

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

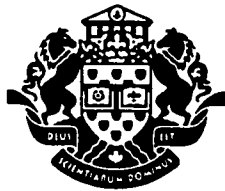
In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

Bell & Howell Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600

UMI[®]



Université d'Ottawa • University of Ottawa

**THE UNDERSIDE OF GLORY:
AFRICANADIAN ENLISTMENT IN THE CANADIAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE,
1914-1917**

by

Sean Flynn Foyn

**Thesis submitted to
the School of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
M.A. degree in History**

Université d'Ottawa/ University of Ottawa

© 1999 Sean Flynn Foyn



National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Acquisitions et
services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file *Votre référence*

Our file *Notre référence*

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-48151-4

Canada

ABSTRACT

THE UNDERSIDE OF GLORY:
AFRICANADIAN ENLISTMENT IN THE CANADIAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE,
1914-1917

Sean Flynn Foyn,
University of Ottawa, 1999

Supervisor:
Professor Chad Gaffield

On March 28, 1917, the officers and men of the Number Two Construction Battalion (No. 2 CB) sailed from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to serve with the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF). The departure of the No. 2 CB marked a turning point in a three year battle over AfriCanadian volunteers in the CEF. Although there were no official policies preventing AfriCanadian enlistments, many AfriCanadian volunteers learned early in the War that racist military and civilian officials did not want a "Checker board army" and that it was a "White man's war." Nevertheless, AfriCanadians and their supporters persistently sought enlistments. In the process they exposed the racist underside of Canada's war-time glory. Eventually, the No. 2 CB, a segregated non-combat unit was authorized. Although the No. 2 CB was not the military objective AfriCanadians had fought for, it was one of the few options available for AfriCanadians who wanted to 'do their bit' for Canada during the 'Great War.'

As part of a small, yet, slowly developing body of work related to the AfriCanadian wartime experience, this thesis examines the key personalities and events that fostered the creation and recruitment of Canada's only AfriCanadian overseas military unit. Inspired by developments in African centered research and analysis, this study maintains that AfriCanadians were the principal actors in their historic enlistment/recruitment drama. Premised on archival and rarely examined primary printed sources, this study explores the social significance of the articulation and actions behind AfriCanadian wartime aspirations and eventual enlistment with the No.2 CB. Before the creation of the No.2 CB, several AfriCanadians seeking enlistment and their supporters, submitted patriotic tracts and letters to civil and military officials explaining the racist conduct of CEF recruiters. Besides offering valuable insights on the AfriCanadians involved in this debate, these correspondences reveal the pervasive nature of racism within the Canadian recruiting system. Often complimenting the anti-racist aspirations found in AfriCanadian correspondences, two unexplored AfriCanadian periodicals, the *Atlantic Advocate* and *Canadian Observer*, provide valuable socio-political context to several AfriCanadians who took part in this debate or joined the No. 2 CB. With the authorization of the No. 2 CB, 605 enlisted personnel joined the Battalion. Contrary to previous studies of the AfriCanadian wartime experience, the Attestation Papers of 13% of the No.2 CB's personnel are juxtaposed with the AfriCanadian correspondences and periodicals to gain a deeper understanding of the social significance of service for AfriCanadians and Canadian society.

NOTES ON THE TERM AFRICANADIAN

Inspired by developments in African American and African Canadian scholarship, this thesis introduces the term 'AfriCanadian' to describe the historical Canadian individuals and groups often defined as African-Canadians, Afro-Canadians, Black Canadians, Coloured Canadians, Negro Canadians and sometimes Ethnic Canadians. As evidenced by Dr. George Elliot Clarke's term Africadian (African Canadians in the Maritime provinces), the body of African American scholarship which often falls under the broad heading of 'Afrocentric' research and analysis, has had considerable influence in Canada. Although this thesis does not reflect the breadth of linguistic and source interpretation and reevaluation commonly associated with the 'School of Afrocentric Thought,' certain themes of this 'school' are relevant to this study. Africa is the continental origins of the people often referred to as Black, Coloured and Negroid. The use of terminology based on colour, or those that grew out of racist constructions of human types, often prevents a clear understanding of the historic social, political, economic and cultural factor that shaped African identity and the forces that sought to disrupt African cultures throughout the Diaspora. As with Clarke's Africadians, AfriCanadians have a historic place in pre and post-Confederation Canada that also, at times, predates British North America. Africadians and AfriCanadians are also connected to a continental and trans-Atlantic historical reality. Where Africadians are associated with a particular geo-political region in Canada, AfriCanadians transcend the geo-political confines of Canadian regionalism. The term AfriCanadian encompasses the people of African descent who were Canadian born as well as those who immigrated to Canada before or during the time period discussed in this thesis.¹

¹ George Eliot Clarke. "The Death and Rebirth of Africadian Nationalism," New Maritimes (May/June, 1993): 20-27; John Henrik Clarke, ed. New Dimensions in African History: The London Lectures of Dr. Yosef den-Jochannan and Dr. John Henrik Clarke. Trenton: African World Press, Inc. 1991; Asante, Molefi Kete. Afrocentricity. Trenton: African World Press, Inc. 1998; Woodson, Carter G. The Mis-Education of the Negro. Nashville: Winston-Derek Publishers, Inc., 1990.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ALL PRAISE IS DUE ALLAH THE BENEFICENT THE MERCIFUL

This Thesis is dedicated in the loving memory of my Father, Tore Peter Foyn Sr. My first librarian, editor, literary critic and seminar leader. February 4, 1940 - September 21, 1998.

I am grateful for the love, patience and support I have received from my Mother, Sister, Brothers and dear friends in Dartmouth, Halifax and Ottawa. Without the love and encouragement of Candace Lynn Thomas, Dr. Wanda Thomas-Bernard, George (Sonny) Bernard and the Thomas family, it is doubtful that this thesis would have been completed before the end of the Twentieth Century. To Candace Lynn Thomas I own a debt of gratitude that defies words and a lifetime of thankyou's.

Dr. Chad Gaffield has been especially patient and open to all of my ideas and opinions. His support in my endeavours to help bring AfriCanadian history to a larger audience will always be remembered. Dr. Tim Stanley's persistent warnings that I did not have to say everything in one document was very important. Dr. Jeff Keshen's unbridled passion for most things found in RG 9 and 24 continue to inspire me and many other students of history.

At the Nova Scotia Public Archives, Barry Cahill and Philip Hartling have been a constant 'source' of inspiration. It was Philip Hartling who introduced me to the AfriCanadian periodical, *The Atlantic Advocate*, and Hartling's biographic sketches of the *Advocate's* staff, and his additional references to Dr. C. C. Ligoure were invaluable. Barry Cahill's support and encouragement of my research has been as diligent and detailed as his work on the AfriCanadian experience. Thankfully we do not always agree and continue to address our differences to each other. At the Institute of Canadian Studies (U of O), Angela Mattiacci was very helpful in preparing some the images used in this thesis and other historical projects in Ottawa.

I am deeply indebted to Senator Dr. Calvin Ruck for his wonderful work on the No. 2 CB and for introducing me one of Canada's best kept military secrets while I was completing my undergraduate degree at Dalhousie University. Either at Dalhousie University, the Black Cultural Centre of Nova Scotia or during telephone conversations, Senator Ruck has remained informative, supportive and open to new interpretations.

I should also thank Danielle Charrette, the Secretary of Graduate Studies at the Department of History. Madame Charette succeeded in keeping my academic paper work in order, and cheerfully helped to rectify those situations which my aversions to forms and applications always seemed to create.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	ii
NOTES ON THE TERM AFRICANADIAN.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	vii
LIST OF IMAGES	viii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1: UNDER THE CONDITIONS OF THE PRESENT WAR	14
1.1: Hegemony and Homogeneity	16
1.2: Patriotic and Militia Associations	26
1.3: Conclusion	30
CHAPTER 2: “WHY AREN’T WE IN THE WAR?”	32
2.1: Baptism by Paradox.....	33
2.2: British Columbia.....	36
2.3: Nova Scotia.....	39
2.4: New Brunswick.....	44
2.5: Alberta.....	50
2.6: Ontario.....	57
2.7: Conclusion.....	67
CHAPTER 3: PRESSING ISSUES.....	70
3.1: <i>Canadian Observer</i>	72
3.2: <i>Atlantic Advocate</i>	75
3.3: <i>Crisis Magazine</i>	78
3.4: Hawkish Opinions and Martial Actions.....	82
3.5: Recruiting Editors.....	88
3.6: Conclusion.....	99
CHAPTER 4: YOUR KING AND COUNTRY NEED YOU.....	103
4.1: The Last Extremity.....	105
4.2: Where are You From.....	109
4.3: Now’s The Time.....	112
4.4: Non Commissioned Officers (NCOs).....	117
4.5: Fowler’s List.....	121
4.6: Kin and Community Recruits.....	125
4.7: The Dead.....	132
4.8: Conclusion.....	137

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION.....	138
BIBLIOGRAPHY	144
1. Archival Sources	145
2. Printed Primary Sources	146
3. Secondary Sources	150

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1:	Provincial Enlistment Places of No. 2 CB Personnel.....	110
TABLE 2:	Birth Places of No 2 CB's Enlisted Personnel.....	111
TABLE 3:	Occupational Diversity of No. 2 CB's NCOs.....	118
TABLE 4:	No 2 CB Men from Fowler's List.....	122
TABLE 5:	Bushfan Kin Group in No 2 C.....	123
TABLE 6:	War Dead of the No. 2 CB/CC.....	134

LIST OF IMAGES

IMAGE 1:	YOUR CHUMS ARE FIGHTING.....	32
IMAGE 2:	ATLANTIC ADVOCATE.....	75

Introduction

I saw the parade on Prince Albert Road [Dartmouth, NS, ca. March 1917]. I was standing by my gate when they came marching by with their chests stuck out, and the band playing..Everybody was out watching; Black people and White people, waving their hands, cheering and clapping. They were proudly marching off to war. It was a nice site to see, but a sad one.

Mrs Mabel Saunders, East Preston, Nova Scotia, July 14, 1984

Why, may I ask, should our Race be huddled together in one mass, like cattle, marched from Barracks to the train at Truro, then on arriving at Halifax, driven, yes even under severe military discipline on board the outgoing transport without a last long good-bye to those near and dear to them... That, surely, is not British, Justice and Freedom. These men are volunteers anxious to do their bit...despite the fact that at first they were rejected.

The Atlantic Advocate, Halifax, Nova Scotia, April 1917

On March 28, 1917, the 605 men and 19 officers of the Number Two Construction Battalion (No.2 CB) sailed from Halifax Harbour aboard the *SS Southland*. An event steeped in pride and disappointment, the departure of No. 2 CB was a pivotal point in a three-year debate about AfriCanadian troops in the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF). Shortly after Canada entered the War in 1914, AfriCanadian volunteers were told that it was “a White man’s war,” and “we do not want a checker board army.” Others received notice that they could serve. However when they attempted to sign up, racist recruiting officials refused to accept AfriCanadian enlistments. Ironically, as Canadian recruiting posters demanded to know why Canadian males were not fighting alongside their “Chums,” many AfriCanadians also demanded know why they were not in the army. Sometimes supported by other Canadians, AfriCanadians instigated a pro- enlistment campaign that ultimately exposed the

racist underside of Canada's emerging war-time glory. In 1916, the No. 2 CB was formed under the command of non-AfriCanadian officers and authorized as a non-combat unit. Although the No. 2 was not the force envisioned by AfriCanadians and their supporters, a number of the men previously refused enlistment joined the Battalion and most of the enlisted personnel were Canadian born.¹

Sailing amidst a tide of socio-political contradictions and paradoxes that often characterized the AfriCanadian enlistment and recruitment campaign, No. 2's departure was indeed an historically pivotal event. For contemporaries, participants and post-war observers, the Battalion's departure was steeped in pride and disappointment. The Battalion's departure pried open the door to overseas service for AfriCanadian volunteers which, for the most part, was then quickly slammed shut. In ending one phase of the AfriCanadian enlistment experience and opening another, this historically pivotal event poses important questions about the citizens of a young nation at war. Why did AfriCanadians want to join the CEF, and in what ways did they articulate their war-time aspirations? How did the nation seeking international prestige respond to AfriCanadian war aims? What were the socio-political implications for Canadian society if AfriCanadians achieved their objectives? Why was the No. 2 CB created and who joined the Battalion? What does the AfriCanadian enlistment campaign and the creation of the No. 2 CB tell us about race relations in Canada during First

¹ For opening quotations see, Calvin C. Ruck. Canada's Black Battalion: No. 2 Construction, 1916-1920. (Halifax: Society for the Protection and Preservation of Black Culture in Nova Scotia, 1986): 27, and Public Archives of Nova Scotia. Microfilm 3207, *The Atlantic Advocate*, January 1917: With the exception of the Battalion's Chaplain, all of the commissioned officers were non-AfriCanadian. Battalion personnel information is located at RG 9 II, B9, Vol. 39, file 748. No. 2 Construction Battalion, Nominal Roll, March 28, 1917: RG 9, III-D3 Vol. 5015, file No. 2 CB, War Diary, May 1917 (NAC).

World War?

The First World War was a formative experience for Canada's national identity. Eighty-one years after the war that helped forge Canada's 20th century identity, there is a general consensus that Canada's response to the war in Europe was motivated by Dominion aspirations and Imperial loyalties. Cultural perceptions were an important component in the construction of these Dominion and Imperial ideologies. However, historians have not fully explored the complex forces underlying AfriCanadian participation in the 'Great War.' Understanding the AfriCanadian enlistment campaign and the creation of the No. 2 CB are necessary for interpreting the social significance of the war on Canadian society. Delving deeper into an obscure area of Canadian history, this thesis examines the personalities and events that led to the creation and enlistment of the Canada's only majority AfriCanadian military unit. Besides providing the historiographic framework to the AfriCanadian enlistment story, the remaining sections of this chapter explain the methodologies and sources employed in this thesis.

Few historians have examined AfriCanadian enlistment experience during the First World War. Moreover, the existing research revolves around AfriCanadian military service culminating with the creation and/or deployment of the No. 2 CB/CC.² Rarely interpreted by historians as the intended military objective of AfriCanadians, the No. 2 CB's domination of this limited historical landscape nonetheless points to the Battalion's significance as

2

Before proceeding to France, No. 2 CB was downgraded to a Company. At various points in this thesis the AfriCanadian overseas unit is referred to as No. 2. CB, No. 2 CC, No. 2 CB/CC and No. 2.

Canada's only AfriCanadian military unit.

Published in 1920, M. S. Hunt's Nova Scotia's Part in the Great War, contains a brief description of the creation and deployment of No.2 CB/CC. Largely premised on the Battalion's War Diaries, Hunt's work describes the assignments and achievements of the No. 2. This work is important because neither A. F. Duquid nor G. W. L. Nicholson discussed No.2 CB in their official histories of the CEF. Ironically, as early as 1919, unanswered requests from the War Records Office for the submission of missing War Diaries lead officials to intimate that the failure to secure the missing "historical data" would hamper the Battalion's ability to "receive due recognition from the future historian." Sadly, eighty one years passed before historians began revealing the obscured history of AfriCanadian enlistment and the No. 2 CB.³

Robin Winks' The Blacks in Canada: A History, published in 1971, examines the nature of anti-AfriCanadian prejudice in Canada from the period of New France to the late 1960s.⁴ For Winks, the First World War marked the 'Nadir' of 'Black-White' relations in

3

M. S. Hunt. Nova Scotia's Part in the Great War. (Halifax: Nova Scotia Veterans Publishing Company Ltd., 1920):148-153. A. F. Duguid. Official History of the Canadian Expeditionary Force in the Great War, 1914-19. Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1938: G. W. L. Nicholson. Official History of the Canadian Army in the First World War: Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914-1919. Ottawa: Queens Printers, 1962: For official requests for the missing War Diaries; National Archive of Canada, RG 9 III D 1 Vol. 4712, folder 101, file 6. Canadian War Records Office to O. C. 2nd Construction Company, B. E. F., 16 May, 1918; Winch to Officer, Canadian War Records Office, 31, Jan. 1919: See also, RG 9, III-D-3 Vol. 5015, file No. 2 Construction Battalion, War Diaries, May 1917 to Oct. 1918.

4

Robin Winks, Blacks In Canada: A History 2nd ed. (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1997). ix.

Canada. Before the War, the Canadian nation had rejected reciprocity with the United States, fought in the South African War, and had spent fifty-five years forcing Aboriginals, Africans and Asians to recognize that their cultures were not welcome in the emerging Dominion. By the second decade of the 20th Century, many of the fragile racial alliances that were established before the mid to late 19th Century were often replaced with apathy, ignorance and occasional acts of ‘White’ on ‘Black’ violence. During this period the adoption of social and scientific racism in Canada also helped to force AfriCanadians to the fringes of the nation’s socio-political institutions. Accordingly, the initial response to AfriCanadian recruits and the creation of a segregated labour battalion were the products of individual and collective racial biases that became institutionalized during the war.⁵

Seven years after the publication of The Blacks in Canada: A History, Barbara M. Wilson’s Ontario and the First World War, 1914-1918: A Collection of Documents, supported Winks’ contention that despite their pre-confederation military service, in 1914, AfriCanadians were not welcome in the CEF. By publishing George Morton’s letter to the Minister of Militia and Defence and excerpts from the *Canadian Observer*, Wilson highlights two vibrant AfriCanadian voices in one of Canada’s anti-racist dramas. Three years later, Desmond Morton’s “Kicking and Complaining: Demobilization Riots in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1918-19,” offered examples of the racism that AfriCanadians faced in the CEF. Morton’s “Kicking and Complaining” examines the turmoil that erupted at the post-war staging camps in Great Britain during the demobilization of the CEF.

⁵

Winks, 238-336.

Making a brief, yet seemingly victorious appearance in the confusion and violence at Kinmel Park, some men with the No. 2 form part of Morton's important post-war study.⁶

One of the few works dedicated to the No. 2 CB, John G. Armstrong's "The Unwelcome Sacrifice: A Black Unit in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1917-19," was originally presented as part of a "Military History Symposium" (March 1986) at Canada's Royal Military College. Later published in N. F. Dreisziger's Ethnic Armies (1990), "Unwelcomed Sacrifice" discusses several of the personalities and events that fostered the creation, deployment and demobilization of the No. 2 CB.⁷

Also appearing in 1986, Calvin Ruck's Canada's Black Battalion: No.2 Construction Battalion, 1916-1920, is the first publication dedicated to AfriCanadian veterans of the First World War. While modestly contending that his text is a tribute to veterans, rather than a 'history' of their war-time activities, Ruck undervalues the historical significance of his work. The use of narrative, oral and photographic history, proves the "practical and positive" necessity of discussing one of the "best kept secrets in Canadian military history." Contrary to most examinations of the AfriCanadian war drama, Ruck also discusses AfriCanadians who served with CEF units besides the No 2. This aspect of Ruck's work

6

Barbara M. Wilson, Ontario and the First World War, 1914-1918: A Collection of Documents. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977): ciii-cix, 166-167; Desmond Morton. "Kicking and Complaining: Demobilization Riots in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1918-19," Canadian Historical Review (61:3, 1980): 335-360.

7

John G. Armstrong's "The Unwelcome Sacrifice: A Black Unit in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1917-19," Ethnic Armies: Polyethnic Armed Forces from the Time of the Hapsburgs to the Age of the Superpowers. N. F. Dreisziger, ed. (1990): 178-197.

adds considerable depth to our understanding of the AfriCanadian War experience and shows that the entire nation and CEF was not awash with racist values.⁸

Published in 1989, James W. St.G. Walker's "Race and Recruitment in World War One: Enlistment of Visible Minorities in the Canadian Expeditionary Force," examined the perceived implications of breaking down the 'colour bar' in the CEF. Although not entirely dedicated to the AfriCanadian war-time experience "Race and Recruitment" is a significant contribution to AfriCanadian historiography. For Walker, one of the greatest paradoxes of the War was that while some 'White' Western women and the subjugated peoples of Central and Eastern Europe gained new freedoms during and after the Great War, the racist oppression of the Aboriginals, Africans and Asians continued. Safely barricaded behind an expanding body of socio-scientific racism that justified Imperialism, many Canadians embraced the claim that Aboriginals, Africans and Asians "lacked the valour, discipline and intelligence to fight a modern war." Throughout Walker's discussion, the AfriCanadian enlistment campaign and the No. 2 CB story receive considerable attention.⁹

8

Calvin C. Ruck. Canada's Black Battalion: No. 2 Construction, 1916-1902. (Halifax: Society for the Protection and Preservation of Black Culture in Nova Scotia, 1986) 39, 53-80: Ruck is not the only AfriCanadian researcher to discuss AfriCanadian CEF Veterans. Leo . Bertley's Canada and Its People of African Descent. Deslauries, Bilongo Publishing, 1977, includes references to some of the individuals discussed by Ruck. Bertley's chapter 'Freedom Fighter' also contains narratives and photographs pertaining to African military service through 360 years of Canadian history: Besides his role as an historian, Ruck has also played a part as an historical actor in the AfriCanadian campaign for social and educational equality during the 1960s. See Blacks in Canada, 457.

9

James W. St.G. Walker. "Race and Recruitment in World War I: Enlistment of Visible Minorities in the Canadian Expeditionary Force," Canadian Historical Review. (70:1, 1989): 1-26.

Although historians of the AfriCanadian war drama have provided an excellent narrative and bibliographic foundation, most studies, with the exception of Ruck, and Wilson, tend to displace AfriCanadians from their place as leading actors in an historical drama. Hunt's focus on the actions of No 2 CB/CC's officers, casts AfriCanadians into the backdrop of the overseas drama. Armstrong's discussion begins with the racist reaction to AfriCanadian recruitment rather than the initiatives that lead to a racist response. Also, while defining Major-General Willoughby Gwatkin, Canada's Chief of the General Staff, as an "otherwise humane and generous individual," Armstrong curiously dismisses Gwatkin's racist actions as mere prejudice. Why Armstrong is willing to define Gwatkin as "otherwise humane" when it was the General's inhumanity towards AfriCanadians that hampered the anti-racist struggle remains unclear.¹⁰

Robin Wink's discussion of the pro-enlistment campaign lead by the AfriCanadian newspaper editor, J. R. B. Whitney, does not explore the social significance of Whitney's *Canadian Observer*. Unfortunately, the *Observer*, and another AfriCanadian periodical, the *Atlantic Advocate*, are also absent from Wink's chapter "Sources of Strength-The Press." In "Kicking and Complaining" Morton claims that "only a bully or a fool" would assert their authority when troops were on the edge of disorder. This statement however fails to consider the character of the Sergeant with the No. 2 CB's who was forced to deal with unruly non-AfriCanadian troops.¹¹

¹⁰

Hunt, 148-153; Armstrong, 179.

¹¹

Winks, 314-319, 390-412; Morton, 343.

Similar to other works of the AfriCanadian war experience, James Walker's "Race and Recruitment" does not place AfriCanadians at the 'center' of the anti-racist recruitment campaign. Although this study is important to our understanding of the issues, Walker's examination of Aboriginal, AfriCanadian and Asian recruitment aspirations, nonetheless, comes at the expense of a focus on one group. Also, Walker's contention that Armstrong's "Unwelcomed Sacrifice" was the first 'scholarly' treatment of No. 2 CB, unfairly dismisses the important contributions of Hunt, Wilson, Winks and Ruck.¹² Nevertheless, while most historians of the AfriCanadian war experience agree that military service was an important social-political victory, few studies have moved beyond the discourse between pro and anti-enlistment forces. Fortunately, there are other studies that help to alleviate this problem.

Although their works are rooted in the American military experience, L. D. Reddick and Richard Kohn offer valuable advice for the student of AfriCanadian military service. Rather than discussing military service as an expression of nationalism and/or state diplomacy, Reddick and Kohn examine the military as a reflection of the American social order. For Reddick, it is important to understand the interaction between general and specific social forces as they converge and diverge at different moments in time. To some extent the Army "generally" reflects society, but these images are not complete. Nor are they always the best portraits of the social character. While these images are useful, they are inherently faulty because the social function of the Army can only be understood in context with the forces that constitute the social order. The specific factors of the equation are found in the

¹²

Walker, 3, note 2.

Army's authoritarian nature, its organization, traditions, human types and personalities of leadership, its conception of its social role, and the military perspectives on civil equality.¹³

In attempting to understand the social significance of military service, Richard Kohn has criticized previous military studies for frequently ignoring a variety of social factors. In fact, patriotic, military, and civilian rhetoric has too often embraced symbol and myth, rather than questioning the deeper motives of the men at arms. For Kohn, historians must begin to ask; Who went to war? Why did they enlist or submit to coercion into service? Where did they come from? What did their leaving and returning mean to their communities? How did they behave? What impact did service have on them and their the nation? Ultimately, the true identity of the soldier is grounded in community and time, from childhood to death. According to Kohn, generalizations on military service will remain faulty until researchers endeavour to understand the soldiers' identities in terms of age, culture, occupation, wealth, education and community. Kohn's conclusion that historians will fail to understand the 'American population,' and the significance of military service if studies ignore the vast assortment of statistical and literary sources available, is particularly important to the study of AfriCanadian military service. Fortunately, Canadian military records from the First World War are remarkably detailed and contain important information on the men who served in the CEF.¹⁴

¹³

L.D. Reddick. "The Negro Policy of the United States Army, 1775-1945," The Journal of Negro History. 34,1 (Jan. 1949) 11-21.

¹⁴

See; Richard H. Kohn *The Social History of the American Soldier: A Review and Prospectus for Research*," American Historical Review. 86, 3 (June 1981):553-67.

Before exploring the AfriCanadian enlistment/recruitment campaign that is at the heart of this thesis, Chapter 1 “Under the Conditions of the Present War” examines the key aspects of Canadian socio-military culture that helped shape the nation’s racist participation in the Great War. This chapter connects Canadian nationalism, British Imperialism and scientific racism to Canadian socio-military culture in the years leading up to and including the War. Although proponents of nationalism, imperialism and scientific racism did not always agree, these forces possessed overlapping concerns for the nation and Empire that they wished to either construct or protect. Significantly, many nationalists wanted to keep Canada ‘White,’ and a number of Imperialists believed in the superiority of the ‘Whites’ and the ‘civilizing’ influences of British democracy. At the same time, scientific racism created the ‘proof’ of national/ imperial successes and the continuing need for ‘White’ homogeneity and hegemony in Canadian socio-military policies and practices.

By revisiting the anti-racist enlistment campaign discussed by historians of the AfriCanadian war experience, Chapter 2, “Why Aren’t We In the War” is offered as an historical response to a CEF recruiting poster that declared “Your Chums Are Fighting, Why Aren’t You?” Based on correspondence found in government and military records, this chapter examines the debate between pro and anti-AfriCanadian enlistment forces from the first year of the war to the creation of the No. 2 CB. Presented as a series of regional debates, “Why Aren’t We” nonetheless views this campaign as a national phenomena. Without dismissing the importance of non-AfriCanadian supporters of AfriCanadian enlistment, “Why Aren’t We” maintains that AfriCanadians were the driving force behind the pro-AfriCanadian enlistment struggle. Contrary to previous studies, Chapter 2, pauses to

consider the significance of the social relationships between AfriCanadian enlistment advocates and the AfriCanadians who sought enlistment.

Delving deeper into the social significance of the AfriCanadian enlistment and recruitment campaign, Chapter 3, “Pressing Issues” explores the role played by three African-centered periodicals during this campaign. As portraits of AfriCanadian social-political culture, the *Atlantic Advocate*, *Canadian Observer* and *Crisis Magazine* provide rare, and often interconnected perspectives on culture, the war and African participation in the European conflict. If, as Robin Winks suggests, the late 19th and early 20th Centuries marked a nadir in Canadian race relations, these periodicals represent a war-time zenith in AfriCanadian aspirations and initiatives in a racially-charged society. Rather than dismissing these regionally-based periodicals as parochial, “Pressing Issues” views these periodicals as regional manifestations with national and international implications. As members of the ‘Patriotic Press;’ the *Advocate*, *Observer* and *Crisis* articulated ‘Hawkish Opinions’ about the War and under the direction of their ‘Recruiting Editors,’ they supported AfriCanadian enlistment/recruitment. Besides discussing these aspirations and actions, Chapter 3 also explores the social calendars of these periodicals to determine their significance to the AfriCanadian communities they served and the men who eventually joined the No. 2 CB.

After three years of debate the establishment of the No. 2 CB finally afforded AfriCanadians a clear opportunity to enlist. Chapter 4, ‘Your King and Country Needs You’ explores the No. 2 CB’s creation/enlistment process and examines five groups of men who joined the Battalion. Drawing upon the statistical information available in the Attestation Papers of No. 2 CB veterans, “Your King and Country” also revisits some of the

documentary sources discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. As the final step towards a clearer understanding of the social significance of the AfriCanadian enlistment campaign, Chapter 4 provides a detailed analysis of 76 No. 2 personnel. Divided into five groups, this 13% of the Battalion's men were selected for distinct, yet at times interrelated, socio-military reasons which are explained in each section of "Your King and Country."

When Canada entered the First World War, AfriCanadians, as with many other Canadians, were willing to embrace the socio-political conditions that drove the young nation towards the war in Europe. Some Canadian volunteers were national and/or imperial patriots. Others viewed the Great War as an adventure of a lifetime or an escape from unemployment or other aspects of daily life in Canada. Unfortunately for most AfriCanadians, the Great War was little more than a baptism by paradox. Although the No. 2 CB, was neither the military objective of most AfriCanadians, nor the only unit in which AfriCanadians served, it was nonetheless one of the few socio-military compromises that was either available or acceptable to AfriCanadians, their supporters, and Canadian racists. At a time when 'White' Canadians were finding new opportunities to express and realize their socio-political objectives, AfriCanadians were forced to fight a different kind of war. Between 1914 and 1918, AfriCanadians were fighting a race war. Sadly, AfriCanadian did not start this war on the 'Home Front,' and it was a war that began long before the conflict in Europe erupted. It was also a war that continued long after the War ended.

Chapter 1

Under the Conditions of the Present War

When war began in August 1914, the young Dominion threw itself into the conflict with a spirit of patriotic optimism. Following Prime Minister Borden's call for volunteers, thousands of men flocked to local recruiting stations and militia units where rapid physical and cognitive examinations often determined an individual's eligibility for enlistment into the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF). Within six weeks, some thirty-three thousand men had left their homes to train at Camp Valcartier, outside of Quebec City. By October 2, 1914, the men of First Contingent CEF were marched out of Camp Valcartier and crowded aboard thirty ships moored in the Gaspé Basin. In February 1915, after a miserable winter in Salisbury Plain, England, the newly named First Canadian Division sailed for France, and moved into positions on the Western Front. That April, during the Second Battle at Ypres, the First Canadian Division suffered six thousand casualties, and played an important role in the fighting and propaganda campaign that followed. Back in Canada, few citizens were expecting a long war and many continued to portray the conflict as a popular crusade. Willing participants in a conflict ripe with allegations of atrocities, many Canadians embraced a social condition in which compromise was impossible and defeat was intolerable.¹

¹ Robert Craig Brown and Donald Loveridge. "Unrequited Faith: Recruiting in the

The initial responsibility of recruiting for the CEF was taken on by an informal collection of civilian and military groups and individuals who had few personal experiences with mass enlistment and industrial warfare. Although thousands of Canadians eventually went to war, sixty percent of the men in the First Contingent and forty two percent of the total number of CEF troops were British born. When AfriCanadians attempted to join the CEF they quickly learned that many of them were not welcomed into new army. Ironically, AfriCanadian voluntarism and patriotism were often usurped by many of the social forces which helped shape the nationalist and imperialist loyalties that drove the Dominion towards the war in Europe. ²

C.E.F.” Revue Internationale d’Histoire Militaire. 51(1982): 52-54: Desmond Morton. Canada and the Great War: A Military and Political History (Toronto: Butterworth and Co., 1981): 54-55, 58-59: Peter Buitenuis. The Great War of Words: British, American, and Canadian Propaganda and Fiction, 1914-1933. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987): 80, 100, 134-139: Desmond Morton. When Your Number’s Up: The Canadian Soldier in the First World War. (Toronto: Random House of Canada, 1993): 26-28: Martin Gilbert, The First World War: A Complete History (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1996): 162: Jeff Keshen, Propaganda and Censorship During Canada’s Great War (Alberta: University of Alberta Press, 1996): 12, 15, 236 n.15: Stephen Pope and Elizabeth-Anne Wheal, eds. The MacMillan Dictionary of The First World War. (London: MacMillan Publishing Ltd., 1997): 98.

²

George F. G. Stanley. Canada’s Soldiers, 1604-1954: The Military History of an Unmilitary People. (Toronto: MacMillan Company of Canada, 1954): 259-269, 270-305: Richard A Preston. Canadian Defence Policy and the Development of the Canadian Nation, 1867-1917. Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association Booklets, No. 24, 1970: Morton. Canada at War, 28-54: Morton. A Military History of Canada. (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1990): x-xiii, 122-129: S. J. Harris. “The Permanent Force and ‘Real Soldiering,’ 1883-1914,” Canadian Military History: Selected Readings. Marc Miller, ed. (Toronto: Copp Clark Ltd., 1993): 35-52: Paul Maroney, “‘The Great Adventure:’ The Context of Recruiting in Ontario, 1914-17,” The Canadian Historical Review (77, 1: Mar. 1996): 61: Brown and Loveridge, 53-59: J. G. Fuller. Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, 1914-1918. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980): 124: Robert Rutherford. “Canada’s August Festival: Communitas, Liminality, and

In the years following Confederation, Canada's national character was shaped by powerful forces. By the turn of the Century, nationalism, imperialism and scientific racism had emerged as significant social, political, economic and cultural determinants in Canada. Besides shaping aspects of Canada's pre-War national identity, nationalism, imperialism, and scientific racism profoundly influenced the nature of Canadian participation in the First World War. What were these forces of nationalism, imperialism and scientific racism and in which ways did they influence Canadian recruitment practices? Besides offering an overview of the socio-military infrastructure which constituted Canada's recruitment machine, this chapter examines the socio-political conditions that defined anti-AfriCanadian recruitment practices during the First World War.

Hegemony and Homogeneity

Born into an era of continental and international instability, the Canadian Dominion often turned to Great Britain for examples of domestic and international survival. For many Canadian nationalists of the pre-war era, the unity and safety of the Dominion was rooted in British Imperialism. Although there were Canadians who resented the new nation's connections to an external and expansionist Empire, 'national imperialism' was nonetheless a powerful forces in Canada. However, by the late 19th Century, Britain's international hegemony began to waver as Americans and Europeans cultivated their own brands of

Social Memory," Canadian Historical Review (77: 2, June 1996):221-249: Preston, Canadian Defence Policy, 2: Carl Berger. The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970): 233-258.

industrialism and expansionism. Fearing the loss of international prestige, British Imperialists moved to defend, reform and revise key elements of Anglo-Saxon culture at home and abroad. While seeking to define themselves as a nation, Canadians and their imperialist counterparts often turned to Social Darwinism to help explain and direct their national destiny.³

Although originally advanced as a set of 'scientific' observations, Charles Darwin's evolutionary theories were later applied to the social sciences and transformed into Social Darwinism. Besides placing of Anglo-Saxons at the top of the so-called evolutionary ladder, the new school of Social Darwinism maintained that Anglo-Saxons were well suited for self-government. At the same time, Social Darwinism explained the colonial domination of the so-called 'darker races' as a product of competition between the 'races,' and natural selection. Unfortunately for Canadians and Britons, the rise of American and European expansionist forces presented unique intellectual and socio-political dilemmas. Unable to dismiss the advances of other 'White' nations and 'races,' British/Canadian nationalists and imperialists turned to public and private education as a means of shoring up individual

3

Stephen Heathorn. "*For Home, Race and Country: The Gendered Ideals of Citizenship in English Elementary and Evening Continuation Schools, 1885-1914*," Journal of the Canadian Historical Association (New Series, Vo. 7: St. Catharines, 1996):105-124; Peter H. Russell, ed. Constitutional Odyssey: Can Canadians Become a Sovereign People? (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993):13-52; Samuel V. LaSelva. The Moral Foundations of Canadian Federalism: Paradoxes, Achievements and Tragedies of Nationhood. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996):31-48; Carl Berger. Imperialism and Nationalism, 1884-1914: A Conflict in Canadian Thought. (Toronto: Copp Clark Pub. Co., 1969):1-5; Carl Berger. The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970):233-239; Adrian Caesar. Taking it Like a Man: Suffering, Sexuality and the War the War Poets. (Manchester: 1993):1-14.

confidence and national character. For 'White' males in the threatened social order, elements of athleticism and Greco-Roman literature were used to encourage 'manliness,' perseverance under pain and the beauty of battle. Eventually, school songs and the sporting field became metaphors for the killing fields of Europe. By 1914, the newly minted conceptions which shared in the supremacy of God, Monarch, Parliament, Country and family dictated that when called upon, the sons of the Empire were duty bound to sacrifice themselves to preserve their nations and the Empire. Clearly absent from the fruitfully constructed images of military valour were Aboriginals, Africans, and Asians. The dearth of non-Europeans as glorious defenders of justice and freedom in the mythology that precipitated an unparalleled rush to arms was however, not accidental. In fact, the perceived disparity of military honour and democratic traditions between Aboriginals, Africans, Asians and Europeans was an important distinction in Victorian/Edwardian society. In the years leading up to the First World War, these social perceptions led to a number of disturbing social distinctions in Canada.⁴

Although racism and racialized perspectives of human types were clearly part of the 19th Century 'White' cultural milieu, the biological and/or acquired characteristics of different 'races' were not always fixed. A people could, as proponents of imperial education

4

Carol Bacchi. "Race Regeneration and Social Purity: A Study of the Social Attitudes of Canada's English-Speaking Suffragists," Histoire sociale-Social History. (11:22, Nov. 1978): 461; Ivan Hannaford. Race: The History of an Idea in the West. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1996; Ian McKay. "The 1900s: The Stillborn Triumph of Progressive Reform," The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation. E. R. Forbes & D. A. Muise, eds. (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1993):194; Heathorn, 123-124; Berger, Imperialism and Nationalism, 116-119, 245-8; Caesar, 5,

claimed, learn a new and 'better' way of living. Still, race was often associated with the aptitude for liberty and self-government. Social Darwinism's dictate that Anglo-Saxon's were well suited for liberty, led Canadian critics of America to conclude that the Republic's African and non-Northern European citizens were largely responsible for America's social turmoil and political corruption. As 'science' and history were twisted to prove the superiority of Anglo-Saxons, Canadian immigration policies discouraged African, Asian and some Eastern European immigration. Preferring to attract 'Imperial citizens' with a common sense of socio-political inheritance and responsibility, Canadian officials encouraged immigration from the British Isles during the 19th century. Falling back on Darwinist principles some Canadians even argued that the Canadian climate fostered a type of natural selection in which the so-called 'weaker races' of Africa, Asia and Southern Europe, if permitted entry, would either adapt and integrate or die out.⁵

Following the subjugation of the Aboriginal peoples in Western Canada, and the completion of a national railway, the Canadian Prairies were opened for new settlement. Despite Canada's need for agricultural workers, African Americans, who were experienced prairie farmers, were not welcomed into the 'new' lands. When African Americans arrived at the Canadian border they were often subjected to racist admissions test. In 1907, Robert Borden, the leader of the Federal Conservative Party, drew cheers from a British Columbian crowd when he declared intentions to keep Canada 'White.' Four years later, the Liberal Government at Ottawa almost introduced legislation to ban African American immigration

5

Berger, The Sense of Power, 66-7, 116-119, 129-133.

for one year. In the Maritimes, Ontario and Quebec, Africans from the United States and Caribbean, also faced problems entering the country. Unless their skills were in demand, and conformed to specific racialized and gendered labour divisions, Africans were not welcome. Even as the nation felt the pain of labour shortages during the War, Immigration officials were reluctant to call on Africans from either the British Empire or America. Canada's reluctance to accept African immigrants, however, was not new.⁶

Throughout the late 19th and early 20th Centuries, AfriCanadians, many of whom had pre-Confederation roots in Canada, attempted to resist the forces of racism in Canada. However, few individuals were able to stop the influences of 'scientific' racism on their society. Often barred from many of the social and paramilitary organizations in Canada, AfriCanadians were accustomed to establishing separate, yet, similar organizations. Prior to Confederation, AfriCanadians in Nova Scotia and Ontario had established separate church and fraternal organizations which, in turn, often formed the backbone of community education and political agitation. Before and after Confederation, AfriCanadian newspapers and periodicals also discussed the social conditions and political aspirations of communities

6

Berger, The Sense of Power 150: Agnes Calliste. "Race, Gender and Canadian Immigration Policy: Blacks from the Caribbean, 1900-1932," Journal of Canadian Studies. (28:4, Win. 1993-94): 131-148: Elizabeth Beaton. "An African-American Community in Cape Breton, 1901-1904," Acadiensis. (24:2, Spring 1995): 65-97: Harold Martin Troper. "The Creek-Negroes of Oklahoma and Canadian Immigration, 1909-11," Canadian Historical Review. (53:3, Sept. 1972): 273-288: R. Bruce Shepard. Deemed Unsuitable: Blacks from Oklahoma Move to the Canadian Prairies in Search of Equality in the Early 20th Century Only to Find Racism in their New Home. (Toronto: Umbrella Press, 1997): 50-120: James W. St. G. Walker. Racial Discrimination in Canada: The Black Experience. (Ottawa: The Canadian Historical Association, Booklet No. 41, 1985):12-15: Vancouver Daily Province, 25 Sept. 1907.

across the nation. Some of these journals were Imperialist in tone while others were distinctly Canadian or Pan-Africanist. Sometimes differing in their editorial positions, these publications nonetheless evidence a literate and politically-conscious AfriCanadian population that understood the inequitable distribution of the rights and privileges afforded them as Canadian citizens.⁷

Curiously, similar to the African American experience, AfriCanadians who embraced the reformist ideals of the era, sometimes received support from liberal minded non-Africans. Still, in an increasingly racist era, the social acceptability of AfriCanadians often depended on their ability to fit into or mirror elements of the reigning social order. Even though some AfriCanadians and their non-AfriCanadian allies confessed their admiration for the bootstrapping principals of Booker T. Washington's

7

National Library Canada, Microfilm. *Constitution and By-Laws of the Anglo-African Mutual Improvement and Aid Association of Nova Scotia*, (undated,); Robin W. Winks. "Negro School Segregation in Ontario and Nova Scotia," Canadian Historical Association. (50:2, June 1969): 167-186: Winks, Blacks In Canada, 390-412: Frank S. Boyd Jr., "Richard Preston," Dictionary of Canadian Biography: Volume 7, 1851-1860. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985): 968-70, *hereafter DCB* : Frank S. Boyd Jr., "Septimus Clarke," 159-60, *op. cit.*: David H. Breen. "John Ware," DCB, Volume 13, 1901-1910. (1994): 1074-1075: J. B. Cahill. "Abraham Beverley Walker," 1066-1067, *op. cit.*: Judith Fingard. "Peter Evander McKerrow." 656-657, *op. cit.*: Sherry Edmonds-Flett. "Mifflin Wister Gibbs," 389-399, DCB, Volume 14, 1911-1920. (1998): 398-399: Owen Thomas. "Anderson Ruffin Abbott," 4-5, *op. cit.*: Owen Thomas. "Delos Rogest Davis," 274-75, *op. cit.*: Judith Fingard. "Louisa Ann Johnson," 538-39, *op. cit.*: Barry Cahill. "The 'Coloured Barrister': The Short Life and Tragic Death of James Robertson Johnston, 1876-1915," Dalhousie Law Journal. (15: , Fall 1992): 138-149: Judith Fingard. "Race and Respectability in Victorian Halifax," The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History. (20:2, May 1992): 169-195: Suzanne Morton. "Separate Spheres in a Separate World: African-Nova Scotian Women in late-19th Century Halifax County," Acadiensis. (22:2, Spring 1993): 61-83: Shirley J. Lee. "Gender Ideology and Black Women as Community-Builders in Ontario, 1850-70," Canadian Historical Review. (75:1, March 1994): 51-73: Walker, 12-18: Berger, Sense of Power, 162-63, 228-229.

industrial/agricultural education, Canadian racists and/or critics of American society often found comfort in the absence of a 'race problem' in Canada. Ironically, while non-AfriCanadian national/imperialists were pleased that AfriCanadians enjoyed the 'blessings' of Canadian/British liberty, some national/imperialists also presumed to fear taking on the 'burden' of a so-called "weaker race.' Significantly, Social Darwinist conceptions of the so-called weaker races and the ability to stand for liberty, drew heavily on the military prowess of European armed forces. Unfortunately, anti-AfriCanadian forces failed to recognize that AfriCanadians did not gain the 'blessings' of freedom by 'burdening' others with a military responsibility.⁸

As freedom fighters, Imperial Loyalists and refugees of war, AfriCanadians had a long history of military service under the Crown. After the American War of Independence, Africans who had joined the British forces were evacuated to British North America. In Nova Scotia, around the turn of the 19th Century, AfriCanadians served with the First Battalion Halifax Militia. In Ontario, AfriCanadian formed part of the loyal Militia during the Rebellion of 1837. British Columbia's first Militia unit, the Victoria Pioneer Rifles, was formed by AfriCanadians in 1860. John Ware, the renowned AfriCanadian wrangler and rancher had joined Stimson's Rangers during the 1885 conflict with the Metis. During the Crimean War, William Hall of Nova Scotia, won the Victoria Cross. The third man in British North America to earn the Imperial 'honour,' Hall's escapades with British forces did not, however, open many doors for AfriCanadian military enthusiasts. Despite the pre-

8

Ibid.

Confederation history of AfriCanadian military service, the young Dominion's armed forces did not support the tradition or forge new ones. Significantly, the socio-military perceptions of the Dominion's British military advisors and international developments influenced Canadian military practices.⁹

After three hundred years of colonial expansion, Britain and most European powers had developed clear policies on the use of African and Asian troops. Rarely equipped with the latest technology, colonial troops in Africa and India were nonetheless better armed than their non-industrialized opponents. Usually commanded by 'White' officers and high ranking non-commissioned personnel, African and Asian troops were often commended for their fighting abilities. However, Africans and Asians were rarely considered capable of the military prowess and honour Europeans recognized in themselves. Often confined to serving in the infantry, Africans and Asians were also kept out of the officer corps for most of the colonial period. Having secured their hegemony in rank and technology, many Europeans and their Colonial descendants held firm to the conception of 'White' superiority. Ironically, during the First and Second World Wars these beliefs led to disastrous consequences for

9

Edmonds-Flett, 399; Winks, Blacks In Canada, 278-290, 302, 331; Ruck, Canada's Black Battalion, 4, 45; James W. St. G. Walker. The Black Loyalists: The Search for a Promised Land in Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone, 1783-1870. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993; Bridglal Pachai. Beneath the Clouds of the Promised Land: The Survival of Nova Scotia's Blacks, Volume II, 1800-1898. (Black Educators Association, 1991): 92-102; Sean Flynn Foyn and Dean Smith. *Africville: Not For Sale, An Audio Taped Documentary*, Nova Scotia Public Interest Group at Dalhousie University, 1996; Headly Tulluck. Black Canadians: A Long Line of Fighters. (Toronto: NC Press Ltd., 1975):128; Colin A. Thomson. Blacks In Deep Snow. (Don Mills: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1979): 35.

British and Dominion Forces.¹⁰

Similar to their British/European counterparts, 'White' Americans were also concerned about encouraging African Americans to fight and kill "White men." In America, Africans had fought to help create the Republic, preserve the Union and support American expansionism. Yet, America was embroiled in the debate over African American military service and access to the citizenship rights that such services entailed. Significantly, following the American Civil War the loss of Southern militarist who had constituted a large portion of America's pre-war officer class, coincided with an increased involvement of African Americans in the US Army. Similar to the deployment patterns of other expansionist forces, African Americans troops who served in the American West, Cuba, Mexico, Central America and the Philippines rarely fought 'White Men.' Curiously during this period General 'Black Jack' Pershing, who eventually commanded the American Expeditionary Force in France, received his nickname, and considerable command experience leading African American troops. Nonetheless, when America entered the War, African American troops were not the men the Republic wanted to send to Europe.¹¹

¹⁰

R. A. Preston. "Ethno-cultural Pluralism in the Military Forces: A Historical Survey," Policy By Other Means: Essays in Honour of C. P. Stacey. Michael Cross & Robert Bothwell, eds. (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Company, 1972): 30-31, 36.

¹¹

Kelly Miller. Kelly Miller's History of the World War for Human Rights. (Austin Jenkins and O. Keller, 1919): A Chew. A Biography of Colonel Charles Young. (1923): J.D. Foner Blacks and the Military the Military in American History: A New Perspective New York, 1974: Robert Mullen. Blacks in America's Wars: The Shift in Attitudes from the America Revolution to Vietnam. New York: Pathfinder, 1990: Paul T. Murray. "Blacks and the Draft: A History of Institutional Racism," Journal of Black Studies. 2,1 (September 1971): 57-76: L.D. Reddick. "The Negro Policy of the U.S. Army, 1775-1945," Journal of Negro History.

In Canada, the racist attitudes that shaped aspects of British, European and American military culture were also apparent. Established in 1876, the Royal Military College (RMC), at Kingston, Ontario, trained the officers of Canada's Permanent Force and Militia. Between 1800 and 1927, a regular activity at RMC was a burnt cork show (black face). Early in 1900, Dr. J. T. Farthingham, one of the founding members of the Canadian Defence League, used Darwinist theory to support calls for mass military training in Canada. According to Farthingham, the progression of human races was rooted in the rivalry and competition that came from the military experience. In 1911, the staff officer assigned the task of formulating a mobilization plan for Canadian military service in a 'civilized county' was Colonel Willoughby Gwatkin. Formerly with the British Army, Gwatkin went on to serve as Canada's Chief of the General Staff. During the AfriCanadian enlistment campaign, Gwatkin's racism was evidenced by his anti-AfriCanadian comments and actions. Shortly after Sam Hughes became Minister of Militia in 1911, one of the Militia men who supported the Minister's style of leadership was the amateur historian, Colonel Ernest Cruikshank. By 1915, Cruikshank became the General Officer Commanding Military District 13 (Alberta). When AfriCanadians in the District began agitating for access to the CEF, Cruikshank's

34, 1 (1949): 9-24: Jane Lang-Scheiber and Harry N. Scheiber, "The Wilson Administration and the Wartime Mobilization of Black Americans, 1917-18," Labor History Volume 10, Number 3 (Summer 1969): 433-58: One of the African American officers who served under Pershing before the First World War, Colonel Charles Young, was expected by many African Americans to lead the African American troops in Europe. Sadly, just before the American Army sailed fro Europe, Young was removed from active service because of medical reasons. Neither Young, his good friend W. E. B. DuBois, or most of the informed African American public believed Young was unfit for duty. Ironically, the officer who did take command of the African American troops was a Southerner who was known for his anti-African American views.

racist opinions appeared in his correspondences to Militia officials at Ottawa.¹²

Although Gwatkin and Cruikshank had different views on Sam Hughes' style of leadership, all three men supported a socio-military culture that formed the foundation of the CEF. For the first three years of the War, Canada was immersed in a social condition that embraced the War and often opposed the participation of AfriCanadians. In order for the anti-AfriCanadian forces to act, however, they required an institutional framework in which to operate. At the same time, a racist institutional framework had to have significant influence in the general society if racism was to succeed. The Militia and a collection of Patriotic Associations provided the institutional framework which propagated and practised anti-AfriCanadian policies that were accepted by the society that supplied the CEF with most of its recruits.

Militia and Patriotic Associations

Between 1867 and 1914, Canadians slowly built up a military tradition that was rooted in voluntarism, patronage and patriotism. While taking important cues from the British Army, the Canadian Militia was not intended to act as a powerful national force. Despite calls from Canadian militarists, the nation's Permanent Force remained small. Often, the part time Militia men who filtered into the Permanent Force had to balance the necessities of military professionalism with the attitudes of a non-military people. Preferring to defer to British naval supremacy, Canada did not start building a navy until 1910. Even

¹²

Morton. A Military History of Canada, 122, 124-125, 128; Winks, 294.

when it became clear that Britain intended to withdraw the bulk of its troops from its Dominion outposts, Canadians did not rush to create a powerful defence force. Eventually falling under the command of a series of General Officers Commanding (GOC), the Militia system had to contend with governmental apathy in the years leading up to the First World War. Generally willing to supply the Empire with Dominion volunteers, Canadians often wrangled with each other and their British military advisors over military appointments, expansionism, equipment, tactics, discipline, deployment and authority.¹³

While supplying the nation with the pool of men needed to maintain a small Permanent Force, the Canadian Militia's collection of local and regional part-time units was more than a military institution. Submerged in a complex system of patronage and influence, the local Militia often acted as a social institution with profound economic and political influence. Recognized as a significant electoral body in Victorian/Edwardian Canada, the 'Militia Vote' carried weight in Parliament. Many Militia officers were professionals, or middle and upper class men with affiliations to influential clubs, boards of trade and social institutions. For some officers, Militia service was an important step towards social respectability or the acquisition of leadership roles in private and/or public life. Not simply the domain of middle and upper class men, Canada's peace-time Militia also attracted a number of men from the trades and working classes. Sometimes sharing in the national or Imperial patriotism of their officers, many of the men in the ranks were also attracted to area

13

Stanley, 241, 259-305; Harris, 36-37, 46-49; Preston, Canadian Defence Policy, 6, 10.

units for the comradeship they created in canteens, mess halls, camps and sporting events.¹⁴

During the first year of the Great War, the Canadian Militia was a central component in Canada's recruiting establishment. Although most Militia units were not prepared for war in Europe, they nonetheless helped to provide the foundation of the martial culture that fuelled Canada's initial response to the war. On their own, however, Canada's Militia units could not provide the resources and influence required to drive the national recruiting scheme. Hawkish politicians, members of the Canadian Press and some returning soldiers rounded out the Canadian recruiting machine.

Under the direction of patriotic politicians, Canada's municipal and provincial governments were powerful forces in recruiting. By providing funding, material support and organizational skills, municipal and provincial officials joined with other patriotic individuals whose financial or moral support insured the successful enlistment and outfitting of an area's Militia or CEF unit. Using their considerable powers of social influence, the English Canadian Press was another important factor in CEF recruitment. Propping up Canadian and Imperial perceptions of the War, the Canadian Press rarely questioned the causes of the conflict. Through recruiting posters, patriotic articles and spectacular yet sanitized battle accounts, the Press was a key voice in the propagation of conceptions of national sacrifice and individual voluntarism. Throughout the War, the Canadian Press

¹⁴

Maroney, 61-65; Harris, 35-52; Christopher J. Anstead, "Patriotism and Comradeship: Workingmen in a Peacetime Militia Regiment, 1907-1954," Histoire sociale-Social History, 36, 52 (Nov. 1993):250-251, 255, 257-254.

maintained a constant propaganda barrage that demonized Canada's enemies while glorifying the actions of Canadian troops. Finally, while patriots on the Home-Front raised funds and harangued locals to sign up, some CEF men who had returned home with war wounds were also sent out to influence reluctant civilians. As newly appointed Recruiting Sergeants, many soldiers returned to their neighbourhoods, pool halls and taverns to begin the work of cajoling, tempting, intimidating, and reasoning with potential recruits.¹⁵

By the Spring of 1915, casualty reports from Europe revealed that the War was going to be long and costly. As voluntarism gave way to pragmatism, Canadians sought solutions to waning recruiting figures. In the fall of 1915, the Militia phase of recruiting was replaced by a Patriotic phase. Characterized by a series of Patriotic and Recruiting Leagues, the Patriotic phase was driven by zealous civilians who were sometimes critical of the Militia recruiting phase. Nonetheless 'Patriots' attempted to maintain the spirit of voluntarism evident during the Militia phase. Retaining the support of the Press and Militia, Patriots had some success, however competition between the newly established battalions often led to a total decline of personnel available for the new and existing units. Eventually, manpower shortages led to the Canadian Conscription Crisis and the end of voluntarism. Ironically, before the Conscription Crisis, Canada's recruitment establishment rarely accepted AfriCanadian enlistment. Under the racist conditions that mediated recruitment, it is not

15

Maroney, 65-66, 68; Morton. When Your Number's Up, 11-12; Philip H. Morris, ed. The Canadian Patriotic Fund: A Record of its Activities From 1914 to 1919. (Ottawa: Canadian Patriot Fund, 1919): 1-20; Keshen, 11-18; R. Matthew Bray. "'Fighting as an Alley:' The English-Canadian Patriotic Response to the Great War," Canadian Historical Review (51:2, 1980): 144, 149-155.

surprising that AfriCanadians often viewed Conscription as an additional insult to their sense of national pride.¹⁶

Conclusion

By the late nineteenth century, Canadian nationalism and British imperialism combined with scientific racism to construct a 'White' socio-political order that was characterized by a curious blend of paternalism, apathy and hostility towards AfriCanadians. Even when AfriCanadians produced socio-political organizations that mirrored those of the 'White' society, AfriCanadian creations and/or adaptations were rarely accepted as equal. Despite their pre-Confederation military service, AfriCanadians were not invited into the armed forces of the new Dominion. Nor were AfriCanadians encouraged to create separate Militia or Permanent Force units. When the First World War, AfriCanadians were rarely part of the key organizations that supported Canada's recruitment drive.

Often rooted to the communities in which they served, Militia units and Patriotic Associations recruited and delivered to camp most of the men mobilized for the CEF. Although many units were not prepared for the technical and psychological aspects of the war, Canada's Militia/Patriotic system withstood three years of recruitment and deployment for an unprecedented military commitment. Eventually, the war precipitated major transformations in the command and operational structure of the CEF. However, rather than

¹⁶

Brown and Loveridge, 58-63: In some cases domestic production also suffered as competing battalions enlisted men who should have been left at their urban and rural jobs.

building a new system, the national war effort initially turned to an existing socio-military order. Before conscription the Officer Commanding (OC) each unit, and the patriots who raised CEF units, could refuse recruits deemed “unsuitable” for a particular unit. That the cultural and social values of OCs or recruiters influenced enlistment is not surprising. Militia officers had to maintain good relations with their men. At the same time, the social and political acceptance of a Militia Area’s civilian population was essential for basic Militia functions.¹⁷ AfriCanadians were hard pressed to break through the racial barriers that pervaded the socio-military order. When refused enlistments by middle or upper class recruiters or Militia officers, few AfriCanadians found recourse in the men who made up the ranks. While some officers accepted AfriCanadian enlistments, it is also clear that many officers feared a decline in “White” enlistments if AfriCanadians were taken on. Preferring to maintain the socio-political order, the Patriotic Press and ‘civilian’ recruiters rarely questioned the appropriateness of refusing the enlistments of AfriCanadians as individuals or in groups.

Nevertheless, AfriCanadians wanted to take part in the Great War. As either patriots, adventure seekers, or socio-political pragmatists, AfriCanadians were not willing to accept the racist assertions of their ‘fellow’ Canadian citizens. Regardless of the socio-military conditions the War, AfriCanadians demanded to know why they were not in the war. Between 1914-1916, this enlistment question exposed an ugly underside of Canada’s war-time glory that few Canadian historians have examined.

¹⁷

Maroney, 73-74.

CHAPTER 2

WHY AREN'T WE IN THE WAR?

Silhouetted by a crimsoned sky, three Canadian soldiers advance across a rolling field with their bayonets fixed and heads held high. It is difficult to see exactly who these men are; however they represent three of the thousands who have gone overseas to fight for their Country and King. In this case, the three soldiers are not real, but their place on a CEF recruiting poster project a reality that many Canadians believed. Above their peaked-capped heads a caption declares, "Your Chums are Fighting," and below the men's putty wrapped legs, another demands to know, "Why aren't You?"

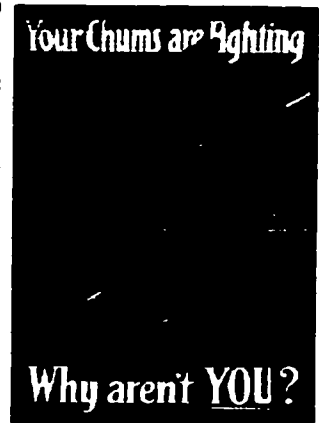


Image 1

One of the many tools employed to inspire a spirit of comradeship, patriotism and voluntarism, this recruiting poster highlights the profound irony of the AfriCanadian enlistment during the First World War. Equally willing to place themselves into the courageous silhouettes that charged out of the Canadian propaganda machine, many AfriCanadians were prevented from 'doing their bit' by elements of the socio-political forces that fuelled the Dominion's enlistment/propaganda machine. Whether or not they were asked by other Canadians, or inspired by Canadian propaganda, AfriCanadians nonetheless wanted to know why they were not in the war. Eventually supported by the reportage of

Afrocentric periodicals, AfriCanadians instigated a socio-political process which, by fall 1915, revealed the extent to which racism dominated the CEF's recruitment practices. When most Canadians were preparing for or recovering from their 'Baptism by Fire,' AfriCanadians were plunged into a 'Baptism by Paradox.' Between November 1914 and April 1916, over ninety documents regarding AfriCanadian enlistment passed through Department of Militia and Defence Headquarters (DMD HQ) at Ottawa. Produced by AfriCanadians and European Canadians, these documents offer valuable insights into an obscure series of historical events. This chapter examines the AfriCanadian enlistment campaign from 1914 to 1916. Although this discussion is divided into provincial groupings, it is important to remember that the events and personalities discussed often overlapped or intersected each other in time and social conviction.

Baptism By Paradox

One of the first reports indicating Militia racism was Arthur Alexander's concise letter to Sam Hughes, Minister of Militia and Defence, on November 6, 1914. As an AfriCanadian teacher and community activist at North Buxton, Ontario, Alexander did not want to join the army. However, he insisted that: "The colored people of Canada want to know why they are not allowed to enlist in the Canadian Militia." Having been informed that several AfriCanadians were refused enlistment "for no other apparent reason than their color," Alexander sought Hughes' clarification of CEF enlistment policies. Evidencing his Dominion and Imperial attitudes, Alexander concluded his request for information by

remaining respectfully loyal to “King & Country.”¹

At Ottawa, Alexander’s letter to Hughes was handed over to V. A. S. Williams, the Acting Adjutant-General Canadian Militia, who then prepared a memorandum for the Military Secretary. According to Williams, the selection of the personnel was left to the OC of each unit, Divisional Area or Military Districts. Paradoxically dismissing a loss of manpower and acceptant of the racist enlistment practices which contributed to the loss, Williams nonetheless addressed more of Alexander’s concerns than the Military Secretary. Where Alexander and Williams recognized factors that contributed to the reduced numbers of AfriCanadians in the First Contingent, the Military Secretary’s eventual reply to Alexander failed to address the existence racist Militia officials. In fact, by maintaining that the selection of personnel for the Second Contingent CEF was left to each OC, the Military Secretary’s claim that the Department of Militia and Defence Headquarters (DMD HQ), would not interfere with local selections, simply supported the racist conduct of Militia officers. Sadly, Alexander’s contact with DMD HQ ended with the Military Secretary’s unsupportive response. Alexander’s proximity to the underside of Canada’s emerging glory, however, continued well into the war. As late as March 4, 1916, the educational and social activities of Arthur Alexander’s kin group at North Buxton were recorded in the *Canadian Observer*. Clearly, Alexander was a respected member of the AfriCanadian community, and he was able to speak with authority about how AfriCanadians felt about their treatment by

1

RG 24, Vol. 1206, file HQ 297-1-21. Alexander to Hughes, 6 Nov. 1914.

Militia officials.²

Although Arthur Alexander was concerned with enlistment problems in Ontario, the experiences that gave rise to his letter reflected a national problem. Throughout 1914, AfriCanadian volunteers faced serious resistance. At Sydney, Nova Scotia, a group of about fifty men offering enlistment were ingloriously informed that: "This is not for you fellows this is a white man's war." In western Nova Scotia, one Militia official told AfriCanadians that "we don't want a checkerboard army." According to a veteran of No 2 CB, Gordon Wilson, his brother was refused enlistment at Halifax. Although some men accepted the Militia claim that "when we want you, we will let you know," Gordon's brother vowed never again to offer enlistment. In New Brunswick, after considerable difficulty gaining the 'acceptance' of recruiters, a group of AfriCanadians were later turned away from a regional training area. Out on the Canadian Prairie, one OC, eventually conceded that after a year of Militia ambivalence, AfriCanadians believed "that their services were not required."³

Still, AfriCanadians continued to seek enlistments. Despite the problems faced by his brother, Gordon Wilson later claimed that; "Black people refused to accept the attitude

2

Ibid. Department of Militia and Defence, memorandum Enlistments of Coloured Men. 13 Nov. 1914; Military Secretary to Arthur Alexander, 20 Nov. 1914; *Canadian Observer*, 18 Dec. 1915; 15 Jan. 1916; 4 Mar. 1916.

3

Ibid. Richards to Duke of Connaught, 4 Oct 1915: RG 24 Vol. 4739 file 448-14-259. OC 63 OSB to DOC 13 MD, 25 Nov. 1915; Calvin Ruck. Canada's Black Battalion: No.2 Construction, 1916-1920. (Halifax: Society for the Protection and Preservation of Black Culture in Nova Scotia, 1986): 12 and 62-63; James Walker, *Race and Recruitment in World War I: Enlistment of Visible Minorities in the Canadian Expeditionary Force*, Canadian Historical Review (70: 1, Mar. 1989): 5.

that it was a white man's war. As loyal citizens we wanted to serve our country. It was our duty, our responsibility." While avoiding stark commentary on Militia racism, the *Atlantic Advocate*, declared that, "in these days of aggression it [behooves] us, as a people, to map out some definite plan for our advancement and march onward, never despairing, always with our eyes fixed on the goal." Clearly, despite the emerging horrors of the European war, and Canadian racism, some AfriCanadian believed that military service during a national crisis was a necessary part of social advancement. Significantly, as the *Atlantic Advocate* called for a vibrantly self confident and loyal AfriCanadian war effort, non-AfriCanadians also ran headlong into the racism that threatened the spirit of patriotic voluntarism. Often distant and seemingly disconnected, the elements which constituted the AfriCanadian enlistment campaign often spoke to regional realities, however their enlistment experiences were part of a national dream.⁴

British Columbia

Following Arthur Alexander's letter to Sam Hughes, at least a year passed before recruitment-conscious AfriCanadians contacted civil or military authorities. Still, other Canadians did recognize the loss of ready manpower. From Fort George, British Columbia, L. S. Clarke, wrote to the Department of National Defence asking five important questions; "Are there any Canadian Negro Regiments? Are any desired? Are Negro's as units in Canada or England desired in either the Army or Navy? Are there any full quota Negro Regiments

⁴

Ruck, 63: Public Archives of Nova Scotia, Microfilm 3207. *The Atlantic Advocate*, April 1914.

used from this Continent? What if any, are being used at all?" Spending more time on his salutations rather than the substance of Clarke's inquiries, the Assistant Deputy Minister of Defence, E. F. James, declared that the "answers to Nos. 1, 2, and 3 are in the negative, and to 4 and 5, no information is available in this Department." If Clarke intended to assist with, or raise an AfriCanadian unit, James' failure to pursue the ideas inherent in Clarke's letter was not encouraging. As with Arthur Alexander in North Buxton, Clarke's contact with DMD HQ ended with the unsupportive reaction of officials at Ottawa.⁵

Following the brief exchange between Clarke and James, there are few indications of AfriCanadian enlistment attempts in British Columbia until November 1915. According to C. C. Henshaw, a recruiting officer at Vancouver, Hughes' November 1915, announcement that there was no colour line in the CEF, led some AfriCanadians to insist that units accept their enlistments. Henshaw's appeal for advice from Colonel J. Duff, OC 23 Infantry Battalion, led Duff to seek direction from the Officer Commanding Military District 11 (OC 11 MD). Hard pressed to find a solution, OC 11 MD forwarded Henshaw and Duff's letters to the Secretary of the Militia Council, Ottawa. According to OC 11 MD, the colour line in BC was so "shapely drawn," that recruitment would suffer if AfriCanadians were enlisted alongside Europeans. The solution, therefore, was to enlist the men as drafts for a presumed AfriCanadian unit on the East Coast. Interestingly, this was not the only time an officer referred to an AfriCanadian unit, and as in most cases, the unit conveniently existed outside of the officers' district or province. Meanwhile at Ottawa,

⁵

RG 24, Vol 1206, file HQ 297-1-21. Clarke to DMD HQ, 10 Aug 1915; James to L. S. Clarke, 20 Aug. 1915.

Major-General W. E. Hodgins, Adjutant-General, DMD, received a memorandum from Major-General W. G. Gwatkin, the Chief of the General Staff, reminding Hodgins that although Hughes' "fiat" declared that there was no colour line in the CEF, "it would be humiliating" for Africans to serve were they were not wanted. Believing that Hodgins had the "best solution to the difficulty," Gwatkin did not see a need to elaborate on Departmental intentions and noted that, "In any case, you will no doubt [negative] the suggestion made by DOC. 11." The next day, in a letter to OC 11 MD, Hodgins repeated Gwatkin's paternal, yet contradictory concerns, and refused to accept AfriCanadians as draft for the presumed unit. Also, DMD HQ again refused to form the AfriCanadian unit that many officials suggested already existed.⁶

Significantly, Hughes' "fiat" and DMD HQ's decision not to accept AfriCanadians as draft, or in a separate unit, were was not simply based on enquiries from British Columbia. Also, for Canadians west of the Rockies, intimations that there was an AfriCanadian unit in the east was not unimaginable. In Alberta, Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, AfriCanadians were attempting to enlist as individuals and from units. As in British Columbia, AfriCanadians in the east also had non-AfriCanadian allies. Nonetheless, opposition to AfriCanadian enlistment was staunch.

⁶

RG 24, Vol. 1206 file HQ 297-1-21. Henshaw to Brigade Major, 23 Infantry Battalion, 7 Dec. 1915; Brigade Major, 23 Infantry Battalion to DSA 11 MD, 7 Dec. 1915; DOC 11 MD to Secretary of the Militia Council, 9 Dec. 1915; Gwatkin to Hodgins, 22 Dec. 1915; Hodgins to DOC 11 MD, 23 Dec. 1915.

Nova Scotia

Although Nova Scotia eventually became the home of Canada's only AfriCanadian Overseas Battalion (OSB), when the war began, racism and confusion dominated the enlistment process for AfriCanadians in the province. Early in the war, racism in Nova Scotia prevented AfriCanadian enlistments. Across the province AfriCanadians were told that they were not wanted in the 'the white man's war.' When non-AfriCanadians showed an interest in the AfriCanadian enlistment, their enquiries were often equally stifled.

At Halifax, on September 23, 1915, Captain R. J. S. Langford of the Royal Canadian Regiment (R.C.R.), requested permission from Sixth Division HQ (6D HQ) to form an AfriCanadian Infantry Battalion. According to Langford, he was approached by prominent AfriCanadians who wanted to raise a unit. Langford did not receive a reply from his superiors until late October, and even then it was negative. Meanwhile at Ottawa, a letter to Prime Minister Borden from M. F. McCurdy, M P for Shelburne and Queens, Nova Scotia, concerning AfriCanadian recruitment was passed to L. C. Christie at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) for immediate enquiry. When questioned by Christie, Gwatkin casually confessed that the discussion was one of the "usual dull negatives of officialdom." Gwatkin did, however, note that although Hughes was not in favour raising an AfriCanadian regiment, "in the last extremity we might organize a company or two." Claiming that only one third of the three thousand men required to maintain a regiment for a year would volunteer, Gwatkin's also concluded that AfriCanadians would not "make good fighting men." Contrary to Gwatkin's pessimistic recruitment forecasting, many AfriCanadian men were nonetheless willing to enlist in the CEF. If persistence is any indication of the fighting

spirit, AfriCanadian volunteers were, despite Gwatkin's view, ready to become good soldiers.⁷

Although it is uncertain whether or not Alexander Bramah and Samuel Reece knew each other before their enlistment dramas, both men were born in British Guiana and had emigrated to Canada before the war broke out. By 1915, Bramah was working as a coal miner at Sydney Mines, and Reece was a railway porter living at Truro. Both men had offered enlistment with Nova Scotian units in 1915, but they were refused. Before the end of the war however, Bramah and Reece were taken on with No. 2 CB.⁸

On October 4, 1915, Alexander Bramah wrote from his residence at Florence, 'Cape Breton,' asking Major-General Rutherford at Sixth Division HQ (6D HQ) for the "privilege of joining" one of the battalions on the East Coast. Although recently discharged from another unit because of his colour, Bramah was not prepared to relinquish his military aspirations. In re-offering enlistment Bramah contended he would, "go out there without any wages or if they don't want to keep me among the white soldiers they could send me over to the Black battalion that's in England." Grand words indeed, especially since Bramah was anxious to get on with a job he would like to have, "killing germans." Unfortunately for

7

RG 24, Vol. 4562, file 133-17-1, Langford to A.A.G. Sixth Division, 23 Sept. 1915; GSO Halifax to AG, 23 Oct. 1915; Hodgins to GOC, Sixth Division, 29 Oct. 1915; RG 24, Vol. 1206, file HQ 297-1-21. L. C. Christie to W. Gwatkin, 29 Sept. 1915 and reply 30 Sept. 1915.

8

RG 150 Acc. 1992- 93/166, Bramah, Alexander, 931037; Reece, Samuel 931761: RG 9, II, B 9, Vol. 39, file 748, No. 2 CB Nominal Roll, March 28, 1917 (Hereafter, Nominal Roll).

Bramah, 6D HQ was not willing to place him in an existing unit. Neither confirming or denying the existence of a 'Black Battalion' serving in England, the officer responding told Bramah that if, or when a Black Battalion was formed, "you will be notified and your services gladly accepted. While it does not appear that Bramah was personally notified when the No. 2 CB was authorized, Bramah did enlist with the Battalion at Sydney Mines on July 21, 1916.⁹

In 1915, Samuel Reece had also offered enlistment at Halifax, but he was refused by a Captain Roscoe. Curiously, Reece was told that if he returned with more men, their enlistment might be accepted. Roscoe also suggested that the 106th OSB might accept Reece's enlistment. Several weeks later following a recruiting drive at Truro, Reverend William White, the Minister at Truro's African Baptist Church, approached Lieutenant Colonel W. H. Allen, OC 106th OSB, to discuss the Reece incident and AfriCanadian recruitment. According to Allen, the two had agreed that if White could raise enough men Allen would incorporate the AfriCanadian platoon into the 106th.¹⁰

By December 14, 1915, however, neither White nor Allen had gathered more than six names, and when subsequent orders from Ottawa stipulated that there was "to be no distinction of colour for enlistment," Allen withdrew from his earlier commitment. Yet, the

⁹

RG 24, Vol. 4562, file 133-17-1. Bramah to Rutherford, 4 Oct. 1915; GSO Halifax Fortress to Bramah, 6 Oct. 1915: RG 150 Acc. 1992-93/166, 931037, Bramah, Alexander: Nominal Roll.

¹⁰

RG 24 Vol. 1206, HQ 297-1-21. OC 106th OSB to DAA and QMG 6th Div. HQ, 14 Dec. 1915: RG 150 Acc. 1992-93/166, Reece, Samuel, 931761.

orders from Ottawa were not the only reasons for Allen's change of heart. While he believed that some AfriCanadians "should do their part in the Empire's Defence," and that some "would make good soldiers," Allen preferred the company of White Canadians. With several recently recruited White Canadians threatening to leave the 106th, if AfriCanadians were taken on, Allen conceded that: "Neither my men nor myself, would care to sleep along side them, especially in warm weather." Clearly oblivious to the horrifically unappetizing sights awaiting his men in Europe, Allen was also reluctant to enlist AfriCanadians because "a White man's appetite is a peculiar thing." Contending that the African Nova Scotian population was very small, and that "plenty of White men were available," Allen did not wish to enlist AfriCanadians for fear of losing a "better class of recruits."¹¹

Significantly, Allen did not say that he would prevent AfriCanadians from enlisting. However, he did not encourage AfriCanadian recruitment. Also, and contrary to instructions from Ottawa, the OC 6 MD did not discourage Allen from making race an issue in enlistment. In fact, 6 MD HQ tried escape taking action by deferring the matter to DMD HQ. Nonetheless, Hodgins' insistence that the final decision on enlistments was left to the OC of each unit did not do much to help AfriCanadian volunteers. Sadly, it simply lent credence to Allen's racist approach.¹²

Back at Nova Scotia, J. F. Tupper, a Recruiting Officer at Pictou, Nova Scotia,

¹¹

RG 24 Vol. 1206, HQ 297-1-21. OC 106th OSB to DAA and QMG 6th Div. HQ, 14 Dec. 1915.

¹²

Ibid. OC 106th OSB to DAA and QMG 6th Div. HQ, 14 Dec. 1915; GOC 6th Div. to Secretary of Militia Council, 15 Dec. 1915; AG Canadian Militia to GOC 6th Division, 22 Dec. 1915.

attempted to offer an alternative path towards CEF integration. On the ironically chosen date of November 11, 1915, Tupper reported that he had over one hundred unsolicited applications from AfriCanadians who were previously denied enlistment. Hoping to attract AfriCanadian and non-AfriCanadians, Tupper wanted Hughes' permission to form a mixed race regiment. Already an Honorary Captain, Tupper offered to take temporary command as an Honorary Colonel. Admittedly ready to lead the regiment into battle, Tupper also prudently confessed his lack of combat experience. Still, Tupper believed he could attend to the regiment's needs until it reached England. Unfortunately for Tupper, officials at Ottawa refused to consider the mixed race battalion. Clearly a decision rooted in hypocrisy, DMD HQ's refusal of Tupper's unit flew in the face of DMD policy statements. If he was promoted and given command of a battalion, Tupper would have emerged as an OC willing to enlist AfriCanadians. However, DMD HQ's position meant that even when an 'OC' was willing to enlist large numbers of AfriCanadians, Ottawa was not willing to disrupt of the status-quo. Five months later another request for an AfriCanadian Battalion surfaced in Nova Scotia. In his recommendation of the formation of an AfriCanadian unit, the OC 85th OSB even suggested that one of his officers take command of the new unit. Sadly, the OC 85th OSB did not even receive a reply.¹³ While AfriCanadians and their supporters faced stiff opposition in Nova Scotia and at Ottawa, AfriCanadians in New Brunswick also experienced similar problems with military racism.

13

Ibid. Tupper to Hughes, 11 Nov. 1915; Adjutant-General to Tupper, 27 Nov. 1915: RG 24 Vol. 4562 file 133-17-1. OC 85th OSB to 6 D HQ, 23 Mar. 1916.

New Brunswick

On the same day that Alexander Bramah wrote to Major-General Rutherford at Halifax, John T. Richards, a Marine Shipping Agent at St. John, New Brunswick, reported to the Governor General of Canada that “coloured men of good repute” were refused enlistment “on the grounds of color.” Sometime before October 4, 1915, Richards had written to Hughes however, had not received a reply. As an AfriCanadians with over twenty years experience outfitting vessels and as an operator of seamen’s lodgings, Richards was comfortable and direct in his role of advisor and intermediary. Richards was also a man with intimate knowledge of Canada’s contradictory recruitment practices, and he was disturbed that his efforts at St. John were repeatedly thwarted by racists. His report to the Governor General also noted that AfriCanadians were “denied a chance to fight for the Empire” since September 1914. Accordingly, in the fall of 1914, a group of AfriCanadian volunteers whom Richards had directed to a St. John recruiting station were refused enlistment. Yet, during the same period, Richards had recruited over six hundred Remount men to serve aboard the vessels carrying horses to England. Amongst the new crews were several AfriCanadians who offered enlistment in England, “and were accepted.”¹⁴

For Richards and his non-AfriCanadian friends, it was an insult that AfriCanadians

¹⁴

RG 24 Vol. 1206 file HQ 297-1-21. J. T. Richards to Duke of Connaught, 4 Oct. 1915: According McAlpine’s City Directory for St. John, New Brunswick, for the years 1913 - 1919, John T. Richards held positions as a Tin Smith, the Keeper of Seaman’s Boarding House, and a Clerk with W. A. Steiper and Company. Richards’ other listings include Shipping Agent, Shipping Clerk, as well as an unspecified positions as a Clerk and Boarding House Operator/owner. During these years Richards continued to reside at 274 Prince William Street, yet, he is listed at various points as either a boarder or an owner of the residence.

were prevented from serving when “England and some of her Allies have Coloured soldiers.” Mindful of the desire for national solidarity, Richards added that some people were suggesting a public protest. However, in hoping that a “square deal” was possible, Richards advised his friends to await Ottawa’s response before taking public action. Eventually S. A. Stanton, the Military Secretary, responded for the Governor General. According to Stanton, the Governor General had “come across a good number of Coloured men” during his inspection tours of CEF units. While he claimed that “there can be no question of their not being allowed to serve their King,” Stanton nonetheless offered to refer Richard’s charges to DMD HQ. Unfortunately, for Richards and the men at St. John, Stanton and Hughes’ eventual reactions, did not change the state of Militia affairs in New Brunswick. ¹⁵

Eventually, Hughes did respond to Richards, however, Richards’ letter to the Governor General, arrived at Ottawa first. Nonetheless, Richards was encouraged by the Hughes’ letter, and showed it to a group of AfriCanadians who again tried to enlist. Again the men were refused enlistment. Prepared for a show down, Richards, perhaps brandishing the Minister’s letter, had the men re-offer enlistment. After considerable debate, twenty men were finally accepted, and ordered to join the 104th OSB at Camp Sussex. When the AfriCanadians and about fifty White recruits reported to Camp Sussex, they were met by the Second in Command of 104th OSB, who claimed that he had not heard anything about accepting the group of AfriCanadians. In what Richards describes as an insultingly rude manner, the AfriCanadians were told that a ‘Black’ Battalion was authorized in Ontario.

¹⁵

RG 24, Vol. 1206, file HQ 297-1-21. J. T. Richards to Duke of Connaught, 4 Oct. 1915; Military Secretary to Richards, 11 Oct. 1915.

Ordered to leave the area immediately, the men returned to St. John and reported the incident to the Mill Street Recruiting Office. Sadly, “after running from place to place for a few days without satisfaction,” the unwelcomed recruits learned that had not been admitted into the CEF. They were therefore denied any pay or substance money as compensation for the wages lost while seeking enlistment. Contending that the men had left their jobs for military service, Richards claimed that the loss of income (some averaging \$12.00 per week) constituted a hardship for some of the men and their families. Hoping that Ottawa wanted to avoid embarrassment, Richards reported that some people at St. John were still considering “appealing to the Embassies at Washington whose Countries are using Colored men.” Still looking for “a square deal,” and assuming that Ottawa would find interest in the Press’ opinion of the “hydro-headed business,” Richards also enclosed clippings from two St. John newspapers.¹⁶

Also at St. John, Lieutenant-Colonel Beverly R. Armstrong reported to Ottawa that twenty AfriCanadians had recently passed military medical examinations. Reluctant to integrate the men into an existing unit, Armstrong wanted to know if an AfriCanadian battalion was “being formed in any part of Canada.” Ottawa denied the existence of an AfriCanadian unit and insisted that there were no restrictions against the enlistment of “coloured men who possess necessary qualifications.” Hughes bombastically declared that the colour line would not be drawn in the CEF. Contending that there were “scores” of AfriCanadians in the Army, Hughes nonetheless declared he did not wish to “lend myself

¹⁶

Ibid. Richard to Hughes, 20 Nov. 1915; Richards to Stanton, 20 Nov. 1915.

to the fad of giving them a regiment to themselves anymore than I intend to have a regiment of one-eyed men or men with yellow moustaches or red hair.”¹⁷ If Hughes intended to crack down on racist conduct, he failed. Overnight, critics and cynics joined with a string of military officials and anti-racists to pressure DMD HQ to take decisive action. Unconvinced by pronouncements from Ottawa, the *St. John Globe* sarcastically suggested that Hughes reconcile Militia policy with the daily activities of the St. John recruiting committee. According to the *Globe*, AfriCanadians were waiting for a chance to serve, yet, “more than one commanding officer has said no to the suggestion” of enlisting AfriCanadians. The *Globe* concluded that AfriCanadians “have been, and still are, the victims of a color line.” The *Globe* was correct. Five days later a few more colour lines appeared between DMD HQ and Maritime Militia officials.¹⁸

On November 25th, Hughes informed Richards that instructions were issued to enlist AfriCanadians in any CEF unit, and that the Camp Sussex incident would be investigated. Ironically, on the same day, Lieutenant Colonel G. W. Fowler, OC 104th OSB, submitted a request to 6D HQ for the immediate release of seventeen AfriCanadians at Camp Sussex. Echoing themes that haunted AfriCanadians recruits, Fowler “rejected them on the grounds that it would be against the interest of the Battalion.” Having “secured a fine class of recruits,” Fowler did not believe “it was fair to these men that they should have to mingle with

¹⁷

Ibid. Armstrong to Secretary of Militia Council, 18 Nov. 1915; A/Adjutant-General to Armstrong, 19 Nov. 1915; *St. John Standard*, 20 Nov. 1915.

¹⁸

St. John Globe, 20 Nov. 1915.

negroes.” Fowler also claimed that some of the AfriCanadians arrived at Camp Sussex intoxicated and were very insolent. Sadly, despite the racist tone of much of Fowler’s letter, he was within the boundaries of Militia policy and practice. Given Fowler’s contention that the presence of AfriCanadians was detrimental to his unit, 6D HQ and DMD HQ refused to interfere with a Commanders’ enlistment practices. Nevertheless, Hodgins was ordered to examine Richards’ charges. Two days later, the OC 6D asked Ottawa for a ruling on the discharge of the men at Camp Sussex. Surprised by the short memo from Halifax, Hodgins sharply asked if the memo was a full report as requested. While the OC 6D denied that his memo was a full report, he did note that Fowler’s letter represented the feelings of OCs in the Divisional Area. Unwilling to push area commanders, 6D HQ refused to take further steps without Ottawa’s ruling on AfriCanadian enlistment. Significantly, DMD HQ had already made its pronouncements on the subject.¹⁹

By late December 1915, K. L. Hamilton, the Secretary of St. John’s British Negro Protection Association, also joined the anti-racist campaign. In a letter to the Governor General, Hamilton detailed anti-AfriCanadian conduct in the city’s restaurants, ice cream parlours and theatres. With a legal case pending against a local theatre, Hamilton wanted the Governor General to monitor the continuing insults to British justice. Commenting on the incident at Camp Sussex, Hamilton claimed that the men “were eventually thrown down because two men got drunk and wanted to fight.” Angered that many good men were

¹⁹

RG 24, Vol. 1206, file HQ 297-1-21. OC 104th OSB to AAG 6 D, 25 Nov. 1915; Hughes to Richards, 25 Nov. 1915; Hodgins to GOC 6th Division, 29 Nov. 1915; GOC 6th Division to Secretary of Militia Council, 1 Dec. 1915; Adjutant-General to GOC 6th Division, 7 Dec. 1915 and reply GOC to Secretary of Militia Council, 10 Dec. 1915.

unfairly characterized as “drunken loafer,” Hamilton reasoned that: “If they can discriminate as to color, surely they can do the same amongst color.” To that end, Hamilton asked why if ‘Upper-Canadian’ OSBs were enlisting AfriCanadians, the same rules or ‘standards’ did not apply to St. John Battalions.²⁰

Nearly one month after Hamilton wrote to the Governor General, officials at the Department of Justice responded to Stanton’s request for information. According to the Assistant Deputy Minister of Justice, W. Stuart Edwards, his Minister could not give the matter personal attention. Although Edwards was certain that there were no Dominion legislation permitting discrimination against AfriCanadians, he was uncertain as to whether or not there were any provincial laws supporting racism. If so, Edwards claimed that such cases were the domain of the provincial governments. Believing that Hamilton’s pending case was the best way to resolve the legalities of discrimination, Edwards refused to discuss military racism and referred Stanton to DMD HQ. After a series of correspondence between Stanton, Gwatkin and Hodgins, Gwatkin explained to Stanton that: “In theory there is no discrimination against negroes.” Still, in noting that AfriCanadians could enlist in any CEF unit subject to the discretion of the OC, Gwatkin resorted to a policy statement that did not match up with the practices of many Militia officials in the Maritimes.²¹

As the debate about AfriCanadian enlistment moved from private citizens to military

²⁰

RG 24 Vol. 1206 file HQ 297-1-21. Hamilton to Governor General, 29 Dec. 1915.

²¹

Ibid. Edwards to Stanton, 31 Jan. 1916; Stanton to Gwatkin, 2 Feb. 1916; Gwatkin to Hodgins, 3 Feb. 1916 *and reply* 4 Feb. 1916; Gwatkin to Stanton, 5 Feb. 1916.

and civil authorities, members of the House of Commons also became embroiled in the discussion. On three separate occasions St. John MP, William Pugsly, brought the issue before the House of Commons with direct questions to the Department of Militia and Defence. Each time, Pugsly was told that investigations into military racism were underway. Yet, in responding to Pugsly's questions, Militia representatives displayed a surprising degree of ignorance or ambivalence towards the situation. Eventually, A. E. Kemp's, the Acting Minister of Militia and Defence, inaccurate responses to Pugsly's questions, gave J. R. B. Whitney, an AfriCanadian petitioner in Ontario, more evidence of Militia hypocrisies. Unfortunately, these detailed and reasonable arguments against racism did not work on the practitioners of inequality.²²

As in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, the AfriCanadian enlistment campaign in Ontario started when AfriCanadians attempted to enlist. However, before examining Ontario's protracted and well-documented campaign, attention is given to the campaign in Alberta.

Alberta

On November 25, 1915, the same day that Hughes wrote to J. T. Richards at St. John, and Fowler submitted his list to 6 D HQ, the AfriCanadian enlistment attempts in Alberta led Militia officials to discuss recruitment practices. Contrary to many of the Militia correspondents, Lieutenant Colonel B. McLeod's, OC 63rd OSB, letter to Brigadier-General

²²

Debates of the House of Commons: Volumes I-III. 25 Jan. 1916, 3 Feb. 1916, 25 Mar. 1916.

E. A. Cruickshanks, OC 13th MD, was refreshingly supportive of AfriCanadian recruitment. Prudently noting that AfriCanadian recruitment would not be expensive if recruiters gained the assistance of AfriCanadian community organizations, McLeod remained cautiously optimistic about recruiting success. Accordingly, after a year of Militia ambivalence, a small propaganda campaign was required because many AfriCanadians believed that their services were not wanted. Still, McLeod reported that the AfriCanadians he approached “were quite enthusiastic.” While McLeod did not reveal the identity of the AfriCanadians he met with, there is evidence to suggest that AfriCanadians, H[enry] Muntou and Archbishop Washington were early proponents for AfriCanadian enlistment in Alberta. McLeod’s report to Cruickshanks indicated that five hundred to one thousand AfriCanadian in the area were ready to enlist are similar to subsequent manpower statements attributed to Muntou and Washington. Also, as a Church leader with recruiting interests, Washington had access to one of the organizations noted by McLeod. ²³

At Calgary, Cruickshanks refused to act without orders from Ottawa. While informing McLeod that “this matter will receive further consideration,” Cruickshanks sent a letter to DMD HQ which, in light of his later statements, was uncharacteristically encouraging. Repeating the optimistic manpower projections, Cruickshanks added that, “many of these men have received military training in the United States Army and would become efficient soldiers in a comparatively short time.” Unfortunately, Hodgins simply repeated Hughes’ instructions that AfriCanadians could join any unit, and refused to

²³

consider the AfriCanadian unit. By mid-month, Cruickshanks informed McLeod of Ottawa's position. Until pressured again by AfriCanadians, Militia officials in Alberta did not move from Ottawa's position.²⁴

On January 14, 1916, Joseph Roger Butler, a baker in Edmonton, joined the AfriCanadian recruitment campaign. Interestingly, his experiences were in line other AfriCanadians and some of the facts set out in Cruickshanks' letters DMD HQ. Before emigrating to Canada, Butler had served four years in the US Army's 25th Infantry and three years in the 9th Calvary. Believing that an AfriCanadian Battalion was authorized, Butler confidently declared that "with a little schooling in new methods" he "would make an efficient officer." Evidencing his understanding of CEF recruiting practices, Butler was looking forward to the responsibilities of rank, and claimed that he "could recruit many eligible coloured men." As he had with McLeod's questions, Cruickshanks sent Butler's letter to DMD HQ, and informed Butler that an AfriCanadian battalion was not authorized. Eventually, Hodgins also reported to Cruickshanks that an AfriCanadian unit was not authorized. Sadly, nothing was done to find Butler a place in the CEF or to respond to another opportunity to raise AfriCanadian troops.²⁵

²⁴

Ibid. DOC 13 MD to OC 63rd OSB, 27 Nov. 1914; DOC 13 MD to Secretary of the Militia Council, 27 Nov. 1915. Adjutant-General, Canadian Militia to DOC 13 MD, 9 Dec. 1915; DOC 13 MD to OC 63rd OSB, 14 Dec. 1915.

²⁵

Ibid. Butler to OC 13 MD, 14 Jan. 1916; GOC 13 MD to Butler, 17 Jan. 1916; GOC 13 MD to Secretary Military Council, 17 Jan 1916; GOC 13 MD to OC 63 OSB, 21 Jan. 1916; AG Canadian Militia to DOC 13 MD, 26 Jan. 1916; GOC 13 MD to OC 63 OSB, 31 Jan. 1916; GOC 13 MD to Butler, 31 Jan. 1916. On September 17, 1916, almost nine months after he was refused enlistment, Butler was taken on No 2 CB at Edmonton with the rank of Private.

On January 20, 1916, shortly after the Federal Government proposed an increase in the size of the CEF, two “representatives of the Coloured Race” at Edmonton, asked McLeod to remind Cruickshanks of attempts to organize an AfriCanadian battalion in Alberta. Hoping to meet with Cruickshanks at Calgary, the ‘representatives’ also thought that Cruickshanks should arrange for their transportation to Calgary. According to McLeod: “I did not feel like turning them down, since a report has been current that a Coloured Battalion will be mobilized.” By late February and early March 1916, the identity of two advocates of AfriCanadian enlistment in Alberta began to take shape. From Edmonton, Henry Munton wrote to inform Cruickshanks that AfriCanadians still wanted “to do their bit for the Empire.” Supported by Archbishop Washington’s claim that Edmonton boasted between 400 and 500 ready recruits, Munton was confident that the rest of the recruits were available in Alberta.²⁶

As with many recruiting schemes during the War, these manpower forecasts were optimistic, especially considering the animosities towards AfriCanadians and the size of Alberta’s AfriCanadian population. Still, as the founder of Edmonton’s African centred St. Mark’s Church of the First Born, Washington had strong ties in the community, and he may

See, RG 150 Acc. 1992-93/166, Butler, Joseph R, 931037: Nominal Roll.

²⁶

RG 4739, file 448-14-259. OC 63rd OSB to GOC 13 MD, 20 January 1916; Munton to Cruickshanks, undated; Cruickshanks to Munton, 11 Mar. 1916; RG 24 Vol.1206, file HQ 297-1-21. GOC 13th MD to Secretary of the Militia Council, 11 Mar. 1916; Munton to Cruickshanks, undated.

According to the Dominion Census Report for 1911, there were 979 AfriCanadians living in Alberta. See; Internet, [Http://www.qusn.meg.gouv.qc.ca/mpages/unit5/u5p100.htm](http://www.qusn.meg.gouv.qc.ca/mpages/unit5/u5p100.htm), Some Missing Pages: The Black Community in the History of Quebec and Canada.

have found the men he needed. Unfortunately for Munton, Cruickshanks did not offer any support for the proposed battalion. Curiously understating his authority as the OC 13 MD, Cruickshanks told Munton that the proposal was before Ottawa. At the same time however, in a letter to Ottawa, Cruickshanks clearly did not want to integrate Alberta's Battalions. Even though he suggested that it was practicable to raise an AfriCanadian Battalion, Cruickshanks did not think enough men would volunteer. While doubting that the AfriCanadian population could maintain the battalion's manpower requirements, Cruickshanks also refused to integrate existing units. Unaware of top level reservations, Munton's second letter to Cruickshanks contended that "we could have the Battalion ready in record time," and that "several gentleman who have seen active service" were willing to officer the new battalion. In the event that the CEF could not find an immediate combat application for AfriCanadians, Munton also proposed that the unit could "do garrison duty and so spare a white battalion for the firing-line."²⁷

As Munton negotiated with Cruickshanks, Archbishop Washington appealed to Alberta's Governor General, R. G. Brett. Following a visit from Washington, Brett wrote to Cruickshanks. According to Brett, Washington claimed that there were at least ten thousand men available for an AfriCanadian Battalion. Although he was unable to offer verification of Washington's contentions, Brett did not, however, object to Washington's character. In fact, Brett complimented Archbishop for "doing a great deal of good among

27

Ibid.

the poor people” at Edmonton.²⁸

Cruickshanks did not immediately respond to Brett, but he did submit the Lieutenant Governor’s letter to Ottawa. At Ottawa, communications between Hodgins and Gwatkin clearly indicate that neither officer wanted to raise an AfriCanadian unit because all the new units were intended as drafts for CEF units in Europe. For Gwatkin and Hodgins, the prospect of large numbers of AfriCanadian reserves was more problematic than the immediate manpower shortages in Europe. According to Gwatkin, “it would be a mistake to raise battalions of negroes,” and “our present method of dealing with this question is best.” Hodgins then wrote to assure Cruickshanks that the offer to raise AfriCanadian troops was appreciated, “but it has been decided to adhere to the policy of enlisting coloured men not as Battalions, but individually in Units of which the Commanding Officer is willing to take them.”²⁹ Unfortunately for AfriCanadians, it was a policy that often kept them out of the CEF as individuals and in groups.

One of the AfriCanadian individuals prevented from enlisting was Benjamin Washington. Born in London, England, Washington emigrated to Canada before the war, and took up Farming at High Prairie, Alberta. In February 1916, Butler had passed the physical examination for the CEF, however he was refused enlistment. According to a letter submitted to Cruickshanks by George E. Martin, Washington, a “good man” with “a

²⁸

Ibid. Brett to Cruickshanks, 13 Mar. 1916.

²⁹

RG 24 Vol. 1206, file HQ 297-1-21. OC 13th MD to Secretary of the Militia Council, 15 Mar. 1916; Adjutant-General to Chief of the General Staff, 15 Mar. 1916, and hand written sub textual reply, 21 Mar. 1916; Adjutant-General to DOC MD 13, 23 Mar. 1916.

splendid physique,” was refused enlistment with a number of battalions because he was AfriCanadian. Enquiring if there were “any places in the Forces” for Washington, Martin also wanted confirmation on the claims that an AfriCanadian battalion was recruiting at Montreal. Sadly, Cruickshanks did not reply to either Washington or Martin. As with Joseph Butler, Benjamin Washington also went on to serve in No. 2 CB. Interestingly, Washington joined the Battalion on September 16, 1916, one day before Butler.³⁰

Significantly, the fate of an AfriCanadian Battalion in Alberta reflected the other provincial and national attempts to raise AfriCanadian troops. Where Munton and Washington submitted single and local proposals with regional ramifications, Hodgins and Gwatkin’s reactions were plural and national. When Albertans called for a local battalion, Ottawa’s refusals were premised on the fear that national enlistment of AfriCanadians would harm the CEF. Yet, while maintaining a policy for individual enlistment for AfriCanadians, Ottawa also refused to interfere with local racist practices. AfriCanadians and their supporters in British Columbia, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Alberta, were hard pressed to end military racism. In Ontario, where the anti-racist campaign was first documented, AfriCanadians also exposed the depths to which racist forces would plunge to maintain a ‘White Man’s Army’ in a ‘White Man’s War.’

30

RG 150 Acc. 1992-93/166, 931555, Washington, Benjamin: RG 24 Vol. 4739 file 448-14-259. Martin to Cruickshanks, 17 Mar. 1916.

Ontario

On September 7, 1915, ten months after Arthur Alexander opened the AfriCanadian enlistment campaign, George Morton, an AfriCanadian living at Hamilton, brought Ontario back into the enlistment debate. Although direct and descriptive, Morton's letter to Sam Hughes was also deferential and patriotic. Seeking to inform the "well-qualified, popular and Honourable" Minister that AfriCanadians at Hamilton were refused enlistment, Morton wanted to know if DMD discriminated "against the enlistment and enrolment of colored men of good character and physical fitness."³¹ Morton also wanted to know if Hughes had issued orders that either counted or supported discrimination. Bolstered by the comments of European Canadians who agreed that it was "beneath the dignity of the Government to make racial or color distinctions in an issue of this kind," Morton skilfully balanced rhetoric and history to articulate AfriCanadian war aims. Nestled comfortably in Dominion and Imperial rhetoric, Morton also offered an interestingly republican twist to the enlistment campaign. According to Morton:

The feeling prevails that in this so called Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave that there should be no color lines...As humble, but loyal subjects of the King, trying to work out their own destiny, they think they should be permitted ...to perform and do their share in this great conflict. Especially so when gratitude leads them to remember that this country was their only refuge in the dark days of American slavery and that here, on this consecrated soil, dedicated to equality, justice and freedom, that under the all-embracing and protecting folds of the Union Jack, that none dare to molest them or make them afraid.³²

³¹

RG 24, Vol. 1206, file HQ 297-1-21, Morton to Hughes, 7 Sept. 1915.

³²

Ibid.

While trusting that there were no legal restrictions on AfriCanadian service, Morton also suggested that the appropriate information would help AfriCanadians to prepare themselves for “the humiliation of being refused solely on the color line.” Not missing an opportunity to stroke Hughes’ questionable, yet ever expanding ego, Morton congratulated Hughes on his recently conferred Knighthood.³³ Despite the impassioned details of Morton’s letter, the Good Knight did not respond. However, nearly one month after his letter to Hughes, Morton returned to the AfriCanadian enlistment campaign.

On October 4, 1915, the same day that Alexander Bramah and John T. Richards attempted to alter the racist condition in the Maritimes, George Morton approached T. J. Stewart, M.P. for Hamilton and Commissioner of the city’s Hydro-Electric Department. In his letter to Hughes on the same day, Stewart admitted that he could not ignore Morton “as I would make considerable trouble for myself if I did.” Although he did not offer an opinion on AfriCanadian enlistment, Stewart did tell Hughes that the Minister’s attention would be viewed as a personal favour. By mid-month, Hodgins notified Stewart that AfriCanadians who possessed the necessary qualifications could join the CEF. Hodgins also insisted that the acceptance of personnel “regardless of colour or other distinctions” rested with the OC of each unit. Unable to break the barrier of racism, Morton’s letters to Ottawa ended in October 1915. Yet, as with Arthur Alexander of Buxton, Morton remained committed to his community. The social and educational activities of both men were recorded in the AfriCanadian newspaper, the *Canadian Observer*. Significantly, one of the best documented

33

Ibid. Morton to Hughes, 7 Sept. 1915.

debates over AfriCanadian recruitment was led by J. R. B. Whitney, the Founding Editor of the *Canadian Observer*.³⁴

In November 1915, following a meeting with Toronto's Colonel A. D. Davidson, J. R. B. Whitney submitted a proposal for an AfriCanadian platoon to Sam Hughes. Hoping to sustain the unit throughout the war, Whitney planned to raise 150 men from Toronto, St. Catharines, London, Chatham and Windsor. Contrary to the calls for an AfriCanadian Battalion, Whitney's platoon did not require a complex recruitment or training infrastructure. Nor was a large influx of men necessary to bring the unit up to strength. If successful as a unit attached to a 'friendly' OSB, the platoon could have established a network of trained reserves awaiting their call to active service.³⁵

From Ottawa, Hughes assured Whitney that AfriCanadians could "form a platoon in any Battalion" and that there was "nothing in the world to stop them." Armed with the Minister's sweeping, yet profoundly inaccurate statement, Whitney began enlisting men for his platoon. Early in January 1916, the *Observer* announced that Hughes and the Officer Commanding Second Divisional Area (OC 2D), General Logie, had; "Definitely approved plans to raise a company composed of members of our race." Contending that Ottawa required at least sixty volunteers before authorizing "a complete company," Whitney also published a cut-out information slip for men to return to the *Observer's* Recruiting Editor,

³⁴

RG 24, Vol. 1206, file HQ 297-1-21. Stewart to Hughes, 4 Oct. 1915; Hughes to Stewart, 12 Oct. 1915; Hodgins to Stewart, 16 Oct. 1915.

³⁵

RG 24 Vol. 1206 HQ 297-1-21. Whitney to Hughes, 24 Nov. 1915.

Whitney. By mid-month, Colonel L. W. Shannon of First Divisional Area HQ (1D HQ) at London, Ontario, wrote to Military Secretary at Ottawa seeking confirmation of the unit. According to Shannon there were a number of AfriCanadians in the County of Kent who wanted to know where to enlist. Two days later, Hodgins denied that orders were issued to organize an AfriCanadian unit. Contrary to Hodgins' statements, however, Whitney continued to raise men. On January 19, 1916, Whitney reported that fifteen men had volunteered and that plans were underway to recruit at London, Chatham and Windsor. Hoping to have a soldier accompany him on a recruiting drive, Whitney requested the services of W. H. Henderson from the 80th Battalion at Belleville. Henderson, an AfriCanadian, was on leave at Toronto visiting an ailing brother.³⁶

At Ottawa, Whitney's letter to Hughes was passed to Hodgins who subsequently claimed that DMD HQ did not know about Whitney's platoon. Hodgins then asked Logie to contact Whitney, and report back to DMD HQ. Concerning Henderson's leave, Hodgins also told Logie to take whatever action seemed appropriate. Back at Toronto, a Captain Trump notified Whitney that recruitment in the city could continue. However, because London and Windsor were out of the 2nd Divisional Area, authority to recruit was not granted. Trump did not mention Henderson's furlough, however, he did note that an AfriCanadian serving with a unit in 2nd Division could serve as a Recruiting Sergeant. Whitney then submitted the names of two AfriCanadians for approval: Sergeant Miller

³⁶

RG 24 Vol. 1206 file HQ 297-1-21. Hughes to Whitney, 3 Dec. 1915; *Observer*, 8 Jan. 1916; OA 1D to Secretary of the Militia Council, 12 Jan. 1916 and Adjutant-General Canadian Militia to OC 1D, 15 Jan. 1916; *The Toronto Star*, 3 Jan. 1916; Whitney to Hughes, 19 Jan. 1916.

Bruce, 48th Battery and Private J. A. Gains, C Company, 166 Battalion. Hoping to avoid further confusion, Whitney also wanted to know what areas constituted 1st Division.³⁷

Three months after Whitney started recruiting, he finally met with General Logie. According to Logie, that meeting was the first he had heard of the AfriCanadian platoon. In his report to Ottawa, Logie confessed his reluctance to reassign men without DMD HQ's ruling. Also, while he could not say whether or not Whitney wanted a Commission, Logie claimed that Whitney wanted an AfriCanadian officer for the platoon. When Hodgins asked whether or not any Officers under Logie's command would accept the platoon, Logie, who assumed that DMD HQ understood the problems associated with incorporating an AfriCanadian platoon into "a white man's Battalion." Even before conducting a survey, Logie freely suggested that every OC under his command "would have a very strong objection to accepting a colored platoon." Under these presumed circumstances, Logie refused to recommend an AfriCanadian platoon.³⁸

Following Hodgins notification to Logie that in the absence of a host Battalion, permission to recruit Whitney's platoon was denied, the inglorious task of informing Whitney fell to Captain Trump, who quickly informed Whitney of the dilemma. Furious

³⁷

Ibid. Hughes to Whitney, 26 Jan. 1916; Hodgins to Logie, 3 Feb. 1916; Logie to Secretary of Militia Council, 6 Feb. 1916 and reply A. A. G to Logie, 10 Feb. 1916; Trump to Whitney, 16 Feb. 1916: RG 24 Vol. 4387, file 2D 34-7-141. AAG 2nd Division to Whitney, 12 Feb. 1916; Whitney to Trump, 3 Mar. 1916.

³⁸

RG 24 Vol. 4387 file 34-7-141. GOC 2nd Divisional Area to Secretary of the Militia Council, 4 Mar. 1916: RG 24 Vol. 1206 file HQ 297-1-21. AG to OC 2nd Divisional Area, 8 Mar. 1916: RG 24 Vol. 4387 file 2D 34-7-141. GOC 2nd MD to Secretary of the Militia Council, 10 Mar. 1916.

with the turn of events, Whitney sent a terse letter and a package of documents indicating DMD HQ's initial acceptance of the platoon to 2D HQ. With advertisements for recruits and testimonials of AfriCanadian volunteers emblazoned across the front page of the *Observer*, Whitney asked; "Am I to publish saying that the Government refuses these people, after accepting the proposition." Suggesting that the news "would cause quite a stir," Whitney nonetheless refrained from public condemnations in the hope that a solution was possible. Meanwhile, Whitney continued encouraging AfriCanadians to support the war effort. At Ottawa, Lt. Colonel C.S. MacInnes of the Adjutant-Generals Office prepared a memorandum on AfriCanadian enlistment which eventually became a central part of Gwatkin's profoundly negative tract on AfriCanadian recruits. According to MacInnes, AfriCanadian offers of service were appreciated, however, because AfriCanadians were not wanted as recruits in Canada or as replacements in Europe, it was not in the interest of AfriCanadians or the CEF that men serve where they were not wanted.³⁹

Officials in the House of Commons also faced pressure over the loss of recruits and the insults to loyal Canadians. Following an exchange in the House between William Pugsly, M.P. for St John, and the Acting Minister of Militia, A. E. Kemp, Whitney wrote to correct Kemp on his misleading statements in the House. Whitney also apprised the Acting Minister of past correspondences with Hughes and sent Kemp copies of the *Observer's* recent recruitment issues. Kemp passed Whitney's case over to his Deputy Minister, E. F. Jarvis,

³⁹

RG 24 Vol. 1206 file HQ 297-1-21. Hodgins to Logie, 13 Mar. 1916; Trump to Whitney, 15 Mar. 1916; Whitney to AAG 2D, 24 Mar. 1916; MacInnes to Secretary of the Militia Council, 25 Mar. 1916.

who subsequently requested that Hodgins deal with the matter. Clearly concerned with the mounting political and institutional concerns, Hodgins then asked Logie to see whether there was a unit that would accept an AfriCanadian platoon. Failing this, Hodgins also sought suggestions on how AfriCanadians “might be employed on Military work.” Despite the appearance of concern, Hodgins did little to push Logie towards an anti-racist solution. In fact, by claiming that it was difficult to employ AfriCanadians as reinforcements, Hodgins provided racist officers with an official justification for their actions. Reflecting an entrenched racism and self-supporting paternalism, Hodgins reassured Logie that it was in the ‘better’ interests of the CEF and AfriCanadians that they should not serve where they were not welcomed.⁴⁰

On April 3, a circular from 2D HQ was sent to forty-five OCs, asking if they would accept an AfriCanadian platoon. Interestingly, two OCs claimed that officers under their command had attempted to organize AfriCanadians units, but were ultimately frustrated by military ambivalence. Another OC claimed that enough AfriCanadians had attempted to join his unit to fill a new battalion. Still, this OC was not willing to enlist AfriCanadians. Ignoring the need for future enlistments, a number of Commanders refused to consider taking on more men because their battalions were at or near authorized strength. Faced with the prospect of integration, at least twenty-six OCs flatly refused to accept an AfriCanadian platoon for fear of losing ‘quality’ recruits. Slashing at the few possibilities Whitney had

⁴⁰

RG 24, Vol. 4387 file 2D 34-7-141. Logie to Secretary of Militia Council, 28 Mar. 1916; AAG 2D to Officers Commanding in Second Divisional Area, 3 Apr. 1916; RG 24, Vol. 1206 file HQ 297-1-21. Whitney to Kemp, 29 Mar. 1916; Kemp to Jarvis 30 Mar. 1916; Hodgins to Logie, 31 Mar. 1916; Jarvis to Hodgins, 1 Apr. 1916.

of finding a supportive Battalion, some of the harshest, and incidently the strangest protests, came from Officers in areas where there were substantial or historic AfriCanadian communities. One OC claimed that AfriCanadians would have difficulties with the climate, and the OCs from two Highland units actually argued that because their men wore kilts, AfriCanadians were unacceptable. ⁴¹

After receiving the mostly negative responses from the OCs in his district, Logie reported to Ottawa that no officers were willing to accept Whitney's platoon. After four months of recruiting and wrangling with indifferent officials, the AfriCanadian platoon had few allies. Undaunted, Whitney reported to Hughes that his forty volunteers and "the race as a whole" was "looking forward to the outcome of the Coloured Platoon." Whitney cautioned Hughes that if a home was not found for the AfriCanadian unit, there "will be great disappointment with the Race and ill feeling towards the government." As with his AfriCanadian counterparts across the nation, Whitney's impatience rarely exceeded pragmatism. Whitney expressed his confidence that Hughes would insure that there was a "squire deal" for AfriCanadians if the Minister became "acquainted with the facts." ⁴²

⁴¹

RG 24, Vol. 4387 file 2D, 34-7-141. All responses dated 1916 and addressed to AAG 2 D; OC 173rd, 4 Apr.; OC 92nd, 4 Apr.; OC 119th, 5 Apr.; OC 180th, 5 Apr.; 204th, 4 Apr.; OC 84th, 3 Apr.; OC 83rd, 4 Apr.; OC 98th, 4 Apr.; OC 166th, 5 Apr. 1916; OC 125th, 5 Apr.; OC 204th, 4 Apr.; OC 169th, 4 Apr.; OC 134th, 4 Apr.; OC 116th, 4 Apr.; OC 127th, 5 Apr.; OC 81st, 7 Apr.; OC 220th, 4 Apr.; OC 133rd, 5 Apr.; OC 123rd, 5 Apr.; OC 97th, 5 Apr.; OC 176th, 4 Apr.; OC 95th, 4 Apr.; OC 215th, 4 Apr.; OC 114th, 4 Apr.; OC 147th, 4 Apr.; OC 120th, 4 Apr.; OC 205th, 4 Apr.; OC 86th, 6 Apr.; OC 208th, 4 Apr.; OC 76th, 4 Apr.; OC 201st, 4 Apr.; OC 170th, 5 Apr.; OC 177th, 5 Apr.; OC 182nd, 5 Apr.; OC 157th, 6 Apr.; OC 216th, 6 Apr.; OC 227th, 6 Apr.; OC 164th, 6 Apr.; OC 122nd, 7 Apr.

⁴²

Ibid. GOC 2D to Secretary of the Militia Council, 10 Apr. 1916: RG 24, Vol. 1206 file HQ,

In the end, Whitney and most AfriCanadians did not get a square deal. Nevertheless, by mid-April 1916, the socio-political pressure exerted by AfriCanadians and their supporters finally led to a detailed military response. In a scathing memorandum on AfriCanadian enlistment Gwatkin's summarised the sentiments of a number of Militia officials who had entered the enlistment debate. According to Gwatkin; "The civilized negro is vain and imitative; in Canada he is not being impelled to enlist by a high sense of duty; in the trenches he is not likely to make a good fighter." Contending that the average 'White' man did not view AfriCanadians as equals, Gwatkin paternally repeated that "it would be humiliating" for AfriCanadians to serve where they were not wanted. Gwatkin also feared placing a "black battalion CEF" into the front lines, because it would "crowd out a white battalion," and at the same time be difficult to reinforce. Nor could AfriCanadians act as reinforcements for other units. Gwatkin was also reluctant to use AfriCanadians troops in Canada because "if they were any good at all, they would resent" being left behind. Under the circumstances, Gwatkin suggested three courses of action: continue with the present policy of individual recruitment; form a labour battalion, for which Gwatkin believed that AfriCanadians in Nova Scotia were especially suitable; or failing these two ideas, send an AfriCanadian CEF unit on special assignment with the British Forces somewhere outside of Europe. Still, Gwatkin was concerned that because AfriCanadians, as Canadian soldiers, were better paid, they might "not mix well with other [African or Indian] troops."⁴³ Clearly,

297-1-21. Whitney to Hughes, 18 Apr. 1916; Whitney to Hughes, 18 Apr. 1916.

⁴³

RG 24 Vol. 1206, HQ 297-1-21. Gwatkin to Kemp, 13 Apr. 1916.

AfriCanadians were not the men Gwatkin wanted, the immediate approval of his memo attests to the difficulties AfriCanadians faced when seeking enlistments. Yet, as the AfriCanadian enlistment campaign seemed at an end, two events occurred which paradoxically concluded and introduced two important phases of the AfriCanadian war drama. Ironically, one of these events was Canadian-born, and the other emanated from Great Britain.

Early in March 1916, Sam Hughes attempted to exert his selective, yet declining influence over Militia officials. After receiving Whitney's "square deal" letter, Hughes telegraphed Logie demanding to know by what authority Trump had refused Whitney's platoon. Clearly lacking patience and deference, Logie replied that Trump's actions were in accordance with the Hodgins' orders. Four days later, Hodgins was called before Hughes to explain what Hughes should have known. Honorary or ornery officials at Ottawa and across the country knew what was going on, and by whose authority Whitney's platoon was denied. As custom dictated, it was within each OCs authority that an AfriCanadian unit could live or die. By 1916, it was clear that few officers, recruiters or politicians were willing to take the necessary steps to make AfriCanadian enlistment possible.⁴⁴

While the prospects for an AfriCanadian combat unit were bleached away by high level Militia racism, the European Front's unquenchable thirst for manpower and resources finally offered an opening for AfriCanadian service. Significantly, it was not the opening most AfriCanadian correspondents wanted, and AfriCanadians were not considered first for

⁴⁴

Ibid. Hughes to Logie, 3 May 1916 and reply 4 May 1916

the new assignment. Sadly, when the offer finally came to form the Number Two Construction Battalion (No. 2 CB), the OC of the No. 1 CB complained that the existence of an AfriCanadian unit would tarnish the reputation of his Battalion. Nevertheless, the No. 2 CB was authorized and many of those previously refused enlistment joined the Battalion. Unfortunately, by 1916, many AfriCanadians had lost their patriotism and refused to serve with a unit that was born out of socio-political prejudice and military pragmatism.

Conclusion:

Although many AfriCanadians saw themselves in the patriotic images of Canada's war-time propaganda machine they were not the 'chums' Canada's Militia and Patriotic institutions wanted to send overseas. At the regional and national level, AfriCanadians volunteers faced serious opposition to enlistment. While the refusal to accept AfriCanadians as individuals was, to some extent, rooted in the actions of other individuals, it was also premised on collective concerns. Sam Hughes' sweeping claim that AfriCanadians could join any unit they wished was inconsistent with the national reality. Although some AfriCanadians did manage to enter CEF units, their enlistment did not outweigh the pervasive denial of larger-scale AfriCanadian enlistment. Officials at Ottawa did enquire about the racist problems in the regions, however, very little was done to insure that an inclusive 'theory' overturned a racist 'practice.' In fact, Gwatkin's contention that AfriCanadians were not capable of true patriotism or military valour merely fed into the presumed fear that AfriCanadians were difficult to integrate into a 'White mans army.' Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that when Hodgins made enquires with Fowler,

Logie, Cruickshanks and the OC 6D, he did not dispute the right of an OC to refuse the enlistments. Compounding the problems for AfriCanadian enlistment was that when non-AfriCanadians who might otherwise take refuge in their status as patriots, attempted to intercede on behalf of AfriCanadians, they, too discovered that AfriCanadian enlistment schemes were not desired. Contrary to the racist element within the socio-political institutions they occupied, L. S. Clarke, Captain Langford, Lieutenant Colonel B. McLeod, M. F. McCurdy, William Pugsly and J. F. Tupper, attempted to include AfriCanadians in the war effort. As with their AfriCanadian allies, non-AfriCanadians also failed to overturn a dangerous social reality.

After two years of regional and national debate, AfriCanadians and their supporters were hard pressed to break the vicious cycle of military racism and social ambivalence. As evidenced by the plights of Alexander Bramah, Samuel Reece, Roger Butler, Benjamin Washington, Henry Courtney and Franklin Talbot, individual AfriCanadians were prevented from service because of their cultural heritage. When AfriCanadians Arthur Alexander, George Morton, J. T. Richards, K. L. Hamilton, Henry Munton, J. R. B. Whitney, and the Reverends White and Washington sought remedies to the situations, they quickly learned the power of the racist forces within the CEF system. Those AfriCanadians who did intercede on behalf of their brethren were important and respected members of the AfriCanadian community. Their relative failure to rectify the situation is not simply a reflection on the limitations of their choice of tactics. It also highlights the general disrespect non-AfriCanadian civil and military officials had for certain community leaders, concerned citizens, and individuals facing a racist situation; racist officials easily dismissed Arthur

Alexander, George Morton, J. T. Richards, K. L. Hamilton, Henry Munton, J. R. B. Whitney, and the Reverends White and Washington.

As Canadians plunged into a 'Baptism by Fire,' AfriCanadian patriotism was suppressed by a 'Baptism by Paradox.' Between 1914 and 1916, and long before the "war to end all wars" became a "war to save democracy," AfriCanadians were fighting a race war in Canada. As AfriCanadians and their supporters battled with civil and military officials, the conflict quickly became public. For the members of a small yet profoundly articulate African-centered press corps, the denial of enlistments, the need to remain patriotic and the opportunity to establish post war objectives were 'Pressing Issues' that required clear and decisive action.

CHAPTER 3

PRESSING ISSUES

In these days of aggression it[behooves] us, as a people, to map out some definite plan for our advancement and march onward...

The Atlantic Advocate, April 1915

The Canadian Army Is To Have a Coloured Unit

The Canadian Observer, January 1916

The second construction battalion consisting of Canadian coloured men and a good number of American negroes has arrived in England.

The Crisis Magazine, June 1917

Often unable or unwilling to address the complexities of censorship and propaganda, Canada's initial control over the war-time press was clumsily managed by a mix of federal and provincial authorities. Operating under a 1906 statute and a 1914 Order-in-Council, a mix of departments only managed to identify and suppress the most belatedly anti-war publications for most of the war. Yet, when left relatively free to report the Great War, the Canadian Press played an important part in maintaining a patriotic front. Caught in a curious blend of journalistic savvy and nationalistic fervour, the Press' thirst for victorious headlines and gripping narratives sometimes lead to stories that compromised military operations. By the end of the war, the Press was muzzled by oppressive censorship. However, in the interests of national unity, most periodicals willingly submitted to Ottawa's control. Significantly, excessive and exaggerated war stories did not stop with censorship. In fact,

the Press' national loyalties often meant that the 'war news' was accompanied by editorials and images designed to inspire a spirit of patriotic voluntarism and personal sacrifice.¹

By examining the Press' articulation of certain war aspirations and social conditions, historians of the Canadian war experience have gained a deeper understanding of the significance of the war on Canadian society. Besides the obvious jingoistic propaganda, local and national periodicals describe social and economic conditions that might otherwise escape documentation. Depending on the cultural or political affiliations of a publication's managers or readers, Canada's war time periodicals also help to concentrate our historic focus on specific or interrelated cultures and political events. Unfortunately, historians of the AfriCanadian war experience have not extensively considered the role played by the African-centered Press during the First World War. In light of the dearth of material, this omission, to some extent, is understandable. However, because one important periodical, the *Canadian Observer*, is located in the same military records used by most historians of the AfriCanadian war experience, the decision to subdue this historical document is curious and problematic. Also missing from past studies, the *Atlantic Advocate Magazine*, complements the *Observer* in offering distinct, yet, interconnected examples of AfriCanadian community life. As previously unexplored expressions of AfriCanadian socio-political thought, the *Advocate* and *Observer's* reportage and social calendars provide historical context for the

1

Jeff Keshen. Censorship and Propaganda During Canada's Great War. (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1996): 3-25, 68; Peter Buitenuis. The Great War of Words: British, American, and Canadian Propaganda and Fiction, 1914-1933. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987):1-20, 80, 100,134-139; R. Matthew Bray, "Fighting as an Ally': The English-Canadian Patriotic Response to the Great War," Canadian Historical Review. (77: 2, 1980): 141-168.

AfriCanadian enlistment campaign. Published in New York, the *Crisis Magazine* was mainly concerned with African American issues, nevertheless, the magazine was critical of Canada's racist immigration and enlistment practices and eventually joined with the *Advocate* and *Observer* to report AfriCanadian war-time events.²

Drawn into the AfriCanadian enlistment campaign through shared interests and readership, the *Advocate*, *Observer*, and *Crisis*, provide rare and interconnected African centered perspectives on regional, national and international conceptions of race, the war, and post-war democratic societies. Although rooted in unique Canadian and American experiences, these publications purposefully achieved relevant ideological sway outside of their geo-political domains. Often complementing the evidence found in governmental records, these publications add important texture to the AfriCanadian enlistment campaign. This chapter examines the socio-military role played by these African-centered periodicals during the AfriCanadian enlistment and recruitment campaign.

The Canadian Observer

Established at Toronto, Ontario, by "the clever young editor and publisher," Joseph R. B. Whitney, the *Canadian Observer* celebrated its first year in print on December 13,

2

National Archives of Canada, RG 24, Vol. 1206 file HQ 297-1-21. *Canadian Observer*, hereafter *Observer*: Public Archives of Nova Scotia, Microfilm 3207. *The Atlantic Advocate*, hereafter, *Advocate*: *The Crisis Magazine*, October 1916, May 1917, January 1918, hereafter *Crisis*. In his discussion of AfriCanadian periodicals, Robin Winks does not discuss the *Observer* or *Advocate*. Curiously however, Wink's outline of the events leading up to the creation of the No. 2 CB includes references to the *Observer*'s Editor, J. R. B. Whitney, and his campaign against military racism.

1915, at Toronto's BME Church, Chestnut Street. The following day, at least four area newspapers published favourable reports about the evenings festivities, and the *Toronto Globe* heralded the *Observer* as the "Organ of the Colored Folk." Devoted "to the welfare of the race throughout the Dominion and the universe," *Observer's* weekly message of race pride and self-help was complemented by a series of AfriCanadian news items. From 1916 until at least 1918, Whitney's home and the offices of the *Observer* were located at 154 Jones Avenue. Employed as a Clerk with the Canadian Northern Railway during 1912-13, Whitney also worked for Mackenzie, Mann and Company between 1914-1918. As the Founding Editor, Whitney was praised for his vision and drive by subscribers from Ontario, Nova Scotia and St Kitts. Besides gaining recognition as a publisher, Whitney also served as the Secretary of Toronto's Eureka Lodge Number Twenty until he was replaced by W. T. Williams in January 1916. Significantly, Eureka Lodge Twenty and a number of AfriCanadian Lodges, Fraternal Orders and Churches also published their meeting notices in the *Observer*.³

Clearly loyal to the Dominion and Empire, *Observer's* propagation of AfriCanadian war aims offered alternatives where derision and apathy had eroded AfriCanadian patriotism. Only one of the seven available copies of *Observer* did not print a front page story related to AfriCanadian enlistment. From December 18, 1915 to March 18, 1916, *Observer* front pages were emblazoned with militaristic images. Most of the cover stories

3

Observer, 18 Dec. 1915, 8 Jan. 1916, 22 Jan. 1916, 26 Feb. 1916, 4 Mar. 1916, 18 Mar. 1916: Toronto City Directory, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1916, 1918. While at the Canadian Northern Railway, Whitney home was at 41 Buchanan Street.

from January to mid-March 1916 were also bordered by war news, accounts of patriotic events and the details of AfriCanadian social advances. Although, by early winter 1916, AfriCanadians were accustomed to the racist chill of Militia officials, Whitney did not use the *Observer* as a platform to launch a public protest. Maintaining his position as a loyal and patriotic member of the Canadian press, Whitney did however take action as racism collided with AfriCanadian war aims. Shortly after contacting the Minister of Militia and Defence, Whitney began raising an AfriCanadian unit for the CEF. Ultimately defeated by stronger social-political forces, Whitney's recruitment attempts ironically faded into history just prior to Canadian Governments' authorization of the No. 2 CB. What happen to Whitney, and why his services were not used to recruit men for the No 2 CB remains unclear. Nonetheless, Whitney's *Observer* was an important link in this chain of historical events that led to the creation of the Battalion. ⁴

As events unfolded in Ontario, AfriCanadians in Nova Scotia also moved to publically articulate their war-time aspirations. Contrary to Whitney's role as the sole proprietor of the *Observer*, AfriCanadians on the east coast were supported by a periodical that was staffed by a team of writers and editors. Although the staff of Halifax's *Atlantic Advocate* did go on to help recruit men for the No.2 CB, they, too, were struck by the bitter ironies of military racism.

4

RG 24, Vol. 1206, file HQ 297-1-21. D.M.D. HQ Memorandum, 15 Apr. 1916 and attachments, 17-18 Apr. 1916; Canadian Militia Council meeting report, 19 Apr. 1916; DMD HQ to Trooper, London, England, 19 Apr. 1916; DMD HQ to Trooper, London, England, 10 May and reply, 11 May 1916.

The Atlantic Advocate

“Devoted to the Interests of the Colored People,” *The Atlantic Advocate Magazine* was launched at Halifax, Nova Scotia, in April 1915, by a group of middling-class AfriCanadians. Hoping that their people would give the journal favourable consideration, *Advocate’s* staff attempted;

to show our people the need for unity, the desire to stand always for the right, to keep before them the dignity of true and honest toil; to teach them to keep themselves sober, temperate and honest; to encourage them to march steadily on with the true determination to work, save and endure; always keeping their mind’s eye on the great goal of progress.⁵

For ten cents an issue, readers received a variety of African-centered articles discussing history, religion, economics, politics, diplomacy, domestic life and community events. While maintaining an aggressive position on AfriCanadian pride and self-help, the *Advocate* was also tempered by a devotion to progressive Christianity and British Imperialism.⁶



Image 2

Although most of the magazine’s founders were not from the Maritime Provinces, the *Advocate* was rooted in the Atlantic experience. The *Advocate’s* President and Associate Editor, Wilfred A. DeCosta, emigrated from Jamaica around 1908-1909, and was living at

⁵

Advocate, April, 1915.

⁶

Philip L. Hartling, *The Atlantic Advocate, Nova Scotia’s First Black Magazine*, an unpublished brief history with biographical sketches of the *Advocate* staff, ca. 1991.

Halifax with his wife Miriam and their two children when he proposed the idea of the magazine. Miriam A. DeCosta, the *Advocate's* Secretary from 1915 to 1917, was a contributing author and once served as Treasurer. George Roache, a native of Halifax, was the magazine's first, and perhaps only, Vice-President. The proprietor of Roache's Lunch Room, Roache was a successful business person with kin and social relations that extended into AfriCanadian community. The *Advocate's* first Editor, Mowbray Fitzgerald Jemmott, was a native of Bridgetown, Barbados, who taught school in Newfoundland before coming to Nova Scotia. In 1903, Jemmott married Teresa Esther Clayton of Halifax, and it was in their Gottingen Street home that the magazine's offices were originally located. The *Advocate's* last Publishing Editor, Dr. Clement Courtney Ligoure, was born at San Fernando, Trinidad, had studied Medicine at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, before coming to Halifax in 1917. From 1917-1921, Ligoure owned and operated Amada Private Hospital on North Street. In 1917, the *Advocate's* offices were also moved to North Street, and it was there that the last available issue of the paper was prepared. Ethelbert L. Cross, who was also born in San Fernando, Trinidad, served as the *Advocate's* Editor for January 1917, issue. A journalist by trade, Cross came to Halifax 1916, and resided at 41 Barrington Street, before moving to Ligoure's residence at North Street.⁷

Unfortunately, *Advocate* did not survive the war years. Contrary to the curiously

7

Advocate, April, 1915, January 1917, April, 1917, May 1917: Hartling, 1-4: PANS RG 83 Vol. 3 No. 12.16, Admitting Cards Queens University Medical Faculty, 1917-09 and 1912-13; Letter of Certificate for C.C. Ligoure, Medical Faculty of Queen's University, 4 May 1916: NAC, RG 150, 1992-93/166, DeCosta, Wilfred A., 931353; Cross, Ethelbert, Lionel., 931405.

quiet departure of the *Observer* from the AfriCanadian enlistment campaign, the *Advocate*'s last days were marked by bitter controversy. Interestingly, the three available issues of *Advocate* for 1917, reveal a transition from strong support for a segregated AfriCanadian unit to contemptuous disappointment with the events around the departure of the No. 2 CB. In contrast to the *Advocate*'s patriotic call to "Duty," in the winter of 1917, the magazine published a harsh critique of the Battalion's departure that Spring. Bitterly disappointed with the No.2's recruitment and embarkation process, the *Advocate* even pondered the post-war demise of the British Empire. Yet, before this transition, *Advocate*'s reportage, and editorial policy were loyal and patriotic. Sometimes beaming with pride over AfriCanadian participation in the war, *Advocate* never lost sight of its bootstrapping convictions. Three member's of the *Advocate*'s staff were recruiters for No. 2 CB. Wilfred A. DeCosta, and E L. Cross, eventually joined the Battalion, and Dr. Clement C. Ligoure spent seven months recruiting for the unit. ⁸

Clearly a significant voice in the articulation of AfriCanadian war aspirations, the *Advocate* emerged as a strong proponent of the No. 2 CB. As a 'recruiting' journal, the *Advocate*, similar to the *Observer*, eventually collided with Canadian racism. While both of these AfriCanadian periodicals remained relatively uncritical of socio-military racism, an African American counterpart, the *Crisis Magazine*'s refused to conform to the principles of the Canadian Patriotic Press.

8

Advocate, January 1917, April 1917: RG 9 II, B 9, Vol. 39, file 748, Nominal Roll, No. 2 Construction Battalion, March 28, 1917: RG 150, 1992-93/166, DeCosta, Wilfred A., 931353; Cross, Ethelbert, Lionel., 931405: Hartling, 1-4.

The Crisis Magazine

Published at New York, NY, *The Crisis Magazine*, was the official periodical of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Edited by W. E. B. DuBois, *Crisis* consciously cut across the geo-political boundaries of the African Diaspora. Significantly, DuBois' scholarship, editorial convictions and political activities, staunchly opposed the global expansion of white supremacy. Although the *Crisis*' position on the War was mediated by the American experience, DuBois' passion diasporic issues often extended into Canadian affairs. Critical of Canadian social policies and practices, *Crisis* also reported African social advances and commented on AfriCanadian war-time actions. While remaining loyal to western conceptions of democracy, *Crisis* often sarcastically commented on the 'fairness' of the British Empire and the savagery of Belgian and German expansion into Africa.⁹

Interestingly, one of DuBois' powerful critiques of the globalization of white supremacist culture did not appear in the *Crisis*. Early in May 1915, DuBois' "The African Roots of War," was published in the *Atlantic Monthly*. This article poignantly drew attention away from the confused maze of alliances, socio-political rivalries and arms races that characterized European continental diplomacy before the War. For DuBois, the causes of the First World War were rooted in the Berlin Conference of 1884. It was at the Berlin Conference that Great Britain, France, Portugal, Italy, Spain, Germany and Belgium agreed

⁹

Crisis, (Nov. 1914):14, 28; (Dec. 1914): 68.

to divide African lands and peoples in a mad scramble for the human and material wealth of the Africa continent. Without dismissing the existence of nationalism, patriotism, class divisions and 'ancestor worship' that pervaded European society, DuBois nonetheless argued that Europeans wanted to protect the "wealth, power and luxury of all classes on a scale the world never saw before." Although DuBois' "African Roots of War" originally appeared in the Atlantic Monthly, elements of his thesis made their way into the pages of the *Crisis*. In fact, from November 1914-1918, the *Crisis* relentlessly pounded at the ironies of African troops drawn from their occupied homelands to "protect the civilization of Europe against itself." Even in the face of harsh criticism from NAACP Board Members, DuBois continued to highlight the paradoxes of Senegalese, Congolese, and South African troops fighting, dying and working for the "Christian" nations that "murdered and robbed" in African without fear of international or celestial reprisals.¹⁰

Despite the *Crisis*' predominantly American and trans-Atlantic orientation, the magazine was important for AfriCanadians and Africans in Canada. A number of *Crisis*' references to Canada appeared as letters to the Editor and socio-political news. From Edmonton, G. J. Jones wrote to thank the magazine for showing him "how to vote for

¹⁰

W. E. Burghardt. "The African Roots of War," Atlantic Monthly. (Vol. 115: Jan.-June, 1915): 707-714; Elliotte M. Rudwick. "W. E. B. DuBois in the Role of *Crisis* Editor," Journal of Negro History (43:3, July, 1958): 214-240; *Crisis*, (Nov. 1914): 14; (Dec. 1914): 69: Throughout the War, DuBois published numerous items that attacked the racist underpinnings of the war in Europe and America's hypocritical position as a protector of freedom and democracy. To attempt a full discussion of these works would take too much attention away from the AfriCanadian recruitment/enlistment discussion. For further details of DuBois's Editorial position see the Editorials, Opinions, Letters to the Editor and Special War Issues of the *Crisis* during the war years.

principles rather than parties.” When, in early 1916, the Canadian Pacific Railroad in Québec began to permit AfriCanadian cooks and waiters on the Montreal-to-Quebec City run, *Crisis* noted the occasion. Later, Philip Savoy, a student at McGill University, claimed that the *Crisis* was “one of the most potent educational factors before the public.” For Savoy, the *Crisis*’s historical discussions and critical analysis of contemporary events, provided Africans with the information required to refute racist arguments. As part of its continental coverage of the events around the racist film ‘Birth of a Nation,’ *Crisis* also happily reported that the film was barred from Halifax, Nova Scotia. After “reading your [*Crisis*] valuable paper for the last three months,” Kenneth L. Hamilton, the Secretary of the British Negro Protection Association at St. John, New Brunswick, was directed to express the BNPA’s appreciation for the work of the *Crisis*’ staff. In December 1915, Hamilton wrote to the Governor General of Canada to report the racist conduct of Militia officials in New Brunswick. Prior to his involvement with the pro-AfriCanadian enlistment campaign, Hamilton was also engaged in a desegregation campaign in the city of St. John.¹¹

Not all the letters from Canada were complimentary. In March, 1917, after receiving a letter from “a bumptious colored correspondent from Canada,” who was angered by the *Crisis*’ critique of British attitudes towards Africans, the magazine defended its position. Besides criticizing Britain’s failure to establish universities in Africa, *Crisis* condemned the Canadian refusal to fully support African and West Indian medical students. According to a report from a student at McGill University, “British Negroes” were unable to finish their

11

Crisis, (June 1916): 60, 95; (Sept. 1916):250; (Oct. 1916): 293; RG 24 Vol. 1206 file HQ 297-1-21. Hamilton to Governor General of Canada, 29 Dec. 1915.

clinical rotations because “of the objections to their presence in the hospital.” In light of this information, *Crisis* “humbly” suggested that its bumptious Canadian critic “use some of his explosive force at home.”¹²

As the cross-border debates raged, *Crisis* continued to report anti-racist victories on both sides of 49th parallel. Following a Canadian attack on the American South’s record of African American lynchings, an irate Texan tried to explain that all Southerners did not support lynching. However, he was soundly harangued by a Canadian who contended that if, as noted by the Texan, the Southern professional classes were “genuinely indignant” in the face of lynchings, the Southern professional’s social influence “must be painfully small.” According to daily events, it was therefore clear that, “it is the common man who counts...he who determines the selection of the governor...he whose pressure...decides whether or not the majesty of the law shall be protected.”¹³

In taking an Afrocentric position on events north and south of the 49th Parallel, *Crisis* joined with the *Advocate* and *Observer* to articulate nationalistic and anti-German conceptions of the War. Besides expressing hawkish opinions about the war in Europe, these periodicals also extolled the virtues of AfriCanadian martial actions during the War.

¹²

Crisis, (March 1917): 215.

¹³

Crisis, (March 1917): 215.

Hawkish Opinions and Martial Actions

As with many English-language publications in North America, the *Observer*, *Advocate* and *Crisis*, glowingly reported Allied activities. Sometimes questioning war-time policies, the *Observer*, *Advocate* and *Crisis* often projected domestic concerns onto the international landscape. While remaining loyal to Canadian, British and American conceptions of democracy, these periodicals argued that cultural or social progress at home depended on decisive action in the defence of democratic principles.

Ready to stand for King and Country, the *Observer* charged into print with hawkish patriotism early in 1916. Accordingly, after eighteen months of war, the forces of “militarism and the great monster against freedom” were running free in Serbia and Belgium. With the help of her loyal Dominions, Colonies and Allies, Great Britain was holding on, but more help was needed. Leaving just enough room to reach the proper conclusion, *Observer* demanded that its readers “Inventory Yourself In Relation To The War.” Contending that some who had died “have been your neighbours and friends,” *Observer* reminded the ‘stay-at-homes’ that if “others had not felt the call for duty... your slumbers would be disturbed long ere this by the enemy.” When Prime Minister Borden announced his intentions to increase Canada’s overseas commitment, *Observer* confessed some surprise, but praised Borden for a political stance that “had not failed in its dramatic effect.” Pushing to maintain a spirit of voluntarism, *Observer* assured patrons that at the rate of one thousand men per day, “the half-million mark will be reached before the close of the year.” Pleased to report that fourteen men had come forward for Whitney’s proposed unit, *Observer* confidently argued “that the response of the race in general throughout

Canada will be sufficiently hearty to meet the expectations of a coloured platoon and later on for a battalion, if needs be.”¹⁴

Offering patriotic clues of the proper use of military force, *Observer* also published the British Navel and Military Toasts. Revelling in the firm leadership of Parliament, and buoyed by Britain’s fortitude at sea and valour in the field, these toasts maintained that British forces always were courageous in the face of danger and disaster. Naturally, the Empire would always emerge as a merciful victor. One week later and still heartened that AfriCanadian would rally to a company of their own, *Observer* nonetheless insisted that “Stay-At-Homes Must Give Sufficient Reasons.” Shamelessly drawing on Greek fables and nineteenth century history, *Observer* cast the ‘stay at homes’ as Aesop’s Wagoner and the British Empire as the God-King Jupiter. Then, reminding readers of Napoleon Bonaparte’s successful deployment of constant crushing force, *Observer* demanded that the men at home realize they were needed in Europe. Metaphorically concluding that, “Leaving it to the gods or some other fellow will accomplish nothing,” *Observer* insisted that, “If the British Empire is to achieve victory, individually and nationally we must put our shoulders to the wheel.” From Collingwood, Ontario, an anecdotal piece, “When The Kaiser Went To Heaven,” mused that following the death of “Kaiser Bill,” the German Monarch was stopped at the Gates of Heaven. After a clerk at the Gate recounted the details of Kaiser’s two charitable donations, Saint Peter retorted; “Write this man a cheque for \$5.25 and send him down to Hell.” Ever cautious of nationalistic opportunities, *Observer* went on to tout Canada’s

¹⁴

Observer, 8 Jan. 1916; 15 Jan. 1916.

continuing generosity and sacrifice during the war.¹⁵

If these trans-Atlantic reflections failed to insight patriotic fervour, the reprinting Dr. C. C. James' historical comparison between the War in Europe, and the American Civil War were intended to inspire a distinctly Canadian audience. For James, both wars were conflicts over the right to equal opportunity and position between the races. In 1915-16, however, it was Canada's emerging democracy that was at stake. Profoundly supportive of an equitable post-war society, James reasoned that if all Canadians were fighting in the trenches, they should "stand together as opportunity comes." Unfortunately, James mistakenly argued "that the young coloured man who steps up and offers himself as a recruit is allowed to take his place right along side the white man." Clearly, Whitney knew this was not always the case. Nevertheless, the decision to publish the remarks attests to the Editors' desire to maintain a patriotic front, and to focus attention on the post-war rewards that awaited patriotic AfriCanadians. Eventually printing British Prime Minister Asquith's declaration that, "We shall never sheath the sword ... until the military domination of Prussia is wholly and finally destroyed," *Observer* also offered AfriCanadians alternatives to front line service. Some AfriCanadians were advised to help secure recruits for overseas, while others were told to contribute a portion of their savings to the young Dominion. A few weeks later, at Windsor, Ontario, the Good Government Club held a patriotic concert that raised seven hundred dollars. Pleased to report that AfriCanadians were participating "in the great fight for freedom," *Observer* praised the events organizers, Rev. C. L. Wells and Mr. James

¹⁵

Observer, 15 Jan. 1916, 22 Jan. 1916.

Nall, and reminded the 'stay at homes' that they must reconsider what they were doing to protect the country.¹⁶

Meanwhile at Halifax the *Atlantic Advocate* called for unity and purposeful actions. Rooted in history and contemporary events Ralphe Pickering's 'The Need of Unity' declared that; "In these days of aggression it behoves us, as a people, to map out some definite plan for our advancement and march onward, never despairing, always with our eyes fixed on the goal." For Pickering, AfriCanadians had to cast aside the 'false teachings' they had received during "the days of our cruel and unprovoked oppression," and foster confidence in themselves. Believing that unity was virtue that brought strength, honour and recognition to its possessors, Pickering advised AfriCanadians to set aside their differences, patronize each others' businesses and form social/trade organizations. Building on Pickering's call for unity, DeCosta's 'Right Thinking' claimed that, "the brain of man has made him the master of the world" and "the races with the best brains invariably win in the long run." For DeCosta, AfriCanadian social progress was rooted in the community's ability to organize each person's thoughts, and reject "every mode of thinking or judging which does not make him better and stronger."¹⁷

Sometimes beaming with pride over the AfriCanadian war effort, *Advocate* reported

¹⁶

Observer, 18 Dec. 1915, 22 Jan. 1916, 26 Feb. 1915, 4 Mar. 1916: In December 1915, Dr. C.C. James was one of the guest speakers at the *Observer's* anniversary celebrations. The text of his speech was published in *Observer* on December 18, 1915 and portions of the same address were republished on January 22, 1916, to support the newspapers enlistment/recruitment campaign.

¹⁷

Advocate, April 1915

that Africans were serving with the CEF and working on the Home Front. With New Glasgow, Nova Scotia's factories running day and night, many AfriCanadian were working for the munitions industry, while others were employed as coal miners. At Digby, twelve AfriCanadians joined the 112th Battalion, and a patriotic service was held at the Baptist Joggins Church. By January 1917, "the pastor, relatives and friends" of the men serving with the 112th, had received letters from the AfriCanadian soldiers, "expressing their delight with the old city of London," and that they were treated well. Besides the men with the 112th, *Advocate* reported on a number of other AfriCanadian CEF men. Lester Ince, a native of Barbados, had joined the 60th Battalion and was reported at the Front. A. Gabriel of the RCR was still in Canada. Thanks to a copy of the *Jamaican Gleaner* supplied by Lance Corporal Henry Perks of the 63rd Battalion, H. S. Bunbury's patriotic tribute to Jamaican soldiers, 'Song for the Men,' was also published by *Advocate*. At Chatham, Ontario, the Evangeline Chapter of the Daughters of the Empire gave a Christmas party at the Clayton home for a group of Jamaican soldiers. Under the direction of the Regent and "chairmen of the committee," Mrs. W. H. Piers and Mrs. Harvey Doane, the troops were treated to an evening of song and celebration. After enjoying the "smokes, candy and fruit" laid out by the young ladies of the Chapter, "everyone of the gallant fellows" received a parting gift. In May 1917, the *Advocate* reported that Sergeant C. J. Halfkenny of the 106th Battalion was forced to return to Canada from England because of his medical condition.¹⁸

The No.2 CB was established on July 5, 1916, and by the fall, three members of the

18

Advocate, April 1915; January 1917; May 1917.

Advocate's staff began recruiting and training the Battalion. In January 1917, Sergeant Wilfred A. DeCosta issued a resounding call to "Duty" in *Advocate*. Contending that "Duty" was a concept fraught with diverse meanings and ramifications, DeCosta believed that people either shirked, relented to, or happily volunteered when called to perform their personal, social and political responsibilities. Skirting the line between obligations to church and state, DeCosta claimed that the "one topic of discussion to-day among people of all classes, all parties, all religions all ages" was the War. Embracing the War as a necessary evil in the evolution of human consciousness, DeCosta reasoned that all participants were "learning lessons which the piping times of peace could not afford." Torn between the actions of war and the quest for human perfection, DeCosta was clearly moved by the prevalence of national self-sacrifice brought on by the War. Drawn away from "their own fire side[s]" citizens of the 'civilized' world were learning the importance of discipline, obedience, courage and patience before pleasure. For DeCosta, the test before AfriCanadians was to view the War as a practical learning experience as well as a moral step towards "universal peace," in which the human race had an opportunity to perform noble and unselfish deeds.¹⁹

Similar to its Canadian counterparts, the *Crisis* was cautiously optimistic that Canada would follow the Allied policy on African troop deployment in Europe. Early in the War, *Crisis* published letters to the Editor which argued that Great Britain should, and would call on its African and Indian troops. Stuck by Germany's protest over the Allied use of

¹⁹

Advocate, January 1917.

African troops, *Crisis* chastised Germany for attempting to incite a religious war in the Mediterranean. Accordingly, the magazine branded German protest of the use of non-European troops as hypocritical and racist. Nevertheless, readers were not certain of the cultural perceptions of their Canadian neighbours. One reader asked questioned whether or not Canadians would refuse to fight alongside the Caribbeans and Indians who were refused immigration into Canada.²⁰

Despite the difficulties their readers faced, the *Advocate*, *Observer* and *Crisis* maintained hawkish opinions about the war. Rather than holding out for serious immediate change on the home front, the *Advocate* and *Observer* encouraged AfriCanadians to either entered the CEF, or join the war effort in Canada. When the No. 2 CB was finally authorized, the *Advocate* and *Crisis* carried a number of items on the Battalion. Leading the pro-enlistment/recruitment campaigns of these journals were a small group of dedicated Recruiting Editors.

Recruiting Editors

Despite the *Observer's* patriotism, Whitney was not blind to Canadian racism. Eventually admitting that, "Justice has not been dealt us in every pursuit in life," *Observer* nonetheless advised AfriCanadians to move beyond the "narrow-minded individuals" who made Canadian life difficult and recognize that it was time to "stand for justice and really know what it means." Bolstered by the fact that some AfriCanadians had enlisted with CEF

²⁰

Crisis, (Nov. 1914): 15, 17.

units, *Observer* reasoned that it was time to form an AfriCanadian unit “and in unity let us prove our worth to the country and the Empire.” Meanwhile, Whitney had approached military officials with his plan to raise an AfriCanadian unit. Early in January 1916, *Observer* reported that Sam Hughes and General Logie, had, “Definitely approved plans to raise a company composed of members of our race.” Contending that Ottawa required at least sixty volunteers before authorizing a company, *Observer* published a cut-out information slip for volunteers to return to the Recruiting Editor, Whitney. The following week, Thomas S. Dockery of Toronto was heralded as the first man to offer enlistment. Although most of the fourteen men who came forward that week were from Toronto, Franklin B. Talbot of Owen Sound, was noted as the most distant of the respondents. Clearly focussed on positive results, *Observer* claimed, “that the response of the race in general through out Canada will be sufficiently hearty to meet the expectations of a coloured platoon and later on for a battalion, if needs be.”²¹

As volunteers came forward, Whitney began publishing the enlistment testimonials of his ‘recruits.’ On January 15, 1916, Russell A. Miller, a native of London, Ontario, responded to *Observer*’s ‘CALL FOR RECRUITS.’ Acknowledging his support for *Observer*’s efforts “in the good cause in this great war,” Miller gave Whitney permission to use his name “in the hope that you will get more men.” A seemingly perfect recruit, Miller was twenty-one years old, single and employed as a teamster. According to Miller, there were “many young fellows here that would go if they [existing units] would only take them

²¹

Observer, 18 Dec. 1915, 8 Jan. 1916, 15 Jan. 1916: RG 24 Vol. 1206 file HQ 297-1-21. Hughes to Whitney, 3 Dec. 1915.

on now.” Obviously pleased with Miller’s letter, Whitney published it on January 22, 1916. By then, eighteen men had volunteered for the ‘Colored Platoon,’ and from as far away as St Kitts, Reverend J. Morris, had offered to serve as company chaplain.²²

Back at Owen Sound, Franklin Talbot’s earlier commitment to the AfriCanadian unit was backed up by Henry Francis Courtney’s claim that he wanted “to go with the Boys of our Race to defend our King and Country.” Writing in a tone fitting to his era, Courtney, a thirty-year old, Methodist teamster, declared that, “if you can please find the time to sit down and write me a few lines to let me know if I can join, I will be deeply in love with you.” Whitney responded to Courtney’s passion with a headline shamelessly touting, ‘H. F. COURTNEY LOYAL TO HIS COUNTRY, BROTHER TRAINING--WANTS TO DO HIS BIT.’ Interestingly, this was not the first time Courtney tried to enlist, nor was it his last. Having previously submitted his name to *Observer*, Courtney suggested to Whitney that “maybe you did not receive my last letter.” With patriotic images of his Brother Jacob Courtney training with the 157th Battalion at Collingwood, and the persistently patriotic endeavours of the elder brother Henry Francis, it is not surprising that Whitney chose to publish Henry’s letter. Significantly, the Courtney name was not new to the pages of *Observer*. Early in January 1916, news of social events hosted by Mrs. John Courtney and Mrs. J. Courtney at Owen Sound, were reported by the newspaper.²³ As the recruiting efforts

²²

Observer, 22 Jan. 1916. Unfortunately for Miller and the *Observer*, the attempt to succeed in the ‘good cause’ of raising an African platoon in Ontario were lost in a cycle of local and provincial military racism. Over two and a half years later, Miller was taken on No. 2 CB at London on September 20, 1917. See, RG 9, II, B 9, Vol. 39, file 748, No. 2 CB Nominal Roll, March 28, 1917: RG 150 Acc. 1992- 93/166, Miller, Russell, A., 931530.

²³

Observer, 8 Jan. 1916; 15 Jan. 1916, 4 Mar. 1916: By August 1916, H. F. Courtney had moved from hometown address at 1582 8th Avenue East, Owen Sound to 35 Emsle St,

of the *Observer* faded from history, the *Advocate* stepped in to support the No. 2 CB. Interestingly, one of the *Advocate*'s staffers was living in Ontario when Whitney was trying to raise an AfriCanadian unit.

Often ignored or pushed to the fringes of the AfriCanadian war drama, Dr. C.C. Ligoure's road to patriotic service, began in October 1915, during his last year of medical studies at Queen's University. In letters to the Nova Scotia Medical Board, Ligoure revealed that he was anticipating a commission with a Trinidadian unit. Pending the completion of his medical studies, Ligoure's military position also hinged on his status within a Medical Board. By April 1916, Ligoure had graduated from Queen's and passed the Board exam for Nova Scotia. Unfortunately, Ligoure was subsequently informed that due to a calculation error, he had not passed the Nova Scotian exam. Although a planned amendment to the Boards' admitting procedures may have allowed for cases similar to Ligoure's, the Board nonetheless reported Ligoure's status to military authorities. For Ligoure, the pain of correcting the perceptions of his celebratory kin and friends was accentuated by a military embarrassment. While at New York, his coveted commission came through. However, rather than boarding a Trinidadian bound vessel, Ligoure was forced to telegram the bad news to 'his' Colonel. Eventually going to Halifax to pursue his Board application, Ligoure later established and operated the Amanda Private Hospital at Halifax. It was at Halifax that Ligoure became involved with the *Advocate*. In 1917, the office of *Advocate* was moved to

Guelph, Ontario. On August 30th, Courtney joined the No. 2 CB at Toronto. Before the Battalion sailed for England, Courtney had earned the rank of Corporal. RG 150 Acc. 1992-93/166, Courtney, Henry Francis, 931501: RG 9, II, B 9, Vol. 39, file 748, No. 2 CB Nominal Roll, March 28, 1917: While it is uncertain if these two women are the same, the reappearance of similar kin names is worth noting for possible social connections.

the Hospital address on North Street.²⁴

While residing at Halifax, Ligoure emerged as a staunch supporter of the No. 2 CB. Yet, Ligoure's contemporary and historic place with No.2 CB was sealed by his military title. Appointed 'supernumerary Lieutenant' on September 16, 1916, Ligoure's status with the Battalion ended on February 21, 1917, at the request of Lieutenant Colonel Sutherland, OC No. 2. CB. Before Ligoure's dismissal however, his recruiting activities brought him back to the province of his medical studies. At Windsor, Ontario, Ligoure gave a supper at the BME Church for ten of the city's "most prominent ladies." Ligoure was later honoured with a dinner for ten hosted by Miss Sadie Lawson. On December 19, 1916, the Karn musical entertainers gave a show in honour of the No. 2 CB, and the next day, Ligoure, "the energetic lieutenant," organized a fund-raising dance for the Battalion's recruiting drive. Credited for a patriotic concert that "netted 204.50," Ligoure also secured \$1000.00 from the patriotic committee. While *Advocate* praised Ligoure's "brilliant work" with "the arduous task to which he is equal," the journal also noted the ladies who contributed to the success of the dance. For all their efforts, over \$2000.00 was raised. Later at Chatham, Miss Lynn gave a dinner for eight in honour of Ligoure. As the Managing and/or Publishing Editor of *Advocate*, it is not surprising that Ligoure's recruiting activities were reported by the magazine. Still, it is ironic that Ligoure, as with Whitney, did not make it overseas with the unit he had supported. Exactly why Ligoure was not granted a full commission remains

²⁴

PANS RG 83 Vol. 3, No. 12.16. Ligoure to Lindsey, 8, Oct. 1915; Ligoure to Lindsey, 22 Oct. 1915; Ligoure to Kendall, 28 Oct. 1916; Acting Registrar to Ligoure, 27 Mar 1916; Ligoure to Acting Registrar, 30 May 1916; Acting Registrar to Ligoure, 4 Apr. 1916; Letter of Certificate for C.C. Ligoure, Medical Faculty of Queen's University, 4 May 1916; Acting Registrar to Ligoure, 5 May 1916; Ligoure to Mack, 8 May 1916: NAC RG 9, III-D-3 Vol. 5015, file No. 2 Construction Battalion, War Diary, December 1917: Hartling, 4.

uncertain. Nevertheless, after seven months of recruiting, Ligoure returned to his practice at Halifax. Interestingly, in April 1917, *Advocate* reported that one of Ligoure's patients, John Harding, was recovering from a recent operation. The surgery was performed by Ligoure and Dr. Frank Mack. It was Dr. Mack who had corresponded with Ligoure while he was at New York.²⁵

The two members of *Advocate's* core staff who had recruited for No. 2 CB and served overseas were Wilfred A. DeCosta and E. L. Cross. Before enlisting, both had worked as editors for the *Advocate*. According to the No. 2 CB's Nominal Roll, Wilfred A. DeCosta and E. L. Cross joined the Battalion at Halifax in November 1916, and January 1917. Yet, there is evidence that suggests that Cross's involvement with the unit began before January 1917. As part of his testimony to a post-war Court of Inquiry in March 1919, Cross declared that he was with the unit since its formation. Also, in January 1917, *Advocate* reported that Sergeants DeCosta and Cross had led a recruiting drive through Hammonds Plains, Nova Scotia, in December 1916. Clearly pleased to report that AfriCanadians at Hammonds Plains had "done their bit by giving six of their sons to the No. 2 Construction Battalion," *Advocate* praised the generosity and determination of the residence, recruiters, and volunteers. While at Hammonds Plains, Sergeants Cross and DeCosta were assisted by Mr. and Mrs. Wilson and Jenkins. When the recruiters tried to reimburse Mrs. Boutilier, for her contribution she declined claiming it was the least she

²⁵

Advocate, January 1917; April 1917; May 1917: RG 24, Vol 1374, file HQ 593-6-1. Adjutant General to OC No. 2 CB, 16 Sept. 1916; OC No. 2 CB to Adjutant General, 21 Feb. 1917 and reply, 24 Feb. 1917. The Adjutant General's letter to Sutherland for Sept. 16, 1916, also contains a proviso that Ligoure's appointment was subject to the conditions of HQ 593-1-64, dated 17 Mar. 1916: The ladies who assisted were Miss Evonne and Mrs. Kelly, the Misses Sadie and Ivy Lawson, Miss I. Bird, Mrs. Stewart and Mrs. Hughes."

could do for the “noble effort.” Despite the failure of past recruiting efforts, and a heavy rain storm that day, the new recruits travelled by open carriage to Bedford, and then on to the Battalion’s Barracks at Truro. One of the recruits, Harry Mitchell, a teamster, was precisely the man needed to guide a Horse Team on a long journey through a downpour.²⁶

As a ‘recruiter editor’ DeCosta wrote that; “The patriotism that shouts itself hoarse at a music hall when no war is at hand and sinks away when duty calls ... is not the patriotism we want.” Under the editorial control of *Cross, Advocate* claimed that No 2 CB was “the expression of the Dominion’s colored manhood” and pride. Appealing to “the spirit of patriotism...never dead in the breasts of colored men,” the journal advised AfriCanadians to combine their loyalty with “a spirit of opportunism.” Looking towards a post-war society *Advocate* reasoned that: “If there are good things coming to you after the war ... they will be meted out to you in the proportion to what service you rendered.” Ironically, after three years of military racism, a recruiting poster published in the *Advocate* notified AfriCanadians that “Your King and Country Need You.” Accordingly, Africans in the colonies had “rallied to the Flag” and were “distinguishing themselves at the front,” and the No. 2 CB represented an “opportunity to be identified in the [Greatest] War in History.” With the fate of “Nations who Stand for Liberty” in jeopardy at stake, AfriCanadians were also warned that, “Your fortunes are Equally at stake as those of your white brethren.” Nevertheless, No. 2 CB was not the unit all AfriCanadians wanted. When DeCosta announced that “in modern days,” Duty was “a badge at which many glance disdainfully,”

26

Advocate, January 1917: RG 9 III Vol. 1722 file F-22-13. Court of Inquiry, Kinmel Park, Rhyl, Wales, 12 Mar. 1919: RG 150, 1992-93/166, Cross, Ethelbert, Lionel, 931405; DeCosta, Wilfred, 931353; Mitchell, Harry, 931362: No. 2 CB Nominal Roll.

he inadvertently captured one of the many ironies of AfriCanadian service. For many AfriCanadians, their colour was a 'badge' that military officials had viewed with distain. Early in 1917, on the verge of the Great Push, that distain returned to haunt military officials as AfriCanadian ambivalence towards military service hampered the successful recruitment of the No. 2 CB.²⁷

In April 1917, following the departure of the No. 2 CB, the *Advocate*, with Ligoure serving as editor and publisher, finally struck out against racism. Clearly angered by events around the Battalion's recruitment and embarkation, Ligoure reported that the men of No. 2 CB were "locked up" before leaving their barracks at Truro and at Halifax driven "like cattle" aboard the *SS Southland* without "the last long good-bye to those near and dear to them." According to the *Advocate*, supporters of the friends of the men in the No. 2 CB had travelled to Halifax to see their loved ones, but were denied the opportunity. Rhetorically asking if this treatment was a reflection of "British Justice and Freedom" Ligoure charged that men of the No. 2 CB, despite previous experiences with military racism, were volunteers, and deserved better treatment. Offering an explanation as to why the Battalion was not up to strength, Ligoure claimed that many AfriCanadians were enticed to enlist by influential AfriCanadians. Unfortunately, when the promise of an AfriCanadian medical officer, presumably Dr. Ligoure, became little more than a "German promise," the Battalion suffered from a further decline of community confidence in the military. Although Ligoure claimed that his criticism of events around the No. 2 CB was not because the OC of the Battalion owed him \$600.00, Ligoure's personal frustration was evident. Nevertheless, there

²⁷

Advocate, January 1917: No 2 CB Nominal Roll.

is substance to Ligoure's claim that the Battalion was a failure because many qualified AfriCanadians were not involved. After all, before the No. 2 sailed from Great Britain to France in April 1917, the unit was downgraded to a Company because it did not have enough men to maintain its Battalion status. Sadly, in the May 1917, the *Advocate* was on the verge of collapse. In an appeal for support from AfriCanadians, Ligoure argued that AfriCanadians had to plan for the post-war environment and that the *Advocate* was an important voice in the process. Interestingly, as part of his appeal to "progressive brothers throughout the world" Ligoure's desire to "rise to the high state of recognition ...our Ethiopian forefathers possessed" also claimed that the *Canadian Observer*, needed the continued support of AfriCanadians.²⁸

Significantly, the war-time reportage of the *Advocate*, and subsequent events also showed that the home and professional lives of AfriCanadians were connected to the activities around the No. 2 and the War. Reports of the Battalion Band's performances at patriotic concerts and sacred concerts appeared in the *Advocate*. Band Master Thomas, a Sergeant with the No. 2 CB was repeatedly complimented for his work with the band. At Halifax, Thomas' wife was noted for her role in a ceremony in which Sergeant Edward Stewart received a pen knife as a token of friendship between Sergeants Thomas and Stewart. Three other member of the Battalion attended the ceremony. The *Advocate* also reported that Albert Alberga was granted leave to return to Montreal to take his Christmas exams at McGill University. Albert's elder brother, Sergeant George Alberga was also a student at McGill. Sergeant Alberga had suspended his studies to join the Battalion and was

²⁸

Advocate, April 1917; May 1917.

working at the Montreal Recruiting Office. Pleased to report that the men of the Battalion were granted leave for Christmas, *Advocate* was equally happy to note that a number of men who lived at Weymouth, Nova Scotia, had gathered for the Baptist Church's Sunday morning service.²⁹

Not all the news for the men of the No. 2 CB was happy. In October and December of 1916, Private Tynes's mother and then his father died. When the No.2 was stationed at Truro, Miriam DeCosta moved with the children to the town, and following the Battalion's departure, she returned to Halifax. Dr. Ligoure's frustration with the military reached a curious historical irony when the Amanda Hospital was used as a dressing station following the Halifax Explosion on December 7, 1917. North of Amanda Hospital, the AfriCanadian community of Africville was a short distance away from the sight of the initial blast that devastated the city. By December 13th, the extent of the damage was becoming clear to the men of the No. 2 in France, and the unit's War Diaries noted that some of the men were worried about their families at Halifax.³⁰

Clearly, the *Advocate* and its Canadian counterpart the *Observer* were relevant voices in the AfriCanadian war drama. Although they were regional entities, the *Advocate* and *Observer* did speak to national concerns. In America, the *Crisis* also took the time to cover the AfriCanadian war drama. While the *Crisis* did not always print detailed information on AfriCanadian participation in the CEF, the magazine did report a number of significant AfriCanadian military achievements.

²⁹

Advocate, January 1917, April 1917: RG 9, III-D-3 Vol. 5015, file No. 2 Construction Battalion, War Diary, December 1917: Hartling, 4.

³⁰

Ibid.

Following the creation of the No. 2 CB, the *Crisis* reported that “Canada was seeking to recruit a battalion of Negroes at Windsor,” Ontario. One month after the No. 2 CB sailed from Halifax, the *Crisis* announced that Reverend William White was commissioned as Captain with No. 2 CB. In the same issue, the magazine also reported that Dr. C. C. Ligoure was the Battalion’s medical officer. The following month, *Crisis* reported that the No. 2 CB, which consisted of “Canadian coloured men” and “American Negroes” had arrived in England. Curiously, after the United States entered the war, *Crisis*’ well documented position on a united and purposeful Pan-African military participation was tested by distinctly American considerations. With “several hundred” African Americans enlisting with CEF, Americans feared the loss of men needed for African American military units. Nonetheless, *Crisis* continued its coverage of the No. 2 CB, *Crisis* and AfriCanadians serving in other CEF units. When Private James Grant, an AfriCanadian from St Catharines, Ontario, won the Military Cross, the *Crisis* briefly picked up the story. While serving with the 49th Battery, Grant was honoured “for taking a gun through a critical place which was heavily shelled by the Germans.” Four months later, Private R. Gilbert reportedly sent home an Iron Cross he had received from a German officer whom Gilbert had captured.³¹

31

Crisis, (Nov. 1916): 14, 31; (April 1917): 293; (June 1917): 85; (March 1918): 248; (July 1918): 134.

Conclusion

In the years leading up to the creation and deployment of the No. 2 CB, the *Advocate* and *Observer* emerged as strong proponents of AfriCanadian enlistment and recruitment. To a lesser extent, the *Crisis* also covered AfriCanadian war-time events. Besides their work as proponents for AfriCanadian enlistment prior to the creation and deployment of the No. 2 CB, these periodicals also offered important details of AfriCanadians serving in other CEF units. As sources of AfriCanadian socio-political culture, the *Advocate* and *Observer's* reportage and social calenders provide distinct, yet interconnected examples of AfriCanadian war-time activities. Both periodicals evidence AfriCanadian communities that believed in the value of self-help, race pride and Canadian/British conceptions of social justice. As indicated in AfriCanadian letters to the editor of the *Crisis*, AfriCanadians also understood the value of socio-political connections to Africans in other 'democratic' countries.

Through their work as AfriCanadian recruiting editors, Whitney, Cross, DeCosta and Ligoure issued hawkish calls to duty that often propagated Canadian/British war aims. Significantly, the AfriCanadian press' articulation of particular AfriCanadian war aims was not simply the ideas of a selection of publishers. The social calenders of the *Observer* and *Advocate*, clearly show that these periodicals were connected to the communities they aspired to served. Many of the AfriCanadians who pushed for AfriCanadian enlistment appeared in the pages of the *Observer* and *Advocate*.

Despite the existence of miliary racism, the *Advocate* and *Observer* concentrated on the successful participation of AfriCanadians in the Canadian war effort. As loyal and patriotic members of the Canadian press, *Advocate* and *Observer* supported the war in Europe.

Clearly preferring to offer alternatives rather than launching a public attack on socio-military racism, Whitney's attempt to raise an AfriCanadian platoon through the *Observer* was part of an effort to maintain a spirit of voluntarism and national unity. Although the *Advocate* was not successful in its recruitment drive for the No. 2 CB, the magazine, similar to the *Observer*, was a staunch supporter of AfriCanadian enlistment.

While it is clear that Arthur Alexander and George Morton were writing on behalf of men in their communities, the *Observer's* reports of the socio-educational activities of Alexander and Morton help to show these men as respected members of their communities. Similar to Whitney, their activities were conducted on behalf of the collective. Unfortunately, their defeats were also felt by the collectives they represented. Ironically, the failure of Whitney's attempt to raise an AfriCanadian platoon in Ontario offers profound evidence of the difficulties faced by AfriCanadian groups and individuals who sought enlistment. Advertisements and testimonials in the *Observer* support the claims made by Whitney in his letter campaign to Ottawa. Also, in the absence of these testimonials, it is doubtful that historians would possess the additional evidence necessary to understand the social significance of Henry Courtney and Russell Miller's eventual enlistment with the No. 2 CB.

Both the *Observer* and *Advocate* offer clear evidence of the ironies of the AfriCanadian enlistment struggle with the *Advocate*, highlighting the curious nature of the No. 2 CB's recruitment process. While *Observer's* reportage and social calendars offer evidence about who wanted to enlist, the *Advocate* provides evidence of the kin and community relationships of a number of men who either supported or joined the No. 2 CB. As recruiting editors, Cross and DeCosta used the *Advocate* as a forum for enlistment with

the No. 2 CB. Under Cross the *Advocate* was replete with No. 2 CB stories and accounts of African participation in the First World War. Significantly, Cross and DeCosta managed to back up their hawkish opinions by joining the No. 2 CB. Carrying through with the patriotic themes found in the *Observer*, the *Advocate's* participation in the recruitment of the No. 2 CB rarely criticized the racist themes underlining the Canadian enlistment. In reporting Reverend William White's role as a recruiter and Chaplain with the No 2 CB, the *Advocate* did not discuss White's pre-CB clash with military racism. In fact, with the exception of Ligoure's attack on No. 2 CB related events, *Advocate* was profoundly supportive of the Battalion, and the war in Europe.

As an American publication, it is not surprising that the *Crisis'* coverage of the AfriCanadian war drama was not extremely detailed. Nonetheless the AfriCanadian material that did appear in the *Crisis* is important. Prior to the creation of the No. 2 CB, AfriCanadians who were inspired by the *Crisis'* critique of racism wrote to compliment the magazine for its contributions to African cultural pride. Particularly significant was the appearance of a letter from St. John, New Brunswick's, AfriCanadian enlistment advocate, K. C. Hamilton. When the No. 2 CB was finally authorized, *Crisis* reported the event and subsequent activities. Besides making an important reference to African Americans serving with the No. 2 CB, *Crisis* also reported that Reverend William White and Dr. C. C. Ligoure were appointed officers with the Battalion. Although Ligoure did not make it overseas, the report of his and White's appointments makes an important link between the enlistment and recruitment campaigns. White and Hamilton were involved with the pro-AfriCanadian enlistment campaign and Ligoure and White were active in the recruitment of the No. 2 CB. Ironically, Ligoure, despite his intentions otherwise, joined with a number of AfriCanadians

who were not permitted to carry out their military aspirations.

After three years of debate and enlistment propaganda, the No. 2 CB was authorized, recruited and sent overseas. The African-centered press' coverage of the 'Pressing Issues' that faced AfriCanadians during the War further help to explain why AfriCanadians were 'not in the War.' Nevertheless, when Canada finally decided that "Your King and Country Need You," AfriCanadians, and members of the African centered press supported the No. 2 CB. Interestingly, some of the individuals involved with the enlistment debate who appeared in the pages of the African centered press went on to join or support the No. 2 CB. Sadly however, although AfriCanadians received notice that their King and Country needed them, socio-military racism continued. An examination of those who served in the No. 2 CB is an important, yet rarely explored aspect of Canadian social and military history.

CHAPTER 4

YOUR KING AND COUNTRY NEED YOU

"I'll go to do my bit for the flag that I was born under ... I'll go out there without any wages."
Alexander Bramah, Florence, Cape Breton
 October 14, 1915

"I have seven years Military experience...with a little schooling in new methods would make an efficient officer."
Joseph Roger Butler, Edmonton, Alberta
 January 14, 1916

"... if you can please ... let me know if I can join, I will be deeply in love with you."
Henry Francis Courtney, Owen Sound, Ontario
 February 4, 1916

"Now is the time to show your Patriotism and] Loyalty. Will you heed the call and do your share. The need of the day is Pioneers, Construction Companies and Railway Construction Companies."
No. 2 Construction Battalion Recruiting Poster, ca. January 1917

After of two years of debate, AfriCanadian volunteers Alexander Bramah, Joseph Roger Butler and Henry Francis Courtney finally gained an opportunity to serve their country. Yet, despite their aspirations and expectations, Bramah did not go overseas without wages, Butler did not become an officer, and Courtney's amorous feelings towards the *Observer's* editor were crushed by military racism. The words and experiences of Bramah, Butler and Courtney reflect the ironies and paradoxes of AfriCanadian enlistment efforts that

culminated in service with the No. 2 CB.¹

Established on July 5, 1916, No 2 CB was originally based at Pictou, Nova Scotia, and later moved to Truro, in the hope that proximity to an AfriCanadian community would increase enlistments. Eventually mobilized for overseas service on March 17, 1917, the 19 officers and 605 men of No.2 CB, sailed from Halifax Harbour aboard the *SS Southland* on March 28. Hardly the overseas fighting force envisioned by many AfriCanadians, the departure of the No. 2 CB marked a turning point in the three-year debate over AfriCanadian volunteers in the CEF. Previously prevented from service, a number of AfriCanadians joined the CEF's segregated non-combat unit. Yet, once a 'place' was established for AfriCanadians, the racist conditions that characterized the pre-No. 2 CB experience often crept into the brief history of Canada's only majority AfriCanadian OSB.²

In an effort to gain a better understanding of the social significance of the No. 2 CB, five groups of the Battalion personnel have been selected for study. Chosen for their military and social significance, the 76 men examined represent 13% of No. 2 CB's 605 enlisted personnel. Three groups, the 'Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO)', 'Fowler's List,' and the 'Dead,' have an immediate place in military culture and martial society. 'Kin/Community Recruits' focuses attention on the significance of community and kin group

1

RG 24 Vol. 4562 file 133-17-1. Bramah to Rutherford: RG 24 Vol. 4739 file 448-14-259. Butler to GOC 13 MD: RG 24 Vol. 1206 file HQ 297-1-21. *The Canadian Observer*, 4 Mar. 1916.

2

RG 9, III-D-3 Vol. 5015, file No. 2 Construction Battalion, War Diaries May 1917. (Hereafter, War Diaries): RG 24 Vol. 4558, file 132-11-1. Sutherland to 6 MD HQ, 26, Aug. 1916.

involvement with No. 2 CB. The seven men discussed in 'Now's the Time' have appeared at different points in this study and are revisited here to draw further attention to ironies that characterized the individual and collective enlistment experience. Although each group represents a distinct socio-military entity, some servicemen appear in one or more groups. While this transference of men does, at times, cloud attempts to isolate individuals in or from a particular group, it also helps to solidify No. 2 CB's place as an historically significant AfriCanadian and African diasporic assemblage. Before examining the selected groups of No. 2 personnel, however, a brief discussion of the authorization, recruitment process and enlistment patterns of the battalion is necessary.

The Last Extremity

When, in September 1915, Gwatkin responded to an enquiry from the Prime Minister's Offices on AfriCanadian enlistment, Gwatkin declared that in "the last extremity" DMD HQ might consider raising one or two AfriCanadian units. By April 1916, the resource demands of the war pushed the Allies towards this point. Following a request from the Secretary of State for the Colonies asking Canada to raise one or two Labour Battalions of the 'navvy class,' DMD HQ, with the support of the Secretary of State for External Affairs and the Ministers of Militia and Labour, proceeded to raise No. 235 OSB. At the request of the new battalion's OC, Lieutenant-Colonel B. Ripley, the unit's name was changed to No. 1 Labour Battalion, and finally to the more palatable No. 1 Construction Battalion (No. 1 CB). However, despite Ripley's contention that the term 'construction' would attract a better class of men, DMD HQ did not intend to change the labouring functions of the battalion.

Meanwhile, at Ottawa, in reminding Hodgins that officials in Toronto were still awaiting a response on AfriCanadian enlistment, Gwatkin also suggested the formation of an AfriCanadian or mixed race labouring battalion. At first the idea was rejected, however, following a meeting of the Militia Council, the Government sought and gained London's approval of an AfriCanadian 'construction battalion.' So long as the men were enlisted as soldiers in the CEF, the Colonial Office at London, England, did not foresee any problem. Unfortunately for AfriCanadians, there were several problems in Canada.³

Approved in principle in early May 1916, No. 2 CB was not authorized as a Battalion until July 5, when Daniel Sutherland, a railway contractor from Nova Scotian, was appointed Lieutenant-Colonel and OC of No. 2. Before Sutherland accepted command, however, two other men had turned down the post. Ironically, two days after Sutherland took command, Lieutenant-Colonel Patterson at Montreal complained that he was overlooked for the position. According to Patterson, he had proposed the idea of an AfriCanadian unit, or "niggers if you will," eighteen months previous, and Hughes had assured Patterson he would receive consideration for command. Eventually, DMD HQ dismissed Patterson's concerns by claiming that Ottawa did not intend to raise any more than two Construction Battalions. Around the same period, Lieutenant-Colonel Ripley complained that the No.2 CB would damage the reputations of No. 1 CB if 'White' men were associated with the work of

³

RG 24 Vol. 2030, file HQ-1812-Vol. 1. Bennetts to Hughes, 4 Apr. 1916; DMD HQ Memorandum, 13 Apr. 1916; Ripley to Secretary of the Militia Council, 13 Apr. 1916; RG 24 Vol. 1206, HQ 297-1-21. Gwatkin to Hodgins 15 Apr. 1916 and subscript notes, 17 Apr. 1916 and 18 Apr. 1916; DMD HQ Memorandum, 15 Apr. 1916; Minutes Militia Council, Apr. 19, 1916; DMD HQ to Trooper London, 19 Apr. 1916; DMD HQ to Trooper London, 10 May 1916 & reply 11 May 1916.

'Black' men. Clearly angered by Ripley's continuing demands, Hodgins replied that AfriCanadians were British and Canadian subjects, and that the Africans and West Indians who were at the Front were recognized "as comrades in arms both in France and England." If Ripley's men had a problem, Hodgins declared it was up to Ripley to solve it. Hodgins' sudden defence of African troops, however, stands as one of the many ironies of military racism. Generally swaying between ambivalence and acceptance of racist ideologies, Hodgins had suggested a 'Black Labour Battalion,' shortly after the authorization of the No. 1 CB. If No. 1 and 2 'Labour Battalions' were successful, Canadians would fulfill the Colonial Secretary's initial request for one or two Battalion's of the navy class. Perturbed that Ripley had enlisted 'White' men whose skills were above what was called for, Hodgins' even taunted Ripley by suggesting that his 'dishonoured' men could transfer to other units. Obviously accepting that there were 'Black' and 'White' men in Canada who were of the navy class, Hodgins did not, however, show any concern that better qualified AfriCanadians might object to serving in a 'pick and shovel' unit.⁴

Despite Hodgins' sudden defence of AfriCanadian troops, few civil or military officials were prepared to alter their perceptions of AfriCanadians. A number OCs who had

4

RG 24 Vol. 1206, HQ 297-1-21. Jarvis to Hodgins, 2 June 1916: RG 24 Vol. 4558, file 132-11-1. Hodgins to GOC Canadian Military District, 5 July 1916: RG 24 Vo. 4486, file 47-8-1. Patterson to Jarvis, 7 July 1916; Jarvis to OA 4 MD, 7 July 1916; Hodgins to OC 4 MD, 21 July 1916; AAG 4 MD to Patterson, 23 July 1916: RG 24 Vol. 2030, file HQ 1812-Vol. 1, Ripley to Jarvis, 7 July 1916; Hodgins to Ripley, 10 July 1916: RG 24 Vol. 1206, file HQ 297-1-21. Gwatkin to Hodgins, 15 Apr. 1916 and reply 17 Apr. 1916: RG 24, Vol. 2030, file HQ, 297-1-21. Ripley to AAG 4 MD, 13 May 1916; Ripley to Secretary of Militia Council, 7 July, 1916; Ripley to Secretary of Militia Council, 15 July 1916; Hodgins to Ripley, 19 July 1916; Hodgins to Christie, 24 July 1916.

enlisted AfriCanadians, quickly transferred the men to the No. 2. Although recruiters in areas that were previously hostile towards AfriCanadians began to offer their support, the new found enthusiasm for AfriCanadians was neither socially inclusive nor successful. Some recruiters even admitted that they refused AfriCanadians enlistment with combat units. From Saskatoon, the Secretary of the Citizens' Recruiting Committee letter supporting Joseph N. Holmes' enlistment, also offered to "recruit any niggers that come along." In Nova Scotia and Alberta, officers with No. 2 CB had problems renting office and barrack space because realtors did not want AfriCanadians to occupy their vacant buildings. Also in Alberta, some of the doctors performing physical examinations were overheard calling AfriCanadians recruits racist names. Officials at Ottawa also hampered No. 2's ability to reach its authorized strength of 1065 officers and men. Sutherland's requests for recruiting funds were not well received. Eventually, the Battalion's Band toured through Nova Scotia, Quebec and Ontario, however, Sutherland was warned to keep the operations on a tight budget. Sutherland's request to raise men in the British West Indies and America were also opposed by immigration officials. Eventually, Africans from outside of Canada were enlisted. Nevertheless, immigration officials continually complained that Africans were gaining a foothold in Canada through the No. 2 CB.⁵

5

RG 24 Vol. 4486, file 47-8-1. Chief Recruiting Officer St Catharines to Fages, 7 July 1916; Tilly to Fages, 7 July 1916; OC 167th Battalion to AAG 4 MD, 28 Aug. 1916: RG 24 Vol. 4558 file 132-11-1. Harris to Lomas, 5 Sept 1916: RG 24 Vol. 4599 file 20-10-52. Gayfer to DOC 10 MD, 23 Oct. 1916; Gayfer to AAG 10 MD, 23 Oct. 1916: RG 24 Vol. 4642, file 11 D, 99-4-63. OC 6th Field Company to AAG 11 MD, 22 Aug. 1916: RG 24 Vol. 1206, file HQ 297-1-21. O'Leary to Adjutant-General, 4 Aug. 1916, Scott to Fiset, 30 Sept. 1916: RG 24 Vol. 4393 file 34-7-171. Wylie to AAG 2 MD, 21 Aug. 1916: RG 24 Vol. 1550, file HQ 683-124-2. Sutherland to Hodgins, 4 Jan. 1917; Adjutant-General to GOC 6 MD, 23 Jan.

Under the conditions of the War, it is not surprising that the Battalion received limited support from non-AfriCanadians. Interestingly however, AfriCanadians greeted No. 2 CB with mixed feelings. In Nova Scotia, the African Baptist Association (AUBA) declared that through the Battalion, AfriCanadians were making history. At Halifax, *Advocate* covered the early days of No. 2 CB with considerable enthusiasm. Across the country, a number of the men who were refused enlistment with other units joined the No. 2. Unfortunately, after two years of socio-military racism and apathy, many AfriCanadians refused to enlist in a segregated unit that was created out of military desperation, national racism and political compromise. When the Battalion finally sailed for England, it was under strength by 460 personnel. This fact, in the absence of testimonials from disgruntled AfriCanadians, attests to the lack of full support AfriCanadians showed for the No. 2 CB. Still the Battalion was important for 605 enlisted men. For many, it was an acceptable victory in a two year enlistment battle.⁶

Where are You From?

Authorized to recruit personnel from across the nation, No.2 CB enlisted men at thirty-eight locations in eight Canadian Provinces. The only province in which men did not

1917; MacDonald to GOC 6 MD, 27 Jan. 1917.

⁶

Advocate, January 1917: Calvin W. Ruck. Canada's Black Battalion: No 2 Construction, 1916-1920. (Halifax: Society for the Protection and Preservation of Black Culture in Nova Scotia, 1986): 25; James W. St. G. Walker. "Race and Recruitment in World War One: Enlistment of Visible Minorities in the Canadian Expeditionary Force," Canadian Historical Review (70:1, 1989): 15.

enlist was Prince Edward Island. Sixty-four percent of the Battalion's personnel were taken on in the Maritimes with Nova Scotia enlisting 60.1 % of the No. 2's men at fourteen locations. Although dwarfed by its Maritime neighbour, New Brunswick's 4.5 % of enlistments constituted the third largest number of personnel. The second largest group of personnel, 26.4 %, were enlisted in Ontario at twelve separate locations. Besides Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Ontario, no other province contributed more than four percent to the Battalion's total strength. Only Nova Scotia and Ontario had more than three places of enlistment. Table 1 indicates the numbers and percentages of the provincial enlistments for 597 non-commissioned personnel with No. 2 CB. ⁷

(Table 1) Provincial Enlistment Places of No. 2 CB Personnel

NS	NB	Que.	Ont.	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	BC	Totals
359	27	9	158	11	5	19	9	597
60.1	4.5	1.5	26.4	1.8	0.83	3.1	1.5	100%

Contrary to the number of British-born personnel of the First Contingent CEF, the majority

7

RG 9, II, B-9, Vol. 39, file 748, No. 2 CB Nominal Roll, March 28, 1917 (Here after Nominal Roll): Because the Nominal Roll does not indicate the provinces where No.2 CB personnel enlisted, The Columbia Gazetteer of the World. Saul B. Cohen, ed, (Columbia University Press, 1998), was used to determine the provincial locations of enlistment. Also, in the absence of an examination of each enlistee's Attestation Papers, further consideration was required. In the case of 'Windsor' (Nova Scotia or Ontario), the personnel attesting to having Next of Kin in Nova Scotia or Ontario, were included in the corresponding provincial group. Where 'Windsor' men attested to having Next of Kin in the United States, another statistical parameter was imposed. Men with Kin along America's Eastern Seaboard were included in the Nova Scotia group, those with Kin in all other states were included in the Windsor, Ontario group. In total Nova Scotia was granted 54 Americans, and Ontario gained 77. For the six 'Windsor' men who did not attest to having Kin, Nova Scotia and Ontario earned three men each. Finally, the percentages given in Table 1 are premised on total figure of 597 men because the Nominal Roll does list the place of enlistment for 8 men.

of No 2's men were Canadian-born. The second largest group of men were American-born. Nonetheless, No. 2 CB enlisted men from five continents and at least four islands. Table 2 indicates the numbers and percentages of No 2 CB's enlisted personnel according to their places of birth.

(Table 2) Birth Places of No 2 CB's Enlisted Personnel

Country	Number of Recruits	Percentage
Canada	344	56.8
United States	171	28.3
British West Indies	64	10.6
British Guiana	6	1
England	4	0.7
Mexico	2	0.33
Arabia	1	0.16
Barbados	1	0.16
Cuba	1	0.16
Holland	1	0.16
Malta	1	0.16
South Africa	1	0.16
Note Stated	8	1.3
Totals	605	100

The No. 2 CB's high number of Canadian-born personnel is reflective of immigration patterns. Nova Scotia was not only the home of Canada's largest 'indigenous' AfriCanadian population, it was the province that attracted most of Caribbean and African American immigrants during the late and early 20th Century. As in Nova Scotia, AfriCanadians in Ontario had also established pre-Confederation communities. The AfriCanadian communities in Southwestern Ontario also attracted a large number of African Americans.

Taken together, the men who enlisted with the No. 2 CB took advantage of one of the few opportunities for overseas service that was available to them. In some cases, men who had offered enlistment prior to the Battalion's creation, were finally able to say that 'Now's The Time.'

Now's The Time

Born out of persistent anti-racist efforts, political compromise, military desperation and socio-military discrimination, the No. 2 CB revealed the power of pro and anti-AfriCanadians forces in Canada. Often warned that it was a 'White Man's War,' AfriCanadian were also told that when their nation decided it needed them, Canada would call. When the call finally came, it was either too late, or not what all AfriCanadians wanted to hear. Still, 605 men came forward. Of that number, at least fifteen men were involved in the pre-No. 2 CB enlistment struggle. The eight men refused enlistment at Camp Sussex, New Brunswick are discussed in a subsequent section 'Fowler's List.' This section considers the struggles of seven men who personify the struggles of countless AfriCanadians during the First World War.

In October 1915, Alexander Bramah of Sydney Mines, Nova Scotia, had written to 6D HQ, Halifax, and offered to go overseas and "kill germans" for free. Previously discharged from another unit because of his colour, Bramah was informed that when an AfriCanadian unit was formed, "you will be notified." Although he was not officially notified about the No. 2 CB, Bramah nonetheless managed to find his way into the No. 2 CB. On July 21, 1916, after ten months of discussion and two refusals from military

officials, Bramah enlisted with the No. 2 CB at Sydney Mines. Nearly five months after Bramah was refused enlistment by officials at Halifax, Samuel Reece was also refused enlistment. Curiously, however, Reece was told that he had to return with more men before he was enlisted. Reece was also informed that the 106th OSB at Truro, Nova Scotia was enlisting AfriCanadians. Sometime later, Lieutenant Colonel W. H. Allen, OC 104th OSB confessed that he had planned to accept an AfriCanadian platoon but he backed out of the scheme because not enough men had applied. Yet, Allen also admitted when a number of non-AfriCanadians learned that AfriCanadians were about to enlist, the non-AfriCanadians threatened to leave the Battalion. Considering that Allen did not think AfriCanadians would make good soldiers and that he did not wish to “sleep along side” AfriCanadians, it is not surprising that few men came forward. Eventually, however, on May 17, 1916, Reece was taken into No. 2 CB at Truro and went on to serve as Corporal with the unit.⁸

Born in Virginia, USA, William Andrew White had immigrated into Canada and was serving as the Pastor at Truro, Nova Scotia’s Zion Baptist Church before War erupted. Shortly after Reece was refused enlistment, Reverend White became involved with the attempt to raise AfriCanadian troops for Allen’s 106th OSB. Although that effort failed, White eventually joined the No. 2 CB in February 1917, and became the Battalion’s Chaplain with the rank of Honorary Captain. Perhaps the only AfriCanadian Officer in the Canadian and British Expeditionary Forces, White was involved with the No 2’s recruitment

⁸

RG 24, Vol. 4562, file 133-17-1. Bramah to Rutherford, 4 Oct. 1915; GSO Halifax Fortress to Bramah, 6 Oct. 1915; RG 150 Acc. 1992- 93/166, 931037, Bramah, Alexander: Nominal Roll: RG 24 Vol. 1206, HQ 297-1-21. OC 106th OSB to DAA and QMG 6th Div. HQ, 14 Dec. 1915: *Op. cit.* Reece, Samuel, 931761.

campaign in Nova Scotia, and remained staunch a supporter of the unit throughout the War. While he was in England and France, White's letters to Nova Scotian MP Frank Stanfield, and Prime Minister Borden, which did not always pass through proper military channels, eventually drew the ire of Military officials.⁹

Further evidencing the difficulties of AfriCanadian enlistment are the plights of four Ontarians, Henry Francis Courtney, Russell A. Miller, Franklin B. Talbot and Thomas S. Dockery. In January 1916, Miller wrote to J. R. B. Whitney to offer his enlistment with the AfriCanadian platoon Whitney was attempting to raise. A resident of London, Miller, a 21 year old teamster, claimed that there were "many young fellows here that would go if they take them now." Two months later, Henry Francis Courtney, a fellow teamster who resided at Owen Sound also offered to join Whitney's platoon. According to Courtney, his brother Jacob was training with a unit at Collingwood, however, Henry was unable to enlist with area units. Also from Owen Sound, Franklin B. Talbot had offered enlistment with Whitney's platoon. Talbot, along with Thomas S. Dockery of Toronto, were among the first to offer enlistment with Whitney's unit in December 1915. Unfortunately, Whitney's attempts to raise an AfriCanadian platoon were plowed under by militia racism. Although Talbot and Dockery relinquished their military aspirations, Courtney and Miller did not. On August 30, 1916, Courtney joined the No. 2 CB at Toronto and eventually became a Corporal. Twenty-one days after Courtney enlisted, Miller was taken on No. 2 at London

⁹

RG 150, Acc. 1992-93/166. White William Andrew: Nominal Roll: RG 9, III, A1, Vol. 81, file HQ 10-9-40. White to Stanfield, 18 Oct. 1917; Creighton to Bristol, 26 Aug, 1918 and reply 28 Sept. 1918: RG 24 Vol. 1469, file HQ 600-100-35. White to Borden, 11 Aug. 1918.

with the rank of private.¹⁰

As events unfolded in Nova Scotia and Ontario, AfriCanadians in Alberta faced an equally frustrating situation. On January 17, 1916, Joseph R. Butler, a resident of Edmonton, submitted his name to 13 MD HQ. An African-American immigrant with seven years experience in the US Army, Butler was confident that he would make an “efficient officers” and attract a number of men to the unit. Sadly, Butler was informed that there was not an AfriCanadian unit, nor was there a plan to create one. Even though Butler’s case was known at regional and national HQs, nothing was done to find a place for Butler in the CEF. On September 17, 1916, almost nine months after he was refused enlistment, Butler was taken on No 2 CB at Edmonton with the rank of Private. By September 23, 1918, Butler was promoted to the rank of Acting Sergeant.¹¹

In March 1916, two months after Butler’s attempted to enlist, the case of Benjamin Washington, a Farmer at High Prairie, was brought to 13 MD HQ. Although he had passed the physical examination for the CEF, Washington was refused enlistment. Writing on behalf of Washington, George E. Martin claimed that Washington was refused enlistment

¹⁰

RG 24 Vol. 1206 file HQ 297-1-21. *Canadian Observer*, 18 Dec. 1915, 22 Jan. 1916, 4 Mar. 1916; Nominal Roll: RG 150 Acc. 1992- 93/166, Miller, Russell, A., 931530; Courtney, Henry Francis, 93150. For a detailed discussion of Whitney’s recruiting attempts see Chapter 3 and 4.

¹¹

RG 24 Vol. 4739, file 448-14- 259. Butler to OC 13 MD, 14 Jan. 1916; GOC 13 MD to Butler, 17 Jan. 1916; GOC 13 MD to Secretary Military Council, 17 Jan 1916; GOC 13 MD to OC 63 OSB, 21 Jan. 1916; AG Canadian Militia to DOC 13 MD, 26 Jan. 1916; GOC 13 MD to OC 63 OSB, 31 Jan. 1916; GOC 13 MD to Butler, 31 Jan. 1916; RG 150 Acc. 1992-93/166, Butler, Joseph R, 931037; Nominal Roll: War Diaries, Sept. 1918.

with a number of battalions because he was an AfriCanadian. Martin also wanted confirmation of the claims that an AfriCanadian battalion was recruiting at Montreal. Unfortunately, 13 MD HQ did not reply to either Washington or Martin. As with Butler, Washington eventually went on to serve in No. 2 CB. Washington joined the Battalion on September 16, 1916, one day before Butler.¹²

Clearly, before the creation of the No. 2 CB, AfriCanadians enlistments were repeatedly refused. As evidenced by the cases of Alexander Bramah, Samuel Reece, William White, Henry Courtney, Russell Miller, Roger Butler and Benjamin Washington, high ranking military officials either fostered racist ideologies or obeyed officials who were racist. Despite the requests for an AfriCanadian unit, few officials looked into the matter. Nonetheless when the opportunity finally did arrive, Bramah, Reece, White, Courtney, Miller, Butler and Washington, continued with their military aspirations. Their individual struggles however personify those of a collective. While they did go on to serve, many other AfriCanadians either refused to re-offer enlistment or to join a segregated non-combat unit. Unfortunately, there are few direct testimonials of those who actually refused to enlist. Fortunately however, there is ample evidence available on the men who either persevered, compromised or waited for their experiences to tell them 'Now's The Time.' Eventually some of those who were refused enlistment took up leadership roles with the No. 2. Before they did, however, there were others who held important positions before the Battalion's departure.

¹²

Ibid. Martin to Cruickshanks, 17 Mar. 1916: RG 150 Acc. 1992-93/166, Washington, Benjamin, 931555: Nominal Roll: War Diaries, Sept. 1918.

Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs)

When No. 2 CB sailed from Halifax Harbour, only one of the commissioned officers, Honorary Captain William White, was AfriCanadian while only two of the NCOs were non-African. As the group of men gaining direct control of the majority African unit, the NCOs represent a point of social contact that often personifies the contradictions of AfriCanadian military service. Either acting as loyal and socially progressive citizens, or as military overseers in a “White Man’s War,” many NCOs walked through a ‘no-African-land’ that rarely accepted AfriCanadians as private soldiers. AfriCanadian NCOs faced pressures the private soldier could often avoid. Besides their responsibilities for the drill, dress and discipline of the No. 2 CB, some NCOs were recruiters for the Battalion. Unfortunately, social connections did not outweigh community indifference towards the Battalion.¹³

Although most of the NCOs were Canadian residents at the time of enlistment, only thirteen men were Canadian-born. Of the seventeen immigrants, seven were born in the British West Indies, three in British Guiana, two in England and one in Malta. The

¹³

RG 150, Acc. 1992-93/166, Norman, James P., 222908; Peacock, George S., 931365; Alberga, George F., 931308; DeCosta, Wilfred A., 931353; Coates, Duckworh, 1033053; Cross, Ethelbert L., 931405; Edwards Mathew Nathaniel, 931028; Falawn, Marlow, 931319; Hemphill, Carry, C., 931619; Johnson Walter A., 931039; Patterson, John L., 931626; Sealy, Edward, 931011; Smith, Narvaez, 931577; Thomas, William, J. 931340; Young, John J., 931145; Duncan, Frank H., 739093; Flood, Sydney, 931066; Corbin, Percy S., 931546; Courtney, Henry F., 931501; Bell, Kilson D., 931252; Binga, Bethune, 931601; Greenidge, Hewburn N., 93163; Johnson, George A., 931051; Kellum, William, 931166; Livingstone, Daniel, 645263; Martin, Lawrence, 931115; Medford, Walter, 931073; Miles, Harry, 931547; Reece Samuel, 902479; Waldrow, Charles O., 243638 (Hereafter, NCOs-Attestation Papers): Nominal Roll: Public Archives of Nova Scotia, Microfilm 3207. *The Atlantic Advocate*, January 1917, (Hereafter, *Advocate*).

remaining four NCOs were American born. Significantly, the NCO's religious backgrounds reflected the influences of British Imperial expansions. The bulk of the NCOs were Protestants. Among the Protestants were eight Methodists, two groups of seven Baptists and members of the Church of England, two Presbyterians and one Plymouth Brethren. There were only two Roman Catholics, and the remaining three NCOs did not attest to a religion. Drawn from a variety of occupations, the NCOs civilian 'trades' or 'callings' indicate a diversity of educational and employment experiences. Table 3 shows the pre-War occupations of the NCOs.¹⁴

(Table 3) Occupational Diversity of No. 2 CB's NCOs

Book Keeper	Coat Maker (2)	Gas Engineer/Mechanic	Quarryman
Carpenter	Cook (2)	Journalist	Saddler
Chauffeur (2)	Gardener (2)	Labourer (6)	Stenographer
Chef	Draughtsman/ Surveyor	Medical Student	Soldier
Civil Engineering Student	Fireman	Porter (2)	Teamster

Highlighting the importance of attaining 'experienced' men, fifteen NCOs attested to previous military experience. Three-quarters of the Senior NCOs, seven of the eleven Sergeants, and one-third of Corporals had previous military experience. Ten men served were with Canadian units, four in the American Army and one was a career soldier with the British Army. Race and occupation is also reflected in some of the ranks and responsibilities of the NCOs. Battalion Sergeant-Major James Norman, a career soldier, was the highest ranking NCO. Following Norman was Regimental Quarter-Master Sergeant George S. Peacock, a Book Keeper who had spent nineteen months with the 93rd Regiment before

¹⁴

NCOs-Attestation Papers.

joining the No 2. Both men, who were described as ‘White,’ were later promoted to Lieutenant. Taken alongside Honorary Captain William White’s contention that he was the only AfriCanadian officer in the CEF, it is clear that even amongst the ranks, AfriCanadians were not in control of the No. 2 CB.¹⁵

Still, AfriCanadians did occupy significant positions with the Battalion. Acting Company Sergeant-Major Wilfred DeCosta’s work as a landscape gardener had prepared him to supervise work crews, however, he also had other useful skills. As the Founding Editor of the *Atlantic Advocate*, and a former manager of a Collections Agency, DeCosta was accustomed to influencing and haranguing people.¹⁶ Acting Company Sergeant -Major George F. Alberga, a Civil Engineering student at McGill University had suspended his studies to serve in the.¹⁷ Rising to the challenges of command, Sergeant Edward Sealy was a competent and tenacious leader. A labourer who had served with the British West Indies Volunteers, Sealy established a reputation as a tough but fair NCO. According to Private William Carter, Sealy “made you toe the mark, but he was a first class soldier ... if he had

¹⁵

NCOs-Attestation Papers: War Diaries, Sept. 1918: RG 24 Vol.1469, file HQ 600-100-35. White to Borden, 11 Aug. 1918: The Battalion had four Senior NCO, eleven Sergeants, and fifteen Corporals. .

¹⁶

NCOs-Attestation Paper: Nominal Roll: *Advocate*, April 1915; January 1917: Philip L. Hartling, *The Atlantic Advocate, Nova Scotia’s First Black Magazine*, (1991) an unpublished brief history with biographical sketches of the Advocate staff.

¹⁷

When the War erupted, McGill was one of the few Canadian Universities to maintain an Officer Training Program. George F. Alberga attested previous military experience was OTC: *Advocate*, January 1917.

been a white man, they probably would have made him a commissioned officer."¹⁸ Born and raised in Nova Scotia Sergeant William J. Thomas, a sleeping car porter, was also the leader of an AfriCanadian band at Halifax. Eventually performing with the No. 2 CB's band, Thomas received considerable recognition for his work with the band at a variety of recruiting and social functions in Canada and overseas.¹⁹

Sailing to Europe to serve the King and Country, many NCOs left behind wives and families. Fourteen NCOs were married, and three had dependent children. Two men, Bethune Binga and Frank Duncan, were widowers with dependent children living in Ontario. The remaining fourteen NCOs were single. At least sixteen NCOs had Kin living in Canada, and most of them were in Nova Scotia. The remaining NCOs had family in the Ontario, Manitoba, Quebec, United States, British West Indies and British Guiana.²⁰

While only one of the NCOs was reportedly refused enlistment before the creation of the No. 2 CB, many of the NCOs understood the difficulties associated with enlistment. One of the most infamous incidences of military racism occurred in New Brunswick and some of the men involved later joined the No. 2 CB.

18

NCOs-Attestation Papers: Calvin Ruck. Canada's Black Battalion: No. 2 Construction, 1916-1920. (Halifax: Society for the Protection and Preservation of Black Culture in Nova Scotia, 1986):58, 60-61: *Advocate*, January 1917: During the units return to Canada, Sealy argued with a 'White' NCO who attempted to interfere with a group of No 2 men at Kinmel Park, Wales. When reason and discipline failed, the White soldiers attacked the No.2 men. In the end, it appears that the 'White' troops lost the fight, and Sealy led his men back to their back to their assigned area. In fact, Sealy was neither a fool or a bully.

19

Advocate, January 1917: *Truro Daily News*, 27 Nov. 1916: War Diaries, December 1917.

20

NCOs-Attestation Papers.

Fowler's List

When on November 25, 1915, Lt.-Col. G. W. Fowler, requested the dismissal of seventeen AfriCanadians from 104th OSB at Camp Sussex, New Brunswick, the incident marked another low point in the fight against military racism. Following their return to St John, the plight of the men was taken up by two AfriCanadians, John T. Richards and K. C. Hamilton who eventually reported the racist conduct of Militia officials in New Brunswick, to Ottawa. Unfortunately, the pattern of racism was difficult to stop. Clearly, Fowler did not want his men to “mingle” with AfriCanadians, and DMD HQ refused to challenge a Fowler's right to refuse particular men. Similar to the AfriCanadians discussed in ‘Now's the Time,’ at least eight of the seventeen men refused by Fowler eventually enlisted with No 2 CB.²¹

One of the men appearing on Fowler's List who joined the No. 2 CB was Percy J. Richards. Significantly, the principle advocate for AfriCanadian enlistment at St. John, John T. Richards, was one of a number of Richards living in the city. At least four of the men on Fowler's List, including Percy J. Richards, lived in the same area as John T. Richards. John T. Richard's concern over the lost wages of the men on Fowler's List also has relevance for the men who later joined the No.2 CB. Under the conditions of their employment, most of these men could not expect their employers to pay them for lost time. Also, all three of the

²¹

RG 24 Vol. 1206 file HQ 297-1-21. OC 104th OSB to AAG 6th Div. HQ, 25 Nov. 1915; Richards to Duke of Connaught, 4 Oct. 1915; Richards to Hughes, 20 Nov. 1915; Richards to Stanton, 20 Nov. 1915 Hamilton to Governor General, 29 Dec. 1915: For a more detailed discussion of the Camp Sussex incident and the debate that followed see the New Brunswick section of Chapter 2.

Labourers, John Blizzard, Fred Dixon and James Holmes, were married men with dependent children. All of the No 2 men barred by Fowler were from St. John. Besides residing in similar parts of the city, some of these men also lived on the same streets. Five of the men on Fowler's List who joined the No. 2 CB in August 1916, were accepted on the same day.

Table 4 indicates the enlistment dates, occupations and marital status of the men on Fowler's List who enlisted with No 2 CB.²²

(Table 4) No 2 CB Men from Fowler's List

Name	Date of Enlistment	Occupation	Marital Status
Harold F. Bushfan	Aug. 10, 1916	Clerk	Single
Roy E. Hayes	Aug. 10, 1916	Teamster	Single
James Holmes	Aug. 10, 1916	Labourer	Married
Herbert Nicholas	Aug. 10, 1916	Barber	Single
Percy J. Richards	Aug. 10, 1916	Teamster	Single
John S. Blizzard	Aug. 14, 1916	Labourer	Married
Arthur S. Tyler	Sept. 14, 1916	Teamster/ Horse Trainer	Not Stated
Fred C. Dixon	Oct. 14, 1916	Labourer	Married

The community connections between the men on Fowler's List and those who enlisted with No. 2 CB are also accentuated by kin relations and religious affiliations. Five

²²

Ibid. J. T. Richards to Duke of Connaught, 4 Oct. 1915; Richards to Hughes, 20 Nov. 1915; Richards to Stanton, 20 Nov. 1915: RG 150, Acc. 1992-93/166. Attestation Papers, Blizzard, John Spencer, 931147; Bushfan, Herold Frederick, 931103; Dixon, Fred Charles, 931323, Hayes, Roy Edward, 931118; Holmes, James, 931113; Nicholas, Herbert, 931115; Richards, Percy James, 931114; Tyler, Arthur Seymour, 931239 (Hereafter Fowler's List-Attestation Paper): *McAlpine City Directory, St. John New Brunswick, 1915-1916*: National Archives of Canada, National Map Collection, 18550, Map of City and Harbour of St. John, N.B., 1910.

men were members of the Church of England. Harold Bushfan and Arthur Seymour Tyler's disappointments at Camp Sussex, were, to some extent, alleviated when they and members of their kin group were taken on with the No. 2 CB at St. John. Four days after Harold F. Bushfan enlisted with the No. 2 CB, Ernest G. and Robert J. Bushfan joined the Battalion. By October, Philip A. Bushfan Jr. had also enlisted. The eldest of three of the widowed Mary Bushfan's sons to enter the Battalion, Philip Jr. was born at Sussex, New Brunswick, while Ernest G. and Robert J. were born at St. John. Also born at St. John, Harold F. Bushfan, the youngest of the four Bushfans, was the son of Sarah E. Bushfan. Table 5 indicates the birth dates, religions and occupations of the Bushfans serving with No.2 CB. ²³

(Table 5) Bushfan Kin Group in No 2 CB

Given Names	Date of Birth	Religion	Occupation
Philip Andrew Jr.	Apr. 8, 1874	Church Of England	Labourer/ Concert Worker
Robert James	Mar. 30, 1879	Church Of England	Bridgeman
Ernest Garfield	Dec. 30 1891	Baptist	Labourer
Harold Frederick	Dec. 23, 1895	Church Of England	Clerk

Clearly members of the same kin group, the mothers of the four Bushfans resided at 3 Union Alley, St John. With the exception of the married elder brother Philip, the other Bushfan recruits also lived at 3 Union Alley. All of the men intended to return to St. John after their military service. ²⁴

Enlisting on the same day as Herold Bushfan, Charles E. Tyler was not at Camp

²³

Fowler's List - Attestation Papers; Nominal Roll.

²⁴

Fowler's List-Attestation Papers: No. 2 CB Nominal Roll.

Sussex, but he was familiar with the situation. Charles' younger brother Arthur Seymour Tyler, was one of the men noted on Fowler's List. Brothers by birth, the Tylers were also teamsters and members of the Church of England. Charles and Arthur's mother, Mary MacCarthy, was widowed and had remarried. Nonetheless, the eighteen-year-old Arthur, resided with Mary MacCarthy at Pitt Street. Charles, who was married with two children, attested to providing his mother with \$15.00 per month. As with the Bushfans, the Tylers also intended to return to St. John after the War.²⁵

As evidenced by the enlistment efforts of the men on Fowler's List who joined the No. 2 CB, AfriCanadian enlistment was a difficult task. Yet, despite the financial hardships some men faced, they persisted in their enlistment endeavours. Significantly, the economic plight of these men, as articulated by AfriCanadian recruitment advocates, is supported by information available in military personal records. Equally important is the fact that when these men returned to their communities with the depressing news of the enlistment difficulties, and their defeat that was felt by other AfriCanadians. Nevertheless, eight men and at least four of their relations did not entirely submit to racist forces. Clearly, the persistence of the men on Fowler's List as with those discussed in 'Now's the Time,' attests to the fact that kin and community relations were an important ingredient in the limited recruitment successes of the No. 2 CB.

25

Fowler's List-Attestation Papers.

Kin and Community Recruits

Inspired by Chapter 7 of Calvin Ruck's Canada's Black Battalion, this section examines a number of AfriCanadians who served with No 2 CB/CC. By combining Ruck's collection of the post-war reflections by AfriCanadian veterans with the standardized information available in military personnel records, this section offers a blend of oral history and documentary research. As with many CEF units, kin and community relations were an important part of No. 2 CB's recruiting process. Previously excluded from military service, several AfriCanadians entered the No. 2 CB with family members and neighbours. A few men also noted that men with the Battalion influenced their decision to enlist. Although the No. 2 CB's Nominal Roll suggests that there were extensive kin and community relations in the Battalion, this section focuses on thirty-five or 6 % of the 605 non-commissioned personnel of the No. 2 CB. While some of these men appear in different sections of this chapter, others were selected to enrich our understanding of the creation and recruitment of Canada's only AfriCanadian Overseas Battalion.²⁶

In mid to late 1916, four Allison's joined the Battalion. Three of these men, Clarence, Kenneth and William, were the sons of Albert Allison. Born in Hants County, Nova Scotia, these men also had connections to Mapleton, Three Miles Plain and New Port

²⁶

RG 150, Acc. 1992-93/166, Alberga, Albert, M., 931255; Alberga, George F., 931308; Allison, Clarence, 931335; Allison, Kenneth, 931053; Allison, Walter R., 931358; Allison, William, 931198; Elms, Alexander, 931189; Elms, Alexander B., 931109; Elms, Frederick G., 931089; Elms, John W., 931274; Elms, Michael R., 931202; Elms, Walter H., 931092; Francis, Charles, 931298; Francis, Charles E., 931293; Francis, Luke, 931297; Kellum, Edward, 282308; Kellum, William, 931166; Tolliver, George W., 931389; Tolliver, William, 931003; Ware, Arthur, N., 931657; Ware, William, J., 931656. (Hereafter Kin/Community Recruits): Nominal Roll .

Station. Enlisting as privates, the Allison brothers were all Baptists who worked as quarrymen. Clarence was the only brother to marry, and his wife Sarah and their two children remained at Mapleton when he went overseas. The fourth Allison to enlist was Walter Ronald Allison of Hammonds Plains. Also a Baptist, Walter Ronald was the son of Hammonds Plains resident Walter Allison. Walter R. worked as a cooper/labourer and was single when he joined the army. According to military records, four men either born in, or attesting to having with next of kin residing at Hammonds Plains, joined the No. 2 CB around the same period as Walter Allison. MacKerrow Anderson enlisted at Halifax on Dec 9. Three days later Walter R. Allison, William Jones and Harry Mitchell were taken on at Truro. All four of these men were Baptists. In the event that they did not know each other from the church and community, it is possible that Allison, Anderson and Jones met while working as coopers. The fourth man, Mitchell, was a teamster. ²⁷

Also from Nova Scotia, six members of the Elms family joined the No. 2 CB late in 1916. Five enlisted in August 1916, and one in September. Enlisting on August 2, Frederick Gordon, and Walter Howard were the first to join. Eight days later, Frederick's cousin, Alexander Benjamin Elms enlisted. Four of the Elms men lived at Truro, and two at Halifax. With the exception of John William Elms, a farmer, all these men were single. When he enlisted, John W. Elms' wife Sadie and their two children were residing at Big Tracadie. While at Pontarlier, France, John wrote home to wish his family a "[h]appy Xmas." Sadie also wrote to inform her husband that the money he sent her had arrived, and that she would

²⁷

Kin/Community Recruits: *Advocate*, January 1917.

send him socks and mittens. All of the unmarried Elms men provided \$15.00 per month to their mothers. Attesting as the sole support of his widowed mother, Annie Elms, Frederick G. later claimed that his mother had not received his Separation Allowance after April 1918.²⁸ Though not involved in the post-War violence at Kinmel Park, Wales, Benjamin Elms later recalled that: "A white soldier made a racial remark and old Sgt. Sealy ordered his men to put him in the guard house. His buddies came to release him and all hell broke loose." ²⁹

Enlisting on consecutive days in late November 1916, Arthur Nelson and William James Ware joined the No. 2 CB at Calgary, Alberta. The sons of the famous AfriCanadian rancher and rough-rider, John Ware, Arthur and William followed the patriotic example of their father. During the 1869 conflict between the Métis and the Federal Government, John Ware had joined the local Militia. Unfortunately, the Ware's parent did not see their son's serve in the CEF. In 1905, both Mildred and John died. ³⁰

Born in Jamaica, George F. and Albert M. Alberga, were civil engineering students at McGill University when they enlisted. Enlisting at Montreal, Albert, the younger brother, was the first to join, however when George signed up at Truro, Nova Scotia, he surpassed Albert in rank and duties. A member of McGill's OTC, George quickly earned the rank of

²⁸

Kin/Community Recruits: No. 2 CB Nominal Roll: Nova Scotia Museum, Negative No. 23, 533 - 23,539, Picture Post Cards, John Elms and Sadie Elms, 17 Nov. 1917 - 25 Nov. 1917.

²⁹

Kin/Community Recruits: Ruck, 60.

³⁰

No 2 CB Nominal Roll: David H. Breen. "John Ware," Dictionary of Canadian Biography Volume 13. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press): 1074-1075.

Acting Sergeant-Major while Albert was listed as a private. Before their departure overseas, both men had returned to Montreal. Sergeant-Major Alberga went to work in the Montreal Recruiting Office, and Albert returned to complete his exams at McGill. Contrary to the Battalions' Nominal Roll, the *Atlantic Advocate* reported that Albert was a Corporal. Nonetheless, by September 1918, both men were Acting Company Sergeant-Majors.³¹

Further evidencing the significance of kin and community in No. 2 CB many of the Battalion's personnel were also linked by community institutions and events. Before his departure overseas, Sergeant Edward Stewart received an engraved pen knife from Sergeant William Thomas as a token of Thomas' friendship and regard. The knife was presented by Thomas' wife, Elda Jane, who was accompanied by Sergeant Walter Johnson, Corporal William Kellum and Private William Johnson. Significantly, two Kellums joined the Battalion. Unfortunately, Corporal William Kellum's date of enlistment was not recorded, however, Edward Kellum joined in March 1916. Possibly members of one of Halifax's renowned underclass kin groups, William and Edward's involvement with the No. 2 CB may have precipitated a change in their social standing. Sergeants Thomas and Johnson were part of a socially interconnected series of kin groups that had successfully weathered 19th and 20th Century Nova Scotian racism. William's presence at the Stewart/Thomas ceremony suggests that William kept company with members of Halifax's rising AfriCanadian middling class. Not surprisingly, the AfriCanadian middling class campaign for socio-political equality had also gained the support of the *Advocate's* bootstrapping immigrant staffers, Dr. C.C. Ligoure

31

Kin/Community Recruits: *Advocate*, January 1917; War Diaries, Sept. 1918.

and Sergeants Wilfred DeCosta and Ethelbert Cross. All three of these men were involved with the No.2 CB, and it was in the *Advocate* that the Thomas/Sealy ceremony was announced.³²

Two other members of the Battalion with kin and community ties to Halifax and the *Advocate* were William and George Washington Tolliver. Enlisting five months before George, William Tolliver did not appear in the *Advocate*, however, William's next of kin, Charles Tolliver, advertised his Grocery Store and Ice Cream Parlour in the *Advocate*. Although George Tolliver had joined the No. 2 CB in December 1916, advertisements for his contracting business appeared in the *Advocate* for January 1917.³³ One of the many ironies of AfriCanadian military service is that four of the men who appeared on Fowler's List and then joined the No.2 CB, went on to perform in the Battalion's Band. On those occasions that their martial music failed to attract recruits, Herbert Nicholas, Arthur Taylor, Fred Dixon and Harold Bushfan knew that the problem was not their performances. By the time the band was organized, military racism had turned a number AfriCanadians away from their patriotic intentions. Interestingly, Harold Bushfan's social interactions were also noted in the *Advocate*. During a visit to Digby, Nova Scotia, Harold had stayed at Mrs Wilkens Miller's home. A resident of St. John, Bushfan's connection to Digby may have come from

³²

Kin/Community Recruits: *Advocate*, January 1917: Judith Fingard. *The Darker Side of Life in Victorian Halifax*. (Lawrencetown: Pottersfield Press, 1991): 77-85: Judith Fingard, "John Kellum," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume 12*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press): 539-540.

³³

Advocate, January 1917.

Mr. and Mrs. Percy Graves. The Graves, who were residents of St. John, had also visited Digby to spend Christmas with their parents, Mr and Mrs Wilkens Miller. Also noted in the Digby news was Mrs Lizzie Frances, who had recently met with a serious loss. Unfortunately, *Advocate* does not explain the loss. Nevertheless, the Francis' at Digby also had to do without three of their men Charles, Luke and Charles Edward who had all joined No. 2 CB at Truro between October 3 and 4 1916. One man, Luke Francis, listed Mrs Lizzie Francis as his next of kin.³⁴

Although AfriCanadians were not always happy with the social circumstances of their enlistment, a number of men were pleased with their time in the army. Before he was discharged in May 1917, because of an arm injury, William Carter recalled that he "got along very well in the army." James Elmer Cromwell, one of seven Cromwell's to enlist with No. 2, found that "once you got into the army, you learned to take care of yourself." While stationed near the Swiss border, John Smith recalled that; "At times it was pretty good at other times it was pretty bad and pretty lonely." Still, John Smith viewed his service as "a real learning experience." After visiting Great Britain and Europe, Charles Gordon Wilson "found it a very good adventure, travelling and seeing some of the world. All in all it was an unforgettable experience." Ordained as a Pentecostal Minister in 1929, Reverend Charles Nathan Smith may have forgiven, but he did not forget that the, "No. 2 Battalion was formed due to discrimination and prejudice." Charles Smith, one of five Canadian-born Smiths to enlist, contends that while in France, some No. 2's men faced prejudice because Americans

³⁴

Kin/Community Recruits: *Advocate*, January 1917: Ruck, 28.

were spreading bad reports about African soldiers. Repeating a theme common to African troops in France, Alexander Benjamin Elms noted that the Europeans he encountered “were different from the people in Canada. They treated us with respect.” On the return trip to Canada, Robert Shepard was with No. 2 CB at Kinmel Park, North Wales, when white soldiers clashed with the men of the No. 2. According to Shepard, a group of No. 2 men were under the direction of Sergeant Sealy when a Sergeant Major from an other unit interfered with the line of the march. After the Sergeant Major was arrested, “some of his comrades attempted to remove him from the Guard House. A riot broke out and a number of soldiers ended up in the hospital.”³⁵

Either through their kin or community relations, many of the AfriCanadians who joined the No. 2 CB had socio-political connections to each other before they enlisted. A number of men entered the Battalion on or near the same date as members of their kin or community groups. In some cases kin/community relations transcended rank, however the majority of the No. 2 CB’s kin relations were found among the private soldiers. Many of the individuals noted here were from Nova Scotia. With 60.1 % of the Battalion’s men enlisting in Nova Scotia it is possible to suggest that the recruitment and deployment of the No. 2 CB was particularly relevant for the members of Canada’s oldest AfriCanadian communities. The high proportion of Nova Scotian kin and community relations also corresponds to another feature of the AfriCanadian experience with the No. 2 CB. The majority of the men who died while serving with the No. 2 CB were also from Nova Scotia, or enlisted in Nova

35

Ruck, 56, 58-63, 69: Nominal Roll.

Scotia. Their deaths, however, were not only felt in Nova Scotia. They were war-time losses that were felt by all of the men in the Battalion and AfriCanadians in Ontario, Alberta, Barbados and America.

The Dead

Although No. 2 CB was not a combat unit, at least nine men died during their military service. Throughout the war, reports of the No. 2's living, transportation and working conditions indicate that the men faced considerable physical hardships in Canada and Europe. In some cases, the causes of death amongst the men of No. 2 suggest that the harsh living and working conditions contributed to the contraction of fatal diseases. In the case of Charlie Some, however, the cause of death is not directly attributable to the physical conditions of service. Indeed, the events around Some's death remain a mystery.³⁶

Considered the only CEF unit to work in Canada "in connection with the War," No. 2 CB sent a detachment of men to pick up steel rails at Edmunston, New Brunswick early in 1917. While at Edmunston the unit was struck by a pneumonia epidemic that eventually claimed the life of Seymour Bundy. Despite requests for medical assistance, medical professionals and supplies were slow to arrive at Edmunston. Also, contributing to the unhealthy conditions was that the men working along the railway were housed in boxcars

³⁶

RG 150, Acc. 1992-93/166. Bryant, Charles Henry, 9311763; Boone, William, 931652; Cromwell, Arthur Benson, 931083; Hall, Belfield, 931343; Mansfield, John, 931378; Some, Charlie, 931410; Sylvie, George, 931025; Williams, Tillman McKinley, 931837 (Hereafter Attestation Papers-The Dead): Nominal Roll: War Diaries, July 1917; Dec. 1917; Jan. 1918; April 1918; June 1918; Sept. 1918; Oct. 1918.

rather than properly outfitted sleeping cars or railway barracks.³⁷

Nearly one month after Bundy's death, the No. 2 CB sailed for Great Britain. According to Calvin Ruck, Arthur Benson Cromwell died en route, however Cromwell's personnel records indicate that he arrived overseas 'safely,' but died less than one month after the No. 2 arrived at La Joux, France. Sadly, it is probable that Cromwell and many of the men who died in France had succumbed to difficult physical circumstances. For example, the records indicate that before arriving at La Joux, France, on May 20, 1917, the men of No.2 were only fed twice after leaving Boulogne on the May 18. At La Joux, the Company was quarantined for ten days "on account of suspected measles." In France, six members of the No.2 died, and four of those deaths are attributable to harsh living and working conditions. Table 6 lists the War Dead of No. 2 CB/CC's according to each man's length of service and the causes and places of their deaths.³⁸

³⁷

Attestation Papers-The Dead: RG 24 Vol. 1695 file HQ 683-401-7. Sutherland to Secretary of Militia Council, 1 Feb. 1917; Sutherland to Secretary of Militia Council, 12 Feb. 1917; OC MD 6 to Adjutant-General, 13 Feb. 1917; McCurdy to ADMS MD 6, 14 Feb. 1917; Adjutant-General to GOC MD 6, 28 Feb. 1917.

³⁸

Ruck, 29: Attestation Papers-The Dead: War Diaries, May 1917; July 1917; Dec. 1917; Jan. 1918; April 1918; June 1918; Sept. 1918; Oct. 1918.

(Table 6) War Dead of No. 2 CB/CC

Name	Time of Service	Cause of Death	Place of Death
Seymour Bundy	ca. Feb. 1917	Pneumonia	Edmunston, Canada
Arthur B. Cromwell	Aug 3 1916 - June 16, 1917	Pulmonary TB	La Joux, France
Charles H. Bryant	Dec. 16, 1916 - July 4, 1917	Meningitis	La Joux, France
William Boone	Oct. 23, 1916 - Dec. 1, 1917	Nephritis	Champagnole, France
Tillman M. Williams	Mar. 13, 1917-Jan. 13, 1918	Pulmonary TB	Champagnole, France
John Mansfield	Dec 30, 1916-Jan. 14, 1918	Syncope	La Joux, France
George Sylvie	July 27, 1916-Apr. 28, 1918	Tuberculosis	Champagnole, France
Charlie Some	July 3, 1916-Sept. 23, 1918	Murdered	Outside Salins, France
Belfield Hall	Nov. 6, 1916 - Oct. 22, 1918	Tubercular Parotitis	Champagnole, France

One death that is not directly attributable to the physical conditions of service was Charlie Some's. On the morning of September 23, 1918, No. 2's Central Headquarters at Jura learned that the body of Private Charlie Some was discovered on Road 45, a narrow road leading to the main Andelot Road to Salins. Originally guarded by French Gendarmes, Some's body was, as ordered by French authorities, transported from "the scene of the tragedy" to La Joux for a post-mortem. Three days later, Charlie Some was buried with full Military Honours at Jura. On October 4, 1918, a Court of Inquiry consisting of No. 2 and Forestry Corp officers, found that Charlie Some "was murdered by some person or persons unknown with a long sharp cutting instrument, as per description of wounds by medical officer."³⁹

Ominously, the survival of the military document noting Some's death and the date

³⁹

Attestation Papers-The Dead: Nominal Roll: War Diary, Sept. 1918; Oct. 1918: Some's death was particularly gruesome event. Besides having his throat cut, Some was found with "numerous incisions" on his face, chest, back and neck.

on which the official conclusion to Some's service was announced, are significant sources and events in the underside of Canadian war-time war glory. The final notation of Some's death, October 4, 1918, appears in the last available War Diary for No. 2 CC. The same day marked the four-year anniversary of the anti-racist submissions by Alexander Bramah, John T. Richards, and George Morton to military officials in Canada. While it is possible that by 1918, Richards and Morton were removed from the realities of their patriotic campaign, Alexander Bramah was with the No. 2 in France. Eighteen days after the Court of Inquiry made its announcement on the cause of Some's death, Bramah, and the rest of the men with the No. 2 learned that another one of their comrades, Belfield Hall, had died of tubercular parotitis. One of two Barbadian-born Halls to serve in the No. 2, Belford and DeCosta Hall did not attest to having the same next of kin. However, both men's kin did live at Bowling Lane, St. Joseph, Barbados.⁴⁰

All of the men who died while serving with the No. 2 were buried with military honours. William Boone and Charlie Some were the only two soldiers who were married. Their War Service Gratuities and Pension Bonuses were paid to their wives at Junkin, Alberta and Africville, Nova Scotia. The six unmarried men who died in France bequeathed their estates to their mothers, while John Mansfield, to his sister. Less than a month before the war ended and after twenty-one months of active service, Canada's only AfriCanadian overseas unit had lost 1.5 % of its enlisted personnel to disease and violence. Ironically spared the high rates of attrition suffered by the CEF's combat and support units that were

⁴⁰

Attestation Papers-The Dead: War Diaries, Oct. 1918: Nominal Roll.

closer to the front lines, No. 2's war dead nonetheless represented significant losses for friends and family in Canada, Barbados, and the United States. As with many other non-combat CEF units, the work the No. 2 was charged with while these men died was important to the war effort.

Conclusion

After two years of socio-political debate, AfriCanadians finally gained an opportunity to 'do their bit' for their country. Although the No. 2 CB was not the overseas fighting force advocates for AfriCanadian had petitioned for, the Battalion was embraced by men who had battled against socio-military racism in the CEF's recruitment/enlistment process. From across the country Alexander Bramah, Samuel Reece, William White, Henry Courtney, Russell Miller, Joseph Butler and Benjamin Washington stepped forward to personify the individual enlistment struggles that also constituted a collective AfriCanadian experience. Yet, even as AfriCanadians moved towards the No. 2 CB, racist military and civilian authorities tried to end the No. 2's existence, take command of the unit or prevent the Battalion's recruiters from renting office and barrack space. Nonetheless, as evidenced by the persistence of Bramah, Reece, White, Courtney, Miller, Butler, Washington and eight of the men on Fowler's List, the desire, or the need to serve was greater than the racist barriers that appeared.

The No. 2 CB performed valuable functions in Canada, Great Britain and France. Although acceptance as a 'labouring' unit reflects racialized socio-economic assumptions, the No. 2 was what was required in the war effort. Significantly, the first 'labouring' unit

comprised of 'White' men, and the term 'Construction' was only utilised when the 'White' and clearly racist OC of the No. 1 CB rejected the name Labour Battalion as unpalatable. Nevertheless, 'Black' or 'White,' the No. 1 and 2 CBs were sent to Europe to work, not fight. To that end, the high proportion of labourers, teamsters and quarrymen who joined the No. 2 CB were exactly what their King and Country needed. As evidenced by the number of professional, clerical, protective, personal, transportation, skilled and semi-skilled personnel who served as NCOs, the No. 2 also attracted many of the men necessary to properly supervise the unit's work crews.

Although the No. 2 CB did not reach full strength, the 605 men who did join constituted a significant social phenomena. Many were attracted to the Battalion out of a sense of patriotism and adventure, and/or as member of kin groups and communities. Despite the disappointment experienced by the AfriCanadians at Camp Sussex, two of the men who went on to enlist with the No. 2 CB were joined by at least four members of their kin group. With only twenty-seven men enlisting in New Brunswick, the men on Fowler's List and their kin who enlisted represented at least 44.4 % of the total number of New Brunswickers who enlisted.

As 'brothers' by birth, religion and trade the men who enlisted also left behind mothers, wives and children who were either dependent upon or accustomed to the financial and emotional support many of the volunteers had provided. While the Separation Allowances of the servicemen provided temporary compensation in their absence, the deaths of nine AfriCanadian soldiers were not equitable to the amounts paid out in War Service Gratuities and Pension Plans.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Shortly after Canada entered the First World War an unprecedented number of men rushed to volunteer with the military units that constituted the CEF. Spurred on by a heady mix of nationalism, imperialism and scientific racism, most volunteers and recruiters were profoundly ignorant of the realities of modern warfare. Significantly, the initial responsibility of recruiting for the CEF fell to a collection of militia units and civilian and groups and/or individuals who had few personal experiences with mass enlistment and industrial warfare. Eventually the CEF's recruiting machine was altered by the War. However, rather than building a new system, the national war effort initially relied on a socio-military order that had developed since Confederation. Sadly however, by the late 19th and early 20th Century, Canadian nationalism and British imperialism combined with scientific racism to construct a 'White' socio-military order that was characterized by a blend of paternalism, apathy and hostility towards AfriCanadians. Despite their pre-Confederation military service, AfriCanadians were neither invited into the new Dominion's Permanent Force, nor encouraged to create separate Militia units. When AfriCanadians attempted to join CEF units, they quickly learned that they were not the 'Chums' racist Canadians wanted to send overseas. As many Canadians were finding new opportunities to express their socio-political objectives, many AfriCanadians were forced to fight battles in which the 'Great War' became little more than a 'baptism by paradox.'

Why did AfriCanadians want to join the CEF, and in what ways did they articulate their War-time aspirations? How did non-AfriCanadians respond to AfriCanadian war aims? Why was the No. 2 CB created and who joined the Battalion? What does the AfriCanadian enlistment campaign and the creation of the No. 2 CB tell us about race relations in Canada during First World War?

The evidence presented in this thesis reveals that, although AfriCanadians were willing to place themselves into the courageous silhouettes that charged out of the Canadian propaganda machine, many AfriCanadians were prevented from 'doing their bit' by the nationalist and imperialist forces that fuelled the CEF's recruitment and propaganda machines. Nevertheless, as either patriots, adventure seekers, or socio-political pragmatists, AfriCanadians refused to accept that it was a 'White man's War.' Eventually supported by members of the African centered press and non-AfriCanadians, AfriCanadians instigated a two-year debate that ultimately exposed the racist underside of Canada's war-time glory. As evidenced by the plights of Alexander Bramah, Samuel Reece, Roger Butler, Benjamin Washington, Henry Courtney and Franklin Talbot, individual AfriCanadians were prevented from service because of their cultural heritage. When AfriCanadians Arthur Alexander, George Morton, J. T. Richards, K. L. Hamilton, Henry Munton, J. R. B. Whitney, and the Reverends White and Washington sought remedies to racist situations, they quickly learned the power of the racist forces in the CEF system. Contrary to the racist elements within the socio-political institutions they occupied, L. S. Clarke, Captain Langford, Lieutenant Colonel B. McLeod, M. F. McCurdy, William Pugsly and J. F. Tupper, attempted to include AfriCanadians in the war effort. Yet, as with their AfriCanadian allies, non-AfriCanadians

also failed to overturn a dangerous social reality.

While a number of the reported refusals of individual AfriCanadian enlistments were rooted in the actions of racist individuals, the large scale denial of AfriCanadian volunteers was premised on collective rather individual concerns. Often rooted in the communities they served, Militia units and Patriotic Associations recruited and delivered most of the men required for the CEF. When refused enlistments by middle or upper class recruiters or Militia officers, few AfriCanadians found recourse in the men who made up the ranks. While some officers accepted AfriCanadians, many other officers feared a decline in “White” enlistments if AfriCanadians were taken on. Clearly, Sam Hughes’ sweeping claim that AfriCanadians could join any unit they wished, was incorrect. Although officials at Ottawa did enquire about the racist problems in the regions, very little was done to insure that an inclusive theory overturned racially exclusive practices. In fact, the high level contention that AfriCanadians were not capable of patriotism and military valour, actually supported arguments that AfriCanadians were difficult to integrate into a ‘White man’s army.’

In addition to AfriCanadian enlistment attempts and the high level discourse that followed several refusals of enlistment, AfriCanadian enlistment aspirations were articulated by a small but vibrant African centered press. Drawn into the enlistment campaign through shared interests and readership, the *Atlantic Advocate*, *Canadian Observer*, and *Crisis Magazine*, provide rare and interconnected perspectives on race, the war, and post-war democratic societies. Clearly preferring to offer alternatives to Canadian socio-military racism rather than launching a public attack on socio-military racism, Whitney’s attempt to

raise an AfriCanadian platoon through the *Observer* was part of an effort to maintain a spirit of voluntarism and national unity. Although the *Advocate* was not entirely successful in its recruitment drive for the No. 2 CB, the magazine was a staunch supporter of AfriCanadian enlistment. Besides publishing letters from AfriCanadians who were inspired by the *Crisis*' critique of racism, the *Crisis* published a letter from AfriCanadian enlistment advocates. K. C. Hamilton and reported that Dr. C.C. Ligoure and Reverend William White were appointed as officers with the No. 2 CB. Similar to the *Observer* and *Advocate*, the *Crisis*' reportage of the anti-racist debate in Canada connects the enlistment and recruitment campaigns.

As recruiting editors, J. R. B. Whitney, E. L. Cross, W. A. DeCosta and C. C. Ligoure issued hawkish calls to duty that often supported Canadian/British war aims. Significantly, the AfriCanadian press' articulation of particular AfriCanadian war aims are not simply the ideas of a selection of publishers. The *Observer*'s reports of the socio-educational activities of Arthur Alexander and George Morton help to show these men as respected members of their communities. Similar to Whitney, their activities were conducted on behalf of the collective. Also, the publication of Henry Courtney and Russell Miller's enlistment testimonials helps to broaden our understanding of the social significance of their eventual enlistment with the No. 2 CB. Where the *Observer* exposes the ironies of the AfriCanadian enlistment struggle, the *Advocate* confirms those ironies and sheds more light on the No. 2 CB's recruitment process. Carrying through with the patriotic themes found in the *Observer*, the *Advocate*'s participation in the recruitment of the No. 2 CB rarely criticized the racist themes underlining the Canadian war effort. Contrary to

Whitney, Cross and DeCosta managed to back up their hawkish opinions by joining the No. 2 CB. As recruiting editors, Cross and DeCosta used the *Advocate* as a forum for enlistment with the No. 2 CB. Significantly, the *Advocate* also provides important evidence of the kin and community relationships of several men who either supported or joined the No. 2 CB.

Although the No. 2 CB was not the overseas fighting force envisioned by many AfriCanadians, it was one of the few socio-military compromises that was either available or acceptable to AfriCanadians, their supporters, and Canadian racists. Yet, once a 'place' was established for AfriCanadians, the racist OC of the No. 1 CB complained that the No. 2 CB's AfriCanadian compliment would tarnish the reputation of his 'White' unit. Compounding the problems for the No. 2 CB, some racist civilians tried to prevent the Battalion's recruiters from renting office and barrack space in Canada. Nevertheless, from across the country Alexander Bramah, Samuel Reece, William White, Henry Courtney, Russell Miller, Joseph Butler, Benjamin Washington and eight of the men refused enlistment at Camp Sussex, New Brunswick, stepped forward to personify the individual enlistment struggles that clearly constituted a collective AfriCanadian experience.

This thesis views the creation and deployment of the No. 2 CB as a pivotal point in the AfriCanadian enlistment debate. Contrary to most studies, this thesis provides space for the AfriCanadian experience. By concentrating considerable attention on AfriCanadian initiatives across Canada, this study presents AfriCanadians as the primary actors in the enlistment debate. Taken together, the articulation of AfriCanadian enlistment aspirations in official correspondence, the African centered Press, and the analysis of the men who joined the No. 2 CB, helps to broaden our understanding of the social significance of

AfriCanadian participation during the First World War. Clearly, the War was a traumatic experience for most Canadians. Thousands of men and women were killed or wounded, and countless family/ kin groups and communities were permanently altered by their wartime experience. In the years following the 'Great War' Canada's national and international character was also transformed by its 'Baptism by Fire.' Yet, as evidenced by countless works on Canada's wartime experience, many of the wounds that were exposed on the trans-Atlantic killing fields of 1914-1918, remained unhealed in the Canadian historical consciousness. Clearly, one of the casualties of the War is the history of AfriCanadian participation in the conflict. At the closing of the 20th Century the history of AfriCanadian wartime endeavours is far from complete. Nevertheless, when AfriCanadians volunteered to serve the nation and Empire that they felt deserved their support, AfriCanadian enlistment/ recruitment efforts clearly exposed the racist underside of Canada's wartime glory. Sadly, AfriCanadians were forced to fight a different kind of war. Between 1914 and 1918, AfriCanadians on the Home Front had to fight a race war. It was a war that they neither wanted, nor started. The resulting wounds have not yet healed. Ominously, these are national scars that will not heal 'Lest We Forget' how they occurred and attempt to learn from their causes.

Bibliography

Archival Sources:

National Archives of Canada

RG 9, II, B9 Vol. 39, file 748
 RG 9, III, Vol. 81, file 10-9-40
 RG 9, III, Vol. 1722, file F-22-13
 RG 9, III, Vol. 4712, folder 101, file 6
 RG 9, III, B-3, Vol. 5015, folder 747
 RG 24, Vol. 1206, file HQ 297-1-21
 RG 24, Vol. 1374, file HQ 593-6-1
 RG 24, Vol. 1469, file HQ 600-10-35 (1&2)
 RG 24, Vol. 1550, file HQ 683-124-2
 RG 24, Vol. 1695, file HQ 683-401-6
 RG 24, Vol. 1695, file HQ 683-401-7
 RG 24, Vol. 2030, file HQ 1812, v.1
 RG 24, Vol. 4387, file 2D 34-7-141
 RG 24, Vol. 4393, file 2D, 34-7-171
 RG 24, Vol. 4486, file 4D, 47-8-1
 RG 24, Vol. 4558, file 6D, 132-11-1
 RG 24, Vol. 4562, file 133-17-1
 RG 24, Vol. 4599, file 10D, 20-10-52
 RG 24, Vol. 4642, file 11D, 99-4-63
 RG 24, Vol. 4680, file 12D, 18-24-1
 RG 24, Vol. 4680, file 12D, 18-24-2
 RG 24, Vol. 4680, file 13-25-2
 RG 24, Vol. 4739, file 448-14-259
 RG 150, Acc. 1992-93/166

National Map Collection, 18550, Map of the City and Harbour of St. John, New Brunswick, 1910.

Nova Scotia Public Archives

RG 83 Vol. 3 No. 12.16. Ligoure, Dr. C. C.

Nova Scotia Museum

Negative No. 23, 533-23, 539, Picture Post Cards of John Elms and Sadie Elms, 17 Nov. 1917 - 25 Nov. 1917.

Printed Primary Sources:

National Library of Canada, Microfilm, *Constitution and By-Laws of the Anglo-African Mutual Improvement and Aid Association of Nova Scotia*, (undated, ca, 1830-1890).

Canadian House of Commons, Parliamentary Debates.

McAlpine City Directory for St. John, New Brunswick, 1913-1919.

Toronto City Directory, 1912-1916, 1918.

Books

Chew, A. A Biography of Colonel Charles Young. (1923)

DuBois, W.E.B. The Souls of Black Folk. New York: Bantam Books, 1903.

Miller, Kelly. Kelly Miller's History of the World War for Human Rights. city not stated: Austin Jenkins and O. Keller, 1919.

Articles

DuBois, W. E. B., "The African Roots of War," Atlantic Monthly (115: Jan-June, 1915): 707-714.

Periodicals

Atlantic Advocate

Canadian Observer

Saint John Globe

Saint John Standard

The Crisis Magazine

The Clarion

Toronto Globe

Toronto Financial Post

Truro News

Windsor Daily Star

Vancouver Daily Province

Secondary Sources

Books

- Asante, Molefi, K. and Mark T. Mattson. The Historical and Cultural Atlas of African Americans. New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1992.
- Asante, Molefi, K. Kemet, Afrocentricity and Knowledge. Trenton: African World Press, 1990.
- Apthenker, Herbert, eds. The Correspondence of W.E.B. DuBois, Volume I: Selections, 1877-1934. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1973.
- . Annotated Bibliography of the Writings of W. E. B. DuBois. Millwood: Kraus-Thomson Organization, 1973.
- Bennett, Lerone, Jr. Before the Mayflower: A History of Black America. New York: Penguin Books Ltd., 1984.
- Berger, Carl. Imperialism and Nationalism, 1884-1914: A Conflict in Canadian Thought. Toronto: The Copp Clark Publishing Company, 1969.
- . The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970.
- Bertley, Leo. Canada and Its People of African Descent. Pierrefonds: Bilongo Publishers, 1977.
- Boyd, Frank, Stanley, ed. McKerrow, A Brief History of the Coloured Baptists of Nova Scotia, 1783-1895. Halifax: Nova Scotia Department of Education, 1975.
- Buitenuis, Peter. The Great War of Words: British, Canadian and American Propaganda and Fiction, 1914-1933. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987.
- Caesar, Adrian. Taking it Like a Man: Suffering, Sexuality and the War Poets. Manchester, 1993.
- Cross, Michael and Robert Bothwell, eds. Policy By Other Means: Essays in Honour of C. P. Stacey. Toronto: Clarke, Irwin and Company, 1972.
- DuBois, W. E. B. Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward an Autobiography of Race Concept. New York: Schocken Books, 1968.

- Connell, R. W. Masculinities. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.
- Cook, O. A. The Canadian Military Experience 1867-1995: A Bibliography. Ottawa: Directorate of History and Heritage, Department of National Defence, 1997.
- D'Oyley, Vincent, R. and Carl E. James, eds. Re/Visioning: Canadian Perspectives on the Education of Africans in the Late 20th Century. Toronto: Captus Press, 1998.
- Duguid, Author F. Official History of the Canadian Forces in the Great War, 1914-1919, Volume I. Ottawa: Kings Printer, 1938.
- Foner, J.D. Blacks and the Military the Military in American History: A New. New York: Perspective, 1974.
- Forbes, E.R. and D.A. Muise. The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation. Acadiensis Press, Fredericton, 1993.
- Fingard, Judith. The Darker Side of Life in Victorian Halifax. Porters Lake: Pottersfield Press, 1991.
- Fuller, J. G. Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, 1914-1918. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.
- Gaffen, Fred. Forgotten Soldiers. Printicton: Theythus Books Ltd ,1985.
- Gilbert, Martin. The First World War: A Complete History. New York: Harry Hort and Company, 1994.
- Hannaford, Ivan. Race: The History of an Idea in the West. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1996.
- Haycock, R.H. Sam Hughs: The Public Career of a Controversial Canadian, 1885-1916. Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier Press, 1986.
- Hunt, Stuart, M. Nova Scotia's Part in the Great War Halifax: Nova Scotia Veterans Publishing Company Ltd., 1920.
- Keto, Tsehloene, C. The African Centered Perspective of History. 2nd Revised Edition, Chicago: Frontline Distribution International, Inc., 1994.
- Keshen, Jeffrey, A. Propaganda and Censorship During Canada's Great War. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1996.

- LaSelva, Samuel V. The Moral Foundations of Canadian Federalism: Paradoxes, Achievements, and Tragedies of Nationhood. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996.
- Lewis, David Levering. W. E. B. DuBois: Biography of A Race, 1868-1919. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1994.
- Miller, Marc., ed. Canadian Military History: Selected Readings. Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1993.
- Moon, Henry, Lee. The Emerging Thought of W.E.B. DuBois: Essays and Editorials from The Crisis. New York, 1972.
- Morris, Philip H. The Canadian Patriotic Fund: A Record of its Activities from 1914 to 1919. Ottawa: Canadian Patriotic Fund, 1919.
- Morton, Desmond. When Your Number's Up: The Canadian Soldier in the First World War. Toronto: Random House of Canada, 1993.
- A Military History of Canada. Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1985.
- Canada and War: A Military and Political History. Toronto: Butterworth, 1981.
- Munford, Clarence J. Race and Reparations: A Black Perspective for the 21st Century. Trenton: African World Press, 1996.
- Mullen, Robert. Blacks in America's Wars: The Shift in Attitudes from the America Revolution to Vietnam. New York: Pathfinder, 1990.
- Nicholson, G.W.L. The Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914-1919. Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1962.
- Pachi, Bridglal. Beneath the Clouds of the Promised Land: The Survival of Nova Scotia's Blacks, Volume II: 1800-1998. Hantsport: Lancelot Press Ltd., 1990.
- Pope, Stephen and Elizabeth-Anne Wheal. The MacMillan Dictionary of the First World War. London: MacMillan Publishers Ltd., 1995.
- Preston, Richard A. Canadian Defence Policy and the Development of the Canadian Nation, 1867-1917. Ottawa: The Canadian Historical Association Booklets, 1970.
- Canada and 'Imperial Defence': A Study of the Origins of the British

- Commonwealth's Defence Organization. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967.
- Read, Delphine, ed. The Great War and Canadian Society: An Oral History. Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1978.
- Robinson, Cedric, J. Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition. London: Zed Books Ltd., 1983.
- Ruck, Calvin. Canada's Black Battalion: No.2 Construction Battalion, 1916-1920. Halifax: The Society for the Protection and Preservation of Black Culture in Nova Scotia, 1986.
- Russell, Peter H. Constitutional Odyssey: Can Canadians Become a Sovereign People? 2nd Edition, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993.
- Schultz, John. Writing About Canada: A Handbook for Modern Canadian History. Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1990.
- Shepard, Bruce R. Deemed Unsuitable: Blacks from Oklahoma Move to the Canadian Prairies in Search of Equality in the Early 20th Century Only to Find Racism in their New Home. Toronto: Umbrella Press, 1997.
- Stanley, George F. G. and Harold M. Jackson. Canada's Soldiers, 1604-1954: The Military History of an Unmilitary People. Toronto: MacMillan Company of Canada Ltd., 1954.
- Thomson, Colin A. Blacks in Deep Snow: Black Pioneers in Canada. Don Mills: J. M. Dent and Sons Canada, 1979.
- Tulluck, Headley. Black Canadians: A Long Line of Fighters. Toronto: NC Press Ltd., 1975.
- Walker, James, W. St. G. The Black Loyalists: The Search for a Promised Land in Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone, 1783-1870. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992.
- Racial Discrimination in Canada: The Black Experience.
Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association Booklet No. 41, 1985.
- Wilson, Barbara, M. Ontario and the First World War, 1914-1918: A Collection of Documents. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977.
- Winks, Robin. The Blacks in Canada: A History. 2nd Edition, Montreal: McGill-Queen's

University Press, 1997.

Woodson, Carter. The Mis-Education of the Negro. Nashville: Winston-Derek Publishers, Inc. 1990.

X, Malcolm. Malcolm X on Afro-American History. New York: Pathfinder, 9th edition, 1988.

Articles

Andrew, C.M. and A.S. Kanya-Forstner. "France Africa and the First World War," Journal of African History 19 (1978): 11-23.

Anstead, Christopher J. "Patriotism and Comaraderie: Workingmen in a Peacetime Militia Regiment, 1907-1954," Histoire sociale-Social History. 36, 52 (Nov. 1993): 247-264.

Armstrong, John G. "The Unwelcome Sacrifice: A Black Unit in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1917-19," Ethnic Armies: Polyethnic Armed Forces from the Time of the Hapsburgs to the Age of the Superpowers. N. F. Dreisziger, ed. (1990): 178-197.

Bacchi, Carol. "Race and Regeneration and Social Purity: A Study of the Social Attitudes of Canada's English Speaking Suffragists," Histoire sociale-Social History. 11, 22 (Nov. 1978): 460-474.

Beaton, Elizibeth. "An African-American Community in Cape Breton, 1901-1904," Acadiensis. 24, 2, (Spring 1995): 65-97.

Blakeley, Phillis. "William Hall, Canada's First Navel V.C.," Dalhousie Review 37 (1957-1958): 250-58.

Boyd, Jr., Frank S. "Septimus Clarke," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume 7, 1851-1860. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985): 150-160.

----- "Richard Preston," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume 7, 1851-1860. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985): 968-970.

Bray, Matthew. "Fighting as an Alley: The English Canadian Patriotic Response to the Great War," Canadian Historical Review. 61, 2, (1980): 141-168.

Breen, David H. "John Ware," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume 13, 1901-

1910. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994): 1074-1075.
- Brown, Robert Craig, and Donald Loveridge. "Unrequited Faith: Recruiting in the C.E.F." Revue Internationale d'Histoire Militaire. 51 (1982)
- Buckly, Suzann. "Attempts at Imperial Economic Co-operation, 1912-18: Sir Robert Borden's Role," Canadian Historical Review. 55, 3 (1974): 292-
- Calliste, Agnes. "Race, Gender and Canadian Immigration Policy: Blacks from the Caribbean, 1900-1932," Journal of Canadian Studies. 23,4 (Winter 1993-94): 131-148.
- Cahill, Barry. "The 'Colored Barrister': The Short Life and Tragic Death of James Robinson Johnston, 1876-1915," Dalhousie Law Journal 15,? (Fall, 1992): 336-39.
- "Abraham Beverley Walker," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume 13, 1901-1910. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994): 1066-1067.
- Clarke, George Elliott. "The Death and Rebirth of Africadian Nationalism," New Maritimes (May-June, 1993): 20-28.
- Edmunds-Flett, Sherry. "Mifflin Wister Gibbs," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume 14, 1911-1920. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994): 398-399.
- Fingard, Judith. "Louisa Ann Johnson," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume 14, 1911-1920. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998): 538-39.
- "From Sea to Rail: Black Transportation Workers and Their Families in Halifax, ca. 1870-1916," Acadiensis. 24, 2 (Spring 1995): 49-64.
- "Peter Evander McKerrow," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume 13, 1901-1910. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994): 656-657.
- "John Kellum," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume 13, 1901-1910. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994): 539-540.
- "Race and Respectability in Victorian Halifax," The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History 20, 2 (May 1992): 169-95.
- Guildford, Janet. "Creating the Ideal Man: Middle-Class Woman's Constructions of Masculinity in Nova Scotia, 1840-1880," Acadiensis. 24, 2 (Spring 1995): 5-23.

- Greenhut, Jeffery. "The Imperial Reserve: The Indian Corps on the Western Front, 1914 - 15," Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History. 11 (1983): 54-73.
- . "Sahid and Sepoy: An Inquiry into the Relationship between the British Officers and Native Soldiers of the British Indian Army," Military Affairs. 48 (1984): 15-18.
- Heathorn, Stephen. "*For Home, Country and Race: The Gendered Ideals of Citizenship in English Elementary and Evening Continuation Schools, 1885-1914*," Journal of the Canadian Historical Association. Vol. 7. (St. Catharines, 1996): 105-124.
- Kohn, Richard, H. "The Social History of the American Soldier: A Review and Prospectus for Research," American Historical Review. 86, 3 (June 1981): 553-67.
- Lee, Shirley J. "Gender Ideology and Black Women as Community Builders in Ontario, 1850-70," Canadian Historical Review. 75:1 (March, 1994): 51-73.
- Long-Wolgemuth, Kathleen. "Woodrow Wilson's Appointment Policy and the Negro," Journal of Southern History. 24, 4 (November 1958): 457-471.
- Maroney, Paul. "The Great Adventure: The Context and Ideology of Recruiting in Ontario, 1914 -17," Canadian Historical Review. 77, 1 (March 1996): 62-98.
- Marshal, David, B. "Methodism Embattled: A Reconsideration of the Methodist Church and World War I," Canadian Historical Review. 66,1 (1985): 48-
- Miller, Carmen. "A Preliminary Analysis of the Socio-Economic Composition of Canada's South African War Contingents," Histoire sociale-Social History. 8, 16 (November 1975): 219-237.
- Morton, Desmond. "Kicking and Complaining: Demobilization Riots in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1918-19," Canadian Historical Review. 61, 3, (1980): 334-60.
- Morton, Suzanne. "Separate Spheres in a Separate World: African-Nova Scotian Women in late-19th-Century Halifax County," Acadiensis. 20, 2 (Spring 1993): 61-83.
- Murrey, Alexander, L. "*The Provincial Freeman: A New Source for the History of the Negro in Canada and the United States*," Journal of Negro History. 44,2 (April 1959): 123-135.
- Murray, Paul T. "Blacks and the Draft: A History of Institutional Racism," Journal of

- Black Studies. (September 1971): 57-76.
- Nelson, Keith, L. "The Black Horror on the Rhine: Race as a Factor in Post-World War I Diplomacy," Journal of Modern History. 62 (1970): 606-8.
- Reddick, L.D. "The Negro Policy of the U.S. Army, 1775-1945," Journal of Negro History. 34, 1 (January 1949): 9-29
- Rudwick, Elliotte, M. "W. E. B. DuBios in the Role of *Crisis* Editor," Journal of Negro History. 43, 3 (July 1958): 214-240.
- Rutherford, Robert. "Canada's August Festival: Communitas, Liminality, and Social Memory," Canadian Historical Review. 77, 6 (June 1996): 221-249.
- Scheiber, Jane Lang and Harry N. Scheiber, "The Wilson Administration and the Wartime Mobilization of Black Americans, 1917-18," Labor History. 10, 3 (Summer 1969): 433-58.
- Silver, Jason. "'We Shall Be Heard!': The Development of the Fugitive Slave Press in Canada," Canadian Historical Review. 50, 1 (March 1984): 54-69.
- Sutherland, David. "Race Relations in Halifax, Nova Scotia, During the Mid-Victorian Quest for Reform," Journal of the Canadian Historical Association. Vol. 7. (St. Catharines, 1996): 35-54.
- Stanley, Timothy J. "*Chinamen, Wherever We Go*: Chinese Nationalism and Guangdong Merchants in British Columbia, 1871-1911," Canadian Historical Review. 77, 4 (Dec. 1996): 475-503.
- Thomas, Owen. "Anderson Ruffin Abbot," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume 14, 1911-1920. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998): 4-5.
- , "Delos Rogest Davis," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume 14, 1911-1920. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998):274-275.
- Thornbrough, Emma Lou. "American Negro Newspapers, 1880-1914," Business History Review. 40, 4 (Winter 1966): 467-490.
- Troper, Harold Martin. "The Creek Negroes of Oklahoma and Canadian Immigration, 1909-1911," Canadian Historical Review. 53, 3 (Sept. 1972): 272-288.
- Walker, James, W. St.G. "Race and Recruitment in World War One: Enlistment of Visible Minorities in the Canadian Expeditionary Force," Canadian Historical

Review. 70, 1 (March 1989):1-25.

Winks, Robin. "Negro School Segregation in Ontario and Nova Scotia," Canadian Historical Review. 50:2 (June 1969): 167-186.

Willan, B.P. "The South African Labour Contingent, 1916-1918," Journal of African History 19 (1978): 61-86.

Unpublished

Beadhen, William. *A Citizen's Army: The Growth and Development of the Canadian Militia, 1904-1914*. PhD dissertation, University of Ottawa, 1980.

Hartling, Philip L. *The Atlantic Advocate, Nova Scotia's First Black Magazine*. Unpublished Biographical Sketches of the *Advocate's* Staff, Public Archives of Nova Scotia, 1991.

Internet

[Http://www.qusn.meg.gouv.qc.ca/mpages/unit5/u5p100.htm](http://www.qusn.meg.gouv.qc.ca/mpages/unit5/u5p100.htm), Some Missing Pages: The Black Community in the History of Quebec and Canada.