Uppermost Canada
The Western District and the Detroit Frontier
1800-1850

R. Alan Douglas
Uppermost
Canada
Great Lakes Books
Philip P. Mason, Editor
Department of History, Wayne State University
Dr. Charles K. Hyde, Associate Editor
Department of History, Wayne State University

Copyright © 2001 by Wayne State University Press, Detroit, Michigan 48201.
All material in this work, except as identified below, is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 3.0 United States License. To view a copy of this license, visit https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/us/. All material not licensed under a Creative Commons license is all rights reserved. Permission must be obtained from the copyright owner to use this material.

The publication of this volume in a freely accessible digital format has been made possible by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Mellon Foundation through their Humanities Open Book Program.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Douglas, R. Alan.
p. cm. — (Great Lakes books)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-0-8143-4448-4 (paperback); 978-0-8143-4449-1 (ebook)
F1059.5.W5 D68 2001
971.3’32—dc21
2001002875

Wayne State University Press thanks the National Archives of Canada for their generous permission to reprint material in this book.

Exhaustive efforts were made to obtain permission for use of material in this text. Any missed permissions resulted from a lack of information about the material, copyright holder, or both. If you are a copyright holder of such material, please contact WSUP at wsupressrights@wayne.edu.

http://wsupress.wayne.edu/
## Contents

Preface: About *Uppermost Canada*  
Introduction: Improvements Handsome and Extensive  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Connections</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1812: Yankee Doodle Upset</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1813: John Bull Set Back</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1814: Winning Isn’t Everything</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A Most Irksome Command</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Personalities</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Communities</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Rebels and Yankees</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Men of Capital</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Adapting to the Land</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Adapting to the People</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion: Descent with Modification  
List of Abbreviations  
Notes  
Selected Bibliography  
Index
Preface
About *Uppermost Canada*

This is a study of one part of the community that, beginning three hundred years ago, grew up astraddle the easiest crossing in the Great Lakes system. Simple convenience has always underlain the cross-river connections so fundamental to life in the Detroit-Windsor area, and it is consistent with this that, just as the University of Windsor and Wayne State University offer cross-listed courses, a Windsor author should have a Detroit publisher, particularly for a volume devoted to regional history. It is also appropriate that the very title of this work, *Uppermost Canada*, should be a happy phrase attributed to American president James Madison, borrowed by a British officer in the midst of hostilities during the War of 1812.¹

In the chapters ahead I shall be contending that the international boundary running invisibly through the Detroit River community is invoked by the residents of the two shores when it is convenient to do so—but otherwise it is only a line in the water. This principle will be seen in the attitudes manifested during emergencies, either closing the border or disregarding it, as suits the nature of the disaster at hand. It will also be seen in the day-by-day demeanor of the inhabitants of the Canadian shore toward the ancestral settlement on the Detroit side.

Of all the partly judicial, partly governmental municipal units that came into being in Upper Canada during the first half of the nineteenth century, the Western District was potentially the most unstable. The organization of the districts (twenty-one of them, eventually), with their blend of contradictory aristocratic and democratic traditions, betrayed an early manifestation of a Canadian national genius for finding the middle ground. However, life in the Western District, with its French-Canadian population and its veneer of British officialdom, and with its intimate relationship with the United States, was more complex.
Why, then, was it in the Western District alone that for precisely fifty years, between periods of frenzied activity, so little appeared to happen that the map changed hardly at all? The search for an answer, for modern southwestern Ontario’s place in the sun, is ultimately what this book is about.

Not even at the outset, in explaining how this project came to be, can cross-border parallels be avoided. Detroit had its realtor, Clarence Monroe Burton, creator of the Burton Historical Collection, the resource of manuscripts, books, and objects from which so much of our understanding of the region has been derived. Windsor had its merchant prince, George Fortune Macdonald, creator of another accumulation of published as well as unpublished, two-dimensional as well as three-dimensional materials, the Macdonald Historical Collection, with records of the Western District at its core. Both men, in fact, donated their collections to the people of their respective cities, to their library boards and museum bodies.

In the case of the Macdonald Collection, however, there was one important difference. Frequent episodes of basement flooding in George Macdonald’s home, followed by repeated spreading out to dry and subsequent gathering up and reshelving, resulted in the virtually total disarrangement of the manuscript collection.¹

In 1957 I was the fledgling first curator of a community museum then being established under the administration of the Windsor Public Library Board. If these papers and records were ever to be of any use, it fell to me to arrange them in as close to their original order of units, series, and subseries as possible. To accomplish this, one of my preliminary tasks became acquainting myself with the workings of the districts of Upper Canada. In the process I became aware that the Western District was among the few whose surviving records dated back to the years following the War of 1812. I also learned that the records that had been rescued by George Macdonald from ignominious discard comprised only a portion of the run; others were to be found at Fort Malden National Historic Site in Amherstburg.

By about 1960 I had begun compiling notes from the documents themselves, those in Amherstburg as well as those in Windsor, as a means of developing my own understanding of local history, the basis for a story line for the museum I had been mandated to develop. Those notes, now air-burned with age around the edges and thus imbued with a certain archival quality of their own, became the basis of this book, which, as it turned out, took almost as long to produce as the fifty-year period dealt with. The writing, abandoned several times as my museological career intervened, was resumed after my retirement in 1991.

The literature dealing with southwestern Ontario and its antecedents includes three major works plus several more specialized titles and articles, together with a number of
unpublished graduate theses. Of the major studies, Ernest J. Lajeunesse's *The Windsor Border Region* (1960) deals with the eighteenth century, and Neil F. Morrison's *Garden Gateway to Canada* (1954) examines Windsor and Essex County from 1854 onward; Fred C. Hamil’s *The Valley of the Lower Thames* (1951) considers the first half of the nineteenth century, but looks southwest toward the Detroit frontier from a viewpoint well up the River Thames. *Uppermost Canada* aims to fill the half-century gap between Lajeunesse and Morrison, and to examine the region in a northeasterly direction from the Detroit frontier.

In the pages that follow, the mind of the museologist, as distinct from the academic historian, will be unapologetically apparent, particularly in discussions of social, cultural, and material history. Selected individuals have been concentrated on for reasons both noble and expedient: because they epitomize the character of the region, and also, in one or two cases, because they add color to the story.

Quotations have been rendered as faithfully as type will allow, including capricious spellings and capitalizations. In passages other than quotations I have been guided by *The Chicago Manual of Style*. In conformity with the “down” style advocated therein, the use of capitalization has been minimized. It has been employed for proper names, including titles used nominatively (Clerk of the Peace Charles Akin), and for the names of corporate bodies (the Court of Quarter Sessions of the Peace, and the Crown), but not for expressions such as the clerk of the peace, and crown and clergy reserves. As to compound titles, after a vain search for consistency I have despairingly decided to dispense with the practice of hyphenation; here you will find lieutenant colonel, governor general, and so on.

Objectionable and inaccurate names and terms have been avoided, except in quoting or paraphrasing the words of others, but I am resigned to the onward march of political correctness, and the likelihood that words that I have used will, despite my best intentions, give offense in the future. Outside quotation marks, *Indian*, *savage*, *red man*, and *half-breed* appear in this sentence for the last time between these covers, although references to the *Indian Department* remain. *Native American* is inappropriate, because its use would demand a cumbersome parallel employment of *native Canadian* (or more accurately but even worse, *native British North American*); I therefore consider the single word *native*, read in context, to be suitable.

Township names are rendered as they were at the terminal date of this study, 1850, so that they reflect neither subsequent dividings nor the restructuring of the 1990s. The ugly corruptions *Bob-lo* and *Snye Carty* are restored to *Bois Blanc* and *Chenail Ecarté*, respectively. There is also some arbitrary standardization: for example, *Ojibwa*, not *Ojibway*, *Chippawa*,
Chippewa, or Chippeway. Also, the names of members of the Baby family are rendered as they appear on their baptismal records, not as anglicized: François, not Francis, and Jacques, not James.

In attempting to capture, in minimally-worded chapter titles and subject headings, the essence of the words that follow, there is always the risk of being merely cryptic. Permit me therefore to note that the title of the introduction, “Improvements Handsome and Extensive,” is a quotation from David William Smyth, surveyor general and a member of the first parliament of Upper Canada for the counties Essex and Suffolk, who used these words in his Short Topographical Description . . . of Upper Canada, page 38, to describe the Detroit frontier as he encountered it a matter of weeks after the implementation of the boundary in 1796. The title of chapter 2, “Yankee Doodle Upset,” is a slogan scratched onto a window pane during 1814 action in Maine and illustrated in Benson J. Lossing’s Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812, page 904. In chapter 5 the heading “Sic Transit Drummond Island” is intended to question whether, at the time of its passing from British to American sovereignty, Drummond Island might have been a little less than the glory of the world.

A note about notes: to conserve not only paper but the reader’s patience, thousands of citations have been eliminated. Quotations are supported in detail and, where appropriate, supplementary material is also provided in the notes—but the bibliography is the place to seek out the (often-repetitive) sources of simple statements of fact.

For the mass of material that with great regret I have not been able to include in the finished manuscript, again I refer to the bibliography. I must confess the possibility of simple errors in transcribing from the documents, not to mention in reading the handwriting in my own notes, despite going back to the sources for verification. For all such unwitting missteps I apologize.

I gladly acknowledge that I have been by no means alone in this project. The part played by George Macdonald before his death in 1959 was, of course, vital. Some have been so unkind as to suggest that his encyclopedic knowledge of local history had rendered his conversation one long footnote, but it proved to be a priceless footnote nonetheless; I was privileged to have heard it, even with the sound of a sump pump in the background. The staffs of the Windsor Public Library Board, including Windsor’s Community Museum, Fort Malden National Historic Site, and the University of Windsor Library, have always been helpful in granting access to their resources, and employees of the Archives of Ontario contributed insights into the workings of the districts. I am also happy to thank my trustees, the members of the Windsor Public Library Board, who (perhaps unknowingly!) allowed me to expend untold hours of the taxpayers’ time in arranging and documenting the Macdonald
Historical Collection, and who rendered early postretirement financial assistance in the drafting of the manuscript.

Problems that presented themselves in the course of the writing were varied and unpredictable, but assistance in solving them was uniformly unstinting. Brian Leigh Dunnigan, for example, curator of maps at the University of Michigan’s William L. Clements Library in Ann Arbor, made what is known as the “Brock” map available to illustrate my chapter 2, even though he planned to use it concurrently in his own Frontier Metropolis: Picturing Early Detroit 1701–1838, also from Wayne State University Press.

My account of Moses David in chapter 6 would not have been possible without the perspectives provided by Rabbi Jonathan V. Plaut, formerly of Windsor and now of Farmington Hills, Michigan, and the Reverend Clarke Raymond of Etobicoke, Ontario. Acknowledgment should also be made of the Family History Centre of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Windsor, and St. John’s Church, Sandwich, with the University of Windsor Archives. All of these bodies granted access to the parish register of St. John’s (fruitlessly, as it turned out!).

Patrick T. Brode, of the Legal Division, Department of Legal and Human Resources, Windsor, steered me to the law reports of the case of Drew et al. v. Baby, which I needed for chapter 7. Harry J. Bosveld, retired from Fort Malden National Historic Site in Amherstburg, provided useful interpretations of John Prince’s conduct during the Battle of Windsor, and his views are reflected in chapter 8.

The illustrations provided the greatest variety of problems, the most challenging being that of the Montreuil mill used in chapter 10. Rampant retouching has rendered most versions of that image so unrecognizable that their common ancestry is betrayed only by the presence of a horse to the right of the mill body. A relatively unretouched halftone made from the original glass-plate negative was found in a heavily water-damaged booklet, and two Douglasses (my son Jonathan, a psychologist in Cornwall, Ontario, and my namesake friend Ted, a retired journalist in Windsor) undertook independent digital reconstructions. Their efforts were being considered for use, despite ethical qualms over the manipulation of images, when a copy negative of the early halftone—pre-flood—was discovered lurking in the Macdonald Historical Collection. For this latter miracle I thank the acting registrar of Windsor’s Community Museum, Heather Butt.

It seems appropriate that my first contact with the press, at the outset of my museum career, was with the (then) Windsor Daily Star’s Ted Douglas, and that so many years later, after his retirement from the Detroit News, the same Ted Douglas provided the photographs of the cradles, the gun, and the gibbet frame.
Among the priceless resources of the University of Windsor’s Leddy Library is the dedicated Don Tupling, a cataloguer and self-described “harmless drudge,” who *pro bono publico* contributed his private time in order to undertake the demanding task of creating the index. Without his diligence this book could not work, and we are all indebted to him.

Particular kudos is due to my longtime friend Larry Kulisek of the History Department, University of Windsor, who is also a member of the advisory board of Wayne State University Press’s Great Lakes Books series. As my mentor and frequent lunch companion, Professor Kulisek saw me over many a rough spot and provided literally hundreds of suggestions for revisions to the manuscript. Thank you, Larry!

My long-suffering family, not all of whom even existed when this project began, have deserved better than the part-time husband and father they have experienced for all these decades. To my wife Marilyn, and to Dan, Peter, Paul, and Jonathan, I offer my apologies for the length of time it took to do a job that had to be done, and my promise to try to do better by you for at least a part of the next forty-odd years.

R. Alan Douglas
Windsor, Ontario
June 2000
Introduction

Improvements Handsome and Extensive

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, half a century before European settlement in what is now Ontario began, the French sealed off the upper Great Lakes from British commercial exploitation by strategically locating an outpost on the upper Detroit River. The site had several advantages: it was free of rapids, it was unencumbered by islands behind which an enemy could lurk, and it was at the major crossing point in the Lakes system. The north bank probably had additional appeal as the location of the future city of Detroit because it afforded longer sightlines both up- and downriver than were available from the south shore.

Detroit's oldest surviving suburb is also the earliest permanent European settlement in Ontario. It began between two creeks, the first of which has since disappeared. Le ruisseau de la Vieille Reine (The Stream of the Old Queen, named for an important Huron woman) and la rivière aux Dindes (Turkey Creek) flowed westerly into the Detroit River in what was to become the Ojibway area in the west end of Windsor. To protect the Ohio country from British expansion, the French set about enlarging their half-century-old settlement at the major crossing of the Great Lakes. Settlers were invited to relocate from the St. Lawrence to Detroit, and the first arrived in the summer of 1749. Additional farms were granted on the north side of le détroit (the strait), and for the first time others were awarded across the Detroit River, below a Huron village at the bend. On July 26, 1749, Louis Gervais, a militia captain, was granted the first farm, just below le ruisseau de la Vieille Reine, which soon came to be known as la rivière à Gervais.¹

Why was Captain Gervais placed where he was, at the upper end of the Petite Côte, this first settlement on the opposite side of the Detroit, and for that matter, why was it located downriver, and not directly across from Fort Pontchartrain?² The answer to both questions might well have been, like the placing of the fort itself, related to sightlines. A hostile force moving up the river could be seen first from the Gervais farm, from which a warning signal
could be flashed to the fort. The Petite Côte settlement had the potential to enable the gar­

cison at Detroit to see farther around the bend in the river.

The French were justifiably concerned for the security of all their posts in New France.

Britain had become a formidable power, with a burgeoning colonial presence east of the

Appalachians whose population approached thirty times that of the French in the St.

Lawrence/Great Lakes basin. The inevitable came with the French loss, first, of Quebec City

on September 13, 1759, and then of Montreal on September 8, 1760.

Not long after the British takeover at the Detroit settlement on November 29, 1760,

resentment among the native populations reached the surface. Where the French had tended

to be friendly and generous in their dealings with the natives, the British were seen as arrog­
gant. Soon native resentment led to a conspiracy, coordinated by the Ottawa chief Pontiac

from his village upriver and on the opposite shore from Fort Pontchartrain, to drive the

British and their American colonists out of the region forever. In this effort they nearly suc­
cceeded in creating an independent, native-governed country around the Lakes. All of the

newly British posts quickly succumbed in the early summer of 1763, except for Pittsburgh

and Detroit, both of which were besieged. At Pittsburgh the siege was broken off in mid­
summer, while Detroit held out until the end of October, when the natives agreed to peace.

Elsewhere in the Great Lakes region hostilities dragged on until 1766, when Pontiac con­
cluded a peace with Superintendent of Indian Affairs Sir William Johnson.

Following the British takeover from the French in the Lakes region, there was a forty-year

period of political reorganization during which the map changed with breathtaking speed, as

the thinly spread British newcomers reorganized life around the Great Lakes to suit them­
selves with a dizzying series of pieces of legislation.

Royal Proclamation, 1763

The proclamation of 1763 was an attempt to placate the natives, who felt that the French

had given away their lands without their consent. Under the terms of this proclamation, the

borders of the province of Quebec were set, with the western boundary running from the

southernmost part of Lake Nipissing to a point on the St. Lawrence just upstream from the

post at Montreal. Anything beyond this western limit was declared to be Indian territory.

The effect of this was that the posts, including Detroit, situated beyond the pale were left

without any formal provision for civil government; the commanding officers were called

upon to provide both civil and military rule. The residents of these posts were literally the

guests of the native peoples.
Quebec Act, 1774
A scant eleven years later, to provide a proper, legal basis for the presence of British troops in native-owned territory in the Lakes region, the native territory was done away with. In 1774, the Quebec Act swept away the 1763 assurances to the natives by extending the province of Quebec northwesterly to abut Prince Rupert’s Land (the Hudson Bay drainage basin) and southwesterly all the way to the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. Other provisions of the act were intended to protect British interests by keeping colonial expansion out of the Lakes. Unlike the practice in the southern thirteen colonies, in the St. Lawrence and Great Lakes region there was no elected government, the Catholic faith was tolerated, and the civil law of France was recognized.

Treaty of Paris, 1783
Detroit served as a base of British operations during the American Revolutionary War, but since no fighting occurred in the area, this was one of the few ways that life was affected. The Revolutionary War was officially ended by the Treaty of Paris, signed September 3, 1783. It might be expected that this fact, which created a new country, would also have created a new border that made Detroit American. Although technically a boundary was, in fact, established, the language of the treaty was not particularly helpful; among other vaguenesses, the line was described as following the middle of the Great Lakes and their connecting links. However, whether “the middle” was to be determined in reference to the distance between the mainland shores or to that between the shores of the navigable channels, such as the one between Bois Blanc Island and the British mainland in the Detroit River, was not specified.

In the days following the signing of the Treaty of Paris, however, quibbles over this and other issues were set aside in the face of a much larger consideration. Those fleeing the lands of the new republic, whom the British preferred to call United Empire Loyalists, were, under the terms of the treaty, to have been compensated for their lost possessions and property. The United States’s failure to do so became a justification, in British minds, for a drastic solution: pending redress, they simply refused to relinquish a number of their posts around the Lakes, including Detroit.

Other considerations reinforced the British decision to continue to occupy Oswegachi (modern Ogdensburg, New York), Oswego, Niagara, Detroit, and Mackinac. The advance of American settlement into the newly created North West Territory was a threat to British interests, inasmuch as the natives in the region, who could be useful in resisting American expansion, were unhappy over the ignoring of their concerns by the British in 1783. In
addition, there was an overriding commercial reason; the highly profitable British fur trade to the west of the Lakes, far into American territory, would be destroyed if the Americans were allowed to move in.

Over the next four years the population in the peninsula between Lakes St. Clair and Erie changed dramatically. Large numbers of refugees who had lost their homes in the Colonies, together with disbanded soldiers, many of them German, located on the lower Detroit and along the Lake Erie shore to the east. The “New Settlement on Lake Erie,” as it was known at first, differed from other Loyalist settlements along the lower Lakes and the St. Lawrence. In layout it resembled the nearest outpost of civilization, the French-Canadian settlement along the upper Detroit, with its long, narrow ribbon farms fronting on water for ease of communication. The Detroit River settlement, already old by the time the Loyalists arrived, became the focus of their world. This attitude is still shared by many people in the region.

Lord Dorchester’s Proclamation, 1788
Government and justice of a sort were handed out by the commandant at Detroit, who took his orders from Montreal in the quarter century following the British conquest in 1760. The region around the Lakes was known as the Montreal District until 1788, when the governor issued a proclamation creating four new districts, named in deference to the Germanic King George III—from east to west, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nassau, and Hesse—to provide the services that had been so rudimentary when the only recourse was to distant Montreal.

The District of Hesse is the one with which we are concerned, and it was enormous. From a line drawn due north from the tip of Long Point, Hesse extended westward to the new international boundary through the Lakes; it also reached north all the way to a line beyond which the watercourses drained not into the Great Lakes but into James Bay and Hudson Bay. Hesse therefore encompassed the lands north of Lake Huron, north of Lake Superior, even north of Lake Nipigon. The one real concentration of population in all of Hesse was Detroit, which of course was not in Hesse at all, but in occupied American territory. Recognizing this awkward fact, when in 1789 the British established their Court of Common Pleas for the residents of Hesse—primarily for Detroitters—they were careful to use buildings on the legally British side of the river for their proceedings.

McKee Purchase, 1790
From the beginning of the French Régime, land title on both sides of the Detroit frontier rested with the native population, who until this time customarily conveyed parcels to individual settlers. All this, in British eyes, was illegal, because title had not first been vested in
the Crown. In 1790 Alexander McKee, superintendent of Indian affairs, concluded a treaty on behalf of King George III with the Ottawa, Ojibwa, Pottawatomi, and Huron nations, for much of what became southwestern Ontario. Two areas were set aside as reserves. They came to be known, however confusingly, as the Huron Church Reserve, where the Huron village was located, at the bend in the Detroit River and just downstream from the Huron Church (modern Assumption Church), and the Huron Reserve, at the River Canard, about halfway down the Detroit to Lake Erie.

The British at Detroit, having secured legal title to much of the land under their control, were ready to lay out townships, and farm lots within the townships, for settlement and legal ownership. To do this they retained the services of a surveyor. Patrick McNiff did more than create neat, orderly new townships in Hesse laid out in a compass-oriented grid system of brick-shaped, two-hundred-acre lots arranged in concessions with road allowances where theory dictated that they should be. Along the upper Detroit he also created British order out of what was taken to be French chaos. He straightened out the side lines of the existing farms of the old French-Canadian settlements on both sides of the river, a succession of long, narrow lots reaching back from the shore into the interior, of slightly different dimensions and oriented in slightly different directions. This involved, of course, the lots near the fort, plus the Petite Côte settlement and its somewhat later, upriver companion, the Côte des Hurons, directly opposite the original Detroit settlement.

McNiff began to lay out his new townships in the District of Hesse, the first two fronting on the Lake Erie shore halfway between the Detroit River and Point Pelee. However, these townships still had no names; “New Settlement,” a vague term, was replaced with “Two Connected Townships,” perhaps not much of an improvement. To lay out his townships east of Point Pelee and Lake St. Clair, McNiff found it easier to orient his grid to the River Thames rather than to the compass, as in the peninsula to the west. In the Detroit and Côte des Hurons settlements, McNiff, in his orderly British way, ran the side lines on both shores in a N28°W/S28°E direction. His intention appears to have been to standardize the widths of the lots, so that the side lines in the two settlements, if projected across the river, would elegantly line up. However, it also appears that more than a few of the French-Canadian inhabitants, in a spirit of joyous free enterprise and disregard of British rigidity, might have moved the odd stake in the dark of the moon.

Constitutional Act, 1791

Upper and Lower Canada were created out of the former province of Quebec in 1791, and Upper Canada was transferred from French to British traditions and laws. In addition, the
Constitutional Act (or Canada Act, as it is also known) provided for a system of reserves, lands to be held back from the settlers for future sale to support the government and the church—that is, the Church of England. Crown and clergy reserves, as they were called, accounted for a total of two-sevenths of the land in every township. In most townships across the province the reserved lots were scattered about in checkerboard fashion. However, in the already-settled townships the reserves had to be collected into solid blocks, away from the inhabited areas. The checkered reserves proved to be detrimental, because they prevented continuous settlement and made communication and cooperation difficult. The block reserves, on the other hand, allowed the affairs of the settlement to move ahead because they did not interfere with established patterns.

In the far southwest, the checkered-reserve townships, those not yet settled and unlikely to be so for many years, were Maidstone, Rochester, Tilbury West, Tilbury East, and Romney—five in all, contiguous with each other, straddling the neck of land between Lake Erie and southeastern Lake St. Clair. A C-shaped group of townships blessed with
block reserves—Sandwich, Malden, Colchester, Gosfield, and Mersea—found themselves isolated not only from the rest of the district (the largely Loyalist-settled townships fronting on the River Thames, also with block reserves), but also from the rest of Upper Canada. The residents along the river and the Lake Erie shore, then, were obliged to orient their lives toward the hub of their universe, the town of Detroit itself. This was the beginning of an attitude, a lingering suspicion of central government, that remains very much with us to this day. The occupants of the region were on their way to finding an identity of their own.

Counties

The next year, 1792, the districts were renamed, Hesse becoming the Western District. Furthermore, Upper Canada was divided into nineteen counties. The counties were not to be local governmental units—that was what the districts and the townships were for—instead, they were to serve as provincial electoral ridings, as units for property registration, and as territories for the raising of militia regiments. Suffolk, the seventeenth county, ran along the Lake Erie shore from Norfolk County to the carrying place or communication, as it was called, a portage from Pointe aux Pins to the Thames—that is, modern Highway 40, Communication Road, between Rondeau and Chatham. County Number 18 was Essex, extending west from the communication to the Detroit River. Last on the list was Kent County, which was defined as those parts of Canada that had not already been assigned to other counties. Kent therefore was the part of the Western District that extended north from Lake Erie to beyond Lakes Superior and Nipigon.

On paper at least, Upper Canada was beginning to reflect southern England—literally. The River Thames flowed from east to west, and southeastern English place names were applied to townships in southwestern Upper Canada. Similarly, the county names of southern England were repeated along the shores of the lower Lakes, in reverse order. Lieutenant Governor Simcoe’s stated intention was to reproduce his beloved England in the wilds of Upper Canada as far as possible—but at the same time to discourage any sense of local feeling or identity. To accomplish both tasks at one stroke, he simply allowed township and county boundaries to conflict. In the Western District the line between Essex and Suffolk Counties divided Harwich Township, and Kent County, stretching north from the River Thames for the most part, was extended as a corridor along the south shore of Lake St. Clair. Kent’s boundary with Essex lay four miles inland, crossing the townships of Tilbury West, Rochester, Maidstone, and Sandwich until it intersected the Detroit River at Alexis Maisonville’s windmill (near the foot of Lincoln Road in modern Windsor).
Uppermost Canada

Upper Canada's first election took place in August, 1792. Because the population was so thinly spread, Essex and Suffolk Counties were combined into a single riding. They elected a single member, David W. Smyth (Smith), to the first provincial parliament, or legislative assembly. Kent County, however, returned two members, William Macomb and François Baby. The reason for this was that Detroit, occupied American territory, was considered for electoral purposes to be attached to Kent, which gave Kent a comparatively large population. Actually, all three of the members elected to Upper Canada's first parliament were current or recent residents of Detroit.

Jay Treaty

Beyond such gratuitous insults to the United States as the electing of members to the Upper Canadian parliament from occupied Detroit, there were additional factors, related to European politics and to commerce, involved in the deterioration of British-American relations. With the concluding of the Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation in London on
November 19, 1794, the crisis that had carried the contending parties close to war was abated. The Jay Treaty, as it is familiarly known, or the Grenville-Jay Treaty, really had very little to say about the border; its focus was instead on commercial relations. Of its twenty-eight articles, only one dealt with the specifics of the evacuation of the occupied posts, and hence the inception of the border through the Lakes. Government being a product of human nature, the treaty deadline for the transfer, June 1, 1796, was missed by nearly six weeks; not until July 11 did Captain Moses Porter and a detachment of sixty-five soldiers arrive at Detroit to take command from Lieutenant Colonel Richard G. England and his British garrison. At last the boundary was implemented.

Soon another municipality came into being on the American side: Wayne County. Here again, cross-border resemblances were striking. Like the 1788 District of Hesse, Wayne County was enormous. Hesse had begun, on the east, at the tip of Long Point on Lake Erie's north shore; Wayne began at the mouth of the Cuyahoga River (modern Cleveland), on the south shore. Where Hesse had extended north of the Upper Lakes, Wayne encompassed virtually all of modern Michigan, plus parts of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin.

**Amherstburg and Sandwich**

To replace the infrastructure lost at Detroit, the British created two clones on the east shore. There was a new downriver fortification and garrison town, to be called Amherstburg, opposite Bois Blanc Island where the navigation could be easily controlled, and from which a major Indian Department base could continue British influence in the newly American territory beyond the Lakes. There was also a new government town, Sandwich, at the bend in the river, on the site of a recently established (1790) native reserve beside the Huron Church (near the modern Ambassador Bridge).

The layout of Sandwich vividly betrayed the attitudes of its founders, largely merchants and their employees and families who had elected to remain British by crossing the river. The new town was a mirror image of the Detroit that its residents had just departed, right down to neighbors in Detroit turning up as neighbors in Sandwich. Detroit, after all, was home. The attitude spawned by the crown-and-clergy-reserves phenomenon was buttressed. Today, two centuries later, it seems as strongly entrenched as ever.

The careers of two surveyors embodied the complex and contradictory feelings engendered by the wrenching choice between doing nothing and thus becoming American or leaving one's home and moving across the river in order to remain British. Patrick McNiff, who had regularized old settlement patterns and laid out new townships for the British, elected to remain in Detroit, where he gave up surveying to embark on a new life as an
American public servant, Abraham Iredell, by contrast, the man who laid out Sandwich in the image of newly American Detroit, chose to remain British. He crossed over to continue his surveying career, in Kent County for the most part.

By the close of the eighteenth century the British reorganization of the area was complete. Attitudes had been developed and processes set in motion. Harmony among the elements became apparent, and a kind of classic calm descended on the Western District that prevailed, on the surface at least, for the half century to come.
An Act for the Better Division of the Province of Upper Canada," creating several new districts and redefining old ones, was proclaimed on the first day of January, 1800, and the sprawling Western District was reduced to a much more manageable size. In the realignment of counties, Essex County extended from the Detroit River to Point Pelee and Pelee Island. Kent County began near the southeast corner of Lake St. Clair, and ended a little beyond Pointe aux Pins and Rondeau Bay. North of the east-west line established by the McKee Purchase, from the head of the St. Clair River delta to the Thames, the Shawnee Township (later Sombra Township) was attached to Kent County, but the rest of the future Lambton County was left as an unorganized part of the district. In addition the military outpost on St. Joseph Island at the head of Lake Huron, ceded to the Crown in 1798, was awkwardly appended to the Western District for administrative purposes. Suffolk County was no more, having been entirely consumed by Kent County and the new Middlesex County, part of the equally new London District. Now that the township, county, and district boundaries neatly coincided, the Kent corridor on the south shore of Lake St. Clair was reduced to a vestige, the entire Tilbury West Township. Gone were the conflicting boundaries of Simcoe’s day, and regional identities were free to flourish.
1800: The Western District redefined. Map by the author.

Through Upper Canada’s early years the tendency of officialdom was to regard democracy with suspicion. At the outset in 1792 Simcoe complained that the Legislative Assembly “seemed to have a stronger attachment to the elective principle in all town affairs than might be thought advisable.”¹ This was one of those blendings of traditions that later came to be seen as an embodiment of the Canadian national psyche: on the one hand, district government was a product of the aristocratic American south, but on the other, township affairs were based on democratic New England. At the district level an appointed panel of magistrates (also called justices of the peace, or JPs) met in the Court of Quarter Sessions of the Peace to dispense both government and justice. In contrast, local officials were elected at annual “town” meetings for such purposes as regulating the height of fences, reporting the condition of roads and bridges, and recording farmers’ marks of ownership, cut into the ears of their livestock.
Under the appointive system, tightly interconnected networks of officeholders gradually developed at both the municipal and the provincial levels. A clubby atmosphere evolved in which social and familial networks—who one was and how well one was connected—mattered a great deal. In the Western District the practical application of this principle could be seen in how members of the oligarchy were recruited, and, in a wider sense, how the district itself was connected, across the river and up and down the Lakes. Under this system, the members of the oligarchy tended to band together in urban clumps, consolidating their power in the process. Not surprisingly, the same names cropped up repeatedly in political affairs. Those unfortunate souls not in positions of privilege were exposed to an unfeeling justice system.

**Populating the Oligarchy**

By 1801 fully a decade had gone by since Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe had set out to recreate his beloved Britain in the upper country, yet in the Western District the Church of England was still to be established. This meant, among other things, that only Catholic marriages were legal, as they had been since the early days of the French settlement. Clearly an Anglican clergyman was urgently needed to care for the souls of Protestants who had located in the district since the Revolution. Since none could be found, one would have to be created. Richard Pollard had been appointed sheriff of the Western District in 1792. Possibly his true talents lay elsewhere, however, and in February 1802 merchant John Askin remarked: “Mr Pollard is gone to Quebec in order to obtain Holy orders if he can. I hope poor man he may succeed for in my opinion he is twenty times fitter for a clergyman than a Sheriff.” Askin added that William Hands wanted to be sheriff in Pollard’s place, and he considered Hands “a poor but worthy man to fill [the sheriff’s] office.”

Pollard was ordained on March 25, but the ways of the sheriff were slow to leave him. The Reverend John Stuart of Kingston described the new cleric’s return to the wilds of the western frontier: “He could not, on his Passage up, always remember the new, *indelible character*, yet, when a sudden Oath escaped, he immediately checked himself for it, saying that, although not strictly clerical, he had a sort of Dispensation till he actually arrived at his Cure; after which he must not indulge himself in the Use of such strong Expressions.” In May, the newly reverend Richard Pollard began keeping the parish register of what was to become the mother church not only of the Western District, but of the Michigan Territory—St. John’s Church, Sandwich.

There was a sharp distinction between the comparatively few leading citizens and those who made up the great bulk of society. Although some public positions proved costly rather
than profitable, in general the chosen few tended to acquire more and more sources of income and positions of power and influence over their fellows, and to add to their enjoyment of life with what were called “emoluments”—earnings from a variety of positions, responsibilities, or titles. One example: in 1804 Upper Canada was regarded as a potential source of hemp, which could be made into rope needed for rigging in the British navy. There was therefore a proclamation by Lieutenant Governor Peter Hunter appointing commissioners for the purchase of hemp in each of the districts in Upper Canada. In the Western District this privilege, with its accompanying emolument, went to the Honorable Jacques Baby, of Sandwich. Less than a month later came another proclamation, this time to appoint commissioners to oversee the expending of provincial funds for roads and bridges. For the Western District the list was headed by the same Jacques Baby. All of the appointees in the various districts were at least at the level of magistrate or merchant, and many of them held other public positions. By contrast, the nearly anonymous underclass continued in squalor and ignorance: at the other end of the scale, for example was a miller, the former owner of a windmill at Petite Côte, who apparently fell on such hard times that he had cut up its canvas sails to make clothes for his children.⁴

In the Western District the all-time champion officeholder and emolument recipient was William Hands. In addition to a brief term (1801) as clerk of the peace, by 1809 Hands was registrar of the Surrogate Court, sheriff, postmaster, and treasurer—all of which positions this virtual one-man civil service held simultaneously, and for many years. By November 3 of that year he was acting as inspector of licenses as well.⁵

The network controlling the affairs of the Western District was inbred, but it was also stable and long-lived. One early example of security in office in the Western District was Abraham Unsworth, who was appointed jailer at Sandwich in 1806 and remained in that post until his death in 1842 at the age of seventy. In 1827 Clerk of the Peace Charles Askin (John’s son, of course) found a way to turn the paperwork that underlay everything that the district did into a means of augmenting his income. The subject of fees for court officers having been discussed by the magistrates, Askin was directed to search the record for any precedent. It was that very record, so painstakingly generated over so many years, that was the source of his workload, and it proved to be his salvation. Within the month Askin, no doubt suppressing a smile, was able to record in the minute book the magistrates’ order “That the Clk. Pce. be allowed six pence for every paper filed by him.”⁶ At sixpence each, filing a mere forty documents would create one pound of income—and hundreds of documents had to be filed for every session. Of course, there was a corollary to this. The bulk of the records of the district was increasing, and providing access to them was becoming more...
burdensome for the clerk of the peace. In 1829 Charles Askin was allowed to charge a search fee of 1s. 3d. In effect, what he was already being paid to put away, he was now to be paid to retrieve.

While some of the most enthusiastic and successful emolument-seekers in Upper Canada were to be found in the Western District, the Reverend Richard Pollard saw himself falling behind. Fortunately, the lieutenant governor was well aware of his circumstances; Francis Gore himself had witnessed Pollard, on a journey to York, distributing sermons and ministering to those they met on their way. In fact, Pollard's outstanding efforts even came to the attention of the governor in chief; in 1810 Sir James Craig wrote to Gore about a request by Pollard for an increase in salary:

In this his services differ much from those rendered to the Military at the other Posts, where the several Clergymen have four times the Emoluments of Mr. Pollard, and are exposed to no expence. I have reason to believe that his present application results from a Struggle between his Zeal and his Prudence, unwilling to narrow the Sphere of his utility, yet unequal to exercise his Functions at that distance from his residence, without some remuneration.7

Richard Pollard reported to his superiors that many of the merchants and traders of Sandwich were moving to Amherstburg, to be near the garrison. He asked to be moved there also, offering as an additional reason that this would place him nearer to the new settlement on Lake Erie, which as yet had no church or school. The ways of bureaucracy being what they were, Pollard's request was dealt with in November 1811, when he received the acting chaplaincy of the garrison at Amherstburg, with lodging money and an officer's rations.

Meanwhile, Assumption Church, the former Huron Church standing near the south shore just above the bend in the river, found itself embarrassed by its continuing role as a mission to the Hurons. Father Jean Baptiste Marchand needed relief because, as his superior put it, his native parishioners "think themselves entitled to be entertained at his expense, although none of them pay him a penny or a grain of wheat for his maintenance."8 Marchand, on whose behalf representations had been made by the Catholic bishop of Quebec to Lieutenant Governor Gore, found his situation relieved with an emolument; Gore would be pleased to appoint Marchand a missionary to "the Western Indians in this province," having met Marchand the previous summer on his visit to the Western District and been impressed by him.9 Whether this actually meant more work for the good father, or simply more income, is uncertain.
Assumption Church, completed in 1787 and later buttressed against the wind, as it appeared to the artist John Elliott Woolford when he visited the region in 1821. The view is downriver toward the town of Sandwich. John Ross Robertson Collection, Toronto Public Library.

**Water Connections**

From the very beginning of the settlement at the strait there were those whose affairs periodically took them to the opposite shore. It seems likely that most settlers had boats, many of them only dugout canoes propelled by paddles, oars, or sails, as conditions required. Crossings must have been spur-of-the-moment undertakings at first, but by 1802 more formal arrangements were coming about. That year Étienne Pacquet leased a patch of land together with a building called the Ferry House, from Joseph Mailloux, for a ferry operation. This must have been an organized commercial operation, with fares being collected. The ferry lease was on the front of lot 76, at about the foot of Caron Avenue in modern Windsor.

There was little to impede the flow of people, goods, and ideas in the settlement at the crossing. The new reality of an international border was only beginning to make itself felt; an American customs service had been in existence for more than a year before word about it even reached Detroit, in 1800.

The oligarchy looked after its own, but its members had no hesitation in doing so at the expense of those less privileged. Upper Canada’s 1793 ban on the further importation of slaves was only the beginning of a gradual process; decades went by before either existing slaves died or their children reached the age of twenty-five and were set free. In 1807 slaves
were still to be seen on both sides of the river, and so were escapees who had crossed over. In one instance, James May of Detroit asked John Askin to persuade Nobbin, his escaped slave, to return to him. May added that he had heard that Askin's slave, George, might also try to escape and cross to Detroit. There was a cross-river trade in slaves, as in other commodities. That autumn Askin told James Fraser, of Detroit, that he intended to sell his slave Ben in order to pay a debt he owed to Fraser; as an alternative he offered Ben directly to Fraser in settlement. Fraser thought he would prefer the cash, because "I believe the ideas of the Government of the United States are not much in favour of Slavery."10

The commercial importance of the Detroit River settlement was not so much its productivity as its strategic location. The merchants of the region, John Askin among them, continued to do business from both sides of the border, forwarding goods between Niagara and the upper Lakes: barrels and boxes of supplies supporting the fur trade upbound, and bales of pelts downbound. Local commodities added to the upbound trade included grain and flour, the product of the windmills on the east shore of the Detroit, and a potent liquid called "high wine"—not wine at all, but a distilled liquor derived from that same grain, shipped north in concentrated form, to be cut with water when it reached its destination.11

In the spring of 1803 Askin readied his newly acquired sailing vessel, the *Saguinah*, and offered shares in her to other Detroit-area merchants. The plan was to operate her between Fort Erie, at the east end of Lake Erie, and Michilimackinac and the St. Mary's River, at the head of Lake Huron. Askin's new residence, Strabane, on the south shore opposite the lower end of Hog Island (modern Belle Isle), was to be the home base. The year 1804 was not a particularly good one for trade, although the *Saguinah* was expected to generate an eventual profit of £400–500 on the year, "no bad thing in these unfortunate times."12

Although communication with the east was probably the most serious difficulty facing the district, the link with the upper Lakes also posed its problems, and there were some ingenious means of overcoming them. John Askin's son, John Jr., at St. Joseph Island, had a request in 1807 for a few apple seedlings from his father at Strabane: they might be temporarily potted in kegs and their limbs bound for protection, or, as an alternative, "I dare say Capt. Fearson or Burbank will take a few astern of their Vessel, the roots well tied or wrapt in Course linnen [sic] & some earth in it to prevent them going to decay or getting dried."13

Apart from the state of the economy, other factors affecting trade included the use of French measure in the Detroit area and British measure elsewhere. What, for example, was the relationship between a British bushel and a French *minot*?14 The remoteness of the Western District from its potential markets to the east was a perennial consideration. Wave
motion, a "following sea" generated by the prevailing westerly winds, made exporting Western District cider the length of Lake Erie difficult; fermentation or even breakage of the casks made it impossible to compete with the Niagara product. Although the markup on furs could cover the enormous expense of their transportation by Detroit River merchants down from the upper Lakes and east through Lake Erie to Niagara on their way to Montreal, other commodities, including hemp, did not fare as well. The government's offer per ton for hemp rose from £40 in 1804 to £62 10s. in 1808, but as late as 1811 only about sixteen tons were raised in Kent. Detroit's almost total reduction to ashes in the great fire of June 11, 1805, in addition to disrupting the residents' lives, caused financial difficulties that extended across the river. The residents of Detroit could not pay their bills, leaving merchants like John Askin unable to pay even the interest on what they owed in Montreal. Adding to Askin's difficulties in a year of generally poor conditions for trade, his aging vessel the *Saginah* ended the season tied up at Strabane, in need of repairs. Askin and his partners were unable to sell her because of the lack of cash in the settlement.

Deeply thrust as it was into the newly American hinterland, the Western District was important to British interests for reasons military as well as commercial. In the autumn of 1808 the merchants of Montreal alleged a longstanding pattern of harassment of British trade in American territory. They maintained that trade with those who were categorized as the "western Indians" comprised nearly the whole of the British fur trade, and that it would have to be either protected or abandoned. The loss of this trade would finish British influence with the tribes east of the Mississippi. The commercial importance of the Detroit River settlement was clear to the North West Company, headquartered in Montreal. This loose coalition of merchants was accustomed annually to forwarding a substantial portion of the supplies intended for their outfits in the upper Lakes by way of the Niagara and the Detroit. Because they were constantly exposed to American harassment along this route, these merchants were prepared to abandon it if a road could be opened from Kempenfelt Bay on Lake Simcoe to Georgian Bay. If they were to succeed in establishing such a road, the southwest would be cut off, to the great detriment of the Detroit River merchants, who had a precarious enough time of it without the threat of being further isolated.15

Even in the lucrative fur trade, the Western District could not be regarded as a producer. The merchants of Sandwich and Amherstburg were forwarders, dealing in goods produced elsewhere. Their commercial connections were largely informal, and frequently based on personal friendships. Their business correspondence often included references to family members, their health, likes and dislikes, and chitchat on any number of topics of current interest. The merchants, like other members of the ruling class, strongly tended to be
British, and members of the Church of England. The more conscientious members of that ruling class must have found their duties burdensome. William Hands addressed these sentiments to Deputy Postmaster General George Heriot at Quebec: “When I was appointed D. P. Master at this place in 1802 I received no written instructions respecting the duties of the office; indeed I do not think that my predecessor Mr. Pollard had any to give me, for although the P. Office had been established since the year 1789 I do not think that a Control sheet had ever been transmitted from [yours to] this office.”

Urban Gentry

The 1797 conveyance of most of the Huron Church Reserve to the Crown for the town of Sandwich was consummated on September 11, 1800, by the outright purchase of the tract, for merchandise to the value of £300, Quebec currency. By the same document a rectangle five hundred yards wide and extending the full depth of the Huron Reserve, adjacent to the northern boundary of Malden Township, was donated to the Crown to provide for the expansion of Amherstburg, and allowance was made for linking the two towns with a road.

Even as early as 1803 the first tiny urban communities scattered across Upper Canada were beginning to confront issues distinct from those of the farms and the wilderness that surrounded them. Sanitation was one of those concerns, and that year legislation was enacted to prohibit swine from running at large in the principal towns of the province: New Johnstown, Kingston, York, Niagara, Queenston, and, in the Western District, Amherstburg and Sandwich.

In Sandwich, diagonally across the intersection of Bedford and Huron Streets (present Sandwich and Brock Streets) from the reserve for the district jail and courthouse lay another government reserve which became the site of a public building in 1807. The District Schools Act of that year constituted the first recognition in Upper Canada that education was a public responsibility. There had been earlier, scattered attempts at private elementary schools—John Askin's children were tutored by Matthew Donovan around the turn of the century in Detroit, and in the Western District there is reference to a teacher, Alex Pringle, in 1806—but 1807 marked the real beginning of formal education in Upper Canada. The schools could only begin to meet the needs of their districts, however. Students other than the handful who happened to live within walking distance had to be boarded, and that meant that their parents had to be well off. Therefore, the schools mainly served the upper class, the oligarchy, and since the upper class were chiefly members of the established church, in effect the district schools were denominational also. John Askin, a pillar of the English Church at Sandwich, was appointed trustee of the new school. In addition, his position in
the community qualified him for appointment as a commissioner to administer oaths throughout the province, and he let it be known that he would not refuse an additional appointment as judge of the District Court, either.

Political Connections

In the Legislative Assembly, the affairs of the remote Western District seemed of no great importance. A bill to regulate the impounding of cattle in the district was passed by the Assembly in 1800, but even that was put in abeyance by the Legislative Council, presumably because of an impending provincial election. In preparation for that event, a little fine-tuning was needed; reflecting the loss of Detroit, which had been considered part of Kent County by reason of the corridor along the Lake St. Clair shore, a bill to provide for more equal representation in the House was amended to reduce Kent County to a single member and increase Essex County to two.

Thomas Smith, an associate of John Askin in the fur trade, described the Sandwich political scene to him: Askin, Smith said, should run for the Assembly because, of the sixteen members then comprising the House, only four were fit to carry the responsibility of running the affairs of Upper Canada. Smith wrote that Western District Clerk of the Peace Walter Roe and surveyor Abraham Iredell were campaigning for Provincial Secretary William Jarvis as well as for Prideux Selby and Matthew Elliott. Smith, on the other hand, would support Askin himself, merchants William Park or George Meldrum, "or any liberal man of my old acquaintance." Roe and Iredell, in Smith's view, were virtual strangers, without influence in Sandwich. The election at Sandwich was held on August 6, with Angus Mackintosh, another merchant, as returning officer. In the end Roe came out for Elliott, as expected, and also for William Park, but the vote went to Elliott and to Thomas McKee (a son of Alexander McKee), who were declared elected by Mackintosh. At Chatham, where Abraham Iredell lived and served as returning officer, Thomas McCrae of Raleigh was elected for Kent.

That the Western District had its own distinctive problems was becoming apparent to the government of Upper Canada by 1801. Thomas McCrae, the member for Kent, gave notice for four bills on a single day, June 2. One would provide for determining the boundaries of certain farm lots in townships fronting on the Thames, an apparent reflection of a defective survey by Abraham Iredell. Another bill was concerned with building bridges in Kent. The third of McCrae's bills was a proposal to divide Sandwich Township, perhaps an indication of the expected growth of the settlement opposite Detroit. This bill was passed by the Assembly and referred to the Legislative Council, where debate was postponed. McCrae's fourth bill, providing for holding courts at Chatham, revealed something even
more significant about the Western District: a separatist sentiment. A journey to Sandwich
was a major undertaking for a resident of the Thames settlement, but beyond that there was
the feeling that the Detroit and the Thames settlements were simply different worlds.
McCrae withdrew this bill on June 8, but the dissatisfaction behind it lingered for decades.

Over a year later the southwest was heard from again: domestic animals were to be pre­
vented from running at large in the towns, but they were also to be protected from preda­
tors. In January 1803 Thomas McCrae and Matthew Elliott brought in a bill to extend the
bounty on wolves to the Western District. The bill was passed three weeks later.22

Upper Canada's fourth parliament took up its duties on February 1, 1805. Representing
Kent was John McGregor, a mercantile friend of John Askin, and sitting for Essex were for­
mer superintendent of Indian affairs, Matthew Elliott, and David Cowan, a one-time cap­
tain of a naval vessel on the upper Lakes. The sudden death of Lieutenant Governor Peter
Hunter on August 11 led to the temporary appointment of Alexander Grant as administra­
tor of the province—a post that this “old and infirm naval officer entirely lacking in political
ability” held until Hunter's successor was appointed early in 1806.23 Curiously, Grant, the
acting lieutenant governor of Upper Canada, resided all the while at Grant Castle, in mod­
ern Grosse Pointe Farms, Detroit.

Miscreants
Prisoners' conditions of confinement were the subject of a petition by several inhabitants of
the townships of Mersea, Gosfield, and Colchester, read in the House of Assembly at York
in February 1807. The petitioners complained that the lockup at Sandwich was “so confined
and incommodious that an unfortunate debtor (although probably an honest, industrious
man) must be confined in the same dungeon or cell with the greatest criminal, which is
repugnant to human feeling, and unprecedented in civilized society.”24 Taking aim at the
members of the local oligarchy, the petitioners went on to propose that funds to remedy the
situation be raised by a tax on all wheeled pleasure vehicles in the Western District. The
identity of the unfortunate debtor became clear when Guillaume Monforton, major in the
Southern Regiment of Essex Militia, wrote to his colonel, John Askin of Strabane, on the
upper Detroit. Monforton had been in prison the past two years for an alleged debt. His
wife “waters with her tears the road to the prison from her home—let us say rather, from
the place of her abode, since one of those two who claim a right to the land and house has
possession of the first.” Monforton enclosed a petition to Lieutenant Governor Francis
Gore, in which he added that his imprisonment had arisen out of a transaction twenty-six
years before, and that he was now seventy years old.25
Colonizers

In the early years of the nineteenth century, as Britain was seeking to expand her colonies around the world, various methods of colonization were being tested. In Upper Canada two grants for this purpose were issued on the same day, February 15, 1803, but the recipients could hardly have contrasted more greatly. One was Thomas Talbot, an Irish-born martinet who would preside over his domain of several thousand acres in the London and Western Districts for the next half century; the other was the altruistic, socially conscious, Scottish-born Thomas Douglas, fifth earl of Selkirk.

Not until 1809 did the government decide to build a road from the heart of Thomas Talbot’s settlement, Port Talbot on Lake Erie, westward through the London and Western Districts to the Detroit River. Lots on each side of the new road would be granted to settlers, on condition that they clear the road allowance in front of their own lots. In June 1811 Surveyor General Thomas Ridout confirmed that Talbot’s road should be continued west to Amherstburg, and that surveyor Mahlon Burwell should lay it out. Burwell began this task on August 26, but got no further than the middle of Howard Township before the end of the season. Five years of war and its aftermath would pass before the work could resume, and Talbot’s settlement in the Western District could get seriously under way.

Lord Selkirk’s doomed experiment in Upper Canada (he had other colonies, on Prince Edward Island and in the Red River valley) was in Kent County, at a place on Bear Creek in Dover East Township called Baldoon. Selkirk’s venture at Baldoon began optimistically enough in 1803. Robert Nichol, John Askin’s friend and fellow merchant at Queenston, wrote a letter of introduction to Askin on behalf of William Burn, Selkirk’s agent. If the settlement were to go ahead, Nichol wrote, Burn was in a position to send a good deal of business in Askin’s direction, and Nichol would like to share in it. Nichol followed this with a word of caution: when Selkirk arrived at Detroit he would be able to distinguish between “Honesty, Intelligence, Plain Dealing & respectability on the one Side, & Vulgarity low Cunning, Over-reaching &c &c on the other.”

That spring, Burn was at Baldoon to oversee the beginning of the settlement. The site was open, but it was generally low and wet, and had to be drained.

Selkirk’s scheme was a grand one. His string of settlements, to be made up of non-Anglophones (Gaelic-speaking highlanders at Baldoon, for example), was intended to resist American influence in the province. His settlers were his indentured employees, working for him until they earned small farms of their own. Naturally, he wanted settlers who would not be likely to desert. Therefore, he preferred families over unattached individuals, and those with a sense of togetherness, such as members of a Scottish clan, over all. The Baldoon
Settlement (with Selkirk's own farm, Baldoon, at its core) was to be only one pearl in a necklace. He envisioned that a road would connect Amherstburg with the Grand River, or perhaps even York. It would be two concessions back from Lake Erie, with Selkirk's settlers located on farm lots along both sides, facing the road. The back concessions on each side would be for large properties assigned to a chosen, aristocratic few. Sheep farming was to be the basis of Selkirk's domain. In his imagination he could picture his pastures eventually extending beyond the St. Clair River, deep into Michigan, perhaps even into northern Ohio. To sheep would be added cattle, horses, and crops of grain and hemp. A distillery would follow. The possibilities were endless.

The first fifteen families from Scotland arrived at Baldoon in September 1803, but what they saw was not encouraging. The autumn rains had begun, and much of the area lay under water. William Burn and the wife of a shepherd were already dead of malaria, and the new arrivals, installed in tents beside the river, soon began to follow. Hay supplies, stacked in preparation for the recent arrivals, were waterlogged and useless. Crops grown during the summer were nearly destroyed by the autumn rains. Sheep had to be kept at a distance until the land froze hard enough that they could be moved, and they were preyed upon by disease and wolves. In Lord Selkirk's opinion the disease that had claimed the lives of so many of his settlers had resulted directly from their situation on low, swampy ground. This was particularly true in the areas next to the unsurveyed, uncleared islands of the delta at the outlet of the St. Clair River. It followed, then, that the higher the ground, the healthier the settlers would be; and since the land rose to the north, in the Shawnee Township, that was where Lord Selkirk felt they should be relocated. Spring 1805 found the settlers greatly improved in both health and morale, however, and Alexander McDonell, Selkirk's new agent, the former sheriff of the Home District, decided against moving them. Fever returned that summer, and McDonell moved the survivors to Sandwich for care. That autumn those still living were returned to Baldoon, and to misery.

Despite Lord Selkirk's desire to extricate himself and his settlers from the fiasco at Baldoon, Alexander McDonell had his own ideas; after all, by the summer of 1806 the settlers were at last free from fever, and a new plan for outright ownership of their farms reduced the grumbling further. McDonell disregarded Selkirk’s instruction to reduce expenses, and spent more money instead. The costly experiment at Baldoon continued into 1809, and with dogged determination McDonell soldiered on. That spring he disregarded a direct instruction from Selkirk to rent out Baldoon Farm on shares, and moved in himself. As the crisis deepened through the remainder of the year, McDonell continued to devise all sorts of expensive schemes to develop the settlement, falling into disputes with the other participants.
The unfortunate Alexander McDonell summed up the situation to Lord Selkirk in January 1810:

With the exception of three or four families they are the most drunken, quarrelsome, spunging, indolent, of any people in Upper Canada. I have repeatedly made up differences between them, but finding that there was no end to their frays, I have at length done what I will persevere in doing, bind them over to the Quarter Sessions at Sandwich. The McDougalls are pre-eminent at pugilistic exploits and the author of most broils, particularly Allan, who is a worthless fellow, and who has been the cause that seven besides himself made their appearance at last Quarter Session lately.

McDonell should not have bothered writing. In May he received a letter that Selkirk wrote in October, 1809, dismissing him. However, before Selkirk’s letter arrived, McDonell embarked on one last costly project on behalf of his former employer. In April he engaged surveyor Thomas Smith to lay out Baldoon Street, just west of the Dover-Chatham township line, connecting the settlement at Big Bear Creek (the Sydenham River) with the Chatham town site on the Thames. It was to be a street, not a road; that is, rather than merely connecting two points, as a road would do, it was to be settled along its length. To accomplish this, one-hundred-acre lots were laid out on either side, to be sold to individual settlers or else given away to those who would encourage others to come. Both the unselfish Selkirk and spendthrift McDonell remained in character to the end.

War Games
To the officer class, the military life was good. It was comparatively easy, it afforded relief from the tedium of day-to-day existence through personal rivalries and political game-playing, and its social events provided opportunities for flirtations not easily available to others. Teaching topographical sketching and perspective drawing, for example, part of young officers’ training, must have been seen as a way to the hearts of Margaret and Catherine, the eligible daughters of Thomas Reynolds, assistant commissary officer first at British Detroit and then at Amherstburg. Such courting campaigns might well have given rise to the surviving body of ink-and-wash drawings of European architectural subjects rendered in one-point perspective, as well as views of Amherstburg.

At the opposite end of the military spectrum were those not so fortunate. The wretched living and working conditions, the tumbledown facilities, and the alien cultures surrounding the garrisons made rigid discipline essential to even the most minimal functioning of posts.

24
such as remote St. Joseph Island (staffed and administered from Amherstburg). That year a blacksmith who accepted three beaver skins from a native as payment for a gun repair was charged with illegally operating as a trader. Nor was misery confined to the Canadian side; by late May, 1804, the food stores were so low at Michilimackinac that some of the St. Joseph Island post’s provisions had to be loaned to the American garrison.

Desertion was a perennial problem. The garrisons were potential sources of workers, who were in short supply on both sides of the Detroit River. Many American deserters, wrote Lieutenant Colonel John Vincent, commanding officer at Amherstburg from 1802 to 1805, were employed as servants by the residents of Amherstburg. To stop the drain, armed forces on both sides felt free to cross the border to pursue, or even to kill, deserters.

King George III’s birthday, June 4, was a time of parades and pageantry, a time to be seen. Wrote Thomas McKee, late captain in the Sixtieth Regiment, having recently joined Lieutenant Colonel John Askin’s Essex Militia:

I am excessively happy to inform you that my Uniform on the 4th gave very general satisfaction so much, that, immediately after the Battalion were dismissed, I got several Recruits, of people of that Class which I am sure will meet your approbation, in fact being of the first.

I can with great propriety, say that the Dress is very handsome, and indeed Elegant, without being dear or extravagant; To tell the truth, the officers of Colonel Elliotts Battalion, as well as himself, were so much eclipsed, that they appeared perfectly ashamed of themselves.31

Colonel John Askin happily described militia preparations held on the king’s birthday in 1807, in case Lieutenant Governor Gore might wish to pay a visit on the same day the following year: “the Militia behaved remarkably well and fired like regular Troops (when they Fire well).” Askin found a scarlet cloak from which to have his uniform made, and “we therefore hope soon to make a pretty appearance.”32

The gameplaying abruptly turned serious, however, in the aftermath of an act of shocking stupidity. On June 22, 1807, off the American East Coast, several years of British and American maritime enmity culminated when the British frigate *Leopard* caught the American *Chesapeake* unprepared and fired a broadside into her that killed or wounded several of her crew. The British boarded her, searched out and imprisoned a few suspected deserters, and took them to Halifax. Although only one *Chesapeake* captive was found to be actually British, he was convicted on charges of mutiny, desertion, and contempt, and hanged in public.
It took some time for word of the *Chesapeake* outrage to reach the interior, but by August 1807 the playful mood on the Detroit frontier had changed considerably. Cross-river communication was suspended. Detroit was palisaded in from the water’s edge back to Fort Lernoult, batteries were being erected, and the garrison was preparing for war.

Tension between the two powers was being most vocally incited by Senator Henry Clay, of Lexington, Kentucky. Leader of the “War Hawks” in the House of Representatives, Clay articulated their position, building on American resentment of the self-proclaimed British right of stopping American vessels on the high seas. The Canadas should be invaded, he said, first, to force Britain to respect American sovereignty, second, because the Canadas were seen as the source of native resistance to American expansion into the Northwest, and
third, because the Canadas provided the raw materials needed by the British navy (rigging and timber) in enforcing its detestable measures. As proof of British culpability in stirring up native unrest on the American western frontier, Clay pointed to Britain's violation of the 1783 Treaty of Paris in continuing to occupy the Northwest until compelled to withdraw by the Jay Treaty of 1794.

To the War Hawks, Fort Amherstburg and its satellite at the head of Lake Huron, St. Joseph Island, constituted the prize of all Canadian targets. This was so for a number of reasons: first, Upper Canada's western frontier was close to the War Hawks' own source of political strength, in Kentucky, and its capture would win votes back home; second, it was weakly defended and its conquest would be easy; and finally, its capture would deprive the hated British Indian Department of the major bases from which it instigated mischief in the American Northwest.

Jacques Baby, for one, was by no means sure that Upper Canada's western frontier could be successfully defended. He and his brother François called on the commandant at Amherstburg, and learned that the fort was unprepared to provide for any force beyond its normal peacetime garrison. Writing later to Lieutenant Governor Gore from a place of security in Raleigh Township, on the River Thames, Baby wondered "upon whom is to devolve the finding the militia with Provisions, and other necessaries, if we should think ourselves sufficiently strong to guard the Settlement opposite the American Garrison of Detroit, or otherwise to repair wherever necessity might direct."

Fortunately, American response to the Chesapeake affair was restrained, partly because of commercial ties between the American coastal states and the British maritime colonies, and partly because Napoleon's France was then at war with Britain, raising the hope that those countries would ruin each other, saving the Americans the trouble.

The war scare was waning. By March 1808 the Detroit militia stood down, and soon those on the Canadian side were dismissed as well. The cross-river friendships that had been a way of life for generations were restored. Elijah Brush, one of Detroit's most influential citizens, sent over some grape vines and currant bushes for Mrs. Askin at Strabane. That August the Reverend Richard Pollard took Askin to task for drilling his militia on Sunday, during church service, but Askin rejected his complaint; it developed that Askin was acting on the orders of no less than the previous lieutenant of the County of Essex, François Baby, and the drilling was to take place outside Baby's own church, Assumption. Alexander Grant, recently appointed to succeed Baby as county lieutenant, made it known that Baby would have to find some time other than Sunday during or after church for militia drill, and merchant William Park offered his cannon to fire a salute on Queen Charlotte's birthday.
The comic-opera character of life among the privileged on the Detroit, for the moment at least, had returned.

Because it was important in the defense of Upper Canada to maintain the support of the natives, the Indian Department was closely linked to the military establishment. A decade earlier, in 1798, rivalry between the army and the Indian Department had erupted on the western frontier. Superintendent of Indian Affairs Matthew Elliott had been dismissed from the Indian Department over a feud begun by a commandant at Amherstburg, Captain William Mayne, and continued by his successor, Captain Hector McLean. There had been a suggestion that private, not public interest was involved in a Western District Grand Jury presentment on the subject of desertions from the garrison, and that the document had been cobbled together by the chairman of the Quarter Sessions, assisted by Elliott, in order to embarrass the commandant at Malden. After the passage of a suitable length of time, however, by 1808 Elliott’s rehabilitation was in the wind. He had never lost his influence with the Lakes tribes, despite his disgrace and removal from the Indian Department, and Lieutenant Governor Francis Gore recommended his reinstatement to the governor in chief, Sir James Craig.

Colonel William Claus of the Indian Department at Amherstburg reported to Lieutenant Governor Gore: “the respect and regard they bear to him [Elliott] from his long and active services with them during the American war, has so endeared him to them, that his influence is not to be shaken, and I have only to lament there should be any impediment in the way of his being employed at a moment when that influence is of such consequence to the country.” Three weeks later, noting that the officer who had had him removed was now exposed as a troublemaker, Governor Sir James Craig formally asked Gore to reinstate Elliott.

Native-watching continued to engage the attention of the Indian Department. Claus was concerned about an Ojibwa chief, A Person Stabbed, who arrived at Amherstburg from Fort Erie but then went straight to Detroit, where he was reportedly well received by Governor William Hull. In the end Claus concluded that A Person Stabbed was “a worthless bad character,” one whom the Americans would trust no more than would the British. Protecting British interests by maintaining goodwill lay behind all that the Indian Department did.

On June 8 Gore reported to Craig that he had decided to go to Amherstburg, to meet with the natives and to enhance their good opinion of Britain, adding that he would prudently avoid giving unnecessary offense to the Americans in the process. What he kept to himself was that his visit would focus favorable attention on the vindicated Matthew Elliott. Claus immediately put Elliott in charge of making the arrangements.
In the midst of a suffocating heat wave, Colonel Claus met Gore on Peche Island, a low, treeless, sunbaked knob of clay at the entrance to the Detroit River, at seven o’clock in the morning on June 28, and there they spent the day. The next morning they set out for Amherstburg in Claus’s canoe. On the way they received a three-gun salute from the brig Caledonia. When they themselves offered three cheers as they passed by the American garrison at Fort Lernoult, however, the response was silence.

Lieutenant Colonel Jasper Grant of the Forty-First Regiment, commanding at Malden, received Gore on the shore, and the guns of the fort roared a salute. The lieutenant governor inspected the troops, then reembarked in Claus’s canoe for a visit to Matthew Elliott’s mansion before returning to the fort for dinner—an unmistakable signal of Elliott’s newly restored place among the elite of Upper Canada.

The dining, dancing, and celebration continued in the days that followed (Claus privately confessed to “a poor attempt to dance the Feather Dance”), with the promulgation of an order of Gore’s for the purchasing of presents and provisions—an announcement certain to be well received by the clients of the Indian Department. The real purpose of all this pomp and ceremony was made absolutely clear at a council attended by representatives of the Shawnee, Huron, and Ottawa nations. Five guns were fired in salute as Lieutenant Governor Gore entered the council house. It took two hours to deliver his speech and have it translated to his audience, replete with its anti-American sentiments—the Americans lie to the Indians, they steal their land, and the like. That evening Gore had twenty-eight dinner companions, and all seemed pleased with his remarks. Symbolically, the natives’ formal acceptance of the speech was delivered by the Hurons on behalf of all present. Dinner afterward was for ninety natives, plus their chiefs and twenty-nine gentlemen of Amherstburg. At six on the evening of July 16 Gore was welcomed aboard the Camden by a salute from her guns, and at half past five the next morning his entourage departed for Fort Erie.

So ended Lieutenant Governor Francis Gore’s visit to the western frontier of the province in 1808. All the social functions had dramatized the restoration of Matthew Elliott to his place as the Crown’s agent in dealing with the natives at Amherstburg, and had emphasized British recognition of Amherstburg as a major Indian Department base having influence over an area extending far beyond the border, as well as into the upper Lakes. In making the arrangements for all of this, Matthew Elliott had done very well, indeed.

Lieutenant Governor Gore, reporting to Governor in Chief Sir James Craig, wrote that in the event of war, “the Post of Amherstburg, will in all probability be the first object of attack.” He added that although Elliott considered that a regiment of British regulars could take Detroit and the country beyond, which would secure the friendship of the natives, “my
private opinion is, that he is too sanguine in his hopes of Indian assistance! Gore's view was echoed by the British secretary of war in another letter to Craig: in the event of war with the United States, "we are to consider not so much [the natives'] use as allies, as their Destructiveness if Enemies." Orders went out that there should be more presents distributed by the Indian Department in Upper Canada in 1809.

Human affairs on the fringes of European civilization, as at St. Joseph Island, often seemed to take on a larger-than-life quality. Petty incidents became inflated almost beyond recognition. In January 1810, the commandant at St. Joseph suspended John Askin Jr. as Indian Department interpreter and storekeeper. This came about over an alleged short-changing of some native customers, pending the resolution of charges against him of contempt of court and disobedience of the commandant's order to attend a court of inquiry. He refused to attend the court, he maintained, because he did not receive the order to do so in writing. At this point Matthew Elliott entered the discussion, noting that the Indian Department was not under military orders, and that therefore the commandant had no right to interfere or to suspend Askin. Furthermore, wrote Elliott, in doing so the commandant was injuring the British in the eyes of the natives. The same day, Francis Gore ordered that Askin be reinstated, and that the commandant be suspended and replaced. Thomas McKee, who had been succeeded at Amherstburg by the restored Matthew Elliott, was transferred to the superintendency of Indian Affairs at St. Joseph Island, on the recommendation of Colonel Claus, and John Askin Jr. continued in his former position of storekeeper, clerk, and interpreter.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Governor Francis Gore had requested a leave of absence from his duties, and was replaced as of October 9, 1811, with an administrator, Major General Isaac Brock of the Forty-Ninth Regiment. Brock lost no time in reporting his realistic view of Upper Canada's military situation, and stressing the importance of maintaining morale by acting as if there were no difficulty, either internal or external. Amherstburg, he felt, was the first and most important point of concern. If provided with the means of taking the initiative militarily, Amherstburg could prevent the Americans from gaining the advantage anywhere west of Niagara. To accomplish this, both Detroit and Michilimackinac would have to be taken, in order to regain the active cooperation of the native tribes on the American western frontier that had been lost when the British failed to support them in the Ohio valley in the 1790s. Failure to take the initiative from the Americans would expose the York area to a threat. To prevent this, Brock proposed sending two hundred additional troops, drawn from Fort York and from Fort George at Niagara, to Amherstburg in late December or early January, when the roads would be frozen hard enough for travel. He also recom-
mended expanding the naval force on Lake Erie by buying and renting merchant vessels, and by building shallow-draft gunboats.

By 1811 native resistance to the expansion of American settlement into the Ohio valley had come together around the Shawnee chief Tech-kum-thai (Tecumseh). That November, General William Henry Harrison, governor of the Indiana Territory, led a force north through Indiana to subdue native opposition. The first blow was a native attack on the Americans, near the village of Prophetstown on Tippecanoe Creek. The next day, November 8, Harrison retaliated by destroying the village. After the Battle of Tippecanoe, refugees fleeing for protection to the Indian Department base at Amherstburg were accommodated through the winter on Bois Blanc Island.

The British post at Amherstburg, like the one at St. Joseph Island, was badly built and in constant need of repair. The boat that ferried troops between the mainland and Bois Blanc Island was condemned in January 1811 and had to be replaced that spring. At the same time, a guardhouse needed repair, and an old, rotten building in the town being used as a temporary storehouse for provisions was in danger of falling apart.

Fort Amherstburg, as it was called, was described in a British report as a square field work, whose four small bastions were of framed timber, faced with planking that was badly decayed. The bastions were connected with a palisade, which was also in poor repair. Within this line of picketing the garrison was housed in a blockhouse having a capacity of about three officers and eighty men. The magazine was of stone, arched so as to form a barrel vault, but it offered little protection against an explosive cannonball. Outside the stockade were two small blockhouses intended to protect the navy yard, but actually occupied as officers’ quarters. Fort St. Joseph, “the most distant Military Post in Upper Canada,” was a square of high cedar pickets enclosing a blockhouse and public buildings. Both forts were “in bad repair and incapable of any defence.” The artillery at Amherstburg in 1811 consisted of one eighteen-pounder (a cannon capable of firing an iron ball weighing eighteen pounds), five nine-pounders, and four six-pounders. The garrison included one subaltern of artillery, one corporal, and eleven gunners. At St. Joseph Island there were four six-pounders and six half-pounder swivel guns. As at Amherstburg, the ammunition was kept in a stone magazine, arched but not bombproof. The magazine at Amherstburg was described as “cracked all through.” Amherstburg and St. Joseph Island were not alone in the deplorable state of their defenses: “In the present Situation of the Posts of Upper Canada, there is not one Situation that can be considered safe as a Depot. The works are faced and lined with wood, the Bastions connected by palisades. The Buildings are of Wood, liable at all times to
accident by fire; and within the power of an Enemy to be burnt, whenever He chose to undertake it.\textsuperscript{44}

While the British had concerns about their state of military preparedness and the reliability of the native population, the Americans had similar worries. Governor William Hull of the Michigan Territory was anything but optimistic about the outcome of any war with Britain. Upper Canada's population outnumbered Michigan's by about twenty to one. Detroit was isolated by about two hundred miles of wilderness from the nearest American settlement, and the natives were not to be trusted.

This was no time to embark on a war.
As the two North American Wars of 1812 approached—one a struggle for economic control on the Atlantic, the other to overcome native resistance to American expansion on the northwest frontier—both sides recognized the importance of seizing the offensive. Montreal was the preferred American target, because its fall would automatically cause the loss of Kingston, York, Fort George, Fort Erie, and Amherstburg, demolishing the influence of the Indian Department. Even more effective, it was thought, might be a two-pronged thrust at Upper Canada: at Montreal via Lake Champlain, and at Fort Amherstburg from Detroit.

The view at Montreal was that the loss of Amherstburg would force the abandonment of the Detroit River fur route. If this were to happen, an alternative overland route from Georgian Bay to York could be resorted to, but in all events the primary source of furs, the upper Lakes, would have to be secured by the reduction of American-held Fort Michilimackinac. The agents of the fur-trading companies were prepared to protect their own interests and were eager to induce the natives to join them in taking any action, defensive or offensive, that might be proposed to them by the British. These traders, motivated by profit, not patriotism, were considered to have “a most Commanding influence” over the natives, and it was felt that their activities should be coordinated with those of the regular army.
By February 1812, Isaac Brock, major general of the Forty-Ninth Regiment and administrator of Upper Canada, was forming energetic plans. "The more information I receive the stronger I am impressed with the necessity of being formidable at Amherstburg—Were we in a condition to act offensively in that quarter the greatest good would be sure to result from it." The natives of the Amherstburg vicinity would cooperate, he felt, and those along the Missouri would follow their example. "By these means an important diversion would be made, and points very assailable preserved from attack."2

Indeed, both Detroit and Michilimackinac would have to be taken at the onset of hostilities, in order to prevent the loss not only of the Amherstburg vicinity but probably the whole of Upper Canada as far east as Kingston. Brock went on to suggest that a detachment of the Forty-Ninth Regiment be sent up the Ottawa River, with some artillery, in the North West Company canoes in the spring. Brock had a flair for highly detailed planning as well as for strategy and tactics; simultaneously he directed the commissariat at Amherstburg to purchase two thousand bushels of Indian corn, as much as possible from American sources in order not to diminish the stock on the Canadian side.

At the same time, Brock took no chances with the loyalty of the Upper Canadian population. In the Western District those appointed to enforce his proclamation to suppress sedition included some of the leading citizens: John McGregor and Angus Mackintosh of Sandwich, Matthew Elliott and Robert Richardson of Amherstburg, John Williams of Camden Township, and Thomas McCrae of Raleigh. Brock's concerns included the natives, among whom the Americans were thought to be busily intriguing. British influence diminished, he believed, each day the Indian Department stood aside or held back the customary supply of ammunition. To the British, native support was essential. On February 27 Captain John B. Glegg of the Forty-Ninth Regiment (the Royal Berkshires, Brock's own regiment) wrote in cryptic terms to Robert Dickson, a former clerk and storekeeper in the Indian Department at Michilimackinac who was then trading in the upper Mississippi region. Would Dickson's "friends" be available to journey to the Detroit frontier for service to the British in the spring? The unsigned, unaddressed response: 250-300 friends were available. They were trustworthy, and would rendezvous at Fort St. Joseph at the end of June. Further, an expedition to the Mississippi should not entail much risk, and would produce more friends.

Across the border the view was strikingly different. Governor William Hull of the Michigan Territory was in Washington in March, and there he addressed a letter to the secretary of war, William Eustis. He feared that a British invasion would bring about the loss of Michigan, whose largely Canadian population would be joined by the population of Upper Canada as well as by the British regular army and by native forces. Hull estimated that the
American inhabitants of the Michigan Territory could be outnumbered by British and Canadians, let alone natives, by ten to one: “that part of the United States must fall into the hands of the British government, with all the inhabitants—the forts at Chicago, Michilimackinac and Detroit . . . and all the country North and North-west of the Miami of Lake Erie.” The only way to avoid this, as well as native depredations in the frontier settlements in western Ohio, would be an adequate force at Detroit. If the Canadas were to be conquered, “The answer probably may be, it is more expedient to leave the Michigan territory to its fate, and direct the force to Montreal.”

Regardless of who possessed Montreal, however, Hull saw Upper Canada and the Michigan Territory combined as a self-sufficient unit. “Two things appear to me to be certain, one is that in the event of war, the enemy will attempt to take possession of that country, with a view to obtain the assistance of the Indians residing in our territory; and the other is, that under its present circumstances of defence, it will be in their power to do it.” On the other hand, an appropriate American force at Detroit would “probably induce the enemy to abandon the province of Upper Canada without opposition.” British abandonment of Upper Canada would cause the British fleet on the Lakes to fall into American hands, and it would also break the British communication, via Amherstburg, with the tribes to the west.

The geographical importance of Amherstburg was recognized on both sides, but it offered no safe harbor. Lieutenant Governor Francis Gore supported an internal trading connection with the upper Lakes, which would reach Lake Huron at Penetang, near the head of Georgian Bay. Penetang’s harbor had an added advantage as a safer and more convenient naval station than the exposed anchorage at Amherstburg.

Governor in Chief Sir George Prevost viewed Brock’s aggressive planning with a cautious eye: “Whatever temptations may offer to induce you to depart from a system strictly defensive, I must pointedly request that, under the existing circumstances of our relations with the Government of the United States, you will not allow them to lead you into any measure bearing the character of offence. . . . You are, nevertheless, to persevere in your preparations for defence. . . .”

By mid-April the approach of war was beginning to have a certain appeal for the profit-minded, like John Askin. “Now there are contracts for Wood &c at Malden,” he wrote a friend and fellow merchant, “with men employed at the works, which will it’s thought cost about £2000. money must get into the hands of farmers & workmen who will lay it out, mostly for Lands.” British intelligence continued to report American preparations for war. William Hull would henceforth hold the military rank of brigadier general, and by his orders a garrison of sixty at Chicago, which was exposed to native attack, would be moved...
to Detroit. Late in April John Askin was still looking forward to an infusion of British money into the Western District, but by that time he was able to add that his own house, Strabane, had been fortified: "The Guns, blunderbusses etc. here are all loaded & in good order; I hate to be taken prisoner & he who attempts it, if openly may lose his life; having only my children & self we can not do much, but I will try not to be surprised."7

As the outbreak of war approached, rumors began to swirl. On May 7 Colonel St. George, commanding at Amherstburg, reported to Brock that he had received reports of 1,200 Ohio militia plus 1,000 American regulars who were on their way to join the garrison at Detroit. He also reported on the great fear the Detroit inhabitants felt toward the natives. Possibly Brock had heard differing figures from other sources, or perhaps he deliberately minimized St. George's report; but eight days later Brock reported that he had heard of 600 Ohio militia bound for Detroit, on which basis he intended sending 100 men of the Forty-First Regiment to Amherstburg. At the same time, he politely demurred from his confinement to defensive measures by adding, "I have always considered that the reduction of Detroit would be the signal of a cordial co-operation on their [the natives'] part, and if we are not in sufficient force to effect this object no reliance ought to be placed on the Indians."^8

Privately, the British were very much aware of their dangerous situation. Prevost wrote candidly to the secretary for war and the colonies: Fort Amherstburg "has been represented to me as a temporary Field Work in a ruinous State; it is now undergoing a repair to render it tenable." Its garrison included an artillery detachment and about 120 men of the Forty-First Regiment, and the nearby militia numbered about 500. As to the militia, their unreliability was conveyed in the following: "The total number of militia in Upper Canada is calculated at 11,000 men, of which it might not be prudent to arm more than 4,000."9

Officership was another concern. "Sir George [Prevost, in a communication to Brock] regrets that he has not field officers of the description you require to command at Kingston and Amherstburg."10

Recognition of British weaknesses and limitations led Sir George to take comfort where he could find it. Prevost replied to Brock: "I am much pleased to find by your letter of the 22nd ultimo you had taken precautions to prevent any act occurring within your control that should afford the Government of the United States a legitimate pretext to add to the clamor artfully raised by it against England."11 Such pessimism might well have been justified; in June the Americans had a report that Fort Amherstburg was in much poorer condition than Detroit, with one side entirely open.12

The tension on the Canadian shore had never been higher. On June 23 John Askin's company of the Essex County Militia was called out. Hull was on the march with additional
troops to join the force at Detroit, and the next day his confidence was apparent in a letter to William Eustis. His force exceeded two thousand and was larger than anything that could be mustered against it. The same day, the secretary wrote Hull with his order: "Should the force under your command be equal to the enterprise, consistent with the safety of your own posts, you will take possession of Malden, and extend your conquests as circumstances may justify. It is also proper to inform you that an adequate force cannot soon be relied on for the reduction of the enemy's posts below you."\footnote{13}

**War Begins**

A week passed following United States president James Madison's June 18 declaration of war before word reached Quebec and was passed on to Britain's outposts in the interior. Even so, the news of the declaration of war reached the Canadian shore of the Detroit River about midnight on July 1, not reaching the American shore until nine hours later, about nine o'clock on July 1, and those few hours' advantage were exploited by the base at Amherstburg. Early that afternoon an American vessel, the *Cuyahoga*, was upbound in the channel, passing Amherstburg. A boat put out from the "thrifty village, with a fort and military depot," as a passenger, Lydia B. Bacon, later described it, and when within earshot ordered the captain of the *Cuyahoga* to lower his sails, firing twice over the passengers' heads. They hove to, within point-blank range of the guns of the fort. To the Americans' embarrassment, all their arms were in the hold at the time, and having been informed that war had been declared, about ten o'clock on the morning of July 2 they were taken prisoner. To their further dismay, the baggage of William Hull's officers, including documents, fell into British hands.

The female passengers, including Mrs. Bacon, were then chivalrously allowed to go on their way to Detroit. Having reached "The Ferry" as it was called, opposite Detroit,

> here a boat was furnished by the Gentleman, to whom I presented our pass, & who politely volunteered his services to see us across the river. ... It was a long Canoe made out of the trunk of a tree, & had been lying [sic] exposed to the sun out of water, which had caused it to crack. The Gentleman took the Helm in one hand & his cane in the other, with my white Pocket-handkerchief tied on it for a flag of Truce.\footnote{14}

Both regiments of the Essex Militia were called out for ten o'clock on July 2, but morale was such that desertions and absences without leave numbered over three hundred. Those who responded to the call marched off from Sandwich toward Amherstburg on July 3, but were ordered back when the Kent Militia overtook them and passed them by.
Meanwhile Isaac Brock, at Fort George, found himself in a difficulty. The garrisons at Amherstburg and St. Joseph Island, at the head of Lake Huron, were too weak to undertake any offensive activities. He was left with only one point for attack, and that was at Fort Niagara, across the Niagara River from Fort George, not much more than a stone’s throw away. Fort Niagara could easily be taken, at any convenient time, but this was not the moment: “unfortunately having supplied Amherstburg with the guns that post required from Fort George, depending upon getting others from Kingston to supply their place, we find ourselves at this moment rather short of that essential arm.”

The importance attached to Amherstburg by the British at the beginning of the War of 1812 is vividly portrayed by the distribution of regular-army troops in Upper Canada at the time. As of July 4, the total of all regulars in the province was 1,658, divided among Kingston, Fort George at Niagara, and Amherstburg. At Amherstburg the Forty-First Regiment comprised a force of 1,014—61 percent of all regular troops in the province.

On the night of July 4, there was a false alarm of an invasion on the Canadian shore. John Askin took members of his family to hiding places in the woods, making room for François Baby’s and Richard Pattinson’s wives and children to spend the night at Strabane. An unauthorized bombardment of Sandwich on July 5 by American militiamen from Springwells, opposite, brought an apology from William Hull the next day. “I am not disposed,” Hull wrote, “to make war on Private Property, or to authorize a wanton attack upon unoffending individuals.” However, the Cuyahoga embarrassment was still fresh in his mind, and in his next sentence he pointedly added: “I would be happy to learn whether you consider private property a proper object of seizure & detention; I allude to the Baggage of officers particularly.” With that exchange, matters quieted down for the moment on the frontier, and the Baby and Pattinson families returned to their homes. Perhaps contributing to the calm was the strengthening of Fort Amherstburg, which Captain Dixon of the Royal Engineers reported with satisfaction on July 8. Moreover, added Dixon, the British at Amherstburg had at their disposal 300 regulars, plus 850 militia and about 400 native warriors. There was no need to fear the Americans, he declared.

The same day, Colonel St. George found time to report the Cuyahoga incident of a week earlier. He added a description of the American bombardment of Sandwich on the fifth. To his chagrin, he had found it necessary as a result to stiffen the resolve of the Essex Militia, under Colonel François Baby, not to abandon the place and flee to Amherstburg. In fact, he had had to turn them back at the bridge over the Canard with a detachment of fifty men of the Forty-First, equipped with a couple of three-pounders. St. George was not overly optimistic: “I shall keep Sandwich as long as I can,” he wrote. He also pressed seventy boatmen
of the North West Company into His Majesty’s service, and he commandeered their cargo of arms, ammunition, and blankets. Short of equipment, he issued lightweight North West Company trade muskets to the militia. Brass three-pounders taken from merchant Angus Mackintosh’s vessel, the Nancy, were mounted on the Nor’Westers’ canoes; “In short I find myself so situated, that I am obliged to make use of everything I want, that falls in my way.”19

However, according to St. George, the fort was much improved. The curtain walls between the corner bastions were nearly finished; what remained to be done was the thickening of the north curtain with timber to fourteen feet. Projecting, pointed stakes had been added to two of the bastions, and the other two would be finished in two days. The surrounding ditch had been deepened, twenty cannon had been mounted, the firing platforms were all in solid condition, a log barracks had been thrown up on the parade ground and another could be added in half a day, and a new magazine was almost finished. “In short every exertion possible is made by us all.” However, the militia were not to be relied on: “Those we get into the Fort we can control, but no others.”20

British and American assessments of the military situation along the Detroit were in remarkably close agreement. Although the British were reluctantly prepared to write off Sandwich and make their stand at Amherstburg, William Hull wrote that “The British have established a post directly opposite to this place [Detroit]; I have confidence in dislodging them, and of being in possession of the opposite bank. . . . I do not think the force here equal to the reduction of Amherstburg; you therefore must not be too sanguine.”21

By the tenth, Hull was beginning to express concern over his extended, exposed line of communication and the Americans’ ability to supply his army, and St. George at Amherstburg was equally unhappy. Misgivings to the contrary, however, both sides had their orders, and they proceeded to carry them out.

**Invasion**

On the evening of July 11 an American force made a show of leaving Fort Lernoult and moving down through Springwells (opposite Sandwich) toward the River Rouge, leaving the British to conclude that after dark the Americans with their boats would continue downriver, for a strike at Amherstburg the next morning. “They accordingly drew all their forces to that place. Next morning the army marched about a mile above Detroit, where boats had been taken in the night. The regiments of Colonels Miller and Cass embarked at once.”22

Hull’s tactic worked brilliantly. One of the officers participating in the invasion described the landing:
The flotilla proceeded very regularly and handsomely dressed in line, the right a little in advance. Standing in the bow with Captain Mansfield, in looking to the left, we could see every boat, and distinguish each regiment. On passing the middle of the river, our wing gradually gained further in advance; and as our captain was very watchful as we neared the shore, lest some on our left should push ahead out of line, in order to gain the shore before us, he gave orders in an undertone to the oarsmen to give headway. The result was, we struck the shore more than a rod in advance of any other boat, and our company had landed and formed in columns as the head of the advance, before the centre and left had reached the shore.

We were not attacked on landing as we had expected. Oblique to the right, and on a bluff quite near to where we landed, was a strongly built mill ... and we thought it more than probable that our enemy, who is ever ready for a fight in time of war, had placed and masked a light battery within it which, with their sharpshooters, might annoy us considerably before our advance in force would have caused their precipitate retreat.

We marched down the road along the bank of the river, to a point opposite the Town, presenting a fine appearance from the opposite shore, according to the description of those who witnessed it. The inhabitants (nearly all Canadian French) welcomed us as friends. White handkerchiefs and flags waved from every house, and the expression, "We like the Americans," came forth from every dwelling.

A vacant, unfinished two-story brick house, ... belonging, it was said, to a colonel Babie, with extensive grounds became the head quarters and entrenched camp of the North-western Army in Canada.23

The next day, William Hull reported his success to the secretary of war, adding that he intended to seal the river by setting up a battery or two on the Canadian shore, facing Fort Lernoult. Not surprisingly, Hull's outlook was noticeably more positive in the days following the invasion. On July 15 he described a number of native leaders as "zealous friends of neutrality," and expressed the hope that all the tribes would fall in with them.24

A dispirited Colonel St. George delayed three days before reporting the invasion to Brock:

On the 11th I received a letter from Colonel [François] Baby, stating, that from the preparation made on the opposite side, & every appearance of the Enemy crossing in great force, he had determined (with the unanimous advice of his
Officers) to withdraw to Amherstburg immediately. . . . The next morning early (the 12th) the Enemy crossed with the greatest part of his force near Hog Island [modern Belle Isle], and occupied Sandwich. 25

Since that time the demoralized militiamen of Essex and Kent had been dispersing, and those left were "in such a state as to be totally inefficient in the field. . . . I hope the Enemy will move forward by land—The Canard is so strong a position that I think (with the Assistance of the Indians) I can annoy them much before they can get to this [Amherstburg] by that road." 26

On the same day, however, Matthew Elliott was able to offer some encouragement. By his estimate there were three to four hundred natives who could be depended upon in the vicinity of Fort Amherstburg. "Tech-Kum-thai [Tecumseh] has kept them faithful—he has shown himself to be a determined character and a great friend to our Government." 27

Now that the Americans were established above Sandwich in what amounted to an outwork of Fort Lernoult, they began to feel out the British defenses of Amherstburg. Lieutenant Colonel Lewis Cass and a detachment of 280, probing down the river road on July 16, found the bridge over the River Canard torn up, and a breastwork defended by a picket of British regulars, militia, and natives. Leaving a company of riflemen near the spot, he took his main force on a long detour to ford the Canard and then one of its upstream tributaries, in order to come up behind the defenders. The delay gave the British picket time to prepare, and they opened fire on the Americans as they advanced in the failing light of the evening. By the time the defenders had fired three volleys, reloading and falling back between, darkness had overtaken the scene, and so ended the first skirmish of the War of 1812. Two sentries of the Forty-First Regiment, cut off on the north side of the Canard, became the war's first casualties; Private Hancock was killed, and Private Dean was wounded and captured by the Americans. 28

At St. Joseph Island, the commandant, Captain Charles Roberts of the Tenth Royal Veterans Battalion, knew nothing of what was transpiring below when, on July 15, he received Brock's orders to adopt prudent measures of offense or defense, as indicated. Since he expected American reinforcements to arrive at Fort Michilimackinac at any time, and he believed that the natives were about to abandon him, he concluded that "my situation at St. Josephs was totally indefensible." That left him with one alternative: to go on the offensive. Therefore, taking his own few troops plus about 150 civilians (half without arms), some three hundred natives, and two six-pounders, he embarked on the morning of July 16 on an expedition to capture Fort Michilimackinac. Roberts's force arrived about
3:00 A.M. the next day. Seven hours later they had wrestled one of their six-pounders to the heights overlooking the fort, and they were ready to begin firing. A summons was sent in, and the capitulation of Fort Michilimackinac was agreed upon. There were no casualties on either side, and the American prisoners were paroled. Roberts’s tone to Brock was deferential, almost apologetic: "I trust Sir, in thus acting I have not exceeded Your Instructions."29

Meanwhile, the Americans were anxious that their occupation of Sandwich and its environs should be seen as benevolent. John Askin, who had seen Hull three days before, wrote: "Governor now General Hull, keeps up the strictest good order. the soldiers dare not take a Cherry, without the Owners consent. . . . Should it be our lot, to fall under any other Authority, I would not prefer any man, to the present General Hull." It was even arranged that Elijah Brush (Askin’s son-in-law), then commanding at Detroit, would send men to reap Askin’s harvest for him, since those who would ordinarily have done this work were members of the Essex Militia and had been called to Amherstburg. As to any absentees, "some few Canadians [i.e. French Canadians], but many more English of the River[?] Trench [Thames], are come off from Malden without leave. I really think the distressed state of their Families and the harvest being so very near, is the general cause." This view was modified a few days later when Askin added, "Our Canadians now desert in numbers. Our officers will have no men."30

The native population was a continuing threat to Hull, despite his assurances of a few days before to Secretary Eustis. On July 18 he issued the following proclamation:

My Brethren of the Six Nations:—The powerful army under my command is now in possession of Canada. To you who are friendly it will afford safety and protection. All your lands and all your rights of every kind will be guaranteed to you if you will take no part against us. I salute you in friendship, and hope you will now act such a part as will promote your interest, your safety, and happiness. May the Great Spirit guide you in person.31

Hull was equally eager to be well thought of in Washington. Neutralizing the hostile tribes was an expected part of this process, as was clear in his report to the secretary of war after his proclamation. He also predicted that the whole of the Upper Canada militia would evaporate in the next couple of days. By this time his camp opposite Fort Lernoult was entrenched, he was mounting twenty-four-pounders, and he was preparing for the siege of Malden. He rounded off his optimistic report by observing that on completion of the brig Adams, launched July 4, "We shall then command the upper lakes."32
Isaac Brock, at Fort George, was sending off documents captured on the Cuyahoga to Governor in Chief Sir George Prevost on July 20 when he was interrupted by the arrival of St. George's letter to him reporting the American landing on July 12, and his letter to Prevost suddenly took on a very different tone. "It is strange," he wrote, "that three days should be allowed to elapse before sending to acquaint me of this important fact, I had no idea until I received Lt. Colonel St. George's letter a few days ago that General Hull was advancing with such a large force." Brock wrote harshly of the militia, and its officers in particular. "The enemy was not likely to delay attacking a force that had allowed him to cross the river in open day without firing a shot. . . . I have never, as Your Excellency has doubtless noticed, been very sanguine in my hopes of Assistance from the Militia."

Brock's immediate reaction became a more calculated response two days later, when he issued a proclamation to the citizens of Upper Canada. His masterful command of language was apparent in that document, which was carefully designed for its sound when read aloud:

The unprovoked declaration of war by the United States of America against the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and its dependencies, has been followed by the actual invasion of this Province in a remote frontier of the Western District by a detachment of the armed forces of the United States. The officer commanding that detachment has thought proper to invite His Majesty's subjects not only to a quiet and unresisting submission, but insults them with a call to seek voluntarily the protection of his Government.

Colonel Henry Procter of the Forty-First Regiment arrived at Amherstburg in time to report the first American bloodshed of the war. The day before, native warriors had ambushed an American patrol at Turkey Creek, and several Americans had been killed. Procter went on to stress the importance of reinforcing the garrison at Amherstburg. Five hundred men of the Forty-First would be needed to decide matters, considering the loss of militia support at harvest time and the drifting away of natives gathered by the Indian Department: "The Enemy's Arts and Misrepresentations have operated strongly on both the Indians and People of this country, among whom their agents now appear. . . . I do not apprehend that this Post is in any immediate Danger, but I am fully convinced of the necessity of a Reinforcement."

By this time American troops as well as American words were deeply penetrating Upper Canada and menacing Brock's position. Patrols from Sandwich reached the Thames, and Hull's proclamation to the Six Nations had the intended effect of persuading the tribes at the Grand River to remain neutral. This, in turn, rendered the militia in that vicinity
"alarmed and unwilling to leave their families to the mercy of 400 Indians, whose conduct affords such wide room for suspicion—and really, to expect that this fickle race would remain in the midst of war in a state of neutrality is truly absurd," as Brock saw it. All this persuaded him more strongly than ever that "unless the enemy be driven from Sandwich it will be impossible to avert much longer the impending ruin of the country. Numbers have already joined the invading army, commotions are excited, and late occurrences have spread a general gloom." Thomas Talbot, then colonel of the First Middlesex Militia, described the Norfolk Militia as sullen.

Hull's invading force was at the extreme end of a very long supply line, and as a result was forced to send out patrols not only to feel out defenses but to forage for supplies. One such patrol passed John Askin's residence, Strabane, riding upstream on the afternoon of July 27, and returned that evening driving "a small drove of Horned Cattle & several droves of Sheep, perhaps 6 or 8 Hundred—the Sheep from Belleriviere, the Moravian breed, their appearance very little & Ugly." Both protagonists in the struggle for the Detroit frontier were becoming convinced of the hopelessness of their situations, yet neither could have known what was in the other's mind. News of the fall of Michilimackinac, which reached Hull on July 28, put a virtual end to his plans for further offensive operations in Upper Canada, but on the same day, Brock, at York, wrote:

My situation is getting each day more critical. I still mean to try and send a force to the relief of Amherstburg, but almost despair of succeeding. The population, although I had no great confidence in the majority, is worse than I expected to find it, and the magistrates, &c., &c., appear quite confounded, and decline acting—the consequence is the most improper conduct is tolerated. The officers of the militia exert no authority. Everything shows as if a certainty existed of a change taking place soon. But I still hope the arrival of reinforcements may yet avert such a dire calamity. Many in that case would become active in our cause who are now dormant.

Brock's mood changed abruptly when he also learned of the capture of Michilimackinac, on July 29. Suddenly re-energized, he selected a hundred volunteers from the York Militia and ordered them to Long Point to form part of a force to be gathered for the relief of Amherstburg. "The capture of Michilimackinac may produce great changes to the westward. The actual invasion of the Province justifies every act of hostility on the American territory." Aware of the American supply problem, he even took comfort in speculating
that Hull had not crossed into Upper Canada under orders, but had done so on his own initiative to obtain provisions.

In Brock's mind the enemy was not so much the Americans as the Upper Canadians. To his military secretary he confided:

My situation is most critical, not from anything the enemy can do, but from the disposition of the people. . . . Legislators, magistrates, militia officers, all have imbibed the idea, and are so sluggish and indifferent in their respective offices that the artful and active scoundrel is allowed to parade the country without interruption, and commit all imaginable mischief. . . . I, however, speak loud and look big.  

Henry Procter, at Amherstburg, wrote Brock to say he was sending the Lady Prevost and the Nancy down to Fort Erie, to be ready to bring up reinforcements. He attributed Hull's inaction to waiting for the militia and the natives to drift away. “I am sorry to observe that the Individuals of the Indian Department are too Old for Actual Service, [n]or does ability and Cordiality appear in the performance of its duties.” He added that the number of militia officers was disproportionately large for the size of the corps, and that they were “in general unequal to the performance of their Duties.” He also found no real attempt being made at gathering intelligence about American activity.

Prevost informed Brock on August 2 that he had just received word of a proposed truce, and that he intended to send Colonel Baynes to the United States with a peace proposal. He added that the British minister to Washington recommended abstaining from an invasion of American territory, but he stopped short of ordering Brock to comply.

As it happened, unknown to Brock and Prevost, the tide was beginning to turn on the western frontier. On August 2 the Hurons decided to join the other tribes against the Americans. Procter, on hearing this news, sent one hundred of his men, along with Tecumseh and a band of his warriors, across the river to Brownstown to help the Hurons move their cattle and belongings. Tecumseh and a large number of his people remained at Brownstown, where they posed a threat to Hull’s line of communication.

At York the next day, a meeting of the Executive Council was held in Government House to consider the emergency on the western frontier. Those present must have been treated to a memorable example of Brock's oratorical skill—so much so that the minutes of the meeting depart from the usual bland language used to describe the deliberations of public bodies, recording “that the militia, in a perfect state of insubordination, had withdrawn from the ranks in actual service; had refused to march, when legally commanded, to reinforce a
detachment of the regular force for the relief of Amherstburg; had insulted their officers, and some not immediately embodied had manifested in many instances a treasonable spirit of neutrality or disaffection.\(^{42}\) The words must have been close to Brock's own, and they had their intended effect. On August 4 the council authorized Brock to declare martial law.

A Reversal of Fortune

The threat to Hull's supply line was obvious, exposed as it was at Brownstown to attack from a British stronghold so close by, and in combination with the loss of Michilimackinac, it was devastating. William Hull's position was ambiguous. If ordered to pursue the attack on Fort Amherstburg he would do so, and in fact he was readying floating gun batteries for the purpose, but just in case of a British counteroffensive he had a breastwork, capable of being defended by about three hundred men, built at Robert Gouie's place, about half a mile below the camp at François Baby's. At the same time, he was preparing for the absolute worst: "Circumstances, however, may render it necessary to re-cross the river with the main body of the army, to preserve the communication for the purpose of obtaining supplies from Ohio."\(^{43}\) In his heart of hearts, Hull was convinced that his position was untenable, and he had accepted the idea of breaking off the invasion.

On August 5 a detachment of the Forty-First with a few militia crossed from Amherstburg to join Tecumseh's band at Brownstown. There they encountered an American force of about two hundred Ohio volunteers, with mail and supplies, moving up the road toward Detroit. By British reckoning perhaps fifty Americans lost their lives in the ambush, and the mail was captured. Subsequently, a prisoner was dragged in, and as witnessed by fifteen-year-old John Richardson (John Askin's grandson), brained from behind by a native woman brandishing a tomahawk, scalped, stripped, and mutilated.

At ten o'clock that same night, Isaac Brock departed York on his way to Long Point, where he would join the force of militia and regulars that had been gathering for some days, before embarking for the west and the relief of Amherstburg.

Hull's agonizing uncertainty was all too obvious on August 7. He began by issuing a general order, instructing his army to "take the field against the enemy.\(^{44}\) Excess supplies and equipment were to be returned to Detroit, but the army was to retain seven days' provisions. Tools likely to be useful in throwing up fortifications were to stay with the army, and so was a raft, for floating guns downstream. The order even specified that the raft should be built of timbers and planks suitable for reuse in bridge building, such as would be necessary to cross the Canard on foot. However, Hull's next order was that the army should recross to Detroit, leaving convalescents in the stockade at Gouie's and a rear guard,
“to hold possession of this part of Upper Canada, and afford protection to the well disposed inhabitants.”

As Brock’s force was leaving Long Point for Amherstburg on August 8, with about three hundred reinforcements, most of them the distrusted militia, Hull was conveying his bad news to Washington. “Under existing circumstances I have, from private feelings, re-crossed the Detroit River with the main body of the army, without making an attempt on the British fort at Malden,” he wrote. He offered a long list of justifications for his action: he could not lay siege to Fort Amherstburg without risking the safety of other American posts; the Hurons had transferred their loyalty and become hostile; the fall of Michilimackinac had freed large numbers of warlike natives to gather at Amherstburg; British reinforcements were on their way; and his supply line from Ohio was cut. However, to soften the blow he added that he had built Fort Gouie and left it garrisoned with about 250 men, and he had sent a detachment of 600 to reopen the communication with Ohio.

Hull’s attempt to force open the communication was frustrated the next day. Alerted by scouts, a British and native force moved toward the small native village of Maguaga (site of modern Wyandotte, Michigan) to meet them. The road was ankle-deep in mud, and the overhanging branches “left no egress to the pestilential exhalations arising from the naked men and putrid bodies of horses and men killed of Major Horne’s detachment, which had been suffered to lie unburied beneath our feet,” as John Richardson later described the scene.

Taking up a position about a quarter of a mile below Maguaga, behind a log breastwork, the British and native force was joined by an advance party which had arrived overland from Fort George, to await the Americans.

The action, late that afternoon, lasted about half an hour. In the confusion a group of natives was mistaken for Americans, and their presence among the redcoats led to a British retreat to the boats. In addition, the Americans had artillery; and by mistake the ground that had been fought over on the fifth was left unoccupied by the British. In the end, however, by Richardson’s count, the Americans paid dearly for their victory, suffering eighty-one
casualties, including eighteen killed, as compared to twenty-six British losses, including one killed. William Hull ruefully observed later that his men had been able to open the communication only as far as the points of their bayonets extended.

Brock’s 375 regulars, militia, and natives were having troubles of their own. Those on shipboard had only reached Port Talbot by six in the morning on the tenth. They were forced to land in the mouth of a creek, because the wind was so strong that they could not round Pointe aux Pins (modern Rondeau), thirty miles ahead. There the fleet of twelve vessels was forced to seek shelter to await the passing of the storm, and there, drenched with rain, the men, tired of a diet of bread and pork, went ashore to forage for food. The natives, about twenty of them, were on foot, meanwhile, and could not match even the reduced speed of the boats. Proceeding with increasing care as they entered American-patrolled territory, Brock’s flotilla of reinforcements cleared Rondeau by August 12, and touched on Point Pelee that evening. There they ate sand cherries before sailing on, all night, in conditions too crowded to allow the men to lie down.

By this time Hull was talking of surrender, and mutiny was brewing. His senior officers, Colonels Lewis Cass and Duncan McArthur, were prevented from relieving him of command by being assigned duties outside Fort Lernoult. Hull “had for several days been an object of general contempt, having frequently been intoxicated, and apparently lost all sense of humor, and even decency. He was sullen in his deportment and wavering in his orders.” Cass took it upon himself to write directly to Ohio governor return Jonathan Meigs on behalf of his colleagues, to speak openly of their differences with their commander. Cass added a postscript: “The British force is opposite and our situation has nearly reached its crisis.”

A British force was indeed opposite, in the very camp on the François Baby farm that the Americans had so lately abandoned. Lydia Bacon, in Detroit, recorded the chilling sights and sounds of their preparations in her diary: “The enemy have been very busy [sic] on the opposite shore, building a battery we suppose, as the ends project beyond a large building which covers them while they work, and at night we can hear them throw their cannonballs from a boat onto the land.”

The Royal Engineers began building two gun batteries, widely separated to afford the maximum convergence on their intended target, Fort Lernoult. One, in all likelihood, was partially shielded from American eyes by a derelict house on the bank, close to the west edge of the François Baby farm (near the foot of Church Street in modern Windsor); in that battery were placed a long eighteen-pounder and two long twelves. To the east, two five-and-a-half-inch mortars were concealed, below the level of the surrounding land, on the bank of a creek that flowed into the Detroit River close to the line between the Baby and Ouellerte
farms. The guns of the *Queen Charlotte* and the *General Hunter*, which also conveyed munitions and siege equipment to the scene, protected the operation.

Clearly the British strategy of acting only defensively had been overtaken by events, and the policymaking process had some catching up to do. On August 13, while preparations were under way for the siege of Detroit, in Montreal the subject of discussion was truce arrangements: “I think it of the highest importance, particularly if we are likely to arrange matters with the States, that the balance of military events should be unequivocally in our favor.”

It was probably at the New Settlement that morning, while Brock’s men were boiling their pork for a meal, that they learned that the Americans had retired to Detroit. That evening, about eight o’clock, Brock’s arrival at Amherstburg was greeted by war-whooping and firing of muskets by natives camped near Matthew Elliott’s. Among those Brock met that evening, he “found some extraordinary characters,” as he later wrote. Tecumseh attracted his attention most: “a more sagacious or a more gallant warrior does not I believe exist.” The troops were paraded at eleven o’clock the next morning, and any damaged arms and ammunition were replaced from stores. That evening they were paraded again; according to one of them, a member of the Lincoln Militia, in all they numbered eight or nine hundred.

Brock’s general orders, read to the troops on parade, congratulated all concerned on the Americans’ evacuation. He had particular words of thanks for Matthew Elliott, Thomas McKee, and the officers of the Indian Department for their judicious management of the natives, but he expressed surprise at the number of desertions from the local militia, which he attributed to “the long stay of the enemy on this side of the river.” He offered a glimpse of things to come: “The enemy being still in the neighborhood, the whole physical force of the country will be employed to drive him to such a distance as will ensure its tranquillity.” The troops were divided into three brigades, under Lieutenant Colonel St. George of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment and Majors Joseph Tallon and Peter Latouche Chambers of the Forty-First Regiment. All were under the orders of Colonel Henry Procter, who was responsible to Brock.

The garrison at Amherstburg was up before dawn on August 15, and at sunrise they formed up to embark in boats for Sandwich. Major Chambers’s brigade landed about two miles below the town; after raiding the orchards nearby, they marched into Sandwich, where they found everyone in arms.

Brock’s demand for Detroit’s surrender, which reached Hull about one o’clock that afternoon, was refused. The result: “As soon as their answer came down to Gen. B. the artillery
officer went up to the battery opposite Detroit.\textsuperscript{55} Lydia Bacon, in Detroit, wrote, "the British soldiers are very busy pulling down the large House which conceals their battery, if I did not feel half frightened out of my wits, I could laugh, to see what quick work, they make of it, never did a building come down quicker.\textsuperscript{56} The firing began around four o’clock, and lasted until well after dark. The Americans responded to the three big guns and two mortars by dragging heavy guns of their own down to the shore, but their performance against the British batteries was ineffective.

Brock’s general orders for August 15 contained no hint of anything but complete assurance that victory was at hand. The troops were to be ready to embark from McKee’s Point, just below Sandwich, at three o’clock the next morning. Matthew Elliott and his native warriors were to cross during the night, landing on the east shore of the River Rouge, take up positions threatening the American defenders, and signal their readiness to the British regulars and militia to land between the Rouge and Springwells. Two other events that day, if they had been known to the defenders of Detroit, would have darkened their outlook even more. Captain Nathan Heald, commanding at Chicago, had received an order from Hull to evacuate that post and move his force to Detroit. He had started out on the morning of the fifteenth, but had gotten no more than one-and-a-half miles from the post before being attacked by natives and compelled to surrender. To make matters worse, President James Madison had decided in Washington that day that the truce was off.

The brigades at Sandwich were under arms by daylight on Sunday, August 16, 1812. John Richardson described the scene:

A soft August sun was just rising as we gained the centre of the river, and the view at the moment was certainly very animated and exciting, for amid the little squadron of boats and scows conveying the troops and artillery were mixed numerous canoes filled with Indian warriors, decorated in their half-nakedness for the occasion, and uttering yells of mingled defiance of their foes and encouragement of the soldiers. Above us again were to be seen and heard the flashes and thunder of the artillery from our batteries which, as on the preceding day, was but feebly replied to by the enemy, while the gay flags of the Queen Charlotte drooping in the breezeless yet not oppressive air, and playing on the calm surface of the river, seemed to give earnest of success and inspired every bosom.\textsuperscript{57}

The gunners at Baby’s found their range even before the crossing began. One shot penetrated a mess room in Fort Lernoult through an embrasure. As Lydia Bacon described the result in her diary, it cut two men in half, splattering their remains around the room, before
it passed on through a wall, cut the legs off a third, and wounded a fourth in the thigh. Another ball entered a hospital room, decapitated a patient, and killed his attendant.

On the American shore a little below the outlet of the Rouge, the invaders found no opposition as they formed up. Brock was told on landing that Ohio Militia Colonel Duncan McArthur's cavalry had been seen that morning, three miles downriver in the rear of the British position, and he therefore decided on an immediate attack. In front were the hardened regulars of the Forty-First Regiment, followed by the Lincoln Militia, then the York Militia, and finally the other militia units. Many, if not all, of the militia were outfitted in the scarlet tunics of the feared British regulars—an idea suggested to Brock by an assistant,

The British landing below Detroit, as visualized by the historical illustrator Charles William Jefferys. Major General Isaac Brock stands in the foreground, accompanied probably by his aide-de-camp Lieutenant Colonel John Macdonell. In the background the artillery exchange between Detroit and the encampment at François Baby's can be seen. Courtesy of the National Archives of Canada (C-070244).
Major Thomas Shaw. The York Militia were painted to look like natives, according to Charles Askin. All told, they were said to number perhaps 750, in addition to about 600 natives who had crossed over earlier. Ahead of all was an advance guard commanded by Lieutenant Richard Bullock of the Forty-First, followed by three six-pounders and two three-pounders on gun carriages. As they moved up the road toward Detroit, spread well apart in order to increase their apparent number even further, they encountered no resistance—not even from American artillermen who had set up two twenty-four-pounders in the road, and who stood by them with their fuses burning, awaiting the command to fire. Instead, Brock's troops moved off the road into a field and orchard on their left, to wait while truce negotiations went on.58

A white flag was advanced from the American battery in the road, and Brock's aides-de-camp, Lieutenant Colonel John McDonell and Captain John B. Glegg, rode out to meet it. Soon Glegg galloped back with the news that the truce was for the purpose of discussing the terms of surrender. Glegg returned to the truce party and accompanied them into town, where it took about an hour for the capitulation to be completed. Through an error Lieutenant Bullock's party entered the fort prematurely and found themselves confronted by Ohio militiamen who were still in arms. Only then did they learn that the articles of capitulation called for the Americans to march out first. Bullock's guard was hastily withdrawn, the Americans moved out, and the British re-entered in proper form, accompanied on the fife and drum by the tune of British Grenadiers. Down came the American flag and up went the Union Jack, "amidst the shouts of the whole army."59

It had been a spectacularly successful morning for the British and their allies—so much so that it presented a problem: there were "double our number of prisoners to take care of," as a member of the Fifth Lincoln Militia put it.60 The prisoners numbered 2,500 at least: two troops of cavalry, a company of artillery engineers, the Fourth U.S. Regiment, detachments of the First and Third U.S. Regiments, three regiments of Ohio militia and one from the Michigan Territory, plus thirty-three brass and iron cannon, and the Adams, "a fine vessel, and recently repaired, but without arms."61

Downriver, it fell to Captain William Elliott of the First Essex Militia to accept the surrender of Colonel McArthur's detachment of cavalry. This he did, after showing him a letter from Hull to this effect, and McArthur in turn endorsed it on the back for Elliott to show to Captain Elijah Brush, whose men were holding a fortification at the River Raisin. It took some time for Elliott to convince Brush that the letter was genuine, but he obtained the surrender of the defenders and returned to Malden with the arms and provisions of the River Raisin stronghold.
It was an exhilarating moment for Brock—indeed, it proved to be the height of his career, an achievement for which he received a knighthood—and he permitted himself a small expression of surprise at his incredible good fortune in a note to Governor in Chief Sir George Prevost:

I hasten to apprize Your Excellency of the Capture of this very important Post—2,500 troops have this day surrendered Prisoners of War, and about 25 pieces of Ordnance have been taken without the sacrifice of a drop of British blood.—I had not more than 700 troops including Militia, and about 400 Indians to accomplish this service.—When I detail my good fortune Your Excellency will be astonished. I have been admirably supported by Colonel Proctor, the whole of my staff and I may justly say every individual under my Command.

The day after the startling outcome at Detroit was one for basking in the afterglow of the accomplishment, and for attending to details. There were letters of congratulation and thanks to be written. This was also a day for reckoning accounts. François Baby fired off a demand to the Americans for compensation for damage done to his property opposite Detroit, in the amount of £2,450. Never mind that those who received the bill were prisoners of war, and hardly in a position to settle (Hull authorized payment regardless), and never mind that the claim included rental of the house in front of the western battery, which in fact the British themselves had demolished, and that Baby would have removed anyway, on completion of his new brick mansion; Baby had a claim, and he meant to be paid.

Meanwhile, analysis of the papers captured from the Cuyahoga that had been sent down to Fort George elicited this comment, without knowing the outcome at Detroit: “The contents appear highly interesting, and lead to the certain hope of the overthrow of the Enemy’s Force in that Quarter.” Perhaps, irony of ironies, the American effort would have collapsed even without Brock.

Brock’s victory was of such enormous proportions that dealing with the prisoners remained an embarrassment for several days. By the eighteenth it was decided that they would hold only regulars, and would parole militia members, as efforts were made to round up vessels to transport them to Fort Erie. Among these vessels were the Thames, the Elinor, and the Nancy. One of the escorting militiamen, William McCay of the Lincoln Militia, spent the night in the rain in an overcrowded, leaky, open boat moored beside the Nancy, lying on a gun carriage wheel, wet, cold, and tired. Eventually McCay and his companions went onboard the Nancy, which was already full of prisoners, there to wait, off Sandwich, until the other vessels gathered there were ready to sail.
A map, probably one of several copies made by a British officer to accompany Brock's reports to various individuals of his victory at Detroit. This copy was received by the paymaster general of the forces in Canada. William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan.
Another, more nagging embarrassment was the conduct of the Essex Militia in the perilous days of the American threat to Amherstburg:

The reports which have reached Major General Brock impeach in so serious a degree the character of many officers of the 1st and 2nd Essex and Kent Regiments of militia that His Honor has thought proper to appoint a Court of Enquiry in order to ascertain by a regular process such as have by any act or neglect of duty during the invasion of this district by the enemy forfeited their claim to the character of officers and gentlemen.  

By the morning of the nineteenth, Brock, Glegg, and Macdonell had departed Amherstburg, and ships loaded with prisoners were joined by others moving down from Sandwich to form the fleet that would transport them from the scene of their humiliation.

The British had only a vague idea of what had fallen into their hands. Colonel Procter found it necessary on August 20 to address a number of questions to Augustus Elias Brevoort Woodward, the self-styled chief justice of the Michigan Territory: Could Judge Woodward provide details of the government of the Michigan Territory? How might the transition to British rule be smoothly made? Would the current officeholders wish to continue? What was the cost of governing the Territory? What were its geographical limits? To all of these questions, and more, Woodward provided a courteous and full reply the same day.

It is a peculiarity of the War of 1812, "the last of the gentlemanly wars," as it has been called, that in the midst of hostilities correspondence, and even commerce, passed between the two sides almost as if the times were normal. The captive William Hull, having already, on behalf of the United States, authorized payment of François Baby's war loss claim, and still very much a prisoner but now at Fort George, addressed a long and polished letter to the secretary of war in Washington, explaining his surrender of Detroit:

It was impossible, sir, that this little army, worn down by fatigue, by sickness, by wounds and deaths, could have supported itself not only against the collected force of all the northern nations of Indians, but against the united strength of Upper Canada, whose population consists of more than twenty times the number contained in the territory of Michigan, aided by the principal part of the regular forces of the province, and the wealth and influence of the North-West, and other trading establishments among the Indians, which have in their employment, and under their entire control, more than two thousand white men.
Colonel Lewis Cass was already in Washington, reporting (by coincidence, on the same day) an opinion of Hull that differed from the brigadier general’s interpretation of events, and was sure to demonstrate disunity.

The British were rapidly learning how to manipulate and exploit American morale and antiwar sentiment. Taking advantage of the armistice and their easy visibility across the Niagara River, the British allowed an execution to be seen by American eyes: “Yesterday a number of men were shot at Fort George in view of our troops. They are supposed to be the unfortunate fellows who joined General Hull in Canada and were surrendered at Detroit. Even William Hull’s release was seen as a propaganda stroke:

Sir George has . . . consented to allow General Hull to return upon his parole. He is loud in his complaints against the Government at Washington, and the General thinks that his voice in the universal cry may be attended with beneficial effects, and has allowed him to return and enter the lists. General Hull appears to possess less feeling and sense of shame than any man in his situation could be supposed to do. He seems to be perfectly satisfied with himself, is lavish of censure upon his government, but appears to think that the most scrupulous cannot attach the slightest blame to his own immediate conduct at Detroit. The grounds upon which he rests his defence are not, I fancy, well founded, for he told us that he had not gunpowder at Detroit for the service of one day. Sir George has since shown him the return of the large supply found in the fort; it did not create a blush, but he made no reply. He professes great surprise and admiration at the zeal and military preparation he has everywhere witnessed; that it was entirely unlooked for, and that he has no doubt that his friend, General Dearborn, will share his fate if he has the imprudence to follow his example. Hull seems cunning and unprincipled. How much reliance is to be placed on his professions time will shew. 

After the Fall

There were times when the identities of friends and foes, and against whom one should defend oneself, seemed ambiguous. A case in point: in September Procter suggested to Brock that Fort Wayne, an American stronghold in the Indiana Territory, might be under siege by what Hull called “the northern hive of Indians” that had been opened by the fall of Michilimackinac. Procter thought it might be necessary to send a force from Amherstburg to rescue the American garrison. He reported that he was sending a detachment of the Forty-First plus militia to Fort Wayne, adding that 150 natives from Mackinac had arrived at Amherstburg just in time to join the expedition.
Brock approved Procter's action, “but it must be explicitly understood that you are not to resort to offensive warfare for purposes of conquest. Your operations are to be confined to measures of defence and security.” He went on to spell out Procter's role in Indian Department politics:

Colonel Elliott is a respectable gentlemanly man, but he by no means possesses the influence over the Indians which Captain McKee does. I recommend to you to promote as far as in you lies a good understanding with and between them and to observe a conciliating deportment and language towards the latter, that his great influence may be secured and employed in its fullest extent for the benefit of your district and for the general good.\textsuperscript{70}

He also instructed Procter that the militia should be called out only in cases of urgent necessity, and that they should be dismissed, if possible to do without jeopardizing the expedition. Now that Brock, in effect, had suggested that Procter had exceeded his authority, he was in a better position to defend himself against criticism from Prevost over the Fort Wayne expedition: “I gave orders previous to my leaving Amherstburg for it, which must have induced Colonel Procter to proceed, upon receiving intelligence of the recommencement of hostilities, without waiting for further directions. I regret that this service should have been undertaken contrary to Your Excellency’s wishes or intentions.”\textsuperscript{71} He added that American prisoners taken at Detroit had endorsed this humanitarian rescue, and he noted that it would help to placate native groups who were upset by the armistice.

Major Adam Muir of the Forty-First, in charge of the expedition, reported to Procter on the twenty-sixth that he was approaching Fort Wayne, but had just received word of a large American force camped nearby. In the face of this superior American strength—about 2,500—he expected to have to break off the expedition, and he warned of a renewed threat to Detroit and Amherstburg. Muir and his band were back at Malden by October 3. Procter put the best face he could on the matter, reporting to Brock that Fort Wayne had already been relieved by the Americans before the British approached, and maintaining that through the expedition the British had gained valuable intelligence of American intentions.

Viewed from Montreal, York, and Niagara, to British military minds the right flank was expendable in order to save the middle. Prevost suggested to Brock that evacuating Detroit and the Michigan Territory would permit reinforcing the garrison at Fort George, to counter an American buildup on the Niagara frontier. On the other hand, American strategists attached more importance to retaking Detroit than the British did to retaining it. One predicted that Brigadier General William Henry Harrison would begin a siege of Detroit by
mid-October at the latest. Brock saw a danger to Amherstburg as well, and considered that such an American threat, subject to the same supply problems as before, would be a do-or-die effort, but was sending troops of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment to Amherstburg just to be sure: “Should the Indians Continue to afford a willing Cooperation I entertain not the smallest doubt of the event that awaits this second attempt to turn my right.”

Over the next day or so Brock became convinced that an American thrust at Detroit, probably coordinated with one at Niagara, was imminent. He wrote to Colonel Henry Procter:

An active interesting scene is going to commence with you. I am perfectly at ease as to the result, provided we can manage the Indians and keep them attached to your cause, which is in fact theirs.

The fate of the Province is in your hands. . . . The enemy must be kept in a state of constant ferment. If the Indians act as they did under Tecumseh, who probably might be induced to return to Amherstburg, [Harrison’s] army will very soon dwindle to nothing.^^

He closed by trusting that Procter had destroyed the works at Fort Lernoult; obviously he intended the British stand to be made at Amherstburg, not Detroit. These were among the last lines ever written by Major General Isaac Brock. On October 13 he died at Queenston Heights in the course of repelling an American crossing in that quarter.74

American activity seemed to be at a more deliberate pace than might be expected if an immediate attack were being planned. Procter had knowledge of about five hundred camped on the Huron River below Sandusky who had built two blockhouses, and was aware that others were nearby, cutting a road. Harrison was on or near the Wabash. None of this sounded like a pressing danger, but out of prudence he sent the Lady Prevost to cruise to the islands, the mouth of the Huron River and Sandusky, and return and report.

Both sides were beginning to use newspapers as weapons of war. The Buffalo Gazette announced to its readership, which doubtless included a few on the west bank of the Niagara River, that it expected Harrison to be at Detroit, with an army of at least eight thousand, by November 25; Malden would then capitulate, leaving no British presence on Lake Erie west of Fort Erie. By contrast, on the Canadian side the Quebec Mercury editorialized on December 22: “We have accounts from Detroit to the 26th November, at which time the Americans were starving at the Glaize. Detroit is safe for this winter.”

The Adams, captured at Detroit and renamed the Detroit, and Angus Mackintosh’s Caledonia, fell into American hands that fall off Black Rock (Buffalo). This was a serious blow to British naval strength on Lake Erie, and the loss had to be redressed quickly. Sir George
Prevost gave his approval on December 19 for the building of three vessels: one already begun at Amherstburg, plus others at York and Kingston. The plan rapidly became more ambitious; Colonel Procter recommended two gunboats on Lake Erie, and Roger Hale Sheaffe (Isaac Brock’s successor as commander of the troops in Upper Canada and administrator of the province) went on record on December 22 as proposing to provide them. A week later he confirmed to Prevost that orders had gone to Amherstburg to build one vessel of the class of the Queen Charlotte, in addition to which two gunboats were to be hired, or purchased, or built, for service on Lake Erie. By the close of the first year of the War of 1812, the pattern was being set for events of a different character in 1813.
The preoccupation on each side early in 1813 was the development of a fleet for a coming contest for control of the Lakes. The acting quartermaster general, Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Myers of the Seventieth Regiment, asked Thomas Talbot for shipwrights from the vicinity of Amherstburg to build a vessel of eighteen guns, as well as several gunboats, for the Lake Erie service. Speed was of the essence; completion of all the vessels being built, at Kingston and York as well as at Amherstburg, was expected by April.

Henry Procter reported to Brock’s successor, Sir Roger Hale Sheaffe, on January 13 that he was already hard at work to secure control of the upper Lakes. To save time and expense he was building gunboats on the Thames, although he needed artisans and materials for the large vessel to be built at Amherstburg. In addition, Procter suggested that two more blockhouses should be built. The residents of the Michigan Territory should not be pressed into military service, he said, because of what would happen to their families and property if the Americans were to reoccupy it.

He also passed on a request for a corps of natives to be attached to the garrison. The legendary Captain William Caldwell was the natives’ choice to command it. The Western Rangers, or Caldwell’s Rangers as they soon came to be known, would, in Procter’s opinion, “soon prove a good substitute for [the] Militia, Whose officers here are almost all, as bad as
can be.” Similarly, Robert Dickson had a plan to employ a large native force to contain the Americans within the boundary stipulated in the 1795 Treaty of Greenville, which ceded most of Ohio, and parts of Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois to the United States. At first there was a certain reticence over Dickson’s free-spending ways, but in the end his project was approved. Although he was to have up to five officers and twenty interpreters, for a force expected to number over a thousand warriors, the British were not to appear as instigators; “it is to be clearly understood that the Indians only are to appear as the movers in such proceedings.”

As Procter was completing his letter to Sheaffe he received word that a large American force had reached the foot of the Maumee Rapids, evidently on its way to an attempted recapture of Detroit. Within days he would have use for the disdained militia.

Frenchtown
By January 18 the American force, about eight hundred strong, an advance guard of General James Winchester’s division, reached Frenchtown (modern Monroe) on the River Raisin, on their way to Detroit. There they encountered a party of fifty Essex Militia under Major Ebenezer Reynolds, with perhaps two hundred natives. The Americans attacked, and the militiamen and their native allies were forced to withdraw. News of the defeat reached Procter at Amherstburg that night, and he decided to attack the enemy in force before they could dig in and fortify their position.

Taking five hundred troops and militia, plus eight hundred natives under Chief Roundhead, early on the nineteenth Procter crossed the Detroit. Major John Richardson, who was among them, later wrote:

No sight could be more beautiful than the departure of this little army from Amherstburg. It was the depth of winter; and the river at the point we crossed being four miles in breadth, the deep rumbling noise of the guns prolonging their reverberations like the roar of distant thunder, as they moved along the ice, mingled with the wild cries of the Indians, seemed to threaten some convulsion of nature; while the appearance of the troops winding along the road, now lost behind some cliff of rugged ice, now emerging into view, their polished arms glittering in the sunbeams, gave an air of romantic grandeur to the scene.

Procter’s men found the Americans, before daybreak, still asleep and without sentries, and were able to get within musket range before being discovered. An hour later, however, the sun was up, and the Americans, firing from behind a fence, were able to pick off the
redcoats, silhouetted against a snowy background. Nevertheless, the militia and the aborigines broke through on the right flank, forcing about four hundred Americans into blockhouses built since their arrival. Those left outside were the targets of heavy British fire, and were pursued for nearly two hours by the natives. General Winchester himself, still in his nightclothes, was captured and forced to write a message ordering those in the blockhouses to surrender.

Only about 150 Americans escaped the disaster at Frenchtown and made it back to Fort Meigs.

The appearance of the American prisoners captured at Frenchtown was miserable to the last degree. They had the air of men to whom cleanliness was a virtue unknown, and their squalid bodies were covered by habiliments that had evidently undergone every change of season and were arrived at the last stage of repair. It has already been remarked that it was the depth of winter, yet scarcely an individual was in possession of a great coat or cloak, and few of them wore garments of wool of any description.

The extent of Procter's victory became clearer over the next two or three days. He had gambled on throwing everything available into the attack. The stakes were high, and although his losses were considerable, he could count 495 prisoners by the twenty-fifth, with more being rounded up all the time. He was particularly proud of the capture of Brigadier General Winchester, taken by the Huron chief Roundhead, and he suspected that many more Americans were killed while fleeing in the bush. Procter congratulated everyone, including Major Ebenezer Reynolds and his Essex Militia, whose training in the use of a three-pounder cannon had shown to advantage. He was even able to note with satisfaction, for once, that everything necessary was in good supply. Procter's euphoria was tempered, however, by the thought that he could not have trusted the aborigines or the militia if the outcome had been otherwise.

John Askin's view was somewhat different. According to Askin, the Kent Militia, some five hundred men, commanded by Colonel Jacques Baby, failed to reach the scene of action. He also said that the cannon was of little use because the attack was at such close range. As to the natives, "in the woods where the Americans must pass one Indian is equal to three white men, let the nation be what it will."

Procter's kind treatment of the prisoners earned him the gratitude of General Winchester. This was related presumably to an agreement of November 12, 1812, between Prevost and American Major General Henry Dearborn, providing for the parole of prisoners.
Judge Augustus Woodward, acting as secretary to Colonel Procter, who was fulfilling the duties of governor of the occupied Michigan Territory, was in a position to hear a good deal that was not intended for American ears, and he was able to report what he heard to Washington. On January 31 Woodward reported on General Winchester's serious errors at the Raisin to Secretary of State James Monroe: the American troops were posted on the wrong side of the road; they were in a position that afforded them no protection from cannon fire; Winchester had slept a mile and a half from the troops, and since his second in command was absent, in effect the men had no commander; and Winchester had disregarded a warning of the British advance he had received the previous evening. By contrast, wrote Woodward, "The operations of the British Commander are marked with the same minute correctness of Judgment in this Instance, and the same boldness of Conception and execution which distinguished, in the former instance, his Illustrious predecessor General Brock."

Woodward's respect for Brock and Prevost contrasted with Procter's view of Americans. On February 1 Procter wrote of "that Depot of Treachery, Detroit" as he reported to Sheaffe that the Americans had committed atrocities at the Raisin. His real concern lay with William Henry Harrison and his large force at the Maumee: "He is at the Foot of the Rapids, and we may expect him, with more thousands than I can find hundreds." 

Detroigers' hostility toward their occupiers, encouraged by Harrison's advance, underlay Procter's attitude toward them. Woodward was asked to present to Procter a resolution signed by twenty-nine inhabitants refusing to comply with Procter's order to remove them under escort to Fort George. The order, they maintained, was a violation of the articles of capitulation.

Procter declared martial law in the face of a potential uprising which could have retaken the fort, left defended only by militia. The residents were further encouraged by Harrison's advance, and this, Procter declared, was what led to "the indecent Resolutions dated Feb. 1st 1813." As to Woodward, "He is an artfull, designing, & Ambitious Man, & his only objects have been to ingratiate himself, with his own Government, & to court popularity."

Robert Richardson, one of the magistrates of the Western District, had some qualms about the imposition of martial law, which affected both sides of the Detroit River. He complained to his grandfather, John Askin, "respecting the unpleasant situation I am in here as a Majistrate, under the command and controul of Commanding officers who expect every thing to be done as they wish sometimes without either law or reason." As to the Raisin massacre: "We Succeeded tis true but we have to thank the fears and want of Conduct in the enemmy, and a kind and protecting providence, much more than our own good
conduct. . . . Be assured we have not heard the last of this shamefull transaction. I wish to God it could be contradicted."

Procter (by this time holding the title of brigadier general while in North America) need not have been unduly concerned about Harrison's threat. The magnitude of Winchester's defeat had so weakened Harrison's force that, as one of his officers wrote to his parents, "We have had correct information from General Harrison; he has had to entrench his army, being so weakened by the defeat of Winchester, and some, whose term of service had expired, returning, that an issue of an engagement would have been doubtful and perhaps fatal."10

Fort Meigs
Nevertheless, Harrison's presence at the Maumee was seen as posing a real threat to Procter. On April 3 Procter reported to Sheaffe that the Americans at the foot of the Rapids had eighteen-pounders and howitzers, with one hundred gunners and three officers. Sheaffe, meanwhile, thought that Robert Dickson and his native forces might be useful in such a situation. By April 23 the decision was made. On that day Procter headed a force of more than two thousand regulars, militia, and natives embarking for the Maumee, and the Nancy was commandeered to join the expedition.

The siege of Fort Meigs began early on the morning of May 1, and it continued for four days. According to John Richardson, every American battery within range was demolished by the British artillery, which included two twenty-four-pounders captured at Detroit. The twenty-four-pounders, loaded with hot shot, were used mainly against the powder magazine. As soon as the Americans covered its roof with a protective layer of earth, the British artillermen amused themselves by landing their heated ammunition on it, scattering the earth and the men who were desperately trying to keep it covered.

Fifteen hundred American reinforcements arrived on the scene and drove off the attackers on May 5, only to fall victim themselves to a counterattack. The scene was drenched with incessant rain, so much so that the defenders found protection from the British artillery by digging tunnels so that shells landing overhead were extinguished by the wet clay. As the siege dragged on through miserable weather, the militia and the natives drifted away. Most of the Kent Militia arrived back on the Thames on the afternoon of May 11. By May 14 the siege had been broken off and Procter was at Sandwich, where he wrote a report to Prevost. The Americans held well-defended, high ground, their fortifications were actually strengthened during the British advance, and the British artillery was virtually useless—points of view that differed from Richardson's. Procter estimated that over a thousand
Uppermost Canada

Americans were killed or captured, despite the unreliable service of the militia and the natives. Of an original native force of 1,200 that embarked on the Maumee expedition, only about 20 were left: “our Indian force is not a disposable one, or permanent, tho’ occasionally a most powerful aid.”

While the siege of Fort Meigs was disintegrating, an incident took place on the Detroit frontier that in its small way spoke more eloquently of the relationship between the two shores than did the hostilities of the moment. Alexander Grant, the old “Commodore,” the erstwhile president and administrator of Upper Canada, and still a member of both the Executive Council and the Legislative Council, as well as lieutenant of the County of Essex, died on May 8 at his home, Grant Castle, at the grand old age of seventy-nine. Grant Castle was in the Grosse Pointe region on the American shore, and that is where he had lived since his marriage in 1774. It is thus perhaps surprising that this long-time resident of Michigan was buried in Upper Canada, in the graveyard of the English Church in Sandwich.

It was an American impression that spring that the British were unwilling or unable to reinforce Malden, Fort Erie, or Fort George, and this, combined with intelligence that the British had assembled up to eight thousand men at Kingston, led the secretary of war to conclude that Prevost meant to risk his western posts in order to shorten his line of supply and defense by concentrating on defending the east end of Lake Ontario against attack from Sackets Harbor. This interpretation led the Americans to increase their pressure to the west. York was raided late in April, while Harrison’s force was gathering at the Maumee to threaten Detroit and Amherstburg. By the end of May, Queenston and Fort Erie were captured, and early in June Fort George fell. So confident, in fact, were the Americans that the Niagara Peninsula did not even have to be held that by June 14 they had withdrawn to Fort Niagara in order to concentrate their energies on preparations for a naval campaign.

The Struggle for Lake Erie

Henry Procter knew of American fleet-building activity at Presqu’Ile (modern Erie, Pennsylvania) by mid-June; in fact, he was surprised that they had not yet made their appearance on Lake Erie. “We are well aware of the necessity of giving the first Blow; indeed we owe everything to our having done so,” he wrote, adding that to make an effective response he needed reinforcements, including seamen, right away. To counter the naval threat, one of Procter’s measures was to commandeer merchant Richard Pattinson’s schooner Ellen, weighing fifty-nine tons, for service as a transport.

Captain Robert Heriot Barclay, in command of British naval operations on Lake Erie, made a reconnaissance at Presqu’Ile on June 16, and found the American fleet well advanced.
In his view the only solution was the immediate reinforcement of Procter, to enable him to join Barclay in destroying the enemy fleet at Presqu’Ile forthwith. Barclay was supported in this intention by John Vincent, until recently the commanding officer at Fort George.  

At Amherstburg, meanwhile, the new *Detroit* was slowly—all too slowly, Barclay thought—nearing completion. She would be ready for launching perhaps about July 9, but her anchor was still in Kingston, she lacked provisions, even guns, and there was not a sailor to put on board her. In recognition of both sides’ shift in emphasis from land to water, Procter volunteered the guns of Fort Amherstburg for use on shipboard, if needed.

Robert Barclay, on board the *Queen Charlotte* off Long Point, was anxious to join with Procter in an immediate attack on Presqu’Ile. However, when Procter learned he could expect no further assistance from Niagara, the two commanders reluctantly had to defer their plan. Deferral was the order of the day on the American side as well. Commodore Perry must have been equally frustrated; he was being cautioned to wait a few days, in order to “be so well prepared as to place the result of a contest beyond a doubt.” By July 19

The well-known *View of Amherstburg*, 1813, signed by Margaret Reynolds, shows the *Detroit* on the ways at the naval yard, under construction shortly before the Battle of Lake Erie. The view is looking north, with Bois Blanc on the left and Elliott’s Point on the mainland in the foreground. *Courtesy of Parks Canada: Fort Malden National Historic Site.*
Barclay had five vessels lying in full view of Presqu'Ille, giving the impression that a British invasion was imminent. The sight of the British blockade had the desired demoralizing effect on the residents of nearby Erie, Pennsylvania, but Perry knew better. He was placed in what he described as “a most mortifying situation,” lacking crews and yet blockaded by a force inferior in vessels and armaments. The British force would not be inferior for long. The Detroit was launched, although she still lacked guns, sails, and crew. The weather deteriorated late in the month, however, forcing Barclay to abandon his blockade and return to Long Point. The American force was now estimated by the British to number about two thousand, and Perry was nearly ready to haul his vessels over the sandbar to engage the enemy.

Meanwhile, a second expedition against Fort Meigs and Sandusky was under way. The Nancy was commandeered again on July 10. Procter departed for the Maumee on July 19 with a large native force. His plan was to mine a corner of Fort Meigs. Arrived at the Maumee, Matthew Elliott and Tecumseh, with members of the Forty-First Regiment, encountered a patrol of Harrison's men. Ten Americans were killed, and two taken prisoner reported that Harrison was moving up with eight hundred mounted men and a quantity of cattle to reinforce the garrison at Meigs.

Procter returned to Sandwich by August 9, and from there he detailed his frustrations in a long letter to Prevost. The British were able to control their native allies only in direct proportion to the extent that the regulars outnumbered them. “For several Days after the arrival of Mr. R. Dickson his Indians were restrainable, and tractable to a Degree, that I could not have conceived possible. I am sorry to add that they have been contaminated by the other Indians.” Procter had been pressured to go to the Maumee by the natives, who then gradually disappeared. Thus weakened, he could not wait for Harrison's arrival, so he moved his force to Sandusky. Again he was pressured into attacking, on the rationale that if Fort Sandusky were not attacked he could never again expect help from the natives. Yet there was a further consideration: “I have also to observe, that, in this instance, my Judgement had not that weight with the Troops, I hope might reasonably have been expected.” The attack was a failure, and British losses were heavy. “You will perceive that the Indian Force is seldom a disposable one, never to be relied on, in the hour of need, and only to be found useful in Proportion as we are independent of it.” Barclay rushed back to Amherstburg to see to the readying of the Detroit; in eight or ten days she would be ready for battle—except that she still had no crew.

By August 12 the British at Amherstburg were aware that Perry's fleet was over the bar. By the eighteenth the strain on Procter was beginning to show in a plea he sent to Prevost:
“I entreat Your Excellency to send me the means of Continuing the contest. I do not expect the least Assistance from the Centre division. . . . I shall Continue to write whilst we are in a Situation that may excite a particular Interest such as the present.” Henry Procter had complained for months about the nonarrival on the Detroit frontier of supplies, equipment, reinforcements, even pay, and now his frustration was turning to sarcasm. Writing the next day from Sandwich, in, “as Mr. Madison calls it, uppermost Canada,” he told Colonel Baynes: “Being situated at the extremity of a long line I do not feel the full effects of His Excellency’s consideration for me. The aid intended for me never reaches me undiminished from some circumstance or another.”

The time of confrontation had almost arrived. Nine American vessels appeared briefly off Amherstburg on the twenty-fifth, but they departed in the direction of the islands about one o’clock. Another approach, off Hartley’s Point, where the British lay at anchor, took place on the twenty-eighth. Again the Americans left the position they seemed to have taken to cover a landing, and Procter speculated that they had moved off to Long Point, perhaps to intercept Amherstburg-bound supplies and reinforcements. Robert Barclay knew the American fleet had sailed back to the islands, not to Long Point, but he feared that if he went to Long Point to pick up the long-awaited guns, crews, and provisions, the Americans would take advantage of his absence. He decided to send a transport to make the pickup as soon as he considered it prudent, and in the meantime he drilled the soldiers of the garrison in shipboard procedures. Twice the Americans had positioned themselves to challenge the British at Amherstburg, and twice they had backed off. The reason, as Commodore Perry reported to the secretary of the navy, was illness—his own, and his crew’s—possibly caused by bad drinking water.

On board the American sloop Niagara, in Sandusky Bay, Captain Jesse D. Elliott of the United States Navy made an assessment of the situation that was remarkably similar to that of the British, except that it applied to the other side. The Americans having seen the British fleet at anchor off Amherstburg, evaluated it as equal to theirs. The Detroit was nearly ready and, in Elliott’s words, “what keeps them in God only knows, for they have a third more guns.” The guns that Elliott saw were probably those, lacking proper firing mechanisms, stripped from Fort Amherstburg and put on shipboard pending the arrival of the naval guns.

Procter had long since formed the impression that his complaints were being disregarded. The troops had gone several months without pay, he reported one more time on September 3; moreover, the civil artificers had stopped work for lack of payment, and the government’s credit was bad. However, unknown to him at the time of this latest complaint, another of his longstanding problems was simultaneously being dealt with. Thomas McCrae
Sr. recorded in his diary that forty-five seamen passed his farm on the River Thames in Raleigh Township that same day, on their way to Amherstburg.

Notwithstanding all their difficulties of supply, Procter and Barclay were ordered to fall on the Americans at the first opportunity, should Harrison make a move. The Americans had twice appeared in force off Amherstburg, and that was enough to put the order into effect. At five o'clock in the morning of Friday, September 10, 1813, those on board the American flagship, the Lawrence, at anchor at Put-in-Bay, discovered the British squadron lying to the northwest. The wind was from the southwest. The fleets closed with each other, and the British began the action shortly before noon. Within half an hour the Lawrence was within range of the Detroit. The whole British squadron opened fire on the Lawrence, which was completely disabled by 1:30. Perry hauled down his fighting flag, with its motto "Don't Give up the Ship," and transferred to the Niagara, where he raised it again. By this time the Detroit and the Queen Charlotte were entangled in each other's damaged rigging. The Queen Charlotte lay so close that, in attempting to work free of her, some of the Detroit's utterly inexperienced crew actually fell on board her. By the time the two vessels worked themselves clear of each other the Detroit was completely unmanageable. Perry seized his opportunity, now that the Americans were able to rake both, bow to stern. The Niagara, which hitherto had stayed out of the action, sailed among the British squadron, firing broadside at the Detroit, the Queen Charlotte, and the Lady Prevost on her starboard, and the Hunter to port. The Queen Charlotte was the first to surrender, then the Detroit. Within twenty minutes all of the British squadron lay silent and helpless. Two small vessels attempted to escape, but they were captured in a matter of minutes.

The residents of the New Settlement were able to watch the battle from the heights overlooking the lake, and the sound could be heard in Amherstburg. Even Thomas McCrae, at his home on the Thames, was able to hear "a great cannonading towards the lake." That same day he recorded that a party of British reinforcements had slept at his place on their way to Sandwich.

Robert Barclay later testified that there were not more than ten experienced seamen, including officers, on the Detroit, and that seven or eight of these were killed or wounded. As to the guns, he elicited testimony from a survivor that the matches and tubes, intended for use with land-based guns, were so unsatisfactory for use on a moving, floating platform that it was necessary to snap flintlock pistols at the cannons' touchholes in order to fire them with anything like the precise timing that was needed. On the Queen Charlotte, of a crew of 120–30, only the relief seamen who had arrived three days before had experience firing big guns from a ship in motion. Moreover, Barclay had to order equipment and stores,
even pistols to fire the guns, transferred from the *Charlotte* in order to make the *Detroit* minimally fit for battle.

Two days later, Procter unapologetically reported the disaster on Lake Erie. “The Commissariat might have saved this District on a due attention to the naval establishment on this lake. I have no neglects to upbraid myself with that could have the slightest effect on the safety of this country. . . . It is my opinion that I should retire on the Thames without delay, preparatory to any other movement that may be found requisite or determined on,” he wrote.2)

Light was cast on the circumstances leading up to the Battle of Lake Erie by Commander Barclay, writing as a prisoner to Sir James Lucas Yeo, commander of the British naval forces, from Put-In-Bay on September 22: “so perfectly destitute of provisions was the port [fort?], that there was not a day's flour in the store, and the squadron under my command were on

C. W. Jefferss's portrayal of the Battle of Lake Erie depicts the desperate British stratagem of snapping an unloaded flintlock pistol at the touchhole of a naval gun. Such a pistol would have had to be held sideways, but for clarity the artist shows it in profile. Courtesy of National Archives of Canada (C-73575).
half allowance of many things, and when that was done there was no more. Such were the
motives which induced Major General Procter . . . to concur in the necessity of a battle
being risked under the many disadvantages which I labored."^{22}

After Lake Erie
Questions arose in the days following the major defeat on Lake Erie. They were quite legiti­
mate, but to a man in Procter's demoralized state their effect must have been devastating:
Had Barclay sailed out under orders from Yeo, Prevost, or Procter? If Procter, why? Why
retire from the Detroit, considering that the American fleet must have been battered and
rendered substantially ineffective? What were the prospects of dealing with an American
force (if any existed) on Lake Huron?

The realistic answer to one of these questions was clear: the end of British naval power
on Lake Erie meant the loss of the western country. The British would have to gather and
concentrate their strength somewhere to the east—say, at the head of Lake Ontario—and
for those in the west this meant a long overland retreat. Procter proposed fortifying Turkey
Point, on Long Point Bay. He asked Thomas Talbot to send what provisions he could spare
to the Thames, and to have the road repaired through the wilderness. Procter's preparation
for the withdrawal began on September 13 with a declaration of martial law, providing for
supplying his troops and for apprehending traitors and the disaffected. If he had known of
his superiors' views, even before they learned of the Battle of Lake Erie, his outlook would
have been even more grim. Sir George Prevost, far away in Kingston, wrote Henry Bathurst,
secretary for war and the colonies, who was even farther away in England, hinting at the
advisability of suing for peace.

Colonel Edward Baynes, at Kingston, had not yet heard of the Battle of Lake Erie when
he wrote to Procter on behalf of Major General Francis de Rottenburg, president and
administrator of Upper Canada, on September 20. Nevertheless, it was clear that the British
position in the west, at the end of a long and difficult line of communication, was not ten­
able, and considerable thought was being given to withdrawal. If retreat were necessary,
Baynes wrote, it should be carefully planned. There should be no excess baggage. Every posi­
tion along the way should be occupied and defended. The fleet should be sacrificed, rather
than abandoned to the Americans.

Preparations for a British evacuation up the Thames were in hand by September 23.
Procter asked Colonel Thomas Talbot to have shelters built at Fourteen Mile Tree, on the
Longwoods Road, and said that the principal flour depot should be at Delaware, farther east
near the London town site. By that time, the Amherstburg garrison's sick and the women
had been sent to the Thames, and the few guns left at the fort had been dismounted. The next day Procter ordered that what little of value was left at Amherstburg should be destroyed. One of the facilities wrecked was a blockhouse on Bar Point, at the outlet of the river, as noted by Harrison and Perry on the Ariel while they searched on September 26 for a suitable landing spot.

The Southwest Reinvaded

Harrison's army landed in an open field four miles below Amherstburg, about three in the afternoon on the twenty-seventh, and by five o'clock they were in the ruins of the fort. Procter retreated to Sandwich. That evening Procter destroyed the public buildings at Detroit, and by the twenty-ninth the British had arrived at the Thames. Thomas McCrae, at his home in Raleigh on the Thames, witnessed the retreat on September 30: "This morning still raining and rained all day. The roads are most shocking bad. The people from Malden are all flocking up on their way, through the Americans having taken possession of Malden on Monday last." Two days later, on October 2, the American main force was still making its deliberate way past John Askin's, at the entrance of the Detroit from Lake St. Clair.

The British command was beginning to disintegrate by this time. By the evening of October 3, "Col. Warburton did not appear to know how to act, the General not having left any directions but he decided on falling in with the wishes of the Indians. Procter's version was that he intended to make a stand at the forks of the Thames, at the Chatham townsite; "Indeed it had been my Intention to have opposed the Enemy nearer the Mouth of the River; had not the Troops contrary to my Intention, been moved during my absence of a Few hours for the purpose of acquiring some knowledge of the country in my rear." Returning on the third, he found his forces moving toward Moraviantown. The troops and the natives, he later complained, kept to themselves on opposite sides of the river, giving little attention to protecting the clumsy boats laden with food and ammunition, which were easily picked off by the pursuing Americans. The defenders were left with only the ammunition they were carrying, and suffered the loss of a six-pounder that was captured without firing a shot.

Moraviantown

The British had to face an attack that finally came on October 5, 1813, in a field a little downstream from Moraviantown, where their sick, their women, and their children huddled, awaiting transportation. The attack came about four in the afternoon—at a time and
from a direction that would place the sun in the defenders' eyes, through the thin October foliage. The British line gave way on the left, and could not be rallied by the officers. "Having in vain endeavored to call the men to a sense of Duty and having no chance by remaining, but of being captured, I reluctantly quitted the ground, and narrowly escaped being taken by the Enemy's cavalry," Procter's report continued. He attributed the failure at Moraviantown to the poor conduct of the troops. The natives, for their part, withstood the American attack, although in the process their leader, Tecumseh, was shot.

The mutterings of discontent with Procter's command and dissension among his subordinates escalated to open talk of mutiny even before the battle. Captain Adam Muir declared on October 4 that Procter ought to have been hanged for leaving his troops, and that Colonel Warburton deserved the same fate for failing to assume command during Procter's absence. For the natives' part, The Prophet was quoted as saying he was tempted to tear the epaulettes off Procter's shoulders.

The Battle of the Thames; Tecumseh is shown rallying the defenders while the Americans ride down on them from the west. Courtesy of National Archives of Canada (C-70229).
Procter's mental state at the time of the battle can perhaps be inferred from a note that he dashed off to Major General Francis de Rottenburg: "I am on the field and in momentary hopes of being attacked, at such a moment I cannot enter into circumstances." Hopes of being attacked? Surely, considering his desperate situation, expectations or fears might have been more appropriate.

That night, at Delaware, after several hours' desperate horseback ride through the Longwoods, Captain John Hall wrote to report the events of the day. It was "a complete rout— notwithstanding the exertions of the General to Rally them, so much so that I thought it impossible he could escape being taken—we are just arrived here—The General is so fatigued by riding from the field of Battle on the other side the Moravian Town, through the Wilderness that he cannot write and I am not much better." The burden of responsibility weighing on Procter was enormous. Headquarters had yet to receive his explanation for sending out Barclay to meet the American fleet, as Prevost wrote to remind him on October 6; and now he had to report that the British right division was gone.

Before returning to Detroit, the Americans set fire to Moraviantown, "which was a nice inconsiderable village, occupied chiefly by Delaware Indians, who professed to be of the Moravian sect of religion," and on the ninth they were passing Thomas McCrae's place in Raleigh Township, with their prisoners. By the tenth they had arrived at Sandwich, amid snow and storm, having lost many of their provisions overboard on the way, and there they had to wait several days for the weather to clear before crossing to Detroit.

The effect of these defeats in the west on the morale of the population can be surmised from such utterances as the following. The Reverend John Strachan, at York, was by no means optimistic about Upper Canada's situation when he wrote:

> our army at Niagara are flanked & must fall back to Burlington heights where they cannot remain long, for tho' they have been working there all summer, no fortifications are finished—indeed I consider the Province gone as far as Kingston if the enemy shew the smallest vigour & activity, nor do I think Kingston by any means safe—the works are too extensive & that part of them, which is the most essential was the last begun & is far from being complete.

The Americans chose not to extend their supply lines in further pursuit of the British, who in retreat were shortening theirs. As for Mackinac, Harrison considered it to be too late in the season for a foray in that direction. The place was not important enough to justify such difficulties as storms, and he had a report that Procter had ordered it destroyed anyway.
In truth Mackinac remained in British control, under the command of Captain Richard Bullock of the Forty-First Regiment, but in woeful ignorance of what had transpired below. Captain Alexander Mackintosh, on board the hired transport Nancy off St. Joseph Island, wrote Bullock on October 16 with a belated, hearsay report of the Battle of Lake Erie and the British retreat, but his letter contained no word of the further disaster at Moraviantown.

Other letters of the same date even more vividly point up the disparity between the speed with which a situation could change and the slowness with which word about it could spread. Henry Procter, writing from Burlington to Major General de Rottenburg at Kingston, was full of excuses and resentment in explaining the outcome of the Battle of the Thames, but de Rottenburg, writing to Prevost simultaneously, was "satisfied with the firmness evinced under his difficulties by M. General Proctor." Procter's first detailed report of the action of October 5 on the Thames was not written until the twenty-third, at Ancaster, near the head of Lake Ontario. De Rottenburg, at Kingston, had read it by October 30, when he passed it along to Sir George Prevost, with the comment, "His statement appears to me very unsatisfactory, and subject to further explanations."

Henry Procter was in trouble. A report that the Right Division had been annihilated was circulated by Staff Adjutant I. C. Reiffenstein, whom Procter, in turn, accused of besmirching his character. Fortunately for Procter, Reiffenstein's character was already known to de Rottenburg. Sir George Prevost had no need for Reiffenstein's innuendo. He read Procter's report by November 4, and he found it to be "extremely confused, indistinct and unsatisfactory"—so much so that he asked for another report to assist him in determining whether Procter should be charged with neglect of duty. Procter, awaiting the enquiry into his conduct, languished in a new command, York, "it being a Post of little importance at present."

**An Ambiguous Conquest**

In the following months control of the Thames River valley was contested in a desultory way. Thomas McCrae, in Raleigh Township, just below Chatham, witnessed an American patrol of seven men on December 11, and others on the twelfth and fourteenth; in fact, they administered an oath of neutrality to the residents nearby on the thirteenth. On the fifteenth, however, a British patrol of thirty-two arrived from the head of Lake Ontario, and attacked an American detachment of forty-three, whom they killed, wounded, or took prisoner before returning to the Burlington area. On the twentieth another American patrol camped near McCrae's house. By the twenty-fourth most residents had taken the oath, and some began leaving for the States.
The inconclusive nature of the British loss of the southwest was such that by December 22 Lieutenant General Sir Gordon Drummond, at St. Davids in the Niagara Peninsula, wrote to Sir George Prevost with a bold plan. "I am convinced that Detroit and the whole of the western country might be re-occupied by us at any moment without difficulty, provided we had it in our power to detach a force for that purpose." The difficulty, of course, lay in Drummond's proviso.

As 1813 ended, the British were taking what comfort they could from the events late in the year. In the view of Henry Bathurst, secretary for war and the colonies,

On the subject of the disaster which appears to have befallen the force under the command of General Proctor I am precluded by the absence of the details from expressing any opinion. But whatever may have been the causes which led to it, it is at least satisfactory to observe that it has not influenced the conduct of our Indian allies nor given to the Enemy any advantage beyond that of which they were already in possession.
In the months following the debacle at Moraviantown the Americans tried to consolidate their gains, but southwestern Upper Canada remained disputed territory, with neither side, exhausted as they were, able to effectively occupy it. An American force penetrated as far as Camden Township, north of the Thames and on the eastern edge of the Western District, then headed back to Detroit shortly before Christmas. As they passed, they confiscated all of the flour and grain of the area near Christopher Arnold’s on the Thames, at the line between Howard and Harwich Townships, and for good measure they burned Arnold’s barn as well. On January 7, 1814, another American patrol of about two hundred rode up the river road beside the Thames, past Thomas McCrae’s farm in Raleigh Township. On the tenth they rode back down, on the other side of the river. They remained nearby, however, and the next day they took one hundred bushels of wheat from McCrae. The day after that they took his harness and his cariole, and on the fourteenth they finally departed the area. The commanding officers at Detroit, Malden, and Sandwich had put the American defenses in the best possible state, although their superior at Sandusky was “between hawk and buzzard as to supplies.”

Meanwhile, a bold British plan was maturing. Captain General and Governor in Chief Sir George Prevost asked Lieutenant General Sir Gordon Drummond on January 17 for his
opinion of an attempt to destroy the American fleet on Lake Erie. Drummond's response went considerably further; he proposed not only to destroy the American presence at Put-in-Bay, but also to attack Detroit, Amherstburg, and Sandwich, as the only means of securing British relations with the western natives. Drummond's plan was fleshed out with detailed estimates of American troop strengths, and the size of the forces needed to bring about their capitulation. His proposal was complete down to the number of rations per day that would be needed to support his troops, the distance that could be covered per day in order to reach the scene, the number of sleighs required, and even the number of billhooks and light hatchets required for slashing through the bush. The troops were to be issued with creepers, to enable them to keep their footing on icy ground. His plan included building a road from the River Thames to Amherstburg, the first target to be attacked. All that was lacking at the moment was snow on the ground, to permit the use of sleighs.

Prevost accepted Drummond's proposal, his only reservations being the lateness of the season and the mildness of the winter, which he was afraid might not have been severe enough to freeze the American vessels in their anchorages at Put-in-Bay. Matthew Elliott offered assurances that the natives could still be counted on for support. They had, he wrote, "only taken the Big Knife by his fingers end and have spoken to them from the lip outwards," although he added that they had been told that the Americans had driven the British before them, all the way to Quebec, where they were shut up, "living on dogs & horses." Word of the planned secret expedition soon reached the Americans, but they were satisfied that Detroit was strong enough to withstand any attack. The question became academic when Drummond realized early in February that because of the lack of solid ice his plan would have to be abandoned, at least for the season.

On the afternoon of February 2, Thomas McCrae saw an American patrol on its way back to Detroit. The troops had prisoners in custody, among them one of Sandwich Township's leading citizens, Francois Baby. By mid-February, word that the British had lost Baby, their assistant quartermaster general, reached York. The Americans had appeared on January 31 at Delaware, where, acting on intelligence received from an informer, they had captured Baby with two others, Militia Captains Bla Brewster Brigham of Oxford and Daniel Springer of Middlesex.

The loss of the officers captured at Delaware prompted Lieutenant Colonel Foster, at headquarters, to instruct that arrangements be made with the American commandant at Detroit for a prisoner exchange. Those captured at Delaware were unarmed, and their treatment, in the British view, was "totally subversive of the customs and usages of war amongst civilized nations." However, Colonel Butler, commanding at Detroit, stiffly informed his
adversary that Baby had been taken in arms, in circumstances suggesting that he had been implementing some plan against the Americans. Baby had been sent on immediately to Harrison’s headquarters, where his fate would be decided.

The plan Baby had been detected in very possibly was for a British attempt at putting pressure on Detroit. Drummond wrote to Prevost on the same date with details of his own intelligence-gathering activity, as far west as Delaware, Long Point, and the River Thames. He found the country around the Thames drained of its resources, and proposed sending the One-Hundredth Regiment to guard the region against any further American advances. The One-Hundredth was itself less likely to plunder than other British regiments, specifically the Royals and the Eighty-Ninth, but nevertheless he directed Captain Stewart of the Royal Scots to take members of his own regiment, together with those of the Eighty-Ninth and the Kent Militia, to make a diversion toward the mouth of the Thames. The intention was to cover a party of about two hundred native warriors crossing overland from Delaware to the St. Clair River, carrying a supply of ammunition to their brethren in American territory.5

Late in February, Lieutenant Jackson of the Royal Scots was sent to Detroit under a flag of truce to return an American prisoner, one Blodget, a resident of the St. Clair River who traded with the residents of the Thames, who had been captured by the Kent Volunteers. The prisoner had not been armed when captured, and therefore his taking violated the rules of war that prevailed at the time. Jackson also had another mission: to lodge a protest regarding the Americans’ incendiary policy in the Western District of Upper Canada. Lieutenant Jackson returned to British-held territory by March 12, and he reported the results of his journey to Detroit: Colonel Butler would agree to exchanging Captain Brigham for Blodget, but he insisted that Harrison himself would have to decide the cases of Captain Springer and François Baby.

Jackson also passed on Colonel Butler’s knowledge of Drummond’s plan for an expedition against Detroit, obtained from a spy who overheard Drummond, through an open door one night at York, outlining his plan to other officers. Jackson kept his eyes open during his visit, and he was able to report the strength of the forces at Detroit, Springwells, Malden, and Sandwich. The small barracks at Sandwich was fortified with picketing, with large nails in the tops of the stakes. Fort Lernoult was strongly armed, with guns mounted in every opening as well as on the parapets. The American spy system was elaborate; Jackson had recognized a native at Detroit as one employed by the British, and he was able to identify as spies four people he had seen at the Thames. Not many days later, Robert Richardson, a British medical officer just released by the Americans at Detroit, had a somewhat similar intelligence report for the British. According to Richardson, Amherstburg was to be
evacuated in order to strengthen the garrisons at Detroit and Sandwich; the Americans were not planning an expedition up the Thames, but they were gathering their forces at Erie, Pennsylvania, for a landing at Long Point and an attack on Burlington.

The Longwoods

Another American party, having ascended the Thames, crossed via the communication to Pointe aux Pins, where it destroyed the settlement; the inhabitants along the Talbot Road and at Port Talbot feared that they would be next. Captain A. H. Holmes, in command of 164 rangers and mounted men of the Twenty-Fourth United States Infantry, was forced to abandon his artillery between Point Pelee and Rondeau. West of Howard Township, the condition of the route that was to become the Talbot Road West (and eventually Highway 3) can be imagined from Captain Holmes's description of what he encountered: "No wheeled carriage of any kind had ever attempted it before, and none will ever pass it until the brush and fallen timber are cut away and the swamp causewayed or drained." Since each side knew that the other had a large force in the area, Holmes abandoned his plan of attacking Port Talbot and began to march toward Delaware instead.

Holmes's force, about fifteen miles from Delaware on March 3, learned that the British had moved out from Delaware and were an hour's march away. The Americans took up a position on the west bank of Twenty Mile Creek, and soon the British formed up opposite them, across the creek. The next morning the British decoyed the Americans into pursuit by creating the impression that they were weak and in panic. Soon the Americans realized that they were being lured into a trap, and they returned to their strong position on the west bank of the creek. Forming themselves into a hollow square, strengthened on the three sides away from the creek with a breastwork of logs, they settled down to await the attack. The British charge came to within twenty paces of the American lines before being stopped by the defenders' fire from behind the logs. With the Americans clearly in control, the British pulled back at twilight. The Americans declined to pursue them, for two reasons: they still thought the British force was larger than their own, and they chose not to be put in the reverse of the situation they had enjoyed, charging a prepared British position on the eastern heights.

The Americans began their return down the Thames on the evening of the fourth. When they passed Thomas McCrae's on the fifth they boasted to him of having killed or wounded about seventy British above Ward's. Holmes's force, numbering about 160, had encountered a British body of about 240. The British, by another American estimate, suffered
about eighty casualties, as against four Americans killed and four wounded. Understandably, numbers of the British participants were close to mutiny in the aftermath of the Battle of the Longwoods.

The War Winds Down

The Indian Department was experiencing some difficulty of its own, which perhaps contributed to the British loss at the Longwoods. Major Thomas McKee, at the Head of the Lake and Burlington, acquired a reputation for doing more harm than good by getting himself, and the natives in his responsibility, drunk. Drummond hoped that Prevost could find some job for him in Montreal, to keep him out of mischief. Complicating the problem were Matthew Elliott’s charges, who refused to carry ammunition westward from Burlington to support their brethren near Detroit without British accompaniment, because it was too dangerous.

By early May it was evident that Elliott was dying. McKee was in line to inherit Elliott’s position in the Indian Department, but because of his alcoholism Drummond recommended passing him by and appointing William Caldwell instead. Prevost confirmed Caldwell’s appointment—and his seniority over McKee—on May 7, the day Elliott died.

The War of 1812 was far from over, but both sides were tiring of it. Until peace could be concluded formally between Washington and London, the two sides arrived at a provisional basis for an armistice. Nine points were agreed to, of which two related specifically to the Western District: no more armed patrols were to be sent out from Amherstburg or Sandwich into the adjacent country, and no vessels were to pass between Lake Erie and Lake Huron, or to visit enemy ports on any of the Lakes. However, it developed that the American negotiator had no authority to enter into any agreement more complicated than a general ceasefire, subject to termination on twenty days’ notice.

Peace efforts having achieved little, the hostilities were carried on with increasing bitterness. In disregard of the antiraiding undertaking, on May 14 an American force of about eight hundred from Presqu’Ile landed near Dover (modern Port Dover) on Long Point Bay. They destroyed Dover and the nearby mills and supply depots in a reincarnation of the “incendiary policy” that already had been complained of.

Events moved swiftly during the summer of 1814. For a time the British considered building another fleet for service on Lake Erie, at Turkey Point. Also in their plans was a naval establishment at Penetang, at the head of Georgian Bay on Lake Huron.

Angus Mackintosh’s former merchant vessel, the Nancy, since pressed into the service of the Provincial Marine, left Mackinac on May 26, downbound for provisions. Was she fit to
Uppermost Canada

have an effective role in a British fleet on Lake Huron? Lieutenant Colonel Robert McDouall, commanding at Mackinac, thought not:

No step has been taken to fit out the Nancy, her former Commdr Capt. McIntosh gave his opinion that she was not fit to cut down, or worth it, and I silently acquiesced [sic] in Lieut. Poyntz's opinion, that even if fitted out, she could not show herself before the force which the Enemy could bring against her, because I derive more advantage from the guns on shore than I have any hope of doing from her being equipped with them.\(^8\)

She returned by July 17, but McDouall was disappointed in the quantity of provisions she brought, and he sent her to the mouth of the Nottawasaga River for more. The Nancy was vulnerable while loading provisions, so much so that Sir Gordon Drummond ordered militia and natives to go to Nottawasaga to protect her in her efforts to supply Mackinac. It was too late. American vessels appeared off Nottawasaga on August 13, and landed a large party. The captain of the Nancy had to burn her to the waterline, with her cargo, to keep her from being captured.\(^9\)

An American offensive that summer resulted in victories at Fort Erie and Chippawa, on the Niagara frontier, but the British and the Americans exhausted each other in the Battle of Lundy's Lane on July 25. The battle raged from late in the afternoon until near midnight, when the Americans broke off and fled, but the British, including militiamen from the Western District, lacked the strength to pursue. Meanwhile, problems of supply and reinforcements frustrated the British in developing enough strength in their right division for a thrust toward Detroit.

One official British view, late in 1814, was that the Americans were concentrating their attention on the Niagara frontier, and that in order to accomplish this they had moved reinforcements and supplies from Detroit. However, this opinion was modified by reports that a mounted party of well-armed, undisciplined Kentuckians was pushing up the Thames from Detroit toward Burlington, at the head of Lake Ontario. The American commander Brigadier General Duncan McArthu's subsequent report identified the troops involved, 720 in all, as Kentucky and Ohio militiamen for the most part, whose nature was chillingly depicted by these words: "It was . . . deemed expedient, from the ardor and species of the force, that the mounted volunteers should be actively employed in the territory of the enemy."\(^10\)

However, McArthu found the Grand River too high and fast from recent rains to cross. Therefore he ordered his troops to move down through the settlement on the southwestern bank and then to Long Point, plundering, burning, and destroying on their way. This was
the deepest American penetration into Upper Canada of the War of 1812. By November 9 they had turned back toward Amherstburg by way of the Talbot Road. Their raid virtually completed the burning of all mills between the Detroit and the Grand, resulting in the prevention of a British advance to Upper Canada's western frontier that winter. Further, because of American depredations in the southwestern peninsula, the proposed reestablishment of a British naval presence on Lake Erie, lacking a source of provisions, had to be postponed once again. McArthur's raid was reported to have cost one American killed and six wounded.

There was one bright spot for the British cause, and they took what satisfaction they could from it. Lieutenant Colonel W. James wrote later that month: "I have great pleasure to Report on the Authority of Col. Caldwell who has had a man in from beyond Delaware that there is not an open American enemy in the British Possessions & which information I am confident may be relied on." Whether the British seriously intended an attack on Detroit or not, they could at least keep themselves informed of the Americans' situation in the west. They learned that soon after the return of the Grand River raiders, the Americans reduced their garrison, and that provisions were short for the coming winter. There was an impression that the Americans intended to feed both their troops and the residents of the region from the Western District alone, without drawing on the United States for provisions. The British also learned that the Americans were building a strong point near the old fort at Amherstburg, in expectation of an impending visit from the British. According to their informant, there were few of the enemy at Malden and not more than two hundred at Detroit, and even those were hardly soldiers at all.

On Christmas Eve, 1814, at Ghent, Belgium, Great Britain and the United States, neither having the ability to wring concessions from the other, signed a treaty ending the hostilities. The basis was a return to the conditions that prevailed before the war. The two powers had wasted their resources and the lives of their citizens for two and a half years.
First word of the end of hostilities reached the Detroit frontier on February 20, 1815. Soon the inhabitants of both shores were preparing a celebration of the joyous news, and by March 29 they had organized "A public dinner & ball given at Detroit on account of a peace having taken place." Peace notwithstanding, tensions dominated the affairs of the Western District during a period of adjustment that lasted for more than a decade. Time, energy, and resources continued to be devoted by the United States and Great Britain to military preparedness on the remote western fringe of the province—in reality to support and defend the commercial interests of both in the upper Great Lakes.

As long as Fort Michilimackinac remained in British hands, and with it the Straits of Mackinac, there was no question as to which power had access to the fur-producing country around Lake Michigan. Equally, Superior was a British lake because, by controlling entry from Lake Huron to the St. Mary's River, Fort St. Joseph on St. Joseph Island made it so. The fur-producing country around the upper Lakes was so important to the economy of British North America that, dating from the acquisition of St. Joseph Island from the Ojibwa in 1798, it was awkwardly appended to the Western District, receiving its civil government from the magistrates at Sandwich.
However, at the end of the war the forts at Mackinac and Amherstburg were each in the other side's possession, and the Treaty of Ghent required the restoration of the *status quo antebellum*. At first it seemed logical simply to return the two posts simultaneously; Amherstburg was restored to the British on July 1 and the return of Mackinac took place on July 18.²

In the Detroit River the ownership of the strategically located Bois Blanc Island had the potential to become a serious dispute; as it was, it was a precursor of more complex and possibly grave incidents. Underlying them was the question of who had jurisdiction over various parts of the Detroit River, pending agreement on precisely where the boundary lay. “Should it [Bois Blanc] be given to the Americans by the commissioners it will of course render Amherstburg quite useless to us as a harbour,” complained Captain Collier of the Royal Navy to Commodore Owen, who was then engaged in a survey of the Great Lakes to determine the boundary more precisely, as provided for in the lately signed Treaty of Ghent.³

Despite the bickering over the transfers of the forts, one issue was resolved: “Fort Amherstburg” was heard of no more. On May 25, 1815, the British ambassador at Washington wrote to the administrator of Upper Canada that he was pressing Secretary of State James Monroe for the speedy restoration of “Fort Malden.”⁴ Although variants of the name had been in American usage since 1812 (“the fort at Malden,” abbreviated on occasion to “Malden”), this was the first known time that this precise form was used. The new name was picked up by Administrator Sir Gordon Drummond and repeated on August 15, although not in the most flattering context: “Fort Malden, at all times insignificant,” as he called what had formerly been known as Fort Amherstburg, had been made useless by the Americans before they withdrew.⁵

That June the location for a British post to replace Mackinac was decided upon; it would be southeast of St. Joseph Island, where, it was hoped, it could control access to both the St. Mary’s River and the Straits of Mackinac. “Drummond’s Island,” as it was first called, off the tip of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula at the head of Lake Huron, apparently had abundant good land and a healthy, pleasant location.

By autumn the moving of the settlement at St. Joseph Island to the new British post on Drummond Island was nearly complete. Entire buildings were moved to the new location. Others were to be built by 1816, their timbers doubtless to be weatherboarded and whitewashed or painted. “The Town will therefore have a fine effect from the Beautiful picturesque harbour, between which and the proposed Fort there is already a notable parade on which a strong Brigade might manoeuvre upon the smooth solid Rock,” the garrison’s commanding officer, Robert McDouall, reported proudly.⁶
However, the little outpost on Drummond Island was at the remotest reach of a chain of command that originated all the way back in London, where Lord Bathurst, secretary of state for war and the colonies, had a different perspective: Governor Drummond was to refrain from building or extending military installations on any islands in the Great Lakes, pending a decision on the international boundary, as well as a rethinking of defensive policy for Upper Canada. McDouall was a British officer to the core, so he concealed his increasing disillusionment and, as ordered, late in February, 1816, suspended construction. Within two weeks, however, he was looking forward to the arrival of his replacement.

As part of the new defensive policy, it was decided that the line of communication with the upper Lakes would no longer run along the exposed Detroit-St. Clair frontier, in full view of the potential enemy and exposed to attack at every wavelet along the way. Instead, an overland route would be created from York by way of the Nottawasaga River to Georgian Bay, and by sail from that point to the new establishment on Drummond Island. Lake Huron's bottom was to be carefully sounded, and the shore was to be sketched and surveyed; unexplored parts were to be the subjects of particular attention, to generate the data needed for making accurate charts.

In 1816 an attempt to build American outposts in the western country worried the British, who feared their influence with the natives of the region would suffer. As it was, the fur trade in the western country was all but closed down—yet, in spite of all, Drummond Island, with its Indian Department presence, was expected to maintain British ascendancy in the American Northwest. The long-term importance of Amherstburg and Drummond Island as Indian Department bases, from which influence over the natives living in the American Northwest could be maintained, was recognized. That fall, presents for the following year’s distribution—no fewer than seventeen bateau-loads of them—were shipped to Amherstburg from below.

Compounding the enormity of this task was the state of communication. Robert McDouall complained that on June 9, 1816, he received nineteen letters, delivered by an American schooner up from Amherstburg. The first had been written nearly nine months earlier, on September 15, 1815. Many, he said, required immediate attention, and in some cases circumstances had changed so much that they were no longer consistent with reality.

McDouall faced continuing worries in his last days at Drummond Island. Natives, mainly from the west, were arriving by the hundreds. He was sure they were expecting British support in resisting the Americans’ building of forts among them, but the British were shackled by the Treaty of Ghent. An additional dilemma: the presents to be distributed by the Indian Department were feared on the one hand not to be enough to satisfy
the recipients, but on the other could be perceived by the Americans as arming the aborigines for war.

The day that Robert McDouall had awaited so long arrived on June 26, 1816. On that date his successor, Lieutenant Colonel John Maule, arrived at Drummond Island, and McDouall, with evident pleasure, relinquished his command to him.

Quite apart from matters of strategy, the expense of military construction on the western frontier was a concern to the commander of the forces in Upper Canada. The cost of building new defensive works, barracks, storehouses, and related facilities at Fort Malden was considerable, "for not a public building was found there on our troops reoccupying that place last summer." As for the new post at Drummond Island, that site "was a perfect wilderness" before the move from St. Joseph Island.⁷

As the winter of 1816 settled in, the Drummond Island post still had no defensive capability.⁸ A blockhouse to protect its stores against either an enemy or native depredations was needed. St. Joseph Island was nearly stripped; only an old magazine containing a little ammunition remained. Amherstburg was "now entirely defenceless." It was "unfit for either a military or a naval depot," too near American territory, too easily attacked, and too difficult to supply; the Royal Engineers recommended that it be replaced with a post at the forks of the Thames, at the Chatham town site.⁹

Yet the Detroit frontier continued to be the link between the upper Lakes and the lower, as it had been ever since the French Regime. Angus Mackintosh contracted to supply live cattle to Drummond Island, and to transport officers' baggage to the island from Fort Malden, during the 1820 navigation season.

Tribulations

Fort Malden afforded neither security nor tranquility of mind in the days following the return of peace to the frontier, and a succession of incidents tried the composure of the commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Reginald James. Early in September, 1815, the disappearance of stores from Amherstburg at the hands of deserters with American assistance came to James's attention, and his exasperation was apparent: "the System of desertion and robbery is now carried on to such an extent as to alarm, and shake the force intended for the defence of this Country."¹⁰ Several days later James's growing indignation evidently was enough to cause him to lose his sense of syntax: "The irritable and littleness of temper shown towards all transactions of whatsoever nature they may be from the opposite side of the River I am sorry to say cannot fail to do mischief, particularly when so much is left at the hands of those who are so much disposed to mislead."¹¹
Through this upheaval in the aftermath of the hostilities of 1812–14, the Americans, while advancing their own interests wherever they could, were careful to maintain correct relations with their British counterparts. General Alexander Macomb, commanding at Detroit, reported in June 1816 to the secretary of war that no British deserters were knowingly enlisted in the American service, and he went on to refer to the harmony that then prevailed between the forces. On the British side, one aspect of the de-emphasis of the defense of the western frontier of the province was the shifting of the headquarters of the Thirty-Seventh Regiment from Amherstburg to Niagara, leading to a reduced garrison at Fort Malden and a concomitant downgrading of the post at Drummond Island.

Adding to James's worries were American attempts to gain influence among the western natives at British expense. His speech to a council of natives at Amherstburg on September 14, on their departure for their homelands to the west, was intended to offset Brigadier General William Henry Harrison's words to the same individuals, previously delivered on the American side. James complained to his superior, "there scarcely passes one day that I don't experience some one act or other of dissimulation, always garbed under the usual cloak of equity. . . . This is a most irksome Command."

Commodore Owen, in 1815 at work surveying in the Detroit River, reported to the commanding officer at Detroit, from his quarters on board His Britannic Majesty's schooner Huron, that several men on the schooner Confiance had looted the officers' trunks and deserted to the American shore. According to Owen, Lieutenant Alexander Vidal, who pursued them, was arrested by the Americans and charged with illegally seizing a deserter on American territory to carry him on board an armed British vessel. Lieutenant Vidal was tried on October 9. He was found guilty of searching the house of an American citizen and disturbing the peace, but not of taking the alleged deserter by force. He was fined on Friday, October 13.

Another incident involved a deserter in a canoe, a member of the Thirty-Seventh Regiment at Fort Malden, who was hailed from shore by Lieutenant John Alexander Wilkinson and ordered to land. Subsequently the Americans claimed a breach by Wilkinson of their rights of the waters between Bois Blanc Island and the Upper Canadian mainland. To his report of the matter, James wryly added that every night for the past month, one to ten Americans had deserted to the British shore.

An incident on October 4, 1815, involving Akockis, a Kickapoo, one of the western natives who were encamped near Amherstburg, added substantially to the tensions along Upper Canada's western frontier. The native, hunting squirrels from a canoe near Grosse Ile, allegedly turned his gun toward one of the occupants of a passing American boat, whereupon
another shot him, from the back, through the liver. The wounded hunter was taken to the surgery of the Indian Department at Amherstburg, where he died. Reginald James, commanding at Fort Malden, reported the incident to the magistrates of the Western District at Sandwich a week later, asking them to take whatever action they deemed necessary to protect British subjects and those claiming British protection.

It being a small world, surgeon Robert Richardson of the Indian Department, who cared for the deceased, was also clerk of the peace of the Western District. In that capacity he replied to James that the magistrates, in a special session, had offered a reward of five hundred dollars for the apprehension of whoever had committed the offense. Governor Cass, however, was also in communication with James, who told him that the native was shot by an American. Cass assured him that the United States would deal with the matter.

The murder of Akockis was reported to American secretary of state James Monroe. News of the incident reached London as well; on March 13, 1816, Secretary for War and the Colonies Earl Bathurst admonished the governor of Canada, Sir Gordon Drummond, that local officers were not to communicate with local American officials on what he called “political” matters. Instead, they were to refer them up the chain of command for transmittal to the minister in Washington. Drummond replied that it would be difficult to enforce a ban on communication between the commandants of frontier posts, particularly at Amherstburg and Mackinac, because the discussion arose out of the transfer of those posts. He added that copies of all correspondence were sent to the British minister at Washington as a matter of course, but nevertheless he had directed the commanding officer at Amherstburg to cease all correspondence with the Americans regarding the murder of the Kickapoo, and to refer all such questions to Lieutenant Governor Francis Gore.

In 1816 the garrison at Drummond Island was beset with another worry: scurvy. By March 26 the lack of fresh foods and sources of vitamin C forced the outpost to purchase remedies from their American counterparts at Mackinac. Part of the problem was that the store of pork, as Robert McDouall described it, was “of a most indifferent quality, and a great deal of it must be condemned as only fit for the Indians.” In addition to scurvy, the men sent up from Amherstburg were “in a most deplorable state of debility from the ague and fever.” McDouall asked that live cattle be shipped north from Amherstburg as a fresh beef supply; meanwhile he ordered his commissary to issue “three pints of bruised Indian corn per man per week, to make soup of with their pork,” adding that “nothing but necessity compels me to issue to the troops the very indifferent bread which they now receive.”

By early May almost every soldier at Drummond Island had scurvy. Six had died in the last month, and “though the officers have escaped its ravages, it is owing to the luxuries of
wine, tea, sugar and some potatoes which they have purchased here at an enormous price." Five more lives were lost in May, before the arrival of fresh supplies from below. By June 1, however, the scurvy was abating, thanks to the availability of supplies from the American stores at Mackinac during the emergency, and by mid-month the members of the Drummond Island garrison were convalescing rapidly.

On July 24, 1816, the American brig *Union* was boarded by a British naval party in an apparent search for deserters, in the channel off Amherstburg, while being threatened by field artillery moved down to the beach from Fort Malden. Finding nothing amiss, the British left, but the incident had the makings of another *Chesapeake* affair. Three weeks later the *Union* incident became a case in point in discussions then going on between Sir Charles Bagot, the British minister at Washington, and Secretary of State James Monroe regarding an American proposal for a reduction of armaments on the Great Lakes. The first response to Bagot's request for a British version of the affair could hardly have been better calculated to cause international friction: the Bois Blanc channel, opposite Amherstburg, was considered to be a British port, and therefore the British had the right to board and search. Fortunately, this pronouncement was overridden by Bathurst's instruction that British interference with American vessels should cease.

This policy, worked out high in the chain of command, took time to reach the scene at Amherstburg. British naval officers' practice of boarding American vessels passing Amherstburg seems to have been longstanding, although the officers of the garrison at Fort Malden maintained that they had neither supported the boarding party nor caused any threat with their artillery.

The *Union* incident was resolved when Bathurst's instructions were transmitted to Minister Bagot in Washington. Secretary of State Monroe must have been gratified to receive Bagot's communication of November 18: in searching vessels passing Fort Malden the British naval commander on Lake Erie had misinterpreted his instructions. It would not happen again.

At Drummond Island construction of the blockhouse was begun in January 1817, although civilian carpenters and masons had to be hired at unexpected cost to do the work. Still greater expense and additional delay in communication between the island outpost and its contacts below resulted from a decision to discontinue the York-Nottawasaga supply route. Not surprisingly, construction of the blockhouse was stopped by an order dated March 1. Something else, costing less than three hundred pounds, should be built instead; the strictest economy was to be practiced at Drummond Island until the commissioners could decide whether it would end up in British or American territory.
In 1817, Alexander Mackintosh, Angus Mackintosh's son, had responsibility for his father's vessel, the *Duke of Wellington*. He had been concerned for some time with the fierce competition on the run between Fort Erie and the St. Mary's River, with a stop at Moy on the upper Detroit. The previous summer he had gone so far as to complain to the commissary general at Quebec, saying that the commissary representative at Amherstburg never even asked what the rates were, preferring to ship everything on board the competing American schooner *Lady Prevost*. He described the *Wellington* as “new and substantially built, burden about 134 tons, a British bottom & navigated by British subjects.”

Mackintosh's complaint became even more pointed that fall, when he wrote to Colonel Lewis Grant, Seventieth Regiment, at Fort George: “A too [evident?] preference is given to the *Lady Prevost*, a schooner, both at Amherstburg & this post [Fort Erie] for transport of Govt. freight, & measures have been resorted to this summer unprecedented for the accomplishment of the transport of Indian goods from this post to that of Amherstburg by [Deputy Assistant Commissary General William] Stanton.” Mackintosh undercut the *Prevost's* rates, whereupon the *Prevost* undercut the *Wellington's* in order to keep the business.

On June 14, 1817, Samuel P. Jarvis, acting provincial secretary, issued instructions at York to two collectors of customs, John Wilson at Amherstburg and William Hands at Sandwich, to defer the seizure of a schooner called the *Champion*. Four days later Major Thomas Howard, of the Seventieth Regiment, on his way to take command at Drummond Island, wrote Assistant Adjutant General Colley Foster that the vessel on which Howard had embarked at Fort Erie, bound for Drummond Island with supplies, had been stopped by Wilson at Amherstburg. Wilson cited as his authority a letter from Inspector General Jacques Baby giving his interpretation of a statute that was previously considered obsolete and in need of revision for use in Upper Canada. The *Champion* had been cleared for Amherstburg by the collector at Fort Erie six days before Jarvis had dashed off his instruction on the fourteenth. Howard complained that another vessel, the *Lady Prevost*, carrying cattle for Drummond Island, was also stopped at Amherstburg.

Embarrassing as it must have been, the seizure was legal. The seventeenth-century English statute that had been invoked required that only British-built vessels be used to transport goods between British posts, whereas the *Champion* and the *Lady Prevost* were American. In reality, strict enforcement of the statute would probably have nearly strangulated navigation in Upper Canada.

Released by the revenue officers at Amherstburg, Howard arrived at Drummond Island on July 12, 1818. There he immediately became aware of the consequences of the *Champion* fiasco; the natives, gathered for their annual distribution of presents, had
departed in disgust. In fact, he discovered to his chagrin that as late as July 26, 1818, the supply requisitioned in June 1817 had yet to be delivered. The fresh beef arrived, presumably by the Lady Prevost, with the result that scurvy among the garrison abated and the men felt encouraged to raise enough vegetables to see them through the coming winter. Late in July 1818 Alexander Mackintosh was still offering to match the competition's rates. At Drummond Island on October 28, Thomas Howard was able to report that the natives had at last received their presents and were contented. A feared major deterioration of British influence west of the Lakes had been averted.

There were additional problems rooted in Drummond Island's dreadful isolation. In 1818 a private in the garrison had a diseased leg that needed amputation, but the medical officer was unable to operate because of inadequate instruments. Therefore the man had to be sent down on the Lady Prevost to regimental headquarters to receive the attention he needed. What would happen, Howard wondered, in an emergency? There was nothing for the bureaucracy in Quebec to do but issue a new set of instruments.

Presumably conditions at Drummond Island in 1819 were less stressful than they had been four years earlier, when Commissariat Officer Monk, “from extreme anxiety to provide for the pressing wants of the troops and Indians in an exhausted country, became deranged in his mind” and had to be replaced. The issue of the medical instruments was still an irritant, however. It developed that the original instruments, the subjects of so much bureaucratic interest, were actually old and worn when first delivered to the post, and they were never used there; but at last a new case of instruments was received, so the discussion could be ended.

The Duke of Wellington arrived at Drummond Island from Amherstburg on May 11, 1820, carrying thirty head of cattle, twenty of which had to be transferred to St. Joseph Island because of the lack of pasturage. It was considered fortunate that the Wellington was available to move them, because of the risk to both the crew and the cattle if they were moved in bateaux, “on such boisterous waters.”

The post at Drummond Island was nearly destroyed by fire on June 25. The garrison members were joined by about four hundred natives, on the island to receive their annual presents, in confining the fire to a pile of timber that had been there since 1816, intended for building a blockhouse. The damage was minimal, since the wood, lying unused for four seasons, was rotted beyond use anyway.

Cross-border desertions continued to be a problem as the units comprising the Fort Malden garrison succeeded each other. In 1819 the garrison was made up of the Sixty-Eighth Regiment of Foot (the Durham Light Infantry). On July 21, two privates went up
the road to Sandwich, to a point in Petite Côte below the town; there they hailed an American vessel, which picked them up, took them aboard, and landed them in Detroit the same night. Captain J. Reed, commanding the Sixty-Eighth at Amherstburg, lodged a complaint with Major General Alexander Macomb, commanding at Detroit, who directed that the officer commanding the vessel be tried by court-martial. The authorities, benefiting from long practice, were apparently becoming accustomed to dealing efficiently with the matter whenever it arose.

Lieutenant J. E. Portlock, of the Royal Engineers, did not mince words in his observations in 1823 on the state of the western posts generally. Fort Malden, according to Portlock, was in a form built by the Americans after the original had been burned by the British during their retreat in 1813. The American version was smaller, so that the remains of a British magazine were outside its walls. The magazine's roof was nearly gone, but the ruin was still in use by the Indian Department to store gunpowder. The Americans had been unable to develop their fortification beyond a rudimentary stage before handing it back to the British, so that when peace returned Fort Malden "was not in a state of even temporary defence." Since that time it had been allowed to deteriorate, "and in consequence scarcely merits the name of a work of fortification. . . . To be brief, the fort displayed but one scene of ruinous decay."

At the head of Lake Huron all the buildings were of wood, except two of stone on St. Joseph Island, and, "tho' built at an immense expense to Government, are already in a state of decay." On Drummond Island there were six timber structures built in the French "post and log" technique, all of them in need of bark to cover their leaking walls. One, originally a North West Company store that had been moved across from St. Joseph Island, enclosed 4,500 square feet on two floors. With its split and sagging timbers, it was kept from collapse only with ropes and chains.

By 1826, military plans for the Amherstburg area included the clearing and fortification of Bois Blanc Island and "the complete reconstruction of the fort, which is in ruins." Fort Malden's primary importance was seen as the control of the American communication between Lake Erie and Lake Huron, rather than maintaining authority in the Western District; for that, a work at the Chatham town site, it was thought, would be more effective.

Another source of stress for beleaguered commanding officers was rooted in the tensions and jealousies that permeated an isolated society such as that found in the Western District. This was evidenced by an episode in the affairs of the Essex Militia. William McCormick brought a case of regimental preferment to the attention of the adjutant general of militia, Colonel Nathaniel Coffin, on March 22, 1822: "As I have lately discovered that two gentle-
men has been appointed as captains in the First Regt. of Essex Militia without holding any rank in said Regt. before, and over me, I have reason to believe my further services in said Regt. may be dispensed with. I have therefore to request you will be pleased to lay this before His Excellency for his approbation of my resigning."

Coffin's reply was sixteen months in coming. In 1807, Ensign James Gordon had been senior to Ensign McCormick. However, in 1808, through an error by Colonel Matthew Elliott, McCormick had been listed as a lieutenant. The mistake went undetected, with the result that in 1819 McCormick was promoted to captain ahead of Gordon, whereupon Gordon successfully appealed, proving that he was senior to McCormick. Therefore, in 1822, Gordon was promoted to major, over McCormick.

The pettiness of the issue was pointed up by the fact that the difference in seniority amounted to a single day, Gordon having become an ensign on May 14, 1807, and McCormick on May 15. Nevertheless, the consequences were significant. William and John McCormick, John Brush, and Captain Francis Caldwell all tendered their resignations from the regiment. Their resignations were not accepted, and Caldwell was reprimanded for making false statements. The incident ended when McCormick was promoted to major, retroactively to April 1, 1822.

**Army versus Indian Department**

It was probably inevitable that two agencies of the Crown, finding themselves on the same remote frontier of the planet, with similar mandates to protect British interests, and each with an officer class jealous of its turf, should clash. In the Western District, as elsewhere, small bickerings had a way of escalating. One such incident began in 1815 when Deputy Superintendent William Caldwell, of the Indian Department's western superintendency, complained of the number of natives concentrated at Sandwich—over 1,900, by his reckoning, and all of them being fed by the public purse. Caldwell blamed Lieutenant Colonel Reginald James, who at the time was not only commandant at Fort Malden but also acting storekeeper and superintendent of Indian Affairs at Sandwich. Colonel James, however, dismissed Caldwell's charges as the products of poor health and "imbecility." James's view was supported by a Shawnee chief who described Caldwell as unfit for his responsibility, unlike the natives' friend Colonel Matthew Elliott had been. Three months later, Caldwell's performance had become "irksome" to Colonel James.

Matters came to a head on October 21, when Caldwell's mixed-ancestry son, "Billy," assistant deputy in the Indian Department at Amherstburg, asked James for help in recovering several horses belonging to the Kickapoo nation that had been rounded up and kept on
Stoney Island, north of Bois Blanc, in preparation for their owners' departure for their homelands west of Lake Michigan. In the confusion since the shooting of the Kickapoo Akockis, however, they were alleged to have been stolen by Americans. That was all James needed to hear. The same day that Billy Caldwell reported the stolen horses, James appointed him to have charge of the Indian Department in his father's place. As it turned out, the horses had been removed to Detroit for safekeeping, and at Detroit their owners could reclaim them.

James remarked that over the course of this confrontation he "experienced nothing but a determined line of pertinacious & disrespectful conduct from Lieut. Col. Caldwell," who asserted that military officers had no control over the Indian Department—a view that he clearly found repugnant. The officers of the Indian Department, he complained, were "infinitely a greater pest to me and tenfold those of all other duties attendant on this station." James maintained that the natives were still encamped near Amherstburg and Sandwich not because he had located them there, as Caldwell charged, but because of Indian Department mismanagement.

John Askin Jr., at Drummond Island, entered the discussion with some candid observations about William Caldwell's nemesis at Amherstburg, Reginald James: "On the arrival of the officers of the 37th Regt. I learnt with sorrow of the unwarrantable conduct of the Commanding Officer at Amherstburg towards poor old Caldwell, even learned that the old man had been so harassed as to have been confined to his room from sickness." Askin did concede, however, that the Indian Department at Drummond Island was top-heavy and overstaffed.

Late that November, Sir Gordon Drummond informed Gore that he would order that there be no further interference with the Indian Department by military officers, including James at Amherstburg. He added that Caldwell had been removed on October 21 because of complaints made by Major General Robinson, and he noted that he himself had witnessed Caldwell's incompetence on several occasions.

The issue was far from resolved, however, and the politicking continued unabated. In mid-December James wrote to Drummond's military secretary, Colley Foster, complaining that Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs William Claus was an enemy who was hindering James's effectiveness by spreading slanders about him in the Western District. Claus, James asserted, wanted to be commander in chief for Upper Canada (a position currently occupied by Drummond), and he followed this up with recommendations for advancements of his own officers Lieutenant John Alexander Wilkinson and Captain William Elliott; the latter he pointedly described as helpful and energetic, although he had
"for a long time been obnoxious to the Dy. Supt. [Claus]." The difficulty may well have been with Administrator Drummond himself, who seems not to have been aware that the Indian Department was under civil control; Drummond, it developed in 1816, was the author of the military officers' interference in the affairs of the Indian Department.

The dispute was still spreading in 1816. At Drummond Island, John Askin Jr. reported his continuing unhappiness to his superior, William Claus:

The Commandant [of the military post at Drummond Island, Robert McDouall] . . . makes a parade of great pomp before the Indians, dressed in the Indian Dept. uniform & pair of gold epaulettes as Commandant & Superintendent [of] the Department . . . The Commandant has endeavoured to annoy me in several instances, but fortunately could never find fault in my Duty or Conduct as St[orekeeper] or Interpreter.

Askin went on to detail an argument between himself and McDouall the previous August, and quoted McDouall's unflattering references to Claus. He accused McDouall of having replaced him with Thomas Gummersall Anderson as captain in the Indian Department. (Askin must have bristled when, on November 14, 1815, he received a memorandum from Anderson, as his McDouall-appointed superior, demanding to know why he was absent without leave that day.) McDouall, Askin asserted, interfered in the distribution of presents to the natives, and even in individual Indian Department members' charitable donations.

Finally, according to Askin, McDouall had a personal dislike of Gore, and preferred corresponding with the military command (i.e., Drummond) rather than the civil. With relief McDouall transferred all authority in the Indian Department to Captain Anderson: "It is certainly much better that it should at once be either civil or military, for a linsey-woolsey piece of patchwork, consisting of both, will not answer. . . . It is with no small pleasure that I look to the speedy prospect of emancipation from a country with which I am so much disgusted."

That summer the visitation of about four thousand western natives to Drummond Island was enough to convince McDouall's replacement, Lieutenant Colonel John Maule, to recommend against reducing the Indian Department to its prewar strength of one person acting as storekeeper/interpreter/clerk; "such an establishment is illy calculated to manage the Indians at the present day."

Providing for a migratory native population was always difficult. As of September 15, 1816, no fewer than 2,339 individuals were reckoned as receiving daily rations in the
Western District, while over the summer an estimated 4,000 transients had visited Amherstburg to receive presents. However, by October 10 the number resident at Amherstburg had declined to 85.

John Askin Jr.'s political troubles caught up with him at Drummond Island, when his name was left off the Indian Department list. By mid-October 1816 he was asking to be appointed superintendent at Amherstburg instead—a request that was supported by Lieutenant Governor Gore.

Native affairs, whether at Drummond Island or at Amherstburg, were by no means free of problems. At Amherstburg, John Askin Jr. resented a set of written instructions issued to him by Isaac Blackburn, assistant storekeeper general in the Indian Department, in August 1818. The issue arose when a band of Sacs and Foxes from the Mississippi, British allies during the war, received their presents. The chiefs and warriors asked to be distinguished "by being invested with medals &c., as a token of their Great Father's acknowledgement of their services," whereupon Askin requisitioned some medals and gorgets for them, plus guns, nails, tobacco, pipes, saddles, bridles, and hats. Blackburn intervened, insisting that the function was his, and moreover that presents should be distributed at the storehouse, not wherever the natives happened to gather in council. Askin, as head of the Indian Department at Amherstburg, objected to being "Mr. Blackburn's understrapper," in effect his interpreter and clerk, adding that the storehouse was on the shore, where it was easily spied on by the Americans, and the space inside its palisade could hold no more than two hundred at a time.\(^{36}\)

Another council on October 16, this one involving the chiefs and leaders of the Ojibwa, was unencumbered by the likes of Blackburn, and Askin in his own right announced that he had instructions from Colonel Claus to purchase all the lands of the Ojibwa lying north of those comprising the McKee Purchase of 1790, as far as the mouth of the Ausable River.\(^{37}\) That fall an allegation about Superintendent John Askin Jr.'s distant and contemptuous manner toward the natives led to an unfavorable comparison of Askin with his predecessor, William Caldwell. Possibly Askin’s appearance of brusqueness was related to his approaching death. As it happened, neither he nor Caldwell had long to live.\(^{38}\)

Amherstburg gained a new superintendent of Indian Affairs, George Ironside Sr., on the death of John Askin Jr. To Ironside fell the task of finalizing the sale to the Crown, tentatively agreed to in 1819, of Ojibwa-owned lands on the St. Clair River and in the Longwoods. The proposed alterations to the agreement were provisionally accepted; the way was now open for new townships in the Western District. The Shawnee Township was also surveyed and opened to settlement, as the Township of Sombra. July 10, 1827, was the last
time that Amherstburg would be the scene of a major signing of a conveyance of native lands to the Crown. This confirmation of the 1819 provisional conveyance of the territory forming the northern part of the Western District, plus a large part of the London District, meant that the glory days of the Indian Department’s base on the Detroit frontier would soon fade.

Nevertheless, Amherstburg and Drummond Island were among the Indian Department’s most important posts, since for the moment they continued to afford the British access to, and influence over, a vast native population far to the west of either British or American colonization. Drummond Island gave presents to an estimated 2,990 in 1818, 2,500 in 1819, and 3,800 in 1820, whereas Amherstburg (which had to be reached by passing directly through American-occupied territory) surprisingly reached 4,532, 4,282, and 5,685 individuals in the same years—consistently at least one and a half times as many as at Drummond Island. In 1825 Colonel Claus placed the number of natives visiting Amherstburg and Drummond Island in the course of a year at 9,000 to 11,000, an estimate that tallied with another suggesting about 7,000 at Amherstburg and up to 4,000 at Drummond Island.

The impending loss of Drummond Island gave rise to consideration of various alternatives: the military post, it was suggested, should be moved to St. Joseph Island, and the Indian Department should transfer its operation to Amherstburg or Penetanguishene; as another option, it was suggested that Penetanguishene would be less expensive and inconvenient than St. Joseph Island as a military post.

**Drawing the Line**

The survey of the Great Lakes, begun in 1815 with a view to settling boundary disputes, was continued in 1816. By then surveys of the Lake Erie-Lake Huron connection were completed, and work was to concentrate on the archipelago in western Lake Erie as well as on the St. Mary’s River, connecting Lake Superior with Lake Huron.

William Owen, in charge of the British boundary survey, made his own contribution to the debate about the route to Lake Huron. The Lake Erie route was less costly in peacetime, but he considered the Niagara portage to be exposed to American mischief. In addition, vessels were frequently delayed for two weeks at Fort Erie, sometimes up to forty days, awaiting a favorable wind. Owen’s solution was to avoid the Niagara route by a portage to the Grand River, perhaps from Burlington, and thence to Lake Erie, where the winds did not affect sailings. He conceded that the Detroit and St. Clair passages could still be blocked by an American enemy, but the crucial point was that Drummond Island was “the only place held by us on Lake Huron,” and therefore to be held at whatever cost.
Regardless of the capital costs involved, however, the route to Drummond Island by way of Lake Erie was preferable to the alternative, overland from York to Nottawasaga and Penticton. Avoiding the expense of rebuilding and maintaining an establishment at Amherstburg would lead to the abandonment of new posts like Drummond Island and the reduction of the naval presence on the upper Lakes, leaving new settlers to fend for themselves. Increased cost for defending Upper Canada against expanded American presence in the Northwest was therefore inevitable.

Permeating life on Drummond Island were two nagging uncertainties: the fear that the island might end up on the American side of the border, and the fact that it was still under native ownership. The second misgiving was obvious, and the first could be exploited to American advantage. As counterparts to the British survey to locate the boundary in the Great Lakes precisely, the Americans were exploring various channels in the upper part of Lake Huron, among the islands and in the St. Mary's River. Nevertheless, in 1819 there were plans to improve the buildings on Drummond Island in order to accommodate an increased garrison. In spite of everything, the British felt they were there to stay.

Peace, Order, and Good Government

Whether Drummond Island was the Crown's to govern or not, the place had a form of local government nonetheless. John Askin Jr. had been functioning at Drummond as a magistrate of the Western District for some time, and he complained in 1816 that his magistrate's duties had become too much for one person to handle. Two other magistrates had shared the workload in the past, but since both had left the country, he recommended that the fur trader Charles Oakes Ermatinger be appointed.31

For his part, McDouall felt bound to ask, perhaps rhetorically, whether civil authority extended there at all. He was unsure of his powers to enforce order and sobriety, to regulate the sale of liquor, and to prevent the presence of undesirable characters. He suggested that the commanding officer should, "as was the case formerly, have a commission as senior Justice of the Peace"—a statement that, in the light of John Askin Jr.'s remarks regarding local government, pointed up the muddled state of human affairs on Drummond Island.42 To confuse the situation even further, the Americans told the native owners of their claim on the island.

There might have been some who considered Drummond Island not to be any concern of the Western District, but the island did figure among the worries of the ever-conscientious Western District inspector of licences, William Hands. Early in 1819, Hand's agent reported trouble with some who refused to take out licences, contending that Drummond
Island was not part of Upper Canada. Hands's representative was enough of an optimist, however, that he asked for two or three blank forms to be sent up, in case any of the offenders should change their minds.

Small wonder that some considered Drummond Island to be part of the United States; the place lacked so much as a proper British flag. A Union Jack sent from Quebec in 1816 never arrived, having, it seems, found its way onto a flagpole in York instead, leaving nothing but an old and patched Red Ensign, a mercantile flag, as a show of sovereignty.

At Drummond Island, however strategically important, the British presence in the harsh conditions continued to be tenuous. Daily routines were carried on, but beneath it all, by 1822, there was a deep uneasiness that the boundary commissioners might already have awarded the post to the United States.

The matter seemed of less concern to the civil authorities at Sandwich than to the military establishment at Amherstburg—but Drummond Island was still part of the Western District, and that spring the magistrates at Sandwich appointed two constables to maintain order on the island.

Thomas G. Anderson, who had served the Indian Department at Drummond Island since 1815, added the initials JPWD after his name when he wrote Clerk of the Peace Charles Askin in 1827 to suggest the names of constables for appointment at both Drummond Island and the Sault. Criminal cases still had to be tried at Sandwich, however. Anderson pointed up the remoteness of Drummond Island when he wrote Sheriff Hands about the trial of a murder suspect, Jonathan Eves, who was being held in the Sandwich jail:

> We are completely away from the means of obtaining law instructions. You will much oblige me by giving me information on the following heads: How are the witnesses to be ordered down from this? Are not subpoenas the usual and proper method? And through what channel are they to be obtained? Will it be necessary for Mr. Keating, Simpson or me to appear? And what time are the Assizes held? These are questions which to you are very simple, but I assure you not so with me who never before had any thing to do with such matters, but am extremely anxious to do what is right.\footnote{43}

**Sic Transit Drummond Island**

Governor in Chief George Ramsey, ninth Earl of Dalhousie, as commander of the forces in British America, wrote to the Duke of Wellington in 1824 to discuss with him the fact that Drummond Island had been placed in American territory by the boundary commissioners. Various considerations seem to have influenced this ruling. The main channel for navigation,
with its implied second function as a boundary, lay to the east and north of the island, a
British presence was no longer required except for fostering relations with the native popula-
tion, and the reality was that neither Britain nor the United States had an appetite for
another war. Dalhousie made the formal recommendation that the post be moved to Sault Ste.
Marie, where buildings of the newly combined North West Company and Hudson's
Bay Company were available for a modest sum. An informal arrangement dating from
about 1816 between John Askin Jr., on behalf of Lieutenant Colonel McDouall, and the
natives who claimed Drummond Island, provided that if Britain retained it when the line
was finally drawn, it would be properly purchased and paid for. However, now that the deci-
sion had been made, that was no longer operative.

Change was fast approaching. Charles Berczy of Amherstburg, the new owner of the
Duke of Wellington, submitted a bid for transferring the troops and stores from Drummond
Island to Penetang. The date of the garrison's withdrawal was November 4, 1828. On
orders from Lieutenant Carson, Sergeant Rawson hauled down the British flag and the
members of the Sixty-Eighth Regiment embarked on the Wellington and the schooner
Hackett for the move to Penetang, followed shortly by perhaps seventy-five civilian families.

Even in withdrawal the remoteness of the head of Lake Huron continued to be a prob-
lem. The Indian Department did not receive its orders to vacate until November 9. On
November 11 Thomas G. Anderson ordered interpreter William Solomon to St. Joseph
Island for the winter, where he was to inform the native population that they would con-
tinue to receive their presents at either Amherstburg or Penetang. Control of the island was
formally handed to the United States on November 14, and all of the British subjects had
departed by November 16. Drummond Island was no longer part of the Western District.
It was the only particle of territory to change hands as even an indirect result of the War
of 1812.
Caught between the lion and the eagle, how did the residents of the Western District relate to their neighbors in the rest of Upper Canada and in Michigan, as well as to each other? In the first half of the nineteenth century the district’s inhabitants were seeking their place, or places, in the sun. The process was in large part driven by a few individuals, and it was enlivened by others. Some were virtual opposites in style and approach, while others exhibited such similarities that it would be difficult to consider them separately. There were also collective identities, group relationships of a larger scale, affecting the character of the region.

**Colonizers: The Earl of Selkirk and Thomas Talbot**

Lord Selkirk’s disastrous experiment in colonization, at Baldoon, like his major project in the Red River Valley, came to an end in 1818. He had wanted to sell the Baldoon property as early as 1811. The war not only interfered with the sale, however, but engendered further losses through damage caused by American raids. At last, in September 1818, the property was sold, and Selkirk, broken in health and defeated in a legal contest with the North West Company over his Red River settlement, returned to England. Because of the obvious lack
of progress during the fifteen years that the Baldoon lands were reserved to Selkirk's use, and due to the death of the purchaser in 1820, the remaining properties were ignominiously thrown open to settlement at a sheriff's sale in 1822.

The other great colonizer of the southwest was a contradiction of the gentle, high-minded Lord Selkirk. By 1803 the autocratic, well-connected Thomas Talbot had already experienced two military careers, separated by service as the private secretary of Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe, when he obtained his grant of thousands of acres along the Lake Erie shore with the intention of founding a settlement.

Following the interruption of the War of 1812, surveyor Mahlon Burwell resumed work laying out Thomas Talbot's colonization road through the Western District from the east; by November 30, 1816, his survey was completed to the Detroit River. The laying out of the Talbot Road West and the slightly later Talbot Middle Road was a testament to the patriarch's power. Both roads tended to keep to whatever higher, better-drained, more desirable ground was available, and wherever crown and clergy reserve lots were encountered—in either block or checkerboard pattern, depending on the township—they were pushed back, out of the way of the Talbot settlers' lots fronting on the new roads. On those lots Talbot contributed significantly to the complexity of the townships' ethnic identities by grouping his settlers according to their national origins.

Unencumbered by the reserved lots, Talbot was able to assign his settlers continuously on both sides of his roads, where in unambiguous language he required them to perform the tasks that made his roads, and thereby his settlements, workable. For the residents of the "Scotch" Settlement on the Middle Road in the township of Maidstone, and those of the Irish Settlement on the Talbot Road West in Sandwich Township, Talbot decreed: "Each person is to Clear off and grub half of the Road, and to Clear off completely and fence ten acres, & to be an actual Resident, or otherwise they will all be turned off." Over time the Talbot Road West came to be known as Talbot Street, or simply The Street. In the usage of the day a road merely connected two points, but a street was settled along its length, and as the Talbot Road settlement filled up, it took on the urban appearance of a street.

**Merchants: The Mackintoshes**

The underpinning of cross-river activity was, of course, trade, whose practitioners by the very nature of their enterprise, with commercial as well as social connections on both shores, manifested numerous and complex identities. Fairly typical were the Mackintoshes, Angus and his son Alexander—of Scottish background, like many of their fellow merchants, with
French-Canadian and native customers, for the most part, and accustomed to reckoning not only with their colleagues but with officialdom, both civil and military, on both sides of the river, in addition to their Montreal backers.

As the depression of the 1810s and 1820s deepened, competition among the local merchants became more bitter. George Benson Hall owned shares in the American schooners *Lady Prevost* and *Champion*. Alexander Mackintosh complained about the Prevost's price-cutting in 1817, and the *Champion* was seized at Amherstburg in 1818, while en route to Drummond Island. In 1821 Mackintosh called Inspector General Jacques Baby's attention once again to the problem of American vessels carrying cargos between British ports. He proposed a prohibitively high duty to discourage the practice, adding a complaint that must have been aimed at Hall, about those who bought American vessels and naturalized them, to the detriment of Canadian shipbuilding interests.²

The times were hard. The prospective cost of replacing Alexander Mackintosh's ramshackle house in Amherstburg, coupled with his other debts, forced him to sell in the summer of 1823 and to move to a property called Dart Hill near his father Angus's establishment on the upper Detroit, where the payments were easier.³ Two years later he offered his creditors in Montreal, Forsyth, Richardson and Company, 249 acres that he owned in Middlesex County, to help pay off what he owed.

For some years Alexander Mackintosh was uncertain about the legality of his parents' marriage. It was his understanding that no record was kept when the ceremony was performed in Detroit in 1783, although a decade later it was regularized by being recorded in the Western District marriage register, by that time maintained in the clerk of the peace's office in Sandwich Township. Mackintosh had good reason to worry; his father Angus was in line to inherit not only the ancestral estate in Scotland but the very leadership of the Mackintosh clan. Alexander was therefore in the succession as well, but to qualify he had to be able to prove his legitimacy.

The death of Alexander's mother on July 13, 1827, precipitated a crisis. Within a week Dart Hill was for sale. By August 9, pleading ill health, he was preparing to leave for Scotland and making arrangements for an interim master of the *Duke of Wellington* for the next season, while his father, Angus, was preparing to leave as well. Alexander's negotiation with the prospective purchaser of Dart Hill, fellow magistrate George Jacob, became more intense. On August 18 he reduced his asking price from $3,000 to $2,500, and three days later he accepted Jacob's offer of $2,000, adding a postscript: "I leave Detroit at 4 P.M. today."⁴
The appointed hour arrived, and the steamer *Niagara* departed Detroit, with the Mackintoshes, father and son, on board. In two days they arrived in Buffalo, and a week after that they were in New York. There they remained until September 8, when they embarked on their transatlantic voyage. On September 25 they sighted the Irish coast, and on October 2 they arrived in Liverpool, on their way to Scotland. The Western District was losing its isolation; a scant six weeks from home, one could have one's feet on the ground in Britain.

Although the Mackintoshes' hearts were clearly in the Highlands, Angus also kept up his interest in the Western District. Writing from the ancestral lands in Scotland, he asked his former assistant, William Gaspé Hall, who continued in charge of his affairs locally, about the nonarrival of his two brass guns, which were to have been shipped to him via Quebec.\(^5\) As for Alexander, the prospect of eventually becoming The Mackintosh of Mackintosh overcame his identity as a product of the Detroit River community.

**Outsiders: Robert Gourlay and William Lyon Mackenzie**

The would-be homeland of Robert Fleming Gourlay, on the other hand, was Upper Canada. In Gourlay's opinion, moneyed emigrants from Britain were going to the United States through ignorance of Upper Canada, and this would not do. Operating from a land office in Kingston, in the Midland District, Gourlay promoted a scheme to fill up the vastnesses of Upper Canada with the surplus population of Britain. He set about publishing a statistical account of the province, to be based on a compilation of responses from all of the townships to a questionnaire. Despite the misgivings of the oligarchy controlling the public life of the province, he obtained permission to publish his thirty-one-part questionnaire.

The resident landowners of Sandwich Township met on December 18, 1817, to reply to Gourlay's orchestrated questions, and their responses could hardly have pleased him more. After statistically detailing the township—eight windmills, one watermill for grinding wheat, no sawmills or carding mills, mixed hardwood timber, a few bricks made locally, most cheese bought on the American side but locally made butter excellent—they got down to what Gourlay really wanted to hear:

No lands have been recently sold in the township; the settlement has long been at a stand.

Only one road in front on the river, which is kept in tolerable repair. The back part of the township unsettled, except a few scattered houses. . . . No water
conveyance in the interior, and from the evenness of the ground, canals would add much to the value of the lands, and the encouragement of the settler.

The want of some incentive to emulation, the reserve of two-sevenths of the lands for the crown and clergy, must for a long time keep the country a wilderness; a harbour for wolves; a hindrance to a compact and good neighbourhood; and as these reserves grow in value, they increase as a political inducement to an enemy. Other reasons may be added; a defect in the system of colonization, and too great a quantity of the lands in the hands of individuals, who do not reside in the province, and who are not assessed for those lands. All these circumstances considered, it must be evident that the present system is very prejudicial to the internal welfare of this township."

Based on responses such as this from across Upper Canada, Gourlay pronounced the provincial government to be guilty of gross mismanagement, and called loudly for an inquiry, to be reported to England. In consequence Robert Gourlay was hauled before the magistrates of the Niagara District in December 1818, and banished from the province under the Sedition Act. In 1819 the members of the provincial power structure could look with some satisfaction on their tightening grip. Jacques Baby, at York, wrote William Hands: “You have heard before this that Gourlay is banished [from] the Province—a would-be troublesome fellow got rid of.”

Perhaps this was so, but elements that would shape Upper Canada’s development for years to come, including the martyrdom by banishment of Robert Gourlay, soon manifested themselves. Scottish-born William Lyon Mackenzie, a rebellion-minded shopkeeper who was to become the principal antagonist of the oligarchy that came to be known as the Family Compact, arrived on the provincial scene in 1820.

In the eyes of the oligarchy, influential outsiders were indeed coming to be regarded as troublesome fellows, as objects of suspicion. The presence in the Assembly of unnaturalized immigrants from the United States was an issue that had been of growing importance for the past several years, and by 1821 this issue became particularly annoying to the Family Compact. With evident relief William McCormick (representing Essex in the House, with François Baby) wrote home to his wife, Mary, in Gosfield:

The Question of Election which has been decided was a very Grand one of Serious Importance to this Province and will Infuture Prevent Pretended[?]}
Men from foreswearing them Selves to obtain that franchise that they are not at Present entitled to, And in a great Measure unfit to enjoy, and know base fellow will infuture be allowed to Swear before a returning officer that he has a freehold without he has the Kings patent or a Conveyance from one that has. This Question was carried by a very large Majority.\(^9\)

For the moment at least, the Compact and those of United Empire Loyalist proclivities were triumphant, the House of Assembly was freed of the American devils with their republican notions, and all was right with the world.

**Church and State: Richard Pollard and William Hands**

With their interwoven careers, Richard Pollard and William Hands, old friends from their days in trade in Detroit in the 1780s, came close to constituting a binary star in the firmament of the Western District. In 1802 these remarkable figures arranged between them which should be the sheriff, and which the cleric. However, this did not prevent the rector of the little Anglican church at Sandwich from holding public offices as well (as judge of the Surrogate Court and Essex County registrar of deeds); nor did it keep the sheriff of the Western District from holding parish positions. Both men tempered their high moral principles with a very human measure of pragmatism.

Among the most devoted clerics of the region was Richard Pollard, whose legacy to the Western District took the form of no fewer than three churches. Construction began late in 1818 on the first, in Amherstburg. The zealous Pollard wanted to borrow money using the clergy reserves as security, but in at least one private opinion, "Mr Pollard's Schemes Wild."\(^10\) Undaunted, he turned to the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, from which he received £50, and the walls were up by early November. The year 1819 was one of great church building. The Reverend John Strachan of York, a recently appointed member of the Executive Council of Upper Canada, promised £100 to the people of Amherstburg on receipt of word that their new church was roofed in. By July 25 he had conveyed the £100 to Amherstburg, and promised an equal amount to another of Richard Pollard's new churches, at Sandwich, which was then under construction. Christ Church, Amherstburg, opened on December 12, 1819. Architecturally it served as a model for churches, all served by Pollard, whose construction closely followed—at Colchester as well as at Sandwich.\(^11\) Richard Pollard's new "English Church" at Sandwich was opened on June 11, 1820.\(^12\) Pollard's responsibilities extended into Kent as well, where in 1820 he opened St. Paul's Church, built in 1819 on the Chatham town site. He had visited his
At the time of construction Richard Pollard's three churches strongly resembled each other. With the exception of the entrance porch, which was added later, Christ Church in Amherstburg has retained much of its original appearance. Macdonald Historical Collection.
charges in the Thames region frequently ever since his ordination in 1802, and he continued
to do so.

Because Sandwich was one of Upper Canada’s few ports of entry, William Hands, as col­
lector of customs as well as district treasurer and postmaster, as one of the province’s few
sources of revenue other than borrowing, in the thin years of 1819 and 1820. Consequently,
he was under unusual pressure as the money supply dwindled. In dismay his son (also
named William) wrote: “I would make any Sacrifice rather than it should be known to the
World that you have disposed of Money that did not belong to you.” The debt appears to
have been in connection with crown and clergy reserve rents collected by William Sr. for
transmission to York, but not paid in on time. This was not the first instance of question­
able handling of public funds by Hands—there was also an unauthorized spending of jail
and courthouse funds in 1817.

Hands, in financial embarrassment despite all his public officeholding, augmented his
income by selling publications. His private commercial activities included an agency for a
newspaper, the *Montreal Western Star*, which had financial difficulties of its own in 1819
that were partly as a result of Hands’s slowness in remitting subscription receipts. George
Ironside, in the Indian Department at Amherstburg, enclosed a payment for two years’
arrears ending April 30, 1820, owed to the *Montreal Herald*—but the times were difficult,
and he instructed Hands to cancel his subscription effective the next day. Hands was also
selling sugar and tea in the Sandwich area on behalf of Forsyth, Richardson and Company
of Montreal at the time.

George T. F. Ireland had been clerk of the peace in recent years, but as his health
declined prior to his death in 1823, his post was filled by an acting clerk, William Hands Jr.
By July 8 the Quarter Sessions had a formal replacement, Charles Askin. Just as Hands Jr.
was a son of Hands Sr., Charles Askin was a son of John Askin; the appointive oligarchy
looked after not only its own, but also the sons of its own.

Richard Pollard, who in 1824 at the age of seventy-two was still struggling with the roads
and the weather to make his missionary rounds, died on November 6, after a lifetime of
selfless concern for others, in debt, like Hands, to Forsyth, Richardson and Company. Pol­
lard’s finances were in a tangled condition, as his creditors observed:

> No Bills of Mr Pollard have passed through our hands since that for £50 dated
1 July last, and we think it improbable that he has negotiated them through any
other channel he was in the habit of drawing out his bills before the period had
elapsed, in our favor and advising the [United] Society [for the Propagation of the
Gospel] of having done so, at the same time informing us that he had put the bills in his pocketbook where they may now perhaps be found. This precaution he used, that in the event of his death, which his advanced age rendered so probable an occurrence, our loss might be as trifling as possible.  

In addition to his priestly duties, Pollard had held various public positions, including the judgeship of the Surrogate Court. William Hands and Richard Pollard had been friends for a very long time, so it was natural that Hands should find himself looked to as Pollard's executor, attending to such details as having a gravestone erected. The difficulty was that Surrogate Judge William Hands (having, of course, lately succeeded none other than the deceased Richard Pollard in that office) was in a conflict of interest, as Attorney General John Beverley Robinson pointed out: “My opinion is that you must necessarily renounce the executorship of Mr. Pollard's will—and then you will be able to commit the administration to any person applying—with the will annexed. I see no other mode of proceeding.” Hands seemed to have been drawn in all innocence into a predicament that could only cause him personal embarrassment. What to do? Coincidence in the form of a contested election in Essex gave him a way out: as returning officer he would be called to appear before the House in York, and there, as luck would have it, he could also testify as to a pending bill relating to the district and surrogate courts, the very heart of his predicament. 

Hands's political leanings, as a multiple appointee of the provincial oligarchy, were evident in an exchange with the reform-minded York newspaper publisher William Lyon Mackenzie, who was attempting to sell Hands a subscription to his Colonial Advocate. Hands, in York at the time, probably on the Pollard matter or the Essex election, icily replied:

Sir

In answer to your letter received this Morning, I never was a Subscriber for the Colin Advocate, nor do I wish to be.

You never sent one of those papers to my Address. I request you never Will.  

The following summer Hands was still acting as executor of the Pollard estate; Pollard’s brother in London was pressing Hands to see to a grave marker, and Forsyth, Richardson and Company were plainly worried about the estate, “from which we must abandon all hope of receiving anything. . . . It seems rather hard, that the Sermons imported for him
& some other matters furnished, shortly before his death, should be cut out by claims of more ancient date. We however leave the Whole to be considered in such way as you shall think proper in the situation you hold as Ext., without wishing to subject you to any embarrassment.”

Pollard’s assets were reckoned at a less-than-princely £13. 15s. 6d., consisting of sums owed to him. In these circumstances ostentation would be unseemly. Therefore, the tombstone, on which Hands was authorized by Pollard’s brother to spend £10, ended up costing a much more modest £4. 19s.

By 1825 the range of William Hands’s interests had reached astonishing proportions. One could infer that he intended to develop an iron industry in Essex County similar to the one in Norfolk; from the Long Point Furnace he ordered an iron cooking stove and a “mineral auger,” the latter item probably for use in extracting samples of bog iron ore such as that found in Gosfield Township. He had property interests in Kent County, including, apparently, a water-powered mill. There is evidence of a building project: he had a need for oak planks, which were ordered from Delaware, presumably because the choicest stands of oak near Sandwich had already been cut down. From his orchard he was shipping apples to York (to the wife of Solicitor General Henry Boulton), and pear tree scions to Grimsby, to a recipient who could keep him advised on the progress of the new Welland Canal, begun in 1824. In addition, somehow he found time to serve as a trustee of the Western District Grammar School.

Yet, in the eyes of the magistrates, William Hands was not quite a superman. William McCrae took him to task over the handling of a case of whiskey smuggling on the Thames, and Alexander Mackintosh complained to Attorney General John Beverley Robinson about the sheriff’s method of arranging bail for a prisoner. By that autumn, Hands, feeling persecuted, might well have been preparing for a change in his personal venue. He was considering the advantages of a lot he owned on Bear Creek in Sombra Township.

Hands did not move, however. Quite to the contrary, two years later and still in Sandwich, his legendary diversity was perhaps even extended. Possibly in his capacity as district treasurer, with responsibility for purchasing supplies, Hands received a letter from James Crooks, of West Flamborough, near the head of Lake Ontario:

I feel much obliged by the Interest you take in my Paper Making Establishment, which, as yet, has succeeded to my utmost expectations. I can now supply nearly all the Printers in Upper Canada, the quantity of writing [paper] has not exceeded
40-50 Reams, but we propose making a large quantity in the Spring & will be happy to supply your quarter of the Country with it—and in return would prefer Rags to Money in payt.\textsuperscript{18}

There was little currency in circulation. Even as late as 1828 Angus McDonald, a tax collector in Sombra, wrote Treasurer Hands, “I would be down by the April Sessions with leather and shingles [in lieu of tax collections]. But . . . the Winter has been so open, it was impossible to get any shingles out over the swamps.”\textsuperscript{19} Obviously, if the Western District became a dealer in commodities such as leather and shingles, it would have no time or money left to maintain order or to see to the building of roads and bridges. One of the greatest pressures on Hands, therefore, would be to convert these assets to cash. By 1830, so great was the demand imposed on the financial resources of the district that the magistrates “Ordered . . . That the loan of money for the District, by the Treasurer, be renewed.”\textsuperscript{20} The difficulty had been noticeable since 1828, when the references began to the ratepayers’ arrears in payment of their assessments, and to delinquent taxes on absentee lands.

Even Hands’s prodigious capability occasionally fell short of expectations. In 1827 the justices of the peace ordered that thenceforth all written communications from the clerk’s office, or from the Court itself, should be sent by mail. In reply Deputy Postmaster General Daniel Sutherland wrote to Sandwich Postmaster William Hands: “It has been represented to me that an additional Post per week is much wanted to Sandwich & Amherstburg. I have therefore to request that you will engage a Courier to go twice a week, to commence on the 6th of April next, & on as low terms as possible.”\textsuperscript{21} Sutherland’s successor, Thomas Allen Stayner, was disappointed in Hands’s performance: “I am Sorry to observe that the Carriage of the Mail twice instead of once a Week has not had the effect of increasing the Business of yr. Office—on the Contrary there seems to have been a progressive falling off in the Receipts. Can you account for this?”\textsuperscript{22}

One of the matters occupying Hands’s attention in 1829, a stay of execution for one Benjamin Ward, held under a sentence of death pending a review in England, revealed another, darker side of his personality. Upper Canada’s new attorney general, Henry John Boulton, was familiar with Hands’s qualities when he wrote him on this subject:

I shall send the war[rant] for his reprieve by the Post but for fear of accidents I also wish to let you know that unless you have a very strong desire to shew how expertly you can perform your Duty you may abstain for the present from laying
violent Hands on poor Ward. I feel it the more necessary to be particular with you knowing how alert you generally are upon these occasions and how disappointed you will be at being deprived of the perquisites.\(^{23}\)

Perhaps because of his many responsibilities, or perhaps because it was a talent that he brought to the job, there was a taste for expediency in Hands’s character. Robert Stanton, editor and publisher of the *Upper Canada Gazette*, at York, in response to Hands’s request in connection with the publication of a legal notice, complained, “Your suggestion that an extra to be dated back would answer, I could not with propriety act upon.”\(^{24}\) The next year Collector of Customs Hands was facing removal from that office over the state of his accounts, and he was being questioned about a schooner which took on dutiable goods at Detroit and landed them at Port Goderich without paying duty. Added to all this, William Hands was having personal worries. It appears that by early 1830 the marriage between Hands’s daughter and John Alexander Wilkinson was in difficulty. Hands found it necessary to ask the commander in chief of the British army to set aside a portion of Lieutenant Wilkinson’s half pay for his wife and children.

A sum owed for reasons unspecified by the Western District to William Elliott became a problem in 1831 when Elliott collected it from the Bank of Upper Canada, but Treasurer William Hands refused to reimburse the bank without the formal order of the magistrates. Understandably, the bank thereupon threatened to sue Hands. Hands’s curious reaction was that although he would be the loser in such an action, it would not be as treasurer of the Western District but as a stockholder of the Bank of Upper Canada. Eleven months after Hands’s refusal to pay, the bank was still pressing for payment plus expenses incurred. Whether this bewildering business was ever resolved is not known; but not long after, Hands was lobbying among members of the panel of magistrates in the Western District against his treatment. One of them, George P. Kerby of Camden Township in Kent County, wrote this to Hands, on the subject of an allowance to the treasurer for the disbursement of government appropriations: “I see no reason, why you should not get the same as the Treasurer of the Niagara District or of any other. In fact I have often thought it rather strange that the Treasurer had not been paid for that Service by Parliament. However as it can be allowed you by the Magistrates in Qt Sessions, I for one will give my voat in your favor.”\(^{25}\)

What is known is that as late as 1835 William Hands was ordered to negotiate a loan to the Western District of a further £500. Of this, £120 was due to Hands himself, to cover advances he had made personally to cover various debts incurred by the district.
At last Hands's long career in public service was beginning to wind down, although not without some mystery. In 1833 Robert Reynolds of Amherstburg was puzzled by a cryptic communication from Hands: “Your Note of this days date has been just handed to me acquainting me that You have some business with My Brother and Me that requires our personal attendance at Sandwich, that is if we think proper to go.” Reynolds was willing, but a little reluctant: “I should however have Considered Myself personally obliged if You had been More explicit. The whole Matter be it what it may is quite mysterious to me.” In the fullness of time the suspense came to an end. Fully eleven weeks after Reynolds’s querulous response to Hands’s note, Chief Justice John Beverley Robinson wrote to Hands, from York, regarding “His Excellency’s determination to Appoint Mr. Ebenezer Reynolds to the office of Sheriff . . . so that You will be relieved as soon as possible, and no doubt You will have Known as much, some time before this letter reaches You.”

William Hands, at the age of seventy-eight in 1835, had far outlived most of his contemporaries, and yet he continued active in private affairs. William McCrae, then one of the MLAs for Kent, turned to Hands for help, which he received, in delaying an execution against his personal property. At the same time, Hands was planning to have a house built for himself in Chatham. He also continued to serve as an agent for the Toronto Albion.

The death of the legendary William Hands, at the age of seventy-nine years and five months, occurred on February 19, 1836. Hands's death created numerous vacancies, which were in large part filled by other members of the Western District oligarchy: Felix Hands as collector of customs, William Gaspe Hall as inspector of licences, and John Alexander Wilkinson as judge of surrogate. Charles Baby was appointed clerk of the peace at this time, replacing Charles Askin, who resigned. Although the treasurer's post was initially left unfilled, very shortly Felix Hands was appointed to this position.

Over his long career in public service, William Hands became so identified with the Western District as a whole that he literally personified it, internally and externally. He was the Western District. Particularly in his roles as sheriff and treasurer during the years of the district-seat question, discussed in the following, it could with justice be said that Hands singlehandedly held the district together.

**Church and Church: Moses David and Louis Joseph Fluet**

Moses David, the first known Jew on the Detroit frontier, seems to have surmounted any ethnic tension occasioned by his presence with relative ease. Born in Montreal in 1768,
by 1793 he was in trade at Detroit. As a British loyalist he crossed the river to Sandwich when the border was implemented in 1796, and soon integrated himself into life on the Canadian shore—that is, carrying on friendships and business relationships on both sides. One of his friends, the American public official James May, was concerned about David's health in 1805: "I hope your illness did not proceed from your frolick at Mr. Henry's when you was so imprudent to cross the river at midnight." At Montreal David married Charlotte, the daughter of Aaron Philip Hart of Trois-Rivières, Quebec, reputedly the first Jew in Canada. Anglophile loyalist that he was, David aligned himself with the English Church at Sandwich to such an extent that he was recorded as present at a vestry meeting in 1807, to consider sales of burial ground lots to parishioners. However, his conversion to Christianity is questionable; when he died on September 26, 1814, he was buried not in the hallowed ground of the churchyard but in a plot on his own residential property in Sandwich. Although he was evidently not regarded as qualifying for burial in the Anglican churchyard, neither could his body be transported down the Lakes to Montreal in the midst of the War of 1812 for interment with his parents, and certainly not in time for immediate burial, as required by Jewish law. Virtually alone even within the isolation of the Western District, Moses David achieved an enigmatic identity of his own.

One of the more versatile figures in the Western District was Louis Joseph Fluet. The earliest reference found identifies him as Father Louis Fluet, assisting Father Joseph P. Crevier as curate in charge of Assumption's missions at Amherstburg and at St. Peter's on the Thames. However, Fluet's identity as not only a Catholic but also a priest led to an incident involving him and his father, on Sunday, November 13, 1831. It seems that the younger Fluet was on his way not to Assumption but to the English Church, and was set upon by the elder in an attempt to prevent his going in. Sheriff Hands and one of the magistrates having witnessed the incident, Fluet the elder was led away and confined for a time, although the authorities complied with the younger Fluet's request that the miscreant not be charged. By December 29 "Lewis Jas. Fluett" was advertising his services as a "house coverer," a roofer, working in tin, sheet iron, lead, zinc, slate, or shingles—a profession he declared that he had followed for twenty years, in the town of Quebec.

Among the many people over the years who for one kindness or another were grateful to William Hands was Louis Joseph Fluet, whom Hands was able to set upon a new career path as an employee at the Colborne Furnace in Gosfield Township. Struggling a little in English, Fluet wrote in appreciation:
My gratitude to my benefactor increases when I consider that, if I enjoy some peace, and I am in the way of doing well, it is to be attributed to nothing but to your fraternal goodness and to the active part you have taken of procuring me with my present Situation. I now believe that the days of trial are over, and at last I am among people who is destituted of prejudices. I have good prospects before me, and I hope to be useful not only to my own family but to my country.

The next summer the Reverend J. Lostree, then awaiting completion of a new Roman Catholic church in Amherstburg, attracted this letter to the *Sandwich Canadian Emigrant*, from Assumption Church's erstwhile missionary to the same town:

Having learned that the Reverend Mr. Lustree [sic], Roman Catholic Priest at Amherstburg, on Sunday the 15th instant, went through the form of an excommunication against me, I beg leave to tell Mr. Lustree and the public generally that the reverend gentleman might have saved himself that trouble, as I voluntarily, long ago, left that denomination, and therefore excommunicated myself.

L.J. Fluett
Ex-Roman Catholic Priest.

That autumn Mr. and Mrs. L. J. Fluett announced the birth of their daughter.

**Initial Success: J. and F. Baby**

The French-Canadian Baby family has been described as among the most powerful in Upper Canada, and with reason: its members, notably Jacques as well as his brother François, were skilled practitioners of the art of being all things to all people. To succeed in a world dominated by British officialdom it would not do to appear to be too French, and therefore both brothers wrote and spoke impeccable English as well as French. They even came to be known by English names, James and Francis, respectively. With deliberate ambiguity their signatures, “J. Baby” and “F. Baby,” gave no clue as to the language in which the writers were thinking. After the War of 1812 Jacques Baby moved from Sandwich to York, where he resided at Baby Point, on the Humber River west of the town. Over his lifetime he is said to have held something like 250 appointments, most of them outside the Western District as a member of the provincial oligarchy. François, lacking something of his brother’s appealing personality, remained a local oligarch, a lifelong resident of the district. The public
good was not prominent among his concerns; rather, his actions were consistently determined by self-interest. One early example was the building of his solid brick, four-chimneyed house on the shore opposite Detroit in 1812, which in ways both obvious and subtle surpassed his brother Jacques's 1798 timber, two-chimneyed Sandwich residence, purchased in 1807.

The public discomfort with François Baby became apparent when Upper Canada's ninth parliament was elected in 1824. The result for the first time was a legislative assembly consisting of a majority of members from across the province having pro-American leanings, whose views were at variance with those of the oligarchy. In the Western District the Family Compact's hold was diminished. For Essex, surveyor John Alexander Wilkinson was elected in the place of Compact-minded William McCormick. The surprise arose over François Baby, a candidate for Essex County's second seat. Baby had been elected easily enough to the eighth parliament four years earlier, but this time he was tied with Nicholas Lyttle. The uneasiness of the electorate is perhaps attributable to his being perceived as manipulative. Alexander Mackintosh's contempt for Baby was unmistakable when he wrote to his colleagues in trade, Messrs. Grant and Kerby at Queenston: "I am sorry Mr. Grant should be trifled with by such a fellow, but it does at the same time show the avidity of the Esquire to draw all he can into his net." Baby's embarrassment soon came to the attention of his brother Jacques, who was eager to learn the resolution of the election from William Hands: "Is the Squall or Tempest over, or does it continue? Among all the News from above I am yet to learn who is the successful second candidate for Essex." (François Baby appealed the election on January 17, 1825, and was seated.)

Further evidence of Baby's negative traits attended what for decades passed for a road along the beach beside the Detroit above Sandwich. As facilities for navigation were developed they came to be viewed as impediments to the citizenry's inherent right to free use of the public highway. This conflicted with the rights of the landowners to have access to their own water frontage. Angus Mackintosh's wharf at Moy was a case in point, and so was François Baby's, with its new horse-boat ferry service. Baby's arrangements were perhaps particularly annoying, because his wharf and landing were located at the outlet of a creek, confronting traffic with multiple obstacles to travel along the shore. In response, in January 1826 the Quarter Sessions ordered that the offending proprietors be directed to make openings in their wharfs for the passage of sleighs and other vehicles. Far from complying, Baby fenced the east edge of his farm down to the water's edge, adding to the blockage of the beach road already caused by his ferry wharf.
It must therefore have been with considerable unease that the magistrates turned on one of their own, when they initiated the case of Rex vs. François Baby. The indictment, replete with the conventional phrases in which such documents abound, alleged that on May 1, 1826, “and on divers other occasions,” Baby had committed a nuisance by erecting a picket fence encroaching on the public highway, “to the evil example of all others in like cases offending, and against the Peace of our Lord the King his crown and dignity.” A true bill having been found against Baby by the Grand Jury, in April 1827 he entered a plea of not guilty, and the case was put over to the summer sitting. Baby was after all a member of the local oligarchy, however, and a conviction was therefore unthinkable. With the exception of Magistrate Mackintosh (with his competing ferry interests), by this time the justices had come to the view that the indictment should be quashed, and there, for the time being, the matter appears to have ended.

Not even the practice of religion was exempt from the disputes that tended to mark François Baby’s life. The religious sisters at Assumption complained to the bishop of Kingston, Alexander Macdonell of Glengarry, that Father Joseph P. Crevier had “built a carpenter & a blacksmith shop upon the very ground where their school should be erected, &c, &c, &c,,” and accordingly they applied for a remedy. It happens that Macdonell was on close terms with François Baby, having sat with him in the House of Assembly for eight years. Hence in Macdonell’s eyes the hapless Crevier compounded his transgression of obstructing secondary education, contrary to Macdonell’s wishes, by having the further temerity to oppose François Baby’s run for the Assembly in the election of 1830. Accordingly Father Crevier was removed from the priesthood of Assumption, François Baby was given the privilege of naming his successor, Alexander Macdonell’s nephew Angus was chosen, and late in 1831 Alexander joined François’s brother Jacques in membership in the Legislative Council. François Baby was a power to be reckoned with in the parish, and soon two streets—Assumption and Church—were added to his new village plot, intersecting in the sign of the cross.

Group Identities

The Western District was not just one world, but at least three. The inhabitants of the Essex Peninsula were separated from their counterparts on the River Thames, in Kent, by five townships whose checkered crown and clergy reserves kept them virtually uninhabited; and in Essex itself the Huron Reserve, halfway down the Detroit River, separated the residents of Sandwich and the largely francophone townships of the Lake St. Clair shore from those of...
Amherstburg and the primarily anglophone/germanophone southern tier: three communities, each with its ties to Detroit, but each differing in its ethnic makeup. Complicating matters further was the political immaturity of the members of the local oligarchy. The lack of a sense of constituency led those in authority into confusing alliances as well as contradictory positions.

An example: in York, the Legislative Assembly provided funds for a new jail and courthouse for Sandwich. That simple action unleashed internal tensions that threatened to rip the Western District asunder. In reaction, in 1817 two petitions, of inhabitants of Essex and Kent, were presented in the House of Assembly at York by William McCormick, one of the two members for Essex, who seems to have been embarrassed not a whit by their apparently contradictory sentiments. Because of the remoteness of Sandwich, in the view of the petitioners from Kent, that county should be separated from Essex, with a new jail and courthouse to be built at Chatham; yet even within Essex there was a sentiment for the removal of the jail and courthouse to Amherstburg:

Amherstburgh would be placed in the very centre of this County, besides which, it is the only place where materials for building, such as timber, stone and lime, can be procured on reasonable terms. . . . Sandwich is at all times surrounded with pestilential marshes and swamps, which renders it a sickly and unwholesome spot. . . . In making the contrast between the two places, Your Petitioners must observe that Amherstburgh is one of the healthiest places in Upper Canada.42

The two petitions were timed to head off the province’s commitment of funds already approved for a new jail and courthouse at Sandwich, and they gave rise to two bills. One, sponsored by McCormick, was to divide the Western District, and another, brought in by Robert Nichol, the member for Norfolk County, was in support of building new facilities in Amherstburg rather than in Sandwich. Nichol’s bill, with the support of George Benson Hall, the other member for Essex, was passed on March 19.43

Hall thereupon moved to delay the expenditure of the funds, because the Nichol-Hall measure was a change in course. The stoppage of the funds for the new Sandwich building was passed by the House on March 28, and carried up to the Legislative Council. The Assembly was then confronted with a motion by McCormick for leave to bring in a bill for the separation of Essex and Kent. The motion was not granted, and there, for the moment, the matter rested.

122
At Sandwich that fall the magistrates signed a petition in which they suggested that District Treasurer William Hands had misappropriated the two thousand pounds voted for the new, permanent jail and courthouse building, and spent it for other purposes. Hands, they maintained, did not consider himself to be responsible to them, and they therefore asked the House of Assembly to compel him to refund the money so that they could apply it to erecting the building "in Sandwich or any other place your Honorable House may designate." The magistrates, who included both MLAs for Essex, had succeeded in coming down solidly on all sides of the issue.

That December there was another petition to the legislature, signed by William McCormick and 542 other inhabitants of the Western District. This one requested two buildings, at Amherstburg and Chatham, if the House chose to divide the Western District. Hall was so unsure of his own position that he presented both the McCormick petition and a counterpetition, signed by Angus Mackintosh and 308 others, putting forth the interests of Sandwich and its environs. The counterpetition pointed out that the government itself had purchased the land for the town of Sandwich with the intention that it be the district seat, and it cited the legislation providing that courts be held there. It observed that the House had confirmed its commitment to Sandwich when it granted two thousand pounds for reconstruction made necessary by war damage, that about half the grant was already spent for materials, and that the builders were contracted for. It pointed out that Amherstburg was entirely on military ground, and no lands for a new district town had been appropriated. Sandwich was altogether "a more eligible and central situation" than Amherstburg, a military base that was therefore more subject to attack. The counterpetitioners ended by asking the House not to remove the district seat from Sandwich.

The contentious issue reached the House of Assembly on March 3, 1818, where the petition and counterpetition of the previous autumn were both tabled by Hall. Meanwhile, at home, the pro-Amherstburg forces were pressing forward. The next day William Caldwell sold four acres at Amherstburg on the north side of "the Public Square now laid out in the new Town" to Robert Richardson for use by the magistrates as the site for a jail and courthouse.

Discussion of the competing petitions took place on March 6. Hall, in a show of decisiveness, gave notice the next day of a motion to bring in a bill to designate the site. However, when the bill made its appearance, Hall, seconded by William McCormick, presented one to alter the site. The House reacted by delaying, for three months, second reading of the bill that would have moved the district seat to Amherstburg.
William McCormick was a frustrated man when he wrote home to his wife, Mary: "I am sorry to say that we have been much disappointed with respect to our jail & courthouse business, but still not without hope."\(^{47}\) Hope or not, Sandwich was the venue having the closest ties, familial and economic, with the ancestral home across the river, and therefore Sandwich would be the permanent seat. The new Western District courthouse and jail building was completed by July 1821, and for the time being the issue sank beneath the surface once again.
Within twenty years of the founding of Sandwich and Amherstburg, made necessary by the implementation of the border, the two were among the principal towns in Upper Canada. In 1817 a provincial “Act to Establish a Police in the Towns of York, Sandwich and Amherstburg” gave the magistrates in Quarter Sessions the power to make, ordain, constitute, and publish such prudential rules and regulations as they may deem expedient, relative to paving, keeping in repair, and improving the streets of the said town, regulating slaughter-houses and nuisances, and also to enforce the said town laws relative to horses, swine, or cattle of any kind running at large in the said town; relative to the inspection of weights and measures, fire­men and fire companies.

Through the late 1820s and particularly the 1830s in Kent County the response of the provincial authorities to population growth through immigration was to open new townships in the north, and the long-delayed settling of the Chatham town site. At the same time in Essex County a new township, Anderton (now known as Anderdon) was created in the place of the Huron Reserve, and urbanization associated with the easy crossing of the upper Detroit River led to even stronger connections with Detroit.
Late in 1824 came the beginnings of a change in the settling of Upper Canada, with the formation of the Canada Company, capitalized among its London subscribers at one million pounds. The purchase by the new company of all the unsold crown reserves across the province, for resale to settlers, held out the prospect that the government would have the funds to pay long-deferred war loss claims. (Probably because of remoteness from markets, land in the Western District was valued below that in any other organized part of the province: four shillings per acre in March 1826.) One-quarter of the clergy reserves in Upper Canada were similarly made available in July 1827. At last the evils of the crown and clergy reserves and the absentee land ownership that Robert Gourlay had chronicled ten years before could begin to be dealt with, and over time the number of united townships would diminish as their populations increased.

In 1825 the townships of Sandwich, Maidstone, and Rochester continued to be united for municipal purposes, because the latter two lacked sufficient population to elect their own township officers; and the Court of Quarter Sessions mandated that anyone residing on the St. Clair River, but not in the townships of Sombra or Dawn, should remain on the assessment rolls for those townships. In Essex County, Maidstone and Rochester were still united townships in 1832, testifying to the importance of the checkered crown and clergy reserves in these and the three townships to the east in delaying their development, blocking communication, and hence impeding cohesiveness, within the district. Reflecting this reality, in 1835 the clerk of the peace was ordered "to request the attendance of the different Magistrates at the April Sessions to take into consideration the propriety of building fire-proof offices in the two Counties of the District." Two sets of county offices, rather than the usual Upper Canadian practice of one set for the district. Once again separatism had briefly bubbled to the surface, but for twelve more years the issue would remain unresolved.

Essex: the Huron Reserve
Halfway up the Detroit, the Huron Reserve had remained since its creation in 1790 as an obstacle between the upper and the lower settlements, and it was a tempting target to those of expansionist sentiments. Any enmity between Sandwich and Amherstburg over the location of the district seat was dissipated in the face of the towns' perceived self-interest. In August 1819 the inhabitants of the two vicinities joined in petitioning Lieutenant Governor Maitland to recommend the purchase of the Huron Reserve, for a number of reasons: the Hurons, although deserving of great consideration for their war services, were not the original occupants; the population of the reserve was no greater than ninety; and the land, which was of little use to them, was a barrier to the improvement and security of the Detroit fron-
tier. Those signing the petition freely admitted to their private interests in gaining access to the land between Petite Côte and Amherstburg, although they suggested that the public-spirited reasons they advanced were sufficient cause to do away with the Huron Reserve.

Factionalism among the native population, both inside and outside the reserve, was a significant factor in weakening their position. In 1829 an Ottawa chief from near modern Toledo, with Ojibwa and Pottawatomi support, laid claim to part of the Huron Reserve. The basis was the wording of the McKee Purchase of 1790, which conveyed the reserve to the “Ottawa, Chippewa, Pottowatomy and Huron Indian Nations of Detroit.” However, at a council at Amherstburg, Lieutenant Governor Sir John Colborne found that the Hurons’ exclusive right to the tract had been arranged among the native groups themselves following 1790.

_Huron Indians leaving their residence near Amherstburg, Upper Canada, on a hunting excursion_, by William Bent Berczy. The leading figure is not merely pointing the way; he is gesturing toward a sidewheel steamer, presumably the _Walk-in-the-Water_, almost invisibly outlined in pencil at the extreme left, which he is seeing for the first time on August 25, 1818. National Gallery of Canada.
The outsiders having been rebuffed, several government offers to purchase the reserve from the Huron residents ensued, until on August 13, 1833, through the agency of Amherstburg Superintendent of Indian Affairs George Ironside Jr., documents were signed at Amherstburg conveying the reserve to the Crown, for the microscopic sum of five shillings. It was to be surveyed, in preparation for opening it to settlement, “as there are several gentlemen of means now in this neighbourhood who have deferred purchasing elsewhere, waiting an opportunity to locate on this desirable tract.”

One contributor to the *Canadian Emigrant* was moved to quote Shakespeare in describing the Huron Reserve as it then was:

```
Fie on't! O fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,
That grows to seed; things rank, and gross in nature
Possess it merely.
```

The writer, noting that the tract was inhabited by only about twenty Huron families, added these observations: “As the Reserve now remains, the law makes us but the servants of the Huron—he is exempted from every tax—performs not even statute labor—our industrious [sic] population, forsooth, must repair his bridges—toil upon his 7 mile roads—while the desidiose, painted Huron basks in the sunshine, and ruminates over his pipe how to gull us again.” The residents, led by their chief Splitlog, tried to get the best deal for themselves. They requested four hundred acres of riverfront land for each man in the tribe, which would have rendered the interior as undesirable as any other waste lands.

Those natives signing the 1833 indenture, however, “Indians of the Wyandot or Huron Tribe, residing in the Western District of the Province of Upper Canada,” among them Adam Brown and Joseph Warrow, were nowhere identified as having any formal status as representatives of the inhabitants of the Huron Reserve. At a subsequent hearing before Alexander Chewett, John L. Williams, and John A. Wilkinson, six Huron chiefs then living on the reserve were present, a completely different group from those who had signed the document conveying the reserve to the Crown. The chiefs reported that in 1829 the government had asked two of them, Splitlog and Thomas Clarke, to invite those Hurons living across the Detroit to move to the reserve, but they had also received a contradictory proposition from the government, to sell the land. “We the Chiefs know that the Gov't. of the U. S. drive off all the Indians but are aware that the B. Gov't. are more generous to the Indians than that. The Indians are not anxious to go back into the Wilderness, but remain with the Civilized Inhabitants.”

The young men of the reserve were negotiating with Indian Superintendent George Ironside Jr., without consultation with the chiefs. The chiefs, in addition to many other resi-
dents of the reserve, were opposed to the deal. They alleged that Ironside persuaded the young men to sign the paper approving the sale, against their will. Clearly there were two factions on the Huron Reserve: the cautious old chiefs and the headstrong young men. Over the next few years, probably with the aid of renewed agitation by the non-Huron signatories to the treaty of 1790, the contest was resolved in favor of the young. Early in May, 1835, the Indian Department's remaining store of presents was sold off. By September the reserve was being surveyed into lots, in preparation for their sale the next spring.

Despite a journey by Splitlog to Quebec in December 1835 to try to have the treaty of 1833 annulled, the Brown/Warrow ("progressive") faction concluded another treaty on February 2, 1836, to replace that of 1833. This one was more limited in its scope, reflecting the dissension in the Huron band. The "progressives" undertook this time only to give up certain unoccupied properties, generally in the southeastern part of the reserve, leaving their own personal holdings as well as those of the Splitlog "conservatives" undisturbed. The description was cumbersome, however, and a more elegant solution, on paper at least, offered itself: the Huron Reserve would be divided into three blocks. Block "C," the southernmost third (except the stone quarry), would be sold off for the benefit of the native population of Upper Canada generally. However, the northernmost third, Block "A," would be sold to benefit those who would be left in possession of Block "B," in the middle, plus the stone quarry in Block "C."

Splitlog was outraged to see two-thirds of the Huron Reserve disposed of without his consent. The current lieutenant governor, Sir Francis Bond Head, met with the Ottawa chief Charloe at Gustavus Armison's inn at Amherstburg, where the proposal was cobbled together. Splitlog, however, refused to sign, leaving Head to conclude the treaty with the Brown/Warrow faction alone. The days of the Huron Reserve were numbered.

The difficulty over the reserve could be largely attributed to factionalism within the Huron band, but it could be ascribed in part also to perceived ambiguity in the treaty of 1790. Thomas Paxton of Amherstburg claimed Fighting Island, saying he had acquired it about 1826 from the Huron band as personified by the Splitlog faction. The conveyance of 1790 included only the mainland, not any adjacent islands, he maintained, so that he need not deal with the Crown. Furthermore, according to Paxton, the surviving document was fraudulent, a substitute for a lost original which, he alleged, made no provision for reserves at all. Nevertheless, presumably out of his inherent nobility of spirit, Paxton had paid yearly gratuities of £12. 10s. to the Huron claimants to the island. Shortly a rebuttal appeared: the notorious William Lyon Mackenzie was behind the Splitlog faction in claiming Huron ownership of Fighting Island, the statements regarding a bogus 1790 treaty were utterly false,
and £12. 10s. seemed an odd amount to pay as an annual gratuity. Paxton continued to maintain that the McKee Purchase document was spurious, and the matter ended for the moment in a standoff.

John Prince figured in the disposition of the question of the Huron Reserve. A group led by Splitlog spent a morning visiting Prince at the Park Farm, and on August 31, 1837, "The sale of The Indian Reserve nr. Amherstburg took place."9 The area continued to be occupied by native families for some years, but in reality the Huron Reserve had become a township, which speedily acquired a name: Anderdon.10

Essex County: The Southern Tier

Early in 1819 the inhabitants of Amherstburg petitioned Lieutenant Governor Sir Peregrine Maitland to be made secure in their land titles, since they had discovered "that in strict contemplation of law, the grantees have only an estate for their own lives therein."11 There was no reference to the process by which they had made this discovery, the drive to move the district seat from Sandwich to Amherstburg. By 1819 that campaign had run out of momentum, and was lost. If the residents of the military reserve on which Amherstburg came into being were to be granted clear titles, there would have to be agreement as to the exact extent of their properties, and this could be accomplished only through a survey. Thomas Smith of Petite Côte, who had twice laid out the town of Detroit (first with alterations by Judge Woodward in 1796, then following the fire of 1805), was engaged to carry out the work.

When the current commanding officer at Fort Malden showed Smith a plan of Amherstburg, the need for a new survey became clear: the map showed no directions, no distances, no lot numbers. There was a rough schedule of lots in existence, but it was so unreliable that Smith decided to divide the area into sections and develop a new lot numbering system. He had considerable experience with such situations, including the ruins of Detroit in 1805, and a dispute in Sandwich Township in 1816 between Julien Parent and John Askin. In Detroit he laid down a base line, "to regulate every point of the horizon. . . . This I attempted in my own Country, but failed; and I lament the state that it is in, still progressing in confusion. The lines travel with the moveable meridian, and my house today will become yours tomorrow, according to the system established by Mr. P[arent] and Mr. Askin."12

The Amherstburg survey began on June 13, 1820, working north from the upriver boundary of the Caldwell property (modern Simcoe Street). The job was substantially finished eleven days later. "The Inhabitants as a grateful Memorial of this event named two of the Principal Streets and requested them to be entered on the Plan."13 By July 3 Smith could reflect, "Here ends the Survey and mensuration of every parcel of ground in the Town
of Amherstburg, and which was performed by double days when the Heat of the Weather was Intolerable, and the Inhabitants falling sick in every quarter. Looking back on his task late in the year, he wrote: “The confused state of the Town caused a great deal of trouble and loss of time. Boundaries were altered—Property had changed names—Lots with two numbers, others none, many Blanks & the Proprietors unknown.”

By 1822 the police regulation for Amherstburg, adopted in 1817, was found to be in need of strengthening. Thenceforth hogs running wild in the town would be impounded and, if their owners failed to pay the fine, the offending beasts would be sold at auction. (The law, in its mercy, did provide, however, that any profits realized would go to the owners.) In 1828 the justices approved amendments providing, among other things, that there be no firing of guns in Amherstburg without the written order of the local magistrates.

Amherstburg’s importance was increasing. A market was established in the town by a provincial act in 1831, and wharfage fees were provided for by another. The justices accordingly appointed a clerk of the market to collect fees, keeping a quarter as his remuneration.

Despite all of this, however, in 1833 Amherstburg impressed Patrick Shirreff less with its accomplishment than with its potential:

The houses are almost entirely of wood, arranged into streets at right angles with each other, and almost all bespeaking poverty and meanness. There are Catholic, Episcopal, and Presbyterian places of worship, besides schools, and the population is about 500. Most of the inhabitants are of French descent. Trade is very limited, and thought to be declining. Every vessel passing up and down the Detroit comes within 100 yards of the pier, which is at all times accessible to the largest class. Fort Maldon [sic], a paltry mud erection, is situated on the banks of the Detroit, about half a mile from the village, and the military reserve around the fort, which is the best of pasturage, is occupied as common. Amherstburgh is one of the oldest places in Canada, situated in its finest climate, the best British post on Lake Erie, and in beauty and healthiness of situation, inferior to no place in America; yet every thing, with exception of two handsome residences below the town, seems in a state of listless decay. I have no doubt there are better days in store for Amherstburgh.

Anna Jameson, in 1837, found much to agree with in Shirreff’s observations of four years before: Amherstburg “contains about six hundred inhabitants, has a good harbour, and all natural capabilities; but here also progress is lacking. There is a wretched little useless fort, commanding, or rather not commanding, the entrance to the Detroit river on our side, and memorable in the history of the last American war as Fort Malden.”
The reason for these depressing descriptions is clear: as the years following the War of 1812 became decades, the military importance attached to Amherstburg declined. By 1835 the town was seen (albeit by the Sandwich newspaper) as a backwater whose progress was impeded by the "worse than useless" Huron Reserve. If only the reserve were done away with, thought the Canadian Emigrant, the back settlement could be united with the front, which would "give to Amherstburgh a neighbouring Yeomanry, who will save it from utter dilapidation." Indeed, so much importance had Fort Malden lost as peace descended that Barrackmaster William Duff offered the buildings of the military establishment for rent, subject to their resumption by government in case of war.

In the southern tier of townships east of Amherstburg, other communities were coming into being. William McCormick, who might be thought of as a small-scale Thomas Talbot, had property interests in Colchester, Gosfield, and Mersea (including his beloved Pelee Island, first leased in 1815 and purchased, although with a defective title, in 1823). As he acquired Pelee Island and other lands in the county, McCormick was developing a vision of himself as a landlord, and he drew up a list of terms to attract settlers. Those locating on his mainland properties were assured that there would be no rent to be paid for seven years, no tithing, and what were described as only moderate taxes. Furthermore, an occupant could improve his holdings or not, as he pleased.

The regulations for those who set foot on McCormick's own part of paradise, Pelee Island in Lake Erie, south-southwest of Point Pelee, were a good deal more stringent. On Pelee, cutting timber or hunting or fishing without the proprietor's permission were forbidden, as was allowing livestock to run wild. Dogs doing mischief among the livestock were to be shot, and persons doing the same would pay double the value of any animals other than their own that died in consequence. Matters pertaining to fences and owners' marks on livestock were normally within the purview of a township, which Pelee was not (it was part of Mersea), but by his regulations McCormick arrogated them to himself. Pelee Island was William McCormick's micromonarchy.

McCormick was a shopkeeper-cum-entrepreneur who had served as Colchester's postmaster and, from 1816 onward, as a magistrate of the Western District. On April 2, 1834, he was appointed lighthouse keeper on Pelee Island, and that summer the family removed their residence from the mainland to the island. Once there, McCormick turned his attention to lumbering, particularly the export of red cedar to Sandusky, Ohio, for use as railroad ties. After the Patriot War, during which William McCormick and his family took refuge on the mainland, they returned to the island in the summer of 1839, but his health failed and on February 20, 1840, he died. Some months before his death he drew up a will, in which
William McCormick's lighthouse on Pelee Island began service in 1834. Its flame glowed dimly through the glass panes of the lantern, which would have been smaller than those appearing in this photograph, taken about 1909. Pelee Island Heritage Centre.
he left each of his children three hundred acres of land on the island. No survey of the island at the time existed, and when the oldest son arranged to have it done in 1847, he totally ignored his father’s will and claimed much of the valuable timber land for himself. In retaliation, the remaining members of the family initiated a lawsuit, whose result was a verdict which denied all title of the island to the McCormicks. It was not until 1865 that the government gave the McCormick family legal possession of the island.

Surveyor John Alexander Wilkinson received instructions from the Surveyor General’s Office late in 1839 to inspect certain lots in Colchester Township, “pointing out at the same time any particular advantages they may offer as the site of a village.”\(^{20}\) The bureaucratic mind was at work; the lots in question were the same ones that had been set aside as a town site when Thomas Smith first surveyed the New Settlement in 1787. Wilkinson’s inspection, carried out soon after receiving his instructions, revealed

Banks on an average from 25 to 30 feet high, perpendicular & composed of Yellow Sand and gravel in layers, great appearance of Iron Ore on a layer of clay. . . . The land cleared about 43 chs. [chains] from the Lake to the Woods. . . . The bay has a point to the N. W. on lot no. 71, and is open to the S. E. & S. W. & S. . . . In the spring of the Year When the ice begins to move its direction is towards the S. E. and frequently from the effect of the wind towards the shore, which would be directly towards the pier, should one be erected, large piers with ice fenders could be formed, but It would be at a great cost. £5000. would make a good & safe harbour for Small craft.\(^{21}\)

Late in 1840, despite Wilkinson’s admonition about an indifferent, inadequate, and expensive harbor exposed to ice damage, he was instructed to produce a detailed survey. Wilkinson’s survey, carried out on September 4, 1841—almost two years after his first directive—elicited objections from the Surveyor General’s Office: neither his field notes nor his diary were sworn to, and his charges were excessive. Wilkinson’s reply must have been a model of its kind: affidavits had never before been required; wind and rain had slowed the work, “as also the local extraction of the needle by iron ore”; timber for stakes was hard to come by because the land had long since been cleared; and the miserable road from Sandwich to Colchester rendered the charge for wagon hire quite reasonable.\(^{22}\)

The village of Colchester arose not so much out of real necessity, but as a community laid down where planning theory suggested one ought to be, with the result that soon its modest potential as a Lake Erie port was eclipsed by a competitor. In October 1834 James King, his wife, and two sons were passing through Cobourg, on their way from Montreal to
the London or Western District, in search of a suitable property of one or two hundred acres. Their way was smoothed by a letter of introduction: "Mr. King is a Gentleman and a Scholar, being the Master of 7 Languages, he and his amiable Lady have for Several years last past Conducted a Seminary here [Montreal] with great Credit to themselves and to the entire Satisfaction of a large circle of friends."\textsuperscript{25} By 1836 they reached Gosfield Township, where at a site on Lake Erie they saw the potential of a lake port serving the surrounding area. There they built a house in 1843 and a school the following year.\textsuperscript{24} There was never much doubt as to Kingsville's name; John A. Wilkinson used it when he recorded his arrival at the spot on January 20, 1850, to begin the town plan.

**Essex County: The Northern Tier**

Above the Huron Reserve, much of the activity associated with urbanization focused on Sandwich Township. Following the inception of the British Régime, Sandwich Township gained a block of British-style lots in the form of a parallelogram, behind the French-Canadian ribbon farms of the Côte des Hurons. Standard British two-hundred-acre lots oriented to the compass were overlaid later, when the two Talbot roads, which intersected at Maidstone Cross, became another layer in the sequence of survey patterns. Sandwich thus became perhaps the most complex township in the province.\textsuperscript{25} Adding to its distinctiveness was the blurring of the line between church and state. At least as late as 1823 the term L'Assomption Parish, or simply L'Assomption, was still in use to denote the settlement opposite Detroit. As in Louisiana, this was a blending of meanings of the word parish: both an ecclesiastical and a civil district.

In 1824 Surveyor of Roads John Gentle's report for a realignment of the road from the town of Sandwich to Petite Côte was disallowed; a signpost was considered by the magistrates to be sufficient to deal with its mires and its windings. The issue was escalated when no less than the Grand Jury became exasperated with the condition of the road to Petite Côte, which they pronounced impassable even in midsummer. The problem, of course, was the low and marshy shore in the ancient Petite Côte settlement, which made it difficult to determine exactly where water left off and land began. As described, the farm lots in the first concession were of a uniform forty arpents' depth, but the location of the back ends was therefore uncertain. On January 11, 1825, the magistrates found it necessary to order that the location of the line between the first and second concessions be determined by a survey, as a prerequisite to applying statute labor to open the road allowance. Two years later the justices went one better by ordering that roads be laid out between the first and second concessions of Sandwich Township, in both directions from the Huron Church Line. Even
The layout of Sandwich Township changed substantially with the coming of the Talbot Road West. The ill-fitting parallelogram of the back concessions (see the pre-Talbot Western District map) was almost entirely replaced, leaving only the western corner surviving. Blocks of crown and clergy reserve lots were set aside, outlined in pink or gray, respectively, on the original of this 1843 map. Off the ridge given over to Talbot's road and his settlers, cross-hatching in some road allowances denotes drowned land. Wilkinson Family Papers, Macdonald Historical Collection/Archives of Ontario.

today the deviations of Malden Road from a straight line betray that it parallels the shore of the Detroit River—or what was arbitrarily deemed to be the shore. The road behind the first concession upriver from the Huron Church Line, modern Tecumseh Road West, began like its downriver counterpart by following a course that was roughly parallel to the shore, forty arpents inland, at the back of the Huron Mission lands and a seigneury granted in the middle of the eighteenth century.26
Patrick Shirreff, who had had to stretch a little to find kind words for Amherstburg following his visit in 1833, had to work even harder after seeing the district seat: “Sandwich is also on the Detroit, sixteen miles above Amherstburgh, and derives its only importance from being the county town. The houses compose an irregular street, running along the river, and chiefly occupied by French. The trade of Sandwich is more limited than that of Amherstburgh, and I do not think it has the same chance of progressing.”

Negative views of the town manifested themselves several times over the next few years. The *Sandwich Canadian Emigrant* editorialized that new arrivals would be welcomed as laborers and servants: “They have no opposition to dread from our present laborers, as generally speaking they are too lazy to earn any more at a time than suffices to purchase whiskey to make them too independent to work until the bottle is empty.” Two years later a meadow opposite the residence of William Hands was subdivided into twenty-four quarter-acre town lots, which, in the view of the *Emigrant*, would “add greatly to the Town, and if the example was followed by a few others, Sandwich would soon be aroused from its present dormant state.” At what in 1837 Anna Jameson described as “the chief place in the Western District,” with a population estimated at not much over four hundred, she “saw sufficient to convince [her] that Sandwich makes no progress.” John Sandfield Macdonald, at the time a twenty-four-year-old law clerk assisting at a Sandwich sitting of the Court of Queen’s Bench, had little to say in praise of the town: “on our side of the River are to be seen but a few scattered houses here and there, sufficient evidence indeed of the lack of energy displayed by the people of the Western District.” Clearly the focus of activity in Sandwich Township had moved elsewhere, and the elsewhere in question was the crossing, upriver.

Sandwich was depicted from Springwells, Michigan, on August 13, 1833, in this view attributed to William R. Wood, a would-be architect and art teacher recently arrived in the Western District. Mill Street bisects the town, with the adjacent Duff-Baby mansion dominating all. At the left, beside the windmill, is a building that soon became John Prince’s brewery. At the right is the 1819 courthouse and jail, as well as the English Church, with the Western District Grammar School, the “Stone College,” in front. Macdonald Historical Collection.
Life on the Detroit frontier was characterized by a flourishing ferry business, and the ferries ensured that Sandwich Township would be more directly linked with Detroit than with any other part of the Western District. As early as 1802 Joseph Malleaux leased a ferry, a little downstream from François Baby's, to Étienne Pacquet. François Baby's wharf, sheltered in the outlet of the creek near the east edge of his farm, might well have been in use as a public ferry landing by 1804. Certainly by 1809 it was leased to Jean Baptiste Bonvouloir, ferryman; Bonvouloir conveyed his interest in the enterprise to Jean Louis Biron in 1818. The service at the upper Detroit River crossing evolved into competing services with their Canadian landings on the fronts of the adjacent François Baby and Charles Ouellette farms, opposite Detroit. Jean Baptiste St. Amour was granted a license on January 11, 1820, to operate rowboats (sail-driven when the wind was right) running from the foot of Woodward Avenue in Detroit to a landing on the front of the Ouellette farm. Three months later, "Uncle Ben" Woodworth, of the ambitiously named Steam Boat Hotel in Detroit, was licensed to operate a flat-bottomed boat and passenger boats from the foot of Randolph. In 1825 Baby's fleet, a scow and seven rowboats, was replaced by the horse-powered Olive Branch, which was brought from Cleveland by its owners, David C. McKinstry and Captain John Burtis of Detroit. The Olive Branch, a sidewheeler, was driven by two horses on a turntable set flush with the deck but enclosed by a circular wall to restrict their vision, so that it resembled "a sort of cheese-box on a raft," not much longer than it was wide. 

When the horse-powered ferry began service between Detroit and the Baby landing opposite, a change of scale as well as pace came over the cross-river connection. The heyday of the dugout canoes and flat-bottomed boats was over. For the first time a vessel existed that was large enough to transport substantial cargos, even loaded wagons with their teams attached, as well as numbers of passengers—which posed a problem that had not previously been of much concern to Collector of Customs William Hands. However, through the good offices of his friend in the provincial oligarchy, Inspector General Jacques Baby, a cross-border accommodation was reached that proved to be entirely characteristic of the region: "you may, until you are otherwise directed, permit the Boat intended to Ply between your Port of Entry and Detroit to pass & repass free from Tonnage Duty, on your ascertaining that the same permission would be extended to a British Vessel in the Port of Detroit to be so exclusively employed." 

Early in 1827 the magistrates, sitting in the Court of Quarter Sessions at Sandwich, heard the petition of John Burtis, master of the Olive Branch, for an Upper Canadian license for his operation, consisting of the horse ferry plus a wharf and a ferry house at Baby's landing. He maintained that several unlicensed people were already operating canoes and small boats as ferries, and further that no license had yet been issued for any ferry operating in
I.

An 1821 view from The Ferry toward Lake St. Clair, by John Elliott Woolford. In the foreground is a bridge crossing an outlet of the Grand Coulee, draining into the Detroit River. The ancestor of Riverside Drive winds along the shore beside the snake-rail fence. Among the possible identities of the figures on the bridge: François Baby with Charles Ouellette and Jean Baptiste St. Amour, Baby’s competitors, who operated a ferry landing on the neighboring farm. Photo by Michael J. Wilk. Courtesy of Art Gallery of Windsor.

Sandwich Township. Burtis’s application was referred on to the lieutenant governor, with a recommendation that it be approved—although Magistrate Alexander Mackintosh had a different view of the matter. Mackintosh hastened home from the courthouse that day to dash off a letter to Attorney General John Beverley Robinson, informing him that although Burtis was in reality American-born, he had been “whitewashed” as a British subject by François Baby, on part of whose property Burtis had erected his ferry facilities. Mackintosh added that Burtis had transferred his right of tavern-keeping to an American, deceitfully taking out a license in his own name; “This is the manner those fine subjects get to windward of us.”

Mackintosh’s real reason for opposing the Burtis application was that he had an interest in St. Amour’s competing ferry, operating from the Ouellette farm, next upriver from Baby’s.

François Baby, with the unhappy experience of 1812 in mind, must have been particularly conscious of the importance of the site opposite Detroit. Impelling him toward the commercial exploitation of the crossing was the prospect that the Welland Canal, bypassing the
Niagara River between Lakes Erie and Ontario, first opened in 1829, would generate economic expansion over the whole Great Lakes region. Moreover, Baby had the capital and the political connections required. The rivalry between the Baby-Burtis and the Ouellette-St. Amour ferry services continued, although Baby's greater financial resources maintained him in the lead. The first steam ferry on the river (and the first steamer built in Michigan), the Argo, was built for Burtis at Detroit in 1830 by Shadrack Jenking, a resident of the Canadian shore near Moy. Originally intended to run the length of the river and north as far as the foot of Lake Huron, the Argo (two whitewood logs joined by a light deck, powered by a four-horsepower engine) proved unsatisfactory for long trips, and in September 1832, Burtis having leased his interest to Louis Davenport, the Argo became a cross-river successor to the Olive Branch. However, the Olive Branch did not disappear that easily. She was acquired by Pierre St. Amour (Jean Baptiste’s son), and continued in service from the rival Ouellette landing for some years—literally as well as figuratively in the shade of the Argo.

By 1831 the name Ferry appeared, as a term to distinguish the landing from the rest of Sandwich Township. The development of The Ferry or Sandwich Ferry into something more than a handful of taverns was assured by the arrival from Scotland, by way of Montreal and York, of James Dougall. Situated on the line of communication with Detroit, and blessed as it was with Dougall’s business acumen, the venture flourished. So profound was the effect of the new level of activity at Sandwich Ferry that the town of Sandwich itself began a gradual decline from which it never recovered. Later ferries reinforced this effect, beginning with Davenport’s Argo as a successor at Baby’s to Burtis’s Olive Branch, followed by the Lady of the Lakes, running every fifteen minutes, it was claimed, from the wharf of the Union Hotel (the refitted and expanded premises of the late Pierre St. Amour at the rival Ouellette landing) in 1834. Davenport’s United replaced the Argo beginning in 1836, so it must have been the United that Anna Jameson described as "A pretty little steamer, gaily painted, with streamers flying, and shaded by an awning." Baby’s own Alliance appeared in 1842, and a second Argo entered service in 1848.

On April 10, 1832, the petition of fifty-four people was laid before the Western District Court of Quarter Sessions, calling for the realignment of the road in front of François Baby’s, together with a report on the subject by Surveyor of Highways William Elliott. After some alterations, the next day the magistrates gave their approval. Although Elliott’s report has been lost, both the nature and the purpose of the realignment seem clear. The straightening of the river road, formerly a path following the curving crest of the riverbank, was related to the laying out of a village plot on Baby’s river frontage, on farm lots 79 and 80. The new alignment, back from the crest, increased the profitability of the venture by per-
Insertion for a fee seems evident in this 1837 lithograph, *City of Detroit, Michigan, Taken from the Canada shore near the Ferry*, by W. J. Bennett. Although most of the vessels are larger than life, and prominently named, one, unidentified, in the middle distance on the right, is a modestly scaled twin-stacked sidewheeler with a tentlike structure on its upper deck. This is probably the new ferry *United*, which carried Anna Jameson during her visit. In the foreground is James Dougall’s wharf, but not his store with its sign; perhaps Dougall also resisted paying for inclusion. Courtesy of the Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.

mitting the sale of building lots on the north side of the street as well as the south. The plot, designed by none other than Thomas Smith, then living out his old age in Petite Côte, was no doubt at least partly motivated by Baby’s desire to profit from a new immigration, already happily personified by just such as James Dougall.

Smith’s plan was distinguished by its modesty as well as its simplicity; its chief feature was that its long axis was parallel to the river, with a lane leading down to Baby’s landing at the east edge of his farm. On August 6, 1832, Baby succeeded in selling his first village lots, near the ferry landing, to a blacksmith, wheelwright, and wagon maker named James Austen. Vital Ouellette (son of Charles, who had died of cholera on August 4) was not far behind; on Christmas Eve Joseph McDougall, another entrepreneur recently arrived in the District, acquired an acre of Ouellette’s lot 81 fronting on the river. However, before implementing his plan he must have seen greater opportunity nearby. Within three years McDougall took action that fundamentally altered the way the community was evolving.
The Quarter Sessions' constant struggle with the maintenance of roads and bridges must have been a concern to settlements such as François Baby's, at The Ferry. In 1832 the *Sandwich Canadian Emigrant* editorialized that the road masters had been negligent in allowing bridges along the river road, including the one at Baby's, to go unrepaired. It appears that no less than François's own nephew, Surrogate Court Registrar Charles Baby, had been trotting his horse across the bridge when the unfortunate animal fell through a hole in the west end, throwing the younger Baby and dropping him seventeen and a half feet onto his back at the bottom of the ravine. This was one of three such holes in the same rotting structure. Two years went by, and still no repair; in 1834 the *Emigrant* noted that the bridge had fallen away along both edges, leaving only a narrow passage along its median.

Nevertheless, Baby's village plot was soon expanded, across the front of his own residence, as far as the western edge of his property. Two new streets forming a cross were laid out, called Assumption and Church, oriented toward Assumption Church in a gesture apparently meant to demonstrate Baby's power in the parish. The hamlet was off to a solid beginning. Even in 1833 Sandwich Ferry impressed Patrick Shirreff more positively than had any other community in the district:

> About a mile and a half above Sandwich is the ferry at Detroit, at which there are fifteen or twenty houses on the Canadian side of the river, and several brick buildings were being erected at the time of my visit. This place will soon eclipse Sandwich, and may rival Chatham. Detroit is the great market of Western Canada, and the ferry possesses advantages, in proximity and access during winter, above every other situation.

By 1835 Sandwich Ferry could boast a population of perhaps two hundred. Beginning with Austen's wagon and blacksmith shop—to which a lumberyard was soon added—stores, taverns, a shoe shop, a sheet metal shop, tailors, bakeries, a brewery, a carpentry shop, and a saddlery all sprouted up. This growth attested to the economic buoyancy of the times. Richmond, as Sandwich Ferry or Sandwich Steam Ferry was being called by 1835 (other names in contention had been Belle Vue or Belle-Vue, Montpelier, and, in tongue-in-cheek deference to its preeminent citizen, Babylon), was the nucleus of a scattering of occupancies spreading out along the river road from Verhoeff and Jasperson's store, warehouse, and forwarding establishment on farm lot 87 (roughly Glengarry Avenue) on the east to John G. Watson's similar operation on lot 75 (Crawford Avenue) on the west. Where only a few months previously, according to the *Sandwich Canadian Emigrant*, the place had been hard to distinguish from the adjacent farms, it had become a flourishing town, offering good fare, splendid
taverns, and handsome accommodations to overnight guests such as families on their way to Michigan. Included among the noted establishments were the old St. Amour stand; Joseph House's new Mansion House; the former Labalaine's (by 1835 ferry master John McLane's) Pig & Tinder Box; Robert Mason's Crown & Anchor Tavern; and William Murray and Lemuel Crawford's Pavilion House. Prominent among the mercantile operations related to the docking facilities were the grocery and provision store of L. and H. Davenport, and the store, warehouse, wharf, and forwarding establishment of J. and J. Dougall.

Yet, trouble was brewing in Richmond. On July 14, 1835, François Baby's petition to the lieutenant governor for the water lots in front of his farm was endorsed by the magistrates, who noted that "the Water lot or lots opposite the land still unsold by him and in his possession will not be attended with any inconvenience to the Public." How wrong they were. Title to Baby's water lots would enable him to charge tenants for the use of facilities built on the shore, and would also interfere with the competing ferry on the adjacent Ouellette farm. The Ouellette ferry's figure-eight course would have made approaching its mooring almost impossible without encroaching on Baby's water lots. The ferries followed a figure-eight route, in order to be heading into the current as they eased toward their landings on each shore. Such a course also carried them across the strongest part of the current, midstream, with minimum effort. That summer John A. Wilkinson laid before the Quarter Sessions, in response to the petition of more than twelve freeholders of Sandwich Township, his survey of a road from the main highway in Richmond to the public ferry wharf, as near to the line between lots 80 and 81 as possible, between the Mansion House, on the Ouellette farm, and the Pavilion House, on François Baby's. "I have been informed," wrote Wilkinson, "that this Road has not only been in Use as a public highway for Many Years, but that Statute Labour has been expended in reducing the Hill and making the Road passable. It appears that Mr. Baby intends to shut up this road if not prevented by the Magistrates." Baby appears to have had plans for his frontage that did not include access from the Mansion House to his wharf; in his view the road was privately owned and he could do as he pleased with it. On August 22 the magistrates "Ordered, that a complaint . . . grounded on the Information of Joseph House [proprietor of the Mansion House] for a supposed stopping up of a High way leading to the Ferry in the Township of Sandwich be discharged, the Court being of opinion that it has no jurisdiction in the Case."

Less than two years after Joseph House had bought property on the Ouellette farm and built his Mansion House, he had had enough, and on April 13, 1836, he sold out to two newcomers, John Drew and John Dods. The ultimate trigger could well have come that February, with Baby's acquisition of title to the water lots in front of his (Baby's) property.
At first the new owners of the Mansion House joined in the game, buying a property on Baby’s side of the line, behind Austen’s wagon shop. However, relations soon deteriorated, and Baby found himself charged with maintaining a nuisance, in the form of two trees left standing since 1832 in the realigned road allowance across his frontage. For good measure, William Murray, the proprietor of the Pavilion House, was charged with keeping a bear in a cage outside his premises, to the discomfiture of passersby.

Yet these annoyances were the connivings of amateurs, who soon discovered that they were dealing with a professional. As feared, Baby blocked all public access from the road to the ferry landing by adding another building astraddle the pathway between the Pavilion House on his side of the line and the Mansion House on Ouellette’s, forcing traffic to use a new route down the bank west of the Pavilion House and well away from Ouellette’s ferry landing. To compound the mischief, Baby had a high fence built on the lot line, blocking virtually all light from the windows on the westerly face of the Mansion House, an L-shaped building whose longer arm abutted the same line. The process culminated in the case of *Drew et al. v. Baby*, heard in the Court of Queen’s Bench on September 10, 1840. Baby, as the *Sandwich Western Herald* reported, had been

induced, from motives and considerations best known to himself, to build an addition and a screen to the house now known as the “British Queen,” which addition and screen occupied the whole of the ground used for so long a period as a public highway. . . . After having occupied the Court for nearly a whole day, the case was left in the hands of the Jury, who found a verdict of two hundred and fifty pounds damages for the plaintiffs. 

Retrials ensued, but in 1841 the presiding judge found Baby guilty of “a very injudicious and high-handed act, deliberately committed by him, with a view to advance his own interest at the expense of his neighbour,” and upheld the award.

Baby, perhaps something less than contrite, carried on with his own plans for Windsor’s development. He built the ferry Alliance and in 1843 obtained a lease in his own name for its operation. In June 1845 he had surveys carried out for a new ferry landing. The result was that on December 28, 1849, notice was given of Baby’s application to stop up the old road leading to the landing on the line between farm lots 80 and 81, because of a new road he had opened about twenty yards to the west, where his tormentors on the Ouellette farm could no longer annoy him. The new road even had a name; Ferry Street had been born.

Meanwhile, on September 23, 1835, surveyor Wilkinson had been working for Joseph McDougall on an assignment that eventually proved at least as important as the one carried
out by Thomas Smith for François Baby three years earlier: "Laid off Lot No. 85 in the 1st Con. of Sandwich, in a town plot. . . . The street through centre of lot called McDougall Street." In addition, several cross streets extended as far as the side lines of the lot. When the justices of the peace approved McDougall Street they set the future community at the crossing on a course that it would follow for generations. Whereas the long axis of the Baby subdivision ran crosswise of Baby's property, lots 79 and 80, and was thereby limited to their combined width, McDougall's ran lengthwise of his single farm lot, and could be repeated far back into the interior, with cross streets extending as far as the side lines wherever desired. Moreover, it could be duplicated on adjacent lots, and that is precisely what eventually happened. The McDougall model was reproduced endlessly in the future Windsor, even in the interior behind the original Baby pattern.

The infant Windsor was, in the language of the day, "a go-ahead town." Railroad fever was beginning to grip the populace. The railroad in prospect in 1836 would run between the Niagara and Detroit Rivers. Along the shore in Sandwich Township, those proprietors farthest to the east fancied themselves to be in the best position to profit from a connection with Detroit. There was talk of a twenty-thousand-dollar "Railroad Mansion House" to be built at McDougall's South Detroit development. Joseph McDougall was selling individual building lots in his subdivision at one hundred to six hundred dollars each. The *Emigrant* reported that whereas two years earlier a typical farm in the first concession between Sandwich and The Ferry brought £375–500, in 1836 a farm could not be had for less than £2,000. The buyers were reported to be American speculators, each vying for the most advantageous position in advance of the coming of the railroad.

McDougall's layout, dubbed South Detroit, for a time added to the profusion of names attached to the burgeoning cluster of would-be communities at the crossing. However, it must have been obvious that these hamlets would soon coalesce, and that a single name would have to be agreed upon. Accordingly, a meeting in Hutton's Tavern on September 10, 1836, called "for the purpose of naming the village at the Ferry . . . resulted in its being called *Windsor*.

The river road was characterized in various ways during Windsor's birth process, "main" (whether as an adjective or a proper noun) being a common factor: Main Street, the main highway, the Main Road, and the like. However, a change came about, seemingly in 1839. On December 7 surveyor John A. Wilkinson referred to "Sandwich Street," and thereafter Sandwich Street it was.

During the 1820s and 1830s, while the fundamental shift in focus upriver from the town of Sandwich to the crossing was taking place, many of the roads in the Windsor area that
are now taken for granted were coming into existence. The process began with a road leading to a settlement well back from the river, in the second concession. The Grand Marais, the great marsh, that in the 1790s had connected Little River with Turkey Creek in Sandwich Township, must have been marginally navigable water at least through the first decade of the nineteenth century. Enlarging the channel to improve surface drainage from its vicinity could well have improved navigation for a time, but once the marsh was drained, the channel, having lost its water supply, would have diminished rapidly, and the community strung along its banks would have found itself isolated from the rest of the settlement. On July 9, 1821, John Gentle, surveyor of roads for Essex, reported to the magistrates assembled in the Court of Quarter Sessions that “the Road on the Marrai” was laid out, as close to the ditch as possible. The justices approved the road, but ruled that the farmers’ side-line fences could be left up until the grain was harvested that autumn. Grand Marais Road is, therefore, perhaps surprisingly, one of the oldest roads in Windsor.

In July 1827 Surveyor of Highways William Elliott reported to the Quarter Sessions that, in response to a petition, he had traced a path for the continuation of the Talbot Road West from the Irish Settlement to Bedford Street in Sandwich, by way of the Huron Church Line and Centre Street (respectively, present Oldcastle, Sandwich Street, Huron Church Road, and Prince Road). Although they had previously authorized statute labor to be expended on Centre Street, the magistrates now changed their minds, responding that the route should be along the Huron Church Line all the way to the Detroit River. The residents along the Talbot Road West had a reason for wanting their settlement connected to Sandwich, so much so that they petitioned again in October, this time for fifty pounds to aid in building the road. A stage line—Chauncey Beadle, proprietor—was chartered in 1827 to begin a service between Sandwich and Queenston, by way of the Talbot Road West. So urgent was this connection that the district granted the fifty pounds to permit the work to be done by contract, and the inhabitants of the Irish Settlement were also exempted from paying their 1827 taxes. Despite Father Joseph Crevier’s reluctance to move the Assumption Church fence, the Quarter Sessions ordered the Huron Church Line road to be opened on December 14, 1828. Five years later the panel of magistrates heard the application of the residents of Sandwich Township for a road in the first concession along the Huron Church Line, the baseline of the ribbon-farm surveys. The inhabitants supported their claim to a road extending along the line to the Detroit River by maintaining that the map by which surveyor Mahlon Burwell had been governed in his survey for Talbot’s road in 1816 showed a road allowance along the line. The magistrates were not so sure, however; their approval of the petition was conditional on there actually being such an allowance. At the same time, the
opening of roads in the allowances between the concessions east of the Huron Church Line (present Tecumseh Road and Third Concession Road) was approved.

The eastern portion of Tecumseh Road in Windsor began in 1829 as an extension, laid out by William Elliott, of the road “in the rear of the first concession in the parish of L’Assomption, commencing from André Pelletier’s” on lot 75. The original road between the first and second concessions, eastward from the Huron Church Line, had run parallel to the river, north of the surveyed line, and in fact a settlement had grown up along the deviant path. This would not do, and on January 11, 1831, thirty-four petitioners asked the magistrates that statute labor be expended to open the road allowance (the straight line between the concessions) from the Huron Church Line eastward as far as the side line between Charles Jannette’s and François Baby’s farms, that is, between lots 78 and 79, where it would join the easterly portion of the road. This notion was soon set aside in response to objections from the residents of the settlement along the existing path across the rear of the first concession, and on May 10 Surveyor of Highways Elliott laid before the Quarter Sessions a report of a road he had laid out from André Pelletier’s house on lot 75 back to the second concession. On May 21 the justices’ authorization for a road between the Janette and Baby farms was rescinded because Elliott’s proposal was approved. The connection along present Crawford Avenue between the two parts of Tecumseh Road was made, and deviation had triumphed.

Howard Avenue in modern Windsor is a hybrid. It began as a road on the line between farm lots 86 and 87, from the Detroit River to the Grand Marais, which was approved by the Quarter Sessions in 1830. It appears that the opening of this road, straddling the side line, must have proceeded northward from the Grand Marais to a point about halfway to Tecumseh Road, where it offsets to the east to proceed along the central axis of lot 87. The reason for this is that early in 1832 the owners of the lot, Peter Frederick Verhoeff and George Jasperson, two merchants recently arrived in the district, granted to Louis St. Amour a right-of-way through their property from St. Amour’s land in the second concession to the river road, subject only to the proviso that he should not forget to shut the gates along the way. So began one of the important future links between The Ferry and its hinterland, a route that makes the transition from a former rural road extending along the side line between farm lots, to an urban street running down the middle of one of the lots, to an urban subdivision (Aylmer and Glengarry linked by The Horseshoe, products of the 1850s related to the coming of the railroad).

The realization, however dim, of the eventual need for multiple east-west connections in Sandwich Township, across the grain of the farm-lot pattern, was coming about by 1844. In
response to a complaint of the Grand Jury about the state of the road along the shore from
the French Church to Windsor, Alexander Wilkinson prepared a “Sketch shewing the pro­
posed line of Road from Sandwich to Windsor,” on the course of present University
Avenue. However, in 1844 it was not to be. A petition for the road was confronted with a
counterpetition, and the original failed. London Street existed as a short cross street on
Francois Baby’s old farm when it was divided among his heirs in 1853, but the extension to
Sandwich was not opened until 1874.

Alexander Wilkinson’s 1844 map showing a proposed inland road from Sandwich to Windsor.
The new Assumption Church, then under construction, was to front on the contemplated road.
Upriver, the urban subdivisions were beginning to exhibit a sawtooth back-end pattern that
later manifested itself as Windsor expanded into the interior along the lines of the French-
Canadian farm lots. Wilkinson Family Papers, Macdonald Historical Collection/Archives of
Ontario.
A question of land ownership came to surround Peche Island, a low, barren bank of clay in the upper Detroit River. It appears that Jean Baptiste Laforet occupied the island about 1800, claiming the authority of the then governor in chief, Robert Prescott. On Jean Baptiste's death the island passed to his son and legal heir, Joseph Laforet, and from him to his son Oliver. However, Jean Baptiste also had a natural son, Charles, and by 1834 both Oliver and Charles were living on the island, each with a large family. A petition from Charles to Lieutenant Governor Sir John Colborne, pleading for recognition of his status as an heir, elicited a response that he would not disturb those whose possession had been granted by the governor.

**Kent: The Thames Region**

In Kent, the Chatham town site lay dormant, occasional squatters and absentee owners aside, long after being surveyed by Abraham Iredell in 1795, despite its obvious advantages. The location at The Forks was a natural one, the head of navigation on the River Thames where it was joined by McGregor's Creek, and Iredell's plan logically followed the sinuosities of these watercourses. However, the abandonment of what proved to be too-expensive efforts to develop Chatham as a defensive outwork for Simcoe's projected provincial capital, upstream at London, led equally to the deferral of development of the town site until conditions were more favorable. By 1821 even the wooden stakes of Iredell's plan were rotted away, but the military importance of the site remained, despite the failure of Simcoe's plan, and accordingly Mahlon Burwell was called upon to carry out a new survey in the summer of 1822. Still, despite continued elaborate plans for fortifications at The Forks, there were precious few settlers other than absentee owners and a few squatters on the broken-front lots along the riverbanks. For practical purposes, despite all the talk over the previous years of Chatham's rightful status as a district seat, the Chatham town site was moribund.

The long-awaited change came in 1832, with a surge of immigration into the province. For perhaps the first time, Chatham found itself favorably situated, not only in its own right as a home for a shipbuilding industry and a place for the export of wheat and barrel staves, but also as a transfer point for immigrants on their way to Michigan and elsewhere who found the overland Upper Canadian route shorter and more convenient than traveling by way of Lake Erie or the United States. For those who preferred the water route, the newly formed Thames Steam Navigation Company was happy to provide transportation to or from ports between Chatham and Buffalo—including Sandwich Ferry and Detroit—on board the *Thames*, built at a princely cost of £4,250.
As early as 1833 the population of Chatham had grown to about one hundred people, and soon the air was filled with optimism. Patrick Shirreff visited the Chatham town site on his way down the Thames: “Chatham is on the south bank of the Thames. Twelve months ago it was said to contain only five or six houses; now there are nearly twenty. It is visited by steamboats; and from being situated at what may be termed the head of the Thames navigation, it is certain of rising at no distant day.” Shirreff found the question of the location of the district seat, last manifested in 1818, still alive in Kent County: “There is a rumour of making Chatham, instead of Sandwich, the seat of the district courts, which would be a more convenient situation; but the growth of Chatham seems to be independent of this alteration.”

The impetus so recently felt in Chatham was attributable at least in part to the Thames Steam Navigation Company, whose share capital was derived principally from Duncan McGregor and Henry Van Allan, with additional financing from William Gaspé Hall of Sandwich Ferry as well as a number of farmers on the lower Thames. A large steamer, the *Thames*, was built in 1833 by “Mr Jenkinson” (possibly Shadrack Jenking, of Sandwich Township) and moved to Cleveland, where her forty-five-horsepower engine was fitted. The arrival of the 112-foot *Thames* at Sandwich from Cleveland on June 23 was cause for celebration. An earlier *Thames* contributed her little fifteen-horsepower engine to another, smaller vessel then being built at Chatham, the *Kent*, to run between Amherstburg and Chatham. The advent of the age of steam was reflected in the naming of places of accommodation. Claude Cartier called his Chatham inn the Steamboat Hotel; unfortunately, the idea was not unique to him or to Chatham.

In 1835 the *Sandwich Canadian Emigrant* followed up its rhapsodic description of developments on the Canadian shore across from Detroit with a companion piece on Chatham: “Should the Thames be made navigable to London, and a rail-road be constructed from thence to Port Stanley, or a canal from Janette’s to Two Creeks on Lake Erie, we know of no town in the province which in any way compares with Chatham.” Chatham’s rapid development in the last year again raised the question of separation. “In a few years it will, no doubt, be made the District Town for a new District to be formed from the northern and eastern townships, which will add to its importance.” One indicator of the spectacular growth of Chatham was the change in the number of inns and taverns: through 1831, zero; in 1832–34, two; in 1835, three; in 1836, six; and in 1837, nine. Indeed, Chatham was proclaimed a port of entry by Lieutenant Governor Sir John Colborne, on the strong recommendation of the Quarter Sessions at Sandwich.
Concurrent with such a surge was an increase in social problems. On January 24, 1835, a meeting was held in Claude Cartier’s inn at Chatham to establish the Chatham Vigilant Society for the Suppression of Felony. The purpose of the society seems to have been to apprehend felons, as well as to indemnify members against losses through crime by regular assessments on its participants.

At Chatham a balance had unconsciously been struck between raw commerce and grace. Anna Jameson’s relief was evident as she emerged from the gloom of the forest in 1837 to encounter a community as prettily situated: “The first view of the beautiful little town of Chatham made my sinking spirits bound like the sight of a friend.”

Shipping and shipbuilding were essential components in Chatham’s development. Although freight was usually moved in humble sailing vessels, passengers expected to be transported in steamers. Perhaps the pride of the fleet was the stylish, speedy, and profitable Brothers, which carried many an immigrant family to the Chatham area, as well as others to the Detroit River settlement. Other well-known Chatham-built steamers included a second Kent, launched in 1841, and, ten years later, the Ploughboy (named for a racehorse). By late 1842 the population of the area was about 1,000, and a year later it was close to 1,100, of whom about 75 lived in North Chatham, a suburb-in-the-making across the Thames. Chatham acquired boosters, who saw it as the very hub of the Western District, in their view soon to replace Sandwich as the district seat. Much of this growth, of course, was owed directly to shipping, and the more astute entrepreneurs were quick to link their land-based businesses to marine transport; plank sidewalks appeared outside the Royal Exchange Hotel, and the path leading from the hotel to the Brothers’s wharf was macadamized, to encourage travelers to patronize both, to the benefit of their common owners, the Eberts brothers. With this kind of enterprise it was small wonder that Chatham’s population reached 1,500 by 1845, or that it was incorporated as a village in 1850 and a town in 1855.

Other hamlets—Louisville, Kent Bridge, Howard Bridge, and Thamesville—developed in Kent County during the 1820s and 1830s, scattered along the Thames above Chatham where crossings were practicable. Howard Bridge enjoyed a brief few years following the opening of a rough bridge in 1826, bolstered by the implementation of stage service between Niagara and Sandwich in 1828, but it lost much of its importance in 1834 when a bridge was built across the Thames at Chatham, leading the road beside the Thames across the river at that point instead, and the village disappeared in the 1840s.

The habitable portions of the lower townships in Kent were filling up. In 1833 Thomas Talbot wrote to Commissioner of Crown Lands Peter Robinson, “I am to beg of you not to
sell any but the Clergy Lots in the Township of Howard, for I have located every Lot except the Clergy and Canada Compy's Land, in Howard. Perhaps half of Kent was considered to be unproductive land because of the need for drainage: "Already do we see strong, healthy, laborious settlers seeking for land in Raleigh and Tilbury, and after wading for days through water, give up the hope in disgust of obtaining a favorable lot."

Kent: The Northern Townships

By the 1820s, population pressure had created a demand for new townships in the Western District. Little land was available in the Essex Peninsula except for the Huron Reserve, and that had been the subject of a petition for its opening to settlement in August 1819. In Kent County, however, there was all the land north of the line of the 1790 McKee Purchase, running west from the Moravian Reserve to the Chenail Ecarté. The expansion of settlement in Kent County began as early as 1796, when the Shawnee Township was purchased, but it gained momentum with the Amherstburg council late in 1818, which led to tentative agreements of March 1819 and May 1820 to purchase the lands north of the Thames. Final agreement was delayed until July 1822, but that technicality did not hinder a committee of the Legislative Assembly, which on March 24, 1821, recommended that new, "unorganized townships," as they were called, including Zone, Dawn, and Sombra, be added to the County of Kent, and the Province Division Act received royal assent and became law. The conveyance of the lands north of the 1790 purchase, between the townships of Sombra and London, agreed to in principle by George Ironside Sr. in 1820, was finalized by Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs William Claus on July 8, 1822. Even six months before the purchase was finalized, there were already fifty-three settlers in what was still being called "Indian land."

With the signing at Amherstburg in 1825 of one last treaty, a provisional agreement with the Ojibwa nation for the purchase of about 2,200,000 acres bordering the upper St. Clair River and the southeast shore of Lake Huron (reservations excepted), the thirty-five-year process of the Crown's acquiring of lands including the Western District was complete. Nearly half of the latest acquisition—the Huron Tract, as it came to be known—was speedily conveyed to the Canada Company, in lieu of a portion of the clergy reserves in the townships already surveyed and opened to settlement.

Sombra Township, linked since its creation with the Townships of Dover East and West for assessment purposes, found itself standing on its own in 1826. It was not until July that Clerk of the Peace Charles Askin called to the justices' attention that the January town meeting in Dawn had not included Sombra; whereupon the Quarter Sessions appointed
township officers for Sombra, as well as for “Sinclair” (the St. Clair River) and for Walpole Island. However, Howard and Orford, and Camden and Dawn, continued paired as united townships, sharing township officials.

July 10, 1827, was the last time that Amherstburg was the scene of a signing of a conveyance of native lands to the Crown. Four reservations were set aside from the purchase, all in the Western District: one at the mouth of the Au Sable River, another at Kettle Point, and two on the St. Clair River. One of the St. Clair River reserves was just north of Sombra Township, while the other was south of the rapids at the outlet of Lake Huron.

The northern fringe of the district, fronting on Lake Huron, had gone virtually unorganized and unsettled until early 1829, when a retired British naval officer, Henry Jones, settled a group of about fifty in a tract at the mouth of Perch Creek. Jones, inspired by a British industrialist and utopian socialist and supported by Sir John Colborne, created a communal settlement, Maxwell, where his charges shared an enormous, one-story central building with a common kitchen and dining area as well as separate quarters for each family. It was a noble venture, evoking memories of the altruistic Baldoon experiment, but a disastrous fire in the main building rendered it even more short-lived. However, it did begin the opening up of the northernmost part of the Western District.

By 1832 Dawn had fifty-two families, and Zone had twenty-eight. Mills were established where Bear Creek crossed the line between Dawn and Zone, and a settlement sprang up, called Thomasville by the inhabitants in deference to one of the mill owners, John Thomas. The residents of the vicinity mentioned encountering a curious oily slate that would burn, a finding that a quarter of a century later would lead to an oil industry.

By 1833 crown lands were being advertised for sale in the new townships of Moore and Sarnia, on the St. Clair River. These, together with Plympton and Enniskillen, testified to the popularity of Lieutenant Governor Sir John Colborne; all of these new townships bore names associated with his past career. Within Sarnia Township, Port Sarnia was laid out at the same time.

Writing in 1833 to the editor of the Sandwich Canadian Emigrant, Henry Jones Jr. complained that immigrant settlers passing through Chatham on their way to Sarnia or Plympton were referred to his father’s vicinity—that is, to the commune begun in 1829. Henry Jr. added that as a result many who encountered the charred ruins of Maxwell were crossing to Michigan in disillusionment and disgust. Others had somewhat different interpretations. A story originating in the Montreal Abstract asserted that of 208 British immigrants who arrived at York, only 54 went on to Plympton, and that as a result charges were brought against the agent who was responsible. Thomas Talbot, a somewhat less idealistic colonizer,
dismissed the whole matter; Jones Sr., in his opinion, was "a discontented bore." To encourage the settling of the northern townships it was "Ordered—That Taxes of poor Emigrants of the townships of Camden Dawn & Zone, amtg. to 16/3 ½ cy (amounting to sixteen pounds, three and one-half shillings currency) be remitted."

The raw quality of the Bear Creek settlement, on the fringe of the wilderness in 1834, was apparent to visitors from older parts of the district. William Cosgrove, of Chatham, wrote to William Hands: "I have lately been in the Township of Dawn adjoining Bear Creek on a pedestrian Tour and I think I can speak feelingly as to the bad state of the roads there particularly adjoining the Upper Mill. . . . The Inhabitants in that quarter deserve every encouragement from their industry & public spirit which bids fair to outvie the River Thames Settlement in a few Years." The Canadian Emigrant agreed; the editor could find not a single magistrate in Camden, Dawn, Zone, Sombra, Brooke, or Enniskillen Townships, and he noted that path masters and other township officials had to travel eighty miles to take their oaths of office. Even more seriously, he remarked that criminals frequently went unpunished because of the difficulty of getting them to justice at Sandwich.

By 1835 there was a demand for expanded service in the northern townships. Claude Gouin wrote Postmaster Hands from Sombra:

You remarked that you hoped we had taken Steps for the Establishment of a Post Office on the St. Clair; Mr. Henry Jones wrote me a few days ago that there ought to be a Post office at My Place and one at the Forks of Bear. Now If You think Me a fit Person to fill that office, will thank you to recommend Me to the Post Master General. It is not for any profit I apply for the Situation, it is Merely to have My Own Letters Free.

A few days later Hands learned that Gouin had a competitor seeking the Sombra postmastership: Neil Campbell, "Located in as desirable a place as any in the Township and half way from Chatham to the Rapids of St. Clair."

Some attention was devoted to roads and bridges in the northern townships—the river road through Sarnia Township, and another beside the north branch of Bear Creek (modern North Sydenham River) in Sombra, for example. By July 1835, however, four thousand pounds granted by the province for roads in 1833 and 1834 was exhausted, and a further request for a road in Plympton had to be refused for lack of funds.

Sarnia Township was attracting the attention of absentee speculators. Samuel Street of Niagara was one, whose attempted purchase of 14,777 acres in 1834 was opposed by Captain Richard Emeric Vidal, lately retired from the Royal Navy and settled on the
St. Clair River, on the ground that the land was worth more than the 1s. 10d. per acre that Street was offering. After a year of haggling, a total price of £4,494. 13s. 5d. was agreed upon.

By 1835 a hamlet on the east bank near the upper end of the St. Clair River had come into existence and acquired a name: "Buenosayres." It appears that the name must have been speedily withdrawn and replaced by Glasgow at a meeting of the inhabitants held about October 14, and that at another public meeting between November 16, 1835, and January 6, 1836, Glasgow was succeeded by a name less likely to lead to confusion with other world capitals: Port Sarnia.

Another of the communities coming into being on the St. Clair River in 1835 was Corunna, in Moore Township—place-names, like many others, having connections to Lieutenant Governor Sir John Colborne. Wallaceburg, at the forks of Big Bear Creek, was also laid out early in 1835, as a subdivision by the owner of lot 13 in the second concession of Sombra Township. One of the advantages of which Wallaceburg could boast was "a good, substantial floating bridge on Bear Creek," at that location. Fromfield (originally Froomefield, or Talfourd's, after settler Froome Talfourd) sprang up by 1836. Uneasy and perhaps embarrassed at their own lack of familiarity with the new, northern townships, the authorities at Sandwich asked surveyor John A. Wilkinson to obtain a map of the area.

In October 1836, dissension similar to that accompanying the evolution of the Huron Reserve into Anderdon Township in Essex County marked the surrender of land in Zone Township, on the north side of the River Thames. Zone was part of the Moravian Reserve, whose population declined as the disaffected moved away to Missouri.

By March 1837, Wilkinson's plan for Corunna having been considered by the bureaucrats in Surveyor General John Macaulay's office, they had certain deficiencies to call to his attention. The plan was not signed; the accompanying field notes were not notarized; dimensions were given for one of each type of block shown on the plan, but not for all, which was an irregular practice; and the department was being billed for the whole survey, which was to have been shared with an adjoining property holder. Mistakes in Wilkinson's arithmetic were called to his attention, and by mid-May the unfortunate Wilkinson's plan had fallen under the eye of Lieutenant Governor Head, who likewise did not like what he saw. Diagonal streets were to be eliminated, along with all irregularly shaped blocks. The central square was to be adjusted to the new plan, and riverfront lots were to be reserved for use as a market.

Wilkinson, perhaps understandably, was not in the best frame of mind on receiving this news. His efforts of 1836 having been swept aside, he had to start over again. He began on
June 1, 1837, by pulling up and collecting the old stakes and throwing them into the St. Clair River. The task of re-doing the Corunna survey began on June 5 with the hiring of a crew, and the glow began to return: “King’s birthday kept. Rainy & heavy mist. Engaged two men to commence tomorrow. Drank a bottle of wine among the party to the health of his Majesty Wm. 4th with cheers, Queen Adelaid[e] & all the royal family with cheers, the Hon. John McCauley and Surveyor General, deputies, etc., etc., etc.”

Communities, like their residents, take on personalities that reflect their experiences as well as their origins, and in consequence each develops an identity of its own. Those in the Western District demonstrate that Uppermost Canada was anything but the monolith of popular perception.
A cold day. Awoke at 6 A.M. by an alarm gun at Sandwich. Rose & saw a fire at Windsor. Proceeded there with the Militia & found it in possession of brigands & pirates. We attacked them & killed 27 & took about 20 prisoners. I ordered the first 5 taken to be shot. We lost 4 men, & poor Dr. Hume, Asst. Staff Surgeon who was cruelly murdered by them!

The “Battle of Windsor” has often been referred to in quotation marks, perhaps because the name somehow seems out of scale. Taken by itself, the battle, or more precisely the incident, could be disposed of in just seventy-one words—as did John Prince, colonel of the Third Essex Militia and officer commanding on the Detroit frontier, in his diary entry for Tuesday, December 4, 1838.

**Background**

Yet, the Battle of Windsor cannot be taken by itself. Having failed in their attempt late in 1837 to liberate the Canadas from the clutches of the hated Family Compact, many supporters of William Lyon Mackenzie in the upper province and Louis Joseph Papineau in the lower had fled to the northern United States. There a good many private American citizens
had joined them, and, reorganized as the Patriots, they reappeared in the two Canadas the following year. In the Western District, exposed as it was on the south and the west to threats by Mackenzie's idealistic, republican-minded American supporters, life came to a virtual halt as panic gripped the population.

The rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada had been regarded in the United States as an outgrowth of the Revolutionary War; as the Detroit Daily Advertiser put it, “What has heretofore been stigmatized as rebellion now assumes the dignity of revolution.” It was believed that only a show of force was needed to bring about an uprising of thousands of oppressed Canadians against their reactionary government. The ensuing series of invasions by unemployed Americans and expatriated Canadians in search of adventure and loot, along the St. Lawrence and the Niagara and Detroit frontiers, has been styled the Patriot War. In
1838 these men, who were largely uninformed about the real issues at stake and were devoid of official sanction, sought against crushing odds to overthrow the governments of British North America from beyond their borders. The Patriot War was an early embodiment of what many Canadians have since come to embrace as a fundamental article of faith: that most Americans are ineffably ignorant of Canada and Canadian affairs.

In Canada most people genuinely mistrusted self-government, and an anti-American lexicon became current. During the Patriot War, American-style democracy was referred to in the Canadian press as mobocracy. Since under democracy the citizen was sovereign, it was customary to sneer at individual Americans as "sovereigns." Those who called themselves Patriots were often called pirates or brigands in the Canadas. Americans who supported the rebels' cause were derided as "sympathizers," residents of the "land of sympathy," in the popular Canadian jargon of the day. "The people" were by definition those who were governed, and they tacitly acknowledged that they were incompetent to govern themselves. As the editor of the *Sandwich Western Herald* wrote,

> We have just returned from that sanctum sanctorum of Liberty and equality—the renowned City of Detroit. There we beheld the beauties of Republicanism displayed in all its native grandeur and simplicity—Notwithstanding the rain and sleet... and the streets, as usual, ankle deep with mud, the lordly sovereigns turned out in all their majesty, and rallied to the polls to exercise the "inestimable privilege" of dropping a bit of printed paper into a ballot-box!... Abuse and slang of the grossest kind has been bandied about from one slavepress to the other; and slander, vituperation, and detraction have been employed by one party against the other... Upon the whole, we are much inclined to think that both are nearly as bad as republican mobocracy and humbuggery can make them. Save us from universal suffrage and vote by ballot, and all their concomitant evils will be forever avoided.

The distinction between the appended titles esquire and yeoman was very real; it was an extension of the feudal system, which in medieval England had offered security. Democracy was government by the yeomen, the peasants; therefore it was government by the incompetent. Democracy was chaos. That the United States successfully avoided becoming embroiled in yet another war with Britain in the face of this general attitude, let alone the specific frictions of 1837 and 1838, is a testimonial to commendable restraint on the part of the young republic.

The rebels' famous march down Yonge Street toward Toronto, on December 5, 1837, became the first in a long series of defeats for Mackenzie and his supporters. Several hundred
rebels exchanged fire with a much smaller defending force before the insurgents' front rank dropped to the ground in the accepted stratagem of the day. In the failing evening light, the rest of Mackenzie's men, thinking those in front had been killed, turned and ran. The news of Mackenzie's failure and his flight to Buffalo reached the Western District by mid-December, prompting a flurry of emergency meetings to deal with the prospect of disturbances by supporters of Mackenzie, with the encouragement of American citizens, launched from American territory. From these meetings John Prince emerged as de facto commanding officer in charge of the defense of the Detroit frontier.

The American authorities, as exemplified by Governor Stevens T. Mason of Michigan, worked to suppress the "Patriots" by enforcing American neutrality. In concert with this, John Prince and a number of his fellow magistrates proclaimed their intent to extradite to the United States any Western District inhabitants charged with depredations committed in American territory in response to Patriot incursions. For his own part, John Prince was exhausted by his nightly patrolling of the frontier. He estimated the force available to defend the Western District at 150, but the shortage of weapons reduced the effective number to perhaps 60. He did expect about 150 blacks, mostly armed, to become available shortly, but "the Canadians generally refuse to turn out."3

Prince was right. Captain John Caldwell's company of Essex Militia boasted one captain, one lieutenant, one ensign, four sergeants, and sixty-two privates in its membership when it paraded at Amherstburg on December 30, 1837. However, of these, one sergeant and sixty-one privates were absent, presumably immersed in New Year's Eve preparations. Caldwell's company was armed with one sword and one English musket. Two privates turned out when Captain Lewis G. Gordon's company paraded on the same day—but forty-five were absent.

There were reports of perhaps a thousand men assembled at Mount Clemens, being readied to cross the St. Clair River with several cannon and thrust toward London, but, "this District cannot do more than guard its frontier, and that only as a check on the Detroit rabble."4 Windsor merchant James Dougall reportedly advanced $12,000 to a committee of the magistrates for the purchase of weapons and provisions in Detroit, plus about $14,000 in blankets and clothing, his own stock-in-trade.

The Schooner Anne
The tragicomic events of 1838 on the western frontier were the results of bumbling Patriot attempts to prevail against what they saw as an oppressive oligarchy, and almost equally ill-considered efforts to resist. To begin with, there was what has come to be known as the schooner Anne incident of January 6 to 9. The Anne sailed down from Detroit in broad day-
light on January 6, with the apparent intention of cannonading Amherstburg and Fort Malden, to the anticipated embarrassment of the government and the garrison. That evening about 150 of the newly enthused Essex Militia left Sandwich on board the *United* and a scow owned by John Prince, for the defense of Malden, where they arrived in heavy rain at 4:00 A.M. However, the *Anne*, in company for a time with the sloop *Geo. Strong*, hovered in the vicinity of Bois Blanc Island and Elliott's Point, on the eighth directing several token shots at the defenders, who replied with rifles and musketry. The next morning the *Strong* was captured, while the *Anne* continued cruising about, occasionally firing into Amherstburg. Toward sunset on the ninth, as she sailed down the channel, firing as before, a lucky shot from the shore killed the helmsman, causing her to go out of control and run aground on Elliott's Point. Lying there helpless, the *Anne* and her little band of warriors fell easy prey to Colonel Prince's forces, who waded out from shore, boarded her, and took her occupants into custody. Several Patriots were killed and twenty-one captured, together with quantities of arms and ammunition, plus three cannon. The schooner *Anne* incident (which John Prince dubbed the Battle of Elliott's Point) was over.

**Fighting Island**

Next came the "Battle" of Fighting Island—surely a misnomer. In midafternoon of February 24 John Prince learned that a Patriot force had taken possession of the island, "but night coming on & the Ice had to cross over we delayed making an attack until tomorrow Morning." The weather by then being more propitious, "At 1/2 p 7 we marched over the Ice to attack the Enemy. They were about 300 in number, & before we got half way across they fled before us like kill-sheep dogs." So ended the Battle of Fighting Island.

**Pelee Island**

Crossing on the ice of Lake Erie from Sandusky, a Patriot force of perhaps four hundred invaded Pelee Island early on February 26, within two days of the landing on Fighting Island, probably in a pincers movement aimed at the capture of Fort Malden. The response might have been more vivid if only the defenders based at Amherstburg had known. As it was, Lieutenant Colonel John Maitland of the Thirty-Second Regiment received word of the five-day-old occupation of Pelee Island only on March 1, and forthwith sent Captain George Mark Glasgow of the Royal Artillery to inspect the ice and report. By about noon the next day Glasgow informed him that the ice was rough but a crossing was possible.

Prince at Sandwich was told of this report by 4:00 that afternoon, and at 6:30—six days after the repelling of the captors of Fighting Island had awaited the convenience of the
thermometer—the troops set out: four companies of the Thirty-Second, one of the Eighty-Third, two six-pounders accompanied by Captain Glasgow’s Royal Artillery, one company of Essex Militia, and a small party of natives. After a march down the bank of the Detroit and east along the Lake Erie shore to Colchester, they rested for four hours before moving out at 2:00 on the morning of March 3 across the ice of Pigeon Bay toward Pelee Island. Soon becoming lost in the darkness, they had to pick their way by lantern light, which dashed any hope of catching the Patriots by surprise. John Prince’s description of the ensuing events was a model of conciseness: “Reached Point Pelee Island with the Troops just after Sun-rise. Occupied the Island at once. Released the Inhabitants who were prisoners to the Rebels & Invaders. The latter fled! At 2 an action took place.”

Maitland reasoned that if he swept the island from north to south, the said rebels and invaders would escape back to Sandusky as easily as they had come, only to return as soon as the troops had left. Therefore, in concert with his sweep he sent a detachment of ninety-five men, under Captain George Browne of the Thirty-Second, south on the ice off the west shore to await the fugitives as they emerged from the bush at the southwest tip, Fish Point. The Patriots, aware of the separation of Maitland’s troops, decided to attack Browne’s detachment for two reasons: first, it was weaker than the main force, with its artillery, and second, if defeated they could more easily make it over the ice to the international boundary, beyond which they would be immune from pursuit. Browne’s force waited; the Patriots finally advanced into range; the British volleyed; and the Americans returned fire. After a fusillade lasting perhaps twenty minutes, Browne ordered a charge and the Patriots fled back into the bush. Because Browne’s force was too small for pursuit, the British reformed on the ice, but an expected second Patriot attack never came. About an hour after the battle, many Patriots were seen departing the island, and the cavalry gave pursuit; the chase had to be abandoned, however, when Captain James Ermatinger’s horse put a hoof through the ice. Many Patriots escaped over the thin ice east of the battleground, although some broke through and drowned. About three hours later, unaware that a battle had taken place, the main British body arrived at Browne’s position, having been delayed by deep snow as well as their unfamiliarity with the paths through the woods. By 11 P.M. all had returned to Amherstburg. The Battle of Pelee Island, which took place not on land but offshore, must thereby qualify as one of the world’s very few naval battles to have been fought on foot.

Alarums and Excursions

These encounters had been uniformly disastrous for the Patriots on the western frontier. Nevertheless, many residents of Buffalo, Cleveland, Toledo, and Detroit were persuaded that
mobocracy was the only life worth living for Upper Canadians, and feeling along the border continued to run high. On May 18 three Canadian officers visiting Detroit were set upon and pelted with stones, eggs, and mud by a crowd bent on provoking them into drawing their swords.

At a public meeting at the Sandwich Courthouse on June 9, Prince asserted that the refusal of the Executive Council of Upper Canada to try the prisoners taken in March at the Battle of Pelee Island, pending receipt of advice from Britain, had resulted in Patrick Spencer, aide-de-camp of the Patriot "General" Thomas J. Sutherland, being set free. Prince added that Spencer was now engaged in organizing another invading force.

Prince held the prisoners to be common pirates, and as such subject to civil law. The view at Toronto was that they were prisoners of war, and therefore had to be tried by military authority. Prince's reply was that in order to be prisoners of war, a state of war had to exist; and since states of war do not exist between private organizations and governments, the central government would have to declare a state of war to exist between two national powers—that is, between the United States and Great Britain. While Prince had the greatest respect for authority, and in fact defended the Toronto government on a later occasion, not because it was right in this instance but precisely because it was the established authority, nevertheless he saw the danger in releasing prisoners simply through indecision.

Such incidents as the indignity of May 18, a brief Patriot landing on the Canadian side of the St. Clair River on June 28, and a rumored attack timed for the Fourth of July, induced John Prince in his current capacity as chairman of the Western District Court of Quarter Sessions, in consultation with a couple of his magistrates and Colonel J. Hill of the Queen's Light Infantry, to take matters into his own hands. As a defensive measure, orders went out on June 30 for the constables along the Canadian shore of the Detroit to seize all boats and canoes, for impounding at Sandwich under military guard. The job occupied at least eight constables, one of whom secured as many as fifty-nine canoes by himself. In addition, a constable checked passenger arrivals at the ferry landing, and another was posted on the ferry itself.

In August the Detroit authorities seized three cannon being unloaded from the steamer Bunker Hill, although the rumor that six more had reached Patriot hands jangled the nerves of the residents of the Canadian shore. Meanwhile, John Prince was out of town, viewing one of Toronto's newer tourist attractions—Montgomery's Tavern, Mackenzie's erstwhile headquarters and the scene of a rout of the rebel forces the previous December.

In October Colonel Richard Airey, commanding at Amherstburg, received a detailed description of a planned attack on Fort Malden. Five steamers were to bring men from
such ports as Buffalo and Cleveland to destroy the town and the fort, with its new military works then under construction (incidentally, by an American contractor!). This story, like many others, turned out to be false—but not before Airey had ordered Prince to call out his militia. At best, the turnout of the Third Essex amounted to “a poor & very thin Muster” through most of November, but by mid-month the rumors of impending attacks were becoming more accurate, and if Windsor and Sandwich were not armed camps, then certainly efforts had been made to give that impression. It was reported that three wagon loads of muskets and equipment had arrived in Sandwich, plus twenty-four Congreve rockets. This was probably true, since there were rumors of fifteen hundred men here, five hundred there, assembled for an attack on November 21. The American General Hugh Brady, operating in the interest of the neutrality laws, seized a Patriot schooner loaded with arms. Clearly a large-scale attack was planned and expected; the number of reports reaching Canadian ears would suggest that the Battle of Windsor was one of the worst-kept secrets in the history of warfare.

By the end of November the militia were still coming in all too slowly, although the sight of Patriot watch fires burning three miles below Detroit on the night of November 30 sent the adrenalin pounding through the arteries of the Canadian defenders. “We are up all Night & men & officers completely worn out. What a horrid state of things, and what a country!” John Prince confided to his diary.

Patriot attempts were made on the nights of November 30 and December 1 to steal a steamboat, both of which were prevented by General Brady, but by now the strain on the Canadians had become very apparent. Prince wrote, “I am by no means well & I undergo the same routine of Military duty by night & day as before. It is Enough to kill a Horse.” On Sunday, December 2, word was received at Sandwich that the Patriots would embark that night on the steamer Champlain, recently arrived at Detroit from the upper Lakes. Apparently the attempt of that night was frustrated by quantities of drifting ice, although the report, which undoubtedly was accurate, was enough once again to alert the militia and the good citizens of Sandwich and Windsor, virtually all of whom were under arms that night.

Monday, the third, brought a report that General Brady had seized 250 arms, and with that news came a certain relaxation. It was the proverbial calm before the storm.

Windsor

At two or three o’clock the following morning the Champlain landed on the ice along the Canadian shore, opposite the lower end of Belle Isle; it was the classic invasion route pio-
neered by William Hull in 1812, and its result in 1838 was to be even less happy. The
Patriots, about 150 strong, under the command of either “General” Lucius Verus Bierce,
with Captains Putnam and Harvell second in command, or “General” Putnam, depending
on who told the tale afterward, scrambled ashore and waited until about five o’clock, when
they started down to Windsor.

On the way was a yellow, two-story frame building, the former Morin store, lately com­
mandeered as a guardhouse for Captain Lewis’s company of Essex Militia. The Patriots,
challenged by a sentry, promptly shot and wounded him in the arm. Those inside, aroused
by the shot, began firing wildly into the darkness. The Patriots, crowding close under the
eaves to avoid the musketry, determined to eradicate this obstacle to their plan by burning
the building. John H. Harmon, a Cleveland printer, went to the house of William Milles, a
black barber living nearby, took a burning faggot from the fireplace, and set fire to the
guardhouse. Milles was rash enough to express a sentiment that did not find favor with the
Patriots (“God save the queen!”), and in consequence was shot and killed. While one
account tells of those inside the guardhouse being forced back into the flames at bayonet
point as they tried to escape through the windows, it appears that most of the occupants
were captured and later let go as the Patriots tried to effect their own escape.

Down the bank, almost directly in front of the burning guardhouse, was the steamer
Thames, tied up at Van Allen’s wharf. The Patriots decided to burn it as well, in reprisal for
the British burning of the American vessel Caroline at Niagara Falls the year before. This was
soon accomplished, using embers from the remains of the Morin store.

The first company of the Patriots, under Putnam, marched down Sandwich Street past
the front of François Baby’s house, then turned left toward a fence running west from the
house to the dwelling of William Johnson, tore out a section of the fence, and entered the
Baby orchard, where they made themselves at home among the fruit trees. By 6:00 that
morning, Windsor was in Patriot hands. About 6:15 a church bell was rung and an alarm
cannon was fired in Sandwich. By about 6:30 two companies of the Second Battalion of
Incorporated Militia, Captain John F. Sparke’s and Captain John Bell’s, were on their way to
Windsor, followed by three companies of the Essex Militia commanded by Captains Fox,
Solomon T. Thebo, and William Elliott.

Shortly after 6:30, then, Captain Sparke’s militiamen made their appearance. Sparke’s
company was particularly well drilled, and in their scarlet uniforms they presented quite a
reasonable facsimile of British regulars, at least to untutored American eyes in the morning
darkness, as they wheeled in from Sandwich Street, past the Johnson house, and ranged
themselves behind a snake-rail fence along the west side of the Baby orchard. The first
volley, fired by the Patriots, was too high. The next, fired by the redcoats, accounted for upward of half a dozen Patriots. While Sparke’s company was occupying the Patriots’ attention in the orchard, the local militia turned into a ditch that ran along the extreme west edge of the Baby property, and crossed the fields behind the settlement so that they came up on the left flank of the Patriots. Caught in the crossfire, the “Sovereigns” broke and ran for the woods.

A six-foot-two-inch Kentuckian named Harvell, was carrying an enormous flag, a tricolor with a crescent and two stars in the lower corner near the staff. Windsor merchant James Dougall is reported to have shouted “A hundred dollars to whoever shoots the standard-bearer!” whereupon the Canadian fire concentrated on this figure.

Henry Grant, the editor of the Sandwich Western Herald and Farmers Magazine, who had been among those crossing the fields, was moved to describe the scene in an extra the following day: “The straggling volunteers of Sandwich, of whom we had the honor to constitute a part, came up in time to send a few leaden messengers after the fast-footed pirates, who fled with a velocity unexampled in the annals of locomotion.” Putnam tried to exceed even the velocity just described, to rejoin his second company which had been waiting, unnoticed by the Canadians, in the vicinity of Ferry Street, near James Dougall’s store at the wharf. A leaden messenger caught up with the unfortunate Putnam as he was crossing a fence.

While the ammunition was flying in the orchard, the Patriots waiting near the ferry landing were puzzled as to what they should do. Presently Lieutenant Wolstan Alexander Dixie of the Incorporated Militia, Commissary Henry B. Morse, and Doctor John James Hume came up the road from Sandwich—the latter to offer his professional services to whoever might need them. Warned that they were about to blunder into the ranks of a Patriot company, they turned and ran. Dixie and Morse escaped, but Hume got only as far as the establishment of Thomas Cole, the upholsterer and mattress-maker, not quite at the west edge of the Baby farm. Hume, according to the most detailed account available, tried to get into Cole’s house, found it locked, and in desperation hid in a large cask with a hinged cover near the woodshed. Thinking him in the house, the Patriots took an axe from the woodshed and broke into Cole’s home. Not finding their prey, they searched around the woodshed and soon discovered Hume in the cask. He was dragged out and stabbed in the chest with a bayonet, and the bearer of the axe mangled his arm at the elbow. After robbing the body, the Patriots rejoined their company and left Doctor Hume’s remains to the hogs.

John Prince, on receiving the alarm a little after six o’clock that morning, had sent to Fort Malden for reinforcements and a field piece. His sportsman’s blood aroused, he arrived
at the scene of battle dressed in hunting costume: fur cap, shooting jacket, long fur gloves, black belt, and sword, with a shotgun over his arm. Finding that the action was almost over in the orchard, Prince ordered a withdrawal to Sandwich, since the town and all supplies had been left completely undefended.

Now came the most significant moment in the entire Patriot War. Prince, mindful of the turn of events that had thwarted the trial of prisoners taken at Pelee Island and led to their ultimate release, had smoldered with frustrated indignation ever since. He had just seen the remains of the Morin store and the steamer *Thames*, and he had just been told of the murders of Milles and of his friend Doctor Hume, who had called on him that morning. Still in the orchard, about half a mile behind the hamlet of Windsor, Prince was not yet aware that the Patriots had in fact been defeated. Quite the contrary; the most recent report was that Sandwich, left utterly defenseless, was menaced by hundreds of Patriots moving down from Windsor. This false impression was reinforced by the fact that the crowd on the Detroit side was clearly audible, cheering their countrymen on. There were other considerations as well: the Sandwich jail was too small to hold numbers of prisoners; any put there would have little trouble escaping anyway; no regular army reinforcements had arrived from Amherstburg as of yet; and Prince could spare none of his own militia to guard prisoners. Taking all of this into account, as he later said, “I therefore resolved upon shooting at once and without a moment’s hesitation every bandit who happened to be captured and brought in.”

Colonel Prince having just reached this decision, Benjamin Cheeseman, a lieutenant in the Second Essex, dragged up a prisoner. Prince ordered the wretch in front of him to be shot.

By this time the skirmish in the orchard was over, and the defenders had moved down to Sandwich. To their relief there was not a Patriot to be seen—but to their chagrin the reinforcements from Amherstburg had not yet put in an appearance, either. Prince and his men were waiting in the main street of the town, in front of Mrs. Hawkins’s tavern, when Charles E. Anderson brought a second prisoner before him, identified as Uri Bennett, a Detroit jeweler, the man who had first shot Doctor Hume. By now the crowd knew what to expect, and a shout went up for the man to be shot. Prince ordered him taken to a field behind William Elliott’s house, next door to the tavern, for execution. Bennett lunged toward Anderson, who pushed him away, at the same time saying “Run for your life!” Bennett dodged bullets as he headed for the field, running between Hawkins’s and Elliott’s. William Elliott himself, standing on the gallery of the Hawkins Tavern, shouted down to the crowd, “Damn you, you cowardly rascals, are you going to murder your prisoner?” and then, specifically to his son-in-law Charles Anderson, “Ain’t you ashamed at shooting at an
unarmed man? Bennett made it to Elliott's haystack, where the militia caught up with him and the deed was done. Charles Anderson later admitted he had blown the man's brains out with his pistol after he had been killed, just to make sure he was dead.

The morning was not yet half over, and neither were the shootings. The crowd had moved from the Hawkins Tavern to the courthouse and jail, a block and a half down the street, when a third prisoner (this one named Denison) was brought in. There ensued an exchange between John Prince and Charles Eliot, one of the magistrates of the Western District, characterized by damns and exclamation marks from Prince and a plea for mercy and legal process from Eliot. Denison, wounded in one arm, was taken four or five yards around the corner, and there shot by Charles Anderson. Charles Eliot had the body dragged across the street and thrown over the fence into the grounds of St. John's Church. "What think you of this?" was Charles Baby's muttered question, directed confidentially to Captain Sparke, who was close by. Sparke's response was an enigmatic shrug of the shoulders and a noncommittal grimace.

It was about eleven o'clock by now, and at last the reinforcements arrived from Fort Malden at Amherstburg. They numbered about a hundred of the Thirty-Fourth Regiment, commanded by Captain Edward Broderick, a few artillerymen with a field piece under Lieutenant Dionysius Airey, and forty or fifty natives led by Amherstburg Indian Department Superintendent George Ironside Jr. Leaving an artillery detachment with their nine-pounder to defend Sandwich, under the command of Captain Alexander Chewett of the Essex Militia, the rest of the regulars and all of the militia and the natives marched off up the River Road toward Windsor in pursuit of the escaping Patriots.

Charles Anderson, who must have been energetically searching for prisoners ahead of the main body as they marched back up from Sandwich, found one. He was an Ohioan named Millen or Miller, lying in the house of William Johnson, just off the Baby orchard, where François Baby himself had taken him after the battle to have a leg wound attended to. It appears that first Anderson told Baby he had orders to shoot the man, after which he reported Millen's existence to Prince. Never did Colonel John Prince more eloquently match his language to the occasion than when he replied, "Damn his eyes, have him out and shoot him!" As the company marched past, forty yards away, three men dragged out of the Johnson house what looked from that distance like a buffalo robe, and threw it down. One man shot into the bundle and stabbed it with his bayonet, and then Anderson shot it as it lay, from horseback. Millen's naked body was left lying outside the Johnson door.

The column continued up the shore road toward a pair of windmills that stood on the Canadian shore a little below the downstream end of Belle Isle. The regulars were in the
lead, followed at some distance by the militia, while the natives scoured the woods behind
the fields lining the road. As an American schooner cruised close to the shore a fifth pris­
oner was hauled before Prince; the spot was about three-quarters of a mile below The Mills.
“Take him out and shoot him!” was the familiar order, and it was carried out in full view of
the schooner, only a hundred yards away and with a lookout aloft. Again Charles Anderson
administered the coup de grâce from horseback, and Anderson was heard to boast that he
had participated in the shooting of all five of them.²²

Aftermath
During the next ten days there seems to have been a period of stunned shock, while second
thoughts about that incredible morning’s work were beginning to form. By December 14 a
few rumblings must have reached Prince’s ears though, for on that day he recorded in his
diary, “L ectured my Qr Mr (Anderson) at Mr. Hall’s [tavern].”²³ At the same time he went
back and broodingly underlined in his entry for December 4 the words “I ordered the first 5
taken to be Shot,” and he added the marginal annotation “Ordered 5 Brigands to be Shot
upon the Spot,” leaving little doubt as to the subject of his lecture to Anderson.²⁴

The simple fact of the shootings seems to have been generally approved of both before
and after the battle, but telling a prisoner to run for his life before shooting him down,
blowing a man’s brains out just to make sure he was dead, dragging a wounded prisoner out
of a house and shooting him from horseback, and staging a shooting for the benefit of the
audience on an American schooner—these were the acts not of a defender of the established
order of things but of a madman. What was worse, their consequences would accrue less to
Charles E. Anderson than to Anderson’s commander, and that was Colonel John Prince.

By December 19 the colonel had adopted a distinctly defensive tone, and he wrote of his
“conduct, allow me to observe, which deep reflection and my own conscience fully
approve.” He quoted the orders of the lieutenant governor himself to an officer on the west­
ern frontier “to ‘destroy’ the brigands ‘if they effect a landing.’” He reminded the world that
only the preceding April the bench itself, at Doctor Edward Alexander Theller’s trial, had
“proclaimed that the captors of that piratical brigand would have been fully justified in
hanging him and his associates upon the spot.” He added that Theller was now the organ­
izer in Detroit of the present troubles, a trustee of a reward totaling $3,500 for the killing of
Prince himself and the destruction of his farm.²⁵

Still, Prince put on a brave show. On December 22 he “Lunched, as usual, at Bill Hall’s
tavern.” At a public meeting held on Christmas Eve, an address to Lieutenant Governor Sir
George Arthur was adopted, which went out over William Elliott’s signature as chairman of

169
the meeting even though its author was pretty obviously John Prince. It promised in regard to future invaders that "certain, instant and inevitable Death at our hands will be their Fate, without any recognition of them as Prisoners of War or as any other sort of Prisoners."

Yet public bravado could not convincingly be maintained for long in the face of private thoughts like this, of December 29: "An attack on My house Expected." The façade was beginning to crack.

On New Year's Day Prince's officers visited him at his home on the Park Farm to toast his health, and he now openly acknowledged that there was disapproval of his act:

He dwelt much . . . upon the brotherly love and Christian charity which ought to pervade all classes . . . at this auspicious season, though very dangerous crisis; but he lamented that he now, for the first time in his life, found that he had bitter and malignant enemies. [His visitors] would be surprised to hear the melancholy truth, but so the fact was, that a base conspiracy was formed to injure his fair fame and reputation. . . . That it consisted of only a few persons, it was true, most of whom he had always looked upon as friends, and not one of whom he ever directly or indirectly injured. . . . He would allow them to go the whole length of their vain, inglorious, and ungrateful measures, and then he would destroy them!

One of Prince's newfound bitter and malignant enemies was incautious enough to speak out, and was nearly destroyed, on January 5: "Was grossly insulted by Robert Mercer Esqre behind my back whom I gave a good sound Horsewhipping to in the public Street before my officers & many others."

Lieutenant Governor Sir George Arthur had been shocked and dismayed by what he considered to be Prince's gross mismanagement of the affair at Windsor—even more by the appearance of Prince's official dispatch in the Western Herald before Arthur himself had received it—and he was on his way to the western frontier to see for himself what was going on. Arthur must have found it difficult to accept that in the month intervening since the battle, Colonel Airey, commanding the British regulars, and General Brady, on the American side, had developed a high personal regard for each other and were actively cooperating to maintain peace along the border. How could military people do so well in a political situation? Arthur's own clerical staff, by comparison, was so inept that it had allowed a confidential letter on the Prince affair, intended for Charles Eliot, to be addressed to "Colonel Elliott," so that it was delivered to William Elliott of the Essex Militia, the pretended author of the address of December 24!
Sir George arrived at Amherstburg on January 11, no doubt intending to have a private briefing from Colonel Richard Airey before appearing in public at Sandwich. John Prince thought it would be a good idea to have His Excellency's private ear, too, and rushed to Amherstburg, where he "had a very long and Satisfactory interview with him." 30

Arthur went up to Sandwich on January 12, and on that morning another address was hastily gotten together, since it was customary to present an address and the one of December 24 had already been mailed and received. The wind had changed considerably by now, and the new document contained sentiments much milder than those in the first—in fact, some passages ran counter to the tone of the earlier address, even though (not having had time to read it) many of the same people signed the new one. Understandably, because of the duplication of signatures the lieutenant governor declined to accept the second address, and those involved were thoroughly embarrassed. Instead, Sir George replied to the Christmas Eve address:

If American citizens violate the laws of your country and their own, the wrong is not to be remedied by an equal violation on your part; on the contrary, if you follow the example which you and the whole of the civilized world reprobate, you at once take redress into your own hands; you constitute yourselves the judges in your own cause; you embarrass the local Executive and deprive Her Majesty's government of the strongest arguments which it can use in enforcing the justice of your cause. 31

Thus the lieutenant governor had reprimanded Prince, as his conscience said he must, but he had managed to make it sound as if he were rebuking those who had signed the address—and of course they could hardly admit that Prince himself had actually composed the offending document, which they had sheepishly signed. Gleefully John Prince cackled into his diary that night: "I quite defeated the plans of all my enemies. I crushed them, as I said I would." 32

Sweet revenge lasted not more than three days. By January 15 he reported "My situation by no means pleasant. A Cabal of disappointed persons Col. Elliott, Cowan & others are [ste] formed against me." 33 The others referred to included Charles Eliot and Charles Baby, as became clear in the next three weeks, and by February 9 things had reached this stage: "Horsewhipped Mr. Charles Baby because he refused to meet my challenge Except upon Hog Island, American Soil, and I afterwards posted him at Windsor, Sandwich and Malden as a Coward, a Liar, & a Poltroon." 34
Early in February the *Western Herald* listed those who had stopped their subscriptions following the appearance of an editorial in support of John Prince: Captain Bell, Charles Askin, James Dougall, Charles Baby, William Elliott, William R. Wood, François Baby, Robert Mercer, and John G. Watson—nine in all. In January a pamphlet had mysteriously appeared, entitled *The Battle of Windsor*—the first time the phrase had been used—reciting the events of December 4 in artfully inflammatory language. Although anonymous, it was known that thirteen people had sponsored its publication, and it seems reasonable that the list of defectors from the *Herald* substantially duplicated the sponsorship of *The Battle of Windsor*.

At six o'clock in the morning of February 11, near the Grand Basin in front of the town of Sandwich, Prince met William R. Wood, deputy clerk of the peace and one of the nine just referred to: "Distance 12 paces. At the first shots my Pistol missed fire. On the 2nd shot I hit Mr. Wood in the Jaw & the ball lodged there. He missed me both shots. Home by 8 to breakfast. I sent him home in my sleigh, & Rudyerd [Prince's second] and I walked all the way." The issue was Wood's refusal to sign an explanation of the pamphlet.

Although he was held to bail to keep the peace for six months toward those he had challenged, as the winter progressed Prince was showered with demonstrations and congratulatory addresses wherever he went. A few papers published editorials in condemnation of his action—the *Toronto Examiner* was one—but most jumped on the bandwagon as his fame spread. The *Cobourg Star*, and even the *Halifax Times*, fell in behind Prince as he became a national figure. In Chatham he received an address showing "how futile any attempt must be to pluck from the brow of well-earned fame, the laurels which a general public guard." A military court of inquiry, convened at Sandwich on February 18 to investigate the Battle of Windsor, sat until February 27. While the court deliberated upon his fate, Prince journeyed to Toronto to take his seat as a member of the legislature. On March 11 he "Went to the House of Assembly at 12 o'clock, and when I Entered it the Members *cheered me Enthusiastically!* A very high & most unusual Compliment."

The court exonerated him on March 14, which must have been a subject that Prince could reflect upon with satisfaction, dining in private on March 20 with a number of gentlemen in government as they "discussed [recent Governor in Chief Durham's] projected Union of the Provinces." Actually, the publication of Lord Durham's report early in 1839 succeeded in diverting a good deal of attention from the Prince question, first in England, where the shootings had become newsworthy in January, and then in the Canadas.
John Prince's dueling pistols, with his diary for 1839 opened at his account of the duel on February 11 with W. R. Wood. Prince Family/Macdonald Historical Collection.

The Prince affair was almost over. Almost. For his inconsistency in first supporting Colonel Prince and then joining in the intrigue against him, William Elliott was reprimanded and removed from command of the Second Essex Militia on March 20; Charles Eliot was to lose his judgeship of the Western District Court. Sir George Arthur summed up his own feelings in a letter to Colonel Airey: "I most cordially condemn Colonel Prince's proceeding; but then, I really believe he never premeditated any cruelty, and was under that degree of excitement that he knew not what he was about. But his detractors are a shocking set!" 39

There the matter might have rested—if only Colonel Prince had known when to keep quiet. At a public dinner given to him on April 4, he again advanced his own interpretation of Sir George's instruction to "destroy" the Patriots, and he suggested that he had been denied support after carrying out this order.
Meanwhile, a stir was being made in England, perhaps on instructions from some interested individuals in Upper Canada, and on May 14 Lord Normanby communicated to Arthur the British Cabinet's regret at Prince's conduct.

The fact is that Prince, despite his bravado and his unbelievable popularity, was in fear for his life. He was idolized in Sandwich, and yet the town was not safe. He even made arrangements to have his Sandwich mail addressed to him in another person's name at Detroit. Beginning with the issue of June 6, and for two and a half months thereafter, the Western Herald contained the following notice:

Having received certain threatening letters against my life and property, I hereby give notice that from this day, on every evening at sun-down, I shall cause 12 spring-guns with wires and strings complete and each loaded with 30 buck shot, to be set about my house and farm buildings, also 2 man-traps.

All persons are therefore hereby warned not to come within the grounds on which my premises are built, between sunset and sunrise.


The real tragedy of John Prince is that most people found him to be a spectacularly attractive personality, and yet, secretive and reclusive, he tended to react negatively when faced with clamor or confusion. A modern analogy might be the celebrity whose fans worship him all the more because he despises them. Consider the following lament: "Could not find time to wash, dress, or shave, or take even 1 cup of tea 'till 3 P.M.!!!! My life is absolutely worse than a common labourers or Even a Slave's! I am distracted with visitors innumerable. Oh what a horrid life!"

On the evening of June 11, a testimonial dinner to Prince was held in John Mears's orchard, on the riverfront just east of the town. It was a triumphant occasion. "The soldiers of the left wing of the 85th regt drew me through the town & took the horse off from the Carriage." It must have been a heady moment indeed when, by a large majority, on July 9 the panel of magistrates of the Western District once again elected Prince chairman of the Court of Quarter Sessions, in the place of the now-disgraced Charles Eliot. Yet his detractors were still at work, and the spring-guns were still set out.

Debate over the Windsor affair reached the House of Lords in London by May 30, and on Sunday, July 14, handbills were circulated at the door of Assumption Church giving a French translation of Lord Henry Brougham's motion of censure against Prince that had opened the debate.
The *Herald* slyly pointed out that Prince had practiced law on the Oxford circuit before emigrating to Canada; that Brougham and Prince had frequently opposed each other in court cases; and that Prince had regularly beaten him. It appears that this time Lord Brougham beat himself with weak arguments, although Lord Normanby, defending Colonel Prince, "was still in want of accurate information as to the precise circumstances under which the unjustifiable Act took place and therefore was obliged by putting together the known incidents of the day to speculate upon its having occurred at that period which seemed to tally best with the different explanations given in its defence."

No doubt Normanby thought he had earned an expression of sympathy from Arthur in response to this account of his discomfiture before the Lords; instead, Sir George delivered himself of the following extraordinary utterance:

> I feel quite assured that Yr. Lordship, by being thrown upon the resources of yr. own genius, was enabled to give a more satisfactory explanation of that much to be regretted occurrence than you cd. have done if in full possession of all the facts of the case as detailed in the documts. wh. I have had the honor of officially transmittg. to you by the present conveyance, for you wd. in vain have searched for anything *satisfactory* in them.\(^42\)

Yet Sir George was in possession of the facts, and he had to contend not only with Prince but with that shocking set, his detractors—and so it was hardly just to inspect the troops that the lieutenant governor visited Sandwich on August 12. That night there was another gleeful entry in Prince's diary: "Waited on His Excellency several times, and in the Evening he did me the honor to Confront me with the horrid *Clique* that has for so long harassed me here. *He lectured them Well.*"\(^44\)

Finally, on September 21, 1839, a committee of arbitrators reported to both Prince and his opponents in such a manner that all parties acted on its proposals, and the spring-guns disappeared forthwith. The arbitrators were unanimously of opinion, . . . [that] all the parties concerned should be unreservedly willing to express at once their unfeigned regret at what has unfortunately taken place. . . . John Prince Esquire should have no hesitation in expressing his unfeigned regret that he should have been led to give utterance to the hasty, intemperate, and provoking expressions made use of by him. . . . The gentlemen . . . whose names are connected with the printed paper entitled the Battle of Windsor, should have equally little hesitation in expressing their
unfeigned regret at the publication of the said papers, the evil tendency of which they did not at the time foresee. . . . Finally, we are of opinion that written acknowledgements of the feeling expected from all parties, drawn up in terms similar to the words above recited, should be the signal for all further reference to the various matters in dispute being . . . forever buried in oblivion. 

So be it.
When the Walk-in-the-Water thrashed its way to Detroit in 1818 it presaged the emergence of a virtually new social class on the frontier. For the first time the residents of both shores saw the fruits of the Industrial Revolution, in the form of a device that could do more work than a horse. Steam technology would change life forever. Theretofore the ruling class on both shores had always consisted primarily of merchants generating often-precarious livelihoods from the conveyance of goods to their customers, usually by barter and invariably at the mercy of the winds.

James Dougall
By the 1820s this fact of life was coming into question, with the entry into the North American economy of merchants of a fundamentally different stripe: people who were aware of the power of advertising as well as the importance of a desirable location in prevailing over competitors, and who dealt on a cash basis. By way of comparison, an inventory of the stock carried at Moy by Angus Mackintosh, as of July 7, 1819, revealed an astonishing range of merchandise being offered to the residents of the Detroit frontier and the upper Lakes region. The list was apparently compiled in no particular order except the sequence of shelves, drawers, cabinets, and bins in the establishment. It began with silk hose and ended
with unhulled corn, but between the two lay a highly detailed listing of hundreds of items, including exotic fabrics, tools, china, clothing, cutlery, condiments, medicines, weights, kettles, fiddle strings, ammunition, soap, window glass, hair powder, furniture, a wagon, liquor, and meat. The total value was reckoned as £8,003 2s. 9 1/4d., Halifax currency—a huge sum, but deceptive because it represented unsold goods on hand, not cash, and in that sense it was a liability rather than an asset.

In striking contrast to the old, debt-ridden ways of the Detroit River merchants, just seven years later two sons of John Dougall, a merchant of Paisley, Scotland, John Jr. and James, arrived in British America. They had a consignment of dry goods to sell for their father, first at Quebec and then at Montreal. Two years later John Sr. joined his sons, and with young James he opened a branch in York. Soon forced out by a fire, John Sr. and James moved on to Sandwich Ferry in mid-1830, and next to François Baby’s wharf they opened a general store. (John Jr. was a partner in the venture, known as J. and J. Dougall, although he remained in Montreal.)

Superbly situated at the connection with Detroit, the business thrrove sufficiently to enable John Sr. to retire to Montreal, where he died in 1836. Meanwhile, James, on his own at Sandwich Ferry, soon built a larger store and wharf, backing up his faith in the venture by advertising, beginning with volume one, number one of the first newspaper in the Western District, the *Sandwich Canadian Emigrant and Western District Advertiser*.
when it made its appearance on December 1, 1831. Dougall offered a stock of dry goods, groceries, liquors and wines, hardware, crockery, drugs, and patent medicines for sale, in addition to which he advertised “The highest price always given for all kinds of country produce, furs, skins, hides, etc; also the highest premium given for bills of exchange on Britain or Montreal.”

Settling into the community at the crossing with breathtaking speed, in 1832, the enterprising James Dougall married no less than François Baby’s daughter Susanne, eventually leaving a dynasty of five sons and two daughters. Dougall’s prominent part in the transition from a barter economy to cash is pointed up by the fact that within a couple of years his provision store was serving as the local agency for the Commercial Bank of the Midland District. It is also worth noting that the store soon became a temperance enterprise, on the initiative of James’s brother John Jr.

Those in positions of economic influence tend to acquire public posts also, and this truism applied to James Dougall as well as others in the Western District. Among Dougall’s contributions to the life of the Detroit River community, there is a tradition that he was responsible for suggesting the name Windsor in 1836. In 1837 he was appointed to the panel of magistrates, and as a notary public. The scale of Dougall’s rapidly acquired fortune was suggested the following year, during the Patriot troubles, when he was able to loan $12,000 for the purchase of supplies, providing a further $14,000 in clothing and blankets, at cost—this in addition to the $24,000 that he removed from his safe and stuffed into his pockets before joining the fray at the time of the Battle of Windsor.

Shortly after the Windsor episode, Dougall gave up his Commercial Bank agency, becoming instead an agent of the People’s Bank. He moved to a new home in Anderdon Township, where his estate, Rosebank, became famous not only for its crops but also for its pure-bred livestock imported from Scotland. At the same time he expanded his mercantile operation, opening a branch store in Amherstburg. By 1842 the firm of Dougall and Redpath (so named in 1840, when James’s brother John Jr. married into the family of the Montreal merchant John Redpath) had expanded its provision business to the point that it was supplying the Hudson’s Bay Company as well as the British market. Setbacks followed later in the 1840s, particularly on April 16, 1849, when Dougall’s Windsor buildings and contents to the value of $25,000 were lost in a fire, but the reputation for integrity developed over the previous two decades saw him through.

As steam gradually supplanted wind as a source of power for milling and for transportation, capitalists of a new kind arrived on the scene, people who already had substantial wealth to invest in exploiting the new energy, and who were able to use the political process
to do it. In the Western District two in particular came to dominate economic and political life: John Prince and Arthur Rankin.

**John Prince**

John Prince was born at Hereford, England, on March 12, 1796, the eldest son of Richard Prince, a grain dealer and miller whose taste for sharp practice and tax evasion exposed the family to a succession of bankruptcies. Apparently using money inherited from his paternal grandfather, young John commenced his study of the law in 1815. On June 17, 1823, he married Mary Ann Millington, of London, and thereupon joined a law practice at Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. Possibly the embarrassment caused by Richard Prince underlay John's overzealous pursuit of transgressors; in 1828 he was fined for the malicious prosecution of a bankrupt.

Leaving a cousin in charge of his substantial resources, the proceeds of just ten years' practice at Cheltenham, which were in large part to maintain him in style for the rest of his life, John Prince and his household suddenly departed the comfortable life of England. On September 5, 1833, Prince, privately tortured but outwardly possessing a compellingly attractive personality, purchased a property on Detroit Street on the bank of the river just above the town of Sandwich, in the Western District of Upper Canada. Prince was a man on the run; he had abandoned his father to die in debtors' prison in England, and had fled to possibly the farthest fringe of the British world in a desperate attempt to hide his guilty secret. In Sandwich he flung himself into a succession of activities, to distract his mind from the knowledge that he had violated the unwritten code of the gentleman.

John Prince was one to whom people naturally gravitated in time of trouble, but his contempt for his father became, on the one hand, scorn for those who turned to him for help, and, on the other, disdain for those who did not. He began to exhibit severe behavioral symptoms which plagued him for the remainder of his days: deep, almost unrelieved gloom, self-blame, and a chronic desire to avoid routine and to seek refuge through escape. The word "lowspirited" entered his vocabulary, and remained in use in his diary until his death in 1870. There were frequent suicidal wishes, and occasional episodes where he found himself physically unable even to leave his room to face the world.²

In his quest for anonymity, a man identifying himself only as "a gentleman who is possessed of one of the finest sites in Upper Canada for flour & grist mills," at Sandwich, advertised his intention to erect a grist mill, with or without sawmill attached, in the *Canadian Emigrant* on September 14, 1833. Patrick Shirreff also referred to Prince without naming him: "I was given to understand a steam-power grist mill was about to be erected at
Sandwich, by a capitalist lately arrived in the country, and I imagine will be chiefly employed in grinding wheat from the States. Soon, however, despite his best efforts, the reclusive Prince found himself attracting public attention. By early November his name appeared on the panel of magistrates for the Western District.

Prince was haughty and aloof, and yet he rapidly established himself as a leading citizen in the community of his choice. In April 1835 he acquired an interest in Louis Davenport's steam ferry Argo, connecting Detroit with the Canadian shore above Sandwich, at the hamlet that was shortly to become Windsor. His extensive land holdings in the Western District, acquired for the most part in 1834 and 1835, included a number of park lots encompassing about two hundred acres in the rear of the town, which he dubbed the Park Farm. There he built a Regency cottage with its back turned to the road and, by extension, to the world. For commercial purposes he also built a wharf on his lot near the foot of Detroit Street, where, instead of the mill he had planned, he established a brewery. The Princes, with their six children and their two long-time servants, had found a retreat.

It soon became obvious to those around him that the morose John Prince was not like other men. A dispute over a case involving a pair of accused juvenile horse thieves, Russell and Orin Stanborough, led to an exchange of insults between Magistrate Prince and Judge Charles Eliot, ornamented with appropriate classical quotations, published in what Prince on occasion contemptuously referred to as the "village journal." Prince's personal attack on Eliot had a precedent in the malicious prosecution of which he had been convicted in 1828, and his later life offered examples of similar excess. Eliot's assessment of his opponent as a man whose generous feelings were minimal—Prince's declarations to the contrary—was remarkably accurate.

The case of the Stanborough brothers, imprisoned since September 1834, came up for trial in August 1835, and was speedily dealt with. John Prince, then foreman of the Grand Jury, asked a visiting colleague, James Buchanan Macaulay, judge of the Court of King's Bench, whether he agreed with Charles Eliot's opinion that the Quarter Sessions lacked the authority to try cases of horse stealing. Mr. Justice Macaulay concurred; horse stealing could not be tried at the Quarter Sessions because it was not done in England, and there the matter ended.

The Stanboroughs might have had only their few minutes in court, but their names resounded a good deal longer in print, in an exchange that demonstrated how easily a minor incident could unleash a torrent of abuse. The editor of the Emigrant, new to his job at the time, began by questioning the action of the Grand Jury in finding no bill against them, suggesting that both had confessed orally, and one in writing. Soon "JPWD" followed with
a long letter on the admissibility of confessions as evidence. Next, John Prince was inspired to contribute a diatribe running to seventy-five column inches, in which he viciously attacked “This Mr. Charles Eliot—this would-be-learned ‘Judge’ as he is called (God save the mark!).” He went on to accuse Eliot of “gross and insufferable ignorance upon legal questions.” Eliot, in Prince’s words, was weak, designing, cunning, impatient, artful, and clandestine.

Charles Eliot himself joined the discussion with an epistle measuring an astonishing ninety-four column inches. A single sentence contained the essence of Eliot’s thought: “The Persians have a proverb, ‘The leper is discovered by his leprosy, and the gentleman by his language.’” However, he added a charge that Prince’s brewery was encroaching on Detroit Street, an offense that was hardly compatible with Prince’s position as a magistrate, sitting in judgment over others committing similar nuisances.
In Prince's rebuttal of the charge of obstructing the highway he portrayed himself as having improved the street by keeping it dry and clean, adding:

I know that the kind and courteous feelings of the Canadians are with me, seeing as they must, that I am bent on general improvements, that I spend all I have among them, and that my wharf (to me a most expensive one) and my private property along the riverside (extending as it does by grant into the very channel, and therefore liable to be shut up by me at pleasure) has been ever freely open to them for sleighing and every other accommodation they require from me.

As to Eliot:

Allow me to ask, Sir, of what service is this man to the community at large? Does he feed the hungry or clothe the naked? Does he give bread and employment to the poor, and destitute & brokenhearted emigrant, by cultivating his fine but deserted farm? I never heard he did any of these things; though one would think "the still small voice" forever on his tongue would prompt him to such actions. No, Sir, he will not improve. He cannot bear to see improvements. His jaundiced eye revolts at the appearance of intelligence, activity, and industry in others, and like the Drones he lives (and let him live) with those—"FRUGES CONSUMERE NATI" [born to consume resources].

Regarding the cause of the whole distasteful exchange, the Stanboroughs, Prince had what he must have hoped were a final few words: on their "confessions" alone, their Detroit mentor was the guilty party, not the two twelve-year-old boys. Charles Eliot could not resist the temptation to have the ultimate word, however. On September 21, after a few more personal attacks on Prince, he corrected him by noting that the Stanborough boys were fourteen and sixteen, not twelve. The *Emigrant* having cut off further correspondence on the subject, District Court Judge Eliot, his competence impugned by Prince, took out a paid advertisement on October 1 in order to publish letters of support from three lawyers practicing in his court: Alexander Chewett, William Elliott, and Charles Baby.

The death of the infant George Prince on February 17, 1836, was one of a series of unhappy events in his father John's life that was closely followed by a change in direction. This time Prince's new course took him into politics. John Prince was not without political experience, having campaigned in 1832 on behalf of a Whig candidate before departing England for the wilds of the Western District. It was not long before he found himself standing in the election of 1836.
Although John Prince's political career was erratic, it would not be accurate to say that his only consistency was inconsistency; throughout his parliamentary career he sought to advance local and personal interests. Among those interests was a new one: a rail connection with the outside world. Prince was not alone in this; rather, he embodied a new class of society, albeit on a larger scale than most. By 1835 Benjamin P. Cahoon, of the Colborne Furnace in Gosfield, had become one of the powers behind a petition for a railroad that would extend from the Detroit River, in Sandwich Township, to the Niagara River, in Berrie Township, and thence northward to the town of Niagara. The railroad would serve the needs of waves of American migrants from New York to the Michigan Territory; furthermore, it would open up vast inaccessible tracts in Upper Canada, and it would speed the development of the Western District.

True, there were a few who were opposed unless a tariff were imposed on American produce entering Upper Canada, but the Sandwich Canadian Emigrant noted that petitions were circulating and signatures were fast filling them up, calling for the rapid building of what was to be called the Niagara and Detroit Rivers Rail Road.

Public meetings were organized, to consider the best means of chartering the railroad. One was held in the district courthouse in Sandwich on December 10, and those attending constituted the new capitalist class in Essex: Sheriff Ebenezer Reynolds in the chair, W. R. Wood as secretary, and Felix Hands as treasurer. Messrs. Elliott, Chewett, Baby, and Cahoon, together with James Dougall, Charles Askin, John L. Williams, and Field Talfourd were to draft a petition which Elliott, then a member of the provincial parliament (MPP), was to present to the Legislature.

All was optimism. The Canadian Emigrant expected that all the stock to be offered at Sandwich would be taken up within twenty-four hours, mostly by Americans. A railroad meeting at St. Thomas on January 20 led to an enthusiastic editorial in the Emigrant on the 26th.

William Elliott, formerly representing Essex in the Legislature, was an effective lobbyist for the "Detroit and Niagara Rail Road" among its current members. Indeed, everything depended on the passing of a railroad bill. On March 29 the Emigrant carried the joyous news that the bill had passed the House and was on its way to the Legislative Council: "Thus, by the exertions of one or two spirited men who have had the true interests of the country at heart, is this grand design in a fair way of accomplishment; and the character the District has obtained from the supineness of the inhabitants, is, we hope, about to receive a very favorable change."

The bill became law on April 10, and the Niagara and Detroit Rivers Rail Road Company was incorporated on April 20, 1836, with a twenty-six-member board of commission-
ers representing the cream of the Western, London, and Niagara Districts. When the company met at the courthouse in Sandwich on June 1, John Prince took the chair.12 By July 18 Prince had himself subscribed five hundred shares of stock in the line.13 Stock sales were reported to be brisk, particularly at Buffalo and Black Rock, across the Niagara River from the proposed eastern terminus. By August 15 a meeting at Sandwich had been given the glad tidings that twelve thousand shares had been sold. So brisk were sales that the company's books had to be closed to allow the postings to be brought up to date, to be reopened a week later to record new subscriptions. At another meeting, on September 20 at St. Thomas, chairman John Prince, having equipped himself with Thomas Talbot's proxy the day before, was first elected a director, then the president of the line. Small wonder that he went to bed about two o'clock the following morning, "rather tipsy.

Water transportation, intertwined, of course, with politics, continued to be a companion interest to railroading. Robert Reynolds and Charles Fortier were commissioners for the building of a stone lighthouse and related facilities on the south end of Bois Blanc Island, and that autumn John Prince presented a petition in the legislature for a similar amenity at the outlet of the Thames. Nor was Prince's interest confined to the Western District; that year he instructed an agent to reinvest one thousand dollars in Ohio Canal stock. Prince's other financial interests involved contacts in Detroit as well. The establishment of a Western District bank was intended to generate enough activity to raise the district out of its economic doldrums. In addition he became involved in an insurance venture. Politically, Prince was also concerned with a bridge over the Thames at Chatham.

Clearly evident in 1837, the year of his most effective political contribution, was the philosophy that what was right for John Prince was right for all. Having succeeded early in January in forming a shaky alliance between his Niagara and Detroit Rivers Railroad and the London and Gore line, he supported the Great Western's plan to connect Hamilton with the new settlement at Port Sarnia. He withdrew his objection to a grant of £200,000 to finance the Great Western Railroad. In exchange, his own Niagara and Detroit Rivers line would be financed by not only share capital, but also public funds made available through Prince's political friends in the legislature. A proposed ferry to Detroit from Prince's wharf and a game bill also involved his personal interest.

The new capitalists in the district pressed ahead energetically in 1837 with their scheme to link the Niagara and Detroit Rivers by rail. Much of the impetus for the project clearly came from Thomas Talbot, who had given Prince his proxy in 1836, and in whose bailiwick many of the planning meetings took place. No doubt Talbot would have been mightily pleased to see the rails closely following the road allowance for the Talbot Road West. Actual
construction began on April 19, 1838, beside Prince's brewery at the foot of Detroit Street in Sandwich, doubtless with the intention of running from Prince's wharf along Detroit Street to the Huron Church Line, and from there paralleling Talbot's road on its way to the east.

Prince's mood was more positive than usual following the launching of the railroad project. The mellowing process began on Good Friday, 1837, when Prince and Charles Eliot shook hands, "after a coolness of 2 yrs & upwards." Soon Eliot resigned the chairmanship of the Western District Court of Quarter Sessions, and Prince replaced him. A scant three days later, Chairman Prince found a further opportunity to exercise his newfound compassion. Having caught two men stealing his rails, Prince had them before him in court. There he reprimanded them and hired them to work for him, for five shillings a day plus a glass of whiskey each.

By the fall, however, Prince was his old self, secure in the belief that his own achievements were far superior to others'. At the Sandwich agricultural fair on October 13, he noted, "Did not show anything because I should carry away everything if I did."

**Arthur Rankin**

Early in 1838 John Prince became acquainted with Arthur Rankin, a young man who had already earned a reputation as a swashbuckler. Rankin, two decades Prince's junior, was born in 1816 in Montreal, the seventh child of George Rankin and Mary Stuart, and it was obvious almost from the outset that the adventurous young Rankin had no fear of the unknown. At the age of fifteen he ran away from his Montreal home to become a cabin boy on a New York-to-London packet boat. By 1831 the elder Rankins had moved from Montreal to Amherstburg, where George found employment as a teacher. In 1835, Arthur, his life on the high seas behind him, returned to Canada. After a sojourn with his brother Charles as a surveyor south of Georgian Bay, Arthur moved to Amherstburg to join the rest of his family.

Domestic tranquillity was not to be his for long, however. A brawl in a Sandwich tavern with a Detroit lawyer, the subject being the honor of a woman, led to a duel on November 23, 1836, on Belle Isle. Rankin was freed by the Detroit authorities only after his opponent had recovered from a wound in the groin.

Soon Rankin journeyed to Toronto, where he embarked on a career in the militia, receiving a commission as an ensign in the Second Queen's Light Infantry. While returning to his unit in Toronto from a leave in Sandwich in September 1837, his steamer touched at Toledo, where three bounty hunters with a captive boarded. The prisoner was a black bricklayer thought to have escaped or been stolen from the Sandwich vicinity, the very point of Rankin's embarkation. His sense of justice was offended (Rankin was a nephew of abolition-
ist Charles Stuart, founder in 1821 of a black settlement near Amherstburg), and the love of
derring-do that had previously manifested itself in his relatively mild exploit of running
away to sea was once again aroused. At Cleveland Rankin challenged the bounty hunters,
who drew their pistols. Rankin used his own as clubs, felled the bounty hunters, and hold­
ing the crowd at bay with the same guns, fled with the erstwhile captive into the bush. After
a succession of narrow escapes from their pursuers, they encountered the proprietor of an
inn who helped them find safe passage to Upper Canada, where Rankin became a hero.

Ensign Rankin's travels brought him back to the Western District when his regiment was
ordered to Sandwich, and it was there, probably soon after the Battle of Pelee Island, that he
became acquainted with John Prince. On July 31, 1838, the Queen's Light Infantry
returned to Toronto, but without Rankin, who had transferred to the Second Battalion of
Provincial Volunteer Militia, stationed at Sandwich under Captain John F. Sparke.

Sparke was ill on the evening of December 3, so that when Rankin, left in charge at the
Sandwich barracks, received word of the Patriot landing at Windsor, it was he who mustered
a force of sixty men and joined the march to meet the invaders. During the early morning
skirmish on December 4 in François Baby's orchard, Pierre Marentette responded to James
Dougall's grandiose offer of one hundred dollars to whoever shot the rebel standard bearer,
but the flag itself was captured by Arthur Rankin. This was one more theatrical gesture in
his growing repertory.

In February 1839, while John Prince was embroiled in a series of duels resulting from
his conduct at the Battle of Windsor, the *Detroit Morning Post* reported (erroneously, as it
happened) that one was to be fought with Arthur Rankin. In an enigmatically worded cor­
rection to the story, Rankin managed to make his denial sound like a challenge accepted; he
would never, he wrote, "traduce the character or seek to injure the reputation of any gentle­
man, without being willing to give him any satisfaction he might require." In reality, Rankin
found it expedient for the moment to be on amicable terms with exactly the kind of man he
wanted to become: a military hero and a successful politician. Even this early in his career
he felt a need to succeed, and specifically to triumph over John Prince. He probably
resented the widespread praise for Prince, when, after all, it was Rankin, not Prince, who
had been present for the whole of the Battle of Windsor, and who had risked his life several
times. It was an unsuspecting John Prince who, having invited Rankin home that fall to the
Park Farm to dinner, recorded this private reaction to his guest: "A fine gentlemanly young
officer he is too."^{17}

This bespeaks a certain level of acting skill on Arthur Rankin's part. It might well
be that his theatrical flair was inherited; certainly he seems to have passed it on. In 1840
Rankin married Mary McKee, a great-granddaughter of Superintendent of Indian Affairs Alexander McKee, and their son, Arthur McKee Rankin, trod the boards of the New York stage. Arthur Rankin saw an opportunity to advance himself at John Prince's expense at the close of 1841, when Prince, believing that any threat from the United States had passed away, tendered his resignation from the command of the Third Essex. Citing no less an authority than intelligence personally conveyed by the colonel commanding at Fort Gratiot (modern Port Huron, Michigan), in January 1842 Ensign Rankin wrote to Assistant Indian Superintendent J. W. Keating at the River St. Clair, alerting him to a potential Patriot attack in that quarter, indeed reporting that a crossing on the night of January 8 had been prevented only by ice, and soliciting the cooperation of the natives under Keating's command. Rankin's sense of dramatic timing was emerging; he appeared to have been vindicated, and Prince had not yet been relieved of responsibility, when a new Patriot scare struck the frontier in June and early July. For a time it appeared that Prince would be celebrating American Independence Day, 1842, as if another Battle of Windsor were brewing, but fortunately the alert proved to be groundless.

Arthur Rankin achieved his lieutenancy, but his military career paused on April 25, 1843, when the Second Queen's Light Infantry was disembodied. Never one to shrink from opportunity, Rankin resolved to challenge John Prince in a new arena: he would become a capitalist. To do so he would need money, of course, and in a burst of creative insight he saw a way to acquire it that would exploit his own demonstrated talent for showmanship. Anticipating “Buffalo Bill” Cody by a full forty years, he followed up his contact with Keating the year before by conceiving the idea of taking several residents of the Ojibwa reserve on the St. Clair River to Britain, to be exhibited as curiosities of nature. There, word spread quickly of “the extravagant and gorgeous display of his troop, driven by himself, as an Indian chief, in a van made for the purpose, with his team of six gorgeously caparisoned cream-coloured horses drilled to the quick step of a brass band in attendance.” The show was so successful that before the year was out Rankin and his troupe found themselves delivering a command performance before Queen Victoria at Windsor Castle.

As with many a subsequent venture, Rankin's instinct was for making a quick killing and moving on. In 1844, after an endorsement of “Sturrock's Real Bear's Grease” (“the most inestimable article extant for the growth, preservation, and embellishment of the Human Hair,” as attested to by “the Ojibbeway Indians, at present in this country under my charge”), he sold his show to American painter and writer George Catlin, and returned to Canada some ten to sixteen thousand dollars richer than when he left. His career as an
impresario behind him, he turned in a new direction, establishing the *Sandwich Western Standard and Western District General Advertiser*, with himself (at the time a rabid Tory) as publisher and editor.

**John Prince and Arthur Rankin: Volatile When Mixed**

The events of 1844 and early 1845 attested to a waning of interest on John Prince’s part in political life. It was time for a change, and his restless mind soon returned to business concerns. A revival of Prince’s railroad activity, dormant since the disturbances of 1837 and 1838, and a new interest in the mineral resources on the north shores of Lake Huron and Lake Superior occupied much of his attention during the summer months of 1845.22

By coincidence, two larger-than-life figures had arrived in the Western District in the 1830s, and with their differing backgrounds and approaches it was inevitable that they
would clash. The reclusive John Prince flung himself into whatever activity, including public life, would serve to distract his mind from his guilty secret. Convinced of his own superiority in all things, he would deign to lead because he considered himself predestined to do so, whether he wanted to or not. The outgoing and competitive Arthur Rankin, on the other hand, had to scramble to catch up and overtake him by any means available.

A confrontation between Prince and Rankin had been building for years, and it became public in 1845. That July, at Beeman's tavern in Sandwich, Prince, Rankin, and others had an argument about a list of favored appointees to the Western District panel of magistrates. The journalistic level of Rankin's *Western Standard* is suggested by its subsequent allegation that nominee Jean Baptiste Laliberte had two wives and was illiterate, and that François Caron, lately arrived from Canada East, was preparing the local French Canadians for the overthrow of the British. Rankin was charged with libel by Laliberte, Caron, and Louis Joseph Fluet. He pleaded not guilty, and the trial took place on September 12, with Prince as prosecutor. In his charge to the jury the judge said Rankin had undoubtedly committed a libel and should be found guilty, but the jury disagreed. Prince was disgusted at what he considered a miscarriage of justice, although he could take satisfaction in the fact that a bruised Rankin withdrew from the newspaper business after the trial.

Any enemy of John Prince was ipso facto a friend of Arthur Rankin. Charles Baby's qualification for this distinction dated back to the Battle of Windsor in 1838, when he was a known opponent of Prince's conduct in ordering the summary executions of five rebel prisoners. An alliance between Baby and Rankin took tangible form in the mid-1840s with the opening of the then-new Assumption Church, which provided them with an opportunity for largesse. A splendid twenty-stop tracker organ ornamented in the Gothic style, built by the prominent New York organ builder Henry Erben at a cost of $2,200, was off-loaded on the wharf at Detroit in 1847, to be delivered to Assumption Church for installation, its component subassemblies prominently marked for the world to see with the names Charles Baby and Arthur Rankin. Not surprisingly, this conspicuous shipment caught the eye of the press, and the *Detroit Daily Advertiser* rewarded the donors with valuable publicity—something that the reclusive John Prince probably had not wanted when he presented a communion service and tablecloth to the English Church in 1834. The organ was a gift calculated to gain Rankin support in anything he undertook among the Roman Catholics of the heavily French-Canadian northwest of the county.

By October 1845 Arthur Rankin's entrepreneurial career had taken a new direction. He entered a partnership with John Waddell, of Chatham, to run a shipping line between Chatham and Montreal. The propeller *Queen of the West* was built at Amherstburg for
launching in July 1846, and a second steamer, the *George Moffatt*, was launched soon after. A wharf was built at Chatham, and more steamers were added, but a series of accidents, combined with a financial panic caused by the depression of 1847–50, caused the company to dissolve.

Next, with his brother-in-law Alexander McKee, Rankin turned to mining. By 1846 enormous interest in the mineral resources of the north shores of the upper Great Lakes had been aroused, and the two obtained licenses for several sites having a potential for copper mining in the Michipicoten area, north of Sault Ste. Marie on the east shore of Lake Superior. At about the same time, with his brother and fellow surveyor Charles Rankin, Arthur discovered copper deposits at Bruce Mines, east of the Sault.

The twin diversions of railroading and mining occupied much of John Prince's mind and energy during 1846. Product of the Victorian age that he was, he attended mining meetings and made speeches asserting that it was an obligation to exploit mineral resources to the fullest possible extent. By July 28 the new British North American Mining Company, of which Prince was a director, required the services of Mr. Townsend of Notre Dame Street in Montreal, probably for a corporate seal.

The theme through 1847 was similar. The world might be askew, but Prince could not concern himself with petty annoyances. Since his vote meant a great deal in a nearly evenly divided House, Prince appears to have been making the most of his position as an independent. His success on June 25, when he carried his railroad bill and his Western District division bill, attested to his new political strength, and it was the same with his mining bill, which received its third reading and final passage on July 27. Suddenly all things became possible, including a meeting concerning the absorption of the Niagara and Detroit Rivers Railroad by the Great Western on July 9. A final arrangement two days later provided for Great Western stock as compensation to the directors of the then-defunct Niagara and Detroit Rivers Railroad.

In 1847 Arthur Rankin and several Montreal capitalists were involved in the formation of the Huron and St. Mary's Copper Mining Company—one more in the bewildering array of such enterprises rushing into existence at the time. John Prince's skill as a negotiator was demonstrated when he was able to resolve a dispute between two directors of the Bruce Mines, James Cuthbertson and Arthur Rankin, and then bring about the absorption of the Bruce Mines by the Montreal Mining Company, a transaction in which Rankin benefited by thirty thousand pounds. In recognition of his service, Rankin offered Prince a gift of stock, but after reflecting overnight, Prince shrewdly decided to pay for it instead of accepting a gift from the upstart he had prosecuted two years earlier on a charge of libel.
The election of 1847–48 (1847 in Essex) was among the least eventful episodes in the eventful career of John Prince. On December 13 he was solicited and agreed to stand, and on Christmas Eve he was elected by acclamation. Perhaps it was his new political alignment (Tory) that shortly secured to him the presidency of the British North American Mining Company.

Meanwhile, Arthur Rankin was losing his interest in mining (despite the forming in 1849 of another of his organizations, the Huron Copper Bay Company) and refocusing his attention on Essex County. His chairmanship of a committee that July to present a speaking trumpet to the Detroit Fire Department by the grateful citizens of Windsor, following a fire on François Baby's wharf, no doubt had its use to Rankin in cementing contacts in Detroit. Late that year he purchased the W. R. Wood residence, Thornfield, on the riverfront on lot 68, between Sandwich and Windsor.  

Thornfield, the W. R. Wood residence on the riverfront between Sandwich and Windsor, was sold at a sheriff's auction following Deputy Treasurer Wood's 1848 disappearance with the funds of the Western District. It was purchased by Arthur Rankin. Macdonald Historical Collection.
Early in February 1850, Rankin, doubtlessly with political embarrassment in mind, asked Prince to comment on an item in the Toronto Independent of January 30 reporting that Prince had come out in favor of annexation to the United States, and had declared that his constituents would support him in the matter. In response, on February 17 Prince began to draft the long letter to Arthur Rankin that came to be known as his “Independence Manifesto.” That document, although overtly political in nature, was probably, in its central thrust (a plea for national independence) an extension of Prince's bitterly evolved personal philosophy. In the Independence Manifesto Prince paraphrased Proverbs 24:15 (“Fie that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it”), an oblique reference to his father as a friend for whom he had gone surety in the past.29

Prince, who had so often been misunderstood and unappreciated, or who thought he had, must have known that this pronouncement would open up whole new worlds of misunderstanding for him. He anticipated the inevitable by resigning his rank as queen's counsel on April 9, although his resignation seems to have crossed in the mail with his dismissal. He must have known that independence from Britain would be confused with annexation to the United States, and that he had no chance whatever of succeeding. This was classic Prince, indulging in activity for its own sake.

In the months ahead, Prince, who for some time had been fully meaning “to leave this detestable Canadian Country for good at the first chance,” misunderstood in his espousal of independence and stung by the perceived gratuitous insult of his dismissal as a queen's counsel after he had resigned, would retire from public life.30 He would abandon the field to his arch-rival, Arthur Rankin.

Or, enigma that he was, perhaps not.

For a time in the summer of 1850 Prince thought he saw an opportunity to revive his railroad. Conservative leader A. N. MacNab, to whom the Great Western was dear, was an opposition member; if, therefore, an independent such as Prince were to give the government something with which to set back a major opposition member, perhaps the Niagara and Detroit Rivers line could be revived. On June 21 Prince carried a railroad resolution against MacNab, and on July 12 his second Niagara and Detroit Rivers Railroad bill was reported from the Standing Committee on Railroads and Telegraph Lines. The brief dream ended July 29, however, after a debate lasting well over five hours, when MacNab's forces carried the day by just two votes. Prince's capitulation was epitomized when he accompanied MacNab to a theatrical performance on August 14. As the third parliament drew to a close in 1851, Prince was coming to regard the Great Western Railroad more favorably, although he was not yet ready to give it his full support. By 1852, however, he was actively cooperating with the
Great Western. The hamlet of Windsor had sprung up in the 1830s around the ferry landing above Sandwich, in the expectation of a rail connection with the east, and in 1852 all the dreams of riches were about to be fulfilled. Soon, with John Prince’s guidance, the railroad would arrive. The insignia on the rolling stock would be GWR, not N&DRR, however, and the terminus would be Windsor, not Sandwich, but the important thing was that the Detroit frontier would at last be linked effectively with the east.

To forestall a feared total eclipse of Sandwich resulting from the 1852 decision to locate the Great Western terminus at Windsor, Sandwich attempted to annex Windsor, as depicted in this map. The reverse happened nearly a century later when Windsor took in its neighbors, including Sandwich, in 1935. Wilkinson Family Papers, Macdonald Historical Collection/Archives of Ontario.
Early in 1853 Prince reported on the north country to a committee of the House. He praised the remote region north of Lake Superior, and he called attention to the need for courts—which, of course, would require the services of just such as himself. Seen in context, this report is significant. Even as long before as 1847, as Prince’s mining affairs were being resolved, his restless mind had been turning in a new direction. A fishery at Rondeau, in Kent County on Lake Erie, would eventually become yet another disappointment. On January 3, 1853, Prince leased property near Rondeau, and on January 11 this lamentation appeared in his diary: “Mrs. Prince sets her face agst The Rond Eau, & has sealed my Ruin!” Once again, a frustrated John Prince wanted to be on the move.

Prince visited Sault Ste. Marie in the autumn of 1853, and it was characteristic of his restless personality that he assessed its potential as a future home. (He found it wanting.) It was just as characteristic that on October 2 of that year he applied for the judgship of the county of Lambton, which had just been separated from Essex. If he had been pressed for an explanation, Prince would, of course, have blamed his own perceived impending financial disaster on his rapacious family in general, and on Mary Ann in particular. “Ruin! Ruin!! At this curs’t place, & yet I can’t coax or drag the family from it! What madness! But they are resolved on my ruin,” he wrote on February 11, 1854.

Prince resumed his duties as a magistrate on February 17, and in April as a queen’s counsel, but peace of mind was as far away as ever. On May 13 he recorded in his diary:

In the Evening I took a slow & Melancholy stroll thro’ the woods of The Park Farm (where I have laid out £6000 & upwards & have spent 20 years of the prime of my life in making it a farm—to my Ruin!!) So depressed are my spirits at times, & so excited at other times, at my disappointments & losses in this horrid & detestable Country, that I believe I shall go mad, or shoot myself. God Almighty preserve me!

On May 26 he applied (unsuccessfully) for the post of superintendent general of Indian affairs; an interview with the attorney general on June 13 presumably dealt with an iron in another fire: the judgship of Lambton County.

John Prince did not run in the election of 1854. By July 11 it had been decided that Albert would offer himself for Essex in his father’s place. For his part, the Gallant Colonel, as Prince had been known since his Patriot War exploits, would volunteer to raise a regiment for the Crimean War. The rivalry between Prince and Arthur Rankin gained new impetus when it became apparent that both had volunteered to raise troops for the Crimea. Soon each was trying to outdo the other in feats of patriotism.
Prince's cherished Niagara and Detroit Rivers Railroad was a valid concept, but it died on the vine when he failed to raise enough capital, and Rankin saw an opportunity in Prince's weakness. It would not do to use the same name, of course, even for the same basic idea, and therefore in 1855 Rankin's proposal was more generically denoted the Southern Railroad or the Great Southern. Whatever its name (Amherstburg & St. Thomas was also used), John Prince found himself in the awkward position of having to support the project while opposing its proponent—and at the same time negotiating, in confidence, of course, about the possible solicitorship of the Great Western.

Prince's dilemma must have been short-lived, however. In 1857 Rankin became involved in a bribery scandal over control of the Southern Railroad scheme, which came to be known in the Toronto press as the "Rankin Job," and petitions presented in the Assembly sought his expulsion. In the following election Rankin ran against John McLeod, an Amherstburg distiller. John Prince, having retired from politics, was ostensibly neutral, but it happened that McLeod was his client as a rival for the presidency of the Southern Railroad, and therefore Prince, very properly in his view, came out in support of McLeod in the latter capacity. He of course could hardly be blamed if a confused electorate voted for McLeod and against Rankin for the House of Assembly. It was a bruised Arthur Rankin, therefore, who early in 1858 announced his return to mining activities.\textsuperscript{32}

Three years later, Rankin, always the master of the grand gesture, proposed to no less than President Abraham Lincoln the raising of a lancer regiment to serve on the Union side in the American Civil War. Canadian sensibilities aside (at the time Rankin was the commander of the Ninth Military District and a member of the House of Assembly), the project was approved and Rankin was commissioned to serve in the army of a foreign power, as well as to recruit other Canadians to the cause. That fall he was arrested in Toronto and charged with a breach of the Foreign Enlistment Act, and although he was not convicted, he had to resign his American commission. His lancer regiment was disbanded in 1862. In view of all this, it is small wonder that the \textit{Montreal Gazette} commented on his quixotic eccentricities.

John Prince, meanwhile, departed "the ungrateful Soil of ungrateful Essex," as he described it, on February 24, 1860, and found a new retreat, and a judgeship, at the head of Lake Huron on the St. Mary's River east of Sault Ste. Marie. There, on November 14, 1866, a mellower John Prince had a visitor, a presumably more serene Arthur Rankin, who no longer had to compete with his arch-rival. In his diary Prince recorded, "Rankin very kind, & we parted good friends. He reminded me a good deal of former times." The clash of the titans was over.
The routine, everyday business of living on the farthest fringe of Uppermost Canada was a never-ending struggle to respond to conditions not only environmental but also ethnic and economic, which interacted in ways not duplicated elsewhere.

The most visible factor affecting life in the Western District was the mixed hardwood virgin forest. This is how Anna Jameson experienced the bush as she approached the River Thames along the Howard-Harwich Town Line (present Chatham-Kent Road 15):

We plunged at once into the deep forest, where there was absolutely no road, no path, except that which is called a blazed path, where the trees marked on either side are the only direction to the traveller. How savagely, how solemnly wild it was! So thick was the overhanging foliage, that it not only shut out the sunshine, but almost the daylight; and we travelled on through a perpetual gloom of vaulted boughs and intermingled shade. There were no flowers here—no herbage. The earth beneath us was a black, rich vegetable mould, into which the cart-wheels sank a foot deep; a rank, reedy grass grew round the roots of the trees, and sheltered rattlesnakes and reptiles. The timber was all hard timber, walnut, beech, and bass-wood and oak and maple of most luxuriant growth; here and there the lightning had struck and shivered one of the loftiest of these trees, riving the great
trunk in two, and flinging it horizontally upon its companions. There it lay, in
strangely picturesque fashion, clasping with its huge boughs their outstretched
arms as if for support. Those which had been hewn to open a path lay where they
fell, and over their stumps and roots the cart had to be lifted or dragged. Some­
times a swamp or morass lay in our road, partly filled up or laid over with trunks
of fallen trees, by way of bridge.

As we neared the limits of the forest, some new clearings broke in upon the
solemn twilight monotony of our path: the aspect of these was almost uniform,
presenting an opening of felled trees of about an acre or two; the commencement
of a log house; a patch of ground surrounded by a snake fence, enclosing the first
crop of wheat, and perhaps a little Indian corn; great heaps of timber-trees and
brush-wood laid together and burning; a couple of oxen, dragging along another
evermous trunk to add to the pile. These were the general features of the picture,
framed in, as it were, by the dark mysterious woods.  

Along the way Jameson found accommodation of sorts:

The inn—the only one within a circuit of more than five-and-thirty miles, pre­
sented the usual aspect of these forest inns; that is, a rude log hut, with one win­
dow and one room, answering all purposes, a lodging or sleeping place being
divided off at one end by a few planks; outside, a shed of bark and boughs for the
horses, and a hollow trunk of a tree disposed as a trough. Some of the trees
around it were in full and luxuriant foliage; others, which had been girdled, stood
bare and ghastly in the sunshine.  

**Working with Wood**

Wood predominated in the tools, equipment, buildings, and furniture required for everyday
living. Logs were a virtually universal raw material for houses, barns, and the like, although
there were distinctions. A settler's first shelter might have had only three sides, and was often
of "rude" construction—its logs were left in the round. Such a structure was viewed with
contempt, and was replaced with a proper house just as quickly as possible so that the origi­
nal structure could be relegated to a lower use, as a hen-house or a barn. Houses of "neat"
construction had their logs squared up into timbers, to reduce the spaces between them, and
to permit upright plank weatherboarding on the outside and either planks or plaster inside.
Neat houses therefore did not look like log structures at all. Buildings of Anglo-Saxon con­
struction had horizontal logs or timbers, fastened together by corner-notching, while those
of French-Canadian origin employed vertical components, particularly at the corners and beside openings, often with horizontals as fillers, and mortise-and-tenon joints made rigid with wooden pins driven into holes bored through the major joints.

Although logs were in plentiful supply through most of the period of the Western District, planks had to be frugally reused, whenever possible, because they were more labor-intensive and therefore more expensive. In 1823 a teacher in Gosfield Township described the transition from his existing house to a new one: "The house I live in is now quite open, owing to boards being taken off for the new house, and before [the builder] can finish he tells me he will want them all, and when the loft is gone I might as well be out of doors."

Of all the tree varieties available in the mixed-hardwood, Carolinian forest, black walnut was the wood of choice; it was straight-grained, knot-free, and plentiful. One result was what moderns would regard as an inversion of the order of priorities between "show" and "junk" woods. John Prince, who wanted to demonstrate that he could afford exotic, non-local woods, had his Regency cottage behind Sandwich built about 1835 with a frame of black walnut, but the doors were of pine, with a transparent finish to show them off.

Brick and stone were reserved for the most important buildings, beginning with the 1807 Western District Grammar School (the "Stone College"). François Baby's second
A house on the Detroit frontier exhibiting the major characteristics of French-Canadian squared-timber construction: a steep roof pitch, chimneys on opposite sides of the roof ridge, flat-roofed dormers, and upright timbers at the corners. In this example the vertical weatherboarding seems to have been sacrificed in the course of protecting the timbers against the elements. Hamlin, 160.

J. Collins of Sandwich perceived a need, and in 1836 advertised that he had devised a machine capable of producing forty thousand bricks per day, six or seven times the rate resulting from the old hand method. Machine-made brick seems not to have appeared in quantity on the local scene until it was employed in the present Assumption Church, which was completed by 1846. Because the Western District was not overly endowed with stone, its use was largely confined to random boulders for the foundations of those comparatively few buildings that had basements. Quarried stone, limestone from the Huron Reserve, was employed only in preeminent structures: one or two churches and, following the demise of the district, a new Essex County courthouse.

Not surprisingly, most of the houses of the gentry looked unrelentingly British, because that is what the majority of their owners were, and with their two-story, symmetrical plans they had their counterparts across the rest of Upper Canada. One, the McGregor-Cowan
House in Sandwich, does stand out because of its French-Canadian heating arrangement: two chimneys, one at each end, on opposite slopes of the roof. Vernacular architecture reflected, with a few years' time lag of course, the evolution of design in more sophisticated world metropolises. A semblance of the "Regency" style in England seems to have reached the Detroit frontier by 1829, when a visiting author wrote of "a little house with verandahs all round, few windows and few fancies; everything done with an air of humble comfort."

Furniture also reflected its regional surroundings, both physical and ethnic. A comparison of two cradles, one French-Canadian and the other Anglo-Saxon, reveals that both are of the ubiquitous black walnut—but there the differences begin. The structure of the French-Canadian piece is related to French-Canadian house construction, with four corner uprights and pinned mortise-and-tenon joints; whereas the Loyalist example has dovetailed corners analogous to the notched and lapped corners of log or squared-timber Loyalist buildings. The differing outlooks of the two ethnic groups are also manifested: the wings of an angel to protect the sleeping infant outline the headboard of the French-Canadian piece, and possibly, as has been suggested, the four posts symbolize the four evangelists, also guarding the occupant; the Anglo-Saxon cradle, by comparison, is straightforward, businesslike, no-nonsense, perhaps even a little stodgy—a box for holding a small adult.

One more point about material culture in the Western District: the products of an isolated ethnic group such as those of Germanic background in South Essex will tend to be technologically up-to-date but stylistically archaic. A deer rifle of the 1840s embodies the...
latest in firearms ignition systems, but in other respects it resembles the flintlock-era Pennsylvania type from which it is descended, with its elaborate brass patchbox, its long, shallow trigger guard, and its hex mark for protection against evil spirits.\textsuperscript{8} This is the expression of a people striving to retain their connections with their own kind.

Land versus Water

Shipping, of course, depended on water, but, perhaps less obviously, water was an almost equally significant consideration in overland travel. This was particularly true in a region such as Essex County, with its strong resemblance to the Fens country at the head of The Wash in eastern England. In 1806, when John Askin wrote of “a good land & Water communication” along the Lake St. Clair shore, one could expect to encounter both while scrambling along the beach and across the mouths of creeks.\textsuperscript{9} Other obstacles encumbering the beach—the bordage, which served as one of the main roads in the Essex Peninsula—included fallen trees, stumps, and driftwood. Even in the open, sand itself had to be contended with, so that scrapers became necessary road maintenance equipment in the Western District. Early in 1827 two were ordered for Malden, and three more for Sandwich Township.

Along the old bordage road in the Essex Peninsula it was tempting to avoid many of the obstructions and bad bridges, at least in the winter, by resorting to the adjoining ice. That, too, posed hazards, however, because the shoreline residents, relying on the Lakes and the Detroit River for their supplies not only of water for immediate use but of ice for storage in icehouses and use throughout the year, felt free to cut large holes with little regard for the consequences to others. By 1835 the justices required beacons to be posted at the ice holes, and the \textit{Canadian Emigrant} editorialized that “Cutting ice openings in the sleigh roads is highly reprehensible.”\textsuperscript{10}

A Pennsylvania-type deer rifle from South Essex, technologically consistent with the 1840s, but in its appearance betraying its ancestral Germanic connections across Lake Erie. Macdonald Historical Collection.
Water levels in the Great Lakes system rose sharply in 1827, flooding much of the adjacent, low-lying land. The damage to bridges crossing the mouths of the backed-up streams draining the Essex Peninsula occupied much of the Quarter Sessions' time that year. The bridge over the River Canard had to be raised and lengthened, and others required substantial work as well. No bridge had previously been needed across the mouth of Little River, but the road fording the stream was inundated that year to such a depth that a ferry service had to be provided.

Six years later, Patrick Shirreff found conditions at the opposite extreme:

The Frenchwoman who keeps the inn at the mouth of the Thames told me the lake was lower now than she had ever known it, and had been falling for years past. . . . Several rivers are laid down on maps as flowing into the south side of Lake St. Clair, but at the time of my visit the mouths of all of them, with a single exception, were closed with sand on the margin of the lake; and I could not determine whether their waters filtered through the sand bars into the lake, or those of the lake into the channels or canals running into the land.

Shirreff added that where settlement had gone ahead on land close to the level of the adjacent water, along the Detroit, the Lake St. Clair shore, and the Thames, foot travel to and from the houses was normally accomplished on planks. Along the banks of the Thames, inhabitants wishing to avoid an annual spring flooding built their houses on stilts.

The plank walkways would probably not have been of much use by the time Captain Frederick Marryat, late of the Royal Navy, visited the District in 1839. High water had returned, and again the land at the mouth of the Thames was inundated, up to the saddle flaps on Marryat's horse. Logs two feet in diameter lying about fazed the local horses not a bit: "They never attempted to jump, but deliberately put one foot over and then the other—with equal dexterity avoiding the stumps and sunken logs concealed under water. An English horse would have been foundered before he had proceeded fifty yards."

Shoreline erosion was another problem. In 1830 a new road had to be laid out across two Talbot Road West lots in Romney Township, "where the road is deficient in consequence of caving down into the Lake." In Sandwich Township in 1838, orders went out for the "underbrushing" of the second concession road from Ouellette's east to Little River, as the first stage of a substitute for an eroded road along the Lake St. Clair shore. (Perhaps the date of the magistrates' order, October 9, one day shy of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the death of Tecumseh, inspired the naming of the Tecumseh Road, which by 1840 had been approved, with that name, all the way to the River Thames.)
Inland, many of the road allowances lay permanently under water. In much of the low-lying Western District, a road had to be built up above the level of the drowned land across which it ran, by “causewaying.” A causeway was fashioned by dragging up soil to form a ridge which sometimes had to be stabilized by laying logs end to end along the sides, bordered by a ditch or ditches. Although the need to fill the low spots seems to have been widely recognized, not everyone was prepared to do the work of building a proper causeway; for example, in 1829 it had to be ordered that apples and corn husks were not to be thrown into the road at Petite Côte.

Detouring was an alternative to causewaying as a means of dealing with localized boggy patches. Beginning in the 1840s, when a change in the legislation required that bylaws be enacted to implement any such departures, they came to be known as byroads or byways, as distinct from the highways, the road allowances laid down in the official township surveys. By this logic the byways were practical and the highways were impractical.

In June 1833 William R. Wood set himself up in Sandwich, intending at first to operate a drawing academy; but soon he presented himself in the Emigrant as an architect and general draftsman, a service that the magistrates found useful when the jail and courthouse required alterations. However, an additional benefit he offered was potentially even more valuable: he would produce maps of the Western District and of individual townships. The magistrates were quick to take advantage of the latter, no doubt because of the difficulty encountered by the clerk of the peace, struggling without a visual aid to record the locations and descriptions of increasing numbers of roads and detours being authorized by the Quarter Sessions.

Corduroy road construction appears not to have been employed in Essex County during the first half of the nineteenth century; this might reflect either the area’s topography or its unique ethnic makeup. However, its use in Kent County was painfully obvious to Anna Jameson, whose description of her experience on the Howard-Harwich Town Line (modern County Road 15) makes Kent seem much more like the rest of Upper Canada:

The road was scarcely passable; there were no longer cheerful farms and clearings, but the dark pine forest, and the rank swamp, crossed by those terrific corduroy paths (my bones ache at the mere recollection!) and deep holes and pools of rotten vegetable matter, mixed with water, black, bottomless sloughs of despond! The very horses paused on the brink of some of these mud-gulfs, and trembled ere they made the plunge downwards. I set my teeth, screwed myself to the seat, and commended myself to Heaven—but I was well nigh dislocated! At length I abandoned my seat altogether, and made an attempt to recline on the straw at the bottom of the cart, disposing my cloaks, carpet-bags, and pillow, so as to afford some
support—but all in vain; myself and all my well-contrived edifice of comfort were pitched hither and thither, and I expected at every moment to be thrown over headlong; while to walk, or to escape by any means from my disagreeable situation, was as impossible as if I had been in a ship's cabin in the midst of a rolling sea.  

By the early 1830s Thomas Talbot was looking toward expanding his fiefdom into the northern reaches of the Western District. In April 1831 he approved a road that would connect the lower part of the Lake Huron shore with an existing road at the northeast corner of Caradoc Township, north of London. The surveyor, thought Talbot, should follow the high ground between the Ausable River and Bear Creek, with minimal reliance on straight lines: “It is notorious that all the surveyors of the Province have most corrupt taste and conceive it worse than murder to run any other than a straight line.”

Roads, like so many other areas of human activity, have always been the focus of attention of those seeking the maximum advantage from the minimum of effort. Having been cleared in a rudimentary way, they became temptations to adjacent farmers, who saw their potential to yield crops. Later, as the forests were disappearing from the land, the presence of timber left standing in the road allowances attracted those who saw it as a valuable natural resource, and public property at that. Related was the theft of road-building materials, which had occurred by 1844.

Certain of the major roads came to take on names and, by extension, identities of their own. In 1833 Patrick Shirreff, then south of Chatham, referred to “what the people of the country call Frogmore Street, a newly opened road leading from Sandwich.” Other names came to be applied regionally to Talbot’s roads, often in recognition of his practice of grouping his settlers by their national origins. In this way the western extremity of the Talbot Road West, near modern Oldcastle in Essex County, was referred to as the Irish Road. Some of the local geographical references in the mid-1830s look a little strange to modern eyes. A sum of $160 was granted “for the Irish Road from Sandwich to the Black Stump.” Regrettably, the location of that prodigious landmark stump seems to have been lost to the ages.

Energy

One of the most pervasive factors in pioneer society was the need for a supplement to hand and horse power with which to operate simple mechanical devices and, by extension, industries. However, the flat, low-lying Essex Peninsula was deficient in water power. Even at best, a stream with the potential to drive machinery—Turkey Creek for example—had to be dammed in order to build up enough of a head of water to run a mill intermittently.
Water-powered mills to drive the vertically reciprocating muley saws that cut planks from timbers were in short supply in the Western District. Patrick Shirreff noted the phenomenon in 1833 during his time in southern Essex County, where he encountered a settler whose house "was very mean-looking, and he accounted for it by the want of sawmills in this part of the country, which rendered boards dear."  

The Western District, the granary supplying fur-trading operations in the Upper Lakes, needed mills for grinding its wheat and corn. Along the upper Detroit Shirreff encountered grist mills, in his opinion "very poor machines," propelled by oxen walking on what he called inclined planes, and others driven by oxen or horses attached to large wheels, moving horizontally a few inches from the ground. An adaptation suited to the Detroit frontier was in order: wind power. The principle was the same whether the energy to operate mill machinery came up from below, as with water, or down from above, as with wind. In a grist mill a vertical shaft connected by wooden pin gears to the power source pierced a pair of stones, the upper one fastened to the shaft so that it ground against the immobile lower, and the space between them being adjustable in order to control the fineness of the flour. The advantage of wind was that it tended to be steady, although a tailpole was needed to pivot the mill's rotatable head from time to time to face it squarely into the breeze.

A further specialization rendered the windmill design even more suited to grinding corn specifically. The openwork wood body of Luc Montreuil's mill, built about 1815 on the south shore of the Detroit just below Hog Island (modern Belle Isle), resembled the construction of a corn crib; it served for corncob storage before the grain was ground and moved to John Askin's distillery at Strabane, nearby to the east, where it was processed into "high wines" to fuel the fur trade in the upper Lakes.

With the arrival at Detroit on August 25, 1818, of "The swift steamboat Walk-in-the-Water" as the Upper Canada Gazette reported, the broadening of horizons on the Detroit frontier soon became evident. William Hands received a letter from a friend in Montreal, written five months after the arrival of steam power on the Detroit, extending an invitation to visit: "We shall then endeavour to fall on some plan to deprive you of Mrs. Hands' society for a few weeks; the facility of the steamboats will not admit of any excuse." The invitation was repeated six months later, again referring to the convenience of travel by steamboat. William McCormick also enjoyed his passage to Fort Erie that spring: "I have arrived here safe and well after a very pleasant passage in the steam boat, and sincerely hope this may find you and our little ones in health & happiness, as also all our friends. I am just setting out for Fort George and hope to be in York the day after tomorrow."
While air and water had their uses as energy sources, steam was more versatile. Steam power, in fact, combined with the occurrence of soft, spongy limonite, a mineral deposited in bogs, made possible the Western District's first heavy industry—and the emergence of industrialists as a new social class. The *Sandwich Canadian Emigrant* reported that about October 10, 1831, the Colborne Furnace, in Gosfield Township, operated by two Ohioans with the wonderfully theatrical names Eliakim Field and Benjamin Parker Cahoon, had begun production of four to five tons of pig iron per day. A fifteen-horsepower steam engine forced air through their smelting stack. Other buildings erected, in progress or to be added, included another stack, a casting house, two dwellings, and a smith's shop. The raw resource, commonly known as bog iron, was found as rusty deposits a mile or so from the furnace. Charcoal for smelting was made on the spot, and consumed at the rate of five hundred bushels per day. The enterprise employed sixty to seventy men daily, and it was expected that castings would be in production by spring 1832.

The Colborne Furnace was producing pig iron by late winter, and expected to be able to offer Upper Canadians a wide range of castings—stove parts, kettles, plow irons, and the like—by the opening of navigation, without the duties that had previously been payable for
American products. Messrs. Field and Cahoon also acquired a licence of occupation for the tip of Point Pelee, perhaps in hopes of using it as an embarkation point for loading their cargo onto vessels bound for distant markets.

A year later all was optimism. Benjamin Cahoon confided to William Hands that there were those who would not "be satisfied with anything short of getting Possession of our Furnace," but he vowed that "they will be disappointed. . . . I have the pleasure of informing you that we started our furnace on the new Blast on the 10th [of March] with more favourable prospects than we have ever started before." However, tragedy is always unexpected, and conditions had been drastically altered by the time of Patrick Shirreff’s visit:

The furnace had been burnt down a few weeks before our arrival, and all hands were engaged in reconstructing it. The whole erection, with exception of the fireplace and chimney-stalk, was composed of wood, and one of the most temporary buildings it is possible to conceive. The bed of ore lies in a marsh a mile and a half distant, and is what is called bog-ore, one or two feet thick, with six inches of peat-earth on the surface; and I was assured by Mr. Field that the earth thrown aside two years ago was now fruitful of ore. The iron-work is expected to consume the coke of nearly 200 acres of forest yearly; and the company would clear any farmer’s woodland for the coke it produced.

In January 1835 Sheriff Ebenezer Reynolds was forced to seize the property of Field and Cahoon to satisfy debts owed to various parties of over £535. Soon the partnership was dissolved, and the business was purchased by Benjamin D. Townsend. Soon the Townsend company announced that repairs and additions would be made to its purchase, and that it would be offering "Hathaway’s Patent Hot-Air Cooking Stove," manufactured from the pattern on the spot. Agents, already in London and St. Thomas, would soon represent the company in all the main towns of Upper Canada.

That April, George Allen announced that he was ready to make castings at his new furnace and foundry in Sandwich, in the former McGregor building lately vacated by the Canadian Emigrant. However, despite the competition—or perhaps even because of it—under Townsend the Gosfield furnace flourished for a time. Townsend’s products were transported by schooner, from an anchorage off Gosfield, to markets as distant as Kingston. The widespread economic panic of 1837, feared loss of government support for an anticipated railroad link with eastern markets, and the disturbance caused by the Upper Canada Rebellion combined to force the operation into a decline. Investments were lost, the planned company town of Colborne went undeveloped, and by 1852 the furnace was described as
having been out of operation for some time—but thanks to steam power, a new, enterprising age had dawned.  

Colborne was not alone as a projected company town. Puce had its beginning on April 16, 1834, when surveyor John A. Wilkinson laid out a subdivision on lots 1 and 2 at the mouth of the River Puce in Maidstone Township. The apparent reason: Beaubien's sawmill. Steam technology having arrived and become familiar, steam-powered mills were beginning to proliferate wherever there was even a sluggish watercourse, because water was required only for transportation, no longer for power.

In November 1829 the isolation of the settlement at the west end of Lake Erie was dramatically reduced. The Welland Canal's promoter, William Hamilton Merritt, had consulted Alexander Mackintosh in 1826 as to what size of vessel was best suited to Great Lakes navigation—that is, what size the new canal should be built to accommodate. Despite its ramshackle character, that first version of the canal succeeded in overcoming the 327-foot difference in elevation between Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, narrowly bypassing Niagara Falls at Chippawa. With the opening of the canal it was possible for vessels up to the size of Mackintosh's *Duke of Wellington* to sail between the rapids below Sault Ste. Marie in the west and Montreal in the east.

As the age of steam was entrenching itself in the Western District, at Amherstburg the launching of a sail-powered vessel was greeted with sarcasm. A century in the future, thought “Mercator,” writing to the *Emigrant*, Amherstburg might have steamers, railroads, and air balloons, “and if we have good luck we, by that time, may get up a steam mill!!!” Aids to navigation were making their first appearance, alleviating some of the risk—particularly at night—of straying off course and running aground. “The lighthouse on Point Pelee Island was completed last Sepr. and reported to His Excy the Lieut. Govr. who appointed William McCormick Esq. keeper thereof, 1 April 1834.”

For more than ten years William McCormick had had direct, personal knowledge of the inherent dangers of steam. Having departed on a trip to Ireland on September 4, 1823, McCormick recorded this account of a rough voyage down Lake Erie:

> at six oclock got on board the Steam boat [at Amherstburg]. . . . Came to Anker on the bar or there Abouts the night being bad and very dark weighed the next Morning About 9 oclock Soon after there came on a tremendous gale of wind the boat roled terably the wood piled on deck Drove about in every direction just as I Saw the wood begin to Slip I perceived John Parker Standing on one of the wings and a [quantity?] of wood moveing Above him. I cauled to him to run
from the Place he was standing in which he might easily have done but he with his youusual Swiftness had to [stop?] to look round and the wood fell over him but fortunately did not hurt him. A Connecticut man of no Small Size fell from the top of the cabin Stairs and landed on his botom on the floar and to the A Muse-ment iff not at the time when the gale was over of all Present as he cauled o God all night. I had liked to have nocked out my brains, A Negro man a servant on board the boat fell but was more fortunate for he died in Consequence of it the Second night after. 

Navigation aids remained inadequate as long as governments saw them as expenses rather than necessities and the populace would accept the risk. Alexander Mackintosh having departed Buffalo for Detroit on May 12, 1835, on the steamer Sandusky, on May 13 complained in his journal: “On board this nasty disgusting boat. At night ground on Fighting Island.” However, Mackintosh’s annoyance seems to have been fleeting at best: the next day, “Off again, and at 11 A.M. arrived at Detroit, my destination.”

A contempt for even the most elementary principles of safety was all too apparent. That September, two miles below Sandwich, for some unstated reason passengers were being transferred between two steamers, the Daniel Webster and the Commodore Perry, in mid-stream. Passengers on the Perry crowding to the side next to the Webster to watch caused the Perry to list severely, which in turn caused water to run from one of her boilers to the other. The just-emptied boiler overheated, but apparently nothing untoward happened immediately. It was after the boarding was completed and the vessel righted itself that the water rushed back into the overheated boiler. In the resulting explosion, four were killed immediately, another was reported fatally injured, and more than thirty were scalded.

Flagrant disregard of danger reached its appalling apogee at three o’clock in the morning on August 12, 1845, when the Chatham-built passenger steamer Kent, east of Point Pelee, found itself rapidly closing with the London, following the identical course in the opposite direction. Both vessels were chartered by the same steamship line, so for amusement the two captains joined in a friendly contest to see who would veer off first. In the deliberate collision that resulted, the Kent lost her bow and subsequently sank. Ten passengers died.

In an age when the most sophisticated navigational instrument was the magnetic compass, see-and-be-seen was the guiding principle. Conditions were often crowded because marine traffic had to stay in sight of land, and collisions were numerous. In addition to the collisions, the boiler explosions, and the engine room fires that sent many wooden steamers to the bottom, there was a more furtive threat. Any hull, ancient or modern, is
capable of sagging in the middle if driven upward by simultaneous wave crests at both the bow and the stern, or of “hogging” if a single wave supports it amidships. The concentration of engines and boilers in that location caused structural stress to wooden hulls, particularly when they were subjected to violent wave action during storms. Taking on water through their seams, they would slowly founder.37

The most dangerous area for shipping in the Western District, indeed probably in the Great Lakes generally, was the Pelee Passage, between Point Pelee and Pelee Island. In that shallow water, particularly during the storms of autumn, it was not unusual for a vessel to go down, leaving its masts or superstructure above water, where terrified crew members and passengers might cling in the hope of being rescued. There were even occasions when a vessel impaled itself on the sunken masts of a previous wreck and so went down itself, forming a second layer of debris.

Far from revulsion at the shocking loss of life, the new technology brought with it a sense of optimism, which manifested itself in the proposing of vast engineering schemes such as the opening of the River Thames to navigation as far as London. William McCrae of Raleigh chaired a public meeting in 1834 to explore ways of accomplishing this feat, and it was decided that the residents of the affected townships should contribute to pay a surveyor to examine the problem and report. Soon, incorporation of a joint stock company for the purpose was being talked about.

The promoters of a canal connecting Lake Erie with the southeast corner of Lake St. Clair learned in March 1835 that the project was feasible; it would require one lock, and one million dollars. By May, no fewer than seventy-six people had undertaken to share in the expense of surveying the route for the contemplated canal. However, this scheme, like others, seems to have fallen victim to the economic crisis that ensued. Ten years went by before it was revived when the Western District approved a petition for a survey of Two Creeks (east of Point Pelee) as a harbor, and a route for either a canal or a road from there north to the River Thames. Even as late as 1856 John Prince, in a nomination speech, was singing the praises of a canal to connect Two Creeks not only with the Thames, but with the Chenail Écarté at the head of Lake St. Clair, all at a cost of no more than half of what had been estimated in 1835. By 1857 the canal scheme had become even more grandiose, extending from Lake Huron to Rondeau. In reality, of course, if any of these projects had been carried out, it would probably have split Essex from Kent and the rest of the province even more effectively than nature already had, and might well have sent Essex and southeastern Michigan into a permanent decline.
By the 1830s railroading was beginning to excite minds in the Western District, as elsewhere, even though it would be nearly two decades before the dream became reality. Pelee Island, surprisingly, was among the first parts of the district to be affected. One of William McCormick's tenants on the Island reported in 1835 the importation of an eight-horsepower steam engine and other sawmill machinery, for sawing red cedar timber into railroad ties for export to New York State.

Agriculture

Although the biggest obstacle to settlement in the Western District was probably water, the forest was next, and both had to be dealt with before agriculture could go ahead. The process was still evident in the mid-1840s when Smith's Canadian Gazetteer made its appearance, brimming with statistical tabulations of agricultural exports. While the Gazetteer demonstrated that grain was the overall leader in revenue generated, commodities stemming directly from the destruction of the forest came in second: barrel staves, and pot-and-pearl ash. Somewhat offsetting the district's remoteness from eastern markets was the proximity of Detroit, as evidenced by exports from Amherstburg and Windsor with greater emphasis on perishables—that is, meat and meat products.

One industry in which the Western District could specialize, by reason of soil and climate, was tobacco culture. In 1823 James Gordon saw through the House of Assembly a petition of various inhabitants of the district, asking for a reduction in the duty on tobacco exported to England from Upper Canada. The author, Joseph Pickering, who visited the area in September 1826, wrote: "black slaves, who have run away from their masters in Kentucky, arrive in Canada almost weekly, where they are free and work at raising tobacco; I believe they introduced the practice. One person will attend and manage the whole process of four acres, planting, hoeing, budding, etc., during the summer."

The area facing Detroit was particularly suited to the cultivation of market-garden crops. In 1819 John Macaulay, then postmaster at Kingston, wrote to William Hands, partly as postmaster at Sandwich but mainly as a cultivator of lettuce, or salad, as it was called: "I have heard the sallad raised at Sandwich highly espoused for the size of the heads, and for its crispness and should therefore esteem it a particular favor if you would send me down a small parcel of the seed enclosed in the Mail to this Office." One writer with an interest in gardening in 1832 listed crocuses, moondrops, hyacinths, primroses, and various shrubs and bulbous roots, as well as a long list of hotbed vegetables, as locally grown garden plants. In 1833 Patrick Shirreff particularly noted the orchards of the Detroit River region, a feature that in Lower Canada he found only on the mountainsides at Montreal. He saw no pear,
plum, or peach trees, but he found so great an abundance of apples that they sometimes remained ungathered, and he commented on the cider presses that he frequently encountered. In 1835 John Prince sarcastically suggested that his target of the moment, Charles Eliot, "in the romantic solitudes of Petite Cote, . . . indulge in the highly useful, pure and patriotic avocations of raising the earliest saucerful of peas for himself and the earliest pretty nosegay for the pretty girls." At the same time, innkeeper William Hall of Sandwich attracted the attention of the press with the enormous radishes—many a foot or more around and one said to measure 23½ inches—growing in a patch in his garden.

This was a green and pleasant land. It was on its way to becoming, in a phrase popularized over a century later, the Garden Gateway to Canada.
Attitudes

Captain Miles Macdonell of the Royal Canadian Volunteers demonstrated not only acceptance of the harshness of life at all levels, but also class distinctions, when he and his party visited the Western District in 1801. Nothing could have been more idyllic than drifting down the River Thames in a canoe one spring morning, breakfasting on boiled chocolate; and yet, that same afternoon they encountered a raucous band of merrymakers at Dolsen's inn in Dover, bent on imbibing the profits of their springtime sugar making, and later, at the mouth of the Thames, they similarly encountered roisterers from a clutter of timber rafts bound for Sandwich and Amherstburg. They spent that night on a beach west of Pike Creek, where they were obliged to set up a couple of boards on edge as a shelter against the wind and rain. With the aid of a blanket rigged as a sail they reached Sandwich the next day, cold, wet, and suffering from headaches (possibly resulting from their alcoholic experiences the previous afternoon). The Court of Quarter Sessions was then sitting, and they were understandably glad to be invited to dine with the chairman and other officers of the court. Afterward, Clerk of the Peace Walter Roe drove them to his home for the night in his caleche, through the mud. Life's pleasurable moments tended to be few, and widely separated, even for the ruling class.
Throughout the period of the Western District, the members of that ruling class tended to regard others with an air of benign condescension. No less a luminary than the deputy postmaster general of British North America, George Heriot, visited the district as part of a tour of his area of responsibility, and published an account of his observations in 1807. Heriot’s views of the French-Canadian settlers he encountered were those of a member of the provincial oligarchy:

The habitants, or landholders, are honest, hospitable, religious, inoffensive, uninformed, possessing much simplicity, modesty, and civility. Indolent, attached to ancient prejudices, and limiting their exertions to an acquisition of the necessaries of life, they neglect the conveniences. Their propensity to a state of inaction retains many of them in poverty; but as their wants are circumscribed, they are happy. Contentment of mind and mildness of disposition seem to be the leading features in their character. Their address to strangers is more polite and unembarrassed than that of any other peasantry in the world. Rusticity, either in manners or in language, is unknown even to those who reside in situations the most remote from the towns. They have little inclination for novelty or improvement, and exhibit no great portion of genius, which may perhaps be in some degree attributed to the want of education, of examples to pursue, and of opportunities to excite emulation, or to unfold the latent qualities of the mind.

Their constitution, at an early period in life, is healthy and robust . . . but they soon look old, and their strength is not of long duration . . . They manufacture their own linens and woollen stuffs, tan the hides of their cattle, make shoes and stockings, are their own carpenters, masons, wheelers, and tailors. They are sufficiently intelligent with regard to objects which relate to their own interest, and are seldom liable to be over-reached. . . .

The whole of the Canadian inhabitants are remarkably fond of dancing, and frequently amuse themselves at all seasons with that agreeable exercise.

Fully three decades later, Anna Jameson’s engaging description of her visit was consistent with Heriot’s view:

The banks of the Thames are studded with a succession of farms, cultivated by the descendants of the early French settlers . . . raising on their rich fertile lands just sufficient for a subsistence, wholly uneducated, speaking a French patois, without an idea of advance or improvement of any kind, submissive to their
priests, gay, contented, courteous and apparently retaining their ancestral tastes for dancing, singing, and flowers.

At Windsor

It was quite curious to find in this remote region such a perfect specimen of an old-fashioned Norman peasant—all bows, courtesy, and good humour. He was carrying a cartload of cherries to Sandwich, and when I begged for a ride, the little old man bowed and smiled, and poured forth a voluble speech, in which the words *enchante! bonheur! and madame!* were all I could understand; but these were enough. . . . After permission asked, and granted with a pleasant smile and a hundredth removal of the ragged hat, I failed not to profit by my situation, and dipped my hand pretty frequently into these tempting baskets.

Sir Richard Bonnycastle's characterization in 1841 was similar:

The old French settlers in this part of Upper Canada are in larger numbers than elsewhere; and here, at nearly one thousand miles from Quebec, you meet the same Jean Baptiste face and features, and hear the *patois* which was formerly the vernacular of the Canadas. The Upper Canadian Frenchman retains, however, his loyalty to England, with his native good-humour and *bienveillance* [decorum]; and I know few more estimable people than the farmers and French gentlemen of this part of the world.

One of the newspapers making their appearances in Upper Canada in the early 1830s was a conservative-minded weekly, the *Canadian Emigrant and Western District Advertiser*, published by John Cowan at Sandwich beginning December 1, 1831. The *Emigrant*, the first newspaper in the Western District, offered a mixture of foreign news (weeks, if not months, late), Upper Canadian and local politics, the doings of the Court of Quarter Sessions, letters to the editor on a variety of subjects but often taking other correspondents to task, articles reflecting the agricultural interests of the readership, and advertisements by the proprietors of commercial enterprises. All these components of the new medium could influence readers' attitudes and practices as never before. Indeed, the paper's very name—*Emigrant*, not *Immigrant*—both reflected and perpetuated a widespread attitude: in the 1830s, during a surge in immigration, the inhabitants of Upper Canada were more important for where they were from than for where they were. A real sense of place had yet to evolve.
Benign condescension was also detectable in cross-border attitudes, reflecting a predilection on the part of virtually any group to regard itself as inherently superior to any other. The phenomenon manifests itself, perhaps unexpectedly, in a succession of community views, produced by a variety of artists beginning in the 1830s, but with remarkably similar titles that in the idiom of the day might be generically rendered “A View of Detroit, Taken from the Canada Shore.” Shared elements in these images include an utterly impossible traffic jam of mostly American vessels in the river, intended to convey Detroit’s dynamism, and, to drive the point home, no community on the Canadian shore, only hills and pine trees. (In reality, neither of these components is prominent in the landscape opposite Detroit.) There is also a quality of quaintness about the foreground figures—the picturesque and colorful inhabitants of the Canada shore, often anglers and picnickers, people at leisure because nothing happens that might occupy them more constructively.

Condescension toward those not in positions of privilege was not overly benign when it came to blacks, who by the 1830s had become an easily visible element in the population. Charles Eliot charged a grand jury in 1832 in these words, transcribed without comment into the *Emigrant*:

> Sorry am I to declare that our jail is again crammed with these Africans, whom one would be disposed to commiserate and to relieve, did not their reprehensible habits cast back every kindly sympathy. . . . Our farmers complain that, since the influx of this refuse of the States, they have suffered heavy losses amongst their swine; and this kind of property, running at large, is sadly exposed to the depredations of the indolent and evil-disposed.

The publication of such views must have had the effect of validating any similar notions, at least among those who could both read and afford the paper. From there they would quickly become tavern talk, and so gain wide acceptance.

The *Emigrant* was forthright in expressing its attitude toward those who were unlikely ever to be counted among its paying subscribers. It decried the scarcity of farm and other servants in the Western District: “Persons of the above description who do not feel themselves more independent than their employers, as is the case with many of our Republican Gentlemen of color, and native *sans culottes*, will find steady employment and good wages.” Almost as an afterthought, it noted that females were also wanted.

One of the blacks most frequently mentioned was Israel Williams, who in 1833 resided in Kent County, where he came to the notice, patronizingly, of writer Patrick Shirreff:
Williams was a runaway Negro from the State of Virginia, a smart, active, stout little fellow, in good circumstances, having several stacks of wheat, and six or seven horses of different ages. I was asked to go into his house and see his wife Juliana, who was as stout and glossy black as any Negro could desire. They had five or six fine curly haired children of the same complexion as themselves, none of whom had been at school, as the teacher could not receive children of colour without displeasing his white employers.

In reporting a riot at Sandwich Ferry on April 23, 1836, during which two blacks were severely beaten, by failing to say what had caused the incident—perhaps they were escaped slaves, or possibly they were ferry employees—the Canadian Emigrant left the impression that their offense had simply been that they existed. However, the press often actively participated in the spreading of antiblack invective. The Emigrant’s successor, Henry Grant’s Sandwich Western Herald and Farmers Magazine, editorialized in its first issue, January 3, 1838: “May the harmony subsisting between our two shores never be disturbed for the sake of a few worthless beings, who but occupy a space in the world that might be better filled were they only out of it.”

The Herald overtly treated blacks as objects of menacing derision. One of the cases awaiting trial at Sandwich that September was of

William Saunders, for murdering an ox. We hope this latter person will meet with the just retribution of the law, for depriving of life so innocent, harmless and useful an animal. As we are not disposed to prejudice the minds of the jury, we must forbear saying anything relative to this appalling subject. We understand the “sympathies” of the colored gentlemen are greatly enlisted in behalf of the sable Beefocide; and, apprehensions existing of an attempt to rescue him from the tenacious grip of the Law, our Magistrates, with becoming solicitude for the full and efficient administration of British Justice, have provided a sufficient military force to ensure order and peace. So look out, Darkies!

In the view of the Herald, the best place for blacks was elsewhere. In 1841 it reported that an agent for a Montreal company for promoting emigration to Jamaica was then at Bullock’s Hotel in Amherstburg, and the editor added his hope that many local blacks would go there, “where constant employment and good wages will be ensured to them.”

Into this climate of condescension that could so easily escalate into virulent racism, a Maryland-born escaped slave called Josiah Henson (Josiah from the given name of his first
master, and Henson from the surname of his master's uncle) arrived with his family, locating in Colchester Township in 1834. Henson, who had become a Methodist Episcopal preacher before his flight from Kentucky, had formed the intention of establishing an exclusively black settlement where trained teachers would provide a general education. With funding from an American missionary society he was able to acquire land in Dawn Township for his community, and there, at Dresden, he relocated in 1842. With his oratorical skills Henson functioned not only as the patriarch of the Dawn settlement but as a spokesperson for Canadian blacks generally.

No area of human activity gives rise to more vehemently held attitudes than religion. The Church of England had undergone the separation of the Methodist sect, which in America had been enjoying phenomenal growth—and on the part of confirmed Anglicans, no little jealousy. In 1819 Robert McMurray, in Gosfield, wrote, "I have commenced a new work, in which I shall show to the world the difference between a Christian and a Methodist."

One traveler visiting the district in 1835 was the Reverend William Proudfoot. Preaching in Tilbury Township, the Presbyterian Proudfoot encountered a congregation that was too conservative for his taste: "These ignorant Highlanders are a hindrance to improvement wherever they go—about them is an obstinacy which nothing can move, and then that Gaelic—alas for the Gaelic!" The next day's encounter revealed the reason for Proudfoot's dislike of the local Presbyterians: "Was much disappointed at finding that there are not any Presbyterians in Chatham. Mrs. Freeman, the tavernkeeper's wife, is a Presbyterian but of the Yankee sort—that is, Methodist or American in doctrine and Presbyterian in government, or rather, in name. . . . These are not the kind of folk who could see matters as we do."

Unlike Presbyterians, who were disapproved of by other Presbyterians, Mormons seemed to be spurned by everyone. "X," of Mersea Township, wrote to the *Sandwich Western Herald* that on July 20, 1839, "this township was re-visited by one of those itinerant vendors of erroneous religious doctrine and republican, alias false, political opinions, one of those propagators of fanaticism and rebellion, viz: a Yankee Mormon preacher," who was seized by a number of the inhabitants, tarred, and feathered.

Languages

The patois referred to by both Jameson and Bonnycastle was Detroit River French, the dialect spoken by the residents of the region. It was, and is, a variant of the Norman-based speech of Lower Canada, embodying some differences in gender as well as vocabulary and pronunciation. When Lord Durham in his famous 1839 *Report on the Affairs of British North America* dismissed the French Canadians as "a people with no literature and no history," in
his oversimplification he unwittingly identified a fundamental difficulty. While it is true that the inhabitants of the Detroit River settlement have not developed a literature, it is equally true that their identity has been expressed orally and musically. The fact is that Detroit River French remained the dominant spoken language of the region through most if not all of the nineteenth century, and perhaps even into the twentieth. Throughout the period the love of music manifested itself in a vigorous French-Canadian tradition of folksinging.\textsuperscript{13}

Anglophone speech, as imported by Yankee immigrants from New England, also rang strangely in the ears of those unaccustomed to its colloquial cadence. One writer's description, not only of what he saw but also of what he heard in the Western District about 1820, begins as he descended the Thames and called on a woman with acute rheumatism. He rendered the conversation between the woman, her doctor, and her husband, abounding in the slang of the day, as follows:

"How d'ye do, my good lady, how d'ye do?"

"Oh, doctor, I was wishing to see you very bad—I don't calculate upon ever getting \textit{smart} again."

"Hoity, toity! You look a thundering sight better than you did yesterday."

"Better! No, doctor, I am no better—I'm going to die in your hands."

"My dear good lady, I'll bet a pint of spirits I'll \textit{raise} you in five days, and make you so \textit{spry}, that you'll dance upon this floor."

"Oh! If I had but the \textit{root} doctor that used to attend our family at Connecticut; he was a dreadful \textit{skeeful man}.

[Enter husband]

"Good morning to you, doctor, what's the word?"

"Nothing new or strange, sir."

"Well, now, doctor, how do you find that there woman? No better, I conclude? I guess as how it would be as well to let you understand plainly, that if you can't do her never no good, I wouldn't wish to be run into no expenses—pretty low times, doctor—money's out of the question. Now, sir, can you \textit{raise} that there woman?"

"Yes, my good sir, yes, I can—I offered to bet a pint with her this moment, and I'll make it a quart if you please, my dear friend."

"But, doctor, are you up to the \textit{natur} of her ailment?"
“Oh, perfectly—nothing more simple; it arises entirely from obstruction and constitutional idiosyncrasy, and is seated under the muscular fascia. Some casual excitement has increased the action of the absorbent vessels so much, that they have drawn the blood from the different parts of the body, and occasioned the pain and debility that is now present.”

“Well now, doctor, I swear you talk like a lawyer, and I begin to have hopes that you’ll be pretty considerably apt to raise my woman.”

The doctor now opened his saddlebags, and, having set forth many small parcels and dirty vials upon the table, began to compound several recipes for his patient, who, when she saw him employed in this way, put out her head between the curtains of her bed, and cried,

“Doctor, don’t forget to leave something for the debilitation.”

When he had finished, he packed up his laboratory, and ordered that something he had left should be infused in a pint of whisky, and that a tablespoonful of the fluid should be taken three times a day.

“Will that raise me slick? I guess I had as well take it four times a-day.”

Patrick Shirreff’s ear caught some regional pronunciations in the Western District. He noted “The river Thames, the letters of which are invariably pronounced soft by the inhabitants of the country.” He also mentioned the Township of “Marsea,” probably reflecting what he heard.

During a sojourn in Ireland to settle a family estate, William McCormick of Colchester Township had time to jot down a rough manuscript that he grandly entitled *A Sketch of the Western District of Upper Canada, being the Southern extremity of that interesting Province; by William McCormick Esq’re, Written in 1824.* McCormick’s enthusiastic spelling and his revisions offer evidence of pronunciations as well as vocabulary in his day. Bois Blanc Island, for example, *L’Ile aux Bois Blancs,* was first rendered as “The island called Boughbla,” which was struck out and replaced, not with its literal equivalent, Whitewood Island, but with “Linn Island,” linn being a variant of linden, basswood. Other words are puzzling until allowance is made not only for linguistic evolution but also for McCormick’s Irish accent: “Poynaply” translates as the form current in 1824, “Pointe à Pelée.”

### The Power of the Press

During the provincial election of 1834 the Tory *Emigrant* found itself dealing with Amos Shaw, who had had the audacity to offer himself as a Reform candidate in Kent. The
Emigrant developed an elegantly simple strategy for dealing with the offending candidate. Two letters from Shaw, dated May 25 and June 2, were both published on July 12. They were run with every spelling and grammatical error faithfully reproduced, and no other editorial comment. They appeared rambling and meaningless, and the point was made.

Newspaper advertising on the western frontier—first in Detroit, and seven months later in Sandwich—stimulated the local economy. When Pierre St. Amour laid up his horse-powered ferry over the winter of 1830–31 for rebuilding, he proudly informed his public by advertising in the first issue of the Detroit Democratic Free Press and Michigan Intelligencer. At Sandwich Ferry the owners of its cluster of inns and stores jostled to keep readers of the Canadian Emigrant informed of their enterprises. Joseph House made it known that he had recently taken over Brooker’s, opposite to Detroit, connected with the ferry and where the mail stages stopped: “There is a delightful view of the city of Detroit, and the surrounding country on both sides of the river, from the pavilion on the top of the house, which is of easy access.”

Dr. D. D. Johnson of Sandwich was advertising “Dr. Johnson’s Vegetable Pulmonary Specific,” whose virtues were said to be that “It opens the pores, removes obstructions of the chest and lungs, promotes expectoration, improves digestion, it composes and strengthens the nerves, and repairs the appetite.” Dr. Johnson also offered “The Real Spanish Tooth Powder.” Finally, there was the perennial advertisement for a lottery, operated from New York. Then as now, experienced advertisers from the Big City knew not only how to impress readers with numbers followed by a great many zeros, but also how to persuade them that they were likely to win.

Like many other newspaper proprietors in Upper Canada, John Cowan had difficulty ensuring a supply of paper. Although he advertised his willingness to pay cash for good-quality rags for papermaking, a shortage before the navigation opened caused him to miss an issue in March 1832. Always short of cash, by April he was proposing to publish a book, a manual for the guidance of the magistrates of Upper Canada; whether he had considered the modest market potential for such a specialized subject is not known. Cowan also operated a venture called the Western District Land Office. As of the issue of September 29, the office of the Emigrant was removed to the editor’s home, on the northwest side of Bedford Street at Detroit Street. Clearly this was a money-saving measure; another was that thenceforth the Emigrant would be printed with the aid of imperial chases (22 × 30 inch, page-sized frames for type) cast at Field and Cahoon’s furnace in Gosfield at a cost of three dollars, one-eighth the expense of the heavier, wrought-iron chases that were customarily used. The Western Herald, like its predecessor, was perennially embarrassed for funds. “Mancius’s Cough Mixture” was to be had at the Herald office for twenty-five cents a bottle. “Moffatt’s Life Pills and Phoenix Bitters” were available at the same source with the promise
that "in all general derangements of the health, these medicines have proved a certain and speedy remedy. They restore vigorous health to the most exhausted constitutions. A single trial will place the LIFE PILLS AND PHOENIX BITTERS beyond the reach of competition, in the estimation of every patient." One might also acquire schoolbooks, or perhaps even a white-fish seine, at the Herald office.

The inception of newspaper service proved to be of fundamental importance to Sandwich and its hinterland. The Canadian Emigrant and Western District Advertiser stimulated an interest among the inhabitants of the district in local and provincial, even world affairs. It provided an outlet for opinions, often vigorously and entertainingly expressed in letters to the editor. Editorial comment called attention (albeit usually negatively) to any number of public issues, and advertisers had created a spurt in economic activity.

The weekly Canadian Emigrant had become enough of an institution in the Western District during its first five years of operation that in 1836 it became a daily, distributed entirely in Sandwich. The weekly edition continued as a summary of the daily, distributed over a broader area. However, distance remained a difficulty for the weekly edition. "Erroll," of Port Sarnia, complained that the Emigrant of New York reached his area through the United States and across the St. Clair River before any Upper Canadian newspaper, including the Emigrant of Sandwich. Even so, the daily edition was discontinued after only nine weeks.

Disease

Among the most traumatic episodes in the half century of the Western District—certainly the most distressing to have been covered by the Emigrant—were the cholera epidemics of 1832 and 1834, separated by a smallpox epidemic in 1833. Cholera had probably originated in southeast Asia, and had reached Europe, where it caused a major epidemic in 1831–32.17 The disease's arrival in the Western District was so catastrophic that the magistrates began an emergency session on June 26, 1832. Their orders that day betrayed a sort of commonsense awareness of the conditions in which disease flourishes, but also the ignorance that prevailed as to specific causes and treatments. Houses were to be cleaned and whitewashed inside, yards were to be cleaned, stagnant pools were to be filled or drained, and ditches were to be cut, allowing the Detroit River to flow into the marshes lying inland. Privies were to be cleaned, washed, limed, and whitewashed, since lime was thought to have disinfectant properties; twelve barrels of the substance were to be bought for Sandwich, and twenty for Amherstburg, for distribution to the population, whether they could pay or not.18 St. Amour's horseboat was to be removed or scuttled. No "tippling" was to be allowed in any of the inns, and the taverns were to close at 8:00 P.M.19
This was a time of panic. The next day the justices hastily appointed boards of health for various overlapping jurisdictions, and as individuals the magistrates were free to enact whatever local regulations they considered necessary. Hospitals were to be established on Bois Blanc Island, at Amherstburg, and at Sandwich—the one at Sandwich to be in the "Stone College," the Western District Grammar School across Bedford Street from the English Church. Acting with astonishingly unbureaucratic speed, on June 28 the justices both established and filled a new position (apothecary and chemist) to prepare medicines for the district. Sandwich Township was particularly subjected to the scrutiny of its board of health, whose inspectors were empowered "to put in force any measures they might deem necessary to prevent infection from noxious smells, etc."

Parts of a proclamation of the mayor of Detroit issued on June 25, including a prohibition on crossing from the Canadian shore, were adopted by the Quarter Sessions for the affected parts of the Western District as well. In addition, the magistrates of both Essex and Kent were authorized to prevent those suspected of being infected from entering the district, which was becoming an isolated principality, defending its borders. George Jasperson and François Baby were on guard at The Ferry on the night of July 11, to enforce the regulations. Three people were so unwise as to test their authority, and the next day were fined five shillings each by the magistrates, for insolence.

On July 13, the justices received word that cholera had broken out at Bear Creek, and along the Thames. The response was a stoppage of all travel within the district, as well as across its borders; "stragglers, deserters and any other persons" heading toward Sandwich who were suspected of having cholera were to be stopped at the River Ruscom.

The crossing guards were empowered to deputize others. François Baby complained on July 14 that a passerby had refused to help him stop a person from landing. The magistrates regarded this as even more serious than the landing itself, and fined the offender ten shillings plus the cost of his arrest, or imprisonment if he failed to pay the fine. Crossings, of course, were nearly impossible to prevent as long as the shore-dwelling residents had watercraft. Therefore, it was ordered on July 14 that all boats and canoes along the upper Detroit should be collected at Sandwich. In effect, the local authorities had acted without higher consultation to close an international boundary. For the first time, but not the last, practical necessity had taken precedence over diplomatic niceties in the managing of the Detroit River boundary.

The orders coming out of the Quarter Sessions were being altered day by day, as the magistrates struggled to respond to an emergency they had never faced before. By July 14 it was ordered that traffic approaching Sandwich from infected parts of the district was to be...
stopped not at the River Ruscom, as ordered the day before, but closer, at Pike Creek. Prices were being raised at Sandwich. Supplies had to be brought in despite the deepening isolation of the town, and on July 17 permission was granted for a single wagon to go to the Thames to bring back a load of flour or wheat.

By late summer the worst of the cholera epidemic was over, but the residents of the Western District did not know it yet. The disease was apparently still spreading at the jail when, on August 22, the contracting for a year’s medical attendance on the prisoners was authorized. On October 11 the magistrates approved an expenditure of £87 9s 6 1/2d by the Board of Health, covering most, if not all, of the direct public cost of the cholera epidemic in the Western District. At the same time, it was ordered with relief that the medical equipment in the hospital, no longer needed, be removed forthwith to the jury room for safekeeping. The cholera epidemic had resulted in a total of fifty-three cases, in a swath from Sandwich Township to Dover, on the Thames, that were reported to the Board of Health. Of these, a shocking twenty-nine, or 55 percent, had died.

Several people had reportedly already died of a smallpox epidemic among the French-Canadian inhabitants of Sandwich, Malden, and the River Thames by the time the editor of the Emigrant was able to publish a warning about it on October 26, 1833. Two days later Pierre St. Amour, the innkeeper and ferryman, died of the disease. By mid-December there were about a hundred cases at Amherstburg, with upward of a dozen deaths, and before the epidemic ran its course it had spread beyond the members of the French-Canadian community.

In 1834 there was an understandable sensitivity, based on the experience of two years earlier, to news of cholera. First, in June, the Emigrant carried a story of an outbreak in Ireland. By early August, the disease, reportedly as bad as in 1832, had progressed inexorably into the interior of North America, from Montreal, through Kingston, Toronto, Hamilton, Dundas, and Ancaster, to Detroit. Cholera first appeared in Sandwich Township on August 10; by the sixteenth, the disease had also reached the mouth of the Thames. Once again, boards of health were hastily convened. Medicines were to be purchased by the district immediately, to be dispensed on the prescription of any medical gentleman, gratis to the poor, and to priests on behalf of the poor, although all others were to pay for them.

By early September, when the epidemic abated, fifteen or sixteen deaths had occurred in Amherstburg. When the Sandwich board met in mid-month it was decided that the remaining medicines should be sold at auction. Bedding that had been acquired was to be delivered to the sheriff, for the use of the Western District in the Sandwich jail. A few days later the Emigrant listed sixty-two who had died in Sandwich Township alone, most of them of
cholera, since the arrival of the disease that year. Another twenty-six deaths in Amherstburg were similarly attributed. If the Emigrant’s tallies for the two cholera epidemics are accepted, in the Western District the second was far worse than the first.

**Justice**

The justice system was as swift and as harsh as it probably had to be, in a border area whose special considerations included desertion and smuggling. In 1819 the magistrates, “Ordered, that the Sheriff do procure to be erected, stocks for the towns of Sandwich and Amherstburg, to be placed in the most conspicuous situations of exposure”; public, highly visible punishment would be carried out wherever its deterrent effect would be greatest. A common miscreant, for example, an immigrant convicted of petty larceny and burglary in 1830, was sentenced to one month’s imprisonment, starting immediately, during which time he was to stand for one hour at noon the next day in the pillory, and again twelve days later, and again on the last day of his sentence. Following that, he was to be banished from the province for life. The docket of cases tried at Sandwich in 1822 was fairly typical, including murder, larceny, smuggling, and enticing soldiers to desert. William McCrae, a magistrate from Raleigh Township, complained about the frailties of the constabulary, specifically Constable Eberts’s difficulty in bringing in one George Baily, a suspected smuggler: “Eberts went down the River to watch this Baily & seize his goods as there is little doubt he has gone down [to Detroit] for a new supply of goods, but as might have been expected Eberts got drunk and if the man had been in the road he might have passed unmolested.”

The provision of social services, such as they were, was another of the responsibilities of the Quarter Sessions: “Mrs. Fraser an insane woman, confined in the Gaol to be permitted to go in the yard every day for two or three hours so long as she does not abuse the indulgence by improper behaviour.” Some other services might be considered more mundane: “Ordered, that the Treasurer shall be authorized to borrow a sufficient sum of money to build a privy to be weatherboarded and to be plastered inside agreeable to a plan exhibited by the Sheriff, and pay interest for such sum as may be required, but if found that a drain can be made cheaper it shall be made in lieu of the privy.”

The famous witchcraft trial of Robert E. Barker, surely one of the most bizarre in Canadian jurisprudence, took place in the Sandwich courthouse in 1830. The supposed facts of the case shared much with folkloric belief that had become most widespread in Britain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. At the heart of the story was a very common element: an old woman—in this case a neighbor of John T. McDonald, of Sombra Township—who desired something belonging to the hero—McDonald’s property—and had been refused.
Mysterious occurrences thereupon began to plague him and his family. Bullets crashing through windows; stones thrown into water magically reappearing, wet, on dry land; masses of flame floating in midair; buildings burning; and the odor of brimstone were reported by one witness to have occurred over a period of sixteen weeks, in late 1829 and early 1830.

Barker, a teacher from Bay County, Michigan, undertook to exorcise the evil spirits considered to have been responsible for the mischief by putting up a sign commanding them to depart. It was probably for this usurpation of a priestly function by a layperson that Barker ended up before the Quarter Sessions in Sandwich, charged with "Pretending to Witchcraft." The prosecution witnesses, including William McCrae and John McDonald, were sworn, and a true bill was returned against Barker on April 13, 1830. His plea of not guilty was recorded on April 14, and a jury was sworn in. The jury was made up of people far removed from Sombra Township; all twelve were members of French-Canadian, Detroit River families. In fact, three of the jurors had the same surname (Dufour). There were other curious points: one of the prosecution witnesses, William McCrae, was also one of the magistrates, and Jean B. Maçon, who was sworn in to act as interpreter for the francophone jury, was another.

Perhaps not too surprisingly, the defendant was convicted. Attorney William Elliott, acting for Barker, immediately moved for a new trial, maintaining that the verdict was contrary to both law and the evidence, but his motion was not granted. Barker was sentenced to be imprisoned for one year, during which he was to stand in the pillory at noon once every ninety days. He was also required to post sureties for good behavior thereafter. At some point the magistrates seem to have undergone a change of heart; when Barker petitioned Lieutenant Governor Sir John Colborne for the overturn of his conviction, the justices supported him with a recommendation for clemency. Colborne pardoned him, and he was released.

There ends the first episode, but not the story. Transformation and alchemy, other elements from European traditional belief, figure in its resolution. Barker's attempt at exorcism having failed, John McDonald turned next to a Catholic priest for help, and then to a native medicine man. Finally, on psychic advice, McDonald made a silver bullet with which to shoot a strange gray goose that had appeared in his flock at the time the mischief began. His shot broke the goose's wing, whereupon he went to the old woman's house and found her nursing a broken arm. With this magical triumph of good over evil the mysterious happenings are said to have come to an end.

Drinking frequently led to assaults such as the one committed on Penuel K. Stevens, in Howard Township, on April 5, 1831, by twenty-six others. Before his ordeal was over, Stevens had been beaten, thrown against a log, then to the ground, and then into a ditch. In the words of the indictment, his tormenters "did rub over, smear, daub, anoint, and defile
with tar, and then and there on and over the said tar and on and upon the body of the said Penuel K. Stevens did put, stick to, and rub on feathers. The participles used to describe the assault included flinging, casting, throwing, kicking, striking, beating, tarring, and feathering, "so that his life was greatly despaired of." One attacker was speedily convicted, but the others disappeared so effectively that the justices authorized rewards of five pounds for the capture and conviction of each of them.

The line separating the sinners and those who were sinned against was a fine one, and it was crossed and recrossed frequently. Late in 1832, at a special session in Sheriff Hands’s office, the justices ordered the posting of a reward for information on a jail escapee, the same Penuel K. Stevens who the previous year had himself been the hapless victim of a grievous assault.

Israel Williams, who had been engaged as a guide by Patrick Shirreff in 1833, was another who had come to the attention of the authorities. That year the magistrates in Quarter Sessions “Ordered, on Gr. Jury’s presentment, that Israel Williams [is] to remove a barn & any other obstructions he has been keeping on King Street in Chatham.” The barn in question was said to have been obstructing King Street for some years. This was only one of many times that Williams had been in trouble involving trespassing, and buildings, and sometimes both. Williams’s career achieved a kind of zenith in 1848, near Amherstburg, where he had been living for some time, when he was charged with the theft of a log building belonging to Hyacinth Baron. It seems that Baron had given his neighbor Williams permission to gather firewood on his property and take it away, that in Baron’s absence Williams had made the honest mistake of thinking that Baron’s house was a pile of firewood, and that after hauling the kindling to his own farm it had occurred to him to assemble it as a house; at least that was the explanation that Williams offered as his defense.

Because several currencies were in simultaneous circulation in Upper Canada, opportunities existed for enterprising characters to exploit the unwary. A supposed peddler, apprehended in Hall’s tavern in Sandwich early in 1834, had a tin box found to contain equipment for making Spanish and American coins. About two weeks later it was reported that the peddler’s supposed partner had lived for some time in Petite Côte and had passed large amounts in Amherstburg, Petite Côte, and the Lake Settlement. Conversely, periodically recurring recessions brought about the problem of too little money, a difficulty that the Western District confronted when it experimented with the issuing of its own scrip—temporary paper currency—in 1838.

The swift carrying out of sentences might have been rationalized as a means of reducing the cost of feeding prisoners. Robert Bird was speedily convicted in 1835 of the murder of an itinerant peddler who had met his end somewhere along Baldoon Street in Dover East
Township. A gallows having been built during the next few days out from the west window of the Grand Jury room of the courthouse, Bird was hanged while a crowd watched below, and an hour later the body was taken down and dissected. As the *Emigrant* described it, "Dr. Geo. Jones distinguished himself by a scientific mode of dissection, and a most lucid and satisfactory explanation of the purpose of the various parts of the system." Within a few days Dr. Jones shared a remarkable phrenological analysis of the departed Bird with the *Emigrant*’s readers: desire to live, destructiveness, amativeness, philoprogenitiveness (defined by Jones as love of children), acquisitiveness, reverence, firmness, and hope, all large; combativeness, secretiveness, and self-esteem, moderate; but sadly, benevolence, marvelousness, and conscientiousness were all found to be small.

On occasion the process was not even delayed by the time required to build the gallows. On Friday, September 22, 1837, a convicted murderer named Morgan was sentenced to be hanged, and the deed was done on Monday the twenty-fifth. Mercy did play a role in the justice system, but a minor one: on Saturday, the twenty-third, another convict, Fitzpatrick, was also sentenced to be hanged, but in response to representations, Quarter Sessions Chairman John Prince signed a petition in favor of the prisoner on Tuesday, the twenty-sixth. Fitzpatrick’s life was extended thirteen days by this gesture; he was hanged on October 9. In a similar spirit of charity, on October 11 the jailer was ordered to provide a lunatic with food on the same basis as the other inmates of the jail, and to lend him a couple of blankets.

Certainly any measure that would reduce the jail population was welcome, but perhaps four prisoners carried this principle a little far when they attempted to break out one Sunday in 1835, while Jailer Abraham Unsworth was in church. They had removed the casing of their window and were in the process of noisily wrenching the iron bars out of the masonry when they were detected by Mrs. Unsworth.

The security of the district jail, located beneath the courthouse, was a constant concern. The justices ordered the sheriff to employ an assistant jailer early in 1835, and at the same time they ordered that smallish iron grating doors be fitted and that a large opening be reduced in size.

By 1837 escapes had become enough of a problem that a committee was formed to advise the Quarter Sessions regarding the matter. The solution to the crisis: Sheriff Ebenezer Reynolds was to be replaced. Indeed, Robert Lachlan, sitting as a member of the panel of magistrates on July 26, produced the necessary bonds to qualify for the position, which was approved of and certified by the chairman of the Quarter Sessions, John Prince. It will hardly come as a surprise, then, to learn that Lachlan was a houseguest of Prince on both the twenty-fifth and the twenty-sixth. One day later the unwitting Reynolds protested that he would not
be responsible for the security of the prisoners unless repairs to the jail were made. It was not until October 10 that Sheriff Lachlan's commission was read to the assembled magistrates, and Chairman Prince ordered that the Quarter Sessions' thanks be conveyed to Ebenezer Reynolds on his retirement. Office politics were as vicious in 1837 as they are today.

The fact is that the jail was in constant need of repair, not because it was of unusually shoddy construction, but because its inmates were determined to be elsewhere. Two prisoners, one of them a blacksmith with considerable experience as a jailbreaker, made their escape in 1842. The blacksmith's cell had an inner door of soft pine and an outer one of iron bars (probably one of those fitted in 1835). Apparently he used a sharpened button from his blouse to cut the wood away around a large staple holding the lock to the inner door, concealing the progress of his work with wadded, dirtied bread to fill the hole around the staple. When he was finally able to withdraw the staple and get the inner door open, he used it as a tool to open the outer grating, then released the other prisoner from his cell. After opening five locks in all, and using blankets spread on the floor to muffle their footsteps, the two departed the building in the early morning darkness.

Sharp business practice was not unknown in the Western District. One focus of suspicious attention was an itinerant clock merchant, Leonard Peck. Peck's career as a dealer in goods of questionable origin appears to have served him well. By the spring of 1836 he was
reportedly having Shadrack Jenking, above the Ferry, build him a 135-ton schooner, the *Princess Victoria*, which was expected to be the largest vessel yet built above Niagara Falls in British North America. However, Peck’s adventurous style carried certain risks. Four months later Sheriff Ebenezer Reynolds was searching for him as an absconding or concealed debtor, being sued for sums amounting to twenty-six pounds.

**Social Movements**

Various segments of the population with their own interests were beginning to emerge. Mr. Justice William Campbell of York, who was also president of the Upper Canada Agricultural Society, perhaps provided the impetus for the formation of agricultural societies in the Western District in 1819 when he wrote William Hands, not as sheriff of the Western District but as a recruiter of subscribers for the society pending the formation of one in the southwest. Inhabitants of Raleigh Township had come together by 1829 as the Talbot Road Agricultural Society, to import superior horses, cattle, and swine to improve their own stocks. The agricultural societies proliferated, and became involved in political processes: John Prince and Robert Lachlan were advancing interests of their own in 1837 when they met about the Western District Agricultural Society (whose presidency Lachlan soon gave up). From the societies it was only a short step to agricultural fairs, which offered entertainment through competition.

Upper Canada was moving toward a planned school system in 1823, with the establishment that year of a provincial board of education. Until province-wide standards could be introduced and maintained, there was a wide variation in education, particularly away from the few major communities. In Gosfield Township, Robert McMurray revealed something of his own modest grammatical attainments when he described his school: “we have a singing school 3 nights in the week and Saturday. It is very entertaining. You will see there nearly 50 scholars all singing at once. The school is held in the Methodist church. There was 23 scholars at school today.” Those who taught came from a variety of backgrounds, and were possessed of similarly uneven qualifications. The *Sandwich Canadian Emigrant* complained of the dangers of having American teachers in Upper Canada, preaching disloyalty and the like, and it even referred to the Reverend William Johnson, of the English Church, teaching at the Western District Grammar School.

By the 1830s, society was beginning to move away from hard drinking as a way of life, giving rise to the temperance movement. About January 1831, a temperance society was established in Howard Township, and another was formed in Gosfield in April. That summer the magistrates required tavern regulations to be posted in every inn. In January 1832
came a petition to the Quarter Sessions, signed by fifteen of the inhabitants of the Gosfield Back Settlement, opposing the issuing of a tavern license that had been applied for. The petitioners maintained that a tavern was “altogether uncalled for,” that it would be “a rendezvous for the riff-raff of the community,” and that it would do “material injury to Messrs. Field & Cahoon, proprietors of the recently erected furnace in this place.” It should be noted, however, that among the petitioners were two who were directly concerned: the aforementioned Messrs. Field and Cahoon.

**Pomp and Circumstance**

With the passage of time, tradition and ceremony were becoming entrenched. Through much of the nineteenth century, New Year’s Day, not Christmas, was “that day which custom has consecrated to the interchange of friendly and affectionate courtesies,” and on such an occasion temperance seems to have been resisted rather successfully.\(^{32}\) One custom, which mercifully has not been handed down, has been reported on Point Pelee: the first celebrant to awake on New Year’s morning aroused his still-sleeping neighbor by firing a shotgun blast at his house; then the two went to the next house and repeated the process, and so on down the line.

In 1835 the justices of the peace decided that a court crier should be hired, at a stipend of fifty dollars per year. A little ceremony still went a long way however, and at this point reality intervened; although the sheriff was directed to provide him with a bench in the courthouse, it was decreed that the crier should supply his own gown.

A public testimonial dinner, above all one having political overtones, afforded an opportunity for a large-scale festive affair. John Prince was the focus of rapidly spreading notoriety in June 1839, having seven months before ordered the summary executions of five prisoners taken at the Battle of Windsor. Although threats had been made against his life, his supporters were legion, and it was they who arranged a gathering in Mears’s orchard on the evening of June 11. The German Band of Detroit was hired for the occasion, to play “See, the Conquering Hero Comes” and the like during the parade through Sandwich to escort Prince in his carriage, drawn by members of the Eighty-Fifth Regiment, to the orchard. There an arbor of oak branches about 150 feet long had been set up, under which was the dinner table. At least five toasts were drunk before Prince’s speech, which lasted upward of an hour, and at least six after. (The precise number of toasts is understandably uncertain.)

For sheer spectacle, however, nothing could match an election, particularly one involving a colorful figure like John Prince and an occasion like the superseding of the province of Upper Canada.\(^{33}\) The proceedings began about ten o’clock in the morning on March 22,
1841, when perhaps 150 horsemen led a parade of Prince's supporters from Mears's orchard into Sandwich, preceded by a flag inscribed "Prince, l'ami des canadiens." Several wheeled parade floats followed, resplendent in banners dedicated to the hero of the day. One was in the form of a full-rigged ship, the Victory, with banners reading "Prince and the Constitution," "Prince and the Indemnity Act, £40,000," "Prince and his 16 Acts," "Prince and the People," and "Prince, Commerce, and Agriculture." The electioneering "crewmen" were in nautical uniforms, and in the opinion of the editor of the Sandwich Western Herald, "the ship Victory was the most unique specimen of naval architecture that we ever saw sail upon dry land."34 A band followed, then the electors of Sandwich and the neighboring townships, in wagons and on foot, each group marked by flags and banners inscribed "Prince." The magic name was also emblazoned on printed muslin on the fronts of their hats, with mottoes in French or English. At the King's Arms this parade was joined by another, bringing the number of participants to nearly one thousand. There they were met by Prince, whose horses they unhitched, and the people drew his carriage as the group moved off to the courthouse, pausing, of course, at the inns along the way.

At the courthouse they were met by the supporters of Prince's opponent, Francis Caldwell. After the speechifying the returning officer called for a show of hands, the unsurprising result of which was promptly challenged by Caldwell's advisers, who demanded a formal poll. Two days later Caldwell conceded the inevitable, whereupon Prince was hoisted on the shoulders of four men, who carried him to the Western Hotel, where he spoke to a throng of supporters from an upper window. From there Prince was borne to his campaign headquarters at William Hall's tavern, and around Sandwich. The town was dazzling with bonfires and lights in the windows that night.

Living on the Edge

As the District matured, the quality of life changed perceptibly. The days of unending struggle with the environment to grub out an existence were slowly giving way to softer conditions, when there was time to turn one's thoughts from mere survival to how well one lived. The annual retreat of the winter's ice from the beaches provided both the occasion and the venue for an annual contest, as settlers and their animals alike celebrated their emergence into the spring sunlight and warmth. In mid-March 1832, a Mr. Genlis of the settlement near the Ferry raced his horse against one owned by a Mr. Monforon of Petite Côte and, as usually happened when someone was rash enough to challenge the legendary Petite Côte breed, he lost.
In reality, living in the stable, unchanging—and therefore dull—Western District of popular assumption underwent considerable change during the five decades of its existence. The contest between land and water for dominance was slowly being won by the land as drainage went ahead, as roads were opened, and as the forest gave way to agriculture, yielding products for export even as it shrank. However, water remained the primary means of long-distance transportation, indeed the only mode for cross-border interaction. Wind and water were giving way to steam as the major source of energy to drive the process. Heavy industry had made its appearance, and with it, a new social class, capitalists. Buildings and furniture continued to reflect the availability of the materials from which they were formed, as well as the ethnic backgrounds of their makers. The justice system betrayed attitudes and beliefs of the day that were echoed, and in many cases reinforced, by the advent of newspapers, with their new power to articulate public opinion. At the midpoint of the nineteenth century, life on the Canadian side of the Detroit frontier was still very much a work in progress.
Conclusion
Descent with Modification

When Governor General John George Lambton, first earl of Durham, completed his Report on the Affairs of British North America in January 1839, he accomplished much more than a momentary diversion of attention from John Prince's notorious conduct of the month before, following the Battle of Windsor. By accepting the advice of the Toronto reformer Robert Baldwin and recommending not only the reunification of the Canadas but also the implementation of responsible government, Durham set in motion a sequence of events paralleling the flurry of activity that had culminated in the creation of the districts, including the Western, toward the end of the eighteenth century.

Act of Union, 1841
The process began almost immediately, in May 1839, with the introduction in the British Commons of legislation to establish a new Province of Canada. Both existing Canadas having consented by the end of the year, the Act of Union was passed in London in July 1840 and proclaimed on February 10, 1841, in Montreal. Upper and Lower Canada were no more, although their identities were preserved as divisions of the new, combined province—respectively, Canada West and Canada East. The term “responsible government,” which perhaps most today would take to mean government responsible to the electorate, meant something slightly different to Durham and his contemporaries. To them it was government responsible to the representatives of the people, that is, a cabinet depending on the wishes of a majority of members of the legislature. The British principle of responsible government had not yet evolved into the American democratic tradition with its reliance on popularly elected officials rather than appointees, although it was unconsciously heading in that direction.

District Councils Act, 1842
The widespread suspicion of democracy that had been evident at the time of the Patriot War manifested itself during discussion of responsible government and how it should operate at
the local level in Canada. In an editorial on August 11, 1841, the Sandwich Western Herald disparaged the proposed "Act to Provide for the Better Internal Government of That Part of the Province, Which Formerly Constituted the Province of Upper Canada" (better known, mercifully, as the District Councils Act), then being debated in Kingston, the new Canadian capital. In the eyes of the Herald, it was "the most anti-monarchical measure proposed the present session, and will prove the steppingstone to the introduction of republicanism on a large scale. . . . Popularity among the mass, not respectability, integrity and moral uprightness, will constitute the principal qualification of aspirants to municipal honors." The editor's mistrust of elected representatives had become even more pointed by the time of the election, that December: "Heretofore the Magistrates have monopolized the high honor of legislating for the District, but now any man worth three hundred pounds, whether he can read or not, is legally competent to that very important, though profitless, office."³

The District Councils Act having become effective January 1, 1842, the election of the first Western District Council took place forthwith.² Under the new dispensation the municipal functions of the Court of Quarter Sessions were transferred from the appointive panel of magistrates to the elective District Council. In practice the council's forms and procedures soon came to resemble those of the provincial House of Assembly. There were first, second, and third readings of bylaws, which were enacted, where previously the panel of magistrates in Quarter Sessions had ordered or approved. Like the House, the council resolved itself into committee of the whole for debate, then reconstituted itself as the council before the chair of the committee formally reported the result of the debate to the warden (a new official, analogous to the clerk in the Court of Quarter Sessions of the Peace).

The Western District Council had existed for no more than six weeks before issues in the affairs of the district that had been simmering for generations boiled up once again. On February 11, 1842, the council decided, by a vote of fifteen to nine, that a committee should draft a petition to the legislature calling for the district seat to be transferred from Sandwich to Chatham. Further, before the council was nine weeks old word had been published in Sandwich that the inhabitants of the northern townships of Kent would apply directly to the legislature to be set up into a separate district. Positions became more extreme, if anything, as the discussions of similar sentiments across the province extended over the next year. The Assembly's consideration of changes that would abolish the existing municipal councils and organize others in their stead gave rise to an address by the Western District Council to Governor General Sir Charles Theophilus Metcalfe:
We are . . . of opinion that the bill, by reason of its excessively democratical and republican character is inconsistent if not incompatible with the continued existence of British sovereignty in this colony, and that it is evidently calculated to alienate the affections of the people from British connection, and to prepare the way for that separation which, as subjects of our great and glorious Monarchy, we regard with horror, dismay, and unqualified detestation.¹

Although matters never reached that extreme, the process of restructuring that had been muttered about in the Western District so often in the past had demonstrated continued and building momentum.

District of Kent, 1847
On July 9, 1847, the provisional District of Kent was established by legislation to become effective as soon as facilities could be built at Chatham.² However, Kent's elevation was the last before the district system in Canada was abolished altogether, and the legislation was never fully implemented. Although no officials were appointed, the Kent members of the Western District Council began meeting at Chatham as an ad hoc separate body on August 17, 1847.

1850: Evolution before Darwin
In the Legislative Assembly of United Canada, Robert Baldwin of Canada West and Louis Hippolyte Lafontaine of Canada East had gradually built support for responsible government until they achieved a majority. During their “Great Ministry” of 1848–51, Baldwin, serving as co-premier and attorney general (west), succeeded in bringing about an ordered series of changes to the municipal arrangements of his jurisdiction that were consistent with the recommendations of the Durham Report. These four interlocking pieces of legislation were proclaimed on the same day, May 30, 1849, with the magic day of implementation to be January 1, 1850.³

United Counties
First in the process came the abolition of all the districts in Canada West, and their replacement by a system of counties. In a case such as the Western District, consisting of more than one county, its place was to be taken by a union of counties. The United Counties of Essex and Kent thus came into being—and with their advent, the provisional District of Kent’s brief life was over. The ink might literally still have been drying on that document.
when it was followed by another, amending the name to the United Counties of Essex, Kent, and Lambton. A new county had been formed from the northern townships of Kent, and named in recognition of the crucial role of John George Lambton, Lord Durham, in setting the operation in motion.

**Baldwin Municipal Act**

With the adoption of the next measure in the sequence, repealing a variety of existing acts relating to municipal government, the way was cleared for the climactic legislation. What came to be known as the Baldwin Municipal Act provided for a variety of municipal corporations, from townships to cities, whose councils were to be elected—in essence the system that prevails today.

**United Counties Unified**

At least in the west, the speedy breakup of the united counties seems to have been intended from the outset, with a provision that when the population of a smaller county in a union reached fifteen thousand it could be separated by order-in-council. Kent emerged as an independent county before 1850 was out, and Lambton by autumn 1853. One substantial beneficiary of all this activity across Canada West, of course, was what must have amounted to a new industry: county jail and courthouse construction. In 1855 Sandwich gained an Essex County replacement for its 1819 Western District predecessor, and with it a new manifestation of cross-river links: important buildings on the Canadian side of the Detroit frontier designed by Detroit architects.

**1854**

The year that auspiciously began with the New Year's Day incorporation of the Village of Windsor was a time of fresh beginnings. On January 17 the Great Western Railway was finally opened all the way from Niagara to Windsor. It was a grand day for Windsor and Detroit, even though the train was hours late, since both were at last linked by rail with the east. After a welcoming cannon salute from Detroit, the dignitaries crossed the river to join an enormous procession and attend a dinner at the Michigan Central Railroad depot attended by more than 2,500 people. The reason for the choice of Windsor for the terminus, rather than Sandwich or Amherstburg, lay in the ferry connection to Detroit, which would continue to be the hub of the community.

There seemed to be no end to the technological triumphs of the Victorian age, and the benefits they could bestow on the residents of the Detroit frontier. On May 27, at 11:00 A.M.,
The breakup begins.
I^Pelee Island

Districts abolished; united counties of Essex, Kent, and Lambton.
United counties of Essex and Lambton.
Tilbury West Township joins Essex County.
Essex, Kent, and Lambton become separate counties. Maps by the author.
The Western District in full flower early in 1847, as depicted by the surveyor Charles Rankin, who mistakenly excluded the northern tip of the district, Bosanquet Township. Courtesy of Archives of Ontario (A-17, AO 234).
The seal of the Western District, with which the proceedings of the magistrates, or justices of the peace, of the Court of Quarter Sessions of the Peace were authenticated. (Image reversed for legibility.) Macdonald Historical Collection.
H. A. Berryman and George Duck of Chatham sent a telegraph message to Henry Prince (John's son) at Windsor, and received an answer about an hour later. Instant long-distance communication had joined the other wonders being showered upon the residents of the Canada shore.

Not everything about 1854 was positive, however. A cavalier disregard for the value of human life and safety in the early days of rail travel echoed what had been observed on the steamboats for some years. That summer a group of Norwegian migrants, sealed in a windowless car on their way in bond to a new life in Wisconsin, were shunted onto a Great Western siding at Jeannette's Creek, west of Chatham, and there they were forgotten until they had succumbed to cholera.11 That fall a dreadful accident occurred at Baptiste Creek in Tilbury West, when a passenger train and a gravel train collided, with a heavy loss of life.

Cross-border trade increased after the implementation of the Reciprocity Treaty in 1854. The treaty was aimed primarily at the Atlantic coastal fisheries, but it also lifted restrictions on a long list of natural products, and it was popular on both sides of the border until the American Civil War intervened. It had the effect of reinforcing local attitudes toward the border—that it existed only when convenient—that during the period of the Western District had come to dominate the affairs of the Detroit River community.

Last Words
"Descent with Modification" became a catch phrase around the world following Charles Darwin's and Alfred Russel Wallace's joint presentation of their theories of evolution in 1858. What had been observed among living organisms perhaps might also have been detectable in human affairs, including the development of the Detroit River community. Incremental mutations following the British takeover from the French in 1760 came more and more rapidly, reaching a crescendo with the implementation of the border in 1796. However, for exactly fifty years beginning January 1, 1800, the process in the Western District was virtually moribund. Although a separatist sentiment sporadically manifested itself during that interval, four decades slipped by (punctuated albeit by military disturbances) before a new wave of mutations came over the settlement. Beginning January 1, 1850, the Western District was no more. Its place was taken by existing but hitherto underemployed units of government, the counties of Essex and Kent, which were joined by the newly created Lambton. The rapid dissolution of the forced marriage of the three counties and the incorporation of Windsor constituted the logical outcome of an evolutionary chapter in the story of Detroit's oldest suburb, across the river in Uppermost Canada.
Abbreviations


Documents: Documents Relative to Colonel the Honourable John Prince, 1837–1838 (bound photostats and transcripts of documents, mostly or all in the National Archives of Canada, Ottawa.)


MHC: Windsor’s Community Museum, Macdonald Historical Collection.


OHS: Papers and Records (annual); from 1947 Ontario History (quarterly); continuous volume numbering. Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, 1899 to date.

QBR: Robinson, Christopher, and John Hillyard Cameron, eds. Upper Canada Queens Bench Reports (Old Series). Toronto: Henry Rowsell, 1858.


SCE: Sandwich Canadian Emigrant and Western District Advertiser.

SWH: Sandwich Western Herald and Farmers Magazine.

WDM: Archives of Ontario, Toronto. Court Records: Court of Quarter Sessions of the Peace; Western District, minutes
Notes

Preface

1. One Western Ontario resident semi-affectionately called it "the War o'Twelve" in a conversation some years ago, using an expression apparently inherited as an oral tradition from his ancestors.
2. So complete was the disorder that in only one case was I able to identify two adjacent pages as remaining in their original sequence—and even then, only because their mold stains matched.

Introduction

1. During the British period la rivière à Gervais came to be transliterated as Jarvis Creek, a reflection of the local French pronunciation of the name.
2. Petite Côte: literally, Little Coast. In North American idiom however a côte was a settlement, a group of French-Canadian ribbon farm lots.
3. With nineteenth- and twentieth-century urbanization on both shores we have inherited a street pattern whose grain follows that of the underlying farm-lot system. Not all the streets line up—in fact, most do not, thanks presumably to those fun-loving stake-movers—but some do, forming one of the unconscious cross-border links that characterizes our lives. One particularly striking example is a pair of streets opposite the downriver end of Belle Isle, both called Meldrum. They carry the name of a man whose career was significant on both sides of the river. George Meldrum, a Detroit merchant, was appointed by the British as an official of the District of Hesse.
4. The Ottawa River for most of its length became the boundary between the new provinces. The terms Upper and Lower in the Canadas refer to their relative elevations above sea level; they do not mean northern and southern, as in Michigan.
5. The attaching of Detroit to Kent rather than to Essex was the product of a remarkable rationalization. When the counties were created, Kent alone was described loosely in the proclamation as all those parts of "the country commonly called or known by the name of Canada" not already assigned to other counties. It appears that this specious justification could equally have been applied to the other occupied posts, if the British had wished to gerrymander Kent County that far.
Chapter One

1. John Graves Simcoe to Home Secretary Henry Dundas (n. d.); Shortt and Doughty, 18:413. For town read township. This confusing contraction continues in North American usage today.

2. Quaife, 2:369.


4. An infertile part of the Petite Côte settlement came to be known during the eighteenth century as *La Côte de misère* (Misery Settlement).

5. Even as late as 1811 it seems that Hands was still engaged in trade, in addition to all of his public offices; at that time he was involved in a dispute with Angus Mackintosh over the proceeds of sugar sales.

6. WDM, May 7, 1827.

7. Craig to Gore, February 7, 1810; Young, “Pollard,” 458.


10. Fraser to Askin, Detroit, November 10, 1807; Quaife, 2:582.

11. John Askin began distilling at his establishment in Detroit as early as 1800.

12. Robert Nichol to Askin, Fort Erie, October 19, 1804; Quaife, 2:438.


14. One *minot* equals five pecks; Quaife, 2:402, note 46.

15. The merchants of the West must have felt themselves isolated indeed. John Askin Jr., writing in January 1811 from icebound St. Joseph Island to his brother Charles, newly arrived at Queenston, remarked on Charles’s novel means of transportation from Lower Canada: “The steam Boats must be an expeditious way of voyageing.” By contrast, two weeks later Askin wrote his father to assure him that Captain John Fearn, master of the *Saguinah*, was still living; Fearn had gone aground at St. Joseph Island in the fall of 1810 and had been icebound, and unheard from, all winter.

16. Draft of William Hands Sr. to George Heriot, Sandwich, June 1, 1808; MHC, 20-108.

17. The land on which the Western District Grammar School, the “Stone College,” was built is still used for public purposes. In 1998 an archaeological investigation carried out after the demolition of the 1915 General Brock Public Elementary School recovered evidence of this former occupation of the site.

18. The Assembly met in the provincial capital, located first at distant Newark (later called Niagara, now Niagara-on-the-Lake), then at equally distant York (modern Toronto).

19. Smith to Askin, July 24, 1800; Quaife, 2:298. The merchant firm of Meldrum and Park originated on the Detroit side. William Park elected to transfer to Sandwich, while George Meldrum remained in Detroit.

20. This was to be expected in an area laid out in the British grid system of two-hundred-acre, brick-shaped farm lots superimposed on the land in disregard of geographical features, as distinct from the water-oriented French system in the Detroit River settlement.

21. The division of Sandwich Township did not actually happen for another six decades.

22. In practice, a piece cut from the scalp including the whorl of hair at the crown was accepted as proof of the killing of the wolf. The claimant took his scalp to the nearest magistrate, who issued a
wolf scalp certificate that could be approved for payment by the Court of Quarter Sessions. Wolf scalp certificates therefore circulated like cash.

23. Craig, 143. The title "Commodore," often applied to Grant, appears not to have been a rank but a nickname.


25. Monforton to Askin, Sandwich, July 24, 1807, and petition, Monforton to Gore, both translated by the editor; Quaife, 2:558.


27. Somewhat similarly, Thomas Talbot's settlers came to be grouped by their national origins.

28. It was just as well, since the so-called Shawnee Township had been purchased by the Crown in 1796 and set aside as a native reserve. As for the islands, since the international boundary had not yet been surveyed through the delta, it was not possible to say which were British and which were American.


30. The traditional belief has been that the creator of these works was Catherine. However the only one known to be signed is the well-known *View of Amherstburg in 1813*, which is inscribed "M. Reynolds." It seems reasonable that both daughters were involved, particularly since at least one other of Thomas Reynolds's children was inclined toward the arts; Robert Reynolds was the builder of Bellevue, the fine neoclassic house on the south edge of Amherstburg.

31. McKee to Askin, Amherstburg, June 7, 1806; Quaife, 2:521. The reference is probably to William Elliott, who was a captain (not yet a colonel) in the First Essex Militia.

32. Askin to Alexander Grant, Strabane, June 27, 1807; Quaife, 2:552–53.


34. The appointment of county lieutenants in Upper Canada was another reflection of the British desire to foster an aristocracy in Canada. County lieutenants, themselves magistrates, were intended to influence the appointments of other magistrates, as well as the affairs of the county militias. Baby briefly (for only five and a half months in 1807) enjoyed the lieutenancy of Essex. He was both preceded and succeeded by Alexander Grant.

35. Claus to Gore, Amherstburg, April 20, 1808; MP, 15:48.


37. Something of the scale and the rapid growth of the Indian Department's operation in the Western District can be gleaned from the following: St. Joseph Island at the head of Lake Huron was visited by nearly 1,300 natives, of three different tribes, in a six-month period in 1803–4. On June 2, 1808, ninety-five packages of presents for distribution to the natives were delivered at Amherstburg on board the *Camden*, and Matthew Elliott reported that 5,000 natives visited Amherstburg for presents that fall. Two years later, in 1810, he declared that annual presents had already been given to 6,000 natives, and the year was not yet over.

38. This must have been a heady moment for Elliott, who was almost simultaneously reelected to the Legislative Assembly.


40. Gore to Craig, York, February 20, 1809; MP, 15:53.

42. These annual appointments, traditionally made in July, became effective five months later, on Christmas Day.
43. Report of Lieutenant Colonel Bruyeres, Quebec, August 24, 1811; MP, 15:54.
44. Report of Major General Glasgow to Prevost, Quebec, September 18, 1811; MP, 15:55.

Chapter Two

1. A. Gray, acting deputy quartermaster general, to Sir George Prevost, Montreal, January 13, 1812; MP, 15:70.
2. Brock to Prevost, York, February 6, 1812; DRICSD, 16.
3. William Hull to Secretary of War Eustis, Washington, March 6, 1812; DRICSD, 19. For "the Miami of Lake Erie" read "the Maumee."
4. Ibid.
5. Prevost to Brock, Quebec, March 31, 1812; DHCNF, 3:51.
6. John Askin to Isaac Todd, Strabane, April 14, 1812; MP, 32:477.
7. John Askin to Charles Askin, Strabane, April 28, 1812; Quaife, 2:707.
9. Prevost to the earl of Liverpool, Quebec, May 18, 1812; DHCNF, 3:62.
10. Adjutant General of the Forces Colonel Edward Baynes to Brock, Quebec, May 21, 1812; DHCNF, 3:64.
11. Governor in Chief Sir George Prevost to Brock, Quebec, May 27, 1812; DHCNF, 3:65.
12. McAfee, 68.
13. Eustis to Hull, War Department, June 24, 1812; DRICSD, 37.
14. Bacon, 68. The gentleman in question was in all likelihood François Baby.
15. Brock to Prevost, Fort George, July 3, 1812; MP, 15:94.
16. The rest of the province was defended by the militia units of the various counties.
17. Pattinson, Askin's son-in-law, was a fellow merchant.
18. Hull to St. George, "Camp Spring Hill" (Springwells?), three miles below Detroit, July 6, 1812; MP, 15:96.
19. St. George to an unnamed recipient (probably Brock, on internal evidence), Amherstburg, July 8, 1812; MP, 15:97; also DRICSD, 44.
20. Ibid.
21. Hull to Eustis, Detroit, July 9, 1812; DRICSD, 50.
22. McAfee, 72. The reference is to Lieutenant Colonel James Miller and Colonel Lewis Cass.
23. Hatch: negative photostat in 20-135, (118) B9−C1, MHC. The landing was very competently planned and executed. In their echelon formation the boats would have presented only a minimal target to defenders as they emerged from early-July-morning mist on the water and were carried by the current toward the mill on the Canadian shore. For a further discussion of the mill, see chapter 10, note 25.
24. Hull to Eustis, Sandwich, July 15, 1812; DRICSD, 60. The native leaders included The Crane, Walk-in-the-Water, Blackhoof, and Blue Jacket.
26. Ibid.
27. Matthew Elliott to William Claus, Amherstburg, July 15, 1812; MP, 15:105.
28. An American, Surgeon's Mate James Reynolds, captured on the Cuyahoga and imprisoned on shipboard at Amherstburg ever since, kept a journal of what little he could see and hear from that moorage. On July 19 he saw a band of armed natives rush past the prison ship, and about two o'clock he heard gunfire. At dusk they returned, and began whooping and firing around the ship. This was the aftermath of a second, and equally indecisive, skirmish at the Canard.
29. Captain Roberts to Brock and to Colonel Baynes, both written at Fort Mackinac, July 17, 1812; MP, 15: 109 and 108, respectively.
31. Hull to the Six Nations, proclamation, Sandwich, July 18, 1812; DHCNF, 3:132.
32. Hull to Eustis, Sandwich, July 19, 1812; DRICSD, 53.
33. Brock to Prevost, Fort George, July 20, 1812; MP, 15:115.
34. Major General and President Isaac Brock, proclamation, Fort George, July 22, 1812; DHCNF, 3:135.
35. Procter to Brock, Amherstburg, July 26, 1812; DRICSD, 89.
36. Brock to Prevost, Fort George, July 26, 1812; DHCNF, 3:144.
40. Brock to Adjutant General Edward Baynes, York, July 29, 1812; DHCNF, 3:152; also MP, 15:123.
41. Procter to Brock, Amherstburg, July 30, 1812; DRICSD, 108.
42. Proceedings of a Council held at York Respecting the Western Frontier, Government House, York, August 3, 1812; DHCNF, 3:162.
43. Hull to Eustis, Sandwich, August 4, 1812; DRICSD, 115.
44. McAfee, 89.
45. Ibid., 90.
46. Hull to Eustis, Detroit, August 8, 1812; DRICSD, 126.
47. The bodies were those of Major Thomas Van Horne's men, killed in the ambush at Brownstown on August 5.
48. Richardson, 17.
49. McAfee, 96.
50. Lewis Cass to Governor Return Jonathan Meigs, Detroit, August 12, 1812; DRICSD, 137.
51. Bacon, 69.
52. Baynes to Brock, Montreal, August 13, 1812; DHCNF, 3:172.
53. Brock to the earl of Liverpool, York, August 29, 1812; DRICSD, 190.
54. District general orders, headquarters, Fort Amherstburg, August 14, 1812; DHCNF, 3:179.
55. Charles Askin, journal, August 15, 1812; Quaife, 2:711.
56. Bacon, 70. The building in question appears to have been built by Jacques Duperon Baby, perhaps about 1760. It had probably been the residence of his son François from the time of François' marriage in 1795, and in 1812 was being replaced with a mansion of solid brick, then under construction a little to the east. The old building, of squared timbers held together by wooden pins.
driven through its major mortise-and-tenon joints, could have been demolished very quickly by driving out the pins and then simply pushing against one wall, to expose the battery built behind it.

57. Richardson, 29.

58. One of the legends clinging to the War of 1812 is that General Brock marched his men through François Baby's new house in a continuous circuit, in the back door and out the front, to persuade the Americans that the British regular-army force was larger than it really was. However implausible this story (and its variations, which turn up all over the world), it obviously has a local basis in fact, involving not the Baby House but the approach to Detroit from downriver.

59. McCay, August 16, 1812.

60. Ibid.


62. Brock to Prevost, Headquarters, Detroit, August 16, 1812; MP, 15:132.

63. Acting Quartermaster General Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Myers, Seventieth Regiment, to Prevost, Fort George, August 17, 1812; MP, 15:133; also in DHCNF, 3:185.

64. Jacques Baby, Matthew Elliott, and William Caldwell, militia general orders, headquarters, Amherstburg, August 18, 1812; DHCNF, 3:188.

65. Hull to Eustis, Fort George, August 26, 1812; DRICSD, 184, and Richardson, 40.

66. General Peter B. Porter to Governor Tompkins, Black Rock, August 30, 1812; DHCNF, 3:222. Lieutenant Colonel Myers, at Fort George on August 30, reported to Brock a deficiency of 22 prisoners, out of a group of 465 that had been counted at Amherstburg. Among the possible explanations are that they escaped, that the count at Amherstburg was inaccurate, or that twenty-two residents of the Western District who defected to the Americans were actually shot.

67. Baynes to Brock, Montreal, September 10, 1812; DHCNF, 3:249.

68. Hull to Eustis, Fort George, August 26, 1812; DRICSD, 184, and Richardson, 40.

69. The "friends" promised by Robert Dickson in February had indeed arrived from Mackinac with a fleet of canoes filled with native warriors. According to John Richardson, among them were Sacs, "a race of men whose towering height, athletic forms, and nobleness of feature, might recall the idea of the Romans in the earlier stages of their barbarity." Another group had a name which in English meant Devoted Men. Costumed in soft white leather decorated with stained porcupine quills with "much taste and ingenuity," the Devoted Men were always ready to demonstrate their scorn of physical pain; one of them cut a piece of flesh from his thigh and "gave it to the dogs." (Richardson, 60.)

70. Brock to Procter, Fort George, September 17, 1812; DHCNF, 3:271.

71. Brock to Prevost, Fort George, September 18, 1812; DHCNF, 3:276.

72. Brock to Prevost, Fort George, October 9, 1812; MP, 15:162.

73. Brock to Procter, n.d. (probably October 11 or 12, 1812); DHCNF, 4:65.

74. John Richardson describes Isaac Brock as "tall, stout and inclining to corpulence; he was of fair and florid complexion, had a large forehead, full face, but not prominent features, rather small greyish-blue eyes, with a very slight cast in one of them—small mouth, with a pleasing smile and good teeth. In manner he was exceedingly affable and gentlemanly, of a cheerful and social habit, partial to dancing, and although never married, extremely devoted to female society." (Richardson, 68.) The authenticity of the celebrated tunic worn by Brock at the Battle of Queenston Heights, with its bullet hole precisely between the button rows on the chest, is cast into question by the
consideration that two such tunics survive in Canadian collections. Moreover, eye-witness accounts published by Cruikshank (DHCNF, 4:83 and 4:108) do not have him shot so symmetrically. The portraying of a hero sometimes departs a little from reality.

Chapter Three

1. Procter to Sheaffe, Sandwich, January 13, 1813; MP, 15:215.
2. Prevost to Dickson, Quebec, January 14, 1813; MP, 15:219.
3. Richardson, 75.
4. Ibid., 79. John Richardson’s depiction of the Americans’ misery continued: “They still retained their summer dress, consisting of cotton stuff of various colors, shaped into frocks, and descending to the knee: their trowsers were of the same material. They were covered with slouched hats, worn bare by constant use, beneath which their long hair fell matted and uncombed over their cheeks; and these together with the dirty blankets wrapped around their loins to protect them against the inclemency of the season, and fastened by broad leathern belts, into which were thrust axes and knives of an enormous length, gave them an air of wildness and savageness, which in Italy would have caused them to pass for brigands of the Apennines. The only distinction between the garb of the officer and that of the soldier was, that the one, in addition to his sword, carried a short rifle instead of a long one, while a dagger, often curiously worked and of some value, supplied the place of the knife. This description may be considered as applicable to the various hordes of irregular troops sent forth throughout the war from the States of Ohio and Kentucky. The equipment was ever the same, and differing only inasmuch as their opportunities of preserving or renewing it were more or less frequent.”
5. John Askin to William Dummer Powell, January 25, 1813; DHCNF, 5:49.
7. Procter to Sheaffe, Sandwich, February 1, 1813; MP, 15:235.
9. Doctor Robert Richardson to John Askin, Amherstburg, February 7, 1813; Quaife, 2:749.
10. Lieutenant Patrick McDonogh to his parents, Black Rock, March 19, 1813; DHCNF, 5:123.
11. Procter to Prevost, Sandwich, May 14, 1813; MP, 15:293.
12. Procter to ——— (unaddressed), Sandwich, June 15, 1813; MP, 15:317.
13. One of the ironies of the War of 1812 is that the American fleet might well have been shattered, along with American intentions, by Barclay’s reconnaissance itself. The Queen Charlotte was within about fourteen miles of five American vessels at one point on June 16; no longer needed at the east end of Lake Erie now that the British had lost the Niagara Peninsula, the five were being moved to Presqu’Ile from Buffalo by Perry. If the Charlotte had spotted the Americans, she could easily have destroyed them, putting an end to American superiority on Lake Erie for the season.
14. Commodore Isaac Chauncey to Secretary of the Navy William Jones, Sackets Harbor, July 17, 1813; DHCNF, 8:15.
15. Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry to General Peter B. Porter, Erie, July 22, 1813; DHCNF, 6:264.
Chapter Four

1. Cariole or carriole: a small open carriage or horse-drawn sleigh.
2. Brigadier General John S. Gano to Major General Harrison, Sandusky, January 17, 1814; DHCNF, 9:292. The problem with supplies was not solved by the return to the Thames of the plundering expedition, whose members had failed to commandeer the expected quantity of provisions. Sickness in the Detroit garrison was another difficulty.

5. This British plan for keeping the native population on the American side in arms came to nothing; Matthew Elliott's natives refused to proceed beyond Delaware.


7. Ward's Station was at “Fourteen Mile Tree” in the Longwoods Wilderness, a desolate 40-mile expanse of forest along the Thames just beyond the eastern boundary of the Western District.

8. Lieutenant Colonel Robert McDouall to Drummond, Michilimackinac, May 26, 1814; MP, 15:564. Most authorities are agreed that the spelling is McDouall, not McDonall, although the handwritten name is open to interpretation and both renderings have reached print.

9. What was left of her sunken hull silted in over the years to become “Nancy Island” in the Nottawasaga River. Excavated and stabilized, the remains of the Nancy recently became the central object in the Nancy Island Historic Site, Wasaga Beach, Ontario.

10. Brigadier General Duncan McArthur to the secretary of war, Headquarters, Detroit, November 18, 1814; DHCNF, 2:308.

11. Lieutenant Colonel W James to Colonel Harvey, Burlington, November 21, 1814; MP, 15:678.

12. This was Fort Covington, named for the American General Leonard Covington, who died during the war.

13. There are several parallels between the War of 1812-14 and the Vietnam War of the 1950s to the 1970s. Henry Clay's War Hawks and their congressional opponents had their counterparts in the Hawks and Doves of the Vietnam era. Both adventures were widely unpopular in the United States (the War of 1812 particularly in New England, where business was business, and trade with the Maritimes continued), and both fell well short of fulfilling American aspirations.

Chapter Five

1. John Askin Sr., diary, March 29, 1815; MP, 32:468. Askin himself declined to attend, citing his “advanced term of life and weak state of health.” He died the following month.

2. As late as May 29, the American commandant at Amherstburg was maintaining that his orders were to continue to occupy Bois Blanc Island and Fort Malden, and the British would-be occupants were forced to wait elsewhere for the bureaucracy to resolve the problem. To accommodate the men of the Thirty-Seventh Regiment, the magistrates of the Western District allowed them the use of the Western District Grammar School at Sandwich. It was a masonry building, capable of housing up to 130 men, and could be made defensible on short notice, if necessary. (Fortunately, one further potential source of misunderstanding was avoided: confusion over which Bois Blanc Island was meant, since there was another one, close to Mackinac Island.)

3. Captain Edward Collier to Commodore William Fitzwilliam Owen, Moy, May 5, 1815; MP, 16:16. In one widely held American view the 1783 Treaty of Versailles set the boundary at the middle of the navigable water, not the middle of the river; and since the channel ran between Bois Blanc and the Canadian mainland, the island was American. Owen Sound on Georgian Bay,
charted in the course of this survey, was named by Owen in 1815 for his brother, Sir Edward W. C. R. Owen. The city of Owen Sound was named for Captain Owen himself on his death in 1857. Bayfield, in Huron County on Lake Huron, was named for Henry Wolsey Bayfield, who took over the survey when Owen was recalled to England in 1817.


5. Drummond to Henry Bathurst, third earl of Bathurst, secretary of state for war and the colonies, Quebec, August 15, 1815; MP, 25:630.

6. Lieutenant Colonel Robert McDouall of the Thirty-Seventh Regiment to Assistant Military Secretary Will Gibson, Drummond Island, October 4, 1815; MP, 16:311.

7. Sir Frederick Philipse Robinson to Lieutenant Colonel Addison, military secretary, Commissary General’s Office, Quebec, July 22, 1816; MP, 16:491. Although construction resumed at the western British posts by the late summer, at Drummond Island the major effort was not new fortifications but making existing buildings habitable for the coming winter. Similarly, at Amherstburg a commissariat store and bake shop were added to the complex of buildings.

8. At the time the post was called Fort Collier, after Captain Edward Collier, participating in the Great Lakes survey.


11. James to Robinson, Sandwich, September 11, 1815; MP, 16:268.


13. Many of the details of this story seem implausible. Why was the native hunting squirrels from a canoe? Why would a squirrel hunter raise his gun to threaten an occupant of a nearby boat? How, if he was aiming at the passenger, was he shot in the back by a fellow passenger? Against these assertions is the statement of a young Kickapoo lad. According to the boy, no one had raised his gun against the passing Americans; he maintained that the deceased had been steering the canoe, not holding a gun, and had had his back to the Americans. A troublesome impression persists that the story of the threat from the canoe to the American boaters was fabricated, and that the native was shot merely for sport.

14. American currency was used on both sides of the Detroit frontier at this time, as was sterling and, to a lesser extent, other countries’ legal tender.

15. McDouall to Major General L. de Watteville, Drummond Island, March 26, 1816; MP, 16:448.

16. McDouall to de Watteville, Drummond Island, May 4, 1816; MP, 16:452.

17. The Rush-Bagot Convention of 1817, which resulted from these discussions, bears the name of Richard Rush, Monroe’s successor as secretary of state.

18. Alexander Mackintosh to Forsyth, Richardson and Company, on board the Duke of Wellington, Fort Erie, August 1, 1817; letter book, Mackintosh Family Papers, 20-137, MHC.

19. Alexander Mackintosh to Colonel Lewis Grant, Seventieth Regiment, on board the Wellington, October 5, 1817; letter book, Mackintosh Family Papers, 20-137, MHC.


25. The perceived need for security against civil unrest in Upper Canada perhaps reflected the provincial administration's unease over the anti-government outcome of the election of 1824. For the first time a clearly anti-government majority was produced in the Assembly, which was attributable in large part to voters in the west, whose heads were thought to be filled with Yankee democratic notions.
26. William McCormick to Adjutant General of Militia Nathaniel Coffin, March 22, 1822; McCormick Family Papers, 20-148, MHC.
28. James to Robinson, Sandwich, October 18, 1815; MP, 16:352.
30. James to Robinson, Sandwich, October 26, 1815; MP, 16:365.
32. James to Secretary Foster, Sandwich, December 24, 1815; MP, 16:407.
33. John Askin Jr. to William Claus, Drummond Island, January 5, 1816; MP, 16:416.
34. McDouall to Foster, Drummond Island, March 8, 1816; MP, 16:439. Linsey-woolsey is a fabric of coarse wool woven on a linen or cotton warp.
35. Lieutenant Colonel J. Maule to Military Secretary Lieutenant Colonel Thomas F. Addison, Drummond Island, August 10, 1816; MP, 16:574.
37. The Ojibwa were willing to sell, as long as a number of reserves were set aside. They asked the British to name a price, to be paid in annual installments for fifty years, half in cash and half in clothing, the price to be in addition to their annual presents. They also asked for a blacksmith, and for training in farming.
38. John Askin Jr. died on January 1, 1820, and William Caldwell on February 20, 1822.
39. Clearly those four hundred who helped put out the fire on Drummond Island on June 25, 1820, were only those who happened to be there on that day.
40. Captain Owen to Captain W. Baumgardt, H.M.S. Prince Regent, Hydrographic Office, Kingston, August 4, 1816; MP, 16:505. Georgian Bay appears not to have been considered part of Lake Huron.
41. Something of the informality of this arrangement is suggested by Askin's offer to swear in the new appointee himself.
42. McDouall to Military Secretary Addison, Drummond Island, June 19, 1816; MP, 16:469.
43. Thomas Gummer'sall Anderson to William Hands Sr., Drummond Island, May 14, 1828; Hands Family Papers, 20-108, MHC.
44. A coalition had been negotiated between the competing North West Company and Hudson's Bay Company in 1821, in the hope that the new partnership's operatives could be effective in the American Northwest, the territory of the American Fur Company. In the end, fashion turned the tide, when silk replaced felt as the favored material for hats, and the market for beaver pelts declined in the 1830s.
45. In the end, the expense and inconvenience of locating and maintaining a replacement for Drummond Island at either Sault Ste. Marie or St. Joseph Island persuaded the British to substitute their existing post at Penetang (Penetanguishene) on Georgian Bay.

Chapter Six

1. Wilkinson Family Papers, 20-235, (209) B10, MHC. Although found in the surveying records of John and Alexander Wilkinson, the authorship of this note is clear; it was datelined Port Talbot, November 29, 1824, and signed with the initials T.T.

2. A measure of the seriousness of the problem: the previous autumn it was reported to Assistant Adjutant General Colley Foster that there were no shipwrights to be found in British North America above Lake Ontario.

3. Dart Hill is also rendered Dart-hill in the Alexander Mackintosh Papers. (Mackintosh is also spelled McIntosh.)

4. Alexander Mackintosh to George Jacob, Moy, August 21, 1827; letter book; Mackintosh Family Papers, 20–137, MHC.

5. The cannons in question, removed from the Nancy, were subsequently received in Scotland, where they remain, mounted on the top of the wall around Moy, the ancestral home.


7. Jacques Baby to William Hands, York, August 30, 1819; Baby Family Papers, 20-11, MHC.


9. William McCormick to Mary McCormick, York, March 12, 1821; McCormick Family Papers, 20-148, MHC.

10. Memo, John Strachan to himself, York, August 17, 1818; Spragge, 173.

11. In subsequent years the eroded and collapsed church at Colchester became the raw material for a chapel, intended to preserve the memory of the original.

12. Ironically, whereas Pollard earlier had responsibility for the Michigan Territory as a mission field, two days after the opening of his newest church a missionary from Ohio made a customs declaration from the River Thames, whither he had journeyed, "in order to take charge of the congregation of Christian Indians living on this River" (letter to Collector of Customs William Hands Sr., June 13, 1820). The English Church at Sandwich was named St. John's Church on September 25, 1838.


17. Forsyth, Richardson and Co. to William Hands Sr., Montreal, July 6, 1825; Hands Family Papers, 20-108 (31), B6, MHC.
18. James Crooks to William Hands Sr., West Flamborough, February 7, 1827; Hands Family Papers, 20-108 (33), C3, MHC.
19. Angus McDonald to William Hands Sr., Sombra, May 19, 1828; Hands Family Papers, 20-108 (36), E12, MHC.
20. WDM, 8 May 1830.
21. D. Sutherland to William Hands Sr., Quebec, February 10, 1827; Hands Family Papers, 20-108 (33), C6, MHC.
22. Deputy Postmaster General Thomas Allen Stayner to William Hands Sr., General Post Office, Quebec, November 30, 1827; Hands Family Papers, 20-108 (35), A3, MHC.
23. Attorney General Henry John Boulton to William Hands Sr., York, September 29, 1829; Hands Family Papers, 20-108 (40), A11–12, MHC. "Hands" is one of the comparatively few arbitrarily capitalized words in this document, giving rise to the speculation that to some at least he might have been known as "Violent Hands."
25. George P. Kerby to William Hands Sr., Camden, June 14, 1832; Hands Family Papers, 20-108 (44), B3, MHC.
27. John Beverley Robinson to William Hands Sr., York, June 3, 1833; Hands Family Papers, 20-108 (46), B4, MHC.
28. The town of York became the city of Toronto on March 6, 1834.
29. James May to Moses David, Detroit, March 12, 1805; Solomon Sibley Papers, Burton Historical Collection. James Henry of Detroit was a community leader, a merchant as well as a multiple public officeholder.
30. Linking by Jews with the established church seems not to have been regarded as particularly traumatic; British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli's father converted to Anglicanism, and in Canada, Isaac Hellmuth became Anglican bishop of Huron. Moses David's remains were exhumed from his private grave in 1978 and moved to Shaar Hashomayim Congregation's burial ground. Curiously, David's connection to the English Church was found not in the records of St. John's Church, but rather in a typed transcript of a note of a vestry meeting preserved in the Macdonald Historical Collection; the location of the original of this document is unknown.
31. Frequently spelled Fluett in English.
32. SCE, December 29, 1831.
34. SCE, June 28, 1834.
35. Reflecting the Detroit River French pronunciation, the surname was (and is) frequently rendered by anglophones as Baubie, Baw-bee, and the like. The circumflex in the variant Béby is a frill that appears to have been added by a governmental clerk, not by a family member, in the late nineteenth century.
36. Alexander Mackintosh to Grant & Kerby, Moy, March 17, 1824; letter book, Mackintosh Family Papers, 20-137, MHC. Robert Grant and William Kerby appear to have been traders domiciled near the head of Lake Ontario about a decade earlier, and might be the individuals named here.
38. This creek seems to have been an alternative outlet for the Grand Coulee, whose main channel, where present Giles Boulevard is located, passed behind Sandwich before discharging into the Detroit River below the town. The gully at Baby’s was labeled “Ravine and outlet of grand coulee” on a map by John A. Wilkinson in 1853.
39. Other obstructions, such as stakes (presumably where farmers tied up their boats), were also to be removed. While the justices were at it they directed that traffic venturing out onto the ice be protected by the placing of stakes as markers at the various water holes broken by the inhabitants close to the shoreline.
40. Court Supporting Documents, May 1, 1826; Western District Records, 20-248, MHC.
41. Draft of a letter to a clergyman, not otherwise addressed, ca. 1831 (based on watermark); Baby Family Papers, 20-11, MHC. On internal evidence this document appears to have been intended for Father Crevier and was drafted by François Baby for signature by the bishop of Kingston, Alexander C. Macdonell.
43. Late Captain Hall, of the Provincial Marine.
45. Ibid., 501.
46. Conveyance, William Caldwell to Robert Richardson, March 4, 1818; Robert Richardson Papers, 20-195, MHC.
47. William McCormick to Mary McCormick, York, March 17, 1818; McCormick Family Papers, 20-148, MHC.

**Chapter Seven**

2. WDM, January 16, 1835. By April the fireproof buildings had parsimoniously been scaled down to fireproof chests, to be purchased for the two county registrars and the treasurer.
3. At 31,334 acres, this was equal to about 522.25 acres per penny.
4. SCE, August 17, 1833.
5. Ibid., September 7, 1833. The Shakespearean quotation is from Hamlet, act 1, scene 2.
6. *Indian Treaties and Surrenders*, Surrender Document no. 35. Through an error this document does not appear in the 1972 reprint of this source. It should also be noted that the name of the representative of the Western District was rendered in the 1891 published document as “Chas. Birche, J. P. W. D.,” an apparent misreading of the name Charles Berczy.
8. The McKee Purchase included with the mainland "all and singular the appurtenances unto the said Tract of Land belonging or in any wise appertaining."
9. JPD, August 31, 1837.
10. WDM, October 11, 1837. The derivation of the name appears to be related to the arrival of a new member of the panel of magistrates. William Anderton was recorded for the first time as present for a sitting of the Quarter Sessions on April 11, 1837.
11. Memorial of several inhabitants of Amherstburg and other parts of the Western District to Lieutenant Governor Sir Peregrine Maitland, Amherstburg, January 20, 1819; MP, 16:658.
12. Thomas Smith to Jacques Baby, Detroit, September 25, 1816; Baby Family Papers, 20-11, MHC.
13. Field notes for the town of Amherstburg, June 24, 1820; Thomas Smith Papers, 20-216, MHC.
15. Ibid., December 14, 1820.
18. SCE, June 20, 1835.
19. In 1788 Thomas McKee signed a 999-year lease with chiefs of the Ottawa nation, in return for three bushels of corn each year. McCormick “bought” the island from McKee’s son, for one hundred pounds, in disregard of the original owners’ continuing interest.
22. Draft of John A. Wilkinson to Surveyor General’s Office, Sandwich, November 27, 1841; Wilkinson Family Papers, 20–235, MHC. Efforts to find “etraction” in dictionaries have failed. Perhaps Wilkinson intended attraction, or detraction, or possibly he simply invented a word.
23. James Allison, general land agent, to George P. Boulton, MP, Montreal, October 1, 1834; King Family Papers, 20-125, MHC.
24. The surviving octagonal King House must be a replacement of the late 1850s for the first residence, inspired by the phrenologist Orson Squire Fowler’s book A Home for All; or, the Gravel Wall and Octagon Mode of Building, first published in 1848.
25. The westernmost corner of the parallelogram of the 1790s survives as a triangle bounded on the north by Cabana Road, on the west by Huron Church Road/Line, and on the east by Howard Avenue.
26. The “dogleg” in Tecumseh Road results from this adherence to the line, eastward from the Huron Church Line, before offsetting to the south to follow a straight line affording a minimum forty arpents’ depth, regardless of the windings of the shore.
27. Shirreff, 216.
28. SCE, July 20, 1833.
29. SCE, October 13, 1835.
34. Alexander Mackintosh to John Beverley Robinson, Dart Hill, January 9, 1827; letter book, Mackintosh Family Papers, 20-137, MHC.
35. François Baby was one of the two members representing Essex County in the Upper Canada House of Assembly, 1820–30.
37. The Argo, built in Detroit by Shadrack Jenking, of Sandwich Township, had a hull fashioned from two dug out logs, decked over, with a little sidewheel steam engine amidships. She was described as "cranky," that is, badly working, lurching, or shaky. She was so low-powered that once when a passenger, attempting to climb over the paddle box, put his foot through the plank covering and caught it in one of the buckets on the paddle wheel, his foot stopped the engine. The passenger then extricated the offending foot without injury and the boat proceeded on its way.
38. In its first phase the plot encompassed village lots in two ranges, laid out on either side of the river road, beginning just east of François Baby’s mansion and extending to the edge of the Ouellette farm. A third range in the rear can be inferred, but the evidence of the lot numbering system shown on a later map, dated 1853, is ambiguous.
39. It could well be that Austen and his family were part of that wave of British immigration that brought cholera to North America, yet the same James Austen proved to be ancestral to the automotive industry that would dominate the future city through the twentieth century.
40. Although the original part of Church Street survives, only a short section of Assumption Street remains at the time of writing, an east-west alley behind the Hilton Windsor hotel, serving the Cleary International Centre.
41. Shirreff, 216.
42. The partnership of Murray and Crawford almost immediately dissolved; William Murray continued to operate the Pavilion House on his own.
43. WDM, July 14, 1835.
44. The road had a bend in it because of a structure on the water’s edge, possibly Baby’s old ferry house. The mouth of the creek that discharged westerly into the Detroit River seems to have figured strongly in the development of Baby’s ferry landing and hence the origins of Windsor. It had eroded the river bank at the northeast corner of Baby’s frontage, diminishing the usefulness of that portion of his property for agriculture but also creating a natural harbor, protected by the headland between the north bank of the creek and the river. It was on the tip of that headland, on Baby’s side of the line between his farm and Ouellette’s, that the ferry house is thought to have been located. However, there is another, more sinister explanation for this bend. Wilkinson’s survey, carried out just three days before Baby’s petition for the water lots, shows the road to the ferry landing running 66 feet along the Baby/Ouellette lot line from the main road, then changing course 21 degrees westerly for a further 145 feet to the end of Baby’s wharf. This configuration would place the end of the wharf well away from the projection of the lot line, permitting ferry departures without encroaching over the line, but also making approaches by the competing ferry to a landing next door exceedingly difficult.
45. Court of Quarter Sessions correspondence, report in the hand of John A. Wilkinson, July 11, 1835; Western District Records, 20-248, MHC. Statute labor was roadwork required to be performed annually by the residents of a township.
46. WDM, August 22, 1835.
47. This incident provided an opportunity, rare perhaps, for the offender’s nephew, Clerk of the Peace Charles Baby, to assert himself within the family. In his draft of a letter to his uncle François, Charles at first wrote that François was “requested,” which he amended to “required,” to remove them immediately.
48. SWH, September 16, 1840. The British Queen was the former Pavilion House, renamed in honor of Queen Victoria's accession to the throne in 1837.

49. SWH, September 16, 1840; also QBR, 6:239, and 1:438. Other details will be found in JPD, passim, July 24, 1839, through August 10, 1841.

50. The old landing was rendered virtually useless anyway by a disastrous fire on April 15, 1849, caused when a pile of cedar on Baby's wharf was ignited, possibly by a spark from the stack of the steamer Hastings. The opening of Ferry Street seems to have entailed at least partially filling the gully at the outlet of the Grand Coulee, causing a problem with drainage. Narcisse A. Janette, proprietor of the two farm lots to the west of Baby's, complained on December 4, 1849, that Baby had had a ditch dug across the front not only of his own property but of Janette's as well.

51. Field notebooks; Wilkinson Family Papers, 20-235, MHC.

52. Lack of coordination between the owners of adjacent subdivisions led to mismatched cross streets, as is particularly evident today in the vicinity of City Hall Square.

53. No doubt this is what prompted Denis Parent, the owner of lot 88, to retain John A. Wilkinson to subdivide his frontage, just as Joseph McDougall had done on lot 85. The subdivision layout was similar, and modern Parent Avenue was the result.

54. SCE, September 13, 1836. Sadly, not only the inspiration for the name Windsor, but even the circumstances surrounding the calling of the meeting, remain the subjects of speculation. The preceding issue of the Emigrant, which must have carried the announcement of the meeting, has been lost. The following issue carried the obituary of John Douglas (James's brother, the other "J" of J. and J. Dougall), whose death at Montreal had taken place on August 28. The notice, communicated to the paper almost certainly by James, referred to John as "the father" of "the flourishing village of Windsor." However, James's own obituary, published after his death in 1888, not only ascribed the naming to him, but added these words, which have caused problems ever since: "Then John Hutton, who kept the only hotel in the place, jumped up and said he would call his house (Windsor Castle)." This is clearly wrong; not only were there other inns at The Ferry in 1836, but innkeeper John Hutton apparently was not. Hutton's name has not been found until 1839, in Sandwich Township (at Moy), and not until late 1842 at Windsor. Further complicating the mystery, S. T. Probert, not John Hutton, announced the opening of his "Windsor Castle Ale & Beer House" in the Sandwich Western Herald and Farmers Magazine, on May 29, 1838, not in 1836. Probert's Windsor Castle stood "on the ferry wharf, between the two tailor shops," by his description, but judging by the well-known photograph (taken years later, of course) perhaps "at the ferry wharf" might have been more accurate, since it is obviously on the south side of Sandwich Street, on dry land.

55. Mackay's Canada Directory used the name Front Street in 1851, but apparently that designation failed to take hold. Sandwich Street was renamed Riverside Drive in 1935.

56. WDM, October 14, 1829.

57. The formerly sharp corners of this offset are now rounded off.

58. Confusingly, John Alexander Wilkinson's son, also a surveyor, was named Alexander John.

59. The extra width of the later London Street, so conspicuous in modern University Avenue, provided for a horse trolley service as well as road traffic.

60. Although Prescott is known to have been in England from 1799 onward, the possibility that he issued a license of occupation cannot be ruled out.

61. Shirreff, 194.

62. SCE, May 9, 1835.

64. Thomas Talbot to the Honorable Peter Robinson, Port Talbot, June 30, 1833; Coyne, 158.
65. SCE, February 16, 1836.
66. The Chenail Ecarte, literally the uncharted channel, is the easternmost of the watercourses forming the delta at the outlet of the St. Clair River into Lake St. Clair.
67. Thomasville, renamed Zone Mills, is the present Florence, Ontario.
68. Thomas Talbot to the Honorable Peter Robinson, Port Talbot, November 3, 1833; Coyne, 161. Even as late as 1835 Henry Jones's social experiment at Maxwell (near modern Brights Grove) in Sarnia Township was still vestigially alive. The "Perch-Mouth Inn" was advertised by Jones for rent in the spring.
69. WDM, July 10, 1833.
70. William Cosgrove to William Hands Sr., Chatham, February 18, 1834; Hands Family Papers, 20-108, MHC.
73. WDM, October 15, 1835.
74. Corunna, La Coruña in northwestern Spain, was the deathplace during the Peninsular War of Lieutenant General Sir John Moore, whom Colborne had served as military secretary and aide-de-camp.
75. SCE, June 13, 1835.
76. For the complexities of native reserves in the Western District and elsewhere in eastern Canada, see Gentilcore, plates 32 and 33.
77. Presumably an octagonal square was seen as a contradiction in terms, although Wilkinson's son Alexander successfully implemented it later in Goderich and Bayfield.
78. Field notes of the town of Corunna, June 1, 1837 (entry dated June 5 internally); Wilkinson Family Papers, 20-235, MHC.

Chapter Eight

1. Detroit Daily Advertiser, November 30, 1837, in Neil F. Morrison Papers, MHC.
2. SWH, November 6, 1838.
3. James Hamilton to A. N. MacNab, Windsor, December 28, 1837 (paraphrasing John Prince); Sanderson, 1:41. The reference to Canadians should be read as French Canadians, as a later passage in the same source makes clear: "The French Canadians cannot be relied on." At this time the French-Canadian residents seem not to have viewed the Patriot War as their cause, preferring to regard it as directed against the Anglo oligarchy. Possibly the blacks expected by Prince were from two such militia companies known to have been based at Chatham, in Kent County, in 1839.
4. James Hamilton to J. B. Askin, Windsor, December 30, 1837; Sanderson, 1:44.
5. JPD, February 24 and 25, 1838.
6. Both prongs of the attack had been planned for February 22, George Washington's birthday.
7. JPD, March 3, 1838.
8. By luck, both had been captured by Prince the day after the Battle of Pelee Island, on the Canadian shore a little west of the Colchester town site.

9. There was a precedent for this locally conceived, unilateral border closure: the justices' similar action during the cholera epidemic of 1832. A story in the *Sandwich Western Herald* of June 26 that the Second Queen's Light Infantry was to be disbanded on July 1, leaving the frontier very weakly defended, probably hastened the magistrates' decision to impound the small craft, although they must have known that the editor meant July 31.

10. JPD, November 1, 1838.

11. JPD, December 1, 1838.

12. Although this William Johnson was described as a teacher, he might have doubled as the Reverend William Johnson, of Sandwich. See SCE, May 2, 1835.

13. Henry Grant, the editor of the *Sandwich Western Herald*, identified Captains Sparke and Bell in his account of the Battle of Windsor as members of the Provincial Volunteer Militia—presumably an alternative name for the Incorporated Militia. Also, John Prince identified Captain Fox of the Third Essex (Prince's own regiment) as Michael Fox in his diary in 1836, but as W. Fox in 1839; that same year he referred to a Lieutenant M. Fox.

14. Since the second wave of Patriots had chosen this particular spot to take their repose, perhaps it is just as well that Dougall, before entering the fray, had providentially emptied his safe of twenty thousand dollars, which he stuffed into his pockets before departing for the orchard. Small wonder that he grandiosely offered the aforementioned hundred-dollar reward—which figure, on due Scottish reflection later in the day, appears to have been reduced to twenty-five dollars. It was generally acknowledged afterward that the fatal bullet was fired by Pierre Marentette, a Sandwich blacksmith who was an ensign in Thebo's company.

15. Prince did not arrive on the scene until after Hume had been murdered. Since the latter had been at Prince's Park Farm behind Sandwich that morning before departing for the scene of battle, how can this discrepancy be resolved? The known evidence suggests that the two took different routes, and that Hume used the shore road (modern Riverside Drive), while Prince, perhaps on the lookout for a rebel descent on Sandwich from the rear, followed the frozen-over headwaters of the former Rivière a Gervais, later called the Grand Coulee, which originated behind the hamlet of Windsor (the site of modern Giles Boulevard) and flowed westward across the Park Farm before discharging into the Detroit River below Sandwich.

16. John Prince to Colonel Chichester (in command at Chatham), the Park Farm, December 19, 1838; transcript in *Documents*.

17. Honor Hawkins's names are also spelled Honour and Hawkens.


19. For the 1835 beginning of the Prince—Eliot antipathy, see the profile of John Prince in chapter 9.

20. Lieutenant Dionysius Airey was a brother of Colonel Richard Airey, commanding at Amherstburg.


22. There had been so many shootings that Prince momentarily lost count; in his own dispatch the next day he wrote, "Of the brigands and pirates 21 were killed besides four who were brought in just at the close and immediately after the engagement, all of whom I ordered to be shot upon the spot, and which was done accordingly." By placing their reliance on the dispatch, many authorities have since fallen into the same error.

23. JPD, December 14, 1838.
24. Observation based on the use of a recognizably different batch of ink.

25. John Prince to Colonel Chichester, December 19, 1838; Documents. Edward Alexander Theller was a Detroit wholesale grocer, physician, and druggist who was among the crew of the schooner Anne at Elliott's Point.

26. SWH, January 8, 1839. This wording is closely parallel to a passage in Prince to Chichester, December 10, 1838; Documents.

27. JPD, December 29, 1838.

28. SWH, January 8, 1839. This was obviously not the best-advised sort of speech to make, and its motivation perhaps lies in a carefully worded introduction to its published form by the editor of the Western Herald: "On his health being drank with deafening acclamations, he addressed them in an eloquent and affecting speech, he himself being much affected at the time." Prince and what he often called "grog" were by no means strangers.

29. JPD, January 5, 1839.

30. JPD, January 11, 1839.

31. SWH, January 22, 1839.

32. JPD, January 12, 1839.

33. JPD, January 15, 1839.

34. JPD, February 9, 1839. Hog Island is modern Belle Isle.

35. JPD, February 11, 1839. Henry Rudyerd was a personal friend of Prince.

36. SWH, June 6, 1839. In the arts this was the period of the Greek Revival.

37. JPD, March 11, 1839.

38. JPD, March 20, 1839.


40. JPD, June 10, 1839.

41. JPD, June 11, 1839.

42. Normanby to Arthur, June 12, 1839; Sanderson, 2:167.

43. Arthur to Normanby, July 3, 1839; Sanderson, 2:185.

44. JPD, August 12, 1839.

45. SWH, September 25, 1839.

Chapter Nine

1. For a full discussion of this assertion see chapter 7, note 54.

2. Chronic symptoms such as Prince's—frenetic activity and high self-esteem, in contradictory combination with withdrawal from the world, a desire to escape, feelings of guilt, and suicidal tendencies—have been identified with a psychological condition, manic-depressive disorder.

3. Davenport's given name is also frequently spelled Lewis.

4. The name Park Farm occurs frequently in England, and so cannot with certainty be said to allude to the park lots at Sandwich. The property is not known to have taken its name from any previous owner named Park.

5. In the sources Orin is also rendered Orrin, and Stanborough as Stamborough.

6. However, in 1834 John Prince did present the Reverend William Johnson with a service of communion plate and a damask tablecloth for the use of the English Church.
7. The letters JPWD customarily followed the name of any justice of the peace of the Western District; therefore in this instance they cannot be taken to mean John Prince specifically.
8. Prince to the editor, Sandwich, August 27, 1835; SCE, September 5, 1835.
10. Prince to the editor, Sandwich, September 18, 1835; SCE, September 19, 1835.
11. One such dissenter was George Duck of Howard Township in Kent, who although unnamed, was described in a letter to the Emigrant as a "quack" lately arrived from England, who had as yet "very few ducklings."
12. For the rest of his life Prince saw leadership as a burden, thrust on his unwilling shoulders by those who crowded around him. It was such an onerous duty that on October 16, 1836, he confided to his diary: "House full. Positively distracted with company. Worried to death. I occasionally wish for death."
13. At $25 a share, Prince's investment was $12,500, an astronomical sum in 1836. Note also that the shares were sold in American funds.
14. JPD, September 20, 1836. St. Thomas, astraddle the Talbot Road, south of London, Upper Canada, was the principal community in Thomas Talbot's domain.
15. JPD, March 24, 1837.
16. JPD, October 13, 1837.
17. JPD, October 6, 1839.
18. Mary McKee was a daughter of Thomas McKee Jr. and Catherine Que-Qua (also rendered Kyuhkwe) of the Huron Reserve. McKee Rankin's descendants, in turn, developed multiple connections by marriage with the acting Drew and Barrymore families.
19. Rankin was, after all, a product of the Victorian age.
21. Handbill, ca. 1844, printed by Robert Hardie & Co., Edinburgh; PM 585 (Arthur Rankin ephemera), MHC. Rankin, instantly recognizable even into old age by his own abundant mane, added his own testimonial: "I think (without presumption) I ought to be a good judge."
22. Attention called simultaneously to the mineral potential of the north shores of Lakes Huron and Superior by the director of the recently established (1842) Geological Survey of Canada, William Edmond Logan, and to that of the south shore of Superior by Dr. Douglas Houghton, Michigan state geologist, led to much prospecting activity in the area in the mid-1840s. Alexander Wilkinson of Sandwich was one who participated in mineral surveys at this time.
23. The visible, architectural parts of this organ survive, preserved among the holdings of Windsor's Community Museum. The Huguenot Church in Charleston, South Carolina, has a virtually identical, contemporary instrument by the same maker, still in use and "now one of Charleston's musical treasures," in the words of that parish's history.
24. George Moffatt, formerly engaged in the fur trade in the western country, was a Montreal merchant and politician at this time.
25. Namesake great-grandson of Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs Alexander McKee; a brother of Rankin's wife, Mary.
26. Although development was pursued over the remainder of the decade, activity tapered off by the mid-1860s because the ore proved not to be as good in depth as it appeared at the surface. Prince's own mining property of about ten square miles, southwest of Thunder Bay, was the subject of a speech in the summer of 1847. A silver vein on Prince's property was worked, but not during his lifetime. The mineral rush of the mid-1840s led to the creation of a kind of
Southwest-Northwest axis over the next two decades or so. Prince himself moved north in 1860, and there he encountered names familiar from below: William Bampton, innkeeper of Chatham and Windsor in the 1840s and 1850s, was doubtless related to Charles J. Bampton, Soo innkeeper in the 1860s; likewise Joshua and Joseph Coatsworth at Bruce Mines, and Caleb Coatsworth of Romney; and Solomon T. Thebo of Sandwich in the 1830s had his counterpart in Solomon Thomas Thebo, whom Prince encountered, first at Shebandowan in 1859 and later at Killarney.

28. Deputy Treasurer Wood of the Western District Council had defaulted and absconded in 1848, and his possessions were sold at auction to pay his debt.

29. Ironically, he had ignored this precept as recently as January 30, when he guaranteed the honesty of County Treasurer George Bullock. Perhaps he did so on the tenuous ground that Bullock was also proprietor of the Amherstburg hotel where the Masonic Lodge, which Prince had recently joined, held its meetings. Considering the W. R. Wood episode of recent memory, he should have known better.

30. JPD, September 24, 1850

31. In 1847, a projected fishing village on an old townsite where the Communication Road ended at Rondeau Bay was laid out for Prince, possibly in exchange for legal services, by a then bankrupt surveyor, Richard Parr. The village was named Shrewsbury, probably alluding to the Prince family’s ancestral home in Shropshire (Salop), England. Shrewsbury appears on William Billyard and Richard Parr’s 1847 map of the Western District, but not on the competing surveyor Charles Rankin’s map of the same year.

32. The Great Southern Railroad was eventually built, but not completed to the Detroit River until the early 1870s. A decade later its operation passed to the Michigan Central, and subsequently to the New York Central, Penn Central, and, most recently, Conrail.

Chapter Ten

2. Ibid., 28.
3. Robert McMurray to Alexander and John McCormick, Gosfield, January 14, 1823; McCormick Family Papers, 20-148, MHC.
4. Nogging was material used for filling the timber frame of a building, concealed from view by cladding. The Duff-Baby House and the John Prince House both had brick nogging, whereas a decidedly humbler dwelling on the River Canard appears to have employed straw for this purpose.
5. Several major buildings on the Canadian side of the Detroit frontier have been designed by Detroit architects. Assumption Church was perhaps the first in this tradition, built posthumously from an 1834 plan by Robert Elliott.
6. In this type a partition runs the length of the house under the roof ridge, dividing the front from the back and necessitating two heat sources. Each stove vents via a stovepipe to a chimney at the opposite end, in order to radiate as much heat as possible inside the building.
8. The “Pennsylvania” type rifle is often colloquially known as the “Kentucky rifle.”
10. SCE, February 14, 1835; also WDM, January 16, 1835. The ice was commonly used for a wide variety of traffic, but the winter of 1836 must have been unusually cold. On February 1 that year two millstones weighing 1,800 pounds, plus the men, the horses, and the heavy sleighs required to handle them, crossed the eighteen-inch-thick ice of the Detroit River from the American to the Canadian shore.
11. One such bridge, over Pike Creek in Maidstone Township, was described in 1834 in a specification by surveyor John A. Wilkinson: “20 ft. wide in clear between the centre cribs, there to be 4 cribs in bridge, the wood above water to be oak & bark to be taken off & to be last [at least?] 12 inches square, the flooring to be at least 5 inches thick & to be of good ash, on each side of bridge to be well filled up & substantial, the logs above water to be oak & 1 foot at small end & bark taken off, a hand rail to be made of squared timber & to be made substantial, the whole to be completed by the 6th of Oct. 1834.”
14. WDM, 1 April 14, 1830.
15. Since water levels prevailing over the Great Lakes are only grossly related to the amount of local rainfall, regional precipitation could sustain marsh conditions in much of the Western District during periods of low water even in the adjacent Lakes.
16. Even as late as the 1840s, cross-hatching in pale blue watercolor over the road allowances was widely used on Essex County township maps produced by John and Alexander Wilkinson. This symbol, resembling railroad tracks, actually signified drowned land. The stabilizing logs seem to have been called *facines*—possibly a Detroit River French word adapted from the English *facings*, meaning rolls at the edges of a garment, which were fashionable at the time.
17. So useful did Wood make himself to the district that he rose in the establishment of positions, building a residence, Thornfield, in 1842. However, he absconded to the United States with district funds in 1848, and his property, including his residence, was sold at a sheriff’s auction. Wood died in St. Paul, Minnesota, after 1856.
19. Thomas Talbot to the Hon. Peter Robinson, Port Talbot, April 3, 1831; Coyne, 111. The result, present County Road 12 through Forest in Lambton County, turned out to be rather less tasteful than Talbot intended. By comparison, Talbot’s Middle Road, with its twenty-eight course changes as it kept to the height of land across a single township, Orford in Kent, must have engendered transports of delight.
20. Shirreff, 195. The reference is to the Talbot Middle Road. Frogmore was the royal mausoleum at Windsor Castle in Berkshire where, three years earlier, George IV had died.
21. WDM, July 9, 1834.
22. Until recently a footpath crossing Turkey Creek along this mill dam could still be traced in aerial survey photographs, south of Sprucewood and west of Malden Road. A slight discoloration of the vegetation was caused by compacting of the soil.
23. Shirreff, 197.
24. For inclined planes Shirreff probably intended to write treadmills.
25. The Montreuil mill's predecessor on the site, probably destroyed by the Americans in 1814, had been owned by his father-in-law, Antoine Louis Descomps *dit* Labadie *dit* Badichon, and was the one at whose base the American force landed at the beginning of the War of 1812. Similar
interstices in the sheathing of the Badichon mill would have given the invaders real concern that small-arms fire awaited them from inside.

27. William McCormick to Mary McCormick, Fort Erie, May 13, 1819; McCormick Family Papers, 20-148, MHC.
28. B. P. Cahoon to William Hands Sr., Colborne Furnace, March 12, 1833; Hands Family Papers, 20-108, MHC.
29. Shirreff, 197 and 207.
30. A story persists of the destruction of the Colborne Furnace that resulted from an explosion at some unspecified date when wet fuel was thrown onto the fire in the smelting stack. This appears to be either pure speculation, or perhaps an embellishment of Patrick Shirreff’s account of the 1833 fire. Colborne, originally laid out by surveyor Peter Carroll, is the antecedent of the present Olinda. One author called Colborne, not Slag Town, as might be expected, but Stag Town, having in mind the number of male employees living on the site while their wives remained far away at home.
31. Mackintosh responded that the Duke of Wellington was somewhat larger than average, 134 tons; most others ranged from 80 to 100 tons. The Wellington drew eight feet three inches when fully loaded. He considered this to be a useful criterion because even she could navigate the St. Mary’s River at the head of Lake Huron, barely scraping her keel over a bar at Lake George. The Welland’s competitor, the Erie Canal connecting Buffalo with New York City, completed in 1825, was only half the depth.
32. SCE, May 28, 1834.
33. Inspector General’s Office to William Hands Sr., Toronto, April 1, 1834; Hands Family Papers, 20-108, MHC. A note added by William Elliott asked Hands to ensure that the light was supplied with oil.
34. William McCormick, journal of a voyage to Ireland, begun September 4, 1823; McCormick Family Papers, 20-148, MHC.
35. For example, a petition for a lighthouse at Hartley’s Point, where the Detroit River enters Lake Erie, was declined.
36. The collision and sinking of the Vandalia, off Point Pelee, on October 27, 1851, was probably typical, except for one point: the Vandalia was the first commercial vessel in the world to have been equipped not with paddle wheels but with a screw propeller. There is a suggestion that the Vandalia, subsequently refloated, continued to operate under another name, a practice that was not unknown at a time when diving bells were beginning to make such salvage operations possible.
37. The shipbuilders’ response to the problem was taken from bridge construction: longitudinal stiffening arches, which became prominent external elements in vessel design from the 1840s into the 1860s. Later, marine design allowed the arches to be concealed inside. Perhaps the most mysterious of all the tragedies were those vessels that were reported “lost on Lake Erie.” It seems possible that after years of flexing, many of them simply disintegrated, even in fine weather, and their fragments simply drifted apart, became waterlogged if they were not so already, and sank without a trace. Even a cargo of organic materials could suffer this fate.
38. The soap-making residue derived by boiling the ashes resulting from burning whatever part of the forest escaped being made into barrels, furniture, fence rails, equipment, vehicles, and buildings—not to mention fuel for the new age of steam power.
39. Quoted in Guillet, 151.
Chapter Eleven

1. The chairman was Doctor William Harffy, garrison surgeon at Amherstburg.
5. SCE, January 19, 1832.
6. The price of the *Emigrant* in 1836 was 12 s. 6d. per annum at the outset, 15s. if paid at the end of six months, or £1 at the end of the year, plus postage. Single copies do not appear to have been sold.
7. Wide perhaps, but not universal acceptance. As early as 1821 Captain Charles Stuart, a retired army officer and abolitionist, had developed an altruistic plan for a black settlement behind Amherstburg. Stuart’s views undoubtedly influenced those of his nephew, Arthur Rankin.
9. SWH, September 25, 1838.
10. The trickle of black refugees that began following the War of 1812 became a flood after 1850, when the Fugitive Slave Act in the United States imposed heavy penalties on anyone assisting slaves to flee. In the Western District, black settlements came into existence not only in the townships of Dawn and Chatham in Kent, but also in Maidstone, Sandwich, Anderdon, Malden, and Colchester in Essex. By the 1840s, Baptist congregations were meeting in private residences, then in church buildings, such as those in the towns of Sandwich and Amherstburg a decade later. Josiah Henson’s dream of an exclusively black community was supported by the segregationist Henry Bibb, publisher at Windsor of the *Voice of the Fugitive*, 1851–54. The opposite, integrationist position was taken, however, by the *Provincial Freeman*, published somewhat intermittently by Mary Shadd, 1853–59, first in Windsor and later in Toronto and Chatham.
11. Robert McMurray to Mary McCormick, Gosfield, August 2, 1819; McCormick Family Papers, 20–148, MHC.
13. The Windsor musicologist Marcel Bénéteau has recently documented well over five hundred folk songs of the Detroit River region.
14. Howison, 210. For brevity the punctuation has been simplified, and most connective passages (for example, “cried the doctor”) have been eliminated.
15. Shirreff, 94 and 207.
16. This building has been known in recent years as the McGregor-Cowan House.
17. The disease, which brought about a severe loss of body fluids, was spread by a bacterium in contaminated water and food. Victims became dehydrated and, if not effectively treated soon enough, could die of dehydration and shock in a matter of hours. One treatment was calomel, a
popular cathartic which must have had an effect similar to that of the disease itself. Compare the
principle, developed in eighteenth-century Germany, of “like cures like.”
18. Lime, calcium oxide, was made by heating limestone such as that found in abundance at the
Huron Reserve.
20. The former town of York was renamed Toronto on its incorporation as a city on March 6, 1834.
21. Court of Quarter Sessions, rough minutes, April 13, 1819; Western District Records, 20-248,
MHC.
22. William McCrae to William Hands Sr., Raleigh, December 27, 1822; Hands Family Papers,
20-108, MHC.
23. WDM, August 3, 1829.
24. WDM, October 13, 1829.
25. WDM, April 13, 1830.
26. Court of Quarter Sessions, court supporting documents, April 5, 1831; Western District
Records, 20-248, MHC. The name Penuel, also rendered Peniel or Penniel, is taken from a town
in (modern) Jordan, the scene in Genesis 32:22–31 of Jacob’s wrestling with the angel.
27. In 1840 another trespass was described by lawyer John Prince as “the old story”; the next year
he was in court again, charged with trespassing “again and again” against the same plaintiff as in
1840; and in 1845, below Amherstburg, he committed the blunder of trespassing on a property
owned by John Prince himself.
28. SCE, August 15, 1835.
29. Phrenology, the analysis of the contours of the skull to determine personality, arose and became
popular in eighteenth-century Austria.
30. The subtleties of conflict of interest appear to have been lost on the justices. Sheriff Lachlan
continued to sit in the Quarter Sessions as a magistrate, as late as January 5, 1838.
31. Robert McMurray to Alexander and John McCormick, Gosfield, McCormick Family Papers,
January 14, 1823; 20-148, MHC.
32. SCE, January 3, 1835.
33. Under the Act of Union Upper and Lower Canada were combined into the united Province of
Canada; the division west of the Ottawa River was thenceforth to be known as Canada West.
34. SWH, March 31, 1841.

Conclusion

1. SWH, December 2, 1841.
2. All went off smoothly, except for a squabble for the post of Sandwich Township clerk, between
Solomon T. Thebo and Louis Joseph Fluet, the roofer, priest, notary public, conveyancer, general
agent, etc., etc. There was also a suggestion that John Dolsen’s naming as district warden,
announced by the provincial secretary’s office at Kingston, had been a patronage appointment of a
person who was totally unfit for the position.
3. Western District Council minutes, November 14, 1843; Western District Records, 20-248, MHC.
4. Since their formation in 1788 the districts in general had experienced a long process of division, subdivision, and combination. The remote Western District was alone, however, in having undergone only one previous alienation, when the London District was created out of parts of the Western and Home Districts in 1798.
5. In Canadian legal parlance, this legislation is cited as Province of Canada, 12 Vic. c.78-c.81 (i.e., the twelfth year of the reign of Victoria, chapters 78–81).
6. Tilbury West Township had been tentatively transferred from Kent to Essex when Kent was provisionally separated from the Western District in 1847, but its District Council representative seems to have continued to meet with his Kent colleagues through 1851, when the shift to Essex became final.
7. The Essex County courthouse was designed by Albert Jordan, of Detroit, and built by stonemason Alexander Mackenzie with his brother Hope, of Sarnia. The same team was simultaneously responsible for All Saints' Church in what is now downtown Windsor.
8. The Great Western's connection with Windsor was the culmination of efforts beginning as early as 1837 to merge the interests of John Prince's Niagara and Detroit Rivers line with the London and Gore Rail Road (incorporated in 1834 and renamed the Great Western Rail Road in 1845), followed by the reincorporation of the Niagara and Detroit Rivers line in 1846, its amalgamation with the Great Western Rail Road in 1847, a brief revival of the Niagara and Detroit River's hopes of going it alone in 1850, the fixing of the terminus of the Great Western at Windsor in 1852, and the opening of the line, in sections, through to Windsor by 1854. It became the Great Western Railway in 1853.
9. From this point onward a distinction had to be made between modes of transportation, with the result that a new expression entered the vocabulary. Long before the coming of the railroad, of a winter's day one could take "the train" from Windsor to Chatham, but what was meant was a train of sleighs, coupled together and drawn by horses on the ice. From 1854 onward, to travel by rail one took "the cars."
10. The Michigan Central connected Detroit with Chicago in 1852.
11. The car was not opened until the train reached Windsor. This potentially disastrous example of public relations was suppressed for months, eventually coming to public notice not locally but in the Montreal Pilot.
Selected Bibliography

Manuscript Sources

For certain large archival units, some microfiche location codes are included in the notes to facilitate finding the specific documents cited.

Archives of Ontario, Toronto:
Court Records: Court of Quarter Sessions of the Peace; Western District, minutes (WDM).
Chatham-Kent Museum:
William McCay journal.
Detroit Public Library; Burton Historical Collection:
Solomon Sibley Papers.
University of Windsor Archives:
St. John's (Sandwich) Church; parish register.
Windsor's Community Museum; Macdonald Historical Collection (MHC):
Baby Family Papers; 20–11.
King Family Papers; 20–125.
George F. Macdonald Papers; binders on various subjects, consisting of personal notes plus material extracted from a variety of sources; 20–135.
Mackintosh Family Papers; 20–137.
McCormick Family Papers; 20–148.
John Prince Papers; diary; 20–275 (JPD).

Documents Relative to Colonel the Honourable John Prince, 1837–1838 (bound photostats and transcripts of documents, mostly or all in the National Archives of Canada, Ottawa) (Documents).
Robert Richardson Papers; 20–195.
Thomas Smith Papers; 20–216.
Western District Records; 20–248.
Wilkinson Family Papers; 20–235.
Published Sources

Unless otherwise specified, citations for published sources in the text are abbreviated to the editors/authors' surnames plus volume and page numbers and, as necessary, publication dates.


*The Toronto Almanac and Royal Calendar . . . for . . . 1839*. Toronto: Palladium, [1839].


---

**Published Collections of Documents**


*Papers and Records* (annual); from 1947 *Ontario History* (quarterly); continuous volume numbering.

Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, 1899 to date. (OHS).


Robinson, Christopher, and John Hillyard Cameron, eds. *Upper Canada Queen's Bench Reports (Old Series)*, 6 vols. Toronto: R. Carswell, 1877–78 (except vol. 5), and Henry Rowsell, 1855 (vol. 5). (QBR).


**Published Firsthand Accounts**


Fairchild, G. M. Jr., ed. *Journal of an American Prisoner at Fort Malden and Quebec in the War of 1812* [identified by the editor as Surgeon's Mate James Reynolds]. Quebec: privately printed by Frank Carred, Limited, 1909.


Marryat, Captain Frederick. *A Diary in America*. Philadelphia: Carey & Hart, 1839.


**Newspapers**

*Sandwich Canadian Emigrant and Western District Advertiser.* (SCE).

*Sandwich Western Herald and Farmers Magazine.* (SWH).

**Unpublished Sources**


Douglas, R. Alan. “A Line in the Water.” Paper prepared to mark the bicentennial of the 1796 implementation of the international boundary through the Great Lakes; delivered to meetings of several organizations, and excerpts adapted for publication in the *Windsor Star*, 1996.
Absconding debtors, 232
Absentee land ownership, 126
Act for the Better Division of the Province of Upper Canada (1800), 11
Act of Union (1841), 237
Adams (brig), 42, 52, 58. See also Detroit (brig)
Adelaide, Queen, 156
Agricultural fairs and societies, 232
Agriculture, 212–13
Aids to navigation, 209, 210. See also lighthouses
Airey, Dionysius, 168, 269n. 20
Airey, Richard, 163–64, 170, 171, 173, 269n. 20
Akockis (native person), 91–92
Allen, George, 208
American Civil War, 196, 248
American Fur Company, 26In. 44
American militia (1812), 38
American regulars (1812), 36
American Revolutionary War, 3, 28, 158
Americans exploring, 102
American spy system (1814), 81
American supply problem, 44, 46, 47, 258n. 2
American teachers, 232
Amherstburg (Ont.), 9, 92, 94, 98, 102, 127; American commandant at, 259n. 2; channel opposite, 93; churches, 110, 118, 275n. 10; defenseless, 90; described (1830s), 131; distillery at, 196; district seat wanted, 126, 130; epidemics, 224, 226–27; expanding, 19; exports to Detroit, 212; Indian Department at (See Indian Department); isolated, 122; J. Dougall opened store, 179; jail and courthouse proposed, 122, 123; merchants, 15, 18; military establishment at; 103; municipal government, 125; natives at, 28, 29, 31, 100, 101, 104, 255n. 37; new buildings, 260n. 7; pillory, 227; Rankins moved to, 186; Rebellions of 1837–38, 161, 167; road to, 22; shipbuilding, 59, 190–91, 209; shipping port, 150; strategic value of, 30, 34, 35, 89; surveyed (1820), 130–31; treaties signed at, 128, 152; troops at, 91; War of 1812, 37, 47, 49, 55, 58, 61, 66, 67, 69, 70, 73, 80, 83, 85, 255n. 28
Amherstburg & St. Thomas Railroad, 196
Anderton Township (Essex County), 125, 130, 179
Anderson, Charles E., 167–68, 169
Anderson, Thomas Gummersall, 99, 103, 104
Anderton, William, 264n. 10
Anderton Township. See Anderton Township
Anglican Church at Sandwich. See under Sandwich, English Church at
Anglophones, 122; dialect, 221–22
Annexation to the United States, 193
Apothecary and chemist, 225
Apples, 213
Ariel (warship), 73
Armistice, provisional, 83. See also ceasefires; peace; truces
Arnold’s farm (Christopher Arnold), 79
Arthur, Sir George, 169, 170, 171, 173, 174, 175
Ashes, use of, 274n. 38
Askin, Charles, 14–15, 52, 112, 117, 152, 172, 184, 252n. 15
Askin, John, Jr., 17, 30, 98, 99, 100, 102, 104, 252n. 15, 261n. 41; death of, 261n. 38
Askin, John, Sr., 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 35, 36, 38, 42, 46, 63, 64, 73, 112, 130, 202, 252n. 11, 254n. 17; accommodated officers, 258n. 30; death of, 259n. 1; distillery, 206; Strabane (residence), 17, 18, 27, 36, 38, 44, 258n. 30
Assaults, 228–29
Assumption Church, 5, 15, 27, 121, 142, 148, 174, 190, 200; architect, 272n. 5; fence, 146; illustration, 16; missions, 118. See also under Sandwich, French Church at
Assumption Parish, 135, 147
Austen, James, 141, 266n. 39
Austen's wagon and blacksmith shop, 142, 144
Baby, François.  See Baby, François
Baby, Charles, 117, 142, 168, 171, 172, 183, 184, 190, 266n. 47
Baby, François, 8, 27, 38, 40, 53, 55, 109, 119–21, 139, 140, 144, 145, 168, 172, 254n. 14, 264n. 41, 266n. 47, 267n. 50; Baby farm, 46, 48, 50, 120, 138, 139, 143, 147, 148, 166, 266n. 44; Baby house, 40, 120, 165, 199–200, 256n. 58, 266n. 38; Baby orchard, 120, 138, 143, 144, 178, 192, 266n. 44; fire, 267n. 50; captured, 80, 81; guarded ferry, 225; lieutenant of Essex, 253n. 34; member of House of Assembly, 266n. 35; and prisoner, 168; residence (first), 255n. 56
Baby, Jacques, 14, 27, 63, 94, 107, 109, 119–21, 121, 138; Duff-Baby house, 120, 137, 200, 272n. 4; Baby Point, 119
Baby-Burtis ferry service, 140
Baby village plot pattern, 145
Bacon, Lydia B., 37, 48, 50
Badichon, Antoine Louis, 273n. 25
Badichon mill, 254n. 23, 273-74n. 25
Bagot, Sir Charles, British ambassador to United States, 92, 93
Baldwin, Robert, 237, 239
Baldwin Municipal Act, 240
Bampton, Charles J., 271–72n. 27
Bampton, William, 271–72n. 27
Bank of Upper Canada, 116
Baptist congregations, 275n. 10
Barker, Robert E., 227–28
Bar Point, 73
Barrymore family, 271n. 18
Barlet, W. H., 199
Bathurst, Lord Henry.  See secretaries of state
Battle: of Fighting Island (1838), 161; of Frenchtown (1813), 62–65; of Lake Erie (1813), 70, 76; illustration, 71; of Lundy's Lane (1814), 84; of Moraviantown (1813), 73–74, 75, 76. (see also Battle of the Thames); illustration, 74; of Pelee Island (1838), 161–62; of Put-in-Bay (see Battle of Lake Erie); of Queenston Heights (1812), 256n. 74; of the Longwoods (1814), 82–83; of the Thames (1813), 73–74, 75, 76 (see also Battle of Moraviantown), illustration, 74; of Tippecanoe (1811), 31
Battle of Windsor (1838), 164–69, 179, 190, 233, 237, 269n. 13; Battle of Windsor, The, (pamphlet) 172, 175–76; court of inquiry, 172; Prince's conduct at, 187; Prince's diary, 157
Bayfield, Henry Wolsey, 259–60n. 3
Baynes, Edward, 45, 69, 72
Bear Creek (Lambton County), 22, 24, 114, 153–55; cholera at, 225; floating bridge, 155
Beaubien's sawmill, 209
Beeman's tavern, 190
Bell, John, 165, 172, 269n. 13
Belle Isle (Detroit), 17, 41, 186, 270n. 34.  See also Hog Island
Bellevue (residence), 253n. 30
Bénéteau, Marcel, 275n. 13
Bennett, Uri, 167–68
Bennett, W. J., 141
Berczy, Charles, 104, 264n. 6
Berczy, William Bent, 127
Berrymann, H. A., 248
Bibb, Henry, 275n. 10
Bierce, Lucius Verus, 165
Big Bear Creek.  See Bear Creek
Bilberry, William, 272n. 31
Birche, Charles.  See Berczy, Charles
Bird, Robert, 229–30
Biron, Jean Louis, 138
Blackburn, Isaac, 100
Black Rock (N.Y.), 58, 185
Blacks, 160, 165, 186, 210, 212, 218–20; refugees, 275n. 10; settlements, 187, 275n. 7, 275n. 10; troops, 268n. 3
Blacksmiths, 25, 231
Black walnut, 199, 201
Boards of health, 225, 226
Bois Blanc channel (Detroit River), 93
Bois Blanc Island (Detroit River), 3, 9, 31, 67, 91, 161, 185, 259n. 2, 259n. 3; fortification of, 96; hospital on, 225; ownership of, 88; variants of name, 222
Bonnycastle, Sir Richard, 217, 220
Bonvouloir, Jean Baptiste, 138
Border closure, 269n. 9
Boulton, Henry John, 115
Boundary disputes, 101, 259n. 3
Bounty hunters, 186–87
Brady, Hugh, 164, 170
Bribery scandal, 196
Brick-making machine, 200
Bridges, 155, 203, 273n. 11
Brights Grove (Ont.), 268n. 68
British grid system, 252n. 20
British interference with American vessels, 93
British measure, 17
British minister to Washington, 45, 92
British North American Mining Company, 191, 192
British Queen (hotel), 144, 267n. 48
British secretary of war, 30
British supply problem, 69, 70
British survey, 102
Brock, Sir Isaac, 30, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 49, 51, 53, 55, 56, 57, 58; aides-de-camp, 52; death of, 58; description, 256n. 74; legends, 256n. 74; letters, 44, 45, 53, 57, 58; orders, 41, 49, 50; plans, 34, 35; proclamation, 43; reputation, 64; troops, 47, 48, 49, 52, 53
Broderick, Edward, 168
Brooke’s, 223
Brooke Township (Lambton County), 154
Broughtham, Lord Henry, 174, 175
Brown, Adam, 128
Browne, George, 162
Brownstown, 45, 46, 255n. 47
Brown/Warrow “progressive” faction, 129
Bruce Mines (Ont.), 191
Brush, Elijah, 27, 42, 52
Brush, John, 97
Buenosayres, 155. See also Sarnia
Buffalo (N.Y.), 58, 164, 185, 257n. 13; Patriot support in, 162
Buffalo Gazette, 58
Bullock, George, 272n. 29
Bullock, Richard, 52, 76
Burbank, Captain, 17
Burlington (Ont.), 76, 82, 83, 84, 101
Burn, William, 22, 23
Burris, John, 138, 139, 140
Burwell, Mahlon, 22, 106, 146, 149. See also surveyors
Butler, Colonel, 80, 81
Byways and byways, 204
Calhoon, Benjamin Parker, 184, 207–8, 233
Caldwell, John, 160
Caldwell, William, 61, 83, 85, 97, 98, 100, 123; Caldwell’s Rangers, 61; death of, 261n. 38
Caldwell property, 130
Caledonia (brig), 29, 58
Camden Township (Lambton County), 34, 79, 116, 153, 154
Camden (vessel), 29, 253n. 37
Campbell, Neil, 154
Campbell, William, 232
Canada Act. See Constitutional Act (1791)
Canada Company, 126, 152
Canada West. See Upper Canada
Canales, 211
Caroles, 258n. 1
Caroline (vessel), 165
Carolinian forest, 199
Caron, Francois, 190
Carrol, Peter, 274n. 30
Carson, Lieutenant, 104
Carrier, Claude, 150, 151
Cas, Lewis, 39, 41, 48, 92, 254n. 22; opinion of Hull, 56
Castlereagh, Viscount, British secretary of war, 30
Catholic marriages, 13
Carlin, George, 188
Ceasefires, 83. See also armistice, provisional; peace; truces
Chambres, Peter Latouche, 49
Champion (schooner), 94, 107
Charloe (Ottawa chief), 129
Charlotte (warship). See Queen Charlotte (warship)
Chatham-Kent Road 15, 204
Chatham (Ont.), 20, 73, 90, 96, 117, 125, 149–51, 154; bridge at, 185; churches, 110, 118; district seat, 239; Eberts brothers, 151; no Presbyterians in, 220; shipbuilding at, 149; shipping line, 190; supported Prince, 172; surveyed, 149; wharf, 191
Chenil Ecarte, 152, 268n. 66
Chesapeake affair, 27, 93
Chesapeake (frigate), 25–26
Chewett, Alexander, 128, 168, 183, 184
Chicago (III.), 35, 50
Chippawa (Ont.), 84
Chippewa nation, 127. See also Ojibwa nation
Cholera, 224–26, 248, 266n. 39, 275–76n. 17, 277n. 11
Christ Church (Amherstburg), 110; illustration, 111
Churches, 110, 118
Church of England, 6, 13, 19, 220
City of Detroit, Michigan. Taken from the Canada shore . . . , 141
Fluett, Lewis Jas. See Fluett, Louis Joseph
Foreign Enlistment Act, 196
Forests, 197–98, 212
Forrs: Amherstburg (Fort Malden), described, 31; destroyed (1815), 88; garrison surgeon, 275n. 1; target of War Hawks, 27, 33; War of 1812, 38, 39, 41, 42, 44, 46, 47, 56, 67, 69, 73; Fort Collier, 260n. 8; Fort Covington, 259n. 12; Fort Erie (Ont.), 66, 84, 94; Fort George, 30, 38, 43, 55, 66, 67, 94; prisoners at, 256n. 66; Fort Gouie, 46, 47; Fort Gratiot, 188; Fort Lernoult, 26, 29, 39, 40, 41, 48, 50, 58, 81; Malden (Fort Amherstburg), American brig Union threatened, 93; American occupation continued, 259n. 2; commandant (James), 97; described (1830s), 131; deserters, 95; destroyed (1815), 88; Gore visited, 29; garrison reduced, 91; Hull ordered to capture, 37; Rebellions of 1837–38, 161, 163–64, 166, 168; rebuilding needed, 90, 91; state of (1823), 96; supplies needed, 35; War of 1812, 42, 47, 52, 58, 66, 73, 79, 81, 85; Fort Meigs, 63; siege (1813), 65–66; expedition (second), 68; Fort Michilimackinac, 33, 41–42; Fort Niagara, 38, 66; Fort Ponchatrain, 1; Fort Sandusky, 68; Fort St. Joseph, 31, 34, 87; York, 30
Fortier, Charles, 185
Fort Wayne (Ind.), 56
Fort Wayne expedition, 56–57;
Forty-First Regiment, 29, 36, 38, 41, 43, 46, 49, 51, 52, 56, 57, 68, 76
Forty-Ninth Regiment, 30, 34
Foster, Colley, 80, 94, 98, 262n. 2
Fourth United States Regiment, 52
Fowler, Orson Squire, 265n. 24
Fox, Michael, 165, 269n. 13
Fox, W., 269n. 13
Francophones, 121
Fraser, James, 17
French-Canadian dialect. See Detroit River French dialect.
French Canadians, 42, 137, 190, 220–21, 226, 228, 268n. 3; described, 216–17; farm lots, 148, 251n. 2; folksongs, 221, 275n. 13
French-Canadian settlements. See Detroit River settlements
French measure, 17, 252n. 14
French survey pattern, 252n. 20
Frenchtown (Mich.), 62
Frogmore (royal mausoleum), 273n. 20
Frogmore Street (Essex and Kent), 205
Froomfield (Moore Twp.), 155
Fugitive Slave Act (United States), 275n. 10
Furniture, 201; cradles, 201; French-Canadian, 201
Fur trade, 4, 17, 18, 20, 33, 87, 89, 206, 261n. 44, 271n. 24
General Brock Public Elementary School, 252n. 17
General Hunter (warship), 49, 70
Gentle, John, 135, 146. See also surveyors
Geo. Strong (sleep), 161
Geological Survey of Canada, 271n. 22
George III, King, 4, 5, 25
George IV, King, 273n. 20
Geographic Bay, 89, 261n. 40, 262n. 45
German Band of Detroit, 233
Germanic settlers, 201–2
Germanophones, 122
Gervais, Louis, 1
Gibbet irons, 231
Giles Boulevard (Windsor), 264n. 38, 269n. 15
Glasgow, George Mark, 161, 162
Glasgow (Ont.), 116, 155. See also Sarnia
Glegg, John B., 34, 52, 55
Glengarry Avenue (Windsor), 142, 147
Goderich (Ont.), 268n. 77
Gordon, James, 97, 212
Gordon, Lewis G., 160
Gore, Francis, 15, 21, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 35, 92, 98, 99, 100
Gosfield Township (Essex County), 7, 21, 132, 135, 199; Back Settlement, 233; iron industry, 114, 118; temperance societies, 232–33
Gouie, Robert, 46
Gouin, Claude, 154
Gourlay, Robert Fleming, 108–9, 126
Grand Coulee (Windsor), 139, 264n. 38, 267n. 50, 269n. 15
Grand Marais, 146, 147
Grand Marais Road (Windsor), 146
Grand River (Ont.), 84
Grand River raiders, 85
Grant, Alexander, 21, 27, 253n. 23, 253n. 34; death of, 66
Grant, Henry, 166, 219, 269n. 13
Grant, Jasper, 29
Grant, Lewis, 94
Grant, Robert, 120, 263n. 36
Grant Castle (residence), 21, 66
Great Lakes: water levels, 203, 273n. 15
Great Southern Railroad, 196, 272n. 32
Great Western Railway, 185, 191, 193–4, 196, 240, 248, 277n. 8, 277n. 11
Grenville-Jay Treaty. See Jay Treaty (1794)
Grist mills, 206
Grosse Point Farms, 21, 66
Indian Department, 9, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 43, 45, 49, 57, 83, 92, 96, 97, 98–99, 100, 101, 104, 112, 168, 253n. 37
Indian land. See native peoples
Indian territory. See native territory
Inns, 198
Intelligence-gathering, 81
International boundary, 89
Iredell, Abraham, 10, 20, 149. See also surveyors
Ireland, George F. T., 112
Irish Road, 205
Irish Settlement, 106, 146
Iron industry, 114, 207–9
Ironside, George, Jr., 128, 129, 168
Ironside, George, Sr., 100, 112, 152
Irregular troops, 257n. 4
J. and J. Dougall (store), 166, 178; fire (1849), 179
Jackson, Lieutenant, 81
Jacob, George, 107
Jail and courthouse, 137; Amherstburg, 122, 123; Chatham, 122, 123; cholera at, 226; repairs to, 231; Sandwich, 21, 122, 123, 124, 167, 168, 200, 204, 230–31, 240
Jailbreaks, 230, 231
James, Reginald, 90, 91, 92, 97, 98
James, Lt. Colonel W, 85
Jameson, Anna, 131, 137, 140, 151, 197–98, 199, 204–5, 216–17, 220
Janette, Narcisse A., 267n. 50
Jannette farm (Charles Jannette), 147
Jarvis, Samuel P., 94
Jarvis, William, 20
Jarvis Creek, 251n. 1
Jasperson, George, 147, 225
Jay Treaty (1794), 8–9, 27
Jeffries, Charles William, 51, 71
Jenkinson, Mr., 150
Jenking, Shadrack, 140, 150, 232, 266n. 37
Jenkinson, Mr., 150
Jews, 117–18, 263n. 30
Johnston, Dr. D. D., 223
Johnson, Sir William, 2
Johnson, Sir William, 2
Johnson, Sir William, 2
Jones, Dr. George, 230
Jones, Henry, Jr., 153, 154
Jones, Henry, Sr., 153, 154, 268n. 68
Jones, William, 69
Jordan, Albert, 277n. 7
Justice of the peace, 271n. 7
Justice system, 102–3, 227–32
Keating, 103
Keating, J. W., 188
Kent Bridge (Chatham Twp.), 151
Kent County, 7, 8, 18, 20, 121, 149, 150, 151, 248; created, 240; extent of, 11; immigration, 125; included Detroit, 251n. 5
Kent Militia, 37, 41, 55, 63, 65, 81; black troops, 268n. 3
Kentucky: fled by Josiah Henson, 220; irregulars, 257n. 4; militia, 84; slavery in, 212
Kentucky rifle. See Pennsylvania rifle
Kerby, George P., 116
Kerby, William, 120, 263n. 36
Kickapoo nation, 91, 92, 97
King, James, 134–5
King House, 265n. 24
Kingston (Ont.), 61, 66, 72, 108; shipbuilding, 59
King Street (Chatham), 229
Kingsville (Gosfield Twp.), 135
Kyushkwe, Catherine. See McKee, Catherine
Labadie, Antoine Louis, 273n. 25
Lachlan, Robert, 230–31, 232, 276n. 30
Lady Prevost (vessel), 45, 58, 70, 94, 95, 107
Lafontaine, Louis Hippolyte, 239
Laforet, Charles, 149
Laforet, Jean Baptiste, 149
Laforet, Joseph, 149
Laforet, Oliver, 149
Lake Erie: Lake St. Clair canal (proposed), 211; ships lost on, 274n. 37; storms, 209–10
Lake Huron, 261n. 40; Rondoud canal (proposed), 211
Laliberte, Jean Baptiste, 190
Lambton, John George. See Durham, Lord
Lambton County, 11, 248; created, 240; separated from Essex, 195
Lancer regiment, 196
Lawrence (warship), 70
Legislative Council, 121
Leopard (frigate), 25
Lewis, Captain, 165
Lighthouses, 185, 209, 274n. 35. See also aids to navigation; Pelee Island, 132, 133
Lime: disinfectant use, 224
Lincoln, Abraham, 196
Lincoln militia, 49, 51, 52, 53
Lincoln Road (Windsor), 7
Linsey-woolsey, 261 n. 34
Liquor, 17. See also high wines
Little River, 203
Liverpool, Robert, Earl of. See secretaries of state
Local government, 12–13
Logan, William Edmond, 271n. 22
London and Gore Rail Road, 185, 277n. 8
London District, 11, 277n. 4
London Township (Middlesex County), 152; Long Point, 46, 47, 68, 81, 82, 84; Long Point Furnace, 114
Longwoods, 75, 100, 259n. 7; Longwoods Road, 72
Lord Dorchester's Proclamation (1788), 4
Lord Durham's report. See Report on the Affairs of British North America
Lostree, Rev. J., 119
Lotteries, 223
Louisville (Chatham Twp.), 151
Lower Canada, 5
Loyalists. See United Empire Loyalists
Lunatics. See mental illness
Lunenburg (district). See districts
Lustree, Reverend J. See Lostree, Rev. J.
Lyttle, Nicholas, 120
Macaulay, James Buchanan, 181
Macaulay, John, 155, 156, 212
Macdonald, John Sanfield, 137, 265n. 41
Macdonell, Bishop Alexander, 121, 264n. 41
Macdonell, John, 51, 55
Macdonell, Miles, 215
Macdonell, Rev. Angus, 121
Mackay's Canada Directory, 267n. 55
Mackenzie, Alexander, 277n. 7
Mackenzie, Hope, 277n. 7
Mackenzie, William Lyon, 109, 113, 129; supporters of, 157, 159–60
Mackinac, 3, 75–76, 83–84, 88, 92–93
Mackintosh, Alexander, 76, 94, 95, 106–8, 114, 120, 139, 209, 210, 274n. 31
Mackintosh, Angus, 20, 34, 39, 58, 90, 94, 106–8, 121, 123, 177, 252n. 5
Mackintosh, Mrs. Angus, 107
Mackintosh wharf (Angus Mackintosh), 120
Mackintosh, Mrs. Angus Mackintosh, 120
MacNab, A. N., 193
Macomb, Alexander, 91, 96
Macomb, William, 8
Maçon, Jean B., 228
Madison, James, 37, 50, 69
Maguaga, 47
Maidstone Cross, 135
Maidstone Township (Essex County), 6, 7, 106, 126, 209
Mailleaux/Mailloux, Joseph, 16, 138
Maisonville's windmill (Alexis Maisonville), 7
Maitland, John, 161, 162
Maitland, Sir Peregrine, 126, 130
Malaria, 23
Malden Road (LaSalle and Windsor), 136
Malden Township (Essex County), 7; road maintenance equipment, 202
“Mancius's Cough Mixture,” 223
Mansfield, Captain, 40
Mansion House, 143, 144
Marchand, Rev. Jean Baptiste, 15
Marentette, Pierre, 187, 269n. 14
Marine design, 274n. 37
Marryat, Frederick, 203
Marital law, 46, 64, 72
Mason, Stevens T., 160
Masonic Lodge, 272n. 29
Maule, John, 90, 99
Maumee expedition, 65–66
Maumee Rapids, 62, 64, 65
Maxwell settlement, 153, 268n. 68
May, James, 17, 118
Mayne, William, 28
McArther, Duncan, 48, 51, 52, 84–85
McCay, William, 53
McCormick, John, 97
McCormick, Mary, 109, 124
McCormick, William, 96–97, 109, 120, 122, 123, 124, 132, 206, 209, 222, 265n. 19
McCrae, Thomas, 20, 21, 34, 69–70, 73, 76, 80; farm, 75, 79, 82
McCrae, William, 114, 117, 211, 227, 228
McDonald, Angus, 115
McDonald, John T., 227–28
McDonell, Bishop Alexander, 121
McDonell, Alexander, 23, 24
McDonell, John, 52
McDonell, Robert, 84, 88, 89, 90, 92, 99, 102, 104, 259n. 8
McDougall, Allan, 24
McDougall, Joseph, 141, 144, 145, 267n. 53
McDougall family, 24
McDougall subdivision, 145
McGregor, Duncan, 150
McGregor, John, 21, 34
McGregor building, 208
McGregor-Cowan House, 200–201, 275n. 16
McGregor's Creek, 149
McKee, Alexander, 5, 20, 57, 191, 271n. 25
McKee, Catherine, 271n. 18
McKee, Mary. See Rankin, Mary McKee
McKee, Thomas, 20, 25, 30, 49, 83, 265n. 19; portrait, 26
McKee, Thomas, Jr., 271n. 18
McKee Purchase (1790), 4–5, 11, 100, 127, 129, 130, 152, 264n. 8
McKee's Point (Sandwich Twp.), 50
McKinstry, David C., 138
McLean, Archibald, 265n. 31
McLean, Hector, 28
McLeod, John, 196
McMurray, Robert, 220, 232
McNiff, Patrick, 5, 9. See also surveyors
Mear's orchard (John Mears), 174, 233, 234
Mecklenburg (district). See districts
Medical equipment, 95, 226
Meigs, Jonathan, 48
Meldrum, George, 20, 251n. 3, 252n. 19
Mental illness, 227, 230
Mercer, Robert, 170, 172
Merritt, William Hamilton, 209
Merritor, Mary Ann. See Prince, Mary Ann
Mills, 108, 114, 137, 267n. 54
Mineral rush (1840s), 271-72n. 27; surveys, 273n. 41
Mills, William, 165, 167
Millington, Mary Ann. See Prince, Mary Ann
Millington
Mills, 108, 114, 137, 153, 180, 181, 206; destroyed, 83, 85
Mineral rush (1840s), 271-72n. 27; surveys, 271n. 22
Mining, 191
Minot (French measure), 252n. 14
Misery Settlement, 252n. 4
"Moffatt's Life Pills," 223-24
Moffatt, George, 271n. 24
Money shortage. See currency shortage
Monforton, Guillaume, 21
Monroe, James, 64, 88, 92, 93, 260n. 17
Monroe (Mich.), 62
Montreal Abstract, 153
Montreal (district). See districts.
Montreal Gazette, 196
Montreal Herald, 112
Montreal Mining Company, 191
Montreal Pilot, 277n. 11
Montreal (Quebec), 2, 4, 33, 49, 178; shipping line, 190
Montreal Western Star, 112
Montreuil's mill (Luc Montreuil), 40, 206, 273n. 25; illustration, 207
Moore, Sir John, 268n. 74
Moore Township (Lambton County), 153, 155
Moravian Reserve, 152; land surrender, 155
Moraviantown (Orford Twp.), 73; destroyed, 75
Morin store, 165, 167
Morse, Henry B., 166
Mount Clemens (Mich.), 160
Moy (Sandwich Township), 94, 120, 140, 177, 267n. 54
Moy (Scotland), 262n. 5
Muir, Adam, 57, 74
Municipal government, 240
Murders, 46, 92, 103, 165, 167, 169, 229, 230, 260n. 13, 269n. 15, 269n. 22
Murray, William, 143, 144, 266n. 42
Myers, Christopher, 61, 256n. 66
Nancy Island (Simcoe City), 259n. 9
Nancy (schooner), 39, 45, 53, 65, 68, 76, 83-84, 259n. 9, 262n. 5
Nassau (district). See districts
Native allies of the British, 34, 36, 41, 42, 43, 44, 49, 50, 52, 53, 55, 56, 58, 61-62, 68, 73, 77, 80, 81, 83, 84, 168, 169, 188, 256n. 69, 259n. 5; (1838), 162; description, 47; Fox nation, 100; Frenchtown, 62-63; Moraviantown, 74; Procter's opinion of, 66; siege of Fort sieve, 65-66
Native peoples, 28, 89, 91, 95, 97, 98, 99; Black-hoof, 254n. 24; Blue Jacket, 254n. 24; Christian indians, 262n. 12; claim to Drummond Island, 104; Crane, The, 254n. 24; Devoted Men (native nation), 256n. 69; land, 152; leaders, 40; medicine men, 228; Prophet, The, 74; reserves, 253n. 28, 268n. 76; territory, 2, 3
Navigation aids. See aids to navigation
Newark (Ont.), 252n. 18
New Settlement (Colchester and Gosfield Twp.), 4, 5, 15, 49, 70; surveyed (1787), 134
Newspapers, 217-19, 222-23; advertising, 223
New York Central Railroad, 272n. 32
Niagara and Detroit Rivers Rail Road Company, 184-85, 185-86, 191, 193, 277n. 8
Niagara: District, 109; frontier, 84; Ont., 3, 91, 252n. 18; peninsula, 257n. 13; portage, 101
Niagara (sloop), 69, 70
Nichol, Robert, 22, 122
Norfolk militia, 44
Normandy, Lord, 174, 175
North West Company, 18, 34, 39, 96, 104, 105, 261n. 44
North West Territory (United States), 3
Norwegian migrants, 248
Nottawasaga, 84, 102
Nottawasaga River (Simcoe County), 89, 259n. 9
Ogdensburg (N.Y.), 3
Ohio: irregulars, 257n. 4; militia, 36, 52, 84; missionary, 262n. 12; volunteers, 46
Oil industry, 153
Ojibwa nation, 5, 100, 152, 188, 26In. 37. See also Chippewa nation
Ojibway (Sandwich Twp.), 1
Oldcastle (Sandwich Twp.), 146
Olinda (Gosfield Twp.), 274n. 30
One-Hundredth Regiment, 81
Ontario. See Upper Canada
Orford Township (Kent County), 153
Oswegachi (N.Y.), 3
Oswego (N.Y), 3
Ottawa nation, 5, 29, 127, 265n. 19
Ouellette, Charles, 139, 141; farm, 48–49, 138, 139, 143, 144, 203, 266n. 38, 266n. 44; ferry landing, 140, 144; ferry service, 140
Ouellette, Vital, 141
Owen, Sir Edward W. C. R., 259-60n. 3
Owen, William Fitzwilliam, 88, 91, 101, 259-60n. 3
Owen Sound (Ont.), 259-60n. 3
Pacquet, Etienne, 16, 138
Panic of 1837, 208
Papermaking, 114-15; 223
Papineau, Louis Joseph, 157
Parades, 233, 234
Parent, Denis, 267n. 53
Parent, Julien, 130
Parent Avenue (Windsor), 267n. 53
Park, William, 20, 27, 252n. 19
Parker, John, 209
Park Farm (John Prince), 130, 170, 181, 187, 195, 269n. 15; name of, 270n. 4
Parr, Richard, 272n. 31
Pattinson, Richard, 66, 254n. 17
Paxton, Thomas, 129, 130
Peace, 87. See also armistice, provisional; ceasefires; truces
Peche Island (Sandwich Twp.), 29, 149
Peck, Leonard, 231–32
Pelée Island (Mersea Twp.), 132; Battle of (1838), 161–62; lighthouse, 209; sawmill, 212; surveyed (1847), 134
Pelée Passage, 211
Pelletier farm (André Pelletier), 147
Penetanguishene (Ont.), 35, 101, 102, 104, 262n. 45
Penn Central Railroad, 272n. 32
Pennsylvania rifles, 201–2, 272n. 8
People's Bank, 179
Perch Creek (Sarnia Twp), 153
Perch-Mouth Inn, 268n. 68
Perry, Oliver Hazard, 67, 68, 69, 70, 73, 257n. 13
Perry's fleet, 68, 69, 75
Person Stabbed, A (Ojibwa chief), 28
Plympton Township (Lambton County), 153, 154
Pointe aux Pins (Harwich Twp.) settlement, 82. See also Rondeau
Point Pelee (Mersea Twp.): New Year's celebrations, 233; variants of name, 222
Politics. See elections
Pollard, Reverend Richard, 13, 15, 19, 27, 110, 113, 262n. 12; assets, 114; death of, 112
Pontiac (Ottawa chief), 2
Poor, conditions of, 14
Portage to the Grand River, 101
Port Dover (Ont.), 83
Porter, Moses, 9
Port Goderich. See Goderich (Ont.)
Port Huron (Mich.), 188
Port Sarnia (Ont.). See Sarnia
Port Talbot (Ont.), 22, 48, 82
Postal service, 115, 154
Post Office, 19
Pottawatomi nation, 5, 127
Prescott, Robert, 149, 267n. 60
Presqu’Ile (Pa.), 66, 67, 68, 83, 257n. 13
Prevost, Sir George, 35, 36, 43, 45, 53, 56, 57, 58–59, 63, 64, 66, 68, 72, 75, 76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 83
Prince, Albert, 195
Prince, George, 183
Prince, Henry, 248
Prince, John, 180–86; agricultural interests, 232; alcohol use, 185, 270n. 28; author of document, 170; became judge, 196; business interests, 189, 191, 193–94, 211, 271–72n. 27, 271n. 13, 272n. 31, 277n. 8; captured patriots, 69n. 8; conduct at Battle of Windsor (1838), 166–69, 173, 174, 237, 269n. 22; controversy
after Battle of Windsor, 172, 175; described
Battle of Windsor, 157; enemies, 213, 269n.
friends, 270n. 35; gift to church, 270n. 6;
Huron Reserve sale, 130; Independence Mani­
festo, 195; interview with Sir G. Arthur, 171;
magistrate, 230, 231, 276n. 27; mental state,
195, 270n. 2, 27In. 12; met A. Rankin, 187;
political interests, 190, 192, 233–34; Rebellions
of 1837–38, 160, 161, 163, 164, 269n. 13,
269n. 15; residence, 199, 272n. 4; resigned
from militia, 188; warning published, 174
Prince, Mary Ann Millington, 180, 195
Prince, Richard, 180
Prince, Septimus Rudyerd, 172
Prince's Brewery, 137, 181, 182, 186
Princess Victoria (schooner), 232
Prince's wharf (John Prince), 181, 183, 185, 186
Probert, S. T., 267n. 54
Procter, Henry, 43–77 passim; court-martial,
258n. 34; decided to retreat, 71; loss at Mora­viantown, 74; mental state, 75
Pronunciations, regional, 222
Prospecting activity, 27In. 22
Proudfoot, Reverend William, 220
Provincial Freeman, 275n. 10
Provincial Marine, 83
Provincial Volunteer Militia, Second Battalion,
187, 269n. 13
Puce (Maidstone Twp.), 209
Put-in-Bay (Ohio), 70, 71, 80
Putnam, Captain, 165, 166
Quarter Sessions. See Court of Quarter Sessions of
the Peace
Quebec Act (1774), 3
Quebec (city), 2, 178
Quebec Mercury, 58
Quebec (province), 5; extent of, 2, 3
Queen Charlotte (warship), 49, 50, 59, 67, 70, 71,
257n. 13
Queen's Light Infantry, 163, 187
Queenston Heights (Ont.), 58
Queenston (Ont.), 66, 120
Que-Qua, Catherine. See McKee, Catherine
Race relations, 218–20
Radishes, 213
Railroad bill, 191; fever, 145; Mansion House
(proposed), 145; ties, 212
Railways, 184, 185, 193–94, 196, 277n. 8; acci­dents, 248
Raisin massacre, 64
Raleigh Township (Kent County), 34, 70, 76, 79,
152
Ramsey, George, 103
Randolph Street (Detroit), 138
Rankin, Arthur, 186–89, 190, 191, 192, 193, 195,
196, 271n. 19, 271n. 21; libel suit, 190; racial
views, 275n. 7; “Rankin Job,” 196; wild west
show, 188
Rankin, Arthur McKee, 188, 271n. 18
Rankin, Charles, 186, 191, 246, 272n. 31
Rankin, George, 186
Rankin, Mary McKee, 188, 271n. 18, 271n. 25
Rankin, Mary Stuart, 186
Rankin, McKee. See Rankin, Arthur McKee
Rattlesnakes and reptiles, 197
"Real Spanish Tooth Powder," 223
Rebellions of 1837–38, 157–69, 208
Reciprocity Treaty (1854), 248
Redpath, John, 179
Reduction of armaments on the Great Lakes, 93
Reed, Captain J., 96
Reform Party, 222
Reiffenstein, I. C., 76
Religions, 220
Report on the Affairs of British North America, 172,
220, 237, 239
Reservations, native, 153, 261n. 37
Responsible government, 237, 239
Revolutions War. See American Revolutionary
War
Reynolds, Catherine, 24, 253n. 30
Reynolds, Ebenezer, 62, 63, 117, 184, 208,
230–31, 232
Reynolds, James, 255n. 28
Reynolds, Margaret, 24, 67, 253n. 30
Reynolds, Robert, 117, 185, 253n. 30
Reynolds, Thomas, 24, 253n. 30
Ribbon farms, 4, 135, 146, 251n. 2
Richardson, John, 46, 47, 50, 62, 65, 256n. 69;
description of Brock, 256n. 74; description of
American prisoners, 257n. 4
Richardson, Robert, 34, 64, 81, 92, 123
Richmond, 142, 143. See also Ferry, The (Wind­
sor); Sandwich Ferry; Windsor (Ont.)
Ridout, Thomas, 22. See also surveyors
River Canard (Ont.), 70, 71, 80; skirmishes, 41
River Puce (Maidstone Twp.), 209
River Raisin (Mich.), 54; fortification, 52
River road (Sandwich and Windsor), 168. See also
shore road (Sandwich and Windsor)
River Ruscom (Rochester Twp.): cholera suspects stopped, 225, 226
Riverside Drive (Windsor), 139, 267n. 55, 269n. 15
River Thames. See Thames River
River Trench. See Thames River
Riviere a Gervais (Sandwich Twp.), 1, 251n. 1, 269n. 15
Riviere aux Dindes (Sandwich Twp.), 1. See also Turkey Creek
Road maintenance equipment, 202
Roads, 19, 22, 72, 106, 135–36, 140, 142, 143, 146–48, 154, 197–98, 202–5; causewaying, 204; corduroy roads, 204–5; ice roads, 202, 273n. 10, 277n. 9; opened, 235. See also under specific roads.
Roberts, Charles, 41–42
Robinson, John Beverley, 113, 114, 117, 139
Robinson, Major General, 98
Robinson, Peter, 151
Rochester Township (Essex County), 6, 7, 126
Roe, Walter, 20, 215
Romney Township (Kent County), 6, 203
Rondeau (Harwich Twp.), 195. See also Pointe aux Pins
Roosebank estate, 179
Roundhead (Huron chief), 62, 63
Royal Artillery Regiment, 161, 162
Royal Berkshires, 34
Royal Canadian Volunteers, 215
Royal Engineers, 48, 90, 96
Royal Exchange Hotel, 151
Royal Newfoundland Regiment, 49, 58
Royal Proclamation (1763), 2
Royal Scots Regiment, 81
Rudyerd, Henry, 270n. 35
Ruisseau de la Vieille Reine (Sandwich Twp.), 1
Sandwich (Sandwich Twp.), 1. See also Ferry, The (Windsor); Richmond; Windsor (Ont.); riot (1836), 219
Sandwich Ferry (Essex County), 140, 142, 150, 178, 223; commercial establishmens in, 142–43. See also Ferry, The (Windsor); Richmond; Windsor (Ont.); riot (1836), 219
Sandwich (Sandwich Twp.), 15; attempted annexation of Windsor, 194; Baldoon survivors at, 23; Baldoon troublemakers at, 24; barracks, 187; Bedford Street, 19, 146, 223, 225; bricks made at, 200; Brock Street, 19; Centre Street, 146; churches, 110, 275n. 10; declining, 145; described (1830s), 137; Detroit Street, 180, 181, 182, 186, 223; district seat, 126; doctors in, 223; English Church, 19, 66, 118, 137, 190, 225, 232, 263n. 30, 270n. 6 (see also St. John's Church), name changed, 262n. 12; epidemics, 224–26; food supplies short, 226; French Church, 148 (see also Assumption Church); furnace and foundry in, 208; government town, 9; hospital in, 225; Huron Church Road, 146; Huron Street, 19; illustration, 137; isolated, 121, 154; J. Baby left, 119; J. Prince arrived, 180; jail (see jail [Sandwich]); King's Arms, 234; leading citizens, 34; local government, 125; magistrates at, 103; maps, 10; market-garden crops, 212–13; merchants at, 18, 118; Mill St., 137; natives at, 97, 98; newspapers, 217, 224; offices held by W. Hands, 94, 114; pillory, 227; political parades, 233, 234; political scene (1800), 20; port of entry, 112; Prince Rd., 146; Rebellions of 1837–38, 164, 167, 168, 187; roads to, 146; Sandwich-Petite Côte road, 135; Sandwich St., 19, 146; school at, 19; Thames arrived, 150; timber rafts bound for, 215; visited by Sir G. Arthur, 175; War of 1812, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44, 48, 49, 50, 55, 65, 69, 70, 73, 75, 79, 80, 81–82, 83, 255–56n. 56, 258n. 34
Sandwich Township (Essex County), 7, 80, 106, 126, 140; complex surveys, 135; map, 136; description (1817), 108; division of, 252n. 21; epidemics, 225, 226; linked with Detroit, 138; road maintenance equipment, 202; roads, 147; surveyed, 130
Sandwich Township clerk, 276n. 2
Sandwich Western Herald and Farmers Magazine, 144, 159, 160, 170, 172, 174, 175, 219, 220, 223–24, 234, 238, 267n. 54, 269n. 9, 269n. 13, 270n. 28
Sandwich Western Standard and Western District General Advertiser, 189, 190
Sanitation, 19, 224
Sarnia, 153, 185; names of, 155; Sandwich newspapers slow to reach, 224
Sarnia Township (Lambton County), 153, 154, 268n. 68
Sault Ste. Marie (Ont.), 104, 262n. 45; visited by J. Prince, 195
Saunders, William, 219
Sawmills, 206, 209, 212
School system, 232
Schooner Anne incident (1838), 160-61, 270n. 25
Scotch Settlement, 106
Scrip. See currencies
Scurvy, 92–93, 95
Seamen, 70
Second Queen's Light Infantry Regiment, 186, 188, 269n. 9
Secretaries of State for War and the Colonies: Robert Liverpool, 36; Henry Bathurst, 72, 77, 89, 92, 93
Secretary of the Navy (William Jones), 40, 66, 91
Selby, Frederick, 20
Selkirk, Lord, 22–24, 105–6
Separation of Essex and Kent, 122, 238–39; sentiment, 21, 122, 238–39, 248
Seventieth Regiment, 61, 94
Shaar Hashomayim Congregation cemetery, 263n. 30
Shadd, Mary, 275n. 10
Sharp business practice, 231
Shaw, Amos, 222–23
Shaw, Thomas, 52
Shawnee chief, 97
Shawnee nation, 29
Shawnee Township (Lambton County), 11, 23, 152, 253n. 28. See also Sombra Township; surveyed, 100
Shirreff, Patrick, 131, 137, 142, 150, 180, 203, 205, 206, 208, 212, 218, 222, 229, 273n. 24, 274n. 30
Shore line erosion, 203
Shore road (Sandwich and Windsor), 269n. 15. See also river road (Sandwich and Windsor)
Shrewsbury (Harwich Twp.), 272n. 31
Simcoe, John Graves, 7, 12, 13, 106, 149
Simcoe Street (Amherstburg), 130
Sixtieth Regiment, 25
Sixty-Eighth Regiment of Foot, 95–96, 104
Sketch of the Western District of Upper Canada . . ., 222
Stag Town. See Olinda (Gosfield Twp.)
Slavery, 16–17, 212, 219
Sleigh roads, 202
Smallpox, 224, 226
Smith, David W. See Smyth, David W.
Smith, Thomas, 20, 24, 130, 134, 141, 145. See also surveyors
Smith's Canadian Gazetteer, 212
Smuggling, 227
Smyth, David W., 8
Soap-making residue, 274n. 38
Solomon, William, 104
Sombra Township (Lambton County), 11, 114, 115, 126, 152, 153, 154, 155. See also Shawnee Township; surveyed, 100; witchcraft in, 227–28
South Detroit (Sandwich Twp.) development, 145
Southern Railroad, 196
Sparke, John E., 165, 168, 187, 269n. 13
Sparke's company of militia, 166
Spencer, Patrick, 163
Spies, 64, 80, 81, 85
Splitlog faction, 129
Splitlog (Huron chief), 128, 129, 130
Springer, Daniel, 80, 81
Springwells (Mich.), 38, 39; strength of forces at, 81
St. Amour, Jean Baptiste, 138, 139, 140
St. Amour, Louis, 147
St. Amour, Pierre, 140, 143, 223; death of, 226
St. Clair River, 81
St. George, Colonel, 36, 38, 39, 40, 43, 49
St. John's Church (Sandwich), 13, 168. See also English Church at Sandwich: new name, 262n. 12
St. Joseph Island (Algoma region), 11, 17, 25, 27, 30, 31, 38, 41, 76, 87, 88, 90, 95, 96, 101, 104, 252n. 15, 253n. 37, 262n. 45
St. Mary's River, 101, 102
St. Paul's Church (Chatham), 110
St. Peter's on the Thames (church), 118
St. Thomas (Ont.), 271n. 14
Stage lines, 146, 151
Stanborough, Orin, 181, 183, 270n. 5
Stanborough, Russell, 181, 183
Stanton, Robert, 116
Stanton, William, 94
Statute labor, 135, 146, 266n. 45
Stayner, Thomas Allen, 115
Steamboat Hotel (Chatham), 150, 151
Steam Boat Hotel (Detroit), 138
Steamboats, 150, 206, 252n. 15; accidents, 210–11; Brothers, 151; Bunker Hill, 165; Champlain, 164; Commodore Perry, 210; Daniel Webster, 210; George Moffatt, 191; Hastings, 267n. 50; Kent (1833), 150, 210; Kent (1841),
151; London, 210; Niagara, 108; Ploughboy, 151; Queen of the West, 190; Sandusky, 210
Steam power, 179
Stevens, Penuel K., 228-29, 276n. 26
Stewart, Captain, 81
Stewart, Robert (Viscount Castlereagh). See secretaries of state for war and the Colonies
Stocks (punishment), 227
Stone College, 199, 225, 252n. 17
Stone quarry, 129, 200
Strachan, Reverend John, 75, 110
Stream of the Old Queen (Sandwich Twp.), 1
Street, Samuel, 154-55
Stuart, Charles, 187, 275n. 7
Stuart, Mary. See Rankin, Mary Stuart
Stuart, Reverend John, 13
"Sturrock's Real Bear's Grease," 188
Suffolk County (Ont.), 7, 8, 11
Survey of the Great Lakes, 101-2
Surveyors, 144-45, 186. See also names of individual surveyors: Burwell, Mahlon; Elliott, William; Gentle, John; Iredell, Abraham; McNiff, Patrick; Ridout, Thomas; Smith, Thomas; Wilkinson, Alexander John; Wilkinson, John Alexander
Sutherland, Daniel, 115
Sutherland, Thomas J., 163
Sydenham River (Lambton County). See Bear Creek
Talbot, Thomas, 22, 44, 61, 72, 106, 151, 153, 185, 205, 262n. 1, 271n. 14, 273n. 19
Talbot Middle Road, 6, 106, 273n. 19, 275n. 20
Talbot Road Agricultural Society, 232
Talbot Road West, 6, 22, 82, 85, 106, 135, 136, 185, 186, 203, 205, 271n. 14; stage line, 146
Talfourd, Field, 184
Talfourd, Fronie. 155
Tallon, Joseph, 49
Tarring and feathering, 220, 229
Taxes, 115
Tech-kum-thai. See Tecumseh (Shawnee chief)
Tecumseh Road: East (Windsor), 147; West (Windsor), 136, 147, 265n. 26; Tecumseh Road (Windsor), 203
Tecumseh (Shawnee chief), 31, 41, 45, 46, 49, 58, 68; death of, 74; illustration, 74
Telegraph, 248
Temperance movements, 272-28
Temporary paper currency. See currencies
Tenth Royal Veterans Battalion, 41
Thames River (Kent County), 72, 73, 79, 81, 82, 84, 121, 149, 150; cholera along, 225; navigation on, 211; spring flooding, 203
Thames River valley, 76
Thames (sailing vessel), 53
Thames settlement, 21, 61
Thames (steamboat), 149, 150, 165, 167
Thames Steam Navigation Company, 149, 150
Thamesville (Howard Twp.), 151
Thebo, Solomon T., 165, 269n. 14, 271-72n. 27, 276n. 2
Thebo, Solomon Thomas, 271-72n. 27
Theller, Edward Alexander, 169, 270n. 25
Third U.S. Regiment, 52
Thirty-fourth Regiment, 168
Thirty-second Regiment, 191
Thirty-seventh Regiment, 91, 98, 259n. 2
Thomas, John, 153
Thomasville settlement (present Florence, Zone Twp.), 153, 268n. 67
Thornfield (residence), 192, 273n. 17
Tilbury East Township (Kent County), 6, 152
Tilbury West Township (Essex County), 6, 7, 11; transferred to Essex, 277n. 6
Timber rafts, 215
Toldeo (Ohio), 186; Patriot support in, 162
Toronto Albion, 117
Toronto Examiner, 172
Toronto Independent, 193
Toronto (Ont.), 252n. 18, 263n. 28, 276n. 20. See also York (Ont.)
Townsend, Benjamin D., 208
Trade (commerce), 17-19
Trains of sleighs, 277n. 9
Treadmills, 273n. 24
Treaty: of Amity, Commerce and Navigation. See Jay Treaty (1794); of Ghent (1814), 85, 87, 88, 89; of Greenville (1795), 62; of Paris (1783), 3, 27; of Versailles (1783), 259n. 3
Trial, witchcraft, 227-28
Trois-Rivieres (Quebec), 118
Truces, 49, 52, 83. See also armistice, provisional; ceasefires; peace
Turkey Creek (Sandwich Township), 1, 43; mill dam, 273n. 22. See also Riviere aux Dindes
Twenty-Fourth U.S. Infantry, 82
Two Connected Townships (Colchester and Gosfield Twps.), 5
Uncharted channel, 268n. 66
Union (brig), 93
Union Hotel wharf, 140
United Counties: Essex, Kent, and Lambton, Essex and Kent, and Essex and Lambton, 239-40
United Empire Loyalists, 3, 4, 110, 118
United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, 110, 112-13
University Avenue (Windsor), 148, 267n. 59
Unsworth, Abraham, 14, 230
Upper Canada, 5
Upper Canada Agricultural Society, 232
Upper Canada Gazette, 116, 206
Van Allan, Henry, 150
Van Allan's wharf, 165
Vandella (steamboat), 274n. 36
Van Horne, Thomas, 255n. 47
Verhoeff, Peter Frederick, 147
Verhoeff and Jasperson's store, 142
Victoria, Queen, 188, 267n. 48
Victory (parade float), 234
Vidal, Alexander, 91
Vidal, Richard Emeric, 154
View of Amherstburg, 1813, 67, 253n. 30
Village lots, 266n. 38
Vincent, John, 25, 67
Wabash River (Ind.), 58
Waddell, John, 190
Walk-in-the-Water (native leader), 259n. 24
Walk-in-the-Water (steamboat), 127, 177, 206
Wallace, Alfred Russel, 248
Wallaceburg (Chatham Twp.), 155
Walpole Island (Ont.), 153
Warburton, Colonel, 73, 74
Ward, Benjamin, 115-16
Warden (municipal official), 238, 276n. 2
Ward's Station, 82, 259n. 7
War Hawks, 259n. 13
War of 1812, 33-85; legends, 256n. 58
Warrow, Joseph, 128
Warship construction, 59
Water levels, 203
Water power, lack of, 205-6
Watson, John G., 142, 172
Watson's store (John G. Watson), 142
Wayne County (Mich.): extent, 9
Welland Canal, 114, 139-40, 209, 274n. 31
Wellington, Duke of, 103
Wellington (vessel). See Duke of Wellington (vessel)
Western District: Agricultural Society, 232; bank, 185; Council, 238, 239, 276n. 2; 123, 126, 130, 149, 150, 238; dissolved, 248; divided, 277n. 4; division bill, 191; extent of, 11; funds stolen, 192; Grammar School, 114, 137, 199, 225, 232, 252n. 17, 259n. 2; issued scrip, 229; Kent separated, 277n. 6; Land Office, 223; maps, 6, 8, 12, 241-46, 272n. 31 warden, 276n. 2
Western Hotel, 234
Western Rangers, 61
West Flamborough Township (Ont.), 114
Wilkinson, Alexander John, 262n. 1, 267n. 58, 268n. 77, 271n. 22, 273n. 16. See also surveyors
William IV, King, 156
Williams, Israel, 218-19, 229
Williams, John, 34
Williams, John L., 128, 184
Wilson, John, 94
Winchester, James, 62, 63, 64, 65
Windmills, 14, 17, 168, 206
Windsor Castle Ale & Beer House, 267n. 54
Windsor (Sandwich Twp.): All Saints' Church, 277n. 7; Assumption St., 121, 142, 266n. 40; Aylmer St., 147; Cabana Rd., 265n. 25; Caron Ave., 16; Church St., 48, 121, 142, 266n. 40; City Hall Square, 267n. 52; Community Museum, 271n. 23; Crawford Ave., 142, 147; exports to Detroit, 212; feared attack (1838), 164; Perry St., 144, 166, 267n. 50; fire (1849), 179, 192; Front St., 267n. 55; London St., 148, 267n. 59; incorporated as village, 240; Main Street, 145; McDougall Street, 145; Meldrum Street, 251n. 3; mismatched cross streets, 267n. 52; naming of, 142, 145, 179, 267n. 54; Sandwich St., 145, 165, 267n. 55; terminus of Great Western Railway, 194
Windsor Voice of the Fugitive, 275n. 10
Wolf scalp certificates, 252-53n. 22
Wolves, 21, 23, 252n. 22
Wood, William L., 137, 172, 173, 184, 204, 272n. 28, 272n. 29, 273n. 17; absconded with funds, 192, 273n. 17
Woodward, Augustus Elias Brevoort, 55, 64, 130
Woodward Avenue (Detroit), 138
Woodworth, "Uncle Ben," 138
Woolford, John Elliott, 16, 139
Wyandotte (Mich.), 47
Wyandotte nation. See Huron nation
Yeo, Sir James Lucas, 71, 72
Yonge Street (Toronto), 159
York Colonial Advocate, 113
York militia, 44, 51, 52
York (Ont.), 61, 76, 80, 89, 102, 125, 178, 252n. 18, 263n. 28, 276n. 20. See also Toronto
(Ont.): J. Baby moved to, 119; raided (1813), 66; shipbuilding, 59
Zone Mills (Florence, Zone Twp.), 268n. 67
Zone Township (Lambton County), 152, 153, 154; land surrender, 155