions can be made in the ways which they appear to have operated.<sup>2</sup>

Some factors were obviously more important than others. Yet that "importance" must be understood in different ways. First a factor's absolute importance to each person could be very high. There might be something about you as a person that would have been considered to decisively effect your chances of social mobility wherever you were,

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(1) Howard P. Chudacoff, Mobile Americans: Residential and Social Mobility in Omaha, 1880-1920, Oxford University Press, New York, 1972, p.8.

(2) On the value of this approach see D.V. Glass (ed.), Social Mobility in Britain, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1954, p.6.

whatever you wanted to do. Other factors did not work like that. These only became important depending on what you wanted to do, and perhaps where you wanted to do it. Thus, for example, sex and race were always crucial to the individual, while education, patronage, and even an aspect of character such as a reputation for honesty were important only relative to certain goals. The seven factors need to be assessed in terms of their absolute importance in the minds of Upper Canadians, while noting where germane their importance relative to particular social ambitions.

The most fundamental factor affecting persons' opportunities for social mobility was their sex. John Beverly Robinson is perhaps the best known "success story" in Upper Canada - from orphan boy (with good connections) to Chief Justice at the age of thirty-eight. However, if he had been born 'she' - just plain Beverly Robinson - absolutely no excellence of intellect or combination of other characteristics could have possibly overcome the fundamental disability of being born female. Almost all professions were closed to her, except a marginal role in teaching (primarily female children), and preaching, in a few minor sects. The principal occupation in Upper Canada, and by far the most accessible route to upward mobility, farming had been effectively closed to women. There was no possibility that women could find employment in government service, except as servants.<sup>3</sup> Women might find some scope for enterprise in business. But there, too, their openings were

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(3) See, for example, John Carey to George Hillier, November 27, 1818, UCS.

largely circumscribed by tradition. The only truly acceptable role for women lay within the home as servant or wife.

Working as a servant offered neither present nor future opportunity for advancement. Women servants (except for specialists, such as cooks, in the few large households) had the lowest pay, barely more than the subsistence given to paupers. The one possibility for 'promotion' to the female servant was her marriage. However, even this process had its limits. A woman might injure a man's position (and thus her own hopes) if she married too high above her station. Mobility through marriage, the woman's principal socially approved avenue, had its own limitations both in how high she might rise and in what she might expect to gain from it.

For men the role marriage might play in their social mobility was less significant. The "good marriage" could have brought the husband a wife with social skills and connections to supplement his own, or perhaps supply their lack. For the pioneer farmer, the wife was essential as co-worker and companion. Yet these assets could usually only have proved an auxiliary boost to the man's main means of getting ahead.

For those entering Upper Canadian society (by birth or migration) at the bottom, character, in its many aspects, was a critical factor. To obtain a land grant, a tavern license, or an appointment as a school teacher, one needed a good reputation. Thus access to the lowest levels of the agricultural, commercial and professional hierarchies depended upon one's character.

However, character operated differentially, once one got beyond the very bottom of the social scale. For women of all ranks and mechanics, maintenance of good character was considered to have been essential to hold their place in society. In a similar way, the continued demonstration of good character could at least partially offset denominational, ethnic or social prejudice. However, the ill-effects of known bad character affected least, in relative terms, those on the top of the social scale. While there were often calls for a moral example from the few at the height of Upper Canadian society, some sorts of bad behaviour might have been tolerated or concealed there, which would have ruined a shopkeeper or mechanic.

Education constituted an important factor in social mobility in two different ways. Lack of schooling, whether of a liberal education in the classics or even the basic level of literacy, formed a barrier to social mobility for those whose economic success had passed the Independent standing. Education also operated as a factor in social mobility, as it provided access to the professions and trades. However, education for the latter had clear limits. Even as a master mechanic, the artisan could only rise so far in the social scale. A successful apprenticeship in a trade could have been a valuable step up from Dependent to Independent status, but it allowed for little further social advance.<sup>4</sup>

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(4) Katz, op. cit., pp.170-171.

In a way similar to character, education was a factor over which an individual (or at least the family) had a measure of control. A commitment of time, energy and financial resources could have opened a professional career for a young man. Certain financial barriers however were too great to be overcome by those in the lowest ranks of society. Like literacy, professional training provided a means for those who had already established at least an 'independence' to move further up (or, more commonly, to send their sons further up) the social hierarchy. Education, then, operated differentially as a means of upward mobility.

The various factors in social mobility seldom acted as absolutes. In their interaction, the relative importance of each was a matter of degree. Thus in comparing character and education, a range of possibilities is open. To have been accepted in a grammar school, a medical or legal apprenticeship required the maintenance of a good character. However, once the education was completed, and if a consequently high social position was secured, the situation could have been altered. Education could have so well established one, that a "lapse in character" would have had less adverse effect.<sup>5</sup>

Ethnicity was a major factor in many cases. Irish, blacks, and, in many respects, Indians faced a daunting degree of prejudice that worked to limit their upward social mobility. In spite of the outstanding success that a few individuals had - Peter Aulen, W.R. Abbot,

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(5) Moodie, Life, op. cit., pp.46-48.

Joseph Brant - most Irish, blacks and Indians, confronting the Upper Canadian society of necessity with scant resources, had little opportunity to rise beyond the lower levels of the social hierarchy.<sup>6</sup>

The clash between the dominant values of Great Britain as imperial power and of the United States as a close and influential neighbour produced a conflict of peoples in Upper Canada. Americans faced overt discrimination in the laws and regulations of 1815-1816, which attempted to close farming and common school teaching to them. During most of the 1820's the agitation of the "alien question" threw the voting and property rights of American-born residents into doubt.<sup>7</sup> These pressures produced less effective restraints on individual Americans (compared to, say, the Irish) because of the predominance of Americans in many settlements before the War of 1812, and their continued prominence in the local government of several communities after it.

A measure of suspicion was directed towards Scots, especially if they held or aspired to positions of authority. However, that view does not occur with anything like the frequency of adverse comments on the Irish. The antipathy towards Scots appears to have been not so

(6) Cross, "Shiner's War", op. cit., pp.13-17. Hill, op. cit., pp.73-83. Thomas, op. cit., pp.58-67.

(7) Criticisms of the Methodist Episcopalians were based on both ethnic and religious grounds. But it was the former that predominated. See for example, Colonial Advocate, May 27, 1824; October 26, 1833; Canadian Christian Examiner, October, 1838, pp.305-307; September 1839, p.273; John Strachan to John Macaulay, April 10, 1820, Robert Stanton to John Macaulay, July 22, 1826, Macaulay Papers. "Memorandum on the Religion of the Province for the Lt. Governor", January 18, 1820, Spragge, op. cit., pp.200-201.

deep or so pervasive as to form an effective barrier to social movement.

To the small minorities of European stock in Upper Canada who did not speak English the language barrier was added to whatever ethnic prejudice might have existed. So long as the Germans, Dutch, or French confined themselves to farming there was little way in which prejudice could affect them in their own communities. However, where they were newcomers, they were expected to keep out of public affairs in deference to the English-speaking majority.

That scale of social prejudice - from Irish, blacks, and Indians to Americans and Scots - stands in stark contrast to the comparative lack of any criticism or prejudice towards English immigrants or native Canadians (those not of American parentage or those of Loyalist stock). Ethnicity and race were important precisely because their influence varied widely depending on who you were. A black man, escaping slavery by fleeing to Upper Canada, would have been most likely to have come with nothing. An Englishman, having chosen to emigrate, most commonly would have had some resources at his disposal. The difference in their starting points would have only been further exacerbated by the contrasting degree of prejudice which each encountered in their new home. Moreover, hostile attitudes towards the English - least intense to begin with - could have had little effect on the Englishman since so many in the colony's social hierarchy were also English. However, given no blacks or Irish in that hierarchy, there was nothing to relieve the



powerful racial or ethnic prejudice against the black or native Irish emigrant. Since ethnic and racial prejudices were most acute towards those who were going to have to begin at the very bottom of the social hierarchy anyway, they constitute a factor reinforcing other barriers to upward mobility.

Unlike ethnicity and race, religion was a factor in social mobility over which one, nominally at least, had some control. However people appeared more inclined to act collectively to bolster the status of their denomination, than to leave it for another perceived as having a higher status. Rather than a rigid structure of denominational status, capped by a firmly established church, there was a church struggling to assume dominance by actualizing its nominal claim to establishment - and failing.<sup>8</sup> The denomination that did succeed in increasing its status was the Methodist Episcopal Church. Here is a clue that there was no church perceived as genuinely socially superior, or at least a belief that such distinctions, as might have existed between Protestant denominations could be readily altered. By contrast the popular antipathy towards "the Church of Rome" was greater and a more impenetrable barrier to social mobility.

The substantial popular prejudice against Roman Catholics moreover, bore particularly heavily upon newcomers to the colony, above all the Irish Catholics. The evidence in lists of office-holders and later census data on skilled occupations shows that they were very much

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(8) On the limits of his own influence see John Strachan to John Macaulay, January 18, 1830, Macaulay Papers.

under-represented.<sup>9</sup> The sharp increase in Irish emigration after 1828 further accentuated anti-Catholic fears of inundation and at the same time exceeded the absorption capacity of the existing Catholic "enclaves" of influence. For the immigrant Irish, Catholicism became increasingly a hinderance to upward social mobility.

However, all of the controversy between denominations must not obscure a fundamental concensus. All Christian churches and sects equated religion with morality. In that society no one would have accepted a person who professed no religion at all as moral, or fit for any position of trust. The denomination to which an individual belonged had a varying effect on the chances of social mobility. But to have no religion would have undoubtedly been a significant social (though not necessarily economic) barrier.

Political patronage generated perhaps greater debate than any other factor of social mobility, despite the limited number of full-time positions available. It was sought by some for its power to confirm social status (already claimed on the basis of property or education), and by others to convey that status by providing the economic basis for respectability. The former aimed principally at the large number of part-time appointments which assumed greater importance the further the community was from the centre of power. The latter sought the lucrative posts, many of which were in either York, or other major towns. However, the controversy over patronage points to

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(9) See Anthony Manahan's petition to Lord Durham, P.A.C., RG 4, volume 542, and Katz, *op. cit.*, pp.64-69, 164-165.

two weaknesses in the status it offered. There was no absolute security in government appointments, as the periodic bouts of selective partisan dismissals showed. Second, while to be seen enjoying official favour gave a person a certain status, at the same time it left him open to charges of political dependence. The possible uncertainty as well as politicized nature of patronage made it an unsure method of seeking upward mobility, though few seemed to have therefore forsaken it.

Ranking the seven factors in order of their absolute importance is one method of comparing their relative influence. A second is to examine the mode of operation whereby each had its effect. A factor could have been a precondition for, the means of, or a catalyst effecting (positively or negatively) the social mobility of an individual.

Certain factors were considered as necessary preconditions, before any thought of upward mobility could have been entertained. If a person were female, immediately the opportunities more narrowly limited. To make effective use of the chances of getting ahead which Upper Canada offered, a person needed to be male. A second prerequisite for social mobility was character, in particular honesty and temperance. Of the same type but of somewhat less importance (at least in particular areas, such as commerce) was the profession of some Christian religion, as against a public avowal of none. Being white and, if Irish at least protestant, assured that certain formidable barriers had been avoided. Where the most favourable construction of these factors

could be secured or was present, a person needed the means to rise.

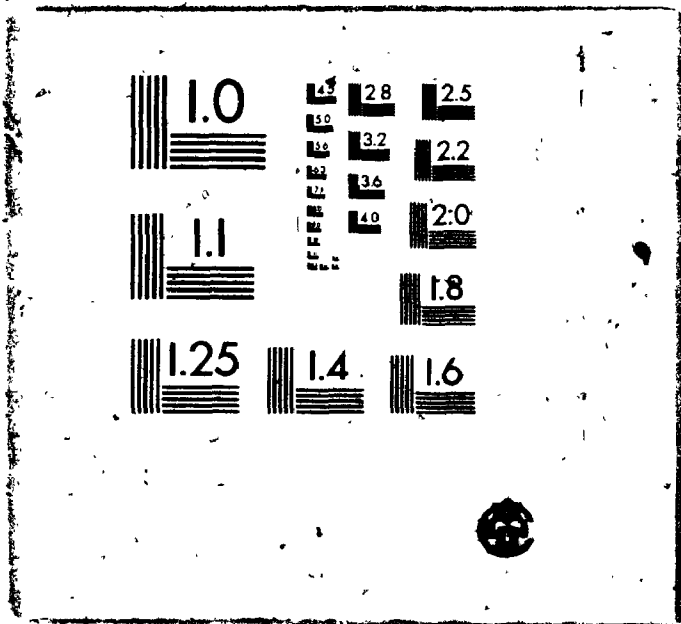
A prime factor which served as a means of upward mobility was education. At the lowest level, the attainment of literacy was necessary for the efficient conduct of business, and to be eligible for the lower posts of respectable public service - the grand jury and militia commands. Beyond that, education through school or apprenticeship might qualify a man to become an artisan, a professional or a merchant's clerk. A second factor serving as a means of rising is found in the ambiguous category of character. Industry, especially, was an aspect of character through which it was believed a person could get ahead. Given the abundant supply of good farm land in Upper Canada, most people regarded the capital which a person could bring to the colony as a variable dependent on the character of its possessor. William McVity and Susanna Moodie, among others, remarked upon the wealthy settlers who had failed at farming.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand the success of a substantial immigrant landowner like Henry Ransford shows that given industry and perseverance, a substantial capital sum could be a very great asset in achieving economic and social success.<sup>11</sup>

Lastly, a person could move up in society by receiving a government position or contract. That might have served to publicly confirm a social status already acquired by property or education. Militia

(10) Moodie, Roughing, op. cit., pp.144, 236 and W. McVity to W.W. Baldwin, October 24, 1835. W.W. Baldwin Papers. See also M'Gregor, op. cit., volume 2, pp.517-518, and Burnet, op. cit., pp.15-16.

(11) D.H. McInnes, "The Diary of Henry Ransford", Ontario History, volume 51, number 4, 1959. pp.251-258.

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commissions and appointments as justices of the peace for instance carried little remuneration but much social prestige. A public post might have provided the economic means, as well as the social role, to claim respectability. Postmasters, customs collectors, and surveyors could have gained sometimes substantial returns, as well as achieving public notice of their receipt of a mark of government favour. Of course, full-time government service itself offered a reputable career, if occasionally of uncertain tenure, in which political connections mattered greatly. The three prominent means of rising, then, were education, character as industry, and political patronage.

Finally, there was a third type of factor seen to be affecting social mobility. These were factors which could either retard or accelerate one's social movement, while seldom if ever themselves being a means of movement. An individual's religious denomination in certain circumstances, and, even more so, his ethnic origin were considered to influence his ability to make the most of the new country's opportunities. Similarly, while a man could not have succeeded socially just by marriage (any more than he could have become wealthy just by being an English-born Anglican), a "good marriage" was considered to have been a major gain to men for the doors it could open. Denomination, ethnicity and marriage for men were held to have had the potential for a catalytic effect on the upward-bound.

The relative weight which each factor had also varied with the person's placement (and ambitions) on the social scale. For those struggling toward Independence, all were agreed that the key was

character, in particular industry and the related virtues of temperance and perseverance. While a further aspect of character, honesty, was lauded, most people recognized that it was not always necessary. Indeed some were seen as achieving Independence, in commerce especially, by dishonesty. Education was important to the teacher or preacher who aimed at Independence, as well as the skilled tradesmen. Prejudice on grounds of religion, ethnicity or race, particularly towards the Roman Catholic Irish, blacks and Indians was often seen as a significant barrier where it could block access to trades apprenticeships and even to land (as it became harder to come by). For men, at the lower end of the social scale, a "good marriage" was one that brought an able-bodied woman to their farm to share the labour, raise the children, and perhaps also bring in some material asset such as land. Political patronage meant little in the pursuit of Independence except within full-time government service.

By contrast for those who aimed at Respectability, the factors carried somewhat different weightings. Industry lost its paramount position although other aspects of character were still very important to those who hoped to rise. Schooling, both for literacy and for some sort of liberal education, became an important social asset. As well, formal education provided the economic basis for the social prestige of the doctor, grammar school teacher and lawyer. Political patronage was far more important, as the many part-time local offices were often sought as the badges of achieved respectability. As well there were

some posts which could confer both the economic basis for respectability and the social role to go with it. However, access to these required more than just connections. A certain level of education and some social standing in a community were also usually required. A "good marriage" for the men aiming at the Respectable level meant a wife with the appropriate social skills and hopefully also valuable family connections either political or commercial, rather than a broad back and a fertile womb.<sup>12</sup> The barriers of prejudice became critical differentials. Those perceived as outsiders for reasons of "race", could have almost totally foregone thoughts of achieving Respectability. Ethnicity tended to discriminate between different groups, a hostility which arose from the antipathy toward the American born, to the jealousy toward Scots, to the almost impenetrable bar to the Catholic Irish. For other Christian denominations the effect of sectarian prejudice appears to have been marginal. The advance of Respectability tended to shift the weight amongst the means from pure hard work towards education and political connections, while changing the nature of the marriage variable, and accentuating the role of prejudice as a barrier.

The seven factors characterized by contemporaries as significant in social mobility operated in different ways, as well as having greater or lesser impact. In order of absolute importance to the individual, they ranged from sex, race, character, ethnicity, education,

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(12) See Baskerville, "Bethune's Steamboats", *op. cit.*, p.145, on the financial role of Bethune's wife's uncle.



and religion, to patronage. Depending upon the particular goal sought, however, the relative importance of some (i.e. education, patronage) could have become great. An ambitious person needed to begin with the necessary preconditions (maleness, character as honesty and temperance, profession of some Christian religion, white), then be possessed of some means of rising (education, character as industry, political patronage). Given the preconditions and the means, one's progress could have been fostered or hindered by certain other catalytic factors - ethnicity, marriage, religious denomination. In some instances ethnicity combined with religion to form a powerful block to social movement. Moreover, the weight of the various factors could have shifted depending upon how high an individual's ambitions aimed. To court success the Upper Canadian needed to have had not only the preconditions for and the means to rise, but also to have used, where possible, those supplementary factors appropriate to his goal, whether it had been Independence or Respectability.

PART III

ATTITUDES TOWARDS SOCIAL MOBILITY

CHAPTER 9

THE POPULAR IMAGE OF UPPER CANADA:

'THE POOR MAN'S COUNTRY'

In 1837 David Wilkie published his North American travel notes in Edinburgh with the prefatory explanation that, "the only interest they can possess will arise from their relation to that part of the world, so appropriately styled the "poor man's country"<sup>1</sup>. Travellers and emigration promoters continually used this image of Upper Canada, or variations of it, as the place where the poor could find comfort and independence. They usually wrote to affirm it, though occasionally questioning it. Yet even the questionings show that the image was predominant. Its hold extended far beyond the effusions of promoters and travellers, to pervade the whole of colonial society. It encompassed all social strata and almost all shades of political opinion. The popular conception of social mobility was expressed in the colony's predominant image as "the poor man's country".

The key to Upper Canada's appeal was the offer of land to all - free, on credit, or at any rate cheaply. William Cattermole, in his emigrants' guide, contrasted the despair of the poor in Britain with the hope that awaited them in Upper Canada.

. . . By emigration every pauper so removed, with reasonable industry, may become in 3 years from his landing in Canada, an occupier, instead of remaining a millstone round the neck of his native country. 2

(1) Wilkie, op. cit., p.i.

(2) Cattermole, op. cit., pp.114-115. See also Picken, op. cit., p.28. Galt, Bogle Corbet, op. cit., volume 3, pp.211, 247..

Anna Jameson in her travel account saw the same contrast.

The profuse gifts of nature are here running to waste, while hundreds and thousands in the old country are trampling over each other in the eager, hungry conflict for daily food. This land of Upper Canada is in truth the very paradise of hope. 3

The opportunity to get land of one's own held out to the poor the promise of "independence". Charles Barclay in his preface to a collection of emigrants' letters home, wrote, ". . . Industrious persons with or without small capital have a fair prospect of maintaining themselves and their families in comfort and independence by settling in Upper Canada".<sup>4</sup> Bound up in the idea of "independence" was an increase in social standing, comfort, the opportunity of raising a large family and enjoying material security in old age. T. Sockett set out the contrast clearly.

By enduring a few weeks of inconvenience and fatigue, they are elevated to a class in society, far above that they before occupied. Here they are regarded by many as a national evil: in Upper Canada they are looked upon as the main strength of the country, and a national benefit. Here, however industrious and frugal a labouring man might be, there is no longer a demand for his labour, sufficient to bring up a family . . . he has no prospect before him, but hard labour, and hard fare, during his youth, and middle age, and the work-house in the close of his days. By emigrating to Canada,

(3) Anna Jameson, op. cit., volume 2, pp.235-36. See also Talbot, op. cit., volume 2, p.155; volume 2, p.100.

(4) Barclay, op.cit., p.5. See also Henderson, op.cit., pp.62,81,83,88. Fergusson, op. cit., p.132. M'Gregor, op. cit., volume 2, pp.517, 536, 549. Howison, op. cit., pp.34, 186-7, 252.

he gets at once into a situation, where . . . a large family is really a treasure to a man; and where, by industry and care in his youth, he will be able to lay up for himself, repose and comfort in the decline of life. - 5

Even when hard times came to the colony, the image remained bright.

Canada's emigration agent, Dr. Thomas Rolph, observed,

Our agricultural population in common with all others, is at present in a very depressed state; but this less affects the humble farmer, who does his own work, than any other class of society, whatever; proving most emphatically that Canada is the poor man's country to thrive in. 6

However not every writer on Upper Canada saw it in such enthusiastic terms.

Patrick Shirreff, a well-to-do Scottish farmer, made a tour through Upper Canada and parts of the United States. "America has been emphatically styled "the poor man's country"; but Upper Canada does not now merit such a title".<sup>7</sup> He went on to explain that "the middle-aged agricultural labourer" who had no capital but constant employment "living in some degree of comfort" was better off in Britain.

The case of the rural inhabitants in many parts of the Highlands of Scotland and Ireland is, however, different, and they would find their condition improved by a change of residence. The sober, the prudent, and the industrious of any country will, however succeed in Upper Canada, if they can laugh at the hardships of first settlement, and with persevering industry look forward to be ultimately rewarded. It seems to me to be a country chiefly for the young, and those seeking to provide for a family. 8

(5) Sockett, op. cit., p.16.

(6) Thomas Rolph, Emigration and Colonization, John Mortimer, London, 1844, p.355.

(7) Shirreff, op. cit., p.386.

(8) Ibid.

John MacTaggart, a British engineer, writing earlier, ridiculed the ambitions and folly of the poor coming into Upper Canada.

Poor ignorant people, too, when they arrive in such colonies, are apt to feel themselves considerably elevated, and will not condescend to toil for mere bread until reduced to the last stage of poverty. Besides, as they have land offered to them for a trifle, the idea of being proprietors has a most intoxicating effect. Under this influence, I have seen them hurrying into the woods with a very indifferent hatchet, a small pack on their back, followed by a way-worn female and her children, there to live for a time on air . . . . 9

Yet a few pages on he takes a more optimistic and at the same time a more careful view of opportunities for farming.

. . . Unoccupied land is abundant, and labour is in considerable demand. The cost of land is trifling. There are no taxes . . . and no poor-rates; so that an agriculturist of industrious habits may, in all cases, and more especially if he have some capital wherewith to begin, look forward to the possession, in a few years, of some comfort and independence, as a landed proprietor . . . . 10

But these cavils are only in fact qualifications. Given the pre-conditions of industry, sobriety, health (perhaps also, youth) and prudence, these writers also accept that the poor can better themselves substantially in Upper Canada.

The travellers and emigration writers offered a view of Upper Canada from the outside, or one that was projected to the world outside the colony. It was widely shared by those native to Upper Canada and those who came to settle. The "poor man's country" was an all-pervasive social myth accepted by the rich and believed devoutly by

(9) MacTaggart, op. cit., volume 2, p.253.

(10) Ibid., p.298.

the poor.

The articulate social leaders in Upper Canada, particularly through the newspapers, subscribed enthusiastically to the image of the colony as one whose resources of land would transform the pauper into a yeoman farmer. Christopher Hagerman, by turns Solicitor-General, Attorney-General, and Chief Justice of Upper Canada, saw the social change as yielding political benefits as well.

. . . However turbulent or discontented individuals may have been prior to their arrival in the province, comfort and plenty soon work wonders on those who are of industrious habits, and loyalty and good humor speedily follow. 11

His opinion of the opportunities offered by Upper Canada was shared, perhaps more cautiously, by John Strachan, the colony's leading Anglican cleric, long a mainstay of the provincial executive.<sup>12</sup> John Rolph, a reform-minded member of the provincial Assembly, like many others, considered that the English Poor Law had no place in Upper Canada where every able bodied man could earn a living by working the land or employment.<sup>13</sup> Newspapers of various political persuasions lauded Upper Canada

(11) Fergusson, *op. cit.*, p.115. See also the York Weekly Post, February 15, 1821.

(12) John Strachan to Rev. Towle, January 21, 1833, in Robert C. Good, "Letter Book of John Strachan, 1827-1834", M.A. Thesis, University of Toronto, 1940, p.329. But see also John Strachan to John Macaulay, November 18, 1821, Macaulay Papers, for his earlier anxieties about the political character of the new settlers.

(13) Upper Canada Herald, January 9, 1827. Kingston Chronicle, January 22, 1819. MacTaggart, *op. cit.*, volume 2, p.298. Moodie, Roughing, *op. cit.*, p.143. Weekly Register, July 24, 1823. William Willocks to John Russell, February 1, 1807, W.W. Baldwin Papers.



as a land of opportunity for all. Wrote the Sandwich Canadian Emigrant, an opponent of all radicalism,

. . . The price of the Land, too, is still so low, and may yet be had on terms so easy that the poorest individual can here procure for himself and family a valuable tract; which, with a little labour, he can soon convert into a comfortable home, such as he could probably never attain in any other country - all his own! 14

Another staunch supporter of the provincial administration repeated this view.

We consider . . . an influx of Poor, quite as essential to our prosperity as of Rich, and depreciate, and have always depreciated the arrogance that has designated them Paupers, in a land where industry meets its due reward, notwithstanding they may have been involuntarily subjected to the condition of receiving parochial aid . . . where competition of labour leaves thousands and tens of thousands unemployed. 15

The Upper Canada Herald, a paper of reform sympathies, published a letter addressed to poor emigrants setting out the prevailing social myth in classic form.

Be not deterred from that steadfast and honest course of industry, by pursuing which a poor man surely arrives in the space of a few years at the possession of ease and independence. This has truly been described as the poor man's country. You bring with you strong arms, and warm and willing hearts. Be assured that your health and strength, and industry are in themselves riches. 16

More radical newspapers shared the same outlook. Francis Collins prefaced a plea for contributions to the Stranger's Friend Society with

(14) Sandwich Canadian Immigrant, July 13, 1833.

(15) Patriot, February 21, 1834; see also March 6, 1832 and January 20, 1837.

(16) Upper Canada Herald, March 14, 1832.

notice of the lack of poverty in Upper Canada.

The word Charity, in the way of alms, comes so seldom before us in this happy country, where every person in the enjoyment of health has an opportunity of gaining a comfortable living, that we almost begin to forget that it bears a construction of that kind. 17

William Lyon Mackenzie contrasted what the Old World could provide for the poor - the work-house - with what the New World offered - the chance to become a "proprietor".<sup>18</sup> While bitter enemies politically, and at odds on almost every other issue, Hagerman and Mackenzie, for a time at least, both saw Upper Canada as the poor man's hope of success.

Perhaps not unexpectedly, those who emigrated to Upper Canada shared in the common social myth. Indeed those settlers who had left a relatively high social standing in Britain frequently commented that the life of pioneer farmer offered more chances to the poor than the more 'genteel'. The best known writer to make the contrast between the success of the labouring poor and the failure of "middle ranks" was Susanna Moodie. She excoriated those who encouraged the emigration of "a class perfectly unfitted by their previous habits and education for the stern realities of emigrant life."

(17) Canadian Freeman, November 25, 1830.

(18) Colonial Advocate, June 10, 1824; see also May 20, 1831; June 9, 1831; Mackenzie and other radicals of the later 1830's came to oppose pauper emigration from Britain on political grounds. See the Correspondent and Advocate, May 3, 1837; Patriot, March 4, 1836; and March 6, 1832. See also Robert D. Wolfe, "The Myth of the Poor Man's Country: Upper Canadian Attitudes to immigration, 1830-1937", unpublished master's thesis, Carleton University, 1976, pp.15-47.

Oh, ye dealers in wild lands - ye speculators in the folly and credulity of your fellowmen - what a mass of misery, and of misrepresentation productive of that misery, have ye not to answer for! 19

Against this picture of failure and despair she set the happy picture of those who ought to have gone.

The Great Father of the souls and bodies of men knows the arm which wholesome labour from infancy has made strong, the nerves which have become iron by patient endurance, by exposure to weather, coarse fare, and rude shelter; and He chooses such, to send forth into the forest to hew out the rough paths for the advance of civilization. These men become wealthy and prosperous . . . Their labour is wealth, not exhaustion; it produces independence and content, not home-sickness and despair. 20

Her adverse comments produced a hostile reaction to which she replied in a subsequent book. "It is written as a warning to well-educated persons not to settle in localities for which they were unfitted by their previous habits and education."

To persons unaccustomed to hard labour, and used to the comforts and luxuries deemed indispensable to those moving in the middle classes at home, a settlement in the bush can offer few advantages . . . nor can I recollect a single family of the higher class, that have come under my own personal knowledge, that ever realized an independence, or bettered their condition. 21

Her brother, Samuel Strickland, made the same point: gentlemen were unsuited to pioneering.<sup>22</sup> It was the able-bodied poor who would benefit. ". . . I know hundreds who, upon their arrival in the Upper Province,

(19) Moodie, Roughing, op. cit., pp.xvi-xvii.

(20) Ibid. pp.xvii-xviii. See also pp.236-37.

(21) Moodie, Life, op. cit., p.134.

(22) Strickland, op. cit., p.134.

had spent their last shilling, and who, by persevering industry, are now worth hundreds of pounds."<sup>23</sup> The attractiveness of Upper Canada to the poor, in contrast to the more affluent, also drew comment from the Rev. Mark Stark, who settled near Ancaster.

It is clearly a country for the labouring classes but not generally speaking for any man who can manage to live comfortably at home. I allude to settling in the backwoods where alone land is now to be got at a low price or even a moderate price . . . .<sup>24</sup>

William McVity, a teacher of sacred music, emigrated from Ireland to farm on Lake Simcoe. He lamented his own decision - ". . . I am such a useless member of society that I have no way of earning a dollar. I wish I had been brought up to any useful trade - ." <sup>25</sup> Yet he could in later years see the opportunities that the land offered to his son who had become accustomed to the life.

My eldest boy has gone back to the farm and is working hard, he prefers it to anything else, and I believe he is right as it is decidedly the most independent life in this country, or I believe in any other. <sup>26</sup>

In the eyes of these people Upper Canada was emphatically a country for the poor, rather than anyone from their own social level.

Probably the most eloquent testimony in support of the prevailing

(23) Ibid., p.139. See also pp.312-318.

(24) M.Y. Stark to Mrs. Stark and Miss Young, August 24, 1833, Stark Papers.

(25) W.B. McVity to W.W. Baldwin, July 15, 1840, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

(26) W.B. McVity to Robert Baldwin, May 17, 1845; see also Wm. B. McVity to W.W. Baldwin, November 12, 1840, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

social image came in the letters written home by the emigrants from the lower orders. William Knox came out to Upper Canada as a labourer, in the 1830's, to join relatives. He wrote home, noting how his uncle's family had improved its circumstances. "My uncle could not have been as comfortable at home by working. I think Canada is best for a large family".<sup>27</sup> Some time later he generalized this opinion into a broader commendation. "I like this country better than I did at first. I think it is a better country for a poor man than the old Country."<sup>28</sup> John Gemmel was an unemployed sawyer who settled in Lanark in 1821. He wrote a series of letters home urging friends and relations to take advantage of the opportunities in the new land to escape the Glasgow textiles recession.

. . . If any of our friends are labouring under the present calamity, I would advise such of them to embrace the present opportunity of emigrating to this country . . . for in the course of a few years' hard labour they would find themselves independent of their fellow creatures. 29

George Forbes was the son of tenant farmer, who began working as a labourer in Upper Canada, eventually buying and clearing a substantial farm. In his letters home he contrasted the poverty and insecurity of his relations as labourers and tenant farmers to his new life.

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(27) W. Knox to Andrew Redford, October 28, 1838, Redford Papers.

(28) W. Knox to Andrew Redford, February 14, 1842, Redford Papers.

(29) John Gemmel to Andrew Gemmel, December 17, 1826; see also same to same, May 2, 1828, Gemmel Papers.

. . . He [his brother] will make bro's without salt let alone butter . . . and then what is to be done if he get unable to work and see his wife with a torn gown and it probably the last and best . . . crying for something to eat and little to give . . . I know it is the condition of many. This to be sure is a country formed for hard work and it is so but a poor man can make himself independent if he conducts himself properly. 30

He clearly set out the heavy labour of clearing and tilling a pioneer farm - and the over-riding factor that made him go on.

But we in Canada have this glorious privilege that the ground whereon we tread is our own and our children's after us; no danger of the leases expiring and the laird saying pay me so much more rent, or bundle and go, for here we are laird ourselves. I may thank my stars that I am out of such a place. 31

Mary McNicol came out with her husband to take up a farm in Southold Township. He died shortly after they arrived. She had mixed feelings about the colony but wrote in 1831, "one thing I know that when people once get themselves properly settled that they are much better off here than at home . . ." <sup>32</sup> Each of these individuals, while having clearer perceptions of the hardships of the beginning of the pioneer life than the promoters or travellers, testified to the appeal of Upper Canada's accessible land and high wages.

The pervasive influence of the social myth is also observable in the collective behaviour of lower-class immigrants. The Primitive Methodist Church was an especially working-class section of English Methodism.

(30) George Forbes to John Forbes, April 20, 1840. See also same to same, October 4, 1853, Forbes Papers.

(31) George Forbes to John Forbes, October 19, 1856, Forbes Papers.

(32) Mary McNicol to John Tolmie and James McNicol, August 2, 1831, Emmigration Manuscripts.

In the early 1830's the group over-extended itself in Upper Canada, establishing congregations and building chapels it could not support. That failure to meet optimistic goals led to a certain quarrelsomeness between the local organization and its parent group in Hull, England.<sup>33</sup> In a letter "to the Brethern at Hull" in March 2, 1836, the members of the York Circuit set out their view of the situation. Among other points, they stressed the inadequacy of the preachers' salaries.

We would suggest that in our opinion one great cause of so many failures among the Preachers in America is the smallness of the Preachers' salaries. . . the commonest labourer can earn more than their allowance  
 . . . . . 34

The Hull Conference replied rather testily that there could be nothing wrong with a preacher earning the wages of a common labourer. The York Circuit replied to this rebuke in a letter of March 1, 1837, by making the astute observation that,

We suppose you have drawn the comparison between our Preachers & your common Labourers in England - not being aware that the Industrious Labourer here if he is steady, in a few years rises to be a Landed Proprietor.  
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- (33) John D. Hoover, "The Primitive Methodist Church in Canada, 1829-1884", unpublished master's thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1970, pp.v-22.
- (34) United Church of Canada Archives, Victoria University, Primitive Methodist Church in Canada, York Circuit, Minutes of Preachers and Leaders Meetings, 1830-38, March 2, 1836.
- (35) Ibid., March 1, 1837. See also Albert Burnside "The Bible Christians in Canada, 1832-1884", Toronto Graduate School of Theological Studies, 1969, p.102, for a similar group's troubles with "the dangers of becoming materialistic in the new land of opportunity".

The Primitive Methodists of Upper Canada were trying to impress upon their English brethren the crucial social myth of the colony. In Upper Canada a common labourer would soon have enough saved out of his wages to purchase a lot and begin clearing his own farm, they believed. In England there was no such handy ladder of social mobility to tempt men away from preaching. A preacher in England had more status (in the eyes of God and men), while as a labourer he would hardly earn more and have no prospect of advancement. If a labourer in Upper Canada had every chance of improving his condition, the salary for a preacher needed to be higher to keep him from that attractive bottom rung of the social ladder.

The idea of Upper Canada as "the poor man's country", then, was an image whose hold spanned both the political and the social spectrum, including those native to and those settling in the colony. It becomes crucial consequently to be as precise as possible about the content and meaning of this image. Who was the "poor man" for which the colony would be a land of opportunity? What exactly could Upper Canada do for him?

The ambiguity and multiplicity of the terms used in different sources make a precise delination of "the poor man" rather difficult. General terms such as "paupers", "the poor", "the hardworking poor" seem to have meant persons without skills or regular employment mainly or wholly dependent on public support. Occasionally labourers, in particular farm labourers, are distinguished, as those in regular employment or normally accustomed to it. While the term "poor man" could



reasonably be stretched to include unemployed mechanics and journeymen and small tenant farmers, these appear to have been of marginal concern as "poor". Distinctions such as these, rough though they appear, are necessary to deal with the occasionally contrasting reactions of contemporaries.

Pauper emigration was advocated through the 1820's and 1830's as the great answer to Britain's problem of unemployment, Upper Canada's key to prosperity, and incidentally a blessing to the paupers themselves. At the Colonial Office, Robert Wilmot Horton advocated and even helped to get underway several schemes for relocating those on parish relief to the backwoods of Upper Canada. He set out his view in an 1828 emigration debate in the House of Commons.

. . . The maintenance of the labourers and their families, whose labour was not in demand in this country was a direct tax on the community at large . . . By mortgaging the poor-rates for a short time, they would be enabled to get rid of the maintenance of the paupers, which was perpetually entailed on them. 36

One of Horton's projects was the settlement of several hundred Irish around Peterborough. In 1830 a dinner was held there to celebrate the event at which it was said,

. . . that it removed so many of our fellow creatures, from scenes where they were lingering under distressing despondency and gloomy despair, to those, where they now breathe the air of comfort, and comparative eases, and look forward with a cheering certainty to approaching independence . . . . 37

(36) Cited in Peter Burroughs, British Attitudes toward Canada, 1822-49, Prentice-Hall of Canada, Scarborough, 1971, pp.31-32.

(37) Upper Canada Herald, September 29, 1830.

Emigration promoters in the 1830's continued to urge the parish officers to send over their dependents, promising a better life. One such was Dr. William Dunlop -

. . . Let a man be ever so poor in this country, his wages as a labourer will more than support his family, -- and if he be prudent and sober, he may in a short time save money enough to purchase for himself a farm, - . . . Poor emigrants . . . from being absolutely penniless, they are now in the most comfortable and independent, and many of them in even what may be called affluent circumstances. 38

And local efforts responded to such appeals, for example, the activities of the Earl of Egremont and the Petworth Committee.<sup>39</sup> While these projects were generally accepted readily by all Upper Canadians, by the mid-1830's a division began to appear along political lines. Early in 1837 the Assembly debated the questions of establishing emigration agents and offering fifty acre lots free to paupers. Henry Sherwood spoke in favour of a policy to make free grants.

. . . It would be attended with one great advantage, in inducing poor men from the old country, who did not possess the means to purchase enough land for a farm, to come and settle in Upper Canada. 40

Ogle R. Gowan pointed to the success already enjoyed by previous settlers no matter how poor. ". . . Many of the best settlers in the Johnstown District were those who in the first instance had come to Upper Canada in extreme poverty . . ." <sup>41</sup> William Jarvis favoured free

(38) Dunlop, op. cit., pp.69, 108; see also Cattermole, op. cit., pp.114-115.

(39) Sockett, op. cit., pp.3-4, 12.

(40) Patriot, January 20, 1837.

(41) Ibid.

grants as well as installment buying. ". . . Every industrious man however ~~poor~~ he might be when he came to Upper Canada, would be thus enabled to pay for his land from the produce of his own labour."<sup>42</sup>

However these proposals were opposed by the radical critics of the provincial executive. David Gibson complained that,

. . . instead of obtaining able-bodied men, they would get all those who were a burden upon the Parishes there; paupers, and those who were lame and not able to earn their own livelihood. 43

A resolution prepared for a meeting organized by Marshall S. Bidwell and Peter Perry endeavoured to make distinctions between those emigrants who were desirable and those who were not.

. . . Although we do not feel the pretended necessity of British Emigrants to infuse British feeling into this Province . . . although we are not convinced of the expedience or justice of encouraging a removal of the pauper population of the Mother Country to this Province for support . . . - we are nevertheless ready to welcome among us any emigrants of fair character and good principles, and of sober and industrious habits . . . . 44

This choosiness, with its obvious political bias, evoked a sharp rebuke from Thomas Dalton, the editor of the Patriot.

What mean these insolent upstarts by "PAUPER"? Is it the willing to labour, the strong of limb, and the generous of heart, who are destitute of the goods of life? . . . And oh! the base insinuation that they were sent here "FOR SUPPORT"!!! They came to support themselves by their honest labour, upon their own soil, and are, and will be, more independent Freeholders than any of their maligners . . . . 45

(42) Ibid.

(43) Patriot, January 3, 1837. See also the Correspondent and Advocate, January 7, 1836; May 3, 1837.

(44) Patriot, March 6, 1832.

(45) Ibid.

What emerged, however, from both the politically motivated questioning of pauper emigration and the replies to it, was a common belief that the able-bodied and industrious paupers could succeed in gaining independence.

That the fears of some radicals about pauper emigration had a basis in fact is shown in the sad story of the commuted Chelsea Pensioners. In 1830 an act of the British Parliament provided that wounded war veterans entitled to pensions from Chelsea Hospital could commute their pensions in return for a lump sum if they chose to emigrate. This offer was accompanied by a promise of free land grants. The plan was to send only those with the necessary health and vigour, and also financial support, to begin pioneer farming. However as J.K. Johnson has noted,

The War Office, for all its stern warnings about the need for funds, physical fitness, and good character, seems to have ignored its own injunctions completely. <sup>46</sup>

The pensioners were usually between 40 and 50 years old. Many were disabled, and some in their enforced idleness had become intemperate. A number had only their commuted pension of £53. Even with free land that would not have been sufficient capital to make the trip and stock a bush farm. But in August 1831, the offer of free land grants was revoked. The story of the Chelsea Pensioners from that point on was one of great hardship and suffering for most of them. <sup>47</sup> That such an under-

(46) Johnson, op. cit., p.277.

(47) Johnson, op. cit., pp.280, 283-289. See also Jameson, op. cit., volume 2, pp.165-168. Yet even of the pensioners, some made a success, Johnson, op. cit., p.281.

taking was attempted demonstrates the power of the social myth.

Naturally if the healthy, hard-working pauper was accepted as a potential settler, the farm labourers and day labourers were prized as those even more likely to make a success of a pioneer farm. Also much valued were those who had experience in running a small farm of their own or as tenants. Thomas Rolph looked particularly to the tenant farmers, for whom the attraction was ownership as well as property.

Can you place before the farmer who is a lease holder in England a more powerful motive to emigration than that one year's rent of a farm going to his landlord, would purchase him a freehold of the same extent in Canada? Every motive is placed before him to improve his estate, and further the interest of the province.  
- The cultivator is at once the cultivator and owner of the soil; every improvement which he makes is exclusively his own . . . . 48

Peter Perry, while apparently opposing the emigration of the paupers, looked for farmers even if they had no capital.

The Emigrants who come to Upper Canada were chiefly the extremely indigent, who [could] not buy land in the Sales, there were also a portion of half-pay officers who were unused to the labours of farming . . . he . . . thought that an English yeoman, with or without money in his pocket, was worth more to the Province than twenty half-pay officers. 49

Mechanics of most trades were in great demand in Upper Canada.<sup>50</sup> But even these were advised to take up farming as a side-line. Wrote one

(48) Patriot, November 29, 1836.

(49) Patriot, March 4, 1836.

(50) Weavers and stone masons were specifically advised not to come, with an eye to practising their crafts. Cattermole, op. cit., p.97. Shirreff, op. cit., p.386. But see also Galt, op. cit., volume 3, p.211.

traveller to intending emigrants,

Mechanics cannot fail to do well in Upper Canada; for, when not employed in clearing land, they will find it easy to gain a little money by working at their professions . . . . 51

While there did exist opportunities for wage labour, the appeal of Upper Canada was above all else the availability of land. Andrew Picken advised emigrants,

. . . While in England there is an endless variety of professions and occupation, in Canada there is properly speaking only one; or at least, that, excepting for a few of the simplest artisan employments, farming, and farming only, should be looked to as the staple profession of all who mean to emigrate. 52

The pauper (provided he was able and willing to work), the labourer, the tenant farmer, the mechanic and journeyman faced by unemployment formed the reservoir of "the poor" to which Upper Canada's vacant lands and their potential opportunities beckoned.

What was it, then, that Upper Canada was supposed to do for "the poor man"? What was the benefit expected? How was it to be obtained? People often expressed goals or ambitions in settling in rather general terms: "We are in a good country for poor folks . . . You see here is all the chance in the world for the poor man to live . . ." <sup>53</sup> Those in Britain were told that they "would . . . improve their circumstances

(51) Howison, op. cit., p.253. See also Picken, op. cit., pp.16-18 and the Christian Guardian, September 21, 1836.

(52) Picken, op. cit., p.16.

(53) Picken, op. cit., pp.xl, xliv. Barclay, op. cit., pp.40, 41.

by emigrating to Canada".<sup>54</sup> Again and again life in the colony was described as "comfortable", "easy", "prosperous". George Forbes wrote to urge his brother to emigrate.

I think he can make himself more comfortable in Canada than at home but he will [have] to work for it but in the end can make a comfortable home. I have wrought very hard and very steady and have been very saving but I shall never have been well off at home, as what I shall be here in a very short time if God spares my health. 55

As with Forbes in the above quotation, the general commendation of Upper Canada was commonly set in contrast to Britain. Boasted the Toronto Patriot, ". . . All became much better off than they were at home. . .".<sup>56</sup>

Behind the variety of general statements lay, above all, the promise of independence. The Irish settlers of Cavan as already noted were uplifted with the reflection that, ". . . they now breathe the air of comfort, and comparative eases, and look forward with a cheering

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- (54) Alex Ross to Rev. Welsh, March 4, 1833, Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence.
- (55) George Forbes to John Forbes, October 4, 1853, Forbes Papers. See also York Weekly Post, February 15, 1820; Rev. McAlister to Rev. Welsh, May 25, 1831, GCSC; George Romanes to Rev. Burns, June 25, 1833, Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence; Adam Hope to Robert Hope, July 30, 1837, Hope Papers; Talbot, op. cit., volume 1, pp. 155-6. Upper Canada Herald, September 29, 1830; March 14, 1832. Archibald Scott to Mr. Sturrock (?) n.d., Redford Papers. John Gemmel to Andrew Gemmel, November 8, 1824, Gemmel Papers. MacTaggart op. cit., volume 2, p.298. M'Gregor, op. cit., volume 2, p.517. Barclay, op. cit., p.5.
- (56) Patriot, January 3, 1837; see also W. Knox to Andrew Redford, February 14, 1842, Redford Papers.

certainty to approaching independence . . ."<sup>57</sup> This promise was linked almost universally in the phrase, "every industrious man can make himself independent",<sup>58</sup> indicating the means necessary to achieve the good things offered by the new country. For some the promise of independence was expected to be manifest in opportunities of continuous employment at good wages. The former Glasgow sawyer, John Gemmel, wrote to his family in Scotland,

There is plenty of good situations for you Andrew and likewise for them if they do not chose to stay at home . . . Your uncle George or any of your friends in a very short time may be very comfortable here . . . There is plenty of sawing here and well paid . . . 59

The chance of employment extended to women as well, and even children.<sup>60</sup>

The possibility of full employment and good wages was at times linked to the wage earners' concern for security, especially in old age, as previously noted. Thomas Sockett directed his emigration appeal

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- (57) Upper Canada Herald, September 29, 1830. See also Peter MacNaughton to Rev. Burns, August 21, 1833, Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence; Patriot, August 18, 1837; John Scott to Andrew Redford, August, 29, 1835, Redford Papers; John Gemmel to Andrew Gemmel, December 17, 1826, Gemmel Papers. Howison, op. cit., pp.38, 252; Talbot, op. cit., volume 1, pp.155-6; volume 2, pp.100, 107.
- (58) Rev. Alex. Ross to Rev. Burns, May 25, 1830, Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence. See also Upper Canada Herald, March 14, 1832; MacTaggart, op. cit., volume 2, p.298; Howison, op. cit., p.253; M'Gregor, op. cit., volume 2, p.517; Barclay, op. cit., p.5; Fergusson, op. cit., pp.132, 157, 160, 313, 367; Patriot, February 21, 1834.
- (59) John Gemmel to Andrew Gemmel, May 21, 1823, Gemmel Papers, see also T. Osgood to John Strachan, July 13, 1839, Strachan Papers; Patriot, March 16, 1838.
- (60) John Gemmel to Andrew Gemmel, June 23, 1823, Gemmel Papers; Adam Hope to George Hope, October 8, 1849, Hope Papers; Sockett, op. cit., p.16.



directly to the labourer.

By emigrating to Canada, he gets at once into a situation, where . . . by industry and care in his youth, he will be able to lay up for himself, repose and comfort in the decline of life. 61

However, the pre-eminent road to independence in Upper Canada was the opportunity of gaining land of one's own to become a farmer.

For most who could be called "poor", opportunity in Upper Canada meant the combination of industry and land to yield independence. As in the passage cited already from John MacTaggart,

. . . An agriculturist of industrious habits may, in all cases, and more especially if he have some capital, wherewith to begin, look forward to the possession in a few years, of some comfort and independence, as a landed proprietor . . . . 62

His assertion that this was available "in all cases, " even to the poorest was made even more explicit by others. Dr. John Scott, of Roxboro' observed,

. . . An industrious family going on to a piece of land that is good, and advantageously situated, will by their improvement, and the increasing value of the country, realize much more than /bank interest/- This is the way in which a great many poor people elbow their way along to independence. 63

(61) Sockett, op. cit., p.16. See also John Gemmel to Andrew Gemmel, May 2, 1828, Gemmel. Papers. John Strachan to Dr. Brown, October 21, 1809, Strachan Papers; George Forbes to John Forbes, April 20, 1849, Forbes Papers.

(62) MacTaggart, op. cit., volume 2, p.298.

(63) John Scott to Andrew Redford, August 29, 1835, Redford Papers.

Samuel Strickland, a Canada Company officer, noted,

. . . The working man with a family of grown children, when fairly established on his farm, is fully on par, as regards his prospects, with the gentleman, the owner of a similar farm, and possessing an income of £100 per annum. 64

That was the great broad avenue which called to the poor in Upper Canada. But those who wished to travel it needed certain prerequisites.

As has already been made evident, the first qualification that "the poor man" had to have was the right sort of character, in particular "industry". Said Strickland, "We want men, women, and children, of hardy and industrious habits, who finding work slack at home, resolve to emulate the ants and bees . . ." <sup>65</sup> By "industry" were meant several things. First it implied that one was used to heavy manual labour, and perhaps also the hardships of the life of the poor. Strickland's more famous sister, Susanna Moodie, saw Upper Canada divinely ordained for ,

. . . the arm which wholesome labour from infancy has made strong, the nerves which have become iron by patient endurance, by exposure to weather, coarse fare, and rude shelter . . . . 66

(64) Strickland, op. cit., p.139. See also Hoover, op. cit., pp.112-113; William Willcocks to John Russell, February 1, 1807, W.W. Baldwin Papers; Colonial Advocate, June 10, 1824; May 20, 1831; June 9, 1831; Patriot, March 6, 1832; November 29, 1836; January 20, 1837; August 18, 1837; Adam Hope to George Hope, October 8, 1849, Hope Papers; Cattermole, op. cit., p.114; Rolph, op. cit., p.19; M'Gregor, op. cit., volume 2, p.517.

(65) Strickland, op. cit., pp.312-14. See also Howison, op. cit., p.252; Talbot, op. cit., volume II, p.100; M'Gregor, op. cit., volume 2, p.517; Cattermole, op. cit., p.114; John Gemmel to Andrew Gemmel, November 8, 1824, Gemmel Papers for examples.

(66) Moodie, Roughing, op. cit., pp.xvii-xviii. See also Talbot, op. cit., p.100.

As the reference to ants and bees suggests, 'industry' was taken to include perseverance. Dr. Howison made this explicit in his comments upon the farmers of the Talbot Settlement.

Nine-tenths of the habitants were extremely poor when they commenced their labours, but a few years' toil and perseverance has placed them beyond the reach of want. 67

To work long and hard on a pioneer farm to contemporary observers implied further preconditions for "the poor man's" success.

Obviously to sustain the heavy labour that clearing forest from a pioneer farm demanded, "the poor man" had to have a robust constitution. George Forbes qualified his great hopes for achieving independence through working "very hard and very steady" with the condition, "if God spares my health".<sup>68</sup> That necessity of good health led to a natural concern to settle in a place which had a healthy climate.<sup>69</sup> Patrick Shirreff definitely warned middle-aged farmers and farm labourers who had steady employment to avoid Upper Canada.

To clear a farm out of the midst of the forest by personal exertion, requires such an iron constitution and strength of arm as few British agriculturists of middle age possess. 70

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(67) Howison, op. cit., pp.186-187.

(68) George Forbes to John Forbes, October 4, 1853, Forbes Papers. See also Jameson, op. cit., volume 2. p.170.

(69) See for example Rolph, The Emigrant's Manual, op. cit., p. 16; MacTaggart, op. cit., volume 2, pp.16-18; Cattermole, op. cit., p.118; and Dunlop, op. cit., p.82.

(70) Shirreff, op. cit., p.374.

But for those who could unite strength and health to youth, he saw a better chance.

The young man of ardour and perseverance, whose habits, could be changed, is differently situated, and he may enter the forest with every prospect of success. It is the returns from clearing forest land being distant, though certain, which gives youth great advantage over age . . . . 71

To succeed, "the poor man" needed persevering industry, which in turn required strength, health and probably youth.

Another precondition to social mobility in Upper Canada which all observers and most lower class emigrants attested to was a further component of character - sobriety. Indeed it stood as the greatest temptation in the way of "the poor man's" success. Anna Jameson in her travel account recounted one man's description of his own life and the lesson to be learned.

He had left England a mere child, thirty years ago . . . to settle "in the bush" . . . At that time they had nothing, as he said, but "health and hands" . . . He has himself a farm of two hundred and fifty acres, his own property . . . "Any man", he said, "with health and a pair of hands, could get on well in this country, if it were not for the drink; that ruins hundreds." 72

The cheapness and easy availability of drink appeared to many as Upper Canada's chief drawback. George Forbes commented, "This is a first rate country for a drunkard - he gets the tumbler and bottle set before him . . . and he can fill it if he please of whiskey -/2 a tumbler."<sup>73</sup>

(71) Shirreff, op. cit., p.384; and p.386.

(72) Jameson, op. cit., volume 1, p.294; see also volume 2, pp.39, 170, 215-217. Shirreff, op. cit., p.384.

(73) George Forbes to John Forbes, July 18, 1845, Forbes Papers. See also Cattermole, op. cit., p.4 and M'Gregor, op. cit., volume II, p.548.

However other emigrants commended Upper Canada as a place with plenty of "grog".<sup>74</sup> But that was the voice of a minority. Drink and drunkenness were described as a major - sometimes the major - reason for the appearance of poverty in the "poor man's country". The Patriot commented,

Intemperance is the most dangerous and destructive vice incident to the present state of human society . . . Hence the frequent calls upon us for charitable contributions, which would not be required, if the source of these streams of wretchedness were dried up. 75

'Sobriety' was usually a fairly straight-forward matter, although there were fierce disagreements among some over matters of degree.<sup>76</sup> Adam Fergusson, who settled in Gore District, however, gave it a twist which lent the term unusual broadness. To the intending emigrant, he wrote,

Assuming such an individual to be a man of sober habits, by which I would be understood to mean not merely a distaste for debauchery, but a temperament which derives its chief enjoyment from the domestic circle, and from useful and rational pursuits; to such a man I am not afraid to say, that Canada holds out an inviting field of enterprize and profitable occupation. 77

In linking "sobriety" to a particular temperament, perhaps Fergusson meant to suggest that the problem of isolation for those of more sociable and expansive temperaments on a pioneer farm led to despondency and often drunkenness.

(74) Picken, op. cit., p.xl.

(75) Patriot, February 25, 1830; see also the Kingston Chronicle, January 22, 1819; April 23, 1819.

(76) Patriot, March 25, 1830; March 25, 1834.

(77) Fergusson, op. cit., p.157. See also Wilkie, op. cit., pp.161, 224 and Moodie, Roughing, op. cit., p.98.

Other character traits and moral virtues were urged upon the poor by particular writers and groups. A correspondent of the Kingston Chronicle declared it would be "little short of madness" for Upper Canada to adopt the English Poor Law. The colony could prevent poverty altogether by ending intemperance as well as the want of frugality and religion by restricting the number of taverns, opening savings banks and Sunday Schools.<sup>78</sup> The Female Benevolent Society of Kingston set its aim in working for the poor to,

. . . administer necessary relief, and endeavour to stir them up to industry, order, neatness, and economy, in order to make them useful to their families and better members of society. 79

John M'Gregor, in praise of Upper Canada, wrote, ". . . thousands who had nothing but industry and frugality to begin with, may be found, who have secured much more [than 100 acres] . . ."<sup>80</sup> But there were others still in poverty he said due to "their improvident character and indolent habits"<sup>81</sup> A common element which emerges from these varying accounts of the character necessary to succeed is the need for "economy" or "frugality". But no virtues were so universally commended as essential to "the poor man" as industry and temperance.

While most contemporaries discussed "the poor man" as an entirely uniform species, some saw distinctions to be made between the absolutely

(78) Kingston Chronicle, January 22, 1819.

(79) "Female Benevolent Society of Kingston", April 1821, Macaulay Papers.

(80) M'Gregor, op. cit., volume 2, p.536.

(81) M'Gregor, op. cit., volume 2, p.550.

destitute and those who had some little funds to start them in the new land. There was a substantial body of opinion which held that even the absolutely destitute (given health and good character) could immediately set themselves upon the road to independence. The provisions, tools, and perhaps even the land could be obtained upon credit by the pauper just off the boat from the Old World. In a matter of days, in this view, the pauper became a yeoman, or at least a pioneer, albeit a heavily indebted one.<sup>82</sup> Other writers condemned this as a trap for the unwary set by heartless land speculators or the government itself. To quote John MacTaggart again, rather than "hurrying into the woods with a very indifferent hatchet, a small pack . . . there to live for a time on air", it was wiser for the settlers to begin with a little capital to enable them to win the "rude abundance" Upper Canada provided.

The best settlers who can go out to Canada, are those who have been badgered and abused in Great Britain, and who in spite of all their misfortunes, have a little cash left. They will there find all the animal necessities of life without much trouble; that is, enough for back and belly, though but few comforts for the mind . . . . 83

Without that small "money capital" some considered it rash for the poor to go onto the land directly, relying only to their own strength and health. The Patriot warned emigrants,

Physical Capital once expended, is not easily restored

(82) See for example, Patriot, January 20, 1837; August 18, 1837; John Gemmel to Mrs. Gemmel, March 2, 1822, Gemmel Papers. Talbot, op. cit., volume 2, p.99.

(83) MacTaggart, op. cit., volume I, p.194. See also F.H. Armstrong, "The Rev. Newton Bosworth: Pioneer Settler on Yonge Street", Ontario History, volume 58, no. 3, September 1966, p.167.

. . . be now aware of the fragile nature of that man's hopes who blindly trusts to that species of capital, and that alone. 84

The better course was to labour on another's farm for a few years to gain both the capital and the experience to have a better chance in beginning his own farm.

. . . After a few years of kind treatment from a generous and affluent master, the physical gentleman appears in the double character of physical and monied capitalist, in addition to which he has a valuable store of useful knowledge, and he then proceeds to turn landholder with the moral certainty for every scion of his stock "a plantation in a pure soil". 85

All observers agreed that to succeed in pioneer farming the poor man needed capital. Some hoped the poor emigrating would not be so very poor as to have absolutely nothing upon their arrival. Yet even the completely destitute could readily obtain the necessary, either on credit (the expediency of which some doubted) or by a few year's labour on someone else's farm. One way or another, by a short route or a slightly longer one, the 'able-bodied industrious poor' could obtain land and independence in Upper Canada.

To the outside observer - traveller or emigration promoter - to the articulate social leaders within the colony of whatever political stripe, to the settler, whether of high or low estate, Upper Canada appeared to promise social mobility, particularly to "the poor man". All contrasted the misery which such persons could expect in Great Britain

(84) Patriot, August 18, 1837. MacTaggart, op. cit., volume II, p.253.

(85) Patriot, August 18, 1837. See also Howison, op. cit., pp.259-260 and M'Gregor, op. cit., volume II, p.534.



to the opportunities of Upper Canada. Some saw these in the chance of continuous employment at high wages. That meant the possibility of raising a large family, as well as putting away enough for security in old age. But to most the colony's promise was land. Whether it was a free grant, came on easy credit, or was bought outright at cheap rates, land was the road to independence and comfort. One significant difference did emerge between the travellers, promoters and local social leaders on the one hand, and actual settlers on the other. The latter saw the hardships of pioneering more clearly. Yet that seldom blotted out their acute perception of the door opened to them. This balance is evident in the reflections of Mr. Robinson, a former Lothian district farmer.

When a man comes out without means, which is too commonly the case, for it is natural for every man to like to be a farmer, and especially to be a laird, if he has as much as will buy him one or two hundred acres, he immediately buys his land, and perhaps leaves himself without a penny behind. He then builds a log-house, and perhaps a log-barn, byre, etc. thus sitting down without any thing but what he has put out on his land. Without the means of subsistence, he is eighteen months at least on his farm before he gets any of the produce of his labour, but is creating debt upon his head . . . so that if you were to see men in this position during the first years, you would be ready to call them a thousand fools for ever coming to America . . . When he goes, however, to his next neighbour's house, and sees him, if he has been ten years in his farm, with plenty of every thing he needs, his farm well cultivated, and no debt, knowing that he was in the same position formerly that he is in now, this cheers him up, and when he sees himself still making a little progress, it encourages him, and makes him bear the burden cheerfully. 86

The hardship is set against the hope. For those to whom the promise of Upper Canada was made, the colony represented "all the chance in the world for the poor man to live . . . " in lasting independence, if not immediate comfort or ease.<sup>87</sup> The prevalence of the social myth points to a very positive attitude towards a certain type of upward mobility. Upper Canada was expected to be a place where the industry of "the poor", especially when matched with the land, would produce a move into independence.

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(87) Picken, op. cit., p.xliv.

CHAPTER 10

IMAGES OF SOCIAL MOBILITY IN UPPER CANADA:  
THE LADDER, THE WHEEL AND THE MUSHROOM

A leading Kingston merchant, John Macaulay, had written to an acquaintance on behalf of a former clerk, Nelson Cozens. Upon being offered the job for which he had solicited Macaulay's recommendation, Cozens turned it down.

The desire of all persons to make choices of what they hope will lead to the most beneficial result, may be given as my particular reason for my declining Mr. McPherson's offer. I had in view at that moment a prospect of my Father's assistance; but a succession of unfortunate disappointments - added to the mortification of seeing others enjoy the favours of Government to which loyalty (not to say rank and merit) had so well enticed him, have placed his pecuniary circumstances in rather a disadvantageous light. My thoughts are now directed to a situation in the Provincial Bank. . . . As it is within the limits of your strenuous influence among your friends at York, and I doubt not your inclination to render me your assistance, I have to beg the favour of your enquiring of your friend Mr. Allan, the President, whether the vacancy of Clerks are not all filled. 1

Such a frank statement of ambitions deserves close attention. Cozens considered that everyone had "choices" to make in what career or employment they might follow. Included with this idea of options was the belief that people weighed these to decide on which would be of most benefit to themselves. At the moment of writing his "choices" have been cramped by his father's "unfortunate disappointments". From

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(1) Nelson Cozens to John Macaulay, February 18, 1822, Macaulay Papers.

what follows, it seem "unfortunate" means here not merely "regrettable" but "misfortunate", an act of fortune. In Nelson's eyes, his father ought to have enjoyed certain (presumably financial) benefits which his loyalty, rank and merit had earned him. These were not forthcoming due to the caprices of political influence. Nonetheless, Cozens still strove to get ahead, renewing his request to Macaulay for yet another position, this one at the new provincial bank. How did people look upon such ambitious attitudes as those expressed by Nelson Cozens?

The elements noted in Cozen's analysis of his own opportunities echoed in similar appeals and throughout the popular discussion of personal advancement in Upper Canada. The prevailing view of the colony was that it offered to all - the poor especially - a chance to rise. People also contrasted the status of different occupations or the effect of certain personal attributes which might advance themselves or others in society. However these ideas about status, and what it took to get ahead in society generally, need to be amplified by the contrast with reactions to individuals' mobility. People thought upward mobility was normal in Upper Canada. How then did they react to particular cases - their own or others'?

Contemporary discussion of personal mobility reveals three recurring images. These can be seen in various ways. Upper Canadians accepted the reality of economic uncertainty or unpredictable personal disasters or successes as "luck", "fate", "fortune", or the more graphic symbol, "the wheel of fortune". But they believed strongly in "the

poor man's country" which promised to reward industry, perseverance and good character with economic and social independence. That belief became articulate in expressions such as "rising", "getting on", or in the symbol of a ladder. Up it one could climb slowly and steadily by merit, or from it one could fall by carelessness. Yet belief in personal mobility by luck or merit did not prevent some from being anxious about others' upward mobility. A concern either to keep down "the wrong sort" or to stress the need for order was expressed in the symbol of the mushroom. It could serve to represent either rapid (probably illegitimate) rising, or base origins, or the possibility of rapid decay, or all three together. The wheel of fortune, the ladder, and the mushroom emerge as the dominant images in contemporary views of personal mobility. Their contrasting messages add a further aspect of Upper Canadian attitudes toward social mobility.

The relation of the three concrete images to the symbols and ideas they embody can be cast in the schematic form suggested by R.H. Pearce. He began with the "Idea", an abstract proposition, for which the "Symbol" was an "emotionally powerful sign". By the term "Image" he indicated "a vehicle for a Symbol: a particular mode of expounding and comprehending a Symbol and the Idea it bodies forth".<sup>2</sup> For the abstract proposition that upward mobility was characteristic and laudable in Upper Canada, the Symbol was "the poor man's country". The Idea was

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(2) R.H. Pearce, The Savages of America: A study of the Indian and the Idea of Civilization, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1953, pp.2-5.

expressed in such terms as 'rising', but most graphically in the Image of the ladder. The idea of economic uncertainty, especially unpredictable personal success or disaster, had its Symbol in luck or fate. The corresponding Image was the revolving wheel. The Image of the mushroom appears to have stood in a more complex and ambivalent relation to its corresponding abstractions. It was always used to condemn rapid upward mobility beyond Independence, but the point of view from which the condemnation was expressed could vary from the severely hierarchical to the comparatively equalitarian. The basic Idea, however, was always the same: that the stability of society was being threatened by the unduly rapid rise to power or prominence of new men. The three Images here considered, with the Ideas that they embody, present a structure marked by a contradiction between acceptance of social mobility and fear of its consequences - a contradiction accompanied, but not resolved, by recognition of the uncertainty of human affairs.

Passing references to fortune, as in Nelson Cozen's letter, were common. A woman's unhappy marriage to a drunkard was termed a "reverse of fortune".<sup>3</sup> John Galt considered that by his connection with the Canada Company he "by a strange eddy of destiny, found myself placed in a situation to realize all the dreams of my ambition".<sup>4</sup> In one of his settlement novels, he has the character declare, ". . . I am bound to

(3) Christian Guardian, December 19, 1829.

(4) John Galt, The Literary Life and Miscellanies of John Galt, Wm. Blackwood, Edinburgh, 1834, volume 1, p.275.

point out to the youthful reader how little of my good luck was owing to my own wisdom and devices . . ."<sup>5</sup> The way in which fortune could mix with other factors to influence a person's course was a common theme. Of Robert Drummond, a Kingston building contractor, it was said, "good fortune deservedly followed his exertions".<sup>6</sup> Yet to others fortune appeared more capricious. William Lyon Mackenzie observed in his newspaper of some English emigrants landing at Quebec, "These settlers were poor, but in general they were fine-looking people, and such as I was glad to see come to America . . . Fortune may smile on some, and frown on others".<sup>7</sup> Some hoped Upper Canada's opportunities could undo the misfortunes they had suffered elsewhere. John Macaulay wrote to procure employment for an old friend of his, "who has been unfortunate in the world, and who came out to this country".<sup>8</sup> At times the passing comment grew into a reflection of fortune. In that extended form is revealed fully the social assumptions bound up in "the wheel of fortune".

Thomas Markland, J.P., of Kingston, made the following appeal for contributions to the relief of the poor.

As some of our fellow men are left destitute it is evidently the intention of Providence, that those of us who are blessed with the means shall contribute therefrom to the relief of the distressed, the comfort

(5) John Galt, Laurie Todd; or the Settlers in the Woods, Richard Bentley, London 1832, p.187.

(6) Patriot, September 2, 1834.

(7) Colonial Advocate, May 20, 1831.

(8) John Macaulay to Wm. Allan, June 12, 1834, Allan Papers.



of the sick and the support of the helpless. This being a world of vicissitudes, as well as inequalities of fortune, any of us, our friends, or children, however easy at present in circumstances, may by some unexpected revolution be brought to a state of indigence, and in our turn need the hand of charity to relieve our distress, or simply wants. Benevolence, therefore is a common cause.

He begins from the assumption that inequality of wealth has been divinely ordained in order to draw forth benevolence.<sup>10</sup> But into this seemingly rigid division he introduced the idea of "vicissitudes" that may strike anyone: ". . . Any of us . . . however easy at present circumstances, may by some unexpected revolution be brought to a state of indigence . . .". None are safe, no matter how secure their position may seem. Thus all must contribute to a poor relief fund, never knowing if it would be for others or themselves. In summoning up the image of "some unexpected revolution", he implicitly draws on the belief that no one can be safe from the next turn of the revolving wheel of fortune. In this view the poor were not necessarily to blame for their condition - a view not then universally held. A writer to the Kingston Chronicle considered the three causes of poverty to be intemperance, lack of frugality and want of religion - all rooted in the character of those who were poor.<sup>11</sup> However in Markland's use of fortune's wheel we see that even the most industrious and prosperous could be impoverished through no fault of their own.

(9) Kingston Chronicle, June 18, 1819.

(10) See also, Christian Guardian, February 17, 1836.

(11) Kingston Chronicle, January 22, 1819; April 23, 1819; see also Upper Canada Herald, May 12, 1830; Christian Guardian, February 17, 1836; Moodie, op. cit., p.18.

By contrast, some cheered themselves with the hope of sudden good fortune. Mrs. Anna Clarke wrote to her discouraged brother, W.D. Powell, at a time when the future Chief Justice was labouring as a lawyer in Montreal,

The North West Company is now so immoderately rich that the Eastern Kings are nothing to them. Mr. Small retires with an independency and a share of the profits; Sutherland's share is between 2 and 3000 pounds a year. What a change in a man so lately in danger of wanting Bread. Let us support our spirits my dear Brother under our present misfortunes - a turn of the wheel may set you above them all. 12

A rapid change in economic circumstances for Mr. Sutherland - from apparent near-starvation to enormous wealth - became the moral tale to lift Powell's spirits. Perhaps he too could look for (vs. work for) "a turn of the wheel". Implicit in the image, also, was some idea of a top and a bottom to society. To what purpose might a wheel of fortune revolve, if not to "set you above them all"?

William Lyon Mackenzie entitled an article in his newspaper, "Fortune's Wheel". It described how two consecutive holders of a judgeship died in rapid succession. He then drew a moral from this which he applied to a suspected feud between Chief Justice W.D. Powell and Attorney-General J.B. Robinson: "fate seems inclined to read both a lesson, namely, that judges themselves must die and come to judgement."<sup>13</sup> Beyond general economic insecurities and the vagaries of one's personal career, the final uncertainty was death.

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(12) Mrs. Anna Clarke to W.D. Powell, August 27, 1791, Jarvis-Powell Papers.

(13) Colonial Advocate, May 27, 1824.

These comments by Thomas Markland, Anna Clarke, and W.L. Mackenzie show something of the uses and meaning of popular conceptions of fortune. It could be summoned up to inspire charity in the well-to-do, hope in the disappointed, or a sobering fear of judgement in those seen as ambitious. Usually implicit was an idea of social structure in society. That might be no more than a "top", to which one hoped to get, and a "bottom", to be avoided. But for the revolving wheel to hold out either hope or terror, it had to be moving one up or down some sort of social scale.

William B. McVity wrote to his patron, W.W. Baldwin, to congratulate him on his son's elevation to the post of Solicitor-General: "now that his foot is on the ladder, I trust he will be soon at the top of his profession . . ."<sup>14</sup> The image of the ladder is only the most graphic symbol of another way to look at persons' social movement, and draws attention to another set of factors considered important in the social mobility of persons. The idea appears more generally in edifying remarks to youth to work hard and cultivate a virtuous moral character, to lay a "foundation" in this, the "seedtime", of their lives.<sup>15</sup> Both images contain the idea of steady development, of 'going up', whether constructing a house on the foundation or the crop growing up. Intending emigrants were promised, "By enduring a few weeks of inconveniences and fatigue, they are elevated to a class in society, far above that they

(14) Wm. B. McVity to W.W. Baldwin, March 4, 1840, W.W. Baldwin Papers. See also Katz, op. cit., p.94.

(15) Dr. Stuart to J.B. Robinson, April 23, 1805, J.B. Robinson Papers, Christian Guardian, February 6, 1830.

have before occupied.<sup>16</sup> This could be accomplished by those who were "industrious and frugal". The ladder, up which one toiled steadily by personal endeavour, provides an informative contrast to the wheel of fortune. Where the wheel expressed the role of chance, the ladder emphasized what one could do for himself.

John Macaulay wrote of one of his young in-laws,

Turner, I think, is right in returning to his father in Britain. He is not fit for the kind of life he has to undertake here in Canada and has not the energy. I suspect there has been too much indulgence to the children of that family, and that they have not been taught to rely on themselves for their advancement in the world. 17

Turner had not been taking advantage of Upper Canadian opportunities because he lacked the "energy" and self-reliance to advance in the world. Reference to young men "beginning" or "rising" were common. When Frank Ridout was discovered embezzling the funds of the Bank of Upper Canada, Robert Stanton, editor of the government gazette, lamented, "poor unfortunate youth, only 22 years of age and irretrievably ruined - what an awful example to Young men beginning in the world -".<sup>18</sup> The stress on a steady rise by one's own endeavour also appears in arguments for equality and opportunity in education. A Presbyterian minister said of the college his denomination planned,

(16) Sockett, op. cit., p.16.

(17) John Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, October 10, 1839, Macaulay Papers.

(18) Robert Stanton to John Macaulay, August 16, 1830; see also Ann Macaulay to John Macaulay, October 1, 1807; Ann Macaulay to John Macaulay, June 2, 1808; Canadian Christian Examiner, March, 1838, p.72.

And the proposed institution will not be after the model and pattern of those of our native land, if it shall not make provision to take by the hand and cherish those, whose pecuniary disadvantages may threaten to crush their ardent spirits in the pursuit of knowledge. 19

Patrons spoke of those they sought to promote in 'onward-and-upward' terms. In urging John Macaulay to accept a certain position, Archdeacon John Strachan wrote, "I have not seen a chance of bringing you forward in so honourable a way since I had anything to say in the Government nor will such an opportunity soon offer again."<sup>20</sup> John Bethune Jr. wrote of a clerk whom he had promoted who had proven dishonest: "But the wretch has blasted all my endeavours and disappointed the hope which I certainly once had of making something of him."<sup>21</sup> As his patron, John Strachan warned the young John Beverley Robinson against conduct that would limit his social mobility. ". . . You will shut every door against you by indulging a satirical propensity, and you will quickly find yourself surrounded by enemies."<sup>22</sup> In each case what the patron urged on his protege - energy, self-reliance, honesty, respectful conduct - was a pattern of behaviour which the individual could choose to adopt. That would be the means or the necessary condition for "rising in the world", or "bringing you forward".

(19) Canadian Christian Examiner, February 1840, p.53. See also "Extracts of a Memorandum", February 1822, Strachan Papers.

(20) John Strachan to John Macaulay, December 12, 1812, Macaulay Papers.

(21) John Bethune Jr. to John Macaulay, March 16, 1814, Macaulay Papers.

(22) John Strachan to J.B. Robinson, September 30, 1809, J.B. Robinson Papers.

The wrong sort of behaviour by contrast would "shut every door against you". The stress was continually on what people could do to improve their social standing.

Rising was not always seen as commendable. Robert Stanton expressed his suspicions about the ultimate ends and real motives of the newly-elected Assembly of 1828. "A Change of Governors, is not the change they seek - they want a radical change, in which such filth, as Mackenzie and some others would stand a chance of rising to the surface."<sup>23</sup> John Strachan at about the same time wrote John Macaulay a long letter expressing irritation at his loss of influence over government patronage. He viewed the new appointments skeptically.

My confidence has during the last few years been shaken as to many persons but I still think well of human nature. There are so few that possess true moral firmness - or who can resist opportunities of bettering themselves that I rather feel compassion than indignation. 24

To Strachan it seemed that since he had fallen from the governor's inner circle, it was those who lacked "moral firmness" that benefitted from those "opportunities of bettering themselves" - which he had earlier urged upon Macaulay. Such doubts about others rising were not however confined to political disputes. The speculative side of business was condemned for its power to tempt farmers away from the surer, more orderly way to Independence. Dr. Dunlop censured that aspect of the lumber trade.

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(23) Robert Stanton to John Macaulay, November 11, 1828, Macaulay Papers.

(24) John Strachan to John Macaulay, December 15, 1828, Macaulay Papers.

. . . It draws farmers from their legitimate occupations, and makes them neglect the certainty of earning a competence by a steady perseverance in their agricultural pursuits, for a vision of wealth never to be realized. 25

Cleverness in business was sometimes thought to shade into "sharp dealing". John MacTaggart, a British engineer, described the American as a "crafty intrepid fellow". The "Yankee" merchants were active, worryingly so.

Their enterprise is great; there is nothing they conceive too hard to be done; they are very ambitious, but by no means inventive . . . They are not extremely honest, yet not to be generally blamed for dishonesty. 26

An Irish settler, E.A. Talbot, spoke more bluntly of the Americans "whose religion is politics, and their God a golden eagle".<sup>27</sup> Patrick Shirreff, a Scot, reflecting on the tour he had just completed, estimated, "At the time of my visit nine-tenths of the hotel-keepers and stage-drivers, and most of the active business people had originally come from the United States".<sup>28</sup> By the system of "store-pay" he considered that the shop keepers had open to them the "plundering" of both workmen and farmers.<sup>29</sup> The popular demagogue, the servile courtier, the crooked Yankee pedlar might all be described as rising steadily by their own efforts.

(25) Dunlop, op. cit., p.118. See also Kingston Chronicle, February 19, 1918, and Canniff, op. cit., pp.74-75.

(26) MacTaggart, op. cit., volume 1, pp.220-221.

(27) Talbot, op. cit., volume 1, p.79. See also John Macaulay to Helen Macaulay, June 2, 1834, Macaulay Papers. W.W. Baldwin to Q. St. George, December 17, 1819, W.W. Baldwin Papers.

(28) Shirreff, op. cit., p.389.

(29) Shirreff, op. cit., pp.128,387.

But to those who viewed them with such an eye, it was an elevation to be reprehended.

Whether lauded or suspected, the image of rising - "putting a foot on the ladder" - conveyed a pervading sense that individuals were making their way up in society by their own endeavour. But how could that be squared with the idea of fortune's wheel, that could in one turn "set you above them all"? Some simply saw the two images in conflict.

They appeared as contrasting forces between which individuals could be caught. William Lyon Mackenzie described "The Case of Thomas Hall", a crippled artillery man who, after having earned his own living in the colony for thirteen years, sought to raise money by subscription to return to England. In Mackenzie's view he was "a deserving though unfortunate man".<sup>30</sup> The Western Herald noted of the 1837-38 recession that hardship came not just to, ". . . the rash adventurer, the improvident and the idle, but the industrious and provident, the mechanic and day labourer, who are dependent upon others for a livelihood . . ."<sup>31</sup>

A disappointed claimant to militia promotion wrote that none of the usual qualification of merit apparently counted when weighed against property, which was the mere gift of fortune.

. . . I for the first time understand, that merit, loyalty, all necessary qualifications of a gentleman worthy of holding a commission, consist in the value of property fortune may have favoured him with. 32

(30) Colonial Advocate, May 23, 1825.

(31) Western Herald, April 17, 1838.

(32) Upper Canada Herald, March 16, 1831.



In seeing two forces in conflict - endeavour and luck - these passages adopt a mainly passive attitude. One did what one could, but accepted that it might be over-ruled by fate or fortune. Others took a more active stance.

Failing to obtain the appointment at York which he had hoped for, the young John Strachan determined to make his own opportunities. "I had wrapped myself in my own thoughts, and resolved on several plans, which might ultimately force me into notice . . ." <sup>33</sup> In a letter to his ward, John Beverley Robinson, Dr. Stuart combined the two images in surveying the young man's prospects.

In the Revolution of affairs some thing favourable to you may turn up; if this should be the case I will eagerly improve it to your advantage. - I hope you are still prosecuting your classical studies; as nothing can be done, to any purpose in the learned Professions without a good stock of latin at least; and with the Foundation laid by Mr. Strachan you might make great progress by your own industry, even without a master. 34

Stuart takes into consideration the opportunity that may be opened by a "revolution" in the wheel of fortune and offers to "improve it to your advantage", as best he can as Robinson's patron. But in the meantime he urges young Robinson to build on the "foundation" his schooling has laid by his own industry. Here both elements were taken together in a dynamic way, each to be used to the utmost for advancement.

A similar combination of the same factors is evident in the case of John S. Craig, a downwardly mobile nephew of John Strachan. Having

(33) John Strachan to Dr. Brown, May 12, 1812, Strachan Papers.

(34) Dr. Stuart to J.B. Robinson, September 20, 1803; see also same to same, April 23, 1805, J.B. Robinson Papers.

invested in a distillery on the young man's behalf, Strachan found Craig had ruined and abandoned it in a most reckless fashion.

As John S. Craig has chosen rather to be a servant than a Master I cannot have any intercourse with him while in that capacity; had it been misfortune that reduced him to this it would have been no disgrace and I would have thought nothing of it but when it arises from gross mis-conduct it is altogether different  
 . . . . 35

As in Thomas Markland's speech on poor relief, Strachan saw no disgrace in a low estate that was due to misfortune. His nephew was ostracized for gross misconduct, the failure to work hard and honestly. Stuart and Strachan saw their proteges in terms of both fortune's revolving wheel and steady industry. Each of these might open a way to the top, and ought to be utilized to the full.

The images of the wheel and the ladder symbolized two key types of variables in the social mobility of individuals. Chance vitally affected every occupation in Upper Canada. A farmer might see his year's labour wiped out in a few minutes by a hail storm; a merchant, his store and warehouse full of goods burned to the ground; a labourer, his savings exhausted by a prolonged illness. People were too well aware of the impact of fire, disease, accident, or the weather to see prosperity and poverty solely in terms of individual responsibility. Nonetheless, few if any subscribed to fatalism. Upper Canada was "a

(35) Good, op. cit., John Strachan to James Strachan, September 19, 1831. See also Spragge, op. cit., p.202, John Strachan to James Strachan, June 18, 1820.

land where industry meets its due reward.<sup>36</sup> The individual through education, or by cultivating certain personal characteristics (especially industry) could steadily rise. For some fortune was an uncertainty: whether it might bless or curse, it could only be accepted. To others fortune was watched for, seized and made the most of. However one reconciled or combined the two, the images stood for actual variables in the lives of individuals.

The theme of steady personal endeavour which appears in comments on individuals is the expected manifestation of the social myth of Upper Canada as a land of opportunity. The recognition of uncertainty - in a negative way, through the wheel of fortune - represents the qualifications on the colony's promise, usually seen most clearly by the poorer settlers. For example George Forbes closed his praises of what the new land could do for him with the significant line, "if God spares my health".<sup>37</sup> By contrast there was less of a place in the general social myth for the good luck signified in the positive aspect of the wheel. But the concept of a sudden fortuitous rise was not inherently in conflict with the idea of a land of opportunity. Upper Canada offered many possibilities to get ahead: most by strenuous exertion; but some by chance.

The final image commonly used to describe social movement does not appear to have emerged from within the social myth. Rather it

(36) Patriot, February 21, 1834. See also F.H. Armstrong, "Rev. N. Bosworth: Pioneer Settler on Yonge Street", Ontario History, volume 58, no. 3; September 1966, p.167.

(37) George Forbes to John Forbes, October 4, 1853, Forbes Papers.

seems to have been a critical response to a certain aspect of it. Unlike the two images already dealt with, the mushroom image was common in political debate, being employed by all sides. It was different from the previous two in another more significant way. Fortune by its nature was indiscriminate - it was capable of raising the unworthy or the worthy. The steady climb up the social ladder could be accomplished by immoral as well as moral means. While both were most often used to express approval (or hope), sometimes they expressed disapproval. By contrast the mushroom image almost always indicated "bad mobility" in the eye of the beholder. The mushroom grew up very quickly (too quickly), probably from base origins, had little useful function, and would most likely decay very rapidly. Each of these negative connotations, or any combination of them, was available to those who reached for the adjective or epithet "mushrooms".

The commonness of the usage of that image in political discourse led the Upper Canada Herald to label a story on the cultivation of mushrooms in the United States: "Mushrooms - Not Political".<sup>38</sup> It was used by critics and opponents of the provincial executive as well as various of its supporters. That might suggest a certain universality about the image. However, the ways in which it was utilized indicate something of the differences among the different political groups.

Charles Jones, a Brockville lawyer, during his first election attempt in 1816, defended his loyalty against the suspicions of those

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(38) Upper Canada Herald, October 13, 1830.

who remembered his wartime opposition to martial law.

Loyalty is fidelity and true adherence to a King. In order to attain this character, is it necessary that a man should be a tenacious advocate for martial law; - That he should respect and support the military and hold in contempt the Civil Authority: That he should support "every holder of petty office" who violates the majesty of the laws and wantonly invades your dearest rights and privileges? - The little mushroom of the day;

"When drest in a little brief authority,  
Most ignorant of what he's most assured,  
His glossy essence, like an angry ape,  
Plays such fantastic tricks before high knaves,  
As makes the angels weep". 39

Jones' attack on military government and its supporters has three points, each related to the mushroom image. It was a brief authority, lacking the legitimacy of prescription. This is the main allusion to "the little mushroom of the day". This transient authority is also arbitrary (perhaps like the mushroom, unplanned) and degraded. The baseness of the "little mushroom" appears in its ignorance and its servility before "high knaves". Jones' usage of these connotations of the mushroom symbol were not unique, as will appear.

In 1832 the Canadian Emigrant of Sandwich printed a highly vituperative attack on Rev. Egerton Ryerson, a leader of the Methodist Church and editor of its newspaper.

Cease your unhallowed deeds! If there be any of the mushroom spawn of sulky disaffection in the Province, it has sprung up from the fetidness of your and Mackenzie's [sic] detested papers. 40

(39) "Free and Independent Electors of the County of Leeds", 1816, Charles Jones Papers.

(40) Canadian Emigrant, March 1, 1832.

The writer was intent on denying legitimacy to the grievance agitation involving Ryerson and Mackenzie. In this attempt he (erroneously) denounced Ryerson as a recent immigrant to Upper Canada. In that mis-statement and his stress on "fetid newspapers" as the source for "the mushroom spawn of sulky disaffection", he clearly intended to deny the existence of any indigenous or deep-rooted grievances. Complaints had their origin in the baseness of the discreditable newspapers. They had grown up quickly and spread quickly, like mushroom 'spawn', upon the wind. In this way the writer could account for the wide dispersal of what he considered groundless criticisms.

In a rather more reflective mood, the Canadian Christian Examiner, following the 1837 Rebellion and ensuing border raids, called for a deeper respect by all for the existing constitution.

We might then indulge the hope that our social fabric, a thing not of mushroom growth, would not be a thing of mushroom decay; that it would survive to hoar antiquity, and occupy a niche in the temple of history collateral with that of the empire from which it sprung. 41

After a decade of extraordinarily rapid growth, accompanied by a rising tempo of political and social tension, the writer feels compelled to declare that the "social fabric" has not been "a mushroom growth". Yet he fears that without a change to the proper attitude of reverence, the society could suffer a "mushroom decay". The mushroom here became, to one concerned with order and stability, the representation of fears about the new society's possible transience. That marks a different emphasis from the fears of an over-powerful military or the

(41) Canadian Christian Examiner, January 1839, p.6.

ambitions of those thrusting themselves forward with baseless agitations.

To critics and opponents of the provincial executive the mushroom served as an image of a new class that had grown up suddenly, without legitimacy, and probably from the lowest of origins. At times such sentiments were combined with calls for an authentic aristocracy to lead the country. In commenting on Lieutenant-Governor Maitland's response to the notorious "Type Riot", the Upper Canada Herald observed,

Here His Excellency appears acting from the impulse of his own noble and honourable mind, aloof from the influence of a band of evil counsellors . . . a mushroom gentry . . . who have started from the very dregs of society and by their low cunning and sordid views have raised themselves into power and office; but who, having their own hands dipped in this scandalous outrage, dare not presume to wire themselves round His Excellency with that show of seemingly disinterested concern, which they employ on other occasions in order to sacrifice the interests of this colony at the shrine of their own ambitions. 42

The paper attacked a "mushroom gentry", not just as a group of bad men but as persons not fit to advise the governor due to their low origins in "the very dregs of society" and to the illegitimate means by which they had risen - "their low cunning and sordid views". The implicit contrast was to a legitimate gentry, from a respectable origin, who had risen more slowly by the proper means.

When Anthony Van Egmont denounced those whom he held responsible for his defeat in the 1835 Huron by-election, he reached for similar images: "old parasites, young idlers, half-beggared would-be gentlemen, half-pay and no-pay cashiered officers, ex-West Indian negro drivers,

(42) Upper Canada Herald, July 4, 1826.

mushroom aristocrats".<sup>43</sup> Taking this as a series of specific attacks, summarized in the image of "mushroom aristocrats", it offers a delination of what Van Egmont meant by "mushroom". He considered his opponents to be claiming a social pretension to which they had no real claim - "half-beggared would-be gentlemen", "ex-West Indian negro drivers". In contrast to himself, an industrious mill and tavern owner, he considered his pretentious opposers as "parasites" and "idlers". These "mushroom aristocrats" like the "mushroom" gentry had neither the proper origins nor had they taken the proper means to become real aristocrats.

William Lyon Mackenzie described the provincial office-holders as "fungus".<sup>44</sup> Like the Upper Canada Herald and Van Egmont he denied any legitimacy to men such as Attorney-General J.B. Robinson,

- Is it a secret in these parts that many, very many such Virginian nobles as the Robinsons assume themselves were descended from mothers who came there to try their luck and were purchased by their sires with tobacco at prices according to the quality and soundness of the article? And is it from such a source that we are to expect the germ of liberty? Say rather is it not from such a source that we may look for the tyranny engendered, nursed and practised by those whose blood has been vitiated and syphilized by the accursed slavery of centuries . . . . 45

Mackenzie turned what he saw as a claim to be descended from southern gentry into a double-edged attack. First he implied that Robinson was the descendant of a prostitute - "mothers . . . purchased by their sires". Second, he linked this rather ambiguously to slavery. The

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(43) Iona A. Stewart, "Robert Graham Dunlop - A Huron County Anti-Compact Constitutionalist", unpublished master's thesis, University of Toronto, 1947, p.30.

(44) Colonial Advocate, June 10, 1824.

(45) Colonial Advocate, May 18, 1826.



reference could have been taken in two ways. Mackenzie might have been asking the electorate how it could trust its liberty to the heir of slave-holders. Alternatively he might have been implying that Robinson was part black (hence, also illegitimately descended) - "whose blood has been vitiated and syphilized by the accursed slavery of centuries". Clearly Mackenzie intended to deny any legitimacy to what he elsewhere called "the mushroom aristocracy of this fair but ill-governed colony".<sup>46</sup>

By contrast Mackenzie at times called for the establishment of a 'proper' colonial aristocracy. In a series of public letters to Lord Dalhousie, he called, amongst other things, for a hereditary peerage as part of a union of all British North American colonies.

The people would submit to taxes imposed by themselves through their representatives, the aristocracy would add to the national dignity, and be a blessed exchange for legislative counsellors /sic/ whose honours are consigned to the tomb with them who wear them . . . . 47

Dr. W.W. Baldwin proposed among his reforms a "legislative Council composed of a liberal and independent gentry".<sup>48</sup> The critics of the

(46) Correspondent and Advocate, cited in Patriot, August 11, 1835.

(47) Colonial Advocate, April 27, 1827; see also May 7, 1827. Note the stress on his own noble connections, Colonial Advocate, June 10, 1824; Constitution, February 8, 1837. On his turn away from the ideal of aristocracy, see Colonial Advocate, September 16, 1830; Correspondent and Advocate, May 7 and 22, 1835; Mackenzie's Magazine, August 11, 1838; including a denunciation of the Scottish aristocracy, to which he had claimed ties, Colonial Advocate, January 17, 1833.

(48) Hutton, op. cit., p.121; see also p.78.

provincial executive were not all of one mind in decrying the aristocratic element of the constitution. For some (at least for a time) the fault lay not in the principle itself, but the unsuitable materials that had been chosen to implement it. By using the image of a "mushroom gentry", these critics found a way to point to the personnel rather than the idea of aristocracy as the flaw in the colonial constitution.

At times the context did not make very clear the way in which writers intended to use the mushroom image. An editorial in the Christian Guardian of Egerton Ryerson reported a great increase in the paper's circulation. It then warned its readers,

A mushroom opposition has, to be sure, been roused against us: but this, by the fiery malevolent spirit which it breathed, has already doomed itself to an almost silent confusion, and like any evil spirit, is rapidly falling into the pit of disappointment and shame, which it had wantonly dug for others. . 49

Ignoring the mixture of metaphors (which offers a fire-breathing mushroom that digs holes), there are evident common implications from the mushroom image. It is fairly clear that this opposition has come into existence quickly and is expected to decay just as rapidly. More basic, that opposition is clearly bad. It was probably political, in the mind of the editorialist. But perhaps it was not. The mushroom image was employed outside the sphere of politics.

Just as the success of some in politics led others to mutter darkly about mushrooms, the rapid success of some businesses led certain writers to use the same image of suspicion. A letter to the Upper Canada Herald

(49) Christian Guardian, February 13, 1830.

saw in Britain a contrast between an established gentility and the rising class of wealthy businessmen.

The people of England as much venerate their ancient nobility who live lives contented upon the estates originally bestowed upon them, as they despise the mushroom race, whose creation and subsistence have despoiled them of food and raiment . . . . 50

The same criticisms made of Upper Canadian businessmen received an interesting rebuke.

I take notice of certain remarks about upstarts, mushrooms, and other opprobrious epithets, so bountifully heaped upon the merchants; for, though they will certainly tend to excite ill-will in the breasts of many I hold them as too contemptible for consideration in a country where all are so nearly alike; - - in fact, it is too ridiculous, where so many are black, to call each other smutty. 51

The writer identified himself as "One of the Committee of the Board of Trade". The mushroom epithet had been directed against the Board of Trade for what was considered the impertinence of some resolutions it had passed. His defense against the implicit accusation of having risen too fast was to point to the universality of quick upward mobility. Why should only long-established merchants be able to express themselves, in the "poor man's country"? If everyone was getting ahead in society, why could not the successful merchant, though newly rich, have as much to say?

The mushroom image was a way of complaining about too much social mobility, by the wrong people, in the wrong way. In a society characterized by massive immigration, a rapidly expanding agricultural frontier,

(50) Upper Canada Herald, June 27, 1826.

(51) Patriot, July 21, 1837. See John Strachan to Simon McGillivray, November 1, 1822, Strachan Papers.

and a consequently high degree of spatial and social mobility it is not surprising to find a fear of social transience, that the new society would lack permanence. There were more specific fears that the wrong persons or groups had risen too rapidly. The power of the military in war-time, the sudden prominence given to critics of the provincial executive in the 1820's and their agitation, the suspicion of a sham gentry sprung from base origins, the emergence of newly rich merchants - all excited alarm in someone who reached for the mushroom image to attack what was regarded as unwarranted advance. The fear of favouritism and demagoguery in politics, as of speculation and dishonesty in business reflected anxiety that people could have been getting ahead by the wrong means. At times other images could express that disapprobation. Robert Stanton referred to Mackenzie and others as "filth", "rising to the surface".<sup>52</sup> Fortune could easily adapt to describing the processes of political favouritism or business speculation. But the pre-eminent image of disapproval was the mushroom.

The three images differed not only in their ideational content but also in their social targets. The way these three were used indicates a further aspect of attitudes toward social mobility. There was broad approval for almost all movement from the Dependent level. That approval was usually directed at immigrants, but also included native-born Upper Canadians.<sup>53</sup> The few cases of disapproval of mobility up into

(52) Robert Stanton to John Macaulay, November 11, 1829, Macaulay Papers.

(53) See for example John Scott to Andrew Redford, August 29, 1835, Redford Papers.

the Independent level were directed at American and occasionally Scottish itinerants and merchants whose methods of self-advancement were seen as disreputable.<sup>54</sup> Disapproval became the more prominent comment when the mobility in question was a move from the Independent to the Respectable level.

Each of the images had a negative application. The mushroom was almost wholly used to depreciate someone's mobility. The target was most often someone identifiably attempting to move into some position of social leadership. The Toronto Board of Trade committee's resolutions were dismissed as the products of "upstarts, mushrooms". As previously mentioned, in defense, one of the committee members questioned how their respectability could be challenged - "it is too ridiculous, where so many are black, to call each other smutty".<sup>55</sup> A quarrel over militia appointments produced the bitter comment that only fortune's child, property, counted for anything.<sup>56</sup> By contrast assembly member Peter Perry and John Macaulay opposed the promotion of newly arrived half-pay officers over local eminent propertied citizens.<sup>57</sup> The political process, whether popular election or executive appointment, raised similar anxieties that the unworthy might gain respectability by

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(54) John Macaulay to Helen Macaulay, June 2, 1834, Macaulay Papers. William McVity to W.W. Baldwin, November 15, 1837, W.W. Baldwin Papers. Canadian Freeman, December 9, 1830.

(55) Patriot, July 21, 1837.

(56) Upper Canada Herald, March 16, 1831.

(57) Patriot, March 14, 1836. John Macaulay to Col. Coffin, June 20, 1821, Macaulay Papers.

caprice of electorate or governor. Nelson Cozens saw his father's fall from office as one of "a succession of unfortunate disappointments", by which he had "the mortification of seeing others enjoy the favours of Government to which loyalty (not to say rank and merit) had so well entitled him . . .".<sup>58</sup> Alternatively politics like business might be the means for people working their way up to respectable positions by disreputable methods.<sup>59</sup> The far greater volume of negative comment, using all three images, points to the highly contentious nature of the move from Independence to Respectability. That forms a sharp contrast with the much more accepted (and hence far less critically noted) move up into the Independent level.

Censure was directed at the unsuccessful as well as the successful. That criticism forms a reverse impression of the picture of upward mobility, reinforcing its validity. The images used reflect that it was the failure to achieve Independence which was denounced. Hence the mushroom did not appear at all. Misfortune made a brief appearance, to excuse the poverty of some.<sup>60</sup> But the almost universal theme in criticism of people's failure to move up lay in "misconduct". Adam Ferguson, a wealthy speculator and settler, considered Upper Canada a beautiful country filled with opportunity,

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(58) Nelson Cozens to John Macaulay, February 18, 1822, Macaulay Papers.

(59) Upper Canada Herald, July 4, 1826.

(60) See for example John Strachan to James Strachan, September 19, 1831, Good, op. cit., p.251.

. . . But it is equally certain that to hundreds it will prove a source of disappointment and vexation . . . They won't labour, they want capital, they loiter and grumble for a season and because the forest refuses to fall or the wheat to spring without the axes or the oxen they abandon it in despair . . . My own firm conviction is, that in no state of human existence will there be found a greater measure of pure and unalloyed enjoyment, than in a well regulated family of a Canadian farmer, but all depends upon being satisfied with independence and abundance, the fruits of industry and sober living. 61

The very wide-spread belief that every able-bodied man could find employment (and soon own land), led to the firm conviction either that there was no poverty in Upper Canada, or that it had to be due to some grave lapse in character.<sup>62</sup> The social myth promised abundant opportunities to rise - modestly - in society. However to those who appeared not to get their "foot on the ladder", there was little sympathy beyond the possible attribution of their poverty to misfortune.

The uses of the three images to comment upon the social mobility goals of individuals tell three things about how those aims were perceived. First the progress of the poor toward Independence was lauded, except for some cases where the means of rising were thought disreputable. Second, the move beyond Independence to Respectability was viewed far more critically. It attracted most of the negative comment on social mobility including all of the mushroom allusions and much of the "fortune" and "rising" imagery. Third, the criticism of the unsuccessful is dominated by what was seen as "character failure" which

(61) Adam Fergusson to Dr. Lee, June 20, 1834, Lee Papers.

(62) See for example Moodie, Life, op. cit., p.18.

stopped people from rising, although some part of their poverty might be excused as a product of misfortune. The "images" usage makes clear how persons' chosen social goals could influence reactions to them and even the type of criticism they might expect.

When people in Upper Canada reacted to specific cases of individual social mobility, they commonly drew on one of three images to express their attitudes. The colony was a land of opportunity - "the poor man's country". The belief that industry, perseverance and other moral qualities would get their due reward reflected most graphically in the image of a ladder up which one could steadily climb. That optimism had to be tempered by the realities of economic uncertainties that could affect the individual dramatically for good or ill. The ladder had to be reconciled with the revolving wheel of fortune. Living in a society which they perceived as dynamic, some found the commotion, or at least a part of it, distasteful. That could result in a stress upon order in general, or that some specific individual or group ought not to be doing so well, or that their way of doing well was not proper. While the other two images could also encompass what was considered "bad mobility", most of the negative comments were expressed with the image of mushrooms. These images point to a conflict between the assumption of personal mobility and anxieties about maintaining social stability. Attitudes toward social mobility also varied according to the person's goal. To strive for Independence was almost universally approved. However to aim beyond that, to Respectability, laid an



individual open to the possibility of intense criticism. Taken together the three images - the ladder, the wheel, and the mushroom and the way in which they were applied - illustrate the diversity of reactions which individuals' social mobility provoked in the context of a prevailing conviction that upward mobility was normal.

CHAPTER 11

SOCIAL STABILITY AND PERSONAL MOBILITY

People commonly understood Upper Canada as a hierarchial society which had a great deal of social movement within it. The colony was seen as having a stable hierarchy of positions, yet as not being static. This was also considered to be a mobile society - featuring overwhelmingly, upward mobility - but not a society entirely unformed or in flux. The way in which Upper Canadians linked and reconciled the mobility and stability that they perceived in their community provides the final element in the picture of their attitudes towards social structure and mobility.

Popular belief in the existence of some sort of social order, whether simple or complex, manifested itself in a variety of ways. The ranking which people so often did of occupations, and even of grades within occupations, demonstrates a clear apprehension of social stratification. While stressing the need for moral virtue as well as proficiency in one's calling, the Christian Guardian ran down the scale of status, listing those who might be,

. . . very contemptible and worthless men, though [they] may be very excellent lawyers, surgeons, chemists, engineers, mechanics, labourers, or whatever else may be our particular employment. 1

Much of the discussion about factors which could influence one's social mobility turned on the recognition that society had at least a "top"

(1) Christian Guardian, April 29, 1835. See also Colonial Advocate, July 8, 1824.

and a "bottom", and very probably a series of grades in between. In the view of one writer in the Canadian Christian Examiner,

We want Grammar Schools it is true, but we want Colleges and Common Schools also. We want Colleges for the learned professions, Grammar Schools for the middle class, and Common Schools . . . for the great body of the people. In all civilised countries there have been, and no doubt always will be, three classes, or ranks in society - all attempts of the levelling system to the contrary notwithstanding; and, if so, there ought to be three classes of schools to correspond, affording an opportunity to all to ascend as high in the ranks of literature as their circumstances will permit. 2

When the Christian Guardian denounced "novel reading" as "a spreading evil", it too cast its glance down a social scale.

We have only to send our readers to the libraries of the great, the parlours of the men of commerce, and we might add, to the shanties and workshops of the lower classes, for the plainest evidence of the truth of this affirmation. 3

Even in correspondence, passing mentions of different ranks appear. Rev. William Morse described his charge at Paris in terms of two groups. "The number of Episcopalian families of respectability amounts to only seven or eight, and about an equal number of families in inferior circumstances."<sup>4</sup> A similar comment came from William Morris about the Belleville Presbyterians.<sup>5</sup> The pre-eminent images used to describe

- (2) Canadian Christian Examiner, July 1839, p.252.
- (3) Christian Guardian, August 14, 1839.
- (4) William Morse to the Bishop of Montreal, September 17, 1838, Strachan Papers.
- (5) W. Morris to Rev. Welch, February 19, 1830, Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence; see also J. Rolph to W.W. Baldwin, (1828), W.W. Baldwin Papers, and John Strachan to George Mountain, December 31, 1827, Good, op. cit., p.13.

social movement all had implicit in them at least a simple social structure of inferior and superior positions. In particular, the graphic image of the ladder portrayed not only lower and higher stations, but a series of regular grades in between. Wilson Benson, an Ulster emigrant, described his disappointment at his lack of advance by saying, "I had been industriously engaged for five years climbing the ladder of fortune, and here I was at the lowermost rung."<sup>6</sup> Whether made explicit or left implicit, there appears to have been a map of the social structure in the minds of Upper Canadians. The validity of the description here offered of that map rests upon the recorded, surviving observations of contemporaries, which have been simply cast into a systematic form, with their logical implications drawn out. Despite methodological limitations, in particular the strong bias toward elite perceptions, it is an essential prerequisite for the study of the colony.

The promise of Upper Canada was one of individual upward mobility. The colony's prevailing social myth was "the poor man's country". As Simon McGillivray described it to a House of Commons committee:

. . . Any agriculturist of industrious habits, especially if he be possessed of some capital, may reasonably look forward to the possession, in a few years, of comfort and independence as a landed proprietor. 7

While the offer was made to each person separately it obviously applied

(6) Katz, *op. cit.*, p.94.

(7) "Minutes of Evidence before the Select Committee on Emigration from the United Kingdom", June 5, 1827, Paper no. 550, in Reports from Committees, 1826-27, House of Commons, volume V, pp.461-464.

to a group. It was not just that individuals might succeed, but that all those known as "poor men" could greatly improve their status. Certainly this was intended to happen by individual not collective action, but the consequence was a changed shape for this society as compared to its British parent. ". . . While in England there is an endless variety of profession and occupation, in Canada there is, properly speaking only one . . ."8. That sentiment expresses in exaggerated form a feeling that Upper Canada had a much simpler, more compact social structure, lacking not only the titled aristocracy and great merchant wealth at the top, but also the other extreme of a harsh poverty at the bottom.

To the benevolent philanthropist, whose heart has bled over the misery and pauperism of the lower classes in Great Britain, the almost entire absence of mendicity from Canada would be highly gratifying. 9

The ample supply of land (free, cheap, or on credit) removed the threat of degrading poverty for the strong and persevering. At the same time, the absence of the traditional "higher orders" opened the top of the social scale.

It is a glorious country for the labouring classes, for while blessed with health, they are always certain also to derive from it ample means of support for their families. An industrious, hard-working man in a few years is able to purchase from his savings a homestead of his own; and in process of time becomes one of the most important and prosperous class of settlers in Canada, her free and independent yeomen,

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(8) Picken, op. cit., p.16. Talbot, op. cit., volume 2, pp.20-21, 29.

(9) Moodie, Roughing, op. cit., p.143, Howison, op. cit., p.278.

who form the bones and sinews of this rising country, and from among whom she already begins to draw her senators, while their educated sons become the aristocrats of the rising generation. 10

John Strachan in his many plans for a provincial educational system sought to create just such an opportunity to advance for the most able sons of loyal subjects no matter how poor. He pointed to the Grammar School Amendment Act in particular - ". . . Ten of the most promising children from among the common people, thus instructed free of expense, may open their way to professional rank and distinction".<sup>11</sup> Subsequently William Chisholm used a similar argument in the Assembly to support scholarships to King's College.

Knowledge is acquired through the agency of the school master - knowledge is a lodestone that attracts property to itself . . . A select number of such as have given tokens of their future capacity to fill the learned professions, and the public offices of this province with credit to themselves . . . are to be sent to King's College . . . this is the only way that these institutions can be made serviceable to the farmers - by educating among themselves persons who will always feel a sympathy for the cultivators of the soil . . . . 12

Upper Canada by professing to offer upward mobility not just to individuals at random but to those below the Independent level especially, produced a picture of itself as a simpler, more compact society not only without a bottom layer of paupers but, as importantly, with a "top" wide open to the ambitious.

(10) Ibid. See also Patriot, April 7, 1835.

(11) Henderson, op. cit., p.75.

(12) Patriot, April 7, 1835.

With so much mobility being promised and perceived as actually going on, it could be expected that some would have seen, in a certain mood, mobility as a possible threat to stability. The great waves of immigration that flooded into Upper Canada after 1815 in particular aroused concern in different parties at different times. John Strachan in 1821 feared the influx of radicals from Britain who could not be so well restrained in the more elementary, less secure colonial society.

The truth is the vast emigration, which hath of late years poured into the Province will not contribute much to our tranquility. Many of them have no religion and more are inimical to regular government. Flying from the ranks of radicals at home they come here with increased assurance and think that in a Colony they may go greater lengths than they durst at home. 13

In that mood Strachan could not accept Christopher Hagerman's sunnier view, "however turbulent or discontented individuals may have been prior to their arrival in the province, comfort and plenty soon work wonders on those who are of industrious habits . . ." <sup>14</sup> In his tour through the colony, Patrick Shirreff noted the same process with disapproval. "Whig and Radical in the Mother country, after becoming possessed of a few acres of forest in Canada, seem to consider themselves part of the aristocracy, and speak with horror of the people and liberality." <sup>15</sup> By the 1830's the radical critics of the provincial

(13) John Strachan to John Macaulay, November 18, 1821, Macaulay Papers. See also John Macaulay to Wm. Allan, May 9, 1832; same to same, July 2, 1834, Allan Papers; and John Galt, Bogle Corbet, op. cit., volume 3, p.43.

(14) Fegussion, op. cit., p.115.

(15) Shirreff, op. cit., p.104.



executive had become alarmed at the political character of certain emigrants. In the assisted passages for paupers and the special consideration shown to half-pay officers, they saw an attempt to reproduce the strata missing in Upper Canadian society.<sup>16</sup> That would first mean that new taxes would be introduced for the support of the swollen Dependent level. The radical Correspondent and Advocate warned in 1837,

The redundant pauper population of the parishes in England will in all probability shortly arrive here . . . [ and ] the industrious farmers of every township in every district in Upper Canada MUST build work houses for their reception, and suffer heavy direct taxation for their maintenance, clothing, discipline and government. 17

Second, the half-pay officers would become the favourites of the executive, filling the positions of magistrates and militia officer, that ought to be held by the long-established local worthies. Anthony Van Egmont attacked "half-pay and no-pay cashiered officers" as amongst the "mushroom aristocrats" that had sprung up to claim pride of place in Huron County.<sup>18</sup>

In the view of the radical critics, the provincial executive's plans to reproduce English society in Upper Canada would result in further burdens on the industrious and the closing off of upward mobility. Anna Jameson in her description of those she termed "whigs" outlined not merely a political faction, but a frustrated social group.

(16) Patriot, March 6, 1832; March 4, 1836; Correspondent and Advocate, January 7, 1836; May 3, 1837.

(17) Correspondent and Advocate, May 3, 1837; see also Patriot, March 6, 1832.

(18) Stewart, op. cit., p.30. Patriot, March 4, 1836.

. . . They insist on the necessity of many reforms in the colonial government. Many of these are young men of talent, and professional men, who find themselves shut out from what they regard as their fair proportion of social consideration and influence, such as, in a small society like this, their superior education and character ought to command for them. 19

After the rebellion the Canadian Christian Examiner saw the problem of rapid mass migration into the colony in more general terms. "We . . . indulge the hope that our social fabric, a thing not of mushroom growth, would not be a thing of mushroom decay."<sup>20</sup> But Upper Canada's population had grown very fast, its area of settlement greatly expanded, and social tensions ensued. Consequently in the minds of some there did over-hang the threat of a "mushroom decay".

Was there a positive side to these fears of instability? Upper Canada might have a weak social structure because it was both new and primitive, but that newness could also be considered as an opportunity. The colony's lack of a long established social order opened many possibilities. How people reacted to these options tells a great deal about their deepest assumptions about order and movement.

The articulate political and social leaders in the colony did perceive and debate the differences between the United States, Great Britain and Upper Canada. One useful focus of such discussion was M.S. Bidwell's Intestate Bill, which was considered by the Assembly numerous times during the 1820's and 1830's. Bidwell's bill was a minor affair, intended to divide all property of those who died without wills equally

(19) Jameson, op. cit., volume 1, pp.101-102.

(20) Canadian Christian Examiner, January 1839, p.6.

amongst the children, but it occasioned at times illuminating debate on the comparative standing of Upper Canadian society. Attorney-General J.B. Robinson attacked the measure.

- The bill . . . would abolish all hopes of ever attaining to the same state of society as existed in England, which he thought desirable - there the beneficial effects of the law of primogeniture had been acknowledged, [sic] and in other countries where a different system was pursued the state of society was not so good and agriculture in a miserable state from the many subdivisions of property . . . . 21

Robinson appears here not as a "natural conservative" defending an established way of doing things, but as a conservative ideologue, advocating the implantation and nurture of institutions which he believed would be conducive to conservative values, and incidentally agricultural prosperity.<sup>22</sup> There was a sense, then, in which he recognized that society could be consciously shaped. Bidwell simply wished to shape it differently.

. . . Natural justice called for such a measure . . . .  
As to the state of society in England, it was different from this country [. ] There immense wealth and refinement existed and being a manufacturing country afforded employment to thousands which in this country must be found in agricultural pursuits . . . . 23

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- (21) Kingston Chronicle, January 19, 1827; see also Upper Canada Herald, January 28, 1827.
- (22) Peter Viereck, Conservatism, Van Nostrand Co., Princeton, 1956, pp.10, 15-17. Arthur Bryant, The Spirit of Conservatism, Methuen and Co., London, 1929, pp.1-4. See also Terry Cook, "John Beverley Robinson and the Conservative Blueprint for the Upper Canadian Community", in Johnson, Historical Essays, op. cit., pp.338-355.
- (23) Kingston Chronicle, January 19, 1827. Colonial Advocate, September 16, 1830. Patriot, March 25, 1830.

In a debate over ending imprisonment for debt, Bidwell made the same point: a young colony gave more scope for experiment. "England was a commercial country, and any alterations in the law there might be attended with confusion, but here they were in a new country, where such an experiment could be more safely tried."<sup>24</sup> John Strachan showed himself aware of the same contrasts between Upper Canada and English models in his early plans for university education.

The great opulence of Cambridge and Oxford is far beyond our reach and altho' I should be sorry to see them lose a shilling for I think them wisely adapted to so rich and populous and learned a country as England, I think them unfit for this country. 25

Even to an admirer of British institutions, the necessity to adapt to the new environment was apparent. On the opposite end of the social scale, the same critical attitude toward English forms in Upper Canada led to a rejection of the Poor Law, or anything like it. A correspondent of the Kingston Chronicle attacked the idea of a voluntary emigrant relief society fearing it would lead to the Poor Laws which he considered had proved a failure in England. "Warned by this example, it would be little short of madness, for a new [community], to have recourse to any similar [expedients], for the support of its indigent members."<sup>26</sup> A writer in the Canadian Christian Examiner considered the Elizabethan Poor Law "an unlimited fund . . . established to

(24) Colonial Advocate, February 7, 1828.

(25) "Draft Letter" on McGill, February 14, 1815; see also "Draft Petition" to Governor Maitland and the Legislature, 1818, Strachan Papers.

(26) Kingston Chronicle, January 22, 1819.

succor misfortune . . . [which] has been perverted to the purpose of supplying the demands of disquieting prodigality". As a result the system was "pressing heavily on the resources of the state, and sensibly deteriorating the character of the people".<sup>27</sup> John Rolph declared, "he would not ingraft an overgrown system in a young country - . . . Poor Laws and Rotten-boroughs; he would imitate only what was desirable".<sup>28</sup> Peter Perry was said to oppose a law to compel support for children born out of wedlock by their fathers, on the ground that it might lead to something like the Poor Law.<sup>29</sup> But this was a limited debate. It turned on copying specific British institutions, or American alternatives. There was no idea of society in flux.

Even in those critical of planting English institutions in Upper Canada there was a strong sense of social hierarchy as extant. The Canadian Christian Examiner cast a severe look back at the 1791 Act which first established Upper Canada.

. . . Though the English statesman who drew up our constitutional act, may have had a strange vision in his mental eye, of the Canada of some future day, so resembling the England of that day, that a lordly nobility, and a lordly church, would there find a proper place; yet he regarded it merely as a possibility, and by no means as a certainty. And of a surety, we would be doing Mr. Pitt and his colleagues great injustice, were we to suppose it their intention, that, should there be no natural place for such nobles and clergy, one should forcibly be made for them. 30

(27) Canadian Christian Examiner, June 1839, p.121.

(28) Upper Canada Herald, February 9, 1828; see also February 12, 1828.

(29) Patriot, April 8, 1836.

(30) Canadian Christian Examiner, March 1838, p.75.

The intention to transplant late eighteenth century England to Canada is considered "a strange vision". To attempt it in contemporary times would have been folly. There was "no natural place" for nobles and established churchmen. "No natural place" in what? In the social structure which had in fact developed. The rejection is based upon the recognition of an existing social order that would have had to be "forcibly" altered. The same sense of a set gradation that had to be respected appears in M.S. Bidwell's opposition to levelling amendments to a Jury Bill, directing all jurors to be chosen by ballot.

As to Grand Jurors, he certainly thought that some distinction should be drawn, as it respected the duties to be performed by them, and which called for a greater degree of intelligence, and knowledge of the law, than was expected from individuals generally. They were called upon to inquire into all matters affecting the peace of society, whereas a Petit Jury, had the question submitted to them, in such a manner, that it became simplified, and with the aid of evidence in a trial, could be determined with great ease. 31

For the weightier duties of the Grand Jury one could not just pluck any citizen at random. These men must come from a certain strata, with the necessary intelligence and knowledge. They would be part of that "natural aristocracy among men, founded on virtue and talents", that W.L. Mackenzie expected would fill the place of the "artificial aristocracy" that "will not soon take root in Upper Canada".<sup>32</sup> The newness of the colony, the apparent malleability of at least parts of its social structure appealed to some who sought different forms. Yet even

(31) Upper Canada Herald, February 9, 1828; see also February 12, 1828.

(32) Colonial Advocate, September 16, 1830. See also Canadian Freeman, December 1, 1825.

for these Upper Canada was not an unformed mass - the potter's clay, capable of being moulded into any configuration. In fact there existed a strong sense of social rank, of an implicit hierarchy that ought to be respected.

The opposite extreme to seeing Upper Canadian society in flux has been to think of it as almost completely static. Contemporary commentators could interpret the social circle around the provincial executive and its political allies as an upper class controlling all wealth and position, and all routes to acquiring a share in either. Lord Durham wrote that "this body of men",

. . . possessed almost all the highest public offices, by means of which, and of its influence in the Executive Council, it wielded all the powers of government . . . and it disposed of the large number of petty posts which are in the patronage of the Government all over the Province. The bench, the magistracy, the high offices of the Episcopal Church, and a great part of the legal profession, are filled by the adherents of this party: by grant or purchase, they have acquired nearly the whole of the waste lands of the Province; they are all-powerful in the chartered banks, and, till lately, shared among themselves almost exclusively all offices of trust and profit. 33

Even a modern social scientist could still link the descendents of the Loyalist elite, Scottish merchants and emigrant gentry into an at least incipient upper class, striving to create a rigid social hierarchy.

The three elements merged into a self-conscious, almost endogamous upper class, preoccupied with land speculation

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(33) G.M. Craig (ed.), Lord Durham's Report, McClelland and Stewart Ltd., Toronto, 1963, p.79. See also Moodie, Life, op. cit., pp.35-37; Dunham, op. cit., pp.42-45.

and preferments, and trying to retain intact the old stratified social structure of Great Britain. 34

It is relatively easy to be misled by categorical statements about the need to respect rank and order, falsely extrapolating these to a demand for renunciation of all ambition to rise. Such statements were common enough that one can build a picture of a rigid class society, if not as extant, then as desired. Typical of that kind of declaration is the following from the Church of England magazine published at Cobourg.

It is shown from this that a diversity and an equality of orders are not contrary to the will of God, but agreeable to his own government; and until there is some express command to the contrary, I think if there were no other reason, it is better to endeavour to imitate the divine conduct than to adopt the inconsistent and unprofitable inventions of man. 35

The Christian Guardian dismissed those critics of universal education who thought it would undermine 'due subordination', thereby asserting its own adherence to the ideal.

Some have objected to the instruction of the lower classes, from an apprehension that it will lift them above their sphere, make them dissatisfied with their station in life, and by impairing the habit of subordination, endanger the tranquility of the state. . . . The admirable mechanism of society, together with that subordination of ranks which is essential to its

(34) Burnet, op. cit., p.33; see also p.113. S.D. Clark, Movements of Political Protest in Canada, 1640-1840, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1959, pp.427-428, 483-485. For the similar view of Marxists see S.B. Ryerson, Unequal Union, Progress Books, Toronto, 1973, pp.91-93 and L. Bergeron, The History of Quebec, NC Press, Toronto, 1975, pp.68-69, 90-91.

(35) Church, March 3, 1838; see also May 22, 1841.



subsistence, is surely not an elaborate imposture,  
which the exercise of reason will detect and expose. 36

Education for the lower orders posed no danger because to move above and beyond one's original station need not be a source of tension as long as the person's understanding of the reasonable nature of the social hierarchy also expanded. A firm stratification of positions would not be threatened by the mobility of persons while those persons had the proper attitude. William Lyon Mackenzie, though often cast in the role of a "leveller", was angered at what he considered the insolence and insubordination of the journeymen who worked in his newspaper office.<sup>37</sup> When faced by a strike of the printers' union, Mackenzie denounced unions as producing class division.

But, when, they [unions] begin to ferment divisions and animosities in society, when they array classes against each other who would otherwise be united by a common interest . . . they become injurious to society. 38

Mackenzie considered that unions could be useful - as the "but" implies - unless they went 'too far'. When the "calm insolence" of the journeymen caused such "animosities" that the common interest of the printing trade was ignored in favour of improving their status as employees, unions became "injurious to society". Within the trade the hierarchy of master over workmen had to be maintained to promote that

(36) Christian Guardian, November 21, 1829.

(37) Colonial Advocate, April 27, 1826. On Mackenzie as a 'leveller', see Canadian Emigrant, March 1, 1832; Gates, "Decided Policy", op. cit., pp.185-208, and Head, op. cit., pp.1-3, 23.

(38) Constitution, October 26, 1836; see also September 21, 1836.

common interest. Yet that idea of hierarchy, even divinely ordained inequality of station, never precluded the individuals' chance to rise from one station to another. John Strachan recognized his own "success story" and encouraged others to rise.<sup>39</sup> He introduced himself to Lord Brougham with a capsule autobiography stressing his achievement. "Though trained to literature I left Scotland young and have gradually risen to some eminence being President of the University of King's College and Archdeacon of York."<sup>40</sup> In his educational biographical sketch of Col. Bishop, he emphasized the value of honourable ambition:

It has been tritely observed that every officer in an army who does not expect to become a general ought to be dismissed as a person destitute of that ardour so necessary to victory; and although it might not be prudent to carry this principle to its utmost extent . . . yet something of it must warm the breast of every good officer. 41

The Christian Guardian, even while demonstrating its adherence to "the admirable mechanism of Society . . . that subordination of ranks" defended education as a means of rising, rising which when done in the proper spirit posed no threat to "the tranquility of the state". Mackenzie tied the "divisions and animosities" of the printers' strike to an "attempt to deprive the youth of a city . . . of the privilege of

(39) John Strachan to John Macaulay, December 5, 1822, Macaulay Papers. John Strachan to J.B. Robinson, November 16, 1807, J.B. Robinson Papers.

(40) John Strachan to Lord Brougham, April 18, 1834, Spragge, op. cit., p.225.

(41) "Life of Col. Bishop", Spragge, op. cit., p.8.

choosing a trade they would desire to pursue".<sup>42</sup> He considered himself a 'self-made man' and took pride in his own social mobility. He recounted his mother's poverty and widowhood, his struggle for self-improvement, and his ambition to see his newspaper spread as far as Sir Alexander Mackenzie had travelled.<sup>43</sup> A belief in the rightness of a hierarchical society and the due subordination of all ranks must not be confused with an opposition to individual ambitions to rise. The individual was free to strive for advancement as long as that striving represented no threat to the ordering of ranks.

The personal mobility which did not threaten social stability was above all that from the Dependent to the Independent level. This type won almost universal praise. The few qualifications concerned sharp-dealing Scots or American merchants and itinerants and, more generally, the prospect of quick easy profits in business. The first report of the Midland District Agricultural Society lamented that so many were led away from the true path to independence.

( Unhappily there exist in this country many inducements to turn away the attention of the farmer from the true objects of his profession. One is allured by the apparently lucrative, though at all times precarious employment of lumbering; another is seduced by the mistaken notion of respectability and ease, which is attached to the occupation of keeping a store; and a third, if, unfortunately for him, his land be situated on the public road, cannot resist the temptation which Tavern keeping holds out. 44

(42) Constitution, October 26, 1836.

(43) Colonial Advocate, September 2, 1824; June 10, 1824. Constitution, February 8, 1837.

(44) Kingston Chronicle, February 19, 1819.

The commercial crisis of 1837, however, in the opinion of the Western Herald, showed how uncertain these other routes were compared to the farmers'.

Their progress in the road to independence has been slow but sure. They have been content to rise gradually by the fruits of their own industry, while others in branches of business in which property may be accumulated more rapidly, by the ever changing vicissitudes of trade and other fortuitous circumstances have been making and breaking around them. 45

Good social mobility was gradual and steady. It was not business as such that was condemned, but its unstable speculative aspect. The steady prudent merchant was also a model of such an orderly rise. Wrote John Strachan to a former pupil, "You return to apply yourself to business which is necessary as well to give you a proper place in society as to supply the means of living comfortably".<sup>46</sup> The mobility which drew the most criticism was that from the Independent to the Respectable level.

What was disordering about the ambitions of those who strove to attain Respectability seems to have been not only their methods and their character but also their targets were positions of social leadership. It was generally acceptable that someone should operate a tavern. What was not acceptable to many was that such a person should be a justice of the peace. "Persons engaged in the wine and spirit trade and brewers . . . are totally unfit for the office to the commonest

(45) Western Herald, April 17, 1838.

(46) "Instructions to Thos. Cartwright", September 11, 1815, Spragge, op. cit., p.100. See also John Strachan to Rev. Towle, January 21, 1833, Good, op. cit., p.330.

observer."<sup>47</sup> Independence was a laudable goal for anyone, but Respectability should only be sought, it was widely held, by the proper sort.

Much of the imagery used to discuss social mobility focused on the contentious rise to Respectability. The image of fortune's wheel arbitrarily pitch-forking any one to the top, while it held out a promise to some, was a threat to others. Merit, complained one, counted for little compared with "the value of property fortune may have favoured him with".<sup>48</sup> But above all, the mushroom provided the descriptive image of bad mobility into the Respectable level. Courtiers and demagogues sprung to prominence overnight from the basest origins by servile flattering before those in power or the electorate - depending on the critics' point of view.<sup>49</sup> The dishonest and merely opportune gained easy wealth in business speculation. Upward mobility, which was bad in itself when it occurred too quickly, in the wrong way and by the wrong people, was also reprehensible if it formed a threat to social stability by its prospect of putting the unworthy at the head of society. Charles Fothergill wrote, while editor of the Weekly Register, a rebuke to a magistrate who had abandoned his wife and family to live with a much younger woman, a near relative sent to be a companion to his daughters.

Those who bear the political fabric upon their shoulders,  
stand, as it were, a mark for public opinion to shoot

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(47) John Newborn to the Lt. Governor, February 1818; W. Campbell to the Lt. Governor, September 29, 1816; George Hamilton to George Hillier, October 12, 1820; J.B. Robinson to George Hillier, October 31, 1820, UCS.

(48) Upper Canada Herald, March 16, 1831.

(49) Canadian Emigrant, March 1, 1832; Upper Canada Herald, July 4, 1826.

at. - Men of influence of all descriptions, fill the place of moral concerns which correspond to the [sic] political matters; and in these they stand equally conspicuous, and are as fair a mark for the same public opinion. Their conduct is equally public property. - but their bad example is far more pernicious, because it silently and imperceptibly goes to sap the foundation of all civil polity, by corrupting the public mind, and weakening the necessary restraints upon vicious principles, which alone are capable of retaining men in the band of society. 50

William Lyon Mackenzie prefaced an attack upon the rapacity of one of the colony's leading lawyers with a stern warning about the moral duties of those above the common level.

In a free country it ought to be the object of those in authority to enlighten the great body of the people, and to set a lesson of morality before them, in order that they may be fit for discharging those important duties which devolve upon them as men, as citizens, as office bearers, and as heads of families. 51

Those who wanted to hold positions of social eminence must have the proper character for that station, which their rise ought to have evidenced. What would harmonize aspirations to attain Respectability with the necessary social stability, then, was considered to have been gradual movement, by the accepted means, which required one to be worthy of the goal.

The particular Upper Canadian concern to reconcile individual mobility and social stability comes out clearly in the response of leading figures to the then-new pseudo-science, phrenology. The fundamental appeal of this widely known system, to such social leaders as

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(50) Weekly Register, May 29, 1823.

(51) Colonial Advocate, June 16, 1825.

Thomas Dalton, John Strachan and Dr. Thomas Rolph, lay in its promise of allowing social mobility without any threat to social stability.<sup>52</sup>

Its precise social applications were set out clearly by Dalton in an article promoting a lecture by Rolph on the subject. Phrenology would produce a revolution, not like William Lyon Mackenzie's -

. . . which would place and retain the dregs of society at the head of affairs, but such a revolution in the opinions, perceptions, and sentiments of mankind, as shall cause a due appreciation of talent and worth; as shall keep the sinister and base minded, from honors and emoluments; and rescue from poverty, crime and degradation, such as are evidently endowed by nature, with her richest gifts, the moral feelings, and the intellectual powers, which can at once be determined by a study of the configuration of the brain, of which the shape of the skull is the true delineator . . . . 53

The basis of phrenology's appeal in fears of 'bad mobility' can be seen here in that it is as much prized for its presumed ability to prevent "the dregs of society", "the sinister and base minded" from rising, as for its discernment of the able and virtuous.

Those interested in the new system were not slow to apply it, especially to those with whom they disagreed. While noting the visit

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- (52) Owsei Temkin, "Gall and the Phrenological Movement", Bulletin of the History of Medicine, volume 21, no. 3, May-June 1947, pp.275-321. Robert E. Riegel, "Early Phrenology in the United States", Medical Life, volume 37, 1930, pp.361-376. Touring lecturers had popularized phrenology in Upper Canada. For example, see Christian Guardian, April 27, 1836; Upper Canada Herald, March 28, 1832; Patriot, January 15, 1836; August 28, 1838; Frederick Marryat, Diary in America, (ed.) Jules Zanger, Nicholas Vane Ltd., London, 1960, pp.23-24; Moodie, Life, op. cit., p.71. "Accounts of George Combe", Ms. 7476, Scottish National Library. John Macaulay to Ann Macaulay, December 26, 1836, Macaulay Papers. Patriot, June 24, 1834. See also Fergusson, op. cit., p.225.
- (53) Patriot, February 6, 1835. On Strachan's interest, see John Strachan to J.M. Strachan, April 22, 1833, Good, op. cit., p.350.

of R.W. Hait, a travelling phrenologist, Dalton invited "our Representatives of the House of Assembly" in particular to attend for "the ascertainment of their deficiencies".<sup>54</sup> Critics of the provincial executive also found the system useful in questioning the competence of their opponents. The Upper Canada Herald rebuked judges for "scolding juries". It wanted judges who did so examined phrenologically, presumably as possible grounds for dismissal from the bench.<sup>55</sup> Again, the root interest in phrenology appears to be fears of 'bad mobility'.

A further factor serving to reconcile the ambitions of persons and the stability of those ranks up which they hoped to climb was the existence of many intermediate levels relatively close together. In his disquisition into the need for morality in "those above us", Charles Fothergill began, "Vice to the discerning eye assumes, in the different grades of society, different degrees of maliquity - ".<sup>56</sup> One function of those perceived gradations was to allow individuals to mark and measure their own movement in terms of status. In an oft-delivered sermon, John Strachan advised the restless to pay more attention to how far up they had come, rather than how much farther they could perhaps go.

You compare your situation with that of your superiors.  
This will turn your attention to advantages you want  
rather than those you possess. . . . But compare it

(54) Patriot, January 15, 1836.

(55) Upper Canada Herald, June 16, 1830; see also March 28, 1832.

(56) Weekly Register, May 29, 1823.



to the inferior stations of life, and the effect will be more favourable to your comfort. . . . By thus contrasting your condition with those that are worse you will see how much more unhappy you might be and thus derive satisfaction from your superiority. 57

The Anglican magazine, the Church, described a divinely ordained series of stations in which the proximity of one to another implied the promise of upward movement.

As out of the same mass, [God] made the heaven and the earth, and the other elements betwixt them, one higher than another, and gave them different stations and qualities, . . . thus for the good of men, hath the Lord assigned these different stations of rule and subjection, though all are of one race, raising them from among men some above the rest . . . . 58

First the common humanity of all persons in the hierarchy is stressed. Then the ranks are shown to be the product of God "raising them from among men some above the rest". The emphasis on the common humanity of all and the derivation of the higher from the lower ranks serve to minimize the gaps between social groups, and make movement from one to another appear more possible. Thomas Dalton attacked the American ideal of equalitarianism as both unworkable and against divine decree.

We never find them zealous to level up, but only to level down. They would reduce those above them, but leave unraised those below. Their servants must remain servants still. The absurdity of this principle is so great and obvious, that it seems unworthy of being reasoned with; otherwise we might observe - that such an equality is impossible: if men were made equal

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(57) S.F. Wise, "Sermon Literature and Canadian Intellectual History", J.M. Bumstead (ed.), Canadian History Before Confederation, Irwin-Dorsey Ltd., Georgetown, 1972, p.268.

(58) Church, May 22, 1841.

to-day, they would be unequal to-morrow, owing to the difference of their understandings, their diligence and self-denial - that it is clearly the will of the Almighty that distinctions of rank and circumstances should prevail . . . . 59

Then he added the important qualification to this entirely orthodox Upper Canadian defense of social inequality.

Yet we must admit that it is desirable that these distinctions should not be excessive. - The welfare of the community consists much in the various gradations between the very rich and the very poor. 60

In the Upper Canadians' perception of their own society, there were a series of levels, from Dependence through Quasi-dependence to Independence, and beyond that through Marginal Respectable to Respectable. The gradualness of the social slope served to encourage those at or near the bottom to struggle up, at least as far as the broad plateau of Independence, if not to scale the steeper incline to Respectability. The existence of what seemed a ready avenue up gave the social order a much greater cohesion. It was that opening that explains Shirreff's previously noted remark that old country radicals considered themselves "part of the aristocracy" once they had "a few acres of forest".<sup>61</sup> The chance to get ahead, even a short way, served to confirm the legitimacy of the society's hierarchy.

Upper Canadians' conception of social rank in relation to mobility was perhaps not so very different from the British society that served as parent state and (after 1815) chief source of immigrants.

(59) Patriot, March 16, 1838.

(60) Ibid.

(61) Shirreff, op. cit., p.104.

Harold Perkin, a British historian, has described late eighteenth century Britain as a "classless hierarchy". He derived that view at least in part from contemporary attitudes.

The old society . . . was a finely graded hierarchy of great subtlety and discrimination, in which men were acutely aware of their exact relation to those immediately above and below them . . . . 62

In that "open, dynamic aristocracy", Perkin argued, the gradual degrees of rank encouraged social ambition.<sup>63</sup> As the industrial revolution proceeded, however, Britain became an increasingly horizontally stratified society, with rising barriers which separated the old "orders" and which defined them into divergent classes.<sup>64</sup> One observer in the colony, seeing the industrial process in American society, feared that a similar polarization could come to British North America.

Instead of the simplicity of a purely agricultural population, we see, to the south of us, manufacturers, merchants, capitalists, men of wealth, and having the habits, and feelings which it produces; we see, beneath them, numerous classes of operatives, mechanics, labourers, living solely by the labour of their hands, and scarcely hoping to rise above this condition . . . . 65

The industrial revolution appeared to destroy the intervening grades which allowed the possibility of some gradual upward movement, reducing society to only two classes - "men of wealth" and labourers "living

(62) Harold Perkin, The Origins of Modern English Society, 1780-1880, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1969, p.24.

(63) Ibid., pp.57, 63, 89, 97.

(64) Ibid., pp.26, 37, 118, 426. Thompson, op. cit., pp.189-196, 234-264.

(65) Canadian Christian Examiner, April 1837, p.47. In light of such apprehensions, Michael Katz's remarks on the industrial process' impact upon the social structure of Canada West become of even greater interest. Katz, op. cit., p.44ff.

solely by the labour of their hands," -- and most significant of all -- "scarcely hoping to rise above this condition". Emigrants from the United Kingdom, consequently, might be seen as leaving a society in which class lines were forming and hardening, to enter one which -- more perhaps than even the older -- had an open social hierarchy. However by the late 1830s at least some Upper Canadians had begun to fear the same "vast rival, opposing, conflicting" interests springing up" in their own society if it were reduced to two sharply separated levels.

The feared polarization associated with industrialization appeared as a threat to social order because it was seen to undermine all hope of rising. Such a development would have represented a fundamental change in the self-image of Upper Canada. It had seen itself as the poor man's country, which offered opportunity to those able to mobilize the necessary factors for social advancement.

The seven factors considered as significant within general attitudes toward social mobility were not all of equal weight nor did they all function in the same way. There were certain pre-conditions which had to be met before a person could really expect to make the most of the social opportunities offered by Upper Canada. One had to be male, to maintain a good character, and, for certain goals, to profess some Christian religion. Then a person needed the means to rise: character, in the sense of persevering industry; education to become a tradesman or a professional, to gain one of those public trusts that carried the indisputable title to Respectability. Of less and decreasing

significance were the much-sought, hotly debated patronage appointments that granted a perhaps temporary, increasingly arguable Respectability. Once granted the preconditions and the means, one could encounter certain other factors that might help or could, more significantly, hinder one's social advance. Religious and ethnic prejudices, especially towards Irish Roman Catholics, at times blocked upward mobility. Race constituted an even more formidable barrier. For a man a good marriage might provide access to material goods, social skills or family connections, as a bad marriage might erode his social standing. For women, however, marriage was the primary means of rising, even though the status it could confer was only by proxy. To fulfill the ambitions aroused by the ample opportunities of the new colonial society, it was considered that a person needed to meet certain pre-conditions, to avail himself of the various means to advance, and to avoid certain inhibiting factors (or turn them to advantage where possible). By using the various factors and in the proper way (or occasionally, for economic rather than social mobility, the improper way) Upper Canadians considered that persons could rise in society.

Upper Canadians considered theirs' a stable society of ranks in which individuals could enjoy considerable upward mobility. The opportunities in agriculture seemed to remove the threat of degrading poverty at the bottom. As well they provided the basis for upward movement. The lack of a long-established, firmly entrenched ruling

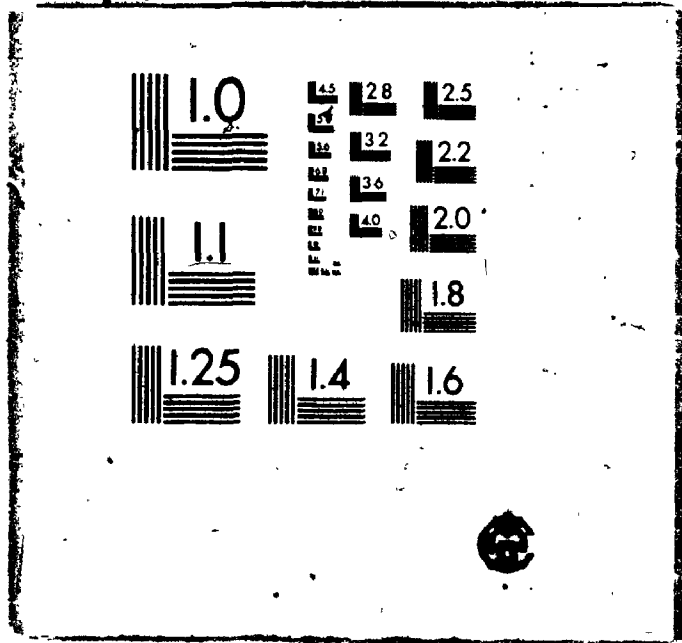
group suggested an opening at the top. While social leaders were capable of recognizing their society as new, and considered conscious adaptations and alterations, they nonetheless believed it had an ordered form. It was not in flux. There existed a strong sense of social rank, a firm hierarchy of positions rather than persons. Some have been misled into thinking a fixed social scale meant that the persons were fixed in place. But it was held people could safely rise above their original place in the order, as long as the social structure itself was never called into question. The mobility that was seen as a threat to social stability was that already considered "bad" in its own right - moving too quickly, the wrong way, by the wrong people, especially into the Respectable level. One key, then, to harmonizing personal mobility with a fixed hierarchy of rank lay in the promotion of good mobility - a gradual rise by the proper means of the right people. Fear of too much social mobility and of too many tensions aroused by the promise of opportunity led some to look to phrenology for more certainty in discerning the 'right rank' of each. Also important was the gradient of the social slope. As long as the hierarchy of ranks was seen to ascend gradually, the promise of at least some mobility was held out to everyone. "The welfare of the community consists much in the various gradations between the very rich and the very poor.<sup>66</sup> It was evident that Upper Canadians held firmly to both concepts - a stable social stratification and personal social mobility.

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(66) Patriot, March 16, 1838.

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Bibliography - Abbreviations

S.P.R.O., Scottish Public Record Office;

P.A.C., Public Archives of Canada;

O.A., Ontario Archives



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