

A “Colony of Unrequited Dreams”?
Settler Colonialism and the Failed-Settlement Narrative
in the Ottawa-Huron Tract, 1850–1910

by

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B.A. (Honours), University of Guelph, 2007

M.A., University of Guelph, 2009

G.Cert., Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, University of Victoria, 2014

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

In the 1850s, the government of Canada West initiated a project to colonize a vast region of the Canadian Shield known as the Ottawa-Huron Tract. Later, in his influential interpretation, Arthur Lower argued the myth of the inexorable forward movement of the settlement frontier was here shattered by a reality of lakes, rocks, and forest inherently unsuitable for farming. This refrain continues to be repeated by proponents of what I call the failed-settlement narrative. A contrasting narrative emphasizes the perseverance of settlers and their descendants. This dissertation was born of an interest in the tension between these competing narratives. On the one hand, the failed-settlement narrative ignores the fact many people succeeded in farming on the Shield. On the other hand, the romanticized image of the pioneer is disconnected from the larger historical contexts which shaped the settlement process and informed those notions of success and failure by which we judge the actions of people in the past. If the colonization project was an unmitigated failure, how do we account for the persistence of settlers and their descendants? If the landscape and soils of the Shield were unsuited to cultivation, why did people continue to cultivate the land for decades after the settlement project was condemned? What follows is an exploration of these questions, focusing on the township of Brudenell, Ontario as a site of Canadian colonial experimentation.

Failure and desertion were certainly important parts of the settlement experience in the Ottawa-Huron Tract, but these themes have been overemphasized by historians. Early on, many settlers realized the variability of the landscape in places like Brudenell and found small parcels of land which they turned to a variety of purposes. Settlers took advantage of government policies that made landowning a realistic goal even for those of

modest means and diverse backgrounds. By embracing new and emerging forms of local authority settlers were also able to tune the structures of the colonial state to further their own interests. They profited from the proximate shanty market for agricultural produce wherever practicable, while also pursuing economic activities oriented toward both local, regional, and national markets. Economic opportunities and the accessibility of land in Brudenell allowed cultural groups to develop spatially-distinct communities, which expanded to fill much of the available land in the township. This revision of the failed-settlement narrative stands out in the historiography of the Ottawa-Huron Tract, but dovetails with histories of settlement in other agriculturally-marginal regions of nineteenth-century Canada.

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Chapter 1

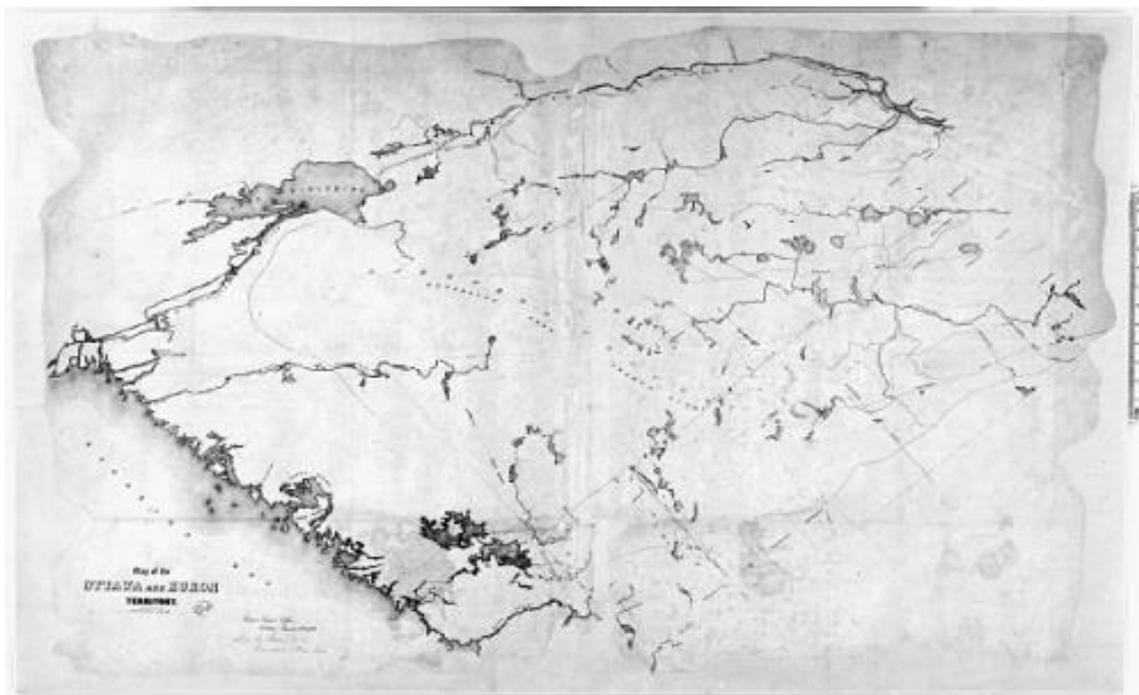
Introduction: A “Colony of Unrequited Dreams”?

In the 1850s, the government of Canada West initiated a project to colonize a vast region of the southern Canadian Shield known to contemporaries as the Ottawa-Huron Tract (see Map 1.1). Among most residents of older settlements along the St. Lawrence River, little was known about this region except that it was the domain of the lumberman. Much of it was, and is, the heart of traditional Algonquin territory. It is a landscape of lakes and trees made famous in works such as Tom Thomson’s *The Jack Pine* (1917), which depicts a strikingly beautiful but also rugged terrain. Today it is known by many in southern Ontario as Cottage Country. In the expansionist gaze of the Victorian state it was to be the next hinterland for Canada’s emerging commercial empire, an outlet for the growing population of Upper Canada, and a bulwark against American expansion.

In 1929, writing about the colonization of the southern Shield, Arthur Lower concluded: “So far, then, as the attempt went to turn the Barrier into farm land and to place upon it a stable and contented population, the assault, so strenuously commenced in the 1850’s, may be judged a failure.”¹ In his influential interpretation, Lower argued the myth of the inexorable forward movement of the settlement frontier—a myth essential to the worldview of Victorian Canada—was shattered by a reality of lakes, rocks, and forest inherently unsuitable for farming. For later proponents of what I will call the “failed-settlement narrative,” it is an oft-repeated refrain that the landscape of the Shield defeated

¹ A. R. M. Lower, “The Assault on the Laurentian Barrier, 1850–1870,” *Canadian Historical Review* 10, no. 4 (December 1929): 306.

MAP 1.1
The Ottawa-Huron Tract, 1857



Source: Crown Lands Office, “Map of the Ottawa and Huron Territory,” 17 March 1857, Library and Archives Canada (LAC), H1/400/1857, NMC11257.

most attempts at agricultural colonization.² Once cleared of the timber that had brought commercial interest in the early 1800s, the terrain was too uneven and the soils too thin to support the eight million people once predicted to eventually populate the region.³

² See, for example: George W. Spragge, “Colonization Roads in Canada West, 1850–1867,” *Ontario History* 49, no. 1 (1957): 17; Keith A. Parker, “Colonization Roads and Commercial Policy,” *Ontario History* 67, no. 1 (1975): 38; Marilyn G. Miller, *Straight Lines in Curved Space: Colonization Roads in Eastern Ontario* (Toronto: Ministry of Culture and Recreation, 1978), 26; Brenda Lee-Whiting, *Harvest of Stones: The German Settlement in Renfrew County* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 4–6; Helen E. Parson, “The Colonization of the Southern Canadian Shield in Ontario: The Hastings Road,” *Ontario History* 79, no. 3 (1987): 272; Thomas F. McIlwraith, *Looking for Old Ontario: Two Centuries of Landscape Change* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 311; J. David Wood, *Making Ontario: Agricultural Colonization and Landscape Re-creation before the Railway* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2000), 103; and Cole Harris, *The Reluctant Land: Society, Space, and Environment in Canada before Confederation* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008), 367–369.

³ The reference is to an oft-cited quote from P. M. Vankoughnet, Minister of Agriculture, who said in 1856 that the Ottawa-Huron Tract was “capable of sustaining a population of some eight millions of people.” Quoted in: Spragge, “Colonization Roads in Canada West,” 7; Parson, “The Hastings Road,” 263; Parker, “Colonization Roads and Commercial Policy,” 34, and Harris, *The Reluctant Land*, 367.

Irresponsible speculators and phony settlers extracted what value they could as quickly as possible: clearing the land by burning trees for potash (and destroying valuable timber in the process), exhausting the limited soil with short-sighted farming practices, selling a few cash crops at inflated prices to the captive shanty market, and then moving on to new opportunities in the Canadian and American wests. The consequence of this colonization scheme, as the failed-settlement narrative suggests, was a scarred landscape scattered with “ghost towns” and abandoned homesteads.⁴ Those settlers who persevered were rewarded only with an annual “harvest of stones.”⁵ For both planners and settlers, the colonization of the Ottawa-Huron Tract produced a “colony of unrequited dreams.”⁶

In contrast with the failed-settlement narrative is a version of events inspired by admiration for those pioneers who attempted to build homes and communities in the “wilderness” of the Ottawa Valley. This school of thought, based largely on a local or “insider” perspective, emphasizes the perseverance of settlers and their descendants and highlights a distinctive culture which emerged from the mixing of Irish, Polish, German, French, English, and Scottish immigrants who settled “The Valley.”⁷ For example, in his preface to Joan Finnigan’s *Life Along the Opeongo Line*, Sean Conway writes:

⁴ See, for example: Ron Brown, *Ghost Towns of Ontario* (Langley, B.C.: Stagecoach, 1978), and *Backroads of Ontario* (Richmond Hill, O.N.: Firefly, 2013); and James Raffan, “The Valley,” *Canadian Geographic* (September/October 2005): 45–57. Websites devoted to ghost towns are numerous. See for example the companion to Raffan’s article: Tobi McIntyre and Paul Politis, “Standing Legacy: Ghost Towns Preserve the Ottawa Valley’s Rich History,” *Canadian Geographic Magazine: Online Exclusive: CG In-depth: Welcome to the Ottawa Valley* (September/October 2005): <http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/magazine/so05/indepth/socgeography.asp> (accessed 29 June 2009).

⁵ Lee-Whiting, *Harvest of Stones*, 49.

⁶ John C. Walsh, “Landscapes of Longing: Colonization and the Problem of State Formation in Canada West” (PhD diss., University of Guelph, 2001). The phrase comes from the title of chapter one.

⁷ See, for example: Vrenia Ivonoffski and Sandra Campbell, *Exploring Our Heritage: The Ottawa Valley Experience* (Arnprior, ON: Arnprior and District Historical Society, 1978); Steve Evans, *The Back*

the colonization experience was, for most [settlers], an unrelenting and often unsuccessful battle against the bush, the bugs, the bottle, and, frequently, against the lumberman, who had already laid claim to the region's vast and lucrative forest resources... Out of this remarkable wilderness experience has emerged a unique regional culture. With its folklore and its distinctive voice, today's Ottawa Valley reflects much of the settler culture developed long ago on the Opeongo Line.⁸

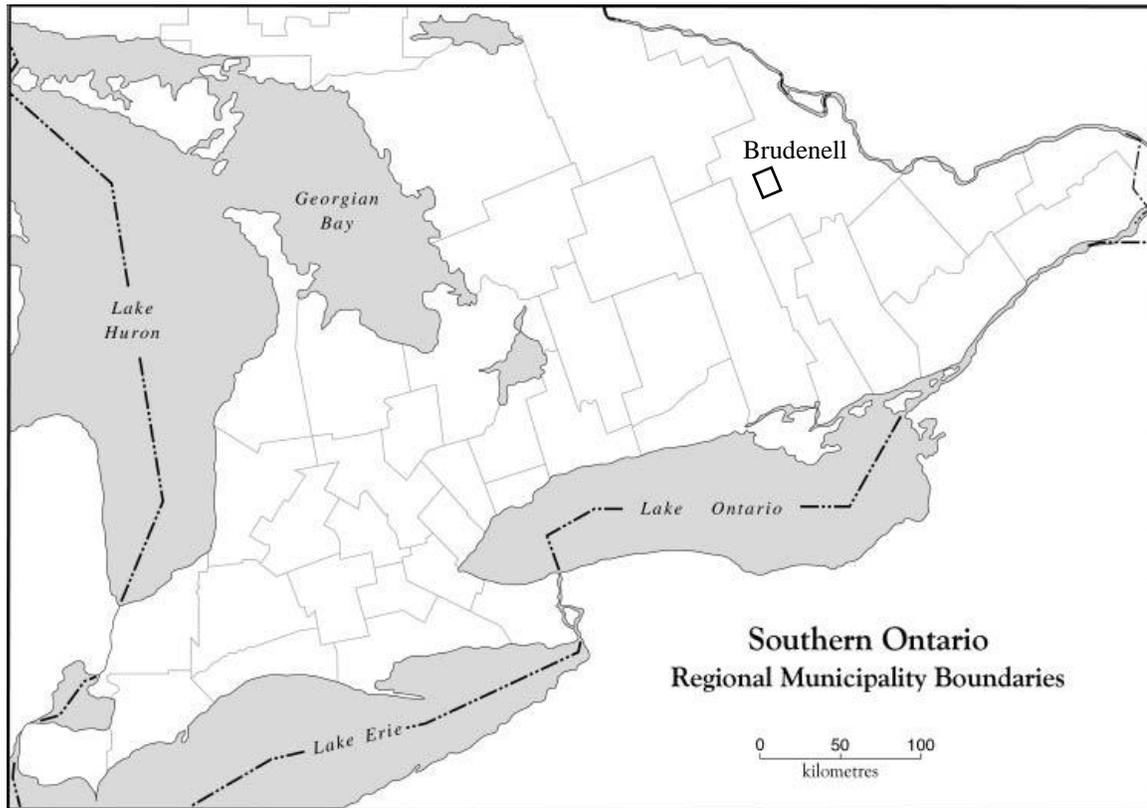
Local authors accept that plans for the settlement of the Shield were misguided, but flip the narrative to argue that the challenging environment of the Ottawa-Huron Tract helped to shape the distinctive character of its people, especially in the Ottawa Valley.

This dissertation project was born of my interest in the tension between these competing historical narratives. On the one hand, the failed-settlement narrative ignores the fact that people did actually succeed in settling and farming on the Shield. On the other hand, the romantic image of the persevering pioneer is disconnected from the larger historical contexts which shaped the settlement/dispossession process and informed those notions of success and failure by which we judge the actions of people in the past. My starting questions are simple. If the colonization project was an unmitigated failure, how do we account for the persistence of settlers and their descendants? If the landscape and soils of the southern fringe of the Canadian Shield were unsuited to cultivation, why did people continue to cultivate the land for decades after the settlement project was condemned? What follows is an exploration of these two questions, focusing on the township of Brudenell, Ontario, as a site of Canadian colonial experimentation.

Forty: Farm Life in the Ottawa Valley (Burnstown, ON: General Store Publishing House, 1990); Joan Finnigan, *Life Along the Opeongo Line: The Story of a Canadian Colonization Road* (Renfrew, ON: Penumbra Press, 2004); Shirley Mask-Connolly, *Kashubia to Canada: Crossing on the Agda, an Emigration Story* (Ottawa: Shirley Mask-Connolly, 1996); Carole Bennett, *Valley Irish* (Renfrew, ON: Juniper Books, 1983); and Johanne Devlin Trew, *Place, Culture, and Community: The Irish Heritage of the Ottawa Valley* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009).

⁸ Sean Conway, "Preface," in Finnigan, *Life Along the Opeongo Line*, ix.

MAP 1.2
Southern Ontario Showing Location of Brudenell, 2017



Source: Modified from: Southern Ontario Regional Municipality Boundaries [computer file]. (No date). St. Catharines, Ontario: Brock University Map, Data & GIS Library. Available: Brock University Map, Data & GIS Library, <https://brocku.ca/maplibrary/maps/outline/Ontario/Sontbase.jpg> (Accessed July 4, 2017).

Why Brudenell? In one sense, there is nothing special about the place. Brudenell today is a rural township in Renfrew County with a few hundred residents (see Map 1.2). Outdoor recreation, tourism, and logging are the main industries in the area. There are no stores and few businesses, but it is a short drive to neighbouring service communities. As with other community-level studies, my argument is not that Brudenell is unique, but that its history is “indicative of processes that are interesting in themselves.”⁹ In *The Irish in Ontario* (1984), Donald Akenson used one township as a laboratory in which to examine

⁹ Donald H. Akenson, *The Irish in Ontario: A Study in Rural History, Second Edition* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1999), xvii.

a “fundamental historical process with the detail provided by an electron microscope.”¹⁰ But, whereas Akenson focused on “ethnic adaptation and acculturation” of Irish migrants in a “neutral” environment, I am focused on both the people and the environment itself.¹¹ The environment in Brudenell was not neutral. Rather, the environment was integral to the processes of colonization. The history of Brudenell is presented here as a case study of the relationships between people and the places where they live in the context of settler colonialism. I want to find out how people viewed the land, how they turned those views into actions, how they worked out the day-to-day of governing a new community on the frontier, whether and how they used the land to support and sustain themselves, and if they experienced these processes differently given their cultural backgrounds. Each of these questions forms the basis of a chapter of this dissertation.

There are other reasons why I chose to focus on Brudenell. One is momentum. Brudenell was the focus of previous research I did on the responses of rural Ontarians to the changing nature of the economy in nineteenth-century Canada.¹² That project led to the creation of a database of the entire manuscript census of 1871 Brudenell, including all eight schedules completed for the Brudenell and Lyndoch sub-district.¹³ The information contained in the database details the lives of all 967 women, men, and children in the sub-district and provides a starting point for a project which has become much wider in scope.

¹⁰ Akenson, *The Irish in Ontario*, 4.

¹¹ Akenson, *The Irish in Ontario*, 4 and 351–2.

¹² Derek Murray, “Narratives, Transitions, and the Spaces between Old and New: A Socio-Economic History of Brudenell, Ontario through the 1871 Census of Canada,” (MA Major Research Paper, University of Guelph, 2009).

¹³ Derek Murray, Kelly Bairos, and Kris Inwood, “Complete Transcription and Database of the 1871 Census of Brudenell, Ontario,” *1871 Canada Census Project*, dir. Kris Inwood, University of Guelph, 2008. Schedule 9, Return of mineral products, was left blank for Brudenell. See Appendix.

Another reason I chose Brudenell is the availability and quality of historical sources. These include assessment rolls, municipal council minutes, survey diaries and reports, inspection and valuation reports, correspondence and reports of Crown Lands' agents, letters and petitions from residents of Brudenell, and the decennial Census of Canada, 1861–1911. To the original 1871 census database, I added transcriptions of tax assessment rolls for Brudenell from 1863 to 1911.¹⁴ Some years are missing, but in total this database includes 6716 lines and 932 individual property holders over this 49-year period. When combined with data from manuscript censuses, the assessment rolls allow me to map out the relationship between people and land on a family-by-family, lot-by-lot basis over the course of several generations of settlement.

The question of land is closely related to the question of property. As Gordon Darroch and Lee Soltow argue in *Property and Inequality in Victorian Ontario* (1994), “questions about the distribution of property, about the process of its acquisition, and about the social characteristics of owners and non-owners are fundamental to social history.”¹⁵ The primary sources described above allow for a detailed examination of these questions in one place, with an eye to a wider region, and in the context of one of the most ambitious colonization schemes in Canadian history. Which leads to another reason for focusing on Brudenell: the colonization of the Ottawa-Huron Tract has for too long been a side note in the history of nineteenth-century Canada.¹⁶ Questions like those

¹⁴ Archives of Ontario (AO) F 1564, Brudenell and Lyndoch Township fonds. See Appendix.

¹⁵ Gordon Darroch and Lee Soltow, *Property and Inequality in Victorian Ontario: Structural Patterns and Cultural Communities in the 1871 Census* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 3.

¹⁶ See for example, Harris, *The Reluctant Land*, which devotes less than five pages of a national survey to this region, 366–9.

posed by Darroch and Soltow have been applied to other regions, but the Ottawa-Huron Tract lies outside the main stream of historical inquiry. Though Brudenell cannot represent the experience of settlement across the entire region, an examination of this one township provides a starting point for a larger investigation of the region as a whole.

The region known from the 1850s to the early twentieth century as the Ottawa-Huron Tract is an area bound by the Ottawa River in the east, Georgian Bay and Lake Huron in the west, Lake Nipissing and the French and Mattawa Rivers in the north, and the St. Lawrence lowlands in the south.¹⁷ It was first settled about 6,000 years BPE.¹⁸ In the early seventeenth century it was controlled by Wendat in the west and Algonquin in the east.¹⁹ By the 1650s Haudenauanne raiders had dispersed the Wendat while the Algonquin resisted both European and Iroquois incursions.²⁰ In the early 1800s loggers began cutting the massive white pine and in the 1830s Europeans went in search of canal routes. In the 1850s, politicians and a powerful business elite in Canada began to push for colonization. Chapter two examines this process in detail and shows how the perceived geography of the region changed from pine country to farm country. The

¹⁷ Today, the region is known by a number of more familiar names for each of the sub-regions which make up the tract: the Parry Sound District in the northwest, the Muskoka region in the southwest, the Haliburton and Kawartha Highlands in the center, Algonquin Provincial Park in the north, and the Upper Ottawa Valley in the east. The “Ottawa-Huron Tract” should not be confused with the “Huron Tract,” an area of land in southwestern Ontario that was purchased by the Canada Company in 1826. For the latter, see Robert C. Lee, *The Canada Company and the Huron Tract, 1826–1853: Personalities, Profits, and Politics* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2004).

¹⁸ Gérard Pelletier, “The First Inhabitants of the Outaouais: 6,000 Years of History,” in *History of the Outaouais*, ed. Chad Gaffield (Sainte-Foy: Les Presses de l’Université Laval, 1997), 43–66.

¹⁹ Bruce Trigger, “The Original Iroquoians: Huron, Petun, and Neutral,” in *Aboriginal Ontario: Historical Perspectives on the First Nations*, ed. Edward S. Rogers and Donald B. Smith (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1994), 46–48.

²⁰ Harris, *The Reluctant Land*, 95. See also Bonita Lawrence, *Fractured Homeland: Federal Recognition and Algonquin Identity in Ontario* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2012), 24.

reimagining of the landscape of the Ottawa-Huron Tract as a governable space of agricultural colonization sought to erase indigenous claims and “open” the land for settlement by Canadians, Americans, and Europeans. Settlement began in 1855 when free grant lots were offered to settlers on the Ottawa and Opeongo Colonization Road, which ran northwest from the Ottawa River into the interior of the Tract.

The project to colonize the Ottawa-Huron Tract was arguably the first truly “Canadian” colonization project, undertaken by Canadian authorities and with Canadian objectives in mind.²¹ Unfortunately, the scheme has received scant attention in the grand narratives of Canadian history. It is not covered in most textbooks, and nationalist histories prefer to focus on the opening of the North West.²² In his intellectual history of expansionism, Doug Owsram argues Canada in the second half of the nineteenth-century was shaped by the idea of bringing a vast northern hinterland under Central Canadian authority.²³ More recently, A.A. den Otter shows how Victorian-Canadian colonists worked to rhetorically transform Rupert’s Land (Hudson’s Bay Territory) from an inhospitable northern waste into a region fit for agricultural cultivation.²⁴ Yet, even before embarking on the colonization of Rupert’s Land, Canadian officials experimented with a civilizing mission closer to home. This was a critical moment in the development of the colonial-bureaucratic state in Canada, and an important step in the rhetorical work

²¹ Walsh, “Landscapes of Longing,” 5–9. Earlier projects such as Simcoe’s roads are discussed in chapter 3.

²² For example, W. L. Morton, *The Critical Years: The Union of British North America, 1857–1873* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1964).

²³ Doug Owsram, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West, 1856–1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980).

²⁴ A.A. den Otter, *Civilizing the Wilderness: Culture and Nature in Pre-Confederation Canada and Rupert’s Land* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2012).

of transforming the West into a field for colonization. It furnished the state with practical technologies of rule, allowed it to plan the annexation of Rupert's Land, and helped to physically and psychologically bridge the gap between Central Canada and the West.²⁵

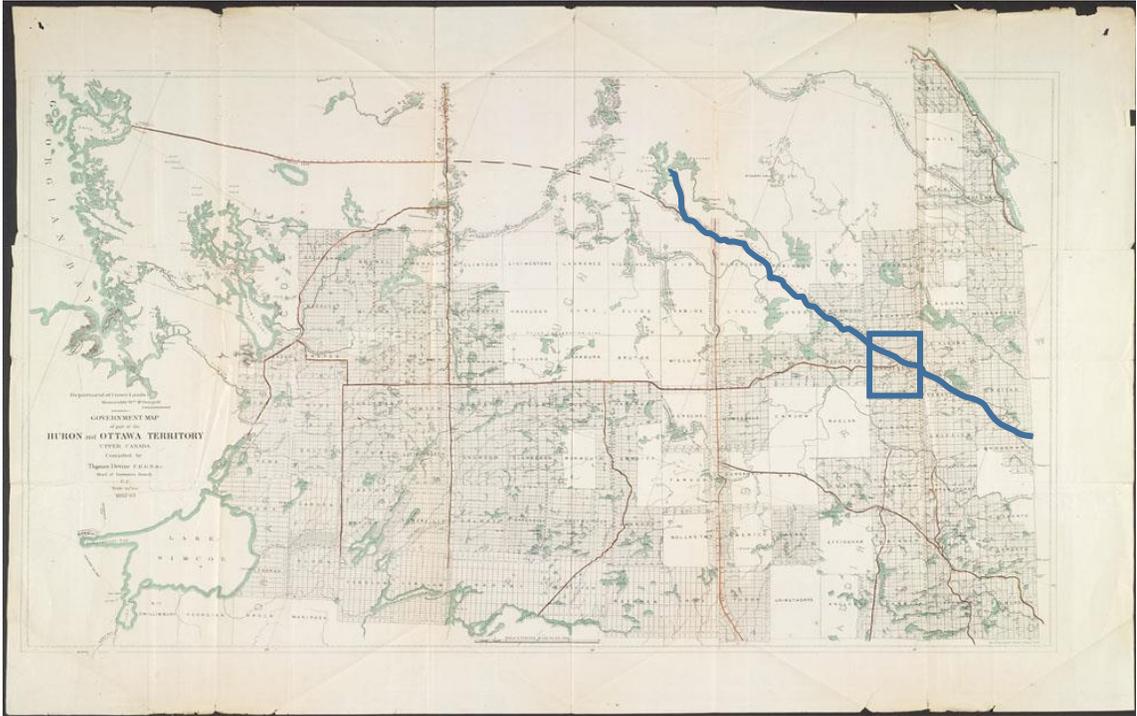
At the core of the Ottawa-Huron settlement project was the construction of a system of "colonization roads" like the Opeongo, which cut across the Tract, connecting the interior with settlements along the fringe (see Map 1.3). The colonization roads project was managed jointly by the Commissioner of Crown Lands and the Bureau of Agriculture.²⁶ Routes were surveyed beginning in the early 1850s and some sections of road were open to settlers as early as 1855. Nearly \$600 000 in government grants were allocated between 1852 and 1862 alone to survey, cut, and build colonization roads in the Ottawa-Huron Tract. Eventually this network of roads spread across much of Ontario and Quebec, reaching north to the Rainy River district.²⁷ The colonization roads network, and the free grant lands laid out along them, created the framework in which settlers interacted with the landscape and with each other in the process of alienation of indigenous peoples and naturalization of outsiders. Chapter three explores the history of the construction and settlement of the Opeongo Road. Active state involvement in the daily lives of settlers provided both challenges and opportunities. Colonization roads

²⁵ Walsh, "Landscapes of Longing," 6–7. See also, Walsh, "Upper Canada and the Mapping of Settler Space" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Canadian Historical Association, Fredericton, NB, May 30–June 1, 2011).

²⁶ Control over the colonization roads branch shifted between government departments until it was absorbed by the Department of Highways in 1937.

²⁷ Some were later abandoned, but many of these roads have been incorporated into the modern highway system, often retaining their original names. Director Michelle St. John and presenter Ryan McMahon recently brought overdue attention to the roads as a key tool of colonial dispossession and erasure of indigenous peoples. See St. John (dir.) and McMahon, *First Hand: Colonization Road*, Online (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 2017), <http://www.cbc.ca/firsthand/episodes/colonization-road> (accessed July 6, 2017).

MAP 1.3
 “Devine’s Map” of the Huron and Ottawa Territory, 1863



Source: Modified from: Department of Crown Lands, “Government map of part of the Huron and Ottawa Territory, Upper Canada,” 1863, LAC, RG 10-1991 File 6721, NMC81767. Location of Brudenell and the Opeongo Road highlighted (right side).

gave settlers access to land and, perhaps unintentionally, turned the maintenance and extension of family networks into a strategy of colonization.

Chapter four examines the implications of the colonization project for settlers in Brudenell, the negotiation of authority between settlers and the state, and the resulting shape of local governance. As scholars of rural history note, control over access to and use of land was an important factor in shaping power relationships in nineteenth-century Canada.²⁸ In the process of articulating the structures of the municipal state, settlers in

²⁸ Catharine Wilson, *Tenants in Time: Families, Land, and Liberalism in Upper Canada, 1799–1871* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2009), 7. See also John C. Clarke, *Land, Power, and Economics on the Frontier of Upper Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001) and Ruth W. Sandwell, *Contesting Rural Space: Land Policy and Practices of Resettlement on Saltspring Island, 1859–1891* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2006).

Brudenell used tools such as tax collection and road building as ways to influence the colonization process. Roads, in particular, were crucial to initial settlement as well as to the long-term success of the colony. Though officials in the Bureau of Agriculture and the Department of Crown Lands were tasked with implementing the colonization roads scheme, settlers played an active role in its articulation. To truly understand the process of colonization, a deeper examination of the relationship between the state, settlers, and the land at the local level is needed. Though Crown Lands' agents operated offices "in the field" and consulted with their local informants, the grunt work of colonization was done by the settlers themselves. Records of their perspectives are not as plentiful as those of the state, but there is enough to make a convincing case about their vision for the local landscape. This evidence comes primarily from the Brudenell Municipal Council minute books from 1864 to 1878 and from the letters and petitions sent to the colonization roads branch in roughly the same period. Letters, petitions, and council minutes did not record the intimate thoughts and desires of settlers. Instead, these documents were written with a pragmatic purpose in mind—the maintenance and improvement of a way of life.

Chapter five analyzes one aspect of that way of life—the economy. Following Lower, proponents of the failed-settlement narrative argue that the soils of the Ottawa-Huron Tract were incapable of supporting an agricultural economy.²⁹ Historians looking

²⁹ In addition to those mentioned in footnote two above, adherents to the failed settlement narrative also include J. H. Richards, "Land Use and Settlement on the Fringe of the Shield in Southern Ontario" (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1954), Brian S. Osborne, "Frontier Settlement in Eastern Ontario in the Nineteenth Century: A Study in Changing Perceptions of Land and Opportunity," in *The Frontier: Comparative Studies*, ed. David H. Miller and Jerome O. Steffen (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1977), 210–226, in the same volume, Geoffrey Wall, "Nineteenth-Century Land Use and Settlement on the Canadian Shield Frontier," 227–242, Graeme Wynn, "Notes on Society and Environment in Old Ontario," *Journal of Social History* 13 (1979): 49–65, and Neil Forkey, *Shaping the Upper Canadian Frontier: Environment, Society and Culture in the Trent Valley* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2003).

back on this colonization project may become embroiled in the nationalist fervour of westward expansion. Historians and historical geographers have examined the ways in which Victorian Canadians overestimated the agricultural potential of many parts of the North American landscape.³⁰ The irony is, despite thoroughly debunking the civilizing myth, many remain beholden to Lower's original conclusion to the failed-settlement narrative. We remain bound by positivist assumptions about the objective quality of land. Such assumptions, based on nineteenth century notions of progress, are buttressed by twentieth century science and the surety of hindsight.

Alongside the failed-settlement narrative is a related "poor-land narrative" in which, its authors assert, government agents knew land in the Ottawa-Huron Tract was unsuitable for farming and still encouraged colonization.³¹ However, as Joshua Blank argues, officials based their pronouncements on testimony by experts in the "inventory sciences" and truly believed the land was fit for farming.³² If government agents were not consciously deceptive, then they were ignorant. Thus, Marilyn Miller writes: "the colonization-road policy was based on hopes rather than knowledge of actual conditions. No one seemed to really understand the limited agricultural capability of the Shield."³³

³⁰ There are too many important works to list all of them here, but some prominent ones are Harris, *The Reluctant Land*, Morris Zaslow, *The Opening of the Canadian North, 1870–1914* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971), Suzanne Zeller, *Inventing Canada: Early Victorian Science and the Idea of a Transcontinental Nation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), den Otter, *Civilizing the Wilderness*, and Joshua C. Blank, *Creating Kashubia: History, Memory, and Identity in Canada's First Polish Community* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016), chapter five.

³¹ The term "poor-land narrative" is borrowed from Blank, *Creating Kashubia*, 146. According to Blank, the claim of government deception was taken to an extreme by local authors writing about the Polish-Kashub experience in the Ottawa Valley. Many of these authors borrowed heavily from Miller, Lee-Whiting, and others cited here, in their condemnation of the settlement agents.

³² Blank, *Creating Kashubia*, 145.

³³ Miller, *Straight Lines*, 20.

In her study of German settlements in the Ottawa Valley, Brenda Lee-Whiting states the soils of the region were “physically marginal for sustained agriculture.”³⁴ In his analysis of agricultural colonization in Ontario before the railway, David Wood argues the limited potential for field crops on the southern Shield meant that, by mid-century, agriculture was still at a “rudimentary stage.” Compared to the rest of Ontario, the region remained a “primitive, forested frontier fringe,” where “embryonic enterprises foundered.”³⁵ In his study of the Bobcaygeon Road, Neil Forkey argues “a permanent farming community was not possible...due mostly to the realities of the physical landscape.”³⁶ These authors take for granted the marginality of the land, rating it within modern soil classifications that leave little room for the adaptability of settlers.³⁷ Few have attempted to determine, conclusively, whether or not there was sufficient material basis for settlement. Forkey, for example, takes population decline after 1901 to mean that settlers could not achieve self-sufficiency.³⁸ The logical fallacy here is apparent—that they *did not* does not mean that they *could not*. In contrast, Blank argues that “agriculture in the Ottawa-Huron Tract was not intended to be pursued independently of the lumber industry. The two industries acted symbiotically.”³⁹ In fact, though planners thought the lumber industry would be

³⁴ Lee-Whiting, *Harvest of Stones*, 6.

³⁵ Wood, *Making Ontario*, 99, 58, and 96.

³⁶ Forkey, *Shaping the Upper Canadian Frontier*, 92.

³⁷ See Miller, *Straight Lines*, 6; Lee-Whiting, *Harvest of Stones*, 298; Wood, *Making Ontario*, 161, and Forkey, *Shaping the Upper Canadian Frontier*, 4–5. For a more detailed critique of the application of such soil surveys on nineteenth-century land use, see Kris Inwood and Jim Irwin, “Land, Income, and Regional Inequality: New Estimates of Regional Incomes and Growth in Canada, 1871–1891,” *Acadiensis* 31, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 168–74.

³⁸ Forkey, *Shaping the Upper Canadian Frontier*, 91.

³⁹ Blank, *Creating Kashubia*, 145.

essential in the early years of settlement, they assumed this was a phase in the transition to a fully-functional agricultural economy.⁴⁰ That these complementary industries co-existed in the Ottawa Valley into the twenty-first century, as Blank attests, would likely come as a surprise to most nineteenth-century settlement boosters.

Determining the quality of the land and its suitability for agricultural settlement was ultimately a subjective process. The relative inferiority of land in Brudenell is not here denied. However, the “relative” qualification is important. Land quality was a matter of perspective as much as scientific fact: it was determined by motivation, desire, and argument as much as the objective observations of Victorian science; it was defined by subjective, relative judgements; informed by research and experience, it was also influenced by ideology—it was always open to interpretation. Indeed, concepts like “objective” and “fact” are themselves based in the ideological and political contexts of their time and cannot be some higher standard by which to judge people in the past. The denouncement of the Ottawa-Huron Tract as a realm of colonial expansion was also a relative decision. Relative to the fertile St. Lawrence lowlands or the vast plains of Rupert’s Land, the region remained a “wilderness” despite the settlement policies of the 1850s and 1860s. Relative to the imperial desires of politicians and boosters in Ottawa and Toronto, the region never became the agricultural hinterland that would form the foundation of the nascent Canadian empire.

If we conceive the capacity of the landscape as different, rather than marginal, we free ourselves from the assumptions that have shaped our understanding of the history of

⁴⁰ See T. P. French, *Information for Intending Settlers on the Ottawa and Opeongo Road and its Vicinity* (Ottawa: Commissioner of Crown Lands, 1857), 27. See also, Walsh, “Landscapes of Longing,” 2.

this region. Rather than comparing the land in the Ottawa-Huron Tract with southern Ontario and the western prairies, if we see the land as having different instead of lesser capacities, then we are not forced to declare the colonization project an outright failure. Success and failure are judgements which depend on the questions posed—ask different questions and new answers are possible. J. I. Little has shown how viable communities developed on supposedly marginal lands by adaptation to local circumstances.⁴¹ Such a recognition is only now being incorporated into the historiography of the Ottawa-Huron Tract. In his study of the Polish-Kashub community in Renfrew County, Blank argues the agro-forest economy, despite continuous and persistent decline since the 1860s, supplemented the incomes of many local residents even into the late twentieth century.⁴² Settlers did not develop the region in the way planners hoped, but, as I demonstrate in chapter five, many settlers did establish long-lasting farms, homes, and businesses that would form the basis of local social, economic, and cultural stability for several generations. In Brudenell at least, many settlers were successful.

Chapter six builds on previous chapters by examining the settlement process in relation to the ethnic backgrounds of the settlers. One of the most interesting facets of settlement history in the Ottawa Valley is the mix of different peoples who took up the project. Contrary to popular perception, the majority of the earliest settlers to Brudenell did not come directly from overseas, but from other parts of Canada. Many of them were born in Ireland, but they had lived in Canada for years before the colonization roads were

⁴¹ J. I. Little, *Crofters and Habitants: Settler Society, Economy, and Culture in a Quebec Township, 1848–1881* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991).

⁴² Blank, *Creating Kashubia*, 171.

opened. This simple observation flies in the face of much of what is said about the colonization road settlers: that they were duped by emigrant agents in Europe, that they were ignorant of the true capacity of the soils on the Shield, or that they settled on poor land out of sheer desperation. Later arrivals to Brudenell did come from overseas. The earliest came from England in the late 1850s and created their own community adjacent to the Irish Catholics on the Opeongo Road. These too had done some reconnaissance before choosing to purchase their lands in Brudenell. Later, through the 1880s and into the 1900s, German Protestant migrants took up land in the southern part of the township. Was their experience of settlement the same as the Irish Catholics who came before? The evidence presented in chapter six suggests that these late arriving Germans were just as successful as the earlier Irish Catholics.

Thus we are back to the question of success and failure. Already in 1855 some, like Crown Timber Agent James Burke, decried the settlement policy as misguided.⁴³

Lower, building on his earlier assessment, wrote in *Colony to Nation* (1946):

This programme of immigration gave Upper Canada the little German settlements near Pembroke and west of Renfrew, and the scattered Irish in the back townships of the St. Lawrence counties: where the soil gave them half a chance, some of these people made good, but the others remained sunk in apathy, typical ‘hill-billies’.⁴⁴

Why not see these scattered communities as successes? If we continue to view the colonization roads scheme from the perspective of a colonial government bent on creating a continental nation-state, then yes, the colonization roads failed to achieve this

⁴³ Burke’s testimony is in “Report of the Select Committee Appointed to Examine and Report Upon the Present System of Management of the Public Lands,” *Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada* (hereafter *JLAC*) 13 (1855): Appendix M.M.

⁴⁴ Lower, *Colony to Nation: A History of Canada* (Toronto: Longmans, Green & Co., 1946), 293.

aim. If we view the project from the perspective of those settlers who sought a place where they could own land and provide for their families by farming and other means, then the answer needs to be qualified.⁴⁵ Some settlers met with disappointment. Others, like many who persisted in Brudenell, were rewarded for their efforts.

Since people's relationships with land are fundamentally shaped by their specific local contexts, this study is local in nature. However, it can be viewed in comparative perspective since this was not the only colonization project undertaken by an ambitious colonial state. Other settlement schemes in late-eighteenth and early nineteenth-century British North America varied according to their own local contexts. In many cases, these projects were based on the exploitation of similarly marginal lands. Early plans focused on resettlement of Loyalists, but other immigrant groups not limited to white British or American were also attracted to northern frontiers. Nova Scotia became a promised land for those fleeing the violence of the American Revolution, a group which included both free blacks and former slaves.⁴⁶ Plans for immigration to Nova Scotia were made in haste as the British defeat loomed; most migrants were concerned with immediate needs for food and shelter, while surveyor-general Charles Morris scrambled to gain a more accurate knowledge of the lands available for settlement.⁴⁷ Between 1805 and 1850 New Brunswick's non-indigenous population grew from 25 000 to 190 000 as immigrants took

⁴⁵ With some exceptions, I use the term "settlers" here and throughout to denote the individuals of all ages and genders who undertook the task of settlement, not just the adult male British subjects identified in official settlement criteria.

⁴⁶ James W. St. G. Walker, *The Black Loyalists: The Search for a Promised Land in Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone, 1783–1870* (New York: Africana Pub. Co., 1976).

⁴⁷ Neil MacKinnon, *This Unfriendly Soil: The Loyalist Experience in Nova Scotia, 1783–1791* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 16.

advantage of cheap land and a strong labour market in a colony also predicated on a symbiosis of agriculture and forestry.⁴⁸ On the other side of the continent, projects to settle Salt Spring Island and the east coast of Vancouver Island pushed the limits of settler colonialism onto lands marginally suitable for commercial agriculture.⁴⁹ Little's work on the Upper St. Francis district of Lower Canada provides poignant comparisons for the Ottawa-Huron Tract.⁵⁰ Both projects were based on the survey and construction of colonization roads and the survey of 50-acre road lots, though in the Ottawa-Huron Tract free grants were given in 100-acre allotments. In both Upper and Lower Canada, the state was determined to open up new areas for settlement with the hope of stemming migration to the United States. Colonization in the Ottawa-Huron Tract occurred at roughly the same time as in the upper St. Francis district, where a battle over unsettled lands was fought between French-speaking proponents of colonization and English-speaking lumber capitalists.⁵¹ In Winslow Township, "one of the least fertile townships in a district of limited agricultural potential," viable communities were established.⁵²

According to contemporary observers and historians alike, the project to colonize the Ottawa-Huron Tract failed because of the region's apparently inhospitable climate and thin, unyielding soils. Most scholars, economic historians and historical geographers

⁴⁸ Graeme Wynn, *Timber Colony: A Historical Geography of Early Nineteenth-Century New Brunswick* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981).

⁴⁹ Sandwell, *Contesting Rural Space*, 226, and John D. Belshaw, *Colonization and Community: The Vancouver Island Coalfield and the Making of the British Columbian Working Class* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 167.

⁵⁰ See Little, *Crofters and Habitants*, and *Nationalism, Capitalism, and Colonization in Nineteenth-Century Quebec: The Upper St. Francis District* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989).

⁵¹ Little, *Nationalism, Capitalism, and Colonization*, 13–14.

⁵² Little, *Crofters and Habitants*, 3.

in particular, continue to view the project as a misguided attempt at transforming the wilderness of the southern Canadian Shield into an agricultural hinterland. Despite Douglas McCalla's dismantling of the staples thesis,⁵³ scholars continue to replicate the perspective of the colonial archive and re-inscribe on the historical landscape the tyranny of wheat. John C. Walsh, in contrast, re-examines the colonization of the Ottawa-Huron Tract not as a failed settlement scheme, but as an important episode in Canadian state formation—the colonization of the Ottawa-Huron Tract was a massive and influential experiment in governance.⁵⁴ As McCalla has shown for the rest of Upper Canada, the goal of most settlers was not the production of wheat for export, but the establishment of independent family farms.⁵⁵ As Little says in his conclusion to *Crofters and Habitants*, “the question of success depends on the standards one chooses to measure by.”⁵⁶ Many attempts at farming on the Shield did indeed fail, but others were quite successful, even if in atypical ways. Settlers did not blindly follow the dictates of the state and colonization boosters. Rather, they carefully assessed the landscape and articulated their own vision of colonization, a vision that did not always mesh with the goals of provincial planners. The following chapters show how settlers assessed the landscape, took advantage of the structures of the settlement process, negotiated local authority, established a viable economy, and shaped cohesive communities in nineteenth-century Brudenell.

⁵³ Douglas McCalla, *Planting the Province: The Economic History of Upper Canada 1784–1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

⁵⁴ Walsh, “Landscapes of Longing,” 38.

⁵⁵ McCalla, *Planting the Province*, 9–10.

⁵⁶ Little, *Crofters and Habitants*, 259.

Chapter 2

Assessing the Prospects of Colonization: Perspectives on Landscape and Settlement in the Ottawa-Huron Tract to 1880

This chapter is not about the actual, but rather the perceived geographies of the Ottawa-Huron Tract, and the impacts of these perceptions on colonization. Understanding how the region's physical traits were perceived from early contact to the 1880s provides a window into the contemporary perspectives and decision-making processes that created the framework for resettlement. This chapter examines the ways in which assessments of the agricultural potential of the region, along with basic land use practices, changed over time. It establishes key contextual elements for later discussions of settlement patterns, governance, economy, and ethnicity. How did indigenous peoples, squatters, lumbermen, surveyors, bureaucrats, and early settlers perceive the landscape around them? How did planners interpret empirical and anecdotal data about the landscape to create an official understanding of the region, and then turn this into a scheme for colonization? What were the consequences of this process for those who undertook the actual work of colonization—the settlers?

Since humans first settled the Upper Ottawa Valley some six thousand years ago (or more), to the time of Champlain, to the present land claim negotiations, this has been a contested landscape. The Algonquin who inhabited (and continue to inhabit) the region developed a complex system of land use in which trade, hunting, gathering, and farming all were important. By 1850, the region had developed a mixed local economy, which included a variety of activities based on the rivers and forests, and in which agriculture was peripheral, though essential. Official understandings of the region began to change

through the 1840s and 1850s. It was reimagined as a space for economic development based on both agriculture and forestry, to be facilitated by construction of timber slides, roads, canals, and railways, and an influx of farmers. Geologists and surveyors were despatched to assess the area's resources and to provide data to inform government policy. Some reports were cautious, but others exaggerated a vast economic potential.

The process of planning colonization was selective. Political decisions were made which seemed in hindsight to go against the best judgement of knowledgeable observers. Beginning with roads and free grants in the 1850s, the state actively and extensively promoted colonization, attempting to impose a rigid settlement structure unsuited to the recalcitrant topography of the Ottawa-Huron Tract. The consequences of this policy included resistance, adaptation, and resignation. The longer the colonization process endured, the more nuanced understandings of the landscape emerged, or re-emerged, and gained traction. These views contradicted settlement boosters, while at the same time reaffirming land use practices of earlier settlers. Some settlers successfully adapted to the landscape, others left, and by the early 1870s the government was resigned to the failure of its colonization scheme and began to look elsewhere for its empire.

The pattern of colonization in the Ottawa-Huron Tract broke from earlier patterns in British North America and was part of a shift in the scope of state involvement in land management in nineteenth century Canada. In the early 1800s, "Upper Canada held out the prospect that a poor immigrant could acquire a farm and, thereby, a livelihood for a family, a prospect that was fast becoming no more than a memory for the British poor."¹ By the 1850s, the prospect of owning land in Upper Canada was still a reality, but it was

¹ Cole Harris, *The Reluctant Land: Society, Space, and Environment in Canada before Confederation* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008), 320.

restricted to the margins of older settled areas and to new areas like the Ottawa-Huron Tract.² The colonization of this vast and varied region required a rethinking of what was suitable land for agriculture, and conversely, what was suitable agriculture for the land. State planners drew on and applied emerging Victorian science to develop a language and epistemology to describe the landscape in a way that made it suitable for colonization.³

From 1800 to 1850, land in the Upper Ottawa Valley was only loosely regulated. There were few imperial authorities to oversee colonization besides the timber barons who leased their limits from the government and the Indian agents who responded to claims of illegal settlement. There was a rush to extract the most accessible white pine timber, but there was no mad scramble for agricultural land, only a slow movement of squatters seeking to exploit the captive shanty market alongside an indigenous population who were also adapting to agricultural settlement. In many cases, it was the lumber companies who set up their own depot farms at key locations within their limits.⁴ All of this changed in 1853 with the initiation of the colonization roads project. One of the first colonization projects directed almost entirely by the Canadian state-in-formation, this was also a project in which there was a significant degree of discretion available to local

² A similar colonization project was undertaken in Lower Canada around the same time. See J. I. Little, *Nationalism, Capitalism, and Colonization in Nineteenth-Century Quebec: The Upper St. Francis District* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989).

³ John C. Walsh, "Landscapes of Longing: Colonization and the Problem of State Formation in Canada West" (PhD diss., University of Guelph, 2001), 69. On the emergence of this science in the context of Canadian imperial expansion in the nineteenth century see Suzanne Zeller, *Inventing Canada: Early Victorian Science and the Idea of a Transcontinental Nation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987); and A.A. den Otter, *Civilizing the Wilderness: Culture and Nature in Pre-Confederation Canada* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2012). For an updated discussion in the context of the Ottawa-Huron Tract, see Joshua C. Blank, *Creating Kashubia: History, Memory, and Identity in Canada's First Polish Community* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016), chapter five.

⁴ Roderick MacKay, "Potatoes in the Pines: Depot Farms in Algonquin Park," in *Partners to the Past: Proceedings of the 2005 Ontario Archaeological Society Symposium*, ed. James S. Molnar (Ottawa: Ontario Archaeological Society, 2007), 76–92.

agents and settlers. It was a bold experiment in modern environmental science—to assess, invest in, and profit from ownership of exploitable land resources.

The Upper Ottawa Valley was not a *terra nullius* when it was colonized, despite the enduring longevity of this myth in Canadian culture. In oral tradition, the Algonquin have called the Ottawa Valley home since time immemorial.⁵ This claim is supported by archaeological evidence which indicates human occupation and trade dating back at least six thousand years BPE.⁶ The traditional homeland of the Algonquin is the entire *Kiji Sibi*, or Kichissippi (Ottawa) River watershed, called the “Great River of the Algonquin” by French explorers in the seventeenth century.⁷ When the trespassing French explorers were discovered in 1603, at least six separate Algonquin groups inhabited the watershed (see Map 2.1). Three of these were active in the area now known as the Upper Ottawa Valley on the south (Ontario) side of the river: the Kinouchepirini (or Keinouche) who occupied the area between the Petawawa and Bonnechere Rivers, the Matouchkarini (or Matouweskarini) who lived in the Madawaska River region, and the Kichesipirini on Morrison’s and Allumette Islands in the Ottawa River itself.⁸

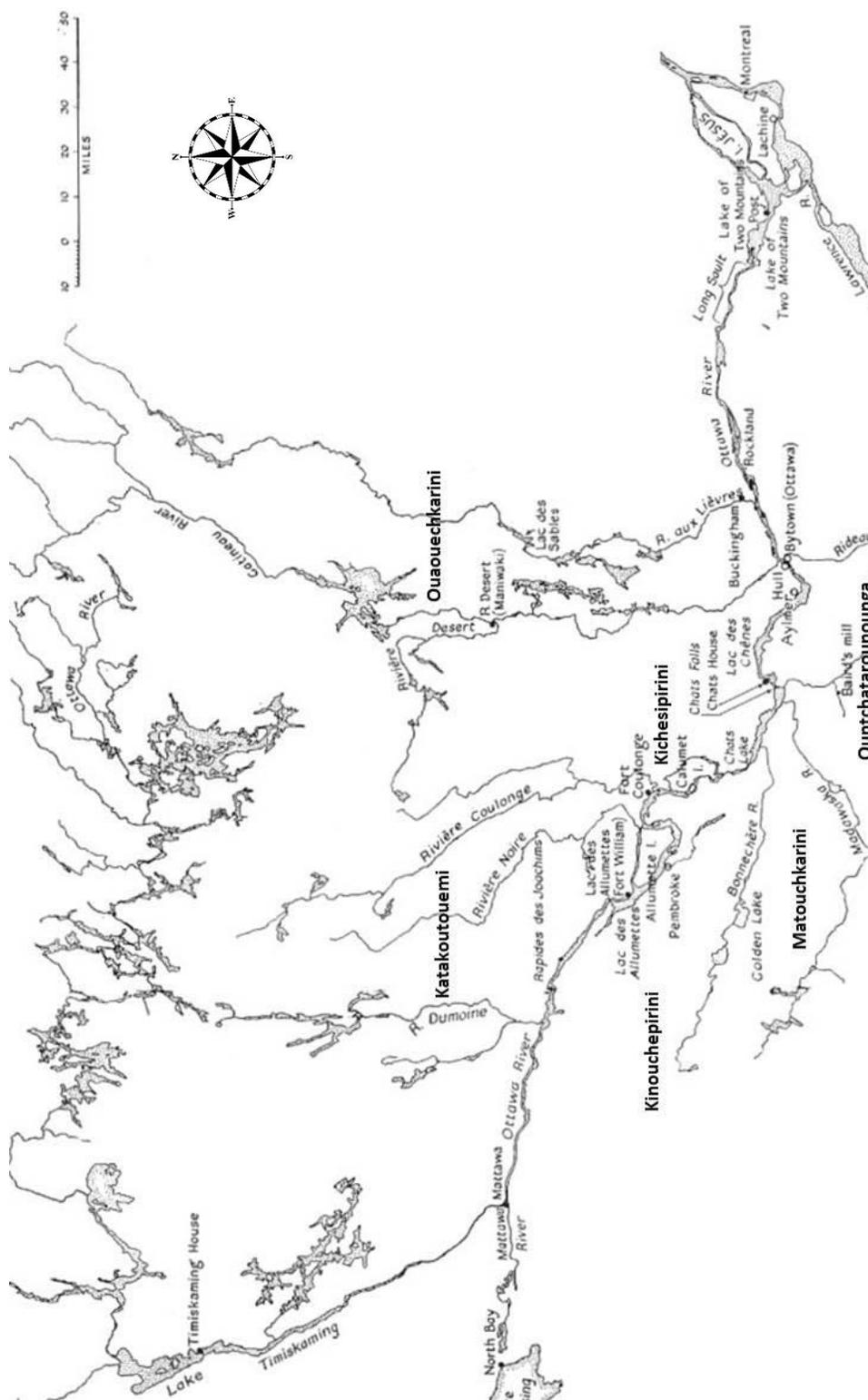
⁵ Council of the Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn and Kirby J. Whiteduck, *Algonquin Traditional Culture: The Algonquins of the Kichissippi Valley – Traditional Culture at the Early Contact Period* (Golden Lake: Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn, 2002), 9.

⁶ Gérard Pelletier, “The First Inhabitants of the Outaouais: 6,000 Years of History,” in *History of the Outaouais*, ed. Chad Gaffield (Sainte-Foy: Les Presses de l’Université Laval, 1997), 43–66; Marc Côté, “Prehistory of Abitibi-Témiscamingue,” in *The Algonquins*, ed. Daniel Clément, Mercury Series, Canadian Ethnology Service Paper, no. 130 (Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1996), 5–39. Algonquian, or Algonkian, refers to the larger language family, which includes Abenaki, Cree, Delaware, Malecite, Mi’kmaq, Montagnais, and Anishinaabeg. Algonquin, or Algonkin, refers to the nation inhabiting the Ottawa River watershed.

⁷ Peter Hessel, *The Algonkin Tribe: The Algonkins of the Ottawa Valley* (Arnprior, ON: Kichissippi Books, 1987), 1. See also Bonita Lawrence, *Fractured Homeland: Federal Recognition and Algonquin Identity in Ontario* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2012), 7.

⁸ Cole Harris and Geoffrey Matthews, *Historical Atlas of Canada, Vol. 1: From the Beginning to 1800* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), Plate 34, and Lawrence, *Fractured Homeland*, 21–22.

MAP 2.1
The Ottawa River Watershed, c. 1840s



Source: Modified from a map by Courtney C. J. Bond, in Clyde C. Kennedy, *The Upper Ottawa Valley: A Glimpse of History* (Pembroke: Renfrew County Council, 1970), 6. Names of Algonquin groups added.

Trade, warfare, evangelization, and disease all shaped the landscape of the Upper Ottawa Valley as it appeared by the 1850s. European goods had reached the region by the 1550s,⁹ but even before European incursions, Algonquin traders routinely exchanged furs for corn with the Wendat to the west.¹⁰ In the seventeenth century, the Ottawa River watershed (including tributaries such as the Madawaska and Bonnechere Rivers) was a key route linking Montreal, and thus the larger world economy, with the continental interior.¹¹ From 1600 to 1620, the Ottawa Valley Algonquin, like the Montagnais of the Saguenay region, exploited the growing French interest in the region and expanded their pre-existing trade networks. In the 1620s, the Algonquin, especially the Kichesipirini, controlled interior access by exacting tolls on passage up the Ottawa River and thus were arbiters of the fur trade in the Ottawa Valley.¹² They restricted European movement, but allowed allies such as the Wendat passage through their territory on the condition the Wendat uphold the same restriction.¹³ Until his death in 1636, Kichesipirini hereditary leader Tessouat sought an Algonquin monopoly on the role of intermediary in the fur trade and attempted to undermine contrary Jesuit efforts among the Wendat.¹⁴

By the 1630s the regional political situation was organized around a Wendat-Algonquin-French alliance north of the St. Lawrence, and an Iroquois-Dutch alliance

⁹ Bruce Trigger and Gordon Day, "Southern Algonquian Middlemen: Algonquin, Nipissing, and Ottawa, 1550–1780," in *Aboriginal Ontario: Historical Perspectives on the First Nations*, ed. Edward S. Rogers and Donald B. Smith (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1994), 68.

¹⁰ Bruce Trigger, "The Original Iroquoians: Huron, Petun, and Neutral," in *Aboriginal Ontario*, 46–48.

¹¹ Harris, *The Reluctant Land*, 106. Harris and Matthews, *From the Beginning to 1800*, Plate 35.

¹² Lawrence, *Fractured Homeland*, 261; Trigger and Day, "Southern Algonquian Middlemen," 67–69.

¹³ Trigger, "The Original Iroquoians," 48; Lawrence, *Fractured Homeland*, 261.

¹⁴ Elsie McLeod Jury, "Tessouat (Le Borgne de l'Île)," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online* 1 (1000–1700), http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/tessouat_1636_1E.html (accessed 9 May 2016).

centered on the Hudson River valley to the south.¹⁵ Unstable from their inception, these alliances were further destabilized as European diseases like smallpox and influenza wiped out half the indigenous population around the Great Lakes between 1634 and 1641.¹⁶ Iroquois raids increased in intensity in the 1640s and French negotiations with the Iroquois undermined the stability of their ostensible Algonquin allies.¹⁷ Well-organized and strengthened by the use of Dutch muskets, the Iroquois moved to disrupt the Ottawa Valley trade through coordinated military action, culminating in a massacre of the Kichesipirini in 1647.¹⁸ These factors encouraged many of the Ottawa Valley Algonquin to migrate north and west while others went to missions at Trois Rivières, Lake of Two Mountains, and Montreal.¹⁹ They later reoccupied much of their traditional territory, but after the French built forts at the mouths of the Coulonge and Dumoine rivers, the Algonquin were no longer able to prevent a permanent European presence.²⁰

The Algonquian peoples of the Eastern Woodlands cultural area are usually referred to as “hunter-gatherer” societies, both in the historical and anthropological literature.²¹ Hunter-gatherer societies were highly mobile, moving with the seasons and

¹⁵ Harris, *The Reluctant Land*, 93; Lawrence, *Fractured Homeland*, 22; and Gilles Havard, *The Great Peace of Montreal of 1701: French-Native Diplomacy in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. Phyllis Aronoff and Howard Scott (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001), 27, and 30–31.

¹⁶ Harris, *The Reluctant Land*, 94; Harris and Matthews, *From the Beginning to 1800*, Plate 35.

¹⁷ Havard, *The Great Peace of Montreal*, 54; Harris, *The Reluctant Land*, 93–95; and Lawrence, *Fractured Homeland*, 22.

¹⁸ Harris, *The Reluctant Land*, 95; Lawrence, *Fractured Homeland*, 24.

¹⁹ Trigger and Day, “Southern Algonquian Middlemen,” 72–73; Lawrence, *Fractured Homeland*, 24.

²⁰ Lawrence, *Fractured Homeland*, 24; Harris, *The Reluctant Land*, 107; Trigger and Day, “Southern Algonquian Middlemen,” 72–73.

²¹ See, for example: Robert L. Kelly, *The Lifeways of Hunter-Gatherers: The Foraging Spectrum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

practicing a subsistence lifestyle based on the local availability of plants, game animals, and fish. This designation is related to a tendency for Euro-Canadians in the nineteenth century to discount the types of land use practiced by First Nations, and therefore also claims to territory, which provided part of the ideological justification for colonization.²²

The hunter-gatherer designation, however, fails to capture the complexity of Algonquin culture in the nineteenth century. According to research by Robert Lovelace of the Ardoch Algonquin First Nation, Algonquin in the Ottawa Valley used over 240 different local plants for both sustenance and medicine.²³ Families practiced forms of aquaculture—tending to wild rice beds, “which fed both themselves and the geese and ducks who congregated there and in turn provided another source of food.”²⁴ As Bonita Lawrence argues, the Algonquin, “not only ‘occupied’ these regions, they modified them according to their needs and were in turn adapted to them at every level.”²⁵ Algonquin in the Ottawa Valley also regularly planted corn, in addition to what was imported from Wendake.²⁶ Archaeological evidence suggests Algonquin along the Madawaska River cleared land for farming in the early nineteenth century.²⁷ Later, they adapted their

²² Harris, *The Reluctant Land*, 286.

²³ Lawrence, *Fractured Homeland*, 30.

²⁴ Lawrence, *Fractured Homeland*, 31. On Aboriginal diets in this region, see Alison Norman, “‘Fit for the Table of the Most Fastidious Epicure’: Culinary Colonialism in the Upper Canadian Contact Zone,” in *Edible Histories, Cultural Politics: Towards a Canadian Food History*, ed. Franca Iacovetta, Valerie J. Korinek, and Marlene Epp (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 31–51. On the cultivation of wild rice (*manomin*) in the Ottawa Valley see Geri Blinick, “*Manomin* (Wild Rice) in the *Kiji Sibi* (Ottawa River) Valley: An Exploration of Traditional Food, Development and Decolonization” (PhD diss., Carleton University, 2012).

²⁵ Lawrence, *Fractured Homeland*, 31.

²⁶ Trigger and Day, “Southern Algonquian Middlemen,” 65.

²⁷ Bill Allen, “Nineteenth Century Aboriginal Farmers of the Madawaska River,” in *Partners to the Past*, 56–75.

farming practices to take advantage of the emerging shanty market: “As timbering operations moved further into the Madawaska Valley interior by the mid nineteenth century, Algonquin farms grew to 10 to 12 acres.”²⁸ In addition to trading, hunting, and gathering, Algonquin in the Ottawa Valley were adept at cultivating the local landscape to meet their needs and to produce for market.

From the 1600s to the 1800s, the Ottawa Valley landscape was transformed numerous times as imperial claims shifted and people moved in and out. As the world changed around them, the Ottawa Valley Algonquin were not static, but adapted to changing circumstances within the context and possibilities of their world. After 1806, the region was transformed again, as the Napoleonic blockade in Europe spurred capital investment in North American forestry. Despite the influx of white lumbermen and settlers to the Ottawa Valley, the land still belonged to the Algonquin and their Nipissing neighbours to the north, who did not welcome the colonial intrusion. In petitions to the Crown, Algonquin leaders told newcomers as much, and referenced the rights granted under the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and subsequent agreements.²⁹ These complaints were ignored or considered inconsequential within the worldview of settler colonialism.

For example, in July 1833, Algonquin and Nipissing representatives at the Lake of Two Mountains petitioned Lord Aylmer, Governor of Lower Canada, regarding their repeatedly unanswered requests for title to their traditional lands. Their petition reveals some of the difficulties they faced in the context of settler colonialism:

²⁸ Allen, “Nineteenth Century Aboriginal Farmers of the Madawaska River,” 68.

²⁹ See the petitions and supporting primary documents collected by Joan Holmes and Associates in *Algonquins of Golden Lake Claim*, 8 vols. (Ontario Native Affairs Secretariat, 1993), available online at: <http://www.thealgonquinway.ca/English/book-e.php?book=10> (accessed 10 May 2016).

What have you done for us, my father, since then [several moons ago]? Nothing, at least to our knowledge, to grant what we asked you for then, except to tell us to go and hunt or live on the islands in the Ottawa. We went there and we found these islands occupied by other people with better title according to what they told us, and who chased us away saying: ‘Leave, you have no right here, we forbid you to hunt and fish. If your father had granted you some rights, he would have granted them to you in writing.’³⁰

When up against competing claims by white settlers, the arguments of Aboriginals fell on deaf ears. In another example, on 15 February 1834, Superintendent James Hughes wrote to Lt. Colonel D. C. Napier, Secretary of Indian Affairs in the Office of the Military Secretary, Quebec, about a land request by a group of Algonquin and Nipissing:

It is on the south side – there is an Island before it which they would also like to have, to make hay thereon & place their Cattle in summer – They say they have no encouragement to work on pieces of land that are in a manner only lent to them whereas were they like the rest of the Indians – Masters of a certain tract – that they could call their own, they would be happy & Industrious and moreover, above, they could have it in their power to make better hunts – find more deer & catch plenty of fish.³¹

Not only did they seek to maintain their hunting and fishing rights, but they were using the land for agriculture and animal husbandry as well.

The Algonquin petitioned the Crown to uphold specific rights, but they also made complaints against individual settlers. In 1834, a signatory of the July 1833 petition above made a complaint against Charles Thomas, a former Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) clerk turned “free hunter” who had taken up residence on the Bonnechere River, near the present day Pikwàkanagàn (Golden Lake) reserve. Makwa, a Nipissing chief, argued Thomas and his sons were illegally trapping on his land and claimed they were

³⁰ LAC R216-204-5-E, Secretary of Indian Affairs in Lower Canada, 1831-1841, reel C-11031, pp. 34427–34430, Algonquin and Nipissing Indians of the Lake of Two Mountains to Lord Aylmer, Governor of Lower Canada, July 1833.

³¹ LAC R216-204-5-E, reel C-11466, pp. 35066–35068, Hughes to Napier, 15 February 1834.

intending to squat and begin farming. The complaint was made to an interpreter at the Lake of Two Mountains, Dominique Ducharme, who brought the matter to Superintendent Hughes.³² The next week, Hughes forwarded the complaint to Napier,³³ who then raised the issue with Lord Aylmer. In his letter to Lord Aylmer, Napier underscored (perhaps unintentionally) the predicament of the Algonquin and Nipissing chiefs:

In Submitting this complaint to Your Excellency, I deem it my duty to observe, that in the Month of May 1829, the Chiefs of the Algonquin and Nipissingue Tribes at the Lake of the Two Mountains preferred a Similar Application to His Excellency Sir James Kempt, - relative to various trespasses and depredations which had been committed by white Intruders upon their Hunting Grounds near the Ottawa River, upon which Occasion I was directed to intimate to those Tribes, that His Majesty's Solicitor General, or the Senior Crown Law Officer at Montreal, would be directed to prosecute on the part of the King, any Person who might illegally Settle, or Commit any Cognizable trespass or depredation on their Grounds; But as the Indians were unable, at that time, to Establish any particular Case with Competent proof, nothing further was done in the Matter.³⁴

In effect, Aboriginals could not force settlers off their land unless they had proof of title, but they could not get proof of title unless it was first granted by the Crown. In this case, Napier reported (via Ducharme) that Makwa did in fact have sufficient proof of his claim, and the matter was forwarded to the Solicitor General.³⁵ Unfortunately for Makwa, the following week, Solicitor General Michael O'Sullivan wrote to Military Secretary Richard Airey advising that Makwa's land was actually on the south side of the Ottawa River, in Upper Canada.³⁶ Being therefore outside Lord Aylmer's authority, the matter

³² LAC R216-204-5-E, reel C-11466, pp. 35092–35093, Ducharme to Hughes, 16 February 1834.

³³ LAC R216-204-5-E, reel C-11466, pp. 35089–35091, Hughes to Napier, 24 February 1834.

³⁴ LAC R216-204-5-E, reel C-11466, pp. 35095–35098, Napier to Lord Aylmer, 31 March 1834.

³⁵ LAC R216-204-5-E, reel C-11466, pp. 35095–35098, Napier to Lord Aylmer, 31 March 1834.

³⁶ LAC R216-204-5-E, reel C-11466, pp. 35099–35100, O'Sullivan to Airey, 7 April 1834. The episode also demonstrates the significance of local knowledge since none of Hughes, Napier, or Aylmer realized the complaint regarded lands on the south side of the river, in Upper rather than Lower Canada.

was subsequently dropped. In the settlement of the Ottawa-Huron Tract, as elsewhere, official rhetoric encouraged Aboriginals to adopt a “civilized” agrarian lifestyle at the same time as the implementation of settlement policies actively thwarted attempts to do so.³⁷ Though it is not clear if Makwa’s issue was at all advanced by Upper Canadian authorities, in 1850—sixteen years after the complaint was lodged—Charles Thomas remained at his farm on Golden Lake.

By this time, a mixed local economy based on forestry, hunting, trapping, and farming had developed in the Upper Ottawa Valley. This economy was more closely related to the earlier seasonal economy of the Algonquin than to the farming economy of contemporary Upper Canada. This evidence confirms the interpretations of Gerald Friesen and others who argue that important continuities existed alongside fundamental economic and cultural changes in early settler society. In writing about the example of Elizabeth Goudie, Friesen remarks: “The rhythms of her activity were similar to those of pre-contact Aboriginal people, and her reactions to daily circumstance were probably very similar to those of her Aboriginal neighbors.”³⁸ The new key difference was the importance of forestry. In the words of Cole Harris, “the whole Ottawa Valley was largely tributary to Montreal and Quebec, where most of the timber barons lived and through which its squared timber and deals were exported to Britain.”³⁹ While the region

³⁷ See Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1990).

³⁸ Gerald Friesen, *Citizens and Nation: An Essay on History, Communication, and Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 85. Ruth Sandwell makes a similar argument in the context of settlement on Saltspring Island, British Columbia. See Sandwell, *Contesting Rural Space: Land Policy and Practices of Resettlement on Saltspring Island, 1859–1891* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005), 5.

³⁹ Harris, *The Reluctant Land*, 339.

was marginal to the agricultural heartland of Upper Canada, it was central to the North Atlantic timber economy. Roughly half the total output of squared timber exported from the Canadas in the 1840s came from forests in the Upper Ottawa.⁴⁰ The Ottawa district remained central to the squared timber industry in Upper Canada until at least 1871.⁴¹ As the relative importance of squared timber declined, the Upper Ottawa became a center for milling and the extraction of sawlogs for lumber.⁴² The development of an agro-forest economy in the Upper Ottawa was well underway.⁴³ The colonization of the Ottawa-Huron Tract took place within the context of this dynamic mixed-land-use economy.

While the square timber industry was transitory, the presence of merchants, lumbermen, and farm families in the Ottawa Valley foreshadowed adaptation to a new social organization based on year-round habitation. A representative of this transition was Charles Thomas, the same who illegally squatted on the lands of the Nipissing chief Makwa. From 1850 to 1852, Thomas kept a diary on operations at his farm, which was located on the Bonnechere River, about 80 kilometres upstream (west) of the Ottawa River and about 30 kilometres downstream (northeast) of what became Brudenell.⁴⁴ Sometimes referred to as “Charley’s Hope” the farm was also a “stopping place” for traders, workers, and settlers venturing further into the interior. Thomas recorded his

⁴⁰ C. Grant Head, “An Introduction to Forest Exploitation in Nineteenth Century Ontario,” in *Perspectives on Landscape and Settlement in Nineteenth Century Ontario*, ed. J. David Wood, Carleton Library no. 91 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1975), 79 and 84–85.

⁴¹ Head, “An Introduction to Forest Exploitation in Nineteenth Century Ontario,” 84.

⁴² Head, “An Introduction to Forest Exploitation in Nineteenth Century Ontario,” 91.

⁴³ Blank, *Creating Kashubia*, 162. See also Chad Gaffield, *Language, Schooling, and Cultural Conflict: The Origins of the French-Language Controversy in Ontario* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1987), chapter three.

⁴⁴ LAC R7271-0-3-E, vol. 2, Typescript of Journal of Charles Thomas, 1850–1852.

observations about weather, travellers passing through, activities on the farm, and details about his family and business. These observations provide a glimpse into the daily concerns of one local resident on the eve of the dramatic changes that would come with the colonization roads project.

Charles Thomas, who was of mixed European-Aboriginal ancestry, was born in 1793 to Margaret Cree and John Thomas. John Thomas was a HBC trader stationed at Moose Factory when Charles was born.⁴⁵ Comparatively little is known of Margaret, but she was likely a member of the Cree, Ojibway, or Oji-Cree nations, other Anishinaabeg groups whose traditional lands lie north of Algonquin and Nipissing territories and south of Hudson's Bay, in what is now northwestern Ontario.⁴⁶ Like his father, Charles worked for the HBC. From 1808 to 1822 he served as a clerk at posts in the Moose, Athabasca, and Peace River territories, before moving to Lake of Two Mountains.⁴⁷ He married Hannah Mannall in 1824, and they had eleven children.⁴⁸ He retired from the HBC in 1832 and he and his family settled at Golden Lake. Thomas is an interesting figure in that his experience reflects both Aboriginal traditions and the emerging commercial economy. His *métis* status allowed him to bridge these two worlds. He is also one of the few settlers—white and non-white—who left a personal record from this place and time.

⁴⁵ Elaine Allan Mitchell, "Thomas, John," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online* 6 (1821–1835), http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/thomas_john_6E.html (accessed 11 May 2016).

⁴⁶ John Macfie and Basil Johnston, *Hudson Bay Watershed: A Photographic Memoir of the Ojibway, Cree, and Oji-Cree* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1991), map on page 6. See also John S. Long, *Treaty No. 9: Making the Agreement to Share the Land in Far Northern Ontario in 1905* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 393–401.

⁴⁷ "Thomas, Charles (1793–1895)," *Hudson's Bay Company Archives Biographical Sheets*, Archives of Manitoba, https://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/biographical/t/thomas_charles1808-1832.pdf (accessed 11 May 2016).

⁴⁸ See biographical sketch on the Library and Archives Canada website, and at the University of Guelph's *Rural Diaries Archive*, <https://ruraldiaries.lib.uoguelph.ca/charles-thomas> (accessed 11 May 2016).

Charles Thomas' very first diary entry is revealing because it provides a clear description of the essential structure of the local economy. Here it is in its entirety:

1850 Sept – 19. A. M^cDonell up at Beaver Farm. Thursday. Very fine Calm day. We tried every where ab^t the head of the Lake for a deer, but all to no purpose. The Deer ab^t the present time very scarce – Johny Daley C & R's Cask were taken across by Bl Bap^{te} who afterwards drove down our cows as they are bulling very badly...Alick M^cDonell Esq up with a great many men...he bought a field of Clover from Charles...sold 2 little Pigs to old woman.⁴⁹

Similar to later entries, the passage reveals daily routines on Thomas' farm. Farming was important, as his references to a cattle drive, the sale of a field of clover and the sale of two pigs suggests. Also important was the presence of game animals, which appeared to be a particularly pressing matter that season. The role of forestry is highlighted, as Alick McDonell and a "great many men" passed through on their way to set up a winter work camp. Finally, the continued presence of Algonquin on Golden Lake is revealed by the reference to the "old woman" who was an elder of that community.

Thomas' diary suggests a cooperative relationship with the local Algonquin, who continued to hunt, fish, trap, and raise crops in the vicinity. Thomas paid close attention to the patterns and practices of the hunting and fishing seasons. On 9 October 1850, Thomas observed, "The night last was very calm, and the Indians were flambeauxing (sic) most of the night along the south shore."⁵⁰ After noting the beginning of trout season on the lake, Thomas mentions, "Flambeaux busy at night at big shoal."⁵¹ Night fishing using torches (*flambeaux*) and spears was a traditional method of Anishinaabeg

⁴⁹ LAC R7271-0-3-E, vol. 2, Typescript of Journal of Charles Thomas, 1850–1852, page 1.

⁵⁰ Journal of Charles Thomas, 7.

⁵¹ Journal of Charles Thomas, 10.

groups throughout the Great Lakes region.⁵² Elizabeth Simcoe, Catherine Parr Traill, and Anne Langton each commented on the practice in their accounts of pioneer life in Upper Canada.⁵³ On 24 October 1850 Thomas noted the beginning of deer season: “Pissendawa and Boy’s started on their hunting tour,” and the next day, “Paul and Douison Pissendawa came back home today having forgot their blankets...the old Woman traded a Martin skin with me for ammunition.”⁵⁴ Thomas was likely noting the start of the Pissendawa’s hunting tour since the experienced hunters’ actions would signal the start of prime deer hunting season around early November.

The Pissendawa family are referred to on at least a weekly basis from October 1850 to May 1851—as informants on hunting and timber shanty activity, as guests and customers at Thomas’ stopping place, in their health and family matters, and as suppliers of local goods. On 1 November, for example, Thomas purchased a three foot canoe from Mrs. Pissendawa for six dollars. Relations with the Pissendawa family were maintained by observing long held customs such as the practice of gift-giving. On 23 December, Thomas noted a visit by “Old Mother’s Pissendawa and Tyandgiké,” who “got some *douceurs* they were in want of – report Marian Pissendawa sick.”⁵⁵ This would indicate the custom of gift-giving was still in operation here at this time, though it had been in decline as an official policy in Canada for several decades.⁵⁶ Thomas also noted in his

⁵² Norman, “Culinary Colonialism in the Upper Canadian Contact Zone,” 43. See also Edwin C. Guillet, *Pioneer Days in Upper Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), 48.

⁵³ Norman, “Culinary Colonialism in the Upper Canadian Contact Zone,” 43.

⁵⁴ Journal of Charles Thomas, 14.

⁵⁵ Journal of Charles Thomas, 27. Emphasis added.

⁵⁶ J. R. Miller, “Victoria’s ‘Red Children’: The ‘Great White Queen Mother’ and Native-Newcomer Relations in Canada,” *Native Studies Review* 17, no. 1 (2008): 4. See also John S. Milloy, “The Era of Civilization: British Policy for the Indians of Canada, 1830–1860” (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 1978).

journal that the Algonquin continued to engage in agriculture. On 4 September 1851, he wrote: “Clear and calm hot day – The Indians appear to be making their Hay at Knights Meadows and Joe is busy reaping his Oats.”⁵⁷ Though for some this was a “rudimentary” form of agriculture,⁵⁸ it is equally viable to view it as a strategic adaptation to local circumstances. Because farmers cultivated hay, oats, and potatoes instead of wheat does not indicate lack of sophistication, only deference for the land and local market demand.

Indigenous farmers adapted to a changing economy. Historical evidence of their presence in Brudenell is fragmentary, but conclusive. Two Algonquin are buried in the Catholic cemetery in Brudenell, but these do not appear in any census or assessment records for the period.⁵⁹ However, the 1861 census did identify fifteen people as Indians. Most appear to have been members of the same extended family, with eight sharing the surname Eengawrek.⁶⁰ Though he is not listed in the nominal schedule, Joseph Nekek is listed on the agricultural census with two acres in cultivation and one acre in crops worth \$80, along with \$18 worth of equipment. A specific location was not given for the farm, but it must have existed somewhere. The farm produced 75 bushels of potatoes and 35 pounds of butter, just below average for Brudenell. Nekek also had an ox, two cows, and a horse, valued together at \$130. The possession of a horse made Nekek unusual in a

⁵⁷ Journal of Charles Thomas, 96.

⁵⁸ See J. David Wood, *Making Ontario: Agricultural Colonization and Landscape Re-Creation before the Railway* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2000), 99.

⁵⁹ Bernadette Burbage, *Early Families: Our Lady of the Angels Parish, Brudenell, Ontario, 1858–2008* (Renfrew, ON: Renfrew Printing, 2008), 233. This is not unusual given the parish limits extended well beyond the boundaries of Brudenell, especially in the early years of the settlement.

⁶⁰ The names given here are the spellings provided on the census and may not be accurate. “Negeek” is one of the names listed in Appendix 3.1.1 to the Algonquin Land Claim, “Preliminary List of Algonquin Ancestors,” <http://www.tanakiwin.com/wp-system/uploads/2015/06/Appendix-3.1.1-Preliminary-List-of-Algonquin-Ancestors.pdf> (accessed 1 June 2017).

township where only one in four households owned a horse. When free grants were made available in 1855, they were denied to First Nations settlers.⁶¹

In contrast with the ideals of later settlement boosters, such practices reveal a perspective on land use more in sync with the actual (rather than imagined) capacities of the local landscape. Thomas' journal provides us with insights into the relationship between Natives and Newcomers, and highlights the slow transition to new land use practices in the Upper Ottawa Valley. Though Thomas was not himself an agent of the state, he was an agent of colonization. While much of his journal describes the revealing routines of daily life, he also observed some larger changes happening around him. His winter entries are filled with the teams of horses and men taking supplies into the bush, while in the spring he notes the frequency of timber rafts coming down the river and across the lake. These were important changes, though they would pale in comparison to the disruptions caused by later state-sponsored colonizing visions.

The development of local and regional transportation routes were key to Thomas' worldview. In November 1851, Thomas hosted a surveying party and the next day noted, "Canoe Navigation [was] closed for the Shanty men."⁶² In the second year of his journal, references to local Algonquin become more scarce, while commercial transactions and the activities of surveyors and shanty workers increase in prominence. During the winter of 1851–1852, teams running supplies up to the shanties routinely stopped over:

Easterly wind and heavy snow greatest part of the day – First Teams stirring about the Lake – Alick McDonnell's Silver Lake Concern received a Ton [of] Tame Hay from Charles...At night we had LeBlanc with 2 half loaded Teams –

⁶¹ Kim Hanewich, *Omàmiwinini: the Invisible People* (Omàmiwinini Pimàdjowin, 2009), 3, <http://www.thealgonquinway.ca/pdf/Omamiwinini-InvisiblePeople-e.pdf> (accessed April 14, 2018).

⁶² Journal of Charles Thomas, 11 November 1851, 104.

and Mr. Perrigo and his Jobber with a span and single sleigh load bound for his Shanty – Richard assisting Charles Thrashing.⁶³

Again the next week there were “seven double teams loaded – Robert Smith, T Burke, LeFanne, Piché and Tommy Foy, and two Canadian Teams – Tom Joynt along with these and very noisy.”⁶⁴ By the end of April the ice was untrustworthy and a few weeks later Thomas noted the first timber rafts of the season: “At night we had Mr. Hickey and Payet on return – and Joshua Smith whose Raft is now in the Lake.”⁶⁵ It took three days for Smith’s raft to pass through, destroying one of Thomas’ nets in the process. While the rafts passed by, Thomas and his family busied themselves with the garden, with receiving news from Montreal, and with stocking the store’s shelves for the fall shanty season.

The economy described in Thomas’ diary reflected both Indigenous and Euro-Canadian land use perspectives. It was integrated with both local custom and the wider transatlantic economy. It was a mixed economy in which forests, rivers, and clearings each played significant roles. It was not isolated, but was connected to outside worlds by the movement of people, goods, and ideas. It was in the midst of radical change. Not only did the growth of the forest economy facilitate the dispossession of Algonquin lands by the sale of limits to timber barons. But the clearing of trees and the influx of colonists, combined with the declining availability of land elsewhere in the province, encouraged reconsideration of the place of the Ottawa-Huron Tract as a field for colonization. Soon perspectives shifted away from pragmatic practise and drew on emerging inventory sciences to support the ultimate goal of agricultural settlement.

⁶³ Journal of Charles Thomas, 15 December 1851, 113.

⁶⁴ Journal of Charles Thomas, 23 December 1851, 116.

⁶⁵ Journal of Charles Thomas, 16 May 1852, 155.

Official understandings of the region began to change in the 1840s and 1850s as lumbermen ventured further up the Ottawa tributaries and surveyors made information available to decision-makers. As forestry moved further inland, distances to markets grew and it became increasingly expensive to transport supplies to the shanty camps. This inefficiency was the basis of arguments in favour of an agro-forest economy in which agriculture and forestry existed in a mutually-beneficial symbiosis.⁶⁶ The Ottawa Valley was not the first place where agro-forestry was attempted, but what distinguished this from previous attempts was the fact that forestry preceded colonization.⁶⁷ In effect, as Blank argues, and as Charles Thomas' diary attests, "there was a de facto agro-forest economy before it became government policy."⁶⁸ When lumbermen like John Egan pushed for government investment in infrastructure, this became an opportunity for the state to cost-effectively satisfy the desires for both timber and land at the same time.

Before investment in infrastructure could be made, however, the state needed more detailed information about the Ottawa-Huron Tract. By 1840, only a handful of surveyors and engineers had explored the region. However, new funding for geological surveys was provided by the provincial government in 1841, and the Geological Survey of Canada (GSC) was founded the following year with businessman and geologist William E. Logan as its first director.⁶⁹ One of the earliest studies conducted under the

⁶⁶ For example: Bureau of Agriculture, "Roads in the Eastern and middle sections of Upper Canada, to be opened by the Colonization grants," 30 September 1854, *Appendix to JLAC* 13 (1854–55): Appendix M.M., page 11. See also David Lee, *Lumber Kings and Shantymen: Logging and Lumbering in the Ottawa Valley* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 2006), 18.

⁶⁷ In New Brunswick, for example. See A. R. M. Lower, *Settlement and the Forest Frontier in Eastern Canada* (Toronto: MacMillan, 1936), 44–45.

⁶⁸ Blank, *Creating Kashubia*, 163.

⁶⁹ Suzanne Zeller, "Mapping the Canadian Mind: Reports of the Geological Survey of Canada, 1842–1863," *Canadian Literature* 131 (1991): 157–158. See also Morris Zaslow, *Reading the Rocks: The*

auspices of the GSC was Logan's 1845 survey of the Upper Ottawa Valley. The survey provided a foundation for arguments defending the economic potential of the Ottawa-Huron Tract and furnished decision makers with evidence to support colonization.

Detailed knowledge of the landscape was essential to the development of new infrastructure projects. Colonial politicians were nevertheless uneasy about delegating power to so-called experts, making Logan's position somewhat precarious.⁷⁰ Logan's appointment gave him the task of making an authoritative examination of the economic potential of the major geological components of the landscape. Though other maps and reports of the region existed, this was to be the first systematic geological work carried out not only in the region, but in Canada.⁷¹ The value of Logan's work on the geology of the Upper Ottawa Valley was attested by Alex Russell of the Crown Lands Department (CLD) in his testimony to the Select Committee on the Geological Survey in 1855. Russell, the CLD's senior surveyor and draughtsman for Upper Canada, testified that Logan's maps were essential to the department's work and had been influential in identifying numerous errors in previous maps.⁷²

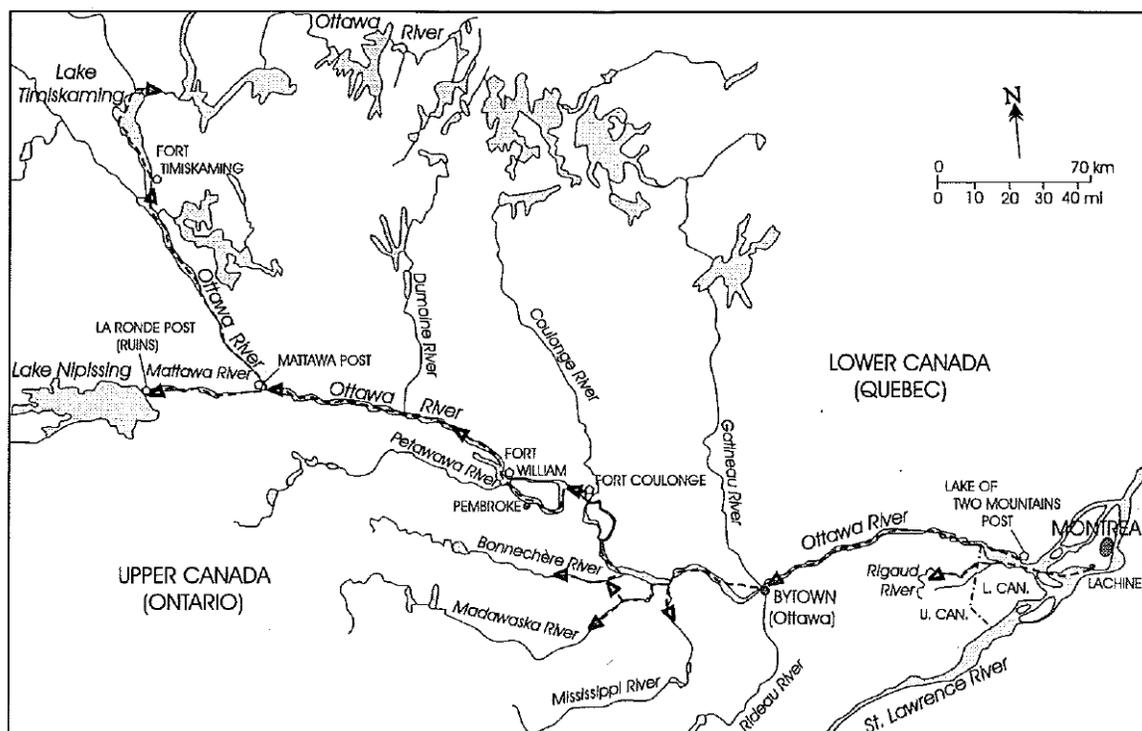
Story of the Geological Survey of Canada, 1842–1972 (Toronto: MacMillan, 1975). The concept of a geological survey was well-established by 1845. The Geological Survey of Great Britain was founded in 1835 to promote geological science and “as a work of great practical utility, bearing on agriculture, mining, road-making, the formation of canals and railroads, and other branches of national industry.” Charles Lyell, “Presidential Address to the Geological Society (1836),” quoted in Andrew A. McMillan, “The Role of the British Geological Survey in the History of Geoconservation,” in *The History of Geoconservation*, ed. C.V. Burek and C.D. Prosser (London: The Geological Society, 2008), 103.

⁷⁰ Peter Baskerville, “Transportation, Social Change, and State Formation, Upper Canada, 1841–1864,” in *Colonial Leviathan: State Formation in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Canada*, ed. Allan Greer and Ian Radforth (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 232–3. Logan was aware of the vulnerability of his position and spent much of his career defending his own credibility. See Zeller, “Mapping the Canadian Mind,” 163 and 165.

⁷¹ Charles H. Smith and Ian Dyck, eds., *William E. Logan's 1845 Survey of the Upper Ottawa Valley* (Gatineau: Canadian Museum of Civilization Mercury Series History Paper 54, 2007), 13.

⁷² Province of Canada, *Report of the Select Committee on the Geological Survey* (Quebec: Lovell and Lamoureux, 1855), 18.

MAP 2.2
Ottawa River and its Tributaries, Showing Logan's Route in 1845



Source: Smith and Dyck, *Logan's 1845 Survey of the Upper Ottawa Valley*, 3.

During his survey of the Upper Ottawa Valley, Logan did not stray much distance from the Ottawa River (see Map 2.2). He went up the Madawaska as far as Burnstown, and up the Bonnechère as far as the fourth chute (now Eganville). So he did not set eye on what is now Brudenell Township. But in Russell's view, Logan's notes provided a basis for subdividing the "waste lands" of the province (including Brudenell) into townships and farm lots and his reports conveyed the potential of agricultural, forest, mineral, and water resources.⁷³ Logan's reports noted the mineral deposits like iron and lead that would be important to export markets, as well as those which would aid local settlers in constructing and decorating their homes, making tools and building materials,

⁷³ Canada, *Report of the Select Committee on the Geological Survey*, 18.

and establishing their farms.⁷⁴ The materials identified were not necessarily found in sufficient quantities to be immediately profitable, but the finds could optimistically be used, “as a possible guide to the discovery of others in the vicinity, where quantities may be greater.”⁷⁵ The survey thereby gave planners enough encouragement to pursue further investigation into the economic potential of the Ottawa-Huron Tract.

In Logan’s stated view, it was his place to make observations, but he avoided making proclamations about the viability of settlement in the Upper Ottawa Valley. In his testimony to the Special Committee, Logan was restrained in his predictions and self-reflective in his view of the relationship between science and economics:

The object of the survey is to ascertain the mineral resources of the Country, and this is kept steadily in view. Whatever new scientific facts have resulted from it, have come out in the course of what I conceive to be economic researches carried out in a scientific way...Thus economics lead to science and science to economics.⁷⁶

Logan was a scientist because his economic interests led him in that direction. He took his observations to their immediate conclusions, without speculating on the future:

All that can...safely be done in regard to mineral veins is to state their existence and describe their character where they are visible, leaving it to private enterprise to ascertain the expensive facts necessary to lead the way to a sound opinion in respect to quantitative returns.⁷⁷

Predictions, then, were the domain of the capitalists and career politicians whose livelihoods were more directly impacted by the progress of development.

Such predictions soon began in earnest. In 1847, Thomas C. Keefer, an engineer in the Department of Public Works, pointing to the underlying pragmatism of the extant

⁷⁴ Smith and Dyck, *Logan’s 1845 Survey of the Upper Ottawa Valley*, 27.

⁷⁵ Smith and Dyck, *Logan’s 1845 Survey of the Upper Ottawa Valley*, 198.

⁷⁶ Canada, *Report of the Select Committee on the Geological Survey*, 38.

⁷⁷ Canada, *Report of the Select Committee on the Geological Survey*, 40.

local economy, reported that lumbermen in the Madawaska and Bonnechere watersheds were building roads to the interior to facilitate the movement of workers and supplies.

He urged that roads be a government priority and his 1847 report reveals many of the assumptions and motivations which drove the colonization plan in its early years:

With regard to roads to the rear of the Ontario districts, the higher prices paid for farming produce, of every description, with the employment afforded for themselves and their teams in transporting supplies and hauling timber in the winter season, are sufficient reasons why the settlers of the back Townships of those Districts should prefer the Ottawa market...The experience of last year has shewn that any required quantity of white pine can be furnished when the price warrants; this timber is chiefly in the agricultural districts, the whole population of which can, when necessary, be turned to its manufacture. On the other hand, the supply of red pine must for the present be comparatively restricted, not from the want of timber, but of communications...It is known that there is a large amount of good land in what is called the "Huron and Ottawa Tract" and it is also known that there is an almost inexhaustible supply of timber adjoining...The lumbermen will therefore penetrate this Huron and Ottawa Tract still further, and if a communication be opened through it, it will become the means by which the immigrant and settler can approach it, while the high prices and the cash market which the lumber trade afford will be the inducement for them to go there.⁷⁸

Keefer's argument for colonization posited an "almost inexhaustible" supply of timber, which could support a local economy indefinitely. He assumed a symbiotic relationship between settlement and forestry. Settlers would be able to work in the lumber camps to supplement their farm incomes and at the same time they would act as a stand-by labour force should they be needed in the camps. In Keefer's view, settlement did not depend on the highest-quality agricultural land, but rather only on "good" land which would be used to grow specific crops that could be sold at a premium to the captive shanty market.

Infrastructure development was central to Keefer's proposal for colonization and the development of an agro-forest economy in the Ottawa-Huron Tract. In the same 1847

⁷⁸ Thomas C. Keefer, "Report of T.C. Keefer, on Ottawa and other Works," in *Report of the Commissioners of Public Works laid before the Legislative Assembly, 12 July 1847* (Montreal: Lovell and Gibson, 1847): Appendix D, page 32.

report, Keefer testified the cost of transporting flour from Bytown to Kamaniskeg Lake on the Madawaska River (about 120 miles) was 20s. to 30s. per barrel and a ton of hay purchased at Kamaniskeg cost £10.⁷⁹ In comparison, in 1847 it cost 18d. to send a barrel of flour from Kingston to Montreal (180 miles).⁸⁰ In eastern Upper Canada in 1845, a ton of hay cost 45s.⁸¹ Using the more conservative of Keefer's estimates, it still cost 20 times more to transport flour into the shanties of the Ottawa-Huron Tract and a ton of hay was worth 4.4 times more if sold at an interior depot compared to an urban market. Improved roads would reduce the cost of transport and settlers would give lumbermen convenient access to provisions and labour in the years before railways. Conversely, improved transport would also mean a corresponding decline in the prices paid for local produce.

Lumbermen and landowners in particular therefore were eager to see public funds put toward private interests. Lumberman John Egan for example used his membership in the Legislative Assembly to promote public works in the Ottawa Valley, including what became the Opeongo Road.⁸² As in other parts of the province, landowners in Bytown and the Ottawa Valley were vocal proponents of government-sponsored colonization. Robert Bell was a surveyor, politician, newspaper editor, and settlement booster whose railway and real estate investments stood to benefit from increased government activity in

⁷⁹ Keefer, "Report of T.C. Keefer, on Ottawa and other Works," 32. See also: R. L. Jones, *History of Agriculture in Ontario, 1613–1880* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1946), 112, and Keith A. Parker, "Colonization Roads and Commercial Policy," *Ontario History* 67, no. 1 (1975): 31–39.

⁸⁰ Douglas McCalla, *Planting the Province: The Economic History of Upper Canada, 1784–1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 286.

⁸¹ McCalla, *Planting the Province*, 337.

⁸² See Richard Reid's biography of Egan in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online* 8 (1851–1860), http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/egan_john_8E.html (accessed 20 June 2015). See also Blank, *Creating Kashubia*, 162–163.

the region.⁸³ In 1850, Bell was tasked with surveying a road to connect townships on the Ottawa River with the interior of the Ottawa-Huron Tract. This survey had significant implications for the shape and scope of the colonization scheme which was to follow. Like Keefer, Bell claimed there were vast stretches of arable land in the Ottawa-Huron Tract that should be opened for colonization. However, Hamlet Burritt, Bell's assistant on the survey, was more cautious in his assessment. The surveyors' diaries and reports illustrate the incoherence of the colonizing vision and the difficulty of extending the agricultural frontier onto the Shield. Even at this early stage, the state struggled to comprehend and categorize what was a spectacularly diverse landscape.

As was common among surveyors of the time, Bell had a vested interest in land policy, both as a landowner and development promoter.⁸⁴ His importance as a surveyor has likely been overstated because of his vocal advocacy for the profession and because it was his name on the official report of the Opeongo Road survey. Bell's presence on the survey was inconsistent at best and he relied heavily on his assistants. He was by 1850 already familiar with the region. In February 1848, Bell completed a survey from the Madawaska River 79 miles west to the Home District.⁸⁵ The next year, Bell's newspaper, the *Bytown Packet*, produced a ten-part series on the promise of the Ottawa-Huron Tract

⁸³ There were several Robert Bells active in Upper Canada at this time. For clarification see: Association of Ontario Land Surveyors, *Annual Report* (1925), 106–109, <http://www.aols.org/sites/default/files/Bell-R.pdf>; and Henri Pilon, "Bell, Robert," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online* 10 (1871–1880), http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/bell_robert_1821_73_10E.html (accessed 23 May 2015). See also Walsh, "Landscapes of Longing," 5; and Joan Finnigan, *Life Along the Opeongo Line: The Story of a Canadian Colonization Road* (Renfrew, ON: Penumbra Press, 2004), 59–60.

⁸⁴ Michelle Vosburgh, "Agents of Progress: The Role of Crown Land Agents and Surveyors in the Distribution of Crown Lands in Upper Canada, 1837–1870" (PhD diss., McMaster University, 2004), 24. See also R.W. Widdis, "Speculation and the Surveyor: An Analysis of the Role Played by the Surveyors in the Settlement of Upper Canada," *Histoire sociale / Social History* 15 (1982): 443–458.

⁸⁵ Excerpts of Bell's survey journal are reprinted in *Muskoka and Haliburton, 1615–1875: a Collection of Documents*, ed. Florence B. Murray (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1963), 136–146.

as a field for settlement.⁸⁶ It is difficult to imagine Bell's appointment in 1850 to survey the Ottawa and Opeongo Road as a coincidence.

Bell received instructions from James H. Price, Commissioner of Crown Lands (CCL), in December 1850 to survey "a line of road from Farel's [sic] on the Ottawa River to the Great Opeongo Lake."⁸⁷ Bell was directed to run a guide line to determine the most advantageous route available and then to survey a road line:

avoiding as much as possible rocky, broken, and swampy land or ground otherwise unfit for settlement or for the formation of a good road which you will trace accordingly returning from the Opeongo Lake to your point of departure making out lots ten chains in perpendicular breadth on both sides of your road with road allowances of one chain in breadth every tenth lot.⁸⁸

Bell was also instructed to mark the best points for bridge, town, and mill sites, to note the quality of the soil and timber, to gather geological specimens, and to estimate the cost of constructing a road suitable for summer wagon traffic. Price's instructions reflected a changing official understanding of the region, with the proposed route based on, "the plans, field notes and reports in this department and in the Crown Timber Office at Bytown and from verbal information of those best acquainted with the locality."⁸⁹ Crown Timber Agent A.J. Russell would later superintend construction of the road. Price could have been referring to Bell himself, or to Egan, or to any of the other lumbermen with

⁸⁶ Walsh, "Landscapes of Longing," 1. The *Packet* became the *Ottawa Citizen* in February 1852.

⁸⁷ AO RG 1-524-2, Crown Lands Survey Account Files, File 311, Robert Bell to J. H. Price, "Acknowledge Instructions to survey Rd from the Ottawa to Lake Opeongo," 25 January 1851. The name "Opeongo" apparently derives from Algonquian words meaning "narrow and shallow with an implication of sandy." See S. Bernard Shaw, *The Opeongo: Dreams, Despair and Deliverance* (Burnstown, ON: General Store Publishing, 1994), 24.

⁸⁸ J. H. Price, "Instructions to Provincial Land Surveyor Robert Bell to survey a line of road from Farrels on the River Ottawa to the great Opeongo Lake," Crown Lands Department, Toronto, 12 November 1850, Ontario, Ministry of Natural Resources Survey Branch, "Instructions to land surveyors, from 6 Nov. 1844 to 24 Oct. 1861," 172.

⁸⁹ Price, "Instructions to Robert Bell," 171.

timber limits in the area as “those best acquainted with the locality.” Price responded to the lumbermen’s pressure for a winter road, but also wanted to determine the feasibility of a summer route—a necessary condition for permanent settlement.

There are three sets of documents from which details on the survey are drawn. First are the CLD survey account files at the Archives of Ontario. These consist mainly of vouchers and pay lists for the survey, but also include some of Bell’s correspondence. The original instructions, field notes, and plans of the survey are at the Office of the Surveyor General in the Ministry of Natural Resources in Peterborough, Ontario. Bell’s notes contain 235 pages of remarks, observations, and measurements.⁹⁰ Since 1852, the survey line from the Ottawa River to Lake Opeongo has been known as Bell’s survey, a credit which is repeated throughout official documentation.⁹¹ However, a third but less well known source is the diary of Hamlet Burritt, one of Bell’s assistants.⁹² Burritt’s journal, discovered by accident and never intended as part of the official record, contains both his personal reflections and details on the conduct of the survey.

Reading Bell’s field notes alongside Burritt’s journal raises questions about the reliability and accuracy of Bell’s claims regarding the land and resources in the vicinity of the Opeongo Road. According to Burritt, Bell was physically absent from the survey for almost its entire duration, coming and going at confusing intervals. In his own notes,

⁹⁰ When historians reference the survey, these are the documents they normally use. See for example: Shaw, *The Opeongo*, 25–27; Brenda Lee-Whiting, “The Opeongo Road: An Early Colonization Scheme,” *Canadian Geographic Journal* 74, no. 3 (1967): 77; George Spragge, “Colonization Roads in Canada West, 1850–1867,” *Ontario History* 49, no. 1 (1955): 5.

⁹¹ See for example: Bureau of Agriculture, “Roads in the Eastern and middle sections of Upper Canada, to be opened by the Colonization grants,” 30 September 1854, *JLAC* 13 (1854–1855): Appendix M.M.

⁹² The journal was found in the attic of a house in Merrickville, Ontario in 1980. See Finnigan, *Life Along the Opeongo Line*, 59. A photocopy of the original journal is held in AO F 1061, Hamlet Burritt fonds, 1851. This photocopy is referenced below.

Bell gave reasons for his absences, such as on 24 April 1851: “prevented working today with inflammation of my eyes. The assistant continued the line.”⁹³ Most of Bell’s official journal entries were kept specific to the measurements and observations taken, which makes it difficult to be certain who was actually filling the journal.

In some cases, however, Bell’s journal clearly conflicts with Burritt’s. For example, Bell’s journal from Friday, 27 June 1851, reads:

The men occupied in washing and mending their clothes and tent. Went to Byers Farm at the outlet of Lake Kaminiskaia, purchased a canoe there and sent it to bring up the sick men who can reach the Madawaska by walking the portages between the small lakes and the river on Byers portage.⁹⁴

In comparison, the corresponding entry in Burritt’s journal reads:

Mr. Sims, myself, Dan, and two other men went down to Byers farm some 8 or 9 miles from the camp in the canoe to the foot of Kaminiskia Lake. Engaged Jack our old cook, but not for cooking. This time, sent two men for to bring up our invalids that we had left behind, not up the line, but around by the lake by that means they would have only about 2 miles to walk.⁹⁵

One of the “two other men” could have been Bell, but he is not mentioned by name. In another example, Bell described being “engaged in getting a raft constructed to cross lake and clearing base line.”⁹⁶ Burritt claimed responsibility for the same action: “Afternoon fine. Continued the line met a large lake had to build a float to cross. Mr. Sims...left me to run a base line.”⁹⁷ On 13 July, Bell described, “entering notes and writing letters.

⁹³ Robert Bell, “Journal of the Exploration and Survey of the Ottawa and Opeongo Road, 1851 & 2,” Ontario, Ministry of Natural Resources Survey Branch, Field Note Book #2203, 7.

⁹⁴ Bell, “Journal of the Exploration and Survey of the Ottawa and Opeongo Road,” 19.

⁹⁵ AO F 1061, Hamlet Burritt fonds, 1851, “Ottawa and Lake Opeongo Survey,” vol. 2, pp. 3–4.

⁹⁶ Bell, “Journal of the Exploration and Survey of the Ottawa and Opeongo Road,” 20.

⁹⁷ Burritt, “Ottawa and Lake Opeongo Survey,” vol. 2, p. 18.

Took set observations for time.”⁹⁸ Burritt was engaged likewise: “Took an observation this morning of the sun for time. Mr. Sims watches are not properly regulated. I have posted up his journal today as usual but I do not think he will get his field notes all copied today.”⁹⁹ From numerous similar entries in Burritt’s diary, it seems he and Sims indeed spent much of their time posting entries to Bell’s official journal.

Bell was known as much for his lobbying as for his seriousness as a surveyor. For the professional surveyors of the nineteenth century, their work was their pride, and submitting someone else’s work as their own was next to unthinkable. Quality work and a consistent presence in the field provided the surveyor opportunities for contracts and advancement.¹⁰⁰ By 1850 Bell was established as a leading and influential figure in Bytown, so perhaps he no longer saw advantage in conducting his own field work. After obtaining the *Packet*, Bell became one of the Ottawa Valley’s most vocal boosters, using his paper to push for investment in roads and railways. Along with Egan and others, Bell was part of a school of Valley politicians drawn from a new business élite who were rated in the community based on their ability to defend local interests. These representatives of industry and infrastructure, “busied themselves responding to local issues and pressures and in securing rewards for the loyal.”¹⁰¹ It is no surprise then that Bell spent more of his time in Bytown than he did out in the field, since that was the way he could achieve the most gains for his community, and for himself.

⁹⁸ Bell, “Journal of the Exploration and Survey of the Ottawa and Opeongo Road,” 23.

⁹⁹ Burritt, “Ottawa and Lake Opeongo Survey,” vol. 2, pp. 30–31.

¹⁰⁰ See Vosburgh, “Agents of Progress,” especially chapter four.

¹⁰¹ Reid, *The Upper Ottawa Valley to 1855* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1990), cxvii.

Nor was conducting the Opeongo Road survey an especially lucrative venture. Bell was to be paid 16s. 6d. per day, rations included, a sum deemed, “quite inadequate, considering the nature of the service, and other circumstances relating to it.”¹⁰² Bell’s argument centered on the difficult terrain, the cost of supplies, and the government’s undervaluing the surveyor’s profession, which was, “such as to hinder men of ability and education from making it a business for life. In consequence, efficiency and respectability are diminished, and public usefulness comparatively destroyed.”¹⁰³ In his letter, Bell argued in favour of provincial surveyors, asking for graduated pay corresponding to the difficulty of the survey and the qualifications of the surveyor. It is possible Bell was responding to a recent statute which created new policies governing surveyors.¹⁰⁴ Even if his reputation was dubious, Bell was a vocal advocate for his colleagues and for higher standards in the profession.¹⁰⁵ In this instance his most concrete demand was for an additional 5s. per day for his service on the Opeongo survey—which he did not receive.

Despite his absence from the survey, Bell claimed that more than half the land in the vicinity of the road line was suitable for cultivation. Overall, his evaluation of the agricultural potential of the region was positive, but with some qualification:

It is a peculiarity of this section of the country that the good land occurs in tracts or patches varying in area from a few acres to one or more Townships, and there are many tracts of excellent land on and near this road, some of them beautifully situated on streams and lakes.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² AO RG 1-524-2, File 485, Bell to Price, “With reference to the instructions sent him for survey of the line of road from the Ottawa to Lake Opeongo,” 8 February 1851.

¹⁰³ AO RG 1-524-2, File 485, Bell to Price, 8 February 1851.

¹⁰⁴ Vosburgh, “Agents of Progress,” 52.

¹⁰⁵ See, for example, his defense of colleague Walter Shanly in: Walter Shanly to Frank Shanly, Bytown, 24 January 1851, in Reid, *The Upper Ottawa Valley to 1855*, 209.

¹⁰⁶ Bell, “Journal of the Exploration and Survey of the Ottawa and Opeongo Road, 1851 & 2,” 196.

Bell's assessment of the landscape would later be exaggerated by others with a vested interest in the success of colonization. Others, like Burritt, were less enthusiastic about the agricultural potential of the land accessed by the proposed road, though they conceded that arable tracts did exist intermittently throughout the region.

Burritt agreed there were tracts of good land, and echoed Bell's assessment of the aesthetic appeal of the landscape, but emphasized its variability rather than cultivability. On 5 June 1851, Burritt and his crew reached Lake Clear where there was a road and a settlement: "Lake Clear is as fine a lake as I ever saw...the water is as green and clear as can be – on one side it is all hardwood...it is very high...but of a very good soil."¹⁰⁷

Further along, Burritt recorded the following impressions while visiting the depot farm of a lumberman named Byers near Kamaniskeg Lake on 2 September 1851:

Took a walk up on the farm which is on the side hill and extends up towards the top. There is a fine view from the farm. The country (and we can't see a great way) is all hardwood nearly rough and spotted with high round pinnacles topped with green timber and (from experience) I should judge rocky...We are camped by the side of a fine large creek, the same creek that ran past our last camp. We are in low swampy country, but we can see hardwood ahead.¹⁰⁸

The landscape described by Burritt was quite varied: from hardwood and decent soils, to stands of red and white pine timber with sandy soils, to ridges and hills, swamps, creeks, rivers, and lakes. He was always looking for hardwood, but even when he found the trees he was looking for, the soils were usually still rocky, as on 28 September 1851: "We have been passing through a very rough country but meet not very high hills the last five or six miles has been mostly all hardwood land but very stony."¹⁰⁹ A few days later, the crew

¹⁰⁷ Burritt, "Ottawa and Lake Opeongo Survey," vol. 1, p. 38.

¹⁰⁸ Burritt, "Ottawa and Lake Opeongo Survey," vol. 3, pp. 25–26.

¹⁰⁹ Burritt, "Ottawa and Lake Opeongo Survey," vol. 3, pp. 44–45.

was forced to stop exploring, “the country [was] so rough we could not get it explored fast enough. Did not know which way to proceed.”¹¹⁰ Like Bell, Burritt perceived the westernmost part of the road as unfit for agriculture because of the rough terrain.

Burritt’s notes about lakes along the Opeongo echoed those of contemporary P.L.S. Duncan Sinclair. In the winter of 1852, Sinclair remarked the land around Golden Lake was, “of inferior quality, it being a chiefly white pine country broken by lakes with small swamps. Still, there is far worse land settled in many parts and this will also be settled very soon...on account of its proximity to the beautiful lake.”¹¹¹ Despite Sinclair’s characterization of the land as inferior, or perhaps in fulfilment of his unenthusiastic prediction, soon after he finished his survey, the region was advertised as opened for agricultural settlement; colonization roads were built, townships and lots were laid out along them, and intending settlers were offered conditional 100-acre land grants under the free grant system. Optimistic interpretations of the agents’ reports were beginning to supersede the practical accommodations of local residents, foreshadowing the ambitious colonization scheme which was to follow.

Whether honest or disingenuous, in Canada in the 1850s, surveyor science was shaped to fit political prophecy. Taken together, the surveyors’ reports of 1845–1852 were only cautiously optimistic. Yet, these generally reserved and qualified assessments were sufficient to encourage the Bureau of Agriculture and the CLD to undertake one of the most ambitious colonization projects attempted to date. The results of Burritt’s and Bell’s Opeongo Road survey provided the justification which led to a September 1853

¹¹⁰ Burritt, “Ottawa and Lake Opeongo Survey,” vol. 3, p. 46.

¹¹¹ LAC R6494-0-X-E, Duncan Sinclair fonds, 1852–1854, “Duncan Sinclair to the Commissioner of Crown Lands,” 27 December 1852.

report by the Bureau of Agriculture to the Executive Council recommending the building of what became known as the Opeongo, Hastings, and Addington colonization roads.¹¹² Once committed to this endeavour, the Bureau and the CLD pressed their advantage wherever possible in order to convince potential settlers of the imminent benefits of colonization. In the view of many of its leaders, Canada needed to expand in order to compete on a world stage with both long-standing and emerging empires. As Owram argues, these expansionists, many of whom, like Robert Bell or Sir Francis Hincks, were based in the Ottawa Valley, saw American prosperity as founded on continual westward expansion and so they sought easily accessible land to develop as quickly as possible.¹¹³ Their idea of the West was based not only on emerging environmental science, but on the conviction that expansion was a precondition of nation-building. Science was a tool of the powerful in the expansionist movement; it was used to convince others that expansion was both possible and prudent.¹¹⁴

The potential of places like the Ottawa-Huron Tract was crucial to the nation-building projects of politicians like Thomas D'Arcy McGee. In studying the relationship between Victorian science and Canadian nation-building, Suzanne Zeller argues:

[The] idea of a transcontinental Canadian nation grew from the degree and quality of self-understanding made possible through the practice of inventory science. Logan's geological inventory crystallized the abstractions with which Thomas

¹¹² LAC R11250-42-5-E, Canada State Minute Book N, pp. 429-431, 14 September 1853, microfilm reel C-116. A copy of this decision is included in AO RG 1-9 Crown Land Administration Subject Files, Roads: Ottawa and Opeongo Road, 1853-1866, MS 892, reels 8 and 9, p. 08015, Order in Council 5360, "For the opening of Roads in Upper Canada: by the Minister of Agriculture," 14 September 1853.

¹¹³ Doug Owram, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West, 1856-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 3-4.

¹¹⁴ The expansionists' interest would later turn to Rupert's Land, which was rhetorically transformed from a northern waste into a region fit for cultivation. See den Otter, *Civilizing the Wilderness*.

D'Arcy McGee associated the prospect of a British North American nationality; it kindled the faith that this new nationality could actually be realized.¹¹⁵

In 1850, the most readily available and easily accessible land for colonization in or near the Province of Canada was in the Ottawa-Huron Tract. Government and business interests combined science with expansionist rhetoric and imperial desire in exaggerating the economic potential of the region.

As we have seen, numerous surveyors and explorers were involved in mapping and assessing the Ottawa-Huron Tract as a potential field of colonization. Data were accumulated by state agencies such as the CLD, the GSC, and the Bureau of Agriculture. The findings of the surveyors were not always entirely positive, but they offered enough evidence of agricultural potential that the Bureau was eager to bring in settlers so that they could fill this “empty” space. In referring to the colonization roads in the eastern part of the Ottawa-Huron Tract in 1856, Minister of Agriculture P. M. Vankoughnet wrote: “There are, of course, in such a large extent of country as that referred to, great varieties in the character and quality of land—some lots being much superior to others; but there is an abundance of the very best land for farming purposes.”¹¹⁶ In his statement, the minister drew on characterizations of surveyors like Robert Bell. But Vankoughnet took the assessment even further: Bell’s dispersed “tracts of excellent land,” became Vankoughnet’s “very best land for farming purposes.”

To draw settlers from beyond North America, in the 1850s and 1860s, emigration boosters like the “Canadian News” sent advertisements to Europe extolling Canada’s

¹¹⁵ Zeller, *Inventing Canada*, 52.

¹¹⁶ P. M. Vankoughnet, “Annual Report of the Minister of Agriculture for 1856,” *Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada* 15 (1857): Appendix 54.

virtues. They described the country as “the ‘land of hope,’ not only for the capitalist who has money at his command, but also for the person of limited means, and still more for those who possess no other resource than labour, whether skilled or unskilled.”¹¹⁷ In its own publications, the Bureau of Agriculture drew on the same allusion to the “land of hope,” attributed to a French observer at the Paris Exhibition in 1855. In an 1856 advertisement Vankoughnet claimed with much hyperbole that the Ottawa-Huron Tract was “capable of sustaining a population of some eight millions of people.”¹¹⁸ In an 1862 pamphlet, the Bureau again publicized the opening of “seven great lines of road in Upper Canada,” with free grants of “lands of excellent quality, and well adapted in respect of soil and climate, to all the purposes of husbandry.”¹¹⁹ Foremost among these was the Ottawa and Opeongo Colonization Road, which was supposed to connect settlements along the Ottawa River with Lake Huron, and thereby become the main east-west route in relation to the other colonization roads, extending the farm frontier well into the northern reaches of Upper Canada.

Correspondence within the colonization roads branch reveals an emphasis on the Opeongo as the focal point of resettlement efforts in the Ottawa-Huron Tract. William Hutton, Secretary of Agriculture, promoter of immigration, and a chief administrator of the colonization roads, was aware of the importance of the Opeongo. In a private letter to Hutton, Christmas Eve, 1855, Crown Timber Agent A.J. Russell, one of Hutton’s primary

¹¹⁷ Editor of the “Canadian News,” *Canada, the Land of Hope for the Settler and Artisan, the Small Capitalist, the Honest, and the Persevering. With a Description of the Climate, Free Grants of Land, Wages, and its General Advantages as a Field for Emigration* (London: Algar and Street, 1857), 6.

¹¹⁸ AO, RG 52-15-3, vol. 1, File 74, “To Emigrants and others seeking Lands for Settlement,” P. M. Vankoughnet, Bureau of Agriculture and Statistics, 25 July 1856.

¹¹⁹ Bureau of Agriculture, *Canada: A Brief Outline of Her Geographical Position, Productions, Climate, Capabilities, Educational and Municipal Institutions, Fisheries, Railroads, etc.*, 4th Ed. (Quebec, 1862).

informants, urged that emphasis on the Opeongo Road would have the greatest “effect toward settling the largest interior country now vacant in the Province.”¹²⁰ In a letter to Vankoughnet the next October, Russell again urged that improvement of the Opeongo Road would bring essential access to:

[The] greater part of the large block of country suitable for settlement lying between the rivers Bonnechere and Madawaska and which is connected with the great interior region favorable for settlement by another large fertile tract lying on the south side of the Madawaska.¹²¹

The Opeongo Road was thus at the core of the bureaucratic vision of the colonization roads project and was viewed as a way to facilitate agricultural development.

In attempting to attract settlers, some agents, though optimistic about the potential of the region, were nonetheless reserved in their pronouncements. In this way they came to terms with geographic realities whilst still encouraging colonization. In tempering the broadly optimistic claims of emigration boosters and the exuberant Vankoughnet, agents more familiar with local circumstances offered practical advice and cautious optimism to intending emigrants. According to T. P. French, the agent in charge of settlement on the Opeongo Road, a free grant was both an opportunity and a responsibility:

There can be no doubt that a Free Gift from the Crown of 100 acres of good land is a boon that must not be lightly estimated; but as the Canadian Government do not wish to lay claim to more liberality than they actually possess, or to have their generosity undeservedly extolled, and have, moreover, no desire to encourage emigration to this Colony by sanctioning fancy sketches of rural felicity, or by permitting hopes of prosperity that cannot be completely realised to be held out, he deems it incumbent on him to remind all who may be disposed to emigrate to this country, that they must not estimate the value of land here by the standard that obtains in the parent kingdom.¹²²

¹²⁰ AO RG 52-15-3, vol. 1, File 55, “re Opeongo Rd.,” A. J. Russell to Wm. Hutton, 24 December 1855.

¹²¹ AO RG 52-15-3, vol. 1, File 104, “re Opeongo Rd and Petawawa Bridge,” A. J. Russell to P. M. Vankoughnet, 20 October 1856.

¹²² T. P. French, *Information for Intending Settlers on the Ottawa and Opeongo Road, and its Vicinity* (Ottawa: Bureau of Agriculture, 1857), 6.

French envisioned the Opeongo Road settlement as a place where all “industrious” and “honorable” settlers could thrive, but did not hide the fact that creating a new community in the Ottawa-Huron Tract would be arduous work taking years, if not generations.

In his 1857 guidebook for intending settlers French emphasized not only the possibilities of the land, but also the character of the settlers already on it. He boasted: “The best possible feeling prevails among the Settlers, and no kindness that any one of them can render is ever denied to the stranger, no matter from what country he hails, or at what altar he kneels.”¹²³ Published early in the settlement process and distributed by the Bureau of Agriculture, French’s guidebook focused primarily on the practicalities of emigrating via England, but he also saw fit to outline his impressions of the culture he envisioned emerging on the Opeongo Road:

Liberty, in the most extended sense of that soul-stirring word, prevails in Canada. We have here a happy and harmonious blending of the best parts of the Monarchal and Republican forms of Government, and all who know aught of our institutions and laws must admit that the Constitution under which it is the proud privilege of Canadians to live will contrast favourably with that of any country in the world.¹²⁴

French was directly responsible for placing settlers on the land, and ensuring that these settlers followed the rules of colonization. His letters and reports reveal both the “progress” of colonization as well as the ways the state kept track of its subjects. For example, on 10 January 1859, French submitted his report on the previous year:

[Giving] the names of the locatees, and such other information as will in my opinion enable you [Vankoughnet] to form a correct estimate of the many advantages which have accrued to this portion of the country from the opening of this road and the adoption of the free grant system upon it.¹²⁵

¹²³ French, *Information for Intending Settlers*, 18.

¹²⁴ French, *Information for Intending Settlers*, 19–20.

¹²⁵ AO RG 52-15-3, vol. 2, File 30, “Ottawa and Opeongo Road Agency,” T. P. French to P. M. Vankoughnet, 10 January 1859.

While French's reports allowed the state to keep track of settlers, they also provide some perspective on the lives of early colonists.

In his 1859 report French noted that within two years of its survey, Brudenell had a store, "to supply the temporal wants of the settlers," a post office, a Catholic church, and taverns, "where travellers can be tolerably well accommodated."¹²⁶ There was no mill, but one was being built. As Brudenell was not yet incorporated as a municipality, there was no town council, nor schools, nor any municipal officers. French was hopeful for the future of the township and his report demonstrates his enthusiasm:

The land in Brudenell is, I believe, fully as good as any to be found in Canada, and from the number and intelligence of those by whom it is now peopled, I am satisfied that the system of farming will soon be improved, and that it will rank as one of the most productive and prosperous Townships in the Province.¹²⁷

French also noted the integral role of the Opeongo Road in allowing lumbermen, as well as settlers, access to the region, and, conversely, allowing locals access to regional markets in Renfrew and Ottawa in the opposite direction.

Despite the enthusiasm of people like Vankoughnet and the optimism of agents like French, settlement in the Ottawa-Huron Tract did not proceed as the state envisioned. A crop failure in 1862 diminished the prospects of settlers on the Addington Road.¹²⁸ On the Opeongo, the CCL reported 22 new settlers in 1863, but noted that nine took over lots vacated by other settlers and six claimed lots forfeited by delinquents. He went further to say that "only eleven are *bona fide* settlers; the others took the lots for the purpose of

¹²⁶ T. P. French, "Annual Report of the Ottawa and Opeongo Road Agency," *Sessional Papers* 12 (1860): "Report of the Commissioner of Crown Lands of Canada for the Year 1859," Appendix 24.

¹²⁷ French, "Annual Report of the Ottawa and Opeongo Road Agency," 1859.

¹²⁸ Wm. McDougall, "Report of the Commissioner of Crown Lands of Canada, for the Year 1863," *Sessional Papers* 23 (1864): Sessional Paper no. 5, p. 11.

securing the pine timber on them.”¹²⁹ M. P. Hayes, the agent on the Hastings Road, reported a sharp decline in the number of free grant locatees after the first three years of settlement.¹³⁰ In his report for 1865, new CCL Alexander Campbell was less enthusiastic about settlement in the Ottawa-Huron Tract than his predecessor. He was particularly disappointed with the progress of settlement along the colonization roads: “I regret to say that but little progress has been made in the settlement on the Colonization Roads, either in Upper or Lower Canada. One hundred and sixty-three new and re-locations in Upper, and 94 in Lower Canada, indicate anything but a satisfactory advance.”¹³¹ Campbell’s critique centred on the inadequacy of the settlers, rather than the unsuitability of the land. Though inferior to the St. Lawrence region, he argued the unsettled land in Canada was as good as any in Northern Europe and should be settled without delay:

[Where] adapted for settlement—that is, where human life can be permanently maintained by their cultivation, no considerations of price should be allowed to interfere with their being disposed of for that purpose in the largest possible areas, and at the earliest possible period—the settler is of infinitely more value to the country than the land.¹³²

Campbell was circumspect in his assessment. He argued that while some lands should be settled, others should be set aside entirely for the cultivation of “merchantable pine,” as in parts of Norway and Sweden.¹³³ This reassessment included unsold lands in the Ottawa-Huron Tract as well as those further north beyond Lake Nipissing. “The remaining

¹²⁹ McDougall, “Report of the CCL, 1863,” 12. Emphasis in original.

¹³⁰ M. P. Hayes, “Report of the Agent for the Hastings Road, 1863,” in “Report of the CCL, 1863,” Appendix No. 29, p. 66.

¹³¹ Alexander Campbell. “Report of the Commissioner of Crown Lands of Canada for the Year Ending 30th June, 1865,” *Sessional Papers* 26 (1866): Sessional Paper No. 3, p. xvii.

¹³² Campbell, “Report of the CCL, 1865,” xxi.

¹³³ Campbell, “Report of the CCL, 1865,” xxi.

public lands in Canada, from their general remoteness and their character, are much less desirable for settlement than those in the valleys of the Rivers St. Lawrence and Ottawa, and of the Great Lakes.”¹³⁴ The suggestion of an agro-forest economy was not new, but in the 1860s its viability (over settlement alone) was gaining greater acceptance in official reports, especially as Canadians started to look further west for their hinterland.

Campbell’s interpretation reflected ongoing debate over the appropriate use of lands in the Ottawa-Huron Tract.¹³⁵ In his earlier testimony to a committee on public lands, Crown Timber Agent James H. Burke charged:

[The] wanton, foolish and insane policy of the Crown Lands Department, in surveying a township where nothing but pine and rock exist, or where to get a thousand acres of habitable land settlers may be thrown in to spread fire and havoc through the pine forests, [should be exchanged for a policy of] separation between the lumber and agricultural region, as nature has laid it down.¹³⁶

This was exactly the policy implemented after Confederation when the government admitted its failure and turned the land over to lumbermen. For ardent expansionists like Thomas D’Arcy McGee in 1862, it was clear the Ottawa-Huron Tract was only a first step in a much larger colonization plan stretching from the Saguenay to Lake Superior.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ Campbell, “Report of the CCL, 1865,” xx–xxi.

¹³⁵ The relationship between forestry and agriculture in the Ottawa Valley has been studied extensively, beginning with Lower, *Settlement and the Forest Frontier in Eastern Canada*, chapter five. See also: H. V. Nelles, *The Politics of Development: Forests, Mines & Hydro-Electric Power in Ontario, 1848–1941, Second Edition* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005), especially 16–17 and 195–198; McCalla, *Planting the Province*, 52–60; and Harris, *The Reluctant Land*, 366–369.

¹³⁶ “Report of the Select Committee Appointed to Examine and Report Upon the Present System of Management of the Public Lands,” *JLAC* 13 (1855): Appendix M.M. Similar quotes from Burke appear in Walsh, “Landscapes of Longing,” 73 and 141, Nelles, *Politics of Development*, 17, Graeme Wynn, “Notes on Society and Environment in Old Ontario,” *Journal of Social History* 13 (1979): 55, Lilian F. Gates, *Land Policies of Upper Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), 298, A. R. M. Lower, “Assault on the Laurentian Barrier, 1850–1870,” *Canadian Historical Review* 10 (1929): 295–296, and Harris, *The Reluctant Land*, 367. While Lower, Harris, Nelles and Gates emphasize conflict between lumbermen and settlers, Wynn and Walsh emphasize a high degree of interdependence.

¹³⁷ Thomas D’Arcy McGee, *Emigration and Colonization in Canada: A Speech Delivered in the House of Assembly, Quebec, 25 April 1862* (Quebec: Hunter, Rose & Lemieux, 1862), 20. McGee himself was

As Harris notes, “Upper Canadian expansionism turned increasingly to the northern plains...Here, in this rightful hinterland of Canada, was the space for a commercial and agricultural empire that would eventually rival the power of Britain herself.”¹³⁸ Though debate continued through the 1860s, the dominant narrative since then is the land was not suitable for agriculture. Planners were either ignorant, or actively deceived settlers.¹³⁹ This perspective accepts a limited version of what farming meant to settlers and assumes a standard of development not in keeping with the actual capacities of the region.

The failed-settlement narrative also assumes that settlers were ignorant of the landscape they were colonizing, caught up in the nineteenth century rush to own land. Two reasons are generally given for the failure of colonization: government greed and settler ignorance. Thus, as Miller claims, the project produced a “field of battle between man and the landscape: a battle with few real winners and no empires, only regret... characterized by arrested development, frustrated ambition, and lost opportunity.”¹⁴⁰

This was a battle for which settlers, who “did not fully understand the limitations of their

confident of settlement in the Ottawa-Huron Tract, arguing its suitability had been ascertained by twenty years of diligent scientific research. Curiously, Blank appears to place McGee in the failed-settlement camp, quoting from McGee’s speech the following: “the granite country between the Ottawa and Lake Huron could never sustain a numerous population.” This is a selective quote which ignores what comes before and after where McGee says: “Our living geologists have exploded one fallacy—that the granite country between the Ottawa and Lake Huron could never sustain a numerous population—and this is precisely the same country, geologically, which we find open to settlement in Lower Canada.” McGee was arguing *for* settlement, not against it. See Blank, *Creating Kashubia*, 151.

¹³⁸ Harris, *The Reluctant Land*, 369. Harris’ words echo those of his predecessor. See Lower, *Colony to Nation: A History of Canada, Third Edition* (Toronto: Longmans, Green & Company, 1957), 293.

¹³⁹ See Lower, “The Assault on the Laurentian Barrier, 1850-1870,” 294–307; and *Settlement and the Forest Frontier in Eastern Canada*. See also: Spragge, “Colonization Roads in Canada West, 1850–1867”; Parker, “Colonization Roads and Commercial Policy,” 31–39; J. H. Richards, “Land Use and Settlement on the Fringe of the Shield in Southern Ontario” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1954); and R. Louis Gentilcore, “Lines on the Land: Crown Surveys and Settlement in Upper Canada,” *Ontario History* 61, no. 1 (1969): 57–73.

¹⁴⁰ Marilyn G. Miller, *Straight Lines in Curved Space: Colonization Roads in Eastern Ontario* (Toronto: Ministry of Culture and Recreation, 1978), 3.

land,” were unprepared.¹⁴¹ In the 1970s, in pitching the ruins of the Opeongo Road as a “heritage resource,” Miller charged that by the end of the nineteenth century, “Overly optimistic hopes, greedy exploitation, and a failure to understand the region’s actual potential had resulted in the creation of an abandoned lumbering and farming district.”¹⁴² In the accompanying poor-land narrative, ill-informed settlers were deceived by agents who knew the land was poor, but disregarded those conditions in order to fill quotas.¹⁴³

Early colonists in Brudenell, who arrived before H. O. Wood’s township survey and before publication of French’s guidebook, may have relied on fragmentary evidence, but they did have access to information via the Opeongo Road survey and the experiences of squatters. They also had access to other published emigrant guides. William Hutton, before he became Secretary of Agriculture, produced a guidebook in 1854 which advised potential emigrants on settling in Canada.¹⁴⁴ Hutton had spent the winter of 1853–54 lecturing in England and Ireland, and the guide was directed at potential emigrants in Britain, not Canada.¹⁴⁵ And though Hutton was a self-described farmer, he had not visited the land himself, but relied on the reports of surveyors like Logan and Bell.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴¹ Miller, *Straight Lines in Curved Space*, 6.

¹⁴² Miller, *Straight Lines in Curved Space*, 147.

¹⁴³ Blank, *Creating Kashubia*, 145–147. See also: Finnigan, *Life Along the Opeongo Line*, 93 and 191; Lee-Whiting, “The Opeongo Road,” 77–79; and Miller, *Straight Lines in Curved Space*, 22; Blank references much of the same literature mentioned here, but his focus is specifically on the Polish-Kashub migrants who settled the region west of Brudenell. See, for example: Shirley Mask-Connolly, “Where They Settled,” in *Kashub/Polish Heritage Stories of Renfrew County, vol. 1. Wilno and Area* (Wilno: Wilno Heritage Society, 2000), 5 and Rev. Aloysius Rekowski, *The Saga of the Kashub People in Poland, Canada, U.S.A.* (Saskatoon: Self-published, 1997), 26.

¹⁴⁴ William Hutton, *Canada: Its Present Condition, Prospects and Resources, fully described for the Information of Intending Emigrants* (London: Edward Stanford, 1854).

¹⁴⁵ Wesley B. Turner, “Hutton, William,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online* 9 (1861–1870), http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/hutton_william_9E.html (accessed 19 May 2016).

¹⁴⁶ Walsh, “Landscapes of Longing,” 53 and 58.

According to French, most of the first settlers on the Opeongo Road, though born in Ireland, came via Upper Canada, where they had been for several years and so were familiar with the climate and soils of the region.¹⁴⁷ Settlers to the Opeongo Road were also permitted to view lands themselves and could take their time in deciding which lot to occupy.¹⁴⁸ Sometimes settlers proceeded to the Ottawa-Huron Tract despite forewarning, as was the case with a group from England who settled in Brudenell in 1858:

[Last] Spring a few newly arrived immigrants (Englishmen) had the good sense and the manliness not to be frightened by the stories they were told, but resolved to judge for themselves. They did so and the result is that they are now occupying purchased Crown Lands in the Township of Brudenell...and are seemingly well satisfied with their position and prospects. These men have attracted a great many of their countrymen who are also settled around them and from what they tell me, I am sanguine of a large English immigration here next Spring.¹⁴⁹

Even if they arrived with little concrete information in hand, settlers were not beholden to the emigrant agents' assessments, but could decide for themselves.

Realistic assessments of the agricultural potential of the Ottawa-Huron Tract existed alongside the overzealous pronouncements of settlement boosters. Indeed, if we look past the hyperbolic rhetoric of the Vankoughnets, we see that a significant number of interested parties maintained a sensible approach to land use throughout this period. The Algonquin continued to develop their own approach based on seasonal occupation and small-scale agriculture. Charles Thomas (who was of mixed heritage) and his

¹⁴⁷ AO RG 1-9, MS 892, reel 9, "Opeongo Road Subject Files," page 08259, T. P. French to L. V. Sicotte, 8 March 1858. This is supported by genealogical research by Burbage, *Early Families*. This was certainly true in Brudenell, but less so further west along the Opeongo Road where an influx of settlers from occupied Poland arrived in 1858 and 1859.

¹⁴⁸ This process is discussed in more detail in chapter three, 99–102. See the example of John Davidson, who wintered on one lot, then changed his mind the following spring and claimed a different location. AO RG 1-9, page 08121, French to CCL Joseph Cauchon, 21 April 1857.

¹⁴⁹ AO RG 1-9, page 08327, French to Vankoughnet, 10 January 1859.

contemporaries, working small farms in the context of an agro-forest economy, seemed tuned to the capacities of the land. And even the surveyors of the 1850s showed considerable acumen in this regard.

In his 1857 survey of Brudenell Township, H. O. Wood reported in detail on the quality of the land, from concessions down to specific lots. Wood's assessment was much less ambitious than Vankoughnet, and even less still than that of the colonization agent French. He was likely less invested in the success of settlement. Wood gained his experience as a surveyor working with Burritt on the Opeongo Road and he conducted the first township survey of Brudenell. In excerpts from his survey notes, published in the 1861 report of the CCL, Wood described parts of the township as fit for settlement; other parts he described as swampy, uneven and rocky, and with poor quality soils. He described the northeastern section of the township as "in general arable," with lots north of the Opeongo Road "nearly all fit for cultivation."¹⁵⁰ He described the southwestern portion of the township as "very uneven and broken...the soil is of poor quality; timber chiefly red and white pine on ridges, and small cedar and tamarack in swamps."¹⁵¹ Rather than blindly accepting whatever land was offered, settlers generally chose lots which were described by Wood as generally arable or fit for settlement, even if they needed to pay for it. A copy of Wood's 1857 survey map shows settlers already occupied by that time most of the lands described as arable in his report.¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ H. O. Wood, "Extract from Surveyor's Report, Brudenell," in "Remarks on Upper Canada Surveys and Extracts from the Surveyor's Reports," *Report of the Commissioner of Crown Lands for 1861* (Quebec, 1862): Appendix 26, page 5.

¹⁵¹ Wood, "Extract from Surveyor's Report, Brudenell," 6.

¹⁵² LAC R12567-98-6-E, B56, H. O. Wood, "Plan of the Township of Brudenell," Ottawa, 15th April 1857. Because of limited space on the map, no names are listed on the Opeongo Road free grant lots.

The agency of individual settlers is one of the more overlooked aspects of colonization in the Ottawa-Huron Tract. For example, while surveyors determined the route of the Opeongo Road, the location of side roads had much to do with the initiative of local residents.¹⁵³ Though only a small minority of settlers left written accounts, one of the ways we can assess their perspective of the land is by their actions. Settlers had choices—they were not forced to go to a particular place and frequently moved around to find a place meeting their requirements.¹⁵⁴ Both the failed-settlement narrative and the poor-land narrative diminish the significance of settler agency in shaping colonization.

Wood's classifications of the land were updated in the 1960s and 1970s by the Ontario Department of Agriculture. A 1964 soil map of Renfrew County shows most of Brudenell as hilly and uneven terrain with a Monteagle Rock soil complex with pockets of Tweed Rock, Monteagle sandy loam, and Eganville loam, none of which are especially suitable for intensive cultivation.¹⁵⁵ However, the lines drawn on these maps are extreme generalizations and do not reflect the same variability in soil compositions reported by nineteenth-century surveyors. A 1970 report categorized 50,370 of Brudenell's 55,490 acres (roughly 91 percent) as wholly unsuitable for farming.¹⁵⁶ These classifications

¹⁵³ In his final report on the Opeongo Road survey, Robert Bell suggested abandoning the policy of assigning road allowances between every tenth lot: "as the uneven surface of the country here and frequent occurrence of lakes will render regular road allowances altogether useless for road purposes, the allowance for roads instead of being thus marked out in particular places should be thrown into the lots generally, and let the road be laid out through the lots where suitable road sites can be found." See Robert Bell, "Journal of the Exploration and Survey of the Ottawa and Opeongo Road," 193.

¹⁵⁴ See David Gagan, "Geographical and Social Mobility in Nineteenth-Century Ontario: A Microstudy," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 13, no. 2 (1976): 161.

¹⁵⁵ J. E. Gillespie, R. E. Wicklund, and B. C. Matthews, *Soil Survey of Renfrew County, Report No. 37 of the Ontario Soil Survey* (Toronto: Ontario Department of Agriculture, 1964), Sheet 3.

¹⁵⁶ Douglas W. Hoffman and Henry F. Noble, *Acreages of Soil Capability Classes for Agriculture in Ontario* (Toronto: Rural Development Branch, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, 1975).

have since been read to mean that agriculture in Brudenell was always impossible.¹⁵⁷

However, it is anachronistic to extend soil classifications from the 1970s back over 100 years to the nineteenth century since the landscape changed over time. And, in the context of an agro-forest economy even 5,000 arable acres may have been sufficient.

In 1863, P.L.S. William Bell inspected locations along the Opeongo Road. His assessments ranged from “rich sandy soil, good land,” to “hilly & broken, large boulders & rocks, inferior land.”¹⁵⁸ Bell’s classifications can be broken down into six categories: good, fair, stony, very stony, rough, and inferior (shown in Table 2.1). Sixty-five percent of locations on the Opeongo Road in 1863 fall into the top three class categories, which, from Bell’s admittedly vague descriptions, appear relatively adaptable to agriculture. Concurrent with Bell’s inspection tour, Wesleyan missionary W. Tomblin travelled through the Upper Ottawa Valley, visiting with missions and congregations along the way, including at Brudenell.¹⁵⁹ Tomblin’s account offers additional reasons—beyond the quality of the soil—for why settlers may have chosen Brudenell. He praised backwoods “luxuries” such as bear, beaver, venison, and trout, and the degree of freedom enjoyed by settlers. Though he was not a qualified surveyor (neither was French, Hutton, or

¹⁵⁷ See, for example: Peter Hessel, *Destination: Ottawa Valley* (Ottawa: Runge Press, 1984), 10; Isabelle Jost, “New Documentation on the Settlement of the Western Part of the Ottawa-Opeongo Colonization Road,” *Revue de l’Universite d’Ottawa* 44, no. 4 (1974): 445; Lee-Whiting, *Harvest of Stones*, 6–7, and Wood, *Making Ontario*, 161.

¹⁵⁸ AO RG 1-95-3-9, MS 482, reel 1, “Inspection and Valuation Reports for the Township of Brudenell by William Bell, P.L.S.,” October 1863.

¹⁵⁹ W. Tomblin, “A Tour Through the Backwoods of Canada,” Westmeath, 12 February 1863, *Wesleyan Missionary Notices* (25 April 1863), in *Wesleyan Missionary Notices, Relating Principally to the Foreign Missions under the Direction of the Methodist Conference*, 3rd Series, vol. 10 (1863), 81–84. The *Wesleyan Missionary Notices* was the official publication of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, which was established as the Missions of the Methodist Church in 1786. See R.G. Tiedmann, *Reference Guide to Christian Missionary Societies in China from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2008), 233.

TABLE 2.1
Classification of Lots on the Opeongo Road in Brudenell based on Inspections by
P. L .S. William Bell, 1863

“Class”	No. Locations	Examples of Descriptions from Bell’s Report
1	5	“Rich sandy soil. Good land.”
2	24	“Rich sandy soil. Fair quality of land.”
3	40	“Good sandy soil. Rather stony.”
4	18	“Good sandy soil but very stony.”
5	14	“Good soil. Rough, hilly & broken. Rough land.”
6	5	“Hilly and broken. Large boulders and rocks. Inferior land.”

Source: Adapted from Bell, “Inspection and Valuation Reports for Brudenell,” 1863, see text.

Vankoughnet for that matter), he offered his own assessment of the land in Brudenell:

Of the land through which we passed, I may say, that it is generally very hilly, with spring brooks and small lakes through the valleys. Some of it is rocky and incapable of being tilled; much of it will present not a few boulders and pine stumps to hinder, when they may not prevent, agriculture; but there are large tracts of hardwood land which will soon repay cultivation.¹⁶⁰

Underlying Tomblin’s assessment was the common assumption that once the trees fell, especially in hardwood forests, that fertile soil would be revealed.¹⁶¹

Echoing the evaluations of earlier surveyors like Burritt and Sinclair, tourist guides in the 1870s extolled the natural beauty of the Ottawa-Huron Tract: “To the tourist, the Student, or the Business Traveller, no district of Canada can furnish a more attractive route than the Valley of the Ottawa.”¹⁶² They also advertised the success of

¹⁶⁰ Tomblin, “A Tour through the Backwoods of Canada,” 83.

¹⁶¹ Robert E. Ankli and Kenneth J. Duncan, “Farm Making Costs in Early Ontario,” in *Canadian Papers in Rural History*, vol. 4, ed. Donald H. Akenson (Gananoque, ON: Langdale Press, 1984), 42–43.

¹⁶² Union Forwarding and Railway Company, *Travellers’ Guide to the Upper Ottawa* (Ottawa: Union Forwarding and Railway Company, 1873), 6.

settlers and the variability of the landscape: “Scattered at intervals through these forest and mountain scenes we meet with clearing, rudely, perhaps, cultivated, but the richness of whose soil abundantly—aye, lavishly—repays the scant toil the husbandman bestows upon it.”¹⁶³ Taken on their own, these statements mean little, but placed alongside testimony of Burritt, Sinclair, Tomblin, and others, they point toward a common view in which small scale settlement was possible, and even desirable in its own right.

After Confederation, expansionist forces turned their attention more concertedly toward Rupert’s Land and local officials in the Ottawa Valley struggled to attract new immigrants. In 1881, Albert Smallfield, editor of the *Renfrew Mercury*, published a handbook “for the information of immigrant farmers desirous of obtaining cheap farms in an already settled district.”¹⁶⁴ This is a little known work which provides unique and interesting insight into the local perspective on the colonization roads project. In an early version of the poor-land narrative, Smallfield criticized the scheme and accused government agents of misleading settlers:

While some of the Agents have contended that they stated nothing but facts, it is beyond dispute that the majority of the early settlers who were intended to take up Free Grants found themselves wofully (sic) disappointed,—there being the greatest possible difference between the promises and prospects held out and the reality. The roads were rough; it was toilsome and unaccustomed work to fell the trees and make the potash; there were no markets near at hand, and the cost of having the potash to the front, and of taking back provisions, furniture, &c., soon exhausted the means of many of the settlers, who abandoned their “locations” and removed elsewhere, cursing those whose representations had deluded them. And there are those who to this day maintain that the Free Grants are, agriculturally considered, of little worth after the first crops have been taken off.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ Union Forwarding and Railway Company, *Travellers’ Guide to the Upper Ottawa*, 28–30.

¹⁶⁴ Albert Smallfield, *Lands and Resources of Renfrew County, Province of Ontario, a hand-book for the information of immigrant farmers desirous of obtaining cheap farms in an already settled district* (Renfrew, ON: Renfrew Mercury, 1881), front cover.

¹⁶⁵ Smallfield, *Lands and Resources of Renfrew County*, 4–5.

Despite these early difficulties, Smallfield described a mature local economy no longer dependent on the shanty market. In the intervening years railways had been built, roads were vastly improved, and farmers were enjoying “record” crops. He blamed the slowing of colonization on unfavourable reports by emigrants, the lure of the North West, and, especially, on the greed of lumbermen, who discouraged settlement so that they could claim more land for themselves.¹⁶⁶ For Smallfield, the main attraction of the region lay in its cleared farms, which offered independence and could be purchased at reasonable rates (see Table 2.2), especially when compared with comparable lands in England.¹⁶⁷

Smallfield’s characterization of the landscape drew on language and notions of quality reminiscent of earlier surveyors and observers. He recognized the need, now that more people were familiar with the region, to be humble in his assessment:

The land, in such an extensive tract, is of course considerably diversified in quality, being in some parts heavy clay, in others loam, and in others sandy and barren. Throughout the country the surface is generally hilly, with a good deal of rock; and these hills, towards the West sometime rise into mountainous ridges.¹⁶⁸

Overall, Smallfield described a highly varied landscape. It was a place where one lot consisted of barren rock, and two lots down was a thriving farm with excellent soil, making broad generalizations extremely difficult.

Of course, many attempts at settlement along the colonization roads failed. The small community at Newfoundout for example, a deviation off the Opeongo Road, was completely abandoned. The land at Newfoundout is rocky to be sure, but there were other reasons why the settlers left. Tommy Donahue, the son of original Newfoundout

¹⁶⁶ Smallfield, *Lands and Resources of Renfrew County*, 5.

¹⁶⁷ Smallfield, *Lands and Resources of Renfrew County*, 7.

¹⁶⁸ Smallfield, *Lands and Resources of Renfrew County*, 8.

TABLE 2.2
Classes and Prices of Land in Renfrew County Townships, after Smallfield, 1881

Class	Price (\$ per acre)	Townships
1	5.70	Westmeath, McNab, Pembroke, Horton
2	5.35	Ross
3	4.69	Admaston, Stafford, Bromley
4	3.20	Grattan, Wilberforce, Alice
5	1.50	Algona, Blythfield, Brougham, Hagarty, Sherwood, Richards, Jones, Burns, Brudenell, Lyndoch
6	1.30	Griffith, Matawachan, Head, Maria, Clara

Source: Data for the table are drawn from Smallfield, *Lands and Resources of Renfrew County*, 9, see text.

settlers, was interviewed by Finnigan in 1999. According to Donahue, his family left Newfoundland not because of the quality of the land, but because of a title dispute with the government.¹⁶⁹ Apparently, Mick and Maud McCauley had a location ticket for their lot at Newfoundland, but no deed. It is not clear from Donahue's testimony why the claim was in dispute, though perhaps it was because the conditions of the location ticket were never fulfilled. Nevertheless, his story shifts emphasis away from the quality of the land and onto state-settler relations. As we will see in the next two chapters, relations between settlers and the state were critical in shaping the process of colonization.

The geometry of the survey asserted itself over time. Not immediately, but for most of Old Ontario it eventually won out. This is less true for the Ottawa-Huron Tract, where the geometry of the survey came up against a terrain that defied easy classification. In writing about Old Ontario, Harris notes how in new areas,

[The] geometry of the survey was invisible, but as the years passed and the forest gave way to fields, it invariably appeared, a geometry that could be deflected here

¹⁶⁹ Finnigan, *Life Along the Opeongo Line*, 216.

and there by rivers, lakes, or abrupt slopes but not halted. The order of the survey reflected a new, circumscribed ecological order on the land.¹⁷⁰

The Opeongo Road is itself an aberration of colonial cartography, moving at an awkward angle and disrupting the regular pattern of the grid. Its position midway between the Bonnechere and Madawaska rivers meant it looked more like a river than a road. In places, the landscape yielded to the logic of the grid, but only slightly. In Brudenell, and throughout the Ottawa-Huron Tract, the colonial vision came up against a reluctant land.

The ways people in the Ottawa-Huron Tract perceived and interacted with the land changed dramatically over the 250 years between Champlain and the start of the colonization roads project. No one characterization can be a summary of the whole. The primary land use of the Algonquin was actually water use—using rivers as trade routes, which gave access to European goods from the east and Wendat produce from the west. The Algonquin viewed the land as theirs to manage and cultivate. Agriculture was both a traditional practice and a way of adapting to new markets and new political structures which emerged in the context of the agro-forest economy. Those who came along with this new economy viewed the land as open for the taking. They followed the timber frontier in search of profit, but also adapted land-use practices (farming, hunting, trapping, and fishing) suited to the landscape around them.

The geologists and surveyors of the 1840s and 1850s saw the land as an enigma—a riddle to be deciphered through the emerging Victorian-era inventory sciences. Though cautious, their interpretations were taken by the politicians and government agents who organized and monitored the colonization roads project as proof of the capability of the land to support a large and permanent agricultural population. The colonists themselves

¹⁷⁰ Harris, *The Reluctant Land*, 341.

encountered a landscape that, while maybe not quite what was advertised, was sufficient to provide a relatively stable presence on the land. Alongside the disappointment of expansionists and nationalist settlement boosters, emerged a view of the land, based on surveyors' science and collective experience, which recognized the variability of the landscape. It was a landscape that could not be described in sweeping generalizations.

Chapter 3

“No Longer a Serious Obstacle”: Construction and Settlement of the Ottawa and Opeongo Colonization Road, 1851–1871

In Ottawa Valley folklore, the legend of the Opeongo Road is synonymous with settlement.¹ Within the context of the changing perspectives of the landscape discussed in chapter two, the colonization roads project created a transportation network which encouraged forestry, commerce, and agriculture on the Shield. The construction of the Ottawa and Opeongo Colonization Road was the first and most prominent manifestation of this project in the Ottawa-Huron Tract. The road, combined with a free grant system of land distribution, shaped the way settlers interacted with the landscape and with each other and shaped the settlement process throughout the region by creating the framework in which the first “bona fide” settlers encountered their new surroundings.

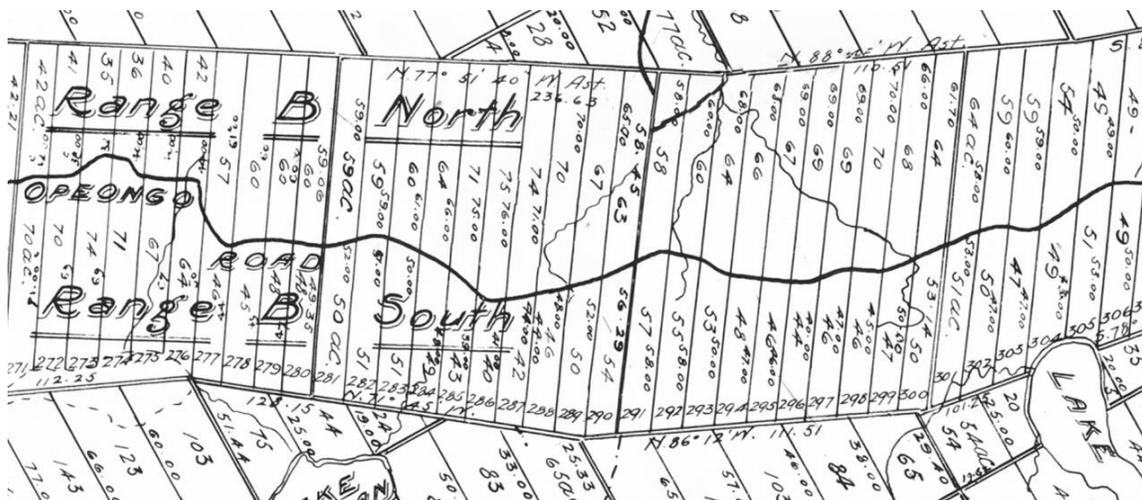
This chapter examines the Opeongo Road as the site of a set of interactions among the state, settlers, and the landscape in shaping the process of colonization. Given the interest of the state in ensuring successful colonization of the Ottawa-Huron Tract, to what degree was the state effective in controlling the actual process of settlement? And, whatever the degree of control exercised by the state, how did the colonization roads program shape settlement along the Opeongo Road?

¹ For example, the collected works of Joan Finnigan, most notably, *Life Along the Opeongo Line: The Story of a Canadian Colonization Road* (Renfrew, ON: Penumbra Press, 2004) and S. Bernard Shaw, *The Opeongo: Dreams, Despair and Deliverance* (Burnstown, ON: General Store Publishing, 1994). See also: Brenda Lee-Whiting, *Harvest of Stones: The German Settlement in Renfrew County* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985); Lee-Whiting, “Along the Opeongo Road: Memories of Canada’s First Polish Settlement,” *Beaver* 72 no. 1 (1992): 29–33; and Marilyn Miller, “The Opeongo Road: A Unique Historical Resource,” in *Exploring Our Heritage: The Ottawa Valley Experience: Proceedings*, ed. Vrenia Ivonoffski and Sandra Campbell (Arnprior: Arnprior and District Historical Society), 10–14. There is currently a “folk revival” happening in the Ottawa Valley, and the “Opeongo Line” provides some valuable material for artists such as Terry McLeish and Barry Goldie.

The power of the state to dictate and manage settlement should not be taken for granted. Based on evidence from geologists and timber agents, in the 1850s the state undertook an ambitious road-building project. This project encountered a landscape which was not easily subdued. The construction and settlement of the Opeongo Road reveals the state to be fragmented and disorganized rather than all-powerful. Surveyed in 1850–51, the road cut a northwesterly diagonal through unsurveyed townships, keeping roughly equidistant between the Bonnechere and Madawaska Rivers, major tributaries to the Ottawa River watershed and essential waterways for the transportation of cut timber and sawlogs. When surveyors drew new townships in the late 1850s, they had to work around this contingency and adapt the standard grid pattern to the presence of the road. This gave townships like Brudenell their unique shape. It also created peculiarities in the lot and concession structure with irregular sizes and inconsistencies which complicated the allocation of free grants (see Map 3.1). The process of road building thus played an important role in establishing the criteria for settlement in this region.

Construction of the road did not immediately follow the survey discussed in chapter two. Planners disagreed on the type of road to build and on who should be responsible for its maintenance. This in turn delayed the opening of the road for settlement by almost four years. The road was then opened before it was actually complete, leading to further complications associated with the poor quality of the road and preventing settlement from extending much beyond Brudenell's western limit. The roughness of the road became a distraction for the administration, who continually had to revisit maintenance projects, even though they wanted to turn this duty over to settlers as soon as possible.

MAP 3.1
Excerpt of H. O. Wood's 1857 Survey Map of Brudenell, showing lot and concession lines and number of acres in each lot as well as roads and water features.



Source: Modified from H. O. Wood, Brudenell [Map] (Ottawa, 1857), Wilfrid Laurier University Geography Resource Centre, G3462.R4:3B79 1857.W6.

The building of the Opeongo Road and the allocation of free grants along its length created a distinct settlement pattern in townships like Brudenell. Settlement did not proceed in the orderly fashion imagined by state planners. Rather, the process was messy and discontinuous with frequent relocations and abandonments due to the inconsistent character of the land and clashes between settlers and the state over the allocation of free grants and the responsibilities of settlers thereon. The colonization roads program did, however, give access to land to a group of people that may not otherwise have been able to enter the market. Since the free grant criteria were less onerous for the adult sons of settlers, the policy encouraged the use of extended family networks as a strategy for acquiring and developing land. These families tended overwhelmingly, though not exclusively, to be Irish Roman Catholic. While the settlement criteria did not necessarily lead to economic inequality between on-road and off-road settlers, they were a contributing factor to a social structure which divided Brudenell into on-road Catholic settlers and off-road Protestant settlers.

Histories of the colonization roads project in Canada West generally begin in the early 1850s, but with differing rationales. George Spragge begins in 1850, differentiating between this bureaucratic program and military projects like Simcoe's settlement roads.² Helen Parson examines the Hastings Road also from 1850, by which time the Province of Canada had turned its attention to new areas for settlement and surveyors pointed to the Ottawa-Huron Tract as a possible field for colonization.³ Keith Parker examines how commercial interests in the 1850s dictated improvements to transportation infrastructure (to encourage and facilitate immigration) as necessary for the economic well-being of the Province.⁴ Walsh highlights an 1853 report from the Bureau of Agriculture, which "was actually the first substantial bureaucratic argument for money to construct colonization roads in and across the Ottawa-Huron Tract, in effect the start of the colonization project as it involved all its constituent elements."⁵ Geoffrey Wall places colonization roads in the context of attempts to reverse declining immigration levels, but his focus on the Muskoka Road leads him to 1858 as the date when construction began.⁶

² George Spragge, "Colonization Roads in Canada West, 1850–1867," *Ontario History* 49, no. 1 (1955): 1–2. The colonial reform movement of the 1830s and 1840s began the process of the bureaucratization of infrastructure development in Canada. See Michelle Vosburgh, "Agents of Progress: The Role of Crown Land Agents and Surveyors in the Distribution of Crown Lands in Upper Canada, 1837–1870" (PhD diss., McMaster University, 2004), 28–29 and Ian Radforth, "Sydenham and Utilitarian Reform," in *Colonial Leviathan: State Formation in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Canada*, ed. Allan Greer and Ian Radforth (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992)..

³ Helen E. Parson, "The Colonization of the Southern Canadian Shield in Ontario: The Hastings Road," *Ontario History* 79, no. 3 (1987): 263.

⁴ Keith A. Parker, "Colonization Roads and Commercial Policy," *Ontario History* 67 (March 1975): 31.

⁵ John C. Walsh, "Landscapes of Longing: Colonization and the Problem of State Formation in Canada West" (PhD diss., University of Guelph, 2001), 59.

⁶ Geoffrey Wall, "Nineteenth Century Land Use and Settlement on the Canadian Shield Frontier," in *The Frontier: Comparative Studies*, vol. 1, ed. David Harry Miller and Jerome O. Steffen (Norman: Oklahoma University Press, 1977), 228–232.

Local histories of the Opeongo offer differing interpretations as well. Finnigan goes back to the seventeenth century, when French traders and missionaries explored the “river ‘roads’” leading to the interior of the country.⁷ Bernard Shaw ties the Opeongo to earlier trade routes, but cites as a starting point J. M. McNaughton’s 1848 survey, which identified the hardwood corridor between the Madawaska and Bonnechere Rivers as “likely to be advantageous for the construction of a road.”⁸ Lee-Whiting suggests 1851, when residents of the United Counties of Lanark and Renfrew petitioned the government for a road “from the Ottawa River, through the township of Horton and Renfrew Village, then westward to Opeongo Lake, and by connections beyond, opening a route to the Georgian Bay.”⁹ Miller points to an 1854 announcement by the Commissioner of Crown Lands about the government’s program to promote immigration on the Shield.¹⁰ Though they differ in specific elements, most local histories emphasize the importance of both commerce and population in the original rationale for the road.

As we saw in chapter two, in the nineteenth century roads were proposed as a way to transform the “wilderness” of Upper Canada into a thriving colony. Legislators were swamped with petitions for roads and spent much of their time discussing the merits of these proposals.¹¹ Planners developed policies (and rhetoric) to manage (and promote) the construction of new roads. In 1847, civil engineer Thomas Keefer proposed “the

⁷ Finnigan, *Life Along the Opeongo Line*, 1.

⁸ Shaw, *The Opeongo*, 24.

⁹ Brenda Lee-Whiting, “The Opeongo Road: An Early Colonization Scheme,” *Canadian Geographic Journal* 74, no. 3 (1967): 77.

¹⁰ Miller, “A Unique Historical Resource,” 11.

¹¹ See G.P. de T. Glazebrook, *A History of Transportation in Canada* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1938), 109.

exploration of two or three routes connecting the timber country on the south side of the Ottawa with the rear of the districts on Lake Ontario.”¹² In 1848, Sir Francis Hincks advocated the opening of roads to attract immigration, increase the value of the “wild lands” of the Province, and ease population pressures in older settled regions.¹³ The Public Lands Act of 1853 provided legislative authority to appropriate public lands as free grants to encourage settlement along public roads. Though the term “colonization roads” was first used only in 1854, previous decisions and references to roads had significant bearing on the shape of the eventual project, which was itself bound up in the politics of expansion.¹⁴ Thus, the previous chapter introduced the colonization roads project in the context of changing perspectives of the landscape and land use.

The building and settling of the Opeongo Road is considered here in the context of the extension of British—and later Canadian—imperial power in North America. This context is important because construction of the Opeongo Road was an early test of the effectiveness of this power. The transition from military to civilian forms of governance and knowledge-gathering is highlighted when we look more deeply at two aspects of that expansion: surveys and roads. From the end of the Seven Years War to the Victorian era, the British Empire experienced significant growth accompanied by an expansion of the state bureaucracy at home and abroad. The monumental surveys of Samuel Holland and J. F. W. Des Barres in the late eighteenth century reflected the extension of metropolitan

¹² Thomas C. Keefer, “Report on Ottawa and other Works,” *Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada* (hereafter *JLAC*) 6 (1847): Appendix Q.Q.

¹³ Francis Hincks, “Memorandum on immigration and on Public Works as connected therewith,” 20 December 1848, as quoted in Spragge, “Colonization Roads in Canada West,” 3.

¹⁴ This is in stark contrast with Spragge’s assertion that the colonization roads in Canada West were built without “political interference.” See Spragge, “Colonization Roads in Canada West,” 1.

influence over territorial claims, exercised through the military and deployed using the latest scientific standards.¹⁵ One model of state development posits the expansion of civilian scope starting around 1870, when states extended communication infrastructures, moved into direct ownership of material infrastructures, and expanded social welfare programs.¹⁶ While previous expansion of state structures was driven by geopolitical militarism, this new phase saw a dramatic rise in active state intervention in the daily lives of citizens.¹⁷ In Britain, bound up with this transition came the emergence of an “infrastructure state” based on the modernization and centralization of a vast, dense, and technologically advanced road network.¹⁸

Despite persistent fears of American aggression, the transition from British military to Canadian civilian administration in the future Dominion of Canada was complete before the 1870s. Certainly Upper Canada began as a military colony and its infrastructure was designed with military movement and defence in mind.¹⁹ Defence and trade were cornerstone arguments for infrastructure development through the nineteenth century. The War of 1812–1814 heightened militarism in the colony, and infrastructure projects such as roads and canals were intended in part to ensure greater security of

¹⁵ Stephen J. Hornsby, *Surveyors of Empire: Samuel Holland, J.F.W. des Barres, and the Making of the Atlantic Neptune* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2011), 5.

¹⁶ Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power, Volume 2: The Rise of Classes and Nation-States, 1760–1914* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 479.

¹⁷ Mann, *Sources of Social Power*, 481. In Canada West this was especially true in the area of education. See Bruce Curtis, “Class Culture and Administration: Educational Inspection in Canada West,” in *Colonial Leviathan*, 103–133.

¹⁸ Jo Guldi, *Roads to Power: Britain Invents the Infrastructure State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012).

¹⁹ R. Louis Gentilcore and David Wood, “A Military Colony in the Wilderness: The Upper Canada Frontier,” in *Perspectives on Landscape and Settlement in Nineteenth Century Ontario*, ed. J. David Wood (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975), 33.

movement for troops and supplies. The settlement project of the 1850s was part of an overall defensive strategy where greater population density would facilitate the raising of a colonial militia if need arose. However, while militarism remained a presence in Canadian society, at least until the final British withdrawal in 1871, the placement of military personnel in government positions gradually diminished.

Exploiting economic activity in the continental interior by the construction of canals and railways and the extension of financial services became the *raison d'être* of civilian expansionist forces in the mid-nineteenth century.²⁰ The movement took on an experimental quality, as the assault on the frontier was led by scientists as well as bureaucrats. The period is often characterized by historians in militaristic terms.²¹ The rise of a professional class through the first half of the century provided reinforcements, and a new army of civilian surveyors, cartographers, and geologists was deployed into the Canadian wilderness in the 1850s. By the late Victorian period in Upper Canada, the capacity of the state to oversee and manage colonization was much more robust than in earlier periods of the “great land rush.”²² The task of surveying and distributing lands in Upper Canada was a major factor in the overall organization and professionalization of the Canadian bureaucracy in this formative period.²³

²⁰ Cole Harris, *The Reluctant Land: Society, Space, and Environment in Canada before Confederation* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008), 266.

²¹ A. R. M. Lower, “The Assault on the Laurentian Barrier, 1850–1870,” *Canadian Historical Review* 10 (1929): 294, and J. David Wood, *Making Ontario: Agricultural Colonization and Landscape Re-creation before the Railway* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), 8.

²² John C. Weaver, *The Great Land Rush and the Making of the Modern World, 1650–1900* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 60–61.

²³ Vosburgh, “Agents of Progress,” 25–26, and David T. Moorman, “The ‘First Business of Government’: The Land Granting Administration of Upper Canada” (PhD diss., University of Ottawa, 1998).

This discussion is important to the history of transportation in Canada generally, and to the history of roads in particular—both areas which require renewed attention.²⁴ This chapter does not fill the gap, but starts by providing a detailed study of one road, a road which shaped the experience of settlement at the local level, but which was also significant in the experiment of colonial expansion in nineteenth-century Ontario. The task of building and maintaining a modern system of roads was so fundamental to the project of nation building that the history of roads in Canada has generally been viewed in the context of an inevitable evolution toward the present system. Alan Greer and Ian Radforth's *Colonial Leviathan* (1992) contains an entire chapter devoted to railways in Upper Canada, but there is no comparable effort given to roads.²⁵ Peter Baskerville's chapter on transportation, social change, and state formation in the same volume emphasizes railways and canals rather than roads.

And yet the “episodic and discontinuous” emergence of an activist state in nineteenth-century Canada is revealed as much in the history of roads as it is in histories of railways, canals, and education. Baskerville's insight that “different forms of regulatory states emerged at different times and places and for different sets of reasons,”²⁶ points to the differences between the trajectories of settlement in the Ottawa-

²⁴ See Glazebrook, *A History of Transportation in Canada*, and Edwin C. Guillet, *The Story of Canadian Roads* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966). The necessity for further study of roads in nineteenth century Ontario is evidenced by flagrant inaccuracies, especially around colonization roads, in a recent publication. See Robert Bradford, *Keeping Ontario Moving: The History of Roads and Road Building in Ontario* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2015), 42–44.

²⁵ On the role of railways in the development of Ontario, see Douglas McCalla, “Railways and the Development of Canada West, 1850–1870,” in *Colonial Leviathan*, 192–229. An updated version of this chapter is included in McCalla, *Planting the Province: The Economic History of Upper Canada, 1784–1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 199–216.

²⁶ Peter Baskerville, “Transportation, Social Change, and State Formation, Upper Canada, 1841–1864,” in *Colonial Leviathan*, 232.

Huron Tract and in other parts of Ontario. The relative lack of analysis on the place of roads in colonial development and state formation in Canada leaves a hole in our understanding, on the one hand, “of the state’s power to regulate routine and standardize behaviour,”²⁷ and, on the other hand, of the settler’s agency in shaping the contours of the experience of colonization.²⁸ This chapter begins to address this gap by drawing on the notion of the “activist state” as useful to understanding the way one particular road shaped the experience of colonization for one group of people.

In Ontario before European settlement, portage routes and footpaths were keys to commerce and communication and travel by water was the main mode of transport until at least the end of the eighteenth century. Unlike in New France, where roads came late in the development of the colony, in Ontario roads were integral to the planning of the colony in its earliest stages. The first roads were built parallel to the main water routes along Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. With fear of American invasion still top of mind, Lt. Gov. Simcoe directed settlement and road building in a military fashion. Simcoe’s plan called for construction of two perpendicular “streets” (Dundas and Yonge) with settlements built at key intervals and junctions.²⁹ Through the first decades of the nineteenth century Simcoe’s system of trunk roads and survey road allowances developed contiguous with the improvement of former foot paths into Upper Canada’s basic road

²⁷ Baskerville, “Transportation, Social Change, and State Formation,” 231.

²⁸ Historians have not been uncritical when examining roads, but a sustained analysis on a monographic scale is overdue. Good examples of this type of analysis in the Ontario context are in McCalla, *Planting the Province*, 132–137, Wood, *Making Ontario*, 120–129, and Walsh, “Landscapes of Longing,” especially chapter seven, “Intersections and Exchanges: Governance, Experience, and Identity on the Colonization Roads,” 254–306. In the British context, Guldi provides a sophisticated interpretation of the relationship between roads, social change, and state formation in *Roads to Power* (2012).

²⁹ Gentilcore and Wood, “A Military Colony in the Wilderness,” 33.

network.³⁰ Gaps in the network were gradually filled in as settlement moved inland and government and private interests devoted increasing resources to the effort.³¹

Roads were useful not just for military purposes, but also for communication between neighbours and communities, and to facilitate settlement. Roads were used in conjunction with water routes so that a trip from Montreal to the interior of Upper Canada took advantage of both stage and steam where practicable. A lack of navigable waterways in the areas north of Lake Ontario and Lake Erie meant the only way to move people and goods was over land. “From every port along the Lake Ontario shore a road led inland, connecting with the imperfect grid of farm access roads. Along these feeders the farm wagons or sleighs made their way to the ‘spinal column’, heading directly to the lakeshore.”³² Early roads were deplored by all, with accounts of their inadequacy filling travellers’ accounts and guidebooks. Technology to improve the roads was available, but labour and funding were scarce. Though rough and often even dangerous, roads were essential to the social and commercial development of early Ontario.

Surprisingly, Glazebrook and Guillet say little about colonization roads in their surveys. It is surprising because of the scale and ambition of the project, which proposed to open for colonization a tract the size of New Brunswick. It is surprising also given the sheer scope of documentation produced by this experiment in colonial governance. The records are spread across several collections, but the chronological files in the Archives

³⁰ Gentilcore and Wood, “A Military Colony in the Wilderness,” 37.

³¹ Glazebrook, *A History of Transportation in Canada*, 129.

³² Thomas F. McIlwraith, “Transportation in the Landscape of Early Upper Canada,” in *Perspectives on Landscape and Settlement in Nineteenth Century Ontario*, ed. J. David Wood (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975), 57.

of Ontario alone cover over 55 metres of textual records and some 270 maps.³³ This study makes use of but hardly exhausts the potential of that collection.

There are several reasons for overlooking the colonization roads in the larger narrative of transportation in Canada. The colonization roads of the 1850s were built in a remote region of the province. The southern Shield region of Ontario was distinct from the St. Lawrence lowland in both history and topography. The Ottawa-Huron Tract was technically within the boundaries of Upper Canada in 1791, but as late as 1850 it was still labelled on official maps as “Indian Land” or left as a blank space. Studies focusing on colonial Upper Canada before the 1840s generally ignore the region as secondary to the historical core of the province.³⁴ Also relevant is the notion that the colonization roads project was a failure, and so does not fit with histories that focus on the forward evolution of economic and social development in early Ontario. Nonetheless, the project was integral to shaping the process and patterns of settlement in places like Brudenell.

Compared to roads in southern Ontario, in an administrative sense colonization roads were roads of a different type. Through the 1840s most responsibility for roads was transferred from provincial to municipal authorities:

Certain main roads remained under the financial and administrative responsibility of the provincial government, but local roads were the problem of the [district] councils, which, with limited powers of raising money, heard petitions and decided on the relative necessity of different projects.³⁵

³³ This is the RG 52-1 collection, “Colonization roads chronological files 1857–1912,” which consists of petitions, reports, and plans and other documentation related to the colonization roads project. See also, Walsh, “Landscapes of Longing,” 17.

³⁴ For example, in his study on Ontario before the railway, Wood places the southern Shield region in a different category entirely outside the “habitable area” of the province. See *Making Ontario*, 127.

³⁵ Glazebrook, *A History of Transportation in Canada*, 112.

In 1849, legislation in Canada West gave municipal councils the authority to build and maintain roads, appoint surveyors, and supervise joint stock companies.³⁶ This system remained in place through Confederation and into the twentieth century. While some planners argued for transfer of colonization roads to local authority, the CLD continued to administer the roads from 1862 to 1900, when they were transferred to the Ontario Department of Public Works. The colonization roads branch shifted through a number of provincial departments until it was absorbed into the Department of Highways in 1937. Unlike the older settled parts of the province, where colonial and later provincial governments divested themselves of interest in local roads, on the margins of settlement the activist state remained closely involved in the daily routines of citizens until well into the twentieth century. Eager to control how funds were spent, the administration kept a keen watch over the progress of settlers along roads like the Opeongo.

There were two main sources for funding roads in the province in the 1850s and early 1860s: the Improvement Fund and the Colonization Grant. The Improvement Fund was established through the 1853 Public Lands Act to aid in building and improving roads in the already settled western parts of the Province. The fund was supplied through the sale of Crown and school lands in that section of the Province. Funds coming from the sale of land in one county or municipality were to be spent on improvements in the same locality. The Colonization Grant, on the other hand, was established by Parliament in 1852–53, to be distributed evenly between Canada East and Canada West. Until 1862, the fund was administered by the Bureau of Agriculture in Canada West, and by the CCL

³⁶ Glazebrook, *A History of Transportation in Canada*, 113. This was the Municipal Corporations (Baldwin) Act. See chapter four, pp. 131–133.

in Canada East, though the CLD continued to share administration of the colonization roads in Canada West during this period.³⁷

The purpose of the Colonization Grant was to build roads in the unsettled portions of the Province, but in reality, the grant was also used to supplement the Improvement Fund.³⁸ This was a source of frustration for bureaucrats who thought the grant should be used solely for opening up new settlement areas.³⁹ In his report for 1856, CCL Joseph Cauchon outlined his rationale for the expenditure of the colonization funds:

In the eastern part of Upper Canada it has been found expedient to devote the Colonization Funds to the opening of roads into the interior of the Ottawa and Huron Territory, to admit of the influx of settlers, where the natural barriers presented by extensive rugged and comparatively barren tract, were such as to be insurmountable to individual enterprise.⁴⁰

From 1852 to 1862 inclusive, a total of \$595,000 was granted on colonization roads in Canada West.⁴¹ From the original grant of £30,000 allocated in 1852–53, the sum of £10,200 was issued to the superintendents by October 1854.⁴² Of that sum, £6200 was

³⁷ Joseph Cauchon, "Report of the Commissioner of Crown Lands of Canada for the Year 1856," 31 March 1857, *Appendix to JLAC 15 (1857): Appendix 25*, pp. 34–35. In 1862, control over colonization roads was returned to the Department of Crown Lands. See Wm. McDougall, "Report of the Commissioner of Crown Lands of Canada for the Year 1862," 3 March 1863, *Sessional Papers 5 (1863)*. The Bureau of Agriculture was created in 1852. See Province of Canada, "An Act to provide for the establishment of a Bureau of Agriculture, and to amend and consolidate the Laws relating to Agriculture," *Statutes of the Province of Canada (1852–53)*, c. 11.

³⁸ Spragge, "Colonization Roads in Canada West," 4.

³⁹ See for example: AO RG 1-199-2-1, vol. 28, A. J. Russell to William Hutton, 17 February 1858, and AO RG 52-15-3-2, Russell to Hutton, 16 February 1858. See also Walsh, "Landscapes of Longing," 299.

⁴⁰ Joseph Cauchon, "Report of the Commissioner of Crown Lands of Canada for the Year 1856," 31 March 1857, *Appendix to JLAC 15 (1857): Appendix 25*, page 84. Incidentally, this passage also suggests that the CLD knew the difficulty of the terrain and yet pursued colonization anyway.

⁴¹ Wm. McDougall, "Report of the Commissioner of Crown Lands of Canada for the Year 1862," 3 March 1863, *Sessional Papers 5 (1863)*.

⁴² Bureau of Agriculture, "Roads in the Eastern and middle sections of Upper Canada, to be opened by the Colonization grants," 30 September 1854, *Appendix to JLAC 13 (1854–55): Appendix M.M.*

intended for surveying and opening roads in eastern Upper Canada, primarily in the Ottawa-Huron Tract. The other £4000 was for roads in the west. After £1700 was spent on the Opeongo survey, £4500 was left for additional surveys and construction.

Roads in Upper Canada at this time varied in form and quality. The pinnacle of road construction was the macadam or “metalled” road, which utilized a form of interlocking stone.⁴³ The method was prohibitively expensive and there were very few such roads in Upper Canada even by the end of the century.⁴⁴ More common in Canada in the 1840s and 1850s were “plank roads” built of lumber, which were superior when new but quickly deteriorated after a few winters and heavy use.⁴⁵ Most roads were simply made by clearing a width of no more than sixty feet, removing as few obstacles as necessary, and then covering the surface with sand, gravel, or logs. The Opeongo Road was no different. The ambition of the project was not in the type of road to be built, but in the vastness of the terrain to be covered and in the scope of the network to be created.

There was no published report on the Opeongo Road in 1855 and correspondence within the administration suggests little progress was made that year. One possibility for the delay is that surveyors Hamlet Burritt and A. H. Sims were engaged in resurveying the location of the western end of the road and scouting a town site at Opeongo Lake.⁴⁶

⁴³ The technique was named after John Loudon MacAdam, a British civil engineer. See Guldi, *Roads to Power*, 51–56 and M. G. Lay, *Ways of the World: A History of the World's Road and of the Vehicles that Used Them* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 77–85.

⁴⁴ Such roads cost as much as \$4888 per mile to build and \$200 per mile to repair. See W. Kingsford, *History, Structure, and Statistics of Plank Roads, in the United States and Canada* (Philadelphia: Carey & Hart, 1851), 9. On the relative number of macadamized roads in Canada see Glazebrook, *A History of Transportation in Canada*, 115.

⁴⁵ Glazebrook, *A History of Transportation in Canada*, 116 and Bradford, *Keeping Ontario Moving*, 36–37.

⁴⁶ A. H. Sims, “Field Book of the Survey of the Ottawa and Opeongo Road, 1853,” Ontario, Ministry of Natural Resources Survey Branch, Field Note Book #2230.

Sims' mental health may have also been a factor. Surveyor H. O. Wood noted in his autobiography that in June 1855 Sims was found by his brother-in-law, Crown Timber Agent A. J. Russell, to be “completely out of his mind.”⁴⁷ Meanwhile, the Minister of Agriculture did not submit his first official report until 1857, though there were numerous documents submitted by the Bureau to Parliament in 1856. The settlement agent on the Opeongo Road, T. P. French, reported to the CCL in December 1855 expressing serious concerns about the state of the road (even in winter), but did not provide any exact measurements.⁴⁸ The situation was complicated by the sharing of responsibility for colonization roads between the Bureau and CLD between 1852 and 1862.⁴⁹

There were also setbacks in construction. Burritt wrote Russell in December 1855 regarding the lack of progress made on the Opeongo.⁵⁰ The bridge over Constant Creek had burned and needed to be rebuilt at a cost of £80. Other bridges and causeways needed to be rebuilt and windfalls cleared at an estimated cost of £682. Burritt promised this would be the last time funds should be spent to clear the Opeongo—the government should instead focus on making the Opeongo a “fair country cart road” for 45 miles past Renfrew, at a cost of £100 a mile, or into a turnpike road for £180 per mile.⁵¹ He also recommended abandoning other roads to focus on the Opeongo, a suggestion which conflicted with Sims' report. While Sims argued for completion of the road to the town

⁴⁷ H. O. Wood, “Autobiography of H. O. Wood, P.L.S., O.L.S.,” in “Surveyors of the Past,” Foreword by Charles Fairhall, *The Ontario Land Surveyor* (Fall 1975): 11.

⁴⁸ AO RG 1-9, p. 08058, French to Cauchon, “Report on the Ottawa and Opeongo Road and its Settlement,” 4 December 1855.

⁴⁹ For discussion of the shifting responsibility for the roads see Walsh, “Landscapes of Longing,” 17.

⁵⁰ AO RG 52-15-3-1, File 55, Hamlet Burritt to A. J. Russell, 24 December 1855.

⁵¹ It is not clear what Burritt meant by a “turnpike” road since this was a form of tolling to raise funds rather than a type of construction. See Glazebrook, *A History of Transportation in Canada*, 116–117.

site at Lake Opeongo, Burritt urged the line be abandoned at the 45-mile mark and turn west to connect with Bell's Muskoka line and settlements on the upper Madawaska River. Burritt's cost estimates were lower than Sims' no doubt in part because his proposed road line took an easier route. Though work on the Opeongo continued past the 45-mile mark, the branch road which was constructed off the Opeongo at this point (the Peterson Road, in what became Brudenell) became the more frequently travelled route as settlers and lumbermen used it to access the upper branches of the Madawaska River.

From 1855 to 1858 improvement of the Opeongo was done by contract and superintended by Russell.⁵² Additional reporting was carried out by T. P. French, though the settlement agent had no authority to direct work on the road itself. It is not clear when the superintendent duties passed from Sims to Russell, but the latter was certainly more suited to the task than the alternative, David Gibson, who was stationed at Willowdale, near Toronto. Though settlement planning was not technically within his duties, Russell's territory included the Ottawa River and its tributaries, where he had been timber agent since June 1846, so his appointment made sense.⁵³ In 1856 the CLD disbursed £392 on management of the Opeongo Road,⁵⁴ while Russell charged the Bureau of Agriculture £3305 for construction costs.⁵⁵

⁵² AO RG 52-15-3-1, File 104, A.J. Russell to P. M. Vankougnet, 20 October 1856.

⁵³ Joseph Cauchon, "Appendix D. List of Crown Timber Agents in Canada East and West, date of their Appointment and Salary allowed to each for Services, during the year ending 31st December, 1856," 31 December 1856, page 8, in "Report of the CCL, 1856."

⁵⁴ Cauchon, "Appendix H. Statement of Disbursements by the Crown Land Department for the year 1856, on account of Expenses of Management," 31 December 1856, page 12, in "Report of the CCL, 1856."

⁵⁵ Bureau of Agriculture, "Annual Report of the Minister of Agriculture for 1856," *JLAC* 15 (1857): Appendix 54, A. J. Russell, "Summary of Expenditure by A. J. Russell on account of Ottawa and Huron Road, charged in his Accounts for the year, 1856," 31 December 1856.

Though some work was done in the spring of 1856, most work on the road that year was undertaken in late summer. According to Russell, work was delayed because a funding decision was not made until the end of July. It cost £30 to clear the most serious windfalls and £93 to rebuild the bridge over Constant Creek—£13 more than Burritt's estimate.⁵⁶ In August, Russell advertised the letting of work on 22 miles of road and granted fourteen separate contracts to the lowest bidders. In September, he advertised another seven miles of road by public auction. The contracts amounted to £2807 for 32 miles of road. By November the road was "well made" for those 32 miles and Russell was impressed with the workmanship of the contractors whose work would be "of full value in the future more perfect making of the road."⁵⁷ The Bureau had indeed set quite a modest standard for the initial construction of the road which was made:

...on the smallest scale it could be, to be serviceable as a good wagon road, at a cost of a little under £93 a mile, or £108 including the £15 a mile spent in the first opening; that is at about half the cost of a good turnpike road of twenty-two feet in width...With the exception of the seven miles below Renfrew, where the work is four feet wider, nine feet in the centre has been grubbed, and the road formed for a width of sixteen feet, with culverts and causeways in the swamps, well laid and earthed in the centre, and side ditches and discharges where required.⁵⁸

This cost was almost equal to Burritt's estimate and considerably below Sims'. In his February 1857 report, French was satisfied the road, which had previously been a barrier to settlement, was "no longer a serious obstacle" to it—high praise indeed.⁵⁹ The Bureau

⁵⁶ Bureau of Agriculture, "Accounts of Expenditure on the Ottawa and Opeongo Road, for the Year ending 1856, by A. J. Russell," 16 April 1857.

⁵⁷ AO RG 52-15-3-1, File 119, A. J. Russell to William Hutton, 24 November 1856.

⁵⁸ Bureau of Agriculture, "Accounts of Expenditure on the Ottawa and Opeongo Road, for the Year ending 1856, by A. J. Russell," 16 April 1857.

⁵⁹ AO RG 1-9, p. 08113, French to Cauchon, 25 February 1857.

thereby discharged its apparent objective of providing a serviceable wagon road ready for settlers to arrive in the spring of 1857—this despite the fact that the road had already been publicly declared “complete” in 1855 when it was opened for free grant settlement.

This object was debated within the administration as there was some ambiguity around the type and quality of road that should be built. One of the overseers on the Opeongo was David Bremner, who had previously worked on Bell’s survey and also as a lumberman in the region. He received praise from Russell for his “natural efficiency.”⁶⁰ In contrast, Bremner’s work received mixed reviews from Thomas Johnson, a surveyor and Justice of the Peace who succeeded Sims as foreman on the Pembroke and Mattawa Road. In a letter from 5 February 1860, Johnson at once praised and chastised Bremner:

The branch road leading from Brudenell centre to the Madawaska at Dennison’s is certainly the best road I ever saw made for the money (£116 per mile) over so rough a country. The plan you adopted of clearing off 20 feet wide taking out roots and stones, grading the whole distance and covering the causeways six inches with earth is an excellent one...I regret however that I cannot give so pleasing a description of the road made last summer on the Opeongo from Bell’s corners westward – The evils of the system there adopted of clearing off 40 feet wide and not digging or grading the road nor covering the causeways with earth is too apparent to require comment.⁶¹

Bremner’s methods were debated by William Hutton and David Gibson in the Bureau of Agriculture. The latter responded to Johnson’s criticism of whether or not Bremner conformed to the official specifications, and if Johnson’s suggestions were themselves objectionable. Gibson questioned Johnson’s suggestion of covering the causeways with earth given the possibility of heavy rain washing it away: “If covered, gravel ought to be used, but if the causeway is properly laid, the bark rubbed off the upper side fills up the

⁶⁰ AO RG 52-15-3-1, File 120, A. J. Russell to William Hutton, 25 November 1856.

⁶¹ AO RG 52-15-3-2, File 81, Thomas Johnson to David Bremner, 5 February 1860.

space between the logs.”⁶² Gibson subsequently sent his assistant Sims to inspect the road work and in November sent another letter to Hutton defending Bremner. According to this letter, Bremner had indeed completed the road to the specifications of the contract, but the road had since then deteriorated through weather and use.⁶³ It was therefore, according to Gibson, the responsibility of the settlers to repair any damage to the road, thus reaffirming the standing policy of the Bureau.

Not absolute, the prescribed guidelines for road work were debated within the administration, leading to some ambiguity around responsibilities such as maintenance. Considerations were made for the role of the terrain, the durability of the road, the cost per mile, and the responsibility for repairs. The state of the road was one of the most serious concerns among new settlers. Settlers argued it was an unfair burden for them to maintain the road, given its regional and commercial significance.⁶⁴ In response, French threatened to revoke the location tickets of settlers who did not maintain their section of road, and reallocate those properties, and any improvements thereon, to new settlers.⁶⁵ This was especially important at the western end of the road, beyond Brudenell, which even in 1860 was still in a very rough state.

In 1861, the CCL sent senior inspector J. W. Bridgland to report on the condition of colonization roads in the Ottawa-Huron Tract. Though he was pleased with prospects for colonization on the Opeongo, Bridgland was unimpressed with the road itself. He

⁶² AO RG 52-15-3-2, File 83, David Gibson to William Hutton, 20 March 1860.

⁶³ AO RG 52-15-3-2, File 132, David Gibson to William Hutton, 13 November 1860.

⁶⁴ AO RG 1-9, pp. 08281–08282, French to Sicotte, 7 July 1858.

⁶⁵ AO RG 1-9, p. 08295, “Notice to Settlers on the Free Grants on the Ottawa and Opeongo Road,” Crown Lands Department, September 1858.

objected especially to its narrowness—a characteristic previously deemed acceptable by Gibson. Even allowing for routine wear, “the works could never at any time have been quite equal to the specification, particularly in the matter of cross-ways and grubbing.”⁶⁶ Through the easternmost townships of Horton and Admaston, the road was in “very good” condition.⁶⁷ Four miles beyond the western border of Admaston, “the road increases in roughness. Long travel with little or no repairing have left their unmistakable marks of deep ruts, frequent mud holes, and broken crossways.” After an “even and good” stretch near Constant Creek, the road became more broken and uneven. Through a flat section between Constant Creek and Lake Clear the road was “much cut up and out of repair.” Bridgland described the Opeongo between Lake Clear and Brudenell as rough, “nearly throughout the whole distance, badly bridged in places, and chequered with frequent bad mud holes and rocky pitches. The bridges are much broken in places, short and uneven.” However, he also noted that in one or two places in Brudenell “a very important amount” of statute labour had been completed on the road. Rather than the settlers’ intransigence, Bridgland blamed the state of the road on shoddy workmanship and poor location and lamented the lack of foresight by earlier surveyors and contractors who had decided the route and specifications.

In his August 1861 report, Bridgland made two recommendations. First was a new commitment by the CLD to repair the worst sections of road—a departure from Gibson’s policy of divestment. Bridgland also recommended dividing the road into

⁶⁶ J. W. Bridgland, testimony to the Financial and Departmental Commission, 12 January 1863, in Province of Canada, *Sessional Papers* 4 (1863): Sessional Paper no. 11.

⁶⁷ AO RG 52-15-6, File 1407, J. W. Bridgland, “Report on the Inspection of Surveys and Examination of Colonization Roads in Canada West,” Department of Crown Lands, 22 August 1861. Subsequent quotes in this paragraph are also drawn from this report.

sections of one mile each and granting separate contracts on each section. Compared to Russell, this tripled the number of contracts granted and made it feasible for ambitious settlers to tender bids. It was a strategy intended to prevent jobbery, speculation, and monopoly, but also to harness the self-interest of settlers who would directly benefit from local improvements to the road. Bridgland later summarized his “rules” for contractors, which included a preference for hiring local settlers as opposed to outsiders.⁶⁸

In 1862, when responsibility for colonization roads shifted fully to the CLD, Bridgland was appointed to take charge of a portfolio in disarray. Shared responsibility across departments had produced irregular accounts. This was not an unusual state for a government agency in the 1850s, so the colonization roads administration was not unique. In 1862, the Financial and Departmental Commission was struck to audit public expenditures; it looked into all public works undertaken between 1 January 1852 and 31 December 1862. When examined in 1863, Bridgland reported that approximately \$437 800 had been expended on colonization roads, but based on files provided to him by the Bureau of Agriculture, he could only account for about \$282 300 of the total, or about 65 percent.⁶⁹ Bridgland also testified to a lack of effective oversight by Gibson, leading to imperfect knowledge of the state of the colonization roads now under the CLD.

By this time settlement on the roads had slowed and the responsibilities of some settlement agents had grown to include superintendence of road work. Some, like James Snow on the Mississippi Road, oversaw work themselves. Others, like T. P. French on

⁶⁸ AO RG 52-15-6, Appendix 25, “Report of Colonization Road Operations during 1866,” no date.

⁶⁹ Province of Canada, “Return of the Financial and Departmental Commission,” *Sessional Papers* 4 (1863): Sessional Paper no. 11. Bridgland’s testimony was given 12 January 1863. See also Walsh, 284–286.

the Opeongo, merely reported on the progress of maintenance. On 19 September 1862, Andrew Russell sent a circular to all settlement agents asking for a full account of the condition of their respective roads. Russell's request hinted at possible dishonesty, or at least exaggeration, among some of the road agents: "As your relation will be compared and checked by information derived from other sources besides yourself, you will see the necessity of making no statements which you cannot personally vouch for."⁷⁰ Already frustrated with his diminished capacities, French took exception to any accusation of wrongdoing, causing Russell to respond with a cautionary note.⁷¹ His role as settlement agent also did not preclude French from attempting to assume responsibility for road works for which he was not under contract, despite disapproval from Russell.⁷²

After 1862 the Opeongo Road entered a new phase in its history. Most lots on the road were taken up and settlers were starting to move into back portions of the townships in greater numbers. The government had already spent over \$35 000 on the road and was looking to divest itself of direct responsibility for repairs while still maintaining its ability to monitor settlement. Within the colonization roads scheme, the Opeongo was not the most expensive (see Table 3.1), but its construction reveals the contours of the larger project in which the state took an active and leading role. The lack of clear directives and coordination in the administration of colonization roads left settlers in an uncertain position. Within the political turmoil of the 1860s, this lack of coordination also reveals the incomplete and disorganized efforts of the fledgling Canadian state to order its affairs.

⁷⁰ AO RG 52-3, Letter Book no. 1 (1862–1865), Files 18–24, Andrew Russell circular to road agents J. A. Snow, T. P. French, J. Graham, M. Hayes, R. Hughes, and R. J. Oliver, 19 September 1862.

⁷¹ AO RG 52-3, File 32, Andrew Russell to T.P. French, 2 October 1862.

⁷² AO RG 52-3, File 37, Andrew Russell to T.P. French, 3 October 1862.

TABLE 3.1
Allocations on Major Colonization Roads in the Ottawa-Huron Tract, 1855–1866

	1855–58	1859–62	1864–66	Total
	£	\$	\$	\$
Mississippi	3200	9000	29700	51500
Frontenac	6500	7326	13500	46826
Bobcaygeon	2950	23500	8700	44000
Peterson	5600	16000	5000	43400
Opeongo	2800	16000	11000	38200
Addington	3750	9400	6400	30800
Parry Sound	--	10000	20500	30500
Victoria	2500	17000	1400	28400
Monck	--	--	27200	27200
Hastings	1350	10250	9700	25350
Muskoka	1500	12500	3000	21500
Burleigh	--	15800	4200	20000
Other	2200	18000	7200	34000
Total	32350	164776	147500	441676

Source: Adapted from Spragge, “Colonization Roads in Canada West,” 10. Spragge’s data come from the Province of Canada Executive Council Minutes. Grants were in pounds until 1858, thereafter in dollars. The totals in the far right column are not from Spragge, but are calculated based on the Halifax standard used in Upper Canada at the time (£1 = \$4.00). See McCalla, *Planting the Province*, 245–246.

If the state was disorganized and fragmented in directing the construction of the road, that disorganization carried over into the settlement process. A key question relating to the colonization roads program and free grants system is the degree to which locatees on free grants could be considered as “actual” settlers rather than imposters. As Walsh argues, the concept of an “actual settler” was central to the state’s visions of colonization and the ideal citizen. The actual settler “was defined in stark opposition to speculators, thieves, and impostors thought to be roaming frontier Canada to make quick money at the expense of others.”⁷³ In the politics of settlement in the nineteenth century, the actual settler was a construct used by planners to navigate the different interests at

⁷³ Walsh, “Landscapes of Longing,” 130.

stake and to negotiate the highest possible return on investment in the land. It was about control over resources and about ensuring settlers, industry, and the state all profited from approved forms of land use.

Proponents of the forest industry charged that settlement on the Shield would inevitably lead to destruction of forests and a consequent loss of national income.⁷⁴ Lumbermen were especially concerned because their rights to resources within their assigned limits were restricted to the timber itself, and not the land on which the timber grew.⁷⁵ Settlement and forestry thus proceeded simultaneously, and not without conflict. While we cannot confidently measure the level of forest destruction in 1850s Brudenell, we can measure the degree of permanence of settlers in the township. If the first settlers were simply interested in extracting timber and moving on, then we should witness a clear trend in abandonment of properties. It was also argued by some contemporary observers that free grants would encourage only the poorest of immigrants while the wealthier sort would choose to purchase properties away from the road that were more suitable to agricultural purposes. Census and tax assessment data are here used to compare settlement on free grant road lots with settlement on non-road lots. What these data show is that free grant settlers were just as likely to maintain and improve their properties as were those who purchased land.

When lumbermen accused the government of allowing irresponsible settlers to destroy valuable timber, the CLD responded with regulations defining clear guidelines

⁷⁴ See James H. Burke's testimony in "Report of the Select Committee Appointed to Examine and Report Upon the Present System of Management of the Public Lands," *JLAC* 13 (1855): Appendix M.M.

⁷⁵ On the rise of the "landlord state" see H.V. Nelles, *The Politics of Development: Forests, Mines, and Hydroelectric Power in Ontario, 1849–1911* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1974), chapter one.

for settlers on the frontier. Those who took up a free grant on one road could not take up grants on another. Settlers also were not permitted to remove marketable timber, “except for agricultural purposes.”⁷⁶ Speculation and destruction of the forest surely took place (see Figure 3.1, for example), but to generalize this as the norm across the entire Ottawa-Huron Tract, and to blame it the on free grant system is unwarranted unless we first look closely at some of the many and varied communities within this region.

Free grant settlement began on the Opeongo in 1855. In their advertisements, the CLD and the Bureau of Agriculture outlined the criteria by which settlers could gain title to land. It was the job of the agent on each road to ensure these criteria were met and settlers were responsibly managing the land. The CCL appointed T. P. French as agent on the Opeongo Road on 21 September 1855. French was to reside on the road himself, and make grants of up to 100 acres, “subject to actual settlement.”⁷⁷ Officially, a settler needed to be male, a British subject, 18 years of age, with proof of honesty and sobriety, and with sufficient capital to sustain himself for at least one year.⁷⁸ Settlers were required to take possession of their lot within a month of declaring their intent, to reside on the lot, and, within four years, to build a house and put into cultivation a minimum 12 acres. These criteria could be flexible, and the agent had some discretion. In some cases, French extended the occupation requirement from one month to up to six months so that potential settlers could raise sufficient capital before proceeding to their location.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ AO RG 52-15-3-1, File 91, Wm. Hutton to T. P. French, 12 September 1856. AO RG 1-9, File 08068, Cauchon to French, 14 March 1856.

⁷⁷ AO RG 1-9, p. 08047, “Notice of Appointment of T. P. French,” 21 September 1855.

⁷⁸ AO RG 1-9, p. 08048, “Agency for the Settlement of the Ottawa and Opeongo Road,” September 1855. Though integral to the settlement process women and children could not claim free grant lots.

⁷⁹ AO RG 1-9, p. 08113, French to Cauchon, 25 February 1857, page 4 of report.

FIGURE 3.1
A Section of Road Passing Through Burned Forest in Brudenell Township, 1901.



Source: AO C 120-2-0-0-54, S5049, Charles Macnamara fonds, "Rockingham, a Brule on Corduroy Road, Dan McKendry in Buckboard," 1901, B379883.

Even with such flexibility, settlement did not proceed as smoothly as the Bureau or the CLD hoped. The road was in poor condition and French was confused about how to deal with settlers whose claims did not correspond to official survey boundaries or acreage limits. When he began assigning free grant locations, French assumed that each lot was 50 acres.⁸⁰ It came as a surprise to both settlers and the agent that few lots were exactly 50 acres and settlers would be required to pay 4s. per acre for any land beyond the 100-acre free grant. In one case, French asked Cauchon to advise when a squatter in Grattan claimed a clearance spanning two lots adding up to more than 100 acres.⁸¹ When French told the squatter to relinquish one of the lots, the latter responded saying he would need to extend his other lot further back into the township in order to get to 100 acres, leaving him with an inconveniently long and narrow lot. Cauchon replied that the squatter could keep his two adjacent lots, but would need to pay for land above the 100-acre limit; this subsequently became official policy.⁸² Some settlers paid up front, but others delayed, petitioning the Minister of Agriculture to pay in installments.⁸³ A petition requesting the same was forwarded to the CCL by French in October 1857.⁸⁴ Both petitions presented arguments based on the happenstance of the situation and on the settlers' "previous and present poverty." Because very few lots actually added up to 100 acres, most settlers claimed more (or less) than the free grant amount.

⁸⁰ AO RG 1-9, p. 08102, French to Cauchon, 17 November 1856.

⁸¹ AO RG 1-9, pp. 08066–08067, French to Cauchon, "For advice on several subjects connected with his agency," 25 February 1856.

⁸² AO RG 1-9, pp. 08068–08069, Cauchon to French, 14 March 1856.

⁸³ AO RG 1-9, pp. 08132–08134, French to Cauchon, 18 May 1857.

⁸⁴ AO RG 1-9, p. 08245, French to Cauchon, 19 October 1857.

The settlement process envisioned in policy was less clear when implemented on the ground. Policies were created, changed, and circumvented as necessary. In theory, settlers were to select a lot, receive a location ticket, occupy the lot within one month of receiving the ticket, complete the required improvements, and then receive their patent.⁸⁵ On 5 May 1856, French wrote to Cauchon asking for location tickets for a list of new settlers on the road.⁸⁶ There was some delay on Cauchon's end, as French wrote again in November to request the same tickets.⁸⁷ French reported settlers were anxious to receive their tickets, but the delay of the CCL allowed settlers flexibility in choosing their lots. There was considerable movement between properties among settlers. Settlers could spend a winter on a lot, then change their mind in the spring and move to a different location. One settler moved from one lot to another and then back: "John Davidson changed his mind, and preferred remaining on the lot he first selected and as the location tickets were not issued, I allowed him to do so."⁸⁸ In another case, a settler was refused a location ticket for undisclosed reasons, but the ticket was later issued to his son.

Settlement proceeded despite this lack of regulatory clarity. In his second annual report to the CCL in February 1857, French conveyed the requisite statistics on the progress of settlement, but also expressed his dissatisfaction with the rate of occupancy. By this time, 132 settlers had taken up residence on the road; 68 were married men with

⁸⁵ See, for example, AO RG 1-9, p. 08249, Location Ticket of David Neilan for lot 26 and 27, Range C North, Ottawa and Opeongo Road, 28 April 1857.

⁸⁶ AO RG 1-9, p. 08074, French to Cauchon, 5 May 1856.

⁸⁷ AO RG 1-9, p. 08094, French to Cauchon, 14 November 1856.

⁸⁸ AO RG 1-9, p. 08122, French to Cauchon, 21 April 1857.

families, and the other 64 were single men.⁸⁹ Ninety-one were born in Ireland, 35 in Canada, and the other six in Scotland and England. The total population of families on the road was 515. French's disappointment arose from his estimate that, since 1855, some 800 persons had come to him for information and to view the road, but less than half had selected lots, and only 132 actually took up residence. He blamed this situation on the state of the road, but also on the prospective settlers' short-sightedness—they could only see the remoteness and sparseness of the road and not its future potential.

According to a survey conducted by French for his 1858 report, those who settled on the road were either brought up in Canada or had lived in the country long enough that they were acquainted with the local processes of cultivation. Only a small minority were new arrivals to the country. A total of 167 settlers were located on the road as of March 1858.⁹⁰ In the same survey, French found only six of these locatees had previously owned land in the province. Without the aid of the free grants, French argued, nine tenths of these settlers would never have accumulated the capital necessary to purchase their own property. In addition, few would have ventured to this remote part of the province and through their experience attract additional settlers. There was also some question of whether free grant lots should be restricted by a means test and "rich men" not allowed to claim them. Complaints were made against French that he was refusing to give free grants to wealthier settlers on the grounds that they could afford to purchase lots away from the road. Hutton's reply expressed the Bureau's position that it was just those

⁸⁹ AO RG 1-9, p. 08109, French to Cauchon, 25 February 1857.

⁹⁰ AO RG 1-9, p. 08260, French to L. V. Sicotte, 8 March 1858. Sicotte was CCL for one year after Cauchon left and before P. M. Vankoughnet took over the portfolio in 1859.

types of men (with capital) who made ideal settlers.⁹¹ When we look to tax assessments for 1864, we find only a minority of settlers in Brudenell were assessed with any personal property: 22 percent for on-road settlers and 20 percent for off-road settlers.⁹² This suggests there was no clear class distinction between free-grant settlers and those who purchased land away from the road where there were more options available.

Settlement did not move smoothly east to west, nor did settlers stay on the first lots they claimed. Potential settlers inspected the available lots looking for one that matched their requirements. Summer and autumn were the busiest times of year for settlement (see Table 3.2). Through the spring and summer of 1858, French located between five and ten new settlers each month. The new settlers did not immediately travel to the extreme western end of the road, but filled in gaps in the free grants along its length. For example, in June 1858, five new settlers were located (from east to west): two in Range D, two in Range C, and one in Range B.⁹³ There were also considerable relocations during this time. In September, for instance, eleven lots were granted, but five of those were lots re-granted to new settlers.⁹⁴ The proportion was even higher in October, when six of ten lots granted were re-grants to new settlers.⁹⁵ The settlement process thus provided considerable flexibility to settlers in making decisions about where, when, and how to take up new land.

⁹¹ AO RG 52-15, File 91, Wm. Hutton to T. P. French, 12 September 1856.

⁹² AO F 1564-4, Brudenell and Lyndoch Township fonds, Collectors Rolls, vol. 35, 1864.

⁹³ AO RG 1-9, p. 08283, French to Sicotte, 7 July 1858.

⁹⁴ AO RG 1-9, p. 08303, French to Vankoughnet, 1 October 1858.

⁹⁵ AO RG 1-9, p. 08305, French to Vankoughnet, 18 November 1858.

TABLE 3.2
Free Grants Located on the Opeongo Road in 1858, by Month

Month	New Grants	Re-Grants	Total
April	5	1	6
May	0	5	5
June	2	3	5
July	10	3	13
September	6	5	11
October	4	6	10
November	3	3	6
All other months	--	--	12
Total	30	26	56

Source: Compiled from T. P. French's monthly reports for April to December, 1858. AO RG 1-9. French did not submit a report in August 1858.

These relocations were not the only form of property turnover as original settlers could also sell their claims to newer arrivals. In January 1859, French reported that 200 locations had been taken up since settlement began in 1855, but not all of these were "new" locations (see Table 3.3).⁹⁶ Many of the locations claimed in 1856 and 1857 were actually lots purchased from the original settlers by newcomers. Rather than purchasing a deed, the newcomers purchased a claim, which included claim to the lot as well as any improvements thereon. Against the charge of speculation, French argued that the sales were the result of "unforeseen circumstances." To prevent any improprieties, settlers who sold their free grant claims were prohibited from receiving another grant, though they could purchase other Crown lands. The transactions were further justified by the argument it was the improvements being purchased, not the land itself. Depending on the value of the sale, and if the price received for the claim was greater than the price to be paid for a Crown lot, this was one way for settlers to use the free grant system as a way to

⁹⁶ AO RG 1-9, pp. 08321-08323, French to Vankoughnet, 10 January 1859.

TABLE 3.3
Free Grants Claimed on the Opeongo Road, to 31 December 1859

Year	New Locations in 1858 Report	New Locations in 1859 Report	New Locations in 1860 Report	Total # Locations	% Lots Claimed
1855	43	43	--	43	8
1856	53	44	--	132	24
1857	71	45	--	167	31
1858	--	68	--	200	37
1859	--	--	51	235	43
Total	167	200	235	235	43

Source: Compiled from T. P. French's annual reports, 1857–1860. AO RG 1-9.

accumulate capital through short-term labour. It was also a way for new settlers to take advantage of the labour of others in a place where labour was scarce. Unfortunately, no records of these sales were kept—French substituted one name for another in his list.

Despite a surge in the fall of 1859, the number of new settlers on the road was in decline by the end of the decade. The majority of free grants in Grattan, Sebastopol, and Brudenell were taken up, and new settlers were uninterested in the remaining lots. The poor quality of the Opeongo beyond Brudenell discouraged settlers. New sources of immigration were needed, but French questioned the policy of advertising the free grant system among new and potential immigrants, arguing that such people be encouraged to work for several years as labourers before attempting to operate their own farms.⁹⁷ French's tone changed only a year later, when he extolled the virtues of a group of Poles who settled on the road. It was a point of pride that in September 1859 the free grant locatees were made up entirely of "foreigners, recent immigrants to this country."⁹⁸ Perhaps the change in tone had something to do with the decline in new settlers in 1859.

⁹⁷ AO RG 1-9, pp. 08263-08265, French to Sicotte, 1 March 1858.

⁹⁸ AO RG 1-9, p. 08355, French to Vankoughnet, 7 October 1859.

Regulatory changes around the allocation of Crown lands also influenced the settlement process. In 1859, the CCL proposed that all free grants not occupied within a year of being offered should be put up for sale. Later codified in the 1860 Public Lands Act, the changes were designed to facilitate the transition from free grants and squatting to the “orderly” sale of public lands.⁹⁹ In January 1859, French reported 33 lots were purchased in Grattan since January 1856 and 170 lots in Sebastopol and Brudenell since August 1856.¹⁰⁰ French’s role diminished after 1861, reflecting the changing nature of the Opeongo Road. With few opportunities remaining on the more desirable eastern end of the road (see Table 3.4), and the road beyond Brudenell remaining in disrepair, the number of free grant claims declined. From 1861 to 1863, French’s main duty was an annual inspection tour of the road, for which he received an \$8 per diem. French’s salary as settlement agent was rescinded and replaced with a \$2 commission on every \$5 fee charged for each free grant located.¹⁰¹ The free grant system shaped the initial settlement of Grattan, Sebastopol, Brudenell, and even Radcliffe, but was essentially over by 1861 and the Opeongo became a route to facilitate settlement of the surrounding townships.

The free grant system was also influential in its exceptions. If a family included several male settlers aged 18 or older, they were allowed to all reside on one lot while each claiming a separate free grant. As long as the required clearing took place on every lot, only one residence needed to be built. In 1858, 167 free grants were claimed along the Opeongo, but only 86 houses had been built, owing to the tendency of families with

⁹⁹ P. M. Vankoughnet, “Regulations for the Sale and Management of the Public Lands,” 13 January 1859, in “Report of the Commissioner of Crown Lands for 1858,” *JLAC* 17, no. 3 (1859): Appendix 17.

¹⁰⁰ AO RG 1-9, p. 08325, French to Vankoughnet, 10 January 1859.

¹⁰¹ AO RG 1-9, p. 08468, Andrew Russell to T. P. French, 4 December 1861.

TABLE 3.4
Percentage of Lots Claimed on the Opeongo Road, Divided by Range

Year	Range A (1–88)	Range B (1–240)	Range B (241–319)	Range C (1–67)	Range D (1–72)	Total # Locations	% Lots Claimed
1855	--	--	--	--	--	43	8
1856	0	0	56	69	45	132	24
1857	0	0	71	90	63	167	31
1858	0	4	78	94	79	200	37
1859	0	23	84	96	83	235	43
1860	0	46	93	94	88	271	47

Source: Compiled from T. P. French's annual reports, 1856–1861. AO RG 1-9. The Ranges are numbered west to east. Free grants in Brudenell comprised Range B, lots 241 to 319. Range A and Range B (1–240) were in unsurveyed territory, Range C in Sebastopol and Range D in Brougham and Grattan.

adult sons to settle together.¹⁰² This is a pattern exhibited in Brudenell, though it was not just fathers and sons living together. Settlers took up free grants and lived with fathers, sons, uncles, and fathers-in-law in all manner of configuration. In 1858 there were 67 settlers on the road in Brudenell and twenty-one lived with a family member rather than attempting to raise a separate home.¹⁰³ The pattern remained roughly the same the following year with 30 of 70 settlers living on a lot with a family member.¹⁰⁴ In the 1863 collector's roll for Brudenell there were 60 property holders listed on the road.¹⁰⁵ Of the assessed parties, five were freeholders, and 41 were householders;¹⁰⁶ the other fourteen

¹⁰² AO RG 1-9, p. 08263, French to Sicotte, 8 March 1858.

¹⁰³ AO RG 1-9, pp. 08311–08319, "List of the Free Grants on the Ottawa and Opeongo Road disposed of up to 31 December 1858 with particulars of the crops raised by each settler during the past year," French to Vankoughnet, 1 January 1859.

¹⁰⁴ AO RG 1-9, pp. 08363–08372, "List of Locatees of Free Grants on the Ottawa and Opeongo Road at 31 December 1859," French to Vankoughnet, 7 January 1860.

¹⁰⁵ AO F 1564-4, Brudenell and Lyndoch Township fonds, Collectors Rolls, vol. 34, 1863.

¹⁰⁶ These categories are not clearly defined. In the 1858 Municipal Act for example, "Every occupant of a separate house, such portion having a distinct communication with a public road or street by an outer door, shall be deemed a householder within this act." An assessed party could be both a freeholder and a householder, and householders were not necessarily tenants. See "Municipal Act, 1858," section 164, in

were not listed in either category, suggesting they occupied land and possessed taxable property but had not built a house. Of those fourteen all but one were men 27 or younger, with a mean age of 25 compared to a mean age of 35 for all property holders on the road in Brudenell. In the context of the free grant system these categories were analogous to the degree to which settlers had completed the requirements of their grant. Freeholders had completed all requirements and owned the land outright. Householders had built a home, but had not yet cleared enough land. The younger family members falling outside these categories were still able to contribute to the family economy by occupying land which could be used to procure building materials or to produce crops.

Settling as a family group and improving multiple lots while residing at a common location was a way to lessen the burden of the settlement criteria and allow settlers more time to improve their locations. In the 1871 assessment roll there were 57 property holders on the road: 16 were freeholders, 29 were householders, and 12 only occupied the land.¹⁰⁷ Of 16 freeholders, thirteen were men with families and only three were single. One of those who was single was the son of the former owner who had passed away. Householders also tended to be men with families: only two were single men, while one other was a widow, Fanny Martin. Of those in the occupant category, only four had families enumerated in the assessment roll. Four others were enumerated

Robert A. Harrison, ed., *The New Municipal Manual for Upper Canada, containing Notes of Decided Cases, and a Full Analytical Index* (Toronto: Maclear & Co., 1859), 76. In 1869, the regulations were updated to specify that an assessed party should be identified as a Householder, Freeholder, or Tenant, but did not provide any definition of these terms nor distinguish between the householder and tenant categories. See *The Assessors' Guide for Making the Assessments of Property in the Municipalities of Ontario according to the Assessment Act of 1869* (Toronto: W. C. Chewett & Co., 1869), 6–7.

¹⁰⁷ AO F 1564-3, Brudenell and Lyndoch Township fonds, Assessment Rolls, vol. 5, 1871.

as part of their father's household. Unlike eight years earlier, the mean age of occupants in 1871 was 34 years. But while the majority of those 12 were still farmers, they also included a store keeper, an inn keeper, and a tanner, demonstrating increasing socio-economic diversity amongst the newer arrivals. By linking the 1871 census with the assessment roll, we find that 17 of the 57 property holders (30%) on the road were actually sons of other property holders. The number of cases had declined since 1859, while the proportion remained high. But while 17 sons of property holders held their own lands, by 1871 only eight still lived with their fathers.

Families who settled on the Opeongo Road together therefore had an advantage over those who purchased lands elsewhere in Brudenell. They had fewer choices of location, but were able to settle in extended kin groups and thereby consolidate resources. Funds could be diverted to purchase implements and additional land, which could be shared among the family. In a location noted for a scarcity of affordable labour, families could combine their collective human capital. This suggests a connection between structures of family and neighborhood. In her analysis of neighborhood in nineteenth century Ontario, Catharine Wilson argues work bees were essential components of the rural economy, whereby families could create capital through reciprocal labour: "This was especially true in newly settled areas where population was highly dispersed and kin networks were not yet established."¹⁰⁸ In Brudenell, we find a situation where settlement was dispersed, yet kin networks were established from the initial moment of settlement. Settlers used their kin networks as a way to both acquire land and accumulate capital.

¹⁰⁸ Catharine A. Wilson, "Reciprocal Work Bees and the Meaning of Neighbourhood," *Canadian Historical Review* 82, no. 3 (September 2001): 436.

When we compare the Opeongo Road free grants with purchased locations elsewhere in the township, several notable findings are illuminated. Table 3.5 displays comparisons of on-road and off-road locations in Brudenell based on nominal returns of the primary occupant in 1871.¹⁰⁹ An occupant was usually head of household, but was not so necessarily. In 8% of cases, the occupant of a property was a member of another household, usually that of his parents. Most of the occupants were male, though several widows also held property after their husbands died. The free grants attracted higher percentages of both younger and older settlers. Almost half of the occupants on the road were either under 30 years of age or over 59 years. By contrast, the vast majority off-road properties were occupied by men in their “prime” years between 30 and 59. This pattern reflects the tendency of fathers to settle alongside adult sons.

The most apparent distinction between on-road and off-road settlers is that over 90 percent of free grant occupants in Brudenell were Irish Roman Catholics, whether born in Ireland or Ontario. Most off-road settlers were also Irish, but this group included a higher proportion of Protestant Irish, and also included French, German, Scotch, and English settlers. What attracted Irish Catholics to the Opeongo? My research only shows the result and cannot explain settlers’ motivations, though I will suggest possibilities. Glenn Lockwood argues that Irish settlers in Montague Township consciously chose poor-quality land because of its low valuation.¹¹⁰ French claimed the free grant system

¹⁰⁹ This table is based on the complete manuscript census of Brudenell for 1871: Derek Murray, Kelly Bairos, and Kris Inwood, “Complete Transcription and Database of the 1871 Census of Brudenell, Ontario,” *1871 Canada Census Project*, dir. Kris Inwood, University of Guelph, 2008.

¹¹⁰ Glenn J. Lockwood, “Irish Migrants and the ‘Critical Years’ in Eastern Ontario: The Case of Montague Township, 1821–1881,” in *Canadian Papers in Rural History*, vol. 4, ed. Donald H. Akenson (Gananoque, ON: Langdale Press, 1984), 168.

TABLE 3.5
Age, Birthplace, Religion, and Origin of Occupants, On-Road and Off-Road
Locations in Brudenell, 1871

		On-Road		Off-Road		All	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total Locations		55	100	112	100	167	100
Age	20-29	16	29.1	21	18.8	37	22.2
	30-39	14	25.5	32	28.6	46	27.5
	40-49	5	9.1	28	25.0	33	19.8
	50-59	9	16.4	20	17.9	29	17.4
	60+	11	20.0	11	9.8	22	13.2
Birthplace	Ireland	41	74.5	59	52.7	100	59.9
	Ontario	9	16.4	18	16.1	27	16.2
	England	1	1.8	16	14.3	17	10.2
	Quebec	2	3.6	6	5.4	8	4.8
	Other	2	3.6	12	10.7	14	12.5
Religion	C of E	3	5.5	22	19.6	25	15.0
	Catholic	52	94.5	78	69.6	130	77.8
	Other	0	0	12	10.7	12	7.2
Origin	English	1	1.8	18	16.1	19	11.4
	Irish	51	92.7	81	72.3	132	79.0
	German	2	3.6	6	5.4	8	4.8
	Other	3	5.4	13	11.7	16	9.6

Source: 1871 Census of Brudenell, see text and footnote 109.

allowed settlers access to land they could not have otherwise purchased.¹¹¹ Their prior experience as tenant farmers and wage labourers gave them important knowledge of the climate, soils, and processes of clearing and cultivating the “wild lands” of the region, thereby making them more likely to succeed on the free grants than new immigrants.¹¹²

¹¹¹ AO RG 1-9, p. 08259, French to L. V. Sicotte, 8 March 1858.

¹¹² This assumption is tested in chapter six.

Whatever settlers' motivations, new locations on the Opeongo Road declined in the 1860s and the total number of settlers on the road in Brudenell dropped by 24 per cent between 1864 and 1880 (see Table 3.6). Why did some settlers abandon their claims while others stayed? While the aggregate numbers suggest a failing settlement, closer examination reveals a more complicated story. The failed-settlement narrative assumes settlers who attempted to farm on the colonization roads abandoned their claims because they either exhausted the soil or found it untillable. What is interesting about these numbers is they suggest an alternative interpretation. Over the longer term, while the total number of locations dropped, the value of the remaining locations increased steadily over the next forty years. In addition, on-road locations increased in value at a higher annual rate than off-road locations (see Figure 3.2). Rather than wholesale abandonment, this suggests locations varied in quality. While some farms were able to support a family, others were not. What is surprising is that even though the number of locations fell, the value per acre remained steady.

Individual property values did not deviate considerably from the mean in the first decades of settlement (see Table 3.7). As the average value of locations rose so did the standard deviation, suggesting increasing disparities in real property wealth over time. For on-road locations, average values increased steadily from settlement to the end of the century while they fluctuated more dramatically on the off-road lots. The lower value of off-road properties was due to the continued rise in locations during this period while the total number of on-road locations remained relatively stable after 1880. At the same time, the standard deviation on road lots increased at an average rate of 22 percent per decade, while on the off-road lots the average rate of change was much lower (8.5%) due to a 14

TABLE 3.6
Mean Real Property Values (\$), On-Road and Off-Road Locations, 1864-1899

Year	On-Road			Off-Road			All Locations		
	N	Mean	Per acre	N	Mean	Per acre	N	Mean	Per acre
1864	67	140.06	1.126	84	153.86	1.086	151	148.00	1.100
1871	57	192.02	1.541	92	197.55	1.313	149	195.44	1.390
1880	51	244.25	1.787	141	186.60	1.257	192	201.91	1.389
1890	51	267.84	1.791	163	205.01	1.324	214	220.94	1.432
1899	54	282.22	1.770	172	219.86	1.376	226	234.76	1.470

Source: Brudenell Tax Assessment Database (1863–1911).

TABLE 3.7
Standard Deviation in Real Property Values (\$), On-Road and Off-Road, 1864-1899

Year	On-Road			Off-Road			All Locations		
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
1864	67	140.06	62.88	84	153.86	79.14	151	148.00	71.80
1871	57	192.02	76.47	92	197.55	81.78	149	195.44	79.26
1880	51	244.25	103.27	141	186.60	99.05	192	201.91	101.29
1890	51	267.84	113.46	163	205.01	84.86	214	220.94	96.50
1899	54	282.22	138.68	172	219.86	105.00	226	234.76	115.29

Source: Brudenell Tax Assessment Database (1863–1911).

percent decrease between 1880 and 1890. The rate of increase on road lots also shrank in this time period to a low of just under ten percent. These numbers are not surprising given stagnant growth in the Canadian economy as a whole in the 1870s and 1880s.¹¹³ The rising mean value of on-road lots combined with increasing range and deviation suggests that some occupants successfully developed their land in this period while others struggled or abandoned development. Per-acre real property values of on-road locations

¹¹³ See for example, M. Altman, “A Revision of Canadian Economic Growth, 1870–1910 (A Challenge to the Gradualist Interpretation),” in *Canadian Economic History: Classic and Contemporary Approaches*, ed. M.H. Watkins and H.M. Grant (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1993), 189–207.

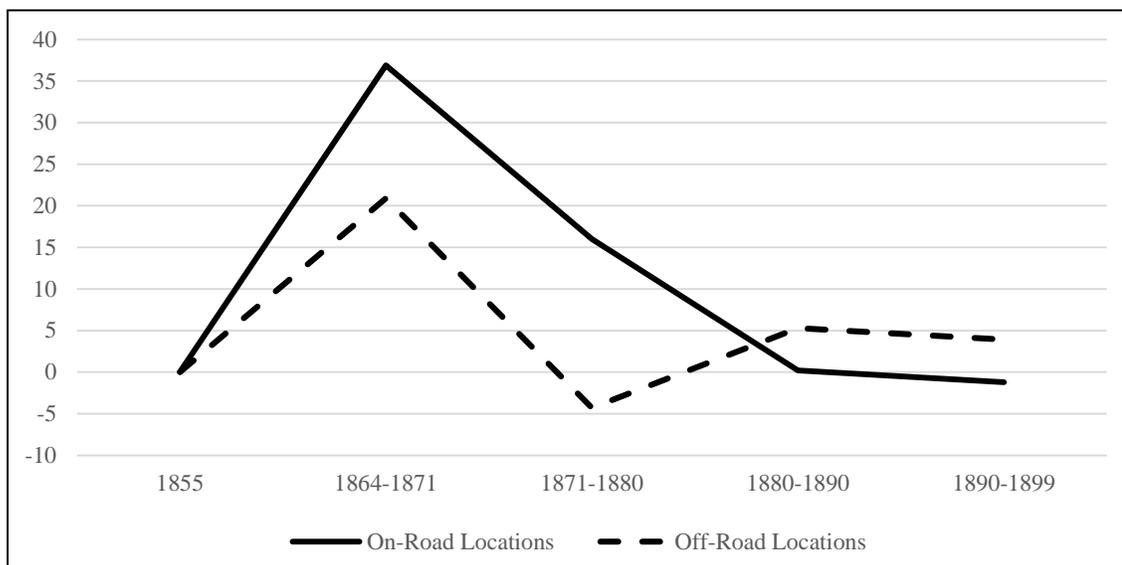
grew by almost 37 percent between 1864 and 1871, but they grew by only 21 percent on off-road lots (see Figure 3.2). Those numbers were greatly inflated by the fact almost all locations went from heavily forested lots to cleared farms in that time period. Growth in per acre real property values leveled off after 1871 with only a modest increase or decrease over each of the following three decades.

Preliminary findings on persistence illustrate the inadequacy of the failed-settlement narrative and refute the contemporary notion of the transient settler.¹¹⁴ Of those who were located on the Opeongo in 1858, 63 percent were enumerated in the 1864 collector's roll. However, to get a more accurate measure of persistence, we need to consider additional factors. For example, the lot occupied in 1858 by Thomas Drohan was occupied in 1864 by James Drohan, possibly a relation. The lot occupied by Patrick Malone in 1858 was occupied by George Malone in 1864. John Murphy was no longer located on the road in 1864, but there was another John Murphy at an off-road location in the township. James Printy and Patrick Hartney, both locatees in 1858, are not listed on the 1864 collector's roll. From the 1861 census, it appears Printy died between 1858 and 1861, as his widow is listed as occupying the same location. Hartney was killed by a kick from a horse sometime before July 1860, leaving his wife and child residing on the lot.¹¹⁵ French thought Hartney's patent should be issued to his wife Jane, but this would have gone against the free grant protocols which stated a settler must be male. French also noted in his report in January 1859 that Michael Power, another 1858 locatee, was

¹¹⁴ I will return to a more thorough analysis of persistence in the context of economic development and the viability of the local economy in chapter five. Here I focus on the role of the Opeongo Road in shaping settlement patterns, while in later chapters I consider the township as a whole.

¹¹⁵ AO RG 1-9, p. 08405, "List of Location Tickets for Free Grants upon the Ottawa and Opeongo Road returned to the Crown Lands Department," 9 July 1860.

FIGURE 3.2
Percentage Growth in Per Acre Mean Real Property Values, 1855–1899



Source: Brudenell Tax Assessment Database (1863–1911).

“in very bad health,” which would explain his absence six years later.¹¹⁶ If these cases are excluded entirely, the number of 1858 locatees still on their lots in 1864 rises to 71 percent. Moving forward, of 67 occupants recorded in the 1864 collector’s roll, 60 percent were enumerated in the 1871 assessment. When we break down the cases of those who “left” in the intervening years we find at least three were deceased and five others located elsewhere in the township. If we exclude these eight cases the number of occupants from 1864 who remained in 1871 rises to 68 percent. Persistence levels in the range of sixty to seventy percent do not support the assertion that a majority of settlers were out for a quick profit from their free grants.

A more reasonable explanation is while a minority of settlers abandoned their locations others expanded and took over lands left by their counterparts. When settlers

¹¹⁶ AO RG 1-9, p. 08314, “List of the Free Grant Locations on the Ottawa and Opeongo Road up to 31 December 1858,” 10 January 1859.

took up locations on the Opeongo they were only able to claim up to 100 acres as part of their grant. Not surprisingly, in 1861, 70 percent of farms on the road were between 100 and 149 acres (see Table 3.8). By 1871 that number had dropped to 40 percent while the number of holdings greater than 150 acres grew from 13 to 35 percent, driven by a doubling in the number of holdings greater than 250 acres. The number of large farms off the road also increased in this decade. However, while the absolute increase of large farms off the road was greater, the proportional shift in the size of landholdings on the road was more dramatic as some of the original free grant settlers consolidated claims. Township-level studies reveal significant diversity among patterns of rural inequality in nineteenth-century Canada.¹¹⁷ Did the free grant system encourage inequality in places like Brudenell? The data in Table 3.8 suggest that, in terms of real property, free grant settlers were at least equal if not better off in the longer term than were their off-road counterparts. Another way to measure wealth is in personal property as opposed to real property. The value of all personal property in Brudenell in 1864 was \$4000, which was divided almost equally between on- and off-road settlers. Table 3.9 shows a comparison of personal property assessment in Brudenell measuring the number of persons assessed with personal property and the mean value of that property.

From 1864 to 1886 the mean value of personal property increased only seven percent while the number of persons assessed more than doubled, suggesting more settlers were entering the middle group of farmers. Further, there was very little per capita difference between personal property of on-road and off-road settlers between

¹¹⁷ Graham Taylor and Peter Baskerville, *A Concise History of Business in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1994), 140–151.

TABLE 3.8
Comparison of Distributions of Recorded Acreage Occupied in Brudenell by On-Road and Off-Road Locations, 1861 and 1871

Acreage Categories	1861				1871			
	On-Road		Off-Road		On-Road		Off-Road	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
0–49	1.5	1	0.0	0	12.7	7	2.7	3
50–99	15.2	10	9.2	7	12.7	7	4.5	5
100–149	69.7	46	55.3	42	40.0	22	55.4	62
150–199	6.1	4	11.8	9	9.1	5	6.3	7
200–249	1.5	1	21.1	16	9.1	5	22.3	25
250 plus	6.1	4	2.6	2	16.4	9	8.9	10
Total	100.0	66	100.0	76	100.0	55	100.0	112

Source: 1861 and 1871 Censuses of Brudenell.

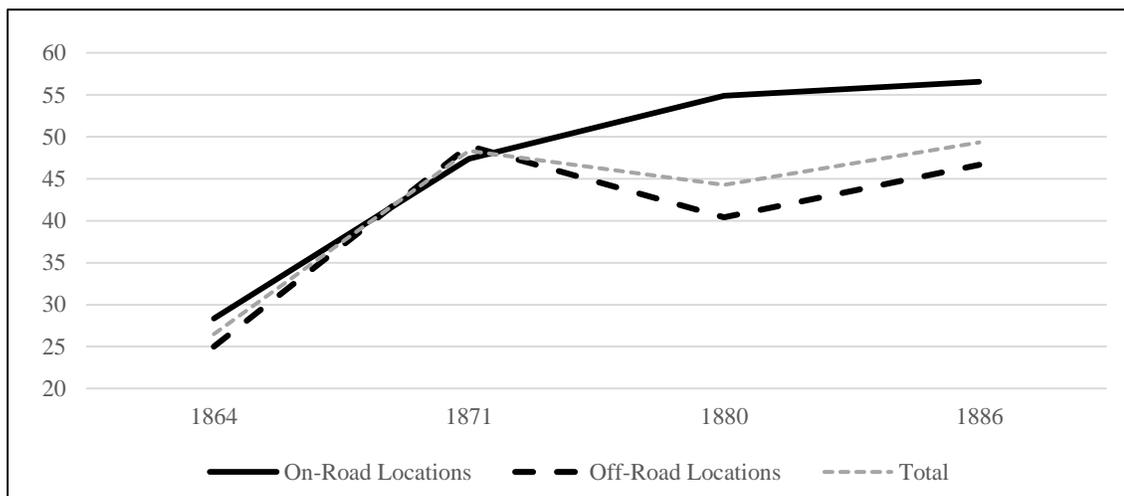
TABLE 3.9
Value of Personal Property in Brudenell, 1864–1886

Year	On-Road			Off-Road			All Locations		
	#LOC	# ASD	Mean Value (\$)	#LOC	# ASD	Mean Value (\$)	#LOC	# ASD	Mean Value (\$)
1864	67	15	127	84	17	124	151	32	125
1871	57	24	113	92	41	110	149	65	111
1880	51	20	140	141	49	116	192	69	123
1886	61	24	144	165	59	131	226	83	134

Source: Brudenell Tax Assessment Database (1863–1911).

1864 and 1886 (see Figure 3.3). It is not clear what happened after 1886 because only the wealthiest settlers appear to have been assessed for personal property after that time. While the ratio of those assessed with personal property to property holders in general remained close to 40 percent between 1871 and 1886, the mean value of assessed personal property was consistently higher for on-road settlers.

FIGURE 3.3
Per Capita Assessed Personal Property (\$) in Brudenell, 1864–1886



Source: Brudenell Tax Assessment Database (1863–1911).

Another difference between on-road and off-road settlement was the type of surveillance employed to ensure “actual” settlement. As we have already seen, the colonial state was concerned that speculators or irresponsible settlers would take advantage of the free grant system to exploit the resources of the Ottawa-Huron Tract without intending to settle and develop the region. All settlers were under surveillance, but those on the free grant lots were more so than those who purchased lots off the road, especially in the first years of settlement. One example of this was the constant reporting by French on the progress of settlement and settlers’ adherence to the free grant criteria. Another example is the inspection reports produced by the CLD after the suspension of the free grant system. Lots on the Opeongo Road were inspected by P.L.S. William Bell in 1863, while off-road lots were not inspected until 1872.¹¹⁸ Those inspection reports were intended to assess the value of the land and any improvements thereon and to keep

¹¹⁸ AO RG 1-95-3-9, “Inspection and valuation reports of the Townships of Brougham, Brudenell, Grattan, and Sebastopol by William Bell, P.L.S.,” October 1863, MS 482, reel 1.

track of the actions of settlers to ensure the rules of settlement were being followed. Of course, all new arrivals to Canada were subject to forms of observation and inspection. However, the colonization roads program, with its free grant conditions, government settlement agents, and diverse immigrant population, created an environment in which one group of settlers was subject to more pervasive surveillance than another. In Brudenell, this distinction was manifest on a local level where those who settled away from the Opeongo Road enjoyed a greater degree of anonymity than did their neighbours.

Table 3.10 compares acreage distributions in Brudenell with Central Ontario. Brudenell was typical of Ontario in that small farms (less than 150 acres) were the norm. Darroch notes the increase in very small (less than 50 acres) landholdings during the 1860s are somewhat skewed by the instructions given to the census-takers, leading to under-representation of small landholders in 1861.¹¹⁹ Setting aside those locations with fewer than fifty acres, what is striking about this comparison is the opposing trend in the type of property holding. Between 1861 and 1871, the number of farms 200 acres and larger grew by 113 percent in Brudenell as settlers acquired additional Crown lots, while the increase in Central Ontario was only 30 percent. In contrast, the number of farms between 100 and 149 acres actually declined by 7 percent in Brudenell and grew by 21 percent in Central Ontario. In Brudenell, the ratio of large to small farms grew, at the same time as it fell in the older settled region.

Overall, the process of colonization on the Opeongo Road differed from older parts of the province in several important ways. The Frontenac region around Kingston,

¹¹⁹ Gordon Darroch, "Scanty Fortunes and Rural Middle-Class Formation in Nineteenth-Century Central Ontario," *Canadian Historical Review* 79, no. 4 (December 1998): 628.

TABLE 3.10
Comparison of Distributions of Recorded Acreage Occupied, Brudenell and Central Ontario, 1861 and 1871

Acreage Categories	1861				1871			
	Brudenell		Central Ontario		Brudenell		Central Ontario	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
0–49	0.7	1	9.8	249	6.0	10	50.2	3065
50–99	12.4	18	26.7	681	7.2	12	16.4	1003
100–149	62.1	90	48.1	1225	50.3	84	24.2	1478
150–199	9.0	13	6.1	155	7.2	12	4.2	254
200–249	11.7	17	7.0	179	18.0	30	3.8	235
250 plus	4.1	6	2.3	58	11.4	19	1.2	73
Total	100.0	145	100.0	2547	100.0	167	100.0	6108

Source: 1861 and 1871 Censuses of Brudenell. The data on Central Ontario are adapted from Darroch, “Scanty Fortunes,” 627, Table 1.

for example, makes an interesting comparison because of the similarities and differences between the locations. Each region contained the starkly contrasting landforms defining the margins of the Canadian Shield: fertile lowlands and Precambrian rock. Each region was also shaped by a free grant system. The major differences were location and timing. Centrally-located, southern Frontenac County was one of the first areas settled by grants to former military personnel after the creation of Upper Canada. There was a concerted effort to establish a British social hierarchy or “squirearchy” where the “characteristic features were the relocation of a population loyal to the Crown, the rewarding of this population’s loyalty by land grants, and a concern for establishing the social and political fabric of a British society.”¹²⁰ In contrast, the conditions for free grants on colonization

¹²⁰ Brian S. Osborne, “Frontier Settlement in Eastern Ontario in the Nineteenth Century: A Study in Changing Perceptions of Land and Opportunity,” in *The Frontier: Comparative Studies*, volume 1, ed. David Harry Miller and Jerome O. Steffen (Norman: Oklahoma University Press, 1977), 208–209.

roads were based on improvements made to the property and not on the social status of the locatee. In colonizing the Ottawa-Huron Tract the state did not have the luxury of a large immigrant group of comparable lineage. Rather, the Bureau of Agriculture was desperate to appeal to as many immigrants as possible and accepted settlers from non-traditional sources. In his progress reports, French took pains to note the diverse character and socio-economic backgrounds of the settlers in his division. Though they consciously attempted to attract “better classes” of settlers, their marketing strategies and the criteria for settlement left open the possibility of a much more diverse population.

Also distinct are the ways lands were categorized and distributed. In Frontenac in the 1790s, this process was overseen by military surveyors, while in the Ottawa-Huron Tract in the 1850s this responsibility had passed to civilians. During the first sixty years of settlement in Frontenac, lands deemed unfit for agriculture were set aside for resource development and agrarian settlement prohibited. By 1851 only the four southernmost townships bordering Lake Ontario had population densities of more than 5 persons per hundred acres.¹²¹ In the Ottawa-Huron Tract, which included the northern townships of Frontenac County, the distinction between lands suitable for farming and those set aside for forestry was blurred considerably. Free grants were offered only on the colonization roads, but all remaining Crown lands in the region were available for sale.¹²² This indiscriminate allocation of lands led to the denouncement of the colonization roads

¹²¹ Osborne, “Frontier Settlement in Eastern Ontario,” 211, Figure 6.

¹²² This was the case until 1868 when the Province made new free grant lands available. Though Brudenell was not initially included in the initial legislation, it was added in 1874. See Ontario, “An Act to Secure Free Grants and Homesteads to Actual Settlers on the Public Lands, 1868,” *Statutes of the Province of Ontario* (Toronto: H. J. Hartney, 1868), and T. B. Pardee, “Report of the Commissioner of Crown Lands of the Province of Ontario, 1873,” *Sessional Papers*, no. 26 (1874): vi.

project by lumbermen like James Burke. This perceived lack of foresight and reckless disregard for the character of the landscape was subsequently cited as a key reason for the inevitable failure of the colonization roads scheme.¹²³

Yet, as we have seen here, the process of colonizing the Opeongo Road cannot be looked at solely as a failed assault on the Canadian Shield by an aggressive state and hapless immigrant farmers. In looking more closely at this one region within the larger Ottawa-Huron Tract, we find the story to be much more complex and the impacts of the colonization roads program to be much more nuanced. The diagonal northwesterly direction of the road created a township with a distinct physical shape. Its survey did more than just create “measurements and brief notations of the terrain”—it created the foundational structure for settlement.¹²⁴ The Opeongo Road (1851–2) was surveyed prior to Brudenell Township (1857), but the road essentially cut through the traditional grid pattern dictated by the standard township survey structure. This pattern was similar to other townships on the Opeongo, namely Sebastopol, Radcliffe, Sherwood, Jones, Robinson, and Murchison. Sebastopol is the nearest comparable to Brudenell because it was also settled during the peak years of the colonization roads project, while the others were settled later (if at all). Not all townships on the Opeongo exhibited this settlement pattern: Grattan, Admaston, and Horton were already incorporated at the time the

¹²³ In relation to the northern part of Frontenac, Osborne argues that “no amount of optimism could disguise the fact that much of the settlement had been a failure, attended by much human misery...” See “Frontier Settlement in Eastern Ontario,” 220.

¹²⁴ The importance of the Opeongo survey in establishing the parameters of settlement is misunderstood still, even in the most recent historiography. The quote is from Joshua C. Blank, *Creating Kashubia: History, Memory, and Identity in Canada's First Polish Community* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016), 154–5.

Opeongo was surveyed and the road ran through an already established grid pattern.

Brudenell is not unique therefore, but it is an interesting case study of the overlap of and transition between two types of settlement.

The intervention of an activist state provided opportunities not available elsewhere, even taking into account factors such as the relative scarcity of arable lands. Settlement proceeded in a thin band along the road combined with scattered small settlements on deviations within a few miles of the main line. This created challenges associated with low population density, but also led to opportunities whereby settlers had greater freedom in situating themselves on the land. Colonization roads provided access to land that otherwise would not have been accessible to most settlers. The free grant system concurrently gave opportunity to a different class of settlers that would otherwise have been shut out of the land market in the mid-nineteenth century. The criteria for free grants encouraged the maintenance and extension of family networks as a way to mitigate the financial burden of settling in a new place. All of this happened under the close, but inconsistent, watch of the CLD and Bureau of Agriculture.

Chapter 4

“Equitable Claims and Future Considerations”:¹ Colonial Authority and the Local State in Brudenell, 1860–1900

In May 1870, settlers in Brudenell petitioned the Ontario government to improve the Peterson Road, referring to a past promise from the Commissioner of Crown Lands: “The improvement asked for, cannot be undertaken at present, [but] the equitable claims of the section of the country represented will not be lost sight of in future considerations.”² The episode highlights tensions between settlers and the state in the colonization of the Ottawa-Huron Tract. Settlers saw themselves as agents of civilization and as forsaken by a government that they assumed would be a partner in the civilizing mission. The petition reveals an attempt to redirect spending to a local project, but it also illustrates frustration with a government whom settlers saw as shirking its duty in the colonization effort.

In this chapter I analyse the ways in which settlers in Brudenell negotiated administrative authority and tuned the structures of government to local circumstances. As I showed in chapters two and three, the colonization of the Ottawa-Huron Tract was an exercise in reimagining the landscape and extending state powers of administration onto the frontier. The episodic and discontinuous emergence of an activist state limited its power to directly manage settlement. The success of the project therefore required the active participation of local populations. But more than participation, it required the complicity of the settler population; or, in other words, an internalization of the rules of

¹ This chapter substantially revises and extends arguments made previously in “Equitable Claims and Future Considerations: Road Building and Colonization in Early Ontario, 1850–1890,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 24, no. 2 (2013): 156–188.

² AO RG 52-1-1870, File 94, “Settlers of Brudenell to the Lt. Governor of Ontario,” 14 May 1870.

government such that settlers would govern themselves. I suggest this complicity should also be viewed as initiative, rather than passive acceptance of colonial authority.

Two questions form the core of this chapter: What tools were available to settlers? How did settlers use those tools? I will focus on three main areas in which settlers had some control: taxation, statute labour, and roads. These were overlapping concerns. Taxes were required to fund the building of roads and statute labour duties were a way for settlers to mitigate the financial burden of infrastructure development at the Provincial level. The Municipal Corporations Act (1849) and the Assessment Act (1853) provided the foundations of local government. How these were interpreted at the local level is revealed in municipal council minutes and in letters and petitions submitted by locals to the colonization roads administration and other branches of the Provincial government.

This discussion is situated within the histories of state formation and the operation of political power in colonial Canada. The sources used are themselves products of the colonial project, created in the exertion of colonial authority over a reluctant land and an ambivalent population. Tax assessments, municipal council minutes, censuses, and the entire colonization roads archive belong to a set of sources created by the Canadian state-information. This archive must be viewed in the context of its construction concurrent with emerging institutional structures in Canada. This task was undertaken by Walsh in his study of the colonization of the Ottawa-Huron Tract, in which the author “sought to understand what these institutional structures were, why and how they erased certain kinds of knowledge, and privileged some forms of knowledge over others.”³ In doing so,

³ John C. Walsh, “Landscapes of Longing: Colonization and the Problem of State Formation in Canada West” (PhD diss., University of Guelph, 2001), 305.

Walsh “made the ‘problem’ of the Canadian state-in-formation, and thus the ‘problem’ of the archive-in-formation the focus of [his analysis].”⁴ Paradoxically, by making the state the problem to be studied, Walsh (unintentionally) perpetuated the marginalization of local perspectives. But, by making the structures of the emerging Canadian state-in-formation more transparent, Walsh also opened up opportunities for future historians to reclaim the local viewpoints sublimated within the process of colonization—the more we can see the archive, the more we can begin to see through it to the local knowledges it was made to consume. This chapter repositions settlers in the Ottawa-Huron Tract—those who did the actual work of colonization—at the centre of their own world. Instead of examining the processes of the Canadian state-in-formation at the federal or provincial levels, my focus is narrowed to the specifically local. It was at this level where large-scale colonial processes—the dispossession of indigenous peoples, the articulation of acceptable social norms, the production of official knowledge, the silencing of local knowledge—were realized in settlers’ everyday experiences of colonization.

The power of the state was haphazardly articulated in both liberal ideology and colonial administrative practice. In E. A. Heaman’s analysis liberalism gave some a way to criticize alternative forms of political authority. However, once it “became hegemonic, [liberalism] became all about justifying power in place rather than about instrumentalizing critiques of that power.”⁵ Hegemonic liberalism, in its defense of established authority, became a highly conservative ideology which privileged property

⁴ Walsh, “Landscapes of Longing,” 305.

⁵ E. A. Heaman, “Rights Talk and the Liberal Order Framework,” in *Liberalism and Hegemony: Debating the Canadian Liberal Revolution*, eds. Jean-François Constant and Michel Ducharme (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 149.

rights and individualism at the expense of equality and other forms of liberty. For Bruce Curtis and Michèle Dagenais, however, power operates not through ideas, but “through relations, through networks in which individuals (and groups) are nodes.”⁶ The decline of mercantilism, the emergence of modern capitalism, and the development of the science of political economy were concomitant with the rise of the administrative desires and capacities of the nineteenth-century state.⁷ Hence, the state abstracted the “particularities of empirical existence” to fit a new social order.⁸ The reverse was also true: settlers resituated the regularities of political economy in the particularities of their time and place. The need to deliver mail and take goods to market, the considerations involved in deciding how to expend one’s statute labour, and adapting infrastructure to geographic reality were part of “a whole host of smaller moves and countermoves in the technologies of government and of administrative capacity.”⁹ Thus, for Dagenais, the establishment of the local state was a way to “neutralize possible popular opposition” by diluting and extending power to local authorities “albeit within a framework defined according to a number of norms and laws,” such as self-government.¹⁰ This explains the importance of “developing a municipal system at the local scale [and] incorporating this level of governance into the broader state.”¹¹ Dagenais’ analysis is instructive in its focus on the

⁶ Bruce Curtis, “After ‘Canada’: Liberalisms, Social Theory, and Historical Analysis,” in *Liberalism and Hegemony*, 187.

⁷ Curtis, “Liberalisms, Social Theory, and Historical Analysis,” 191.

⁸ Curtis, “Liberalisms, Social Theory, and Historical Analysis,” 191–2.

⁹ Curtis, “Liberalisms, Social Theory, and Historical Analysis,” 192.

¹⁰ Michèle Dagenais, “The Municipal Territory: A Product of the Liberal Order?” in *Liberalism and Hegemony*, 208.

¹¹ Dagenais, “The Municipal Territory,” 209.

emergence of a municipal territory in Canada and its relation to the larger colonial state. Yet Dagenais goes too far; the rules of the municipal state at times facilitated, rather than neutralizing, popular opposition. Seemingly mundane issues like roads, statute labour duties, property taxes, and the drawing and funding of school sections were crucial to ordering everyday life and shaping conduct at the local level.

The perspectives above rely on one or both of Antonio Gramsci's notion of hegemony and Michel Foucault's governmentality. Hegemony is understood here as the ideological dominance of one social group over others, to the point where the dominant ideology is accepted by all as both true and good. Governmentality refers to the relations between state and population, especially in regard to technologies of rule and the degree to which ways of governing are instrumentalized by the population. These perspectives are not necessarily incompatible.¹² Hegemony is the "what" of rule and governmentality the corresponding "how". For Gramsci, power lies in ideology—in the ability of the ruling elite, via the state, to make an ideology (in our case the Canadian variant of nineteenth-century liberalism) hegemonic. Not just government, "the State is the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules."¹³ Meanwhile, for Foucault, power resides in the techniques of administration applied to the everyday life of the individual (e.g. the social norms of colonialism applied to the settler), which "marks him by his own individuality, attaches

¹² See for example: Marcus Schulzke, "Power and Resistance: Linking Gramsci and Foucault," in *Gramsci and Foucault: A Reassessment*, ed. David Kreps (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 57.

¹³ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 244.

him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects.”¹⁴ Governmentality is not domination per se, but is “the relation between the technologies of domination and the technologies of the self.”¹⁵ The successful exercise of political power means creating self-governing subjects who recognize their role in governing structures, and who act predictably. Implementing this in early Canada was not always easy, as Curtis notes: “In the working out of projects for the government of subjectivity in Canada the tensions are evident between domination over others and government of the self.”¹⁶ In the routines of everyday life on the frontier, settlers and the state each influenced the shape of society in the small worlds of the Ottawa-Huron Tract.

The municipal realm in Upper Canada underwent substantial changes between the Constitutional Act of 1791 and the incorporation of Brudenell as a municipality in 1860. The liberalization of the local state was not a forgone conclusion. The 1791 Constitution imposed a rigid colonial structure on British North America which invested significant power in the colonial elite that permeated to the local level. Local government during the tenure of Upper Canada’s first Lieutenant Governor, John Graves Simcoe, was organized on the district system, which existed from 1788 to 1849. Though the first counties were created in 1792, the district was the primary unit of local administration in this period.¹⁷

¹⁴ Michel Foucault, “The Subject and Power,” *Critical Inquiry* 8, no. 4 (Summer 1982): 781.

¹⁵ Curtis, “Liberalisms, Social Theory, and Historical Analysis,” 187. Curtis’ definition is based on Michel Foucault, “Technologies of the Self,” in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, ed. Luther H. Martin et al. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 16–49.

¹⁶ Curtis, “Liberalisms, Social Theory, and Historical Analysis,” 189.

¹⁷ Andrew J. McCammon, “British Colonialism, Lieutenant-Governor Simcoe and Local Government in Early Upper Canada” (PhD diss., University of Guelph, 1980).

Local self-government was limited and direct responsibility for the districts was in the hands of the Lieutenant Governor until the creation of district councils in 1841.

For liberal-nationalist historians in the twentieth century, the establishment of local self-government, notably reflected in the Municipal Corporations Act, was viewed as part of the larger epic struggle for responsible government in Upper Canada.¹⁸ J. H. Aitchison's undisguised praise of Robert Baldwin's achievement points to the relevance of Heaman's critique of the conservatism of hegemonic liberalism:

It was the culmination of a long struggle for 'home rule' at all levels of local government. The name of Robert Baldwin will forever be associated with responsible government, but that principle of government is only a specific application of his more general principle that 'people should manage their own affairs.' In the sphere of local government this meant for him not merely elective representative institutions, but also freedom for such institutions to function without hampering statutory restrictions or central administrative control.¹⁹

The Baldwin Act was indeed a significant moment in the history of local government: it extended elective government to the local level and established official structures through which municipal governments took shape. But since it "was based on the principle that municipalities could perform only those responsibilities for which they were delegated

¹⁸ An early example of this is Adam Shortt, *Municipal Government in Ontario: An Historical Sketch* (Toronto: The University Library, 1903). See also: Stephen Leacock, *Baldwin, LaFontaine and Hincks: Responsible Government* (Toronto: Morang, 1907); George Wilson, *The Life of Robert Baldwin: A Study in the Struggle for Responsible Government* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1933); John H. Aitchison, "The Development of Local Government in Upper Canada, 1783–1850" (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1953); and Kenneth G. Crawford, *Canadian Municipal Government* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1954). Similar sentiments were repeated in chapters by J. M. S. Careless, G. P. de T. Glazebrook, and C. F. J. Whebell in the collection, *Aspects of Nineteenth Century Ontario*, eds. F. H. Armstrong, A. H. Stevens, and J. D. Wilson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974). Even as recently as 2000, scholars continued to view the Baldwin Act in this way. See for example J. David Wood, *Making Ontario: Agricultural Colonization and Landscape Re-Creation before the Railway* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), 57.

¹⁹ J. H. Aitchison, "The Municipal Corporations Act of 1849," *Canadian Historical Review* 30, no. 1 (June 1949): 107.

express authority by the provincial government,”²⁰ it could be interpreted as restricting, rather than enlarging, local powers. From a state-centred perspective, enhanced local influence was not even the primary goal. Albert Schrauwers argues:

The expansion of municipal government in Upper Canada was less an empowering democratic revolution as civic humanists like Robert Baldwin sought, and more an extension of a rationalized, hierarchical bureaucracy for ‘efficient rule’ by a ‘benevolent’ colonial state seeking to deprive the elected legislature of its capacity for local patronage.²¹

Though not necessarily related to patronage, if the interests of local inhabitants diverged from provincial proscriptions as, for example, happened often in the administration of colonization roads, then the stage was set for conflict.

Beginning in the late twentieth century, scholars focusing on the urban context began to break down the liberal-national perspective.²² W. T. Matthews refocused the narrative of the origins of municipal government to emphasize local circumstances and the ways local elites monopolized municipal authority for their individual benefit.²³ J. I. Little argues that in rural Lower Canada, rather than having a system imposed from above, local communities played a significant role in shaping the emerging municipal system. This process was not dominated by local elites nor was it strictly segregated by

²⁰ David Siegel, “Ontario,” in *Foundations of Governance: Municipal Government in Canada’s Provinces*, eds. Andrew Sancton and Robert Young (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 24.

²¹ Albert Schrauwers, *Union is Strength: W. L. Mackenzie, the Children of Peace, and the Emergence of Joint Stock Democracy in Upper Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 215. See also Jeffrey L. McNairn, *The Capacity to Judge: Public Opinion and Deliberative Democracy in Upper Canada, 1791–1854* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

²² See Engin F. Isin, *Cities without Citizens: Modernity of the City as a Corporation* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1992), and “Rethinking the Origins of Canadian Municipal Government,” *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* 4 (1995): 73–92.

²³ W. T. Matthews, “By and For the Large Propertied Interests: The Dynamics of Local Government in Six Upper Canadian Towns during the Era of Commercial Capitalism, 1832-1860” (PhD diss., McMaster University, 1985).

class or ethnicity.²⁴ No comparable study of rural Upper Canada exists,²⁵ so Little's work presents the best opportunity for comparison with the Ottawa-Huron Tract. For example, that "the overriding concern in the Eastern Townships was that local tax dollars be directed to local projects and institutions rather than being administered by distant officials over whom ratepayers could exercise little control,"²⁶ is especially applicable to our context. Further, Little's subjects wrote petitions and letters revealing the region's main concern was "its economic isolation, an isolation which clearly reinforced the strong sense of community localism even while it fostered a regional identity based on common grievance."²⁷ As in Quebec's Eastern Townships, the inhabitants of Brudenell and other locales along the Opeongo Road were concerned that their best interests did not coincide with those of provincial authorities. Their letters and petitions reveal the ways in which the liberal-order project was contested at the local level at the same time as settlers saw themselves as participating in the task of civilizing the wilderness.

The physical space that became the township of Brudenell was slowly brought into the governable space of Upper Canada beginning in the 1850s, after the passing of the Baldwin Act. Hamlet Burritt's survey of the Opeongo Road marked some of the key features of the landscape in Brudenell in June 1851. Overseen by T. P. French, settlers

²⁴ J. I. Little, *State and Society in Transition: The Politics of Institutional Reform in the Eastern Townships, 1838–1852* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 10–12. See also, Little, "Colonization and Municipal Reform in Canada East," *Histoire sociale / Social History* 14, no. 27 (May 1981): 93–121.

²⁵ Schrauwers suggests it was the farmers of Upper Canada as much as it was Baldwin who pushed for responsible government, but his study focuses on the influence of largely urban economic voluntary associations rather than rural municipal councils. See his *Union is Strength*, 215–216.

²⁶ Little, *State and Society in Transition*, 12.

²⁷ Little, *State and Society in Transition*, 13.

began taking up free grant lots on the Opeongo in the autumn of 1855. The official boundaries of Brudenell, including its lot and concession structure, were surveyed by H. O. Wood in 1857, at the same time facilitating the purchase of Crown lands away from the Opeongo Road. In 1859, the first post office was established in Brudenell with weekly service beginning that September.²⁸

In his report to the CCL in January 1860, French lamented the lack of municipal government in Brudenell and the problems this created for the progress of colonization. Commenting on the incorporation of neighboring Sebastopol and Griffith, he added:

Brudenell not being within the boundary of any defined county has not yet been organized, a circumstance which is much to be regretted as in consequence of there being no Municipal Council there are no schools, nor is there any statute labour performed upon the roads, neither can there be Pathmasters, Pound Keepers, Fence Viewers or any other of those Municipal officers so necessary to the well being of every township.²⁹

Only ten years since Baldwin's Act, these officers were considered indispensable in the management of local affairs. French was later elected Warden of Renfrew County, an office which extended his influence in local affairs and supplanted the loss of authority experienced when his position with the CLD was reduced.³⁰

Some residents of Brudenell apparently saw their interests laying to the south along the Addington Road, rather than east and west along the Opeongo. In 1858 the Province considered a Bill to incorporate Brudenell, Lyndoch, Denbigh, and Abinger Townships as a municipality and attach them to Renfrew County. Several petitions were

²⁸ AO RG 1-9, Opeongo Road Subject Files, MS 892, reel 8, p. 08344–08345, French to P. M. Vankoughnet, 9 August 1859.

²⁹ AO RG 1-9, p. 08378, French to Vankoughnet, 7 January 1860.

³⁰ H Belden & Co., "Historical Sketch of the County of Renfrew," in *Illustrated Atlas of the Dominion of Canada, Renfrew County Edition* (Toronto: H. Belden & Co., 1880), iii.

presented in opposition to the Bill, and it was eventually withdrawn.³¹ Instead, on 19 May 1860 the situation was resolved when parliament assented to an amendment by which the new townships of Brudenell, Lyndoch, Raglan, and Radcliffe were added to Renfrew County.³² Having met the threshold of 100 ratepayers, on 5 October a county by-law incorporated the four townships together as an independent municipality with Brudenell as the senior township.³³ Elections were to be held the first Monday in January at the home of innkeeper Desiré Payette with merchant and mill owner John S. J. Watson presiding as returning officer.³⁴ Blacksmith John Reynolds was elected the first Reeve and represented the municipality at County Council in June 1861.³⁵

The municipal state in Brudenell was a small-scale affair. Its workings reveal the ways municipal authorities made use of provincial legislation to facilitate local social and economic development and to pursue individual and family interests. Providing services to the municipality was a way to supplement the family income as well as shape local

³¹ The first petition (in support) was presented by Brudenell resident Michael Kearney on 4 June. Three separate petitions from John Supple, Alexander Fraser, and Charles Young, representing other residents of Renfrew County opposed to the idea were presented 24, 28, and 30 June. A second petition, in favour, from Thomas Hickey and other Reeves of Renfrew County, was also presented 30 June. The Bill was withdrawn on 10 August. See *Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada* 16, part 2 (1858): 592, 642, 742, 752, 762, 763, 779, and 978.

³² Statutes of Canada, “An Act to Amend ‘An Act respecting the Territorial Division of Upper Canada,’” 1860, chap. 39, article 4, in AO RG 19-20-1, Municipal Incorporation History Documentation Files, fiche 6.4, Brudenell and Lyndoch Township, p. 5.

³³ In the 1863 Collectors Roll there were 149 ratepayers in Brudenell and 22 in Radcliffe. Data on Lyndoch and Raglan not available. The by-law came into effect 1 December 1860. See United Counties of Lanark and Renfrew, “By-law for the purpose of incorporating the Townships of Brudenell, Radcliffe, Raglan, and Lyndoch into a Union of Townships for Municipal Purposes,” in Municipal Incorporation Files, p. 7. In 1878 Radcliffe and Raglan were separated from Brudenell and Lyndoch and incorporated as a separate municipality.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ County of Renfrew, “Meeting of the Reeves of the County of Renfrew,” 20 June 1861, in *ibid.*, p. 10.

circumstances. From 1861 to 1869 township council paid about \$34 per year in room and board to hold meetings in a back room of Payette's tavern.³⁶ Councillors (including the reeve) were paid between \$9 and \$13 per year depending on the number of meetings they attended. Meetings were held irregularly as needed, but usually began in the morning and lasted most of the day. In May 1867 the council began to discuss building a Town Hall and in August advertised for tenders for a purpose-built structure twenty-four by thirty feet.³⁷ Local residents bid to supply timber for the hall,³⁸ and the winning bid of \$34.50 went to John Hartney.³⁹ In July 1868, council passed a by-law "sanctioned by the electors" to raise funds to erect the hall.⁴⁰ Denied provincial funding, council instead sought a private loan and granted Desiré Payette a \$500 contract.⁴¹ Payette later asked to be released from the contract, and subsequently a \$600 bid by Joseph Whelan was accepted pending approval of the loan.⁴² That bid was also rescinded, as the council

³⁶ The Payettes were one of the few French Canadian families to settle in Brudenell. They ran an inn near the intersection of the Opeongo and the branch road leading from Brudenell to the Madawaska River. According to the 1861 Census, the family of six operated out of a 1 1/2 story log house while a second house was under construction; the building also housed a dressmaker's shop and eight boarders. The family was a fixture of the community, running the hotel from 1861 until relocating to Notch Hill, in the B.C. interior, after 1899. They are recorded in the Assessment Rolls for Brudenell every year from 1863 to 1899. In 1904, 1905, 1910, and 1911 Desiré Jr. and Joseph Payette (sons of Desiré Sr.) are recorded as non-resident owners residing in British Columbia. The cost to rent from Payette fluctuated from as little as \$18.25 in 1865 to \$64.50 in 1867. See AO F 1564-1, Brudenell and Lyndoch fonds, MS 777 reel 1, "Council Minutes, 1864-1878," 9 January 1865, p. 16, 8 January 1866, p. 43, 14 January 1867, p. 63, 13 January 1868, p. 88, 28 November 1868, p. 112, and 10 January 1870, p. 139.

³⁷ AO F 1564-1, "Council Minutes, 1864-1878," 4 May 1867, p. 75, and 17 August 1867, p. 84.

³⁸ AO F 1564-1, "Council Minutes, 1864-1878," 26 October 1867, p. 86.

³⁹ AO F 1564-1, "Council Minutes, 1864-1878," 13 January 1868, p. 88.

⁴⁰ AO F 1564-1, "Council Minutes, 1864-1878," 18 July 1868, p. 105.

⁴¹ AO F 1564-1, "Council Minutes, 1864-1878," 26 September, p. 109, 17 October 1868, p. 111.

⁴² AO F 1564-1, "Council Minutes, 1864-1878," 11 January 1869, p. 114, 18 January 1869, p. 116, and 8 May 1869, p. 125.

advertised a third time for tenders in April 1870. This time council specified potential contractors should have the opportunity (and obligation) to view council's desired specifications when proposing their bid.⁴³ In May 1870, John Reynolds bid \$469 on the contract and was advanced \$400.⁴⁴ Progress was delayed again and the council sent a warning to Reynolds in May 1871 that the hall must be finished before July or he would be held in breach of contract.⁴⁵ The Hall was completed in January 1872 and Reynolds was paid the balance owing on his contract.⁴⁶ The building held council meetings, but was also an income-generating property rented for private functions and as the site of semi-annual agricultural fairs.⁴⁷

Though the municipal state was small, its influence was real. Two important functions of local government were the assessment and collection of property taxes and the assignment (or commutation) of statute labour. These were matters which could impact the livelihoods of families and direct the flow of limited financial resources. The decision to direct that a settler's statute labour be performed on a road running through his own farm to a main road like the Opeongo could substantially improve transportation to and from the farm and at the same time avoid placing additional demands on the family's time. The decision to entertain appeal of an assessment could mean the difference between a property being rated at \$150 as opposed to \$50. With tax rates

⁴³ AO F 1564-1, "Council Minutes, 1864–1878," 18 April 1870, p. 151.

⁴⁴ AO F 1564-1, "Council Minutes, 1864–1878," 2 May 1870, p. 154.

⁴⁵ AO F 1564-1, "Council Minutes, 1864–1878," 8 May 1871, p. 177. A "Town Hall" is recorded in Schedule 3 of the 1871 census on a lot owned by John Reynolds at RBN 291 in Brudenell village.

⁴⁶ AO F 1564-1, "Council Minutes, 1864–1878," 15 January 1872, p. 186.

⁴⁷ AO F 1564-1, "Council Minutes, 1864–1878," 29 January 1872, p. 187.

TABLE 4.1
Taxes Imposed as a Percentage of Total Assessed Property, 1863–64 and 1886–1900

Year	County Rates	School Rates	Municipal Rates	Total Rates	Total Taxes Imposed (\$)	Average Taxes per Ratepayer (\$)
1863	1.50	0.40	1.00	2.90	1012.46	6.80
1864	1.39	0.39	0.80	2.58	770.67	5.07
1886	0.33	1.78	0.43	2.54	1675.77	6.42
1887	0.35	1.74	0.40	2.49	1684.71	6.36
1888	0.35	1.29	0.46	2.10	1472.47	5.28
1889	0.42	1.70	0.47	2.59	1555.92	5.52
1890	0.41	1.06	0.64	2.11	1324.50	4.89
1891	0.41	2.39	0.77	3.57	2253.07	8.34
1892	0.45	2.34	0.72	3.51	2016.20	7.44
1893	0.47	2.14	0.73	3.34	2014.53	7.52
1894	0.60	2.31	0.72	3.63	2158.14	7.96
1895	0.51	1.95	0.71	3.17	1913.88	6.84
1896	0.47	2.52	1.04	4.03	2449.61	8.75
1897	0.49	2.55	0.90	3.94	2369.73	8.17
1898	0.41	2.04	0.77	3.22	2403.41	8.55
1899	0.43	2.09	0.75	3.27	2301.30	7.31
1900	0.40	2.12	0.61	3.13	2195.00	7.15

Source: AO F 1564-4, Collectors Rolls, 1863–1864 and RG 19-142, Brudenell and Lyndock Township Financial Returns, 1886–1900. Tax rates for 1863-64 are given as “cents on the dollar” in the collectors roll. Tax rates for 1886–1900 are estimates generated by dividing the total amount of taxes imposed (in dollars) by the total value of assessed property. The average taxes paid is an estimate generated by dividing the total taxes imposed by the number of ratepayers on the roll.

generally between 2.5% and 4% annually (see Table 4.1), a \$100 difference in the assessment could mean a difference of \$4 per year in taxes. Taxes included rates set by the county as well as the rates set by the municipality. Local taxes were calculated by first determining the need of the municipality and then establishing a rate estimated to meet that need.⁴⁸ In the 1863 collector’s roll, county rates were 1.5%, the general school rate was 0.4%, and the municipal rate was 1%. Additional levies were applied to specific

⁴⁸ Province of Canada, “An Act to Amend and Consolidate the Several Acts Respecting the Assessment of Property in Upper Canada” (1866), sections 10-18, in Robert A. Harrison, ed., *The Municipal Manual for Upper Canada*, 2nd Edition (Toronto: W. C. Chewett & Co., 1867), 360–4.

school sections within the township: in 1863, ratepayers in school section one paid 0.8% while ratepayers in section two paid 2%. Collected and applied locally, municipal taxes in Upper Canada formed one of the largest revenue sources in the province.⁴⁹ Residents of Brudenell paid some of the lowest tax rates in the province. The average rate in rural Renfrew County in 1889, for example, was \$2.06 per capita, compared to \$1.25 in Brudenell. In older settlements like York County, rates were nearly \$4 per capita.⁵⁰

Widely promoted, education in proper and efficient municipal administration was also profitable business in the 1850s and 1860s. Activities of local officers were guided by official publications such as the *Assessors' Guide* and *Consolidated Statutes*, and by privately published legal reference works, which contained extracts or reproductions of relevant statutes. To aid in deciphering the dispersed statutes pertaining to municipal law, several municipal manuals were published, beginning with Hugh Scobie and John Balfour's 1850 guide.⁵¹ A Scottish immigrant, Scobie was known as a moderate "liberal conservative" and prominent defender of Scottish interests in Upper Canada.⁵² He was a prolific publisher who believed a healthy and vigorous British-Canadian society in Upper

⁴⁹ See Douglas McCalla, *Planting the Province: The Economic History of Upper Canada, 1784–1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), Appendix B, Table 9.2 for data to 1840. On municipal tax regimes in Canada before and after Confederation to 1912, see J. H. Perry, *Taxes, Tariffs, and Subsidies: A History of Canadian Fiscal Development* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1955), 20, 30–37, 78–89, and 124–36. For a more detailed description of the municipal tax system in pre-Confederation Ontario / Upper Canada, see Harold E. Manning, *Assessment and Rating: Being the Law of Municipal Taxation in Canada*, 3rd Edition (Toronto: Cartwright, 1951), chapter one.

⁵⁰ Ontario, "Statistics of Ontario Municipalities, 1885–87: Assessment and Taxation," *Annual Report of the Bureau of Industries for the Province of Ontario, 1888* (Toronto: Warwick & Sons, 1889), 15–30.

⁵¹ Hugh Scobie and John Balfour, *Scobie and Balfour's Municipal Manual for Upper Canada for 1850* (Toronto: Scobie and Balfour, 1850).

⁵² David Ouellette, "Scobie, Hugh," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online* 8 (1851–1860), http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/scobie_hugh_8E.html (accessed 22 June 2016).

Canada “could only be guaranteed through education, material prosperity equitably distributed among all classes, the moral values of Christianity, and a political system that embodied the good of all members.”⁵³ Works such as the *Municipal Manual* and his *Canadian Almanac* were part of an effort to improve the public welfare of Upper Canadians. Even though Scobie ran against Baldwin in the 1847 election, the two agreed when it came to the desirability of efficient municipal government.

After Scobie’s death in 1853, his *Municipal Manual* was revised and redistributed for a time by his partner John Balfour, but the project was taken up and expanded by lawyer Robert Harrison in 1859.⁵⁴ In his diary, Harrison wrote of resemblances between his and Scobie’s character, in addition to the fact Scobie was the first to publish a municipal manual in Canada.⁵⁵ Harrison’s *Municipal Manual* went through four editions, was his most profitable work, and was popular among elected local officials because of its careful explanations and attention to practical applications.⁵⁶ In his preface, Harrison outlined his rationale for the work: “the Municipal Laws of Upper Canada are in importance second to none of the laws of the Province, and [every] Municipal Corporation is a small Parliament, possessed of extensive but yet limited powers.”⁵⁷ It was, therefore, paramount that municipal reeves and councillors, most of whom had no

⁵³ Ouellette, “Scobie, Hugh,” *DCBO*.

⁵⁴ Peter Oliver, ed., “Introduction,” in *The Conventional Man: The Diaries of Ontario Chief Justice Robert A. Harrison, 1856–1878* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 33. Harrison’s second wife, Johanna (married in 1868), was Hugh Scobie’s only child.

⁵⁵ Robert Harrison, diary entry for Sunday, November 24, 1867, in *The Conventional Man*, 317.

⁵⁶ Oliver, “Introduction,” *The Conventional Man*, 17.

⁵⁷ Robert A. Harrison, ed., *The New Municipal Manual for Upper Canada, containing Notes of Decided Cases, and a Full Analytical Index* (Toronto: Maclear & Co., 1859), v.

training in politics or government, but were invested in local affairs, should seek out knowledge of the nature and extent of their powers. To comb through and make sense of the various provincial statutes, legal cases, amendments, and repeals was beyond the capacity of most except for a few legal professionals. Certainly most farmers and small town merchants presumably had more immediate concerns. There is no direct evidence that the municipal council of Brudenell purchased Harrison's manual, but the council minutes make specific reference to procuring "Instructions to Assessors" and "Consolidated Statutes of Canada."⁵⁸ W. C. Chewett & Co. of Toronto published both works while also distributing all the necessary forms a municipal council would need, such as assessors' rolls, poll books, and licenses.⁵⁹ After 1860, Chewett also distributed Harrison's manual and published the revised second edition in 1867.⁶⁰ In 1865 the Brudenell council paid Chewett \$18.31 for stationery and purchased supplies from Chewett intermittently over the next decade.⁶¹ It is reasonably likely these purchases included Harrison's manual, which, in effect, mediated between the prescriptions of the provincial government and the actions of local officials.

In the small world of municipal affairs, the lines between public and private, personal and political were blurred. The distinction between state and settler was hardly clear when it was the settlers themselves who were appointed as assessors and collectors.

⁵⁸ AO F 1564-1, "Council Minutes, 1864–1878," 20 January 1868, p. 90, and 22 February 1868, p. 92.

⁵⁹ For a listing of these forms, see the price list on the back cover of *The Assessors' Guide for Making the Assessments of Property in the Municipalities of Ontario according to the Assessment Act of 1869* (Toronto: W. C. Chewett & Co., 1869), 20.

⁶⁰ Advertisement in *The Upper Canada Law Journal and Municipal and Local Courts' Gazette* 7, no. 8 (August 1861): 221.

⁶¹ AO F 1564-1, "Council Minutes, 1864–1878," 9 January 1865, p. 16.

Rather than professional bureaucrats dispatched from some urban centre, in the local context “agents of the state” were usually neighbors and often family. According to the Assessment Act of 1853, the municipal council was empowered to appoint one or more assessors at their discretion and to divide the municipality into wards or districts as necessary.⁶² Between 1864 and 1868 there was one assessor/collector appointed in Brudenell each year for the whole municipality. John Dooner billed the council \$66.63 for assessing and collecting in 1864.⁶³ The previous year’s accounts were usually closed at the last meeting of the year, or the first meeting in January, and the council disbanded for elections. The township clerk was required to submit record of all revenues and expenditures to the county clerk before the end of the first week of January.⁶⁴

Positions in municipal government gave residents access to the mechanisms of rule and the procedures they followed added an additional air of legitimacy to decisions. During the second meeting of the year the new council was sworn in, officers were appointed, and vacant positions advertised. In January 1865, for example, a new council of reeve John S. J. Watson and councillors Edmond Ring Sr., John Cull Sr., James Dooner Sr., and George Malone were sworn in; school superintendents and auditors were reappointed, and vacancies for treasurer, clerk, assessor, and collector advertised.⁶⁵ Other positions were then filled through by-laws at subsequent meetings based on order of

⁶² Province of Canada, “An Act to Amend the Assessment Laws of Upper Canada” (1853): section 15, in Harrison, *New Municipal Manual for Upper Canada*, 506–507.

⁶³ AO F 1564-1, “Council Minutes, 1864–1878,” 9 January 1865, p. 16.

⁶⁴ Province of Canada, “An Act to Provide for the Making of Certain Annual Returns to the Government” (1853): section 1, in Harrison, *New Municipal Manual for Upper Canada*, 490.

⁶⁵ AO F 1564-1, “Council Minutes, 1864–1878,” 16 January 1865, p. 18.

priority with core (and higher salary) positions filled first. In February 1865, by-law 51 was passed to appoint Joseph Daly as assessor and collector for the year, by-law 52 made James Fallon clerk, and by-law 53 appointed Francis Carty as treasurer.⁶⁶ At the next meeting, the council passed by-laws appointing nineteen pathmasters (no. 54), three fence runners (no. 55), and six pound keepers (no. 56).⁶⁷

Given the importance of infrastructure development in the early years of settlement, one of the most important local offices was the tax assessor. How the assessor and the local council interpreted tax rules could significantly impact the circumstances of local families. Once he received his commission, the assessor proceeded to examine each property in his jurisdiction and record the details on the official form provided. This included the occupant's name, location, land owned, and a description of assessable property.⁶⁸ The assessor was given considerable discretion in determining the assessed value of any property. The basic mode of assessment was an interview with the property holder, who was expected to be honest: "and if any reasonable doubt is entertained by the Assessor of the correctness of any information given by the party applied to, it shall be the duty of the Assessor to require from him a written statement as aforesaid."⁶⁹ Property holders were required to give a complete

⁶⁶ AO F 1564-1, "Council Minutes, 1864–1878," 13 February 1865, p. 19.

⁶⁷ AO F 1564-1, "Council Minutes, 1864–1878," 11 March 1865, p. 22.

⁶⁸ "Assessment Act, 1853," section 17, in Harrison, *New Municipal Manual for Upper Canada*, 507. The required information changed with each iteration of the Act. See Appendix A for an overview of the categories for each year included in the database.

⁶⁹ "Assessment Act, 1853," section 18, in Harrison, *New Municipal Manual for Upper Canada*, 507-508. This requirement echoes the free grant criteria outlined by the Minister of Agriculture in 1855, namely that settlers needed to show proof of "honesty and sobriety" in their application for a free grant. See AO RG 1-9, p. 08048, "Agency for the Settlement of the Ottawa and Opeongo Road," September 1855.

description of their holdings, subject to a £5 (\$20) penalty for giving false information.⁷⁰ If after “making due enquiry” the assessor believed the owner’s report to be incorrect, he was empowered to “assess such party for such amounts of property or income as they may believe to be just and correct.”⁷¹ Such ambiguity created the potential for dispute and was later revised in the 1866 Assessment Act so that real and personal property would be “estimated at their actual cash value as they would be appraised in payment of a just debt from a solvent debtor.”⁷² The assessor’s discretion was thus not absolute, but subject to continually changing provincial regulations.

Types of assessable property also changed over time, but from 1853 to 1904 included both “real” and “personal” property. Real property meant the land itself and anything “affixed” to the land such as buildings, farm implements, trees, and minerals. Personal property meant everything else, including debts payable, corporate shares, cash, and other goods.⁷³ Though any amount of real property could be assessed, the minimum assessable personal property was £25 (\$100) from 1859 until it was removed from the roll in 1904.⁷⁴ Importantly, farm income was exempt from taxation, as was any property owned by government, churches, prisons, charities, and schools, incomes derived from pensions under \$200, and military service.⁷⁵ This made the assessment of real property

⁷⁰ “Assessment Act, 1853,” section 18, in Harrison, *New Municipal Manual for Upper Canada*, 508.

⁷¹ “Assessment Act, 1853,” section 18, in Harrison, *New Municipal Manual for Upper Canada*, 508.

⁷² “Assessment Act, 1866,” section 30, in Harrison, *The Municipal Manual for Upper Canada*, 2nd Edition (Toronto: W. C. Chewett & Co., 1867), 370.

⁷³ “Assessment Act, 1853,” section 3, in Harrison, *New Municipal Manual for Upper Canada*, 501.

⁷⁴ “Assessment Act, 1853,” section 4, in Harrison, *New Municipal Manual for Upper Canada*, 502.

⁷⁵ “Assessment Act, 1853,” section 6, in Harrison, *New Municipal Manual for Upper Canada*, 502–503.

essential to the municipal budget. So that residents would accept the burden of taxation, the process of assessment needed to be perceived as fair and legitimate.

Beyond arguing with the assessor, property holders could bring their case for adjustment to a regular council meeting or to an annual Court of Revision. In August 1864, for example, Francis Carty applied to the council for an abatement given he was “assessed for more land than he was actually possessed of.”⁷⁶ The assessor had from 1 February to 15 April to complete his inspection tour and inform all parties of their final assessment.⁷⁷ Once completed, the assessment roll was given to the municipal clerk who then posted a clean and alphabetized copy in a public place until the Court could hear complaints and finalize revisions.⁷⁸ The Court was a committee of the whole, requiring at least three councillors. Dates of sessions were to be published in the local newspaper (usually *Pembroke* or *Renfrew*). Any ratepayer could ask for a revision of his assessment or any other assessment on the Roll.⁷⁹ If unhappy with the Court’s decision the assessed party could appeal to the judge of the County Court who had final say in the matter.⁸⁰ The final revised Roll was due to the county clerk no later than 1 June.⁸¹

The Court of Revision was one key to the “government of subjectivity” and reveals the tensions “between domination over others and government of the self.”⁸²

⁷⁶ AO F 1564-1, “Council Minutes, 1864–1878,” 15 August 1864, p. 8.

⁷⁷ “Assessment Act, 1853,” section 23–4, in Harrison, *New Municipal Manual for Upper Canada*, 509–510.

⁷⁸ “Assessment Act, 1853,” section 25, in Harrison, *New Municipal Manual for Upper Canada*, 510.

⁷⁹ “Assessment Act, 1853,” section 26, in Harrison, *New Municipal Manual for Upper Canada*, 510–511.

⁸⁰ “Assessment Act, 1853,” section 28, in Harrison, *New Municipal Manual for Upper Canada*, 512.

⁸¹ “Assessment Act, 1853,” section 30, in Harrison, *New Municipal Manual for Upper Canada*, 514.

⁸² Curtis, “Liberalisms, Social Theory, and Historical Analysis,” 189.

Between 1865 and 1877, sixty-three appeals were brought to the Court and thirty-nine of those appeals were granted (sixty-two percent). Not all of these were reductions. In some cases, settlers appealed for a change of location, removal of assessment, or an addition to the Roll. Fifty-seven complaints were also brought against assessed parties, though the majority of those came in only two years: 1866 (13) and 1877 (34). Of those complaints, seventeen were dismissed. A session was held in Brudenell in May 1865 and appeals were heard from Rev. A. Dofi, Francis Carty, and James Grace.⁸³ Dofi's assessment was revised to £12 while the claims of Carty and Grace were rejected. Later in the meeting, an appeal was brought by Michael Kitt Sr. that he was being assessed for land actually owned by his son, Michael Kitt Jr.⁸⁴ The council moved to amend the Roll so that the son was assessed for L13/C15 instead of the father.⁸⁵ Since the value of the whole property was then divided between the two holders, the change made no difference in terms of the total taxes paid to the municipality. However, it meant both father and son (who continued to live together) were now eligible to be included on the voters' list, potentially increasing the family's influence by adding another voter.⁸⁶ Though there is no evidence to suggest the Kitt's claims were illegitimate, the episode points to the fact that those potentially on the margins of the property-owning class were able to use the

⁸³ AO F 1564-1, "Council Minutes, 1864–1878," 6 May 1865, p. 24.

⁸⁴ AO F 1564-1, "Council Minutes, 1864–1878," 6 May 1865, p. 30.

⁸⁵ The shorthand L13/C15 is used to indicate the lot and concession numbers of the property. The shorthand RBS (or RBN) 291 is used to indicate a range and lot number on the Opeongo Road. RBS refers to Range B South and RBN to Range B North. The council members present at the session were John Cull Sr., Edmund Ring Sr., James Dooner Sr., and George Malone, and reeve John S. J. Watson.

⁸⁶ Michael Jr.'s older brother James was also counted on the roll from 1863 to 1871, as was Michael Sr.'s brother William Sr., counted from 1863 to 1898.

rules of municipal government to find advantages for themselves. As in Little's study area in the Eastern Townships, the base of the political community in Brudenell was broad and its boundaries were permeable.⁸⁷

The rules around fathers and sons as ratepayers could be interpreted in ways not explicitly outlined in the legislation. The manipulation of these rules was one way for settlers to gain additional influence by dividing property. If, for example, there was an agreement that the son owned at least one third of the crops on the property, he was entitled to be on the Roll.⁸⁸ The minutes do not include the discussion which must have taken place in May 1865, only the motion as carried. However, the councillors were familiar with the situation of the Kitt family. All four councillors lived close to the Kitt family on the Opeongo Road, near Brudenell village, or in the area between the Opeongo and the township line with Hagarty. Michael Jr. likely did not meet the age qualification to vote (21); he was listed as 14 on the 1861 census, but those numbers are often suspect as the system of self-reporting could be manipulated.⁸⁹ Under the 1858 Municipal Act there were minimum property values for electors in cities, towns, and incorporated villages, but no such requirement existed in rural townships.⁹⁰ Before changes were made in the 1866 Act, this could allow for the son of any property holder, as long as he

⁸⁷ Little, *State and Society in Transition*, 11–12.

⁸⁸ See footnote (e) to "The Municipal Act, 1873," section 77, in Harrison, *Municipal Manual for Upper Canada*, 3rd Edition (1874), 56.

⁸⁹ See Lisa Dillon, *The Shady Side of Fifty: Age and Old Age in Late Victorian Canada and the United States* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008), especially chapter three.

⁹⁰ "Municipal Act, 1858," section 76, in Harrison, *New Municipal Manual for Upper Canada*, 35. This qualification was added in the Municipal Act of 1866, section 76. See Harrison, *Municipal Manual for Upper Canada*, 2nd Edition (1867), 62.

met the age requirement, to become an elector. In cities, towns, villages, and townships after 1866, property owners were required to have enough property that, if divided among age-eligible family members, all of them would meet the minimum requirement.⁹¹

Systems of self-reporting could also be manipulated regarding allocation of properties in the assessment roll. The lot in question (L13/C15) was acquired by the Kitt family between 1857 and the 1863 assessment;⁹² it passed between family members multiple times between 1863 and 1911. Table 4.2 shows who was assessed for the property each year for which rolls survived.⁹³ It is doubtful Michael Jr. acquired the lot himself, but it is likely the family acquired the lot and it was held in Michael Jr.'s name; whatever their motivations, the episode demonstrates the flexibility available to settlers and municipal authorities in arranging the shape of the local tax base and electorate.

The above episode is also more likely an example of community agency than nepotism or favouritism. Having family on council was not necessarily a benefit to a ratepayer seeking reduction of their assessment. Throughout this period, family members of councillors regularly appeared before a Court of Revision appealing their assessment. In one case from 1877, when John Dooner was reeve and James Dooner a councillor, the assessments of James Dooner Jr. and James Dooner Sr. were both raised by the Court, by

⁹¹ "Municipal Act, 1866," section 80, in Harrison, *Municipal Manual*, 2nd Edition (1867), 64.

⁹² The lot is not listed on the 1861 Census, but is shown on the 1863 Collectors Roll belonging to Michael Kitt Sr. The 1872 inspection report by P.L.S. William Bell indicates the lot was sold in 1857 for \$0.80 per acre, but had only been occupied, by William Kitt, for two years. Bell described the lot as "mixed timber, rough and rocky," and valued improvements at \$20. See AO RG 1-95-3-11, MS 482, reel 2.

⁹³ Though his death is not listed in the 1871 Census (because it was more than 12 months before the Census was taken), according to genealogical research by Bernadette Burbage and Mark Woermke, Michael Jr. died at Brudenell in 25 March 1870. See Burbage, *Early Families: Our Lady of the Angels Parish, Brudenell, Ontario, 150th Anniversary, 1858–2008* (Renfrew: Renfrew Printing, 2008), 121–126. See also Mark Woermke, *The Kitts Family of the Ottawa Valley and North America* (Self-Published, 2007).

TABLE 4.2
Property Assessments on Brudenell Lot 13, Concession 15, 1863–1911

Name	Years Assessed	Relation
Michael Kitt Sr.	1863–4	
William Kitt Sr.	1871–6, 1879–80, 1882	Michael Sr.’s brother
Samuel Kitt	1879 and 1882 (with his father)	William Sr.’s son
Samuel Kitt	1883–4, 1886, 1889–92, 1894, 1896, 1898–9, and 1904–6	William Sr.’s son
Denis Sullivan	1910	Married to William Sr.’s youngest daughter, Lucy
William Kitt Jr.	1911	William Sr.’s son

Source: AO F 1564-4, Collectors Rolls, 1863–1864 and AO F 1564-4, Assessment Rolls, 1866–1911.

\$50 each, after complaints were made against them.⁹⁴ The assessment of Bernard Dooner was debated by the same Court. John Dooner moved to raise Bernard’s assessment by \$25 while James Dooner proposed an amendment to have the assessment remain at \$75. Because this was a committee of the whole and not a regular council meeting, the chair was held not by the reeve (John Dooner), but by Councillor Michael Nevin, who voted in favour of the amended motion.

The council minutes reveal ways some settlers—even those representing the emerging municipal state—did or did not conform to the colonial state’s vision of the proper settler. Conversely, the minutes reveal ways municipal authorities responded to their fellow settlers who broke the rules. At times, municipal authorities pushed or talked back at the colonial state by subverting or manipulating the rules of government. But at other times they implemented the colonial project with some zeal. As we know, settlers

⁹⁴ AO F 1564-1, “Council Minutes, 1864–1878,” 9 August 1877, p. 319.

were supposed to be “honest and sober” but, not surprisingly, were not always so. Long-time township clerk and local school teacher James J. Fallon was expelled from office in January 1875 for being drunk.⁹⁵ Like instances of push back, instances of embodiment of the colonial project demonstrate the ways settlers were active participants influencing the shape of the Canadian state-in-formation at the local level.

The roles played in the government of subjectivity were themselves sometimes hotly contested. The power of the municipal state to enforce the rules of government was not absolute. In 1867, a controversy arose around the assessment and collection of taxes. The council received tenders for the offices of assessor and collector from three settlers: James Burbidge (\$70), John Dooner Sr. (\$80), and Joseph Daly (\$65).⁹⁶ Despite his bid being the lowest of the three, and despite his having served in the role for the past two years (or perhaps because of this) Daly’s bid was rejected in favour the highest of the three bids. At the next meeting the clerk was directed to issue instructions for Daly to appear before the council and bring with him the collector’s roll for 1866.⁹⁷ When Daly appeared, he asked for an extension to finish the collection and submit the Roll. The council was split: half argued for a fifteen day extension, and the others 25 days. The reeve cast the deciding vote in favour of the 25-day extension. When the council reconvened 40 days later, Daly was obstinate:

Mr. Daly, in accordance with a notice sent to him, appeared before the Council and not bringing his Roll with him, he was required to deliver his Collector’s Roll and Municipal Funds now in his hands. This he refused to do owing to his Bond being informal at the same time acknowledged his having over Forty Dollars in hands but

⁹⁵ AO F 1564-1, “Council Minutes, 1864–1878,” 18 January 1875, p. 247.

⁹⁶ AO F 1564-1, “Council Minutes, 1864–1878,” 9 February 1867, p. 70.

⁹⁷ AO F 1564-1, “Council Minutes, 1864–1878,” 16 March 1867, p. 72.

this he would only deliver when it was his pleasure to do so and subsequently left the Room bidding defiance to the Council.⁹⁸

Daly may have been upset by the rejection of his bid to return to office, or it could have been some other grievance with the council. Given Daly's confession of "deliberate embezzlement," the council issued a warrant for his arrest. Daly was sued by the council, but still given another extension until 20 May.⁹⁹ Three months after this latest extension was granted, the council again directed the clerk to issue a notice for Daly to deliver the collector's roll for 1866.¹⁰⁰ Finally, two weeks later, Daly delivered the roll, though he was short \$102.43 on his collection, and refused to collect or deliver the money.¹⁰¹ The council again moved to bring charges against Daly and made arrangements to bring in a judge; but, after a special meeting, they agreed to grant another one-month extension.¹⁰² When Daly failed to meet this deadline also, the council again threatened legal action against him, repeating this threat at the first meeting of the new council in 1868.¹⁰³

In addition to revealing the limits of municipal authority, the episode effected a reconsideration of the process of assessing and collecting taxes. Since this was the growing municipality's primary source of revenue, it was essential that taxes be assessed fairly and collected promptly. In 1868, rather than hiring one officer as both assessor and collector, the council hired two assessors—one by tender and one by private contract—

⁹⁸ AO F 1564-1, "Council Minutes, 1864–1878," 25 April 1867, p. 74.

⁹⁹ AO F 1564-1, "Council Minutes, 1864–1878," 4 May 1867, p. 75.

¹⁰⁰ AO F 1564-1, "Council Minutes, 1864–1878," 3 August 1867, p. 82.

¹⁰¹ AO F 1564-1, "Council Minutes, 1864–1878," 17 August 1867, p. 84.

¹⁰² AO F 1564-1, "Council Minutes, 1864–1878," 2 September 1867, p. 85.

¹⁰³ AO F 1564-1, "Council Minutes, 1864–1878," 20 January 1868, p. 90.

and an independent collector.¹⁰⁴ The Municipal Act gave council the authority to appoint and terminate officers, but their authority was limited in prosecuting misdeeds. One penalty available was removal from office, as happened with the clerk, Fallon. The penalty for an assessor or collector failing to perform his duty was set at \$100 in the 1866 Act, with an additional \$200 fine for submitting a late roll, and potential imprisonment for submitting a fraudulent assessment.¹⁰⁵ The fines were to come out of the property of the offender or his sureties, but any penal action was the jurisdiction of the County Court, rather than the municipal council.¹⁰⁶

The council also had authority to defer or exempt payment of taxes, which they did in the cases of James Whelan and Mary Ann O'Hare in 1868.¹⁰⁷ Settlers brought complaints at collection time, despite missing all deadlines for reassessment. In January 1874, for example, Michael Meehan and Joseph Gereki avoided taxes on properties they swore they did not own or occupy.¹⁰⁸ The municipality attempted to collect unpaid taxes, but if it failed, sent claims on to the Division Court. They did so in 1874 with taxes owed by Joseph, Patrick, and Michael Daly.¹⁰⁹ Those who were eventually convicted by the Division Court of failing to pay taxes were assigned labour duties on roads in lieu of a fine. Michael McGuire, for example, owed \$21.70 in taxes and legal fees, which the

¹⁰⁴ AO F 1564-1, "Council Minutes, 1864–1878," 22 February 1868, p. 92.

¹⁰⁵ "Assessment Act, 1866," sections 176, 181, and 179, in Harrison, *Municipal Manual*, 2nd Edition (1867), 447–450.

¹⁰⁶ "Assessment Act, 1866," section 182, in Harrison, *Municipal Manual*, 2nd Edition (1867), 451.

¹⁰⁷ AO F 1564-1, "Council Minutes, 1864–1878," 5 September 1868, p. 108.

¹⁰⁸ AO F 1564-1, "Council Minutes, 1864–1878," 19 January 1874, p. 223.

¹⁰⁹ AO F 1564-1, "Council Minutes, 1864–1878," 2 August 1875, p. 271.

council decided could be paid through work on “whatever road the Pathmaster of his division shall direct.”¹¹⁰ In this way, the municipal council was able to collect on unpaid taxes at the same time as it could increase the amount of labour available on roads and redistribute authority to various other offices such as pathmasters.

The Municipal Act gave local councils the power not just to widen or repair existing roads, but to open new roads through any lands in the township.¹¹¹ This led to some confusion in the Ottawa-Huron Tract since jurisdiction over roads was shared in this period between the municipalities and the colonization roads administration. The working out of local authority was not a straightforward matter, especially since the rules could be vague and confusing. Pathmasters, for example, are frequently mentioned in the council minutes, but the regulations around their duties are unclear, and were perceived as such at the time: “The Pathmaster is now, so far as we understand the law, an officer of the Municipality and bound to discharge such duties as may be prescribed by the Municipality.”¹¹² Between 1858 and 1861 the title of the office was changed to Overseer of Highways, and specific duties clarified so that, in general, they were to “make and keep in repair the highways, call out persons bound to labour, and to superintend the same; expend monies receivable for reconstructing roads,” but they were also supposed to “perform all duties required of them by the by-laws of the council.”¹¹³ Pathmasters, as

¹¹⁰ AO F 1564-1, “Council Minutes, 1864–1878,” 18 September 1875, p. 272.

¹¹¹ “Municipal Act, 1866,” section 333, in Harrison, *Municipal Manual*, 2nd Edition (1867), 267.

¹¹² W. D. Ardagh and Robert Harrison, eds., “General Correspondence, August 1858,” in *Upper Canada Law Journal and Municipal Courts Gazette* 4 (1858): 191.

¹¹³ Ardagh and Harrison, “Election Cases,” in *UCLMCG* 7 (1861): 129.

they continued to be called in Brudenell, had the power to compound, commute, or revise statute labour assignments within the guidelines set for them by the council.¹¹⁴

These statute labour decisions were central to the colonial state's plans for the Ottawa-Huron Tract. T. P. French commented on such decisions in Sebastopol and Grattan in his June 1858 report, referring specifically to the lack of clarity in guidelines for keeping the Opeongo in repair, and to the overlap between this criteria and the statute labour duties of settlers in general: "My opinion is that the road should be divided into sections of six miles and that the settlers within each of these sections be required to keep that portion in good order. I shall be thankful for more accurate instructions on this point."¹¹⁵ For free grant settlers in Sebastopol and Grattan, their preference was to perform their statute labour on the Opeongo, thereby discharging both responsibilities at the same time. In contrast, according to French, municipal councils were directing settlers to perform their statute labour on other roads, leaving the Opeongo to be maintained by the Province. He raised the matter again in his next report:

Referring to my Report for May, I would most respectfully ask you to reconsider your decision in regard to the keeping in repair of the road by the Settlers. They are much dissatisfied at the rule of each being obliged to keep the front of his own lot in good order and would prefer the road being divided into sections as suggested by me as it would be the most equitable arrangement as regards the Settlers and the most beneficial for the road itself.¹¹⁶

As an intermediary between settlers and the colonial state, French was in an ambiguous position. As a settler himself, he wanted the government to provide greater support. He

¹¹⁴ "Municipal Act, 1866," section 322, in Harrison, *Municipal Manual*, 2nd Edition (1867), 264–5.

¹¹⁵ AO RG 1-9, p. 08276–08277, French to L. V. Sicotte, "Report on the Settlement of the Ottawa and Opeongo Road for May 1858," 5 June 1858.

¹¹⁶ AO RG 1-9, p. 08281–08282, French to Sicotte, "With lists of lots granted on the Opeongo Road in June '58," 7 July 1858.

also disapproved of his fellow settlers who were not as industrious or ambitious as fit his perception of the ideal settler. And he was probably concerned that the deterioration of the Opeongo Road would have a direct impact on his ability to locate additional settlers on the free grants, making his position as settlement agent precarious. The deterioration of the Opeongo Road was such a concern for French that in September 1858, he proposed to the CCL giving settlers a “Final Notice”¹¹⁷ that their free grants would be rescinded if they did not keep their portions of the road in repair:

The portion of the road made last year is now in some places much in need of repairs, but I find the Settlers unwilling to work upon it. I therefore beg to enclose a copy of a notice which if approved of by you, I will thank you to send me 100 copies if printed and with as little delay as possible.¹¹⁸

There is no record of the note having been printed, but the threat was real and was based on a faithful reading of the original settlement criteria.

French again raised the issue of statute labour in his 1863 inspection report, but this time the agent struck a noticeably more sympathetic tone in regards to the duties of settlers. In the previous year, the Opeongo had been expanded 14 miles beyond the last settler, but French urged that expenditures should be made on repairs to the existing road, rather than building anew:

I am aware that the Municipalities and the Settlers do all they can to keep it in order, but as it is the only highway to the extensive lumber regions on the Madawaska the numerous and heavy teams of the lumberers cut it up so much that the settlers ‘statute labour’ is scarcely perceptible.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ AO RG 1-9, p. 08295, Crown Lands Department (notice written by French), “Notice to Settlers on the Free Grants on the Ottawa and Opeongo Road,” September 1858.

¹¹⁸ AO RG 1-9, p. 08299, French to P. M. Vankoughnet, “Location of Free Grants made in July,” 7 September 1858.

¹¹⁹ AO RG 1-9, p. 08517, “French to W. McDougall,” 2 January 1863.

Reiterating French's earlier concern, in 1865, S. O. McGuin, overseer on the Opeongo Road reported to the CCL:

...in some sections the settlers living on the line have been ordered by their municipal councils not to put their statute labour on the Opeongo Road but to put it upon the several side roads leading thereto. This information I received from one of the Path Masters living on the road and should be reliable.¹²⁰

The Brudenell council did not, however, issue a blanket order for labour to be performed only on side roads. From a local perspective, there were good reasons to spend statute labour both on the Opeongo and on side roads and the amount of statute labour allocated on any one road was open to debate. Settlers could apply to council for aid in building roads or to have their statute labour spent on a particular road. For example, in 1864, John Reynolds and James Dooner moved that James Reynolds, Bernard R. Dooner, and John Dooner and his sons be assigned the task of "cutting out the Dooner Road."¹²¹ The next summer, John McCarthy and Patrick O'Brien applied to spend their statute labour on the line between concessions twelve and thirteen.¹²² In March 1866, Desiré Payette, James Grace, John Scharboneau, John Quealy, and Patrick Kiely applied to perform their statute labour on the Opeongo Road at "Brudenell Corners."¹²³

Decisions regarding statute labour related to the specific needs of settlers in the context of the needs of the municipality and the rules set by the Province. McCarthy and O'Brien were farmers seeking a reliable route from their farms to a main road. Payette's

¹²⁰ AO RG 52-17, vol. 3, Reports from Overseers and Crown Land Agents, File 1305, "S. O. McGuin to the Commissioner of Crown Lands re Ottawa and Opeongo Road," 22 August 1865.

¹²¹ AO F 1564-1, "Council Minutes, 1864-1878," 21 November 1864, p. 15.

¹²² AO F 1564-1, "Council Minutes, 1864-1878," 12 August 1865, p. 33.

¹²³ AO F 1564-1, "Council Minutes, 1864-1878," 10 March 1866, p. 52.

group had commercial interests in the village of Brudenell, and so were more concerned with the state of the main road running through the settlement and on toward the lumber camps further west. The pragmatic prescriptions of the council reflected the concerns and appeals of individuals and groups of settlers. Settlers were assigned a certain amount of statute labour—usually from one to three days per male over the age of twenty-one—in correlation with the assessed value of their property.¹²⁴ Statute labour lists were given to pathmasters who oversaw the work, which was required to be completed before October or else defaulted to the tax collector at a rate of \$1 per day.¹²⁵ Distributing statute labour duties and deciding where to build local roads was one of the ways local communities were able to influence the shape of their local landscape.

Settlers applied to perform statute labour in a particular location, but were also assigned duties by the council to meet perceived local needs and to mediate disputes. In June 1874, for example, Thomas Sheridan appealed that the road on the 16th concession of Brudenell needed to be bridged and that another settler, Austin Lavalley, had blocked the route through his land.¹²⁶ The council resolved to provide assistance to cover two thirds of the cost of bridging, but required that Michael Roche spend all of his two days statute labour for the year on the road. In September, the council resolved to expend all of the taxes paid on lands contiguous to the 16th concession (\$14.56) in opening up a road on the line between Brudenell and Hagarty.¹²⁷ Thomas Sheridan was to oversee the

¹²⁴ “Municipal Act, 1866,” section 332, in Harrison, *Municipal Manual*, 2nd Edition (1867), 263–266.

¹²⁵ AO F 1564-1, “Council Minutes, 1864–1878,” 9 September 1865, p. 35.

¹²⁶ AO F 1564-1, “Council Minutes, 1864–1878,” 24 Jun 1874, p. 236.

¹²⁷ AO F 1564-1, “Council Minutes, 1864–1878,” 28 September 1874, p. 240.

works and would be issued the funds after providing a certificate signed by Bernard Kelly and Thomas Wingle (residents on the line) that the work was complete.

At the Brudenell council meetings in this period, roads were the primary concern. The first meeting recorded in the surviving minutes, 8 July 1864, convened as a “special meeting for the purpose of receiving applications for aid in the construction of new roads.”¹²⁸ The council heard twelve requests, debated their merits, and assigned duties to pathmasters. In most cases, settlers asked to spend their statute labour on roads bordering their own property. Sometimes this was clear from the request, but otherwise can be ascertained by comparing locations in the minutes with those given in the assessment rolls. Usually these were roads that connected several farms with main side roads or with the Opeongo. For example, John Cull and others requested aid to make a road from the border with Hagarty Township (north of Brudenell) along a side line to Christopher Whelan’s property on the Opeongo Road. Whelan lived at RBN280/281, and this road would travel through John Cull Jr.’s property (as well as his father’s), connecting them both with Hagarty, and with the Opeongo Road to the south.

Sometimes the ability of settlers to build a road was restricted by the size of the task or the jurisdictions involved. In contrast with dictates of the colonization roads administration, settlers argued the state was responsible for building or repairing such roads. In February 1865, settlers petitioned for a road from Brudenell to the new county town of Pembroke.¹²⁹ Since the petitioners “would often be compelled to attend at the County Town on Public Business,” the decision caused “considerable inconvenience

¹²⁸ AO F 1564-1, “Council Minutes, 1864–1878,” 8 July 1864, p. 6.

¹²⁹ AO RG 52-1, File 1007, “Settlers of Brudenell to the Commissioner of Crown Lands,” 13 February 1865.

experienced and loss of time by reason of the circuitous route they must travel.”

Accordingly, it was the responsibility of the CLD to provide settlers with access to political institutions. The authors of the petition identified themselves in a way which made clear their relationship to the provincial state and to the colonial project. The petitioners were both “settlers” and “ratepayers”—meaning they were at once agents of colonization and members of the polity worthy of consideration.

When settlers objected to a course of action by the colonial government, they wrote to express their concerns. In a series of letters and petitions sent to the colonization roads administration from 1863 to 1888, residents of Brudenell articulated a vision of colonization in which the state played a supporting rather than determining role. In their petitions, settlers drew upon a democratic culture originating in early modern England and adapted to the Upper Canadian frontier.¹³⁰ Settler petitions channelled the energies of local residents, and they furnish us with a means of assessing the views of so-called “ordinary” Canadians in the past. As we saw in chapters two and three, while the state attempted to redefine the landscape as a controllable, governable space, colonization was a lived experience—it was a negotiated process in which government agents, local residents, and the land played significant roles.

¹³⁰ See, for example, David Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture: Printing, Petitions, and the Public Sphere in Early-Modern England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). Though Carol Wilton examined the role of petitions in the popular politics of early Upper Canada, no study of the intricate relationship between petitions and local economic development has yet been attempted. See Wilton, *Popular Politics and Political Culture in Upper Canada, 1800–1850* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000). J. K. Johnson has made excellent use of personal petitions in fleshing out the lives of ordinary Upper Canadians in their relations with the government, but his study only covers the period to the Union of 1841 and does not address the use of collective petitions. See his, *In Duty Bound: Men, Women, and the State in Upper Canada, 1783–1841* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014), 5.

In an 1863 letter to David Gibson, superintendent of colonization roads in Canada West, John S. J. Watson, resident of Rockingham in Brudenell Township, expressed his disapproval with the government's handling of road construction in his municipality:

Dear Sir, I [recently] learned some facts which lead me to the conclusion that the Road now making from the Snake Bridge on the Madawaska to this Township is another piece of jobbery. Of three brothers named Perry, the one is the surveyor, another the contractor, and the third the inspector of said road. If this be true, then the government on the Reform ticket should be ashamed of themselves...The surveyor and company seem bent on taking the benefit of the settlers work and charging the government for the same as done by themselves.¹³¹

Gibson, himself a Reformer, rejected Watson's claims because they were not supported by "facts,"¹³² despite Watson's acute knowledge of the local landscape. Watson had been resident six years, was Reeve in 1865, and was involved in almost every aspect of the local economy—as landowner, merchant, and mill owner. The episode encapsulates the politics of settlement in the Ottawa-Huron Tract: while the state claimed a monopoly on official knowledge—and consequently on the power to decide on matters important to local affairs—settlers actively protested, offering their own visions for the landscape.

Analyzing the process whereby settlers and the state negotiated road construction projects and envisioned the rural landscape, reveals a local culture in which frustration with bureaucracy provided an impetus to build community structures across traditional divides. Roads were essential to the functioning of rural communities. In the backwoods of Upper Canada, where topography defied the logic of the grid, the placement and maintenance of roads was crucial not only for convenience, but for survival. In talking

¹³¹ AO RG 52-1, File 351, "John S. J. Watson, Advice re the Road from the Snake Bridge on the Madawaska to the township," received 4 November 1863.

¹³² AO RG 52-1, File 351, "David Gibson to Andrew Russell," 18 November 1863.

back to the state from his position as a settler, Watson defended his interests and those of his community. The next year, in his capacity as reeve, and thereby representing both settlers and the municipal state, Watson sent another letter to the CCL suggesting changes in the way the Opeongo Road was to be repaired. Even if the changes were not eventually made (we do not know if they were) assistant CCL Andrew Russell agreed to send out an inspector to investigate.¹³³

In May 1870, settlers in Brudenell petitioned the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario for repairs to the Peterson Road, which ran east to west connecting the Opeongo Road with the Hastings Road further to the west.¹³⁴ Their argument included seven reasons for state intervention. The road was in poor condition and passed through a region of such “rough character” that there were very few settlers situated on or near it and their statute labour was inadequate to keep it in repair. The road was the primary route for settlers heading to newly-surveyed townships further west; this claim was supported by the very assertions of the roads administration itself. The road was used continually by lumberers, suggesting that repairs should not be wholly the responsibility of the settlers. On the road was located the only mill in the region, so it was prone to heavy local traffic.¹³⁵ \$4000 had recently been granted for repair of the Opeongo Road from Brudenell to Bark Lake, which was “but little travelled being used only by one or two lumberers and leading to a section of the country not likely to be settled.”¹³⁶ Finally there was the outstanding

¹³³ AO RG 52-3, Letter Book no. 1, vol. 1, File 132, “Andrew Russell to John S. J. Watson,” 28 June 1864.

¹³⁴ AO RG 52-1, File 94, “Settlers of Brudenell to the Lt. Governor of Ontario,” 14 May 1870.

¹³⁵ This claim is verified by the industrial schedule in the 1871 manuscript census.

¹³⁶ Interestingly, a few years later the Colonization Roads Branch received a letter from timber baron J. R. Booth complaining of the “deplorable quality” of the Opeongo Road from Brudenell to Bark Lake. See

promise that: “The improvements asked for, cannot be undertaken at present, [but] the equitable claims of the section of the country represented will not be lost sight of in future considerations.” The petition was signed by 127 “settlers and ratepayers,” which included the municipal council, a Methodist minister, a Catholic priest, various public officials, merchants, business owners of various stripes, and a large cohort of farmers and labourers.¹³⁷ In these petitions, the identity of the petitioners was based more on their role as settlers and ratepayers than it was on occupation, ethnicity, or country of origin.¹³⁸

The arguments of settlers in Brudenell were supported by their neighbours to the north in Hagarty Township. Settlers in Hagarty depended on the services available at Brudenell village and—prior to the building of a railroad through Hagarty in 1894—on the access to regional markets provided by connections to the Opeongo Road. In 1873 alone, settlers in Hagarty sent three petitions to the Colonization Roads office asking for a shorter route to Renfrew, asking for repairs to the road from Killaloe (the main village in Hagarty) to Brudenell, and objecting to the proposed route of a new road which would by-pass their village.¹³⁹ In the third of these petitions, the settlers of Hagarty presented a comprehensive argument for improving connections to Brudenell, based on a detailed knowledge of the local landscape. They began with the fact that Brudenell was the main

AO RG 52-1, File 866, “J.R. Booth to the Commissioner of Crown Lands,” 23 September 1873. Lumbermen like Booth were never shy in their requests for state sponsorship.

¹³⁷ Council members were noted on the petition; other occupations were found in the 1871 census.

¹³⁸ I am not arguing for an absence of ethnic tension, only that there were clear instances in which settlers of various backgrounds worked together toward a common goal. It is possible that settlers worked against each other in other ways, but the evidence presented here suggests we should be cautious in taking notions of ethnic strife to be representative of the experience of settlement as a whole.

¹³⁹ For the first two, see: AO RG 52-1, File 63, “Settlers of Hagarty to the Commissioner of Crown Lands re shorter route to Renfrew,” 8 January 1873; File 75, “Settlers of Hagarty to the Commissioner of Crown Lands re connection from the Opeongo Road to the Eganville and Hagarty Road,” 18 February 1873.

centre of commerce, industry, and spirituality in the region, and ended with the fact that settlers in both townships had already taken it upon themselves to build and maintain “bush roads” connecting the two settlements. They further argued that the proposed road would run through the rear of the township and would “double the distance to be travelled to Church, Mill, or Store.”¹⁴⁰

In their petitions, denizens of Brudenell referred to themselves as settlers and ratepayers more often than as residents, citizens, or any other designation. The label indicates settlers saw themselves as involved in an ongoing colonization project in which they had invested significant time and effort. They expected results. When Ontario passed the Free Grants and Homestead Act of 1868, it gave the provincial government authority to “appropriate any Public Lands considered suitable for settlement and cultivation, and not being Mineral Lands or Pine Timber Lands, as Free Grants to actual Settlers.”¹⁴¹ According to advertisements by the Department of Public Works and the CLD, Brudenell was not included in the free grant area.¹⁴² While lots in neighbouring townships were being given as free grants, lots in Brudenell were for sale at \$0.50 an acre.¹⁴³ In response, the municipal council issued a resolution calling on the government to include Brudenell in the free grant region:

¹⁴⁰ AO RG 52-1, File 182, “Hagarty settlers to the Commissioner of Crown Lands re objection to proposed course of road,” April 1873.

¹⁴¹ Ontario, “An Act to Secure Free Grants and Homesteads to Actual Settlers on the Public Lands, 1868,” *Statutes of the Province of Ontario* (Toronto: H. J. Hartney, 1868), 72.

¹⁴² See for example, W. J. S. Holwell, “Map of Part of the Province of Ontario, Canada,” Department of Public Works (Montreal: Hunter, Rose & Co., 1871), LAC, H3/400/1871, copy 1, NMC 2931.

¹⁴³ Department of Crown Lands, “Disposal of Crown Lands – Ontario,” *Colonization Circular*, no. 31 (Westminster: Her Majesty’s Colonial Land and Emigration Commission, 1872), 82.

That the fact of a few townships in this county being made free grants has a prejudicial effect on the adjoining townships in attracting the emigration exclusively to said free grants as well as tempting settlers whose payments are not made in full to resign their present lands for free grants. That the land in this Municipality being not superior in quality to those in the Free Grant Territory there is no justice in holding them for sale whilst other lands in the County are made free. That having no exclusive superior advantages of government facilities our position (having of roads or the prospect of railroads, free grants on either side) will depreciate the value of our land by drawing off the population whilst we have no attraction for emigration. Resolved that it is of the first importance that these townships be included in the Free Grant Territory.¹⁴⁴

The local state was as concerned about outmigration as the province. Their concern for declining property values and the consequent loss of municipal revenue was based on local knowledge of the landscape and its capacity to support an agricultural population. From a local perspective, the free grant policy—designed to encourage immigration—was actually partly responsible for population instability. Though the change did not necessarily solve the problem of outmigration, Brudenell, Lyndoch, Raglan, and Radcliffe were added to the free grant area in 1874.¹⁴⁵

Settlers' pleas were not always ignored, and sometimes even contributed to favourable results, as above. At least one petition seems to have been heard. In April 1875, Brudenell council referenced a grant on the Opeongo Road which impacted its decision in assigning statute labour duties for the season:

Moved by Mr. Nevin and seconded by Mr. Gallagher that the Clerk be authorized to instruct the Pathmasters of Road Divisions Nos. 1, 4, 5, 8, and 9 that in view of the fact of the Opeongo Road going to be repaired by a Grant of money from the Ontario Government during the coming summer, that it is deemed advisable and to the benefit of the settlers living a distance from the Opeongo Road to have their

¹⁴⁴ AO F 1564-1, "Council Minutes, 1864–1878," 4 April 1872, p. 192.

¹⁴⁵ T. B. Pardee, "Report of the Commissioner of Crown Lands of the Province of Ontario, 1873," *Sessional Papers*, no. 26 (1874): vi.

statute labour expended on the difficult side roads leading to or from or terminating on the said Opeongo Road.¹⁴⁶

The directive was in line with previous decisions by the council and demonstrated its continued resolve to improve local infrastructure as efficiently as it could with the resources and powers at its disposal.

From the 1860s to 1900, settlers in Brudenell and Hagarty actively petitioned the state for new and improved roads, noting inefficiencies in the present system. In 1887, they argued for an improved road from Killaloe to the Brudenell township line, including a newly-commissioned surveyor's map with the request.¹⁴⁷ They cited frequently ignored appeals since the road had been declared "finished" and which had resulted in the road deteriorating to a state of uselessness. Killaloe was a rising village and now the site of the closest mill to settlers in northern Brudenell. The road was important for allowing communication between the two settlements, and without it residents had to travel a "circuitous route" in order to conduct business. The petition drew on the language of progress and efficiency in attempting to secure aid. Settlers in Hagarty and Brudenell saw themselves on the front lines of settlement; and, since they were fulfilling their duty in the context of the colonization project, the state also had a duty to contribute its share.

The following year, upon hearing of a grant to be spent on a road ambiguously called the "Hagarty and Brudenell" road, resident J. Roche sent a letter of protest to the CCL.¹⁴⁸ In attempting to influence state policy, Roche drew on his knowledge of the

¹⁴⁶ AO F 1564-1, "Council Minutes, 1864–1878," 12 April 1875, p. 256.

¹⁴⁷ AO RG 52-1, File 270, "Settlers of Hagarty and Brudenell for a grant for a road from Killaloe to the township line with Brudenell," 19 January 1887.

¹⁴⁸ AO RG 52-1, File 395, "J. Roche to J. A. McAndrew," 20 March 1888.

local landscape, developed over thirty-two years as a settler. He emphasized the health and safety of locals and travellers, the social and economic necessity of the road, and (like Watson) referred to work already done by the settlers. The letter was received by Renfrew South MPP J. A. McAndrew, who forwarded it to the CLD along with a note indicating the road described by Roche was indeed the “Hagarty and Brudenell” road for which \$500 had been allocated. The note from McAndrew also referenced the petition from 1887, saying, “There is a similar sketch attached in the petition which you have on file.” Settlers were tapped into the plans of the state for local roads and their petitions were part of the process of negotiating the re-construction of the local landscape. Though they drew on similar language as the bureaucrats, their objectives and their priorities were sometimes at odds. In some cases, locals took the initiative in building and maintaining roads and in other cases they appealed to the perceived responsibility of the state.

Settlers in Brudenell and environs used these same techniques in attempts to take advantage of proposed new railway ventures near the end of the century. The expansion of the railway network in Upper Canada in the 1850s and 1860s was an important factor in the development of colonial industry and communication between urban centres.¹⁴⁹ Railways skirted the periphery of the Ottawa-Huron Tract in the 1850s and 1860s, but did not reach the interior until the 1890s, and then only with substantial public funding.¹⁵⁰ In the 1880s and 1890s, federal and provincial governments backed railway development on a massive scale. In Ontario alone, between Confederation and the First World War, the

¹⁴⁹ McCalla, *Planting the Province*, 215.

¹⁵⁰ The Bytown and Prescott Railway was completed 24 December 1854 and the Canada Central Railway extended to Arnprior and Pembroke in the 1860s. See David Lee, *Lumber Kings and Shantymen: Logging and Lumbering in the Ottawa Valley* (Toronto: Lorimer & Co., 2006), 100–103.

provincial government invested nearly \$8 million sponsoring almost 2800 miles of new track.¹⁵¹ Railways were key to the development of the Ottawa Valley lumber industry and lumbermen like J. R. Booth of Ottawa and Daniel McLachlin of Arnprior, both of whom had extensive limits in the upper Madawaska region, lobbied all levels of government for support. They pitched railways as a way to “open up some of the richest farming and mineral lands along the fertile valleys of the Ottawa and Bonnechere Rivers,” echoing earlier rationales for colonization roads.¹⁵²

As the lumbermen looked for public backing, local leaders also made the case for railways in Brudenell. Rockingham residents and business owners John S. J. Watson and William Haryett were shareholders and provisional directors in Booth’s Ottawa and Parry Sound Railway when it was chartered in 1888.¹⁵³ The railway was to be built through Hagarty, thus bypassing Brudenell. But the Act provided for branch lines of up to six miles and Watson and Haryett were raising funds for a line to be built to Brudenell from the station at Killaloe.¹⁵⁴ Even without a branch line, the railway would make urban markets in places like Renfrew and Ottawa much more accessible to farmers in Brudenell. The municipal council submitted a petition to the CCL in support of the railway in 1890, arguing “the municipality suffers great loss, and inconvenience from the want of railroad facilities, and from the want of markets caused thereby, and which

¹⁵¹ H. V. Nelles, *The Politics of Development: Forests, Mines & Hydro-Electric Power in Ontario, 1848–1941, Second Edition* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005), 117.

¹⁵² “Memorial of the Ottawa, Arnprior and Renfrew and the Ottawa and Parry Sound Railways to the Attorney-General of Ontario,” *Sessional Papers*, no. 81 (1890): 4.

¹⁵³ Canada, “An Act to Incorporate the Ottawa and Parry Sound Railway Company,” *Acts of the Parliament of Canada, 2nd Session of the 6th Parliament* (Ottawa: Brown Chamberlin, 1888), chap. 65, section 1.

¹⁵⁴ “Want a Branch Line,” *Ottawa Journal*, vol. 12, no. 2, December 21, 1896.

renders farming very unremunerative, and prevents the settlement of the country.”¹⁵⁵

Though many local historians decry the railway as the death knell of the Opeongo Road, settlers did not see it as such.¹⁵⁶ Again in 1893 they petitioned Premier Mowat for funding to support the Ottawa, Arnprior and Parry Sound Railway.¹⁵⁷ In this instance, the petitioners were successful. Booth’s railway was completed in 1896 and connected the upper Great Lakes to Boston via the Ottawa Valley. The push for rail in Brudenell continued with the charter of the Toronto, Lindsay and Pembroke Railway Company in 1899.¹⁵⁸ The road was to begin near Golden Lake and pass through Brudenell on a route to Bancroft, thereby establishing a direct connection between Pembroke and Toronto without detouring through Ottawa. Though subsidies were provided by both federal and provincial governments,¹⁵⁹ there is no record of the line being built. If built, it would have provided the connection sought by settlers in Brudenell in their 1865 petition.

Here we witness the negotiation of space among settlers, the local state, and the colonial, provincial, and federal states. In addition to being governable spaces, the colonization roads and their local offshoots were also lived spaces. Exchanges between settlers and the state recorded in the process of governing provide valuable evidence of

¹⁵⁵ “United Townships of Brudenell and Lyndoch to the Commissioner of Crown Lands,” 5 February 1890, *Sessional Papers*, no. 81 (1890): 5.

¹⁵⁶ See for example, Joan Finnigan, *Life Along the Opeongo Line: The Story of a Canadian Colonization Road* (Renfrew: Penumbra Press, 2004), especially chapters 11 and 12.

¹⁵⁷ “Municipal Council of the Township of Brudenell to Oliver Mowat,” 25 February 1893, *Sessional Papers*, no 115 (1894): 29.

¹⁵⁸ Ontario, “An Act to Incorporate the Toronto, Lindsay and Pembroke Railway Company,” *Acts of the Legislature of the Province of Ontario, 2nd Session of the 9th Legislature* (Toronto: L. K. Cameron, 1899), chap. 105.

¹⁵⁹ See for example: Canada, “Railway Subsidies Act, 1912,” *Acts of the Parliament of Canada, 1st Session of the 12th Parliament* (Ottawa: Charles Henry Parmelee, 1912), chap. 48.

local community processes. As much as agents of the state, settlers were nodes in the networks of power which were articulated in the colonization of the Ottawa-Huron Tract. While it is important we acknowledge these records were created as part of a deliberately constructed colonial archive,¹⁶⁰ we should not ignore the opportunity to study the lives and behaviours of the people who did the bulk of the work of colonization—the settlers.

The colonial administration may have been concerned, for example, about ethnic tensions among immigrant populations, but this concern was not necessarily shared by the settlers themselves. In an 1858 letter to Secretary of Agriculture William Hutton, timber agent A. J. Russell expressed his frustration over a petition from Irish Catholic free grant settlers on the Opeongo. According to Russell, these settlers were neglecting their statute labour duties and questioning government wisdom, while English Protestants, who had paid for their land, constituted and behaved as a more “respectable” class of immigrants. In Russell’s mind, the purpose of the petition was twofold:

First, a dishonest attempt on the part of the Irish Catholic settlers on the road who got their land free to get rid of the obligation to keep it in repair, which the English Protestant settlers who have to pay for their lands and make roads for themselves for miles back in the rear would have been glad to have had the opportunity of doing. Second, a design to get the road business under Irish Catholic management entirely and particularly to get rid of my overseer David Bremner who has been making himself so serviceable in directing and conducting in emigrants in this and the previous season (including a very respectable class of English Protestants) that Mr. Clemow the Emigrant Agent at Ottawa insists that he is much more use to him in securing the location of settlers (immigrants) than Mr. French.¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ See for example: Curtis, *The Politics of Population: State Formation, Statistics, and the Census of Canada, 1840-1875* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001); Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); and Stoler and Frederick Cooper, “Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda,” in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 1–56.

¹⁶¹ AO RG 52-15-3, vol. 2, “A. J. Russell to Wm. Hutton,” 11 November 1858. Emphasis in original.

Russell's comments neglect the fact that settlers on the Opeongo Road, as we saw in chapter three, were subject to different settlement criteria and forms of surveillance than were the off-road settlers. Moreover, as we saw earlier in this chapter, the Opeongo Road was not just a local route—it was used (and abused) by teams of lumberers headed to the interior. The complaints of the on-road settlers had little to do with their ethnicity, and everything to do with the nature of the settlement scheme.

Though Russell perceived divisions between Irish Catholics and English Protestants on the Opeongo Road, settlers' cooperation in municipal matters and in their petitions for aid reveal it was not just Irish Catholics who were upset with the roads' administration, nor were grievances necessarily organized along ethnic or religious lines. Despite evidence of earlier ethnic tensions in the Ottawa Valley,¹⁶² settlers in Brudenell at times acted in cooperation across ethno-religious lines. In the 1865 petition for a more direct route to Pembroke, religious differences between Catholic and Protestant were subordinate to a common goal of economic development and political participation. At the time, reeve Watson was Protestant and the other five councillors Catholic. Of the sixty signatories on the petition representing almost half the landowning families in the township, at least 17% were Protestant, a number that correlates almost exactly with the distribution of religious affiliations within the township as a whole.¹⁶³ The petition for improvements to the Peterson Road, submitted in 1870, exhibits the same pattern of

¹⁶² See for example: Michael S. Cross, "The Shiners' War: Social Violence in the Ottawa Valley in the 1830s," *Canadian Historical Review* 54, no. 1 (1973): 1–26.

¹⁶³ These estimates were determined by matching names on the petition to names in the censuses of 1861 and 1871, and assessment rolls for 1869 and 1871. Religion was added as a category to the assessment roll in 1869. Of the sixty names given on the petition, fifty were identified in the corresponding sources.

representation.¹⁶⁴ Of 127 signatures representing again about half the landowning families in the township, at least 18% were Protestant. Though Protestants and Catholics in Brudenell may have fought over matters of theology or education, that dispute does not appear to have spilled over into the realm of infrastructure development.

The petitions and letters referenced above allow us to see into the lives of settlers via their demands of the state. In part, these petitions were calculated fictions. But, as Natalie Zemon Davis has shown, though petitioners may have exaggerated their claims, they did so with an aim in mind, and these documents are an important window into the lives of people who did not leave many written records.¹⁶⁵ Settlers wanted to participate in local and regional government, they wanted access to markets, and they wanted to be able to get to church on Sunday. Essentially, they wanted to have a say in their own destinies and they saw the state as having a duty to help facilitate these aims. Walsh viewed their petitions, “less as windows into the social history of the roads but rather as intensely *political* texts.”¹⁶⁶ Further, “the essential element of these petitions as political texts [was] silence.”¹⁶⁷ As political texts, silence was certainly one element of these petitions. In many cases, the petitions were either rejected or simply filed away. In other cases settler petitions were heard and sometimes caused wider reverberations. However, even if petitions were ignored, this silencing was not an extinguishing—the petitions

¹⁶⁴ AO RG 52-1, File 94, “Petition from settlers of Brudenell for a grant to repair the Peterson road,” 14 May 1870. There were eight similar petitions from Brudenell sent between 1865 and 1902.

¹⁶⁵ Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987). See also Lex Heerma van Voss, ed., *Petitions in Social History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 7.

¹⁶⁶ Walsh, “Landscapes of Longing,” 289, emphasis in original.

¹⁶⁷ Walsh, “Landscapes of Longing,” 302.

were preserved and could be retrieved if necessary. As political texts “silence” was just one element of these petitions. We can also employ these documents to explore the social histories of the colonization roads and the communities that depended on them, and we can provide space for settler voices to be heard.

The efforts of the state to impose a specific model of colonization on the Ottawa-Huron Tract were at once embraced, questioned, and reshaped by settlers. Settlers took initiative in applying the prescriptions of municipal law in creating local states to govern local matters. The perspective here is at odds with the prevailing interpretation:

The roads and the free grant settlers along them were subjected to regular inspection, evaluation, and judgement by a network of agents and offices. Of primary importance was the role of local agents. Through them state, society, and landscape intersected and moments of exchange occurred. As well, it was these agents who were essential in making visible the small worlds of the roads to state officials and policy makers in the centres of political power. At the same time, when travelling the roads or leading roadwork teams, the agents exposed the Canadian state-in-formation to settlers. More than some abstract idea, ‘the state’ for settlers was embodied both in the bodies and offices occupied by these agents. Indeed, even when they petitioned for change, settler requests had to go through these agents, or their elected members of parliament (perhaps the most obvious symbol of government), in order to have their voices heard. Though some of these local agents and elected officials were empathetic and even sympathetic, they lacked the final authority to solve the settlers’ problems. That power lay in the centre, at a great distance from everyday life in the local peripheries.¹⁶⁸

Yes, settlers were inspected, evaluated, and judged. At the same time, settlers on the Opeongo Road were subject to similar forms of inspection as were farmers throughout the province who had to give decennial census takers and annual tax assessors the same information. The fact the census taker was always a local farmer filling out a form provided to him by some distant bureaucrat blurs the lines between settler and state and reveals how settlers interpreted the requests being made of them by the bureaucracy.

¹⁶⁸ Walsh, “Landscapes of Longing,” 303–304.

Such moments of exchange were not one-sided. To be called an exchange necessitates their very two-sidedness. Settlers not only received dictates from the state, they dictated, and were at times influential, despite the real power inequality noted by Walsh. Settlers were often ignored, but they were also heard. And even if the settlers' pleas were ultimately ignored, their very existence indicates not just the lack of truth-value assigned to them by the state, but also the willingness and ability of settlers to engage in the bureaucratic processes of colonization, and their ability to organize as communities in defence of a common interest. When petitions were ignored by the state they became less true within the state-centred production of official knowledge. But, settlers also chose what information to give to agents of the state and at times even embodied such offices themselves. These instances of settler agency and the blurring of lines between state and settler complicate the larger problem of the state-in-formation.

According to Walsh, those settlers who resisted or defied the rules of the state, "became politically and legally excluded from the imagined national community."¹⁶⁹ But what about the settlers who embraced the colonial project rather than resisting it? In this case, the "autonomous self-development of the individual"¹⁷⁰ can be viewed as the active participation of settlers in a colonial project which they saw as valid and progressive, and the success of which was also in their local self-interest as an interactive mutually-supportive community. While outside agents of the colonization roads administration could be viewed as "imposing" the will of the state, the settlers' adherence to the laws of local self-government shows their willingness to take on and develop the project of the

¹⁶⁹ Walsh, "Landscapes of Longing," 309.

¹⁷⁰ Curtis, "Liberalisms, Social Theory, and Historical Analysis," 190.

local state. Rather than seeing these historical agents as victims or as pawns of the state, we should view them as existing in the centres of their own small worlds and actively participating in the colonial project. Those who resisted were the exception rather than the rule. Petitions were constructed within the rules while arguing for accommodations going beyond the scope of the state's willingness to intervene.

The Municipal Act and the Assessment Act together established the rules by which local governments could raise and spend money and thus, by definition, restricted what local governments could and could not do. Looked at this way, the establishment of municipal government in Upper Canada was, as Siegel and Schrauwers argue, a way for ruling authorities to circumscribe the powers available to settlers. It also provided, as Matthews noted, avenues for local elites to attempt to control economic processes and shift these to their advantage. Those who had the time, money, and education usually necessary to participate in local politics, gained some advantage from being on municipal councils and in positions of power. At the same time, the articulation of the local state provided modest opportunities for settlers to take advantage of tools like the assessment roll and statute labour duties for the benefit of their families and community.

The municipal state gave local authorities the ability to raise funds and distribute resources on local projects with a wide degree of discretion and very little oversight from higher levels of government. Further, the municipal state gave institutional legitimacy to what would have otherwise occurred organically and haphazardly. Settlers would have built roads anyway—they needed to if they wanted to communicate with neighbours and participate in a regional economy. The development of local government in rural Upper Canada cannot be seen solely as the imposition of metropolitan authority on a hinterland

population. Nor can it be viewed as the triumphant evolution of responsible government. It was, to go back to Curtis' words, "a whole host of smaller moves and countermoves in the technologies of government and of administrative capacity."¹⁷¹

By examining these moves and countermoves in detail, this chapter has redressed the lack of a coherent voice for those settlers who participated in and influenced the shape of the local state and its interaction with the colonial and provincial states who often dictated the terms of settlement. I have emphasized the agency of settlers as a counterpoint to the prevailing interpretation which views settler's actions as subordinate to those of the state. The assessment and collection of taxes and the development of local infrastructure were ways in which the local state mediated between settlers and the provincial state. Local state structures enlarged the freedoms and responsibilities of some, while restricting those of others, and ignoring the majority of the population whose names were not listed in the assessment rolls. In the next chapter the analysis shifts from how people governed themselves to how they used the land.

¹⁷¹ Curtis, "Liberalisms, Social Theory, and Historical Analysis," 192.

Chapter 5

Only a “Harvest of Stones”? Agriculture and the Local Economy in Brudenell, 1855–1910

The title of Brenda Lee-Whiting’s *Harvest of Stones* (1985), reflects the essence of both the failed-settlement narrative and the poor-land narrative.¹ Not only did many settlers leave after failed attempts at farming, but those who persisted did so despite the poor-quality of the land. Such sentiments offer a romantic image of pioneer hardship, but fail to capture the variety of experiences of settlement and farming for those who went beyond the initial clearing phase to operate productive farms. The failed-settlement and poor-land narratives highlight the overblown rhetoric of the colonization boosters in contrast with the “true” character of the landscape, known only in hindsight. But even in the nineteenth century there were competing perspectives of the landscape at work, not one truth. The variability of the land was recognized by many early surveyors and certainly by the 1860s settlers were well aware of the limitations and possibilities of the land in the Ottawa-Huron Tract. The possibilities of the landscape were mediated by the intervention of an activist state. The official rules of the settlement process, and the inconsistency with which they were applied, provided opportunities for settlers to enter the shrinking Upper Canadian land market without having to move across the continent. Settlers also enjoyed significant discretion in shaping the structures of local development through the powers and responsibilities of municipal government. The institutional legitimacy afforded local authorities by the emergence of the municipal state helped to

¹ Brenda Lee-Whiting, *Harvest of Stones: The German Settlement in Renfrew County* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 49.

organize and channel resources in and to the community, whether through local infrastructure projects or by advocacy at the provincial level.

In this chapter I will explore two related themes in the economic history of Brudenell: the material basis for settlement and the general patterns of farming which shaped the local economy. Two questions form the focus of discussion. How did settlers use the land? And could the land support an agricultural population in the medium or long term? The mixed land use of small family farms combined with a diverse range of off-farm occupational possibilities provided a viable basis for the development of a modest-sized rural community. Though the settlement scheme did not succeed to the expectations of colonial planners, it did provide opportunities for several generations of settlers to live on the land. The failed-settlement narrative must therefore be revised.

One of the problems with the failed-settlement narrative is it does not consider what settlers actually did with the land beyond the first few years of settlement. Authors' assessments of agricultural production on the colonization roads are usually based on the reports of settlement agents who only ever considered settlers on the roads themselves and stopped reporting once most of the lots were claimed. Helen Parson, for example, followed the progress of agriculture on the Hastings Road from 1859 to 1863 through the annual reports of the Commissioner of Crown Lands (CCL).² In these years, oats production did not increase at expected rates while farmers diversified their production away from the six core crops (wheat, oats, hay, potatoes, turnips, and potash) that had accounted for 90 per cent of production in 1859. For Parson this trend indicates the

² Helen E. Parson, "The Colonization of the Southern Canadian Shield in Ontario: The Hastings Road," *Ontario History* 79, no. 3 (1987): 271, Table 3.

difficulties of farming in the region.³ Similarly, Lee-Whiting views declining free grant applications as evidence of the overall decline in settlement, rather than a saturation of the available free grant lots suitable for farming.⁴ Marilyn Miller argues the failure of the colonization roads plan lay in the government's policy of pushing settlement onto lands unfit for agriculture, but suitable for forestry; their mistake was exacerbated by the Free Grant and Homesteads Act of 1868, and, in 1871, the government began licensing unsold lands as timber limits, thus admitting the failure of the settlement policy.⁵

This question of the relationship between settlement and forestry in the Ottawa-Huron Tract is one of the keys to understanding the economic development of the region. As we saw in chapter two, forests were an important part of the local mixed economy of the upper Ottawa Valley throughout the nineteenth century. The place of forestry in the economy of early Canada—and its regional variations—has been discussed at length by historical geographers as well as social and economic historians.⁶ In the early 1990s

³ Parson, "The Hastings Road," 272.

⁴ Lee-Whiting, "The Opeongo Road: An Early Colonization Scheme," *Canadian Geographic Journal* 74, no. 3 (1967): 80.

⁵ Marilyn G. Miller, *Straight Lines in Curved Space: Colonization Roads in Eastern Ontario* (Toronto: Ministry of Culture and Recreation, 1978), 42–44.

⁶ There are too many works to list all of them here. Lower was the first to provide an in-depth examination of the conflict between settlement and forestry in Canada in his seminal work, *Settlement and the Forest Frontier in Eastern Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan Co., 1936). This was followed shortly after by his study of the lumber trade between Canada and the United States in *The North American Assault on the Canadian Forest* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1938). The culmination of Lower's analysis of forestry in eastern Canada is found in *Great Britain's Woodyard: British America and the Timber Trade, 1763–1867* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1973). For a detailed historiographical analysis and critique of Lower's model in the context of Upper Canada, see Douglas McCalla, "Forest Products and Upper Canadian Development, 1822–46," chapter 4 in *Planting the Province: The Economic History of Upper Canada, 1784–1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 66. On some regional variations in the forest economy see for examples: Graeme Wynn, *Timber Colony: A Historical Geography of Early Nineteenth Century New Brunswick* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981); Richard Reid, ed., *The Upper Ottawa Valley to 1855* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990); Fernand Ouellet, "The Colonial Economy and the World Market, 1760–1850: The Trade

Douglas McCalla argued convincingly that the importance of the timber economy as a driver of provincial economic development had probably been overestimated.⁷

Whether agriculture and forestry were complementary, symbiotic, or incompatible industries remains an open question. Lorne Hammond outlines these three main views of agro-forestry in the Quebec context:⁸ first, agriculture and forestry were complementary because of the seasonal nature of each; second, they were mutually dependent when in close proximity—forestry required the produce and labour of settlers while settlers relied on off-farm income in the shanties—but if the distance was too great, then forest superseded farm; and third, they were in conflict because of their incompatible “capitalist and agrarian social structures,” leading to under-development.⁹ However, according to Guy Gaudreau, all three theories neglect the role of small producers in competition with

of the St. Lawrence Valley,” chapter 7 in *Economy, Class, and Nation in Quebec: Interpretive Essays*, trans., Jacques A. Barbier (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1991), 210–229. The role of forest products in the economic development of eastern Canada is substantially revised by Béatrice Craig in *Backwoods Consumers and Homespun Capitalists: The Rise of a Market Culture in Eastern Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), especially in chapter 3, “A Connective Enterprise: Madawaska Lumbering,” where she argues that the volatility of the timber trade and the gambling mindset that accompanied it, “made the forest industry a poor agent of development,” 95. Note the Madawaska region referred to by Craig was in New Brunswick, not Upper Canada. A recent study of agro-forestry in the context of the Ottawa-Huron Tract is Joshua C. Blank, *Creating Kashubia: History, Memory, and Identity in Canada’s First Polish Community* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2016), chapter five.

⁷ McCalla, *Planting the Province*, especially 65–6.

⁸ Lorne Hammond, “Anatomy of a Lumber Shanty: A Social History of Labour and Production on the Lièvre River, 1876–1890,” in *Canadian Papers in Rural History*, vol. 9, ed. Donald H. Akenson (Gananoque, ON: Langdale Press, 1994), 293–4. Hammond’s summary is based on Guy Gaudreau, “Le Rapport agriculture-forêt au Québec: Note historiographique,” *Revue d’histoire de l’Amérique française* 33, no. 1 (juin 1979): 67–78.

⁹ Hammond, “Anatomy of a Lumber Shanty,” 294. The under-development theme is a reference to Normand Séguin’s research on agro-forestry in the Saguenay. On the incompatibility of large-scale corporate forestry and small family farms, see Séguin, *La Conquête du sol au 19e siècle* (Québec: Boréal Express, 1977), 50–64. Gérard Bouchard argued that the two industries worked together for a time, but in the end under-development occurred as settlers were unable to devote enough time to their farms. See Bouchard, “Family Structures and Geographic Mobility at Laterrière, 1851–1935,” *Journal of Family History* 2, no. 4 (1977): 358. Blank echoes the argument in *Creating Kashubia*, 165.

large corporations. In Hammond's words, "These small producers, in effect farming the forest, are not the passive victimized rural society presented by Séguin."¹⁰ In the Ontario context, Chad Gaffield argues something like the middle view happened in Prescott County, southeast of the Ottawa-Huron Tract: while forestry and settlement overlapped (1840s to 1870s), the agro-forest economy provided important economic opportunities, but the relationship collapsed as the forest frontier moved to the northwest.¹¹

The development of an agro-forest economy in the Ottawa-Huron Tract occurred differently. Joshua Blank argues the Ottawa-Huron Tract was different from regions such as the Saguenay, Upper St. Francis, or northern Ontario because forestry there came before organized settlement.¹² Forestry was already a well-established industry in the Ottawa Valley when settlers arrived in Brudenell in 1855. One consequence was that there were fewer small producers in an industry already dominated by large operations.¹³ For an agro-forest economy to work in the Ottawa-Huron Tract, settlement and forestry needed to be close enough that farm goods could reach market, but not so close that settlers claimed the same lands as lumbermen.¹⁴ The variability of the landscape, therefore, lent itself to this relationship: pockets of land suitable for farming were

¹⁰ Hammond, "Anatomy of a Lumber Shanty," 294. See Gaudreau, "Le Rapport agriculture-forêt," 77.

¹¹ Chad Gaffield, *Language, Schooling, and Cultural Conflict: The Origins of the French-Language Controversy in Ontario* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), 62.

¹² Blank, *Creating Kashubia*, 163. On the St. Francis district see J. I. Little, *Nationalism, Capitalism, and Colonization in Nineteenth-Century Quebec: The Upper St. Francis District* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 31–3. On northern Ontario see Lower, *Settlement and the Forest Frontier*, 45.

¹³ Compared to Winslow in the St. Francis district, where Little notes small operators competed with the major corporations. See *Crofters and Habitants: Settler Society, Economy, and Culture in a Quebec Township, 1848–1881* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 148–150.

¹⁴ Blank, *Creating Kashubia*, 163.

intermingled with lands suited to pine timber. There was no clear boundary between the two types of landscape as there was in southern Ontario.

A long-standing question in the history of early Canadian settlement is the degree to which the forest sector provided a ready market for settler produce. Settlers on the frontier, being distant from urban centres and lacking railway facilities, were dependent on proximate lumber camps as a market for local produce. The camps themselves, suffering from the same deficiency of markets or railways, were willing to pay high prices for essential goods such as hay and oats. Contemporary observers clearly considered the shanty market essential to the settlers' economic well-being, especially in the early years of settlement. Thomas C. Keefer reported in 1847 that prices for staples such as hay in the upper Madawaska region were quadruple the urban market rate.¹⁵ In "An Appeal to Emigrants," found in the *Ottawa Citizen* in 1851, the authors advertised high wages for labourers (£2 to £4 per month) and claimed "farmers receive the highest cash prices for all the surplus produce they may have to dispose of."¹⁶ In his 1857 guide for intending settlers, T. P. French wrote about the relationship between the settler and the lumberer and commented on the unique variability of the landscape in the region as well as the temporary nature of the contemporary economy:

All through the Valley of the Ottawa patches of Pine and Hardwood are singularly mingled, and it is a wise dispensation of Providence that they should be so: for as the hardwood land is that which best repays the farmers toil, so is the Pine Grove the mainstay of the lumberer, and each must remain dependent on the other, while

¹⁵ Thomas C. Keefer, "Report of T. C. Keefer, on Ottawa and other Works," in *Report of the Commissioners of Public Works laid before the Legislative Assembly, 12 July 1847* (Montreal: Lovell and Gibson, 1847): Appendix D, page 32. See also: R. L. Jones, *History of Agriculture in Ontario, 1613–1880* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1946), 112, and Keith A. Parker, "Colonization Roads and Commercial Policy," *Ontario History* 67, no. 1 (1975): 31–9.

¹⁶ "An Appeal to Emigrants," *Ottawa Citizen*, 6 September 1851, C 68 in *The Upper Ottawa Valley to 1855*, ed. Richard Reid (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1990), 167.

yet at an inconvenient distance from railways or navigable waters. Thus it is that the lumber shanties afford a certain and profitable market for all the settlers surplus produce of Beef, Pork, Flour, Peas, Potatoes, Oats, and Hay.¹⁷

An 1872 advertisement reproduced French's words verbatim, without acknowledgment, when arguing for the continued vitality of the settlers' relationship to the shanty market.¹⁸ Such statements are routinely used as evidence the shanty market was indeed essential to the livelihoods of early settlers.¹⁹

Settlers themselves testified to a reliance on the shanty market in their responses to an 1880 survey by the Ontario Agricultural Commission. The Commission asked what local market facilities were available to farmers and whether any industries depended on local produce.²⁰ The respondent for Brudenell stated that their main markets were the lumber shanties in winter; otherwise, they had to travel 35 miles to the nearest railway access (the Canada Central at Cobden). Half of the respondents from municipalities in Renfrew County stated that the lumber operations were their primary, if not their only, market for agricultural produce. Said the respondent from Rolph, for example: "No local industries. No factories or creameries. All products of the soil go to the lumbermen."²¹ Such testimony suggests that a mutually-dependent relationship between settlement and forestry was still on-going some thirty years after initial settlement.

¹⁷ T. P. French, *Information for Intending Settlers on the Ottawa and Opeongo Road and its Vicinity* (Ottawa: Commissioner of Crown Lands, 1857), 27.

¹⁸ Henry Beaumont Small, *The Resources of the Ottawa District* (Ottawa: The Times, 1872), 6. French also reproduced other's words in his guide, so it is possible this passage came from an earlier publication.

¹⁹ See, for example, Blank, *Creating Kashubia*, 164.

²⁰ Ontario Agricultural Commission (OAC), *Report of the Commissioners*, Volume 2, Appendix B (Toronto: C. Blackett Robinson, 1881), 518, questions 31 and 32.

²¹ OAC, *Report*, 2-B, 519.

While anecdotal statements provide evidence of the perceived importance of the shanty market, data on the scale and nature of this economy are needed to facilitate a more robust analysis. How much produce did the shanties typically consume? How much demand was met by production on the depot farms owned by the lumberers? And did settlers produce sufficient surpluses to supply the shanties? Comparing these figures will give a reasonable estimate of the real function of the shanty market in the local economy. Determining such measures requires combining fragmentary and incomplete records. Two complementary sets of estimates will be used here: production and consumption estimates for shanty operations and those for the population as a whole. I use Hammond's data on the Lièvre operations to establish consumption levels of an average shanty for one work season and McCalla's estimates of weekly rations to shanty workers as the basis for estimating total annual consumption by workers in Brudenell.²² Through the 1861 census I will estimate the likely size and demand of the shanty market in Brudenell, the level of production on depot farms, and total production by settlers.²³ M. C. Urquhart's estimates for consumption of hay and oats by horses and cattle,²⁴ and

²² Hammond, "Anatomy of a Lumber Shanty," 303–4, and McCalla, *Planting the Province*, 56–7.

²³ Data from the 1861 census are used with caution and here I focus specifically on the local context. The enumeration procedures in 1861 present challenges to interpreting aggregate data for that census year. Bruce Curtis notes the 1861 census was, especially in contrast with later enumerations, a product of local knowledge and shows how it was made in different ways depending on the local context. Curtis objects specifically to the use of aggregate data from 1861 to establish "facts" about the time, since the enumerations were "not the product of systematic observations of standardized social relations, and hence are poor indicators of large scale population phenomena." The process of making the 1861 census was certainly not scientific. However, the layers of interpretation that make comparison between regions in 1861 problematic are less relevant when assessing the local context. Moreover, because the census was conducted on a *de facto* principle, the enumeration also presents opportunities not available in later years. See Curtis, "On the Local Construction of Statistical Knowledge: Making Up the 1861 Census of the Canadas," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 7, no. 4 (December 1994): 430.

²⁴ M. C. Urquhart, with acknowledgment to R. Marvin McInnis, "Chapter 2. Agriculture," in *Gross National Product, Canada 1870–1926: The Derivation of the Estimates* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 51–65.

Marvin McInnis' estimates of consumption by Upper Canadian farm families allow for calculation of marketable surpluses in Brudenell and therefore give us an indication of the ability of the settler population to meet shanty demand.²⁵ While Hammond and McCalla also counted goods such as salt and tea (and these were important to Upper Canadian consumption patterns) here I will consider only those commodities whose local production can be reasonably estimated from available sources.

A typical shanty crew on the Lièvre River in the 1880s employed 30 to 60 men in a season lasting from late September to early April.²⁶ Near the end of the season, teams refilled supply depots for the next fall. In February and March 1889, for example, approximately 9.54 tons of hay were delivered to one of the Lièvre shanties to stock the keepon for the next year.²⁷ At another shanty, 12 tons of hay were delivered, along with 7.5 tons of oats. Stocks delivered to two Lièvre shanties are listed in Table 5.1. By comparison, in 1861, the average farm in Brudenell produced 1.7 tons of hay and 1.6 of oats. By 1871, the average had increased to 11.9 tons of hay and 2.2 tons of oats per farm, probably in response to considerable shanty demand for these crops.

The estimates in Table 5.1 show us how much shanty operations may have had in stock at a given time, but they are not reliable as estimates of overall consumption. For example, the figures of 0.307 tons of hay and 0.151 tons of oats per horse in a six month

²⁵ McInnis, "Marketable Surpluses in Ontario Farming, 1860," *Social Science History* 8, no. 4 (Autumn 1984): 403–6.

²⁶ Hammond, "Anatomy of a Lumber Shanty," 306 and 301. This points to huge potential for variation in the number of men employed in a shanty at any given time.

²⁷ Hammond, "Anatomy of a Lumber Shanty," 304. The number given by Hammond is 36 presses of hay, each of which was approximately 530 pounds. I am converting this to tons of 2000 pounds each, which is the measurement used in the 1861 Census (and in 1871 as well).

TABLE 5.1
Estimated Stock of Principal Supplies for One Season in Two Shanties, 1889

	Shanty 1	Shanty 2	Total	Mean per Man/Horse
Men	47	32	79	1.000
Horses	38	32	70	0.886
Hay (tons)	9.5	12	21.5	0.307
Oats (tons)	3.1	7.5	10.6	0.151
Pork (brl.)	25	25	50	0.633
Beans (brl.)	4	4	8	0.101
Peas (brl.)	3	14	17	0.215
Flour (brl.)	30	30	60	0.759

Source: Adapted from Hammond, "Anatomy of a Lumber Shanty," 303–4.

season appear quite low given estimates of annual consumption provided by Urquhart. Urquhart estimates the average 1300-pound off-farm horse in Upper Canada, working at a medium rate, consumed about 2.75 tons of hay and 75 bushels (1.275 tons) of oats in a year.²⁸ If we convert Hammond's estimates to annual figures by doubling, they still come up well short of Urquhart's numbers. However, part of the discrepancy may be explained by the likelihood of grazing, or by the irregular workloads of horses in the Lièvre shanties. As Hammond notes, the numbers of men and horses in the first two rows of Table 5.1 are maximum, rather than continuous levels.²⁹ Horses were in much heavier use in February and March than they were in October through January.³⁰

Determining the number of shanties and shanty workers in Brudenell requires inference from clues provided in the census. The 1861 census was conducted on a *de facto* basis, meaning people were enumerated where they were found, rather than at their

²⁸ Urquhart, *Gross National Product*, 57 and 63.

²⁹ Hammond, "Anatomy of a Lumber Shanty," 306.

³⁰ Hammond, "Anatomy of a Lumber Shanty," 303.

usual residence. Given the census was conducted beginning 14 January—at the height of the lumbering season—most shanty workers were likely enumerated at the camps where they worked. Of course, many local residents may also have found work in the forests in the winter, but identifying these is even more difficult because there is little evidence to distinguish them from their neighbours. For locals, work in the forests was in addition to their primary occupation—farming. Hence, census takers for Brudenell in 1861 rarely used the label “shantyman” to describe the occupation of a resident. Instead, we infer the presence of a shanty worker from other categories. Temporary workers in Brudenell are distinct from the rest of the population in that they were enumerated in large contiguous groups, they were not family, and they were not normally resident. Identified this way, there were 397 possible shanty workers in the Brudenell, Lyndoch, Raglan, and Radcliffe census division in 1861. Most of these were single men between the ages of seventeen and forty, but many were also married and their wives were not with them. Occasionally, children as young as seven worked as labourers, presumably on the depot farms. In several cases, whole families moved with the camps, as with Sarah and John Murphy and their three children, the oldest of whom (9 and 7) are listed as labourers on the census. A few of the 397 workers had common local names like Copps, Keravin, and Adams, but most names were never recorded in Brudenell again. The majority came from other parts of Upper Canada, but many were from Lower Canada, and others came from New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and the United States.³¹ The group

³¹ While McCalla estimated that “at least half the workers in pine shanties and on the rivers [of the upper Ottawa] came from Lower Canada,” in Brudenell this seems to be an over-estimation. See McCalla, *Planting the Province*, 56. The present analysis is based on a manual count of the manuscript census. Digitization of the nominal data would facilitate a more definitive response to McCalla’s estimates.

included thirteen foremen, fifteen cooks, and twelve hewers—occupations clearly tied to camp work. Others, like the 288 labourers who made up the majority of the workforce, or the 45 farmers who were the next largest group, were likely also directly employed either in camps or on depot farms.

Several considerations require us to be cautious when interpreting the analysis presented here. Where Hammond considered only those workers directly involved in lumbering, the 1861 census for Brudenell also included forty-five farmers who appear to have been working on the depot farms linked with the shanties. The duration of their stay is uncertain since periods of intensity in farming tended for the most part to complement lumbering, rather than overlap.³² Hence, while we may assume that most shanty workers needed to be fed from October through March, this assumption does not necessarily hold for farm workers. If we assume most shanty workers were present for six months of the year, and if we assume the majority of the labourers in the census were shanty workers rather than farm labourers, we can split the 397 workers into two categories: 352 shanty workers present for six months, and 45 farmers present for eight months.³³ To get a more useful number, we can convert this to an equivalent figure of adult-male workers present for a full year: $((352 * 6) + (45 * 8)) / 12 = 206$ equivalent full-time adult male workers who needed to be fed. Using a ratio of horses per man of 0.886 (Table 5.1), gives us a figure of 183 full time draught animals needed in the shanties in 1861.

³² Local farming activities were particularly intense in May and September, according to French. See *Information for Intending Settlers*, 24–6.

³³ According to French's guidebook, ploughing season began around the end of April, with the harvest concluded by the middle of October, a schedule which complemented the lumbering season quite seamlessly. See, *Information for Intending Settlers*, 24–6. However, since these shanty farmers were enumerated in January, we can assume they had other farm work (or off farm) before planting season began, such as clearing land for crops or pasture, processing potash, or making maple sugar.

A second difficulty is that the animal workforce in Lièvre consisted entirely of horses. It may be that the timeline here is significant—in Brudenell in 1861 oxen were still a major part of the workforce, but by the late 1880s in Lièvre they were phased out in favour of horses.³⁴ In 1861 Brudenell, the three major depot farms together owned 1.4 oxen for each horse. Oxen were in general easier to acquire and maintain and could be eaten after outliving their usefulness.³⁵ Compared to horses, for example, off-farm cattle generally consumed only 8.04 bushels of oats (0.14 tons) and 2 tons of hay annually per head.³⁶ McCalla notes that in one operation on the Rouge River in the 1830s, horses were used primarily to transport supplies while oxen were employed in hauling logs; he suggests this may have been typical.³⁷ French advised settlers on the Opeongo Road that, while horses and sheep required cleared land for pasture, oxen and cows:

are merely allowed to roam at large in the ‘bush’ (woods), and they quickly fatten upon the brouse and herbage. In winter they are fed upon ‘wild hay,’ which is generally easily obtainable at some of the numerous ‘beaver meadows’ that are to be found in all directions and which are always regarded as common property until the lots are surveyed and sold by the Government.³⁸

³⁴ See Edwin C. Guillet, *Pioneer Farmer and Backwoodsman* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963). Clarke notes that Guillet speculated oxen were preferred for breaking new ground, but statistically there was little difference between new and old farms in terms of the number of oxen. See John C. Clarke, *The Ordinary People of Essex: Environment, Culture, and Economy on the Frontier of Upper Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010), 201–2. According to Blank, oxen were apparently still common on the Opeongo in 1900. See *Creating Kashubia*, 158. McCalla notes a dramatic decline in oxen reported in Upper Canada between 1851 and 1870. See *Planting the Province*, 222. Little contests this claim, noting “one in five Canadian farms still reported owning a pair of oxen as late as 1891.” See, “Ox and Horse Power in Rural Canada,” in *Powering Up Canada: A History of Power, Fuel, and Energy from 1600*, ed. R. W. Sandwell (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2016), 71.

³⁵ Clarke, *The Ordinary People of Essex*, 201–2 and 222–3. See also Blank, *Creating Kashubia*, 158.

³⁶ Urquhart, *Gross National Product*, 58 and 63. Blank suggests oxen ate more, but gives no sources to corroborate the claim. See *Creating Kashubia*, 158.

³⁷ McCalla, *Planting the Province*, 58.

³⁸ French, *Information for Intending Settlers*, 26–7.

Others argue that since little natural grass grew in the pine lands of the Ottawa-Huron Tract, fodder needed to be imported at high cost, or else grown locally, which required clearing.³⁹ Though animal feed generally cost less than human food, it was still a major item in the shanty budget, especially due to the cost of transportation.⁴⁰ John McCallum and others note that pork was imported to the camps of the Ottawa Valley from as far afield as Cincinnati, while crops such as hay and oats could not be transported such distances, meaning “local farmers faced no serious competition” in these markets.⁴¹

Other potential sources of imprecision arise from the measurements and estimates quoted in the available sources. Hammond quotes quantities of hay in “presses,” which were equal to approximately 530 pounds, or 26.5% of a 2000-pound ton, while beans, peas, pork, and flour came in standard barrels; oats were delivered in bags of between 80 and 100 pounds each.⁴² In the 1861 census, enumerators were asked to enter beef and pork in 200-pound barrels. Wheat, peas, oats, and potatoes were measured in bushels, while quantities of hay were given in “tons of 2000 lbs. or bundles of 16 lbs.” It took five or six bushels of wheat to produce one 210-pound barrel of flour.⁴³ Enumerators in

³⁹ Roderick MacKay, “Potatoes in the Pines: Depot Farms in Algonquin Park,” in *Partners to the Past: Proceedings of the 2005 Ontario Archaeological Society Symposium*, ed. James S. Molnar (Ottawa: Ontario Archaeological Society, 2007), 76–7.

⁴⁰ McCalla, *Planting the Province*, 58.

⁴¹ John McCallum, *Unequal Beginnings: Agriculture and Economic Development in Quebec and Ontario until 1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 11 and 41.

⁴² Hammond, “Anatomy of a Lumber Shanty,” 304.

⁴³ See Henry Youle Hind, ed., “Extracts from the First Report of the Secretary of the Board of Registration and Statistics on the Census of the Canada for 1851–52,” in *The Canadian Journal: A Repertory of Industry, Science, and Art; and a Record of the Proceedings of the Canadian Institute*, volume 2, 1853–4 (Toronto: Maclear & Co., 1854), 94. Craig estimates that Upper Canadian mills in the early nineteenth century produced one barrel of flour from 5–6 bushels of wheat. See *Backwoods Consumers*, 297, n. 81.

1852 were also required to give quantities of hay “in the ‘usual method of the Country, whether by bundles or tons,’ although they were not instructed to indicate which measure they employed.”⁴⁴ It was the same in 1871, when the instructions advised enumerators to not make any calculations themselves, since “the quantities given will always indicate to the compiler the mode of reckoning.”⁴⁵ Given average output of hay in Upper Canada in 1860 was 0.6 units per capita, it seems much more likely that hay production in Brudenell in 1861 was recorded in tons rather than bundles.⁴⁶

Determining which locations were depot farms requires some estimation since none was listed explicitly as “shanty” or “depot” in the 1861 census. However, we can be fairly certain which were depot farms based on their size and location. There were thirteen properties listed with “unknown” as their address. One of these was Joseph Nekek (also Negeek or Nigik)⁴⁷ and his family, enumerated as hunters, some of the few Algonquin visible in the census. Eight appear to be small operations with between one and twenty-five acres in cultivation. The remaining four, owned by Daniel McLaughlin, Hilliard Dickson, Jacob Harris and “Conroy” (no given name) totalled over 1900 acres

⁴⁴ Bruce Curtis, *The Politics of Population: State Formation, Statistics, and the Census of Canada, 1840–1875* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 117.

⁴⁵ Canada, *Manual Containing the Census Act and the Instructions to Officers Employed in the Taking of the First Census of Canada* (Ottawa: Department of Agriculture, 1871), 29. The instructions for 1861 did not provide precise detail on recording quantities of hay. See David P. Gagan, “Enumerator’s Instructions for the Census of Canada, 1852 and 1861,” *Histoire sociale / Social History* 7, no. 14 (November 1974): 365.

⁴⁶ If recorded in tons, the figure for Brudenell was 0.26 tons per capita, which is low, but reasonable for a frontier district, especially considering the per capita figure includes shanty workers who were not engaged in agriculture. If recorded in 16 lb bundles, the figure would be 0.0021 tons per capita, which is much too low. For the Upper Canada figures, see McCalla, *Planting the Province*, 267, table 5.3.

⁴⁷ For a list of Algonquin names in the Ottawa Valley, see “Appendix 3.1.1 Preliminary List of Algonquin Ancestors,” 2 December 2013, <http://www.tanakiwin.com/wp-system/uploads/2015/06/Appendix-3.1.1-Preliminary-List-of-Algonquin-Ancestors.pdf> (17 August 2016), page 26.

held, with 555 in cultivation—or over one quarter of the total cultivated area of the entire census district (see Table 5.2).⁴⁸ In contrast, forty-three per cent (66 of 155) of all farms recorded in the 1861 census were located on the Opeongo Road free grants and were all therefore about 100 acres in size. The remaining farms located off the Opeongo averaged 136 acres—the smallest being 67 and the largest 350 acres. The average cultivated acres of these farms was just over twelve acres. Large farms were extremely rare in Brudenell in 1861; other than the depot farms, only five farms in the district were larger than 300 acres. Only three farms had greater than 30 acres in cultivation. From the size and value of the operations outlined in Table 5.2, combined with the early stage of settlement, it is clear these were depot farms operated on a scale not possible for an ordinary settler.

The depot farms of the lumbermen were by far the largest and most valuable farms in the district. These were substantial operations producing much—but not all—that was required to supply their lumbering activities (see Table 5.4). While other farms produced a diverse range of crops, the depot farms specialized in oats, potatoes, hay, and beef. The figures in Table 5.2 reveal the magnitude of these operations compared to the district as a whole. Most striking, perhaps, are the figures for animals and meat. These three farms alone owned more horses than the rest of the district combined and almost as many oxen. While pork is one of the most commonly cited shanty staples,⁴⁹ these farms produced very little, seemingly making up for some of that shortfall through beef—presumably slaughtered oxen. As McInnis notes, reported figures for cured beef and

⁴⁸ “Conroy” may have been Robert Conroy, a lumberman who made improvements on the Madawaska in the 1840s. See Reid, *The Upper Ottawa Valley to 1855*, 168. See also reference to Robert Conroy by T. P. French in footnote 72 below.

⁴⁹ Hammond and McCalla, for example, make no mention of beef in their estimates of shanty consumption.

TABLE 5.2
Agricultural Statistics on Three Depot Farms in Brudenell, 1861

	Conroy	Dickson	McLaughlin	% of Total
Acres Held	Unknown	Unknown	1200	5.9
Acres Cultivated	180	175	200	26.8
Acres in Crops	44	51	47	12.1
Acres in Pasture	11	20	12	17.5
Value of Farm and Implements (\$)	4600	7000	7720	28.3
Peas (bushels)	45	0	0	14.7
Oats (bushels)	900	1700	1075	25.0
Potatoes (bushels)	350	800	500	9.2
Hay (tons)	4	50	42	36.5
Oxen (over 3 years)	16	25	34	45.2
Steers or Heffers (under 3 years)	3	2	8	8.4
Milk Cows	1	1	6	6.0
Horses (over 3 years)	16	20	18	59.3
Pigs	12	5	0	6.2
Sheep	0	0	0	0.0
Butter	0	0	600	9.4
Beef (200 lb barrels)	50	70	105	91.5
Pork (200 lb barrels)	0	4	0	3.1

Source: 1861 manuscript census, agricultural returns. The “% of Total” in the right column are my own calculations of the acreage, value, or production from these three farms expressed as a percentage of the total for the entire census district, which was 155 locations.

pork in barrels are problematic since they represent only a fraction of production.⁵⁰

McInnis addresses this deficiency using slaughter ratios and animal weights to estimate total production. However, aside from oxen, the depot farms in Brudenell reported very few animals. Farms like McLaughlin’s must have employed significant manpower, which would explain the non-resident farmers enumerated in the census.

While the depot farms described in Table 5.2 clearly produced significant amounts of the key products the shanties required, we still need to determine whether production met demand. If not, and if settlers produced surpluses of these products, then

⁵⁰ McInnis, “Marketable Surpluses,” 401.

TABLE 5.3
Estimated Adult Male Equivalent Consumption of Major Food Items

Commodity	Quantity Per Year
Wheat (as flour)	7 bushels
Potatoes	14 bushels
Beef	62.5 lbs
Pork	95 lbs
Mutton	20 lbs
Butter, cheese, and milk (as butter)	52 lbs

Source: McInnis, "Marketable Surpluses," 405, Table 1.

we may conclude that settlers indeed at least had access to a lucrative and captive shanty market. The cost of equipment and provisions was a major concern for a timber industry in which one-third of total costs went to supplies. McCalla notes that weekly rations for shanty workers in one operation consisted of "seven pounds each of pork and flour, a pound each of butter and sugar, and one-sixth of a pound of tea; sometimes codfish (2 ½ pounds) and potatoes (¼ bushel) were also included."⁵¹ This would mean a total consumption of 364 pounds of pork per man per year. McInnis estimates the average adult male consumed roughly equivalent amounts of butter and potatoes in a year, but far less meat, being only 177.5 pounds (3.4 pounds per week) of beef, pork, and mutton combined (Table 5.3). The amount of pork per adult male (Table 5.1), if converted to a weekly ration in a twenty-six week season, amounts to 4.9 pounds per man per week, or 253 pounds of pork per man-year. Shanty workers likely consumed more meat than the average Canadian, so a conservative estimate of pork (or beef) consumption then would still be in the range of five or six pounds per man per week. Even if we assume the lower figure, this means total annual demand of 268 barrels of pork or beef (see Table 5.4). The

⁵¹ McCalla, *Planting the Province*, 56.

TABLE 5.4
Shanty Demand for Principal Products and Value to the Local Economy, 1861

	Total Demand	Depot Stock or Production	Demand Met (%)	Revised Demand	Total Value (\$)
Men	206				
Horses	76	129	170		
Oxen	107	75	70	32	1280
Hay (tons)	423	96	23	327	5232
Oats (tons)	112	2	2	110	4070
Pork / Beef (200 lb barrels)	268	229	85	39	663
Potatoes (bushels)	2781	1650	59	1131	452
Butter (lbs)	10712	600	6	10112	1315
Wheat (bushels), as flour	1792	0	0	1792	1971
Total Value of Shanty Demand (\$)					14983

Source: My calculations are based on equivalent annual consumption estimates drawn from McInnis, Hammond, and McCalla, and production levels reported in the agricultural return of the 1861 manuscript census, see text and footnotes.

depot farms recorded in the 1861 census produced 229 barrels of beef and pork, leaving a 39-barrel deficit. Assuming settlers were able to meet this demand, and at \$17 per barrel, this would represent a cash infusion into the local economy of \$663, or about \$4.42 per farm, which was almost enough to pay a family's annual property tax bill.⁵²

Some further explanation is required for the estimates and values presented above.

The number of horses and oxen is based on the estimate of 183 total draught animals (derived on page 187), multiplied by a ratio of 1.4 oxen for each horse. The total value of horses is based on the average value of a horse in the 1861 census of Brudenell, which was \$88.43. This figure seems reasonable given McCalla's estimate that in 1839 one

⁵² Pork was selling for £5 (\$20) per barrel in Bytown in 1836–7 (see McCalla, *Planting the Province*, 57) and for \$17 per barrel at a store in Darlingside (on the St. Lawrence between Kingston and Brockville) in 1861. The latter figure comes from the sample created by McCalla for *Consumers in the Bush: Shopping in Rural Upper Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), see Table 32, page 194. Given the distance to major markets, the price per barrel of pork in Brudenell was likely closer to \$20 than \$17, making this a relatively conservative estimate. Average taxes per ratepayer ranged from \$4.89 to \$8.55 per year from 1863 to 1900. See chapter four, p. 138, Table 4.1.

horse was worth £20 (\$80) in the shanty market, equivalent to a yoke of oxen.⁵³ But since draught animals were considered capital, shanties were not likely to make these purchases every year. It is more likely these deficits were met by hiring teams from among the local population, which owned 37 horses and 91 oxen, according to the census. McCalla also notes that a shanty in 1859 paid £1 5s. (\$5) per month to hire a yoke of oxen during peak season. If this value were used instead of the £20 per yoke sale price, it would mean a total value (rental cost) of \$960 instead of \$1280.

Quantities of hay and oats are calculated based on consumption levels for horses (2.75 and 1.275 tons per year) and oxen (2 and 0.14 tons per year).⁵⁴ The figure used is the sum of these, rounded to the nearest whole. The value of hay is based on a price of £4 (or \$16) per ton delivered, given by A. J. Russell as an average Ottawa Valley price in 1853.⁵⁵ This is higher than the £3 13s. (\$14.59) per ton quoted by McCalla for an 1854–5 purchase,⁵⁶ but much lower than the £10 per ton quoted by T. C. Keefer for a purchase at Kaminisseg Lake in 1847.⁵⁷ In the census, oats were recorded in bushels, not tons. The standard bushel of oats in Upper Canada in 1860 was 34 pounds, or about 58.8 bushels a ton.⁵⁸ The value of oats is based on two estimates. One is a purchase by McLaughlin of 1000 bushels for £200 (\$47 per ton) delivered on the Madawaska in January and February

⁵³ McCalla, *Planting the Province*, 57–8.

⁵⁴ Urquhart, *Gross National Product*, 57–8 and 63.

⁵⁵ Quoted in MacKay, “Potatoes in the Pines,” 76.

⁵⁶ McCalla, *Planting the Province*, 58.

⁵⁷ Keefer, “Report of T.C. Keefer, on Ottawa and other Works,” 32.

⁵⁸ See *Canadian Settlers' Guide, 10th Edition* (London: Edward Stanford, 1860). Urquhart uses the same figure in *Gross National Product*, 57.

1853.⁵⁹ The other is Russell's estimate of 2s. 3d. (\$0.45) per bushel delivered,⁶⁰ which works out to about \$27 per ton. Taking the difference between these gives us an estimate of \$37 per ton of oats. Since prices varied widely depending on the location, supply, and time of year, these estimates are reasonable, but should be viewed with caution.

Prices and demand for potatoes, butter, and flour are based on estimates by McCalla and McInnis. McCalla estimates rations of potatoes at $\frac{1}{4}$ bushel per week (13 bushels per year) and McInnis estimates 14 bushels per year; the figure in Table 5.4 is the difference. The value of potatoes is based on a price of 1s. 9d. per bushel on the Toronto market in 1861, rounded up to 2s. (\$0.40) per bushel to compensate for Brudenell's remoteness.⁶¹ This estimate is likely still low given the distance from Toronto, but seems fair given the abundance of potatoes on the market in 1861.⁶² McCalla and McInnis each estimate butter consumption at 52 pounds per year, valued here at the 1861 Toronto price of 8d. (\$0.13) per pound.⁶³ McCalla estimates flour consumption at 7 pounds per week and McInnis 7 bushels of wheat (as flour) per year. If we assume a 210-pound barrel of flour was equivalent to six bushels of wheat, then McCalla's estimate works out to 10.4 bushels of wheat per year. Again taking the difference, we can estimate annual wheat consumption at 8.7 bushels per man, per year, valued at 5s. 6d. (\$1.10) per bushel.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Quoted in McCalla, *Planting the Province*, 58.

⁶⁰ Quoted in MacKay, "Potatoes in the Pines," 76.

⁶¹ McCalla, *Planting the Province*, 340, Table C.2. A voucher from 1876 for the sale of 10 bushels of potatoes to a work crew on the Opeongo gives a price of \$0.40 per bushel. See AO RG 52-1-1876, "Accounts, estimates, vouchers, pay lists, and letters not entered in the Index Books re: particular roads and bridges," voucher for payment from Wm Kitt for 31 bushels of potatoes, 24 July 1876.

⁶² McInnis, "Marketable Surpluses," 404.

⁶³ McCalla, *Planting the Province*, 341, Table C.2.

⁶⁴ McCalla, *Planting the Province*, 340, Table C.2.

Based on the summary data presented in Table 5.4, it appears the shanties indeed represented considerable demand for almost every principal product except cured pork. The total market represented a value of just under \$20 000, which works out to about \$32 per capita (permanent residents only), or \$133 per farm. By comparison, road cutters and hewers employed by John Egan & Co., working on the Bonnechere River in the 1857–8 season, earned \$13 to \$15 and \$28 to \$30 per month respectively.⁶⁵ Based on a six month season, that means a total income of \$78 to \$180. According to T. P. French, a “good working man” could expect to earn \$120 to \$160 per year, including room and board.⁶⁶ These figures place the value of proceeds from sales to the shanty market within the range of a reasonable annual income for a wage earner in the Ottawa-Huron Tract in the early years of settlement. Given these are mean figures, it is quite possible that some settlers could have made a comfortable living from the shanty market.

The last question to be considered here is whether settlers produced enough surplus to meet the shanty demand. Later, I will consider the potential marketable surpluses on a household basis when examining the 1871 census returns. But for the moment, we only need to know the overall potential surplus. This we can determine based on the age and sex of all residents (626) after the shanty population has been removed (since consumption of the shanty population has already been considered above). Table 5.5 shows the age-sex makeup of Brudenell in 1861 alongside McInnis’ estimates of equivalent food consumption for each category.

⁶⁵ “John Egan & Co. Shanty Account Book, 6 October 1857 to June 1858,” C 76 in Reid, *The Upper Ottawa Valley to 1855*, 174–8.

⁶⁶ French, *Information for Intending Settlers*, 22.

Based on consumption levels (Table 5.3), total equivalent adult males (Table 5.5), and total production by settler farms in 1861, we can calculate the potential marketable surplus (or deficit) of wheat, potatoes, meat, and butter for the year. Unlike 1871, the 1861 census did not record the number of animals killed in the year. My estimate of meat production is therefore based on barrels of cured beef and pork produced, which unfortunately means we cannot account for the production of fresh meat. The estimates used above for hay and oat consumption by horses and cattle were for off-farm animals, and so are likely quite high for our purposes given the likelihood that on-farm animals could get much of their nutrition from grazing. If we estimate that on-farm horses and cattle were fed primarily by grazing, say seventy per cent and ninety per cent of their respective consumption, this likely gives us a more realistic figure.⁶⁷ Surpluses of hay and oats are therefore based on overall production, less thirty per cent and ten per cent of the consumption levels for horses and cattle used above, multiplied by the numbers of these animals owned by the settler population. This includes not only oxen, but all cattle enumerated in the 1861 census. Like draught animals, sheep and pigs also needed to eat. Reliable estimates of the amounts of hay and oats consumed by these animals could not be found, but the numbers are likely small and perhaps negligible for our purposes. Pigs, for example, could be fed on scraps or simply allowed to browse.⁶⁸ Sheep required more attention, and did consume oats, but could also be fed on peas, pasture, and less-

⁶⁷ French suggested oxen needed no feeding, while horses and sheep could be fed almost entirely by grazing, except in the winter months when they required cut fodder, which, he argued, could be easily obtained by labour alone. See *Information for Intending Settlers*, 26. In Brudenell in 1861 there were about four head of livestock (all species combined) for each acre of pasture land, which does not take into account the potential for use of unoccupied or unclaimed lands as pasture.

⁶⁸ Clarke, *The Ordinary People of Essex*, 282.

TABLE 5.5
Age-Sex Ratios and Equivalent Adult Male Food Consumption in Brudenell, 1861

Age Class	Males			Females		
	N	P	E	N	P	E
Less than 5 years	39	0.40	15.6	46	0.40	18.4
5 – 9 years	39	0.55	21.5	48	0.55	26.4
10 – 14 years	40	0.80	32.0	33	0.75	24.8
15 – 59 years	218	1.00	218.0	146	0.80	116.8
60 years and over	12	0.85	10.2	5	0.75	3.8
Total	348		297.3	278		190.1

Source: My calculations are based on 1861 manuscript census returns and estimates of food consumption by sex and age as a proportion of the consumption of adult males used by McInnis. See McInnis, “Marketable Surpluses,” 406, Table 2. N = number of individuals; P = proportion of adult male food consumption; and E = equivalent adult male food consumption.

marketable fodder crops such as clover.⁶⁹ This gives us a rough estimate of potential marketable surpluses of key products at the level of the census district and we can thereby estimate the possibility of settlers producing enough to meet shanty demand (see Table 5.6). The values in Table 5.6 are calculated by the same measures as in Table 5.5.

Estimates for hay, oats, wheat, and potatoes indicate that settler farms could at least meet part of the shanty demand, to a value of just under \$17 000, or about \$113 per farm, which is lower than the estimate in Table 5.4, though not an insignificant sum. The figures for meat and butter are problematic given the difficulty of accurately estimating production and consumption levels, and are likely not very useful. But, if we assumed settlers consumed only fresh meat and that all cured beef and pork were intended for market, the ability of settlers to satisfy demand would rise. Given the previously noted propensity for shanties to import pork from the United States, it seems the most important local crops to the shanty market were oats and wheat. Based on these estimates, there is

⁶⁹ Clarke, *The Ordinary People of Essex*, 281–3.

TABLE 5.6
Estimated Marketable Surpluses of Settler Farms in Brudenell, 1861

Commodity	Production	Consumption	Surplus	Value (\$)
Hay (tons)	167	103	64	1024
Oats (tons)	187	19	168	6216
Wheat (as flour) (bu.)	8836	3412	5424	5966
Potatoes (bu.)	16274	6824	9250	3700
Meat (lbs.)	29000	86514	-57514	0
Butter, cheese, and milk (as butter)	5776	25345	-19569	0
Total Value				16906

Source: Calculations of the author are based on 1861 manuscript census (personal and agricultural) and estimates of consumption from McInnis and Urquhart. See text.

insufficient data to conclude settlers in Brudenell could make their living entirely from the proceeds of the shanty market. However, the evidence presented here confirms that the shanty market was significant to the local economy, at least at its peak in the 1860s.

If production for the shanty market was just one part of the material basis for settlement in Brudenell, what else did settlers do to make a living? Could those practices be sustained, and for how long? Hammond notes that MacLaren's shanties on the Lièvre employed workers from local villages and farms, but also hired seasonal labourers from outside the region.⁷⁰ Blank draws on a few references in secondary sources to suggest Polish settlers on the Opeongo sold produce to shanties, hired themselves as teamsters, or worked in the shanties directly.⁷¹ That settlers in Brudenell worked in shanties has been assumed rather than studied. While it seems likely that settlers in Brudenell worked in the lumber shanties, firm figures connecting settlers to shanty work are impossible to

⁷⁰ Hammond, "Anatomy of a Lumber Shanty," 298.

⁷¹ Blank, *Creating Kashubia*, 166–7.

determine. The difficulty lies in the nature of shanty work itself, and its relationship to the local population. Work in the bush was seasonal and in the ideology of the time was viewed as a temporary unpleasantness in the transition to an agricultural economy.

The extraction of timber and saw logs from nearby limits was undoubtedly an important element of the local economy in Brudenell, especially in the early years of settlement. Aspects of this economy are revealed in colonization road papers, in the reports of Crown Lands' agents, and in censuses. In his report to the CCL in March 1858, T. P. French noted the presence of seven "extensive lumbering establishments" operating in the vicinity of the branch road connecting the Opeongo with the upper Madawaska region.⁷² French reported these firms had previously been paying \$7 per barrel of flour delivered and \$0.50 per bushel of oats, but were now paying only \$5.25 and \$0.35 for each respectively since the Opeongo was built.⁷³ Such figures indicate the importance of the shanty market was perhaps in decline even as early as 1858.

Unlike 1861, the 1871 census was conducted *de jure* meaning that anyone away working in forests would have been enumerated at their normal residence, whether or not they were there for the taking of the census. The temporary workers found in 1861 are not visible in 1871 as they were enumerated at their normal residences. Exceptions were some of the cooks, foremen, managers, and clerks, whose positions required them to be at the camps on a more permanent basis. One cook, two foremen, one general manager, one clerk, and one teamster were enumerated in Brudenell in 1871. It is no coincidence then

⁷² AO RG 1-9 Crown Land Administration Subject Files, Roads: Ottawa and Opeongo Road, 1853-1866, MS 892, reels 8 and 9, pp. 08259-08270, French to L. V. Sicotte (CCL), 8 March 1858, page 10. These were the firms of Daniel McLaughlin, James Skead, Robert Conroy, Robertson and MacKay, Gilmour and Company, John Egan (estate of), and Charles Hudson.

⁷³ These numbers correspond to those quoted above, or \$0.45 per bushel oats in 1853.

TABLE 5.7
Occupations in Brudenell Ranked by Frequency, 1871

Occupations	# Individuals
Farmers	211
Store Keepers, Inn Keepers, Clerks, Telegraph Operator	9
Miller, Contractor, Shantymen, Manager, Foremen, Cooks	8
Servants and Labourers	7
Shoemakers	6
Carpenters	5
Blacksmiths	5
Priest, Minister, Teachers, Gentleman	5
Weavers	4
Total	260

Source: Derek Murray, Kelly Bairos, and Kris Inwood, “Complete Transcription and Database of 1871 Census of Brudenell,” *1871 Canada Census Project*, dir. Kris Inwood, University of Guelph, 2008.

that the 1871 census for Brudenell enumerated 211 farmers and only two shantymen (see Table 5.7). This does not preclude the possibility other residents of the township worked in the forests, but it does give us an indication of their (or the enumerator’s) priorities. If they were working in the camps and it was not their primary occupation, then they may have viewed it as an opportunity to earn a cash wage in order to have more fluid assets, or raise capital for the farm. The seasonal nature of farming is commonly associated with the demand for labour of the shanties.⁷⁴ As McCalla demonstrates, the link between seasonal work in lumber camps and the available labour of settlers in logging regions is tenuous—estimates of available local labour are usually high and the presence of the migrant labour of French Canadians skilled in the work required is underestimated.⁷⁵ However, it is probable given the proximity of the forest and the seasonal nature of forest

⁷⁴ See Lee-Whiting, “The Opeongo Road,” 79; and Hammond, “Anatomy of a Lumber Shanty,” 299.

⁷⁵ McCalla, *Planting the Province*, 55.

work that settlers' sons may have worked for several weeks or months for wages in the bush or on less-skilled tasks such as road cutting, in order to gain income.⁷⁶ While it would have provided an infusion of cash, this temporary labour was not reflected in the occupations enumerated on the census.

Though shanty workers were not enumerated individually, George Malone, who took the 1871 census of Brudenell, indicated two logging operations in the area. In the remarks column of the census he relayed estimates of the number of men working in the camps. As in 1861, Daniel McLaughlin's firm continued to be active in Brudenell in 1871.⁷⁷ McLaughlin's company operated extensively on the upper Madawaska, and was a major producer of sawlogs in the Ottawa region.⁷⁸ At one of his camps, McLaughlin employed local resident Bartholomew Keravin as a teamster (though he would surely have needed more than just this one teamster in his operation), William Waddington as a foreman, Donald McDonald as a cook, and 22 unnamed men "domiciled elsewhere." McLaughlin contracted work to Donald McMaster, who employed Evars Dewar as a clerk and Charles Movell as a shantyman, with "the rest domiciled elsewhere," though a precise number is not given. Another operation was a group called "Wright and Batrow" or "Wright and Batrom" which had sixty men working at a camp in Brudenell (as the

⁷⁶ Ian Radforth, "The Shantymen," in *Labouring Lives: Work and Workers in Nineteenth-Century Ontario*, ed. Paul Craven (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 206.

⁷⁷ McLaughlin's firm owned timber rights covering most of Brudenell as well as neighbouring Radcliffe. See AO C-277-1-348-0-2, W. Macdonald, "Plan Shewing the Position of Byers' Creek in the Limits of D. McLaughlin Esq., North of the Madawaska River," (1865).

⁷⁸ C. Grant Head, "Nineteenth Century Timbering and Sawlogging in the Ottawa Valley," in *Exploring Our Heritage: The Ottawa Valley Experience: Proceedings*, ed. Vrenia Ivonoffski and Sandra Campbell (Arnprior, Arnprior and District Historical Society, 1980), 56.

writing is difficult to read and no corroborating source has been found, I will refer to them as W&B). We can estimate the entire workforce directly involved in forestry in Brudenell as around 80 men, a figure which is much lower than that for 1861. This may have been due in part to decline in the industry over this decade, but also relevant was the splitting of the census district so that Brudenell and Lyndoch (east) were separated from Radcliffe and Raglan (west) townships, which were further to the interior.

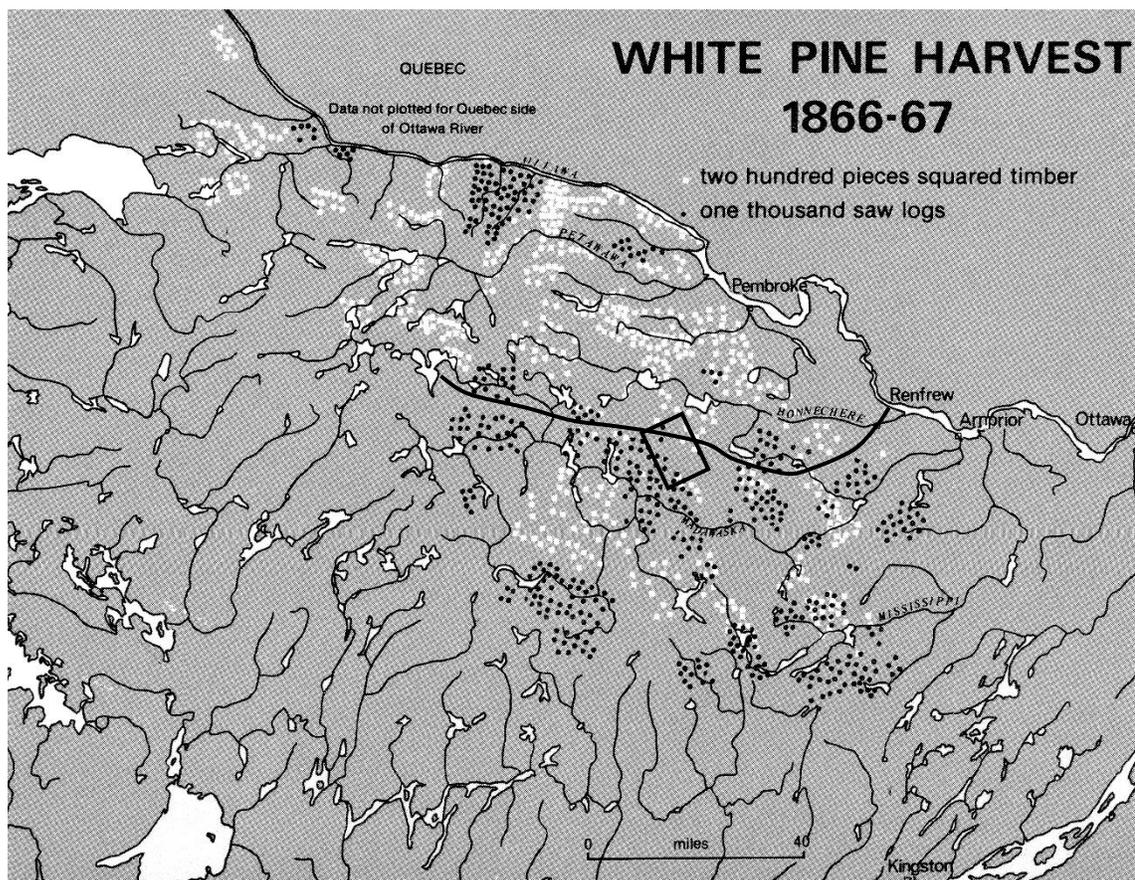
Figures 5.1 and 5.2 show the location of Brudenell and the Opeongo Road in the context of the 1866–7 and 1878–9 white pine harvests in the Ottawa Valley. The black dots represent one thousand saw logs and the white dots two hundred pieces of squared timber. The census recorded 37,664 sawlogs and 8554 pieces of timber coming out of Brudenell in 1871, a small number given the nearly six million pine sawlogs harvested in Ontario that year.⁷⁹ Most of that production was evenly spread across townships in the Ottawa-Huron Tract.⁸⁰ All the timber, and all but 7500 sawlogs harvested in Brudenell belonged to McLaughlin. Most of the logs were probably processed at his operations in Arnprior. Though W&B were noted by the census taker, no timber or sawlog production was attributed to this firm. The other 7500 sawlogs were credited to William Haryett, a local store keeper, though it is not clear where or how these logs were processed.

As was the case in other regions, it is difficult to determine the degree to which locals participated in the forest economy. Little notes, for example, that the 1871 census reported forty-two French-Canadian farmers in Winslow, Quebec cut an average of sixty

⁷⁹ Head, “An Introduction to Forest Exploitation in Nineteenth Century Ontario,” in *Perspectives on Landscape and Settlement in Nineteenth Century Ontario*, ed. J. David Wood (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975), 80, Figure 6.1.

⁸⁰ Head, “Forest Exploitation,” 81, Figure 6.2.

FIGURE 5.1
Brudenell in Relation to the White Pine Harvest in the Ottawa Valley, 1866–67



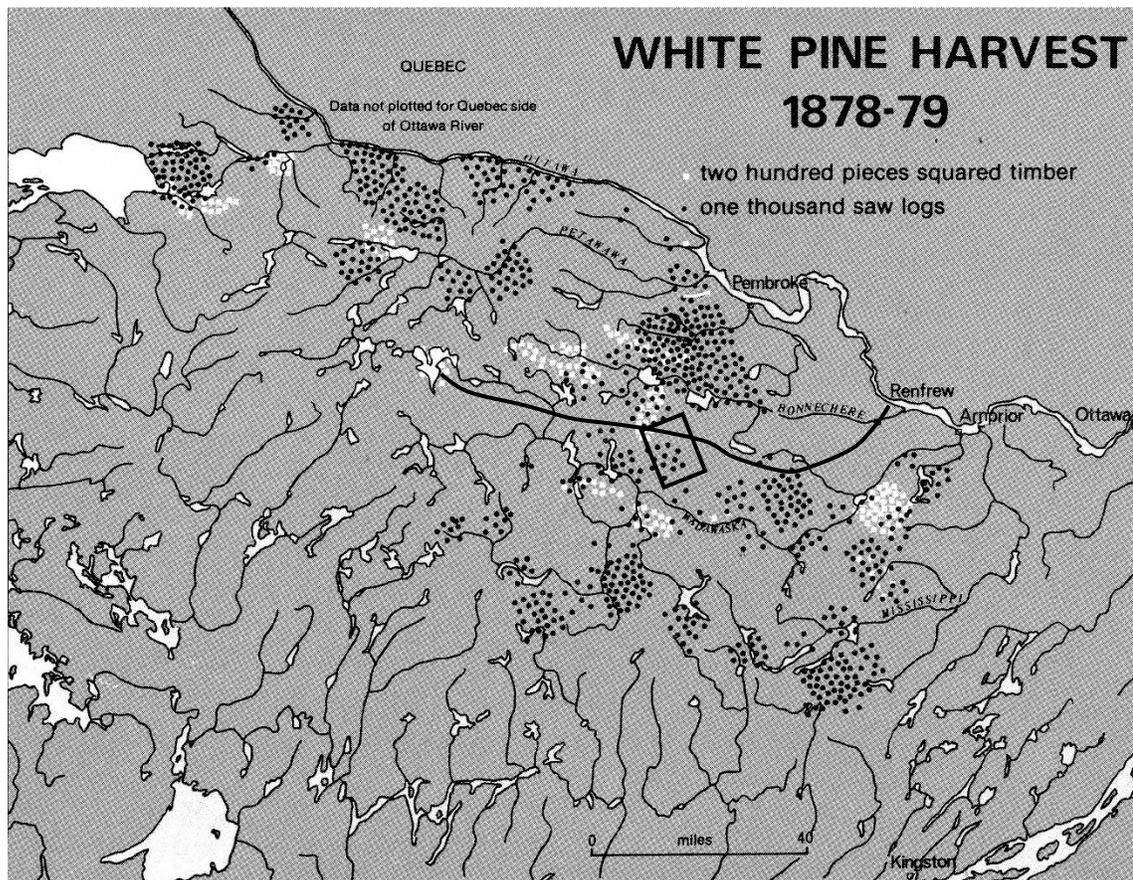
Source: Head, "Nineteenth Century Timbering," 57, Figure 12. Location of Brudenell and the Opeongo Road added by the author.

logs each, while twenty-one Scots settlers cut an average of forty-nine logs each.⁸¹ In the southern part of Winslow nearly 50% of logs were processed at local mills, while in the north, where settlers were dependent on one large firm, only 19% of the logs cut were processed locally.⁸² In contrast, Watson's sawmill at Rockingham processed 400 sawlogs, while Daniel Copps' saw pit in northern Brudenell processed 100 (see Table 5.8). These may have been cut by locals and sawn on commission with the landowner

⁸¹ Little, *Crofters and Habitants*, 149.

⁸² Little, *Crofters and Habitants*, 149.

FIGURE 5.2
Brudenell in Relation to the White Pine Harvest in the Ottawa Valley, 1878–79



Source: Head, "Nineteenth Century Timbering," 57, Figure 13. Location of Brudenell and the Opeongo Road added by the author.

not declaring this on the census. On the other hand, the local mills could have purchased the logs from the lumber companies and then sold the finished lumber to people in the area. If we take these locally processed logs as a fraction of the total sawlog production in the township, it represents only 1.3 per cent of the total. Attempts by locals to extract timber were met with resistance by the well-established commercial timber industry. In 1865, for example, local resident John Whelan attempted to move timber to Quebec using a local creek flowing to the Madawaska. McLaughlin obstructed Whelan's efforts by falling trees in the way of Whelan's timber. When Whelan sued, McLaughlin argued that

the creek Whelan tried to use was only rendered navigable because of works constructed by McLaughlin within timber limits that McLaughlin had leased. A jury ruled in favour of McLaughlin saying that Whelan had no right to use of a stream which in its “natural state” did not constitute a navigable waterway.⁸³ Though settlers had the right to cut and sell timber, if they had no means of getting that timber to market, there was no way for them to make a profit. The incident, along with the maps and figures above, suggests that Brudenell was more important to the forest sector than that sector was to Brudenell, at least in terms of direct participation in production of forest products.

Perhaps surprisingly, the most significant single industrial product in Brudenell in 1871, in terms of overall output value, was actually flour. Thirteen thousand bushels of wheat and 1100 bushels of coarse grains were milled to produce 3000 barrels of flour valued at \$7.25 per barrel (see Table 5.8). Watson’s grist mill employed two adult male workers, each paid \$32 per month for twelve months. The next most valuable industry in Brudenell was shoemaking, which provided employment for three men (two for twelve months and one for nine months) at an average wage of \$19.15 per month. Though the mill produced 82500 board feet of lumber, its value was small compared to these other industries. If we take the total wages paid by all industrial establishments reported in the 1871 census, divided by the equivalent number of full time employees, these industries supported fifteen workers at an average wage of \$221 per year.

Most of these “industrial” workers were men, except for two women weavers who were paid a comparably low wage of \$12 to \$14 per month. Five women also worked as

⁸³ *Whelan v. McLachlan* (1865), as cited in S. J. Vankoughnet, *Reports of Cases Decided in the Court of Common Pleas of Upper Canada* 16 (Toronto: R. Carswell, 1878), 102–114.

TABLE 5.8
Industrial Production in Brudenell, 1871

Industrial Product	No. Operations	Capital Invested (\$)	Workforce (# months)	Wages Paid (\$/month)	Output Quantity	Output Value (\$)
Blacksmithing	4	621	34.5	25.28		1740
Charcoal	1		12	1.08	800 bu	40
Flour	1	5000	24	32.00	3000 brl	21750
Lime	1	70	9	26.00	1260 b.	315
Potash	7	461	11.5	10.35	11 brl	350
Lumber	2	5540	21	13.10	82500 bft	810
Boots/Shoes	3	1190	33	19.15	776 pair	2534
Leather	1	125	12	8.33	2000 lbs	300
Cloth/Flannel	2	70	22	13.86	2620 yds	1965
Total	22	13077	179	3318		29804

Source: Compiled from 1871 manuscript census, schedule 6, "Return of Industrial Establishments."

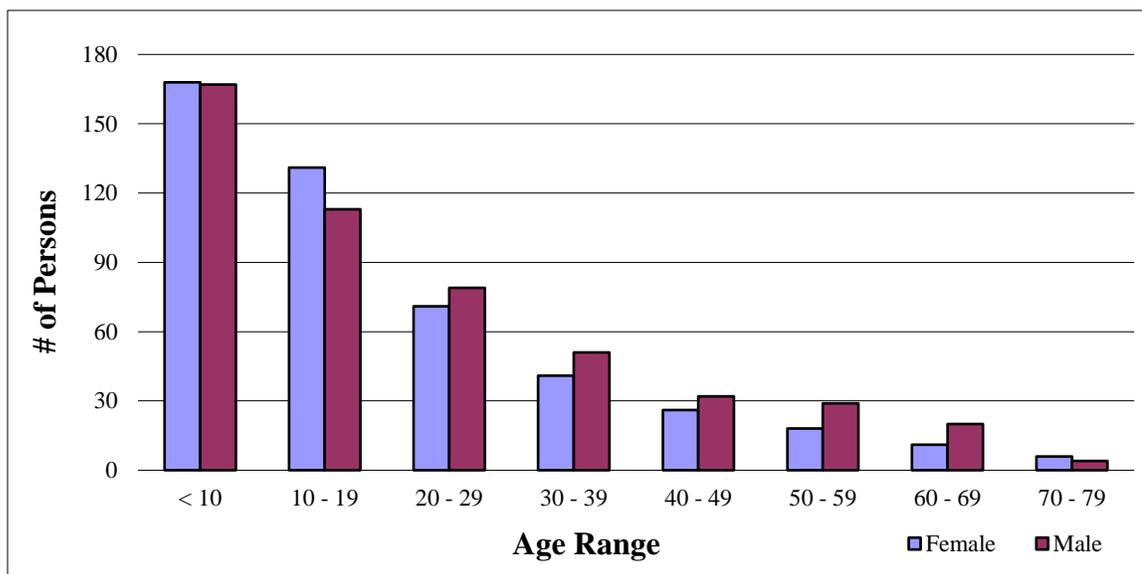
servants, one as a school teacher, and one as a telegraph operator. Only eight of the 472 women enumerated in the census had a recorded occupation, making it difficult to know the nature and scope of women's work in Brudenell through this source alone. Women's extensive participation in agricultural labour is noted elsewhere. According to French, women and children were "most frequently the cultivators of the Potato."⁸⁴ According to Marjorie Cohen, women were actively involved in the production of potash, butter, and cheese for market, "But for the most part the remunerative activities of the female in the household were incidental to the major work of subsistence production for the family."⁸⁵ In the early years of settlement, males outnumbered females in Brudenell by a ratio of about five males for every four females.⁸⁶ This is perhaps not surprising given the free

⁸⁴ French, *Information for Intending Settlers*, 24.

⁸⁵ Marjorie Griffin Cohen, *Women's Work, Markets, and Economic Development in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 85.

⁸⁶ When shanty workers are excluded, there were 348 males and 278 females recorded in the 1861 census.

FIGURE 5.3
Male and Female Residents of Brudenell by Age Range, 1871



Source: 1871 Brudenell Census Database.

grant criteria required settlers to be male. As Table 5.5 shows, in 1861 males fifteen and older outnumbered females by a 3:2 ratio. By 1871 these margins had narrowed with roughly equal numbers of males (495) and females (472) in the district. Females were marginally overrepresented in younger age categories and underrepresented among older segments of the population (see Figure 5.3). Girls between the ages of 10 and 19 thus made up a slightly larger proportion of the workforce than boys of the same age. They were also just as often available for work. As Table 5.9 shows, when it came time for school, girls under fifteen attended in roughly equal numbers to boys. Only after age fourteen did girls attend school more often than boys, though attendance among both groups was low. Such figures suggest that male labour on farms became more valuable as boys grew, but this observation is tentative given the small absolute numbers involved.

Though women and girls could find wage work as servants, their labour was needed more at home. This is further evidenced by the low number of female servants

TABLE 5.9
School Attendance by Age and Sex in Brudenell, 1871

Age Category	Total Number	No. in School	% in School
Females 5–14	155	87	56.1
Males 5–14	149	86	57.7
Females 15–17	37	12	32.4
Males 15–17	28	4	14.3

Source: 1871 Brudenell Census Database.

recorded in the 1871 census. Some women may have been occupied in domestic work part-time. But like temporary shanty labourers, these servants are invisible in the census. In 1880, John Whelan reported to the Ontario Bureau of Industries that, “Domestic servants are very scarce, and their wages are good. The best girls are inclined to go to town or villages to sew or work in the factories.”⁸⁷ Brudenell was not unusual, as female servants were in short supply in nineteenth century Ontario.⁸⁸ According to Ruth Frager and Carmella Patrias, the division of labour in rural households varied depending on the wealth of the family: “Although the available evidence is fragmentary, farm women’s work may have been more burdensome than the work of their menfolk, particularly if the farm was not well off.”⁸⁹ Hence, when we refer to the “farmers” in Brudenell, we are not referring to the (usually) male head of household, but to the entire family unit. Though difficult to estimate from census records, women’s (and children’s) work on farms and the wages they earned outside the home were essential to the success of farm families.

⁸⁷ Ontario, *Annual Report of the Bureau of Industries for the Province of Ontario for 1887* (Toronto: Warwick & Sons, 1888), 200.

⁸⁸ Cohen, *Women’s Work*, 86. The declining supply of domestic servants in Canada is examined in more detail in Eric W. Sager, “The Transformation of the Canadian Domestic Servant, 1871–1931,” *Social Science History* 31, no. 4 (Winter 2007): 509–537.

⁸⁹ Ruth A. Frager and Carmella Patrias, *Discounted Labour: Women Workers in Canada, 1870–1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 7.

Maintenance projects on local roads also provided inconsistent opportunities for wage labour. In 1876 for example the CLD paid \$1990.90 to repair the Opeongo Road through Brudenell.⁹⁰ The work was done by twelve local residents who earned between \$0.50 per day for labourers and \$3.50 per day for teamsters and the overseer.⁹¹ Teamster Samuel Kitt was hired for 52 days between 6 June and 6 August and was paid \$182 for the duration. Even though Kitt likely assumed the cost of feeding his team for that time, this was still a considerable wage given the \$32 per month paid to mill workers in 1871. Since the work happened during the summer months it came at the expense of rather than complementing farming. In 1886 the CLD paid another \$573.93 for repairs to the branch road from the Opeongo to Rockingham.⁹² The wage for a teamster in 1886 was \$3.00 per day, while labourers earned \$1.23 per day.⁹³ Such work could supplement other farm and off-farm work, but was likely too inconsistent to be relied on as a regular wage.

If the shanty market was profitable but not lucrative, and if local industry and wage labour opportunities were only modest, could settlers make up the difference by farming? Establishing a farm in Upper Canada required substantial infusions of cash, labour, and supplies. Any potential farmer had to consider not only the cost of land, but also provisions, livestock, labour needs, and distance to markets. For potential farmers, there were a number of options available. They could purchase land in a developed area

⁹⁰ AO RG 52-1-1876, affidavit from Wm Kitt, overseer on the Opeongo Road, 12 October 1876.

⁹¹ AO RG 52-1-1876, pay list for work on the Opeongo Road, summer 1876.

⁹² AO RG 52-1-1886, "Account Files re: Opeongo and Rockingham Road," affidavit signed by Joseph Doyle, 2 December 1886.

⁹³ AO RG 52-1-1886, pay list for work on the Opeongo and Rockingham Road, 23 November 1886.

where roads, markets, and even railways were already established. In the 1840s, land in Upper Canada could be purchased for £3 to £5 per acre. A “standard” sized farm was generally between 70 and 169 acres,⁹⁴ which would thus cost between £210 and £845. Even a small farm of 50 acres would cost at least £150. Most people could not afford such a purchase without a mortgage, which were themselves expensive and difficult to procure.⁹⁵ Robert Ankli and Kenneth Duncan argue that R. L. Jones’ estimate of £100 currency, plus the cost of land, was the minimum needed to start a new farm.⁹⁶ In the Ottawa-Huron Tract, where free grants were available, T. P. French estimated “that the energetic and self-reliant man of family,” should require roughly £56 to make a start along the Opeongo Road, but it could be done for as little as £10.⁹⁷

Renting was another option available to those just starting out. However, renters were not common in Brudenell, at least in the early years of settlement. According to the assessment rolls, the first tenants appeared in Brudenell in 1876.⁹⁸ Four tenants were recorded in that year: three merchants and a physician, but no farmers. The number of tenants in Brudenell, as a percentage of all occupiers of land (rural land as well as village

⁹⁴ McCalla, *Planting the Province*, 71. See also McInnis, “The Size Structure of Farming, Canada West, 1861,” in “Agrarian Organization in the Century of Industrialization: Europe, Russia, and North America,” *Research in Economic History*, suppl. 5 (1989): 313–29.

⁹⁵ Catharine A. Wilson, *Tenants in Time: Family Strategies, Land, and Liberalism in Upper Canada, 1799–1871* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2009), 56.

⁹⁶ Robert E. Ankli and Kenneth J. Duncan, “Farm Making Costs in Early Ontario,” in *Canadian Papers in Rural History*, vol. 4, ed. Donald H. Akenson (Gananoque, ON: Langdale Press, 1984), 48. The reference is to Jones, *History of Agriculture*, 67.

⁹⁷ French, *Information for Intending Settlers*, 31.

⁹⁸ This figure, and subsequent references to assessment data, come from a complete transcription of the assessment rolls for Brudenell for the years 1863–4, 1866–9, 1871–86, 1889–92, 1894, 1896, 1898–9, 1904–6, and 1910–11.

FIGURE 5.4
Tenancy in Brudenell, 1863–1911

		Years as Tenant					
		1	2	3	4	5	>5
Residency (Years)	1	19	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	2	8	3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	3	4	4	4	n/a	n/a	n/a
	4	2	1	2	3	n/a	n/a
	5	0	2	2	0	0	n/a
	6-10	17	2	2	1	0	1
	11-15	15	2	1	2	0	2
	15-20	2	2	0	0	0	1
	>20	5	0	0	0	1	0

Source: Brudenell Tax Assessment Database (1863–1911).

lots) hovered around five per cent from 1879 to 1905.⁹⁹ From 1863 to 1911 (the period covered in my database), only five individuals were tenants for five or more years (see Figure 5.4). In comparison to provincial ratios, this was quite a low number. In 1871, 15 per cent of all occupiers of rural land in Ontario were tenants; the number increased to 17.7 per cent in 1881, and 21.2 per cent in 1891.¹⁰⁰ Though Brudenell therefore differed from the provincial average, it followed another general pattern. In his analysis of the 1871 census, William Marr found that, “The further census districts were from Lakes Ontario and Erie, the greater the decline in tenancy rates.”¹⁰¹ While Marr did not speculate on the causes of this difference, an obvious reason for lower tenancy rates is the free grant system, which provided opportunities for the first wave of settlers to acquire land. Aside from free grants, vacant land could be purchased in the Ottawa-Huron Tract

⁹⁹ The Renfrew County rate in 1871 was 4.4 per cent, so Brudenell was average by that comparison. See William L. Marr, “Tenant vs. Owner Occupied Farms in York County, Ontario, 1871,” in *CPRH* 4, 52.

¹⁰⁰ Wilson, *Tenants in Time*, 230.

¹⁰¹ Marr, “Tenant vs. Owner Occupied Farms,” 51.

for \$0.80 to \$1.00 per acre in 1857–58;¹⁰² much lower than the prices quoted above for Upper Canada. After the initial settlement period, the price of land dropped to \$0.50 per acre in 1872.¹⁰³ The remaining unpurchased lots were offered as free grants in 1874.¹⁰⁴ Though most of these lots were poorly situated, the free grant criteria were more relaxed than in 1855. According to the editor of the Renfrew *Mercury*, an “established farm” in Brudenell could be purchased for \$1.50 per acre in 1881.¹⁰⁵

From 1876 to 1911, tenants were recorded 198 times in the assessment rolls, for a total of 108 individuals. This was a diverse group. The only consistent attribute is that tenancy was a short-term option for the vast majority of those recorded, at least for their time in Brudenell. Some were in Brudenell only temporarily—one or two years—working as labourers, in trades, as merchants, or hotel keepers. A few were tenants for longer periods. George Jeffrey, for example, rented from John S. J. Watson and worked as a hotel keeper from 1883 to 1904. In 1905 he took up farming and rented land from Patrick Houlihan. Tenancy was for some a way to start out in farming. Tenancy could also be an end of life event. Some farmers who spent thirty or more years in Brudenell passed their land on to their sons and rented for the last years of their lives.

¹⁰² AO RG 1-95-3-9, “Inspection and valuation reports of the Townships of Brougham, Brudenell, Grattan, and Sebastopol by William Bell, P.L.S.,” October 1863, MS 482, reel 1.

¹⁰³ Department of Crown Lands, “Disposal of Crown Lands – Ontario,” *Colonization Circular*, no. 31 (Westminster: Her Majesty’s Colonial Land and Emigration Commission, 1872), 82.

¹⁰⁴ T. B. Pardee, “Report of the Commissioner of Crown Lands of the Province of Ontario, 1873,” *Sessional Papers*, no. 26 (1874): vi.

¹⁰⁵ Albert Smallfield, *Lands and Resources of Renfrew County, Province of Ontario, a hand-book for the information of immigrant farmers desirous of obtaining cheap farms in an already settled district* (Renfrew, ON: Renfrew Mercury, 1881), 9. See also chapter two, page 71, Table 2.2.

The following is a cross-sectional analysis of farming in Brudenell in 1871. By linking the census agricultural schedules to the nominal schedule, we may discern general trends in the character of a medium-sized family farm. As we saw in Table 5.7 above, the majority of those with recorded occupations identified (or were identified by the enumerator) as farmers. Some residents were enumerated as farmers even when a cursory examination of agricultural production indicates they could not have actually made a living from their farming activities alone. Residents of Brudenell possibly saw farming as a means of subsistence, and utilized other sources to complete their income. Occupational pluralism was a common economic strategy in nineteenth-century Canada, especially during the period of industrialization.¹⁰⁶ In addition to farming, settlers also added to their diet through hunting and fishing. For example, 119 moose were shot and 67 nets of fish were caught in Brudenell in 1870. Twenty-six per cent of households reported something in at least one of the columns related to fur-bearing game animals.

In describing the character of the average family farm in Brudenell, I do not mean to create a model to which all farms adhered without variation, but one that is flexible. None of the households encountered in a survey of Brudenell were the same, but many of them followed local trends. The starting definition of a farm used here is a plot of land in

¹⁰⁶ This literature is especially well-developed in the Maritime context where shipping and forestry were central to many family economies. See for example: Wynn, *Timber Colony*; L. D. McCann, “‘Living the Double Life’: Town and Country in the Industrialization of the Maritimes,” in *Geographical Perspectives on the Maritimes*, ed. Douglas Day (Halifax: St. Mary’s University, 1988), 93–113; Janine Grant and Kris Inwood, “Gender and Organization in the Canadian Cloth Industry, 1870,” in *Canadian Papers in Business History*, vol. 1, ed. Peter Baskerville (Victoria: Public History Group, 1989), 75–100; Béatrice Craig, “Agriculture and the Lumberman’s Frontier: The Madawaska Settlement, 1800–1870,” *Journal of Forest History* 12 (July 1988): 125–37; and Eric Sager, with Gerald E. Panting, *Maritime Capital: The Shipping Industry in Atlantic Canada, 1820–1914* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1990), especially 192–6. The Upper Canadian literature is less developed, but growing. See for example: Jacqueline McIssac, “Cameras in the Countryside: Recreational Photography in Rural Ontario, 1851–1920,” *Scientia Canadensis* 36, no. 1 (2013): especially 24–30; and McCalla, *Planting the Province*, 93.

TABLE 5.10
Farms and their Operators in Brudenell, 1871

Operators	Size of farm		
	Small 1–69 acres	Medium 70–169 acres	Large 170+ acres
Male household heads with farmer as occupation	2	77	47
Male household heads with other occupations	1	9	5
Other male farmers	2	7	2
Female household heads	0	5	0
Other male non-farmers	0	1	0
Total	5	99	54

Source: 1871 Brudenell Census Database.

the agricultural schedule one acre or larger (Table 5.10). This excludes nine village lots, but includes five women heads of households, twelve men who were not the head of any household, and sixteen who gave occupations other than farmer. In contrast, McInnis and Darroch built their respective analyses on samples of male heads of households who gave their occupation as farmer and could be manually linked to the agricultural return.¹⁰⁷

The reason I defined farms this way is because it captures more of the actual “farms” in Brudenell than would otherwise be the case and therefore gives us a more complete image of rural family economies in this location. A few of the farms found this way were probably not really farms, but do still reflect local land use patterns. Thomas Dolan, for example, was a weaver who had improved two of his 100 acres on which he produced two tons of hay. Though he owned his own land, Thomas was the son of (and

¹⁰⁷ See Darroch, “Scanty Fortunes and Rural Middle-Class Formation in Nineteenth-Century Central Ontario,” *Canadian Historical Review* 79, no. 4 (December 1998): 629–30; and McInnis, “Marketable Surpluses,” 399. See also McInnis, “The Size Structure of Farming, Canada West, 1861.”

lived with) another weaver, Michael Dolan. Michael owned 105 acres on the Opeongo Road adjacent to his son; he had 16 improved acres on which he produced 150 bushels of potatoes and 6 tons of hay, likely for the shanty market. A clear example of occupational pluralism, Michael also owned a small weaver's shop which produced 700 yards of cloth valued in 1871 at \$525. Michael's daughter Sarah was also enumerated as a weaver and likely worked in her father's shop. The Dolan's situation illustrates the plurality of ways in which rural families could sustain themselves. As Darroch notes, and as the work of others suggests, "seasonal and lifecycle patterns of wage labouring, in agriculture, in lumbering, and in the factories, dovetailed with a variety of ways of making livings on the land, including farm tenancy, incremental farm improvement, and family migration to new lands."¹⁰⁸ Landholders in Brudenell who declared no occupation, or an occupation other than farmer, occupied an average of 93 acres, which was much higher than the average of less than 10 acres in Darroch's sample.¹⁰⁹ If half-acre and quarter-acre village lots are excluded, the average is actually 140 acres. These included merchants, inn keepers, blacksmiths, carpenters, shoe makers, a miller, and a priest.

In another outlier example, Sarah Mountney, whose husband, according to the enumerator, had left two years earlier, struggled to support her four young children on a farm that produced only a small amount of wool. However, the Mountney's were an exception. Margaret Cuddy, Eliza James, Mary Ann O'Hare, and Hannah Smallprice all

¹⁰⁸ Darroch, "Scanty Fortunes," 634. Darroch's references are to: Joy Parr, "Hired Men: Ontario Agricultural Wage Labour in Historical Perspective," *Labour / Le Travail* 15 (Spring 1985): 91–104; Terry Crowley, "Rural Labour," in *Labouring Lives*, 13–104; Ian Radforth, "The Shantymen," in *ibid.*, 204–77; Ruth Sandwell, "Rural Reconstruction: Towards a New Synthesis in Canadian History," *Histoire sociale / Social History* 27, no. 53 (1994): 1–32; and Gaffield, *Language, Schooling, and Cultural Conflict*, chapter 3.

¹⁰⁹ Darroch, "Scanty Fortunes," 634, fn. 21.

ran productive farms. These four women owned an average of 122 acres each, with an average 26 acres improved and produced an average of 40 bushels of wheat, 175 bushels of potatoes, and 110 pounds of butter among their many agricultural products. These production levels put them right around the overall means for all farms in the township.

Also excluded from the above groups are the “farmers without farms” enumerated in 1871. In his analysis of Central Ontario in 1861–71, Darroch argues the proportion of farmers without farms (9.6 per cent of farm heads) was “large enough to underscore rural class divisions in a historically prosperous region.”¹¹⁰ In Brudenell there were zero male heads of households who did not occupy their own land. There were 79 individuals who were farmers by occupation who did not occupy land, but these were either farmers’ sons or their elderly fathers.¹¹¹ In Brudenell there were actually more occupied farms (158) than there were household heads (155)! This does not mean class divisions were absent in Brudenell. An indication of class formation in rural Ontario is distribution of occupied acreage. As Table 5.10 shows, two-thirds of farms in Brudenell were middling size (70–169 acres), suggesting an egalitarian social structure. However, since land was relatively easy to acquire in Brudenell, land under cultivation is a better indicator of the character of farming in the township. Clearing land required substantial investment over years, if not generations. It was time-consuming, arduous work done mostly by hand, using tools such as brush hooks, felling axes, and crosscut saws.¹¹² It would have taken even longer

¹¹⁰ Darroch, “Scanty Fortunes,” 633.

¹¹¹ Darroch notes this was possible in his sample as well, but would require manually checking the manuscripts to confirm. See, “Scanty Fortunes,” 633, fn. 19.

¹¹² McCalla’s description of the farm-making process is especially succinct. See *Planting the Province*, 68–71. On the Ottawa Valley, see Clyde R. Patterson, *Harvests Past: Domestic and Agricultural Hand Tools and Rural Life in the Ottawa Valley, 1860-1875* (Erin, ON: Boston Mills Press, 1989), 87.

in Brudenell because of the sparse population. Population density was crucial in land development because of the potential human energy available.¹¹³ Thus clearance rates provide a way to measure farms in Brudenell against each other, and against wider trends.

In terms of cultivated acres, farms in Brudenell were smaller than the provincial average. In 1861, the average Ontario farm had a ratio of improved to occupied acres of 0.388. By 1871 the ratio had risen to 0.588.¹¹⁴ In his case study of York County in 1871, Marr found a ratio of 0.716 acres improved to acres occupied.¹¹⁵ In Brudenell, the ratio in 1861 was 0.102 and by 1871 had risen to 0.202 acres improved to acres occupied. The number of acres cleared, expressed as a percentage of acres occupied, continued to rise throughout the rest of the century (Figure 5.5) but never reached 30 per cent of the total acreage. The aggregate figure is somewhat misleading: of 257 locations recorded in the 1911 assessment roll, 69 reported no acres cleared whatsoever while 6 locations reported less than one acre cleared. If these 75 locations are removed, the total ratio of cleared to occupied acres was actually a little more than 30 per cent.

As a newly-settled township, it is not surprising that the ratio of improved to occupied acres in 1871 was so low, but the numbers here do reveal the degree to which experiences varied across the province depending on the character of the land and the timing of settlement. A small farm in a well-developed region such as York County had 40 acres under cultivation.¹¹⁶ A “finished” farm in Upper Canada, according to McInnis,

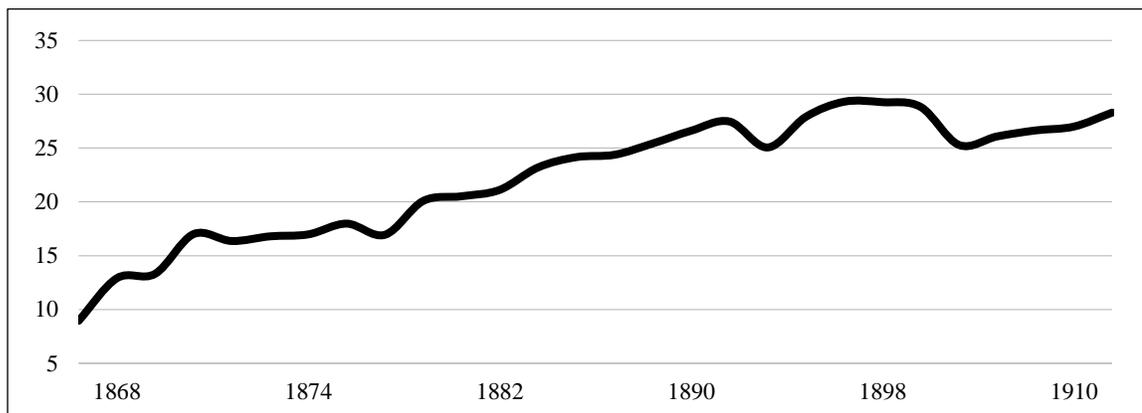
¹¹³ H.W. Taylor, J. Clarke, and W.R. Wightman, “Contrasting Land Development Rates in Southern Ontario to 1891,” in *CPRH* 5 (1986), 71.

¹¹⁴ Darroch, “Scanty Fortunes,” 635.

¹¹⁵ Marr, “Did Farm Size Matter? An 1871 Case Study,” *CPRH* 6 (1988): 282.

¹¹⁶ Marr, “Did Farm Size Matter?”

FIGURE 5.5
Acres Cleared as a Percentage of Acres Occupied in Brudenell, 1867–1911



Source: Brudenell Tax Assessment Database (1863–1911).

had 70 cleared acres.¹¹⁷ In Brudenell in 1871, 30 per cent of farms met Marr’s minimum while only 6 per cent met McInnis’ threshold of a profitable farm. Compared to Central Ontario, where over a third of farms had 70 or more improved acres, Brudenell farmers were behind.¹¹⁸ However, in Nova Scotia in the same time period, the minimum needed for a self-sustaining farm was only 30 improved acres.¹¹⁹ By this standard, just over half of the farm families in Brudenell met the minimum requirement in 1871. However, by 1911, 80 per cent of farms met the 30-acre minimum, while 45 per cent had reached the 70-acre mark. Given the first lots in Brudenell were settled in 1855, this trajectory is actually quite comparable to the provincial figures. So, while farms in Brudenell in 1871 were smaller and likely less productive than the provincial average, this was due at least in part to the timing of settlement and cannot be attributed entirely to the quality of the land or poor farming practices, as has been suggested.

¹¹⁷ McInnis, “Size Structure of Farming,” 322.

¹¹⁸ Darroch, “Scanty Fortunes,” 635.

¹¹⁹ Rusty Bitterman, Robert MacKinnon, and Graeme Wynn, “Of Inequality and Interdependence in the Nova Scotian Countryside, 1850–70,” *Acadiensis* 18 (Autumn 1988): 12.

In general the family farm in Brudenell was an extensive operation. For example, 74 of 158 farms recorded production in more than half of 25 agricultural categories.¹²⁰ Of the crops reported by 50% or more farms, potatoes, hay, and milk cows were the most common products (see Table 5.11). Nearly 90 per cent of farms reported producing these crops. The majority of medium and large farms in Brudenell reported production across all of the categories in Table 5.11. Though smaller farms tended toward specialization, the small (absolute) number of these farms makes it difficult to draw any conclusions from this finding. However, the results in Table 5.11 do confirm Brudenell was in line with the tendency of Ontario farmers to diversify their production in the second half of the nineteenth century.¹²¹ As McCalla argues for Upper Canada in 1870: “Everywhere the rural economy involved wheat, cattle, and forest products; specialization was nuanced, not absolute. The essence of the rural economy was its balance, not its specialization.”¹²² In this sense at least, Brudenell was no different.

In terms of agricultural output, however, farms in Brudenell were different. As Table 5.12 shows, per capita outputs of some crops were close to the provincial average, while others deviated. Farms in Brudenell produced about the same amounts of hay (surprisingly), butter, and wool, and owned nearly equivalent stocks of horses, cattle, sheep, and pigs. Outputs of wheat, barley, peas, and corn were lower in Brudenell, while oats were emphasized, likely due to the shanty market. Most striking is the production of

¹²⁰ These were: spring wheat, fall wheat, barley, oats, rye, peas, beans, corn, potatoes, turnips, beets, carrots, hay, horses, colts, oxen, milk cows, steers/heifers, sheep, swine, cattle killed, sheep killed, swine killed, butter, and cheese.

¹²¹ Sandwell, “Rural Reconstruction,” 11.

¹²² McCalla, *Planting the Province*, 243.

TABLE 5.11
Percentage of Farms Reporting Selected Produce or Stock in Brudenell, 1871

	Size of farm		
	Small 1–69 acres	Medium 70–169 acres	Large 170+ acres
Number of farms	5	99	54
Spring wheat	20	74	78
Oats	40	74	81
Potatoes	60	87	93
Hay	80	79	96
Butter	80	76	89
Pork	40	71	85
Mutton	20	52	69
Wool	40	60	80
Horses	40	60	70
Milk Cows	80	81	93
Steers/heifers	60	69	81
Sheep	60	61	80
Swine	40	76	89

Source: 1871 Brudenell Census Database. Includes crops reported by 50% or more farms only.

potatoes at a rate more than double the provincial average. One might speculate the high proportion of Irish Catholics in Brudenell caused this, but this stereotype has elsewhere been shown false.¹²³ In Brudenell, Irish farms had on average 1.6 acres in potatoes while non-Irish farms had about 1.3 acres. Craig suggests that 1871 was a bumper year for potatoes in New Brunswick, though the provincial average for Ontario in the same year suggests Brudenell was unusual.¹²⁴ The answer may lie in the versatility of the humble potato. Potatoes were a subsistence crop, often one of the first crops planted on a new farm, but they could also be used as fodder, and were important to the shanty market.¹²⁵

¹²³ Clarke, *The Ordinary People of Essex*, 272.

¹²⁴ Craig, *Backwoods Consumers*, 165.

¹²⁵ Gaffield, *Language, Schooling, and Cultural Conflict*, 67 and 80.

TABLE 5.12
Output of Selected Farm Products in Brudenell and Ontario, 1871

	Brudenell		Ontario	
	Total	Per Capita	Total (000)	Per Capita
<i>Output</i>				
Wheat (bu)	6,275	6.5	14,033	8.7
Oats (bu)	15,787	16.3	22,139	13.7
Barley (bu)	561	0.6	9,461	5.8
Rye (bu)	582	0.6	548	0.3
Peas (bu)	1,399	1.5	7,654	4.7
Corn (bu)	12	0.01	3,148	1.9
Potatoes (bu)	26,515	27.4	17,139	10.6
Hay (tons)	1,596	1.7	1,805	1.1
Butter (lb)	20,788	21.5	37,624	23.2
Wool (lb)	3,333	3.5	6,411	4.0
<i>Stock</i>				
Horses	178	0.2	489	0.3
Oxen	72	0.07	48	0.03
Cattle	719	0.7	1,355	0.8
Sheep	941	1.0	1,515	0.9
Swine	470	0.5	875	0.5

Source: 1871 Brudenell Census Database. Ontario data from McCalla, *Planting the Province*, 267, Table 5.3.

Increasing potato production was one way for farm families to fill out their household diet, make up for the shortfall in other feed crops, reduce impact on soils strained by overproduction of hay and oats, and still gain extra income from the market.¹²⁶

In terms of marketable surpluses in 1871, did Brudenell farms differ considerably from other regions? As in our discussion of 1861 above, I will use McInnis as a guide to estimating potential surpluses a decade later. Production is estimated based on amounts given in the agricultural census and consumption by the factors outlined by McInnis.¹²⁷

As we can see in Table 5.13, by these calculations, the township as a whole produced

¹²⁶ Craig makes a similar argument in *Backwoods Consumers*, 162.

¹²⁷ McInnis, "Marketable Surpluses," 405.

TABLE 5.13
Estimated Marketable Surpluses of Selected Crops in Brudenell, 1871

Commodity	Total Surplus / Deficit	Value (\$)	Mean per Farm	Value (\$) per Farm
Wheat (bu)	1,378	1,378	8.7	8.70
Hay (tons)	1,291	13,452	8.2	85.44
Oats (bu)	11,132	2,037	70.5	12.90
Potatoes (bu)	16,802	8,402	106.3	53.18
Beef (lb)	56,388	3,834	356.9	24.27
Pork (lb)	-8,671	-971	-54.9	-6.15
Mutton (lb)	8,324		52.7	
Butter (lb)	-15290	-2,722	-96.8	-17.23
Total Value		25,410		161.11

Source: My calculations are based on 1871 Brudenell Census Database. Values are based on Toronto market prices in 1870. See McCalla, *Planting the Province*, 340–41, Table C.2. McCalla’s table does not provide values for mutton.

modest surpluses of some crops (wheat, potatoes, and mutton) and showed deficits in others (pork and butter).¹²⁸ Combined with mutton, the large surplus of beef could help to explain the deficit in pork production. This is somewhat surprising given the presence of the shanty market and its traditional demand for pork. However, beef production on the depot farms in Brudenell in 1861 was also high, so perhaps there was a local taste for steak. Overall, a higher proportion of large farms produced surpluses than did medium-sized farms (Table 5.14). A majority of large farms produced surpluses across every

¹²⁸ These calculations are necessarily imprecise. Historians use various estimates for the amounts of hay and oats consumed by farm and non-farm animals. It is impossible to establish any definitive standard. Little discusses this difficulty in *Crofters and Habitants*, 143. My estimates are for total consumption less amount of time spent on pasture (see pp. 198–199). In their study of the northern United States, Atack and Bateman use a standard of a half-ton of hay per head of cattle and horses, but that seems low for Brudenell (like Winslow) given its longer winters. See Jeremy Atack and Fred Bateman, *To Their Own Soil: Agriculture in the Antebellum North* (Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1987), 294, n. 54. In a study of agricultural efficiency in Lower Canada, Lewis and McInnis estimate much higher levels of hay and oats required, but base this assumption on contemporary recommendations. See Frank D. Lewis and Marvin McInnis, “Agricultural Output and Efficiency in Lower Canada, 1851,” *Research in Economic History* 9 (1984): 45–87. Indeed, guides such as Bailey’s *Cyclopedia*, on which Urquhart’s estimates are based, recommends animals be fed primarily on cut fodder and to avoid pasturing, if possible, due to the likelihood of poisoning from uncontrolled feeding. See L. H. Bailey, *Cyclopedia of American Agriculture, vol. 3: Animals* (London: Macmillan, 1910), chapter 4.

TABLE 5.14
Percentage of Farms in Brudenell with Marketable Surpluses of Selected Crops, by Farm Size, 1871

	Size of farm		
	Small	Medium	Large
	1–69 acres	70–169 acres	170+ acres
Number of farms	5	99	54
Wheat	0	52	69
Hay	80	77	93
Oats	40	67	80
Potatoes	40	72	85
Beef	80	33	52
Pork	0	31	52
Mutton	20	41	65
Butter	60	8	33

Source: 1871 Brudenell Census Database.

category except butter, while medium-sized farms were more often deficient in meat products. This suggests the possibility meat consumption was higher among wealthier families and fits with the overall increase in meat production in Ontario over the second half of the century.¹²⁹ The deficiency in butter production fits with McInnis' results for the 1861 census.¹³⁰ While McInnis suggested underreporting of butter production in Upper Canada, it is also possible settlers purchased butter when available and made up for the shortfall in areas where they had a surplus. The modest surpluses in wheat and potatoes are in line with Little's findings for a similar shanty-oriented region in Lower Canada in the same time period. Little's surpluses for Winslow are actually lower than

¹²⁹ McInnis, "The Changing Structure of Canadian Agriculture, 1867–1897," *Journal of Economic History* 42, no. 1 (March 1982): 191–8. Our understanding of the relationship between meat consumption and wealth in nineteenth-century Ontario is still hazy. See Margaret Derry, *Ontario's Cattle Kingdom: Purebred Breeders and Their World, 1870–1920* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 134.

¹³⁰ McInnis, "Marketable Surpluses," 401.

mine for Brudenell.¹³¹ This is surprising, but suggests that farmers in Brudenell were more successful than farmers in a similar location. Or, maybe it is not surprising, given the greater participation of Winslow farmers in the production of forest products. More revealing is the fact that only 7 farms reported no surpluses in any category, while 132 farms (84 per cent) reported surpluses in three or more categories. While there were few commercially-viable farms in Brudenell, the vast majority of farms were commercial.

In Brudenell, as across the province, the farm was a family effort. The vast majority of households, though they may have hired help on occasion, did not employ full-time labourers. Table 5.15 shows a breakdown of the workforce in Brudenell by household size. Most households did not have labourers who lived with them. In fact, only two people in the entire township gave their occupation as labourer. Even if one includes servants in the category of hired live-in labour, the number is still modest at seven. As one would assume, the larger households housed a greater proportion of the workforce. The average household had three members that I will consider as working age (15–59 years). This included the father and mother and one child, while the oldest son—assuming he was over the age of thirteen and not in school—was also enumerated as a farmer.¹³² The relatively small size of the household workforce, combined with the shortage of surplus wage labour opportunities, meant farm families performed most of the everyday duties themselves, while probably participating in work bees for the larger projects such as raising barns and other outbuildings. Through such activities, “many

¹³¹ Little, *Crofters and Habitants*, 142–3.

¹³² There were no persons in Brudenell with enumerated occupations that are also under the age of 14. There was one teenager with a recorded occupation also in school.

TABLE 5.15
Workforce in Brudenell by Household Size, Age, and Sex, 1871

Household Size	Average number in household, by type			
	M15-59	F15-59	OCC	BRD
1-2	1.0	0.5	1.1	0.1
3-4	1.1	1.2	1.3	0.0
5-6	1.4	1.4	1.7	0.1
7-8	1.7	1.7	1.8	0.0
9-10	1.9	1.3	1.7	0.1
11 or more	2.2	2.5	2.3	0.3
Total	249.0	229.0	252.0	10.0
% of population	25.9	23.8	26.2	1.0

Source: 1871 Brudenell Census Database. M15-59 = males ages 15 to 59; F15-59 = females ages 15 to 59; OCC = members of the household with an enumerated occupation; and BRD = members of the household with an enumerated occupation and no discernible familial relationship to the household.

individual families were able to acquire the extra labour, skills, and equipment necessary for capital improvements, so that profitable farming could proceed.”¹³³ There is little reason to suggest Brudenell was any different.

If we take the farm size categories used above and compare them with average household size (Table 5.16), we find that larger farms were on average operated by larger households.¹³⁴ This relationship is complicated somewhat by the fact these larger farms were also marginally more likely to hire non-family labour. Of ten residents determined to be boarded labourers, seven lived in households which operated farms over 170 acres. Though larger households operated larger farms on average, there is no clear relationship between larger households and productivity as measured by marketable surpluses. Table

¹³³ Catharine A. Wilson, “Reciprocal Work Bees and the Meaning of Neighbourhood,” *Canadian Historical Review* 82, no. 3 (Sept. 2001): 436.

¹³⁴ The numbers here are similar to those found by Edward Hedican for Irish farms in Admaston Township. See Hedican, “Irish Farming Households in Eastern Canada: Domestic Production and Family Size,” *Ethnology* 42, no. 1 (Winter 2003): 28, Tables 5 and 6.

TABLE 5.16
Farm Size Compared to Average Household Size in Brudenell, 1871

	Size of farm		
	Small 1–69 acres	Medium 70–169 acres	Large 170+ acres
Number of farms	5	99	54
Average Household Size	2.0	5.7	6.7
No. of Non-Family Workers	2	1	7

Source: 1871 Brudenell Census Database.

5.17 shows average farm size (acres owned) and the percentage of farms with surpluses in selected crops sorted by household size.¹³⁵ The average acres owned by households in each size category reinforces the results shown in Table 5.16. Further, nearly the same percentage of small, medium, and large households produced surpluses of hay, oats, and potatoes, which were the three most common crops produced in the township. Fewer large households produced surpluses of wheat, while more large households produced surpluses of beef and mutton, which suggests an emphasis on meat production among larger households. Relatively little overall difference between household size and marketable surpluses suggests that in Brudenell increasing farm size was a way to provide for a larger family rather than to produce more for market.

As we saw above, land use in Brudenell was initially tied to forestry, but this did not mean that places like Brudenell were always dependent on forestry. The westward movement of the forest frontier away from Brudenell came at the same time as improved

¹³⁵ Hedican measured productive capacity in terms of the ratio of workers/consumers per acre cultivated, but used different calculations to determine the number of workers/consumers than what McInnis used in calculating marketable surpluses (see Table 5.5 above). To maintain consistency with data presented in the rest of this chapter, I am continuing to use McInnis' calculations here rather than Hedican's. See McInnis, "Marketable Surpluses," 406, Table 2 and Hedican, "Irish Farming Households," 23, Table 3.

TABLE 5.17
Percentage of Farms in Brudenell with Marketable Surpluses of Selected Crops, by Household Size, 1871

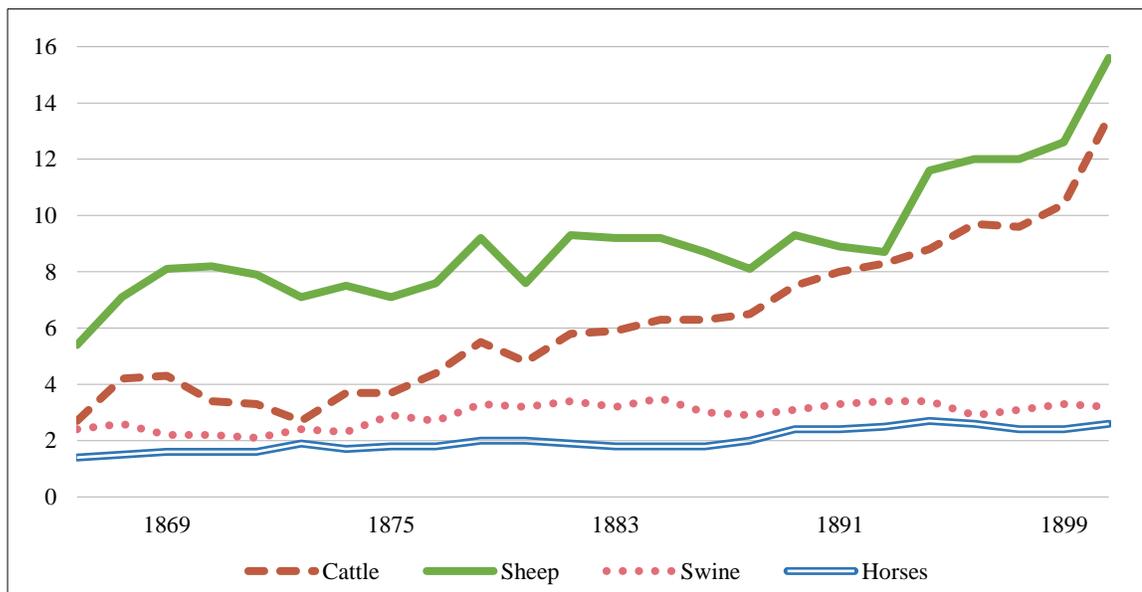
	Size of household (no. of persons)		
	Small	Medium	Large
	Less than 5	5 to 8	9 or more
Number of farms	49	76	33
Average size (acres owned)	132	155	170
Wheat	53	66	36
Hay	82	82	85
Oats	71	66	79
Potatoes	71	75	82
Beef	31	42	55
Pork	41	42	21
Mutton	31	54	64
Butter	29	18	3

Source: 1871 Brudenell Census Database.

access to markets, which allowed for both diversification and specialization catering to local markets and ecological conditions. The toll on the soil by continually producing the same crops and the slow, but gradual, improvement of local road networks through the 1870s to 1900s, all favoured a shift away from shanty-oriented production toward mixed farming, with a particular emphasis on livestock, especially sheep and cattle (Figure 5.6). Production of hay increased dramatically from 1861 to 1871, but this was accompanied by an increase in the number of livestock held by local farmers. Rather than a response to the shanty market, the rise in hay production is attributable at least in part to on-farm demand for fodder in winter. As McInnis argues, a shift from wheat to mixed farming was accomplished in Canada before 1870.¹³⁶ The transition from staples to mixed

¹³⁶ McInnis, “The Changing Structure of Canadian Agriculture,” 192. The relative importance of the wheat staple is still debated. See Peter A. Russell, *How Agriculture Made Canada: Farming in the Nineteenth Century* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2012), chapter 4.

FIGURE 5.6
Per-Farm Livestock Holdings in Brudenell, 1867–1904



Source: Brudenell Tax Assessment Database (1863–1911).

farming in Brudenell in this time period was therefore not unusual. However, Brudenell is an interesting case in the sense it seemed to skip the period of reliance on the wheat staple altogether. In Ontario, wheat production fell from 18 per cent of cultivated acreage in 1880 to just 5 per cent in 1900.¹³⁷ In Brudenell in 1871 the percentage of improved land used in wheat production was 8.6 per cent, or well below the provincial average. Potatoes made up 4.4 per cent, while hay was grown on 38.9 per cent of improved land. About 8 per cent went to turnips, oats, peas, rye, barley, carrots, beans, corn, and gardens, and the rest (about 40 per cent) was pasture. While 56 per cent of farms in 1871 reported a surplus of wheat, that surplus was worth barely \$9 per farm. In contrast, over 70 per cent of farms produced surpluses of potatoes, hay, and oats worth over \$150 per farm. Wheat was an important crop in Brudenell, but in no way was it dominant.

¹³⁷ Graeme Wynn, *Canada and Arctic North America: An Environmental History* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2007), 196.

The state of agriculture in Ontario was a concern for the provincial government in the late-nineteenth century. The OAC's 1880 survey was not a systematic assessment of agricultural production, but does provide estimates at the township and county levels, which help to place Brudenell in its local context. When asked about classification of lands for agriculture, the respondent for Brudenell reported one quarter of the land in the township was second class, which meant adequate, and the remainder third class, which meant unsuited for farming. This ratio was close to the county as a whole, in which 23 per cent of land was considered second class and about 68 per cent third class.¹³⁸ The respondent for Brudenell reported hay, oats, and beef were the chief products of the township which, he argued, was "well adapted for stock raising" despite the lack of first-class agricultural land.¹³⁹ The average acres cleared per person in the county was 7.7, while in Brudenell the number of acres cleared was 12 per person, which put Brudenell fourth among twenty-one rural municipalities.¹⁴⁰ Brudenell was consistently below county averages of livestock per person, but this did not appear to be a concern.

New markets were beginning to open to local farmers in the 1880s as settlement expanded into the Canadian west. The National Policy had some impact on the local economy in Brudenell. In 1883, a parliamentary committee investigating the effects of tariffs on agriculture sent a circular to rural townships with eighteen questions.¹⁴¹ John S. J. Watson replied on behalf of Brudenell that it was not in the local interest to allow duty

¹³⁸ OAC, *Report*, 2-B, 504–5.

¹³⁹ OAC, *Report*, 2-B, 516.

¹⁴⁰ OAC, *Report*, 2-B, 520.

¹⁴¹ Canada, *Report of the Select Committee Appointed by the House of Commons to Enquire into the Operation of the Tariff on the Agricultural Interests of the Dominion* (Ottawa: MacLean Roger, 1883), 19–20.

free produce from the United States.¹⁴² The duty on American corn, for example, allayed local fears after lumberers threatened importation of cheap corn in order to drive down prices for oats, while duties on American wheat and flour stabilized local prices for the same. The local price of horses had risen by 50 per cent since 1878 and farmers had begun exporting surplus horses to Manitoba. This was a market that was surely temporary until Manitoba farmers began their own breeding programs, but farmers in Brudenell were in this way able to take advantage of westward expansion, rather than it being the cause of their demise.¹⁴³ As in 1880, Watson attested to the quality of the soil for raising grains to feed livestock, but reasserted that Brudenell was too far from railway access for products like vegetables, poultry, eggs, and butter to be affected by the tariff. These goods were destined for the household or for the local market. The increased prices paid for wheat and flour helped local farmers take advantage of a substantial wheat crop in 1882. As markets for labour and produce were strong, Watson reported “there is not emigration to the States talked of as in former years...the general condition [of farmers] is vastly improved [since 1878]. There is double the amount of cash moving around to what there was three years ago.”¹⁴⁴ The final question from the survey asked if the government should legislate any changes to improve the condition of farmers.

Watson’s reply reveals local desires had not changed much since the 1860s:

We want good leading roads through the county, put into and kept in good repair. The loss to the farmer in farrier work, harness, wheelwright repairs is a serious tax

¹⁴² Canada, *Report of the Select Committee on the Operation of the Tariff*, 68–9.

¹⁴³ Little suggests there was also a growing urban market for horses. See, “Ox and Horse Power in Rural Canada,” 69–70.

¹⁴⁴ Canada, *Report of the Select Committee on the Operation of the Tariff*, 69.

and impediment. Statute labour is a farce. The so-called road repairs, under Government grants through members, is thinly disguised wholesale bribery.¹⁴⁵

In addition to improved roads, Watson and others sought rail links to connect Brudenell farms with urban markets.¹⁴⁶ Even if a branch line could not be built to Brudenell, a rail connection at Killaloe would have reduced the distance to a railway from 35 miles down to just eight. Proponents of the failed-settlement narrative generally view the railway as the beginning of the end for settlements along the Opeongo Line because the road was no longer a primary transportation route for supplies to the interior shanty camps.¹⁴⁷ This view is based on the assumption that settlers were dependent on the shanty market. But, as we can see, that market was just one part of a larger economic base.

Local reports from later in the 1880s reveal both the fragility and adaptability of the local economy. Watson reported to the *Monetary Times* in 1887:

The continued drought in the summer and fall has been followed by damage to the wheat in quality and yield and to oats in weight. Business, however, continues good, slightly in advance of last year. Lumberers are active in consequence of the large area burned over during the fall by extensive forest fires. Prices for farm produce are good.¹⁴⁸

The value of the shanty market to the local economy in Brudenell was still apparent in 1887, though it was just one part of a complex local economic ecology. In the context of declining wages in the province, John Whelan commented on a local labour shortage in

¹⁴⁵ Canada, *Report of the Select Committee on the Operation of the Tariff*, 69.

¹⁴⁶ As discussed in chapter four, p. 167, Watson and another Rockingham merchant, William Haryett, were shareholders and provisional directors in a railway company which was set to build a line through nearby Hagarty Township. See Canada, "An Act to Incorporate the Ottawa and Parry Sound Railway Company," *Acts of the Parliament of Canada, 2nd Session of the 6th Parliament* (Ottawa: Brown Chamberlin, 1888), chap. 65, section 1.

¹⁴⁷ For example, Lee-Whiting, "The Opeongo Road: An Early Colonization Scheme," 82.

¹⁴⁸ John S. J. Watson, in "Letters from Subscribers," *The Monetary Times, Trade Review and Insurance Chronicle* 21, no. 23 (December 1887): 696.

the same year: “money is scarce and people are afraid of hard times.”¹⁴⁹ In contrast, Joseph Kinder remarked on the quality of pasture that year: “Horses, cattle, and sheep are in good condition. The season until the last few weeks has been very favorable for dairying as the pastures were good.”¹⁵⁰ The next year, Whelan and Kinder commented on crop failures and damage due to extended drought.¹⁵¹ The relationship with lumbering was strained. Brudenell still counted on the shanty market for local produce, but the falling off of lumbering activity in the township, combined with the high wages paid by the industry elsewhere were drawing labour away, not just for the winter, but into July and August, leaving farmers to fend for themselves.¹⁵² Reports from Frontenac, Simcoe, Muskoka, and Prescott Counties noted the same problem.

Provincial authorities tried to encourage economic development by pursuing new immigrants. Alexander Kirkwood’s *Underdeveloped Lands in Northern and Western Ontario* (1878), for example, was part of a renewed push by the Mowat government for agricultural colonization in the north.¹⁵³ The volume reprinted the original surveyor’s reports and noted the presence of local services, but said little else about Brudenell.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁹ Ontario, *Annual Report of the Bureau of Industries for the Province of Ontario for 1887*, 194 and 200.

¹⁵⁰ Ontario, *Annual Report of the Bureau of Industries for 1887*, 129.

¹⁵¹ Ontario, *Annual Report of the Bureau of Industries for the Province of Ontario, 1888* (Toronto: Warwick & Sons, 1889), 23 and 43.

¹⁵² Ontario, *Annual Report of the Bureau of Industries for 1888*, 141.

¹⁵³ A. Kirkwood and J. J. Murphy, *The Underdeveloped Lands in Northern and Western Ontario* (Toronto: Hunter, Rose & Co., 1878). See also H. V. Nelles, *The Politics of Development: Forests, Mines & Hydro-Electric Power in Ontario, 1848–1941, Second Edition* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005), 53.

¹⁵⁴ Kirkwood and Murphy, *Undeveloped Lands*, 156.

Kirkwood's enthusiasm soon waned, but others stepped in to promote colonization.¹⁵⁵ A local directory published in 1888 tried to encourage investment by interpreting the earlier OAC report in the best possible light, saying Brudenell contains "a considerable area of good farming land, but [is] as yet remote from railway communication. [Its] agricultural resources are only beginning to be developed."¹⁵⁶ The author suggested an untapped reserve of agricultural potential, rather than a township on the verge of decline. As we saw in chapter two, such reports reveal the re-imagining of the local landscape:

It used to be the opinion that the land in Renfrew was generally not well adapted for farming purposes...but a better knowledge of its agricultural resources, acquired of late years, has served to reverse this opinion and to prove that Renfrew has as much good farming land as any county in Ontario.¹⁵⁷

This new image essentially redefined "second class" land as fit for agriculture, which raised the ratio of land suitable for farming in the county from 10 per cent to 35 per cent. Though these tracts did not attract huge sums of new immigrants, the number of locations recorded in the assessment rolls suggests a period of stability in the last decades of the century, and a decline that only began after 1910 (Figure 5.7).

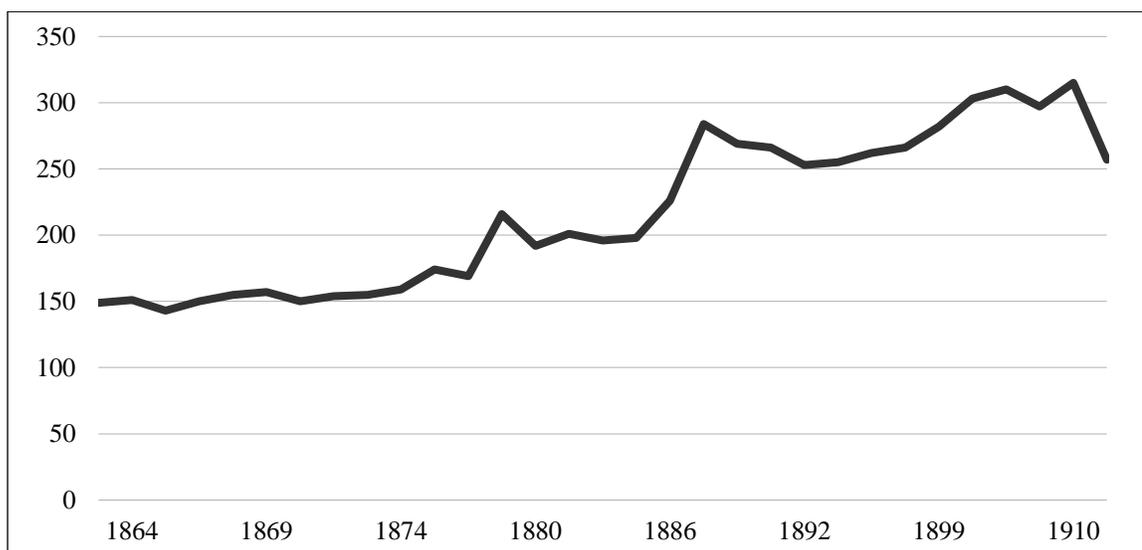
A recurring element in the historiography of the Ottawa-Huron Tract is that when settlers cleared lands and tried to farm, they found the soils too sandy or rocky to be very productive, leading many to pursue more promising opportunities elsewhere. The above discussion suggests that contemporaries were concerned about out-migration, but also had some hope for the future. Other authors emphasize a story of continuity, wherein

¹⁵⁵ In the 1880s, Kirkwood was a proponent of conservation and leading figure in the development of Algonquin Provincial Park, which is situated just north and west of Brudenell. See Gerald Killan, *Protected Places: A History of Ontario's Provincial Park System* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1993), 10.

¹⁵⁶ W. J. Gallagher, *The Renfrew County Directory* (Pembroke: Standard Publishing, 1888), 47.

¹⁵⁷ Gallagher, *Renfrew County Directory*, 4–5.

FIGURE 5.7
Number of Persons Assessed for Taxes in Brudenell, 1863–1911¹⁵⁸



Source: Brudenell Tax Assessment Database (1863–1911).

settlers stayed for generations, persevering in the face of substantial obstacles.¹⁵⁹ What happened in Brudenell? Record linkage across the study period can help answer this question by providing a measure of persistence among settlers in Brudenell. Linking various historical records into one central database has been a useful tool for historians for decades.¹⁶⁰ Cross-disciplinary research into nineteenth-century processes and social structures has spawned significant collaborative efforts to articulate and refine methods of both manual and automatic record linkage.¹⁶¹ For the purposes of this study, a manual

¹⁵⁸ The sharp upward spikes in 1879 and 1889 are the result of a number of farmers' sons being added to the roll for statute labour and electoral purposes. No property was associated with these men.

¹⁵⁹ Bernadette Burbage, *Early Families: Our Lady of the Angels Parish, Brudenell, Ontario, 1858–2008* (Renfrew, ON: Renfrew Printing, 2008).

¹⁶⁰ For example, Stephan Thernstrom, *Poverty and Progress: Social Mobility in a Nineteenth-Century City* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964). See also: Ivan P. Fellegi and Alan B. Sunter, "A Theory for Record Linkage," *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 64, no. 328 (1969): 1183–1210.

¹⁶¹ For example the "RecordLink" workshop at the University of Guelph, April 6–7, 2009. For a product of a collaborative venture see Peter Baskerville and Kris Inwood, eds., *Lives in Transition: Longitudinal Analysis from Historical Sources* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015).

approach to record linkage is used. Manual linkage generally produces higher retrieval rates than automatic methods though retains certain biases, such as low retrieval rates for young adults who married or moved away.¹⁶²

My intent is to measure persistence in Brudenell over a roughly fifty-year time period. The goal then is not only to track a particular group of people, but to track a place and people's connection to land within that place. The immediate purpose is to respond to the question of land quality and settler motivation by demonstrating the degree to which people stayed or left the location. At the same time, we can add to the larger discussion of persistence and mobility that is ongoing in the historiography of nineteenth-century Ontario. In his 1981 study of geographic and social mobility in Peel County, David Gagan described a society on the move:

Families moved into and left the community at an astonishing rate, so high in fact that only one-quarter of the families enumerated at census time would have been there since the previous census and would stay until the next enumeration ten years later.¹⁶³

For over three decades, Gagan's interpretation has remained the benchmark of settler mobility in Upper Canada, representing a school of thought characterizing nineteenth-century North America "as an era of extraordinary movement."¹⁶⁴ Recent studies temper Gagan's emphasis on mobility and point to the significance of methodological choices that influence one's findings. Baskerville argues in a 2015 chapter that, "although

¹⁶² See for example the discussion in Sherry Olson, "Ladders of Mobility in a Fast-Growing Industrial City: Two by Two and Twenty Years Later," in *Lives in Transition*, 199.

¹⁶³ David Gagan, *Hopeful Travellers: Families, Land, and Social Change in Mid-Victorian Peel County, Canada West* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 6.

¹⁶⁴ See Harris, *The Reluctant Land*, 373. The quote is from Baskerville, "Wilson Benson Revisited: Movement and Persistence in Rural Perth County, Ontario, 1871–81," in *Lives in Transition*, 141.

movement in [Logan Township, in Perth County] was significant, it was significantly less than that reported by many previous studies of movement and persistence in nineteenth-century North American rural communities.”¹⁶⁵ By linking household heads found in the 1871 census of Logan to the 1880 U.S. and 1881 Canadian censuses, Baskerville identified a 73 per cent persistence rate among successful links.¹⁶⁶

Three methods of record linkage are used in the present study of Brudenell. The first begins with a hand-drawn copy of H. O. Wood’s 1857 survey map, which indicated the names and locations of some of the earliest settlers in the township.¹⁶⁷ These names were manually linked forward to names and locations in the 1871 census database. One drawback of this map is that it does not label any locations on the Opeongo Road, though this deficiency is addressed in the second and third methods described below. However, when linked to the 1871 census, the map gives us a quick indication of how long some of the “original” settlers had been on their particular properties, or in the township at all. An exact match is considered a name and location from 1857 which is identical to an 1871 record. Out of 96 individual name/location combinations, there are 39 which have an exact match in the 1871 file (40 per cent). Several of these matches belong to the same person owning more than one lot. In terms of the names alone a higher success rate is achieved: just fewer than 78 per cent (49 out of 63) can be linked in some way to 1871. This still does not exhaust the possibilities for linkage between these two sources. If one

¹⁶⁵ Baskerville, “Wilson Benson Revisited,” 163.

¹⁶⁶ Baskerville, “Wilson Benson Revisited,” 146.

¹⁶⁷ H. O. Wood, *Brudenell* [Map] (Ottawa, 1857), LAC, G3463.R4:3B78 1857 .W66 H2.

takes into account weaker links, such as a similarly-spelled name at a different location, or the name of a known descendant, the number of probable links is 86.5 per cent.

In a second exercise, family names were identified in the 1871 database and used in a keyword search in the FamilySearch.org 1881 database. Name, age, occupation, and family composition were the primary variables used to determine a link. None of these of course is a perfect indicator of a match given the tendency for misspellings, for family compositions to shift over time, and for people to change their age and occupation from one census to the next.¹⁶⁸ However, taken together, they provide a reasonably accurate form of linkage. By this method, I attempted to trace all 965 persons enumerated in the 1871 census of Brudenell. The process yielded three types of result: positive, negative, and ambiguous links. A positive link was an exact match between the two census years. A negative link meant confirmation that a person or family was no longer in the township (i.e. they were found somewhere else). An ambiguous link was one in which the person could not be found, but there were several possible explanations: a person could have died in the interim, or in the case of young women, they may have married within the community and changed their name. Of the 965 total individuals in the 1871 database, 427 were positively identified in 1881. There were 106 ambiguous matches, and 432 negative cases. At minimum, then, we have a persistence rate of 44 per cent, which is between Gagan's results for Peel and Baskerville's results for Logan.

¹⁶⁸ On the tendency of respondents to "falsify" their age, see Lisa Dillon, *The Shady Side of Fifty: Age and Old Age in Late Victorian Canada and the United States* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008). On occupational mobility see Gordon Darroch, "Lives in Motion: Revisiting the 'Agricultural Ladder' in 1860s Ontario, a Study of Linked Microdata," and Luiza Antoine, Peter Baskerville, Kris Inwood, and J. Andrew Ross, "Change amid Continuity in Canadian Work Patterns during the 1870s," both in *Lives in Transition*, 93–119 and 120–140.

The third linkage method used is based on the Brudenell assessment rolls database, which includes names and locations for property holders enumerated between 1863 and 1911. From 1864 to 1874, 90 of 151 property holders were successfully linked (60 per cent) by name and location. The advantage of manual linkage, and in this case, of having a database with almost annual (as opposed to decennial) coverage, is that I can try to explain the failed links in more detail. For example, of the 61 property holders who could not be linked from 1864 to 1874, nine of them show up again in later assessments. Joseph Kinder, for example, was an early settler who came with John S. J. Watson from England and settled at Rockingham in 1858. He is missing from the 1874 assessment roll, but his wife Elizabeth was recorded that year instead. Kinder was recorded on every roll in the database up to 1911. Why was he not recorded in 1874? Why was Elizabeth recorded instead? The answer is a mystery. As we saw in chapter four, the local council had considerable discretion in deciding who would and would not be listed on the assessment roll, but there is no reference to Kinder's case in the council minutes.

For the Catholic settlers in Brudenell I have the additional advantage that local genealogists have spent considerable time tracing the original congregation of Our Lady of the Angels parish in Brudenell.¹⁶⁹ Others who were missing from the 1874 roll show up again in later years on the same land they were on in 1864. The case of James Whelan is particularly interesting, as this passage from Burbage attests:

Mary (Meehan) Whelan died January 19, 1871 leaving James with eight children. In the 1870's James took all but his eldest child (who had married) and joined the exodus to the Dakotas. He remained there only a few months. He returned to Brudenell and is listed as an "inn-keeper" possibly at Payette's hotel which came

¹⁶⁹ See Burbage, *Early Families*. Burbage did her own research based on censuses, cemetery records, and parish registers, but also incorporated the research of other local genealogists into her reconstruction of the first Catholic families in Brudenell, who made up the majority of the population.

under Whelan management...Family researchers may be interested to learn that James had lost a leg some time between his farming career and his inn-keeping. Perhaps he met with an accident in the West which changed his plans. He died July 1, 1896 at Brudenell.¹⁷⁰

Historians spend considerable effort trying to determine the motivations of people who moved from one place to the other. Sometimes there are clear answers, but other times there are too many variables. Looking at the 1864–74 linkage, 31 of 61 failed links can be explained. Twelve died and their land was inherited by a family member. Ten others emigrated. According to Burbage, some went as far as Barry's Bay (about 15 miles up the Opeongo) where they became prominent members of that community; others went to the United States. Two could not be traced, but other family members resided on their land. If we exclude deaths, and those who were found in later assessment rolls, the persistence rate in Brudenell between 1864 and 1874 was actually 90 of 130 cases, or 69 per cent, which is very close to Baskerville's results for Logan in 1871–81.¹⁷¹ While not denying the importance of mobility, from these figures we can conclude that Brudenell was relatively normal in the range of mobility patterns for nineteenth-century Ontario.

The assessment rolls also allow me to measure the number of occurrences of names across a long time span on an almost annual basis. Of 151 individuals in the 1864 roll, only 16 were never counted again in subsequent years, while 93 were counted in at least ten later assessments. More challenging is to connect settlers and their descendants from 1864 to 1911. Seventeen of those who were counted in 1864 (almost ten per cent) were counted again in 1911, 57 years later! Another 46 had family members who were

¹⁷⁰ Burbage, *Early Families*, 221.

¹⁷¹ Baskerville, "Wilson Benson Revisited," 146–7.

TABLE 5.18
Persistent Property Holders and their Descendants in Brudenell, 1864 and 1911

	1864		1911	
	Persistent	Other	Persistent	Other
Number of farms	63	83	99	108
Average farm size				
Acres occupied	150	130	198	219
Acres cleared			69	62
Average value of all real property				
\$ per farm	179	127	629	481
\$ per acre	0.84	1.02	3.17	2.20

Source: Brudenell Tax Assessment Database (1863–1911). The number of farms includes only those who reported one or more acre occupied. This excludes some farmers' sons who were assessed in 1911, but who did not occupy their own land. No clearance data are provided in the 1864 roll.

still resident in 1911, for an overall family persistence rate of 42 per cent. As Brian Osborne suggests in his study of Frontenac County, one measure of a successful colonization scheme, even in an area with a high rate of turnover, was “the survival of a small demographic nucleus [that] could provide for the future infilling of the area being colonized.”¹⁷² These family links to 1864 represent 48 per cent of the individuals recorded in the 1911 roll (124 of 257). This level of persistence suggests strong family ties to the land. As Table 5.18 illustrates, those who persisted to 1911 owned, on average, slightly larger (in terms of acres cleared) and more valuable farms than did those who were not part of the 1864 group. The persistent group owned farms that were nearly the 70 cleared-acres estimated by McInnis as commercially viable. Sylvester and Leonard have found that early settlers in Kansas spread themselves out over the land,

¹⁷² Brian S. Osborne, “Frontier Settlement in Eastern Ontario in the Nineteenth Century: A Study in Changing Perceptions of Land and Opportunity,” *The Frontier: Comparative Studies*, volume 1, ed. David Harry Miller and Jerome O. Steffen (Norman: Oklahoma University Press, 1977), 203.

resulting in lower average farm sizes in the first decades of settlement. Over time, as “structural circumstances changed, when access to land was determined more by long-resident families themselves, the route to growth was increasingly shaped by being a member of the persistent population.”¹⁷³ The figures presented here do not confirm the reasons why some stayed and others left, but it seems unlikely that poverty was the cause of their persistence. The simple fact settlers stayed says something about their connection to the land despite the instability of the shanty market in the late nineteenth century.

The shanty market was just one economic driver in nineteenth-century Brudenell. It was important, but did not by itself define the material basis of settlement. In this way, the economy of Brudenell was much like the rest of rural Canada in which household maintenance was based on three economic pillars:

self-provisioning (producing for their own consumption), producing for sale in the market, and working away from the farm or household for wages. As long as all three were available, there was a basis for independence, and that in turns helps to explain why many rural families persisted in conditions that seemed, to outsiders at least, to offer a lower standard of living than could be obtained elsewhere.¹⁷⁴

Agriculture for both domestic and market production beyond the shanties was also important. Few farms in Brudenell ever reached sizes like those suggested by McInnis as commercially viable. However, most farms did produce surpluses in both 1861 and 1871 and continued to grow in the decades following, especially those started by the earliest settlers. These farms were engaged in market activities even if they were not commercial farms. Occupational pluralism was one way for farm families in Brudenell to maintain

¹⁷³ Kenneth M. Sylvester and Susan Hautaniemi Leonard, “Revisiting Wealth on the American Frontier: Farm Growth, Inequality, and Social Persistence in Kansas, 1875–1940,” in *Lives in Transition*, 184.

¹⁷⁴ Douglas McCalla, review of *Canada’s Rural Majority: Households, Environments, and Economies, 1870–1940*, by Ruth W. Sandwell, *Histoire sociale / Social History* 50, no. 101 (May 2017): 217. See also Sandwell, *Canada’s Rural Majority*, 4–5.

their presence on the land and establish future generations in this place. The potential income generated from farming, combined with the potential income generated by seasonal off-farm labour, and the diverse, balanced subsistence strategy practiced on most farms suggests the material basis for settlement in Brudenell was uncertain, but flexible enough to support a small farm-owning population, even if it could not support long-term population growth. This conclusion is verified by the persistence of a core group of settlers from the 1860s into the first decades of the twentieth century.

Chapter 6

Did Ethnicity Matter? Ethnicity, Religion, and Settlement Patterns in Brudenell, 1855–1910

In the crowded land market of nineteenth-century Ontario, Brudenell was a place where families and communities had room to grow. Even if the agricultural capacity of the land was marginal compared to earlier-settled parts of the province, the settlement structure, the local decision-making processes, and the local economy provided settlers with opportunities to acquire land and form communities which remained in place into the twentieth century. The individuals and families who formed these communities came from a variety of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. In some ways they formed distinct, physically and culturally separated groups. Yet as we have seen, they also worked together across cultural boundaries. They shared in the process of governing and in responding to common local economic, social, and political challenges.

This chapter takes a more detailed look at the people who undertook the project of colonization in Brudenell, focussing specifically on the relationships among ethnicity, religion, and settlement patterns. In estimating the ethnic composition of the township, I use data from censuses, tax assessments, and Crown Lands' records to describe both the initial character of settlement, and changes over time. I then use these same sources to examine patterns of migration, spatial distribution in the township, property holding, and farming practices, in order to compare the behaviours of settlers among the three main ethnic communities in Brudenell. Though there is little evidence of overt ethnic conflict in Brudenell, some of these patterns—especially spatial distribution—were clearly correlated to the ethnic backgrounds of the settlers.

Why focus on ethnicity? First, in a broad sense, ethnicity mattered to the articulation of structural patterns in nineteenth-century Ontario.¹ At the same time, broad regional studies such as that by Darroch and Soltow reveal little about the relationship between local contexts and cultural patterns of settlement.² Which leads to the second reason for focussing on ethnicity: this approach allows for comparison with other local studies which use ethnicity as a basis for examining settlement patterns in nineteenth-century Ontario. In his landmark study of Irish settlers in Leeds and Lansdowne Township in central Ontario, Akenson argues that our understanding of the success of Irish immigrants in Canada requires “intensive local study”—something that was lacking in 1984.³ A number of important works have appeared since then which have added to our knowledge of the ways in which the settlement process was influenced by both ethnic (Irish) background, and specific local circumstances.⁴ Third, not only can this approach lead to a greater understanding of the diversity of experiences within a particular ethnic

¹ Gordon Darroch and Lee Soltow, *Property and Inequality in Victorian Ontario: Structural Patterns and Cultural Communities in the 1871 Census* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 17.

² Darroch and Soltow, *Property and Inequality*, 12.

³ Donald H. Akenson, *The Irish in Ontario: A Study in Rural History, 2nd Edition* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1999), 40.

⁴ On the Irish as an ethnic group, see for example: Bruce S. Elliott, *Irish Migrants in the Canadas: A New Approach, 2nd Edition* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2004), David Wilson, ed., *Irish Nationalism in Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2009), Cecil J. Houston and William J. Smyth, *Irish Emigration and Canadian Settlement: Patterns, Links, and Letters* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), Catharine A. Wilson, *A New Lease on Life: Landlords, Tenants, and Immigrants in Ireland and Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1994), Akenson, *Ireland, Sweden, and the Great European Migration, 1815–1914* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011), and Mark McGowan, *Creating Canadian Historical Memory: The Case of the Famine Migration of 1847* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 2006). Some examples of other local studies of Irish migrants include: Glenn J. Lockwood, “Irish Immigrants and the ‘Critical Years’ in Eastern Ontario: The Case of Montague Township, 1821–1881,” in *Canadian Papers in Rural History*, vol. 4, ed. Donald H. Akenson (Gananoque, ON: Langdale Press, 1984), 153–178, Pauline Ryan, “A Study of Irish Immigration to North Hastings County,” *Ontario History* 83, no. 1 (1991): 23–37, and Derek N. Tucker, “Successful Pioneers: Irish Catholic Settlers in the Township of Hibbert, Ontario, 1845–1887,” (MA Thesis, McMaster University, 2001).

group, but it allows us to explore the degree to which ethnic background was related to the “success” of settlers on the Shield. Fourth, contemporary authorities viewed ethnicity as an important factor in the overall success of settlement. As we saw in chapter three, colonial authorities wanted to attract the “better classes” of immigrants. They sought to avoid conflict rooted in ethnic difference, or in the perceived failings of a specific ethnic group. Were their concerns justified? Finally, we already know the spatial distribution of settlers in Brudenell had clearly-defined ethnic contours. In chapter three we saw that free-grant settlers on the Opeongo Road were mostly Irish and Roman Catholic, while early settlers at Rockingham were predominantly English and Protestant. Years after initial settlement, German Protestants concentrated in the southwest, in many cases taking over properties vacated by earlier Irish settlers.

Though ethnicity is clearly a relevant factor in the history of Brudenell, defining a historical person’s ethnicity is another matter entirely. And, the more micro-historical the perspective, the more complicated it seems. At a basic level, the term “ethnic” can “be used to signify to what specific cultural group an individual considered himself, and was considered by the community as belonging.”⁵ In theory, giving a particular “origin” to a census taker, and the state accepting the legitimacy of that claim, would meet this criteria. Reality is more complicated. For example, before 1871, Canadian census forms did not have an “ethnicity” question—only birthplace.⁶ Without anything better to work with, the two are often taken as equivalent in works using census data to examine ethnic

⁵ Jean R. Burnet, *Ethnic Groups in Upper Canada* (Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, 1972), 2.

⁶ Of course, “ethnicity” as a concept is a twentieth century invention. See Susanne Lachenicht, “Ethnicity,” in *Oxford Bibliographies*, DOI: 10.1093/OBO/9780199730414-0022 (accessed 29 May 2017).

communities.⁷ Place of birth can say a lot about a person's background, but it can also be misleading. There are at least two revealing examples in the 1861 census of Brudenell. George Malone was a Catholic born in England, but he was not English. According to Burbage, the Malone family moved to England from Ireland in the early 1830s, where George was born; the family later migrated to Canada, eventually taking up land in Brudenell.⁸ Malone's origin was given as Irish in the 1871 census, when he himself was enumerator. Another notable exception is John S. J. Watson, who was born in India according to the 1861 census, but was English-origin in 1871. As Akenson suggests, the introduction of the ethnic origin category was a strong point of the 1871 census because "it defined ethnicity in a manner that varied according to each individual's perception...it employed self-definition rather than arbitrary and imposed external criteria."⁹ There were, however, strict limitations on self-identification. As Curtis notes:

In practice, enumerators were torn between entering respondents' answers in the 'origins' column and entering one of the census standard nationalities. Some respondents clearly declared their origin to be 'Canadian' and others declared themselves 'American,' yet neither entry was acceptable. Enumerators, likely on the instructions of their commissioners, and the compilers after the fact, scratched out such entries and made an attribution of origins according to the census standard.¹⁰

⁷ Most authors acknowledge this challenge. For example: Akenson, *Irish in Ontario*, 15, Darroch and Michael Ornstein, "Ethnicity and Class, Transitions over a Decade: Ontario, 1861–1871," *Historical Papers* 19, no. 1 (1984): 123, and Darrell Norris, "Migration, Pioneer Settlement and the Life Course: The First Families of an Ontario Township," in *CPRH* 4 (1984), 153–178. On ethnic identities and the census in the Ottawa Valley see: Enoch Padolsky and Ian Pringle, *A Historical Source Book for the Ottawa Valley* (Ottawa: Linguistic Survey of the Ottawa Valley, Carleton University, 1981), xiii–xv.

⁸ Burnadette Burbage, *Early Families: Our Lady of the Angels Parish, Brudenell, Ontario, 150th Anniversary, 1858–2008* (Renfrew: Renfrew Printing, 2008), 138.

⁹ Akenson, *Irish in Ontario*, 27, fn. 32. Enumerators were instructed as follows: "Origin is to be scrupulously entered, as given by the person questioned; in the manner shown in the specimen schedule, by the words English, Irish, Scotch, African, Indian, German, French, and so forth." See Canada, Department of Agriculture, *Manual Containing the Census Act and the Instructions to Officers Employed in the Taking of the First Census of Canada (1871)* (Ottawa: Brown Chamberlain, 1871), 22.

¹⁰ Bruce S. Curtis, *The Politics of Population: State Formation, Statistics, and the Census of Canada, 1840–1875* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 284–5.

If census enumerators had strict guidelines on entering ethnic origins, the tax assessors' practices around religion were, at best, inconsistent. Sometimes they marked a "C" or a "P" in place of anything more specific, but often they left the category blank. In the case of some German immigrants in the late-nineteenth century, their recorded religion changed on an almost annual basis, making categorization difficult.

Howard Palmer noted in 1982 that "ethnic" histories in Canada were focussed almost entirely on groups other than the charter peoples—British, French, and Indigenous—to the overall detriment of the field.¹¹ A scan of the titles in the Canadian Historical Association's *Immigration and Ethnicity in Canada* series suggests this may still be the case.¹² In her contribution to the series, Franca Iacovetta reminds us, "the assumption that only minorities possess racial or ethnic characteristics that simultaneously inform their class and gender identities has been exposed as narrow-minded at best and racist at worst."¹³ For Akenson, the problem lies in the difficulty of comparing the histories of the discriminated-against, visibly and audibly "other" minority and mostly urban immigrants, with the accepted, mainstream, and largely rural Irish, Scots, English, and American immigrants.¹⁴ Lucille Campey has gone so far as to say the English, despite being one of

¹¹ Howard Palmer, "Recent Studies in Canadian Immigration and Ethnic History," *The History and Social Science Teacher* 17 (Winter 1982): 97. Akenson, *Irish in Ontario*, 5.

¹² The first volume in the series was J.M. Bumsted's *The Scots in Canada* (1982) when the series was still called *Canada's Ethnic Groups*. Volume's 2–11 were on non-charter groups, until David A. Wilson's *The Irish in Canada* (1989). In the 1990s the editors refocused the series on ethnicity and immigration, rather than looking at specific ethnic groups. See Marlene Epp, "Narrating the Canadian Mosaic: *Immigration and Ethnicity in Canada / L'Immigration et l'ethnicité au Canada*," Canadian Historical Association (2017): <http://www.cha-shc.ca/english/cha-publications/immigration-and-ethnicity-in-canada-booklet-series.html#sthash.ZYxyNTdW.X1Eq4HAW.dpbs> (accessed June 16, 2017).

¹³ Franca Iacovetta, *The Writing of English Canadian Immigrant History* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1997), 1.

¹⁴ Akenson, *Irish in Ontario*, 5.

the largest immigrant groups in the late nineteenth century, have been forgotten, “their contribution to Canada’s historical development has been largely ignored, both by contemporary observers and later historians.”¹⁵ Given the centrality of British-Canadian narratives and figures in the writing of Canadian history, it is more likely the English have been taken as the norm, rather than being ignored. However, the relative lack of studies of the English as an ethnic group makes it difficult to fit this chapter’s analysis of English immigrants into a wider historiographical context.¹⁶ The conflating of British and English identities is part of the problem. British has at times meant not only English, but also variously Irish (Protestant Irish, at least), Scots, Welsh, Loyalist, and English-Canadian. We need to understand the complexities of early immigrant communities, and not group them all together as one “undifferentiated ‘Anglo’ or ‘British’ lump.”¹⁷ In Brudenell, an English Protestant minority settled alongside an Irish Catholic majority, which gives us an opportunity to compare two “British” groups in one place.

The predominantly Irish Catholic settlers who arrived in Brudenell in the 1850s were the first of three main ethnic groups to colonize the township. English Protestants arrived beginning in the late 1850s, while German Protestants settled beginning in the early 1870s. In defining specific groups in this context, I am following Darroch and Soltow’s use of the concept of cultural heritage, which includes both country of origin

¹⁵ Lucille H. Campey, *Ignored but Not Forgotten: Canada’s English Immigrants* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2014), 22.

¹⁶ Skimming through the titles in the McGill-Queen’s University Press Ethnic History Series, one finds numerous titles relating to Irish, Scottish, and Welsh communities in Canada, but only one on the English, Paulina Greenhill’s *Ethnicity in the Mainstream: Three Studies of English Canadian Culture in Ontario* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1994).

¹⁷ Akenson, *Irish in Ontario*, 7. See also Houston and Smyth, *Irish Emigration and Canadian Settlement*, 6.

(even if Canadian-born) and religious persuasion.¹⁸ Thus, for example, someone born in Canada, of Irish parentage, and professing the Catholic faith is defined as Irish Catholic. I also follow Akenson in viewing Irish Catholics as separate from Irish Protestants, and as a “multi-generational ethnic cohort” including not only those born in Ireland, but also their descendants in Canada.¹⁹ As others have argued, in rural contexts at least, ethnic identities and communities were shaped by experiences of settlement, rather than existing independently from them.²⁰ For the purpose of constructing a broad overview of the cultural heritage of Brudenell settlers, I have linked assessment roll data to nominal and agricultural census records for most years from 1863 to 1911.

The assessment form never asked for country of origin, but it did at times provide a column for religion, which, as noted above, was used inconsistently. For example, August and Matilda Behm (variously spelled Boeme, Beem, Bimm, and Bemon) settled in Brudenell with their four children in 1891. In the census that year, August’s birthplace was Germany and his religion Presbyterian. In the assessment roll for the same year his religion was given as Baptist, while in the 1892 roll it was Methodist, in 1899 Lutheran, in 1905 simply EC, which could stand for English Church or Evangelical Church, in 1906 Church of England, and in 1910 Evangelical. The 1901 census recorded August and Matilda as German Lutherans, but the children were all Canadian by nationality. In 1911

¹⁸ Darroch and Soltow, *Property and Inequality*, 147.

¹⁹ Akenson, *Irish in Ontario*, 7.

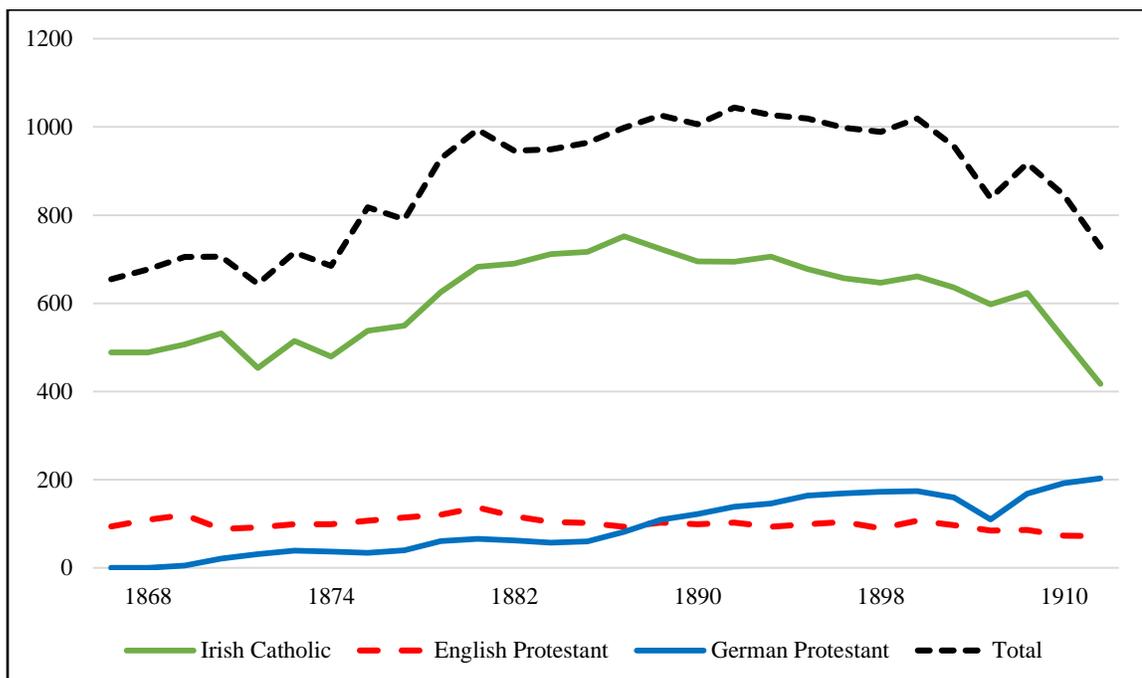
²⁰ Darroch and Soltow, *Property and Inequality*, 54. See also Chad Gaffield, *Language, Schooling, and Cultural Conflict: The Origins of the French-Language Controversy in Ontario* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1987), John Mannion, *Irish Settlements in Eastern Canada: A Study in Cultural Transfer and Adaptation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), and Elliott, *Irish Migrants in the Canadas*.

all family members were enumerated as German by origin, Canadian by nationality, and Evangelical by denomination. Thus, in my analysis below, August Behm is categorized as German Protestant. Admittedly, such a label does not capture the complexities of this family's evolving identity, but it allows for a summary analysis of broad cultural groups. In other cases, there is not enough information in the records to confidently determine both religion and country of origin. In these cases settlers are categorized based on the religion column of the assessment roll as Other-Catholic or Other-Protestant. Where no religion was given in the assessment roll, and no corresponding census record was found, the settler is categorized as Other-Unknown. Based on this analysis, Irish Catholics were a majority in Brudenell during the entire period under study (see Figures 6.1 and 6.2).

While Irish Catholic settlers were always a majority, their numbers (proportional and absolute) declined after 1900. After peaking in the early 1880s, English Protestants maintained a smaller but steady presence in Brudenell over the next three decades. At the same time, German Protestant settlement increased dramatically through the last quarter of the nineteenth century, spiking in the first decade of the twentieth. Importantly, this latter trend belies the common assumption that settlement in Brudenell was doomed following the construction of the Ottawa, Arnprior, and Parry Sound Railway, which reached Killaloe in 1894. Though an overall population decline closely paralleled the departure of many Irish Catholics (see Figure 6.1), the German Protestant exception shows that people were still choosing to settle in Brudenell, even as others left.²¹

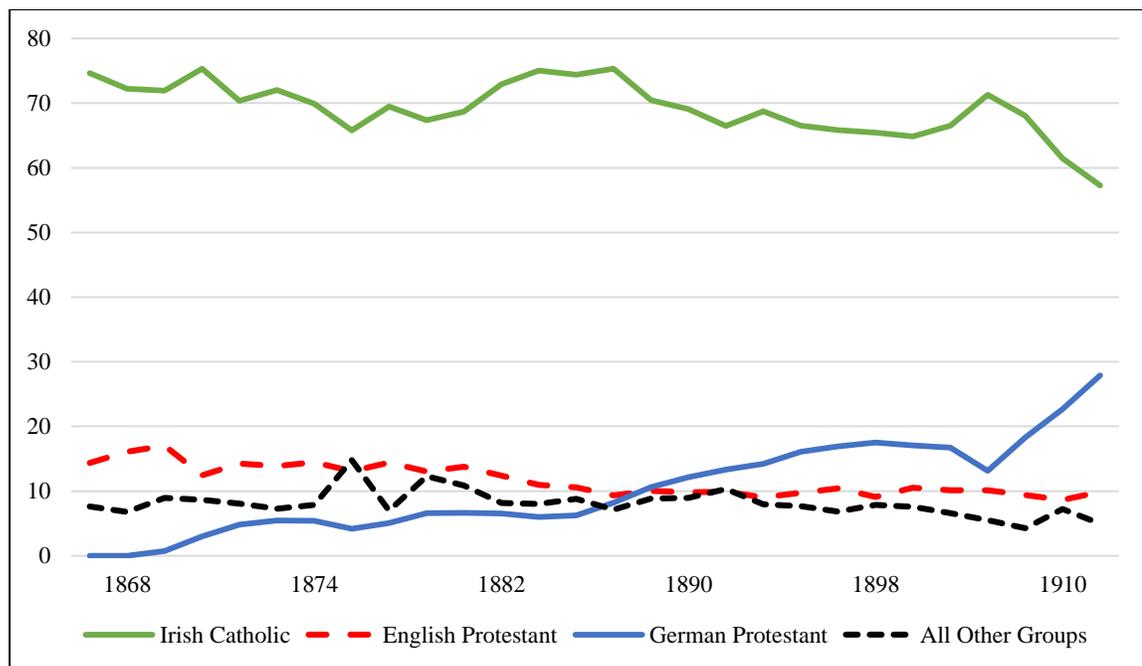
²¹ Though this downward trend would seem to support a failed-settlement narrative, the persistence of a core group of settlers in Brudenell from 1864 to 1911 (see chapter five, Table 5.18, page 242) along with the influx of German Protestants suggests the reality was more complicated. The surrounding region continued to grow in the early twentieth century as the population of the Brudenell, Lyndoch, Radcliffe, and Raglan census district went from 2148 in 1881 to 2538 in 1941. See Padolsky and Pringle, *A Historical Source Book for the Ottawa Valley*, 16.

FIGURE 6.1
Populations of Major Ethnic Groups in Brudenell, 1867–1911



Source: Brudenell Tax Assessment Database (1863–1911) and Census of Brudenell (1871–1911).

FIGURE 6.2
Major Ethnic Groups as a Percentage of Population in Brudenell, 1867–1911



Source: Brudenell Tax Assessment Database (1863–1911) and Census of Brudenell (1871–1911).

Before more closely examining the situation in Brudenell, it will be useful to consider the migration histories of each of the three major ethnic groups who arrived in this period. They were part of a wave where “about 55 to 60 million Europeans left the European continent (including the British Isles) between the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the beginning of World War I.”²² This expansion of the “Atlantic community” took place in Brudenell, which was a site of the imperialistic land grab of the “true nineteenth century.”²³ Migrants mostly moved in search of more stable economic opportunities. Always, it was at the expense of local indigenous populations. This was as true for the Irish Catholic immigrants to Brudenell in the 1850s as it was for the English Protestants who followed shortly after, and for the German Protestants who came later. In the capitalist settler-colonialism of the nineteenth century, the people who came to Brudenell, even if only looking for a better life for their children, were the foot-soldiers of empire:

It is undeniable that many of the migrants from Europe left deplorable conditions and that many had themselves been victims of several forms of exploitation and abuse. Yet, these same individuals, when in a New World, themselves became oppressor and exploiters, sometimes directly, sometimes only systematically, but always inevitably. The better life for Europe’s migrants was paid for in part by a worse life for those they dispossessed.²⁴

By the 1850s in Brudenell, the physical process of dispossession was well underway, but it needed to be solidified and maintained. The migrants who came from Europe—or from other parts of Canada—to Brudenell allowed the nascent Canadian empire to justify its claim to possession of the vast territory of the Ottawa-Huron Tract.

²² Akenson, *Ireland, Sweden*, 4.

²³ See Akenson, *Ireland, Sweden*, 21, note 5. Access to land was, of course, crucial to the success of this community. See John C. Weaver, *The Great Land Rush and the Making of the Modern World* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003).

²⁴ Akenson, *Ireland, Sweden*, 6.

The Irish Catholic and English Protestant settlers who arrived in the mid- and late-1850s settled alongside Algonquin families who maintained a presence at least into the 1860s. As we saw in chapter two, Algonquin peoples claimed much of the territory that Canadian expansionists referred to as the Ottawa-Huron Tract. When First Nations applied for free grants, they were denied. In 1873 their money was used to purchase land to establish a reserve at Golden Lake near the site where Charles Thomas had previously operated a store. Some were even forced to move from their farms in Sebastopol and Brudenell to settle on the reserve.²⁵ The current land claim—which covers 36,000 square kilometres—is ongoing and could lead to Ontario’s “first modern-day constitutionally protected treaty.”²⁶ In the maps below, the hexagon covering the northern half of L19/C6 and all of L18/C6 indicates territory included in the current claim (Parcel 193).²⁷

Irish Catholics were the first non-indigenous ethnic group to settle in Brudenell as part of the Canadian expansion. Irish migration to Canada has been well and thoroughly studied over the past 35 years. Akenson’s history of the Irish in Leeds and Lansdowne changed the way scholars thought about the Irish in Canada. Instead of following the American model of the Irish as an unskilled urban proletariat, and as mostly Catholic, Akenson found that “most Irish migrants to Ontario and most persons of Irish descent were Protestants [and] both Catholics and Protestants were mostly a rural people.”²⁸ The

²⁵ Bonita Lawrence, *Fractured Homeland: Federal Recognition and Algonquin Identity in Ontario* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2012), 215–218.

²⁶ Ontario, “The Algonquin Land Claim,” Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, <https://www.ontario.ca/page/algonquin-land-claim> (accessed 1 June 2017).

²⁷ “Algonquin Land Claim Descriptive Plan – Parcel 193,” http://www.tanakiwin.com/wp-system/uploads/2015/06/Parcel-193_Appendix-5.1.1_201309301.pdf (accessed 1 June 2017).

²⁸ Akenson, *Irish in Ontario*, xvi.

Irish were the most significant migrant group to British North America even before the Great Famine of 1845–52. But it was the Famine migration that made the Irish in Canada infamous—“as a result of the Famine the Irish in Canada have acquired a romantic and epic aura.”²⁹ This aura is exemplified in the 1981 National Film Board production *First Winter*, in which an Irish family flees Ireland because their land is taken from them and their language outlawed. In 1830, they settle in a remote corner of the Ottawa Valley because, according to the father, “the land belongs to no one, and no one can take it from us.”³⁰ As her mother is dying of pneumonia, a young woman laments her loss: “In Ireland, during years of starvation and cruelty *O Mamai* had kept us alive. On the ocean voyage she’d seen the bodies of the dead cast overboard. She had endured it all for the dream of a better life.” A similar sentiment is conveyed by Carol Bennett and D. W. McCuaig in their 1983 history of Irish settlers in the Ottawa Valley: “Many people came here because they had no choice. To remain in Ireland was to starve.”³¹ Yet, as numerous studies have shown, these sentiments, though romantic, are misleading.

According to Akenson, most emigrants may have been “in reduced circumstances but were well above the poverty line.”³² Similarly, Elliott argues, “the Irish of [his] study were rational men and women who crossed the Atlantic after weighing carefully the advantages and disadvantages of remaining where they were.”³³ More recently, Akenson

²⁹ Houston and Smyth, *Irish Emigration and Canadian Settlement*, 4.

³⁰ *First Winter*, DVD and Online, directed by John N. Smith (National Film Board of Canada, 1981), <https://www.nfb.ca/film/first-winter/> (accessed May 29, 2017). The film was nominated for the 1982 Academy Award for Best Short Film, Live Action.

³¹ Carol Bennett and D. W. McCuaig, *Valley Irish* (Renfrew, ON: Juniper Books, 1983), 4.

³² Akenson, *Irish in Ontario*, 23.

³³ Elliott, *Irish Migrants in the Canadas*, 6.

argues that Irish emigration was part of a wider pattern which included a long history of risk propensity and free-flowing knowledge, in which even small farmers were well versed in market economics, but in which economic factors formed only one part of the decision-making process.³⁴ Even before the Famine, Akenson suggests, many Irish farmers were already facing uncertain circumstances, yet chose not to leave, largely because of “a set of cultural values—positive affirmations—that made them do their sums in a way that is forever mysterious to the merely econometric.”³⁵ Those who left before 1845 were the ones who leaned toward the econometric in their thinking—the outpouring which came after 1845 was a result of a shift to a culture of out-migration.³⁶

The Irish who settled in Brudenell fit with many of the patterns identified above. For one, they were rural. Rural Renfrew County was a popular destination for Irish settlers in Canada because it offered space to both spread out and cluster together. As Hedican notes, “lacking any degree of mechanization, farmers no doubt survived such [frontier] conditions by helping one another with *cooring*, as the Irish call such patterns of co-operation.”³⁷ Though a majority of Irish migrants to the Canadas were Protestant, in Brudenell ninety-two per cent of the 737 people identified as Irish origin in 1871 were Roman Catholic. While we cannot use the available sources to analyze motives, we can analyze behaviour. For the most part, Irish settlers to Brudenell did not come directly

³⁴ Akenson, *Ireland, Sweden*, 95.

³⁵ Akenson, *Ireland, Sweden*, 95.

³⁶ Akenson, *Ireland, Sweden*, 102 and 230.

³⁷ Edward Hedican, “Irish Farming Households in Eastern Canada: Domestic Production and Family Size,” *Ethnology* 42, no. 1 (Winter 2003): 17. See also, D. G. Symes, “Farm Household and Farm Performance: A Study of Twentieth Century Changes in Ballyferrieter, Southwest Ireland,” *Ethnology* 11, no. 1 (1972): 33, and C. M. Arensberg, *The Irish Countryman: An Anthropological Study* (New York: Natural History Press, 1968 [1937]), 72–73.

TABLE 6.1
Origins of Catholic, Irish-Born Heads of Households in Brudenell, 1861

Province of Origin	Number of Migrants in Each Period			Total
	Pre-Famine Before 1845	Famine 1845–52	Post-Famine After 1852	
Connaught	2	13	1	21
Leinster	1	10	1	12
Munster	8	10	3	16
Ulster	4	1	3	8
Unknown	8	3	2	13
Total	23	37	10	70

Source: Derived from 1861 Census and Burbage, *Early Families*.

from Ireland, but went to other parts of North America first. Of all those in Brudenell identified as Irish Catholic in 1871, 72 per cent were born in North America, though the average age of this group was just under 13 years. However, of that 72 per cent, 10 percent were old enough to have been in Canada since 1845, so their 1861 parents were clearly not Famine migrants. Of the Irish-born heads of households in the census, nearly one-third left Ireland before the Famine, about half came during the Famine years, and only one in seven came after (see Table 6.1).³⁸ This figure does not include all Irish Catholic families, only those who could be traced through Burbage's research.³⁹ It also does not include any Irish Catholic families with household heads born outside Ireland, since these cannot be identified from the 1861 census. We can conclude, however, that these were not the most desperate and destitute—they were experienced settlers with knowledge of the opportunities available to them in North America.

³⁸ To generate Table 6.1, I found all Irish-born heads of households in the 1861 census and compared these with genealogical research by Burbage, who determined County and/or Province of origin for Irish Catholic settlers by examining birth, marriage, and death records in parishes around the Ottawa Valley.

³⁹ This included 68 of 77 household heads born in Ireland and enumerated as Catholic in the 1861 census.

English Protestant settlers to Brudenell present an entirely different narrative from their Irish counterparts. A whole legend has built up around the founder of the English settlement at Rockingham: John S. J. Watson, the “Marquis” of Rockingham. In a 1970 article in his “Ottawa Valley Days” column in the *Ottawa Journal*, local journalist and amateur historian Harry J. Walker claimed that Watson was a descendant of Charles Wentworth Watson, 2nd Marquess of Rockingham and Prime Minister of Great Britain, 1765–66 and again in 1782.⁴⁰ Watson is sometimes known in local lore as a “remittance man” banished from his English estate for marrying beneath his social class.⁴¹ He apparently received from his father the equivalent of \$75,000 and “a crew of building craftsmen to establish a colony in the wilds of Brudenell.”⁴² Legends aside, Watson was an important part of the English migration to Brudenell, as we saw in previous chapters. As noted above, the English as an ethnic group in Canada are arguably understudied, likely because of close ties between notions of English, British, and English-Canadian cultural identities,⁴³ and the practice of setting “ethnic” histories against the dominant

⁴⁰ Harry J. Walker, “Exiled from his Norman castle in 1860 he carved out a settlement in Upper Valley,” *Ottawa Journal* (11 July 1970), 41, Newspapers.com, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/41479166> (7 June 2016).

⁴¹ See for example, “Rockingham Church Written Information,” Killaloe & District Public Library, <https://killaloelibrary.ca/2017/01/30/rockingham-church-written-information/> (accessed 30 May 2017) and S. Bernard Shaw, “Rockingham,” *The Country Connection Magazine*, no. 43 (Summer/Autumn 2003): <http://www.pinecone.on.ca/MAGAZINE/stories/Rockingham.html>. Though a remittance man was “any individual who received an allowance—a remittance—from family or friends at home,” by 1900 it had become a derogatory term for English emigrants “viewed as disreputable, languid fops.” See Patrick Dunae, *Gentleman Emigrants: From the British Public Schools to the Canadian Frontier* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1981), 124. The label was immortalized in Canada by Robert Service in his poem, “Rhyme of the Remittance Man,” in *The Spell of the Yukon and Other Verses* (New York: Barse & Hopkins, 1907), 66–68.

⁴² Walker, “Exiled from his Norman castle,” 41.

⁴³ Donald M. MacRaid, “An ‘Invisible Diaspora’?: English Associational Culture in Nineteenth-Century North America,” in *Between Dispersion and Belonging: Global Approaches to Diaspora in Practice*, ed. Amitava Chowdhury and Donald H. Akenson (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University

national culture. According to Paul Langford, while state structures and institutions could be viewed as part of a shared “British” culture, the British character (ethnicity) by the mid-nineteenth century was fundamentally English.⁴⁴ Though both groups emigrated from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, the Irish Catholics and English Protestants who settled in Brudenell must be considered as distinct groups. They were affected by many of the same events, including the cultural shift which took place in each country in the middle of the nineteenth century where emigration became an acceptable way of dealing with economic and population pressures at home.⁴⁵ At the same time, they came from different backgrounds and brought with them different customs.

Some differences are revealed in the groups’ behaviours once in Brudenell. Most of the Irish Catholics enumerated in the 1861 census were in Canada before the Opeongo Road was opened.⁴⁶ They moved to Brudenell to take advantage of the free grant lots which became available in 1855. English Protestant settlers, on the other hand, arrived from England in the spring of 1858, without first settling elsewhere. The road agent, T.P. French, was impressed by their “good sense [and] manliness” and expected more English to follow.⁴⁷ Within three years there were 25 landed English Protestant households in

Press, 2016), 190. See also Paula Hastings, “‘Our Glorious Anglo-Saxon Race Shall Ever Fill Earth’s Highest Place’: The *Anglo-Saxon* and the Construction of Identity in Late-Nineteenth-Century Canada,” in *Canada and the British World: Culture, Migration, and Identity*, ed. Phillip Buckner and R. Douglas Francis (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006), 92–110.

⁴⁴ Paul Langford, *Englishness Identified: Manners and Character, 1650–1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 14.

⁴⁵ Langford, *Englishness Identified*, 120.

⁴⁶ The notice went out in September and settlers were on their lots in October, making it unlikely they came directly from Ireland to Brudenell.

⁴⁷ AO RG 1-9 Crown Land Administration Subject Files, Roads: Ottawa and Opeongo Road, 1853-1866, MS 892, reel 9, p. 08327, Report of the Ottawa and Opeongo Road Agency, 10 January 1859.

Brudenell, or just under 20% of the township total. Despite the continued availability of free grants, they chose to purchase their lands. They likely chose their location because of the proximity of water power.⁴⁸ The first water-powered mill in Brudenell was built at Rockingham and was completed sometime between French's report and the 1861 census.

The German Protestants who went to Brudenell shared some similarities with their Irish Catholic and English Protestant predecessors. Their emigration from Germany also coincided with a cultural shift in the donating country, though it happened later there than in Ireland or England. Lee-Whiting suggests migration from Germany to the Ottawa Valley was encouraged by Bismarck's ambition for a unified German state.⁴⁹ According to Jonathan Wagner, from 1850 to 1939, migration from Germany to Canada reflected processes of industrial transformation in each country.⁵⁰ The slow emergence of a right of free movement, along with spectacular economic growth between 1850 and 1870 delayed mass migration from Germany until later in the century.⁵¹ Later, the active pursuit of settlers by Canadian authorities combined with a severe economic downturn in Germany (1873–1890s) to attract artisans and agricultural workers to emigrate, even without a consistent emigration policy in the newly-unified German state.⁵²

⁴⁸ Jenny Clayton and Philip Van Huizen, "Water Power before Hydroelectricity," in *Powering Up Canada: A History of Power, Fuel, and Energy from 1600*, ed. R. W. Sandwell (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016), 191. See also Carol Priamo, *Mills of Canada* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1976), 27.

⁴⁹ Brenda Lee-Whiting, *A Harvest of Stones: The German Settlement in Renfrew County* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 17. See also, by the same author, *On Stony Ground* (Renfrew, ON: Juniper Books, 1986), 21.

⁵⁰ Jonathan F. Wagner, *A History of Migration from Germany to Canada, 1850–1939* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006), 4.

⁵¹ Wagner, *A History of Migration*, 73 and 216.

⁵² Wagner, *A History of Migration*, 73–4 and 113.

Of course, there were Germans in British North America before the 1870s and even before the Conquest in 1759.⁵³ Later, Germans were part of the wave of Loyalists who settled in Nova Scotia and Upper Canada in the 1780s.⁵⁴ By 1867, ethnic Germans made up 70 per cent of the non-British, non-French-Canadian population in Canada, with the largest contingent living in the area around Waterloo, Ontario.⁵⁵ Immigration from Germany to the Ottawa Valley began in 1857 and the area soon became home to the largest cohort of German settlers in Eastern Ontario.⁵⁶ The German presence in Renfrew County grew slowly at first, from 405 in 1861 to 2318 in 1871; it doubled to 4831 in 1881 and peaked at 9463 in 1911.⁵⁷ The new arrivals from Germany were mostly Protestant, though from a variety of denominations, Lutherans being the largest group.⁵⁸

The surprising thing about the German immigrants to Brudenell is that they came after the colonization project was already being decried as misguided and as Irish and other settlers were beginning to leave the region. Lehmann and Lee-Whiting suggest some reasons. For one, though many Germans were part of the mass migration to the West between 1871 and 1914, “those Germans who stayed behind made greater efforts than before to fill the vacant farms in their neighborhood with friends and relatives from

⁵³ Kenneth McLaughlin, *The Germans in Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1985), 3. See also Heinz Lehmann, *The German Canadians, 1750–1937: Immigration, Settlement, and Culture*, ed., trans., Gerhard P. Bassler (St. John’s: Jespersion Press, 1986), 31.

⁵⁴ Lehmann, *The German Canadians*, 49.

⁵⁵ McLaughlin, *The Germans in Canada*, 3 and 9.

⁵⁶ Lehmann, *The German Canadians*, 56.

⁵⁷ Lee-Whiting, *On Stony Ground*, 7 and Lehmann, *The German Canadians*, 58–9.

⁵⁸ In the 1911 census of Renfrew County, 5504 of 9453 (58%) Germans by origin identified as Lutheran. See Lehmann, *The German Canadians*, 59. See also Lee-Whiting, *On Stony Ground*, 11.

Germany.”⁵⁹ The outmigration of Irish settlers in Brudenell and neighboring townships provided ready access to already cleared farms at competitive prices. Many new arrivals chose to purchase these farms, despite the increased availability of free grant lots in the region with the 1868 Free Grants and Homesteads Act.⁶⁰ For example, between 1881 and 1921, the township of South Algona (northeast of Brudenell) went from having 405 Irish and 199 Germans to 234 Irish and 418 Germans.⁶¹ A similar pattern of movement shaped Brudenell. Between 1871 and 1911 Irish settlers left the southwest corner of the township around Letterkenny and Germans moved in, in many cases occupying lands previously held by the Irish (see Maps 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4 below).

The ethnic groups identified above are simple generalizations. These identities were not static, but fluid and in formation. While I have isolated three core groups by their cultural heritage as Irish Catholic, English Protestant, and German Protestant, these categories serve as a useful basis for analysis, not as absolute social divisions. A short discussion of religion will illustrate the need for caution in ascribing deterministic labels to individual settlers. In 1871, the ethno-religious composition of Brudenell reflected the predominance of Irish Catholic settlers, alongside a contingent of English Protestants (Table 6.2), both Canadian and foreign-born. The vast majority of the latter were Anglicans, while three families identified as Methodist and one as Catholic. French-Canadian, Scottish, and Irish Protestant groups each comprised only 3 or 4 families. The Germans were the most denominationally-diverse group, split almost evenly between

⁵⁹ Lehmann, *The German Canadians*, 58.

⁶⁰ Lee-Whiting, *On Stony Ground*, 14 and 33. The Act was applied to lands in Brudenell in 1874.

⁶¹ Lee-Whiting, *On Stony Ground*, 27.

TABLE 6.2
Origin, Religion, and Birthplace of Brudenell Residents, 1871

Origin	Religion	No.	% Born in North America	% Born outside North America
English	Church of England	99	52.5	47.5
	Methodist	20	85.0	15.0
	Roman Catholic	6	100.0	0.0
French	Church of England	1	100.0	0.0
	Roman Catholic	25	100.0	0.0
German	Baptist	11	9.1	90.9
	Church of England	13	30.8	69.2
	Methodist	17	11.8	88.2
	Presbyterian	1	0.0	100.0
	Roman Catholic	11	9.1	90.9
	Unknown	1	100.0	0.0
Irish	Church of England	39	87.2	12.8
	Methodist	17	76.5	23.5
	Presbyterian	5	100.0	0.0
	Roman Catholic	676	70.9	29.1
Scottish	Church of Scotland	6	66.7	33.3
	Methodist	1	100.0	0.0
	Roman Catholic	18	88.9	11.1

Source: 1871 Brudenell Census Database.

Anglican, Methodist, Baptist, and Catholic denominations. Altogether, there were 42 German Protestants, or less than half the number of English Protestants and about the same number as the Irish Anglicans. These were all recent arrivals: none was present in 1861 and most were born outside North America. The first identifiable German Protestant was recorded in the assessment roll in 1869. It is possible that many of these incoming Germans were Lutherans, but without an established Lutheran church nearby in 1871, they likely joined other congregations.

According to the 1871 census there were two churches in Brudenell: a Methodist church in Rockingham and a Catholic church in Brudenell village. It is likely most of the

Catholics (not only Irish) attended mass in Brudenell. The 60 non-Irish Roman Catholics in Table 6.2 are a curious group. For instance, in all of Brudenell in 1871, twelve people had occupations associated with the forest industry: 3 clerks, 1 contractor, 1 cook, 2 foremen, 1 general manager, 2 labourers, and 2 shantymen. Both shantymen were French-Canadians. The cook and a clerk were both Scottish and a foreman was English. If these “temporary” residents are removed from the overall totals, the percentage of Catholics who were Irish rises slightly. These temporary workers were a small minority in Brudenell, but many of the other non-Irish Catholics were also short-term residents in the township. Twenty-one (35%) were members of three French-Canadian families: the Payette’s, the Fresse’s and the Pokitt’s. According to Burbage, the Payette family were members of Our Lady of the Angels parish in Brudenell. Members of this family were recorded on the assessment roll for Brudenell in every year from 1863 to 1911. The other two families do not appear on the assessment rolls and do not appear on the census again after 1871. Seven non-Irish Catholics belonged to a German family, the Prince’s, who were recorded on the assessment rolls from 1871 to 1880, but not after.

More interesting, however, is that half of these non-Irish Catholics belonged to families in which one parent was Irish Catholic. The six English Catholics, for example, were the children of Ann Daly and Hugh Belkwell. Hugh was born in England, Ann was born in Ireland. Hugh was sometimes enumerated as Anglican, other times as Catholic.⁶² Ellen O’Brien, a German Catholic born in Prussia was married to John O’Brien, an Irish Catholic. Louisa Sullivan, a French-Canadian was married to Daniel Sullivan, an Irish

⁶² In the 1861 and 1871 censuses he was Anglican, but in later censuses he was Catholic. Ann and the children were consistently enumerated as Catholics and Burbage notes the family were members of Our Lady of the Angels parish. See *Early Families*, 20.

Catholic. Finally, Elihis McDonald, a Scottish Catholic born in Ontario was married to Mary Ann McDonald, an Irish Catholic born in Ireland; their seven children are listed as Scottish Catholic. All of this suggests that the Irish Catholic cultural group was likely even larger than the 676 persons identified specifically as Irish Catholic in the census and was flexible enough to incorporate individuals of different backgrounds. It also suggests that the Catholic component of their identity was stronger than the Irish.

With a few exceptions, in 1871, settlers in Brudenell were generally endogamous. Of 132 married couples, only three were inter-religious. In two of these marriages, the children “took” the religion of the mother, regardless of sex (one Catholic and one Anglican). This could just be a quirk of the local enumerator, or it could signify a larger theme. The number of cases is too few to establish a pattern in Brudenell, but it does suggest that Brudenell fit with patterns established elsewhere in Upper Canada. In Essex County, for example, in the first half of the nineteenth century, nearly two-thirds of children in mixed marriages followed their mother’s religion.⁶³ Marriage outside of one’s cultural origin was more common, with eleven of 132 marriages in 1871 Brudenell being inter-cultural. Of those marriages, ten produced offspring, and, in all ten cases, the children were listed with their father’s country of origin. Inter-cultural marriages were more common among Catholics than any other group, with seven of eleven marriages coming between two Catholics and two of the other four marriages involving one Catholic partner. As Map 6.1 shows, though different Catholic and Protestant settlers mixed, there was a distinct Protestant / Catholic division in the early years of settlement.

⁶³ See, for example, Clarke, *The Ordinary People of Essex: Environment, Culture, and Economy on the Frontier of Upper Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010), 146.

Turning to the Protestant groups, this is one place where the census fails to fully capture the complexities of religious affiliation in nineteenth-century Canada, especially in the context of a frontier society where denominational boundaries were strikingly fluid and affiliations changed over time, as in the earlier example of August and Matilda Behm. Though a private home or field could also serve as a gathering place, especially among the more evangelical groups,⁶⁴ many of the non-Methodist Protestants probably went to services at the Rockingham church. Supporting this suggestion is the fact the Methodist church was located on property owned by Watson, an Anglican. In January and February 1863, two Methodist preachers went on a tour from Pembroke to the Brudenell Mission.⁶⁵ On arriving in Brudenell, they stayed one night with Ones Larwill (an English Methodist born in Quebec) before continuing on to Rockingham. Tomblin's reflections provide an interesting perspective on religion in the early years of settlement in Brudenell:

In the evening we found nearly a hundred persons assembled in a building close by a small grist mill, near the town line of Brudenel and Redcliffe (*sic*). Part of the company had come from Bangor, thirteen miles distant. Mr. Arthur Acton, our Class-Leader, presided; and a small choir gave us some soul-stirring music. After the Missionary, Mr. Perry, and the 'deputation,' had addressed the Meeting, 7 dollars 50 cents, chiefly in silver, was taken up. An excellent spirit pervaded the meeting; and the people seemed to be very glad of a visit from their old Pastors.⁶⁶

The party were put up for the night by Watson, "an intelligent and liberal Episcopalian [who] has shown himself very friendly to our cause in this settlement." It is not clear why Watson provided land for a Methodist church, but not an Anglican one, or if this was

⁶⁴ Clarke, *The Ordinary People of Essex*, 124.

⁶⁵ W. Tomblin, "A Tour Through the Backwoods of Canada," Westmeath, 12 February 1863, *Wesleyan Missionary Notices* (25 April 1863), in *Wesleyan Missionary Notices, Relating Principally to the Foreign Missions under the Direction of the Methodist Conference*, 3rd Series, vol. 10 (1863), 81-84.

⁶⁶ Tomblin, "A Tour Through the Backwoods of Canada," 82.

even the case. St. Leonard's (Anglican) Rockingham was established in 1864—a year after Tomblin's visit and seven years before the 1871 census.⁶⁷ That church was also located on land owned by Watson. It is likely a spirit of ecumenism existed in this thinly populated area.⁶⁸ It is possible the two churches shared the same building, and it seems unlikely the census enumerator would make a mistake since Malone was also one of the original settlers. The biggest difference between Methodists and Anglicans of English origin in 1871 was actually birthplace. Eighty-five per cent of English Methodists, but only 53 per cent of English Anglicans were born in Canada.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when many churches struggled to find ministers, Methodists succeeded more often than others in providing congregations with leadership.⁶⁹ The 1871 census of Brudenell recorded one Methodist minister (and a Catholic priest), but no Anglican clergy. As an offshoot of the Church of England, Methodists shared many aspects of their belief system with Anglicans. As John Webster Grant notes, the operation of established churches in Upper Canada “was greatly affected by custom and circumstance and by the existence of power structures that escaped the neat definitions of ecclesiastical theory.”⁷⁰ In this context, local lay leaders

⁶⁷ Anglican Diocese of Ottawa Archives, St. Leonard's Church (Anglican), Rockingham, Ontario fonds, 1882–2000, administrative history available online: <https://www.archeion.ca/st-leonards-church-anglican-rockingham-ontario-fonds> (accessed 31 May 2017).

⁶⁸ Ernest Lloyd Lake notes in his *Pioneer Reminiscences of the Upper Ottawa Valley* (Ottawa: Le Droit, 1966), 31, that Protestants in Eganville not only shared buildings, but attended each other's services. Methodist businessman Robert Smith donated land to Anglicans so they could build a church, p. 73. Sharing church buildings was common among Protestant settler groups in both Upper Canada and British Columbia. See for example Lynne S. Marks, *Infidels and the Damn Churches: Irreligion and Religion in Settler British Columbia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2017), 103.

⁶⁹ John Webster Grant, *A Profusion of Spires: Religion in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 45.

⁷⁰ Grant, *A Profusion of Spires*, 37.

gained greater influence and enjoyed considerable freedom, even among the generally episcopal Anglican, Catholic, and Methodist denominations. Since Methodist ministers were generally appointed for a limited time, and because visits by “circuit-riders” could be infrequent, class leaders provided an element of continuity in their community.⁷¹ And, as Marguerite Van Die argues, effective class leaders needed to be attuned to the needs of their specific locale, where “any appearance of cant, staleness, and formalism could only have a deterrent effect in attracting and retaining members.”⁷² The class leader at the meeting referenced above, Arthur Acton, is listed on the census as Anglican, yet here he was presiding over a Methodist congregation. Because there was such significant intercourse between English Anglicans and English Methodists in Brudenell, it makes sense to speak of these as forming one “English Protestant” group. We might also add Irish Methodists and Anglicans to this group, as there is evidence to suggest they were part of the same community. The Methodist minister in 1871, John Rutaro, was of Irish descent (born in Ontario) and he boarded with an Irish Methodist family living just outside Rockingham village. Looking at Map 6.2 below, four of seven Irish Protestant families lived near Rockingham. Even without including these last two groups, English Protestants still easily constituted the largest minority population in Brudenell in 1871.

Having a sense of the ethnic composition of Brudenell in the early years of settlement, let us now move on to examine the spatial orientations of the same settlers over time and see what patterns emerge related to ethnicity. The first settlers in the

⁷¹ Phyllis Airhart, *Serving the Present Age: Revivalism, Progressivism and Methodist Tradition in Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1992), 29–30.

⁷² Marguerite Van Die, “‘A March of Victory and Triumph in Praise of ‘The Beauty of Holiness’’: Laity and the Evangelical Impulse in Canadian Methodism, 1800–1884,” in *Aspects of the Canadian Evangelical Experience*, ed. G. A. Rawlyk (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997), 84.

official record arrived in October and November 1855, but records of their locations only exist from T. P. French's report of February 1857.⁷³ French started recording a date of occupation on his censuses beginning in 1858. So, our records of the earliest settlers are from 1858, pointing back to 1855. It is certain that some settlers came and went in this time, but their number is unknown. Of the 45 settlers listed in French's 1857 report, 32 were born in Ireland, one in England (to Irish parents), nine in Canada West, and three in Canada East. Of the thirteen settlers born outside Ireland, six were of Irish descent based on links with the 1871 census. This means at least 84 per cent of all settlers on the Opeongo Road in 1857 were Irish. All of the Irish settlers were Catholic.

Let us take a closer look at the 1855 settlers. Twenty-one were located on the road as of 2 January 1856 and were still in occupation of their lots in December 1858. Eight of these settlers lived with their fathers, meaning there were actually thirteen households and 101 individuals. This includes one settler, Michael Power, who had no family and was reported by French in March 1858 to be in ill health, having "been unwell for nearly two years."⁷⁴ Power is the only 1855 settler who was not recorded on the 1861 census. By December 1860, all twenty-one settlers remained on their lots and the total individuals had increased to 108. These settlers went after the task of clearing their land with considerable vigour. In the first five years of settlement, settlers cleared an average of 4.0 acres per property per year, with individual rates ranging from 0.6 to 12. This puts the first settlers in Brudenell well ahead of provincial averages calculated by Peter

⁷³ AO RG 1-9, pp. 08126–08127, "List of Locatees on the Ottawa and Opeongo Road," 25 February 1857.

⁷⁴ AO RG 1-9, pp. 08251–08257, "List of Locatees of Free Grants on the Ottawa and Opeongo Road," 1 March 1858, page 2.

Russell based on a sample of aggregate assessment data from Upper Canada in 1812–1842. Between 1832 and 1842 the average rate of clearance in Russell’s sample was 1.55 acres per farm per year.⁷⁵ In even greater contrast, the average clearance rate in Bathurst-Dalhousie District (1835–39) was 0.6 acres per adult male per year.⁷⁶ However, Russell’s averages are the long term clearing rates of farmers, not pioneers. A closer comparison can be found by looking at Polish settlers further up the Opeongo Road in Radcliffe and Sherwood. For these settlers, Blank found an average clearance rate of 2.5 acres per property per year, with a range between 0.3 and 5.75.⁷⁷ Clearing land was hard work and required considerable skill. On average, the twenty-one 1855 settlers had been in Canada for 20 years (including both native and foreign born), more than enough time to develop the skills necessary to thrive on the frontier.⁷⁸ In comparison with long-term averages and with the more recently-arrived Polish settlers, the first Irish Catholics on the Opeongo Road in Brudenell were experienced, skilled, ambitious and determined.

Family strategies for the acquisition of property are revealed in numbers drawn from French’s reports (see Table 6.3).⁷⁹ In 1858, the mean age of householders was 41.9 years, while the mean age of non-householders was 22.9 years. French’s reports indicate that all non-householders were actually sons of householders. These families focussed on

⁷⁵ Peter A. Russell, “Upper Canada: A Poor Man’s Country? Some Statistical Evidence,” in *CPRH* 3 (1982): 136.

⁷⁶ Peter A. Russell, “Forest into Farmland: Upper Canadian Clearing Rates, 1822–1839,” *Agricultural History* 57, no. 3 (July 1983): 336.

⁷⁷ Joshua C. Blank, *Creating Kashubia: History, Memory, and Identity in Canada’s First Polish Community* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2016), 118.

⁷⁸ See the discussion on pp. 257–8 above, along with Table 6.1.

⁷⁹ Statistics in this table are based on T. P. French’s reports for December 1858 and December 1860. See AO RG 1-9, pp. 08311–08319 and 08430–08434.

TABLE 6.3
Statistics on the First Settlers in Brudenell, 1858 and 1860

	December 1858		December 1860	
	Householders	Landed Sons	Householders	Landed Sons
Number	13	7	15	5
Mean Acres Cleared	15.2	6.7	22.5	17.8
Mean Acres in Crops	3.2	1.9	15.1	8.6
Mean Age	41.9	22.9		
Mean Family Size	7.2	1.0	6.7	1.2

Source: Compiled from AO RG 1-9, T. P. French's reports for 1858 and 1860.

improving one property first, where they fulfilled their free grant obligations, before turning to improving additional properties. In 1858, the mean clearance on householders' lots was 15.2 acres versus 6.7 acres on lots occupied by sons. Further, while the mean acres in crops on householder lots was 3.2, only two sons had any acres in crops. Within two years, however, the number of sons without their own house had decreased from seven to five and all of the sons' farms were producing crops.⁸⁰

By 1860, the vast majority (93 per cent) of the Opeongo Road free grant lots in Brudenell were occupied. Most of these early arrivals to Brudenell were Irish, or of Irish descent, and a majority were farmers (see Table 6.4). In the late 1850s and early 1860s, settlers moved into areas off the Opeongo Road as well. The maps below provide a reconstruction of settlement trends in Brudenell from the end of the free grant phase in the early 1860s, to the maturing township in 1871, to the beginning of the population decline in the early 1890s, to the end of the first decade of the twentieth century.

⁸⁰ The means give a reasonable impression of this group. In 1858 the oldest householder was 62 and the youngest 22—a wide range. However, 8 of 13 householders were between 30 and 53 years of age. Six of thirteen householders had an adult, landholding son living with them. For non-householders, the range was much narrower, with the youngest being 19 and the oldest 27. The largest clearance among 1858 householders was 30 acres and the smallest was 4 acres, but again, 9 of 13 clearances were between 10 and 20 acres. For non-householders, the smallest clearance was 3 acres and the largest was 12.

TABLE 6.4
Birthplaces and Occupations of Opeongo Road Settlers, 1860

	Ireland	Canada	England	Scotland	Poland	Total
Farmer	52	12	2	1	1	68
Blacksmith	2	0	0	0	0	2
Cooper	1	1	0	0	0	2
Joiner	0	0	1	0	0	1
Teacher	1	0	0	0	0	1
Weaver	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	57	13	3	1	1	75

Source: Compiled from AO RG 1-9, T. P. French's report for 1860.

As with Figures 6.1 and 6.2, each map below is based on data from the Brudenell Assessment Roll Database linked with the nearest corresponding censuses. Map 6.1 uses location data from the 1864 collector's roll, which is the earliest surviving roll that is not missing any pages. This location data is combined with origin and religion from the 1871 census (where available). Because of the seven-year gap between sources, this method results in a higher number of Other-Unknowns (8.6 per cent) than in the 1871 (0.7), 1891 (0.8), and 1911 (0) maps. Maps 6.2, 6.3, and 6.4 are based on location data from the assessment rolls for 1871, 1891, and 1911 linked to the corresponding census each year.

These maps show property holdings rather than households. Thus, each icon on the map denotes a property held by a person of a specific cultural heritage. The decision to map ethnicity this way is based on the nature of the assessment rolls, which, rather than household addresses, identified properties owned or occupied. Many settlers owned multiple properties—often adjacent, but sometimes not. For example, in 1871, Patrick Regan owned L11&12/C13. As contiguous lots, it is reasonable to conclude this was also his household address. In contrast, William Haryett owned L17/C6 as well as L26/C9.

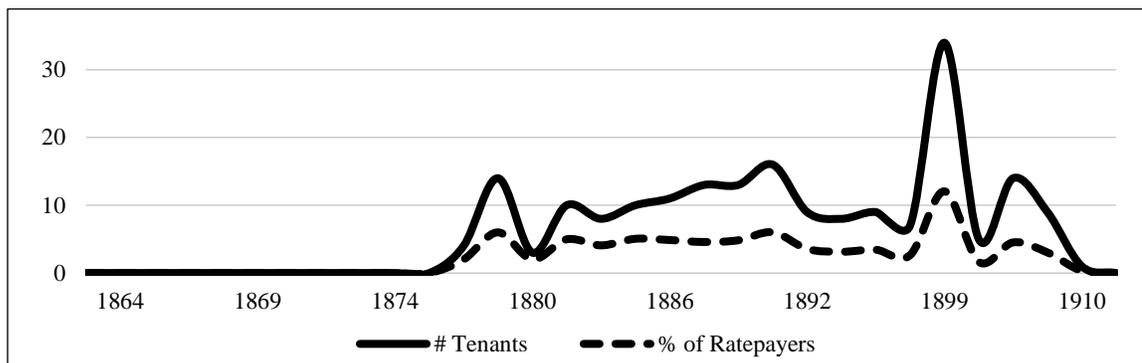
Many settlers continued to accumulate property over the next decades, so the problem of identifying which one was the primary residence becomes even more apparent. By 1911, the average property occupied was 203 acres, meaning the average settler occupied more than two standard 100-acre lots, or more than four 50-acre Opeongo Road lots.

In nearly all cases, these were properties owned, rather than rented. As noted in chapter five, tenancy in Brudenell was rare, never exceeding 12 per cent of ratepayers in any year, and averaging 3 per cent per year between 1863 and 1911 (see Figure 6.3). Tenancy was a short term strategy for settlers in Brudenell, with only four settlers who rented for more than five years.⁸¹ Only 111 individuals were identified as tenants in this period. Compared to the rest of the population, a much higher proportion of tenants were tradespeople living in the villages, rather than farmers occupying their own land. Of 111 tenants, 48 per cent were farmers, while the others included blacksmiths, hotel keepers, labourers, merchants, and shoe makers; forty per cent occupied properties smaller than one acre.⁸² These tenants also included roughly equivalent proportions of English and German Protestants in relation to the overall population. Between 1867 and 1911, English Protestants averaged 12 per cent of the overall population, while German Protestants made up 10 per cent (though this had increased to 28 per cent by 1911), compared to 69 per cent for Irish Catholics. Of 111 tenants, 13 per cent were English Protestant, and 13 per cent were German Protestant. Irish Catholics, however, comprised only 45 per cent of the tenant group. Tenancy was a less common strategy among Irish Catholics than it

⁸¹ Tenancy is discussed in more detail in chapter five, pp. 212–14. Tenancy rates in Brudenell were, on average, much lower than the rest of Ontario throughout the entire study period. See Catharine A. Wilson, *Tenants in Time: Family Strategies, Land, and Liberalism in Upper Canada, 1799–1871* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009), 231.

⁸² In contrast, 84 per cent of all adult men in the 1871 census of Brudenell identified as farmers.

FIGURE 6.3
Rate of Tenancy in Brudenell, 1863–1911



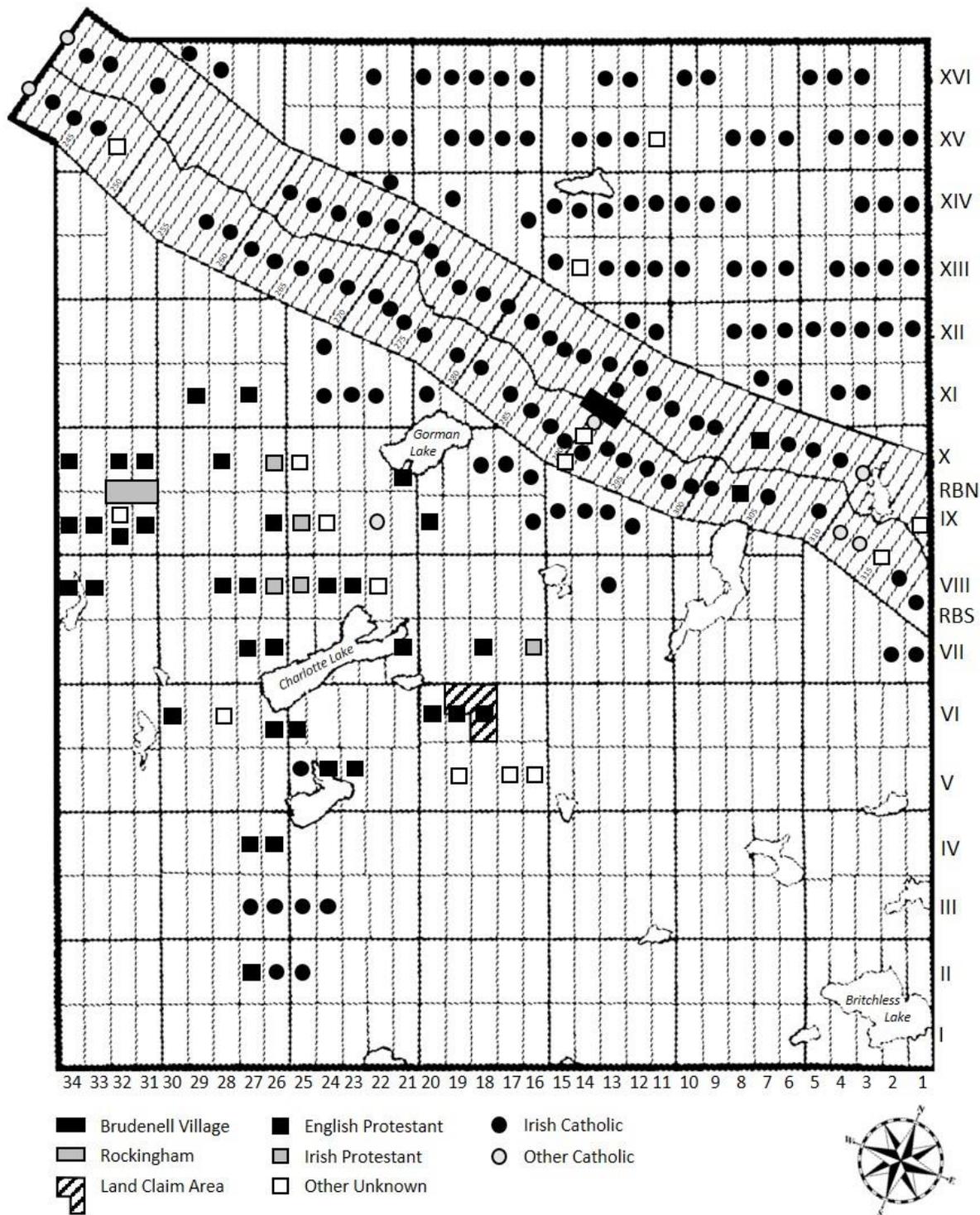
Source: Brudenell Tax Assessment Database (1863–1911).

was among the other ethnic groups in Brudenell, likely in part because of their near monopoly on the Opeongo Road free grants.

Map 6.1 reveals the extent and concentration of Irish Catholic settlement on and north of the Opeongo Road in 1864. The Catholic Church (RBS 283) and the services available at Brudenell village were the focal points of the Irish Catholic community. By this time some earlier settlers on the Opeongo had already moved on from the swampy section between lots 250 and 260. Many of these lots were reclaimed by 1911, but most remained unoccupied in 1871 and 1891. The area northeast of the Opeongo was also the best agricultural land in the township according to the surveyor's initial report in 1857.⁸³ It was luck, perhaps, that the Irish Catholic free grant settlers also had first opportunity to inspect and purchase lots in the northeast part of the township. Of 65 property holders on the Opeongo recorded in the 1861 census, eight also occupied adjacent lots off the road and five of these eight were part of the original 1855 cohort. Lucky or not, Irish Catholic settlers took advantage of the opportunity to increase their landholdings.

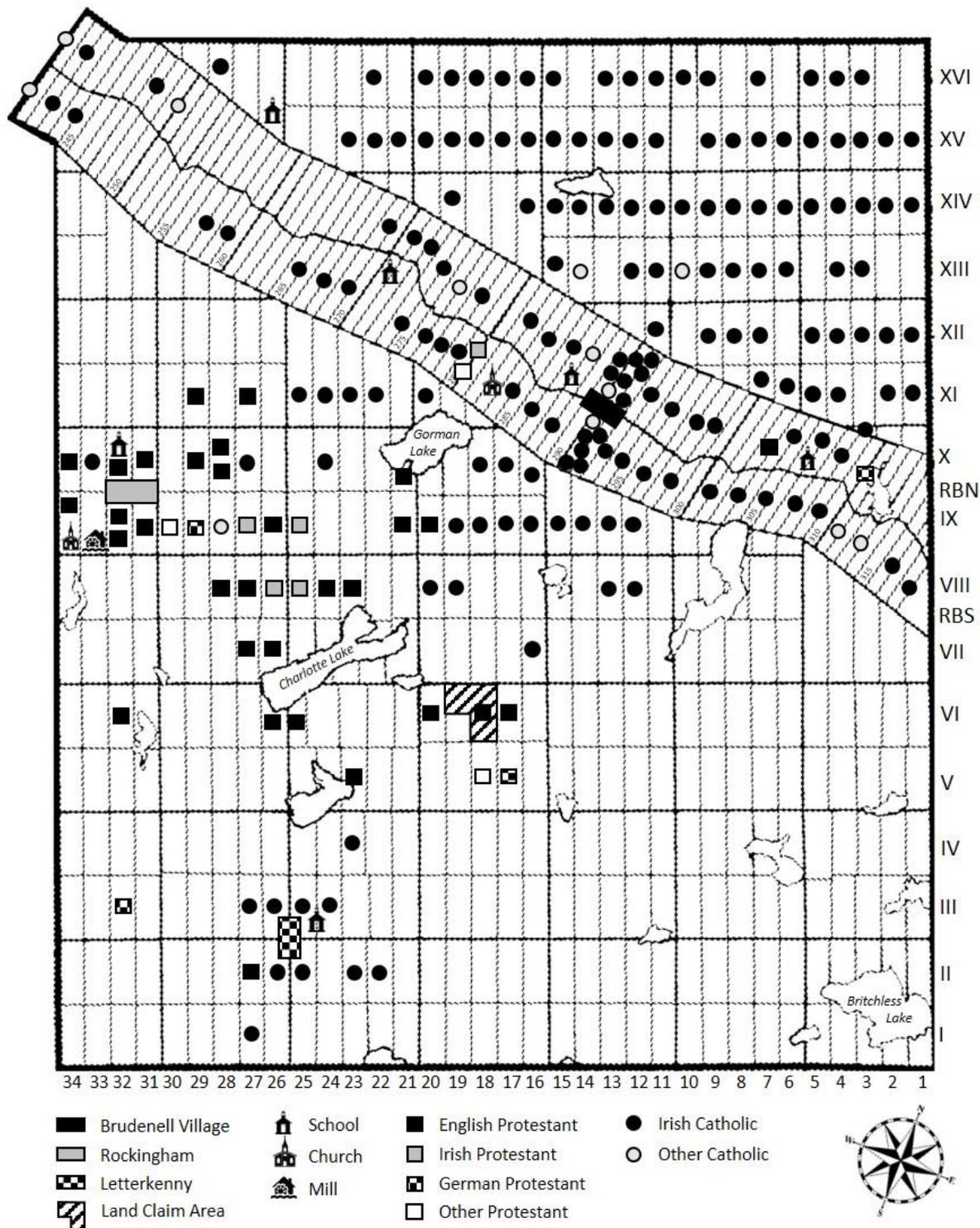
⁸³ H. O. Wood's survey reports are discussed in chapter two, pp. 65–66. See H.O. Wood, "Extract from Surveyor's Report, Brudenell," in "Remarks on Upper Canada Surveys and Extracts from the Surveyor's Reports," *Report of the Commissioner of Crown Lands for 1861* (Quebec, 1862): Appendix 26, pp. 5–6.

MAP 6.1
 Distribution of Property Holdings in Brudenell by Ethnicity, 1864



Source: 1864 Collector's Roll and 1871 Census.

MAP 6.2
 Distribution of Property Holdings in Brudenell by Ethnicity, 1871



Source: 1871 Census and Assessment Roll.

Maps 6.1 and 6.2 reveal the division in Brudenell between Catholic (northeast) and Protestant (southwest). In terms of landholding patterns, little changed between 1864 and 1871. Irish Catholic settlers continued to abandon properties on the Opeongo Road, while the villages at Brudenell and Rockingham expanded. Maps 6.2 through 6.4 show the locations of schools, churches, and major commercial ventures such as the grist and saw mill in Rockingham.⁸⁴ Map 6.2 also shows the first German-owned properties in the township: one at the southeast end of the Opeongo, one in Rockingham, one near Lost Nation, and one west of the Irish settlement at Letterkenny.

The Irish Catholic community in northeast Brudenell was flexible enough to incorporate non-Irish families: the Belkwell and Payette families discussed earlier, for example. Family relationships and connections to land facilitated inter-cultural and inter-religious mixing. For example, an apparent exception to the dominance of Irish Catholics in northeast Brudenell (Map 6.3) was Herbert Grand, an Anglican/Catholic/Presbyterian painter-turned-farmer who occupied L8/C14&15 in 1891.⁸⁵ Closer examination reveals the complex nature of ethnic identity and the intimate and intricate connections among Irish Catholic settlers in Brudenell leading back to the original 1855 cohort. According to a 1923 obituary, Grand was born in Guelph, Ontario in 1860.⁸⁶ He married Mary Naughton in 1883 before leaving for Egypt as part of the 1884–85 Nile Expedition.⁸⁷ He

⁸⁴ These were located using the institutional and industrial schedules of the 1871 census.

⁸⁵ He was enumerated as a painter in the 1891 and 1911 censuses and in the 1889–92, 1898, 1904–06, and 1910–11 assessment rolls and as a farmer in the 1901 census and in the 1894, 1896, and 1899 rolls.

⁸⁶ Burbage, *Early Families*, 103.

⁸⁷ Burbage, *Early Families*, 103. On the role of Canadians in the Nile Expedition, see Roy MacLaren, *Canadians on the Nile, 1882–1898: Being the Adventures of the Voyageurs on the Khartoum Relief Expedition and Other Exploits* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1978).

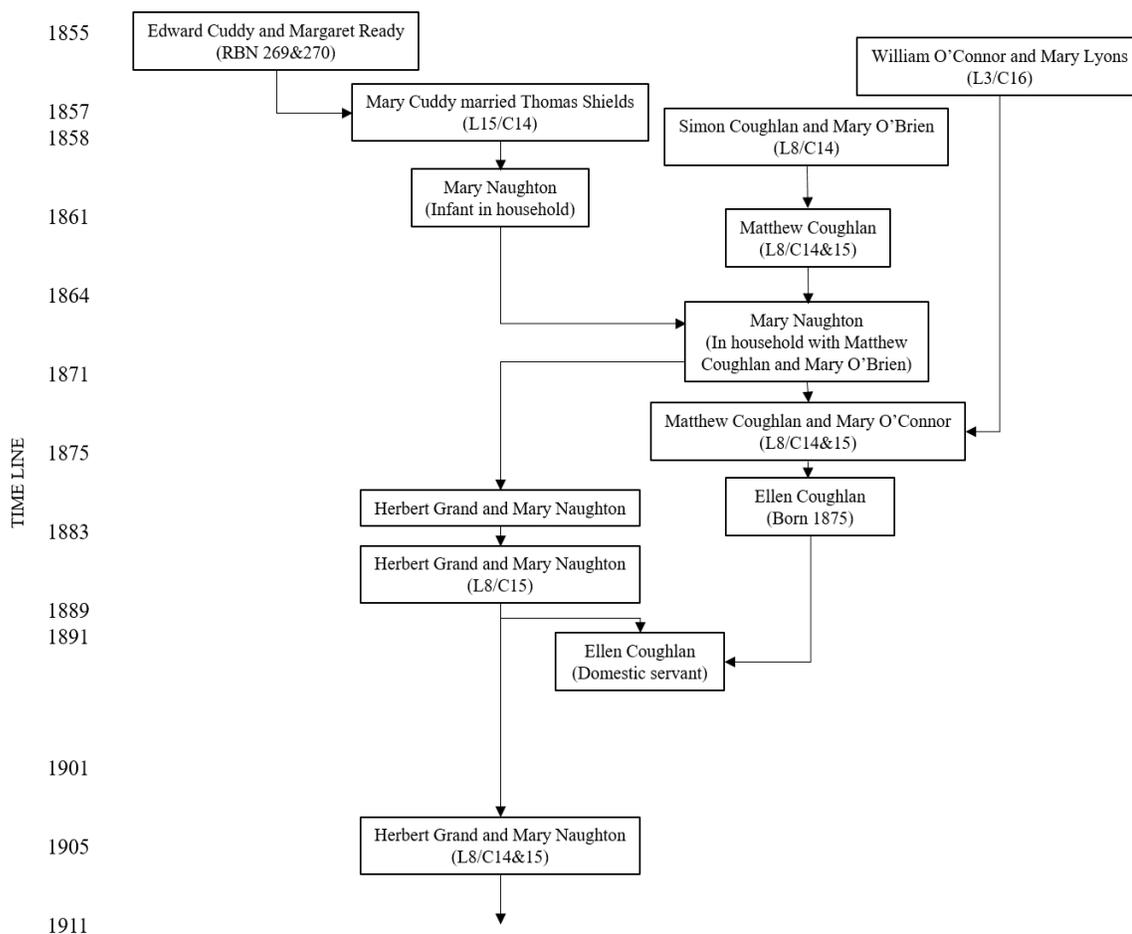
first appeared on the assessment roll in Brudenell in 1889, and on the census in 1891 along with wife Mary and their children Joseph (7), John (4), and Mary Ann (2). He occupied L9/C15 on the assessment roll that year, as well as in 1892, but he was a householder on L8/C15 in 1890, 1891, 1894, and 1896. He was a tenant on L8/C15 in 1899, and a freeholder on the same lot in 1898 and 1904. In 1905–06 and 1910–11 he owned both L8/C14 and L8/C15. In the 1901 census, Grand was listed as English by origin, Canadian by nationality, and Presbyterian by religion, while Mary and their children were English, Canadian, and Roman Catholic. According to the 1911 census, Herbert was English, Canadian, and Anglican while Mary and the children (and one grandchild) were Irish, Canadian, and Catholic.

Though Herbert was a late arrival to Brudenell, Mary's history can be traced back to several of the original 1855 settlers (see Figure 6.4). In the 1861 census Naughton was an infant in the household of the recently-married Thomas Shields and Mary Cuddy who lived on L15/C14. Mary Cuddy was the daughter of Edward Cuddy and Margaret Ready who settled on the Opeongo Road in 1855.⁸⁸ In 1871, a thirteen-year-old Mary Naughton was in the household of Matthew Coughlan and his widowed mother, Mary O'Brien, who lived on L8/C14&15. Coughlan appeared on the assessment roll occupying the same property from 1864 to 1886. According to Burbage, Coughlan married Mary O'Connor about 1873.⁸⁹ This Mary O'Connor was possibly the daughter of William O'Connor,

⁸⁸ On the birth of Mary Cuddy see Burbage, 55. For settlement location of Edward Cuddy see AO RG 1-95-3-9 [Inspection and valuation reports of the Townships of Brougham, Brudenell, Grattan, and Sebastopol by William Bell, P.L.S.] October 1863 MS 482, reel 1.

⁸⁹ Burbage, *Early Families*, 32. According to the 1861 census, William and Mary O'Connor had a daughter Mary, born c. 1855, which would put her at the same age as the Mary married to Matthew Coughlan in the 1881 census.

FIGURE 6.4
Family Background of Mary Naughton and Herbert Grand, 1855–1911

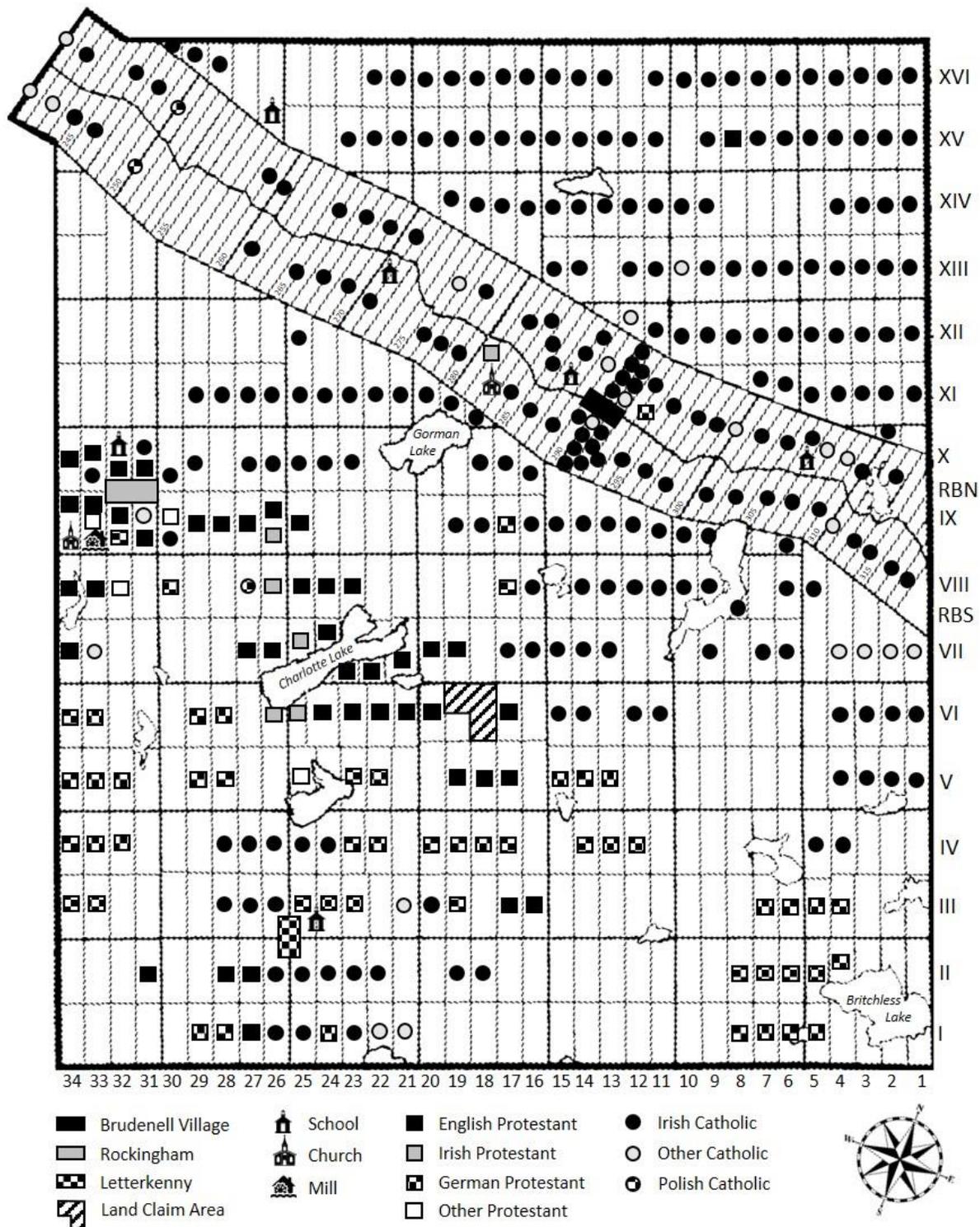


Source: Brudenell Tax Assessment Database (1863–1911), Census of Brudenell (1861–1911), Burbage, *Early Families*, AO RG 1-9, and AO RG 1-95-3-9. See text.

who in 1871 owned a farm in concession sixteen. Matthew Coughlan and family appear on the 1881 census, including their six-year-old daughter Ellen. The family left by 1891, apparently for Port Arthur (Thunder Bay), except possibly Ellen.⁹⁰ In the 1891 census, Ellen Coughlan, a sixteen-year-old domestic servant, was listed in the household of Mary (Naughton) and Herbert Grand. While Ellen's parents and the rest of her family left Brudenell, she stayed and worked as a servant in the house of the woman who used to

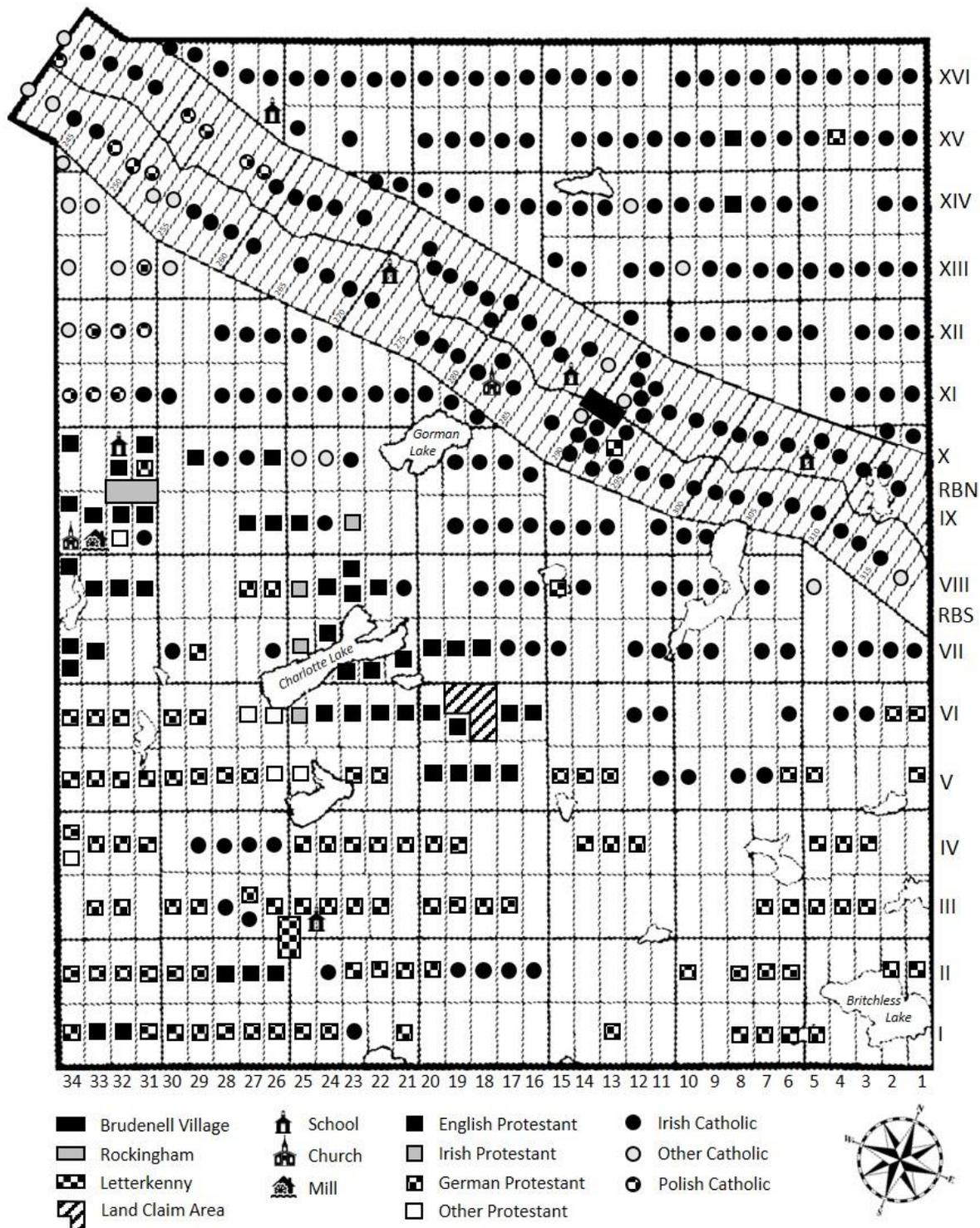
⁹⁰ Burbage, *Early Families*, 33.

MAP 6.3
 Distribution of Property Holdings in Brudenell by Ethnicity, 1891



Source: 1891 Census and Assessment Roll.

MAP 6.4
 Distribution of Property Holdings in Brudenell by Ethnicity, 1911



Source: 1911 Census and Assessment Roll.

be a boarder with her grandmother and who now lived on the property where Ellen was raised. Ellen was not listed as part of the household on the 1901 census. The relationship among families and land in Brudenell was complex. Religion, especially ties between Catholic families, was important in establishing and maintaining connections to specific locations. Intergenerational transfer was not a straightforward process of transmission from father to eldest son, but there were multiple possible routes, as the story of Mary Naughton and Herbert Grand shows.⁹¹

Between 1871 and 1891 the spatial distribution of ethnic groups in Brudenell changed dramatically. While Irish Catholics continued to dominate the Opeongo and the northeast, and English Protestants expanded their holdings in the area around Charlotte Lake, German Protestants moved in greater numbers into the south. Earlier, we discussed two probable reasons for this trend: chain migration from Germany, and the availability of affordable land. Another likely reason is the proximity of southern Brudenell to German settlements in neighboring townships: Vanbrugh and Woermke (Sebastopol), Quadeville and Wolfe (Lyndock), Zadow and Augsburg (South Algona), and Rosenthal (Radcliffe). Several of these hamlets had post offices with German-speaking postmasters, the earliest of which was established at Vanbrugh in 1863 or 1864.⁹²

Each of the above maps depicts a township divided by ethnicity. Similar patterns are visible in other townships and counties in nineteenth-century Ontario. Montague Township, for example, was settled by Irish migrants (both Protestant and Catholic) from

⁹¹ Also see the case of the Kitt family property at L13/C15, which passed between multiple family members (including a son-in-law) between 1857 and 1911. Chapter four, pp. 146–8 and Table 4.2.

⁹² Lee-Whiting, *Harvest of Stones*, 52.

the 1830s to the 1870s. Irish Catholics settled close to urban centres where there were established churches.⁹³ Irish Catholics in Brudenell, by comparison, arrived before a church was built on land donated to the Diocese by one of the original 1855 settlers. Though Irish Catholics came later to Montague than their Protestant counterparts, they also found themselves on better land. Lockwood argues that the timing of settlement was crucial, if in an unexpected way. The earlier Irish Protestant settlers, many of whom were formerly workers on the Rideau Canal project, had arrived in Montague in poverty and squatted on land they knew was comparatively poor, but which meant they need not fear eviction.⁹⁴ By 1861, the township exhibited a settlement pattern in which Irish Catholics were clustered near their churches, Irish Protestants were concentrated in the central and northern portions of the township, and non-Irish settlers were scattered throughout.⁹⁵ Lockwood's map of Montague, however, shows considerably greater overlap between ethnic groups than my maps of Brudenell.

In Logan Township, in the 1870s, Baskerville finds that "German Lutherans lived side by side to a greater degree than any other ethnic community."⁹⁶ Irish Catholics and English Protestants, on the other hand, were dispersed throughout the township. By no means a cohesive group, German Lutherans in Logan established "a number of separate and fervently supported parishes...around which [they] conducted their lives."⁹⁷ This

⁹³ Lockwood, "Irish Migrants and the 'Critical Years' in Eastern Ontario," 164–5, Map 4.

⁹⁴ Lockwood, "Irish Migrants and the 'Critical Years' in Eastern Ontario," 164.

⁹⁵ Lockwood, "Irish Migrants and the 'Critical Years' in Eastern Ontario," 166, Map 5.

⁹⁶ Peter Baskerville, "Wilson Benson Revisited: Movement and Persistence in Rural Perth County, Ontario, 1871–81," in *Lives in Transition: Longitudinal Analysis from Historical Sources*, ed. Peter Baskerville and Kris Inwood (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 153–4, Figure 7.4.

⁹⁷ Baskerville, "Movement and Persistence in Rural Perth County, Ontario," 155.

attachment to parish suggests the presence of German communities in adjacent townships may have been a significant pull factor to acquiring land in Brudenell. In rural Essex County, Clarke finds that religion and kinship were more powerful forces of propinquity than country of origin. Roman Catholics (both Irish and French-Canadian) concentrated in the northern part of the county, especially in Sandwich Township, while Methodists and Baptists predominated in the south.⁹⁸ In Essex, distance to church was an important factor in determining the location of settlement. This helps to explain the presence of Polish and French Canadian Catholics in northern Brudenell. In Winslow, Quebec, a township with a similar history to Brudenell, French Canadian settlers pre-dominated in the north, where forestry was a key industry, while Hebridean Scots held the south.⁹⁹ Like these other regions, the spatial distribution of settlers in Brudenell was the result of a combination of factors. Among these factors ethnicity, religion, and timing of settlement were especially important.

As the spatial distribution of ethnic groups in Brudenell shifted over time, so too did population numbers. The Irish Catholic population increased at an average rate of about 1.5 per cent per year between 1871 and 1891. The English Protestant population increased at a slightly slower rate of 0.9 per cent per year in the same time period, while the German Protestant population grew by an astonishing 28 per cent each year on average. Between 1891 and 1911, however, the populations of Irish Catholic and English Protestant groups decreased by 2 per cent and 1.5 per cent per year respectively, while

⁹⁸ Clarke, *The Ordinary People of Essex*, 122–6.

⁹⁹ J. I. Little, *Crofters and Habitants: Settler Society, Economy, and Culture in a Quebec Township, 1848–1881* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 63–9, and Maps 9–13. On comparison with Brudenell, see chapter five, pp. 225–6.

the German Protestant group continued to grow, though at a slower pace of 2.3 per cent per year. When we compare Map 6.3 with Map 6.4, several important features stand out. One is the obvious increase in German Protestant landholding. Another is the influx of Polish Catholics into the northwest, filling in many of the previously vacated lots on the Opeongo Road. Third, and perhaps counterintuitively, is the relative stability of Irish Catholic and English Protestant landholding in the northeast and around Rockingham.

There are several reasons for continuity of Irish Catholic and English Protestant landholding. Though the size of their populations shrank between 1871 and 1911, the number of ratepayers increased (see Table 6.5). This is partly explained by an increase in the number of non-residents who were assessed for taxes, but whose families were not included in the population. There were a variety of non-resident types in Brudenell in 1911. Their names and addresses provide clues to their trajectories. Six were widows who left after their husbands died. Some moved north to Cobalt and Fort Stewart, while others went south to Chatham, and still others went west to British Columbia.

This out-migration suggests descendants of Irish Catholic and English Protestant settlers saw diminished opportunities in Brudenell. However, the continued influx of German Protestants suggests the opposite was true for that group. Table 6.5 displays the number of ratepayers of each group, and the percentage of these who were non-residents in each of the three census years in question. Sixty-seven per cent of non-residents were people who lived in neighboring townships and owned secondary properties in Brudenell. Though out-migration was a real factor leading to population loss, we must also account for the continued demand for land in Brudenell. Along with the late-coming German and Polish immigrants, the increase in non-resident landholders in the early twentieth century

TABLE 6.5
Ratepayers, Non-Residents, and Populations, by Major Ethnic Groups, 1871–1911

	1871			1891			1911		
	#RP	% NR	POP	#RP	% NR	POP	#RP	% NR	POP
Irish Catholics	113	0.9	532	181	3.9	694	158	14.5	417
English Protestants	18	0.0	88	31	0.0	103	21	9.5	72
German Protestants	4	0.0	21	30	7.7	139	50	10.0	203
Total	135	0.7	641	242	3.7	936	229	13.1	692

Source: Brudenell Tax Assessment Database (1863–1911) and Census of Brudenell (1871–1911).

indicates a possible shift in what potential property holders saw in the land—not as the primary basis of the family economy, but as a secondary asset.

Were the differences between Irish Catholics, English Protestants, and German Protestants only spatial? Or, were there other ways in which these groups distinguished themselves? A cross-sectional analysis of the 1871 census provides another venue for discussion of cultural patterns of settlement in Brudenell. We can, for example, see what types of crops each ethnic group produced, and whether they produced enough to meet their consumption needs for the year. Though it does not provide details on specific crops produced on each farm, the Brudenell Tax Assessment Database enables us to analyze categories such as family size, age of property holders, farm size, land value, and livestock holding over a long time period. The analysis which follows combines both the cross-sectional and longitudinal approaches.

In chapter five, I described the economic character of the average family farm in Brudenell in 1871. That farm was slightly smaller and less productive than the average Ontario farm, yet still more than sufficient to meet the needs of a growing population for sustenance and income. Farm families in Brudenell practiced an extensive and balanced

TABLE 6.6
Farm Size by Major Ethnic Groups in Brudenell, 1871

	English Protestant	German Protestant	Irish Catholic
Number of farms	18	6	117
Percentage of farms in each size category			
Small (1–69 acres)	5.6	0	3.4
Medium (70–169 acres)	55.6	100.0	59.0
Large (170+ acres)	38.9	0	37.6
Average acres...			
occupied	149.6	100.0	157.3
improved	33.5	13.3	31.9
planted	10.5	4.5	6.2
in wheat	2.4	1.8	2.9
in potatoes	0.9	0.6	1.5
in hay	13.5	2.8	12.6

Source: 1871 Brudenell Census Database.

form of agriculture with a tendency toward diversification rather than specialization.

Where Brudenell differed from provincial trends was in its underproduction of wheat and its emphasis on oats, potatoes, and beef. Do those same patterns hold when we examine farming in relation to ethnicity? By 1871 Irish Catholic and English Protestant landholders were established in Brudenell for over a decade. German Protestants, on the other hand, were more recent arrivals. This is reflected in the number and size of farms (Table 6.6).¹⁰⁰

The newer German Protestant farms were all exactly 100 acres and were under less cultivation in 1871 compared to the English and Irish. Surprisingly, and in contrast with patterns identified elsewhere, the first German farmers in Brudenell did not own any oxen (see Table 6.7). In Logan, for example, German Lutherans owned twice as many oxen as

¹⁰⁰ The size categories used here are based on Marvin McNinnis, "The Size Structure of Farming, Canada West, 1861," in "Agrarian Organization in the Century of Industrialization: Europe, Russia, and North America," *Research in Economic History*, suppl. 5 (1989): 313–29.

TABLE 6.7
Crop Production and Stockholding by Major Ethnic Groups in Brudenell, 1871

	Per cent farms with crops or livestock			Average production or stock for farms with crop or stock		
	EPR	GPR	IRC	EPR	GPR	IRC
Spring wheat (bu)	67	50	80	43	50	56
Oats (bu)	67	50	81	135	38	139
Peas (bu)	39	33	47	24	9	22
Potatoes (bu)	89	67	91	124	103	166
Turnips (bu)	39	33	19	147	100	176
Hay (tons)	89	50	91	11	4	12
Wool (lb)	67	50	69	44	13	12
Horses	89	83	60	1.4	1.0	1.9
Oxen	17	0	26	2.0		2.1
Milk Cows	94	100	86	2.6	2.2	2.4
Other Cows	72	50	77	2.9	2.0	3.7
Sheep	72	67	69	10.2	3.5	9.3
Swine	56	100	85	2.7	1.8	4.0

Source: 1871 Brudenell Census Database.

all other groups.¹⁰¹ The low number of livestock among German farmers is also reflected in the comparatively small amount of land devoted to hay production. The average Irish Catholic and English Protestant farms were on the high end of the “medium-sized farm” category and had nearly identical amounts of improved land. In terms of the proportion of large farms, Irish Catholics and English Protestants were again roughly even, with 37.6 and 38.8 per cent of farms among each group being larger than 169 acres. If we think of farm size as a proxy for class, all three groups were ahead of provincial averages in 1871, and a majority of both Irish Catholic and English Protestant farmers were solidly middle

¹⁰¹ Baskerville, “Movement and Persistence in Rural Perth County,” 155–6.

class and a higher proportion were owners of large acreages. In Darroch's 1871 Central Ontario sample, only 7.7 per cent of male heads of households occupied farms 170 acres or larger, compared to 36.9 per cent in Brudenell.¹⁰² There do seem to have been some minor differences between Irish Catholic and English Protestant farms. Twice as many English as Irish farmers grew turnips, though they seemed to be less successful with their crops. In contrast, English farmers were much more skilled at wool production, with nearly four times the output of Irish farmers, and roughly the same percentage of farmers reporting. More Irish farmers engaged in wheat and oat production, though their outputs per farm were similar to the English. Irish Catholic farmers also devoted more acreage to potatoes, which resulted in higher average production of that crop. Both groups showed a tendency for balanced stock raising. While more English Protestants owned horses, those Irish who did own horses tended to own more per farm.

The head start enjoyed by the Irish and English also meant these farms were able to produce more goods for market (see Table 6.8).¹⁰³ Major differences are revealed when we compare early and late arriving groups. On average, only 2 of 6 German farms had a surplus in any category. However, if the Germans looked at their neighbours, they could easily expect to see a return on their investment within a decade. The percentage of Irish Catholic and English Protestant farms producing surpluses in key categories is roughly equivalent. A majority of farms had surpluses of wheat, hay, oats, potatoes, and mutton, while a smaller number produced surpluses of beef and pork, and only a few of

¹⁰² Gordon Darroch, "Scanty Fortunes and Rural Middle-Class Formation in Nineteenth-Century Central Ontario," *Canadian Historical Review* 79, no. 4 (December 1998): 630. This difference is qualified by the relative accessibility of land in Brudenell compared to the rest of Ontario.

¹⁰³ See also chapter five, pp. 223–5.

TABLE 6.8
Marketable Surpluses of Selected Crops by Major Ethnic Groups in Brudenell, 1871

	Percentage of farms reporting surplus in each category			Per farm value (\$) of each surplus or deficit (all farms)		
	EPR	GPR	IRC	EPR	GPR	IRC
Wheat	50	33	62	-7.17	-11.17	15.92
Hay	89	33	90	79.16	5.92	91.42
Oats	61	33	77	10.67	-0.40	15.05
Potatoes	83	33	79	19.22	-2.00	45.81
Beef	39	33	42	12.26	-4.95	29.22
Pork	33	17	43	-11.81	-38.14	-0.49
Mutton	56	33	50			
Butter	17	0	21	-26.05	-27.95	-13.61
Firewood	39	0	20	-3.11	-44.50	-16.47

Source: 1871 Brudenell Census Database. Per farm value includes all farms, not only farms reporting.

butter. On average, both Irish Catholic and English Protestant farms produced surpluses of hay, oats, potatoes, and beef, while German Protestant farms produced surpluses only in hay. The relative lack of production on German Protestant farms in 1871 reflects their late arrival in the township. Consequently, these farms had a lower ratio of improved to occupied acres (0.133) compared to English Protestant (0.224) and Irish Catholic (0.203) farms (Table 6.6). These early German Protestant farms lacked the draft animals needed to quickly increase production by clearing more land (Table 6.7) and likely suffered due to the smaller number of compatriots that they could have called on for assistance.

Based on Joshua MacFadyen's new estimates of firewood consumption, I also attempted to measure whether farms in Brudenell were meeting their annual energy needs.¹⁰⁴ Only a few farms appear to have produced enough firewood for their own

¹⁰⁴ Joshua MacFadyen, "Hewers of Wood: A History of Wood Energy in Canada," in *Powering Up Canada*, 152.

consumption needs, let alone for market. Not only that, but there was an overall deficit in firewood of 6.47 cords, or \$16.18 per farm.¹⁰⁵ This is surprising given the location and the availability of trees for wood. The instructions to enumerators state that “quantities consumed or employed by the producer himself are to be counted as an essential part of the aggregate to be recorded.”¹⁰⁶ It is possible that the enumerator misunderstood his instructions, but if not, this is an area requiring further research. McCalla suggests that firewood was an important commercial product in 1860s Ontario. If so, then based on the above estimates, farmers in Brudenell were consumers of imported firewood. Another striking difference in Table 6.8 is the average per farm value of surpluses. Irish Catholic farmers, overall, were much more successful in producing goods for market, even compared to the English Protestants who settled at nearly the same time. This adds to a growing body of evidence suggesting Irish Catholics were not the landless proletariat of popular myth. In 1871 Brudenell at least, they were the most successful commercial farmers of the three major ethnic groups in the township.

Table 6.9 provides a breakdown of household heads in Brudenell in 1871 showing marital status, literacy, occupation (farming or non-farming), age, birthplace, origin, and religion. The average household in Brudenell was a farm family consisting of a married, literate, couple, under fifty years of age and of Irish Catholic origin, with three or four children at home. Irish Catholics identified as farmers more often than did English Protestants. Irish household heads also tended to be younger than the English and a

¹⁰⁵ The estimated value of the firewood deficit is based on McCalla’s conservative estimate of \$2.50 per cord on the domestic market in 1860s Toronto. See Douglas McCalla, *Planting the Province: The Economic History of Upper Canada, 1784–1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 230–1.

¹⁰⁶ Canada, *Manual Containing the Census Act and the Instructions to Officers*, 33.

TABLE 6.9
Marital Status, Sex, Literacy, Occupation, Age, Birthplace, Origin, and Religion of Household Heads by Major Ethnic Groups in Brudenell, 1871

	Total		Major Ethnic Groups					
	All Groups		EPR		GPR		IRC	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total	159	100.0	21	100.0	6	100.0	114	100.0
Marital Status								
Married	126	79.7	16	76.2	5	83.3	92	80.7
Widow	16	10.1	2	9.5	0	0.0	11	9.6
Single	16	10.1	3	14.3	1	16.7	11	9.6
Sex								
Male	152	96.2	20	95.2	6	100.0	111	97.4
Female	6	3.8	1	4.8	0	0.0	3	2.6
Literacy								
Able to read and write	103	65.2	20	95.2	6	100.0	66	57.9
Unable to write	10	6.3	1	4.8	0	0.0	8	7.0
Unable to read or write	45	28.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	40	35.1
Occupation								
Farmer	126	79.7	13	61.9	4	66.7	97	85.1
Non-farmer	32	20.3	8	38.1	2	33.3	17	14.9
Age								
20-29	30	19.0	1	4.8	1	16.7	25	21.9
30-39	45	28.5	6	28.6	1	16.7	33	28.9
40-49	32	20.3	8	38.1	2	33.3	18	15.8
50-59	29	18.4	5	23.8	2	33.3	18	15.8
>59	22	13.9	1	4.8	0	0.0	20	17.5
Birthplace								
Ireland	93	58.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	89	78.1
Ontario	26	16.5	1	4.8	0	0.0	20	17.5
England	19	12.0	18	85.7	0	0.0	1	0.9
Quebec	8	5.1	1	4.8	0	0.0	4	3.5
Germany	5	3.2	0	0	5	83.3	0	0.0
Other	7	4.4	1	4.8	1	16.7	0	0.0
Religion								
Catholic	121	76.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	114	100.0
Anglican	26	16.5	18	85.7	2	33.3	0	0.0
Methodist	8	5.1	3	14.3	2	33.3	0	0.0
Baptist	2	1.3	0	0.0	2	33.3	0	0.0
Presbyterian	1	0.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Origin								
Irish	123	77.8	0	00.0	0	0.0	114	100.0
English	21	13.3	21	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
German	7	4.4	0	0.0	6	100.0	0	0.0
Scotch	4	2.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
French	3	1.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

Source: 1871 Brudenell Census Database.

higher proportion were born in Ontario, which is another factor that could explain their ability to clear and cultivate marginal lands in Brudenell. By comparison, Irish Catholics (42.1 per cent) were much more likely to be illiterate than English Protestants (4.8 per cent). In 1871 Ontario, about 11.3 per cent of the adult male population were unable to read or write.¹⁰⁷ Yet even though levels of illiteracy among Irish Catholics in Brudenell were much higher than the provincial average, this did not seem to be a barrier to economic success in terms of landholding and crop production. Irish Catholics, for example, had the highest proportion of household heads who were unable to read or write. But in terms of marketable surpluses, Irish Catholics were the most successful farmers in Brudenell. Moreover, of 45 household heads who could not read or write, 42 owned their own house. Illiterate adult men owned an average of 0.89 houses and 76.3 acres of land—nearly twice as many houses as the provincial average and more than double the amount of land owned.¹⁰⁸ Seventy per cent of illiterate adult men owned acreage and 83 per cent owned a house, again exceeding provincial averages.

As we saw in chapter three, the settlement structure in Brudenell made property ownership more accessible than in the longer-settled parts of the province. The low cost of land made investment in home ownership a reasonable goal. This led to higher than average rates of both home ownership and landholding in Brudenell compared to Ontario as a whole. Darroch and Soltow found that Protestants held an advantage over Catholics in terms of the average number of homes owned (see Table 6.10). To compare with

¹⁰⁷ Darroch and Soltow, *Property and Inequality*, 114.

¹⁰⁸ This calculation is based on the 1871 census of Brudenell. The comparison is made with figures provided by Darroch and Soltow, *Property and Inequality*, 156. Illiteracy is defined as being unable to write while an adult male was 21 years of age or older.

TABLE 6.10
Brudenell and Ontario Compared: Mean Number of Homes Owned among Adult Males by Major Religion and Age in 1871

	Ontario		Brudenell	
	Protestant	Catholic	Protestant	Catholic
All	0.64	0.55	0.71	0.77
By age category				
20-39	0.37	0.32	0.31	0.62
40-99	1.01	0.87	1.12	1.03
Farmers	0.82	0.72	0.71	0.79

Source: 1871 Brudenell Census Database. Darroch and Soltow, *Property and Inequality*, 93, Table 3.9.

Darroch and Soltow, I have combined all Protestants and all Catholics in Brudenell into two categories. Since 94 per cent of all adult male Catholics were Irish origin, and 71 per cent of all Protestants were English, Irish, or Scottish, the comparison is still useful in our discussion of ethnicity in Brudenell. The comparison clearly shows that Catholics in Brudenell owned proportionally more homes than they did in the province as a whole. Even if we assume the low number of Catholic home owners in Ontario is skewed down by a French Canadian propensity to rent, the difference is still clear. Especially apparent is that, on average, young Catholics in Brudenell owned twice as many homes as their counterparts elsewhere. Desire Payette, one of the few French Canadians in Brudenell, owned four houses! Protestants also benefited from easier access to home ownership in Brudenell compared to Ontario. If we return to the question of why someone would choose to settle and stay in a “failed” settlement like Brudenell, here is important evidence. Brudenell provided the opportunity for young families to own land and homes.

Our discussion of social and economic patterns has to this point focussed mainly on Irish Catholics and English Protestants because there were relatively few German

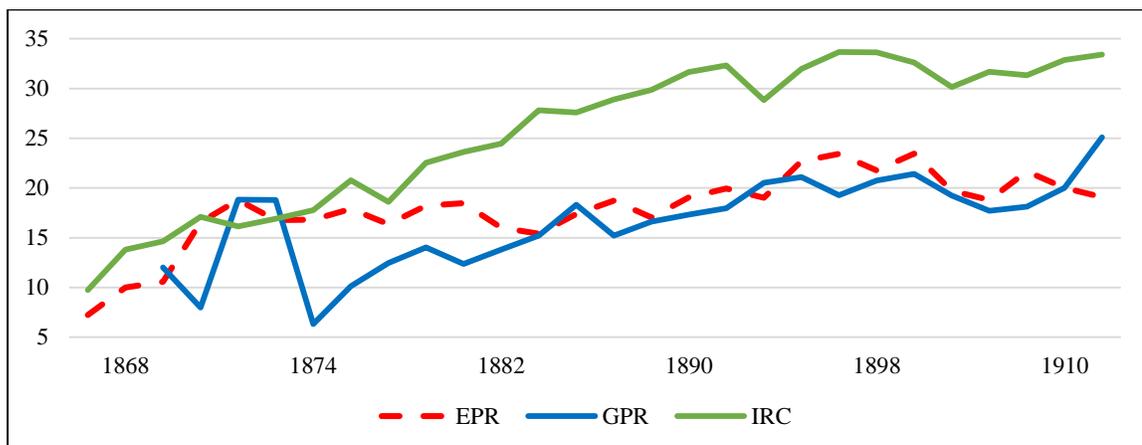
Protestants in Brudenell in 1871. Though German Protestant farms were initially less developed than their Irish Catholic and English Protestant neighbours, the difference was narrowed over time (see Figure 6.5). From the mid-1880s to the early twentieth century, German Protestant farms had roughly the same number of cleared acres by occupied acres as English Protestant farms. From the mid-1870s onward, Irish Catholics outpaced the other two groups in terms of the ratio of cleared acres to acres occupied. This was despite the fact the Irish had the lowest average number of working-age adults (both male and female) per farm in 1871.¹⁰⁹ Between 1883 and 1911 Irish Catholic farms had on average 11.7 per cent more cleared acres than German or English farms. The most plausible way to explain the Irish success in clearing may be their earlier appearance in Canada. Longer experience with pioneering gave them an edge compared to the other groups, though the Germans appear to have learned quickly. Family size also likely played a role. Though the English and Irish were roughly equivalent in family size until the mid-1880s, the Germans gained an advantage after 1890 (see Figure 6.7b).¹¹⁰

Figure 6.5 also shows that for each group the number of acres cleared began to plateau in the 1890s (earlier for the English). For some observers this might suggest declining productivity. However, Hedican argues that emphasis on cultivated acreage alone is misleading because it neglects the importance of wooded areas on the farm as a source of fuel, food, and building materials. “A critical decision farmers must make,

¹⁰⁹ Working age is defined as 15–59 years. There were 1.44 and 1.5 working age men and women among English Protestants, 1.83 and 1.67 among German Protestants, and 1.36 and 1.27 among Irish Catholics.

¹¹⁰ Family size here refers only to members of the immediate or extended family, but not to boarders or other members of the household. From 1867 to 1878, the assessment roll asked for the “number of persons in the family,” after which the question was phrased as “number of persons in the family of each person rated as a resident.” The question was changed in 1905 to include members of the household not directly related to the resident rate payer.

FIGURE 6.5
Acres Cleared as a Percentage of Acres Occupied, by Ethnic Group, 1867–1911



Source: Brudenell Tax Assessment Database (1863–1911).

then, concerns maintaining a balance between cultivated area and wood lot, since both are necessary.”¹¹¹ After the initial phase of clearing in order to plant crops, farmers had to decide whether it was worth their time to continue clearing, especially given that additional clearing would not necessarily increase the availability of arable land.¹¹²

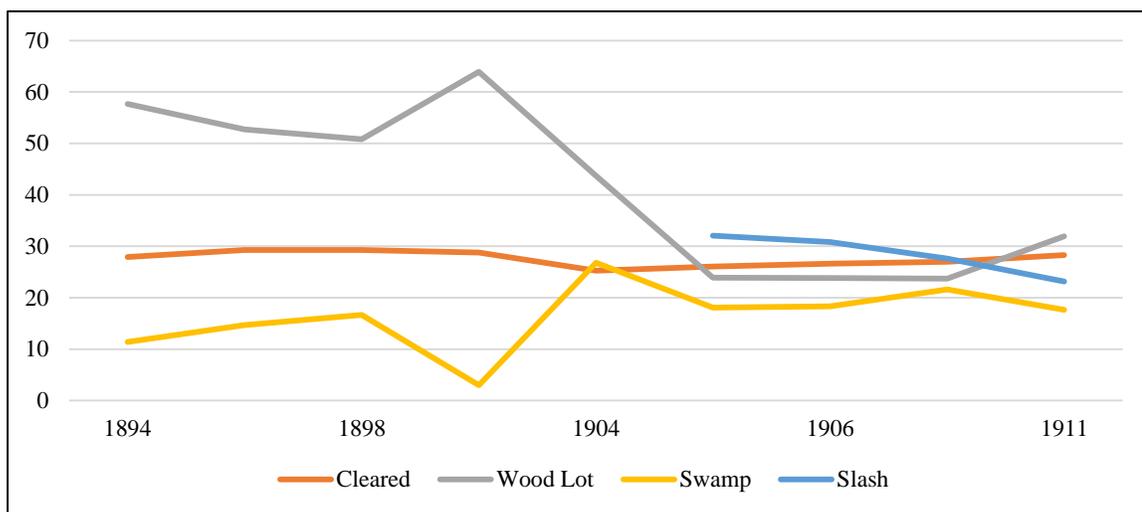
Hedican’s research on Admaston Township suggests that Irish farmers there had roughly 55 per cent of their land as wood lot in 1871, down from 78 per cent in 1861.¹¹³ From 1894 to 1911, the assessment rolls for Brudenell recorded acres in wood lot alongside acres cleared and acres categorized as swamp (shown in Figure 6.6). Slash land and

¹¹¹ Hedican, “Irish Farming Households in Eastern Canada,” 34.

¹¹² Hedican, “Irish Farming Households in Eastern Canada,” 35. The land classifications discussed in chapter five (p. 231) suggest that roughly two-thirds of the land in Brudenell was not suitable for farming, but much of this would have been suitable as wood lot.

¹¹³ Hedican, “Irish Farming Households in Eastern Canada,” 29–30, Figures 7 and 8. Since there is no “wood lot” category in the 1871 census, Hedican appears to calculate the size of wood lots by subtracting “acres planted” (crops) and “acres improved” (crops plus pasture) from the overall acres owned. Though this provides a rough measure of available land on each property, it hides the fact that much of this land could have been swamp. According to the Ontario Agricultural Commission, about 5 per cent of the land in Admaston was swamp, whereas in Brudenell it was 4,000 acres. See OAC, *Report of the Commissioners*, Volume 2, Appendix B (Toronto: C. Blackett Robinson, 1881), 503.

FIGURE 6.6
Categories of Land as a Percentage of All Acres Owned in Brudenell, 1894–1911



Source: Brudenell Tax Assessment Database (1863–1911).

swamp were in effect categories of less valuable woodland, but still had the potential to grow trees.¹¹⁴ Though there appears to be considerable variation in the way woodlands were categorized, the overall ratio of wood lot to cleared land remained relatively steady in this period, suggesting farmers were careful to manage this important resource.¹¹⁵

Between 1867 and 1911 changes in the number of property holders in each ethnic group mirrored changes in the overall population distribution in the township (Figure 6.7a and Figure 6.1). This masks changes in family structure which occurred over the course of the settlement period. In the first two decades of settlement, Irish Catholic and

¹¹⁴ The category for “slash” was introduced in 1902 at the request of the Bureau of Statistics. The assessor for Brudenell began completing this column in 1905. See Ontario, *Report of the Ontario Assessment Commission* (Toronto: L. K. Cameron, 1902), 18. “Slash” was apparently self-explanatory to the Assessment Commission, but was later defined in one periodical as “potential woodland and under wise management would be classified as woodland in 20–40 years.” See I. C. Marritt, “Alarming Decrease of Woodland Area in Agricultural Ontario,” *Forestry Chronicle* 12, no. 1 (1936): 94.

¹¹⁵ MacFadyen suggests it was “feasible to harvest anywhere from 0.75 to 1.25 cords of wood from a hectare of forest without depleting it. Houses consuming between 12 and 30 cords annually could have clear cut anywhere from 0.5 to 1.5 hectares every year.” See MacFadyen, “Hewers of Wood: A History of Wood Energy in Canada,” in *Powering Up Canada*, 141.

FIGURE 6.7a
Number of Property Holders in Major Ethnic Groups, 1867–1911

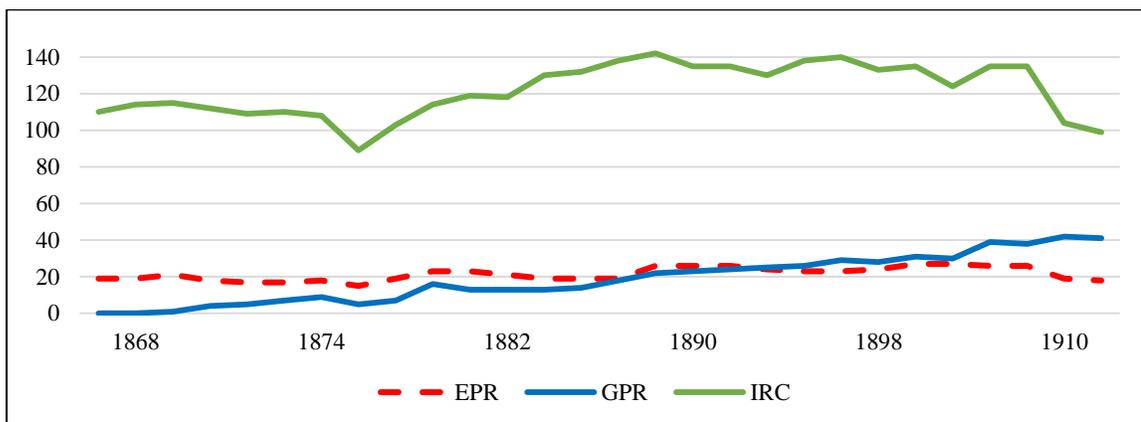


FIGURE 6.7b
Average Family Size of Property Holders in Major Ethnic Groups, 1867–1911

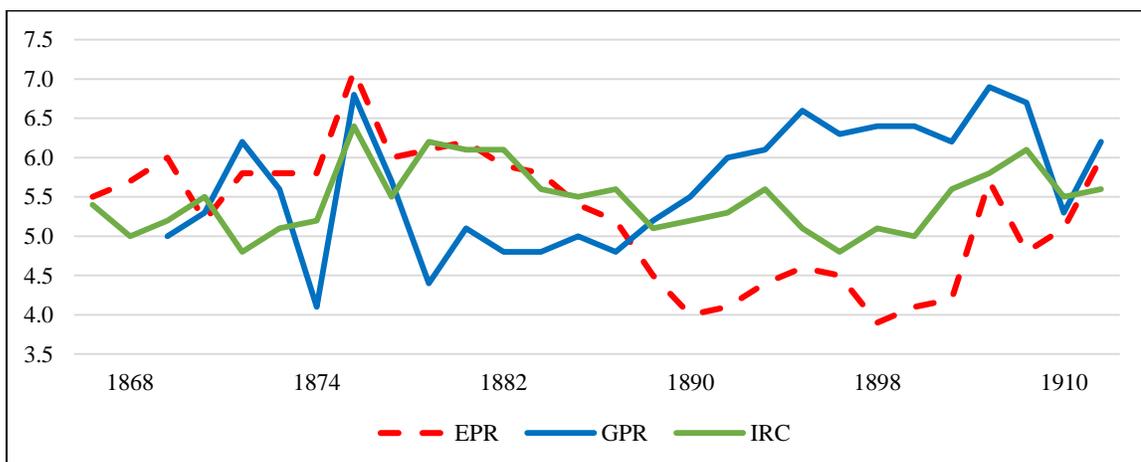
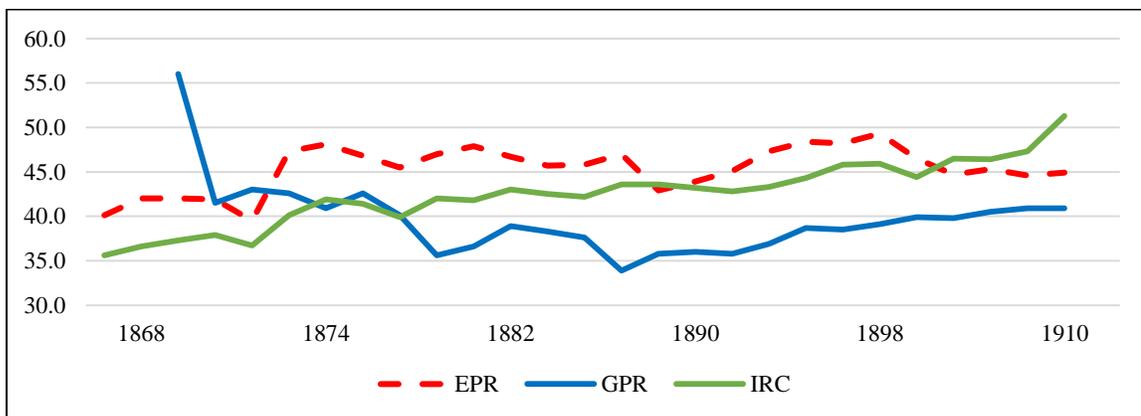


FIGURE 6.7c
Average Age of Property Holders in Major Ethnic Groups, 1867–1910



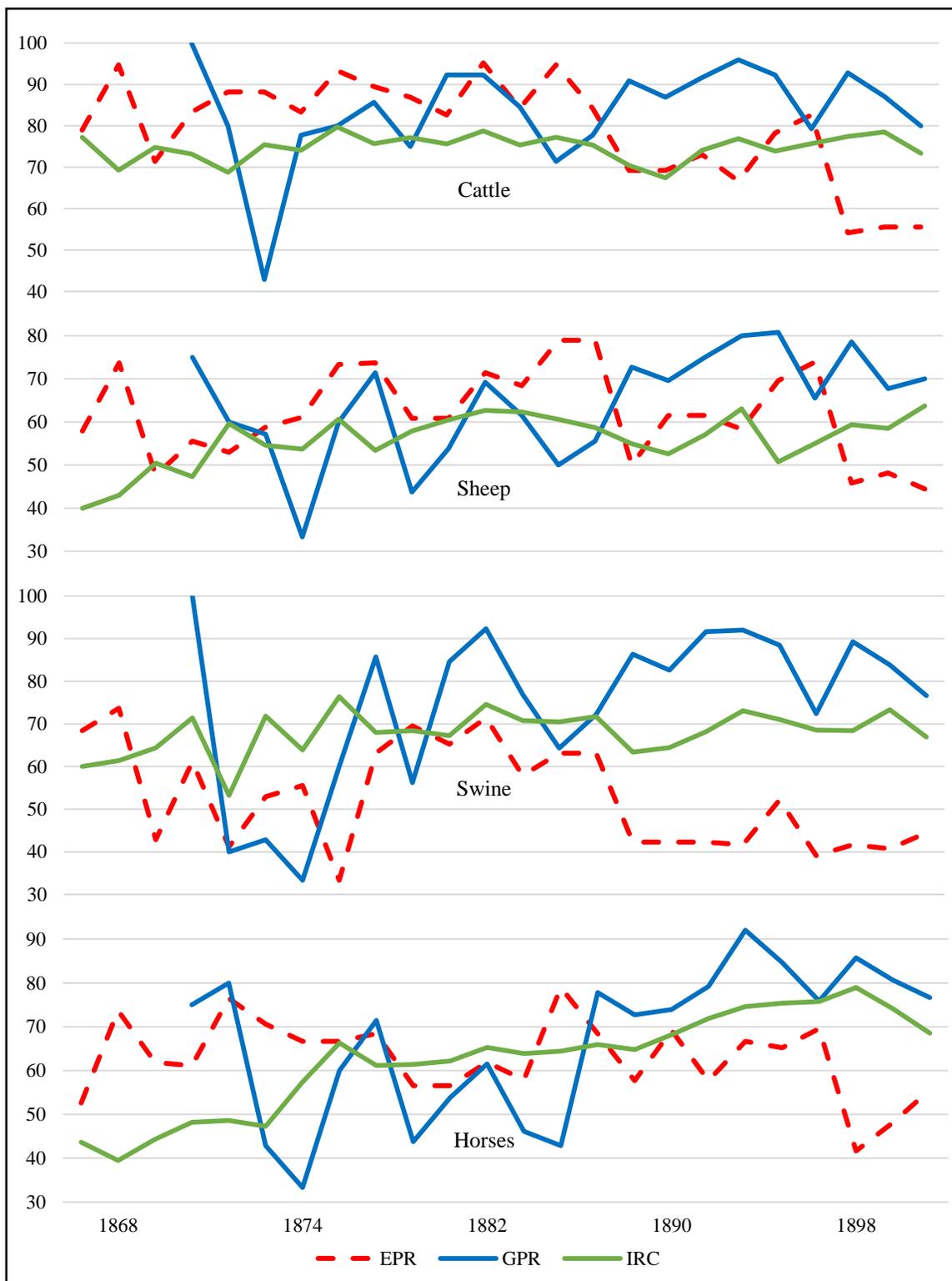
Source: Brudenell Tax Assessment Database (1863–1911).

English Protestant families were roughly the same size (Figure 6.7b). Families in each ethnic group grew from 5.4 and 5.5 persons, respectively, in 1867 to 6.2 and 6.1 in 1879, before shrinking to lows of 4.8 and 3.9 in 1896 and 1898. Each group then rebounded, with a mean size of 5.6 and 6.0 persons per family in 1911. German Protestant families, on the other hand, grew through the 1890s, peaking at 6.9 in 1905. The difference in family size reflects the timing of settlement. For the period between 1871 and 1876 there were only between four and nine German property holders in the township in each year, which helps to explain the wide fluctuations in family size in this period. From 1879 onward, growth in family size showed a much smoother trend. In effect, late-arriving German Protestants came to Brudenell in the 1870s with families similar in size to those Irish Catholics and English Protestants who arrived in the late 1850s.

On average, German Protestant property holders were also younger than their counterparts (Figure 6.7c). Of the three groups, the Irish Catholics showed the steadiest increase in age between 1867 and 1910. The age of English Protestants fluctuated, while German Protestant property holders actually got younger between the early 1870s and mid-1880s. Thereafter, from 1886 to 1906, the average age of German Protestant property holders increased by 1.032 per cent per year. This was roughly the same rate of increase experienced by Irish Catholics between 1867 and 1910 (1.26 per cent). German Protestant settlers, therefore, closely followed the trajectory of the earlier Irish Catholics. They settled in Brudenell as young families which grew along with their farms.

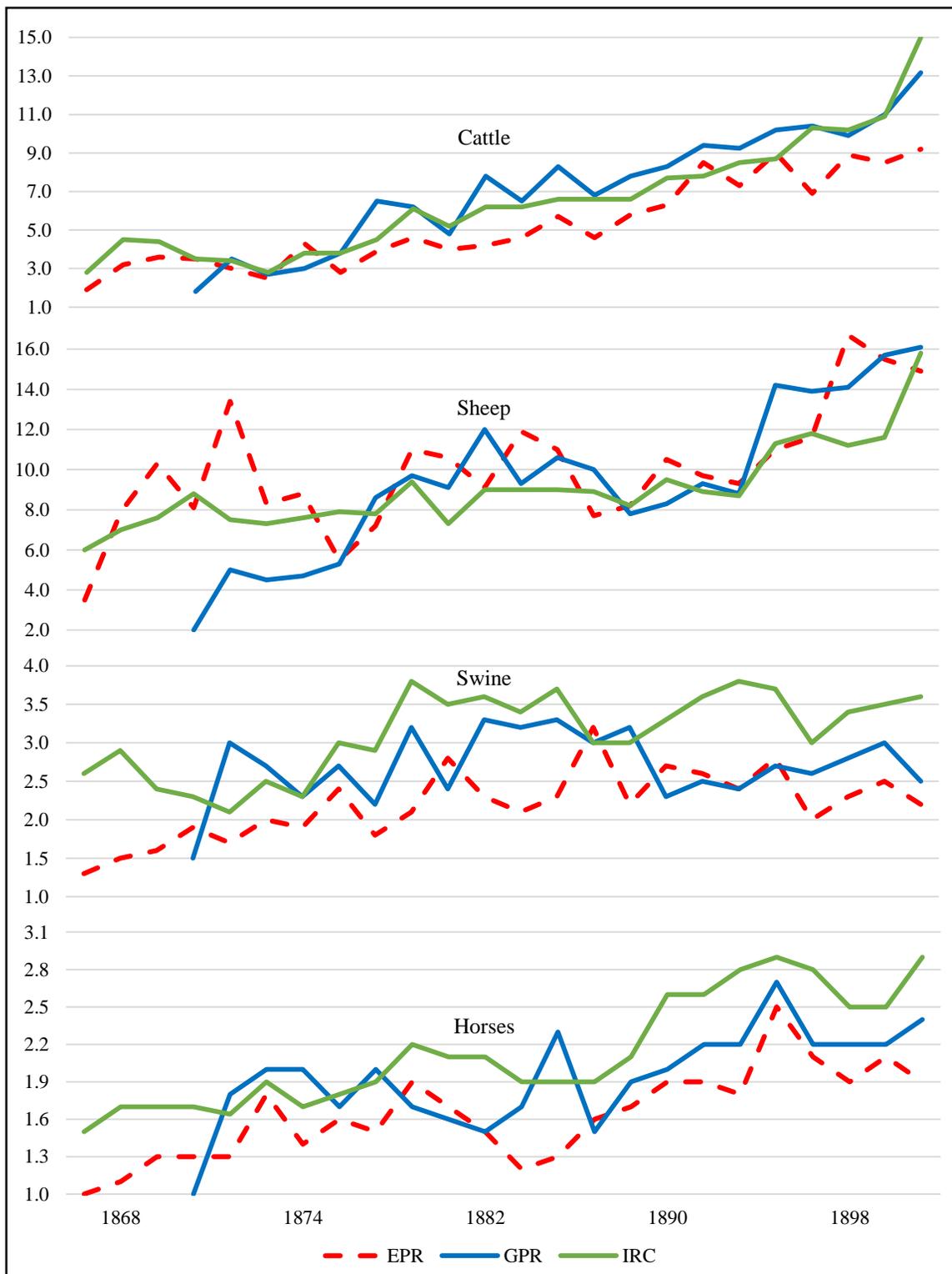
As the farms in Brudenell matured, they also took on a different shape. They got larger and had more cleared acres, but they also used more of their land to raise animals (see Figures 6.8 and 6.9). English Protestants generally moved away from stock raising

FIGURE 6.8
Per Cent of Farms (Property Holders) with Stock, by Ethnic Group, 1867–1904



Source: Brudenell Tax Assessment Database (1863–1911).

FIGURE 6.9
Average Stockholding for Farms with Stock, by Ethnic Group, 1867–1904



Source: Brudenell Tax Assessment Database (1863–1911).

(with the exception of sheep) as part of their farming practice at the same time as their clearance rate slowed in comparison to the other two groups. German Protestants, expanded their stock holding in the same period as more farmers entered the sheep, swine, and horse markets and the number who raised cattle remained steady. Those farmers who continued to raise animals expanded their cattle and sheep herds with very little difference between ethnic groups in terms of the number of animals on each farm. This latter point suggests all three ethnic groups attempted various adaptations to the local landscape rather than maintaining cultural predispositions.

It also suggests that farms in Brudenell were in line with the trend toward mixed farming, which involved less risk than production of potentially more profitable staple crops like wheat, or, in the case of Brudenell, oats and hay.¹¹⁶ Rising numbers of cattle and sheep especially, may suggest a growing emphasis on dairy and wool production. Irish Catholic farmers led the way in cattle and sheep farming and also owned the most horses. Horses continued to be valued (and valuable) in Canadian agriculture well into the twentieth century.¹¹⁷ As the price of labour rose and availability of wage workers declined, demand for animals, and animal-powered machinery, increased.¹¹⁸ In Ontario the average number of horses per farm increased from 2.0 in 1851 to 3.6 in 1911, thereafter declining.¹¹⁹ Farmers in Brudenell owned fewer horses on average, but

¹¹⁶ Robert E. Ankli and Wendy Millar, "Ontario Agriculture in Transition: The Switch from Wheat to Cheese," *The Journal of Economic History* 42, no. 1 (March 1982): 207–215.

¹¹⁷ J. I. Little, "Ox and Horse Power in Rural Canada," in *Powering Up Canada*, 73.

¹¹⁸ Little, "Ox and Horse Power in Rural Canada," 72. As we saw in chapter five, pp. 226 and 233–4, the demand for wage labour in Brudenell in this period was high and supply was low.

¹¹⁹ Little, "Ox and Horse Power in Rural Canada," 71.

followed the same trend. The correlation between farm size and horse owning among Irish Catholics therefore makes sense. As we saw in chapter five, farmers in Brudenell not only used horses on their own farms, but bred them for export to western markets, which also fits with prevailing trends in Ontario at the time.¹²⁰

Irish Catholics were relatively successful in Brudenell in part because of their early arrival and their exploitation of free grant lands. The free grant system allowed Irish Catholic families to achieve home ownership much sooner, and in larger proportion, in Brudenell than in the rest of the province. However, the trends revealed in Figures 6.8 and 6.9 suggest differences according to ethnicity in important respects were minimal. As settlers became more accustomed to the capacities of the landscape, they adapted their farming practices to compensate, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds. Irish Catholic, English Protestant, and German Protestant farmers used many of the same strategies to make their farms successful over the long term. Similarly, trends in the age of property holders, in average family size, and in cleared acres showed little difference between ethnic groups.

Was ethnicity important in the settlement of Brudenell? Certainly each of the three ethnic groups discussed here experienced the settlement process differently. Time of entry to the township was a key factor in shaping the spatial orientation of ethnic communities in Brudenell, but seemed to have little bearing on the settlers' success. Each group was part of the same mass migration from Europe, but Irish, English, and German attitudes toward emigration were different. The early arriving Irish Catholics were able to develop skills in frontier farming in other parts of North America before

¹²⁰ Little, "Ox and Horse Power in Rural Canada," 70.

taking up free grants on the Opeongo Road and then spreading out into other parts of Brudenell. Irish Catholics used this advantage as a springboard to becoming the most successful farmers in the township. English Protestants were also successful farmers and developed a small but cohesive community around the church, mill, and village at Rockingham. Late-arriving German Protestants were, on average, just as successful as earlier arriving Irish Catholics and English Protestants, despite migrating to Brudenell after the colonization roads scheme had been deemed a failure. They took advantage of land vacated by earlier (mostly Irish) settlers and also settled in close proximity to their compatriots in neighboring townships to the south and west of Brudenell. Though many Irish Catholics left Brudenell around the turn of the century, those who stayed continued to develop their farms and to expand their stock holding. By the measures used here, Brudenell in the nineteenth century was a viable settlement.

Conclusion

“A Unique Historical Resource”: History and Heritage in the Ottawa-Huron Tract

Should we view the project to colonize the Ottawa-Huron Tract as a failed settlement scheme? In important ways, yes. The colonization project failed to create a new agricultural hinterland that would fulfill the imperial aspirations of planners in Ottawa and Toronto. Many settlers, actual or otherwise, took up lands which failed to meet their expectations and abandoned their claims after a few years, or sometimes only a few months. The project failed to erase indigenous claims to the territory, as the current land claim negotiation shows. However, the answer to this question depends on who is being asked. From the perspective of state planners in the late nineteenth century, the answer is clear: Canada's national interest lay in the formation of a transcontinental union, not in the colonization of marginal lands in the Ottawa-Huron Tract. The project was, in their eyes, nothing more than a misguided effort to turn pine lands into farm lands. The 1867 British North America Act made the dream of a northern North American nation-state a distinct possibility, if not a probability. From that point on, the interests of colonists in the Ottawa-Huron Tract were deemed inconsequential beyond the local realm. Rather than a formative experience in the practise of colonial expansion, the scheme was an aberration. In the national story, the region was not a place of extensive agricultural settlement, but of resource extraction—in this case, forestry.

Attention to more nuanced local perspectives, however, reveals a much more complicated story. As my research has shown, settlers succeeded in establishing viable communities in the Ottawa-Huron Tract—of which Brudenell is likely just one example.

This study therefore adds to our understanding of the variety of ways in which rural communities in nineteenth-century Canada responded to the economic and political challenges of their time, while also shaping local circumstances in ways not necessarily conforming to pre-determined patterns. In the Upper Ottawa Valley, as in the Upper St. Francis district of Lower Canada, settlers adapted to a landscape which others considered too marginal to be worth the effort.¹ As in Winslow, ethnic origin clearly shaped the spatial patterns of settlement in Brudenell. Yet regardless of their cultural backgrounds, settlers in Brudenell developed land use strategies which were strikingly similar in their adaptation to the character of the local landscape and the needs of families. Like colonists on Saltspring Island, BC, rather than “failing to achieve universal (European) goals articulated by policy makers,” settlers in Brudenell developed localized strategies “to facilitate their own household-centred goals.”² Unlike Sandwell’s Saltspring Islanders, settlers in Brudenell based their success on developing market-oriented family farms.³ Despite their market orientation, most families in Brudenell did not rely on farming alone, but practised an occupational pluralism similar to settlers on Saltspring Island, in the forests of New Brunswick, or in the Cape Breton countryside.⁴ And since

¹ J. I. Little, *Crofters and Habitants: Settler Society, Economy, and Culture in a Quebec Township, 1848–1881* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1991).

² Ruth W. Sandwell, *Contesting Rural Space: Land Policy and Practices of Resettlement on Saltspring Island, 1859–1891* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005), 226–7.

³ Sandwell, *Contesting Rural Space*, 226.

⁴ See, for example, Béatrice Craig, *Backwoods Consumers and Homespun Capitalists: The Rise of a Market Culture in Eastern Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009). While Craig takes a generally positive view of occupational pluralism, others have viewed it more as a symptom of poverty. See, for example, Stephen J. Hornsby, *Nineteenth-Century Cape Breton: A Historical Geography* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1992).

settlers were not fully dependent on the forest sector for their livelihoods, their story does not fit with the underdevelopment thesis proposed by Séguin for the Saguenay.⁵

The central contribution of this thesis is to encourage a rethinking of notions of success and failure when it comes to the colonization of the Ottawa-Huron Tract, and, by extension, other “marginal” areas of the Canadian landscape where settlers “faced similar challenges in similar ways with essentially similar results.”⁶ If we begin with McCalla’s conclusion that family farms were the “chief accomplishment” of the Upper Canadian economy by 1871,⁷ then it follows that the establishment and maintenance of family farms over several generations of settlement in Brudenell should be viewed as a success.

Early on in the colonization process, settlers in the Ottawa-Huron Tract realized the variability of the local landscape. Colonists found small parcels of land which could be turned to a variety of agricultural purposes. They took advantage of government policies which made landowning a realistic goal even for those of modest means. These settlers were subject to constant surveillance by a bureaucratic apparatus which sought to closely manage the settlement process at the same time as it attempted to divest the state of responsibility for the success of the same. However, settlers were also able to tune the structures of the colonial state to further their own interests at the local level. They used tools such as direct appeals to metropolitan authority (letters and petitions) in their attempts to shape the colonization process. Settlers embraced new and emerging forms

⁵ See Normand Séguin, *La Conquête du sol au 19e siècle* (Québec: Boréal Express, 1977), 50–64.

⁶ Cole Harris links the Ottawa-Huron Tract with other “different, isolated, settlement experiences” in the Cape Breton uplands of Nova Scotia and the Laurentian Highlands of Quebec. See, “The Spaces of Early Canada,” *Canadian Historical Review* 91, no. 4 (December 2010): 745.

⁷ Douglas McCalla, *Planting the Province: The Economic History of Upper Canada, 1784–1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 243.

of local administrative authority (tax assessments and statute labour regulations) to manage the financial burdens of settlement. They took advantage of the proximate shanty market for agricultural produce wherever practicable, while pursuing economic activities geared toward both local, regional, and national markets. Settlers were not passive to the whims of the emerging capitalist economy but endeavored to shape it through investment in roads and pursuit of railways through the township. The persistence of cohorts of Irish Catholic and English Protestant settlers from the 1850s to the early twentieth century shows that family farms in Brudenell were viable in the long term. The accessibility of land in Brudenell allowed these cultural groups to develop spatially-distinct, yet mutually-dependent communities which expanded to fill much of the available land in the township. After the early 1870s, when many observers declared the colonization scheme a failure, Brudenell continued to attract settlers—this time primarily German Protestants—who took up lands in southern Brudenell adjacent to German communities in neighbouring townships. The cultural backgrounds of settlers shaped their experience of settlement (especially in terms of timing and location), but it did not determine their trajectories. Over time, successful farms in Brudenell were medium-sized, family-centred, operations involving both crop production and stock raising. This revision of the failed-settlement narrative stands out in the historiography of the Ottawa-Huron Tract, but dovetails nicely with the histories of settlement in other agriculturally-marginal regions identified above.

How then do we explain the enduring attraction of the failed-settlement narrative? For Lower, it was the historian's task to "help Canadians to some of that self-knowledge so necessary if they are to take their rightful place in the world, and still more, if they are

to be a happy people, at peace with themselves”—in other words, to develop a national consciousness.⁸ Lower was interested in “solutions” to big “problems” like creating a new Canadian nation-state where “the bold defiance of geography contained in the national planning which was an essential aspect of Confederation, resulted in the integration of half a continent.”⁹ In the “grandiose project” of nation-building, the colonization of the Ottawa-Huron Tract was a spectacular failure, one which spurred “the first piece of Canadian expansionism, the determination to secure the British west.”¹⁰ Lower’s nationalist vision of Canadian history required a dramatic plot—the failure of settlement in the Ottawa-Huron Tract provided the ideal segue between the end of colonial rule and the birth of the new Dominion. Others writing since Lower have taken up the failed-settlement narrative and consider the colonization of the Ottawa-Huron Tract as tangential to the larger national narrative.

One of the difficulties in assessing the success or failure of settlement on the Canadian Shield is the sheer size of the region. As Sandwell observes, it is “one of the globe’s most distinctive geological formations and, in many ways, the most important physical feature of the North American continent.”¹¹ Since settlers had such a difficult encounter with this landscape, “the Shield has [historically] played a largely negative role in what historians have designated as the main story of Canadian rural history: the

⁸ A. R. M. Lower, *Colony to Nation: A History of Canada, Third Edition* (Toronto: Longmans, Green & Company, 1957), xii.

⁹ Lower, *Colony to Nation*, xii.

¹⁰ Lower, *Colony to Nation*, 293.

¹¹ Ruth W. Sandwell, “Rural Households, Subsistence, and Environment on the Canadian Shield,” in *Subsistence Under Capitalism: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. James Murton, Dean Bavington and Carly Dokis (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2016), 111.

progress of Euro-American agricultural settlement.”¹² The Ottawa-Huron Tract, though itself a massive area, is just a small corner of this vast landscape. It has been difficult for historians to see the settlement of the southern Shield fringe outside the context of later attempts to colonize more northerly reaches of the Shield. In opening his study of the expansion of the farming frontier into the boreal forests of Canada, Wood holds up the Ottawa-Huron Tract as an example of one of the many failures which preceded this latest “ill-fated” scheme. By the end of the nineteenth century:

unproductive land was being identified and abandoned in many places...In Ontario, the so-called ‘waste-lands,’ cleared and farmed sixty or more years earlier, were identified and even roughly mapped and farm folk were demonstrating their assessment of expanses of poorly drained land in the Ottawa Valley and Huron Uplands by leaving in large numbers for the West.¹³

According to some estimates, “farm failures” on the Shield occurred at rates of roughly 67 per cent in Ontario and 51 per cent in Quebec between 1910 and 1940.¹⁴ Depression-era colonization projects ended in starvation for some settlers and by the mid-1930s the Canadian public was convinced of the inevitable failure of agricultural settlement in the north. Despite this evidence of failure, by mid-century, “some people still felt that the advantages of owning a homestead that could support a variety of economic activities for a rural family, though making only a meager subsistence, still outweighed the benefits of abandoning ‘the farm’ for the city.”¹⁵ The benefit of looking at the history of settlement on the Shield through a microhistorical lens is that it allows us to appreciate the diversity

¹² Sandwell, *Canada’s Rural Majority: Households, Environments, and Economies, 1870–1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 35.

¹³ J. David Wood, *Places of Last Resort: The Expansion of the Farm Frontier into the Boreal Forest in Canada, c. 1910–1940* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2006), 3.

¹⁴ Sandwell, *Canada’s Rural Majority*, 55.

¹⁵ Sandwell, *Canada’s Rural Majority*, 55.

of ways in which people experienced that process in their own place and time. It helps us to “make sense of why a few chose to go to the Shield, whereas most did not.”¹⁶

Outside academia, failed settlement schemes are also potentially profitable commodities. Abandoned “ghost towns” can be marketed as tourist attractions similar to ancient ruins or archaeological sites. An international phenomenon, ghost towns can “create a landscape invested by their visitors with images and narratives of the pioneering period...that are widely circulated through film, television, guide-books, local histories, internet sites, and restored or fabricated ghost towns designed for tourist consumption.”¹⁷ The ghost town phenomenon has spawned a vast literature of guidebooks dedicated to exploring the “ruins” of historic North American communities.¹⁸ The Opeongo Road is itself the site of numerous communities labelled this way, Brudenell included. Tourist and adventure websites unabashedly perpetuate the failed-settlement narrative in variations of the same opening statement. For example:

If you travel the Opeongo Line, one of Ontario’s earliest-built roads, you’re going to find at least one ghost town, and lots of spooky stories...Back in the 1850s, the Canadian government proposed that the Opeongo Line run west from the Ottawa River to Opeongo Lake in present-day Algonquin Provincial Park, and then continue on to Georgian Bay. European immigrants were lured to this area with the promise of fertile farm land. Many moved on when they discovered a very rocky landscape. Today, along the old Opeongo Line and on nearby back roads, ghost towns like Brudenell, Foymount, Balaclava and Letterkenny remind us of what once was. Lonely, haunted grey-timbered buildings and split rail fences, the Canadian hideaway of famous gangster outlaw Al Capone, and on the highest

¹⁶ Douglas McCalla, review of *Canada’s Rural Majority: Households, Environments, and Economies, 1870–1940*, by Ruth W. Sandwell, *Histoire sociale / Social History* 50, no. 101 (May 2017): 219.

¹⁷ Barbara Truesdell, “Ghost Towns,” in *Encyclopedia of American Urban History*, ed. David R. Goldfield, <http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/10.4135/9781412952620.n170> (accessed July 20, 2017). See also the aptly titled, “Haunted by Rhyoltie: Learning from the Landscape of Failure,” by Patricia Nelson Limerick (Photographs by Mark Klett), *American Art* 6, no. 4 (1992): 18–39.

¹⁸ See for example, Ron Brown, *Ghost Towns of Ontario* (Langley: Stagecoach, 1978), *Ghost Railways of Ontario* (Peterborough: Broadview, 1994), and *Ghost Towns of Canada* (Toronto: Canon Books, 1987).

point of land around, even an abandoned radar line designed to detect Soviet-era bombers coming over the polar ice cap.¹⁹

Though inspired by an honest desire to encourage appreciation of a collective settler heritage, these sites blend memory, myth, and misinformation in a way that makes the professional historian uneasy. Some settlements were completely abandoned, but after 1911 people continued to live, work, and even farm in settlements along the Opeongo Line, including Brudenell. Descendants of the original settlers still live in Brudenell today, a fact that is difficult to reconcile with its “ghost town” image.

Related to this, the Opeongo Road continues to inspire a nostalgic longing for the pioneer past. From the 1930s to the 1970s, Ottawa journalist Harry Walker wrote many articles about the “saga” of Opeongo Line where, “along its tortuous terrain a courageous breed trudged over wind-swept ridges and silent valleys to hew clearances and found little settlements named after well-loved homes ‘beyond the sea’.”²⁰ In the 1960s, many of the settlers’ original log homes and barns were still standing along the Opeongo and its tributaries, seeming to call out of the nineteenth century. Fewer stand today, but they can still be found here and there. A fascination with these remnants of the past led local author Joan Finnigan to devote her spare time to protect and preserve the Opeongo Line and the settler history it represented. Like Walker before her, Finnigan wrote articles for the *Ottawa Journal* through the 1960s and 1970s advocating for the Opeongo Road to

¹⁹ Glenn Cameron, “Ghosts on the Opeongo Line,” ROADstories.ca, September 23, 2016, <https://roadstories.ca/ghost-town-on-the-opeongo-line/> (accessed July 20, 2017). Other examples include Jeri Danyleyko, “Brudenell Ghost Town,” Ontario Ghost Towns, October 27, 2001, <http://www.ghosttownpix.com/ontario/towns/brudenel.html> (accessed January 6, 2018), and “Opeongo Road Ghost Towns,” Ontario Abandoned Places, September 9, 2009, <https://www.ontarioabandonedplaces.com/upload/wiki.asp?entry=855> (accessed January 6, 2018).

²⁰ Harry J. Walker, “Saga of ‘Opeongo Line’ Featured By Color and Action,” *Ottawa Journal*, April 6, 1940, page 22.

“be preserved as a unique Canadian heritage resource.”²¹ Around the same time, and working for the Historical Planning and Research Branch of the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation, Marilyn Miller wrote a 200-page report cataloguing sites of interest along the road. In her report, Miller recommended:

The best approach to preserving and presenting heritage sites and landscapes in the Opeongo region would be through the concept of a scenic-historical route. Key sites could be primarily privately owned, but developed as a tourist attraction by a public association with the assistance of provincial and municipal government programs.²²

The concept of a “scenic-historical route” was based on the freezing-in-time of a static, unchanging landscape, as Miller herself noted: “If these buildings are destroyed and new developments such as gas stations, motels and road straightening take place on the actual colonization road, the resource will lose its potential as an historical route.”²³ Thus the success of historical preservation relied on the continued failure of settlement.

As this thesis has shown, the settlement of the Opeongo Road, and Brudenell in particular, was a dynamic, adaptive process. Recognizing the utility of broad narratives, understanding the history of colonization in nineteenth-century Canada requires we look beyond simplistic perspectives to see the lives of our ancestors in their locally-situated contexts where the processes of history—interesting in themselves—unfolded.

²¹ Joan Finnigan, *Life Along the Opeongo Line: The Story of a Canadian Colonization Road* (Renfrew: Penumbra Press, 2004), xiii. For example: “The Opeongo Trail,” *Ottawa Journal*, June 1, 1963, page 6, in which she wrote: “the Opeongo Trail has a story not yet told and it’s lined with more pioneer log buildings than any other, I will wager, in all Ontario. If Canadians had the penchant of Americans for restoration of historical sites and trails we would now be in the process of preserving and opening to the public the Opeongo Trail and the 80-odd log buildings (I’ve counted them) which still stand there...”

²² Marilyn G. Miller, *Straight Lines in Curved Space: Colonization Roads in Eastern Ontario* (Toronto: Ministry of Culture and Recreation, 1978), 162. See also, Miller, “The Opeongo Road: A Unique Historical Resource,” in *Exploring Our Heritage: The Ottawa Valley Experience*, ed. Vrenia Ivonoffski and Sandra Campbell (Arnprior, ON: Arnprior and District Historical Society, 1978), 10–14.

²³ Miller, *Straight Lines in Curved Space*, 162.

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Appendix

Notes on Census and Assessment Roll Databases

Much of the evidence for this dissertation—especially in chapters five and six—comes from two main databases. The first was created from the 1871 manuscript census returns and provides a cross-section of the entire population of Brudenell. This allowed for a detailed socio-economic analysis of Brudenell in 1871 and facilitated comparison with other studies that also rely on data from the first census after Confederation. The other was built from the tax assessment rolls for Brudenell for the years 1863 to 1911 and thus provides a long-term view of the township. The basic aim of these databases was to collect as much information as I could on the people who settled in Brudenell, but who did not leave behind many written records. Below are brief descriptions of how each database was constructed. In the case of the assessment rolls, some discussion of the quality of the preserved rolls is necessary as is some discussion of the changing nature of the assessment practice over the half-century covered in the database.

1871 Brudenell Census Database

The 1871 Brudenell Census Database was built as part of the 1871 Canada Census Project directed by Dr. Kris Inwood at the University of Guelph. The database includes all information entered into each schedule of the 1871 census for Ontario District 81 (Renfrew South), Sub-district G-1 (Brudenell and Lyndoch), microfilm reel C-10020, including:

- Schedule 1: Nominal return of the living
- Schedule 2: Nominal return of the deaths
- Schedule 3: Return of public institutions, real and personal estate
- Schedule 4: Return of cultivated land and products

- Schedule 5: Livestock, animal products, home-made fabrics and furs
- Schedule 6: Return of industrial establishments
- Schedule 7: Return of products of the forest
- Schedule 8: Return of shipping and fisheries

Schedule nine (Return of mineral products) was left blank and was not included in the database. Data from the census was entered into a Microsoft Access database by Kelly Bairos. I checked the data entry against the manuscript to correct any mistakes. This database is available to researchers through the Historical Data Research Unit at Guelph. For my project, I exported the data from schedules 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8 into a single Excel spreadsheet linked to households in the nominal schedule 1. This spreadsheet contains details about 967 individuals, 155 households, and 158 families who lived in Brudenell in 1871. Data from schedules 2 and 6 were put into separate spreadsheets.

Brudenell Tax Assessment Database (1863–1911)

Constructing the Brudenell Tax Assessment Database (1863–1911) was more complicated. Historical assessment rolls for Brudenell are contained in the Township of Brudenell and Lyndoch Fonds (F 1564) at the Archives of Ontario. The Townships of Brudenell, Lyndoch, Raglan, and Radcliffe were incorporated in December 1860. Raglan and Radcliffe were separated from Brudenell and Lyndoch in 1876. The rolls for 1863 to 1876 therefore also contain the records for Raglan and Radcliffe. Thankfully, assessors used a new form for each township so that the records can be easily distinguished.

The data set is not fully complete. Overall, the database covers a 49-year period from 1863 to 1911 and includes data from 32 of those years: 1863–64, 1866–69, 1871–76, 1879–84, 1886, 1889–92, 1894, 1896, 1898–99, 1904–06, and 1910–11. Of those 32 years, the rolls for 26 years have survived fully intact. Many of the pages are in poor condition, but overall the information is legible. In one case (1867), the original roll is

held together with newsprint. In another case (1881) the roll was mouldy and therefore closed for safety concerns. The archivist was kind enough to laminate the pages so that I could view them. The rolls for 1863, 1866, 1871, 1875, 1886, and 1889 are each missing pages. The 1863 roll is missing half of page one and the only available data for persons listed on that page is their school section. The roll for 1866 is also missing half of page one. In this case, the other half of the page provides information on property values, so it is possible to determine aggregate values for this year, even though individual names are missing. The roll for 1871 is also missing the first half of page one. However, the second half of the page includes location data. By comparing with the 1869 and 1872 rolls and with the 1871 census, I was able to fill in the missing names on the 1871 roll.

The rolls also vary in their authorship. For 1863–64 the rolls are signed by John Dooner, the assessor for those years. From 1866 to 1875 the rolls were completed by various assessors and township clerks, which is not necessarily a problem, except one of the clerks, James Fallon, had a habit of changing various columns on the roll and even added his own columns in some years. In 1876 John Whelan assumed the clerkship and remained in that role until 1911, when his son James took over. Whelan was a careful record keeper, as was county clerk S. E. Mitchell. Together, they ensured that the rolls which survived from 1876 to 1910 were neat, legible, and complete. In some years, the rolls that have survived are the original assessor's rolls. In other years, they are revised rolls. Most of the rolls preserved by Whelan and Mitchell (1886–1910) are copies of the revised assessment roll, which is why they are in better condition than other years. While in the archives, I used a basic digital camera to create a digital image of each assessment roll page, for a total of 1185 files. These files were used in construction of the database.

During this period, tax laws in Canada were not static. As the tax assessment regulations changed over time, so too did the categories on the assessment roll. To keep track of all of these changes, I created a text document which lists details on each roll for each year that survived. This file lists the year, the title of the roll, the headings and category names contained on the roll, and any remarks entered manually by the assessor, collector, or clerk. This file was used as the basis for constructing the coding system and fields for the database (Table A.2). Though the categories on the assessment roll varied from year to year, there are some which remained consistent throughout the period, thus allowing for an analysis of the socio-economic character of the township over half a century. For each year the roll includes the name of the assessed party, their ownership status, their post office address, the location (lot and concession) of each parcel of property they owned or occupied, the number of acres owned or occupied, the value of their real property, the amount of their taxable personal income, their statute labour owed, the school section in which they lived, and the number of dogs owned. Table A.2 below provides a detailed breakdown of the fields included in the database, the contents of each field, and the date range for which the data are available.

The database is a spreadsheet including 6716 records on the 932 individuals who were entered into the roll between 1863 and 1911. The database was constructed in three stages. First I manually entered information from the digital image into the spreadsheet. After completing data entry for each year, I went back and checked the data against the digital image. Once data entry was complete, I went through and standardized the spelling of names so that the database could be sorted not just by year, but also by family. To facilitate the analysis of ethnicity presented in chapter six, I manually added an

“ethnicity” field to the database by comparing the name and religion of each individual entered in the assessment roll with the nearest corresponding census record. This process resulted in the creation of fifteen separate ethnic categories (Table A.1). Three additional categories were added which combined the smaller groups. This field could then be used to sort the entire database by ethnic groups.

TABLE A.1
Ethnic Categories in the Assessment Roll Database, 1863–1911

Code	Ethnic Group / Category	Total Cases
IR-RC	Irish Catholic	4540
ENG-PR	English Protestant	721
GER-PR	German Protestant	631
IR-PR	Irish Protestant	135
OTH-UNK	Other Unknown	116
FR-RC	French Catholic	105
(no data)	(n/a)	95
OTH-RC	Other Catholic	89
ENG-RC	English Catholic	68
POL-RC	Polish Catholic	59
OTH-PR	Other Protestant	44
GER-RC	German Catholic	37
FR-PR	French Protestant	34
SC-PR	Scottish Protestant	32
SC-RC	Scottish Catholic	10
	<i>Total Lines in Database</i>	<i>6716</i>
OTH-RCT	Total “Other Catholic”	368
OTH-PRT	Total “Other Protestant”	245
OTH-ALL	Total “Other”	613

Source: Brudenell Tax Assessment Database (1863–1911).

TABLE A.2
Assessment Roll Database Fields and Coding

#	Code	Original Labels	Description / Notes	Value Type	Date Range
A	YEAR	n/a	Assessment Year	Date	Full
B	DOC	n/a	Notes whether the document type is the Assessment Roll (AR), Collector's Roll (CR), Revised Assessment Roll (RAR), Copy of the Assessment Roll (CAR), or Copy of the Revised Assessment Roll (CRAR)	Text	Full
C	NO	Nos.; No.; Successive No. on Roll; etc.	Identification number given in the extreme left-hand column of each roll.	Whole	Full
D	NR	Non-Resident	Indicates if the taxable party resides away from the property.	Text	1866-1904, 1910-1911
E	FN	Names of Parties Assessed; Occupant; Name of Taxable Party	Name of the person responsible for paying taxes on the property, name of Farmer's Son, Voter, etc.	Text	Full
F	GN	n/a	Family name and given name are in the same field on the originals, but separated in the database.	Text	Full
G	AGE	Age; Age of Occupant; Age of Resident; Age of the Assessed Party; Age of the Taxable Person		Whole	1866-1911
H	OCC	Profession, Occupation, &c; Occupation or Calling; Profession; Calling; etc.	Occupation. In 1886 a new qualification appeared: "...and in case of females, Spinster, Married Woman, or Widow." This qualification remained for the duration of the time period.	Text	1866-1911

#	Code	Original Labels	Description / Notes	Value Type	Date Range
I	OWN	Freeholders; Householders; Freeholder or Householder; Freeholder or Tenant; Freeholder, Tenant, Farmer's Son, or Manhood Franchise; etc.	This category changes over time, but is always present. I merged these into one field and provide specific codes to designate each of the 18 possible options.	Text	Full
J	ADD1	Address; Owners and Address; (Name and) Post Office Address of Taxable Party	From 1863 to 1881 the address (Township, Village, or Post Office address) of the resident is given in the "Address" category even though this field is intended to record the name of the "Owner" regardless of who is residing. In 1882 a new category is added where "Name and Post Office Address" are given together and a separate field is used to denote the name and address of the Non-Resident owner, until this category is dropped in 1905.	Text	Full
K	ADD2	Name and Address of Owner where Party Named in Column Two is not the Owner	Property owner and address where the resident does not own the property.	Text	1882- 1904
L	CON	No. of Concession, Street, Square, or other Designation; No. of Con, Street, or other description	Concession, Range, or Street	Whole or Text	Full
M	LOT	No. of Lot, part Lot, or House; No. of Lot, or House	Lot, or Street Number	Whole	Full

#	Code	Original Labels	Description / Notes	Value Type	Date Range
N	ACR	No. of Acres, Feet, or other Measurement	A record of the size of the taxable property, always in acres.	Fraction	Full
O	ACL	Acres Cleared		Fraction	1867-1911
P	BLT	Built upon or vacant	For village lots; indicates the size of the built up lot in acres.	Fraction	1882-1904
Q	WOOD	Acres in Woodlot		Whole	1884-1904
R	SLSH	Acres in Slash Land		Whole	1905-1911
S	SWMP	Acres in Swamp, Marsh, or Wasteland		Whole	1884-1904
T	ORCH	Acres in Orchard and Garden		Fraction	1884-1904
U	FWT	Acres in Fall Wheat		Whole	1884-1904
V	VAL	Value of Each Lot; Value of each parcel of real property;		Whole	1866-1911
W	BLDG	Value of Buildings		Whole	1904-1911
X	REAL	Value of Real Property; Total value of real property	Value of the assessed property, not including personal property or income.	Whole	Full
Y	PERS	Value of personal property other than income; Value of Personal Property		Whole	1867-1904

#	Code	Original Labels	Description / Notes	Value Type	Date Range
Z	INC	Amount of Taxable Personal Property or Income; Taxable Income;	Amount of Taxable Income	Whole	Full
AA	TOT1	Total Value of Personal Property; Total Value of Personal Property and Taxable Income		Whole	1866, 1869-1904
AB	BUS	Value of Business		Whole	1905-1911
AC	TOT2	Total Real and Personal Property or Income; Total Value of Real and Personal Property; Total Assessment	The total assessment of the residents' taxable property and income.	Whole	Full
AD	SLP	Statute Labour, No. of Persons from 21 to 60 yrs of age; Male persons from 21 to 60 yrs	Number of males in the household from 21 to 60 years of age; "Male" added in 1890.	Whole	1866-1911
AE	SLD	Statute Labour, No. of Days	In most cases, the forms ask for both "Number of Persons aged 21 to 60" and number of days, but in some cases only ask for the number of days owed.	Whole	Full
AF	DIV	Road Division	The section of the township in which the statute labour is owed.	Whole	1867-1876, 1880, 1882-1904, 1910-1911

#	Code	Original Labels	Description / Notes	Value Type	Date Range
AG	REL	Religion	From 1863 to 1868 there is no "Religion" category, but rather a category asking if the resident is of a particular religion.	Text	1866-1911
AH	ETH	Ethnicity		Text	Full
AI	SS	School Section	Number designating the part of the municipality to which the resident owes school rates.	Whole	Full
AJ	STP	Public School or Separate School	Indicates whether the resident supports public or separate schools.	PS, SS	1882-1911
AK	FAM	No. of Persons in the Family; No. of Persons in Family of Person Rated as Resident		Whole	1867-1911
AL	KID	No. of Children between ages 5 and 16		Whole	1881-1911
AM	MID	No. of Children between ages 7 and 13		Whole	1882-1904
AN	YTH	No. of Children over 16 and under 21	In 1905 this category no longer exists, but there is a new category "No. of Children between the age of 5 and 21"	Whole	1882-1904
AO	CHD	No. of Children between ages 5 and 21		Whole	1905-1911
AP	BTH	Births		Whole	1882-1911
AQ	DTH	Deaths		Whole	1882-1911

#	Code	Original Labels	Description / Notes	Value Type	Date Range
AR	REG	Registered		Whole	1882-1904
AS	DTD	Dog Tax, No. of Dogs		Whole	Full
AT	DTB	Dog Tax, No. of Bitches		Whole	1866-1911
AU	COW	No. of Cattle		Whole	1867-1904
AV	SHP	No. of Sheep		Whole	1867-1904
AW	HOG	No. of Hogs		Whole	1867-1904
AX	HRS	No. of Horses		Whole	1867-1904
AY	SMBL	Steam Boiler		Whole	1889-1904