

A HISTORY OF THE ONTARIO  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PRESERVING ONTARIO'S HERITAGE:  
A HISTORY OF  
THE ONTARIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to relate the hitherto untold history of the Ontario Historical Society from its earliest precursors in the mid-nineteenth century to the present time. Since 1888, the OHS has been a considerable educational institution and cultural force endeavouring to develop an awareness of, and interest in, local and provincial history. Its credentials have been established by its programmes to record, interpret, publicize, and preserve Ontario's heritage, and by its efforts to co-ordinate and encourage the work of local historical associations and museums.

The initial chapters provide an analysis of the nature, intent, personnel, philosophy, and accomplishments of the two lineal ancestors of the OHS -- the Historical Society of Upper Canada (est. 1861) and the United Canadian Association (est. 1872) -- as well as the dozen local historical groups that banded together after 1888 to create the OHS.

The major emphasis of the remainder of the thesis is to illustrate how the OHS has established itself as an educational and cultural force. Its valuable role in historic preservation, a subject largely ignored by historians, is dwelt upon in detail. Another chapter provides valuable historiographical perspectives for the society's collection of publications, the largest and perhaps most important single body of material in print pertaining to the history

of Ontario. The efforts of the OHS members to further the study of history in the schools and universities, to establish adequate archival and museum facilities in the province, and to assist the local historical groups, all of these are examined in each stage of the OHS's existence. So too are the motives, the philosophy, and the composition of the membership.

Another major theme of this essay is that of ambition denied. For many reasons which are dealt with at length, the OHS has not been able to accomplish all of its declared objectives or to reach its full potential at any given time. Success and failure, accomplishment and frustration, go hand in hand throughout its history.

This work also provides valuable insights into some of the current enthusiasms of Ontarians since 1861. Nationalism and imperialism, anti-Americanism and anti-materialism, feminism and nativism, the social reform urge and the problem of assimilating new Canadians, these concerns and others are reflected in the history of the Ontario Historical Society.

## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis seeks to relate the history of the Ontario Historical Society. Until now, it is an account that has largely been ignored even by the members of the society itself. What irony, for instance, that these historically minded individuals have forgotten the society's original name. Since the late 1940s, the cover of Ontario History has proudly declared that

the Ontario Historical Society was organized on September 4, 1888 under the title of "The Pioneer and Historical Association of the Province of Ontario" and adopted its present name in 1898.

This statement, amusingly enough, is erroneous. In fact, the original title of the OHS was the Pioneer Association<sup>1</sup> of Ontario. At the annual meeting of the Pioneer Association of Ontario in Brampton on June 3, 1891, the words "Historical" and "Province" were added to the original name, and only then did the society become known as The Pioneer and Historical Association of the Province of Ontario.<sup>2</sup>

The foregoing paragraph is testimony that few people are aware of even the most basic details of the history of the Ontario Historical Society. This is understandable since so little has been written about either the historical society movement in general or the OHS's contributions to it in particular. Like most others, this author was originally

ignorant of the full range of the OHS's achievements or the notable individuals that took part in its affairs. Indeed, my original subject of research -- A History of Historical Societies in Ontario -- was much broader than the present study. It was only after I had started investigating the local historical society movement that I began to understand what the OHS had accomplished, and had tried to accomplish, in the way of preserving Ontario's heritage and of developing the study of local and provincial history. This prompted me to seek access much earlier than I had anticipated to the great quantity of hitherto unused reports, minute books, and correspondence stored in the office of the Ontario Historical Society. My hopes were soon confirmed that in these sources an important story, worthy of my undivided attention lay begging to be told.

The largest single body of primary material for this dissertation was found in the archives of the OHS. But as a glance at the bibliography will verify, a substantial amount of material in the form of local society records, publications, and personal correspondence was found in the Ontario Archives, the Public Archives of Canada, and in a dozen or so smaller repositories across southern Ontario. I wish to express my appreciation of the patience and kindness of the members and staffs of the archives, libraries, historical societies, and museums in which I undertook research.

The completion of this dissertation marks the end of five stimulating and enjoyable years at McMaster University. During that time many friends have helped me by their advice, particularly my office mates, Herbert Mays and Robert Passfield. May they prosper in their future academic careers.

Of all the people at McMaster, I owe the greatest debt to Professor Charles M. Johnston, my supervisor and mentor. Without his assistance and guidance, this dissertation may never have been completed. I have also much reason to be grateful to Professor Herbert W. McCready and Professor Goldwin S. French for their help and constant encouragement over the past few years.

I am also indebted to the officers of the Ontario Historical Society for their complete co-operation. Most of all I must express my gratitude to Miss Alice Davidson, the executive secretary. Miss Davidson and her assistant, Miss Olwyn Anderson, made my months of research at 40 Eglinton Avenue East in Toronto an almost painless experience. A special thanks ought also to go to J. Keith Johnson of St. Patrick's College in Ottawa for reading and criticizing this manuscript, thereby saving me several errors of fact and judgement.

The financial assistance provided by the Canada Council and by the Government of Ontario in the form of an Ontario Graduate Fellowship and a Sir John A. Macdonald Fellowship is gratefully acknowledged.

I wish, above all, to thank my wife, Linda. This most unselfish individual gave freely of her time on weekends and vacations to help in the research and editing of this tome. Perhaps most important of all, she provided a much-needed stabilizing influence when I experienced that emotional turmoil known to most doctoral candidates. Finally, a word of thanks must go to my parents; I could never properly express my appreciation for their many efforts on my behalf.

FOOTNOTES

1  
Pioneer Association of Ontario Canada, Organized  
at Toronto, September 4, 1888 (Toronto: Dudley and Burns,  
[1890]). The only known copy of this report is in the Toronto  
Reference Library.

2  
The Pioneer and Historical Association of the  
Province of Ontario, Annual Report 1891 (Toronto: n.p. ,  
n.d.), p. 6.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AASLH	American Association for State and Local History
AHA	American Historical Association
AHR	<u>American Historical Review</u>
CHR	<u>Canadian Historical Review</u>
CNE	Canadian National Exhibition
DL	Douglas Library Archives, Queen's University
EHSI	Elgin Historical and Scientific Institute
GHS	Grenville Historical Society
HPL	Hamilton Public Library
IFL	Imperial Federation League
IODE	Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire
JCS	<u>Journal of Canadian Studies</u>
JTWHs	<u>Journal and Transactions of the Wentworth Historical Society</u>
KHS	Kingston Historical Society
LLHS	Lundy's Lane Historical Society
LLM	Lundy's Lane Museum
NHS	Niagara Historical Society
OA	Ontario Archives
OEA	Ontario Educational Association
OFPA	Old Fort Protective Association
OH	<u>Ontario History</u>
OHS	Ontario Historical Society
OHSA	Ontario Historical Society Archives
PAC	Public Archives of Canada
PAO	Pioneer Association of Ontario
PCM	Peterborough Historical Museum
PHS	Peterborough Historical Society
RCI	Royal Canadian Institute
SCHS	Simcoe County Pioneer and Historical Society
SCM	Simcoe County Museum Archives
TPL	Toronto Public Library
UT	University of Toronto Archives
UWO	University of Western Ontario Regional History Archives
WCHS	Women's Canadian Historical Society
WHS	Wentworth Historical Society
WWHS	Women's Wentworth Historical Society

## INTRODUCTION

The history of the Ontario Historical Society, as suggested in the preface, has been largely ignored. No historian has yet ventured to write directly on the subject. Professor James J. Talman came closest to so doing in an article written in 1948 entitled "Some Precursors of the Ontario Historical Society"<sup>1</sup> in which he indicated that "the study of history by societies in Ontario has a more or less consecutive history of over a hundred years...."<sup>2</sup> Since Talman's study, several historians have shown an interest in examining Canadian historiography and the development of a historical profession in this country. One such was Hugh A. Stevenson, a graduate student at the University of Western Ontario who submitted a Master's dissertation in 1960 on James H. Coyne: His Life and Contribution to Canadian History.<sup>3</sup> Another graduate student, David McConnell of the University of Toronto, submitted a comparable thesis in 1965 on E.A. Cruikshank: His Life and Work.<sup>4</sup> Coyne and Cruikshank, both gifted amateur historians, were commanding figures in the OHS's past who contributed to the development of critical historical scholarship in Canada.

One other historian has briefly explored the aims, nature, and significance of the historical society movement in Ontario during the late-nineteenth century. This was Professor

Carl Berger in his splendid intellectual history The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914 (1970). Berger concluded that the local historical societies in Ontario, including the provincial Pioneer and Historical Association, were "one aspect of a wider North American concern with local history." More importantly, he added, because of their efforts to perpetuate the so-called Loyalist Tradition as a means of cultivating a British-Canadian nationalism (or imperialism as Berger would have it), "there is much to be said for regarding these historical societies as branches of the Imperial Federation League."<sup>5</sup>

Professor Berger was not interested in the late-nineteenth century historical societies for their own sake; rather, they were studied to provide illustrative material for the development of a chapter on the "Loyalist Tradition." For this reason, his research on the historical societies was understandably superficial. Only a few reports of the Lundy's Lane Historical Society and the provincial Pioneer and Historical Association were consulted. A more extensive analysis of the local historical society records, however, indicates that the second of Berger's conclusions is questionable. In fact, as will be argued in the second chapter of this study, only a small minority of the local historical groups which affiliated to form the provincial Pioneer and Historical Association of Ontario can be fairly described as "branches" of the Imperial Federation League. Berger's conclusion with re-

gard to the North American scope of the historical society movement, on the other hand, is sound.<sup>6</sup> It is worth mentioning in this connection that the activities and objectives of the American state historical societies have been used when appropriate as a touchstone or reference point against which to compare the aims and programmes of the Ontario Historical Society throughout this century.

All four of the aforementioned authors raised as many questions as they answered about the Ontario Historical Society and its affiliates. Talman clearly indicated that the historical groups were of some social significance simply by virtue of the fact that they have been functioning for over a hundred years. But exactly what had the provincial historical society contributed to the preservation of Ontario's heritage or to the development of an awareness of, and interest in, local and provincial history over this extended period of time? The Stevenson and McConnell studies demonstrated that two leading OHS figures were of some historiographical importance, but what of the other dozens of contributors to the society's publications? And what of Berger's contention that the historical groups were essentially "branches" of the Imperial Federation League? These and other questions inspired this study.

This thesis, then, takes up where these authors terminated their investigations into aspects of the OHS's past. In so doing, an attempt will be made to provide a detailed

narrative and analysis of the history of the Ontario Historical Society from its earliest precursors to the present time. The first chapter re-examines the two lineal ancestors of the OHS -- the Historical Society of Upper Canada (1861)<sup>7</sup> and the United Canadian Association (1872) -- in the light of new material uncovered at the Public Archives of Canada. Chapter two critically discusses at some length the nature, intent, personnel, philosophy, and activities of the dozen or so local historical groups which banded together after 1888 to create the Pioneer and Historical Association of the Province of Ontario as a clearing house for their common concerns. The relatively ineffective performance of that provincial historical association and its reorganization into the Ontario Historical Society is the subject of a third chapter.

The next three chapters deal with what might be called the halcyon period (1898-1914) of the Ontario Historical Society. Here are examined the efforts of the society to expand its usefulness, the philosophy of some of its leading spokesmen, and the major role the OHS assumed in preserving many of the province's historical landmarks. Consideration is also given to the financial and administrative problems which continuously plagued the society and to the appearance of the several organizations which sprang up in direct competition with the OHS

"Ambition Denied" and "'To The Very Edge of the

'Precipice' and 'Back"', the titles of the seventh and eighth chapters, indicates that a prolonged period of stagnation and decline set in after 1914. The Depression and the two World Wars crippled the work of the OHS, driving it in the early 'forties to the brink of dissolution. In the inter-war period, the OHS became little more than a publishing society, and, apart from its publications programme, it failed to devise ways and means for popularizing the history of the province among the population at large. Chapter nine deals with the society's attempts since 1950 to become a more dynamic cultural force, and a more broadly based educational institution serving both scholarship and the general public. The last chapter contains a lengthy analysis of the publications of the Ontario Historical Society and their contributions to historical scholarship.

The predominant theme of this study is that the Ontario Historical Society has been a considerable educational and cultural force in Ontario by virtue of its many efforts to develop an awareness of, and interest in, the history of the province and its regions. All the same, it will also be shown that the OHS has failed in every period of its existence to live up to its full potential and its highest ambitions. Success and failure, accomplishment and frustration, go hand in hand throughout the entire history of the organization.

Finally, an attempt will be made throughout this essay

to indicate how the OHS has reflected many of the current enthusiasms of Ontarians since 1861. The emergence of a historical consciousness in the mid-nineteenth century, and the waxing and waning of interest in Ontario's past can be traced through the history of the organization. Prior to the Great War, ideological controversies over annexation, imperial unity, and autonomy vitally concerned the historical societies that believed their chief function was to foster national and patriotic sentiments. Feminism, anti-materialism, anti-Americanism, the immigrant problem, the social reform urge, all these diverse concerns have their place in this history of the OHS.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>  
OH, Vol. XL (1948), pp. 13-21.

<sup>2</sup>  
Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>3</sup>  
Hugh A. Stevenson, James H. Coyne: His Life and Contribution to Canadian History (unpublished Master's dissertation, Department of History, University of Western Ontario, 1960).

<sup>4</sup>  
David McConnell, E.A. Cruikshank: His Life and Work (unpublished Master's dissertation, Department of History, University of Toronto, 1965).

<sup>5</sup>  
Carl Berger, The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), pp. 96-97.

<sup>6</sup>  
David Van Tassel, Recording America's Past: An Interpretation of the Development of Historical Studies in America, 1607-1884 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).

<sup>7</sup>  
This society was later renamed the Historical Society of Canada West, and later still, the Historical Society of British North America.

## CHAPTER ONE

### PRECURSORS OF THE ONTARIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY, 1861-1888

The Ontario Historical Society was organized on September 4, 1888 under the title of the Pioneer Association of Ontario and was renamed the Pioneer and Historical Association of the Province of Ontario in 1891 before assuming its present name in 1898. What is often forgotten, however, is that the genesis of the OHS dates back several decades prior to the appearance of the Pioneer Association of Ontario. In 1948 James J. Talman provided valuable perspectives by indicating that the PAO was not the first historical society with provincial scope; actually, such an organization functioned briefly in Canada West as early as 1861.<sup>1</sup> Though Professor Talman is the only historian who has thrown light on the origins of the Ontario Historical Society, his article is not entirely satisfactory. It was presented as a series of documents informed by a brief but largely unanalytical narrative. Furthermore, he neglected to mention a federation of patriotic and historical groups known as the United Canadian Association (est. 1872) that was a direct precursor of the Pioneer Association of Ontario. This chapter seeks to re-examine the roots of the Ontario Historical Society by interpreting the documents that Talman transcribed and by introducing information that he apparently

overlooked.

I

A provincial historical association appeared in 1861 as a result of a new found interest in the past that emerged at the mid-nineteenth century. The death of the few remaining first generation Upper Canadians -- the last link with the Loyalist and Simcoe era -- contributed to the development of a retrospective cast of mind. Feelings of nostalgia and a didactic urge to perpetuate conservative principles were aroused, particularly among the descendants of the loyalists.<sup>2</sup> A body of literature appeared at this time in praise of the founders of British Canada such as William Kirby's long poem The U.E.: A Tale of Upper Canada (published in 1859 though completed in 1846), dedicated to the preservation of the loyalist philosophy for the inspiration and guidance of future generations. Kirby believed that loyalty stemmed "from a particular social order and the agrarian way of life and that allegiance to an hierarchical order, the Church of England and the British form of government, [were] communicable . . . ."<sup>3</sup> It was also at the mid-century that Egerton Ryerson, whose loyalist father had died in 1854, determined to write a history of the loyalist contribution to the development of Canada designed "to vindicate their character as a body, to exhibit their principles and patriotism."<sup>4</sup>

There was likely a correlation between the growing interest in past men and events in Canada West and the remarkable social and economic progress that occurred in the 'forties and 'fifties. In a recent study, Professor J.M.S. Careless examined the sweeping social changes that occurred in Canada during these years, changes of such significance that "by the late fifties the Central Canada of today may be said to have been moulded in its basic outlines."<sup>5</sup> Canada West had undergone a transformation during the period of the union of the Canadas from a colonial backwater to a bustling community with a distinct regional character of its own, and with a confidence in its capacity to direct and exploit westward expansion across the northern half of the continent.

In a political sense there had been remarkable institutional growth. Responsible cabinet government, dual French and English party mechanisms, effective administrative departments, revitalized municipal governments, all these appeared during the union period. Sweeping economic changes occurred as Canada lost the advantages of the imperial preferential trade system and readjusted to new continental relationships. And in the 'fifties, as Careless puts it, "the coming of the railways, of developing capitalism and business power, of urban and industrial advances ..." worked to knit the previously "disjointed settlements" into "a coherent, relatively mature regional society."<sup>6</sup> By the end of the

decade no significant area of south-western Ontario remained unsettled with the exception of the Bruce Peninsula. It was perhaps to be expected, therefore, that second and third generation Upper Canadians like Kirby and Ryerson, conscious as they were of the magnitude of their community's achievements over a short period of seventy years, would gratify their urge to honour the men and events responsible for them.

The integration of the settled areas of Canada West and the rapid urbanization of the province at the mid-nineteenth century created some of the conditions that made feasible the establishment of a provincial historical society in 1861. It was now within the bounds of reason to consider forming organizations of a provincial scope since the transportation revolution had shortened distances and made it possible for individuals living in various areas of the province to meet on a regular basis. Rapid urban growth also helped to create a cultural climate conducive to the formation of learned societies. Since the 1830s, libraries, Mechanics' Institutes,<sup>7</sup> and associations for the development of literary, scientific and historical pursuits<sup>8</sup> such as Toronto's Canadian Institute (1849), or the Hamilton Association (1857) had been organized in the cities, towns and villages of the province to satisfy the needs of the urban dweller. These institutions seem to have provided the first media for historical research and discussion. The Mechanics'

Institutes, for example, imported from the United Kingdom in the 1820s, had as their goal, "the improvement of the mind and the diffusion of knowledge; by means ... of a library containing ... Philosophical, Historical, Biographical and Mechanical Works ..., by lectures on any useful and important branch of knowledge, and ... by the discussion of questions in relation to appropriate subjects...."<sup>9</sup>

As Canada West matured there also emerged a greater regional awareness, a greater "sense of being a distinct community, differing in interests, outlooks, and needs from its Lower Canadian partner,"<sup>10</sup> that manifested itself in the hardening sectional division within the political arena. A provincial patriotism and rudimentary thoughts of nationality appear to have been expressions of this sectional awareness. Patriotism, unlike nationalism, according to one student of the subject, is a universal phenomenon, the ingredients of which are roughly the same everywhere -- an emotional attachment to the land on which one lives, distinctive attitudes towards people in one's midst, and a reverence for one's own culture or way of life.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, patriotism invariably involves some reference to the past, and it is likely that the interest suddenly shown in the history of the province during the 1850s was in part a function of British Canadian patriotism as well as a product of the simple nostalgia and the conservatism of loyalist descendants and elderly pioneers. For example, a great

deal of patriotic enthusiasm lay behind the rebuilding of the Brock monument (completed in 1856) and the concomitant desire to erect memorials of identical granite at all the battlefields of 1812-14.<sup>12</sup>

At least one social scientist has said "... patriotism probably promotes nationalism: he who loves his land dearly seeks ways to preserve and perhaps also to expand his culture and power."<sup>13</sup> Schemes of a British American federation and northwest expansion were aired during the 'fifties as ways to preserve and expand the institutions and power of Canada West. The Globe proclaimed that "we have a national character to win," and exclaimed "Oh for a Canadian nationality which would ameliorate the unmitigated personal selfishness which pervades the land."<sup>14</sup> At this time, certainly, only a few farsighted politicians, journalists, and businessmen seriously envisioned a new nationality based on a federation of all the British North American colonies, or a nation of transcontinental proportions.<sup>15</sup> Any sense of national feeling in English Canada, moreover, was "confused ... with a sense of a wider British nationality embracing the whole empire."<sup>16</sup>

Yet a concern for the trappings of nationalism and a need for national sentiments had emerged in some quarters. In 1860, for instance, a group of native-born Canadians met in Toronto's St. Lawrence Hall and adopted the maple leaf as the emblem most representative of their national dis-

tinctiveness to be worn as a badge during the forthcoming visit of the Prince of Wales to the city.<sup>17</sup> Most of the people identified at the meeting were descendants of loyalists, bound together by ancestor worship and the consciousness of a shared history. They included, among others, William Henry Boulton, a past mayor of Toronto (1846-1849) and member of the Legislative Assembly (1844-1853), Richard L. Denison, an officer in the Queen's Light Dragoons, George T. Denison II, commandant of the 5th and 10th military districts, Saltern Givins, a Presbyterian minister, James Richardson, a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada, Egerton Ryerson, superintendent of education, and Emanuel Playter and M.R. Vankoughnet, both members of prominent loyalist families.

On that occasion in 1860, they talked at length of their ancestors and dwelt on the need for a "sentiment of nationality" that "would have the tendency to blend the whole population of Canada in one deep, universal feeling of devotion to the best interests of their common country."<sup>18</sup> Objections were raised against the debilitating effect that the British patriotic societies of St. Andrew, St. George, and St. Patrick were allegedly having upon the growth of national feeling. Many speakers favoured the organization of a Canadian association to nurture a national sentiment largely by reference to the community's own loyalist history.<sup>19</sup> It is possible that thoughts of a future nation-

ality similar to those expressed at this meeting, and the need conceived for a society to foster patriotism by the use of history, were important factors in the decision of the gentlemen on the platform that evening to organize or to join the first provincial historical society in 1861 and the York Pioneers' Society in 1869.

The organizer of the first provincial historical association was Jedediah Frendergast Merritt of St. Catharines, then an official collector of documents for the library of the Legislative Assembly. William Hamilton Merritt, Jedediah's father, the politician and businessman best known as the promoter of the Welland Canal, and George Coventry, a Cobourg journalist and also a collector of documents for the library of the Legislative Assembly, assisted Jedediah in organizing the historical association. For some dozen years before the latter's appearance the Merritts had shown an interest in things historical. For example, they had promoted the rebuilding of the Brock monument and erection of memorials on the battlefields of the War of 1812.<sup>20</sup> By the late 'fifties, Jedediah was promoting a scheme for the collection and publication of a documentary history of Canada which he described as a "History of the Rise and Progress of Canada since it came into the possession of the British by the Capture of Quebec by [General] Wolfe."<sup>21</sup>

With the aid of his father's political influence, Jedediah was hired in 1859 by the Legislative Library

Committee of the Province of Canada to collect documents on which to base the history. <sup>22</sup> The chain of events leading to his appointment was described in Jedediah's biography of his father, and is well worth citing here. It is evident that part of Jedediah's inspiration for the documentary history and the idea of an historical association to assist in the collection of the documents came from the example set by the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec. "During the administration of Lord Dalhousie in 1824," Merritt wrote,

a society called the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec was founded and received the patronage of succeeding Governors. From the period of the Union, it became the applicant and receiver of annual grants of money from the Legislature, for the purpose of collecting manuscripts and other documents appertaining to Canadian History. As this society was distant from Upper Canada, and appeared to identify itself with French Canadian History, the author, in 1858, whilst the Parliament was in Toronto, succeeded, through the influence of [W.H. Merritt], in getting copies of historical data (before not allowed) out of the Crown Lands' Office, and the Registrar General's Department and others, regarding the early settlers and their proceedings. In consequence of this, in the same year a grant of money was left with Mr. [Egerton] Ryerson through which a valuable collection of historical works on Canadian History were purchased for the Normal School.

During the session of the next Parliament, which was held at Quebec, the author circulated a petition praying that the House ask that more attention be paid to Upper Canadian history. This petition was presented by Mr. [W.H.] Merritt, and, with his usual energy, succeeded in getting a majority of English speaking members on the Library Committee, which heretofore had been exclusively French. This unexpected success led to the author being appointed to look after Upper Canadian documentary history in England and elsewhere ....

Jedediah Merritt also knew of the valuable collection

and publication policies of the historical associations that flourished along the eastern seaboard of the United States. In fact, he had firsthand knowledge of their work after his visits to the historical societies in Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, New York, and Massachusetts in preparation for his trip to England to collect documents for the Legislative Library.<sup>24</sup> Although he left little record of his indebtedness to their activities, there is good reason to believe that Merritt had the example of these American associations in mind when he called the first meeting of the Historical Society of Upper Canada in November 1861.

The Merritts' motivation for collecting documents and preparing a history of Upper Canada was complex. They realized that "the sources of information for a history [were] every day diminishing" because of the death of the pioneers and their immediate descendants and because of "the destruction of papers and documents relating to those early days."<sup>25</sup> These erstwhile historians of loyalist descent also subscribed to the philosophy that certain principles and traditions in the past should be recorded and perpetuated for the sake of future generations. "Nothing improves or enlarges our mental powers," the prospectus for the historical society declared, "so much as the study of history. Without this hand-maid to the mind, man would grope his way through this life divested of that mine of intelligence that history furnishes."<sup>26</sup>

It is also evident that a streak of family egotism,

a desire to perpetuate and glorify the family name, lurked behind the Merritts' interest in history. George Coventry unwittingly noted on one occasion that "Mr. Merritt's family name, being among the early settlers, he was anxious that Upper Canada should pursue the same course [as the Quebec and American historical societies] that posterity might know the energies pursued by them [in particular the Merritts!] to establish an Independent Country and provide a good home as it has done to thousands of families now scattered throughout every portion of this Province."<sup>27</sup>

In any case, on November 14, 1861, the organizational meeting of the Historical Society of Upper Canada was held in Egerton Ryerson's office in Toronto's Normal School Building. Evidently the circulars calling for the meeting had been widely distributed since individuals attended from Cobourg, St. Catharines, and Toronto. These included Jedediah and William H. Merritt of St. Catharines, George Coventry of Cobourg, and William Canniff, a professor of surgery at Victoria College in Cobourg. Toronto was represented by Egerton Ryerson, J. George Hodgins, the deputy superintendent of education, Thomas Hodgins, a barrister, Alfio de Grassi, a railway agent and inspector, and Sheriff W.B. Jarvis of the Home District.<sup>28</sup> All these individuals claimed pioneer status, either as native Canadians or long-term residents of the province. Jarvis, Ryerson, Canniff, and the Merritts boasted of loyalist descent. It is very likely that ances-

tor worship was a factor in the motivation of all of them.

There was considerable diversity in their social and economic backgrounds. William Hamilton Merritt, the entrepreneur, had links with the old Compact Tory elite that had dominated the government of Upper Canada before the Rebellion. Ryerson and J. George Hodgins belonged to the upper echelons of the emergent civil service and the educational establishment. Most of the others were members of the professions or were businessmen.<sup>29</sup> In addition to these individuals, the prospectus listed other subscribers to the society, most of whom belonged to the old Compact group or the social and political elite of Canada West.<sup>30</sup> These included such well-known figures as William Boulton, the past mayor of Toronto (1846-1849), the Reverend John Strachan, the first Anglican Bishop of Toronto (1839-1867), George Boulton of Cobourg, a Legislative Councillor since 1847, Sir Allan MacNab of Hamilton, a past Prime Minister of the Province (1854-1856) and then a Legislative Councillor, and Sidney Smith of Peterborough, the Postmaster-General (1858-1862). That such eminent names were listed suggests that Merritt might have been following the example of American historical associations most of which restricted their membership to men of considerable social or scholastic attainment. Regrettably for the Historical Society of Upper Canada, the eminent individuals listed in the prospectus were only honorary members who did little for the society apart from permitting their names to

be used to attract additional members.

Those in attendance at the November 14 meeting declared their intention of placing the membership of the society "upon as wide a basis as possible, and of securing at least the patronage if not the co-operation, of the judges and other learned and influential members of the community."<sup>31</sup> The term "as wide a basis as possible," was probably not intended to encompass the working classes of the cities and towns, but referred to the growing middle class in the urban centres of Canada West: businessmen and merchants, civil servants, judges, and professional groups. Apart from a few affluent farmers, most rural dwellers in this unmechanized age would have had neither the time nor the money to travel to historical society meetings in Toronto. In any case, the many agricultural societies seemed to provide a sufficiently varied programme to exhaust the farmers' interests and energies.

On several occasions the organizers of the Historical Society of Upper Canada made it clear that the association had no political intentions. According to the prospectus, "the object of the Society now in contemplation is to have nothing to do with party politics."<sup>32</sup> At the organizational meeting the association's scope was limited to "the collection of documents and of facts calculated to throw light on the history of Canada." The society's obligations did not include pronouncing any opinion upon the documentary material;

"its duty would be accomplished when [the documents] had been placed within the reach of those who may aspire to be the historians of Canada."<sup>33</sup>

The statements declaring that the historical society had no political aims and no business interpreting the documents seem to indicate that old political enmities were being sublimated. The efforts to dissociate the historical society from political matters likely stemmed from the extraordinarily bitter and factional strife that was then plaguing the near deadlocked provincial legislature. Potentially, the diverse political and religious affiliations of the members were explosive enough to cripple the society should any one of them decide to discuss burning political issues in historical terms. After all, the membership embraced the names of Strachan and Ryerson, individuals who had for years waged war in the political arena over a number of religious and educational questions. Furthermore, while the old Tory guard appeared to be well represented in the organization, there were also men of Reform persuasion such as the lawyer Thomas Hodgins who later sat in the provincial legislature as a Liberal for West Elgin between 1871 and 1879. It takes little imagination to envision the discord that could have erupted had Hodgins and the old Tories attempted to debate the history of past or current political events.

Although several of the delegates at the preliminary meeting wanted to constitute the historical society formally

that evening, it was resolved to defer this action until a committee had drawn up a constitution and solicited the cooperation of influential people. This decision proved to be an unwise one. The committee never reconvened. Ryerson, the chairman, made no effort to discharge his responsibilities by either calling a meeting or fostering an interest in the society. Attempts were made by George Coventry to prod Ryerson and Hodgins into action, but to no avail. Annoyed by the inactivity in Toronto, he reported his lack of success to the senior Merritt.

I went to Toronto [to] see what could be done relative to the Historical Society but find there is no possibility of organizing it in Toronto. Doctor Ryerson to whom it was left as head of the Committee has never called a Meeting. I have also written to him and Mr. Hodgins from neither of whom have I ever received an Answer nor to any other Communic'ns made to them which is a **very** loose way of doing business today .... When I have the pleasure of seeing you I will bring the Minutes of the first Meeting and we will carry it out at St. Catharines, where I told Jedediah at first it ought to have been established.

34

It is regrettable that Ryerson did not fulfil his commitments to the fledgling historical society, for he appeared to have the financial, political and educational resources at his command to ensure the success of the organization. At the first meeting he had raised hopes by suggesting "that a portion of the funds at his disposal might legally be appropriated to carry out some of the objects of the Society."<sup>35</sup> Had Ryerson decided to help finance the society

and to link it with the education department, there is reason to believe that its fate would have been a happier one. It is surprising that Ryerson failed to keep in touch with Merritt and Coventry on the matter since he had just publicly announced his intention of collecting all the relevant documents for a two volume history of the loyalists and a multi-volume history of Canada.<sup>36</sup> Upon receiving notice of Ryerson's plans, Jedediah Merritt had instructed Coventry to consult with Ryerson with a view to co-ordinating their work.<sup>37</sup> Whether Ryerson was simply too busy as superintendent of education to communicate with Coventry and to promote the historical society; whether he reneged on his promises to support the society because he sensed unwanted competition to his own publication schemes; or whether some modus vivendi could not be arranged between Ryerson, Coventry and Merritt with respect to the use of the documents and the preparation of the projected history of settlement, no one it seems will ever know. Neither C.S. Sissons' biography of Ryerson nor Ryerson's The Story of My Life, edited by J.G. Hodgins in 1883,<sup>38</sup> provide a clue to Ryerson's behaviour.

After the failure to establish the Historical Society of Upper Canada in Toronto, a second organizational meeting was held in St. Catharines on February 15, 1862. A quarterly meeting schedule was agreed upon and an annual fee of one dollar was levied. According to the rules and regulations laid down, each member was obliged as best he could "to

obtain information; and forward to the Secretary any documents relative to the early settlement of Upper Canada." <sup>39</sup>

For the first year, at least, all documents were to be confined to Upper Canada and its resources, "whether historical, civil, literary, or any branches of Natural History," the aim being to build "a vast depository of local and useful records, that at some future period will be of service to the historian, philosopher, and naturalist." John Clark of Port Dalhousie, a Lieutenant-Colonel in the Lincoln militia who had served in the War of 1812, and who had subsequently represented Lincoln County in the Legislative Assembly, was elected president. William Hamilton Merritt became vice-president and George Coventry, the secretary.

A list of honorary members in the circular describing the meeting indicates that reliance was again placed on the drawing power of the social and political elite. The list included the names of Chief Justice Sir John Beverley Robinson, Sheriff William B. Jarvis, Henry Ruttan of Cobourg, a past speaker of the Legislative Assembly and sheriff of the Newcastle District (1827-1857), the Reverend John Strachan, Thomas C. Keefer, the well-known civil engineer, and George S. Boulton of Cobourg, a member of the Legislative Council (1847-1867). Over the next few months, Jedediah Merritt and George Coventry tried but without success to enlist the support of politicians, lawyers, judges, <sup>40</sup>clergymen, businessmen, and members of the professions.

They failed probably because they offered would-be members very little in return for their joining the society. Apparently it failed to occur to Merritt that few people would wish to travel to St. Catharines every month for an historical meeting, or to collect documents for the society without getting something in return. The society's prospectus gave no promises of historical excursions or periodical publications for the benefit of its members.

Whatever provincial pretensions the society initially exhibited quickly evaporated. By September 1863, the organization had become a purely local group centred in and around the town of St. Catharines. Called the Historical Society of Canada West,<sup>41</sup> it was supposed to meet every month in the local Mechanics' Institute. Before long even the society's interest in purely local Upper Canadian history seemed to wane as members instead prepared lectures on such exotic topics as "Dialogues of Shakespeare" and the "History of Florence."<sup>42</sup>

Activity on such a local scale was not to Jedediah Merritt's liking; consequently, he made several attempts during the 1860s to raise his small St. Catharines group to provincial status. By 1864, for example, Merritt had grandiloquently renamed his local organization the Historical Society of British North America<sup>43</sup> and had succeeded in adding the names of a few individuals outside the St. Catharines area to the society's roster. For instance, James

H. Ingersoll, the registrar of Oxford County (1834-1886), and Hoppner Meyer, a painter and engraver in Toronto, were included in the 1864 membership roll. By 1870, Chief G.H.M. Johnson of the Tuscaroras, Six Nations Reserve, and William Kirby, the past editor of the Niagara Mail, and later a collector of customs (1871-1895), had become members.

In 1869 Merritt attempted to break out of the confines of the Niagara Peninsula. The following announcement in the London Free Press of September 23, 1869 indicates that he had considered moving the historical society to a larger urban centre -- either London or Toronto -- as a step toward expanding its scope:

#### HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A meeting of the Canada Historical Society is announced for half past four this afternoon. This society was established in 1861, for the purpose of collecting important documents of historical interest .... Its headquarters have been at St. Catharines but it is now thought well to remove it to some more populous place. London has been suggested and the object of the meeting will be to decide upon bringing it here or transferring it to Toronto. There are a considerable number of people amongst us who would take a deep interest in the society, and by attending the meeting they may be able to secure the advantage of having the headquarters of so useful a society in our midst ....

44

The following day the press failed to mention the meeting. Presumably little interest was stirred up in London because Merritt's society remained in St. Catharines until it disappeared from the scene in the 1880s. It is uncertain whether or not he subsequently made an attempt to transfer

his "provincial" historical organization to Toronto; but, the formation of the York Pioneers' Society in that city in April 1869 probably acted as a deterrent. His apparent failure to consider the nearby "Ambitious City" of Hamilton as a suitable headquarters for a provincial historical association is mystifying. With the advent of the railway era and the establishment of the Great Western shops and related industries in Hamilton, the city had grown remarkably in the 'fifties and 'sixties, and in 1869 was a substantially larger urban centre than London.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, the intellectual climate of the city was sufficiently advanced to provide ample opportunity for the founders of historical groups. Organizations like the Mechanics' Institute and the Hamilton Association incorporated in 1857 to promote the "cultivation of Science, Art and Literature, the formation of a Museum, Library and Art Gallery, and the Illustration of the Physical Characteristics, Natural History and Antiquities of the Country"<sup>46</sup> indicated that an initial interest in things historical awaited further development. It is just possible, of course, that Merritt did consider Hamilton as a site for the historical society, but rejected it because the city seemed to have sufficient literary and artistic institutions to satisfy its cultural needs.

In any event, despite repeated efforts, Jedediah Merritt failed both to create a viable provincial historical association and to publish the documentary history that had

inspired him in the first place. The reasons for his lack of success are not difficult to surmise. The historical society offered no tangible inducements for people to join, and yet saddled members with the obligation of collecting documents and reminiscences. Had there been a periodical publication to make membership more appealing, or had the annual meetings been held in various centres across the province, more people might have been induced to join outside the Niagara Peninsula. The lack of proper financing and government support also contributed to Merritt's unhappy experiences. After 1863 even the facade of government subsidization ended when an economy-minded government in the midst of a depression terminated Merritt and Coventry's appointments as collectors of historical documents for the legislative library.

The efforts to establish an effective provincial historical association were not, however, entirely unproductive. Merritt and Coventry seem to have been assisted in their work as official collectors of historical records by the early activities of the St. Catharines' society. A circular put out by the latter in 1863 claimed that "a considerable amount of useful matter has already been collected. They embrace documents and published works of an old date ...; also, several very complete biographical sketches of some of the best-known of our first settlers."<sup>47</sup> William Canniff also acknowledged that "a good deal of

local work was accomplished." <sup>48</sup> The Historical Society of Upper Canada was also indirectly responsible for Canniff's The Settlement of Upper Canada (1869), since the volume grew out of the research Canniff had undertaken at the society's request for an address on the history of settle-  
<sup>49</sup>ment along the Bay of Quinte. Finally, the concept of a provincial historical society was firmly planted in the minds of a few local historians like Canniff who remained keenly aware of the need for an agency to develop the study of provincial history and to nurture patriotic sentiments.

## II

It was shortly after Confederation and the formation of the Province of Ontario that the next attempt was made to create a provincial historical association. On June 4, 1872, delegates from local historical, patriotic, and pioneer societies in Chatham, Grimsby, St. Catharines, Niagara, Hamilton, Toronto, Collingwood, and Belleville gathered in an ante-room of Toronto's St. Lawrence Hall to discuss the prospect of "amalgamating the different Canadian Societies of the Province, ... and arranging for a day on which the societies should meet to enjoy an excursion." <sup>50</sup> At this meeting the following constitution was drafted, creating the United  
<sup>51</sup>Canadian Association:

CONSTITUTION  
OF THE  
UNITED CANADIAN ASSOCIATION

1st. That the various Canadian Societies form a central organization: to endeavour to give uniformity to the efforts of each, in encouraging Canadian interests, and that the central body be called the "United Canadian Association."

2nd. That the objects of the Association shall be to gather and diffuse a knowledge of Canadian History; to encourage a Canadian National sentiment; a pride in our country, confidence in its future, its power and resources.

3rd. That the meeting of said Association shall be held, when convenient, once in the year; and when otherwise, the Secretary shall by circular notify the delegates or members of the committee.

5th. That the Societies at present forming the said Association be the following, viz.:

The Loyal Canadian Society of Grimsby; the St. Catharines Historical Society; the Chatham Canadian Society; the York Pioneers; the Native Canadian Society of Belleville; the Loyal Canadian Society of Niagara, No. 1; the Canadian Society of Hamilton; the Collingwood Pioneers.

6th. That on any emergency the President or any three of the Presidents of branch Societies, shall have power to call a special meeting to transact such business only as it may be especially called to consider.

7th. That each local Association may, without prejudice, retain its original designation, and transact affairs, affiliating or withdrawing its connection from the Central Society at pleasure, with the restriction that such funds as it may have contributed to and for the general use, or such collections as it may have deposited in the Museum, Institute, or by whatever name the Depository may be called or designated, shall not be withdrawn; but remain in possession of, and for the use of the "United Canadian Association."

F.T. KERBY,  
Chairman

ALEX HAMILTON  
Secretary

Passed and approved,  
Toronto, June 4th, 1872.

The principal framers of this constitution were T.C. Mewburn and S.S. Welles of the Loyal Canadian Society of Grimsby; W.J. Simcoe Kerr, Chief of the Six Nation Indians; T.I. Harvey and F.T. Kerby of the Loyal Canadian Society of Niagara; A.T. Freed and W. McMahon of the Canadian Society of Hamilton; William Canniff of the Native Canadian Society of Belleville; the Reverend Henry Scadding, Alexander Hamilton, W.B. Phipps, W.H. Doel, and George T. Denison II and III of the York Pioneers' Association of Toronto.<sup>52</sup>

Unlike the membership of the Historical Society of Upper Canada, that of the United Canadian Association lacked a large contingent of Compact Tories, though they were represented in spirit by men of similar political and social philosophies -- the Denisons, Scaddings, and Canniffs. Now middle-class professional people, businessmen, clergymen, and civil servants predominated, a reflection perhaps of fundamental changes in society during the interval. F.T. Kerby and A.T. Freed were journalists, the former the publisher of the Niagara News, the latter the assistant editor of the Hamilton Spectator. W.H. Doel was a druggist; Alexander Hamilton, a looking glass manufacturer, carver and gilder; George T. Denison Jr., a lawyer; William Canniff, a professor of surgery; and Henry Scadding, the rector of Holy Trinity Church in Toronto.

The local groups to which these men belonged, though different in name, were of the same species, and a brief

analysis of the objectives, activities, and membership of a few of them provides valuable insights into the nature of the provincial association. Two of these local organizations, the Loyal Canadian Society of Grimsby and the York Pioneers, seem typical. The former was established in 1847 at Beamsville by "early pioneers and their descendants" for many of the same reasons that Jedediah Merritt and others founded the first provincial historical society -- nostalgia, patriotism, and a didactic urge to perpetuate tradition.

Other functions of the Loyal Canadian Society of Grimsby were to maintain friendships and social ties between local pioneers and their descendants, and to undertake benevolent work for distressed members.<sup>53</sup> Most of these aims were reflected in the preamble to the society's constitution:

The history of our country, during the short period of its Settlement, is so filled with events calculated to cement the tie of friendship for the early pioneers and their descendants, that it is deemed wise to form a Society to keep in perpetuation these associations that were nearest and dearest to the hearts of our forefathers and are still reverently cherished by us, as well as to instil into the minds of our children the same patriotic principles that guided them in their eventful career; and also to rivet the connection of all more closely if possible, in that bond of union which has so happily existed among Canadians, from the remotest period down to the present auspicious time.

54

Over three decades later, a member of this group outlined his conception of the association's purposes: "The present society was organized for the purpose of meeting together annually, collecting all the historical events of Canada and

to cultivate a national sentiment. It is partly sentimental,<sup>55</sup> partly historical, and partly national."

The York Pioneers' Association, established in 1869, had similar aims, although it publicized its historical objective above all else. For example, the society entitled its constitution and bylaws the "York Pioneers' Association For the Conservation of Early Canadian History."<sup>56</sup> The constitution stated that the organization was

... formed for the purpose of more intimately uniting in friendly relations those who are natives of, or who emigrated to, the original County of York, in the former Province of Upper Canada, or to this city previous to its incorporation, March 6th, 1834, and change of name from York to Toronto, and their descendants on attaining the age of forty years; and for preserving and perpetuating by re-publication and otherwise such historical recollections and incidents, documents and pictorial illustrations relating to the early settlement of this country and city as aforesaid, as are worthy of being rescued from oblivion; and by the contribution of communications on these and kindred subjects to be read at the meetings of the Society ....

57

Regrettably, the York Pioneers failed to live up to many of these promises. The society, for example, did not collect or publish so much as one volume of documents or reminiscences, and a trifling number of the papers read at meetings were published or preserved. The members seem to have been much more interested in the social schedule of monthly meetings and the grand annual banquet.<sup>58</sup> No doubt many of the individuals who joined the United Canadian Association had the same social priorities.

It is interesting to note that the three people regarded as the founders of the York Pioneers -- Richard Oates, Alexander Hamilton, and W.B. Phipps -- were also instrumental in the formation of the United Canadian Association. Whether they were the originators of the idea of the federation of societies is not known; but they and other York Pioneers were certainly at the centre of activity in the new provincial organization. W.B. Phipps was at the founding meeting of the UCA along with Alexander Hamilton who was elected secretary of the gathering. Richard L. Denison, the first president of the York Pioneers, became the first president of the United Canadian Association.<sup>59</sup> By 1876, Richard Oates, a successful Toronto millstone manufacturer, had assumed the UCA presidency.<sup>60</sup>

Factors such as ancestor worship and the prospect of social intercourse evidently moved individuals to join the local historical and pioneer groups, and later the United Canadian Association. But these same people were also inspired to study history for nationalistic reasons. This appears to have been the chief concern of those who drafted the constitution of the United Canadian Association. The stated objectives of the association were: "to gather and diffuse knowledge of Canadian History; to encourage a Canadian National sentiment; a pride in our country, confidence in its future, its powers and resources." The framers of this statement presupposed that the citizens of

the new Dominion lacked national sentiment, pride and confidence, and they hoped to rectify that situation. Such views were natural enough considering how Confederation was achieved. It was not a response to a popular national idealism; it was, instead, the creature of a few practical politicians and governments striving to solve regional problems and to reconcile regional antagonism.

All the same, Confederation had engendered great expectations among the membership of the United Canadian Association. The following statement by William Canniff is suggestive of the high hopes entertained by this group of Ontarians:

I do believe that Canada will yet be not only the great nation of America but of the world. I often look forward to the time when Canada shall extend from ocean to ocean -- when the individual British Provinces shall be consolidated into a grand whole -- when a line of railway shall reach from the Atlantic to the Pacific Coast and when all along its many miles of length will be flourishing towns and cities -- when peaceful fields will have taken the place of the wild forest -- when a happy, free and Christian people shall inhabit the broad land .... When the tide of trade will ebb and flow through our land, when British India will empty her rich treasures into our lap and when China and Japan made free by the reception of Christianity shall seek trade with us upon our Pacific Coast. And when all nations shall look unto them as a light set upon a hill; from which will beam the pure light of truth ....

61

Henry Scadding was another UCA member who wrote of a developing "Cis-Laurentian" people in British North America: "We, like our forefathers, are becoming every year set as a city

on a hill, conspicuous in spite of ourselves; and our example<sup>62</sup> may be productive in the future of unexpected consequences."

That both Canniff and Scadding made reference to a Canadian mission in terms reminiscent of John Winthrop's Puritan mission is remarkable. Interestingly enough, thoughts of north-western expansion on an imperial scale, and of a Canadian nation as the linchpin of a constellation of nations within the Empire, were shared and echoed by other groups in Canada West in the late 'fifties and 'sixties. Indeed, visions of a northwest destiny caught the popular imagination at this

<sup>63</sup> time. "The desires of Upper Canadian farmers for new frontiers of settlement," writes J.M.S. Careless, and "the ambitions of the rising Toronto metropolis for a new western empire, combined in a vigorous campaign to acquire the North-<sup>64</sup>west for Canada." Anticipating this development, the North West Navigation and Transportation Company opened regular steamship communications in 1858 between Collingwood and Fort William. The directors, men such as Allan Macdonall, W.F. Howland, Sir Allan MacNab and John McMurrich, projected a future empire of trade and settlement in terms that ri-<sup>65</sup>valed the effusions of Canniff and Scadding.

Although the achievement of Confederation buoyed the national hopes of the members of the United Canadian Association, they were certainly not free of apprehension and doubt when they came to speculate about the future of the new Dominion. They were well aware that Canadians in 1872 had many troubles to contend with. The great north-

west had to be tamed and settled. The established provinces were divided by regional, racial, and cultural differences. The republic to the south was a constant threat to the Dominion's integrity, a situation made all the more serious by Britain's seeming disregard for colonial interests in the negotiations leading to the Treaty of Washington, and by her decision to withdraw the imperial legions from the northern half of the continent. For good reason, then, hope and fear were opposite sides of the same coin. Latent apprehension, as well as visionary anticipations, explain the United Canadian Association's attempt in 1872 to create national sentiment, pride, and confidence. Realistic Canadians knew that "nations do not spring Minerva-like into existence,"<sup>66</sup> that nationalism and a sense of identity had to be consciously and carefully cultivated among the citizenry if the experiment of Confederation were to succeed. All this was implicit in the constitution of the United Canadian Association. The basic underlying premise of the document was that an awareness of a shared past would provide the desired bond of unity among Canadians.

Since the United Canadian Association published no reports or pamphlets, there are few definite statements on the ideological position of its members. Fortunately, two of the association's founders, William Canniff and George T. Denison III, were spokesmen for another nationalistic group -- the Canada Firsters. Canniff and Denison clarified their reasons

*Canniff as  
Canada 1st*

for fostering nationalism in their capacity as members of that movement.<sup>67</sup> The United Canadian Association and the Canada First Movement actually had much in common. Both were the products of the same climate of opinion in which the anticipation of an exciting national destiny combined with the uncertainties and apprehensions of the immediate post-Confederation period. Again, both groups believed that history was the most effective of all instruments for instilling a sense of national unity, because "the consciousness of a common past would provide a bond of union."<sup>68</sup>

William Canniff, author of the now classic The Settlement of Upper Canada, and a loyalist by descent, was born in 1830 near Hastings, Upper Canada. After taking his medical degree from New York University and serving in the Crimean War, he eventually assumed a post at Victoria College as a professor of surgery and began a long career in the service of Canadian medicine. After moving to Toronto in the mid-'sixties, Canniff helped found the Canadian Medical Association, served as its first Ontario secretary, and eventually became its national president. Like other English-Canadians during the Confederation era, Canniff became enthusiastic about creating a nation of trans-continental proportions. He joined the Canada First group in 1870 and eventually became president of the North-West Emigration Aid Society, a body organized by the Canada Firsters to promote the settlement of the Canadian prairies.<sup>69</sup>

Canniff

In the mid-'sixties Canniff first recorded his thoughts as to why nationalism was so essential to Canadians.<sup>70</sup> His philosophy of history understandably included a cyclical concept of national life, moving from infancy through adolescence to maturity and "inevitable decline." During infancy and adolescence the most "assiduous guardianship" was required to ensure that "right principles" were implanted and nurtured, and noxious doctrines expunged from the collective mind. For him, Canada was just passing through its period of adolescence when the national mind was "still pliable and capable of being moulded into almost any form." In his opinion, a happy future for the new nation depended upon the immediate cultivation of certain thoughts and principles to prevent Canada from emulating the "spoiled child" example set by the American republic.

Canniff

Canniff elucidated several of the "right principles" that he believed should constitute the basis of national consciousness. Foremost in his thought was the value of the British connection through which "the life-blood has flowed into the Province." Just as significant were traditions from the "pages of Canadian history" which gave "character and stability to our Northern Nation." As a result of the "honest," "industrious" and "enterprising" efforts of past generations, Canada stood before the world, "a nation grand, firm, deep-rooted, and free -- free to all men -- to the black as well as the white man." Hers was a history of loyal Britons who had refused to live "under an alien flag"; a history not

of "bloody revolution" but of "gradual and healthful changes"; a history not of "filabusterism" or "land pirates fighting under the mottoe [sic] of 'Manifest Destiny'," but of "internal improvements, and of healthy advancement." In short, Canniff's message was that if Canadians were made aware of, and then remained true to, these past values and traditions, their British-Canadian future would be a happy one.

In the mid-'seventies, Canniff once again spoke out in support of nationalism in a pamphlet entitled Canadian Nationality: Its Growth and Development, a statement that smacked of Canada First ideology.<sup>71</sup> The hindrances to the growth and development of the new nation, and a Canadian national sentiment were commented upon at length. Parochialism constituted a major obstacle. "Each [province] wanted to be head nurse," wrote Canniff. "The result has been unfortunate for the child."<sup>72</sup> He expressed anger at the effects of the British national societies of St. George, St. Patrick, and St. Andrew. These groups had originally been the preserve of British immigrants but they had later admitted native-born descendants of immigrants into their ranks. "The result of this is that, in a great measure, the population of Canada is composed of foreign nationalities ...."<sup>73</sup> Canniff acknowledged the immigrants' right to cherish the memory of their homelands, but vehemently denounced their practice of bringing to the new country as the national societies appeared to have done, "the prejudices and the dis-

likes -- the clannishness and the feuds" which existed in their old homes. "Is it not a curse to any country to have its people split into factions -- divided into numerous <sup>74</sup>isms?"

What was his solution? "The barriers erected by sectionalism, prejudice, and bigotry not native to Canadian soil," he wrote, could only be "dissolved by a noble patriotism, so as to create a homogeneous whole." This process would include the blending of the French element with the Anglo-Saxon. "They are French so long as we have English, Irish and Scotch in our country; but if the English, Irish and Scotch would become Canadians, so would the French." The hope for common national feeling and the growth of the Dominion were two aspects of the same thing. "They grow together; one is dependent on the other."<sup>75</sup> It was for such reasons, then, that Canniff supported both the Canada First movement and the United Canadian Association. In each instance his motives were frankly nationalistic.

It is probable that the members of the United Canadian Association were inspired by similar thoughts and motives. According to Canniff, the local societies that made up the UCA had been created in part "to counteract the un-<sup>76</sup>toward influences of other national societies upon the young men." That Canniff vilified these "other national societies" for encouraging a purely British patriotism deserves comment. Actually the differences between the societies of St. Andrew, St. George, and St. Patrick and the Ontario historical groups

were often ones more of degree than kind. Both groups, for example, tried to fulfil the needs of individuals who were imbued with feelings of nostalgia and ancestor worship, who desired to perpetuate tradition, and who had a historical sense that required fulfilment, while a few of the historical and pioneer societies like the Loyal Canadian Society of Grimsby were no different from the national societies in that they undertook benevolent work to aid distressed members.

They differed, of course, on the matter of the kind of patriotism each was striving to develop. The historical and pioneer societies that made up the United Canadian Association sought to create a patriotism rooted in an understanding of the history of British North America since the coming of the loyalists. As for the national societies of St. Andrews, St. George, and St. Patrick, they sought to maintain the patriotic enthusiasm of their members for the old homelands across the Atlantic.

Most members of the United Canadian Association would have probably agreed with Canniff and George Denison that there was nothing incompatible between a strong nationalism and a united Empire. In their opinion, a robust and self-reliant Dominion would automatically strengthen the whole Empire. Canniff explained:

... it would be a strange doctrine to advance -- that the natural affection an Englishman, or Irishman, or Scotchman possesses for his native country, is in-

compatible with a patriotic devotion to the whole empire; and on what solid ground can rest the accusation that Canadians, in fostering a similar love of country, are compromising their patriotism as Britons. On the contrary, is it not true that the greater the attachment one has for his native land, the greater will usually be his devotion to the whole, of which his province forms a part?

77

Canniff and probably others in the UCA accepted George T. Denison's reasoning that the development of a Canadian national sentiment was the only means of checking the drift toward imperial disintegration. According to this popular impression, it was Britain's attitude towards Canada that endangered imperial ties. Many Englishmen were thought to be indifferent to Canadian needs. They seemed to regard Canadians as inferiors and judged the imperial connection solely in economic terms. But if the new Dominion progressed materially, the argument went, and developed national pride, and successfully assumed all its responsibilities such as defence, then Britain's supposedly misguided ideas regarding colonies would undergo a transformation. She would regard the Empire differently and would provide the web of protection necessary to ensure Canada's development in a hemisphere dominated by the American republic. <sup>78</sup> Although it was anticipated that Canada would mature within the matrix of the Empire, neither Denison nor Canniff intended Canadians to be inferior. "Canadians will no longer tolerate imported supercilious mediocrity -- they will be satisfied with nothing less than equality with the people of the

United Kingdom." <sup>79</sup> These were some of the reasons why prominent members of the UCA considered the creation of a national sentiment of vital importance and formed organizations to promote that cause.

This discussion of the "nationalism" that the United Canadian Association aspired to promote begs a rather crucial question. When these Ontarians thought themselves staunchly nationalist in 1872, were they not actually reflecting an Upper Canadian patriotism by equating Canada with Ontario? After all, the Dominion was only a federation of provinces, and according to G.F.G. Stanley, "the people who lived in the provinces that became Canada were not, in the eighteen-seventies, really Canadians at heart. They were Nova Scotians, New Brunswickers, Islanders, French Canadians, Westerners, British Columbians, and Ontarians." <sup>80</sup> Judging from the concepts of the nation and of the past espoused by some members of the UCA, the nationalism they intended to inculcate was hardly acceptable to the other regions of Canada. Their parochial perception of "Canadian" history was made conspicuous by the absence of any effort to study the historical contributions of the other provinces. Canada, in their view, began with the loyalist migration to Ontario. The Anglo-Saxon, loyalist emphasis in their thought, needless to say, was also anathema to French Canadians.

Because of its Ontario first philosophy, the United Canadian Association could never have realized its objective of fostering national sentiments outside of Ontario. Even in

that province, the UCA did little to accomplish its major goals. The annual excursion became the most important activity of the association. The first excursion, planned to mark the anniversary of Brock's capture of Detroit in 1812, took place on August 16, 1872, at Queenston Heights. Delegates from all the affiliated societies attended the affair which was highlighted by a brass band, patriotic speeches, and culinary delights. Richard Oates was honoured by the York Pioneers with a gold medal for himself and a silver tea service for his wife in appreciation of the valuable work he had done for the society.<sup>81</sup>

In the later 'seventies, the pilgrimage to Brock's tomb became a regular ritual for the pioneer groups. For a few years, though, the annual picnic was peripatetic, being held, for example, near Hamilton in 1873.<sup>82</sup> These annual excursions could not have inspired other Ontarians to new heights of nationalistic fevour. Since press coverage beyond the place visited was minimal, few people would have given the United Canadian Association a second thought.<sup>83</sup>

One of the projects planned at the inception of the UCA was the building of a monument at Queenston Heights to the Shawnee chief, Tecumseh. Delighted that the association intended to bestow on an Indian a status almost equal to Brock's, the Six Nations began to show an interest in the activities of the UCA. Chief W.J. Simcoe Kerr explained that the matter of the monument had been unanimously approved

before a full meeting of his people, and he promised that eight hundred warriors would be present when the foundation stone was dedicated.<sup>84</sup>

All this turned out to be wishful thinking. The monument never materialized in spite of the efforts made by several members of the association. At a meeting of the UCA in the Canadian Institute in Toronto, June 7, 1876, a committee was appointed to rendezvous at Moraviantown to seek out the grave of Tecumseh.<sup>85</sup> A month later, on July 8, 1876, the Evening Telegram reported that the committee had been forced to abandon its search because people in the neighbourhood adamantly opposed the removal of the chief's remains.<sup>86</sup> A scheme to pacify the local residents drew the following comment from John Ross Robertson:

The members of the United Canadian Association are taking a very fair and equitable stand .... They now suggest that should a repeated search for the Indian warrior's grave prove unsuccessful, a suitable monument should be erected upon the battlefield on the bank of the Thames. Should they ... succeed in discovering the resting place of Tecumseh, they desire, in concordance with the wishes of the tribe to which the great chieftan [sic] belonged, to remove the remains to Queenston Heights and to deposit them by the side of those of Gen. Brock. The idea of placing the two champions of British authority side by side, in death as in life, is a very fitting one ....

87

In early September, Richard Oates travelled to the valley of the Thames and exhumed what was supposed to have been Tecumseh's remains. Oates whisked his prize away to Niagara only to be informed that the remains were those of someone

88  
 else. The publicity generated by this incident cooled the association's enthusiasm for the monument scheme.

The United Canadian Association had other setbacks. For instance, a potentially important task sanctioned by the constitution was not taken up. Documents and artifacts were supposed to have been collected by local societies and deposited in a central museum. No real effort, however, seems to have been made by the leaders of the UCA to co-ordinate a collection programme with the aim of establishing a provincial museum. Another project that was not completed, at least by the United Canadian Association, would have involved the sponsoring of a centennial celebration of the landing of the loyalists in Ontario.<sup>89</sup> Unfortunately by 1884, the centennial year in question, the UCA had dissolved. Several one-time members of the association did keep the idea alive, however, and brought it to fruition. William Canniff became the moving force behind the loyalist celebrations at Adolphustown and Niagara in 1884.<sup>90</sup>

As for the fate of the United Canadian Association, Canniff informed Jedediah P. Merritt early in 1880; "I fear the Canadian Association is dead. I have done what I could and am willing to do what I can to promote the objects for which the Association was created."<sup>91</sup> He gave a post mortem explanation of the death of the UCA:

... there are but few who care about it. I have time and again spoken to Dr. Scadding and others. The feeling prevails that the Canadian Institute affords

sufficient power to act, and it is already the depository of a good many books and articles of interest.

92

In addition to the competition of the Canadian Institute, Canniff also mentioned that the society faltered because it did not obtain "the Government support absolutely necessary to secure success." Several efforts had been made without results in the 1870s to acquire government subsidization for the collection of "historical lore".<sup>93</sup> Canniff still believed that a "National Society" similar to the United Canadian Association was important and asked for Jedediah Merritt's assistance. "If you can induce the Dominion Government to allow a sum sufficient to establish an historical museum . . . , it would be a blessing to the Country."<sup>94</sup> But without government sponsorship, "persons of wealth and leisure" would have to take up the torch. "Could I do so," Canniff confided, "it would be the pleasure of my life to engage in the work of collecting documents and historical articles."

The United Canadian Association, like the earlier Historical Society of Upper Canada, exerted an influence beyond its time. In several ways it anticipated some of the aims and structures of the Pioneer Association of Ontario and the Ontario Historical Society. The co-ordinating role among the affiliated societies, the interest in collecting historical documents and artifacts for a central museum, the intention of diffusing a knowledge of Canadian history for

patriotic reasons, the efforts to build monuments to extraordinary historical personages, the annual meetings in various parts of the province, and most importantly, the federal structure with complete local autonomy were attributes common to both the UCA and the Ontario Historical Society.

The direct link between the United Canadian Association and the Pioneer Association of Ontario can be traced to the York Pioneers' organization. Members of the latter group -- Henry Scadding, William Canniff and W.H. Doel -- happened to be instrumental in the founding of both provincial societies. These men and others were unhappy that the UCA had become quiescent and they continued to believe in the need for a body to co-ordinate the patriotic and historical activities of the various local groups. Consequently, Henry Scadding and the York Pioneers persevered to maintain the communications between the local groups and to resurrect a provincial organization. Correspondence in the J.P. Merritt papers in Dominion Archives indicates that throughout the 1880s numerous annual excursions to Queenston were arranged by the York Pioneers. These outings were attended by some of the local societies that once made up the UCA.<sup>95</sup> Finally, in 1886, an effort was made by Scadding to re-establish a provincial association. He wrote to Merritt:

I daresay you will have received ere this a Circular from the Secretary of our Pioneers' Society having reference to a proposed Pioneers' and Old Settlers' day during the Industrial Exhibition in September

next, namely Tuesday the 14th of that month.

I hope, so far as you may find it convenient to do so, you will kindly help forward the idea with your influence, as I hope such a gathering may result in the Formation of a general Association for Ontario, [*italics mine*] having in view the preservation in each locality of the province, of relics of its Past, of its records, traditions and reminiscences.

96

Although the idea of a Pioneer Day at the Industrial Exhibition was acted upon, Scadding presumably failed to muster enough enthusiasm for yet another provincial historical organization. Undeterred, he continued to work in this direction. Eventually, in 1888, he arranged a federal union between his local association in York County and the Peel Pioneers' Society of Brampton, an arrangement that created the Pioneer Association of Ontario. This third provincial historical group was destined to succeed.

As this chapter has shown, the PAO evolved out of several earlier efforts to create a lasting provincial historical association. Jedediah Merritt made the first attempt in 1861 when he organized the short-lived Historical Society of Upper Canada to collect documentary material for a history of Canada West. Later, in the period following Confederation, a group of patriotic Ontarians sought to breathe more life into the new nation by establishing the United Canadian Association, a body dedicated to the fostering of nationalism by the diffusion of a knowledge of Canadian history. In its organization, aims, and membership, this society anticipated the Pioneer Association of Ontario. Although both the earlier

groups failed to live up to expectations, the PAO had a more fortunate development. It drew strength after 1888 from the proliferation of local historical and pioneer societies in southern Ontario. The PAO, like the United Canadian Association, was made up exclusively of delegates of these local groups.

To acquire an understanding of the Pioneer Association of Ontario, an examination of the membership, motivation, and activities of the local historical organizations is essential. The following chapter, therefore, is devoted to a comprehensive analysis of the local historical society movement in the last decade of the nineteenth century.

## FOOTNOTES

1

James J. Talman, "Some Precursors of the Ontario Historical Society," OH, Vol. XL (1948), pp. 13-21. Historical societies existed earlier in at least two localities, but records pertaining to their activities are almost non-existent. Talman indicates that the Toronto Literary and Historical Society functioned in 1843, but appears to have been interested in ancient history and probably considered local history insignificant. See newspaper clipping from the Church, Toronto, February 10, 1843, p. 13. Another local society was established in St. Thomas in 1853. It did not make any contribution according to Hugh A. Stevenson, "James H. Coyne: An Early Contributor to Canadian Historical Scholarship," OH, Vol. LIV, No. 1 (March, 1962), p. 28.

2

This paragraph borrows heavily from a careful examination of the same subject in Carl Berger, The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism 1867-1914 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), p. 92.

3

Ibid., p. 93.

4

Egerton Ryerson, The Loyalists of America and Their Times (Toronto: 1880), Vol. II, p. 191. Quoted in ibid., p. 92.

5

J.M.S. Careless, The Union of the Canadas: The Growth of Canadian Institutions 1841-1857 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967).

6

Ibid., p. xi, and pp. 152-53.

7

George P. de T. Glazebrook, Life in Ontario: A Social History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), p. 112. According to the author, "by the middle 'fifties Ontario had seventy-two Mechanics' Institutes."

8

Charles M. Johnston, The Head of the Lake: A History of Wentworth County (2nd. ed. rev.; Hamilton: Wentworth County Council, 1967), p. 218. For example, the Hamilton Association established in 1857 revealed an early interest in natural history and prehistoric matters.

9

From the constitution of the Waterdown Mechanics' Institute quoted in ibid., p. 214.

10

Edith G. Firth (ed.), Profiles of a Province: Studies in the History of Ontario (Toronto: the OHS, 1967), p. x. See also Careless, op. cit., p. 153.

11

Leonard W. Doob, Patriotism and Nationalism: Their Psychological Foundations (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), chapter II. See also Karl W. Deutsch, Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality (2nd. ed.; Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1967), p. 288, footnote 40 for a discussion of the distinctions between patriotism and nationalism.

12

OA, Brock Monument papers. See also W.H. Merritt papers, packages no. 3 and no. 8 for Merritt's role in procuring funds for these causes.

13

Doob, op. cit., p. 245.

14

The Globe, Toronto, January 2, October 20, 1847. Quoted in Careless, op. cit., p. 165.

15

See Donald G. Creighton, John A. Macdonald: The Young Politician (Toronto: Macmillan, 1952), p. 271 and J.M.S. Careless, Brown of the Globe (Toronto: Macmillan, 1959), Vol. I, p. 308 and p. 321.

16

Careless, Union of the Canadas, p. 163.

17

"The Formal Adoption of the Maple Leaf as the National Emblem of Canada," OHSPPR, Vol. V (1904), pp. 21-35, being a copy of the proceedings of August 21, 1860 in Toronto, together with several pieces of correspondence in the press relative to the meeting. See also E.C. Guillet, Cobourg 1798-1948 (Oshawa: Goodfellow, 1948) for a picture of the badge. Guillet mentions that on the occasion of the Prince of Wales' visit, native Canadians in Cobourg undertook the same activities as their confederates in Toronto.

18

"Adoption of Maple Leaf," op. cit., pp. 23-24.

19

Similar reasons motivated J.M. McMullen, a Brockville journalist and printer, to write the first reputable, large-scale survey of Canadian history in English. McMullen intended The History of Canada from its First Discovery to the Present Time (1855) "to infuse a spirit of Canadian nationality into the people generally, to mould the native born citizens, the Scotch, the English, and the Irish emigrant into a compact whole...." Quoted in Kenneth N. Windsor, "Historical Writing in Canada to 1920," in Carl F. Klinck et al., Literary History of Canada: Canadian Literature in English (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), p. 216.

20

OA, W.H. Merritt papers, see packages no. 3 and no. 8.

21

OCHA, Coventry papers, Coventry to Lord Ellbank of Peebles, Scotland, November 7, 1861. This collection was recently donated to the PAC.

22

OA, William Canniff papers, package no. 12. See the Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Canada, January 25, 1859 for an example of the arguments utilized by Merritt and his friends to convince the assembly to finance the collection and publication project.

23

J.P. Merritt, Biography of the Hon. W.H. Merritt, M.P. (St. Catharines; E.L. Leavenworth, 1875), p. 424.

24

OA, W.H. Merritt papers, package no. 23, J.P. Merritt to Alpheus Todd, October 10, 1863. This is a rough draft of the memorial to the joint library committee of the legislature.

25

OA, William Canniff papers, package no. 12, press clipping, the Empire, Toronto, May 17, 1893. Here Canniff reproduced a letter in support of Merritt's scheme in 1859.

26

Circular and Prospectus for November 14, 1861 meeting of Historical Society of Upper Canada, quoted in Talman, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

27

Ibid.

28

Account of the preliminary meeting in the Journal of Education which had been taken from the Globe and Leader, Toronto, quoted in Talman, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

29

See Henry Scadding, Toronto of Old, edited by F.H. Armstrong (Toronto: Oxford, 1966), Hutchinson's Toronto Directory 1862-63 (Toronto: Lovell and Gibson, 1863), Brown's Toronto General Directory 1861 (Toronto: W.C. Chewett, 1861).

30

Circular and Prospectus for November 14, 1861 meeting of Historical Society of Upper Canada, quoted in Talman, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

31

Account of the preliminary meeting in ibid., pp. 17-18.

32

Circular and Prospectus for November 14, 1861 meeting of Historical Society of Upper Canada, quoted in Talman, op. cit., p. 15.

33

Account of the preliminary meeting in ibid., p. 17.

34

OHSA, Coventry papers, rough draft of letter, Coventry to W.H. Merritt, [date incomplete] 1862.

35

Account of the preliminary meeting in Talman, op. cit., p. 17.

36

OHSA, Coventry papers see the three page printed circular issued by Ryerson dated May 1861.

37

Ibid., See the instructions to Coventry written on the front of the circular.

38

C.B. Sissons, Egerton Ryerson: His Life and Letters (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1947), Vol. I; A.E. Ryerson, The Story of My Life, edited by J.G. Hodgins (Toronto: 1883).

39

OHSa, Coventry papers. The information relative to the St. Catharines meeting of February 15, 1862 is taken from a printed circular entitled "Historical Society of Upper Canada."

40

PAC, J.P. Merritt papers, M.G., 24, E1, Vols. 46-47. See the list of individuals approached for support as of May 1862.

41

PAC, J.P. Merritt papers, M.G. 24, E1, Vols. 46-47. See printed circular entitled "Historical Society of Canada West, organized November 14, 1861."

42

PAC, J.P. Merritt papers, M.G. 24, E1, Vols. 46-47. See handwritten copy of minutes of meetings, n.d. for the winter session of 1863-4.

43

PAC, George Coventry papers, M.G. 24, K2, Vol. 1. See two handwritten lists of members for the Historical Society of B.N.A. for 1864 and 1870.

44

Quoted in Talman, op. cit., p. 19.

45

Johnston, op. cit., chapter XIII.

46

Constitution of the Hamilton Association for the Advancement of Literature, Science and Art (Hamilton, 1883), quoted in ibid., p. 218.

47

PAC, J.P. Merritt papers, M.G. 24, E1, Vols. 46-47. Circular entitled "Historical Society of Canada West," September 10, 1863.

48

TPL, undated pamphlet without a title, quoted in Talman, op. cit., p. 20. Altogether 10,000 folio pages of transcripts were collected by Merritt and Coventry between 1859-1863. It is not known how many were provided by the historical society.

49

William Canniff, The Settlement of Upper Canada (Toronto: Dudley and Burns, 1869), p. v.

50

The Mail, Toronto, June 5, 1872.

51

PAC, J.P. Merritt papers, M.G. 24, E1, Vols. 46-47.

52

The Mail, Toronto, June 5, 1872.

53

OA, Nelles papers, III - C. See Constitution of the Loyal Canadian Society.

54

Ibid.

55

PAC, J.P. Merritt papers, M.G. 24, E1, Vol. 42. Unidentified newspaper clipping, n.d., but probably mid-1880s. The speaker was J.P. Wilson, the vice-president of the society.

56

Constitution and By-Laws of the York Pioneers' Association, with a List of Members (Toronto: Copp, Clark and Co., 1883).

57

Constitution and By-Laws 1883. Originally membership was restricted to those who were residents of York prior to March 6, 1834. As time passed, and members died, the survival of the society necessitated a wider membership base; hence, on April 8, 1872, the constitution was amended to admit the male progeny of the members who had arrived before 1834.

58

A.D. McFall, "The York Pioneer and Historical Society - 100 Years," York Pioneer (1969), pp. 3-4.

59

R.L. Denison, "Colonel Richard Lippincott Denison the First of Dovercourt," York Pioneer, (1953), p. 3.

60

The Evening Telegram, Toronto, July 4, 1876 Oates is cited as president.

61

OA, William Canniff papers, package no. 13, MS "Patriotic Address," unpaginated, n.d., but probably 1863.

62

Henry Scadding, English Civilization Undemonstrative: The Address to the St. George's Society, Toronto, April 23rd., 1860. (Toronto: Rowsell and Hutchison, 1860), p. 13.

63

Careless, Brown of the Globe, Vol. I, p. 231.

64

Careless, Union of the Canada, p. 203.

65

Careless, Brown of the Globe, Vol. I, p. 229.

66

From W. Foster, Canada First: or Our New Nationality (1871) quoted in Berger, op. cit., p. 62.

67

See Berger, op. cit., and David P. Gagan, "The Queen's Champion": The Life of George Taylor Denison III, Soldier, Author, Magistrate and Canadian Tory Patriot (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, Duke, 1968).

68

Berger, op. cit., p. 93.

69

See William Canniff, The Settlement of Upper Canada, with an introduction by Donald Swainson (Belleville: Mika Silk Screening Ltd., 1971), pp. 1 - V.

70

OA, William Canniff papers, package no. 13, MS "Patriotic Address," unpaginated, n.d.. The following two paragraphs are based on this address.

71

William Canniff, Canadian Nationality: Its Growth and Development (Toronto: Hart and Rawlinson, 1875), p. 20. Much of this pamphlet had been published earlier in a letter to The Times, Toronto, December 11, 1873, a copy of which is in the TPL.

72

Ibid., p. 6.

73

Ibid., p. 10.

74

Ibid., p. 11.

75

Ibid., p. 11, p. 14.

76

Ibid., p. 13.

77

Ibid., p. 9.

78

Berger, op. cit., pp. 61-2. See also Canniff, Canadian Nationality, pp. 15-18.

79

Canniff, Canadian Nationality, p. 15.

80

G.F.G. Stanley, "The 1870s" in J.M.S. Careless and R.C. Brown, (eds.), The Canadians 1867-1967 (Toronto: Macmillan, 1967), p. 69.

81

The Mail, Toronto, August 19, 1872.

82

Daily Times, St. Catharines, August 5, 1873, August 20, 1873.

83

For example see the Daily Times, St. Catharines, August 5, 1873. The paper gave the following description of the Hamilton meeting: "The Canadian Society picnic yesterday at Hamilton is said to have been a success, and all had a 'jolly time.' Belleville, Grimsby, Toronto, and other places were represented." See also the all too brief description of the 1876 meeting at Queenston in the Evening Telegram, Toronto, June 8, 1876.

84

The Mail, Toronto, June 5, 1872.

85

Evening Telegram, Toronto, June 8, 1876.

86

Ibid., July 8, 1876.

87

Ibid., July 18, 1876.

88

Ibid., September 2, 1876; September 11, 1876.

89

Ibid., June 8, 1876.

90

See Berger, op. cit., p. 79.

91

PAC, J.P. Merritt papers, M.G. 24, E1, Vol. 41.  
Canniff to Merritt, January 26, 1880.

92

Ibid.

93

OA, W. Canniff papers, package no. 12, MS "A"  
Review of Historical Work in Upper Canada, November 9, 1893."

94

PAC, J.P. Merritt papers, M.G., 24, E1, Vol. 41.  
Canniff to Merritt, January 26, 1880.

95

PAC, J.P. Merritt papers, M.G. 24, E1, Vol. 42.  
See for example, postcard, E. Playter (secretary of York  
Pioneers') to Merritt, July 20, 1883; and Playter to Merritt,  
October 9, 1886.

96

PAC, J.P. Merritt papers, M.G. 24, E1, Vol. 42.  
Scadding to Merritt, July 31, 1886. The circular referred  
to is also in this collection. It informed Merritt that  
"all the Canadian Societies" similar to the York Pioneers'  
were invited. See also Playter to Merritt, July 7, 1886.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE LOCAL AFFILIATED SOCIETIES, 1887-1898: ORIGINS, MEMBERSHIP, MOTIVATION, AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The historical society movement spread rapidly in Ontario after 1887; so much so, that by the turn of the century the local historical association had become a valuable social and cultural institution in some dozen communities across the southern part of the province. During the period under review, the movement registered substantial gains in such areas of endeavour as publications, museum work, and historic preservation. The historical groups in question were the York Pioneer and Historical Society, Toronto (1869); the Lundy's Lane Historical Society, Niagara Falls (1887); The Peel Pioneer and Historical Society, Brampton (1887); the Wentworth Pioneer and Historical Society, Hamilton (1888); the Historical Section of the Canadian Institute, Toronto (1888); the Elgin Historical and Scientific Institute, St. Thomas (1891); the Grenville Pioneer and Historical Society, Prescott (1891); the Simcoe County Pioneer and Historical Society, Barrie (1891); The Kingston Historical Society (1893); the Thorold and Beaverdams Historical Society (1894); the Niagara Historical Society, Niagara-on-the-Lake (1895); the Women's Canadian Historical Society, Toronto (1895); the Town and County of Peterborough Historical Society (1896); and the Women's Wentworth Historic-

al Society, Hamilton (1899).

Perhaps the popular image of these groups as more "hysterical" than historical explains why no historian has deemed it worthwhile to study them and to provide answers for such basic questions as: Why were they created at a particular time and place? What were their purposes? Did they fulfil these purposes? Who founded them, or joined them, and for what motives? The only historian to have examined the nature and aims of the local historical organizations -- and this in an admittedly superficial way -- is Professor Carl Berger in The Sense of Power (1970).<sup>1</sup> Berger concluded that they were "one aspect of a wider North American concern with local history," that the Ontario societies were "not primarily concerned with disinterested and detached antiquarianism," but were instead dedicated to the cultivation of British-Canadian nationalism (or imperialism as Berger would have it). "In keeping with this avowed purpose," Berger continued, "their publications were almost exclusively devoted to the hardships of the United Empire Loyalists and the incidents of the War of 1812;" hence, "there is much to be said for regarding these historical societies as branches of the Imperial Federation League."<sup>2</sup>

Berger's impressions are partly correct, but he erred in relying on an overly narrow sample of the ideas entertained by historical society members. His conclusions are based almost exclusively upon the publications and

pronouncements of Canon George Bull, president during the 1890s of both the Lundy's Lane Historical Society and the Pioneer and Historical Association of Ontario, and of Clementina Fessenden, the corresponding secretary of the Wentworth Historical Society. The local historical groups to which Bull and Fessenden belonged did serve as vehicles for disseminating the message of the Imperial Federation League, and do fit the mould fashioned by Berger. But most of the other historical associations cannot be catalogued in this way, and indeed were created for reasons in no way related to the movement to consolidate the Empire. It is the purpose of this chapter to examine these reasons, as well as the activities, membership, and achievements of the local historical groups.

## I

A quickening interest in the past during the Confederation period, an interest that was sustained through the 'seventies and 'eighties, was a factor behind the establishment of the historical societies in Ontario after 1887. A historical consciousness, of course, had existed since the 1850s and had contributed to the formation of the ill-fated Historical Society of Upper Canada. With the impact of the American Civil War and the achievement of Confederation this incipient historical awareness was heightened by an infusion of nationalism. Groups like the Canada Firsters

and the United Canadian Association approached history as a useful device for instilling a sense of national unity in the new Dominion. The 'nationalistic desire to trace the life of the nation to its roots, to exalt its founders and defenders," explains Carl Berger, "... gave an immense stimulus to historical work in general ...."<sup>3</sup> Though the heightened interest in the past sprang from the nationalist fears and enthusiasms of the Confederation era, several influences combined to maintain it through the 'seventies and 'eighties. For instance, the activities of the affiliated local patriotic and historical societies that made up the United Canadian Association likely had some effect. More importantly, a growing number of writers began to produce historical literature that both satisfied and stimulated the public's appetite for Canadian history. *→ local history*

✓ Francis Parkman, whose seven epic volumes of France and England in North America appeared between 1865 and 1892, probably had an "influence upon Canadian historiography ... greater than that of any other individual during the nineteenth century."<sup>4</sup> His style and interpretations were accepted as the standard criteria of excellence. Parkman also demonstrated to nationalist writers that Canadian history had immense inspirational potential, filled as it was with heroic figures, dramatic events, and grand themes.<sup>5</sup> Another major influence in "strengthening the conception of romantic history and inspiring the retrospective spirit"<sup>6</sup> was Walter Scott.

Influence

His historical novels, for instance, influenced the writing of several romanticizers who became active in the historical societies. These included Niagara's William Kirby, author of The Golden Dog (1877), Toronto's Sarah Anne Curzon, who wrote Laura Secord: The Heroine of 1812 (1887), and Kingston's Agnes Maule Macher, the writer of For King and Country (1874). ✓

Annals of Niagara

Other local, provincial, and national histories appeared in Ontario during the 1870s and 1880s that helped to maintain an interest in the past and anticipated the kind of work several historical associations would later undertake. Representative of some of the best publications were Henry Scadding's Toronto of Old (1873), William Henry Withrow's popular The History of Canada (1880), J.C. Dent's The Last Forty Years: Canada Since the Union of 1841 (1881), Scadding and Dent's Toronto: Past and Present (1884), D.B. Read's The Lives of the Judges of Upper Canada (1888) and his Life and Times of General John Graves Simcoe (1890), William Houston's Documents Illustrative of the Canadian Constitution (1891), and William Kingsford's ambitious and multi-volume History of Canada (1887-1898). ✓

In addition to these individual efforts, various institutions prepared the groundwork for the historical societies by creating an interest in local history and archeology. A growing number of private and municipal libraries (especially after the passage of the Public Libraries Act of 1882), the varied literary and scientific associations, and the ✓

Mechanics' Institutes, all provided the books and facilities for some of the first forays into local history. Not surprisingly, the people who had belonged to such groups as the Hamilton Association and the Canadian Institute of Toronto became charter members of the local historical associations.

Perhaps the most powerful factor in exciting the "retrospective cast of mind" was the tense climate of opinion that developed in the 1880s, the product of economic depression, political turmoil, and racial, religious, and sectional conflict. "It is in times of trial," writes Carl Berger, "that the sense of nostalgia for a heroic history is heightened and in the midst of turbulence and change that traditions are most useful for maintaining the assurance of security. The mood of doubt, disillusionment, and uncertainty which culminated in the late 1880s provoked many of the appeals to the certainties of the past." For instance, the widespread concern for the loyalist heritage so evident in the UEL centennial celebrations at Adolphustown and Niagara in 1884, and in the speeches and writings of many nationalist spokesmen, was largely a response to the attacks on the British connection by continentalists or advocates of independence. The nationalists cum imperialists sought to preserve and strengthen imperial ties by invoking the past to prove that imperial federation was the logical end towards which Canadian history had been evolving since 1783. As will be shown later in this chapter, the founders of at least two

7  
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local historical societies used the medium of the loyalist tradition to preach the message of imperial federation.

After 1872, historical research received a stimulus from an entirely different source when the Dominion Archives began issuing annual reports. *Dumb* Douglas Brymner, who was appointed that same year to the newly created post of Dominion Archivist, directed the publications programme for thirty years. His reports kept students up to date on the growing documentary collections in Ottawa then reliably described by E.A. Cruikshank as "unrivalled on this continent both for extent and importance."<sup>10</sup> Brymner had completed the calendar for the large collection of Haldimand papers by 1889, and the Colonial Office records by 1895. In addition, several series of documents had been printed under his aegis for the first time.<sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile, factors external to the Canadian scene were of great importance in promoting interest in local history at this time. The American historical society movement, for example, readily earned the admiration of the founders of historical associations in Ontario. Although comparable groups in the Republic had been assiduously collecting and publishing source materials for nearly a century, a marked escalation of interest in such work occurred during the 1880s. Over eighty local and state societies were founded in that decade.<sup>12</sup> American "documania" soon spilled over the border into Canada as American societies culled the collections in

the Dominion Archives, and spent large sums of money in transcribing and printing documents for their own use. By the mid-1890s, the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society had published some twenty-six hundred pages, and each of the Wisconsin and Vermont Historical Societies over two hundred pages of Canadian documents relevant to American history.<sup>13</sup> Provincial historical associations in Canada, on the other hand, unable to muster the necessary financial resources, had done virtually nothing of this nature.

Many of the founders of local historical groups in Ontario certainly envied the American accomplishment and bore it in mind when establishing their groups. For instance, when James Coyne formed the Elgin Historical and Scientific Institute and urged the collection of all documents and facts related to the Talbot Settlement, he specifically mentioned the similar work being carried on south of the border.<sup>14</sup> In Simcoe County, Andrew F. Hunter, editor of the Barrie Examiner and the founder of the Simcoe County Pioneer and Historical Society, stressed the value of forming a local historical society by publishing a lengthy article on the subject by an American writer.<sup>15</sup> William Canniff, chairman of the Historical Section of the Canadian Institute in 1893, was ashamed that "we of Canada are far behind the several neighbouring States in the matter of collecting and publishing the historical material thickly scattered over the Province, or to be found in by-places abroad . . . ." <sup>16</sup> Finally, in applying for governmental financial support, Canon Bull of

Lundy's Lane emphasized the fact "that each state across the border-line has long since acted upon the plan of an annual grant of money to assist in producing one or more volumes of state historic value every year."<sup>17</sup>

Considering the British character of late-Victorian Ontario, the record is strangely silent on what impact, if any, the example of Britain's historical societies had in Ontario. Andrew F. Hunter, in arguing for a county historical organization, made one reference to the researches into local social and economic history undertaken by Oxford's J.E. Thorold Rogers as indicative of the "class of information that such societies could preserve." He went on:

The late Prof. J.E. Thorold Rogers, of Oxford, spent twenty years of patient investigation amid the old business records, farm accounts, and municipal archives of England. The main results of his research, Prof. Rogers has placed on record in his "Six Centuries of Work and Wages" and in his six volume "History of Agriculture and Prices." These are priceless volumes of exact information, and in late years have done much to mould public opinion on labour, trade and social questions .....

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This could well be the sole reference in this period to work in British local history by a founder of a historical society in Ontario.

Historical organizations in other Canadian provinces did not seem to exert much influence either. From the available sources, it would appear that there was an awareness in Ontario of some of the activities of the historical associations in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Quebec, and Manitoba.

E.A. Cruikshank, for example, while addressing the assembled delegates of the local societies at the annual meeting of the Pioneer and Historical Association of Ontario in 1895, briefed them on the publications of these Canadian organizations. There is no evidence, however, that any of the local historical societies in Ontario owed their existence to the example or encouragement of historical groups in the rest of the country.

## II

*Motivations*

Ontarians established historical societies in Ontario after 1887 for many reasons, the combination of which changed according to time, place, and the interests and concerns of the founders. The knowledge that irreplaceable historical documents, artifacts, buildings, and sites were being destroyed was often expressed as a good reason for establishing historical associations. Other factors that ought to be examined are local pride and jealousies, the vested interests of women's groups, ancestor worship, and social prestige. Finally, some importance must be attached to the abiding need among many Ontarians to create a cohesive national heritage and a unity of national purpose in a period when the integrity of the Dominion seemed to be under attack.

A fundamental reason for the establishment of historical societies in Ontario was the realization among a growing number of citizens that action was essential to

preserve historical documents and artifacts, the destruction of which was apparent everywhere. Invariably the frame of reference for the activities of each society embraced the collection, preservation, and diffusion of historical materials. No limitation was put on the kinds of documents and information that were to be gathered. Everything relevant to the history of early British settlement was considered acceptable. The Elgin Historical and Scientific Institute included among its aims "the collection and preservation of the records of the early settlement of the Lake Shore [Erie] counties ... including histories, newspapers, pamphlets, old letters, books, documents and the personal reminiscences of old pioneers." <sup>19</sup> According to William Canniff, the end result of all this gathering activity would be "a full and faithful history of the founders and builders of Upper Canada:"

...I refer not alone to those noble United Empire Loyalists ..., but as well to the brave-hearted sons and daughters of the several fatherlands across the sea ....

How little is known about all these fathers of our country individually, about the circumstances attending their voyages and their travels through trackless woods, and by treacherous waterways; of the uncertainties of settlement, of the days and years of struggle to conquer the obstacles which beset their way, and the eventual success which crowned the labors of many of them and of the failures of others.

How little is known about the organization of the several municipalities, the gradual development of the country in the formation of various institutions, the introduction of schools, the beginning, the growth and development of the several learned professions -- in a word, all that is comprehended in the firm establishment of law, order and good government ....

It is to gather up and preserve all that can be obtained relating to these events that historical societies are founded ....

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Although the proclivity for the history of settlement was shared by the founders of all the societies, several organizations were in part the product of an interest in archaeology or natural history. In this respect David Boyle of the Canadian Institute, Andrew Hunter of the Simcoe County Pioneer and Historical Society, and members of the Elgin Historical and Scientific Institute are particularly noteworthy. Boyle, a Scottish immigrant of 1856, entered the teaching profession and was principal of the public school in Elora for ten years, a period in which he made himself an authority on Ontario archaeology. In 1884 he presented his valuable collection of Indian relics to the Canadian Institute. Two years later the Institute opened a museum of Natural History and Archaeology with Boyle as curator, and in 1887 Queen's Park awarded Boyle a grant of one thousand dollars to promote archaeological research in Ontario. <sup>21</sup> The following year he published the first Archaeological Report as an appendix to the annual report of the Department of Education. David Boyle was also partly responsible for awakening an interest in archaeology in Peterborough and vicinity in 1896, after the discovery of the famous serpent mound. He wrote to individuals in the area suggesting that they establish a historical organization

Archby  
Boyle

to undertake further archaeological and historical re-  
 searches in Peterborough county.<sup>22</sup>

Andrew Hunter, another self-educated archaeologist and friend of Boyle's accomplished valuable work in uncovering and charting the village sites and ossuaries of old Huronia.<sup>23</sup> Undoubtedly Hunter had archaeological activity in mind when he founded the Simcoe County Pioneer and Historical Society in Barrie.

In Hamilton, the Wentworth Historical Society was organized in part to prosecute researches into archaeology, an activity first promoted in the area by the Hamilton Association. As early as 1883, members of the latter group investigated and uncovered the exploits of French missionaries and explorers at the fond du lac.<sup>24</sup> The Elgin Historical and Scientific Institute, situated in what used to be the country of the Neutrals, also included archaeological research in its list of prime objectives. Interest was aroused when farmers in the region repeatedly ploughed up Indian artifacts and destroyed what might have been valuable prehistoric sites. Much enthusiasm had also been engendered by the discovery of the Southwold Earthworks, the only known double-walled Indian earthwork fort in existence. Thus, among the society's stated aims, were "the collection and preservation of Indian vocabularies, folk-lore and archaeological specimens," and "the investigation of Indian forts and mounds, and their preservation as far as practicable."<sup>25</sup> The Elgin Historical and Scientific Institute, as its name

implies, was unique in that its field of enquiry encompassed natural history and "historical and scientific research." Actually the emphasis on the "scientific" function in the title was something of an overstatement, being chiefly a response to the passion of one of the founders for ornithology.<sup>26</sup>

It is tempting to speculate about what social philosophy with respect to the Indians underlay the new interest in things archaeological. Was it a product of "deep doubts about the old certainties of progress and Western superiority"<sup>27</sup> that first arose during the 1890s in Europe and North America,<sup>28</sup> of a new social conscience and cultural relativism that would later help to give the Indian a new lease on life?<sup>29</sup> This does not seem to have been the case. These amateur archaeologists probably retained the image of the aborigine perpetuated by the Parkmans or the Duncan Campbell Scotts as "a combination of stealth, wild passion, absence of compassion, and superstition."<sup>30</sup> The historical society member was more likely to be imbued with nineteenth century concepts of progress,<sup>31</sup> social darwinism, survival of the fittest, and the Anglo-Saxon duty to civilize, as James Coyne put it, "inferior races upon principles of justice and equality"<sup>32</sup> than with cultural relativism.

Turning to other factors that led individuals to establish historical associations, it was the urge to preserve historic sites, buildings, and landmarks that moved

individuals to band together in Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Thorold, and Hamilton. The Niagara Peninsula, one of Ontario's oldest settled regions, and the scene of some of the heaviest fighting during the War of 1812, had perhaps the greatest concentration of historical military landmarks and buildings in the province.

In 1887, George Bull, the newly appointed canon of All Saints Church in Niagara Falls, first gave voice to the concern of many Ontarians for the dilapidated condition of so many of the region's historic sites and buildings. Born in Dublin, Bull had come to Canada in 1831. Ordained in 1852, he served in various parishes in Barton, Stamford, Lundy's Lane, and Hamilton before retiring in 1902. For thirty years he was a superintendent of schools in the counties of Lincoln and Wentworth.

George Bull was particularly appalled by the neglected state of the battlefield and cemetery of Lundy's Lane at the crest of Drummond Hill. The site was unmarked and dotted with weed-choked tombstones in various stages of decay. To transform this unfortunate scene and to mark the site with a fitting monument became the raison d'etre of the Lundy's Lane Historical Society in its first years of operation.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, the founders of the Wentworth Historical Society credited a visit to the neglected ruins and landmarks of the Niagara region for the inspiration to form a historical society in their area:

The scene of desolation presented was touching in the extreme. The utter neglect of these forts is resulting in their complete obliteration, and it was proposed to try and organize a Society for the purpose of collecting all possible information relating to these places and their early occupants, and enlist the aid of the Government in their preservation.

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Two historical societies at Niagara-on-the-Lake, both impressed by the example of Canon Bull, were founded to ensure the preservation of the town's historic sites and buildings. A short-lived organization established by William Kirby in 1891 lobbied briefly for federal funds to repair Fort Mississauga before the centennial celebration of the founding of Upper Canada in 1892.<sup>35</sup> Janet Carnochan's second Niagara Historical Society founded in 1896 dedicated itself to "the preservation of all historical landmarks in [the] vicinity."<sup>36</sup> At approximately the same time, the Thorold and Beaverdams Historical Society materialized with a view to memorializing the battlefield made famous by the names of Secord and Fitzgibbon.<sup>37</sup> And finally, much of the enthusiasm for the formation of the Historical Section of the Canadian Institute seems to have come from the interest of its founders in preserving such archaeological sites as Fort Ste. Marie and historic Forts George and Mississauga<sup>38</sup> in the Niagara region.

Not a few of the historical associations discussed here were in part the product of a snowball effect within the historical society movement; that is, once the first

*Snowbird effect of 1840s intrusion burning the off*

societies were functioning, they directly encouraged the creation of similar organizations in adjacent counties, either through direct stimulus or simply by example. For instance, within months of its formation, the Lundy's Lane Historical Society corresponded with individuals in Fort Erie, Stoney Creek, Niagara, and Thorold in the hope of establishing branch societies. <sup>39</sup>

There seems little question that Canon Bull's enthusiasm was at least partly responsible for the establishment of historical associations in Hamilton, Thorold, and Niagara. <sup>40</sup> All these groups manifested their indebtedness to the Lundy's Lane society by emulating its activities in almost every respect. Janet Carnochan, who was an active member of the Lundy's Lane Historical Society when she founded the Niagara Historical Society in 1895, consciously patterned the activities of her historical group after Bull's organization, and readily <sup>41</sup> admitted relying on his advice on several occasions.

Another clergyman, Henry Scadding (1813-1901) of Toronto, actively promoted the formation of county historical associations in Ontario. The son of John Scadding, at one time the property manager of Colonel John Graves Simcoe, Henry was a native of Devonshire, England and had come to Canada in 1821. <sup>42</sup> Educated at Upper Canada College and St. John's College, Cambridge, he taught for several years at the former institution before assuming the position of rector of Holy Trinity Church in Toronto. He retired from active parochial work in 1875 and devoted himself to historical pur-

suits. By publishing Toronto of Old (1873), Toronto: Past and Present (1884) in collaboration with J.C. Dent, and Toronto: Old and New (1891) with G. Mercer Adams, Scadding earned his reputation as the historian of Toronto. In recognition of his accomplishments his peers elected him president of the Canadian Institute (1870-76), of the York Pioneers' Society (1880-98), and of the provincial Pioneer and Historical Association (1888-94).

As leader of these historical societies, Scadding was instrumental in forming the Peel Pioneers' Society in 1887 and helped to organize the Simcoe County Pioneer and Historical Society in 1891. The former was created as a sister organization by the members of the York Pioneers residing in and around Brampton, and adopted the York Pioneers' constitution and by-laws as their own. So too did the Simcoe County society, founded mainly through the efforts of Andrew F. Hunter. When Hunter assumed the ownership of the Barrie Examiner in October 1889, he promised that "every effort will be made to uphold the position of the Examiner as a weekly newspaper of the highest class. The series of Local and County historical sketches already announced to appear will be commenced in a few weeks ...." Upon learning this, Scadding urged Hunter to form a historical association in Simcoe County. Taking up the challenge, Hunter educated his readers as to the value of history and local historical societies, and reported on the activities

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of existing historical associations across the province. After nearly two years of educating the public as to the desirability of having a historical society in the community, Hunter succeeded in establishing one in Barrie.

Admiration for the efforts of the Lundy's Lane and York Pioneers' Societies certainly contributed to the growth of the historical society movement. On the other hand, local pride and jealousies played significant roles in the formation of some organizations. Niagara Falls residents stung the pride of adjacent communities by boasting that the battle of Lundy's Lane was the "most memorable, ... the most severe and decisive, of all the engagements on the Niagara frontier during the campaign of 1812-14." <sup>47</sup> Naturally Wentworth's "Men of Gore" had other ideas about the most significant military engagement in the Niagara region. It was a common belief in Wentworth County that the battle of Stoney Creek was more important, and "but for the reversal resulting from that engagement the loss of [the] Southern peninsula would certainly have followed the advance of the American forces" in 1813. <sup>48</sup> After all, exulted a founding member of the Wentworth Historical Society, the skirmish was "a victory which has proven most important to us Canadians ...; a victory which will not be erased from history in all time; a victory that has very few equals; a victory that has secured the home, the family and the country to British-Canadian people we trust for all time to come." <sup>49</sup> Needless

to say, the residents of Thorold reacted in much the same way and glorified the accomplishments of Laura Secord and the heroes of Beaverdams.

Ironically, rivalries within the same locality could give rise to a historical association. In 1899, for instance, most of the officers and members of the ladies' auxiliary of the Wentworth Historical Society bitterly dissociated themselves from the parent body and formed the independent Women's Wentworth Historical Society. This division of historical forces in Hamilton climaxed a running battle between the two groups over the question of a museum and monument site for the Battle of Stoney Creek. The majority of the original group, most of whom were men, had resolved to build a log cabin museum in Harvey Park adjacent to Dundurn Castle, near the defensive earthworks built during the War of 1812, and to erect a monument commemorating the battle on a small plot that they determined was near the centre of the battlefield.

Many of the women, however, rejected this plan. They advocated instead a more daring project involving the purchase of the Gage House and homestead. The dispute over the museum and monument site was further complicated by another controversy which to this day has not been settled to everyone's satisfaction. The women's claim that the Battle of Stoney Creek raged all around the Gage house was rejected by the officers of the Wentworth Historical Society. From their reading of the documents pertaining to the battle, the

men were convinced that the homestead remained on the periphery of the battlefield.<sup>50</sup> They argued that the women's case was biased by the fact that Sara Calder, the president of the Women's group, had a personal interest in purchasing the homestead since her grand-parents had owned the property at the time of the battle. In any case, Mrs. Calder persuaded her feminist counterparts to raise the necessary funds by public subscription. When that proved insufficient, she signed the mortgage herself for the balance owing. Subsequently, the main work of the Women's Wentworth Historical Society involved raising additional funds to expand, renovate, and maintain the property as a museum and park.<sup>51</sup> It was the first historic site and building in Canada secured for permanent preservation by an independent agency.

The formation of the Women's Canadian Historical Society of Toronto was a less dramatic affair. At a meeting of the Pioneer and Historical Association of the Province of Ontario, September 5, 1895, a resolution moved by David B. Read and seconded by Henry Scadding was passed appointing Sarah Curzon and Mary Fitzgibbon a committee to form a women's society in affiliation with the provincial organization.<sup>52</sup> Within a few months, the committee of two had created their own organization.

The women's historical groups in Hamilton and Toronto should be considered to some degree a product of the feminist movement which had been growing in strength since the 1870s.

*Common*

Many women were no longer content with their subordinate status and were attempting in various ways to carve a more meaningful role for themselves outside the confines of the Victorian home.<sup>53</sup>

The leading personnel of the women's society in Toronto were deeply involved in the feminist movement. For example, Sarah A. Curzon (1833-98) had been an activist for women's rights since the 1870s when she helped Dr. Emily Howard Stowe to establish the first women's

suffrage group in Canada in the guise of the Toronto Women's Literary Club. In 1881 Mrs. Curzon became a leading publicist for the feminists as an associate editor of the Toronto weekly Canada Citizen, a temperance paper that had offered the literary club a column through which to propagate its philosophy and causes.<sup>54</sup>

Another charter member of the Toronto women's society, Mrs. Willoughby Cummings, had been on the editorial staff of the Globe for several years, the first woman in Canadian journalism to hold such a position. Other members -- Mary A. Fitzgibbon, Lady Edgar, Marjorie McMurchy -- were accomplished writers in an age when some men still frowned upon such activity. Janet Carnochan (1839-1926), the founder of the Niagara Historical Society, endeavoured in her capacity as a teacher to advance the cause of women in her profession. After an exemplary teaching career, she ignored much adverse criticism in 1872 to assume the position of principal of the Niagara Public School, a position her critics believed was beyond the capabilities of

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a woman.

There is little doubt that the women had an axe to grind when they formed historical societies. History, they apparently thought, was a useful tool to promote the late nineteenth century demand for equal rights, by illustrating what a vital role women had played in the development of the nation. It was partly for this reason that Laura Secord became the patron saint of the women's society in Toronto. Her deed was highly dramatized and suitably embellished in Sarah Curzon's Laura Secord, The Heroine of 1812 (1879). Mary Fitzgibbon, a grand-daughter of the male hero in the Secord story, and of Susanna Moodie, the writer of Roughing it in the Bush, used the first transaction of the Women's Canadian Historical Society to publicize her feminist beliefs and to stake a claim for the women's share of the national glory:

... We know the worth of our influence now for good or ill, and the devoted loyalty of the women in Canada in 1812 was a strong factor in the preservation of our land to the British Empire. On every page of the history of the U.E. Loyalists, and that of the War of 1812-14, the energy, loyalty, bravery and endurance of the women are written in letters of gold.

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It is interesting that the first of hundreds of Women's Institutes across Canada, yet another manifestation of aroused womanhood, was formed in 1897 at historic Stoney Creek. Although originally designed to promote a knowledge of household science, these feminist groups soon included history within their terms of reference and became, in effect,

the rural counterparts of the urban women's historical societies.

Personal and familial pride of accomplishment seems to have been another powerful factor motivating many of the founders of these early historical associations. Certainly charter members in every group either traced their lineage to Upper Canadian pioneer stock or claimed to be original settlers in their own right. Indeed, the York and Peel societies were exclusively "pioneer" associations that opened their ranks only to long-term residents of the respective counties and their descendants. The following excerpt from a speech at the annual games of the York and Peel Pioneers in 1891 provides insights into the minds of those elderly members who had sought and found their version of the good life in Ontario, men who had helped to lay the foundation of the province and who recognized the significance of their undertaking:

In looking back and taking a retrospect of the history of many of your members, I find they, like myself, were leaving their native country ... accompanied by poverty; but to-day, thank God, many of us have left homes to come here wherein there is a great plenty, and enough to spare; ... [Now] the Canadian farmer finds himself comfortable [sic] housed in his frame building, his fields surrounded with good fences and waving with yellow crops, all the vestiges of the old forest removed except here and there an old pine stump to remind him of former generations of heroes that have passed away.

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For such men, the zenith of agrarianism had been reached in

Ontario.

Though eligibility to join most other historical groups was not restricted to those of pioneer lineage, there was still a tendency to encourage such people to join. The Simcoe County Pioneer Historical Society, for example, especially welcomed "those who resided in the County of Simcoe prior to confederation, July 1, 1867, or their descendants." <sup>58</sup> In Toronto, the organizers of the Women's Canadian Historical Society were chosen by Mary Fitzgibbon and Sarah Curzon because they were representatives by name or descent of families long resident in the city. <sup>59</sup> Only one of the associations was comprised exclusively of loyalist descendants. The Grenville Pioneer and Historical Society restricted its membership to those who could establish that one of their ancestors had been a resident in Canada before <sup>60</sup> 1792. This group was basically the one man operation of its president, F.J. French, who spent his energy filling notebooks with the reminiscences and pioneer experiences and accomplishments of the members and their families. <sup>61</sup> To be sure, loyalist names crop up in every historical society -- Denison, Canniff and Playter of Toronto, Rogers of Peterborough, Mills, Land, Lazier and Griffin of Hamilton, Kirby, Ball and Servos of Niagara -- but loyalist ancestry was not typical of the general membership in any of these groups.

In an age when history was used for nationalistic ends, when loyalists and pioneers were extolled as the found-

ers and builders of the country, there may have been deep personal and psychological reasons for the ancestor worship so evident in the historical associations. Professor Berger, drawing upon Richard Hofstadter's status revolution thesis in The Age of Reform (1955), has argued that the loyalist tradition flourished partly because "it bolstered the status of loyalist descendants by associating their ancestors with the foundations of national greatness."<sup>62</sup> According to this hypothesis, loyalist families in Ontario, in common with old-stock Anglo-American families along the eastern seaboard of the United States, developed an interest in history and genealogy partly in an attempt to recover social prestige and to compensate for the impending or actual loss of social and political power to the nouveaux riches of the so-called Gilded Age. In the republic, the old families apparently sought to counter the social climbing of the new aristocracy of wealth and to shore up their own declining prominence by claiming a superior patriotism as descendants of the nation's founders, and as guardians of America's culture.<sup>63</sup> Hence, filiopietistic patriotic orders akin to the Sons of the American Revolution (1889) and the Daughters of the American Revolution (1890) proliferated after 1870, accessible only to the descendants<sup>64</sup> of the founding fathers.

Berger perceives a similar "pattern in the assumptions of social superiority based on ancestry and patriotism" in the literature of British-Canadian loyalism. The historical societies, for instance, allegedly" ... filled the pages of

published transactions with sketches of loyalist families, usually written by relatives, stressing past sacrifices for principle and tales of hardship in the forests of Ontario." <sup>65</sup> According to Berger, loyalist descendants in the historical society movement, individuals like G.T. Denison, William Canniff, and William Kirby, helped create the loyalist cult which "could not but redound to their own personal prestige and social status." Furthermore, the antipathy many of the loyalist descendants harboured "towards men of business" might be explained by Berger's application of the Hofstadter thesis.

But how well does the Berger - Hofstadter hypothesis explain the motivation of those who formed historical societies in this period? Certainly ancestor worship or filio-pietism suffused the literature of the historical societies. Interest in the non-loyalist pioneer fathers was quite strong, indeed, moreso than Professor Berger has indicated. The local historians lauded the average pioneers as founders and builders of the Dominion. Like the loyalists, the pioneers were also portrayed as suffering and toiling in the forest primeval to build home and country. They too fought rebels in 1837 and Fenians in the 1860s to preserve their heritage, even if they had not participated in the hallowed War of 1812. The York Pioneers' Society, which was composed solely of pioneers and their descendants, and the other pioneer and historical societies that welcomed the membership of old-stock families, very likely had members who were imbued with

the same filiopietism that spawned the American patriotic orders. Moreover, by publicizing their lineal connection with the pioneer founders of the province, many of the historical society members, whether they realized it or not, may have been seeking greater personal prestige and social status.

It is doubtful, however, that most historical society members developed an interest in history as a means to counter the social pretensions of a new aristocracy of wealth and to bolster their own declining status. It may have been a factor in the motivation of a few loyalist descendants like George Denison and William Kirby, described by Berger as psychological misfits in the new urban and industrial order. But such people do not appear to have been typical members of historical associations. Actually, the historical groups enlisted many prosperous businessmen, professional people, and political and social leaders of various descriptions who held decision-making positions in a community that was becoming increasingly industrialized and urbanized, and who were clearly not estranged by it.

Not a few of these members recollected the earlier insecure days of their immigrant and native-born families and had good reason to be proud of their familial and personal accomplishments. The register of the York Pioneers' Society, with its eight hundred entries, is replete with the names and the stories of individuals of log cabin birth or

of lowly immigrant background who subsequently developed into veritable pillars of the community.<sup>66</sup> In short, they were generally not representative of old-stock Upper Canadian families known over several generations for their wealth and prestige, certainly not the class of families that Berger suggests were losing power and social prominence in late nineteenth century Ontario. Some of the very parvenus that the Denisons, Canniffs, and Kirbys were ostensibly reacting against can be found in most local historical associations.

A closer examination of the social and economic background of the membership of several of the historical groups will illustrate these points more clearly. Most associations encompassed a relatively broad cross-section of those levels of society above the working classes. The latter, who were rarely found in the historical associations, may have been indifferent to historical matters, or they may have found satisfaction in such bodies as Mechanics' Institutes, trade unions, Orange lodges, and temperance societies. Of course, they may have boycotted the historical associations because of an aversion to the social structure of the membership. On the other hand, it is quite possible that the historical groups, some of which were quite exclusive, simply kept out lesser mortals. Their constitutions usually included a clause requiring that all new members be voted into the society, a device that may have ensured that new recruits had the proper social qualifications. Admittedly, there is not one instance to be found where the application of

a prospective member was vetoed, but it is possible that the recording secretaries conveniently ignored such incidents to prevent possible embarrassment. At the very least, the prospect of being turned down might have deterred some individuals from seeking membership.

Turning now to the membership structure of specific groups, the ten charter members of the Lundy's Lane Historical Society located in the village of Niagara Falls represented a cross section of occupations in their community. Four were small businessmen (a nurseryman, a grocer, a wholesale seedsman, and a hotel keeper), three belonged to the professions (a clergyman, a public school principal, and a teacher), and what appears to be an exception to the rule of working class participation, two were skilled artisans (a stonemason and a plasterer).<sup>67</sup> Within months more individuals of similar background joined this group -- James McGlashan, manager of the Imperial Bank of Welland, and Welland County treasurer; J. Wilson, superintendent of the Niagara Falls Park Commission; and the Reverends Canon Houston, S. Hobbs, and E.J. Fessenden. In the town of St. Thomas to cite another example, the founders of the Elgin Historical and Scientific Institute included several highly placed county officials (the registrar, a judge and a magistrate), as well as the county clerk, two civic engineers, a loan company manager, a lawyer, a bookstore owner, a jeweller and the editor of the St. Thomas Journal, James A.

Brierley. Twenty-five new members of similar background joined within a month of the society's formation and included past and present county and municipal officials and civil servants, lawyers, teachers, doctors, local businessmen, and the editor of the St. Thomas Times.<sup>68</sup>

In 1892 the Wentworth Historical Society listed some two hundred members on its rolls, and of these roughly half were men. A breakdown of their occupations reveals that thirty-four owned businesses of nearly every size and description, twenty-two were lawyers, and thirteen were civic or county officials. Also listed were six doctors, six accountants and bookkeepers, five executives or managers of large companies, three bankers, two judges, two real estate agents, a dentist, an editor, and an architect. The chairman, secretary, and two elected members of the Hamilton Board of Education belonged to the society in 1899, as did three aldermen and five members of the federal and provincial legislatures. A detailed check of all the new recruits listed in the minute book from 1899 to 1923 reveals that no substantial change occurred in the basic social and economic structure of this association.<sup>69</sup> The female representation was largely made up of the wives and daughters of the male members.

Several of the associations tended to become clubs for the social or intellectual elite which made membership in them desirable for people concerned with social appearances. For instance, the tone of the Kingston Historical

Society meetings was set by the faculty and administration of Queen's University and the Royal Military College, and by several of the literary lights of Kingston. In Toronto, the Historical Section of the Canadian Institute sported a plethora of degree holders including half a dozen M.A.s and several Ph.D.s (though not in history) among its rank and file.<sup>70</sup> The local society in Peterborough recorded on its rolls a long list of the town and county's socially prominent and wealthy families. Included in the list were representatives of such literary families as the Stricklands, Moodies, Traills, and Stewarts, and lumber barons such as J.M. Irwin, J. Carnegie, M. Boyd, and W.H. Hall. Many of the pioneer families of the Peterborough area were also represented such as the Dunlops, Burnhams, Rogers, Barlees, Halls, Hays, Blackwells, Birdsalls, Dennistouns, Lundy's, Chamberlains, Cluxtons, and Pecks.<sup>71</sup> Similarly, a certain exclusiveness was evident in the membership of the Women's Canadian Historical Society of Toronto. The roster included such names as Robinson, Jarvis, Merritt, Baldwin, Sullivan, Powell, Boulton, Burwash, Cawthra, Cayley, Cumberland, Dent, Hodgins, Lash, Riddell, Rolph, Wrong, and Strachan. All these names conjure up much of the city's indeed the province's history.<sup>72</sup>

Underlying the ancestor worship and the interest in pioneers and loyalists was a conservative urge to preserve the principles of the past for inspiration and guidance in

the present and future. "We have endeavoured to keep alive in our hearts," wrote Clementina Fessenden of the Wentworth Historical Society, "the best traditions of the early life of our forebears -- looking to the 'Rock from whence we were hewn,' as the inspiration of our lives."<sup>73</sup> What all the historical associations aimed at, added Henry Scadding, "is that the memory and example of our brave men in the past, our pioneers and founders of our communities, should not be utterly lost. Our pioneer and historical societies are to furnish the chroniclers who are not to allow the achievements and wisdom of our worthy forefathers to perish."<sup>74</sup>

The conservative premise that there were guiding principles embedded in the past was integrally related to another of the main factors impelling Ontarians to form historical societies in this period -- the need to create a unifying national heritage by using history to foster patriotism and to "aid in welding together a ... distinctively Canadian national sentiment."<sup>75</sup> Almost all the historical associations put the building up of Canadian loyalty and patriotism near the top of their list of objectives. In fact, this may be seen as the ultimate function of most of their activities. The urgent need to create a cohesive national heritage was a response to the divisions in Canadian society after 1887. Economic depression, the apparent failure of the National Policy, the Liberal Party's flirtation with Commercial Union and Unrestricted Reciprocity, and the

suspected machinations of annexationist forces ignited an explosive debate over the future of the Dominion. Arguments over annexation, independence and the British connection became one of the great national past times in the late 'eighties and early 'nineties. At the same time racial and religious divisions wracked the Canadian body politic as the Riel hanging, the Jesuit Estates controversy, and the Manitoba School Question became fiery issues, helping to give rise to such perverse progeny as the Equal Rights Association and the Protestant Protective Association. These events and issues were very much on the minds of some historical society founders who believed in the capacity of history to shape common national sentiments for healing the rents in the Canadian social fabric and for combatting the deeply feared continentalist threat.

Although historical associations would have probably appeared in Ontario during the 1890s as an expression of the general North American interest in local history, it is clear that the appearance of at least two of them was connected with the annexationist scare that developed after 1887. Underlying the formation of the Lundy's Lane and Wentworth Historical Societies and their appeals for a national history was a determination on their part to combat the dreaded continentalists. Through all their activities, they sought to illustrate that imperial federation was the logical indeed inevitable end towards which

*loyalist  
int'l*

Canadian history had been evolving.

The loyalist interpretation of Canadian history was the vehicle by which these two local historical societies disseminated their imperialist message. In brief, this tradition <sup>76</sup> portrayed the loyalists as the very cream of society in the thirteen colonies who suffered by choice unspeakable depredations and atrocities, and the loss of country and all material possessions for the sake of high principle and religious and moral values. In particular, they adhered to the institutions and philosophy of the British constitution, and to imperial unity. During the War of 1812, the tradition said, the Canadian militia comprised mainly of loyalists and their kin, and inspired by Isaac Brock, successfully defended, preserved, and perpetuated the principles of the British constitution and of imperial federation that had supposedly served to found Canada. <sup>77</sup>

Canon George Bull frankly admitted that his organization was an agency devoted to propagating the message of imperial federation. "The result of our labour, "he confided to William Kirby," is not for money to ourselves . . . , but for much higher consideration -- the raising of the British Flag to its rightful distinction in our country." <sup>78</sup> To the public he declared that "there is a tidal historic wave from East to West, which is affecting and teaching the whole population unmistakably for the good at this time. National sentiment will by such means be cultivated in con-

nection with the great Empire to which we belong, and will serve to strengthen in Canada the bonds of British Union."<sup>79</sup>

To understand what is meant by this statement, it is essential to recall Professor Berger's thesis, that "Canadian imperialism was one variety of Canadian nationalism," and that at the root of this nationalism was a uniquely loyalist interpretation of the past.<sup>80</sup>

In speeches and publications, members of the Lundy's Lane group hammered home the message of the loyalist tradition using the battle on Drummond Hill as the focal point of their argument. It was at Lundy's Lane that the militia defended the "priceless blessings" of British constitutional government and imperial unity handed down by the "loyalist fathers."<sup>81</sup> E.A. Cruikshank, who declared that "Canada should never separate from the motherland,"<sup>82</sup> documented the details of the victory at Lundy's Lane for the society's first publication, while William Kirby chronicled the loyalist Annals of Niagara (1896).<sup>83</sup> The Reverend E.J. Fessenden edited what he called "a timely sermon for the new year of 1892," a document entitled A Loyal Sermon of 1814: Delivered by Rev. John Burns (1892).<sup>84</sup> The introduction to this publication was a measure of the almost indescribable emotional indeed quasi-religious commitment to the cause of imperial federation. Here Fessenden fulminated against the enemies of the British connection in 1891 as well as 1814, declaring them irreligious and deserving of a "'coward's grave'" and

"the curse of Meroz." He continued:

We are reminded ... that no one can live in "the fear of God" and not be loyal and patriotic toward fatherland .... This sermon is proof, if evidence were needed, that in those days all denominations of Christian men formed an invincible host of loyal unionists, liberal and conservative, ready with their life blood to maintain the integrity of the empire. As was the manse then, so it is throughout Stamford to-day. Let us take heart of courage from this augury that the same is true throughout Canada.

85

To Fessenden, the proverbial decree, "My son, fear thou the Lord and the King; and meddle not with them that are given to change" seemed an especially convincing retort to the continentalists as did all the other "closely reasoned Christian principles" espoused by the Reverend Burns in 1814.

Shortly after the formal organization of the Wentworth Historical Society in January 1889, George Mills, one of its founders and first president, recorded why he helped to form the association:

Its influence will naturally tend to enlarge patriotic and loyal sentiment. It will stimulate desire to increase our knowledge of our vast and invaluable inheritance. It will check the progress of discontent and elemental sedition of those who feel little interest in the country which the pluck and patriotism of the early pioneers preserved against great odds, and transmitted to them, to live and prosper in. To this time traitors and annexationists have been permitted, unchecked to proclaim their peculiar ideas through the press .... The quiet unostentatious influences of such societies will do wonders towards dispelling false and erroneous ideas, counteracting disloyal and untruthful statements.

86

Mills, a loyalist by descent, Liberal-Conservative in politics,

and a past mayor of Hamilton, held the post of president of the Wentworth Historical Society for a decade. Along with other members of his group including F.W. Fearman, well known for his meat packing company and civic endeavours, Mills used the society as a platform to voice imperialist ideology and to combat the arguments of its arch-foe, Goldwin Smith.<sup>87</sup>

George Mills shared the attitudes and assumptions of other Ontario imperialists.<sup>88</sup> He believed that imperial federation was necessary to check the American policy of absorption and to secure for Canada a national destiny.<sup>89</sup> As for Canadian independence, it was a chimerical idea, presenting as it did "the spectacle of two nationalities on the same continent, with a common origin and language, the one all powerful, the other comparatively weak," a situation "so hedged in by danger as to preclude its ultimate success."<sup>90</sup> Commercial Union or Unrestricted Reciprocity, he believed, had "the look of a grand conspiracy to separate Canada from the British Empire," the prelude to annexation.<sup>91</sup> Within the imperial matrix, however, Mills felt that Canada would be able to develop its immense resources and ultimately attain a position "with power to command rather than to obey."<sup>92</sup> In a word, Canada would not long remain a "mere colony," she would "become a joint instrument along with England in bettering the condition of the world." Indeed, Mills thought that there was much truth in the "hackneyed prophecy" that the Dominion would become the "brightest jewel in the

British crown."<sup>93</sup>

Imperial federation also provided Mills with a solution for the racial and religious discord within the Dominion. This is significant considering that Professor Robert J.D. Page has argued that Canadians in the 1890s made no connection between the imperial idea and the racial and religious bitterness of the time. "Although this bitterness existed," Page stated, "it in no way focussed on Canada's position within the empire."<sup>94</sup> But George Mills made the connection, and the fact that he did so raises the question as to how many other people might have shared this opinion. On issues such as French-English dualism, Roman Catholicism, and separate schools, Mills held views that were not entirely unique in Ontario judging from the relative success of the Equal Rights Association and the Protestant Protective Association.<sup>95</sup> Behind the Jesuit Estates Act, for example, he perceived the spectre of "the French and Roman Catholic desire for dominance in Canada" and a plot to reinstate the "nefarious" Jesuit Order. As for separate schools, these were sloughed off as "nurseries for Romanism" which strengthened "the hands of the enemies of British liberty."<sup>96</sup> "Every constitutional measure," he wrote, "tending to the destruction of the separate schools, will therefore lessen the impending danger ...."<sup>97</sup> Religious rancor threatened "to burst forth into a storm of unprecedented magnitude," ending in a struggle for supremacy, a final struggle for

mastery which could snap the bonds of Confederation.

Although he admitted that annexation to the United States would effectively purge these French and Romanist influences, Mills was convinced that imperial federation would "work as radical a cure" while conferring "more lasting benefits" upon Canadians. Imperial federation would be followed by a marked increase in British and Protestant immigration that would "lessen the influence of the French and ultimately entirely destroy it, while it would weaken the power of Roman Catholicism."<sup>98</sup> Bearing in mind Page's observation that Canadians made no connection between the imperial idea and the racial and religious bitterness of these years, it is unfortunate that there is not sufficient information available to determine how widely Mill's views were held among the members of the historical groups. The spokesmen of the Pioneer and Historical Association of Ontario and the Ontario Historical Society, as will be indicated later, were certainly not of this persuasion. Instead they sought to develop a better understanding between the founding races through the study of their common past.

During the first few years of its existence, the Wentworth Historical Society served as a medium through which Mills, Fearman, and others assiduously promoted the idea of imperial federation and attempted to foster their conceptions of Canadian nationalism. In his inaugural address of November 18, 1890, Mills gave this explanation of the

historical society's function:

The influence of such Associations ought to promote manhood, furnish strength to the arm raised in defense of right, and paralyze the designs of traitors. It should nurture power to protect the weak, guard the innocent and punish the guilty. Nations draw their stability from the patriotism of their subjects. It is, indeed, the keystone to the arch of national construction, and in a free country the greatest safeguard to liberty, independence and progress, its decline a prelude to national degeneracy, its spread an indication of national vigor. Without patriotism, Canada ... may never hope to take a prominent place among nations; with it, that destiny would seem inevitable.

99

Following the example set by the Lundy's Lane Historical Society, the leaders of the Wentworth group invoked the loyalist tradition to promote the idea of imperial federation. They built their interpretation around the Battle of Stoney Creek, yet another instance, in their view, of the loyalist militia defending and preserving their traditions "with heroic valor against great odds." <sup>100</sup> By increasing the public's awareness of this struggle for imperial unity, Mills believed his society "would go far towards strengthening a determination to maintain, continue, and even enlarge our affectionate relationship with the Mother Land." <sup>101</sup> He confessed in his diary that he attempted to use the historical society outing at Stoney Creek, June 5, 1889 to create a climate of opinion favourable to the establishment of a branch <sup>102</sup> of the Imperial Federation League in Hamilton. It was a follow up to his activity a month earlier, when he, Fearman, and two other members of the society had organized a pre-

liminary public meeting to form a branch of the league in the city.<sup>103</sup> Principal George Grant of Queen's University, D'Alton McCarthy of the Equal Rights Association, and George Denison III, a Toronto police magistrate and chairman of the national organizing committee of the Imperial Federation League, had been the featured speakers at that meeting.

Following Canon Bull's example, George Mills endeavoured as president of the Wentworth Historical Society to lobby for federal funds to construct a monument at Stoney Creek. Not only did he justify the project in terms of the military significance of the battle, but he emphasized the political utility of such memorials "in spreading a national sentiment," so necessary when "many disloyal people are ventilating their peculiar views."<sup>104</sup> Doubtless this was a reference to Goldwin Smith, the one-time Oxford political economist and historian and an advocate of Canada's annexation to the United States, and Erastus Wiman, a Canadian expatriate then residing in New York and an architect of the Commercial Union movement. F.W. Fearman, Mill's colleague, used the same arguments:

The time is at hand when no more delay should be permitted; when a small rabble of restless men are endeavouring to unsettle the minds of the people and disturb the peace of the community, then it is well to inspire all particularly the young with a knowledge of the history of our country; and there is no means that can so well be done than by the providing of monuments... to the memory of these great events, and to the heroes who took so prominent a part in them.

Members of the Wentworth Historical Society also helped to establish and to work closely with other patriotic organizations. At this time Hamilton was a hot-bed of patriotic group activity and the home not only of the first Canadian Club (1893),<sup>106</sup> but also of the first Ontario chapter of the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire (1900). Members of the historical society were charter members of both these associations, branches of which soon appeared in other parts of the province and Dominion. The first IODE chapter in Hamilton was originally named after Clementina Fessenden, the corresponding secretary of the historical society, the founder of Empire Day (1897), and the woman chiefly responsible for establishing the chapter.<sup>107</sup> Mrs. Fessenden (née Trenholme), who was born in Trenholme, Quebec and educated in Montreal before marrying the Reverend E.J. Fessenden, was second to no one in her crusade to inspire Canadians with her imperialistic brand of Canadian<sup>108</sup> nationalism.

In summation, both the Lundy's Lane Historical Society (1887) and the Wentworth Pioneer and Historical Society (1888) can be regarded at least as informal "branches" of the Imperial Federation League in that they consciously propagated the gospel of imperial federation through the medium of the loyalist tradition. The question remains, however, as to what extent the other historical organizations became propagandists for the imperial federation movement.

Actually, none of them showed the same consistency of purpose that was found in the historical societies at Niagara Falls and Hamilton.

One society that remained untouched by the thinking of the imperial federationists was the Simcoe County Pioneer and Historical Society. In an ideological sense, Andrew F. Hunter, a Liberal and the founder of the society, was persona non grata to imperialists of George Mills' ilk.

Unlike Mills, Hunter was not haunted by the annexationist bogey and he saw no absorptionist plot behind the Liberal Party's policy of Unrestricted Reciprocity. In fact, when he assumed the ownership of the Barrie Examiner in October 1889, his lead editorial proclaimed:

In Canadian politics, the Examiner will continue to firmly advocate Liberal principles. For the prosperity of the country it is necessary to obtain more favourable trade relations with the American republic. The accomplishment of this reform, which, we believe, can be effected without surrendering the slightest part of our National Independence, will be one which we shall endeavor to bring about.

109

An explanation for the founding of the Simcoe County Pioneer and Historical Society need go no further than the intrinsic interest of its members in archaeology and local history, Hunter's two year campaign to establish a society, the example of American historical associations, the personal and familial pride of accomplishment showed by the members that included a reverence for the county's pioneer founding

fathers, and, finally, the encouragement of Henry Scadding. That Scadding, an ardent imperial federationist himself, went out of his way to help Hunter who was not, is proof alone that the ideological thrust of the historical society movement was by no means dogmatically imperialist.

Even Henry Scadding's own York Pioneer and Historical Society did not embrace the philosophy of the Imperial Federation League. As the following excerpt suggests, Scadding realized that he was not speaking to an audience of the converted at a joint meeting of the York and Peel Pioneers in July 1892 when he requested that his listeners weigh carefully the virtues of a federated Empire:

... inheriting as we do so largely a deep respect for the old U.E. principles, it will be expected of us, I think, and of our children, when the critical time shall come, that we shall present a very dedicated front against all who shall be engaged in any movement for the dismemberment of the great British Empire, and what I desire is that in the meantime all our members should take into consideration, as far as it may be in their power, the pros and cons for the great measure of Imperial Confederation which is now occupying the minds of so many. I do not think the matter should be thrust aside as an impracticable and visionary project.

110

Having a venerated president who supported a particular cause was evidently not a guarantee that the historical society would automatically follow his lead.

Another institution that did not dedicate itself to fostering an interest in the loyalist fathers for nationalistic ends was the Kingston Historical Society. The stated objec-

tives of this group -- "the collection and preservation of books, documents, and other objects of Historical interest, the reading at the meetings ... of papers on historical subjects, and the publication ... of all such documents and papers as it may be deemed advisable to publish" --<sup>111</sup> reflected more the interests of the academic than the patriot-maker. The society's roster included the names of many faculty members and administrators of Queen's University and the Royal Military College as well as the literary and social lights of Kingston.<sup>112</sup> Although the members talked at length of erecting plaques in the city, and of establishing a museum, the Kingston Historical Society's activities in the 'nineties were virtually limited to collecting documents and preparing papers, many of which were scholarly productions based on extensive research.<sup>113</sup> Most of the papers were published in the local press or the Queen's Quarterly, while Adam Shortt's valuable studies of "The Beginning of Banking in Upper Canada" were subsequently printed in the Banking Journal. The minute book of the society indicates that neither imperialist rhetoric nor patriotic tub-thumping interrupted the ruminations of this staid, intellectual circle.

Professor Berger gives the impression that the publications of all the historical societies were basically a medium for the imperial federation message. He states that these publications were "almost exclusively devoted to the

hardships of the United Empire Loyalists and the incidents of the War of 1812. "<sup>114</sup> As a matter of fact, only the early volumes of the Lundy's Lane and Niagara Historical Societies, were devoted "almost exclusively" to loyalist and military history. This should come as no surprise considering that those historical groups were situated in an area of loyalist settlement that saw the bitterest fighting in the War of 1812. Yet even the publications of historical associations close by Niagara, at Thorold and Hamilton, dealt with other themes and subjects. For instance, the first three issues of the Journal and Transactions of the Wentworth Historical Society (1899-1902) included numerous essays on non-loyalist or military history ranging from general European and Canadian history to local social, economic, and political topics, reminiscences, topography, and biography. The title of the sole production of the Thorold and Beaverdams Historical Society -- The Jubilee History of Thorold, Township and Town: From the Red Man to the Present (1897)<sup>115</sup> -- indicates that the volume encompassed more than the period from the American Revolution to the War of 1812, although, admittedly, that period bulked largest in the book.

Historical associations outside the Niagara region had understandably even less interest in loyalist or military history simply because these subjects had little local relevance. The Elgin Historical and Scientific Institute's first publication, Historical Sketches of the County of Elgin

(1895),<sup>116</sup> was made up of three essays that examined themes peculiar to southwestern Ontario -- James Coyne's "The Country of the Neutrals," C.O. Ermatinger's "On the Talbot Settlement," and K.W. McKay's "The Development of the County of Elgin." The second publication of this group was a local institutional history, K.W. McKay's The Court Houses of a Century (1901).<sup>117</sup> In Simcoe County the pattern was similar. Of the many papers read to the society during the 1890s, some of which were later published in six volumes of Pioneer Papers (1908-1917),<sup>118</sup> none dealt with loyalist themes. A few examined the county's minor role in the War of 1812, while the bulk involved pioneer social and economic history and reminiscences. In Kingston, only two of the thirty-six papers read to the historical society in the 1890s pertained to loyalist subjects. The remainder covered multiple topics such as European history as it related to North America, Kingston during the French regime, and Upper Canadian social and economic history.<sup>119</sup> Clearly, Professor Berger's generalization that the historical societies devoted their publications "almost exclusively" to the hardships of the loyalists and the War of 1812 needs to be qualified.

That only two of some fifteen historical societies seem to have been "branches" of the Imperial Federation League is a reflection of the lack of enthusiasm for a more closely united Empire among the population at large. Professor Robert J.D. Page has recently argued that the attitude typical of most

Canadians seems to have been held by Sir John A. Macdonald. "He gave many expressions of unbounded loyalty to the British connection on the public platform," Page explained, "but he was always careful to ensure that nothing was ever done to strengthen those existing ties." Macdonald was "a champion of the status quo rather than of imperial federation."<sup>120</sup>

The same message emerges from the pages of Sara Jeannette Duncan's The Imperialist (1904). Lorne Murchison, the protagonist of the novel was rejected by the voters in the town of Elgin (Brantford) for making imperial federation the chief plank of his election platform. "'You see, old man,' Horace Williams put in, 'you didn't get rid of that save-the-Empire-or-die-scheme of yours soon enough. People got to think you meant something by it.'"<sup>121</sup>

On the subject of imperial federation, the attitude of most members of the historical societies was likely that of the majority of Canadians. The membership, after all, did encompass a fairly representative cross-section of the major social groups in Ontario with the exception of the working classes. By the same token, it would follow that most historical groups likely had a few members who endorsed the principle of a federated Empire. Henry Scadding of the York Pioneers and James Coyne of the Elgin Historical and Scientific Institute were cases in point.

Interestingly enough, no rift appeared in the historical society movement between the imperial federationists and those who were content with the existing ties with

Britain. The minute books indicate that the subject of imperial federation was rarely brought up in the meetings of local societies. Perhaps the members saw little relevance in the subject for an historical association meeting. Another explanation may be that the members of some groups deemed the subject a dangerously political one, in which case they would have considered it unsuitable for discussion since the constitutions of most locals specifically prohibited debates on political questions. If the subject was broached by a speaker, it was invariably cloaked in the most innocuous and high-sounding rhetoric. <sup>122</sup> There is no record of any speaker attempting to spell out the mechanics of the proposed federation with the mother country. Controversy would almost certainly have erupted if this had been done.

With two notable exceptions, then, the local historical societies should not be regarded as branches of the Imperial Federation League. The majority of them were established for reasons in no way connected with the movement to consolidate the Empire. Moreover, five of the local historical groups were formed after the annexationist scare which had helped to give rise to the Wentworth and Lundy's Lane Historical Societies in the late 'eighties. Wentworth's George Mills rejoiced at the radically different outlook of Canadians in 1898 compared with "the condition of unrest and doubt as to our future that pervaded many sections of Canada nine years ago." <sup>123</sup> The editor of the Canadian Magazine, J.

I. Cooper, expressed the renewed sense of anticipation among Canadians in 1895:

To convince one's self that a national sentiment is growing very strong in this young Dominion ... one has only to notice the patriotic tone of the newspapers and to listen to the general comments of the talking public. A feeling of thorough confidence in the resources and possibilities of this country has been engendered by the stability and progress of the past two years, and this feeling is both strong and universal ... As our orators and writers have said, let us be French or British, Roman Catholic or Protestant if we wish, but let us be Canadians first ....

124

The wave of optimism and concomitant national awareness referred to in this statement had a noticeable effect on the formation of local historical associations after 1895. The Women's Canadian Historical Society recognized the broad factors underlying the appearance of their group: "The rapidly rising status of Canada among the nations of the world; that a unity of national purpose and a high ideal of loyalty and patriotism in her people will alone sustain her in such high position; that to this end a thorough acquaintance by her people, both native and im-  
migrant, with her heroic past, is of the first importance...."

125

Apprehension, however, was never far below the surface of the heady optimism of the mid-'nineties. While the Laurier era witnessed prosperity, it also saw a great wave of European and American immigration to Canada which aroused nativist fears of cultural submersion, or at the very least

the watering down of the British principles and traditions passed on by the loyalist and pioneer fathers of the country. Such fears were first expressed toward the end of the decade, and became quite vocal after the turn of the century. It is not difficult to read between the lines of the preamble to the constitution of the Women's Canadian Historical Society with its reference to "both native and immigrant," or of the Peterborough Historical Society's decision to establish British citizenship as an eligibility requirement,<sup>126</sup> and find an incipient nativist concern about the new immigration.<sup>127</sup>

### III

The activities and achievements of the dozen historical groups that functioned in the period under review were noteworthy. Indeed, it is surprising that these voluntary organizations with such modest financing, and with no more than a thousand rank and file members among them in 1898,<sup>128</sup> were able to accomplish so much. By the turn of the century they had succeeded in fulfilling their stated purposes of preserving and publishing historical materials, encouraging the preservation of historic buildings and landmarks, establishing museums, and generally creating a greater awareness of history by undertaking a broad range of historical and patriotic activities.

The historical societies in Toronto were in the vanguard of the campaign to preserve and to publish documentary materials. William Canniff of the Canadian Institute

and Henry Scadding of the York Pioneers laboured untiringly during the 1890s, as they had earlier, to educate both the public and the various levels of government on the need to preserve historical information.<sup>129</sup> With the support of their respective societies, they urged the provincial government to preserve archival material and to begin publishing annual volumes of documents.<sup>130</sup> In 1892, the Canadian Institute sent a delegation to confer with Premier Oliver Mowat and to urge his government to collect and publish documents on a systematic basis. Later, the institute advised Mowat to appoint an archivist "to make special enquiry about the valuable historical documents in the possession of private families, and to procure the originals or copies thereof."<sup>131</sup> This pressure likely had a cumulative effect over the years. It would seem to provide part of the explanation for the appointment of Alexander Fraser as the first provincial archivist in 1903. The historical societies themselves benefited in 1895 when Queen's Park began to award small grants of up to several hundred dollars for their publications projects.

Under Canniff's direction, the Historical Section of the Canadian Institute also urged county councils to record and collect municipal documents. Local historical associations added their voice to the Institute's plea, and newspapers in several centres endorsed the request.<sup>132</sup> Subsequently, several county councils became willing supporters

of historical society schemes. In Wentworth, Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Thorold, and Barrie, for example, councils began to subsidize the publication efforts of the local groups.

Another historical society activity that found favour in county councils was the essay contest. In Hamilton, when the Wentworth Historical Society organized a contest in 1896 to produce a county history, the council promised to bear the expense of publishing the winning essay. Joseph H. Smith, a school inspector, was declared the winner and his valuable Historical Sketch of the County of Wentworth was issued in 1897.<sup>133</sup> In Elgin County it was the school board which encouraged the historical society essay contest among school children. This contest was of large proportions, involving the co-operation of the school authorities and the teachers' association. Gold and silver medals were ostentatiously distributed to the winners at large public gatherings and over fifty of the essays were published in the local press.<sup>134</sup> Many historical societies held essay contests among school children,<sup>135</sup> but none was quite able to match the fanfare achieved in Elgin County.

The historical societies had less success in gathering and preserving collections of documents. Only one group considered here, the Niagara Historical Society under the guidance of Janet Carnochan, created a manuscript and newspaper archives of respectable proportions. By 1910, the

society's archives was a required research base for many notable historians such as A.H. Young, W.D. Le Sueur, W.L. Grant, and Adam Shortt.<sup>136</sup>

In the publications field, the Lundy's Lane Historical Society stood out markedly among its counterparts. E.A. Cruikshank wrote pamphlets on the Battle of Lundy's Lane (1899, 3rd. ed., 1895), Beechwoods (1889, 2nd. ed., 1895), and Drummond's Winter Campaign (1895). In 1896, Cruikshank began his much acclaimed The Documentary History of the Campaign on the Niagara Frontier ... 1812 - [1814].<sup>137</sup> These works

were of no little historiographical importance considering the depth of research and the information embodied in the documents. Even the bias was noteworthy, as Canon Bull noted: "For the first time the story of the battles and marches, the privations and sufferings of the founders of our Province is told from a truthful and sympathetic point of view."<sup>138</sup>

An indication of the popularity of Cruikshank's work is the fact that a first edition run of five hundred copies of the Battle of Lundy's Lane was quickly depleted, requiring a second edition in 1891 and a third in 1895.

Furthermore, Canon Bull reported that 122 weekly newspapers in the province were reproducing the society's publications.<sup>139</sup>

William Kirby's Annals of Niagara (1896) and Janet Carnochan's Niagara 100 Years Ago were also creditable studies that contained useful information.

No other historical society in the period could boast of a publishing record to rival that of the Lundy's Lane

organization. This is not to say that much valuable work was not accomplished by the other groups; on the contrary, the publications of the Niagara, Wentworth, Elgin, Thorold, and Simcoe associations are still welcome sources of information that cannot be overlooked by researchers in local history. At the same time, it is also true that a significant proportion of the material in these volumes was of dubious merit, material that was maudlin and anecdotal, poorly researched, short on interpretation, and based on reminiscences of suspect quality.

The establishment of museums was another endeavour of Ontario's earliest historical associations. The first group to establish one was the York Pioneers' Society. In 1879, this group moved the cabin originally built by John Scadding in 1794 on the bank of the Don River to its present site on the Toronto exhibition grounds, and stocked it with historical artifacts. The Canadian Institute's Museum of Natural History and Archaeology was opened in 1886 under the curatorship of David Boyle. During the 1890s, the Institute and other historical societies campaigned vigorously for a provincial museum.<sup>140</sup> This resulted in the designation of Boyle's collection in 1897 as the nucleus of a provincial museum under the auspices of George Ross' Department of Education.<sup>141</sup> Ross supplied new quarters and showcase facilities for the collection in the Toronto Normal School Building where it remained until absorbed in 1933 by the Royal

Ontario Museum.

At Niagara-on-the-Lake, Janet Carnochan confessed to David Boyle in 1898 that "... my ambition is (how to be realized I know not) to have a room to ourselves with a collection of which Niagara may be proud and I shall then feel I have accomplished something." <sup>142</sup> In 1903, Miss Carnochan announced her long-range plan to raise money for the construction of a museum building which would double as a monument to the loyalists. The museum was built on a site donated by Miss Carnochan and opened in 1907, the first building erected in Ontario specifically for museum purposes. Meanwhile, the Peterborough Historical Society established a museum in "Inverlea House," the past residence of an old Peterborough family. With substantial financial aid from both the town and county councils, the "Victoria Museum" was opened in 1897.

In Hamilton, both the Wentworth and Women's Wentworth Historical Societies started museums in buildings that they hoped to see preserved -- Sir Allan MacNab's Dundurn Castle and the Gage House at Stoney Creek. The circumstances surrounding the purchase of the Gage House museum have been dealt with earlier. Briefly, the Gage House and homestead were opened as a public park in 1899, to become the first instance of historic ground being taken over and placed at the public's disposal by a private organization. Not to be outdone, the Wentworth Historical Society opened a display room in Dundurn

Castle the following year. Since 1871, F.W. Fearman and George Mills, among others, had urged the city to purchase the Castle and its grounds for use as a park, but they were repeatedly thwarted by either the city council or the rate-<sup>143</sup> payers, because of the projected costs of the scheme.

Finally, in 1899, Fearman and Mayor Teetzel of Hamilton led a movement to purchase the property and succeeded in convincing the owner, the Hon. Donald McInnes, to drop the selling price from \$75,000 to \$50,000. After a vigorous educational campaign by city council and the historical society, the ratepayers carried a by-law to purchase the<sup>144</sup> property. The new Parks Board consented to the request of the historical society that a museum be established in Dundurn. Clementina Fessenden became the first curator, and the accumulated belongings of the society were loaned to the city as the basis for the museum.<sup>145</sup>

A great many artifacts, books, and archival material were likely preserved by such museums. It would be misleading, all the same, to picture them as unequivocal centres of learning. Perhaps Boyle's Archaeological Museum and Carnochan's Niagara museum were the best of their kind mainly because the curators had some basic awareness of sound collection and display policies. David Boyle gave an indication of his museum philosophy in the following:

For local history purposes there is nothing superior to the local museum, ... provided that said museum shall be true to itself. It must not become a hetero-

geneous collection, a mass of bric-a-brac, or a heap of curiosities. Every object should illustrate a point, enforce some statement, or elucidate something otherwise obscure.

146

It is not likely that the amateur curators of Gage House, Dundurn Castle, or Victoria Museum followed such a code. For example, the same women who established Gage House set up a Historic Loan Exhibit at a fê<sup>^</sup>te in 1895 that featured objects of either questionable pedigree or little educational value. These included a pair of spurs allegedly worn at the Battle of Waterloo, the wearer having had no fewer than three horses shot from under him, Laura Secord's "little dog" stuffed and mounted, a medallion worn by an officer of the Spanish Armada, the keys of the Bastille loaned by a gentleman from Woodstock, Santa Anna's riding whip, used at the Battle of Buena Vista, Sir Walter Scott's inkstand, and a sword used by George IV at the Battle of Waterloo.<sup>147</sup> As for the museum at Dundurn, some Hamiltonians may never be able to forget the stuffed two-headed calf that caused a minor sensation in its time. At Peterborough, local history again suffered when the society opened a "Florida Room" in 1901, filled with articles from that state donated by a former resident of Peterborough.<sup>148</sup> These museums, obviously, were something of a mixed blessing as agencies promoting the study of local history.

One accomplishment of more certain value was convincing the public and government for the first time to take an interest in preserving historic buildings, sites, and landmarks.

Granted, an initial concern for memorializing and preserving battlefields of the War of 1812 had been evident in the 1850s largely inspired by the erection of the second Brock Monument, and the subject had been discussed in the 1870s by the United Canadian Association. But it was not until after 1887 when the Lundy's Lane and Wentworth Historical Societies commenced their respective campaigns for the construction of monuments on the battlefields of the War of 1812, that either the public or the government began to take the matter of historic preservation at all seriously.

As indicated earlier, the decrepit condition of the buildings at Forts George and Mississauga was a major factor behind the appearance of a number of historical societies in the Niagara Peninsula. Beginning in 1891, William Kirby of the first Niagara Historical Society memorialized Ottawa, with little success, to finish restoring Fort Mississauga in time for the centennial celebrations to mark the hundredth anniversary of the founding of Upper Canada. The fort had been partially repaired in 1889-90 at the request of Kirby and the Niagara town council.<sup>149</sup> During the centennial year 1892, the Canadian Institute, the Lundy's Lane Historical Society, and residents of the Niagara region jointly petitioned the federal government for repairs to the buildings at Forts George and Mississauga.<sup>150</sup> Members of Parliament from Toronto and Niagara also raised the question in the House of Commons.<sup>151</sup> After several years, Ottawa reacted favourably to the demands of the historical associations and granted the

funds for minor repairs to historic buildings like those at Fort George, and for projects such as the monuments at Lundy's Lane, Chrysler's Farm, and Chateaugay.

By 1896, the historical societies determined that the best solution for the preservation of Forts George, Mississauga and Erie was to petition Ottawa to place the buildings and property under the control of the Niagara Falls Park Commission.<sup>152</sup> Eventually they achieved this goal, but not without difficulty. Several protests, for example, had to be made against plans to sell the fort properties to the likes of private railway corporations or American golf clubs.<sup>153</sup> In 1901, Fort Erie was the first garrison property transferred to the Niagara Park Commission, followed by Butler's Burial Ground in 1907 and the Drummond Hill Cemetery in 1910. Despite a dogged campaign after 1896 by the Niagara Historical Society, Forts George and Mississauga, and Navy Hall were not put under the commission's jurisdiction until after the Great War had ended.

These early historical associations also helped to conserve a number of valuable archaeological sites through a vigorous educational campaign. David Boyle and other members of the Canadian Institute, and Andrew Hunter of the Simcoe County Historical Society, for example, took steps to inform the township council of Tay and the town council of Midland of the historical importance of Fort St. Marie on the River Wye.<sup>154</sup> For a brief period in 1891, the Institute even

considered purchasing the old fort site by public subscrip-  
tion.<sup>155</sup> Boyle and Hunter impressed George Ross and other  
provincial officials with the reports of their archaeological  
findings in Simcoe County and elsewhere.<sup>156</sup> For its part,  
the Elgin Historical and Scientific Institute was indefatig-  
able in its endeavours to protect the Southwold earthworks,  
a unique double-walled Indian fort, until the National Parks  
service assumed responsibility for it in 1930.

In addition to the monuments at Lundy's Lane (1895)  
and Stoney Creek (1911), the local historical groups under-  
took other projects to commemorate people and events in  
Ontario's past. For example, the Lundy's Lane Society  
sponsored the campaign to erect a statue to Laura Secord,<sup>157</sup>  
and the York Pioneers publicized the idea of building a  
statue to Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe.<sup>158</sup> Both  
these projects were ultimately brought to fruition after the  
turn of the century under the aegis of the Ontario Historical  
Society. Associated with the erection of the monument at  
Lundy's Lane were the several reinterment ceremonies, like  
those held on October 17, 1891 and witnessed by some three  
thousand spectators.<sup>159</sup> On these occasions, the remains of  
soldiers killed in battle and accidentally uncovered in un-  
marked graves were reinterred with full military honours.

It is difficult now to understand the emotions that  
underlay the building of monuments to extol past people and  
events in the 'nineties. But like patriots in other countries

caught up by internal crises and growing national self-awareness, Canadians required and demanded the construction and preservation of symbols that epitomized their deepest beliefs and principles, symbols to which they could go to pay homage or seek spiritual guidance or sustenance for the present and future.

160

In keeping with their goal of encouraging an interest in history and creating a British-Canadian nationalism, the local historical associations advocated the introduction of Canadian history into all levels of the educational system. At the seventy-fifth anniversary celebration of the Battle of Lundy's Lane in 1889, Wentworth's George Mills and Niagara's William Kirby introduced the following resolution which was given press coverage across southern Ontario:

That in the opinion of this meeting the study of Canadian history ought to be made a special branch of education in the public schools of Ontario, and taught thoroughly so as to imbue into the minds of our children love of country, a patriotic pride in its history and institutions, and connections with the great Empire of which we form a part.

161

The following year, the Canadian Institute added its voice to the growing number of interested parties urging that Canadian history, taught with a "more pronounced spirit of patriotism," be given a more important place in schools and universities.

162

163

The Lundy's Lane and Wentworth Societies

also recommended that lecture courses be established in

Canadian history in all the colleges and universities of the province, few of which provided instruction in the subject at that time. At Queen's Adam Shortt of the political science department gave the first course in Canadian history in 1895.<sup>164</sup> At each of McGill, Queen's and Toronto in 1896, there was only one professor of Canadian history. In the same year, according to George M. Wrong, the University of Toronto provided no instruction in the history of Canada after 1815, "for fear of appeals to existing party feeling."<sup>165</sup>

By the summer of 1891, the historical societies reported that Queen's Park had responded to their pleas, that the requests for the introduction of Canadian history into the educational system, and the writing of textbooks by Canadian authors had been favourably received by the Minister of Education, George Ross.<sup>166</sup> With some justification the historical societies claimed partial responsibility for Ross' decision to make Canadian history compulsory in elementary schools, and to sponsor the publication of textbooks written by Canadian authors.

These, then, were the major activities and achievements of the dozen or so historical associations which created the Pioneer Association of Ontario and reconstituted that organization as the Ontario Historical Society. In the period 1887-1900, before the rise of the university-based professional students of Canadian history, and the widespread appearance of courses in Canadian history in the schools and

universities, the local historical societies were perhaps the chief instruments for creating an interest in, and an awareness of, Ontario's past. They were formed for numerous reasons, the combination of which depended on such factors as the political beliefs and interests of the founders of each society, the geographical situation of each group, and the date of establishment. Among the chief factors contributing to the growth of the historical society movement after 1887 were a general North American interest in the study of history at the regional and local level; a growing realization that historical documents, artifacts, sites and buildings were being destroyed at an alarming rate; ancestor worship and concomitant considerations of social prestige; and a bewildering complex of national fears and doubts relative to both the external and internal development of the Dominion, apprehensions that were tempered by a growing national pride and awareness as the decade of the 1890s progressed. And underlying most of these concerns was a basic, though not particularly commendable trend to use history as a medium for promoting any number of causes, whether it was that of the imperialist, the feminist, the status seeker, or the patriot maker.

Whatever the motive, the historical societies fulfilled many of their purposes when one takes into account the number of volumes published, the documents and artifacts

collected, the buildings and sites preserved, and the other activities undertaken in an effort to create a British-Canadian nationalism. With this background in view, then, it is now possible to turn to the history of the Pioneer Association of Ontario, a federation of the local societies discussed here, and created by them to further their aims and objectives.

## FOOTNOTES

1

Carl Berger, The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism 1867-1914 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970).

2

Ibid., pp. 96-97.

3

Ibid., p. 93.

4

Ibid., p. 94.

5

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6

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7

HPL, WHS records, minute book, January 8, 1889. The early meetings of the WHS were held in the rooms of the Hamilton Association. This body had established a Historical Branch in 1887 "for the purpose of collecting information regarding the settlement of the County, and the aboriginal tribes"; however, the Historical Branch seems to have accomplished very little and was apparently absorbed by the WHS.

8

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9

Ibid., p. 82.

10

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11

Ibid. These documents had to do with the settlement of the loyalists, the Northwest trade negotiations with Vermont, French republican designs on Canada, and the political agitation of Justice Thorpe in 1806-1807.

- 12  
David D. Van Tassell, Recording America's Past: An Interpretation of the Development of Historical Studies in America 1607-1884 (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1960), pp. 186-90. See also Leslie Dunlap, American Historical Societies (Madison: Cantwell Printing Co., 1944), and Walter Muir Whitehill, Independent Historical Societies: An Enquiry into their Research and Publication Functions and their Financial Future (Boston: Athenaeum, 1962).
- 13  
Cruikshank, op. cit., pp. 22-23.
- 14  
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- 15  
Barrie Examiner, May 21, 1891.
- 16  
OA, William Canniff papers, package no. 12, MS "A Review of Historical Work in Upper Canada," November 9, 1893.
- 17  
OA, LLHS records Seventh Annual Report of the Lundy's Lane Historical Society, July 25, 1894.
- 18  
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- 19  
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- 21  
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- 22  
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23

SCM, A.F. Hunter papers. There is copious correspondence in this collection between Boyle and Hunter on archaeological matters in Huronia.

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Parkside Collegiate Institute, St. Thomas, EHSI records, minute book, unidentified press clipping, March 1930.

27

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H. Stuart Hughes, Consciousness and Society (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), p. 17.

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Patterson, "The Poet and the Indian," op. cit., pp. 69-78.

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Ibid., p. 72.

31

J.H. Coyne, "A Century of Achievement," JTWHS, Vol. II (1899), pp. 113-35.

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UWO, J.H. Coyne papers, press clipping, St. Thomas Weekly Times, June 24, 1897. Speech by Coyne at Jubilee Day Picnic, Port Stanley.

33

PAC, Department of Militia and Defence, Deputy Minister's Office Records, R.G. 9, II, A1, Vol. 288, file A7743, Petition of the Lundy's Lane Historical Society, date of receipt May 21, 1888.

34

HPL, WHS records, minute book, December 17, 1888.

35

OA, NHS records, Ms 193, reel 11, Correspondence, William Kirby (Jr.) to Catherine Creed, July 5, 1928. This letter contained information with respect to the original NHS which disappeared from the record after 1892. See also PAC, Department of Militia and Defence, Deputy Minister's Office Records, R.G. 9, II, A1, Vol. 352, file A11803. Correspondence from W. Kirby of the NHS during 1891. The objectives of the first NHS also included the promotion of knowledge of the history of the town and the erection of a monument to the loyalists.

36

OA, NHS records, Ms 193, reel 6, minute book, January 10, 1896.

37

PAC, Department of Militia and Defence, Deputy Minister's Office Records, R.G. 9, II, A1, Vol. 382, file A13980. See letter from the society to the Minister dated May 2, 1895.

38

Transactions of the Canadian Institute, 1889-90, Vol. I, (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1891), p. 66 and ibid., Vol. III, p. 59.

39

LLM, LLHS records, minute book, July 9, 1887.

40

TPL, The Second Annual Report of the Lundy's Lane Historical Society, July 25, 1889. n.p.. Here Canon Bull claimed that there was a direct link between his society and those that followed.

41

See the Times, Niagara-on-the-Lake, December 5, 1895; and PAO, NHS records, Ms 193, reel 6, minute book October 13, 1896.

42

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46

Ibid., May 21, 1891.

47

PAC, Canon Bull papers, M.G. 30, D19, Vol. I, circular entitled "Battle of Lundy's Lane -- July 25, 1814: An Appeal to British Canadians," August 1887.

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49

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50

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OA, Scrapbook collection, OHS scrapbook, unidentified press clipping, April 1, 1926.

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Fitzgibbon, "Historic Banner," op. cit., p. 9.
- 57  
Brampton Conservator, June 25, 1891.
- 58  
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- 59  
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- 62  
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- 63  
Wesley Frank Craven, The Legend of the Founding Fathers (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965), chapters IV and V, and John Higham, Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925 (New York: Atheneum, 1972), p. 32.
- 64  
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Ibid., p. 86.
- 66  
Register of Members of the York Pioneer Society of Toronto: From the Commencement of the Society in 1869, compiled by W.H. Doel with a preface by Henry Scadding. This is a handwritten, bound volume in the possession of Mr. A.D. McFall of Toronto.
- 67  
OA, LIHS records, clipping of Niagara Falls Evening Review, June 21, 1947.

68

Information with respect to the background of these individuals was acquired from scattered references in the EHSI records. See also James S. Brierley, 1881 and Onward: Reminiscences of St. Thomas and Elgin County Half a Century Ago (St. Thomas, 1931); W.C. Miller Vignettes of Early St. Thomas (St. Thomas: Sutherland Press, 1967).

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70

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71

PCM, PHS records, minute book.

72

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73

HPL, WHS records, minute book, copy of address to the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, November 30, 1911 (written by Clementina Fessenden).

74

Henry Scadding, An Address to the Pioneer and Historical Society of the County of York on the Exhibition Grounds, Toronto, June 18, 1891 (Toronto: Office of the Week, 1891), p. 5.

75

Address by George Mills, June 5, 1889 in JTWHS, Vol. I (1892), p. 14.

76

Berger, op. cit., see chapter III for a brilliant analysis of the loyalist tradition.

77

The beliefs and myths that make up the loyalist tradition can be found scattered throughout the various publications of the historical societies, especially those issued by societies in the Niagara Peninsula and Toronto. See for example: E.J. Fessenden, "The United Empire Loyalists of the Eighteenth Century as Imperial Federationists," JTWHS, Vol. I, (1892), pp. 85-105; W.T. White, "The Battle of Queenston Heights," ibid., pp. 182-84; J.H. Coyne, "Memorial to the

United Empire Loyalists," NHS Publication No. 4 (Niagara-on-the-Lake: the Times, 1898), pp. 1-10; A Loyal Sermon of 1814: Delivered by Rev. John Burns, (Welland: W.T. Sawle, 1892); See also the publications of the LLHS between 1887-1906; S.A. Curzon, "The Battle of Queenston Heights," The WCHS of Toronto, Transaction No. 2 (Toronto, 1898); H. Scadding, The Revived Significance of the Initials 'U.E.', A Paper Read Before the Pioneer and Historical Society of the County of York, July 1892 (Toronto: Copp Clark, n.d.).

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See the attack on Smith by S.A. Curzon, "Historical Societies," JTWHS, Vol. I (1892), pp. 106-114.

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in JTWHS, Vol. II (1899), pp. 13-14

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(1899), p. 18.

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p. 33.

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XLVIII, No. 1 (March, 1967), pp. 45-58; and John T. Saywell  
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101

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- 118 Pioneer Papers (6 vols.; Barrie: The Simcoe County Pioneer and Historical Society, 1908-1917).
- 119 See Flynn, "Early Years of KHS," op. cit..
- 120 Page, op. cit., p. 33.
- 121 Sara Jeannette Duncan, The Imperialist (New Canadian Library Series; Toronto: Macmillan, 1968), p. 262.
- 122 See Scadding, Revived Significance of Initials 'U.E.'.
- 123 JTWHS, Vol. II (1899), p. 166.
- 124 "Current Thoughts," The Canadian Magazine, Vol. V (October, 1895), pp. 576-77.
- 125 Annual Report of the Women's Canadian Historical Society of Toronto 1897-8 (Toronto: 1898), preamble to the constitution, p. 2.
- 126 PCM, PHS records, see copy of the constitution adopted January 9, 1897.
- 127 See Craven, op. cit., chapter V. American historical and patriotic groups were also organized because of fears that had been stirred by foreign immigration.
- 128 For details as to the number of the members in each society see the Proceedings and Annual Reports (1890-97), of the Pioneer and Historical Association of the Province of Ontario.

129

See Henry Scadding, An Address... June 18, 1891; OA, William Canniff papers, package no. 12, clipping entitled "Ontario Archives," the Week, Toronto, n.d. (a letter to the editor by Scadding, January 15, 1894). There are also various letters to the editor by William Canniff on this subject in this collection.

130

OA, William Canniff papers, package no. 12, clipping the Week, Toronto, January 5, 1894.

131

"Report of the Historical Section," Transactions of the Canadian Institute, Vol. II (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1892).

132

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133

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134

Parkside Collegiate Institute, St. Thomas, EHSI records, minute book, August 24, 1895 and Annual Report OHS 1898, pp. 17-18. In 1971 a collection of these essays were republished under the title A Pioneer History: Elgin County Prize Winning Essays Published by James S. Brierley in the "Southern Counties Journal," with an introduction by George Thorman and M. Wayne Neale (St. Thomas, 1896).

135

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137

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- 145  
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- 150  
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- 152  
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- 154  
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- 155  
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- 159  
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## CHAPTER THREE

### THE FOUNDING OF THE ONTARIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY, 1888-1898

#### I

Henry Scadding's efforts throughout the 1880s to form a provincial historical organization for developing the study of history in Ontario bore fruit on September 4, 1888 when delegates of the York and Peel Pioneers met in Toronto and organized the Pioneer Association of Ontario. As its constitution suggests, the new provincial society was created exclusively to serve the needs and to promote the various aims of the local historical groups. Its objects were:

to unite the various Pioneer societies of the Province in one central head or organization, thereby the better to promote intercourse and union of all such societies, for the better preservation of historical and other records and memorials of the Province, for the forming of new societies for such purposes, and for the promoting and extending the influence and benefits thereof. Also, this Association shall publish an annual report, containing the names of all the members of each and every affiliated society, with such other matters as may be required ....

1

The Pioneer Association of Ontario was designed to function as a clearing house for the historical society movement; the founders never intended that it should have an existence largely independent of the local groups. To prevent

the association from becoming a competitor for popular support, its membership was severely restricted to the delegates of the affiliated societies. Consequently, ten years after its appearance, the association was comprised of a mere eleven members since each local was entitled to send only one voting delegate to the meetings.<sup>2</sup>

Notwithstanding its tiny roster, the provincial pioneer and historical association did experience a healthy rate of growth. During the few years of its existence fifteen local groups joined the federation, although only eleven of them still functioned in 1898 when the association was reorganized as the Ontario Historical Society.<sup>3</sup> Much of the association's success in attracting widespread support from the locals may be attributed to the principle of local autonomy and the looseness of the federation. The provincial association had no prerogative "to exercise any control in governing or directing any of the affiliated societies, or in any way to interfere in their private workings." Only in the event that a question was referred to the association by one of the locals, would it have competence "to consider and decide upon any such question or reference."<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, the association made few demands of the local groups. Each affiliate was required to do no more than pay annual dues up to a maximum of ten dollars depending on the size of its membership, and contribute to the success of the annual meeting by sending delegates, preparing a report on the year's

work, and recommending persons capable of researching and<sup>5</sup> delivering an address.

The affairs of the provincial historical society were managed by the president, vice-president (a second was added in 1894), secretary, treasurer and an executive committee of five. Throughout the period under review, the executive was made up of some of the most capable and respected figures in the historical society movement. A cadre of these zealous individuals held one post or another in the provincial historical society throughout the 'nineties.

At the helm, three presidents -- Toronto's Henry Scadding (1888-1894), Niagara's George Bull (1894-1897), and St. Thomas' James Coyne (1897-1902)-- each contributed in their own way to the lasting success of the association. W.H. Doel of the York Pioneers also held positions of authority all through these years. Then a justice of the peace in York County, Doel was noted for his promotional work in support of the Industrial Exhibition in Toronto and his activities in the East York Reform Association. Another York Pioneer, William Rennie, was an active officer. Rennie began his working life as a farmer before opening in 1870 a seed and farm implement warehouse and a firm for manufacturing farm equipment. He was like Doel a Reformer in politics and a director of the Industrial Exhibition in Toronto. Grenville's David B. Read, a lawyer and historian, Liberal Conservative in politics and an ex-mayor of Toronto, also served on the

executive throughout the 'nineties. Other councillors included Eli Crawford, a well-known farmer and magistrate of Peel County, Frederick W. Fearman, the Hamilton meat packer, Andrew Hunter, owner-editor of the Barrie Examiner, and John Orchard, a St. Catharines' grocer and the warden of Welland County.

This group of men from a variety of backgrounds was<sup>6</sup> bipartisan, multi-professional, and multi-denominational, drawn together by a belief in the importance of historical work, a belief that transcended social, political, and religious differences. Of course, other members of the PAO also spent much time and energy encouraging its interests, but none had the influence or staying power of these capable individuals.

The presidents of the provincial association set the tone and direction of the organization and provided the leadership so necessary for its success. Without Henry Scadding's persistence, for example, there may not have been a federation of historical societies until well after 1888. By the time he retired from the presidency in 1894, eight local societies had joined the Pioneer and Historical Association of the Province of Ontario. In keeping with its avowed objective to promote the formation of new groups, Scadding had encouraged individuals like Eli Crawford and other York Pioneers in Peel County, A.F. Hunter in Barrie, and F.J. French in Grenville County to form local societies.<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, Scadding arranged that the secretary, W.H. Doel, attend the organizational meetings of new associations such as the Wentworth Pioneer and Historical Society, and the Simcoe County Pioneer and Historical Society, in order to facilitate their creation.

During his presidency, Canon Bull continued this line of work with equal success and witnessed the affiliation of seven more locals. Perhaps the most noteworthy additions under his leadership were made at the end of his term of office in 1897 when the Six Nations Indians were given the special status of an affiliated society with each band entitled to send one delegate to the meetings of the association. At the annual meeting in Niagara-on-the-Lake in 1897, Six Nations' representatives gave the delegates a rare treat by holding a formal council meeting with the full ceremony of the longhouse. The following year, the annual conference was held on the Grand River Reserve at Ohsweken.

The PAO executive welcomed the Indians into the historical association for various reasons. James Coyne expected the connection with the Six Nations would aid David Boyle's archaeological and anthropological research on the Grand River Reserve. Moreover, Coyne must have been aware that the Six Nations adherence would bring the historical association some favourable publicity at a time when it was seeking governmental subsidization.

What prompted the Indians to participate in the

activities of the historical association? The enthusiasm of one sympathetic individual, J.O. Brant-Sero, an author of several historical articles on the Six Nations and himself a lineal descendant of the Mohawk chief, Joseph Brant, may account in part for the Indians' interest. "I suspect that Brant-Sero is the moving spirit in the Six Nations' Historical matters," wrote David Read to James Coyne.<sup>11</sup>

That factor aside, the Indians probably had good reason to join the historical association. Their recent glorification of Joseph Brant and the Six Nations' "red loyalist" heritage suggests that they were seeking greater respect in the white community. They may also have had political motives. In 1911, for example, the "red loyalist" theme was used as a justification for exempting the Six Nations from the discriminatory legislation (the liquor clauses were cited in particular) of the Indian Act and for legal equality with the white man. Chief W.M. Elliott stated the Indians' case to the annual meeting of the Ontario Historical Society in the following terms:

In the Indian Act we are cited together with the other Indians of Canada. As the Six Nations hold an unique position apart and different from any other Indian nation in Canada in that they fought for their land rights and privileges, there should be special legislation made for them, and they should, as allies of the British Crown, have some say in the making of these laws in the same manner as is the conceded right of the ordinary British subject ...; but we are surprised to-day to find the Canadian Government by intrusion trampling upon our rights and privileges to such an extent that the Indian is reduced to a condition approaching so near

slavery that the line of demarcation is hard to define. If the Six Nation chief and warriors were men enough to fight for Canada and the supremacy of the British Crown upon this North American continent ..., why should the legislation of this country now place them in the category of minors?

13

The Six Nations' attempt in 1911 to persuade the Ontario Historical Society to champion their demand for equal rights was unsuccessful. The leaders of the historical society decided to remain aloof from this sensitive political issue, justifying their decision by citing the clause in the OHS constitution that prohibited the discussion of such subjects. It was likely more than a coincidence that after this episode, the Indians' interest in the historical society all but disappeared.

During the 1890s, the annual conferences of the provincial historical association, held on the first Wednesday of June, were the main activity of the group. With the exception of the Brampton meeting in 1891, the conferences under Scadding's presidency were held in the Canadian Institute Building in Toronto. No attempt was made to balance the business transactions of the annual meeting with sightseeing tours or other diversions.<sup>14</sup> Since Scadding regarded the conference as the chief means by which the association could fulfil its role as a clearing house for the locals, he let nothing interfere with the business at hand. Not surprisingly, the first annual meetings of the association were poorly attended. Only six delegates, for instance, appeared in 1894.<sup>15</sup>

In an attempt to extend the usefulness of the association, to make it a more effective organization its own right, Canon George Bull gave notice of several reforms in June 1895 that included holding the annual meeting outside the Toronto area, appointing a committee of management to invite speakers and other guests on each occasion, and securing an annual grant from the provincial government to meet necessary expenses.<sup>16</sup> Although no provincial grant was awarded until 1898, Bull did make changes in the format which enhanced the effectiveness of the annual gathering. Among other things, it became peripatetic, going in the next few years to Brampton, Hamilton, Niagara-on-the-Lake, and Ohsweken.

The substantial increase in the attendance at the annual meetings testifies to the success of Bull's efforts.<sup>17</sup> Judging from the articles printed in the annual reports for 1895 and 1896, the guest speakers were both informative and entertaining. Ernest Cruikshank talked on recent research in Canadian history, Sarah Curzon on early settlement in Peel and York Counties, Oliver A. Howland on the proposed four hundredth anniversary celebrations to commemorate Cabot's discovery of Canada, Joseph H. Smith on the history of Wentworth County, David Boyle on the philosophy of folk lore, and W.H. Davis, a Hamilton school principal, on patriotism in the schools. Those in attendance at the conferences also enjoyed side trips to the historic sites of Niagara and Hamilton, and witnessed the spectacle provided by the Six Nations Indians in full cer-

emonial regalia at both Niagara and Ohsweken.

The provincial historical association also sponsored several projects which took it beyond the role of a clearing house for the local groups. The most prestigious of these was the centennial held in Toronto and Niagara-on-the-Lake to honour the establishment of the province of Upper Canada. On the petition of Henry Scadding, Queen's Park granted the provincial historical society the sum of two thousand dollars in 1892 to subsidize the fêtes.<sup>18</sup> The first ceremony was held on July 16th at Niagara-on-the-Lake to commemorate the issuing of the proclamation by Lieutenant-Governor Simcoe of the electoral divisions of the province of Upper Canada. A parade of dignitaries and several army and navy bands marched through the gaily decorated town, and was greeted by a twenty-one gun salute at Fort George. A luncheon followed with speeches by Lieutenant-Governor George A. Kirkpatrick and Premier Mowat. On September 17, a second ceremony took place in Toronto in front of the new Parliament Buildings to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the meeting of the first parliament of Upper Canada. Bands, dignitaries, members of the legislature, city council, historical associations, patriotic groups, and fifteen hundred school children participated in the events. In remembrance of these two occasions, the Pioneer and Historical Association of Ontario published five hundred copies of a memorial volume and struck a centennial medal. For their part, the citizens of Niagara-on-the-Lake erected a memorial fountain

in the centre of the town.

As might have been expected of a central organization created by a group of local historical societies to promote their common interests, the provincial historical society often followed the initiative of the local groups in taking up causes. At the annual conferences of the Pioneer and Historical Association of Ontario, resolutions were passed urging governments to subsidize the publication of local and provincial histories,<sup>19</sup> the erection of monuments to the loyalists and Lieutenant-Governor Simcoe,<sup>20</sup> the creation of a provincial museum and archives,<sup>21</sup> and the introduction of more inspirational history and symbols of nationality into the schoolrooms<sup>22</sup> of the province.

Given the nature and size of the provincial historical association, the efforts it made to promote these causes were necessarily modest. With few members and no large source of funds, it could do little more than pass token resolutions on these matters, and on rare occasions send deputations to Queen's Park. As the decade of the 'nineties progressed, however, the association's leaders became increasingly frustrated with this limited role that brought so few results. It was largely this frustration, as will be shown later, that led in 1898 to the reorganization of the historical society. Only then was it able to take a more direct part in the publications field, in museum work, in monument building, and in the patriotic indoctrination of the young.

## II

Like the local historical groups, the Pioneer and Historical Association of the Province of Ontario undertook all the activities discussed to this point with a nationalist end in view. "The chief purpose of this association," explained George Bull, "is to foster the spirit of British Canadian nationality, which shall remain strong and steadfast for generations to come."<sup>23</sup> By transmitting an awareness of the Canadian heritage and inspiring pride in the past, Bull believed that the association could attempt "to inculcate intelligently the duties pertaining to the domestic affections, to probity of character in public capacities and in private life, to respect for authority, and to love for our common country, the absence of any or all of which virtues inevitably tends to national decay."<sup>24</sup>

It was a coincidence that the first three presidents of the provincial historical society -- Scadding, Bull, and Coyne -- believed in the principle of imperial federation. All had risen to the highest office of the association, not because they espoused an imperialist brand of Canadian nationalism, but because of their exceptional talents and energies. Nevertheless, once in office, these individuals set the ideological direction of the historical association and made it a champion of imperial unity.

George Bull rarely missed an opportunity to expound upon the theme of loyalty and the virtues of a united Empire when he addressed the provincial historical association. In his speech to it in 1895, the Canon invoked the Higher Power to justify his philosophy of loyalty to established constitutional and imperial relationships:

Narrow partizanship we would exclude from our association, but loyalty and patriotism we desire to promote. This principle is briefly comprehended in words sacred and inspired: "Honor all men, love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the King." (I. Peter, ii, 17). I have no need to dwell upon this sacred text, but only to express a passing thought. Loyalty is to be grounded on piety. To be good citizens men must begin with being good Christians. Honor to kings and all in authority, is to be based on the fear of God, by whom kings rule and whose ministers they are.

25

In his annual addresses to the provincial historical society in 1896 and 1897,<sup>26</sup> Bull professed his belief in the inevitability of Canada's achieving greatness within the imperial framework. The success of the Empire in his estimation rested on Britain's administrative genius to establish order based on the common laws of the British constitution. These laws, he said, ensured the protection of life and property, and guaranteed civil and religious liberty for people of all races and climates. Bull delighted on both occasions in describing the benefits of Empire for "the heart of Africa." This ebullient though not too well informed missionary and armchair imperialist told his audience that in Uganda, murder, tribal-

ism, and slavery had been replaced by Christianity, civilization, order, justice, and prosperity under the British flag.

Imbued with similar beliefs, the historical society leaders were concerned with the various methods of fostering correct "British-Canadian" patriotic and national sentiments. The importance of the school system as an agency for developing certain feelings and attitudes in the younger generation was fully understood. History teachers, explained W.H. Davis, a Hamilton school principal, could

instil into the minds of the children lessons which will enable them intelligently to perform those duties of citizenship which they must soon assume. They must be instructed in the history of Canada and Britain, and in the duties of citizenship. They should be able to tell of the greatness of our country and empire, should know something of our great men, should understand our system of government and should be taught to revere the flags of Britain and Canada.

27

The resolutions urging the introduction of more inspirational history texts, flags, and historical pictures into the schools, and the efforts to erect monuments to Simcoe and the loyalists were all designed to nurture a better appreciation of the national heritage and the historical significance of the British connection.

James Coyne was also a vociferous exponent of the  
<sup>28</sup>loyalist tradition and imperial consolidation. According  
<sup>29</sup>to his biographer, Coyne's philosophy was shaped by a number of influences. He grew up in a traditionally Liberal household in south-western Ontario, witnessed the unbounded progress

of the railway era in the 1850s, and served in the militia during the Fenian troubles at the ripe age of sixteen. His nationalist thought was particularly affected by the Canada First movement and his friend George T. Denison III. During the 1870s, Coyne was active in the West Elgin Reform Association and ran unsuccessfully as a Liberal candidate in the general election of 1884, before accepting the political appointment of registrar for Elgin County.

Within weeks of assuming the presidency of the provincial historical association in 1897, Coyne delivered an impassioned address on imperial unity at a mammoth Victoria Jubilee Day picnic at Port Stanley. His audience, estimated at some nine thousand people, was comprised mainly of school children from West Elgin and St. Thomas.<sup>30</sup> For Coyne, Victoria's empire was synonymous with progress, with "unparalleled material, intellectual, artistic, scientific and religious advancement." As an exponent of the belief that commerce was "the great peace-maker and solvent of international troubles," he marvelled at the opportunities for world peace made possible by Imperial preferential trade.<sup>31</sup>

Looking at the sweep of the nineteenth century, Coyne saw a general impulse toward consolidation, union, and peace of which the Empire was perhaps the best witness:

It is the mission of the Victorian era to show that in union of communities and societies is not only strength, but peace. With the growth of the democratic idea of the greatest good of the greatest number, have come hostility

to war, the principle of arbitration, the tendency to union, and illustrated by the innumerable societies, the great trades unions, the federations of labor and capital, and the consolidation of states, all tending to the establishment of goodwill among men, and permanent peace within and without the nation.

.....  
 The genius of the Anglo-Celtic race is towards union, toleration, federation, righteous law and administration. Its instinct for exploration of new countries and extension of territory is accompanied and justified by its extraordinary success in governing inferior races upon principles of justice and equality.

32

Blinded by his idealism and his belief in progress, Coyne ignored the harsh realities of imperial expansion and suggested to his youthful audience that "throughout the vast empire, with brief exceptions, peace and contentment have prevailed for sixty years; and today there is no note of disaffection amongst the numerous colonies and dependencies." He concluded that the Empire was "the guarantee of the peace of the world" and that it was the duty of Canadians to do their part (what that part would be, he did not specify) so that "the imperial bond of union shall be strengthened not impaired with the rolling years." That a man of Coyne's intelligence could utter such rhetoric is striking testimony to the hold that the imperial idea had on the minds of many Ontarians in the 'nineties. It is curious how he could talk of world peace while the news of the infamous Jameson Raid had been filling the Canadian press since December 1895, while the well-armed Boer snarled his defiance in the Transvaal, while Germany and Britain eyed each other menacingly as a result of the South African imbroglio,

and while French and British rivalry on the Upper Nile was threatening to lead to hostilities at Fashoda.

### III

The Pioneer and Historical Association of Ontario achieved many of its stated objectives. Annual meetings and published reports brought about the desired unity of action among the affiliated societies, while the executive actively encouraged the formation of new local historical groups. These modest accomplishments -- little more could have been expected from a provincial historical association created as a mere clearing house for the locals -- did not however satisfy the ambitions of George Bull or James Coyne. Bull was the first to realize that the association could not hope to foster a general interest in Ontario and Canadian history without expanding its original terms of reference. As a first step in this direction, Bull made changes in the format of the annual meeting. At the same time, he sought to establish a publications programme.

Unfortunately, a financial straitjacket thwarted his publishing schemes from the beginning. The truth of the matter was that the Pioneer and Historical Association of Ontario had no financial basis whatsoever. The only source of funds were the annual dues of the local societies. Theoretically, each local was obliged to contribute up to ten dollars annually depending on the size of its membership. In fact, the association was unable to collect even these paltry funds. "The

burden of carrying on the work of the local societies," explained James Coyne, "usually falls upon a few of the more enthusiastic members. Their work is sufficiently difficult without adding to it the burden of this assessment."<sup>33</sup>

Salvation, of course, lay in subsidization from the provincial government, and numerous appeals were made to Queen's Park requesting an annual grant large enough to finance the administrative activities of the association and to launch a publications programme.<sup>34</sup> The reasons for the government's refusal to grant the association publishing funds can only be inferred. Queen's Park which had supported the publication activities of various locals since 1895 by awarding small grants, may have seen little rationale for spending the taxpayers' money on a tiny eleven-member provincial historical society closed to the general public and comprised entirely of delegates of the local groups that the government was already financing.

By 1897 the leaders of the Pioneer and Historical Association of Ontario, and especially the new president, James Coyne, recognized that a general reform of the organization was needed to broaden the society's terms of reference and its basis of membership. At a special session of the association held at the Industrial Exhibition Grounds in Toronto in September 1897, Coyne was authorized to appoint a committee for the following purposes:

- (1) To consider means for widening the basis of membership.
- (2) To formulate some more systematic plan of work.
- (3) To communicate with the Government with reference to obtaining financial aid.
- (4) To arrange for a permanent central office.
- (5) To report to the Association.

35

Before convening this committee, however, Coyne decided to inform George Ross, the Minister of Education, of the association's intentions to reorganize. Coyne also hoped to learn what reforms Ross thought were necessary in the programme and administration of the society before the government would consider subsidizing it.

In his negotiations with Queen's Park, Coyne had an advantage over his predecessors because he had known George Ross since 1871. The acquaintanceship lasted through the years both as a result of Coyne's activities on behalf of the Liberal Party in Elgin County and his work as a representative for the graduates of University College on the Senate of the University of Toronto.<sup>36</sup> In September 1897 Coyne approached Ross and told him of the plans to expand the scope of the Pioneer and Historical Association of Ontario.<sup>37</sup> Ross intimated that he would consider subsidizing the association, but first he desired to see a more detailed analysis of its plans. According to Coyne, Ross stated that "such a scheme would receive [his] favourable consideration if it appeared to be effective and satisfactory."<sup>38</sup>

After his interview with the Minister, Coyne looked to the example of the state historical societies in the American Middle West rather than those on the Atlantic seaboard<sup>39</sup> since the former already carried on a wide range of activities funded by their respective state governments. Coyne intended to draw upon the administrative experience, the membership criteria, and the programmes of these publically supported groups before submitting to Queen's Park his own plan of reform for the Pioneer and Historical Association of Ontario.

There appeared to be good reason for Coyne to ignore the older historical associations along the eastern seaboard of the United States. These groups unlike their Middle West counterparts, regarded themselves as scholarly institutions devoted to the collection, preservation, and publication of documentary source material for facilitating the writing of history. They had been founded by men rooted in an aristocratic tradition of learning, men unfamiliar with either universal education or public subsidy. "With the passage of time," wrote one observer, "they became dignified, exclusive, even snobbish, and as their private endowments grew, they felt under no real pressure to serve a wide public audience."<sup>40</sup>

The state historical societies in the American Midwest, on the other hand, were part of a more democratic tradition that began with the incorporation of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin in 1854. This organization was the first

of its kind to receive substantial state appropriations on an annual basis. Because it accepted public funds, it felt compelled to open its membership to the general public and "recognized the obligation to pursue an aggressive educational policy."<sup>41</sup> The director of the society in 1897, Reuben Gold Thwaites, explained the philosophy of the state supported societies in this way:

Such a society, in order to continue in the receipt of substantial government aid, must be popular in its organization and methods; it must perpetually demonstrate its reason for being, by proving useful and inspiring to the public whose support it seeks .... In short, a state supported historical society should recognize that a necessary condition of its existence is the cultivation of a sound historical interest among the people at large.

42

This philosophy, as it turned out, became that of the Ontario Historical Society.

By late November 1897, Coyne had received the information he needed from the American societies and had passed it on to George Ross in the hope that it would persuade him to subsidize the Pioneer and Historical Association of Ontario. The Minister was told that the Wisconsin Historical Society cost the state government approximately fourteen thousand dollars annually, a figure which included cash grants, publishing costs, office expenses, and the salaries of a secretary and two librarians. In Michigan, Ross was informed, the government awarded twenty-five hundred dollars annually to the state historical society in addition to paying the salary of a per-

43  
manent officer.

On the basis of the past experiences and needs of the Pioneer and Historical Association of Ontario, and of the information received from the Middle West historical groups, Coyne requested the government of Ontario to print the society's publications, pay for a permanent secretary, furnish an office, and grant an additional sum of money for miscellaneous administrative expenses.<sup>44</sup> Accompanying this application was the more detailed scheme of reform that Ross had demanded earlier. Coyne explained that the work of the association would be directed from Toronto by a secretary who would manage the projected library, edit the new series of publications, and collect documents and reminiscences of pioneers. Apparently the Minister had intimated that an employee of his department might without charge to the association undertake these duties; consequently, Coyne requested that the secretaryship be arranged on that basis.<sup>45</sup> As for enlarging the membership, Coyne hesitated to open the provincial historical society to the general public. He proposed instead that the present basis of membership be maintained, although augmented "by some system of election, which would bring in a number of members who (as professors or special students of history) might be considered as experts."<sup>46</sup> At this stage, Coyne had not yet swallowed the democratic philosophy expressed by Reuben Gold Thwaites.

George Ross was obviously pleased with the reorganiza-

tion plans and he took steps in 1898 to include an annual grant of five hundred dollars for the historical association in the estimates of the Department of Education. Though it was far less than Coyne had hoped for, and a meagre sum by American standards, the grant did put the provincial historical society on a sound financial basis for the first time.

Ross' decision to support the Pioneer and Historical Association of Ontario deserves comment. The Minister could well have been partly influenced by his political friendship with Coyne, and perhaps he was impressed by the knowledge of historical society activity in the American Midwest. All the same, it should be noted that Ross probably had his own good reasons from the outset for subsidizing the historical association. He already had a reputation for encouraging the study of Canadian history within the educational system. And as a nationalist and imperialist<sup>47</sup> of the same breed as those described in Carl Berger's Sense of Power, he employed many devices to transform the schools into more effective agencies for fashioning patriotic attitudes and beliefs among the children of the province.<sup>48</sup> For instance, the study of Canadian history was made compulsory in the elementary schools, and history texts were standardized and rewritten by Canadians. Patriotic exercises were encouraged in the schools on national and imperial holidays, and Ross himself prepared a teachers' aid for such occasions entitled Patriotic Recitations and Arbor Day Exercises (1893). Ross recognized that an effective

provincial historical society could bolster the patriotic work of the Department of Education by arousing pride in country and empire through the study of the past. "An historical society should be educational," Ross told the re-organization committee of the provincial historical association, "and while scholarly and exact in its methods, it should reach the masses in its results -- it should appeal to our domestic affections as well as to our national pride and our patriotic aspirations."<sup>49</sup>

With the knowledge that government aid was available, it was incumbent upon Coyne to name and call the special re-organization committee projected at the September meeting of the association. Although the majority of the members he eventually named to the committee belonged to the local historical societies, Coyne was also careful to include such qualified individuals as James Bain, chief librarian of the Toronto Public Library, Professor James Mavor, the political economist, Professor George M. Wrong of the University of Toronto's history department, the Rev. Dr. J.R. Teefy, superior of St. Michael's College, and W.R. Harris, the Dean of St. Catharines. By no means did Coyne expect all these gentlemen to participate, and admitted including some of them "merely as an advertisement, if for no other purpose."<sup>50</sup>

The committee met only once, on March 30, 1898, at the Education Department Building on St. James Square in Toronto. Coyne chaired the meeting while David Boyle acted

as secretary. George Ross, Charles Canniff James, the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, David B. Read, Eli Crawford, the Reverend W.R. Parker of Barrie, a representative of the Simcoe County Pioneer and Historical Society, Miss Sarah Mickle, the delegate of the Women's Canadian Historical Society, J. Brant-Sero, James Bain, and George Wrong all attended the meeting. Coyne presented the committee with a scheme of reform which was accepted with few amendments and incorporated into a new constitution. At a general meeting of the historical association held on May 23, 1898, the new constitution was taken up clause by clause and adopted with few changes.<sup>51</sup> From that point on the Pioneer and Historical Association of the Province of Ontario became known as the Ontario Historical Society.

The most important difference between the old organization and the new related to the widening of the terms of reference of the OHS. The society, of course, would continue its traditional role of uniting

the various Pioneer and Historical Societies of the Province in one central head or organization, thereby the better to promote intercourse and co-operation on the part of all such societies, to form new societies and to promote and extend the influence and benefits thereof.

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In addition to this function, however, the society planned to publish volumes of local and provincial history, and to begin a collections programme for the establishment of a

library, museum, and archives:

The Society shall also engage in the collection preservation, exhibition and publication of materials for the study of history, especially the history of Ontario and Canada; to this end studying the archaeology of the Province, acquiring documents and manuscripts, obtaining narratives and records of pioneers, conducting a library of historical reference, maintaining a gallery of historical portraiture and an ethnological and historical museum, publishing and otherwise diffusing information relative to the history of the Province and of the Dominion, and, in general, encouraging and developing within this province the study of history.

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This was a grandiose statement of intent. Evidently the OHS anticipated filling the vacuum in historical endeavour caused by the lack of a provincial museum and archives, and a periodical devoted exclusively to provincial history.

A widening of the basis of membership constituted a second major change in the structure of the provincial historical society. While maintaining the loose federal nature of the Pioneer and Historical Association which allowed each affiliate to send three delegate members to the annual meetings, provision was made for five other classes of members: ex-officio,<sup>54</sup> life, honorary, corresponding, and annual. The most significant of the new membership clauses allowed any resident of the province to join the Ontario Historical Society upon paying an initial entrance fee of one dollar. Government pressure likely forced Coyne to introduce this provision since he had not intended doing so in November 1897. George Ross, on the other hand, had made it clear that

he desired the OHS to "reach the masses in its results."<sup>55</sup>  
 In any case, to have restricted membership to the delegates of the local societies and to "experts" might have been unwise for a historical group that depended on government subsidization. As Reuben Gold Thwaites so aptly noted: "state appropriations could not long be secured for a closed corporation of scholastics, with whom the average voter [has] no sympathy."<sup>56</sup>

Nevertheless, James Coyne still had reservations about the open membership clause. Fearing that the OHS might be dominated by members from Toronto, he offered the following advice at the special meeting of March 30, 1898:

To guard against any objection arising from a possible preponderance of the Toronto membership, it might be well to follow the example of the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society and limit the right of voting as at present to the officers and delegates, with perhaps the extension of the right of voting to ex-officio and life members.

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The majority of delegates who ratified the constitution obviously did not share these fears (perhaps because they were from the Toronto area) since all annual members were given a vote in the society's affairs. It is interesting, however, that at least one local group did share Coyne's fears. The Kingston Historical Society viewed the OHS with thinly veiled hostility because of the latter's Toronto connections. Although the Kingston group had affiliated with the Pioneer

and Historical Association of Ontario in 1894, its members had not taken affiliation seriously and rarely participated in the activities of the association. In November 1898, the OHS asked the Kingstonians to reaffiliate, but they haughtily rejected the offer. Their reasons for so doing appeared to be based on a complete misunderstanding of the origin and nature of the OHS as the following excerpt from their minute book indicates:

Prof. [George D.] Ferguson reminded the meeting that this Soc'y [OHS] was originally known as the "York Pioneer Hist. Soc'y" and that as such it was in no higher status than our own and that probably the idea was to absorb surrounding Societies into a central organization supported by Gov't, and that the probable object of their programme was to receive all papers worth publishing and give them to the public in their own name -- whereas with a much smaller grant from Gov't we should be able to publish our own papers....

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The nature of the changes made in the constitution of the provincial historical association indicates that Coyne borrowed heavily from the model of the state historical societies of the American Midwest, particularly Wisconsin's. The OHS leaders regarded the Wisconsin organization as "remarkable among historical societies for the generous support it receives from the state, as well as the amount of work accomplished."<sup>59</sup> Coyne certainly made no attempt to hide his admiration of the Wisconsin example when he revised the constitution of the Pioneer and Historical Association of Ontario.<sup>60</sup> The programme outlined by Coyne for the OHS included

a museum, historical portrait gallery, a systematic collection of historical information, documents, and reminiscences, a library, and publications, all the trappings of the Wisconsin body. Coyne greatly admired the director, Reuben Gold Thwaites, who was then in the midst of preparing his scholarly edition of The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents in seventy-three volumes (1896-1901). One of Coyne's first decisions as president of the OHS was to arrange for Thwaites to visit Toronto and address a special meeting of the OHS in January 1899 on the subject of "The Study of Local History." He was hailed as the secretary of "the most flourishing [society] of its kind in this continent, if not in the world."<sup>61</sup>

It seemed pretentious for the Ontario Historical Society with its small five hundred dollar grant, to tackle the same range of activities as Thwaite's Wisconsin organization. Nevertheless a good start had been made, and there was reason to believe that the OHS would receive more governmental assistance once it demonstrated its effectiveness as an educational force. Coyne could well be pleased with the new relationship he had engineered with the Department of Education. George Ross had consented to become the honorary president of the society, a gesture to publicize the OHS's connection with the educational work of the province.<sup>62</sup> His department also subsidized the society indirectly by providing office facilities in the Normal School Building. Finally, Ross' suggestion that the secretary of the OHS be selected from the staff of the

Department of Education resulted in the appointment of David Boyle, the provincial archaeologist and curator of the Archaeological Museum, as a part-time secretary on the minister's recommendation.

One facet of the reorganization still remained incomplete in 1898 as far as James Coyne was concerned -- that of incorporation. The OHS accepted his recommendation to consider the matter in September of that year.<sup>63</sup> Some months later, on April 1, 1899, "An Act to Incorporate the Ontario Historical Society" (Chapter 108, Ontario Statutes 1899) drafted by Coyne himself, passed through the legislature and received royal assent.<sup>64</sup> Incorporation became imperative once the provincial historical society had resolved to own property in the form of a museum and library. One of the chief advantages of the act was that it provided the executive officers comparative freedom from personal liabilities of the corporation. The act prescribed and limited the legal rights of the OHS and stated, among other things, that the society

may by any legal title acquire, hold and enjoy, for the use of the society, any property whatever, real or personal, and may alienate, sell and dispose of the same or any part thereof, from time to time, and as occasion may require, and other property real or personal, may acquire instead thereof; provided always that the annual value of the real estate held at any one time for the actual use of the society shall not exceed four thousand dollars.

James Coyne also believed that as a permanent incorporated body with the power to receive gifts and bequests, the society would be more likely to receive contributions of books and

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other articles of historic value.

Two of the clauses of the act of incorporation worked to the advantage of the local affiliates by providing for their incorporation:

Any historical or pioneer society now affiliated with the said society may become incorporated, with all the powers and privileges of said society, by passing a resolution to that effect, stating the proposed corporate name, and forwarding a copy of such resolution under the hands of its president and secretary to the Education Department and to the secretary of said society.

Any historical or pioneer society hereafter becoming affiliated with the said society under the constitution and bylaws of the latter in that behalf, shall thereby become incorporated by the name under which it shall have become affiliated, and with all the powers and privileges conferred by this Act upon The Ontario Historical Society.

These legal rights were unusual in 1899 and are unheard of today. They meant that any new local historical association upon affiliation with the OHS became incorporated automatically without having to go through the customary legal procedures. The passing of resolutions by the OHS and the local association, when duly recorded in the minutes of each, completed the incorporation of the local society as well as its affiliation. Clearly, these clauses enhanced the attractiveness of membership in the Ontario Historical Society among the local groups.

The affiliates benefited in yet another way from Coyne's reorganization of the provincial historical association. They were relieved of the burden of paying annual dues. In theory,

the OHS could still call upon the locals to pay such fees, but after obtaining the provincial grant, Coyne advised the executive that "no annual fee be exacted hereafter ..., that the funds of each local society be devoted to its own local objects and no other, except in the case of appeals of a special and extraordinary character."<sup>66</sup> This statement was testimony to the fact that the OHS had come a long way from its foundation in 1888 as a dependent of the local groups.

After the reorganization in 1898, the Ontario Historical Society was firmly established as a society in its own right, indeed, as the foremost historical association in the province. In its early years, the Pioneer and Historical Association of Ontario had never been a particularly effective body. It had served its local masters well by co-ordinating their common activities, and by encouraging the growth of the historical society movement; but, it was unable to branch into the field of publications, or museum and archives work. To rectify this situation, James Coyne, following the example of the leading state historical societies of the American Middle West, and with the support and advice of George Ross, reshaped the largely ineffective Pioneer and Historical Association of Ontario. Reorganized and incorporated, the new Ontario Historical Society soon began to enlarge its programme of activities.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>  
Pioneer Association of Ontario, Canada, Annual Report 1890 (Toronto: Dudley and Burns, n.d.).

<sup>2</sup>  
 Originally each local was entitled to send up to five delegates as long as there were fewer than nine groups in the federation. But by the mid-'nineties, as soon as nine locals had affiliated, the constitution required that membership be automatically reduced to one delegate from every local historical society. This one delegate clause remained in effect until 1897 when each of the eleven affiliates that made up the Pioneer and Historical Association of Ontario was permitted to send three representatives to the meetings of the provincial society. See Annual Report of the Pioneer and Historical Association of the Province of Ontario 1897 (Guelph: Mercury Job Print, n.d.), p. 6.

<sup>3</sup>  
 For a handy check list of these groups see OA, M.O. Hammond Papers, box I, envelope 2, J.S. Carstairs, "A Glance at the Long and Honourable Record of the Ontario Historical Society 1888-1933: A Brief Chronology," (n.d.), 8 typewritten pages.

<sup>4</sup>  
Pioneer Association of Ontario, Annual Report 1890.

<sup>5</sup>  
 PCM, PHS records, J.B. Reynolds, secretary of the Pioneer and Historical Association of Ontario to T.A.S. Hay, February 11, 1897.

<sup>6</sup>  
 Although information with respect to the religious background of all the executive officers is not available, the multi-denominational pattern is evident. Scadding, Bull and Read were Anglicans. Rennie and Hunter were Presbyterians (though Hunter eschewed the idea of supporting only one denomination and frequented several churches). Doel was a Methodist.

<sup>7</sup>  
 All these individuals used the constitution of the York Pioneers as the model for the constitution of their own local groups.

- 8  
HPL, WHS records, minute book, January 8, 1889; OA, Simcoe County Pioneer and H.S. records, minute book, November 6, 1891. Unfortunately, none of the addresses Doel delivered to the organizational meeting of the new local societies has survived.
- 9  
Pioneer and Historical Association, Report 1897, p. 6.
- 10  
OHSA, scrapbook, clipping of Brantford Expositor, June 2, 1898. This clipping contains a summary of an address by Coyne.
- 11  
OHSA, D.B. Read to J.H. Coyne, April 22, 1898.
- 12  
The tribes did receive considerable attention of a flattering nature. At the annual meeting of the provincial historical society at Ohsweken in 1898, James Coyne and others lavished praise on Joseph Brant and the Six Nations for their loyalty to the Empire. Articles on Brant also appeared in the first issues of the OHSR.
- 13  
Annual Report of the Ontario Historical Society 1911 (Toronto: the OHS, 1911), p. 46.
- 14  
Excursions were arranged separately. The association visited Niagara in 1892 for the centennial celebration of the founding of Upper Canada, and Hamilton in 1893 for visits to Dundurn Castle and Stoney Creek.
- 15  
Pioneer and Historical Association, Report 1894, p. 6.
- 16  
Ibid., 1895, p. 11.
- 17  
Ibid., 1896, p. 5.
- 18  
Centennial of the Province of Upper Canada 1792-1892: Proceedings at the Gathering held at Niagara-on-the-Lake, July 16, 1892 and ... Toronto, September 17, 1892 (Toronto: Printed for the Centennial Committee by Arbuthnot and Adamson, 1893). See financial accounts pp. 55-7. Grants of \$200 and \$100 were given by the Lincoln and Welland County Councils respectively.

- 19  
Pioneer and Historical Association, Report 1896,  
 pp. 30-31.
- 20  
Pioneer and Historical Association, Report 1893,  
 pp. 8-9; and ibid., 1896, pp. 6-7; ibid., 1897, p. 7; See  
 also PAC, Canon Bull collection, M.G. 30, D. 19, Vol. 1, Bull's  
 presidential address June 2, 1897 at Niagara; and J.H. Coyne  
 "Memorial to the U.E. Loyalists," NHS Publication No. 4  
 (Niagara-on-the-Lake: The Times, 1898), pp. 1-10.
- 21  
Pioneer and Historical Association, Report 1891, p. 6.  
 See also Henry Scadding, An Address to the Pioneer and Historic-  
al Society of the County of York on the Exhibition Grounds,  
Toronto, June 18, 1891 (Toronto: Office of the Week, 1891), p. 7.
- 22  
Pioneer and Historical Association, Report 1896,  
 pp. 6-7; ibid., 1895, pp. 6-7. See also W.H. Davis, "The  
 Teaching of Patriotism in Our Public Schools, ibid., 1896,  
 pp. 56-60.
- 23  
 "Address of the President," [June 5, 1895], ibid.,  
 1895, p. 9.
- 24  
Ibid.
- 25  
 "Address of the President," [June 5, 1895], Pioneer  
and Historical Association, Report 1895, p. 13
- 26  
 "The President's Annual Address," [June 3, 1896],  
ibid., 1896, pp. 31-2; "The President's Annual Address, [June  
 2, 1896]," ibid., 1897, p. 11.
- 27  
 Davis, "The Teaching of Patriotism," op. cit., p. 56.
- 28  
 See J.H. Coyne, "The Value of History," the Globe,  
 Toronto, January 8, 1898, and Coyne, "Memorial to the U.E.,  
loc. cit.
- 29  
 Hugh A. Stevenson, James H. Coyne: His Life and  
Contribution to Canadian History (unpublished Master's  
 dissertation, Department of History, University of Western  
 Ontario, 1960).

30

UWO, J.H. Coyne papers, clipping, St. Thomas Weekly Times, June 24, 1897.

31

Here, perhaps, can be discerned the influence of George Denison who advocated that a system of imperial preferences would promote imperial unity by fostering inter-imperial trade as an alternative to continentalism. See David P. Gagan, The Denison Family of Toronto 1792-1925 (Canadian Biographical Studies; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), p. 72.

32

UWO, J.H. Coyne papers, clipping, St. Thomas Weekly Times, June 24, 1897.

33

Pioneer and Historical Association of the Province of Ontario: Report of the Special Meeting, Toronto, March 30, 1898 (Toronto: 1898), p. 6.

34

Pioneer and Historical Association, Report 1892, p. 7; ibid., 1896, p. 6. See also OA, LLHS records, Sixth Annual Report of the Lundy's Lane Historical Society, June 25, 1893 (n.p., n.d.).

35

OHSA, form letter to members of the Special Committee from J.H. Coyne and D. Boyle, March 24, 1898.

36

H.A. Stevenson, "James H. Coyne: An Early Contributor to Canadian Historical Scholarship," OH, Vol. LIV, No. 1 (March 1962), 32.

37

OHSA, Coyne to David Boyle, November 27, 1897.

38

UWO, J.H. Coyne papers, letter book, Coyne to Ross, November 7, 1897. In his thesis James H. Coyne: His Life and Contributions to Canadian History, p.171, H.A. Stevenson suggested that it was Ross who asked Coyne to assume the presidency of the provincial society in 1897. This piece of information was given to Stevenson during an interview with H.E.B. Coyne on June 29, 1960. There is no corroborating evidence for this assertion. In fact, Stevenson fabricated a liaison between Ross' Department of Education and the Pioneer and Historical Association. He wrote: "To provide a centralizing

agency for local historical societies the department of education established the Pioneer and Historical Society of Ontario in 1887 [sic]...." This is nonsense for the department had no connection with the historical society until 1897 when Coyne (after being elected president) approached Ross (and not vice versa) for financial assistance. Stevenson is correct insofar as Ross encouraged the reform of the provincial historical society by demanding its reform before he would subsidize it, but the decision to reform it had already been made by the historical society members.

39

UWO, J.H. Coyne papers, letter book, Coyne to Indiana State H.S., November 18, 1897. OHSa Coyne to Boyle, September 29, 1897. Coyne wrote to the historical societies of Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

40

Richard McCormick, "The Historical Society is an Educational Institution," in James H. Rodabaugh (ed.), The Present World of History: A Conference on Certain Problems in Historical Agency Work in the United States (Madison: AASLH, 1959), p. 2.

41

Ibid., p. 3.

42

Quoted in ibid.

43

UWO, J.H. Coyne papers, Coyne to Ross, November 27, 1897.

44

Ibid.

45

Ibid.

46

Ibid.

47

For a full statement of Ross' belief in imperial federation see "Shall Canada Always be a Dependency of the Empire," Address to the National Club, October 28, 1908, Appendix II in G.W. Ross, Getting Into Parliament and After (Toronto: William Briggs, 1913), pp. 314-331.

- 48  
Ibid., Appendix I, pp. 309-313 and chapter XIV and XV; See also Margaret Ross, Sir George W. Ross: A Biographical Study (Toronto: Ryerson, 1923), chapter XIV; Robert M. Stamp "Educational Leadership in Ontario, 1867-1967," Profiles of a Province: Studies in the History of Ontario (Toronto: the OHS, 1967), pp. 196-204.
- 49  
Report of the Special Meeting, March 30, 1898, p. 4.
- 50  
 OHSA, Coyne to Boyle, March 25, 1898.
- 51  
 OHSA, copy of the Constitution of the OHS, adopted May 23, 1898.
- 52  
Ibid.
- 53  
Ibid.
- 54  
 Ex-officio members were the Governor-General of Canada, the Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, the Minister of Education, the Dominion Archivist (and all who had held any of these offices), all university professors of history in Ontario, and the directors of all provincial or municipal archaeological museums in Ontario.
- 55  
Report of the Special Meeting, March 30, 1898, p. 4.
- 56  
 Reuben Gold Thwaites, "State Supported Historical Societies and Their Functions," AHA Annual Report 1897, p. 67. Thwaites explained that the same consideration forced the Wisconsin H.S. to open its membership to the general public.
- 57  
Report of the Special Meeting, March 30, 1898, p. 7.
- 58  
 DL, KHS records, minute book, November 1, 1898.
- 59  
Annual Report OHS 1909, p. 30.

- 60  
OHSa, Coyne to Boyle, April 16, 1898. See also Report of the Special Meeting, March 30, 1898, p. 11. Here Coyne referred to the financial basis of the Wisconsin society in his report.
- 61  
OHSa, circular letter dated January 12, 1899.
- 62  
Report of the Special Meeting, March 30, 1898, p. 12.
- 63  
Ibid., p. 12.
- 64  
Coyne claimed he drafted the act in the Annual Report of the Ontario Historical Society 1929 (Toronto: the OHS, 1930), p. 12.
- 65  
Annual Report OHS 1899, p. 28
- 66  
Report of the Special Meeting, March 30, 1898, p. 12.

CHAPTER FOUR  
CONCEPTS AND ATTITUDES, 1898-1914

The period between 1898 and 1914 was perhaps the most active one in the history of the Ontario Historical Society. During these years, the provincial historical association undertook a wide-ranging programme of activities that has yet to be equalled in scope or success. Before examining the achievements of this period, however, there is a need to understand the concepts and attitudes that inspired much of the society's work. The fundamental objective of that work -- the nurturing of patriotic sentiments by educating Ontarians about the events and meaning of the British-Canadian heritage -- remained unchanged from the days of Henry Scadding and George Bull. But a different combination of factors gave rise to the historical activism of this later period. An insurgent Canadian national feeling combined with nativist fears to sharpen the motives of the chief OHS spokesmen. Moved by these factors, they continued to champion the cause of imperial unity and stepped up their patriotic activities to include the promotion of Empire Day and flag exercises, and the introduction of inspirational decorations and symbols into the schools.

The most striking difference of attitude between the early 1890s and the period after 1900 stemmed from the fact

that there seemed to be after the turn of the century no longer any serious question among Canadians that the nation would survive as an independent entity on the North American continent. The beginnings of large-scale economic expansion and a growing national pride and consciousness had dissolved most of the earlier annexationist fears of the 'nineties. Certainly the buoyant optimism and pride inspired by Canada's material prosperity -- expressed in Laurier's statement that the twentieth century would belong to Canada -- explains part of the OHS leaders' urge to create symbols of their heritage and to otherwise preserve their past. Such was the optimism in 1909 that reviewers of G.T. Denison's The Struggle for Imperial Unity "found it necessary to explain to their readers that 'about twenty years ago' there had been something called the annexationist crisis which was now just a 'curious recollection.'<sup>1</sup>"

At the same time, however, it appears that those who directed the activities of the OHS after 1898 were well aware of the fragility of the developing Canadian character in a period noted for its rampant materialism and massive immigration. Individuals like James Coyne, Barlow Cumberland, and Clementina Fessenden feared the consequences of these trends in the first decade of the twentieth century. In the first place, they realized that material prosperity could not alone provide a satisfactory foundation upon which to build the future nation state. "It is not in the bulk of the territory,

the magnitude of population or the wealth of possessions by which the greatness of a nation is to be estimated," explained Barlow Cumberland, "but by the character of the people."<sup>2</sup>

To a man, the OHS spokesmen agreed that patriotism, rooted in an understanding of their version of Canada's past, could help significantly to mould a people's character.

Patriotism, claimed Barlow Cumberland,

arises to wrest the people out of their selfishness, and fuses them mightily into a pervading fervid fellowship -- a process of amalgamating power arising from a spirit of self-sacrifice, rather than of self-seeking; from emotion, rather than judgement; from filial remembrance of parental guardianship, and of the honour and duty to the history and tradition of their ancestors.

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These ideas were similar to those of the humorist Stephen Leacock, who also preached that patriotism was a necessary purgative for the spiritual ills of an unbridled materialism.<sup>4</sup> Professor Ramsay Cook demonstrated recently that Leacock (who incidentally was a member of the OHS in this period) belonged to "a long and distinguished line of Canadian intellectuals, reaching back to the Canada First Movement and forward to Canadian Dimension, who have sought to solve Canada's problems by a strong injection of nationalism." Together these individuals formed a Canadian intellectual tradition "... characterized by repeated efforts to raise questions about the quality of Canadian life when the gross national product seemed the major concern ... [and] by an attempt to

give Canada a self-consciousness and an identity."<sup>5</sup> The spokesmen of the Ontario Historical Society were certainly a part of this body of thinkers.

Another and more powerful consideration impelled the OHS leaders to develop patriotic sentiments in this era of prosperity. Now they feared the possibility that the massive influx of European and American immigrants, newcomers who knew nothing of the Dominion's heritage, would endanger their unique British-Canadian character. Like most English-speaking Canadians, the OHS leaders believed that Canada was and should remain an Anglo-Saxon country embodying the highest principles of Christianity and civilization. Their thought was replete with the concepts of social darwinism, Anglo-Saxon superiority, the white man's burden to bring peace, religion and civilization to the "inferior races",<sup>6</sup> and the myth of the superiority of the northern races and civilizations.<sup>7</sup> Coyne, Fessenden, and Cumberland were also most adamant in their conviction that Canada's national destiny properly lay within the Empire.

Indeed Coyne proclaimed that Canadians were "a people more British in sentiment than the British themselves, keeping alive, as a sacred fire, the once almost extinguished spark, cherishing the idea of a united empire through good and evil report until it has become the watchword of the race throughout the world."<sup>8</sup> The OHS spokesmen saw no contradiction in the claim that they could be nationalists and imperialists simultaneously. "A Canadian who is not an Imperialist," said

Cumberland, "must either be ignorant of our country's history, or else be wanting in the first principles of honour and duty, for Imperialism is the basis of our Canadian existence."<sup>9</sup>

Support for the British connection did not preclude the concept of a self-conscious Canadian nationality. In no uncertain terms Cumberland wrote that "... there shall be created in Canada, sprung from this nation, a people which in spirit, in character, in righteousness which exalteth a nation, shall not be less worthy than the British nation in whom we hold united allegiance."<sup>10</sup> Such statements would appear to contradict one recent writer, Professor Douglas Cole, who has denied that the imperialism of men like Cumberland was a form of Canadian nationalism. Cole describes their thought as simple patriotism or a colonial-minded pan Britannic nationalism.<sup>11</sup>

The OHS spokesmen were particularly concerned about the possible effects that immigration might have upon the community's Anglo-Saxon character. Certainly they were not as optimistic as the majority of Canadians who, according to Professor Marilyn Barber, seemed to have been confident that the immigrants could be easily assimilated and that they would contribute significantly to the future growth of the country.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, they were not quite so pessimistic as their fellow historian, William Stewart Wallace, who concluded that "race suicide" could result from unrestricted immigration.<sup>13</sup> The position of the society's officers lay somewhere between these extremes.

Together with other concerned educators and clergymen across Canada, OHS spokesmen feared that the assimilation of the immigrants was not an inevitability, and that unwanted alterations in the national character would result if steps were not taken to absorb the newcomers.<sup>14</sup> Referring to this possibility, Barlow Cumberland warned:

Canada is now passing into the most momentous trial that has ever been set before a growing people. Never was there such a sudden, widespread and speedy task, of nation building, and patriot making, as is now pressing upon the Canadians of to-day.

A great responsibility lies in every one of us, for we are proposing to do in decades what our forefathers did in centuries. The patriotic duty of education of both young and old, in the ideals and history of our past, lies upon our schools, our national societies and ourselves....

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George Locke, a future OHS president and chief librarian of the Toronto Public Library, agreed with Cumberland that history was "an all important subject owing to its influence on the assimilation of the foreign elements in our population."<sup>16</sup>

Interestingly enough, the Methodist clergyman James S. Woodsworth of All People's Mission in Winnipeg entertained in the religious sphere, fears and assumptions similar to those of the OHS leaders. In his volume Strangers Within Our Gates (1909), Woodsworth examined the problems arising from massive immigration into western Canada, in an attempt to spur the churches into becoming more effective agencies of assimilation.

The fears of the OHS leaders might be seen as part of

a wider North American pattern of behaviour. During the 1880s and 1890s, as the flood of immigrants reached the United States, a nativist reaction against large scale immigration, and especially against the newcomers from southern and eastern Europe had manifested itself south of the border.<sup>17</sup> American "patriots" argued "that a great nation requires a homogeneous people" and called for a reawakened sense of nationality. "The period," argues John Higham, "resounded with organized campaigns to arouse a vigorous 'Americanism.' Flag exercises, replete with special salutes and pledges, spread throughout the public schools along with agitation for inculcating patriotism. Among well-to-do, status-conscious circles, over a dozen hereditary, patriotic societies sprang up in the early nineties to cultivate a keener, more exclusive sense of nationality."<sup>18</sup>

The parallels between the history of American historical and patriotic societies in the 1890s and their Ontario counterparts in the following decade is more than coincidental. Ontarians such as Coyne, Fessenden, Cumberland, J.G. Hodgins, George Locke and others kept close watch on the American scene and readily copied the attempts below the border to teach political attitudes by way of pledging allegiance to the flag, schoolroom decorations, and monument building. Visitors such as Reuben Gold Thwaites commented upon the similarity of the American and Canadian experience in "the number of foreigners they were called upon to educate along

the line of patriotism."<sup>19</sup> James Coyne also was cognizant of the common problems of each country:

We are one in many problems we are called upon to face. What are we to do with our foreigners? Shall we exclude them altogether, or shall we control immigration by more stringent regulations and conditions? Shall we assimilate it, or to what extent shall we admit the newcomer to the rights and privileges of citizenship? How shall we educate them to the duties and responsibilities of citizenship? Shall we encourage men of all races and colors to come and occupy, or shall we imitate the chosen people of old, and keep and develop our country as an inheritance for our children and our children's children?

20

Given the Anglo-Saxon racial emphasis in their thought, it is not difficult to understand why the historians reacted as they did to the new immigrants of European descent who, if they remained unabsorbed, seemed to have the potential for undermining the British character of the race. Not for nothing did Clementina Fessenden write that "the Government should help worthy Englishmen to settle among us rather than assist such a foreign element as the Doukhobors."<sup>21</sup>

Ironically Clementina Fessenden, while emulating the tub-thumping activities of the American patriotic societies, reacted even more vociferously against immigrants from the United States than she did against those from Europe. Her speeches and letters promoting flag and patriotic exercises usually emphasized the American cultural threat above all else. She agreed wholeheartedly with the following statement by William Kirby:

We are entering on a grand national crisis. We are at the forks of the road of fate. We must choose whether we are to be Americanized or more closely bound to Britain by ties of trade preference as well as ties of sentiment. The pot is boiling over in the U. States, and its discontent. People will come into Canada's West by hordes, shall I say by millions, and we must assimilate them or perish as a Dominion.

22

The American immigrant was feared because he brought with him the cultural baggage that some Canadian nationalists disliked most. Clementina Fessenden warned of a possible "leavening of our highest ideals by a people whose views and laws do not make for highest good."<sup>23</sup> The critique of the republic espoused by OHS spokesmen was by no means unique; indeed, it was virtually identical to the complex of ideas held by those imperialists examined in Carl Berger's Sense of Power.<sup>24</sup> Barlow Cumberland abhorred the rampant materialism below the border and railed against American immigrants coming "... solely to better their condition and whose first qualification is the amount of money they have in their purse."<sup>25</sup> Unchecked individualism, and irreligion were thought to be at the root of American society. "American freedom," wrote Mrs. Fessenden, "is founded on the philosophy that all men are free and equal, and no man should be interfered with in his pursuit of happiness .... It takes no thought of man other than man's relation to man; it gives to national life no recognition of God or obligations to Him."<sup>26</sup> American lawlessness, corruption, the perilous 'coloured' problem, the traditional hostility of American to Canadian interests<sup>27</sup> were

all part and parcel of the image of the republic held by some OHS spokesmen. This subjective critique, based on traditional tory biases,<sup>28</sup> can hardly be taken as a sound interpretation of American society at this or any other period; but, it does reveal a great deal about the minds of the OHS leaders and why they considered the American immigrant so serious a threat to the Canadian identity.

These same fears were expressed by Lorne Murchison in Sara Jeanette Duncan's The Imperialist (1904). He explained to the voters of Elgin that they were facing an "invasion from the south" which threatened the Dominion's moral fibre:

We took our very Constitution, our very chart of national life from England -- her laws, her liberty her equality were good enough for us. We have lived by them, some of us have died by them....

"And this Republic," he went on hotly, "this Republic that menaces our national life with commercial extinction, what past has she that is comparable? The daughter who left the old stock to be the light woman among nations, welcoming all comers, mingling her pure blood, polluting her lofty ideals until it is hard indeed to recognize the features and the aims of her honourable youth."

29

Clementina Fessenden was more pessimistic than most of the members of the OHS insofar as she believed that the bulk of "the foreign United States immigrants now flooding the West will not become naturalized and loyal British subjects."<sup>30</sup> Their attitudes and values, she believed, were rapidly formed and could not be changed. Still, their children could eventually be assimilated by subjecting them to careful

indoctrination, particularly in the schools. Mrs. Fessenden had given this subject much thought and had translated her ideas into action by initiating her remarkable campaign to have a Flag Day, or Empire Day as it was eventually called, introduced as an annual event in the schools of Canada. The success of this movement here and in the rest of the Empire, made Mrs. Fessenden's name a household word in Ontario, and rocketed her into international prominence after the turn of the century.

Empire Day, the school day immediately preceding the 24th of May, was intended to be "devoted specially to the study of the history of Canada and its relation to the British Empire and to such other exercises as might tend to increase the interest of the pupils in the history of their country and strengthen their attachment to the Empire to which they belong...."<sup>31</sup> Beginning in 1897, Mrs. Fessenden single-handedly launched a campaign to have her idea accepted. It involved sending letters to the press in Montreal and Toronto,<sup>32</sup> appealing to George Ross, the Minister of Education,<sup>33</sup> and organizing support in school boards across Ontario.<sup>34</sup> Impressed by the enthusiasm that quickly built up behind the Flag Day concept, George Ross, himself imbued with the imperial idea, took up the torch and introduced resolutions in favour of Empire Day at the Ontario Educational Association meeting in April 1898, and at the Dominion Teachers' Association conference in Halifax in August 1898.<sup>35</sup> In each case the resolution was

unanimously accepted. By the following year, Empire Day was incorporated into the school systems of many of the provinces. Within a few years, it was celebrated in Britain and throughout the rest of the Empire. The potential scope of the exercises in Ontario schools may be gathered from the following circular issued by George Ross to school inspectors:

Part of the forenoon might be occupied with a familiar talk by the teacher on the British Empire, its extent and resources; the relation of Canada to the Empire; the unity of the Empire, and its advantages; the privileges which, as British subjects, we enjoy; the extent of Canada and its resources; readings from Canadian and British authors by the teacher; interesting historical incidents in connection with our own country. The aim of the teacher in all his references to Canada and the Empire should be, to make Canadian patriotism intelligent, comprehensive and strong. The afternoon ... might be occupied with patriotic recitations, songs and readings by the pupils, and speeches by trustees, clergymen and such other persons as may be available. The trustees and public generally should be invited to be present at the exercises.

36

Early in 1898, James Coyne endorsed Mrs. Fessenden's Empire Day proposal with the Ontario Historical Society's stamp of approval. Ironically, Coyne believed that Canadians could well afford to follow the lead of the United States which already had special patriotic school days for conditioning children and shaping their political attitudes.<sup>37</sup> "At this period," he explained in a burst of high-sounding rhetoric,

the minds of men throughout the globe are dominated by the idea of the unity of the Empire .... A more opportune time could not be chosen for setting apart a day on which our school children may be specially reminded of the great achievements of their ancestors, the enormous expansion of British sway, its vast responsibilities, the mission of the race to keep the peace of the world.... Children

cannot be taught too early what a noble lineage they are sprung from, the heroic struggles and accomplishment of the pioneers of Upper Canada, and of British and Canadian soldiers and sailors, and the influence upon our national growth of that reverence for law and order, and for the idea of Imperial unity which we have inherited with our blood and bone and sinew.

38

At the annual meeting of the OHS in June 1898, the general membership again supported Mrs. Fessenden and requested the Minister of Education to establish a flag day for patriotic exercises in the schools.

39

Inspired by Mrs. Fessenden, the OHS appointed her in 1898 the convener of the flag and commemoration committee to lead a movement to have all schools in Ontario equipped with the Union Jack or Canadian Red Ensign, and to promote their use on proper occasions. Barlow Cumberland, an active member of this committee, explained why he and others considered flags and related ceremonial activities of such importance in his book, History of the Union Jack (1900). For Cumberland, a flag was the one emblem "universally accepted among men as the incarnation of their intensest sentiment, and ... concentrates in itself the annals of a nation and all the traditions of an empire."<sup>40</sup> He believed that the value of a country's flag increased in direct proportion to the number of people who knew its story and understood its symbolism. "For of itself a flag is nothing," wrote Cumberland, "but in its significance it is everything...." The Union Jack was bound up "with love of country, defence of home, and all that is glorious in

Canada's history...", and was

the signal of parliamentary government by British constitutional principles. It represents progress and modern ideas -- the rule of the people, for the people, by the people, through their Queen; and, therefore, it is the evidence of their affectionate and loyal allegiance to that monarchy and system of government under whose benign sway the colonies have advanced and Canada, above all other countries on the continent of America, is the land of the self-governed and the free.

41

The OHS faced two main problems in taking this interpretation of the Union Jack's meaning to the children. In the first place, many schoolhouses, particularly in rural areas, had neither a flag nor a staff; a survey conducted by the committee in 1901 revealed that only one school in four possessed a flag.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, by 1907 the OHS succeeded in reaching its objective when the Minister of Education instructed Clarkson W. James, his personal assistant and then secretary of the OHS, to call for tenders for a supply of flags for rural schools. This action, James declared, met "the great end in view, namely -- the flying of the flag in every schoolhouse in our fair Province."<sup>43</sup> Once the flags were distributed, a second and more difficult problem arose: how to convince school inspectors and teachers to appreciate the potential significance of the flag in the education of the young? To what extent the OHS succeeded in unravelling the mysteries of the Red Ensign and Union Jack for the school children and inspiring them with its meaning is impossible to measure. But at least the effort was made. For example,

at her own expense (and presumably at her own profit), Clementina Fessenden made up a colourful flag chart and printed a thousand copies which she sold to various school boards across Canada.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, the Department of Education distributed Empire Day instruction booklets each year as a teaching aid for the flag exercises.

After a few years of activity, the flag committee broadened its objectives to include educating all Ontarians, young and old, as to the meaning of the flag and its proper usage and display. Ontarians, it seems, became more flag conscious than they had ever been before as a result of the campaigns of the OHS and other patriotic organizations. The greater public concern was reflected in the federal government's decision in 1908 to commence the practise of flying the flag over every government building. Furthermore, throughout this period the flag committee sought to educate the public about the constant misuse of the Canadian Red Ensign. In 1901, the failure of many Canadian vessels to hoist the ensign when entering a foreign port was condemned. On other occasions letters were sent to civic authorities urging them to enforce local bylaws to ensure the dignified use of the flag. This business was ~~some~~times taken to ridiculous extremes. At one point Mrs. Fessenden denounced the action of an American circus troupe who had bought a small flag and hired "a coloured boy to carry it before them" as they entered one Ontario town. Such behaviour, which thoroughly affronted her sensibilities, was said to be "quite inconsistent with...good breeding."<sup>45</sup>

Other incidents aroused the ire of Mrs. Fessenden if she considered they involved "the impertinent flaunting of foreign [usually a euphemism for American] flags on Canadian Soil." She sent indignant letters to the press or government when an unauthorized flag was flown over a Hamilton post office,<sup>46</sup> when American flags were improperly displayed at the Canadian National Exhibition,<sup>47</sup> or when cottagers vacationing in the Muskokas hoisted the "Stars and Stripes" over their property.<sup>48</sup> Whether such vigilance had any effect is uncertain, but at least Mrs. Fessenden was convinced that it did. She reported to the OHS in 1909, with obvious regret, that "at times it would seem ... there was no further need for the continuance of this committee. It has done its work in calling public attention to the necessity of knowing well the story of our flag and ... its proper usage and times of display."<sup>49</sup>

Clementina Fessenden's concern about the American cultural threat was shared by the rank and file members of the Ontario Historical Society. This was evident in the general support for the flag committee's activities. The same concern prompted the passage of a resolution in 1900 urging Ottawa to stem the tide of American literature then flooding the country by encouraging the interchange of British rather than of American newspapers and magazines.<sup>50</sup> The subsequent introduction of imperial penny postage was heartily welcomed as a step in this direction.

The same fear of American culture and values underlay the OHS's opposition to the attempts of an American patriotic order -- the Sons of the American Revolution -- to build a monument at Quebec City in memory of General Richard Montgomery who had laid seige to the city in 1775. In 1898 and again in 1901, the OHS joined the public outcry across Canada against the plan. James Coyne addressed a bluntly worded letter to Sir Wilfrid Laurier in 1898, arguing that since a monument had yet to be erected for the defenders of Quebec, it "would appear to be almost the climax of preposterousness to suggest that one should be erected to glorify the leader of the invading army." The mere thought of such an action was "absurd and ridiculous, as well as insulting;" and if accomplished, "there could be no more grievous offence to the dignity of the nation."<sup>51</sup> Coyne's letter was indicative of the vehemence of the protest that forced various levels of government to thwart the plans of the American organization.

In 1901 and 1902, the Sons of the American Revolution attempted once again to erect the memorial. Along with dozens of other Canadian patriotic and historical groups, the OHS<sup>52</sup> renewed their protest and petitioned the federal government. Laurier momentarily allayed their fears by publicly stating that no monument would be erected on government-owned land, and that only a simple tablet marker was proposed.<sup>53</sup> Little did anyone suspect that since no limit was placed on the size of the tablet, the Sons of the Revolution actually planned to

erect a nine thousand dollar marble slab about twenty feet in height.<sup>54</sup> Unluckily for the Americans, Clementina Fessenden, then the convener of the OHS flag and commemoration committee, uncovered their scheme while visiting Massachusetts. Mrs. Fessenden had earlier informed the IODE branches, the historical societies, and the press in April 1901 about the renewed efforts to erect a Montgomery monument, and she continued to feed them information which rekindled the protest early in 1902.<sup>55</sup> "I'm half dead looking after that Montgomery affair [and] seeing the Sons of the Revolution," she wrote to David Boyle on February 12, 1902.<sup>56</sup> Her efforts obviously succeeded. Within several months she proudly told William Kirby that "the withdrawel [sic] was most humiliating to them, subscriptions have been taken up and no doubt a great demonstration (well planned) prevented...."<sup>57</sup> Woe to the American patriotic organizations now that they had raised the anger of Mrs. Fessenden. Almost immediately after the "Montgomery affair" had been settled, she and William Kirby published a letter decrying another American proposal to erect a memorial to George Washington in St. Paul's Cathedral in London.<sup>58</sup>

In addition to the flag committee's efforts to nurture desirable political attitudes among the younger generation, the OHS assisted the movement to introduce into the schools "patriotic pictures, illustrative of our National and Provincial histories." According to J.G. Hodgins, the librarian and historiographer of the Ontario Department of Education,

most of the classroom walls were "bare of everything that would excite any special interest in the young, or call forth either patriotic feeling, or enthusiasm in our national affairs, or even in our local Canadian History."<sup>59</sup> In 1900, the OHS endorsed Hodgins' request that the historical societies in Canada bring before the public in their respective regions the subject of schoolroom decoration. Hodgins' appeal came in the form of a booklet published with the blessing of the Ontario Department of Education entitled School Room Decoration: An Address to Canadian Historical Societies (1900). In what amounted to a remarkable tribute to the American techniques for instilling a feeling of national loyalty and pride (and to a stunning lack of originality on Hodgins' part), he suggested that Canadian schools assiduously emulate those techniques. "Instead of the portrait of General George Washington...", Hodgins suggested,

we might have in our Schools, that of ... the Queen; instead of the Declaration of Independence, we might have our Magna Charta...; instead of Paul Revere's famous Ride, we might have a picture of Mrs. Secord's notable Walk...; for the "Surrender of Burgoyne" and Cornwallis, we might have a picture of the Surrender of Hull at Detroit; and pictures of the Holding of the Palisaded Fort by "Heroes of the Longue Sault...."

60

Considering it an especially appropriate time to foster patriotic sentiment because of the conflict in South Africa,<sup>61</sup> the OHS promptly urged the local affiliates to put Hodgins' suggestions into effect.<sup>62</sup> There is no indication

that members of the OHS saw the irony in their endorsement of the Hodgins' plan to borrow American methods of political indoctrination. Meanwhile, for its own part, the provincial historical association offered to provide framed pictures of the Simcoe and Secord monuments to any school contributing to the monument funds.

It is somewhat surprising that with their Anglo-Saxon and British proclivities, the OHS spokesmen had no difficulty incorporating the French fact into their image of the national character. Although there was a sprinkling of members in the Ontario Historical Society known for their anti-Catholic and anti-French viewpoints such as James L. Hughes and George S. Ryerson (both associated with the Equal Rights Association), there is no hint of such sentiments in the OHS reports, minutes or correspondence. Instead, the society established a tradition of encouraging goodwill and understanding between the two peoples. As early as 1896, in an address published in the annual report of the Pioneer and Historical Association of Ontario, a Hamilton school principal, W.H. Davis, urged history teachers to inculcate "a broad tolerance for each other, no narrow provincialism, no narrow partizanship, no narrow creed should result from our teaching." He hoped that the day would soon come "when demagogues who set province against province, or creed against creed, shall find their occupation gone."<sup>63</sup>

James Coyne added his voice in support of such senti-

ments. Although he talked at times of the Anglo-Saxon's genius for "governing inferior races," his racism apparently exempted the French-Canadians. In part, this was a consequence of the fact that he was rooted in the Laurier Liberal camp. He may also have come to grips with the French-Canadian question through the study of Canadian history. Certainly he conceived of history as a panacea for the racial and religious turmoil in the country.

This line of thought he developed in an address entitled "The Value of History," given in January 1896 to a meeting of the Women's Canadian Historical Society of Toronto. "History is recorded experience," explained Coyne, "and therefore of practical utility. The continuity of national life is dependent upon unity of national purpose, and this can only be maintained by cultivation of knowledge of the past."<sup>64</sup> Without knowing the origin of present conditions and problems, Canadians would be unable to meet the questions that confronted them:

When critical questions of statesmanship arise, dividing classes, creeds or races, the Canadian who wishes to decide with a full sense of responsibility to the whole Dominion must see the need of a clear and full knowledge of its history, of the elements constituting the nation, how the progress of fusion has proceeded and upon what conditions alone the future nationality can be built up one and indivisible.

65

To perform his duty adequately, each Canadian must know "the mainspring of our beginnings in every part of the Dominion," especially the history of New France, of British settlement,

and of the West. Only then will he learn

... to respect the preferences and convictions of the various elements of our population, avoid occasions of conflict and strive to discover common grounds of national unity and common ideals for future action, upon which all can join in harmony and mutual forbearance and regard. May we not say that those who have done the best constructive work in Canadian statesmanship have been earnest students of the national history, and thus better able to harmonize the conflicting elements, racial, religious, political and commercial.

66

From his own study of Canadian history, Coyne had become a subscriber to the providential view of the Conquest, and considered the French-Canadians as effectively assimilated by virtue of their profound devotion to British political institutions. French-Canadians, he believed, easily consoled themselves "with the thought that under the new allegiance [they] enjoyed more liberty, prosperity and happiness than under the old regime of tyranny and repression, and as much freedom in the exercise of their religion as in the most Catholic country in the world...."<sup>67</sup> Coyne praised French-Canadians for fighting in defence of country and of the principle of imperial unity on several occasions in the past.<sup>68</sup>

During his presidency, Barlow Cumberland also urged the study of French-Canadian history as a vehicle "to better understand our brother Canadians." He looked to the day when the "blending of the races" would be completed and a homogeneous Canadian nationality created. This notion was rather more subtle and palatable than the brutally simple

concept of assimilation espoused in many quarters of English-speaking Canada. Cumberland's idea was based on his understanding of the precedent in Britain where the Norman French and Saxons had intermingled since 1066 to create a united nationality possessing the best characteristics of each group. English and French-Canadians, he believed, had enough in common to make another blending process feasible. This included a northern climate, a similar Norman ancestry, and a common history in North America.<sup>69</sup> Like Coyne, he believed that both groups were united by devotion to British political values and institutions, though English-Canadian loyalty was basically emotional and the French loyalty based on a calculated but "deep-seated conviction" that they had first acquired real liberty under the British constitution. In the creation of the new nationality there was to be "no thought of French domination or of English domination, but an amalgamation and union for the purpose and advancement of the whole." The new nationality would still be predominantly British in character, but it would be a uniquely Canadian product, a synthesis of the best characteristics of both races. Certain desirable French-Canadian character traits would temper the callousness of English-Canadians who Cumberland felt were too "...immersed in the whirl and struggle of development, expansion, and business success." From their French heritage, all future Canadians would display "cheerfulness and gaiety of heart, a regard for religion,

a reverence for elders, a placidity of content which makes the living of life of equal consideration with that of working for gain."<sup>70</sup>

To the end of this period which continued to be plagued with French-Canadian language and school controversies, the OHS repeatedly urged an end to bigotry for the sake of the national future. Mr. Justice W.A. Weir's plea in the annual report of 1913 was strikingly reminiscent of Coyne's views in the "Value of History" fifteen years earlier. "The people of Quebec," wrote Weir,

...may differ in their customs and methods from the people of the Maritime Provinces, Ontario, or the great West; but any bitterness or prejudice on that account is apt to be unjust and certainly antagonistic to the development of broad citizenship. The differences after all are few and temporary while the common interests are as many and of enduring nature. The lesson of our history is that we should try to get each other's viewpoint and develop kindly and fraternal sentiments for the future activities of the various provinces seemed destined to remain linked together.

71

These, then, were the national and imperial concepts and attitudes, the images of the Canadian character and identity, held by the Coynes, Cumberlands and Fessendens during the first decade of this century. After 1911, however, when these historian-patriots stepped down from high office, new OHS spokesmen came up from the ranks who entertained a set of opinions different in degree, if not in kind, from those held by their predecessors. By 1913, the first per-

ceptible changes were reflected in the absence of imperial rhetoric in the presidential addresses and in the growing number of references to "the struggle for responsible government"<sup>72</sup> and "autonomy,"<sup>73</sup> figures of speech which had no relevance for the imperial federationists of an earlier day. Perhaps it was the unhappy Boer War experience combined with the growing criticism of the imperial idea in Britain and Canada which taxed many Canadians' enthusiasm for empire. After the General Election of 1911, moreover, questions of imperial unity and Americanization began to lose their appeal as Canadians faced the pressing social problems of an increasingly urban and industrial environment.<sup>74</sup>

Though some nationalists strove to link imperialism and social reform,<sup>75</sup> it was apparent to OHS members that urbanization and industrialization in this "age of plutocracy" had created enough domestic social problems to gratify the most ardent reforming urge. Such concerns found their way into the literature of the Ontario Historical Society. One member wrote:

To prevent the growth of caste and classes under a democratic constitution and the sense of social injustice in the minds of many of our fellow-citizens, and to develop watchful guardians of our liberty, trained citizens, whose education must in large measure include the lessons of history were never more necessary to the public interest.

76

Edith L. Marsh, another member who looked at the social problems caused by the "unbridled greed and competition"

of modern society, rejected the predominant social and economic values of her own age and suggested that the Indian and pioneer customs of hospitality, sharing, and mutual assistance be put in their place.<sup>77</sup> Like others before her, this speaker saw the solution for the problems of the present in the lessons of the past. Historians, argued Miss Marsh, could assist in the battle to combat social injustice:

It is the county historian who can show how gradually the spirit of the early days which laid the foundation of our Dominion has been passing away, and by stating facts as they are can open our eyes to the dangers of the present. A time will come when we have put the power of money in the place where it belongs, when we have ceased to honor men for their wealth until we know how it has been obtained.... A system that allows monopoly to dispossess the tiller of the soil can never tend towards national greatness.

The county history can do more than any other force to bridge the gulf of inequality that lies between the communal system of the Indians and the early settlers and a grand co-operative social system that is to come. Such a future is not a mere vision. For generations the great leaders of thought have realized that our competitive system is too wasteful. They have seen that many are struggling in poverty, some in a starving condition, while the few can throw away what would keep a multitude in plenty, and they know that in time we must have a more just and economical system of production and distribution.

78

This attack on the prevailing "competitive system" was part of the general reform current growing out of the problems of an increasingly urban and industrial society. "By the beginning of the twentieth century," wrote Professor Paul Rutherford in a recent study of the urban reform movement, "it was widely accepted that urban growth posed a serious

menace to the future of the nation."<sup>79</sup> The social gospel, of course, was an important and integral dimension of the reform tradition in this period.<sup>80</sup> Miss Marsh's critique of the capitalist system, and her idealization of Indian and pioneer communal life, was a condemnation of the whole sweep of nineteenth century social and economic development. Her belief in social degeneration, her disenchantment with latter-day values, represented quite a shift from the opinions of James Coyne. As an imperialist, Coyne was imbued with the mission of civilizing "inferior races", and as a Liberal, he had perceived nothing but unmitigated progress during the course of the nineteenth century.

In addition to turning their attention to new social concerns after 1911, OHS spokesmen continued to address themselves to the problems of civic education, the assimilation of the immigrants, and the threat posed by American culture; but, they did so with less frequency and without the emotionalism that coloured the thought of such as Clementina Fessenden. For instance, John Dearness, the president of the Ontario Historical Society (1912-14), eschewed the kind of rabid anti-American sentiment so characteristic of Mrs. Fessenden.<sup>81</sup> He rationally examined the state of Canadian-American relations and wrote of the need for both countries to know each other's history intimately, since "we have already profited in many ways by their experience and they have profited by ours.... Our school system, our municipal system, our transportation

methods, our provincial-federal form of government are more like the corresponding features of the United States than like those of the British Isles." <sup>82</sup> Dearness had no fear of "Americanizing ourselves" simply by adopting American methods and adapting them to Canadian conditions. His statements were symptomatic of a change of opinion within the higher echelons of the OHS.

The shift away from traditional concerns about maintaining and strengthening imperial unity was best reflected in an address by Clarence Warner entitled "The Growth of Canadian National Feeling" presented at the annual conference of the OHS in 1915. Warner concluded:

All parties, races and creeds in Canada agree that there has been a rapid growth of Canadian national feeling during the last fifteen years. But Kipling's great line, "Daughter am I in my mother's house, but mistress in my own", does not express the true epitome of Canadian spirit at this time. That was applicable to us when the South African War was in progress. We are now full partners in the great firm of "John Bull and Co.", and as the American branch of that house we shall probably conduct this end of the business in the manner deemed advisable by the Canadian directors of the firm. Conditions -- economic and social -- are bound at times to make our point of view different from that of the senior partners, but we will all have the same object in view and Canadian nationalism will never break with Britain. Our history is decisive proof that Home Rule is the truest form of Empire, and we have come to recognize that there is something more important than material prosperity.

83

Thus, during the period 1898-1914, the Ontario Historical Society made a noticeable transition in its thinking

as the concepts and attitudes of the Coynes, Cumberlands, and Fessendens gradually gave way to the outlook of people less enamoured of closer imperial ties and the Anglo-Saxon mission, of people more aware of the growing autonomy of the Dominion. Significantly, the transition in mood and opinion had an impact on the kind of patriotic activities undertaken by the provincial historical association. After 1910, the flag and commemoration committee slipped into oblivion along with most of the attempts to introduce patriotic exercises and historical symbols into the schools for the purpose of indoctrinating the children. The weakening of the impulse to nurture patriotic sentiment was a trend that would continue after the Great War as the OHS turned to more scholarly pursuits.

## FOOTNOTES

- 1 David P. Gagan, The Queen's Champion: The Life of George Taylor Denison 3rd...(unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, Duke University, 1969), p. 184.
- 2 "President's Address," Annual Report of the Ontario Historical Society 1908 (Toronto: the OHS, 1908), p. 51.
- 3 Frederic Barlow Cumberland, "Canada's Heirlooms of Empire," ibid., 1910, p. 33.
- 4 R. Cook, "Stephen Leacock and the Age of Plutocracy, 1903-1921," in John S. Moir (ed.), Character and Circumstance: Essays in Honour of Donald Grant Creighton (Toronto: Macmillan, 1970), p. 176.
- 5 Ibid., pp. 173 and 181.
- 6 UWO, J.H. Coyne papers, clipping of St. Thomas Weekly Times, June 24, 1897.
- 7 Frederic Barlow Cumberland, "Introduction," Maple Leaves: Being the Papers Read Before the National Club of Toronto at the "National Evenings," During the Winter of 1890-91 (Toronto: 1891), pp. VII-VIII.
- 8 "Mr. Coyne's Address On Retiring From the Presidency," Annual Report OHS 1901 and 1902, p. 74.
- 9 Cumberland, "Heirlooms," op. cit., p. 47.
- 10 "President's Address," Annual Report OHS 1908, p. 51.
- 11 Douglas L. Cole, "Canada's 'Nationalistic' Imperialists," JCS, Vol. V, No. 3 (August, 1970), p. 48. In this review article of Carl Berger's Sense of Power (Toronto: 1970), Cole denies

that the imperialism of men like G.T. Denison, G.M. Grant, and G.R. Perkin was a form of Canadian nationalism. The same argument would apply to this interpretation of Cumberland's thought.

12  
Introduction by Marilyn Barber to J.S. Woodsworth, Strangers Within Our Gates (Social History of Canada Series; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), p. XVI.

13  
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- 23  
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- 24  
Carl Berger, op. cit., chapter 6.
- 25  
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- 26  
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Ibid. See also Cumberland, "Heirlooms," op. cit.
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See Sidney F. Wise and Robert C. Brown, Canada Views the United States: Nineteenth Century Political Attitudes (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967).
- 29  
Sara Jeannette Duncan, The Imperialist (New Canadian Library Series; Toronto: Macmillan, 1968), p. 233.
- 30  
Fessenden papers, Fessenden to W. Price, M.P., April 15, 1911.
- 31  
Fessenden papers, circular to school inspectors signed by George W. Ross, March 1899.
- 32  
Fessenden papers, Fessenden to editor of Montreal Star August 24, 1897; press clipping, letter of same to Toronto Mail and Empire, January 20, 1898.
- 33  
Fessenden papers, George Ross to Fessenden, November 6, 1897; December 23, 1897; April 4, 1898.
- 34  
Fessenden papers, petition to George Ross from London Board of Education, May 1898; see also clipping of Hamilton Spectator, n.d., regarding her meeting with the Hamilton Board of Education.
- 35  
Clementina Fessenden, The Genesis of Empire Day (Hamilton: George B. Midgley, 1910).

36

Quoted in W. Sanford Evans, "Empire Day: A Detailed History of Its Origin and Inception," Canadian Magazine, Vol. XIII (1899), p. 277.

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The OHS leaders believed the Americans were very successful in this regard. They may have been right according to a recent study by Robert D. Hess and David Easton, "The Role of the Elementary School in Political Socialization," School Review, Vol LXX (Autumn, 1962), pp. 257-65. The authors argue that American school children acquire "respect for law and a feeling of national loyalty and pride" by "pledging allegiance to the flag, singing the national anthem, celebrating the birth of Washington and Lincoln and observing Veterans' Day."

38

Fessenden papers, press clipping, letter to editor of Toronto Mail and Empire, January 20, 1898.

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OHSA, minute book OHS, June 1, 1908.

40

Frederic Barlow Cumberland, History of the Union Jack: How it Grew and What it Is (2nd ed. rev.; Toronto: William Briggs, 1900), p. 21.

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Ibid., p. 280.

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OHSA, Flag Committee Questionnaire, n.d., in package dated June 1901 - February 1902.

43

Fessenden papers, Clarkson W. James to Fessenden, September 6, 1907.

44

UT, Sir Edmund Walker papers, Fessenden to Walker, May 4, 1904; See also OHSA, Fessenden to David Boyle, November 11, 1904, Hamilton and Toronto school boards, for instance, purchased her flag charts.

45

OHSA, Flag Committee Report, n.d. (probably June 1901), in package dated June 1901 - February 1902.

46

Fessenden papers, Report of Flag and Commemoration Committee 1909-1910.

- 47 Annual Report OHS 1904, p. 14; see also OHSA, clipping of Toronto Telegram, September 15, 1906.
- 48 OHSA, Fessenden to Boyle, dated October 1904.
- 49 Annual Report OHS 1909, p. 28.
- 50 OHSA, minute book OHS, general meeting, August 30, 1900; council meeting, November 10, 1900.
- 51 OHSA, Coyne to Laurier, October 22, 1898.
- 52 OHSA, minute book OHS, April 12, 1901.
- 53 Annual Report OHS 1901 and 1902, p. 49.
- 54 OHSA, Fessenden to D. Boyle, February 4, 1902.
- 55 PAC, Laurier papers, M.G. 26, GI (a), Vol. 224, Fessenden to Laurier, February 22, 1902.
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- 59 J. George Hodgins, School Room Decoration: An Address to Canadian Historical Societies (Toronto: Warwick Bros. and Rutter, 1900), p. 5.
- 60 Ibid., p. 6.
- 61 "President's Address," Annual Report OHS 1900, pp. 11-21.

62  
Annual Report OHS 1901 and 1902, p. 25.

63  
 W.H. Davis, "The Teaching of Patriotism in our Schools," Pioneer and Historical Association of the Province of Ontario Annual Report, 1896, p. 59. The same attitude is evident in E.A. Cruikshank, "On Canadian History," Barrie Examiner July 2, 1891.

64  
 James H. Coyne, "The Value of History," The Toronto Globe, January 8, 1898.

65  
Ibid.

66  
Ibid.

67  
 "Mr. Coyne's Address on Retiring," op. cit., p. 79.

68  
 "President's Address," Annual Report OHS 1901 and 1902, p. 49.

69  
 "President's Address," ibid., 1908 pp. 49-51. These ideas were not very original. See for example William Canniff, History of the Province of Ontario (Toronto: A.H. Hovey, 1872), p. 27.

70  
 "President's Address," Annual Report OHS 1908, pp. 49-50.

71  
Ibid., 1913, p. 24.

72  
Ibid.

73  
 In 1913 the society distributed Professor J.L. Morison's "British Supremacy and Canadian Autonomy," an essay which chronicled the growth of Canada's autonomy.

74  
 Paul Rutherford, "Tomorrow's Metropolis: The Urban Reform Movement in Canada, 1880-1920," Historical Papers 1971, p. 203.

- 75  
Berger, op. cit., and Cook, op. cit.
- 76  
Letter from Judge W.A. Weir in Annual Report OHS 1913, p. 24.
- 77  
Edith L. Marsh, "The County History as a Factor in Social Progress," OHSPR, Vol. XIII (1915), pp. 53-7.
- 78  
Ibid., pp. 56-7.
- 79  
Rutherford, op. cit.
- 80  
Richard Allen, "The Social Gospel and the Reform Tradition in Canada, 1890-1928," CHR, Vol. LIX, No. 4 (December, 1968), pp. 381-399.
- 81  
J. Dearness, "The Sphere of the Historical Societies," Annual Report OHS 1914, p. 39.
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Clarence M. Warner, "The Growth of Canadian National Feeling," Annual Report OHS 1915, p. 26.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### A CREDITABLE RECORD, 1898-1914

When it appeared in 1898, the Ontario Historical Society believed in its capacity to fill the void occasioned by the absence of other provincial historical agencies. At that time there was no central archival depository or historical library in Ontario, no museum to represent the full sweep of the province's past, no organization to issue a periodical devoted solely to recording and interpreting the history of Ontario, and no agency to preserve historic sites and landmarks. Although the burden of undertaking the work of all these institutions proved too much for the historical society, it none the less accomplished a great deal in the period prior to the First World War. By 1914 the OHS's record was a creditable one that more than justified its existence.

#### I

After reorganizing the provincial historical society in 1898, James Coyne turned to the problem of setting the new OHS constitution into operation. To grapple with the ambitious objectives that the society had set for itself, Coyne wisely delegated authority through the creation of a committee system. The most pressing task of the OHS at the outset was to build up the membership, and in this work Coyne was assisted by a committee that included David Boyle, the

secretary, Charles Canniff James, the vice-president, and Frank Yeigh, the treasurer.

Charles C. James (1863-1916), born in Napanee of loyalist stock and educated at Victoria College, had been a professor of chemistry at the Ontario Agricultural College before assuming in 1891 the position of Deputy Minister of Agriculture at Queen's Park. After joining the OHS he became one of its most active officers and succeeded Coyne as president in 1902. Frank Yeigh, the treasurer of the OHS, was for many years (1880-1896) a private secretary to the Hon. Arthur S. Hardy, then the Commissioner of Crown Lands in Ontario. Yeigh retired from the civil service in 1908 to devote himself to organizing historical tours, and to lecturing, journalism, and social work with the Young Men's Christian Association. He was author of Ontario's Parliament Buildings, or a Century of Legislation (1893), and of an annual compendium entitled Five Thousand Facts About Canada which he published for over <sup>1</sup> twenty-five years.

These individuals succeeded in enticing some two hundred Ontarians to join the provincial historical association in its first few years of operation. Membership was made attractive by levying only a small entrance fee and by deferring the imposition of annual dues. Other inducements included the prospect of receiving the annual volume of papers and records, the first of which appeared in 1899, as well as the publications of the Dominion Archives, the Ontario Department of Education,

and those reports of the Department of Agriculture which were of a historical nature.<sup>2</sup> The affiliated historical societies were also approached for their assistance and asked to sell their publications at a special rate to OHS members. At least one local group -- the Thorold and Beaverdams Historical Society -- complied with this request and offered its History of Thorold at a discount.<sup>3</sup>

It was natural for the Ontario Historical Society to seek its base of support from the same groups of people who had joined or encouraged local historical associations. Hence, the first circulars advertising the society and its objectives were specifically addressed "To Members of Dominion and Provincial Parliaments, Municipal Councillors; High, Public and Separate School Trustees; Professors and Teachers; Professional Men Generally, and Intelligent Persons of Every Kind."<sup>4</sup> To catch the interest of such people, Coyne arranged a host of activities and special meetings. Much publicity resulted from the gatherings held during the Industrial Exhibition in Toronto at the end of each summer, as well as from such special events as the public meeting of January 1899 at which Reuben Gold Thwaites spoke, and the Historical Exhibition held at Victoria College in June of that year. The annual conferences proved attractive in a social sense. At the Belleville meeting in 1901, an entire day was spent on a steamer excursion on the Bay of Quinte. The following year, the high point of the conference was a steamer ride through the Kawartha Lakes between Lakefield and

Lindsay. Evidently the low fees, the free publications, the circulars, and the flurry of interesting meetings had the desired effect since the annual membership figures increased steadily through Coyne's term of office from 22 in 1898, to 170 in 1900, and to 216 in 1902.<sup>5</sup>

Under Coyne's presidency, the number of local historical associations that affiliated with the OHS was also impressive, jumping from eleven in 1898 to twenty-three in 1902.<sup>6</sup> Coyne actively encouraged their formation. For example, the OHS sent letters early in 1899 to individuals known for their historical interest in those counties lacking a historical association.<sup>7</sup> In Milton, just such a letter prompted the residents of that village to form the Halton County Historical Society in May 1899.<sup>8</sup> This group shortly organized small branches in Oakville, Burlington, Acton, and Georgetown.<sup>9</sup>

Promoting the formation of local historical groups was an activity pursued by most of Coyne's successors in this period, though some with more enthusiasm than others. Frederic Barlow Cumberland, the vice-president of the Niagara Navigation Company and the son of Frederic William Cumberland, the architect of Toronto's St. James Cathedral, Osgoode Hall, and University College, and the promoter of the Northern Railway, assiduously engaged in this work. Cumberland envisioned the establishment of historical societies in every county, and to that end he personally assisted in the formation of several new affiliates.<sup>10</sup> Of all his successes, the formation in

October 1907 of a local historical society in the Thunder Bay District of Northern Ontario must have been the most gratifying, this after he had sent no fewer than fifty-six circular letters to influential residents in Port Arthur and Fort William.<sup>11</sup>

Another OHS leader who participated in the formation of local associations was President John Dearness (1912-14) of London. Born in Hamilton in 1852, Dearness began his career as a teacher in Strathroy before becoming principal of the London Normal School, and professor of biology in the Medical School and Arts College of the University of Western Ontario.<sup>12</sup> At the Ontario Educational Association he became something of a legend; he attended his first meeting in 1872 and missed only one convention over the next eighty-one years. As leader of the OHS, Dearness was instrumental in bringing local historical societies into existence in both Chatham and Amherstburg.

In 1913 the OHS was in a relatively healthy condition inasmuch as some thirty local affiliates reported to the provincial organization.<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately a few of these local groups were sustained by the enthusiasm of but one or two members, and collapsed when the services of these people were for one reason or another withdrawn. All the same, the point to be emphasized here is that the OHS succeeded in garnering varying degrees of support from almost every local historical society organized in this period.

There were many reasons impelling the locals to affiliate with the OHS. Perhaps the most important consideration was

the desire of each local to communicate with, and learn from, their counterparts in other districts. A few groups with pretensions of starting museums joined in order to become corporate entities with the right to own property under the terms of the OHS act of incorporation. Such was the case of the Women's Wentworth Historical Society which affiliated in 1899 to facilitate the purchase of Gage House and the Stoney Creek Battlefield Park.<sup>14</sup> It is also probable that some of the local groups realized that the OHS would support them in a number of ways, like helping to preserve a local landmark, collecting funds for a memorial statue or museum, or publishing material in the OHSR.<sup>15</sup> Another factor accounting for the Ontario Historical Society's popularity among the locals was that it carefully refrained from interfering in the affairs of the affiliates unless asked to do so.<sup>16</sup> When the OHS did map out a policy for itself, the affiliates were not coerced into following that course of action and could adopt it or not as they deemed expedient. There were occasions when a local group actually pursued a policy diametrically opposed to the wishes of the OHS. This occurred in 1907 when the York Pioneer and Historical Society defected from the movement led by the OHS to save Old Fort York, and in a complete reversal of policy, endorsed the city of Toronto's scheme for a street railway through the fort to the Canadian National Exhibition. Though it lamented the York Pioneers' decision, the OHS respected that group's right to follow an independent course

of action.

While the membership committee was building support and assisting in the expansion of the local historical society movement, other committees were engaged in activities to promote the establishment of a provincial museum, an archives, and a library. At the meeting of the OHS at the Industrial Exhibition Grounds in Toronto in September 1898 a committee was appointed to investigate the possibility of holding a Historical Exhibition to stimulate public interest in the establishment of a provincial museum.<sup>17</sup> C.C. James convened the committee which was made up largely of the members of the Women's Canadian Historical Society of Toronto who for some time had urged the creation of a museum in the city.

In the autumn of 1898 the committee made enquiries across Ontario to ascertain the nature and scope of the display material that could be borrowed for the exhibition from any individual or group interested in the idea of forming a museum. The response was excellent and the committee reported the results to the OHS in February 1899. But owing to a lack of funds and the society's inability to incur liability before incorporation, or even to furnish a guarantee against loss, nothing was done at that meeting beyond passing a resolution that an exhibition be held.<sup>18</sup>

The Historical Exhibition would have been postponed for at least a year had not the members of the Women's Canadian Historical Society insisted that it be held immediately. Jolted into action by the news that the women planned to stage the

exhibition themselves, James Coyne hastily explained that the OHS still intended to sponsor the project and would do so in June of that year. The women's group reluctantly acknowledged the provincial association's prior claim and agreed to work under its banner. Even so, the women assumed so much of the preparatory work that it was their project in all but name.<sup>19</sup>

The OHS was fortunate enough to receive assistance in the museum project from a number of sources. James L. Hughes, a school inspector, gave indispensable aid by persuading wealthy Torontonians to provide a guarantee fund of a thousand dollars for the articles on loan. The board of governors of Victoria College offered to house the exhibition in their main building. Individuals and organizations from across Ontario and as far away as Montreal, Newfoundland, and Winnipeg sent thousands of articles for display; so many indeed, that it took a catalogue of some 150 pages to list them all.<sup>20</sup> It was only made possible, of course, by the promotional work of the Women's Canadian Historical Society. They had sent two thousand advertising posters across Canada, and supplied the press with news items to arouse interest and to solicit the loan of materials. Editors in Toronto, London, Brantford, Kingston, Montreal, Quebec City, Buffalo, and Winnipeg among others co-operated by commenting favourably in their columns on the preparations. Catalogues and souvenir pins were sold to the public. Luncheons, concerts, and drill corps marches brought the exhibition more publicity than would otherwise

have been the case.

From the point of view of public acceptance, favourable press coverage,<sup>21</sup> and financial considerations, the Historical Exhibition staged between June 14 and July 1, 1899 was a distinct success. Thousands of visitors poured into Victoria College and forced an extension of the show for an additional three days. Although the returns were modest (some three hundred dollars which were shortly placed in a trust fund) the primary objectives of the exhibition were achieved for the OHS had demonstrated that there was considerable public interest in, and historical materials for, a provincial museum.

Regrettably, Queen's Park did not share the OHS's enthusiasm for a museum of Ontario history, most likely because of the heavy costs of constructing and maintaining such an institution. When the province finally did enter the museum field, it considered another project of potentially greater significance -- the cosmopolitan Royal Ontario Museum which was officially opened in 1914. Without provincial assistance, it was certainly out of the question for the Ontario Historical Society to attempt a museum project of its own, one which could have involved the expenditure of several hundreds of thousands of dollars. The OHS had to remain content with the Archaeological Museum in the Toronto Normal School and the small space in that institution allotted to the historical society for displaying its few artifacts, rare books, and docu-

ments. As for the small museum trust fund, it gathered interest for over fifty years until a sum of nearly two thousand dollars had accumulated, which was transferred in 1949 to the society's publications fund.

Although it failed to achieve its goal of a museum, the OHS did play a role in the formation of the Ontario Archives and the appointment of Alexander Fraser as the first Provincial Archivist in 1903. The society achieved this success by convincing George Ross of the desirability of a central records depository for the province. Soon after the appearance of the OHS in 1898, a committee for Archives and Publications with George Robson Pattullo as chairman, and Andrew Hunter as secretary, was appointed for the purpose of encouraging the collection and preservation of documents and reminiscences. Pattullo, the editor-owner of the Woodstock Sentinel was a member of a family known for its public spirit and services across Canada; his son, Thomas Dufferin Pattullo, served as Premier of British Columbia from 1933 to 1941. Also prominent in politics, George Pattullo was elected first secretary and general agent of the Liberal Party in Ontario and served in 1884 as a special commissioner of the Ontario Government during the Manitoba Boundary Dispute. A man of many interests and talents, Pattullo for some years was secretary of the Niagara Falls Park Commission and president of such groups as the Woodstock Horticultural Society, the North Oxford Agricultural Society, the Oxford Historical Society, and finally the Ontario Historical Society (1904-

1906).<sup>23</sup>

During its first year of operation, Pattullo's archives committee accomplished some important work by persuading Dr. P.H. Bryce, Deputy Registrar-General of Ontario, to take greater care in the preservation of early official registers of births, deaths and marriages, and to provide facilities for genealogists to peruse these records at some central office.<sup>24</sup> Bryce sent two circular letters to clerks of the peace in each county on the subject of old records in their possession, and he assured A.F. Hunter that he was

most anxious, first for the purposes of this Department, and like you for their archaeological and historical value, that the records of the Province may be as complete as possible; and I shall feel much obliged for any further suggestions you make in this matter in which you have taken so much interest.

25

By September 1899, Bryce reported that considerable progress had been made in the work of collecting early genealogical records and listed the registers that had been sent to his office by the county clerks.<sup>26</sup> For its own part, the OHS urged its members to seek out old parish records, many of which were published in the OHSPR.

Pattullo's committee also recognized that municipal records of all descriptions were being destroyed at an alarming rate and that only action on a provincial scale would effectively halt this loss of material. Thus by February

1902 Pattullo reported having sent the following memorial to George Ross, then Premier of Ontario:

It is thought desirable that early municipal records, -- records of township meetings, rolls of the early inhabitants, etc., -- wherever such exist, ...be preserved in a central bureau for ready reference, and for safety from destruction by fire. ...At the present time, such records are almost always in the hands of township clerks, frequently farmers, who have no vaults or other means of keeping them safely. This state of affairs impels us to recommend that all such records be deposited for safe-keeping in some central repository, say, in the county Registry Offices, (with a view to concentrate them ultimately, in Toronto)....

It may be added that many states regularly collect archives of the kinds mentioned, and even publish material extracts therefrom quite extensively. The Province of Quebec has always shown a favorable bearing toward historical matters, and the Dominion Government has been praised again and again throughout Great Britain and the United States for its encouragement to Archives.

If you will take into consideration some legislation or order-in-council whereby the above desirable end may be attained, and the records gathered into a more secure place, it will be a service for which all persons interested in the local history of our Province will feel deeply grateful to you.

27

Charles C. James, the Deputy Minister of Agriculture and president of the OHS in 1902 added his voice to those urging the government to establish a central depository for archival material.

28

Premier Ross responded to these appeals and instructed David Boyle to prepare a circular on the subject which was sent to municipal clerks and other local officials. Then, in 1903, Colonel Alexander Fraser, a past editor of the Toronto Mail and Empire and author of The Last Laird of MacNab (1899) and The 48th Highlanders of Toronto (1900), was commissioned

to investigate the archival facilities in Quebec as a preliminary step to setting up similar facilities in Ontario.<sup>29</sup> On July 8, 1903 an order-in-council named Fraser Archivist of Ontario. The leaders of the Ontario Historical Society took pride in the part they had played in bringing about this appointment.

When Alexander Fraser assumed his post as Provincial Archivist, the OHS anticipated working in close liaison with his office. James Coyne commented to Ross "that the duties assigned to Mr. Fraser could easily be made to fit in with the Society's work, and this, I understand, is also your own wish."<sup>30</sup> C.C. James hoped that Fraser would "stir up the local societies to better work, and the two branches together could accomplish a great deal in the way of saving our local records, stimulating further research, and in the publishing of material that will be not only interesting but stimulating to our national pride."<sup>31</sup> This sought after collaboration never materialized, however, and the Ontario Archives went its own way and assumed almost all the official responsibility for preserving documents. That there was no co-operation with the historical societies was entirely the choice of Alexander Fraser who disregarded the offers of the OHS to work in conjunction with the Archives. Just how much more material could have been collected had Fraser encouraged the historical societies to work on his behalf can only be surmised.

While falling short of its museum and archives goals, the OHS made some progress in establishing the rudiments of

a library. In 1898 before the Ontario Archives had been established, David Boyle threw himself into the task of building up a central book and document depository for the province. He invited members of the OHS and the local affiliates to send him copies of "every pamphlet and fly-leaf that may appear on any subject," every kind of book relating to Canadian history, and "everything in manuscript form that in any way throws light on the early days of this colony."<sup>32</sup>

Since the OHS could ill afford to purchase books and periodicals, almost everything in the library was acquired by exchange or donation. To encourage the latter, Boyle offered free memberships to all donors who gave volumes valued at one dollar or more. Once the society began to publish its Papers and Records, exchanges with historical associations in Canada, the United States, and Britain were sought with considerable success. In 1908, the secretary reported that forty-three American and thirty-four British and Canadian historical and literary associations were exchanging publications with the OHS on a regular basis.<sup>33</sup> By 1909 enough material had been collected to make the library more fully operational and a catalogue of holdings was appended to the annual report of that year. The secretary gave the following breakdown of holdings:

Relating to Historical Societies of the United States.....	884
Relating to Canadian Historical Societies.....	765
Relating to Ontario Historical Society.....	3068
Relating to British and Foreign Historical Societies.....	127
Miscellaneous -	

Magazines.....	44
Catalogues.....	65
Souvenir Books.....	97
Newspapers.....	289
Two Rolls of Diagrams	
Maps.....	91
Photographs and Plates.....	21
Other Miscellaneous.....	25
Grand Total of Volumes of Reports, etc.	
Plus Miscellaneous Books.....	5496
	34

The library's only strength after its first decade lay in its periodical literature, and even much of that was American in origin and subject matter. Fortunately by 1914, this trend had been reversed and the bulk of the new accessions pertained to Canadian and Ontario history.<sup>35</sup> At no time in this period, however, was the OHS able to afford the current publications of publishers and authors not on the exchange list. Until it was able to do so, the library could not hope to compete with the growing Canadiana collections at the Toronto Public Library and the University of Toronto. And certainly the archival holdings did not amount to much except for a few incomplete runs of old papers, and miscellaneous photographs, maps, old deeds, account books, papers, minute books and diaries, most of which had been collected before the Ontario Archives was established. At best it can only be described as a modest beginning.

In another area of activity -- the erection of monuments to commemorate historical events and figures in Ontario's past -- the OHS made valuable contributions. Two quite different lines of reasoning, one patriotic and the other economic,

were given as justification for this kind of project. As one circular explained, monuments were valuable for instilling patriotism among the public at large:

There is nothing better calculated to promote patriotism than the honor paid by posterity to those who in the past have served the public. Monuments are not less honorable to those who erect them than those whom they seek to honor. They are at once an index to the character of a people and constant object lessons of the civic virtues, of heroism, and public and private gratitude. Their educational influence can hardly be overestimated.

36

The second reason for erecting monuments -- as an aid to the province's fledgling tourist industry -- first cropped up in the historical society literature at the turn of the century. "There is also a material benefit from the erection of memorials," one circular explained, "in the added interest that historical sites thus marked acquire in the estimation of travellers.... As an investment, apart altogether from the patriotic side of the question, the money spent upon monuments is a good investment."<sup>37</sup> That the economic argument should appear at this time is not surprising, for according to a recent study, the first great expansion of the Ontario tourist industry came with the economic boom that started in 1896.<sup>38</sup> The OHS, it should be added, had a vested interest in bringing the profit motive into focus for provincial authorities since Queen's Park contributed financially to most of the society's monument projects.

The statue of Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe

that now stands at the main entrance of the Parliament Buildings in Toronto was the major monument project of the historical society. In June 1900, at the annual meeting of the OHS in Hamilton, a committee was appointed to arrange for the erection of the statue. Within a short time most of the necessary funds were procured through grants from Queen's Park and the Toronto City Council.<sup>39</sup> Appeals for contributions were made to every school in the province, an action endorsed by Richard Harcourt, the Minister of Education, who believed that the monument would make an "honorable, moral, useful, and elevating" impression on the youth of the province.<sup>40</sup> Circulars instructed inspectors and principals to ask the children to contribute a penny apiece. As part of the campaign, it was hoped that an awareness of the community's British heritage as symbolized in the Simcoe monument would be fostered. "... It is especially desirable," the circular declared, "for the youth of the country to know that our history has been a noble one, and that if we appreciate what British institutions have done for us we should be resolved to pass on our blessings and privileges to future generations."<sup>41</sup>

To the dismay of the historical society leaders, the appeal to the children was a failure; only two school boards sent in donations totalling some fifteen dollars.<sup>42</sup> Perhaps the poor response can in part be attributed to the policy of certain school boards to discourage such collections no matter

what the cause, and in part because principals and teachers were simply tired of penny canvasses. Outside the Toronto area, moreover, it is likely that teachers and students were short on enthusiasm for a statue in Queen's Park that they would probably never see.

Fortunately, the OHS had friends in high social circles; otherwise, the balance of the costs may never have been met. One of the members of the monument committee was Byron Edmund Walker, then the General Manager the Canadian Bank of Commerce and author of a History of Canadian Banking (1896). He took it upon himself to persuade fourteen wealthy Torontonians to contribute a hundred dollars apiece to the fund.

From the outset, the OHS decided to hold a competition among some of the world's leading sculptors for the contract to execute the bronze statue. While in Europe in 1900, John Ross Robertson approached several British sculptors and corresponded with others in France.<sup>43</sup> All told, eight artists (three from Edinburgh, one from London, England, one from Paris, and three from Toronto) offered their models.<sup>44</sup> In June 1901 a panel of judges comprised of representatives of the provincial government, the Toronto City Council, and the OHS voted in favor of the model submitted by Toronto's Walter S. Allward.<sup>45</sup> The nine foot statue of "heroic" proportions was unveiled with suitable pomp and circumstance May 27, 1903. Unfortunately, there is no record of the judges' qualifications

as art critics, or the criteria by which they chose Allward's model. Evidently they were influenced by both the artistic qualities and inspirational appearance of the models. In any case, Allward's credentials were sound for he had already designed several other public monuments in Toronto and Ottawa with which the judges were probably familiar. He eventually became known as Canada's most successful sculptor, the crowning achievement of his career being the splendid memorial at Vimy Ridge in France.<sup>46</sup>

Before the Simcoe statue had been unveiled the OHS erected a smaller memorial to Laura Secord in the Lundy's Lane Battlefield Cemetery. First promoted by the Lundy's Lane Historical Society in 1888, this project, like the Simcoe one, had been stalled by lack of capital until the OHS assumed the responsibility for its completion. The statue, designed by the Canadian sculptress, Mildred Peel, sister of the painter, Paul Peel, was unveiled on June 22, 1901.<sup>47</sup> The ceremonies were replete with all the platitudes befitting the half-legendary story of "one of the bravest and best known women any country has ever known."<sup>48</sup> Aroused feminists revelled in the fact that this was the first public memorial erected in Ontario in honour of a Canadian woman.

After the Simcoe and Secord statues, the Ontario Historical Society erected no other memorials. Its leaders had perhaps been discouraged by the difficulty that they had experienced in raising funds for these two projects.

After 1903, the OHS took up a more unassuming role and limited itself to supporting the schemes of other groups. Sometimes this participation proved to be valuable. For example, an OHS delegation made up of John Dearness and Alexander Fraser successfully persuaded the Dominion government to subsidize the efforts of Orillia's Canadian Club and Board of Trade to build a statue to Champlain. According to Andrew Hunter, this OHS delegation to Ottawa in 1912 resulted in a federal grant of five thousand dollars to the Orillia organizers.<sup>49</sup>

Another cause taken up by the provincial historical society at the close of this period was the introduction of local history into the curriculum of the public and high schools. David Williams, a Collingwood journalist and president of the Ontario Historical Society from 1910 to 1912, broached the idea during his term of office. Other OHS spokesmen had often urged the study of heroic and inspirational history in the schools for patriotic motives, but Williams advocated the study of local history for different reasons. He argued that the best way to develop a youngster's interest in general history was to teach him the heritage of the localities with which he was familiar before introducing him to wider historical subjects. "Boys and girls nowadays," claimed Williams,

find little to encourage them to study the history of lands across the seas, or even of the general past of their own continent. History to them is a passing story, to be got rid of as quickly as possible. To

arouse a proper spirit in this important branch of study would be a worthy aim and might perhaps be attained by a proper beginning. Where is the youth who has not the curiosity to learn the story of his native town or city, of the farm upon which he lives, of the school which sheltered his father or mother? Where is the youth who is not interested in the story of the settlement of his township, town or city?

50

Delighted by this suggestion, the OHS council drew the attention of the Department of Education to the matter. Alas, little came of this action. Few educators appeared to consider local history worthy of study. The political and constitutional themes of national and imperial history were deemed more suitable by the curriculum planners of that generation.

Ignoring this rebuff in official educational circles, the OHS sought to nurture an interest in local history among teachers and members of the university community as well as the public at large by holding an essay contest in 1912. The contest offered three cash prizes for the best original historical essays on a subject relating to the province of Ontario.<sup>51</sup> A thousand copies of the governing rules were distributed to public and high school inspectors and principals, university registrars, and college principals. Another two hundred circulars were sent to clergymen and almost the same number of newspapers.<sup>52</sup> Thirty-seven essays were eventually received, of which twenty-seven were deemed suitable for submission to the judges, Professors W.L. Grant and J.L. Morison of Queen's University. The competitors were mostly high school and public school teachers, and university students

who were "well distributed over the Province."<sup>53</sup> The winning essays were published in volume XII (1914) of the Papers and Records.<sup>54</sup> Encouraged by the success of this exercise, the OHS planned to make similar appeals in future. Regrettably, the First World War thwarted these intentions and essay contests were not resurrected in the post-war era.

The essay contest was only one of many attempts to encourage history teachers to participate in the activities of the OHS and to popularize local and provincial history within the ranks of the teaching profession. Between 1902 and 1906 the OHS held joint meetings at Easter time with the Historical Section of the Ontario Educational Association. On each occasion OHS members delivered two or three papers to the assembled delegates.<sup>55</sup> For some unknown reason, the joint meetings were terminated after 1906. While they lasted, however, the membership and executives of both groups became partly interlocked. Historical society members such as Janet Carnochan, John S. Carstairs, Jean Rose Holden, and others were found on the roster of the OEA. During these years, the OEA also lent its support to several causes that the OHS had taken up including the flag campaigns<sup>56</sup> and the battle to preserve Fort York.

Although such close liaison was established between the OHS and the official history teachers' group, the historical society had little success in persuading individual teachers to join its ranks.<sup>57</sup> After a vigorous membership

campaign in 1913, for example, an exasperated Andrew Hunter, then the secretary of the OHS, reported that:

Our letters of solicitation to 88 specialist teachers in history in the collegiate institutes have proved singularly unproductive [seven responded and became members]. These specialists have salaries averaging \$1500 per annum, and yet have not a single dollar to spend in promoting the making of history itself. We must give them a rap over the knuckles somehow....

58

To put the teachers' behaviour down to some kind of irresponsibility or apathy as Hunter seemed to do was unjustified. The subject of local history likely had no intrinsic appeal for many of them. For others, it would have had little relevance since local history had no official status in the school curriculum.

By 1914, the OHS's efforts to win the support of the university teachers of history seemed to be more successful. Initially, however, few academics deigned to attend the society's functions. There were some exceptions. George Wrong of the University of Toronto, because of his friendship with Coyne, appeared at several of the early meetings. In 1901 Adam Shortt of Queen's addressed the annual meeting in Brockville on the "Establishment of Responsible Government."<sup>59</sup> Six years later, in June 1907, he and George D. Ferguson of the Queen's History Department helped the Kingston Historical Society host the annual meeting of the OHS at the university. Apart from these instances the historical profession remained aloof for a number of years from the activities of the his-

torical societies.

The turning point came in 1912 through the perseverance of Clarence M. Warner. As president and founder of the Lennox and Addington Historical Society in Napanee (est. 1907), Warner cultivated the friendship of historians at both Queen's and Toronto Universities and persuaded some half dozen academics to deliver guest lecturers on a regular basis after 1908.<sup>60</sup> In these years the excellent speakers and lectures arranged by Warner helped make the Napanee society one of the most successful in the province. "Of course we are small," he wrote to Sir Edmund Walker after one particularly auspicious meeting, "but we had to turn over one hundred away from our last lecture."<sup>61</sup>

Elected second vice-president of the OHS in 1910, Warner sought to involve the academics in the society's activities. He invited the OHS to hold its annual meeting in Napanee in 1912 and proceeded almost singlehandedly to make the necessary arrangements. He wrote dozens of letters in his quest to make the programme "the best ever offered at a meeting of the [Ontario] Historical Society,"<sup>62</sup> and billed the conference as "the first meeting held in Canada to celebrate the Centennial of the War of 1812." He even managed to persuade the local chapter of the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire to erect a tablet to commemorate the occasion of the meeting.<sup>63</sup>

To upgrade the society's academic image, Warner com-

municated with John Franklin Jameson of the American Historical Association and persuaded him to mention the programme in the American Historical Review. The relationship between the OHS and the prestigious AHA had been cultivated for several years by Barlow Cumberland, Ernest Cruikshank, David Williams, and Warner, all of whom had attended several AHA conventions. <sup>64</sup> Warner explained to Jameson:

It is the first time the Ontario Historical Society has had a real representative program offered at one of the annual meetings and I believe that we are going to be able to put some new life into this organization. Of course, this subject I will not care to have mentioned to anyone.

65

Warner also confided that "I am making a particular effort to have [the meeting] so interesting that the teachers of history in Ontario will appreciate the work of such a society and will in future devote some time to the Ontario Society." <sup>66</sup> In fact, prominent educators such as Professors William Lawson Grant, J.L. Morison and Oscar Skelton of Queen's, and William Stewart Wallace of McMaster University did attend the conference which offered an impressive list of speakers. Addresses were presented by well-known personalities like Reuben Gold Thwaites on "Romantic Elements in the History of the Mississippi Valley," Frank H. Severance of the Buffalo Historical Society on "Collections of Historical Material Relating to the War of 1812," Adam Shortt on "The Economic Effect of the War of 1812 on the Settlement of the

Canadian West," and Francis Cleary on "The Defence of Essex County During the War of 1812."<sup>67</sup>

Time proved the Napanee meeting to be of some significance since a kernel of interest was aroused within academic circles in the activities of the OHS. At Napanee two university professors, William Stewart Wallace and William Lawson Grant, consented to be nominated for election to the council of the OHS. Wallace stayed on the council until he joined the Canadian armed forces after war broke out in 1914. Grant, a past Beit lecturer in colonial history at Oxford 1904-1910, and then lecturer in colonial history at Queen's, remained an OHS councillor until 1916. He was the translator and editor of, among other volumes, Lescarbot's History of New France (Champlain Society, 1907-14) and The Voyages of Samuel de Champlain (1907). In 1913, Joseph L. Gilmour, professor of church history at McMaster University, joined the Ontario Historical Society and later served on both the editorial committee and the executive council from 1915 to 1917. Significantly, ever since the Napanee conference engineered by Clarence Warner, there have been at least one or two academics on the councils of the OHS.

## II

Although the Ontario Historical Society fell short of its aims to establish a museum, an archives, and a library of its own, its record in other respects was a creditable one.

Indeed the achievements of these years seem all the more praiseworthy when the problems that beset the society are taken into consideration. Prior to the Great War, a growing number of historical agencies appeared that superseded the OHS in several lines of endeavour. By 1914, for instance, archaeological investigation was under the jurisdiction of the separately financed Provincial Archaeologist. The work of collecting documents, manuscripts and pioneer narratives had been largely assumed by the Ontario Archives. The Royal Ontario Museum seemed to undermine the arguments for a provincial museum. Even in the publications field where the OHS was most successful, the volumes of documents and translations issued by the Ontario Archives and the Champlain Society obviated the once urgent need to publish original documents and to translate rare volumes into French.

More importantly, serious financial and secretarial problems accounted for the OHS's want of progress in certain areas. As the society's activities expanded after 1898, the point was soon reached where museum, archives, library and monument work proved difficult, and in some cases impossible, without heavy government subsidization and a full-time secretarial staff.

James Coyne originally anticipated that the annual government grant would be augmented substantially as the scope of the OHS programme widened. This proved to be wishful thinking. Despite annual requests for increased subsidization,

the society still only received a trifling six hundred dollars annually ten years after receiving the first five hundred dollar grant in 1898.

Why was the government so reluctant to provide more funds when the three Ministers of Education in this period -- George Ross, Richard Harcourt, and Robert Pyne -- all agreed that the OHS was a valuable educational force? The answer may simply be that the historical society's argument for increased support was weakened by the fact that the OHS actually functioned well enough without lavish aid. The various activities of the historical society, and the press coverage given them, may have been interpreted as an indication that the current grant was quite adequate. Still it is easy to sympathize with the OHS leaders. Their voluntary efforts seemed to be worthy of more recognition at Queen's Park.

All the blame for the society's financial difficulties, however, can not be laid at the door of the provincial government. The historical society could have attempted to pursue another potential source of funds -- the income from a larger membership -- with more enthusiasm than it did.<sup>68</sup> After Coyne's vigorous presidency (1898-1902) no concerted effort was made to solicit new members until 1913 when Andrew Hunter became secretary. The number of names on the rolls levelled off after reaching a peak of 251 in 1903 to roughly 200 a decade later. Possibly the small membership also helps to

account for the government's reluctance to augment the OHS grant. In the society's defence, it can be said that its endeavours were hampered by the lack of a permanent salaried officer to look after the enormous amount of routine office business involved in a membership drive. But without a larger income, it was impossible to hire a permanent secretary. The society, in short, was caught in a vicious circle.

The first part-time secretaries -- David Boyle, Clarkson W. James, and Alexander Fraser -- were government-appointed career civil servants whose normal duties were analagous to those of an OHS secretary. David Boyle, the Provincial Archaeologist and the first secretary (1898-1907), was appointed by George Ross. For several years Boyle worked diligently to build up the membership, to edit the Papers and Records, and to carry on the daily administrative chores of the society -- all this for a paltry annual salary of one hundred dollars. As the work load increased, however, Boyle's enthusiasm for the position waned and in 1901 he resigned. Personal financial problems led Boyle to reconsider his decision and he subsequently resumed the post and held it until 1907. The OHS had little choice but to retain his services since his appointment was a political one. As Coyne explained to Andrew Hunter, the society could not

take part in any struggle that may arise over such an appointment. If we did... the Society might suffer seriously and permanently. All we could do properly would be to urge that the [secretary] should be a qualified

person and leave the selection to the Ministry.... I think we would be going outside our province entirely if we interfered in a matter of patronage....

69

Boyle's performance during his last years as secretary seems to have been only adequate at best. The society's membership slumped, and the communications with the local historical societies were neglected. In 1906, Barlow Cumberland, then the vice-president, deplored the lack of purpose in the OHS and gave much thought to "revivifying" the society and "enlarging its usefulness."<sup>70</sup> It annoyed Cumberland that the secretary had been unable or unwilling to further the work of the local societies. When Boyle finally resigned because of ill health the following year, Cumberland was appointed chairman of a committee to consider the possibility of establishing the OHS as a branch of the Department of Education with a permanent secretary.<sup>71</sup>

Never has the Ontario Historical Society known a more determined leader than Barlow Cumberland; yet, even he failed to convince Queen's Park of the society's need for a permanent secretary. The best that Cumberland could elicit from the Department of Education was an increase in the annual grant to eight hundred dollars,<sup>72</sup> and the services of a part-time secretary -- Clarkson W. James, an assistant to the Minister of Education. Cumberland was pleased with James' appointment believing that it established a closer relationship with the Department of Education which would

partly compensate for the drawbacks of a part-time secretary.

For all of Cumberland's expectations, Clarkson W. James proved to be an uninspired secretary. He accomplished little in the way of nurturing new local affiliates or assisting the established ones. He allowed Cumberland's efforts to launch a membership campaign to lapse.<sup>73</sup> Worst of all, he neglected to prepare volumes of the Papers and Records in 1909, 1911 and 1912, an act of omission which contributed to a decrease in the membership and large arrears in fees paid.<sup>74</sup> For the second time, the OHS had been poorly served by a government-appointed official trying to accomplish the almost impossible task of administering the society's business while attending to another job. In James' case, the situation was further complicated by the secretary's declining health. It was a blessing for the historical society when Clarkson James resigned in 1912.

The Minister of Education appointed Alexander Fraser, the Provincial Archivist, as James' replacement. This seemed an excellent choice since Fraser had a proven interest in things historical, experience in editing publications, and administrative ability. In fact he quickly demonstrated that he was a more capable administrator than his predecessor. In only one year as secretary, he issued two volumes of Papers and Records, sent out over one thousand pieces of correspondence (much of it involved the essay contest in 1912), and represented the society's interests on numerous

visits across the province.<sup>75</sup> Regrettably, Fraser's performance was marred by personality conflicts with the other executive officers, particularly Vice-President Clarence Warner. At one point Warner commented to Sir Edmund Walker that Fraser had "continued his obstruction tactics" (these were never detailed), and had "made most unpleasant comments" during a recent meeting. "So much so," explained Warner, "that I have advised Dr. Coyne, Dr. James, and Mr. Dearness that I absolutely refuse to continue in my work unless that man is removed...."<sup>76</sup> When faced with the choice of losing either Fraser or Clarence Warner the executive council was unanimous in its choice to depose the secretary.

Alexander Fraser's conflict with Clarence Warner may have been no more than a simple personality clash. Yet, it could well have been a manifestation of a rivalry for government support between the Ontario Archives on the one hand and the Ontario Historical Society on the other. Was it just a coincidence, for instance, that Fraser's belligerence erupted shortly after Clarence Warner and Sir Edmund Walker had jointly persuaded Queen's Park to allocate to the OHS the partly furnished rooms formerly occupied by the Minister of Education and the clerk of records in the old Normal School on St. James Square? Possibly this concession to the OHS triggered a jealous reaction in Alexander Fraser. The Provincial Archivist, like the OHS leaders, had been starved for both money and staff,<sup>77</sup> and he may have considered his

archival work of more importance than that of the historical society.

Whatever his motives, Fraser had so antagonized the executive council by August 1914, that they had determined to replace him. Aware that Fraser might seek to undermine the OHS position within official circles, Clarence Warner asked Sir Edmund Walker (who had agreed to become an officer for one year simply to help the society arrange for a permanent home)<sup>78</sup> to remain as a vice-president. "There is one important reason why I should like to have you continue as an officer....," explained Warner,

You know that at the present time there is opposition through the Secretary and that the Secretary will have to be disposed of at the Chatham meeting.... I would like to be able to show him and his friends that our organization is a unit and your continuing as an officer will help very materially to accomplish this object....

79

In view of the urgency of this request, Walker agreed to remain in office. Meanwhile arrangements were made to have Andrew F. Hunter become the first permanent secretary of the Ontario Historical Society.

Few people seemed better suited to handle the affairs of the OHS than Andrew Hunter who had been a leading figure in the historical society movement since the early days of the Pioneer and Historical Association of Ontario. Born in 1863 in Innisfil Township of Simcoe County, Hunter was a descendent of the pioneer Warnica family.<sup>80</sup> He received his

early education in local Barrie schools before majoring in Mathematics and Physics at the University of Toronto, where he graduated with a B.A. in 1889 and an M.A. in 1892. Upon graduation, Hunter decided to try his hand at journalism and purchased the weekly Barrie Examiner in 1889. Two years later he founded the Simcoe County Pioneer and Historical Society (1892) and became an officer in the provincial historical association. Hunter soon tired of the deadlines and pressures of an editor's life and sold the Examiner in 1895 to take up more congenial work. For some time he was associated with the Geological Survey of Canada (1904-1908). It was during these years, moreover, that Hunter contributed his best work to historical and archaeological studies. He provided information for Reuben Gold Thwaites' seventy-three volume edition of the Jesuit Relations and for James Bain's edition of Alexander Henry's Travels and Adventures (1901). More importantly, he compiled his two volume History of Simcoe County (1909), and contributed articles on Huron village sites to the Archaeological Reports of the Department of Education.

In 1913, Hunter moved to Toronto to replace Alexander Fraser as secretary of the Ontario Historical Society, a post he was destined to hold for eighteen years. His abiding interest in Ontario history and archaeology, and his editorial talents served him well over the next two decades. Furthermore, the personality and life style of this eccentric and

shy fifty year old bachelor perfectly suited the requirements and realities of the job. He thrived on mundane editorial and administrative tasks and seemed to enjoy working long hours in relative isolation. To augment his small OHS salary of three hundred dollars, he undertook editorial work for periodicals such as the Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada. Hunter was almost a caricature of the historical society member, a man unconcerned with worldly needs, antiquarian in his love of books and artifacts, and an unconventional dresser.

Andrew Hunter quickly demonstrated his value to the Ontario Historical Society by effectively coming to grips with the financial crisis that confronted the OHS in 1913. The major worry was the large printer's bill of over seven hundred dollars left unpaid by Alexander Fraser. "This will use up the greater part of our [government] cheque when it comes," Hunter wrote to Clarence Warner, "so we will have to develop the annual membership branch of our work to the utmost of our power. I have come to the conclusion that with another year of Dr. Fraser's reckless administration the Society would be on the scrap heap."<sup>81</sup> Within months of assuming office Hunter and Clarence Warner launched a carefully planned campaign that exactly doubled the membership of the provincial historical society to over four hundred names by June 1914.<sup>82</sup>

A membership of four hundred, to be sure, was hardly

spectacular considering that a local affiliate, the York Pioneer and Historical Society, claimed in 1912 to have over one thousand names on its rolls.<sup>83</sup> But at least now the officers of the OHS had faced up to the society's need for a large increase in popular support, and had set a membership goal of two thousand for the immediate future.<sup>84</sup> In social and economic terms, the people who belonged to the society in 1914 were similar in most respects to the type of person who had been joining the historical society movement since the 1890s -- educated and professional people such as lawyers, judges, doctors, clergymen, educators, librarians, engineers, journalists, civil servants, bankers and businessmen of nearly every description.

The OHS did not enjoy or claim widespread public support, but what it lacked in numbers, it partly made up for in the social and political respectability of its members. The society received the support of such educators as Nathanael Burwash of Victoria College, James L. Hughes, chief inspector of Toronto schools, Sir Robert Alexander Falconer, president of the University of Toronto, and Principal Daniel M. Gordon of Queen's University; journalists like James A. Macdonald, the managing editor of the Toronto Globe, John S. Willison, formerly editor of the Toronto News; politicians like Sir John Boyd, the last Chancellor of Ontario, Martin S. Burrell, the federal Minister of Agriculture; and businessmen such as Sir Edmund Walker, the president of the Canadian

Bank of Commerce, and Sir Edmund Boyd Osler, the president of the Dominion Bank.

Included in the rank and file were over two dozen of the province's intellectual elite -- university administrators and professors from a variety of disciplines such as the historians, Archibald H. Young of Trinity College, and Edward Kylie of Toronto; the economist cum humorist, Stephen Leacock of McGill; the geologist, Professor A.P. Coleman of Toronto; the political scientist and economist, Professor Oscar D. Skelton of Queen's; the professor of French, John Squair of Toronto; and the professor of Teutonic Philology, L.E. Horning of Victoria College. Twenty-five percent (107) of the membership belonged to the Champlain Society, and over a dozen were members of the prestigious Royal Society of Canada.

<sup>85</sup> Interestingly, by far the majority of members were males. <sup>86</sup> The women in the historical society movement seemed to prefer membership in the local women's historical groups in centres like Ottawa, Bowmanville, Sarnia, St. Thomas, and Toronto.

While few in number the members were distributed <sup>87</sup> across southern Ontario as the following chart indicates:

Toronto	147
Ottawa	40
Kingston	12
Eastern Ontario	25
Montreal and eastern provinces	12
Northern counties	20
London	22
Hamilton	17

(South) Western Peninsula	68
St. Thomas	16
Fort William and western provinces	22
United States	19

Although roughly one third of the membership came from Toronto, the OHS was by no means a Toronto-dominated organization. The majority of the OHS leaders, for instance, were residents of other parts of the province.

In June 1914, the future of the Ontario Historical Society looked bright. The critical secretarial problem had been solved and the membership showed signs of continuous growth. Thanks to Andrew Hunter's efficient administration, the OHS had overcome its immediate financial worries. New revenues flowed in from membership fees, and from sales of the society's publications to libraries across Canada.<sup>88</sup> Furthermore, Hunter effected a substantial saving by calling for tenders for the contract to print the society's publications. Finally, the annual meeting in Ottawa in June 1914 proved to be one of the most successful ever held by the provincial historical society. The conference took place in the elegant Chateau Laurier Hotel. Trips were arranged to the Dominion Archives, the Royal Mint, and other local historical sites. The sumptuous luncheon of June 4, sponsored by the Women's Canadian Historical Society of Ottawa, was attended by Prime Minister Laurier and his wife, Mrs. Robert L. Borden, the Hon. George Foster, and other prominent citizens of Ottawa. Elated by the meeting, Clarence Warner resurrected

the grandiose notion of constructing a provincial museum. "I had several talks, while in Ottawa," he wrote to Sir Edmund Walker, "with people interested in the question of an historical museum and it seems to me that we should start at once with the idea in view of having this building built in Toronto." <sup>89</sup> Little did Warner suspect that all his hopes for the OHS would come crashing down around him within a matter of months.

The First World War signalled the end of an era for the Ontario Historical Society. With the notable exception of its publishing work, the OHS was about to enter a period of meagre accomplishment and financial difficulty. The leaders of the society in the summer of 1914 could not have anticipated such a development. In fact the future had never looked more promising. Clarence Warner and Andrew Hunter seemed to have solved the immediate financial and administrative problems and were busily planning how to expand the society's efforts in museum and library work. These same leaders took pride in the OHS's achievements in its first decade and a half. The society had become a recognized cultural force in the provincial community by means of its growing list of publications, the monument building and related patriotic activities, its effort to promote the study of history in the schools and universities, and its major role in the formation of the Ontario Archives. And of course, there were the society's most important contri-

butions in the area of historic preservation which have yet to be examined. Thus before turning to the impact of the First World War, it is now necessary to retrace our steps through the first decade of this century to analyze the society's involvement in the movement to preserve Ontario's historic sites and landmarks.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> OA, See Frank Yeigh Papers for more details of his life and for copies of his publications.

<sup>2</sup> OHS, circular dated November 5, 1899, 3 pages.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. I found no record of other locals following the example of the Thorold group.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Annual Report of the Ontario Historical Society 1899 (Toronto: the OHS, 1899), p. 2; ibid., 1900, p. 22; ibid., 1901 and 1902, p. 70.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 1901 and 1902, p. 70.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 1899, p. 12. Resolution to this effect passed February 15, 1899.

<sup>8</sup> OHS, R. Coates to David Boyle, May 3, 1899.

<sup>9</sup> Annual Report OHS 1900, p. 43.

<sup>10</sup> OHS, minute book, October 11, 1907. Cumberland provided copies of constitutions and bylaws to facilitate the work of local organizers.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. See also copy of circular letter in OHS, dated October 11, 1907.

<sup>12</sup> See obituary of Dearness by K.V. Moore in OH, Vol. XLVII (Winter, 1955), pp. 43-44.

<sup>13</sup> Annual Report OHS 1914, p. 74.

14 Ibid., 1921, p. 53.

15 Ibid., 1907, p. 12.

16 See affirmation of this policy in OHSa, minute book, June 6, 1900.

17 OHSa, scrapbook on Historical Exhibition June 1899, see Report of the Secretary and Treasurer of the first Canadian Historical Exhibition (Toronto: 1900).

18 OHSa, scrapbook on Historical Exhibition June 1899, see Report of first Historical Exhibition.

19 Annual Report of the WCHS 1898-99, pp. 3-4.

20 Catalogue: Canadian Historical Exhibition (Toronto: William Briggs, 1899).

21 OHSa scrapbook on Historical Exhibition, see the appropriate press clippings.

22 The Women's Canadian Historical Society received no remuneration for their efforts in 1899, a fact that still raises a soupcou of resentment among the members of that organization. See Stella M. Cook, "Seventy Years of History 1895-1965," Women's Canadian Historical Society of Toronto, Transaction No. 29 (Toronto: n.p., 1970), p. 8. After it was apparent that the OHS was not about to sponsor the building of a museum, the WCHS asked on numerous occasions for a share of the museum fund for their local clubhouse fund. On each occasion this request had to be refused since the money was legally locked into a trust fund for a provincial museum.

23 See obituary in Annual Report OHS 1922, p. 27.

24 SCM, A.F. Hunter papers: Bryce to Hunter, March 28, 1899; Hunter to Bryce, April 25, 1899; Pattullo to Hunter, May 26, 1899; Hunter to Pattullo, June 8, 1899.

- 25  
SCM, A.F. Hunter papers, Bryce to Hunter, March 28, 1899.
- 26  
OHSa, minute book, September 1, 1899.
- 27  
OHSa, package June 1901-February 1902, Report of the Committee on Archives and Publications, n.d.
- 28  
OHSa, A.F. Hunter to the Hon. W.F. Raney, Attorney General of Ontario, March 26, 1923.
- 29  
OA, Misc. Mss., Letter and Report of Alexander Fraser to Premier George W. Ross, March 18, 1903. See also Judith H. Beattie, "Pre-Course Assignment for Certificate Course in Records Management," Department of Public Records and Archives, September 14, 1970.
- 30  
Quoted in First Report of the Bureau of Archives for the Province of Ontario (Toronto: 1904), p. 37. Coyne to Ross, n.d.
- 31  
Ibid., p. 40. C.C. James to Ross, n.d.
- 32  
Annual Report OHS 1899, p. 26.
- 33  
Ibid., 1908, p. 15.
- 34  
Ibid., 1909, p. 24. The figure of 3068 for the Ontario Historical Society seems to include the stock piles of the OHSPR which should not be included in the table of library acquisitions.
- 35  
Ibid., 1914, p. 75.
- 36  
OHSa, circular to prospective members, February 16, 1901.
- 37  
Ibid.

- 38 R. I. Wolfe, "The Changing Patterns of Tourism in Ontario," in Profiles of a Province: Studies in the History of Ontario (Toronto: the OHS, 1967), p. 173.
- 39 Queen's Park eventually provided \$3500, the Toronto City Council \$1000 and the OHS \$150 towards the project.
- 40 OHSA, minute book, June 26, 1900. Simcoe Monument Committee.
- 41 Ibid. Circular entitled "Simcoe Monument Fund" appended.
- 42 Annual Report OHS 1903, p. 33. The Frontenac County schools raised \$11.14 and two schools in Galt contributed \$4.57.
- 43 OHSA, Simcoe Monument correspondence, Report of John Ross Robertson, October 10, 1900.
- 44 Annual Report OHS 1901 and 1902, p. 34 and p. 41.
- 45 OHSA, minute book, May 14, 1901. See also Simcoe Monument Correspondence for full details of the competition.
- 46 William S. Wallace (ed.), The Macmillan Dictionary of Canadian Biography (3rd. ed. rev.; Toronto: Macmillan, 1963), p. 11.
- 47 Annual Report OHS 1901 and 1902, p. 52. Miss Peel undertook the work for nearly half the going rate for similar pieces of sculpture.
- 48 OHSA, scrapbook, unidentified press clipping, March 16, 1901. See George Ingram, "The Story of Laura Secord Revisited," OH, Vol. LVII, No. 2 (June, 1965), pp. 85-99 for an excellent analysis of the Secord mythology.
- 49 OHSA, A.F. Hunter to C.M. Warner, July 27, 1914.

50  
23-24. "President's Address," Annual Report OHS 1912, pp.

51  
For a list of the conditions and rules governing the contest see ibid., p. 90.

52  
Ibid., 1913, p. 59.

53  
Ibid., p. 62.

54  
The judges awarded first prize to Marjorie J.F. Fraser for her essay "Feudalism in Upper Canada" and third prize to John May for "Bush Life in the Ottawa Valley Eighty Years Ago." No second prize was awarded, but George M. Jones' "The Peter Perry Election and the Rise of the Clear Grit Party" was designated a proxime accessit.

55  
See for example Annual Report OHS 1903, p. 30.

56  
OA, minute book of the Historical Section Ontario Educational Association, April 2, 1902.

57  
OHSA, D. Chenay (Public School Inspector, North Essex) to David Boyle, May 17, 1904. Chenay regretted telling Boyle that few of his teachers seemed interested in the annual meeting of the OHS at Windsor.

58  
OHSA, Hunter to C.M. Warner, February 26, 1914.

59  
Annual Report OHS 1901 and 1902, p. 37.

60  
p. 92; ibid., 1908, p. 80; ibid., 1909, p. 86; ibid., 1910, p. 85; ibid., 1911, p. 85.

61  
UT, Sir Edmund Walker papers, Warner to Walker, February 29, 1912.

62  
PAC, Lennox and Addington H.S. records, Correspondence (Letter Book), 1906-1915, Warner to J. Franklin Jameson, March 18, 1912.

- 63  
Annual Report OHS 1912, p. 49. The inscription on the tablet read: To Commemorate The First Centennial Celebration held in Canada of the War of 1812. Erected by the United Empire Loyalist Chapter IODE. At the Annual Meeting of the Ontario Historical Society June, 1912.
- 64  
Ibid., p. 27.
- 65  
PAC, Lennox and Addington H.S. records, Correspondence (Letter Book), 1906-1915, Warner to J. Franklin Jameson, March 18, 1912.
- 66  
Ibid.
- 67  
Most were published in Vol. X (1913), OHSR.
- 68  
The society imposed annual fees of one dollar in 1901 for the first time to cover some of its operating expenses.
- 69  
SCM, A.F. Hunter papers, Hunter to Coyne, December 1, 1900.
- 70  
OA, NHS records, Ms 193, reel 9, Cumberland to Carnochan, March 3, 1906.
- 71  
Annual Report OHS 1907, p. 19.
- 72  
Ibid., 1909, p. 228. These gains were achieved after a deputation comprised of Nathanael Burwash, David Williams, and Cumberland had visited Robert Pyne and at his request prepared a memorandum of the society's needs. Further interviews with other officials followed.
- 73  
OHS, circular soliciting new members, n.d. (circa 1907-8).
- 74  
Annual Report OHS 1913, p. 18.

75 "Secretary's Report," ibid., pp. 19-20.

76 UT, Sir Edmund Walker papers, Warner to Walker, April 30, 1913.

77 Beattie, op. cit.

78 UT, Sir Edmund Walker papers, Walker to Warner, July 27, 1912. Originally the OHS investigated the possibility of erecting a separate building. Walker warned them that this would be very difficult because he had been trying for years without success to raise money for an Art Museum. Eventually the OHS decided to seek separate office space within the Normal School Building and succeeded in doing so.

79 UT, Sir Edmund Walker papers, Warner to Walker, August 27, 1913.

80 For a more complete biographical sketch see Martha Hunter, Big Brother: A Short Biographical Sketch of the Late Andrew Hunter (Privately published, 1957).

81 OHSA, Hunter to Warner, October 23, 1913.

82 For details see Annual Report OHS 1914, pp. 69-71.

83 Ibid., 1912, p. 116.

84 OHSA, Warner to Hunter, December 18, 1913.

85 Annual Report OHS 1914, p. 70. Hunter had solicited members of both these groups to join the OHS.

86 Whereas thirty female names out of a total of 251 members could be found in the 1903 rolls, only twenty-nine were listed in 1914.

87 Ibid., 1914, p. 71. See also ibid., 1903, p. 31.

88

Ibid., 1914, p. 71. Revenues from membership fees reached an all time high of \$434 in 1914.

89

UT, Sir Edmund Walker papers, C.M. Warner to Walker, June 6, 1914.

CHAPTER SIX  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION, 1898-1914

At a time when there were no governmental policies for protecting the historical resources of Ontario, the OHS played an important role in preserving historic sites and buildings. From the very outset in 1898, the society provided leadership in this field and became an effective pressure group urging all levels of government to preserve, restore, mark, or maintain historical landmarks. At the same time a careful watch was kept over many of the major sites, and when required, the OHS took whatever political action was necessary to protect them from private and corporate interests. By 1914 the provincial and federal governments had reacted to the public demand created by the OHS and other historical organizations across Canada by establishing the first policies and agencies of historic preservation.

I

During the first decade of this century, Canadians responded to the campaigns of historical and patriotic groups to preserve the nation's historic sites. In Nova Scotia, for instance, public opinion swelled in support of the movement to protect Louisburg and Annapolis Royal, while in Quebec, the Governor-General, Earl Grey, triumphantly over-

saw the formation of the Quebec Battlefields Commission to preserve the Plains of Abraham and Ste. Foye as a suitable means of celebrating the tercentenary of Quebec. And in Ontario, the historical and patriotic societies goaded the provincial and federal authorities into preserving major historic sites, particularly the old forts and battlefields associated with the loyalist era and the War of 1812.

The climate of opinion in Ontario at the turn of the century favoured the preservationist cause. In this era of material prosperity, Ontarians could well reflect upon the past with a heightened sense of national and provincial accomplishment. It was perhaps people in this frame of mind who were most receptive to the preservationists' idea of conserving historic landmarks as visible reminders of the sacrifices of earlier generations that had laid the foundations of a prosperous province and Dominion. Furthermore, as Canadians optimistically claimed that the twentieth century would belong to Canada, Ontarians became conscious of the fact that historic sites, especially the forts and battlefields associated with the loyalist and militia traditions, supported their province's claim to the lion's share of the national glory. Ontarians never doubted for a moment the paramount role their province had played in building and defending the nation. "Here was laid the cornerstone of Upper Canada," explained William Kirby with reference to Fort George at Niagara-on-the-Lake,

in its turn the cornerstone and foundation of our Dominion as it is to-day. Here was the landing place of the United Empire Loyalists, the noble exiles from the American Revolution, and here in the short time of eight years they were strong enough and prepared to lay the foundation and build up the Province of Upper Canada.

1

Because of their connections with the loyalists and the War of 1812, the military landmarks held a powerful attraction for OHS spokesmen. Many revered the old forts of Ontario as sacred symbols of the long struggle for imperial unity. At these places, the public was told, Canadians "died to save Canada [for] the Empire."<sup>2</sup> Old Fort York, added another preservationist, "teaches us that during the war of 1812 Canada was saved from being annexed to the United States, more by the valor of the Canadian militia than through the presence of the Imperial forces."<sup>3</sup> It would appear that much of the preservationists' success in arousing public opinion lay in the appeal made to the national and provincial pride, myths, and traditions of Ontarians.

At the same time, the preservationists sought to gain converts by playing on the nativist fears of potential supporters. References to the problem of the immigrant, for example, were sprinkled liberally through the preservationist literature. Spokesmen for the OHS claimed that the military landmarks would facilitate the assimilation of newcomers by providing them with an understanding of the Anglo-Canadian heritage. In 1909 Sir William Mortimer Clark, the Lieutenant-

Governor of Ontario, offered the following reason for preserving Fort York:

Large numbers of strangers are now coming to settle among us, and it is of great importance that they should learn something of our past.... They will visit this historic scene, and learn that their country has been fought for, and is worth fighting for again should occasion arise. They will learn that it is their duty to do their part in upholding and strengthening our Government and institutions.... [They] will have it impressed on their hearts that we are part of that great British Empire of which we are so justly proud....

4

Nathanael Burwash, Chancellor of Victoria College and an OHS executive in 1909, supported this statement and argued that "if we are to make of [the immigrants] patriotic Canadian citizens, we... must make the most of our history and make its monuments as impressive as possible."<sup>5</sup>

Another aspect of the preservationist literature that likely found support in an increasingly urbanized and industrialized society was its anti-materialism. Spokesmen for the OHS and the press built the issue of preservation into what Henry Adams might have interpreted as a struggle between Clio and the Dynamo; that is, the forts and comparable landmarks pitted against reckless commercial and industrial expansion. "There are two opposing points of view regarding the matter," explained Frank Yeigh in reference to the city of Toronto's attempt to build a street car track through Fort York, "the historic and what might be termed the commercial. The one seeks to preserve the ancient

landmarks; the other would remove them if they stand in the way of modern progress. The former holds a sacred regard for the past; the latter has more respect for the utility of the present."<sup>6</sup> The Toronto Evening News verbally portrayed the image of Fort York "being shoved off the map by... the commercialism of this later age," represented on the north by the railway yards and huge gas storage tanks, on the east by an abattoir, and on the west by the Canadian National Exhibition.<sup>7</sup> Another editor suggested that "in the hurry and jostle of the present it is well that men have died and worms have eaten them for something more than the desire for money and material success."<sup>8</sup>

The philosophy of the preservationists, however, was not anti-industrial or anti-commercial per se; on the contrary, the OHS position was perhaps best stated by Sir Edmund Walker when he said that "noble and high national ideals ought to go hand in hand with the great industrial and commercial advance of the day."<sup>9</sup> Leading preservationists such as Barlow Cumberland, Sir Edmund Walker, and Emerson B. Biggar were successful and dedicated businessmen who believed that national life needed a stronger foundation than material prosperity.<sup>10</sup> Historic military landmarks, they said, would nurture the spirit of patriotism, the vital ingredient which prevented personal gain and economic expansion from becoming the sole measure of national status.<sup>11</sup>

## II

The successful struggle to preserve Fort York from October 1905 to May 1909 was the Ontario Historical Society's most noteworthy contribution to the preservationist cause in these years. The battle over the fort revolved around the determination of civic and CNE officials to construct a street railway through the fort property in order to facilitate the flow of traffic to and from the grounds of the Canadian National Exhibition. That Fort York exists today is a tribute to the bitter four-year political campaign waged in its defence by Barlow Cumberland and the OHS, in conjunction with historical, patriotic, and military societies across the province.

In October, 1903 an agreement was reached between the municipality of Toronto and the Department of Militia and Defence for the sale of Garrison Common and Fort York. Since there were provisos binding upon the city regarding the preservation and restoration of the fort, a relatively low price of \$200,000 was to be paid for the property.<sup>12</sup> Sir Frederick Borden, the Minister of Militia, had stipulated that "...it must be understood that the ordinance lands are only to be used for park and exhibition purposes, and that the old cemetery shall be properly cared for and the Old Fort preserved."<sup>13</sup> By agreement, the transfer of the property was not to be consummated until the militia had erected new buildings elsewhere to replace the ones they were being forced to vacate. Meanwhile, the federal authorities were

to retain the deeds to the property, and the city of Toronto the bulk of the purchase price, until the final transfer deeds could be arranged.

The prospect of owning and restoring Fort York was a minor factor behind city hall's decision to purchase Garrison Common. Little importance was attached to the fort; indeed, it was ignored in an official report to council listing the advantages of buying the common.<sup>14</sup> Nor were the CNE directors noticeably delighted with the prospect of preserving the military post. They were interested in the property because it provided room for the expansion of the critically congested fair grounds, and the right of way for a much needed trolley line via Bathurst Street to the eastern side of the exhibition grounds.<sup>15</sup>

Toronto City Council's intense interest in the continued success of the Canadian National Exhibition was the product of civic pride and economic reality. The annual event had greatly increased the city's reputation and was considered a key ingredient in Toronto's civic pride and character, and a symbol of the economic and material progress of the city and the Dominion. In 1904, the exhibition was renamed the Canadian National Exhibition of Toronto, a name befitting its national reputation. But more important, the city council had solid economic reasons for maintaining the CNE's rapid rate of expansion. Since 1899, the city had assumed all the assets

and liabilities of the exhibition and was responsible for the erection of all new buildings. In return, the association was required to hand over all surplus revenues to the city.<sup>16</sup> It was settled in 1901 that the mayor and aldermen should be standing members of the association and that five directors should be named by city council.<sup>17</sup> Hence, similarity of outlook between the CNE and city hall remained a constant factor during the period under consideration, and it is not surprising that the three civic administrations from 1905 to 1909 held the belief that what was good for the CNE was good for the city.

Since the city fathers considered the needs of the CNE to be urgent, studies were ordered on January 14, 1905 for the trolley extension to the exhibition.<sup>18</sup> The city engineer submitted a draft blueprint in March. Surprisingly, the plan disregarded the stipulations in the agreement with the Department of Militia and Defence referring to the preservation and restoration of Fort York. In violation of the terms of sale, a trolley route was projected through the garrison which required the moving or destruction of several buildings.<sup>19</sup> The engineer considered that the street car line did not violate the agreement to use the property exclusively for park and exhibition purposes because the extension served the CNE.

Until October, 1905 the Ontario Historical Society made no response to the plan to run the trolley line through Garrison Common. Only after Miss Jean Earle Geeson of

Parkdale had roused Torontonians from their indifference and increased their awareness of the importance of Fort York as a historical landmark did the OHS assume the responsibility of mobilizing opinion against the city's scheme. Miss Geeson, a public school teacher and an enthusiastic local historian, had undertaken research into the fort's background during her spare time and on vacation in England. The Toronto Globe of October 4, 1905 printed her appeal to save the fort and endorsed her cause in a sympathetic editorial.<sup>20</sup> Within a week her personal campaign had succeeded in eliciting responses from the OHS, local historical, military and patriotic societies, the board of education, and the entire Toronto press.

The OHS decision to become involved was made during a hastily-called meeting between Mr. E.B. Biggar, Miss Geeson and the society's secretary David Boyle on Thursday October 5, 1905. Boyle was informed that a number of citizens had arranged for a public meeting at the fort on the following Saturday afternoon, October 7, to protest the city's plans, and that they believed the gathering would have the greatest effect if it were held under the auspices of the OHS. Contact by telephone was made with those OHS executives who were then in Toronto -- C.C. James, Deputy-Minister of Agriculture and past president of the society, and Frank Yeigh, the treasurer. Both agreed that it would be quite proper to consent to the suggested arrangement.<sup>21</sup> In this undramatic fashion the society

was drawn into the leadership role of the preservation movement. Not until December 29, 1905 did the OHS council formally approve of the emergency action taken by Boyle.<sup>22</sup> The chairman at the December council meeting was Frederic Barlow Cumberland, the second vice-president.<sup>23</sup> Cumberland, who most forcefully advocated that the OHS assume a leading role in the movement to save the fort, was instrumental in the creation of the new Historic Sites and Monuments Committee to work for the preservation of historic landmarks, in particular Fort York, at the OHS annual meeting in Collingwood, July 1906.<sup>24</sup> He assumed the chairmanship of the committee himself.

Then a resident of Port Hope, Cumberland was a member of a prominent upper middle-class Toronto family. His father, Lieutenant-Colonel Frederic W. Cumberland, had been a well-known architect and railway promoter in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, and was especially recognized for his connection with the Northern Railway. After studying at Trinity University, Toronto, and tinkering with the idea of a law career, Barlow Cumberland opted to follow his father into the transportation business where success came naturally. From freight and passenger agent of the Northern Railway, he subsequently became traffic manager of the Collingwood and Lake Superior Line of steamers before organizing the Niagara Navigation Company of which he was vice-president. Cumberland's net of personal relationships across the province was remark-

able. He had become associated with an increasingly wide circle of prominent individuals as he held such posts as chairman of the Marine Section of the Toronto Board of Trade, director of the Ontario Bank, past president of the St. George's Society, the Sons of England, and the National Club, senator of Trinity University, and a Captain in the 10th Royal Grenadiers. Thus, he was exceptionally well suited to lead the movement to preserve Fort York.<sup>25</sup>

The public meeting at the fort on October 7, 1905, called under the auspices of the OHS, discussed the steps to be taken to preserve the endangered landmark. A powerful combination of political and social support was represented by the speakers on the roster: Lieutenant-Governor William Mortimer Clark, the chairman of the meeting; E.B. Biggar, OHS stalwart and owner of the Biggar-Wilson Publishing Company; Miss Geeson; William Rennie, president of the York Pioneer and Historical Society; Mr. E.A. Maclaurin, president of the United Empire Loyalist Association of Ontario; Reverend Chancellor Nathanael Burwash of Victoria College and president of the Ontario Educational Association; William Houston of the Toronto Globe; and Mr. J.A. Cooper of the Canadian Magazine.<sup>26</sup> The meeting unanimously passed a resolution moved by Chancellor Burwash and seconded by Mr. C.A. Brown, chairman of the board of education:

That in the opinion of this meeting the preservation of these grounds should be considered a sacred trust, not merely for the citizens of Toronto, but for the

Province and the Dominion at large;

That no portion of the Fort or grounds should ever be alienated, but that they should be preserved for a public park in fulfilment of the express conditions under which they were acquired by the city;

That the portion of the eastern rampart already destroyed to make room for a slaughter house should be restored, and that the other features of the Fort be repaired so that they may appear as nearly as possible in their original condition....

27

It was also decided to send a deputation to interview Sir Frederick Borden who happened to be in the city that day, in order to ascertain his views and to appeal for his support. The deputation consisted among others of Mr. E.B. Biggar and Mrs. E.J. Thompson of the OHS; Lady Edgar, president of the Women's Canadian Historical Society; Mrs. S. Nordheimer of the IODE; Mrs. Clementina Fessenden of the Wentworth Historical Society and acknowledged founder of Empire Day; Colonel George Shaw of the York Pioneers; and Mr. J.A. Cooper of the Canadian Magazine. This formidable group made it clear to the Minister that they looked upon the fort property as a sacred national battlefield and burial ground. Borden satisfied them that he supported their cause, declaring that he too was convinced that the transfer to the city of Garrison Common and Fort York was upon the condition that the property must be kept as a public park, never to be alienated for any other purpose.

28

The Old Fort issue became a cause célèbre in the city press. The Globe's editor, on October 4, remarked that it was a general principle of the city that no car line should run through any public parks, and pointed to the city's

resistance to street railway cars running through Queen's Park "where they would be a great convenience."<sup>29</sup> Having traditionally been an advocate of Toronto's metropolitan dominance, the Globe recognized that the fort was the city's claim to a large share of the national glory:

Our civic authorities, contrary to the growing spirit of the time, threaten to destroy the characteristic features of a spot second to no other in Canada in patriotic and tragic interest. Not Fort Erie, or the Prescott Windmill, or Queenston Heights, or even Lundy's Lane, can surpass it in all that give such places a claim to preservation and veneration.

30

The Toronto World lauded the OHS for attempting to preserve "... one of the few remaining landmarks we have left to recall the struggle out of which a nation was born on the northern half of the American continent...."<sup>31</sup> The Toronto Daily Star devoted a full page to the issue entitled "The Defence of Fort York." Included was a large sketch by C.W. Jefferys portraying the ghosts of the soldiers who died in 1813 standing resolutely at the gate of the fort, between the old cannon, bayonets at the ready, facing the ominous silhouette of a street railway car, with the caption "The Spirit of 1812 -- 'Halt'!"<sup>32</sup>

Mayor Urquhart, evidently shaken by the spontaneous outburst of indignation at the city's plans, responded to the clamour by issuing a statement that the city did not intend to interfere with the preservation of the fort.

Considering that he concluded his argument with the following remark, it is clear why he failed to convince the public:

"Naturally some old buildings will have to come down, but, as I have already said, the Old Fort will not be disturbed, nor will the old military burying ground."<sup>33</sup>

The OHS found this logic somewhat disconcerting. In rebuttal, the Daily Star printed E.B. Biggar's retort with a diagram of the fort showing the proposed car line running through and between the buildings.<sup>34</sup> The reader was enjoined to compare the tracing of the street car route with the mayor's assurance that there was no intention to interfere in any way with the preservation of the garrison. The pressure brought to bear on city council by the OHS and its affiliates was successful in this first phase of the preservation battle. At city hall, the people's representatives decided that discretion was the better part of valour, and tabled the plans for the Bathurst Street extension until a more propitious time.

It was six months later, in mid-April, 1906, when Toronto City Council and the new mayor, Emerson Coatsworth, initiated phase two in the contest over the future of Fort York. A plan was now entertained for the transfer of a section of the northern part of the fort to the Grand Trunk Railway, to be added to a shunting yard, in exchange for nearby property. The OHS council, on April 19, passed a resolution condemning the plan on the grounds that it would destroy a large portion of the northern ramparts, disfigure the original

contour of the fort, and violate the city's agreement with the federal authorities.<sup>35</sup> Copies of the resolution and a circular letter were sent to the Minister of Militia, to Mayor Coatsworth, and to the local historical associations. Aware of the potentially explosive nature of the issue, Coatsworth attempted to assure the OHS that the fort was in no danger. He explained: "The effect of this exchange would be to make the place more symmetrical and more accessible...", but added that no final decision had yet been made by the board of control.<sup>36</sup>

Realizing from the mayor's letter that the board of control was still flexible on the matter, Barlow Cumberland arranged a meeting with the controllers on May 2, 1906 at which time he outlined the society's objections to the exchange. After the meeting Cumberland and the controllers visited the fort and appraised the situation. The majority of the civic officials became so impressed by the well-preserved state of the place that they decided against the transfer to the Grand Trunk Railway. Another factor which probably influenced their decision was the renewed activity in Toronto to mobilize opinion by the OHS and the Women's Canadian Historical Society. The latter had obtained permission from the board of education to allow senior pupils from forty-eight elementary schools to attend lectures on events related to the fort's history given by OHS executives Barlow Cumberland, Frank Yeigh, and Alexander Fraser on

Friday afternoons at the fort.<sup>37</sup>

The OHS had little time for self congratulations after preventing the exchange of land with the Grand Trunk Railway. There was only a brief hiatus before the beginning of the next phase of the political struggle. By October, 1906 it was certain that the city planned to construct a Bathurst Street extension through the fort involving a trolley line, with double tracks, and an accompanying road and sidewalk. The project would have necessitated the destruction of many of the earthworks, and the removal or demolition of three of the oldest buildings, including the central block-house.<sup>38</sup> Alternative routes via Strachan Avenue and Tecumseth Street had been rejected by the city because the costs were deemed prohibitive.<sup>39</sup> On November 27, city council adopted a by-law to provide for the issue of loan debentures to defray the cost of constructing the Bathurst Street trolley route to the exhibition grounds.<sup>40</sup> According to the law, the ratepayers had to be given the opportunity to vote on the money by-law during the municipal elections on January 1, 1907. This afforded the OHS a full month to wage a campaign against the municipal legislation.

The OHS campaign involved the circulation of letters to local affiliated societies across the province urging them to forward protests to the mayor. The response was excellent and memorials were sent from all parts of Ontario. The highlight of the activities against the by-law was a memorial to

Governor-General Earl Grey. He was approached because of his much-heralded interest in the creation of a Canadian nationalism and in the preservation of historic sites and landmarks. Grey was asked to counsel the Dominion Government to prevent the contemplated invasion by the street railway and to place the fort beyond danger of future disturbance by creating a park commission as in the case of Annapolis Royal, to be made up of representatives from the city, federal government and historical societies.<sup>41</sup> Copies of the memorial were sent to Premier James P. Whitney of Ontario and to Sir Frederick Borden. Whitney, who was in sympathy with the preservationists, helped the cause significantly by forwarding a strong remonstrance to Ottawa calling the Minister of Militia's attention to the city's project.

Sir Frederick Borden's response was not long in coming. Although the request for a park commission was denied on the grounds that negotiations with the city of Toronto were too far advanced,<sup>42</sup> the Minister did commit himself to forcing the city to abide by the provisos in the original agreement regarding Garrison Common. Borden admitted that his department had not realized that there was a real threat to the fort until Whitney's communication had corroborated the OHS charges.<sup>43</sup> Once convinced, the Department of Militia and Defence immediately reminded Mayor Coatsworth of the stipulations binding on the city.<sup>44</sup> Ottawa's intervention had no effect, however, since the city was unyielding in its belief

that the proposed street railway would not violate the terms of the agreement.

As the January 1st referendum approached, the OHS ended its campaign by a skilful use of the Toronto press. E.B. Biggar wrote letters to all the city dailies, many of which were published on December 31, the day before the vote.<sup>45</sup> This last minute flurry of activity probably had some effect. When the results of the vote on the by-law were released, it was clear that the OHS had been successful. The by-law was defeated by 9004 to 3968 votes.<sup>46</sup> Factors other than the concern for preserving an historical landmark undoubtedly influenced the vote, for instance, the anticipated costs of the trolley extension. Nevertheless, OHS spokesmen had made the ratepayers aware of every kind of argument, historical and economic, and were probably correct in their belief that their campaign was the major factor in the defeat of the by-law.

The defeat at the polls seemed to be shrugged off as a minor irritant by civic and exhibition officials. Within a month the CNE board of directors was again urging city council to build the eastern entrance trolley route, and judging from the tone of the annual report, they were confident of success: "Your Directors have again urged the City Council to arrange for an easterly entrance; this, we are glad to report, the City Council are busily engaged upon, and we trust that before the next Exhibition is held much-needed accommoda-

tion will be provided."<sup>47</sup> Just four weeks after the referendum, in March 1907, the city engineer was once again instructed to draft plans for a Bathurst Street extension.<sup>48</sup> Anticipating that Fort York was still in jeopardy, Cumberland visited Ottawa in March, and again in August, to appeal for safeguard clauses in the deed to Garrison Common. His requests were academic since the federal government was still not yet ready to transfer the property to the city. In late October 1907 the worst fears of the OHS were realized. The city engineer presented Cumberland with a slightly revised plan for a trolley line<sup>49</sup> through the fort.

It was at this time that the unsuspecting preservationists were bewildered by the news, made all the more galling because it came directly from CNE Manager-Director J.O. Orr, that the oldest and one of the most venerated historical societies in the province, the York Pioneers, had decided to endorse the city's latest plan. This became a reality on December 3 despite an appeal by the OHS. E.B. Biggar explained the defection as a simple case of trickery and bribery. He charged that individuals sympathetic to the CNE had packed the membership rolls of the York Pioneers, and that Orr had bribed the society by promising them a new museum building<sup>50</sup> within the exhibition grounds. There is no question that these charges have some basis in fact. For example, the York Pioneers' minute book between April and December 1907 reveals that William Crocker and ex-alderman Daniel Lamb,

leading advocates of the city's project, had jointly sponsored  
114 new members.<sup>51</sup> A special meeting of the society was called  
on December 3, 1907 and according to Biggar, it was largely  
attended by the new members, older members not having been  
notified of the gathering.<sup>52</sup> An architect's plan for a new  
museum was presented and discussed just before the society  
voted to endorse the trolley project by a majority of 31 to  
11.<sup>53</sup>

To have risked losing the prospect of a free, new  
museum for opposing the city's scheme was a great deal to  
expect of any local historical association. But for the  
York Pioneers this inducement was only one of several considera-  
tions impelling them to support the city. The society had  
more at stake than any other historical association that sup-  
ported the preservation movement. There was a very real risk  
of ending the splendid relations that had existed for decades  
between the society, the city council, and the CNE. Many  
past and present civic and exhibition officials were active  
York Pioneers. The CNE and the Pioneers had enjoyed a long  
and fruitful partnership. The society's Scadding cabin had  
been one of the interesting features on the exhibition grounds  
since 1879 and Pioneer Day had been a long established annual  
event. It probably occurred to the society's executive that  
these institutions could be terminated by the exhibition's  
directors if the Pioneers continued to oppose the trolley  
line through the fort. The York Pioneer and Historical So-  
ciety had simply too many interests at stake to remain in the

preservation movement.

Barlow Cumberland realized that immediate action was essential to maintain the flagging morale of the movement. A meeting of the groups involved in the preservation battle was called on November 27, 1907, and a decision made to send a large deputation to confer with the Parks and Exhibition Committee.<sup>54</sup> This was effected and to the surprise of city hall the parks committee adopted the OHS position and recommended that the proposed route be rejected and an alternative line be considered.<sup>55</sup> Manager Orr swooped into action when told of this recommendation. Bristling with indignation, he informed the board of control that the question had been dealt with in his absence, and expressed a desire to discuss the matter further.<sup>56</sup> The board acquiesced and refused to adopt the parks committee report, referring it back for more consideration.

Faced with such a powerful opponent, Cumberland and the OHS decided upon more drastic action -- the creation of a society specifically dedicated to saving Fort York. Hence, on December 9, 1907, the Old Fort Protective Association was organized at the Saint James Chambers, Toronto.<sup>57</sup> The avowed purpose of the body was "... to make every effort to secure the proper restoration of the Old Fort and its historic grounds as nearly as possible to their original condition, and to have them put under the control or custody [sic] of a Commission,

or other satisfactory body as shall be considered advisable."<sup>58</sup>  
 Personal membership and representation for local societies was provided for in the constitution. There was to be an annual meeting and special meetings when needed. Governor-General Earl Grey consented to become the patron of the association, and Lieutenant-Governor W. Mortimer Clark, the vice-patron.

Although destined to play a leading role in the subsequent stages of the political struggle, the OFPA did not function as its creators had intended. Only three meetings are recorded in the minute book, the last on February 12, 1908, less than two months after the society's inception. No annual meetings were called. By mid-February both the original president and secretary had resigned and were replaced by Colonel Clarence Denison and J.O. Thorn respectively. Some two hundred names are listed in the membership book,<sup>59</sup> but only twenty-four of these had paid any dues by April 1908, and only three associations had joined. The local societies, effective to this point in saving the fort, were evidently not convinced of the need for the OFPA. Possibly they felt that the OHS filled the role of a co-ordinating society more than adequately. The OFPA boasted that it represented over thirty groups in Toronto and other parts of Canada,<sup>60</sup> but this assertion is not borne out by the figures in the deposit book of the association which never exceeded \$21.63.<sup>61</sup> Judging from the correspondence extant, the association owed its

effectiveness to only four men: Denison, Thorn, E.B. Biggar, and the indefatigable Barlow Cumberland.

By January 1908, city council had decided upon its next tactical manoeuvre in the bid to construct the trolley line. Undaunted by a strongly worded warning from the Department of Militia and Defence stating that the Minister had "no intention of receding" from the stipulations binding on the city regarding Garrison Common,<sup>62</sup> Mayor Oliver announced that the city would apply to the Ontario Legislature for an act to empower the municipality of Toronto to issue debentures<sup>63</sup> for the cost of building the car route across the common. If granted, the provincial act would have exempted the city from seeking the consent of the voters who had rejected the proposal a year earlier.

The OHS-OFPA leaders responded by beginning a new round of political lobbying. A flood of letters and memorials descended upon provincial and federal authorities. During March 1908, before the Private Bills Committee of the Provincial Legislature was scheduled to rule on the city's application for special legislation, the OHS sought to influence its decision. A complete file of correspondence relating to the issue was deposited in the office of the Minister of Education,<sup>64</sup> and copies of the Globe were forwarded to Premier Whitney with the observation that it would not be politically dangerous to champion the fort: "It is quite evident that you would have the support of this leading op-

position newspaper in refusing to give the City Council authority to over-ride the expressed will of the ratepayers, which the City Council is asking you to do...."<sup>65</sup> Cumberland also communicated with the chairman of the Private Bills Committee, stressing the national importance of Fort York.

We submit that the dealings of the City of Toronto with the Garrison Common Park are not purely local to Toronto, but are National, and that the interest of the Province, as also of the Dominion, must be upheld in any dealing with it....

There is no more dominant subject at present in the minds of the Canadian public than the preservation of Historic Landmarks. The old fort at Annapolis has been restored, Louisburg has been rescued from spoliation, the Plains of Abraham and St. Foye are to be preserved.

At such time it would not be seemly for the Parliament of Ontario to show itself indifferent to this principal historical landmark within its borders....

66

This steady application of political pressure had its desired effect when the Private Bills Committee unanimously refused to grant the city's request for enabling legislation.

Barlow Cumberland sensed that the city, after suffering another set-back, might be willing to come to an understanding with the OHS. During July 1908, a tentative agreement was hammered out with Mayor Oliver. It was decided that when the city resurveyed the fort to ascertain its exact boundaries, the OHS would prepare plans, at its own expense, for the reconstruction and maintenance of the fort and submit them to the city.<sup>67</sup>

While waiting for the surveys to be completed during the summer of 1908, Cumberland studied plans and maps of

Garrison Common that he had received from Ottawa. He spent many hours walking the grounds of Fort York, comparing their condition with his documents. Suddenly, in August, he was astounded to discover that both the Park-Blackwell Company and the Grand Trunk Railway had encroached upon property which belonged to the fort. The railway company, he found, had annexed the land once occupied by Garrison Creek which had been filled in. The railway's deed, however, stipulated that the boundary was the northern bank of the creek, the river bed being the property of the fort. As for the Park-Blackwell Company, it had cut into the south-east bastion regardless of the registered plan of the acreage conveyed to the company which showed the bastion intact.<sup>68</sup> Cumberland was determined that every foot of the original boundaries had to be retained by the city in order that a proper restoration could be accomplished. Mayor Oliver was urged to instruct the city solicitor to investigate the encroachments and to take legal steps if necessary to recover the annexed land.<sup>69</sup> A week later, Cumberland called on the city solicitor and found that no instructions had been given. Angered, he retained his own lawyer to make search and report with a view to possibly securing injunctions against the guilty parties.<sup>70</sup>

After studying the situation, the OHS lawyer agreed that encroachments had probably been made, but that no injunctions would be granted at the suit of the society because of the lack of recent surveys of the Garrison Common area.<sup>71</sup>

This did not prevent the preservationists from suggesting to Mayor Oliver that legal action would follow if Ottawa was not informed of the encroachments and steps not initiated to recover the land.<sup>72</sup> Mayor Oliver, who was becoming increasingly short-tempered because of the relentless OHS pressure, had no other recourse than to promise a survey, but only after the city surveyors had finished other business. To further vent his anger he commented: "If you will pardon me saying so, it is my impression that if the Members of the Ontario Historical Society were to do a little more work and less talk it would be much better for all concerned."<sup>73</sup> The mayor soon regretted ever having suggested that the OHS "do a little more work." Upon receipt of this letter, Cumberland warned him that the city must put surveyors to work at once or else the OHS would.<sup>74</sup> It was no coincidence that within a week city surveyors were seen on the job.

Two months later, in November 1908, the surveyors' report was submitted. The investigation substantiated that encroachments had been made by the two companies.<sup>75</sup> Cumberland advised the mayor to arrange a compromise boundary with the Grand Trunk Railway since there was no way of locating the exact position of the old creek. With respect to the area annexed by the Park-Blackwell Company, the OHS demanded that the alienated land be recovered.<sup>76</sup> Mayor Oliver instructed the city solicitor to act upon this advice.<sup>77</sup>

According to the terms of the informal agreement made

between Cumberland and the mayor in July, it was incumbent on the OHS to draw up plans for the restoration of Fort York once the survey had been completed. Consequently, a full-sized restoration project was undertaken by professional architects under the supervision of Barlow Cumberland.<sup>78</sup> It came as a shock, therefore, when it was learned, only one week after receiving the surveyor's report, that the civic authorities had no intention of waiting for the completion of the restoration plans, and that another assault upon the fort was in the offing. Mayor Oliver intended to visit Ottawa to expedite the transfer of Garrison Common and the construction of a street railway through the fort.<sup>79</sup> This was unquestionably a breach of the verbal agreement with the Ontario Historical Society.

As they had done so many times previously, the OHS-OFPA leaders attempted to counter the mayor's offensive by appealing to the Department of Militia and Defence.<sup>80</sup> This time, however, they were surprised by a new turn of events. Prime Minister Laurier himself replied and tried to opt out of the issue: "I would respectfully submit to you that this is a matter which concerns more the City of Toronto than the Federal Government. We will be guided in the matter by the city authorities, and it is to them that you should address your representations."<sup>81</sup> This answer was paradoxical because the matter was of concern to the federal authorities. In fact, the Department of Militia had been largely guided by the OHS,

not city council, for several years. Laurier's reply may have been partly influenced by his predilection for provincial rights or by his innate ability to sense the dangers of becoming involved in a local political issue. But even more important, it was in the Liberal leader's interest not to commit his government to the preservation of Fort York if it meant alienating Joseph Oliver and the city council, most of whom were Liberals. Oliver's political influence could not be overlooked because the Liberal party received no support in the House of Commons from the city of Toronto. Only a month earlier, in the general election of October 26, 1906, the Conservatives had swept all five city ridings.<sup>82</sup> Under the circumstances the Liberals may have felt some compulsion to nurture any source of support in Toronto. Laurier's reply momentarily jarred the preservationists, but, considering that Sir Frederick Borden had consistently upheld their cause and had given no indication that he would change his stance, little outcry was made against the Prime Minister's statement at this time.

In January 1909, the OHS was pleased to unveil the architect's model for the restoration of the fort. The project included a reconstruction of the earthworks and the great trench on the west with its bridge, and the line of pickets which surrounded the post. A promenade was to be built along the top of the ramparts. Two elaborate gates, dedicated to Isaac Brock and John Graves Simcoe were also

included.<sup>83</sup> Shortly thereafter, Mayor Oliver made what appeared to be a magnanimous gesture. He announced that restoration funds would be forthcoming, and that the parks commissioner was already studying the OHS blueprint.<sup>84</sup> Actually, the offer was a ploy to mask a clever tactic. Mayor Oliver still intended to construct the trolley line through the fort, but, by initiating its partial restoration, he hoped to convince Ottawa to complete the transfer of Garrison Common.<sup>85</sup>

A determined effort was soon in progress to speed up the transfer of the deeds. Oliver visited Ottawa and was in touch with Laurier throughout January and February 1909. The mayor gloomily prophesized the ruin of the CNE if the street railway were not completed by August.<sup>86</sup> Initially, the negotiations went smoothly but broke down when a controversy developed over the question of the property rights of the Park-Blackwell Company. It was the intention of the city to evict the firm from the south-east portion of the fort involved. The company's lawyer, however, argued that the Department of Militia and Defence had granted permission in 1901 for the occupation of the small area of the bastion, and that considerable improvements had been made on the property in the interval.<sup>87</sup> Forgetting how urgently the city needed Garrison Common, Oliver informed Laurier that unless the meat-packing factory was evicted, the agreement for the common could not be consummated. He added "... that it would

be an impossibility to comply with the wishes of the Historical Societies of Canada if the Park-Blackwell Company was permitted to retain possession of any portion of the land included in the City's purchase." <sup>88</sup> This sudden concern for the wishes of the historical societies was not sincere. Oliver was conveniently ignoring the fact that he was dead-locked with the OHS over the issue of the trolley line. Laurier replied that he was not "disposed to interfere with the rights of the Park-Blackwell Company", and that he believed the firm had a "vested right" to maintain possession. <sup>89</sup> Nevertheless, to clarify the matter, the Prime Minister sought a Justice Department opinion as to the rights of the company. He was advised that "... the Company would not be entitled to compensation should possession of the lands be resumed by the Crown" since "the permission given to the Company was a licence simply, not coupled with an interest in land, and may be revoked at any time...." <sup>90</sup> This ruling strengthened Laurier's resolve to protect the property rights of the company, and he informed Oliver that the small portion of land occupied <sup>91</sup> by the firm would definitely not be included in the deeds. The federal government refused to budge from this decision.

The relatively amicable relations that existed between Cumberland and Oliver over the problem of the eviction of the two companies were not enough to prevent the city from initiating a second attempt to acquire special enabling legislation from the provincial legislature in March 1909, to finance the

Bathurst Street extension without the consent of the rate-payers. Surprisingly, the OHS-OFPA campaign consisted at this juncture of a few routine letters to Premier Whitney's office and to the chairman of the Private Bills Committee.<sup>92</sup> For the first time a trace of complacency was evident in the preservation battle, a complacency based on the expectation of an automatic second and favourable decision by the committee. To be sure, there was cause for smugness since Whitney was a vigorous defender of the fort, and since the same committee had unanimously rejected the bill a year before.

In order to break the stalemate that seemed likely to continue, the OHS submitted a possible solution to Mayor Oliver a week prior to the Private Bills Committee hearing. Cumberland explained to the mayor that the proposed trolley line, made public in February 1909, was unacceptable since it would result in the removal of a large part of the ramparts, prevent all possibility of restoring the old gateway, and necessitate the demolition of some of the buildings.<sup>93</sup> The ideal route, from the OHS point of view, would have had the street cars passing below the fort, between it and the lake, on the projected water front. Cumberland conceded that this was unacceptable to the city for economic reasons. But the historical society was prepared to accept an alternative route which the city engineer had outlined during a meeting between Cumberland and Oliver. The plan was to have the tracks pass through the upper part of the fort, entirely

separated from the roadway, and without interfering with the buildings. Cumberland's proposal was a considerable concession. He was aware that it would be considered a capitulation by the purists in the preservation movement.

Nevertheless, Mayor Oliver ignored the OHS compromise proposal. He likely sensed that the active behind-the-scenes activity<sup>94</sup> of civic and exhibition officials had some chance of success in influencing the Private Bills Committee's decision. His confidence was warranted for the committee recommended to the legislature that the city be authorized to raise funds for the Bathurst Street extension. An urgent appeal was sent to Queen's Park by the OHS, protesting the city's tactics. The complaint was lodged that the Private Bills Committee had broken its promise that the preservationists would be informed when it visited the fort to appraise the situation. Instead, the committee investigated the fort without informing the OHS and in the company of a civic deputation. The OHS argued, with some justification, that because only one side of the problem was presented, it affected the committee's decision.<sup>95</sup>

E.B. Biggar went so far as to suggest that unethical conduct was involved. The activities of George H. Gooderham, a York Pioneer, and a CNE director, and unnamed committee members were called into question. Biggar explained to the chairman of the Private Bills Committee: "Now Mr. Lucas I am not trying to be sarcastic when I say that it is through pure good nature and hospitality that Mr. Gooderham has been

entertaining the members of the Private Bills Committee at his club, but here you have the fact that certain members of your committee have been actively advocating the scheme of a corporation in which they are directors...."<sup>96</sup> These charges of conflict of interest can not be taken at face value. No names were ever produced and Biggar, who was prone to exaggerate, did admit that "the evidence was not complete and I would not make formal charges which I could not prove."<sup>97</sup>

Upon receiving these complaints, Premier Whitney<sup>98</sup> promised to review the matter. There was little time for the OHS leaders to regret their earlier complacency in not having contacted Whitney personally. New tactics had to be devised within two or three days. After consultation between the OHS and government officials, it was resolved that the preservationists' aims could best be achieved by an amendment to the Toronto Bill setting forth that street cars were not to be routed through the fort.<sup>99</sup> Once again, the fort was temporarily saved from the invasion of the car tracks.

Part of the preservationists' reaction to the Private Bills Committee's recommendation had been to memorialize the federal government to establish a parks commission.<sup>100</sup> Laurier's reply was disheartening as he reiterated his decision to stay clear of the matter. The Prime Minister stated: "Orders have been given to the proper authorities here to have the transfer of the Old Fort property to the City of Toronto completed within [sic] the shortest possible delay. The intention of the City authorities to cut a wide roadway and run

a street car line through the Old Fort property is one as to which the Government have no opinion to offer and which they must leave altogether to the citizens of Toronto." <sup>101</sup>

Many facets of the issue were intentionally ignored in this reply. The people of Toronto had made their opinion known in rejecting the city by-law to finance the trolley extension, yet the city was attempting to negate the expressed will of the ratepayers by acquiring special provincial legislation. Furthermore, Laurier's government had offered its opinion on the preservation issue on many occasions since October 1905. For instance, the Minister of Militia and Defence had recently stated in the House of Commons:

We have stipulated with the city that the fort should be maintained and restored, and of course if the street cars were to go through it or injure it in any way that would not be an observance of the conditions. I think there was a further order in council in reference to this very matter which said that nothing of the kind, no railway of any kind could be carried through the Fort without the consent of the people of Toronto; it must first be permitted by by-law of the city.

102

The preservationists were not unaware of the possible political considerations which led Laurier to hand down a decision that could only work to Mayor Oliver's advantage. <sup>103</sup> Since the Prime Minister had chosen to try to make political capital with the issue, the OHS-OFPA forces had little alternative but to retaliate by opening communications with the federal opposition party. Encouraged by George E. Foster, they sup-

plied the Conservatives with a stream of documents and information to be used against the government. But before the Conservatives could prepare their case, the Laurier government came forward with the final surprise of the political campaign. Without any warning, an announcement was made that a condition would be inserted in the deed to Garrison Common prohibiting street cars through the fort.

It was probably a combination of factors that led Laurier to accept the demands of the preservationists, beginning with the protests sent to federal M.P.'s by historical and patriotic societies across the country. Another factor was probably the pressure exerted by Sir Frederick Borden who must have been embarrassed and annoyed by the decision to end the government's long-standing support of the preservation movement. Finally, the Prime Minister likely sensed that his party could gain nothing politically in the Toronto area if the Conservatives championed the Old Fort and pressed for a safety clause in the deed. For these reasons, then, the following stipulation was inserted in the patent issued to the city of Toronto, dated May 17, 1909:

To have and to hold the same unto the Corporation, its successors and assigns, upon and subject to the following trust and condition, namely; that the site of the Old Fort situated upon the said lands shall, as far as possible, be restored to its original condition as shown on the attached copy of a plan of it, prepared by G. Nichols, Government Engineer, and dated Quebec, 24th June, 1816, and that the same shall be preserved and maintained in such condition forever.

Provided that upon the breach by the Corporation, its successors and assigns of the trust and condition to which the Grant hereby made is subject as aforesaid, such grant shall immediately become and be null and void, and

it shall be lawful for us (the Dominion of Canada, represented in this document by the Deputy Minister of the Interior and the Under Secretary of State) our heirs, successors and assigns, in, to and upon the said lands hereby granted (or any part thereof in the name of the whole) to re-enter and the same to have again, repossess, and enjoy as of our former estate therein, anything herein contained to the contrary notwithstanding.

104

With this clause inserted in the deed, the preservationists were assured that their battle had been won against the street railway. Money for the partial restoration of the fort had been granted by the city and work was to be commenced forthwith. Although the Park-Blackwell Company still retained a portion of the fort property, and although a full restoration lay far in the future, the long campaign to ensure that the fort became a permanent national landmark had been brought to a successful conclusion.

One man and one group stood out most prominently in the four year struggle to save Fort York -- Barlow Cumberland and the Ontario Historical Society. The episode is a splendid example of the role played by the OHS in the first decades of its existence. Throughout the effort, the society achieved many of its main objectives. It mobilized the affiliated societies, provided leadership for them when their interests merged, acted as their co-ordinating agent, enunciated the philosophy of the movement, and assisted in the preservation and restoration of historic grounds and landmarks. As for Barlow Cumberland, his work in this cause alone assured him

of recognition as one of the outstanding figures in the history of the OHS. It was the inspired leadership that he provided daily, and his persistent lobbying and manipulating at three levels of government that maintained the momentum of the campaign.

### III

Although the struggle to save Fort York was the most noteworthy of the OHS's contributions to historic preservation in these years, the society did spend considerable time and energy battling still other "commercial interests" that endangered such places as the Fort George military reserve, and Forts Erie and Malden. The OHS also assisted the movement inspired by Governor-General Earl Grey to nationalize the battlefields of Quebec City. The outcome of all this activity was a happy one. The public responded favourably, major sites and buildings were saved, and the federal authorities acknowledged that they had a duty to perform in the field of preservation.

During the 1890s, the deteriorating condition of the historic military sites in the Niagara Peninsula was a contributing factor in the formation of local historical societies in Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Thorold, and Hamilton. These groups, as was indicated earlier, sought to preserve the military landmarks by placing them under the care of the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park Commission. At first the

federal government failed to take the preservationists seriously. In June 1898, for example, Ottawa issued an order-in-council authorizing the lease of part of the Fort George garrison reserve to the American-owned Canada Southern Railway. Needless to say this action elicited loud protests from the local historical organizations in the Niagara region.

The delegates at the meeting of the Ontario Historical Society in September 1898 rallied to the support of the local groups. A resolution was passed urging the government to rescind the railway privileges, restore Forts George, Mississauga, and Erie, and place them under the custody of the Niagara Falls Park Commission.<sup>105</sup> Meanwhile, the Premier of Ontario, Arthur S. Hardy, had responded to the pleas of the preservationists and memorialized the federal government to protect Fort George and rescind the order-in-council. Hardy's involvement seems to have been the straw that broke the camel's back. A special committee of the Privy Council quickly reviewed the matter after receiving Hardy's petition, and recommended the cancellation of the lease to the Canada Southern Railway.<sup>106</sup> This was done, but a second recommendation that the fort property be leased to the Niagara Falls Park Commission was ignored. The military, it was argued, still had need of the training facilities and barracks at Fort George.

Just two months later in November 1899, the OHS engaged in yet another preservationist battle. At this time

the society reacted angrily to the news that the land around Fort Erie might be sold or leased to a Buffalo country club which had expressed interest in the property.<sup>107</sup> Spokesmen for the OHS communicated with Ottawa on at least two occasions before May 1900 and demanded that the fort property be transferred to the Niagara Falls Park Commission.<sup>108</sup> "It makes ones [sic] blood boil," wrote Barlow Cumberland to Prime Minister Laurier,

to see the patriotic care the Americans take of the historical places on their side of the river while we allow ours to go to rack and ruin and to be used for pig pens and leased out to caretakers for a few dollars. Pardon my language but if I were speaking to you I might possibly be warmed to make it even stronger.

109

On this occasion the Minister of Militia pleased the preservationists by assuring them that the country club's proposal would not be considered.<sup>110</sup> Shortly afterward, Ottawa turned Fort Erie over to the Niagara Falls Park Commission.

Although an important precedent had been set by the transfer of Fort Erie to the commission, there was no certainty that the same good fortune would be enjoyed by Forts George and Mississauga, and adjacent Navy Hall. The question of their preservation was raised again in 1902 when Janet Carnochan, the president of the Niagara Historical Society, informed an appalled OHS that Navy Hall, which many Ontarians believed was the site of the first session of Parliament in Upper Canada (1793), was being used as a stable. After being told of this

situation, Sir Frederick Borden, the Minister of Militia, ordered an end to the use of the hall as an animal shelter. He did not, however, pledge to restore the historic building. <sup>111</sup>

It was not until 1905, and then only after another round of protests, that the historical societies finally squeezed a commitment from the Minister of Militia that the historically significant areas within the military reserve would be preserved. The renewed agitation to save Fort George commenced in the spring of 1905 when it was discovered that the government proposed to sell part (and perhaps all) of the Niagara military reserve in ten-acre lots for residential purposes. Both the town council of Niagara-on-the-Lake and the Niagara Historical Society leaped into action and sought the help of the Ontario Historical Society to scuttle the new plan. George Pattullo, the president of the Ontario Historical Society, promised them his full support.

Early in May 1905, a deputation comprised of members of the town council, influential residents of the district, and the Ontario Historical Society waited upon Sir Frederick Borden in Ottawa. Borden seemed sympathetic and requested that their arguments for the preservation of the fort and common be put in writing. George Pattullo, who volunteered to prepare the necessary statement, <sup>112</sup> explained that the Niagara Common was rich in inspirational history. It was connected with the loyalists, with Simcoe's first parliament, with the council house of the Six Nations Indians (held in

Niagara for some years after 1783), with the centre of combat in 1812-15, and with the "immortal" Brock. Borden was also reminded that the reserve had great sentimental value for the thousands of militiamen who had trained there. Pattullo even struck a commercial note by arguing that as a tourist site, the returns from the reserve would augment "the large revenue already derived by the Niagara Falls Park."

Meanwhile, the Niagara Historical Society aroused the public in its constituency. Open letters denouncing the alleged government plot written by Janet Carnochan and the venerable William Kirby<sup>113</sup> were given wide publicity. The local society also collected over three hundred signatures<sup>114</sup> for a petition to the Prime Minister. All this activity produced gratifying results; in July Sir Frederick Borden promised that the government would preserve the areas of historical value within the reserve. At this time Borden also claimed that his department had never intended selling all the military common.<sup>115</sup> Only those portions that did not contain points of historical interest and that were not suitable for future military or park purposes were considered disposable. Although this did not satisfy the Niagara Town Council, which desired the whole reserve retained as park land, OHS President George Pattullo was delighted with Borden's pledge. On the other hand, Pattullo was not so sure of the credibility of Borden's statement that no thought had been given to selling the entire common. "In view of what had previously occurred," he wrote to Janet Carnochan, "I am

convinced that the future of the Reserve was in danger and that the protest and agitation made were both timely and effective."<sup>116</sup>

After the Minister of Militia and Defence had given his pledge to preserve the Fort George military reserve, the preservationists' role involved little more than lobbying the government to maintain and repair the old buildings until they were transferred to the Niagara Falls Park Commission. Almost on an annual basis, the Niagara Historical Society and the OHS complained to Ottawa about the neglect of certain buildings or the erosion of the shoreline near the ruins of Fort Mississauga.<sup>117</sup> The preservationists were particularly annoyed in 1911 when the roof of Navy Hall collapsed. Fortunately, Janet Carnochan, Earlow Cumberland, and John Ross Robertson, the editor of the Toronto Evening Telegram together persuaded the government to provide the Niagara Historical Society with the funds to repair the hall.<sup>118</sup>

By this time the preservationists seemed to have had the Department of Militia and Defence well in hand. In fact, the military dared not even cut down several trees near Fort George for fear of angering the Niagara Historical Society. The following letter to Janet Carnochan from the command engineer responsible for maintaining the grounds of the fort speaks volumes for the impact the preservationists had made:

It is proposed to erect a wire fence on the outside of the ditch, brush and generally clean the interior of

the fort.... There are a number of trees which it is thought could be cut down, and in order that the Historical Society and the Department may agree I am directed to ask if you would kindly set a date during the month of June on which a committee composed of members of the Historical Society and Officers could go over the grounds together, marking the trees to be cut down and decide on other questions which might arise.

119

Occasionally, the OHS's interest in the preservation of inspirational military landmarks drew the society outside its provincial scope. In 1908, for instance, the OHS joined the Dominion-wide movement led by Governor-General Earl Grey to nationalize the battlefields of Ste. Foye and the Plains of Abraham as a means of commemorating the tercentenary of the founding of Quebec City. Interestingly, this project inspired the members of the Royal Society of Canada to establish the Historic Landmarks Association (1907). Although its immediate object was to further in every possible way the Quebec tercentenary, the general purpose of the association involved the marking and preservation of all Canadian his-  
 120  
 torical landmarks. James Coyne became a member of the first council of the Historic Landmarks Association and in 1908 Barlow Cumberland was elected a vice-president.

OHS leaders helped the newly formed Quebec Battlefields Commission to collect subscriptions for the purchase of the alienated battlefield property and attended the tercentenary celebrations in Quebec City. Barlow Cumberland explained that the OHS chose to take an active part for several reasons.

"The principal objects that suggested themselves to me," he told the executive council of the OHS, "were that apart from the merit of [Earl Grey's] proposal, it was a good opportunity for showing interest in the Historical Association of our Sister Province, and we might also obtain his advocacy in the preservation of our own Old Fort at Toronto."<sup>121</sup>

Whether the OHS support of the Quebec Battlefields Commission would have been less enthusiastic had the Fort York issue not been a consideration is open to conjecture.

The tercentenary celebrations, the formation of the Quebec Battlefields Commission, and the nationalization of the battlefields of Ste. Foye and the Plains of Abraham, all these gave preservationist groups across Canada new incentives. Earl Grey's initiative, declared the Toronto Mail and Empire, "has stirred public feeling to an interest in historic spots generally,"<sup>122</sup> a conclusion that was borne out by similar statements in the public press, and by the warm reception given to the appeal for funds to purchase the battlefields. Meanwhile, the idea took hold that the scope of the Quebec Battlefields Commission should be widened to include the acquisition of all historic sites, military or otherwise. The Historic Sites Committee of the Ontario Educational Association, for example, reported that because of "the instances of encroachment, neglect, threatened abandonment, desecration, and destruction" of historic sites across the province,

the Dominion Government should be urged ... to appoint

a Royal Commission in perpetuity with power under statute to acquire such battlefields, places of historical interest, Indian sites, forts, buildings, residences, monuments, etc., as may be considered worthy of preservation for historical and national purposes, and that such acquisitions be restored, preserved, and worthily maintained at the public expense.

123

Once the various historical groups outside the province of Quebec began to demand Dominion-wide action on the preservation of historic sites, it was really only a matter of time before Ottawa had to face the problem of expanding the scope of its preservationist activities. What had been done at Quebec City could not be denied to the rest of Canada. The occasion that forced the government to consider this matter was the sale of portions of Fort Malden in Amherstburg, Ontario, to private developers who had in 1909 subdivided the property into building lots. The municipal council of Amherstburg delayed the registration of the new lots and urged Ottawa to acquire the site as a national park. "We do this," explained the town council in an obvious reference to the work of the Quebec Battlefields Commission, "with the greater confidence because we feel assured that it is the policy of our present Federal Government to preserve historic and patriotic memories by the preservation of the historic places of their origin."<sup>124</sup>

Other local groups such as the Essex Historical Society and the Public School Teachers of the South Riding of Essex County also sent resolutions praying that Fort

Malden be reclaimed by the federal authorities and preserved as a national historic park. Aware of the remarkable campaign that the Ontario Historical Society had waged in defense of Fort York, the mayor of Amherstburg approached the OHS for its support. Barlow Cumberland asked for the relevant plans of the fort, proffered some tactical advice to the mayor, and promised that the OHS would "take immediate action in aid."<sup>125</sup> Subsequently, the provincial historical society joined the chorus of voices protesting the desecration of<sup>126</sup> the fort.

Confronted by this considerable body of opinion, the Department of Militia and Defence studied the situation and made the following recommendations in a report to the Privy Council on July 14, 1910.

...the present application [re Fort Malden] raises the general question of the policy to be adopted by the Dominion in respect to the preservation and nationalization of all properties of historic interest throughout the Dominion, other than those at Quebec, for which provision has already been made.

The undersigned is of the opinion that it would be in the public interest to extend the powers of the National Battlefields Commission so that the said Commission shall have the power to acquire and be charged with the preservation and maintenance of all places of historic interest throughout the Dominion, such as the site of Fort Malden....

127

Thus, after years of lobbying by historical groups in Ontario and across Canada, Ottawa began to recognize the need for establishing policies for the conservation of historic sites of national significance. As events turned out, however, it

was not the Quebec Battlefields Commission that became the chief federal agency of historic preservation. This responsibility was given to the Dominion Parks Branch of the Department of the Interior, then under the supervision of the Commissioner of Parks, J.B. Harkin. It was the Parks Branch that took options on the Fort Malden property in 1913-14 thereby ensuring its preservation as a national historic site.

With the province's major military landmarks in Ottawa's safekeeping, the OHS began to play a less active part in historical preservation. Just prior to the Great War, its participation in preservation matters was limited to making a few recommendations each year which were forwarded to various levels of government. At the annual meeting in 1909, resolutions in favour of restoring and preserving Macdonald Park and the Martello towers in Kingston were sent to the Dominion and provincial authorities and to the municipal council of Kingston.<sup>128</sup> Similarly, the society approached the Superintendent of Indian Affairs in 1910 and requested that he protect historical and archaeological sites on Indian reserves; Fort St. Marie on Christian Island was especially mentioned in this connection.<sup>129</sup> In 1913, John Dearness corresponded with federal and provincial authorities to urge the preservation of what remained of the stockaded fort at Penetanguishene.<sup>130</sup> And Clarence Warner anticipated the work of the federal Historic Sites and Monuments Board

when he recommended that Ottawa establish "some kind of bureau with power to erect suitable tablets upon known historic sites which are bound to be forgotten as time passes."<sup>131</sup>

Although this was still valuable work, it paled in comparison with the earlier efforts to save Forts York, George, Erie and Malden. The deputations, special meetings, press campaigns, public demonstrations, and indeed the emotionalism that had been part of the battles to save the military landmarks were not to be found after 1910. What accounts for this changed situation? In the first place there were simply fewer instances of encroachments upon major historical sites after the publicity achieved by the campaigns to preserve the old forts and the Quebec battlefields. Furthermore, there was less pressure on the OHS now that the Dominion government, not to forget the forty or so local affiliated historical groups, was guarding historical landmarks against private and commercial interests.

The passing of individuals like Barlow Cumberland also helps to explain why the OHS took a less active role in preservation matters. Concerned with maintaining the symbols of the British connection and the loyalist past, Cumberland and others had brought a remarkable emotional commitment to the preservationist cause. As indicated earlier, when a different climate of opinion emerged after 1911, and a new set of leaders appeared who were much less concerned than

Cumberland with the questions of American domination and imperial unity, the remarkable emotionalism that had characterized the earlier preservationist work was noticeably lacking.

In conclusion, the period from 1898 to 1914 stands out as the Ontario Historical Society's heyday as an organization dedicated to protecting historical sites and landmarks. Prior to the First World War, the OHS succeeded in goading both the public and the government to take an interest in conserving the province's historical resources. As a result of the OHS's efforts, some of the major national historical sites in the province were less likely to be endangered by railway corporations, trolley cars, country clubs, and building developers. Clearly, an important watershed had been crossed in the work of preserving Ontario's heritage.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>  
PAC, Department of National Defence (Army) Records, R.G. 24, Vol. 6351, file H.Q. 71-72. Unidentified press clipping of a letter by William Kirby dated June, 1905.

<sup>2</sup>  
TPL, OFPA papers, Memorial: To His Worship the Mayor and the Members of the City Council, Toronto February 10, 1908. Cited hereafter as OFPA papers.

<sup>3</sup>  
OFPA papers, clipping of the Toronto Evening Telegram, January 13, 1909.

<sup>4</sup>  
Annual Report of the Ontario Historical Society 1909 (Toronto: the OHS, 1909), p. 40. Speech made at the annual meeting held at Fort York, September 18, 1909.

<sup>5</sup>  
Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>6</sup>  
OA, Frank Yeigh papers, scrapbook No. 8 (December 1904 - January 1906), press clipping of Toronto Standard, December 23, 1905.

<sup>7</sup>  
OHS, scrapbook, press clipping of Toronto Evening News, October 9, 1905.

<sup>8</sup>  
Ibid., unidentified press clipping, October 9, 1905.

<sup>9</sup>  
Annual Report OHS 1912, p. 60. Address to the annual meeting June 5, 1912.

<sup>10</sup>  
Some historians might try to explain this aversion to reckless economic development by applying a status revolution theory. See Carl Berger, The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism 1867-1914 (Toronto: the University of Toronto Press, 1970), p. 88. Berger suggests that the psychology of the promoters of the loyalist tradition can be attributed to the fact that they represented an old

social elite being displaced in social importance by a new commercial-industrial elite. The OHS leaders do not seem to fall into this mould since they themselves were successful businessmen in the new economic order and were clearly not alienated by it.

11

Frederic Barlow Cumberland, "Canada's Heirlooms of Empire," Annual Report OHS 1908, p. 50.

12

Minutes and Proceedings of the Council of the Corporation of the City of Toronto for the year 1903, Appendix I (Toronto: Carswell Co., 1904), p. 925. Report of Assessment Commissioner R.J. Fleming, October 30, 1903. Cited hereafter as Council Minutes.

13

Quoted in Ibid., Borden to Fleming, October 19, 1903.

14

Ibid., p. 923.

15

See for instance the address delivered by CNE Vice-President W.E. Wellington, February 24, 1903 in Industrial Exhibition Association of Toronto: Reports for 1903 (Toronto: 1904), p. 10.

16

Jesse E. Middleton, The Municipality of Toronto: A History (Toronto: Dominion Publishing Co., 1923), Vol. I, p. 363.

17

Ibid., p. 364.

18

Council Minutes for 1905, Appendix A, p. 458. Report of City Engineer C.H. Rust, March 17, 1905.

19

Ibid., p. 460.

20

OHS A, scrapbook, press clipping of the Toronto Globe, October 4, 1905.

21

OHS A, minute book, special meeting, October 7, 1905.

- 22 Ibid., council meeting, December 29, 1905.
- 23 He was presiding in the absence of the president, George R. Pattullo of Woodstock, and first vice-president, Lieutenant-Colonel H.C. Rogers of Peterborough.
- 24 OHSa, minute book, annual meeting, July 20, 1906.
- 25 Henry J. Morgan, (ed.), Canadian Men and Women of the Time: A Hand Book of Canadian Biography of Living Characters (2nd. ed.; Toronto: William Briggs, 1912), p. 286.
- 26 Annual Report OHS 1905 and 1906, p. 17.
- 27 Annual Report OHS 1907, p. 28. Report of the Committee on "Preservation of Historic Sites."
- 28 Ibid., p. 29.
- 29 OHSa, scrapbook, press clipping of the Toronto Globe, October 4, 1905.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Ibid., press clipping of the Toronto World, October 7, 1905.
- 32 Ibid., press clipping of the Toronto Daily Star, October 11, 1905.
- 33 Ibid., press clipping of the Toronto Globe, October 7, 1905.
- 34 Ibid., press clipping of the Toronto Daily Star, October 11, 1905.
- 35 OFPA papers, copy of a report on the preservation of Fort York prepared by Cumberland, June 1906.

- 36  
OFPA papers, Coatsworth to Boyle, April 23, 1906.
- 37  
Hughes, Chief Inspector, May 19, 1906.  
OFPA papers, copy of a directive from James L.
- 38  
OHSA, scrapbook, unidentified press clipping,  
dated June 22, 1906.
- 39  
Council Minutes for 1906, Appendix A, p. 1392.
- 40  
Ibid., p. 297 and p. 313.
- 41  
Annual Report OHS 1907, p. 30.
- 42  
Ibid., p. 32.
- 43  
OFPA papers, copy of a letter from Acting Deputy  
Minister of Militia and Defence E.F. Jarvis to Coatsworth,  
November 27, 1906.
- 44  
Ibid.
- 45  
OFPA papers, press clippings of the Toronto Evening  
News, December 31, 1906; Toronto Daily Star, December 31, 1906;  
Toronto Evening Telegram, December 31, 1906.
- 46  
Annual Report OHS 1907, p. 27.
- 47  
Industrial Exhibition Association: Annual Report  
for 1906, p. 35. Board of Directors' Report, February 26, 1907.
- 48  
Council Minutes for 1907, March 25, 1907, p. 104.
- 49  
OFPA papers, C.H. Rust to Cumberland, October 9, 1907.  
Rust promised to remove only one building, a barrack house.
- 50  
OFPA papers, Biggar to Whitney, enclosed with a  
memorial to Whitney, February 10, 1908. See also Biggar to I.B.  
Lucas, April 6, 1909.

- 51  
York Pioneer and H.S. Archives, minute book, April to December 1907.
- 52  
OFPA papers, Biggar to Lucas, April 6, 1909.
- 53  
York Pioneer and H.S. Archives, minute book, December 3, 1907.
- 54  
OFPA papers, press clipping of the Toronto World, November 29, 1907.
- 55  
Council Minutes for 1907, Appendix A, p. 1596.  
Report of the Parks and Exhibition Committee, December 4, 1907.
- 56  
Ibid.
- 57  
OFPA papers, minute book OFPA, p. 3.
- 58  
Ibid., p. 6.
- 59  
OFPA papers, membership book OFPA.
- 60  
OFPA papers, Memorial to Mayor of Toronto, February 1910.
- 61  
OFPA papers, bankbook of the OFPA.
- 62  
OFPA papers, Fiset to Oliver, January 18, 1908.
- 63  
Council Minutes for 1908, Appendix A. p. 1. Report No. 2 of the Board of Control to City Council, February 1908.
- 64  
OFPA papers, Cumberland to A.H.U. Colquhoun, Deputy Minister of Education, March 7, 1908.
- 65  
OFPA papers, Thorn to Whitney, March 27, 1908.

- 66 OFPA papers, Cumberland to Lucas, April 1, 1908.
- 67 OFPA papers, Cumberland to Oliver, July 8, 1908.
- 68 OFPA papers, Cumberland to Oliver, August 21, 1908. Garrison Creek was approximately eighteen feet wide in the vicinity of the fort according to E.J. Hathaway, "The Story of the Old Fort at Toronto," OHSPR, Vol. XXV (1929), pp. 345-57.
- 69 OFPA papers, Cumberland to Oliver, August 21, 1908.
- 70 Ibid., see notation on bottom of this letter.
- 71 OFPA papers, Macdonald to Cumberland, August 28, 1908.
- 72 OFPA papers, Macdonald to Oliver, September 2, 1908.
- 73 OFPA papers, Oliver to Macdonald, September 3, 1908.
- 74 Ibid., see notation on bottom of this letter.
- 75 OFPA papers, James Wilson, Parks Commissioner, to Cumberland, November 2, 1908.
- 76 OFPA papers, Cumberland to Oliver, November 4, 1908.
- 77 OFPA papers, Oliver to Cumberland, November 6, 1908.
- 78 Annual Report OHS 1909, p. 52.
- 79 OFPA papers, Cumberland to Borden, November 14, 1908.
- 80 Ibid., see also Thorn to Borden, November 21, 1908 and Thorn to Laurier, November 21, 1908.

- 81  
OFFPA papers, Laurier to Thorn, November 30, 1908.
- 82  
Arnold W. Thomas, (ed.), The Canadian Almanac and Miscellaneous Directory for the Year 1909 (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1909), p. 301.
- 83  
OFFPA papers, OHS Memorandum to accompany the plans of the Restoration of Fort York.... January 12, 1909.
- 84  
OFFPA papers, Oliver to Cumberland, January 27, 1909.
- 85  
OFFPA papers, press clipping of the Toronto Globe, February 4, 1909.
- 86  
PAC, Laurier papers, Oliver to Laurier, January 15, 1909. See also Oliver to Laurier, March 12, 1909.
- 87  
PAC, Laurier papers, W.W. Tilley to Laurier, February 10, 1909.
- 88  
PAC, Laurier papers, Oliver to Laurier, February 12, 1909.
- 89  
PAC, Laurier papers, Laurier to Oliver, February 15, 1909.
- 90  
PAC, Laurier papers, Justice Department memorandum, signed by E.L. Newcombe, Deputy Minister of Justice, February 18, 1909.
- 91  
PAC, Laurier papers, Laurier to Oliver, March 16, 1909. See also Annual Report OHS 1909, President's Report, September 17, 1909, p. 21. In an interview with Cumberland, Sir Frederick Borden had stated that the portion of the fort held by the Park-Blackwell Company would be patented to the city as soon as the company ceased to use it.
- 92  
OFFPA papers, Thorn to Whitney, March 6, 1909 and Thorn to Lucas, March 6, 1909.
- 93  
OFFPA papers, Cumberland to Oliver, March 8, 1909.

- 94 OFPA papers, Thorn to George E. Foster, April 1, 1909.
- 95 OA, Whitney papers, OFPA memorial to Whitney, April 5, 1909.
- 96 OA, Whitney papers, Biggar to Lucas, April 6, 1909.
- 97 Ibid.
- 98 OA, Whitney papers, Whitney to Biggar, April 2, 1909.
- 99 OA, Whitney papers, Biggar to Whitney, April 5, 1909.  
See also OFPA papers, Biggar to G.E. Foster, April 10, 1909.
- 100 OFPA papers, memorial to Sir Frederick Borden, March 26, 1909.
- 101 OFPA papers, Laurier to Thorn, March 30, 1909.
- 102 OFPA papers, copy of Canada: House of Commons Debates, July 17, 1908, column 13429.
- 103 OFPA papers, Thorn to Foster, April 8, 1909.
- 104 A copy of the safety clause can be found in the OFPA papers.
- 105 Annual Report OHS 1899, pp. 7-8.
- 106 OHSa, Extract from a Report of the Committee of the Honourable the Privy Council, approved by His Excellency on the 1st September, 1898.
- 107 Annual Report OHS 1899, p. 31.
- 108 OHSa, minute book, council meeting, April 7, 1900.

- 109  
PAC, Laurier papers, M.G. 26, GI (a), Vol. 90, Cumberland to F.W. Borden, November 5, 1899. (Copy to Laurier).
- 110  
Annual Report OHS 1900, p. 16.
- 111  
OA, NHS records Ms 193, reel 6, minute book, October 13, 1902.
- 112  
PAC, Department of Militia and Defence (Army) Records, R.G. 24 GI (a), Vol. 6351, Memorandum by Major Pattullo...prepared by request of the Mayor of Niagara, May 12, 1905.
- 113  
OHSA, printed letter by J. Carnochan, June 28, 1905. PAC, Department of Militia and Defence (Army) Records, R.G. 24, GI (a), Vol. 6351, file H.Q. 71-72. Letter by Kirby dated June 1905.
- 114  
PAC, Department of Militia and Defence Records, R.G. 24, GI (a), Vol. 6351, petition to Laurier, received July 14, 1905.
- 115  
PAC, Department of Militia and Defence Records, R.G. 24, GI (a), Vol. 6351, Memorandum from Deputy Minister November 24, 1905.
- 116  
OA, NHS records, Ms 193, reel 9, Pattullo to Carnochan, August 4, 1905.
- 117  
Annual Report OHS 1909, p. 45; OA, NHS records, Ms 193, reel 9, Carnochan to Borden, April 13, 1911; OHSA, Cumberland to Borden, October 16, 1908.
- 118  
OA, NHS records, Ms 193, reel 9, Cumberland to Carnochan, August 14, 1912. The sum of one thousand dollars was given to the NHS for the repair work.
- 119  
OA, NHS records, Ms 193, reel 9, C. Caldwell, Command Engineer, 2nd Division to Carnochan, May 17, 1912.

- 120 "The Canadian Historical Association," CHR, Vol. III, No. 3 (September, 1922), p. 218.
- 121 OHSA, Cumberland to executive council, January 13, 1908.
- 122 OFPA papers, clipping of the Mail and Empire, Toronto, February 21, 1908.
- 123 OA, minute book of the Historical Section OEA, April 21, 1908. Three of the four members of the Historic Sites Committee were OHS members: John S. Carstairs, George M. Wrong, Alexander Fraser.
- 124 OHSA, copy of a memorial of the Municipal Council of Amherstburg to the Governor-General, n.d., attached to the Essex Historical Society's resolution for the fort's preservation dated March 22, 1909.
- 125 OHSA, Cumberland to Frank A. Hough, Mayor of Amherstburg, April 12, 1909.
- 126 Annual Report OHS 1909, p. 36.
- 127 PAC, Department of Militia and Defence Records, R.G. 24, GI (a), Vol. 6559, Report to Privy Council, July 14, 1910.
- 128 OHSA, memorial to the Honourable R.A. Pyne, Minister of Education, n.d. (c. 1909). See also Annual Report OHS 1907, p. 22.
- 129 Annual Report OHS 1910, p. 61.
- 130 Ibid., 1913, p. 16.
- 131 Ibid., 1909, p. 33.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### AMBITION DENIED, 1914-1939

In the summer of 1914 the Ontario Historical Society appeared to be on the threshold of its possibilities, sustained by a high morale, an impressive roster of officers, a growing membership, and a diversified programme of activities. To the members attending the annual conference in Ottawa that year, the future of the organization had never looked brighter. It was all the more unfortunate, therefore, when the Great War reared up to deny the society's high ambitions. Before that disastrous conflict drew to a close, the OHS, like some of the combatants overseas, had suffered reverses in almost every line of endeavour and was wracked by internal dissension. Not until 1920 did the society begin to shake off the effects of the experience.

#### I

The First World War quickly delivered a series of crippling blows to the work of the Ontario Historical Society. The initial setback came hard upon the declaration of hostilities. As a result of the reallocation of building space for the military in November 1914, the Department of Education gave the Workmen's Compensation Board the suite of offices then occupied by the OHS.<sup>1</sup> The historical society had to be

content with one small room in the Normal School Building and was forced to place the bulk of its library in storage.

The war also abruptly ended the membership drive far short of the ambitious annual enrolment goal of two thousand set in 1913 by Clarence Warner. At the outbreak of the conflict, approximately four hundred individuals were listed on the roster; by 1919 this figure had dropped to just over three hundred.<sup>2</sup> The society apparently chose to terminate its membership drive and to curtail much of its regular programme for patriotic reasons. It was assumed that the members would rather spend the time normally devoted to historical pursuits on war-related activities. "In a crisis like the present one," added Andrew Hunter, "the Nation comes first .... It would have been almost a discredit to our Society not to make some sacrifice in refraining from making a campaign for new members, even if there had been prospects of success in that direction."<sup>3</sup> This same masochistic logic accounts for the decision to purge the annual meeting of all its literary and social aspects and to hold it each year in Toronto for the duration of the war. Stripped to its business essentials, the annual conference of 1915 lasted a mere ninety minutes. Even the council meetings were few and far between, and initiative passed to the secretary and the small executive subcommittees.

In place of its regular programme, the OHS offered the services of its members to the Recruiting League and the Speakers' Patriotic League. In March 1916, Andrew Hunter

provided each organization with a full list of members who were willing to participate in recruiting and fund raising drives. Presumably, representatives of the society had already spoken on behalf of these groups since the secretary expressed

the desire of the Council to continue the hearty co-operation [*italics mine*] of our members and the members of the local historical societies ... in the efforts for recruiting, and their hope that it may be possible for organizations such as the Speakers' Patriotic League to utilize to the fullest extent the services of our members in such undertakings.

4

Unfortunately none of the addresses given by the OHS members survived to indicate how these historically minded individuals conceptualized the causes and events of the Great War.

As for individual efforts, few members served at the front or saw active duty largely because of their advanced age; only twenty-nine were known to have done so.<sup>5</sup> At home, one member, Vice-President Sir Edmund Walker, head of the Canadian Bank of Commerce until September 1915, spent the greater part of his time in activities related to the war.<sup>6</sup> As one of Canada's chief bankers, he became deeply involved in matters connected with the adaptation of national finance to war conditions. He was a committee member of, and fundraiser for, such organizations as the Canadian and British Red Cross, the Patriotic Fund established to assist the families and dependents of those on active duty, and the Voluntary Aid Committee which had charge of a number of military hospitals. These and other responsibilities demanded so much

of Walker's time that he felt compelled to decline the presidency of the OHS when elected to that post in June 1916.

Judging from the annual reports, it appears that many members became involved in war work through their local historical society. The women's historical groups, for instance, threw themselves into Red Cross and relief work. "Owing to the war," reported the Women's Auxiliary of the Elgin Historical and Scientific Institute in 1915, "and the demands upon the time and attention of our members, who are also active members of the Red Cross and other war relief associations, it was not considered advisable to hold our regular afternoon meetings this season."<sup>7</sup> Instead they sent some two hundred cholera belts to the men of Elgin County overseas, and in 1916 this same group raised six hundred dollars to make socks for local soldiers.<sup>8</sup> Not to be outdone, the Women's Canadian Historical Society of Toronto set up a Red Cross Committee as early as August 1914 which by war's end had raised over three thousand dollars for hospital supplies and soldiers' comforts.<sup>9</sup> Like its counterpart in Toronto, the Women's Canadian Historical Society of Bowmanville reported in 1916 "the merging of its work into the activities called for by the war."<sup>10</sup>

Other historical societies, while they did not actually participate in Red Cross work and the like, did contribute funds raised during the course of their normal schedule of activities to the various relief agencies. The Niagara His-

torical Society, for example, reported in 1918 that "we have given each year a contribution for war fund purposes, first for the hospital ship, then the British Red Cross, the Bread Fund, [and] the Navy."<sup>11</sup> James Coyne, president of the Elgin Historical and Scientific Institute in St. Thomas, noted in 1915 that "the Institute has gladly contributed a substantial sum... to the Patriotic Fund, to which its members generally have also individually contributed."<sup>12</sup>

The local historical associations actually responded in a variety of ways to the events of the Great War. Some suspended all operations to devote their time to war-related activities. A few attempted to carry on as usual. Others tried to combine a historical programme with some kind of war work. Whatever the response, local historical activity suffered because of a natural slackening of interest in local and provincial history as the great conflict raged overseas. Fewer meetings, declining enrolment, and diminishing revenues were the rule.<sup>13</sup> "With other organizations," explained the Brant Historical Society in 1918, "our work has suffered somewhat and been in many ways retarded by the hurry and stress of the time."<sup>14</sup> Janet Carnochan, president of the Niagara Historical Society, had carried on a full range of activities including publications, meetings, special outings, the placing of markers, and museum work, but she admitted that during the war her society had "fallen behind the record of other years."<sup>15</sup> At least one local group, the York Pioneer and Historical

Society, came through the war period unscathed. That society met regularly, recorded slight increases in its membership, and made a most important gain in 1918 when it purchased the Davidite Sharon Temple of Peace near Newmarket.<sup>16</sup>

Although there was unanimous agreement within the OHS that the society should contribute in some way to the war effort, a few members questioned the wisdom of limiting their regular routine so severely. Janet Carnochan, for instance, believed that the truncated annual conferences held exclusively in Toronto were "injuring the usefulness and progress of the Society" by stifling historical interest and activity in the rest of the province.<sup>17</sup> Andrew Hunter's reluctance to call council meetings worried Clarence Warner who believed that "it is through the influence of the Council and the fact that the members are called together occasionally even if very little work is done that the interest in the Society is maintained."<sup>18</sup>

As the OHS's activities were curtailed, interest in the society naturally waned and the membership declined. This in turn contributed to a financial crisis since the revenues from membership fees dropped considerably.<sup>19</sup> Meanwhile inflation chipped away at the fixed annual provincial grant of eight hundred dollars. It also became necessary to raise the secretary's stipend from four to seven hundred dollars in view of his years of service and the rising cost of living. In an effort to trim expenses, the executive drastically

reduced the number of pages in the Papers and Records, and at one point, President Clarence Warner had to assume personally the costs of publishing William R. Riddell's biography of Robert Gourlay in the 1916 issue of the periodical.<sup>20</sup> Fortunately, the government recognized the society's plight and agreed in 1917 to bear the costs of publishing the annual report. The following year this privilege was extended to cover the Papers and Records.

Under wartime austerity conditions, the OHS's morale and sense of purpose was noticeably undermined. The disillusionment was further exacerbated by a number of unhappy events. In the first place, the OHS lost the services of the very capable Clarence Warner who in 1916 emigrated to Boston, Massachusetts. The loss of Warner was followed by Sir Edmund Walker's refusal to direct the society. "I am now responsible," Walker explained, "as Chairman, or President for several bodies, and the amount of work entailed is really all that I can manage."<sup>21</sup> The upshot of this episode was a second election and the accession to the presidency of John Squair, professor of French at University College in Toronto. Squair proved to be an excellent second choice and was able to guide the historical society through this troubled period. It was Squair who led the deputation in 1916 that successfully persuaded the Department of Education to assume the costs of printing the society's publications.

Another event during that year which caused some

bitterness was the decision of the city of Toronto to build the Bathurst Street trolley extension to the Canadian National Exhibition grounds, across the northern part of Fort York. The city authorities attempted to justify the streetcar line by emphasizing that no buildings were to be affected,<sup>22</sup> and that it would later be rerouted to run along the waterfront. Emerson Biggar, who had been so active in the earlier preservation campaign, sought unsuccessfully to frustrate the city's plans by leading deputations to the Ontario Railway and Municipal Board and to city council. His protests to the federal authorities were also to no avail. Struggling through the worst year of the war, Ottawa had no time for what seemed such a relatively inconsequential local dispute.<sup>23</sup> Eventually the streetcar line was constructed across part of the northern ramparts in clear violation of the 1909 transfer deed to Garrison Common.

In the midst of this adversity, the executive was further weakened by internecine conflict which hampered the society's efforts until 1920. The rift developed and widened after 1916 as a consequence of a personality clash between Secretary Hunter and George Locke, the new vice-president. Locke was the chief librarian of the Toronto Public Library who, over a period of several decades, built up one of the finest public library systems in North America. He took great pains to stress history in children's library classes and he himself wrote two volumes for younger readers entitled

When Canada was in New France (Toronto, 1919), and Builders of the Canadian Commonwealth (Toronto, 1923).

It was Andrew Hunter's bitter effusions against Locke which escalated what should have remained a cold but workable relationship to an open feud. Hunter seemed to be jealous of Locke's accomplishments with the Toronto Public Library and he made little effort to hide his feelings, being rude and surly in everyone's presence. Hunter charged that a man in Locke's demanding position would not or could not work in the best interests of the OHS. "Frankly, I say again," he wrote to Fred Landon, then a librarian in London, "it would be a calamity to our Society to have Dr. Locke for President, as he has a Library of his own (Seventeen in fact) and has no interest in the development of ours."<sup>24</sup>

Since both Locke and Hunter possessed welcome talents, factions developed within the executive in support of each. George Locke's adherents included the most influential figures in the organization, individuals such as James Coyne, Clarence Warner, and George Pattullo, a past president of the OHS (1904-1906) who had since been re-elected to the post in 1918. Hunter's adherents included John S. Carstairs, a long-time OHS officer and active member of the United Empire Loyalist Association, and then a Captain in the Department of Militia and Defence, and Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander Emerson Belcher, the OHS treasurer. Once a successful travelling salesman, Belcher had written What I Know About Commercial Travelling

(1883). For many years he served as president of the North Bruce Conservative Association and was prominent in municipal politics in Southampton. Belcher had personal reasons for disliking the Locke faction since James Coyne and George Pattullo, both Liberals, had frustrated his own attempt to become president of the OHS in 1916 by nominating and supporting John Squair. Belcher suspected that they had opposed him because of his Conservative party affiliations.<sup>25</sup> This seems unlikely considering that other Conservatives had held the presidency of the historical society and that political issues of any nature had been assiduously avoided.

The test of strength between the two factions came in June 1919 at the annual conference in Woodstock. In a bid to thwart Locke's election to the presidency, Hunter tried desperately to arrange the election of Stratford's J. Davis Barnett, a respected local historian and an engineer by profession.<sup>26</sup> The secretary's machinations came to light at the conference when his supporters marred the usually tranquil business session by attempting several tactical ploys from the floor to block Locke's election. All the intriguers looked foolish, however, when Barnett, who had not been approached beforehand, declined the nomination for the presidency.<sup>27</sup> Locke had no opposition after this pronouncement.

A.F. Hunter was extremely lucky not to have been dismissed from office for his behaviour. Not only did he fail to oust Locke, but he still stubbornly refused, as late as

1919, to support the expansion of the society's programme, claiming that the war crisis had not yet passed. Hunter and Belcher had been the only councillors to oppose the revival of the traditional annual meeting at points outside of Toronto.<sup>28</sup> A priggish individual at the best of times, Hunter claimed that because of these outside meetings "our business affairs are subordinated to social and festive exploitation."<sup>29</sup> In this case, it seems that Hunter was motivated by a perverse desire to obstruct the attempt of President George Pattullo, a supporter of George Locke, to restore the fortunes of the OHS. Distressed by the secretary's behaviour, Pattullo confided to one correspondent that unless Hunter's attitude was so modified that "he will readily and promptly carry out the wishes and the policy of the Executive," he saw "little hope for the Society's future. I ... would not consider for a moment a place on the Executive Committee under the conditions that have prevailed during the past twelve months."<sup>30</sup> Hunter would have been dismissed had he not been held in such high regard by some of the society's members. John Carstairs, for example, intimidated the secretary's enemies by threatening to "carry the discussion into the Toronto Newspapers" if Hunter were removed.<sup>31</sup> Still, it was a subdued Andrew Hunter who emerged from the annual meeting of June 1919. Earlier in March, he had been reprimanded by the executive for trying to undertake all the duties of the editorial committee himself,<sup>32</sup> and now his rival, George Locke,

controlled the historical society.

As might have been expected, given the internal strains within the society, George Locke's tenure as president (1919-20) was not an auspicious one. Weakened from the outset by the rift between the secretary and the president, the society's difficulties were compounded by several other factors. In the first place, George Locke suffered a nervous breakdown shortly after taking office. "Dr. Locke has been sick since the Woodstock meeting," Andrew Hunter wrote unkindly to Carstairs,

as he also was at the time of the meeting, brain and nerves being broken down, as described to me by two ... of the female assistants at the Library. This trouble used to be called insanity, and the person so afflicted not infrequently called a d--n fool, but the more euphonious speech of the present day discards the harsh terms of the past generation and substitutes the term neurotic condition. The late president Pattullo was no better, and I am wondering why this poor Society has to be afflicted year after year with some mental wreck at its head.

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The efficiency of the OHS was undermined further by the fact that Hunter temporarily lost both his enthusiasm for his job and his faith in the efficacy of the society. He began to talk about the need for a government-appointed historical commission to assume the society's functions. According to Hunter, the annual changeover of officers and the "go-as-you-please way" of selection, made "it impossible to get definite or continuous policy in serious historical effort."<sup>34</sup> His solution was to all but abolish the OHS. "...

It can be relegated to the function of grouping the federated societies for an annual outing," he said, while the new historical commission would undertake "the more serious matters of publishing records, collecting a library, a historical museum, etc....."<sup>35</sup> Hunter's loss of faith must largely be discounted as the product of the factionalism within the OHS councils. Still, it took incredible audacity for Hunter to complain about lack of progress when he was being so uncooperative with those who now sought to expand the society's usefulness.

At this juncture, Hunter should have resigned. Instead he continued in office and without the executive's knowledge, began to urge the Hon. R.H. Grant, the Minister of Education, to set up a permanent historical commission.<sup>36</sup> As a private citizen he had every right to do this, but he had no authority to use the OHS letterhead or to sign the correspondence as secretary of the OHS as if to suggest that he spoke for the whole society. Thus, with its president incapacitated and its secretary playing the role of the subversive, the Ontario Historical Society staggered into the 'twenties.

In a complete turn of events, character and circumstance combined in 1920 to give the OHS a new lease on life. Before the year's end, even Andrew Hunter's confidence in the society's future had been restored. Ironically, the secretary's critical appraisal of the organization's usefulness had a valuable effect; it made other members realize that if the

OHS did not quickly expand its activities, its collapse was imminent.<sup>37</sup> This subject was carefully debated in 1920 at the annual meeting in Owen Sound.

In retrospect, the Owen Sound conference was of considerable importance in the history of the OHS. Here, the way was paved for a reconciliation between the rival groups when George Locke resigned for reasons of health and was replaced by Brigadier-General Ernest Cruikshank, then the chairman of the recently created federal Historic Sites and Monuments Board (est. 1919). After a year of Cruikshank's inspired and forceful direction, the bickering within the executive was all but ended. There had been no difficulty in prevailing upon the Brigadier to assume the presidency. He seemed eager to take the position which circumstances had denied him earlier. As first vice-president in 1908, Cruikshank had retired from the OHS after being appointed to take charge of the military records in the Dominion Archives. Now his less demanding position at the Historic Sites Board once again allowed him the time to renew his association with the Ontario Historical Society.

Cruikshank entertained great plans for the OHS. During the debate at Owen Sound he first raised the idea of imitating the extensive publications programmes of the American state historical associations.<sup>38</sup> This idea was soon translated into reality when he and Andrew Hunter began to edit an exciting new documentary history series intended to encompass

the correspondence of all the Lieutenant-Governors and Administrators of Upper Canada. Cruikshank also used his influence at Queen's Park to reacquire larger office and library space and obtain a small increase in the annual grant.<sup>39</sup> Within the two short years of Cruikshank's presidency, then, most of the adverse effects of the Great War had been removed. Again the hopes and ambitions of the OHS leaders were on the rise.

## II

As a result of Cruikshank's guidance and energy, the Ontario Historical Society made its most important gains during the inter-war period in the publications field. The historiographical significance of this material will be discussed in a later chapter, but briefly the OHS made a valuable contribution to Ontario and Canadian historical scholarship through the pages of the OHSRP and the new documentary history series. The latter project eventually included five large volumes of the Simcoe Papers (1923-31), three volumes of the Russell Papers (1934-36), and The Settlement of the United Empire Loyalists on the Upper St. Lawrence and Bay of Quinte ... (1934), all of which were edited by E.A. Cruikshank with the assistance of A.F. Hunter.<sup>40</sup> Cruikshank personally considered that the OHS should be first and foremost a publishing society, and believed that its main object had always been to collect and publish original documentary material not

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 already in print. More than anyone else he worked to make that aim a reality and after Cruikshank stepped down in 1922, his successors continued to stress the publications function above any other.

During the 'twenties the provincial government seems to have appreciated the value of the society's publications. At one point in 1925, it was solely on the strength of the OHS's publishing record that the government of Premier George Howard Ferguson, which was then otherwise bent on a policy of retrenchment, continued to subsidize the historical society. Although Ferguson's austerity programme left all the local affiliates without annual subsidization, the OHS was granted special dispensation. The Premier explained to OHS President W.H. Breithaupt, a civil engineer and a member of one of Kitchener's distinguished families:

I have taken the trouble to go through the transactions of the Ontario Historical Society for the last ten years or so, and I have become convinced that the character of the work is so outstanding and important that this Organization is deserving of special consideration.

I am instructing the Deputy Minister of Education to see if some way cannot be worked out whereby your Organization might be given assistance through the department that would not involve a special vote in the House, and a violation of our policy of withholding these special grants....

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But, not even the favour of the provincial authorities could save Cruikshank's publications project from the Great Depression. The provincial government, which had borne the

cost of printing the society's periodical and reports, the Simcoe Papers, and the first volume of the Russell Papers, terminated that support in 1931. At first, the historians cut expenses by discontinuing the valuable annual report and with much difficulty managed to raise the funds to print the remaining volumes of the Russell Papers. Brigadier Cruikshank himself assumed the costs of printing the Loyalist Settlement. By the mid-'thirties, however, the society recognized that the documentary history series had to be scuttled. It had become economically impossible for the OHS to publish volumes of documents with a prospective sale of only a few hundred copies. Even during the prosperous 'twenties, the society had experienced trouble selling the massive tomes of documents at the ridiculously low price of one dollar each. The situation worsened in the following decade leaving the OHS holding thousands of unsold volumes, many of which remain in storage to this day.<sup>43</sup>

Apart from the documentary history series, there were no other major innovations in the society's work before the Second World War, and in almost all the traditional lines of endeavour only modest gains were registered. During the 1920s, it appeared as if the library might become a useful resource centre. Andrew Hunter, his enthusiasm aroused once again, made it accessible to the general public for research and book borrowing, and acted as a one man reference section for the dozens of enquiries made each year by mail or tele-

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phone. With perhaps the exception of editorial duties, the library tasks consumed most of the secretary's time. In 1921 the library contained nearly three thousand books and five thousand pamphlets, a considerable increase from the 1913 collection of six hundred books and two thousand pamphlets.<sup>45</sup> Throughout the 'twenties the acquisitions by exchange and donation grew apace and were frequently supplemented by purchases of new publications not on the exchange list. In 1928 the secretary reported that the society possessed some six thousand books alone.<sup>46</sup> Although no catalogue of holdings was prepared by Hunter, the lists of acquisitions in the annual reports indicate that the library's main strengths were in the areas of Canadiana, Ontario local history, and the periodical literature of Canadian and American historical societies.

The library, like the publications programme, fell upon bad times during the 'thirties. At least Andrew Hunter was spared the agony of watching atrophy set in; he resigned in 1931 after suffering a stroke which left him partially paralyzed. He was replaced by J. McE. Murray, recently retired from the Canadian Bank of Commerce in Toronto,<sup>47</sup> and a graduate of the University of Toronto who could boast of having studied before the turn of the century under the eminent political scientist, Sir William Ashley. Murray complemented his administrative experience with a sense of humour which the stern Andrew Hunter had utterly lacked. "... I am getting the 'kick' out of a new experiment in life," he wrote to one friend shortly after becoming secretary.

The work gives me pleasant but not too pressing occupation and ... a modest salary to supplement my pension. I tell my family that an added advantage is that I can now wear my old clothes longer. They insist, however, that I must continue to shave each day, although I pretend that I see many facial decorations that would be most appropriate to my new responsibilities.

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Murray's good spirits were put to the test during his dozen or so years as secretary. The library was one of his chief worries. Financially unable to do anything about the library's plight, he could only watch acquisitions and users dwindle away. By 1936, Murray recognized that the library was an unreasonable project for the OHS to continue and reported to the executive that "Public, Legislative, and University Libraries in Toronto and at other centres are better equipped for reference purposes than the Society with its limited resources could possibly be."<sup>49</sup> Apparently the feeling was shared by other councillors since the question of disposing of some of the material on the society's shelves was seriously discussed the following year.<sup>50</sup> Although this step was deferred until the midst of the Second World War it was clear by the mid-'thirties that the library's fate was already sealed.

In the work of historic preservation, the OHS made itself useful in various ways. For example, it played a part in the first restoration of Fort York, a project undertaken in 1934 as a centennial project for the city of Toronto. The restoration was the product of many factors such as the desire

of the city fathers to attract tourist revenue<sup>51</sup> and to create a make-work scheme for the unemployed;<sup>52</sup> but, it was also the result of the uninterrupted lobbying by some fifteen historical and patriotic groups located in Toronto that banded together to form a joint preservation committee in the fall of 1925. A.F. Hunter was elected chairman of the group.<sup>53</sup>

The preservationists made little progress until 1930 when Bathurst Street was extended to the new lakeshore. This development permitted the city to remove the trolley line constructed during the war across the northern bastion. Furthermore the city expropriated and later demolished the old meat-packing plant encroaching upon the southeast corner of the fort. With the historical societies urging him on,<sup>54</sup> the parks commissioner undertook in 1931 to make the first repairs.<sup>55</sup> That same year George Locke chaired a sub-committee of the Toronto Centennial Celebration Committee which recommended that the Old Fort and Stanley Barracks be restored and maintained as museums.<sup>56</sup> The OHS organized deputations in support of this plan and later appointed representatives at the request of the city of Toronto to the Advisory Committee on Historic Sites and Buildings.<sup>57</sup> Meanwhile, in association with the other Toronto groups and individuals, the OHS procured a large scale model of the fort (costing some two hundred dollars) which was displayed in various parts of the city.<sup>58</sup> Through such activities, then, the provincial historical society encouraged the city to

make its first honest attempt to restore Fort York according to the terms of the 1909 deed transfer to Garrison Common.

The preservation, restoration, and maintenance of the pioneer cemeteries in Ontario, many of which had fallen into a delapidated state, was another cause championed by the OHS during the 'twenties and early 'thirties. At the annual meetings of 1923 and 1924 delegates like A.E. Belcher, A.F. Hunter, and James Mitchell of Goderich, a field officer for the Ontario Archives, urged the affiliated societies to pressure local authorities and to arouse public sentiment on this matter.<sup>59</sup> After efforts for reform at the local level failed, the society turned to Queen's Park for legislation of a provincial scope.<sup>60</sup> The agitation of the historical groups was a major factor in the government's decision in 1927 to introduce a Cemetery Act. When this legislation proved unsatisfactory, OHS presidents Louis Blake Duff (1928-30), the past owner-editor of the Welland Telegraph and then head of the Niagara Finance Company, and Ernest Green, F.R.S.C. (1930-31), a civil servant with the Federal Department of Trade and Commerce, again petitioned Queen's Park. They also endorsed the campaign led by the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Ontario County, Dr. T.E. Kaiser, to strengthen the Cemetery Act.<sup>61</sup> Eventually the government responded and new legislation was passed. By 1932, Dr. Kaiser was able to report that in half the counties in the province, some action had been taken to preserve the old pioneer graveyards.<sup>62</sup> It was unfortunate that the re-

trenchment programmes of the 'thirties prevented the act having full effect since the province did not press the local commissioners to enforce it strictly. In any case, the public and the government were more aware of the problem, useful legislation had been passed, and improvement was visible.

The Ontario Historical Society also co-operated with the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada in the work of erecting plaques, cairns, and monuments at sites of national historic significance. Several prominent OHS personalities were asked to join this organization. Ernest Cruikshank and James Coyne were among its original members, the former being the first chairman of the board. Fred Landon replaced Coyne in 1932 as the Ontario representative, a post he retained until 1958. In the initial task of compiling an inventory of sites and a rating scheme, the OHS assisted the board by offering its own list of sites in Ontario, while A.F. Hunter<sup>63</sup> provided a wealth of information on Huronia. Later, Hunter directed a federal official sent by the board to survey the Huron village site of St. Ignace, and on another occasion accompanied an engineer to investigate the ruins of St. Marie II on Christian Island.<sup>64</sup> The OHS also helped the board on a number of occasions by arranging the details for the public unveiling of plaques and monuments to coincide with the society's annual conference. It was perhaps fitting that the first memorial unveiled by the board in 1922 was at Port Dover to commemorate the discovery and exploration of the shores of

Lake Erie in 1669-70 by Dollier and Galinée. James Coyne himself had discovered and identified the latter's wintering place twenty years earlier and had translated the written record of that expedition for the fourth volume of the OHSR.

During the 'thirties, a lack of finances restricted the society's activities in many lines of work and bred a cautious attitude among its leaders. This was particularly unfortunate because a number of situations arose connected with the preservation of historic sites that called for a certain amount of pluck and initiative. For instance, when plans were being entertained in 1931 to remove the old Cawthra House from the corner of King and Bay Streets in Toronto, Professor A.H. Young made the point that the Ontario Historical Society, along with such groups as the Royal Canadian Institute, the York Pioneers, and the Women's Canadian Historical Society, should attempt to raise the money to purchase the home and convert it into a provincial museum. <sup>65</sup> The rest of the executive, however, gave the idea short shrift, and considered it far beyond the society's financial means. <sup>66</sup> No effort was made by the society to test the public's enthusiasm for the project. The house was demolished in due course.

Another opportunity slipped by in 1937 when the OHS refused an offer to become the occupant of the William Lyon Mackenzie House on Bond Street in Toronto. A large group of wealthy individuals including Sir William Mulock, Sir Joseph Flavelle, E.R. Wood, T. Wilbur Best, Newton Rowell, and

Leighton McCarthy, had purchased the house and were looking for a suitable tenant. The occupants would be required only to assume the costs of heating, lighting, and incidental repairs.<sup>67</sup> J. McE. Murray thought the deal an exceptional one that could bring the OHS many benefits. "If we could get behind us the influence and driving force of such men as are contributors to [the] purchase fund," he explained, "we should have what we now lack."<sup>68</sup>

Despite Murray's enthusiasm, the executive decided to turn down the offer. Charles W. Jefferys, an unrivalled authority on the pictorial side of Canadian history and an art instructor at the University of Toronto, was adamantly opposed to the idea on political grounds. He believed that anything connected with William Lyon Mackenzie was "colored by party politics" and could arouse the latent tory and loyalist biases within the OHS rank and file.

Our association with the Mackenzie House would give the impression that we were a Liberal or Reform organization ..., [wrote Jefferys]. Our membership includes all shades of political opinion, without recognizing any.... I fear that if we were to move into these quarters it would precipitate a very lively and acrimonious controversy in our membership.

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Jefferys also raised the point that the OHS could become involved in the schemes of the house's owners. "... We should avoid being entangled in any scheme in which our tenancy possibly might be used as a lever to gain further financial or other

support for a cause.... Self preservation must be our first and main consideration."<sup>70</sup> The memory of having turned down the offer must have haunted the executive a few years later when the society was evicted from its quarters in the Normal School Building during the Second World War.

Perhaps the most basic of all the OHS functions was that of co-ordinating the work of the various local historical groups and encouraging the creation of new ones. In this area of endeavour, as in others, the OHS's fortunes languished as the historical society movement remained static during the inter-war years. Andrew Hunter reported in 1923 that twenty-four locals were active;<sup>71</sup> twelve years later only twenty-two were functioning.<sup>72</sup>

One factor that accounts for this stagnation was, of course, the Depression. But even before the hard times of the 'thirties, the discontinuation in 1924 of the small government appropriations<sup>73</sup> had contributed directly to a decline of activity and enthusiasm.<sup>74</sup> "The withdrawal of the Government Grant," reported the president of the Lennox and Addington Historical Society, "has had a very serious effect on our organization."<sup>75</sup> "I think our Society would never have been formed if we had not counted on that [grant]," added a dejected spokesman for the Stratford and Perth Historical Society.<sup>76</sup>

Premier George Howard Ferguson apologized for the termination of the support, claiming that "the imperative necessity for eliminating everything to the bare cost of carrying on

business made it necessary...."<sup>77</sup> The OHS leaders realized that there were other reasons. W.H. Breithaupt admitted that "some societies received larger grants for less work. This has grown up in the course of years and this favouritism ... had much to do with the discontinuance of the grants as a whole .... The whole question required revision."<sup>78</sup>

A.F. Hunter, nevertheless, could well wonder why a reduced number of grants were not re-allocated on a merit basis and why there had been no reductions in grants to the many agricultural societies in Ontario if the government was so bent on a policy of economy.<sup>79</sup> He suspected that the government was heeding the advice of the old OHS rival Alexander Fraser. "We know," wrote Hunter to Fred Landon, "that the civil service, and particularly the Archivist Fraser, have been advocating the cancellation of the grants for two years or more ...."<sup>80</sup> Hunter could not restrain his anger when the province, so niggardly in its relations with the historical societies, authorized the Royal Ontario Museum to spend some four thousand dollars on a single piece of English armour. "I make no complaint about the development of interest in the Wars of the Roses..., " moaned Hunter,

but our own Province, our own land, is the one that should receive the \$4,000, instead of the antique dealers in England. Nobody appreciates more than I do our indebtedness to the Motherland, but when such extraordinary conditions arise it is time for us to take notice of the extraordinary things that are taking place in the expenditure of money. That is why I wish to emphasize this point of dealing with Canadian matters first.

During the 'twenties, the Ontario Historical Society did what it could to alleviate the plight of its affiliates. In 1925, for example, the executive resolved to pay any local society a twenty-five percent commission for selling volume XXII of the OHSPR.<sup>82</sup> For those local groups unable to publish material without financial assistance, the OHS printed some of their manuscripts that had general interest in the OHSPR and provided off prints for their members.<sup>83</sup> Finally, after considerable lobbying by such OHS leaders as W.H. Breithaupt and Fred Landon, the government consented in 1926 to print the researches of the half dozen locals that published on a regular basis. When A.H.U. Colquhoun, the Deputy Minister of Education, hesitated to do so unless an officer of the OHS edited the material, A.F. Hunter volunteered to undertake this work without extra compensation and to supervise its passage through the government printers.<sup>84</sup> These printing privileges lasted until 1933 at which time they became the victim of yet another government austerity programme.

The troubles that beset the historical society movement after the mid-'twenties seemed to weigh most heavily upon the overworked and underpaid secretaries of the OHS -- A.F. Hunter and J. McE. Murray. Both men grew particularly sensitive to the lack of co-operation shown on occasion by the affiliates. Often the locals failed to send in the required annual reports and ignored OHS questionnaires. In 1923-24, for instance, A.F. Hunter, in order to compile a

central catalogue of museum holdings, communicated with each affiliate that maintained a museum.<sup>85</sup> Perhaps because they had no full-time curators or because it would have proven too costly or time consuming to catalogue their holdings, not one society responded to Hunter's letter. On another occasion, J. McE. Murray sent out a special circular in 1931 asking the affiliates to furnish lists of their publications so that a general bibliography could be compiled. Only one response was received.<sup>86</sup> Murray's patience finally snapped that same year when the locals were slow in sending their annual reports. "The experience with these reports ...," Murray complained,

clearly demonstrates a lack of co-operation that the Ontario Historical Society has a right to expect from affiliated local societies. We are fighting their battle, helping them in every way we can by arranging to get their printing done gratis and giving their activities wide publicity. All we ask of them is a simple annual report from each. Surely we should not have to BEG for that!

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Other executive officers further removed from the frustrations that plagued the secretary, tried to convince Murray of the importance of the locals to the Ontario Historical Society. "While they do not give us much assistance in the way of membership or book-sales," argued Ernest Green, "they do send valuable people to our annual meeting. Also, we must not overlook the fact that twenty affiliated local societies means that there are twenty places in the province that have an interest in the well-being of the OHS."<sup>88</sup> Still,

Murray's disillusionment with the affiliates persisted and several years later he still could not "understand why so much emphasis [was] laid upon their connection."<sup>89</sup> Not surprisingly, given Murray's attitude, the ties that bound the locals to the central historical society were gradually neglected. This became evident to David Williams and James Talman who recommended in 1937 that "special efforts should be made to strengthen the relationship with the local societies."<sup>90</sup>

Circumstances, however, prevented the OHS from strengthening its relationship with the affiliates during the late 'thirties. The provincial historical organization itself was by then operating under an impending sense of doom. Each year J. McE. Murray wondered if the annual grant of one thousand dollars needed to pay his salary and the printing bills would materialize. In 1938 the situation was so critical that the secretary voluntarily reduced his salary by a half and the Papers and Records was not published that year. Cruikshank's documentary history series had already been suspended. There was little hope that revenues could be acquired from an increased membership if the OHS could no longer guarantee its members a regular series of publications. Such was the state of the Ontario Historical Society in 1939, that a mere 130 paid-up members were listed on the roster<sup>91</sup> contrasted with 326 in 1919. Secretary Murray realized that it was only the small annual government

grant that kept the OHS afloat. Should that support be terminated, he wrote, "the only course for the society would be to wind up at once...."<sup>92</sup>

### III

The unhappy experience of the Ontario Historical Society during the 1930s -- the declining membership, the straitened circumstances, and the severely curtailed programme of activities -- appears in keeping with a decade notorious for its social and economic dislocation. Certainly the leaders of the provincial historical association in this decade, faced as they were with critical financial difficulties, had little leeway within which to improve the society's performance. Still, the financial problem does not constitute a sufficient explanation for the want of any major projects apart from the documentary history series throughout the entire inter-war period. A leadership that was sometimes unimaginative and irresolute must also be weighed in any explanation of the society's generally modest accomplishments.

The conclusion is inescapable that during the 'twenties and 'thirties, the OHS leaders could have shown a great deal more initiative in fulfilling their primary responsibility of building up the membership. Granted the war, the government austerity programmes, and the Depression all bred disenchantment and defeatism; but, this cannot entirely justify the fact that between 1919 and 1929 the number of annual subscribers

remained virtually unchanged, or that between 1929 and 1939 the membership declined from 330 to 130.<sup>93</sup> There can be little doubt that had the executive arranged a series of systematic and extensive campaigns every few years, the number of names on the roster would have increased substantially. Andrew Hunter and Clarence Warner had demonstrated the effectiveness of such membership drives in 1913 when their carefully engineered canvass easily brought in over two hundred new recruits in just a few months.

Why later executives did not follow this example is a baffling question. Instead, they sent out a few circulars each year which sufficed, at least before the Depression, to bring in enough new members to maintain the status quo. Ironically, it was Andrew Hunter himself, previously a proponent of the large-scale membership drives, who discouraged the executive from undertaking similar efforts. In 1923 he argued that

there may not be more than four or five actual workers in every county, that is to say, people who are producing literary work for the press on historical subjects. Therefore, two hundred or three hundred members ... would be as much as this society could expect to receive.

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Hunter was talking nonsense for his own successful campaign ten years earlier had pushed the membership over the four hundred mark. Possibly he was deliberately trying to avoid the labour involved in such a canvass. It might be said in

the secretary's defense that he was already overworked with editorial duties, library responsibilities, and general office routine that would have taxed the energies of several full-time employees. All the same, he did the OHS a disservice by discouraging those who suggested that the membership could be larger.

The failure to augment the membership was but one of many opportunities lost by the OHS leaders during the inter-war years. By examining the programmes of some of the American state historical associations in this period, it can be shown that the OHS could have undertaken many other kinds of activities despite its financial difficulties and limited enrolment. To compare the programmes of the American groups with that of the OHS is a valid exercise considering that the historical society movement was a North American phenomenon, and that the OHS itself had originally been conceived in the light of the American example. Prior to the Great War, the OHS spokesmen borrowed heavily from the ideas and practices of the American historical groups. After 1918, however, they seemed to ignore the many public education programmes organized by historical associations south of the border. The disinterest in things American could well have been a manifestation of a general Canadian trend to resist the "onrush of American mass culture" between the Peace of 1918 and the Depression.<sup>95</sup> Whatever the cause, it was evident that the Americans could have taught the OHS much about methods of

popularizing provincial and local history.

The American societies, for example, became quite skilful in using the press to generate interest in local history. Various state historical associations issued monthly press bulletins, and over a period of time supplied hundreds of newspapers with historical articles and news items that were extensively reprinted.<sup>96</sup> In Missouri, a newsletter to local editors entitled "This Week in Missouri History" proved to be an effective means for creating an interest in the history of the state. The Historical Society of Iowa furnished newspapers through the Associated Press with a series entitled "Stories Out of Iowa's Past" and it took advantage of the "Ask Me Another" vogue to supply the press with questions and answers on Iowa history. In many states, newspapers were encouraged to draw upon historical society materials and personnel for feature stories.

In Ontario during the same period, the provincial historical society sometimes failed to ensure that the annual meeting received adequate press coverage. "I may be inclined to over-emphasize the importance of the matter," commented the editor of the Woodstock Daily Sentinel Review in 1932,

but nevertheless I offer the opinion that the item of publicity should be given some consideration when the council decides upon the place of meeting each year. That is, if a good attendance and an increase of interest on the part of the general public are of any consequence .... Nothing is done in this respect.

The executive at this time were aware of their neglect in publicizing the society's activities. At the annual meeting in 1924 the following resolution was passed: "It is the sense of this meeting that the work for which we stand should be much better known, and as it is evident that interest in Canadian history is considerably on the increase, advantage of this fact should be taken by the adoption of a more active policy in publicity, such as the appointment of a small committee for this purpose."<sup>98</sup> For some reason, the new executive ignored this resolution.

Over a decade later, in 1936, David Williams, the Collingwood journalist, Louis Blake Duff, the ex-newspaperman from Welland, and Fred Landon of the University of Western Ontario, attempted to rectify the inadequate liaison with the press. They devised plans based on a successful project in New York State, this is, to make an annual award to the weekly newspaper in the province that made the most valuable contribution to local history by publishing articles dealing with the history of its own locality.<sup>99</sup> Arrangements were made with the editor of the Bulletin of the Weekly Newspaper Association for an advertisement giving full particulars about the contest, and inviting the submission of candidates for the award. Unfortunately the notice brought only one response.<sup>100</sup> Discouraged by this initial setback, the executive discontinued this potentially valuable project instead of pursuing the matter knowing that the contest had worked elsewhere.

In addition to the press, the American societies used the new medium of radio to reach a larger audience. Historical broadcasts were heard in school assemblies throughout a number of states. In Iowa, a notable series of radio talks was given annually in connection with "Iowa History Week," while in Minnesota, one series of some twenty historical broadcasts was given wide acclaim.<sup>101</sup> The subject of radio programmes was broached at the annual conference of the Ontario Historical Society in 1931 by broadcasting personality, Merrill Denison, who argued that "radio can be not only an aid in the teaching of history, but one of the greatest aids."<sup>102</sup> One delegate, upon hearing Denison's talk, frankly admitted that "it is a subject to which I have never given any attention prior to this."<sup>103</sup> The other members sat in stoney silence which forced President Ernest Green to apologize:

Mr. Denison, I feel that the reluctance of the audience to discuss this subject is not due to any lack of keen appreciation, but to the fact that it is such a new subject, and such a big subject, and you have presented it to us in such a wealth of detail and variety of points of view that it is a little too big to grasp on short notice.

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Presumably the subject was also too big to grasp in the long run since the society made no subsequent attempt to exploit this medium of communication.

Closely related to the use of radio talks was the motion picture. Realizing the value of such visual aids for

popularizing history, some industrious American historical associations launched into film projects. Others installed archives for motion pictures or sponsored the exhibition of films in local communities. One ambitious group organized and filmed a large-scale historical pageant and widely distributed the result.<sup>105</sup> In Ontario, however, the financially starved provincial historical society dared not think of implementing such exciting though expensive schemes.

American state historical societies were also busily engaged in another kind of activity related to the visual reconstruction of the past -- museum work. The Indiana association, for instance, looked upon the establishment of local historical museums as one of its main objectives, while in Minnesota, the state historical group nurtured interest in local history by employing travelling museum exhibits.<sup>106</sup> The Ontario Historical Society acknowledged that it had a similar duty in the museum field but failed to meet its responsibilities. Two separate attempts to compile a catalogue of museum holdings, one in 1923 and the other over a decade later,<sup>107</sup> were suspended when little enthusiasm for the project was registered among the affiliates.

According to a Carnegie Foundation study of museums in Canada published in 1932, fifteen of the twenty-three local historical societies affiliated with the OHS operated a museum.<sup>108</sup> These ranged in size from one room in a public library to a separate memorial hall as in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Several OHS leaders recognized that there was scope for the provincial historical society in guiding and co-ordinating the local museums. In 1930 the executive agreed to organize a conference of museum curators at the annual meeting planned for the following year.<sup>109</sup> But, Andrew Hunter's sudden illness and retirement threw the society's plans into disarray, and the idea of a curators' conference was lost in the confusion. Several years later in 1934, and again in 1935, a lone member urged the society to take more interest in the museum field.<sup>110</sup> His appeals went unheeded and no action resulted.

Although financial difficulties provided a valid excuse for much inactivity, there is little question in this case that the OHS could have provided valuable services to the museums without much expense or difficulty. None of the local museums had professional curators and all had to rely on inexperienced voluntary, and part-time help. The findings of the Carnegie library study revealed how inadequate that assistance was:

Few objects are exhibited with a definite purpose behind them; overcrowding and reduplication are common; direction notices, instructive labels, guides, and handbooks are conspicuous by their almost entire absence; and last, but not least, it is made as difficult as possible for any one to find the museum, and when found, to be able to see it as it should be seen. Paralytic modesty is a common museum disease....

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Obviously the amateur curators could have profited from even

the most basic instruction in methods of exhibition and principles of museology. The OHS might have provided that instruction by drawing upon the services of museologists from such as the Royal Ontario Museum. It was not until after the Second World War, however, that the OHS began to provide workshops for the amateur curators of the local museums.

In yet another familiar line of work -- the promotion of provincial and local history in the schools -- the OHS might have looked to the American example. In addition to films, radio programmes, pageants, and the usual publications, some state historical societies assisted teachers by preparing guides, outlines, textbooks, and special volumes of readings.<sup>112</sup> Regrettably, few of these activities can be found in the Ontario record.<sup>113</sup>

It would be misleading to leave the impression that the Ontario Historical Society failed to make any contribution to the study of local history in the schools and universities. Actually it did, mainly by virtue of its lengthy publications list which provided both student and teacher with a wealth of primary and secondary material and interpretations. It is also worthy of note that OHS member Duncan McArthur, who left his post as professor of history at Queen's University in 1934 to become Deputy Minister of Education, arranged in 1937-38 for the introduction of new history courses into the elementary schools that stressed the heritage of the local community and emphasized the importance of linking past with present.<sup>114</sup> The OHS deserves recognition for helping to

create the climate conducive to the acceptance of such courses in the educational system.

#### IV

It was the OHS's misfortune that during the depression decade, when its leaders did devise a number of excellent projects which had the potential for enhancing the society's effectiveness, hard times combined with a continuous turnover in the executive to frustrate most of these efforts. Ernest Green was the first to attempt a widening of the society's usefulness in the face of the Depression. "We have been doing magnificent work in publications," he observed in 1929, "but that is the extent of our members' activity."<sup>115</sup> Aware that the growing number of family reunions and genealogical groups had "a bearing on the vital problems of [the] Society," Green proposed to encourage these organizations to join the OHS.

Initially, he distributed a circular letter to the officers of some forty known family organizations. The circular urged these family groups to collect and preserve historical documents and records of every kind, to assist in the movement for the restoration of old cemeteries, to undertake the compilation of genealogies, and to form themselves into local historical associations affiliated with the OHS.<sup>116</sup> The response to the circular (about a dozen replies, two of which included family genealogies) cheered A.F. Hunter who

felt that it "yielded sufficient information to indicate that the Society might be useful in this line of activity."<sup>117</sup>

Hunter was further encouraged by his firsthand knowledge that the majority of his library's users were genealogical researchers.

Despite this favourable beginning, Green's effort to attract the interest of the genealogical associations went unfinished since he resigned from the presidency after only one year of a traditional two-year term. Green found that his new post as Investigator of Foreign Tariffs in the Department of Trade and Commerce required all of his energies. At this same time the society's affairs were also disrupted by the illness of Secretary Hunter. After overcoming the difficulties of losing these two officers, the executive turned to new projects, preferring to start afresh and to ignore the family unions as possible allies in historical endeavour. Consequently, not one genealogical group joined the OHS.

Trinity College's A.H. Young, who succeeded Green as president in 1931, proved to be an exceptionally capable leader. Well-known and respected in official educational circles by such people as A.H.U. Colquhoun, the Deputy Minister of Education, Young was able to persuade Queen's Park to grant the provincial historical society special appropriations (a thousand dollars in 1931 and two thousand dollars in 1932) so that it could discharge most of its out-

standing obligations.<sup>118</sup> This represented a dramatic improvement in the society's relationship with the Department of Education. Over the years, Colquhoun's support for the OHS had soured because of a personality clash with Andrew Hunter. The latter had been most indiscreet in criticizing the Deputy Minister for the government's tardiness in publishing the society's periodical.<sup>119</sup>

The financial relief afforded in the early 'thirties proved to be short-lived, however, as the provincial government, harassed by the Depression, terminated the practice of printing OHS publications. Premier George Henry advised the OHS to defer its work to more propitious times.<sup>120</sup> It was to Young's credit that he ignored this suggestion and determined instead to proceed with his plans for a full programme of activities for 1934. That year was the occasion of the centennial of Toronto's incorporation, the 150th anniversary of the loyalist arrival, and the 400th anniversary of Jacques Cartier's first voyage to Canada. The highlight of the OHS celebrations was a series of six well-attended public lectures at Trinity College. The speakers were notable professional and amateur historians: A.H. Young and T.A. Reed, a leading authority on the history of Toronto and co-author of Our Royal Town of York (1929), spoke on aspects of Toronto's past; Professors Chester Martin and George Wrong of the University of Toronto and George Locke of the Toronto Public Library, lectured on the loyalists; and the Hon. Louis Côté prepared

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a paper on Jacques Cartier. In other ways, Professor Young gave freely of his time in 1934 to ensure the proper commemoration of the various anniversaries. He spoke out strongly for the reconstruction of Fort York as a Toronto centennial project, and co-operated with the Canadian and Empire Clubs to hold a joint Empire Day banquet in honour of the loyalist settlement.

Young's most notable attempt to revitalize the society was of a constitutional nature. With the assistance of J. McE. Murray, George Locke, and Charles W. Jefferys, Young sought to broaden the society's base and to bring it into closer liaison with other historical agencies like the Ontario Archives, the departments of history and political economy in the universities, the Royal Ontario Museum, and any other organizations with a historical bent. In short, the constitutional changes were offered as a means of bringing together through the medium of the OHS the many disparate and isolated agencies at work on the history of the province. 122

To attain this end, Young created a new and enlarged council while retaining a small executive committee of nine to look after the finances, publications, and general business of the society. The new council was to consist of the members of the executive committee, all past presidents of the OHS, and representatives of the local historical groups, the departments of history and political economy in the universities and colleges, the Ontario Archives, the Royal Ontario Museum,

and the new class of corporate member societies. Corporate membership was to be granted on payment of an annual fee to any organization interested in the study of any part of Ontario's past. According to the constitution, the object of the council was to "devise means for co-operating in the finding, collecting, and making available historical material and, generally, for furthering the cause of the history of the Province of Ontario."<sup>123</sup> The first meeting of the new council in November 1933 attracted delegates of the local historical associations, professional historians like Chester Martin of Toronto University, Father Morriveau of the University of Ottawa, and Professor Duncan McArthur of Queen's, and Professor W.F.M. Hart, a representative of both the Ontario Agricultural College and the Royal Ontario Museum. These individuals set up two committees of council to pursue projects of joint interest to the various organizations represented at the meeting. The first committee had the responsibility of co-operating with the Institute of Historical Research of the University of London, England in preparing a Dictionary of British Empire Place Names. A second committee was appointed to conduct a survey of the province to compile a record of all existing historical and museum material.<sup>124</sup>

Young's success in bringing together the diverse groups through the OHS was duplicated at the annual conference of 1933 where scholars from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines presented papers. Professor H.A. Innis, a politic-

al economist at the University of Toronto, gave an "Introduction to the Economic History of Ontario," Professor Hart of the Ontario Agricultural College examined the "History, Purpose and Development of Community Halls in Rural Communities," Fred Landon of the University of Western Ontario lectured on "Agricultural Journals in Upper Canada and Ontario," and James Talman of the Ontario Archives examined the "History of the Teaching of Agriculture in the Colleges and Schools of Ontario."<sup>125</sup>

Unfortunately, after Young's death, the OHS's attempt to unite through the council the various agencies at work on the history of the province came to an end. The new council met only twice in its first fourteen years apparently because there were few substantial matters to bring before it.<sup>126</sup> The two committees of council named at the first meeting accomplished nothing. The one appointed to assist in the compilation of the projected Dictionary of British Place Names was informed by the Institute of Historical Research that the scheme had been terminated owing to a lack of finances.<sup>127</sup> As for the committee named to make a survey of the museums, illness among the members and a declining interest as time passed account for its lack of results. Meanwhile, no other committees of council were appointed. By 1936, the participation of the university community in the OHS had lapsed markedly. Apart from a few stalwarts like Fred Landon and James Talman, and later George Spragge, there were fewer instances of involvement

by professional historians in the administration or activities of the historical society.

A.H. Young's passing had another adverse effect. Following the success of the Trinity lecture series in 1934, Young had begun to plan another series of lectures in Toronto for the following year which he intended to repeat at outside centres if local groups made the necessary arrangements.<sup>128</sup> This project was only in the planning stage when Young died and none of the other OHS leaders came forward to complete it. In defense of Young's successors -- George F. Macdonald (1933-37), a Windsor merchant, and David Williams (1935-37) of Collingwood -- it can be said that they had few personal contacts in the academic community and would have found it difficult to arrange for the calibre of speakers that participated in the 1934 programme. Even so, they might have worked through individuals like Fred Landon and James Talman to set up the second lecture series.

Although a constantly changing executive made it difficult to implement long-term policies, the turnover had at least one beneficial result; it permitted new and enthusiastic officers to assume leadership. One such was James Talman who was to direct the society for a three-year term (1937-40) and play a crucial role in its survival and resurrection during and after the Second World War. Talman, who rose quickly through the ranks to become vice-president in 1935, brought a healthy attitude to the demoralized executive.

"I think that if the society will get busy on some constructive work," he confided to Secretary Murray, "our problems of declining interest will be eliminated."<sup>129</sup> Talman, along with such officers as David Williams, Louis Blake Duff, Percy Robinson, and C.W. Jefferys, made yet another effort after 1935 to enhance the society's usefulness and sense of purpose. The most important aspect of their administration was not so much the number of actual achievements, as the fact that they continued to bring forward innovative ideas.

One of the imaginative projects contrived by this group was that of encouraging the many local fairs in Ontario to make an annual feature of exhibiting material of distinctive local relevance. In February 1937, David Williams addressed the annual convention of the Provincial Fairs Association on this matter. Circulars were then distributed to the district directors of the association, and OHS members offered to cooperate with the local agricultural societies and Women's Institutes to establish the exhibits.<sup>130</sup> As a consequence, numerous fairs across the province began in 1937 to advertize the heritage of their regions.

Efforts were also made to enthuse the existing membership and to attract new recruits in the mid-thirties by holding joint annual meetings in 1936 and 1938 with American historical associations in states contiguous to Ontario. The annual conference of 1936 was held on both sides of the Niagara frontier in conjunction with the New York State Historical Association.

Two years later a similar conference was arranged in the Detroit-Windsor area with the Detroit Historical Society and the Michigan Historical Commission. The Niagara meeting turned out to be a distinct success, with over a hundred Ontario delegates in attendance.<sup>131</sup> But, distance and place frustrated the efforts of Windsor's George Macdonald to make the 1938 conference a memorable one; only forty members attended that meeting.<sup>132</sup> This was a great disappointment for the executive who had hoped that the joint conference with the Michigan people would erase the memory of the equally poor attendance (thirty-seven members registered) at the Ottawa meeting the year before.<sup>133</sup>

One noteworthy project investigated by the Talman administration involved working with the Department of Highways to create a historical guide for the tourist industry. In 1938 the executive met with the Ontario Minister of Highways, T.B. McQuesten, and offered to co-operate in the preparation of a booklet "on the lines of 'Historic Nova Scotia'" for the use of motorists.<sup>134</sup> This project interested McQuesten and might have proved useful in popularizing history had the priorities of the Second World War not prevented its implementation.

Although there were encouraging signs of vitality in the Ontario Historical Society in the late 'thirties, the organization was in a very frail condition. It seemed to stagger along, subsisting on a paltry grant of one thousand

dollars. The secretary was on half salary and his work suffered as a consequence. Publication sales were low. Cruikshank's documentary history series had been terminated, and because of a lack of finances in 1935 and 1938, the periodical was not issued in those years. Naturally, without the publications, fewer people responded to the membership circulars and the numbers on the rolls continued to decline. As the Depression dragged on members could ill afford, or were simply unwilling, to attend the annual conferences. Weakened by all these difficulties, the OHS was suddenly confronted with the crippling effects of the Second World War. The circumstances of this conflict were shortly destined to drive the provincial historical society to the very brink of dissolution.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>  
OHSa, A.H.U. Colquhoun to A.F. Hunter, November 28, 1914. See also Annual Report OHS 1915, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup>  
Annual Report OHS 1917, p. 21. During the first three years of the war only thirty-seven new members joined the OHS, while seventy either died or allowed their membership to lapse.

<sup>3</sup>  
Ibid., 1919, p. 30

<sup>4</sup>  
OHSa, Hunter to the secretary of the Speakers' Patriotic League, March 7, 1916; Hunter to Lieutenant-Colonel J. Galloway, secretary of the Recruiting League, March 9, 1916.

<sup>5</sup>  
Annual Report OHS 1919, p. 12.

<sup>6</sup>  
George P. de T. Glazebrook, Sir Edmund Walker (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), chapter six.

<sup>7</sup>  
Annual Report OHS 1915, p. 98.

<sup>8</sup>  
Ibid., 1917, p. 54.

<sup>9</sup>  
Stella M. Cook, "Seventy Years of History, 1895-1965," Women's Canadian Historical Society of Toronto, Transaction No. 29 (Toronto, 1970), p. 17.

<sup>10</sup>  
Annual Report OHS 1916, p. 60.

<sup>11</sup>  
Ibid., 1918, p. 38.

<sup>12</sup>  
Ibid., 1915, p. 84.

<sup>13</sup>  
Ibid., p. 31.

- 14  
Ibid., 1918, p. 29.
- 15  
Ibid., 1919, p. 41.
- 16  
York Pioneer and H.S. Archives, minute book, June 4,  
July 2, 1918.
- 17  
OHSa, Carnochan to Hunter, June 4, 1918.
- 18  
OHSa, Warner to Hunter, December 22, 1916.
- 19  
The combined figures for membership fees and sales  
of publications dropped from \$502 in 1913-14 to \$215 in 1918-  
19.
- 20  
Annual Report OHS 1917, p. 20.
- 21  
UT, Sir Edmund Walker papers, Walker to C.M. Warner,  
July 7, 1916.
- 22  
TPL, OFPA papers, Engineer's Report, H.W. Middlemist  
to the chairman of the Ontario Railway and Municipal Board,  
May 2, 1916.
- 23  
Annual Report OHS 1916, pp. 14-17 and p. 20.
- 24  
OHSa, Hunter to Landon, May 26, 1919.
- 25  
OHSa, Belcher to Hunter, June 10, 1918.
- 26  
OHSa, Hunter to Fred Landon, May 26, 1919.
- 27  
Annual Report OHS 1919, p. 18. OHSa, scrapbook,  
clipping of Toronto Mail and Empire, June 18, 1919.
- 28  
OA, NHS records, Ms 193, reel 6, Pattullo to  
Carnochan, March 24, 1919.

- 29 OHSa, submission to OHS council, June 24, 1919.
- 30 OA, NHS records, Ms 193, reel 6, Pattullo to Janet Carnochan, June 2, 1919.
- 31 OA, Belcher papers, Carstairs to Belcher, June 25, 1919.
- 32 OHSa, minute book, October 12, 1918 and March 15, 1919.
- 33 OHSa, Hunter to Carstairs, July 23, 1919.
- 34 Ibid. See also submission to OHS council, June 24, 1919.
- 35 OHSa, Hunter to Carstairs, July 23, 1919.
- 36 OHSa, Hunter to Grant, May 4, 1920.
- 37 Annual Report OHS 1920, p. 12.
- 38 Ibid., p. 13.
- 39 OHSa, Cruikshank to Hunter, confidential, November 13, 1920. Interestingly, E.C. Drury's United Farmers' administration proved to be no more or less receptive to OHS requests than previous governments. The stable relationship with changing governments was likely facilitated by the presence of A.H.U. Colquhoun, the Deputy Minister of Education from 1906 to 1934.
- 40 Hunter helped edit both the Simcoe and Russell collections. See Annual Report OHS 1923, p. 26 for a description by Cruikshank of the amount of work assumed by Hunter. This included proof reading each volume three times, preparing the indexes, and supplying information on occasion.
- 41 OHSa, minute book, September 5, 1935.

- 42  
OHSa, Ferguson to Breithaupt, February 13, 1925.
- 43  
Two thousand copies of each volume of the Simcoe Papers were printed.
- 44  
OHSa, Hunter to Cruikshank, January 28, 1921. Hunter wrote: "Someone calls or writes almost daily to consult us or the collection on some historical point, and the enquiries are seldom by the members of the Society; it is the general public we are serving in this particular."
- 45  
Annual Report OHS 1921, p. 26.
- 46  
Ibid., 1928, p. 25.
- 47  
OHSa, minute book, May 21, 1931. Murray was chosen from a dozen candidates who responded to an OHS advertizement in the Toronto press.
- 48  
OHSa, Murray to H.A.G. Willoughby, January 20, 1932.
- 49  
OHSa, report to council, September 5, 1935.
- 50  
OHSa, minute book, March 7, 1936.
- 51  
OHSa, Progress Report of the Toronto Centennial Committee, 1934, approved by Board of Control October 25, 1935.
- 52  
OHSa, OHS circular entitled "Restoration of Old Fort York," n.d. (circa 1933).
- 53  
OHSa, Hunter to Fred Landon, April 22, 1927.
- 54  
OHSa, Hunter to C.E. Chambers, parks commissioner, April 14, 1930; Chambers to Hunter, April 14, 1930.
- 55  
Oa, M.O. Hammond papers, Hammond to J.B. Harkin, September 4, 1931.

- 56  
OHSA, Progress Report of the Toronto Centennial Committee, 1934, approved by Board of Control October 25, 1935.
- 57  
"Annual Report for 1932," OHSPR, Vol. XXIX (1933), p. 174, and ibid., Vol. XXX (1934), p. 264.
- 58  
OHSA, "Fund for Model of Fort York: Statement of Receipts and Expenditures," n.d.
- 59  
Annual Report OHS 1923, p. 28
- 60  
OHSA, scrapbook, clipping of Toronto Globe, July 4, 1925.
- 61  
Ernest Green, "Report Respecting the Old Pioneer Cemeteries," Annual Report OHS 1931, p. 54.
- 62  
OHSA, minute book, June 23, 1933.
- 63  
Annual Report OHS 1922, p. 19. OHSA, Hunter to Cruikshank, October 31, 1919.
- 64  
OHSA, Hunter to J.B. Harkin, December 15, 1921 and August 7, 1923.
- 65  
Annual Report OHS 1931, p. 47.
- 66  
OHSA, minute book, July 17, 1931.
- 67  
OHSA, Murray to D. Williams, November 18, 1937.
- 68  
Ibid.
- 69  
OHSA, Jefferys to Murray, November 24, 1937.
- 70  
Ibid.

- 71  
OHSa, list of local affiliates in Hunter to W.O. Carson; Inspector of Public Libraries, Ont. Dept. of Education, April 17, 1923.
- 72  
Annual Report OHS 1931, p. 25. OHSa, list of local historical societies 1935. It is worth noting that a rapid turnover occurred in the historical society movement. Only fifteen of the twenty-four local groups that existed in 1901 were active in 1930.
- 73  
These grants ranged between a hundred to three hundred dollars.
- 74  
Annual Report OHS 1928, p. 8. "Five or six years ago," wrote Hunter, "we could say that some 24 local societies were active. Now I think only about 17 or 18 are really active. There has been a decline since their grants were cut off four years ago...."
- 75  
Ibid., p. 42.
- 76  
Ibid., 1924, p. 35.
- 77  
OHSa, Ferguson to Hunter, November 11, 1924.
- 78  
Annual Report OHS 1925, p. 10.
- 79  
OHSa, Hunter to John King, president of the Thunder Bay Historical Society, January 29, 1925.
- 80  
OHSa, Hunter to Landon, July 8, 1924.
- 81  
Annual Report OHS 1929, p. 7.
- 82  
Ibid., 1925, p. 27.
- 83  
OHSa, Hunter to Mrs. M.L. Rush, November 27, 1924.

84 OHSA, Hunter to Colquhoun, January 27, 1926.

85 Annual Report OHS 1930, p. 28.

86 OHSA, report of the secretary for 1932, n.d.

87 Ibid.

88 OHSA, Green to Murray, June 18, 1931.

89 OHSA, Murray to Green, March 22, 1933.

90 "Report of the Thirty-Ninth Annual Meeting," OHSPR, Vol. XXXII (1937), p. 212.

91 Reports of Annual Meetings 1939 and 1940 (n.p. n.d.) p. 4. This figure is based on the fees received by the end of the fiscal year in 1939.

92 OHSA, Murray to David Williams, January 3, 1936.

Date	No. of members
1914	414
1919	326
1924	217
1929	330
1934	273
1939	130

All figures refer to the number of paid-up annual subscribers. The figure of 130 members for 1939 is a rough estimation based on the fees received that year of \$261.

94 Annual Report OHS 1923, p. 14.

95 John C. Weaver, "Canadians Confront American Mass Culture, 1918-1930," a paper read to the Annual Meeting of the CHA, Montreal, June 1972. See also Annual Report OHS 1928, p. 18. Referring to the threat posed by American culture, Louis Blake Duff said: "I would like to call the attention of the delegates to the fact that 80 million copies of printed

matter come into Canada every year from foreign soil. It is time that someone should stand up for things Canadian, and the Ontario Historical Society has a duty in that respect."

96

Theodore C. Blegen, "State Historical Agencies and the Public," Minnesota History, Vol. IX (1928), pp. 126-27. Iowa began this practice in 1911, Wisconsin in 1914, and Minnesota in 1921.

97

OHSA, Editor of Woodstock Daily Sentinel Review to J. McE. Murray, June 24, 1932.

98

Annual Report OHS 1924, p. 27.

99

"Report of the Thirty-Eighth Annual Meeting," OHSPR, Vol. XXXII (1937), p. 211.

100

OHSA, McE. Murray to David Williams, January 6, 1937.

101

Blegen, op. cit., p. 129.

102

Merrill Denison, "Radio in the Teaching of History," OHSPR, Vol. XXVIII (1932), p. 15.

103

Annual Report OHS 1931, p. 28.

104

Ibid.

105

Blegen, op. cit., p. 129.

106

Ibid., p. 128. The museum programmes of these state historical associations were cited as examples of the best of their kind by the author of this article.

107

Annual Report OHS 1933, p. 27. OHSA, minute book, November 27, 1933.

108

Sir Henry A. Miers and S.F. Markham, A Report of the Museums of Canada (Edinburgh: T. and A. Constable Ltd., 1932), p. 34.

- 109  
Annual Report OHS 1930, p. 28 and p. 39.
- 110  
"Report of the Thirty-Sixth Annual Meeting," OHSR, Vol. XXX (1934), p. 299 and "Report of the Thirty-Seventh Annual Meeting," ibid., Vol. XXXI (1936), p. 243.
- 111  
Miers and Markham, op. cit., p. 39.
- 112  
Blegen, op. cit., p. 131.
- 113  
The OHS did pass resolutions urging that its publications be placed in the secondary schools. See Annual Report OHS 1928, p. 13.
- 114  
"Report of the Fortieth Annual Meeting," OHSR, Vol. XXXIII (1939), p. 150.
- 115  
Annual Report OHS 1929, p. 18.
- 116  
OHSR, see copy of circular November 28, 1929.
- 117  
Annual Report OHS 1930, p. 35.
- 118  
OHSR, Vol. XXIX (1933), p. 173. See also OHSR, Colquhoun to Young, July 29, 1932.
- 119  
OHSR, Colquhoun to Young, May 19, July 13, 1931; Young to Colquhoun, July 14, 1931; OHS memorandum to the Premier of Ontario, June 4, 1931.
- 120  
OHSR, minute book, March 13, 1937.
- 121  
Most of the papers were published in OHSR, Vol. XXX (1934).
- 122  
OHSR, Murray to Cruikshank, April 18, 1933.

- 123 OHSA, see constitution of the OHS, revised 1933.
- 124 OHSA, minute book, council meeting, November 27, 1933.
- 125 OHSA, typewritten record of the annual meeting June 21-23, 1933.
- 126 OHSA, minute book, April 28, 1935.
- 127 OHSA, G. Parsloe, secretary of the Institute of Historical Research to OHS, May 12, 1938.
- 128 OHSA, minute book, December 3, 1934.
- 129 OHSA, Talman to Murray, May 9, 1935.
- 130 OHSA, Murray to J.A. Carroll, superintendent of Fall Fairs, December 13, 1936; see also circular n.d. (circa February 1937).
- 131 "Report of the Thirty-Eighth Annual Meeting," OHSR, Vol. XXXII (1937), p. 203.
- 132 "Report of the Fortieth Annual Meeting," ibid., Vol., XXXIII (1939), p. 144.
- 133 "Report of the Thirty-Ninth Annual Meeting," ibid., Vol. XXXII (1937), p. 212.
- 134 OHSA, Murray to McQuesten, September 23, 1938; McQuesten to Murray, October 12, 1938. The executive met with McQuesten on October 12, 1938.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### "TO THE VERY EDGE OF THE PRECIPICE" AND BACK

The crisis may not be entirely a misfortune. Sometimes individuals and organizations need to be pushed to the very edge of the precipice before they can be roused to requisite action. (C.W. Jefferys, July 18, 1941).

1

The effect of the Second World War on the provincial historical society was even more devastating than that of the first. Indeed, the OHS came close to the point of disintegration in the frustrating years of the early 'forties. The credit for its survival belongs for the most part to a handful of stubborn individuals who refused to accept the conclusion reached by some members that their historical association had outlived its usefulness.

The main impact of the war came suddenly and unceremoniously in July 1941 when the executive officers read in the Toronto press that the Normal School Building, the society's home, had been given over to the military authorities as an Air Force training centre and that all residents of the building were to be evicted. Informed by the Department of Education that no alternative quarters were available, OHS Vice-President Charles W. Jefferys and Secretary J. McE. Murray were fortunate to solicit free temporary office and storage accommodation in a building owned by the Ontario Hydro Commission on Elm Street

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in Toronto. These quarters provided only a short respite;

in February 1944 Hydro asked the society to vacate the property. From this time until 1947 when the Department of Education provided office space once again, the OHS had no rooms to call its own.

There was a string of adverse effects related to the loss of the permanent office which helped push the Ontario Historical Society "to the very edge of the precipice." Following the notice of eviction from the Normal School, the executive decided to destroy a thousand sets of the Simcoe Papers in order to save the cost of storage. "In the emergency," wrote C.W. Jefferys,

I took it upon myself to move a resolution which passed unanimously to clear out 1000 sets of the Simcoe Papers and have them chopped up for pulp.... It will still leave on our hands an ample supply for all future generations. I hope General Cruikshank and Mr. Hunter will not turn in their graves; but the idea of an edition of 2000 was absurdly extravagant at the outset, even though the Government paid the bill, and we now have an elephant on our hands which will eat more storage hay than we can afford. I am prepared to urge further eliminations of the same kind with regard to some of our other publications and to be ruthless with regard to the library.

3

There was little question that the crisis situation required decisive leadership. Still, the haste with which Jefferys passed sentence on the Simcoe Papers raises a number of questions. Could the books not have been used as gifts to attract new members or to retain the membership that was slowly declining? Could they not have been deposited in the offices of the Department of Education (whether Queen's Park

appreciated this gesture or not) for free dispersal to the history teachers and students of the secondary schools and universities? To say the least Jefferys' decision to shred the volumes was a controversial one. Fortunately his appetite to eliminate the surplus of past OHS publications was satiated after this initial foray into the stock rooms and he resigned himself to paying the storage costs on the remainder.

The second major effect of the eviction from the permanent office was the closing down of the society's library. Many of the books were packed away after the move from the Normal School, while others were sold.<sup>4</sup> In this case, Jefferys' decision to dispose of some of the society's literary assets seems to have been a wise one. He explained:

[J.McE.] Murray has looked up the joint comparative catalogue prepared by the University, the Legislature and the Public Libraries and finds that many of our items are on the shelves. These, or some of them, could be disposed of to dealers in Canadiana ... and the cash, however little, would be of more use to us than the books. Other books on the shelves have no relation whatever to the work of the Society and should also be disposed of.

5

Although a small portion of the collection was sold at this time, the bulk of the library remained inaccessible to the public until it was purchased by McMaster University in 1972.<sup>6</sup> As the time factor suggests, this decision did not come easily and before it was made, required almost three decades of hand-

wringing and soul-searching on the part of many executives.

Sharp cuts in income received from sales of publications and from membership renewals also accompanied the closing of the permanent office. With the society's stock of books locked in storage, the secretary was unable to fill many of the orders for past publications; consequently, in the fiscal year ending in May 1942, he was able to report only the sale of some \$13.50 worth of publications.<sup>7</sup> This astonishingly small figure also reflected the effects of a two year hiatus (1940-41) in the printing of the OHSPR because of both financial retrenchment and wartime shortages. The lack of annual publications in the early 'forties also contributed to a falling off in the membership which, as indicated earlier, had been declining through the previous decade. Understandably, many subscribers, be they individuals or libraries, preferred to pay their annual dues on receipt of the OHSPR. Based on the treasurer's statement of dues received, the paid-up membership in 1941 slid to thirty-eight. The number of names on the roll recovered, however, after the OHSPR reappeared in the following year. Just over a hundred<sup>8</sup> members were listed in 1943 as having paid their fees.

With the library stored away, few publications to edit, a tiny mailing list, and only one executive meeting between October 1942 and May 1944,<sup>9</sup> the scope of Secretary Murray's job narrowed markedly. As his work load decreased, his

salary was reduced to \$250 annually,<sup>10</sup> a mere fraction of the salary of a thousand dollars he once laboured hard to receive. Little wonder that the aging Murray grew weary and disheartened with the business of the OHS. In February 1942 he informed the members of the executive committee: "My personal judgment is that the Society has outlived its usefulness.... If the conditions cannot be improved, only one course is ... open to the Society: to surrender its charter...."<sup>11</sup> Murray based his opinion on the fact that except for its publications, the OHS no longer met any of the objectives listed in its charter and constitution. It had failed to provide a provincial library, an archives, a museum, and a historical portrait gallery. Even the functions of uniting the various local affiliates and co-ordinating their work had for many years been poorly served. At that time only a half dozen or so local historical societies bothered to send in an annual report.

Although the executive recognized that the OHS was in a precarious position,<sup>12</sup> they unanimously rejected Murray's conclusion that the society should be disbanded. A questionnaire sent to leading members of the society in 1942 revealed a consensus that the OHS "should make every effort to carry on, even though the war situation might compel a further curtailment of activities."<sup>13</sup>

Nevertheless, Murray's pessimism deepened when the society was forced to vacate the temporary quarters in the

Hydro building a year later. Once again he reiterated his belief that the OHS should turn over its charter to the Department of Education. This announcement shocked and annoyed several of the more determined members such as James Talman and Fred Landon who wrote to President C.W. Jefferys: "This letter has disturbed both of us for it appears to be as clear a statement of a defeatist attitude as we have ever seen. Surely Murray should resign if he feels that the society should fold up."<sup>14</sup> Talman was aware, however, that the society owed Murray a debt of gratitude for his past services,<sup>15</sup> and was not eager to demand his resignation. Luckily the executive was spared this embarrassment when Murray relinquished the secretaryship for reasons of health in the spring of 1944. The old banker agreed to continue on as treasurer, however, and conscientiously kept the books up to date until just four days before his death in 1945. James Talman, then assistant librarian at the University of Western Ontario, volunteered to undertake the secretary's duties on a part-time basis after Murray's resignation. Little did the executive suspect that the OHS would function without a permanent secretary for the next twenty-two years.

J. McE. Murray's pessimism in the early 'forties was entirely understandable. The OHS was inactive for the most part, and its membership almost non-existent in the period from 1942 to 1944. Fortunately the majority of its leaders found some reason for hope in this otherwise discouraging

period. C.W. Jefferys, for example, responded to Murray's second cry for dissolution in 1944 with the following evaluation:

It seems a most inopportune time to commit suicide. I am not, I think, unduly optimistic, but it seems to me, ... with evidences of a revival of local interest ..., and the attendance and activity shown at our last two meetings, this is no time for us to fold up. There is still plenty of work for us to do.

16

Certainly, as Jefferys suggests, there was cause for optimism given the success of the annual meetings during the war. The executive carefully selected the sites for the annual conference, choosing urban centres in south-central Ontario such as Niagara Falls, Simcoe, Brantford, Hamilton, and Kitchener where an active local affiliate was prepared to administer the details of the meeting. On each occasion the attendance was agreeably high,<sup>17</sup> and President Jefferys<sup>18</sup> "was much encouraged by the general spirit shown."

Relations with the local affiliated societies also began to improve by the war's end. At the annual meeting in 1942, the general lack of communication between the locals and the OHS led the delegates to pass a resolution urging that the provincial historical association do more to develop the work of the local groups and to bring about some uniformity of effort in such endeavours as printing, preservation of war records, or marking sites.<sup>19</sup> The executive of the OHS subsequently tried to act upon this resolution. Secretary

Murray reported a year later that he, Jefferys, and Talman had managed to do "a little in the way of personal touch with a few local bodies."<sup>20</sup>

This kind of "personal touch" shortly had a positive result when C.W. Jefferys was instrumental in creating a local historical association in Wentworth County. "While in Hamilton," Jefferys reported to Fred Landon in August 1943,

I saw Miss [Freda] Waldon, [George] Laidler and Col. [Charles R.] McCullough, and discussed with them the prospect of organizing a local historical society, and sounded them on the idea of holding the next annual meeting of the OHS there, as a stimulus to arousing popular interest in their history....

21

Jefferys obviously succeeded, for in March 1944 the Head-of-the-Lake Historical Society was created in Hamilton and played host to the OHS conference that summer. Members of the new local society like George Laidler, an engineer and keen local historian, the Reverend T. Melville Bailey, and T. Roy Woodhouse, a district manager with the Bell Telephone Company, provided most of the papers for the annual meeting.

The OHS leaders also sought to bring about some uniformity of effort among the local groups trying to preserve archival material, antique furniture, implements and the like from the wartime salvage campaigns. After the annual meeting in 1942, Secretary Murray circulated a letter on this subject to the local affiliates, educational institutions, and the news media. Fred Landon had already spoken to the London Free Press

with the result that the editors wrote an article on the subject which in turn was widely quoted by other papers.<sup>22</sup> Murray's circular was also published in many of the leading papers across the province. "A worthwhile result," the secretary reported later, "was the preservation of certain correspondence of John Norton, a Mohawk Chief, and associate of Joseph Brant....<sup>23</sup> Murray subsequently wrote an article for the OHSPR based on this material.<sup>24</sup>

The executive's most imaginative attempt in the early 'forties to improve the relationship with the affiliates and to develop an interest in the work of the OHS was the publication in July 1944 of the News Letter. As a medium of communication between the local societies this small bulletin (issued up to six times a year by 1947-48) filled the vacuum created by the termination in 1931 of the society's Annual Report. Fred Landon, chief librarian at the University of Western Ontario, prepared the first number of the News Letter. After assuming the secretaryship, James Talman undertook the responsibility for editing the remainder. A thousand copies of the first issue of the News Letter were printed and sent to newspapers, government departments, OHS members, and non-members known for their interest in history.<sup>25</sup> These efforts succeeded in building up the society's roster. "For the first two numbers," Talman reported, "fees from new members paid the cost of printing."<sup>26</sup>

With the publication of the News Letter, the Ontario

Historical Society had taken a major step to recovery. Thanks to the efforts of a cadre of officers who refused to fall victim to a defeatist attitude, the OHS had passed through the worst part of the war crisis. By 1945, the signs for the future looked promising as the membership rallied and the executive attracted new leaders of high calibre. George Spragge, having completed a stint in the Air Force, returned as treasurer. And significantly, people like George Smith of Port Colborne, George Laidler of Hamilton and Jean Waldie of Brantford came up from the ranks of the local societies to direct the provincial historical association.

Finally, the war itself seemed to have strengthened the OHS's resolve to preserve and disseminate a knowledge of Canada's historical traditions, values, and institutions. An appreciation of this heritage, it was argued, would help Canadians as they assumed greater international responsibilities in the post-war era. "We live in a world where narrow prejudice is an obstructive and retrograde influence of the most dangerous kind," remarked Professor George Brown of Toronto University as he presented the Ontario Historical Society's brief to the provincial Royal Commission on Education in December 1945.

We do believe, however, that a just pride in and understanding of the local community on the part of its citizens is essential to an understanding of world problems and our share in them. The family which has such a just pride and knowledge of itself is an asset to the local community, and similarly the province or the nation cannot contribute what they should to the

body politic either national or international unless they have an appreciation of their best characteristics which are rooted deep in their history."

27

## II

In 1945 a formidable task still lay ahead for those who sought to revive the Ontario Historical Society and to expand its usefulness. The membership had to be greatly augmented, and new projects devised to broaden the much-diminished programme of activities. By the end of the 'forties, the society's leaders had for the most part succeeded in meeting these objectives.

The aggressive efforts of the executive chiefly account for the membership gains made immediately after the war. George Spragge, the treasurer (1945-47) and later the secretary-treasurer (1947-51) was especially successful in conducting canvasses for new recruits. By 1948, he reported that the society's membership had increased from a mere 130 in 1945<sup>28</sup> to an all-time high of 415. Other individuals, of course, assisted Spragge in the drives for new members; these included James Talman, the acting secretary from 1945 to 1947, George Laidler, a Hamilton engineer who served as president from 1946 to 1948, and Jean Waldie, a journalist with the Brantford Expositor and the first woman to serve as president (1950-52) of the OHS.

John Barnett, a manager of a Toronto financial house

and president from 1948 to 1950, was another officer who gave unstintingly of his time to promote the work of the provincial historical association. He addressed over a dozen local groups on the aims of the OHS and arranged in 1948 to mark its sixtieth anniversary by securing booth space at the Canadian National Exhibition for the purpose of bringing the OHS to the attention of a wider public. Over forty members helped to staff the booth, fifteen hundred folders were distributed, and some twenty-five new recruits were landed during the course of the exhibition.<sup>29</sup>

In 1947, the reacquisition of office space in a Department of Education building at 206 Huron Street in Toronto also worked to the society's advantage since the stock of past publications was again made available for sale. They had been locked in storage and largely lost as a source of revenue since 1944.<sup>30</sup> As for the current publications, the News Letter and the high editorial standards set by Talman and Spragge for the Papers and Records (renamed Ontario History in 1947) probably account for much of the society's popularity and growing membership.

The annual meetings in these years were very well attended, reflecting a new enthusiasm within the OHS. More persons signed the register at the 1946 conference in Guelph than at any other meeting since the register was begun in 1913.<sup>31</sup> No fewer than 120 were present. The attendance at the ensuing annual meetings continued to please the executive. "It

is dangerous to use superlatives," commented one excited member in 1949, "but the Society is growing and flourishing, and one may expect our annual meetings to become better and better."<sup>32</sup>

In addition to undertaking an aggressive canvass for new recruits, the executive attempted to expand the society's usefulness. Some members, for example, began to seek ways and means to assist the dozen or so local historical museums in Ontario. Those who were interested in museum work took advantage of the annual conference at Kitchener in June 1945<sup>33</sup> to organize themselves as an informal museum's section. Wilfrid Jury, the curator of the Museum of Indian Archaeology at the University of Western Ontario, was elected chairman of the group, and Dr. Effie M. Milner of Chatham, secretary.

The museums' section sought to systematize and to improve display methods and the classification and catalogue schemes of the local museums. At the initial meetings of the group, the members exchanged ideas on these matters and received some basic instruction from Wilfrid Jury and Effie Milner among others, who had some expertise in the principles of museology. At one such meeting in London in March 1949, Dr. Milner presented a plan for a uniform and efficient cataloguing system for adoption in all county museums. The bare details of the system were described in Ontario History and the complete scheme was offered for the asking to any museum in the province.<sup>34</sup> Just how many local museums followed

Dr. Milner's cataloguing method is uncertain. Although a handful may have done so, a survey of the museums conducted in 1957 indicates that the majority were still unwise to the ways of sound museum management.<sup>35</sup>

While the OHS was extending its services to the local historical museums, it was also enhancing its reputation as a publishing society. George Spragge's edition of The John Strachan Letter Book, which included a revisionist interpretation of the Tory role in Upper Canada, appeared in 1946. Under the editorial direction of James Talman, the calibre of article in the OHSPR improved in quality from an academic point of view. This trend was even further encouraged by his successor, George Spragge, who began in 1949 to issue the periodical on a quarterly basis. These publishing efforts did not go unnoticed. In 1951 the American Association for State and Local History presented its coveted Award of Merit to the OHS "for the outstanding job of any historical society in eastern Canada, and for its annual publication program of reports, documents and monographs."<sup>36</sup>

The connection with the prestigious American Association for State and Local History and the Canadian Historical Association was fostered by the activities of that ubiquitous duo, James Talman and George Spragge. The former had been a member of the AASLH since 1944 and had helped that body compile a list of Canadian historical associations for a new edition of its Handbook of Historical Societies in the United States and

Canada.<sup>37</sup> As secretary of the OHS, Talman attended the 1946 conference of the AASLH in Washington D.C., where a large part of a morning session was devoted to his report on "The Local History Scene in Ontario."<sup>38</sup> That same year, George Spragge travelled to Washington, Albany, St. Paul, Madison, and Indianapolis, and conferred there with officers of various state historical associations. In the autumn of 1947 he was elected to the council of the AASLH. Closer to home, Spragge was instrumental in setting up the national committee on local history at the annual conference of the Canadian Historical Association in May 1947 held at Laval University in Quebec City.<sup>39</sup> Shortly thereafter, he reported that he had been appointed supervisor of local history with the Ontario Department of Education, a position he held until 1950 when he became the Archivist of Ontario.<sup>40</sup>

The contacts forged with the AASLH and the CHA were indicative of the efforts made by the OHS leaders to seek new avenues for promoting the cause of local history. Other examples of this concern included their submission of briefs to both the Ontario Government's Royal Commission on Education in 1940, and the Federal Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences in 1949. James Talman and Fred Landon prepared the brief to the Royal Commission on Education while George Brown of the University of Toronto History Department presented the document on behalf of the OHS.<sup>41</sup> The primary recommendation in the brief was that a

Provincial Historical Centre be established in Toronto. Professor Brown explained that the recommendation stemmed from a widespread belief that the archival facilities in the province were inadequate. At that time the Ontario Archives was poorly financed, understaffed, and literally stuffed into the basement of the Parliament Buildings. The OHS suggested that the new Historical Centre should take over the Ontario Archives and its staff should encourage the systematic and extensive collection of archival material.

It was also hoped that the Historical Centre would become a clearing house for the schools, local historical societies, Women's Institutes, museums, and every governmental agency involved in projects pertaining to Ontario history. Without it, the brief explained, "the result is a serious lack of direction and absence of any over-all policy with regard either to objectives or methods." As events turned out, no Historical Centre was instituted by the government to co-ordinate the work of the many private and official historical agencies, or to devise a master plan for co-operative action. But, the brief likely added considerably to the mounting pressure on the government to nourish and to house more adequately the Ontario Archives. It was not entirely a coincidence that before the decade was over, a large new building for the archives was under construction at Queen's Park.

Having been partners in misery since the Depression,

it was fitting that the OHS and the archives assisted one another in their period of regeneration. Helen McClung, the Provincial Archivist throughout the 'forties and an OHS councillor from 1941 to 1946, co-operated with the historical society on a number of occasions. For example, at the suggestion of George Laidler, she set up a display room of archival material at the OHS's annual meeting in 1947 at Trinity College.<sup>42</sup> For its part, the OHS began to publicize the archives' recent acquisitions in Ontario History.<sup>43</sup> The ties between the archives and the OHS became even closer after 1950 when George Spragge replaced Helen McClung as Provincial Archivist.

The idea of submitting a brief to the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences was first raised by James Talman who wished to ensure that the needs of the historical societies would not be forgotten during the commission's deliberations.<sup>44</sup> John Barnett, in consultation with the executive, wrote the submission; in it, he recommended the establishment of a federal Historical Board to bring about co-operation on a national level between all groups interested in local and provincial history. It was suggested that the new board could "give continuing study to, and make specific recommendations on" such matters as: the introduction of scholarships as a means of providing personnel for national and provincial archives and libraries; the wider publication and distribution of basic reference material; the

encouragement of inter-provincial historical studies and research; and the correlation of historical work by all local and provincial authorities and organizations.<sup>45</sup> The philosophy of the brief was in the mainstream of traditional OHS thought on the relationship between history and nationalism. Indeed, it was remarkably reminiscent of James Coyne's philosophy of the value of history. The brief stated:

Local history is of vital importance in producing common understanding and mutual respect as between provinces and communities and, in the end, a national consciousness and unity.

This Society is firmly of the opinion that increased historical research and the publication and dissemination of local historical materials is vitally important to Canadian unity, culture and social progress....

46

Evidently the OHS recommendation for a Historical Board was lost in the mountain of paper that descended upon the Massey Commission. No national organization of an official nature (or an independent body akin to the ASSLH for that matter) has yet emerged to co-ordinate the work of the various provincial historical associations.

The road to recovery for the Ontario Historical Society was not always a smooth one and a number of failures and lost opportunities marred what was otherwise a successful comeback. Such was the case with the project to mark farmsteads in the province that had been continuously occupied by the same family for a century or more, a scheme first suggested in 1945 by

Louis Blake Duff.<sup>47</sup> Lillian Benson, a librarian at the University of Western Ontario, was appointed chairman of a committee to compile a list of the farms. Assisted by a London radio broadcaster, Andy Clark, the committee's search generated a great deal of interest and elicited many responses. In June 1946 Miss Benson reported that the preliminary survey had uncovered more than a hundred farms, six of which had been owned by the same family for over 150 years.

The search, however, eventually proved to be too successful. It became apparent that the project was much larger than the OHS had originally envisaged. The executive decided that an excessive amount of work was involved in checking the validity of the information sent in by supposed century farm owners. John G. Harkness, a second member of the committee and a lawyer, was wary of the legal technicalities involved in defining what was or was not direct descent in borderline cases. In 1947, the executive approached the Ontario Department of Agriculture with the request that the government take over the recognition of the farms, or at least help evaluate the claimants to century farm status.<sup>48</sup> When no aid came from this quarter, the society resolved to terminate the project. Since 1948 the neatly bound pile of century farm information sheets compiled by Lillian Benson has lain dust-covered and forgotten in the archives of the OHS. A later governmental programme to mark century farms inspired by the centennial celebrations in 1967 was undertaken in complete

ignorance of this data.

Another opportunity lost by the OHS in its period of recovery was the chance to provide a forum for those interested in family history. Impressed by the number of genealogical inquiries received by the society during his tenure as secretary, George Spragge advocated that a special section be formed for those members interested in genealogy. On his advice, the executive appointed a committee in June 1948 to study and report on the possibility of setting up such a section in the society.<sup>49</sup> The committee reported in favour of the venture but since it was not clear how the section would function without adding to the duties of the already over-burdened secretary,<sup>50</sup> no action was taken on the report. George Spragge regretted that none of the other executive officers came forward to assume the task. He wrote to one correspondent some years later:

I think that the study of genealogy should be encouraged, and two or three years ago I suggested the formation of a genealogical section in the Ontario Historical Society. But because the only name suggested as a person who might co-ordinate the work done was my own, and as I was too busy to undertake more work, nothing was done....

51

Interestingly enough, the idea of a genealogical section was raised again in the mid-'fifties by Leslie Gray, an executive of Silverwood's Dairy in London and president of the OHS from 1954 to 1956. Gray reported that

as an experiment I have been handling all such [genealogical] queries since the first of the year. I believe that information has been provided on about forty families. Where I could not help the query was passed on to some individual or agency in the district involved.

52

Although there was an obvious need for a genealogical section of some kind, the idea was deferred once again because the OHS had other priority projects underway at the time. Since then, a separate body -- the Ontario Genealogical Society -- has been organized to serve the needs of those people interested in family history.

During the immediate post-war period, then, the Ontario Historical Society registered its share of successes, failures, and lost opportunities. The most important development, though, was the simple act of regeneration. From the brink of dissolution in the early 'forties, the society had recovered its respectability and expanded its membership and usefulness.

Of course, the society's success in the late 'forties (as it would be in the future) had been made possible by a climate conducive to historical endeavour. Rapid economic development worked in a number of ways to foster an interest in the past. The tourist industry was greatly stimulated as the number of registered motor vehicles mushroomed after 1945,<sup>53</sup> and highway construction grew apace. In addition to acquiring the means to tour the province's historical

localities, more individuals now had the leisure time to pursue their historical interests as industries shortened the work week, granted longer vacations, and pensioned older workers.

The post-war economic boom also gave rise to urban sprawl, massive redevelopment, and rapid immigration, all of which impelled many Ontarians to attempt to preserve some vestiges of what was quickly passing away. Lillian Benson summed up the fears of these people in the following statement:

The economic expansion of Ontario is erasing many historic landmarks, the large influx of immigrants is diluting our Anglo-Saxon heritage and our pattern of life is of necessity changing. The study of local history provides not only an invaluable means of keeping alive the best traditions of the past but, also, an excellent method of explaining our way of life to new Canadians.

54

Throughout the fifties, moreover, Ontarians were awakened to an awareness of the history of their local communities by the centennial celebrations held in numerous municipalities and townships created under the aegis of Robert Baldwin's Municipal Act of 1849. The Women's Institutes' Tweedsmuir histories of local communities, and the growing number of local historical societies and museums also nurtured a greater pride in the past. Jean Waldie noted too that an interest in local history was being stimulated by the daily and weekly press and by the radio. "Many papers both large and small," she reported

in 1951, "have weekly historical columns, pages, or individual historical articles. A number of radio stations have similarly been fostering an interest in history."<sup>55</sup> Miss Waldie knew well of what she spoke. For a number of years she had been on the staff of the Brantford Expositor and a frequent contributor to other newspapers, particularly to the London Free Press where many of her historical articles appeared in the "Looking Over Western Ontario" section.

During the 'fifties, the government of Premier Leslie Frost assumed a greater role in protecting and popularizing Ontario's heritage. The Frost administration combined the Conservative's abiding sense of history with a calculated understanding of the economics of the tourist trade. Acting on the recommendations of the First Ontario Tourist Conference at Niagara Falls in March 1949, and of the Historical Conference convened by the Department of Travel and Publicity at the Parliament Buildings in January 1950, Queen's Park set up a Provincial Historical Advisory Council to help preserve, develop, and publicize Ontario's historical resources.<sup>56</sup> An Archaeological and Historic Sites Advisory Board appeared in 1953, which three years later began an extensive programme of erecting historical plaques. By 1958, the expanded historical work of the Department of Travel and Publicity required the establishment of a special Historical Branch to undertake all the departmental matters relating to history, archaeology, and museums. Meanwhile other governmental agencies

such as the Niagara Parks Commission, the Ontario-St. Lawrence Development Commission, the Department of Lands and Forests (now the Ministry of Natural Resources), and a plethora of conservation authorities and municipalities had begun to play an expanded part in the development of historical attractions.

Finally, in the 'sixties, historical endeavour in general was given an enormous fillip by the celebrations to mark Canada's Centenary. At the federal, provincial and local levels there was a great swelling of historical interest, awareness and activity. All these developments, then, since 1945, created an atmosphere eminently suited to the continued expansion of such organizations as the Ontario Historical Society. The main outlines of that expansion comprise the subject of the next chapter.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>  
UWO, C.W. Jefferys papers, Jefferys to Talman, July 18, 1941.

<sup>2</sup>  
OHSA, minute book, July 17, 1941.

<sup>3</sup>  
UWO, C.W. Jefferys papers, Jefferys to Talman, July 18, 1941.

<sup>4</sup>  
"Treasurer's Report," OHSPR, Vol. XXXV (1943), pp. 65-66. The income from the sale of books and periodicals totalled \$239.88.

<sup>5</sup>  
UWO, C.W. Jefferys papers, Jefferys to Talman, July 18, 1941.

<sup>6</sup>  
The library had to be shifted and dispersed on a number of occasions between 1944 and 1972. It has rested in part and in whole in warehouses, the several OHS offices, the library of the Department of Municipal Affairs, the old Ontario Archives building on Queen's Park, the basement of the Ryerson Institute of Technology, and the Marine Museum. Although McMaster University purchased the bulk of the library, parts of it had been given earlier to other institutions. The Ontario Archives picked through the collection in the early 'sixties for any useful archival material. For a list of the material taken by the archives see OHSA, George Spragge to Edna Ash, August 23, 1962. In 1961 the American exchange publications were donated to the new library of the University of Waterloo.

<sup>7</sup>  
"Treasurer's Report," OHSPR, Vol. XXXV (1943), pp. 65-66.

<sup>8</sup>  
Ibid., Vol. XXXVI (1944), p. 106.

<sup>9</sup>  
After the executive meeting of October 9, 1942, no meeting was held until June 1943 at the annual conference. The next was called on May 4, 1944.

- 10  
OHSa, minute book, October 9, 1942.
- 11  
OHSa, memorandum to executive committee, February 12, 1942.
- 12  
OA, William Colgate collection, C.W. Jefferys to Colgate, March 24, 1942.
- 13  
Ibid. See also OHSa, minute book, March 3, 1972.
- 14  
UWO, C.W. Jefferys papers, Talman to Jefferys, February 15, 1944.
- 15  
UWO, C.W. Jefferys papers, Talman to Jefferys, February 21, 1944.
- 16  
UWO, C.W. Jefferys papers, Jefferys to Talman, February 17, 1944.
- 17  
There are no figures available for either 1942 or 1944, but eighty-six delegates attended the meeting at Niagara Falls in 1941 and seventy-seven at the Brantford meeting in 1943.
- 18  
OA, Misc. Mss. 1942, Jefferys to Spragge, August 14, 1972.
- 19  
OHSa, minute book, October 9, 1942.
- 20  
"Report of the Forty-fifth Annual Meeting," OHSa, Vol. XXXVI (1944), p. 105.
- 21  
UWO, C.W. Jefferys papers, Jefferys to Landon, August 24, 1943.
- 22  
"Report of the Forty-fourth Annual Meeting," OHSa, Vol. XXXV (1943), p. 66.

23 "Report of the Forty-fifth Annual Meeting," ibid., Vol. XXXVI (1944), p. 10.

24 J. McE. Murray, "John Norton," ibid., Vol. XXXVII (1945), pp. 7-16. The Champlain Society recently published the journal of John Norton. Carl F. Klinck and James J. Talman (eds.), The Journal of Major John Norton 1816 (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1970).

25 OHSPR, Vol. XXXVII (1945), p. 97.

26 Ibid.

27 OHSa, Brief and Supporting Material Requesting the Establishment of an Historical Centre Presented by the Ontario Historical Society to the Royal Commission on Education, Toronto, December 5, 1945, and Remarks Made in the Presentation of the Brief to the Commission by Professor George W. Brown.

28 This figure is based on the fees received column in the financial statement, OHSPR, Vol. XXXVII (1945), p. 103.

29 "Notes and Comments," OH, Vol. XL (1948), p. 93.

30 Significant increases in the sale of past publications were subsequently registered as indicated by the following table:

1946	....\$	70
1947	....	248
1948	....	195

31 OHSa, minute book, annual meeting, June 26-28, 1946.

32 OH, Vol. XLI, No. 3 (July, 1949), p. 164.

33 News Letter, Vol. II, No. 1 (July, 1945), p. 4.

34 "Notes and Comments," OH, Vol. XLI, No. 3 (July, 1949), p. 160.

- 35 Carl E. Guthe and Grace M. Guthe, The Canadian Museum Movement (Published by the Canadian Museums Association, 1958), p. 16.
- 36 OHSa, Award of Merit: American Association for State and Local History to the Ontario Historical Society, June 15, 1951. The AASLH is a continent-wide organization founded in 1940 to co-ordinate and to assist the work of historical agencies including state and local historical societies, museums, libraries, and junior history clubs.
- 37 UWO, C.W. Jefferys papers, Talman to Jefferys, December 16, 1943.
- 38 OH, Vol. XXXIX (1947), p. 127.
- 39 Ibid., p. 128. Spragge was elected chairman of the new committee.
- 40 Ibid., Vol. XL (1948), p. 103.
- 41 OHSa, see Brief Requesting Historical Centre and Remarks by George Brown.
- 42 OA, Ontario Archives Branch records, file on OHS, Laidler to McClung, May 26, 1947.
- 43 OA, Ontario Archives Branch records, file on OHS, Spragge to McClung, September 24, 1948.
- 44 OHSa, minute book, June 1, 1949.
- 45 OHSa, Brief Presented by the Ontario Historical Society to the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences 1949.
- 46 Ibid., p. 14 and p. 16.
- 47 News Letter, Vol. II, No. 4 (April, 1946).

- 48  
OHSA, minute book, annual meeting, June 13, 1947.
- 49  
OHSA, minute book, annual meeting, June 9, 1948.
- 50  
OHSA, minute book, executive meeting, April 30,  
1949.
- 51  
OA, Ontario Archives Branch records, file on OHS,  
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## CHAPTER NINE

### SOME NEW WINE IN AN OLD BOTTLE: THE SOCIETY SINCE 1950

It is both difficult and risky for a historian to examine the very recent past. He lacks the perspective of time and necessarily harbours the biases of a participant. These limitations notwithstanding, it is still worthwhile to investigate briefly the main developments of the past two decades in the history of the Ontario Historical Society. The most striking aspect of that history appears to be the change in the nature of the organization's programme before and after 1960. Prior to that date the general thrust of the society's work in public education was directed towards previously unexplored lines of endeavour. Here the efforts of the ill-fated New Canadian and Junior Historian Committees come readily to mind. Since 1960, on the other hand, the OHS programme, while often dynamic, has been limited mainly to traditional objectives such as publications, preservation, and assisting local historical groups. If James Coyne had been alive to pass judgment on the OHS work in recent years, he might well have said: "some new wine in an old bottle."

#### I

Perhaps the most important aspect of the OHS programme in the past twenty years has been the growth of the Museums

Section. Its roots, as indicated earlier, are to be found in the meetings organized in the late 'forties by Dr. Effie Milner of Chatham and Wilfrid Jury of London.<sup>1</sup> In the early 'fifties, their efforts to form an association of museum workers faltered temporarily largely because the executive of the society was overly cautious about subsidizing the section's work or formally recognizing its status.<sup>2</sup> But the group did not stay inactive for long. It had set a valuable precedent by providing a forum for the discussion and dissemination of new ideas and methods that the expanding number of untrained local curators sorely missed. A survey of The Canadian Museum Movement<sup>3</sup> undertaken in 1957 by the professional museologists, Carl and Grace Guthe, gives an indication of the condition of the small community historical museums (some twenty-five of which sprang up in Ontario between 1945 and 1957) which the Museums Section hoped to serve. The Guthes found that

most of these museums have been created in response to a locally recognized need for preserving historical materials which would otherwise be lost and forgotten. They are kept alive by a small group of interested ... citizens, who are quite unfamiliar with museum management procedures. Many of these museums are so young they are still in the stage of accumulating objects.... They have been opened to the public prematurely and have encountered insurmountable staff and maintenance problems....

A number of these museums do not have access to sound guidance in museum management, and in others the need for such guidance is not recognized. None of them have facilities to render normal museum services to the public, and many do not know what such services are....

Aware in a general way of these problems, a number of local museum workers again met informally in 1953 at the Ontario Historical Society's annual meeting in Kingston. Here they determined to set up a permanent Museum Committee. With the encouragement of OHS President T. Roy Woodhouse (1952-54), one of Wentworth County's well-known local historians, the first formal meeting of the Museum Committee took place on September 19, 1953 in Hamilton in the office of Dr. Freda Waldon, the chief librarian of the Hamilton Public Library.<sup>5</sup>

At this meeting, the delegates agreed to sponsor the first of a long series of weekend workshops at Jordan, Ontario in May 1954, to publish a news letter,<sup>6</sup> and to compile a directory of museums in the province. All these projects were completed with despatch and proved to be popular in the museum community. The OHS executives were also impressed, so much so that they agreed in 1956 to reorganize the committee as a Museums Section with a separate membership and subscription list. The constitution was amended to give the section full recognition. The chairman of the new section was made an ex-officio member of the OHS executive. "The purpose of the Museums Section," the constitution now states, "shall be to ascertain the needs and desires of the museums of the Province, to establish standards, to exchange ideas, to disseminate information, and unite all in a fellowship of museum workers."

Since 1956, the Museums Section has gone far to achieve its purpose. Above all else, the annual workshops have been the most useful activity. The attendance at these functions now rivals that of the OHS annual conference. As a type of museum training the workshops are valuable, since they reach "a constantly increasing number of individuals" and stimulate "active improvement in museum methods."<sup>7</sup> Like the OHS annual meetings, the workshops have been held all across southern Ontario. At each workshop, the practice has been to provide instruction on one or more themes of common interest such as museum administration, internal organization, display, cataloguing, publicity, budgeting matters, the care and repair of museum materials, furniture restoration, and museum security, to name but a few. Experts in such matters from a wide variety of backgrounds<sup>8</sup> have been brought in to assist the amateur curators. By 1968 some 120 speakers had addressed the workshops since the first meeting in Jordan.<sup>9</sup> Many of their addresses were subsequently mimeographed and distributed among the local museums. The monthly news letters have also been a popular medium for disseminating ideas and maintaining interest between the workshops and meetings.

The performance of the Museums Section has been widely praised. In 1962 the American Association for State and Local History presented the section with an Award of Merit in recognition of the effective assistance it gave to the museums of Ontario. The Canadian Museums Association also gave the

OHS its nod of approval in 1968 by deciding that the weekend workshops would be accepted as partial fulfilment of the requirements for accreditation in the CMA's own training scheme. "We are now well on our way toward having a body of formally trained museum people in this province," commented R. Alan Douglas, the curator of Windsor's Hiram Walker Historical Museum, "and museum service can only benefit from this."<sup>10</sup> There is little doubt that the OHS has helped to provide the training essential for the improvement of the community museums. The extent and depth of that improvement, however, can only be known after another survey similar to the one undertaken by the Guthes in 1957.

Not surprisingly, the very success of the Museums Section gave rise in the mid-'sixties to the belief that it should take leave of the Ontario Historical Society. The recent creation of provincial museum associations in British Columbia, Quebec, and the Maritimes gave added strength to the arguments of the would-be secessionists. Actually there was only a fine line between de jure independence and the existing relationship with the Ontario Historical Society. That relationship was described in 1964 in the following terms:

The Society's Museum Section is self-sustaining in all respects, even to publishing its own monthly news letter. The section operates with no interference from the parent Society and little direct contact except through its chairman who belongs to the Executive Committee ex-officio. Since the appointment to the provincial Department of

Tourism and Information of a Museums Advisor several years ago, museologists have been drawn closer to the government and further from the work of the Society, though it is noteworthy that the President [Kaye McFarland] and her two predecessors [Andrew Taylor, David A. McFal] are active in museum work.

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Those members of the Museums Section who sought independence did want to retain some kind of special affiliation with the OHS. A joint membership or inter-locking directorate was proposed at one time or another. "I do not for a moment suggest that our spiritual bonds be severed," explained R. Alan Douglas to the Museums Section in the fall of 1967.

What I do have in mind is a shift in emphasis, from a parent-child relationship to a relationship between equal members of the adult world -- and I may say, equals who need each other. I am not talking about a sentimental attachment; we, of course, owe our very existence to the OHS, and we all know it. I am speaking of our very real and practical need for a continued working relationship. The OHS, for its past and present exceedingly valuable work, unquestionably deserves our support,... and it is equally true that we need the OHS.

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As events turned out, the section preferred to retain the status quo in its relationship with the OHS; but, whether the debate over independence has been concluded remains to be seen.

At the same time that OHS members began to assume a leadership role in the museum movement, the society began to reassert itself in the field of historic preservation. The OHS's interest in preservation matters, which had been

dormant since the Depression, was revived in the 'fifties by the alarming number of buildings and landmarks of historical and architectural significance that were falling victim to the bulldozer. One circumstance in particular moved the provincial historical association to resume its political involvement in the preservationist cause: the realization in 1952 that the St. Lawrence Seaway Project threatened to flood thousands of acres of land that had a history of white settlement stretching back at least to the arrival of the loyalists. For the next four years, OHS spokesmen, often in conjunction with such groups as the Royal Ontario Museum, the Architectural Conservancy, the Ontario Archives, and the Departments of History, Architecture and Anthropology at the University of Toronto, applied pressure to ensure the preservation to the fullest extent possible of "the materials of history in the area to be inundated."<sup>13</sup>

The OHS took on the role of a pressure group after receiving a report in the fall of 1952 of the probable effects of the Seaway Project from Professor George F.G. Stanley, chairman of the History Department at the Royal Military College. Stanley recommended that the Ontario Historical Society ensure that plans be made to photograph and to record the history of the endangered area.<sup>14</sup> The first of a series of meetings between the OHS and the Ontario Hydro Electric Commission, the organization then in charge of the Seaway Project, took place in February 1953. A delegation led by

T. Roy Woodhouse interviewed Robert Saunders, the chairman of the Hydro Commission. The meeting was an amicable one and the deputation was delighted to learn that Hydro planned to employ the necessary experts for compiling an inventory of historical resources in the Seaway area as a first step towards their preservation.<sup>15</sup> The OHS, nevertheless, decided to monitor developments until the project was completed. This was a wise decision. After fully twenty months, Hydro had made little progress in compiling a systematic inventory, and a rating scheme of historical resources. At this time, November 1954, the OHS resumed its discussions with the Hydro Commission.

John M. Gray, president of the Macmillan Company of Canada, headed the OHS Seaway Preservation Committee which proceeded to probe Hydro for details of their plans.<sup>16</sup> On the basis of the information received, the historical society prepared a lengthy memorandum for Hydro. It made the suggestion that a systematic study by a team of experts in such fields as historical records, buildings, textiles, arts and crafts, and historical anthropology be made at the earliest possible moment.<sup>17</sup> The memorandum carried with it the support of representatives from the University of Toronto's History and Archaeology Departments, the Royal Ontario Museum, the Community Planning and Development Board, the Ontario Archives, and the Women's Institutes.

A meeting to discuss the proposal was cancelled by the untimely death of the chairman of the Hydro Commission, Robert

Saunders, and the subsequent change in control of the Seaway project in 1955 from Hydro to the Ontario-St. Lawrence Development Commission. The creation of the latter agency by an act of the Provincial Legislature actually constituted a victory for the preservationists. The legislation anticipated the establishment of a parks authority and the building of a system of recreational and historical areas on the general pattern of the Niagara Parks Commission. The Hon. George Challies, the first chairman of the new Ontario-St. Lawrence Development Commission, stated as a principle of park planning that "every opportunity should be taken to preserve tangible links with the area's historical past by preserving homes and landmarks and establishing museums."<sup>18</sup> Challies also promised that a Historic Centre comprising some of the district's oldest buildings would be established. This was the genesis of Morrisburg's Upper Canada Village.

Regrettably, the St. Lawrence Development Commission did not entertain the same sense of urgency as the OHS and its allies with respect to conducting a systematic survey of historic resources. No amount of persuasion, meetings, nor briefs could persuade the commission to finance an immediate survey of historical and architectural records of the more significant buildings by the OHS and other volunteer agencies. The reason given (which never satisfied the OHS) was that access to such houses would be a major problem until such time as the property settlements had been completed.<sup>19</sup> "We

hope that when Hydro acquires the properties," the OHS concluded in 1956, "it will not be too late to do at least a good portion of the suggested research."<sup>20</sup> With this statement, the historical society ended its participation in the campaign. The executive felt that they had done all that was possible to ensure the preservation of historical resources in the region to be flooded. How much data and material was lost because of the delay in the survey can never be determined. Still, much was ultimately preserved judging from the impressive display at Upper Canada Village.

Another significant preservation issue caught the Ontario Historical Society's attention during the early 'fifties. This was the outcry by archaeologists and the press against the unregulated excavating of historical and archaeological sites, and the uncontrolled export of artifacts from Ontario by American interests.<sup>21</sup> In September 1952, the OHS joined the protest and recommended to W.J. Dunlop, the Minister of Education, "that some form of control be established whereby archaeological remains may not be removed from Ontario without a permit from the provincial authorities. Also that permits be required for the excavating of historic sites."<sup>22</sup> Dunlop replied promptly that this suggestion would "receive complete and sympathetic consideration."<sup>23</sup>

Sensitive to the growing criticism, Dunlop soon introduced legislation on this matter. By April 1953, "The Archaeological and Historic Sites Protection Act" had received

royal assent. This legislation authorized the Minister to designate any land an archaeological or historic site, to which only permit holders would be allowed access. All permit holders would be required to file detailed reports of their activities and findings, and would be forbidden to remove any artifact from a site without the permission of the owner. For the administration of this act, Queen's Park appointed a special Archaeological and Historic Sites Advisory Board. Much to the delight of the OHS, almost all of the board's complement were active members of the society-- Leslie Gray, the first vice-president, George Spragge, J.M.S. Careless, G.F.G. Stanley, and Wilfrid Jury.

The last major preservationist controversy which involved the OHS in the 'fifties was yet another battle to save Fort York. On this occasion the old landmark (only just restored in 1953), was threatened by the proposed elevated highway (now the Frederick G. Gardiner Expressway) along the Toronto Lakeshore. The announcement in January 1958 that the city intended to build the highway partly on and over the fort brought angry protests from the Toronto Civic Historical Committee, the OHS, and various other local historical groups. The details of this latest struggle have been recorded elsewhere.<sup>24</sup> Briefly, the OHS for its part sent letters of protest to Premier Leslie Frost, Metro Council, Toronto's mayor and controllers, and the Toronto Globe and Mail.<sup>25</sup> A notice entitled "Fort York Threatened" appeared in Ontario History

informing the readers of the situation and enjoining them "as individuals and through their local historical societies, to act to save Fort York."<sup>26</sup> Midway through the imbroglio the Associated Historical Societies Committee had to oppose an idea supported temporarily by both the press and politicians to move the fort from its original site to one closer to the lakeshore. The massive costs involved in such an operation, however, soon cooled the enthusiasm of its advocates. Ultimately, economic and engineering realities, the 1909 proviso in the deed to the fort property, and the public protest organized by the preservationists combined to save Fort York. The once heralded "only practicable route" for Mr. Gardiner's expressway was eventually amended by the addition of a curve in the highway to the south of the fort property.

In addition to the successes in local museum work and historic preservation, the OHS performed a valuable service through its Microfilm Committee. Indeed, Leslie Gray of London, the chairman of the committee, became the chief architect of a monumental project to film all the scattered land book and municipal records and some of the parish records of several denominations in Ontario. The scheme grew out of the fear expressed by the OHS executive in 1954 that there was a great potential for loss because most of the Upper Canada Land Books and the municipal records were still widely dispersed, and often inadequately stored, in record offices all over the province.<sup>27</sup> Leslie Gray, who knew of the internation-

al microfilming programme of the Genealogical Society of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, enquired as to the possibility of their filming land and municipal records in Ontario. "It might interest you to know," he was told by the co-ordinator of the Mormon Genealogical Society, "that we made a few feeble attempts to get permission to microfilm<sup>28</sup> in Canada but were not able to make any arrangements."

Eventually the Mormons promised to supply the Ontario Archives with free copies of all the records microfilmed if the OHS made the necessary plans for them to film the documents. The OHS's executive agreed to sponsor the project and proceeded to arrange for the filming. Gray obtained a letter of approval for the plan from the Department of Municipal Affairs<sup>29</sup> which he distributed to municipal officers across the province. George Spragge, then a vice-president of the OHS as well as Provincial Archivist also used his influence in the civil service to expedite the project. Meanwhile, at the suggestion of Professor Richard A. Preston of the Royal Military College, the microfilming programme was expanded to include the parish records of any denomination which would permit the cameramen to film their files.<sup>30</sup> Again it was Leslie Gray who sought the approval of the various synods<sup>31</sup> of the Anglican and Presbyterian Churches in Ontario. In the spring of 1957 the filming of municipal records was finally commenced.

This project was a mammoth one that has yet to be

completed. In the first two years alone some 3800 reels of film, the equivalent of 4.6 million pages of material was deposited in the Ontario Archives. As of July 1973 the Ontario Archives reported that the Church of the Latter Day Saints had provided them with approximately 6900 reels of County Registry Office records and Municipal records, and 1426 reels of Surrogate Court registers, wills, and indexes to wills.<sup>32</sup> As for church records, the OHS and the Mormons experienced difficulty in obtaining permission to film the records of the various denominations. The Presbyterians and Baptists were most co-operative; roughly 140 reels of Presbyterian baptism, marriage, and death records are on file (most of which are from counties east of York) and nine reels that contain the Canadian Baptist Historical Collection of McMaster University. There are only two reels of Anglican records, three of Methodist and one of Evangelical. This enormous programme, completed at practically no cost to the province, may well be one of the OHS's most significant contributions to scholarship. It ensured the preservation of a vast store of widely scattered records and brought them into a central archives for the free use of students of history.

Although the microfilming project was of much significance, few members of the historical society were involved in the undertaking. Furthermore, it brought the OHS little public acclaim. Other new projects had to be devised if the

society wished to attract new members, acquire public recognition, or to encourage the existing members to participate more actively in the society's affairs. The major attempt to meet these objectives was the scheme to establish junior historian clubs in the elementary and secondary schools of the province. The example set by successful junior historian programmes in the United States was the chief influence leading the Ontario Historical Society to investigate the possibility of expanding into this area of endeavour.

In September 1956 the OHS executive named Dr. A.S. Hardy Hill the convener of a committee to investigate the possibilities of establishing junior membership in the society. Dr. Hill, a long-time teacher in the secondary schools and then a resident of Richmond Hill, launched a thorough canvass of existing junior historian programmes in the United States and Canada.<sup>33</sup> At the annual meeting in Guelph in June 1957, a full morning session was devoted to an address by Hardy Hill and a panel discussion on the topic "Ontario Needs Junior Historians."<sup>34</sup> Significantly, officials from the Department of Education, particularly Inspector Fred Swayze,<sup>35</sup> were favourably impressed by the whole idea of furthering local history in the schools and promoting it by means of junior history clubs in association with the OHS.

In an effort to acquaint history teachers with the idea of junior history clubs, the Ontario Historical Society sought a hearing in the spring of 1958 at the annual conference of the Ontario Educational Association. As well as arranging

a display at the conference, the OHS brought in Edward Roth of Cooperstown, New York, as a guest speaker. Roth was the editor of the New York Historical Association's junior history publication, the Yorker Magazine.

Roth explained to the delegates that in New York State, the Department of Education had made state history a compulsory subject in the early 'forties for students in grades seven and eight.<sup>36</sup> At the same time the department had assisted the state historical association to initiate local history chapters in the schools. By 1958 there were 150 such chapters with some 5500 members, all of whom received an annual subscription to the Yorker Magazine. The state historical association also provided special crests, monthly letters, and pen pal lists. Annual conventions were held and museum materials circulated among the chapters. Individual groups had their own meetings and activities such as compiling local histories, operating historical newspapers, and contributing to radio and television programmes. Roth also briefly described the junior movements in such states as Wisconsin where some 23,000 children were organized into 1200 chapters. Mention was also made of the Manitoba Historical Society which had just begun that year to establish junior history clubs in the schools (thirty-two branches with nearly six hundred participants by June 1956), and to publish a junior club magazine. All this information evidently impressed Hardy Hill. He spent part of his vacation that summer in Cooperstown, New York, learning the operation

of Roth's Yorker Magazine.

At the annual meeting in June 1958, Hardy Hill reported that his committee had reached the conclusion that the Ontario Historical Society should organize junior historical clubs in conjunction with the Department of Education along the lines of the system operating in New York.<sup>37</sup> Having received promises of financial support from the Atkinson Foundation, Hill wanted to distribute a questionnaire through the Department of Education to determine how much support the historical society could expect.<sup>38</sup> The executive endorsed the idea but several critical comments were expressed. Professor J.M.S. Careless of the University of Toronto History Department emphasized the necessity of arousing greater interest in Ontario history among adults and suggested that a project of that kind should take precedence over the organization of junior historical societies.<sup>39</sup> George Spragge added that the promotion of junior societies should be handled mainly by the Department of Education and not the OHS. Certainly there was reason for such concern considering the magnitude of the task that Hardy Hill was asking the OHS to assume. He eschewed a gradual approach and declared his intention of organizing clubs across the whole province at one time with three tiers of administration at the local, district, and provincial levels.<sup>40</sup>

This grandiose plan, of course, depended entirely upon the interest that could be cultivated among students and teachers. In the fall of 1960, some three thousand question-

naires, covering letters from the OHS and the Department of Education, and a copy of the Yorker Magazine were sent to every secondary school as well as a cross section of primary schools in the province. The Atkinson Foundation defrayed the costs of the survey while the Ontario College of Education distributed the material and tabulated the results.<sup>41</sup> Approximately seven hundred schools responded to the questionnaire. When the final analysis was made, it was learned that fewer than two hundred had heard of the OHS and its publications, and only fifty seemed genuinely interested in promoting a junior historical society.<sup>42</sup>

If Dr. Hill had remained active, he might possibly have convinced the OHS to help form junior chapters within the fifty or so schools that indicated a more than casual interest in the idea. This was more than enough interest with which to begin. In Manitoba, for example, the provincial historical society had commenced operations in 1956 in just over thirty schools. Unfortunately, Hardy Hill was incapacitated by illness. The new convener of the Junior Historian Committee, J.M.S. Careless, after consultation with Dr. Hill, advised the OHS to approach the junior historian project cautiously, possibly as a ten-year plan which would culminate in a junior society publication or three or four county histories.<sup>43</sup> At the time, this suggestion seemed feasible and was accepted. The society had already decided to sponsor a pilot book for a projected series of county

histories for use in the schools. But by the time this volume -- C.M. Johnston's Brant County: A History 1784-1945 -- appeared in 1967, not only had the need for the county history series been undermined by the spate of volumes written as centennial projects, but the enthusiasm for the junior historian clubs had languished as well.

The idea was revived briefly in the mid-'sixties when the Department of Education under William G. Davis began to encourage the study of local history in both the lower and advanced grades. In 1966, for example, local aspects of Ontario history were included as a unit of "Your Ontario Community" in the proposed advanced level curriculum for Grade 13.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, experiments were then being conducted in a number of Grade 10 classes in St. Thomas and Elgin County where special emphasis was placed on local history.<sup>45</sup> Again, the Department of Education began to give school boards greater freedom to develop locally-oriented curricula which, according to Morris Zaslow, would act as "an impetus for the development of history courses that took cognizance of major developments in the evolution of the various districts and their institutions."<sup>46</sup> George Thorman, an OHS executive and the principal of Parkside Collegiate in St. Thomas, had already received a fifteen hundred dollar grant to embark on a programme to collect documents, write pamphlets, and compile anthologies of local history for classroom use. In 1966, twelve of his classes at Parkside were working on the project.<sup>47</sup>

Impressed by these developments, Morris Zaslow commented in August 1967 that "the time now appears ripe for another attempt to promote the establishment of a junior history programme in Ontario."<sup>48</sup> Most of the other executive officers did not agree; they felt that such a scheme was beyond the society's staff and financial resources.<sup>49</sup> Professor S.F. Wise, a member of the Department of History at Queen's University (1955-66) prior to becoming director of the Canadian Armed Forces Historical Section, and Mrs. Margaret Angus of the Kingston Historical Society had reviewed the question and concluded that the OHS was "certainly not ready to embark on a junior history programme."<sup>50</sup>

Instead, the executive decided that its work in the field of education would have to be limited for the time being to making direct contact with the schools which had implemented local history programmes. The society would co-ordinate these programmes and perhaps review the idea of junior history clubs at a later date.<sup>51</sup> Professor Wise reported in 1967 that he and other members of the executive had spoken on a number of occasions to audiences of school children and teachers.<sup>52</sup> Since then, however, very little has been done to co-ordinate the work of the schools which have established courses in local history.

The Junior Historian Committee was one of two groups established in the mid-'fifties to investigate programmes which had a great potential for giving the OHS a new sense of

purpose, the other being the New Canadian Committee. "There is a growing interest in local history and growing need for it too," exclaimed Leslie Gray in a statement that echoed the words of OHS spokesmen before the First World War,

with our great influx of immigrants who need to learn the background of our traditions -- not only from the political viewpoint but through the study of the development of our social life and traditions.

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Spurred into action by such beliefs and by the interest shown by several of the local historical societies in attracting recent immigrants to the subject of local history, the executive named J.M.S. Careless convener of a New Canadian Committee.<sup>54</sup> Professor Careless examined the question and presented an enthusiastic report in June 1957.

The question of interesting new Canadians in the OHS, the report stated, was "one which should be of concern to every member" if for no other reason than that new recruits from this "large and growing segment of our provincial population" would allow the OHS "to grow in proportion to the growth of Ontario as a whole."<sup>55</sup> But more importantly, the report continued, "an interest in our provincial past could help immigrants truly to become part of our community, give them a sense of understanding and belonging, and the feeling that they too have roots in Canadian soil."

Professor Careless recognized that there were barriers to the idea of involving the recently arrived immigrants in

the activities of the OHS. There were still those "'old' Ontarians" and loyalist die-hards who considered that interest in local history was their private preserve and were not anxious to associate with the newcomers. Careless believed that it would be tragic if these people prevented "the appreciation of the men and women, ideas and forces which have shaped this province" from being transmitted to the new citizens.

... Though only a few of us may actually be descended from United Empire Loyalists, that does not prevent the rest of us taking pride in the Loyalists' achievement, and regarding it as part of our heritage in Ontario, whether or not our own ancestors had anything to do with it.

Finally, the report reminded OHS members of the fundamental fact "that we in Ontario, essentially, are all immigrants: the only difference is in time."

Careless also outlined a scheme for gradually interesting the immigrants in local and provincial history. Recognizing that new Canadians had enormous adjustment problems and tended to overcome their sense of strangeness by staying close to their own ethnic groups, the report recommended that the immigrants be first approached at the community level on a "fairly personal basis." This would be the task of the local museums and historical groups. Once some historical interest had been nurtured locally, then membership in the OHS might follow. The following plan for making initial contact and arousing interest was submitted.

The Ontario Historical Society, to begin with, might draw up a general programme for the guidance of local societies, send local speakers to New Canadian groups or ethnic organizations to give them colourful and interesting information on the background of the community in which they now have settled.... Church groups might help in making contacts. With Department of Education approval, school boards could also assist by making lectures available or by inserting talks on local history into citizenship and other orientation courses provided for immigrants. Finally, when contacts of these sorts have been made, then it should be possible to issue invitations to New Canadians to attend meetings of local societies, museum nights, or special gatherings....

Actually, all this was wishful thinking. The OHS executive, influenced by Hardy Hill's arguments for promoting the junior historian scheme in the schools, decided to ignore the recommendations of the New Canadian Committee. Despite Professor Careless's protestations that adult education was a more important priority,<sup>56</sup> nothing was done at this time to implement his recommendations or to determine how much support for his ideas actually existed among the ethnic groups. Interestingly, almost ten years later Professor S.F. Wise briefly revived the idea of involving the ethnic groups in the activities of the OHS. "We could greatly profit in this area," he said, "and in so doing become more truly the Ontario Historical Society."<sup>57</sup> Presumably the executive felt they had more important priorities since they have not yet acted upon Wise's suggestions.

The decade of the 'fifties, a period of new ideas and policies for the OHS, ended on an appropriate note in 1960 with a revision of the constitution. The first major

amendment involved the restatement of the society's objectives. Outdated references made in the original 1898 document to a historical museum, archives, and library were finally deleted. <sup>58</sup> Instead, the following statement was included beneath the traditional declaration of the society's responsibility for uniting and co-ordinating the local pioneer and historical societies:

The Society shall publish a magazine and other material devoted to the history of the Province, shall hold annual meetings in various cities and towns in the Province, and shall co-operate with the Provincial Archives, the Royal Ontario Museum, and other historical societies and museums in preserving the documents and archaeological artifacts which may contribute to the understanding and interpretation of our history. It may also undertake projects of any nature to encourage and develop within this Province the study of history.

The second major amendment eliminated the council and vested its powers in the executive committee. As indicated earlier, the large council, created in 1933 by Professor A. H. Young to co-ordinate the activities of all historical agencies in Ontario, failed lamentably. At no time did it fulfil its role as the decision-making body of the OHS. In a fashion that was certainly unconstitutional, the small executive committee usurped the policy-making function from the outset. The constitutional revision in 1960 simply legalized the existing situation.

## II

The amendment of the constitution was the prelude to

an extended period of stock-taking and paradoxically, stagnation in the early 'sixties. The unhappy fate of the Junior Historian and New Canadian Committees encouraged this development. Having been unsuccessful in these attempts to move into new channels of activity, the OHS leaders grew cautious and less willing to embark on other expansive schemes, or new schemes at all for that matter. Indeed, the society was painfully slow in substituting different projects for the plans of the defunct committees.

Discontent at this state of affairs was voiced in the executive during the mid-'sixties. One unidentified officer gave this evaluation of the society's withered programme in 1964:

In addition to publishing Ontario History the Society's main function is holding an annual meeting for business, reading of papers and visiting historic sites.... During the rest of the year the Society gives limited assistance and advice to affiliated organizations and to individuals. It has little or no contact with related departments of government beyond receiving an annual cash grant.

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Two years later, John S. Moir, a professor of history at Scarborough College, and author of Church and State in Canada West: Three Studies in the Relation of Denominationalism and Nationalism, 1841-1867 (1959), admitted that the situation had not improved:

...The functions of the Society have not developed much beyond the stage existing a generation ago. The only new services offered members is [sic] the quarterly magazine that replaced the annual some twenty years ago

and the establishing of a Museums Section ten years ago.

60

Fired with enthusiasm by the historical interest engendered by the Centennial of Confederation,<sup>61</sup> and disturbed by the society's lethargy, the executive began to study ways of improving the OHS's effectiveness. President Morris Zaslow (1966-67), a professor of history at the University of Western Ontario, his successor John S. Moir, (1967-68) and Philip Creighton, the treasurer and chairman of the Administration Committee, acted to streamline the society's administration, enlarge the committee system,<sup>62</sup> and to expand the programme of activities. Understandably, after the sorry experience with some of the experiments of the late 'fifties, they and their successors chose to develop the society's usefulness along almost exclusively traditional and secure lines of endeavour. Since then, publication schemes, the work of co-ordinating and encouraging the local affiliates, and historic preservation activities have absorbed the society's energies.

The renewed emphasis on special publications has been the most striking example of the trend back to traditional kinds of activities. Since the mid-'sixties, the OHS has churned out a spate of volumes that considerably raised its stock in scholarly circles. The Defended Border: Upper Canada and the War of 1812 (1964) edited by Morris Zaslow,

and C.M. Johnston's Brant County: A History 1784-1945 (1967) were followed by Profiles of a Province (1967) edited by Edith Firth. Two recent publications, Jean R. Burnet's Ethnic Groups in Upper Canada (1972) and Gerald A. Hallowell's Prohibition in Ontario, 1919-1923 (1972) are the first of a long series of research publications to be issued under OHS auspices. This publication work has proved to be lucrative. In 1963 before the first special volume appeared, the sale of publications grossed only some \$480.<sup>63</sup> For the year ending December 31, 1971, the society received over \$6300 from publication sales.<sup>64</sup>

Encouraging and co-ordinating the work of local historical associations is another of the Ontario Historical Society's original functions. In recent years the OHS has never been more effective in assisting the work of the affiliates. The breakthrough came under John Moir's presidency (1967-68) when Margaret Angus of the Kingston Historical Society was named chairman of a new Local Societies Committee. This group began its work by distributing a questionnaire to determine exactly how the affiliates wanted the provincial historical association to serve them. A new group of activities were launched on the basis of the suggestions received.<sup>65</sup>

One of the most frequently heard complaints of the locals was the lack of communication between the various affiliated groups. Local societies wanted and needed to know

more about the activities of their counterparts. Hence, the OHS decided to publish a news letter or Bulletin as it was called to report on historical activities in the province and to answer the general queries that came into the society's office. Alice Davidson, a former school teacher who came to the OHS as executive secretary in 1968 from the Toronto Historical Board, has edited the Bulletin since its appearance in the fall of 1968. Another frequent request of the affiliates was for speakers. Again the OHS responded by establishing a speaker's bureau and offered to do its best to meet all requests.<sup>66</sup>

Perhaps the most important function of the Local Societies Committee has been the organization of regional councils to foster communications between local historical groups clustered in various parts of the province. The idea received its first trial in November 1968 when representatives from nine societies in the St. Lawrence-Bay of Quinte area met in Kingston for a one-day workshop sponsored jointly by the Ontario Historical Society and the Queen's University Archives. There was a panel discussion on the research materials available for local historians and the sources offered in this field by archives and libraries. The talks also touched on a wide range of topics related to local historical society programmes. So successful was the meeting that the enthusiastic delegates agreed to meet again at six month intervals. The OHS offered to provide the necessary administrative frame-

work by arranging the time and place of meetings, setting the topics, and chairing the discussions. The regional council and workshop idea caught on quickly. By 1970, Ian Wilson, the archivist of Queen's University and then the chairman of the Local Societies Committee, reported that some fifty-six societies were participating in the regional councils.<sup>67</sup> The St. Lawrence-Bay of Quinte group had held its fifth workshop, and the Peterborough and Toronto regional councils their third. Affiliates in the London, Hamilton, Niagara, and Bruce Peninsula areas had been approached to follow suit.

When the regional councils were set up in the late 'sixties, the OHS leaders became more knowledgeable than perhaps they had ever been before with respect to the needs of the local affiliates. Consequently, more projects were devised to meet those needs. The idea of a seminar on archival management, for example, sprang out of the continuing dialogue in the regional councils. Designed for those local historical groups that asked "what do we do with these papers, letters, manuscripts, maps and old books?"<sup>68</sup>, the seminar provided an elementary and practical course for the local archivist. The two-day seminar was held in November 1970 at Queen's University. Only twenty-five applicants were selected on the basis of the use their society could probably make of the instruction. Readings were assigned beforehand. The staff and facilities of the archives in the Douglas Library were fully utilized,

and the archivist, Ian Wilson, gave most of the lectures. Once again the delegates agreed such seminars were extremely useful. Since then workshops have been held to assist local groups in their publications programmes and in their efforts to promote local history in the schools. To be sure, these workshops have great potential, but more time will be needed to determine whether they can measurably upgrade the performance of the local historical associations in their various activities.

Next to the enlargement of the publications and local societies programme, historic preservation has consumed an increasingly larger portion of the society's energies since 1967. Actually, the OHS continued to participate in this work all through the 'sixties but in an essentially limited capacity. Often this participation boiled down to little more than passing resolutions and sending off letters urging the preservation of revered provincial landmarks. For example, Toronto's St. Lawrence Hall,<sup>69</sup> Old City Hall,<sup>70</sup> and Osgoode Hall,<sup>71</sup> Stoney Creek's Battlefield Park,<sup>72</sup> and Almonte's "Mill of Kintail,"<sup>73</sup> the home of the internationally renowned sculptor painter, surgeon and physical educator, Dr. Robert Tait Mackenzie, all received such attention when they appeared to be threatened for one reason or another

There were a few instances when OHS involvement went beyond the passing of a supporting resolution. In 1963, for example, the society responded to the request of the Royal

Architectural Institute of Canada for financial aid to develop a photographic exhibition of historic buildings from coast to coast. This was part of a larger effort by the Institute to press the Dominion government to begin a national inventory of historic buildings.<sup>74</sup> The OHS agreed to contribute five hundred dollars -- a large amount considering the small annual grant of \$3500 -- to the project being organized by the late Professor William Goulding of the University of Toronto's School of Architecture.<sup>75</sup> This and other related activities succeeded in their aim. In September 1969, the National Historic Sites Service announced that it would undertake the desired Canadian Inventory of Historic Buildings.<sup>76</sup>

Not all the campaigns engaged in by the OHS were successful. Pleas by the OHS and other preservation organizations like the Architectural Conservancy for legislation establishing an Ontario or Federal National Trust akin to existing programmes in Great Britain and the United States have not yet been successful.<sup>77</sup> Similarly the battle to save the home associated with Barbara Heck, the reputed foundress of Methodism in North America, located near Maitland in Grenville County, did not have the desired result. The building in question was particularly valued not only for its historical associations, but also because it was the last Norman-style home (circa 1800), in Ontario, and one of three such in North America.<sup>78</sup> Despite OHS protests and efforts to help the United Church of Canada raise the necessary moving and restoration funds, the preserv-

ationists failed to discourage Dupont of Canada from dismantling the building, placing it in storage, and using the original site for industrial purposes.

The fate of the Barbara Heck Home was typical of the treatment meted out to dozens of other buildings representative of Ontario's architectural heritage. As these historically important structures were torn down, however, a growing demand began to be heard for their preservation. By the late 'sixties all levels of government had acknowledged and responded to the pressure of such as the OHS and its affiliated locals, the Architectural Conservancy, and other citizens' groups and individuals interested in preserving the province's architectural heritage. After nearly a decade of lobbying, Kingston was granted special provincial enabling legislation in 1970 which allowed it to take action to conserve its exceptional mid-nineteenth century limestone buildings.<sup>79</sup> The city of Toronto was also successful in obtaining a limited form of preservation legislation in June 1967.<sup>80</sup>

For its part, Queen's Park created the Ontario Heritage Foundation in 1967 to acquire and to administer property of architectural and historical value on behalf of the province.<sup>81</sup> Finally, the Department of Municipal Affairs, inspired by Kingston's successful bid in 1970 for special legislation, determined to institute a study "with a view of identifying the problems of architectural and historic conservation on a province-wide basis and taking suitable remedial measures."<sup>82</sup>

In 1971 the Department released the results of the study -- A Programme for the Preservation of Buildings of Historic or Architectural Value in Ontario. Briefly, this report recommended that municipalities be provided with enabling legislation for the protection of both individual buildings and also groups of buildings and districts. Furthermore, the province was advised to assume similar powers for the protection of buildings of particular importance from a provincial standpoint. Legislation is now pending based on these recommendations.<sup>83</sup>

Like the various governmental authorities, the OHS responded to the upsurge of interest in architectural conservancy which it had actually helped to create over the years. In December 1970, the executive made the decision to assume a more active role in such matters and to that end established a Preservation Committee.<sup>84</sup> Margaret Angus, the president of the OHS from 1969 to 1971 and writer of The Old Stones of Kingston (1966) especially welcomed this development. She herself had been a moving force in Kingston to secure the special provincial legislation that empowered the city to protect its historic buildings. She also had become the OHS's chief philosopher on architectural conservation. "Beyond the emphasis on the economics of tourism or on sentiment," stated Mrs. Angus,

preservation as a social and cultural benefit has become important in our search for a meaningful environment.

. . . . .

We can usually provide evidence of the historical and architectural significance of buildings worthy of preservation, but there are intangibles beyond that significance. Many old Ontario buildings have a simple beauty seldom found in modern buildings. As symbols of the past they have a direct emotional appeal, speaking for their own times more eloquently than we realize. They give us a sense of continuity; they contribute to our sense of identity; they enrich our lives.

85

Such an emphasis on the importance of the aesthetic as well as the historical importance of old buildings was new to the OHS preservationist philosophy.

The first Preservation Committee was made up of, among others: the convener, Mrs. Kenneth Kidd, a well-known activist among Peterborough ratepayers against indiscriminate urban renewal; Mrs. Angus; B. Napier Simpson Jr., a Toronto architect and long-time advocate of establishing a closer liaison between the OHS and the Architectural Conservancy of which he was a leading member; and Larry Ryan, executive director of the Ontario Heritage Foundation. The committee was given the responsibility of screening the requests for support of various projects received by the OHS from communities across the province, and of advising the executive on appropriate action. Moreover, it was envisaged that the committee would act as an information centre for local groups.

Obviously it is too soon to measure the effectiveness of this committee. At best it can be said that the OHS has become much more active in recent years in encouraging preservationist activities at the community level. Guided by the

Preservation Committee, the society has lent its support to several causes and proffered advice in a number of others. Articles on preservation have been specially written for Ontario History in a bid to excite more public awareness and action. A panel discussion to serve the same purpose was arranged for the 1972 annual meeting at Kitchener-Waterloo. By such activities, then, the OHS appears to be assuming a new place at the forefront of the preservation movement as its leaders had hoped.

It would be impossible to explain the waxing fortunes of the Ontario Historical Society in recent years without mentioning in some detail the contribution of the full-time executive secretary. The hiring of such an officer in 1967 filled the society's greatest need. As the OHS expanded its membership and functions after 1945, it had to stagger along administratively by depending upon the efforts of a half-dozen part-time secretaries. These individuals, who worked either two or three times a week, or at nights and on the weekends, had difficulty keeping a semblance of order at the OHS office. The part-time hours, the frequent changes at the secretaryship, the working environment of the small and dingy office, and two office moves after 1958, all these made it difficult to achieve the desired degree of administrative efficiency.

Long before 1967, the executive had sought to get an increase in the annual cash subsidy large enough to retain

the services of an adequately trained and experienced secretary.<sup>90</sup> Not until the mid-'sixties, however, was the government persuaded to augment the grant to cover at least a portion of the salary of a full-time officer.<sup>91</sup> It was perhaps Morris Zaslow's most valuable single contribution as president when he convinced the executive in 1967 to take what he described as a "bold momentous step -- considering its slender financial resources -- of appointing a full-time executive assistant...."<sup>92</sup>

The first incumbent of the new position was a part-time graduate student at the University of Waterloo. Regrettably, before he could make a positive contribution, he had to relinquish the post in 1968 and was replaced by Miss Alice Davidson, a graduate of the University of Toronto in Fine Arts and of Columbia University in Arts and Archaeology. Miss Davidson's background in local historical society and museum work with the York Pioneers and the OHS Museums Section, her years of teaching experience, and her association with the Toronto Historical Board, eminently suited her for the post. Alice Davidson quickly became the society's indispensable "jack of all trades." Her responsibilities include most of the office routine such as the heavy daily correspondence, the book orders, the mailing lists, and the preparation of the biannual Bulletin. The executive secretary also acts as the OHS liaison with the general public, the local affiliates and every other historical agency.

Other executive officers, needless to say, have worked diligently on the society's behalf. This is particularly evident in the success the OHS has had in building up its membership. The number of names on the rolls has increased fivefold in the past twenty-five years as the following table indicates:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Membership</u>
1948.....	400
1956.....	500
1958.....	800
1961.....	1000
1962.....	1150
1966.....	1450
1969.....	1700
1973.....	2000

Unlike the inter-war period when OHS leaders neglected large-scale membership drives, the officers of the society since the mid-'fifties have been most assiduous in maintaining an active membership committee. Beginning in 1955, a canvass for new recruits has been undertaken nearly every two or three years. On each occasion significant numbers were added to the society's rolls. One massive effort between 1956 and 1958 conducted by George Spragge and Richard Preston netted some three hundred new members.<sup>93</sup> Later canvasses by Paul Cornell in the early 'sixties and George Thorman at the end of the decade increased the society's membership by roughly two hundred on each occasion.

The breakdown of the OHS membership in this period

is revealing with respect to the growth of the historical society movement since the Second World War. George Spragge reported in 1948 that the membership was made up of some 383 annual subscribers, 23 affiliated locals and 44 libraries.<sup>94</sup> A similar survey in 1968 indicates that a considerable advance had been made in the interval. There were approximately 1000 individual subscribers, 99 local historical societies, 173 schools, 263 libraries (in Ontario), 42 subscriptions from other provinces and 41 from the United States.<sup>95</sup> Still the leaders have never considered the size of the membership an adequate proportion of the total population of Ontario. A roster of five hundred in 1949 with a provincial population of 4.3 million, or of 1700 in 1970 with a population of 7.6 million was nothing to boast about.<sup>96</sup> Moreover, various executive councils have expressed some concern that the OHS has made few inroads in northern Ontario. In 1968 only thirty-five members resided north of a line drawn roughly from Ottawa on the east to Penetang on the West.<sup>97</sup> As in the past, the heaviest concentration of members continues to be in south-central Ontario; nearly fifty percent (490) of the individual subscribers in 1968 were residents of metropolitan Toronto. The rest of the annual subscribers were scattered across southern Ontario in the following proportions:<sup>98</sup>

London, St. Thomas, Woodstock.....	55
Essex County, Windsor.....	8
Prescott, Brockville, Kingston, Cornwall, Morrisburg,.....	44

Lanark, Pembroke, Ottawa.....	74
Paris, Brantford, Hamilton.....	38
Huron, Lambton.....	17
Sarnia.....	5
Dunnville, Niagara Peninsula.....	51
Simcoe, Tillsonburg.....	9
Penetang, Barrie, Orillia.....	23
Listowel, Seaforth, Stratford.....	9
Peterborough, Oshawa, Port Hope, Whitby, Trenton.....	63
Kitchener-Waterloo, Guelph, Galt.....	43
Chatham.....	7

In social and economic terms, the background of the members has not changed markedly since the turn of the century. The majority are still well-educated people of both sexes from the professions and the business world. Miss Edna Ash, the secretary in 1961, examined the social composition of the membership and found that it included

doctors, lawyers, professors, and teachers; architects and engineers; members of parliament and civil servants; archivists and curators; publishers and book dealers; military officers; newspaper, television and film personnel; bond insurance, and real estate dealers; proprietors of department stores, china shops, and dairies; secretaries; farmers; inn-keepers; housewives....

99

The composition of the membership has changed in at least one important respect; more professional historians now take an active part in the society's affairs. In fact, five of the six presidents from 1966 to 1973 have been academicians -- Morris Zaslav, John S. Moir, Sidney F. Wise, J. Keith Johnson, and Paul G. Cornell. It is only since the mid-'sixties, however, that the nature of the executive council had been changed by the inclusion of so many professors

of history.

As indicated in an earlier chapter, there have been one or two professional historians on most executive councils since W.L. Grant and W.S. Wallace joined the executive in 1912. All the same, for many years the majority of university professors of history still gave the OHS a wide berth. In 1923 Ernest Cruikshank commented that

...as far as my recollection goes, the professors of Canadian history... have very rarely attended the meetings of this Society, or paid any attention to this Society whatever. They seem to think that societies of this sort are more "hysterical" than historical. I dare say there is some foundation for it.

100

Fred Landon added in 1932 that "there has not, in the past, always been the best discrimination used in connection with our programs or our publications and one result has been that practically all the professional historians have stood aloof."<sup>101</sup>

After the Second World War, as the historical profession and graduate schools grew apace, and as historians began to appreciate more fully the value of local studies, academicians joined the OHS in increasing numbers. George Brown of the University of Toronto and for many years the editor of the Canadian Historical Review was a councillor in the late 'forties. He was shortly joined by his colleague Professor J.M.S. Careless, a graduate of the University of Toronto and Harvard (Ph.D., 1950), and later author of Canada: A Story of Challenge (1953)

and Brown of the Globe (two volumes: 1959, 1963). Careless, who remained on the executive through the 'fifties, was the first academician to assume the presidency (1959-60) since James Talman held the post from 1937 to 1940. George F.G. Stanley and Richard A. Preston, both members of the history faculty of Royal Military College were also on the executive during the 'fifties.

Finally in the 'sixties the academicians were elected to the executive in ever-increasing numbers. Interestingly enough, most had done their graduate work at the University of Toronto before taking up posts in other colleges and universities. These included Charles Humphries, the biographer of Ontario Premier James P. Whitney, Paul Cornell, an authority on the political history of pre-Confederation Canada, Morris Zaslow, one of the few experts on the history of the North, John Moir, a writer of pre-Confederation religious history, Frederick H. Armstrong, a historian of Toronto, and J. Keith Johnson, a student of Ontario social history and the editor of the John A. Macdonald papers.

The academicians have had a notable impact on the society's development since 1950. Their important historiographical contributions, for instance, will be traced in the following chapter. Administratively, they were quite capable and enthusiastic officers who took their responsibilities

seriously. It is no coincidence that since the OHS's resurgence in the mid-'sixties, academicians have presided over it (with the exception of Margaret Angus' tenure 1969-71). This is not to say that the professors of history are solely responsible for the society's recent achievements. From the foregoing narrative it should be very clear that many non-academicians should be given a great deal of the credit.

There is perhaps one regrettable aspect to the greater participation of the professional historians; some non-academicians have voiced the fear that the OHS might become too much the servant of the intellectuals. Almost as soon as James Talman and George Spragge and others began to restore the OHS's fortunes in the mid-'forties, the Reverend Percival Mayes of Niagara Falls and a past-president of the OHS (1940-42) complained that "the OHS has had a tendency to become too academic, being largely controlled by the professional historians of the province."<sup>102</sup>

The fear that the OHS might become "too academic" has not been realized. The various executives have been conscious of the fact that the OHS could not function without the support of the non-academicians who make up the bulk of the membership. To be sure, the society has become more academically oriented in some respects. For example, Ontario History is more scholarly in its emphasis to-day than it was in 1945, and the new series of research publications has definitely

more appeal in the universities than among the public at large. But if the society has become more valuable for the professional historians and university students, it has not been at the expense of the non-professional members. On the contrary, it will be recalled that the OHS has at the same time become of much more value to the latter through the work of the Local Societies and the Preservation Committees and the Museums Section. The OHS, in short, believes that it can serve well the interests of both the academicians and non-academicians, a claim substantiated by its work in recent years.

It has been true throughout the history of the Ontario Historical Society that the organization's successes and failures have been determined in large part by the talents and energy (or lack thereof) of its key leaders. That certainly is the basic interpretation given here for the events in the society's recent past. All the same, there has been a limit to what even the most talented and determined leaders could do without sufficient financial support. In this period, as in every period in the OHS's past, the financial problem continued to have a large bearing on the society's policies and actions.

It is obvious that if the OHS had been more adequately subsidized, its programme would have expanded much faster than it did and the periods of stagnation might not have occurred at all. With the resources to hire a full-time officer or officers in the 'fifties and to embark on a junior

historical publication, perhaps the OHS would have had the confidence to carry on successfully with both the New Canadian and Junior Historian projects. Even the society's revival in the late 'sixties and the expansion along traditional lines of work was largely patterned by tight financial considerations. The work of the Museums Section and the Local Societies and Preservation Committees, for example, was possible only because the operating costs were minimal. Additional special publication schemes were feasible only because the sales of past volumes found a ready market in the universities.

Although the support of provincial authorities has been crucial in the survival of the Ontario Historical Society, it can never be said that Queen's Park was overly generous in its funding of the historical association. Between 1950 and 1964, for instance, the OHS received an unimpressive annual average income of just over two thousand dollars. Several increases during the 'sixties raised the annual cash grant to the present amount of \$8500, but even this sum does not cover either the cost of publishing Ontario History, or office and administrative expenses. <sup>103</sup>

Fortunately, the government continued to provide free office quarters. <sup>104</sup>

Considering what the Ontario Historical Society has accomplished, and what it has attempted to accomplish, in the work of preserving Ontario's heritage and developing the study of local history, the grant structure has never been

adequate. The extraordinary thing about the society's recent history, indeed its whole career, is that it has managed to achieve so much with so little financial backing. It is fascinating to ponder what the Ontario Historical Society might have done had it been given the financial support commensurate with its ambitions and achievements. The OHS's greatest accomplishment, of course, has been its fine collection of publications. The following chapter attempts to evaluate the historiographical significance of those volumes.

## FOOTNOTES

1

Another unsuccessful attempt to form an association of museum workers after World War Two had been made by the Community Programmes Branch of the Department of Education.

2

OHSA, minute book, executive meeting, April 30, 1949. "The first vice-president, Miss Jean Waldie, said that some members of the Museums Section were anxious to know if the Section could have a representative on the Executive. The President [John Barnett] stated that at the annual meeting anyone was at perfect liberty to nominate anyone, and there was no reason why a member of the Museum Section should not be elected. It was not, however, contemplated that a change in the constitution should be made in order to have representatives of various interests on the Executive." Clearly, this kind of reception was bound to weaken the enthusiasm of those members trying to establish the museums section.

3

Carl E. Guthe and Grace M. Guthe, The Canadian Museum Movement (Published by the Canadian Museums Association, 1958).

4

Ibid., p. 16.

5

For a more complete account of this meeting see Dorothy Drever, "The Museums Section: An Account of Its Beginnings," OH, Vol. LIII, No. 3 (September, 1961), pp. 153-55.

6

See Alice Davidson, "Museums of Ontario," ibid., Vol. XLVI, No. 3 (Summer, 1954), pp. 189-195. Forty-three entries are listed.

7

Guthe, op. cit., p. 24.

8

These have included staff members of the Royal Ontario Museum, advisers from the provincial and federal governments, personnel from American State Historical Society Museums, and professional architects.

9  
OHSA, minute book, annual meeting, June 1968, appendix IV, report of the Museums Section, submitted by R. Alan Douglas.

10  
Ibid.

11  
OHSA, "A Proposal for the Enlargement of the Operations of the OHS," (n.d.), received November 10, 1964. See also "The Relationship Between the Ontario Historical Society and the Museums Section: Memorandum of Discussion, March 16, 1967.

12  
OHSA, minute book, annual meeting, June 1968, appendix IV, report of the Museums Section.

13  
For a detailed account of the OHS role see "The Ontario Historical Society and the Preservation of the Historic Values of the St. Lawrence Seaway Area," OH, Vol. XLVIII, No. 2 (Spring, 1956), pp. 81-85.

14  
OHSA, minute book, executive meeting, September 6, November 8, 1952. Stanley undertook the study after a letter was received from John M. Gray urging the society to become involved.

15  
OHSA, memorandum for members of the executive with respect to the meeting with Hydro, February 12, 1953.

16  
OHSA, J.C. Boylen, OHS secretary to Robert Saunders, November 16, 1954.

17  
OHSA, memorandum to the Hydro Electric Power Commission of Ontario, December 14, 1954.

18  
OHSA, copy of speech by the Hon. George H. Challies enclosed in Challies to Boylen, March 7, 1955.

19  
"OHS and Preservation of Historic Values of the Seaway Area," op.cit., p. 82.

20  
Ibid., p. 85.

- 21  
OHSA, minute book, executive meeting, September 6, 1952.
- 22  
OHSA, J.C. Boylen to W.J. Dunlop, September 9, 1952. See also OH, Vol. XLIV, No. 4 (April, 1952), p. 198.
- 23  
OHSA, Dunlop to Boylen, September 15, 1952.
- 24  
"Fort York Threatened," OH, Vol. L, No. 1 (Winter, 1958), p. 38; "Old Fort York Saved," ibid., No. 2 (Spring, 1958), p. 100; "Fort York Wins a Modern Battle," ibid., Vol. LI, No. 1 (Winter, 1959), pp. 22-24.
- 25  
OHSA, minute book, executive meeting, February 8, 1958.
- 26  
"Fort York Threatened," op. cit.
- 27  
OHSA, minute book, executive committee, October 23, 1954.
- 28  
OHSA, T. Harold Jacobson to Leslie Gray, April 14, 1954.
- 29  
OHSA, minute book, executive meeting, November 24, 1956.
- 30  
Ibid.
- 31  
Ibid., executive meeting, April 13, 1957.
- 32  
OA, Ontario Archives Branch records, Marion Beyea to G. Killan, July 24, 1973, and August 8, 1973. The County Registry Office records include copies of the abstract indexes to deeds and of the deeds themselves. The Municipal records include assessment and collector's rolls and Township minutes.
- 33  
OHSA, minute book, executive meeting, April 13, 1957.

- 34 Ibid., annual meeting, June 22, 1957.
- 35 Ibid., executive meeting, September 7, 1957.
- 36 For a synopsis of Roth's speech see "The Ontario Historical Society's Programme at the Annual Meeting of the Ontario Educational Association," OH, Vol. L, No. 2 (Spring, 1958), pp. 74-6.
- 37 OHSa, minute book, council meeting, June 12, 1958.
- 38 Ibid., executive meeting, November 29, 1958.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Ibid.
- 41 See OH, Vol. LII, No. 3 (September, 1960), p. 198. The cost of the survey was approximately two thousand dollars.
- 42 OHSa, minute book, executive meeting, November 3, 1962.
- 43 Ibid., executive meeting, September 23, 1961.
- 44 Ibid., executive meeting, April 16, 1966.
- 45 Ibid., executive meeting, May 28, 1966.
- 46 OHSa, "The Ontario Historical Society," an address delivered by Dr. Morris Zaslow at a luncheon meeting, Wednesday, August 30, 1967, in Toronto, to the American Association for State and Local History.
- 47 OHSa, minute book, annual meeting, June 18, 1966.

48 OHSa, "The Ontario Historical Society," address by Zaslow to AASLH, August 30, 1967.

49 OHSa, minute book, annual meeting, June 17, 1967.

50 Ibid., executive meeting, March 18, 1967.

51 Ibid., executive meeting, October 1, 1966, and March 18, 1967.

52 Ibid., annual meeting, June 17, 1967.

53 OH, Vol. XLVIII, No. 3 (Summer, 1956), p. 141.

54 OHSa, minute book, executive meeting, November 24, 1956.

55 The following three paragraphs are a resumé of a "Report of the Committee on New Canadians," OH, Vol. XLIX No. 3 (Summer, 1957), pp. 161-3.

56 In 1958 a token effort was made to link elements of the New Canadian scheme with the Junior Historian programme. The following resolution was passed: "That the Ontario Historical Society approves the project for the formation of a Junior Historical Society in association with the Ontario High Schools to further the knowledge and awareness of Canadian History among boys and girls and particularly to assist in the integration of New Canadians in each community." See OHSa, minute book, annual meeting, June 13, 1958.

57 OHSa, minute book, annual meeting, June 20, 1969. President's Report.

58 George Spragge proposed most of the major changes. See OHSa, "Remarks on the Proposed Revision of the OHS Constitution," December 7, 1959.

59  
OHSa, "A Proposal for the Enlargement of the Operations of the Ontario Historical Society," (n.a.), November 10, 1964.

60  
OHSa, confidential memorandum to executive committee, n.d. (circa, April 1966), signed John S. Moir.

61  
The centennial celebrations were said to be an "unprecedented occasion" for the OHS to expand its operations. See for example OHSa, copy of resolution (June, 1966) authorizing the society to hire a full-time executive secretary.

62  
OHSa, minute book, report of the Administration Committee, June 12, 1967.

63  
"Statement of Revenue and Expenditure," OH, Vol. LV, No. 2 (June, 1963), p. 117.

64  
OHSa, Auditor's Report, June 6, 1972.

65  
OHSa, minute book, annual meeting, June 1968, appendix III, report of the Local Societies Committee.

66  
Ibid., annual meeting, June 21, 1969, report of the Local Societies Committee. Surprisingly, the bureau has been called on by very few affiliates although they had indicated that it was one of their most urgent needs. The existence of the bureau was well advertised at the time of its appearance.

67  
Ibid., executive meeting, November 25, 1970.

68  
Ibid., annual meeting, June 1970, appendix VIII, report of the Local Societies Committee.

69  
Ibid., executive meeting, April 30, 1960.

70  
Ibid., executive meeting, November 20, 1965, and January 29, 1966.

- 71  
Ibid., annual meeting, June 18, 1966.
- 72  
OH, Vol. LIII, No. 3 (September, 1961), p. 230.
- 73  
OHSa, minute book, annual meeting, June 1964.
- 74  
OHSa, Robbins Elliott to Andrew Taylor, March 25, 1963. The Department of Northern Affairs had already acquiesced to make preliminary inventories at Halifax, Quebec City, and Niagara-on-the-Lake.
- 75  
OHSa, minute book, executive meeting, April 27, 1963.
- 76  
James Acland, "The Canadian Inventory of Historic Buildings," OH, Vol. LXIII, No. 3 (September, 1971), pp. 147-50.
- 77  
OHSa, minute book, executive meeting, December 3, 1960, annual meeting, June 17, 1961. See also R. Romilly Fedden, "The National Trust in Great Britain," OH, Vol. LIII, No. 3 (September, 1961), pp. 174-7.
- 78  
"The Barbara Heck House," OH, Vol. LIV, No. 3 (September 1962), p. 188.
- 79  
See Section 2 of the final draft of A Programme for the Preservation of Buildings of Historic or Architectural Value in Ontario, issued by the Department of Municipal Affairs in 1971; and Margaret Angus, "History of Preservation Activities in Kingston," OH, Vol. LXII, No. 3 (September, 1971), pp. 151-54.
- 80  
Section 2.7 of A Programme for the Preservation of Buildings. The City of Toronto Act, June 1967 enables the council to designate historic sites.... The city may obtain the postponement of demolition on designated sites for up to sixty days.
- 81  
Larry Ryan, "The Ontario Heritage Foundation," OH, Vol. LXIII, No. 3 (September, 1971), pp. 145-46.

82  
A Programme for the Preservation of Buildings.  
 Section 2.25.

83  
 Howard V. Walker, "There's Still Time to Save Old Buildings Pleads an Architect," Toronto Star, May 29, 1973.

84  
 OHSA, minute book, executive meeting, December 5, 1970.

85  
 Margaret Angus, "Preservation-Why and How," OH, Vol. LXIII, No. 3 (September, 1971), p. 139.

86  
 OHSA, minute book, report of the Preservation Committee, November 10, 1971. The committee recommended to the executive (1) that the society support the preservation of Toronto Union Station only on the grounds that it be kept as part of the street scape. (2) that the society recommend to the Niagara Regional Historical Council that they put pressure on the local authorities to preserve their historic structures. (3) that the society advise the Amherstburg group to support the Rotary Club in its effort to preserve the Park House.

87  
OH, Vol. LXIII, No. 3 (September, 1971).

88  
 Major John C. Boylen (1951-56), Mary Davies (1956-57), Edna Ash (1957-64), Freya Hahn (1964), Joan Scott (1964-67).

89  
 In 1958 the society moved to a Department of Education building at 27 Surrey Place from 206 Huron Street. In 1962, the Department provided another office in the basement of 40 Eglinton Ave. East.

90  
 As early as 1957 Lillian Benson and John Gray attempted without success to get the grant increased from three to eight thousand dollars.

91  
 In 1965 the grant was raised from \$3500 to \$6500, and to \$8500 in 1968 where it has remained.

92 OHSa, "The Ontario Historical Society," address by Zaslow to AASLH, August 30, 1967.

93 This campaign began by asking the existing members for the names of prospective recruits. Over one thousand names were received, and letters and application forms mailed to each. Those that did not respond were sent a second letter and a complimentary copy of Ontario History. Several individuals have subsequently given unstintingly of their time as chairman of the membership committee: John Gray (1958-59); Paul Cornell, a professor of history at the University of Waterloo (1961-63); George Thorman (1969-70); Father Leo Burns (1971-73), a teacher at Michael Power High School in Toronto.

94 OH, Vol. XL (1948), p. 104.

95 OHSa, minute book, report of the Education and Membership Committee, October 25, 1968.

96 In comparison with historical societies in the United States, the OHS membership has been small. The following figures were given in an appendix of the Brief to the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences 1949:

	Population	Historical Society Membership
Ontario	4.3 M.	500
Indiana	3.9	2000
Missouri	3.8	4962
Nebraska	1.3	1850
Minnesota	2.9	2478
Wisconsin	3.5	3400

97 OHSa, minute book, report of Education and Membership Committee, October 25, 1968. A number of factors account for this including the long distances to be travelled to OHS functions, the sparse population of the North which makes it difficult to establish historical societies, and perhaps the fact that the history of settlement is still relatively young. Furthermore, the OHS has done little promotional work in the North except for holding the 1970 annual meeting at Sault Ste. Marie.

98

Ibid.

99

OH, Vol. LIII, No. 4 (September, 1961), p. 225.

100

Annual Report OHS 1923, p. 29. Statement made at the annual meeting, July 6, 1923.

101

OHSA, Landon to J. McE. Murray, September 22, 1932.

102

LLM, LLHS records, minute book, May 25, 1945.

103

OHSA, Auditor's Report, June 6, 1972. For the year ending December 31, 1971, the cost of Ontario History was \$8,754 and the office and administrative expenses \$10,463.

104

OHSA, "A Proposal for the Enlargement of the Operations of the Ontario Historical Society," November 10, 1964. The writer of this report stated that the society must have more ample and permanent quarters if it were to pursue an enlarged role. This was in 1964. The OHS remains quartered in the basement of 40 Eglinton Avenue East. The public can only reach the office through a side door and along an improperly lighted and circuitous passageway. Apart from the OHS office, the basement is deserted.

## CHAPTER TEN

### THE PUBLICATIONS OF THE ONTARIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY: A HISTORIOGRAPHICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REVIEW

Publishing material that adds significantly to our understanding of this province's past has been a raison d'être of the Ontario Historical Society since 1898. The OHS collection is now the largest and perhaps most valuable single body of literature in print pertaining to the history of Ontario. It includes the periodical Ontario History, previously known as the Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records, that has long been respected for the sources, interpretations, and information contained within its pages. Furthermore, the OHS has published ten volumes of documentary material, five special publications since 1964, and several dozen reports and newsletters. Although many of these works were reviewed individually shortly after printing, the collection still awaits a reviewer to provide essential historiographical and bibliographical perspectives.

Not surprisingly, the Papers and Records contain articles which run the gamut from sheer antiquarianism to brilliant historical craftsmanship. It is this spectrum of essays, however, that provides the main historiographical lessons; the changes in the degree and kind of scholarship presented in the periodical are an expression of the substantial effect that the publication has had on the mainstream of local

history in Ontario. For instance, during the first two decades a core of non-academicians used the journal to set higher standards of research and writing that contributed to the foundation of critical historical scholarship in Canada. Later, by the 1920s, those OHS members on university faculties ventured into local history and began studying social and economic subjects, the natural habitat of the local historian. These academicians promoted meaningful social and economic history in the OHSPR fully a decade before the main body of professional scholars had lost their enthusiasm for political and constitutional themes and turned to those of a social and economic nature. More recently, certainly during the past twenty-five years, Ontario History has evolved into a quite complete scholarly journal, encouraging and guiding the increasingly sophisticated work of professional historians and serious amateurs studying the province's past. To examine these developments and the individuals responsible for them, and to evaluate the contributions of the OHS collection to Ontario and Canadian historiography, is the object of this chapter.

## I

When James H. Coyne reorganized the largely ineffective Pioneer and Historical Association of the Province of Ontario, and renamed it the Ontario Historical Society in 1898, he set the society a difficult task: "the original investigation and publication of historical material relating to Ontario, includ-

ing the reminiscences of pioneers, maps, journals, letters and other documents..., the translation of important works written or printed in French, the reprinting of rare and costly books and pamphlets of general interest, the collection of information relating to the ethnology of Ontario, and generally to endeavor to place before the people of Ontario and historical students all available facts relating to the history of the Province."<sup>1</sup> With the blessing of George Ross's Department of Education, new quarters in Toronto's Education Department Building and a five hundred dollar provincial grant, the OHS was fairly launched as a publishing society and educational force. Under the editorial direction of four eminent amateur historians, James H. Coyne, Charles Canniff James, David Boyle, and Andrew F. Hunter, the first annual volume of the OHSPR was issued in 1899.

The society hoped to serve two general purposes by publishing historical material, one educational and the other patriotic. In terms of its educational objective, the new periodical was created for several reasons: to preserve and circulate rare documentary materials; to provide an outlet for the research papers written by members of the growing number of local historical societies; to inspire the production of historical works of "a higher and more exact character";<sup>2</sup> and to stimulate the study of, and interest in, Ontario history. In theory, only original research papers on topics in which "the information [was] authentic and the evidence in support

sufficiently strong" were to be included in the periodical.<sup>3</sup>  
 Such written history, however, as far as James Coyne initially planned, was to assume a subordinate role to the publication of rare documents, "'materials for history' rather than histories in the ordinary sense."<sup>4</sup>

A second purpose that lay behind the birth of the OHS was frankly nationalistic: the inculcation of a national sentiment. History was conceived as a means of accelerating and shaping the slowly emerging national consciousness in the early Laurier era. George Pattullo, president of the OHS in 1905, gave voice to the "high purpose -- the upbuilding of our beloved Canada" -- behind the society's publications:

... the importance of collecting and disseminating the materials of history, especially in a young country, can scarcely be over-estimated.... This work successfully prosecuted must ... have a wholesome effect upon national life. It is, indeed, nation building. Nothing will more surely stir the patriotic impulses of a people and create a steady and sturdy patriotism, than a complete knowledge of their history....

5

Although sincere, this nationalistic rhetoric smacks of parochialism and must be kept in perspective. Typical of Ontarians then and now, the OHS leaders, while thinking their interests and concerns were national in scope, presumed that the history of Canada was simply the history of Ontario writ large.

All these considerations, then, educational and patriotic, shaped the character of the OHS in its early years.

James Coyne's hope to publish rare documents and translations in preference to narrative history, however, was not fully realized, and the format of the periodical in the pre-war period changed considerably from issue to issue. Though four fifths of the first volume was comprised of documents, it was followed by L.H. Tasker's narrative The United Empire Loyalist Settlement at Long Point, Lake Erie.<sup>6</sup> After Coyne's edited translation of Galinée's journal<sup>7</sup> appeared in the fourth issue, the format of the OHSR through volumes five to nine settled down into a judicious blend of documents and articles under the editorial supervision of C.C. James. In terms of printed pages, church, marriage, baptismal, and burial records bulk largest,<sup>8</sup> but militia rolls, travellers' accounts, official documents, and an early business account book, all pertaining to the Upper Canadian period, are examples of other kinds of documents included in the first issues of the periodical.

Perhaps the highlight of early documentary material from the point of view of the great care and scholarship involved in its preparation, was Coyne's edited translation of The Exploration of the Great Lakes (1669-1670) by Dollier de Casson and de Brehant de Galinée..., which included both the original manuscript and the English translation.<sup>9</sup> The journal was of much value for it contained the earliest description of southwestern Ontario as written by two Sulpician missionaries. The volume was praised in scholarly circles. The Review of

Historical Publications Relating to Canada commented that "... neither the editor nor the society which published it need fear comparison with the best work of the kind done on this continent,"<sup>10</sup> a statement perhaps in reference to the monumental seventy-three volume collection of The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents 1610-1791, translated and edited by Reuben Gold Thwaites, the director of the Wisconsin Society, between 1896 and 1901. This work, which also included both the original French text and the English translation, could well have been a model for Coyne. Shortly after Galinée was published, Coyne's abilities were recognized in tangible form by George Wrong and H.H. Langton, when they invited him to become a reviewer for the Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada.<sup>11</sup>

The appearance of the Ontario Archives in 1903 and the Champlain Society two years later may explain why the OHS stopped trying to live up to its original expectations of publishing volumes of documents and translating and reprinting rare works in French such as Galinée. In 1904 Alexander Fraser, the Provincial Archivist, began to issue annual volumes of documents pertaining to Upper Canada. For its part, the Champlain Society was devoted solely to the publication of rare volumes or unpublished materials relating to Canada. With these organizations reproducing documentary material, the editors seemed more willing than they had first been to include narrative history in the OHSFR.

With respect to the so-called original articles that appeared in the first dozen volumes of the periodical, little praise can be lavished on most of them. At best they preserved information that might otherwise have been lost. In terms of subject matter, studies of early loyalist and pioneer settlement in various sections of southern Ontario were most numerous, while loyalist and pioneer biographies, genealogies and reminiscences, and pieces on Joseph Brant, the Mohawk chief, and military affairs, together vied for second place. Papers on such varied topics as the naval history of 1812-14, place names, folk-lore, and political and constitutional subjects helped to fill out the rest of the journal.

Of the articles in the category of loyalist and pioneer settlement, few showed evidence of much originality, interpretive framework, or literary merit. In short, they were antiquarian essays often cluttered up by meaningless details. Tasker's United Empire Loyalist Settlement at Long Point showed evidence of research at the Dominion Archives into family backgrounds, and gave brief glimpses into various aspects of pioneer social and economic life. The book was otherwise marred by subjectivism and sentimentality, a poor writing style and a penchant for relying on unsubstantiated hearsay. Most of these faults were obvious in the opening paragraphs of Tasker's work and were typical of many other essays published at the time.

From infancy we have been told of the brave men of our

race, and yet the tale, ever told, is ever new. The hero stories that thrilled us in our childhood have still the power to make the heart beat quickly and the current of feeling sweep over us, rich and strong. Socialists and revolutionists may effect to scorn it, but they cannot blot out the inherent glory contained in the word "patriotic."

"Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori."

To die for one's native land is assuredly sweet and seemly, and yet there is a truer and a nobler loyalty than this. It is that of preserving inviolate one's faith to the established government, when all around is sedition, anarchy and revolution. When to be loyal means to fight, not against the stranger, the foreigner, but against those of the same language, the same country, the same state, and, it may be, the same family as one's self -- when loyalty means fratricidal war, the breaking up of home, the severing of the dearest heart cords, the loss of everything except honor --

"Oh! who shall say what heroes feel,  
When all but life and honor's lost?"

Such was the loyalty of ... [the] United Empire Loyalists, and these were the men who, at the close of the war, sought a refuge and a home on British soil, among the northern forests, and laid deep the foundations of the institutions, the freedom, the loyalty, and the prosperity of our land.

12

Thus, antiquarianism, ancestor worship, badly written romantic and heroic history, and the ingredients for the largely mythical loyalist and pioneer traditions can be found in the early volumes of the OHSPR.<sup>13</sup> This is understandable for a number of reasons. Most of the contributors to the periodical had been weaned on the works of such romantic and literary historians as Edward Gibbon, T.B. Macaulay, and Walter Scott in Britain, and W.H. Prescott, John L. Motley and Francis Parkman in the United States.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, for a historical society interested in fostering nationalism, the literary and romantic style of history was ideally suited to that purpose.

The subject matter of the romantic historians included stirring and dramatic events, the character and exploits of heroes, and grand themes such as the origin of a nation or the progress of liberty in the battle against absolutism. Such was the stuff from which national sentiment and pride were thought to be moulded. This accounts in the early essays of the OHSPP for the heavy emphasis on incidents of the American Revolution and the War of 1812, on the virtues of the heroes Brock and Brant,<sup>15</sup> or on the collective virtues and superhuman feats of the loyalists and pioneers in the wilderness. Another consideration was that the president of the Ontario Historical Society and editor of the periodical, C.C. James, advocated this kind of history. He disputed the opinion supposedly held by many Ontarians that their history was "uninteresting, unromantic, devoid of those stirring events that make the histories of European countries attractive." He argued instead that the history of settlement was "saturated with romance."<sup>16</sup> Many aspiring Macaulays, Scotts, and Parkmans were subsequently given an opportunity to write in the OHSPP, but often with disastrous results.

From the point of view of historical scholarship, it was unfortunate that from the outset the twin educational and patriotic thrusts of the OHSPP sometimes conflicted with each other. A popular style of history that glorified the loyalists and pioneers could make for dreadful scholarship. Political considerations partly account for the inclusion of articles

of questionable quality. The executive of the OHS were likely aware that they had to satisfy the politicians, the subsidizers of the periodical, by making the publication readable for the public. Reuben Gold Thwaites, a most knowledgeable observer noted that this problem frequently occurred in the United States: "In order to secure political support it seems essential, at least in the earlier years of the society, to produce publications having a quasi-popular character .... This is one quite sufficient reason why so much interest is paid in many States to the narrative side of history for the story of the pioneers always appeals strongly to the 'general reader.'<sup>17</sup>"

Political considerations and the shroud of loyalist and pioneer mythology governed editorial policy through the 1930s. The most blatant example of their stultifying effect not only upon scholarship but upon intellectual integrity occurred in 1936 when the society rejected Professor R.O. Macfarlane's social and economic revisionist interpretation of the loyalist migration. The following reasons were given:

The Editorial Committee for this year is now busy reading the papers, but they agree with the Committee of last year that to print yours would be inexpedient. So long as we are dependent on Government "pap" we cannot run the risk of giving offence to any sections of our community, and my people feel that there is that risk in what you have written....

The comments at the side of the MS. are by the late Professor A.H. Young.... General Cruikshank agrees with them fully. The latter, referring to the statement by [A.L.] Burt that in an examination of 600 Loyalist claims

he had found not one lawyer and only two doctors, says: "That proves nothing. He ought to have known and recognized the fact that nearly all the professional men in Upper Canada, and many in Lower Canada, were Loyalists." and he goes on to give a list of such men.

These criticisms indicate that in addition to the possible danger mentioned in the first paragraph, we should have to meet discord within our own body.

18

An undue emphasis, however, ought not to be placed on the unoriginal and antiquarian nature of the first issues of the OHSR. It must be remembered that at the turn of the century a historical profession had only just emerged in Canadian universities and that the writing of Canadian history had not yet been solidly established on a critical foundation.<sup>19</sup> Actually, it is not surprising that many of the articles in the OHSR lacked originality or scholarly attributes; what is surprising is that a good number of them were so carefully researched and written. For example, Janet Carnochan's "The Count de Puisaye: A Forgotten Page of Canadian History,"<sup>20</sup> T. Campbell's "The Beginning of London"<sup>21</sup> and A.F. Hunter's "The Ethnographical Elements of Ontario"<sup>22</sup> can still be read with profit to-day. Carnochan's "de Puisaye", based mostly on primary documents and held together by sound historical inferences and interpretations, and a pleasant writing style, sparkled among its rather unfortunate companions.

The contributions of E.A. Cruikshank are also noteworthy. Two of his better articles appeared in the first volumes of the periodical -- "The Insurrection in the Short

Hills in 1838,"<sup>23</sup> and "An Episode of the War of 1812: The Story of the Schooner 'Nancy'."<sup>24</sup> Cruikshank's biographer has recently criticized him for the "... inability to free himself from meaningless detail, to select what is relevant and important, and to judge and interpret."<sup>25</sup> This conclusion is valid to a point, but it also betrays a certain lack of perspective on the part of the critic. What is crucial to understand is that the cadre of university-trained historians in Canada was negligible at the turn of the century, and that Cruikshank stood out among both his non-academic and academic contemporaries for his adherence to the canons of thorough research and strict accuracy. A measure of Cruikshank's enviable reputation was his relationships with the prestigious American Historical Review and its Canadian peer, The Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada. His work in military history was kindly received by the American journal,<sup>26</sup> and he was considered of sufficient expertise to review books in its pages on a regular basis before the Great War.<sup>27</sup> George M. Wrong, the founder of the Review of Historical Publications considered Cruikshank "a master of his subject"<sup>28</sup> and invited him to contribute to the periodical. It was in the first issue of the Review of Historical Publication that Cruikshank undermined William Kingsford's reputation by mercilessly showing the inaccuracies in volume VIII of Kingsford's History of Canada.<sup>29</sup>

Although he had received no formal historical training

nor introduction to Rankeian methods and assumptions, Cruikshank was rooted in the "scientific" school of historical writing. He piled fact upon fact, and transcribed document after document, linked by a brief narrative in causal sequence, hoping to recreate the past exactly as it happened and assuming that the chronological sequence of data would produce generalizations and conclusions spontaneously. His concern for detail, moreover, was warranted. In the "Short Hills" article Cruikshank was appalled by the number of errors concerning the episode in previous accounts, and he realized that a complete and accurate narrative was necessary. "The Story of the Schooner 'Nancy'" remains the definitive account of this remarkable 1812 saga, and illustrates that its author was capable at times of judging and interpreting his facts with skill, and of providing the requisite national and international context for his theme. In summary, then, Cruikshank's contributions to the OHSPR and the work undertaken by Coyne, Carnochan and a few others, were significant contributions to Ontario and Canadian history. In a small but cumulative way they contributed to that movement which marked the development of critical historical scholarship in Canada.

After 1910 the Ontario Historical Society fell upon several years of administrative and financial difficulties. Unfortunately, the journal became a casualty of this period of quiescence and did not reappear until 1913. When volume ten was finally published, a new format had been devised by

Alexander Fraser, the Provincial Archivist and secretary of the OHS. This format was continued by his successor Andrew Hunter between 1913 and 1931. No longer were half the pages of the OHSPR devoted to documentary material, and in lieu of the usual hundred pages of parish records, each volume now had a few carefully selected articles of the note-and-document variety. The reorganization of the format was largely a response to the number of historical works being produced by a growing phalanx of amateur and professional historians.

Naturally there was both continuity and change after 1913. Still to be found in the journal were reminiscences of suspect quality, place name articles,<sup>30</sup> unimaginative military and Indian history, loyalist and pioneer sketches that smacked of ancestor worship, and antiquarian settlement studies with no conception of the broader context. There remained a thirst for "romantic" and "heroic" history<sup>31</sup> and the president of the Ontario Historical Society from 1914 to 1916, Clarence Warner, could not "altogether condemn" those histories in which "myths have been manufactured to order" because "these usually add to the interest of the tale."<sup>32</sup> Similar writing and sentiments were destined to remain with the journal until they were purged by James J. Talman and George Spragge in the 'forties.

If mediocrity remained a factor, there were also healthy developments that first took root in the immediate pre-war period and developed steadily through the inter-war years. The character and quality of the articles improved as the journal

began to attract the work of some first-rate amateur and professional historians. These included George M. Jones, C.D. Allin, Adam Shortt, Lawrence Burpee, Benjamin Sulte, William R. Riddell, and Fred Landon. A better calibre of political history, biography, and social and economic history appeared in the OHSPR. For the first time, moreover, several valuable bibliographical reference articles were published such as "Collections of Historical Material Relating to the War of 1812" by Frank Severance,<sup>33</sup> "The Books of the Political Prisoners and Exiles of 1838" by J.D. Barnett,<sup>34</sup> and "Some Unusual Sources of Information in the Toronto Reference Library on the Canadian Rebellions of 1837-8" by F.M. Staton.<sup>35</sup> In the 1914 issue, the periodical featured articles on anthropological and archaeological topics,<sup>36</sup> but since members of the Ontario Historical Society received the annual research reports distributed by the Provincial Museum then quartered in the Normal School Building with the OHS, archaeology was less represented in the periodical than would have otherwise been the case.<sup>37</sup>

In the field of political history new ground was broken in several respects. George M. Jones, a high school teacher of history and later a professor at the Ontario College of Education, set precedents by being the first contributor in the periodical to use footnoting apparatus for citing sources and to write on a virtually unknown phase of the history of political parties in "The Peter Perry Election and the

Rise of the Clear Grit Party."<sup>38</sup> Jones's use of the contemporary press, and the absence of either blatant "tory" or "grit" biases were other praise-worthy features of the essay. Another example of the sophisticated political history appearing in the OHSPPR, and one of the best articles in the periodical to that date, was Professor C.D. Allin's "The British North America League, 1849"<sup>39</sup> which supplemented the chapters in C.D. Allin and George M. Jones, Annexation, Preferential Trade and Reciprocity (Toronto: 1911). Allin's analysis of the genesis, development, and decline of the League was a valuable contribution to scholarship, and the conclusions he reached have stood the test of time.<sup>40</sup>

A new criterion of excellence for biographical sketches in the OHSPPR was set by Ontario Supreme Court Judge, the Hon. William Renwick Riddell in "Robert (Fleming) Gourlay"<sup>41</sup>. This essay was based entirely on primary sources and made it possible for the first time to unravel Gourlay's career, motivation, and significance. It was also remarkably free from the biases that marred so many of the early political biographies. Riddell's treatment of both Gourlay and his adversaries, John Strachan and William Dummer Powell, was balanced, eminently fair, and trustworthy. Riddell's judicial experience provided him with the requisite expertise to dispel once and for all the smokescreen that had surrounded the legality of Gourlay's trial and banishment.

Adam Shortt's "The Economic Effect of the War of 1812

on Upper Canada"<sup>42</sup> and Fred Landon's "Canada's Part in Freeing the Slave"<sup>43</sup> were harbingers of a new era in Ontario and Canadian social and economic historiography that would reach maturity in the 'twenties. Shortt's study, far in advance of its time in methodology and subject matter, offered the startling thesis "... that the War of 1812, instead of being the occasion of loss and suffering to Upper Canada as a whole, was the occasion of the greatest era of prosperity which it had heretofore enjoyed, or which it was yet to experience before the Crimean War...." This was local history at its best in which a local economic theme was considered in relation to "the general setting of the country, geographical, social and commercial." In addition to Shortt, a few other individuals in the universities of the province like Fred Landon and A.H. Young were beginning to react against the predominantly political and constitutional bent of Canadian historiography and were turning to social and economic themes in a local setting.

During the 'twenties, certain university members of the Ontario Historical Society betrayed their concern for the state of Canadian historiography. In an article of seminal importance, "The Teaching of Canadian History"<sup>44</sup> (1924), Professor D.A. McArthur of Queen's University deplored the failure of political and constitutional history as then presented to inspire the country's youth. Aware perhaps of Canada's growing national status and the added responsibilities that

implied, McArthur emphasized that a knowledge of the nation's history was essential for the "development of an intelligent and enlightened Canadian citizenship," for "the security of our Canadian democracy," and for "the promotion of an attitude of intelligent loyalty and even devotion to our nation and to its institutions." McArthur's solution was to make history more meaningful and enjoyable by stressing local history of a social and economic nature. "My argument is," he wrote, "that constitutional movements are meaningless divorced from the economic and social forces which created them, and that our teaching of history, in failing to realize that, is seriously in error." He defended this viewpoint by illustrating that "the conflict in this province for self-government which culminated in the Rebellion of 1837 was in its origins an economic and social movement."

As for teacher reference sources, McArthur felt that the OHSPR contained enough information to satisfy the needs of any classroom. In his courses at Queen's in the 'twenties, he followed his own advice and made extensive use of the periodical. "In our advanced courses," he explained to A.F. Hunter, "we throw the students largely on their own resources and have been endeavouring to lay special emphasis on the social life of the Canadian people. In special studies many of the articles appearing in the papers of the Historical Society have been of extremely great value."<sup>45</sup>

To what extent, if any, McArthur's proclivity for so-

cial and economic history and local and provincial themes had been fashioned by the realities of Canadian political life during and after the First World War can only be surmised. At the federal and provincial levels, the Progressive Party and the United Farmers' movements respectively were striking examples of the social and economic underpinnings of political events. It was as though the two great interest groups, the industrial and the agricultural, were doing battle; "Parliament had become a congeries of sectional and occupational interests," explains W.L. Morton. "Canada had reverted to its inherent parochialism."<sup>46</sup> Such a climate may have been a factor impelling a minority of historians like McArthur to perceive more relevance in the social and economic history of the provinces than in the political and constitutional evolution of the Dominion within the Empire.

At the University of Western Ontario, Fred Landon, another OHS member in agreement with McArthur's cause, was guiding two budding social historians -- J.J. Talman and M.A. Garland -- through their graduate apprenticeship. "The everlasting raking over of the dry bones of the Constitutional development, with small account whatever taken of social influences," wrote Landon to Frank Underhill in 1928, "has given us a distorted viewpoint and made large areas of our history difficult of understanding, even by our best students."<sup>47</sup> Landon also wanted to make changes in the subject matter of social and economic history as it had been carried on for

decades by amateur historians. At the Ontario Historical Society annual meeting in 1928 he and Professor A.H. Young of Trinity College suggested that the members turn their attention from such well-cultivated themes as the development of municipal institutions or the beginning of local parishes, to the history of business, agriculture, transportation, and to "how people lived, the ordinary mode of life in early times."<sup>48</sup> That McArthur, Landon, and Young had a profound influence on the character of the OHSR is most evident in the inter-war period.

Fred Landon's first contributions to Ontario social history involved the study of the blacks in the province. This was reflected in such works as "The Diary of Benjamin Lundy Written During his Journey Through Upper Canada January 1837,"<sup>49</sup> "The Work of the American Missionary Association among the Negro Refugees in Canada West 1848-1864,"<sup>50</sup> "Social Conditions Among the Negroes in Upper Canada Before 1865,"<sup>51</sup> and "Anthony Burns in Canada."<sup>52</sup> Landon's influence can also be detected in the important new work in the history of religion undertaken by his graduate students, M.A. Garland in "Some Phases of Pioneer Religious Life in Upper Canada Before 1858"<sup>53</sup> and James Talman in "Church of England Missionary Effort in Upper Canada, 1815-1840."<sup>54</sup> For the first time in the journal, sophisticated university-trained historians were interpreting local history by considering it in a broad national or international context. Influenced

by the frontier thesis of Frederick Jackson Turner, Landon and his students took a partly environmental approach, stressing the democratizing effect of the frontier in Upper Canada. They were also fully cognizant of an Upper Canadian climate of ideas, attitudes, and behaviour moulded both by the Jacksonian democratic and British reform traditions. All these concepts are laid bare in Landon's "London and Its Vicinity 1837-8," a tour de force of local political and social history.<sup>55</sup>

Another contributor to social history in the journal was Professor A.H. Young of Trinity College, a leading authority of the history of the Church of England. With three exceptions, his thirteen contributions to the OHSR between 1922 and 1934 dealt with pioneer clergymen of the Church of England such as Robert Addison, John Ogilvie, John Langhorn, George O'Kill Stuart, Richard Pollard, and the Bethunes. On the basis of this work in the OHSR alone, it is possible to agree with J.J. Talman's conclusions regarding Young's historiographical significance: "He first applied to the history of the Church of England in Canada the principles of scholarship which we expect in secular history, but which are less often found in denominational accounts. He further proved by his example that church history in general and Church of England history in particular must be recognized as a part of the social history of this country."<sup>56</sup> Young's essays in religious history and the work of Landon, Talman,

and Garland superceded the well-intentioned but less helpful amateur studies of local ministers, parishes, and graveyards.

Following the example set by these academicians, there was a notable increase in the number of sound social and economic articles by non-academic historians. H.P. Hill's "The Construction of the Rideau Canal, 1826-1832,"<sup>57</sup> Ernest Green's "Canada's First Electric Telegraph,"<sup>58</sup> "The Niagara Portage Road,"<sup>59</sup> and "Township No. 2 -- Mount Dorchester -- Stamford,"<sup>60</sup> E.A. Cruikshank's "A County Merchant in Upper Canada, 1800-1812,"<sup>61</sup> and "An Experiment in Colonization in Upper Canada,"<sup>62</sup> and J.S. Carstairs "From Colony to Commonwealth, 1841-1867"<sup>63</sup> are worthy of note.

Generally speaking, these social and economic studies by professional and amateur historians in the OHSR were in the vanguard of historiographical developments in Canada. For instance, during the same period, the bulk of the contributions in the more prestigious Canadian Historical Review were still devoted to traditional constitutional, political and imperial themes. The swing to social and economic topics in the University of Toronto's CHR would not occur until after 1930.<sup>64</sup>

The high calibre of social and economic history achieved by the OHSR during the 'twenties became a permanent fixture of the periodical. Not surprisingly, the academicians at the University of Western Ontario remained in the forefront of

the contributors in the following decade. Fred Landon's examination of a social upheaval in the political sphere involving the displacement of the old tory establishment by a new elite of businessmen politicians in "An Upper Canada Community in the Political Crisis of 1849"<sup>65</sup> was conceptually valuable. His protégés, Garland and Talman, also broke new ground in their joint effort, "Pioneer Drinking Habits and the Rise of Temperance Agitation in Upper Canada,"<sup>66</sup> as did Talman in his "Agricultural Societies of Upper Canada"<sup>67</sup> and "Travel in Ontario Before the Coming of the Railway."<sup>68</sup> Professor W.B. and Mrs. A.B. Kerr's "Reverend William Leeming: First Rector of Trinity Church, Chippawa"<sup>69</sup> supplemented A.H. Young's work in religious history. Briefly, each issue brought fresh and scholarly contributions on a variety of socio-cultural themes such as crime and punishment,<sup>70</sup> journalism,<sup>71</sup> land settlement,<sup>72</sup> assisted emigration,<sup>73</sup> community halls,<sup>74</sup> architecture,<sup>75</sup> and education.<sup>76</sup> It is worth mentioning that most of these essays involved pre-Confederation themes, and for some reason both academicians and amateurs remained aloof from post-Confederation studies.

In economic history the trend was toward a treatment of many of the subjects delineated for special emphasis by Fred Landon in the 'twenties -- industrial development, canals, and transportation routes.<sup>77</sup> With respect to the latter theme, Percy J. Robinson's all too brief synopsis of

the history of "The Toronto Carrying Place"<sup>78</sup> (1615-1793) is particularly noteworthy as a contribution to the province's neglected French period. This article was a product of the research for Robinson's important study of Toronto During the French Regime (1934). Since Coyne's Galinée, few other historians had published in the OHSR the fruits of their research into this era of Ontario's past. There was also something refreshing in the application of the sweeping staples theory of Canadian history to the Ontario experience in H.A. Innis's "An Introduction to the Economic History of Ontario: From Outpost to Empire."<sup>79</sup> With the publication of this study, the journal was reflecting in a minor way the historiographical battle between those like Landon and Talman who leaned towards the frontierist and continentalist approach, and those like Innis who conceptualized the Laurentian thesis around the facts of geography, staples, and metropolitan connections in what could be construed as an attempt to "imperialize" and to reverse the Americanization of Canadian history.

During the course of the 'twenties, changes were made in the format of the OHSR. By 1926 each issue had swollen to over five hundred pages, a sharp rise from the war years when volume fifteen was a paltry forty-five pages. The massive size of the periodical was retained until 1932 when the Depression forced the editors to cut the volume in half. Much of the increase between 1926 and 1931 was

accounted for by the resurgence of documentary material, an editorial policy likely influenced by E.A. Cruikshank who never forgot that an original aim of the OHS was to collect and publish primary documentary material not already in print. Cruikshank himself edited some extremely valuable sources including the Robert Nichol letters,<sup>80</sup> the minutes of the first session of the Executive Council of Upper Canada,<sup>81</sup> and petitions for Grants of Land, 1792-6.<sup>82</sup> He often appended for good measure several dozen pages of documents to his articles. A.F. Hunter edited two collections of "The Probated Wills of Persons Prominent in the Public Affairs of Early Upper Canada."<sup>83</sup> A refreshingly different document, the only material relative to a twentieth-century theme was "The Diary of C.M. Wright, 58th Batt., 14th Brigade, France, No. 1260428."<sup>84</sup> And finally, a service was rendered to all historians of Upper Canada when the invaluable journal of William Proudfoot, edited by M.A. Garland, appeared in seven instalments between 1930 and 1937.

Another important inter-war trend, especially in view of the dearth of scholarly historical biographies at this time, was the proliferation in the number of biographical sketches appearing in each issue of the journal. Willis Chipman on Samuel Holland,<sup>85</sup> Cruikshank on Robert Nichol and John Macdonell,<sup>86</sup> Ernest Green on Gilbert Tice and John de Cou,<sup>87</sup> George F. Macdonald on Commodore Alexander Grant,<sup>88</sup> W.R. Riddell on John White, Thomas Scott and Joseph Willcocks,<sup>89</sup>

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and A.H. Young on Sir William Johnson all are studies still worthy of consideration.

Documents and biographical sketches alone do not account for the total increase in the size of the OHSPR. The prolific number of articles on these and other subjects by Judge Riddell and Brigadier Cruikshank must be taken into account. Before he faded from the scene in 1932, William R. Riddell wrote over forty articles for the OHSPR, this in a twelve year period. Many of his short articles, unfortunately, were petite-histoire, often so esoteric and antiquarian as to be virtually useless. But representative of his more valuable contributions and indicative of his flair for legal history were "A Trial for High Treason in 1838,"<sup>91</sup> "The Ancaster 'Bloody Assize' of 1814,"<sup>92</sup> "The Bidwell Election -- A Political Episode in Upper Canada a Century Ago,"<sup>93</sup> and "The Prerogative Court in Upper Canada."<sup>94</sup>

The redoubtable E.A. Cruikshank contributed thirty-eight diverse and lengthy essays during the inter-war years. They included the edited documents and social and economic studies already cited, a half dozen of the first addresses he delivered as chairman of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, and essays on naval, military, political, and constitutional history. Although written in his by then anachronistic "scientific" style, "The County of Norfolk in the War of 1812,"<sup>95</sup> "The Contest for the Command of Lake Ontario in 1814,"<sup>96</sup> "The 'Chesapeake' Crisis as it Affected

Upper Canada,"<sup>97</sup> "The King's Royal Regiment of New York,"<sup>98</sup>  
 "The Invasion of Navy Island,"<sup>99</sup> "The Genesis of the Canada  
 Act,"<sup>100</sup> "Post War Discontent at Niagara in 1818,"<sup>101</sup> "A  
 Memoir of Lieutenant-General Peter Hunter"<sup>102</sup> must still be  
 admired for their comprehensiveness.

During the inter-war years, then, the contents and quality of the OHSPR generally improved from a scholarly point of view as a result of the contributions of such as Cruikshank, Riddell, Green, Landon, Talman, Garland, and Young. All the same, poorly written and researched essays better suited for the less demanding publications of local historical associations continued to appear in the OHSPR. There were mitigating circumstances in addition to the political factors described earlier to explain their inclusion in the journal. In 1924 financial assistance for the publication projects of local historical societies was terminated by an economy-minded provincial government, an act which automatically increased pressure on the OHS to publish more articles from the local groups. The OHS obviously succumbed to that pressure. Still, there was no excuse for publishing some essays that were blatantly polemical in spite of their innocuous titles such as J.M. Clark's "The Municipal Loan Fund in Upper Canada"<sup>103</sup> and De W. Carter's "Relative Sizes and Capacities of Our Canals Reflected in Trend of Traffic."<sup>104</sup> While the former boils down to a diatribe against the evils of deficit financing, the latter was basically a plea for the immediate deepening of the St. Lawrence canal system to

prevent the loss of the lucrative grain trade to the Americans.

Soon after the outbreak of the Second World War, it appeared as if the days of the OHS might be numbered. Weakened by the longevity of the Depression, the OHS was staggered by an almost fatal combination of blows during the early 'forties that sent it reeling to the brink of dissolution. No volumes of the journal were published in 1940 or 1941. Fortunately a few stalwarts like C.W. Jefferys, the president, and members at the University of Western Ontario kept their faith in the value of the OHS and its journal, and struggled successfully to resume publication in 1942. James Talman took over the editorial reins and with the co-operation of Fred Landon, then the chief librarian at the University of Western Ontario, and the help of Lillian Benson and others on the library staff, he guided volumes thirty-four through thirty-seven to completion.

When the war ended, George Spragge returned from the Air Force to assume a share of the society's administrative chores. A weary but grateful James Talman passed on to him the editorial and secretarial tasks in 1947. The infusion of new blood had an immediate effect. Spragge convinced the executive to change the journal's name to Ontario History, a simpler and more appealing title derived from the example of American local history publications. <sup>105</sup> Volume thirty-nine also included a new feature, "Book Notes", an annual listing of many of the recent publications relating to the

history of Ontario. At the same time, Spragge urged that Ontario History become a quarterly but the suggestion was deferred by the executive. Within a year, however, he had persuaded the council to cease publishing the News Letter and incorporate it in a quarterly form of Ontario History.<sup>106</sup> The journal burst into colour with a new cover and as a quarterly in 1949. Thus was established the basic format that has lasted with the exception of a few changes to this day.

During the 1940s the OHSR evolved into a more complete scholarly journal under the care of James Talman and George Spragge. Their efforts in promoting a higher standard of scholarship were facilitated after the war by the prodigious research into the province's past undertaken by a new generation of amateur and professional historians and by graduate students. By the time the new quarterly was launched, Spragge demanded that all articles show evidence of sophistication in research and writing, and he refused to publish essays of an antiquarian sort that had previously appeared in the Papers and Records. Early in 1948 Spragge took another step towards upgrading the journal by drafting Professor J.M.S. Careless of the University of Toronto's History Department into the editorial committee. Careless assumed so much of the work that Spragge commented a few years later: "He has pretty much been the editorial committee by himself."<sup>107</sup> Under these editors who had a profound

empathy with serious amateur historians and a commitment to promote their work, the quarterly attempted to strike a balance between the research articles of both professional and amateur historians. That balance remains the keynote and perhaps the most important feature of Ontario History insofar as it aims to foster the study of history in the province among all segments of the population.

The changes in editorial policy and format during the 'forties were paralleled by the beginnings of change in the kind of essays appearing in the journal. Articles publicizing new source material are noteworthy such as Lillian F. Gates' description of the contents of recently discovered journals of the Legislative Council at the Ontario Archives in "The Legislative Council of Upper Canada"<sup>108</sup> and Spragge's similar effort in "A Letter from John Galt."<sup>109</sup> A significant departure was the growing interdisciplinary character of Ontario History. Historical geography was represented by J.W. Watson's "The Changing Industrial Pattern of the Niagara Peninsula,"<sup>110</sup> and archaeology by Frank Ridley's "A Search for Ossossane and Its Environs,"<sup>111</sup> and Kenneth Kidd's "The Identification of French Mission Sites in Huron County: A Study in Procedure."<sup>112</sup> William Colgate examined aspects of the history of Ontario art in "George Theodore Berthon: A Canadian Painter of Eminent Victorians,"<sup>113</sup> and "Hoppner Meyer: A Painter and Engraver of Upper Canada."<sup>114</sup>

Only a very few professional historians and senior

graduate students contributed articles on political affairs, and then only for the pre-Confederation era. W.B. Kerr's "When Orange and Green United 1832-9; The Alliance of Macdonell and Gowan"<sup>115</sup> touched upon a subject replete with further research possibilities. George Spragge examined aspects of the wide sphere of Imperial political events in "The Provincial Agent for Upper Canada,"<sup>116</sup> and I.A. Stewart in "The 1841 Election of Dr. William Dunlop as Member of Parliament for Huron County,"<sup>117</sup> focussed on the necessity of more detailed studies of the political process at the local level since the outcome of this particular election "depended on local quarrels."

Clearly the 'forties was a decade of change in the history of the journal, but it would be a distortion to ignore the continuity upon which that change was built. True to the traditions of the periodical, social, cultural and economic history, biography, and articles of the note-and-document variety continued to appear in every issue. Only a few of these essays need be cited as examples of the major trends. John Barnett's "Silas Fletcher, Instigator of the Upper Canadian Rebellion"<sup>118</sup> and T.A. Reed's, "The Scaddings, a Pioneer Family in York"<sup>119</sup> were representative types of biographical sketches. A variety of manuscripts were of a socio-cultural nature. T. Roy Woodhouse's delightful yet fictional "A Diary for the Year 1827"<sup>120</sup> was a product of this imaginative author's breadth of knowledge of the social life of Upper Canada in the 1820s. Pearl

Wilson tore several strips from the pioneer myths of deprivation and primitive living in "Consumer Buying in Upper Canada, 1791-1840,"<sup>121</sup> and Lord Selkirk's ill-fated "Baldoon" settlement was well-treated by Fred Coyne Hamil in "Lord Selkirk in Upper Canada."<sup>122</sup> Two of the first articles in the journal pertaining to post-Confederation Ontario life were Alan Bogue's "The Agricultural Press in Ontario"<sup>123</sup> and Talman's "Some Precursors of the Ontario Historical Society."<sup>124</sup> Several articles of a social and economic nature were of high calibre. W.J. Patterson, for instance, provided new perspective in "The Long Point Furnace,"<sup>125</sup> as did John Philp, a graduate student at the University of Western Ontario, in "The Economic and Social Effects of the British Garrisons on the Development of Western Upper Canada."<sup>126</sup> In this field post-Confederation topics were passed over, but an exception was J.A. Bannister's overview of the economic history of "Port Dover Harbour"<sup>127</sup> between 1793-1940.

A blend of biography and the history of education was provided in George Spragge's "The Cornwall Grammar School under John Strachan,"<sup>128</sup> the second of his articles of this kind.<sup>129</sup> As a follow-up to these works, the executive of the OHS, as early as 1941, had intended to publish Spragge's edition of The John Strachan Letter Book: 1812-1834<sup>130</sup> as volume thirty-five of the OHSPR. This intention was not fulfilled as the precarious nature of war-time publishing and severe labour problems delayed the printing of the book

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until 1946. In the introduction to this publication, Spragge built upon concepts stated in his earlier essays, and fashioned a revisionist interpretation of the Tory role in general, and Strachan's role in particular, in the development of Upper Canada. It is no exaggeration to suggest that Spragge deserves more credit than he is generally given in Ontario and Canadian historiography for his pioneer efforts to dismantle the flimsy superstructure of the liberal-whig interpretation of early Ontario history. By demolishing the image of Strachan and the Tories as arch-reactionaries who delayed the achievement of responsible government for three decades, Spragge helped to set the stage for a full scale re-interpretation of Upper Canadian history in later years.

Throughout the 'fifties and early 'sixties the editors of Ontario History changed frequently. The pressures of managing the Ontario Archives forced Spragge to resign the editorship in 1952. W.E. Hanna, a retired high school principal, assumed the position in September of that year and retained it until his death in 1955. For a brief interlude of three issues, Ontario History was temporarily in the hands of the venerable Librarian Emeritus of the University of Toronto, William Stewart Wallace. The work was then taken over in January 1956 by Professor Morris Zaslow of the University of Toronto, an authority on northern Ontario and Canadian history.

When Zaslow left for a year's study in England in

1960, John S. Moir of Carleton University, noted for his contributions in the field of pre-Confederation religious and social history, filled the void. By this time however it was becoming clear that the editorial duties were far too onerous for any one individual; hence, when Zaslow returned in 1961, he was appointed associate editor to assist Moir. During the Zaslow-Moir years, 1956-1962, Ontario History was enlarged and an attempt made to enhance its appeal by more frequent use of illustrative material. A handsome pictorial cover was introduced in the September 1962 issue as a final step in their campaign to improve the quarterly's image.

Since George Spragge's heyday, one of the principal aims of the OHS has been "... to gain the respect and confidence of scholars by the calibre of the material it publishes and at the same time to continue to offer a place for the work of the serious amateur historians."<sup>132</sup> The basic editorial criterion of selection has been and still is, "a just combination of sound historical scholarship, effective presentation and adequately broad reader interest in the topic."<sup>133</sup> Yet to maintain these standards has often been an agonizing and thankless task. An uphill struggle has had to be fought to achieve a desirable balance between the contributions of professional and amateur historians simply because of the dearth of articles submitted by the latter. This state of affairs was quite serious in the late 'fifties and early

'sixties. John Moir pleaded at the 1961 annual meeting for more articles by non-academicians as a means of restoring the balance. On this same occasion he acknowledged the OHS's debt to the professors and students of the University of Toronto who for some time had contributed a large proportion of the articles printed in Ontario History.<sup>134</sup>

Certainly the most striking feature of the periodical in the past quarter century has been the predominance of academic writers, either university professors or their senior students. The table of contents of Ontario History reads like a "who's who" of the historical profession in Ontario over the past two decades. It was no coincidence that G.F.G. Stanley's "Regionalism in Canadian History" appeared in 1959, for it mirrored the growing interest of academicians in local studies:

The regional approach to Canadian history is a legitimate and a valuable one. Valuable because it is based upon a frank recognition of the regional realities of Canadian life; valuable because it acknowledges the interrelationship of physical environment and the complexities of cultural and economic arrangements within a given area; valuable because it provides an empirically verifiable interpretation of our national history.

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Regrettably, after most of the academic historians had realized what the amateurs might have termed the error of their ways and recognized the value of local and regional history, the amateur historians who had dominated the periodical for half a century almost gave the OHSR to the academicians

by default. Perhaps the more scholarly criterion for selecting articles and their fear of comparison with the professional historians frightened away a large number of amateur contributors. Furthermore, the proliferation of rival publications issued by local historical societies must be taken into account.

Ironically, had the amateurs submitted manuscripts, there is no question that the harried editors would have gone to great lengths to get them into print.<sup>136</sup> As they explained on several occasions, "since the well-being of our Society, and of Ontario History, depend upon the interest and support of those people to whom history is not a business but an avocation, the dearth of material from our amateur friends is of serious concern to the editors."<sup>137</sup> Luckily there have always been one or two submissions by amateur historians before each issue so that a semblance of the balance could be struck. The difficulty, nevertheless, continues to exist and only rarely has there been even a small backlog of manuscripts prepared by non-academic writers.

The invasion of the professional historians and the retreat of the amateurs had an effect on the format of Ontario History during the 1950s. The large number of note-and-document entries in part reflects the paucity of manuscripts submitted by non-academic historians. It would be an error, however, to slough off these contributions as mere "fillers" for they often served important functions such as

pointing out new areas of study and publicizing new sources. Lillian Benson's "An O.A.C. Student in the 1880s,"<sup>138</sup> Gerald Craig's "Comments on Upper Canada in 1836 by Thomas Carr,"<sup>139</sup> and Leslie Gray's "From Bethlehem to Fairfield 1798"<sup>140</sup> are examples of the significant documentary material published. W.G. Ormsby's "The Upper Canada State Papers: An Untapped Research Source"<sup>141</sup> was another valuable article of a slightly different nature.

A combination of an academic commitment to interdisciplinary approaches to the study of history, and the lack of submissions from amateur historians probably accounts for the larger number of articles by students of literature, archaeology, and anthropology. Carl F. Klinck, an authority on early Canadian literature at the University of Western Ontario, contributed several articles on the literary history of Upper Canada.<sup>142</sup> Archaeologists, in particular, made use of the periodical to keep readers abreast of new findings in their field. Robert Popham's "Late Huron Occupations of Ontario: An Archaeological Survey of Innisfil Township,"<sup>143</sup> Wilfred and Elsie Jury's "The Burley Site,"<sup>144</sup> and Paul Sweetman's "A Preliminary Report on the Peterborough Petroglyphs"<sup>145</sup> clearly deserved a place in the journal. For a few years, 1956 to 1962, it became routine for the quarterly to publish annually an account of archaeological activities across the province. The readers of Ontario History were also treated to a series of articles in the early 'sixties

dealing with the controversy over the origins of the Hurons.<sup>146</sup>

And finally, anthropologist R.C. Dailey's "The Midewiwin, Ontario's First Medical Society,"<sup>147</sup> was the first of a series of anthropological studies. It is regrettable that neither the annual archaeological report nor articles on current research and findings have been retained.

The interdisciplinary nature of the journal was maintained through the 'sixties and into the 'seventies. Thus, solid contributions in the history of literature,<sup>148</sup> anthropology,<sup>149</sup> and historical geography<sup>150</sup> were to be found in the quarterly. A manuscript of a unique nature, J.M.B. Bell's "The Use of Pollen Analysis to Determine Post-Glacial Vegetation and Environment,"<sup>151</sup> was a methodological piece that explained how the historian-archaeologist can use the techniques of the biologist to gather data regarding the agricultural activities and society of early man. Several articles on architectural history were indicative of the upsurge in popular interest in the preservation of buildings of historic and architectural significance.<sup>152</sup> The June 1971 issue of Ontario History, devoted largely to articles pertaining to the philosophy, politics, legislation, and agencies of architectural conservancy in the province and elsewhere, suggested the renewed interest of the Ontario Historical Society in preservation and its willingness to become politically active in this area.

During the 'fifties the number and quality of bio-

graphical sketches continued to remain high, but conceptually, they were of the kind that had been seen in the OHSPR for decades.<sup>153</sup> Articles in the field of social and cultural history also remained a feature, covering the full sweep of the province's history to 1900. E.J. Lajeunesse's "The First Four Years of the Settlement on the Canadian Side of the Detroit River"<sup>154</sup> was a rare contribution relative to the early French period in southwestern Ontario which anticipated his volume in the Champlain Society's Ontario series entitled The Windsor Border Region (1960). However, the lion's share of the submissions continued to focus on aspects of social and cultural life in pre-Confederation Ontario. There were important contributions on land and settlement policies,<sup>155</sup> travellers' accounts,<sup>156</sup> the Talbot settlement,<sup>157</sup> colonization roads,<sup>158</sup> art forms,<sup>159</sup> and journalism.<sup>160</sup> Reflecting the North American interest in black studies in the 'fifties, there were a considerable number of essays pertaining to the negro in Ontario before 1867. Fred Landon still dominated the field of abolitionism and anti-slavery activities,<sup>161</sup> but newcomers such as J.I. Cooper examined the religious and educational aspects of "The Mission to the Fugitive Slaves at London,"<sup>162</sup> and A.L. Murray described a recently unearthed newspaper file in "The Provincial Freeman: A New Source for the History of the Negro in Canada."<sup>163</sup>

Noteworthy articles on religious and educational themes became more frequent in the 'fifties, an indication

perhaps that as modern society became increasingly secularized, its religious heritage became more historically interesting. John Moir began to demonstrate his expertise in the sadly neglected field of Methodist Church history. In "Early Methodism in the Niagara Peninsula"<sup>164</sup> he introduced the relevant theme of the Canadianization of the various denominations. He also struck a blow at the popular tradition of a united Methodism in support of Egerton Ryerson and the Christian Guardian in "Methodism and Higher Education, 1843-1849,"<sup>165</sup> an article that anticipated Goldwin S. French's more complete analysis of the same theme in Parsons and Politics (1962).<sup>166</sup> High and Low Church rivalry was examined in John Kenyon's "The Influence of the Oxford Movement upon the Church of England in Upper Canada,"<sup>167</sup> and John Strachan's motivation behind "The Founding of Trinity College, Toronto"<sup>168</sup> was analyzed by J.L.H. Henderson. George Spragge's "Elementary Education in Upper Canada, 1820-1840"<sup>169</sup> threw more light upon the pre-Ryersonian school system and completed another stage in his quest to vindicate the much-maligned Tories.

Tentative steps into aspects of urban history were taken in M.J. Havran, "Windsor - Its First Hundred Years,"<sup>170</sup> Leopold Lamontagne, "Kingston's French Heritage."<sup>171</sup> and R.A. Preston, "The History of the Port of Kingston."<sup>172</sup> J.E. McNab's synthesis of "Toronto's Industrial Growth to 1891"<sup>173</sup> provided a needed overview of Toronto's industrial growth and supplemented D.C. Master's The Rise of Toronto, 1850-1890

(Toronto, 1947). The essay also identified many of the economic interrelationships between the city and its hinterland.

In economic history, Beryl Scott's "The Story of Silver Islet"<sup>174</sup> was one of the few articles to explore the almost totally ignored story of the exploitation and development of natural resources in northern Ontario since Confederation. D.J. Wurtele's "Mossom Boyd, Lumber King of the Trent Valley,"<sup>175</sup> was a short but highly suggestive incursion into this topic in a more southerly clime. Another in this short series of articles pointing to the endless research possibilities in post-Confederation Ontario was J.J. Talman's "Migration from Ontario to Manitoba in 1871."<sup>176</sup> Slowly historians were discovering that Ontario had a history after 1867, but they still had yet to write of the dynamism and industrial diversity, and the concomitant economic and social problems, that characterizes the economy of the province in the twentieth century.

Through the 'fifties political history was given short shrift, perhaps because of the emphasis placed upon it by earlier historians, but the few political essays that did appear were noteworthy. Edith Firth's "The Administration of Peter Russell, 1796-1799" was a judicious examination of this "excellent if unspectacular administrator."<sup>177</sup> Taking a cue from George Spragge, R.E. Saunders analyzed the identity, nature, recruiting procedures, and qualifications for

membership of Upper Canada's Tory elite in "What was the Family Compact?"<sup>178</sup> In the area of post-Confederation political history, it was a healthy sign to find several studies on such fundamental themes as nationalism and imperialism in "Ontario's Contribution to the South African War" by Norman Penlington;<sup>179</sup> provincial rights and patriotism in "National vs. Provincial Loyalty: The Ontario Western Boundary Dispute, 1883-1884" by K.A. MacKirdy;<sup>180</sup> and the political impact of the National Policy in "The Dominion Election of 1878 in Ontario" by David Lee.<sup>181</sup>

Another trend in Ontario History during the 'fifties was the emergence of a number of historians to fill the void in the field of military and naval affairs left by the death of Ernest Cruikshank in 1939. R.A. Preston's "The Fate of Kingston's Warships"<sup>182</sup> and "Broad Pennants on Point Frederick,"<sup>183</sup> G.F.G. Stanley's "Historic Kingston and Its Defences,"<sup>184</sup> and C.W. Humphries' "The Capture of York"<sup>185</sup> mirrored the healthy state of affairs in this area. A new approach was taken by W.M. Weekes in "The War of 1812: Civil Authority and Martial Law in Upper Canada,"<sup>186</sup> an article which illuminates the relations between the civil and military administrations during the war. And, finally, C.P. Stacey laid to rest the militia myth of the War of 1812, and critically examined the long-term results of the conflict in "The War of 1812 in Canadian History."<sup>187</sup>

The popularity of military history among a growing

number of amateurs and academicians continued into the 'sixties. M. MacLeod's "Fight at the West Gate"<sup>188</sup> was a valuable study relative to the military collapse of New France. Several authors examined the so-called "Patriot War" of 1838: G.F.G. Stanley, "Invasion: 1838" [Battle of the Windmill],<sup>189</sup> J.P. Martyne, "The Patriot Invasion of Pelee Island"<sup>190</sup> and Allan Douglas, "The Battle of Windsor."<sup>191</sup> Another group of filibusters was considered in F.M. Quealey's "The Fenian Invasion of Canada West June 1st. and 2nd., 1866,"<sup>192</sup> and W.S. Neidhardt's "The Fenian Brotherhood and Western Ontario: The Final Years."<sup>193</sup> In naval history, M. MacLeod argued in "Simcoe's Schooner Onandaga"<sup>194</sup> that the military and non-military contributions of the Upper Canadian governmental marine service was deserving of more attention. And at long last, in "The Story of Laura Secord Revisited," George Ingram provided the first clear and reasonable assessment of the role played by the heroine of the Battle of Beaverdams by examining the historiography of the subject and by painstakingly describing the development of the Secord mythology.<sup>195</sup>

Since the December 1962 issue, Ontario History has been under the editorial supervision of Paul G. Cornell and his colleagues at the University of Waterloo,<sup>196</sup> a group that deserves credit for the standards attained by the quarterly. One of the first decisions made by the new editor-in-chief was to seek the advice of the rank and file OHS membership

on the matter of improving Ontario History. An editorial<sup>197</sup> was published asking the readers for their suggestions. Most respondents desired no drastic changes in the type of essays published in the quarterly and agreed that "the scholarly articles fulfilled the important function of disseminating ideas and information about Ontario's past that might otherwise be lost."<sup>198</sup> A general desire was evident, on the other hand, for "a common meeting place, a forum, through which [the members could] exchange information, ideas, opinions and experiences." Acting upon these ideas, Cornell introduced a "Notes and Queries" section to which readers could send comments and historical "snippets", and a Local History News Section. Later, the society's executive followed the editors' advice in establishing the annual Cruikshank Medal award in 1967 as a means of encouraging both amateur and academic historians to submit their best work to Ontario History. Judging from the past five volumes of the journal, it appears that some progress has been made in satisfying the bulk of the academic and non-academic readers, and in attracting the work of capable amateur historians.

Given the professionalization of local studies, it is not surprising that in terms of scholarly content and of the variety of new and old subjects studied, the period of the 'sixties and early 'seventies is a landmark era for the quarterly. Even in the staid area of historical biography, exciting changes were set in motion. Alan Wilson's method

in "John Northway's Career: An Approach To Ontario's History"<sup>199</sup> was pregnant with possibilities if applied to hitherto little-known Canadian businessmen and public figures. Wilson argued convincingly that Northway's rise from penniless immigrant to millionaire tells us much about late nineteenth and early twentieth century Ontario, "about its response to depression and prosperity, about the outlook of the southwestern region, about the pull of metropolitan Toronto and about its economic imperialism on a national scale, about Toronto's social, religious and cultural life, and about the successful attempt of an immigrant to discover that 'Canadian identity' which eludes so many Canadians." Perhaps influenced by Wilson, other writers soon contributed similar studies. T.W. Acheson's "John Baldwin: Portrait of a Colonial Entrepreneur,"<sup>200</sup> F.H. Armstrong's "George Jervis Goodhue: Pioneer Merchant of London, Upper Canada,"<sup>201</sup> and R.G. Hoskins' "Hiram Walker and the Origins and Development of Walkerville, Ontario"<sup>202</sup> were the first entrepreneurial histories to appear in the journal. New ground was also broken by Donald Swainson in "Business and Politics: The Career of John Willoughby Crawford,"<sup>203</sup> in which the author posited that Crawford was typical of a class of businessmen-politicians in control of enormous economic power who successfully "combined membership in the House of Commons with their business activities."

For the first time since the 1930s, political history began to take on real significance in the pages of Ontario

History. But unlike the dusty official and constitutional bent of the earlier period, recent studies have demonstrated an awareness of the social, cultural, and intellectual factors that have influenced political life. This was an indication perhaps of the greater sophistication in historical studies brought about in large part by the advances since the 'thirties in the social sciences. Revisionism is the keynote of the work done for the Upper Canadian period. Building upon the foundation laid earlier by George Spragge and R.E. Saunders, S.F. Wise and his students and others, have added immensely to our knowledge of the institutional and philosophical basis of Upper Canadian Toryism and of its influence on the conservative tradition in Canada. S.F. Wise's "Tory Factionalism: Kingston Elections and Upper Canadian Politics, 1820-1836,"<sup>204</sup> and "Upper Canada and the Conservative Tradition,"<sup>205</sup> Elva Richard's "The Joneses of Brockville and the Family Compact,"<sup>206</sup> Paul Baldwin's "The Political Power of Colonel Thomas Talbot,"<sup>207</sup> H.V. Nelles, "Loyalism and Local Power: The District of Niagara 1792-1837,"<sup>208</sup> F.H. Armstrong's "The Carfrae Family: A Study in Early Toronto Toryism,"<sup>209</sup> D.R. Beer's "Sir Allan MacNab and the Adjutant Generalship of Militia, 1846-1847,"<sup>210</sup> J.D. Purdy's "John Strachan's Educational Policies, 1815-1841,"<sup>211</sup> T. Cook's "John Beverley Robinson and the Conservative Blueprint for the Upper Canadian Community"<sup>212</sup> and M.L. Magill's "William Allan and the War of 1812"<sup>213</sup> have thrown light on the

significance of the so-called "Family Compact." It can be described as nothing less than "A Tory Renaissance" in Canadian historical studies that has thoroughly revised our earlier preconceptions of Upper Canadian social and political life.

The other side of the political coin was not ignored during the 'sixties. Several articles examined the theme of William Lyon Mackenzie in exile,<sup>214</sup> and others dealt with various aspects of reformism such as James E. Rea in "Barnabas Bidwell, A Note on the American Years."<sup>215</sup> One unique contribution was Elizabeth Arthur's "General Dickson and the Indian Liberating Army in the North" which examined unrest in the Lake Superior District in 1836-37.<sup>216</sup> Not surprisingly the centennial year 1967 witnessed a fine crop of articles relative to the Confederation period that included Paul Cornell's "The Genesis of Ontario Politics in the Province of Canada (1838-1871),"<sup>217</sup> Bruce Hodgins' "Democracy and the Ontario Fathers of Confederation,"<sup>218</sup> and Foster Griezic's "William McDougall and the North Ontario and North Lanark By-Elections."<sup>219</sup> Oddly enough, with one or two exceptions, there had been no articles in the quarterly dealing with this phase of Ontario's political past before these studies appeared.

Another very significant trend in the journal during the 'sixties was the number of doctoral candidates and recent university graduates who wrote for it. They produced some

of the best studies to have appeared in print pertaining to post-Confederation political history. A. Margaret Evans' work on Oliver Mowat,<sup>220</sup> Brian D. Tennyson's on William Hearst,<sup>221</sup> Charles W. Humphries' on James P. Whitney,<sup>222</sup> Margaret Prang's on Newton W. Rowell,<sup>223</sup> Peter Olivers' on Howard Ferguson,<sup>224</sup> and Neil McKenty's on Mitchell Hepburn, were long overdue and most welcome contributions to scholarship. Various elections in Ontario, both provincial and federal, attracted the attention of many authors, but representative of the scope of the work being done in this field were Lorne Brown's "The Macdonald - Cartwright Struggle in Lennox, November 1873,"<sup>225</sup> "The West Toronto By - Election of 1873 and Thomas Moss,"<sup>226</sup> K.A. MacKirdy's illustrated "The Loyalty Issue in the 1891 Federal Election Campaign, and an Ironic Footnote,"<sup>227</sup> James T. Watt's "Anti-Catholicism in Ontario Politics: The Role of the Protestant Protective Association in the 1894 Election,"<sup>228</sup> Terence Crowley's "Mackenzie King and the 1914 Election,"<sup>229</sup> Margaret Prang's "Mackenzie King Woos Ontario, 1919-1921,"<sup>230</sup> Robert Cuff's "The Conservative Party Machine and the Election of 1911 in Ontario"<sup>231</sup> and "The Toronto Eighteen and the Election of 1911,"<sup>232</sup> and Ian Macpherson's "The 1945 Collapse of the C.C.F. In Windsor."<sup>233</sup> The list is not complete, but it gives an indication of the burgeoning number of important post-Confederation studies written since 1960.

The Six Nations Iroquois have been the subject of

nearly a dozen articles in the past decade, reflecting it would appear the new concern and awareness created by Indian militancy during the period. This is especially obvious in the work of Toronto lawyer, Malcolm Montgomery, who had worked on the Indians' behalf: "The Legal Status of the Six Nations Indians in Canada,"<sup>234</sup> "The Six Nations and the Macdonald Franchise,"<sup>235</sup> and "Historiography of the Iroquois Indians."<sup>236</sup> G.F.G. Stanley's coverage of the military efforts of the Six Nations during the American Revolution and War of 1812,<sup>237</sup> and C.M. Johnston's investigation of aspects of the political infighting in the valley of the Grand in "Joseph Brant, the Grand River Lands and the Northwest Crisis,"<sup>238</sup> and "William Claus and John Norton: A Struggle for Power in Old Ontario"<sup>239</sup> added considerably to our knowledge and were typical of other contributions in this field. Other noteworthy essays on aspects of Indian history were R.J. Surtee's "The Development of an Indian Reserve Policy in Canada,"<sup>240</sup> Donald Smith's sensitive portrayal of "'Grey Owl',"<sup>241</sup> and E.P. Patterson's "The Poet and Indian: Indian Themes in the Poetry of Duncan Campbell Scott and John Collier."<sup>242</sup>

In the 'sixties, social and cultural themes continued to bulk large in Ontario History. For the pre-Confederation era, especially, there was a rich variety of articles on a multitude of topics related to the history of settlement. Representative of some of the better submissions were D.W.L. Earl, "British Views of Colonial Upper Canada, 1791-1841,"<sup>243</sup> J.K. Johnson, "The Chelsea Pensioners in Upper Canada,"<sup>244</sup>

H.J. Johnston, "Immigration to the Five Eastern Townships of the Huron Tract,"<sup>245</sup> Leo A. Johnson, "Land Policy, Population Growth and Social Structure in the Home District, 1793-1851,"<sup>246</sup> Theodore D. Regehr, "Land Ownership in Upper Canada, 1783-1796: A Background to the First Table of Fees,"<sup>247</sup> and Michael Cross, "The Lumber Community of Upper Canada, 1815-67."<sup>248</sup> Aspects of settlement in the North toward the end of the nineteenth century were covered in Florence B. Murray's "Agricultural Settlement on the Canadian Shield: Ottawa River to Georgian Bay."<sup>249</sup> The violence that characterized some of these communities was analyzed by F.H. Armstrong in "The York Riots of March 23, 1832,"<sup>250</sup> J.K. Johnston in "Colonel James FitzGibbon and the Suppression of Irish Riots in Upper Canada,"<sup>251</sup> and Michael Cross in "Stony Monday, 1849: The Rebellion Losses Riots in Bytown."<sup>252</sup> Hereward Senior, an authority on the Orange Order in the United Kingdom, documented the early history of the Order in Ontario, a neglected theme, in "The Genesis of Canadian Orangeism."<sup>253</sup> Negro history first examined by Fred Landon, drew the interest of a number of other historians such as J.K. Farrell in "Schemes for the Transplanting of Refugee American Negroes from Upper Canada in the 1840's,"<sup>254</sup> D.G. Hill in "Negroes in Toronto, 1793-1865"<sup>255</sup> and F.H. Armstrong in "The Toronto Directories and the Negro Community in the Late 1840's,"<sup>256</sup>

Historians in the past dozen years continued to show a concern for studying the religious and educational history

of the province in greater detail. The crucial importance of religion in the social life of nineteenth century Ontario became much clearer as a result of such contributions as John Moir's "The Upper Canadian Religious Tradition"<sup>257</sup> and "The Upper Canadian Roots of Church Disestablishment,"<sup>258</sup> S.W. Horrall's "The Clergy and the Election of Bishop Cronyn,"<sup>259</sup> James K. Lewis' "Religious Nature of the Early Negro Migration to Canada and the Amherstburg Baptist Association,"<sup>260</sup> John Bank's "American Presbyterians in the Niagara Peninsula 1800-1840,"<sup>261</sup> and W.H. Heik's "Becoming an Indigenous Church: The Lutheran Church in Waterloo County, Ontario."<sup>262</sup> In the history of education, emphasis was placed on the makers and shapers of the school system, the Superintendents of Education, in essays like R.D. Gidney's "The Rev. Robert Murray: Ontario's First Superintendent of Schools,"<sup>263</sup> D. Onn's "Egerton Ryerson's Philosophy of Education: Something Borrowed or Something New?,"<sup>264</sup> A. McGregor's "Egerton Ryerson, Albert Carman, and the Founding of Albert College, Belleville,"<sup>265</sup> and Robert M. Stamp's "Educational Leadership in Ontario 1867-1967."<sup>266</sup>

The growth of urban studies in Canadian universities during the 'sixties was also reflected in Ontario History. A large share of the limelight was focussed on the history of Toronto, a situation largely brought about by the prodigious output of F.H. Armstrong. In addition to his essays on the York riots, the Toronto Negro community and the Carfrae family already cited, his writings on the Great Toronto Fire of 1849

and its aftermath were notable.<sup>267</sup> So too was Michael Cross' "The Stormy History of the York Roads, 1833-1865."<sup>268</sup> Richard A. Preston described the powerful social impact that the Royal Military College has had on Kingston's development and argued that the college helped make it the unique city that it professes to be in "R.M.C. and Kingston: The Effect of Imperial and Military Influences on a Canadian Community."<sup>269</sup> One of the first comparative urban studies printed in Canada and worthy of emulation was Hugh Johnson's "Stratford and Goderich in the Days of the Canada Company."<sup>270</sup> Moving north, several historians such as F.K. McKean in "Early Parry Sound and the Beatty Family,"<sup>271</sup> and T.D. Tait, "Haileybury: The Early Years,"<sup>272</sup> cleared the way for others to follow in examining the urban development of northern Ontario.

Post-Confederation topics in social and cultural history that had long been overlooked were touched upon for the first time. Attention was centred on women's suffrage in J.E. Stowe's "The Influence of Dr. Emily Howard Stowe on the Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada;"<sup>273</sup> on recreation and leisure in R.I. Wolfe's "The Summer Resorts of Ontario in the Nineteenth Century;"<sup>274</sup> on medical history in C. Greenland's "Services for the Mentally Retarded in Ontario;"<sup>275</sup> on nativism in J.T. Watt's "Anti-Catholicism in Ontario Politics: The Role of the Protestant Protective Association in the 1894 Election;"<sup>276</sup> on Mennonite folk art in N.L. Patterson's "Mennonite Folk Art of Waterloo County;"<sup>277</sup> and on historic

preservation in G. Killan's "The First Old Fort York Preservation Movement 1905-1909: An Episode in the History of the Ontario Historical Society."<sup>278</sup> Another recent first for Ontario History was the publication of two important articles on labour history: F.H. Armstrong's "Reformer as Capitalist: William Lyon Mackenzie and the Printers' Strike of 1826"<sup>279</sup> and J.D. Leach's "The Workers' Unity League and the Stratford Furniture Workers: The Anatomy of a Strike."<sup>280</sup> Both these essays were a testimonial to the glaring lack of research into this area by Ontario scholars. It should be stressed again that what has been written here is not a complete categorization of the recent contents of the journal; at best, it indicates the quality and diversity of the submissions that have appeared in the past dozen years.

Economic history, unfortunately, has made few advances in the past decade. Though several business histories have appeared -- J.A. Blyth's "The Development of the Paper Industry in Old Ontario, 1824-1867,"<sup>281</sup> John Saywell's "The Early History of Canadian Oil Companies: A Chapter in Canadian Business History,"<sup>282</sup> Edward Phelps's "Foundations of the Canadian Oil Industry, 1850-1866,"<sup>283</sup> and A.G. Talbot's "Ontario Origin of the Canadian Explosives Industry"<sup>284</sup> -- they succeeded only in whetting the appetite for more substantial treatments. Similarly, while northern Ontario received a small share of attention in M. Van Every's "Francis Hector Clergue and the Rise of Sault Ste. Marie as an Industrial Centre,"<sup>285</sup> D.

Chaput's "Michipicoten Island: Ghosts, Copper and Bad Luck,"<sup>286</sup> and J. Konarek's "Algoma Central and Hudson Bay Railway: The Beginnings,"<sup>287</sup> the complex social and economic history of this vast region remains to be studied and interpreted by Ontario's historians. Finally, a suggestive essay in technological history, A. Margaret Evans and R.W. Irwin's "Government Tractors in Ontario, 1917-1918"<sup>288</sup> indicated the need for even the most basic studies in the history of science and technology, of the war effort in the province, and of government agricultural policies. Without question, in economic history much remains to be done on such fundamental themes as demography, business and entrepreneurial history, economic ideologies, and the role of the state and private industry in the exploitation and conservation of our natural resources to name but a few.

The number of articles in Ontario History pertaining to the history of ideas has increased in recent years. Beginning in the 'sixties, there appeared John Munro's "English Canadianism and the Demand for Canadian Autonomy, 1903,"<sup>289</sup> E.P. Patterson's "The Poet and the Indian: Indian Themes in the Poetry of Duncan Campbell Scott and John Collier,"<sup>290</sup> and James Horne's "R.M. Bucke: Pioneer Psychiatrist, Practical Mystic."<sup>291</sup> In the early 'seventies, there has also been a spate of articles in intellectual history: D. McNab's "Peter McArthur and Canadian Nationalism,"<sup>292</sup> J.J. Bellomo's "Upper Canadian Attitudes Towards Crime and Punishment (1832-1851),"<sup>293</sup>

James M. Clemens' "Taste Not; Touch Not; Handle Not; A Study of the Social Assumptions of the Temperance Literature and Temperance Supporters in Canada West between 1839 and 1859,"<sup>294</sup> and Terry Cook's "John Beverley Robinson and the Conservative Blueprint for the Upper Canadian Community."<sup>295</sup> These studies, of course, merely scratched the surface of intellectual history which has just come into its own in Canadian universities.

A thought-provoking essay of a quasi-intellectual character was A.R.M. Lower's "Ontario-Does it Exist?"<sup>296</sup> In it the author argued that except in the geographical and legal sense, this province is a figment of the historians' imagination. It is curious, perhaps some might say revealing, that no historian has published a retort to this hypothesis. The answer to the question "What is Ontario?" cannot be found in Ontario History simply because studies are lacking in many areas. As indicated earlier, the contributors to the journal have not yet examined and interpreted the history, the sense of community, the values, and the traditions of the vast northern part of the province. Until that has been accomplished, the problem of "What is Ontario?" must remain unresolved.

Few essays of a historiographical nature are to be found in Ontario History. Hugh Stevenson's "James H. Coyne: An Early Contributor to Canadian Historical Scholarship"<sup>297</sup> and F.H. Armstrong's "Fred Landon, 1880-1969,"<sup>298</sup> while valuable for weighing the importance of two early OHS leaders, almost stand alone. What might be considered deplorable,

especially in view of the number of academicians who have a professional duty to define the philosophical rationale behind their work, is the glaring lack of essays on the philosophy of local history. On rare occasions in the past dozen years, several non-academic historians did enunciate their reasons for studying local history. Typical of these submissions was R.F. Leggett's "A Sense of History: A Guest Editorial",<sup>299</sup> an article that was essentially patriotic and inspirational, cemented together by a philosophy that was fundamentally Burkeian conservatism.

Perhaps it was partly the euphoria attending the centennial celebration of Confederation which accounted for these bursts of patriotic sentiment, or perhaps it was an atavism from the OHS past! Whatever the causes, during the last few years, spokesmen for the Ontario Historical Society have given voice to the original educational and patriotic purposes of the society. Nothing illustrates this better than Profiles of a Province: Studies in the History of Ontario, a scholarly collection of essays commissioned and published by the OHS to commemorate the centennial of Ontario, which was awarded a certificate of merit by the Local History Section of the Canadian Historical Association in 1969. According to Morris Zaslow the book was designed to inspire as well as to educate; indeed, the society hoped that the volume would

... reach the Citizens of Ontario -- particularly the

young people in the schools -- and make them aware of the glorious heritage bequeathed them by earlier generations of Upper Canadians and Ontarians, to the end that they will take a just pride in that heritage and be inspired to emulate the achievements of those who have gone before.

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Professor Zaslow's message sounds strange to modern ears. All the same, it suggests that the patriotic function still carries weight in the society's publications in addition to the major educational or scholarly purpose. Today, however, patriotic enthusiasm is invoked in a much different fashion than it was in 1898. At the turn of the century, pride in province, people, and culture was cultivated by a worshipful romantic and heroic, "drum and trumpet" brand of history. If Zaslow's statement is interpreted correctly, this function is now thought to be served automatically by meticulous research and tireless scholarship. Zaslow seems to say that a scholarly understanding of the key developments that have shaped Ontario and its basic characteristics is the soundest approach to fostering a love of province. This is credible enough, but surely Zaslow is overstating his case when he suggests that such an understanding will elevate Ontario's youth to such lofty heights of enthusiasm that they will "emulate the achievements of those who have gone before."

## II

Since 1898, the Ontario Historical Society has published additional volumes to supplement the Papers and

Records. Between 1898 and 1931 annual reports were issued that contained information about the activities of the various local historical societies. The aim was to facilitate communication between the widely scattered affiliates and to highlight the most promising activities as worthy of emulation. In addition, the reports contained a great deal of information about the OHS itself including the minutes of meetings, committee and officers' reports, library acquisitions, membership lists, and presidential addresses. Governmental retrenchment policies during the Depression led to the demise of the annual reports after 1931. The affiliates were relieved in 1944 when the News Letter appeared in their place.<sup>301</sup> The News Letter lasted until 1949 when financial considerations forced the society to sacrifice it for the sake of a quarterly Ontario History. Although it was the hope of the OHS to incorporate the News Letter in the quarterly, local society news appeared infrequently and in abbreviated form. This state of affairs proved inadequate and complaints arose in the 'sixties that the OHS was not fulfilling its co-ordinating function by providing a forum through which members could exchange information, ideas, opinions, and experiences.<sup>302</sup> Hence, a Local Society News Section was re-introduced into the quarterly until it was superseded in 1968 by a separate biannual pamphlet entitled the Bulletin.

During the 1920s and 1930s the OHS performed a valuable service by publishing five volumes of the Simcoe Papers,

three volumes of the Russell Papers and a single volume documentary history of The Settlement of the United Empire Loyalists on the Upper St. Lawrence and Bay of Quinte.<sup>303</sup> All were edited by E.A. Cruikshank who placed his prodigious editorial capacity at the disposal of the society without charge or condition. He even financed the publication of the Loyalist Settlement himself when the provincial government terminated its policy of printing the OHS documentary publications without cost in 1933.<sup>304</sup> As president of the OHS, the Brigadier had convinced the society of the need for publishing all the official and semi-official correspondence of the Lieutenant-Governors and Administrators of Upper Canada. He had been impressed by the publishing activities of the leading State Historical Societies to the south: "For the preservation of such documents, as exist only in manuscript form, printing is unquestionably the greatest service that an historical society can render to the State and student. Through the persistent efforts of the State Historical Societies, the Colonial Archives and Records in nearly all of the original thirteen provinces have been gradually transcribed and in great part, printed, thus making them accessible to a host of students, who otherwise could never have consulted them."<sup>305</sup> Unfortunately, the documentary history series ended with the Russell Papers, even though Cruikshank had edited the correspondence of Peter Hunter. Without government printing privileges, it became financially impos-

sible for the OHS to publish volumes of documents which had an estimated sale of but a few hundred copies.

At the time of publication, the documentary histories were praised by historians for their relative comprehensiveness, for the revelations contained in them, and for the accurate and helpful notes. Even so, complaints were made about minor errors of fact and document omissions in the first volume of the Simcoe Papers, and about the lack of exact reference sources for each document in the Dominion Archives.<sup>306</sup> Unfortunately, time has eroded much of the value of the Simcoe and Russell collections to the point that they are now unsatisfactory, "the Simcoe volumes because the transcription made under the direction of John Ross Robertson in the 1880s is inadequate when compared with the originals now in the Ontario Archives, and the Russell volumes because of the large quantity of Russell material that has become available since their publication."<sup>307</sup> The fate of the Loyalist Settlement is a somewhat happier one; its popularity among genealogists required the society to reprint the volume in 1966.

The Strachan Letter Book (1946), edited by George Spragge, was the last of the documentary volumes to be sponsored by the Ontario Historical Society. It was a volume of unusual value, as Spragge explained:

The years 1812-1822 include the war years and the changes which wars must bring about. They were years of beginnings: the beginning of opposition to the clergy reserves, of interdenominational rivalry, of increased assistance to the Church of England by the S.P.G., of a state - aided

elementary school system, of the establishment of a university, of the formation of an organized opposition to the Government, and of the establishment of the Family Compact.... [It] was, too, a formative period in Strachan's life ... [since] it was not till his appointment to York that he was able to forge on the anvil of practical politics those plans and principles to which he was to hold fast throughout his life.

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The significance of the volume was enhanced by the interpretation placed upon the documents in the introduction where Spragge illustrated that "the generally accepted and somewhat uncomplimentary estimate of [Strachan's] work and character is inaccurate."<sup>309</sup> There was obviously ample justification to publish the book, but unlike the comprehensive Simcoe Papers, the Strachan Letter Book was less memorable simply because of its limited scope. It represented only a small fraction of the material on Strachan and covered in detail the period from 1812 to 1822 only.

After the Strachan Letter Book, the Ontario Historical Society was financially unable to publish any additional special volumes until the 1960s. But lost time was recovered in the past few years when the society entered into its most active publishing period since the Cruikshank era. In quick succession, the OHS churned out The Defended Border: Upper Canada and the War of 1812 (1964),<sup>310</sup> edited by Morris Zaslow, C.M. Johnston's Brant County: A History 1784-1945 (1967),<sup>311</sup> Profiles of a Province (1967), edited by Edith G. Firth, Jean R. Burnet's Ethnic Groups in Upper Canada (1972), and Gerald A. Hallowell's Prohibition in Ontario, 1919-1923 (1972), the latter two vol-

umes being the first of a series of research publications. Furthermore, the society arranged in 1969 for the reprinting of the first forty-nine volumes of the OHSR.

Defended Border, a commemorative volume on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the War of 1812, was a selection of writings drawn from a variety of journals, designed to give a relatively comprehensive picture of the War in Upper Canada, including the complex military and naval events and strategies, their effect upon the citizenry, and the legacies of the conflict. As an attempt to delineate, record and interpret the main themes and outstanding episodes of the Upper Canadian War, the book was more than adequate. The main selection criterion, which was to use the best work of the OHS and local historical societies in the province whenever possible before turning to other scholarly publications, had both its advantages and drawbacks. Since many of the articles in the anthology had appeared in Ontario or Canadian journals, the best treatment in print of a particular topic was often chosen as in the case of essays by E.A. Cruikshank, J.M. Hitsman, Victor Lauriston, Adam Shortt, C.P. Stacey and G.F.G. Stanley to name a few of the better contributors. On the other hand, several of the articles, especially those written by amateur historians early in the twentieth century such as Katherine B. Coutts, S.A. Curzon, and J.I. Poole had an "unscholarly, even naive" character; hence, the articles in the volume varied "widely in approach, presentation, depth of research,

and degree of judgment."<sup>312</sup> The society's explanation for inclusion of these articles, that they gave readers "some idea of the scope and variety of the polished literature on this epoch in the history of the Ontario region," was not entirely convincing.<sup>313</sup> Like most anthologies of this nature, Defended Border also received criticism for its failure to deal with one or another aspect of the war and for its limited Upper Canadian scope.<sup>314</sup> On the whole, however, this volume which brought together many of the best articles on the subject of the War of 1812 for the first time was a worthwhile proposition.

Although published in 1967, Charles M. Johnston's Brant County was conceived seven years earlier at the annual meeting of the Ontario Historical Society, June 1960.<sup>315</sup> At this time a resolution was passed deploring the loss of historical records in Ontario and the dearth of county histories, and calling for a feasibility study for a series of county and district histories to be sponsored by the society. In December the investigating committee advised the society to publish a pilot book as a model for the series and to seek government aid at a later date for the production of the remainder.<sup>316</sup> Professor Charles M. Johnston of McMaster University was the unanimous choice to write a first volume on Brant County which was to be approximately 160 pages (150,000 words) in length, not too academic in style, and designed to supplement school texts and to appeal to the

general public.<sup>317</sup> The society's hope that the volume would be completed with despatch was never realized because the author, hamstrung by prior commitments, did not complete the volume until 1967. Brant County, all the same, met the conditions stipulated by the OHS when the book was first commissioned, and sought to examine and explain the major social and economic influences and personalities that have shaped the development of an Ontario county. By 1967, however, the raison d'être of the entire series had been largely undermined by the proliferation of county histories written independently as centennial projects. Consequently, the OHS had little alternative but to shelve its scheme.

The need to substitute another long-term publication series for the defunct county history project was one of the reasons that prompted J. Keith Johnson of Carleton University in 1969 to urge the OHS to sponsor a series of research publications based mainly on unpublished theses. The main argument in favour of the project was that unpublished graduate theses and research papers comprised an extensive body of unused and unavailable research on a wide variety of subjects carried out under the direction of professional historians. These sources contained information of value and significance to all those interested in the province's past. That there was and is an expanding demand among schools, universities and the public at large for books on provincial or local history was also a telling argument.<sup>318</sup> Jean Burnet's Ethnic Groups

in Upper Canada and Gerald Hallowell's Prohibition in Ontario were published in 1972 as the first volumes in the series. Other volumes on the Canada Company and family history are projected for the near future. This series has enormous potential and should become one of the OHS's most valuable projects for developing the study of history in Ontario.

### III

The seventy-nine volume collection of scholarly publications issued by the Ontario Historical Society, the work of several generations of historians is perhaps the most important single body of printed material on the history of Ontario and its regions. Although a substantial number of the essays, particularly in the period prior to the Second World War, were of dubious merit, it can be said without exaggeration that the documents, information and interpretations which the volumes contained are of incalculable worth to the historical profession. Through the OHSPR especially, the society has provided essential services to Ontario history by helping to shape and direct the thrusts towards professionalism and sophisticated concepts of local history in the province over the course of the century.

Changes in the writing of local and provincial history in the province, and some of the individuals responsible for the new directions can be traced through the pages of the periodical. The first generation of skilled amateurs -- the Carnochans, Coynes, Cruikshanks, and Riddells -- contributed

to the development of critical historical scholarship in Canada by attempting to apply the canons of thorough research and strict accuracy to their work. The advent of the 'twenties brought a second generation of scholars -- the McArthurs, Landons, Youngs, Talmans, and Garlands -- who used the journal to pioneer the transition to more meaningful social, cultural, and economic history. This group was also representative of the first tentative incursions by academicians into local and regional history as a means of arriving at a better understanding of the Canadian past. The coming of age of local and regional studies in Ontario occurred after the Second World War as the professional historians were fully converted to the gospel of local history and antiquarian elements were purged from the pages of Ontario History.

The historical community and many historical agencies have been well served in other ways by the publications of the Ontario Historical Society. The quarterly has provided an outlet for the papers of unseasoned graduate students, many of whom received recognition for the first time in its pages. At one time or another, the periodical has extended aid to the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, the Archaeological and Historic Sites Board of Ontario, and the Ontario and Dominion Archives by publicizing their activities or their acquisitions. Through the pages of the journal, the newsletters, and the bulletins, the society has co-ordinated the activities of the local historical associations and museums

in Ontario by highlighting their most valuable work. The OHS has also attempted to guide this work by printing occasional articles on museums activity, architectural conservancy, and the mechanics of researching and writing history.

At various times since the society's inception, its spokesmen have used the periodical and reports as a forum for urging the study of provincial and local history at all levels of the educational system. There can be little doubt that this pressure played some part in the creation of the sympathetic climate of opinion that led to the formation of a considerable number of local history courses in the secondary schools and universities. Moreover, the society has attempted to meet the research and teaching needs of these programmes by providing special publications such as the Simcoe and Russell Papers, Loyalist Settlement, Defended Border, Brant County, Profiles of a Province and the recent research publication series. In short, the Ontario Historical Society has been, and shows every sign of remaining, a considerable force in the publication of historical research and in the encouragement of the study of local history in Ontario.

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<sup>2</sup> See review by James Bain, Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada, Vol. III, Publications of the Year 1898 (Toronto: William Briggs, 1899), p. 135.

<sup>3</sup> OHSa, James Coyne to David Boyle, July 28, 1898.

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## CONCLUSION

Since 1898 the Ontario Historical Society has been a considerable educational institution and cultural force endeavouring to develop an awareness of, and interest in, local and provincial history. Its credentials have been established by its programmes to record, interpret, publicize, and preserve Ontario's heritage, and by its efforts to co-ordinate and encourage the work of local historical associations and museums.

Of all its contributions, the society's publications programme has been the most important. Replete with documents, data, and interpretations, the volumes have served well the general public, teachers and students, professional and non-academic historians, and a plethora of independent and official historical agencies. They remain the largest single body of documentary and interpretive material with reference to the history of Ontario and its regions. In a historiographical sense, moreover, the members of the OHS, through the pages of the society's periodical, have helped to shape and to direct the thrusts towards professionalism and sophisticated concepts of local history for the past seventy-five years. It is hoped that a greater recognition of the contributions to historical scholarship of such individuals as James Coyne, Ernest A. Cruikshank, Janet Carnochan, William R. Riddell, Fred Landon,

Archibald Hope Young, James Talman and George Spragge, among others, will follow this study.

In addition to its publications, the OHS, from virtually the day it was created, has encouraged the study of local and provincial history at all levels of the school system. Resolutions, addresses, and deputations urging that action be taken in this regard have descended upon many a Minister of Education. It is incontrovertible that the introduction of local and provincial history into the curricula of the schools and universities in Ontario was made possible at least in part by the favourable climate created by the OHS.

The serious writing of history has been facilitated by the Ontario Historical Society's efforts to preserve the documentary traces of the province's past. It was the lobbying of the OHS which prompted the administration of George Ross in 1903 to establish the Ontario Archives. Once again in 1945, the society urged the creation of better archival facilities and collection policies in a brief to the Hope Commission on Education. This helped to convince the provincial government of the need to construct a new building for the archives at Queen's Park shortly thereafter. The monumental microfilming project of the late 'fifties arranged by the OHS in conjunction with the Mormon Church is perhaps the society's most valuable contribution in this area.

In the work of preserving important historic sites, landmarks, and buildings the OHS also boasts a proud record.

As an agency of preservation, the society's most active years were those prior to the Great War when the campaigns to save such sites as Forts York, George, Erie, and Malden, among others, helped persuade the Dominion government to establish policies and agencies of preservation. Since 1945 the OHS and its members have also been deeply involved in preservation issues which culminated in the appearance of a provincial Archaeological and Historic Sites Act, the establishment of Morrisburg's Upper Canada Village, and the official recognition by Queen's Park of the need for legislation to conserve the province's architectural heritage.

Another of the society's valuable and ongoing functions involves co-ordinating and assisting the work of the local affiliated historical groups. During every period of its history, the OHS leaders, some admittedly with more enthusiasm than others, have actively encouraged the formation of local historical associations, co-ordinated their common efforts, and provided a forum for the discussion and exchange of ideas. But it is in the past two decades particularly that the OHS has made its most significant mark in assisting the affiliated locals. The activities of the Museums Section and the Local Societies Committee have been the means to this end.

A second major theme which runs strongly through every chapter of this study is the idea of ambition denied. It is an unhappy truth that a great many of the society's projects have failed or remained in the realm of wishful thinking. In-

deed, in no period of its existence has the provincial historical association managed either to accomplish all of its declared objectives or to reach its full potential.

It was the ineffectiveness of the Pioneer and Historical Association of the Province of Ontario during the 1890s, for example, that led to its reorganization in 1898 as the Ontario Historical Society. The new OHS soon fell short of its aim to establish a museum, archives, and library complex. The Great War and the Depression reduced the historical association to little more than a publishing society, while the Second World War pushed it to the brink of dissolution. And most recently, in the 'fifties and 'sixties, the OHS lost several golden opportunities to expand into both junior and adult education when the Junior Historian and New Canadian Committees were discontinued.

Frustrated ambition has been explained in this study by reference to a number of factors. Most important of all were the financial restraints that have greatly weakened the society's effectiveness throughout its history. The annual subsidization provided by the provincial government has sometimes been adequate, often niggardly, but never generous. Given the straitened circumstances under which the OHS has laboured since 1898, its contributions seem all the more impressive. Competition from a number of specialized and better funded private and official historical agencies which appeared after 1898 partly accounts for the failure of the OHS

to achieve its original objectives. The social and economic disequilibrium caused by the Depression and the World Wars also played havoc with the aspirations of OHS leaders. And finally, the calibre of that leadership cannot be overlooked in an explanation of the society's less than perfect performance. Burdened by all the aforementioned problems, it is understandable that at times, the leadership has sometimes been cautious, unimaginative, and irresolute.

It is worthwhile to conclude with a few remarks about the evolution of the OHS since 1888 by comparing its record in the past twenty-five years, with its performance before the Great War. Perhaps the main difference to be noted is the more modest range of objectives pursued by the OHS in recent years. Today the OHS entertains no aspirations of building and administering a state-supported museum, archives and library. In 1898, on the other hand, these objectives seemed quite reasonable considering that the OHS was the sole historical agency of provincial scope, and given the precedents set by comparable historical associations in the American Midwest. As early as 1914, however, the more grandiose schemes of the OHS's leaders had been frustrated. The Ontario Archives had been established, but as part of the civil service. The growing Canadiana sections of the various libraries in Toronto were beginning to preclude the need for a separate OHS historical collection. The Royal Ontario Museum seemed to undermine the need for an OHS museum. And finally, the Champlain Society

began to help fill the void in the publication of rare documents.

Although the visions of the present OHS officers are more limited than those of the leaders at the turn of the century because of the strides made by other historical agencies in the interval, it is interesting how much resemblance there is between the programmes pursued by the society in the two eras. Most differences are ones of degree rather than of kind. Certainly the annual meetings have not changed in nature nor intent. Publishing is still a mainstay of the society's existence although it has assumed greater significance since many of the original objectives fell by the wayside. The work of co-ordinating and assisting the activities of the local affiliates still goes on, and, as the work of the Museums Section and the Local Societies Committee will testify, that function has recently been fulfilled more effectively than ever before. The OHS still remains a leading force in preservation matters; however, unlike the early twentieth century pre-occupation with inspirational military landmarks, latter-day members are engrossed in the task of conserving Ontario's architectural heritage.

In both periods the historical society members responded to forces and ideological currents at work in their provincial and national communities. Towards the end of the nineteenth century the imperial idea particularly caught their imagination. The leaders of the Pioneer and Historical Association

of Ontario and the Ontario Historical Society -- Henry Scadding, George Bull, James Coyne, Barlow Cumberland, and Clementina Fessenden -- used history to champion the cause of imperial unity. During the annexationist scare of the late 'eighties and 'nineties, moreover, local historical societies sprang up in Niagara Falls and Hamilton and used the loyalist tradition as a vehicle to spread the gospel of imperial federation. After 1911, however, imperial unity and American domination lost much of their appeal as other forces generated new interests within the historical society movement. Clarence Warner began to talk of the historical development of Canadian nationalism and of growing autonomy within the Empire. Other members pointed to the need for a return to the communal habits of the past as a remedy for the social evils of a materialistic and urbanized present. Briefly, it was fashionable prior to the Great War to use history as a medium for promoting any number of causes, whether it was that of the imperialist, the feminist, the status-seeker, or the patriot-maker.

Interestingly enough, the OHS members in recent years responded to many of the same concerns that had excited their predecessors at the turn of the century. Preservationists then and now deplored the reckless material expansion that often resulted in the destruction of Ontario's historical buildings and landmarks. Similarly OHS members in each period reacted to the massive numbers of new immigrants pouring into

the country. The reactions in each period, however, were quite different. Compare, for example, the nativist effusions and patriotic flag-waving activities of Clementina Fessenden with the more urbane and liberal philosophy and intentions of J.M.S. Careless' New Canadian Committee.

There is even much of a sameness in the composition of the membership in each period. It is still small; the society has yet to become a broadly based institution. With perhaps the exception of a recent influx of academics and graduate students, the members in 1898 and 1973 are generally from the same kinds of backgrounds, particularly from the professions, private business, the civil service, or the managerial and executive echelons of industry.

As a publically funded organization, the Ontario Historical Society has always felt the need to serve a large public audience. At first it attempted to do so by embarking on a wide-ranging programme of activities at the turn of the century which seemed to appeal to both the general public and the more scholarly inclined. The Victoria College Exhibition (1899), the monument projects, the activities of the flag and commemoration committee, the preservation battles, the library, and the publications were launched in the years prior to the Great War in a bid to increase the membership. Once the techniques of the large-scale membership canvass had been mastered by 1914, it appeared likely that the society could attract a broader base of support. The Great War and its aftermath,

however, destroyed all hope of that.

Since 1960, the society's work has not been of the kind that could arouse mass public enthusiasm. The publications have only limited appeal. By their very nature, the Museums Section, the Local Societies Committee, and the Preservation Committee do not attract much attention beyond the local historical societies and museums. And, regrettably, dynamic new programmes that might well have added to the society's roster were either unsuccessful or given short shrift. Such was the case with the Century Farms project, the proposed Genealogical Section, the New Canadian Committee, and the Junior Historian Programme. If any one of these had been implemented, the interest generated might have spontaneously augmented the society's ranks. Without them, the number of names on the rolls has grown but slowly, and only by dint of the hard work involved in successive membership drives.

The comparison between the OHS in its early and later periods further indicates that the society has kept alive a tradition that goes back at least to William Canniff, the United Canadian Association, and the spirit of Canada First. That tradition centres on the belief that history is an indispensable vehicle for expressing and nurturing a sense of nationality. Certainly the ultimate aim of the first generation OHS spokesmen of an imperialist bent -- the Bulls, Coynes, Cumberlands, and Fessendens -- was to inculcate patriotic and national sentiments among the population at large, and in particular,

among the younger elements of the community. The Empire or Flag Day proposals, the activities of the Flag and Commemoration Committee, and the penchant for inspirational classroom decorations were all directly related to that end.

Although the imperialist brand of Canadian nationalism has lost its appeal, the search for the Canadian identity had not abated by the 1960s, nor apparently, had the belief that history could provide the means to nurture a sense of nationality. In 1949 the OHS brief to the Massey Commission stated explicitly that in the study of local and provincial history lay the opportunity for developing a stronger Canadian nationalism. This same concept was implicit in the New Canadian Committee's concern about facilitating the assimilation of the various groups of new immigrants into the Canadian mosaic. It appeared again in the preface of Profiles of a Province where Morris Zaslow revealed his hope that the book would make young and old Ontarians aware of their "glorious heritage" and inspire them "to emulate the achievements of those who have gone before."

In conclusion, then, it seems appropriate to reiterate the statement made in the introduction to chapter nine. The society's recent efforts, when compared with those undertaken by earlier generations of OHS members, can be summed up in one statement: some new wine in an old bottle.

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