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CAPITAL, LABOUR AND LUMBER IN A.R.M. LOWER'S WOODYARD:

JAMES MACLAREN

AND THE CHANGING FOREST ECONOMY, 1850-1906

by

Lorne F. Hammond

Thesis submitted to
the School of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
Ph.D. degree in History

Université d'Ottawa/University of Ottawa

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UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA
UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

ABSTRACT**CAPITAL, LABOUR AND LUMBER: JAMES MACLAREN,
OTTAWA VALLEY LUMBERMAN, 1850-1919**

Lorne F. Hammond
University of Ottawa, 1993

Supervisor:
Professor Chad Gaffield

In reaction to A.R.M. Lower's forest studies, which emphasize the role of markets and tariffs, it is argued that both capital and labour demonstrate extensive agency during the transition between Canada's exports of lumber to Britain and the United States. A series of micro-studies explore the socio-economic transition from colonial to corporate forestry, within a regional framework integrating rural and urban experiences. The succession between economies is examined, from fur to lumber, land speculation, to merchant capital and pioneer sawmilling, to the Ottawa Valley capitalist. The example, James MacLaren, used kinship capital pools and strategic business alliances to rise to the position of independent capitalist lumberman and Bank president.

The labour institutions upon which his business was based, the shanty and the timber cove, were anchored to a web of household economies, both urban and rural. Families drew on monthly shanty wages. The shanty was common ground for small kin-groups of local farm workers, urban sawmill workers, migrant workers, and a core of professional lumberers, resident in Ottawa. Staggered waves of arrival and departure show flexibility in when one decided to leave the

farm for the shanty, implying it was a complementary institution. MacLaren's cove in Québec City also accommodated rural workers amid numerous small non-union strikes. Across the harbour, timber ship labourers, divided over ethnicity and technology, coalesced violently into one of the country's strongest unions. As industrial lumber barges replaced rafts, sawmills replaced coves as export points. MacLaren used both to sell to British and U.S. markets simultaneously, expanding his investments into Vermont and New York.

His capital was redeployed in resource developments, such as mining and railways, or local real estate, in a regional pattern that cut across the "Empire of the St. Lawrence". His connections were with American investors or competitors -- Cleveland steel elites or the House of Morgan. The Bank of Ottawa, built upon his gathering of local groupings of capital, eventually found regional identity a hinderance in raising capital. Unable to make inroads into other markets, it merged with the Bank of Nova Scotia.

In 1904 a successful appeal was made to the State to close timber limits against settlement. This was to make forests more acceptable as collateral to make the transition to pulp and paper. Couched in the discourse of fire, the closing of the forest common marks the true end of the frontier. For Québec, this is the final abandonment of agrarian colonisation for a development model based on state supported large scale corporate forestry, mining and hydro-electric development.

DEDICATION

With love to Monica.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This doctoral thesis owes much to Dr. Chad Gaffield, who encouraged and challenged me throughout. His support has been constant, unhesitant and without reserve. His advice always came at exactly the right moment, it often surprised me and opened up the issues for me. I hope I can do the same for my graduate students.

I would like to thank my examination committee for the care and depth with which they read and commented. They have left me with several new directions to ponder. It seems to me that the entire faculty of the History Department at the University of Ottawa has helped me in one way or another. A few examples that come to mind quickly are Jacques Barbier for the survey of Latin American export economies, Béatrice Craig for her knowledge of the Northeastern lumber literature, Don Davis for his thoughts on business and resources, Cornelius Jaenen for his advice on what a Ph.D. is all about, and Michael Piva for teaching about teaching. Thank you all.

As a graduate student I would also like to thank the support staff, past and present, of the History Department and of the School of Graduate Studies and Research. All of them solved mysteries and helped me over hurdles. My fellow and former graduate students kept me thinking, even when they did not know it,

especially Barry Cottam, Anne Drummond, Michel Girard, John Lutz, Richard Mackie, Jean Manore, Mary McRoberts, Lorna McLean, Nancy Parker, Rick Rajala, and Fran Thompson.

Other academics who are owed a debt of thanks are Dr. Peter Baskerville of the University of Victoria, for his sound advice on how to tackle sensitive banking records. Dr. Ronald Rudin of Concordia University for sharing his banking data, and Dr. Matt Bray of Laurentian University who shared his notes on the MacLarens and the COR/INCO lawsuits. To Dr. Richard Judd of the University of Maine and Dr. Graeme Wynn of the University of British Columbia, thank you for your comments on my early conference presentations.

My approach was influenced by three years living at Lake Cowichan and working at B.C.F.P. Youbou. It was there that Don and Beth Hammond from Honeymoon Bay, across the lake, first told me about the Ottawa Valley lumbermen and helped me get settled in at the mill. I worked all over the mill, including the headrig and logdeck, and learned grading, tallying and first aid. Thank you to the old B mill crew, to Evelyn Hobson, and to John Bauer. Anything decent I have written about the lives and deaths of workers in this thesis has something to do with those years at Lake Cowichan.

Most of the thesis was written in Ottawa's Lowertown, in a wooden house typical of those occupied by the families of sawmill workers / shantymen from 1870 to 1890. Many of my research days began and ended with a beautiful walk, in summer and winter, across the Ottawa River on the Champlain Bridge. The

records of James MacLaren Industries are in Hull, Québec at the Archives nationales du Québec-centre de l'Outaouais. James MacLaren Industries have the foresight to preserve their records, and that includes numerous twentieth century records which await the next researcher. My thanks to Archivist Hélène Cadieux, Luc Brazeau, Jérémie, and all the staff of that very active archive who helped me immensely. Luc showed me how to find and use notarial records and death certificates. My thanks also to another who knows that archive and its various records intimately, Pierre Louis Lapointe.

Thank you to the Bank of Nova Scotia for its preservation of, and granting of access to, the records of the Bank of Ottawa. It was a pleasure to work at the Bank's Archives in Toronto where Jane Nokes, Matt Szybalski, and Charlie Dougall were everything a researcher hopes for in a staff: professional, knowledgable, and willing to help. At the Bank of Canada, Librarian Louise Gibson, Archivist Corinne Miller, Paul Barry from the Currency Museum and George Watts helped me along my foray into banking. Related assistance was provided by the staff of the libraries of the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions and Treasury Board.

Numerous other libraries and archives have assisted. The staff of Morisset Library were a constant source of information, particularly Online Services, Inter-Library Loan, Special Collections, and the Map Library. I would also like to briefly thank the Archives nationales du Québec-centre de Montréal, the Archives of Ontario, Frank Kirkwood at the Library of Parliament, the McCord

Museum's photographic division, the National Archives of Canada, the National Library of Canada, Queen's University Archives, and the University of Toronto Special Collections. I worked in the New York Historical Society the week it closed its doors, laying off eighty archivists and librarians. I urge institutions to protect their corporate memory and maintain their investment, both in archives and expert staff.

Financial support, for which I am most grateful, was provided by the School of Graduate Studies and Research and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Lorne Hammond

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INTRODUCTION

A.R.M. LOWER AND THE CANADIAN FOREST

Introduction

The best memorial to scholars is the continued relevance of their work. The late Arthur Reginald Marsden Lower,¹ who taught History at Queen's University in Kingston, continues to influence forest historiography as researchers re-examine points he made and explore new areas.² Lower, who once described

¹ Dr. Lower (b. Barrie, Ontario, 12 August 1889; d. Kingston, Ontario, 7 January 1988, age 98). In addition to his forest histories he authored *Canada and the Far East* (1940), *Colony to Nation* (1946), *Canadians in the Making* (1958), *Evolving Canadian Federalism* (1958), *A Pattern for History* (1978), and his autobiography, *My First Seventy-five Years* (1978). His academic work was recognized with the Royal Society's Tyrell Medal (1947), the Governor General's Medal (1947 and 1955), and the Ontario Bicentennial Medal (1984). He left the bulk of his estate for scholarships and fellowships in Canadian history at Queen's University.

² For a critical discussions of Lower's life and work see: A.G. Bailey, "Sitting in Judgement on the Past", *Queen's Quarterly*, LXVI (Summer 1959): 312-19; Carl Berger, "Arthur Lower and a National Community," in *The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing Since 1900*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986, pp.112-136; J.M.S. Careless. "Metropolitan Reflections on "Great Britain's Woodyard," *Acadiensis*, III:1 (Autumn 1973): 103-109; *The Craft of History*. Eleanor Cook, ed. Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1973; Michael S. Cross, *Issues in Canadian History: The Frontier Thesis and the Canadas: The Debate On The Impact Of The Canadian Environment*. Toronto: Copp Clark, 1970; Donald F. Davis, "The Metropolitan Thesis and the Writing of Canadian Urban History," *Urban History Review*, XIV: 2 (October 1985): 95-113; R. Peter Gillis, "Great Britain's Woodyard: A Critical Appraisal," *Journal of Forest History*, 18:4 (October 1974): 110-127; *His Own Man: Essays In Honour of*

writing Canadian history as "an act of faith"³, spent much of his time studying and writing about, not wars and constitutions, but people and forests.

As a pioneer in Canadian economic and social history, he left a remarkable series of studies of the relationship between Canadian society and the forest. The first, *Settlement and the Forest Frontier in Eastern Canada* (1933), examined the dual movement of the lumber industry and agricultural settlement north into marginal Laurentian shield soils and the tensions between industry and settlers. The second book dealt with Canada's relationship with American capital and markets, *The North American Assault on the Canadian Forest* (1938). His final volume, *Great Britain's Woodyard* (1973), detailed the forest as part of a metropolitan/imperial system.⁴ These studies are some of the earliest

Arthur Reginald Marsden Lower. W.H. Heick and Roger Graham, eds. Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1974; Joseph Levitt, *A Vision Beyond Reach: A Century of Images of Canadian Destiny*. Ottawa: Deneau, 1982; Douglas McCalla, "Forest Products and Upper Canadian Development, 1815-46," *Canadian Historical Review*, 68:2 (1987): 159-198; Joseph J. Malone. "Book Review: *Great Britain's Woodyard: British America and the Timber Trade, 1763-1867*," *Canadian Historical Review*, LVI:1 (March 1975): 68-69; W.L. Morton, "Arthur Lower and the Timber Trade," *Queen's Quarterly*, LXXX:4 (Winter 1973): 616-619; Robert M. Stamp, *The Canadian Obituary Record: A Bibliographical Dictionary of Canadians Who Died in 1988*. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1989, p. 107; Graeme Wynn, "Book Review: *Great Britain's Woodyard: British America and the Timber Trade, 1763-1867*," *Canadian Geographer*, 17:4 (Winter 1973): 414-417.

³ Arthur R.M. Lower *Colony to Nation: A History of Canada*. Toronto: Longmans Canada Limited, 1946. [Reprint, Fourth edition, 1964], p. xi.

⁴ A.R.M. Lower, *Settlement and the Forest Frontier in Eastern Canada*. Toronto: Macmillan, 1933; *The Northern Assault on the Canadian Forest: A History of the Lumber Trade Between Canada and the United States*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1938; *Great Britain's Woodyard: British America and the Timber Trade, 1763-1867*.

historiographic steps outside a constitutional framework of Canadian history, discussing social formation on frontiers, ethnicity and labour systems, and the business of markets and natural resources.

These distinguished breakthroughs were also intertwined with, and at times subsumed by, Lower's deep commitment to documenting the progress of Canada from colony to nation. His vision of national history had an almost theological aspect. He emphasized the external -- subservience to the imperial connection and resistance to the American influence. The irony of his vision of Canadian national identity is that it often overlooked the internal experience and local process of Canadian regional development. Lower's case studies of forest society were not ultimately concerned with forests and societies, but with nations. Understanding some of the factors which influenced Lower as an historian will help clarify the areas of confusion and even distortions that have emerged from his work.

I Arthur Lower's Canadian Forest

In a way, Lower was a product of the forest industry. He was born in 1889 at Barrie, in Simcoe county.⁵ His autobiography makes several references to

Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1973.

⁵ In 1891 Barrie had two planing mills, three lumber retailers and wholesalers, two timber firms, and a large mixed species sawmill with a financial rating of \$300,000-600,000. *The Lumberman's Directory and Reference Book of the United States and Canada, 1891*. Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., 1891, p. 638.

Simcoe's lumbering activity and his childhood: for example, learning to swim in the booms of an abandoned mill. The family home was built in the 1860s with local white pine flooring and sheds built with twenty inch boards. His memoirs are flavoured with timber nostalgia: his mother's side of the family are "good solid stock"; the sound timbers of his home are bulldozed by progress and replaced by a gas station; his father, a storekeeper, is "carried up the economic scale by the white-pine prosperity".⁶

His birth came very close to the end of an era. Census reports for Barrie and Simcoe North (Figure 1) show a rapid decline of white and red pine. Other data show Simcoe and Ottawa as the leading districts in

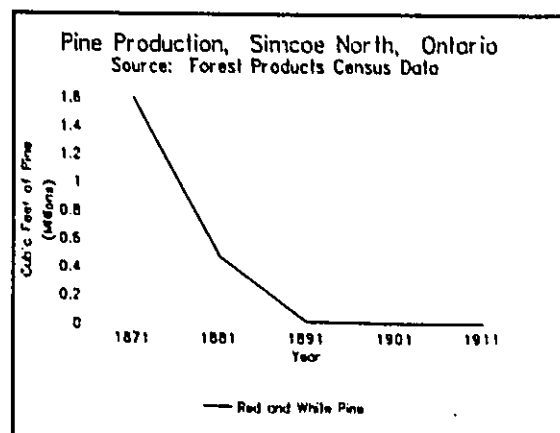


Figure 1 Pine Production, North Simcoe

Ontario's forest industry (See Table I).⁷ From 1871-1891 each provided nine to twelve percent of the value of province's production. Québec's Ottawa district topped its provincial production, supplying twelve to fifteen percent. Next came

⁶ A.R.M. Lower, *My First Seventy-five Years*. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1967, pp. 2-4. [Hereafter: *Seventy-five Years*.]

⁷ In 1870 of 35,691 sawmill workers in Canada, all but 2,858 were in Ontario (13,851), Québec (11,848) and New Brunswick (7,134). See: *Census of the Canadas, 1851-52*, vol. II, Québec: Lovell and Lamoureux, 1855; *Census of the Canadas, 1860-61*, vol. II, Québec: S.B. Foote, 1864; *Census of Canada, 1870-71*, vol. III, Ottawa: I.B. Taylor, 1875; *Census of Canada, 1880-81*, Ottawa: MacLean, Roger & Co., 1883; *Census of Canada, 1890-1891*, Ottawa: S.E. Dawson, 1894; *Fourth Census of Canada, 1901*, vol. II, Ottawa: S.E. Dawson, 1904.

Lévis, a resaw and timber shipping centre on the south shore at Québec City. From 1871-1891 its production dropped from nine to four percent.⁸ These distinct and localized concentrations are obscured in Lower's discussion of regions. Only his discussion of Québec's coves dealt with a specific node of the export system. He preferred a regional pastiche which mixed river basins, the Canadian Shield, and political boundaries.

Life in Barrie also shaped Lower's approach to nationalism and ethnicity. Like that of many of his contemporaries, Lower's view of Canada was racist. His work is filled with ethnic discussions. He remembered Barrie as homogenously British, but with a predominance of the non-conformist tradition, it was mildly hostile towards the traditional English "Establishment".⁹ Census figures show Barrie's population as 71% Ontario-born in 1881, 82% by 1891.¹⁰ Québec-born residents account for less than 2% of the population. Many of the others present in 1881, such as those born in China or Africa were, according to the census, gone a decade later. Lower grew up in a very homogenous community.

⁸ Both shores of the St. Lawrence combined, the Lévis/Québec City area contributed thirteen percent, declining to eight percent of the value of provincial production.

⁹ *Seventy-five Years*, p. 21.

¹⁰ 1881 Place of Birth, Ontario 71.5%, England 14.5%, Ireland and Scotland 12.4%, Québec 1.5%. Canada. *Census 1881*, Table IV. 1891 Place of Birth, Ontario 82.5%, Ireland and Scotland 9.5%, England 7.2%, Québec 0.9%. Canada. *Census 1891*, Table V.

Table I Top Four Sawmill Centers
Ontario and Québec, 1871-1891

Ontario 1871							Québec 1871						
Census District	No. Sawmills	No. Workers	Yearly Wages	Cost of Materials	Value Added	Census District	No. Sawmills	No. Workers	Yearly Wages	Cost of Materials	Value Added		
Ottawa (City)	7	1192	\$2950000	\$1078400	\$1564800	County of Ottawa	26	1327	\$218361	\$716373	\$1504244		
Simcoe North	64	951	\$265476	\$392896	\$913465	Lévis *	37	931	\$224148	\$813046	\$1189575		
Prescott	16	331	\$56806	\$476665	\$678612	Québec County	27	584	\$109262	\$457990	\$801599		
Hastings	12	13072	\$89466	\$323350	\$473360	Trois Rivières	2	375	\$40800	\$150000	\$482099		
Ontario 1881							Québec 1881						
Ottawa (City)	5	1440	\$389340	\$1348485	\$1866315	Ottawa	49	1696	\$514446	\$1027248	\$2404072		
Simcoe North	85	1462	\$348205	\$765002	\$1583696	Québec	5	472	\$140615	\$444374	\$686365		
Muskoka	60	715	\$178767	\$337635	\$691932	Chicoutimi /Saguenay	41	946	\$148119	\$289108	\$657341		
Perth North	46	331	\$72326	\$331036	\$523399	Lévis	35	778	\$160225	\$395538	\$199756		
Ontario 1891							Québec 1891						
Simcoe East	73	2595	\$987895	\$1387055	\$3128412	Ottawa	79	1873	\$470343	\$961284	\$1775334		
Ottawa (City)	5	2514	\$535000	\$1981000	\$2795000	Richmond & Wolfe	83	759	\$185661	\$341385	\$431160		
Algoma	52	1689	\$703078	\$1213259	\$2368045	Compton	55	487	\$92371	\$233385	\$515455		
Muskoka & Parry Sound	64	1360	\$485313	\$899807	\$1788785	[Lévis **]	35	465	\$97846	\$197948	\$351510		

* 1871 Lévis is the combined total of Districts 153 & 154. ** By 1891 Lévis had fallen to 6th place. Ranked 4th was Drummond, fifth was Chicoutimi and the Saguenay. Source: Calculated from the following Census of Canada industrial establishments schedules: 1871, vol. 3, Table XXXIII; 1881, vol. 3, Table XXXIV; 1891, vol. 3, Table I.

Like his contemporaries Edmund Bradwin and Alfred Fitzpatrick, Lower was comfortable with the social gospel movement and its underlying mistrust and characterizations of various non-British immigrant groups.¹¹ The best/worst example is a discussion of ethnic variations of the "bold and undaunted, care-free and jolly" workers of the timber trade of the Ottawa in "Lumberjack's River."¹² Only once did Lower methodically pursue the patterns of region and ethnic differences.¹³ Yet there are differences that can be explored. The 1911 census nativity tables for forest workers show that in Québec only four percent of shantymen and woodsmen were foreign born, most of them working as woodsmen. In Ontario, immigrants made up nineteen percent of forest workers, found predominately in the shanties.¹⁴

As both an ethnic and a labour historian, Lower comes close to Allan

¹¹ Edmund Bradwin, *The Bunkhouse Man: A Study of Work and Pay in the Camps of Canada, 1903-1914*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1928. [Reprint: University of Toronto Press, 1972]. Alfred Fitzpatrick, *The University in Overalls: A Plea for Part-Time Study*. Toronto: Frontier College Press, 1923.

¹² A.R.M. Lower, "Lumberjack's River," *Queen's Quarterly*, 60 (Spring 1953): 24-40.

¹³ See Lower's *Settlement and the Forest Frontier*, Appendix D, The Racial Composition of Population of Pioneer Districts of Quebec and Ontario, 1931, p. 161.

¹⁴ In Québec there were 374 immigrants, 301 as woodsmen, among 9,943 self-described shantymen and woodsmen. In Ontario there were 1,723 immigrants, , 1,124 as shantymen among the 9,119 reported workers. *Census of Canada 1911*, vol. VI, Table V, VI Forestry.

Greer's description of Clare Pentland -- ground-breaking but flawed.¹⁵ Rolf Knight is less kind to Lower. He considers frontier thesis historians such as Lower and Michael Cross to be spreading a "scurrilous, patronizing and romantic" portrayal of primary resource workers such as loggers, often seeing them as "noble savages" or focusing on farmer-yeomanry and ignoring the logger.¹⁶ Knight's bibliography on work camps and company towns includes only one volume by Lower, *Settlement and the Forest Frontier*, which he describes as a "social geography of loggers, hard scrabble farmers, lumber operators and merchants," where "the emphasis is on the internal and external economies of these pioneer commercial activities and not on the nature of the society itself."¹⁷ Indeed, Lower's workers are symbols for a somewhat nostalgic blending of myth and history, creating an order of meaning to provide Canadian society with "a common symbolic environment".¹⁸

¹⁵ Allan Greer, "Wage Labour and the Transition to Capitalism: A Critique of Pentland." *Labour/Le Travail*, 15 (spring 1985): 7-22.

¹⁶ Rolf Knight, *Work Camps and Company Towns in Canada and the U.S.: An Annotated Bibliography*. Vancouver: New Star Books, 1975, p. 1. There is some truth to this and it is an interesting test to apply to the *agro-forestiere* school we will see later.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁸ Donald E. Polkinghorne, *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1988, 2-3. *History and Myth: Arthur Lower and the Making of Canadian Nationalism*. Welf H. Heick, Editor. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1975. See also: Kenneth C. Dewar, "Where to Begin and How: Narrative and Non-narrative Openings in Donald Creighton's Historiography." *69th Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical*

From Lower's emphasis on the square timber trade, we get the impression of a declining pioneer era workplace. The first fifty years after Confederation did see a dramatic shift of population from the rural agricultural economy, centred around the family farm, to the urban industrial economy. But from 1881 to 1911 the proportion of Canada's workers in the forest sector did not decline, it more than doubled (See Table II). Actual numbers of forestry workers from 1881 to 1911 increased from 8,116 to 42,914. An equal number were employed in wood manufactures, and more were employed in the pulp and paper industry.¹⁹ Lower does not talk of this general expansion or changing nature of rural employment during industrialization.

Table II Percentage of Total Workers in Four Sectors of the Canadian Economy, 1881-1911				
	1881	1891	1901	1911
Agriculture	48.1%	45.8%	40.2%	34.3%
Manufactures	11.7%	14.1%	15.4%	18.0%
Government	0.6%	1.1%	1.0%	2.8%
Forestry	0.6%	0.8%	0.9%	1.6%

Source: *Census of Canada, 1911*, vol. VI, p. xx, Table 11.

However, in Lower's defence, one finds that as early as 1929 he was raising

Association, University of Victoria, 1990.

¹⁹ *Census of Canada, 1911*, vol. VI, Table II. In 1881 there were 16,248 employed under the heading wood manufactures. In 1911 the number is 37,422. See: *Census of Canada, 1911*, vol. VI, p. 6.

the issue of class and forest workers.²⁰ In an earlier draft of *Great Britain's Woodyard* he cut the following from a section on forest workers:

Who were these men, what sort of lives did they lead, were they a strength or weakness to the country, have they improved their lot as time has gone by, have they risen to the higher ranks of their calling, do their sons succeed them, all of these questions must have some answer returned to them.²¹

Questions of class were considered here and then subsumed, as Lower went on to focus on ethnic identities. Class was a research path seen, but not taken.

Instead, Lower was more interested in the combination of religion and nationalism. In Barrie, the largest group of Methodists attended the Church of Canada -- a rather appropriate name given Lower's unique blend of theocratic nationalism. Methodists surpassed the dominant Church of England for the first time in the 1891 census.²² Both Lower and his mother embraced what Lower felt was a deeply important cultural, as well as religious, shift from Anglicanism to Methodism. His father did so with less enthusiasm. Arthur Lower's conversion was part of the religious, cultural and demographic trend as circumstances in Barrie produced an homogenous generation of white Ontario-born English-speaking evangelical Canadian nationalists.

²⁰ A.R.M. Lower, "Some Neglected Aspects of Canadian History." *Canadian Historical Association. Annual Report, 1929*, p. 67.

²¹ *Papers*, Box 62, F74, manuscript page 455, chapter page 1.

²² 1881, Church of England 36.4%, Methodist 24.7%, Roman Catholic 20.1%, and Presbyterian 18.7%. *Canada. Census, 1881*, Table II. 1891, Methodist 32.1%, Church of England 27.3%, Roman Catholic 23.9%, Presbyterian 16.8%. *Census of Canada, 1891*, Table IV.

Tension between proto-Canadians and their English heritage also existed in Lower's relation with his English immigrant father. He described the gulf between them as a distance equal to "the Atlantic Ocean." Age added to distance. At Arthur's birth his father was forty-six and was almost seventy when his son entered college.²³ This personal relationship parallels Lower's view of relations between young Canada and an older, more distant Great Britain. Lower's histories stressed consensus, not conflict, with statements such as: "Our subordination. . .to Great Britain was a voluntary subordination. . .We were children in our father's house, and we rested comfortably in that relationship."²⁴ The British connection was a constant in Lower's vision of Canadian history.

An author of Methodist textbooks, Reverend William Henry Withrow, was another early influence on Lower.²⁵ He also published national history texts,

²³ *Seventy-five Years*, p. 4, 6-7.

²⁴ *Craft of History*, p. 18.

²⁵ See Lower, *Seventy-five Years*, p. 38. William Henry Withrow (1839-1908) was born 6 August 1839 at Toronto and educated at Toronto Academy, Victoria College, Cobourg and Toronto University (B.A. 1863). A Methodist, he was ordained at Hamilton in 1864 and married Sarah A. Smith of Simcoe that year. He served at Waterford, Montréal, Hamilton, Toronto, Niagara, and again, Hamilton. He attended the 1867 Wesleyan Conference as an ardent unionist. In 1874 he became editor of *Canadian Methodist Magazine*. A member of the Montreal Historical Society he was elected to the Royal Society of Canada (1883). His historical works include *Barbara Heck: A Story of Early Methodism in America*. Toronto: Methodist Mission Room, 1895; *A History of Canada for the Use of Schools and General Readers*. Toronto: Copp, Clark, 1876; *The King's Messenger, or, Lawrence Temple's Probation a story of Canadian Life*. Toronto: S. Rose, 1879; *A Popular History of the Dominion of Canada from the Discovery of America to the Present Time: Including a History of the Provinces of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia,*

beginning with Copp Clark in 1876. His various texts had an extensive publishing history, judging by their revisions and expansions.²⁶ He appears frequently in Lower's memoirs and works. Withrow's words open Lower's *The North American Assault On The Canadian Forest*:

The ravenous sawmills in this pine wilderness are not unlike the huge dragons that used in popular legends to lay waste the country; and like dragons, they die when their prey, the lordly pines, are all devoured.²⁷

Withrow's 1893 *Popular History of the Dominion of Canada* described how the

Prince Edward Island, British Columbia, and Manitoba; of the North-West Territory, and of the Island of Newfoundland. Toronto: W. Briggs, 1893; and *Our Country: Canada Scenic and Descriptive: Being an Account of the Extent, Resources, Physical Aspect, Industries, Cities and Chief Towns of the Provinces of Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, the Northwest Territory, and British Columbia with Sketches of Travel and Adventure.* Toronto: W. Briggs, 1889. See: *Men of Canada, or, Success by Example.* William Cochrane, Editor. Brantford, Ontario: Bradley, Garretson & Co., 1891, p. 396.

²⁶ This raises the question: how elitist is Canadian historiography? Certainly we have very little analysis of the profession as an occupation or on the consumption of history, nationalist or otherwise, by the public. Notable are William Henry Withrow, *Our Country: Canada Scenic and Descriptive: Being an Account of the Extent, Resources, Physical Aspect, Industries, Cities and Chief Towns of the Provinces of Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, the Northwest Territory, and British Columbia with Sketches of Travel and Adventure.* Toronto: W. Briggs, 1889; and the heavily revised *A Popular History of the Dominion of Canada From the Discovery of America to the Present Time Including a History of the Provinces of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, British Columbia, and Manitoba; of the North-West Territory, and of the Island of Newfoundland.* Toronto: William Briggs, 1893. Revised and extended from editions in 1878, 1883, 1884, 1886, and 1878.

²⁷ William Henry Withrow, *Our Country: Canada Scenic and Descriptive*, cited in the frontispiece of Lower, A.R.M., W.A. Carrothers and S.A. Saunders, *The North American Assault on the Canadian Forest. A History of the Lumber Trade Between Canada and the United States.* Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1938.

timber trade was promoted by increased demand for shipping and the heavy duty on Baltic pine. He points out the links between New Brunswick's timber trade and ship-building after the exclusion of the U.S. from the British West Indies.²⁸ In *Our Own Country* Withrow spent twenty-two pages describing various aspects of the lumber trade on the Ottawa, from the shanty to Québec, with illustrations.²⁹ Internal references show that it is based on research for *Lawrence Temple*, a novel about a Methodist youth in the shanty, where his faith wins him the respect of shantymen of various ethnic, linguistic and religious backgrounds.³⁰

These early influences left Lower with a belief in the process of conversion, from Anglicanism to Methodism, from British colony to nation, and a concern with an homogenous sense of community and identity. Overlaying this was the strong sense of economic identity reinforced by the role of the forest industry around Barrie. Lower's synthesis, focusing on identity, also contained ethnic biases and a curious failure to pursue the patterns and role of regional experience.

²⁸ Withrow, *A Popular History*, p. 501, p. 504.

²⁹ Withrow, *Our Own Country*, pp. 390-412.

³⁰ W.H. Withrow, *The King's Messenger; or, Lawrence Temple's Probation. A Story of Canadian Life*. Toronto: William Briggs, 1897. (Seventh edition.)

II Harvard, Lower, and Turner's Frontier Thesis

Lower's view of the forest was also shaped by his Harvard doctoral training.³¹ One of his teachers was Frederick Merk, a former graduate student of Frederick Jackson Turner. Merk's western expansion seminar introduced Lower to the frontier thesis and convinced him of the forest's historiographic importance to national identity. Lower left Harvard before the 1930s wave of criticism of Turner, when Louis Hacker wrote:

Not only were Turner's own seminar students legion (he taught altogether for some thirty-four years) but his personal followers in turn scattered over the land to indoctrinate other vast numbers of eager scholars. . . So intensely have all these persons labored. . . that one scarcely exaggerates in saying that the patient and obscure toiling of another long generation of American historical scholars will be required to destroy this influence³²

Right or wrong, Turner's influence was immense and among his many intellectual children was A.R.M. Lower.³³ Lower closes *Settlement and the Forest Frontier* with a discussion of Turner's thesis, telling us he found that settlement pierced

³¹ Harvard, lacking a Canadianist, assigned Lower to Wilbur Cortez Abbott, a specialist in Oliver Cromwell. The forest image of history in the opening quote for Lower's *A Pattern for History*, almost fifty years later, is taken from Thomas Carlye's collection of Cromwell's letters. See: A.R.M. Lower, *A Pattern For History*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978, p. 5.

³² Louis Hacker, "Sections -- or Classes," In, *The Turner Thesis: Concerning the Role of the Frontier in American History*, George Taylor, Editor. Toronto: D.C. Heath, 1972, p. 51.

³³ Others included Carl Becker, Merle Curti, Frederick Merk, Wilbur Jacobs, James Malin, Henry Nash Smith, Walter Prescott Webb, the truculent Richard Hofstadter.

the Canadian Shield and pushed northward in Ontario not as a line, but "as a series of expanding circles."³⁴ It is somewhat ironic that Lower's Canadian academic nationalism was so intertwined with the birth of American academic nationalism.

Turner's frontier thesis concluded that the meeting of the eastern and western frontier lines brought a national social and economic crisis.³⁵ The end to a seemingly endless supply of freely available land, he argued, had tremendous spiritual, ideological and political implications. For Turner and Lower, the forests played an important symbolic and cultural role, nurturing and defining both frontier societies and democracy. The wilderness experience renewed core democratic values, such as pioneer characteristics of independence, individuality and community purpose. Turner also saw the frontier as providing an ideology for capitalism. American business, he argued, received these characteristics from the frontier experience:

That coarseness and strength combined with acuteness and inquisitiveness; that practical, inventive turn of mind, quick to find expedients; that masterful grasp of material things; lacking in the artistic but powerful to effect great ends; that good and evil, and withal

³⁴ Lower, *Settlement and the Forest Frontier*, p. 150.

³⁵ Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History", *The Turner Thesis Concerning the Role of the Frontier in American History*. George Rogers Taylor, editor. Toronto: D.C. Heath, 1972. Turner was wrong about when the frontier ended. Morgan Sherwood, using the official census definition of a frontier as less than two persons per square mile, shows it continued to exist at least sixty years later, in Alaska. Morgan Sherwood, "The End of American Wilderness." *Environmental Review*, 9:3 (Fall 1985): 197-209.

that buoyancy and exuberance which comes with freedom --these are traits of frontier³⁶

Turner's thesis was a declaration of independence, providing a theological base for the covenant view of American history.³⁷ It drew Lower's attention to the influence of the forest on forming Canadian national identity.³⁸

Lower blamed the decline of Simcoe's industry directly on Americans. He emphasized that Cornell University's endowment came from the forests of Simcoe, that Canadians had been "left with the stumps".³⁹ He also blamed Canadian complicity by bureaucrats and politicians, writing in 1947 that:

it is easy to reward a supporter or to yield to the importunities of an American capitalist when the material concern is only trees, hundreds of

³⁶ Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History", *The Turner Thesis Concerning the Role of the Frontier in American History*, p. 27.

³⁷ Turner was also reacting against the Europeanist interpretation of American history taught at Johns Hopkins by Herbert B. Adams. The frontier/puritan covenant view of U.S. history can be traced through George Bancroft to Turner, to Daniel Boorstin and onward. See the example of Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Genius of American Politics*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966, and the overview of David Noble, *Historians Against History: The Frontier Thesis and the National Covenant in American Historical Writing Since 1830*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1965.

³⁸ Mary McRoberts argued Lower was concerned that American business, born with democracy in one forest, was destroying not just the Canadian forest, but as the Turner thesis implies, the conditions for true democracy in Canada. This argues the assault on the forest was also one on political development. Conversation of 21 April 1991 with Mary McRoberts (History, York University) regarding her draft paper "The North American Historians' Assault on A.R.M. Lower."

³⁹ See A.R.M. Lower to Hon. William G. Davis, Prime Minister of Ontario, 13 May 1971. Kingston, Queen's University Archives, *A.R.M. Lower Papers*. Box 8, A167, File: Conservation.

miles away, in the midst of a wilderness. It is innocuous to insist on filling out of forms and it gives a pleasant sense of power to bandy back and forth the intricacies of regulations.⁴⁰

Primarily he sought national identity in his studies of forest-based economic activity. A 1942 draft in Lower's papers contains a revealing statement:

I remember how, as I was returning from the Great War of 1914-1918, as our ship came off Quebec, the smell of fresh-sawn lumber was wafted out to it. It was one of the associations of my native land that I had unconsciously missed in the years overseas. "How typically Canadian the smell of wood" I thought at the time.⁴¹

While emphasizing tariffs, he employed a constitutional chronology, because ultimately, he was discussing Canada, not the forest or the timber trade. The forest was a metaphor, a microcosm for nation. Within it, we find the pivotal forces, British and United States markets, the economic forces that shaped the country. Yet he does not seem to have looked for evidence of non-British, non-American agency.

⁴⁰ A.R.M. Lower, Book Review of *Report of the Ontario Royal Commission on Forestry, 1947*, in *Canadian Journal of Economic and Political Science*, 14 (November 1948): 508-9.

⁴¹ Kingston, Queen's University Archives, *A.R.M. Lower, Papers*, B894, p. 1.

III The Timber Trade and New Social History

What impact has Lower's approach to forest history had on the last twenty or thirty years of Canadian historiography? Social and economic historians now narrow their focus to region, down to the case studies of micro-history. They look for large processes writ small in the parish, village, or individual business. Lower, following the staple through its "long complex chain of organization"⁴² to market, depended on narrative sources, descriptions of travellers and leading merchants. We get a top down view of the timber trade, with little information on day-to-day operations and non-elite lives touched by the trade.

Of Lower's three forest volumes, it is *Settlement and the Forest Frontier In Eastern Canada* that has developed a sophisticated literature. Québec historians, working within their own nationalist framework, have advanced most clearly our understanding of the relationship between the lumber industry and settlement. Surprisingly, the port of Québec, a prime historiographic target for a politically-charged discussion, the heart of the exploitive Anglo-export system, receives little attention. With Esdras Minville's 1944 studies, Raoul Blanchard's work from the 1950s, and Normand Séguin and René Hardy's study of the Mauricie, and Séguin's earlier *La conquête du sol au 19^e siècle*, we have the basis for the système agro-forestière approach.⁴³

⁴² Lower, *Great Britain's Woodyard*, "Prefatory Note", p. 137.

⁴³ Esdras Minville, *La Forêt*. Montréal: Editions Fides, 1944. Raoul Blanchard, *L'ouest du Canada Français*. Montréal: Librairie Beauchemin Limitie, 1954. 2 vols.; René Hardy and Normand Séguin, *Forêt et société en Mauricie: La formation de la*

This approach posits that the seasonal nature of lumbering provided a complementary activity to farming, winter job opportunities for under-employed farming families and their horses, as well as a market for provisions. As the timber was depleted, the movement of the logging frontier draws settlement on with it. This process transformed the farming community into a rural proletariat, increasingly dependent on the cash income of lumbering. Movement of the frontier into areas of more marginal soil placed increased pressure on resources and the wage economy increased costs to the family farm. Capital investment in timber stands faced competition from railways construction, but also fragmented settlement economies. The shift of capital to pulp and paper production broke the seasonality of the rural work cycle as workers choices were increasingly limited to a marginal cycle of farm and forest or year-round industrial employment, albeit in a rural setting. Séguin argues this leads eventually to rural under-development. The primary culprit is the economic and cultural domination of urban capitalism.⁴⁴

The *agro-forestière* literature has further layers of complexity. Guy Gaudreau

région de Trois-Rivières 1830-1930. Montréal: Boreal Express, 1984. Normand Séguin, *La conquête du sol au 19^e siècle*. Québec: Boreal Express, 1977, and also, "L'économie agro-forestière: génèse du développement au Saguenay au 19^e siècle," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, 29:4 (March 1976): 559-565.

⁴⁴ For a discussion of cultural domination in an Ontario context see: Brian S. Osborne, "The Hinterland," in *New Directions for the Study of Ontario's Past: Papers of the Bicentennial Conference on the History of Ontario: McMaster University, September 5 to 8, 1984*. David Gagan and Rosemary Gagan, eds. McMaster University, 1988, pp. 267-283.

argues that Séguin's interpretation fails to explain the small rural family's persistence as a competitor of the larger corporate producers in wood production.⁴⁵ Rural society clearly is not as passive in its response as Séguin assumes.⁴⁶ Yet Gaudreau's work, centering on timber limits as a measure of domination, seems to move too quickly over conflict to declare that the rural family somehow established itself as an entity in the industry, without apparent conflict or resistance from the forest companies.

Gérard Bouchard emphasises factors which act upon the population, shaping change and response, and providing a context for agency. His work rejects sociological models but not the influence of their variables on societies and families. For him the interaction of larger processes -- cultural, demographic, economic, geographic and social -- combine to create a discrete historical context.⁴⁷ If Séguin argues local elites were agents for external capitalism,

⁴⁵ In 1914, production from private land was 759,664,238 boardfeet compared to 938,493,344 from the province's timber concessions. Guy Gaudreau, "Le rapport agriculture-forêt au Québec: Note Historiographique," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, 33:1 (1979): 77.

⁴⁶ This is one of the interesting and distinctive aspects to the lumber industry in Québec. The recent adoption by the Québec government of the *Groupement Forestier* policy to support cooperative community-based production is a direct response to the fact that 25% of the industry's wood in Québec continues to come from 10% of the privately owned land. Canadian Council on Rural Development. *The Relationship of Canada's Forests to Rural Employment and Community Stability*. Ottawa, 1977, p. 216.

⁴⁷ See: Gérard Bouchard, "L'agriculture Saguenayenne entre 1840 et 1950: l'évolution de la technologie." *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, 42 (1990): 353-80; "Co-intégration et reproduction de la société rurale: pour un modèle

Bouchard would say, perhaps, but that first we should consider the specific historical context of the community. He argues that the family, supplementing the poor wages from lumbering, was actually strengthened and was itself an institution of resistance to the form of capitalist manipulation that Séguin presents. The bachelor males working in the woods were not as isolated as they seem from their families.

Jack Little's two volumes on forests and societies in Eastern Québec lean towards Bouchard's position.⁴⁸ However, he places more emphasis on the control of the State over lives in the Eastern Townships, defining survey systems and looking aside when families supplement their income with unsanctioned forays into the forest. Yet the State fails to provide a working system that allows them to combine a mixed farming and lumbering economy for themselves, such as evolved in the Baltic. This failure of state policy is, to his mind, much to

saguenayen de la marginalité." *Recherches sociographiques*, 29, 2-3 (1988): 283-310; "La dynamique communautaire et l'évolution des sociétés rurales québécoises aux 19e et 20e siècles: construction d'un modèle." *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, 40 (1986): 51-72; "Dynamique des populations locales: la formation des paroisses rurales au saguenay (1840-1911)." *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, 41 (1988): 363-88; "L'économie agraire et la reproduction sociale dans les campagnes saguenayennes (1852-1971)." *Histoire sociale / Social History*, 18 (1985): 237-59; "Un essai d'anthropologie régionale: l'histoire sociale du Saguenay aux XIXe et XXe siècles." *Annales: économies, sociétés, civilisations*, 34 (1979): 106-25.

⁴⁸ J.I. Little, *Crofters and Habitants: Settler Society, Economy, and Culture in a Quebec Township, 1848-1881*. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991. J.I. Little, *Nationalism, Capitalism, and Colonization in Nineteenth-Century Quebec: The Upper St. Francis District*. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989.

blame for the structural nature of economic marginalization. Little finds a distinct separation of the worlds of the settler and capitalist. The settler's economy is internally generated, but marginal. In his area of study, the lumber company is externally controlled, and only weakly connected to the settler's world. He does not say so directly, but the role of the state here is inactivity, which allows a difficult situation for the settler and their children to continue without resolution.

A growing body of regional case studies shows variations in the pattern. Séguin's pupil, John Willis, argues that lumbering was harmful to the peripheral region of Bas-Saint-Laurent, between the St. Lawrence and the border of New Brunswick.⁴⁹ In adjacent Madawaska, Béatrice Craig found the lumber industry's cash economy enabled new immigrant families to settle despite lack of access to credit systems used by more established families.⁵⁰ Graeme Wynn adds a cultural overlay to agriculture and forestry conflicts by showing the disparity between rhetoric, the nineteenth century agrarian ideal, and the

⁴⁹ John Willis. "Urbanization, Colonization and Underdevelopment in the Bas-Saint-Laurent: Fraserville and the Temiscouata in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Cahiers de Géographie du Québec*, 28: 73-74 (April-September 1984), pp. 125-161.

⁵⁰ Béatrice Craig, "Immigrants in a Frontier Community: Madawaska 1785-1850," *Histoire Sociale/Social History*, XIX, 38 (November 1986), pp. 277-297. See also Louise Dechêne's discussion of the role of the "truck" system of credit. Louise Dechêne. "Les entreprises de William Price, 1810-1850," *Histoire Sociale/Social History*, 1 (April 1968), pp. 16-52.

economic reality of forestry's role in New Brunswick's development.⁵¹ The models of production in his classic, *Timber Colony*, dovetail neatly with the *agro-forestière* school, but without pursuing the under-development argument.⁵²

Maine's historiography also supports the *agro-forestière* interpretation. Richard W. Judd examined the agriculture/lumber relationship in Aroostook County. He made no reference to the Québec literature but drew attention to the complex relationship between the "twin pillars of development," agriculture and lumbering.⁵³ For Aroostook, the 1873 depression, coupled with rail access to external urban markets, diversified farm production, breaking dependence on the lumber economy. Judd also found surveys of farmers conducted in 1856 and 1857 showed awareness of the cost of dependence on lumbering.⁵⁴ Four-fifths

⁵¹ Graeme Wynn, "Deplorably Dark and Demoralized Lumberers? Rhetoric and Reality in Early Nineteenth-Century New Brunswick," *Journal of Forest History*, 24:4 (1980), pp. 168-187.

⁵² Graeme Wynn, *Timber Colony: A Historical Geography of Early Nineteenth Century New Brunswick*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981.

⁵³ Richard W. Judd, "Lumbering and the Farming Frontier in Aroostook County, Maine, 1840-1880," *Journal of Forest History*, 28:2 (1984), pp. 56. Also: "Timber down the St. John: A Study in Maine New Brunswick Relations." *Maine Historical Association Quarterly*, 24:1 (Summer 1984), pp. 195-218, and, Richard W. Judd, *Aroostook: A Century of Logging on the Northeastern Frontier*. Arno: University of Maine Press, 1985.

⁵⁴ *Annual Report of the Board of Agriculture*, Augusta, Maine, 1856 and 1857. in *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65. The historian who first used these reports in 1935 was Richard Wood, Richard G. Wood, *History of Lumbering in Maine, 1820-1861*. Orono, Maine: University of Maine Press, 1935.

had negative comments about farming's relationship with the lumber industry.⁵⁵ Maine, in many ways similar to New Brunswick and Québec, later became an importer of timber from Sherbrooke, the Eastern Townships, and the Saugunay via the Grand Trunk Railroad.⁵⁶

Taken with studies on Ontario's development we find a pattern of regional rural development, or under-development, varying according to factors such as demography, local responses, transportation, and alternate markets.⁵⁷ This approach, which began by asking how capitalism penetrated Québec's rural society, appears applicable to post-World War II Canadian society. It provides a context for Ian Radforth's *Bushworkers and Bosses*, where against a background of rural de-population, an industry makes a technological response to a shrinking

⁵⁵ While farmers acknowledged the benefits of forest markets, they saw conflicts between the timing of the spring river drive and their planting cycle. The use of stock in the woods over the winter meant a loss of manure for the spring. Sale of fodder to shanties limited the number of stock they could winter on their farms. There was unease at the over-reliance on credit while employed in the woods. Competition for labour between agriculture and forestry meant increased wage costs and farm labourers' newly acquired expectations led to a greater transiency rate. *Ibid.*, pp. 196-198.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

⁵⁷ Chad Gaffield, "Boom & Bust: The Demography and Economy of the Lower Ottawa Valley in the Nineteenth Century." *Historical Papers*, (1982), pp. 172-195. Douglas McCalla, "Forest Products and Upper Canadian Development, 1815-46," *Canadian Historical Review*, 68:2 (1987), pp. 159-198. Peter Russell, "Forest into Farmland: Upper Canadian Clearing Rates, 1822-1839," *Agricultural History*, 57:3 (1983), pp. 326-339.

labour force.⁵⁸ Whether one accepts inevitable under-development or the Aroostook emphasis on access to external markets, the literature extends our understanding of rural development far beyond the issues of farm versus shanty. The richness of these debates extends Lower's work immensely.

Lower's other two forest books, *North American Assault* and *Great Britain's Woodyard*, have inspired far fewer historians and drawn more criticism. Missing are the social conflicts and avarice detailed by Michael Cross, and to a lesser degree, by Jeremy Kilar and Béatrice Craig.⁵⁹ One does not get a sense of internal conflicts within these two books. We get little sense of the developing role of the state, although H.V. Nelles and Peter Gillis fill in some aspects.⁶⁰ We know little about linkages between the forest industry and other sectors of the economy. Neither book sheds much light on what was happening at the grassroots level of the industry as it spread.

⁵⁸ Ian Walter Radforth, *Bushworkers and Bosses: Logging in Northern Ontario, 1900-1980*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987.

⁵⁹ Michael S. Cross, "The Dark Druidical Groves: The Lumber Community and the Frontier in British North America to 1854," Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1968. Jeremy W. Kilar, "Great Lakes Lumber Towns and Frontier Violence: A Comparative Study." *Journal of Forest History*, 31 (April 1987), pp. 71-85. Craig, Béatrice, "Agriculture and the Lumberman's Frontier in the Upper St. John Valley, 1800-70," *Journal of Forest History*, (July 1988): pp.125-137; Béatrice Craig, "Immigrants in a Frontier Community: Madawaska 1785-1850," *Histoire Sociale/Social History*, XIX, 38 (November 1986) pp. 277-297.

⁶⁰ H.V. Nelles, *Politics of Development: Forests, Mines and Hydro-Electric Power in Ontario, 1849-1941*. Toronto: Macmillan, 1974. R. Peter Gillis, and Thomas Roach, *Lost Initiatives: Canada's Forest Industries, Forest Policy and Forest Conservation*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1986.

Lower also says little about the relationship between timber trade capitalism and social formation. Peter Gillis said *Great Britain's Woodyard* failed to explore the "causal force behind the development of the Canadian capitalist system." By concentrating on the British firms at Québec timber coves, Lower did not explore the linkages and social developments of the upcountry operations. Gillis, supported by Michael Cross' study of Ottawa Valley timber society, argues that local entrepreneurs developed an indigenous community-based trade, one established as an increasingly complex matrix of outward social, political and economic connections.⁶¹ This process is missing from Lower's portrait of colonial dependency, of Canadians as "hewers of wood" for resident British timber firms in the Québec City entrepôt.

Great Britain's woodyard was also New York's woodyard. Lower acknowledged this in a chapter of *North American Assault* but it has yet to be explored at a regional level. Lower preferred to simply condemn U.S. influence, as in this statement:

American saw-millmen. . .came to establish a mass-production industry, selling lumber to the great American markets, especially New York. These men contributed enormously to the development of the valley,

⁶¹ Robert Peter Gillis, "Great Britain's Woodyard: A Critical Appraisal." *Journal of Forest History*, 18:4 (October 1974), pp. 110-127; Michael S. Cross: "The Dark Druidical Groves: The Lumber Community and the Frontier in British North America to 1854," Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1968; "The Lumber Community of Upper Canada, 1815-1867," *Ontario History*, 52 (1960): pp. 213-233; "The Shiner's War: Social Violence in the Ottawa Valley in the 1830s," *Canadian Historical Review*, 54:1 (March 1973), pp. 1-26.

though they wrecked its forests in the process.⁶²

American sawmilling may have involved "mass-production" but so did British firms such as the Hamilton Brothers of Hawkesbury, early builders of one of the largest and most complex mills in the region.

When did a "Canadian" capitalist lumber system come into existence? We know most of the Ottawa lumber community elite were American. Nationalists prefer to avoid discussion of American immigrant contributions to development. In *Great Britain's Woodyard* Lower discusses English timber merchant Henry Usborne, but ignores his testimony in 1821 that one-third of the timber exported from Québec had American origins.⁶³ John Hamilton of the large English-owned Hawkesbury sawmill testified, to the same Commission Lower used, that his axe-men and raftsmen were American, while local farmers provided the labour.⁶⁴ In 1835 John Neilson told another commission about the impact of American business styles.⁶⁵ Neither of Lower's books adequately explores this

⁶² A.R.M. Lower. "Lumberjack's River", *Queen's Quarterly*, LX:1 (Spring 1953), p. 27.

⁶³ Testimony of Henry Usborne. Britain. Parliamentary Papers. *Report From the Select Committee on the Foreign Trade of the Country and on the Lord's Report of the Previous Session Relative to the Timber Trade, 1821*, (186) Vol. VI, p. 41. See also Philip L. White's description of the timber trade with Québec City in *Beekmantown, New York: Forest Frontier to Farm Community*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979.

⁶⁴ Testimony of John Hamilton, *Ibid.*, p. 72.

⁶⁵ Testimony of John Neilson. Britain. Parliamentary Papers. *Report from the Select Committee Appointed to Take into Consideration the Duties on Timber, 1835*

overlap of British and American influence.

Economic historians have also turned their attention towards Lower's thesis in *Great Britain's Woodyard*. Douglas McCalla found a number of inconsistencies: comparative advantage may have been a more important than the Imperial tariff; there is no clear co-relation between immigration patterns and incoming timber ships; patterns of metropolitan exploitation do not match the experience of the forest economy of southern Upper Canada; and the narrative sources Lower set great store upon do not stand up to statistical analysis of input components, such as number of labourers, wages, linkages to the local economy through the purchase of supplies and so forth.⁶⁶ McCalla concedes the uniqueness of the Ottawa Valley as a lumber producing region, but argues that operations have been exaggerated.

Marvin McNinnis is also critical of Lower's emphasis on the changing British duties. He suggests that what happened was not a loss of market after the removal of preferential duties.⁶⁷ Instead there was a voluntary withdrawal of Canadian timber from the British market in favour of the United States.⁶⁸ He

(519), Vol. XIX, I, p. 135.

⁶⁶ Douglas McCalla, "Forest Products and Upper Canadian Development, 1815-46," *Canadian Historical Review*, LXVIII: 2 (1987): 159-198.

⁶⁷ They were reduced in steps in 1842, 1847, 1851, 1861 and finally removed in 1866.

⁶⁸ The author wishes to thank Marvin McNinnis for making a draft of "The Competition for the British Timber Market, 1850-1895" available.

does agree that preliminary trade was accelerated by preferential duties.

McCalla concedes this only for the Ottawa Valley producers. The rest of Upper Canada's trade existed prior to the duties and grew constantly for forty years prior to and during the duties. McInnis suggests that the removal of the thirty percent American tariff on Canadian lumber was more significant.

The clearest evidence against Lower's British tariff chronology is provided by him in *Great Britain's Woodyard*. If one flips past his conclusion to the graphs in the back, one will see Lower's own statistics refute the book's chronology. In the chart of combined square and sawn timber imports to Britain from B.N.A., we see that industry's peak has no relation to tariffs or Confederation. The peak volume fell in the heat of industrialization, the 1890s.⁶⁹ Clearly we need to re-examine this period in which markets shifted and exports peaked.

A key historiographic problem of interest to McInnis, is that despite Lower's *North American Assault*, the "full story of how Canada came to penetrate the U.S. market has not been told."⁷⁰ We lack the basic information we need to understand the transition between the two markets, which Lower has avoided discussing by neatly compartmentalizing the two markets into two separate books. How did these lumbermen view the two metropolitan markets and what was their role in the transition between markets? To answer that, where better to look

⁶⁹ Lower, *Great Britain's Woodyard*, "Total of Square Timber and Sawn Lumber Imported Into Great Britain From British North America, 1842-1938," p. 257.

⁷⁰ McInnis, "Competition for the British Timber Market, 1850-1895," p. 7.

than the Ottawa Valley, with its strong connections to both British and American markets. How well do Lower's forest studies *Great Britain's Woodyard*, *The North American Assault on the Canadian Forest*, and *Settlement and the Forest Frontier* explain the forest industry if examined through regional experience? The intent of this thesis is to demonstrate the role of agency, of individual decisions taken by capital and labour in the forest industry of the second half of the nineteenth century during the transition between the British and American markets.

Lower's vision of the industry is uneven. On one hand he set out great themes, some of which social historians have developed to a high level of sophistication. Yet his books also obscure process by neatly compartmentalizing the two markets, trade with Britain and with the United States. He tells us nothing about the links, social and economic, that came before and extended after the timber trade. What influence did the industry have? Its social impact is also compartmentalized into a third volume that discusses process, but not its effect. He chose racialist interpretations and avoided discussions of class. He said he was following the staples chain, but he began and ended with Britain.⁷¹

The portrait that emerges, while structured for nationalist reasons, denies the role of those supposedly dependent and complacent people whom we are told were acted upon, and had their identities defined by, two great markets. In Lower's chronology of the forest industry, in the second half of the nineteenth

⁷¹ This can be seen in the organization of the table of contents to part two of Lower's *Great Britain's Woodyard*, "Anatomy of the Trade".

century tariffs have agency, but not those people that Bouchard, Little and McInnis suggest should have had a role, the capitalist and the worker.

We need to look in the day-to-day record for evidence of the dynamics that existed in the decisions taken by both. Neither capital nor labour could afford to allow itself to be solely defined by the tariffs and markets in which Lower set so much store. It seems logical to argue that if there was such a thing as a "Canadian" lumber industry, it was constructed deliberately in the period of the transition between the two markets. Market forces are indeed large processes, providing an historical context, just as Lower's personal life provided a context for his vision of the nineteenth century forest industry. But within that historical context lies the ability of people at all strata to make decisions to put forward their own vision of their lives formed within their times. A national history that denies that is mere myth.

IV Research Strategy and Evidence

Such an examination requires a consideration of methodology and sources. How did Lower go about his work? His methods were influenced by those who trained him, such as George Wrong of the University of Toronto and Adam Shortt of the Public Archives of Canada. Lower worked for Shortt indexing the *Montréal Gazette* from 1785 to 1840.⁷² This training with newspapers provided

⁷² This card catalogue is still on the floor of the National Archives reference room.

the basis for his University of Toronto M.A. thesis, "The Trade in Square Timber." Shortt suggested the topic and introduced him to the reader for the thesis, Harold Innis.⁷³ George Wrong's influence seems more general.⁷⁴ All these influences, with Turner, Merk, and Withrow, melded into Lower's narrative approach to doing history.

Yet it would be inaccurate to describe Lower solely as a narrative historian. He did not neglect non-literary sources. His economic graphs document the outline of the timber trade's growth and decline. Indexing the *Gazette* gave his work depth for the period prior to 1840. After that date his work uses narrative sources, some government statistics and the ubiquitous reference to "information from private sources". We do not know if he used routinely generated sources, such as the employment and shipping records of timber companies. His work on settlement, aimed at contemporary problems, did use a social science questionnaire given to settlers along the Canadian Shield.⁷⁵

Still, his work is not directly comparable in methodology or sources to the micro-history case studies of the nineteenth century that have appeared since the

⁷³ *Seventy-five Years*, p. 130, and "Nationalism and the Canadian Historian," *Canadian Historical Review*, LXVI:4 (December 1985): 547.

⁷⁴ Lower also fits Carl Berger's observation that Wrong, believing historians should draw moral conclusions from history, was concerned with communicating history to the public, particularly through public school textbooks. Carl Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing Since 1900*. [Second Edition] Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986, pp. 14-15.

⁷⁵ Lower, *Settlement and the Forest Frontier*, pp. 154-160.

1970s. However the narrative forms favoured by A.R.M. Lower should not be discarded out of hand. Voices of contemporary witnesses found in the newspapers, books and testimony before government commissions can be used critically through juxtaposition with routinely generated sources to bring out a richer insight to the matter at hand -- Canada's forests during the transition to industrialism.

A different picture of the forest industry should emerge from routinely generated records generated by a firm in the trade. Employment ledgers and daily business correspondence give an accurate and precise picture of day-to-day life for worker, employer, and region. Another source unused by Lower are notarial records of business dealings and probates of estates, which offer an alternate perspective to the effusive comments of travel writers or memorialists, both uncritical promoters of regions and industries. Such a micro-study will take us closer to the dynamics, to understanding the changing fabric of forest societies during industrialization, a transition usually framed only in an urban context.

The papers of James MacLaren, an Ottawa Valley Lumberman with operations in Québec, provide an opportunity to follow the export process during industrialization through its operations and its related interests. MacLaren's business was not typical of the Ottawa Valley. For one thing, it survived. Operations that began as a family trade in square timber expanded to sawmilling, pulp and paper and hydroelectricity, and continues today as a division of the Noranda group. Yet the problems MacLaren faced were shared by many of his

contemporaries and the records his company generated shed light on the industry as a whole.

There are several strengths to these records and one weakness. Recently deposited, they contain a good run of business correspondence, employment contracts and ledgers detailing work in the woods. The papers are particularly strong in presenting the spatial dimensions of the business, covering both British and U.S. markets during a time of transition. In addition the records include extensive correspondence on the operation of a timber cove in Québec. The weakness of the records lies in the lack of details concerning the internal operation of the sawmill itself, which is made worse by the lack of local newspaper sources.

The MacLaren example is also well sited to examine external connections of the forest industry to society at large. There are a number of notarial sources on the family and its business dealings. James MacLaren founded a regional bank, and extensive records, including shareholder lists, exist in that connection. Other useful sources are several Royal Commissions which discuss the operations of firms and the industry's relation to other parts of society. All of this combines to offer ample opportunity to re-examine the historiographic terrain first covered by Lower.

Conclusion

The chapters which follow discuss a number of questions raised by a rereading of Lower's work. We know the fur trade often preceded settlement into areas and the other extractive industries followed, such as timber and mining. In this transition between staple economies, when and how did an industrial capitalist wage economy arrive? What role did capital play in small scale rural development, such as that centred around the timber trade? On these preliminary questions Lower assumes an influence but does not examine it directly.

The next two chapters examine institutions of work. First, the organization of work in the woods is examined using routinely generated sources. The next chapter deals with a part of Québec mentioned earlier, the timber coves of the south shore at Lévis. There James MacLaren's operation has left us extensive records covering several decades. Strangely, for the second half of the nineteenth century the timber trade here, where the output of several forests met for sorting, sales, and resawing, is relatively unstudied, even in a general way, let alone in a micro-study.

On the north shore, in the city of Québec, another aspect of the trade will be examined. It was here that the output of the Canadian forest met the international lanes of the world trading system. How did the experience of interaction with international trade influence relations in the port? What of the port's decline and its disengagement from the world system? Did this trade

simply wither and how did that effect the labourers who loaded the timber ships?

Forests cannot be accumulated without capital, and that raises further questions unaddressed by Lower. Where did the capital generated from the timber industry go? Did lumbermen diversify their investments and by what criteria? Related to the role of elites is the issue of regional development. Staples theory proposes that export systems will spinoff additional industries, such as manufacturing. Or was there under-development as capital migration took profits to other regions? These questions, central to modern debates about industries, societies and regions, were not part of Lower's consideration of the forest.

What of "after" the timber boom? For Ontario, Lower discussed how conflicts over limited resources grew, as both timbermen and settlers became constrained by the physical barrier of the Canadian Shield. What about this process in Québec? What were the conflicts like in the Ottawa Valley, where timber lands became an investment vehicle quite quickly? The regional experience of these two forest themes, settlement and the timber trade, are kept separate in Lower's work. By assigning them to different volumes, has Lower's search for consensus inadvertently downplayed areas of conflict over land tenure? There are few greater areas of conflict than over access to land or its accumulation, and this should be re-examined.

Answers to the above will yield insight into the relationship between the timber trade and society during industrialization. Examining these questions

through specific case studies based around one Ottawa Valley Lumberman, James MacLaren, we can move further than the image of the industry presented by A.R.M. Lower. Against Lower's consensus view, these results may reveal more of the multi-faceted connections between the emerging turbulent industrial world and corporate forestry. This micro-study begins with the changes unfolding on one of several tributaries of the Ottawa River, the Lièvre.

CHAPTER 1

EARLY CAPITALISM ON THE LIÈVRE

Introduction

A.R.M. Lower begins his discussion of the lumber industry with the events in Europe that triggered demand for Canada's wood. No one questions that origin. But what were the precursors and the processes involved in the arrival and development of the lumber industry on the Lièvre? Answering that question, particularly as it applies to the role of individual agency and capital, is the purpose of this chapter.

In every region, the details of settlement and development differ. A good local history captures this sense of place, presenting a view of the past which reflects culture and identity. This is not a local history, but shares much material in its search not for the details but the patterns they suggest. A micro-history works from the particular to the general. Events on the Lièvre differ from those on the Gatineau River, both differ from the upper Ottawa, or other river systems elsewhere. Providing these individual cases allows us to examine underlying processes, includes those noticeable by their absence. The opening of the Lièvre by the lumber trade and the eventual arrival of James MacLaren are not in

themselves important.¹ It is the pattern behind the sequence of development that is important. Something similar, with local variations, occurred in most frontier lumber communities. The traditional photographic symbols of local forest histories -- a first sawmill, the general store, workers' houses, and river work, such as building the mill dam or timber slides -- are manifestations of social change and the forms of capital incursion into the rural world.

According to "staples school" historiography these incursions came in successive waves.² Fur was succeeded by lumber. But this process of succession

¹ There are three conventions in spelling the name MacLaren in the documentation which has been surveyed. "Mclaren" occurs with the least frequency, and is assumed to be from clerical misunderstandings. As there is at least one unrelated McLaren doing business in the Montréal area its use has been avoided. The thornier issue is the issue of "Maclaren" versus "MacLaren," members of the family and family-owned businesses on occasion using both. My decision has been to ground the term in the milieu in which it existed and to use the spelling MacLaren, as it appears in a family business document involving three members of the family and signed by James MacLaren and concerning the estate of John MacLaren. ANQ-Montréal. Phillips, William Anderson, Public Notary, Minute 15387, 15 August 1878. But even here there is inconsistency; Reverend William McLaren [sic], the brother of James, did not use the "a" in signing his last name.

² The theory is attributed to political economist Harold Adams Innis. The earliest use of the term staple, meaning an item such as fur, timber, wheat or fish, which is only partially processed before export to metropolitan centres, is by George H. Perry in a lecture delivered in Ottawa in 1862 and published by the Ottawa Board of Lumber Manufacturers. George H. Perry *The Staple Trade of Canada: A Lecture Delivered in the Temperance Hall, Ottawa, on Tuesday, 18th March, 1862, Before the Mechanics' Institute and Athenaeum*. [Ottawa?: Ottawa Board of Lumber Manufacturers, 1862?] For an introduction to the theory see: Mel H. Watkins, "A Staple Theory of Economic Growth," *Canadian Journal of Economic and Political Science*, 30 (May 1964), pp. 141-158 and Clare H. Pentland, "The Role of Capital in Canadian Economic Development before 1875," *Canadian Journal of Economic and Political Science*, (1950) or his *Labour and Capital in Canada, 1650-1860*.

has received little consideration and is unaddressed in Lower's writings. We begin by examining how pre-existing economic life was changed: How did timber fell the fur trade? This is particularly pertinent to Native Peoples as it involved the introduction of a cash economy.³ Lumbering changed their relationship with the fur trade. By 1850 in the Ottawa Valley the fur trade post was a retail shop, and in the process closed credit opportunities for Natives, placing them at the cross-roads of marginalization or direct entry into a cash economy.

The lumber trade on the Lièvre also involved land and the control of the river. Colonial land speculators used the land not for its timber, but as an investment. The first wave of colonial speculation followed an almost seigneurial model, limiting itself to the land at the junction of the Lièvre and the banks of the Ottawa River. In the mid-1820s a second wave of speculation left in its wake a small legacy of farms around what became the village of Buckingham. It marked the beginning of mercantile-backed competition. Through merchant capital a structured society began to take shape in the region, based around lumbering and its labour requirements.

Within this society, two fledgling sawmill and lumber operations competed,

Toronto: Lorimer, 1981.

³ Readers interested in pursuing this topic should refer to the B.C. case. Rolf Knight. *Indians at Work: An Informal History of Native Indian Labour in British Columbia, 1858-1930*. Vancouver: New Star Books, 1978; and, John Lutz, "After the Fur Trade: The Aboriginal Labouring Class of British Columbia, 1849-1890," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, New series, vol. 3, (Charlottetown 1992): 69-93.

each hoping for a monopoly position. Both Baxter Bowman and Levi Bigelow, in their attempts to establish control over both river and timber demonstrate a high level of individual agency, visible in their conflicts and compromises. Most of their competition was centred around those areas that were most capital intensive, particularly river slides. This took place within the intensive capital demands of river and forest development, something which can be explored through the use of notarial and governmental records.

The demise of their enterprises in the early 1850s, corresponding to the final reorganization of the fur trade, marked a transition from mercantile pioneerism, the alliance with external pools of capital, to direct capital investment. Both operations were taken over by experienced lumber partnerships. By the 1870s these partnerships had been streamlined down into a pre-corporate form of capitalism characterized by James MacLaren, an Ottawa Valley lumberman. That process also involved a great deal of agency, acted out through kinship and business networks.

Surviving business records will be used for this chapter, as well as government records, such as petitions. However, to gain a more precise detail of the workings of these developments, the primary source to be used is the notarial documents. In them appear precise details of events such as wills and sales, which generate inventories. They also record agreements and compromise over disputes, the ebb and flow of agency, providing insight into the alliances of the various participants. These individual details illustrate the larger processes at

work in the industry, free of the self-promotion that usually accompanies narrative sources.

Our study area is located on the southern margins of the Canadian Shield, up river from Montréal. The *Rivière du Lièvre*⁴ flows into the Ottawa River, 225 miles below the three branches of its headwaters, draining some 4,000 square miles of terrain. Like the larger parallel river system, the Gatineau, it is a podzolic pre-cambrian area; pleistocene glaciation has left behind a scattering of long lakes and valleys marked by sand, clay and gravel deposits, which limit its agricultural potential.⁵ The region was well forested with stands of red and

⁴ *Du Lièvre* translates as "The Hare". According to one author the river, like a hare being pursued, follows a "circuitous or torturous" course at great speed. *Lumbering on the Rivière du Lièvre -- A Saga of MacLaren's and Buckingham*. [Private printing, 1973.] [Attributed to J. Thomson and J. Bryant.], p. 53.

⁵ For the geographer's perspective on the region, and in particular, Helen Parsons and Ingo Eberle on the post-1945 links between ethnicity, farming and lumber work, and farm abandonment, see: Raoul Blanchard, *L'Ouest du Canada Français. "Les Pays de l'Ottawa" "L'Abitibi-Temiscamisque"*. Montréal: Beauchemin, 1954; Ingo Eberle, *Les abandons de ferme et la concentrations de l'habitat dans l'outaouais rural quebécois: Les changements structurels de l'économie agro-forestière et leurs repercussions sur les transformations recentes de l'habitat dans une region peripherique de l'est du Canada*. Traduit par Anne Gilbert. University of Ottawa: Notes de Recherches: 42, Département de Géographie Novembre 1983. Donald D. Hogarth, *A Guide to the Geology of the Gatineau-Lièvre District*. Canada: s.n., 1962. [Also in, *Canadian Field Naturalist*, 76 (1962), pp. 1-55.]; John Ross Mackay, "The Regional Geography of the Lower Ottawa Valley", Ph.D. thesis, University of Montréal, 1949, and, "The North Shore of the Ottawa River," *Revue Canadienne de Géographie*, 1 (1947), pp. 3-8, and, "Physiography of the Lower Ottawa Valley," *Revue Canadienne de Géographie*, 3 (1949), pp. 53-96; Paul G. Lajoie, *Soil Survey of Gatineau and Pontiac Counties Quebec*. Ottawa: Research Branch, Canada Department of Agriculture, Quebec Department of Agriculture, and MacDonald College, McGill University, 1962; J. Maxwell, "Notes on Land Use and

white pine, as well as spruce and hardwoods. Settlers' first attention focused on the potential of its falls; the river drops 500 feet during its last thirty miles.⁶ This motive power for sawmill machinery at Buckingham, coupled with annual high water levels of the May freshets, led to development of an inexpensive system of transportation and timber manufacturing, and eventually to the MacLaren Company's investment in a pulp mill at Masson.

I Timber Fells The Fur Trade

Capitalism first entered the Lièvre valley through the barter of the fur trade. References to the Native Peoples appear on both Champlain's maps and in the Jesuit Relations.⁷ The region's value to both Europeans and Natives was as a

Landscape Evaluation in a Fringe Area of the Canadian Shield," *Geography Bulletin*, (1966), No. 2, pp. 134-50; Helen Edna Parsons, "Rural Land Use Change: A Study of the Gatineau Valley of Quebec" Ph.D. University of Kentucky, 1976, and, "An Investigation of the Changing Rural Economy of Gatineau County, Quebec," *The Canadian Geographer*, 21 (Spring 1977), pp. 22-31, and, "The Rise and Fall of Farming in a Marginal Area, the Gatineau Valley, Quebec," *Cahiers de géographie de Québec*, 19 (décembre 1975), pp. 573-582; and finally, Willard Vandine Smith. "Evolution of a Fall Line Settlement, Buckingham, Québec." M.A. thesis, University of Ottawa, 1967.

⁶ From High Falls to the Ottawa the falls are: High Falls, dropping 180 feet; Poupore, 12 feet; Upper Falls at Buckingham, 22 feet; Dufferin Falls, 63 feet, and a final drop of 200 feet through a 3 1/2 mile series of rapids from Buckingham to Masson on the Ottawa.

⁷ See the overview presented in Pierre Louis Lapointe. *In the Heart of the Lower Lièvre District. The City of Buckingham From Its Earliest Beginnings, 1824-1990*. Buckingham, Québec: City of Buckingham, 1990, pp. 3-8. [Hereafter Lapointe, *City of Buckingham*.]

transportation system, rather than as an area of settlement. Natives and Europeans used the Ottawa to link the West with the St. Lawrence, and Natives also used the Gatineau and Lièvre Rivers to move from the St. Maurice to the Ottawa. Wildlife was present, both game and fur-bearers, on the river basins that fed the Ottawa, but not in unusually large numbers.

The Algonquin Peoples of the Ottawa Valley began a commercial trade in furs in the New France period. The North West Company traders worked the Ottawa and had a post on the Lièvre at Lac des Sables in 1795.⁸ In the fall of 1803 the X Y Company also had one or two posts on the Lièvre. Both alcohol and traps were trade items on the Lièvre by 1814.⁹ The Ottawa Valley posts were not part of the North West and Hudson's Bay Company merger of 1821. Thain and McGillivray of Montréal kept the Ottawa posts until their bankruptcy in 1826, whereupon all, including Lac des Sables on the Lièvre, became Hudson's Bay Company posts. All of this probably had little impact on Algonquin families. Reduction of competition may have lowered prices for furs, but free traders from

⁸ See the Lac des Sables Adventure entries for 22 August and 12 December 1795, North West Company -- General Accounts, 1795-1797, F.4/1. Hudson's Bay Company Archives (microfilm copy), Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa. Reel 5M2. [Hereafter referred to as *HBCA* (Ottawa), Reel xxx.]

⁹ François Albert received a "Commis pour les chenaux, et le Haut de la Rivière du Lièvre" and was operating by September 1803. Norman Anick, *The Fur Trade In Eastern Canada Until 1870*. 2 vols. Ottawa: Parks Canada, National Historic Parks and Sites Branch, 1976, p. 141. The 1814 Lièvre post inventory, at £218, was twice that of Fort Coulonge's. North West Company -- Inventories, Servants Balances, 1814. F.4/6. *HBCA* (Ottawa), Reel 5M3.

nearby Montréal were a continual presence on the Lièvre until at least 1833. The restructuring of the fur trade in the 1820s brought about no significant changes in the Ottawa Valley.

Real economic change came to the region because of two factors, settlement and the lumber trade. Along the Ottawa, fur posts such as Lac des Allumettes and Fort Coulonge were quickly surrounded by settlers and lumber shanties. John Siveright at Fort Coulonge had to compete for furs with free traders, settlers and shanties trading alcohol for furs.¹⁰ In his memoirs HBC trader John McLean recounts being lost far upriver from his post on the Lièvre in the winter of 1829-30. He owed his life to a shanty whose work trails he stumbled upon.¹¹ Shanties supplied free traders with trade goods.¹²

The two economies were accompanied by social conflicts large and small. In 1831 a Native killed an abusive drunken lumberman at a Company post.¹³ In at least one case, on the Gatineau in 1850, Native settlement and timber licenses

¹⁰ John Siveright to James Keith [Hereafter Siveright to Keith], 16 Feb 1831, B.134/c/9, fos. 125-6. *HBCA* (Ottawa), Reel 1M280.

¹¹ "thinking I should never see daylight, -- I suddenly came upon a hard beaten path: this inspired me with new vigour, as it indicated the close vicinity of a shanty". John McLean. *Notes of a Twenty-five Year's Service in the Hudson's Bay Territory*. W.S. Wallace, editor. Toronto: Champlain Society, 1932, pp. 96-97.

¹² Siveright to Keith, 15 Feb 1829, B.134/c/5, fo. 118. *HBCA* (Ottawa), Reel 1M276.

¹³ His body was sent down to Hull. Siveright to Keith, 16 February 1831. B.134/c/19, p. 125-26.; and Siveright to Keith, 7 March 1831. B.134/c/19, p. 176. *HBCA* (Ottawa), Reel 3M54.

were in direct competition for strategic parcels of land.¹⁴ Territorially the lumber trade encompassed and rapidly overtook the fur trade.

George Simpson, who administered the North American operations of the Hudson's Bay Company, became alarmed about the Ottawa Valley lumbermen. Lumbering not only drew off furs, it also gave Natives alternate economic opportunities to work as canoeists and camp hunters. He had assumed that the year required to move a log raft to market in Québec City, an economic constraint on credit created by river navigation, would limit the expansion of lumbering into fur trading areas. However high waters increased the navigability and speed of streams and rivers, cutting the time to market in half.

By 1837 lumbermen from Hull were cutting as far up the Ottawa river system as Lake Temiscamingue, where Lyman McConnell and his eleven sons cut square timber and traded for furs. Simpson attempted to stem the inroads of lumbering by making an example of the McConnells. He tried to lease the only pasture land on the lake, to deny lumbermen access to hay for their oxen.¹⁵ In 1839 the HBC entered the timber trade, using business licenses taken out either

¹⁴ *Return to an Address of the Legislative Assembly, June 25, 1850, for Correspondence Regarding the Setting Apart of a Tract of Land in the Valley of the River Gatineau for the Use of Certain Indians, Also, Correspondence Relative to Granting Lumber Limits to Thomas McGeoy and Joseph Aumond.* Toronto: Rollo Campbell, Simcoe Street, 1850. Native interests were represented by the Roman Catholic Bishop in Ottawa. See the copy in the Archives of Ontario.

¹⁵ George Simpson to the Governor and Committee [Hereafter Simpson to Gov. & Committee], 20 August 1837, D.4/105, fo. 5. *HBCA* (Ottawa), Reel 3M46.

by the Company or by others on their behalf in order to destroy the lumber trade. Simpson referred to this plan as more practical than competing as they did in the Saugenay, where they built costly sawmills, rather than shanties and rafting. The loss, estimated at £1,500 a year, was regarded as a short term necessary expense.¹⁶

The HBC Committee in London approved Simpson's plan and he hired a "superior crew" under a Mr. Armstrong, "a large body of men, who could be employed for the protection of our trade, as occasion might require".¹⁷ Working from one shanty, three parties squared the best timber on the lake. However sending it out was delayed by low water levels. When some of the McConnell brothers had second thoughts and asked to be bought out, Simpson turned them down, thinking that ruining them was the wiser course.¹⁸

¹⁶ Simpson to Gov. & Committee, 24 September 1839, D.4/107, paragraph 66. *HBCA* (Ottawa), Reel 3M42.

¹⁷ Simpson to Gov. & Committee, 8 August 1844, D.4/66, p. 11. *HBCA* (Ottawa), Reel 3M21. Please note: This quote was arrived at independently of Elaine Allan Mitchell's *Fort Timiskaming and the Fur Trade*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), where it also appears on page 170. Elaine Mitchell's book, which includes a chapter on the fur trade and timber (pp. 158-173), came to my attention following completion of this chapter. I am in agreement with her analysis. However our purposes differ. Mine is to demonstrate the origins and structural influence of a timber economy on pre-existing social and economic structures -- the dislocation of credit for Natives and the wage economy implications of staples succession. My decision is to let my research stand, despite this coincidental overlap in use of the sources on Simpson's timber experiment.

¹⁸ Simpson to Gov. & Committee, 20 June 1841, D.4/109, paragraph 4. *HBCA* (Ottawa), Reel 3M42.

The McConnells survived until 1846-47, in part because of their trade in furs. Simpson authorized the HBC traders to trade alcohol because the "great attraction of the Indians to these shanties is the cheap rate at which they can obtain provisions & liquor."¹⁹ After three years of competition the project began to see returns in the order £4000 on its annual rafts.

That was the positive side presented to his superiors. A more candid view is found in his correspondence with his subordinates. Duncan Finlayson forwarded the costs of the foray into the square timber trade to Simpson with the comments that:

I am exceedingly sorry to say that our Lumbering operations have turned out very unprofitable. By a comparison, which we have prepared, of the expenses attending the prosecution of that business, and the proceeds arising from the sale of the timber, you will observe we have sustained a loss of about £3000, exclusive of the charges from Moose, which are, I am informed, considerable²⁰

Simpson countered that there were also profits involved in sales to lumbermen and Depot advances. He suggested that Armstrong, who worked on salary, be replaced by someone paid on profits, to turn the matter around. But the man who took the rafts down to Québec City refused to work on those terms, even with a share of the profits on goods sold to his shantymen.²¹ By the summer of

¹⁹ George Simpson to John Siveright, 23 December 1843. D.4/63, p. 190. *HBCA* (Ottawa), Reel 3M21.

²⁰ Duncan Finlayson to George Simpson, 28 October 1844, D.5/12, fos. 420-421. *HBCA* (Ottawa), Reel 3M67.

²¹ George Simpson to Duncan Finlayson, 26 December 1844, D.4/66, pp. 77-78. *HBCA* (Ottawa), Reel 3M21.

1844 Simpson was discouraged, revealing his feelings most clearly in a letter to John Siveright about closing Fort Coulonge and selling its timber:

It has been suggested that we might with advantage cut down the timber & forward it to market on account of the Company; but, we find from experience that we know little about the practical part of the Lumbering business & that however profitable it may be to others it is to us a bill of costs; notwithstanding all Mr. [Angus] Cameron's zeal & activity, the expenses have been enormous; & the article is almost unmarketable, being the worst parcel of timber that was perhaps ever sent down the Ottawa -- badly selected and badly squared. I shall not, therefore, on any consideration, meddle with that branch of business again."²²

Simpson tried one more winter of shanty activity before abandoning the enterprise in the spring of 1845. Canadian timber did well that year in England and he told his superiors in London that he expected 200 to 300 lumbermen in the area the next winter "against whom the few additional hands which we, in a single shanty, could employ, would afford little or no protection. I have, therefore, after much consideration, determined on not renewing our lumbering operations". He was hopeful that the high cost of lumber, wages, and provisions, about \$1 a day, would convince:

the principal persons engaged in the Lumber business, that it will be found more to their advantage to break off all intercourse with Indians, than to allow the attention of their people to be diverted from their work; and I have succeeded in coming to an arrangement with . . . the principal outfitters in the Temiscamingue quarter, that they will not allow their people to have any dealings with the natives. The lumber business has been entered into on such a very large scale this year, that it is expected the price of timber in the home market must come down; which labour & provisions are so extravagantly high that, there is much apprehension on the minds of many persons engaged in the trade, that notwithstanding the very large profits of

²² George Simpson to John Siveright, 23 February 1844, D.4/63, p. 251. *HBCA* (Ottawa), Reel 3M21.

the present year, the coming will prove a very unproductive one.²³

Simpson also talked to the McConnells' suppliers.²⁴ By 1845 the fur trade admitted it could neither stem nor compete with the lumber trade.

However the full changes were more widespread than the McConnell incident. The company adapted several of its supplying techniques from the lumber trade, particularly the use of winter sleighs to move supplies up the Ottawa from Lachine.²⁵ It was found cheaper to move bulky main provisions like barrels of pork and flour "by ice than open water".²⁶ But the most significant change was the shift away from a Native trade based on credit to a retail non-Native cash trade.

Lumbering rapidly broke down the traditional system of credit for Native trappers. Shantymen offered the opportunity to sell debt-encumbered furs a second time, perhaps at a better price and at a closer location. The shanties were also interested in trading for items other than furs. They bought fresh game, snow shoes, and canoes, and leather goods such as mitts and moccasins produced by Native women. Fur traders' correspondence about "dishonest"

²³ Simpson to Gov. & Committee, 25 August 1845, D.4/67, pp. 142-143. *HBCA* (Ottawa), Reel 3M22.

²⁴ George Simpson to John Siveright, 1 September 1845, D.4/67, p. 124. *HBCA* (Ottawa), Reel 3M22.

²⁵ George Simpson to John Siveright, 23 December 1843, D.4/63, p. 192. *HBCA* (Ottawa), Reel 3M21.

²⁶ George Simpson to Duncan Finlayson, 26 December 1844, D.4/66, pp. 77-78. *HBCA* (Ottawa), Reel 3M21.

Natives reflects their unease that alternate markets threatened the credit dependency that brought Natives back to pay their debts each spring. By the mid-1840s the HBC began to cut off credit to Natives.

From Natives, the trade shifted to a new market, that of settlers and lumbermen. The post returns made it clear that:

surrounded as we are by new settlements and lumbering establishments. . . We have of late given more attention than usual in this quarter to our retail shopkeeping business, which is likely to yield a fair profit, this, however, will merely go in deductions of the loss sustained in the fur trade. . .we do well if we make both ends meet²⁷

Fort Coulonge, unproductive in furs, made a profit in the retail trade carried on with "people engaged in the Lumbering business".²⁸ The profits from sales to the lumbermen and settlers allowed the Ottawa Valley posts to survive. Post inventories began to change to a selection of goods to meet the preferences of their new customers who paid in cash, provisions or furs. Shantymen and settlers became intermediaries, conduits for native furs. Some competed directly with Natives by trapping.

Another factor was the need to maintain the posts as part of a transportation system. In 1847 Simpson reported the results from the Ottawa were not good:

²⁷ Simpson to Gov. & Committee, 20 November 1846, A.12/3, p. 374. *HBCA* (Ottawa), Reel 198.

²⁸ Simpson to Gov. & Committee, 21 June 1843, D.4/62, para. 8; Simpson to Gov. & Committee, 7 February 1844, D.4/63, p. 242. *HBCA* (Ottawa), Reel 3M20 and 3M21.

as the country is being closely settled, every post being surrounded by villages, farms & lumbering shanties, affording a ready market to the Indians for the few furs they collect, while their more frequent intercourse with the whites renders them less honest in their dealings; and here, as elsewhere, it is found that the march of civilization is alike destructive to the aboriginal population & the fur bearing animals. Notwithstanding the unproductive nature of these posts we cannot abandon them as they form links in the chain of communication with the interior, facilitating our transportation of provisions etc., to Temiscamingue & other inland districts; so that, while they are not attended with absolute loss, it appears to me that they must be maintained.²⁹

Although continuing, the economic relations between Natives and fur traders in the Ottawa Valley were changing rapidly by mid-century.

Within this broader context the Lièvre post at Lac des Sables became increasingly a losing proposition. McLean was not aware that the shanty he stumbled upon in 1829 marked the beginning of the end for the HBC on the Lièvre. It functioned primarily as a post to guard access to the Interior. Its fur returns were higher than at Fort Coulonge but neither was very profitable.

In 1843 Thomas Taylor was in charge of the Lièvre post and a lesser one on the Gatineau at Rivière Désert. Simpson instructed Taylor to "husband" supplies and concentrate on farming, using employees for labour and "such Indians as cannot pay off their old debts by hunting". Lac des Sables had a large number of old "Indian debts" that Simpson suspected would never be paid in fur. Taylor was to "get as much of them wrought off by labour or in any other way as possible: & you will, on no consideration give new debts to Indians, unless you

²⁹ Simpson to Gov. & Committee, 11 December 1847, A.12/3, pp. 558-59. *HBCA* (Ottawa), Reel 199.

feel satisfied that they will be repaid in furs."³⁰

Taylor was told to increase production of potatoes, wheat, and oats as they would get "a fair price", presumably from shanties. The post's staff of eight was to be cut in half. The "useless old man" was to be replaced with a girl or boy at \$2 a month and no contracts were to be renewed. Nor was the post to rent sleighs from local farmers any more. Simpson sent up a horse to improve breeding stock for sale or use in winter hauling.³¹ The post was taking on the appearance of a lumberman's depot farm.

The post continued its decline and in 1846 Simpson began to make plans to pull back to the settlement at Buckingham. He hoped to exchange the post with a Buckingham lumberman in return for having a store built in the village. As a retail operation the village store, operated by Taylor and one man, could provide the cash to purchase furs from lumbermen and farmers. Taylor was to make regular rounds of local farms and shanties to collect furs. Negotiations were delayed but by January of 1849 the new retail store in Buckingham was open and the Lac des Sables post closed.

Simpson had little regard for the effect of the closure on local Natives, calling the old post "a haunt for idle, useless Indians, who are a constant drain on

³⁰ George Simpson to Thomas Taylor, 10 February 1844, D.4/63, pp. 230-233. *HBCA* (Ottawa), Reel 3M21.

³¹ George Simpson to Thomas Taylor, 10 February 1844, D.4/63, pp. 230-233. *HBCA* (Ottawa), Reel 3M21.

our provisions & supplies".³² The new Buckingham store would:

by confining our dealings with the natives to cash transactions, whereby they will be enabled to supply themselves with clothing, provisions etc., instead of providing them ourselves with those articles, at a loss instead of a gain.³³

This new relationship with Natives came up several times in correspondence.

Taylor wrote from the Buckingham that:

it is expected that the profits arriving from a small retail store will cover the expenses, while the unprofitable credit system with the natives would be abandoned, paying them either in cash or goods for the furs that they might bring in, in like manner as practised by the numerous other fur dealers who are to be found in every village.³⁴

Simpson described closing Lac des Sables to London:

The small outpost on the Gatineau, although very unproductive, it will be necessary to maintain as a means of facilitating the communication with Grand Lac, which receives its provision supplies from the Ottawa, the natives being so much accustomed to imported provisions that if not forwarded to them they would abandon that part of the country & become hangers-on at the different shanties on the Rivers aux Lièvres and Gatineau, whereby we should lose the trade of that still valuable post.³⁵

Natives buying from the HBC on the Lièvre after 1850 paid cash, credit was rare.

In Buckingham the Hudson's Bay Company store was just that, a store, not a trading post. The old fur post with its servants and Natives had been replaced by

³² George Simpson to Thomas Taylor, 20 March 1846, D.4/67, p. 346. *HBCA* (Ottawa), Reel 3M23.

³³ Simpson to Gov. & Committee. 20 November 1846, A.12/3, p. 375. *HBCA* (Ottawa), Reel 198.

³⁴ Thomas Taylor to George Simpson, 21 January 1849. D.5/24, fo. 108. *HBCA* (Ottawa), Reel 3M84.

³⁵ Simpson to Gov. & Committee, 11 December 1847, A.12/3, pp. 558-59. *HBCA* (Ottawa), Reel 199.

a manager, a labourer and a clerk, supplied by contracted carters. This was to be the fate of many other fur posts in mid-nineteenth century Canada. Two years after the Lièvre shop opened Simpson reported to London that the principal trade of the Ottawa River:

is no longer confined to the Fur Trade alone, the principal branch thereof now being the sale of goods at retail stores at Fort Coulonge, Fort William, Joachim & Mattawa to settlers & lumbermen who pay us in money, provisions & furs.³⁶

This first influence of lumbering on the rural economy of the peoples of the Lièvre was a cash economy, destroying traditional economic relations between Natives and Europeans.

II Speculators, Pioneers and Merchant Capital

While the fur trade was the first visible intrusion by Europeans into the Lièvre, there were other less visible processes that introduced capitalism to the region. Through land grants, bought and sold prior to settlement, the Lièvre became a market commodity before it was even settled.

The region's land had remained relatively undisturbed until 1790. In New France, Montréal fur traders succeeded in having regulations passed barring settlement in the Ottawa Valley. In the 1790s a sequence of land grants were issued to reward friends of the Executive Council and veterans of the American Revolution. The township of Buckingham, at the mouth of the Lièvre, came into

³⁶ Simpson to Gov. & Committee, 5 July 1851, D.4/72, p. 9. *HBCA* (Ottawa), Reel 3M27.

existence on 27 November 1799. A grant of 2,000 acres of strategic lots on either side of the mouth of the river was made to Ensign John Robertson, formerly of the 84th Regiment as a pension. He did little to develop or settle it. His grant, part patronage, noblesse oblige and pension, was the cheapest and most abundant currency available to the Crown, land.³⁷ Robertson kept the land as an investment, along with properties elsewhere, as did the next important grantee, William Fortune.

In 1803 Fortune and his associates, many of whom had connections with Vermont, obtained one of a series of township grants.³⁸ He received a township leader's grant of 14,400 acres to settle and survey Buckingham. He and almost all the members of his group sold their holdings to an outside party within six weeks of obtaining them.³⁹ Only the Dunning family, Montréal merchants, kept theirs, to become the oldest merchant family on the Lièvre. For Robertson the Lièvre was a government pension. For Fortune it was a quick frontier speculation. Only the Dunnings made any direct contribution to the region,

³⁷ See the discussion by Bill Shannon, "Upper Canada Settlers and Inflation: The Real Cost of Land Speculation," paper presented to the Canadian Historical Association (Victoria 1990).

³⁸ See the discussion of regulations and abuses of the various methods by which land was granted by the Crown from 1763-1890 in the introduction of J.-C. Langelier. Québec. *List of Lands Granted by the Crown in the Province of Quebec from 1763 to 31st December 1890*. Québec: Charles-François Langlois, Printer to Her Most Excellent Majesty the Queen, 1891, pp. 3-20.

³⁹ See ANQ-Montréal, J.A. Gray, Notary, 24 October 1803, cited in Lapointe, *City of Buckingham*, n. 99, p. 18.

building a farm and opening a general store. That decision marks the transition to the role of merchant capital in the region.

The bulk of the Fortune associates' holdings were bought by another Montréal businessman, Joseph Bigelow, a nail manufacturer and a business acquaintance of the High Constable in Montréal. Bigelow transferred most of the land, 10,000 acres, to Levi Bigelow, a relative in the United States.⁴⁰ Three years later, in 1806, he received the lease to the most strategic piece of land in the township, Crown reserve Lot 11 Range 4. The land, on the right bank of the Lièvre, had a storage basin for logs above and a good site below the falls for a water-powered mill. Bigelow knew sites with water power were good investments. The lease provided, he may have hoped, an opportunity to monopolize the river's power. Even in the 1820s the Ottawa Valley's hydraulic and timber potential was attracting U.S. capital, but it was capital formed through merchant families and inter-family friendships, such as that between the Bigelows and Philemon Wright of Wrightsville (now Hull). Wright had a mill further up the Ottawa at its junction with the Rideau. The families' business dealings included buying land on behalf of each other; they shipped cattle from Vermont to Hull and planks from Hull to Buckingham. We do not

⁴⁰ Lapointe found that Levi Bigelow lived just across the Quebec border in the U.S, not far from Stanstead. Lapointe, *City of Buckingham*, p. 19. The family operations of Levi Bigelow and Sons of Buckingham consisted of Levi, Lucius and Lawrence Bigelow. Levi died in Burlington in 1843 and Lawrence Bigelow's wife Elizabeth was also from Burlington, Vermont.

know if they had joint lumber shanties and rafting ventures.⁴¹ Financial problems forced Bigelow to sell a number of lots in the 4th range of Buckingham to Thomas and Samuel Chandler. The Chandlers were importers with branches in the Canadas and the United States.⁴² Unfortunately for Bigelow, their firm became insolvent during 1818.

A second merchant group took advantage of this opportunity to establish itself on the Lièvre. In May 1824 William Bowman of Quebec petitioned the Land Committee of the Executive Council on behalf of the London merchant firm of Bainbridge and Brown, to whom the Chandler brothers owed £10,000, secured by land in the Eastern Townships and the 2,800 acres in Buckingham. On the behalf of his "London friends" William Bowman asked for, and was granted, leniency in the patent's time restrictions for his plan to settle four families from Stanstead, giving each a lot on the condition they clear ten others.⁴³ Two months later Baxter Bowman, later Bigelow's arch-rival, arrived from Montréal to begin construction of a sawmill.

Local histories credit Justus Smith with erecting the first sawmill on the Lièvre. Smith, a Montréal innkeeper, had been at Buckingham in 1823. He

⁴¹ Lapointe. *City of Buckingham*, p. 19.

⁴² See NAC, MG 24, D 8, L3L, pp. 21273-21275, cited in Pierre Lapointe, *Buckingham, 1824-1990*, Note 114, p. 23.

⁴³ This included the following 4th range lots: 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20, and 21. Petition of William Bowman, Quebec, 11 May 1824. NAC, RG1, L3L, Quebec and Lower Canada: Executive Council, Land Committee: Petitions and Related Documents, p. 23825-23828.

returned the next spring to begin construction of the mill with a party that included Clement Eaton, a millwright, and Baxter Bowman in the role of labourer. A local controversy about Bowman surrounds the question of how he, a labourer, obtained the mill from Smith after it was completed. Given the role of William Bowman it seems likely that Smith was acting for the Bowmans, who needed Levi Bigelow's Clergy reserve lease for a mill site. Bigelow granted it to Smith in December 1823, the winter before both parties began building their sawmills in Buckingham.

By 1825 the nature of the small community was established. While farms were established in the area, the two sawmills were its economic focus. The households of Bigelow and Bowman contained a third of the population of the 158 residents in 1825 and fifty-eight of the area's seventy single men.⁴⁴ When the nine single males living at the Dunning's household are added, these three households (and employers) contained almost all the region's single men and almost half the non-Native population.⁴⁵ This was quite distinct from the ten households with francophone names, where of fifty-one residents, thirty were children, predominately girls.⁴⁶ The francophone households, with their children, represent the traditional pioneer family, in direct contrast to the

⁴⁴ Seventeen lived with Levi Bigelow, sixteen men and one woman in her forties. Baxter Bowman's household had thirty-nine men and no women.

⁴⁵ Seventy of one hundred and fifty-eight.

⁴⁶ Eighteen of the children were girls and francophone women were eleven of the region's documented twenty-three women.

predominantly male work groups of the large anglophone households with their interest centred on stores, large farms and sawmills. The mills were the dominant, but not exclusive, focus of settlement.

Bowman and Bigelow, with their families and households of employees, totalling less than 100 in all, surrounded by the red and white pine forests and the Lièvre's water power, sought monopoly control, racing each other to the next promising stand of forest -- a forest that neither had the technology to utilize or destroy. What made the competition so intense was not the need to control forests, but the power and transportation source needed to cut and move the trees, the river.

It was the river that provided the location for mill sites and storage space for the logs the mill processed. When frozen it supplied an easy means to move supplies to the shanty camps, and when high in May, provided an easy way to bring down logs. It also created costs at various hurdles, such as rapids and waterfalls. All this was framed within the constraints of capital, market demands and the seasonal cycle of life on the river -- the rapid movement of large numbers of logs down to the mills on the spring freshets and onto markets to the south, and the counterpart, periods of low water in summer, and winter ice that limited sawmill operations.

However the story of these pioneer businesses is found not in their sawmills, but in arrangements of credit, legal instruments and capital investment aimed at gaining control of the river. It is a resource conflict in which the state played

almost no role. As individuals Bigelow and Baxter made numerous strategic decisions, competing here, compromising there, as they attempted to gain advantage over the other. Agency played an important role within these larger structural factors.

III River Slides, Compromise and Conflict

Lumbering on the Lièvre was delayed by the wildness of the first stretch of the river below Buckingham. Both Bowman and Bigelow refer to the earlier failures by others trying to bring rafts of timber and sawlogs down the rapid and continuously falling last four miles to the river's mouth. There was not a large enough body of controllable water for a mill site and holding booms before Buckingham. The first problem was solved by Baxter Bowman's first partner, Charles Sanborn, who constructed a plank slide from Buckingham down to the mouth of the river.⁴⁷ A modern form of this slide exists today. Both parties built their mills at the falls in the fourth concession, with a storage basin above, Bigelow on the east and Bowman on the west bank.

By the 1830s shortages of accessible timber may have been a factor in the exploration of the upper river. Twenty-five miles up river was the largest

⁴⁷ Although Bowman bought out Sanborn he was still in the region. In 1835 he received a land grant in the second range of Lot 7. Bowman also had a partner named Henderson, but the timing of these partnerships is not known. NAC, RG1, L3L, Quebec and Lower Canada: Executive Council, Land Committee: Petitions and Related Documents, Smith Sanborn, 28 July 1835, pp. 84359. Microfilm reel C-2560.

obstacle, High Falls, a "big chute" which dropped 130 feet. In the summer of 1832 Bigelow explored the river above for a distance of some 130 miles. He found "large tracts of pine timber of a very superior quality and of very easy access, and which, but for said "Chute" might be taken down the river and manufactured at your petitioners and said Bowman's mills".⁴⁸

High Falls became the focus of both men. In the winter of 1832-33 Bigelow applied through his agent Charles F.H. Goodhue of Sherbrooke to pre-empt the lots around the falls when they were surveyed on behalf of both himself and Bowman. Bigelow's petition stated he had been manufacturing timber since 1830 and had invested £10,000 in mills and improvements. His future in the lumber business depended on access past the falls. He asked that Bowman be denied any exclusive rights above the chute, suggesting all slides be open to all users, at a reasonable standard cost.⁴⁹

In August 1833 Bigelow and Baxter came to a oral agreement to petition the government for the joint privilege of making and enjoying the necessary improvements around the falls. Bowman started building a slide around the falls

⁴⁸ NAC, RG1, L3L, Quebec and Lower Canada: Executive Council, Land Committee: Petitions and Related Documents, Petition of Levi Bigelow, 14 April 1836, pp. 21280-21286.

⁴⁹ NAC, RG1, L3L, Quebec and Lower Canada: Executive Council, Land Committee: Petitions and Related Documents, Petition of Levi Bigelow, 14 April 1836, pp. 21280-21286. For another perspective on river agreements see Thomas R. Cox, "Transition in the Woods: Log Drivers, Raftsmen, and the Emergence of Modern Lumbering in Pennsylvania." *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 104 (1980): pp. 345-364.

and Bigelow was to pay half. Bigelow drew up the petition but Bowman refused to sign, arguing that it over-emphasised Bigelow's role and said little about his role. Bowman refused to acknowledge Bigelow's contribution to the slide construction and declared the oral agreement to be null and void. Bigelow responded by starting his own slide but ran out of money to complete it.

From Bowman's perspective he had the larger investment and had made a more substantial contribution to opening the river. His High Falls petition pointed out that his early partner, Smith Sanborn, built the mile and a half plank slide below Buckingham at a cost of £1530, and 30 feet of it was, with consent, on Bigelow's property and used by him. It cost Bigelow nothing and Bowman, who bought out Sanborn, spent £400 to build that cross-river section. Bowman's mill was more extensive than Bigelow's, having thirteen runs of saws operating in January 1825. By 1836 he doubled the number of saws and added a grist mill with two runs of stone, spending £15,000 in improvements. At High Falls he spent a £1980 to blast an eighteen foot deep and eighty foot long channel through rock and needed another £1500 to complete the slide. He also had 500 acres of land under cultivation and spent £300 on a road and buildings to connect Buckingham to the Ottawa River.

Bowman told the Crown that Bigelow had failed to pay his share of joint expenses on a number of occasions. In 1834 he presented the slide construction expense book to Bigelow for payment of his share (£400). Bigelow went to his backers, the House of Horatio Gates, who would not invest. In March Bigelow

promised to furnish Bowman with fifty barrels of pork for supplies and so Bowman provided the labourers again. But after spending another £300, Bowman ordered the construction stopped as Bigelow owed both money and the pork. At the falls Bowman cleared seventy-five acres, put up a finished house (26 x 26), and a framed barn (36 x 46), with out-buildings and spent 200 days labour clearing float timber and driftwood to make space for a small mill to grind shanty provender. He accused Bigelow of putting up a small dam nearby to deliberately ruin the site for the grist mill. Bowman asked to be granted a twenty-five year exclusive privilege for each slide and a fixed rate of 6 pence usage per sawlog.⁵⁰

Bigelow responded to Bowman's request to the Crown by saying he had never heard of the planned grist mill and that Bowman's 1834 work was only on the High Falls farm. Bigelow's slide, unlike Bowman's, was complete except for booms, meaning it was not ready either. He asked for the same toll on sawlog or timber under 12 feet and that neither be allowed to obstruct the other's slide with booms.⁵¹ But even with separate timber chutes there was a new bottleneck -- neither had enough open water behind the falls to set out separate booms to control the feed of the logs into the chutes.

⁵⁰ NAC, RG1, L3L, Quebec and Lower Canada: Executive Council, Land Committee: Petitions and Related Documents, Memorial of Baxter Bowman, 23 June 1836, pp. 23806-23817.

⁵¹ NAC, RG1, L3L, Quebec and Lower Canada: executive Council, Land Committee: Petitions and Related Documents, The Reply of Levi Bigelow to a Memorial of Baxter Bowman of 14 April 1836, Montréal 16 August 1836, p. 23805.

Another dispute centred around the sawmills over the division line between Lots 10 and 11. To resolve it they conducted a joint survey in 1836 by David Thompson, the former fur trade explorer and map-maker.⁵² Bowman paid Thompson his share of costs on February 1837 but Bigelow did not. At the same time Bowman made a counter-move involving the mouth of the river. He went to Hull to buy the privilege of keeping his cook house and the plank slide on Lot 12 in the first concession. Bigelow immediately wrote to his friend Philemon Wright in Hull, reminding him of:

the promise often repeated and now of long standing from you to us that you would not sell Mr. Bowman a right there so as to exclude us from the same privileges which him and us now both enjoy.⁵³

What happened next is unknown, but in June 1846 Bowman filed a notarial protest that Bigelow ignored the survey he agreed to in 1836 by building on Bowman's side of Lot 11.⁵⁴ Clearly relations were very poor between Bowman and Levi Bigelow. They grew worse under Lawrence Bigelow, who took over after Levi's death in 1843.

Tough times in the timber trade in 1845-46 led both men to try to gain

⁵² David Thompson was at the time living in Williamstown and working as a Land Surveyor. See: ANQ-Montréal. Francis Samuel McKay, Sr., Public Notary, Minute No. 151, 25 August 1846; and "David Thompson", by John Nicks, in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Vol. VIII.

⁵³ NAC, MG 24, D8, Wright, Philemon and Family, 1816-1862, Levi Bigelow and Sons to Philemon Wright, 23 February 1837, p. 9560.

⁵⁴ ANQ-Montréal. Francis Samuel McKay, Sr., Public Notary, Minute No. 151, 25 August 1846.

advantages from the Crown. Bowman, aware of government grants for river improvements, presented a very detailed thirty-six page statement claiming £3,450 for constructing the High Falls slide the previous decade.⁵⁵ It was a major undertaking constructed in stages: from August to November 1833; continued in March and April of

1834; and finished up in 1836. Cyrus Eaton was the engineer and the number of men involved ranged from seventy-three to eighty-eight.

As Figure 2 shows, provisions for men and animals were as large a cost as the labour itself.

If Bowman was not padding the figures to include his winter shanty

supplies, the evidence shows that the men ate quite well. In addition to the

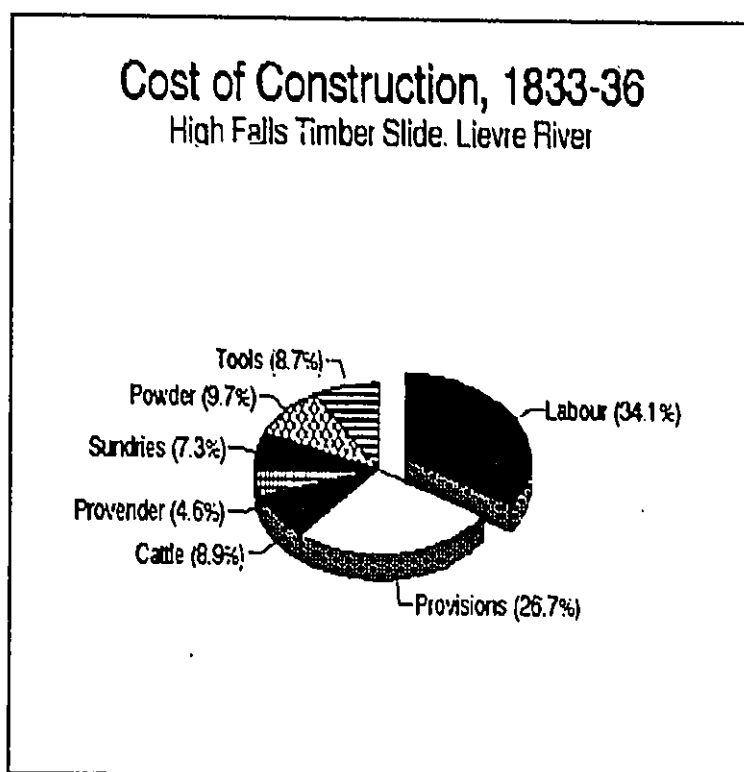


Figure 2 High Falls Timber Slide Construction
Source: NAC, RG4 C1, Petition of Baxter Bowman, 4 January 1845, pp. 4580-4606.

⁵⁵ NAC, RG4 C1, Canada East: Provincial Secretary's Office, Numbered Correspondence Files, 1839-1867. Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa. Petition of Baxter Bowman to Governor General Charles Theophilus Metcalfe. 4 January 1845, vol. 124, p. 4577. Reel C-13531.

expected pork, flour, sugar, beans, peas, bread and potatoes, are the unexpected: ginger, barrels of mackerel, barrels of dry and pickled cod, as well as beer and rum. Animals consumed in excess of eight tons of hay, as well as oats and corn, and general provender. Four yokes of oxen were hired for £78 for four months, to do the heavy hauling. There is little evidence at this time of widespread use of horses. The importance point is that large river slides involved more labour than a sawmill and substantial capital.

Bowman's petition of 1845 also drew attention to the £4,500 duty the government received on the 30,000 logs he passed through the slide. He had also established a series of farms above the falls, including one of 300 acres a hundred miles up river to assist in moving his rafts. As the government had paid for lumber-related river improvements on the Ottawa, he felt he should be either reimbursed or receive a reduction in duties. His claim was rejected by the Board of Public Works, as the work had been for his own benefit.

Aside from High Falls there were a number of agreements relating to leasing plank slides at Buckingham and use of the river. The most significant agreement set out joint-exploitation of both the river and its timber. Both Bigelow and Bowman realized the possibilities of mutual profit if they could exclude others. The region had no other access and their mills and booms were in effect the gatekeepers to the river basin. They came to an agreement in the spring of 1838 to draw lots to cut and pile logs on alternate sides of the river

after August 1839 for the next two years.⁵⁶ The use of the river between High Falls and the mills at Buckingham was to alternate in twelve working day periods, including the time needed to remove booms before handing the river over. When Levi Bigelow and Sons were running logs down to their mills, Bowman was to have possession of the river above High Falls, and vice versa. Neither was to contract to have logs cut on the other's side or to use contractors to run logs outside the time they had possession of the river. Both could use pre-existing shanties and roads when they swapped sides of the river but not the operating supply farms and their fields. The agreement also covered repairs and the alternate use of the plank slide at the sawmills.

However after Levi's death in 1843, and with the pressure of the poor market for lumber in 1846, Lawrence Bigelow appears to have broken the agreement. Early in the year Bowman paid £250 to lease access to Bigelow's plank slide in Buckingham, but in April he filed a protest that Bigelow had taken the cash and kept full use of the slide.⁵⁷ In June Bigelow put up a building, partly on Bowman's side of the Thompson line.

Matters grew more heated under the pressure of season's end. Since 1838 the two parties had agreed they would take turns using the river below High

⁵⁶ ANQ-Montréal. Isaac Jones Gibb, Public Notary. Minute 2048, 26 March 1838. There is also reference to an agreement of 8 October 1836, notary unknown, which could not be located.

⁵⁷ ANQ-Montréal. Francis Samuel McKay, Sr., Public Notary, Minute No. 127, 17 April 1846; and; Minute No. 128, 17 April 1846.

Falls to run logs down to the mills in twelve day periods. Lawrence Bigelow had the use of the river from August 5-18 and Bowman was to get access on Wednesday the 19th. But six days later Bigelow was still using it. Bowman was losing production time and had four gangs (36 men) idle. He sent his book-keeper and a labourer to Bigelow's house to demand an explanation. When asked to return the river and remove the offending building Lawrence Bigelow replied: "I have no answer to make."⁵⁸

From this point on the agreements that let Bowman use Bigelow's slide were negotiated between his surety, Peter McGill, and Bigelow. It is likely that Bowman and Bigelow were no longer on speaking terms. Tensions eased and in January 1847 Lawrence Bigelow leased the use of his plank slide to Peter McGill for twelve months for £400 and renewed the arrangement in 1848. In April this was extended until 1850 in return for two months' access for Bigelow to the log slide at High Falls on the west side.⁵⁹

George Simpson and the Hudson's Bay Company re-entered the picture at this point. In 1848 Simpson hoped to sell Lawrence Bigelow the Lac des Sables fur post as a shanty depot. Lawrence acted for Simpson in finding a suitable building for an HBC store in Buckingham. He negotiated with a Mrs. O'Reilly, whose husband was dying of consumption. The sale fell through when her

⁵⁸ ANQ-Montréal. Francis Samuel McKay, Sr., Public Notary, Minutes No. 150, 151, and 152, 25 August 1846.

⁵⁹ ANQ-Montréal. Francis Samuel McKay, Sr., Public Notary, Minute No. 237, 27 January 1847; Minute No. 379, 6 March 1848; Minute No. 420, 21 April 1848.

relatives advised her not to sell, for fear her husband would take the money and leave her -- they advised waiting until he was dead.⁶⁰ Before this happened, Lawrence Bigelow had problems of his own. During a December visit to Montréal his financial arrangements collapsed. He managed to return home with an emergency loan of £200 from George Simpson.⁶¹

Bigelow welcomed the new year of 1849 in Montréal, sitting down with his banker, David Davidson to deal with his personal bankruptcy. Bigelow's debts included £2,000 to privileged creditors including wages owed his workers, £588 owed to the Bank of British North America, Crown timber dues and duties of £1,850, and a mortgage of £10,000 transferred to H.E. Burstall from Thomas Wilson two years earlier. In all he owed £14,438 and more for unsecured common debts. Davidson, on behalf of the bank, agreed to pay fifty percent on common debt, and all the privileged debt and sums owing to the Crown.⁶² In return, for 5 shillings, Bigelow assigned to the Bank the assets in Table III, and Elizabeth, signed to transfer her rights of dower and those of their children. The family was given permission to stay in their house for six months. Three days later the privileged creditors, including the workers, were paid. The Bigelow's

⁶⁰ Lawrence G. Bigelow to George Simpson, 27 February 1848, D.5/21, fo. 371; Lawrence G. Bigelow to George Simpson, 5 March 1848, D.5/21, fo. 320. *HBCA* (Ottawa), Reel 3M80.

⁶¹ Lawrence G. Bigelow to George Simpson, 18 December 1848, D.5/23, fo. 478. *HBCA* (Ottawa), Reel 3M84.

⁶² ANQ-Montréal. Francis Samuel McKay, Sr., Public Notary, Minute No. 473, 5 January 1849, and, Minute No. 475, 8 January 1849.

were ruined, as	
were many others in	Land by range or concession:
the often	I: 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 16, 18, 20, 21, 23
speculative lumber	II: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 16, 18, 19, 20.
trade.	III: 1, 3, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21.
	IV: 10, N ½ 26, 27.
	V: 4, 10, 26.
	VI: 9.
A series of	VII: 15, 16, 17.
letters concerning	Farms: Clay Creek Farm, Portland Farm, High Falls, Ox-bow Farm, Wabasee, Tappanee
the unprotected	
common debt of	Businesses: Buckingham Sawmill, Grist mill, Other buildings on Lot 10, Bigelow store
£200 owed by	Family Home
Bigelow to George Simpson give	All assets include Elizabeth Henry Bigelow's dower. Source: ANQ-Montréal. Francis Samuel McKay, Sr., Public Notary, Minute No. 473, 5 January 1849.
glimpses of the strain on Bigelow	<hr/> Table III Lawrence Bigelow's Buckingham Assets Transferred to D. Davidson, 1849 <hr/>

and his family. In one he wrote to apologise for his "violent. . .posture of defiance" and "language neither courteous nor polite".⁶³ The loan had been swallowed up in the costs of settling the estate but he considered it a debt of honour which he would repay somehow. He went to his wife's home, Burlington,

⁶³ Lawrence G. Bigelow to George Simpson, 12 January 1849, D.5/24, fo. 58. HBCA (Ottawa), Reel 3M84.

Vermont, and entered into lumber dealing there.⁶⁴ He finally paid Simpson in 1856, seven years later.⁶⁵ In another letter, after commenting on Elizabeth's eroding health and an ill child, he said he had no regrets at abandoning Buckingham Mills, as the crash would have come no matter how he fought, but that failing in business for an honest man is like having "soul and body torn asunder".⁶⁶

We do not know what Baxter Bowman thought of Bigelow's ruin. He died shortly thereafter in 1853, ending an era. The management of Bowman's sawmill and shanties had been changing before his death. In February 1847 at Feller's Hotel in Montréal, Bowman drew up his will before a trip, perhaps to his other home, Meredith, New Hampshire, where he was later buried. Giving Peter McGill his power of attorney, Bowman split his estate evenly between Emeline,

⁶⁴ An L.G. Bigelow is said to have brought the first large shipment of Canadian lumber to Burlington. Burlington got rail access to Boston in 1849 and by 1868 was the third largest lumber centre in the United States, processing lumber from the Ottawa. See: William G. Grove, "Burlington the Former Lumber Capital," *The Northern Logger and Timber Processor*, 19 (May 1971): 18,19, 38-43; Joseph Amrhein, *Burlington, Vermont: The Economic History of a Northern New England City*. [Available as a photocopy from the Middlebury College Library.] Ph.D. thesis, New York University, 1958. [N.Y.U. no longer has an original.]

⁶⁵ Lawrence G. Bigelow to George Simpson, 12 May 1856, D.5/41, fo. 401. HBCA (Ottawa), Reel 3M109.

⁶⁶ Lawrence G. Bigelow to George Simpson, 26 February 1853, D.5/36, fo. 314. HBCA (Ottawa), Reel 3M102.

his daughter, and his friend McGill.⁶⁷

The day-to-day management of Bowman's mills continued, in the hands of the man Bowman's daughter married, George Washington Eaton.⁶⁸ Like the Bigelows, Eaton came from Vermont. He was more a bourgeois figure than pioneer, marrying the mill owner's daughter, starting in the Company store and through kinship and effort becoming manager.⁶⁹ A diary of an unidentified photographer described the complex as the "Eaton Mills" a decade later, in 1861-62.⁷⁰ Eaton told the visitors how as a result of his marriage to Baxter Bowman's daughter he received half the profits and logged one complete side of the river.

Bowman's financial affairs had been just as strained as Bigelow's, except

⁶⁷ His daughter was to receive the interest on his estate until her death and her children were to have the principal when they reached majority. The other half of his estate went to Peter McGill. McGill was not only a powerful merchant, he was also speaker of the legislative assembly and a university now bears his name. ANQ-Montréal. William Nicholas Crawford, Public Notary, Montréal. Minutes 711 and 712, 16 February 1847.

⁶⁸ He was probably a relative of both the engineer who built the High Falls slide and the millwright who built the sawmill in 1825.

⁶⁹ McGill stipulated in the transfer that Eaton be paid \$19,000 for his services to date, that he continue to receive an annual salary of £750, and an additional sum in trust, 10,739 (Unclear if this is dollars or pounds), representing Bowman's bequest to his daughter and her children. McGill and Company were also to receive £14,345 3 shillings and 5 pence still outstanding on the original £20,000 borrowed in the 1830s.

⁷⁰ This unique manuscript was a gift from an unidentified photographer (probably from the staff of William Notman) to Alvira Lockwood, an Ottawa photographer. How it came to be in the Library of Parliament is unknown. It is filed under the recipient's name: Alvira Lockwood, *Tour up the Lièvre* (1860-61).

Bowman had a powerful backer.⁷¹ The evidence appears in documents generated in 1860, as Peter McGill's failing health caused him to dissolve Peter McGill and Company and to transfer his responsibilities as executor of Bowman's estate. In 1836 Peter McGill loaned Bowman £15,000 for one year. He failed to pay the principal, or the £2,200 interest or an additional promissory note of £2,300, probably for supplies, owing within a year £20,000. Peter McGill agreed to carry Bowman's operations. Pierre Louis Lapointe has uncovered a connection with McGill's associate William Price -- Price had first choice of Bowman's output.⁷² Both Price and McGill were associated with the important London firm of Nathaniel Gould and James Dowie. Bowman's final will and codicil of July 1849 made Peter McGill, the individual, sole executor of his estate and transferred his debts to Peter McGill and Company, which probably included the Liverpool merchant Kenneth Dowie and his London attorney Charles Bischoff. The source for capital for "milling and lumbering" was "almost wholly

⁷¹ ANQ-Montréal. John Carr Griffin, Public Notary, Minute 18234, 18 February 1860, and Minute 18249, 20 February 1860. Key events in these documents include references to: a Minute before Notary N.P. Griffin, 13 October 1836 regarding the loan of £15,000 for twelve months to Bowman from McGill; a ruling in McGill's favour for £20,000 before the Court of Queen's Bench, District of Montréal, 19 October 1837; an agreement and declaration between Bowman, McGill and Peter McGill and Company, before notary J.J. Gibb, 22 November 1849; and case 1180 before the Superior Court of Lower Canada, 26 February 1850.

⁷² ANQ-Québec, E21, 1877, "Droits de coupe" 1834 and 1836-37. Baxter Bowman to William Price, 25 November 1834; 14 December 1837; and "Assignment", 29 July 1837. Cited in Pierre Lapointe, *Buckingham, 1824-1990*, Notes 96-98, p. 52. See also Louise Dechéne, "Les entreprises de William Price," *Histoire sociale/Social History*, vol. I (April 1968), pp. 16-52.

by means of advances in money or goods" by Peter McGill and Company.⁷³

While remembered in local histories as self-reliant pioneer figures, the businesses of Baxter and Bowman were built on extended credit.

Both Bigelow and Bowman began literally building an economic structure in the 1820s upon the residual of colonial land speculation. During the competition of the 1830s neither had the resources to successfully gain control of the river, and by the 1840s they divided the Lièvre between them through various agreements. Bowman was probably the better businessman and many of the river "improvements" were his doing, not Bigelow's. However the Bigelows appear better at dealing with officials and people such as Simpson, although that did not save them. It would be simplistic to consider them mere structural extensions of capital, through credit. Both demonstrated considerable agency in the decisions they made. But by 1850 the world of these pioneers was one in which law and notarial documents were more important than the broad axe.

Even George Simpson was moving from his fur trade past into metropolitan finance. David Davidson, Bigelow's trustee, moved on to the Bank of Montreal and quietly lobbied for George Simpson, who was elected a director a few years later in 1860.⁷⁴ On the Lièvre, the HBC fur post closed, to reopen down in Buckingham as a retail shop, during the winter of Bigelow's failure. Business was

⁷³ ANQ-Montréal. John Carr Griffin, Public Notary. Minute 18249, 20 February 1860.

⁷⁴ David Davidson to George Simpson, 1 May 1860, D.5/52, fo. 1, and also, 4 June 1860, D.5/52, fo. 132. *HBCA* (Ottawa), Reel 3M123.

Table IV
Chronology and Value of Improvements
Buckingham Mills and the Lièvre River, 1826-1851

YEAR	IMPROVEMENT	VALUE
1826	Sawmill at Buckingham	----
1829	Sawmill at Clay Creek	1750
	Slides & Dams for mill	250
	Clearing site for mill	475
1832	New Buckingham sawmill	3500
	Canals & Slides into the Mill	3800
	Dams and blasting	750
	Plank and slab slides from the Mill	500
	Log basin booms	150
	Upper Falls slide, & booms above	825
1836	High Falls slide & booms	2750
	Ox Bow farm by High Falls	1500
1837	Grist mill	2500
1841	Booms and piers for Ox Bow farm	750
1842	Portland Farm	500
1843	Booms at Lac des Sable	75
	Booms at Le Cars	75
	Wabasee Farm	1500
1845	Tappanee Farm	1500
	Dams & slides on: Creek de Cerf.	
	Creek des Isle, Pearson Creek	250
	New plank and slab slide	600
	Sawmill	3500
1846	New slide Mills to Basin 3 1/4 miles	3500
1850	Booms and piers in Log Basin	225
1851	Built small saw mill	550
n.d.	Roads and bridges	500
n.d.	Workshops	250
n.d.	Clearing and Building	5500
	Total Improvements	£38,025

Source: ANQ-Hull, James MacLaren Industries, M-207 Memorandum of Improvements, 1826-1853.

business and old ways change.

The Lièvre as a resource was divided as much by private legal arrangements overseen by lawyers and bankers as by the licensing of the state. By mid-century the era of the pioneer lumberman, an odd mix of structural factors and agency, was at an end. Both Bowman and Bigelow had built mills and overseen construction of physical solutions to the barriers to their use of the river. A memorandum kept by Davidson on pre-1850 improvements shows investments of £38,000, over and above the first sawmill (Table IV). The figures allow for comparison: £10,025 for mill construction, improvements and workshops; roads and clearing was another £6,250. River, farm and forest-related work accounted for the majority of the investment: £8,625 for the dams and slides immediately surrounding the sawmill, a further £4,275 spent on dams slides and booms upriver, and £8,250 spent on supply depots and farms. The total estimate was £32,275, of which two thirds was the infra-structure needed to support and supply a sawmill. The scale of these substantial investments of capital were far beyond that possible for the average pioneer farming family.

IV Bankers and Family Partnerships

Under bank administration a more formal series of business arrangements took place. Davidson, acting for the Bank of British North America, the temporary owner of Bigelow's mills, resolved a number of long-standing disputes at the mills in Buckingham. He, and later his Buckingham agent Robert Lusk,

continued the previous arrangements over slides and river use.⁷⁵ Before his death Baxter Bowman sold a disputed part of Lot 11 in order to keep the slide private and to resolve the dispute over David Thompson's survey of February 1837.

In November 1850 the Bowman slide from the sawmill to the river's mouth received protected legal status as The Lièvre Slide Company. It was created under a miscellaneous section of the Joint Stock Companies Act for macadamizing the roads of Lower Canada.⁷⁶ Bowman was not a member, but members included his book-keeper, his son-in-law and the holder of his mortgage, Peter McGill, later President of the Bank of Montreal. The Lièvre Slide Company's offer for a 100' corridor across Bowman's Lots 11 and 12 was put to arbitration amicably over the price, and Bowman's representative was the Mayor of Buckingham, Michael Mahoney.⁷⁷ Both this slide and a later one

⁷⁵ ANQ-Montréal. Isaac Jones Gibb, Public Notary, Minute 12148, 7 February 1850.

⁷⁶ The Lièvre Slide Company was founded 13 November 1850 under Vic 12, Chap 56. "An Act to authorize the formation of Joint Stock Companies in Lower Canada, for the construction of Macadamized Roads and Bridges and other works of a like manner." For rural development this is an unstudied and critical piece of legislation. Its members were: Peter McGill and Selah P. Tilton (sp.?), Merchants, Montréal; George Feller, Hotel-keeper, Montréal; George Washington Eaton and George William Steacey of Buckingham. Steacey was Bowman's book-keeper. ANQ-Montréal. John Carr Griffin, Public Notary, Minute ?, 20 December 1850.

⁷⁷ ANQ-Montréal. Francis Samuel McKay, Sr., Public Notary, Minute No. 640, 17 January 1851.

built by MacLaren on the other bank were granted an entrenched position over other interests, including railway companies.

There was also a survey in 1852 of "Bowman's Log Slide" at the Upper Falls, just above the mill, undertaken by Horace Merrill, a timber engineer from Ottawa. Merrill reported that the 2,180 foot timber slide needed extensive work. The old slides were too close to the falls, and as a result booms could not be used until the low water in July. That had a substantial penalty, as Merrill pointed out: "Mills working with full heads of water [have] deal rafts [that] can be floated to Quebec in about one half the time that they can in low water, and with the advantage of finding an early market."⁷⁸ Bowman made the repairs suggested in Merrill's report and Davidson paid £800, half. The slide and the rafting basin were to be used for "half of the month alternately, beginning on the first day of May. . .continuing until the close of navigation."⁷⁹ First use each year would alternate and Eliza Wheeler Bowman took part when she agreed to grant her dower in the land.

⁷⁸ ANQ-Montréal. Isaac Jones Gibb, Public Notary, Minute No. 14287, 15 November 1852, "Report of Horace Merrill, Bytown, 6 September 1852." It is unclear but likely that Merrill has some relationship to Joseph Merrill Currier, a partner of James MacLaren who will be discussed later in this chapter. Merrill reported the slide, whose first 120 feet had been redone in 1851, still needed 450 feet rebuilt, at a cost of £786 for the slide, £300 for pieces and stop logs to handle high and low water, repairs to planking and bulkhead £82, and new booms, £208.

⁷⁹ ANQ-Montréal. Isaac Jones Gibb, Public Notary, Minute No. 12148, 7 February 1850 and Minute 12394, 4 July 1850, and Minute No. 14286, 15 November 1852.

These new joint agreements went further, to include the division of the timber limits at a fork in river above High Falls. All parties were bound "punctually to apply for and use all possible diligence to obtain all licenses and licenses in their respective names from the Government." Having cast lots, they agreed that Bowman was to cut only on the west side of the Lièvre above High Falls for the next seven years. Davidson and any new owners were to cut on the east side and neither were to contract for logs cut by

Table V
Moveable Property Inventory,
Bigelow Estate 1853

Location	Value
In Store, Upstairs	£10.18.04
In Store Downstairs	9.08.09
In Office	7.06.06
Wool House	22.09.07
Oil House	3.07.11
East Granary	9.14.08
Store Yard	20.00.00
Back Store, Upstairs	6.14.11
Warehouse	11.15.09
West Granary	28.12.09
Cook House	31.16.04
Bake House	9.18.03
Blacksmith Shop	104.02.07
Lumber House	87.07.09
Shoe & Harness Shop	20.02.01
Barn Yard	23.06.06
Stable	350.07.03
Carpenter Shop	55.12.10
Saw Mill	53.18.09
Turning Shop	88.15.10
Grist Mill	17.04.07
Portland Farm	272.09.09
Ox Bow Farm	664.05.06
Wabasse Farm	623.00.00
Tappanee Farm	466.05.05
The Basin	17.01.07
Rafting material	51.10.03
Misc.	6.02.00
Boom Raft Chain	210.00.00
Anchors	50.00.00
1 Batteau	15.00.00
Total	£3348.16.05

third parties on the other's side of the river. Having already divided the river, they had in effect agreed to a private division of the public lands.⁸⁰ Both realized the importance of maintaining private control over the river and its timber. It also made it easier for the bank to sell the assets.

Having stabilized the business Davidson sought out new owners for Bigelow's sawmill, farms and land. One of the first he contacted was George Simpson, who was looking for a business for his nephew. Having witnessed the grim failure of Bigelow and with his own bad experience with the timber trade on the Temiscamingue, Simpson decided he was not interested. The ultimate buyers were the Hamilton brothers, George and John of Hawkesbury, who were interested in supplies for their mill, and their brother Robert and his partner John Thomson, financial men from Quebec City. An inventory was taken and a sale price of £15,000 agreed upon, subject to the ratification court.

A look at the moveable property involved in the sale shows that most of the capital was invested outside the sawmill, in transportation and river-related equipment, and the rural depot farms. Three of the farms had goods valued above £500. The next most significant investments were the stable, and its horses, followed by another farm. Iron in the form of boom chains and blacksmith supplies came below that. The sawmill itself contained less than £55 worth of goods and a saw inventory (probably of spares) had a value of only £31

⁸⁰ ANQ-Montréal. Isaac Jones Gibb, Public Notary, Minute No. 14287, 15 November 1852.

of the total £15,000 price.⁸¹ The land and buildings were valued at £11,500, shanty and farm real estate at £1,000, the moveable property at £2,500. The sale included everything listed in Table V and the rights to the various log slides.

The new buyers assumed all "the engagements with the Clerks-Workmen and Contractors for logs. . .and assume and take all the provisions and goods supplied for the said business for the next season." Half the business was to be held by the three Hamilton Brothers and half by John Thomson.⁸² A number of smaller land owners and lumbermen claimed rights to some of the lands, but after a court hearing, the sale of the estate was approved on 21 February 1853 and final payment was made 1 May 1855 by the new firm of Thomson & Co., with a resident manager, Andrew Thomson at Buckingham.⁸³

The new owners made one important change at the end of the season in 1855. They agreed to let the agreement to cut alternate sides of the river lapse. From now on, each was to keep to the side of the river they were already cutting on -- with Thomson cutting on the west side. This would aid long term

⁸¹ The inventory of moveable property at Bigelow's mill for saws listed: 20 saws in gang at 10s. each (£10); 2 circular saws at 15s. each (£1-10-0); 2 pair butting saws (£3); 2 7½ feet, new saws in gate (£6-15-0); 2 7½ feet, new saws in gate (£6-15-0); 8 saws in gang, little mill, at 5s. each (£2); 1 circular saw (£1); 1 butting saw (£0-6-0); Total £31-1-0. ANQ-Montréal. Isaac Jones Gibb, Public Notary, Minute No. 14509, 21 February 1853.

⁸² ANQ-Montréal. Isaac Jones Gibb, Public Notary, Minute No. 14510, 21 February 1853.

⁸³ ANQ-Montréal. Isaac Jones Gibb, Public Notary, Minute No. 16300, 1 May 1855.

investment in the woods. They had agreed, without the State, to divide the resource.

Although Hamilton & Thomson had bought the estate, the London firm of Bainbridge & Brown, on whose behalf William Bowman had petitioned in 1824, were still involved. They granted a deed of sale in 1858, prior to the final registration and discharge of the estate. One year later the Hamiltons made an assignment to Thomson (discharged in January 1860). Perhaps Thomson was buying out his partners. A few months later he transferred several of the timber leases to members of his family.⁸⁴

V Ottawa Valley Lumberman: James MacLaren

The 1860s saw changes in ownership on both sides of the river, although the pattern of compromise and cutting separate sides remained. After having bought out the Hamilton brothers, Andrew and John Thomson sold their company (3 May 1867) to Lemoine Gibb & Co. This partnership included James MacLaren, Thomas Gibb Ross, and James Gibb, Jr., who sold his share to McPherson

⁸⁴ ANQ-Hull. James MacLaren, Industries. M-88-2-34, List of Documents. The list makes reference to the following: 6 February 1856, Deed of Sale, Bainbridge & Brown to Hamilton Bros. & John Thomson; July 1858, Copy Judgement of Deed of sale, registration of Estate of Levi Bigelow; 17 September 1858, Release and Discharge from Trustees Bainbridge & Brown to John Hamilton & J. Thomson; 15 February 1859, Assignment and transfer from John Hamilton, Robert Hamilton, and Julia Jervis widow of George Hamilton to John Thomson; 31 January 1860, Receipt and Discharge, G.J. Jervis, John Hamilton, Robert Hamilton, and Mrs. George Hamilton to John Thomson; 20 April 1860, Declaration and Conveyance, John Thomson to Andrew Thomson and John Cook Thomson.

Lemoine.⁸⁵ James Gibb Ross, together with Forsyth Bell who issued the annual price guides and statements for the Quebec-Liverpool timber trade, were prominent supporters of James MacLaren in other areas. In a major court case heard between 1864-69 over MacLaren's failure to deliver the timber rafts of Charles Meech, which had been blocked by creditors of Meech, Ross and Bell stood bond and testified on MacLaren's behalf against the British timber house of Arthur Murphy.⁸⁶ This firm was sold to Frank and John Ross of Quebec in 1873 who operated in close conjunction with James MacLaren, including joint-investments in British Columbia, until the two were merged in 1901.

On the other side of the river the Bowman estate was sold in 1864 to a different partnership: that of James MacLaren, Joseph Merrill Currier, Vincent Sincennes and William McNaughton. This one ended in 1872 when James and his brother John bought out the other partners for \$200,000.⁸⁷ This connection

⁸⁵ The final release from James MacLaren Co. (Witnessed by the copartners James and John MacLaren, J.M. Currier, William McNaughton and Jacques F. Sincennes) to James Ross of the Baxter Bowman estate was made for \$726. According to the minute the estate had been registered by George Eaton and Charles Bischoff in the County of Ottawa, on 5 January 1863 under "No. 169 Lib. B Vol. 10, page 284." ANQ-Montréal: James Stewart Hunter, Public Notary (1852-1882), James MacLaren to John Ross, Minute 14941, 7 May 1869.

⁸⁶ ANQ-Hull. James MacLaren Industries, M-226, "James MacLaren et al. vs. Arthur Murphy," *Transcript of Record and Proceedings in the Court of the Province of Quebec, Canada: Appealed From in a Cause Between James MacLaren et al. and Arthur H. Murphy et al.* Quebec: Middleton & Dawson, 1869.

⁸⁷ ANQ-Montréal. William Anderson Phillips, Public Notary, Minute No. 4450, 31 July 1872. Dissolution of Partnership between James MacLaren, John MacLaren, Joseph M. Currier, William McNaughton, and Jacques Felix Sincennes.

of James MacLaren to the Lièvre predates the actual purchases of the mills and requires some examination of his background.

His parents were David MacLaren, who married Elizabeth Barnet and they had three Scottish born sons: James, John and Henry.⁸⁸ David was a hardware merchant in Glasgow before coming to Canada in 1821. In later years James would continue this connection, consigning timber to Glasgow merchants. His father David was Crown Lands Agent at Richmond, Ontario before buying a farm in Torbolton, on the Ottawa River, assisted by the astute purchase of military land script at greatly reduced prices. There he farmed and built a small sawmill. References to debts owed him by farmer/lumbermen and his trips to Quebec City imply he may have carried on his hardware business, perhaps importing on a small scale to supply local farmers. In his letters from Quebec to his wife he makes it clear that he had a low opinion of the lumber trade. In August 1837 he mentioned:

a House here in the Lumber trade has failed for about eighty-four thousand Pounds with which a great many of our Ottawa Lumberers are concerned. ... It must be desperation which drives people to lumber, and madness which continues them in it."⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Both parents were from Scotland. David was born March 11, 1789 and died at Wakefield, Quebec on April 10, 1870. Elizabeth Barnet was born February 17, 1788 and died at Wakefield, August 3, 1875. James was born March 19, 1818 in Glasgow and died in Buckingham, Quebec, on February 19, 1892. John was born in Glasgow, April 9, 1820 and died in Toronto, June 6, 1874. Other children included Henry, David, William and Alexander.

⁸⁹ NAC, MG 24, I 62, Papers of David MacLaren, 1836-1842. David MacLaren to Elizabeth MacLaren, 2 August 1837, p. 3.

A Mr. Julien who had managed to sell his raft that season was unable to pay his account with MacLaren.⁹⁰ In letters written in 1840 to his brother in Scotland he mentioned he had a sawmill, but had spent no time lumbering the last winter, spending the time instead on finishing his new house. Describing his sons, six boys (James 22, John 20, David 18, Henry 16, William 12, Alexander 8) he told his brother:

The three oldest with a hired Hewer, and occasionally an additional hand, have commenced the winter operations of making timber -- a business we shall probably close this season, as it interferes, I find somewhat with farming operations particularly with clearing land and is besides a business I do not much admire.⁹¹

He was concerned that none of them had gone through school, which the area lacked, but someone, perhaps his mother Elizabeth, was teaching them: "James has gone very successfully through common and decimal arithmetic and Trigonometry -- knows a little of Geometry and Geography -- none of the others are so far advanced as James".⁹² It maybe that this attitude of his father gave James the restraint needed to re-consider his decisions when business opportunities presented themselves, something perhaps the Bigelows did not have.

No doubt he also received much of his education from his mother. In her

⁹⁰ NAC, MG 24, I 62, Papers of David MacLaren, 1836-1842. David MacLaren to Elizabeth MacLaren, 4 September 1837, p. 2.

⁹¹ NAC, MG 24, I 62, Papers of David MacLaren, 1836-1842. David MacLaren to John MacLaren, 12 December 1840.

⁹² *Ibid.*

husband's absence on business, she was in charge of the farm and family, as were many farm women. Many of the instructions and advice her husband gave her show that she dealt with contract labour for finishing the house, collected and called in debts and loans when necessary, bargained on the price of fodder, and dealt with disputes over cattle ownership with what appears in one case to be a rather stubborn and not quite stable farmer, and raised the family.

David eventually took the opportunity to buy a mill near Wakefield, leaving Henry with the farm. At Wakefield he set up a store, gristmill, sawmill, and his sons would later add a woollen mill and a brickmaking shop. John and James continued in the lumber trade, with capital loaned by their father and repaid to his estate, after his death in 1870. At their retirement David and Elizabeth moved into Wakefield and John managed the mill complex. John did well, but his business sphere seems somewhat localized. John joined James on a number of investments, but always as a silent partner.

James cast a wider net, contracting for and bringing logs down the Gatineau for sale to Currier & Dickson, the firm running Thomas MacKay's mill at the Rideau Falls. MacLaren eventually bought into the firm, buying out two partners, the Hon. R.W. Scott and Dickinson, beginning an important business partnership with yet another Vermont immigrant, Joseph Merrill Currier, born in North Troy in 1820.

Joseph Currier's skill lay in building and managing large sawmills. He came to Canada when he was seventeen, around 1837, and worked as a millwright at

his cousin's lumber mill in Templeton, Quebec.⁹³ Another source tells us he was engaged as a millwright to build a mill by William Farmer in 1843, but he only remained a few months as he was called upon to rebuild Bigelow's mills after a fire the year Levi died.⁹⁴ Afterwards he was in charge of the Bigelow mills, before moving on to manage the MacKay and McKinnon lumber mills at New Edinburgh, on the west side of the falls where the Rideau entered the Ottawa.

MacLaren and Currier had more than a business connection. We do not know if James MacLaren met him in Buckingham or later, but they were connected socially through marriage. Joseph Currier's wife Hannah, a successful businesswoman in her own right, was the daughter of Ruggles Wright and granddaughter of Philemon Wright.⁹⁵ James MacLaren married Ann Sully in 1848. His sister-in-law was the wife of a Wright.⁹⁶

⁹³ NAC, MG 30 D1, vol. 9. Audet, Francois Joseph, "Joseph Merrill Currier" (b. 1820, d. 22 April 1884), pp. 396-399. Audet's sources included Morgan's Annual Register for 1884, p. 220. Currier had a long political career: After 1853 he served on the Ottawa City Council. He was also the M.P. for Ottawa from 1863-1882, and Ottawa Postmaster in 1882. It is often said the American lumbermen kept a low profile and stayed out of politics. This is not true, as Currier, a vocal supporter of John A. Macdonald illustrates. The MacLaren family, former partners of Currier, owned the property adjacent to Macdonald's Gatineau retreat.

⁹⁴ See the finding aid. NAC, MG 24, I, William Farmer & Family. FA. 1124.

⁹⁵ See NAC, M29 A9, Papers of Hannah Wright Currier.

⁹⁶ They married January 13, 1848. Ann's sister Mary was the wife of Hull Wright, grandson of Philemon Sr.

In 1853 Currier and MacLaren leased Thomas MacKay's sawmill at Rideau Falls. Currier's residence, close by the mill, at 24 Sussex Drive, is now the official residence of the Prime Minister. During the nineteenth century the Rideau Falls, between New Edinburgh and the City of Ottawa, had a substantial mill complex. Just before the falls, the Rideau flows around Green Island, now the location of Ottawa City Hall, before dropping sharply into the Ottawa River. The site had access both to the City of Ottawa and to waterborne transportation for its products down the Rideau Canal system and the Ottawa River. The sawmill, planing mill and door and sash factory on the west bank would become part of MacLaren's investments. It fell victim to fire in 1891 and was sold with its related Gatineau timber to Senator W.C. Edwards for \$340,100 in 1894. On the East bank MacLaren would also enter into partnership in a woollen mill with Robert Blackburn and another former Mackay sawmill and gristmill run by William McClymont.⁹⁷

The sawmill in New Edinburgh was supplied with logs MacLaren obtained on the Gatineau. The cut lumber went out on slides down to barges on the Ottawa River. Very little documentation survived for their woods operations. In April 1857 John Egan obtained a judgement in the Superior Court of Ottawa

⁹⁷ See the Green Island documentation in NAC, MG 24, D39, MacLaren Co. Papers, 1866-1920.

against James MacLaren and a sheriff's warrant was served.⁹⁸ The warrant lists 495 white pine sawlogs valued at £130, of which 120 were on the banks of the River Peche, nearby the MacLaren family Wakefield sawmill, and 375 at the west side of the mouth of the Gatineau, not far from Currier's mill. Ten years later James and John MacLaren and the Hamilton Brothers of Hawkesbury signed an agreement to drop a series of court actions before the Superior Court of Aylmer (circa 1866-67) involving logs and booms on the Gatineau. The Hamiltons agreed to replace a large quantity of white pine sawlogs and pay a \$500 penalty.⁹⁹

On July 4, 1866, Thomas Keefer, executor of MacKay's estate, agreed to sell the mills, factories and water privileges of the Ottawa mill to John and James MacLaren, in exchange for \$20,500 cash, and \$61,500 in a 6% mortgage.¹⁰⁰ They paid it off within three years. Currier is noticeably absent from the agreement, but it may be that at this time he shifted his interest to the Batson & Currier mill across the river at Hull. Or it may have had something to do with

⁹⁸ ANQ-Hull. Hull 8SH. Bref d'execution & Divers Shéréf, 1853 à 1899, Superior Court Ottawa, Warrant on Saisie Revendication, No. 242, John Egan vs. James McLaren [sic], 25 April 1857.

⁹⁹ The records of the Superior Court of Aylmer were the victim of one of numerous fires among archival and municipal records. Archives of Ontario, MU 1221 9. Agreements, 1863-81, Indenture between James and David MacLaren and Robert and John Hamilton, 10 June 1867. James Kenny, later important in the MacLaren family business witnessed the agreement.

¹⁰⁰ NAC, MG 24, D39, MacLaren Co. Papers, "Memo of Deed - July 4, 1866".

the founding of James MacLaren Company on 6 January 1865, which invested in Buckingham.

The partners in the company included James, his brother John, Joseph Currier, and William McNaughton of Montréal and Jacques Felix Sincennes of Sorel. McNaughton and Sincennes were partners in The Sincennes McNaughton Line, a shipping company that specialized in moving barges of lumber on the Ottawa, St. Lawrence and to Lake Champlain in Vermont. It was a McNaughton Sincennes Line protest against Lemoine, Gibb and Co. that, together with other financial problems, resulted in the sale and reorganization of that company, in which MacLaren had a share, to his friends, the Ross brothers.¹⁰¹ The James MacLaren Company partnership originally was to have a limited existence but continued past the original deadline until 1872. James and John bought out their partners for \$200,000, paying \$75,000 in cash, and the balance in three annual instalments.¹⁰² One payment remained when the unexpected occurred. John's

¹⁰¹ The protest was a claim for empty vessels, contracted to ship seven million five hundred feet of lumber to the American market, via Whitehall & other ports of Lake Champlain. Lemoine only managed to ship nine hundred and forty-seven thousand feet. ANQ-Montréal. Pierre-Etienne Normandeau, Public Notary, Minute 1936, Protest to Lemoine Gibb & Co., 3 September, 1873, on behalf of The Sincennes McNaughton Line. Copy also at ANQ-Hull, James MacLaren Industries, M-89-4, Actes sous seing privé ou notariés.

¹⁰² ANQ-Montréal. William Anderson Phillips, Public Notary, Minute No. 4450, 31 July 1872.

death in Toronto on 6 June 1874, left his widow Anne Baird with seven children.¹⁰³

The notarial record of his estate gives a detailed view of the MacLaren brothers' business as of 1 September 1874. John's personal business in Wakefield was not large, \$47,123 in assets and \$29,439 in liabilities, \$9,000 of that to various MacLarens. Most of its value lay in the unassessed value of the family sawmill, gristmill, stores and houses. In addition he held timber licenses and real estate in the area at Aylmer, Hull, Hincks and Wakefield. The timber licenses were held in three ways: under the name James MacLaren (Licenses 484, 485, 486), James and John MacLaren (Licenses 57, 483), and James MacLaren and Co. (Licenses 58, 59, 60, 482, 484, 485, 486, 487). None were held by him alone.

John's Wakefield store ledger showed \$21,006.03 owed by local residents and an inventory of \$16,855.53. His livestock, 22 horses, 6 colts, 6 yoke of oxen, 1 bull, 1 "shag", and 11 cows, was worth \$4,050. The scale of his lumber-related supplies reflected a small company operation: \$1,427 in lumber provisions, \$450 in grain and \$2,583.30 in sleighs and blankets, etc. at various Gatineau/Lapeche depots. His total cash on hand, including his stores, was \$752.04.

John only owned a third of the Wakefield business. The other co-owners, probably by inheritance, were his two brothers and executors, James and Reverend William MacLaren of Toronto. His share of the \$17,684.90 balance of

¹⁰³ Ann (age 12), Henry (10), Daniel (8), Ellen (5), James Campbell (3), John Albert (1) and Elizabeth Georgina (age three months).

	Table VI Selected Assets and Liabilities of James MacLaren Company, 1 September 1874	
assets over	Moveable Assets	
liabilities, was	Timber Afloat	\$74,712.52
\$5,894.97, plus land,	Deals in Quebec Cove	122,860.80
buildings and	Buckingham Sawlogs	
Gatineau timber	and Square Timber	40,352.60
licenses. The	Farm Crops & Cattle	20,342.30
picture is one of a	Shanty & Depot Goods	
slightly prosperous	& Grain	28,335.00
second generation	Deals Consigned	
small rural lumber	to Liverpool	14,000.00
and mercantile	Total Value	300,603.22
family. It reflects	Production Costs	
the physical image	Crown Timber Dues	13,300.00
of a small rural	Sundry Salaries	3,000.00
stone mill complex	Labour	13,263.46
on a minor river in	Sundry to Wages	1,545.45
the nineteenth	Sundry to Invoices	369.19
century landscape.	Sundry to Forwarders	445.53
	Total Costs	\$31,923.63

John's investments in shares reinforces this impression. They were typified by a local focus of concern with family education and local roads. He bought 25 shares (\$500) in the Ottawa Ladies College for each of his three daughters. John supported local transportation improvements with 100 shares (\$2,000) in the

Gatineau Macadamized Gravel Road Co., 175 shares (\$3,500) in the Hull and Wakefield Macadamized and Gravel Road Co, and \$1,000 worth of shares in the Ottawa City Passenger Railway Co. The picture of John that emerges is of someone, content with his lot, embedded in community and his role as a local merchant.

The picture changes when we come to the notarial section detailing the activities of the James MacLaren Company, with its Ottawa and Buckingham operations. John held a quarter interest in his brother's company, worth \$76,325.12, plus his share of the mills, land and the Lièvre's twenty-one timber licenses. As of 1 September 1874, as James and John had intended to make the last payment to their former partners, the firm had over a quarter of a million dollars in inventory.

The estate is quite complex but Table VI shows what lumbering on the Lièvre was producing for James and John MacLaren in 1874. This is an oversimplification, but the proportion is revealing. The total assets, not including timber licenses, land or sawmills and booms, had grown to \$399,655.48. Various companies owed the MacLaren's \$89,518.30 and they in turned owed other companies \$94,355. But of that amount owed, \$40,417.00 was the last payment to their former partners. General bills, other than labour or Crown dues, came to \$22,828.00. Paying out their partners, meeting their timber dues, wages and general bills came to \$94,355, against assets of a quarter million dollars in timber and fifty thousand in farm produce and merchandise. Yet James had even less

cash on hand than his brother's mill, under \$700. John, the merchant and miller of Wakefield, fits closely the model of the trade presented in Graeme Wynn's in *Timber Colony*.¹⁰⁴ But on the Lièvre, capitalism, in the form of James MacLaren's scale of production was rapidly outstripping old methods of business and, as will be discussed later, would require new financial institutions.

Conclusion

Several themes discussed by Arthur Lower are present in the preceding: the role of British merchant capital, the arrival of lumbermen from the United States, and the relation between settlement and the lumber trade. However, the patterns of development found in this micro-study of the Lièvre reveal themes and strategies regarding staple succession, the role of capital, kinship groups, bankers, lawyers and investors not found in Arthur Lower's studies.

The Lièvre, and the Ottawa Valley generally, went through several stages of developmental capitalism. The long standing barter system of the fur trade was enveloped, but not changed by, patronage and land speculation. However the cash economy of lumbering seeped through the region, eroding quickly systems of credit and reshaping HBC operations. Merchant-directed resource exploitation was based on levels of capital beyond the reach of most pioneer families. It seems doubtful that there was ever any lumber industry of consequence which evolved out of the pioneer family economy, yet the small Wakefield mill of John

¹⁰⁴ Wynn, *Timber Colony*, pp. 113-125.

MacLaren, son of a Torbolton farmer, does fit that model. On the Lièvre the sawmills existed from the start as extensions of urban capital. Its "pioneer" sawmillers did indeed rise and fall on the cyclical nature of the market.

However the nature of their businesses, revealed in notarial records of trustees, mortgages and partnerships, shows credit dependency and debt. Individual agency had a role in shaping the alliance with pre-existing capital, which Bowman made and Bigelow lost. Control of the river above High Falls was ever before them, but capital for improvements, not axes, decided how much control was possible. In the record of their compromises over the river, the active hand, mediating, belonged to the trustee and guarantor, be it Davidson or McGill.

After the 1850s the lumber industry was a closed shop, limited to partnerships of those already familiar with it. Partners were often, but not always, connected by marriage, or immediate kin. Partnerships were an assemblage of differing interests, Currier's Ottawa mills, the McNaughton and Sincennes barges, and James MacLaren's focus on the Lièvre's logs. But behind the ambitions and ability with credit of James was the kinship figure of John and the Wakefield mill, representing the achievements of a second generation immigrant family. Severed by contractual arrangement from non-kin partners, but carrying linkages through marriage, and separated by death from his brother and business partner, James emerges as that solitary resource entrepreneur and capitalist, the Ottawa Valley lumberman.

CHAPTER 2

WORK IN THE WOODS

Introduction

Opening any illustrated history of the lumber trade, one sees a series of images: men steering a lumber raft on a river; the sawmill buildings, often with the lumber piles in the background; two men chopping or sawing a tree in winter; a team of horses drawing a load of logs down an ice road; a room containing a welter of men, with clothing and socks drying from every rafter and bunk; and perhaps the cook tending the fire in the cambouse, or the lumber ships at the wharves. These images reoccur in book after book and in countless photography collections. They represent and shape the accepted form of social memory of the lumber trade and those nineteenth century labourers described by Michael Cross as "the most thoroughly studied of any group of workers in the nineteenth century".¹

These images form a constant in another way. An examination of the

¹ Michael S. Cross, Editor. *The Workingman in the Nineteenth Century*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1974, p. 315.

accompanying text will show that these images are only loosely anchored to the descriptions. The various scenes are described only in the most general terms. The actual documentation for the image will tend to be sparse, often providing no information on the workers, their location, employer, or the year portrayed. The photographic images of shantymen and lumber workers may illustrate, but few yield insight into, the lives of those they portray. Until recently the same could be said for much of the existing lumber literature. Only in the last decade have social historians begun to explore the lives of those who drew their living from the lumber shanty.² Prior to this, descriptions of life in the woods might be

² The best appear in *Bulletin of Material History*, 13 (1981): Chris Curtis, "Shanty Life in the Kawarthas, 1850-1855", pp. 39-49; Claire-Andrée Fortin, "Profil de la main-d'oeuvre forestière en Mauricie d'après le recensement de 1861", pp. 75-81, and, "Notes sur les conditions de vie et de travail des bûcherons en Mauricie au 19^e siècle," pp. 83-95; Benoît Gauthier, "La sous-traitance et l'exploitation forestière en Mauricie (1850-1875)", pp. 59-67; Michel Larose, "Les contrats d'engagement des travailleurs forestiers de la Mauricie", pp. 69-73. See also Louise Proulx's *Les chantiers forestiers de la Rimouski, (1930-1940): Techniques traditionnelles et culture matérielle*. Rimouski: Groupe de recherche interdisciplinaire en développement de l'est du Québec, Université du Québec a Rimouski, 1985. The above should be read together with Normand Lafleur's *La drave en Mauricie: des origines à nos jours*. Trois-Rivières: Editions du bien public, 1970; and M-Adélarde Tremblay's "Les tensions psychologiques chez le bûcheron: Quelques éléments d'explication." *Recherches Sociographiques*. 1 (1960), pp. 61-89.

For the Ontario side of the Ottawa Valley see: C. Grant Head, "Nineteenth Century Timbering and Sawlogging in the Ottawa Valley," *Exploring Our Heritage: The Ottawa Valley Experience: Proceedings*. Vrenia Ivanoffski and Sandra Campbell, Editors. Arnprior, Ontario: Arnprior and District Historical Society, 1980, pp. 52-57. James M. Hillis, "Life in the Lumber Camp: 1883," *Ontario History*, 59:3 (1967), pp. 157-162. Charles Macnamara, "The Camboose Shanty," *Ontario History*, 5:2 (Spring 1959), pp. 73-8. John May, "Bush Life in the Ottawa Valley Eighty Years Ago," *Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records*, 12 (1914), pp. 153-163.

drawn from works such as those of Isaac Stephenson or John Springer on the forests of Maine.³ An examination of A.R.M. Lower's *Great Britain's Woodyard* reveals that these are exactly the sources he uses for his surprisingly brief description of the shantymen, less than three pages.⁴ His interest lay with the shantyman's role as folklore -- part fact, part fiction.⁵

³ John S. Springer, *Forest Life and Forest Trees: Comprising Winter Camp-Life Among the Loggers, and Wild-wood Adventure: With Descriptions of Lumbering Operations on the Various Rivers of Maine and New Brunswick*. New York: Harper, 1851. Isaac Stephenson, *Recollections of a Long Life, 1829-1915*. Chicago: R.R. Donnelley, 1915.

Narrative accounts about actual Canadian shanty life are found in the works of J. McGregor, Joshua Fraser, and Horace Miner. J. McGregor, *Historical and Descriptive Sketches of the Maritime Colonies of British America*, London: Longman, Rees, Orme Brown, and Green, 1828; Joshua Fraser, *Shanty, Forest and River Life in the Backwoods of Canada*, Montreal: John Lovell & Son, 1883; Horace Miner, *St. Denis: A French-Canadian Parish*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963.

⁴ Lower, *Great Britain's Woodyard*, pp. 183-185.

⁵ Examples of English-Canadian fiction which mention lumbering and shanty life are found in the writings of authors such as Doctor Drummond, Stewart Edward White and "Ralph Connor". See: William Henry Drummond, *Johnnie Courteau and Other Poems*. New York: G.P. Putnam's, 1907. Ralph Connor, *The Man From Glengarry. A Tale of the Ottawa*. Toronto: Fleming H. Revell, 1901. [Ralph Connor is a pseudonym for Charles Gordon.] Stewart Edward White, *The Riverman*. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1908. For the historian these works tell more about their authors' and their audiences' concepts of race than they do about the actual functioning of the lumber industry. The best of the lot is Stewart White's *The Riverman*. For an example, although a small item, of what can be extracted from novels about logging see Ronald W. Woodland's "The Coastal Logger as Seen in Some Novels: An Aspect of British Columbia Society." *British Columbia Historical News*, 11:3-4 (April-June 1978), pp. 2-6.

In the literature of Québec the classic reference to the Chantiers occurs in *Maria Chapdelaine*, but the actual conditions of the shanties remains offstage. Certainly the shanty as a work unit has had a cultural impact. One has only to compare *Maria Chapdelaine* to *Dans les chantiers*, the 1923 pamphlet by the Jesuit

I Historiography and the Shantyman

A common image of the lumber shanty⁶ is camp buildings in winter, snow on the pitched roofs, from which smoke rises straight up into a clear crisp day. Clustered in front of the main building are the shantymen, log makers, road cutters, teamsters, handymen, clerk and foremen. The white-aproned cook and his bucket-toting helpers form a smaller group off to one side, and a teamster stands on the other side, holding the reins to a prize team of horses.

The observer is struck by several things about that image: who are these people, where did they come from and what was life like where they worked? Subjectively, they seem a proud group of people, and more than that, they do seem a group -- the viewer is left with a strong sense of being an outsider. How they are organized and what the relationships are within that group are difficult to discern.

Father Joseph-Alphonse Desjardins, to realize how much the social perception of the shanty has influenced public policy and social debate over work conditions. Joseph-Alphonse Desjardin, *Dans les chantiers*. Montréal: l'Ecole sociale populaire, 1923. A brief biography of the author is found in his edited manuscript describing the shanties to which he ministered in the region above Georgian Bay. See J.-A. Desjardin, *Le bûcheron d'autrefois. Vie et travaux de l'ouvrier de la forêt*. Sudbury: Société historique du Nouvel-Ontario, 1980. A measure of the weight of the original pamphlet can be found by the fact that the Minister of Forests for Québec provided the foreword.

⁶ From the French *chantier*; it appears in English as shanty and means a workshop, work site or a rough working camp. See: A.R.M. Lower, *Great Britain's Woodyard*, p. 199; Donald MacKay, *The Lumberjacks*, pp. 24-25; Collins Robert *French-English English-French Dictionary*.

The standard image of the shantyman is of a somewhat wild and anti-social woodsman, a sort of late nineteenth century equivalent to the *coureurs de bois* or the trapper.⁷ They and camp workers in general are viewed as transient men, unrooted in society. But of course the shanty is itself a transient work unit. Unlike factories, shanties move, making them more like ships.⁸ And as David

⁷ Graeme Wynn, "Deplorably Dark and Demoralized Lumberers?" Rhetoric and Reality in Early Nineteenth-Century New Brunswick," *Journal of Forest History*, 24:4 (1980), pp. 168-187.

⁸ In fact the shantyman has much in common with the sailor. Both work in groups and yet in isolation. Both are regarded as "the dregs of society", and the history of both has been subsumed to folklore and storytelling. Both share skills which are not easily catalogued. Most labour literature is oriented to urban and factory work and often not as useful to the subject at hand as Eric Sager's discussions about the evolution of work in a maritime workplace. Eric W. Sager, *Seafaring Labour. The Merchant Marine of Atlantic Canada, 1820-1914*. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989.

Rolf Knight recognized the problem clearly when he made an accusation that some historians acted "as if a proletariat only came into existence where cities and factories were constructed." Rolf Knight, *Work Camps and Company Towns in Canada and the U.S.: An Annotated Bibliography*. Vancouver: New Star Books, 1975, pp. 4-5. Unfortunately, for the nineteenth century that statement, outside of studies of canal workers, seems to be equally true for most labour historiography. Most of the theoretical literature is shaped very much around the artisan, craft, or factory and the mass production systems. This is of little use in examining rural workers in the resource sector.

That said, the following are useful in addressing labour process theory, such as the role of foremen, and struggle over control of the workplace: Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital; The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974; Richard Edwards and Michael Reich, *Segmented Work, Divided Workers: The Historical Transformation of Labor in the United States*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Richard Edwards, *Contested Terrain: The Transformation of the Workplace in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Basic Books, 1976; and David Noble, *Forces of Production: A Social History of Industrial Automation*. New York: Knopf, 1984.

Gagan and Michael Katz have shown, nineteenth century society was itself a society in motion.⁹

In the 1920s there was a flurry of interest in the shanty as a labour institution in need of reform. In English Canada, people like Edmund Bradwin began to consider the social costs of the shanty-style work camp.¹⁰ His precursor on the matter was Alfred Fitzpatrick, who observed that: "Camps in Canada have been too long patterned on the old style logging camps. Whatever merit they ever possessed is more than offset to-day by positive disadvantages."¹¹

The nineteenth century Canadian literature is primarily urban in its focus: Gregory S. Kealey, *Toronto Workers Respond to Industrial Capitalism, 1867-1892*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980; Brian D. Palmer, *A Culture in Conflict: Skilled Workers and Industrial Capitalism in Hamilton, Ontario, 1860-1914*. Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1979; *On the Job: Confronting the Labour Process in Canada*. Craig Heron and Robert Storey, eds. Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986; *Essays in Canadian Working Class History*. Gregory S. Kealey and Peter Warrian, eds. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976.

⁹ The debate on rural mobility began with David Gagan's *Hopeful Travellers: Families, Land, and Social Change in Mid-Victorian Peel County, Canada West*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981. For transience in an urban milieu see Michael Katz's *The People of Hamilton, Canada West: Family and Class in a Mid-Nineteenth Century City*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975.

¹⁰ Edmund Bradwin, *The Bunkhouse Man: A Study of Work and Pay in the Camps of Canada, 1903-1914*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1928. [Reprint: University of Toronto Press, 1972]

¹¹ Fitzpatrick and Frontier College's real concern was with the demographic changes which the presence of immigrant non-anglophone shantymen reflects. This post-World War I view of citizenship was one that other historians such as Donald Avery understand very well. See for example the chapter on Canadianization and the regulation and control of ethnic language newspapers. Alfred Fitzpatrick, *The University in Overalls: A Plea for Part-Time Study*. Toronto: Frontier College Press,

The shanty provided the basic model from which grew the work unit for Canada's resource and transportation infrastructure, whether one examines isolated camp life in mining, lumber, railway construction, or hydro development. During the same period in Québec both government and the church officials grew uneasy at the increasing numbers of very small family-run shanties springing up to supply the pulp mills, beyond government and church supervision.¹² Large or small, the shanty in the forest has been a part of the rural landscape of Canada into the twentieth century.

In the Ottawa Valley, this relationship between farm and forest has continued to be the focus of local research by geographers and historians.¹³

1923 . (Reprint), p. 3.

¹² Joseph-Alphonse Desjardin, *Dans le chantier*. Montréal: l'École sociale populaire, 1923. The author was a Jesuit and the foreword was provided by the M. G.-C. Piché, chef du service forestier. Eugène L'Heureux, *Le problème des chantiers*. Chicoutimi, Québec: [s.n.], [1927].

¹³ For the Ontario historiography see: Chad Gaffield, "Boom & Bust: The Demography and Economy of the Lower Ottawa Valley in the Nineteenth Century." *Historical Papers*, (1982), pp. 172-195, and *Language, Schooling, and Cultural Conflict: The Origins of the French-Language Controversy in Ontario*. Kingston and Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987; Nicole Castéran, "Les stratégies agricoles du paysan canadien-français de l'est ontarien." *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, 41:1, (été 1987), pp. 23-51; Douglas McCalla, "Forest Products and Upper Canadian Development, 1815-46," *Canadian Historical Review*, 68:2 (1987), pp. 159-198. Peter Russell, "Forest into Farmland: Upper Canadian Clearing Rates, 1822-1839," *Agricultural History*, 57:3 (1983), pp. 326-339.

For the geographic literature on the region around the Lièvre see: Ingo Eberle, *Les abandons de ferme et la concentrations de l'habitat dans l'outaouais rurale québécois: Les changements structurels de l'économie agro-forestière et leurs répercussions sur les transformations récentes de l'habitat dans une région périphérique de l'est du Canada*. Traduit par Anne Gilbert. University of Ottawa: Notes de

The choices made by rural families between farm and forest are at the core of *agro-forestière* theory discussed in an earlier chapter. A central issue is whether shanty work and farming have conflicting or complementary labour demands. One way of answering this is to look at the transiency patterns for evidence of peak movements by workers around the time of spring planting or the fall harvest. It is within this framework that the discussion of families, workers and lumber shanties will be placed in our examination of the shanty camp, "in touch with the outside world only by the long, tortuous tote road, this little community, its buildings crowding the edge of some lake or river, lives all undisturbed, a working village".¹⁴

The shantyman is the juncture between farm and forest economies. While A.R.M. Lower drew attention to the ambivalence of the relationship between the industry and agricultural settlement he did not pursue the implications of this on Canadian rural society -- issues of class formation and the origins of a rural

Recherches: 42, Département de Géographie Novembre 1983; Helen Edna Parsons, "An Investigation of the Changing Rural Economy of Gatineau County, Québec", *The Canadian Geographer*, 21 (Spring 1977), pp. 22-31, and, "The Rise and Fall of Farming in a Marginal Area, the Gatineau Valley, Québec," *Cahiers de géographie de Québec*, 19 (décembre 1975), pp. 573-582; Lucien Morais, "La forêt dans l'économie de la ferme," *La forêt Québécoise*, 11 (1946), pp. 285-303; Robert-D Hirsch, *Planification du développement régional. Série II: Rapport d'analyse, Cahier II/2 Les origines et la nature des déséquilibres régionaux du Québec*. Québec: Conseil d'orientation économique du Québec, octobre 1967. Avec la collaboration de MM. Gérard Vibian et Bernard Robert.

¹⁴ Fitzpatrick, *University in Overalls*, p. 4.

capitalist society.¹⁵ The shantyman, and nineteenth century forest workers in general, appear to be in a rather peculiar position, one generally ignored by both labour and rural historians.¹⁶ One rural historian has gone so far as to define rural as "residence in an area of low population density and chief livelihood earned in agriculture",¹⁷ a very exclusionary definition when applied to forest-based economies. Michael Cross commented that when S.D. Clark described the lumbering profession on the Ottawa as "a regular labour force which increasingly

¹⁵ For recent critical discussions of Lower's work see: Robert Peter Gillis, "Great Britain's Woodyard: A Critical Appraisal." *Journal of Forest History*, 18:4 (October 1974), pp. 110-127. Douglas McCalla, "Forest Products and Upper Canadian Development, 1815-46," *Canadian Historical Review*, 68:2 (1987), pp. 159-198. A.R.M. Lower's "Settlement and the Forest Frontier in Eastern Canada," W.A. MacKintosh and W.L.G. Joerg, Editors. *Canada Frontiers of Settlement*. Vol. IX, Part 1. Toronto: Macmillan, 1936, and *Great Britain's Woodyard: British America and the Timber Trade, 1763-1867*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1973, and also A.R.M. et al. *The Northern Assault on the Canadian Forest: A History of the Lumber Trade Between Canada and the United States* Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1938.

¹⁶ For example: Bryan D. Palmer, *Working-Class Experience: The Rise and Reconstitution of Canadian Labour, 1800-1980*, Toronto: Butterworth & Co., 1983. Even the exceptions, the previously cited work on the Shiners by Michael Cross, and Edward McKenna's, on the 1891 Ottawa sawmill strike, are distinctively urban in their focus. Little has changed. See the recent essays by Greg Kealey, "Writing About Labour", and John Thompson, "Writing About Rural Life and Agriculture", in *Writing About Canada: A Handbook for Modern Canadian History*. John Schultz, Editor. Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1990. Edward McKenna, "Unorganized Labour versus Management: The Strike at the Chaudiere Lumber Mill, 1891," (*Social History*, 5:10 (1972), pp. 186-211.

¹⁷ Robert P. Swierenga. "Theoretical Perspectives on the New Rural History: From Environmentalism to Modernization," *Agricultural History* 56:3 (1982), 495-96, cited by John Thompson in *Writing About Canada*, 115 n. 31.

became differentiated from the rural population and came to constitute rather a part of an urban proletariat", Clark should have coined the phrase "rural proletariat".¹⁸ Cross and Clark are not the only observers of forest economies to come to this conclusion. Guy Gaudreau has drawn attention to a similar statement by Esdras Minville:

Il faut lui reprocher entre autres -- et c'est un reproche très grave -- d'avoir introduit dans nos classes rurales l'esprit ouvrier, pis encore, l'esprit prolétaire, c'est-à-dire le goût de la tâche rémunérée à taux convenu et dont on a ni l'initiative ni la responsabilité -- esprit qui est à l'opposé même de celui qui doit animer l'agriculteur s'il doit faire un succès de son entreprise.¹⁹

Sven Gaunitz, studying the forest of late nineteenth century Northern Sweden, finds at the local level a co-existence of two social formations. The first is capitalist, based around sawmill-centered communities, representing the forces of industrialism within a rural setting. The other is a rural peasant society based around household modes of production. He finds sharp divisions at the parish level between the industrial activity of the sawmill and the agrarian activity of timber cutting, within the same community and within the operations of the same company. Lumbering, and for our case, shanty work, represents an intermediary

¹⁸ S.D. Clark, *The Social Development of Canada*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1942, p. 210, cited in, Michael S. Cross, "The Lumber Community of Upper Canada, 1815-1867", *Ontario History*, LII:4 (December 1960), p. 221.

¹⁹ Esdras Minville, "Le problème social de la forêt," in *La Forêt*, Montréal: Fides, 1944, p. 331, cited in Guy Gaudreau, "Le rapport agriculture -- forêt au Québec: note historiographique," *RHAF*, 33:1 (juin 1979), p. 71.

between the two modes of production.²⁰ Gaunitz's analysis calls to mind the last chapter of Alan Greer's *Peasant, Lord, and Merchant*, which describes the response of peasant household economies to a similar transition in the area of commercial agriculture. Greer also uses the phrase "rural proletariat".²¹ If Gaunitz, Clark, Cross, Minville and Greer are all correct, then the shantyman is more than just a part of the mythology and folklore of forest history. He is also the intermediary, the transitional figure between two modes of production, two social formations, one capitalist and the other the peasant household economy.

II MacLaren's Shanties

We have very little information on the shanties of Bigelow or the Bowman/Eaton shanties. Bowman, according to legend, employed the legendary shantyman and raftsman, Joseph Montferrand. Montferrand is an heroic figure

²⁰ Sven Gaunitz, "Local History as a Means of Understanding Economic Development. A Study of the Timber Frontier in Northern Sweden During the Industrialization Period." *Economy and History*, XXII:1, pp. 38-62. Gaunitz's view is implicit in Rolf Knight's discussion of Natives as sawmill workers (pp. 113-115), loggers (pp. 116-123) and shantymen (p.116, fn.12) in the economy of British Columbia. Rolf Knight, *Indians at Work: An Informal History of Native Indian Labour in British Columbia, 1858-1930*. Vancouver: New Star Books, 1978.

²¹ Alan Greer, *Peasant, Lord, and Merchant: Rural Society in Three Quebec Parishes, 1740-1840*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985, p. 226. See also his: "Wage labour and the Transition to Capitalism: A Critique of Pentland," *Labour -- Le Travail*, 15 (Spring 1985), pp. 7-22.

in the pre-1850s timber trade and a Québécois folk hero.²² However he does not appear on Bowman's 1833-36 list of over eighty employees working on the High Falls slide. In 1864, the year of Joseph Montferrand's death, James MacLaren, the future founding president of the Bank of Ottawa, bought the mill and holdings from the Bowman estate.

Graeme Wynn's description of timber production in New Brunswick showed the integration of a small scale production system, in which farmers and jobbers worked in small groups (4-6 men), cutting timber on their own land to sell to the mill.²³ Jack Little's study of Winslow showed mixed results, local Scottish families appeared more independent than the French-Canadian households of

²² Joseph Montferrand (1802-1864), son of a North West fur trader and a legend in the square timber trade, is very much a symbol of the cultural transition between staples. Donald MacKay argues that Joseph Montferrand was not only the personification and defender of Québécois values during the Ottawa Valley "Shiners' War" but also, in his more mythical role as "Joe Muféraw", the precursor for the stories assembled about Paul Bunyan. See Donald MacKay, *The Lumberjacks*, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1978, pp. 35-39. Also: Benjamin Sulte. *Histoire de Jos. Montferrand: l'athlète canadien*, Montreal: J.-B. Camyré & Cie, 1884. On the "Shiners' War", which involved violent ethnic and religious conflict both between Protestant Irish farmers and Catholic Irish timberers, as well as within the lumber trade between Catholic Irish and Canadian labourers, see Michael S. Cross, "The Shiners' War: Social Violence in the Ottawa Valley in the 1830s", *Canadian Historical Review*, LIV: I (March 1973), pp. 1-26. Cross makes no mention of Montferrand although specific incidents are described by Sulte which involved the Shiners' and Joseph Montferrand. Sulte places Montferrand on the Lièvre after 1827 and gives the impression that he was Bowman's head troubleshooter.

²³ Graeme Wynn, *Timber Colony: A Historical Geography of Early Nineteenth Century New Brunswick*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981, pp. 72-78, 115-118.

contract work to supply logs to Clark and Co.²⁴ More influential was the role of sawmill workers competing with farmers by working during winter in the Clark shanties. The record shows that Wynn's model did occur to a limited extent, but as in Little's case, most production was coming from company shanties. For example, during the winter of 1855-56 four shanties produced 42,900 saw logs. The other 5,164 sawlogs produced that year came from twenty individuals, the smallest lot being twenty-one logs and the largest lot 1,141.²⁵ Other fragmentary evidence of small-scale production appears in the ledgers of William Dunning, a merchant at Masson.²⁶ On the Lièvre it was the farmers' labour rather than the forest products from land clearing that became the distinguishing characteristic of the trade, although a sub-theme was the farmer's ability to also supply shanties with produce.

As MacLaren expanded his Lièvre operations his shanties took on a more formalized structure, reflecting the dominance of a larger production unit over the small farm-based group. Shanty ledgers as such appear within the MacLaren

²⁴ J.I. Little, *Crofters and Habitants: Settler Society, Economy, and Culture in a Quebec Township, 1848-1881*. Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991, pp. 149-153.

²⁵ The shanties were those of Jacques Ross (9,000 logs), Henry Hollingsworth (11,000 logs), Stanis Lajeunesse (12,100 logs), and Rich Newton (10,800 logs). Almost all of the twenty smaller producers had francophone surnames. All logs were cut on Crown Lands. ANQ-O, Industries James MacLaren Inc., M-193, Saw Logs Specification Ledger, 1846-1863.

²⁶ ANQ-O, William H. Dunning. Merchant, Masson, Québec, (184?).

papers of the 1870s. Several ledgers exist detailing operations of the shanties during the winter of 1888-89, although ledgers for 1875-76, 1880-81, 1889-90 and employment contracts for 1880-85 have also been surveyed.²⁷ Shanty ledgers were kept either by the foreman or more usually, by the shanty clerk. Their purpose was to record not only employment information, but also production figures, receiving and supplies inventories and the shanties' accounts of cash advances and goods drawn by an employee against their wages. The ledgers used by the MacLaren Company were designed for the timber trade by James Hope & Co., in Ottawa. Their "Shanty Ledger and Monthly Time Book" had the general serial number of 1000-74, which may mean a design date of 1874. There was no change in the type of ledger used between 1875 and 1890 in the MacLaren collection.

The hardcover ledger was divided into four parts. The first section dealt with time keeping, recording the names and days worked by employees each month, often with comments added by the foreman or clerk. The second section recorded the daily and monthly allocation of men and horses to various tasks:

²⁷ Unless otherwise stated, all statistical data and foreman's comments presented are drawn from databases constructed using the following sources: ANQ-O, Industries James MacLaren Inc: M-14-1, Mill Engagement Contracts, 9 avril 1880 - 15 juin 1885; M-142 "Ross Shanty Account Book, 1876-1877"; M-143 "Valliant Shanty Account Book 1880-1881"; M-144 "for femme [sic] rouge Farm, 1888-89"; M-146 "Shanty Ledger, 1888-1889" [John Bisson's, according to internal evidence] thru 150, Various Shanty Ledgers, 1875-1890; M-147 "Calice Bissons' Shanty, 1888-1889; M-148 "'Gauvreaus' Shanty, 1888-1889"; M-149 "Dionnes' Shanty, 1888-1889; M-150 "Payette's Shanty 1888-1889"; M-188 [Monthly work book, 1890]; M-189 "Receiving and Forwarding Kavanaugh's Shanty, 1890".

cutting roads, making logs, teaming horses. The numbers of logs made, logs lain up (skidded out of the woods to a central pile on a roadway for counting before being hauled) and logs drawn (hauled off to the river bank) were also recorded. The foreman or clerk would annotate this section with comments on men assigned to other tasks, such as building or creek work. The third section was a record of supplies received: date, name of teamster, barrels of pork, beef, flour, fish, molasses, beans, peas, bags of oats, hay, and sundries, and noting their point of origin. The last part of the ledger was blank and was used to record the shanty accounts for each man who took an advance against his wages in goods or cash. Sometimes the shanty clerk would also append an end of season inventory of supplies remaining. These records form the basis for this exploration of the shanty as a work unit.

The shanty, as the juncture between industrialism and rural society, drew workers from a mixture of social groups.²⁸ The shanty as a work unit employed

²⁸ Joseph-Alphonse Desjardins categorized those he had met in Ontario shanties as falling into three categories: transient "jumpers", who when they find they do not like the work seldom stay the season; farmers and farmers' sons seeking winter wages; and true foresters, those who prefer life in the woods: "mais la plupart sont des jeunes gens qui ont en horreur tout travail -- mauvaises têtes, cœurs lâches -- toujours mécontents. . . pas un sou en poche, heureux s'ils n'ont pas été coffrés pour quelques mauvais coups. . . Ils viennent gagner l'argent qui leur permettra d'achever de payer leur terre, qui leur donnera les moyens de l'améliorer; ils veulent aider leurs parents; ils veulent terminer la maison commencée. . . Là [au chantier] ils se sentent chez eux, comme le marin sur la mer, comme le prospecteur dans les lointains pays à la recherche de l'or." Desjardins, *Dans le chantier*, pp. 20-21.

What is lacking in his perspective is a sense of workers who choose to define themselves by their occupation, shantyman. Desjardins, heavily influenced by the tone of Louis Hémon's novel, makes the assumption that this is a choice of lifestyle

labour, extended credit to families, hired stock and wagons, provided capital, and purchased the plants and animals produced by the farm. Those hired included urban industrial sawmill workers, and that precursor of the modern trucker, company teamsters; professional forest workers, shantymen hired in Ottawa through a jobber; village workers from places such as Angers, Masson and Buckingham; migrant labourers from outside the region; and workers from farm families. With the exception of two women working at the main supply depot, the shanty appears to have been be a male society.

This view is misleading because it fails to take into account the strategies and extensions of the family economy. It was commonly accepted that wives and mothers could draw on men's wages at the mill office while the men were in the woods, according to John Henderson, a sawmill manager for James MacLaren who testified at the Ottawa hearing of the 1889 *Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital*.²⁹ William Anderson, speaking for J.R. Booth's operations, painted a similar picture, describing how both wives and husbands went together to the mill office to make the arrangements. Unmarried men also arranged to have orders and money sent home. The example in testimony was

rather than occupation.

²⁹ Testimony of John Henderson, Manager of J. MacLaren & Company, Lumber Merchants, Ottawa. *The Report of the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital. Evidence -- Ontario*. Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1889, pp. 1137-1138. Shantymen are also discussed in the evidence of: William Anderson, Book-keeper for J.R. Booth, pp. 1104-1107; George Lang Chitty, Book-keeper to Gilmour & Co., pp. 1175 -1177; Paul Miner, Shantyman, pp. 1188-1191.

\$15 drawn once a month against a salary of \$20. In surviving contracts several men, but not many, asked for these financial arrangements. In James Stirling's 1881 shanty contract he was "To get \$10 per mo cash for mother." James Murphy, a cook, wanted "To get some money sent to his wife." Frederick Ayatte also wanted "To get some money put in letters to wife". Jean Lacombe's wife was to get \$10 cash on 1st January. Joseph Vassant's wife was to get \$10 per month. John Flood wanted \$8 a month sent to an Ottawa address after his first month's work. Pierre Cayen and Norbert Dallaire asked simply "to get money sent" in a letter. Others may have been paying debts. The families of shantymen could also draw goods in Ottawa, Buckingham, and at the stores attached to the Company depots and farms.

Whether this system gave the Company economic leverage over its workers is unknown.³⁰ The preliminary evidence is that it did not. Few of the workers negotiated these terms in their contracts. One possible reason for the low number of such arrangements might be a higher reluctance of sawmill workers in larger urban centres to leave their families during winter. If a mill worker were to work all summer in the mill and all winter in the woods, the first at \$8 a week and the second at \$21 a month and board, a top income of \$400 could be

³⁰ Price V. Fishback argues workers had greater economic freedom than previously assumed in their dealings both in scrip and with the local monopolies of the Company store. See his "Did Coal Miners 'Owe their Soul to the Company Store'? Theory and Evidence from the Early 1900s." *Journal of Economic History*, XLVI: 4 (December 1986), pp. 1011-1030.

earned, if no time was lost.³¹ In response to the Commission's question if it was the "better class of men" who would not go to the shanties, John Henderson grudgingly conceded "a certain class" of sawmill workers did refuse shanty work after MacLaren's Ottawa mill closed for the winter.³²

For farmers and their sons the shanty grew more appealing after the end of the square timber rafting trade. Winter wages, earned during a time of inactivity on the farm, did supplement the family economy, or at least offset the costs of the family over the winter. If the farmer worked as a teamster with his span of horses, he could transfer the cost of feed onto the Company and earn cash with the team. Lastly, shanty work provided a pool of capital to begin the summer's agriculture, but delivering square timber rafts could overlap with the spring planting. The influence of the shift to sawmilling from square timber on the farmer's decision to go to the shanty was commented on:

since the sawn lumber business has assumed such large proportions, the drive on the river is comparatively short, generally over by the first of June, consequently a much larger number of farmer's sons in the vicinity of the works are seeking employment, as they generally can get home in time for sowing the crop; and as they are a much more steady and reliable class, and just as able-bodied and skilful workmen, they are more readily engaged than any others.³³

³¹ Testimony of George Lang Chitty, *Royal Commission on Labour*, p. 1175.

³² Testimony of John Henderson, *Royal Commission on Labour*, p. 1137.

³³ Joshua Fraser, *Shanty, Forest and River Life in the Backwoods of Canada*. Montréal: J. Lovell and Son, 1883, p. 37.

Sawlogs did not require, as did the square timber trade, the long trip to Québec and the longer absence from the farm.

Many of the workers were French Canadian and, contrary to the impression given by the literature, so too were the foremen. When asked if any of the men who "go to the stump for timber" owned their own houses a witness to the Royal Commission replied:

The men are very largely farmer's sons or countrymen. They come in just when they get their crops saved. Of course, there are a good many Frenchmen who do nothing else but lumber. They go up in the fall, follow the drive, and board in town the rest of the time, doing nothing.³⁴

The disdain of the witness for the professional shantyman is clear and he failed to answer the question, except in the traditional manner of extolling the virtuous farmer. We know very little about what they did in the off season.³⁵ The Commission asked another witness about the large number of French Canadian workers from the parish of Sorel who returned every year to work for Ottawa firms.³⁶ In J.R. Booth's operations, a different class of men was hired to start up the shanties before the mills shut down. George Lang Chitty, the Gilmour Company bookkeeper, testified that the sawmill workers left the shanties prior to the start of the drive, which was taken over by this different class of men.

³⁴ Testimony of William Anderson, *Royal Commission on Labour*, p. 1107.

³⁵ A study of court cases, comparing shantyman with the general urban population would be useful in examining the truth behind their folkloric reputation.

³⁶ Judge James Armstrong, Chairman to Paul Miner, Shantyman. *Royal Commission on Labour*, p. 1191.

Investigations continue into the extent to which MacLaren made use of these migrant workers. A preliminary view of the correspondence is that he did, through hiring agencies.

MacLaren also drew on another pool of labourers in the Lower Town of Ottawa, through Alex D. Chevrier, a hotelkeeper and Lumberman's Agent.³⁷ Chevrier signed up one hundred and two men for MacLaren under five separate engagement contracts during the fall, in 1882 and 1883.³⁸ It is clear from the contracts that each represented a full shanty crew, the area of work of each man being clearly described as general hand (\$20), road cutter (\$18), log-maker (\$22),

³⁷ Alexandre Chevrier (1821-1898) was one of several members of the Chevrier family to run hotels in Ottawa's Lower Town, a working class area with a high concentration of transients. His hotel was at 207 St. Patrick Street. See Georgette Lamoureux, *Ottawa, 1855-1876, et sa population canadienne-française*. Ottawa: G. Lamoureux, 1980, p. 247, p. 259; Georgette Lamoureux, *Ottawa, 1876-1899, et sa population canadienne-française, 1876-1899*. Ottawa: G. Lamoureux, 1982, pp. 231-237. On the lumber community in Lower Town see Michael Cross's previously cited "Shiner's War", and, *Lower Town Ottawa, Volume II 1854-1900*. Prepared by Michael Newton. Ottawa: National Capital Commission, Heritage Section, Public Activities Branch, 1981.

³⁸ Five "Lumbermen's Engagement" contracts were found pasted into the Buckingham contract ledger. ANQ-O, Industries James MacLaren, M-14-1. None of the one hundred and two workers could be positively identified in the 1881 census, and more disturbingly, the manuscript census does not appear to include the occupants of any of Lower Town's numerous hotels. This means the Ottawa census population figures for 1881 may be too low. For discussion of the contracts used in other regions see: Michel Larose, "Les contrats d'engagement des travailleurs forestiers de la Mauricie," *Bulletin of Material History*, 1 (1981), pp. 69-73. For samples of contracts see: Barbara E. Benson, *Logs and Lumber*, 1989, p. 199, fn. 9; and, Normand Lafleur, *La drave en Mauricie: des origines à nos jours*. Trois-Rivières: Editions du bien public, 1970, [Contract of Engagement, 15 October 1858.], Figure 11, p. 16.

cook (\$30), or head log-maker (\$23). Some, probably younger or less experienced hands, received wages between \$16 and \$18 a month and board.³⁹ Some of the men, such as David Nault, Johny Gagnon, Alex Delanger and Joseph Poulieu, insisted that they be kept together, and others stipulated that they would only work with each other.

Many of the workers took advances on their pay to cover debts. Thirty-two men received advances ranging from \$1 to \$5 each, many getting the \$1 advance. Most owed A.D. Chevrier board bills of four to fifteen dollars. Adelard Dubé owed Chevrier \$104, but he was an exception. One or two asked for cash at the start of January and March, and many had monthly payments of about one week's wages made on their behalf to merchants or to women who ran Lower Town boarding houses.⁴⁰ When the amount of debt for board was examined as it related to the wages paid, a pattern was observed.⁴¹ Four men owed more

³⁹ At the Royal Commission John Henderson described MacLaren's shanties, stating that men received board and about sixteen dollars a month. That figure is low, as eighteen to twenty-two dollars was common. George Lang Chitty, (p. 1175) put a figure of ten dollars on the value of board, although the common charge for short term board for non-employees was one dollar a day. Testimony of John Henderson, *Royal Commission on Labour*, pp. 1137-1138. Testimony of George Lang Chitty, *Ibid.*, p. 1175.

⁴⁰ All of the women are described as Mrs. (Mrs. Leteau, Mrs. Danau, Mrs. Whalen), and none have surnames matching the shantymen. Most of the payments above \$5 went to the firm of Leblanc & Lemay.

⁴¹ Each worker's debt for board was deducted from his monthly rate of pay. For the 102 cases, the results were negative for four workers. Nineteen owed nothing for board. For three job classifications the monthly wage was divided by four to arrive at one week's wages. The numbers, by occupation, for those who owed more

than one month's wages; all were general labourers. Further, only 10% of the log makers owed more than one week's wages. For roadcutters and general hands, the percentages were 38% and 36% respectively. There was an inverse relationship between skill and debt that was even more pronounced among those in a leadership roles. The head log makers, chief teamster and cook, as well as being the most highly paid, were also the least in debt. However, most of those hired were working for themselves in the shanty by the second week and were paying no board. These men represented a core of professional forest workers, distinct from sawmill workers, and they spent the off season in a world of hotels and bars much like that found on North America's west coast or the Great Lakes.

While MacLaren did hire in Québec for his mills and shanties, he rarely took men from his own cove. At the end of season his cove workers were let go and few found work at his camps on the Lièvre. There was one case, a carrier gang headed by Joseph Boulanger, who could sharpen saws, and the men he landed deals with, Xavier Willet, Louis Touchette, Prudent Minard, Louis Toursant. They went up without wage arrangements, with Cream's recommendation and a note stating: "Mr. MacLaren said he would give them

than one week's wages was: log makers (4 of 37), based on a monthly rate of \$22.00; general hands (17 of 47), based on either the \$18 or the \$20 per month rate; road cutters (5 of 13), based on \$16 and \$18 per month.

work when they finished the landing of the Deals."⁴² Cream advanced their transportation tickets.⁴³ James MacLaren wrote back that he was:

not particular whether these men come up or not, but as I said we would take them, let them come up and we will give them work either for a year or until Creeks are driven next spring, we will not pay their passage up if they want work let them pay their own way up. We have lost by some of the men that came up this year and who did not remain long enough to pay their passage up⁴⁴

He did concede he would pay them as soon as they earned the amount of their passage, so that they can send the amount down to the friends who loaned them passage up. If they were not there by the first week of December he would not hire them. This lone experiment concluded with these words of advice from MacLaren to Cream:

The men that you wrote us about came to Ottawa and two of them came down here and hired at \$12 per month -- went back for their clothes but never came near us again, you see how little dependence can be placed in the men.⁴⁵

How most men and their families who worked the coves got through the winter, in the face of this segmentation of commodity chain labour is unclear. Some answers are suggested in the following chapter on the Ship Labourers, the timber specialist longshoremen who handled the actual loading of timber and deals onboard the buyer's vessels.

⁴² William Cream to James MacLaren Co., 26 November 1866, M-1-3-13.

⁴³ William Cream to James MacLaren, 27 November 1866, M-1-3-46.

⁴⁴ James MacLaren to William Cream, 28 November 1866, M-1-3-100.

⁴⁵ James MacLaren to William Cream, 11 December 1866, M-1-3-100a.

While MacLaren did not hire from his own cove, he did use Québec as a general source for shantymen. Stevenson, who brought down the square timber rafts from Fitzroy Harbour and the Gatineau, came to Québec in 1866 to look for one hundred men for the winter. MacLaren told Cream:

if he hires men in Quebec they will likely want to get so much per week per month for their families, you can agree to do or pay in Quebec anything that Mr. S. may arrange with them for. . .We have not hired a man since he left 5 or 6 men offered today but they wanted \$15 to \$17 per month⁴⁶

For Buckingham and the Lièvre, MacLaren often sent Thomas Kenny, and asked Cream to give him any assistance he needed. He did this in early October of 1867 and in 1868 was unhappy about the confusion caused by Kenny allowing the men to draw half their wages in Buckingham and to have the other half paid to their families in Québec.⁴⁷

Besides sending down people to hire he used the occasional Jobber to provide labour. A man called Demers telegraphed offering a foreman and thirty men. Buckingham replied they would take twenty, "good men not to exceed fifteen dollars". Kenny confided to Cream that: "We don't care about having much to do with him but if he got us twenty good men at that price now we

⁴⁶ MacLaren added that if the price of men remained high, he would not take out many logs that winter. James MacLaren to William Cream, 21 September 1866, M-1-3-104.

⁴⁷ James MacLaren to William Cream, 6 February 1868, M-1-5-123.

would take them."⁴⁸ The next year Kenny hired nineteen men, forgetting to send up from Québec some butting saws because:

I was in such a fuss getting men on cars. We had great difficulty in getting a car for men and had the satisfaction of getting them into a first class car at last as they had no others⁴⁹

In August 1869 MacLaren went as far as Three Rivers to get sawmill workers who would also go to the shanties. He told Cream "we have been sawing only day watch for the last two months for want of men."⁵⁰ In Québec Cream found Joseph Raynar [sic], who said he ran the Benson & Co. mill at Three Rivers and offered to get one hundred men for \$10 to \$12 a month for ordinary hands. Men for the spring drive would cost extra.⁵¹ He asked MacLaren to send him terms, including for payments to the families. MacLaren responded to the low labour price by sending a man to Three Rivers, but he came back alone. "Reynor must not have known what he was speaking about. Couldn't get any at \$14 a month."⁵²

⁴⁸ Thomas Kenny, James MacLaren Company, to William Cream, 1 September 1870, M-2-3-99.

⁴⁹ Thomas Kenny to William Cream, 2 October 1871, M-3-1-31.

⁵⁰ James MacLaren to William Cream, 6 August 1869, M-2-1-141.

⁵¹ William Cream to James MacLaren, 10 August 1869, M-2-1-164.

⁵² James MacLaren to William Cream, 30 August 1869, M-2-1-142.

Dealing with shantymens' orders, the instructions to make payments to their families, was another part of Cream's daily responsibility. The surviving record deals mostly with the problem cases:

Two of our men have gone away (or rather they were sent away) that came up from Quebec. You have had orders to pay their wives \$6 per month. If you have not paid before now, do not pay any thing to Francois Fournier's wife as he is in debt already over \$2 and if you have paid him the \$6 he will be in debt over \$8. Charles Fournier is also settled with and has come out clear, we have charged him \$6 that you were told to pay his wife. . I hope the wife of Fournier has not been to see you as it will be a dead loss to us.

I do not know what Desmers meant by sending up such men. They are two brothers and over 60 years of age and know nothing about Shanty work, and are to [sic] old and infirm to learn.⁵³

From the cove and shanty hiring correspondence we see that the web connecting the lumber shanties to family households throughout Québec is far from localized. There was no simple or even geographic boundary between the family economy and the external wage economy. The spatial separation of work and family is somewhat misleading. It is clear that employers paid close attention to regional variation in wage demands. This gave employers some leverage over community attempts to negotiate higher wages. However, it brought with it another set of problems: the reliability of transient workers, the logistics of hiring, and meeting worker demands for paying wages to distant families.

⁵³ James MacLaren to William Cream, 2 October 1867, M-1-4-16.

III Winter Wages, Winter Work

Shanty work followed a general pattern. In the fall, shantymen were signed to winter contracts for their labour. In October an initial group, including a foreman, clerk and cook, headed upriver to the site chosen for that year's camp. The site had been located the previous spring and some work may have been started on it. If it was a new camp, buildings had to be constructed for the men, stores, and horses. If it was an older camp, repairs had to be made. After this, the crew worked to build and repair the dams that raised the level of the creeks down which, in the spring, the logs would be driven to the main river. This was done during the low water, prior to freeze-up. Next, the roads down which logs would be hauled or drawn to the creeks, rivers, and lakes had to be cut. Stores, especially hay for the winter's teams, were brought in once there was sufficient ice and snow for the improvised winter hauling trails. Only after this preparatory work could the actual work of falling begin, although of course roads cannot be cut without falling trees.

The second group of workers followed later, after the rivers were frozen enough to support teams, and they brought in the main transportative power of the operation, in this region, horses. Throughout the course of the winter there was a steady stream of visitors as local farmers working as teamsters replenished the shanty's supplies. Others, such as a woods foreman, a priest in the new year, and cullers, as well as government inspectors, made their appearance over the course of the winter.

With spring approaching work in the woods centred on laying logs up in preparation for the thaw and placing holding booms across the lake and river ice. There was a lull as these preparations concluded. A "keepover" was constructed to hold supplies for the start of the following year's work, a necessity when transportation depends on winter roads. The equipment needed for the spring river drive was also prepared. Those shantymen who were signed only for the winter, and those with teams of horses, were paid off and left. The remaining shantymen waited for the thaw.

As the ice broke up, *la drave*, the river drive, began, with the clearing of smaller creeks and streams and the gathering of logs in holding booms. As the drainage basin was cleared, the foreman watched rising water levels for the best time to release the booms. Members of the crew were stationed at those points on the river where logs could "jam" or bottleneck. Other booms were set above the rapids, so that the flow of logs could be kept as fast as possible to take advantage of the spring freshets, but also slow enough to avoid bottlenecks and log jams. It was a calculation based on the experience of the foreman and the crew, and the state of the river. As the main body of logs moved on, crews from other shanties along the river joined in with their logs and the mass moved down river towards, in this case, the MacLaren mill pond at Buckingham. As the logs arrived they were shunted into "bags" or holding booms for the sawmill.

This was the basic pattern of work from the shanty to the sawmill. In different regions of eastern North America there were variations. Some drives

continued on to larger rivers. Square timber was formed into rafts and then taken down for sale, for example from the Ottawa to the St. Lawrence, and on to the timber coves of Québec City where the raft was sold and the crew paid. Now let us look at the pattern as found at the micro-level of one season at a shanty on the Lièvre.

At Joseph Payette's shanty the advance group, consisting of the foreman, clerk, handyman, cook and choreboy, twenty-one other workers, and four teams of horses arrived on 22 August 1889. The month of September was spent clearing ground for the shanty and cutting roads and logs. The weather may have been pleasant, because shanty construction did not begin until the first week of October, meaning they lived under canvas and boughs. It took eighteen men five days to put up the main shanty structures. Two men continued to work on the shanty, perhaps dealing with doors and chimneys, spending the last day mousing in the chinks in the walls. Four other men built the granary in one day.

With the completion of the main structures, other tasks remained. Half a dozen men spent a week boating, surveying river conditions that might influence the spring drive, and choosing locations for log piles, "rollaways", where the winter's cut would be piled. These locations determined the amount of road that had to be cut to link the timber stand with the river, and this in turn influenced the speed with which the season's work could proceed.

Five men worked building snow scoops, large horse-drawn shovels, and spent October 22 rigging axes (fitting heads to handles) and building bunks in

preparation for the arrival of the second group of fourteen workers. This next group arrived the following day, bringing the number in the shanty to forty men and four teams of horses. At this point the shanty was in full operation, falling trees and making logs.

Freeze-up came after November 26, the last journal entry for boating. The pace of work continued with men furling or dragging logs off the mountain before the snow got too deep for horses. A four-man group continued to build snow scoops during December. In the second week of December, six men began work on the stables, which were roofed two weeks later and finished a week after that. Other men were breaking roads.

In the new year, the emphasis of work in the shanty changed to cutting roads and hauling logs. Little else was done in the camp for the next two months. Figures 3 through 8 show the typical shift in the division of labour during a shanty season. Road cutting occupied about half of the manpower before the new year. The arrival of horses on or about January 1 marked a shift in emphasis towards moving logs to the river, which by February occupied almost three-quarters of the shanty workforce. The number of men making logs remained small, four to six men, throughout the season. At Payette's shanty the spans of horses arrived in two waves, the first on January 8, consisting of another eight two-horse teams, bringing the number of horses to twenty-six for forty-six workers. By the second week of February there were thirty-eight horses and forty-five men working out of the shanty.

By the third week of February men were back at work building new snow scoops, to clear the ground for construction of the "pork house" or keepover, where supplies would be cached for next year. On February 22 the foreman wrote, "10 hyred Teams would not work. No hay". It may be that supplies in the shanty were, through mismanagement, low. However after the season slowed in March, six men spent a day "roofing old hay shed". Perhaps the roof had collapsed. Whatever the reason, half of the shanty's teams had to be sent to fetch hay from the Mountain Farm depot, and when they returned

another nine men spent two days working "at hay shed". Supplies for both horses and men were a large part of the shanty's economy.

Feed for the teams of horses was a major and bulky item which required a transportation system based around a small group of teamsters. In February,

Table VII
Stocking the Keepover
Deliveries to Payette Keepover
February 1889

February	
13	2 barrels, beans
20	1 sack coal
22	6 Presses of Hay,
23	8 presses of hay
25	6 presses of hay, 2 barrels beans
27	25 barrels pork
28	4 presses of hay

March	
1	4 presses of hay, 3 barrels peas, 5 dozen axe helms
4	30 barrels flour, 1 barrel tea, 1 sack salt
5	8 presses of hay, 39 bags oats (3908 lbs.)
9	29 bags of oats (2369 lbs.)
13	1 barrel tea, 1 box Horse Shoe nails (25 lbs.)
14	3 boxes axes, sundries

* 1 press of hay = approx. 530 lbs.

Division of Labour at Ross Shanty
October 4, 1876

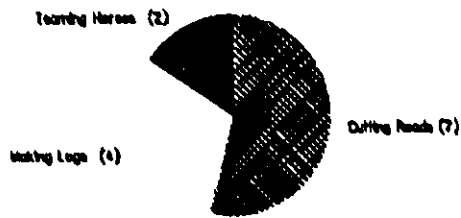


Figure 3

Division of Labour at Ross Shanty
November 4, 1876

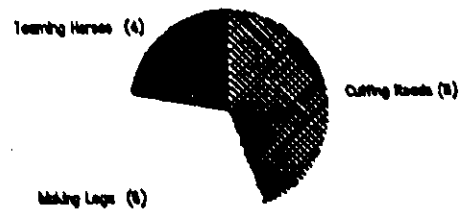


Figure 4

Division of Labour at Ross Shanty
December 4, 1876



Figure 5

Division of Labour at Ross Shanty
January 4, 1877

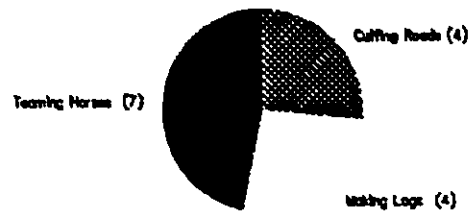


Figure 6

Division of Labour at Ross Shanty
February 3, 1877

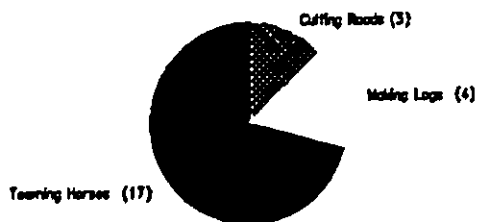


Figure 7

Division of Labour at Ross Shanty
March 4, 1877

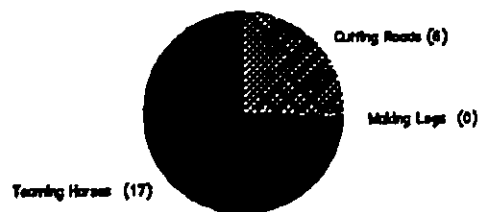


Figure 8

teamsters worked to fill

the Payette Keepover

and hay shed. During

February James

Cameron hauled one

298 pound barrel of

beans, two presses of

hay (1127 lbs. total), five

barrels of Keepover

Pork, and five barrels of

flour. Table VII gives an idea of the supplies delivered by half a dozen

teamsters to one keepover. After filling it, the teamsters moved on to stock John

Bisson's Keepover, delivering twenty-five barrels of pork, four of beans, fourteen

of peas and thirty of flour. Feed for Bisson's horses consisted of twelve tons of

hay and seven and a half tons of oats, packaged in one hundred and eighty bags

containing eighty-four pounds of oats each.⁵⁴

Teams and men started leaving the shanty a few at a time through March

and by the end of the month the shanty was down to half strength, with the

remaining men fixing buildings. The clerk's entry for April 4 reads, "Teams left

this day at noon. Foremen & 2 men gone with them. Balance fixing up things

Table VIII
List of Supplies at End of Drive,
Joseph Payette Crew, May 1890

2	Boats	18	Paddles
6	Oars	3	[unclear]
15	Peavies	1	Jam Dog
24	Log Dogs	11	Gaffs
18	Cotton Bags	5	Cotton Tents
2	Axes	1	Fire Shovel
1	Tin Baker	25	Tin Plates
20	Tea Dishes	1	Butcher Knife (large)
17	Spoons	1	Meat Fork
1	Pifer Castor	2	Roler Towels (useless)
2	Bake Kettles	1	Kamp Kettle
4	Tin Pails	2	Wood Pail
50	lbs. Flour	10	pr. Marked Blankets
1	Linen Bag	1	Pike pole

⁵⁴ ANQ-O, Industries James MacLaren Inc, M-187, Dépenses et travail effectués, 1889-1890.

at shanty." The shanty workforce dropped to fourteen men, nine of whom worked for three days on the keepon, while one explored the timber limit for next year's cut. A further two days were spent readying for the drive, and on April 15 it commenced.

The drive itself was done in stages, the first ten days as half-days due to low water. Some of the logs were driven from smaller stream banks where they lay scattered. On April 26, the main ice began breaking and serious driving of the large streams, with the release of logs piled at the rollways, began. Table VIII lists the Driving Outfit, the equipment left at Iroquois Farm by Joseph Payette. On May 9 the drive, having cleared the streams around the shanty, moved out of the area and the men followed it down Delanier Creek, ending their involvement in the drive on April 27. Payette's Shanty outlines the general contours of work in a shanty, which follows closely the pattern at the other shanties.

IV The Changing Rural World

The scale of work in the woods, though rural and isolated, had more in common with the scale of an industrial operation than the family farm. The main statistics for the shanties operating on the Lièvre in the winter of 1888-89 are found in Table III. At the peak of the season two hundred and thirty-three men and one hundred and seventy horses were at work in the five shanties. Sixty thousand logs were cut, skidded, and hauled to the river for the drive to the mill. Figure 7 gives an example of the general flow of log production; the peaks may

represent small logs, or they may be a bookkeeping error. As Table III shows, John Bisson's shanty was the largest logging operation, cutting sixteen thousand trees. The overall scale of the operation is very similar to another Ottawa Valley operation described by Joshua Fraser in 1883.⁵⁵

The hours of work in the shanties, daylight, have been fairly portrayed as long tiring days with minimal comforts. Shantymen worked a six day week from before dawn until dusk. At the shanty itself, the teamsters had horses to tend, the cooking staff had dinner to serve and clean up, woodsmen had axes to file up, and the foreman and clerk had entries to close and the next day to plan. However, this is still shorter than the seven day week of the farm, and the shortest hours of daylight in the year occur while the men are in the woods, the longest in the summer on the farm.

Workplace discipline had more in common with the factory than the farm. The men, spread over several miles, could easily choose their own pace, but it was measured each day in the clerk's records. Mediating between production and the pace of work through negotiated workplace discipline was a measure of a foreman's ability.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ He described visiting a group of five active shanties in a five mile radius. Their average workforce was 30-40 men. They hoped to cut 60,000 logs and a large raft of square timber that season if all went well. Joshua Fraser, *Shanty, Forest and River Life in the Backwoods of Canada*. Montréal: J. Lovell and Son, 1883, p. 20.

⁵⁶ Joshua Fraser gave the following definition of a good foreman: "It is not merely that they must be men of experience in the woods -- men who know *where*, and *how*, to build a shanty on a spot in the midst of the best and largest quantity

In 1866 Adolphus Trousseau was hired in Québec as a shanty foreman for \$20 per month. Cream wrote from Québec that his family was "very badly off", having had neither word nor money from him in the two months he had been gone.⁵⁷ MacLaren replied that Adolphus was hired to run one of the shanties, but:

we would not however like to pay any money without his order. We will try and let him know what you say but it will be some time before we can hear from him as he is a good way up river and there is no passing up and down at this time of the year.⁵⁸

of timber in the limit, with the shortest "draw" to the nearest river; and who knows experimentally every detail of the business from "cook's-mate" up to hewer; but, above all this and chiefly, they must know how to *govern men*. To hold their own with the most refractory and self-opinionated -- to insist upon every man doing as he is told, and fulfilling his full and fair quota of work, and conducting himself in a quiet and orderly way in the shanty; and at the same time to exercise great caution not to be too arbitrary with, or abuse them." *Shanty, Forest and River Life in the Backwoods of Canada*. Montreal: J. Lovell and Son, 1883, p. 28.

Attitude towards the men also depended on how easily they could be replaced: "Of course, the fact that they can discharge men when they please, without detriment to the business -- being so near the settlements that they can quickly replace them -- gives the manager and foreman the whip-hand over the men in maintaining the order and general efficiency of the shanty." *Ibid.*, p. 34.

For a theoretical framework see Daniel Nelson's discussion of "The Foreman's Empire", the third chapter in *Managers and Workers: Origins of the New Factory System in the United States, 1880-1920*. Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1975. Also Richard Edwards, *Contested Terrain: The Transformation of the Workplace in the Twentieth Century*, New York: Basic Books, 1979.

⁵⁷ William Cream to James MacLaren, 28 November 1866, M-1-3-7.

⁵⁸ James MacLaren to William Cream, 11 December 1866, M-1-3-100a.

On investigating MacLaren found he had "run away from his shanty" in debt, and Cream was instructed not to pay his wife the \$8 a month.⁵⁹ However a letter soon followed reversing those instructions. The runaway foreman had been sent back to the woods. The reason for his leaving was a dispute with his men, which ended as:

they beat him and hunted him from the shanty, we have taken warrants out for the men and will try and teach them some other way of getting along.⁶⁰

The payments to the family began again. One can imagine the psychological as well as the financial strain that distance and uncertainty put on all the members of that particular family. But by the 1880s this governance of the shanty was also changing:

A foreman now-a-days never thinks of taking a handspike and knocking a man down if he neglects his duty, or is in any way refractory. If the man will not listen to remonstrance or reproof, he orders the clerk to "give him his time," and then quietly tells him to leave. The dread of this has a far more powerful effect upon the men in keeping them up to the mark than handspikes or fisticuffs.⁶¹

MacLaren's 1880s shanty ledgers shows only four of five hundred and seventy workers left the shanties with the words "discharged" next to their name, all from the same shanty. If a worker left the shanty it was more likely their own decision. If a man quit before the end of the winter in theory he was fined \$1

⁵⁹ James MacLaren to William Cream, 12 December 1866, M-1-3-102.

⁶⁰ James MacLaren to William Cream, 18 December 1866, M-1-3-100b.

⁶¹ Joshua Fraser, *Shanty, Forest and River Life in the Backwoods of Canada*. Montréal: J. Lovell and Son, 1883, pp. 38-39.

for each day, but in practise he was billed the cost of bringing in a man to replace him, or forfeited his wages to date. The cost of returning home was his.⁶²

Workers relaxed once a week, on Sunday, except for the foreman, cook and choreboy. The season was also marked by holidays. The first fell on November 1, All Saints Day. Observance, as Table IX shows, varied. At the Valliant shanty in 1880 and the shanty run by Calice Bisson in 1888, the foremen described the day as a holiday. Calice Bisson had himself been a worker in the Valliant shanty eight years

prior and his men received

the same holiday he had

enjoyed. At John Bisson's

shanty in 1888 the day was

not even recorded in the

ledger, an unusual omission.

Table IX
Holiday Observance, All Saints Day.

Shanty	Workforce	Worked Nov.1
Calice Bisson	25	7
John Bisson	25	0
Dionne	20	12
Gauvreau	31	22
Payette	7	4
Ross	28	18
Valliant	37	8

However, at Dionne and Gauvreau's shanties in 1888, most worked. The same is true for the Ross shanty in 1875. There was no distinction between the choice to take the holiday or not based on ethnicity, and it appears likely that the foreman's attitude had a strong influence. While one of the workers at Gauvreau's shanty who chose to not work left by the third week of November,

⁶² A standard clause in a MacLaren contract was the forfeit of all wages if the worker left before the expiration of the agreement or without consent. *Ibid.*, p. 1189-90.

the employment pattern of the others was undifferentiated from those who did work the holiday.

The holiday also marked a shift in size and work for some of the shanties. At the Valliant shanty, stable construction began the day after the holiday. In the two days following the holiday, John Bisson's shanty workforce grew from twenty-five to forty-two; Dionne's from twenty to thirty-five; and Gauvreau's from thirty-one to forty-three. The pattern of secular rural work shows unevenly the imprint of the religious calendar upon worker traditions such as those maintained by Calice Bisson, but its influence appears to have been fading, as the Dionne and Gauvreau shanties make clear.

Christmas was a different matter. Only the foremen of the shanties appear to have worked outside during the single day off. At Payette's shanty Christmas Day was quiet, with only the foreman, cook and choreboy working. A number of workers returned home for the holidays. Many of them returned to the shanty in January with their teams of horses for the next phase of work.

Shanty accounts also show that organized religion entered the workplace once a year on the Lièvre. A Roman Catholic priest visited each shanty during late January and many of the men paid a subscription from their shanty

Table X
Production Statistics
MacLaren Shanties, Lièvre River, 1888-1889

Shanty	Days of Operation	Maximum No. of Men	Maximum No. of Horses	Logs Made	Logs Lain Up	Logs Drawn
Calice Bisson	154	39	24	7641	7641	7651
John Bisson	149	32	32	16908	15586	16818
Dionne	159	45	34	10989	11240	11240
Gauvreau	191	60	42	9302	9291	9341
Payette	239	47	38	16174	16124	16885
Total	892	233	170	61014	59882	61935
Average	178	47	34	12203	11976	12387

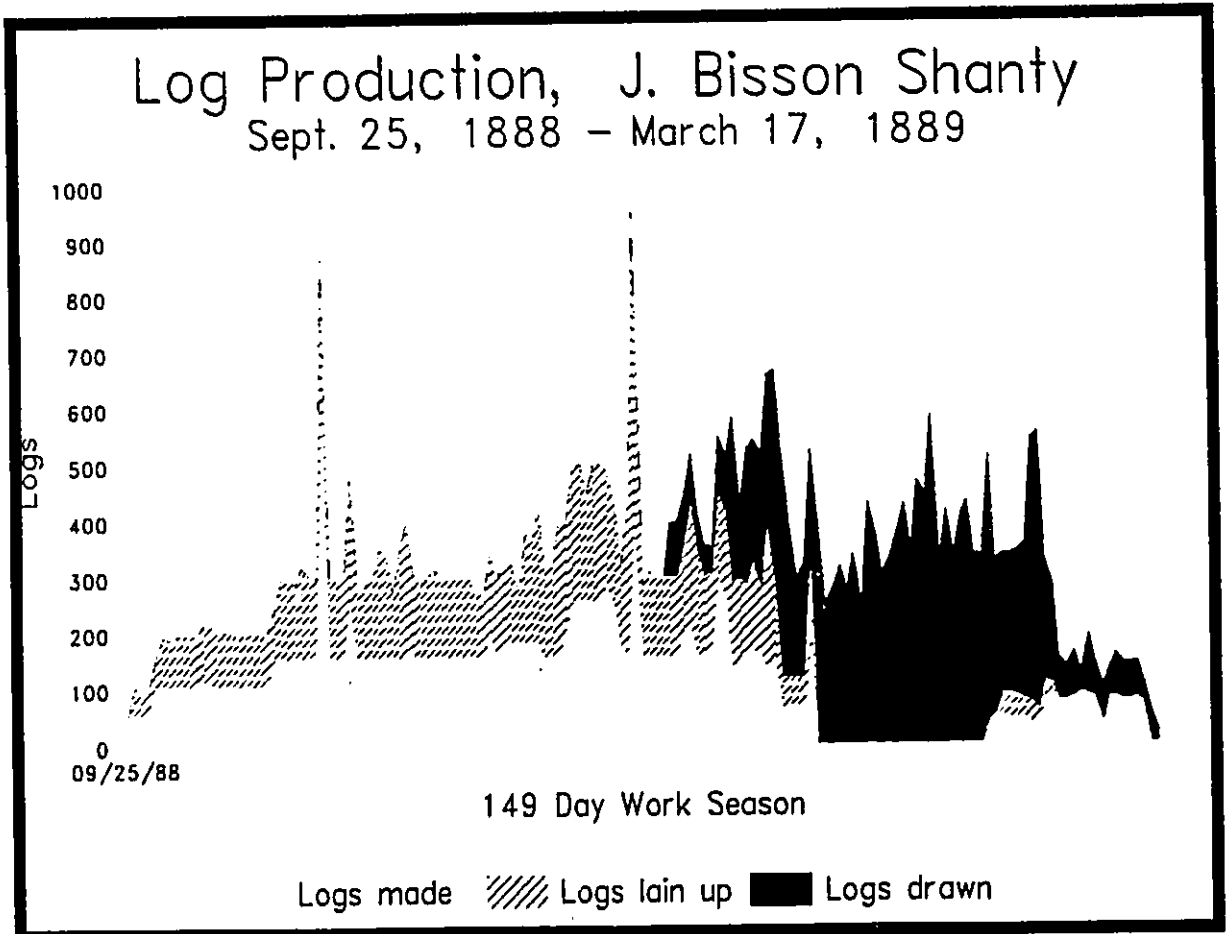


Figure 9

accounts.⁶³ At the Ross shanty twenty-nine of forty-five men subscribed a total of \$20.15.⁶⁴ In the case of eleven men, the subscription to the priest was the only item charged to their account.

Many companies sold goods, some mass produced, others home-made, to their workers. Men were encouraged to supply themselves as much as possible, but the company provided a stock of goods "solely for the convenience of the men; there is no profit in the concern, not any more than any store-keeper; they can be provided just as cheap as at the store."⁶⁵ Many, but not all, of the

⁶³ His path can be charted by the deduction dates for the subscription. Dionne shanty January 17, Gauvreau January 19, John Bisson January 21, Payette February , and Calice Bisson February 4. The name Reverend F[ather] Trucgan [?] appears in two shanties. For more on religion in the shanties see: Marcel Bréton, "Les aspects religieux chez les travailleurs de la forêt," *Laurentian University Review*, 19 (1978), pp. 7-31; P. Donat Martineau, "Les Ministere des Chantiers," *Sessions d'Etude: Societe Canadien de l'Eglise Catholique*, 49 (1982), pp. 59-68; Presbyterian Church of Canada in Connection With the Church of Scotland. Committee on the Mission to the Lumbermen. *Report of the Mission to the Lumbermen in the Valley of the Ottawa*. [Kingston?]: The Committee, [?].

⁶⁴ The subscription breakdown was: the head shantyman gave \$1.50, nine gave \$1, one gave .90, seventeen gave .50, and one gave .25 cents. Most of the sixteen who did not subscribe had Scottish surnames but there were several with francophone surnames.

⁶⁵ Henderson, *Royal Commission on Labour*, p. 1138. On page 1189 Paul Miner gave some examples of high prices in the shanty for goods, such as: pants, which cost \$2-\$2.50 in Ottawa sold in some shanties for \$3.25 - \$3.50, and in the worse case, \$5.00. Plug tobacco (12=1 pound) sold for \$1.25, instead of \$.60 - \$.75, and for that price the worker received ten plugs instead of twelve. The evidence in the MacLaren ledger supports shows 10 plugs of tobacco did sell for \$1.20 -\$1.25. The prices of pants show Duck [canvas?] pants sold for \$1.50, and Etoffe [wool?] pants were \$3.50.

Table XI
Goods Purchased by
George Cochrane, 1889-1890

Aug. 23	1 lb. chew tobaca	.70
Sept. 4	1 jack knife	.60
9	1 pair pants	2.30
21	1/2 lb. black tabac	.35
24	1 pair socks [?]	1.60
Oct. 6	1 pair wool mitts	.50
9	1 lb. black tabac	.75
21	1 pair dear mitts	2.00
23	1 wood pipe	.75
27	1 lb. Black tabac	.75
28	envelope	.01
Nov. 1	1 pair wool mitts	.50
16	1 H[ome] made shirt	2.00
28	pair wooleu socks	.50
	1 Duck smock	1.50
Dec. 13	1 clay pipe	.01
Jan. 5	1 skein thread	.06
10	1 pair socks	.50
	1 pair socks motheaten	.35
11	1 lb. tabac	.75
	1 pair wool mitts	.50
20	1 bottle pain reliever	.30
21	1 bottle pain reliever	.30
	Total for season	18.58

workers in the shanty took advantage of this and the records allow a glimpse of the extent of the shantymen's purchases.

While some of the work clothes were mass produced, a large number of items were probably made locally by women on farms and in the rural villages, such as Buckingham. A knit shirt sold for \$1.25, but a home made shirt sold for \$2.00. Drawers cost \$1.50 and pants sold from \$1.50 to \$3.50, depending on type. Mittens and moccasins, also hand made, were much in demand, the "dear mitts" in

Table XI referring to deerskin as

opposed to moose. Moose moccasins and short top moccasins sold for \$2.00 a pair. The Valliant shanty also bartered goods for three dozen axe handles, two fur caps, a set of paddles and a rough canoe off Chabott, a local woodsman. Teamsters, mostly farmers, bought very little. A few bought a single horseshoe or some nails, but many bought papers of sugar for the horses. Table XI shows

that George Cochrane spent almost one month's wages, or twenty percent of his income, mostly on work clothes and tobacco related items.

The item most universally consumed by shantymen was plug and pipe tobacco. It covered the smell of unwashed workers and sweating horses. The hundred and eleven pounds smoked at the Ross shanty in 1875-76 was typical. Thirty-three of forty-five men with accounts purchased tobacco, meaning three out of four men smoked. It is left to the imagination what the shanty was like if thirty-five men each had a pipe after dinner.

In every shanty men bought paper, envelopes and stamps. The photographers on the *Lièvre* in the winter of 1861-62 described the initial reaction at a fifty man shanty to their visit:

we were often asked with anxious looks for letters and papers, and about people, especially girls, whom we had never heard of before. We had brought only one letter to the shanty -- to a young man who had now procured a candle, and was laying, face downwards, on a high bunk, pouring over its contents, apparently with intense interest. Around the same dismal light lay a group of three young men who appeared to require each others services to dictate a letter to send with us in the morning.⁶⁶

The purchaser may or may not have been literate, but it does reflect their need to correspond with the outside world and their families.

There was a trade in alcohol-based medicinal products, some probably contained narcotics as well. Common were "Dicks Leniment", "Syrup of Spruce Gum", "R.R. Relief" or "Wizard Oil". The generic "pain reliever" purchased by George Cochrane probably contained a high proportion of alcohol.

⁶⁶ Alvira Lockwood, *Tour Up the Lièvre*, page 71.

Injury and illness in the shanty were costs that fell on the worker, but not just for lost wages. Testimony at the Royal Commission talked of a \$1 a day fine set for an injured or otherwise non-producing shanty worker.⁶⁷ At the MacLaren shanties the practice was to pay only for days worked. Medical care was, as illustrated in the case below, the responsibility of the worker, such as the case of Joseph Ethier.

On November 2, 1880 eleven new men arrived at the Valliant shanty. Among them was the three Ethier brothers, twenty-eight year old Joseph, his brother Procul, age twenty-five and Octal. As the month went on Joseph became ill, from causes unknown. On Monday November 22 he was too ill to work and stayed in the shanty. His time was stopped. On November 24 he purchased a box of pills.⁶⁸ His brothers continued to work, but Joseph got worse. By the next Friday Procul's time was also stopped as he stayed with him. The foreman recorded that Procul was in the shanty because he was "attending his very sick brother". The third brother, Octal, continued to work. Joseph did not recover, and Octal stopped work at noon on Friday December 11. Joseph was dead.

The shanty worked the next day. On Monday morning the Ethier brothers left; the foreman recording simply "three men gone down with J. Ethier deceased". The party made its way down river, through Buckingham. Joseph

⁶⁷ Testimony of Paul Miner, *Royal Commission on Labour*, p. 1189.

⁶⁸ On the day of his death he bought a bottle of another medication identified only as "R.R. Relief". His total account for \$7.78 in goods was sent on the day after he died.

was buried in Angers, a small town above Masson, on January 18, the priest noting in his records "décède sur un chantier".⁶⁹ Joseph was married to Olive Bernard, and on December 16, after the brothers had left, the accounts show the men drew against their accounts to raise \$18.20 for the widow, about a month's salary.⁷⁰ The money was probably sent down with Charles Pautrie, who left the shanty the same day as the deductions were made.

These shantymen have a reputation of being transient and marginal workers. In order to investigate this, the pattern of persistence and transiency was sought for the various shanties, illustrated in Figures 10 through 15. The length of the vertical lines charts the time between the arrival and departure of a worker.⁷¹ An examination of these work season charts for each shanty, show a definite pattern. Note the staircase pattern of the arrival of groups of workers in all the graphs except that of the Payette shanty.

Much of the debate over the relationship between the farm and forest in *agro-forestière* theory hinges on whether one believes that shanty work and

⁶⁹ *L'Ange-Gardien Angers. Baptêmes et Sépultures, 1864-1900.* Marthe Delisle, editeur. Hull: La Société de Généalogie de l'Outouais, Inc, p. 102.

⁷⁰ The foreman gave \$1.50, eight others gave \$1, two gave .60, fourteen gave .50, and two gave .25 cents.

⁷¹ The graphs were created from spreadsheet data listing start and end dates for each worker, plotted against time on a hi-lo graph normally used to show stock market performance. Three other graphs were also constructed for Calice Bisson's shanty, Mountain Farm/depot and Iroquois Farm/depot. The graphs shown for the depot farms contain the same staircase pattern, while that of Calice Bisson's shanty demonstrates the same pattern as Payette's workforce.

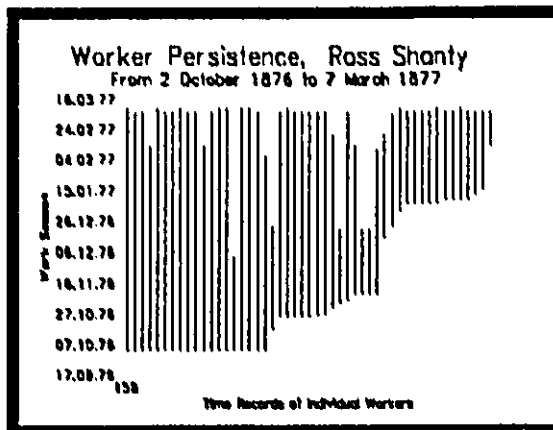


Figure 10

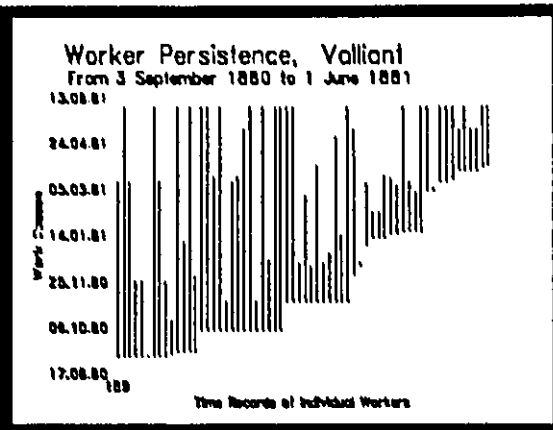


Figure 11

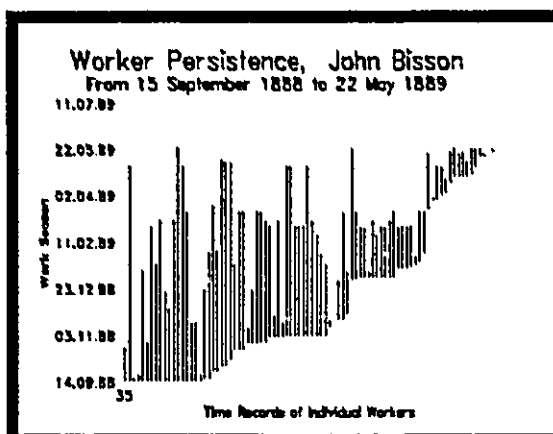


Figure 12

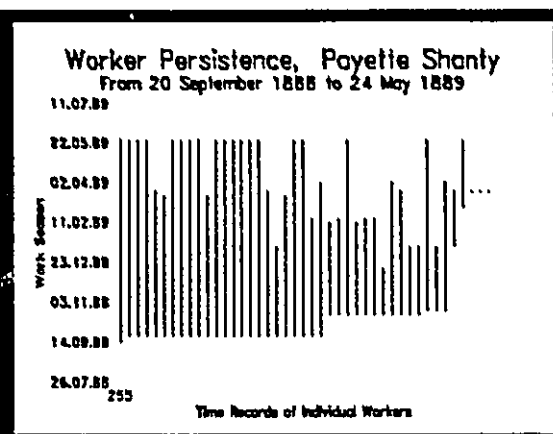


Figure 13

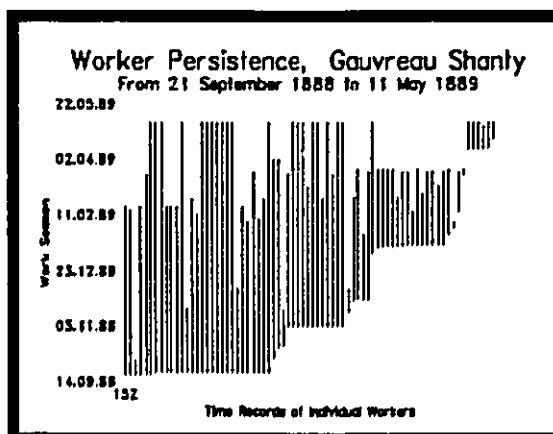


Figure 14

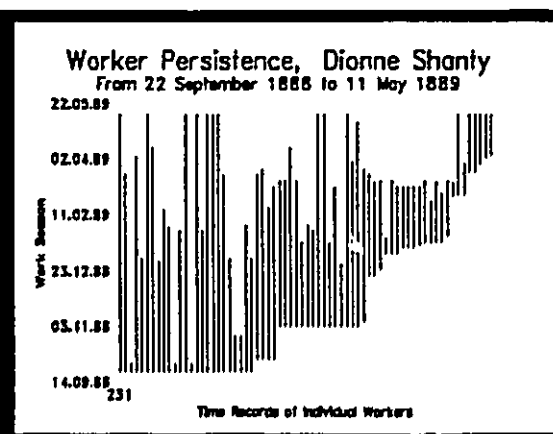


Figure 15

farming have conflicting or complementary labour demands, an either/or proposition. The staircase pattern shows waves of workers arriving and departing throughout the fall, winter and spring. At the micro-level of the MacLaren shanties, the answer is that they were complementary because of this flexibility.

As a work unit, the shanty continued to accept workers throughout the season. Workers came and went fairly constantly, on their own terms, and this dynamic reflects the flexibility of the labour demands of the shanty.⁷² The farmer and the labourer had a degree of latitude in moving from one seasonal activity to the other. Transiency reflects as much the degree of freedom, as it does harsh work conditions.

Conclusion

In *Great Britain's Woodyard* A.R.M. Lower presented the image of the shantyman and his work, but not its substance. Deep within the forests along the banks of the Lièvre River in this "working village" we find the confluence of both the industrial world of capitalism and the rural agrarian world of the peasant household. In writing on the shanty, Esdras Minville characterized it as the most

⁷² For 1888-89 the length of time workers stayed in the shanty was calculated and the results show that 16% worked less than a month, 19% for under two months, 12% under three months, 10% under four, 14% worked five, 13% under six months, 7% seven months and 9% for eight months.

primitive of our economic organizations.⁷³ Yet this village had its managers, the foremen; clerical and support staff; the cook, clerk and choreboy; professional forest workers from Ottawa; urban-dwelling sawmill hands; company teamsters; farmers with their sons and stock; villagers like Joseph Ethier; and possibly migrant labourers from as far away as Sorel. Although it appeared an all-male preserve, the shanty contained direct and indirect links to the family economies throughout the region, supplying credit advances on wages, and a market for home-made articles. As a social unit, the shanty represented a very complex matrix of individual decisions. This social complexity is important in answering the questions raised by *agro-forestière* theory. For the Lièvre, farming was complementary to the forest economy.

Joshua Fraser had this to say in 1883 about those who employed the shantymen of the Ottawa Valley, lumbermen like James MacLaren:

You no longer find them in their shirt-sleeves with handspike in hand, heading and cheering on the men in every perilous and difficult piece of work. All this, and every other kind of manual and practical work, is now delegated to the foreman. . . Their acquaintance with the shanty and the work is limited to an occasional flying visit for a day or two during the winter, when they burst in upon the astonished simple-minded backwoodsmen with jingling bells and gorgeous equipages, and all the importance and dignity of a prince of the blood royal. As for the men, they do not pretend to know the names of a quarter of them; and,

⁷³ Esdras Minville, "Le problème social de la forêt", in *La Forêt*, Montréal: Fides, 1944, p.331, cited by Guy Gaudreau, in "Le rapport agriculture -- forêt au Québec: note historiographique," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, 33 (1979), p. 71.

except with a few old, faithful and privileged fellows, they never exchange a word of greeting or kind fellowship.⁷⁴

Fraser's lament for a way of life may not be a true description of MacLaren personally, but it does typify how well understood it was that even in the shanty the social and economic relations of life were changing. Just as Fraser was commenting on the departure of the lumberman from the shanty, he noted the appearance of a "new phase of shanty government", the delegation of the lumberman's authority to a woods manager.⁷⁵ In the shanties of the 1880s, one finds the fledgling structure of the twentieth century logging camp.

⁷⁴ Joshua Fraser, *Shanty, Forest and River Life in the Backwoods of Canada*. Montréal: J. Lovell and Son, 1883, pp. 317-318.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 33.

CHAPTER 3
THE QUEBEC TIMBER COVE:
SHIPPING, LABOUR, AND MARKETS

Introduction

The Québec timber cove has a special place illustrating the world of Arthur Lower's *Great Britain's Woodyard*. This well known symbol has till now remained just that, receiving little historiographic attention since Lower. We know very little about day to day work there. We know the timber cove itself had certain generic characteristics as a workplace, whether operating in the 1820s or the 1870s. It was a gently sloping sand or gravel beach for landing rafts, sheltered from wind, with space for piling lumber to dry. It functioned much as an open-air warehouse with a relatively small workforce receiving, sorting and shipping. We know there was a certain range of skills found among its workers, gardeners, shippers and labourers, but that gives us little insight into what it was like to work in one. We know even less about how it fared after the 1840s and nothing about its decline during the industries later transition to the American markets.

This chapter will do three things. First we will look briefly at changes

occurring on the river that supplied the cove, as the barge replaced the timber raft. Secondly, we will examine the founding, staffing and running of a timber cove. MacLaren's cove records include extensive correspondence from 1866-1883 and present a rare opportunity to examine the day to day operations of a Québec timber cove. This, together with employment contracts, and Royal Commission testimony, are the main sources for this chapter.

A micro-history study of the cove as a workplace will bring out a level of detail not found in Lower's descriptions, especially about agency, the kind of decisions workers and managers made. A key element in this story is what the transition between British and American markets looked like, when viewed through the two sides of the cove correspondence. Lower's separate treatment of the two markets in *North American Assault* and *Great Britain's Woodyard*, books published thirty-five years apart, has over-simplified a complex transition.

I An Industrial River: From Raftsmen to Bargemen

Down the river came the wood that supplied the timber cove. Arthur Lower and numerous artists and illustrators have fixed the timber raft into Canadian iconography.¹ As Lower mentioned, the St. Lawrence raft trade began from

¹ The classic presentations are those of Arthur Lower, D.D. Calvin and Adam Shortt, a historian who, in 1902, actually rode a raft down the St. Lawrence. Lower, *Great Britain's Woodyard: British America and the Timber Trade, 1763-1867*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1973, pp. 201-213; D.D. Calvin, *Saga*

Vermont and the U.S. side of the St. Lawrence. The earliest account this author has found of taking a raft to Québec is an 1805 account of a voyage from Vermont.² The lumber barge, serving the Montréal and U.S. markets, through Vermont, brought about the decline of the timber raft. The movement of lumber on the Ottawa and St. Lawrence underwent a transformation from the 1860s to the 1880s. Work on the river took on a more industrial form as steam towing and the lumber barge replaced the labour intensive timber raft. This transition has not been well documented.

The U.S. rafting literature provides a useful context for this change.³ Among

of the St. Lawrence. Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1945; Adam Shortt, "Down the St. Lawrence on a Timber Raft," *Queen's Quarterly*, X:1 (July 1902), pp. 16-34. Lesser known is A.A. Calvin's 1930 master's thesis which includes original photographs taken on and beside a moving raft. There is an overlap between these photographs and some which appear in *Great Britain's Woodyard*, credited to Adam Shortt. Lower, writing forty years later may have been mistaken and the photographs may have originated with the Calvin family. A.A. Calvin's description of the rafts is at variance with Lower's on a number of minor points, dealing with dimensions. A.A. Calvin, "A General Survey of the Timber Trade. . . up to 1849. . .," Thesis No. 117383, Queens' University Library, 1930.

² H.N. Muller, "Floating a Lumber Raft to Quebec City, 1805: The Journal of Guy Catlin of Burlington," *Vermont History*, 39:2 (1971), pp. 116-124.

³ A comparative look at logs and rivers in the United States case is useful. Two good starting points are Thomas Cox's seminal discussion of a river improvement association and corresponding river, boom and mill workers strike response to attempts to limit wages, and Joseph Tonkin's chapter, "The Log Driver's and Raftsmen's War", about conflict underlying river use at the Williamsport Boom between 1846-57. Tonkin's raftsmen were small local shanty producers. Log driving represented, as he said in 1940, "mass production" and clear cutting. The one required a navigable river, the other, a river blocked by booms. In 1852 a boom

the volumes of nostalgia and chronologies of events and colorful individuals the Mississippi experience is worth considering. The Mississippi had a number of connections with the Ottawa. At least one company's employees were all Scotch-Canadians from the Ottawa or Saint Maurice.⁴ The Eau Claire Lumber Co. had Ottawa employees before moving to Alberta's Bow River, to become a key supplier for Calgary's urbanization.⁵ Ottawa raftsmen and rivermen brought with them terminology and a few pieces of equipment, such as the *bateaux*. The Eau

and log drive company brought in French-Canadians with their *bateaux* to drive loose logs to a sorting boom. The two modes of production clashed at a riverbend shooting in 1857 of three log drivers. The court ruling in favour of the log driving drew a modern response: logs were spiked. No similar conflict happened on the Ottawa because small scale production was structurally absent and riparian associations, or the unofficial owners of river systems, such as MacLaren, had State support. See: Thomas R. Cox, "Transition in the Woods: Log Drivers, Raftsmen, and the Emergence of Modern Lumbering in Pennsylvania." *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*. 104 (1980): pp. 345-364; Joseph Dudley Tonkin. *The Last Raft*. Harrisburg, Pa.: the author, 1940, pp. 99-111. Also useful: Walter Acheson Blair. *A Raft Pilot's Log; A History of the Great Rafting Industry on the Upper Mississippi, 1840-1915*. Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark, Co., 1930; Alfred Geer Hempstead. *The Penobscot Boom and the Development of the West Branch of the Penobscot River for Log Driving*. Orono, Me.: University of Maine Press, 1931; William Gerald Rector. *Log Transportation*. Glendale, Calif.: A. H. Clark Co., 1953. Less useful: Charles T. Curtis. *Rafting on the Delaware*. Ithaca, NY: De Witt Historical Society of Tompkins County, 1957; David Francis Magee. *Rafting on the Susquehanna: Papers Read Before the Lancaster County Historical Society, Friday November 5, 1920, XXIV, no. 9, pp. 193-202*; James Herbert Walker, ed. *Rafting Days in Pennsylvania*. Altoona, Pa.: Times-Tribune Co., 1922.

⁴ The Beef Slough Boom & Improvement Co. See: Walter Blair. *A Raft Pilot's Log*, p. 51.

⁵ Christopher Youse, "Eau Claire, The Company and the Community," *Alberta History*, 27:3 (1979): 1-6.

Claire rafts on the Chippewa were made up in a 24 *crib* size.⁶ Mississippi rafts had 60 cribs.⁷ But these Ottawa connections were far outweighed by the influence of steam technology: the paddle-wheeler. By 1863 rafting began to adapt to the paddlewheeler and crew size on Mississippi rafts dropped quickly. Such a transition, as we will see, took place in the Ottawa/Québec trade, but with a different technology, the steam tug and the barge.

What of the Ottawa rafts themselves? Lower notes the square rafts did differ from those found on the St. Lawrence, but he says nothing about the deal raft.⁸ While the sub-unit of the St. Lawrence raft was the scottish *dram*, meaning a measure of whiskey, on the Ottawa it was the *crib*. Neither MacLaren nor his cove manager ever used any of the terms listed by Lower, such as *drams*, *withes*, or *hundreds*. For MacLaren the *crib* was a primary unit, both a sub-unit of a raft, and a measure of sawmill production. In June of 1871 MacLaren noted with

⁶ The basic unit of a raft was the crib, a bundle of logs or layers of deals. A number of cribs were chained together to form rafts. A deal is lumber that is at least three inches thick, a board is thinner.

⁷ Walter Blair. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁸ A better source on the Ottawa rafts, particularly pre-1850, is the detailed examination by Sandra Gillis and the more general discussion of David Lee, but both focus on square timber. Sandra Gillis, *The Timber Trade of the Ottawa Valley, 1806-1854*. Ottawa: Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, 1975; and, David Lee, *Forest Products Industries in the Ottawa Valley, 1850-1925*. Ottawa: Historical Research & Records Unit, Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, 1985.

satisfaction that he was cutting a *crib* a day.⁹ His *crib* consisted of 2,000 deals, although in practise it was a few hundred short.¹⁰ Square timber rafts were two levels or tiers deep. Deal rafts were from ten to twelve tiers deep. The lower number was used when the summer waters were lower and the raft needed more clearance.

Raft construction required capital investment beyond the means of most small farmers. By the 1860s both square and deal rafts were wrapped by iron chains and ropes and carried anchors. MacLaren's rafts used four tons of chains, ropes and anchors, neither a common nor inexpensive item for small farmers.¹¹

⁹ "We are now sawing pretty well in mills making over one crib per day." This was faster than MacLaren expected and he wanted the raft crew sent back as quickly as possible from Québec. James MacLaren to William Cream, 24 June 1871, M-3-1-61. Industries James MacLaren Inc. Papers. Archives nationales du Québec, dépôt de l'Outaouais. [Hereafter all citations to this unique and extensive run of timber cove correspondence will be referred to simply by correspondent, date, and sequential item number.]

¹⁰ Based on averages from rafts where both the number of cribs and the number of deals appeared in correspondence. Examples: 11 cribs of 19,630 deals, average 1,784, James MacLaren to William Cream, 19 June 1867, M-1-4-54; 43 cribs of 67,695 deals, average 1,574, James MacLaren to William Cream, 15 June 1869, M-2-1-84; 25 cribs of 42,646 deals, average 1,705, James MacLaren to William Cream, 6 August 1869, M-2-1-141; 26 cribs of 43,251 deals, average 1,663, John A. Cameron to William Cream, 20 June 1874, M-5-1-75.

All rafts also included boards, in a ratio of one board for every 8-10 deals, (ex. 20,000 deals and 2,000 boards). They were probably cargo and/or used to layer or space the tiers. In a letter about 189 boards missing from raft, William Cream mentioned twenty loose boards on top he thought were used to build the usual shelters. William Cream to James MacLaren, 27 August 1879, M-8-2-66.

¹¹ W.M. Andrews to William Cream, 17 July 1879, M-8-2-155.

MacLaren's letters to Québec asking that the chains and rope be sent quickly back from Québec for use on the next raft imply he had only one set. His brother David MacLaren also had a set used on the rafts he sent from the Gatineau and Fitzroy Harbour, forty miles above Ottawa. In 1875 David wrote to have eight boom chains sent back to Arnprior by rail.¹² Credit, labour and expertise was not enough to enter the rafting trade. The 8,000 pounds of iron and rope were the insurance to the lender that their investment would reach its destination intact.

The rafts were also vessels for other goods. The white pine rafts (red pine was about 10 percent of the rafts) commonly carried non-floating cargo, hardwoods such as ash, maple, oak and tamarack, as well as cedar, firewood and boards for the Québec urban market. MacLaren's cove manager kept a separate firewood register, probably lost in his house fire in 1881.¹³ MacLaren had such concern for detail that he even inquired about the price for the raft's long sweep oars, used once and then sold in Québec.¹⁴

¹² David MacLaren, Fitzroy Harbor to William Cream, 15 March 1875, M-5-3-66.

¹³ William Cream to James MacLaren, 6 January 1883, M-12-1-3.

¹⁴ Even the lengths of the oars differed depending on the type of raft. Oars sold for one to one and a half shillings each, depending on whether they were for deal rafts or square timber rafts. William Cream to James MacLaren, 21 July 1866, M-1-3-16.

One man was crucial in the rafting process. Edward Willmet, referred to alternately as a resident of Carillon and Grenville, lived on the Ottawa River halfway between Buckingham and Montréal. He oversaw the construction of each raft and prepared the raft for the St. Lawrence at a place called Little River. MacLaren made several references to going there to meet Willmet and discuss the progress of the rafts. Willmet personally took each raft to Québec. Often MacLaren would send instructions to his Québec office that Willmet was to pay off the crew on arrival and return quickly with the gear. Other men were hired for the next trip. MacLaren may have found it cheaper to arrange work in exchange for passage down or he may have been thinking of saving the expense of bringing the crew back.

The first raft of the season, usually in the third week of May, was usually made up of culls, fourth grade deals unsuited to the Québec market. They were sent to Montréal for resaw by manufacturers who needed coarser grades, wagon and box makers rather than cabinetmakers. It is unclear precisely who was buying them, but from the earliest records in 1866 it is clear that several shipments of 30-40,000 deals had been sent to Montréal before Québec received a second raft.

The few lists of raft crews that survived, such as that in Table XII, show a

crew size for a deal raft of sixteen men, including a cook.¹⁵ On this raft, all had French names, and some may have been related, such as the Touchettes, Pierre, Napoleon and Esdras. Some may have been Natives, who were active taking rafts through rapids. When MacLaren's brother Henry drowned canoing a rapids in 1869, his companion "an Indian. . .was saved".¹⁶ The rafts themselves appear to have been safe workplaces for the crews. No injuries or loss of life are reported in any of the correspondence dealing with the three to six rafts sent down each season.

The rafts did have accidents. They became stuck in low water, were delayed by fog, or came apart in rapids or before heavy winds, and on one occasion rammed a ship in Québec harbour.¹⁷ That raft, a large one could have been broken into two sections at Cap Rouge above the crowded harbour, but that was

¹⁵ The crew size of sixteen is a more realistic number than the two square timber rafts Stevenson brought down in 1866, said to contain about thirty men each. Those rafts were probably carrying a number of shantymen riding their paycheck to market. James MacLaren to William Cream, 29 June 1866, M-1-3-86.

¹⁶ James MacLaren Co. to William Cream, 24 June 1869, M-2-1-79.

¹⁷ The raft, which was being towed by a steam tug, hit the *Julia* which was lying by the wharf. Only three cribs were broken and twelve deals lost. The ship's owners settled for \$80 in damages while MacLaren and Cream argued with the steam company over responsibility. The matter was settled quietly because of legal precedents and the fact that MacLaren's partners, McNaughton and Sincennes, had shares in the tug in question. See: William Cream to James MacLaren, 24 May 1869, M-2-1-189; William Cream to James MacLaren, 27 May 1869, M-2-1-188; James MacLaren to William Cream, 3 June 1869, M-2-1-70; William Cream to James MacLaren, 3 June 1869, M-2-1-186.

not done to keep towage fees low. Rafts which wintered over before reaching Québec also tended to come apart more easily. Willmet complained of one:

It is in very bad order old rafting and not well at that men is scarce I cant get on as well as I would like it will take me all week before I can get out in the St. Lawrence. The tow company charges high here. There is oppositions Boats Ferdinand Begin has one called Lord Elgin I believe she is a good Boat.¹⁸

Willmet asked William Cream, the cove manager to strike a deal for the towing or to send Begin to the raft to deal with him.

Towing costs were watched closely as the owners of tugs formed an association to set rates. MacLaren and other timbermen kept tabs on the association, but not till 1882 did

Table XII
Payroll, No. 6 Deal Raft,
6 October 1869

Samuel Dejend	\$33.90
Felix Rose	56.30
Napoleon Touchette	19.93
Pierre Touchette	19.16
Laurence Rose	67.00
Baptiste Chartrand	33.88
Seraphin Brislos	42.35
Pierre Quarie	24.53
Magloire Blemuer	25.99
Bargil Degemais	39.96
Esrau Touchette	12.75
Leon Fauche	16.67
Augustin Condin	14.28
Pierre Wrte	15.57
Bazil Charlebois	17.20
N. Sepiot	6.00
	\$445.47
Edward Willmett	25.00

¹⁸ Edward Willmet to William Cream, 12 June 1870, M-2-3-105.

MacLaren consider buying his own tug.¹⁹ The cost of total wages paid for men on the raft dropped significantly with steam towing. In 1867 a nineteen man crew on a deal raft received a total of \$461.01 and the tow boat's bill of \$280 was countered with an offer of \$260.²⁰ By 1882 the steamboat Pilot needed only \$150 to pay off all the men (total unknown), except two he was keeping. Towing ranged from \$210 for a deal raft and \$280 if the bulkier timber came with it.²¹ These examples suggest that total costs had dropped by half, all of it labour (from \$721 to \$360).

While steam made the system more reliable and lowered costs, the major change was due to the lumber barge. Barges weakened Québec's dominance in the commodity chain's transportation system. Air drying deals was the concern. Doing this in Québec tied up limited storage space at the cove during the shipping season, particularly if the deal raft arrived in mid-summer. Using barges the air drying could take place at the mill and unlike rafts the barge kept the

¹⁹ "I am informed that there is a combination amongst the steam boat men and that they are going to charge very high for towage. Mr. A. Thomson informed me that he thinks an arrangement can be reached with them for the season by which they will allow a considerable discount off the regular charges, he (Mr. Thomson) says that Mr. McGreavy is the man to see. I am told that they are going to charge as high as \$4 for a single crib, which would be \$8 for double" A discount of 7 1/2 percent was arranged. James MacLaren to William Cream, 20 May 1870, M-2-3-65.

²⁰ William Cream to James MacLaren, 24 October 1867, M-1-4-138.

²¹ William Cream to James MacLaren, 11 July 1882, M-11-2-66.

wood dry during shipping. In the early 1870s much of the lumber was rafted, but by the 1880s barges replaced many rafts. No figures have been located for the shift to mill drying, but there is extensive evidence in the photographic record.

Barges set their own constraints on the trade in Québec. The low wharves and shallow beaches that favoured rafting timber were unsuited for barge traffic. William Cream wrote MacLaren in 1878 that "Bargemen not willing to discharge at Cove as their vessels would have to ground every Tide."²² Barge Agents "grumbled" at the delays the coves cost their dispatching.²³ Ships could be loaded during the day from bateaux or rafts, regardless of tide, as both floated together.²⁴ However barges unloading at wharves were tide dependant: "men on Barges discharged as the Tides suited, Sometimes through the night."²⁵ Cullers would not work at night. Firstly they needed good light to visually grade lumber

²² William Cream to James MacLaren, 24 May 1879, M-8-2-23.

²³ Cream told of two barges of deals from Buckingham which were there for several days "but owing to low tide they could not get to wharf to discharge. . .The Agent of the Barges has been grumbling at the delay, but it could not be avoided unless we sent Bateaux to take portion of Deals but this would have been expensive and caused another handling of the Deals which is objectionable." William Cream to James MacLaren, 9 October 1882, M-11-2-43.

²⁴ The Québec bateaux were small independent sailing boats which carried the dry deals out to the waiting ships. All appear to have had French-Canadian owners. Loading square timber and large deals was the job of the Ship Labourers Benevolent Society, dealt with in the next chapter.

²⁵ William Cream to James MacLaren, 25 May 1882, M-11-2-21.

and secondly, as skilled labour, they may have objected to working nights. That meant deals could be counted but not graded when unloaded. This was another feature which led to centralization of quality control at the mill, not the cove.

Despite problems, barges loaded quickly at Buckingham by a few men with a wooden slide, and dispatched two a month to Québec, were more efficient than cumbersome, labour expensive rafts, with unpredictable arrival schedules. By 1882 the use of barges was changing other aspects of staffing at the cove:

I note that you are loading Barges for Quebec and that we may expect some Deals next week. . .let me know what you intend sending Deals cut this season -- in Rafts or by Barges and if you expect to have any Timber in Quebec this year. If the Deals come in Barges and we have no Timber there will be little done in Booms, and consequently little work for Boomsmen and I will arrange accordingly. To enable me to give men who are waiting on an answer I would like to hear from you.²⁶

While the few boomsmen received less work, the carriers, paid by the piece, had a different view of the transition to barges. The issue centred on the combination of weight and speed. Rafted deals arrived wet and dirty from being immersed in water. Barged lumber, being dry, weighed less and did not need hand or machine washing. Being lighter, it was easier and faster to pile.

MacLaren's Québec carriers struck in 1882 for a premium to do raft work; they preferred the barges at the neighbouring Gilmour cove.²⁷ That August, Cream

²⁶ William Cream to James MacLaren, 5 May 1882, M-11-2-17.

²⁷ "I cannot say how long it will take to land the Deals. On Tuesday the Carriers Struck for an advance of 25 cents per Hundred. Up till then we paid \$1

wrote that barges posed no problem if they arrived before the timber raft was finished as "it is easier to find men to work at them than at Raft Deals, latter is laborous work this weather."²⁸ Barges, worked in day and night shifts, became an increasingly standardized unit of work, and carriers lives increasingly took on the shape of those of modern industrial longshoreman.

Nothing has been written about the bargeman, who replaced the raftsmen. No testimony has been located for those who worked the large barges from Buckingham or elsewhere on the Ottawa. One voice was found in the Québec testimony of Joseph Desnoyers to the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labor and Capital. Desnoyers states he began as a lumber bargeman around 1875. Depending on the season he earned from a low of \$140 to \$300. Before working for Dobell, he quit work for one Agent who he felt cheated him, not directly on money owed, but more subtly by assigning him bad loads. He began working for the Dobell lumber company, running chartered barges, but was not happy with matters. He described his work:

Q. --The Agent was Mr. Dobell's agent?

A. --Yes sir. I can say, for those masters, that all they can do to ruin the lower class, they do with all their hearts. Firstly: they send the barges

from today we have to pay \$1.25 Since raft arrived Gilmours have received a large quantity in Barges which the men prefer working at, being lighter. There are a good many men employed at Railway works in neighbourhood, which helps to make them scarce." William Cream to James MacLaren, 20 July 1882, M-11-2-49.

²⁸ William Cream to James MacLaren, 5 August 1882, M-11-2-27.

down from Ottawa, alongside the ships, and the laborers are obliged to work on them; and for us, when the time for barges is over, and they have to pay "demurage" at the office, they send us with barges, and we load planks in them, and sometimes we are four or five days, and not one cent.

Q. --Is there not an understanding among bargemen? Are they not organized in a Union?

A. -- No sir.

Q. --When you work, at what hour do you begin in the morning? At what hour do you take your dinner, and at what hour do you finish at night?

A.--Some mornings we begin very early, there are times we begin work at midnight, loading at the wharves, and we begin alongside the ships whenever the men on the ships begin.

Q.--And when you begin at midnight at what hour do you finish?

A.--When we take on two thousand, or two thousand one hundred, when they come fast, two men working, we can finish in two hours and a half²⁹

After the close of navigation, he stayed in Québec for the winter and went out of his way to describe how he survived when the river was frozen. He worked cutting ice, not trees. Packed in stone cellars or earth pits, ice was the primary source of refrigeration for the summer. Ice cutting was an eight hour day for a gang of from 6-10 men cutting and hauling "a league and a quarter" from town. It paid about 3 to 3 1/2 shillings a day, those who split ice by axe getting an additional shilling. Farmers who brought horses to haul received \$1.50 for themselves and \$1 for the horse. At noon they lit a stove in the small ice

²⁹ Testimony of Joseph Desnoyers, Bargeman. *Report of the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labor and Capital in Canada. Evidence -- Quebec.* Ottawa: Queen's Printer, A. Sencal, 1889, pp. 815-819.

cabin but often ate their food cold. Accidents were not common, but although not asked, Desnoyers pointed out to the Commission that when it was dangerous "on the ice we have to take the place of horses. We take the place of horses in drawing ice."³⁰ To Joseph Desnoyers the winter world of the bargeman had no dignity equivalent to the romantic figure of the raftsman or shantyman. Out on the frozen river, he knew that his life was worth less than a farm animal's.

II Work in a Timber Cove

The timber cove itself is a curious construction, having some similarities to the shanty, although it is found beside an urban centre. James MacLaren decided during the winter of 1865-66 to set up his own timber cove in Québec City, to ship to the British market. By having a cove he could control the timing of his wood's entry into the market. Others had tried to by-pass Québec's fluctuating, seasonal prices by sending their timber directly to Liverpool, only to find that freight and charges, both for shipping and later for unloading and storage in Liverpool had consumed up to half the gross sales. A cove would transfer the shipping costs to the overseas buyer.

The first thing MacLaren needed was a manager to advise him on choosing a

³⁰ Testimony of Joseph Desnoyers, Bargeman. *Report of the Royal Commission on the Realitions of Labor and Capital in Canada. Evidence -- Quebec.* Ottawa: Queen's Printer, A. Sencal, 1889, p. 817.

cove. The master of the cove had to be someone who knew wood as a product and was experienced in the intricacies of trans-Atlantic timber trade and shipping. Running a cove involved hiring and supervising employees, banking and legal affairs such as contracts, insurance and law suits, the receiving, preparation, storage, sales, and shipping of inventory, dealing with Ship Masters, other brokers, and Crown agents, as well as generally keeping MacLaren informed of the state of shipping and markets in Québec, London and Liverpool.

Master of the Cove: William Cream

MacLaren found the right man in William Cream. Their sixteen year relationship is preserved in a remarkable run of both sides of an almost weekly correspondence. Cream began to manage MacLaren's affairs in March 1866. He received \$1,000, drawn at \$80 a month with the balance at season's end. This included the use of a new house at the cove for the shipping season, roughly May to November. Each day he made a trip to Québec at mid-day, at MacLaren's expense, to deal with MacLaren's other business affairs. Cream's advice and experience allowed MacLaren to concentrate on his Ottawa operations.

William Cream had ten years experience working for the Gilmours at Wolfe's Cove.³¹ He appears to have been handling some of MacLaren's timber, selling

³¹ William Cream to James MacLaren, 30 November 1866, M-1-3-45; and 9 April 1867, M-1-4-110.

some spars and arranging for the landing at Victoria Cove of some cribs of timber moored at Bridgewater Cove. MacLaren and Cream spent a morning at Victoria Cove watching the Thomson's Co. operations, with an eye on leasing part of their Cove.³² Cream suggested:

you could (as I suggested the morning that we went to Victoria Cove) contract with parties at Home for your Deals & Timber at a price delivered here you would have the profit the Merchants here have off the Lumber & could draw for the amount of invoice when the Bills of Lading were signed by the Capt. but this is a very different business from Shipping on consignment. I was informed recently of a person that had shipped a considerable quantity of 3rd qly. Pine Deals which were sold at a price that left him \$12.00 per 100 Quebec Standard after paying charges.³³

They decided to lease part of Victoria Cove while they negotiated a lease of West Indian Cove. Cream hired foremen, shippers, cullers, and carriers. Across the river on St. Peter street in Québec he opened a two-room office, with a small clerical staff. It was in the same building as Allan Gilmour & Co. and across the street from the offices of Ross & Co. Cream negotiated with the river tugs to call at the cove twice a day as they went past. He also hired a nightwatchman to guard against timber theft and fires and a foreman to run the booms.

³² William Cream to James MacLaren, 13 November 1865, M-1-2-5.

³³ The St. Petersburg deal was the industry standard and the conversion rate, according to Cream was 72 Quebec deals to 100 St. Petersburg Standards. Freight costs in Quebec for moving air dried deals from the cove to a vessel by bateau were calculated on a rate per 100. William Cream to James MacLaren, 13 November 1865, M-1-2-5.

Putting out and taking in the booms marked the start and end of the season. In Québec in April everyone watched the state of the ice-bridge linking the two sides of the St. Lawrence. If it held, navigation season would be late, if it gave way arrangements to open the cove were quickened. Occasionally a complication arose, such as 1882, when the Ottawa opened for navigation before Québec, creating a rush of rafts and barges from upriver coinciding with a rush of empty timber ships coming in through the now cleared ice packs of the St. Lawrence. The season closed some time in the second half of November, when continued operations were a day to day affair. If wood remained in the water, the odds are that it would stay there for the winter, slowly becoming ice-bound, water-stained and then creaking and perhaps splitting under the pressure of ice. Deals could no longer be washed because the water froze. Any booms left in the water would be unlikely to be found in the spring. Inventory was taken and the books prepared to be sent up to Buckingham for review, but business did not come to a halt.

Cream and MacLaren then began their winter partnership.³⁴ Each winter as the Cove closed British buyers made one last round of December and January purchases, for spring shipment, before they left for home via Portland, Maine.

³⁴ MacLaren had asked Cream to lend him \$4,000 when he was hired, and Cream offered \$2,000-3,000. William Cream to James MacLaren, 17 April 1866, M-1-3-3.

Cream and MacLaren also looked for winter investments, including unsold timber rafts. Cream's preference was investing in winter stave production for export. MacLaren looked westward at Chicago grain and pork prices, considering buying for spring delivery or resale. Cream made at least one trip to Chicago on behalf of other Québec merchants attracted by pork speculation, a practise they deplored but sent Cream to investigate for opportunities. MacLaren and Cream also promoted the Bank of Ottawa's stock and currency, using it to pay the men. Cream even tried to interest MacLaren in opening a bank in Little Rock, Arkansas, where Cream often wintered.

At times MacLaren and Cream's joint account functioned quietly. MacLaren was a partner with John A. Cameron in the North Nation Mills.³⁵ Their stock of deals wintering at the Québec cove were sold, to MacLaren. He neglected to tell Cameron that Cream, who received a cove manager commission on the sale, and was billing Cameron for winter storage on the deals, was MacLaren's silent

³⁵ MacLaren was a partner with W.C. Edwards and Cameron. He told Cream about the deal in the following letter: "made a purchase along with another party of Gilmours of North Nation Mills and I wanted some money to pay them down - - did not like to cheque on Bank until I was sure that the money was there. . .The North Nation. . .falls into the Ottawa about 20 miles lower down than this place and the Limits for said mill on the North Nation joins ours on this river. We do not get possession of their mills until the fall and as a matter of course will have no lumber from them until next season. . .This Company is not Interested in the purchase of these Mills, but only my self in connection with Cameron & Edwards of Thurso. They are new and good mills and do about 2/3 the business that we do here." James MacLaren to William Cream, 21 May 1868, M-1-5-86.

partner in buying the deals.³⁶ This was all quite legal and gave MacLaren the potential to make a profit three times on the same transaction.

As MacLaren and Cream aged, their relationship became less amicable. Cream's respiratory problems grew worse because of winter in Québec. He travelled south to Little Rock or various health springs as soon as the season ended. MacLaren, who believed in knowing and dictating what was to be done about every detail of his business, began to clash with Cream, who was just as stubborn. The relationship ended over MacLaren's insistence on receiving not just his share of the profit in the joint account timber raft venture, but also full interest on the capital, which Cream saw as a double profit, taken from Cream's earnings. This brought on one of MacLaren's rare bursts of temper:

neither was the work done by you but by me and at my expense -- it was done in my office, with my stationary and other appliances. I paid you for your time when you were doing the work, and if the timber had been all my own. . .it would have been your duty to have done the selling and other work contracted. . .I will not allow money to be taken in this way without leave with impunity.³⁷

Cream held his ground: "In a recent letter you speak of me being your servant etc. I dont think I can be considered such, on joint account matters."³⁸ Both

³⁶ See: James MacLaren to William Cream, 30 December 1870, M-2-3-8; James MacLaren to William Cream, 17 November 1871, M-3-1-19; James MacLaren to William Cream, 21 February 1870, M-2-3-42a.

³⁷ James MacLaren to William Cream, 26 December 1882, M-11-2-53.

³⁸ William Cream to James MacLaren, 2 January 1883, M-12-1-1.

agreed to settle the matter without outsiders, through the arbitration of a Ross family member. This incident, together with emotional and physical wear and tear, led Cream to end the relationship at the close of the 1882 season, leaving his son Daniel as his successor. So ended a rather long business relationship.

Skilled Workers: Foremen and Cullers

MacLaren used the expertise of many skilled individuals. Expert shippers and cullers were the most difficult to find. Literacy, close knowledge of lumber grades and wood volumes and strong mathematical skills were prerequisites for their work. They knew what was in the water and what was piled in the cove. If piled on land the Shipper had to know if the wood was properly washed, trimmed, and well enough seasoned to sell or ship. Some buyers bought wood but did not immediately remove it, which meant calculating wintering charges or summer booming charges, all part of arranging the movement of large volumes of wood through a finite volume of space. All of these were management problems of a broader nature than the mechanics of receiving an arriving timber raft into the booms, a deal raft onto the beach, or a barge to the wharf. The Shipper Foreman also dealt with jobbers and piece workers and appeared as witnesses to Cream on numerous employment contracts. The wrong choice in hiring these men had profound financial implications on day to day operations and

profitability.

The first Shipper, Foreman, Culler was John Quinn, a former Thomsons culler, working for \$500 for the season. Quinn held Cream to the letter of his contract when MacLaren's first rafts were late. He refused to take work at the Superintendent's Office during the delay. Nor could Cream lease him to Thomson's cove. Their rafts were also late and they had their men build a wharf to keep them occupied.³⁹ Cream put Quinn to work dressing spars. On another occasion Cream confided to MacLaren that if Quinn knew a raft had been shipped before the Crown Dues were paid he might go to the Supervisor of Cullers, and this information was kept from him.⁴⁰

At the end of the first season the work was spread between the lease at Victoria Cove and a larger location at West Indian Cove. Quinn was in charge of one, while Cream tried to hurry work on at the other. It was only when he met him on a road that he learned Quinn had closed up several days earlier, leaving wood in the water for the winter.⁴¹ The next season Thomas Patry

³⁹ William Cream to James MacLaren, 26 May 1866, M-1-3-2.

⁴⁰ "Mr. Ross disposed of some of the lot at Cap Rouge & if Quinn learns this it is probable that he may report it to the Department." William Cream to James MacLaren, 28 November 1866, M-1-3-7.

⁴¹ "I was very dissatisfied with the men stopping below so soon I did not know they were going to stop till I was on the road down the day we finished here, when I met Quinn who informed me that there had been nothing done for 2 days & that every thing was laid up for the winter." William Cream to James

replaced Quinn as Shipper, Foreman, Culler, assisted by Theodore Sawyer.⁴²

Shippers and foremen came from the ranks of the cullers and worked very closely with them. Many cullers worked for the Supervisor of Culler's Office, measuring the volume, not the quality, as rafts arrived in Québec. Crown Dues had to be paid before shipping timber out of the port. They also graded for quality, using rules in the Culler's Act and issuing certificates. However most firms preferred to keep private control of culling. Interpretation of the rules allowed a slight shifting of the grade to maximize profits. In 1882 the industry grew alarmed when the government Culler's attempted to monopolize culling:

The Cullers in Supervisor's Office have taken steps to compel manufacturers to have their Deals culled by former. There was a meeting of nearly all the Quebec manufacturers here yesterday and it was unanimously agreed to resist the attempt, and to make the action raised against Bem[?] a test case and jointly defray the cost of resisting it, meantime they agreed to take legal advice and have a meeting afterward. I said that as the present system had been pretty generally followed for upwards of 30 years, if the matter was brought before the Government by Deputation or Petition, latter might stop proceedings although the action is raised by the Cullers. I believe the Government is to pay the costs of action raised, or of others that may be raised; it is reputed that the Deputy Minister of Justice has instructed the Lawyers to proceed against every one that employs men outside the Office. So far as I know the views of the Trade none want to have their Deals culled by men from the Office.⁴³

MacLaren, 28 November 1866, M-1-3-7.

⁴² Patry received \$50 a month, with a bonus to make it \$500 at season's close and Sawyer was paid \$400, at \$40 a month with the balance at season's end.

⁴³ William Cream to James MacLaren, 31 August 1882, M-11-2-1.

MacLaren believed one culler's overly strict interpretation of the Act had quietly cost him \$9-10,000 in one season.⁴⁴

As the skill was learned through years of daily observation these workers were indispensable. Firms went to great length to accommodate a good culler and the cullers could pick and choose where they worked. Patrick Malone, hearing of the sub-lease of part of Victoria Cove, applied for a timber culler's position, partly because the location more convenient to his home than another offer.⁴⁵ Cream negotiated with one culler who offered to work by the day at a high wage, instead of the season. Cream would not have to pay for rainy days or waiting for late rafts and the culler could "have the privilege of stopping on his farm till he puts in the crops."⁴⁶ There were also non-wage benefits negotiated:

Last Fall he told me that he had £60 for the season with a Free House & Firewood & I believe this is about what he would have as £40 @ £45 with Free House & Wood is the customary Wages for ordinary Boomsman. The Cullers at Wolfes Cove had £80 for the season but had neither House or Firewood & he left because they would not advance his salary.⁴⁷

Even cullers with drinking problems got special treatment. Cream sent a

⁴⁴ James MacLaren to William Cream, 4 January 1869, M-2-1-119.

⁴⁵ William Cream to James MacLaren, 8 March 1866, M-1-3-40.

⁴⁶ William Cream to James MacLaren, 2 April 1867, M-1-4-95.

⁴⁷ The "advance" was paid early in the season, allowing creditors to be paid or cash purchases to be made for the farm. William Cream to James MacLaren, 2 April 1867, M-1-4-95.

culler, George Couture, up to Wakefield, but David MacLaren finally told him to leave after his prolonged drinking. Knowing this, James MacLaren still said:

I think it would be better to get Couture for a Culler I believe he is a good Culler although he is a little addicted to drink. I think T.[Thomsons] & Co. gave him 6/ per day last summer. They agreed with him for so much if he kept sober all summer, and if not so much less, he has been once or twice the worse of his glass this winter, but on the whole I think it would be as well for us to have a culler that has been with T. & Co. so as to cull our deals a near as we can in the same way that they do theirs.⁴⁸

Despite his drinking, Couture's \$360 seasonal contract was repeatedly renewed.

In 1870 the contract contained the provision "if I am absent from work either from Drinking or otherwise the time. . . is to be deducted from the balance coming to me". Two years later it was restructured still paying \$6 a week, but if drunk his season bonus would be forfeit. In 1875 an additional \$20 bonus was added if he stayed sober for the season. Drinking on the job, as we shall see, was also a problem among jobbers, especially at season's end.

Cullers from Québec were constantly asked for by the Ottawa Valley sawmills. Louis Vermette went twice to the North Nation Mill on the Ottawa to cull deals in the summer of 1882. When North Nation could not get him on another occasion W.P. Malone was "engaged by the Rockland business to come

⁴⁸ James MacLaren to William Cream, 7 March 1867, and James MacLaren to William Cream, 23 March 1867, M-1-4-49. Cream observed "last summer he was perfectly steady, but after the New Year I was informed that he sometimes tiddled and I am sorry to learn by your letter that he has been at it since he went up." William Cream to James MacLaren, 14 March 1866, M-1-3-45.

here after he got done measuring at the Gatineau and cull for us until they [probably the Edwards mill] begin cutting deals"⁴⁹ In 1883 another Vermette, Pierre, appears in the contract book. Cullers may have passed their occupation on to their sons, certainly it could not be learned except from another culler.

Culling began to shift between the cove and the sawmill. By the turn of the century it would become almost exclusively a sawmill occupation. Pierre Vermette's 1883 contract states he is to grade either at the cove or in Buckingham. As early as 1866, MacLaren, running both a day and a night shift in the Buckingham mill, relied on Cream's Québec cullers to provide the feedback to improve the quality of MacLaren's product:

I am glad that you are taking notice of the defects in the Deals, we have not got any good cullers here, and they are often careless, and at night let deals pass that should not go down, I am at them all the time to try and make things better and hope that you will find an improvement in the third raft.⁵⁰

Increasingly, as the focus of shipping moved from the cove to the mill site, so too would the location of culling, later known as lumber grading.

What exactly did cullers and shippers deal with? An example is found in a sale from the summer of 1867, involving most of the variables they juggle: quality

⁴⁹ John A. Cameron & Co. to William Cream, 12 June 1882, M-11-3-51, 8 May 1882, M-11-3-63, 17 June 1882, M-11-3-48, 21 August 1882, M-11-3-25, and 25 August 1882, M-11-3-24. Also: William Cream to James MacLaren, 9 May 1882, M-11-2-22, 31 May 1882, M-11-2-14.

⁵⁰ James MacLaren to [William Cream], 28 July 1866, M-1-3-78.

or grade, width, thickness, length, volume of wood and price. In August Sharples agreed to buy 50,000 Québec deals in the usual complex manner in which lumber is sold: 37,000 of the dry floated pine deals were to come off the first three rafts, the balance off the fourth. The first three would be dry enough to ship overseas in the fall and the fourth raft would winter over, to get the high prices paid for the first wood shipped out next spring.

Next the contract specified 36-40% of the deals should be of the first quality, the balance of the second, and no more than 10% should be third grade. Length was also specified, no more than 8% of any of the deals should be short, 10 or 11 foot lengths, and no more than 13% of the lengths could be more than 1 inch less than a foot. The price agreed per Québec hundred was \$66 for the first grade, \$44 for the second and \$22 for the third. The shipping and culling charges were to be paid equally and the culler was to be a neutral, from the Supervisor of Cullers Office. They were to be paid for in ninety day notes as each lot was piled on Sharples Wharf. Cream kept the option of increasing both the number of firsts to 50% and the thirds to 20%, which he could do by recutting the seconds, in order to move as much of the lumber off the cove as possible, to make space for next spring's arrivals.⁵¹ It was a typical sale and its details reflect the need of shipper, culler and seller to shuffle the variables of

⁵¹ William Cream, 14 August 1866, M-1-3-20, William Cream to James MacLaren Co., Buckingham, 20 August 1866, M-1-3-22.

length and quality, as well as time of delivery. The ability to work with this matrix of variables still lies at the heart of the lumber industry today.

Contract Labour: Jobbers and Carriers

The occupation of most of the cove's labour force was that of carrier, contracted through a jobber. They were paid at piece rates, per hundred, with a negotiated amount paid in advance. The jobbers hired small work gangs of five or six carriers, and the number of gangs fluctuating according to need. In 1868 a jobber agreed to do "Washing Landing & Piling" for \$1.40 per hundred, "Shipping" for 40 cents per hundred and "Cross cutting" or butting a piece to a shorter, but higher quality length at 50 cents per hundred. One jobber furnished all the buckets and brooms for washing the timber, but insisted Cream's day labourers do the time-consuming work of taking off the raft's deckload of firewood & boards for the local market. Cream agreed, as "we must have a few men by the day to attend to the Bateaux & to be on the spot in case of a storm".⁵² Sometimes contracts were signed with groups of four or five individuals for washing, butting and piling. These small work units were of a similar scale to those of the lumber shanty.

⁵² The danger of a storm, particularly the east gales of fall, lay in the breaking and scattering of booms, timber, deal rafts and cribs. William Cream to James MacLaren, 2 April 1867, M-1-4-95.

Using the tide, the raftsmen beached the rafts. Landing involved gently beaching just enough of the raft on the sloping beach to hold it while the raft was disassembled and deals taken ashore by carriers or square timber guided into the holding booms by local boomsmen. Often the beach had to be prepared before landing, or repaired by day labourers afterwards.⁵³ The ropes and massive raft chains were sent back by tow boat, regular steamer or sometimes by rail, for the next raft.⁵⁴ Any discharged raftsmen crossed the river to Cream's St. Peter street office and had their accounts settled and were paid off. There was some opportunity but little time for drinking and carousing before returning. One raft arrived on the tide at 5 a.m. and the crew left Québec on the 4 p.m. steamer.⁵⁵

Over the next two weeks the jobber's men disassembled each 10 to 12 tier crib, in all some 60-120,000 deals in a raft. Each deal was washed by men and boys with the steam pump's hose and brooms, culled, counted and carried a short distance inland to be piled. The preference was to get as many piled early in the season as possible, in order to take advantage of the hot summer months for

⁵³ Cream said upon the arrival of the second raft of the 1866 season that: "I am very glad it has got in as there was nothing to do except a little shipping and doing some repairs on the part of the Beach where it has to be landed." William Cream to James MacLaren Co., Buckingham, 24 August 1866, M-1-3-24.

⁵⁴ W.M. Andrews to William Cream, 17 July 1879, M-8-2-155.

⁵⁵ William Cream to James MacLaren, 12 August 1869, M-2-1-165.

drying. Seasoning prior to shipping decreased weight, reduced spoilage, and increased value. Deals spent from two to four months air-drying in the summer sun.

Piling deals at the cove differed from the sawmill. At the cove space was at a premium. On one occasion James MacLaren suggested to Cream that his piling was terrible.⁵⁶ He objected to putting cross pieces in the piles and wanted them piled with a slope, to keep the rain off. It drew this response from Cream:

I suppose you pile by having in the case of 3 inch Deals, two men to lift each Deal and put it in its place on the pile but it is different at a Cove, where there may be 40 piles or some of which there may be 50 dropped in 30 minutes and others on which there may not be 50 on a day, with 2 men and a Boy to do the whole piling and make very small wages at 15 cents per 100 pieces -- the rate we are at present paying.⁵⁷

Cream noted none of the Québec coves piled as the mill did, on the slope (probably because of danger in such closed quarters), but offering to put sloped rain covering on top.

Square timber rafts received different treatment. They were not landed as quickly, remaining afloat inside the protection of the cove's booms. Split or

⁵⁶ James MacLaren to William Cream, 8 October 1879, M-8-2-100.

⁵⁷ The boy was probably placing the spacing strips across the piles, between each layer lowered by the men. This allowed air to flow around each piece and stabilized the pile structurally. Improper stripping resulted in unstable piles which could crush anyone caught between them. William Cream to James MacLaren, 11 October 1879, M-8-2-45.

damaged ends of deals or square timber would be butted or hewed. Lower comments that in some cases sawn marks on the ends of timbers would be concealed by careful axe-work, to suit the custom of the English market.⁵⁸ If they had to winter over they would be "moulinetted", piled in square tiers ashore.

The cove also had a steam engine. The idea seems to have come from the larger firms, Gilmour and Hamilton, both of which used hoses from steam engines mounted on scows to wash the deals as they came off the rafts. The rafts picked up stones, grit and mud, which stained the wood, obscuring defects from the culler, and damaged the saws. Workers used brooms to scrub deals, but hoses did a better and faster job. MacLaren and Cream agreed that presentation influenced sales, and their goal was to establish a product and reputation equal to the larger firms.

Costly, about \$1,200 to \$1,500, the engine was a major investment and not an item that could be imported from England for their specialized purpose. Cream wrote:

Of course we can go on as we did last summer -- washing by brooms but the Deals will never have the same appearance as they would if washed by a Pump and in the Fall when the weather is cold it is almost impossible to get Boys to wash.⁵⁹

MacLaren found an engine in Montréal for \$850. It included both a pump for

⁵⁸ Lower, *Great Britain's Woodyard*, "private information", p. 225.

⁵⁹ William Cream to James MacLaren, 14 March 1866, M-1-3-45.

washing deals and a pulley for running saws.⁶⁰ The saws allowed a low grade deal to be upgraded by trimming some defects out of it -- split ends, checking, knots, and wane.⁶¹ Cream wrote that the engine had been of great use in a putting out a small fire, but had produced the spark that caused the fire.⁶²

Non-union Strikes

The cove was not subject to any workers' association and so not "organized" in the traditional trade unionist sense of the word. But rules written and unwritten were part of the workplace, and so also was strike action, involving very small groups of men. Wages, conditions of work and control of hiring, when it reduced worker's total number of days, could trigger job action.

MacLaren and the other employers resisted attempts to form cove workers' associations, or unions, but with success in name only. In 1871 MacLaren, worried about a permanent cove workers' association, told Cream:

⁶⁰ The 15 horsepower engine was built by E.E. Gilbert and had a three by fourteen foot boiler. James MacLaren to William Cream, 3 December 1866, M-1-3-64.

⁶¹ Wane is the absence of wood down all or part of length of an edge. It reduces the number of full size boards that can be cut out of the large piece.

⁶² William Cream to James MacLaren, 25 May 1871, M-3-1-112. MacLaren's worried not about the \$40 damages but about legal liability: "the present loss is not much but if all Gilmour's Deals at our place burned up it would be a different matter, but in Law it will be the same, and in right also". James MacLaren to William Cream, 27 May 1871, M-3-1-68.

I saw Mr. Robert Hamilton on the boat the other night, and I see he will do all he can to keep down any society of men that may be formed to try and control your cove hands. I think it is likely that you will not have any more trouble for the present.⁶³

However such a front failed to limit wages in the strike of 1874. That year Cream did not want to pay the asking rate of 3/6 per 100 deals, but he was a victim of a larger neighbouring firm's tight shipping schedule:

Gilmour's people who are on the same position with the men require the Deals & I fear they will yield to the men, and if they do we will have to do so also: what the men ask is equal to an advance of 46% on last years wages.⁶⁴

MacLaren wrote back, advising a combination against the men's combination:

I should think that if you and Mr. Gilmour would take a stand at some fair price and both hold to it along with Hamilton Brothers that the men would have to come to your terms, but it will be much better if you would act together. If one gives in there would be little chance for others but give in also. Should you have to pay an Extra high rate this spring for a time, you better not bind yourself for any length of time, as we should be able to get the price down after a while. I cannot understand how men should expect more wages for carrying this season, when business of all kinds is so very dull, and wages are falling all over the country.⁶⁵

Gilmour's gave in, and so in turn did William Cream. James MacLaren wrote that while he was sorry to hear of the outcome, he knew Cream had no choice.

⁶³ James MacLaren to William Cream, 10 June 1871, M-3-1-44.

⁶⁴ William Cream to James MacLaren, 23 May 1874, M-19 Letterbook 170, 13 novembre 1868 au 1 septembre 1877, p. 685.

⁶⁵ James MacLaren to William Cream, 26 may 1874, M-5-1-60.

In the next sentence he told Cream to hire a large number of men as he intended to send deals down from the Ottawa at a fast rate.⁶⁶ The price for his labour component for the season had been set and the matter was no longer important. Cream followed MacLaren's advice about the length of contract and by mid-season, after the initial rush of ships had left, Cream was able to hire at a lower rate.

Strikes and withdrawals of services by carriers occurred on at least eight occasions, in the month of July 1866, 1867, and 1882, in August of 1869, 1879, and 1882, and in September of 1866 and 1869. Twice, both in late May of 1874 and 1877, men did not strike but made strong demands for increased advances against the work they had started for the season. The first reference to a strike is set against the background of the July 1866 Ship's Carpenter's strike in England. That strike depressed the market and sales just as the first Québec timber was reaching there. Cream wrote: "We have had another Strike among the Deal Carriers since Mr. MacLaren left, but hope that we will have no further trouble having got another jobber to do the work."⁶⁷ As the leased cove filled up, the carriers objected to having to carry the deals so far to the overflow piling

⁶⁶ James MacLaren to William Cream, 30 May 1874, M-5-1-62.

⁶⁷ William Cream to James MacLaren, 21 July 1866, M-1-3-16.

area, but Cream quickly found another jobber to replace the striking men.⁶⁸

MacLaren wrote back: "I hope you may have no more strikes amongst your deal carriers, but if you have, never take the Same lot again if you can possible help it."⁶⁹ However in September, as the No. 3 raft arrived it happened again: "this morning the men struck wanting more wages and I expect that I shall have to look out for another Jobber, which I am looking after today."⁷⁰

Part of the labour problem was over the cramped and dangerous work conditions in the overcrowded cove, as Cream reiterated to MacLaren:

for want of room we had to make the piles higher than is desirable for various reasons & as the Gangways in consequence are very steep, the men are in great danger if they carry on them on wet weather & will not do so at all. Had it not been for the constant rains that we had of late it would have been all landed 8 or 10 days sooner than it was. After a good deal of trouble I arranged to have a large number of men to commence 3rd Raft at the same price but shortly after they commenced Thomson's Jobbers took away 4 or 5 of our carriers & the remainder of that Gang said there was no use in them remaining as they could not pay Washers & Pilers for the few carriers that remained. They promised however to have their Gang made up on Monday morning. I called on Mr. A. Thomson on Thursday & mentioned the matter to him but he appeared to think that as it was a Jobber (a man that takes the landing of a portion of their Deals by contract) he could not do anything in the matter⁷¹

⁶⁸ William Cream to James MacLaren, 24 July 1866, M-1-3-17.

⁶⁹ James MacLaren to William Cream, 26 July 1866, M-1-3-79.

⁷⁰ William Cream to James MacLaren, 24 September 1866, M-1-3-30a.

⁷¹ William Cream to James MacLaren, 29 September 1866, M-1-3-36.

In early November the French-Canadian working class suburb of St. Roch had a major fire. Many of the men left to fight it or to care for their families. Labour became in short supply:

Some of the best carriers that we had here never came back after the fire in St. Rochs & as I discovered that there was a combination among the men here to get the price up to 9/- the 100 pieces I brought up one of the Indian Cove Jobbers with a number of his men to work here for a short time to put us through quicker. . .I have done every thing that was in my power to push on the work but it is a universal complaint just now in Quebec that men cannot be got to work. The money that is collected [for victims of the fire] will prove to many an injury rather than good as large numbers are going about in idleness that would be working but for what they are getting in Charity.⁷²

Within the week the men began treating the season as over despite the work remaining to be done, and they began drinking. Quinn went to St. Roch to get more men. He found plenty but none willing to travel so far to work.⁷³ The Jobber from Indian Cove was brought down to Victoria Cove with his six men and put in four good days piling: "if they had kept so we would have been finished this week but his men came drunk on Monday & have been tipping ever since till this morning when they knocked off entirely."⁷⁴ Cream borrowed one of Thomson's gangs, but then it began to rain, bringing things to a halt.

Finally Cream was able to report that he had finished landing the rafts at

⁷² William Cream to James MacLaren, 6 November 1866, M-1-3-15.

⁷³ William Cream to James MacLaren, 30 November 1866, M-1-3-45.

⁷⁴ William Cream to James MacLaren, 14 November 1866, M-1-3-12.

Victoria Cove, but that Quinn's men had stopped two days earlier at Indian Cove, because the neighbouring firm, Patton, wanted to take the booms out of the water. The result left nine cribs of the No. 4 Raft stranded and vulnerable to damage from winter ice.

Other times the problems were not so much with the carriers as with the Jobbers themselves. In 1867, Cream explained a problem with a Jobber to MacLaren:

On Monday the Jobbers struck work at the landing of the Deals. On Saturday when paying him I told him that he must get another person to pile as the person that he had doing it a mere Boy was not fit to do them properly. On Monday he came & had evidently been drinking & commenced to prepare for work but shortly after said that he was not going to cull but that he would attend to the piling. I said that it was not good treatment but that I would get a person to cull & set the Shipper to cull till I would get a person and then came to the office. Shortly after he came to the office & said that he was going away altogether. I warned him in the presence of the Shipper that if he did so that he would according to the agreement forfeit the balance remaining in our hands on all the work done this Season which amounts to a considerable sum but notwithstanding he set off. I then arranged with the men to go on & divided the work and they commenced on Tuesday. Had it not been for this we would have been pretty well through this week but as he took a number of the men away it will be about Thursday [when] we will be finished.⁷⁵

The following year the carriers struck for higher wages and Cream and the Jobber agreed they would each provide three pence more per day to the strikers. MacLaren wanted none of it, telling Cream:

⁷⁵ William Cream to James MacLaren, 4 October 1867, M-1-4-113.

I do not see what we have to do with the men. If you give a job, it is the business of the Jobber to get men to do the work. I would not give a Job, and then deal with the men also. Let the Jobber get other men and go on with the work. I do not see the use of giving a Job if we have continually to be dealing with the men. If the Jobber is worth anything insist upon his going on with the work.⁷⁶

So the sub-contractor, the Jobber, was an attempt to keep labour problems at a distance, although often the Jobber himself became the problem.

The cove had a strong connection with the rural workforce. Like the shanty, the cove was enmeshed in, and at times dependent on, a flow of workers in from surrounding farms, in search of wage labour. The seasonal cycle of the farm and that of shipping were at times complementary. For example, in June 1869 Cream noted: "Carriers are very difficult to be got but as the Farmers have nearly in their crops, a good many will be coming in to Québec now to work."⁷⁷ When urban workers struck the rural workers became an important factor, such as the August strike of 1882:

Our men are still on Strike but as we have a few others working I expect they will begin to work soon. Men are unusually scarce at present. I hope they will be more plentiful when Farmers have finished the Hay Harvest.⁷⁸

This rural connection may, together with the small work groups, easily replaced,

⁷⁶ James MacLaren to William Cream, 10 June 1868, M-1-5-75.

⁷⁷ William Cream to James MacLaren, 3 June 1869, M-2-1-186.

⁷⁸ William Cream to James MacLaren, 14 August 1882, M-11-2-33.

may have been one of the reasons the coves remained non-union. Certainly this was much different from the strong control exercised by the urban dwelling Ship Labourers we will see in the next chapter.

In addition to a flow of rural workers into the cove, there was also a flow of workers out of the cove at the end of the season. Some men began leaving the region in the first week of October, going to work in various shanties for winter wages:

Owing to a number of the carriers leaving for the woods for the winter we have not as many men as we would like but as Gilmour's people will be through on a day or two I hope to have more soon.⁷⁹

It became a scramble for Cream to find men to get the deals out of the water under the pressure of the looming end of season. As we will see in the next chapter, others were headed south to work as longshoremen.

On the surface the timber cove seems a very static workplace. It has no place in trade union history nor does it have much in the way of large conflicts or strikes. But each season brought the push and pull of strike and contract. The cove is an interesting grey area in labour studies. It is difficult to differentiate between a strike which is a sub-contractor's renegotiation for his own benefit or one for the collective benefit of the workers in his gang. Nevertheless, these small non-union work sites were subject to constant

⁷⁹ William Cream to James MacLaren, 11 October 1871, M-3-2-146.

bargaining and strikes.

III The Timber Cove and the American Market

MacLaren found a second market in the United States as soon as he opened his cove for the British market. The first season, in 1866, began inauspiciously. On May 18 MacLaren had still not begun sawing at the mill, meaning no deals would reach Québec until the end of July. Cream was told to delay taking possession of the cove and to say nothing to the buyers. The only good in the situation was the chance to get labourers at the usual reduced price "after the first of the Spring shipping is over."⁸⁰

Sawing went quickly and by June MacLaren had a small deal raft ready and two more of square timber. The square timber and spars came from the Gatineau and Fitzroy Harbour, not the Lièvre.⁸¹ MacLaren estimated he could have 100,000 Standard deals cut at Buckingham by 12 July for a second raft,

⁸⁰ James MacLaren to William Cream, 18 May 1866, M-1-3-97.

⁸¹ The rafts, under the charge of A. Stevenson and sixty men, came down the Ottawa past Masson on 29 June and expected to reach Québec by July 10. Red pine was only a minor proportion of the rafts; one contained 1,836 pieces of square white pine, 614 white pine board or waney deals, 777 Red Pine and 207 Red Pine Round, being sold for spars. James MacLaren to William Cream, 29 June 1866, M-1-3-86; A. Stevenson to William Cream, Montreal, 6 July 1866, M-1-3-99; William Cream to James MacLaren, 18 July 1866, M-1-3-5.

ready to go as soon as the crew of the first raft returned.⁸² At the end of July he wrote he expected the second deal raft to reach Québec for August 8th and he would have a third raft ready for the return of the raft's crew. A fourth raft was to follow in mid-September.

Most of the first raft was landed when disaster struck the second raft. It went apart somewhere around the Long Sault. It took a month to gather it on the back river behind Montréal.⁸³ The late second raft sailed past the cove on 24 August, carried by the current and brought back on the Flood Tide.⁸⁴ Six weeks after it left on what should have been a two week trip a clerk at Buckingham wrote: "it has been so long on the road that we fear it has almost eat itself up. . .the reports we have that this raft will be pretty badly smashed up".⁸⁵

Cream's men had been kept busy "butting", turning 4,600 third grade pieces into shorter second grades by cutting off split ends and bad knots. Some of these

⁸² James MacLaren to William Cream, 29 June 1866, M-1-3-86.

⁸³ Sincennes & McNaughton to William Cream, 3 August 1866, M-1-3-80.

⁸⁴ Many of the rafts overshot Québec on the momentum of their weight. They were usually stopped at Bridgewater Cove, which marked the point where the tide changed. William Cream to James MacLaren Co., Buckingham, 24 August 1866, M-1-3-24.

⁸⁵ James MacLaren Co. to William Cream, Buckingham, 23 August 1866. M-1-3-72.

ends went as firewood, but others were sold to Edison & Fitch's match and matchbox factory at New Liverpool. James MacLaren Co. were creditors when it failed in 1875 after a fire destroyed their dipping building.⁸⁶

In July Edmonston & Mitchell wrote Cream that prices were depressed in Britain. The market was gripped by financial panic and strikes just as the first shipments arrived from Québec.⁸⁷ Almost immediately MacLaren found an alternate market in the United States:

Since I went down to Quebec there has been a good deal of Timber sold to go to Sorel. Mr. Davies who came up on the boat last night has bought to day 210 M feet at 14 1/4 cents net cash in gold. There has been 8 rafts sold for the American Market in the last few days and more is wanted. There is one man from Troy here who wants 500 M feet, there is something like two million feet sold already to go to the States, and from present appearance another million will be wanted, this along with a short supply of white pine must effect the Quebec Market very much.

I think you may be quite stiff about the price of raft of timber, I believe that the white pine will be all wanted and at perhaps a higher price than we put on it.⁸⁸

American buyers paid \$26 per 100 Std., double the price Cream was unable to get (\$12-13) in Québec.⁸⁹ The price convinced MacLaren to resaw at his mill.

⁸⁶ Edison Fitch & Co., New Liverpool, closed after a fire and James MacLaren Co.'s representatives were at a creditors meeting in April 1875.

⁸⁷ Edmonston & Mitchells to William Cream, 12 July 1866, M-1-3-84.

⁸⁸ James MacLaren to William Cream, Montreal, 17 July 1866, M-1-3-69.

⁸⁹ James MacLaren to William Cream, 26 July 1866, M-1-3-79; William Cream to James MacLaren, 24 July 1866, M-1-3-17.

He took all his culls (complete rejects) and third quality (lowest grade) deals through the mill a second time to be cut for the U.S. market. Resaw removed defects, making the piece smaller but increasing the quality of the deal or board. MacLaren told Cream that if the price held he would be cutting a lot of logs for the U.S. next year. By mid-August the price of thirds in Québec was a more reasonable \$22 per 100 but MacLaren was now watching two markets, and preparing to shift mill output between the two.⁹⁰ At the end of the 1866 season MacLaren gave a market summary to William Cream:

we have finished taken stock here and will winter 27,000 Deals for Quebec, 44,000 Cull deals for Montreal, 1500,000 feet lumber for the American market, 3,000,000 Lath beside 650,000 feet for Hodgett of Burlington, Mr. Hodgett pays us for this lumber although he can not get it until next year, we also winter 15,000 saw logs of last years cutting, we have also some deals and lumber unsold in Whitehall, we are not sure how much perhaps \$10,000 or \$15,000 worth, we are expecting accounts from Whitehall any day.

You will see that our stocks of lumber are large this fall when it is all taken together. It is a heavy business, on the top of this stock we are already half through the expence of Logs for next season and more than that we are now purchasing Pork in Chicago for the winter of 1868, we have bought a lot of Pork there that will stand us in Ottawa \$17.75, Mr. Ross [a Québec wholesale merchant] offered to sell us at \$20.

You will say that I have not much to do going over the above figures, as we are in the midst of these things at present, I just give you a little idea to guide you should you think of going into a saw mill one of these days.⁹¹

By January of 1867 MacLaren made it clear that even though he had his own

⁹⁰ William Cream to James MacLaren, 14 August 1866, M-1-3-20.

⁹¹ James MacLaren to William Cream, 18 December 1866, M-1-3-100b.

cove in Québec, he was not simply dependent on the British market, he had other options:

I am not afraid of deals falling in price or if they will fall mill owners will send their lumber another way, there are a number of people anxious to contract with us for all of sawing of next summer, and if it was not that we have a cove hired and our mill is not quite so well suited for sawing boards as deals, we would go into the board trade, we can get \$14 [per?] hun[dred?] at the mills for all the lumber we could cut for the American market, keeping out the rotten culls. Gilmours & Co. have sold all their lumber from the Nation Mills to go the States, and Mr. Allen Gilmour was very near selling all of their Gatineau lumber to go the same way. They will have no deals to go to Quebec this year except part of their Gatineau mill sawings, and from present appearances in the States, I think there will be a [need for] deals next season.⁹²

Oddly enough, although A.R.M. Lower was not aware of these events, their timing fits his constitutional chronology rather well, but their cause was purely economic. The U.S. market boomed until the depression of 1874 hit and recovered strongly from 1880 until 1894.

In 1871 MacLaren said he was cutting sawn lumber exclusively for the U.S. market by mid-summer, as was the LeMoyne Gibb mill. James Gibb wrote to MacPherson Le Moyne that he agreed it was useless to cut British deals out of poor logs: "with the loss of butting & edging & the large amt. of culls I believe it wld. pay better to cut everything into lumber. If the American market keeps as

⁹² James MacLaren to William Cream, 29 January 1867, M-1-4-55.

good as it is at present."⁹³ At the North Nation sawmill they were also cutting for the U.S., but one saw gate continued to cut larger logs into British deals. The fact that North Nation cut for both markets, or that MacLaren could cut deals for Britain in the spring and sawn lumber for the U.S. from mid-summer onwards shows the flexibility and market responsiveness of sawmills. Refitting to make the mills flexible enough to accommodate both markets was a necessity.

As the American demand in 1872 for Ottawa Valley timber became almost frenzied, MacLaren instructed Cream that even though the British were not buying he should raise prices. Sales in Québec may have been slow, but not in Ottawa. MacLaren sent another letter to Cream:

writing you now is to let you know the great demand there is for Lumber in the American market the prices are up 25%. I sold yesterday to be delivered out of next summer sawing 4,600,000 feet of cull boards & planks at \$10 per M feet [up \$2 on last year] all the mills about here are holding their lumber from 20 to 25% higher than last year, and they will get their price.

Mr. LeMoyne & I have put 25% on all our lumber. My sale yesterday was the first at the advanced price. I never saw the demand so good. There were no less than three buyers running after me in Ottawa yesterday, and in every case I got all I asked. No such thing as Coming down in price. If deals do not advance a good deal, then will not be near so many made, as a great many of the mills will saw boards.⁹⁴

The American buyers went to the source and appear to have bypassed Québec.

⁹³ James MacLaren to William Cream, 31 July 1871, M-3-1-53; James Gibb to McPherson Le Moyne, 8 August 1871, M-3-1-114.

⁹⁴ James MacLaren to William Cream, 20 Januray 1872, M-3-3-151.

Unlike others, MacLaren was not caught by the sudden depression. He began to notice a small but increasing number of his customers' notes were "coming back on us protested. I do not want to have any thing to do with Timber this fall from present appearances."⁹⁵ He was unprepared to purchase rafts for the British market, or to invest in large cutting operations. Perhaps he sensed the unease behind the speculations. Low water convinced him to layup rafts already underway to market, but he still investigated, cautiously, the Chicago pork market. The result was a minimal exposure when the economy crashed in the depression of 1874.

The American market dried up quickly: "We had an American buyer here last Saturday looking around, but could not sell him anything, we have not sold one dollar's worth yet to go to the States."⁹⁶ MacLaren told Cream not to sell any culls or thirds, as they could be used as extras to help sell the higher quality deals in Québec. By 1875 the British timber houses were advising production be curtailed to create a shortage and MacLaren was worried:

I am very much discouraged at the lumber business the way it is going at present. I hardly know what to advise or what to do, we cannot sell in the U.S. we cannot sell any where at paying prices, we are getting filled up here with certain kinds of Lumber -- have not been able to sell any short Lumber for the last two years, neither can we sell Common siding, we cannot get an offer -- have on hand some 4,000,000 feet of the above

⁹⁵ James MacLaren to William Cream, 28 September 1872, M-3-3-111.

⁹⁶ James MacLaren to William Cream, 27 April 1874, M-5-1-50.

kind of Lumber. You will get blocked up with deals in Quebec and will not be able to land, if ships do not come soon. It is altogether hard times in the Lumber trade and will try the resources of a good many this season.⁹⁷

Things got so crowded at the cove with stock unsold or unshipped that Cream's overflow was the subject of a protest of trespass by his landlord, James Patton & Co.⁹⁸ Other coves were also filling with unsold stock. The Hamiltons had to send a raft to Victoria Cove as their cove at New Liverpool was full and so were the coves around the mills at Montmorency.⁹⁹ MacLaren survived, perhaps helped perhaps by his bank. The next year, as we will see, he bought into one of the largest U.S. consumers of Canadian wood.

The inter-relationship between markets drew the comment from Britain that things there would not recover until the United States recovered. By 1875 a depression in the American economy was so influential that it also closed Canadian timber markets in Britain. Timber houses began to fail, but mostly those engaged in the baltic trade and Canadian timber, such as Gilmour's

⁹⁷ James MacLaren to William Cream, 11 June 1875, M-5-3-71.

⁹⁸ James Patton & Co. to James McLaren & Co., 14 August 1875, M-6-1-44; William Cream to James MacLaren, 16 August 1875, M-6-1-43; James Patton & Co. to James McLaren & Co., 16 August 1875, M-6-1-50.

⁹⁹ William Cream to James MacLaren, 30 July 1875, M-6-1-42.

300,000 deals in London, went unsold.¹⁰⁰ The depression continued and 1878 was perhaps worse. One vessel was told if rates dropped when they reached Québec, they were to pay off the crew and lay the ship up.¹⁰¹ The British market was poor, timber ship insurance was up, and the Glasgow Bank went under. On an 1879 winter tour of markets in Glasgow, Liverpool, the Clyde and London, Cream was told by one British house that "were it not that they have a number of ships that they can send no where but to Canada, he would not purchase Deals."¹⁰²

It was at this juncture that Cream suggested to MacLaren that he complete the British commodity chain, bypassing middlemen and opening a British retail yard. He had in mind a location outside London, to avoid port charges and taxes, and close to the railway lines. Cream said he had been thinking of this since 1875 and his declining health in Québec, coupled with the dull market made him raise the issue: "At present our consignments are sold to Dealers on

¹⁰⁰ Cream wrote from Britain: "I met Mr. Smith of Roberts Smith & Co. the other day who informed me, that they had not sold a Deal this winter. . .it would be desirable if the manufacturer of Deals and Square Timber was much curtailed." William Cream, London, to James MacLaren, 3 March 1875, M-6-1-15.

¹⁰¹ William Cream to James MacLaren, 13 May 1878, M-8-1-141. Insurance premiums rose on timber ships up due to Plimsol legislation.

¹⁰² Mr. Strang of Gilmour, Rankin, Strang & Co. to William Cream, cited in William Cream to James MacLaren, 13 March 1879, M-8-2-35.

large lots, who retail them to Builders and others, often at large profits."¹⁰³

MacLaren made no reply, but the answer may be in part found in a letter seven years earlier, when Cream suggested going over to sell six rafts and 200,000 deals held in joint-partnership. MacLaren's main concern was "we would not be able to draw until the shipments were made, and we might not be able to draw in time to meet our payments."¹⁰⁴ As long as someone over there carried the risk and time required to sell the deals, MacLaren had the flexibility and security of their negotiable credit note. If the buyer was his own company, with its startup costs and, unlike Burlington, beyond his easy supervision, the profits might not equal the risk and exposure. This was a very interesting moment in which he could have taken the whole commodity chain to its logical vertically integrated conclusion and monopsonist profits, but wisdom held him back.

Instead MacLaren preferred the other commodity chain, which went to the Boston and New York markets and was more easily supervised. His timber, mostly in boards, was barged to Sorel, home of one of his partners, the shipper Jacques F. Vincennes, and then sent down the Richelieu to Lake Champlain. Many of the barges went to Burlington, Vermont, halfway down Lake Champlain. Other barges took MacLaren's lumber down to Whitehall, which reshipped to the

¹⁰³ William Cream to James MacLaren, 29 November 1878, M-1-2-2.

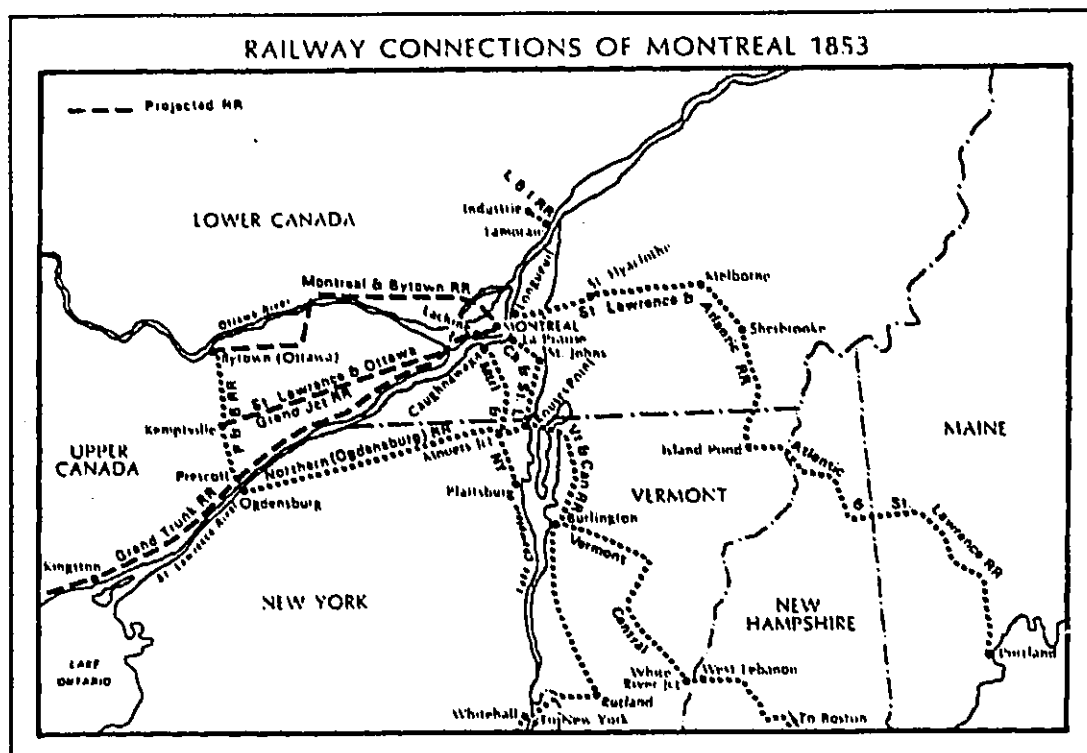
¹⁰⁴ James MacLaren to William Cream, 17 November 1871, M-3-1-19.

New York market (See Map 1).

By the 1860s Burlington was a lumber boomtown. By 1868 it was the third largest lumber manufacturer in the United States. Its mills imported 169 million feet of wood for remanufacturing in 1873, much of it from the Ottawa Valley. It was processed into siding, mouldings, venetian blinds, refrigerators, or simply planed and reshipped to Boston and other eastern seaboard U.S. cities. The firm that bought half the Candian wood in 1871 was Shepard, Davis and Co. It became Shepard, Morse when a New York/Boston group and their Ottawa partner, James MacLaren bought it in 1876.¹⁰⁵

John R. Booth also set up a mill in Burlington that year. MacLaren used his Ottawa Valley connections to negotiate purchases with other Ottawa lumbermen for the U.S. market. For example Cream was instructed to assist four U.S. barges sent up from Burlington to get some top quality boards from Hadlow's

¹⁰⁵ Shepard, Davis & Company was formed in Burlington 1869 by Otis Shepard and Lewis A. Hall of Boston and Mial Davis. The Boston office was known as Shepard, Hall and Company. It failed in 1876 and was bought by Otis Shepard, James MacLaren (Ottawa), George H. Morse and William A. Crombie (New York) and Frank Dudley (Portland, Maine). It was incorporated as the Shepard and Morse Lumber Company on September 1, 1878. Pope & Crombie were commission lumber merchants in Boston and official agents for MacLaren. John R. Booth also established a firm in Burlington in 1876, run by his half-brother Edward. See: Joseph Amrhein, *Burlington, Vermont: The Economic History of a Northern New England City*. Photocopy, Middlebury College Library. [S.l.: s.n. 1982?] Ph.D. thesis, New York University, 1958, pp. 225-227. MacLaren also appears to have bought out C. Blodgett, Son & Co. of Burlington, see letterhead of 31 August 1878, M-7-1-21.



Map 1 Ottawa - Vermont Rail and Water Connections

Source: Gerald Tulchinsky, *The River Barons*, (University of Toronto Press, 1977), p. 106.

Cove. MacLaren bought them from Booth for Shepard & Morse.¹⁰⁶ In addition to Sincennes barges, MacLaren used those of D. Murphy & Co., whose letterhead describes the company as linking Ottawa, Montréal, Québec, Burlington, Whitehall, Albany and New York.¹⁰⁷ The barges of the Ottawa Towing Company were also common on Lake Champlain. The timber cove in

¹⁰⁶ James MacLaren, Shepard, Morse & Co., Burlington, Vt., to James MacLaren Company, 21 September 1878, M-7-3-106.

¹⁰⁷ D. Murphy & Co., to James MacLaren, 20 September 1882, M-11-3-20. Murphy a forwarder of lumber and the successor to J.W. McRae & Co. A.N. Bedard was the Montréal Agent, W.F. Bascom ran the reshipping docks at Whitehall, New York, and its New York agents were Armstrong & Moe.

Québec was becoming only one of a network of northeastern sales depots.

Conclusion

As a labour institution, the timber cove has many similarities to the shanty in its labour relations, although it has an urban context. The distance between the rural and urban worlds was not as great as one would think and the fluid nature of employers' quests for workers and workers' quests for employment within their own seasonal demands made for a great deal of movement and negotiation. It appears the small size of work groups and the availability of rural workers limited union inroads. In the timber cove, under the influence of steam and barge, there was a gradual move away from labour intensive opportunities, a beginning of a more familiar industrial workplace, something, as we will see in the next chapter, that faced some resistance from workers.

As for markets, the decline of the timber cove began in the 1860s as Ottawa Valley lumbermen such as MacLaren developed a matrix of companies in Vermont and New York. Agency, rather than dependency, was the theme for the lives of the Culler, Jobber, Carrier and Capitalist. MacLaren exercised a great deal of independence within the structural framework of the marketplace, and used it to great advantage. The timber cove was fast approaching its conclusion as a useful instrument for the lumber industry, not just because of

falling British demand but because shipping by barges and sawmill-based piling, grading and sales were cheaper and more effective mechanisms for the widening geography of markets. The mill developed market flexibility and the cove was relegated to becoming only an intermediary, a depot for sales in transit along the trans-Atlantic commodity chain. The tensions and the politics of disengagement from the British commodity chain for timber, as seen in the lives of those employed to load timber ships, is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4
WALKING ON WATER:
LOADING TIMBER IN QUEBEC

Introduction

The timber cove workers existed side by side with the highly organized and militant world of the ship labourers who did the actual loading of timber for export. A.R.M. Lower's discussion in *Great Britain's Woodyard* actually tells us very little about these labourers, men and boys who worked on the timber ships. He does tell us that prior to an Irish domination of the occupation there was a French-Canadian Société de Bord, formed around 1840. He learned this from one source, Narcisse Rosa, an author. Lower appears unaware that Rosa was a key figure in anti-union activities. Lower shares Rosa's interpretation of what went on in the port:

when the trade declined there was a great outpouring to other parts of the continent -- just as many of the English merchants went "home". The result was a heavy decline in the influence and the number of the English-speaking population of Quebec.

The dictatorial attitude of the Labourers may have contributed to the decline of the trade. At any rate the decline coincided with a strike in 1890, and trade and labourers departed together. The strike is

somewhat of a record in the matter of length, for never having been called off, it is still officially going on.¹

The situation is far more complex than Lower supposed. Moving from the MacLaren papers to the newspapers of 1879 and the testimony of the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labor and Capital a far richer portrait of events emerges.²

While the actual loading of timber ships is a central feature of the square timber trade, it has attracted minimal attention from Canadian labour historians.³ It is assumed that as the square timber trade made its departure

¹ Narcisse Rosa, *La Construction des Navires à Québec et ses environs*. Québec: Impr. L. Bourassa, 1897, pp. 17-19. Cited as the source for the evidence in the above quote in Lower, *Great Britain's Woodyard*, pp. 228-229.

² Strangely enough the potent combination of dependency theory, labour history and Québec nationalism has yet to be combined in a study of the port. There is a conspicuous lack of interest in the Irish and French-Canadian politics of the main timber port of North America.

³ The Canadian literature has focused primarily on the Maritimes in the nineteenth century: Robert H. Babcock, "Saint John Longshoremen during the Rise of Canada's Winter Port, 1895-1922," *Labour*, 25 (1990): pp. 15-46; Jessie Chisholm, "Organizing on the Waterfront: The St. John's Longshoremen's Protective Union (LSPU), 1890-1914," *Labour*, 26 (1990): pp. 37-59; Ian McKay, "Class Struggle and Mercantile Capitalism: Craftsmen and Labourers on the Halifax Waterfront, 1850-1902," in *Working Men Who Got Wet: Proceedings of the Fourth Conference of the Atlantic Shipping Project*, ed. Rosemary Ommer and Gerald Panting (Maritime History Group/Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1980): pp. 289-319; Rosemary Ommer, "Anticipating the Trend: The Pictou Ship Register, 1840-1889," *Acadiensis*, 10:1 (1980): pp. 67-89.

The related work on sailors has little to say about longshoremen or ethnic conflict, but useful to the general context are: Judith Fingard, "The Decline of the Sailor as a Ship Labourer in 19th Century Timber Ports," *Labour/Le Travailleur*, 2 (1977): pp. 35-53; Judith Fingard, *Jack in Port: Sailortowns of Eastern Canada*.

from the economic stage it went quietly. It did not. Instead a trade union dispute escalated until hundreds of armed, determined French-Canadian longshoremen gathered on the Plains of Abraham in the summer of 1879 before forcing their way into the city. Around the coves of Québec the battle of 1879 was one of union politics described at the time as "the mingled motives of pecuniary and race jealousy"⁴. But that is an over-simplification as structural pressures divided one of nineteenth century Canada's strongest unions, one that worked an eight hour day long before the nine hour movement began.

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982; and Eric W. Sager, *Seafaring Labour: The Merchant Marine of Atlantic Canada, 1820-1914*. Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989.

Québec has a literature, but it tends to focus on the unloading trade in Montréal, rather than the export trade from Québec City: Gerald Bérnier, "La structure de classe Québécoise au 19^e siècle et le problème de l'articulation des modes de production," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 14:3 (1981): pp. 487-518; Réal Bibeault, "Le syndicat des débardeurs de Montréal." Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Montréal, 1954; Jacques Ferland, "Syndicalisme "parcellaire" et syndicalisme "collectif": une interpretation socio-technique des conflits ouvriers dans deux industries Québécoises," *Labour*, 19 (1987): 49-88; Pierre Maranda, "Sémantographie du domaine "Travail" dans la haute-ville et dans la basse-ville de Québec," *Anthropologica*, 20:1-2 (1978): pp. 249-292; Esdras Minville, *Syndicalisme, Législation Ouvrières et Régime Social au Québec avant 1940*. [Reprint] Montréal: Fides, 1986; David-Thiery Ruddel, "La main-d'oeuvre en milieu urbain au bas-canada: conditions et relations de travail," *Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique Française*, 41:3 (1988): pp. 389-402; Robert Tremblay, "La grève des ouvriers de la construction navale à Québec," *Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique Française*. 37:2 (1983): pp. 227-239; France Normand, "La navigation intérieure à Québec au dernier quart du XIX^e siècle," *Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique Française*, 43:3 (hiver 1990): pp. 323-351.

⁴ "Editorial -- The Quebec Riots," *Montreal Herald*, 16 August 1879, p. 2.

At Québec there was an odd confluence of mutual interests at the transportation node for timber exports. Conflict between the French-Canadian and Irish ship labourers and English/Scottish Ship Masters and merchants was mediated by violence and contracts written and unwritten. Yet when the violence ended, it did so remarkably quickly and quietly. All the parties concerned appeared, like the men who brought the rafts out to the timber ships, anxious to relearn the art of walking on water, after falling in.⁵

I Ports, Processes and Patterns

Literature specific to the nineteenth century longshoremen is a relatively small body of work.⁶ Eric Hobsbawm described harbour work as a problem

⁵ The phrase, by which I include the deeper conflicts below the surface of day to day work in Québec, comes from the testimony of Richard S. Leahey, President of Section One of the Ship Laborer's Benevolent Society [Hereafter SLBS] when describing timber swingers: "I might say they have to "walk on the water"". Canada. Royal Commission on the Relations of Labor and Capital. *Report of the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labor and Capital in Canada. Evidence -- Quebec.* Ottawa: Queen's Printer, A. Sencal, 1889, p. 745. [Hereafter RCRL&C]

⁶ A brief survey of the non-Canadian literature is: Eric Arnesen, *Waterfront Workers of New Orleans: Race, Class, and Politics, 1863-1923.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1991; John P. Beck, "They Fought For Their Work: Upper Peninsula Iron Ore Trimmer Wars," *Michigan History*, 73:1 (1989): pp. 24-31; Michael Coleman Connolly, "The Irish Longshoremen of Portland, Maine, 1880-1923." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Boston College, 1988; William C. Hine, "Black Organized Labour in Reconstruction Charleston," *Labor History*, 25:4 (1984): pp. 504-517; Eric J. Hobsbawm, "National Unions on the Waterside," in *Labouring Men: Studies in the History of Labour.* London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1964, pp. 204-230; John Lovell, *Stevedores and Dockers: A Study of Trade Unionism in the Port of London, 1870-1914.* New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1969; James V. Reese, "The Evolution of an Early Texas Union: The Screwmen's Benevolent Association

involving "an industry with fluid frontiers and no exact shape" and with "no obvious and pre-destined core for its union".⁷ Ports differ and their labour systems are dependant on when the port came into prominence, the nature of what moves through it, the degree to which machinery can be used, the spatial evolution of dock development, and the presence of competitor ports or alternate systems, such as the tremendous impact rail systems had on the decline of Mississippi river ports.⁸ Eric Arnesen emphasises the resulting diversity of work on the waterfront:

Certainly no two ports were exactly alike, and waterfront workers experienced different employment practises and diverse conditions of labor which depended upon geography, the racial or ethnic character of the labor force, the nature of the cargo, the degree of capital concentration, and the unique political and economic histories of the

of Galveston, 1866-1891," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, LXXV, No. 2 (October 1971): pp. 158-85; Daniel Rosenberg, *New Orleans Dockworkers: Race, Labor, and Unionism 1892-1923*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1988; William H. Sewell Jr., "Uneven Development, the Autonomy of Politics, and the Dockworkers of Nineteenth-Century Marseilles," *American Historical Review*, 93:3 (June 1988): pp. 604-37; Jerrell H. Shofner, "The Pensacola Workingman's Association: A Militant Negro Labor Union During Reconstruction," *Labor History*, 13:4 (Fall 1972), pp. 555-9; Eric L. Taplin, *The Dockers' Union: A Study of the National Union of Dock Labourers, 1889-1922*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985, and his *Liverpool Dockers and Seamen, 1870-1890*. York: Occasional Papers in Economic and Social History No. 6, University of Hull, 1974; M. van der Velden, "Havenarbeid, Drageregilden: Vergeeten Historie," [Harbor work and workers guilds: forgotten history]. *Economisch-en Sociaal-Historisch Jaarboek*, 45 (1982): pp. 18-38; Mavis Waters, "Dockyard and Parliament: A Study of the Unskilled Workers in Chatham Yard, 1860-1900," *Southern History* (London), 6 (1984): pp. 123-138.

⁷ Eric Arnesen, *Waterfront Workers of New Orleans: Race, Class, and Politics, 1863-1923*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 41.

⁸ Arnesen, *Waterfront Workers of New Orleans*, p. 37.

ports themselves. Even the names given different groups of workers varied considerably from port to port: New Orleans employed its longshoremen, screwmen, draymen, yardmen, and roustabouts; London its shipmen, stevedores, coal whippers, overside corn porters, dockers, quay labourers, hand truckers, and warehousing labourers; Liverpool its stevedores, riggers, quay porters, fruit porters, coalheavers; and South Wales its coal tippers and trimmers, timber porters, grain workers, and iron-ore workers.⁹

None of the literature surveyed discusses the bi-directional nature of a port, the degree to which it is primarily an importer or exporter of freight. Large European and North American centres, such as New York, are primarily importers of a diversity of products and rarely export staple goods. This is reversed for ports such as New Orleans (cotton), various Great Lakes iron ore and coal ports, many South American, Asian and African and Australian ports, and some Canadian ports -- such as Québec City's timber trade.

However specialization did take place among dock workers at the recipient ports of Québec's timber. John Lovell notes that in London specialization took place among coal, timber and grain handlers on the south side of the Surrey docks because of the staple being handled, the spatial isolation of the receiving docks for each, and traditional occupational groupings. After 1891 groups dealing with heavy merchandise were aligned with specific shipping-lines.¹⁰

⁹ Arnesen, *Waterfront Workers of New Orleans*, pp. 41-42.

¹⁰ John Lovell, *Stevedores and Dockers: A Study of Trade Unionism in the Port of London, 1870-1914*. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1969, p. 56. On 3 December 1891 the British Timber Trade Federation was formed in part to negotiate lower rates for inland railway and canal distribution. Bryan Latham, *History of the Timber Trade Federation of the United Kingdom: The First Seventy Years*. London: Ernest Benn, 1965, pp. 24-25.

Timber work was "an intensely localised sector of employment".¹¹ Lovell's observations on timber workers in London provides an interesting foil for the Québec coves:

the work formed one of the most genuinely skilled branches of waterside labour. Reversing the pattern normally found in the industry, in the timber department it was the shore workers who surpassed the shipmen in skill. . .The specialisation of south-side shipworkers in the timber trade was somewhat inevitable, for the only other work available was in corn. There was little interchange between the grain and timber departments, for at first both trades were dependent upon the Baltic season, so that their slack and busy periods tended to coincide. . .The continued dependence of the soft-wood trade upon the Baltic season, however, rendered the timber workers subject to long spells of idleness. As with the "Wools" and "Teas" their specialisation was thus far from being an unmixed blessing.¹²

William Sewell's article on dockworkers in Marseilles extends the picture. These dockers worked a cramped harbour, serviced by a widespread warehouse network on narrow streets. Spatial restraints gave them a strategic position. Merchants were willing to pay to avoid the costs of unloading facilities and also as insurance against pilferage.¹³ The organization was part guild, part union, part sub-contractor and part benevolent association. Port labour involved four groups: seamen, with limited responsibility for cargo; high status and high wage dockworkers or stevedores; lower status carters and loaders, who moved cargo

¹¹ Lovell, *Stevedores and Dockers*, p. 54.

¹² Lovell, *Stevedores and Dockers*, p. 54.

¹³ William H. Sewell Jr., "Uneven Development, the Autonomy of Politics, and the Dockworkers of Nineteenth-Century Marseilles," *American Historical Review*, 93:3 (June 1988): p. 622.

through the streets; and a pool of temporary workers, hired as needed. Sewell's sample of marriage and census records showed 89% of his identified dock workers were locally born, whereas 37% of the low wage and low status carters and loaders were farmers' sons, from the outlying countryside.¹⁴ Marriage registers proved an "hereditary possession" of occupation. Sewell found a 70% inheritance rate of occupation, from father to son, among married dockworkers. It was much lower for other labourers, artisans, or even wholesale merchants (42%).¹⁵ By the 1840s these workers had job security, pension, a work allocation system, a closed shop, and the ability to pass on the occupation to their sons.¹⁶ Interestingly, unlike most nineteenth century "unions", dockworkers' key role in the harbour town's economy allowed for a very public association; their charter was endorsed by the Mayor and recognized by the Chamber of Commerce. This did not last.

Construction of new steamship docks outside the old harbour, secured against pilferage and using workers organized by the dock company, led to a union-breaking strike. Some members took dock company employment, as did temporary and other workers from the external labour pool. The closed shop world of the Marseilles dockworker was destroyed by steam, shipping-lines and dockyard corporations.

¹⁴ Sewell, "Uneven Development", pp. 616-617.

¹⁵ Sewell, "Uneven Development", n. 13, p. 609, 610.

¹⁶ Sewell, "Uneven Development", p. 611.

Sewell concluded that "capitalist development is uneven", that it does not produce "an increasingly solid and uniform proletariat . . . but a continually changing archipelago of variegated working-class categories".¹⁷ The spatial constraints of Marseilles, the social acceptance of the union, the rural-urban divisions of labour, the arrival of steam and new docks, and the absence of ethnic divisions make the port an interesting foil for Québec, with its ten miles of coves on two sides of a river and strong ethnic divisions. Yet as we shall see much of what occurred in Marseilles appears in a different form in Québec by the end of the century, where the new steamship docks were located upriver, at Montréal.

Eric Taplin's Liverpool stevedores unloaded Québec's white pine. He points out that to call these workers "unskilled" is a misnomer:

They were unskilled in the sense that they did not serve an apprenticeship; it was not a trade. It was unskilled also in the sense that in a time of short supply or an emergency any man would be taken on. But the inexperienced worker was slow, inefficient and a danger for the job required considerable physical stamina allied to a knack of handling and moving heavy weights. Such expertise could not be picked up in a matter of days but was the result of many years' experience. Unloading timber or bulk grain from the hold of a ship, manhandling cotton bales or loading coal for hours at a time soon sorted out the novices from the experts. Moreover experienced dockers were reluctant to work with genuine casuals if for no other reason than the dangers involved.¹⁸

Their experience, individually and as inter-dependent members of communal work units in a dangerous profession, was their skill, much like Eric Sager's

¹⁷ Sewell, "Uneven Development", p. 637.

¹⁸ Eric L. Taplin, *Liverpool Dockers and Seamen, 1870-1890*. York: Occasional papers in economic and Social History No. 6, University of Hull, 1974, p. 7.

sailors. Skill attached them to a narrow range of docks, each specialized by the nature of the product it handled and often linked to specific merchants. The word docker or stevedore simplifies, especially when used by newspapers, the complex and specialized activities it covers. In Québec stevedore meant a sub-contractor who oversees loading or unloading the ship by ship labourers.

Another aspect is the cult of masculinity around dock workers. The same descriptions applied to rural Canadian shantymen and loggers¹⁹ are given to

British dockworkers:

The permanent docker was brutalised by poverty, drink and the indifference of employers to his condition as a human being. Yet in a perverse fashion many dockers favoured the casual nature of their job. It gave him what he called independence; he worked when he wanted to. In many ways he despised the employee with the discipline of regular hours and a six day week. The dock worker inhabited a world where physical stamina and prowess were praised, where drunkenness, poverty and brutality were part of the everyday fabric of life and where the independence of casual work was regarded as a virtue. It was likely to take many years for the ideals for which trade unionism stood to make any impact upon him.²⁰

Their independence led to many short term decisions. In 1872 in the sheds of Canada Dock, Charles MacIver of the Cunard Line argued with stevedores and

¹⁹ See: Peter H. Harrison, "Life in a Logging Camp," *B.C. Studies*, 54 (1982), pp. 88-104; Steven Maynard, "Rough Work and Rugged Men: The Social Construction of Masculinity in Working-Class History," *Labour/ Le Travail*, 23 (Spring 1989), pp. 159-169.

²⁰ Taplin, *Liverpool Dockers and Seamen*, p. 10.

porters that regular employment was in their best interest. But they chose higher daily wages over the security of regular weekly employment.²¹

Another feature of the Liverpool dock work was the spatial division of the docks on a north-south axis between Roman Catholic and Protestant Irish dockers. This distinction was less apparent in day to day activities and was subsumed in the event of major strikes, usually against wage cuts, such as the Great Strike of 1879, involving all dockers and seamen, 30-35,000 in all.²² Joint action was also taken to extract higher wages at times of peak employment. Québec's longshoremen shared a religion, but not language or culture. As we will see 1879 was also a year of unrest in Québec, where religion played a different role.

The history of New Orleans's dockworkers also offers a remarkable parallel with that of Québec. The cotton industry gave a specific shape to the patterns of work and unionization. Screwmen, who used screwjacks and boards to dense pack cotton bales in the ships' holds, had a strategic advantage as their skill influenced profitability of the ship's cargo.²³ Divisions among harbour workers began along racial lines, and black longshoremen struck without unions in 1865

²¹ Taplin says they chose badly and faced layoffs shortly afterwards. *Canada Dock* is deserving of a study in itself. Taplin, *Liverpool Dockers and Seamen*, pp. 23-24.

²² For religious differences see Taplin, *Liverpool Dockers and Seamen*, pp. 10-11; for the strike, see pp. 33-62.

²³ Eric Arnesen, *Waterfront Workers of New Orleans: Race, Class, and Politics, 1863-1923*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991, pp.42-43.

and 1867. In 1872 black workers, under verbal and physical pressure from white workers' accusations that they were "breaking the wage", formed the Longshoremen's Protective Union Benevolent Society. A wage floor was put in place, and gradually they worked with white workers to raise wages, eventually achieving parity.²⁴ This was only a foot in the door, in the face of the severity of the economic depression which hit New Orleans hard between 1872 and 1878. The return of prosperity in 1880 saw union expansion and by 1882 dockers had formed a biracial wage parity model of trade unionism. Subsequently this model seemed at times about to spread outside the docks throughout New Orleans, but fell back as a dockwork-only solution. This dualism is remarkably similar to the port of Québec's 1879 resolution of Irish/French tensions discussed below.

One can also speculate at the movement of workers' culture from port to port. We do know the ship labourers of Québec were very familiar with working conditions in other ports. Witness after witness drew comparisons of conditions and wages before the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labor and Capital. Québec longshoremen were in demand for winter port work all along the eastern U.S. seaboard, and particularly in Florida and the Gulf of Mexico ports. One

²⁴ The crux of attitudes on racial equality lies in the circumstances around the moment when white workers accept the concept of wage parity with black workers. Neither Daniel Rosenberg nor Eric Arnesen look at this economic moment on the dock.

longshoreman testified to the *RCRL&C* that "Knox, the Canadian lynched at Scranton, Miss., was one of this class."²⁵

Canadian ship labourers were used as scapegoats in order to gain recognition for Florida's first black union. Pensacola, Florida in 1870 was a busy yellow pine port, most of the wood going to England. Each winter Canadian ship labourers went south to compete with local blacks for longshore work. Tensions built and in January 1873 several hundred black longshoremen with clubs and pistols effectively seized control of the town, turning Canadians from the docks and searching boardinghouses for them. The matter drew protests from the British Consul over the treatment of British citizens, but for much of the winter black stevedores and longshoremen closed the docks to Canadians, until they returned north. The economic downturn beginning in 1873-74 delayed the Canadians' return south and Florida's state legislature amended the longshoreman licensing laws in 1874 to require a six month residency.²⁶

The connections among these ports are more than just examples of historical process. These ports were nodes within what Immanuel Wallerstein calls the world system, the global extensions of capitalism. It does suggest that these events might be considered within the broader context of a comparative approach, using labour studies from other similar nineteenth century ports. All

²⁵ Testimony of Patrick Mullin, *RCRL&C*, p. 743.

²⁶ Jerrell H. Shofner, "The Pensacola Workingman's Association: A Militant Negro Labor Union During Reconstruction," *Labor History*, 13:4 (Fall 1972), pp. 555-59.

these workers and ports were connected through the trans-Atlantic trade that was increasingly the domain of steamship capitalism. It is within this framework the events in Québec should be considered.

II Loading Timber in Québec

What kind of skills and organization were involved in loading timber in Québec? The process began when the buyer or his ship master would contract with a stevedore to load. The stevedore would use a Ship Labourers Benevolent Society (SLBS) work gang to move the timber raft from the cove to the vessel, and to load and store it. The SLBS's rules were very explicit on how many men were to be hired.²⁷ A vessel of over 600 tons with four loading ports in the bow or stern (two per side) was to have twenty-nine men: eighteen winchers, seven holders, two swingers and two boys on the stage to hook on, a job similar to the modern-day chokerman.

Swingers were the men who worked on the river getting the timber from the raft to the port of the vessel. One timber swinger described his work as involving being wet to the neck, with boots full of water. In the fall he worked

²⁷ There are multiple references to the rules in: Canada. *Report of the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital. Evidence -- Quebec*. Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1889; and Chambre de commerce du district de Québec. *Quebec Labor Question: Copy of Correspondence Between the Council of the Quebec Board of Trade and the Quebec Ship Labourers' Benevolent Society, and Other Data Relative to the Rules and Regulations of the Society*. Québec: Morning Chronicle, 1888. [C.I.H.M. No. 12266]

in snow, rain and frost and many of the older workers suffered from rheumatism.²⁸ The stevedore decided in what order and by which end each piece would be loaded. He chalked his instructions on the end of the timber in a language specific to the occupation. Using a winch placed on the forecastle the winchmen would "hove up" the timber out of the water. A man in the port hooked each piece with a pair of "dogs" to a second line from the main winch, placed between decks, "abaft" (in the stern of) the main hold. From there it was hooked onto the line of a winch placed in the "mizzen" of the ship and hove into its berth, where the holders, the men working in the hold, manoeuvred it into place with crowbars.

The work of the men in the hold was particularly dangerous. As the timber came in the port someone had to go ahead of it in the narrow trunk way, to keep the lines clear and making sure it did not "butt" against any of the other already loaded timbers. If it did, it could knock them in on him, or push the timbers back, crushing the hands and feet of the men packing the back of the load. Once the timber was moving, it might come in faster than the winch could take the line up, with brutal consequences. It could stick in the port and at least one man had his head crushed between the ship's beams and a seesawing timber. Richard Leahey estimated forty to fifty men would be disabled in a season.²⁹ It

²⁸ Testimony of George Mulrooney, *RCRL&C*, pp. 754-756.

²⁹ Testimony of Richard S. Leahey, *RCRL&C*, p. 745.

required caution, expertise, fast communications and teamwork. One result was an adamant opposition to the use of steam.

The SLBS's opposition to steam is, rightly, cited as a factor in the decline of the port. From the merchants' and shippers' perspective, steam meant fast loading and steam winches run by salaried idle ship's crew. The SLBS's opposition was not just for the protection of jobs. It was also due to the difficulty in controlling the speed of moving timber; the main factor was workplace communications. One man with twenty-four years experience explained:

in stowing by hand winch, which makes no noise to speak of, if a man finds himself in a tight place, he cries out, and his voice is heard at once by the winchers, and the piece is stopped immediately. Whereas, on a ship where timber is hove by steam, the man has got to shout to his partner, and his partner has to run to the man at the bell, and the man at the bell has to ring to the engineer, and the engineer stops the engine, while all this is being done, although it may be done very quickly, the piece has travelled twelve or fourteen feet, and perhaps killed the poor man in the trunk way. That is reason why steam is objected to in Quebec.³⁰

As the union aged, it protected its members by banning any use of steam in loading, using the specific case of timber as its justification. The insistence on an obligatory work crew based on a timber loading model meant all twenty-nine continued to be paid even if only two were still working filling in and blocking the loaded vessel. The same work group hiring was required for mixed cargoes, even if very little timber was to be loaded. The difficulty of the operation and

³⁰ Testimony of Patrick Fitzgerald, *RCRL&C*, p. 752.

the need for safety was also the justification for the eight hour day, something achieved long before the Knights of Labour, which the SLBS refused to join.

III Ethnic Divisions and the Strike of 1879

The waterfront of Québec in the first half of the nineteenth century is, as Judith Fingard noted, a murky terrain. We do know ship owners and masters twice sought to differentiate the occupations of ship labourers from seamen, first in 1820 and again in 1848.³¹ By May 1855 ship labourers were loosely organized enough to strike both at Québec City and the Sillery Docks. A formal structure was established two years later with the founding of the Ship Labourers Benevolent Society. The Society was an Irish invention, formed to take advantage of the leverage they had in the seasonal pressures of the square timber trade, the speculative rush of the arrival of the first ships through the spring ice and in the fall, the pressure of a season closing with escalating insurance rates and the onset of icy winter storms. Language and ethnicity resulted in the separate formation in 1865 of the Union canadienne des débardeurs, to provide a counter-weight for employment of French-Canadian workers. In the 1860s unions were formed by the longshoremen, ship's carpenters, timber tugboatmen and boatmen. The Ship Carpenters' Friendly Benevolent Society, who were involved

³¹ Judith Fingard, "The Decline of the Sailor as a Ship Labourer in 19th Century Timber Ports," *Labour/Le Travailleur*. 2 (1977): p. 38-39.

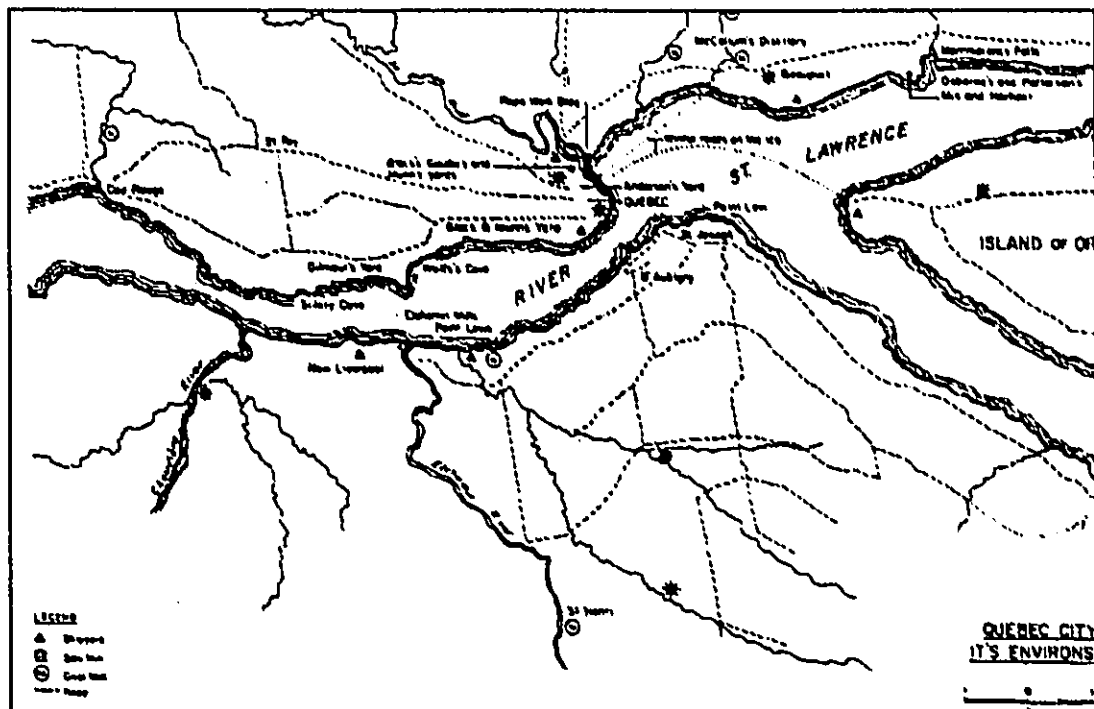
in a long violent strike in September 1867, was notable in that its membership included both Irish and French-Canadians.

The movement towards unionization began at the end of the season of 1857, as a protest against unemployment and reduced wages.³² The early organizers seem to have been Irish, and as J.L. Cooper has noted, none of the names on the petition for the 1862 Incorporation Act are found in the 1847 directory of Québec. One, Richard Burke, later a President of the *SLBS*, testified before the Royal Commission that he had begun attempting to organize longshoremen in 1854, a year after he began work in Québec. He also stated that he spent his winters during those early years working in Savannah; how formative that experience was is unknown. A charter (25 Vic. Cap. 98) was granted and four years later the first strike occurred as they sought to establish a closed shop.

There was an attempt to play off cheaper south shore laborers against the north shore members of the *SLBS*. The laborers of Levis, across the St. Lawrence, organized themselves "to remove any pretext for the unlawful interference of parties residing in this city" (See Map 2).³³ The trigger for the strike on Friday 20 July 1866, was the *Norwood*, which sailed leaving \$800 in wages unpaid to those who loaded it. Ship owners moved their vessels across the river but the *SLBS* crossed over and seized the vessels, stopping all loading. The

³² J.L. Cooper, "The Quebec Ship Labourers' Benevolent Society," *Canadian Historical Review*, 30:4 (December 1949): 339.

³³ "The Laborers of Levis," *Morning Chronicle*, 11 July 1866, p. 2.



Map 2 Québec City and Its Environs

Source: David T. Ruddel. *Quebec City, 1765-1832: The Evolution of a Colonial Town*. Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1987, p. 118.

Mercury suggested they be called the "malevolent" rather than benevolent society:

not only were these men themselves idle; but others were thrown out of work on their own account. There was of course no work for choppers, dressers, or laborers at the timber-coves, as there was no timber going out. Timber-towers and batteau men were also idle.³⁴

At a 23 July meeting, the Ship Masters agreed to accept the demand that wages be paid directly to the men, prior to the vessels' departure, and no longer to the stevedore who hired them. This is significant as the laborers had reached this agreement with the Ship Masters, who were anxious to leave port, not with the local merchants. The next day the merchants met. After declaring the strike

³⁴ "Ship Laborers' Strike," *Morning Chronicle*, 24 July 1866, p. 2.

illegal and issuing a warning that "Labour was simply a commodity, like everything else, and was regulated by the same laws", they unhappily followed suit.³⁵ The timber merchants may have been behind the letter signed "Fair Play" which appeared in the *Quebec Chronicle* on the day the Ship Masters gave in. The letter called for the repeal of the SLBS's charter and suggested that the predominantly francophone community of St. Roch would be prepared to work for less.³⁶

The date of the settlement, July 23, was marked by the annual demonstration of the identity and power of the ship laborers.³⁷ All work in the harbour stopped for their annual parade. Labourers, fined for non-attendance or drunken behaviour, assembled under their banners, with accompanying bands at the Mariner's Chapel. The parade wound its way up from Lower Town, through the Upper Town and returned to the Irish tenements of Champlain Street via the Plains of Abraham.

For the merchants the matter did not end there. In 1869 fragmentary records show the stevedores attempted to organize themselves into a society but a delegation of the Board of Trade went to the Private Bill Committee of the

³⁵ See Eugene Forsey, *Trade Unionism in Canada, 1812-1902*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982, p. 79. Cooper, pp. 340-341.

³⁶ "Part Played by Ship Laborers' Society in the History of the Port of Quebec," *Montreal Herald*, 4 May 1901, p. 13.

³⁷ Eugene Forsey, *Trade Unions in Canada, 1812-1902*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982, pp. 79-80.

Legislative Assembly and had the bill thrown out.³⁸ In 1877 a ship carrying deals for R.R. Dobell & Co. struck a rock after it left port. After repairs, it was reloaded from Dobell Company bateaux, not by the SLBS. As a result the SLBS declared all Dobell bateaux "hot".³⁹ The bad blood between this firm and the SLBS was the unspoken sub-text in the testimony by the two groups before the Royal Commission on the Relations between Labor and Capital. The testimony also came in the wake of John Ross & Co.'s letting of a contract to unload molasses to Narcisse Rosa, who was not a member of the SLBS. Rosa hired "sunflowers", casuals from around the dock and with a police guard of twenty men attempted to unload. Approximately 1,500 SLBS members blockaded and all donkey engine work in the harbor stopped. The SLBS thought that it was a deliberate attempt to break the union which had just made concessions to the merchants.⁴⁰

The greatest confrontation took place in August of 1879, the same year as Liverpool's Great Strike that united Protestant and Catholic, longshoreman and sailor. However in Québec the conflict was not an externally directed strike, but

³⁸ "The Board of Trade," *Morning Chronicle*, 7 April 1869, p. 2.

³⁹ The ship was the *Dunsmyre* and the events began on 16 August 1877. See "Part Played by Ship Laborers' Society in the History of the Port of Quebec," *Montreal Herald*, 4 May 1901, p. 13.

⁴⁰ This is the same Rosa who gives such vehement testimony against the SLBS before the *RCRL&C*, pp. 898-899. For the events of the dispute see: "Labor Troubles in Quebec," *Montreal Herald*, 9 June 1887, p. 1; and "The Quebec Labor Troubles," *Montreal Herald*, 11 June 1887, p. 1.

an internal conflict with divisions which ran so deep that for the first time since 1837 insurrection was an unspoken possibility. The causes were many. In part it was a reaction to the threat of the previous year's Orange Lodge disturbances.⁴¹ Also, the Irish would not release control of port jobs, nor would they lower wages to increase employment. The dissatisfied French-speaking members, 3,000 of the 5,000 member SLBS, formed L'Union Canadienne, and issued a schedule calling for lower wages and more jobs. The presence of a French warship, Vice-Admiral Peyron's frigate *La Galissonnière*, may have heightened differences during the month.⁴² The "new and cheap section of the Ship Labouring Society, known as L'Union Canadienne" announced they would march to show their "numbers to merchants and other interested" on August 15th.⁴³

In the week prior to the march very little was said in the papers about it. However subsequent testimony shows that a week prior to it, police Detective

⁴¹ The "B" Battery of Québec had been sent to keep the peace at the 1878 Orange parade in Montréal and tensions were so high that shots were fired at them from the dock in Québec as they embarked for Montréal. About 1,000 members of the Irish Catholic Union gathered on Dufferin Terrace and after calling for strict control of parades and condemning specifically the Orange parade, ended with their own parade. When rumours circulated that the commander of "B" battery had been killed in street fighting in Montréal crowds visited the hardware stores buying or taking revolvers. One hundred and fifty Irish labourers then left for Montréal armed with pistols and fired a volley as their steamer left the dock. See: "Telegraphic Despatches – Quebec," *Montreal Herald*, 10 July 1878, p. 3; 11 July 1878, p. 3; and 12 July 1878, p. 3.

⁴² It arrived on 2 August and its band played on Dufferin Terrace, a future battle site. *Morning Chronicle*, 4 August 1879, p. 1

⁴³"Telegraphic Despatches -- Quebec," *Montreal Herald*, 15 August 1879, p. 3.

Skefflington advised the military to remove the cannons from the Drill Shed. Some hardware stores packed their inventory of pistols and sent them to the Citadel for safe-keeping prior to the parade. Detective Skefflington waited at the site of the confrontation before it occurred, yet the Water Police, who patrolled the Lower Town, were not reinforced. The violence occurred in front of the Office of the Allan Line's Québec agent.

On the morning of August 15 the Union Canadienne, estimated by one source as 1,800 strong and by another as 3,000 started out from St. Sauveur to parade down St. Joseph, St. Paul, St. Peter and on to the Irish neighbourhood of Champlain Street, which ran along the coves and wharves. The Irish members of the SLBS prepared to welcome the parade to Champlain Street by removing four ships' cannons, which were filled with scrap iron and placed at Martin's Wharf, next to the Allan, Rae & Co. wharf. A line formed across Champlain Street at Allan & Rae's wharf, the Allan Line agent. Groups of men, women and boys gathered in the rocks above the road and in the upper stories of houses and businesses along the street. Two local officials tried to convince the parade not to continue. At 10:45 Captain Trudel of the Water Police left his fourteen men, who had recently had their pay reduced by 20%, under shelter and went out to talk to the parade. He failed and narrowly escaped a beating. A Shipping Master, Mr. Miller, also failed to stop the crowd, which jeered and pressed onward.

At about 11 a.m. they passed by a grocery store next to the Allan wharf and stones were thrown out of it at them. Detective Skeffington, in the Allan office door, reported rocks and shots coming from the cliffs above the street and upper stories of buildings, and saw women pour boiling water on the well dressed parade below. The casualties left behind in the parade's retreat included Pierre Giroux, a married man with eight children. The initial report stated he was killed by a shot, but later an all French-Canadian coroner's inquest found he had died from a stone to the head and a boat-hook over the left eye. A man called Fleurie from Indian Cove was reported to have died as a result of a gunshot to his lungs. Many of the injured were shot in the head from the cliff side of the road.⁴⁴ The newspaper accounts are based only on those wounded left behind by the paraders and all agree at least thirty were seriously wounded. The numbers were probably higher and the *Union Canadienne* claimed five dead.

The *Union Canadienne* fell back, regrouped, and at nearby Cap Blanc attacked three Irish houses, including one belonging to a widow. They then turned to the hardware stores in search of guns: twenty men entered Andrew's

⁴⁴ The initial list of wounded also included: David Giroux shot in throat, unlikely to recover; J. Bouchette shot in the groin and neck by his own pistol's discharge; Joseph Morin, ball in leg; Norbert Bourbeau, ball in right side of the head; Morisette, seriously wounded; Augustine Gosselin, lips carried away by rifle ball; Ward, badly beaten; Dionne, shot in the arm; Joseph Bourgot, shot in the shoulder; O'Gallagher, shot in the head; James Mallain, beaten in St. Sauveur and taken to St. Roch church for safety, and several others. Dr. Alleyn alone dressed wounds of twelve. See: "Rioting in Quebec," *Montreal Herald*, 16 August 1879, p. 2, and "The Riot Yesterday," *Morning Chronicle*, 16 August 1879, p. 3.

store on St. John Street, but the revolvers had already been sent to the Citadel. Shaw's store was broken into at noon and again at 5 p.m. with unknown results; weapons, at least 119, were taken from Julien & Frères, Samson's and other stores in St. Roch, where many of the paraders were from, and three barrels of gunpowder were taken from Martineau's.⁴⁵ The shutters went up quickly on the shops of Québec and all eyes were on the cove.

A reporter walking on Champlain Street in the aftermath found an uneasy quiet on the blood-covered streets as knots of predominately Irish men wondered what the French-Canadian response would be. One account states that it was not until this point that ship's cannons were seized and set up, two on Kinchello's wharf and another on Martin's wharf. Twenty families fled across the river to Point Levis and a number of the others placed their children at the Water Police Station, where the body of Pierre Giroux had been taken. One group claimed that no more than fifty of those in the parade had been ship labourers, but others openly referred to them as the No. 5 men, the St. Roch section of the union. The reporter concluded: "The difficulty has now assumed the appearance of a war of races, and where it will stop is a matter of grave uncertainty."⁴⁶

The French-Canadians marched through town to a meeting at Jacques Cartier market hall that afternoon. After the meeting a core group of eight

⁴⁵ "The Riot Yesterday," *Morning Chronicle*, 16 August 1879, p. 3

⁴⁶ "Rioting in Quebec," *Montreal Herald*, 16 August 1879, p. 2.

hundred, armed with rifles, shotguns and revolvers left the hall and went up the Crown Street steps to the Plains of Abraham:

where they and their friends assembled in large numbers, when they were able to muster 1,800 men duly armed with rifles, shot guns and revolvers and the like, a rush was made for the city, and the principle streets of the St. Louis suburbs were profaned by the rushing through them of the mob firing shots from their weapons and shouting most discordantly. Your informant did not hear if anyone was hurt. The Irishmen of the Cove are said to be in motion. At 6.10 p.m. the crowd is dispersing, the volunteers are to be turned out and bloody work may be expected before morning.⁴⁷

A second account stressed a smaller number but used more vivid language:

When the number there mounted to about 1,200 men, a rush was made for the city. Screaming like men possessed by demons, they dashed through the streets of Montcalm Ward, to a running accompaniment of revolvers and gunshots, driving all before them and smashing an occasional window on their way.⁴⁸

A number of doors were attacked with axes and as evening came on the truly serious nature of what had transpired began to sink in. The Mayor, R. Chambers, vacillated and turned his responsibility as first magistrate over to W.D. Campbell, who was furnished with the Riot Act. Two battalions, the 8th & 9th infantry, the Hussars Cavalry and "B" Battery were called out.⁴⁹ As night approached the Town was described thusly:

Crowds of men with guns, &c., on their shoulders paraded the streets all evening and insulted all the opposite nationalities they met. French

⁴⁷ "Rioting in Quebec," *Montreal Herald*, 16 August 1879, p. 2.

⁴⁸ "The Riot Yesterday," *Morning Chronicle*, 16 August 1879, p. 3.

⁴⁹ The unit strengths were 125 men for the 9th and 235 for the 8th. "The Labor Troubles," *Morning Chronicle*, 18 August 1879, p. 3.

and Irish seem doomed unfortunately to be again pitted against each other in Quebec, and nobody knows where the present reign of terror and bloodshed will end. Fears are entertained that either Champlain street, Montcalm Ward, or St. Roch's, or all of them may be fired before morning. The Provincial Parliament adjourned out of fear at seven o'clock and the Parliament House and all the approaches are barred and barricaded. Many residents have crossed the river to Levis for safety, and others have barricaded their homes. Strong men quiver and tremble for the fate of those who look to them for protection. At the present moment things look very serious, and perhaps before this appears in print the streets of Quebec will be dyed in blood.⁵⁰

Sporadic fighting continued with a steady number of casualties. As the weekend progressed French-Canadians on Dufferin Terrace rolled large boulders down onto the wooden houses of Champlain Street, 240 feet below. They were chased from there through the streets of Upper Town, in a running gun battle, by 180 Irish labourers with pistols and cutlasses.

Saturday afternoon seventy to one hundred unidentified men, marching in from the suburbs across the Plains of Abraham in military formation, with rifles on their shoulders, were dispersed by a cavalry charge. It was rumoured that a crowd of 15,000 was assembling at St. Roch. The first reports began to come in, later verified, that the arms had been taken from the Québec militia armouries in the surrounding countryside. Forty-two stands of Snider rifles were taken from Lorette and the Charlesbourg Armoury was also seized.⁵¹ The reports are

⁵⁰ "Rioting in Québec," *Montreal Herald*, 16 August 1879, p. 2.

⁵¹ How many rifles make up a stand is somewhat like asking how many geese make up a flock. However, the minimum to make a tripod stand of rifles is three, which would mean 126 rifles in a stand of forty-two. The "stand" could also be consist of five rifles (210), or could refer to a rifle rack of twelve or more. Author's telephone conversation with William Rawling, Historian, Department of National

unclear as to whether the Levis armoury was emptied by rioters or by the military as a precautionary measure. By Sunday the infantry, artillery and cavalry units were moving out of the city to break the supply lines between Lorette and St. Roch and orders had been given to remove the arms from the surrounding French-Canadian militia units.

In the city, violence continued as individuals on both sides fell prey to roving bands. Ignace Fortier was stabbed. At Cap Blanc a crowd beat a man called Dwyer as well as J. Crowley, "a feeble old man beaten almost to death without provocation". F. Trudel, a pistol waving carter, was dragged from his vehicle on Champlain Street and treated "shamelessly".⁵² The Friday night North Shore Railway train from Montréal was attacked and among those injured by stones was Bishop Racine of Chicoutimi. Mr. C. Gautier, an advocate, was beaten by a gang on John Street and had his leg broken.⁵³ Someone else beat Ellison the photographer and at midnight a gun battle erupted on Sous-le Fort street between six or eight men, two of whom were thought to have been fatally wounded.⁵⁴ Brown of Valier Street in St. Roch was the second man beaten on the Dorchester Bridge as he tried to get home. Private Spiers of the 8th

Defense, January 3, 1993.

⁵² "The Quebec Riots," *Montreal Herald*, 18 August 1879, p. 2; "The Labor Troubles," *Morning Chronicle*, 18 August 1879, p. 3.

⁵³ "Telegraphic Despatches -- Quebec," *Montreal Herald*, 19 August 1879, p. 3.

⁵⁴ "Telegraphic Despatches -- Quebec," *Montreal Herald*, 20 August 1879, p. 3.

Battalion left home after dinner and was disarmed, beaten and stabbed in the groin with his own bayonet. A carter named Healey went to Palais to buy hay and was beaten with sticks as his father and another carter fled for their lives. The street cars were stopped on St. Joseph Street and the crowd wanted the English-speaking conductors and drivers fired. French-Canadian demands for half the ship loading jobs and lower wages were said to have been delivered with a direct threat to roll barrels of burning tar off the heights of Dufferin Terrace onto the closely packed wooden houses of Champlain Street.⁵⁵

Smaller groups also received the attention of the Union Canadienne and deserve special mention. By the end of events the Lower Town Railway Co. was "constrained to discharge all their English-speaking drivers and conductors."⁵⁶ The American workers engaged on the graving dock and harbour works were ordered to leave. Then the Norwegian Consul and various Norwegian Ship Masters were said to have received threatening letters, signed l'Union Canadienne. The Norwegians received special attention because crew wages were twenty percent below those on vessels of other countries. They were very reliable, because Norway refused to let any sailor return to Norway unless they came back on the same vessel they left on. Since they had few deserters, were behind a linguistic barrier, rarely hired non-Norwegians and kept to themselves,

⁵⁵ "The Quebec Riots," *Montreal Herald*, 18 August 1879, p. 2.

⁵⁶ "Telegraphic Despatches -- Quebec," *Montreal Herald*, 21 August 1879, p. 3.

they represented a low-wage closed shop. Norwegian vessels also preferred to load using their own crews.⁵⁷

Recovery began first with the military, who slowly gained the upper hand in the days following, with few reports of skirmishes in the English press. On Saturday the Cavalry brought in the arms from the St. Foy militia. "B" Battery brought in those of the 17th Levis battalion and the guns of the Levis battery. The Lancers were said to have brought in the arms of the Charlesbourg company, while the 9th blockaded movement between Cap Blanc and St. Saveur. It was rumoured that St. Sauveur had the Portneuf arms. The Mayor of Montréal was telegraphed to ban the sale of all ammunition for Snider rifles, as the Lorette rifles were still missing.

Mediation between the warring groups was begun by the institution which bridged both cultures. By Saturday the Roman Catholic Church began an organized campaign to bring the two groups of ship labourers together. At City Hall, Reverend Grenier brought together the SLBS and L'Union Canadienne to negotiate. Edouard Lachance, Joseph Villeneuve and Joseph Lessard of L'Union Canadienne sat down with John Howard and James Paul of the SLBS and continued to insist that half the loading be given to them, and that wages be rolled back. In the media the conflict was being externalized. The day of Giroux's funeral it was reported that foreign agitators were in part to blame:

⁵⁷ See Testimony of John O'Farrell, Barrister. *RCRL&C*, pp. 840-842.

It is now stated that there are several French Communists living in St. Rochs, and that the recent troubles may in a great measure be attributed to their acts. One of them, Savard, was arrested in the suburbs last night while brandishing a pistol and inciting people to violence.⁵⁸

During the week the negotiations continued and on Thursday (21 August) it was agreed that both societies should have equal standing and neither should interfere with the other's members. The annual parade of the SLBS was to cease.

After ten days of violence the press responded with much self-congratulation and events took a lighter turn. Two boxes of insurrectionary dynamite taken off the Montréal train were opened at the police station and found to contain fireworks destined for a professor's experiments at Rivière du Loup. The dead Fleurie, shot down in the first wave of violence, was announced to be recovering nicely. As the cost of the riot, some \$10,000, was calculated, the hotels were said to be complaining of the great falling off of tourists.⁵⁹

No editorial comment connected the fact that the seal upon the agreement between the two unions came on the same day the British North American Fleet arrived, complete with the Governor General. The following day the Marquis of Lorne, flanked by French and British officers, reviewed the militia who had served during the outbreak, before paying them off.⁶⁰ Three days later the

⁵⁸ "Telegraphic Despatches -- Quebec," *Montreal Herald*, 20 August 1879, p. 3.

⁵⁹ "Telegraphic Despatches -- Quebec," *Montreal Herald*, 21 August 1879, p. 3.

⁶⁰ "Telegraphic Despatches -- Quebec," *Montreal Herald*, 22 August 1879, p. 3.

SLBS quietly voted to roll their wages back to the level demanded by the *Canadienne* and loading began on August 24.⁶¹

September brought a semblance of calm. After ten days in Quebec the Governor General moved on to visit Ottawa, and the navy quietly announced that H.M.S. *Tourmaline* would winter over in the port. Crews began repairing the masonry on Dufferin Terrace, and those whose houses had been destroyed in the riot started suits against the city.⁶² The Lorette rifles and others now admitted to have come from the Charlesbourg armoury were quietly recovered by the police on September 9.⁶³ At the end of September the Liberal party held a mass rally of 12-15,000 at St. Roch. The crowd was addressed by Joly, Langelier, Mercier and Wilfrid Laurier.⁶⁴

As September ended the groups began disengaging. The labour force of the port began its seasonal out migration. The *Montreal Herald* reported:

The annual fall migration of stevedores and ship labourers to Southern ports has commenced. Anticipations are that labour will be brisk this winter, and the probabilities are that a larger number than usual will

⁶¹ "Telegraphic Despatches -- Quebec," *Montreal Herald*, 25 August 1879, p. 3.

⁶² "Telegraphic Despatches -- Quebec," *Montreal Herald*, 25 August 1879, p. 3; 13 September 1879, p. 3.

⁶³ "Telegraphic Despatches -- Quebec," *Montreal Herald*, 5 September 1879, p. 3.

⁶⁴ "Telegraphic Despatches -- Quebec," *Montreal Herald*, 22 September 1879, p. 3.

go forward this fall. A telegram was received here from Savannah asking for five gangs of men.⁶⁵

A few days later thirty longshoremen left Champlain Street for the annual winter work in Norfolk, Virginia.⁶⁶ Others left for various ports to the south.

In the outlying villages young French-Canadian men began their own migration to the shanties of the lumbering districts, such as the eighty who left Etchemin in one week.⁶⁷ But tensions were still present; on October 6 the ship labourers of New Liverpool Cove argued, making "liberal use of pistols", but without injury.⁶⁸ November brought the end to harbour work, and even Captain Trudel's Water Police were paid off.

After the events of 1879 it was agreed that Ship Masters in Québec must hire equally among the French-Canadian and Irish ship labourers. In testimony before the *RCRL&C* Patrick Fitzgerald was asked about nationality and ship labourers:

Q -- Do all nationalities work together or are they divided in the hold of a timber ship?

A -- They are divided. Work is such in Quebec, gentlemen, that even the division of race is brought into the question. In commencing a ship, the number of men to work her, according to the by-laws, should

⁶⁵ "Telegraphic Despatches -- Quebec," *Montreal Herald*, 22 September 1879, p. 3.

⁶⁶ "Telegraphic Despatches -- Quebec," *Montreal Herald*, 27 September 1879, p. 3.

⁶⁷ "Telegraphic Despatches -- Quebec," *Montreal Herald*, 30 September 1879, p. 3.

⁶⁸ "Telegraphic Despatches -- Quebec," *Montreal Herald*, 6 October 1879, p. 3.

be half English and half French speaking, consequently the stevedore with an eye to his own pocket, places one nationality on the starboard side of the ship and the other nationality on the port side -- the French speaking on the one side and the English speaking on the other side, and from the time the work starts until it is finished, it is a race between both nationalities to see who shall finish their side first. The consequence is, the men in Quebec do a terribly hard day's work all through, the stevedore knowing that by dividing nationalities the men will work all the harder, and so hard do they work in order to compete with one another and to keep the ship trimmed, that I do not believe at the present rate of working they could possibly work more than eight hours in a day, and in that time a Quebec ship laborer does as much and more than they do in any other port in ten hours.⁶⁹

There is an old work song "Donkey Riding" connected to this industry. It asks if you were ever in Québec, loading timber on the deck, and did you see who was sitting on top of the donkey engine, which would have been manually powered by members of the SLBS. In one verse, it is the Lion and the Unicorn, the two halves of the union, and in another verse, the figure is a man with a crown of gold. This pre-strike work song, sung in many of the ports described in this chapter, took on a sub-text as a trade union lament about racial tension and capitalism.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Testimony of Patrick Fitzgerald. *RCRL&C*, p. 751.

⁷⁰ The song "Donkey Riding", sung to the tune of "Highland Laddie", is found in the ports feeding Glasgow and Liverpool. It opens with: "Were you ever in Québec/Stowing timber on the deck/where there's a king with a golden crown/riding on a donkey" and the second verse: "Seeing the Lion and the Unicorn/Riding on a Donkey." One version pre-dates the events of 1879. It was sung by cotton stowers in Mobile, Alabama in 1857, and refers to the ports of Québec, Dundee, Mobile and the "Merrimashee" (Miramichi, N.B.). Edith Fulton Fowke, *Folk Songs of Canada*. Waterloo: Waterloo Music Co., 1954, 38-39; William Main Doerflinger, *Shantymen and Shantyboys: Songs of the Sailor and the Lumberman*. New York: Macmillan, 1951, p. 50.

Square Timber's Legacy

The picture that emerges shows some of Lower's observations to be true. There was an outpouring of labourers, but it was part of a much earlier pattern of seasonal work. The SLBS rules were a factor in the decline of the port, as Lower said. He failed, however, to discuss the social tensions and ethnic and linguistic rivalry revealed in the events of 1879. At times, Great Britain's Woodyard was a volatile and bloody place.

As improvements in the channel to Montréal increased steamer access, the larger steamship lines bypassed Québec in favour of Montréal where steam loading was common and less skilled labourers worked a ten hour day. The Allan line was one of the main shippers to switch. They even had rafts brought back from Québec to be loaded in Montréal, where deals were loaded ten to a sling into the cargo holds of iron steamers. Québec's aging wooden hulled sail driven timber ships were themselves victims of the 1876 enactment of the Plimsoll Act.⁷¹ As the number of vessels calling at Québec dropped, the union became even more insistent on maintaining its members' rights to the maximum amount of a diminishing opportunity, driving shipping lines away from the port. Opportunities in southern ports became an economic choice of necessity for winter survival for longshoremen. A more permanent out migration may have

⁷¹ Bryan Latham. *History of the Timber Trade Federation of the United Kingdom: The First Seventy Years*. London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1965, p. 19.

ensued. While the SLBS did contribute to the decline of the port, they were also victims of that decline.

There was a decline in demand for square timber. However, more astute observers drew attention to changing spatial dimension of the timber trade. Elsewhere on the St. Lawrence many found it more convenient to ship directly from the mill, by vessel, barge or railcar.⁷² John O'Farrell pointed to the shift to iron hulls at the Clyde as contributing to the dropping demand for large timber, coupled with the shift of British buyers to the pine forests of the Southern U.S., whose pitch pine was:

for all purposes, except the manufacture of furniture . . . superior to our red pine, and which was put down at nearly half the price, that also diminished the number of ships coming into Quebec, as many ships went to the States for cargo in summer. Then, the channel of Lake St. Peter was deepened so as to allow steamers to go to Montreal with their cargo, and they shipped from Montreal deals, manufactured near Ottawa. In this way they manufactured, and do now manufacture, deals and other lumber in large quantities, which were brought down (as they are now) in barges through the canal to Montreal, where they were put on board the steamers, taking so much away from the mills at Quebec and vicinity, so that the trade at the latter places disappeared on account of the return cargo which these barges were, and are, able to take back after they have delivered the sawn lumber in Montreal.⁷³

⁷² Testimony of Frederick Henry Andrews, Secretary of the Quebec Board of Trade, *RCRL&C*, p. 804.

⁷³ Testimony of John O'Farrell, Barrister, *RCRL&C*, p. 841. O'Farrell may be a very early labour lawyer. He states he had personal knowledge of twenty cases of non-payment of longshoremen and used the following phrase in his testimony in regards to why longshoremen were no longer at the mercy of ship stowers for their wages: "...why? Because union is strength".

Note the reference to the loss of resawing rafts at the mills around Québec and the loss of the import trade, a withering of diversification in the surrounding local economy. The causes of the demise of square timber at Québec were many: world markets, changes in ship building, loading technology that favoured the convenience of short timber, union intransigence, the independence that barges and railways gave to interior sawmills, and competition from Montréal all had an effect. Both square timber and the port of Québec were slowly being disengaged from the world trade system.

But the SLBS itself refused to fade away or become an anachronistic relic of an older world. In 1887 their rules were found *ultra vires* by Chief Justice Casault in the Paradis case. The union ignored his findings. In 1890 they were told to submit their bylaws to the Provincial Legislature for approval by the Lt. Governor. They ignored that order and carried on as before. Their Act of Incorporation was repealed in 1895 for failure to comply. They ignored its repeal. Another case was begun in 1899 to supposedly wrap up their affairs, but the court orders to produce their books and funds were ignored. And as a reporter discussing them in 1901 noted, this non-existent union had at the time of his writing just won a victory against the Great Northern Railway over loading

Twenty-three years earlier a cove manager wrote to his employer, James MacLaren, that a lawyer called Farrell was suing for \$40 in damages for lost time for a culler sent up to measure deals. MacLaren's lawyer, one of the Hamiltons, advised ignoring Farrell but warned the firm should be quickly registered in Québec as "Farrell will use it against us". ANQ-Hull, Industrie James MacLaren Ltd., M-1-3-17, William Cream to James MacLaren, 24 July 1866.

the Leyland line of steamers.⁷⁴ The square timber trade set the form and the Ship Laborer's Benevolent Society of Québec used it to become that form of trade unionism we now refer to by the twentieth century term, longshoreman.

⁷⁴ "Part Played by Ship Laborers' Society in the History of the Port of Quebec," *Montreal Herald*, 4 May 1901, p. 13.

CHAPTER 5

CAPITAL DIVERSIFIED: REGIONAL INVESTMENT

Introduction

As Canada's economy diversified under industrialism, the lumber industry as described by Arthur Lower appears isolated and unconnected. He tells us fortunes were made, some of which built Montréal's "Golden Mile" of wealthy homes, and that capital as well as trees went south. Lower did not attempt to address how and to what end the capital generated by the lumber industry was redeployed. That question was answered for Lower's generation by the portrait of regional development in Donald Creighton's *Commercial Empire of the St. Lawrence* (1937), still a book of profound influence. Both Gerald Tulchinsky and Brian Young's work on regional economies based in Montréal trace some lineage to Creighton.¹ Development in central Canada does flow in a readily observed arc along the St. Lawrence from Montréal to Toronto, accentuated today by rail and road. It is easy to make the assumption that regional economies and

¹ Gerald J. J. Tulchinsky, *The River Barons: Montreal Businessmen and the Growth of Industry and Transportation, 1837-53*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977. Brian J. Young, *Promoters and Politicians: The North-Shore Railways in the History of Quebec, 1854-85*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978.

investments will also neatly follow these geographic dictates, these metropolitan hierarchies. In the case of James MacLaren, this is much less evident.

Some of MacLaren's money was re-invested in the regional economy of the Ottawa Valley, primarily in real estate. When he needed additional money to invest he turned to Burlington, Vermont and Albany, New York, not the financial communities of Montréal or Toronto. After dabbling in small local mines and railways that ran only a few miles, his next railway venture, the Central Ontario Railway, was a factor in a turning point in the evolution of Canada's resource industries -- J.P. Morgan's control of the most strategic mineral deposit in Ontario's history. In this investment most of MacLaren's partners were from Cleveland, not Toronto or Montréal. In the next chapter we will look at the Bank of Ottawa, another regional institution he founded, independent of Toronto and Montréal capital. None of these decisions were extensions of the commercial empire of the St. Lawrence. MacLaren's vision of region struggled against, or cut directly north and south across, this traditional element of Canadian historiography. His decisions about investment opportunities, while certainly influenced by external markets, contained a distinctive regional perspective.

MacLaren's diversification is also interesting because of his preference for investing in primary industries or their supporting structures, railways, rather than manufacturing. This makes him more representative than many Montréal and Toronto manufacturers of the long term pattern of Canadian economic

development, resource over industrial investment, as emphasized by Tom Naylor.² Staples theory posits that the extractive industry should generate spin-off manufacturing. MacLaren's capital pool from lumbering was applied in the opposite manner, back into resource extraction. As we will see in the next chapter his bank did the same. Lessons learned in working with capital in one staple industry were applied to others with similar characteristics.

I Buying Up Ottawa

James MacLaren's investment in the urban real estate of Canada's capital is comparable in scale to few other transactions, except perhaps the real estate ventures of the Sulpicians in nineteenth century Montréal.³ The transactions concerning the estate of Lieutenant Colonel John By involved a massive block of property in Ottawa (See Map 3).⁴ MacLaren bought the title to much of downtown Ottawa from the British, in part by using American credit.

When Colonel By oversaw the surveying of Ottawa as part of the Rideau Canal construction he acquired substantial real estate holdings. The undeveloped Concessions C and D were originally patented in 1801 to Grace McQueen and

² Tom Naylor, *History of Canadian Business, 1867-1914*. Toronto: James Lorimer, 1975, vol. I, p. 14-15.

³ Brian Young, *In Its Corporate Capacity: The Seminary of Montreal as a Business Institution, 1816-1876*. Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986.

⁴ Robert F. Legget, "John By", *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Volume VII (1836-50), pp. 128-131.

were resold to By in 1832.⁵ After his death in 1836, his 600 acre estate remained fairly intact as Ottawa developed. By the 1870s the boundaries of the City began to touch upon those of the estate. Absentee ownership, mired in legal complications created by the death of both By's heirs and his executors, tied up the estate. These legal problems and the land's proximity led to squatting.⁶ Finally, in 1876 the London administrators, Edward Tyler and Edward Moberly, began to dispose of the By estate through their Ottawa lawyer, Henry Cooper Henderson.⁷ James MacLaren and his partner in the venture, Charles Magee, negotiated with the estate to purchase the unsold lands. Magee had experience in Ottawa real estate and had been the administrator of the Sparks estate (See Map 3). MacLaren provided the capital.

⁵ Lots D and E of Concessions C and D were patented from the Crown to Grace McQueen on 20 May 1801. They were sold to John By on 6 February 1832 for £1200. City of Ottawa. Land Registry. RO489, Abstract Index. Nepean 6 Concession C.R.F. Lots A-O.

⁶ As late as 1862 only three building lots had been sold. See Robert F. Legget's discussion of the estate problem in his *John By Lieutenant Colonel, Royal Engineers, 1779-1836*. Ottawa: Historical Society of Ottawa, 1982, pp. 48-50. Also, Robert Legget. *Rideau Waterway*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, [1955], 1986, pp. 256-7. Legget states the authority on the will itself is Dr. Edwin Welch, formerly City Archivist and now Archivist of the Northwest Territories, Yellowknife.

⁷ Both were part of the firm of Tyler, Wickham & Moberly, Solicitors, 14 Essex Street [London], Middlesex, England. Their authority to sell was based on an indenture of 31 October 1856.

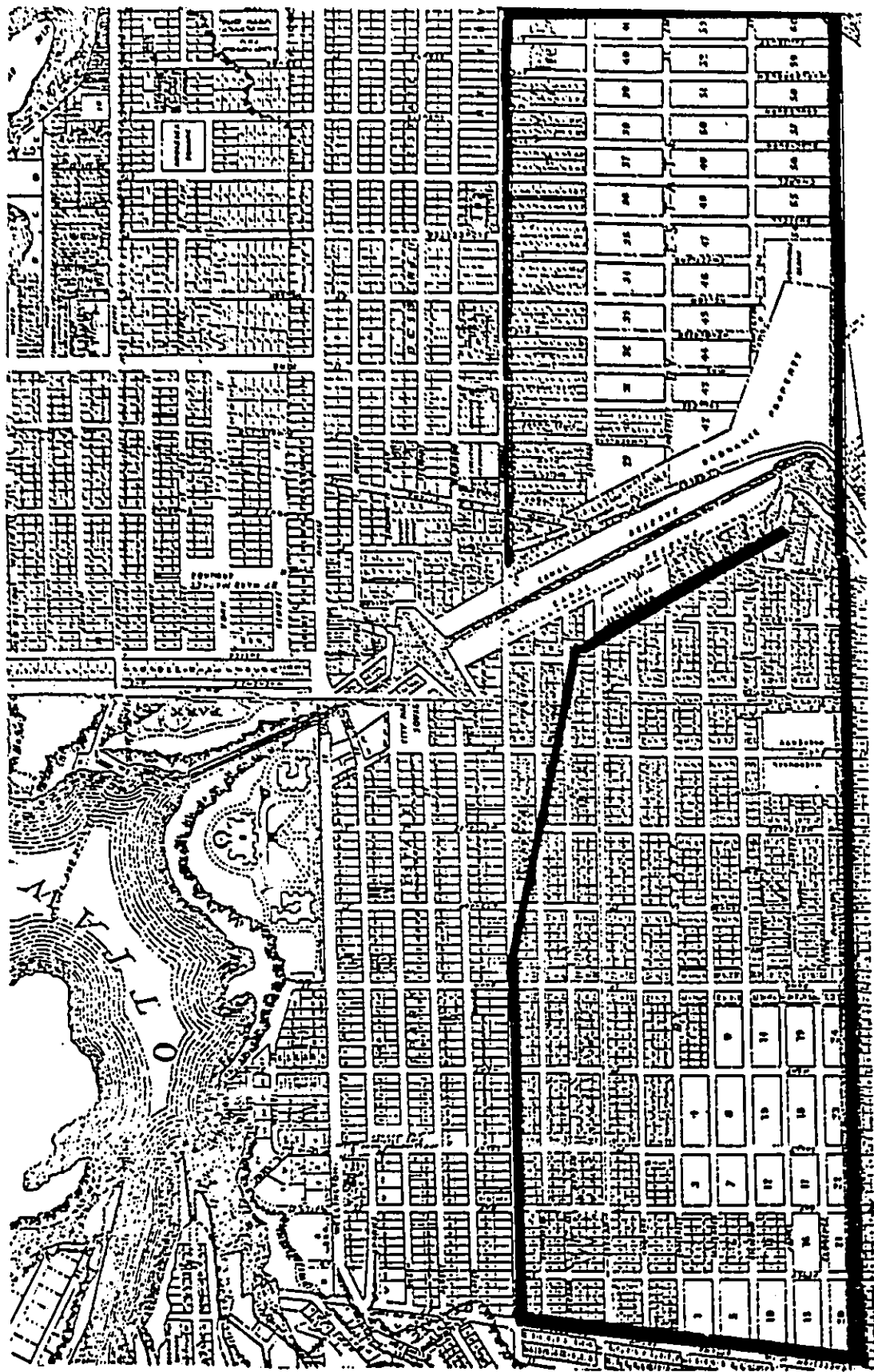
The sale was arranged on 14 July 1876 for \$500,000, of which it is probable \$100,000 was paid in cash.⁸ On the morning of 14 September 1876 an indenture of sale and a mortgage for \$400,000 was registered by MacLaren and Magee's lawyer, Alexander James Christie, to purchase Lots D and E of Concessions C and D.⁹ This venture gave James MacLaren control over half of what is now downtown Ottawa. MacLaren and Magee were to pay for the estate through a carefully controlled sequence of annual payments and releases of titles of city lots over ten years. The first annual payment of \$30,000 was due in August 1877 and several banks, including MacLaren's own Bank of Ottawa, were named for the remittance of Bills of Exchange.

The real estate partnership was added a third partner. Robert Blackburn, a wealthy Ottawa merchant who owned woollen mills on the Rideau River, entered the partnership. On 15 January 1877 the three, with their barrister A.J. Christie, entered into a "partnership speculation".¹⁰ MacLaren controlled half,

⁸ City of Ottawa. Land Registry. The sale is CR14347, registered on 14 September 1876. The mortgage is CR14351 of the same date. Microfilm Reel 5-498.

⁹ City of Ottawa Archives. Land Register F. No. 5 (Copybook 164), Indenture No. 14351, 14 September, 1876. Each year on the first of August they were to remit \$30,000 until 1881. From 1882 until 1886 they were to pay \$50,000. A limited number of lots were to be released as each payment was received. Taxes and assessments were to be split equally between the two parties. MacLaren and Magee were to pay semiannually, in sterling, the interest on the balance, at an exchange rate fixed at £1 4s. 4p.

¹⁰ City of Ottawa Archives. Land Register F. No. 5 (Copybook 164), Indentures No. 14895 and 14896, 15 January 1877.



Map 3 The By Estate, Ottawa, circa 1879.
Historical Atlas of Carleton County, Ontario. Toronto: H. Belden & Co., 1879, pp. 8-9.

Magee and Blackburn each held a quarter. All three partners in this speculative real estate venture had another connection, they were all directors of the Bank of Ottawa.¹¹

The property rights of the wives of all three partners received special attention in the legal documents for both the purchase and partnership. On the original purchase agreement Ann MacLaren and Fanny Magee both held Dower, the estate they brought to each marriage. It was specifically barred from liability. When the partnership was set up with Robert Blackburn, his wife Mary, together with Ann and Fanny, released all claim of Dower when they and their husbands transferred the By estate in trust to their lawyer.¹²

The partners worked closely with municipal officials, probably through Magee. Even before the sale and mortgage were registered they developed plans for lots and roads in the new subdivision. At times they argued with the City, for a reduction in taxes on lots that they claimed were still farmlands. A local printer produced legal documentation printed with their names by a local legal stationer that included their names, the indenture for selling a lot, with their names and the general description of the subdivision.¹³

¹¹ It is unfortunate that both Bank, legal and City records regarding the land after the original mortgage was discharged have not survived.

¹² City of Ottawa Archives. Land Register F. No. 5 (Copybook 164), Indentures No. 14895 and 14896, 15 January 1879.

¹³ For example see the Indenture of Sale with William Henry Waller for two lots for \$1300 on 14 October 1881. Hill and Hill, NAC, MG 28 III 46, vol. 9, file 284.

It took MacLaren only three years to pay off the half million dollar property, despite an economic depression.¹⁴ MacLaren described raising his final payment in an 1879 letter to William Cream. MacLaren used both his British and American lumber connections to raise the money. He drew £10,000 against sales in London and travelled to Albany, New York to raise the £52,000 he needed for the transaction with Robert Blackburn. He wrote that he intended to get £26,000 out of the business and borrow the other half for six months from the Bank of Montreal. He arranged \$20,000 in Albany and the next day another \$20,000 out of his share in the Shepard & Morse lumber company, in Burlington, Vermont.¹⁵

Slowly, over the next twenty-five years, the group and its heirs disposed of the lots and left behind its names and those of other lumbermen on streets such as Blackburn, Gilmour, MacLaren and Russell (a former partner of Magee). This real estate venture anchored MacLaren economically, politically and socially within the commercial heart of the regional economy.

¹⁴ The City registers show the indenture as discharged on 14 August 1879. City of Ottawa Archives. Land Register F. No. 67 (Copybook 165), Indenture No. 17877, 14 August 1879.

¹⁵ James MacLaren, Shepard & Morse Lumber Co, Burlington, Vermont, to William Cream, 22 April 1879, M-8-2-209.

II Local Railways, Local Mines

The Ottawa Valley was also a part of nineteenth century railway activity. The statutory record shows 68 acts relating to establishing, operating and merging railways or branch lines through the Ottawa Valley from 1846 to 1912.¹⁶ Unlike his colleagues, such as Thomas Keefer, a fellow shareholder of the Bank of Ottawa, James MacLaren was only slightly touched by railroad fever.¹⁷ His investments, even when unsuccessful, had a clear rationale related to resource extraction, or strategic control of a hinterland. Railways were a means of both capitalizing on MacLaren's real estate and integrating the regional economy.

The most notable railway battle was fought over how the Ottawa Valley would be integrated into a national network beginning in Montréal. One group favoured a southerly route across the lower Ottawa Valley, connecting Montréal with Toronto. Others supported Sir Hugh Allan, such as lumberman George Bryson, MacLaren's founding partner in the Bank of Ottawa, and the local merchant community. His Montreal Northern Colonization Railway down the

¹⁶ The statutes start with the 1846 Montreal and Lachine Rail-road Co. (9 Vic., Cap. 82). The full list, available from the author, has been cut for reasons of space. Like a footnote in Innis' doctorate, it runs across three pages. Compiled from: Canada. Department of Transport. *A Statutory History of the Steam and Electric Railways of Canada 1836-1937*. Compiled by Robert Dorman. Ottawa: King's Printer, 1938.

¹⁷ T.C. Keefer. *Philosophy of Railroads*. H.V. Nelles, Editor. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972 Reprint.

Ottawa Valley connected with his own Montréal-based oceanic steamship line.¹⁸ James MacLaren was a friend of Hugh Allan, yet Allan's line to Hull deliberately bypassed Buckingham, despite local petitions.¹⁹ From Ottawa the line was to go across northern Ontario to tap trade from the upper Great Lakes and the West.

Ottawa businessmen supported another connecting line to Allan's project, the Toronto and Ottawa Railway, which also included Ottawa as a railway depot.²⁰ The City Council voted \$200,000 in debentures for the project.²¹ As the political wrangling over railways shifted in favour of the Canadian Pacific

¹⁸ See Robert Peter Gillis, "George Bryson," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, XIII, p. 134; and for the full context, Brian Young. *Promoters and Politicians. The North-Shore Railways in the History of Quebec, 1854-85*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978, p. 74. In March 1871 MacLaren wrote: "I was in Montreal last week trying to induce the City of Montreal to give \$1,000,000 for a railway up the North Shore of the Ottawa past this place. . . There was about 24 people from this Country down. I think we made a favourable impression on the City Fathers of Montreal but how long it may last is hard to say." James MacLaren to William Cream, 7 March 1871, M-3-1-93.

¹⁹ Pierre Louis Lapointe suggests MacLaren may have deliberately discouraged the entry of railways into the river system he logged, in order to maintain a close control on both resources and population. When the Buckingham and Lievre Railway was incorporated the MacLaren's were surprisingly absent. See: Pierre Louis Lapointe. *Buckingham, In the Heart of the Lower Lievre District, the City of Buckingham From Its Earliest Beginnings, 1824-1990*. Buckingham: City of Buckingham, 1990, pp. 122, 216; "An Act to Incorporate the Buckingham and Lievre Railway Company," Canada. *Statutes*, 55-56 Vic., Cap. 32.

²⁰ Young, *Promoters and Politicians*, pp. 41-42. A delegation from Ottawa met with Premier J.A. Chapleau about the matter of a depot and provincial subsidies. City of Ottawa Archives. City of Ottawa. *Minutes of the City Council*, 4 October 1880.

²¹ City of Ottawa Archives. *Minutes of the City Council*, 9 December 1880.

Railway, the city, building on the depot idea, attempted to obtain the CPR workshops. A \$100,000 subsidy was offered, including 100 acres of land and tax exemptions in exchange for a minimum of 600 jobs. The City offered to double the cash subsidy if Ottawa was also on the transcontinental main line.²² By the 1880s MacLaren's real estate holdings contained the best location and most contiguous lands for the railway depot.

While MacLaren himself kept a low public profile on local railway questions, major shareholders in his bank did not. Shareholders of the Bank of Ottawa, such as Charles Magee, Francis Clemow, and Dr. John Sweetland worked for a railway depot in the local municipal arena. Bank shareholders made up the majority of the citizen's advisory board for the Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa and Occidental Railway in 1880.²³ The supporters of the Ottawa, Waddington and New York Railway and Bridge Company in 1882, which planned to put a railway bridge across the St. Lawrence at Morrisburg, included a who's who of Bank of Ottawa shareholders: Charles Magee, Robert Blackburn, Thomas Mackay, Levi Church, Charles Bate, Thomas Keefer, Joseph Tassé M.P., J.M. Currier M.P., and Senators James Skead and Richard Scott. Their U.S. counterparts included Thomas Durant, President of the Adirondack Railway Company and Leslie

²² City of Ottawa Archives. *Minutes of the City Council*, 5 November 1881 and 5 December 1881.

²³ City of Ottawa Archives. *Minutes of the City Council*, 5 July 1880.

Russell, Attorney-General for New York State.²⁴ The strangest of the Ottawa-based projects was the visionary Ottawa River -- Georgian Bay canal, following the original fur trade route.²⁵ More successful was the steel rail reality of John Rudolph Booth's Ottawa and Parry Sound Railway, built in 1888 primarily to move forest products. Charles Magee was a shareholder in Booth's railway, but not James MacLaren.²⁶

There were two patterns to Ottawa railway promoters. They were either struggles for their share of national railway integration, or a pragmatic attempt to secure north-south linkages between lumber producers and their U.S. markets. In one case the Ottawa business community was attempting to cut across the "Empire of the St. Lawrence" to U.S. markets, on the other to divert trans-Canada freight and jobs northward from the Toronto-Montréal axis. These elites

²⁴ "An Act to Incorporate the Ottawa, Waddington and New York Railway and Bridge Company," Canada. *Statutes*, 45 Vic., Cap. 77 (1882).

²⁵ A short history of the Ottawa-Lake Huron project is given in Robert Legget's *Ottawa River Canals and the Defence of North America*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988, Appendix D, The Georgian Bay Ship Canal, pp. 243-77.

²⁶ Unlike Booth, MacLaren did not use railways to supply his Ottawa Valley mills. On the Lievre MacLaren limited his transportation improvements to the river itself, although several of the smaller mines in the region did build tramways. Booth's line, which brought logs to his Ottawa mills from what is now Algonquin Park, was later renamed the Ottawa, Arnprior and Parry Sound Railway. See: "An Act to Incorporate the Ottawa and Parry Sound Railway Company," Canada. *Statutes*, 51 Vic., Cap. 65, Section 1. For a non-academic view of the line see: Niall MacKay. *Over the Hills To Georgian Bay: A Pictorial History of the Ottawa, Arnprior and Parry Sound Railway*. Erin, Ontario: Boston Mills Press, 1981.

of Ottawa's business community had a consistent and distinct vision of themselves as players in the Toronto-Montréal-New York metropolitan rivalry.

Locally the MacLaren family avoided involving themselves publicly in railway promotion. But they were directors in two local railways, both based in Hull. While James MacLaren's sons were involved in Hull's first street railway, the Hull Electric Railway, it was Charles Magee who sat on the early board.²⁷ The MacLarens did not join the board until David did in 1898, with Albert following in 1901. It was a street railway linking Aylmer to Hull and delivering freight and workmen to the E.B. Eddy plant and the Gilmour and Hughson lumber mill.

James MacLaren's first railway was the Hull Mines Railway. It ran down the Gatineau River a mere 6 1/2 miles, bringing out poor grade iron ore from the Hull Iron Company to barges on the Ottawa River.²⁸ MacLaren's business partners all had similar small railways. Robert Blackburn had a phosphate

²⁷ The Bank of Ottawa itself was closely involved in this venture. In 1897 the paid capital for the railway was \$285,900 of the \$300,000 authorized and the Bank of Ottawa held \$233,130 in demand notes at 6%. By 1901 this had grown to \$518,297.35. Shortly thereafter, in 1903 the railway was sold to Montréal interests and no floating debt appears in the annual statements. NAC, RG 46, Records of the Canadian Transport Commission. III Reports of Steam and Electric Railways 1875-1903, vol 1093, Hull Electric Railway, 1897-1908. Annual Reports.

²⁸ "An Act to Incorporate the Hull Mines Railway Company," Canada. *Statutes*, 44 Vic., Cap. 49.

railway in the region.²⁹ Magee and Blackburn were also directors of another local railway, the four and a half mile Pontiac and Renfrew (1889-1895), serving the Bristol Iron Mines.³⁰

These small railways seem unimportant, but they were MacLaren's first experimental steps into mining and railways. His next investment, the Central Ontario Railway, integrated mining, lumber, speculation and transportation on a much larger scale. The railway itself was the scene of a complex battle for control, not only for the railway and its hinterland, but the mining companies connected to it. It was part of the direct entry of American corporate capital into the Canadian resource sector.

²⁹ Mica and phosphate, often found together, were identified on the Lievre as early as 1829 and mining local graphite deposits began in 1866. Phosphate mines were very active from 1872-1894. F.L. Ingall. *Report of the Commissioners...*, Québec, 1830, pp. 257-277.

³⁰ RG 46, Records of the Canadian Transport Commission. III Reports of Steam and Electric Railways 1875-1903, vol 1007, Pontiac and Renfrew Railway. Annual Reports, 1889-1901. Magee was listed as President in the 1890 report and 5,451 tons of ore were moved. Attached to the 1893 report is a letter to Collingwood Schreiber from Secretary Edward, 14 November 1893. It lists Robert Blackburn, Hiram Robinson and Charles Magee as directors. P. O'Connor was the General Manager and Saul Young the engineer. Authorized capital was \$250,000, \$100,000 subscribed and only \$20,000 paid capital. Dominion and Quebec bonuses and subsidies were \$31,033. The mine/line was closed from 1894-96, shipped 1,000 tons in 1897 and remained closed through to 1901.

III The Central Ontario Railway and INCO

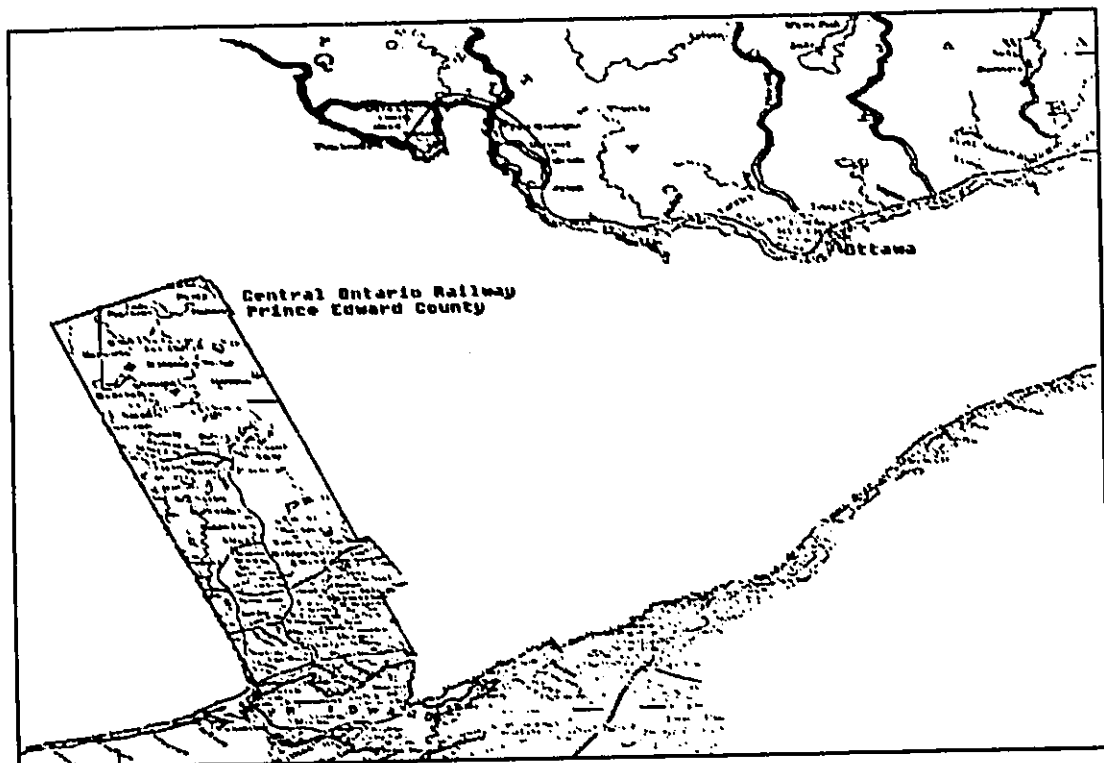
The Central Ontario, originally the Prince Edward County Railway, ran from Trenton, on Lake Ontario, north into Hastings County, an area of considerable mining and lumbering potential. To the west, lumbermen such as E.W. Rathburn and Mossom Boyd and the Ottawa Valley's Gilmours, used the Trent-Severn waterway to move logs out.³¹ The Central Ontario Railway opened up a lumber and mining region which lacked a river system for transportation. Transportation had delayed the opening of the region and impeded access to its timber (See Map 4). But it was mining that drove the railway's construction.

Local interests had been involved in promoting a Prince Edward County railway since the first local charter in 1853, but progress was fitful until a second attempt in 1873.³² These thirty-four miles of line were of little consequence until a buyer appeared for the railway. In November 1880, a year after it began regular operations, it was bought by George William McMullen and his brothers Henry and James.

George McMullen is one of Canada's most infamous, yet paradoxically forgotten, railwaymen. It was George who sold the Liberals his cache of letters detailing how funds flowed from American railway capitalists to the Canadian

³¹ See: James T. Angus, *A Respectable Ditch: A History of the Trent-Severn Waterway, 1833-1920*. Kingston and Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988.

³² "An Act to Incorporate the Prince Edward Railway Company," Province of Canada. *Statutes*, 16 Vic., Cap. 245, and "An Act to Incorporate the Prince Edward County Railway Company," Canada. *Statutes*, 36 Vic., Cap. 73.



Map 4 Central Ontario Railway, Prince Edward County

cabinet, through Sir Hugh Allan. The resulting "Pacific Scandal", brought down Macdonald's government in 1873.³³ McMullen left Canada to attend family banking business in Chicago and avoided testifying at the subsequent Royal Commission. How the McMullens financed the purchase of the Central Ontario Railway ten years later is unclear.

In the 1880s, as iron and steel interests in Pittsburgh and Cleveland fought for market dominance, their search for easily transported iron ore brought them to the iron-ore deposits of Hastings County. Two local mines were purchased by

³³ For testimony by one of George's brothers, a Chicago banker, and copies of the letters see: Canada. *Journals of the House of Commons*. VII (1873), Appendix No. 1 Report of the Royal Commission, also, *Montreal Herald*, 4 July 1873.

the Johnstown Steel Co. and Andrew Carnegie's Bethlehem Iron Co.³⁴ Mining statements from the region show that in 1885 ore was being moved out to Cleveland and Philadelphia from Hastings and Madoc, much going to Bethel Iron Co.³⁵

Within a year the McMullens were partners with a group of American investors, Republican steel men from Cleveland, Ohio.³⁶ One member of the group was Samuel J. Ritchie who eventually bought the McMullins shares. He first came to the region looking for a timber supply for the wooden wheel division of a carriage firm, finding instead large deposits of iron ore. Ritchie, an American entrepreneur, claimed a vague connection with Andrew Carnegie.

Ritchie's strategy was to extend the railway in order to export the ore via Trenton to iron and steel works in Cleveland. Ritchie lobbied through a bill in 1882 which changed the name of the railway to the Central Ontario Railway and added clauses allowing dock construction.³⁷ The new Central Ontario Railway was granted the unusual right for the company to own mines and to expropriate

³⁴ The Dufferin and Nelson mines.

³⁵ NAC, RG 87, vol. 18, file 81, Iron Ore, Pig Iron and Steel, 1885-1888. These obscure records of the Mineral Resources Branch are mine reports arranged by mineral. They include confidential annual reports from across Canada listing information on the company directors, the mine, its equipment, production, costs and profits, wages and workers, and work season.

³⁶ The group's connections included future President William McKinley. O.W. Main, *The Canadian Nickel Industry: A Study in Market Control and Public Policy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1955, n. 19, p. 52.

³⁷ Incorporated under the Ontario Act 45 Vic. Cap. 61, 10 March 1882.

mineral deposits as well as farmlands. Owners of iron-ore deposits sold out in the face of being denied access to transportation. It is alleged that even the terminus of the railway was changed in order to expropriate a possible mine site.³⁸ O.W. Main summarizes the purpose of the Central Ontario Railway as "to secure a monopolistic control of iron-ore mining in the district through the twin levers of expropriation and complete control over the means of transportation."³⁹

After the railway approached the Conservative government for a subsidy, the McMullens were quietly dropped as directors. The reason is again unclear, but it seems likely that the "Pacific Scandal" and who caused it, had not been forgotten by the government. In February 1885 in Cleveland, Ritchie bought the McMullens 1080 preferred shares and 1800 common shares. The same day he transferred 750 preferred and 1115 common shares to James MacLaren.⁴⁰ The implication is that MacLaren supplied the funds to buy out the McMullens.

MacLaren was also involved in the iron mines. In partnership with a local iron mine owner, William Coe of Madoc, Ritchie formed the North Hastings Iron

³⁸ Main, *The Canadian Nickel Industry*, n.56, p. 14. Investigation of the House of Commons Debates cited by Main uphold the allegations.

³⁹ Main, *The Canadian Nickel Industry*, 1955, p. 14.

⁴⁰ RG 30, vols. 1195 & 1196. Papers of the Canadian National Railway -- Central Ontario Railway Company -- Certificates of Stock, 1884-1939; 1884-1941.

Company when he bought into the McMullen railway operation.⁴¹ When Ritchie became president of the railway in 1881, the directors, including James MacLaren, moved to purchase an interest in William Coe's iron ore mine and to build a port to ship out ore at Weller's Bay, near Trenton.⁴² MacLaren, with Ritchie and Payne, bought a 75% share in the Coe Hill Mine and its 15,000 acres, and added a further 65,000 acres north of the mine site. These assets were transferred to the Anglo-American Iron Company in 1885.⁴³ A local Hastings County newspaper reported that on 2 June 1885 a meeting of the Coe Hill Mining Co. elected Cleveland steelman William Chisholm as President.⁴⁴ Ritchie and the McMullens resigned at the meeting and their shares passed to

⁴¹ The only work on the Prince Edward County/Central Ontario Railway is James Plomer and Alan R. Capon's *Desperate Venture: Central Ontario Railway*. Belleville, Ontario: Mika Publishing, 1979. Primarily a railway buff's history, it makes use of the Samuel J. Ritchie papers, from the Western Reserve Historical Society of Cleveland, Ohio. Ritchie died in 1908 and from 1906-1914 the railway was effectively under the control of Mackenzie, Mann and Co. Ltd, until it was absorbed into the Canadian Northern Railway system. T.D. Regehr, *The Canadian Northern Railway. Pioneer Road of the Northern Prairies, 1895-1918*. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1976, pp. 267-70.

⁴² The meeting was held 17 June 1881, Plomer, *Desperate Venture*, p. 45. Part of the package included the formation of the Coe Hill Mining Co. with a contract to move 400,000 tons of ore to Cleveland, Ohio, probably to serve the mills of a new director, William Chisholm. Plomer, pp. 48-9.

⁴³ John F. Thompson and Norman Beasley, *For the Years to Come: A Story of International Nickel of Canada*. Toronto: Longman's, Green & Company, 1960, p. 30.

⁴⁴ Chisholm is singled out as typical of the Cleveland steel elite in John N. Ingham's *The Iron Barons: A Social Analysis of an American Urban Elite, 1874-1965*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1978, pp. 61-62.

James MacLaren.⁴⁵ Alexander MacLaren's name appears on the annual Dominion mine reports for the Coe Hill Mine. By 1885 the mine employed 70 men and shipped over 10,000 tons of ore to Cleveland, until it was rejected because of a high sulphur content and mining was suspended for the next four years.⁴⁶ Unfortunately for the MacLarens the ore from the mine was as poor as that from their small Gatineau mine.

MacLaren's interest in the railway also lay in its strategic potential. As a transportation monopoly, it controlled access to the region's mineral wealth, just as the Lièvre protected his lumber operations. There were also rumours that it may have been part of a far wider scheme, according to a local newspaper:

A despatch from New York contains the following good news, if true: "An immense iron ore combination is being formed in New York which aims at nothing short of owning and controlling all the known valuable iron deposits of Canada, now being ascertained to be the richest iron country in the world. The Central Ontario Railway, which runs from Trenton, on Lake Ontario, through the centre of Ontario, and all the iron interests connected with it are to form part of the scheme. The road is to be extended 150 miles through the heart of the iron districts to a junction with the Canadian Pacific Railway at Lake Nipissing. The capital of the company is ten millions, more than two-thirds of which is already pledged. The syndicate, it is said, will own more than a hundred different properties at various points in Canada and a mineral development, even greater than that on Lake Superior is predicted. Among the principal owners is Senator Payne, Stephenson Burke, S.J. Ritchie, all of Ohio, James McLaren [sic] of Ottawa, Erastus Wiman, A.B. Boardman and other prominent parties in New York"⁴⁷

⁴⁵ *North Hastings Review*, 18 June 1885, cited in Plomer, *Desperate Venture*, p. 84.

⁴⁶ RG87, vol. 18, file 81. Reports of Coe Hill Mine, 1886, 1887, 1888, 1889.

⁴⁷ *North Hastings Review*, 17 March 1887, cited in Plomer, p. 88.

All this collapsed with the sulphur problem and iron speculators moved on to more promising deposits, particularly the new and massive Mesabi Range in the United States.

The MacLaren interests might have stopped there, except Ritchie, in his search for more ore for the railway, had patented much of what is now the Sudbury nickel belt. A syndicate was indeed assembled, but to control nickel, not iron ore. Two corporations were established in 1885 in Cleveland. Ritchie's Ohio partners convinced him the best way to finance the railway was to set up separate companies, one for Hasting's County iron ore (Anglo-American Iron Company) and the other to control the nickel and copper deposits at Sudbury (Canadian Copper Company). Ritchie, Payne, MacLaren and Coe transferred their mines and mineral assets to the Anglo-American Iron Company. One year later two Acts of Parliament recognized the Anglo-American Iron Company and the Canadian Copper Company.⁴⁸ The story is told at length by O.W. Main and more recently by H.V. Nelles, who has sketched out the legal and national context in his description of the "Manufacturing Condition" in *The Politics of Development*.⁴⁹ The Cleveland group of investors gained control of Canadian

⁴⁸ "An Act respecting the Anglo-American Iron Company," 49 Vic., Cap. 97. Assented to on 2 June 1886.

⁴⁹ See: H.V. Nelles, *The Politics of Development: Forests, Mines & Hydro-Electric Power in Ontario, 1849-1941*. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1974, pp. 87-102; Main, *The Canadian Nickel Industry*; Ontario. Royal Commission on the Mineral Resources of Ontario: *Report*, 1890; Canada. Select Committee on Mines and Minerals: "Proceedings," Appendix 5, *Journals of the House of Commons*, Part III,

Copper from Ritchie, leaving him with the other two companies and perhaps the most litigated railway in Canadian history.

Canadian Copper went on to export semi-processed "matte" to the Orford Copper Company in New Jersey, where it was refined for the U.S. Navy. Nickel-steel plate was to the global armament industry at the close of the nineteenth century what uranium was after World War II. The combination produced the special armour plate associated with the age of the "unsinkable" battleship.

Two years after Andrew Carnegie sold out to J.P. Morgan and the United States Steel Corporation in April 1902, the Morgan group founded the International Nickel Company in New Jersey. Vertical integration took place as Orford and Canadian Copper were sold to the International Nickel Company. The next year the only other competitor in Canada with the potential to combine iron ore and nickel into a Canadian nickel-steel industry, F.H. Clergue at the Sault, failed. The immediate cause was his inability to raise capital on the New York financial market, allegedly by J.P. Morgan's influence.⁵⁰

1910; Ontario. Royal Ontario Nickel Commission: *Report*, 1917. Dr. Matt Bray of the Department of History, Laurentian University is currently working on a history of INCO (Prior to 1976, the International Nickel Company).

⁵⁰ According to Duncan McDowell the failure of Clergue's Consolidated Lake Superior Corporation to float bonds to cover a \$5,050,000 loan from Speyer and Co. of New York was alleged to have been the result of the influence of Morgan. McDowell makes little reference to Clergue's interest in nickel-steel production other than the standard interpretation that his nickel mines were solely to gain access to their sulphur content. Duncan McDowell, *Steel at the Sault: Francis H. Clergue, Sir James Dunn, and the Algoma Steel Company, 1901-1956*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984, p. 45. However, O.W. Main cites the Clergue

Ritchie and the MacLaren family, faced with complex litigation over both the railway and Canadian Copper, regrouped in 1897 and formed their own syndicate, the Canadian Consolidated Copper and Nickel Company. They lobbied unsuccessfully to have Canadian Copper's charter revoked for failure to refine ore within Canada, which was found not to be a binding requirement. They did succeed in having a duty placed on the export of ore but the legislation was not proclaimed, probably because as Sudbury's largest employer, Canadian Copper made it clear they would shut down operations and go overseas.

Despite its Ottawa connections, the Ritchie/MacLaren group became known as the "Hamilton group" when they combined their interests with Hamilton iron and English steel interests. In 1898 the group founded three more linked companies, the Nickel Steel Company of Canada, the Nickel Copper Company of Ontario and the Hamilton based Hoepfner Refining Company. Hamilton businessman John Patterson told a Select Standing Committee in 1910 that the companies failed due to a combination of closed U.S. markets, an exclusionary duty, the lack of \$700,000 capital for enlarging the smelter and railway

interests as having "boasted that they would market armour plate at \$30 a ton." Main, *Canadian Nickel Industry*, n. 162, p. 146. Flamboyant and perhaps incompetent as a manager, Clergue did go under in less than 12 months after Morgan set up the International Nickel Company.

construction, and the House of Morgan's refusal to finance anyone who invested in their enterprise.⁵¹

The first decade of the twentieth century was marked by extensive and expensive litigation, including a suit between the MacLarens and the Vermillion Mining Company, which delayed its planned entry under the umbrella of the International Nickel Company. In 1908 the MacLaren family sold its mines to Ottawa lumberman J.R. Booth and his partner M. J. O'Brien, whose Dominion Nickel Company, despite their railway interests, proved equally ineffectual.⁵² MacLaren's mining investments were failures, but with an interesting parallel to the fall of F.H. Clergue's grand plans for the Sault.

Conclusion

Lumber, drawn from his monopolistic control of the Lièvre river basin, made James MacLaren and his children wealthy. His diversifications, whether successes or failures, were shaped by the characteristics of his first business. Spatial control, sometimes in combination with others, sometimes as a monopoly,

⁵¹ Canada. Select Committee on Mines and Minerals: "Proceedings," Appendix 5, *Journals of the House of Commons*, Part III, 1910, Testimony of John Patterson, pp. 44-47.

⁵² The search for Booth's business correspondence remain something of a grail for Ottawa Valley historians. We lack a biography on this key figure in the Ottawa Valley's history. M.J. O'Brien, his mining and railway partner, was forgotten until revived by a biography. Scott Young and Astrid Young, *O'Brien*. Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1967.

was always sought. In his business dealings, local partnerships and family networks were a regular aspect of his strategy. But these regional kin networks were not enough for the MacLaren family when they entered into the competitions of large scale continental capitalism. There were limitations to what they could achieve and the amount of capital they could call up.

The "Commercial Empire of the St. Lawrence" and its railway extensions only had influence on the MacLarens in terms of their real estate/railway depot holdings and Ottawa's determination to draw trade between Montréal and the West through it. In the court battles over Sudbury's nickel and the Central Ontario Railway, whose Lake Ontario terminus led south to Cleveland, it was irrelevant. Decisions over development and investment, whether made in the Ottawa Valley or outside it, had little to do with the metropolitan centres of the St. Lawrence. The battles over Canada's resource industries were fought out in coalition with Americans on both sides of our border -- both Ritchie and Clergue were U.S. citizens -- and decisions about who to support were made through regional not national eyes.

CHAPTER 6

LIMITS TO REGIONAL CAPITAL: THE BANK OF OTTAWA

Introduction

Arthur Lower's emphasis on a British/American dichotomy gives a minimal role to local elites and the development of regional economies. Lower acknowledged comments by T.C. Keefer that "there was a distinct class of person financing the trade."¹ In Chapter One we found an example in Peter McGill. James MacLaren went further, creating a financial vehicle, the Bank of Ottawa, for the pool of capital created by the Ottawa Valley lumber trade. This unique, previously unstudied creation of Ottawa Valley elites was both an institution and a symbol of economic and regional identity.

The social composition of regional capitalism, be it based on mining, manufacturing, wheat or, as in this example, lumber, is worth our attention. Naomi R. Lamoreaux and Michael Lise-Williams argue that in regional development, banks were one strategy by which merchant families ensured their

¹ Lower does discuss the relationship between producers and capitalists, concluding that by mid-century lumber financing shifted from Québec City and its British export merchant houses to resident capitalists in Montréal. Gilmour's centralized its operational headquarters in Montréal. Lower, *Great Britain's Woodyard*, pp. 168-169.

survival during industrialization.² The perspectives of the social historian offer tools rarely used in banking or business history.³ Who invested in the bank? Capital formation by elites and shareholders provides more than a social context for regional capital; individuals, kin groups and social groups are the internal linkages of the regional economies.⁴

The founding, and subsequent merger, of the Bank of Ottawa point not just to the role of local elites but also to the possibilities and limits of regional economies. Canadian banking historiography has focused on two themes, the relationship between bankers and the state⁵, and the growth of Canada's six

² Naomi R. Lamoreaux, "Banks, Kinship, and Economic Development: The New England Case", *Journal of Economic History*, XLVI, No. 3 (September 1986): 647-68; Michael Lisle-Williams, "Beyond the Market: the Survival of Family Capitalism in the English Merchant Banks", *British Journal of Sociology*, 35:2 (June 1984): 241-71.

³ See Chad Gaffield, "The New Regional History: Rethinking the History of the Outaouais," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 26:1 (Spring 1991): 64-81.

⁴ Annual shareholders lists, as Ronald Rudin has argued, are a routinely generated record group which deserves much more attention from historians. Shareholders lists are a way to crack open the monolithic image we have of banks and to examine the social groupings they represent, to map out the genealogy of regional capitalism. Ronald Rudin, *Banking en français: The French Banks of Quebec*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985.

⁵ Peter Baskerville, *The Bank of Upper Canada*, Toronto: Champlain Society, 1987; Robert MacIntosh, *Different Drummers. Banking & Politics in Canada*, Toronto: Macmillan Canada, 1991; Tom Naylor, *The History of Canadian Business, 1867-1914. Volume I The Banks and Finance Capital*, Toronto: James Lorimer, 1975; Michael Piva, "Financing the Union: The Upper Canadian Debt and Financial Administration in the Canadas, 1837-1845," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 25, No. 4 (Winter 1990-91): 82-98.

large banks and the centralization of finance in Toronto, arguably to the detriment and underdevelopment of the periphery, regions such as the Maritimes.⁶ But this focus on the rise of large banks has cast local banks in the role of victim, brushing aside consideration of agency, regional function and specialization of small and mid-sized banks. It is here, at the level of community, that we can examine the fluctuating fortunes of regional economies.

I Founding the Bank of Ottawa

In the period immediately following Confederation, there was a remarkable growth in the number of banks in Canada. From 1867-1875 the House of Commons approved charters for twenty-six banks, the last of which was the Bank of Ottawa. Some of these banks never began operation and others failed for various reasons. Prior to founding the Bank of Ottawa, James MacLaren dealt with the Quebec Bank, circa 1869-1870, before switching to the Banque du

⁶ While many agree with the interpretations of Tom Naylor, Neil Quigley, for one, does not. T.W. Acheson, "The National Policy and the Industrialization of the Maritimes, 1880-1910", *Acadiensis*, I (Spring 1972): 3-28; Naylor, *op. cit.*; Douglas O. Baldwin, "The Growth and Decline of the Charlottetown Banks, 1834-1906", *Acadiensis*, 15:2 (Spring 1986): 28-52; Douglas O. Baldwin and Helen M. Gill. "The Savings Bank of Prince Edward Island: Philanthropy and Self-interest in the Nineteenth Century", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 20:4 (Winter 1985-86): 115-25; L.T. Evans and Neil C. Quigley, "Discrimination in Bank Lending Policies: A Test Using Data From the Bank of Nova Scotia 1900-37", *Canadian Journal of Economics*, 23 (February 1990): 210-25; William Code, Gunter Gad, Neil Quigley. "Plate 9: Financial Institutions," in *Historical Atlas of Canada*. Volume 3. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990; James D. Frost, "The Nationalization of the Bank of Nova Scotia, 1880-1910", *Acadiensis*, 12:1 (Autumn 1982): 3-38.

People from 1870-1873. The Banque du Peuple opened a branch in Ottawa in 1873, and it may have been this entry into the heart of the region's economy that prompted MacLaren and others to found their own bank.

Table XIII Founding Directors of the Bank of Ottawa

Name¹	Occupation
James MacLaren	Lumberman
Hon. George Bryson	Lumberman, Member of Legislative Council, Québec
Robert Blackburn	Merchant, M.P., (Later of the Hawkesbury Lumber Company)
Charles T. Bate	Wholesale grocer
Alexander Fraser	Lumberman, square timber trade since 1852
Allan Gilmour	Lumberman, Gatineau River since 1847
George Hay	Hardware merchant, supplier to timber trade
Charles Magee	Dry goods merchant, real estate
Hon. Levi R. Church	Attorney General and later Treasurer of Québec

¹ The Act of Incorporation lists the following, replaced at the first shareholders' meeting by Gilmour, Church and Hay: Henry McCormick, Edward McGillivray, Daniel O'Connor.

The unofficial description of the Bank of Ottawa as "The Lumbermen's Bank" was accurate from its inception. The decision to establish a bank began with an agreement between the two largest shareholders, both lumbermen, George Bryson of Fort Coulonge, and James MacLaren. The Bank's founding directors were either lumbermen or suppliers to the lumber trade (See Table XIII). Three merchant directors supplied equipment, dry goods or foodstuffs to the lumber industry.

The establishment of the Bank took about a year. The first meeting, on 21 October 1873, in the boardroom of the Water Works Commissioners of Ottawa, established a provisional board. Charles Magee served as secretary for the group.⁷ By the next month the provisional directors were planning to open an office and in June they had a ten year office lease in John Usborne's Victoria Hotel. One of the problems in opening a bank was finding reliable, trained male staff. Many Canadian banks hired young men trained in London by the Bank of British North America and sent to work in its North American branches. In August, after being rejected by their choice for cashier, D. J. Eastwood, they settled upon Patrick Robertson at a salary of \$2,600 for the first year and \$3,000 for the second. This was a decision they would later regret.

The actual legislation -- *An Act to Incorporate the Bank of Ottawa*⁸ -- received assent in May 1874. It allowed for incorporation with a capital stock of up to one million dollars, divided into ten thousand shares of one hundred dollars each. To get a Treasury Board certificate to operate, \$500,000 of stock had to be subscribed, \$100,000 cash deposited with another chartered bank, and a public meeting held to elect permanent directors.

⁷ The meeting was chaired by J.B. Lewis, who was to undertake the necessary steps to obtain a charter. Also present were MacLaren, Edward McGillivray, Robert Blackburn and Henry McCormick. Not present, but intimately involved, were others such as Alex Fraser, the Honourable George Bryson, C.T. Bate, Roderick Ryan. The unexpected death of J.B. Lewis resulted in another meeting at Russell House on 5 February, 1874.

⁸ *Statutes of Canada*, 37 Vic, Chap. 56. 1874. Assented to 26 May 1874.

To raise the required capital the committee opened a stock book at the July 10 meeting and began a general canvassing for investors. A chartered bank being "a license to print money", arranging for printing their own currency was the subject of a September meeting with Mr. Burland of the British American Bank Note Company. It was decided, "for the safety of the bills two photographs should be put on and those selected were Mr. McLaren [sic] and Hon. George Bryson."⁹ September 15 and 16 were spent considering how the Bank Act could be interpreted, suggesting they were short of the required capital. The problem lay in the fact that subscribers to the stock were purchasing the stock through instalments. The first payments on the stock, 20%, were due on November 2 and the amount was deposited at 3% interest with the Bank of Commerce.

On 3 November 1874, one year later, "Means were procured to secure the payment of the balance of the \$100,000 into the Bank of Commerce before 3 p.m."¹⁰ The Treasury Board, receiving a certificate stating that \$100,000 was on temporary deposit, and a certified list of shareholders, issued the operating certificate two days later.¹¹ A public meeting of shareholders to elect the

⁹ *BNSA*, Bank of Ottawa. 2-1 Minute Book of Provisional Board of Directors of Bank of Ottawa, 7 September 1874.

¹⁰ *BNSA*, Bank of Ottawa. 2-1 Minute Book of Provisional Board of Directors of Bank of Ottawa, 3 November 1874.

¹¹ *BNSA*, Bank of Ottawa, 3, part 1, Certificate from Treasury Board, 5 November 1874.

official Board of Directors was held without press comment on November 18 at the Young Mens' Christian Association Rooms.¹²

From the annual reports we know the opening of the Bank was slightly delayed, until the last week of December 1874. The timing could not have been worse, coming as it did at the start of the economic recession of the 1870s. The Bank of Ottawa, as the last Canadian bank chartered as the recession began, had its life and character shaped by the worsening economic circumstances of its birth. From its opening until the first half of 1880 the economy was severely depressed. Numerous business failures in 1876 led to delays in establishing several planned branches. Despite this the Bank managed to avoid serious losses. The first business strategy for the directors of the Bank was cautious expansion.

A conservative management style also resulted from an early scandal involving banking and lumber. While all successful businessmen, none of the nine directors of the Bank had any experience or training in banking. They were made painfully aware of this when Charles Magee explained to the shareholders at the 1879 annual meeting that: "When the report first reached the directors that Mr. Robertson had taken poison, of course it naturally occurred to us that there was something wrong at the bank."¹³ Patrick Robertson, the Bank's

¹² *BNSA, Bank of Ottawa*, 3, part 2, Affidavit of Notice of Meeting of Shareholders, 18 November 1874.

¹³ "The Bank of Ottawa. A Statement of Its Affairs," *Daily Citizen [Ottawa Citizen]*, 11 December 1879, p. 4.

Cashier, survived his suicide attempt and confessed that he had become involved with one of the partners in a failing sawmill enterprise. He used the books to cancel some of the partner's notes with fictitious transactions with lumber firms in Québec. As the amounts rose he tried to cover the problem by using Bank funds to buy a timber limit through a bush ranger, A. McCuaig. He sent the timber in rafts to Québec under the name of a "well known local lumberman", in the hope that the profit would cover the deception. Declared losses to the Bank totalled \$52,152.92, but the greater damage was to the Bank's reputation. The *Monetary Times and Trade Review Insurance Chronicle* asked bluntly about the staff and the directors' lack of vigilance.¹⁴

In the weeks after this discovery, and prior to any public statement, the Cashiers of the Merchant Bank and La Banque Nationale, George Hague and F. Vezina, paid a visit to Ottawa.¹⁵ La Banque Nationale had itself undergone scrutiny over accusations of illegal trading in lumber, square timber and saw logs the year before.¹⁶ The summer of 1879 had seen failures, suspensions, runs and court cases involving five banks and the conviction of a director and former

¹⁴ "The Bank of Ottawa," *Monetary Times and Trade Review Insurance Chronicle*, 19 December 1879, p. 720.

¹⁵ "Personal Matters," *Ottawa Citizen*, 27 November 1879, p. 2.

¹⁶ Adam Shortt. *History of Canadian Currency and Banking, 1600-1880*. Toronto: Canadian Bankers Association, 1980, p. 701.

Minister of Finance, Sir Francis Hincks.¹⁷ MacLaren, Bryson and Magee decided to use the dividend to absorb the loss and to go "before the shareholders like honest men."¹⁸ This decision saved the Bank and was followed by the best business decision they ever made, to replace Robertson with the most experienced banker they could find, George Burn.

Burn, born in Thurso, Scotland in 1847, shared with James MacLaren that amalgam of ethnicity, religion and business.¹⁹ Slowly and methodically he brought the reserve fund to a point where it surpassed the capital subscribed by the shareholders. As shareholders were responsible for two dollars of debt for every dollar held in stock, this liability buffer made the Bank an appealing investment, one which also consistently paid high dividends. On his death in 1932, the Ottawa papers referred to Burn as a modest man known by few outside

¹⁷ The year 1879 saw the failure of the Exchange Bank, and the Mechanic's Bank, the trial of Sir Francis Hincks over the failure of the Consolidated Bank, the suspension of La Banque Ville-Marie, and runs on the Montreal City and District Savings Bank and the Banque d'Hochelaga.

¹⁸ "Bank of Ottawa," *Ottawa Citizen*, 11 December 1879, p. 4.

¹⁹ The son of a Presbyterian minister, Burn began banking at fifteen with four years training at the Royal Bank of Scotland. In 1866 he came to Canada, where he worked for the Royal Canadian Bank at Toronto, the Canadian Bank of Commerce and the Exchange Bank at Montreal. His expertise was such that he was elected President of the Canadian Bankers Association during World War I, acting as the liaison to the Minister of Finance. That earned him a knighthood. *BNSA - Vertical File*. "Bankers' Association Head," *Montreal Daily Star*, Saturday, January [?], [1916?].

Ottawa; in fact his obituary was rather prominent in the *New York Times*.²⁰ As Cashier, a title later changed to General Manager, he directed the training of a bank staff that reached 700 by 1914.

II Investing in the Local Bank

In examining the question of who invested in the "Lumberman's Bank" traditional sources have been used: Ministry of Finance files, newspapers, and the annual reports and other Bank of Ottawa papers held in the Archives of the Bank of Nova Scotia. The most interesting of source for social historians is the annual shareholders lists prepared for sessional paper publication, and much of the following analysis draws on a relational database of shareholders constructed using Paradox 3.5 software on a PC.²¹

²⁰ The Archives of the Bank of Nova Scotia acquired a number of papers and items from the estate of Sir George Burns.

²¹ The complete information was entered for each individual or corporation which held shares in the following years: 1875, 1880, 1885, 1890, 1895, 1900, 1905, 1910, and 1915. These years were chosen in order to capture information outside the usual pattern of analysis which is dependent on census years. No recoding or telescoping of data was conducted at this entry stage. For all years the following information was available: surname, first name and middle initial, a label regarding marital status for women (married, spinster, widow), place of residence, number of shares, dollar amount paid on those shares, and year of the list. It was also possible to capture whether shares were held by an administrator, executor or financial institution. Occupational information was listed for all men and two women (housekeeper and school teacher) in 1880 and 1915. Additional occupational information was supplied by searching City Directories with a yearly alphabetized lists of individuals, sorted by known place of residence. The data was cleaned using two methods. Alphanumeric data was checked by running frequencies to check variations of spelling and typographic errors. Numeric data was compared with

The shareholders list for 1875 reveals a complex but logical pattern of inter-related social and economic groups. The make up of the shareholders changed significantly over time.²² Certainly at first it was "the Lumbermen's Bank". All investment in the Bank circled around the capital put up by MacLaren and the Honourable George Bryson, lumberman and Member of the Legislative Council from the Upper Ottawa (See Figure 18). There was also square timberman Alex Fraser from Westmeath, and other lesser operators, such as Robert Campbell from Eganville and Hugh Grant from Pembroke. John Mather, the woods manager for Allan Gilmour, John Feeley, the foreman at E.B. Eddy, and various managers, agents, millwrights and owners of lumber yards also put money in the Bank's stock. Lumber-related occupations account for 41% of the capital in 1875.²³

subtotals that occur at the bottom of each page of the sessional papers. This was done by bringing the data into a Quattro Pro spreadsheet, and creating subtotal formulas which corresponded to the location of subtotals in the original document. The final database consisted of 3,168 records. Recoding and telescoping of data was done by copying this for manipulation into several other databases dedicated to specific questions, such as residence, gender or occupation. An additional smaller set of data concerned the establishment of bank branches and was cross-linked to the shareholder's residence.

²² Using a combination of occupations listed in the following years and city directories for the Ottawa Valley occupations were found for the owners of 80% of the capital invested in shares in 1875. The following discussion is based on the patterns observed for \$378,480, or 73%. The remaining 7% of the capital had miscellaneous origins.

²³ In 1875 MacLaren held stock worth \$115,000, Bryson \$50,000, Fraser \$25,000 and Mather \$5,000.

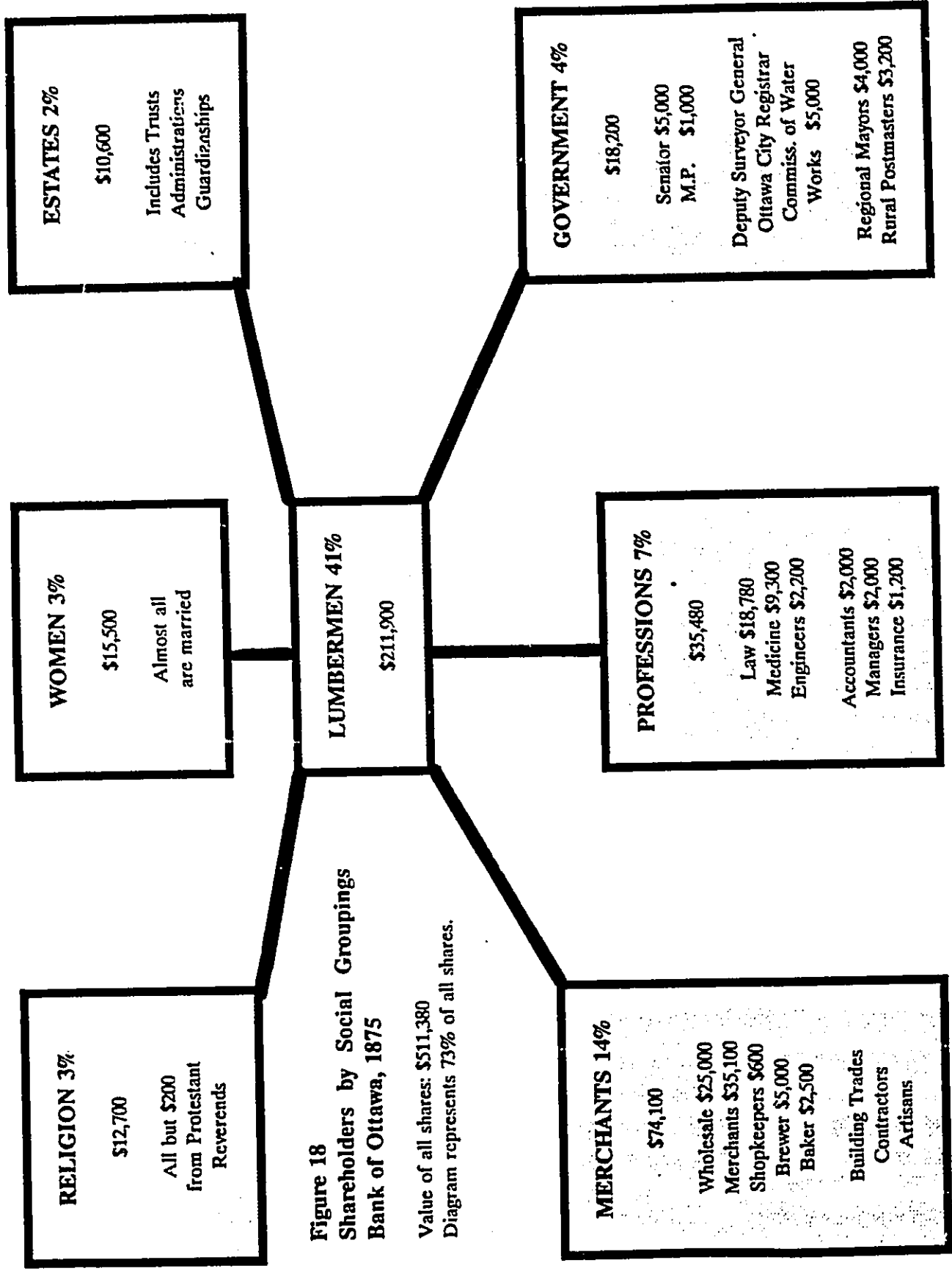


Figure 18
 Shareholders by Social Groupings
 Bank of Ottawa, 1875

Value of all shares: \$511,380
 Diagram represents 73% of all shares.

The Ottawa business community was another source of capital. Three of the directors, Magee, Bate and Blackburn, together represented almost half of the merchant capital. With them they brought a cluster of smaller Ottawa and Ottawa Valley merchants. Manufacturers were limited to a smaller grouping who ran flour mills, cement and brick works and a stonemason. Saddlers and harness makers, tanners, blacksmiths, and a tinsmith put up smaller amounts.

Direct profit or the advantage of having an alliance with a bank was not the only motivation for these shareholders. The lumber trade was important to many businessmen. Stationer James Hope printed or sold the record and account books for both MacLaren's lumber operations and the Bank. The leather trade supplied harnesses, trunks, and sawmill belting. One firm repacked pork at Ottawa for the shanties, and the lumber industry consumed large amounts of hardware, dry goods, and foodstuffs such as tea and tobacco. Membership in the Bank was a strategic alliance between suppliers and one of their major customers.

This complex of a primary industry and a merchant community had a supporting group of investors in the professions. The full range of the legal system was represented, from a Superior Court judge, to barristers, advocates, court clerks, bailiffs and a jailor. Other occupations included professional managers, accountants, engineers, and insurance brokers. Their investment in the Bank also represented an investment in the community upon whose goodwill their business depended.

The political connections of the Bank are represented by a fourth group of investors, those whose business was politics and government. The capital they put up was not as important as the connections they brought to the Bank. Senator William Edwards was also a lumberman. George Bryson was a member of Québec's Legislative Council. Levi Church was at different times Attorney General and Treasurer of Québec. Members of Parliament held shares, as did a few civil servants, most notably Lindsay Russell, the Deputy Surveyor General, who invested \$1,000. At the municipal level, the City of Ottawa Registrar and the Commissioner of Water Works had small investments. The Mayors of Aylmer and Buckingham, Québec had shares, as did the Postmaster of Buckingham and Hull.

The Bank had other social dimensions. Scottish ministers, protestant like MacLaren, were the dominant religious investors. The Bank was the recipient of funds from estates and trusts. Married women also had capital in the Bank. If these three less obvious groups are taken together they represent \$38,800 or 7% of the capital. This is not a large amount, but it is a larger amount than either the professions or the political sphere, and almost half the amount put up by Ottawa merchants. As the Bank grew so did the amount of capital invested by estates and by women. Religious affiliation, estates and inheritance, and women played a role in the founding of the Bank.

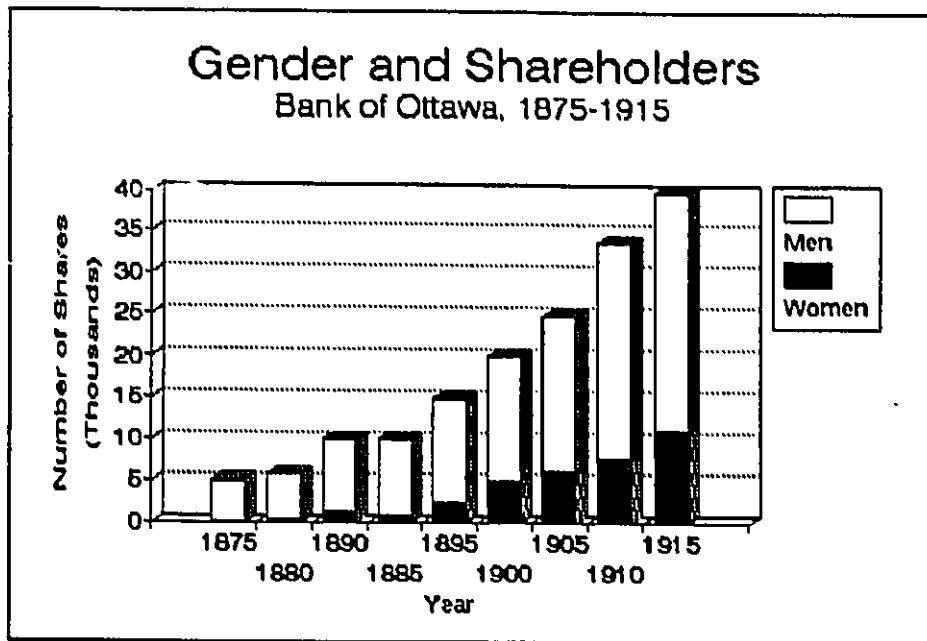


Figure 17 Gender and Shareholders

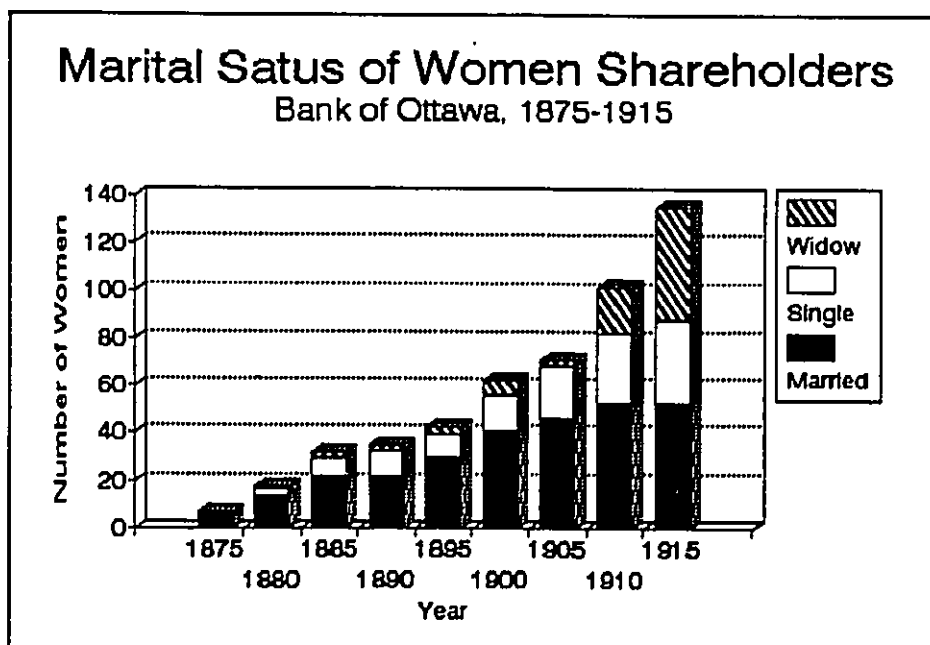


Figure 18 Marital Status of Women Shareholders

Women were important as shareholders of the Bank (See Figure 19). In 1875 women had less than three percent of the stock, but by 1915 they held twenty-eight percent. While widow's holdings were significant, there was a steady increase in stock held by married women (See Figure 20). This rise in stock for married women may be due in part to dowries or inheritance patterns. In a simple test the shareholders were separated by gender and the question asked was how many women did not have the same surname as a male shareholder.²⁴ The results in Table XIV suggest that women's shares were an extension of family investment. Even if these women had surrendered their voting proxies or the management of their stocks to patriarchal figures, this particular group of women held increasing corporate power prior to suffrage.²⁵ By 1905 women held 25% of the stock, ten times the amount of stock held by men in the combined professions of medicine, law and engineering.²⁶

²⁴ There are some problems with this. It would generally not capture daughters who marry, although some nested their family name, for example, widow Jennie Bryson Boulter.

²⁵ Is economic power a precursor to political power? If so, then scholars should look much closer at the entry of women into corporate and financial institutions. Shareholders lists do allow this question to be tackled with reference to banks on a national level.

²⁶ Medicine \$45,500, Law \$7,500, Engineering \$12,400, for a total of \$65,400 or 2.6% of the stock. Women held a total of \$621,300 or 25%. The total involved \$2,500,000 worth of stock. Occupations or gender information could not be identified for the owners of \$445,900 or 18% of the stock.

Table XIV Gender, Kinship and Dollar Value of Bank Stock, Bank of Ottawa, 1875-1915						
Comparison of 1083 Women's Surnames with Surnames of Male Shareholders						
Year	Dollar Value of Shares Women Whose Surnames Did Not Match			Dollar Value of Shares Women Whose Surnames Matched		
	Married	Single	Widow	Married	Single	Widow
1875	2400	0	0	13100	0	0
1880	5555	500	0	33543	400	0
1885	11400	1000	0	61200	26200	500
1890	19600	700	0	58100	44300	500
1895	31100	3200	0	142300	50300	3800
1900	42350	3750	350	244280	73870	51900
1905	136500	15400	0	288600	102700	78100
1910	153030	23950	24000	305160	135890	112500
1915	169100	41600	123200	266200	187300	332800

The other significant shift by 1905 was in the financial administration of money invested by estates, trusts and individuals. While half of the funds were being administered by individuals, including through trust accounts with lawyers, the remainder of the funds were held by financial institutions with shares in the Bank. These financial institutions began appearing at the turn of the century and could vote a larger block of shares in the Bank than local merchants, political figures or professionals combined. In this respect the Bank of Ottawa fits very closely the "ideal" pattern of a social hierarchy of kinship and

interlocking corporate directorates described by Christopher Armstrong and H.V. Nelles.²⁷

The founding groups continued to be represented among the Bank's shareholders, but women, estates and financial corporations represented 44% of the identified stock. The same pattern continued in 1915, where occupation and gender is known for all but \$1,200 of the \$4,000,000 in stock. Women owned 28% of the Bank's stock, and lumbermen owned 20%. Self-styled capitalists, gentlemen and retired men together owned 12%, about \$6,000 more than estates and trusts. Financial institutions and loan and trust companies held 8% of the stock and merchants 5%. Those six groupings, women, lumbermen, capitalists, financial institutions, estates and trusts, and merchants accounted for 85% of the stock held. By 1915 the Bank was much less reflective of the local traditional business community and much more a generic financial vehicle.

²⁷ See: "The Paper Givers," In Christopher Armstrong and H.V. Nelles. *Southern Exposure: Canadian Promoters in Latin America and the Caribbean 1896-1930*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988, pp. 3-23. The institutional shareholders of the Bank of Ottawa are, in descending order: Montreal City & Savings Bank, Toronto General Trusts Corporation, Caisse d'Economie de Notre Dame de Québec, North American Life Assurance, Confederation Life, Home Savings and Loan, Canada Life Assurance, National Trust, Victoria Loans and Savings, and Fidelity Lodge.

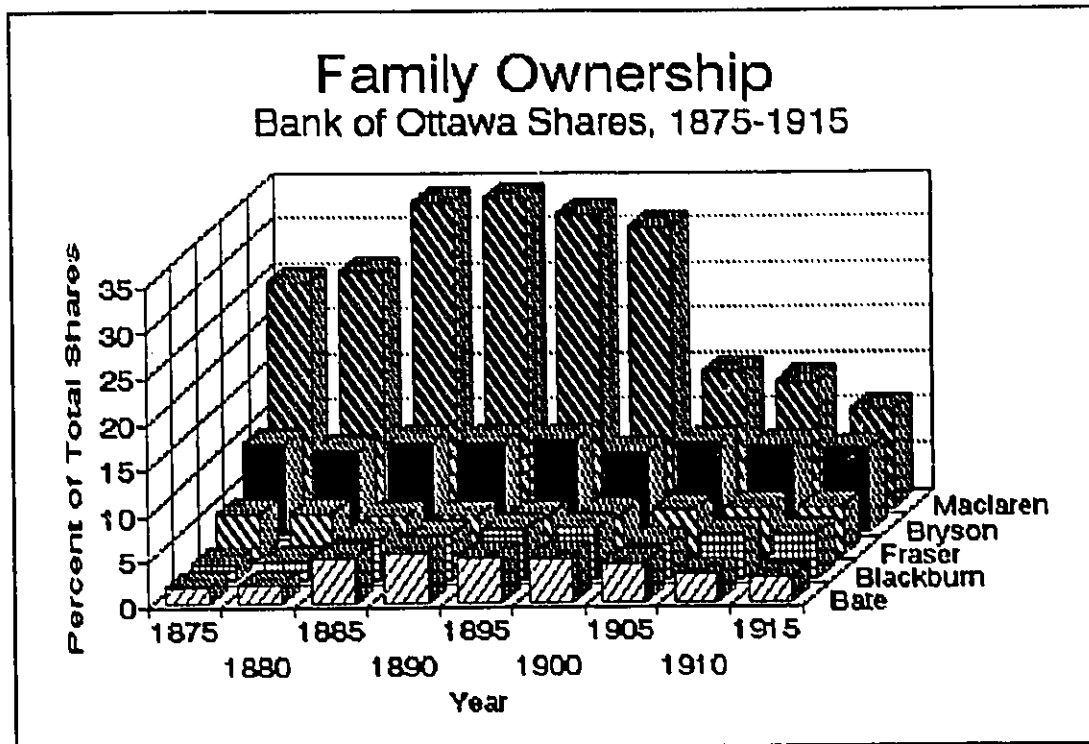


Figure 19 Family Ownership, Bank of Ottawa Shares, 1875-1915

Lastly, the bank had a continued presence of merchant families. Ten families with the largest total investment in the Bank were examined.²⁸ The MacLaren extended family included Frederick Alloway who provided bank business in Winnipeg, and the Barnet branch, builders of a Bank of Ottawa and MacLaren supported sawmill in Barnet, B.C. From 1885 to 1900 five families controlled over fifty percent of the Bank's stock (See Figure 21). By 1915 twenty-seven members of the Bryson and MacLaren families held stock. The Blackburn,

²⁸ The families which held in excess of \$50,000 in stock included: Bate, Blackburn, Bryson, Church, Fraser, MacLaren, Magee, Manuel, Mather, Murphy, and Perley. The Brysons included the Boulter and Moore branches.

Bryson, Fraser and MacLaren families were all able to place directors on the board of the Bank of Nova Scotia after its merger with the Bank of Ottawa.

III The Rise and Fall of a Regional Bank

The Bank very successfully secured its control over the Ottawa Valley. It was as much a symbol of the economic power of the Ottawa Valley lumber trade as were the rafts, barges and booms of logs found along the Ottawa River. George Hay, a founding director, provided the City of Ottawa with its unofficial coat of arms in 1854, and the same coat of arms appeared on the Bank's currency. The Bank's seal contains the expression "J'Avance", a term used by timber raft pilots to indicate to the crew that the raft was clear of the obstruction (whether rapids or shallows) and they should let the river carry it with full speed. Both the timber raft and the chartered bank contained investments, whether logs, shares or deposits, moving towards a yet to be realized future profit. Both required a pilot or captain and a skilful crew capable of recognizing the dangers of rapids and shallows, of economic expansions and contractions. The image below the motto on the currency provided a second and more pointed statement -- the arm of a woodsman holding an upraised broad-axe in a manner more evocative of the heraldry of combat than the cutting or squaring of timber.

The Bank's currency reinforced the image of the "Lumbermen's Bank". Bryson and MacLaren, the two leading shareholders or capitalists appeared on their own money. Several denominations featured lumbering scenes on the back.

The workers also made an appearance on the currency, in an engraving taken from a photograph of shantymen standing with their winter's production. Other bills show a raftsman at his pole, while behind him on the raft are a mother and child -- a family safe above dangerous waters. Also common is the ubiquitous steam locomotive and a dairy scene illustrates the other source of the Bank's support, farming.

As a farming region, the Ottawa Valley was one of wealthy mixed agriculture, benefitting in the 1890s from an export market for dairy products. Farmers' deposits helped offset the declining fortunes of the lumber trade. However farmers rarely invested in Bank stock. Including yeomen or gentlemen farmers, farmers held only 1% of the stock in 1915. The dairy scene on the Bank of Ottawa's currency was a direct lure for farmers' business.

Spatially the shareholder lists show the Bank of Ottawa anchored physically to the communities of the Ottawa Valley. In 1915, Arnprior invested as much as Montreal (\$118,300). While Toronto had \$309,900 in stock, Fort Coulonge, Québec invested only \$6,000 less. The largest block of shares, \$1.8 million, was held by Ottawa residents. Residents of small towns and villages invested small amounts in Bank of Ottawa shares. In 1875 stock was held in forty-two Ontario and Québec communities. By 1915 the number had risen to one hundred and four.

The broader geographic distribution of the owners of bank stock in Table XV gives the large picture of investor residence. Québec and Ontario accounted for

the bulk of ownership. In the share offerings after 1895 Ontario residents absorbed most of the new offerings. Québec residents did not show the same dramatic growth of investment as Ontario residents. From 1890 to 1905 shareholders living in the United States were the third largest group, with twice as many shares as western Canadians; Maritimes and British investment was not very important. For example, in 1915 residents of New Jersey, or New York, or California all had more shares in the Bank of Ottawa than the combined shareholders from either the Maritimes or the British Isles.²⁹ Even so, the \$128,300 worth of shares held by U.S. residents was insignificant compared to the \$2.9 million held in Ontario or the \$806,700 in Québec.

The Bank opened on a very small scale, with one branch in Arnprior and one in Ottawa. In the Ottawa Valley the depression of the 1870s was very severe. Each year's annual report contains the word "depression", accompanied by either "continues" or "severe". The numerous business failures in 1876 continued and not until the second half of 1880 did things improve. As Figure 22 shows, there was a small expansion in the number of branches from 1881-83.

The remainder of the 1880s saw the Bank's first foray into northern Ontario,

²⁹ The figures are: New Jersey \$27,600, New York \$26,900, California \$24,500; New Brunswick, \$3,500, Nova Scotia \$15,600; England \$8,500, Ireland \$10,900, Scotland \$1,000.

with the opening of a branch to serve the Keewatin mills of Bank Director John Mather.³⁰ In the 1890s seventeen branches opened in other regions. One

Residence	1875	1880	1885	1890	1895	1900	1905	1910	1915
Ontario	293780	336460	462680	448200	822900	1226270	1712100	2403700	2906000
Québec	222600	231241	522400	521700	632800	451320	687500	751620	806700
Maritimes	3000	0	0	2800	4600	4900	21600	17250	19100
West & Yukon	0	0	9800	7000	9200	10800	17800	51870	115700
British Isles	0	0	2300	5200	3400	3500	16800	17300	20400
USA	0	0	400	13100	21700	20590	41200	89560	128300

Table XV Regional Ownership of Bank Shares (In dollars)

strand followed the lumber trade across the top of southern Ontario to Parry Sound. A small number of branches was opened outside Winnipeg in Dauphin and Portage la Prairie. Most of the effort was spent opening Ottawa Valley branches along the valley above the new Montreal and Lachute branches.

Major expansion came between 1900 and 1910, with the opening of fifty-eight branches, tripling the size of the Bank of Ottawa's network. Eight branches were opened in Saskatchewan, three in Manitoba and one each in British Columbia and Alberta. The Bank also was involved in two resource projects. From 1900 until the branch's closure in 1906 it had big hopes for the impact of hydro-

³⁰ Mather had replaced his former employer Allan Gilmour as a director of the Bank in 1880. He advised on expansion into Western Canada and his business interests included lumber, flour milling, and he was President of the *Winnipeg Free Press*. Jamie Benidickson is in the process of writing a *DCB* entry on Mather.

electricity on industrial development at Shawinigan Falls.³¹ The other resource that received the Bank's attention was the northern Ontario mining boom. In the Ottawa Valley the Bank began filling in the pockets it had missed on both sides of the Ottawa River. From 1911 onwards branches were added here and there, but in a lacklustre fashion, except for an interest in the business of anglophone farming communities on the Québec side of the Ottawa River.

Initially, the branches of the Bank of Ottawa tied their fate very closely to the fluctuations of the local farming and lumbering economies. The directors of the Bank of Ottawa did work to diffuse their dependency on lumbering by entering the economies of other regions, such as Winnipeg, whose wheat and real estate market was the subject of a special meeting in March of 1882. The wheat economy diffused the risk in the Bank's dependency on the Ottawa Valley's lumber-driven economy.

Why did they invest in wheat and not manufacturing? The reason has to do with their understanding of the unusual demands for capital of extractive economies. Both activities require investment and patience, with a wait of at least a year before a return is expected, usually from an export market. Both lumbering and wheat require a large seasonal amounts of capital to move their output to market. Skills learned in working with capital in one staple industry

³¹ See: Pierre Lanthier and Normand Brouillette. "Shawinigan Falls de 1898 à 1930: L'Emergence d'une ville industrielle au sein du monde rural," *Urban History Review*, 19 (1-2) (1990): 42-55.

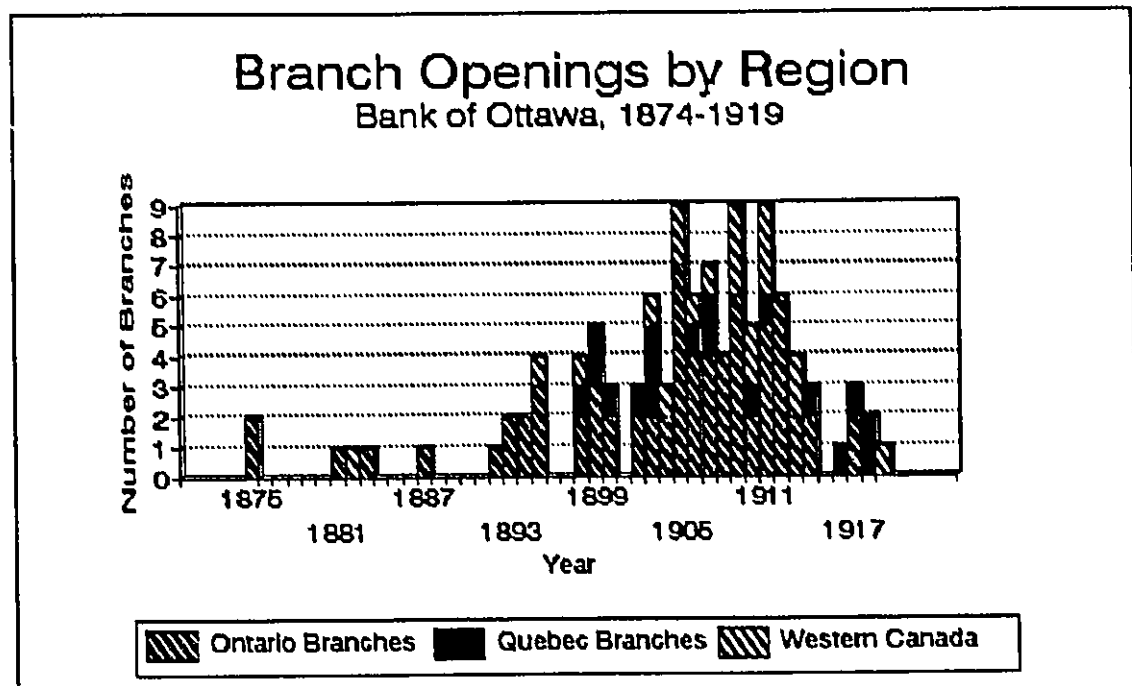


Figure 20 Regional Expansion of Bank of Ottawa Branches, 1875-1919

were applied to another.³² Manufacturing has a completely different pattern of capital demands.

Despite all these opportunities, the situation for the Bank was not as promising as it seemed. The Bank had run out of frontiers. There was an attempted entry into southern Ontario, but between 1909 and 1916 competition forced the closure of three branches in Toronto and one in Peterborough. To the east, language and culture were, as Ronald Rudin has pointed out, barriers to

³² Tom Naylor puts the Canadian problem of the retardation of industrial capital formation by the resource sector as the structural result of a colonial staple-economy. I argue that, as in Latin America, regional capitalists had more freedom and flexibility than a structural approach would suggest. See Naylor, *The History of Canadian Business 1867-1914. Volume I The Banks and Finance Capital*, Toronto: Lorimer, 1975, pp. 14-15.

bank expansion.³³ Certainly the Québec branches show a strong affinity to anglophones as staff, shareholders and depositors.³⁴ The northern mining boom had attracted intense banking competition in a very small concentrated area and was, as William Code has pointed out, a very speculative and dangerous enterprise for bankers.³⁵

Western Canada, while having great potential, was a frontier which closed quickly under banking competition. David MacLaren and D.M. Finnie toured their branches in Manitoba and the North West in 1903 and found that of thirteen banks with 160 branches in the region, the top five banks had 128 branches between them. The Bank of Ottawa, with six branches, was ahead of the Bank of Montreal and the Bank of Nova Scotia, but the leader, the Union Bank, had 55.³⁶ MacLaren felt that the West had tremendous growth potential, but branches were expensive to establish, distance made training managers a

³³ Ronald Rudin, *Banking en français: The French Banks of Quebec*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985.

³⁴ The limited employment records show only the Isidore branch having a staff consisting of a majority of francophone names, and there were none in the Lachute office. There was one attempt to expand into the anglophone population of the Eastern Townships of Québec, by opening a branch in Granby in 1901.

³⁵ William Robert Code, "The Spatial Dynamics of Financial Intermediaries: An Interpretation of the Distribution of Financial Decision-Making in Canada," Ph.D. University of California, Berkeley, 1971, pp. 240-70.

³⁶ The Union had 55 branches, the Commerce 23, Merchants 21, Hamilton 18, Imperial 11, British 8, Dominion 7, Ottawa 6, Montreal 5, Nova Scotia 3, Molsons 1, Hochelaga 1, Eastern Townships 1. *BNSA*, Bank of Ottawa 11, David MacLaren to the President and Directors of the Bank of Ottawa, 28 September 1903.

problem, it was a costly place to live and was subject to real estate speculation. If the Bank over-expanded, a bad harvest could be disastrous. David MacLaren also noted that while western farmers demanded banking services, very few actually invested in banks. Bank competition also meant cheap money for farmer and businessman and so impartial or accurate business information was hard to come by, particularly for locating new branches. This problem of western expansion was one of the key questions in the merger decision of 1919.

There were serious problems with raising capital for expansion. Writing to the Minister of Finance at the time of the merger, Finnie estimated they would need four to five million dollars in new capital to launch an aggressive expansion.³⁷ The problem was where to raise it. The Bank was "perhaps more localized than any in Canada" and the Ottawa Valley shareholders had limited resources. If they sold shares outside the region, their \$200 market value would have to be dropped to compete with the \$150 range of other banks. Then there was the problem of maintaining the high dividend while money was being lost bringing new branches online. Finnie's arguments point out the limits to a regional bank's growth and that regional identity can be a negative factor in raising capital.

Expansion of the Bank had stalled and problems were occurring as deposits grew without the funds being taken up by commercial loans. The result was that

³⁷ MG 27 II D18, Vol. 1, file 4(a), D.M. Finnie to Sir Thomas White, 12 February 1919.

for lack of loan opportunities, the Bank held forty percent of its assets in government investments.³⁸ Renewed expansion meant that the Bank of Ottawa had to compete with twelve larger banks, banks with greater resources which could, if necessary, absorb higher losses.

Amalgamation with the Bank of Nova Scotia offered expansion without the same level of risk. With almost three hundred branches the two banks only competed at eleven points, all large urban centres. The merger made the Bank of Nova Scotia the fourth largest bank in the country and increased its resources by seventy-three million dollars. The Bank of Nova Scotia had separate advisory boards for Halifax and Toronto and it was assumed a similar arrangement would be made for Ottawa.³⁹

For the Bank of Ottawa, the merger offered a solution to several problems, bad debts being only one. The Bank of Ottawa had been in existence for forty-five years and, like the institution, its managers and directors had aged. George Burn retired at seventy, he was replaced by the sixty-seven year old D.M. Finnie.⁴⁰ Pending an official vote at the shareholders general meeting, March 4, an Order in Council would approve the merger under the Bank Act, and the Bank of Ottawa would cease to exist on April 30, 1919.

³⁸ "Ottawa Bank Merger", *Ottawa Citizen*, 23 January 1919, p. 14.

³⁹ See comments of D.M. Finnie, "Bank of Ottawa Is Absorbed by the Bank of Nova Scotia", *Ottawa Citizen*, 20 January 1919, p. 12.

⁴⁰ Joseph Schull and J. Douglas Gibson. *The Scotiabank Story*. Toronto: Macmillan, 1982, p. 123.

The day after the announcement things took on a different shape. The story held the front page of the *Ottawa Citizen* for four days. Criticism was immediate. There was a sentimental attachment and a local pride in the institution which took the city's name. It was also regarded as a real public relations loss; Stewart McClenaghan mentioned that the circulation of Bank of Ottawa currency was a daily advertisement of the capital's economy "throughout the Dominion". J. Graham foresaw that the finances of the country would eventually be controlled "by four or five large banks, should such mergers as that just arranged be permitted". This was the third recent bank amalgamation⁴¹ and comments appeared that it was part of a broad policy among Canadian bankers to restructure for post-war competition.

Resistance coalesced around A.E. Corrigan, manager of the Capital Life Insurance Company. He asked:

Is it in the best interest of the people of Ottawa and the Ottawa Valley to see all the big financial institutions removed to Toronto and Montreal? ... The people of Ottawa and the Ottawa Valley should rise up and protest in the most emphatic way possible against this proposed merger, which would be nothing short of a catastrophe to the capital and its environs.⁴²

The most controversial rumours focused on the role of Prime Minister Borden. Borden had shares in the Bank of Ottawa and had been a director of the Bank of Nova Scotia from 1899-1911. He received the equivalent of \$31,405 on his

⁴¹ Fresh in the public's mind were the amalgamations of the Northern Crown and the Royal, and Bank of British North America and the Bank of Montreal.

⁴² "Had Reached Limit of Expansion; Reason Given For Sale of Bank of Ottawa to Bank of Nova Scotia", *Ottawa Citizen*, 20 January 1919, p. 6.

investment and made a profit of between \$8,000-\$20,000, depending on whether his purchasing price was face value or market value.⁴³ However the Minister of Finance stated he had no communication on the merger with the Prime Minister and that he was certain Borden knew nothing about it.⁴⁴

Criticism of the merger turned to resistance when a meeting to protest the merger was held by the Retail Merchants' Association. They were concerned that Toronto would take over control of about \$100,000,000 in local capital. Some simply wanted more information from the bankers as to the reason for such a large merger. E.M. Trowers set the matter in its 1919 context by exclaiming that "Bolshevism. . .was spreading all over Europe and in Canada, where capital was being attacked. If the two banks had to get together for protection he wanted to know it, or else the real reason".⁴⁵ In answer to the

⁴³ Borden, originally a Halifax lawyer, corresponded with H.A. Richardson, Manager of the Bank of Nova Scotia and did hold the largest block of Nova Scotia shares in Ottawa. Suspicions such as those of Mr. Corrigan may have been aroused by a typographic error in the last sessional list (1916) of Bank of Nova Scotia shareholders. It shows Borden as only having paid \$600 towards \$36,600 worth of Bank of Nova Scotia shares. A check of the manuscripts and unpublished lists shows the shares were paid in full. His 114 Bank of Ottawa shares had a face value of \$100 each and a market value of \$202 prior to the merger. They were exchanged five shares for four of the Bank of Nova Scotia at a rate of \$275, and he received 91 shares and \$55 cash for a 1/5 share.

⁴⁴ MG27 II D18, Vol. 1, file 4(a), Sir Thomas White to Edward W. Nesbitt, 11 February 1919, replying to his letter of 8 February (*op. loc.*). Nesbitt mentioned he heard it said that approval was granted because the Prime Minister was a shareholder, which he doubted.

⁴⁵ "Organize for Resistance to Bank Merger", *Ottawa Citizen*, 21 January 1919, p. 6.

suggestion that a citizens committee approach the Minister and the bankers, Colonel Pidgeon of the Great War Veterans Association declared it would be "absolutely useless":

I took this step when the same octopus was ready to swallow the Bank of New Brunswick and was given to understand it was to save the institution from ruin. I afterwards found out that the information given me was a tissue of lies from beginning to end.⁴⁶

He recommended making the matter a civic or national issue because the merger would "foster the spirit of Bolshevism among those who would be at the mercy of a few great bankers." The next day, without Colonel Pidgeon, a committee including A.E. Corrigan, L.N. Poulin and Harold Fisher, Mayor of Ottawa, called on D.M. Finnie of the Bank of Ottawa but without success.

The Mayor reacted by calling the banks the largest combine in the country and called for "the nationalization of banking", rather than allowing mergers to continue to concentrate capital in one or two cities and fewer and fewer hands.⁴⁷ The citizens committee's next step had a brilliant simplicity. Plans were announced to buy up the Bank of Ottawa's four million dollars worth of shares by using the twelve million the local economy had invested in Victory

⁴⁶ Colonel Pidgeon was a member of the civic committee at St. John, New Brunswick during the earlier merger of the Bank of Nova Scotia and the Bank of New Brunswick. "Organize for Resistance to Bank Merger", *Ottawa Citizen*, 21 January 1919, p. 6.

⁴⁷ "Says Bank Merger Not in Interest of the Country", *Ottawa Citizen*, 22 January 1919, p. 6.

Bonds, bonds sold by the banks. Critics of the merger linked the notions of patriotic duty and civic pride and raised \$55,000 in one morning.⁴⁸

That same day the *Ottawa Citizen* ran its only editorial on the merger. While claiming to voice no opinion on the matter, the editor went on to present the Bank's position in a favourable light. What had been a front page story suddenly ceased to be covered or even commented on. The paper did not even cover the results of the shareholder vote on the merger resolution or the subsequent demise of the Bank. The vote was reported in Toronto, by the *Globe*, which was informed by the Bank of Nova Scotia.⁴⁹ The growing public opinion against the merger vanished just as it was gaining momentum and supporters.

The reason is made clear by the reminiscences of H.V. Cann, the Associate General Manager of the Bank of Ottawa:

associations were organized to protest and wild plans announced to buy control of the bank and prevent ratification of the agreement by the shareholders. The press featured this sensational news for several days. I succeeded in having one of the most active leaders of the opposition silenced by appealing to a friend who controlled the corporation with which the agitator was connected. Next I called upon the owners of a newspaper and went over the whole proposition with them. They finally expressed themselves as satisfied that the merger was not against public interest, said they must continue to publish the news but would not feature it. They were fair minded enough to follow up that conversation with a long editorial favorable to the amalgamation.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ "Would Buy Stock of Shareholders Favorable to Bank Amalgamation", *Ottawa Citizen*, 22 January 1919, p. 1; "Pledge \$55,000 in First Half Day to Stop Bank Merger", *Ottawa Citizen*, 23 January 1919, p. 1.

⁴⁹ "Ottawa Joins Nova Scotia", *Globe*, 5 March 1919, p. 20.

⁵⁰ H.V. Cann, *Pages from a Banker's Journal*, [Ramsey, N.J.]: n.p., 1933, p. 37.

The shift in position by the *Ottawa Citizen*, in favour of silence, effectively closed local debate on the merger.

This was not the case in the city which had the most to benefit by bank mergers, the new financial capital of Toronto. The *Globe* ran two strong editorials against this and any further bank mergers. They drew attention to the fact that since he had left banking to become Minister of Finance in 1911, Sir Thomas White had approved the absorption of nine banks in eight years.⁵¹ The *Globe* felt that both the Minister of Finance and the directors of the two banks were concerned only with "stockholders first, last and at all times", without considering public good or the rights and capital of depositors. Shareholders had twenty-nine million dollars at stake but the depositors and their \$145,522,000 had no say in the matter. The other paper opposed to the merger was the *Winnipeg Free Press*, which argued for separate regional banking.⁵² Ironically, a former director of the Bank of Ottawa, John Mather, had been the paper's President.

⁵¹ The mergers Sir Thomas White approved were: The Royal Bank and the Traders Bank (1912), the Quebec Bank (1916) and the Northern Crown Bank (1918); the Bank of Commerce and the Eastern Townships Bank (1912); the Home Bank and the Banque Internationale du Canada (1913); the Bank of Montreal and the Bank of British North America (1918); and the Bank of Nova Scotia acquisition of the Bank of New Brunswick (1913), the Metropolitan Bank (1914) and the Bank of Ottawa (1919). Under the Laurier administration thirteen mergers took place between 1896 and 1911. For a chronology of mergers see A.B. Jamieson. *Chartered Banking in Canada*. Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1953, p. 369.

⁵² "A Proposed Bank Merger," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 23 January 1919, p. 11. Also: "Reach Agreement to Merge Banks," 20 January 1919, p. 1; "The Bank Merger," 21 January 1919, p. 6.

The protests had no effect, either on the Minister's decision, taken before the public was informed, or on the shareholders.⁵³ Against the concerns of local and regional economies the Minister of Finance made a statement in the House on the need for strong banks to support exports. He cited the British precedent that since 1891 the number of British private banks had fallen from thirty-eight to seven, and the number of joint stock banks from one hundred and four to thirty-four.⁵⁴ The Bank of Ottawa merger was one minor step in the consolidation of capital and the integration of regional banking networks and their related local economies.

However, amalgamation and centralization of banking in Canada was an issue in Toronto, where the *Globe* spoke out against a money trust, in the Ottawa Valley, which was indeed surrendering control of over seventy million dollars

⁵³ H.A. Richardson of the Bank of Nova Scotia confided his concern over the *Free Press* editorials on the Bank of Ottawa merger to the Minister of Finance. MG 27 II D18, Vol. 1, file 4(a), H.A. Richardson to Sir Thomas White, 17 February 1919.

⁵⁴ Canada. House of Commons. *Debates, 1919*. 2 April 1919 (vol. II): 1091. This same phenomenon had taken place amid protests in England, where by 1919 the five largest banks held per capita deposits of \$160 for each of thirty-seven million citizens. The situation in Canada, with a population of only eight million, stood in 1919 at \$142 per head in deposits, counting only the four largest banks. "The Bank Merger," *Globe*, 22 January 1919, p. 6. Several references in Sir Thomas White's speeches come from an item in his files, the British Treasury Minute, 11 March 1918, *Report of the Treasury Committee on Bank Amalgamations*. London: H.M. Stationers Office, 1918. See also: B.H. Beckhart. "Fewer and Larger Banks," in *Money and Banking in Canada*, E.P. Neufeld, Editor. Toronto: Carleton Library/McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1964, pp. 196-205.

worth of its economy, and in the Prairie provinces, which despite the proliferation of branch banks had problems getting credit.

Conclusion

As a form of economic nationalism, the merger movement was all the more unsettling in a population of only eight million which was further divided by regional economic identities. Layered upon this was the public distrust of any combination of lawyers, politicians and banks, and a post-war climate of demobilization, bolshevik rumour and economic unease. The secrecy of bankers and the Minister of Finance's exclusion of the public from a major economic restructuring aggravated the situation.

Built with local capital, the Bank of Ottawa served a hinterland of small towns and villages for forty-five years before being absorbed. Despite a brief local outcry over the loss of control over regional capital to distant hands, the only local bank in the nation's capital was lost not to Toronto, but to the Maritimes. The 1916 shareholders list for the Bank of Nova Scotia shows that of 65,000 shares, 51,316 were registered in the Maritimes, 10,137 in Toronto and 3,547 in Montreal. The head office of the Bank of Nova Scotia may have moved to Toronto, but the dividends went to Maritimers. Cast in this light the process of centralization of financial institutions is less cut and dried.

The Bank of Ottawa also illustrates the limitations to capital growth and branch expansion of a regional bank. Unlike the Maritime banks, which

expanded both into the Caribbean and into central Canada, the Bank of Ottawa found itself boxed in. "J'Avance" covered over the fact that increasingly the Bank was drifting. The arguments put forth by the local community against the merger have a strong echo of Maritimers' sentiments. However, to the shareholders, men and women who were also local residents, voting to bring an end to this local symbol was a simple financial decision. This institution, whose regional identity was so pronounced in 1875, was now undistinguished among other financial institutions. The merger may have been the most effective way to gain access to larger investment markets. The main crew of this particular timber raft chose a larger vessel to carry themselves and their capital into the twentieth century. Descendants of James MacLaren continued to sit on the Board of Directors of the Bank of Nova Scotia into the 1970s.

CHAPTER 7
CLOSING THE FOREST:
LUMBERMEN AND THE COMMISSION ON COLONIZATION

Introduction

In April 1901 a number of individuals paid the necessary \$5.64 fee for location tickets for land far above Buckingham at an obscure place called Chapleau road. The events which are central to this chapter concern what followed on these small lots, either the north or south range, above or below the Chapleau road, held by eleven individuals. To the north, lots 39 through 43 were held by Hyacinthe Deslauriers, Edouard Deslauriers, Gédéon Landry, and Edmond Fortier, all working in Michigan, at Escanaba or Detroit at the time of application. On the south, lots 37 through 42 were held by Isaie and Felix Landry, Hyacinthe Deslauriers, and Napoléon Legault, most of whom were from Fall River. This may have been the Fall River in Wisconsin, a lumber town, or the one in Massachusetts, where many French-Canadians worked in textile mills. Like so many others at the turn of the century, they had gone outside Québec to find work, in the United States.

Further along the road on the south side were lots 45 through 48, held by Evangéliste Raymond, Delphis Raymond, Alvarez Lauzon, and Magloire Aubry.

This group were clearly *bona fide* settlers, clearing and putting up buildings, and long-time residents in the general region. Subsequent events at these lots caused all these settlers to bring suit against the MacLaren Company for trespass and damages for cutting "their" timber. They in turn, were accused by the MacLaren Company of making fraudulent applications for lands within the MacLaren timber limits. This small incident became, as we will see, the focal point of the considerations of Québec's Commission on Colonization. The story marks the turning point in the State's relationship between the forest industry and settlers.

As nineteenth century settlement progressed, conflicts over land had increased. A.R.M. Lower's *Settlement and the Forest Frontier in Eastern Canada* was the first study to examine the tensions over rural land use among the resource sector, the State and settlers.¹ In Lower's opinion land classification was less a science than a political instrument. As early as 1855 the classification of land was a political issue as the legislators sought "A fair line of demarcation between lumbering and the agricultural regions."² The debate concerned a narrow range of choices: "is the land to be for people in their individual

¹ For Ontario see: A.R.M. Lower, "Settlement and the Forest Frontier in Eastern Canada," W.A. MacKintosh and W.L.G. Joerg, Editors. *Canada Frontiers of Settlement*. Vol. IX, Part 1. Toronto: Macmillan, 1936. See also his "The Assault on the Laurentian Barrier, 1850-70," *Canadian Historical Review*, 10 (December 1929), pp. 294-307.

² Report of the Select Committee Appointed to Examine and Report upon the Present System of Management of the Public Lands, *Journals of the Legislative Assembly of Canada, 1854-55*, Appendix M.M., Evidence of J.H. Burke, Bytown, cited in Lower, *Settlement and the Forest Frontier*, p. 49.

capacities or for them in corporate capacity?"³ The latter meant either the Crown, or perhaps a colonization society. But by 1860-61 the pages of the *Ottawa Citizen* began to ask "does the settler benefit the lumberman?"⁴ Lower concluded about the 1860s that:

the country as a whole would have been very much further ahead if the forests of the Upper Ottawa Valley had been kept permanently in the public hands as a national estate. Then the rivalry between lumberers and settlers, which incited the one to slash down and the other to burn up, would never have taken place.

Few persons, however, at the time went so far as to advocate anything so drastic as the withdrawal from settlement of an entire district.⁵

After 1867 Québec was increasingly pulled between the dual policies of Church-and-State assisted colonization and its support of lumbermen. This was complicated by timber limits that escalated in value through public auctions, while being increasingly depleted by cutting, fire and insects. Political solutions included the 1875 Forest Reserve Act, which together with the 1877 land survey, attempted to separate the two. It was repealed in 1888 due to the political pressure of the colonization movement.⁶

³ Lower, *Settlement and the Forest Frontier*, p. 49.

⁴ *The Citizen*, August 11, 18, September 9 1860, and June 29, 1861, cited in Lower *Settlement and the Forest Frontier*, p. 55.

⁵ Lower, *Settlement and the Forest Frontier*, p. 56.

⁶ The idea of a forest reserve which excluded settlers was not new. From 1883 until its repeal in 1888 the Forest Reserve Act gave lumbermen thirty months to remove merchantable timber from any lands on which a settler took out a location ticket. It was clear that many of the lumbermen were in favour of a return to that system and most remembered it in a positive light. When asked if the old system

Throughout the 1880s the problem of settlers using location tickets solely to obtain timber in Québec had some regional variation.⁷ Normand Séguin finds that in Hébertville applications claiming to be for agricultural purposes were in reality to provide timber to other parties. Jack Little's study of Winslow, in the Eastern Townships, finds that there was minimal evidence of settlers acting for lumber companies. But by the turn of the century, depletion of forests and scarcity of land, and increased demands by both settlers and timber companies brought about a sense of crisis. The ambivalent State, trying to support both demands, reached a critical moment in 1904, in part due to this dispute at Chapleau Road.

Afterwards Quebec changed its land classification to keep land designated as non-agricultural in the hands of the Crown, as actively logged forest reserves.⁸ While Lower mentions this change passing he seems to have attached no special

was satisfactory most spoke glowingly. However the Commission heard testimony from George Cahoon and A.B. Filion that there had been a great deal of dissatisfaction, presumably from settlers who saw lumbermen removing the chief asset on the land they had chosen. The 1888 repeal, as we will see, may have had a great deal of support by the railway lobby.

⁷ See: Marcel Hamelin, *Les premières années du parlementarisme québécois (1867-1878)*. Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1974, pp. 238-239; J.I. Little, *Crofters and Habitants: Settler Society, Economy, and Culture in a Quebec Township, 1848-1881*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991, pp. 70-74; and Normand Séguin, *La conquête du sol au 19e siècle*. Sillery: Boréal Express, 1977, pp. 135-136.

⁸ It is discussed in the Annual Report of Minister of Lands, Mines and Forests, for 1906, p. viii, cited in Lower, *Settlement and the Forest Frontier*, p. 66.

significance to its impact on settlement. According to Peter Gillis and Thomas Roach, between 1904 and 1910 Premier Simon-Napoléon Parent, and his successor, created 429,283 square kilometres of forest reserves, blocking the advance of settlement from the south.⁹ In a paternalistic manner, and to the benefit of commercial large-scale forestry, the State brought an end to the nineteenth century pioneer experiments in adapting family economies along the southern forest frontier. The Premier of Québec fell over the furore and it marks the closure, not enclosure, of the common -- the forest.

In this micro-study the actors include the State and companies such as James MacLaren's, but also the individual farmer, the small timber operator, and the northern colonization movement, begun by Curé Antoine Labelle.¹⁰ Québec, faced with limited financial options and high out-migration invested in itself, through the movement of people north, under the joint administration of Church and State. The interaction of these actors could be a thesis in itself, but

⁹ R. Peter Gillis and Thomas R. Roach, *Lost Initiatives: Canada's Forest Industries, Forest Policy and Forest Conservation*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1986, p. 117. See also: Bruce W. Hodgins, Jamie Benidickson, and Peter Gillis, "The Ontario and Quebec Experiments in Forest Reserves, 1883-1930," *Journal of Forest History* 26:1 (January 1982): 23-32.

¹⁰ See Gabriel Dussault, *Le Curé Labelle: Messianisme, utopie et colonisation au Québec, 1850-1900*. Montréal: Hurtubise HMH, 1983; and Robert Laplante. "Du Curé Labelle et de feu l'agriculturisme," *Recherches Sociographiques*, 28 (1) (1987): 71-88. For the older clerical interpretations see: L'abbé Elie-J. Auclair, *Le Curé Labelle. Sa vie et son oeuvre*. Montréal: Librairie Beauchemin, 1930; and Le Recorder Testard de Montigny, *La Colonisation: Le Nord de Montreal ou la région Labelle*. Montréal: C.O. Beauchemin & fils, 1895.

this chapter will focus primarily on the relationship between the State, lumbermen and settlers as seen through the 1904 Commission of Colonization's Hull hearings.

I The Commission on Colonization

The Commission was not the first inquiry into the use of public lands, but was the first to generate an extensive body of local testimony. The Commission, established 14 June 1902, had a mandate to examine all aspects of public lands as they related to the often conflicting needs of Québec's two main systems of rural development -- the agrarian-based colonization movement and the forest industry.¹¹ The Commission heard or read submissions from over 325 witnesses in regions and towns throughout Québec, at Métapédia, Labelle, la Beauce, Lac St-Jean, Québec, Montréal, and Hull. Depositions and transcripts totalled 2,500 pages and the final report was issued in two volumes.

¹¹ Order in Council, under Statute 2, 14 June 1902, 2 Edward VII, Chap. 3. Three commissioners were appointed: President, Mgr. J.C.K. Laflamme; Hon. George W. Stephens; and Hon. J.B. Bourgeois; with J.C. Langelier as Secretary. With the unexpected resignation of Laflamme, followed by the death of Judge Bourgeois, the Commission was reorganized as follows: President, Senator J.H. Legris; Reverend Canon Thivierge; John L. Brodie; with C.O. Lavoie, Superintendent of Land Sales Branch and J.C. Langelier as Secretary. Their report was published in 1904. See: Québec. Commission de colonisation. *Rapport de la commission de colonisation de la Province de Québec*. 2 vols. Québec: Charles Pageau, imprimeur du Roi, 1904 (hereafter cited as *Commission de Colonisation*). George Stephens issued an unofficial minority report after his exclusion: George Washington Stephens, *Forestry and colonization: A Report*. Montreal: Lovell & Son, Printers, 1903.

The Commission provides insight into the forest and society on several themes. The lumbermen of Québec received a list of 201 questions and returned detailed answers giving their views on forest fires, timber supply, forest preservation, sale of limits, settlers, colonization and colonization roads, water power, enforcement and the burgeoning pulp and paper trade. From this, a picture of the corporate view, primarily anglophone, of Québec's forests emerges, which existed within a different milieu than A.R.M. Lower's portrait of settlement on the northern Ontario frontier. On a more specific level, the MacLaren Company used the Commission's Hull hearings to publicly pursue and intimidate those they believed were using Colonization as a pretext in order to cut on their timber limits. The Commission marked the final closing of the door by Québec's government on Curé Antoine Labelle's model of agrarian development, in favour of large-scale resource development based on concessions to big business.¹² Although it brought about the defeat of Premier Simon-Napoléon Parent, it marked the final victory of philosophies which would hold centre stage in the twentieth economic thinking in Québec -- reliance on development through large scale forestry, mining and hydro-electricity.

¹² While another wave of colonization took place in the 1930s it was forced above the timber limits of the south, into poorer soil and the shorter growth season of the Clay Belt. The earlier wave made a more consistent expansion of society northward from the St. Lawrence.

II The Politics of Depletion: Québec's Forest

The Commission solicited answers from leading lumbermen throughout both Québec and the Ottawa Valley on 201 forest-related questions; of these only nine dealt specifically with colonization. Several groups were conspicuously under-represented or absent; there is little testimony by settlers or newly formed pulp and paper companies and smaller custom mills. When lumbermen appeared before the Committee to testify in Hull, the questions were put to them by one of their own, P.G. Owen, the Secretary-Treasurer of the Limit Holders' Association. Strangely enough, it was Owen who made the only reference to the public's view of the real reason the Commission was sitting, prefacing a question to J.R. Booth with the statement:

You are, of course, acquainted with the popular idea going around the province here, that the lumbermen and *bona fide* settlers are practically fighting each other and that the Commission here has been appointed especially to see to those differences if they so exist.¹³

Only one company in attendance, the James MacLaren Company, did not belong to the Lumbermen's Association. The matter was raised briefly by the Henry Aylen, the Company's lawyer, in the following exchange with Edward Vallillée, the Buckingham mill manager:

- Q: Your company is not connected with the Lumbermen's Association?
 A: No, sir.
 Q: So that you treat with this broadly?
 A: Yes, if we joined that Association it might look to the farmers with whom we deal that it would hurt them.

¹³ *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 50.

The object of the association is good, but in our particular case we would rather deal with our own people.

Q: That leaves you above suspicion among your colonists?

A: Yes, sir.¹⁴

The whole course of the Hull sittings seemed rather odd. At least two lumbermen submitted answers to questionnaires which contained several responses which matched word for word. Still, when used with caution, the volume of testimony is useful.

The majority (157 of 201) of the questions concerned, in descending order, preservation of the forest, settlers, fire, timber supply and water powers. A rough count of subjects discussed in the replies shows that lumbermen were concerned with, in descending order; fire, settlers, timber supply, preservation of the forest and to a lesser extent, water powers. Colonisation and pulp wood, both very controversial topics, attracted the least comment. For the Commission the issue was balancing preservation of the forest with the needs of settlers. For lumbermen the issue was the immediate destruction of their timber supply, more than the long term problem of forest preservation.

Few of the questionnaire respondents demonstrated much knowledge about the life cycles of the trees they cut, although professional foresters and scientists had converged on Montréal twenty-two years earlier at the 1882 American Forestry Conference. When asked how long it took to produce a pine tree measuring one foot at the butt, three lumbermen, William Price among them,

¹⁴ *Commission de Colonisation*, pp. 107-108.

replied they did not know. Other estimates ranged from a low of twelve years to as high as eighty. Several did allow for variables of "locality, soil and other variables". A.B. Filion's rule of thumb was 1/4" of tree growth per year. Henry Egan distinguished between trees growing in clearings, open bush and primeval forests and on land that had been previously burned. Five had no answer for spruce, a few said it grew at the same rate as pine, others said faster. When asked about replanting by seed only one named specific months when seeds were ripe, November and December. Several referred generally to the Autumn. None of them replanted on the lands they cut, and only one could name someone who did replant (Egan referred to Sir Henri G. Joly de Lotbinière). When asked if the province should establish either a German or French forestry system, all respondents were opposed, but many felt a more systematic manner of cutting was required, and that experiments should be undertaken with nurseries. Only one, J.B. Fraser, suggested actual replanting, based around a rebate of timber dues. John Booth dismissed replanting as nonsense. The real issue for him was how to preserve the large forests which already existed from destruction by settlers, fires, and timber thefts.

The evidence of depletion of the timber supply was mixed. Some felt the countryside was infinite, if properly managed and harmful factors legislated against. George Cahoon's testimony gave the most detailed view of the problems of second growth timber:

Timber has become so scattered on driveable streams through unintelligent lumbering, or lumbering with no regard to the future, in

the past, that it is now almost impossible to remedy this condition, and to allow a growth of timber to become so thick that it will perpetuate itself, without resorting to artificial means, before being obliged to cut same. The only chance of obtaining this end is to open up back country not on driveable streams, by a railroad, and to limit the number of holders of limits in each district, so that it will be certain that each holder will be able to get out his requirements without being compelled to cut every available stick of timber which comes under Government regulations, or more concisely, so that each holder will be able to protect his forest lands from depreciation in value.¹⁵

The past was referred to as a period of "unbroken forest". Patrick Rice had spent twenty-five years working for the MacLarens on the Gatineau and twelve more working for Senator W.C. Edwards, who purchased MacLaren's Eagle River limits. Looking back fifty years to 1864 he estimated 10 percent of the Gatineau's pine forest remained, blaming speculators, fire, and failed attempts at agricultural settlements, such as one at Lake Cagamont.¹⁶ Central to all of the discussion were statements about the role of settlers.

III The Good *Colon* and the Discourse of Fire

The very existence of the Commission makes it clear that it was not a time of peaceful co-existence between settler and lumberman. The central political question for the Commission was whether there should be a distinction between land set aside for the forest industry, and land for settlers and agricultural production. Scale of investment and the finite nature of the resource had led the

¹⁵ George Cahoon, *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 58.

¹⁶ Patrick Rice, *Commission de Colonisation*, pp. 10-11.

industry to demand that the State consider excluding settlers from the forest. A.R.M. Lower's discussion of the situation in northern Ontario focused on the issue of fire and the movement of farms into areas with poor agricultural soils. While correct, this ignores other issues of structural importance to rural class relations and resource policy. Closing the forest common marks the end of the frontier.

Closure severely restricted the opportunities for poorer families to try to establish themselves, including their freedom to fail, something common to farmers in any region. In the nineteenth century families established themselves through the sale of the timber as they cleared land. The removal of this right insured failure, which in turn demonstrated that settlers should be excluded because of their failures. It was a circular argument that proved the region was unsuitable for settlement. On another level, the issue was whether an individual who clears land purposefully for the timber alone, should be allowed to continue to earn a living. Or to restate it, the question is this: do small producers have a right to exist amidst larger investors?

The issue of forest reserves or closure also implied an end to movement. Fixing the location and nature of the forest defines nodes of settlement and brings rigidity into the social relations and cycles of work. The end to movement puts a more fixed caste on the relations between settler/forest worker and employer. It creates the forest dependent company town so familiar in the twentieth century throughout North America. These are the issues that underlie

discussions of the costs of fires and the good *colon* versus the evil squatter -- issues of access to and control of the forest.

The industry did not deny what we would call its *agro-forestière* relationship with the good *colon*. Even William Price had something good to say:

The limit holders never have any trouble with and are in no way hostile to *bona fide* settlers. On the contrary, in most instances they are pleased to have *bona fide* settlers take up lands really suitable for agricultural purposes within their limits, and assist them largely in settling and further provide a market for all their produce and give work to such members of the family as are of an age to labour.¹⁷

When asked if they were a hinderance or a help to colonization, most lumbermen answered positively. William Price called the lumberman "probably the greatest colonization agency there is," pointing to his influence on the Saguenay and Lake St. John. Many lumbermen mentioned how lumbering supported farmers: giving winter employment for the men, boys and teams; it was a convenient market at the farmer's door buying all his produce; and several stressed that farmers received higher prices from them than in city markets.

Henry Egan of the Hawkesbury Lumber Company, which controlled about 1,300 miles of Québec timber limits, stated he spent about \$225,000 a year on forest work and river drives, including buying provisions. He bought 225 tons of hay from farmers at Ville Marie, as well as potatoes, and all of their small production of oats and beef, neither being enough for his needs. His other local source was the farms of Pontiac County, from the Isle of Allumettes to Shehan

¹⁷ William Price, *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 83.

township.¹⁸ Another Ottawa Valley lumberman, J.S. Gillies, stated he bought from \$50-60,000 of local farm produce a year. His spending on forest wages and provisions totalled \$300,000 a year.¹⁹ The E.B. Eddy operations, covering 1,000 miles, had expenses running about \$700,000 a year, some of it going to local farmers for produce, but Eddy insisted: "I am not supposed to know or to see the amount of money spent or expended on our limits," which implies segmented monetary responsibility with unknown parties.²⁰ J.R. Booth also claimed about \$700,000 a year in expenses, for limits totalling 2,400 miles, half of them in Quebec. He could not be more exact, stating that his business calculation was this: "I take the number of logs I get cut in a year from the province of Québec limits and I count at so much per log and from that we know what it costs at an average to manufacture it."²¹ Booth estimated spending among local farmers and villages was about 45% on provisions and another 15% in payment for portaging the supplies up to the camps. He concluded that he had always had good relations with settlers:

Men going on the limits all like us to buy something from them and we like to do so to encourage and help them and we find also that whenever they take up timber, for they do it sometimes, we don't lose

¹⁸ H.K. Egan, *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 19.

¹⁹ J.S. Gillies, *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 25.

²⁰ E.B. Eddy, *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 26.

²¹ J.R. Booth, *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 49.

anything by this for they get out these logs, we buy from them and they make their clearing; those logs are free of duty²²

Also:

I do not know of all the cases where we have run an open account to our men, that is settlers that were short of money, but still we have found it to our advantage to keep them going on with their business and in our interest; to keep them well was in our interest as well as theirs; we, whenever it was asked, gave them credit till the next season, in fact we look on them as of our own men, and their interest are as ours.²³

However, while this may have once been typical, the statement of the Ottawa Valley firm Gillies Brothers on the lumberman and colonization points to a decreasing dependence on local farmers: "usually as soon as the lumbering ceases or a railroad comes nearer, and the lumberman can get his supplies at ordinary market rates, the settlers cannot make a living."²⁴

Railroads were a key variable in this relationship between settlement and lumbering. They were both the cause of and solution to settlement problems. Railways frequently burned wood, despite regulations against it, resulting in forest fires, but they also gave settlers alternate markets for farm and timber produce. Gillies discussed the case of the colonization movement at Lake Temiscamingue:

This was carried on by a society, some of the land being tillable, inducements being the high prices paid for farm produce by the

²² J.R. Booth, *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 50-51.

²³ J.R. Booth, *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 51.

²⁴ Gillies Brothers, *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 95.

lumbermen. This settlement until this last year has been gradually becoming bankrupt, as trade did not increase as population increased. This last year trade had been some better as larger lumbering operations have been carried on and the influx of settlers to the Ontario side of Lake Temiscamingue, has given a market for produce, but unless railroads bring other industries, both the Ontario and Quebec side will be bankrupt immediately the timber has disappeared.²⁵

Fraser and Fillion argued that railroads could also cause the reverse, the abandonment of isolated farms, as settlers moved to "farms located nearer civilization where they could send their children to school and be nearer the advantages that accrue from close proximity to railroads."²⁶ Fraser and others, while in one part stressing the importance of lumbermen's road building to opening the country, argued that roads should be limited "to the front". The answer was to point the settler towards good agricultural land and use roads to shape their choices of land, keeping them out of the interior.

In addition to settlers the railroad brought the small custom mill. Originally the mill, like its water-anchored companion the grist mill, served the needs of local farmers, cutting planks and boarding from their logs for farm construction. Some of these mills had diversified into specialties, such as hardwood production. However the lumbermen were uneasy about the proliferation of the mills, to their minds far more in number than were needed to supply the needs of local construction. Their suspicion was that the small, highly mobile wood-burning

²⁵ Gillies Brothers, *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 104.

²⁶ J.B. Fraser, *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 86.

steam-powered sawmills were linked by unknown ownership and were positioned to process nearby Crown land timber and logs extracted by "bogus settlers" from their limits. Given their substantial investments in both mills and timber limits, lumbermen distrusted sawmills of any size which had no direct investment in timber limits.

There was also a technological and generational aspect to their unease about custom mills. Their investments were built around the pre-railroad age of water-borne transportation, in which large plants were located at strategic power and transportation sites and the logs brought down to them. Railroads in the Ottawa Valley were introducing the same structural freedom from water power that was so characteristic of the southern U.S. industry, and the spectre of cut and run competition alarmed the heavily invested older generation of lumbermen. R. Sissons and William Price both discussed the presence at Batiscan of five custom mills on the limits, cutting 190,000 logs, against the Price mill's output of 100,000. Filion estimated the custom mills of the Labelle Lumber Company, which had no limits, bought 75,000 logs a year from settlers. The "bogus settler" was seen as the agent of these mills.

Both Sissons and Price stressed the need to "have the country developed by a thrifty class of people" so that the "limit holder and the public domains would not be robbed."²⁷ In George Cahoon's opinion, while the average settler did need some wood, their goal was soil not lumber, and a "settler who brings

²⁷ R. Sissons and William Price, *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 55.

nothing into the country is of no benefit to it".²⁸ Presumably the settler could purchase the timber needed to build their farm, from the lumberman who had cut it on the lot the settler was buying. An unkind exaggeration perhaps, but what is important is the lack of willingness to accept poor families that established themselves through their own labour in clearing and selling the timber cover. Underneath the lumbermen's statements a picture emerges of competition from farmers, entrepreneurs, and the "sawmill-speculator" who owned no limits, but was allied to the settler who required his services.²⁹ While all the lumbermen talked extensively about speculators, it was George Perley who explained that "speculator" was the term they used when referring to "the squatters".³⁰ J.B. Fraser commented that the squatters sometimes "invade in numbers".³¹

A picture emerges of the typical *faux-colon*, characterized by Sissons as "not settlers, they are unsettlers and undoers of the forest".³² Having located a good stand of merchantable timber, in March or April they would pay a \$5.64 fee for a location ticket. Regulations gave the limit holder until April 30 following the

²⁸ George Cahoon, *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 88.

²⁹ John Breakey *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 91; and C & L.O. Lumber Co., *Ibid.*, p. 89.

³⁰ George Perley, *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 15. He also pointed to the long list of unopposed lots which had been taken from his limits for *bona fide* settlers.

³¹ J.B. Fraser, *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 91.

³² R. Sissons, *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 91.

sale to remove the existing timber. Henry Egan claimed that some took out location tickets on April 29th, leaving the lumberman one day to clear the lot.³³ Sissons said that next they would build a camp, or if possible, squat in an old company camp and spend the next two years cutting. This would be followed by the inevitable malicious or accidental fire, which would spread into the surrounding limits. The squatters would then move on, leaving in their wake abandoned clearings and blackened forests.³⁴ Unknown timber speculators were often said to be financing the squatters' operations.

It is within this context that fire, a very real issue, was invoked as part of the anti-settlement rhetoric involved in the closing of the forest commons, much like an urban argument about the presence of immigrants and the possibilities of increased crime. Perley said that many squatters were not in the woods for timber or farming:

the squatter is often a man who wants to be alone and to live away from everybody and civilization, a man who is liable to be out in the upper story and is most dangerous for the good of the forest.³⁵

Next in importance to the mentally unbalanced hermit was the isolated settler, anyone who settled near trees and away from other settlements:

We have put a case now before the department of [lands?] and about several men about whom I feel certain are not real settlers who have asked to take lots, rough lots in one range extending right into the

³³ Henry Egan, *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 80.

³⁴ R. Sissons, *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 79.

³⁵ George Perley, *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 16.

limits, with timber on both sides of those lots and no settlement nearby than the lower end of the range. When settlers take out lots away from the settlements, regular settlements we will say, the danger of fire is of course more certain and increased than even in ordinary cases.³⁶

Perley and most of the lumbermen who testified defined settlers as those living in pre-existing settlements, or requesting land which had been cut-over and was no longer valuable to the lumber industry and was no longer within easy reach of existing stands of timber. In this politics of investment and scarcity fire was the justification for exclusion.

To go further, settlement was itself "fire", a spreading contagion. The "fire" of all-consuming settlement threatened at a thousand points to consume the timber limits which were increasingly expensive to purchase, to protect and to operate, and whose contents of mature timber was declining at a rate far faster than natural reproduction.

The discussion of what provisions should be made for settlers, if a forest reserve was put in place, drew a wide spectrum of responses. William Price's testimony was coloured by the sale of 40,000 cords of "pillaged" wood by the English-based Saguenay Colonization Company to an American pulp company.³⁷ He wanted the settler restricted to only "the timber necessary for building and

³⁶ George Perley, *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 16.

³⁷ The successor to *La Société de Trente*, the Saguenay Colonization Company, headquartered in London, England, took over several of Price's lots and delivered 40,000 cords of pulp wood to the Battle Island Pulp Company. The result, Price maintained, was that by cutting the wood under settlement terms, the Crown lost its stumpage, as well as future ground rent and fire taxes. *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 104.

fencing purposes." All else would belong to the limit holder for the next thirty months, but the good *colon* would have "the preference to cut the timber himself at the current rate of wages in the locality, if he so chooses." Whatever was left on his land after thirty months, was his to do with as he wished.³⁸ At the other end of the spectrum A.B. Fillion commented: "In my opinion, a forest reserve would not be acceptable by the majority of the settlers. The settler wants to be sole owner of the land and wood."³⁹ R. Sissons made the most reasonable suggestion, that the timber licensee, the Crown and the settler be linked together. The settler should have first refusal of any cutting contract on his land and the stumpage should be credited against his lot payments. Even so, Sissons wanted to see no area of less than fifteen 50-acre lots of flat tillable land opened to settlement:

In my 35 years of bush and farming experience I have known many well meaning young men from lack of experience or proper guidance take a lot in the back wood on which there was not sufficient good soil to warrant a livelihood, make a clearing, build a camp, and take a young wife to it, and after a few years of misery and hardship, privation, and may say starvation, have to get up and leave it, and with a large and young family start afresh somewhere else or be forced to be a day laborer.⁴⁰

When asked about settlers taking up lots within their limits, in the absence of a forest reserve, the general consensus was that they should have no right to the

³⁸ William Price, *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 78.

³⁹ A.B. Fillion, *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 78.

⁴⁰ R. Sissons, *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 77.

timber. The lumbermen paid highly for the limits, increasingly buying them not from the Crown, but at private auctions and sales. They took the risk and costs of protecting them from fire, paid fire taxes and annual ground rent, and stumpage on what they cut. The lumbermen insisted on their rights to the "merchantable timber", although one, Fillion, was willing to leave to the settler the immature timber. J.B. Fraser pointed out that competition from settlers left the lumberman with no choice except "to cut everything he can possibly clear expenses on, and the settler will be up against him in every instance."⁴¹

When asked if the *bona fide* settler was ever a cause of trouble to the lumbermen, five said no, one said rarely. But George Cahoon testified "Yes at times, and in the following manner -- by charging exorbitant rates and damages for allowing lumbermen the privilege of driving logs on streams running through said settler's property, and for hauling supplies over property."⁴² George Perley wanted all settlers excluded from areas of valuable timber, and Fraser candidly admitted:

I have come across *bona-fide* settlers who are not the cause of trouble to the lumberman, but the percentage of them is not large, for unless they are both intelligent and fair minded above the average they are liable to think so much of their own interest as to disregard the interests of others. As a rule the average run of settlers think of the lumberman as fair game for plunder. They are equally disposed to

⁴¹ J.B. Fraser, *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 79.

⁴² George Cahoon, *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 84.

disregard his property as they are that of the Government. They think both owe them a living.⁴³

With Fraser's statement the idea emerges of the settler as a joint problem of both State and industry.

IV MacLaren's Battle at Chapleau Road

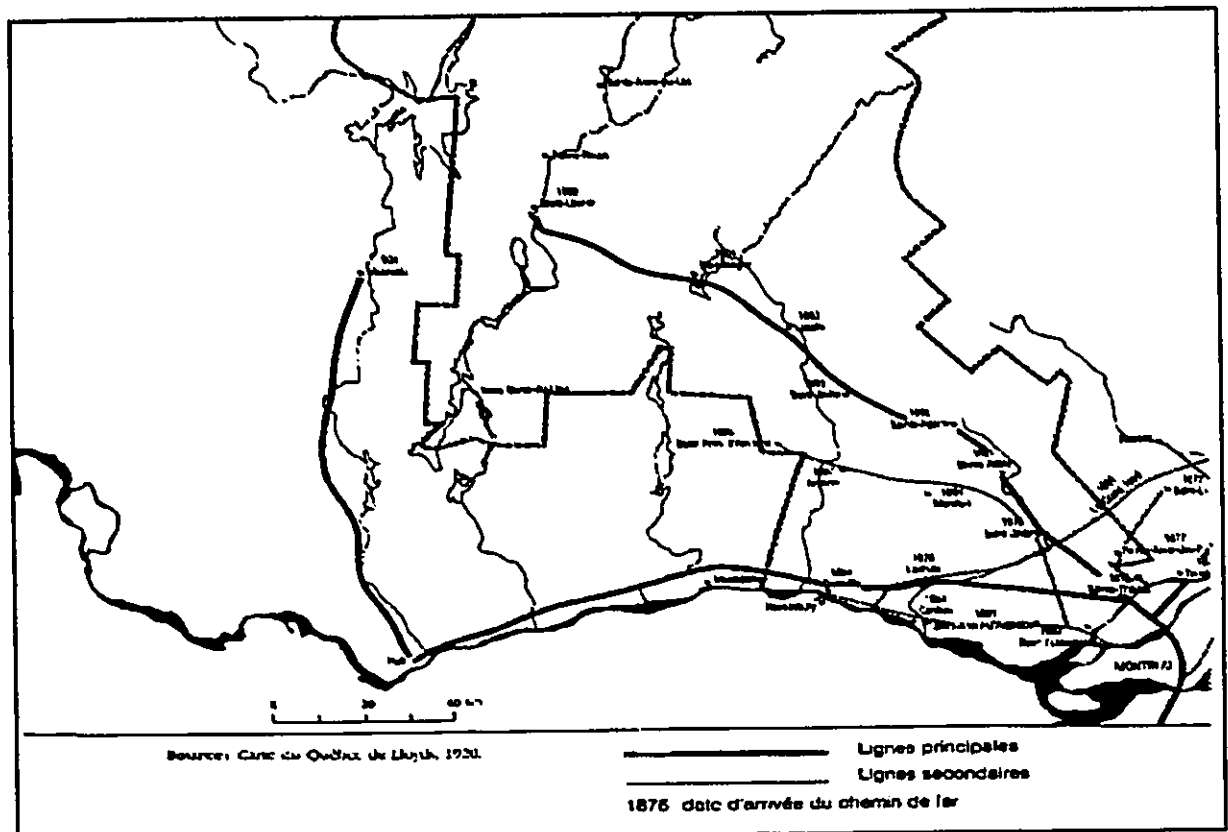
All of these issues came together in a conflict involving the MacLaren Company timber limit at Chapleau Road. Colonization had slowly reached into the MacLaren operations through the colonization railway. The line came north from Montréal to St-Jérôme (1876), Sainte-Adèle (1891), Sainte-Agathe (1892), Saint Jovite (1893), Labelle (1893), reached Nominique in 1904 and crossed through the Lièvre timber limits to arrive at Mont-Laurier in 1909 (Map 5). Its approach was watched with alarm by the James MacLaren Company. Their concern was not so much colonization but the ability of U.S. based pulp and paper companies to use the railroad to bring down pulp wood purchased from settlers. John Edward Vallillée, manager of the MacLaren mill at Buckingham since 1893, testified that they suspected timber from their limits was being drawn down to St-Jérôme to the Riordan Company's mill. When asked how it got to St-Jérôme he blamed the Colonization Railway:

They are right into our limits and we believe propose to get into the very heart of the limits in a short time. They are now at a place called

⁴³ J.B. Fraser, *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 84.

L'Original and it makes our limits so tributary that the stuff can be taken to the States or anywhere else.⁴⁴

Vallillée testified that "outside forces" had filled farmers with inflated ideas of the value of the timber on their lands, which could be sold free of stumpage



Map 5 Progress of the Colonization Railway
 Source: Serge Laurin, *Histoire des Laurentides*, Carte 8,
 Le réseau de chemin de fer vers 1920, p. 303.

charges to "the Yankees" through the railway. The new alternate market would also end farmers' dependency on the MacLaren Company as the main buyer of timber. In 1903 the James MacLaren Company spent \$586,000 in the Lièvre

⁴⁴ Testimony of John Vallillée. *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 91.

Valley, including contracts with 523 farmers who in turn employed from two to twenty men, in total about 4,000 male settlers.⁴⁵ If the labour monopoly was broken by competition, labour and timber prices were likely to rise, as well as illegal cutting. More importantly, the 4,000 settlers represented a pool of potential applicants for location tickets, either directly, or through their immediate families or the arrival of members of their extended families.

The James MacLaren Company was concerned about more than trees. Timber limits were critical sources of credit to finance their own transition to pulp and paper. Vallillée maintained that the insecurity of the limits was making financial lenders unwilling to advance the capital necessary to proceed with construction of a MacLaren pulp and paper mill on the Lièvre, with its related jobs. So although the Chapleau incident focuses on only seven 200 acre lots, it really represents a structural crisis over the direction and control of local forest exploitation.

It is unclear when exactly the MacLaren Company unofficially learned of the settlers on Chapleau road. In September, five months after the location tickets were registered, and after the four-month period for appealing against them had expired, Thomas Wells, the MacLaren's woods manager, arrived. A shanty was put on Hyacinthe Deslauriers' part of Lot 41 on the south side of the road, in the middle of the cluster of lots claimed by U.S. resident settlers. In the course of cutting in September and October, which were not traditional cutting months,

⁴⁵ Testimony of John Vallillée. *Commission de Colonisation*, pp. 90-91.

5,333 sixty foot spruce logs and 17 pines were cut, as well 141 spruce logs removed to make shanty access roads across Alvarez Lauzon and Magloire Aubry's homesteads: "en faisant des chemins des chantiers ici", as the government arbitrator put it.⁴⁶ Charges against the Company for this included trespass, unauthorized removal of timber, blocking public roads with fallen timber, and cutting trees whose dimensions were below the minimum size stated in Government regulations. In a letter written the following month Edward Vallillée, the company manager, referred to protests in the following manner, neglecting to mention that the shanty was a month old:

We would request you to have all these lots cancelled, as they are all timber lots. A part of this territory is where we had put up a camp and keep over supplies for the winter. After our men got cutting timber, some man came along and ordered them off the limit. One man claims that on his lot we cut 2,000 logs. It would seem to us that any lot with 2,000 logs on it is a timber lot, and a very good one for timber.⁴⁷

Probably it was the arrival of the MacLaren shantymen that prompted the local land agent, after five months of deliberate or accidental neglect of his duties, to finally serve official notice that the lots had been sold the previous spring.

In the third week of September the seven lot holders in the immediate cutting area pressed their trespass suit against MacLaren. Inspection of the sites showed that none had cleared more than an acre or two, often on easily cut

⁴⁶ Gustave A. Langelier to L'hon. ministre des T.M. & P., Québec, 27 Décembre 1901, reprinted in *Commission des colonisation*, Exhibit P.6, p. 197.

⁴⁷ J.E. Vallille, Manager, for the James McLaren [sic] Company, Ltd., to Hon. S.N. Parent, Premier, 28 October 1901, reprinted in *Commission de colonisation*, Exhibit P-7b, p. 199.

marshland. No one in the region recalled ever seeing them in the vicinity, although each claimed about \$100 in expenses for visiting the area to inspect damages.

After a flurry of correspondence between the Ministry, the Land Office, the law firm representing the lot holders, Major and Fortier, and the James MacLaren Company, the situation was this -- through Major and Fortier the settlers were suing the MacLaren Company for trespass and damages to their land, and loss of timber. The Minister was considering the legalities of the sales versus the legality of cancellation, and the MacLaren Company was assembling a counter-case to prove the licenses were invalid on the basis of fraud and technical omissions.

At this point the Premier of Québec, Simon-Napoléon Parent, intervened to bring the parties together in Hull. At the meeting between the Premier and Edward Vallillée they agreed Gustave Langelier should look into the charges and issue a binding report as arbitrator. In January 1902, after receiving the Government arbitrator's report, the Company sent its bailiff, David Roy, up river to negotiate settlements of claims for damages by local residents. His description makes it clear how uneasy the settlers were in their relationship with both the Company and Bailiff Roy. The first claimant Roy found was Magloire Aubry. He was working as an employee in one of MacLaren's shanties, a hundred miles above Buckingham. The following is Roy's account of the negotiations that took place:

I said it seemed that the company had trespassed on his lot, and he said yes. I said what do you value the damages at? And he said \$50, and he said he would accept that in full payment of all claims against the company. I told him that he had given his claim into the hands of Major and Fortier and he said "Yes" but he did not seem to know the amount of the demand on the company. When he said \$50 I said "Don't you consider it too high? and the old man Raymond, his father-in-law said "no, it is worth that."⁴⁸

Aubry signed a binding agreement to drop all charges and claims as long as he was paid in fifteen days. We have no evidence of how Aubry felt about being confronted by the Company bailiff as an employee in a Company shanty. His lawyer, H.A. Fortier, was not present. If present he would probably have advised his client against accepting. The suit sought \$495 in damages and legal fees and court costs.⁴⁹

The next settlement was negotiated in the home of Evangeliste Raymond on the Chapleau road. He committed himself and his son, Delphis, to drop claims in exchange for \$350 and \$150, respectively. Their separate suits were for damages totalling \$2350, plus legal fees and court costs.⁵⁰ The father signed in the absence of the son and without legal counsel. Roy stated:

⁴⁸ Testimony of David Roy, *Commission de colonisation*, p. 79.

⁴⁹ Action of Magloire Aubry vs James MacLaren Company, Ltd. Cour Supérieure, district d'Ottawa. Reprinted in *Commission de colonisation*, Exhibit P-23, pp. 169-170.

⁵⁰ Action of Delphis Raymond vs James MacLaren Company, Ltd. Cour Supérieure, district d'Ottawa. Reprinted in *Commission de colonisation*, Exhibit P-24, pp. 171. Action of Evangéliste Raymond vs James MacLaren Company, Ltd. Cour Supérieure, district d'Ottawa. Reprinted in *Commission de colonisation*, Exhibit P-25, pp. 173.

His wife seemed a little scared and did not want him to sign any papers. I said: "I do not want to take any unfair advantage of you, and if you come back to Kiamika we can see the priest there and make the arrangements before him." I said I would drive him home again. So he came with me to Father Lemonde and there he signed an agreement for himself and son⁵¹

The amounts, higher than the arbitrator's suggestions, were approved by Vallillée, and Roy returned in February with the payments and got receipts.

We have only the bailiff's account of what occurred. Not one resident of the Upper Lièvre testified over the Chapleau case. Magloire Aubry, who depended on the MacLarens for winter work, settled for \$50. The Raymonds, uneasy with the presence of a bailiff bearing legal documents in their own house, had settled for \$500, although the Company had no legal right whatever to come onto their land and cut the 2,220 logs. Mrs. Raymond was, in the bailiff's own words, "scared".

What of the non-resident lot holders? In March, after failing to locate the other seven settlers, Roy was sent to Fall River, in Bristol County, Massachusetts to locate Félix Landry, Hyacinthe Deslauriers and Napoléon Legault. Fall River had a population of 150,000, roughly half French-Canadian, organized in six parishes.⁵² Together with Adelard Perron, a local police inspector, Roy searched the city directories and the town clerk's twelve year register of annual

⁵¹ Testimony of David Roy, *Commission de colonisation*, p. 80.

⁵² Testimony of David Roy, *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 81 and p. 83. The other side argued the MacLaren's man should have gone to the lesser known lumber town of Fall River, Wisconsin.

poll-tax lists of resident men over twenty-one years of age. He also visited clergymen and checked the parish registers. Roy returned with affidavits from all six parishes and the Inspector of Police stating there was no evidence the three had ever been residents of the community.⁵³

As the investigation progressed it was learned that within weeks of the start of cutting, all the absentee settlers had transferred their rights in the lots to a twenty-one year old provincial warden in Montebello, one Noé Landry. Not only had they transferred the lots into his hands, they had also transferred to him their cases against the James MacLaren Company, and any damages that might be awarded. Landry, with the assistance of C.B. Major's law firm, continued to press the suits, until the issue of fraud came up, whereupon he took legal advice and surrendered all his claims to the lots in a letter to the Minister, Premier Parent.⁵⁴ This was not sufficient for the MacLaren Company. Chapleau was only one of many incidents and a public example was to be made.

At the Commission of Colonization's Hull hearings the following year the MacLaren Company gave no answers in response to the questionnaire and had no time for questions regarding things such as fire. They used the hearings to launch a legal inquiry into the Chapleau road incident, turning the hearings into

⁵³ Certificates of Roman Catholic Curés of Fall River, reprinted in *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 231; Declaration by Adelard Perron, Inspector of Police, Fall river, 15 March, 1902, reprinted in *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 232; Testimony of David Roy, *Commission de Colonisation*, pp. 81-82.

⁵⁴ Noé Landry to L'hon M. S.N. Parent, Premier Ministre, Québec, 14 Décembre 1903, reprinted in *Commission de Colonisation*, Exhibit P-15, p. 205.

a trial of alleged conspirators. The MacLarens were represented by Sir Henry Ayles, K.C.

One of Ayles's targets was Charles-Beautron Major, prominent farmer, *avocat* and Member of the Parliament (Ottawa) who had supported applications for over one hundred location tickets. Major had obtained blank forms for location tickets from the local Land Agent for Montigny, Thomas Christin. While many were used by *bona fide* settlers, irregularities existed in all of them and Ayles argued that timber fraud was the motivation behind the group's land acquisition. Major had promoted and supported the applications of the seven absentee applicants and his law firm represented their suits for damages and trespass against the MacLaren Company. He had also represented the Colonization Society in a suit, later dropped, against the Perley Lumber Company.⁵⁵ Major maintained throughout the hearing that while he lobbied the Ministry strenuously on behalf of the "bogus" settlers, it was no different than his vigorous lobbying on behalf of any other settler in the region. Edward Vallillée, the MacLaren manager, made it clear in his testimony that he believed Major consistently took positions on issues against the company.

Ayles also questioned the behaviour of Christin, the Montigny land agent. It may have been irregular for Christin to hand out blank forms, but Departmental regulations required him to do two things, which he did not do. First, all settlers taking out land were required to make a sworn declaration before him as to their

⁵⁵ *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 75.

age, that the land was unoccupied, and that they were not applying to buy "merely for the purpose of cutting timber." These oaths were not taken, because in most cases C.B. Major acted as the intermediary. Christin did send the declaration forms to Major but there is no evidence that they were completed and they were certainly not submitted. Secondly, the land agent was required to inform anyone with timber limits in the area if a location ticket was being granted within his limits each month. All sales of land under location tickets were effective immediately, subject to a four month Ministerial revocation period. If the limit holder did not protest within four months the settler got both land and timber. Christin granted most of the licenses in April and did not send the MacLaren Company the monthly list of lots sold until October -- five months later.⁵⁶

It is clear that the lots in question were opened to application because of Major's lobbying. However Premier Parent and Charles Lavoie of the Lands Sales Office had also visited the Upper Lièvre and had supper with settlers who asked that the lots be opened. Major's cross-examination of Lavoie showed they had agreed to open only lots along the Chapleau road to keep the back country's extensive woods for lumbermen. The purpose of locating lots for settlers along the road was to create a source of labour for road maintenance.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Testimony of Charles O. Lavoie, Chief of the Land Sales Branch, *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 61, and p. 71.

⁵⁷ Cross-examination of Charles Lavoie by C.B. Major, *Commission de Colonisation*, pp. 77-78.

Henry Aylen focused on the transfer from the seven settlers to Noé Landry of both the lots, and the legal suits against MacLaren. The Commission summoned him to appear with the original documents in those cases and any other transfers which had taken place. He arrived empty-handed the next day, and after denying that he had planned his testimony with C.B. Major, he took the stand. After a number of preliminary questions he was asked for information on the transfers of the lots or the present whereabouts of the deeds. He replied some forty-six times with variations on one simple phrase: "Je refuse de répondre parce que cela pourrait m'incriminer." The monotony of the answers led to this exchange:

- Q: Comment, vous refusez de répondre; pourquoi refusez-vous de répondre?
A: Je ne veux pas répondre à cela.
Q: Pourquoi?
A: Parce que je ne veux pas m'incriminer.
Q: Vous craignez de vous incriminer?
A: Oui monsieur; je suis assez embarrassé avec cela.

The refusal to answer triggered a debate over what to do about the witness.

Henry Aylen asked that unless Landry produced the documents and answered all questions he should be sentenced to jail for one year for contempt. Landry's legal counsel, Mr. Foran, questioned the legal framework by which Aylen claimed it could be done, and cautioned the Commission that they should "not play into the hands of those who have something else in view besides the putting of this man in prison," adding elsewhere that "I know what you want -- it is to prosecute

this man if the Attorney General refuses to do so."⁵⁸ An order to imprison him was issued at Hull on 16 February 1904.

In a memorial prepared by Henry Aylen for the MacLaren Company he makes it clear that they believed the seven settlers had never existed and were an invention of Major. They were never able to prove this, or make a link between Major and Noé Landry, which was the point of Aylen's single-minded pursuit of the original documents and transfer deeds. There was a strong tone of personal dislike in the attack on Major. Aylen's memorial sought to put the events in context:

That this practise of securing lots within the limits of the said company, under the pretence of colonization, by methods similar to, if not identical with, that resorted to by Noé Landry and his associates, has been, of recent years, rapidly increasing; that the situation of the company's limits enable such frauds to be easily and profitably carried out thereon; that such conditions are now widely known not only in the Province of Quebec, but in the United States; and that even American firms have combined with the poorer laborers of the back townships, with the result that well-wooded lots, entirely unfit for settlement, within the limits of the company, have been selected with the sole object of securing the timber growing thereon for the benefit of such firms.⁵⁹

Yet the much discussed American connection was never really part of the MacLaren's case at the Hull hearings. It is true that the Chapleau road was but one of many such incidents, such as "bogus" lots being cleared on behalf of the

⁵⁸ Foran, *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 129, and p. 130.

⁵⁹ Henry Aylen. *Factum of the James McLaren Co., re the Montigny lots*, p. 186.

Laflèche Brothers, a lumber company in Battleboro, Vermont.⁶⁰ As Major himself brought out in a cross-examination of Edward Vallillée, the MacLaren Company had asked for the cancellation of 180 lots in one list alone in the winter of 1900-01 and a further 100 cancellations in the winter of 1901-02.⁶¹ They blamed Major for blocking those cancellations and the issue of colonization was inter-woven with timber piracy, railway development, and Americans. One troubling aspect about the missing or non-existent settlers along Chapleau road is this -- anyone who worked in the U.S. and filed for a lot *in absentia* would find that absence was itself seen as proof of complicity to commit timber fraud. Did this mean only those wealthy enough to buy established farms could come home?

V The Aftermath: The Fall of a Premier

Premier Parent's political fate was intimately tied to the MacLarens and the Chapleau road question. Part of a long line of Liberal premiers of Québec, he became Premier on the death of Félix-Gabriel Marchand. Parent's views, as a staunch supporter of Wilfrid Laurier and an industrial progressive, often brought him into conflict with clerical, agrarian and more idealistic nationalists of the Henri Bourassa camp. He believed the future for Québec was based on the

⁶⁰ Lafleche Brothers, of 41 Main Street, Battleboro, Vermont, cited in the letter of 3 February 1903 by Asa A. Cook, the Forest Ranger at North Nation Mills. Cook found a squatter clearing land on the Upper Lièvre on behalf of the firm. *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 157.

⁶¹ Cross-examination of Edward Vallillée by C.B. Major, *Commission de Colonisation*, p. 103.

spin-off of industrial jobs from large scale foreign investment in hydroelectricity and corporate investments in forests and mines.⁶² Under his administration colonization was abandoned as a governmental development strategy, which in part led to his defeat, but his own party, and his successor, Lomer Gouin continued his policies.⁶³

Parent, like several Premiers of Québec, rose through the Lands Department and later kept close control of it, the source of some 20-30% of

⁶² The period of the Parent/Gouin/Taschereau administrations was, from an economist's perspective, a turning point in Québec's development. For an early appraisal see: Albert Faucher and Maurice Lamontagne, "History of Industrial Development in Québec," In *Essais sur le Québec contemporain / Essays on Contemporary Quebec*, Jean-Claude Falardeau, ed. Québec: Presses de l'Université-Laval, 1953.

⁶³ The symbolic example of this is the abolition in 1901 of the Department of Colonization and its replacement with a Department of Public Works. Paul-André Linteau, René Durocher, Jean-Claude Robert, *Québec: A History, 1867-1929*, trans. Robert Chodos. Toronto: James Lorimer & Co., 1984, p. 391. However this should not be taken as literally as it appears. The lumbermen's testimony makes it clear that the concept of colonization lingered on in practise through the ranks of the civil service. One conclusion of the report of the Commission on Colonization was that the civil service, especially land sales agents, had too much freedom to allow colonists into areas of potential conflict with industry. Perhaps someone will investigate the politics of this interesting group of civil servants. Were they neutral arbitrators, extensions of a Liberal party fund-raising mechanism, or *nationaliste* activists pursuing agrarian goals against the wishes of a pro-business administration? In 1906, after the fall of Parent, a token Department of Colonization was reinstated to placate critics. It achieved little and future settlement was forced into very poor agricultural lands well above existing timber limits and the interests of forest companies.

Québec's budget.⁶⁴ When he became Premier (1900-1905) he kept the portfolio of the Commissioner of Lands, Mines and Forests. It was here that political scandal constantly emerged. The accusations aimed at Parent continued under his successor's administration when one developer, the Belgian Baron de l'Epine, publicly stated that land he wanted in Abitibi was offered to him at seventy cents per acre, provided he pay thirty cents an acre into the Liberal party re-election fund.⁶⁵ However the admonition of historian Bernard Vigod should be kept in mind. Parent, Gouin and Taschereau represented the antithesis of the *nationaliste* clerico-agrarian program, arguing for education and industrialist jobs

⁶⁴ Due in part to the death of Bernard Vigod in 1988, we have little scholarly work on Parent (b. 12 Sept. 1855, d. 7 Sept. 1920), except a reissue of Robert Rumilly's rarely seen *S-N Parent*, Fides, 1980. Parent was married to Clara Gendron, the daughter of Ambroise Gendron, the Lumber Inspector. He was Premier of Québec from 1900 until 1905, and also mayor of Québec City. Parent's business connections included serving as director on the Molson's Bank, the Great Northern Railway Company, president of the Quebec Bridge Company, the Quebec Railway, Light & Power Co., Quebec & Lake St. John [sic] Railway. On Parent's retirement from Québec politics, Laurier appointed him to chair the National Transcontinental Railway Commission (1905-1911). This was an interesting appointment as the opposition in his own legislature had accused him of avoiding any investigation into its somewhat suspect affairs. See also: Henry J. Morgan. *Canadian Men and Women of the Time*, Toronto: William Briggs, 1912; Benjamin Sulte, C.E. Fryer & L.O. David, *A History of Quebec, Its Research and Peoples*, Montréal and Toronto: The Canadian History Company, 1908, p. 613-615; Bernard L. Vigod, "Simon-Napoléon Parent," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, Second Edition. Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1988, p. 1614.

⁶⁵ Bernard L. Vigod, *Québec Before Duplessis: The Political Career of Louis-Alexandre Taschereau*. Kingston and McGill: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986, p. 30.

through capitalist accommodation. Some of these charges of "corruption" were no more than moral rhetoric in an attack against modernization.⁶⁶

Parent's links with the lumber industry seemed indirect. However when he brought Taschereau into his law firm to handle his personal business, Taschereau remained William Price's lawyer.⁶⁷ When Edward Vallillée met with Parent in Hull, Parent did not have far to travel. Although Premier of Québec and Mayor of Quebec City, he lived in Ottawa, on King Edward Street. One can only speculate on the amount, if any, of unofficial contact Parent had with Ottawa Valley lumbermen. It was Parent who drew the attention of American investors to the hydroelectric potential of the St. Maurice and Saguenay Rivers in 1900, and he personally handled the Crown's sale of the disputed High Falls on the Lièvre to the James MacLaren Company in 1901.⁶⁸ In a pamphlet issued in 1903 to defend his forest policies, Parent included copies of a 1901 petition of Québec pulp manufacturers which included David MacLaren and most of the lumbermen who dominated the testimony before the Colonization Commission.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Vigod, *Quebec Before Duplessis*, pp. 31-32.

⁶⁷ Vigod, *Quebec Before Duplessis*, n.24, p. 13.

⁶⁸ Vigod, *Quebec Before Duplessis*, p. 17.

⁶⁹ The petitioners of 29 May 1901 included: J.R. Booth, David McLaren [sic] of the Buckingham Mills, H.K. Egan, George Bryson, Gillies, the Riordan Co., Perley, Fraser, E.B. Eddy. Another, the result of a meeting of the manufacturers of pulp and paper at the Hotel Windsor on 2 December 1902, was endorsed by: E.B. Eddy, Gillies, Vallée de McLaren, John Barber, the Toronto Paper Mfg. Co., F.P. Buck & Co., compagnie de Pulpe de Jonquière, Cie de Pulpe de Montmagny, Moulins de Pulpe de Rimouski, A. McArthur, Laurentide Pulp Co., Cie de paper

In the spring of 1902 questions were raised in the House about the Chapleau Road.⁷⁰ The issue did not go away; pressure mounted on the government. In June Parent issued the Order-in-Council for the province-wide inquiry into the tense relations between colonization and the forest industry. Aylen's legal attack on Major at the hearings led to demands by Major that the correspondence and testimony between the Commission and the government be made public. Even after the publication in 1904 of the Commission's report, pressure continued to build on the Parent administration, until, as Vigod describes it, Parent was driven from office in 1905 by young nationalists critical of his concessions to foreign capitalists.⁷¹

The most famous incidents in this bitter example of party politics are the speeches of two Federal Liberal Senators against Parent. Senator Joseph H. Legris, chairman of the Commission of Colonization Committee, said this:

Rolland, John Ford, Cie de Pulpe de St-Rouymand, Robert Miller, Cie de Pulpe de Ouatchouan, Canada Paper Co., Cie du chemin de fer Quebec et Lac St-Jean [Emphasis added. Parent was himself a Director of this Company.], J.E. Caron M.P.P., secretaire de la Cie de Pulpe Métabetchouan, F. Florentin Soucy, Hamelin & Ayers, Cie de Pulpe de Chicoutimi, James Davey et John Forman. See pages 4-5 of Simon-Napoléon Parent's *Discours de l'Hon. S.N. Parent, Premier Ministre sur la question des Droits de coupe sur le bois a pulpe. Prononcé à l'Assemblée Legislative de Québec, le 25 avril 1903.* Québec: [s.n.], 1903. 47 pages.

⁷⁰ Pierre-Évariste LeBlanc (Laval) introduced the question and it was pressed by the *colons'* M.P.P., Charles-Beautron Major. Québec. *Débates de l'Assemblée législative du Québec. 10e Législature -- 2e Session, 21 mars 1902, pp. 263-264.*

⁷¹ Bernard L. Vigod, "Simon-Napoléon Parent," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, Second Edition. Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1988, p. 1614.

I come as a Liberal to denounce a Liberal Government. Mr. Parent, as Minister of Crown lands and as Prime Minister, has brought the Liberal party and the Province into an era which can only end in ruin notwithstanding the apparent successes and the surpluses, not less apparent, in the public Treasury. I myself am the interpreter of the views of a great many of the Liberal leaders in saying that Mr. Parent has not only been a curse to his party but for the Province.

I was appointed by Mr. Parent to preside over the Inquiry on the lumber industry and colonization. I do not hesitate to say that brigandage is openly practised in the Crown Lands Department with Mr. Parent's sanction. Our system of forest sales is abominable. Every year hundreds of thousands of dollars which belong to the Crown fall into the pockets of Mr. Parent's favourites. Charity prevents me from going further. Our timber limits are sold in a way which forces me to believe that Mr. Parent desires to depreciate their price instead of enhancing it.⁷²

In Quebec City four days later Senator Philippe-Auguste Choquette added to the anti-Parent chorus with a speech which concluded with this line: "I may say that a man must be a fool or a criminal to act in such a way and Mr. Parent is not a fool."⁷³ The year was marked by charges of corruption. In addition to C.B. Major's questions about the Commission's impartiality, a Montréal Alderman was brought before the Legislative Assembly because he had called the Members of the House "boodlers" easily purchased by the great corporations.⁷⁴

⁷² Senator J.H. Legris, November 21, 1904, quoted in *The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs, 1904*, J. Castell Hopkins, ed. Toronto: Annual Review Publishing Co., 1905, pp. 325.

⁷³ Senator P.A. Choquette, November 25, 1904 in *L'Evenement*, quoted in *The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs, 1904*, J. Castell Hopkins, ed. Toronto: Annual Review Publishing Co., 1905, pp. 325-326. For more on the conclusion and context of this, including Taschereau's role, see Vigod, *Quebec Before Duplessis*.

⁷⁴ The remarks were made by S.S. Vallières in a speech at the Chateau Frontenac on April 24th. *Canadian Annual Review, 1904*, p. 314.

The Chapleau case was not unique and not all conflicts were over timber fraud. An anonymous election pamphlet, probably for the Conservatives, spent thirty pages detailing the faults and scandals of the Parent administration. The first accusation was that this was "Un Gouvernement d'Avocats" and six key ministers were indeed corporate lawyers.⁷⁵ The Premier himself received salaries from eight or more public and private sources. The pamphlet documented the persecution, eviction and arrest of *colons* by a Provincial Police detachment under the supervision of one of the Premier's staff at Nemtagé. This was allegedly for the benefit of the St. Lawrence Terminal Co. There was the case of Alfred Lajoie, forced to sell land he had worked for seven years to an American pulp company for \$50. There was a general distrust when the State intervened on the behalf of companies against settlers.

The most nationalist arguments were the anti-Americanisms under the heading of "Notre Bois". They asked who benefited when Québec sold pulpwood for \$4-5 a cord for export, which Americans turned into paper worth \$40. They concluded with:

Il suffit de tourner nos regards vers les Etats-Unis où on a aussi fait ce calcul imprévoyant. Aujourd'hui les Etats-Unis n'ont plus de bois disponible ils viennent en chercher chez nous et gaspiller nos forêts, et nous serons avant longtemps dans la même position que les Etats-Unis sous ce rapport-là.

⁷⁵ The six were: Parent, H. Archambault, L. Gouin, A. Turgeon, A. Robitaille, and I.G. McConnell. *Le Regime Parent. Quelques Faits Importants*. n.p.: s.n., [1904?], 32 pages. A copy of this rare item is in the special collections of the Morisset Library of the University of Ottawa.

Si encore on suivait la loi et qu'on ne coysait que le gros bois pour que nos forêts repoussent, mais les Américains coupent tout et dévastent tout. On voit descendre le bois dans nos rivières et il y a des petits billots qui ne sont pas plus gros que le bras; mais le Gouvernement s'en moque et il dit: "après nous le déluge."⁷⁶

Parent, in his defence noted that as of the spring of 1903 Americans had 10,370 of 62,952 square miles of timber limits, but only 1,562 square miles had been obtained directly from the Crown.⁷⁷ It is ironic that even the nationalists focused on *les Américains*, despite the fact that most of what was taking place involved the interests and actions of Québec businessmen and politicians. Rhetoric and reality may have differed but it is clear that amidst the charges and counter-charges there were deep divisions over the future of Québec and its development. They surfaced in the most obscure places, such as Chapleau Road.

Conclusion

In the year following Parent's forced retirement the James MacLaren Company was the focus of trade union activity. Pierre-Louis Lapointe has documented how the community was divided by the 1906 strike. David MacLaren brought in Pinkertons from Chicago, armed with Winchester rifles, to protect his property. A pitched battle fought at the log booms ended with the death of the young union leader, shot many times. Martial law was declared and a deadly novelty for 1906, a machine gun troop, arrived in the small town below

⁷⁶ *Le Regime Parent. Quelques Faits Importants*, p. 30.

⁷⁷ *Discours de l'Hon. S.N. Parent*, p. 41.

Ottawa. After the strike the MacLarens pressed for prosecution of the surviving strikers.⁷⁸

From the Company's perspective, colonization, the defeat of Parent and the appearance of "outside agitators" and trade unions, were all part of a pattern begun by Curé Labelle for control of the forest. Serge Laurin referred in passing to the MacLarens treating the Upper Lièvre as their seigneurie.⁷⁹ There is much truth in that image and it goes far to explaining the violent manner in which the 1906 strike was broken. The strike was not just about trade unions or the economic clash of "two solitudes". It was also a pseudo-peasant uprising against a pseudo-seigneur's patriarchal authority. It also marked the end of a journey, the arrival at the mill gate of the ghost of Curé Labelle, although the Church did not approve of the union.

It was the culmination of a long process of events which had already destroyed the career of Premier Parent. Lower does not seem to have been aware of the intensity of the State's conflicting loyalties. In *Settlement and the Forest Frontier* Parent does make a brief appearance, as Minister of Lands, Mines and Forests in 1902, prior to the crisis. While Lower does refer to bogus

⁷⁸ Pierre-Louis Lapointe, *Buckingham, villé occupée*. Hull: Éditions Asticou, 1983.

⁷⁹ Serge Laurin, *Histoire des Laurentides*. Québec: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1989, p. 334.

settlers⁸⁰ apparently he was unaware of the subtext and complexities in the

Parent quote he chose:

The settlement and opening of our vacant lands and the consequent increase of our population constitutes our chief aim. All our energies are directed to that end, for from it comes the political influence we now have and which we are to possess in the future.⁸¹

The statement is really a response to criticism that he is behaving in the opposite manner. His response reveals his preoccupation with the key problem of policy and political influence in all its complexities.

Chapleau road showed that local mechanisms of government regulation could not be relied upon to defend MacLaren's mill and timber limits. The defeat of Parent revealed the limits of political protection. Perhaps that convinced David MacLaren that defence, by force if necessary, lay in his own hands. The Winchesters fired. Martial law arrived, with a machine gun company to enforce it. The out-migration of Buckingham families began. At great cost the MacLarens maintained their control. Their forest would remain closed.

⁸⁰ Lower, *Settlement and the Forest Frontier*, p. 131-2, 134. See also his description of false colonization on p. 83. Lower mentions the obvious solution to the problem, which existed in Québec's private woodlots, but used it in an off-hand disparaging manner: "settlers, instead of sticking to their proper business, have been playing the old game of "timber Farming"." Lower accepted the industry's argument that in a forest zone settlers should grow potatoes or hay, rather than the obvious, trees. This argument, made to protect the holdings of large-scale capital against distribution to small scale capital, was a self-fulfilling prophecy which showed again, like the discourse of fire, that settlers had no place on such "poor" soil.

⁸¹ Report of the Minister of Lands, Mines, and Forests for 1902, *Sessional Papers of Quebec, 1903*, p. vii, cited in Lower, *Settlement and the Forest Frontier*, p. 67.

CONCLUSION

Introduction

The first part of this conclusion will summarize what has been found in the micro-studies based around one Ottawa Valley Lumberman. What does the nineteenth century forest industry look like through the experience of James MacLaren? The picture that emerges is one of flexibility and at the same time constraints, in the areas of both capital and labour. It is a picture far different from that presented by A.R.M. Lower. Overlap, inter-play and interaction seem primary features and this raises the question of why did Lower compartmentalize Canadian forest history in the manner he did? Part of the answer lies with the role of Harold Adams Innis. What did Lower think he had achieved? And, lastly, in the epilogue are this author's impression, unfettered opinion really, of where, in the most general sense, all of this fits.

James MacLaren's World

The early development of lumber on the Ottawa and the Lièvre shows how the succession of economies, from fur to lumber, in the region was accompanied by the transition from barter to a cash economy. This occurred not so much by the widespread introduction of cash currency, but by the rapid withdrawal of

credit and barter. On the Lièvre the first sawmills arrived complete with their own workforce with them and immediately began to dominate the region economically and demographically. The local elites, the Bigelows and Baxter Bowman, were in turn dependent on external capital for their positions. In their battle for control of the river they expended capital on farm and river improvements that were far beyond the reach of local farmers, and, from the first, local settlers had few opportunities to enter the industry except as labourers, suppliers or sub-contractors. The limitations of early capital's influence was apparent in the bankruptcy of Bigelow, and revealed after the death of the other sawmill operator, Bowman, yet both men displayed a fair amount of agency in their attempts at control of the river.

From the start James MacLaren was a capitalist, someone totally absent in Lower's forest histories. He was a farmer's son whose entry into the industry met with tremendous success. He did this by combining not just labour and business ability, but by drawing on the financial resources of his family, its Wakefield mill and a series of strategic business alliances. His career is marked by business arrangements that allowed him to use the capital of others.

Lower once commented on the *draveurs* of the Gatineau that "A little more than mere economic ties bound workman and boss together in the best days, a relationship having something of the feudal or patriarchal about it."¹ While he

¹ Arthur Lower, et al., *The Northern American Assault on the Canadian Forest. A History of the Lumber Trade Between Canada and the United States*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1938, p. 190.

left us with our clearest portraits of two work institutions utilized by lumber capitalists, the shanty and the timber cove, they tell us little about labour history. Turning to those who worked in the woods for MacLaren, we found in chapter two a dynamic and flexible workplace, anchored in complex social and economic relations to the outside world. Families sold goods and labour to the shanty and waited on the money sent out to them from family members in the woods. The shanty, far from isolated, was just as in urban centres, also shaped by capital and industrialism. It is also clear that employers were aware of regional wage variations when hiring. In time the shanty evolved into the lumber camp typical of twentieth century forestry.

Lower's portrait of the timber cove stands up quite well, although it is somewhat static, compared with the picture that emerges from MacLaren's cove correspondence. We found a small workforce set within a seasonal rhythm of work, much like that of the shanty. Cove labour, while not formally organized because of the small size of work groups and the use of jobbers, was subject to numerous wage negotiations in the form of non-union strikes. By the 1880s barges were replacing both raftsmen and boomsmen. They carried a more industrial product, sawn air-dried lumber, which displaced hand-hewed square timber. Its characteristics led to the centralization of inventory storage at the mill site and localized shipping facilities, and it drew to it the cove's quality control, the lumber graders. All this undermined the need for the timber coves, increasingly merely a transshipment point competing with Montréal's steamship

lines.

The barges represented not only the changing structure of the industry, but also the diversification of markets. As early as 1866 we find MacLaren involved heavily in the U.S. market and far more independent of the British market than Lower's arguments would suggest. The Ottawa Valley mills show considerable flexibility in selling to both markets. This fledgling Canadian lumber industry in the Ottawa Valley penetrated U.S. markets through the shipping route past Sorel to Burlington's rail terminus with Boston, and Whitehall's with New York. By the 1870s, the Ottawa Valley was as much New York or Boston's woodyard, as it was Great Britain's. But in a reversal of the pre-1850s movement of early lumbermen from Vermont to the Ottawa Valley, by 1876 Ottawa Valley lumbermen owned mills in Vermont. This intimacy of regional economies and the overlap between markets is lost in Lower's separate treatment of the two major markets.

At the gateway to the other market a far different and more violent world of class, ethnicity and linguistic tension existed than that described by Lower. The Québec ship labourers riot of 1879 was a complex event, with many layers of interpretation: nationalist, region, class, ethnicity, and trade unionist. The unease as the port was slowly replaced by Montréal resulted in violence and compromise, against an apparently long-standing pattern of winter out-migration by port workers. Out of this a strong union appears, evolving into what we now call longshoremen. The violent strike demonstrates how divided workers were

over how to respond to the downturn as sawmills and shippers chose other market options. The delicate arrangements they had constructed broke down completely for ten days, only to be reforged, but with a harsh outcome for both sides.

The profits of the MacLaren lumber trade went into local real estate, a railway and an unsuccessful mining venture that challenged the House of Morgan's founding of INCO. MacLaren, Magee and Blackburn were more successful in their investment in Ottawa real estate, buying out British owners with capital raised, in part, from U.S. operations. The Toronto and Montréal business communities are noticeably absent from MacLaren's projects.

Ottawa Valley banking was quite successful, both for lumbermen, such as James MacLaren and George Bryson, and for the circle of merchants who supplied the trade. As a regional institution, the Bank of Ottawa reflected its origins, combining farming and lumbering in the pattern of branch operations in the Ottawa Valley. It invested in areas whose characteristics, such as seasonal capital demand, were familiar, servicing the wheat economy but not manufacturing. Other branches clustered around mining. It was a resource developer's bank in an age in which, like the forest, the frontiers for investment were shrinking. The Bank of Ottawa opened few branches in Québec, where its founders made their money, did poorly in Toronto, and was too small to establish a strong presence in the Prairies.

By World War I the bank was a vehicle for inheritance and a symbol of a

beleaguered regional economy. Its regional identity became a detriment on capital markets. The merger with the Bank of Nova Scotia provided a national presence that was unobtainable alone. The Bank of Ottawa's shareholders wrapped the region's capital in that of a larger bank. With the decline of lumber, local options were limited.

The last chapter returns to the forest to examine a turning point in the birth of modern corporate forestry. It involves the state's recognition of corporate primacy over settlers for the resource and offers a somewhat bleaker interpretation of Lower's discussion of the politics of land in his *Settlement and the Forest Frontier*. It also suggests a final resolution to the structural problems that Jack Little saw in the case of the Eastern Townships, where marginalized settlers existed side by side with an externally controlled lumber industry. In our example the conflict was heightened by the simple fact that the owners of James MacLaren Co. felt they had a personal stake in the region. The battle of Chapleau Road forced the state to choose between the agrarian ideals of the nineteenth century and the corporate vision of the twentieth century.

For Québec this decision over the politics of land, pressured by hydro-electricity, railroad construction, and the transition to pulp and paper, marked the first step along the path of nationalist development through corporate vehicles, at first private, and later state controlled. The belief in progress through large-scale development, particularly through forestry and hydro-electricity, cut across all political lines within Québec for almost a century.

The thread of continuity, which had earlier origins, accelerates with Parent's sale of waterfalls to internal businesses such as MacLaren or to external investors, usually American. It continues in the support of high capacity energy consumers, rural industrialism in the form of pulp and paper and, later, aluminum plants. It shifts to an early vision of Quebec, Inc. with Adélar Godbout's nationalization of Montreal Light, Heat, and Power (1943), through the politics of Jean Lesage and René Lévesque's vision of Hydro-Québec "L' électricité la clef de notre émancipation économique" (1963), to Robert Bourassa's James Bay and James Bay II, and to Jacques Parizeau's vision of hydro exports as a source of currency to fund independence. It is a quiet economic revolution of the state, which almost one hundred years ago deposed economically but not culturally, agrarianism, colonization and the Church. This 1904 revolution, accused of being against the wishes of its citizens, was controlled by French-Canadian elites, corporate lawyers and cabinet ministers. Yet they are not far removed from those studied by Brian Young in the mid-nineteenth century.

The world of James MacLaren lasted far longer than his death in 1892. James MacLaren's business life began somewhat in the manner described by Graeme Wynn in *Timber Colony*. A farmer's son, MacLaren set off with his brothers, a team and a hired hewer to square timber. When he died he left to his children a very twentieth century collection of structures: a bank, a railway, mining interests, and a real estate development. His family kept control of the

business, with his son David becoming president of the Bank. The family also inherited both his real estate business and his battles -- over nickel and the Central Ontario Railway. They fought with lawyers, political influence and armed men to defend their vision of the Lièvre. Their lumber operations expanded into hydro-electricity and pulp and paper, and still under the name James MacLaren, became a division of the Noranda group. His descendants became citizens, in Canada's corporate world, sitting on the boards of the Bank of Nova Scotia and Noranda.

Arthur Lower's Woodyard

Arthur Lower was a seventeen year old high school student when the Pinkertons David MacLaren had brought to his mill in 1906 fired on the employees. For Lower the lumber world of his "community" had already passed away, quietly. What forest history would he have written if he had grown up in a town under martial law? As it was, Lower's work has no place for the events in Buckingham. His chronology emphasizes consensus by compartmentalizing forest history into simple stages, avoiding the conflict found in the tension of overlapping forces. His nationalist interpretation simplifies complex interactions and gives says little about the role of agency or process. Ironically, he overlooks the development of a non-British, non-American industry, one that involved capitalism, elites and workers, regions and markets.

Why did Lower draw these distinctions that have so influenced us? In the

course of this research it became clear that much of the responsibility lay with Harold Adams Innis's influence in segmenting publication of Lower's thesis. It was Innis who convinced Lower to divide his work into three sections.

His thesis, as Lower described it, twenty chapters about the "great Omnipresent fact" of the forest in Canadian history, had a complex publishing genealogy.² The chapter on the forest in New France appeared as an article.³ Those dealing with the physical geography of the forest appeared with revisions as opening chapters of both *Settlement and the Forest Frontier* and *North American Assault*. Chapters XV through XVII, on settlement and the forest frontier, also appear in the volume on that topic. In *Great Britain's Woodyard* the ordering of ideas changes, but substantial parts of section I (5, 7-11) and section II (12-19) are drawn from the original thesis. *North American Assault* uses the last three chapters of his thesis and greatly expands the unused portions on public policy and the post-1854 trade. The bibliography of the thesis appears in *North American Assault*.

How this selective academic logging of thesis occurred is explained in Lower's correspondence with Harold Innis. In 1930 Innis wrote to "Art" thanking him for his comments on the *Fur Trade In Canada* and mentioning how he was

² A.R.M. Lower, "Lumbering in Eastern Canada: A Study in Economic and Social History" Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1928. 2 vols, p. ix.

³ A.R.M. Lower, "The Forest in New France: A Sketch of Lumbering in Canada before the English Conquest," *Canadian Historical Association Annual Report, 1928*, pp. 78-90.

looking forward to a good argument with him on the points he raised. Innis said "I am very ambitious to see the timber trade worked out as a companion volume and I am half way through it the second time."⁴ He added that he thought the manuscript on the timber trade should be less thematic and more chronological, a feature of Lower's literary style which drew comments throughout his career.⁵

In October of 1932 Innis suggested a series on the staple industries through Lorne Pierce at Ryerson Press, to which Lower would contribute a volume on square timber trade and another on the lumber industry.⁶ The next month the idea took shape for a volume covering lumber in Georgian Bay, Vancouver Island, the St. John Valley and New Brunswick. Innis wrote that there was a publishing problem, meaning lack of money, and Lower's second volume would have to expand to include the "pioneer belt" with Innis providing something on mining.⁷ Lower protested that their two pieces would have little in common and

⁴ Harold Innis to A.R.M. Lower, 6 January 1930. Box 7, A127, A.R.M. Lower Papers, Queen's University Archives, Kingston. [Hereafter cited as *Lower Papers*.]

⁵ Joseph Malone's review of the final form of the manuscript in 1975 made the same observation. This matter of the need for things to be "shoved around" forms the only incident recounted in Lower's thesis supervisor's comments on his dissertation. The pattern of history recounted in Withrow's *Our Own Country* is similar in its emphasis on spatial rather than chronological development. Joseph J. Malone, "Book Review: *Great Britain's Woodyard: British America and the Timber Trade 1763-1867*, by A.R.M. Lower." *Canadian Historical Review*, LVI:1 (March 1975): 68-69. *My Seventy-five Years*, p. 151.

⁶ Harold Innis to A.R.M. Lower, 7 October 1932. Box 7, A127, *Lower Papers*.

⁷ Harold Innis to A.R.M. Lower, 1 November 1932. Box 7, A127, *Lower Papers*.

Innis replied that he should expand his sawn lumber to:

include the material with specific reference to pioneer problems. If you then confine yourself to eastern Canada and fill in pulp and paper as you suggest and leave out B.C. which is a distinct problem in any case, include your present work and the study of the interrelation between forest industries and agriculture, the whole situation will be satisfactorily met⁸

At this point Dr. Lower launched a protest to Innis:

Dear Harold:

I hardly know just what to say in answer to your suggestions. I had thought that next summer would see me quit of the lumber trade for good and all, and very glad I would have been too, but this new scheme opens up quite immense vistas, and I don't think it could be done by a year from July next . . . [*North American Assault on the Canadian Forest*] would be by no means a labour of love for me, nor would it do much for my professional reputation, so I think his terms would have to be decently attractive if I were to undertake it. As a matter of fact, as I suppose you know, I always feel that economic investigations really take me away from what should be my more proper concerns, and indeed from subjects in which I have a more instinctive interest.⁹

Lower wanted to turn to the broader issue of national history, and money also was a problem. Innis quite understood, because he was himself in debt over publishing the *Fur Trade*. A practical answer to the problem came from the United States, through Innis' connections with Dr. J.T. Shotwell of Columbia University, and Chester Martin. Shotwell was editor of the series on Canadian-American relations and he and Martin were working under a Carnegie

⁸ Harold Innis to A.R.M. Lower, 12 November 1932. Box 7, A127, *Lower Papers*.

⁹ A.R.M. Lower to Harold Adams Innis, 2 December 1933. Box 7, A127, *Lower Papers*.

Foundation committee on furs, forests, farms, manufacturing and mining.

Shotwell had funds for a publishing program. There was one small problem. Shotwell had no authority to publish non-Canadian/U.S. material. He had Innis ask Lower to separate out the material on the English square timber trade from that dealing with the American market. Our image of the transition between the two markets has been historiographically distorted because of a much smaller economic process than a tariff, one involving the practicalities and nationalist issues of a publishing mandate.

So Innis suggested Lower set the British material aside for Ryerson Press.¹⁰ After some intercession by Innis for an advance, Lower began the task. In October of 1935 he wrote to Innis:

I did not manage the Trade in Forest products with Great Britain this summer, though I did my best. But the other one grew so and there was so much to be looked up and incorporated that I just managed to finish it. G.B. will have to wait for next summer.¹¹

In February of 1936 the *North American Assault* manuscript was forwarded by Innis to Shotwell. Meanwhile the proofs for the settlement volume were well under way.¹²

"G.B" sat as Lower turned to other interests and a draft titled "Metropolis and Hinterland. Great Britain and the Canadian Timber Trade, 1763-1939"

¹⁰ Harold Innis to A.R.M. Lower, 5 November 1933. Box 7, A127, *Lower Papers*.

¹¹ A.R.M. Lower to Harold Innis, 27 October 1935. Box 7, A127, *Lower Papers*.

¹² Harold Innis to A.R.M. Lower, 14 February 1936. Box 7, A127, *Lower Papers*.

appears among Lower's papers, dated 1942. He did not return to it until the 1960s, although he did enter into correspondence with Albert Faucher between 1964-67 about what might have had a great potential, a joint publication on the trade from Quebec City.¹³ Finally, after forty-three years, the last major sections of Lower's thesis was published in 1971 as *Great Britain's Woodyard*. The long story of these publishing, rewriting, and funding problems have exaggerated the divisions in Lower's work.

Having said much about Lower, it is only fair to let Lower speak for himself. Looking back he saw a division in his writing, which turned on writing *The North American Assault*. He noted an early scientific phase: "many a month compiling price indexes, tables of imports and exports, and the like." The early books had, he felt, an historical utility, but "they were also the extreme of aridity." He moved onto what he referred to as "pleasant surroundings." For him *North American Assault* was the book that marked this transition:

it is as *scientific* as my capacity permits: that is, it has no *parti pris*, except a certain sympathy for the destroyed forests; it is objective, statistical, based mostly on original material. It is useful in the sense that snow shovels or cars are useful.¹⁴

In a draft of *Great Britain's Woodyard* he said *North American Assault* "stressed

¹³ For the correspondence see the Lower Papers. B845. Also: Albert Faucher. "The Decline of Shipbuilding at Quebec in the Nineteenth Century," *Canadian Journal of Economic and Political Science*, XXIII, no.2 (May 1957): 195-215.

¹⁴ A.R.M. Lower. *History and Myth: Arthur Lower and the Making of Canadian Nationalism*. Welf H. Heick, Editor. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1975, p. xiii.

geography and its bearing on industrial processes" and that *Settlement and the Forest Frontier* was about "the social consequences of the forest environment".¹⁵

Within all his forest studies he felt there was a duality between economic and social history:

I have tried to distinguish sharply between economic and social history by telling myself that economic history consists of the story of what man does to his environment, whereas social history has to do with what his environment does to man. The economic historian looks at the axe in the settler's hands and he traces its effects through clearing to ploughed fields, crops, statistical returns of crops, and the towns that such efforts eventually bring into existence. The social historian looks at the settler and tries to estimate what effects new conditions have on him and the subtle changes his relations to his fellows which eventuate in a new social group. Or, again, the economic historian will be interested in the raft of logs got out of the bush in the spring and the processes of its conversion into lumber--such as techniques of river-driving, of operation of lumber-mills--but the social historian will be interested in the new type of man all this activity produces, the river driver.¹⁶

In the last letter he wrote to Harold Innis, who was slowly dying, he said: "what happened to us was not so important if we continued to live in our works."¹⁷

The appearance of *Great Britain's Woodyard*, at age eighty-four, closes the last chapters on a dissertation defended not quite half a century earlier. *Great Britain's Woodyard* was written by a man in search of cultural identity. Although we should be cautious when approaching his statements on chronology,

¹⁵ Lower. *History and Myth.*, p. 2.

¹⁶ *Canadians In The Making*, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981. [American reprint of 1969 printing of the 1958 book.], p. xv.

¹⁷ A.R.M. Lower to Harold Adams Innis, 3 August 1952. Box 7, A127, *Lower Papers*.

nationalism, class, capital and labour, the issues raised and those subsumed by Arthur Lower still merit our consideration.

Epilogue

We began this story with the fur trade, a staple, being overtaken by lumber. In truth what occurred was not simply a shift from one staple to another. The Ottawa Valley lumbermen emerge as Canadian resource sector capitalists. They made use of the state but were ultimately independent of it. Unlike an earlier era their businesses were not extensions of British or American capital, although they made use of both to their own advantage. Men like James MacLaren represent the first stirrings of a Canadian lumber industry. They were formed out of a regional context, did business based on kinship and personal friendship, but also took those first steps out of the circle of a regional community to take larger opportunities in things that were familiar to them, such as railways, banking, wheat, or mining. When they failed the answer was often as simple as backing the wrong group or competing with those with more capital. They made decisions good and bad, sought opportunities, confronted labour, calculated costs and went on. Their business instincts were honed and their capital gathered in a specialized and very regional arena. To them, what were Montréal or Toronto, but minor versions of London, Liverpool, New York, or Boston?

Their Canadian identity, shaped by capitalism was not anti-national, but it fits neither the "Empire of the St. Lawrence" nor the frontier thesis so cherished

by historians of the 1930s. For the Ottawa Valley lumberman the St. Lawrence was part of a larger network, linking them as much to Vermont, New York, Boston, as it did to Liverpool. It was more than A.R.M. Lower's arterial link to the mother country, and more an opportunity to access markets to the south than a barrier against economic incursions from the U.S.

The picture that emerges is unflattering, a regional centre firmly connected both before and after the 1850s to Vermont and unconnected, as is most of Canada, to the traditional historiographic poles of central Canada. Such a harsh picture is perhaps necessary to offset such a steady diet of geographic deterministic historiography inculcated by both the frontier and staples schools. National identity is closer to the coalition and compromises of the archipelagoes put forth by Cole Harris, within which this is but one story.¹⁸

Yet the issue must be raised for none of the traditional canon of work truly explains the nature of the long and complex interaction of the resource sector with the United States. This nation has never averted its eyes from southern opportunities. This is true equally of MacLaren or the "absentee settlers" on Chapleau Road. James MacLaren and the other Ottawa Valley Lumbermen seized southern opportunities in the year before Confederation and used those profits, buying out the British in downtown Ottawa, to define their own economic identity. They are a relatively undiscussed group in mainstream historiography,

¹⁸ R. Cole Harris, "Regionalism and the Canadian Archipelago," in L.D. McCann, ed. *Hearland and Hinterland: A Geography of Canada*. (Scarborough, 1982): 460-484.

yet their rafts floated below the Parliament, and their Bank stood before its front door. Even our Prime Ministers live in the former house of one of MacLaren's associates. They are a part of the reality of the nineteenth century's economy and yet have no place on the national stage, except as symbols to a primitive past, floating on the back of archaic currency. What indeed was an Ottawa Valley lumberman is a question which as good Canadians we do not want answered.

We prefer instead the romantic trappings and stories of raftsmen and shanty boys, the Men from Glengarry and Drummond's happy-go-lucky *draveurs*. Under Ottawa Valley capitalism the same changes we associate with industrialization in urban centres were reaching into our rural landscape. Shantymen were people from a wide geographic area driven by need to support their families in a wage economy. They were people, as David Gagan has argued, in motion. They lives in a landscape in which economic opportunities were limited. Land, that dream of independence (much like next year's furs, or fish) was increasingly, as forest investments escalated, a more elusive commodity.

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