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"African Barbarism" and "Anglo-Saxon Civilization": The Mythic Foundations of School Segregation and African-Canadian Resistance in Canada West

by

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Table of Contents

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Abstract

The legend of the Underground Railroad and the ideal of Canada as a promised land for African-American fugitive slaves have been pervasive in the Canadian imagination. In the mid-nineteenth century, myths describing British Canada West as a moral exemplar and guarantor of equal rights to all provided a sense of transcendent meaning and orientation to citizens of British and African heritage.

British-Canadian school promoters hoped to lay the foundations of an ideal British society in the emerging public school system. The main proponent of this system, Egerton Ryerson, boasted of the merits of a Christian and moral education provided to all Canadians without discrimination. However, African Canadians were largely excluded from public education in Canada West, or forced into segregation, a practice that was against the spirit of egalitarian British laws.

British-Canadian mythologies that called for the protection of Anglo-Saxon racial purity allowed for the introduction of this practice of school segregation. In response, many African-Canadian leaders called upon Canadian society to live up to its egalitarian ideals and promoted integration. This work examines dominant discourses that presented the British-Canadian people as a culturally pure group, unchanged by their historical environment, and contrasts these mythologies with African-Canadian mythologies that reflected the culturally diverse nature of Canadian society and emphasized the potential for human transformation in mid-nineteenth century Canada West.

Chapter One – Introduction and Methodology

This work examines the history of school segregation in Canada West, the religious motivations behind this practice and religious responses to its implementation. Using a History of Religions approach, my analysis of this historical situation delves into the religious meanings emerging out of the encounter and interaction between racialized whites and blacks in regions where both groups settled.[1] An analysis of these peoples' religious understandings of their new home reveals very different perspectives on the nature of Canada West society. While Anglo-Europeans placed a strong emphasis on cultural and racial purity, black leaders of the time, marginalized by racism, offered an alternative vision of Canada West, which emphasized ethnic and cultural diversity.

Popular historical depictions privilege a British loyalist heritage in Ontario,[2] and present this province as a historical haven for African Americans who arrived via the Underground Railroad.[3] From children's stories to television vignettes, the legend of the

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[1] The terms "black" and "white" refer to racialized groups of people in nineteenth century Canadian society. Following James W. St. G. Walker and current practice, I use the terms "African Canadian" and "black" interchangeably to refer to the historic community of immigrants of African heritage (the vast majority of whom came from the United States) and their descendents in Canada. See Walker, "African Canadians", in Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples, Paul Robert Magocsi, ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999): 139-176. Many African Canadians were of mixed descent and were identified as "Negroes", "coloured" people, "blacks", or "Africans" in nineteenth century Canada West. I will be examining the relationships between these people and the dominant Anglo-Protestant population in Canada West. This population includes Canadians of Anglo-Celtic extraction, who arrived directly from Ireland, England, Wales, or Scotland, or who were descended from these emigrants and came to the Quebec colony (and later Upper Canada) via the thirteen colonies (later the United States). These people were racialized as "white".

[2] See Gerald M. Craig, Upper Canada: The Formative Years, 1784–1841 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1963); Ontario Historical Society, Profiles of a Province: Studies in the History of Ontario. A Collection of Essays Commissioned by the Ontario Historical Society to Commemorate the Centennial of Ontario (Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, 1967). Several histories romanticize the Loyalist heritage of the province. See Loyal She Remains: A Pictorial History of Ontario (Toronto: United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada, 1984); Charles J. Humber, ed., Allegiance: The Ontario Story (Mississauga, Ont.: Heirloom, 1991).

[3] Jane Lind, The Underground Railroad: Ann Maria Weems (Toronto: Grollier, 1990); Canada: A People's History. Episode 8, cassette A, The Great Enterprise, prod. and dir. John Williamson, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 2001, videocassette; The CRB Foundation Heritage Project: 60th Minute Commemorative Video: The Underground Railroad, CRB Foundation, 1998, videocassette.

Underground Railroad is often told; yet, there is little in popular mythology that discusses the obstacles faced by African-American immigrants once they arrived in Canada. When African-Canadian history is presented in school history books, there is little discussion of black presence in Canada before or after the period of Underground Railroad migration, and few students are exposed to courses in black history at all.[4] While I was conducting my research in southwestern Ontario, not one white person I spoke with knew about this region's history of school segregation, while many were willing to share stories regarding the heroic actions of Canadians who sheltered fugitive slaves.

Much of the scholarship in African-Canadian history emphasizes segregationist tendencies, especially regarding black education, where historians suggest that black communities supported school segregation in Canada West; this work will show that this is not the case.[5] While white society pushed for segregated institutions in Canada West,

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[4] James Walker's 1980 study of the most widely used history textbooks and articles in Canadian schools revealed a paucity of references to black history in Canada, with the exception of accounts of the Underground Railroad migration. See Walker, A History of Blacks in Canada: A Study Guide for Teachers and Students. (Hull: Minister of Supply and Services, 1980), 3; George J. Sefa Dei suggests that this was still a problem in 1995, and argues that high black dropout rates from Canadian schools may be related to the marginalization of black studies in the curriculum. Dei, "African Studies in Canada: Problems and Challenges" Journal of Black Studies 26 (November, 1995), 153-171. Towards Freedom: The African-Canadian Experience, published in 1996 for use as a high school textbook, provides a comprehensive and critical analysis of African Canadian history, and is perhaps a sign of a reversal in the trend toward ignoring black history in school curricula. Ken Alexander and Avis Glaze, Towards Freedom (Toronto: Umbrella Press, 1996), (See pp. 12-14 on their vision of progress made in introducing black history into Canadian schools) . Few students I have taught at the University of Ottawa, however, have had any exposure to black history in their public school education.

[5] Afua Cooper is critical of historical depictions of Canada's black community that assume a segregationist/integrationist dichotomy, as she suggests they have misinterpreted African-Canadian motivations regarding their own survival in and adaptation to Canadian society. "'Doing Battle in Freedom's Cause': Henry Bibb, Abolitionism, Race Uplift, and Black Manhood, 1842-1854" (PhD Dissertation: University of Toronto, 2000), 22-27. For a more detailed discussion of historical misunderstandings regarding black attitudes toward segregation, see chapter four. Historical works that suggest black support for school segregation include Robin Winks, The Blacks in Canada: A History, 2nd ed. (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997); Walker, "African Canadians"; Claudette Knight, "Black Parents Speak: Education in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Canada West", Ontario History, vol. 89 (December 1997), p. 275; Susan E. Houston and Alison Prentice, Schooling and Scholars

black society fought against racial separation in education. Chapter five re-examines historical evidence surrounding the introduction of the segregated racial schools clause in the School Act of 1850 and of historical interpretations regarding separate black education in Canada West. In addressing this question, this study thus speaks directly to the myth of Canada as a haven from racism. A re-examination is warranted of African-Canadian attitudes toward integration and religious responses to the experience of exclusion as African-Canadian views offer an alternative perspective on the foundations of Canadian society, challenging dominant mythologies that do not confront the reality of racism in Canadian history, emphasizing instead the history of human encounter and exchange that has consistently defined the Canadian situation.

This investigation will necessarily revolve around issues of racism, myth and identity in the Canadian context. Racialization refers to the social construction of "race," a concept that does not have any real referent in terms of biology or heredity. The process of racialization involves the historical invention of racial difference and the imposition of racial categories upon groups of people.[6] The term "race," a "fluid, fragile ... vacuous concept,"[7] according to David Theo Goldberg, is a category of exclusion, and racism is the social and cultural practice of exclusion based on race.[8] According to

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in Nineteenth-Century Ontario (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988); Donald G. Simpson, "Negroes in Ontario from Early Times to 1870" (PhD dissertation, University of Western Ontario, 1971).

[6] As Tim Stanley suggests, "people do not naturally fit into the fictions of 'race' ... they have to be shoved into them, and the boundaries of 'race' have to be continually policed." Timothy J. Stanley, "Why I Killed Canadian History: Towards an Anti-Racist History in Canada", Histoire Sociale/Social History 33 (May, 2000): 96. On the social construction of race, see Theodore W. Allen, The Invention of the White Race. Volume Two: The Origin of Racial Oppression in Anglo-America (New York: Verso, 1997). On the social construction of race within the Canadian context, see Kay Anderson, Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980 (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991).

[7] David Theo Goldberg, Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1993), 80.

[8] Goldberg, 51; On racism as a cultural and social phenomenon see Ibid.; Paul Gilroy, "There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack": The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation (London:Hutchison, 1987) and Benjamin P. Bowser, ed. Racism and Anti-Racism in World Perspective (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage,

Goldberg, race is an invention of modernity, incorporated into the European vocabulary during the late fifteenth century, the same time as the European people were set to assert hegemony over the world through conquest and colonialism.[9] The fact that racial discourse emerged at the same time as European colonialism is not merely coincidental, as notions of racial purity and racial superiority have served to justify European dominance over human cultures that were ranked on the lower rungs of the racial hierarchy. In colonial societies, racism has taken a structural form that allows for differential power relationships as the superiority of one race is asserted over others.[10]

Using the example of racist structures in the public education system of Canada West, this work will argue that racism is not limited to social and economic dimensions, but is also deeply rooted on a mythological level in colonial societies. In his classic work, *Sociology of Religion*, Joachim Wach investigates the manifold interrelations between religion and social phenomena.[11] As religious experiences are expressed in a cultural milieu there is a mutual influence between social and religious structures. According to Wach, social motives influence religion and religion has an important influence upon the social structure.[12] While overtly religious institutions, such as churches, are one place where religion is expressed, these are not the only context for religious expression. The History of Religions school, which Wach founded, examines

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1995).

[9] Goldberg, Racist Culture, 1, 61.

[10] According to Peter H. Wood, racism as we know it in the modern West is largely the product of European colonialism and the slave trade. Wood, "'If Toads Could Speak': How the Myth of Race Took Hold and Flourished in the Minds of Europe's Renaissance Colonizers", in Racism and Anti-Racism, Bowser, ed., 28-29.

[11] Wach founded the History of Religions school at the University of Chicago, where he taught from 1945-1955. He emphasized a hermeneutical approach to the study of religion, which involved an investigation into the nature and structure of the religious experience and its expression in history. See Joseph M. Kitagawa, "Introduction", in Joachim Wach, Essays in the History of Religions, Kitagawa and Gregory D. Alles, eds. (New York:MacMillan, 1988).

[12] Joachim Wach, Sociology of Religion (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944), 13.

religion in its broader social and cultural context. For Wach religion refers to "both experience and its expression in thought and action – in concepts, forms of worship, and organization."[13] Charles H. Long, a student of Wach's, argues, "The religion of any people is more than a structure of thought; it is experience, expression, motivations, intentions, behaviors, styles, and rhythms."[14] It is the process whereby "one comes to terms with the ultimate significance of one's place in the world."[15] This notion of placement in the world is an important theme in the work of many scholars of religion. Catherine Albanese, for example, suggests that religion refers to human location in space, time and in social terms.[16] In keeping with these perspectives, I understand religion to denote orientation in the ultimate sense.

Human beings orient themselves in the world, or negotiate the meaning of being human, in relation to their material surroundings. Mircea Eliade has argued that religious consciousness develops in relation to the material structures of our world. In his *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, Eliade examines religious experience in relation to natural phenomena such as the sky, moon, water and stone. He suggests that archaic peoples came to terms with the human condition through their interactions with the natural world.[17] In his work on religion and colonialism, Long applies this notion of the "religious imagination of matter" to the modern situation.[18] In colonial societies,

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[13] Wach, Essays in the History of Religions, 100; for an application of Wach's perspective to an analysis of African-Canadian religious expression in Nova Scotia, see Jennifer I.M. Reid, "Points of Contact: A Wachian reappraisal of the African Orthodox Church and the early steel industry in Sydney, Nova Scotia" Studies in Religion/ Sciences Religieuses 30 (2002): 323-337.
[14] Charles H. Long, Significations: Signs, Symbols and Images in the Interpretation of Religion. 2nd ed. (Aurora, CO.: Davies Group, 1995), 7.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Catherine Albanese, America: Religions and Religion. 3rd Edition. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1995), 5.
[17] Mircea Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion. Trans. Rosemary Sheed. (Cleveland: Meridian, 1963).
[18] Cf. Long, "Passage and Prayer: The Origins of Religion in the Atlantic World", in Quinton Hosford Dixie and Cornel West, eds. The Courage to Hope. From Black Suffering to Human Redemption: Essays in

religious consciousness is negotiated in relation to what Jennifer Reid calls the "materiality of the colonial period". In this way, any examination of religion in the modern period must take into account the defining material exchanges of modern times, such as the trade of commodities and cultural encounter of unprecedented magnitude.[19]

Human encounter and exchange profoundly influence religious expression and understanding, and human relationships play an important role in the formation of identity. Marcel Mauss alludes to the religious significance of material exchange in *The Gift*, in which he suggests that human relationships are based in trade and material exchange is a defining aspect of human existence.[20] The most profound aspects of a community's self-understanding can be discerned through an examination of the meanings attributed to the human encounters and interactions of its people. As Hans Mol has suggested, religion "stabilizes a system of meaning, reinforces a definition of reality, and sacralizes identity."[21] Catherine Albanese has argued that religion "means staking out a claim on the landscape of identity."[22] This claim is staked in relation to all meaningful aspects of one's surroundings, principal among which are other human beings. The following chapters examine the religious elements in the relationship between two groups of immigrants to Upper Canada, African and British Canadians.

Honor of James Melvin Washington (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999); Jennifer I.M. Reid, "Introduction" Religion and Global Culture: New Terrain in the Study of Religion and the Work of Charles H. Long. (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2003), 2.

[19] Reid, "'Faire Place à une Race Métisse": Colonial Crisis and the Vision of Louis Riel", in Religion and Global Culture, 56.

[20] Marcel Mauss, The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies (New York: Norton, 1967), 10-12.

[21] Hans Mol, Identity and the Sacred. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1976), 266.

[22] Albanese, America: Religions and Religion, 5.

Religion, the mode of human orientation in the world, is, as Long argues "the basic element in the constitution of human consciousness and human community."[23] Wach contends that religion both dictates and reflects social relationships.[24] He suggests, "the influence of religion, sociologically speaking ... is twofold: there is a positive or cohesive integrating influence, and there is a negative, destructive, disintegrating influence."[25] Thus, religion can serve as a "potent unifying force" in creating and sustaining social relationships,[26] and also to set the boundaries between insiders and outsiders of a particular group. As Robert Choquette has pointed out, "religious myth is the overriding determinant in the nature of the relationship among peoples."[27] The recitation of a community's myths serves to unite those whose history is described in the story, while those who are not included in the original mythic group are excluded by this process. For example, nationalist myths, such as those of the British people, serve to unite those who identify and are identified as British and exclude those who are not seen to belong to the "British race."

Religious myths provide a sense of meaning and identity for human communities,[28] and articulate a symbolic ordering of the world through which these communities come to terms with historical reality.[29] Myths describe a divine order and express a relationship to what is considered holy. They tell stories of origins and present a model upon which this world is based. As "exemplary models for human behavior",[30]

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[23] Long, Significations, 107.
[24] Wach, Sociology of Religion, 55.
[25] Ibid., 35.
[26] Ibid., 27, 290.
[27] Robert Choquette, The Oblate Assault on Canada's Northwest. (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1995), 21.
[28] Mircea Eliade, Myth and Reality. Trans., Willard R. Trask. (New York: Harper, 1963), 5.
[29] Charles H. Long, Alpha: The Myths of Creation (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1963), 14.
[30] Mircea Eliade, Myths, Dreams, and Mysteries: The Encounter between Contemporary Faiths and Archaic

myths call upon those to whom the myth is addressed to recreate the divine order in human history.[31] According to Wach. "the terrestrial order ideally should be the earthly image of the celestial order".[32]

In Victorian Ontario, the British Empire took on a sacred significance in that it was held in high esteem and set apart from the ordinary. According to Mircea Eliade, the sacred represents an order that does not belong to our world, but which is manifest in common, worldly things.[33] Thus, the sacred is set apart from the commonplace while at the same time it is experienced through material reality. The sacred represents order, wholeness and awesome power. As Mary Douglass points out, the sacred must be protected from defilement, while at the same time the impure must be protected from it. The Latin root *sacer* denotes restriction, while the Hebrew root of the word holy also refers to that which is set apart or kept separate.[34] According to Yi Fu Tuan, the political state can exhibit sacred attributes, in that it imposes and maintains order, it exerts power over a people, and people sacrifice their lives to protect the boundaries of the state from defilement.[35] For Anglo-Protestants in the nineteenth century, the British Empire represented Divine Order in this world; it was God's instrument, by means of which His dominion would be spread over the earth.[36] Sacred reality was manifest through the

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Realities. Trans. Philip Mairet (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), 15.
[31] Wach, Sociology of Religion, 50.
[32] Ibid., 290.
[33] Mircea Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion Trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1959), 11.
[34] Mary Douglas, Purity and Danger. An analysis of the concepts of pollution and taboo (1966; London&New York: Routledge, 1995), 7-10.
[35] Yi Fu Tuan, "Sacred Space: Explorations of an Idea", in Karl Butzer, ed. Dimensions of Human Geography: Essays on Some Familiar and Neglected Themes. (Chicago: University of Chicago Department of Geography Research Paper 186, 1978), 84, 91-95.
[36] Important Anglo-Protestants such as John Strachan believed that as part of the Empire, Canada had a significant role to play in making the earth "the garden of the Lord." William Westfall, Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario (Montreal& Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 5; According to British missionary Samuel Wilberforce, the British Empire was a gift of God

British Empire; thus, we might consider that this Empire functioned as a sacred space in the imagination of its devoted citizens.

British law, along with other symbols of Britain, such as the monarchy and British institutions, represented the manifestation of a timeless, transcendent, sacred reality in relation to which Upper Canadian Anglo-Protestant identities were formed. Human laws can be viewed as "expressions of an urge to 'realize' the divine order, to adapt reality to it, and thereby secure the functioning of an order upon which depends the existence and well-being of mankind or a particular group of [people]."[37] According to Wach, "the law of the state [has been] embedded in a religious matrix" throughout human history.[38] As British Law was seen to be divinely ordained, it served to sustain a relationship between the British people and their God. British laws applied in Canada West symbolized this province's link to the Great British Empire, and myths describing the moral fortitude of the society protected by this law provided a sense of transcendent meaning and orientation to its inhabitants.

In times of historical crisis, religious myths allow human beings to ascribe order and meaning to chaos. Crisis periods can be lived when cultures are in transition, are threatened, or when new discoveries are made.[39] Colonial encounter can be seen as one such instance of historical crisis. As the British Empire expanded, traders, missionaries, colonial administrators, and, later, settlers came into contact with new cultures inhabiting exotic, unknown lands. This encounter had a significant impact upon the colonized and

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destined to spread across the earth; "what works of God might not be worked through it!" Wilberforce also described the Empire as timeless in nature, in that it would live on eternally through the Christian nations it founded and nurtured, "Sermon by William Wilberforce, 'The Conditions of Missionary Success', 1850." in John Wolffe, ed. Religion in Victorian Britain, Volume V Culture and Empire (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 306-307.

[37] Wach, Sociology of Religion, 50.

[38] Ibid., 296.

[39] Long, Alpha, 9, 11.

the colonizers. As Charles H. Long has noted, any new age "must be understood in mythic terms for it is in these terms that the new is ordered and humanized."[40] Both the colonized and colonizers developed mythic languages that allowed them to find meaning in this time of historical transition. The mythic languages of the colonizers described the conquered peoples as inferior using racial hierarchies to justify the situation of domination. When concepts such as race are articulated within a mythological framework, they come to hold a powerful and pervasive influence over colonial peoples. This work investigates specific mythologies that influenced racialized relationships in the colonial society of mid-nineteenth century Canada West and relates the religiously meaningful notions of race, myth and identity to the history of public education in mid-nineteenth century Canada West.

The study of religion has its origins in the European Enlightenment, an intellectual movement that coincided historically with European expansion across the globe through conquest, trade and colonialism. The Enlightenment launched a critique of religion in Western society and looked to alternate modes for understanding the human. As reason became the primary characteristic for defining humanity and individual autonomy became a conceptual possibility, religious expression was no longer regarded intellectually as central to human experience. It came to be relegated to the peripheries of society, located among groups considered marginal, such as the rural peasantry, women, the insane and "primitives".[41]

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[40] Long, Alpha, 220.

[41] Religious expressions influenced by the Enlightenment tradition, such as Deism, located religious experience in the mind and saw God as playing an increasingly less significant role in human life. Long, Significations, 4, 61-65.

Charles Long has argued that the ideological structures of the Enlightenment "paved the ground for historical evolutionary thinking, racial theories and forms of color symbolism", all of which served to justify and mask the political, economic and military situation associated with colonial practice.[42] The study of colonized peoples, called "primitives", became the basis for the development of the human sciences. The intellectual study of these colonized "others" objectified these people through categories and concepts, and served to deny the common humanity of colonizers and colonized. In addition, these intellectual pursuits failed to acknowledge the complex exchanges that took place between these two groups and the impact of colonialism upon both cultures was largely ignored.

Long sees this failure to recognize these reciprocal relationships as an "acute intellectual problem" that continues to permeate the linguistic structures of Western society.[43] According to Long, the dominant discourses of certain colonial societies are characterized by dynamics of concealment that deny the religious implications of colonial contact and "prevent the meaning of what really happened from becoming part of the cultural languages of the national community."[44] As the colonial situation was intellectualized by the disciplines of the human sciences, the real ramifications of contact were masked by what was seen to be the objective pursuit of knowledge. The impact of colonial encounter upon European identity and the changes undergone by Europeans in the colonial situation have been largely ignored. By replacing religion in a central position for understanding the human, Long's work and that of others in the history of

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[42] Ibid.
[43] Long, Significations, 6. He suggests that this problem of recognition goes much deeper than the mere appreciation of cultural diffusion between these societies.
[44] Long, Significations, 141. Italics in the original.

religions constitutes an attempt to undercut the linguistic structures that perpetuate the dynamics of concealment and to develop a new intellectual language that recognizes the realities of our colonial history.

The History of Religions tradition asserts the relational nature of human consciousness in contrast to the Enlightenment tradition, which has suggested that consciousness develops independently of its material environment. Charles H. Long proposes that the colonial period constitutes a "new arche" in which new sources of human meaning emerge in relation to the radically altered material surroundings brought about by colonialism.[45] The religious responses of people marginalized by the colonial situation, which take into account new human relationships and material exchanges associated with colonialism, can be a source for new modes of thinking about the modern situation.

In her work on British and Mi'kmaq relations in colonial Acadia,[46] and on the religious vision of Louis Riel in the late nineteenth century Northwest,[47] Jennifer Reid examines religious responses to colonialism in the Canadian context. She investigates how new material situations, such as battles for land, changing trade relationships and the altered human composition led to a religious redefinition of human relationships and community. Her work makes significant contributions to the understanding of Canadian colonial and religious history as well as to understandings of religion in the modern world. Influenced by her work, chapter four of this dissertation deals specifically with

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[45] Charles H. Long, "Indigenous People, Materialities, and Religion: Outline for a New Orientation to Religious Meaning", in Religion and Global Culture, 167-68.
[46] Reid, Myth, Symbol, and Colonial Encounter: British and Mi'kmaq in Acadia, 1700-1867. (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1995).
[47] Reid, "'Faire Place à une Race Métisse'", in Religion and Global Culture, 51-66.

black religious expressions that led to a redefinition of community in mid-nineteenth century Canada West.

In keeping with the history of religions tradition, I will examine the ways in which relationships between British Canadians and African Canadians were mediated in religious terms. The experiences and actions of Canadians in the British colony of Canada West were influenced by mythical understandings of Empire. Citizens of Anglo-Celtic and African-American heritage expressed their faith in morally upright British institutions and pride in their identity as British subjects. Canada West modeled its institutions upon British ideals, and the application of British law came to symbolize the morality of British society. The Canada West education system promoted loyalty to Britain and perpetuated British Canadian myths of moral superiority and universality. In spite of egalitarian laws, however, African Canadians were not treated as equal citizens in mid-nineteenth century Canada West. Anglo-Protestant understandings of an egalitarian society did not include African Canadians as equal partners; African Canadians, not surprisingly, held different views. Black discourse in mid-nineteenth century Canada West emphasized the potential of British law to allow for a diverse society in which a variety of ethnic groups could share equal rights. While Canadians of African and Anglo-Celtic descent shared an attachment to British heritage, African Canadians created new meanings and identities in response to their contemporary situation, while Anglo-Protestant Canadians attempted to recreate an idealized and homogenized vision of their homeland on Canadian soil.

Many African Americans looked to Canada as a refuge from the persecution they faced in the United States. The Underground Railroad migration was likened to an

Exodus into a new Canaan. As British law forbade slavery after 1833 and made no distinction according to race, it was held sacred by many, and provided the impetus for a mass migration to Canada. African-American immigrants were eager to begin their new lives as free subjects in Her Majesty's Canadian colony. Anglo-Protestant identity in Canada West, a so-called "outpost of the British race,"[48] was shaped by mythical understandings of the racial and moral superiority of the British people and their Empire. British mythology described the Anglo-Saxon people as the apex of the racial, social, political, and moral order, chosen by God to spread His dominion as they ruled over the so-called inferior races of the world. Celtic and other northern European peoples soon came to be included in this superior group.[49]

Prior to the nineteenth century, the British government discouraged emigration to its colonies as the populations were to be kept small in order to allow for maximum economic exploitation on the part of Britain.[50] By the turn of the nineteenth century, the government of Upper Canada offered significant incentives in the interest of attracting Anglo-Protestant settlers to the colony, and due to economic circumstances in Europe, British settlers began to move to Canada in large numbers by mid-century. These immigrants encountered cultural diversity on an unprecedented scale as they came into regular contact with a wide variety of human cultures. This form of human encounter directly challenged British myths; in response, Anglo-Protestants in Canada developed a

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[48] Robert A. Huttenback, Racism and Empire. White Settlers and Colored Immigrants in the British Self-Governing Colonies 1830-1910 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1976), 26.
[49] On "Anglo-Saxonism", and the extension of racial privilege to northern Europeans see Huttenback, 15, 20; On British divine mission, see Samuel Wilberforce, "The Conditions of Missionary Success", cited in John Wolffe, ed. Religion in Victorian Britain. Vol. 5. Culture and Empire. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 306-307.
[50] K.J. Duncan, "Patterns of Settlement in the East" in The Scottish Tradition in Canada, W. Stanford Reid, ed. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), 49.

new discourse that allowed them to maintain their ideals of British purity by relegating those who were not considered white to the peripheries of society.[51]

At the same time as these so-called "coloured" British subjects faced harsh discrimination, Canadian society maintained its claim to moral superiority by virtue of being a province of the egalitarian British Empire. This apparent hypocrisy on the part of Canadian society might be explained in terms of the dynamics of concealment. In this situation, the role of marginalized groups in the construction of national identity is ignored and the oppressive treatment of these people is forgotten in the official memory. This concealment has serious ramifications, not only for marginalized peoples, but for dominant groups as well.

Methodology

I began this project with an examination of the history of public education in Ontario and the discrimination that seemed to be inherent in this system. The example of school segregation in the mid-nineteenth century was particularly interesting to me, and so my research came to focus on this topic. A reading of the published historical material on African Canadians and their experiences in public schooling brought to mind several important questions regarding the context of the discriminatory treatment faced by this community and the reasons why it was so widespread in a society that purported to adhere to British values of egalitarianism and Christian morality.

I decided to delve into primary materials and collections referenced in published works on education and African-Canadian history. John George Hodgins' twenty-eight-

[51] Jennifer Reid, "'A Society Made by History': The Mythic Source of Identity in Canada", Canadian Review of American Studies 27 (1997): 1-20.

volume *Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada*[52] was an important starting point. This collection contains significant background information on Egerton Ryerson's reports on the education system as well as the development of school legislation in the mid-nineteenth century. In addition, there are numerous references to so-called "coloured schools" and matters concerning black students in the education system.

The records of Education Department correspondence held at the Archives of Ontario include numerous letters pertaining to the issue of school segregation and racial discrimination in several Canada West communities. This correspondence has been the most significant source in my re-evaluation of the history of school segregation in Canada West. The Alvin McCurdy collection at the Archives of Ontario is another important repository of primary information, especially regarding black organizations and schools in the Windsor and Amherstburg areas. Other significant primary materials consulted include local Board of Education Minutes for the towns of Chatham, London, Amherstburg and Windsor, (local education records from the Niagara region for this era were destroyed by fire), reports and correspondence of the American Missionary Association and the Church of England's Colonial Church and School Society, and minutes and reports of the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada as well as various black conventions and societies pertaining to education. Local newspapers in regions of black settlement were also consulted, including the *Provincial Freeman* and *Voice of the Fugitive*, published by African Canadians in Chatham and Windsor during the early 1850s.

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[52] J. George Hodgins, Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada, from the Passing of the Constitutional Act of 1791, to the Close of Reverend Doctor Ryerson's Administration of the Education Department in 1876. 28 volumes. (Toronto: Warwick Bros. & Rutter, 1894-1910).

Two significant descriptive works written about blacks in mid-nineteenth century Canada West are Benjamin Drew's *A Northside View of Slavery. The Refugee: or the Narrative of the Fugitive Slaves in Canada*, originally published in 1856,[53] and Samuel G. Howe's, *The Refugees from Slavery in Canada West. Report to the Freedmen's Inquiry Commission*, published in 1864.[54] These works, written by American abolitionists, provide detailed information on the lives of African Canadians at the time, and on black-white relations based on interviews. Drew provides a description of several regions of African-American settlement, and includes a discussion of schools in these towns. Drew devotes a large portion of his text to the narratives of black refugees in Canada West. S. G. Howe's report to the United States government in the wake of the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 provides an interesting analysis of the nature of Canadian racism and includes a chapter on public schooling.

A number of autobiographies and memoirs written by African Canadians of the era, abolitionists and education minister Egerton Ryerson provided useful context on common motivations, ideals, and attitudes of the period. The records of the Ontario Education Department contain numerous petitions against segregation and copious evidence of efforts by African Canadians toward integration. In contrast with common historical depictions of the separate racial school clause in the 1850 School Act, the primary evidence I investigated suggested that the introduction of this legislation had nothing to do with the wishes of Canadian blacks. The emphasis of several scholars upon segregationist tendencies among African Canadians seemed clearly misplaced, and historical analysis of the emergence of separate racial schools was simply inaccurate.

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[53] (Toronto: Coles, 1972).
[54] (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969).

This research brought out several questions concerning contemporary understandings of the history of segregated education in Ontario. Firstly, why was the history of forced segregation largely forgotten in the popular memory? And why had so many professional historians, many who had examined the same historical materials as I did, come to such different conclusions concerning the origins of separate school legislation and the desires of the African-Canadian community?

Previous Work in the Field

There have been several books and articles published dealing with African-Canadian history, principal among which are Robin Winks' authoritative *The Blacks in Canada: A History*,[55] James W. St.G. Walker's *A History of Blacks in Canada: A Study Guide for Teachers and Students*,[56] and Daniel G. Hill's *The Freedom Seekers: Blacks in Early Canada*.[57]

Winks' work, originally published in 1971, provides the most detailed account of the history of African-Canadian communities across this country from the era of slavery in seventeenth century New France until the 1960s. This pioneering work remains a significant resource for the study of a previously neglected aspect of Canada's history. Winks provides a useful critique of popular Canadian attitudes that portray racism as only an American problem and points to more subtle forms of racist practice in this country that have allowed for the exclusion of blacks from mainstream Canadian historical narratives.

The Blacks in Canada has been the subject of much criticism for some of the

[55] 2nd ed. (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997).
[56] (Hull, Quebec: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1980).
[57] (Agincourt, Ontario: The Book Society of Canada, 1981).

unfounded assumptions and over-generalizations Winks makes in the work. His analysis of the history of African-Canadian institutions such as churches, schools and the press measures the success of these organizations using the criteria of mainstream white society. He laments a lack of organization and initiative and expresses disappointment that these institutions seem to have promoted segregationist tendencies rather than promoting integration, while providing little evidence in support of these arguments.[58]

The Blacks in Canada includes a chapter on education, focusing on Nova Scotia and Ontario. He provides the first detailed history of school segregation in these two provinces and describes the situation of racism that fostered this regrettable situation. Winks consulted a significant number of primary sources in the preparation of this chapter, but his analysis of these sources is sometimes inaccurate and misleading. Although he acknowledges that school segregation was usually forced upon African-Canadian communities against their will, he also makes that claim that some black groups pushed for segregated education, especially in the westernmost regions of Canada West.[59] A review of the same sources consulted by Winks shows that the vast majority of blacks all over Canada West were strongly in favour of integrated education. Winks has had a significant influence upon subsequent scholarship on African-Canadian history and his assumptions about segregationist tendencies, especially in education, have been perpetuated by many more recent scholars.[60]

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[58] Winks suggests that black churches, schools, and the press "were not genuine sources of strength", were "often not relevant" and were "ineffective" in achieving "accommodation with the Canadian norm". Winks, The Blacks in Canada, 412.

[59] Ibid., 366.

[60] Winks is cited in all the major works on black history and his conclusions regarding black education are frequently reproduced uncritically. Cf., James W. St. G. Walker, Walker, A History of Blacks in Canada: A Study Guide for Teachers and Students (Hull: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1980); Jason Silverman, Unwelcome Guests: Canada West's Response to Fugitive Slaves, 1800-1865 (Millwood, NY: Associated Faculty Press, 1985); Donald G. Simpson, "Negroes in Ontario from Early Times to 1870"

James Walker's *A History of Blacks in Canada* is intended as a resource guide for use in public schools, providing a survey of previously published material in the field as well as a general discussion of black history in Canada. Walker's analysis focuses on the history of the "colour line" in Canada, a widespread and tacitly accepted situation of racism that has perpetuated stereotypes and limited opportunities for blacks throughout Canadian history. Walker suggests that this colour line is not indigenous to Canada but has been accepted "passively, from other societies."[61] With this explanation, Walker inhibits an examination of the particular historical and mythical contexts that led to unique forms of racism in Canada.

Walker argues that the common experience of the colour line by the diverse black communities in this country provided a unifying force, leading to a distinctive black culture and identity in Canada. He also suggests that the vast majority of African Canadians passively accepted this colour line, and that segregation was voluntarily accepted because "there was no inspiration to enter white society."[62] Walker points out that segregation was not a "black idea" and warns against the assumption that "if only blacks had shown an inclination to assimilate, they would have been welcomed into white society."[63] In his emphasis on black distinctiveness and the passive acceptance of segregation, however, Walker overlooks copious evidence pointing to African-Canadian efforts toward integration, such as the opening of schools and churches to whites, the efforts of True Band societies to bring blacks and whites into closer daily contact and countless attempts by black parents to have their children accepted into common schools.

(PhD diss., University of Western Ontario, 1971).
[61] Walker, A History of Blacks in Canada, 7; Also see Walker, "African Canadians", 149.
[62] Walker, A History of Blacks in Canada, 151.
[63] Ibid., 135.

In spite of the work's flaws, *A History of Blacks in Canada* aptly illustrates the importance of African-Canadian history within the broader context of Canadian history in general.

Daniel Hill's *The Freedom-Seekers: Blacks in Early Canada* focuses mainly on the history of African-American immigrants to Upper Canada in the nineteenth century, although he does briefly discuss different aspects of African-Canadian history in other regions of the country. Hill deals with various aspects of the historical experience of blacks in Ontario including the history of migration and settlement, legal history, black presence in the military and other common occupations, missions, schools, churches and other organizations, and provides short biographies of significant individuals. Throughout his historical analysis, Hill emphasizes the efforts of black and white Canadians to promote racial understanding and cooperation. With this approach, he tends to romanticize the efforts of abolitionists and missionaries, such as John Graves Simcoe, George Brown and William King, but at the same time he places an important emphasis on integrationist tendencies among black communities that have often been neglected in other scholarship.

Hill's work is grounded in both primary and secondary work. Perhaps what is most interesting about this volume is the copious amount of historical documents, such as slave testimonies, law, and correspondence, which are showcased throughout the text. The book is well illustrated, not only with photographs and drawings, but also with historical maps, newspaper articles and advertisements, land deeds, posters and legal documents.

Another important work on African-Canadian history in Canada is Peggy Bristow

et al.'s *'We're Rooted Here and They Can't Pull Us Up': Essays in African Canadian Women's History*.[64] This work includes a variety of articles focusing on the experiences of African-Canadian women in a diversity of historical situations from the seventeenth century to the 1940s. Two articles pertain directly to the subject of this dissertation, including a piece by Peggy Bristow providing a portrait of the Chatham/Buxton region from 1850-1865, and an article by Afua Cooper on Mary Bibb, a teacher in the Sandwich/Windsor area during the mid-nineteenth century. Cooper's article gives detailed information on the educational situation in the Windsor area and of Bibb's struggles to open and run a school that "should be free to all irrespective of color."[65]

Jason Silverman includes a chapter on education in his *Unwelcome Guests: Canada West's Response to Fugitive Slaves, 1800-1865*.[66] This work is organized in a similar manner to Winks' *The Blacks in Canada*, but its focus is much more narrow, dealing with Canada West in the mid-nineteenth century. Silverman's goal with this volume is to challenge the common perception that the lives of black emigrants from the United States improved in Canada. He accomplishes this goal providing numerous detailed examples of discriminatory treatment. His examples are useful, but he often falls into dangerous generalizations, referring to blacks in Canada West as "destitute, inexperienced fugitives", many of whom were forced into segregated schools by white racism, but some of whom voluntarily chose segregation "because of a sense of inadequacy".[67]

Silverman's emphasis on fugitive slaves downplays the diversity of the African-

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[64] (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994).
[65] Peggy Bristow et al., 'We're Rooted Here and They Can't Pull Us Up', 153.
[66] (Millwood, NY: Associated Faculty Press, 1985).
[67] Silverman, Unwelcome Guests, 132.

Canadian population in the province, failing to account for those who had made Canada their permanent home long before the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, as well as free blacks who arrived during the Underground Railroad era along with the so-called "destitute fugitives". He portrays blacks in Canada West as "guests" or "visitors" who were eager to return home to the United States once slavery was abolished.[68] Certainly many did return to the United States, but it is likely that a larger number remained in Canada as permanent settlers. The suggestion that "their visit to British North America was merely a waystation in their lives"[69] denies the fact that Canada was a home to African-American immigrants who became British citizens in Canada, impacted Canadian history and were changed by their experiences in Canada.

Donald G. Simpson's dissertation "Negroes in Ontario from Early Times to 1870"[70] is well researched and contains a vast amount of detailed historical information on most areas of African-Canadian settlement in the nineteenth century and on education. Simpson, like several other authors, tends to see segregationist tendencies where there is no evidence to support this assumption. For example, he erroneously describes certain segregated schools imposed upon the black population as separate institutions requested by blacks in response to pressure or a "lack of confidence to compete."[71] He provides no

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[68] Recently Michael Wayne has argued that historians have over-estimated the proportion of fugitive slaves in the black population and has challenged the pervasive assumption that the vast majority of black immigrants to Canada returned to the United States after the Civil War. Silverman and others have suggested that up to two-thirds of the black population left Canada for the United States, but Wayne's reassessment of census data has led him to conclude that perhaps no more than 20 per cent of the population returned in the 1860s. Michael Wayne, "The Black Population of Canada West on the Eve of the American Civil War: A Reassessment Based on the Manuscript Census of 1861", Histoire Sociale/Social History 28, no. 56 (November, 1995), 465-485.

[69] Silverman, Unwelcome Guests, 161.

[70] (PhD diss., University of Western Ontario, 1971).

[71] Simpson suggests that black schools in Windsor, Sandwich, Amherstburg, Chatham, Colchester and St. Catharines were established because of strong pressure on blacks to establish separate schools. However, what Simpson fails to point out is that many of these schools were actually established by white trustees and not separate schools requested by blacks. Simpson, "Negroes in Ontario", 493, 495-96.

evidence to support the assumption that people who made a brave journey of thousands of miles, many risking death, to settle in a foreign country suffered from a lack of confidence.

Simpson's explanation for the return of large numbers of blacks to the United States during and after the Civil War seems incomplete. He suggests, "it was not that the Negroes were interested in leaving Canada, rather they were interested in returning to their family and to their old homes."[72] While certainly the attachment to homeland and the motivation for reunion with families must have been strong, Simpson does not acknowledge the possibility that the return may have had something to do with the way these people were treated in Canada. Simpson does devote a good deal of attention to Canadian racist practice, but he does not acknowledge that it could have been a significant motivating factor in the departure of many black people.

For Simpson, the concept of white superiority is evidence of the "evil side of the white personality" that "was still part of the thinking". He likens racism to a "disease" or "noxious plague" that had been "caught" in some towns and was largely "unexplainable".[73] This analysis is problematic in many ways. Simpson's explanation does not acknowledge that racism was normative in mid-nineteenth century Canada West, not an illness caught by the immoral few. He seems to suggest that racism was a result of bad thinking in the past, and that, like the plague, it has now been eradicated. Perhaps it takes less obvious forms today, but most scholars of African-Canadian history

[72] Simpson, "Negroes in Ontario", 898-99.
[73] Simpson, 666, 784-85.

would agree that racism has been foundational in the history of this country and continues to have an important impact upon Canadian life.[74]

Other unpublished works on the history of black education in Ontario include Hildreth Houston Spencer's doctoral dissertation, "To Nestle in the Mane of the British Lion: A History of Canadian Black Education, 1820 to 1870",[75] and Master's theses by Afua Cooper[76], Harriett Chatters[77] and Bruce Elliott.[78] These works provide historical details on the history of black private schools in various regions of mid-nineteenth century Ontario.

There is a plethora of works dealing with racism in Western society. Many of the most recent and convincing theoretical works on racism see this phenomenon less as a psychological symptom of sick individuals but as a pervasive social and cultural phenomenon. David Theo Goldberg, for example, suggests that far from being inexplicable and irrational, racism has many rational qualities because it often falls within socially accepted structures, and is easily rationalized by the dominant elements in society.[79] He argues that racism is not the result of individual prejudices, but is instead framed conceptually and sustained by culture.[80] Other racial theorists, such as Theodore Allen, Benjamin Bowser, and Paul Gilroy emphasize the social and cultural dimensions of racism. Theodore Allen traces the emergence of American racialized culture to

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[74] Cf. Cecil Foster, A Place Called Heaven: The Meaning of Being Black in Canada (Toronto: Harper Collins, 1996); Walker, "African Canadians"; Winks, The Blacks in Canada; Alexander and Glaze, Towards Freedom.
[75] (Northwestern University, 1970).
[76] Afua Cooper, "Black Teachers in Canada West, 1850-1870: A History" (MA thesis: University of Toronto, 1991).
[77] Harriett Chatters, "Negro Education in Kent County to 1890" (MA thesis: Howard University, 1956).
[78] Christopher Bruce Elliott, "Black Education in Canada West: A Parochial Solution to a Secular Problem, Rev. M.M. Dillon and the Colonial Church and School Society" (MA thesis: Wilfrid Laurier University, 1989).
[79] Goldberg, Racist Culture, 90-119
[80] Ibid., 7-8.

attempts at social control by white landholders in eighteenth century Virginia. He argues that the notion of a "white race", a mark of social status that cuts across class, was invented to prevent collaboration between lower-class white and black labourers; thus preventing a threat to the established white elites.[81] The collection of essays included in Bowser's edited volume, *Racism and Anti-Racism in World Perspective*, point to an intimate relationship between institutional racism and culture, and Paul Gilroy uses specific examples to highlight racist culture in modern Britain, arguing in his *"There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack"* that racism can only be adequately understood if examined in the context of other social relations.[82]

Goldberg argues that racism can never have benign effects; this is in contrast to Bowser and Omi and Winant's views that racism involves simply a belief in the superiority of one's own group.[83] Goldberg suggests that these definitions are too broad, and he puts forth instead that racism is expressed by dominant groups, and it involves acts of exclusion. He suggests that racism, in its many forms, can always judged by its effects, which are always negative.[84]

Many scholars have examined racism's role in the development of the nation state. Bowser describes cultural racism as the product of nationalist ideology while Gilroy argues that the distinction between race and nation is often difficult to make.[85] Etienne Balibar is perhaps one of the most influential thinkers on the relationship between racism and nationalism. He suggests that these two phenomena operate in a

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[81] See Allen, The Invention of the White Race, Vol. 2, 248-49.
[82] Gilroy, "There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack", 14.
[83] Bowser, "Introduction", in Racism and Anti-Racism, xiv-xv; Michael Omi and Howard Winant, Racial formation in the United States : from the 1960s to the 1980s (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), 145, 172.
[84] Goldberg, Racist Culture, 97-111.
[85] Bowser, Racism and Anti-Racism, xiv; Gilroy, "There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack", 45.

"cycle of historical reciprocity" in which racism is constantly emerging out of nationalism, and vice versa.[86] Racism, according to Balibar, can present itself as a form of "super-nationalism", which insists upon the racial or cultural purity of nations. In order to maintain this national purity, certain social groups considered "false", 'exogenous", "cross-bred", or "cosmopolitan" are racialized and designated external or impure.[87]

As national identity has often been defined along racial lines, state formation then can involve racist exclusions. In *Building the Educational State: Canada West, 1836-1871*,[88] Bruce Curtis suggests that state formation in mid-nineteenth century Canada West depended upon the development of a public education system that would promote obedience to political authority and attachment to the ideals of the state. Although he does not deal with issues of racism in the education system, his theoretical approach informs my own interpretations regarding systemic role of racism in the development of the public education system of Canada West. Curtis argues that educational practice played the role of public religion in that the system emphasized individual moral regulation and promoted a "common Christianity",[89] fostering the maintenance of societal norms and values. Curtis suggests that ideals held by education administrators for the developing public education system were "class- and gender-specific"[90] and that this led to social conflicts between the governing and lower classes. He underlines the important role that these conflicts among various actors in education, including students, parents, teachers, trustees, and central government administrators, played in the development of

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[86] Etienne Balibar, "Racism and Nationalism" in Balibar and Immanual Wallerstein, Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities (London: Verso, 1991), 53.
[87] Balibar, 59-60.
[88] (London, Ontario: Althouse Press, 1988).
[89] Curtis, Building the Educational State, 109.
[90] Ibid., 379.

the emerging system. His focus on class and gender, however, leaves little room for discussion of racial and ethnic conflict. Curtis does briefly address race relations in his related work, *True Government by Choice Men? Inspection, Education and State Formation in Canada West*,[91] which covers much of the same terrain as *Building the Educational State* but focuses more narrowly on the role of educational inspectors during the 1840s. Curtis briefly addresses local conflicts over the admission of black students and the role played by district superintendents in mediating between local trustees, who often supported forced segregation, and the Education Office, which gave conflicting opinions regarding racial segregation.

There is unfortunately little discussion of Ontario's history of public school segregation in published works on the history of education in Canada; however, some recent scholarship does deal very briefly with this topic. Susan Houston and Alison Prentice devote the most attention to the significance of racial discrimination in the history of Ontario education taking seven pages to discuss the issue of racially segregated public schools. *Schooling and Scholars in Nineteenth-Century Ontario*[92] investigates schooling as an integral aspect of public and private life long predating organized educational practice by governments. The authors examine power relations in relation to class and gender in schooling, with an emphasis on relations among family, state and school. The authors situate the history of racial discrimination in education within the historical battle between local and central forces for control of education. In their analysis of the origins of separate racial schools, they suggest that the 1850 clause allowing for racial segregation was introduced as a result of petitions for separate schools

[91] (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).
[92] (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988).

by black parents and against the better judgment of government officials who preferred integration. This interpretation contrasts directly with evidence in the Department of Education correspondence and in J.G. Hodgins' *Documentary History of Education* that includes letters and petitions from local school superintendents, government officials and missionaries requesting the establishment of separate racial schools, and dozens of petitions from African Canadians protesting school segregation.[93]

J. Donald Wilson et al.'s foundational work *Canadian Education: A History*[94], published in 1970, was one of the first to place the history of education in the context of social history. The authors begin with a history of European and American influences on Canadian education systems and continue with a history of education in Canada from colonial beginnings in New France and British North America to the development of provincial systems of public education through modern times. In his chapter, "The Ryerson Years in Canada West", Wilson mentions the separate racial schools clause in the 1850 School Act, and makes a similar argument to Houston and Prentice regarding its origins.

It is telling about Canadian understandings of our history that the peculiar practice of school segregation is barely discussed in mainstream works on Canadian education. We must look to more specific scholarship on African-Canadian history to learn about this issue. These works provide details and interpretations of historical events and situations significant to African-Canadian and a more generalized Canadian history. The

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[93] Archives of Ontario (AO), Incoming Education Correspondence, RG 2-12, Vol. 5, Robert Peden to Egerton Ryerson, February 23, 1846; George Bullock, Warden of Western District Council to Ryerson, February 7, 1848, in Hodgins, Documentary History, vol. 7: 1847-48 (1900), 124; Harrow and Colchester South Township School Area Board, A Story of Public Schools in Colchester South Township (Harrow: School Board, 1966), 11.

[94] J. Donald Wilson, Robert Stamp and Louis-Philippe Audet, eds., Canadian Education: A History (Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1970).

authors chronicle black/white relations in this country, describing the history of racism in Canada. However, many of these scholars have uncritically accepted assumptions regarding African-Canadian segregationist tendencies, and fail to provide adequate explanations as to how and why racist practices have been widely tolerated in this country. It is my hope that the following study will better explain motivations for racist action in Canadian history and provide some insight into widespread assumptions that continue to misrepresent this country's foundational myths and history of exclusion.

Chapter Two - History of Immigration to Upper Canada

This study focuses on the principal areas of African-Canadian settlement during the nineteenth century. Diverse groups of slaves and former slaves to French, English and Native populations, as well as former slaves and free black immigrants from the United States settled largely in the western regions of what is now Ontario. By the early nineteenth century, immigrants of a diversity of backgrounds, the dominant portion of which was descended from emigrants from the British Isles, began to outnumber Native populations in Upper Canada.[1] By 1850, when the passing of the American Fugitive Slave Act motivated thousands of African Americans to migrate to Canada, the population of Canada West, as the province was now called, was exploding with a diverse immigrant population.

The geographical area to be examined is bound by the Detroit River in the southwest and the Niagara River in the southeast and extends north from Lake Erie to the region between Lake Huron and Georgian Bay, including the region around the western portion of Lake Simcoe south to the western tip of Lake Ontario. Prior to the arrival of Europeans, these were Iroquoian territories inhabited by the Neutral, Petun (Tobacco), Wendat (Huron) and the Five Nations Confederacy. By the seventeenth century, these territories were absorbed into New France and played an important role in the fur trade.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, French and indigenous populations collaborated in commercial, military and missionary endeavours. In what is now southwestern Ontario, the French population established trading posts at Fort Niagara (on what is now the American side of the Niagara River), Fort Toronto (later

[1] Douglas McCalla, Planting the Province: The Economic History of Upper Canada, 1784-1870 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 28.

expanded and renamed Fort Rouillé), Fort St. Joseph (at present-day Sarnia) and Fort Detroit.[2] Some slavery was practiced in French settlements, although the economy of New France did not support a widespread system of slavery as there were few plantations requiring large amounts of labour and it was expensive to feed and clothe slaves during Canada's long winter. Slavery was not made legal in New France until 1709, and although Louis XIV gave it limited approval in Canada in 1689, France discouraged economic diversification in the colony, imposing a fur trade economy in which slavery was of little advantage. French élites made use of Native ("Panis") and African slaves (from the thirteen colonies, the West Indies and Africa) as household servants and agricultural workers.[3]

Black slaves were among the first inhabitants at Fort Detroit and the surrounding communities on both sides of the river. The 1750 census of the settlement recorded thirty-three slaves out of the total population of 450 and by the early 1770s, there were ninety-six blacks out of a total population of 1291.[4] The slave system in place in New France was kept intact under British rule after the Conquest of 1760. The Articles of Capitulation guaranteed the rights of slave-owners, and some British élites, including Governor Murray, also owned slaves.[5]

The British conquest of North America had little effect on the demographic makeup of the Quebec colony until the American Revolution encouraged the mass migration of settlers loyal to the British into this territory. After the Revolutionary War,

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[2] Robert Choquette, Ontario. An Informal History of the Land and its People (Toronto: Ontario, Minster of Education, 1983) 12-14.
[3] Daniel G. Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, 3-4.
[4] Hill, The Freedom Seekers, 9; Carole Jensen, "History of the Negro Community in Essex County, 1850-1860" (MA Thesis, University of Windsor, 1966), 1-2.
[5] W.R. Riddell, "Notes on Slavery in Canada", Journal of Negro History 5 (July, 1920): 396; Hill, 6.

the British government enticed Loyalists to immigrate with military commissions and administrative positions and offered generous grants of land to agricultural settlers. Many of the initial settlers were veterans of loyal regiments, including Irish, Scottish and English soldiers and their families, Native people and some African Americans who had fought on the side of the British. A small proportion of civilians, many of whom were frontier farmers, also arrived with the first Loyalists.[6]

A diverse group of approximately 10 000 loyal immigrants arrived in Quebec after the war, followed by large numbers of land-hungry settlers. Immigrants of British heritage were joined by Native groups whose livelihood was threatened by the advancement of white agricultural settlement; many immigrants were members of ethnic and religious minorities, including German conscientious objectors and Brooklyn Dutch, and thousands of African Americans joined the Loyalist migrations, voluntarily and involuntarily. According to Daniel Hill, some 2000 slaves rowed boats, carried weary settlers, made camp, cleared land for farming and settlement and helped to build some of the first Loyalist homes in the British province of Quebec. During the Revolutionary War, the British had offered freedom to any slaves who joined their forces, while at the same time European and Native soldiers who owned slaves were encouraged to bring them to Canada. Some British soldiers captured American slaves and brought them to Quebec to work their property, and other free blacks who fought for the British moved north with the Loyalist migrations.[7]

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[6] Norman Knowles, Inventing the Loyalists: The Ontario Loyalist Tradition and the Creation of Usable Pasts (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 14.
[7] Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, 9, 12, 111.

Hundreds of free blacks and slaves fought alongside British, Seneca and Six Nations troops in the company of Butler's Rangers at Fort Niagara.[8] After this fort was handed to the Americans in 1783, John Butler along with many of his men and their families set up a Loyalist settlement on the Quebec side of the Niagara River at what was to become Niagara-on-the-Lake.[9] German-American conscientious objectors had been settled in the Niagara Falls area since the 1780s. By the early nineteenth century, hundreds of Pennsylvania Mennonites had settled near Niagara Falls and their population spread across southwestern Ontario.[10] By 1791 the Niagara District pioneers owned approximately 300 black slaves, more than in any other part of the territory at the time.[11]

The Mohawk leader Joseph Brant (Thayendanegea) encouraged hundreds of his people to fight for the British during the American Revolution out of a desire to protect Iroquois territory against American incursion. However, in the Treaty of Versailles of 1783 British negotiators surrendered Mohawk lands to the Americans. In order to replace the land it had given away, the British government made provision to resettle large numbers of its Iroquois allies from the American-claimed territories to lands north of the Great Lakes. In 1784, the British governor Haldimand bought land from the Mississauga nation and offered it to Britain's dispossessed Six Nations allies. Joseph Brant led over 1500 settlers to a large tract of land along the Grand River near present-day Brantford. Another Iroquois group settled near the Bay of Quinte.[12]

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[8] Ibid., 111.
[9] Choquette, Ontario, 16-17.
[10] Heinz Lehmann, The German Canadians, 1750-1937. Immigration, Settlement and Culture Gerhard P. Bassler, trans. (St. John's, NF: Jesperson Press, 1986),14-16.
[11] Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, 220, n. 19.
[12] J.R. Miller, Skyscapers Hide the Heavens. A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 76-78; Choquette, Ontario, 17.

Many of the surrendered Native territories remained the object of dispute between Britain and the United States until Jay's Treaty settled the negotiations in 1794, once and for all surrendering all disputed Native lands to the United States. Again, the British purchased large tracts of land along the Thames River from the Ojibwa for the resettlement of up to 3000 more Native allies.[13]

Several Iroquois Loyalists brought slaves with them to the British province of Quebec. Native slave traders, such as Sarah Ainse who lived west of Chatham, used black slaves to work their properties. Joseph Brant owned up to forty black slaves, many of whom he had captured in the war. Native Americans generally treated slaves differently than British slave-owners, as slaves were often adopted into Native American families and intermarriage between African slaves and aboriginal people was common. Brant's own granddaughter married an escaped slave from Maryland.[14] Sophia Pooley, one of Brant's slaves, was raised as part of his family, and she recounts a situation in which Brant came to her defense when she was abused at the hands of one of his wives.[15] Brant also provided homesteads for several escaped American slaves who settled on the Grand River reserve as free people.

Some free black veterans were granted lands along with other United Empire Loyalists. A number of veterans of Butler's Rangers and other military regiments settled on grants of land along the Lake Erie shore east of the Detroit River. The earliest known black landholder in Upper Canada's westernmost county of Essex was Butler's Rangers

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[13] Miller, Skyscrapers, 78-79.
[14] Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, 13; also see Ken Alexander and Avis Glaze, Towards Freedom: The African-Canadian Experience (Toronto: Umbrella Press, 1996), 47.
[15] Cited in S.G. Howe, The refugees from slavery in Canada West: report to the Freedmen's Inquiry Commission, 1864 (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969), 192-197.

veteran James Robertson.[16] By the 1790s, several African-American settlers owned land in Gosfield township, on the northwestern shore of Lake Erie, and soon the black population of nearby Colchester had cleared approximately two-thirds of the land in the township.[17] Edward Smith, a former American slave and United Empire Loyalist received a land grant along what is now the Thames River near Raleigh (southwest of today's Chatham) in 1793. Five other African Americans were recorded to be residents of Raleigh that year.[18]

In 1791, the former Quebec territory was divided into the two colonies of Upper and Lower Canada. Upon the arrival of Lieutenant-Colonel John Graves Simcoe, Upper Canada's first governor, there were 14 000 inhabitants in this colony[19], and the population continued to grow as land-hungry American settlers continued to arrive. In attempting to stamp a British identity upon this emerging colony, Governor Simcoe worked to attract loyal American settlers to Upper Canada, as few British migrants were able to migrate because of the Napoleonic Wars. Few migrants came for political reasons although tens of thousands were attracted by the prospect of free land in the British colony. These later American immigrants soon outnumbered the earlier loyalists and contributed to the rapid increase in the colony's population; by the end of the first decade of the nineteenth century Upper Canada's population exceeded 50 000 inhabitants.[20]

In the late eighteenth century, several members of the British ruling classes owned slaves as a symbol of their élite status. However, anti-slavery sentiment began to

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[16] Jensen, "History of the Negro Community", 8.
[17] Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, 46; Benjamin Drew, A Northside View of Slavery, 367-371.
[18] Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, 47.
[19] Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, 15.
[20] Gerald M. Craig, Upper Canada: The Formative Years, 1784-1841 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1963), 43; McCalla, 8.

take hold among the majority middling classes in the colony by the 1790s. In 1791 the British reformer William Wilberforce introduced a bill into parliament suggesting that the Empire put a stop to the importation of slaves to its colonies. Governor Simcoe was a strong supporter of Wilberforce, and he argued that the practice of slavery, which was not necessary to the economic success of the British colony he worked to establish, contravened Christian teaching and the British constitution. In 1793, a bill prohibiting the introduction of slaves into the colony was passed in the Legislative Assembly.

This "Act to Prevent the further introduction of Slaves", came about as a result of compromise between slaveholders, many of whom were members of the legislature, and anti-slavery activists. The Act limited the practice of slavery by forbidding the further importation of slaves and allowed for the gradual liberation of the children of slaves. This Act did not actually free any slaves, however, and the interests of slaveholders were also protected, as it explicitly stated, "Nothing herein contained shall extend, or be construed to extend, to liberate any Negro ...property therein is hereby confirmed."[21] Public attitudes toward slavery began to change with Simcoe's law. By the turn of the nineteenth century, most African Canadians were free people. Former domestics, attendants and farmhands began to work as tradespeople and labourers. There exists no record for the sale of any slaves in British North America after 1806 although slavery was not officially abolished in the Empire until 1833.[22]

In the early nineteenth century, some free American states passed laws restricting the rights of African Americans. The state of Ohio introduced its notorious "Black

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[21] "An Act to prevent the further introduction of Slaves, and to limit the terms of contracts for servitude within this Province", Revised Statutes of Upper Canada Vol. I, Chap VII, (1792-1840), 18-19; Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, 15-16; Carole Jensen, "History of the Negro Community", 2.

[22] Hildreth Houston Spencer "To Nestle in the Mane of the British Lion: A History of Canadian Black Education, 1820 to 1870" (PhD. Dissertation, Northwestern University, 1970), 13.

Codes" in 1804 and 1807, which banished blacks and "mulattoes" unless they presented a certificate of freedom. Employers could be fined for hiring black employees with no certificate and black migrants attempting to move to the state were prevented from settling unless, within twenty days of their arrival, they showed proof they could support themselves, posted a $500 bond and gave assurances of good behaviour. Fines for hiding blacks living illegally in Ohio were raised from $50 to $100.[23]

For the small numbers of American blacks who chose to emigrate from the United States as a result of discrimination, British North America was but one destination among many. American colonization efforts advocated emigration to Liberia, the Caribbean, or South America, but most black migrants preferred to remain in North America. If they faced difficulty in the northern states, some moved west and others fled to Nova Scotia and Upper Canada.[24] By the early nineteenth century, small numbers of African-American loyalist immigrants and refugees from slavery and discrimination had settled alongside their fellow American and European immigrants in the towns and rural areas of Upper Canada.

Prior to the War of 1812 Richard Pierpoint, a veteran of Butler's Rangers and former American slave, petitioned the government of Upper Canada to raise a company of black troops to protect the Niagara frontier. Canada's first all-black military company was formed under the command of Robert Runchey, a white officer.[25] The eagerness of this military company to defend Upper Canada did not reflect a widespread societal trend, as there was little support for the 1812 War among the dominant population of Upper

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[23] Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, 27.
[24] Robin Winks, The Blacks in Canada, 154-155.
[25] Ernest Green, "Upper Canada's Black Defenders", Ontario Historical Society. Papers and Records 27 (1931): 368-370.

Canada; according to Gerald Craig, the majority of Upper Canadians, who had migrated from the United States in search of economic opportunity, were apathetic to the loyalist cause by this time.[26] During the war, African Canadians helped defend Upper Canada at several important battles, including the Battle of Queenston Heights where 50 black troops joined 140 Native troops under the command of Joseph Brant's son.[27] Some soldiers received land grants and severance pay as a reward for their successful defense against an American invasion. However, not all received the severance pay they were promised. For example, the black Sergeant William Thompson of the York militia addressed a letter of complaint to the government on behalf of himself and thirteen others in 1815 complaining they had not received their promised reward.[28]

In the aftermath of the War of 1812, British-Canadian nationalist sentiment began to take hold while anti-American feelings were on the rise. American settlers who had not proven their loyalty were perceived as threats to this British colony, while the Upper Canadian government discouraged further immigration from the United States. Instead, the government encouraged direct immigration from the British Isles in order to ensure the loyalty of Upper Canada's inhabitants, and to ensure this colony would be identifiably British. As John Strachan declared, "to make this a British colony we must have a decided majority."[29] By this time, British authorities had gained considerable political authority over Native populations in the Upper Canada colony, and the government procured some of the region's most desirable lands upon which to place British immigrants in exchange for reserves, annuities and other trades. Within the next

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[26] Craig, 70-71.
[27] Green, "Upper Canada's Black Defenders".
[28] Cited in Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, 117
[29] John Strachan, 1822, cited in Craig, 103.

two decades, Upper Canada's population increased by half as European migrants came to Canada looking for economic opportunity following the end of the Napoleonic Wars.[30] These new immigrants had to prove they were loyal to Britain in order to receive government land grants.[31] The largest proportion of immigrants came from Ireland. By 1842, Irish descendents represented one quarter of Upper Canada's population. Two-thirds of these immigrants were Protestant, and they influenced the dominant loyal and Protestant mindset in the colony.[32]

In 1819, J.B. Robinson, Attorney General of Upper Canada declared that residence in Canada assured freedom for blacks and that Canadian courts would uphold that freedom.

> Freedom of the person is the most important civil right protected by the law of England ... the negroes are entitled to personal freedom through residence in Canada and any attempt to infringe their rights will be resisted in the courts.[33]

Soldiers' reports about Canadian laws regarding slavery encouraged further migration into Upper Canada. African-American immigrants reflected loyalist sentiments and worked to gain access to the rights guaranteed to all British citizens under the law. In the first recorded appeal to the Upper Canadian government for access to education, a group united at Ancaster composed the following petition to the Lt. Governor, Sir Peregrine Maitland in 1829:

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[30] Craig, 228.
[31] Ibid., 90.
[32] John Webster Grant, A Profusion of Spires: Religion in Nineteenth Century Ontario (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 69; Donald H. Akenson, The Irish in Ontario. A Study in Rural History. 2nd ed. (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), 13-15, 267, 277. Akenson demonstrates that the Irish represented the largest European ethnic group in Ontario throughout the nineteenth century, and prior to the Great Famine they were already the single most important group of migrants to British North America. Most Irish Canadians were Protestant and Loyalist, and many belonged to Orange Orders, which had an important influence upon the history of the province.
[33] Cited in Hill, The Freedom-Seekers , 93.

> The petition of the under-named people of colour, residing in different parts of the province, humbly sheweth, that your petitioners duly appreciate the excellent constitution of the province, and anxiously desire to enjoy more fully the many privileges it confers, and from which they are in their present situation, in a great measure excluded. One of the many, and perhaps the greatest disadvantage under which they labour, is the want of means of educating their children – which desirable object they fondly cherish the hopes of being able to accomplish, should they be formed into a settlement, where they could combine and unite their means and exertions for so laudable a purpose as that of securing to their posterity the means of obtaining a moral and religious education, with all its happy consequences...[34]

This petition demonstrates the high esteem in which many African Canadians held British laws and institutions, as well as the importance of formal education. The Ancaster petitioners requested a grant of land upon which they could establish a separate settlement in order to ensure access to education for their children and in an attempt to curb kidnappings by American slave catchers. In the first half of the nineteenth century, a few attempts were made to establish communal black settlements in Upper Canada; these were largely short-lived, often unsuccessful and attracted few settlers. No more than five per cent of the African-Canadian population ever lived in these settlements.[35]

The first of these settlements was established at Lucan, north of London. In 1829 the city of Cincinnati revived the Ohio black codes, which had previously not been strictly enforced. At this time, the city applied harsh restrictions upon the African-American population; for example, in 1830 the black inhabitants of Cincinnati were given sixty days to register with the city and pay a $500 bond. Rioting resulted when white mobs stalked black sections of the city. Thousands of migrants from Cincinnati,

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[34] "Interesting Notes on Great Britain and Canada with Respect to the Negro", Journal of Negro History 13 (April, 1929): 115-116.
[35] William H. Pease and Jane H. Pease, Black Utopia: Negro Communal Experiments in America (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1963), 49, 65, 92.

Boston and other northern regions planned to settle at Lucan in the Wilberforce settlement as early as 1829.[36]

The settlement was allowed but not without some objection on the part of white Upper Canadians. In 1830 the House of Assembly declared that,

> The sudden introduction of a mass of Black population, likely to continue without limitation, is a matter so dangerous to the peace and comfort of the inhabitants, that it becomes necessary to prevent or check, by some prudent restrictions, this threatened evil.[37]

Although Upper Canadians expressed sympathy for the plight of persecuted African Americans, many remained firmly opposed to the possibility that these people might take refuge in Canada. In 1840, the Western District Council petitioned the legislature to prevent, "the rapid importation of this unfortunate race", as they had "inundated this devoted section of the province, to the great detriment of the claims of the poor immigrant from the mother country."[38] Black presence was seen to threaten the rights of descendents from the British Isles to dominate the colony.

Only about two hundred settlers finally made their homes at Wilberforce. Some who had set out for the colony never made it and were dispersed throughout the province of Upper Canada and the northern states. Poor organization and mismanagement led to difficult negotiations with the Canada Land Company, which, as a result, refused to sell any further land to black immigrants. Several intended settlers never left Cincinnati after the city's government reconsidered its implementation of the harsh Black Code regulations in an attempt to keep the city's cheap labour force from emigrating. By 1835, Wilberforce's population had dwindled and much of the population scattered throughout

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[36] Winks, The Blacks in Canada, 155-56.
[37] Cited in Silverman, Unwelcome Guests, 28.
[38] Cited in Allen P. Stouffer, The Light of Nature and the Law of God: Antislavery in Ontario, 1833-1877 (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), 63.

the province or moved back to the United States. Irish immigrants took over the settlement in the 1830s.[39]

In 1842, another significant attempt was made to start a black settlement in the township of Dawn, northeast of Chatham. Josiah Henson, an escaped slave who had arrived in Canada in the 1830s, and Hiram Wilson, founder of the American Missionary Association's Canada Mission, and emigrant from Cincinnati, collaborated with the Quaker philanthropist James Cunning Fuller, as well as other white and black trustees, to establish this settlement. The community was to be built around the British American Institute, a school where black and white instructors would teach black and aboriginal students industrial and manual skills. No ethnic group was excluded from the school. In spite of the apparent good intentions of its founder, the settlement engendered much criticism among some African Canadians who were opposed to segregation and the solicitation of funds. Within ten years, as a result of mismanagement, dishonest leadership and strong opposition, the Dawn settlement was in serious decline. The community's peak population of 500 dissipated throughout the province during the 1850s.[40] However, news exaggerating the success of black settlements in Upper Canada spread throughout the United States and served to make the province a popular destination among black emigrants.

By the 1830s an underground network that smuggled fugitive American slaves into Canada began to take shape. The impetus for this movement began with Quaker reaction against violence toward Pennsylvania blacks in the early nineteenth century. The Quakers harboured fugitives and worked to smuggle them further north. Levi

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[39] Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, 67-71.
[40] Pease and Pease, Black Utopia, 64-74; Hill, The Freedom-Seekers,71-72.

Coffin, a Quaker abolitionist from Cincinnati, housed 100 or more refugees in his home every year during the period of strict implementation of Ohio's Black Codes. He gathered much moral and financial support for his cause and came to be known as the "president" of the Underground Railroad. The Underground Railroad movement was the result of a successful collaboration among free blacks and white Quakers and Methodists from the northern and southern United States to assist black fugitives in escaping slavery and finding a safe refuge from oppression.[41]

Most black immigrants did not settle into segregated communities but were dispersed throughout towns and villages in Upper Canada. By 1830, nearly 600 African Canadians had settled along the Detroit River and Lake Erie shores in municipalities such as Amherstburg, Fort Malden, Sandwich, Anderdon, Maidstone, Mersea, Gosfield Colchester, Harrow and New Canaan. The southwestern shore of Lake Ontario was another important area of settlement for black immigrants. The Niagara region and Hamilton were important areas of settlement from the 1820s; the town of Niagara Falls had a black population estimated at 400 people by 1837.[42] St. Catharines became a significant northern terminus of the Underground railroad by the 1830s. Toronto experienced a boom in immigration during this decade, and black immigrants were among this first wave. Also, during the 1830s, small numbers of African-American immigrants began to settle further inland in towns such as London, Brantford, in and around Chatham, and as far north as Oro, on the northwestern shore of Lake Simcoe. Early in the decade, there were likely 800 African Canadians living in the province,[43]

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[41] Hill, The Freedom-Seekers , 25-26.
[42] Janet Carnochan, "A Slave Rescue in Niagara Sixty Years Ago", Niagara Historical Society 2 (1897): 10.
[43] Donald G. Simpson, "Negroes in Ontario", 256-453, 296.

while that number increased by 1842 to an estimated 13 000 out of a total provincial population of approximately 500 000.[44]

Debates over Responsible Government in Upper Canada culminated in the Rebellions of 1837-38. Several black regiments, up to 1000 soldiers, fought to defend the established government against Mackenzie's rebels, whom they feared were sympathetic to the republicans to the south.[45] In 1840 a black military regiment, which came to be known as the Coloured Corps, served for over a decade working to develop the infrastructure of Upper Canada. At first the Corps worked to clear forests and build roads in the Niagara region, but the company's efforts were soon needed to prevent violent fighting between Irish Catholic canal workers and Orangemen. The Coloured Corps was instrumental in calming a violent incident in Slabtown, near St. Catharines, when armed Irish Catholics and Orangemen became engaged in a bloody brawl in July 1849.[46] Twenty-five black militiamen responded to an urgent call to restore order. Their successful intervention was very much appreciated by the population of St. Catharines, although according to Ernest Green, certain of the Irish agitators were less appreciative, suggesting that "it was the climax of humiliation to be kept within the bounds of law and good order by a 'naygur in a red coat'."[47] The Welland Canal was completed in 1850 and members of the disbanded Coloured Corps settled throughout the Niagara Peninsula. Many became involved in assisting refugees of the Underground Railroad.[48]

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[44] Simpson, "Negroes in Ontario", 296; Akenson, The Irish in Ontario, 1842 census data, 16.
[45] Roger Riendeau, An Enduring Heritage: Black Contributions to Early Ontario (Toronto: Dundurn, 1984)
[46] Paul Hutchinson and Michael Power, Goaded to Madness: the Battle of Slabtown (St Catherines: Slabtown Press, 1999), 27.
[47] Ernest Green, "Upper Canada's Black Defenders", Ontario Historical Society (27, 1931).
[48] Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, 125.

In 1850, the American government passed the Fugitive Slave Act,[49] which allowed for the owners of escaped slaves to enlist the aid of government officials throughout the South and the North in recapturing their lost property. Even long-escaped slaves could be reclaimed by a master who presented an affidavit of ownership to a federal judge or commissioner. Free blacks could easily be claimed as slaves, as the onus was on them to prove they were free, and alleged fugitives could be arrested without due process. The police for all states had to assist in the search for former slaves, and the police could be fined if they refused to obey a commissioner's certificate or failed to prevent a fugitive's escape.[50]

The Act stimulated the movement of refugee slaves into Canada, but also multiplied the risks involved in the escape and in aiding the fugitive in flight. Fines of up to $1000 and a maximum six months in prison were the penalties for obstructing a slave-owner's claim by protecting or harbouring fugitives. Many "conductors" on the Underground Railroad were caught and jailed, but those abolitionists who managed to evade capture worked to smuggle more African Americans to Canada than ever before. Entire Baptist church congregations in Buffalo and Rochester moved together into Canada, and most of the black waiters in the Pittsburgh Hotel headed for the Canadian border.[51]

Many women worked as conductors; the most famous of these was Harriet Tubman, commonly referred to as "Moses". She escaped slavery in Maryland in 1849 and subsequently made dozens of trips into the south to guide refugees into the northern United States and later to Canada. She used St. Catharines as the chief terminal for her

[49] An earlier Fugitive Slave Act was introduced in 1783, but it was not strictly enforced.
[50] Jensen, "History of the Negro Community", 14; Spencer, "To Nestle in the Mane", 25.
[51] Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, 32; Farrell, "The History of the Negro Community in Chatham", 68.

activities. Here, Rev. Hiram Wilson led the efforts among the refugee community to clothe and feed these new immigrants and then to settle them throughout Canada West.[52]

There is much debate over the exact number of former slaves and free African Americans who reached Canada via the Underground Railroad, although it is certain that the black population grew exponentially as a result of this movement. Reporting to the U.S. Freedman's Inquiry Commission in 1864, S.G. Howe estimated that between 30 000 and 40 000 exiles had found refuge in Canada since 1800.[53] This figure has been disputed most recently by Michael Wayne, who suggests that the black population of Canada West was between 22 500 and 23 000 in 1861.[54] The exact number will never be known, but it would be safe to estimate that the black population of Canada West might have reached 30 000 during the 1850s.[55]

As the Underground Railroad brought large numbers of African-American immigrants to Canada West, migrants from the British Isles and other parts of Western Europe also arrived by the thousands every year looking for economic opportunity. New industries and more efficient modes of transportation encouraged population growth in this young province. By the mid-nineteenth century, several black communities were firmly rooted throughout the southwestern portions of Canada West. These communities

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[52] Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, 38.

[53] S.G. Howe, The refugees from slavery in Canada West, 15.

[54] Michael Wayne, "The Black Population of Canada West on the Eve of the American Civil War", 470. In 1852, the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada estimated that the black population of Canada West was 30 000, while other anti-slavery activists suggested that 110 000 blacks had arrived via the Underground Railroad. See Drew, A Northside View of Slavery, v; Winks, The Blacks in Canada, 486. In 1855, Samuel Ringgold Ward suggested that there were between 35 000 and 40 000 blacks in the province. Ward, Autobiography of a Fugitive Negro (1855; New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1968), 154. Canadian census figures for 1861, dismissed as inaccurate by most historians, put the black population at 11 000 for this year. Wayne's proposed correction to this data makes a more plausible estimate but he does not take into account the number of fugitive slaves who might not have reported to census-takers out of a fear of being discovered and returned to the south.

[55] Historians such as Robin Winks and James W. St. G. Walker agree on this estimate. For a discussion of the difficulties in estimating actual population numbers for African Canadians, see Winks, The Blacks in Canada, 233-246. Also see Walker, "African Canadians", 143.

grew during the 1850s, through immigration and high birth rates. By 1854, Canada West's population was approaching one million people,[56] and by 1861, an estimated 40% of Canada West's black population was born in the province.[57]

The most important settlements continued to grow along the Detroit frontier, and the village of Amherstburg, located at a narrow point of the Detroit River, was at this time the principal terminus of the Underground Railroad. According to the American observer Benjamin Drew, the black population of Amherstburg was between 400 and 500 out of a total town population of 2000 or more in 1854.[58] The neighbouring township of Malden had up to another 900 inhabitants.[59] The black community established one school and three churches in the town, as they were not welcome in white churches and schools. Most African-Canadian Baptist churches were part of the Amherstburg Baptist Association, established in 1841. Many African Canadians owned real estate in the town, some ran stores and barbershops and some worked as mechanics and domestic servants. In the rural areas around Amherstburg there were also several successful farmers.[60]

By the mid-nineteenth century, the Windsor/Sandwich area became an important industrial and commercial hub of the Western District. The Great Western Railway ran through Windsor from Niagara Falls, trade with Detroit was very active and work was plentiful. Several black settlers obtained work on the railway, and many women and men went into business as laundry workers and successful merchants. In 1853 the General

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[56] Herbert Thomas Coleman, Public Education in Upper Canada (Albany, NY: Brandow Printing Co., 1907), 117.
[57] Wayne, "The Black Population", 473.
[58] Drew, A Northside View of Slavery, 245.
[59] AO, Alvin D. McCurdy Papers (hereafter McCurdy Papers), F 2076-3-0-83, Primary Documents: Photocopies, Container 15, Minutes and Proceedings of the General Convention for the Improvement of the Colored Inhabitants of Canada, Held by Adjournments in Amherstburg, Canada West, June 16th and 17th, 1853, (hereafter Minutes of the Amherstburg Convention, 1853), 20.
[60] Simpson, "Negroes in Ontario", 570.

Convention for the Improvement of the Coloured Inhabitants of Canada, held at Amherstburg, estimated the black population of Sandwich to be 500,[61] and by the end of the decade, there were likely 700-800 black residents out of a total population of 2500.[62]

This area was home to several important community leaders. Henry and Mary Bibb arrived in Sandwich in 1850, and at their invitation, Mary Ann Shadd settled in Windsor in 1851. Mary Bibb and Mary Ann Shadd both opened schools for students who would not otherwise have access to education.[63] Henry Bibb published the *Voice of the Fugitive*, an important newspaper for the African-Canadian community. In 1852 the Refugee Home Society, led by Henry Bibb and supported by the American Missionary Association, purchased farmland around Sandwich for the settlement of refugees. An important goal of this society was to establish schools for the fugitive slave population, but a groundswell of opposition led by Mary Ann Shadd led to the rapid decline of this organization.[64]

By 1855, Mary Ann Shadd had moved to Chatham, and her newspaper the *Provincial Freeman*, started in Windsor two years prior, was published from here. With Henry Bibb's death in 1854 the *Voice of the Fugitive* had gone out of print, and the *Freeman* took its place giving voice to issues affecting African Canadians. Shadd used this organ to oppose begging and segregation (two important complaints she held against Bibb's Refugee Home Society) and "to promote harmony – not based on complexional differences – among her Majesty's subjects", "to remove the stain of slavery from the

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[61] AO, McCurdy Papers, Minutes of the Amherstburg Convention, 1853, 20.
[62] Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, 53.
[63] Afua P. Cooper, "Black Women and Work in Nineteenth Century Canada West: Black Woman Teacher Mary Bibb, in Peggy Bristow, ed., 'We're Rooted Here and They Can't Pull Us Up': Essays in African Canadian Women's History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 143, 148.
[64] Winks, The Blacks in Canada, 207; Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, 74, 202.

face of the earth" and "to encourage the rising generations in literary, scientific and mechanical efforts".[65]

Chatham and its surrounding area also continued to grow and soon outrivaled the Detroit frontier for the highest concentration of African Canadians. By 1856, Chatham's black population had reached 800 out of a total 4000 people in the town. And, by 1859, black citizens of the town and surrounding areas were said to own one-third of the land, pay one-third of town taxes and constitute one-third of the town's population.[66]

The Great Western Railway ran through Chatham and was an important source of employment. Some black citizens of the town struggled financially, but many were successful farmers and blacksmiths, mechanics and artisans.[67] African Canadians faced many social challenges in Chatham. Missionaries for the Colonial Church and School Society suggested that racial prejudice was greater in Chatham than anywhere else in Canada West. Black children were not admitted into the common schools, burial in white cemeteries was discouraged, and most lots were not available for sale or lease to blacks by 1854.[68]

In 1849 William King, a former American slave-owner and Presbyterian minister, founded the Elgin settlement and Buxton mission at Raleigh, southwest of Chatham. This settlement of former African-American slaves was strongly opposed by members of Chatham and Raleigh's white community. Edwin Larwill, school commissioner in Raleigh Township, editor of the Chatham *Journal* and local politician had led a racist movement in Chatham opposing school aid for blacks in the early 1840s. In 1849 Larwill

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[65] The Provincial Freeman, August 19, 1854.
[66] Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, 54.
[67] Simpson, "Negroes in Ontario", 662.
[68] Mission to the Fugitive Slaves, Occasional Paper No. 2 (December 1854), 10.

led opposition in and around Chatham to the planned Elgin settlement. At a well-attended meeting organized by the town Sherriff to prevent black immigration to the region, he argued that, "the Negro is a distinct species of the human family ... far inferior to the European".[69] Those in attendance at the meeting approved an "Address" by Walter McCrae, which was sent to the Governor General, the Elgin Association, and the Kent County members of the Legislative Assembly.[70] McCrae asserted that the people of the town abhor slavery, but "the presence of the Negro among [whites] is an annoyance", and "amalgamation, its necessary and hideous attendant, is an evil which requires to be checked ... [We do not want a] horde of ignorant slaves in the township of Raleigh."[71] Black settlers, some of whom had cleared the first lots of land in Raleigh after the American Revolution, were clearly no longer welcome in this community.

The Elgin settlement went ahead in spite of objections, and in the first year of the settlement, King preached a sermon to an integrated congregation. Black and white students attended the Buxton school where teachers from Knox College in Toronto provided a quality education, better than that offered at the common school in Raleigh Township. This school may well have been the first successful integrated public school in North America.[72]

In 1853, Baptist and AME churches were established at Buxton, and the settlement was thriving with up to 200 African-Canadian families.[73] By 1855 up to 250 students were receiving a standard classical education at the settlement's three integrated

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[69] Cited in Simpson, "Negroes in Ontario", 335.
[70] Stouffer, The Light of Nature and the Law of God, 91.
[71] Walter McCrae, "Address to the Inhabitants of Canada," recorded proceedings of "A Public Meeting Being held in Chatham" Chatham Chronicle (November, 1849).
[72] "Schools in Canada", Voice of the Fugitive (July 18, 1852); Victor Ullman, Look to the North Star: A Life of William King (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), 148-49.
[73] Ullman, Look to the North Star, 148-49.

schools. By this time, the schools and churches, formerly funded by the Presbyterian mission, were self-sufficient.[74] In 1856, a well-attended meeting was held to celebrate Buxton's success. Citizens of Buxton and several white citizens of Raleigh and Chatham, many of whom had signed Larwill's petition opposing the settlement, were in attendance. Local politician Archibald McKellar gave a speech thanking the black community of Buxton for settling in Raleigh.[75] This settlement was successful into the late 1850s, after which the African-Canadian population began to decline.

From the 1840s, several squatters had cleared lots and settled in the Queen's Bush in the former Huron territory between Lake Huron and Georgian Bay. Missionaries reported 108 black families living in this area in 1844.[76] When the government decided to sell this land, most of those who had originally settled on these lots could not afford the high price to buy the lands they had cleared. Despite numerous appeals, most of these settlers were driven off the land they had cleared in 1850 by the government and wealthier settlers. According to John Francis, one of a handful of black settlers who was able to remain on his property in the Queen's Bush, when the land came into market, several settlers "sold out for very little and removed to other parts ... that is what has scattered the colored people away from here."[77] Some of the Queen's Bush settlers moved south to Chatham and Brantford, and others to towns on the western shore of Georgian Bay. The small black communities in the towns of Oro, Collingwood and

[74] Simspon, "Negroes in Ontario", 542-43.
[75] Ullman, Look to the North Star, 141-42.
[76] Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, 52.
[77] John Francis, cited in Drew, A Northside View of Slavery, 196.

Owen Sound were already established at this point, as some Underground Railroad migrants had arrived by steamship through Georgian Bay.[78]

The population of London grew during the 1850s, while the black population at Brantford began to decline. In the early 1850s, the total population of London more than doubled, increasing to 10 000 in 1854.[79] In 1853, the black population of the town was estimated at 276,[80] and by 1856, there were an estimated 350 blacks out of a total population of 12 000 in London.[81] African-Canadian citizens of London contributed to the town's economy and paid taxes on the property they owned, but they were largely excluded from public schools and discouraged from worshipping in white churches.

In an attempt to solve this problem of exclusion, Marmaduke Dillon of the Anglican Colonial Church and School Society opened a number of mission and Sunday schools in London. Dillon arrived in 1854 along with R.M. Ballantine, a graduate of Mico Training College in Kingston, Jamaica, and two Jamaican teachers, Sarah and Mary Titré. The missionaries established a mission church for the black community and held separate services for the white community. Their schools, which were initially successful, accepting hundreds of students, soon fell into decline. White students, most of whom paid a fee to attend the mission schools, soon crowded out the black students who were not required to pay. By 1855, less than fifteen per cent of Dillon's 260 students were black.[82] He exaggerated the number of black students at his schools in reports and showed a preference for white pupils. He prided himself on his successfully integrated schools, but was reported to have refused black students "for fear of giving the

[78] Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, 56-58.
[79] Simpson, "Negroes in Ontario", 752.
[80] AO, McCurdy Papers, Minutes of the Amherstburg Convention, 1853, 20.
[81] Drew, A Northside View of Slavery, 103.
[82] Christopher Elliott, "Black Education in Canada West", 80.

schools a too decidedly coloured aspect."[83] Dillon was relieved of his duties in 1856 after suffering a nervous breakdown.[84]

The Niagara and St. Catharines regions continued as important centres of black immigration. By 1853, the black population in this district was 1500.[85] In the larger urban centers of Hamilton and Toronto, the black population only constituted a small portion of the total population. Estimates of the black population at Hamilton range from 300 in 1856[86] to 700 in 1854, an estimate that perhaps includes the population outside the city centre.[87]

Toronto's peak African-Canadian population reached about 1000 by the mid-nineteenth century. This population was almost invisible amidst the city's total population of 31 000.[88] When compared with the peak African-Canadian population of approximately 30 000 dispersed mostly throughout the rural, southwest regions of Canada West, the Toronto population is of little significance at this time. However, the city proved a good host to certain African-Canadian and abolitionist organizations. The Anti-Slavery Society of Canada was established here in February of 1851 and the Provincial Union, started by Samuel Ringgold Ward and Mary Ann Shadd in 1854 based its activities out of the city. The Toronto Ladies' Association for the Relief of Destitute Coloured Refugees, affiliated with the Anti-Slavery Society, helped hundred of newly arrived black families to find shelter, food, clothing and employment in the province.[89]

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[83] Simpson, "Negroes in Ontario", 770.
[84] Spencer, "To Nestle in the Mane", 136-143; Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, 153.
[85] AO, McCurdy Papers, Minutes of the Amherstburg Convention, 1853, 20.
[86] Drew, A Northside View of Slavery , 82.
[87] Provincial Freeman, cited in Simpson, "Negroes in Ontario", 845.
[88] Drew, A Northside View of Slavery , 94; Wayne, "The Black Population", 469; D. C. Masters, The Rise of Toronto, 1850-1890 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1947), 21.
[89] Stouffer, The Light of Nature and the Law of God, 121.

By the start of the American Civil War, some recent black immigrants returned to the United States to fight for the Union. Osborn Anderson, Thomas Cary, Josiah Henson and Mary Ann Shadd worked to recruit troops from Canada West for black regiments. After the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, there was an important migration of blacks to the United States; many moved to the former Confederate states.[90] However, as Michael Wayne points out, the number of emigrants has been largely overestimated by historians. Wayne suggests that rather than an exodus of the majority of blacks from Canada West, as most historians have suggested, it is more likely that the province's black population decreased by about twenty per cent between 1861 and 1871.[91]

This is still a substantial proportion of the population that felt compelled to leave the province. There could be a variety of reasons why these people left; Jason Silverman suggests that it was because they felt "unwelcome"[92], Donald Simpson agues that they wanted to reunite with families and return "home".[93] As Robin Winks points out, white Canadian society encouraged African Canadians to "go home" to the United States after the Civil War, even though home for most of these people was Canada West. Contributions to fugitive aid societies plummeted, and a common perception of the remaining blacks in Canada West was that they were intruders or exiles.[94] As Ken Alexander and Avis Glaze argue, there were several factors that could have helped to draw African Canadians back to the United States, but at the same time, circumstances in Canada also worked to push many African Canadians south of the border. After the war, white Canadians lobbied the government to close the border to black refugees and

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[90] Winks, The Blacks in Canada, 289.
[91] Wayne, "The Black Population of Canada West", 471.
[92] Silverman, Unwelcome Guests, 161.
[93] Simpson, "Negroes in Ontario", 898-99.
[94] Winks, The Blacks in Canada, 290.

campaigns were launched to repatriate black Canadians to the United States.[95] From the time of their arrival in Canada West, African Canadians were often denied accommodations at hotels and service at restaurants; they were sometimes not permitted to use public transportation; they were kept off juries; and landlords often refused to rent or lease to them.[96] Blacks in Canada faced harsh discrimination in Canada West, in spite of egalitarian laws, and it is highly likely that many became disillusioned with Canadian society by the 1860s and were drawn back to the United States by the hope that constitutional amendments against slavery would guarantee them their rights as equal persons.

The majority of African Canadians, of whom nearly half were born in the province, remained in Canada West after the American Civil War. African Canadians have a long history in Ontario and the population, present for over 250 years, has had an important, if little acknowledged, influence on the history of this province.

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[95] Alexander and Glaze, Towards Freedom, 26, 80-81.

[96] Ward, Autobiography, 144-146; Howe, The Refugees, 49-50; Colonial Church and School Society, West London Branch, Mission to the Free Coloured Population in Canada. Occassional Paper No. 4 (London, 1855), 11.

Chapter Three – Upper Canada in the Anglo-Protestant Imagination

During the nineteenth century, an idealized image of the British Empire took on religious significance for a wide variety of immigrants to Upper Canada, who found meaning and orientation in what they regarded as the Empire's divinely ordained institutions and laws. British loyalty was a pervasive attitude throughout the nineteenth century, and it took various forms as expressed by various groups of Upper Canadians, representing a diversity of political affiliations, ethnic and religious backgrounds. As David Mills has argued, by the mid-nineteenth century loyalty became the basis for political consensus in the diverse society of Canada West.[1] Egerton Ryerson, influential Methodist preacher, founder of the *Christian Guardian*, which he edited intermittently between 1829 and 1840, and superintendent of schools for Canada West from 1844 to 1876, defined Canadian loyalty as "a firm attachment to that British Constitution and those British laws ... which best secure life, liberty and prosperity, and which prompt us to Christian and patriotic deeds by linking us with all that is good and noble in the tradition of our national history."[2] This attachment to and reverence for Britain was influential throughout Upper Canadian history.

In 1791, a Constitution was adopted for Upper Canada that was "the very image and transcript of that of Great Britain".[3] Soon after, governor John Graves Simcoe sought a capital for this new colony that would not be vulnerable to American firepower. As Egerton Ryerson notes, Simcoe "made a tour through the wilderness of the western

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[1] David Mills, The Idea of Loyalty in Upper Canada, 1785-1850 (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), 131.
[2] Egerton Ryerson, Loyalists of America and their Times: from 1620-1816. Volume II (Toronto: William Briggs, 1880), 447-449.
[3] John Graves Simcoe's speech at the close of parliament, 16 October, 1792, cited in Ryerson, The Loyalists of America, 310.

peninsula and proposed to found a new London for the Canadian capital, on the banks of what he then called the River Thames." London was not eventually chosen as the capital of the province, but it retained its name and British character, imposed upon the "wilderness" of this new land.[4] Other towns and landmarks in Upper Canada were given English names: the LaTranche River became the Thames; the Chippewa River was renamed the Welland; and Lac aux Claies came to be called Lake Simcoe.[5] By the end of the century, Simcoe campaigned to attract new loyal settlers of British heritage and strengthen the colony's ties to Britain.

At the turn of the nineteenth century the province's governing population began to express concern over the growing American population. In 1802, Thomas Talbot began a colonization project in the southwest portion of the province to be made up of settlers who would be loyal to Britain. He felt that that many among the American population in Upper Canada exhibited "a growing tendency to insubordination and revolt", which needed to be checked by immigration from the British Isles.[6] He did accept British-American settlers in his colony, but these immigrants supported his colony's goals of loyalty and maintaining the status quo.

After the War of 1812-15, feelings of British pride flourished in Upper Canada as anti-American sentiment grew and a distinct sense of Upper Canadian identity began to emerge. As the number of immigrants from the British Isles came to exceed the population of earlier American settlers, Tory leaders hoped to make Upper Canada "a

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[4]Ryerson, The Loyalists of America, 311.
[5] Robert Choquette, Ontario. An Informal History of the Land and its People (Toronto: Ontario, Minster of Education, 1983), 22.
[6] Cited in Gerald M. Craig, Upper Canada: The Formative Years, 1784-1841 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1963), 47-48.

really British colony."[7] To ensure this British character and to counteract republican influences, Scottish, Irish and English immigrants were granted free passage on ships traveling to Upper Canada, and the government paid immigrating schoolteachers' and clergy members' salaries.[8] Upper Canadian residents from all walks of life came to assert their British loyalty in response to fears of American influence; as the *Kingston Chronicle* observed in 1822, "the proofs of loyalty [are] everywhere given."[9] As Upper Canadian churches battled to establish themselves in the new colony, a variety of these organizations emphasized loyalist characteristics in the hopes of attracting new immigrants from the British Isles.[10]

Regions settled by Anglo-Celtic Canadians, many of which were previously established by other groups and had a diverse population, took on a decidedly Anglo-European character when these immigrants arrived. As Susanna Moodie observed, cities and towns in the province were, "to all outward appearance entirely European", offering "civilisation, comfort, and luxury".[11] The village of Sandwich, absorbed into Windsor in the 1850s, was said to have a very English appearance, with its pear trees, English-style public buildings and gardens aside many homes.[12] Early British leaders in the colony strove to recreate Upper Canada's government structures, institutions and landscape in Britain's image.

By the 1830s popular loyalist sentiment came to be expressed through growing membership in Upper Canada's Orange Lodges, which attracted a diversity of Irish and

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[7] Sir John Colborne, 1831, cited in Craig, Upper Canada, 227.
[8] Craig, Upper Canada, 88.
[9] Kingston Chronicle, September 20, 1822, cited in Craig, Upper Canada, 85.
[10] Grant, A Profusion of Spires, 70.
[11] Susanna Moodie, Roughing it in the Bush; or. Life in Canada. Critical Edition, edited by Elizabeth Thompson (1852; Ottawa: The Tecumseh Press, 1997), 388.
[12] Donald Simpson, "Negroes in Ontario", 593.

non-Irish Protestant groups and represented dominant British-Protestant attitudes in the province.[13] As John Webster Grant claims, the Orange Order became so ingrained in Upper Canadian culture by mid-century that the story of William of Orange was "a mythology more familiar to many Upper Canadians than most of the Bible or the creeds."[14] When first begun in 1830, the Grand Orange Lodge of Upper Canada professed its goals to support "the principles and practice of the Protestant religion" and to "maintain the Laws and Constitution".[15] As radical reformers came to present a threat to the established political order, and in an attempt to attain social acceptance for Irish immigrants to Upper Canada, Orange Lodges emphasized most strongly their Loyalist and conservative tendencies during the 1830s.[16] Orange Lodges worked to defeat radical Reformers and even cooperated with certain Catholic groups to achieve this goal. After the Reformers were defeated in the 1836 election, leaders of the Orange Lodge in Toronto and Catholic Bishop Alexander Macdonnell publicly commented on each other's loyalty.[17]

While members of the Family Compact and Orange Orders have been described as "more British than the King",[18] their political opponents also asserted their ties to Britain. As one Irish immigrant observed in 1829, Upper Canadians were "overanxious to be considered loyal", and one could hear "the incessant hum of 'loyalty! loyalty! loyalty!' from both Whig and Tory."[19] Reformers modeled their movement upon

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[13] Cecil J. Houston and William J. Smyth, The Sash Canada Wore: A Historical Geography of the Orange Order in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980).
[14] Grant, A Profusion of Spires, 83-84.
[15] Objects and Principles of the Society: Rules and Regulations of the Orange Institute of British North America, cited in Mills, 85-86.
[16] Mills, The Idea of Loyalty, 8, 85.
[17] Craig, Upper Canada, 238.
[18] Craig, Upper Canada, 109, 229.
[19] Francis Collins in The Colonial Advocate, April 30, 1829, cited in Mills, The Idea of Loyalty, 93.

political reform organizations active in the British Isles. A meeting of reformers held in 1832 recommended they organize "on the plan of the political societies of England, Scotland and Ireland."[20] Even the most radical of reformers, William Lyon MacKenzie, originally hoped to maintain Canada's ties to Britain. The Jacksonian influences upon his politics cannot be denied, but prior to 1837, he also emphasized the need for Upper Canada to adhere to the British Constitution "in all its purity," and asserted that the British Empire was "the greatest and wisest that has ever been."[21] He opposed the Family Compact, whose practices went against what he saw to be the true spirit of the Constitution and were a disgrace to the Empire. In 1832 he visited England looking for imperial intervention on behalf of reform, but returned disillusioned with the British response. After rejecting British influence for a time during the following year, the radical reformer again came to emphasize the need for protection and assistance from the motherland.[22] He argued for a representative House of Assembly that would "go hand in hand with the King and his excellent ministers in perfecting our political institutions," thereby adhering to "all that was noble and generous in the institutions of Britain."[23] Later in the decade, MacKenzie's political approach became too radical for most Upper Canadians, however, and his rebellions were easily put down in 1837-38.

In reaction to this violent outburst against the established government, Upper Canadians of all political persuasions asserted their disdain for republicans and their loyalty to Britain. No one proclaimed their loyalty more loudly than the moderate Reformers, who worked to distance themselves from MacKenzie's radicalism. These

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[20] Canadian Freeman, February 2, 1832, cited in Mills, 198.
[21] Colonial Advocate, September 30, December 16, December 30, cited in Mills, 112, 113.
[22] Craig, Upper Canada, 220.
[23] The Advocate, September 25, 1834.

politicians asserted that their grievances with the current colonial administration did not contradict their desire to maintain British ties and to apply the British Constitution to the Canadian context.[24] In fact, moderate Reformers portrayed themselves as the true defenders of the British Constitution.[25] Robert Baldwin and Francis Hincks asserted that the concept of Responsible Government was a British constitutional principle. Baldwin called for the "permanent connection between the colonies and the mother country", suggesting that the British model of government was "the genius of the English race."[26]

From the 1830s, the Methodist leader Egerton Ryerson expressed moderately conservative views that were not always strongly supported by the Reformist Methodist majority, but which earned him much respect after the Rebellions. Few argued with his assertion that loyalty to Britain was "of the highest spiritual and eternal advantage to thousands in Upper Canada." He equated support and respect for the British government with Christian duty, as its beneficent laws and equitable administration stemmed "from the authority of God".[27] According to Ryerson, the loyal British subject demonstrated a "deep love of divine truth"[28] for a government that administered "infinite wisdom, justice, truth and purity."[29] He asserted that loyalty to Britain was based upon "Scripture, justice, and humanity", and would "sacrifice life itself in the maintenance of British supremacy."[30] As a result of this loyalty, Canada West could be made into "the brightest gem in the crown of her Britannic Majesty."[31]

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[24] Craig, Upper Canada, 252; Mills, The Idea of Loyalty, 6.
[25] Mills, The Idea of Loyalty, 93.
[26] Robert Baldwin to Lord Durham, August 23, 1838, cited in Craig, Upper Canada, 257.
[27] Egerton Ryerson "The Story of My Life" by the late Rev. Egerton Ryerson D.D., LLD, J.G. Hodgins, ed. (Toronto: William Briggs, 1883), 40-41.
[28] Ryerson, The Loyalists of America Vol. II, 449.
[29] Ibid., 373.
[30] Ibid..
[31] Egerton Ryerson, Sir Charles Metcalfe Defended Against the Attacks of His Late Counsellors (Toronto:

During the 1830s and 40s, the colony of Upper Canada began to come into its own, undergoing rapid growth, as well as social, political and religious change. By mid-century, the distinction between Canada West and the British homeland was obvious. Visitors to Canada from the British Isles remarked on the unique North American culture that was developing in this space,[32] and immigrants like Susanna Moodie, an English upper middle class economic migrant who arrived in Upper Canada in the 1830s, had to adapt to Canadian customs. In her emigration guide *Roughing it in the Bush*, she remarked on the spirit of independence encouraged by life on the frontier and described her struggle to come to terms with the breakdown of the social class structure in Canada.[33] Yet, she asserted that Upper Canada had inherited her "British mother's spirit", and that "no foe shall sever [h]er children from their parents' side; [t]hough parted by the wave."[34] Moodie described her daughter Katie, who had been raised in Canada from a tiny baby as "purely British".[35] In a similar fashion, Egerton Ryerson, who was born and raised in Canada asserted that he was a "British-born subject".[36] In spite of the important changes they underwent in the Canadian environment, Upper Canadians continued to identify themselves as British.

The denominational character of Canada West was very different from that of the British homeland. Methodism was the fastest-growing religious denomination in the province[37] and Methodist leaders had an important influence upon the abolition of the

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British Colonist, 1844), 8.
[32] See John McTaggart, Three Years in Canada: An Account of the Actual State of the Country in 1826-7-8 2 volumes. (London, 1829).
[33] Moodie, Roughing It in the Bush, xiv-xv, 143-44, 328.
[34] Ibid., xxv, 321.
[35] Ibid., 119.
[36] Cited in Mills, The Idea of Loyalty, 62.
[37] By the time of Confederation, it had become the largest Protestant denomination in Ontario. See Phyllis Airhart, Serving the Present Age. Revivalism, Progressivism, and the Methodist Tradition in Canada

Clergy Reserves[38], the move away from the rigid class structure of British society, and the introduction of Responsible Government. Methodist camp meetings were enormously popular in Upper Canada and led to a rash of emotional conversions. In contrast with the established Church of England, Canadian Methodism had a strong revivalist spirit, placing an important emphasis upon the personal experience of God and individual conversion. At the same time as this new and unique religious tradition emerged as a significant force for change in Upper Canada, mainstream Methodist leaders worked to situate Methodism in the tradition of British loyalty and conservatism, in response to certain perceptions that linked the denomination with a rebellious spirit.

Rev. John Strachan of the Church of England made several serious accusations of disloyalty against Methodist preachers. In response, Methodist spokesmen traced the history of loyalty in their tradition. A Select Committee of the Upper Canadian Legislative Assembly was set up in 1828 to investigate Strachan's claims and came to the conclusion that, contrary to his accusations, Methodist preachers had worked to spread "Christian duty, an attachment to the Sovereign and a cheerful and conscientious obedience to the laws of the country."[39] Methodist historians such as George F. Playter and John Carroll emphasized the fact that the earliest Methodist ministers were British soldiers who served the United Empire Loyalists in Upper Canada.[40] In his documentary history of Methodism in Canada, Egerton Ryerson asserted that loyalty to British values

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(Montreal&Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), 4.

[38] In 1791, the British government allotted one-eighth of crown lands for the use of the established Church of England. These reserves were completely secularized in 1854, with much of the land set aside for educational purposes.

[39] Cited in George F. Playter, The History of Methodism in Canada: with an account of the rise and progress of the work of God among the Canadian Indian Tribes and Occasional Notices of the Civil Affairs of the Province (Toronto: Anson Green, 1862), 332.

[40] Ibid., 7-15; John Carroll, Case and His Contemporaries; or, The Canadian Itinerants' Memorial Volume One (Toronto: Samuel Rose, 1855), 3-4.

was the most significant characteristic of the Canadian Methodist. He argued that, "the birthplace of Methodism in Canada was in the bosom of loyalty and in the heart of benevolence".[41]

According to Ryerson, the doctrines, practices and worldviews fostered by Canadian Methodism were not at all new or unique, but harkened back to British ideals and traditions. He argued that Methodist theology was true to the central tenets of the Church of England, which had strayed from its roots in the Protestant Reformation. He asserted that the doctrines of "repentance and faith" and "justification and pardon" reflected the original principles of the Protestant Reformation that "commenced the career of Britain's greatness". These principles, according to Ryerson, shaped British history and identity and formed a "vital ... element in the formation of Canadian liberty and character."[42] Ryerson's work looked to the past to justify the emergence of a new religious orientation in Upper Canada, arguing for the medieval Scottish origins of revivalist camp meetings, for example, thus contributing to a popular perception of this colony as a recreation of the old world.[43]

At the same time as a new and distinct society emerged in mid-nineteenth century Canada West, characterized by unprecedented cultural diversity and new legal, social and parliamentary systems, popular accounts continued to describe the province as an extension of the British homeland. This is evidenced by the emphasis on British loyalty, the widespread popularity of the Orange Order, the justification of Methodism as a loyal and inherently British tradition, as well as assertions of British identity made by the likes

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[41] Egerton Ryerson, Canadian Methodism; Its Epochs and Characteristics (Toronto: William Briggs, 1882), 1.
[42] Ibid., 89.
[43] Ibid., 122.

of Ryerson and Moodie. Even the unique Canadian innovation of Responsible Government was described as "the simple application of the tried principles of the British constitution in a British province."[44]

Mid-nineteenth century historical narratives articulated the relationship of British settlers to this new land and its inhabitants, provided a source of continuity and meaning during this period of historical transition, and profoundly influenced popular notions of Anglo-Protestant identity in this colony. As Norman Knowles suggests, by the mid-nineteenth century Canada West's leaders looked to "create a heroic past" as a sign of growing nationalist sentiment in the colony.[45] During the 1850s, interest in Loyalist history was on the rise, as Egerton Ryerson began to publish Loyalist obituaries in his *Journal of Education.* In 1861 the Historical Society for Upper Canada was formed, with the goal of publishing a history of the province that would instill national pride among the people of Canada West. Members of this organization set out to collect reminiscences of the remaining Loyalists that would form the basis of that history.[46]

We might consider the way in which popular historical narratives played the role of religious myths, as they described how the contemporary historical situation in Upper Canada had come into being and provided meaning and orientation during this period of historical crisis, when British immigrants undertook to colonize and develop this new province.[47] As Canadian historian and self-proclaimed myth-maker Arthur Lower suggests, "history is the joint product of myth and fact."[48] Myth, however, in its religious

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[44] William Hamilton Merritt, cited in Mills, The Idea of Loyalty, 115.
[45] Knowles, Inventing the Loyalists, 119.
[46] Ibid., 31, 33.
[47] Mircea Eliade, Myth and Reality, trans: Willard R. Trask. (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963), 5; Welf H. Heick, "Introduction," in Arthur R. M. Lower, History and Myth: Arthur Lower and the Making of Canadian Nationalism, Welf H. Heick, ed. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1975), xx.
[48] Lower, History and Myth, 6.

connotation, does not denote a fictional tale but a true story that describes reality.[49] Myths relate stories of origins formulated in relation to transcendent reality, while historical articulations often claim to have a purely spatial and temporal basis; however, understandings of human origins are often legitimated by some sense of transcendent power or sacred structure.

For Upper Canadians of Anglo-Protestant heritage, the British Empire took on sacred significance because it represented the authority of God and provided meaning and orientation for British-Canadian life in this strange new land. Anglo-Protestant identity rested upon a mythic narrative that described Upper Canadians as a British people who, in spite of being in a newly diverse and changing environment, remained British and continued to inhabit British space. As several nineteenth century historians asserted, Upper Canada's founders, the United Empire Loyalists, risked their lives to preserve British ascendancy in North America. They "sacrificed everything for the preservation of the empire".[50] In fact, the meaningful life of the Anglo-Protestant Canadian came to depend upon British continuity.

From the nineteenth century to this day, popular narratives have asserted that the history of Ontario began with the settlement of the United Empire Loyalists and was built from scratch by their efforts.[51] This myth denies the role of Native and French-Canadian peoples who were present in Upper Canada long before the arrival of the British. The

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[49] Charles H. Long, Alpha, 11.
[50] William Kingsford, The History of Canada Volume Seven [1779-1807] (Toronto: Roswell & Hutchison, 1894), 224.
[51] See Ryerson, The Loyalists of America; J. George Hodgins, The geography and history of British America, and of the other colonies of the empire (Toronto: Maclear, 1857); William Canniff, History of the Settlement of Upper Canada; with Special Reference to the Bay of Quinté (Toronto: Dudley & Burns, 1869); Kingsford, The History of Canada; Craig, Upper Canada; Ontario Historical Society, Profiles of a Province: Studies in the history of Ontario. A Collection of essays commissioned by The Ontario Historical Society to commemorate the centennial of Ontario (Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, 1967).

historical work of Egerton Ryerson, William Canniff, J. George Hodgins and Methodist historians John Carroll and George Playter idealizes the United Empire Loyalists as the heroic founders of Upper Canada. Ryerson's historical account, *The Loyalists of America and their Times*, published in 1880 but compiled in the 1850s, tells the story of "our United Empire Loyalist forefathers" who "sought a refuge and a home in the wilderness of Canada, felled the forest of our country, and laid the foundations of its institutions, freedom, and prosperity."[52] According to William Canniff's *History of the Settlement of Upper Canada*, these pioneers would "endure any toil, so long as they were in the King's dominion and the good old flag waved over their heads and their families." They "preferred, above all measure, to enter a wilderness and hew out a new home ... rather than live under an alien flag."[53] According to Playter, these pioneers "endured great privations and distress" as they made their way in the Canadian "wilderness".[54]

These historical accounts repeatedly describe Canada as an empty wilderness waiting to be moulded in the image of Britain. Susanna Moodie, for example, refers to the "unpeopled wastes of Canada" that received "the impress of civilization" as Divine Providence guided the British westward.[55] It was seen as the natural fate of Native peoples in Canada to be supplanted by British settlers, who, along with the wilderness, had to be hewn from the path of progress and civilization. According to Moodie, "the red man ... never appears to advantage as a resident among civilized men ... he seems painfully conscious of his inferiority."[56]

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[52] Ryerson, The Loyalists of America, 448-49.
[53] Canniff, History of the Settlement of Upper Canada, 617, 625.
[54] George F. Playter, The History of Methodism in Canada, 7-15; See also John Carroll, Case and His Contemporaries, 3-4.
[55] Moodie, Roughing it in the Bush, 200, 6.
[56] Ibid., 142.

According to British-Canadian myths, United Empire Loyalists preferred to maintain ties to Britain rather than the "absolute submission to a nearly self-created authority of rule."[57] Canniff adds, the Loyalist "felt as much as Briton in the colony of America, as if he were in old England."[58] These descriptions do not admit the possibility that loyal Canadians had also undertaken a form of self-creation by continuing to identify themselves as British people and Canada as a British place in spite of their new and changing historical context.

Popular histories asserted that the unity of the British race was the most important ideal for Loyalists who fled the United States after the American Revolution. According to William Kingsford, the title of "United Empire Loyalist" was "reverently treasured" by those who were devoted to the British crown.[59] The eventual success and prosperity of the Loyalists was seen as the result of Providence, which rewarded them for doing their "duty to God and country".[60] During the War of 1812, their "loyalty, patriotism, and courage defeated [the American] dark designs against the liberties of mankind"[61] while the Americans failed because they had attempted to "extinguish the national life of the British empire and the unity of the Anglo-Saxon race."[62] Some Canadians even suggested that the American Civil War was a manifestation of God's vengeance for the country's disloyalty to Britain and "for the unheard-of cruelties they inflicted upon these most brave and loyal people".[63]

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[57] Ryerson, The Loyalists of America, 57.
[58] Canniff, History of the Settlement of Upper Canada, 616.
[59] Kingsford, The History of Canada, 224.
[60] Elizabeth Bowman Spohn to Ryerson, 23 July 23, 1861, cited in Ryerson, The Loyalists of America, 269.
[61] Ryerson, The Loyalists of America, 451.
[62] Ibid., 52.
[63] Elizabeth Bowman Spohn in Ibid., 269.

As the United States attempted to sever ties to its British past, Upper Canada saw its British heritage as the principal source of meaning and identity in this new North American world. The British government was deemed to be the "freest and best government on earth,"[64] representing the "genius of the English race,"[65] and the British Constitution the "noblest fabric of human wisdom".[66] Lord Durham's stipulations that Canada needed a "decidedly English legislature" and a "clear English majority" were carried out in the creation of Canada West.[67] British-Canadian leaders aimed to transplant sacred British traditions in the Canadian context and downplayed the important changes that affected their new society.

The British Empire evoked a kind of religious devotion for many Upper Canadians. The Free Church of Ancaster provides an interesting example of this religious veneration of Empire. In 1824, the foundations for this church were laid; no clergy were in attendance but an inter-denominational group of Protestants celebrated by toasting the king and singing British national songs.[68] During the 1830s, Upper Canadians made use of religious language to describe a timeless British Empire and Constitution. The Empire was called "the greatest empire at this day upon earth" and the British Constitution had "stood the admiration of past ages, and [would] forever defy the ravages of time."[69] By mid-century, stories of William of Orange's attempts to unite the Empire were better known among Anglo-Celtic Protestants than biblical myths.[70] In their new environment, Canadians of Anglo-Protestant heritage held onto a sense of identity

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[64] Isaac Buchanan in British Colonist, January 5, 1844, cited in Mills, The Idea of Loyalty, 123.
[65] see note 26.
[66] Upper Canada Gazette, March 13, 1800, cited in Mills, The Idea of Loyalty, 10..
[67] Lord Durham's Report on the Affairs of British North America, cited in Craig, Upper Canada, 262, 263.
[68] Grant, A Profusion of Spires, 82-83.
[69] The Patriot, September 19, 1834; March 6, 1832, cited in Mills, The Idea of Loyalty.
[70] Grant, A Profusion of Spires, 83-84.

derived from a different time and place and attempted to refashion their new home in such a way as to mimic the holy land they left behind.

By the 1840s, an evangelical Protestant consensus began to take shape, which emphasized moral conformity. In Victorian Canada West, upstanding Protestants believed that Christian belief led to proper moral behaviour, thus ensuring social stability. Founders of Sunday schools and other early schools in the province, many of whom were members of the clergy, portrayed education as a necessary auxiliary to religion.[71] The most influential figure in education was the Methodist minister Egerton Ryerson, who argued that religious instruction would "promote and strengthen loyalty".[72] He and other citizens of Canada West also saw public education as the key to social equality among loyal citizens of the province. As Susanna Moodie suggested, "the want of education and moral training is the only real barrier that exists between the different classes of men."[73] Those who did not conform to the British-Protestant ideal, however, were not accorded the same opportunities for social advancement as others. While important efforts were extended to bring morality to lapsed Protestants, high Anglicans and Catholics who did not espouse evangelical values were seen as forces for division in the province. French-speaking Catholics were seen to properly belong in Lower Canada, not Upper Canada, and the conversion of French Catholics had been a goal of Protestant leaders since the British Conquest, while Durham's report recommended the Anglicization of the French. While English-speaking Catholics had proven their loyalty by cooperating with Protestants to defeat rebellious elements during the 1830s, the increasing numbers of Catholic immigrants through the 1840s came to be seen as a threat to the dominant

[71] Ibid., 66; William Westfall, Two Worlds, 201.
[72] Report to the Upper Canada House of Assembly, 1828, cited in Mills, The Idea of Loyalty, 61.
[73] Moodie, Life in the Clearings (1853; Toronto: MacMillan, 1959), 55.

Protestant population.[74] As Anglican demand for separate schools waned by the 1850s, separate schools came to be more popular among Catholics, and Protestant-Catholic tensions increased with controversy over separate schools and "no-popery" campaigns by such influential media men as George Brown of the *Globe*.

When responsibility for Indian affairs was transferred from military to civil authority during the 1830s, the government of Upper Canada came to see Native peoples as a social problem rather than as invaluable military allies. As white settlement expanded in Upper Canada, Native peoples were relocated to reserves and their lands sold to new immigrants. On these reserves, they were to be assimilated into European ways through Christian indoctrination and instruction in sedentary agriculture. The government began a policy of funding day schools already operated by missionaries until 1842 when the Bagot commission, which led to the reorganization of the Indian department, found that day schools were not effective in assimilating the Indians and instead recommended that children be removed from their parents and placed in residential schools. In the majority of these schools children spent half a day in class and half a day working on the school's farm. This system of schooling, which was in operation throughout the nineteenth century, set Native peoples apart and perpetuated their marginal status in society.[75] Thus, the potential for social equality promised by the public education system only extended to white people as Native peoples were educated apart from the mainstream and, as will be discussed in chapter five, black children were frequently barred from public schools.

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[74] Grant, A Profusion of Spires, 126, 129.
[75] J.R. Miller, Skyscapers Hide the Heavens. A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 104-108.

In popular lore, the British Empire was portrayed as a moral exemplar in a culture that emphasized moral uprightness. The British constitution was seen to guarantee the equal rights of all, and anti-slavery activists emphasized this in calling for the abolition of the practice. After slavery was abolished in the Empire in 1833, the practice came to be associated with the American enemy. Britain presented itself as morally superior to the United States for abolishing this inhumane practice even though the British people continued to benefit from slavery, importing cheap slave-grown sugar and other goods. Practical circumstances were likely a more significant factor in the British abolition of slavery than moral concerns: Toussaint Louverture's slave revolt had forced the British out of St. Dominigue in 1798 and Jamaican Maroon uprisings continued; threatened by continued slave resistance, British began steps toward abolishing slavery in 1807.[76]

This sentiment about the superiority of the Empire extended to Upper Canada, where an editorial in the Niagara *Gleaner* of 1833 declared that while Americans

> prattle about liberty and equality, the kingly government of Britain acts upon the principle, and sets an example to the whole world ... It is disgusting to hear our neighbours of the United States boast of their liberty and equality, while thousands of human beings are chained together and driven from place to place and sold like beasts ... to the everlasting disgrace of the people of that Republic. We glory in being a subject of the greatest and most benevolent nation ever in existence, either of the present or subsequent ages of the world.[77]

Upper Canada, where slavery had disappeared because economically unfeasible before the turn of the nineteenth century, and where tens of thousands of fugitive slaves took refuge by mid-century, was commonly portrayed as a land of freedom and equal opportunity by virtue of it British ties. Susanna Moodie reflected popular opinion when

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[76] Ken Alexander and Avis Glaze, Towards Freedom: The African-Canadian Experience, (Toronto: Umbrella Press, 1996), 45.
[77] Niagara Gleaner, October 19, 1833, cited in Stouffer, The Light of Nature and the Law of God, 44-45.

she said that "here freedom dwells".[78] The abolitionist Alexander Milton Ross asserted that in Canada West, "the blackest Negro is entitled to, and freely accorded every right ... We make no distinction in respect to the colour of a man's skin".[79]

The Anti-slavery Society of Canada published a pamphlet in 1852 defending Canada West's reputation as a refuge for fugitive slaves. Claiming that in Canada West the black man was "on a level, in regard to every political and social privilege, with the white man",[80] this society did little to combat racial discrimination in Canada West. Established in 1851 to spread information on slavery, the first meeting was well attended, and members of the organizing committee included several prominent citizens of Toronto, including the city's mayor, the president of Knox College, Michael Willis and Goerge Brown, editor of *The Globe*. Prominent black leaders Samuel Ringgold Ward, Henry Bibb and George Cary were also involved in the organization.[81] The people of Toronto strongly opposed the American practice of slavery, given the large turnout at the meeting,[82] but few were active in the movement to support and assist black refugees in Canada. Samuel Ringgold Ward, traveling agent for the society, and the affiliated Toronto Ladies' Association for the Relief of the Destitute Coloured Refugees were highly successful in their fundraising and awareness-raising campaigns, but aside from the establishment of a night school in Toronto for African Canadian adults, the central

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[78] Moodie, Roughing It, xxvi.
[79] Alexander Milton Ross, Recollections and Experiences of an Abolitionist, from 1855-1865 (Toronto, 1875), 148.
[80] Stouffer, The Light of Nature and the Law of God, 124.
[81] AO, McCurdy Papers, F 2076-3-0-83, Container 15, Anti-Slavery Society of Canada, First Annual Report (Toronto: March 24, 1852), 12.
[82] According to the Globe, the first meeting of the society attracted "the largest and most enthusiastic [crowd] ever seen in Toronto", cited in ibid., 111.

organization of the Anti-Slavery society was largely ineffective. By 1855 the society no longer held public meetings and virtually faded out of existence.[83]

Anti-slavery sentiment in the British Empire often proved to be less an example of concern for the slave as it was a mark of disdain for American institutions. As N.M. Senior wrote in 1856, "we are tired of hearing [America] boast that she is the freest and most enlightened country that that world has ever seen."[84] Christine Bolt suggests that a sense of self-satisfaction usually overshadowed real concern for the black slave, and allowed for the dehumanization, idealization and victimization of these people in the British mind.[85] Abolitionist missionaries to Canada commonly described black people as "poor", "weak" slaves who needed assistance and moral training from white people to improve their lot.[86]

Anti-American sentiment masked racist attitudes in Britain and the Empire. As the American observer S.G. Howe pointed out, Canadians denounced American prejudice, while "they themselves have quite as much of it."[87] In Canada West, racism was commonly seen as an American and not a Canadian problem. Any racial discrimination in existence in Canada was seen to be the result of American influence. As Egerton Ryerson told Howe, "the American feeling still exists in this country in regard to people of color, ... I do not consider it a natural feeling because it is not an

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[83] Ibid., 121, 122, 128, 140.
[84] Cited in Christine Bolt, Victorian Attitudes to Race (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 31.
[85] Bolt, Victorian Attitudes to Race, 29-31.
[86] Archives of Ontario, J. George Hodgins Fonds, F1207, London Auxiliary Bible Society to William H. Draper, March 27, 1847; Colonial Church and School Society, West London Branch, Mission to the Free Coloured Population in Canada. Occassional Paper No. 4 (London, 1855), 15; Mission to the Fugitive Slaves, Annual Report (1860), 31.
[87] S.G. Howe, The refugees from slavery in Canada West: report to the Freedmen's Inquiry Commission, 1864 (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969), 38-39.

English feeling."[88] Another minister in London asserted that, "the prejudice against colored people is growing here. But it is not a British feeling; it does not spring from our own people, but from your people [Americans] coming over here."[89] The blaming of Canada West's problems of racial discrimination on the United States allowed for the concealment of a particularly Canadian form of racist practice growing out of the unique historical context of this British colony.

Some contemporary observers found that racist attitudes were actually worse in Canada West than in the United States. Some African Canadians felt the effects of racism more strongly in Canada than in certain northern states. As Mrs. Brown of St. Catharines reported to Howe, "prejudice" was much stronger in Canada than in her home state of New York, "but the colored people have their rights before the law; that is the only thing that has kept me here".[90] Although several proud citizens of Canada West might have agreed with assertions regarding the egalitarian nature of British laws in Canada West, racist practice was prevalent in spite of legal guarantees of equality. Reports to Howe detail incidents of property destruction in Chatham and Orford,[91] African Canadians were frequently prevented from sitting on juries,[92] and school segregation was the norm in most regions of black settlement.[93] Mr. Sinclair of Chatham attempted to explain this situation, observing that, "our laws know nothing about creed, color or nationality ... but in regard to social prejudice, that is something we cannot help. The colored people are considered inferior."[94]

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[88] Howe, The Refugees, 39.
[89] Ibid., 39-40.
[90] Ibid., 45.
[91] Ibid., 43-44.
[92] Ibid., 49.
[93] See Chapter five.
[94] Ibid., 44.

The people of London claimed to sympathize with "the suffering and moral degradation of the unfortunate African in the neighbouring Republic",[95] but at the same time they asserted that they did not want blacks to attend the same schools as their children. Reasons given for this desired segregation include fears that black children would have a negative moral influence upon white children,[96] that they emit a "highly offensive effluvium" and differ "so essentially from the caucasian race in organic structure" that "close or intimate relations with them are not desirable."[97] In towns across Canada West, many opposed the settlement of black people in or near their communities while at the same time taking pride in the Empire's moral example of abolishing slavery. George Brown, who remarked that prejudice in Toronto was worse than in the United States, received a petition when he ran for parliament with 150 signatures supporting a head tax on black immigration.[98] Isaac Buchanan, MP from Hamilton, suggested that, "if the question was put to a vote, the people would vote against having the negroes remain here."[99] Walter McCrae, a vocal opponent to black settlement near Chatham, asserted that, "every member of the human family is entitled to certain rights and privileges, and nowhere on earth, are they better secured, enjoyed, or more highly valued, than in Canada".[100] Malcolm Cameron, Member of Parliament and an important advocate for segregated schools, asserted that all men were "free and equal" under the British constitution. He claimed to have "ever advocated the perfect equality of all mankind, and

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[95] London Free Press, July 22, 1861.
[96] re. Dennis Hill v. the School Trustees of Camden and Zone, Upper Canada Queen's Bench Reports, Volume 11, 578.
[97] "Extract from a Report of a Sub-Committee to the School Trustees, City of London, November, 1862", cited in Howe, The refugees, 106-107.
[98] Howe, The refugees, 43.
[99] Ibid., 42.
[100] McCrae, "Address to the Inhabitants of Canada".

the right of all to every civil and religious privilege without regard to creed or color."[101] However, it would seem that equality did not apply when people of different colour moved into McCrae's neighbourhood or attended school with Cameron's children. In 1849, Cameron proposed a bill in the legislature providing for segregated schools.

George Sunter, writing to the Brantford *Semi-Weekly Expositor* in 1859, expressed his reaction to this apparent contradiction between the words and actions of white Canadian society mimicking popular attitudes:

> utterances about negroes ... are usually prefaced with, 'I don't approve of slavery but,' – or, 'I don't go for slavery, but!' But what? 'But I would not have niggers about among white folks: the country is large enough, I would have them colonized off by themselves; I would have them sent back to their own country where they belong. I am opposed to amalgamation; I would have a law passed to prohibit their intermarriage with whites. Would you like your sister to marry a nigger? Would you like a nigger wench for a wife? Such marriages are unnatural. They are an inferior race, intermediate between man and monkey ... and how they smell, too; lazy and thievish besides ... Would not allow my children to play in the streets with young darkies.[102]

By 1861, it is likely that forty per cent of Canada West's black population was born in the province,[103] and these people asserted their rights to equal participation in Canadian institutions. Although many black Canadians were proud British subjects, and appealed to white Canadian leaders to live up to their British ideals by treating all subjects equally, they were prevented from participating on equal terms with other Canadians. Attempts by black British subjects to assert the rights guaranteed to them by British laws (the same egalitarian laws that were a source of pride for Canadian leaders, and were ordained by the myth of the British Empire's moral superiority) were seen to be

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[101] Chatham-Kent Black Historical Society, Heritage Room, "Correspondence between the Hon. Malcolm Cameron and the colored stock holders of the Elgin Association", February 21, 1850.
[102] George Sunter, cited in Simpson, "Negroes in Ontario", 808-809.
[103] See Michael Wayne for an analysis of 1861 census data. Wayne, "The Black Population of Canada West", 473.

nefarious and threatened the racial hierarchy that was ordained by another myth, that of white British racial superiority. African Canadians, although British subjects, were not considered to be part of the British race and were classified, like other dark-skinned people from all over the world, as inferior. It was taken as a given in the nineteenth century that they could never be on a par with their racial superiors.

Since the beginning of European colonial expansion, the category of race came to be used as a mark of civilization. As Charles Long has suggested, "the notion of race became the theater of the entire European myth of conquest."[104] Myths describing colonized peoples as inferior, wild, and savage took on popular expression once European domination of the colonies was certain. As David Hume remarked in 1777, "I am apt to suspect the negroes and in general all other species of men ... to be naturally inferior to the whites. There never was a civilized nation of any complexion other than white."[105] Skin colour thus became an important factor in racial identification.

By the eighteenth century the terms "white" and "black", already associated with notions of good and evil, purity and sin, cleanliness and filth,[106] took on very specific meanings related to the practices of colonization and slavery. The language of race was used to justify colonial oppression; in the British colonies, the colour white came to be equated with northern European, free and "civilized" people whereas black defined the slave. Africans were seen as not fully human and thus not fit to qualify for the equal rights of British citizens.[107]

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[104] Long, Significations, 115.
[105] David Hume, "Of National Characters", cited in David Theo Goldberg, Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1993), 31.
[106] Bolt, Victorian Attitudes to Race, 131; Long, Significations, 203.
[107] For example, John Locke argued in his First Treatise of Government that slavery was an abhorrent practice, out of character with English values; yet, he owned African slaves and supported the transcontinental slave trade. He was able to maintain these seemingly contradictory views because, as was

The Enlightenment emphasis on order led to the development of the sciences of anthropology and biology, which categorized different groups of human beings on a hierarchical scale. According to these scientific categorizations the white, European races were the highest representatives of civilization.[108] Although the concept of race does not only refer to physical characteristics, and was closely linked with ideas about culture during the nineteenth century, racism was commonly defined by this time as hostility towards certain people because of the colour of their skin.[109] According to the Church Missionary Intelligencer of 1869, "it is the hue of the negro's skin which, in the eyes of modern anthropologists, forms an inseparable obstacle to his admission within the pale of our species."[110]

Early European travelers and colonists associated certain African manners of dress with immodesty, shamelessness, immorality, and unrestrained sexuality.[111] As Charles H. Long has noted, the nakedness of indigenous peoples was seen to correspond to a blank mind and a cultural void.[112] These early impressions were ingrained in the European imagination to such an extent that African slaves and their descendants throughout the world continued to be associated with these traits of character centuries after these first impressions were made. People called black were seen as inferior and

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common among British people of his time, Africans were seen to be less than fully human and thus not subject to the same rights as the white "Englishman." Locke, First Treatise [1690] The Norton Anthology of English Literature <http://www.wwnorton.com/nael/18century/topic_2/locke.htm>, July 22, 2004.

[108] Goldberg, Racist Culture, 25, 29.

[109] Bolt, Victorian Attitudes to Race, 9, 17.

[110] Cited in Bolt, Victorian Attiudes to Race, 132.

[111] Cf. Bolt, Victorian Attitudes to Race, 135-36; Richard Francis Burton, Wanderings in West Africa ([1863] New York: Dover, 1991); Winwood Reade, Savage Africa (London, 1863).

[112] Long, Significations, 116.

childish, exemplifying infantile and animal-like passions and instincts such as selfishness, greed, dishonesty, impatience and stupidity.[113]

Those who felt sympathy for Africans as fellow human beings still categorized them as uncivilized and in need of moral guidance from the superior British people. In his famous tirade against slavery, William Wilberforce called upon the British people to stop the slave trade in Africa, and act as a proper moral model to "a continent just emerging from barbarism". He pleaded, "wherever the sun shines, let us go round the world with him, diffusing our benevolence; but let us not traffic [in slavery]."[114] Thomas Fowell Buxton, a fellow abolitionist touted as "the Friend of the Negro", felt that Africans inhabited "the kingdom of darkness" and were "bound in the chains of the grossest ignorance".[115] It was "without doubt", according to Buxton, "the duty of Great Britain to employ the influence and strength which God has given her, in raising Africa from the dust, and enabling her, out of her own resources, to beat down Slavery and the Slave Trade."[116]

As anti-slavery sentiment began to grow in British North America and throughout the British Empire, black people were idealized as suffering victims, and consequently de-humanized as helpless objects of pity in the British imagination. Sympathy for the plight of African-American slaves did not eliminate, and actually served to reinforce

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[113] Cf. Bolt, Victorian Attitudes to Race, 137-38; Richard Francis Burton, The Lake Regions of Central Africa ([1860] Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2001).
[114] William Wilberforce, "On the Horrors of the Slave Trade", speech to House of Commons, May 12, 1789, in William Jennings Bryan, ed. The World's Famous Orations, (New York: Bartleby.com, 2003), < http://www.bartleby.com/ 268/4/8.html> [July 22, 2004].
[115] Thomas Fowell Buxton, cited in Christine Bolt, 227-228.
[116] Buxton, The African Slave Trade and its Remedy (London: Murray, 1839), cited in The Dictionary of African Christian Biography July 2004 <http://www.gospelcom.net/dacb/stories/non%20africans/ legacy_buxton.html> [July 22, 2004].

stereotypes of lazy, dirty and immoral blacks in need of white people's assistance.[117] Missions to fugitive slaves in Canada sought to bring civilization to the black people. The Colonial Church and School Society saw the need to convert them to the Church of England from "a ranting order of Methodists or ... an equally wild sort of Baptists."[118] Jemima Williams, teacher at the CCSS girls' school in London from 1855, hoped to "assimilate the girls' characters" to her own, and train the black people of London against "immorality, lying, cheating and stealing".[119]

White people were commonly seen as the natural governors of the world, the ones who could keep the darker races under control. According to British myths, articulated in the media and by important societal leaders, the Anglo-European race was the "natural colonizer"[120] of the world and the "greatest governing race".[121] James Mill, a colonial administrator in India in the 1820s, felt that the Indian people were incapable of self-government and needed to submit to the benevolent control of the British. His son, John Stuart Mill, was more hopeful regarding the governing abilities of the Indians when he entered the colonial service, though he still argued that they and all of the "uncivilized" subjects of Great Britain needed direction from the superior governing powers of the British.[122] *The Times* of London asserted in the aftermath of the Jamaican Revolt of 1865 that the black man needs "a strong white government and a numerous white population to

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[117] See Bolt, Victorian Attitudes to Race, 30, 47, 54.
[118] Colonial Church and School Society, Mission to the Fugitive Slaves, Annual Report (1860), 21.
[119] Colonial Church and School Society, West London Branch, Mission to the Free Coloured Population in Canada. Occassional Paper No. 4 (London, 1855), 15; Mission to the Fugitive Slaves, Annual Report (1860), 31.
[120] S.W. Baker, cited in Bolt, Victorian Attitudes, 148.
[121] Joseph Chamberlain, cited in Huttenback, Racism and Empire, 15-16.
[122] Goldberg, Racist Culture, 17, 35.

control him," although it would be impossible to "eradicate the original savageness of the African blood."[123]

In the mid-nineteenth century, a sense of the racial uniqueness of the Anglo-Saxon people was strong in Britain and Anglo-Saxon cultural characteristics were linked with white racial identity. According to Robert Huttenback, "Anglo-Saxonism" was widespread in Victorian society. This was the conviction that England's people had long been blessed with "superior physical and mental attributes" and that members of the Anglo-Saxon race possessed a special capacity for self-government and the government of others through the application of the principles of liberty, justice and efficiency inherent in the British constitutional system.[124] In North America, Celtic and Scandinavian descendents were counted alongside Anglo-Saxons as the capable white leaders of society.[125]

According to the British and British North American version of the Myth of Divine Providence, God had placed those who had been born in the British Isles at the top of the racial, social, political, and moral order. Their divine mission was to rule over the so-called inferior races of the world and spread God's dominion over the earth. It was considered the Christian duty of the British people to spread their influence to the so-called "weaker races" through the civilizing powers of the morally superior British Empire. In 1850, the *Church Missionary Intelligencer* reported that England's "high position amidst the nations of the earth is a providential dispensation."[126] According to the *North American Review,* Britain's "flag wherever it has advanced has benefited the

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[123] Cited in Bolt, Victorian Attitudes to Race, 76.
[124] Huttenback, Racism and Empire, 15.
[125] Ibid., 20.
[126] Cited in Bolt, Victorian Attitudes to Race, 111.

country over which it floats; and has carried with it civilization, the Christian religion, order, justice and prosperity."[127] The perpetuation of "English laws and English principles of government" was deemed to be "essential to the freedom of mankind."[128] William Wilberforce equated the British Colonial Empire with a "gift of God", that "encircles the earth." This Empire did the work of God, as Church of England missionaries and British colonists laid "deep and wide the foundations of His earthly kingdom."[129]

The Empire represented transcendent reality to many Canadians of British heritage, fostering their sense of belonging to the chosen British race and shaping a shared sense of meaning and identity. Canadians of a variety of backgrounds saw the British Empire as a model to the world. Ryerson likened British colonial administrators to "minister[s] of God",[130] and even the radical William Lyon MacKenzie saw the Empire as the "greatest and wisest there has ever been".[131] John Strachan felt that as part of the Great British Empire, Canadians had a significant role to play in spreading British Christian principles, and thus making the earth "the garden of the Lord."[132] Susanna Moodie echoed Strachan's feelings with her belief that God had given Canada to the British people so that they would "guard the honour of this land", bringing the highest form of civilization to this place.[133] She professed her pride "to belong to a race who, in

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[127] Cited in Huttenback, Racism and Empire, 14.
[128] Cited in Ibid., 16.
[129] William Wilberforce, "The Conditions of Missionary Success", 1850, in John Wolffe, ed. Religion in Victorian Britain, Volume V Culture and Empire (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 306-307.
[130] Christian Guardian, March 27, 1830.
[131] See note 21.
[132] John Strachan, cited in William Westfall, Two Worlds, 5.
[133] Moodie, Roughing It, 6, 14.

every portion of the globe in which they have planted a colony, have proved themselves worthy to be sires of a great nation."[134]

As British colonials and missionaries believed that their people had been chosen by God to carry out His mission in the world, it followed that they were also protected and privileged by Him. The placement of the Anglo-Celts at the top of the racial hierarchy was given sacred significance in this way, as it was in accordance with God's Divine plan. According to popular mythology, Great Britain transcended history and represented the arm of God on earth. The Empire was seen to be timeless in nature, in that it would live on eternally through the Christian nations it founded and nurtured.[135] In this way, the Empire was sacred to the British people, as God had ordained this nation to rise above worldly existence and to spread His dominion over the earth.

In British North America, descendents of Africans were generally perceived as strangers in far-away lands who were either governed at arm's length or unjustly enslaved. Common descriptions pointed to morally degraded, ignorant slaves,[136] or unfortunate, inferior and barbaric Africans,[137] who, when in Canada, were seen as annoying, "a damned nuisance", or "a low, miserable set of people".[138] In spite of their long-term presence in New France and the territory that would become Upper Canada with the arrival of the British, common British-Canadian attitudes suggested that black Africans did not belong in this white British land. Although sympathy with the suffering

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[134] Moodie, Life in the Clearings, 35.
[135] Wilberforce asserted that, "if the day should come when England's greatness shall be a tale of past generations, still she might survive amongst nations, in the Christian realms which, in her day of strength, she founded with her seed and nurtured in her truth." Wilberforce, "The Conditions of Missionary Success".
[136] London Free Press, July 27, 1861; McCrae, "Address".
[137] Howe, The Refugees, 44; AO, Incoming Education Correspondence, RG 2-12, Vol. 18, Philip Smith to Ryerson, August 1, 1854.
[138] Howe, 40, 41.

of African Americans was commonly expressed in British-Canadian society, at the same time, many white Canadians expressed strong opposition to the settlement and integration "of a race of people which is destined by nature to be distinct and separate from us."[139] Walter McCrae of Chatham accurately represents this sentiment with his assertion, "let the slaves of the United States be free, but let it be in their own country; let us not countenance their further introduction among us."[140] While Susanna Moodie expressed her disdain for "prejudice against race and colour",[141] she maintained that black Canadians belonged in service roles, whereas those who hoped for equal treatment under British laws were a detriment to the province. She praised the "fine corps of well-dressed Negro waiters"[142] who attended to her on a visit to Niagara Falls, yet also argued that

> The constant influx of runaway slaves from the States has added greatly to the criminal lists on the frontier. The addition of these people to our population is not much to be coveted. The slave from his previous habits and education, does not always make a good citizen.[143]

Black British people with equal rights were perceived as anomalies in British-Canadian society, and thus dominant societal elements were opposed to their presence. As Mary Douglas suggests, anomalies in society may be labeled as dangerous and need to be controlled.[144] She refers to the example of night-crowing cocks that had to be eliminated because they threatened established definitions of roosters as birds that crow at dawn. As black people were on a level with animals according to common perceptions, the socially integrated black person of the time could be compared to the night-crowing cock. Black people possessing equal rights contradicted established

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[139] McCrae, "Address to the Inhabitants of Canada".
[140] Ibid.
[141] Moodie, Life in the Clearings, 26.
[142] Ibid., 254.
[143] Ibid., 157.
[144] Mary Douglas, Purity and Danger. An analysis of the concepts of pollution and taboo (1966; London&New York: Routledge, 1995), 40.

understandings of Africans as an inferior and victimized people, and could also undermine the legitimacy of British colonial projects among darker-skinned peoples abroad. As a result, African Canadians were relegated to the margins of mainstream society where they would not threaten the established social order. This order was ordained by myths that portrayed this colony as a purely British creation, and the black British person as a contradiction in terms.

As Tim Stanley has argued, racial boundaries need to be continually monitored and protected.[145] The ideal of Canada West as a racially pure British society was perceived to be threatened by the presence of African Canadians. The situation in Upper Canada may be likened to that of colonial Acadia, where as Jennifer Reid suggests, boundaries drawn around British society prevented the equal participation of Native peoples and perpetuated the belief that British society in Canada was culturally pure.[146] Black people in Canada West were prevented from enjoying the full privileges of Canadian citizenship and were kept in a marginal position in the racial order. As Mary Douglas suggests, marginal peoples are "treated as both vulnerable and dangerous" because they have the power to potentially pollute society.[147] These marginal people hold ambiguous roles and come to be "credited with uncontrolled, unconscious, dangerous, disapproved powers".[148] The possession of these nefarious powers justifies discriminatory treatment towards those considered marginal.

Any attempts by African Canadians to assert their equality under British law were looked upon with disdain and fear and led to efforts to prevent their equal participation in

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[145] Tim Stanley, "Why I Killed Canadian History", 96.
[146] Reid, Myth, Symbol and Colonial Encounter, 67.
[147] Douglas, Purity and Danger, 96, 98.
[148] Ibid., 100.

society. According to Douglas, the "physical crossing of the social barrier is treated as a dangerous pollution... The polluter becomes a doubly wicked object of reprobation, first because he crossed the line and second because he endangered others."[149] Attempts by black people to settle in majority British areas were seen as "dangerous to the peace and comfort of the inhabitants," or as a "threatened evil" that had to be prevented or, at the very least, restricted.[150] Black people, it was feared, would have a "poisonous effect upon the moral and social habits of the community." Because they could potentially defile the sacred Anglo-European racial heritage, they had to be "removed, and separated from the whites."[151]

The economy of towns with large black populations, such as Chatham and Windsor, depended on black workers, and thus several were relegated to service occupations, generally acceptable positions for black people according to dominant societal standards. As George Sunter points out:

> Your horror of amalgamation is a lying pretence; 'niggers' may shave you, cook for you, serve at your tables, dress your fair ladies ... so long as they will consent to be your slaves. It is only when we aspire to the freedom of self-government and to the equality which justice awards, that your turned-up noses discover that we smell badly, and that your amalgamation horrors commence. [You say] ... there is no getting along with them unless you keep them at a distance, and down; make them know and keep their places.[152]

Here, Sunter points to the inherent hypocrisy in segregationist practice. In Canadian society white and black people could not avoid interacting; Canada West was built through the combined efforts of a diversity of cultural groups. It was impossible to completely separate these two groups of people; however, the terms of social interaction

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[149] Ibid., 140.
[150] Upper Canada House of Assembly debate on Wilberforce settlement, 1830, cited in Jason Silverman, Unwelcome Guests, 28.
[151] McCrae, "Address".
[152] Cited in Simpson, 810, 809.

were laid out in such a way so that, in spite of constitutional guarantees of egalitarianism, black people were discouraged from moving beyond an inferior social standing in white-dominated society.[153]

Several British Canadians expressed surprise that "even the Niggars" expected to be addressed as Mr. or Mrs. in Canada West.[154] The CCSS missionary Jemima Williams declared her surprise that the "lying", "stealing", "simplest fugitive should fancy himself as good as the best man in the province."[155] While Mr. Meigs from Malden, near the Detroit border, himself an immigrant to Canada in the 1840s, suggested that "the colored people ... are becoming now so very haughty that they are looking upon themselves as the equals of the whites!"[156] White communities expressed fear and outrage at attempts by blacks to claim their equal rights before the law. When George Washington of Charlotteville brought a case of forced segregation before the Supreme Court in 1854, whites in the community complained that "African barbarism" would "triumph over Anglo-Saxon civilization".[157]

Association between whites and blacks was commonly seen to be "immoral", "disgusting",[158] "hideous" and "evil".[159] Interracial marriage was very rare in Canada West; among people interviewed by S.G. Howe in 1864, no white respondents found intermarriage acceptable. Some African Canadians also felt the same way, but mixed

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[153] White Canadians lent popular support to movements for segregation of black populations; when black citizens were seen to accumulate too much wealth, their property was sometimes destroyed; in some instances they were prevented from exercising influence over the application of British Canadian law when kept off juries; and they were frequently prevented from gaining access to common schooling. See pp. 44-46.
[154] Saint Catharines Journal, September 11, 1856.
[155] Colonial Church and School Society, Mission to the Fugitive Slaves, Annual Report (1860), 31.
[156] Howe, The Refugees, 40.
[157] AO, Incoming Education Correspondence, RG 2-12, Vol. 18, Philip Smith to Ryerson, August 1, 1854.
[158] Simpson, "Negroes in Ontario", 335.
[159] McCrae, "Address".

marriage was more readily accepted in black communities. According to one teacher in Chatham, "so it is with a white woman who marries a Negro. The whites will have nothing to say to her, and her society is entirely with the blacks."[160] Racial mixing was perceived as a health threat. Health professionals verified this assumption, concluding that people of "mixed race" were "most unhealthy ... they die out when mixed."[161]

At the same time as Anglo-Protestant settlers encountered human diversity on an unprecedented scale in North America, they rigidly held onto an established sense of identity in the face of a changing environment, and developed a discourse of cultural purity that allowed for the inhuman treatment and exclusion of those who were not considered to be of British stock. Integration with these people was perceived as a threat to British purity and to the very identity of Anglo-Protestant immigrants to Canada. As Canada's British heritage was held sacred, white Canadians worked to keep it from defilement. According to societal norms, the inclusion of black people as equal British citizens could potentially pollute this sacred order, and so they were kept apart and prevented from enjoying their rights as British citizens.

Once it became probable that slavery would be abolished as a consequence of the American Civil War, white Canadians could see no reason for black immigrants to remain here. Robin Winks suggests that as African Americans no longer needed to take refuge in Canada West, mainstream society came to look upon those blacks who remained in Canada as "intruders" who should "go home" to the United States.[162] The African-Canadian population did decline sharply during the 1860s, but most black Canadians remained in Canada West, their new home, in spite of popular attitudes that

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[160] Howe, The Refugees, 32.
[161] Ibid., 19, 38.
[162] Winks, 288-91.

suggested they did not belong here. During the 1860s, missionary organizations cut much of their funding for schools that served African Canadians. Most CCSS missions except Dresden and Windsor were in decline by 1860. Although the CCSS continued to operate in these towns for a few more years, the meager assistance provided for black education by British and Canadian charitable organization sharply declined after slavery was abolished in the United States, and American philanthropic efforts ceased to fund Canadian missions to focus solely on American efforts.[163] Jason Silverman suggests that African Canadians in the mid-nineteenth century were seen as "guests" who were never truly welcome.[164]

While people who were not included in the white racial category faced harsh discrimination in Canada West, the dominant British-Protestant discourse continued to present this province as a highly moralistic and egalitarian society. The boundaries created to protect the purity of this imagined British-Canadian society were constructed in such a way as to conceal the historical reality of cultural diversity and inter-cultural exchange in this province and to hide the role of the British in the unjust treatment of those who did not fit the ideal racial type of British society.

[163] Winks, The Blacks in Canada, 290.
[164] Silverman, Unwelcome Guests.

Chapter Four – Upper Canada in the African-Canadian Imagination

Among black Canadians who did not fit Upper Canada's racial ideal, racism was an important handicap in Canadian society; at the same time, many felt that the protection afforded by British law made Canada a safe haven for African Americans. As G.F. Simpson of Toronto suggested, echoing the sentiments of many others, "the law is the only thing that sustains us in this country."[1] African Canadians from across Canada West expressed their "gratitude to the Country which has received us, and the Constitution which protects us."[2]

African-American immigrants looked to Canada as a refuge from the discrimination they faced in the United States. As the popular song proclaimed, many slaves sought to move to Canada "where coloured men are free".[3] According to the former slave Richard Warren, Canada West was a "land of freedom ... where the oppressed and down-trodden sons of Africa can find a resting place."[4] Samuel Ringgold Ward suggested that "there is no country in the world so much hated by slaveholders, as Canada; nor is there any country so much beloved and sought for, by the slaves ... [because] it is a free country." He believed that in Canada, like in England, the air was too pure for the slave to breathe, "they touch our country, and their shackles fall."[5] The popular African-Canadian newspaper the *Voice of the Fugitive* sought to promote emigration to Canada West because it was, "the only spot on the American continent

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[1] Benjamin Drew, A Northside View of Slavery. The Refugee: or the Narrative of Fugitive Slaves in Canada. [1856] (Toronto: Coles, 1972), 45.
[2] Cited in John K.A. Farrell, "The History of the Negro Community in Chatham", 63.
[3] from "The Free Slave", by American abolitionist George W. Clarke.
[4] Richard Warren, Narrative of the Life and Suffering of Rev. Richard Warren (A Fugitive Slave) (Hamilton: Christian Advocate, 1856), 13.
[5] Samuel Ringgold Ward, Autobiography of a Fugitive Negro (1855; New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1968), 158.

upon which the hunted fugitive can find a protection by law for his liberty," a place where "the laws make no distinction among men, based on complexion."[6]

According to the North American Convention of Colored Freedmen held in September 1851, "the British government was the most favourable in the civilized world to the people of colour and was thereby entitled to the entire confidence of the Convention."[7] Several African Canadians identified strongly with Canada West's British heritage and idealized the egalitarian nature of British society. In asserting his children's rights to attend common schools, one parent reported to S.G. Howe that his children, who were born British subjects in Canada West, "don't believe in anything else but the Queen."[8]

In her *Plea* to American fugitive slaves to immigrate to Canada West, the young Mary Ann Shadd praised British law, asserting that, "there is no legal discrimination whatever affecting coloured immigrants in Canada, nor from any cause whatever are their privileges sought to be abridged."[9] She devoted almost one full quarter of her widely circulated guide, *A Plea for Emigration; Or, Notes of Canada West* to British laws and oaths in effect in Canada West. This book includes the full text of the Oath of Allegiance and emphasizes the freedom that awaits emigrant fugitives under the British government.

Shadd was born in Wilmington, Delaware to free mulatto parents in 1823. She taught in various northern states, and gained a reputation as a writer and lecturer in abolitionist circles, earning the respect of Frederick Douglass, before moving to Canada following the passing of the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850. Upon arriving in Toronto she

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[6] Voice of the Fugitive, December 3, 1851; January 1, 1851.
[7] Provincial Freeman, September 10, 1851.
[8] Howe, The Refugees, 51-52.
[9] Shadd, A Plea for Emigration, 74.

undertook the position of secretary of the North American Convention of Coloured People, held in the city that year. She developed ties with African Canadian abolitionists such as Martin Delaney and Henry Bibb, and her account of convention proceedings was soon widely published in black North American publications, earning her a reputation as a respected writer and leader.[10] At the invitation of Henry and Mary Bibb, she moved to Windsor the following year where she opened a school for children from a diversity of ethnic backgrounds, published *A Plea for Emigration*, which she sold on her many successful lecture tours of the United States and Canada, and, in 1853, published the first issue of her newspaper the *Provincial Freeman.* By this time, many of her family members had joined her in Canada West, and when she published the 1854 issue of her newspaper out of Toronto, her sister Amelia and brother Isaac helped with editing. She was the first black woman to edit a newspaper, and she continued to publish the *Provincial Freeman* out of Chatham until it went bankrupt during the economic depression of 1857. Shadd lived and worked in Canada for thirteen years, traveling widely as one of the first female public lecturers of her time. On her popular lecture tours she made her living from the sale of *A Plea for Emigration* and the *Provincial Freeman.*[11]

In her early work, Shadd describes Canada West as if she is looking through rose-coloured glasses. According to her emigration guide, black people faced no discrimination and could act independently to buy land, start businesses and rise to positions of power. According to Shadd, "land is cheap, business increasing ... [and there is] no lack of employment at fair prices, and no complexional or other qualification

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[10] Silverman, "Mary Ann Shadd and the Search for Equality", in Black Women in United States History, Volume 4, (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson, 1990), 1263

[11] Richard Almonte, "Introduction" in Mary Ann Shadd, A Plea for Emigration; Jim Bearden and Linda Jean Butler, Shadd: The Life and Times of Mary Ann Shadd Cary (Toronto: NC Press, 1977).

in existence."[12] She argues, "coloured men prosecute all the different trades; are storekeepers, farmers, clerks, and labourers; and are not only unmolested, but sustained and encouraged in any business."[13] In certain cases, she suggests, "the proprietor of an establishment is coloured and the majority or all of the men employed are white."[14] For Shadd, Canada West represented a complete reversal of the segregated American society where black people could not hold positions of power and racial segregation was the norm.

Many African-Canadian leaders idealized the Canadian landscape along with the egalitarian legal system. In her *A Plea for Emigration*, Shadd provides vivid descriptions of this territory that God had provided. The climate was "most desirable" and "highly conducive to mental and physical energy".[15] In his autobiography Samuel Ringgold Ward suggests that the climate in Canada West was "the most pleasant and the most salubrious on the American continent" with a "clear, cloudless, smokeless, fogless atmosphere – its bright blue sky, its white snowy drapery enveloping the earth – even winter is a most beautiful season."[16] Shadd exaggerates the bounty of the "rich, dark and heavy" soil that "is unsurpassed by that of Kentucky and states farther south, and naturally superior to the adjoining Northern States". She praises "the character of the products, and the unequalled growth and size of timber on uncleared lands."[17] The *Voice of the Fugitive*, edited by Henry Bibb, echoes her assessments, calling Canada West "one of the best agricultural countries on the continent ... with beautiful forests of the most

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[12] Ibid., 59.
[13] Ibid, 59.
[14] Ibid., 59.
[15] Shadd, A Plea for Emigration, 48, 46.
[16] Ward, Autobiography, 155.
[17] Shadd, A Plea for Emigration, 50.

valuable timber – an inexhaustible mines of lead, iron, coal, [and] copper".[18] According to Shadd, vegetables and fruits grown in Canada were "decidedly superior to those grown in the United States".[19] She also describes "numerous and beautiful rivers, and smaller streams, [that] run through the country in all directions, so that there is no lack of water power."[20]

Shadd wrote her emigration guide and Bibb published his newspaper with the intention of attracting African Americans to Canada West, and in response to stereotypes, often spread by slave-owners, of Canada as a cold, barren land where African Americans had little hope of attaining liberty or happiness. Ward also delivered lectures in which he attempted to convince fugitive slaves to move north; thus, he, Bibb and Shadd were apt to exaggerate Canada's positive qualities, representing the British colony as a paradise in order to convince slaves to take the incredible risk of fleeing to this country. In addition, Shadd's *Plea for Emigration* was published less than two years after her arrival in the province. Her later work, discussed below, is more critical of Canadian society, likely providing a more historically accurate picture of discrimination faced by African Canadians.

A common theme that permeates Shadd's and Ward's work is a call for African Canadians to take responsibility for the improvement of their situation, to assert their rights as equal British subjects and to rise above the discrimination they faced in Canadian society. Shadd calls upon her fellow African Canadians to work toward the establishment of a truly egalitarian society that lived up to the British ideals of freedom and equality that were held in such high esteem. Although Shadd's and Ward's

[18] Voice of the Fugitive, December 3, 1851.
[19] Shadd, Plea., 54.
[20] Ibid., 51.

descriptions of Canada West are at times more optimistic and exaggerated than historically accurate, they do accurately reflect the diverse character of Canada West, and articulate a vision of a society that lives up to the British ideals that attracted African-American immigrants to the province in the first place.

Numerous African Canadians felt compelled to defend their newly beloved homeland. Many early migrants fought during the American Revolution, under the impression that they would be rewarded as free people in Canada. Although most did not receive the land grants and other rewards promised to them, black men remained eager to defend the British regime under which they sought protection, and as was common in nineteenth century Upper Canadian society, to demonstrate their loyalty to the crown. Certain members of the Coloured Corps who had fought at the key battles of Queenston Heights and Stoney Creek during the War of 1812 did not receive promised severance pay, and were granted land claims half the size of white soldiers after the war; yet black soldiers were quick to volunteer to defend the established government during the Rebellions of 1837-38.

Although African Canadians had not been officially permitted to join the military between the War of 1812 and the Rebellions of 1837-38, several black men started volunteer units of their own. After the outbreak of the Rebellions, the Upper Canadian government welcomed the official participation of black troops who fought to uphold Canada's British ties and defend the status quo against what they perceived as a republican threat. Josiah Henson commanded a military company in Windsor that defended the town against rebel attacks from the Detroit River. Captain Caldwell's Coloured Corps included participants from across the province and was stationed at Fort

Malden for two months during the Rebellion. Another company of 50 black soldiers was assembled on the Niagara River, while several African Canadians from Oro joined the Simcoe militia and other companies.[21] These soldiers must have made an important contribution to the cause of the established government, as Lieutenant-Governor Sir Francis Bond Head acknowledged their contributions to the defense of "the glorious institutions of Great Britain"[22] and William Lyon MacKenzie lamented that black troops had fought against his movement based on unfounded fears:

> I regret that an unwarranted fear of a union with the United States on the part of the coloured population should have induced them to oppose reform and free institutions in this country.[23]

Almost every black man in Hamilton fought during the Rebellions, and eighteen African Canadians in the town signed a "loyal statement of people of colour", proclaiming that it was "the duty of every Loyal man at the present crisis to come forward in support of the Government of our Most Gracious Queen."[24] In Chatham, African Canadians assembled for drills and used borrowed weapons until the local colonel asked for government permission to form an official company. After a difficult search for a white officer to command the troops, two black companies were formed in 1838 with a total of eighty men.[25] Most of these troops were disbanded by the early 1840s. This was not soon enough for some citizens of Chatham who were happy to see one group that had defended their town and served as the main firefighting force sent back to Sandwich. According to a report in the *Chatham Journal* of 1843, these troops

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[21] Ernest Green, "Upper Canada's Black Defenders", 370-378.
[22] Sir Francis Bond Head, report to Legislature of Upper Canada, March 6, 1838, cited in Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, 121.
[23] Cited in Butler and Power, Slavery and Freedom, 53.
[24] Cited in Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, 121.
[25] John K.A. Farrell, "The History of the Negro Community in Chatham" (Ph.D. Dissertation: University of Ottawa, 1955), 30-34.

would have been unruly had they not been kept under control by their white commanders.[26]

African Canadians fought for their rights as equal and protected subjects under British law, and influenced the Upper Canadian government's position on the status of fugitive slaves. When Lieutenant-Governor Bond Head ordered the extradition of Solomon Moseby, who had stolen a horse and escaped from slavery in Kentucky in 1837, a storm of protest arose in the Niagara community where Moseby was being held. Between 200 and 300 African Canadians held vigil for three weeks outside the Niagara jail as the government delayed his removal in the hopes that opposition to this action would recede. When Moseby was finally brought out, a riot ensued, Moseby escaped but police killed two black protestors. Later the same year, another case for extradition was brought before the government. Mindful of the recent incident with Moseby, yet afraid of setting a precedent that would make Upper Canada a refuge for criminals, Bond Head refused to make a decision in the case. The colonial secretary, Lord Glenelg was left to make a ruling, and he decided in this case that a former slave should not be considered guilty of a crime that had been committed in order to escape slavery.[27]

Lord Glenelg's ruling did not prevent the future extradition of other fugitive slaves, however, as the Hackett case of 1841 demonstrates. Nelson Hackett, an escaped slave from Arkansas, arrived in Chatham accused of stealing a horse, coat, watch and saddle. He was imprisoned, and after an unsuccessful attempt by black soldiers to free him, was extradited back to Arkansas, where he was sent directly back to his master.[28] After this well-publicized case, a group of black fugitives sent a proposal to the British

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[26] Cited in Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, 123.
[27] For further background on these cases see Butler and Power, Slavery and Freedom, 49-53.
[28] Winks, The Blacks in Canada, 172; Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, 95.

government through the abolitionist Thomas Rolph, asking that African Americans be automatically naturalized upon crossing the Canadian border.[29] This proposal would have protected black fugitives from extradition, but also it demonstrated the desire of black immigrants to cut ties with the United States and become British subjects. This request was not granted; however, the British Colonial Office introduced an extradition treaty in 1842 making certain offenses not extraditable, including "self-theft". No African American was returned to the United States under this law.[30]

Black religious leaders and popular black newspapers espoused dominant Upper Canadian views regarding the importance of Christian morality and education, and encouraged the black population to adapt to British-Canadian society, familiarizing themselves with the laws of the land. Knowledge of the Bible and British law was presented as the key that would lead black people to success as free and equal participants in British-Canadian society. Black religious leaders such as British Methodist Episcopal bishop William Nazrey, strongly advocated a Christian and moral education grounded in the Bible and expressed the desire that their children be in a position to "make good use of the rights and privileges as they are laid down by British law."[31] According to a group of parents from Simcoe who petitioned Ryerson for access to common schools in 1851,

> We have a number of children growing up in ignorance and no remedy, we know that you are leading god's pupils to a throne of grace, and we have ... a great many little children we want you to lead to the Eternal world by putting them in the way to read god's word.[32]

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[29] Stouffer, The Light of Nature and the Law of God, 61.
[30] Winks, The Blacks in Canada, 172-73.
[31] William Nazrey, AME bishop, cited in Jason Silverman, Unwelcome Guests, 144; Ancaster petition to Lt. Governor Maitland (1828), "Interesting Notes on Great Britain and Canada with Respect to the Negro", Journal of Negro History (13, April, 1929), 194.
[32] AO, Incoming Education Correspondence, RG 2-12, Vol. 11, Petition of colored inhabitants of Simcoe, 12 Dec 1851.

The first recorded petition to government for black access to education was made at Ancaster in 1828 by a group of African Canadians from across the province. The petitioners noted that, "perhaps the greatest disadvantage under which they labour, is the want of means of educating their children."[33] Requests for access to education continued throughout the mid-nineteenth century. According to Mary Ann Shadd, "the refugees express a strong desire for intellectual culture, and persons often begin their education at a time of life when many in other countries think they are old."[34] Community leaders such as Mary Ann Shadd and Henry Bibb looked to education as a gateway to acceptance, equal treatment and, ultimately, success for blacks in Canadian society. The *Provincial Freeman* advocated "a good British education, thorough instruction to the young by means of British school books [and] by teachers British at heart."[35] And Bibb's *Voice of the Fugitive* articulated a hopeful attitude toward the benefits of education:

> We regard the education of colored people in North America as being one of the most important measures connected with the destiny of our race. By it we can be strengthened and elevated. Without it we shall be ignorant, weak and degraded. By it we shall be clothed with the power which will enable us to arise from degradation and command respect from the whole civilized world.[36]

An article in the *Voice of the Fugitive* of January 15, 1851, emphasized the importance of biblical and legal literacy for the black community:

> We think there are but very few who could not be taught to read the Bible, if they would commence and persevere. If we learn to read that, we can learn to read other books and papers, and we should understand the laws of the government under which we live. To do so we should read in order to become wise, intelligent and useful in society.

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[33] "Interesting Notes on Great Britain and Canada with Respect to the Negro", 115.
[34] Mary Ann Shadd, A Plea for Emigration, 63.
[35] Provincial Freeman, April 25, 1857.
[36] Voice of the Fugitive (January 15, 1852), 2.

The former slave Henry Bibb and a group of education supporters argued that education provided "emphatically the most effectual protection to personal or political liberty with which the human family can be armed."[37] For black education advocates, the Bible and British law went hand in hand. Both were held in high esteem as a result of their transformative, redemptive qualities. British law, like the Bible, provided meaning and orientation to black people in Canada and in this way, held sacred power.

Bishop Nazrey was a strong advocate of public education. In 1868, he advised members of his church that,

> If we expect to keep up with this fast age we must educate our children, and there is no better way to do this than to make good use of the rights and privileges as they are laid down by British law ... that all men are free and equal irrespective of hue or clime; and therefore, all have a right to public schools...[38]

Black activists fought for the equal rights guaranteed to them by Canadian law and worked towards an integrated society in Canada West. Racial segregation and discrimination were depicted as inconsistent with the ideals of a British society. H. Ford Douglass, reporting to the *Provincial Freeman* in 1857, argued that segregated institutions,

> are nuisances that should be abated as soon as possible, they are dark and hateful relics of Yankee Negrophobia, contrary to that healthy, social and political equality recognized by the fundamental principles of British common law, and should never be permitted to take root upon British soil.[39]

Samuel Ringgold Ward asserted that in his adopted home of Canada abolitionist sentiment and the equal treatment of all people without regard to race was evidence of a

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[37] Henry Bibb et al., "Address to the Colored Inhabitants of North America", (October 1851) in Peter C. Ripley ,ed. The Black Abolitionist Papers Volume II, 1830-1865 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 173.
[38] Cited in Silverman, Unwelcome Guests, 144.
[39] H.F. Douglass, "The Duties of Colored Man in Canada", Provincial Freeman March 28, 1857.

"strong British feeling".[40] In much of his writing he hinted that the truly British would never discriminate against black people, thus challenging those who proudly wore the stamp of British identity to live up to egalitarian ideals. According to Ward, "the gentlemen treat the negro properly." whereas "Negro-haters" are "low, degraded persons".[41]

The Committee for the Colored People of Windsor asserted in 1859 that,

> [as] Her Majesty's subjects, [we] desire to share the common blessings of a Free Government in the education of our rising generation ... according to the established Laws of the country of our adoption and choice.[42]

Ward reflected the feelings of many African Canadians when he argued, "there is no reason why we should not buy, build, live, die and be buried, just where other of Her Majesty's subjects live."[43]

When Mary Ann Shadd moved to the province, she refused to teach in segregated schools, asserting that segregation threatened black people's "true position as British subjects".[44] She was critical of those who accepted segregated institutions, and in her emigration guide she seems to blame black people themselves for the existence of segregated churches and schools. In her later work, Shadd changes her attitude, calling the Canadian government to task when it failed to ensure the equal treatment guaranteed by law for all its citizens, and analyzing the role of white missionaries in promoting racial separation. In a lecture to African Canadians, most likely given after the publication of *A Plea for Emigration*, Shadd acknowledges that African Canadians often faced harsh

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[40] Ward, Autobiography, 150.
[41] Ibid., 201.
[42] AO, Ontario Department of Education, Incoming Correspondence (hereafter Incoming Education Correspondence), RG 2-12, Volume 26, Committee for the Colored People, Windsor to Ryerson, March 2, 1859.
[43] Ward, Autobiography, 205.
[44] Mary Ann Shadd, A Plea for Emigration, 16, 62.

discrimination and points out hypocrisies between Canadian ideals of equality and the reality of racism. She argues that,

> The coloured people of these provinces live in a land of equal laws, equal rights, and yet ... in certain localities parties can be found who ... administer the law in a way clearly prejudicial to the interests of [the coloured population]."[45]

Shadd accuses certain missionaries, such as the Presbyterian minister Isaac Rice of Amherstburg, of encouraging separate schools and churches. She suggests that before the arrival of missionaries, black and white children were more frequently educated together and their families more apt to attend the same churches. Missionaries often sought donations for separate black schools and churches, setting them apart as objects of charity, and according to Shadd, exacerbating "separations, prejudices, distrust, etc."[46] In an 1856 editorial, she laments the unfair advantages of white children over black students in Chatham's common school system:

> Large and handsome school houses are erected for the children of the whites, while but a single miserably contracted wooden building, is set apart for the children of the colored taxpayers of the entire town ... The few children of the hundreds of colored people, composing a large portion of our population, must go out of their wards to the 'one horse' school house, there to be taught by the *one* (colored) teacher employed at a little salary by the one School Committee... [Black children are] crowded into a Kennel ... [and although] the Colored people of Chatham must pay taxes... the condition of our public schools is an unmitigated insult to the colored people and a disgrace to the age ... That disgrace ... the little colored school house ... is a monument of the injustice the colored people sustain.[47]

As evidenced by the existence of separate institutions, some African Canadians obviously accepted this situation, whether willingly or unwillingly it is difficult to tell. There is no evidence, however, of any active support for segregation among black

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[45] Shadd, "Obstacles to the Progress of Coloured Canadians", n.d., appendix to 1998 edition of Shadd, A Plea for Emigration.
[46] Provincial Freeman, December 22, 1855.
[47] Provincial Freeman, July 26, 1856.

Canadians in the mid-nineteenth century. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, some early black settlers sought to gain grants of land for common black settlement.[48] Some of these petitioners were former soldiers who had been segregated in the military, and may have expected that military land grants would have followed the same pattern of segregation as Nova Scotia. Here, a significantly larger proportion of black immigrants were forced into segregated settlements after the Revolution and War of 1812, when several landless families often shared soldiers' grants that were on separate lots from white settlers.[49] In Upper Canada early requests for separate land grants were rarely granted, and only a very small proportion of black settlers ever lived in separate settlements. Settlements that were predominately black, such as Dawn and Buxton were never exclusive to African Canadians; both of these colonies were managed by integrated boards, and started by white initiative. Buxton was the only settlement to attract large numbers of settlers over an extended period of time, and this colony hosted integrated churches and schools.[50] The Refugee Home Society, run by Henry Bibb, Josiah Henson and Rev. T. Willis, has often been incorrectly portrayed as a segregationist colonization scheme; however, the society's land-holdings were actually dispersed throughout regions of white settlement. The central purpose of the organization was to enable fugitive slaves to own their own land, in the midst of white-dominated society.[51]

The historical record shows an overwhelming desire for integration in black

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[48] For example, some members of Butler's Rangers addressed a petition to Governor Simcoe in 1794 for a common land grant, hoping to prove to the government that "Negroes are capable of being industrious, and in loyalty to the crown they are not deficient." Petition of Free Negroes, July 8 1794, cited in Butler and Power, Slavery and Freedom, 15; also see 1829 Ancaster petition, discussed on p. 11 above.
[49] James W. St. G. Walker, "The Establishment of a Free Black Community in Nova Scotia", in The African Diaspora: Interpretive Essays. M. Kilson and R. Rotberg, eds. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), 210-213, 230-232.
[50] See pp. 12-13 above.
[51] Afua A.P. Cooper, "'Doing Battle in Freedom's Cause': Henry Bibb, Abolitionism, Race Uplift, and Black Manhood, 1842-1854", ((PhD. Dissertation: University of Toronto, 2000), 239-286.

Canada West society. The Canada West Education Department received dozens of appeals for integrated education from black parents during the 1840s and 50s.[52] Many black groups fought against white pressure to segregate themselves, as a group of African Canadians at Windsor asserted, they would not "yield to prejudice" at the risk of the "destruction of the rights of the people around us."[53] Black organizations and the popular press took on a strongly integrationist stance, as will be discussed below.

The black popular press argued strongly against segregation using knowledge of Canadian and British law to support its arguments. Canada West's first back newspaper, the *Voice of the Fugitive*, edited by Henry Bibb, was begun in 1850 as the organ of the Fugitive Union Society, a precursor to the Refugee Home Society, which advocated integrated settlement. Bibb's paper advocated black self-help, opposing the solicitation of funds, and calling upon African Canadians to relate to their fellow Canadians on equal terms. Asserting its editors' British loyalty, the newspaper made use of the crest of the British crown as its logo.[54]

In 1854, Mary Ann Shadd took on the duty of special agent for the Provincial Union, an organization founded in Toronto whose goals were to "diffuse a loyal spirit", "remove the stain of slavery" and "promote literature, general intelligence, universal freedom and a British union not based on complexional character." Rev. Ward was president of this organization and his wife was a member of the Ladies' Committee along with Shadd. The official organ of the association was Shadd's *Provincial Freeman*, whose goals were to "notify citizens against injustices in the United States and Canada"

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[52] AO, Incoming Education Correspondence, RG 2-12, 1844-50.
[53] AO, Incoming Education Correspondence, RG 2-12, Vol. 26, "Re. Colored Inhabitants of Windsor", Clayborn Harris to William Horton, February 15, 1859.
[54] Cooper, "'Doing Battle in Freedom's Cause'", 231-239, 299-303.

and "to work against arguments that different complexions can't live together under the protection of the 'British Lion, in British America'".[55] As H. Ford Douglass reported to the *Freeman* in 1857,

> We are opposed to all separate organizations ... that can have no other effect than that of creating a line of demarcation; fostering if not creating a spirit of caste here, such as colored men are compelled to suffer in the United States.[56]

After Bibb's death in 1854, the *Voice* stopped publication and the *Freeman* took over as Canada West's leading black newspaper. This paper was widely distributed with correspondents in Windsor, London, Brantford, Toronto and St. Catharines, and, not unlike the *Voice*, it strongly advocated integrationist views. Both the *Voice of the Fugitive* and *Provincial Freeman* were widely read, and as the only successful journals published by African Canadian at the time, they must have had an important influence on popular views.

In 1853 the General Convention for the Improvement of the Coloured Inhabitants of Canada was held in Amherstburg. Several resolutions were passed opposing the solicitation of funds, promoting loyalty to Britain, pride in its institutions and laws, and promoting integrated education.[57] In September 1854 the first True Band society was established at Amherstburg. Some of the goals of this co-ed organization included the improvement of schools and increase in school attendence, the arbitration of disputes between blacks and improvement of relations between blacks and whites.[58] African-Canadian organizations asserted a desire to be on the same footing as white Canadians. For this reason, many black Canadians refused to be treated as objects of pity, opposing

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[55] National Archives of Canada, Mary Ann Shadd Cary Papers, MG 24-K22, File 1, "Constitution of the Provincial Union" Toronto, August 9, 1854.
[56] H.F. Douglass, "The Duties of Colored Man in Canada", Provincial Freeman March 28, 1857.
[57] AO, McCurdy Papers, Minutes of the Amherstburg Convention, 1853, 7, 19.
[58] Walker, A History of Blacks in Canada, 119.

reliance on charity, proudly asserting that, like other Canadians, they could subsist through independent effort. As Henry Johnson of Buxton asserted to Benjamin Drew in 1856,

> the people here are very prosperous – they came into the woods without means, depending on their own hands; they never begged a meal here, - nor have any goods nor old clothing been distributed. If any were sent, I should want it sent back.[59]

African Canadians sought equal treatment and integration while retaining certain common components of a unique sense of identity formed in relation to the particular historical experiences of being black in North America. African-North American religion is a locus for the expression of certain aspects of black life in the North American context. As C. Eric Lincoln suggests, the black religious experience is "a unique response to a historical occurrence that can never be replicated for any people in America". Black churches were a "peculiar sustaining force that gave the [African American] the strength to endure when endurance gave no promise, and the courage to be creative in the face of his own dehumanization."[60]

As a result of their historical exclusion from white churches in North America, African Americans often formed their own congregations, which reflected their own religious experiences and served as a force for unity among people who had experienced the divisive effects of slavery. African Canadians who sought cooperation with white Christians, such as David George in Nova Scotia, and the Amherstburg Baptist Association of Canada West, were often pushed into segregation.

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[59] Drew, A Northside View of Slavery, 306.
[60] C. Eric Lincoln, "Foreword", in William R. Jones, Is God a White Racist? A Preamble to Black Theology (Garden City, NY: Anchor/Doubleday, 1973), viii.

In Nova Scotia, where some of the earliest British North American black missions and churches were founded, white missionaries worked among black settlers, many of whom had not been previously exposed to Christianity. Black Anglicans and Methodists in the province were relegated to separate galleries at first, and then slowly pushed out of white churches by increasing numbers of white parishioners. As government policy on land grants ensured that many black Nova Scotians lived in segregated settlements, separate black churches readily evolved. White missionaries to these settlements usually initiated a church and then left black leaders on their own to continue the maintenance of their congregations.[61]

Certain black migrants who had previously been exposed to Christian teaching took on important leadership roles in churches and in black communities at large. David George, a former slave from Virginia, was the first Baptist preacher in Nova Scotia and had the largest following of other ministers of his time. George attracted both white and black followers and he consistently sought to preach to integrated congregations. Several white Nova Scotians opposed George's efforts at integration; he was frequently harassed, and his church was burned down and property destroyed.[62]

In Upper Canada, white missionaries often encouraged separate churches and schools.[63] In addition, black religious leaders were often reluctant to fellowship with churches that maintained ties to pro-slavery institutions in the United States, and most Canadian Baptist and Methodist denominations did not break ties with southern pro-

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[61] Walker, "The Establishment of a Free Black Community", 215, 216.
[62] David George, "An Account of the Life of Mr. David George (as told to Brother John Rippon)", The Baptist Annual Register, Vol. 1, by John Rippon (London, 1793), 473-84; Grant Gordon, From Slavery to Freedom: The Life of David George, Pioneer Black Baptist Minister. (Hantsport, NS: Lancelot Press, 1992).
[63] Provincial Freeman, December 22, 1851; Colonial Church and School Society, Mission to the Fugitive Slaves, Annual Reports (1855-1860).

slavery churches. Certain Baptist organizations, such as the Long Point Baptist Association of Canada West, refused to admit black members. Black Baptist leaders unsuccessfully sought cooperation with white churches, and in 1841 organized the Amherstburg Baptist Association, which the white Long Point Association refused to recognize.[64]

The African Methodist Episcopal Church underwent a transformation in adapting to its new environment in Canada West. From 1843, efforts were made to curb late-night worship in order to conform to British-Canadian custom, and in an effort to remove "much of the odium commonly thrown upon our religious worship."[65] In July, 1855, a group at Chatham petitioned the General Conference to have a Book of Discipline "in accordance with the laws of Her Most Gracious Majesty, under whose sceptre we enjoy our rights as men". They also requested to be set apart "as a separate body" from the American branch of the Church.[66] Their petition was granted, and the newly created British Methodist Episcopal Church expressed its respect for the British government and its laws in its twenty-third Article of Religion:

> We acknowledge Her Majesty, Queen Victoria, as our rightful sovereign... British law throws the broad shield of equal protection over the life, the liberty, and the personal happiness of all its loyal subjects, without regard to the clime in which they were born, or the color of their skin, therefore we believe it our duty ever to pray that the most high God make the reign of Her Majesty peaceful, prosperous and happy; that every member of the royal family may be wise, holy and useful; and that the British Empire may continue to increase in power and prosperity till Christ himself descends to reign on earth.[67]

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[64] Dorothy Shadd Shreve, The AfriCanadian Church: A Stablizer (Jordan Station, Ontario: Paideia Press, 1983), 66-67.
[65] Daniel A. Payne, History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (Nashville: AME Sunday School Union, 1891), 160, 179.
[66] Ibid., 321.
[67] Ibid., 375.

Black religious leaders shared similar goals to their white counterparts, advocating education in Christian morality and setting up Sunday Schools to inculcate Christian values. Many black adults and children learned to read in Sunday School classes, suggesting that in "searching the Scriptures for themselves" they would "get out of the dark into the light."[68] Church leaders felt that Christian education was

> the only sure means of creating in the mind those noble feelings which prompt us to the practice of piety, virtue and temperance and elevate us above the condition of brutes by assimilating us to the image of our Maker.[69]

The African-American migration to Canada was often described in religious terms. Underground Railroad workers used biblical analogies to describe their people's escape from the "pharaohs of Egypt", following the North Star to the "Promised land" flowing with "milk and honey."[70] One common reaction upon arrival in Canada was to thank the Lord for delivering His people to "Canaan".[71] Rev. William Mitchell, a black Baptist minister in Toronto, used the analogy of a pilgrimage to describe the migration of a former slave:

> Trusting in the God of Israel, her trembling limbs bore her feeble body northward; subject to rain, hail, snow, and impetuous storms; a pilgrim ... to freedom's land, to worship God, and enjoy the boon of liberty.[72]

Popular poems and songs used religious imagery to describe the migration, such as John G. Whittier's "The New Exodus", printed in the *Provincial Freeman* of May 29, 1856:

> By fire and cloud, across the desert sand,
> And through the parted waves,
> From their long bondage with an out-stretched hand,
> God led the Hebrew slaves! ...

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[68] Amherstburg Baptist Association Minutes, 1867, cited in Shadd Shreve, The Afri-Canadian Church, 50
[69] Minutes of the AME Annual Conference (1837), in Payne, History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, 115.
[70] James K. Lewis, "Religious Nature of the Early Negro Migration to Canada and the Amherstburg Baptist Association" Ontario Historical Society. Papers and Records 58 (1966): 117.
[71] Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, 28.
[72] cited in Lewis, "Religious Nature of the Early Negro Migration", 118-119.

Not, as before, with hail and fire, and call
Or death for midnight graves,
But in the stillness of the noonday, fall
The fetters off the slaves.
No longer through the Red Sea, as of old,
The bondmen walk dry shod;
Through human hearts by love of Him controlled,
Runs now that path of God.

In these narratives Canada was depicted as a sacred place that offered redemption to pilgrims. As religious experience often evokes ambivalent reactions[73], so reactions to this new homeland were sometimes mixed. Many fugitive slaves experienced Canada, the land of promise, as a cold, harsh wilderness. Rev J.W. Loguen, a former slave, describes his reaction upon crossing the frozen Detroit River in the 1830s:

> When he put his foot on the soil, the angel of freedom touched his heart, and it lept for joy. Cold, cheerless, and unpromising as everything looked without him, he felt the divine hand within him, and he instinctively exclaimed, 'O Lord God, I thank thee! – I am free!'[74]

Two decades later, Loguen recalled his arrival in Hamilton: "Twenty-one years ago I stood on this spot penniless, ragged, lonely, helpless, hungry and forlorn. Hamilton was a cold wilderness for the fugitive when I came here."[75]

This ambiguous space served as a locus for the potential transformation of human beings in the black imagination. In Canada West Americans became British, slaves became free and new human communities that were not based on racial difference could be created. The arrival in Canada was a transformative experience for the fugitive slave and free but persecuted African American. Samuel Ringgold Ward agreed with British

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[73] Yi-Fu Tuan discusses the ambiguity of sacred space in his "Sacred Space: Explorations of an Idea" in Dimensions of Human Geography Karl W. Butzer, ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Department of Geography Research Paper 186, 1978), 84-99; See also Rudolf Otto's description of the "mysterium tremendum" in The Idea of the Holy. An Inquiry into the non-rational factor in the idea of the divine and its relation to the rational. John W. Harvey, trans. (London&New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), 12-30.

[74] Lewis, "Religious Nature of the Early Negro Migration", 119.

[75] Cited in Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, 60.

abolitionists who suggested that, "the sublimest sight in North America is the leap of a slave from a boat to the Canadian shore". Ward suggested, "that 'leap' transforms him from a marketable chattel to a free man... one can see in that 'leap' so much of the consummation of long and fondly cherished hope."[76] He went on to describe three stages of transformation undergone by former slaves on their way to Canada: "When [the former slave] reaches Canada, he is no longer either a slave or a fugitive, but a freeman."[77]

Josiah Henson, a former slave and founder of the Dawn settlement, testified that "when my feet first touched the Canada shore ... I threw myself on the ground, rolled in the sand, seized handfuls of it and kissed them ..." When someone asked if he was crazy, he replied, "Oh no ... don't you know? I'm free!"[78] Captain Chapman, the commander of a ship that carried two black people across Lake Erie from Cleveland to Canada, "witnessed a scene I will never forget" upon their arrival on the Canadian shore.

> They seemed to be transformed; a new light shone in their eyes, their tongues were loosed, they laughed and cried, prayed and sang praises, fell upon the ground and kissed it, hugged and kissed each other crying, 'Bless de Lord! Oh! I'se free before I die.'[79]

Another man, reporting to Howe, suggests that now that he lived in Canada, he had become a "regular Britisher. My American blood has been scourged out of me; I have lost my American tastes."[80] According to H. Ford Douglass, "We owe everything to

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[76] Ward, Autobiography, 158.
[77] Ibid., 159.
[78] Josiah Henson, An Autobiography of the Reverend Josiah Henson (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1969), 69-70.
[79] Cited in Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, 59.
[80] Howe, 26.

the country of our adoption ... Colored men should become as thoroughly British as they can..."[81]

Mary Ann Shadd emphasized Canada West's potential to remake human beings. In this space, "formerly totally destitute coloured persons" could become "independent", "successful" and "free".[82] Those who advocated independent effort, according to Shadd, were,

> free men ... amenable to British laws [who] wish to observe and appropriate to ourselves, *ourselves*, whatever of good there is in the society around us, and by our individual efforts, to attain to a respectable position, as do the many foreigners who land on the Canadian shores...[83]

For Shadd, this province was a picture of racial harmony and a paradise, likened to the Garden of Eden where the creation of the world began.

Shadd provides a particularly detailed description of a community of squatters on crown land that was not yet cleared. Here, black families were "interspersed among the French, Dutch, Scotch, Irish and Indians, in the woodlands districts: often English is not spoken ... Nothing but the sound of the axe, and their crude ideas of independence ... inspire them, unless it be an Indian campfire occasionally."[84] For Shadd, Canada West offered the potential for the creation of new human communities where people from all cultural backgrounds could live, work, socialize and build a new society together. Her written work offers a religious vision of a new Canadian society in which new human meanings are created, where whites and blacks, Indians, French, Dutch and British shared space, worked, prayed, learned and socialized together. *A Plea for Emigration* and other narratives of black immigration to Canada represent religious

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[81] H.F. Douglass, "The Duties of the Colored Man in Canada", Provincial Freeman, March 28, 1857.
[82] Shadd, A Plea for Emigration, 52.
[83] Ibid., 72.
[84] Ibid., 66.

responses to the colonial situation, as articulated by those who have been marginalized by the colonial situation. These mythologies are informed by the new material situation African Canadians confronted in Canada West, and in taking into account the altered human composition of this space they offer a religious redefinition of human relationships and community.[85]

African Canadian mythologies, such as Shadd's *A Plea for Emigration*, Ward's autobiography and Bibb's editorials are stories of origins that provide meaning and orientation for their readers. These stories can be compared to British-Canadian myths, such as Egerton Ryerson's *The Loyalists of America and their Times*, and Susanna Moodie's *Roughing it in the Bush.* In African-Canadian myths, God carried the weary fugitives to this Promised Land while in British-Canadian stories, strong, hardy loyalists made their own way to this empty territory. Black fugitives landed in Canaan, a strange wilderness that was also a potential land of milk and honey if by independent effort people could take advantage of the opportunities offered to them in this province. Conversely, according to white British myths, Anglo-Protestant migrants came to a wild land that they built from nothing into sacred British space. Shadd, Ward and Bibb's myths acknowledge the diverse human presence on the Canadian landscape while Ryerson and Moodie's stories fail to acknowledge the significance of any other human community aside from the British.

Both white British loyalists and African-American migrants felt they had God on their side as they worked to achieve success in this sacred British space that was

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[85] On religious meanings emerging out of the historical experience of oppression, see Charles H. Long, Significations, 179-184; Long, "Indigenous People, Materialities, and Religion: Outline for a New Orientation to Religious Meaning", in Religion and Global Culture, 167-68; Reid, "'Faire Place à une Race Métisse'", in Religion and Global Culture, 51-66.

protected by British law. And this law was held sacred in both mythic narratives. In Ryerson and Moodie's myths the British people refashioned this profane land as holy British territory, while in Shadd, Ward and Bibb's tales Canada West was already great before the arrival of their people, who had to work hard to prove themselves worthy and to make the most of their experience as free people in this sacred space.

While Anglo-Protestant myths described Canada West as a recreation of the land they left behind and the province's British inhabitants as unaffected by their new surroundings, African-Canadian myths emphasized the creation of new human beings in Canada West. Black Canadian narratives recognized the historical reality of Canada West's diverse character and saw the potential for the creation of a new and integrated human community under the protection of the sacred British Empire.

Chapter Five – Segregation and the Ideal of British Purity in Canada West Public Schools

In attempting to build a British society in Canada West, an important priority was to develop an education system where British values could be passed on to future generations of citizens of the Empire and where societal ideals could be firmly planted. By the mid-nineteenth century a public education system was put in place, which purported to offer universal education to all children of Canada West. However, as this system was devised to lay the foundation for the ideal British society, those who were seen as threats to British purity were never permitted to benefit equally from the system.

Until the nineteenth century Canadian schools were private, church-run institutions. As Upper Canadian society privileged its Loyalist heritage, the British state began to intervene in educational matters, working to promote identification with British and Protestant cultural values among the citizens of the Canadas. John Graves Simcoe established a strong English influence on the development of schools in Upper Canada. In 1797 he succeeded in gaining a government land grant for the support of grammar schools to serve the children of the Anglican élite. Ten years later, the Upper Canadian government passed legislation providing for the establishment of a grammar school in each of the eight districts of the province. In 1815 John Strachan, Anglican priest and member of the executive council, made recommendations for a system of government-supported common schools in Upper Canada. Many of these recommendations were put into effect with the Common School Act of 1816, which provided a government grant to help pay teachers' salaries for newly established common schools, and forbade the hiring of American teachers because of their "pernicious" and "deleterious influence".[1]

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[1] J. Donald Wilson, "Education in Upper Canada: Sixty Years of Change", in Canadian Education: A

During the 1830s reform-minded members of the Legislative Assembly called for further public support for common schools. Lord Durham's Report of 1839, which advocated the Anglicization and conversion to British Protestantism of French Canadians, also called for a system of public education that could put these goals into effect. The Act of Union of 1840 served to escalate divisions between Canada's two main European groups in spite of its intended goals of unification, as Canada East's larger population base was represented by an equal number of seats to Canada West in the Legislative Assembly and the older province was forced to share in Canada West's debt.[2] In an effort to gain acceptance for a common system of education in both regions of Canada, several compromises were introduced into the legislation, including a provision that allowed for separate schools. Protestants in Canada East were the strongest advocates of these schools, and Canada West's Roman Catholics and several Anglicans, alienated by the overtly evangelical characteristics of schools in Canada West, soon took advantage of their rights to set up separate schools.[3]

When Egerton Ryerson took over the position of assistant superintendent of schools for Canada West in 1844,[4] this system of common schools, originally advocated as a means of ensuring cultural uniformity in the Canadas, was very much divided along ethnic and religious lines. Ryerson was under pressure to enforce a well-organized system of public instruction under a strong and centralized administrative structure, and his 1846 School Act marked an important step toward a highly centralized education

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History Wilson, Stamp, Audet, eds. (Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1970), 200.

[2] Robert Choquette, Ontario. An Informal History of the Land and its People (Toronto: Ontario, Minster of Education, 1983), 25.

[3] Wilson, "Education in Upper Canada", 210.

[4] He took on the title of Chief Superintendent of Schools in 1846 when the education systems of the two Canadas became independent of each other.

system.[5] The school system under his control, if it was to be universal, also had to serve a divided and rapidly diversifying populace of French-Canadian Catholics, British Protestants, increasing numbers of Irish and Scottish Catholics, new immigrants from all over Western Europe, African Canadians and Native peoples.

Ryerson, a former Methodist missionary, approved of the established system of separate education for Native children and focused his efforts on establishing a functioning administrative structure of public schools that would serve the European population of Canada West. Like Lord Durham, Ryerson aimed to promote British and Protestant values through public education. His goal as superintendent was to "devise and develop a system of sound universal education [based] on Christian principles, imbued with a spirit of affectionate loyalty to the Throne and attachment to the unity of the Empire."[6] This system was to be "the indirect but powerful instrument of British Constitutional Government".[7]

The "universal" system advocated by Ryerson did not account for the cultural and religious diversity of Canada West. This system of public schools was established to train the next generation of morally responsible British citizens in order to ensure the moral code and social stability of the colony.[8] Those who were not of British-Protestant heritage, such as Native peoples, Catholics and black people, often felt alienated from these institutions and were treated as peripheral to educational development or as threats

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[5] Wilson, "Education in Upper Canada", 209; R.D. Gidney and D.A. Lawr, "The Development of an Administrative System for the Public Schools: The First Stage, 1841-50" in Neil McDonald and Alf Chaiton, eds. Egerton Ryerson and His Times (Toronto: MacMillan, 1978), 162.
[6] Address to Lord Dufferin, cited in J. George Hodgins, Documentary History, vol.24: 1872 (1908), 70.
[7] Cited in Clara Thomas, Ryerson of Upper Canada (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1969), 99. Ryerson also suggested that the purpose of education was to make Canada West "British in domestic feeling", cited in David Mills, The Idea of Loyalty in Upper Canada, 1785-1850 (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), 58.
[8] William Westfall, Two Worlds, 201-202.

to the proper functioning of schools. Ryerson saw separate schools as an exceptional and unnecessary privilege that would gradually disappear under the public system, which was purportedly non-sectarian and universal.[9] At the same time, he advocated an education system based on specifically Protestant values, such as the belief in the sole authority of the Bible and the emphasis on the individual's role in transforming society through adherence to a strict moral code.[10] As Catholic leaders demanded more equitable funding and control over an expanding separate school system during the 1850s, Ryerson came to describe separate education as subversive to public education and he expressed fears that Catholic efforts to assert their rights to schooling would "destroy the system of public schools".[11]

Petitions to the Education Department from white trustees and parents frequently complained that black and aboriginal people should not be permitted to attend common schools with white children.[12] Attempts by African Canadians to assert their rights to attend common schools were seen to threaten "the harmony in school matters".[13] Several trustees complained to Ryerson that "schools have been broken up"[14] because black children were "forcing themselves into the same schools with the white children".[15]

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[9] Franklin A. Walker, Catholic Education and Politics in Upper Canada, Volume 1, Third Edition, (Toronto: The Catholic Education Foundation of Ontario, 1985), 116, 143, 168.
[10] According to Bruce Curtis, an important goal of public education was "the moral regulation of the population" through an emphasis on self-regulation. Building the Educational State, 109.
[11] Cited in J. Harold Putnam, Egerton Ryerson and Education in Upper Canada (Toronto: William Briggs, 1912), 194; also see Walker, Catholic Educatoin, 176
[12] See "Correspondence in Regard to Indian Schools", in J. George Hodgins, Documentary History, vol. 6: 1846 (1894), 296-298.
[13] Archives of Ontario, Incoming Education Correspondence, Vol. 12, George Duck (Chatham) to Ryerson, 7 March 1852.
[14] AO, Incoming Education Correspondence, Vol. 20, John Cowan (Sandwich) to Rev. McNab, 15 October 1845, Vol. 4; James Douglas (West Flamboro) to Ryerson, 3 February 1856.
[15] Harrow and Colchester South Township School Area Board, A Story of Public Schools, 11.

In his Report of 1846, Ryerson asserted that public education would be grounded in the "general system of truth and morals taught in the Holy Scriptures."[16] The goal of education was to raise morally upright citizens of the Empire. Upper Canadians looked to a moral education to solve social problems, especially lower-class crime.[17] Ryerson suggested that universal education placed the "poor man on a level with the rich man", thus promoting harmony in class relations, and eventually, a classless society.[18] School promoters asserted that education was the key to upward social mobility, whereas a lack of education ensured a drop in social and economic status.[19] Because of the colour of their skin, black people (who were often among the lower economic classes) were not afforded the same opportunities for social advancement as their white counterparts. They were usually prevented from attending common schools and, thus, many remained uneducated. People who lacked education were perceived to be ignorant, and as ignorance, according to Ryerson, was "an evil to society", the uneducated were seen as lacking in moral training.[20]

One common reason given for the exclusion of black children from common schools was that parents and school trustees feared that they would have a negative moral influence upon white children. Black children in the united township of Camden and Zone, northeast of Chatham, were kept out of local common schools because white parents felt that "the children of the coloured people" were "in respect to morals and

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[16] Egerton Ryerson, "Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, 1846", in Hodgins Documentary History, Vol. 6: 1846, 147.
[17] Goldwin S. French, "Egerton Ryerson and the Methodist Model for Upper Canada", in Egerton Ryerson and His Times Neil McDonald and Alf Chaiton, eds. (Toronto: MacMillan, 1978), 45, 50; Alison Prentice, The School Promoters: Education and Social Class in Mid-Nineteenth Century Upper Canada, 3rd Printing (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 47-50.
[18] Cited in Curtis, Building the Educational State, 111.
[19] Prentice, The School Promoters, 66.
[20] Cited in Susan E. Houston, "Social Reform and Education: The Issue of Compulsory Schooling, Toronto, 1851-71" in Egerton Ryerson and His Times, 256.

habits ... worse trained than the white children", and feared that their own children "might suffer from the effects of bad example."[21] Parents in London, who hoped to open a segregated school for black children in 1861, lamented the "moral degradation of the unfortunate African", who was "rude in speech, uncouth in manners and address and untidy in attire." The fact that black children already sat on separate benches at schools in London was not considered protection enough for the white children. Segregationist sentiment was well articulated in the *London Free Press* in 1861:

> We are confident, however much as our fellow-citizens, as a people, may sympathize in the suffering and moral degradation of the unfortunate African in the neighbouring Republic ... were each to express the genuine sentiments of his own heart, he would boldly declare his unwillingness that his daughter, verging upon womanhood, should be constrained to associate, for six hours in the day, with negroes of either sex.[22]

This stigma created a vicious cycle for school-age black children: because they were perceived as a moral threat, they were kept out of schools and not allowed access to the education that would allow them to qualify as morally acceptable citizens.

By the mid-nineteenth century schools in Canada West functioned as sanctuaries where children were removed from negative influence, trained to uphold societal values and become morally responsible British citizens. According to Joachim Wach, public schooling served a religious purpose; here, children were initiated into the rites of adulthood, and introduced to the myths, doctrines and ritual traditions of British-Canadian society.[23] Buildings of frame and later brick construction were built to function for the sole purpose of educating children; by the late 1850s these buildings adhered to

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[21] re. Dennis Hill v. the School Trustees of Camden and Zone, Upper Canada Queen's Bench Reports, Volume 11, 578.
[22] London Free Press, July 22, 1861.
[23] Joachim Wach, Sociology of Religion (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944), 64.

government guidelines for the equipment and construction of a proper schoolhouse.[24] Schools were fenced off and located at a distance from commercial and industrial sectors, so as to separate children from negative societal influences.[25] Teachers and trustees in several towns discouraged the use of the schoolhouse for community and religious meetings, complaining that these meetings damaged school property and left the schoolhouse dirty.[26] Administrators urged the community to take good care of these "seminaries for the cultivation of the taste, the manners, and the minds of intelligent and rational beings".[27]

School rules usually required that students dress appropriately, arrive on time and generally "observe good order".[28] The education department discouraged the use of "foreign [American] books" that were seen as "both anti-British and unpatriotic" and instead promoted the use of the Irish National Readers.[29] The department instituted a system of inspection to ensure that unauthorized books were not used.[30] Teachers were encouraged to undergo government training and were expected to act as moral exemplars.[31] Ryerson's ideal educational institution was to be,

> a place of learning where the stream of educational instruction shall not be mingled with the polluted waters of corrupt example; where the pupils will be guarded against the infection of immoral principles and practices...[32]

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[24] J. George Hodgins, The School House: Its Architecture, External and Internal Arrangements (Toronto: Lovell and Gibson, 1857).
[25] Prentice, The School Promoters, 39-40.
[26] Curtis, Building the Educational State, 227-28.
[27] Annual Report of Port Hope Trustees, 1850, cited in Susan E. Houston and Alison Prentice, Schooling and Scholars in Nineteenth-Century Ontario (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 206.
[28] Houston and Prentice, 57-58.
[29] Ryerson to George Hendry, Superintendent of Common Schools for Brock District, Feb. 1, 1847, in Hodgins, Documentary History, vol.6: 1846, 284
[30] Bruce Curtis, True Government by Choice Men?, 69, 71.
[31] As Houston and Prentice point out, sought-after teachers possessed the qualities of "morality, manners and ability", 63.
[32] Cited in Goldwin S. French, "Egerton Ryerson and the Methodist Model for Upper Canada", in Egerton Ryerson and His Times, 56.

These efforts to regulate the construction and maintenance of schools, to control the material and people who entered the buildings, and to introduce behavioural guidelines set schools apart from other institutions in the mid-nineteenth century. Schools at this time could be compared to religious sanctuaries of the state, and they were idealized as pure, protected spaces. The protective boundaries around schools were set up in such a way as to keep out anyone or anything who could potentially defile the purity of the educational facility. Black students, whose presence was thought to be polluting, were not permitted to cross these boundaries.

Many black children found themselves excluded from public education, or forced into segregation, a practice that was against the spirit if not the letter of the law. Education laws were changed to accommodate racism, while at the same time guardians of the education system tolerated illegal discriminatory practices. In spite of the fact that the British laws in use in Canada West declared equal treatment for all and the School Act of 1846 declared education for all without regard to religion, race, or language, African Canadians were often refused entry into public schools.

Toronto was perhaps the one place where segregation in public education was not the norm. Black doctors graduated from the city's medical schools and Emaline Shadd, Mary Ann's sister, received top honours from the Toronto Normal School in 1855.[33] Egerton Ryerson attributes this inclusive spirit to the "good sense and Christian and British feeling" of the citizens of Toronto,[34] but the reasons for integration in Toronto are perhaps better understood in more practical terms.

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[33] Hill, The Freedom Seekers, 158.
[34] AO, Outgoing Education Correspondence, RG 2-8, Volume 7, Ryerson to Dennis Hill, Nov. 30, 1852.

According to Daniel G. Hill, author of one of the few studies on Toronto's black community prior to the late nineteenth century, a relatively affluent population of blacks in the city had immigrated over a long period of time and had established a strong infrastructure to support new immigrants. Black immigrants from the United States arrived in a slow and steady migration by mid-century, never by sudden influx, and found work easily in the city's growing economy.[35] Some of Canada's most vocal anti-slavery activists lived in Toronto and were opposed to racial segregation. George Brown, editor of the *Globe* (ironically a vehement anti-Catholic) had an important influence on preventing the introduction of segregation into the city's institutions.

In spite of Toronto's good record on school integration, racism was far from completely absent. As G.F. Simpson reported to S.G. Howe, "I must say that, leaving the law out of the question, I find that prejudice here is equally strong as on the other side [in the United States]."[36] The vast majority of black settlers lived in one section of the city, St. John's Ward.[37] As a result, policies of school segregation may not have seemed necessary if large numbers of black students were together in the same school section, already separated from white students by virtue of district boundaries. In addition, African Canadians made up only 2 per cent of Toronto's total population in 1854, compared with between 20 to 30 per cent of some towns in the southwestern regions of Canada West, such as Chatham, Colchester and Amherstburg.[38] It is thus not surprising

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[35] Daniel G. Hill, "Negroes in Toronto, 1793-1865", Ontario History, 55(June 1963): 76-84.
[36] S. G. Howe, The Refugees from Slavery, 45.
[37] Adrienne Shadd, Afua Cooper, Karolyn Smardz Frost, The Underground Railroad: Next Stop, Toronto! (Toronto: Natural Heritage Books, 2002), 33.
[38] According to Benjamin Drew, the peak population of blacks in Toronto was 1000 out of a total population of 47 000 in 1854. In Amherstburg, south of Windsor, there were approximately 400-500 blacks out of a total population of 2000; in neighbouring Colchester, 450 blacks out of a total population of 1500; and in Chatham, 800 out of a total population of 4000. Drew, A Northside View of Slavery, 94, 234, 348, 367.

that issues of segregated schooling were les pronounced in Toronto and more of an issue in communities with larger concentrations of African Canadians.

In most Canada West towns, the majority of white parents as well as school trustees were opposed to integration. If black children were allowed into the schools they were usually forced to sit on separate benches.[39] More often than not, however, black children were not admitted into common schools at all and little concern was shown for their education. Isaac Rice, a missionary in Amherstburg, wrote to Egerton Ryerson in 1846 complaining that black people in his town were deprived of their education rights. He suggested that the parents of white children would "sooner ... cut their children's heads off and throw them into the road side ditch" than send their children to school with "niggers".[40] In 1847, the London Auxiliary Bible Society reported that although blacks in London paid the school tax, "if any Coloured child enters a school, the white children are withdrawn, the teachers are painfully obliged to decline, and the Coloured people ... yield to an injustice which they are too weak to redress."[41] In towns such as Colchester and Sandwich, trustees divided school districts in order to avoid inter-racial contact.[42]

These efforts to segregate black students were blatantly against the laws in force at the time. The School Act of 1843 clearly states:

> it shall not be lawful for such Trustees, or for the Chief, or other, Superintendent of Common Schools, or for any Teacher to exclude from any Common School or

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[39] This was common practice in Hamilton, and in West Flamboro before black children were excluded from the town's common schools altogether. AO, Incoming Education Correspondence, RG 2-12, Vol. 4, Patrick Thornton to Alexander McNab, November 26, 1844; Vol. 20, James Douglas to Ryerson, February 3, 1856; Vol. 25, Jefferson Lightfoot to Ryerson, October 5, 1858.

[40] Isaac Rice et al. to Egerton Ryerson, cited in Hodgins, Documentary History, vol. 6: 1846, 294.

[41] AO, J. George Hodgins Fonds, F1207, London Auxiliary Bible Society to William H. Draper, March 27, 1847.

[42] AO, Incoming Education Correspondence, RG 2-12, Vol. 4, John Cowan (Sandwich) to Alexander McNab, October 15, 1845; Harrow and Colchester South Township School Area Board, A Story of Public Schools, 8.

> from the benefit of education therein, the children of any class or description of persons resident within the School district to which such common school may belong.[43]

The Department of Education received several appeals to intervene against segregation, and in response superintendent Egerton Ryerson admitted that exclusion was, "at variance with the letter and spirit of the law, and ... with the principles and spirit of British Institutions, which deprive no human being of any benefit ... on account of the colour of his skin."[44] However, Ryerson continued to tolerate illegal discrimination in the schools, claiming there was nothing he could do to stop it.

Prior to Ryerson's appointment as superintendent of Education, the Department of Education did intervene in one case and was successful in pressuring trustees to allow black children into common schools. A group of African Canadians from Hamilton petitioned Governor General Sir Charles Metcalfe in 1843 for access to common schools. Metcalfe took an interest in the case and contacted the Assistant Superintendent of Education for Canada West, Robert Murray, instructing him to resolve the problem. As a result of pressure from the higher echelons of government, the Hamilton Board of Police, who was responsible for managing the schools, assured Murray that "it would not be advisable to yield to [prejudice] ... the law ought to be enforced without distinction of colour."[45] The law was enforced.

Although black children were still required to sit on separate benches in many of Hamilton's common schools and opposition to integration remained strong, there were no

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[43] "An Act for the Establishment and Maintenance of Common Schools in Upper Canada", Section 44, Clause 7, in Hodgins, Documentary History, vol. 4: 1841-1843 (1897), 258.
[44] AO, Outgoing Education Correspondence, RG 2-8, Vol. 3, Ryerson to Isaac Rice et al., March 5, 1846.
[45] AO, Incoming Education Correspondence, RG 2-12, Vol. 2, Petition of the Coloured Inhabitants of Hamilton to Sir Charles Metcalfe, October 15, 1843; AO, Outgoing Education Correspondence, RG 2-8, Vol. 1, Robert Murray to George S. Tiffany, October 19, 1843; RG 2-12, Vol. 2, Tiffany to Murray, November 9, 1843.

further complaints from Hamilton regarding exclusion from the schools. Two of Hamilton's influential political leaders, member of Parliament Isaac Buchanan and principal Archibald McCullum of Hamilton High School were sympathetic to the integrationist cause.[46] The leadership of these men was certainly an important factor in ensuring that Hamilton schools remained integrated. As principal McCullum noted, black and white students were easily integrated at his school:

> little children do not show the slightest repugnance to playing with the coloured children, or coming in contact with them. I never knew of a case. But sometimes parents will not let their children sit at the same desk with a coloured child. The origin of the difficulty is not being treated like the other children.[47]

In other regions of Canada West school segregation was the norm. Few influential white leaders in the Western and Niagara peninsulas spoke out against the exclusion of African Canadians from common schools. Egerton Ryerson, who replaced Robert Murray as assistant superintendent in 1844, did not effectively intervene in any cases of exclusion. In practice, the provincial Board of Education tolerated and even encouraged segregation after 1844. Ryerson, who advocated a strong central authority in matters of public education, declared himself powerless before local trustees' decisions to exclude blacks from their schools. In response to complaints from London, Ryerson claimed, "I have done what I could to remedy [this problem], but with only partial success. The caste of colour in this case is stronger than the law."[48] There is no evidence in the Department of Education correspondence, however, that Ryerson involved himself in this conflict at all. Alexander McNab, acting superintendent during Ryerson's international educational tour of 1844-45, went so far as to encourage racial segregation

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[46] Howe, The Refugees from Slavery, 42-43.
[47] Ibid., 47.
[48] AO, J. George Hodgins Fonds, F 1207, 12, Ryerson to W.H. Draper. April 12, 1847.

when he suggested to a Sandwich trustee in 1845 that segregated districts would be the "remedy of the evil..." of blacks "forcing" themselves into schools with white children.[49]

Admission to common schools was an important goal among African Canadians in Canada West. An 1841 report to Lord Sydenham suggested that, "the cause of first complaint of our coloured men is the difficulty they experience in procuring admission for their children into common schools."[50] Faced with exclusion from the common school in Amherstburg, a group of African Canadians worked with the missionary Isaac Rice to start their own public school open to students of all backgrounds in 1846, and the school trustees made numerous appeals for their share of the government grant. African- and French-Canadian populations of Amherstburg lived in close proximity to each other and were forced to compete for a school in the same district; it would seem that the municipality would not allow for more than one public school aside from the institution already established for white English-speaking citizens of the town.[51]

Where black children were excluded from public education, black teachers often took the initiative to start their own schools. Upon the Bibbs' arrival in Sandwich in 1850 no public schooling was available to black students. Mary Bibb began to teach classes in her own home, but she faced difficulty procuring adequate quarters and funding for her students, and this school folded by 1853. Soon after, Bibb opened a new school in nearby Windsor. This was the only school available to black students until 1859 when

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[49] AO, Outgoing Education Correspondence, RG 2-8, Vol. 2, Alexander McNab to John Cowan. November 5, 1845.
[50] National Archives of Canada, Colonial Office 42/478, Original Correspondence, Secretary of State, Upper Canada: Dispatches, E. de St.-Remy to Lord Sydenham, April 5, 1841.
[51] AO, Incoming Education Correspondence, RG 2-12, Vol. 5, Rice et al. to Ryerson, January 23, 1846; Peden to Ryerson, February 23, 1846; Outgoing Education Correspondence, RG 2-8, Vol. 3, Ryerson to Peden, March 5, 1846.

the public school trustees decided to establish a separate school for black students.[52] The Refugee Home Society, founded by Mary Bibb's husband, Henry, also ran at least one successful school in the rural surroundings of Sandwich during the 1850s.[53] Mary Bibb and some other teachers received a small amount of assistance from American philanthropists; however, black teachers in Canada West were poorly paid, their schools were largely under-funded and most were short-lived.[54]

Many African Canadians benefited on a short-term basis from missionary efforts at education. The American Missionary Association established a Canada Mission, which sporadically funded schools in the Dawn settlement (British American Institute), St. Catharines, Amherstburg, and some small rural communities in the Amherstburg area during the 1840s and into the 1850s. By 1853, however, this mission, which sought to serve both black and white children, was in decline, with only one school left in operation.[55] The AMA also provided Mary Ann Shadd with partial funding for her short-lived Windsor school and assisted with Amelia Freeman's school for advanced learning in Chatham, established around 1856.[56]

Several black children attended Colonial Church and School Society mission schools in London, Chatham, Hamilton, Amherstburg and Sandwich during the 1850s, but most of these schools lasted only a few years. In London, the CCSS school actually

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[52] Prior to Bibb, Mary Ann Shadd held classes in Windsor from 1851-1853, Richard Almonte, "Introduction" in Mary Ann Shadd, A Plea for Emigration, 16; Afua Cooper, "Black Teachers in Canada West", 29-45.
[53] Carole Jensen, "History of the Negro Community in Essex County, 1850-1860" (MA thesis: University of Windsor, 1966), 52; Spencer, "To Nestle in the Mane", 178.
[54] Cooper, "Black Teachers", 64-92.
[55] H. H. Spencer, "To Nestle in the Mane of the British Lion: A History of Canadian Black Education, 1820 to 1870" (PhD dissertation, Northwestern University, 1970), 159-177; Pease and Pease, Black Utopia, 64.
[56] Amelia Freeman married Isaac D. Shadd, who later managed her school, while Mary Ann Shadd and two of her sisters shared teaching duties. Cooper, "Black Teachers", 86-88.

served a larger number of white students than black.[57] Mission schools at Dresden (near the former Dawn settlement) and Windsor operated into the 1860s.[58] The Baptist Free Mission also operated a school in Chatham for black students who had been forced to attend segregated schools since 1840.[59] Some mission schools faced opposition from black leaders, as a result of the patronizing attitude of some white missionaries and because the schools were thought to promote segregation.[60]

The Buxton Mission school, a private institution established at the Elgin settlement by William King , was open to all children regardless of race. Because the quality of instruction, given by graduates of Knox Presbyterian College in Toronto, was far superior to that of schools in neighbouring Chatham, by 1851 almost all the students from the common school run by King's nemesis Edwin Larwill, had joined the black students in Buxton.[61]

Indeed, the vast majority of private schools established by or for African Canadians were open to black, white and aboriginal students who wanted to attend. These schools were often opened as an alternative to the strict segregation imposed in government schools. Mary Bibb, who worked for a government school in Sandwich for a short time, opened a private school in Windsor that was to be "free to all, irrespective of color".[62] By 1855, seven of her forty-six students where white.[63] According to Mary Ann

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[57] Elliott, "Black Education in Canada West", 80.
[58] Spencer, "To Nestle in the Mane", 126; Elliott, "Black Education in Canada West", 42-77; Farrell, "The History of the Negro Community in Chatham", 144-45.
[59] Harriett Chatters, "Negro Education in Kent County to 1890", 3; Victor Lauriston, "Early Schools Were Bunched", Chatham Daily News, May 1, 1963.
[60] The Provincial Freeman called for the black population to boycott mission schools in 1854: "Keep your children away from the colored African school and the plan must fail." Provincial Freeman (September 16, 23, 1854).
[61] "Schools in Canada", Voice of the Fugitive, July 18, 1852; Ullman, Look to the North Star, 148-49.
[62] Mary Bibb to Horace Mann, 20 January, 1853, cited in Cooper, "Black Teachers", 38.
[63] Benjamin Drew, A Northside View of Slavery, 321-22.

Shadd, "the colored common schools have more of a complexional character than the private, which, with no exception I have heard of, are open to all."[64] By 1859, Shadd and some of her other siblings worked with Amelia Freeman at her "school for all";[65] several white students attended the schools at which Shadd taught.[66] Schools managed by African Canadians were rarely, if ever, exclusive. Instead, the vast majority of black educators in Canada West looked to promote integration.

At the same time as African Canadians sought integrated education, public education officials imposed segregation upon an unwilling black population. By 1850, the Council of Public Instruction had changed education laws to accommodate racist tendencies. The School Act of 1850 includes a provision for the establishment of separate schools based on race. Section XIX reads:

> It shall be the duty of the Municipal Council of any Township, and of the Board of School Trustees of any City, Town or incorporated Village, on the application, in writing, of twelve, or more, resident heads of families, to authorize the establishment of one, or more, Separate schools for Protestants, Roman Catholics, or Coloured people.[67]

Perhaps because Canada West's Roman Catholic leaders strongly supported separate denominational schools, historians have tended to assume that African Canadians were also of a similar mind regarding separate racial schools. Robin Winks, whose foundational work is a significant resource for an understanding of racism in black education, argues that the black community was divided over the issue of segregation. Although some of his conclusions regarding a segregationist/ integrationist dichotomy

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[64] Shadd, A Plea for Emigration, 66.
[65] Provincial Freeman, 28 January, 1859.
[66] Hill, The Freedom Seekers, 156.
[67] J. George Hodgins, Historical and Other Papers and Documents Illustrative of the Educational System of Ontario, 1853-1868 (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1911), 213.

have been criticized,[68] his suggestion that certain African Canadians promoted segregated schooling has not been questioned in historical scholarship. Winks suggests that a significant event highlighting divisions regarding segregation in education was the attempt by the Elgin Association for official incorporation in 1850. This association managed the Elgin settlement at Raleigh, also known as Buxton. According to Winks, the Elgin Association promoted segregation, and this caused much controversy in the black community.[69] It must be kept in mind, however, that, although the Buxton school was set up primarily for black children who were not welcome in common schools, a significant number of white students also attended integrated classes at Buxton. The petition to incorporate the association was made by Skeffington Connor, a white lawyer, and member of a racially mixed board. It cannot be concluded, then, that the Elgin Association represented "separatist" tendencies among black people in Canada West.

Some historians, likely influenced by Winks's assumptions about segregationist tendencies, have suggested that the 1850 provision for separate racial schools was adopted as a result of pressure from black interest groups. Susan Houston and Alison Prentice's *Schooling and Scholars in Nineteenth Century Ontario* is the only general history of education to discuss black education in any detail, and the work provides a sympathetic portrayal of the experiences of black students in Ontario schools. Nonetheless, the authors are incorrect in suggesting that the introduction of the segregated school clause of 1850 came at the request of black parents and was against the

[68] For example, Afua Cooper argues that historical understandings of Canada's black community have over-emphasized a segregationist/integrationist dichotomy, and as a result, have misinterpreted certain African-Canadian motivations. "'Doing Battle in Freedom's Cause': Henry Bibb, Abolitionism, Race Uplift, and Black Manhood, 1842-1854" (PhD Dissertation: University of Toronto, 2000), 22-27.
[69] Winks, The Blacks in Canada, 366.

better judgment of government officials, who preferred integration.[70] J. Donald Wilson makes a similar argument, although he does assert that Ryerson was ultimately responsible for the segregated school legislation.[71]

Houston and Prentice make reference to appeals by black parents that their children be admitted into common schools, and to legislative debates concerning black education, but they base their conclusions on an article in the *Voice of the Fugitive* by Henry Bibb, who lamented that a request for separate schools had been made "not ... by the intelligent portion of the colored population, but by a lot of ignoramuses who were made fools of, and who knew not what they were doing".[72] Bibb arrived in Canada after the 1850 School Act was implemented, and his explanations of the history of separate schooling are not entirely accurate. In his editorial, Bibb suggested that the law allowing separate schools was requested by some of the "colored people and the Catholics". While it is true that, after legislation for separate denominational schools was originally introduced in 1841, Catholics in Canada West did lay claim to their right to establish these schools, Protestants were actually the most vocal supporters of the legislation.[73] While Bibb suggests that some black people requested separate schools for whatever reason (perhaps because they were "made fools of"), it does not necessarily follow that the separate racial schools legislation of 1850 was introduced at the request of blacks. As Bibb was incorrect in his assumption about Catholics, and because he was not in Canada to witness the events leading up to the introduction of the segregated school clause, it is also highly probable that his assertions regarding black requests for separate schools are

[70] Houston and Prentice, Schooling and Scholars, 298-300.
[71] Wilson, "The Ryerson Years in Canada West", 232.
[72] Voice of the Fugitive, January 1, 1852.
[73] See Wilson, "Education in Upper Canada: Sixty Years of Change" in Canadian Education, 210-211.

inaccurate, especially considering that there is no other evidence to support his claims. Without further evidence, the fact that Houston and Prentice base their entire argument on Bibb's claims places too much weight on his interpretations. Other primary sources cited by Houston and Prentice, Wilson and Winks, include petitions from black people complaining of exclusion and supporting admission into integrated schools. Not one of these petitions requests that the government allow for the establishment of separate schools based on race.

In contrast, support for separate schools among white leaders was quite strong. The archival records of the Education Department show that white local superintendents, government officials and missionaries proposed the establishment of separate racial schools. Robert Peden, local superintendent for Amherstburg, felt that the only way to ensure education for black children was to establish school districts "not having a local boundary, and embracing a particular class of persons, such as the coloured people."[74] The London Auxiliary Bible Society was of a similar mind with Peden when it appealed for the establishment of separate schools for "coloured children".[75] In 1848 the Western District Council sent a recommendation to Ryerson that the School Act be amended to allow for separate racial schools.[76] Thomas Hawkins, superintendent of Colchester, made the recommendation to the Council because he felt that black children were a burden on the school system and that separate schooling would be the best means of preventing them from "forcing themselves into the same schools with the white children".[77]

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[74] AO, Incoming Education Correspondence, RG 2-12, Vol. 5, Peden to Ryerson, February 23, 1846.
[75] AO, J. George Hodgins Fonds, F1207, London Auxiliary Bible Society to William H. Draper, March 27, 1847.
[76] George Bullock, Warden of Western District Council to Ryerson, February 7, 1848, in Hodgins, Documentary History, vol. 7: 1847, 48 (1900), 124.
[77] Harrow and Colchester South Township School Area Board, A Story of Public Schools, 11.

When first confronted with opposition to integration in public schools, Ryerson suggested that a law acknowledging the racist tendencies of Upper Canadians would be "a disgrace to our Legislature." In his draft of the 1847 School Bill for cities and towns, he allowed trustees a broad base of power to "establish any kind or description of schools they may please." This vague directive was deliberately left open to interpretation, so that trustees could "establish one or more schools for coloured children. Thus the best interests as well as the rights of the coloured people can be respected and promoted, and nothing insidious be admitted into the Statute book."[78]

After his tour of the Western District in 1848, Ryerson came to the conclusion that this newly introduced provision did not allow for the education of black children, and so he drafted a new provision "authorizing each District council to establish one or more Schools for the children of Coloured people".[79] This proposal became law in the 1850 School Act. Ryerson submitted this proposal "with extreme pain and regret." He claimed to "have exerted all the power that I possessed, and employed all the persuasion I could command, but the prejudices and feelings of the people are stronger than law."[80] As evidenced by his responses to appeals by African Canadians against exclusion and his correspondence with local school officials, however, Ryerson, unlike his predecessor Robert Murray, was more inclined to tolerate discrimination than exert any pressure to resolve the issue. As Chief Justice Beverly Robinson remarked in a later Supreme Court ruling regarding the exclusion of black children from common schools, "separate schools

[78] AO, J. George Hodgins Fonds, F 1207, 12, Ryerson to W.H. Draper. April 12, 1847.
[79] Egerton Ryerson, "Explanation of the Provisions of a Proposed School Bill of 1849" in Hodgins, Documentary History, vol. 8: 1848-49 (1901), 91.
[80] Ibid.

for coloured people were authorized ... out of deference to the prejudices of the white population".[81]

The new School Act proved very influential and also quite controversial. Nova Scotia, where unofficial school segregation had been the norm from the introduction of formal education in the province, officially recognized segregated education in 1884 with an Act that closely resembled Ontario's 1850 Act, and which had similar effects.[82] In reaction to the Canada West School Act, many groups, both black and white, expressed their opposition to separate racial education. A petition from Toronto argued that the introduction of the "coloured school" provision would, "not only be detrimental to our elevation, but ... the first step toward taking away that equality which the British law guarantees to all Her Majesty's subjects."[83] Citizens of Canada West's westernmost county, Essex, complained that the separate school provision was an unjust infringement upon their rights, and that it was unfair to put the control of black education into the hands of municipalities.[84] Certain teachers' associations also expressed their disapproval.[85]

During the 1850s, black parents sent over twenty petitions to the Canada West Education Department complaining of exclusion and requesting admission for their children into common schools.[86] A petition from black parents at Simcoe claimed that they had been "deprived of the privilege for many years of sending children to common schools." Yet, they were compelled to pay school taxes.

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[81] Hill v. Camden and Zone, 578.
[82] James W, St. G. Walker, "African Canadians", 160.
[83] Toronto Globe, June 25, 1850.
[84] "Objections to the Provision for Separate Schools for Coloured Children," in Hodgins, Documentary History, Vol. 9: 1850-51 (1902), 26.
[85] Dumfries' Teachers' Association remarks, in Ibid., 64.
[86] AO, Incoming Education Correspondence, RG 2-12.

> We have tried every lawful and civil means to get our children into the common schools ... we have applied to the trustees time after time and year after year and failed in it. We have taken our children into the schools and desired the teachers to receive and teach them which thing has also been refused... [We] voted for the School Trustees together with other persons, and expected our children educated with the white children ... we had no desire to be set apart, nor never had...[87]

Despite claims that the new law would protect black children, the vague regulations were open to various interpretations by white trustees; as a result, segregation and the outright denial of education to black children continued. In spite of the fact that their parents' tax money went to support common schools, black students were denied the same rights of access to public education as their white counterparts. The School Act of 1850 did not require that the request for separate racial schools come from black parents; thus, the legislation was used as a tool by certain trustees to force black people into segregation against their will.

The Council of Public Instruction encouraged the imposition of segregated school districts during the 1850s, in spite of several complaints of forced segregation from the black population. In response to requests for advice on how best to keep black children out of common schools, Ryerson encouraged trustees to establish segregated school districts. Ryerson wrote to the Chair of the Chatham Board of School Trustees asserting that although blacks who did not choose to establish a separate school had a right to attend a common school,

> it does not follow that they have a right to attend any school they may fancy to attend. As the Board of Trustees ... is authorized by law 'to determine the number, sites, kind and description of schools which shall be established and maintained' ... trustees may provide teachers and schools specially for the colored portion of the population.[88]

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[87] AO, Incoming Education Correspondence, RG 2-12, Vol. 11, Petition of colored inhabitants of Simcoe, 12 Dec 1851.

[88] AO, Outgoing Education Correspondence, RG 2-8, Vol. 6, Ryerson to George Duck, April 7, 1852. Ryerson made a similar recommendation to trustees in St.Catharines, Vol. 19, Ryerson to James S. Currie,

This approach to school segregation was commonly accepted and approved by white trustees and parents. According to George Duck, chair of the board of school trustees for Chatham, the imposition of school segregation upon black children was supported by the "most respectable", moderate and "reasonable" members of his board.[89]

After 1850, African Canadians were refused admission outright to common schools in towns such as Charlotteville (southwest of Hamilton along the Lake Erie shore), Malden, Windsor, and Sandwich, where the people were said to have "a strong old-fashioned English hatred of oppression".[90] If a black child attempted to join a class, the white students were often taken out of school by their parents or teachers dismissed their classes.[91] When certain teachers in Sandwich, Charlotteville, Windsor and West Flamboro, north of Hamilton, expressed a desire to admit black students, school trustees in these areas threatened to withhold the teachers' salary or fire them unless they refused admission to black students.[92]

In the Hill case of 1854 the Supreme Court ruled that, if a separate racial school had been established, black students had to attend it, no matter the quality of the school of its distance from home. In 1852, Dennis Hill of Camden Township, northeast of Chatham, wrote to Egerton Ryerson complaining that although he had paid taxes his son was excluded from the common school in his section because his "skin is a few shades

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June 16, 1857.

[89] AO, Incoming Education Correspondence, RG 2-12, Volume 12, Chair, Board of School Trustees, Chatham to Ryerson, March 30, 1852.

[90] Simpson, "Negroes in Ontario", 597-98.

[91] AO, Incoming Education Correspondence, RG 2-12, Vol. 21, Samuel Atkin (Malden) to Ryerson, December 29, 1856; Vol..23, Henry Brent (Sandwich) et al. to Ryerson, March 9, 1858; Vol. 27, Duncan Campbell (Harwich) to Ryerson, March 14, 1862.

[92] AO, Incoming Education Correspondence, Vol.. 4, John Cowan (Sandwich) to McNab, October 5, 1845; Washington v. the Trustees of School Number 14, in the Township of Charlotteville, Upper Canada Queen's Bench Reports, Vol. 11, 569-
573; AO, Incoming Education Correspondence, RG 2-12, Vol.. 20, James Douglas (West Flamboro) to Ryerson, February 3, 1856.

darker than some of my neighbours."[93] In reply, Ryerson remarked, "I cannot express any opinion upon the case which you submit", but he suggested that if there was no separate school for his son to attend, Hill should prosecute for damages.[94] Hill did prosecute and his case was heard in the Supreme Court of Upper Canada in 1854.

In 1852, the trustees of Camden designated the British American Institute, located in the Dawn settlement, a common school "for the exclusive benefit of the coloured population".[95] The limits of this school section encompassed the entire township and gore of Camden as well as the adjacent township of Zone, a region over fifteen miles across. Although the Dawn school was a full four and a half miles away from Hill's property, the court ruled that his children must attend there or be denied access to education. In 1856, citizens of Camden claimed that their taxes went to common schools in their section while the segregated school was inaccessible at a distance of up to fifteen miles away.[96] Most of the black children of Camden township were effectively denied access to education because the segregated school was too far for them to attend.

Public schools for black children were sorely lacking in public funding, as local trustees were not always forthcoming with their share of government grants. In 1852, the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada reported that teachers at black separate schools were poorly paid and poorly qualified and that the quality of education at these schools was

[93] AO, Incoming Education Correspondence, Vol. 14, Dennis Hill to Egerton Ryerson, November 22, 1852.
[94] AO, Outgoing Education Correspondence, RG 2-8, Vol. 7, Ryerson to Hill, November 30, 1852.
[95] Hill v. Camden and Zone, 575.
[96] AO, Incoming Education Correspondence, RG 2-12, Vol. 20, William P. Newman to Ryerson, January 13 1856; Peter B. Smith et al. to Ryerson, June 29, 1856.

decidedly inferior to that at other common schools.[97] On his tour through Canada West in 1855, Benjamin Drew noted the poor quality of black separate schools in the province.[98]

In Windsor no public education was available to blacks until 1859 although trustees had passed a by-law in 1854 claiming they would establish a "coloured school". The construction of this school was delayed, however, until 1862. The temporary accommodations made available in 1859 measured 16'x24' and were intended to accommodate up to eighty school-age children. Parents likened the school to a "coop".[99] In 1856, African Canadians in St. Catharines boycotted their separate school because they felt they were at a disadvantage and intended to claim "their lawful right to ... [send] our children to whatever public school is established in our ward."[100]

When the town of Amherstburg introduced free common schools in 1851, the public school trustees appealed to the people of the town "to take the responsibility of keeping the coloured children from entering any of the schools". A committee of four trustees was appointed to set up a separate school for black children.[101] Benjamin Drew remarked that the separate school in Amherstburg was "comfortless and repulsive." It had no blackboard or chairs, the two inkstands in use yielded "a very little bad ink", and the readers were "miserably tattered and worn-out".[102] In declaring his judgment in the Hill case, Chief Justice Robinson observed, "it can hardly be supposed that the

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[97] Anti-Slavery Society of Canada, First Annual Report of the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada,(Toronto, March 24, 1852).
[98] Drew, A North-Side View of Slavery.
[99] AO, Incoming Education Correspondence, Vol. 26, Clayborn Harris to William Horton, February 16, 1859.
[100] Provincial Freeman, May 24, 1856; AO, Incoming Education Correspondence, RG 2-12, Vol. 23, Daniel Jones et al. to Ryerson, January 24, 1853.
[101] AO, Alvin D. McCurdy Papers, F 2076-11-0-1, Container 53, Amherstburg Public School Trustees Minutes with reference to King St. School and Coloured School Teachers, April 1, 1851.
[102] Drew, A North-Side View of Slavery, 348; As further testament to their destitute situation, schools for blacks in Amherstburg and Colchester received grants from the Education Department's Poor School Fund after petitions to Ryerson. AO, Outgoing Education Correspondence, RG 2-8, Vol. 19, Ryerson to James Kevill, March 13, 1857; Vol. 21, Ryerson to F.G. Elliot, December 3, 1857.

Legislature authorized such separate schools under the idea that it would be more beneficial or agreeable to the coloured people to have their children taught separately from whites."[103]

Trustees in other regions altered the boundaries of school districts according to the presence or absence of blacks. According to Rev. David Hotchkiss, working for the AMA in Amherstburg, "the whites will not let the coloured children attend their schools. They [draw] their lines around their districts in a zig zag course so as to throw all the coloured families out."[104] In Norwich, north of Charlotteville, the black population was denied access to the school they were using in their area after one white family moved in nearby and the school was annexed to a white school section.[105] This gerrymandering of school districts was declared illegal by the Supreme Court in the 1854 case of Washington vs. the Trustees of Charlotteville.

In this case, George Washington paid the school fees and was assessed for repairs of the common school in his section. In 1849, trustees instructed the local teacher not to admit Washington's son Solomon. Washington appealed to the district superintendent who, in turn, appealed to Ryerson. The district and provincial superintendents informed the trustees that their conduct was illegal, but the school administrators of Charlotteville were determined to exclude Mr. Washington's children from the common school whatever the consequences. In 1850, the Municipal Council of Charlotteville redrew the school section boundaries so as to exclude Washington's land from any school district; however, he continued to be assessed for school taxes. Ryerson did not directly

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[103] Hill vs. Trustees, UCQB, Vol. 11, 578.
[104] AO, AMA manuscripts, F19 – F1 S42, 1846-1860, Hotchkiss to Whipple, 4 March, 1851.
[105] AO, Incoming Education Correspondence, RG 2-12, Vol. 11, Charles Joiner to Ryerson, January 8, 1852.

intervene, claiming he "never supposed the trustees would resist the law",[106] and suggesting Washington take his grievances to court. The Supreme Court heard Washington's case in 1854; by this time, his eldest son Solomon had reached the age of twelve. The court ruled in Washington's favour, outlawing the gerrymandering of school districts for the sole purpose of excluding black students.[107] Following this decision white trustees wrote to Ryerson expressing fears that opening the doors of their schools to black students could lead to the "triumph" of "African barbarism" over "Anglo-Saxon civilization".[108]

This victory was bittersweet for Washington because he received no assistance with his legal expenses and lost his farm in payment of the fees incurred.[109] The precedent set by this case was only a qualified victory for black education rights because the ruling did not prevent school trustees from creating segregated school sections. It became common practice for trustees to open three different kinds of schools in their districts; one for Protestants, one for Roman Catholics and one for black students. These were not necessarily separate schools, as they were set up and managed by the central board of trustees, and not requested by the parents of black students.[110]

In the township of Anderdon, near Amherstburg, black parents set up a government-funded separate school after their children had been excluded from the white common school in 1850. After the white school burned down, white parents tried to take

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[106] AO, Outgoing Education Correspondence, RG 2-8, Vol.. 12, Ryerson to J.G. Henton, May 20, 1855.
[107] Washington v. the Trustees of Charlotteville, UCQB, Vol. 11, 569-573.
[108] AO, Incoming Education Correspondence, RG 2-12, Vol. 18, Philip Smith to Ryerson, August 1, 1854.
[109] AO, Incoming Education Correspondence, RG 2-12, Vol.. 6, William Clarke to Ryerson, June 2, 1849; Vol. 18, Philip Smith to Ryerson, August 1, 1854; Vol. 19, J.G. Henton to Ryerson. May 25,1855; AO, Outgoing Education Correspondence, RG 2-8, Vol. 4, Ryerson to William Clarke. n.d.,1849; Vol. 10, Ryerson to Henton, May 20,1855.
[110] In 1854 the school trustees of Windsor voted to erect 3 such schools. Simpson, "Negroes in Ontario", 641; Colchester had a similar system in place since 1846. Harrow and Colchester South Township School Area Board, A Story of Public Schools, 11.

over the separate school's funding. When they did not succeed in this, white Protestant parents attempted to set up a Protestant separate school. English-speaking Catholics who had previously attended the common school with other white Protestants also set up separate schools to avoid sending their children to school with blacks.[111] In neighbouring Malden township, the majority of Catholic parents in one mixed school section also set up a Catholic separate school to prevent black children from attending school with their own children.[112]

Certain historians, such as James Walker, have argued for strategic support for separate schools among black leaders. In spite of assertions that "several black communities took immediate advantage of the [1850 School Act] to establish separate school districts"[113] in towns such as Windsor, Colchester and Chatham, segregated schools in all of these districts were set up by white trustees in the face of vocal opposition by the black community.[114] Similar schools were set up in St. Catharines, London and Dresden by trustees who claimed it was to the advantage of both whites and blacks to be educated apart.[115] While undoubtedly, and understandably, certain African

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[111] Amherstburg Public Library, Historical binder: Anderdon Township, Schools, "Anderdon School"; "School Arbitration", Amherstburg Echo, August 11, 1889.
[112] Amherstburg Public Library, Historical binder: Malden Township, Education, "Schools: Malden Township file".
[113] Walker, "African Canadians", 159; Claudette Knight, "Black Parents Speak: Education in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Canada West", Ontario History 89 (December, 1997): 275.
[114] No public education was available to blacks in Windsor until 1858, and petitions to Ryerson express strong opposition to the establishment of a segregated school. In letters to blacks and whites in Windsor, Ryerson suggests that white trustees should establish separate schools in spite of black opposition. AO, Incoming Education Correspondence, RG 2-12, Vol. 26, Clayborn Harris to William Horton, February 15, 1859; re. Colored Inhabitants of Windsor, February 16, 1859; Outgoing Education Correspondence, RG 2-9, Vol. 12, Ryerson to W. Horton, February 21, 1859; Ryerson to Rev. AR Green, March 10, 1859.White trustees in Colchester had set up segregated schools in the 1840s, Harrow and Colchester South Township School Area Board, A Story of Public Schools, 8-11; Blacks in Chatham wrote Ryerson in 1852 claiming that they had never requested a separate school and appealing for admission into a common school. AO, Incoming Education Correspondence, RG 2-12, Vol. 12, Committee of the Colored Citizens of Chatham to Ryerson, March 7, 1852.
[115] JJ Talman Regional Collection, DB Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario, London Board of Education Minutes, June 4, 1861; AO, Incoming Education Correspondence, RG 2-12, Vol. 23, Robert F.

Canadians have accepted the societal norm of racial separation, the historical record shows that in Canada West, white Canadian society strongly advocated racial separation while the overwhelming trend among African Canadians favoured integration.

Although much contemporary historical work points out that segregation was enforced by the white population of Canada West, several established historians have argued that African Canadians favoured segregation out of a desire for "comfort" and "security"[116], or out of a "sense of inadequacy",[117] "lack of confidence to compete",[118] or because they were "unable to do the regular work set by the Education Department".[119] These claims regarding black support for segregation fly in the face of all evidence. As countless appeals against separate education illustrate, large numbers of African Canadians found little comfort in segregation. Robin Winks acknowledges that, in most instances, black separate schools used the same texts as white schools, and "examination papers were also creditable."[120] Thus black students were capable of and did the same work as whites, and assumptions that they could not attain the same standards of education are without foundation.

In addition to unsubstantiated claims about general segregationist tendencies, some historians have made more specific claims regarding support for separate schools among black leaders. Winks argues that certain black "self-help" organizations, such as the Wilberforce Lyceum Educating Society and the Association for the Education and Elevation of the Coloured People of Canada, fueled white assumptions that black people

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Brown (St. Catharines) to Ryerson, March 10, 1858; Vol. 12, Committee of the Colored Citizens of Chatham to Ryerson, March 7, 1852; George Duck to Ryerson, March 30, 1852; Vol. 20, Peter B. Smith (Dresden) to Ryerson, June 29, 1856; Hill v. Camden and Zone.

[116] James W. St. G. Walker, "African Canadians", 159.

[117] Silverman, Unwelcome Guests, 132.

[118] Simpson, "Negroes in Ontario", 493.

[119] Winks, The Blacks in Canada, 365.

[120] Ibid., n. 5, 365.

could not attain equal standards and that they "preferred separation".[121] Some of the goals of the Wilberforce Lyceum Educating Society, established in 1850, were,

> the promotion of the rising generation in education, scientific attainments and other such possessions ... as will promote the furtherance of the true religion of God, politeness and such other genius ... as will entitle us to mix more freely in the great crowd of Her Majesty's subjects.[122]

As black people were rarely accepted into white-run clubs, it should not be surprising that some leaders took the initiative to start their own organizations. However, the constitution of this organization clearly indicates that it was not segregationist in nature, but instead held integration into Canadian society as an important goal. James Walker suggests that the Association for the Education and Elevation of the Coloured People of Canada, incorporated in 1859, "defended separate black education."[123] Winks' and Walkers' assumptions regarding this organization, however, appear to be ill founded as the association did not fund the establishment of separate schools and did not encourage attendance at separate schools. Instead, the Act incorporating this association indicates its goals to assist black students in attending integrated schools.[124]

Winks argues that the black community was divided over the issue of segregation and that preference for segregation was most prevalent among "black leaders in the peninsula of Canada West".[125] However, the most vocal opponents of segregation were community leaders Mary Ann Shadd and Henry Bibb, who published newspapers in the western towns of Chatham and Windsor. Bibb, for example, referred to the "coloured school" as "a mark of prejudice uncalled for by the Government under which we live and

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[121] Winks, The Blacks in Canada, 366.
[122] Constitution and By Laws of the Wilberforce Lyceum Educating Society. For Mental and Moral Improvement (Amherstburg, 1850).
[123] Walker, "African Canadians", 160.
[124] "Act to Incorporate the Association for the Education and Elevation of the Coloured People in Canada", Statutes of Upper Canada (1859), cap. 124.
[125] Winks, The Blacks in Canada, 366.

which has a tendency to perpetuate that prejudice against color, that has always kept our children under the feet of the whites."[126] According to H. Ford Douglass, a contributor to Shadd's newspaper, the *Provincial Freeman*, "separate colored schools and churches are nuisances that should be abated as soon as possible".[127]

Like Walker and Winks, Donald Simpson and Jason Silverman make important contributions to an understanding of black education in Canada West, and they point to several examples of enforced segregation and discrimination against black students in Canada West schools. However, Simpson and Silverman also make unsupported claims regarding black parents' requests for separate schools in certain regions. After having referred to numerous petitions against school segregation in Amherstburg, Simpson claims that there is no way of knowing whether blacks in this town wanted separate schools.[128] In spite of the assertion by African Canadians in Simcoe that "we had no desire to be set apart nor never had,"[129] and the refusal of blacks in Windsor to "yield to prejudice" and establish a separate school,[130] Silverman assumes that the black population of these towns desired separate schools.[131]

While there is little doubt that some elements of the black population in Canada West had little choice but to accept school segregation, there is no evidence that any

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[126] "Schools in Canada", Voice of the Fugitive, July 15, 1852.
[127] H.F. Douglass, "The Duties of Colored Man in Canada", Provincial Freeman, March 28, 1857.
[128] Simpson refers to a petition by Levi Foster for the inclusion of his children in the white-run common school. Simpson, "Negroes in Ontario", 576; Opposition to separate schools was also expressed in Isaac Rice's appeal to Ryerson, AO, Incoming Education Correspondence, RG 2-12, Vol. 5, Isaac Rice et al. to Ryerson, January 23, 1846; District superintendent Robert Peden indicated that the black community rejected his suggestion that they open a separate Protestant school in the Catholic district, because they "wanted ... to be on the same footing as the whites." Robert Peden to Ryerson, February 23, 1846.
[129] AO, Incoming Education Correspondence, RG 2-12, Vol. 11, Inhabitants of color now residing in Simcoe and surrounding county to Ryerson, December 12, 1851.
[130] AO, Incoming Education Correspondence, RG 2-12, Vol. 26, "Re. Colored Inhabitants of Windsor", Clayborn Harris to William Horton, February 15, 1859; Thomas Jones et al., Committee for the Colored People, Windsor to Ryerson, March 2, 1859.
[131] Silverman, Unwelcome Guests, 134, 138.

African Canadians in Canada West ever endorsed segregated education. On the contrary, African Canadians worked toward integration and were determined to claim their rights to equal access to schooling. A CCSS missionary to Dawn Mills, northeast of Chatham, suggested that black people in his town would "rather be without schools than excluded."[132] In 1859 the Committee for the Colored People of Windsor asserted, "we as a people ... love British Law and will ever defend it, but we shall equally stand up for all the rights that the law provides us."[133] Numerous petitions appealed to education administrators' "sense of justice and judgment",[134] demanding that they live up to their British-Canadian egalitarian ideals and allow for equal access to education.[135] As Dr. A.T. Jones of London declared to S.G. Howe in reaction to the school board's proposal to open separate schools for black children:

> I have eight children, who were all born in this town, -- British subjects, as much as the whitest among you; and they don't believe in anything else but the Queen. Now, instead of leaving these children to grow up with that love of country and the Queen, you are trying to plant within them a hatred for the country; and the day may come when you will hear them saying, 'This is the country that disenfranchises us, and deprives us of our rights.'[136]

As much as black leaders pushed for integration, white trustees proved equally adamant in their opposition to integration. Letters from local trustees to the Council of Public Instruction complained that black parents must not be allowed to "force their children" into classes with the white children, threatening "the harmony ... in school

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[132] Colonial Church and School Society, Mission to the Fugitive Slaves, Annual Report, (1863-64), 11-12.
[133] AO, Incoming Education Correspondence, RG 2-12, Vol. 26, Jones et al. to Ryerson, March 2, 1859.
[134] Ibid., Vol. 23, Henry Brent et al. (Sandwich) to Ryerson, March 9, 1858.
[135] Ibid., Vol. 26, Jones et al. to Ryerson, March 2, 1859; Vol. 20, Peter B. Smith (Dresden) to Hodgins, June 29, 1856; Vol. 23, Henry Brent et al. to Ryerson, March 9, 1858; Vol. 25, Jefferson Lightfoot (West Flamboro) to Ryerson, October 5, 1858; Vol. 26, Clayborn Harris (Windsor) to William Horton, February 16, 1859.
[136] Howe, The Refugees from Slavery, 51-52.

matters".[137] This "harmony" was ensured through a policy of forced segregation that was sanctioned by the Supreme Court of Canada West in 1854.

The majority of black-run schools welcomed a diversity of Canadian children, regardless of heritage and in spite of their meager funding. Schools opened by or for black communities in several towns opened their doors to white children who had no other options of education themselves or whose parents saw that the quality of education, provided by some well-educated missionary teachers was in a few cases of a better caliber than was available to them. The segregated schools imposed by Colchester trustees accepted white students and eventually many of them served a majority of white children.[138] Robin Winks points to a similar situation in Brantford where the level of instruction at the black school was superior to that at the white school. White students began to enrol here until the two schools were eventually integrated.[139] The government-imposed separate school in Chatham also accepted the occasional white student.[140]

African Canadians accepted people of all backgrounds into their schools because they recognized the heterogeneous nature of Canadian society. Black leaders promoted integration in order to survive and thrive in Canadian society. Integrated schooling was envisioned by many as a first step toward the integrated society idealized by Mary Ann Shadd in *A Plea for Emigration.* In this society, new meanings for human existence emerged in relation to the diverse human landscape of Canada West, under the protection of British institutions. In contrast, the powers controlling schools in the province aimed to create a microcosm of a racially pure, ideal British society in Canadian public schools,

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[137] AO, Vol. 12, George Duck (Chatham) to Ryerson, March 7, 1852.
[138] Harrow and Colchester South Township School Area Board, A Story of Public Schools, 12.
[139] Winks, The Blacks in Canada, 367.
[140] Victor Lauriston, "Chatham Vetoed Co-Education in 1856", London Free Press, June 3, 1950.

which did not reflect the historical reality of cultural diversity in Canada West. The protective boundaries set up around white schools excluded those who did not fit ideals of British purity, concealed the plural nature of Canadian society and also blinded British Canadians to the injustices suffered by those students who were excluded from their schools.

During the mid-nineteenth century, many Canadians did not perceive the contradiction between their British ideals and the lived reality of racial exclusion in the "powerful instrument of British Constitutional Government"[141] that was the public education system. Because education administrators espoused a deep desire to refashion Canada West as the British province described in Canadian foundational myths, the equal participation of black students in the public education system was regarded as a threat to the maintenance of this religiously secured notion of British purity. At the same time, the ideal of British morality was so pervasive in the consciousness of nineteenth century Canadians that the discrimination inherent in Canada West's education system was not confronted by its proponents and was allowed to continue while myths of an egalitarian and morally upright society remained intact.

[141] See note 8, above.

Chapter Six - Conclusion

The controversy over segregated schools in mid-nineteenth century Canada West demonstrates the nature of the historical relationship between Canadians of African and Anglo-European descent, and is indicative of each group's different religious understandings of the other and of their shared historical environment. African and European Canadians negotiated their sense of meaning and identity in relation to one another and to their material surroundings in Canada West, and in relation to British mythic structures applied in the Canadian context. In response to their historical situation, each group developed very different religious mythologies describing the nature of human community in Canada West.

In spite of social, political and religious changes in the Upper Canadian context, dominant cultural expressions, such as the vastly popular Orange Order, and cultural myths describing white Canadians as British and Protestant first and foremost, privileging a white loyalist heritage in the province, depicted Upper Canada as a recreation of British society. The historical presence of a diversity of ethnic and cultural groups in this region, however, challenged these assertions of Anglo-European purity. African Canadians were some of the earliest settlers in Upper Canada; a diverse group of slaves, former slaves, freeborn Americans, and black citizens of France and England worked alongside other Upper Canadians of Native American, French, German, Irish, Scotch and English extraction to establish and defend this new British colony.

Myths of British moral superiority, supported by Upper Canada's anti-slavery stance and images of Canada as a land of freedom and equal opportunity, were coupled with myths of Anglo-European racial superiority in mid-nineteenth century Canada West.

Dominant mythologies presented the Anglo-Celtic people in Canada as a culturally pure group, unchanged by their new historical context. In contrast, African-Canadian myths acknowledged the transformations undergone among migrants to Canada West. Popular African-Canadian stories presented this colony as a place where black American slaves became free British citizens and where new human communities, which were not based on racial difference, could be created.

The historical period in which large numbers of blacks and whites came into contact in Canada West was one of historical transition. At this time, an array of cultural groups came into encounter on Canadian soil, and this confrontation with diversity challenged established notions of meaning and identity for large numbers of immigrants who moved to Canada West. In the face of this historical situation, Anglo-Protestant Canadians asserted their continuity with the British homeland, excluding those who did not fit the Anglo-Protestant ideal. African Canadians, on the other hand, had little choice but to adapt to their surroundings by developing new meanings that reflected this Canadian situation of cultural diversity.

The mythic discourse of both groups accorded a sacred status to the British Empire and idealized Canada West as emulating this model of divine order. African and Anglo-European Canadians held in common an attachment to and reverence for British laws and institutions, and the moral and egalitarian ideals they promoted. British laws were held to be sacred and Canada West, under the protection of these laws, this colony was to be a model of a divine British order that represented freedom and equality for all. African and European Canadians, however, each had radically different interpretations of what British ideals meant and how they should be applied in an ethnically diverse

context. In European Canadian society, the freedom and equality of British institutions extended to white people only, in spite of inclusive language in the laws themselves. Thus, a contradiction between stated ideals, which made no distinction regarding race, and practice was evident in the treatment of groups that were not considered white. On the other hand, African Canadians looked to British law as an ultimate source of protection and guarantor of equal rights. In seeking equal treatment in Canada West, they challenged white society to adhere to the letter and spirit of British law, which made no distinction among peoples, by treating black people as equals.

In response to the racial discrimination they faced in public education, several African-Canadian leaders opened schools that reflected the historical reality of cultural diversity in Canada West and were a microcosm for an ideal, integrated society. Unlike the European colonizers of North America, African Americans did not have the option of attempting to create an identity in defiance of their historical situation, as African-American meaning had always been contingent upon forces these people could not control since the first African slaves arrived on this continent. In contrast to the dominant Canadian population, African Americans who immigrated to Canada in search of freedom came to define themselves in relation to the historical situation that confronted them.[1] A significant defining characteristic of Canada West was its human diversity, and African Canadians sought to live in a society that embraced this fact.

Dominant discourses of white Anglo-European purity were an obstacle to the realization of this African-Canadian vision, as these myths prevented the equal treatment of those people who were not considered to be members of the superior British race. Anglo-European mythology idealized a racially pure society, in which the British people

[1] Charles H. Long, Significations, 179-184.

transformed a "wilderness" into an extension of Britain on the western side of the Atlantic Ocean. Non-European presence in this colony was perceived as a threat to the maintenance of white British identity in Canada, and so, these other inhabitants of Canada West were excluded from Anglo-European colonial discourse and relegated to the peripheries of British-Canadian society, their significance in the formation of this place denied. Black British citizens who demanded equal rights were seen to be dangerous anomalies in a society that was idealized as white and British, and they had to be set apart.

This examination of religious imaginings of Canada West and the mythic influences that allowed for the practice of forced segregation raises several important questions regarding the introduction and perpetuation of this practice and our contemporary understandings of this historical situation.

During the mid-nineteenth century, white school trustees in Canada West gerrymandered districts, divided their meager school funds among several separate schools, risked breaking the law and expensive legal challenges, and organized special committees with the sole purpose of keeping black children out of white schools. White parents went so far as to deny their own children education by removing them from schools when black children attempted to join their classes. One question raised in this study is why did some white trustees and parents go to such great lengths to keep black children out of their schools? While black students were segregated into poor quality schools or denied their education altogether at the hands of Anglo-European parents, teachers, trustees and school administrators, British-Canadian society continue to believe it was egalitarian and a moral exemplar. How is this possible in the face of such blatant

discrimination? Why didn't white society recognize its unjust actions? Another series of questions relates to contemporary understandings of this historical situation. While the story of the Underground Railroad is held dear in the Canadian memory, most popular historical work, such as television vignettes and children's stories, does not come to terms with the discrimination and exclusion African Canadians faced upon arrival in Canada. The history of school segregation is largely forgotten in the popular memory. Why is this so? While the academic work on black history in Ontario acknowledges the existence of white racism and discusses the historical discrimination faced by African Canadians, established scholars such as Robin Winks and James Walker suggest that this situation came about, at least in part, as a result of black peoples' own segregationist tendencies. How can these authors continue to emphasize segregationist tendencies when, in the mid-nineteenth century, popular trends in the community clearly favoured a variety of approaches to achieving integration? Why do a number of historical interpretations, in the face of historical evidence to the contrary, suggest that legally sanctioned school segregation came about as a response to requests by African Canadians?

Government administrators hoped to lay the foundations for a British-Canadian state with the establishment of the public education system in Canada West. It was hoped that public schooling would perpetuate society's most deeply held values of moral integrity and egalitarianism through the indoctrination of young Canadians. Schools were created as sanctuaries where future generations of model citizens of the British Empire were trained in a protected and purified environment. Although Ryerson's common school system purported to offer education to all children in Canada West

without discrimination, the system was devised to teach the next generation of white children. Thus, those who were not included in this group were never allowed to benefit equally from the system.

Black parents fought for their children's rights to common schooling in accordance with egalitarian British laws, but their petitions were mostly ignored or denied. Perhaps white parents and school trustees took such great pains to prevent integration because their deeply held notions of meaning and identity were seen to be at stake. If black children were allowed to participate on equal terms in Canada West's education system, which represented the very foundation of a pure society in the image of Britain, then the dominant British-Canadian society would have had to come to terms with the ethnically diverse nature of Canada West. Any acknowledgement of this fact threatened religious conceptions of this colony as a model of a divine, pure order, thus putting British-Canadian conceptions of meaning and identity in a precarious state, rendering them potentially meaningless. In order to protect established notions of meaning, white Canadian society went to great lengths to prevent integration and to keep dark-skinned people out of white British institutions.

In a letter to the editor of the *Brantford Expositor* written in 1859, George Sunter suggests that white citizens of Canada West could learn an important lesson from their black counterparts' efforts towards achieving equal status. He suggests that black immigrants to Canada West provided, "a test for your morals, an occasion for the exercise of that justice, the meaning of which you have well nigh forgot, and for a reinstatement of those principles of liberty which you would betray and banish."[2]

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[2] George Sunter to Brantford Weekly Expositor, 1859, cited in Simpson, "Negroes in Ontario", 810.

The dominant forces in white society did not listen to George Sunter or to other African Canadians, whose experiences demonstrated that British law was not upheld in Canada West. Instead, the inherent discrimination in British-Canadian society was ignored by many of the same people who prided themselves on their colony's egalitarian and morally upright laws and institutions. In keeping with the dynamics of concealment, the reality of discrimination had to be denied in the official memory of Canada West if the mythic ideals that shaped Anglo-Protestant identity were to remain intact. As Charles H. Long has argued, the memory of a colonial society's transgressions are concealed, "for to make this memory concrete and public would be to plunge the community into a radically contingent state."[3] In this way, the dominant Anglo-Protestant discourse continued to present this society as a moral model under whose laws all were treated equally, in defiance of historical reality.

Although Canadian conceptions of identity have changed significantly since the mid-nineteenth century, contemporary myths continue to perpetuate certain aspects of nineteenth-century visions of Ontario society. In the nineteenth century Canada West was perceived as an egalitarian, British society. Today, popular discourse also emphasizes the egalitarian nature of Canadian society, but this important characteristic is seen to stem from the multicultural values held dear in contemporary society. With the introduction of multicultural policy, the previous ideal of British purity in Ontario has been replaced by the admission of multiple purities.

From the nineteenth century to today, popular mythologies have described Canada as a refuge to fugitive slaves, a bastion of freedom and equality where African Americans could find protection against the evils of slavery. In the nineteenth century,

[3] Long, Significations, 179.

the abolition of slavery in the Empire was linked to British moral ideals. The memory of Canada's history of slavery was suppressed, as the *Globe* reported in 1849, "slavery never existed in Canada".[4] As some Canadians in the nineteenth century denied that Canada had ever allowed the abhorrent practice of slavery, certain popular contemporary myths also omit Canada's history of racial exclusion from memory, in an attempt to protect our society's cultural myths of egalitarianism and tolerance from threat.

In the mid-nineteenth century, British Canada was seen as a moral exemplar, especially in relation to the United States, where slavery was not abolished until the 1860s. Today attitudes of moral superiority in relation to the United States continue as Canadians tend to see themselves as more tolerant of diversity, and less prone to racial discrimination. The contemporary focus on racial problems as an American phenomenon conceals our own unique and subtler history of racism. Perhaps Canadians are afraid to look into the mirror of self-examination, because what they might see could undermine popular conceptions of Canadian innocence in regard to race relations.

To this day, racism permeates Canadian society; yet, receives little acknowledgement in the dominant discourse.[5] David Theo Goldberg suggests that resistance to the acknowledgement of racism in society stems from its rationalization in the language of the dominant groups, who must use it as a tool for the justification and maintenance of a hegemony rooted in colonialism.[6] Not only is racism rationalized as a tool of oppression, but it is deeply rooted on mythological level in colonial societies. The

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[4] cited in Stouffer, The Light of Nature and the Law of God, 65.
[5] The fact that blacks are over-represented in Canadian jails and as school drop-outs can be seen as the result of systemic racism. Racial incidents such as the 1991 riots at Cole Harbour High School in Nova Scotia, and police violence against blacks in Toronto suggest that Canadians have not resolved issues of racism in society. See Alexander and Glaze, Towards Freedom, 11-17; also see Foster, A Place Called Heaven; Dei, "African Studies in Canada".
[6] Goldberg, Racist Culture, 112.

racist actions of white Canadians stemmed from religious myths of Anglo-Cetlic superiority and cultural purity that were at the very foundations of British-Canadian culture and society. The unique expressions of Canadian racism, then, cannot be seen as imported into this country from the United States, or as a "disease" caught by the "evil" portion of society. Rather, racism has informed the history of Upper Canada since the arrival of British colonists, and survives to this day; as it is deeply rooted in myth, it is not easily eradicated.

While acknowledging racist practice in Canadian history, much of the academic discourse on racial segregation erroneously suggests that black leaders preferred this situation. Robin Winks' foundational and biased work is widely cited in discussions of black education. Contemporary authors have raised criticisms of his work; however, few question his assumptions regarding black requests for segregated institutions, and no author has re-evaluated the sources he presents. This widespread misrepresentation of the history of segregated education in Canada is an indicator of more than just faulty scholarship. Perhaps even the best Canadian historians are not immune to the influence of dominant cultural myths, which perpetuate ideas of white innocence, and portray systemic racism as un-Canadian, abnormal and peripheral to the historical development of this society.

If we are to come to terms with our own history, we must acknowledge the religious myths that influenced the historical relations among Canada's peoples. Dominant myths, coming out of a tradition that emphasizes cultural purity and the egalitarian and moral nature of Canadian society, are inadequate to describe our history as they do not account for the ethnically and culturally diverse nature of Canada, nor do

they reflect the historical ramifications of contact between supposedly culturally pure groups of Canadians. As our dominant myths are inadequate, we are in need of a new mythology reflecting the exchange among human communities that is at the foundation of Canadian society.

The mythologies of marginalized groups, such as those articulated by African Canadians in the mid-nineteenth century, reflect the history of contact and exchange in Canada and provide a template for a new Canadian mythology that more accurately represents the unique history of this place. African Canadian religious visions show that Canada was never a purely white, British place, but instead, was formed as a result of a diversity of ethnic and cultural influences. It is this encounter with diversity that defines what it means to be a Canadian.

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