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Forgotten Settlers: The Migration, Society and
Legacies of British Military Veterans to Upper
Canada (Ontario), from 1815-1855

Shane Smith

PhD

2018

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Legacies of British Military Veterans to Upper
Canada (Ontario), from 1815-1855

Shane Smith

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Abstract

This thesis examines the settlement of British military veterans in Upper Canada (modern-day Ontario) in the period between 1815 and 1855. It presents five settlement schemes which were introduced by successive British governments to facilitate the migration of the veterans and the women and children who accompanied them to the colony. This thesis uses petitions for land, appointments and assistance to discover how the veterans presented themselves as potential settlers to the colonial authorities. It also reveals networks of patronage and connections which linked the veterans with the military men who administered the colony. This research builds on existing works which detail the process of petitioning in the colonies. It also expands on the historiography to demonstrate that support networks encompassed officers as well as the rank-and-file.

When the veterans interacted with the colonial authorities through their petitions, they highlighted their military past and their status as a former soldier or sailor. However, a contradiction emerges between the way they presented themselves in the closed world of petitioning and the way the men behaved in public in their day-to-day lives. Veterans became influential figures in agriculture, business and local government; yet their prominence was based on their status as leading civic figures, rather than military men. In addition, we will see that anniversaries of Waterloo or battles of the Peninsular War passed without the veterans commemorating them. This contradiction in behaviour reveals details about the nature of colonial society. In private, the veterans benefited from a society based around patronage, connections and hierarchy. Yet this power was publicly challenged by civilians, and the early Canadian scholars who emerged in the later part of the nineteenth-century overlooked the veterans as they did not fit their narrative that the colony was built on hard work, individual effort, and a pioneer spirit.

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Declaration

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledges opinion, ideas and contributions from the work of others.

Any ethical clearance for the research presented in this thesis has been approved. Approval has been sought and granted by the Research Ethics Committee on 21/07/2015.

I declare the word count of this thesis is 72,642

Name: Shane Smith

Signature:

Date: 12/05/2018

Introduction

In 1824 James C. Morgan published a guide to advise prospective emigrants about life in British North America. His book – a travel diary – documented his journey through the Canadian colonies and provided descriptions of the towns he visited, the geographical features of the land, and the inhabitants he came across. Wherever Morgan went he encountered former British army soldiers. While staying in the town of Matilda in Upper Canada (modern-day Ontario) he noted that there were ‘a great many’ former soldiers living in the area.¹ Former soldiers were found farming their land grants in the Rideau military settlements or working in a variety of different businesses in large towns and cities. A visitor to York (today’s Toronto) could have called in at the Royal Mortar Inn whose proprietor, James Barclay, was a veteran of the Royal Artillery.² A resident of Montreal who wished to learn a musical instrument could have called on John Follenus, formerly of the 73rd Regiment of Foot, who worked as a professor of music.³ Finally, Robert Goodfellow of Kingston was available as an engineer.⁴ Military men also occupied prominent local government positions, commanded local militia regiments, were present in leading positions in the Orange Order and Freemasons, and were frequent petitioners to the colonial authorities.

Despite the important presence of former soldiers and their involvement and contribution to the development of Upper Canada, it seems that by the 1850s colonial society was beginning to forget them. Early studies of Canadian history, whether by individuals or newly emerged historical associations, looked to the Loyalist settlers (who arrived in the colonies fleeing the newly independent United States after the American Revolution) instead of military men as the founders of Canada and the most important contributors to

¹ J. C. Morgan, *The Emigrants Notebook and Guide* (London: Longman, 1824), p. 214.

² H. & W. Roswell, *The Toronto Directory and Street Guide 1843-1844* (Toronto: H. & W. Roswell, 1843), p. 12.

³ W.S. McKay, *Montreal City Directory 1842-1843* (Montreal: McKay, 1842), p. 52.

⁴ T. Flynn, *Directory of the City of Kingston 1857-1858* (Kingston: T. W. Robinson, 1857), p. 124.

contemporary prosperity. The centenary celebrations held in Toronto in 1884 to mark the arrival of the Loyalists cemented the idea that these settlers were key to the development of the colonies. The head of the organising committee for the event declared that ‘it must not be forgotten that all of the advantages we have today we owe to our ancestors, the United Empire Loyalists’.⁵ This process of praising the Loyalists and tracing the origin and development of Canada to them, and them alone, continued into the twentieth-century. Earlier Canadian historians such as Jennet Roy and James F. Jeffers promoted the Loyalists as the founding fathers of British North America and romanticised their hard-won struggle over the wilderness to build new homes and communities.⁶ The focus of these and other early Canadian historians did not just promote the Loyalists, but also overlooked the soldier settlers who came after 1815. Indeed, it is difficult to find even a mention of former soldiers in these works.

The process by which nineteenth-century historians and antiquarians praised the Loyalists above soldier settlers is also evident in modern historiography. The Loyalists, it has been argued, laid the foundations for the development of the Canadian colonies as their settlement formed ‘the nucleus of what was to become Ontario’.⁷ For Christopher Moore, there are communities in contemporary Canada which ‘could hardly have been born without the Loyalists and the labour of the Loyalists’.⁸ This celebration and promotion of the Loyalists establishes a line between their settlement and contemporary Canada by hailing them as being the ‘best and brightest founders of English Canada’. The Loyalists’ role in defending Canada during the War of 1812 is supposed to have helped shape a Canadian

⁵ Anonymous, *The Centennial of the Settlement of Upper Canada by the United Empire Loyalists 1784-1884* (Toronto: Rose Publishing Company, 1885), p. 13.

⁶ J. Roy, *The History of Canada* (Montreal: Armour and Ramsay, 1850). J. F. Jeffers, *A History of Canada* (Toronto: Canada Publishing Company, 1894).

⁷ K. McNaught, *The Pelican History of Canada* (London: Pelican, 1978), p. 59.

⁸ C. Moore, *The Loyalists: Revolution, Exile, Settlement* (Vancouver: McClelland and Stewart, 1994), p. 254.

nationalism.⁹ Norman Knowles' 1997 work sought to address some of these claims by tackling the hagiography found in some studies of the Loyalists. He played down the Loyalists' success and questioned their legacy as builders of the colonies.¹⁰ However, the purpose of Knowles' work was to critique the myth of the Loyalists and not to provide an assessment of the contributions made by other groups of settlers.

Soldier settlers, their families, and their experience in the colonies have not been completely forgotten by scholars. There are a number of older studies on military migration which were published at least forty years ago. William A.B. Douglas researched the settlement of naval officers in Upper Canada between 1815 and 1841 and provided a general overview of their experiences.¹¹ He found that the men settled in enclaves in particular townships due to group solidarity, and this issue will be explored in greater detail in the third chapter of this thesis. Douglas also believed that military men did not make successful settlers as they failed to adapt to the demands of a pioneer life, and were accustomed to a regimented existence.¹² The negative view of military men as settlers can also be found in George Raudzens' work, which was written at a similar time to Douglas' article. He provides an assessment of military settlement with a case study on a scheme from 1846. He argues that former soldiers required significant support from the British government and colonial authorities to survive. His work, though, is concerned with one particular scheme in one part of the colony, and looks at the Chelsea Pensioners.¹³ Robert England's article, from 1946, looked at the settlement of military men in Canada before 1914. He also quotes work from the early twentieth-century which argued that soldiers made poor settlers due to living lives

⁹ W. Brown, 'Victorious in Defeat: The American Loyalists in Canada', *History Today*, 27:2 (February 1977), p. 100.

¹⁰ N. Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists: The Ontario Loyalist Tradition and the Creation of Useable Pasts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

¹¹ W. A. B. Douglas, 'The Blessings of the Land: Naval Officers in Upper Canada 1815-1841', in A. Preston and P. Dennis ed., *Swords and Covenants* (London: Croom Helm, 1976), p. 47.

¹² *Ibid.* p. 42.

¹³ G. Raudzens, 'A Successful Military Settlement: Earl Grey's Enrolled Pensioners of 1846 in Canada', *The Canadian Historical Review*, 52:4 (December 1971), pp. 389-403.

of drunkenness in the army and their need for discipline and instruction.¹⁴ This view of soldiers as settlers has been challenged in more recent work.

Michael Vance's *Imperial Immigrants* assesses the former Scottish soldiers who migrated to the military settlements in the Rideau Valley from 1815. His work provides a valuable assessment of the men's lives in their new communities and the way in which they used their pension income to start new businesses.¹⁵ John Cookson has also researched soldiers as settlers, and like Vance, has also focused on migrants from Scotland. His 2009 article on Scottish military pensioners is devoted to the motives of the men and their families in emigrating to Canada. Rather than exploring their lives in the colonies, Cookson considers the men who returned home following a short period of settlement.¹⁶ James K. Johnson's research on military settlers looks at all of Upper Canada and frames the discussion in terms of the men who migrated as part of a commutation scheme in 1830-1839. This work views the scheme as a failure and covers the lives of the men who suffered as a result.¹⁷

Existing works on military migration have often taken the form of local studies, or as part of a wider discussion on emigration. For example, the differences between military migration and the settlement of civilians is not made clear in Lucille Campey's work on Scottish and English settlers.¹⁸ Discharged soldiers are often lost amongst the mass of people making the journey across the Atlantic. Once the emigrants settled, secondary studies such as those by Michael McGowan and James Rees have looked at communities founded along ethnic lines, thereby neglecting the military status of these former soldiers.¹⁹ This thesis takes

¹⁴ R. England, 'Disbanded and Discharged Soldiers in Canada Prior to 1914', *The Canadian Historical Review*, 27:1 (March 1946), p. 10.

¹⁵ M. E. Vance, *Imperial Immigrants: Scottish Settlers in the Upper Ottawa Valley 1815-1840* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2012), p. 53.

¹⁶ J. E. Cookson, 'Early Nineteenth Century Scottish Military Pensioners as Homecoming Soldiers', *The Historical Journal*, 52:11 (June 2009), pp. 319-341.

¹⁷ J. K. Johnson, 'The Chelsea Pensioners in Upper Canada', *Ontario History*, 53:4 (1961), pp. 273-289.

¹⁸ L. Campey, *An Unstoppable Force: The Scottish Exodus to Canada* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2008).

¹⁹ M. McGowan, 'Famine, Facts and Fabrication: An Examination of Diaries from the Irish Famine migration to Canada', *Canadian Journal of International Studies*, 32:2 (2007), p. 50.

a different approach by going beyond one ethnic group (i.e. Scottish soldiers) to consider all British army soldiers and veterans of the Royal Navy – including those who were born in Continental Europe. In addition, while existing works concentrate on the experiences of the veterans themselves, this research will focus on the ways in which the men's widows and family members benefited from the trappings of their military status. Work on soldier settlement also tends to focus on particular schemes or geographic areas. Existing work is then, rather atomised and parochial. This will be overcome in this thesis by taking a broader geographical sweep (by looking at the entirety of Upper Canada) and a longer chronological frame from 1815 to 1855. This long view is particularly needed, as very little has been written about the settlement schemes of the 1850s. Indeed, the existing literature gives the impression that soldier settlement was a fashion of the early nineteenth-century, when in fact the British government's commitment to it was long and enduring. Overall, studies which encompass the distinct experiences of veterans in Upper Canada, as well as the policies of British governments in supporting their movement, are lacking.

Our ability to differentiate military settlers from civilians has been made more difficult due to the lack of a clear definition, and the absence of any agreed-upon term for describing the many class of migrants who had military backgrounds. This problem stems from the early nineteenth-century, as the migrants were referred to by a wide range of different names such as pensioners, half-pay officers, military settlers and veterans. This stands in marked contrast to the Loyalists, as despite the wide differences in their composition (as this thesis will acknowledge), they were described under the umbrella term United Empire Loyalists. The difficulty of assigning a name to the military settlers is borne out of the differences between them. This thesis investigates the background of these men in detail and shows how they were made up of a wide range of ranks, regiments, levels of

J. Rees, *Surplus People: From Wicklow to Canada* (Cork: Collins Press, 2014).

combat experience, and nationalities. Notwithstanding the fact they came from the army and Royal Navy. While the differences remain over their service history, this thesis will refer to the military settlers by using the term veterans. While they were not all veterans of combat, they were veterans of military or naval service. Being able to use a single term for their description clarifies the research and discussion.

The scope of this thesis is restricted to Upper Canada, and there are several reasons which have underpinned this decision. This work uses records from the Chelsea Hospital which show that over two thousand veterans settled in British North America between 1815 and 1857.²⁰ The majority went to Upper Canada. Similarly, we will also see that settlement data held in the *Upper Canada Sundries* collection also shows that the colony was the favoured destination for veterans. The military settlements created in 1815 were also located in the Rideau Valley area of Upper Canada. The thesis makes extensive use of records relating to this area, and we will see that veterans made vital contributions to the development of these townships.

One of the primary driving factors behind the British government's desire to settle veterans in the Canadian colonies was defence; the military settlements provide an excellent example of this policy in action as they were located in strategically important border locations. The settlement schemes which ran throughout the period covered by this thesis were also centred on Upper Canada, so we can develop a good understanding of how they worked, and the motivation behind their introduction. The need for loyal settlers in Upper Canada meant that the colony was in a unique position. It was sparsely populated and the border region with the United States was ill defined and poorly defended. Lower Canada had its established population of French Canadians who proved during the War of 1812 that they would not welcome the colony being absorbed into the United States. Upper Canada's

²⁰ N. Crowder, *British Army Pensioners Abroad 1772-1899* (London: Genealogical Publishing Company, 2012).

population was looked upon with suspicion so it was seen to be threatened from external and internal forces.

The source material relating to Upper Canada is particularly rich. There are a wide variety of petitions for land, appointments and assistance from veterans, their families and civilians. These have proven to be vital in creating an understanding of the experiences of the veterans and their interaction with the colonial authorities. Finally, the availability of settlement records for veterans in Upper Canada has allowed this research to identify a number of key individuals who made their homes in the Rideau Valley area. These individuals feature throughout this work as we can reveal their initial applications for land, as well as their efforts to establish themselves as prominent community members, through to their attempts at creating a legacy.

Veterans were encouraged to settle in Upper Canada due to schemes which were enacted by successive British governments from 1815 to 1855, and the men proved instrumental in shaping the development of the colony during this period. Failure to attend to their experiences leaves us with an impoverished understanding of how Upper Canada developed, the nature of colonial society from 1815, and the colonies' place in the British Empire itself. Veterans, particularly the half-pay officers, received large amounts of land across different townships allowing them to become regional figures. Their land, in addition to the income from regular pension payments placed them in a position to own and operate a variety of different businesses. Veterans came to dominate a range of local government positions which gave them access to power, influence and wealth. Significantly, they generally held onto these positions for decades. The men also left important legacies. Most noticeably, veterans helped lay the foundations for Anglo-Canada's rich associational culture. As other scholars have noted, both the Orange Order and the Freemasons were shaped in significant ways by military personnel and both displayed a military ethos. Smyth has traced

the colonial origins of the Orange Order to the regiments who were stationed in garrisons in Kingston, York, Halifax and Montreal.²¹ Hereward Senior's research into the Orange Order provides examples of parades in which half-pay officers featured prominently.²² Jessica Harland-Jacobs has revealed the important role that military men played in establishing Masonic lodges in the Canadian colonies, as well providing evidence that veterans were in positions of leadership in the organisation.²³ Military influence over settler communities is also shown by the leading role veterans played in hosting events to mark the visits of dignitaries from the colonial government, and also in the campaign to construct a monument to the Duke of York (a former British Army commander-in-chief) in 1828.

The settlement of former soldiers reveals details about how colonial society operated during the decades after 1815 in relation to the granting of land and local government jobs. This, in turn, helps us to uncover and understand how power and influence was distributed. Patronage and connections were key factors which allowed individuals to acquire a grant of land or an appointment. Harold Perkin long ago stated that eighteenth-century England was a society 'based on property and patronage'.²⁴ He has defined patronage as a 'personal system of recruitment which operated at every level' where selection was based 'from amongst ones kinsmen and connections'.²⁵ This research investigates the story of patronage in Upper Canada and the colonial world; in doing so, it aligns itself with those studies that emphasise the 'unreformed' nature of British imperial rule deep into the mid-nineteenth century. Patronage was a system used by veterans who called on networks that encompassed the military men who administered the colonies, so as to help them establish a dominant position in local areas and to build up a power base. Zoe Laidlaw's *Colonial Connections* uncovers

²¹ W. J. Smyth, *Toronto, the Belfast of Canada: The Orange Order and the Shaping of Municipal Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), p. 19.

²² H. Senior, *Orangeism: The Canadian Phase* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1972), p. 11.

²³ J. Harland-Jacobs, *Builders of Empire: Freemasons and British Imperialism 1717-1927* (The University of North Carolina: Chapel Hill Press, 2007).

²⁴ H. Perkin, *The Origins of Modern English Society 1780-1880* (London: Routledge, 1969), p. 17.

²⁵ *Ibid.* p. 45.

how patronage operated amongst high ranking officers who found work in the Cape Colony, Australia and Canada. Laidlaw demonstrates how connections, patronage and military status enabled officers to climb to the leading positions of colonial administration.²⁶ She shows that connections were built between military men in the colonies and the governors through a shared military experience and the status of being a veteran of the Peninsular War. The veterans in Upper Canada regularly made claims to the colonial government for land and appointments, and cited their loyalty, military service and personal connections. When awarding grants of land or positions, the colonial authorities did not seek to establish whether the veterans had a knowledge of agriculture or law; or indeed whether they were even literate. Instead their connections and loyalty were valued. Johnson's *Becoming Prominent* assesses the nature of colonial society in Upper Canada and shows the importance that both land and patronage could have in terms of allowing an individual to progress socially and economically.²⁷ The colonial society presented in Johnson's work, and that which emerges from the petitions studied in this thesis, was one that valued militarism and patronage above merit or equality.

Military migration is also crucial to forming a wider understanding of the Canadian colonies' place in the empire following the Napoleonic War. Christopher. A. Bayly's research on the empire has stated that 'the dominant ideologies of the imperial projects of the period were informed by its military and aristocratic character'.²⁸ Bayly argued that the British Empire in the period after the American Revolution was dominated by the militaristic and aristocratic attitudes of the 'military gentlemen and gentlemen soldiers' who wielded power and influence. These men shaped the development of colonies along British lines with

²⁶ Z. Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections 1815-1845: Patronage, The Information Revolution, and Colonial Government* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005).

²⁷ J. K. Johnson, *Becoming Prominent: Regional Leadership in Upper Canada 1791-1841* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), p. 53.

²⁸ Bayly, 'The First Age of Global Imperialism c1760-1830', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 26:2 (1998), p. 39.

a focus on hierarchy, loyalty and the Anglican Church.²⁹ The leading role military men played in the administration of the empire can be seen through their presence in India, the Cape Colony, and Australia.³⁰ Bayly's ideas were developed by Christine Wright who has researched the former soldiers who settled in Australia. Her work is of particular importance to this thesis and its contents and methodology serves as something of a guide for this study. Wright has examined the veterans of the Peninsular War who came to the colonies after 1815.³¹ She argues that these settlers came to Australia as builders of empire in that they were crucial to the development of their new communities in terms of their involvement in local government, business, and society. As with Bayly, Wright's work also analyses the experiences of the highest-ranking military men and their links with other high-ranking former soldiers in Horse Guards and the colonial administrations. Seema Alavi's research finds veterans as administrators in local and colonial positions, militia officers and as providers of security in remote areas in India. She has argued that the granting of land to veterans created a class of military land lords who wielded significant influence in settler communities.³² However, the importance of the impact of the military settlers who came as part of waves of migration, or those who were discharged in the colonies, has yet to be fully understood and appreciated.

Existing scholarship has raised topics and questions that remain under-researched. Bayly does not examine British North America particularly closely in his research and his focus on a military empire tended to concentrate on the eastern empire (notably India) and Australia.³³ While creating an understanding of the militaristic nature of the empire in this

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ S. Alavi, 'The Company Army and Rural Society: The Invalid Thana 1780-1830,' *Modern Asian Studies*, 27:1 (1993). C. Wright, *Wellington's Men in Australia: Peninsular War Veterans and the Making of Empire c1820-1840* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011).

³¹ C. Wright, *Wellington's Men in Australia: Peninsular War Veterans and the Making of Empire c1820-1840* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011).

³² S. Alavi, 'The Company Army and Rural Society: The Invalid Thana 1780-1830,' p. 165.

³³ Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World 1780-1830* (London: Longman, 1989).

period, Bayly's is a far-reaching survey that, understandably, focuses on representative and high-ranking figures, such as the governors and administrators. Laidlaw and Wright also take the same approach by focusing on the experiences of officers as settlers. By contrast, this work is interested in all ranks of soldiers who settled in the colony and the way in which they made claims on the succession of military men who governed Upper Canada. This research will also take a broader scope than existing works. Wright is concerned with settlers who fought in the Peninsular War. By contrast, this dissertation will take a much larger sample of military men including veterans of Waterloo, the War of 1812, and those who were stationed across the Empire.

The thesis emphasises the British government's long-running fascination with soldier settlers. As early as 1815 Lord Bathurst's Colonial Office made the point that veterans would make good settlers, though the image of soldier farmers had preoccupied imperial officials for many decades before this. When Halifax in Nova Scotia was settled by discharged soldiers in 1748, Henry Pelham's government believed that the men would secure the colony for Britain.³⁴ Discharged soldiers had also been used to secure territory through settlement in India during the 1780s.³⁵ Between 1815 and 1855, British governments introduced five separate settlement schemes to facilitate the settlement of soldiers and sailors. Beginning in 1815, discharged soldiers were provided with free grants of land relative to their rank as well as tools, rations and free passage to the colonies for themselves and their family members. At the behest of the British government, military settlements in strategic places close to the United States border were surveyed and populated with former soldiers and civilians. There were also specific schemes aimed solely at veterans such as the commutation scheme of the 1830s and the Hudson Bay settlement which took place in the late 1840s and early 1850s.

³⁴ P. McGreath, and J. Leefe, *A History of Early Nova Scotia* (Halifax: Four East Publications, 1982), p. 202.

³⁵ S. Alavi, 'The Company Army and Rural Society', p. 159.

The first aim of this research is to examine the settlement schemes and the debates around them to show the importance of veterans to the government. From 1815 to the 1850s their settlement was supported and monitored. By contrast, civilian emigration was unassisted and unsupervised, and generally left to individual effort or private enterprise. This dissertation, then, asks why veterans and their families were valued as migrants for so long. As late as the 1850s the British government planned the settlement of Crimean War veterans. Indeed, the settlement of veterans continued throughout the nineteenth-century and into the twentieth-century, and this has been the subject of research by Kent Fedorowich. He has found that during the 1870s and 1880s, the British state ‘hid behind the mantle of *lassiez-faire* liberalism’ as a means of deflecting calls for government support for civilian migrants. In contrast, military men continued to be supported.³⁶ After the Boer War, the Canadian government launched a campaign to encourage veterans to settle in the colony, and in 1906 the Chelsea Hospital approached the government in the hope that army pensions could be commuted to assist emigration.³⁷ Fedorowich argues that prior to 1914, Canada remained the most favoured destination for military settlers.³⁸

This thesis will show that veterans were not simply isolated individuals, as networks of support for the men and their families sprang up across Upper Canada. These networks linked veterans to the highest-ranking administrators in the colonial government. As is well known, beginning in 1815, a succession of governors and lieutenant governors were former high ranking military men. They also brought with them fellow officers to fill administrative posts. George Raudzens has argued that this conferred a significant advantage on military settlers, and they were prized by the colonial government because of the qualities they were

³⁶ K. Fedorowich, ‘The Migration of British Ex-Servicemen to Canada and the Role of the Naval and Military Emigration League 1899-1914’, *Social History*, 25:49 (May 1992), p. 78.

³⁷ *Ibid.* p. 81.

³⁸ *Ibid.* p. 98.

seen to embody such as loyalty and militarism.³⁹ Evidence reveals that veterans benefited from such connections, as they could secure positions as prominent members of their new communities. They also held an expectation that due to their service and status as former British soldiers, they should be justly rewarded. Networks of support also linked veteran settlers together as they assisted each other in their attempts to acquire jobs, obtain monetary assistance from the colonial government, or settle legal disputes. The wives and widows of the veterans were also able to benefit. While existing studies have not undertaken an analysis of the family members who accompanied the veterans to Upper Canada, this research explores the experience of the wives and widows who settled in the colony, as well as the children of the veterans. Johnson has researched women's interaction with the colonial government through petitioning. He argues that it was rare for the colonial authorities to award a grant of land to a woman in her own right.⁴⁰ However, there were military widows who were able to acquire land grants in their own right; women used land to develop and operate businesses. Widows were also able to call upon assistance from serving soldiers, veteran settlers, and other widows to enable them to secure assistance from the colonial government. The fact that veterans, their wives, widows and children interacted with each other and were linked by networks suggests that military communities developed a distinct class identity based around shared military status. The evidence for this is reflected in their petitions, as well as their interaction with the colonial government, which emphasised a shared status as former British servicemen which separated them from civilian settlers. This class identity was further separated along lines of rank, place of service and service history. Half-pay officers were particularly keen to emphasise their status and separateness. The connections and the shared status was reflected in the veteran's desire to socialise and support

³⁹ G. A. Raudzens, 'A Successful Military Settlement: Earl Grey's Enrolled Pensioners of 1846 in Canada', *Canadian Historical Review*, 52:2 (1971), pp. 389-403.

⁴⁰ J. K. Johnson, 'Claims of Equity and Justice: Petitions and Petitioning in Upper Canada 1815-1840', *Social History*, 28:55 (1995), p. 225.

each other which in turn contributed to the growth and development of the Orange Order and the Freemasons.

This study will be divided into two thematic sections and, below this, into five chapters. Chapters one to four consider the ways in which the men and their families utilised their military status through their interaction with the colonial authorities and British governments. Their connections, status and the availability of patronage enabled the settlers to acquire land, jobs and assistance. This was all achieved through a closed world: the private sphere of petitioning in which success depended on the ability to highlight military status. The remainder of the thesis looks at the way the veterans publicly presented themselves as settlers in their day-to-day lives in their new communities. There was a contradiction between their private and public behaviours which must be acknowledged and reconciled. Veterans connected with each other privately through the support networks which were based around their militarism; but they did not publicly highlight their military past and status. They did not commemorate battles through outward militaristic displays such as marching. Instead they mingled with civilians as passive spectators at events carried out by serving soldiers in garrisons. Veterans often became influential at a local level, but they were prominent civic figures in business, agriculture and politics. Rather than outwardly expressing their military past, they adapted to the prevailing conditions in their communities by joining the Freemasons and Orange Order where they could march and parade in a different guise. The contradiction between the hidden world of patronage and military connections through petitioning, and their public behaviour as civic rather than militaristic leaders helps to account for why the veterans became forgotten settlers.

The first chapter is concerned with the methods employed by successive British governments to facilitate the settlement of former British soldiers and sailors. The issues will be dealt with in a chronological order looking at the earliest schemes which emerged in 1815,

to the attempt to settle men from the Anglo-German legion in Canada in 1855. This chapter will also show the reasoning which underpinned the introduction of these schemes: colonial defence and the need to secure the link between the colonies and the mother country. The work in this chapter relates to Buckner's idea that military men made British North America British.⁴¹ An important desire of the British government in 1815 was to fundamentally change the composition of the colonies to favour those born in the British Isles rather than the United States. It was hoped that by supplanting the American-born population with British settlers, the loyalty of the colonies would improve and the threat of invasion diminish. Military service deepened a sense of Britishness among veterans, and this sense of Britishness was imprinted in the colonial institutions which they impacted upon. Significantly, a proportion of the veterans were born in Central European countries but had served in British regiments. We will see that in the eyes of Lord Bathurst's Colonial Office, these men were equals to their British born comrades in terms of loyalty and their suitability as settlers. They were still imbued with the status of a British serviceman.

With the methods of settlement explored, the second chapter will consider how veterans and their family members presented themselves to the colonial authorities in their petitions for land. The contents of the claims reveal that they spoke of their loyalty, service, military experience and their expectation of reward. This chapter will make an important contribution to the literature on petitioning by examining the documents which accompanied many claims which reveal the web of patronage connecting soldier claimants and the military men who administered the colony. The documents themselves and the interaction of the settlers with the colonial authorities reveals the type of society that the government wished to construct. This was a society based on hierarchy, connections and loyalty rather than

⁴¹ P. A. Buckner, ed., *Canada and the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 18.

individual merit; and the claimants in effect told the authorities what they wanted to hear in terms of their vision of the ideal settler.

The third and fourth chapters examine the experiences of the men and their families once they had settled. Chapter three focuses on the veterans themselves and uncovers the connected world the military men lived in and the ways in which they utilised the benefits of their status to gain power and influence in their new communities. This chapter will show that in regards to Upper Canada, Bayly's assertions about the power of military men was not as strong and unchallenged as he has stated. Civilian settlers questioned the authority of soldier magistrates. Rebellion in Upper and Lower Canada (modern-day Quebec) threatened the power of the military administration. The study of the veterans who settled in Upper Canada provides answers to questions about the pervasiveness and reach of military power in colonial society. This chapter also investigates the veterans and their families as people by considering the complexities behind their settlement. For instance, it will show the range of different nationalities of the men, as well as their different military experiences and the variety of trades and skills they brought to Upper Canada. While the British government tended to view these men as a unified group of former soldiers, the reality was somewhat different. The fourth chapter continues this theme through a study of the women and children who accompanied the men to Upper Canada. The veterans' efforts to create a legacy by passing power and influence onto their sons will be highlighted. As the men were engaged in using their connections to gain status, so were their widows and children. While there are many examples of widows who struggled terribly after the death of a husband, there were women who overcame the challenges which they faced and became successful settlers. These women utilised the land grants, and their status as army wives, so they could own and operate their own businesses and land interests. As such, along with their children, they were not victims of a system which sought to limit their influence.

The middle decades of the nineteenth-century saw the beginnings of a process whereby the veterans and their achievements were gradually forgotten. The remaining chapters explore this theme and demonstrates how the erasure of military men from Canadian historiography can enrich our understanding of memory and commemoration in Canada. Cecilia Morgan's *Commemorating Canada* is an important point of reference for the issues considered in the final part of the thesis. She has argued that the last third of the nineteenth-century saw a rise in commemorative activities and engagement with history in Canada. This corresponds with the promotion of the Loyalists and the forgetting of the veterans. Morgan states that 'those chosen for commemoration tended to reflect the desires and aspirations of particular groups of society'.⁴² An additional work which underlines the themes in the latter half of the thesis is Hayday's and Blake's *Celebrating Canada: Holidays, National Days and the Crafting of Identities*. The articles in this study provide a sense of how commemorative activities, and the forms which they took, developed in Upper Canada and Ontario during the nineteenth-century.⁴³ The thesis engages with the ideas present in both of the above works by showing that the Loyalists were favoured as they reflected contemporary values of individual effort, and pioneer spirit. We will see that the world of the veterans, based on success through patronage and hierarchy rather than merit, proved an uncomfortable subject to engage with.

Chapter four looks at the issues of commemoration. Despite the prevalence of significant numbers of veterans of important battles living nearby one another, most showed little interest in commemorating the anniversaries of the campaigns they had been involved in. There were veterans who were involved in fundraising and organising efforts to construct monuments to the Duke of York and General Brock, the martyr of the War of 1812. However, these campaigns are more complex as they also represent efforts by local and

⁴² C. Morgan, *Commemorating Canada: History, Heritage and Memory 1850s to 1990* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), p. 46.

⁴³ M. Hayday and R. Blake, ed., *Celebrating Canada: Holidays, National Days, and the Crafting of Identities* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016).

colonial elites to demonstrate their power and wealth. Rather than pursuing their own commemorative activities, veterans became involved in the Orange Order and the Freemasons. The fourth chapter shows how military migrants were an important driving force behind the expansion of these organisations; the parading and events surrounding them were a vehicle for the men to commemorate their own pasts. As the veterans did not openly commemorate their past and played-down their military heritage in their day-to-day lives, their behaviours contributed to the process of forgetting which took place in the second half of the nineteenth-century. The other factors which accelerated this process are investigated in the final chapter of the thesis. Chapter five explores the early works of Canadian history which appeared from the 1850s. These studies focused on the Loyalists and, in general, omitted the veterans. The contents of these works helps to identify and explain the rapid process by which the men and their achievements were forgotten.

Sources

This research will make use of a wide variety of sources, drawing on new evidence and expanding upon the methods used by others. Norman Crowder has compiled a list of British army soldiers who were supported by the Chelsea Hospital and had settled across the Empire from the late eighteenth to the end of the nineteenth centuries.⁴⁴ This data records the details of the soldier's name, date of pension, date of death and place of residence. The sources will be expanded upon with the addition of more detail about the lives of the emigrants which are obtained from their service records. This includes their places of service, condition upon discharge and trade before enlistment; all of which ultimately allows for a rich picture to emerge of who the veterans were. Edward Coss' research on the British soldier in Wellington's army provides a useful foundation for this dissertation. He has carried out an analysis of a sample of men who enlisted in 1803 to ascertain their backgrounds in terms of

⁴⁴ N. Crowder, *British Army Pensioners Abroad 1772-1899*.

their occupations, places of birth and social standing.⁴⁵ With the data taken from the Chelsea Pensioners records, this research will utilise Coss' methodology to form a picture of the men who settled in Upper Canada. The depth of this information will be a new addition to our understanding of a significant number of migrants over several decades.

This dissertation makes extensive use of petitions for land, appointments or assistance submitted to the colonial government by the soldiers themselves or their family members. Indeed, the contents of the petitions underpins several chapters and forms the basis of our understanding of how patronage and networks of assistance operated in the colonies. Johnson has previously studied petitioning in Upper Canada and has looked at the way different groups of settlers presented themselves to the colonial authorities in their claims.⁴⁶ His research details claims by civilian settlers, women, the descendants of loyalists, as well as military settlers. However, this research will expand on Johnson's work by studying the importance of letters submitted alongside the petitions which tell us of the networks of connections and patronage. The petitions are a key source as they reveal personal details of the veterans and the family members who accompanied them to the colonies. This depth of information across such a broad range of the settler population is not to be found in any other source material, particularly as there are no diaries by veterans which could offer a glimpse into their daily lives and experiences in their new communities.

The availability of source material has also helped to shape the scope of this project. Government settlement schemes facilitated the movement of veterans to the whole of British North America- Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Lower Canada in addition to Upper Canada. It is possible to identify the veterans who settled across all of these colonies from the Chelsea Hospital records (although the largest number from these records

⁴⁵ E. Coss, *All For the King's Shilling: The British Soldier Under Wellington, 1808-1814* (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013).

⁴⁶ J. K. Johnson, 'Claims of Equity and Justice'.

settled in Upper Canada). However, there is a real lack of additional sources relating to the lives of these men once they had arrived in the colonies such as petitions, colonial government records and land settlement details. The military settlements, particularly, the town of Perth, features prominently in this work. This is because there was a large concentration of veterans in this area; and it is also due to the considerable volume of sources available. This includes a local newspaper, detailed colonial land records, and diaries.

Chapter One: The settlement schemes which facilitated military migration 1815-1855

On 2 April 1832 Sir George Murray, former Tory Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, addressed the British House of Commons during a debate on military settlement schemes. He explained that ‘the principle of encouraging the emigration of soldiers is good and wise’ and ‘I think that a more beneficial class of settlers cannot be sent out to the colonies than these military settlers’.¹ Murray’s succinct statement affirmed government support for military settlement in the Canadian colonies and the reasons which underpinned this: ‘They might be placed in the weakest points or those districts most open to attack...you would have military colonies in those districts most open to the incursions of an enemy’.² But he also offered a cautionary note as ‘it should be recollected, that during the greater part of their lives, everything is provided for the soldiers...it is not surprising that they should be improvident when left to themselves’.³ These sentiments could have been uttered by imperial and colonial officials in any period from the end of the War of 1812 through to 1855. In 1848 the Whig Colonial Secretary, Earl Grey, told the governor general of Canada that British army pensioners were ‘a class of emigrants whom it is highly desirable to encourage’.⁴ Moments of crisis in the history of the empire also resulted in veterans being particularly favoured as settlers. Earl Grey’s statement from 1848 occurred at a time when campaigns of civil disobedience had occurred in the Cape Colony, New South Wales and Van Diemen’s Land.⁵ The perception that British North America was threatened by the aggression of the United States in the years after the War of 1812 also made the settlement of veterans a

¹ Parliamentary Papers (PP) *Commons Sitting* of Monday 2 April 1832, Third Series, Volume 11, 1209.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ PP, *Papers Relevant to Emigration to British Provinces in North America*, Earl Grey to Governor-General the Earl of Elgin and Kincardine, 2 November 1848, Volume 38, 1025 (1849), p. 48.

⁵ M. Taylor, ‘The 1848 Revolutions and the British Empire’, *Past and Present*, 166:1 (February 2000), p. 149.

pressing concern. It was the aim of successive British governments and colonial administrations to encourage the settlement of veterans in the Canadian colonies. These individuals were prized as being able to play a key role in transforming the colonies by strengthening ties with Britain, spreading conservative values and providing a valuable line of defence against future American invasion, as well as internal revolt. To facilitate the settlement of veterans, different schemes were put in place by British governments from 1815 onwards.

This chapter will detail how these schemes operated, the impact they had on encouraging settlement, and the reasons for their introduction. This will reveal that the settlement of veterans was prioritised over civilians and there was a long-standing interest in these men across different governments. The interest in settling veterans in the colonies had begun in the middle of the eighteenth century. However, it was not until the end of the Napoleonic War that the British government was in the position to promote their settlement on a large scale. Subsequently a raft of schemes were put in place which continued until 1855. Throughout this time there was a desire to strengthen the crown's hold on Upper Canada through the settlement of people who were relied upon to be loyal to Britain. Veterans were consistently valued and idealised as settlers because they were considered agents of defence and security.

The War of 1812, which witnessed the invasion of British territory by American forces, highlighted the vulnerability of the Canadian colonies from the threat posed by its neighbour. At the time of this conflict most of the population of British North America was American-born or descended from American migrants. This situation had come about due to an influx of Loyalists into the colonies after the American Revolution, as well as the policy of

Upper Canada's first lieutenant governor, John Simcoe, of encouraging American settlers.⁶ So at the end of the War of 1812 the British government and colonial authorities were faced with a situation where the vulnerability of the colonies had been exposed, and the population was linked to the United States rather than to Britain.⁷ Discharged British soldiers were seen as the answer to the colonies problems and 1815 marked the beginning of a concerted effort to settle them in large numbers. Over the decades that followed there continued to be great anxiety over the United States' plans for the colonies and the introduction of new schemes were grounded in security concerns. This situation lasted until the middle of the 1850s as the final schemes of the decade were still informed by the need to protect the colonies from invasion.

Economic and social conditions in Britain also had an impact on the policy of Lord Liverpool's government in relation to the need to settle veterans in the colonies at the end of the Napoleonic War. Much of the country was blighted by severe poverty and economic depression. For example, southern counties suffered from agricultural distress and Scotland witnessed a severe downturn in manufacturing sectors.⁸ At the same time, the government's concern for 'retrenchment' - a keyword in British policy after 1815-meant that the army was significantly reduced in number. Lord Liverpool's government was perturbed by the impact that thousands of discharged soldiers would have by joining the growing ranks of unemployed, disaffected people in Britain. Emigration was a means of exporting this population. Similar considerations played a part in later schemes which were introduced during the 1830s and 40s when the country again faced severe economic and social problems. For example, an aim of Earl Grey's Whig government was to reduce the army pension bill

⁶ P. A. Buckner, 'Making British North America British,' C.C Eldridge, ed. *Kith and Kin: Canada, Britain and the United States from the Revolution to the Cold War* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997), p. 16.

⁷ J. K. Johnson, *In Duty Bound: Men, Women and the State in Upper Canada 1815-1841*, (Montreal: Montreal-Queen's University Press, 2014), p. 108.

⁸ Rees, *Surplus People: From Wicklow to Canada*, p. 50.

and this policy was fundamental to the introduction of the ‘commutation scheme’ of the 1830s.

In the official mind, veterans ensured that the prevailing ideology in the colonies was centred on loyalism, royalism and aristocratic military virtue. This ties in with Bayly’s arguments about the nature of the British Empire during the period after 1815.⁹ He has described how the prevalence of military migrants and settlements reflected the militaristic and aristocratic values of the men who administered the empire in the period up to 1830. Bayly has remarked on the high-ranking officers, particularly those who had fought in the Peninsular and at Waterloo who came to rule British colonies across the world.¹⁰ These men were idealised as being able to export militaristic, hierarchical values to the colonies. This chapter will also show that while the veteran settlers included a wide variety of nationalities from the British Isles and mainland Europe, the important factor was their status as a former British soldier and this conferred prestige and dependability in the eyes of the government.

Settlement before 1815

Schemes to facilitate the settlement of British North America had been attempted before mass migration began in 1815, although they generally had very little success, particularly where military migration was concerned. Military men had long been valued as settlers and attempts had been made to populate the colonies with discharged soldiers. These attempts were limited in terms of geographical area and the numbers of men involved. They centred on soldiers who were disbanded in the colonies rather than attempting to bring settlers across from the British Isles. An early scheme occurred in 1748, when the British government offered land grants to soldiers who had been discharged in Nova Scotia in an effort to encourage them to settle in and around Halifax. These men were regarded as being a vital part of the government’s plan to secure the colony and neutralise any threats posed by the Acadians (the

⁹ Bayly, ‘The First Age of Global Imperialism’ p. 41.

¹⁰ Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World 1780-1914* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), p. 144.

descendants of the early French settlers).¹¹ In addition, soldiers had also been used to establish British authority in India in the 1780s and New South Wales and the Cape Colony after 1815.¹² Military settlement in the colony of New South Wales did not always run smoothly. The New South Wales Corps had served in the colony since 1790, and many of the officers became leaders in local government, and helped develop the local economy by using their income to fund imports and retailing.¹³ Alan Atkinson, in his study of the mutiny, argues that officers ‘formed the habit of believing themselves to be above to law, at least in local matters’.¹⁴ Governor Bligh arrived in the colony in 1806 and set about breaking the financial and political power of the officers by attempting to restrict the economic enterprises of the men. In response to his actions, the men of the New South Wales Corps deposed Bligh in January 1808 in what become known as ‘The Rum Rebellion’. Atkinson states that while the British government considered the act as a mutiny, ‘the officers who took part in the rum rebellion believed in their cause, and saw themselves as morally correct’.¹⁵ Bligh was replaced by an officer named Macarthur.¹⁶ For two years after the rebellion the colony was ruled by a success of senior officers of the New South Wales Corps. We will see in this thesis parallels between the power of the men of the New South Wales Corps, and the way that veterans in Upper Canada, in particular in the military settlements, came to dominate the local area. Just like the men in New South Wales, the veterans became leading figures in local government, agriculture and business. The Rum Rebellion served as an example to the British government, and colonial authorities in Upper Canada of what could go wrong when military men were given too much power.

¹¹ P. McGreath, and J. Leefe, *A History of Early Nova Scotia*, p. 202.

¹² Alavi, ‘The Company Army and Rural Society’, p. 159. Bayly, ‘The First Age of Global Imperialism’, p. 39.

¹³ A. Atkinson, ‘The Little Revolution in New South Wales, 1808’, *International History Review* 12:1 (1990), p. 68.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 67.

¹⁶ See S. Dando-Collins, *Captain Bligh’s Other Mutiny* (Sydney: Random House Australia, 2007).

Methods to settle the colonies were expanded in 1791 when Upper Canada's first lieutenant governor, John Graves Simcoe, enacted a policy of encouraging Americans who were loyal to Britain, militiamen and British army soldiers from colonial regiments to settle in the new province. Simcoe believed that 'British principles could offer a blueprint for the colony's future ideological and political development'.¹⁷ Therefore by settling migrants who were considered to be loyal to British interests, Simcoe's aim was to 'insulate the colony from the contagion of republicanism and rebellion'.¹⁸ The new colony was to be a model of England overseas, but based on the population of North America.

The outcomes Simcoe desired failed to materialise. His government was slow to grant lands and the scheme suffered from haphazard administration. When grants were made, Simcoe preferred to allocate large amounts of land, sometimes entire townships, to individual settlers in the hope they would act as the new landed gentry. In reality, this deterred settlers who had no desire to become tenants.¹⁹ Elizabeth Errington has described Upper Canada in the years before 1815 as a collection of isolated communities where the only real evidence that it was a British colony was seen in a few small towns such as Kingston and Niagara.²⁰ She argues that while the conservative elite may have extolled the virtues of the imperial connection, most of the colony's residents had few personal or social ties with Britain. Indeed by 1800 the influx of Americans meant that the population had become increasingly Americanised to the extent that 'the inhabitants resembled the customs of New York or New England'.²¹ The rapid influx of American settlers arose concerns from some in the colonial government. For example, Thomas Talbot, Simcoe's secretary, warned in 1802 that the new arrivals might revolt against British rule, and argued for the encouragement of immigration

¹⁷ E. Errington, *The Lion, the Eagle, and Upper Canada: A Developing Colonial Ideology* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), p. 28.

¹⁸ R. Bothwell, *The Penguin History of Canada* (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2006), p. 134.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 88.

²⁰ Errington, *The Lion, the Eagle and Upper Canada*, p. 15.

²¹ *Ibid.* p. 27.

from the British Isles.²² Knowles has argued that while some of the Americans who came to the colonies were dedicated to Britain and the empire, many more were motivated by commercial ties, opportunism, and the desire to claim grants of land. The leaders of these new communities resisted Simcoe's plan to transform the colony into a model of Britain.²³

The War of 1812 had an important impact on emigration into the colonies as it highlighted the vulnerability of British North America and raised questions about the loyalty of the population. During the war the colonies had been defended by a small contingent of regular British soldiers who were supported by militia regiments. As a result, a view emerged in Upper Canada that militia groups made up of local people had played a key role in repelling American incursions.²⁴ This claim has been picked up on by historians who argue that the Loyalists (those who mainly arrived between 1783 and 1784) and Late Loyalists (who arrived just prior to the War of 1812) were instrumental in securing the colonies.²⁵ However, Johnson warns that Canadian historians have fallen into the trap of accepting the presumed role that the Loyalist militias played during the war. Instead he stresses the small numbers of Upper Canadians who willingly got involved in the fighting.²⁶ This point has been echoed by Knowles who says that the British government had serious doubts about the contribution of the Loyalist militias to the defence of the colonies. The colonial authorities were also highly suspicious of where the loyalties of the American born population lay, especially as they tended to live in communities along the border.²⁷

After peace between the United States and Britain was signed in 1815, loyalty and fear shaped the ideology and outlook of the colonies for decades and directly impacted upon

²² Craig, *Upper Canada: The Formative Years*, p. 48.

²³ N. Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists: The Ontario Loyalist Tradition and the Creation of Useable Pasts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997) p. 19.

²⁴ Bumstead, *The Peoples of Canada*, p. 255.

²⁵ L. Campey, *Seeking a Better Future: The English Pioneers in Ontario and Quebec* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2012), p. 49.

²⁶ Johnson, *In Duty Bound*, p. 108.

²⁷ Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists*, p. 19.

migration policy. The fear of another American invasion and the questions over the loyalty of the population convinced the colonial authorities of the ‘necessity of the simultaneous suppression of American style politics and the maintenance of British cultural hegemony’.²⁸ Johnson has argued that the threat of future war meant that ‘Upper Canadians saw themselves as living in a permanently armed camp’.²⁹ Loyalty became a defining feature of British North America. Maya Jasanoff’s study of loyalty in British North America has argued that a Tory vision took shape after 1812 as the colonies pursued a path of ‘ordered liberty, anti-Americanism anchored in hierarchical and constitutional monarchy’.³⁰ David Mills has researched loyalty in Upper Canada and again highlights the English conservatism which took root in the colony after 1812. For Mills, this loyalism was characterised by an attachment to monarchy, empire and the British constitution. Loyalists, according to Mills, considered ‘any opposition to the administration was to be crushed because it created political turbulence and thus disrupted social harmony’.³¹ The continued threat from America meant that ‘there was an increased emphasis upon the necessity of internal unity’.³² Wise has defined the dominant conservative loyalty of the early nineteenth-century as not just an attachment to the crown and empire ‘but to the beliefs and institutions the conservatives considered essential in the preservation of a form of life different from, and superior to the United States’.³³ The importance of institutions has been echoed by Errington who has argued that in order to maintain a truly British colony ‘it was believed its residents must be unquestioningly and totally committed to preserving British institutions’.³⁴

²⁸ Bumstead, *The Peoples of Canada*, p. 50.

²⁹ Johnson, *Becoming Prominent*, p. 68.

³⁰ M. Jasanoff, *Liberty’s Exiles: The Loss of America and the Re-making of British North America* (London: Harper Collins, 2011), p. 333.

³¹ D. Mills, *The Idea of Loyalty in Upper Canada 1784-1840* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1988), p. 16.

³² *Ibid.* p. 27.

³³ S. F. Wise et al, *God’s Peculiar People: Essays on Political Culture in Nineteenth Century Canada* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1993), p. 182.

³⁴ Errington, *The Lion, the Eagle and Upper Canada*, p. 170.

Settlement Schemes after 1815.

A number of important settlement schemes were introduced by successive British governments from 1815 to 1855. This includes the creation of military settlements in strategic border locations, the provision of free grants of land to soldiers, sailors and their families, the commutation scheme of the 1830s and the Hudson Bay settlement from 1848 to 1855. The settlement of veterans was distinct from civilian emigration. Military men benefited from the active role that governments played to ensure that they settled in the colonies. On the other hand, civilian emigration was continually left to private enterprise or individual effort.

In 1815, Lord Liverpool's government began the process of introducing schemes which were intended to facilitate the settlement of veterans in Upper Canada in larger numbers than had been attempted previously. This policy was then continued by successive governments, both Tory and Whig. These men were seen to offer the solution to the internal and external security threats which faced the colonies, and the deteriorating economic conditions in the British Isles following the end of the Napoleonic Wars also motivated the Tory government to reduce the numbers of discharged soldiers seeking employment in the country.

Transatlantic travel had reopened by 1815 and this provided an opportunity for the government to begin to settle veterans in the colonies on a much larger scale than had ever been done before. Crucially this also coincided with a shift in opinion regarding emigration in Earl Bathurst's newly-formed Colonial Office. The long-held view that emigration equated to a loss of power for the mother country began to lose ground.³⁵ Bathurst has been described as being 'willing and even anxious to give encouragement to emigration' in the interests of colonial defence.³⁶ Despite peace, relations with the United States after 1815 remained tense

³⁵ W. P. Morrell, *British Colonial Policy in the Age of Peel and Russell* (Oxford: Routledge, 1930), p. 5.

³⁶ D. M. Young, *The Colonial Office in the Early Nineteenth Century* (London: Longmans, 1961), p. 38.

and the American born population of the colonies was looked on with suspicion. Tension existed because it was believed that the allegiance of this population ultimately lay with the United States rather than Britain. The boundaries between the colonies and the United States remained a controversial area after the war, and incursions and disputes were common. In an effort to prevent Americans from settling in British North America, Governor General Gore (who was appointed to the position in 1811) ordered magistrates not to administer the oath of allegiance to them, thereby preventing them from legally holding land.³⁷ This action was underpinned by the ‘Alien Question’ which was a source of debate in British North America after the War of 1812. The question related to American born settlers who arrived in the colonies after 1791. This group was already under suspicion after 1812, and in 1820 British courts decreed that American born settlers were not legally subjects of the crown. Therefore, as aliens they could not hold property and were denied political rights.³⁸ Governor Gore’s action was aimed at ensuring Americans found it difficult to establish themselves in the colonies; conversely, British subjects were encouraged. The colonial administration believed that if the pre-1812 pattern of immigration from the United States continued, British North American would become American, and the link with Britain would ultimately be severed.³⁹

American expansion, demonstrated by the advance in Florida, heightened fears of expansion in the north. To counter this, the British government increased the number of soldiers stationed in the colonies and began to improve defensive positions and land communication. The sense that Upper Canada was in danger was exacerbated by internal unrest in Upper Canada after 1815. This was centred around the reformer Robert Gourlay who became increasingly critical of the government of Upper Canada whose members he argued had abused their power. In 1818 Gourlay toured the colony championing emigration

³⁷ Errington, *The Lion, The Eagle and Upper Canada*, p. 156.

³⁸ Mills, *The Idea of Loyalty in Upper Canada 1784-1840*, p. 34.

³⁹ *Ibid.* p. 35.

from the United States, rather from the British Isles. His actions deeply unsettled the government who became wary of widespread unrest. By 1819, Gourlay had been expelled to New York.⁴⁰ In an effort to shore up security and loyalty in the colonies, the British government, in familiar fashion, turned once more to discharged soldiers.

Economic and social problems in Britain which resulted from the end of the Napoleonic War were an important underlying factor behind the government's emigration policy. It is well known that the period after the Napoleonic War was one of economic depression in Britain. The downturn effected industry in the Clyde region, and exacerbated agricultural distress in the Highlands and across Ireland.⁴¹ These events were part of a general trend of falling wages and rising prices and poor rates all over the country.⁴² In 1816 ministers had to pay interest on a debt worth more than twice the national income, and as a result the policy of 'war expenditure in a time of peace' was proposed which forced massive cuts in spending.⁴³ Houghton has argued that 'from 1815 economic depression and reactionary Tory government created the climate that society was breaking apart'.⁴⁴

In response to these problems, the conservative governments of Lord Liverpool, Canning, the Duke of Wellington and Lord Goderich pursued a policy of extensive retrenchment between 1815 and 1830 with the aim of reducing public spending. It was hoped that the cuts would reduce political and social pressures in the country.⁴⁵ It was in this atmosphere of economic crisis that tens of thousands of British soldiers returned home ready to be disbanded. The armed forces were an obvious target for spending cuts. The strength of the British army at the end of 1814 stood at 19,785 cavalry, 136,073 infantry, 17,661 artillery

⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 107.

⁴¹ Campey, *An Unstoppable Force*, p. 4.

⁴² Rees, *Surplus People*, p. 59.

⁴³ B. Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People? England 1783-1846* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), p. 251

⁴⁴ W. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830-1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), p. 57.

⁴⁵ P. Harling, *The Waning of 'Old Corruption': The Politics of Economical Reform in Britain, 1779-1846* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 152.

and 2,254 sappers and miners.⁴⁶ Between 1815 and 1816 the army was reduced in strength as 36,702 men were discharged.⁴⁷ A proportion of these men added to the mass ranks of unemployed in the country. At the end of 1814 *The Times* argued that ‘some beneficial and desirable recourse must be found for the brave men who have endured the excessive fatigues of war’. Importantly, the newspaper added, ample employment was to be found in British North America, the Cape of Good Hope and the West Indies.⁴⁸

The aim of the first scheme introduced in 1815 was to settle large numbers of soldiers in strategically important locations close to the border with the United States in the Rideau Valley region. In preparation for the commencement of the settlement scheme, Bathurst asked Lord Drummond (the governor general of Canada) to be ‘prepared to select such persons as are most likely to become industrious settlers’ while warning that ‘you will not in any case grant land to subjects of the United States and use your best endeavours to prevent their settling in either of the Canadas’.⁴⁹ Drummond’s successor, Lord Dalhousie, believed that military settlements would afford ‘a good and loyal population...which would be highly advantageous as affording an efficient and well-disposed militia’.⁵⁰

The Perth settlement, formed around a military supply depot in 1815, was the first in a series of military colonies. British and Irish soldiers arrived in Perth in June 1815, mainly from the Glengarry Fencible regiment which had been disbanded in Upper Canada shortly before the settlement began. Alongside the Fencibles were men from the 90th and 81st Regiments of Foot. Initially 222 former soldiers, accompanied by thirty-five women and forty-nine children moved to Perth during the first month of settlement. They were joined by fifty-nine emigrant men, forty-two women and 168 children who were initially from Scotland

⁴⁶ PP, *Return of the Effective Strength of the British Army*, Volume 9, 197 (1814), p. 1.

⁴⁷ PP, *Return of the Number of Discharges and Desertions from the Regular Army*, Volume 13, 209 (1817), p. 1.

⁴⁸ *The Times*, 13 October 1814, p. 2.

⁴⁹ Libraries and Archives Canada (LAC), Land Petitions of Lower Canada, R10870-6-2-E, Microfilm C-2503. Lord Bathurst’s letter to Lord Drummond, Folio 13767.

⁵⁰ The National Archives (TNA), Military Settlements in Canada 1821-1823, CO42/199, Folio 1.

and had participated in an organised settlement scheme.⁵¹ Overall a total of 1,425 discharged soldiers arrived in the settlement between 1815 and 1831. They were accompanied by 712 women and 991 children. Although military settlers initially outnumbered the emigrants, over time the arrival of soldiers steadily declined as the numbers of emigrants increased. So, by 1831, 2,686 men had arrived with 1,621 women and 2,022 children.⁵² The Reverend William Bell, Perth's first Presbyterian minister and noted diarist, described the process by which the military character of the settlement gave way to a civilian one. He stated that most of the area's residents were discharged soldiers but over time 'the number of emigrants has increased while that of the soldiers has decreased'.⁵³ Here we get an early sense that veterans, though a numerical minority, monopolised positions of power in settler communities. This was achieved by their desire, and ability, to gain employment in local government. However, this domination was challenged as time progressed. This important argument about the nature of colonial society and the leading position of veterans will be explored in detail in the third chapter.

Following the creation of the Perth settlement, a second depot closer to the Bytown area became the township of Richmond in 1816.⁵⁴ Several other townships were established in the Rideau Valley area in 1815 and 1816 and they became home to a number of veterans. In August 1815 twenty-three veterans were settled in Montague Township. This included four men from the 81st Regiment such as Isaac Smith and Benjamin Evans, and four men from the 9th Regiment and three from the 57th.⁵⁵ At the same time, twenty-two veterans were settled in the near-by township of Kitley. They predominately came from the 57th and 58th

⁵¹ HC, Perth Military Settlement Fonds, Microfilm C-4651, Folio 23.

⁵² All of the above have been taken from LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 108, Microfilm C-6873, Folio 61647. Return of the number of emigrants in the Perth military settlement, 12 August 1831.

⁵³ W. Bell, *Hints to Emigrants* (Edinburgh: Waugh and Innes, 1824), p. 152.

⁵⁴ E. Jarvis, 'Military Land Granting in Upper Canada Following the War of 1812', *Ontario History*, 67:3 (1975), p. 127.

⁵⁵ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 23, Microfilm C-4545, Folio 10409. Rank and Regiment of the Men Settled at Montague, 28 August 1815.

Regiments of Foot.⁵⁶ By May 1816, new townships had been established across the Rideau Valley military settlement. Although they consisted of veterans and civilians, in these early days the military men were in the majority. Alexander McDonnell, the Deputy Superintendent of the military settlements, reported to the lieutenant governor that 200 families had been settled and provided with provisions and tools.⁵⁷ The new settlements consisted of the townships of Finch where fourteen veterans were settled; at Lancaster 114 veterans, mostly from the Glengarry Regiment were settled alongside fifty-three civilians. Men from the Glengarry Regiment were also the majority in the townships of Sidney, Thurlow and Ameliasburg. Murray Township consisted of thirty-six veterans from the Royal Navy, 41st Regiment, and De Wattville Regiment, alongside sixteen civilians.⁵⁸ Throughout the lists of veterans in the townships of the military settlement, we see groups of men from the same regiments settling together at the same time. This feature of veteran settlement was common across Upper Canada and will be explored in more detail in the third chapter of this thesis.

The efforts to settle veterans did not always run smoothly. In June 1815, requests were made to Lieutenant Governor Gore to send additional surveyors to Perth. The superintendent stated that ‘much inconvenience has arisen from the insufficient number of surveyors’ and asked for an additional ten or fifteen. The lack of surveyors meant that men from the De Wattville, De Muron and Glengarry regiments had arrived in the area but could not be settled, and some decided to leave the settlement rather than wait.⁵⁹ Evidently the problem was not resolved very quickly as another letter was sent in June 1816 describing the ongoing issue. Again a call for more surveyors was issued and the delay on placing men on

⁵⁶ Ibid. Folio 10411. Rank and Regiment of the Men Settled at Kitley, 28 August 1815.

⁵⁷ Ibid, Volume 28, Microfilm C-4547, Folio 12882, Return of Locations Made by Alexander McDonnell on new Settlements for Disbanded Soldiers, 23 May 1816. 883-900

⁵⁸ Ibid. Folios 12883-12900.

⁵⁹ Ibid. Volume 28, Microfilm C-4547, Folio 13104. Letter from General John Wilson to Gore, 28 June 1815.

their land had continued. A warning was issued that ‘the men of the De Wattville regiment are getting impatient, some have already quit the settlement and others say they will follow soon’.⁶⁰ It was not until December 1816 that three additional surveyors arrived in Perth to assist with the settlement of veterans.⁶¹

Veterans who participated in this scheme were allocated grants of land based upon their rank in the army: a lieutenant colonel received 1200 acres, a major 1000, a captain 800, a subaltern 500, a sergeant major 300 acres, a sergeant 200 and a private 100 acres.⁶² In his study of the military settlements, Robert Passfield states that the colonial authorities ‘did everything possible to facilitate and support the soldier settlers until the first crops could be harvested’.⁶³ This included issuing each family with tools and rations from the depot for their first year of settlement. Despite this support, the first year of settlement proved to be extremely difficult for the new arrivals, and after their rations were withdrawn they faced starvation. A petition from inhabitants of the military settlement was sent to the colonial authorities in October 1816 and asked for the reinstatement of rations for another year. The petition remarked that due to bad weather in the summer, the crops of the area were ruined. Furthermore, ‘provisions cannot be purchased here, nor can they be purchased at a distance’ as the carriage proved too expensive. Without assistance, the settlers would suffer during the winter, so their rations were reinstated.⁶⁴ The settlements were overseen by superintendents who were tasked with ensuring that arrangements were made to fell timber, open roads and erect buildings.⁶⁵ Government supervision continued until 1822 whereupon the settlements were given over to municipal government. Between 1815 and 1822 the superintendent was

⁶⁰ Ibid. Folio 13072. Letter Regarding Problem Placing the De Wattville Men on their Land, 25 June 1816.

⁶¹ Ibid. Folio 14059. Three More Surveyors Arrive at Perth, 9 December 1816.

⁶² LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 22, Microfilm C-4545, Folio 10118. Regulations regarding land grants in the military settlements, 27 July 1815.

⁶³ R. Passfield, *Military Paternalism, Labour and the Rideau Canal Project* (Bloomington: Authorhouse, 2013), p. 149.

⁶⁴ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 30, Microfilm C-4547, Folio 13693. Petition of the Inhabitants of Glengarry. 1 October 1816.

⁶⁵ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 23, Microfilm C-4545, Folio 10181.

responsible for the governance of the area and reported back to the lieutenant governor. After the superintendent was withdrawn in 1822 the magistrates became influential local figures (as the third chapter will show) and elections for representation in the house of assembly were held.

The veterans were composed of various nationalities. Nonetheless the Colonial Office still saw them as British because all had served in the army. Their status as veterans, and the positive characteristics which became attached to the men under that banner, was more important than differences in nationality. The Colonial Office did not differentiate between British soldiers and those born in mainland Europe in terms of their ability to secure the colonies and promote British interests. Bathurst's 1815 letter to Lieutenant General Prevost gave instructions that soldiers born outside of the British Isles should be given land so they could 'maintain their families in comfort' and that they would make 'industrious settlers'.⁶⁶ These men still conformed to the values the Colonial Office sought in its settlers and Bathurst valued the contribution that 'settlers of this description' could offer the colonies as they 'may be established with great advantage along frontier districts most open to invasion [to] prevent the encroachment of intruders from the neighbouring states'.⁶⁷ A soldier born in mainland Europe, just like any soldier of the British army, was valued for his loyalty and could be equally depended upon to defend Upper Canada.

In 1815 men born in mainland Europe who had served in the De Wattville and De Meuron regiments were granted land alongside settlers from the British Isles in the military settlements. These men and their families were amongst the first waves of settlers to arrive as their regiments were disbanded in 1815. Both regiments were raised in Switzerland and had fought in the Peninsular War, before being posted to Upper Canada where they participated

⁶⁶ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 20, Microfilm C-4544, Folio 9208. Lord Bathurst's Letter to Lieutenant General Prevost.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

in the War of 1812. Between 1815 and 1817, 169 men from these regiments were granted land in the newly formed Rideau military settlements. They were from a range of different European countries as the settlement data shows that 38% were German, 33% were Swiss, 16% were Polish, 3.5% were Italian, 4% were from Flanders and the remaining handful came from Hungary, Moravia, Holland, France and Bohemia. A small minority (11%) were married and so they settled with their wives, and twenty children also accompanied them.⁶⁸

Naval settlement

Following the creation of the settlements for discharged soldiers, steps were put in place from 1816 to provide land for officers of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines. The proponents of these scheme argued that naval officers should be placed on equal terms with army officers when it came to land grants, and senior figures in the Admiralty pressured the colonial office to bring this into effect. The result was a military settlement for naval men and their families on the Bay of Quinte on the Ottawa River in 1819. In January 1816 Lord Bathurst put in place the first measures which supported the settlement of naval veterans. His instruction to Governor General Drummond allowed the provision of 100 acres of land to seamen who were discharged in the Canadian colonies providing they had served a minimum of three years on the great lakes. Britain's naval presence on the lakes was considered a vital line of defence against further American attacks on the colonies and the men who served in this capacity were clearly valued by the Colonial Office. The 100 acres were granted with the same terms and conditions as the land for soldiers including the need to cultivate the lot, construct a home and maintain the roadway.⁶⁹ In a later letter of instruction to the colonies from the Colonial Office, Bathurst explained that the government's policy of land granting to

⁶⁸ HC, Perth Military Settlement Fonds, Microfilm C-4651, Folios 23-70.

⁶⁹ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG1 A5, Volume 26, Microfilm C-4546, Folio 11442-44. Lord Bathurst's instructions to Drummond, 6 January 1816.

Royal Navy sailors followed the same rules as those which applied to soldiers. He was keen to 'place the naval service on the same footing with the army'.⁷⁰

Between 1815 and 1819 high ranking naval men repeatedly sent letters to Bathurst and the lieutenant governors which insisted that the settlement plan was carried through to fruition. The details of the plan were the result of Commodore Sir Robert Hall, commander of the naval force on the Great Lakes, writing from the naval yard in Kingston. Hall's departure from the colonies in 1818 appeared to stall the progress on the naval settlement at the Bay of Quinte. In September 1818 Maitland received a letter from Captain H. Montessor at the Kingston naval establishment which reminded the new lieutenant governor that progress was still to be made on the settlement. The letter complained that since Hall's departure, the organisation for the scheme had 'fallen on less competent hands'. However, he still believed that the settlement would be of great value to the colonial government due to its proximity to Kingston. The naval settlers 'would be at all times ready incase [sic] of any disturbances from the States...the land would also pass to their children'.⁷¹

The correspondence from Hall and Captain Montessor show the regard and sense of paternalism that these senior naval men held for their discharged comrades. They were keen to ensure that the men under their command would be provided with the necessary land and support to help them live comfortably after their service. Robert Barrie, commissioner of the Kingston dockyard, took responsibility for the creation of the settlement. In 1819 he acknowledged to Maitland that there had been delays in the process as and blamed Hall for not leaving him detailed instructions on how to proceed. However, he reassured Maitland that

⁷⁰ Ibid. Volume 33, Microfilm C-4549, Folio 15969. Lord Bathurst's letter to the Governor Generals of British North America regarding land grants to men of the Royal Navy, 5 September 1817.

⁷¹ Ibid. Volume 40, Microfilm C-4602, Folio 19027. Letter from Captain H. Montessor to Maitland regarding land for naval personnel, 21 September 1818.

discharged naval men continued to be granted land grants.⁷² The settlement at Quinte was under the direction of Barrie and naval settlers petitioned for land in the location. The settlements set aside for men discharged from the army and navy show how the Colonial Office ensured they were provided with material support to allow them to settle. However, this level of involvement did not extend to civilian migrants.

Veteran settlement and civilian emigration

Lord Liverpool's government maintained its policy of encouraging the settlement of veterans into the 1820s with the introduction of several new emigration schemes. But these efforts stood in stark contrast to the assistance offered to civilians. Indeed, it is important to note that throughout the period considered in this thesis, and across successive British governments, the veterans who participated in the settlement schemes were able to count on consistent support from the imperial government which amounted to land grants, free passage to the colonies and provisions. In contrast successive governments were not prepared to launch initiatives to facilitate the migration of civilians. Burroughs' work on emigration policy has argued that during the 1820s fear of excessive expenditure made parliament unwilling to subsidise emigration schemes with public funds. According to Burroughs 'nothing is more instructive of contemporary political philosophy than the fact that schemes for assisting emigration during the 1820s remained out of favour, despite the acuteness of Britain's economic difficulties'.⁷³

With regards to British North America, the notable exception to this trend was a small-scale scheme which involved 2000 Scottish labourers in July 1815 which was paid for

⁷² Ibid. Volume 44, Microfilm C-4604 Folio 22113. Robert Barrie to Maitland regarding land for discharged naval servicemen, 22 November 1819.

⁷³ P. Burroughs, *The Colonial Reformers and Canada 1830-1849: Selections from Documents and Publications of the Times* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1969), p. 51.

by Parliament.⁷⁴ Further examples can be found when looking at other parts of the empire, such as the settlers who went to the Cape Colony in 1819-20. It has been estimated that 4,000 settlers arrived in the Cape between April and June 1820 and were granted land and supplied with farm implements.⁷⁵

The issue of government support for civilian migration was raised several times in Parliament during the period that the military settlement schemes were in operation. In a debate on emigration held in the commons in 1816, the Whig MP Francis Horner commented that ‘considerable injury’ had been done by advertisements published in Scotland ‘exciting the people to emigration’. He thought that ‘the government ought to leave this matter of emigration to itself, and not to give any particular encouragement to it’. Henry Goulburn, Under-Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, replied that ‘the government never intended to excite emigration’ but that ‘if people were to leave Britain it was better that they went to British colonies rather than the United States’.⁷⁶ An editorial in *The Times* in 1816 also questioned government support for assisted immigration due to the ‘considerable expense’ which would be incurred.⁷⁷ However, questions over cost and the government’s role in emigration were not asked about military settlement. In 1820 the issue was raised once again and the official line remained the same. Chancellor of the Exchequer Nicholas Vansittart was asked whether the government would introduce a plan to allow civilians from economically depressed areas to settle in the colonies. He replied that ‘it would be highly premature to adopt any plan for the promotion of emigration.’⁷⁸ He went as far as saying that ‘The British provinces of America were...overloaded with emigration’.⁷⁹ This is an interesting position to make when his government had been actively supporting military

⁷⁴ Errington, ‘British Migration to British North America 1783-1867,’ p. 146.

⁷⁵ C. Saunders ‘South Africa 1795-1910’ in A. Porter, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume Three, The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 118.

⁷⁶ *The Times*, 22 June 1815, p. 2.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* 1 October 1816, p. 2.

⁷⁸ PP, *Commons Sitting*, 28 April 1820, Second Series, Volume 1, 39.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

migration during the previous five years and had allowed thousands of veterans to settle. In fact, we will also see how Liverpool's government expanded military settlement through the introduction of new schemes for soldiers during the 1820s. Evidently, there was a clear distinction in the mind of the Chancellor that it was perfectly fine for veterans to settle, yet civilians must be prevented from 'overloading' the colonies. This is proof of the importance placed on military migration in terms of the development of protection of British North America.

The 1826 Select Committee on Emigration was tasked investigating the feasibility of government supported migration schemes for civilians. It also sought colonial opinion on the issue of emigration in general. Prior to its formation there had been appeals by colonial authorities for centralised support for emigration. For example, in Upper Canada, Lieutenant Governor Maitland called for a state-sponsored programme to bring out settlers, but he was rebuffed by the Colonial Office due to a preoccupation with cost-cutting.⁸⁰ The Select Committee's report demonstrated the level of support in British North America for the introduction of a large scale civilian emigration scheme. The evidence collected included testimonials from prominent individuals in the colonies which detailed opinions on the subject. The report showed a general agreement that large numbers of migrants could be comfortably absorbed. It was stated that Upper Canada could cope with a 7,000,000 increase in its population, and Lower Canada could accommodate 20,000 new migrants each year.⁸¹ The colonies remained keen to impress upon London their need for an increase in population and that new arrivals could become successful settlers. When George Markland, a member of the Upper Canadian executive council, was interviewed by the committee and asked if he believed emigrants would have a positive effect on the colonies, he answered that 'there is no

⁸⁰ E. Richards, *Britannia's Children: Emigration from England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales since 1600* (London: Continuum, 2004), p. 118.

⁸¹ PP, *Report from the Select Committee on Emigration from the United Kingdom*, Volume 4, 404 (1826), p. 48 and p. 29.

question about the opinion...the land is excellent and the climate admirable. It only wants people'.⁸² The report also concluded that colonial society was willing to accommodate new arrivals by 'giving up a large proportion of their waste land to the government for the purpose of settlement'.⁸³

Parliament debated the evidence in the report in February 1827. Robert Wilmot-Horton, Under Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, began the session by reiterating the strong support from the colonial authorities in British North America towards emigration. In relation to settlers who had arrived from the British Isles during the previous decade, he stated that 'the feelings of the colonist were in favour of the new-comers and that they considered the addition which had been made to their population to be advantageous'.⁸⁴ Recalling the statements which constituted the committee's evidence, he argued that 'the colonial witnesses all concurred in thinking that the prosperity of the colony would be greatly advanced by the introduction of additional population'.⁸⁵ Henry Bright, a Whig MP for Bristol, advocated for a civilian emigration scheme and called on the government 'not to shrink from the question of emigration, from any fear of expense'. Using Canada as an example, he thought 'she should be adequately colonized and supported, if we meant to protect ourselves in our American possessions, or wished to defend them from encroachment'.⁸⁶ Despite these words of support, concerns over the cost of emigration schemes proved an insurmountable issue.

The Tory Prime Ministers of the 1820s continued to support the settlement of veterans through central government funding, but this policy came in for criticism from radicals and retrenchers. James Grattan, the MP for Wicklow, was known as an advocate of retrenchment

⁸² Ibid. p. 37.

⁸³ Ibid. p. 36.

⁸⁴ PP, *Commons Sitting*, 15 February 1827, Second Series, Volume 16, 496.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

and he derided government intervention in emigration. He called emigration ‘the hobby’ of Wilmot-Horton and believed it was a dangerous thing to encourage as ‘hopes were excited among the distressed people. They imagined that a plan was in preparation for their removal’ when in fact the government ‘had no means of realizing’ such a plan which ‘by no probability could come to pass.’⁸⁷ Grattan not only objected to civilian emigration schemes, but also criticised the government’s support of veterans. His is a dissenting voice which demonstrates that despite the evidence we have seen, government intervention in military settlement did not pass without criticism. Grattan stated that the formation of the military settlements in Upper Canada had cost the county 20*l.* per man. Such expense ‘made it impossible for the country to execute its [civilian settlement schemes] to any considerable extent’.⁸⁸

A group of radical MPs in the Commons provided a critique of emigration policy, and indeed government management of the colonies altogether. These MPs believed that the Tories had mishandled colonial policy since 1815, and their arguments consisted of two themes. First, they argued that colonial policy was expensive and wasteful, and second, they criticised what they saw as the government’s oppressive governance of the colonies. It is from these two broad themes that criticism of military settlement itself emerged.

The radical critics of government policy consisted of men such as John Roebuck (a self-declared independent MP for Bath), and Joseph Hume (MP for Aberdeen and later Middlesex). Their views were supported outside of Parliament during the 1820s by Richard Cobden who became MP for Stockport in 1841. These men were important contributors to the argument that government colonial policy was expensive and wasteful. This radical group began attacking the Tories on spending in Canada by criticising what they saw as ‘extravagant expenditure on colonial...administration’. In its current state, they believed the

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

colonies were 'expensive liabilities'.⁸⁹ The radicals called for a reduction in spending on the empire which would be achieved by ensuring the colonies paid for their own government. Cobden saw imperialism as 'a drain on the domestic economy which diverted national income away from domestic investment'.⁹⁰ Roebuck, critical of the government in Parliament, published his thoughts on colonial administration. He argued that 'the colony should not cost the mother county anything, if the colony cannot sustain itself, it is useless as a colony'.⁹¹ Isaac Coffin articulated his belief regarding expenditure on Canada during a debate in the House of Commons in 1822 by stating that 'it would have been a good thing for this county if Canada had been sunk to the bottom of the sea. It costs this country 500,000l per annum, and did not make a return to it of 500 pence'.⁹² An example of Joseph Hume's view comes from a Commons debate in May 1830. He criticised government policy over the last decade which meant that the country had been 'called on to support their [the colonies] expensive establishments' as they had proved to be 'unable to support their own establishments'.⁹³

The second theme, regarding the nature of colonial government, emerged from the discussions of expenditure. This argument questioned the militarisation of colonies, and from this we can see a criticism of military settlement. Hume succinctly summed up the criticism of colonial government in the Commons on 22nd February 1828 by linking expenditure and militarisation. Accordingly, the Tory policy since 1815 'had imposed on the inhabitants of the mother country an enormous expenditure... [which] took large sums of money every day from their pockets, for no purpose than to keep down the indignant spirit of our oppressed

⁸⁹ P. Burroughs, 'Parliamentary Radicals and the Reduction of Imperial Expenditure in British North America', *The Historical Journal*, 11:3, (September 1968), p. 451.

⁹⁰ M. Taylor, 'Imperium et Libertas? Rethinking the Radical Critique of Imperialism during the Nineteenth Century', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 36:1 (July 2008), p. 1.

⁹¹ J. Roebuck, *The Colonies of England: A plan for the Government of Some Portions of Our Colonial Possessions* (London: J. W. Parker, 1849), p. 123.

⁹² PP, *Commons Sitting*, 13 March 1822, Second Series, Volume 6, 76.

⁹³ *Ibid.* 10 May 1830, Second Series, Volume Twenty-Four, 506.

colonies.’⁹⁴ Taylor’s research on the critics of imperialism has found that colonial reformers believed that ‘a high level of colonial expenditure attributed to despotic political conditions’.⁹⁵

The issue of colonial government in Canada, and the subsequent militarisation of the colonies was highlighted by the radicals in Parliament. We have seen British governments consistently argued that the Canadian colonies needed defending from American aggression, and this formed the basis of the military settlement policies. However, the radicals proposed a different solution. Roebuck argued in Parliament in 1834 that the British government should adopt a conciliatory approach to Canada to win the friendship of the people. They would then be relied upon to defend the colonies.⁹⁶ His publication on the empire called for the government to ‘reduce the supervision as much as possible, retain only what it needed to maintain our metropolitan rule, confide to the colony the government of its own affairs’.⁹⁷ Hume also contributed to this debate by questioning what he saw as the militarisation of the Canadian colonies. He believed the government ‘kept Canada like a garrison’ and criticised the fact the colonies were administered by military men’. Hume stated that ‘he had no personal dislike to military men; but he wished to see them where they were always seen to the best advantage...at the head of their corps’.⁹⁸ The radical’s argument followed that the militarisation of the colonies had the opposite effect that the government hoped as it caused dissatisfaction with Britain and ultimately disloyalty. We can see from these two strands of arguments which emerged during the 1820s that the settlement of the colonies by military men did not go without challenge. Yet despite these challenges, the factors which led to the introduction of military settlement schemes in the first place, and which were sustained for

⁹⁴ Ibid. 22 February 1828, Second Series, Volume Eighteen, 176.

⁹⁵ Taylor, ‘Imperium et Libertas?’ p. 4.

⁹⁶ Burroughs, *The Canadian Crisis and British Colonial Policy*, p. 65.

⁹⁷ Roebuck, *The Colonies of England*, p. 102.

⁹⁸ PP, *Commons Sitting* 22 February 1828, Second Series, Volume 18, 176.

decades, proved too important to successive governments to be derailed by radical critiques in Parliament.

While the debates carried on, Lord Liverpool's government instigated a new means to allow for the settlement of veterans. The new initiative, introduced during the 1820s aimed to promote the settlement of the sappers and miners of the Royal Engineers who had worked on the construction of the Rideau Canal. This scheme was again motivated by the need to secure Upper Canada from the perceived threat of American influence. The United States was viewed as an unstable and aggressive neighbour; cross-border tensions indeed existed. Military defences were invested in, and in 1828 the British naval presence on Lake Ontario was increased. Wise has argued that this period also saw Upper Canadians taking an increased interest in the United States. This fed their fears about the perceived dangers from the southern neighbour. Wise states that colonial observers of the United States were struck by the disorder of the American system, particularly the factionalism that supposedly came with republican democracy during the presidency of James Monroe. There was an 'ideological hostility to the US' which was a 'pervasive part of the cultural ambiance of Upper Canada'.⁹⁹ This view is echoed by Errington who has found that newspaper reports describing the United States portrayed the country as being inherently unstable and blighted by crime. This was contrasted with the unifying and stabilising force provided by the colonies attachment to Britain and the protection of the British constitution which the inhabitants enjoyed.¹⁰⁰ The need to assert Britishness, conservative values and the link with the mother country continued to be the underlying factor in government migration policy and soldiers remained valued and were still seen as the people who could transform the colonies.

⁹⁹ Wise et al, *God's Peculiar People*, p. 47.

¹⁰⁰ Errington, *The Lion, the Eagle and Upper Canada*, p. 135.

Under the Rideau Canal construction scheme, men were each granted 100 acres of free land once their service was completed. The land was a reward for their work but also a check against desertion during the canal's construction.¹⁰¹ The records of the Chelsea Hospital show that six men from Royal Engineers took advantage of the offer and settled in Bytown where they would have spent time whilst working on the canal.¹⁰² A further eleven settled in London, York and Kingston in Upper Canada. Reminders to soldiers regarding the land they could claim in the colonies continued to be circulated during the 1820s and were used to encourage them to take up residency. Horse Guards published a general order in July 1828 that detailed the amounts of land soldiers could claim (again the amount varied from rank to rank). Offers came with the proviso that settlement would be over the long-term and that land would have to be cultivated and improved.¹⁰³

The 1830s: The Commutation of Pensions Scheme

Early Grey's Whig government came to power for the first time in 1830 but the change in administration did not see a new direction in policy towards migration. Veterans continued to be valued and seen as the settlers who could transform the colonies, therefore new methods were introduced to facilitate their migration. An important initiative introduced by the Whigs in 1830 was the commutation of pensions scheme which ran until its termination in 1839. Men who took part forfeited their regular pension payments for a lump sum which was designed to enable them to fund a new life in the colonies. The Chelsea Pensioners, along with their families, had their transatlantic travel costs covered and once they arrived in Quebec were settled in remote areas where they were expected to clear land for farming and live as wilderness pioneers. The scheme was popular and when it was terminated in 1839

¹⁰¹ TNA, Emigration of Army Pensioners 1830-1838, WO43/542, Folio 225.

¹⁰² Crowder, *British Army Pensioners Abroad*. The findings have been compiled from the total listing throughout the book p. 7-360.

¹⁰³ TNA, Emigration of Army Pensioners, WO43/524, Folio 226.

there were 654 commuted pensioners resident in Upper Canada.¹⁰⁴ In line with the settlement of veterans across the empire in this period, the commutation scheme was not solely restricted to British North America. An act of Parliament on 1 March 1831 stated that ‘men desirous of emigrating will not be restricted to the North American colonies but the public will not pay for their travel’.¹⁰⁵ Upper and Lower Canada emerged as by far the most popular destinations for the commuted pensioners, though several hundred did go to the Australian colonies and a handful made their way to South Africa, the West Indies and Gibraltar.¹⁰⁶

As with the previous methods employed to settle soldiers and sailors, the commutation scheme emerged because of a mixture of domestic and colonial concerns. It was a result of the government attempting to save money through stopping payments of pensions, and also anxieties over the stability and security of the colonies.¹⁰⁷ When the scheme began in 1830, the Secretary for War issued a memorandum that informed interested pensioners that ‘a man commuting his pension abandons all claims to future payment of pension, and if through his own improvidence or otherwise he fails in his attempt to settle, he will have no claim to revert to the pension list’.¹⁰⁸ Parliament reviewed the commutation scheme and government expenditure on pensions in Parliament in 1832. Sir Henry Hardinge, who had served as Secretary of War in the Duke of Wellington’s government, stated that before the scheme began there had 91,000 old soldiers ‘involving an expense to the public, which annually exceeded one million and a half in money’.¹⁰⁹

Evidently the government wanted to be rid of the financial burden of these men; having them participate in the scheme freed them from the responsibility of supporting them.

¹⁰⁴ PP, *Despatches and Correspondence Relative to the Chelsea Pensioners in Upper Canada*, Volume 31, Paper 248 (1839), p. 75.

¹⁰⁵ TNA, Emigration of Army Pensioners, WO43/542 1830-1838, Folio 160.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. Folio 44.

¹⁰⁷ J. K. Johnson, ‘The Chelsea Pensioners in Upper Canada’ *Ontario History*, Volume 53 (1961), p. 274.

¹⁰⁸ PP, *Despatches and Correspondence Relative to the Chelsea Pensioners in Upper Canada*, Memorandum for the Information of Chelsea Out-Pensioners, Volume 31, 248 (1839), p. 7.

¹⁰⁹ PP, *Commons Sitting*, April 2 1832, Third Series, Volume 11, 1188.

Miles Taylor has argued that the Whig government was committed to reducing the tax burden while also curbing spending in order to ‘recover from Hanovarian fiscal excess’.¹¹⁰ The government conducted a retrenchment campaign along the lines of the previous Tory administration. Harling has argued that Grey’s chief financial goal was to lower the tax burden.¹¹¹ Like the Tory government, cuts to military expenses presented a means to achieve this aim. The need to cut taxes was in part, a reaction to economic and social distress in the British Isles during the 1830s. A poor harvest in 1829 was one reason unrest spread to the south of England, and northern counties had already experienced two years of dearth.¹¹² Boyd Hilton argues that the terror felt by the landed society ‘added to the sense that ministers had lost control over events’.¹¹³ This period was also one of intense political ferment with demands for parliamentary reform, attacks on the Church of England and the Church of Ireland.¹¹⁴ It was in this atmosphere that the Whig government embarked on the commutation scheme which would reduce government expenditure and result in the departure of a large number of former soldiers. As with the 1820s, financial support from central government for emigration in general remained limited. The Colonial Office did provide limited support for settlers in Australia in 1831 through the sale of Crown Lands. However, Earl Grey’s government refused to sanction public funds to support civilian emigration to British North America as trans-Atlantic travel was viewed as affordable for individuals, and there was also resistance to pay for settlers to reach the United States through Canada.¹¹⁵

The situation in the country and the motivation behind the scheme might give the impression that military migration was just another case of shovelling out paupers. The need to save money undoubtedly played a part in the decision to introduce the scheme, yet it must

¹¹⁰ Taylor, ‘The 1848 Revolutions and the British Empire’, p. 148.

¹¹¹ Harling, *The Waning of ‘Old Corruption’* p. 217.

¹¹² Wood, *Nineteenth Century Britain*, p. 77.

¹¹³ Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People?* p. 147.

¹¹⁴ Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830-1870*, p. 2.

¹¹⁵ Burroughs, *The Colonial Reformers and Canada*, p. 51.

also be kept in mind that the previous fifteen years of government policy showed that these men were valued as settlers. Indeed, the 1830s were a turbulent decade for Upper Canada, and the colonial authorities continued to seek loyal British settlers. Specific threats from across the border, real or imagined, were reported to the governor of Upper Canada and give an insight into the fears present during the decade. In 1830 the commander of Fort Erie wrote to Lieutenant Governor John Colborne to inform him that ‘a party of Americans, fifty in number, came over to Fort Erie in three or four boats...for the purpose of hoisting the American flag’.¹¹⁶ In addition to reports of small scale disturbances, rumours of impending attacked spread across the border. For example Colborne was warned by a citizen of Upper Canada that during his three week visit to New York State, he had heard of plans that ‘armed patriots are planning an attack on Canada’.¹¹⁷ An 1838 memorandum to Governor George Arthur reported that a steamer’s captain was ‘informed by persons whom he has perfect confidence’ that men were gathering in Rochester ‘as a means of invading Canada’.¹¹⁸ The precarious position of the colonies was described to the colonial secretary in an 1831 report. It stated that ‘the first remark which presents itself is on their inconvenient shape, a long narrow belt of settlement upon the northern boundary of a powerful neighbour, capable of being pierced through or overrun at will’.¹¹⁹

Mills argues that by 1830, loyalty to Britain and the support for the maintenance of the imperial connection was the defining political consideration and excluded the legitimacy of dissent. Conservatives in the colony viewed the growth of the reformers in the early years of the 1830s as a threat.¹²⁰ In Upper Canada, William Lyon McKenzie (a Scottish born

¹¹⁶ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 101, Microfilm C-6870, Folio 57013. Letter from the commander of Fort Erie to Colborne warning him of the activity of Americans near the fort, 6 July 1830.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. Volume 208, Microfilm C-6903, Folio 114871. An anonymous letter to Colborne warning him of an impending attack from America, 26 October 1838.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. Volume 214, Microfilm C-6905, Folio 120771. Memorandum to Governor George Arthur regarding the danger of an attack from America, 19 April 1839.

¹¹⁹ PP, *Canada Waste Land*, Volume 32, 334 (1831), p. 20.

¹²⁰ Mills, *The Idea of Loyalty in Upper Canada*, p. 72.

journalist and member of the legislative assembly) led a group of radical reformers who called for democracy and closer ties to the United States.¹²¹ During 1837-1838 both Upper and Lower Canada experienced armed revolt and public disturbances as the radical campaigners took direct action. Although quickly and easily put-down by the respective governments of Upper and Lower Canada, the rebellions coincided with armed incursions into both provinces from the United States and there was a growing fear that it would result in war.¹²² As a result British military strength was substantially increased in the colonies. The building up of tensions into outright rebellion during the 1830s coincided with the British government implementing the commutation scheme alongside the existing land granting regulations to encourage the settlement of loyal veterans.

A shift in position: the end of free land granting 1834-1843

The commutation scheme was not the only development introduced by the Whig government during the 1830s. In 1834 free land grants in the Canadian colonies was abolished and replaced by a system of compulsory purchase at auction. However, it is important to emphasise that this change did not mean that the government wished to limit the number of soldiers settling in the colonies. When the new policy was introduced, Lord Aylmer wrote that ‘Mr Spring Rice [Secretary for War and the Colonies] is reluctant to propose the withdrawal of any advantage from the soldier of the British army’ and that the move ‘will not prove a material discouragement to the settlement of discharged soldiers in these colonies’.¹²³ Soldiers were still viewed as a priority group.

¹²¹ Ibid. p. 55.

¹²² Bumstead, ‘The Consolidation of British North America’ p. 56.

¹²³ PP, *Correspondence with Colonial Governors on Emigration and the Disposal of Crown Lands*, Secretary Spring Rice to Lord Aylmer, Volume 34, 616 (1834), p. 14.

Though veterans had been able to claim free grants of land for over a decade, the effectiveness of this policy did begin to be challenged. Gibbon Wakefield's 1829 study into land granting in Australia argued that settlers lacked the means and motivation to put their large allotments into profitable use. He highlighted problems with the existing system of free land grants which encouraged settlers to disperse over a wide area. Greater control could be exercised through the selling of land as it would ensure that new arrivals would be concentrated in the same areas where they could support one another.¹²⁴ In broad terms, Wakefield's argument was based on the notion that free grants of land deprived the British government of revenue. He favoured a 'sort of colonisation that would repay its cost' as the income derived from the colonies through the selling of land could be used to support destitute people in Britain and lower the financial burden of the colonies.¹²⁵ These sentiments found favour with supporters of retrenchment who believed that 'the property owning classes were excessively burdened with taxation'.¹²⁶ Wakefield's ideas were also supported by Lord Goderich's Colonial Office. As a result, the decision was taken to stop free grants of land to migrants settling in New South Wales in 1831.¹²⁷

In 1834 this policy was extended to the crown lands in Canada which were being allocated to discharged soldiers, and indeed also to emigrant settlers. Spring Rice issued letters to the colonial administrations in British North America to inform them of the new rules. These letters provide an insight into the factors which led to the Earl Grey's government's change of policy. One such letter sent from Downing Street in July 1835 stated that 'the value of land in the colonies has very much risen and the practice of making gratuitous grants has found to be injurious to the colonies, and not beneficial to the settlers

¹²⁴ Burroughs, *The Colonial Reformers and Canada*, p. 45.

¹²⁵ E. G. Wakefield, *A View on the Art of Colonisation: In Letters Between a Statesman and a Colonial* (London: John Palmer, 1849), p. 7.

¹²⁶ Burroughs, 'Parliamentary Radicals and the Reduction of Imperial Expenditure in British North America', p. 446.

¹²⁷ Morrell, *British Colonial Policy in the Age of Peel and Russell*, p. 8.

themselves'.¹²⁸ A second letter, sent in August 1834, provided further details about how the government believed free grants were detrimental to the settlers as it made them 'alienated in large tracts of land, too large to be cultivated by them, and separating one from another'.¹²⁹ The concern that settlers could not cultivate their land was reiterated in a parliamentary paper on the subject of land granting in the Canadian colonies which concluded that settlers were given land they did not have the knowledge, means or desire to cultivate, so instead the grants were left as wasteland. The paper stated that those settlers who were willing to work could find employment and be paid a decent wage; so an industrious settler would soon have the money to buy their own land.¹³⁰ Therefore land was to be purchased at public auction in lots of 100 acres.¹³¹ In confirmation of the rule changes, the legislative assembly of Upper Canada passed a ruling which restricted free grants of land to United Empire Loyalists and their children only.¹³²

The change in policy caused a degree of confusion and anger on the part of the migrants but the evidence shows that it did not affect the number of veterans coming to the colonies. There are several petitions for land which mention the fact that the applicant was confused about the policy or was late in applying due to factors such as illness. For example, John Hamilton admitted that 'your petitioner neglected to apply for the usual allowance of land granted to discharged soldiers' due to 'a bad state of health and being ignorant of how to proceed'.¹³³ However, such petitions received a standard response which informed the

¹²⁸ LAC, Settlers, RG8-1, Volume 632, Microfilm C-3160, Folio 173. A letter from Downing Street to the Lieutenant Governors explaining that free land grants will no longer be offered to settlers in Canada, 2 July 1835.

¹²⁹ Ibid. Folio 186.

¹³⁰ PP, *Correspondence with Colonial Governors on Emigration and the Disposal of Crown Lands*, Volume 34, 616 (1834), p. 9.

¹³¹ Ibid. p. 14.

¹³² PP, *Legislature of Upper Canada*, Volume 32, 274 (1834).

¹³³ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 174, Microfilm C-6892, Folio 95310. Petition of John Hamilton, 18 January 1837.

applicant that free grants of land were no longer available.¹³⁴ There are indications that the confusion that the change brought about did have an impact on the number of veterans settling in Canada. Evidence from the Chelsea Hospital records show a slight decrease in numbers. The eighteen-year period from 1834 to 1855 saw 311 men from the hospital settle in Upper Canada. This contrasts with the 485 who arrived in the nineteen-year period between 1815 and 1833.¹³⁵ The decline in the volume of petitions in the *Upper Canada Sundries* collection after 1834 also reflects this trend.

The impact of the policy was investigated by the government during the 1840s as Lord Stanley, the Secretary for War, sent letters to colonial governors to ascertain their opinion on the subject. The reply from Sir Charles Bagot, Governor General of Canada, showed the continued scepticism towards free land granting. Bagot confirmed that the Provincial Land Act prevented the free granting of public land and removed the colonial government's discretionary powers of granting land to officers.¹³⁶ He called the old policy a 'wasteful system, pursued for many years [which] left the government destitute of land'.¹³⁷ Accordingly the system had given the settlers land grants which were far too large for them to clear and cultivate with the result that they had been left as wasteland. Bagot was clear that 'however deserving the retiring officer may be of a reward for their services, the granting of lands remaining in the possession of the Crown in Canada is not the mode to service them, land can be purchased on easy terms'.¹³⁸

At the end of the 1830s a new attempt to induce former soldiers to settle in the colonies was instigated. In an 1839 letter to Lord Glenelg, Adam Ferguson (a member of the legislative council of Upper Canada), explained plans for a scheme for the 'encouragement of

¹³⁴ Ibid. Volume 156, Microfilm C-6887, Folio 85499. Petition of John Hamilton, 8 August 1835.

¹³⁵ Crowder, *British Army Pensioners Abroad*.

¹³⁶ PP, *Correspondence relating to colonial land and emigration*, Charles Bagot to Lord Stanley, Volume 34, 291 (1843), p. 70.

¹³⁷ Ibid. p. 70.

¹³⁸ Ibid. p. 70.

emigration to the country, by means of military colonisation'.¹³⁹ His idea came about as a result of the need for defence of the colonies from future American invasion and his concern that 'emigration levels dropped during the revolt'.¹⁴⁰ Ferguson enclosed a petition that he had sent to George Arthur regarding his proposal. He believed that more military settlements were required in the colonies which could be populated with former soldiers now residing in Britain. In return for land and free passage to the colonies for the men and their families, these veterans would form a Royal Canadian Rifle Corps and be prepared to defend the colony.¹⁴¹ Ferguson asked Arthur to think of the advantages that such a scheme would have:

[there would be] a moral effect...on our troublesome neighbours, no doubt they are chuckling and rejoicing at the state of anxiety in which the whole population of Upper Canada is kept. But if we could show them some thousands of brave and fine fellows embodied to defend the province, or to revenge her wrongs...[the new settlers are] destined to form communities of loyal subjects.¹⁴²

The idea to form a veteran battalion in Canada consisting of 1,000 to 1,200 men was considered by the British government in December 1839.¹⁴³ In 1840 the Royal Canadian Rifle Regiment was formed and consisted of men who had served fifteen years in the army and were about to be discharged. They could join the regiment providing they had a good record of service. Their terms of service included that they must not be stationed outside of British North America, they must spend their leisure time in agricultural pursuits (presuming to prepare them for settlement), and that they would defend the security of the colonies.¹⁴⁴

This scheme shows the value placed on former soldiers in terms of their military knowledge

¹³⁹ TNA, War Office: Correspondence, WO43/745, Folio 176.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid. Folio 192.

¹⁴² Ibid. Folio 193.

¹⁴³ Ibid. Folio 207.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. Folio 229.

and potential to provide defence against the United States; evidently such considerations continued to be a driving force in the government's policy on military settlement.

Later schemes 1845-1855.

Additional settlement schemes were introduced during the late 1840s and 1850s. Although smaller in scale than earlier efforts in terms of the total numbers of men involved, these schemes still brought groups of former soldiers to the colonies. Government policy towards migration continued to be informed by the value of soldiers as settlers as well as British foreign policy and events in the Empire. The Irish famine, which began in 1845, re-ignited debates about how emigration should be handled by the government, and questions were asked in the House of Commons. For example, in March 1847, the issue of voluntary emigration was discussed. Vernon Smith, Whig MP for Northampton and former Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, argued that some provision should be made by government to support people who wished to emigrate. He admitted that 'anything like a system of compulsory emigration would be abhorrent to the feelings of the people...even the application of a large sum of money for the purpose of any national system' would not be passed by Parliament.¹⁴⁵ However, he claimed that public feeling towards voluntary emigration through private means was much more positive and this was driven by the view that 'there was an excessive population choking up the suburban districts of the country, and that human beings were so crowded together as to prove detrimental to health and injurious to morals'.¹⁴⁶ His solution to this problem would not involve an outlay of money, but would instead enable those who wished to emigrate to do so. To achieve this aim 'there was no reason why some persons should not be appointed to make searches, and ascertain what parishes were willing to send persons to the colonies, and what proprietors were ready to assist'. Additionally, he proposed the creation of local agencies who would advise

¹⁴⁵ PP, *Commons Sitting*, 4 March 1847, Third Series, Volume 90, 838.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

prospective emigrants about how they could find transport to Canada. William Mackinnon, Whig MP for Lymington, cautioned that although emigration was desirable, ‘the less the Government interfered with it, the better. It would not do for the Government to tax the country to such an extent merely as would enable them to send out emigrants to the colonies’.¹⁴⁷ The Prime Minister, Lord John Russell, concluded the debate by answering that it would be impossible for the government to calculate how many people would want to emigrate to Canada, therefore it was ‘unadvisable to undertake the payment of the passage of emigrants thither’ as the costs could soon mount.¹⁴⁸

The issue was raised again several months later in June 1847. On this occasion it was the Earl of Lincoln who spoke in favour of support for voluntary emigration. Lincoln was the MP for Falkirk Burghs and had served as Chief Secretary of Ireland in 1846, so he was motivated by the famine. He admitted that while a government funded emigration scheme would prove to be too expensive, he believed that the poor of Ireland should still be encouraged to leave for Canada. The Canadian colonies ‘are much the nearest to our own shores, and of course the passage is by far the cheapest...there are large tracts of unoccupied land’.¹⁴⁹ Benjamin Hawes, the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, referred to the debates around emigration which had taken place in Parliament during the 1820s which concluded that government support would prove too expensive, and that the situation had not changed. He also believed that if money was spent helping the Irish poor to emigrate, then calls would be made for the assistance of the poor of England and Scotland.¹⁵⁰ Lord John Russell again concluded the debate by arguing that while the government would not fund emigration schemes, it was a mistake to think that no support was provided. He stated:

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. 856.

¹⁴⁹ PP, *Commons Sitting*, 1 June 1847, Third Series, Volume 92, 1404.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. 1405.

We have not left ourselves merely to the throwing out of these destitute poor upon the colonies without the means of subsistence...the law provides, that the vessels conveying emigrants shall be of certain dimensions...and that the vessels shall be seaworthy, in order that the lives of the emigrants may not be unnecessarily exposed.¹⁵¹

The debates during this time echo what was said during the 1820s. While it was recognised that there were a great many destitute people who wished to emigrate, the government was not prepared to shoulder the cost of emigration schemes. However, just like the previous three decades, while civilians would not be supported by central government funding, veterans continued to benefit from the introduction of new schemes.

Earl Grey, Secretary of State for the Colonies highlighted the merits of military migration in an 1848 letter to the Earl of Elgin. Grey stated that a soldier's pension 'secured them from being a burden on the province as paupers'.¹⁵² The colonies had little capital, and so veterans, in receipt of a steady income from a regular pension payment, had a distinct advantage over other settlers. Concerns over security also persisted into the 1840s and beyond, which again made these men a sought after addition to the colonies population. According to Cookson, the War Office believed that 'once a soldier, always a soldier' therefore the men could be called upon in times of conflict.¹⁵³ J. D. Tulloch, Staff Officer of Pensioners, reported on the conditions of military settlers in 1850. His account provides a significant level of detail about the housing situation, occupations and place of settlement of veteran's resident across British North America. The enquiry's primary function was to assess the potential of the men for service in local militia regiments. Tulloch noted the number of pensioners in each township who would be capable of service by recording their

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² PP, *Papers Relative to Emigration to British Provinces in North America*, Volume 38, 1025 (1849), p. 48.

¹⁵³ Cookson, 'Alexander Tulloch and the Chelsea Out-Pensioners' p. 76.

physical condition and their proximity to vulnerable border areas. As late as 1850, the report makes it clear that the government was hungry for information regarding the continued suitability of military settlers for service in the event of conflict.

In 1848 a new scheme was introduced due to the need to raise a company of former soldiers to serve in land administered by the Hudson's Bay Company in the territory of Rupert's Land. The company agreed to take on any financial costs associated with the scheme which constituted the payment of pensioners, the passage of their wives and children from Britain, and the provision of grants of land. In return, the company would gain a group of former soldiers who could defend their territory as the previous regiment stationed in the area was about to be withdrawn to England. Each man who wished to take part in the scheme was to be enrolled for seven years and would be provided with accommodation in Fort Garry. The men were expected to spend three days each week employed in agriculture or manual labour.¹⁵⁴ The War Office made it clear that the men were to be 'bound for military service...if called upon to serve in defence of the settlement' from attack by the United States.¹⁵⁵ In return, at the completion of their seven years of service the men were to receive a grant of land of 100 acres or less, situated near Fort Garry.

The scheme ran into problems soon after the first group of men completed their period of service and began to settle in the area. In January 1855, the Duke of Newcastle, the Secretary of War, issued a memorandum on the situation which the men and their families found themselves in. It stated that the pensioners were unwilling to remain in the area due to its remoteness. Although the land was described as fertile and that the settlers produced a surplus of produce, they were forbidden to trade with the local population due to the monopoly held by the Hudson's Bay Company. Newcastle also noted that the men had been

¹⁵⁴ TNA, War Office: Secretary-at-War, Correspondence 1848-1849, WO43/849, Folio 99.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. Folio 101.

granted land along the banks of the Red River which was prone to flooding.¹⁵⁶ Evidently the pensioner's presence had been valued by the Company for the security they provided as Newcastle admitted that it was 'not likely to afford any facilities for parting with these men' and so 'they should be removed at public expense'.¹⁵⁷ In February 1855, Sir George Grey, Secretary of State for the Colonies, sanctioned the removal of the men from Rupert's land.¹⁵⁸

The pensioners were initially taken to the fort in Toronto where it was said they all 'expressed themselves happy to have removed from Fort Garry to Canada'.¹⁵⁹ They complained of the 'want of society as their neighbours were either half breeds or Scotchmen from Orkney, the former could only speak the Indian language and the latter only Gaelic. Since the flood of 1851 the whole of them have been desirous to leave.'¹⁶⁰ After arriving in Toronto the men found work in other parts of the colonies with a number of them settling in the same place. For example, William Flynn, formerly of the 24th Foot found work in a timber yard in Amherstburg. He was joined in the town by Patrick Malloy of the 23rd Foot, Thomas Corrigan of the 24th Foot, George Walsh of the 19th Foot and Michael Murphy of the 83rd Foot.¹⁶¹ In addition Charles Stodall of the 29th Foot, who was described as a 'very industrious and sober man' gained employment in agriculture in Fort Erie. He was joined by George Rees of the Grenadier Guards who found work driving a horse and carriage.¹⁶²

Events in the empire contributed to the commencement of other settlement schemes during the 1850s. Due to the outbreak of the Crimean War, Lord Panmure, the Secretary of War, sought to form an Anglo German legion to assist in the fighting.¹⁶³ The War

¹⁵⁶ TNA, Colonial Office: Canada 1855, CO42/600, Folio 6.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. Folio 11.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. Folio 14.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. Folio 14.

¹⁶¹ Ibid. Folio 16.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ C. C. Bayley, *Mercenaries for the Crimea: The German, Swiss and Italian Legions in British Service 1854-1856* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1977), p. 18.

Department identified a tract of land between the Ottawa River and Georgian Bay of one million acres which was set aside as land grants for the men who served in the legion. Lord Panmure believed that offers of free land would induce men to enlist and that it would also 'furnish the means of supplying the colony with a class of German emigrant of a very valuable character'.¹⁶⁴ His desire to settle German veterans echoed the 1815 settlement of men from the De Wattville and De Muron regiments. However, the legion was disbanded in 1856 having seen little action and the men were instead provided with land in the Cape Colony.¹⁶⁵

An administrative change in the organisation of the military in Canada was the foundation for a final scheme to settle soldiers. In 1855 the Ordnance department was dissolved and incorporated into the War Office.¹⁶⁶ Its lands in the colony were transferred to the provincial government and its staff disbanded. Plans were formed in late 1854 in order to deal with the 150 men employed in the Ordnance department who were about to become pensioners.¹⁶⁷ In March 1855 it was decided that the men would be offered employment in barracks across Canada, and that grants of land would be reserved at Fort Erie and Penetanguishene. Upon completing their service the pensioners were to be given portions of this land on which to settle.¹⁶⁸

The final settlement schemes of the 1850s were of a much smaller scale than what had gone before. However, there were similarities with previous attempts to settle military men in terms of the provision of free grants of land, and in some case rations and travel for their families. Defence against the United States continued to be a motivation for the settlement of former soldiers, particularly in the case of the Hudson's Bay scheme.

¹⁶⁴ TNA, Colonial Office: Canada 1855, CO42/600, Folio 221.

¹⁶⁵ Bayley, *Mercenaries for the Crimea*, p. 65.

¹⁶⁶ G. Raudzens, *The Ordnance Department and Canada's Canals 1815-1855* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1979), p. 115.

¹⁶⁷ TNA, Colonial Office: Canada 1855, CO42/600, Folio 250.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.* Folio 248.

Conclusion

In the aftermath of the War of 1812 the British government and colonial authorities were fearful of further American incursions into British North America. They also looked with suspicion on the predominately American born population of the colonies and were wary that republican ideas would find sympathy amongst these people. Previous attempts had been made to secure Britain's remaining North American possessions after the War of Independence, but efforts had been hampered by the wars with France and the United States.

In answer to the perceived threat to the colonies, Lord Bathurst looked to populate British North America with veterans from the British Army and Navy. These men were seen to embody the characteristics which the government desired of new settlers: loyalty, attachment to crown and empire, experience of hierarchy, and military prowess. Veterans were considered as a coherent group of men with the same ideological outlook and shared common experiences. Although in the years following 1815 former military men were a small part of a wave of migration from the British Isles, veterans enjoyed significantly more government assistance over a longer period of time than civilian settlers ever did. Government was sceptical about assisted civilian migration, and such schemes did not benefit from long-term government support.

The means to facilitate the migration of veterans was put in place in 1815 with the advent of the first settlement scheme. But how did the men and their families go about securing their grant of land, tools and rations in Upper Canada? The next chapter explores petitioning and the ways that veterans interacted with the colonial administration. The petitions are a valuable resource as they provide a glimpse into the lives of veterans, their past experiences and their hopes for the future. The first chapter has explained the aims of the settlement schemes in terms of providing security for the colony and transforming its population through the migration of loyal Britons. These aims were well known to

contemporaries and we will see how they featured in government publications and guides. The next chapter shows how veterans used their petitions to present themselves to the government in a favourable manner, and how they met the expectations placed on them as potential settlers.

Chapter Two. Veterans and their interaction with the colonial government

In 1820, William Miller, a half-pay officer from Portsmouth petitioned the colonial government to secure a free grant of land for himself and his family. He noted that he had ‘observed a paragraph in the army paper that encouragement [sic] will be given to half pay officers who go out as settlers’, and he assured the lieutenant governor that in his petition he would ‘produce testimony of my character, conduct and service’.¹ Miller’s was one of countless petitions submitted by veterans to colonial government and the Colonial Office in London. The petitions provided an opportunity for would-be settlers to present their case to the authorities to be granted land. The language and details included by the men reflect their interaction with the colonial government and shows the characteristics and values the authorities sought in their settlers. A discourse, unique to the military claimants, appears in the documents, one that focussed on individual’s loyalty and military exploits. The overall similarities in the content of the petitions over many years was no coincidence; the applicants were responding to what they knew the colonial authorities wanted to hear.

A key aim of the settlement schemes which occurred after 1815 was to ensure that loyal veterans, who were able to demonstrate military prowess, would become long-term

¹ TNA, War and Colonial Department and Colonial Office: Emigration Original Correspondence 1818, CO384/3, Folio 340.

residents in the colonies. The men used their petitions as a means of conveying their suitability as settlers to the colonial authorities. The society in which the veterans found themselves after arriving in Upper Canada was not founded on merit or individual effort. Their petitions reveal how patronage networks, and colonial society more generally, operated. They shed light on the private sphere of petitioning that involved the veterans and their families, their advocates (such as former commanding officers) and the colonial authorities who received the requests for land or assistance. John Clark's survey of power and appointments in Upper Canada argues that 'it was difficult to make one's way without the necessary connections' regardless of the individual's background.² James Aitchison has described the colonial establishment of favouring well-connected individuals when it came to filling local government positions.³ Johnson's study of how individuals came to achieve prominent positions in regional settings emphasises the importance of patronage.⁴ With this in mind, a veteran who could demonstrate his connections with the military men in power was in a position to advance his standing, and so the petitions reveal how veterans utilised patronage in order to gain land and appointments. When applying for land or a job, the applicants rarely mentioned whether they possessed the required agricultural skills, local knowledge or experience to meet the demands of the role. Instead, applicants presented themselves by describing their military experience and their service to the crown.

While petitions are extensively utilised in this chapter, similar documents, and the process of petitioning, has featured in existing secondary studies. On one hand, Carol Wilton's work concentrates on petitions submitted by people who were in opposition to the

² J. Clarke, *Land, Power and Economics on the Frontier of Upper Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), p. 51.

³ J. H. Aitchison, *The Development of Local Government in Upper Canada, 1783-1850* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1953), p. 103.

⁴ Johnson, *Becoming Prominent*, p. 91.

colonial government's policies and wanted to air their grievances.⁵ In contrast, Johnson's article offers a wide-ranging overview regarding petitions from different sections of settler society, he also uncovers the colonial government's responses to these requests. However, it must be noted that soldier settlers could call upon connections that they had accrued during their time in the army. Our understanding of the significance of these connections and how patronage networks operated has been enriched by studies by Laidlaw and Wright. Laidlaw writes of a 'Peninsular network' that encompassed high-ranking veterans of the campaign who had been appointed to influential administrative positions throughout the empire. Accordingly, this network 'mediated patronage, transmitted information, influenced policy and maintained a sense of comradeship'.⁶ From 1815, Upper Canada was administered by former high-ranking officers such as Peregrine Maitland (1818-1828) and John Colborne (1828-1838). These governors brought with them other officers to act as assistants and secretaries and it was to these figures that the veterans reached out to. Wright's research focuses on Peninsular War veterans as settlers in Australia and finds that connections to a governor or senior official in the colonies 'often paved the way for a colonial appointment'.⁷ However, both Clark and Laidlaw tend to focus on patronage networks which involved the leading figures in the colonies and do not consider how these networks operated alongside petitions amongst the mass of settlers.

Despite the value of the Upper Canadian petitions, a comprehensive study of the claims made by veterans has not been undertaken. These are important documents for the historian, because they tell us that the men lived in a highly networked world, and to advance, these networks of patronage and letter writing had to be understood and exploited. What we

⁵ C. Wilton, *Popular Politics and Political Culture in Upper Canada 1800-1850* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000).

⁶ Z. Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections 1815-1845: Patronage, the Information Revolution and Colonial Government* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p. 22.

⁷ C. Wright, *Wellington's Men in Australia: Peninsular War Veterans and the Making of Empire c1820-1840* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), p. 67.

will see here is that veteran claimants were particularly adept at exploiting patronage networks, and this explains why so many became prominent citizens. In addition to revealing details about the nature of colonial society after 1815, the petitions are vitally important sources. Through the personal information contained in the sources, we can find out where the men served and the battles they had been involved in. Veterans also spoke about the service of their family members as it was believed by identifying lineages of military service they could bolster their own chances of success. Indeed, everything we know about some men and their families comes from their petitions to the government.

The administration of petitioning

Veterans who wished to claim for a grant of land were required to interact with colonial bureaucracy by going through various administrative steps. This began with the submission of a petition to the colonial government. Studies by Wilton and Johnson on petitioning in British North America note the historic right of British citizens to petition the crown. This tradition was carried to the colonies. In the case of Upper Canada, petitions were directed to the crown's representative- the lieutenant governor.⁸ Information and advice about the process involved in petitioning was provided to settlers by numerous sources in the colonies.

The Emigrant's Assistant contained useful advice, vital to the new arrival, on how the colonial bureaucracy operated. Significantly, a specific section of the guide was directed at military migrants. These settlers were instructed to apply to the lieutenant governor with a petition, discharge papers and service records.⁹ Local newspapers also regularly published notices which informed readers how to acquire grants of land. For example, in March 1820, the *Kingston Chronicle* advised that the land board for the town did not have 'the power to grant land to the children of U.E. Loyalists, militia men who served in the flank companies

⁸ Johnson, 'Claims of Equity and Justice', p. 220.

⁹ A. J. Christie, *The Emigrant's Assistant* (Montreal: Nahum Mower, 1821), p. 111.

during the war, navel and military claimants'. Instead these people were directed to take their application to the lieutenant governor in York.¹⁰ A guide by James Strachan, who detailed his experiences travelling through Upper Canada to visit his brother, reiterated these instructions and advised that 'many [settlers] prefer going to York, the seat of government, and applying to the Lieutenant Governor in council'.¹¹

To gain a grant of land the settler had to take the oath of allegiance to the crown before a magistrate. Following this, they were issued with a certificate of proof showing their country of birth, their residence in the colony, their trade, and where they took the oath. The oath certificate also confirmed that the claimant's discharge papers had been examined and it certified details of their service. This was given to the executive council for consideration alongside their other documents.¹² The executive council was composed of members of the legislative assembly and council, as well as the chief surveyor. Maitland was the first lieutenant governor to regularly attend council meetings and participate in deliberations and he set a precedent which was maintained until the 1840s.¹³ Johnson has called the land granting administration 'inefficient and disorganised', as the council met infrequently so there was often a backlog of claims.¹⁴

If the council decided to award a grant of land, the claimant was issued with a ticket for their location whereupon they were required to complete their settlement duties. From 1791 the settler was required to build a house of sixteen by twenty feet, clear half of the roadway in front of their lot and fence five acres of land; from 1818 this rule was 'enforced with some vigour'.¹⁵ However, this situation changed in 1836 as the colonial government, in

¹⁰ *Kingston Chronicle*, 17 March 1820, p. 1.

¹¹ J. A. Strachan, *A visit to the Colony of Upper Canada* (Aberdeen: J. Strachan, 1819) p. 53.

¹² Johnson, *In Duty Bound*, p. 34.

¹³ D. Moorman, *The First Business of Government: The land granting administration of Upper Canada* (Doctorate thesis, University of Ottawa 1997), p. 225.

¹⁴ Johnson, *In Duty Bound*, p. 34.

¹⁵ J. Clarke, *Land, Power and Economics on the Frontier of Upper Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), p. 175.

an effort to encourage veterans to settle more readily in the colony, decreed that military and Loyalist claimants could settle without performing these duties. The entire process of applying for land and ultimately being granted a patent may have been convoluted, but there was a degree of assistance and information available to petitions in terms of how the process operated.

There were also sources of information available to settlers which advised on the actual content of the petition and the best way of structuring the document. The uniform nature of the petitions shows that the authors adhered to this advice. Given all the material available to advise settlers on how to structure their claim, it is not surprising that over time the petitions differed very little in their content, style and format. For example, in 1819, James Collins, a discharged colour sergeant from the 21st Regiment of Foot, petitioned for a grant of land so he could settle in Upper Canada with his family. His claim was written in the third person, told of his time in the army, and provided details about his wife and four children whom he supported.¹⁶ Seventeen years later, a former soldier named Simon O'Brien wrote to Lieutenant Governor Sir Francis Bond Head also asking for a grant of land. Despite the passage of time and differences between the two individuals, O'Brien's petition was remarkably similar to that of Collins', as he also included details of his army service, his family and presented the document in the same style and format as the 1819 petition.¹⁷

Guidance on how the petition should be structured was available to claimants through pamphlets produced by the colonial government. The Surveyor General's office in York (which was renamed Toronto in 1834) issued one such document in 1832 which provided information for settlers who had recently arrived in Upper Canada. It included templates of petitions which showed that discharged soldiers should provide details of their country of

¹⁶ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 45, Microfilm C-4604, Folio 22111. Petition of James Collins, 20 November 1819.

¹⁷ Ibid. Volume 166, Microfilm C-6890, Folio 90533. Petition of Simon O'Brien, 6 May 1836.

birth, length of service in the army and request for a specific acreage of land.¹⁸ An accompanying picture of a completed petition provided an example for how the document should be structured including the correct way of addressing the lieutenant governor at the top of the page, and how the text should be laid out. Similarly, several emigrant guides also advised on the correct way of structuring petitions. A. J. Christie's guide advised that when applying for land, the claimant should state details of their family and where they wished to settle.¹⁹ A poster produced by the Colonial Office in 1815 also added to the advice literature. It stated that it was 'the intention of His Majesty's Government to encourage settlers to proceed from Great Britain to Ireland to the British Provinces in North America'.²⁰ Settlers were to be 'persons properly recommended' and they were instructed that their claims were to provide details of their good character, profession, whether married or a widower, and the number and ages of their children.

The style, structure and language used in the petitions echo what was written in contemporary instruction manuals such as *The Universal Letter Writer*, written by the Reverend Thomas Cook in 1812. A chapter of the book is devoted to the correct way of writing a petition and it made the following points: that it should include an 'introductory superscription and address' and that 'as the very word petition implies want, the language of petitions should be at once the most humble and respectful imaginable'.²¹ Robert Houston's *Peasant Petitions* is useful when considering the content of petitions and the way they are written. This work offers a comprehensive account of petitioning in Ireland, and unlike Johnson and Wilton, Houston focuses on the language and format of the documents and the

¹⁸ S. P. Hurd, *Information for the use of persons emigrating to Upper Canada: Containing an explanation of the various modes of applications for land, together with different forms of petitions, and their progress to grant, with a statement of fees.* (York: Surveyor General's office, 1832), p. 135.

¹⁹ A. J. Christie, *The Emigrants Assistant: Or Remarks on the Agricultural Interest of the Canadas* (London: Smith Elder, 1821), p. 135.

²⁰ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries RG5 A1, Volume 111, Microfilm C6874, Folio 63112. Colonial Office announcement regarding grants of land to soldiers, 1831.

²¹ T. Cook, *The Universal Letter Writer: Or New Art of Polite Correspondence.* (London: T Wilson and Son, 1812), p. 186.

methods employed by illiterate people to get claims written. Houston has found that the language used in petitions and the way that the text was set out on the page was done deliberately to show deference and subjections on the part of the claimant.²² Although he does not make an account of petitioning in the colonies, his conclusions regarding the style and structure of the documents provides a useful point of reference to this study on the Upper Canadian examples. Houston's research is focused on petitions written in England and Ireland to landlords or members of the government and his conclusions demonstrate a remarkable level of similarity to claims submitted in Upper Canada. Houston writes of the prevalence of phrases such as 'humbly showeth' that 'reinforced deference but also asserted strength, as humility was a moral virtue'.²³ The petitions which feature in his study also tended to be written in the third person, using 'your petitioner' or 'your memorialist' instead of 'I'. Finally, he notes that the documents 'routinely ended with a pledge to fidelity and service'.²⁴ All of these points are reflected in the petitions from Upper Canada. Vance's research on petitions from Scottish military settlers in Upper Canada reports similar findings. He argues that the formulised style and structure of the documents was a result of claimants seeking to 'present themselves as deserving objects of charity'.²⁵

Veterans were able to secure assistance from literate neighbours, or from those who were more experienced in petitioning, to help write their claim. Research on petitioning often highlights issues regarding the authors of the claims. For example, Johnson, in his study of petitioning in Upper Canada, argues that 'who submitted the petition on behalf of an illiterate person is rarely evident'.²⁶ The majority of the petitions which feature in this thesis do not reveal an author. Although most are signed with the applicant's name, there is no way of

²² R. A. Houston, *Peasant Petitions: Social Relations and Economic Life on Landed Estates 1600-1850* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), p. 94.

²³ *Ibid.* p. 96.

²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 103.

²⁵ M. Vance, *Imperial Immigrants*, p. 60.

²⁶ Johnson, 'Claims of Equity and Justice,' p. 223

telling whether they wrote it. The high standard of spelling and grammar present in the claims attests to a hidden hand of an educated person. Beyond the Canadian petitions, Houston's investigation into authorship had found that illiterate people could rely on a family member, a neighbour, employ a professional scribe, or solicit the assistance of a clergyman.²⁷ He also highlights that the 'high standard of spelling and grammar suggests supplicants targeted their responses to the status and education of the recipient, and so sought out someone who knew how to influence the lord and his staff'.²⁸ An analysis of the Upper Canadian petitions reveals more about the authors of the documents, and this in turn adds to our understanding of how former soldiers called on members of their new communities to assist them.

Several petitions bear the mark of having been completed by a prominent community member. For example Miles Keegan's 1824 appeal was marked with an X but signed by Thomas O'Frannell, a public notary.²⁹ James Cousins of the Royal Artillery did not mark his petition at all, instead it had been written and signed by his attorney.³⁰ Similarities between petitions in terms of style of hand-writing and form suggests that the petitions of different claimants were the product of the same person. For example, on 23 March 1815, Thomas Lewis, a half-pay surgeon in the Royal Navy petitioned Drummond for land. The petition noted his years of service, loyalty to the King, and involvement in action. The petition was signed and dated from the naval yard at Kingston.³¹ On the same day, a second petition for land was submitted by Captain Francis B. Spilsbury, also a half-pay officer from the Royal Navy. The hand writing of the two petitions matched, as did the contents. Likewise,

²⁷ Houston, *Peasant Petitions*, p. 83.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ LAC, Upper Canada Land Petitions, RG1 L3, Volume 273, Bundle K16, Microfilm C-2119, Petition 9, Petition of Miles Keegan, 21 February 1824.

³⁰ *Ibid.* Volume 112, Bundle C17, Microfilm C-1726, Petition 203, Petition of James Cousins, 21 September 1837.

³¹ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 22, Microfilm C-4544, Folio 9704. Petition of Thomas Lewis, 23 March 1815.

Spilsbury's petition was also signed and dated from the naval yard.³² The two men likely chose to petition at the same time and sought out the same author to assist them. These examples demonstrate the way in which a crucial support network encompassing veterans, and their former military comrades operated. It allowed the claimants to submit their petition in the correct style and format expected by the colonial authorities, and so provided them an opportunity to secure a positive resolution.

Declarations of loyalty and service to the crown

The content of the petitions shows how veterans presented themselves to the colonial government by making claims about their loyalty to the crown, describing their experience of war, and their service to Britain. There was also a sense in many petitions that they were entitled to a reward for their service. In effect the men were telling the colonial government what it wanted to hear by fulfilling the need for loyal settlers with military prowess. They were able to play on the value placed on military migrants. When petitioning for a grant of land, proving oneself to be a loyal settler had a tangible impact on the success of an application. For example, in an 1816, a civilian named Payson submitted a petition for a grant of land. The executive council raised concerns over his allegiance. Thomas Ridout, the surveyor general, informed Maitland that:

In my humble opinion, this man, though one of the oldest settlers in the neighbourhood, is far from being attached to His Majesty's Government. During the late war he appeared to me to haunt the society of those who are notoriously disaffected.³³

³² Ibid. Folio 9707.

³³ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 26, Microfilm C-4546, Folio 11772-11774. Petition of Payson, 31 January 1816.

Following this letter, Payson's application for a grant was rejected. In contrast to this, a petition was a means for the veterans to prove their loyalty by citing their history of service and attachment to the king. This ranged from simply one or two lines detailing the amount of time spent in service and location, to detailed descriptions of the battle and campaigns they had participated in. The petitions demonstrated to the colonial authorities that the claimant would make a faithful and loyal subject, and so conform to the character traits valued by the government.

Being able to show how an individual had served the crown was a key component of the petitions. Lieutenant Richard Brown described himself as 'an old servant of the Crown in whose service I have passed the most valuable part of my life'. He went on to explain that he had reached the rank of acting sergeant major in the 19th Light Dragoons and was stationed in Lower Canada during the War of 1812.³⁴ Lieutenant Don MacDonald described himself as being of a 'military character' with a 'firm attachment to his King and Country'.³⁵ Captain Josias Taylor used similar language to assert that he would make an ideal settler in Upper Canada as he pledged to 'make himself serviceable to my King and Country, which I place as the height of my ambition'.³⁶ C. J. Bell, a half-pay officer from the Royal Navy sought a lot of land in the town of Perth. He described his long service and promised as a settler he would fulfil his duties with 'allegiance and fidelity'.³⁷

Veterans of prestigious campaigns wrote about their experiences in order to bolster their chances of making a successful claim. Foster has remarked that Waterloo had entered the national lexicon as early as 1816 and that 'many immediately hailed [being at Waterloo]

³⁴ Ibid. Volume 102, Microfilm C-6870, Folio 57785.

³⁵ Ibid. Volume 162, Microfilm C-6889, Folio 88848. Petition of Don MacDonald, 29 February 1836.

³⁶ Ibid. Volume 114, Microfilm C-6874, Folio 64149. Petition of Josias Taylor, 15 February 1832.

³⁷ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 57, Microfilm C-4609, Folio 29474. Petition of C. J. Bell, 3 August 1822.

as analogous to being with Henry V at Agincourt'.³⁸ Collins has also argued that participation in Waterloo and the Peninsular campaign continued to carry significant kudos in British society for years after the events themselves.³⁹ A number of Waterloo veterans who intended to settle in the colonies inserted details of their personal involvement in the battle into their petitions. Daniel Gerin, a former colour sergeant from the 11th Regiment of Foot and a veteran of the Peninsular War, was keen to tell of the engagements he had been involved in. In fact, his detailed petitions reads like a history of that campaign. In addition to fighting at the battle of Fuentes de Onoro, he was also:

...at the keeping back of the main force of the enemy during the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz. At the taking of the fort of Salamanca...the Heights of Pamplona...and Nivelles where we drove the French army off the Pirineese [sic] mountains into France.⁴⁰

The petition of Charles Strickland describes his military exploits. He fought at Trafalgar, Cadiz and Coruna and received a medal of 'meritorious service...presented by Boulton to the heroes of Trafalgar'.⁴¹ John Foxton describes that he was 'present at thirteen different general engagements, was at the storming of twenty six forts and towns, and was also at the battle of Waterloo'.⁴² John Cassin, a former private in the 23rd Regiment of Dragoons petitioned in 1832. He told of his time fighting in France and Flanders and that he 'was present at the battle of Waterloo'.⁴³

The fact that the colonies were seen to be under threat from invasion by the United States motivated men who had fought against the Americans to include this detail in their

³⁸ R. E. Foster, *Wellington and Waterloo: The Duke, the Battle and Posterity* (London: The History Press, 2014), p. 60.

³⁹ B. Collins, *War and Empire: The Expansion of Britain 1790-1830* (London: Routledge, 2014), p. 411.

⁴⁰ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 109, Microfilm C-6873, Folio 62314-62319. Petition of Daniel Gerin 22 October 1831.

⁴¹ LAC, Settlers, RG8-I, Volume 631, Microfilm C-3160, Folio 242-243.

⁴² LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 172, Microfilm C-6892, Folio 93805.

⁴³ LAC, Settlers, RG8-I, Volume 632, Microfilm C-3160, Folio 21.

petitions. For example Thomas Davies of the 99th Regiment of Foot described how he had ‘served under Lieutenant General Drummond’ during the War of 1812.⁴⁴ Similarly Richard Brown wrote to Colborne to say how he had served in the 19th Regiment of Light Dragoons in Upper Canada during the war, and that he had reached the rank of acting sergeant major which he held until the end of the conflict.⁴⁵ Private John Olive from the 89th Regiment of Foot, petitioned in 1828 to say that he ‘had the honour of being engaged in this country during the late war’.⁴⁶ The descriptions in these petitions tell the colonial government that the men had faced the American enemy so their loyalty as settlers was presumably guaranteed.

Veterans made much out of particularly dangerous postings and experiences. For soldiers in the British army during the early nineteenth-century, a posting to the West Indies or Caribbean was fraught with danger and had a terrible reputation amongst the military. Buckley’s study of the army in the West Indies talks of the prevalence of disease and shockingly high mortality rates amongst the soldiers.⁴⁷ Descriptions which reflect this appear in numerous petitions. The most common way was for a soldier to state the number of years that he had been in the army, followed by the length of time spent in the West Indies. In Captain Bowen’s case this constituted ‘twenty six years in the army, six of which in the West Indies’.⁴⁸ Major Joseph Thompson told of the action he had seen while in the West Indies, which included serving under Sir Charles Grey during the capture of Martinique, St Lucia and Guadeloupe.⁴⁹ Lieutenant Jeremiah Dewson of the 35th Regiment spoke of the negative impact that service in the West Indies had on the state of his health which led to his discharge

⁴⁴ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 15, Microfilm C-4549, Folio 15765.

⁴⁵ Ibid. Volume 102, Microfilm C-6870, Folio 57785.

⁴⁶ Ibid. Volume 87, Microfilm C-6865, Folio 47994.

⁴⁷ R. Buckley, *The British Army in the West Indies: Society and the Military in the Revolutionary Age* (Gainesville: The University Press of Florida, 1998), p. 108.

⁴⁸ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 141, Microfilm C-6882, Folio 76910-13. Petition of Captain Bowen, 5 May 1834.

⁴⁹ Ibid. Volume 161, Microfilm C-6888, Folio 87756-59. Petition of Joseph Thompson, 4 January 1836.

from the army.⁵⁰ William Baldwin, a sergeant in the 80th Regiment, suffered a similar fate as a result of his time in the Caribbean. In his petition to Lord Aylmer, he explained that after nine years in the regiment he contracted a ‘chronic disease of the liver and dysentery’ and as a result was discharged. These petitioners were keen to tell the colonial government that they had served in and survived the perilous environment.

The soldier’s petitions spoke of their service history and their involvement in battles and campaigns. However, experience of battle varied significantly amongst the migrants, as did the places they had been posted to. The men were not such a homogenous group as Bathurst had assumed and had varying degrees of military service attests to this; although the petitions tend not to acknowledge it. Instead, individual service records reveal where men had been stationed and which campaigns, if any, that they had been involved in. To provide a study of this, a sample of 223 men from the Chelsea Hospital records, spanning a range of regiments, and dates of service has been collected. From this group 51% of the men had served in British North America (including 7.6% who had fought in the War of 1812). This makes British North America the most common place of service for the settlers in this group. This finding makes sense as having some experience of life in the colonies would make it more likely for the men to choose to settle there, whether they travelled from the British Isles after leaving the army or opted to stay after being discharged in British North America. The men who had fought in the War of 1812 had added prestige in the eyes of the colonial authorities as they had proven their loyalty by defending the colonies from the American invasion; a fact which was readily stated in their petitions.

The data shows that along with the 7.6% who had served in the War of 1812, 12.5% of the men had fought at Waterloo and/or Quatre-Bras, and 17% had fought in the Peninsular campaign. Along with service in British North America, it was common for the migrants to

⁵⁰ Ibid. Volume 140, Microfilm C-6882, Folio 76706-07. Petition of Jeremiah Dewson, 25 April 1834.

have served in the West Indies (22.8%) and the East Indies (17%). The settlers in Upper Canada had in general served in one or more places overseas, with only 4.4% of the migrants having spent their entire military career in the British Isles. However, the men did not admit in their petitions that they had seen no action or had not been stationed away from home. Instead, they still framed the documents to tell of their own service, sacrifices and loyalty. It is only by examining service records that the full details of their military career emerge.

In addition to using their service record as a testament of their own loyalty, there were also soldier settlers who were keen to show that they came from a family with a history of service to the crown. Writing to ask for a grant of land in 1817, Captain Nolan told of his own service history and that of his family. He stated that ‘my father and three uncles lost their lives in the service, and an only uncle now living by whom I have located and placed in the army’.⁵¹ Henry Elliot, formerly a lieutenant in the Royal Navy explained in his petition that he had been ‘brought up in the service of King and Country, as were my father and all of my family’.⁵² Henry Watt’s petition also talked of his family’s military heritage: ‘Your memorialists grand-father Francis McDowell served in the 4th Horse Guards (now the 7th Dragoon Guards) for nearly fifty years...and your memorialists father Henry Watt served for twenty years in the Royals and Bays, in the late regiment he was Captain and Adjutant’. He closed by asking that ‘his case and that of his families [sic] long service under the crown may be taken into favourable consideration’.⁵³ Donald Campbell’s 1821 petition described the sacrifices that his family made in military service. He enclosed a letter telling of his brother’s death in Malta and wrote in his petition that a second brother was killed ‘at the memorable battle of Quatre-Bras’.⁵⁴ Major Sharpe of the Royal Marines petitioned for land in 1834. As

⁵¹ Ibid. Volume 45, Microfilm C-4549, Folio 15318. Petition of Captain Nolan, 27 May 1817.

⁵² Ibid. Volume 76, Microfilm C-4616, Folio 40742. Petition of Henry Elliott, 1 February 1826.

⁵³ TNA, War and Colonial Department and Colonial Office: Emigration Original Correspondence 1817, CO384/1, Folio 164.

⁵⁴ LAC, Settlers RG8-1, Volume 626, Microfilm C-3159, Folio 20. Petition of Donald Campbell, 30 January 1831.

well as serving for thirty-one years in the navy and suffering several wounds, he spoke of his family's history of service. Sharpe's father had 'rendered service to his country' in the army and so believed that he should be entitled to land as 'grants...have been given to many of far less service than your memorialist.'⁵⁵ Through such descriptions of family service, men were keen to show how several generations had served the crown as this acted to strengthen their own case.

An additional method that a soldier could employ to prove their value as a settler was through the description of their conduct on their discharge papers. These papers were forwarded to the executive council for their consideration along with their petition. The description of their conduct was provided by their commanding officer and varied between several words to a more detailed description, but nevertheless soldiers could utilise a positive record in their favour when applying for land. George Boxall's discharge paper noted that he was a 'worthy and sober' individual.⁵⁶ Similarly, Thomas Young's commanding officer described his conduct as 'excellent' and that he 'is strongly recommended'⁵⁷. Descriptions also spoke of specific actions in battle such as Richard Herdsman of the 1st Regiment of Dragoon Guards. His paper noted his 'bravery in the field and at Waterloo'⁵⁸. The discharge paper of Isaac Carling of the 1st Regiment of Foot also described how his conduct had been 'very good, particularly at the battle of Waterloo'⁵⁹. These short descriptions indicated how a settler possessed characteristics such as sobriety, reliability and bravery and so in addition to their petition and letters of recommendation, would demonstrate their suitability.

The men called on the prestige and danger attached to service in Waterloo and the West Indies to prove their loyalty. But they were also communicating the sense that they

⁵⁵ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 142, Microfilm C-6882, Folio 77756. Petition of Major Sharpe, 26 June 1834

⁵⁶ TNA, Record of Individual Service of George Boxall 1815-1840, WO97/21/74, Folio 1.

⁵⁷ TNA, Record of individual Service, WO97/301/105, Folio 1.

⁵⁸ Ibid. Richard Herdman 1812-1842, WO97/64/13, Folio 1.

⁵⁹ Ibid. Isaac Carling 1812-1812, WO97/2/164, Folio 1.

should be rewarded for their service (and oftentimes traumatic) experiences. Commenting on petitioning in the nineteenth-century England, J. M. Bourne states that ‘it was expected that anyone who believed he was owed something, be an individual or an institution, should put his claims on paper’.⁶⁰ This was certainly the case with military petitioners in Upper Canada. Archibald Provan’s claim provides an example. Provan, a private who had served for nineteen years (including a stint during the Peninsular War), closed his petition with the sentence ‘that on account of his service he is entitled to a grant of one hundred acres of land’.⁶¹ A similar sense of entitlement comes across in the petition of Miles Keegan, who was mentioned earlier in this chapter. He made Maitland aware that he had lost his right arm during battle and as a consequence ‘trusts from the long servitude of your petitioner, that Your Excellency will be graciously pleased to locate your petitioner in a favourable situation’.⁶² To summarise, the content of the petitions and the descriptions employed by the veterans were used to highlight their experience of battle. Particular attention was drawn to their participation in prestigious engagements. The veterans also sought to demonstrate to the colonial government that they had survived long and arduous postings abroad in the service of the King. While they were responding to what the authorities wanted to hear in terms of fulfilling the picture of being loyal settlers who possessed valuable military skills, there is also a sense that the men expected to be rewarded for their services in the form of a land grant in Upper Canada.

The condition of the migrants

As well as having a variety of different military experiences, veterans also differed in their physical condition upon discharge from the army. There were men who were discharged at

⁶⁰ J. M. Bourne, *Patronage and Society in Nineteenth Century England* (London: Edward Arnold Publishing, 1986), p. 9.

⁶¹ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 108, Microfilm C-6873, Folio 61489. Petition of Archibald Provan, 25 July 1831.

⁶² LAC, Upper Canada Land Petitions, RG1 A3, Volume 273, Bundle K16, Microfilm C-2119, Petition 9, Petition of Miles Keegan, 21 February 1824.

the end of a long period of service, and others who left the army with scars of battle, disease or having endured tough conditions. While the first chapter of this thesis has demonstrated that successive British governments tended to view veterans as a cohesive group, here we can see another example of their differences. Their time in the military meant that many were not necessarily fit for a new life on the frontier.

To appreciate these differences, a sample of 224 veterans recorded in the records of the Chelsea Hospital has been taken. Comments from their discharge papers reveal the condition they were in, and the extent to which their military service impacted upon their health. The largest number of men in the sample (a total of eighty) were described as ‘worn out’, ‘unfit for further service’ or that they had a broken constitution. We can presume that the hardships from overseas service or campaigns brought on this general state. The rigours of battle took its toll on many of the men in the sample with descriptions of gunshot wounds appearing frequently in the discharge papers. One such settler was William Murray who had served in the 1st Regiment of Dragoon Guards. He was discharged after receiving a gunshot wound in the pelvis at Waterloo.⁶³ Battlefield wounds also resulted in John Hill of the 56th Regiment of Foot being described as paralysed, the extent of which was not expanded upon. After leaving the army he settled in Prescott, Upper Canada in 1822.⁶⁴ Four men in the sample had lost limbs due to battlefield wounds; such as John Perryman who lost his left arm during the War of 1812.⁶⁵ The veteran’s experience of battle also resulted in visual and hearing impairments. Eleven men, including James Izzard who settled in York in 1826, were described as suffering from loss of sight.⁶⁶ In addition, James Foster, who served in the 6th Regiment of Dragoons was discharged due to being ‘dull of hearing’.⁶⁷

⁶³ TNA, Record of Individual Service of William Murray 1818-1843, WO97/99/89, Folio 4.

⁶⁴ Ibid. Francis Holmes 1808-1827, WO97/691/122, Folio 4.

⁶⁵ Ibid. John Perryman 1813-1816, WO97/265/44, Folio 4.

⁶⁶ Ibid. James Izzard 1806-1826, WO97/437/32, Folio 5.

⁶⁷ Ibid. James Foster 1804-1817, WO97/49/62, Folio 4.

Hardships experienced by serving soldiers, particularly while on campaign, may also have impacted upon the health of the veterans. Until 1813, the rank and file soldiers were not permitted to sleep in tents during campaign. They would have also to endure a poor diet, as rations could be unreliable and of poor nutritional value. This was particularly the case during the Peninsular War when men were expected to forage to survive.⁶⁸ These hardships could explain why twelve men in the sample were suffering from rheumatism. This included Thomas Stubbins of the 54th Regiment of Foot who settled in London in 1841.⁶⁹ Conditions while in service also impacted upon the health of Bernard Gaffney of the 33rd Regiment of Foot who left the army after suffering from ‘chronic dysentery’.⁷⁰ The data from the Chelsea Hospital records suggests that accidents during service were fairly common occurrences and could result in serious, lasting injury. Four of the men suffered broken or fractured bones. This included William Godfrey of the 15th Regiment of Foot. His records stated he was discharged with a fractured leg ‘caused by the slippery state of the street’ while serving in Upper Canada.⁷¹ In addition, three of the men suffered from a hernia at the time of leaving the army. One of these was John Winn of the 58th Regiment; his records noted that his hernia was the result of ‘a kick by one of his comrades’.⁷² John Chapman of the 4th Regiment of Dragoon Guards was one of four cavalymen in the sample injured by a fall from a horse. In Chapman’s case this occurred during his time a riding school.⁷³

The lifestyle of a serving soldier brought its own problems in later life as it was common for men to consume significant – and damaging- amounts of alcohol.⁷⁴ Two men in the sample were discharged due to liver disease, one of whom was James Holman who settled

⁶⁸ A. Brett-James, *Life in Wellington’s Army* (London: Donovan Publishing, 1995), p. 145.

⁶⁹ TNA, Record of Individual Service of Thomas Stubbins 1818-1841, WO97/676/72, Folio 4.

⁷⁰ Ibid. Bernard Gaffney 1817-1823, WO97/511/92, Folio 4.

⁷¹ TNA, Record of Individual Service of William Godfrey 1825-1839, WO97/363/53, Folio 4.

⁷² Ibid. John Winn 1822-1824, WO97/712/116, Folio 3.

⁷³ Ibid. John Chapman 1809-1821, WO97/28/99, Folio 5.

⁷⁴ Coss, *All For the King’s Shilling*, p. 89.

in London, Upper Canada in 1817.⁷⁵ Finally, the discharge papers of Duncan McPherson of the 42nd Regiment of Foot, who settled in Belleville in 1841, noted he was suffering from ‘disease due to habits’.⁷⁶ While these descriptions paint a picture of men broken by service, it must be remembered that seventy men from the sample of 224 left the army without any notices of physical issues being described in their papers. All seventy were discharged due to their regiment being disbanded or reduced, or that they had completed their time of service. The authorities in Upper Canada, and the Colonial Office looked on soldiers to populate strategic areas and considered the men as a single entity of settlers. However, the records show a more complex picture as this was a group of men who had varying degrees of military experience, and some bore the scars of their service more than others. The physical and psychological differences between the veterans were not considered when plans for military settlement were drawn up and implemented.

Petitions for assistance

Any problems which the soldier happened to be suffering from did not come out in their initial petition for land. Undoubtedly, they wanted to portray a positive image of themselves to secure settlement. However, subsequent petitions sent to the colonial authorities in the years following their settlement, reveal the problems they encountered. In some cases these were a result of wounds from their time in the army. Migrants would also petition the colonial government if they were experiencing distress; they tended to ask for monetary relief to overcome an issue, or for long term support. In general, these petitions for relief followed the same conventions as others in terms of structure and style, and highlighted their author’s loyalty and service. Indeed, years of service in the army did leave its mark upon the soldier

⁷⁵ TNA, Record of Individual Service of James Holman 1807-1816, WO97/67/107, Folio 4.

⁷⁶ Ibid. Duncan McPherson 1819-1841, WO97/580/44, Folio 4.

settlers and details about their physical condition upon leaving the army was noted in their papers.

As the petitions for assistance revealed the sacrifices the individual had made in the army so it was expected that the colonial government would assist such loyal settlers in their time of need. In Private William Newburn's petition, he spoke of having been wounded twice in the leg, and of having lost two fingers in a skirmish during his service in the Peninsular War. He came to Upper Canada with his six children to support but explained to the lieutenant governor that he could not work because of his wounds. His petition therefore asked for 'a few pounds as an act of charity'⁷⁷. A second petitioner who referenced a wound he received in combat was submitted by Lewis Johnston who wrote to Maitland asking for monetary assistance. He was wounded in battle and held prisoner in the United States for four months. 'The sufferings and other hardships sustained' by the petitioner during his incarceration were said to be 'exceedingly injurious to his health'.⁷⁸ The military settlers who submitted such petitions were asking for help due to the sacrifices they had made while serving Britain, and once again we can see how they showed their loyalty.

Patronage, connections and land

The petitions from soldiers which have been considered in this chapter may span several decades, are from a variety of different ranks, and from men who had different military experiences, yet they have a major theme in common. The men do not write about the practical skills they could bring to the colonies in terms of their knowledge of a trade. Nor do they write about any agricultural experience they may have had. They also do not mention any wounds or disabilities that they may be suffering from as a result of war. Instead, they present a picture of themselves as conforming to the expectations of the government through

⁷⁷ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 162, Microfilm C-6889, Folio 88695. Petition of William Newburn, 22 February 1836.

⁷⁸ Ibid. Volume 46, Microfilm C-4605, Folio 22659.

their descriptions of being a loyal settler bringing military expertise to the colonies. The soldiers also used their army connections to vouch for their character and loyalty.

The content of the petitions help us to understand key characteristics of early nineteenth-century colonial society. We can assume that if the colonial authorities had been concerned with whether the soldier knew how to farm or if they could bring a useful skill, the men would have written about it. Likewise, the values attributed to patronage shows that individual ability was often of secondary importance. Instead this was a society which valued loyalty, militarism and connections, and soldier settlers were well placed to benefit and take advantage of this. This system of patronage was common in English society before the industrial revolution. Perkin states that while ‘later ages considered this as corruption’ it was an ‘inevitable method of recruitment’ due to the lack of selection procedures.⁷⁹ Houston’s study on patronage in the British Isles argues that by utilising connections through petitioning was ‘part of the social and political structure of Britain and Ireland’.⁸⁰ In England, when appointments were to be made, the recruiter looked first and foremost amongst his friends, and was expected to do so. A beneficent of patronage ‘could be almost anyone amongst ones’ acquaintances in whom one recognised special merit or service to one-self’.⁸¹ In Upper Canada, the veterans sought out contacts who could validate their loyalty, service and value as a settler. Laidlaw’s *Colonial Connections* considers the operation of patronage amongst the elite in the Cape Colony and New South Wales.⁸² However, this network existed on a more localised level in British North America with the lieutenant governors playing an important facilitating role. According to Bourne, the ‘lack of career prospects at home for

⁷⁹ Perkin, *The Origins of Modern English Society*, p. 48.

⁸⁰ Houston, *Peasant Petitions*, p. 24.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections*, p. 22.

discharged officers of the army and navy led them to look hopefully at the patronage of the empire'.⁸³

Documents that accompanied the petitions submitted by veterans show how these men utilised their networks and connections to have their character vouched for, and their loyalty confirmed. It must be kept in mind that military men were not the only settlers to enclose letters in support of their character as civilian migrants also did so. Richard Alexander, a farmer from the Darlington area wrote in his petition that he had:

Brought with him several recommendatory papers from England but has unfortunately lost them...the only recommendations he now has are those which he prays leave herewith to present which he has obtained from persons who have known him since he came to this province.⁸⁴

Such papers which were attached to civilian claims were often from previous employers or persons of authority in their local community. They tended to tell of the individual's reliable character as an employee or their propensity for hard work. Letters accompanying soldiers' petitions were different: these men were able to call on contacts acquired during their time in the army from individuals in powerful positions who could certify their loyalty and play a part in influencing the outcome of the claims. By doing this, the veterans became part of networks which encompassed the lieutenant governor, high ranking officials and administrators in the Colonial Office.

Military claimants held an advantage over civilian settlers when it came to utilising connections, largely because a succession of lieutenant governors of Upper Canada had military backgrounds. George Murray, Peregrine Maitland, John Colborne, Francis Bond

⁸³ Bourne, *Patronage and Society in Nineteenth Century England*, p. 91.

⁸⁴ LAC, Upper Canada Land Petitions, RG1 L3, Volume 6, Bundle 11, Microfilm C-1610, Petition 28, Petition of Richard Alexander, 12 March 1819.

Head and administrator Samuel Smith had experience of command, particularly during the Peninsular War and at Waterloo.⁸⁵ This is a key factor in our understanding of how patronage operated in terms of the petitions and accompanying letters. Networks of patronage were not simply confined to the veterans themselves. The fourth chapter of this thesis shows how their wives, widows and children were able to secure land grants, employment and assistance as part of these networks. They were aware of the routes to follow to gain these advantages. Similarly, the men also called on their contacts in the hope that their children (generally their eldest son) could also enjoy the benefits which came from the status of being a former British soldier or sailor. The fourth chapter of this thesis explores the creation of such military legacies.

Many of the petitioners believed that there was a ‘natural affinity’ between themselves and the governors who had in some circumstances fought in the same battles and campaigns, and as such would support their claims.⁸⁶ Some petitioners explicitly referenced this in their claims. Nicholas Clarke wrote to Maitland that ‘your petitioner explores a desire to settle on lands and humbly prays for Your Excellency is well known as a friend to a soldier’.⁸⁷ Charles Boyle professed to have known Sir George Murray while both men were serving in the army so he used this claim to create a sense of affinity between the two.⁸⁸ Richard Thornberry’s petition to Lord Aylmer detailed that he had directly served the Lord at his quarters in Spain and France during the Peninsular campaign. Much of his petition was written in the standard third person until the point where it changes tone to read ‘I was with Your Excellency’. This appears to have been done deliberately to emphasise their previous

⁸⁵ D. B. Read, *The Lieutenant Governors of Upper Canada* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1900).

⁸⁶ Johnson, ‘Claims of Equity and Justice,’ p. 232.

⁸⁷ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 73, Microfilm C-4617, Folio 38953. Petition of Nicholas Clarke, 22 July 1825.

⁸⁸ TNA, War and Colonial Department and Colonial Office: Emigration Correspondence, CO384/23, Folio 84.

relationship.⁸⁹ Accordingly, the petition mentioned that Thornberry later worked as a coachman for Dalhousie ‘who made promises for past services but always had the misfortune to be forgotten’.⁹⁰ Michael Mabey, a staff surgeon on half-pay, wrote to Lord Aylmer’s secretary asking him to place the petition before the Lord for consideration. Maybey reminded the secretary that they had served together many times before, so he hoped the favour would be done for him.⁹¹ By directly referencing a relationship with a lieutenant governor, a soldier was able to call on the ‘wide patronage powers’ that the men could provide.⁹² John Smith, formerly a private in the 66th Regiment, employed the tactic of referencing some form of contact between himself and the governor. A slightly different method to highlight a connection was employed by Captain Andrew Wilson of the Royal Navy. His petition described him as being ‘well known to the late Duke of Richmond’ and that Wilson has dined with Richmond ‘the day before his lamented death! I lost an invaluable friend’.⁹³

The letters accompanying the petitions from commanding officers could have a real impact on the outcome of a claim. In 1817 Samuel Davis petitioned for a grant of land in Upper Canada. His petition was accompanied by a letter written by his former commanding officer Lieutenant Colonel Foster. He described Davis as ‘extremely well bestowed as an active and intelligent and faithful soldier and a loyal and industrial subject’.⁹⁴ Similarly a petition for land from a soldier who had served in the 19th Lancers came with a letter from the man’s commanding officer. An extract from it stated ‘his conduct has always been excellent as a soldier. I have the honour most strongly to recommend his case for favourable

⁸⁹ LAC, Settlers, RG8-1, Volume 631, Microfilm C-3160, Folio 218. Petition of Charles Strickland, 7 April 1824.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ LAC, Settlers, RG8-1, Volume 632, Microfilm C-3160, Folio 107. Petition of Michael Maybey.

⁹² Johnson, *In Duty Bound: Men, Women and the State in Upper Canada*, p. 50

⁹³ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 50, Microfilm C-4606, Folio 24798. Petition of Andrew Wilson, 5 September 1820.

⁹⁴ Ibid. Volume 33, Microfilm C-4600, Folio 16018. Petition of Samuel Davis, 25 September 1817.

consideration'.⁹⁵ A soldier named Krays who had served in the Royal Engineers petitioned for land and included two letters of recommendation. The first was from a Colonel Dunford and described Krays as having 'conducted himself with utmost propriety and attention to his duty.' The second was from a Colonel Romilly and read 'I beg strongly to recommend him to any situation in the public offices, where the duties are not so arduous as those of his present situation'.⁹⁶ In 1820 Lieutenant G. R. Lauder of the Royal Marines petitioned for a grant of land. Accompanying his application was a letter from his commanding officer Major Gillespie which described Lauder as serving with the 'distinguished conduct of a gentleman' and 'most spirited zeal as an officer'. Lauder was recommended as a settler due to his record of long service and his integrity.⁹⁷ Peter White, a discharged able seaman in the Royal Navy had his captain, Andrew Wilson, send a letter to Colborne to ask for 'Your Excellency's patronage to be extended to him'.⁹⁸ Wilson believed this was justified as the petitioner was 'a good man who never tastes liquors of any description' and that he had served the King for many years in a wide variety of different locations and battles.⁹⁹

The first chapter highlighted Commodore Sir Robert Hall's desire for a military settlement for discharged naval officers. In addition, he was a keen advocate for the men in terms of helping them gain grants of land. During 1817 and early 1818 he sent Gore lists of officers who he recommended for land.¹⁰⁰ In May 1817 Gore revealed that although he had 'no positive instruction on granting land to naval officers' he nonetheless complied with the

⁹⁵ TNA, War and Colonial Department and Colonial Office: Emigration Correspondence 1818, CO384/3, Folio 6.

⁹⁶ LAC, John Colborne Fonds, R14204-0-9-E, Microfilm A-585, Folio 22, Colonel Romilly's letter in support of Krays, 11 November 1829.

⁹⁷ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 49, Microfilm C-4605, Folio 24326.

⁹⁸ Ibid. Volume 154, Microfilm C-6886, Folio 84343. Petition of Peter White, 10 June 1835.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 32, Microfilm C-4549, Folio 15273. Sir Robert Hall Recommending Naval Settlers to Gore, 22 May 1817.

lists of recommendation.¹⁰¹ Hall also wrote to Samuel Smith, the administrator of Upper Canada in support of discharged sailors. Hall informed Smith that he had granted certificates to men to enable them to secure grants of land, and that he had Bathurst's approval for this. He included details of the men's service and mentioned that 'I shall most likely discharge several other men under similar circumstances' so more letters of recommendation would soon follow.¹⁰² Group letters of recommendation were also used by the army to assist the settlement of soldiers. For example, a letter from the lieutenant colonel of the 79th Highlanders, offered 'for the favourable consideration of the commander of the forces' the names of Sergeant Finlay and Private Howie. These men were 'recommended in the strongest manner...as most deserving from the length and faithfulness of their services'.¹⁰³

It was common for military petitioners to reach out to their network of contacts to find someone with the necessary connections to advance the claim on their behalf. Former military men in positions of political power were regularly contacted by soldiers to secure land, and such networks of 'relatives, friends and allies' could prove highly advantageous.¹⁰⁴ The use of patronage and the level of success it could deliver shows how the colonial government valued personal connections and alludes to the type of society that was being constructed. A soldier's former rank in the army did not affect the level of patronage they could benefit from, or the help that they received. Privates called on their commanding officers to act on their behalf, and the men themselves directly addressed the lieutenant governors to explain their connections. Men of all ranks called on whatever connections they had, be it from a commanding officer, a general, or a lieutenant governor.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. Folio 15263. Lieutenant Governor Gore's recommendations regarding land for naval settlers, 22 May 1817

¹⁰² Ibid. Folio 15518-15540. Sir Robert Hall recommending naval settlers to Samuel Smith, 18 June 1817.

¹⁰³ LAC, Settlers, RG8-1, Volume 632, Microfilm C-3160, Folio 141. A group of veterans writing to recommend Sergeant Finlay as a settler, 17 April 1819.

¹⁰⁴ Clarke, *Land, Power and Economics on the Frontier of Upper Canada*, p. 446.

John Kearns, a former lieutenant in the 68th Light Infantry petitioned Maitland for a grant of land in 1820 in the township of Plantagenet. Included with the appeal was a letter of support from Lord Dalhousie which read ‘this officer Kearns was wounded at Vittoria with us and he seems resolute on settling down for good in this country’. Dalhousie proceeded to ask that Maitland consider the request for land, which was duly granted.¹⁰⁵ A second example is seen in the case of William Winder. He had been an officer in the 49th Regiment and wrote to Bond Head in the hope of securing a job in any public office in Upper Canada. Winder set out his case by proving his loyal character by stating that he ‘is an Englishman by birth’ and had ‘passed through the whole of the late war with the United States’ having the ‘honour to be mentioned twice in the general orders of the army for my conduct in the field’.¹⁰⁶ Enclosed with the petition was a letter to the lieutenant governor from Winder’s former commanding officer in which he was described as having an ‘unblemished moral character’ and so worth of Bond Head’s attention.¹⁰⁷ A letter from the Colonial Office was also sent to Bond Head on Winder’s behalf which stated ‘Lord Bathurst has received very strong testimonials in favour of this officer...I beg leave to recommend him to your most favourable consideration’.¹⁰⁸

The networks of patronage which benefited the veterans also extended to influential members of central government in Britain. There were a number of men who were able to either call directly on government figures for a letter of recommendation, or were able to reach out to their contacts in government to approach a lieutenant governor on their behalf. These examples show the depth and range of the network of connections which veterans could call upon. The letters of recommendation tended to originate from leading figures at Horse Guards or in Downing Street. Lieutenant Roche of the Royal Navy prevailed upon his

¹⁰⁵ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 48, Microfilm C-4605, Folio 23666. Petition of John Kearns, 10 July 1820.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. Volume 162, Microfilm C-6888, Folio 88373. Petition of William Winder, 8 February 1836.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. Folio 88377.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

commander, Sir John De Launcey, to contact Colborne ahead of his arrival in the colonies. The tone of De Launcey's letter suggests that he was on friendly terms with Colborne and so this is something which Roche could have been aware of in order to gain an advantage. The letter recommended Roche to Colborne's 'favourable notice' and asked to ensure that his 'numerous family' would find support.¹⁰⁹ A second Royal Navy man whose commander seemingly had a personal connection with Colborne was Lieutenant William Cooke. Writing from Merchant House in 1834, Cooke's commanding officer, named Harrison, requested that Colborne would grant a 'particular favour' to keep abreast of his progress in Upper Canada to ensure that he did not run into any difficulties. Harrison's letter also included a personal guarantee of Cooke's respectability.¹¹⁰

Sir Robert Hay, Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, was used as an intermediary for soldier settlers to pass on letters of recommendation from their military contacts to the lieutenant governors of Upper Canada. In 1834 he transmitted a request to Colborne from Lord Stewart De Rothesay (British ambassador to France). This was a letter to introduce Lieutenant Hayter of the Royal Navy who was proceeding to the colonies to settle. Hay stated De Rothesay's desire for Colborne to use his power to 'further' Hayter in the colonies.¹¹¹ Correspondence between Hay and Colborne on military settlers occurred frequently during the mid-1830s. In February 1834 Hay contacted Colborne to inform him that he had received a letter from the Ordnance Office which asked that the details of a prospective settler be passed along to the lieutenant governor. The letter was in relation to Captain Thomas Mayor, a half-pay artillery officer, who was preparing to leave Britain for Upper Canada. Hay informed Colborne that the master of Ordnance wished it to be known

¹⁰⁹ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 120, Microfilm C-6876, Folio 66679. Petition of Lieutenant Roche, 13 August 1832.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. Volume 141, Microfilm C-6882, Folio 77141-43. Petition of William Cooke, 18 May 1834.

¹¹¹ Ibid. Volume 138, Microfilm C-6881, Folio 76121. Letter from Hay to Colborne to introduce Lieutenant Hayter, 24 March 1834.

that Mayor 'is much respected' and 'most deserving' and would make a 'most valuable colonist' due to his long record of military service.¹¹² The final example of this form of patronage is from August 1834 and involves an officer of the Royal Navy named Lieutenant Davies. Thomas Spring Rice informed Colborne that he had received a letter 'from a highly respectable gentleman in Cork' and that he had been asked to recommend Davies to Colborne for employment and land in the colonies.¹¹³ The letter to Spring Rice was written A. J. Newsham, a friend of Davies. The letter told how Davies, and his friend Sir Thomas Deans (Mayor of Cork) had spent time and money in helping victims of cholera in Cork, and had used 'his habit of system, acquired in navy' to better organise the local hospital.¹¹⁴ The letter was accompanied by a cutting from the local newspaper which told how the local people had appreciated Davies' work and considered him 'the poor man's friend'. They also lamented his departure for Canada. Such letters did not solely originate from high ranking officers in support of the military comrades as there are several examples of officers using their colonial office connections to benefit their family members who were desirous of settling in Canada. For example, in 1832 Colborne received a letter from Horse Guards which stated that the son of Sir Benjamin Martins, late controller of the navy, was sailing to Canada as an emigrant. Horse Guards introduced Captain H. B. Martin of the Royal Navy to Colborne in the hope that he would receive assistance from the colonial government.¹¹⁵ These examples are useful as they show the range of connections that military settlers had, as well as the desire of their patrons to use their power to ensure the best possible advantage for these men.

The end of free land grants in Upper Canada in 1834 did not stop soldiers from petitioning. Significantly despite the clear directive that there would be no exceptions to the

¹¹² LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 138, Microfilm C-6881, Folio 75397-77401. Letter from Hay to Colborne regarding a half pay officer, 13 February 1833.

¹¹³ Ibid. Volume 144, Microfilm C-6883, Folio 78546. Petition of Lieutenant Davies, 8 August 1834.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. Folio 78547.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. Volume 140, Microfilm C-6876, Folio 66346.

rule, there were military men who were still provided with free land. This unexpected trend can be explained by the importance of the power of patronage and connections that the successful applicants possessed. Initially there appeared to have been some confusion on the part of the applicants regarding whether the rule change applied to soldiers who had been discharged in British North America. Some petitions sent after 1834 attempted to explain the reasons for their lateness such as the claimant having an ill family member or being unaware that a change in the law had taken place. On the other hand, there were veterans who made no reference to this fact and applied as normal. David Bates of the 85th Regiment applied for land in June 1836. His petition to Colborne detailed that he had been living in Upper Canada for several years but had not claimed for land. He explained that his home in Hamilton, along with his possessions had been recently destroyed in a fire leaving him destitute.¹¹⁶ The claims were discussed in council and it was decided that ‘the petitioner did not apply in time, land is not granted to discharged soldiers’.¹¹⁷ This was the common result for men who applied after 1834. However, there was a very small minority of men who were successful, and the reasons behind this tell us a great deal about the society.

A case study of two men who used their connections to secure a grant of land after 1834 highlights the value that was placed on patronage. The fate of these two men can be compared to a third discharged soldier to illustrate this point. It must also be remembered that civilian settlers did not have the means of accessing power to allow them to be an exception. The research carried out on petitions for this chapter has not identified any civilians who called on external powers to the extent and effectiveness that soldiers were able to.

James Cummins applied for land in 1837 and his first claim was rejected. He received the standard letter that stated free grants of land were no longer available to settlers.

¹¹⁶ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 160, Microfilm C-6888, Folio 87974. Petition of DAVID Bates, 16 January 1836.

¹¹⁷ LAC, Land Minute Books of Upper Canada, R10875-2-1-E, Microfilm C-106, Folio 458, Petition of David Bates 11 June 1836.

However, he decided to write to the colonial government for a second time in the hope of getting a different response. His second petition did not follow the forms of language and structure which was a standard feature in most cases. It had a more direct tone. According to Houston, a petition which did not adhere to the norms of narrative by being more candid and written in the first person was likely to be self-written.¹¹⁸ This was likely to be the case with Cummins' second petition which asks 'why did I not apply for land before? My wife was very sick for many years, her constitution broken...she is now buried in Montreal.'¹¹⁹ He went on to explain his years of service and loyalty; aside from the time spent in the army, he claimed to have taught in a common school, and had campaigned in favour of King and Country at elections across the colony. The petition ended by asking for land in a manner which was not typical of other claims:

A thousand acres of wild land would not compensate me for the time, expense and services I have rendered to my King and Country...but I have never received the value of a farthing...can my country be so lost to all sense of virtue and justice as to be ungrateful to its best servants?¹²⁰

However, despite Cummins having a record of loyalty and service in keeping with many other applicants, it was not enough for the colonial government to make his claim an exception to the rules.

Exceptions were made though for applicants who could utilise the power of patronage. Daniel Callaghan applied for land in the same year as Cummins, yet his appeal was successful. The petition explained that Callaghan wished to leave the army to become a settler in Canada in 1832; yet his commanding officer asked him to postpone the decision and remain in the army for several more years. Callaghan was too late to apply for land by the

¹¹⁸ Houston, *Peasant Petitions*, p. 70.

¹¹⁹ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 178, Microfilm C6894, Folio 98117. Petition of James Cummins, 21 September 1837.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* Folio 98119.

time he was eventually discharged.¹²¹ Unlike Cummins, Callaghan was able to call on support from people in positions of power. First, he included a letter from the 15th Regiment of Foot which confirmed that he had applied for discharge in 1832. But ‘Lieutenant Macintosh prevailed upon him to postpone’.¹²² Second, the lieutenant colonel of the regiment, G. W. Horton, wrote to Bond Head in which he described Callaghan as a ‘most excellent, upright and intelligent soldier...[he] is most superior in education and general information’.¹²³ Horton went on to ask that Bond Head take an interest in Callaghan as he would have difficulty acquiring a grant of land. The case was subsequently referred to council in November 1837 and as a result Callaghan was granted land ‘according to his rank as if he had applied within the time permitted of the regulations’.¹²⁴

The second soldier who successfully used patronage to circumvent policy was David McPherson. Having been discharged from the army he returned to his native Glasgow where he petitioned the Colonial Office for a grant of land in Upper Canada. The reply from the Under Secretary of State for the Colonial Office read:

I am directed by the Secretary of State to acquaint you that free grants of land are no longer made in British North America to pensioners from the army or navy...Although the existing regulations have precluded the Secretary of State from complying with your application, he is induced, on consideration of your service in the army, and of the testimonials which you have submitted, to direct the accompanying letter to be forwarded to you, recommending you the protection of the Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada.¹²⁵

¹²¹ LAC, Upper Canada Land Petitions, RG1 L3, Volume 121, Bundle C21, Microfilm C-1730 Petition 43, Petition of Daniel Callaghan, 1 July 1837.

¹²² Ibid. p. 43c.

¹²³ Ibid. p. 43e.

¹²⁴ Ibid. p. 43d.

¹²⁵ LAC, Upper Canada Land Petitions, RG1 L3, Volume 357a, Bundle M18, Microfilm C-2213, Petition of David McPherson, Petition 130.

The letter which was sent to Sir John Colborne read:

Recommend to his protection the bearer of this note, David McPherson who has served for many years, with great credit to himself and to the 91st Regiment. Mr Hay is induced to point him out to Sir John Colborne as a person which character and former services in the army are deserving of his protection.¹²⁶

The involvement of the Colonial Office was clearly successful as three months after this letter was sent, McPherson was in Toronto to take the oath of allegiance ahead of his settlement.¹²⁷

Cummins, Callaghan and McPherson all used their petitions to highlight their service and loyalty through their time in the army, yet the regulation governing land granting was not applied to Callaghan or McPherson. The materials in the archive which record the council deliberations of these cases are somewhat frustrating in that they do not expand on the reasons behind Callaghan's or McPherson's success. The entry relating to McPherson's case simply states 'praying for a grant of land as a discharged soldier. Recommended'.¹²⁸ Similarly the entry for Callaghan reads 'recommended according to his rank'.¹²⁹ However, despite there being no overt acknowledgement of the patronage that both men received, the importance of Horton's influence on the outcome of Callaghan's case cannot be understated. Similarly, Hay's letter to Colborne allowed McPherson to claim his free land grant. This support from an influential third party was something Cummins lacked.

Patronage and personal connections were, then, vital means through which discharged soldiers gained advantage when settling in Upper Canada. The memorandum sent to Colborne from Downing Street in 1834 clearly stated that land was not to be granted to any settlers and officially there was no room for exceptions to be made. However, the power and

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ LAC, Land Minute Books of Upper Canada, R10875-2-1-E, Microfilm C-105, Folio 151, Petition of David McPherson, 28 August 1835.

¹²⁹ Ibid. Microfilm C-106, Folio 187.

value places of the patronage networks was such that a minority of military settlers secured grants of land after 1834, and in McPherson's case, he even had the support of the Colonial Office.

Conclusion

The petitions submitted to the colonial government of Upper Canada are a valuable resource which provide insight into the lives of the settlers in the colonies, and their backgrounds in the British Isles. Substantial information can be gathered about individuals whose only other trace is in patchy census records. In the case of the veterans, the sources show how these men, by highlighting their loyalty and service, presented themselves to the colonial government as loyal, respectable and politically conservative settlers. Petitioning was a skill that was taught and learnt: one result of this was that, on paper, the men who applied for land looked all the same; this may well have contributed to the sense in government that veterans did form a coherent constituency. But when read carefully, these petitions reveal a great deal of diversity in the careers and experiences of men; indeed, many show that some applicants could not fulfil the kind of things that government expected of them.

The additional documents submitted alongside many petitions are as valuable as the claims themselves, as they reveal a great deal about individual settlers and the colonial society they inhabited. The significance of patronage in colonial society cannot be understated. The networks that encompassed the veterans and the governors allowed the men to acquire a significant advantage when it came to securing land. Central to the workings of the patronage system was the petitions. They were used as means to further prove an individual's loyalty and value as a settler. Although letters of recommendation did accompany the petitions of civilians, former soldiers were in the positions to have their army contacts play an active role in helping to secure land on their behalf. The military background

of a succession of lieutenant governors of Upper Canada meant that soldier settlers were positioned in a web of connections which encompassed the petitioner, their former commanding officers, the governors, and senior civil servants in London. Studies of the 'Peninsular network' tend to focus on the ways in which patronage operated amongst the highest-ranking figures in the colonies, the Duke of Wellington, politicians and generals at Horse Guards. However, this chapter has shown that by analysing petitions and the letters which accompanied them, networks of patronage clearly operated at a lower day-to-day level involving the veterans who came to the colonies as settlers.

By securing their grants of land, the veterans were able to start a new life with their families in Upper Canada. While some disappeared into the backwoods, others left their mark on their new communities through their involvement in business, agriculture and local government. For many veterans, their involvement with the colonial administration did not end with the applications for land. Connections with the military men in the highest positions of power in Upper Canada proved to be particularly useful in the pursuit of jobs.

Chapter Three: Local government, business and agriculture in the military settlements

The veterans who settled in Upper Canada were able to use their connections with the military men who administered the colony to acquire influential local government positions. This was particularly the case with former officers who gained prestigious positions which they often held for decades. This was achieved through the private sphere of petitioning which encompassed relationships between the veterans and the colonial administration. Furthermore, with their significant land grants and pension income, veterans became leading civic figures in business, agriculture and the organisation of the colonial militia. It is here that we can begin to judge the nature and the extent of the power and influence of the veterans. However, this power did not always go unchallenged as civilian settlers raised complaints to the colonial authorities about their conduct. This chapter uses the Rideau Valley military settlements of Perth, Richmond and the surrounding townships to demonstrate the impact that veterans had on the development of their new communities. Due to the absence of diaries and other personal accounts, the *Perth Courier* newspaper emerges as a key source in this research as it provides an insight into day-to-day life in the area. This chapter also reveals how military ties, formed in their regiments and through their common experiences as former soldiers, helped to determine where the men chose to settle, and how they lived their lives. For example, the veterans supported one another to find local government jobs or offered legal assistance. The fourth chapter expands on this theme by taking in the family members, wives and widows of the soldiers who came to the colony to show how they were also able to benefit from military ties, and their status as relatives of former soldiers.

Existing historiography does not appreciate the impact that veterans had in the development of colonial society from 1815. For example, Johnson's *Becoming Prominent*,

which investigates the ways in which residents of Upper Canada gained power, influence and wealth in the colonies, is one work that does begin to touch on these issues. But while there is some consideration of military men, this work generally focuses on Loyalists and civilian settlers. Studies which do engage with the contribution made by emigrants tend to focus on settlers from particular national backgrounds. Donald Akenson's *The Irish in Ontario*, for instance, provides a detailed analysis of the experiences of Irish settlers in terms of agriculture, business and their social lives.¹ Similarly, Campey's work of Scottish emigrants in Upper Canada considers their settlement, domestic life, and involvement in farming.² While these studies document day-to-day life in settler communities, they do not consider the role that veterans had in dominating local government positions, or how they used their advantages of connections, land and pension incomes.

There are also similarities between the scope of work which underplays the impact of the veterans, and those which have viewed their settlement as part of the general movement of people from the British Isles. Existing works have engaged with the issue of chain migration and the factors which effected where civilian migrants chose to settle. While veterans are missing from these accounts, they do provide a useful point of reference and comparison, this includes work such as Rees' *Surplus People* and McGowan's *Famine, Facts and Fabrication*.³ These works show that civilians were heavily influenced by regional or ethnic ties in determining where to settle. However, this was generally not the case for former soldiers as their priority was to settle alongside other military men. By doing so they supported each other to obtain local government positions, confront personal difficulties and form agricultural societies. This phenomenon has attracted some notice from historians. For

¹ D. Akenson, *The Irish in Ontario: A Study in Rural History* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984).

² Campey, *The Scottish Pioneers of Upper Canada: 1784-1855* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2005).

³ M. McGowan, 'Famine, Facts and Fabrication: An examination of diaries from the Irish famine migration to Canada', *Canadian Journal of International Studies*, 32:2 (2007). J. Rees, *Surplus People*.

example, when considering former Scottish soldiers, Vance talks of social networks between the veterans in their local community which revolved around taverns and local organisations.⁴ Wright's research into the Peninsular War veterans who settled in Australia also highlights the importance of community and networks between the military men. She argues that the social networks had an impact on an individual's choice to emigrate, as well as settlement patterns, marriage patterns and relationships with governing officials.⁵ This chapter will expand on Wright's work by focusing on how a wide range of military settlers, from various ranks and backgrounds, interacted with each other and the colonial government.

Johnson writes of the importance of patronage and networks when individuals searched for jobs. He has found that settlers needed connections to successfully acquire positions, as competition was often fierce: Johnson's research certainly tells us how veterans used patronage to their own advantage.⁶ The previous chapter has explored the importance of patronage and the veterans' place in the networks of connection. This chapter will continue to develop this theme by exploring the ways in which the men acquired positions for themselves in local government. This will be achieved by analysing the petitions for appointments to show how the settlers benefited from their relationships with prominent colonial officials as well as their connections with other former soldiers in their new communities. Their relationships, based around military service, with the governors and secretaries of the colony were key to their success. There were veterans who were particularly enthusiastic about gaining appointments, and they regularly sought out local government positions and business opportunities. By doing so, they made important contributions to the development of their new communities.

⁴ Vance, *Imperial Immigrants*, p. 59.

⁵ Wright, *Wellington's Men in Australia*, p. 57.

⁶ Johnson, *Becoming Prominent*, p. 103.

There is, then, evidence that veterans fulfilled some of the functions that government officials had set them. But not every military settler was a success, and not every veteran had access to expansive military networks. Susannah Moodie came to Upper Canada from Suffolk in 1832 with her half-pay officer husband who had served in the Napoleonic War. They settled in the backwoods near the township of Peterborough and Susannah recorded their experiences in a book, first published in 1852. On one occasion she described meeting an old dragoon living on his remote grant of land as a ‘kind of hermit, from choice, and far removed from the other settlers’.⁷ There were undoubtedly countless individuals who came with their families and pursued a quiet life as farmers, not becoming involved in business, local government or society. The men who took part in the commutation scheme generally experienced poverty and hardship. There were also veterans who did not progress past their ports of entry, perhaps through falling ill, running out of money and returning home. Cookson has researched Scottish pensioners who returned home after only settling for a short time. He cites the lack of marriage opportunities, and failure to cultivate land grants as the main reasons that veterans failed to settle.⁸ He acknowledges that little is known about how most soldiers fared after leaving the army, and that due to the lack of evidence, it is far more difficult to track the lives of the veterans who failed. Families who did not become prominent community members tended not to leave behind a trail of evidence in newspapers, petitions, or correspondence with the colonial authorities. But the records do show examples of successful settlers whose contributions to the development of the settler society in Upper Canada, from the beginnings of the settlement schemes in 1815.

The settlement patterns of veterans

⁷ S. Moodie, *Roughing it in the Bush: Or Forest Life in Canada* (London: Richard Bentley, 1871), p. 365.

⁸ J. E. Cookson, ‘Early Nineteenth Century Scottish Military Pensioners as Homecoming Soldiers’, *The Historical Journal*, 52 (June 2009), p. 340.

Civilian migrants who came to the colonies from the British Isles tended to be drawn to areas where their friends, relatives or people from their home region had settled. This conclusion is found in numerous studies which deal with chain migration and the motivations underpinning the movement of settlers. McGowan's work on migration from Ireland during the early years of the nineteenth-century has identified townships in the St Lawrence River Valley in Lower Canada which had sizeable Irish populations.⁹ Similarly, Rees' study finds that by 1833 a quarter of Quebec's population was descended from Irish settlers.¹⁰ Research into Irish settlement patterns has also identified significant concentrations of Irish Catholics in Kingston and around Bytown, but less so in York as the distance to travel was further and so the journey more expensive.¹¹ Emigrants from the Scottish Highlands who came to the colonies from 1815 were drawn to settlements in Rideau Valley in Upper Canada and the Eastern Townships of Lower Canada. In contrast, lowland Scots tended to settle in and around York.¹² Elliott's study of English migration to Upper Canada before Confederation has found that the largest cluster of English settlers was centred on the towns of York (Toronto) and London, and in the rural stretch from York to Cobourg.¹³

Unlike civilian settlers, it was rare for the veterans to say that they wished to be settled with people from their home region. Instead, their priority tended to be to settle alongside other military men, particularly from their own regiments. Presumably this was partly because the veterans had grown up in a military environment where mutual support and conviviality was commonplace. As has been pointed out, regimental and army ties played an important role in forging bonds between former servicemen. Cookson has previously

⁹ M. McGowan, 'Famine, Facts and Fabrication: An examination of diaries from the Irish famine migration to Canada', *Canadian Journal of International Studies*, 32:2 (2007), p. 50.

¹⁰ Rees, *Surplus People*, p. 58.

¹¹ B. Elliott, 'Regional Patterns of English Immigration and Settlement in Upper Canada', in B. Messamore (ed.), *Canadian Migration Patterns from Britain to North America* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2004), p. 54 and p. 79.

¹² M. Harper and S. Constantine, *Migration and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 17.

¹³ B. Elliott, 'Regional Patterns of English Immigration', p. 56.

stated that ‘regiments functioned as practically self-contained communities’ and that vital support links were forged between the men who served together.¹⁴ The army command also encouraged bonds between the soldiers through the recognition of the importance of regimental identity. Kevin Linch has stated that ‘every regiment in the army was expected to develop a core stock of historical notes, actions and awards that could form the core of its tradition and culture’ and that a soldier joined a regiment, not the army.¹⁵ In what follows, we shall see that veterans understandably wished to replicate these valuable support networks when they settled overseas.

Cookson has argued that the decisions that migrants made about where to settle operated on both an emotional as well as practical level. The bonds of comradeship and regimental loyalists that existed between veterans resulted in groups of pensioner settlement in the colonies.¹⁶ This assessment is supported by evidence from the Chelsea Hospital records that clearly show how former soldiers settled alongside each other. Between 1815 and 1843, the details of their dates of discharge from the army and place of settlement is recorded. These documents reveal instances of men from the same regiment settling together around the same time.

An example of the importance of military ties is seen by the four soldiers who settled together in Kingston on 5 June 1817, and who had all been discharged from the 4th Veterans Battalion. In addition, there were three discharged soldiers from the 99th Regiment of Foot who made Kingston their home on 23 September 1818.¹⁷ A list of officers and soldiers who were granted land in the Rideau Valley settlement in November 1819 recorded the regiments

¹⁴ Cookson, ‘Alexander Tulloch and the Chelsea Out-Pensions 1838-43, p. 62.

¹⁵ K. Linch *Britain and Wellington's Army: Recruitment, Society and Tradition 1807-1817* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), p. 139.

¹⁶ Cookson, ‘Early Nineteenth Century Scottish Military Pensioners as Homecoming Soldiers’, p. 331.

¹⁷ Crowder, *British Army Pensioners Abroad 1772-1899*. The data is compiled from the total number of men who are recorded as having settled in Canada throughout the volume. The original data is found in TNA WO120 Volume 69.

that each man had served in. A selection from this list shows twenty-six men from the Glengarry Regiment, twelve from the 52nd Regiment of Foot, eleven from the 41st Regiment of Foot, and seven from the 6th Regiment.¹⁸ So while regiments were important in determining where men chose to settle, the evidence shows that background was not. For example, fourteen veterans settled in Amherstburg between 1815 and 1844. Eight of them were from England (two from Sussex, one each from Lincolnshire, Staffordshire, Hampshire, Kent, Wiltshire and Liverpool). Four of the settlers were from Ireland (Donegal, Meath and two from Armagh), and two were from Scotland having been born in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Finally, the places of birth of thirty-one men who settled in London, Upper Canada, between 1815 and 1835 can be identified. Of this total, eleven were from various parts of England, nine were from Ireland and ten from Scotland. There is no trace of settlement along ethnic or regional settlement as would be expected in civilian emigrants.

The petitions for land submitted by veterans are an important source for understanding the men's motives for settling in particular regions. Petitions reveal that the men did not request to be settled amongst people from their home town, region or country. Instead they spoke of a desire to settle with other discharged soldiers. These requests also confirm that what the colonial authorities wanted to hear as we have seen in the previous chapters the policy of settling veterans together to provide defence. Philip Ryan, formerly an adjutant in the 10th Regiment petitioned for a grant of land in 1818. He asked to be provided with land in York as he had friends in the town and 'would be desirous of settling among them'.¹⁹ There were many soldiers like Ryan who made similar requests. For example, James Goodwin, a private from the 99th Regiment, asked for land in Richmond 'where the general part' of his regiment 'was at present settled'. He added that 'it would be a great convenience'

¹⁸ LAC, Upper Canada Land Petitions, RG1 L3, Perth Military Settlement Bundle, Volume 420, Microfilm C-2739, Folio 23K and 23L.

¹⁹ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 40, Microfilm C-4602, Folio 18993. Petition of Philip Ryan, 14 September 1818.

to be ‘near his friends and acquaintances’.²⁰ James Pringle asked to ‘be allowed to locate to military land in the townships of Plantagenet or Alfred’.²¹ Launcelot Dawson’s petition contained a similar request, this time for ‘a proportion of land in the most convenient military settlement to the River St Lawrence’.²² John Wilson, a sergeant from the 104th Regiment, was anxious to proceed to the Perth military settlement when he was discharged. He had become ‘detained some time behind the others of his regiment who proceeded to the military settlement’ because he had to oversee the closure of a military hospital at Montreal. He asked that his claim be resolved quickly so that he could join the rest of the men.²³

The distribution of land to veterans

Veterans who settled in Canada between 1815 and 1834 were provided with free grants of land which varied in size according to their former rank. The distribution of land to these settlers nurtured community ties and enabled support networks amongst veterans and their families to flourish. This, in turn, strengthened the power of the veterans. Cowan has argued that for a settler in British North America, the opportunity of owning a plot of land on which to build a home and farm ‘was perhaps the colonies’ greatest attraction’.²⁴ Half-pay officers who received significant amounts of land across numerous townships became regional figures who were visible and influential. The fact that they received far more land than other veterans, and indeed civilian settlers, nurtured bonds amongst these men and their families. They worked, socialised and formed business and political associations together. Subsequently they acquired significant power at a local level.

Settlement data reveals the locations of the land granted to individual veterans.

Privates (as well as civilians) received 100 acres in a single lot. Officers’ land was allocated

²⁰ Ibid. Volume 72, Microfilm C-4615, Folio 38260. Petition of James Goodwin, 3 May 1825.

²¹ Ibid. Volume 51, Microfilm C-4606, Folio 25120. Petition of James Pringle, 13 January 1821.

²² LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 68, Microfilm C-4613, Folio 35980. Petition of Launcelot Dawson, 9 August 1824.

²³ LAC, Settlers, RG8-1, Microfilm C-3159, Folio 29.

²⁴ H. Cowan, ‘British Immigration Before Confederation’, *The Canadian Historical Association*, Historical Booklet Number 22 (1978), p. 12.

differently as their lots were not confined to one area of the settlement – rather it was common for their grants to be split into smaller portions across multiple areas. This is significant as it allowed the officers to forge connections and influence over a wider area, in multiple townships instead of being locked into a single plot.

Officers received land through one of two methods. Firstly, they might receive the majority of land in a single township with the remainder of the grant spread into smaller lots in one or two areas. For example, Anthony Leslie received 500 acres, and records show that he registered the completion of his settlement duties on all of the lots on 30th July 1820. His land was broken down into two segments: 400 acres across different plots in Bathurst, and 100 acres in Landsdowne Township.²⁵ Similarly, the majority of Henry Graham's lands were placed in one site as he held 400 acres in different locations in Drummond Township with a single 100 acre lot in Bathurst.²⁶ Secondly, there were a number of soldiers who spread their lots more widely across a large area. For example, Benjamin DeLisle held land in two parts of Drummond, as well as Beckwith and Leeds Townships.²⁷ Francis Cumming held lots in four locations in Drummond, and one each in Oxford, Landsdowne and Bathurst Townships.²⁸ Whether the men distributed their land in two, three or more places, they had a presence in multiple locations across a wide area.

In addition to their significant rural land grants in the military settlements, half-pay officers secured small town lots for themselves in Richmond and Perth. These town quickly developed into the administrative, economic and social hubs for the entire region. Officers were at the heart of this development. The town lots were only an acre at most, yet they ensured the men could set up a permanent residence; by living nearby one another, the half-

²⁵ LAC, Land Petitions of Upper Canada, RG1 L3, Volume 421, Perth Military Settlement Bundle, Petition 21, Page 21b, Microfilm C-2739.

²⁶ Petition 33, Page 33d, Microfilm C-2739.

²⁷ LAC, Land Petitions of Upper Canada RG1 L3, Volume 420, Perth Military Settlement Bundle, Petition 11, Page 11e-11f, Microfilm C-2738.

²⁸ *Ibid.* Petition 18, Page 18b, Microfilm C-2739.

pay officers were able to cultivate business and political relationships. Andrew Playfair owned one acre of land on Herriott Street in Perth. The settlement duties for this site were completed in December 1819, almost a year before the duties were completed on his rural lots.²⁹ Half-pay officers such as Josias Taylor, William Marshall and Henry Graham also held small plots in the town in addition to their large rural grants. Once again these men completed the settlement duties on their town lots ahead of their rural ones which demonstrates their priority was to settle in the town. A total of twenty-nine settlers are listed as residents of Perth town in 1819, seventeen were military migrants and the remaining twelve were civilians.³⁰ Settlement records also show the seventeen soldiers were half-pay officers. These men brought their families with them to the town and set about building homes and businesses.

Discovering the personal details about the civilian settlers and why these individuals and their families were granted land amongst the officers is difficult to ascertain as details of their trades and backgrounds are not listed. Census records for the military settlements are extremely patchy for the 1840s and 1850s, and it has not been possible to identify any of the 1818 settlers. However, pieces of information about them can be ascertained from petitions they subsequently submitted to the colonial government. William Tully, an emigrant from Ireland who settled in the town in 1818, submitted a petition to the lieutenant governor for permission to set up a mill in Perth town, which was duly granted.³¹ John Ferguson, an emigrant from Scotland, submitted a petition in March 1825 for assistance with settling a debt owed to him by an emigrant who had been executed for murder. Ferguson's status in the town is revealed as he described himself as a merchant.³²

Both of these men were involved in business in the town, and this fact might help explain why they were granted the town lots. The fact that the town was settled by half-pay

²⁹ Ibid. Volume 421, Perth Military Settlement Bundle, Petition 60, Page 60a, Microfilm C-2739.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ LAC, Land Petitions of Upper Canada, RG1 L3, Volume 500, Bundle T14, Petition 102, Microfilm C-2835. Petition of William Tully, 9 September 1818.

³² Ibid. Volume 77, Bundle F14, Petition 191a, Microfilm C-1898, Petition of John Ferguson, 7 March 1825.

officers and men involved in business suggests that high status settlers were provided with the town lots. A plan may well have been in place to facilitate the growth of the town into the commercial centre of the area. Several anecdotal remarks on the early years of Perth confirm what is shown in the land records regarding the settlers. On his arrival in Perth, the Reverend William Bell, the first Presbyterian clergyman of the settlement, noted that ‘the Privates settled upon their land, but most of the officers built houses in the village’.³³ Similarly, Jessie Campbell, daughter of the Reverend George Buchanan, recalled that during the first years of its existence, Perth town comprised of a ‘dozen log houses in the woods occupied mainly by the officers of the War of 1812’.³⁴

The half-pay officers who arrived in the military settlements were unique among emigrants in that they were able to hold land across multiple townships as well as having a position in Perth town. This enabled the men to become regional figures with a presence over a wide rural area. In addition, they were able to cultivate connections with other officers living in the town; as the remaining parts of this chapter demonstrate, this could prove vital to their business interests and their ability to dominate local government.

Military ties in practice

By settling together and possessing land grants over a wide area, military migrants maintained links and networks of support that reached across the colonies. This contributed to their ability to gain important positions in local government, as well as their influence in business and agriculture. While this was not true for every settler, there is ample evidence to

³³ W. Bell, *Hints to Emigrants*, Letter 10, p. 52.

³⁴ J. Campbell, *The Pioneer Pastor: Life and Labors of the Reverend George Buchanan, first Presbyterian minister of Beckwith, Lanark County* (Toronto: J. Campbell, 1900), p. 21.

show that through a continued association with other veterans across their new communities, the men demonstrated that they were part of an interconnected world.

Firstly, men who encountered legal problems were able to call on their former comrades for support. John Adamson, a former sergeant with the Glengarry regiment, was fined £20 in 1822 for selling alcohol without a license. He subsequently submitted a petition for the remission of the fine and enclosed a letter of support from several half-pay officers who lived locally. The letter vouched for Adamson's character and asked that the lieutenant governor consider the case.³⁵ Adamson's support came solely from former soldiers and they encompassed a range of different regiments. This is the first example that a connection existed between assistance and military status and was not just something that occurred within regiments. A second soldier who got into trouble was Frances Morgan, a former private in the 99th Regiment. He was sentenced to death for shooting the Deputy Sherriff of Perth in 1831. Morgan petitioned Colborne for clemency stating that he had 'fought, was wounded and bled in the late war with the United States' and that 'in a momentary fit of insanity...labouring under great depression of spirits' shot John Powell.³⁶ In a show of support, ten former soldiers signed a letter which was submitted alongside the petition asking for Morgan's life to be spared. It is not known whether the plea was successful but both examples show that former soldiers could be called upon to rally to the assistance of a comrade in need of help.

The networks of support reached as far as the military administrators of the colonies. This research has shown the influence that former officers had in the governance of the colonies and the impact this had on land granting after 1815. In addition, military settlers had advantages in their attempts to claim local government positions. Clark's study of land and power in Upper Canada provides information about how military service and personal

³⁵ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 55, Microfilm C-4608, Folio 28041. Petition in support of John Adamson, 18 February 1822.

³⁶ Ibid. Volume 109, Microfilm C-6873, Folio 61934.

connections helped secure positions.³⁷ Wright's research on Australia features a chapter on veterans as men of authority and this work is useful in providing a framework for our understanding of the situation in Upper Canada.

The connections that veterans had with the former officers who came to administer the colonies was crucial in aiding the men to secure local government positions. There are examples which show that the status attached to a man who had served in the British Army was enough to open up a range of possibilities. This was evident from the earliest stages of military settlement which began in 1815. Thomas McNamara, a half-pay officer from the Royal Navy petitioned for any available local government position in Upper Canada. His application to Governor Gore referenced a letter which was to be sent from his former commanding officer to the Governor as proof of McNamara's suitability for employment. McNamara also assured Gore that he could produce further testimonials from any of the Captains that he had served under.³⁸ Similar letters of support for military applicants were often sent to the colonial administration from officers who could vouch for the applicant. This is shown in an 1826 letter sent to Maitland by William Campbell relating to an application for the Clerk of the District of Perth made by a half-pay officer named Alexander Fraser. Campbell admitted that he had:

little or no knowledge of this gentleman, but am told he stands high in the estimation of that community [the Perth settlement] as a man of correct sober and industrious habits...from all I have heard of him I believe him to be deserving your kind attention and patronage.³⁹

³⁷ Clarke, *Land, Power and Economics on the Frontier of Upper Canada*.

³⁸ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 24, Microfilm C-4545, Folio 10786. Petition of Thomas McNamara, 16 October 1815.

³⁹ *Ibid.* Volume 79, Microfilm C4618, Folio 42608. Alexander Fraser's application for a position, 7 September 1826.

In Upper Canada, the presence of George Hillier in the colonial government during Maitland's tenure as governor provides an opportunity to see how the connections operated. Hillier had been a Major in the army and had served with Maitland in the Peninsular and at Waterloo. Because of their shared background in the army, the two men became close friends. When Maitland was appointed lieutenant governor in 1818 he brought Hillier to the colony as his secretary in which role he served for ten years (the duration of Maitland's period as lieutenant governor). *The Dictionary of Canadian Biography* has described Hillier as having significant powers to dispense patronage. The veterans knew this as they regularly addressed their applications to Hillier rather than Maitland.

Josias Taylor, a resident of the Perth military settlement, called on his connections when writing to apply for a position in 1828 which he believes would soon become vacant. His letter, which was addressed to Major Hillier, stated:

Presuming upon our former acquaintance as old brother campaigners, and encouraged by the kind offer of service you made me when I last had the pleasure of meeting you in York... that you will be good enough to use your influence with His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor.⁴⁰

Taylor believed that Hillier's close working relationship with Maitland could 'do much' to secure the position for himself.⁴¹ Taylor had addressed the governor personally in an earlier letter, and wrote of his relationship with people in positions of authority:

I am not without friends in this country to whom I have been personally known for many years, among whom is Col Forrest A.D.G to his Lordship the Governor in

⁴⁰ Ibid. Volume 90, Microfilm C6866, Folio 50022. Petition of Josias Taylor, 28 September 1828.

⁴¹ Ibid.

Chief who served in the same regiment with me...I have also the honour to have known Major Hillier your Excellency's secretary.⁴²

Hillier left Upper Canada in 1828 at the end of Maitland's tenure as governor and both men were reassigned to positions in Jamaica. Hillier received a stream of letters from the soldier settlers he had helped, and their content reveals the value that the men placed on their connection with him. Charles Sache wrote to convey his 'sincere thanks for the many acts of kindness...that your promotion and appointments afforded me sincere gratification'.⁴³ Similarly, Anthony Leslie's letter to Hillier set out to 'return to you my most sincere thanks for the many favours I have received through you from first to last and also to congratulate you on your late promotion'.⁴⁴ Before Hillier left the colony, several military settlers made one last effort to promote their interests. Josias Taylor addressed him as 'my dear colonel' and he wrote to 'convey to you my warmest thanks for the kind solicitude therein conveyed on my behalf'.⁴⁵ He asked Hillier to mention him (Taylor) to Maitland for a final time while explaining that 'I should be personally known to His Excellency having (as you are aware) served in the same Brigade with him for upwards of three years'.⁴⁶ Francis Raynes, a military settler resident in Kingston, also sent a letter to Hillier on the eve of his departure in the hope of gaining an appointment. He explained that Maitland's impending departure 'induces men to take the liberty of asking the favour of being mentioned to him for his consideration'.⁴⁷ Raynes requested to be promoted to an Ensign in the local militia and added that 'nearly the

⁴² Ibid. Volume 57, Microfilm C4609, Folio 29470-29473. Petition of Josias Taylor, 3 August 1822.

⁴³ Ibid. Volume 90, Microfilm C6866, Folio 50173. Letter from Charles Sache to Hillier remarking upon his departure from the colonies, 15 October 1828.

⁴⁴ Ibid. Folio 50230.

⁴⁵ Ibid. Volume 90, Microfilm C-6866, Folio 50276. Letter from Josias Taylor to Hillier remarking upon his departure from the colonies, 29 October 1828.

⁴⁶ Ibid. Folio 50277.

⁴⁷ Ibid. Folio 50093.

whole of my life has been spent in His Majesty's service' and his sons 'inclinations and view are towards the army'.⁴⁸

The settlers continued to use their links with the colonial government during Colborne's ten-year tenure as lieutenant governor between 1828 and 1838. Laidlaw has stated that a close connection to a governor or senior colonial official was often crucial in determining whether an individual secured an appointment.⁴⁹ The petitions provide plenty of evidence for this. Josias Taylor's persistent applications for positions continued and he used a note of recommendation prepared for him by Hillier. The letter informed Colborne that Taylor was 'one of the oldest settlers in the district and the first half pay officer who brought a family to it...he has contributed to it as largely as any individual'. Hillier's patronage was such that he asked that if Josias could not have the job, his son Joseph should.⁵⁰ Taylor sent an additional letter to Colborne in the same year and reminded the governor that he 'had the honour of serving with and sometimes under Your Excellency's command'.⁵¹ He followed this by describing in detail the places he had served and the campaigns that he had fought in. This record of service was repeated in an 1837 application to the recently instated lieutenant governor Francis Bond Head to make the new governor aware of his suitability as a candidate for appointments.⁵² Charles Sache wrote two letters to Bond Head's secretary in 1838 requesting to be appointed as a Clerk of the Peace. His first letter asked for 'your kind interference on my behalf for the appointment' as the magistrates had yet to nominate anyone for the position.⁵³

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Z. Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections*, p. 69.

⁵⁰ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries RG5 A1, Volume 92, microfilm C-6866, Folio 50898-05. Petition of Josias Taylor to Hillier for a position for his son, 10 January 1828.

⁵¹ Ibid. Volume 93, Microfilm C6867, Folio 51788, 31 March 1828.

⁵² Ibid. Volume 178, Microfilm C6894, Folio 98412-98414. Petition of Josias Taylor, 25 October 1837.

⁵³ Ibid. Volume 207, Microfilm C6902, Folio 114218. Petition of Charles Sache, 1 October 1838.

Veterans also used their contacts in the army to inform them of upcoming vacancies in local government, as seen in the case of Anthony Leslie in 1822. His letter to Hillier remarked that he had ‘been informed by my brothers in the 69th Regiment that you have been pleased to say I shall have your interest with respect to any appointment’.⁵⁴ He requested to be appointed as inspector of licenses and treasurer ‘and if one of these should be deemed sufficient I would prefer the inspector of licenses’.⁵⁵ In 1835 he applied to be a licensed notary public, and again called on his connections by asking that the governor’s secretary ‘solicit His Excellency’ to grant the position.⁵⁶ In 1818 the serving sheriff of the London district decided to step down from his position. He alerted the retired naval captain John Harris who wrote to the colonial government with the aim of securing the position before the vacancy became available. Harris used his connections to position himself at the front of the queue when a new sheriff was to be selected.⁵⁷

Assistance networks operated amongst the men when it came to seeking appointments. They operated much like the networks between settlers and the colonial government but on a more localised and informal basis as the men called on their former comrades for recommendation. William Matheson sought to use his connections with Donald Fraser, a fellow soldier settler and member of the provincial parliament for Lanark, to secure a position as a magistrate. Fraser wrote to Colborne on Matheson’s behalf to vouch for his suitability for the role. This was based on his status as a former soldier, a man of substantial property, and one of the first arrivals to the area.⁵⁸ The letter even went as far as suggesting that another applicant named Ebenezer Wilson should not be considered by Colborne for the position. He was described as possessing a poor character as well as having questionable

⁵⁴ Ibid. Volume 68, Microfilm C4608, Folio 28498. Petition of Anthony Leslie, 14 April 1822.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid. Volume 149, Microfilm C6885, Folio 81862. Petition of Anthony Leslie, 27 January 1835.

⁵⁷ Ibid. Volume 40, Microfilm C-4602, Folio 18840. Petition of John Harris, 19 August 1818.

⁵⁸ Ibid. Volume 128, Microfilm C-6878, Folio 70372. Petition of William Matheson, 2 April 1832.

loyalty as he 'is in the habit of going to the United States.'⁵⁹ In October 1831 Charles Sache sent a petition to certify the character of a fellow military settler named John Kemp. Sache confirmed that the two men had served together for five years in the 76th Regiment of Foot and that Kemp had 'always conducted himself as a good man, as well as a good soldier'.⁶⁰ A new arrival to Lanark in 1836 named Stephen Moore petitioned for a grant of land and had a former regimental colleague named Reade send a recommendation with his petition. Reade had been established in the area for some years and stated that he had served with Moore in the Peninsular War and certified that 'his conduct on the occasion was most excellent, and I know that many of the officers speak in the highest regard of his character'.⁶¹

A soldier settling in the colonies with military connections was able to utilise this to his own advantage. It is striking that in their petitions for appointments the men did not make it known whether they could read or write, had knowledge of colonial law, were held in esteem in their communities or even expressed their motivations for wanting the positions. Indeed, the colonial authorities were not concerned with ascertaining this information. Instead the petitions tell of military service, and most importantly connections. Here is further evidence that early Upper Canada was a society that valued patronage and connections first and foremost over individual merit.

The 'leading men of the place'

An article in the *Perth Courier* from 1866 marked the anniversary of the founding of the newspaper and remarked on prominent individuals who had lived in the area. It listed half-pay officers and described them as 'the leading men of the place' during the first decades of

⁵⁹ Ibid. Folio 70373.

⁶⁰ Ibid. Volume 98, Microfilm C-6868, Folio 62147. Petition of Charles Sache in favour of John Kemp, 11 October 1831.

⁶¹ Ibid. Volume 190, Microfilm C-6893, Folio 97301. Petition of Stephen Moore, 30 June 1837.

the Perth military settlement.⁶² A group of military settlers came to dominate local government across the military settlement for decades and formed the social and commercial elite. Their grants of land, access to pension money and use of networks and patronage were all key to their success. The experience of the former soldiers in the Perth settlement provides a valuable example of how these men became influential figures in colonial society. The fact that many veterans sought prominent positions is an interesting one, particularly when we keep in mind the changes that took place in the organisation of the British army in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Trustram has argued that the army became more professionalised and bureaucratic so ‘with professionalism came a distancing from the rest of society’.⁶³ Regiments were housed in barracks which were separate from the public. This meant that the men ‘became more isolated from the civil community so they became more self-sufficient, closed communities, jealously guarding their traditions and wary of outside interference’.⁶⁴ There was a difference between the way the men presented themselves to the colonial authorities, and to the civilian population of the settlement. The soldiers settled together and supported each other through the system of petitioning to acquire jobs and secure support. Their claims for jobs were overtly based on their military status. However, their interaction with civilian settlers in terms of their work in agriculture and business was based on an aim of becoming influential civic, rather than military figures.

Local government positions were coveted by the veterans due to the prestige attached to the roles and the income they could provide. The role of a magistrate was particularly valued and indeed discharged soldiers came to dominate these positions in the military settlements. Magistrates had a broad remit; they were responsible for tax collection, licensing premises, appointing minor officials, conducting marriages, supervising construction and

⁶² *Perth Courier*, 5 October 1866, p. 2.

⁶³ M. Trustram, *Women of the Regiment: Marriage and the Victorian Army* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 15.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p. 18.

controlling the use of militia.⁶⁵ They were also responsible for local law enforcement and acted as lower court judges.⁶⁶ Wright has found that magistrates in the Australian colonies ‘were the virtual rulers of the countryside’ and that most vacancies in New South Wales in the 1820s and 30s went to military men.⁶⁷ Magistrates in Upper Canada were appointed by the lieutenant governor, so connections through the military of government was vital in helping an individual secure a job. There were cases, particularly in rural areas where the choice of applicant was low, and Armstrong has argued that in these cases appointments were made out of necessity rather than talent.⁶⁸ As previously mentioned, the colonial authorities did not necessarily ask an applicant to disclose their qualifications for the role in their petition. They were chosen on the basis of their military status rather than confirmation of literacy or aptitude.

In the early years of the Perth settlement, the lieutenant governor relied on recommendations from the superintendents as to who should be appointed as a magistrate. One such letter to Maitland listed five men, all from military backgrounds who were to be considered for the role.⁶⁹ As time progressed the military settlers actively sought out positions for themselves and the frequency of their applications is revealed by examining the catalogues of the *Upper Canada Sundries* collection at Libraries Archives Canada. For example, Charles Sache petitioned for appointments in June 1828, January 1832 and October 1838. Josias Taylor submitted applications in August 1822, September 1828, September 1833, June 1835 and October 1837. Lastly, Anthony Leslie applied in April 1822, February

⁶⁵ Clarke, *Land, Power and Economics on the Frontier of Upper Canada*, p. 383.

⁶⁶ S. D. Lewthwaite, ‘Law and Authority in Upper Canada: The Justices of the Peace in the Newcastle District 1803-1840’ (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Toronto, 2001), p. 4.

⁶⁷ Wright, *Wellington’s Men in Australia*, p. 115.

⁶⁸ F. H. Armstrong, ‘The Oligarchy of the Western District of Upper Canada 1788-1841’ in J. K. Johnson, and B. Wilson, ed. *Historical Essays on Upper Canada: New Perspectives* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2000), p. 526.

⁶⁹ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 49, Microfilm C-4605, Folio 24127. Letter to recommend men for the position of magistrate in the Perth military settlement, 9 September 1820.

1824 and January 1835.⁷⁰ The men were proactive in their pursuit of jobs and would often apply before a vacancy had arisen. Indeed, a rumour that a vacancy might soon arise was enough to trigger applications. In his letter for a position in June 1828, Charles Sache wrote to Hillier that he believed ‘there is a probability of a situation shortly becoming vacant in the district’.⁷¹ Alexander Fraser applied in advance for the position of Register for the County due to the health of the incumbent whose ‘death may be soon looked for’.⁷² Josias Taylor justified his letter for a vacancy that had not yet arisen due to ‘the various reports in circulation here at the situation of Sheriff becoming vacant’.⁷³ He was concerned that applications from others were about to be made and did not wish to miss out on the potential opportunity. The frequent applications illustrate the proactive way in which veterans sought out positions for themselves even though many came to hold multiple offices at the same time. His second petition further elaborated on what he saw were his main qualification: ‘I can only say that my father, who was a much respected British officer, gave me the education of a gentleman, which character traits I have maintained’. He was of the opinion that as a high ranking former officer he should be allowed to take up the position of magistrate as ‘from the description of persons settled in this part of the country, the qualifications of a magistrate are, with few exceptions, only to be found amongst officers’.⁷⁴

The result of the numerous applications meant that military men came to dominate positions across the townships of the military settlements. An article in the *Perth Courier* from 1842 listed the men from the Bathurst, Montague, Lanark and Perth townships who had recently been appointed as magistrates. Of the forty men listed, fourteen of them had served

⁷⁰ These dates have been gathered from the catalogue collections of the Upper Canada Sundries records. See Microfilm C-6866, C-6874, C-6902, C-4609, C-6867, C-6894.

⁷¹ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries RG5 A1, Volume 89, Microfilm C6865, Folio 49126. Petition of Charles Sache, 4 June 1828.

⁷² Ibid. Volume 126, Microfilm C6878, Folio 69719. Petition of Alexander Fraser, 27 February 1833.

⁷³ Ibid. Volume 133, Microfilm C6880, Folio 73317-73318. Petition of Josias Taylor, 14 September 1833.

⁷⁴ Ibid. Folio 28612.

in the British army.⁷⁵ These men were among some of the first settlers to the region. This means that more than twenty years after its formation, the former soldiers who were amongst the first wave of settlers were still influential figures. Clarke has found that once an individual was granted the office of magistrate, removal from power was rare.⁷⁶ A magistrate was a coveted post which was ‘considered a decisive test of belonging to the rank of Gentleman’.⁷⁷ Former soldiers such as Henry Graham, Roderick Matheson, Anthony Leslie and Josias Taylor were longstanding magistrates.⁷⁸

Further demonstration of the veterans’ long-term involvement in local government is shown in the composition of the members of the Grand Jury of Perth from June 1842. A total of seventeen men are listed as members, five of whom were former soldiers (Roderick Matheson, a half-pay officer and foreman of the jury; Anthony Leslie, a half-pay officer; Charles Sache, a half-pay officer; John Adams, a private from the Glengarry Regiment; and John Hall, a private from the 104th Regiment).⁷⁹ Once again these men were amongst the initial wave of migrants to the area between 1815 and 1818. Of all of the military settlers who held positions in the area, there was a small group who came to hold multiple jobs.

Lieutenant Colonel Charles Sache had an important role in the financial administration of the Bathurst area. In 1835 he was appointed Clerk for the district, then Treasurer several years later.⁸⁰ In 1841 he was appointed as District Coroner which meant he received an additional income of £2 11s 8d per year. As well as being a magistrate and foreman of the Jury, Roderick Matheson was appointed to head a committee tasked with building a new gaol after the previous one had been destroyed by fire.⁸¹ Anthony Leslie also served as Inspector of

⁷⁵ *Perth Courier*, September 13 1842, p. 2.

⁷⁶ Clarke, *Land, Power and Economics on the Frontier of Upper Canada*, p. 386.

⁷⁷ Wright, *Wellington’s Men in Australia*, p. 122.

⁷⁸ *Perth Courier*, 13 September 1842, p. 3.

⁷⁹ *Perth Courier*, 7 June 1842, p. 2.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 27 March 1835, p. 3, and 7 Dec 1838, p. 2.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* 15 March 1842, p. 2.

Licences for Bathurst for many years, and Josias Taylor was the longstanding Postmaster for Perth.⁸²

The involvement of veterans in local government extended to their participation in elections for positions in the House of Assembly. The men tended to base their candidacy by declaring their prominent position in the community, as well as their wealth, influence, and position as a long-standing resident. Military men were elected to positions of power during the early years of their settlement. In 1820 Charles Stewart, a half-pay Captain, was elected to represent Amhertsburg in the house of assembly. The letter sent to Hillier which announced his election stated that Stewart had been repeatedly solicited by many of the town's most prominent inhabitants. He was credited as possessing 'superior abilities, integrity, and unshaken loyalty'.⁸³ Electoral success was also experienced by Donald Fraser in 1833 who beat Thomas Reade (also a half-pay officer) in the county of Lanark.⁸⁴

The Upper Canadian elections of 1836 marked a high point for the involvement of military men in local politics, as Governor Francis Bond Head sought a conservative mandate against the rising power of the reformers. The *Perth Courier* described the announcement of the election as an opportunity to 'check the growing symptoms of republicanism'. The editorial called on local people to support the lieutenant governor by rejecting reformers and radicals.⁸⁵ The *Toronto Courier* also supported Bond Head's decision to call an election to strengthen conservative forces in the colony. Its editorial called on local people to send the opponents of the colonial government 'back to that obscurity from which a majority of them, illiterate and shuffling as they are, ought never to have emerged'.⁸⁶ In this atmosphere former

⁸² Ibid. 6 February 1836, p. 3, and 23 January 1835, p. 3.

⁸³ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 47, Microfilm C-4604, Folio 23096. Announcement of Captain Stewart's election to represent Amhertsburg, 3 April 1820.

⁸⁴ Ibid. Volume 125, Microfilm C-6877, Folio 69010. Announcement of the election of Donald Fraser in Lanark, 13 January 1833.

⁸⁵ *Perth Courier*, 13 May 1836, p. 3.

⁸⁶ *Toronto Courier*, 13 March 1836, p. 3.

military men put themselves forward as candidates for election. In Bathurst the election was contested by Dr Thom, Thomas Radenhurst, Malcom Cameron (all half-pay officers), and John A Powell (son of a half-pay officer).⁸⁷ The victor, Dr Alexander Thom, posted an election address in the local newspaper several months before the election. His qualifications included being one of the first settlers in the area and having ‘shared in common with you those difficulties and privations which are unavoidable in the formation of a new settlement’. If elected, Thom promised to ‘uphold the constitution and the connection that so happily exists between this colony and the Crown of Great Britain’. Making an appeal to the former soldiers and referencing his own military past he pledged to ‘solider-like stand foremost in the ranks to defend our noble sailor King against his enemies’.⁸⁸ Involvement in local elections was a further means for the prominent half-pay officers to increase their local influence. Their candidacy was also a mark of the power that these men held in their position as community leaders.

As part of their remit as leading figures in local government, veterans took centre stage when dignitaries visited the settlements. These events provided the opportunity for influential soldier settlers –particularly the half-pay officers- to engage with the colonial government and demonstrate their status as the local elite. These visits were marked by displays of loyalty and expressions of attachment to the empire. Proclamations signed by the inhabitants of the area were issued to the visitor and displays from the local militia were organised. These events are significant for two reasons. Firstly, they show the extent to which the leading military settlers of an area were involved in the organisation of the event and the rallying of their communities to honour the governor. In his study of Governor General Bagot’s visit to Toronto in 1840, Goheen has argued that it provided ‘an opportunity for the

⁸⁷ *Perth Courier*, 1 July 1836, p. 3.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* 12 February 1836, p. 3.

elite to stage an event'.⁸⁹ Secondly, the visits were also moments for negotiation between colonial governments and local communities: the latter customarily used the opportunity presented by the visit to request improvements or assistance from the colonial government. The efforts made by soldier settlers in leading these expressions was not without criticism. There was a sense that the occasions were hijacked by prominent military men as a means of asserting their own power and influence in their local area.

Visits to the military settlements show how these events were organised by the local elite. Lieutenant governor Maitland visited Perth town in February 1824. The residents presented him with an address to honour the occasion. The document affirmed the loyalty of the population and described their sense of gratitude that he had visited the town. The address was signed by 'the magistrates and respectable inhabitants of the town of Perth and its vicinity'.⁹⁰ The third chapter of this dissertation has shown that the serving magistrates were generally former soldiers (mostly half-pay officers) and they would have considered themselves as constituting the area's respectable class. They informed Maitland of the 'orderly and industrious character of settlers sent here by His Majesty's Government' and ended with a pledge 'of the loyalty of all of the inhabitants of the Bathurst District'. Governor General Dalhousie visited Perth in 1828 and once again the inhabitants marked the occasion by expressing their loyalty and former soldiers took a prominent role. The address was signed by fifteen military settlers and ten emigrants.⁹¹ The order which the signatures appeared on the list is revealing as the first people to sign were the leading half-pay officers of the area. For example, the signatures of Roderick Matheson, Henry Graham, Alexander Thom, Charles Sache and Josias Taylor are first. Whereas the emigrant settlers such as John Fisher appear at

⁸⁹ P. Goheen, 'Parading: A Lively Tradition in Early Victorian Toronto' in A. Baker, ed, *Ideology and Landscape in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 337.

⁹⁰ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, Volume 76, Microfilm C-4616, Folio 40891. Address to Maitland from the inhabitants of Perth on the occasion of his visit to the town, 20 February 1826.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* Volume 90, Microfilm C-6866, Folio 49835. Address to Lord Dalhousie from the inhabitants of Perth, 3 September 1828.

the end of the list.⁹² This was also the case with visits in Perth as the military settler elite were at the forefront of organising the commemorations.

A visit to the area by Colborne in October 1835 provided another opportunity for the prominent community members to take a leading role. Though this visit marked the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the settlement, the first military men to arrive in 1815 continued to maintain their position of influence in the community. According to the *Perth Courier*, upon his arrival, Colborne was presented by an address which was remarked to have been composed and signed ‘by the purely British inhabitants of this place’.⁹³ This document described the ‘deep sense of respectful attachment’ the inhabitants felt for Colborne.⁹⁴ The familiar signatures of Henry Graham, Josias Taylor, Alexander McMillan and Anthony Leslie (all former officers) feature at the top of the list. The presentation of the address to Colborne was followed by an artillery salute and a display carried out by the local militia regiment in the lieutenant governor’s honour.

As well as providing a platform for prominent individuals to show their loyalty to the colonial government, a visit and an address also presented an opportunity for a community to secure services and assistance from the colonial administration in return for their show of loyalty. The people of Perth told Colborne of their ‘devoted and unalterable attachment to our Sovereign and British constitution’ in 1835.⁹⁵ However, they also presented him with a petition asking for a supply of side arms and ammunition for the local militia ‘for the purpose of practicing more frequently than they have heretofore’.⁹⁶ The article in the *Perth Courier* reported that Colborne had agreed to this request and promised to deal with it when he

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ *Perth Courier*, 16 October 1835, page 3.

⁹⁴ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, Volume 158, Microfilm C-6887, Folio 86713. Address from the inhabitants of Perth to Colborne on the occasion of his visit to the town, October 1835.

⁹⁵ Ibid. Volume 169, Microfilm C-6891, Folio 92691. Address from the inhabitants of Perth to Colborne, August 1836.

⁹⁶ *Perth Courier*, 16 October 1835, page 3.

returned to York. The language of other addresses in different parts of Upper Canada shows that communities expected support in return for their show of loyalty. For example, in Niagara in 1828, the address presented to Colborne wrote of the people's gratitude for 'the appointment of so distinguished an officer to preside over our interests'.⁹⁷ A visit to Amherstburg in 1829 prompted the inhabitants to state that they were happy in the knowledge 'of Your Excellency's desire to promote the welfare of this province'. The people of the town were sure that the government would continue to 'improve their happiness and prosperity'.⁹⁸

The fact that veterans monopolised the organisation and put themselves in a position of prominence alongside the governor was not without criticism. An anonymous letter to the editor of the *Perth Courier* after the 1835 visit registers a complaint about the conduct of the half-pay officers. It argued that 'the address was signed by but a very few of the purely British inhabitants, and not by the whole of them'. The author complained that 'I consider myself as purely British as any one [sic] who signed the address; and yet, so far from signing it, I never heard of it, till after it had been presented'. He believed that the result of this was 'to deceive the public, especially those at a distance, by leading them to suppose that many people here are anti-British, or disaffected to the British government, which is not the case'.⁹⁹

The reaction to the visits of dignitaries begs the question of what the wider community thought of the domination of local government by the veterans over such a long period of time. Reverend Bell commented on half-pay officers' grip on positions of power in the Perth settlement when he wrote that it 'gives them a greater degree of influence in the settlement that is perhaps agreeable to the civilians, few of whom hold commissions of the

⁹⁷ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, Volume 90, Microfilm C-6866, Folio 50258. Address from the inhabitants of Niagara to Colborne on his visit to the town, 27 October 1828.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* Volume 97, Microfilm C-6869, Folio 54697. Address of the inhabitants of Amherstburg to Colborne upon his visit to the town 1828.

⁹⁹ *Perth Courier*, 23 October 1835, p. 3.

peace'.¹⁰⁰ There is evidence that civilians objected to the soldiers who were appointed as magistrates. In 1826 complaints were raised to the sheriff about the conduct of a half pay officer named Fraser. The letter does not detail the nature of the charges, but Fraser responded that he was surprised to have learned that locals had made accusations against his character as a magistrate and colonel of the militia. He claimed to be able to 'easily refute' the complaints and asked Hillier for advice on how to proceed.¹⁰¹ In 1825 a complaint was made to Sheriff Powell about the conduct of a soldier settler in Perth. Powell's reply does not detail who made the accusation, or the nature of the issue. Instead he wrote that John Robinson, the settler in question, was 'in his manner and appearance he is gentlemanly and intelligent, but unfortunately addicted to drinking'.¹⁰² Powell also wrote about another former soldier named McKeag, who despite being a magistrate, had a 'constant habit of getting drunk with the other pensioners'. McKeag was said to often appear 'in a state of intoxication'.¹⁰³ Powell concluded that out of the total population of soldier settlers in Perth 'there are others whos [sic] conduct is anything but what it ought to be'.¹⁰⁴

The power held by the former soldiers was challenged more frequently as the military settlements developed over time. Public complaints against the conduct of a magistrate in the military township of Cavan resulted in the man's dismissal from office. Petitions were sent to Colborne over several years regarding the behaviour of John Lister which shows that he was a long-standing object of anger from the community. The first letter was sent in 1828 which complained of Lister's 'arbitrary and unjust' decision making and that 'there are many who complain of his judgements'.¹⁰⁵ In 1833 Lister was the subject of a petition from the

¹⁰⁰ Bell, *Hints to Emigrants*, Letter 19, p. 32.

¹⁰¹ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 76, Microfilm C-4616, Folio 40663. Letter from Fraser to Maitland refuting the claims made against him, 23 January 1826.

¹⁰² Ibid. Volume 75, Microfilm C-4616, Folio 39907. Powell's letter to Maitland regarding the conduct of a veteran in Perth, 20 November 1825.

¹⁰³ Ibid. Folio 39908.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. Folio 39909.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. Volume 89, Microfilm C-6865, Folio 48968.

inhabitants of the township asking for his removal from office. It claimed that he had refused to hear evidence against accused people due to his bias towards some parties. Lister was also deemed to be unfit to be a magistrate as he had been charged for stealing barrels of salt from a local merchant.¹⁰⁶ The community took collective action to remove him from office.

Alexander Fraser was again the subject of controversy in 1851 and 1852. As one of the earliest arrivals to the Perth military settlement, he had maintained his position as magistrate for decades. An article in the local newspaper stated that several petitions had been made to the government complaining of Fraser's conduct as a magistrate. His behaviour is described as 'overbearing and insolent' and that while serving as chairman of the Quarter Sessions he was 'tyrannical, and his decisions so arbitrary and unjust the Hon William Morris and several other gentlemen of Perth had to exert themselves to get him removed'.¹⁰⁷ As a result, Fraser lost his job as a magistrate. The article also stated that Fraser boasted of having '*cut the heads of six Yankees at one blow [sic]*'. The fact that this was written in italics suggests it was a direct quote of Fraser's and one that he often said. It also opens his conduct up to ridicule as well as anger and makes him appear as a figure rooted in the past whose past actions had little relevance to the readers. When offering a conclusion on the role that military men played in the area, the *Perth Courier* remarked that 'war is a bad school for a man to administer justice in; and old military officers seldom make good peace officers'.¹⁰⁸ Yet for the previous three decades the military officers had been employed as peace officers, and the *Perth Courier* had not previously questioned their role. The timing of this article suggests that a new generation was questioning the power which remained in the hands of the surviving military settlers.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. Volume 128, Microfilm C-6867, Folio 70722.

¹⁰⁷ *Perth Courier*, 5 November 1852, p. 2.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

Beyond the Perth military settlement, veterans who held positions of power also faced scrutiny and criticism of their actions from the civilian public. In Sandwich Township, a half-pay lieutenant named Charles Elliott had served as chairman of the Quarter Sessions Court. In 1835 he stepped down citing ill health. However, a letter to Colborne complained that Elliot continued to attend the court and this had disrupted proceedings as he seemed unwilling to relinquish his responsibilities. The magistrates of the area sought clarification from Colborne as to whether Elliot still possessed the authority as chairman on the court.¹⁰⁹ A complaint from the settler community could result in a military man losing his position. For example, Benjamin Street, a half-pay naval captain, wrote to Maitland asking why his position as magistrate for the township of March had not been renewed for 1823. Street admitted that he suspected ‘something prejudicial to the reputation’ had resulted in this omission and asked Maitland whether ‘others have been influential with Your Excellency’ in bringing about the decision.¹¹⁰ In the township of Talbot, a magistrate named Edward Allan was the subject of a complaint by the inhabitants of the area. They sought his removal from office citing his ‘violent and lawless character’.¹¹¹ Despite the level of power and influence held by military settlers, they were not immune from criticisms directed from the local community.

Vance has argued that a new generation of inhabitants of the military settlements began to come to prominence during the 1830s and 40s. Young lawyers formed the core of this group as they were educated, wealthy, ambitious and keen to prove themselves as gentlemen.¹¹² The buildings in Perth town stand today as testament to their wealth, as the most prominent lawyers built the grandest stone houses in the area. The law was a respectable

¹⁰⁹ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 155, Microfilm C-6866, Folio 85015. Letter from the magistrates of Sandwich to Colborne regarding a magistrate named Elliott, 18 July 1835.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. Volume 59, Microfilm C-4610, Folio 30827. Benjamin Street’s letter to Maitland asking why he was not considered for the position of magistrate, 16 January 1823.

¹¹¹ Ibid. Volume 102, Microfilm C-6871, Folio 58170. Complaint from the inhabitants of Talbot regarding the conduct of the magistrate Edward Allan, 13 October 1830.

¹¹² Vance, *Imperial Immigrants*, p. 106.

profession which opened up government jobs. It attracted ambitious second and third generation Canadians.¹¹³ Armstrong has argued that during the first years of settlement, government jobs tended to be given to anyone who was available. But as time passed and the towns became more established, appointments were more likely to be given to trustworthy people, favoured by education, business or wealth.¹¹⁴ However, the number of government jobs available did not keep pace with the growth of population so there was more competition and demand for new jobs and more pressure and those who had held positions for years to step aside.¹¹⁵ The criticism of Fraser and the other former soldiers shows that their monopoly of government jobs was being questioned by educated second generation inhabitants. The civilian settlers, who constituted a majority of the population, would not always accept the power of the military migrants. This power was based on their access to patronage and the connections they had with the colonial administration. The importance of these challenges suggest that the method used by the veterans to acquire the jobs was not acceptable to civilians. The final chapter of this thesis argues that the world of patronage was viewed with discomfort by the middle of the nineteenth-century and colonial society came to value individual effort and hard work.

Beyond the sphere of local government, veterans, with their pension income, land grants and connections, succeeded in becoming prosperous figures in business and finance in the military settlements. This meant that they had an important role in their communities from the earliest days of settlement. Their activities were not confined to any single area as their land grants allowed them to developed commercial ventures on a regional scale.

Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Playfair of the 194th Regiment, came to Upper Canada with his

¹¹³ Johnson, *Becoming Prominent*, p. 23.

¹¹⁴ Armstrong, 'The Oligarchy of the Western District', p. 525.

¹¹⁵ Johnson, *Becoming Prominent*, p. 20.

wife and three children in 1817.¹¹⁶ Although he was granted an acre of land in Perth town for his family home, he built a number of mills, houses and a church across his land in Drummond Township. The area subsequently became known as Playfair Mills.¹¹⁷ Henry Graham, an Irish half-pay officer from the 103rd Regiment, and Roderick Matheson of the Glengarry Fencibles were among the first settlers to arrive in the Perth area in 1815 and both quickly established stores in the town. Matheson developed significant commercial interests across a wide area and his business continued to be operated by his decedents into the late nineteenth-century. In 1825 his commercial interests expanded beyond the area of Perth town as he purchased land for a carding factory. His petition to Maitland on the subject explained that he was ‘in extensive business here and has been for some years passed’ and that the works he planned to open would be of public benefit as there was no carding machine in the Bathurst district.¹¹⁸

Not all of the men were equipped with skills and experience to succeed in business. There was a diverse range of different trades amongst the men who came to the colonies, but the most dominant by far was that of agricultural labourer. Coss’ study of the trades of new recruits in 1803 reveals that men from a range of backgrounds enlisted in the army. He argues that their occupational backgrounds at enlistment presents ‘a picture of probably decent and fairly young men, driven into the army because of economic circumstances’.¹¹⁹ Coss’ methodology can be adapted and utilised to reveal the trades that military migrants to Upper Canada had through analysing the papers of the men supported by the Chelsea Hospital.

A sample of 280 soldiers who settled in Upper Canada between 1815 and 1855 has been taken from the list and their details cross-referenced with archival data to gather their

¹¹⁶ HC, Perth Military Settlement Fonds, Volume 1, Microfilm C4651, Folio 54.

¹¹⁷ *Perth Courier*, 29 January 29 1851, p. 4.

¹¹⁸ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 70, Microfilm C4614, Folio 37435. Petition of Roderick Matheson, 19 February 1825.

¹¹⁹ Coss, *All for the King’s Shilling*, p. 79.

trades. The sample consists of a range of infantry, cavalry and artillery regiments and has also been defined by the number of incomplete records.¹²⁰ The largest proportion of men (58.2% of all the settlers considered) were labourers. An explanation of this can be sought from the conclusions found in Coss' study. His results also show labourers as making up the largest proportion of recruits and therefore states most of these men would have been agricultural labourers who depended upon seasonal employment.¹²¹ The second greatest trade amongst the soldiers was weaver, and this makes up 14% of the total. Once again there is a correlation with Coss' 1803 study which also placed weavers as the second most common trade. The research shows that after weavers are shoemakers (7%) and tailors (4.6%). Therefore, these four categories account for 82.3% of all the trades. However, this high percentage should not obscure the diverse range of trades present in the sample size. Indeed, a further twenty-six different trades have been recorded with blacksmiths being the most prevalent. The remainder of the trades were generally registered by two or three men. This includes several millers such as John Gilley of the 2nd Regiment of Life Guards who settled in York.¹²² There are also three carpenters such as Patrick Kinsley of the 15th Regiment of Foot who settled in London, and three miners such as John McKenzie of the Royal Engineers who settled in York.¹²³ There are also a number of individual trades such as Charles Dixon from the 77th Regiment of Foot who was a carriage maker, George Leslie from the 71st Regiment who was a painter, and Robert Winter of the 32nd Regiment who was a wine cooper.¹²⁴ Accordingly, these men could have been forced into the army due to economic reasons, and that they had 'real trades and expertise and were more likely to be older men'¹²⁵.

¹²⁰ A list of all of the pensioners who settled in Upper and Lower Canada has been taken from N. Crowder, *British Army Pensioners Abroad 1772-1899*, and then the names cross-referenced with TNA WO120/35.

¹²¹ Coss, *All for the King's Shilling*, p. 70.

¹²² TNA, Record of Individual Service of John Gilley 1825-1826, WO97/4/96, p. 1.

¹²³ Ibid. Patrick Kinsley 1815-1819, WO97/364/60, p. 1.

¹²⁴ Ibid. Charles Dixon 1826-1848, WO97/879/61, p. 1. George Leslie 1808-1832, WO97/833/68, p. 1. Robert Winter 1817-1846, WO97/509/158, p. 1.

¹²⁵ Coss, *All for the King's Shilling*, p. 68.

Although the men involved in business and local government had an important impact on the development of colonial society, they were outnumbered by those military men (mostly privates) who set up as farmers on their smaller grants of land. In his tour of the colonies for his 1850 report on the condition of pensioners, J. D. Tulloch, staff officer for pensions, paid a visit to the settlements in the Rideau Valley. He described that while travelling on the road from Bytown to Richmond he passed through well-cultivated farms, some of which were owned by old soldiers.¹²⁶ He was met by forty-four former soldiers in Richmond and discovered that they were doing well. Of this number, forty men were farmers and just two stated that they were unable to feed their families from the produce cultivated on their land.¹²⁷ In regards to the area around Richmond, Tulloch remarked that ‘the soil is very good, and the results show that with its advantage and good road, military settlers have no difficulty in getting forward’.¹²⁸ While travelling to Perth town he met forty-one men from the surrounding areas; nearly all were engaged in agriculture and all were prosperous apart from three men who complained of being granted land which was rocky or swampy.¹²⁹ The report explained that while the men living in the military settlements were generally doing well, they were ‘beginning to be far too advanced in life for day labour’ so their children were beginning to take on the management of their farms.¹³⁰

The descriptions of veterans as settlers in contemporary accounts (among them Moodie’s) report men living in rural areas as isolated pioneer farmers.¹³¹ However, we should still remember that these men were connected with other settlers and benefited from their military ties; evidence demonstrates that this was certainly the case for rural settlers in the Rideau Valley region. One way men stayed connected was through the Perth Agricultural

¹²⁶ Tulloch, *Report in the Inspection of Pensioners in the North American Provinces*, p. 17.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.* p. 18.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ Moodie, *Roughing it in the Bush*, p. 365.

Society (formed February 1840). The aim of the society was to develop the ‘improvement, prosperity and wealth’ of agricultural settlers in the Perth area through the sharing of farming knowledge, livestock and equipment.¹³² The society organised auctions of livestock, held regular advice meetings, distributed equipment and engaged its members in social activities such as agricultural competitions.¹³³ A number of former soldiers had important roles in the founding and operation of the society, and this provides an example of military migrants working together over a wide area. Anthony Leslie, a half-pay officer, was appointed as the society’s first president. Alexander Ferguson, also a half-pay officer was appointed as vice president, and William Robinson, a former private was made a director. These men, along with many other former soldiers from the military settlement, constituted the bulk of the membership of the society.¹³⁴

Another way for the veterans to exercise their power and authority over the population was through their involvement in the colonial militia. Indeed, former soldiers across the colony were a significant presence in militia regiments, particularly in the military settlements. As well as making up rank and file members they also dominated officer positions. Joining the colonial militia provided former soldiers with a chance to carry on a form of military service and it also allowed them to serve again alongside former comrades. The militia also presented an opportunity for half-pay officers to continue in positions of command, prestige and responsibility. In addition to this, being a militiaman meant that former soldiers could take part in militaristic pageantry. Local units held regular muster meetings where they would practice drill and march together through their community. During the rebellions of the late 1830s, former soldiers responded to calls to serve in the militia. This played on their sense of loyalty and patriotism.

¹³² *Perth Courier*, 15 February 1840, p. 2.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.* 9 March 1841, p. 3.

The presence of former British army soldiers in the ranks of the militia can be ascertained by comparing the names with settlement records. This method shows that half-pay officers tended to hold high ranking positions in local regiments and there was a particularly strong presence of former soldiers in the military settlements. Three regiments of militia were formed from the Lanark military settlement in 1825 and comprised of eighty-eight men. It has been possible to confirm that nineteen of the twenty-nine members of the First Regiment of Lanark militia were former soldiers.¹³⁵ Most of the officer class was comprised of military settlers. For examples James Powell was the colonel in command of the regiment and he had served as a Major in the 103rd Regiment of Foot. Alexander McMillan was the second ranking militia officer and he had been a captain in the Glengarry Fencibles. The Second militia regiment shows a similar story as its colonel, William Marshall, had been a captain in the British Army. The militia regiments formed in the neighbouring military settlement of Glengarry shows a similar picture as its leading officers had also been high ranking British army soldiers.¹³⁶ As with the half-pay officers desire to hold local government positions, they also actively sought out high ranking roles in the militia. This helps to explain the earlier findings. For example, Anthony Leslie wrote to Hillier in 1824 to request that he be appointed as lieutenant colonel of the local regiment (a request which was granted). He argued that his previous military experience would be a benefit to the rank and file of the militia. His letter stated that ‘I am confident you are aware of the motely crews that too frequently disgrace the rank...when I see daily around me field officers from the lower case of society’ who brought ‘quarters of gin and plugs of tobacco’ to militia meetings. Leslie argued his military service meant that he was a gentleman so was best placed to improve the existing regiment.¹³⁷ Alexander Fraser also wrote to Hillier in

¹³⁵ LAC, Upper Canada Militia, R1022-13-X, Microfilm T-S488, Folio 16.

¹³⁶ Ibid. Folio 1.

¹³⁷ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 65, Microfilm C-4612, Folio 34537. Petition of Anthony Leslie, 24 February 1824.

1820 to secure the command of the 1st Regiment of Glengarry militia. He quoted his ‘twelve years of active service and of the responsibility of the character he was made for himself during his residence in the country’ as the main reasons that he should be granted the position.¹³⁸

Veterans enjoyed an active social life in the Rideau Valley military settlements, particularly the half-pay officers who constituted the social elite of the area. Books and articles written in the late nineteenth-century look back on the first years of the Perth settlement after 1815 and provide anecdotes and comments on social standing in the area. These accounts, alongside Reverend Bell’s diaries, tell of an active social life in the area, of which half-pay officers were at the centre. Jesse Campbell remarked that ‘the people divided into cliques and factions, which had little social intercourse with each other’.¹³⁹ One of these factions comprised of the half-pay officers who ‘contrived to have a jolly good time until death ended the scene’.¹⁴⁰ Bell’s diaries told tales of debauchery amongst the half-pay officers on the town. Throughout his time in the settlement he was regularly offended by their actions and believed they should have set a better example for the rest of the community. On one occasion Bell refused to baptise the illegitimate child of Alexander McMillan, and several years later took the same stance with the illegitimate child of Roderick Matheson.¹⁴¹ He also disapproved of formal social events which took place in the area such as the dress balls held on special occasions. Bell criticised the attendees for being concerned with ‘nothing but dress visiting and amusement’.¹⁴² The protests in Bell’s diaries were not just confined to the officer class: the morality of all levels of society was questioned.¹⁴³ The diaries also describe a time in which Bell attended a ball given by Fraser in honour of his

¹³⁸ Ibid. Volume 50, Microfilm C-4605, Folio 24580.

¹³⁹ Buchanan, *The Pioneer Pastor*, p. 21.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 45.

¹⁴¹ R. D. Richmond, *‘There is a moral wilderness requiring cultivation’: Religious and Social Regulation in Perth Upper Canada 1817-1827* (Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Guelph 2007), p. 89.

¹⁴² Ibid. p. 55.

¹⁴³ Vance, *Imperial Immigrants*, p. 81.

child's christening in 1827. He believed that a ball 'was not the most suitable' event to follow a christening and remarked on the dancing and lavish meal in which no expense was spared. Such extravagant celebrations were 'unwise as our entertainers had a large family, and were often in debt'.¹⁴⁴ This event also shows an example of conspicuous consumption to mark Fraser's membership of the settlement's elite. In addition to the former soldiers, officers' wives enjoyed an active social life in Perth and were said to be 'dressed beautifully and even if they did not go the numerous dinners, had quite a gay time socially, and adapted themselves to their surroundings as only soldiers' wives can'.¹⁴⁵

Despite what Bell may have thought, evidence shows that some half-pay officers saw themselves as able to set an example for the other settlers in terms of how to behave. A group of officers and 'principle inhabitants' of the military settlement petitioned the Duke of Richmond in 1819 fearing that the military superintendence was about to be withdrawn. The petition stated that the men had tried to lead by example in the settlement in order to promote a 'nursery for a loyal and rising generation who it is hoped will emulate their father's service, in defence of what must ever be dearest to them-their country'.¹⁴⁶ In a separate petition to Richmond in 1819, another half-pay officer explained that since he came to the settlement he had 'with my very limited means done more real good for the settlement than the majority who have resided since its formation'.¹⁴⁷ He described himself as an officer and a gentleman who had the support of the respectable inhabitants of the area.

The different experience of Commuted Pensioners

Not all of the veterans enjoyed the same level of success in their new lives. In general, the men who took part in the commutation scheme fared far worse than those who continued to

¹⁴⁴ Bell, *The Condensed Diaries of the Rev William Bell*, p. 32.

¹⁴⁵ M. G. Armour 'A few notes about the forming of a military settlement at Perth and surrounding country' *Perth Historical and Antiquarian Society* (1900).

¹⁴⁶ LAC, Settlers RG8-1, Microfilm C-3159, Folio 75.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.* Folio 26.

receive regular pension payments. In his guide to emigrants, Cowan stated that an income from a pension enabled the men to ‘support their families in comfort during the first several years of their location...placing them on the scale of reputable society.’¹⁴⁸ The military men in the colonial government looked on the commuted pensioners and the poverty which surrounded them with disdain. The plight of these men led to questions being asked by the colonial authorities about the suitability of all former soldiers as settlers.

The cause of the commuted pensioners’ poverty and failure was rooted in the administration of the scheme itself. Difficulties were quickly encountered when the colonial office attempted to settle the pensioners, and Johnson states that ‘red tape and stupidity [were] given free reign’.¹⁴⁹ Initially the migrants and their families arrived in the port of Quebec, but their paperwork and identification details were sent to Halifax. This resulted in a delay for the pensioners being correctly identified, paid their lump sum and settled on their land grants. Johnson has also argued that some of the participants did not fully comprehend the nature of the scheme, particularly because they would no longer be eligible to receive their pension payments. In the first few years of the scheme’s operation, John Colborne complained that many of the settlers ‘have squandered away their commutation allowance, and cannot, without further assistance, remain on their land’¹⁵⁰. As early as 1833, Colborne wrote to Lord Goderich to say, ‘the system of encouraging pensioners to accept the commuted allowance, with a view of their settling in Canada, has failed’.¹⁵¹ Despite this admission the scheme was to continue for another six years.

In response to the criticisms of the scheme, the Whig government sought to shift the blame onto the soldiers themselves as they questioned the suitability of the men as settlers.

¹⁴⁸ G. Cowan, *The Emigrants Informant: Or A Guide to Upper Canada* (London: Cowan and Co, 1834), p. 14.

¹⁴⁹ Johnson ‘The Chelsea Pensioners in Upper Canada,’ p. 274.

¹⁵⁰ TNA, Emigration of Army Pensioners 1830-1838, WO43/542, Folio 109.

¹⁵¹ PP, *Despatches and Correspondence Relative to the Chelsea Pensioners in Upper Canada*, Colborne to Goderich 26th March 1833, Volume 31, 248 (1839), p. 20.

Sir John Hobhouse, Earl Grey's Secretary of War, denied that there were any issues with the scheme by arguing that 'it appears from letters recently received at the Colonial Office, that they [the commuted pensioners] were going on extremely well, and had conducted themselves with the greatest prosperity'.¹⁵² He admitted that some of the pensioners at the beginning of the scheme had not conducted themselves correctly, in terms of spending their commutation money which meant that they could not support themselves. However, according to Hobhouse 'this, perhaps, might be anticipated from this class of persons after a long and tedious voyage'.¹⁵³ This view was seconded by Lord John Russell, future Whig Prime Minister, who believed that it was not 'surprising when we consider the general character and habits of soldiers, that many of them did not behave with that degree of propriety which could have been wished'.¹⁵⁴ Earl Grey believed that the government had managed the scheme successfully while also shifting the blame for problems on the pensioners themselves. He thought the pensioners had misunderstood the scheme as they had 'anticipated that they should receive grants of cleared land fit for immediate cultivation-land such as it cultivated in England; but when they found that only forest land was granted to them, they manifested great surprise, and appeared to think that they had been deceived'.¹⁵⁵

The plight of the settlers is described in the memoirs of British migrant Susana Moodie when she wrote about an encounter with a commuted pensioner in the colony. The man, an old dragoon, had settled with his family and they were struggling to eke out a living in a remote forest clearing:

He was one of that unfortunate class of discharged soldiers who are tempted to sell their pension, often for below their true value, for the sake of getting a lot of land in a

¹⁵² PP, *Commons Sitting*, 2 April 1832, Third Series, Volume 11, 1205.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 1209.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

remote settlement where they will have the unenviable privilege of expending the last remains of their strength in clearing a patch of land.¹⁵⁶

The colonial authorities were left to manage the problems the scheme had caused and expressed unhappiness that the burden had fallen on them. Colborne, in a letter to Colonial Secretary Lord Goderich, complained that the commuted pensioners had ‘occasioned much embarrassment’ and were proving too old or too idle to work and so support themselves and their families. Colborne also believed that the administration of the scheme had been mishandled as ‘much inconvenience has arisen from their arriving there without any previous notifications of the sums due to them’.¹⁵⁷

The government of Upper Canada investigated the plight of the settlers who had participated in the scheme, and their findings highlight the scale of the problems facing the men and their families. An assessment of pensioners resident in Medonte Township in 1832 is particularly illustrative. It found that fifty-one commuted pensioners were residing on the land in the area and all were remarked to be in a condition of ‘absolute distress’¹⁵⁸. All but one of these men had wives and children to support, indeed a total of 139 children resided with the pensioners in Medonte. The assessment also recorded a further nineteen pensioners who had left the area as they were unable to cultivate their lands; they were described as being in a state of ‘actual distress’.¹⁵⁹

Destitute pensioners reacted to their situation by submitting petitions to the respective lieutenant governor for relief in the form of food, clothing, a grant of money, or the reinstatement of their old pension. One such settler who petitioned for the reinstatement of his one shilling pension was Edward Shuel who had served in the 58th Regiment of Foot for

¹⁵⁶ S. Moodie, *Roughing it in the bush*, p.364.

¹⁵⁷ TNA, Emigration of Army Pensioners 1830-1838, WO43/542, Folio 109.

¹⁵⁸ LAC, Sir John Colborne Fonds, R14204-0-9-E, Microfilm A-584, Folio 18 and 19.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.* Folio 20.

23 years. His petition explained that ‘all he has got for his commute is exhausted in bringing his family here and their support of food and raiment is now run out, and he had no more’.¹⁶⁰

Private William Newburn petitioned Sir Francis Bond Head in 1836, again to ask for his pension payments to resume. He explained that he needed the money to support his family of six children, and that he could not work due to the loss of his fingers in battle.¹⁶¹ Sixty-three commuted pensioners from the Newcastle district of Upper Canada petitioned Colborne for help and also asked that the lieutenant governor make the government in London aware of the realities of the men’s plight. The petition stressed that they were faithful and local subjects and described the situation that they had found themselves in:

The greatest part of your pensioners are, from want of means, wounds and bad health, rendered unfit to provide for their helpless families; and many of their comrades, who have braved all dangers in defence of their King and Country, have given themselves up to despair and died in the woods, monuments of the greatest wretchedness.¹⁶²

An additional group petition from pensioners comes from forty-three men from the Adelaide and Warwick Townships who addressed Colborne in 1835. Their petition explained that ‘we thought from all accounts we would have been able to make a living here but find ourselves and many other without means to sustain ourselves’.¹⁶³

The colonial authorities in Upper Canada did consider means of assisting the commuted pensioners in the colony through a temporary reinstatement of destitute men’s pensions at a rate of one shilling per day. Upon becoming governor in 1838, George Arthur

¹⁶⁰ TNA, Emigration of Army Pensioners 1830-1838, WO43/542, Folio 81.

¹⁶¹ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 162, Microfilm C-6889, Folio 88695. Petition of William Newburn, 22 February 1836.

¹⁶² TNA, Emigration of Army Pensioners 1830-1838, WO43/542, Folio 88.

¹⁶³ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 152, Microfilm C-6886, Folio 83517. Petition of a group of military settlers to Colborne, 25 April 1835.

sought to address the poverty facing the pensioners. As a former soldier himself, Arthur admitted that:

the mind naturally recurs to the value of the services which many of these veterans may have rendered to their country in times of peril, though which long since past, have not faded from the minds of the British people.¹⁶⁴

He informed Lord Glenelg that ‘their condition is indeed such that it is painful to witness’ and stated that he was convinced that the government must take into serious consideration the propriety of revising its agreement with the pensioners....with a view of restoring their pensions’.¹⁶⁵ The Treasury responded to Arthur’s letter and offered some help, without going as far as agreeing to reinstate the men’s pensions. In March 1839 a memorandum from the Treasury Chambers stated that relief would be administered in the form of food and clothing and expressly forbade giving money to the men. It argued that ‘the pensioners may still be induced to look rather to their own exertions than to the assistance that may be thus administered to them...advisable that in every case the relief be limited to the smallest possible amount’.¹⁶⁶ The emigrant office in Toronto recorded the cost of the relief distributed to the commuted pensioners and their families. Their records show that by January 1840 452 men had been provided with relief in the form of rations for ninety days or clothing. When taking provisions for their families into account, the number who received help rose to 1,808.¹⁶⁷

The unfortunate plight of the commuted pensioners and the chaos surrounding the difficulties of administering the scheme was important as it led to questions being asked about the suitability of former soldiers as settlers. In reference to the commuted pensioners,

¹⁶⁴ TNA, Emigration of Army Pensioners 1830-1838, WO43/542, Folio 42.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. Folio 45.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. Folio 35.

Lord Aylmer complained that ‘few of these men apply themselves steadily to the cultivation of the land thus acquired’.¹⁶⁸ As the settlement of the commuted pensioners was not just confined to Upper Canada, a questionnaire was sent out to churchmen in Lower Canada to ascertain their opinion of the pensioners living in their local areas, and to also gather suggestions for solutions to their problems. In his response, G. J. Mountain, the Anglican Archdeacon of Quebec, shifted the blame away from the lack of a fixed income and instead believed that the ‘improvident habits of the pensioners and their unfitness for the routine clearing and cultivating of land’ was the cause of their poverty.¹⁶⁹ Mountain’s assessment went beyond the commuted pensioners as he stated that all former soldiers ‘who led a wandering military life’ were not suited to make good settlers in Canada.¹⁷⁰ Lord Durham warned of the difficult task any military migrant would face as he attempted to build a new life for himself and family; he questioned whether former soldiers who had to overcome advanced age, poor levels of fitness and wounds sustained in the army would make suitable settlers.¹⁷¹ Sir Henry Hardinge questioned the suitability of veterans as settlers but also criticised the Whig government for allowing the men to emigrate in the first place. He stated to the House of Commons that:

there has been no examination by medical officers in the case of several of these sick and mutilated men, of their capacity and fitness to undertake the difficulties of struggling with a severe climate in a wilderness...the blame originally is with the War Office, for allowing such men to commute at all.¹⁷²

Some years after the termination of the commutation scheme, an 1850 report into the conditions of military settlers in British North America noted that, throughout all of the

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. Folio 127.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² PP, *Commons Sitting*, 2 April 1832, Third Series, Volume 11.

colonies, the surviving commuted pensioners were invariably faring far worse than their former comrades who had retained their regular payments.¹⁷³ Despite the setbacks resulting from the commutation scheme, and the questions it raised from various figures about how suitable former soldiers were for migration, the British government did not lose its faith in military migration. Indeed, the end of the commutation scheme did not signal the end of government encouragement as new methods were employed to achieve the aim of settling former soldiers in the Canadian colonies.

Conclusion

The evidence presented in this chapter shows us how veterans utilised their connections with each other, as well as with the former soldiers in the colonial government, to become the political elite of settler societies. The closed world of petitioning and connections gave them a significant advantage when it came to acquiring positions. In addition, in many cases they were able to hold onto these roles for decades. Their applications were based around their military past and status as former soldiers.

Their contribution to the development of these communities is evidence of their importance as migrants after 1815. Certainly not all men found success in their new lives. The commuted pensioners lived in poverty, and many disappeared to lead lives of backwoods farming. However, the impact of a relatively small percentage of the total population of settler communities, namely in the shape of officers and other former soldiers, was significant.

In their settlement, the veterans behaved differently to civilians in their desire to live amongst other military men. By engaging with the findings in the current literature concerning chain migration, we have seen how former soldiers did not conform to the same settlement patterns as civilians. The role which family played in military migration has also

¹⁷³ Tulloch, *Report on the Inspection of Pensioners in the North American Provinces*, p. 35.

shown to be important in that former soldiers wished to settle with their families to escape poverty at home and have the chance to claim their own plot of land. Whether the soldier had been discharged in the British Isles or in British North America, they made efforts through petitions to have their family accompany them. The importance of settling with family was acknowledged by contemporaries as it ensured men were more likely to put down roots in their new communities.

So far this thesis has concentrated primarily on the lives of the veterans. But their women and children who accompanied the men to Upper Canada also had an influence on the development of settler communities. The system of connections was not just confined to the men, as military widows were also able to benefit from the prestige attached to former soldiers.

Chapter Four. Women and children in colonial society.

Susana Moodie settled in Upper Canada in 1832 with her husband, a half-pay officer, who had been discharged from the army several years before. Her experiences as a settler in the backwoods of the colony were recorded in the 1852 publication *Roughing it in the Bush: Or, Forest Life in Canada*. Catherine Parr-Traill also settled in Upper Canada with her half-pay officer husband in 1832. She published *The Backwoods of Canada* in 1836 as a collection of diaries and letters documenting her family's first years of settlement. Moodie and Parr-Traill provide insights into the position of women in the colony and the expectations placed upon them. Parr-Traill wrote that a settler's wife should be 'active, industrious, ingenious, cheerful and not above putting her hand to whatever is necessary to be done in her household'.¹ She commented on the wives of military settlers, writing that:

Since I came to this country, I have seen the accomplished daughters and wives of men holding no inconsiderable rank as officers, both naval and military, milking their own cows, and making their own butter, and performing tasks of household work that few of our farmers wives would now consent to take part in.²

Similarly, Susannah Moodie also described her experiences of running the farm and working alongside her husband in the fields. She believed that it was her duty to 'exert myself to the utmost to assist my husband and help maintain my family'.³ Both of these works, and the lives of their authors, have been extensively researched. They appear in numerous secondary

¹ Parr-Traill, *The Backwoods of Canada*, p. 182.

² Ibid. p. 183.

³ Moodie, *Roughing it in the Bush*, p. 375.

accounts about life in the colonies such as those by Frances Le Jeune and Errington as a means of framing the experience of female settlers.⁴

The accounts written by Moodie and Parr-Trail provide extensive details about the experience of women in the colonies, and their role in colonial society. This chapter investigates the experiences of the women and children who accompanied veterans to Upper Canada from 1815. By using petitions, and letters to the colonial authorities, the chapter uncovers their place in colonial society, the important contributions they made to the development of their communities, as well as the ways in which they interacted with the government and other military settlers. The research in this chapter shows that widows were not passive bystanders, or victims of their circumstances. They were active members of society who, like their veteran husbands, were also part of the extensive and influential military patronage networks. They had a knowledge of how the system worked in terms of presenting themselves and acquiring assistance to gain access to the highest levels of power.

This chapter serves as an important reminder of the family members who travelled to Upper Canada with the veterans. It must be noted that older studies on military migration have not examined the lives and experiences of the wives, widows and children of the military men. For example, they are absent from the works of England and Douglas.⁵ However, comments from the early nineteenth-century highlighted the benefits of family settlement. The issue appeared in several emigrant guides such as the one written by Samuel Butler in 1843. The argument asserted that single men were seen to make less successful settlers than married veterans; and married men were more likely to remain on their land grants.⁶ This chapter will also address the issue of the support that the veterans provided for

⁴ F. Le Jeune, *How Canada is Described in the Writing of 19th Century Canadian Women: The Feminine Experience in the Margins of the British Empire* (The Edwin Mellen Press: Lewiston, 2012). E. Errington, 'Women and their work in Upper Canada', *The Canadian Historical Association*, Historical Booklet 64 (2006).

⁵ England, 'Disbanded and Discharged Soldiers in Canada Prior to 1914'. Douglas, 'The Blessings of the Land'.

⁶ S. Butler, *The Emigrants Complete Guide to Canada: Handbook of Facts* (N.H Cotes: London, 1843), p. 42.

their children. Half-pay officers in the military settlements were keen to create a legacy by providing their eldest sons with a means to inherit their positions of power and influence in the community. They used their connections to secure jobs and land.

The experience of women in colonial Canada has been researched by Le Jeune and Errington. Le Jeune's study of the place of female settlers in nineteenth-century Canada argues that middle class women were empowered through colonial life as it offered them 'the opportunity to display all the abilities that their domestic and literary education had taught them'.⁷ For instance, women were expected to take on roles such as the building and management of their farm which directly contributed to the founding of new communities, which, as Le Jeune argues, shows how women settlers had a key role in the building of the colonies.⁸ Errington has found a contradiction between how women were perceived and expected to behave, and what necessity required them to do. Colonial leaders 'extolled the virtues of the 'good woman'...good women did not have to work, instead they fulfilled their divinely appointed duties as man's help mate and support'.⁹ However, the realities of colonial life meant that 'Upper Canadians recognised that this had little to do with women's lives'.¹⁰ Many of the petitions submitted by the widows spoke of desperate situations and the struggle to provide for their children. While this was undoubtedly a common situation, there were also women who were able to use their land grants to start businesses such as mills and lodging houses. For instance, Errington has argued that seeking help from neighbours, friends and relatives was a feature of life in the colonies, and most families at some point needed to call on these support networks.¹¹

⁷ Le Jeune, *How Canada is Described in the Writing of 19th Century Canadian Women*, p. 164.

⁸ *Ibid.* p. 168.

⁹ Errington, 'Women and their work in Upper Canada', p. 1.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 2.

¹¹ Errington, *Wives, Mothers, Schoolmistresses and Scullery Maids: Working Women in Upper Canada 1798-1840* (McGill-Queen's University Press: Montreal, 2003), p. 83.

The chapter also analyses the claims made by widows for land grants originally allocated to their husbands. In her study of the interaction between women and the British state in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Margaret Hunt argues that soldier's wives 'loudly and pointedly' demanded recompense for the sacrifices made by themselves and their husbands. To achieve this, women developed a working knowledge of state bureaucracy.¹² While Hunt's work covers an earlier period than this dissertation (she is interested with female interaction with the eighteenth-century 'fiscal military' state), it is possible to identify similarities between Hunt's women and the widows in Upper Canada who interacted with the authorities. Their petitions provide a window into this. The documents are much the same as those considered in previous chapters, both in terms of style, structure and language. Military widows tended to form their claim around the service of their late husband. However, there were also women who claimed land because of their own merit and achievements. They had worked hard to develop the land or operate businesses and so felt that the grant was a reward for these efforts. Finally, we will see how the widows were part of the military support networks that encompassed the veterans and colonial officials. They were able to call on other veterans for help in writing their claims, providing references or ensuring that the petitions were passed to the highest levels of the colonial bureaucracy for consideration. These women were part of the same networks of connections due to their status as army widows; generally speaking they knew how the networks operated and how to gain an advantage for themselves.

Family Settlement

¹² M. Hunt, 'Women and the Fiscal-Imperial State in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Century' in K. Wilson ed., *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity and Modernity in Britain and the Empire 1660-1840* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2008), p. 30.

The women and children who accompanied the veterans to the colonies, and who shared their aspirations for a new life, made important contributions to military settlement. In one respect, the importance for a soldier to have his family settle alongside him in the colonies has been acknowledged in existing studies on migration. It was also mentioned in contemporary accounts. Cookson has noted that marriage opportunities in rural settlements were limited, so single men tended to abandon their lots to move into towns.¹³ Similarly, Eric Jarvis has argued that single men with few family ties had little desire to accept a sedentary life on their land grants, so again they tended to leave after a short time.¹⁴ Contemporary accounts, such as Samuel Butler's 1843 emigrant guide to Canada also warned against single men settling in the colonies as 'married persons are always more comfortable and succeed sooner'.¹⁵ Archival records and petitions reveal the extent that veterans settled on land grants with their family in Upper Canada. Between 1815 and 1821, 982 former soldiers emigrated to the Perth settlement and a third of these were married. Accompanying them were 565 children.¹⁶ In addition to this, from 1815 to 1821, over half of the men who settled in Richmond were married and brought 853 children. Over the same period sixty-seven percent of the military men who settled in Lanark were married and they were accompanied by 1,836 children.¹⁷

The previous chapter used material from the Chelsea Hospital and colonial settlement records to demonstrate that military bonds, rather than ethnic or regional ties, were a deciding factor in determining where a soldier chose to settle in Upper Canada. However, soldiers were also concerned that the family members who accompanied them were provided with a comfortable life. This fact impacted on where men chose to settle. There were three routes which determined how the veterans came to the colonies to reside with their family. First,

¹³ Cookson, 'Early Nineteenth Century Military Pensioners as Homecoming Soldiers', p. 340.

¹⁴ E. Jarvis, 'Military Land Granting in Upper Canada Following the War of 1812' *Ontario History*, 67:3 (1975), p. 129.

¹⁵ S. Butler, *The Emigrants Complete Guide to Canada: Handbook of Facts* (N.H Cotes: London, 1843), p. 42.

¹⁶ HC, Perth Military Settlement Fonds, MG9 D8-27, Volume 1, Microfilm C-4651, Folio 45.

¹⁷ LAC, Settlers RG8-1, Microfilm C-3159, Volume 627, Folio 25. Return of the number of emigrants to settle in Richmond.

men who were disbanded in the colonies arranged for their families to come out to live with them. Second, there were countless soldiers who were discharged in the British Isles and made the journey across the Atlantic with their families. Finally, there were those who were related to established settlers and who came out to live alongside them. The first two groups settled with their families in areas populated by other military men such as the settlements of Perth or Richmond. The final group are somewhat an exception to the settlement rules in that they were drawn to areas where their family members lived. However, evidence from petitions shows they were very much in a minority.

Soldiers who were discharged while serving in the Canadian colonies and wished to remain in the colonies would petition to enable their family to travel from the British Isles to join them. Army regulations only permitted six wives per 100 men to accompany the regiment on active service, and officer's wives as a rule did not follow the men abroad.¹⁸ As a consequence, most soldiers discharged in Canada had family left behind at home. James Collins wrote to Maitland in 1819 to explain that he had resided in Upper Canada since leaving the army eighteen months previously. He therefore requested free passage for his wife and four children from their home in Belfast so that they could join him.

Military men who were disbanded in the British Isles and wished to emigrate to Upper Canada would petition the Colonial Office to ask to be provided with the means to allow them to settle as a family. James Farney, a pensioner supported by the Chelsea Hospital, looked to settle in the colony in 1835. As a widower with four children to support from only his pension income, he asked to be granted land 'to establish himself...for the benefit of his children'.¹⁹ Christopher Gifford, a Chelsea Pensioner from the 1st Regiment of Foot Guards

¹⁸ C. Kennedy 'From the Ballroom to the Battlefield: British women and Waterloo' in A. Forrest, et al, ed. *Soldiers, Citizens and Civilians. Experiences and Perceptions of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic War 1790-1820* (Palgrave MacMillan: Basingstoke, 2009), p. 139.

¹⁹ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 154, Microfilm C-6886, Folio 84552. Petition of James Farney, 23 June 1835.

petitioned Lord Bathurst while living in Lancashire. He had been discharged in Britain but could not find work in his trade as a stonemason due to his wounds 'as all masters wish more work than I am able to do'.²⁰ Unable as a widower to support his son, he hoped to emigrate to Upper Canada as he had learned that grants of land were available to former soldiers.

There were also veterans whose family members were established settlers in the colonies. In these cases, the military men petitioned for land to be with their family. These veterans are somewhat an exception to the normal settlement patterns of military men in that their primary concern was to be with family rather than regiment. But interestingly, cases such as this do not frequently occur. Family support was evidently a concern for David Wilson as he requested land in the same township as his relatives and prayed 'not to be withdrawn to a strange part of the colony destitute of friends and support'.²¹ Samuel Davis explained that he was 'severely anxious to locate as near as possible to his brother and his family' and made Maitland aware that a grant of land 'immediately adjoining his brother was vacant'.²² Men who recognised that they were unaccustomed to a rural way of life in the colonies sought out the assistance of family who were successful settlers. Marcus Gunn, a sergeant from the 52nd Regiment, faced the problem of being inexperienced in farming when he looked to settle in Upper Canada. He admitted in his petition that he was 'not accustomed much to manual labour' and asked for land near London where his family were established farmers'.²³ Whether the former soldiers settled with family members or regimental colleagues, they valued the assistance and support that could be provided to them. Men were far more likely to emigrate with their wives and children to be amongst other military settlers,

²⁰ TNA, War and Colonial Department and Colonial Office: Emigration Original Correspondance, C3084/8, Folio 138.

²¹ LAC, Upper Canada Land Petitions, RG1 L3, Volume 528, Bundle W12, Microfilm C-2954, Petition 176, Petition of David Wilson, 1 July 1819.

²² LAC, Upper Canada Sundries RG5 A1, Volume 35, Microfilm C-4549, Folio 16017.

²³ Ibid. Volume 110, Microfilm C-6873, Folio 62669. Petition of Marcus Gunn, 26 November 1831

but there were smaller numbers who went out live with family members who were established in the colony.

Creating dynasties, creating legacies

While maintaining prominent positions in their local communities throughout their lifetimes, there was a concerted effort from some veterans, mainly half-pay officers, to ensure that their sons (there is no evidence they made requests for their daughters) would benefit from their privileges. This took the form of attempts to secure land grants and positions of employment in the colonial government. Through these efforts, the veterans were attempting to hand their power and status down to the next generation. In effect this was an attempt to create a legacy by which their sons would inherit their status. Individual settlers such as Robert Mansell of Ramsay Township sent petitions to request grants of land for their children. Mansell asked for 100 acres for his son Isaac and 100 for his son Thomas in the same township.²⁴ There are also examples of groups of half-pay officers making a collective effort to request land. In 1828 in the Perth military settlement, Anthony Leslie, writing on behalf of a number of veterans, asked Hillier whether the sons of officers were entitled to grants of land. As the previous chapter has shown, Leslie was an influential half-pay officer and he was acting as a representative for other officers in the area in this petition.²⁵ The petitioners did not receive a response, yet they continued to pursue the issue. In 1831 a second group petition was submitted to Colborne to ask that grants of land be awarded to the sons of officers. This document claims that Colborne had previously expressed an interest in the subject and had asked that any papers be submitted to himself. The group also claimed to have the support of the superintendent of the settlement.²⁶ It is interesting to note that the rank and file soldiers were not part of this request despite their holding land grants. The petition shows hierarchical

²⁴ Ibid. Volume 85, Microfilm C-6863, Folio 46255. Petition of Robert Mansell, 21 July 1827.

²⁵ Ibid. Volume 89, Microfilm C-6865, Folio 49517. Petition of Anthony Leslie, 16 July 1828.

²⁶ Ibid. Volume 111, Microfilm C-6874, Folio 63109. Petition from half pay officers in Perth for grants of land to their sons, 1831.

divisions present amongst the military settlers. This is an example of half-pay officers forming a community based on their rank, and the following chapter provides further evidence of this. Their status in the army evidently continued to be a factor which mattered to them when they interacted with the colonial government.

Regular attempts were also made by the men to secure positions in the colonial government for their sons. These applications followed the same lines as the men's own attempts to get jobs for themselves. They utilised their own connections for the benefit of their children. Anthony Leslie wrote to Hillier in October 1828 in the hope of securing a position for his son. As with his own previous applications, Leslie highlighted his friendship with Hillier and his own military service. He reminded the secretary 'of the kind promise that if and when the situation in the civil department of this part of the province was to become vacant' Hillier would present the details of Leslie's son to Maitland for consideration.²⁷ A second former soldier to call on his contacts on behalf of his son was Rufus Henderson from the county of Grenville. In a letter to secretary Hillier, Henderson explained that he had met Maitland several days previously and had recommended his son Solomon for the position of registrar for the county. The purpose of Henderson's letter was to ensure that this was followed up and he also suggested that Maitland ask local dignitaries who would confirm Solomon's suitability.²⁸ Attempts were even made when a man had only recently arrived in the colonies. This was the case with William Fraser, a half-pay officer who recommended his son to Governor Gore in November 1816 for the position of Sherriff of Johnstown. Fraser claimed that his son was 'capable of discharging the duties of that office under the greatest accuracy and satisfaction'. The petition also tells of a friendship between Fraser and Gore as

²⁷ Ibid. Volume 90, Microfilm C-6866, Folio 50067. Petition of Anthony Leslie, 3 October 1828.

²⁸ Ibid. Volume 93, Microfilm C-6867, Folio 51542. Petition of Rufus Henderson, 16 March 1828.

he enquired after the Governor's health, his family, and apologises for not meeting recently.²⁹ It must be noted that these applications were written by the military settlers themselves rather than the child who was to take up the position. By doing so the men could emphasise their own connections with the recipient in the hope of getting a favourable outcome.

Besides using their connections, there are several other examples of different methods employed by veterans. The petitions overwhelmingly described the military service of the father, rather than the capabilities of the son. This suggests that there was an expectation that the father's service and status as a former soldier could be used to reflect favourably on his son. For example, Royal Naval officer Francis Leviere sought the position of clerk of the district court for his eldest son Julian. The petition gave a long account of Francis' service which began in 1793 and included several engagements with the French navy. Leviere asked Maitland to 'take into account my age and services in which I have acquired some credit'.³⁰ Interestingly the petition did not mention the suitability of Julius or why he should deserve the role in his own right. Clearly the fact that the father had served as a captain was deemed far more important. Attempts to secure a legacy was also perused by trying to get the military settler's job passed directly onto his son. A successful example of this was from Lieutenant Colonel John Powell of Perth. Before he died in 1829 he made several attempts to ensure that his son, John, succeeded him. William Morris, the assemblyman for the area, wrote to Secretary Mudge to put Powell's wishes into effect. The letter argued that Lieutenant Colonel Powell 'has often of late mentioned to me his decision that his eldest son should succeed him in the role' and the 'greater part of the magistrates' of the area agreed.³¹ Six months prior to

²⁹ Ibid. Volume 30, Microfilm C-4547, Folio 13933. Petition of William Fraser on behalf of his son, 11 November 1816.

³⁰ Ibid. Volume 79, Microfilm C-4616, Folio 42606. Petition of Francis Leviere for a position for his son, 6 September 1826.

³¹ Ibid. Volume 95, Microfilm C-6868, Folio 53156. Letter from William Morris to Secretary Mudge regarding the appointment of John Powell, 5 August 1828.

the letter, Powell had successfully instated his son as his deputy. Accordingly, the son became the Sheriff after his father's death in the autumn of 1829.

Women as part of support and patronage networks

We have seen throughout this dissertation that veterans supported each other in their efforts to acquire local government positions, and also when they needed assistance to overcome unexpected difficulties. It is important to note that army and navy widows were also able to benefit from these military support networks. In addition, widows also assisted one another. Uncovering the ways in which these support networks operated provides a new perspective on how veterans helped each other, as well as the place of widows in an extended community of military settlers. It also must be noted that there was a difference between the support civilians received, and the way military settlers helped each other.

Civilian settlers who encountered periods of hardship could call on family members, neighbours or friends for help. There are numerous works which detail how such assistance operated. For instance, Errington has argued that seeking help from neighbours, and friends and relatives was a feature of life in the colonies, and most families at some point needed to call on these support networks.³² In her study of family life in the colonies, Noel has found that individuals were 'immersed in a dense network of family, neighbours and kin'.³³ She argues that such reciprocal relationships were crucial to survival and could help settlers cope with family illness, domestic tasks, travel, and the aftermath of fire or accident. In the colony, as Johnson has found, people who suffered misfortune 'had no agency of government to turn to'.³⁴ Support between settlers also features in the works of Susanna Moodie and Catherine Parr-Traill. Moodie recounts occasions when she, or her neighbours, experienced shortages

³² Errington, *Wives, Mothers, Schoolmistresses and Scullery Maids*, p. 83.

³³ F. Noel, *Family Life and Sociability in Upper and Lower Canada 1780-1870* (McGill-Queen's University Press: Montreal, 2003), p. 4.

³⁴ Johnson, *In Duty Bound*, p. 216.

and so survived by borrowing food or household goods from people in the local area. She also described a 'logging-bee' held in a rural area in which settlers came together to assist a new arrival in clearing land or raising a log house. In return the host provided food and drink for the participants.³⁵ Parr-Traill commented 'how deplorable their situation would be, unless they could receive quick and ready help from those around them'.³⁶

Assistance operated differently for former soldiers and sailors and their family members. Army widows received help from other military settlers who utilised their connections to secure assistance from the colonial authorities. We will also see examples of how widows supported each other. The bonds of assistance which existed between veterans, and women were forged by army service and the status of being a soldier settler. Hurl-Eamon speaks of the 'esprit de corps [which] fostered a network of interdependence among the women of the regiment'.³⁷ St John-William's study of women in the British army during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries argues that they could expect little help from the War Office so instead had to seek means of support from each other.³⁸ Similarly, although Truham's work is mainly concerned with army life from the Crimea to the end of the nineteenth-century, she remarks on a tradition of mutual help between soldiers and their family members present in the British Army.³⁹

Military families who travelled to the colonies with the intention of building a new life together could be struck by misfortune on the journey or shortly after arriving in the colonies, with the result that the death of the husband left the widow fending for herself and her family. In times of distress, military widows could count on support from veterans who

³⁵ Moodie, *Roughing it in the Bush or Forrest Life in Canada*, p. 327.

³⁶ Parr-Traill, *The Backwoods of Canada*, p. 121.

³⁷ Hurl-Eamon, *The Girl I Left Behind Me*, p. 202.

³⁸ N. St John-Williams, *Judy O'Grady and the Colonel's Lady: The Army Wife and Camp Follower since 1660* (Maxwell Pergamon: London, 1988), p. 21.

³⁹ M. Truham, *Women of the Regiment: Marriage and the Victorian Army* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1984), p. 165.

lived in their community. In June 1819 a half-pay officer from the Royal Navy submitted a petition in support of a widow from the township of Cornwall. Isabella Cook had been fined twenty shillings for selling alcohol without a license. The author of the petition, Charles McMahon, addressed Hillier and argued for a remission of the fine. He took up the case as an act of ‘charity and mercy’ due to having ‘the opportunity of observing every day’ the dire situation that Cook was in. The document was signed by a further two half-pay officers and two local magistrates who all agreed the fine should be rescinded.⁴⁰ Cook’s community of half-pay officers were evidently unwilling to see her suffer further by having to find the money to pay the fine. Another example concerns William Hamilton Merritt, who was a former soldier, militiaman, businessman and member of the legislative assembly for Niagara.⁴¹ In January 1822 he submitted a petition on behalf of Mrs Noonan who was the widow of an army surgeon. Hamilton Merritt explained that since the death of her husband, Noonan had ‘been left in this neighbourhood for two years without support but her own industry, with a family of four daughters’.⁴² He was confident that if the lieutenant governor was aware of her plight ‘he would afford her every relief in his power’. The case of Ann Edmonds of Belleville provides another example. As the widow of a soldier of the 70th Regiment of Foot, her petition stated that she was ‘enfeebled by age and infirmity...she has no other means of support, but what was afforded to her by two Roman Catholic clergymen and other charitable individuals’.⁴³ Edmonds wrote that her decision to apply for help was driven by the fact that ‘she has frequently been advised by respectable persons in Belleville to make application [sic] to Your Excellency of the grant of land that her late husband, if living, would be entitled’.⁴⁴ Although she did not name the respectable individuals, she did request

⁴⁰ Ibid. Volume 44, Microfilm C-4603, Folio 21340. Petition of Charles McMahon for a remission of a fine, 25 June 1819.

⁴¹ J. J. Talman, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*.

⁴² LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 55, Microfilm C-4608

⁴³ Ibid. Volume 141, Microfilm C-6882, Folio 77308. Petition of Ann Edmonds, May 1834.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

that all communication regarding her claim was to be sent to Mr James Hutton of Belleville. Hutton's own petition for land shows that he was a former soldier from the 89th Regiment of Foot.⁴⁵ He did not serve in the same regiment as Edmond's late husband, but he did provide her with some level of support and advice. An additional widow who received support from the military settler community was Ann Moore of Kingston who petitioned in June 1826. She was the widow of Archibald McCallum from the Royal Veterans Battalion, and upon his death Ann married another former soldier named Richard Moore of the 99th Regiment. He died in June 1825, so she asked for a grant of land 'as her husbands from their length of service were entitled to receive' as well as a small pension.⁴⁶ Her claim was accompanied by a short note which stated that two other former soldiers had known McCallum and Moore and could vouch for Anne's claim. Catherine Landel lost her husband to cholera, leaving herself and children 'in abject poverty dependent on the kindness of friends, the charity of strangers'.⁴⁷ Her late husband, George, had been a half-pay officer in the Royal Marines. Landel's application for assistance stated that the lieutenant governor could refer to the Honourable Peter Adamson (a member of the legislative council) who would vouch for Catherine by confirming that he had been a friend of her late husband. Adamson, a former soldier, motivated by his desire to assist an army widow, sent a letter to accompany the claim. It stated that Landel's husband had been 'a loyal and intelligent man' and his death had 'left his wife and children in great poverty'.⁴⁸

There are numerous cases where a veteran died before he could claim a grant of land. In such instances, the widow of a veteran would be required to submit her own petition for land or assistance. Johnson's study of petitioning in Upper Canada has considered the experiences of women who submitted claims for land or assistance. He has found that it was

⁴⁵ Ibid. Volume 134, Microfilm C-6880, Folio 73596. Petition of James Hutton, 7 October 1833.

⁴⁶ Ibid. Volume 80, Microfilm C-4618, Folio 50318.

⁴⁷ Ibid. Volume 152, Microfilm C-6885, Folio 82330.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

unusual for women to be granted land in their own right, the exception being that widows of prominent figures were sometimes successful.⁴⁹ Upper Canadian regulations stated that ‘the waste lands of the Crown in this province are not grantable to any female except the daughters of United Empire Loyalists’.⁵⁰ The daughters of United Empire Loyalists were considered to be entitled to land due to the services of their father.⁵¹ Despite these restrictions, Johnson’s research has estimated that eighteen percent of all land petitions submitted from 1791 to 1834 were from women.⁵² Widows also petitioned for assistance, but like their claims for land, it was rare for the colonial government to provide any kind of assistance.⁵³ Johnson argues that despite the slim chances of success, women continued to reach out to the colonial authorities, partly out of desperation and ‘partly because there was nothing to be lost by asking’.⁵⁴ This attitude corresponds with Jeanine Hurl-Eamon’s research on army wives in the eighteenth-century. She found that widows ‘made fairly high demands of the military administration’ in terms of asking for pensions. Although she does acknowledge that often their efforts were in vain, nonetheless ‘their continued and persistent demands for such was a victory of sorts’.⁵⁵ The volume of petitions from women in Upper Canada recorded in the archives is a testament to the conclusion of both Hurl-Eamon and Johnson.

Taking Johnson’s findings and the regulations of the colonial authorities into account, we must conclude that most army widows who sought assistance or a grant of land were unsuccessful. This did not prevent women from petitioning, in much the same way as the first and second chapters of the thesis showed that veterans continued to ask for free grants of land after the 1834 change in policy. Angelique Cowie’s petition featured many of the common

⁴⁹ Johnson, ‘Claims of Equity and Justice’, p. 225.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Craig, *Upper Canada: The Formative Years*, p. 89.

⁵² Johnson, ‘Claims of Equity and Justice’, p. 231.

⁵³ *Ibid.* p. 236

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Hurl-Eamon, *The Girl I left Behind Me*, p. 53.

themes that we will see in the sections below. This included a description of the service of her husband in the 65th Regiment, her need to support her family, and also the fact that since her husband had died she had worked hard to make improvements to the land. However, despite this, on the back of the petition is a scrawled note which reads ‘the petitioner is not entitled to a free grant of land under the regulation of HM government so cannot comply with the request’.⁵⁶ Nonetheless the petitions are important sources as they help us to understand how widows interacted with the colonial government, and how they presented themselves. Most claims for land were entirely based around the deceased veteran’s military service. But there are also petitions which highlighted the widow’s own value as a settler due to her experiences as an army wife, and her achievements on finding means to support her family.

Women who wished to make a claim based their arguments around either the military service of their husband or family member, or their own actions as an army wife. In both cases there are striking similarities with the petitions submitted by soldiers which talk of service, loyalty and the expectation for reward. A petition submitted by a widow named Bridges-Noble demonstrates this. She applied to Colborne in 1835 and asked that he ‘consider me a worthwhile soldiers [sic] widow’.⁵⁷ She described that her husband had served the king in the 74th Regiment for twenty-three years and that he had fought in multiple engagements ‘in defence of his country’. The petition references her husband’s loyalty as demonstrated by his service, and she also writes of the loyalty of herself and her children. She told Colborne that a grant of land would enable her family to settle and that her children would ‘support the King and Government, as did their father before them’.⁵⁸ Sarah Downs petitioned Maitland for land in 1824 as the widow of the late Deputy Assistant Commissary General in Quebec. Like the other petitions, she hoped that ‘her late husbands [sic] services’

⁵⁶ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, Volume 152, Microfilm C-6885.Folio 84642.

⁵⁷ Ibid. Volume 157, Microfilm C-6887, Folio 86108. Petition of a widow named Bridge-Noble, 11 September 1835.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

would be considered.⁵⁹ She also further bolstered her claim by describing to Maitland that she was from a military family and her daughter was the wife of Lieutenant Graham of the 105th Regiment of Foot.⁶⁰

Agnes Sackville also made the lieutenant governor aware of the service of her family when asking for land. As a military widow she petitioned in 1834 and stated that her brother had ‘served His Britannic Majesty for twenty six years’ and so hoped ‘from his long servitude’ she could be granted 100 acres of land.⁶¹ Sackville wanted the land in order to provide for her five children and assured Colborne that ‘His Majesty can depend on the fidelity and loyalty of six Northumbrian emigrants’.⁶² Such an assurance of loyalty was also made by Isabella Geary whose 1834 petition for land was ‘founded on the service of her father, brother and near relatives who have died in the service’.⁶³ She wrote of her loyal family’s long history of service to the crown: her father had served in Egypt, the Peninsular and Waterloo before dying of the ‘wounds and hardships’ he had sustained in the army.⁶⁴ In addition, her eldest brother had fought in France and was drowned in an accident on his return to Britain in 1818 and her youngest brother served the Duke of York until his death in Africa from fever. Widow Ratliff’s 1835 petition remarked that her husband, a naval officer, was presumed dead after getting lost in the woods near their home. She asked to be given the deed to his land to support her children. Ratliff added that her father had also served for seven years in the Royal Navy and that this should also be considered.⁶⁵ A final example comes from the claim of Jane Dunn, the widow of William, who explained to Maitland that since her husband’s death ‘her house has been consumed by fire...your petitioner is left in charge of five children who are dependent on her support, and that she has not the means of supporting

⁵⁹ Ibid. Volume 67, Microfilm C4613, Folio 35713. Petition of Sarah Downs, 29 July 1824

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid. Volume 138, Microfilm C-6881, Folio 75433. Petition of Agnes Sackville, 15 February 1834.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid. Volume 147, Microfilm C-6884, Folio 80114-18. Petition of Isabella Gray, 6 November 1834.

⁶⁴ Ibid. Volume 128, Microfilm C-6880, Folio 72221. Petition of Isabella Geary, 13 July 1833.

⁶⁵ Ibid. Volume 154, Microfilm C-6886, Folio 84537. Petition of a widow named Ratliff, 22 June 1835.

them or herself'.⁶⁶ To prove her eligibility for assistance, she wrote that she was from a 'respectable family who had served the King and Country'. This included her brother who was killed at Waterloo as well as her uncle, a Reverend, who was 'killed in the late rebellion in Ireland'.⁶⁷

There are also some striking instances when women also moved beyond basing their claims on the service of their husband and instead described their own loyalty and service from their life as an army wife. Hurl-Eamon has described accounts of women who 'travelled on the strength' and worked as a laundress or a nurse, or occasionally even fighting alongside their husband. She argues that these women would have felt a sense of duty to the army.⁶⁸ Similarly, Derek Oddy has researched the women who followed the regiment from posting to posting, and has described the duties they were expected to carry out.⁶⁹ It is argued that there was 'loud praise of battlefield wives' of the revolutionary and Napoleonic age who remained at their husband's side.⁷⁰ Sarah Grimman, the widow of Sergeant William Grimman of the Royal Artillery, submitted her claim for land in 1834. The petition noted that William served for twenty-nine years and was a veteran of the Peninsular War and Waterloo. Sarah stated that she had shared her husband's experiences having 'accompanied him through all the different engagements'.⁷¹ As a result she requested a grant of land for herself and her three children. A similar declaration is made in the petition of Mary McNabb, widow of Colour Sergeant McNabb of the 71st Highland Light Infantry. Mary wrote that her husband had served for nine years in British North America. She asked Colborne to 'protect the widow and orphans of an old soldier who together with myself shared the toils and fatigues of a long

⁶⁶ Ibid. Volume 68, Microfilm C-4613, Folio 36195. Petition of Jane Dunn, 4 October 1824.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Hurl-Eamon, *The Girl I Left Behind Me*, p. 42.

⁶⁹ D. J. Oddy, 'Gone for a Soldier: The Anatomy of a 19th Century Army Family', *Journal of Family History*, 25:1 (January 2000), p. 52.

⁷⁰ Hurl-Eamon, *The Girl I Left Behind Me*, p. 44.

⁷¹ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 146, Microfilm C-6883, Folio 79812. Petition of Sarah Grimman, 20 October 1834.

and arduous warfare in Spain and Portugal'.⁷² Sarah Ann Mack was a widow who had experience of working for high ranking military personnel who gained positions of power in the colonies. Writing to Lord Aylmer after her arrival in the colony, she explained that her late husband, a private in the 31st Regiment, had died in Londonderry in 1825. Although she asked for land that he would have been entitled to, she framed her claim around her own achievements. This consisted of being in service to Lord Dalhousie in Quebec, and 'attending on Lady Aylmer in the steam boat as Lady's maid at the period of Your Excellency's visit to Montreal about two years since'. She also stated that 'there are many respectable persons in the country who can speak of her general character'.⁷³

The willingness of some of the widows to turn their hand to building and managing a farm is mentioned in several of the petitions for land. For example, Elizabeth Adams was 'anxious to hold a lot of land in her own right, in which she may expend in improvements' to provide for her children. A similar situation is seen in the petition of Matilda Sutherland who emigrated with her soldier husband and seven children from Scotland. Her husband died shortly after the family arrived in Ramsay Township, but Sutherland made a claim to have the land assigned to her. She told of her keen desire to use the land 'to make a home and provide for the family in general'.⁷⁴ There are petitions submitted by army widows which showed how these women took ownership of land grants and developed them. Agnes McKennon, widow of a sergeant from the 1st Regiment of Foot, submitted a petition to be given the deed to the land that had initially been granted to her husband. She told how she had, at great personal expense 'cleared thirty acres and erected a grist and saw mill, both of which are

⁷² Ibid. Volume 147, Microfilm C-6884, Folio 80479. Petition of Mary McNabb, 23 November 1834.

⁷³ LAC, John Colborne Fonds, R14204-0-9-E, Microfilm A-584, Folio 123, Petition of Sarah Ann Mack, 9 July 1830.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

nearly finished'.⁷⁵ Her work was intended to benefit the local community as she explained that:

From the want of mills in the township, the inhabitants have very frequently been obliged to cross the St Lawrence River to the mills on Salmon River in the United States...[this] destructive inconvenience will be done away with as soon as your petitioner finishes the mills.⁷⁶

The deed would secure the land and the improvements she had made in her own name. A second widow who developed business interests was Mrs McGourne, whose husband had been a sergeant in the 6th Regiment. Although she had been granted 100 acres of land in Bathurst Township, she informed the lieutenant governor that she had not been able to settle on it because she ran a boarding house in Kingston.⁷⁷ The aim of the petition was to acquire tools and rations which would allow her to improve and farm the land grant. Errington has found that in York 'there were several hotels and boarding houses run by women and widows and skilled craftswomen who ran, and sometimes owned their own businesses'.⁷⁸ These cases show how there were widows who took on the responsibility of farming and operated their own businesses.

While most single women who applied for land had their application denied, as per the regulations, this was not the case for everyone. There are examples where the colonial authorities bent the rules and allowed women land or monetary assistance. In these cases, the widow usually had support from veterans or contacts in the military. These successes compare to the cases detailed in the second chapter where some veterans were allowed a

⁷⁵ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, Volume 44, Microfilm C-4603, Folio 21511. Petition of Agnes McKennon, 8 July 1819.

⁷⁶ Ibid. Folio 21512.

⁷⁷ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 53, Microfilm C-4608, Folio 28052. Petition of Mrs McGourne, 19 February 1822.

⁷⁸ Errington, 'Women and their work in Upper Canada', p. 35.

grant of land after 1834. On 19 March 1818 the executive council of Upper Canada deliberated a request for land made by Mary Friel, who was the widow of a private who had served in the Glengarry Infantry. The council minutes state that a letter from Major General Widrington was received and read aloud. It recommended that Mary be granted land, which the council agreed.⁷⁹ There are also examples where widows sought assistance from serving soldiers. In May 1823, Thomas Jobson, the barrack Master at Kingston, sent a letter to Maitland to inquire about an earlier petition which had been sent to the lieutenant governor. Jobson stated that a soldier's widow from Kingston had her brother in law, a sergeant major, petition Maitland on her behalf for assistance in June 1822. However, as she was yet to receive a reply, Jobson took it upon himself to enquire whether the petition had reached Maitland and to ask if some help could be given to 'this poor widow with nine children'.⁸⁰

Widows were able to utilise military connections to secure land. These women were actively trying to secure a better position for themselves and their families to escape the trap of poverty that a single woman could easily fall into. Elizabeth Barker's husband died in 1820 shortly after arriving in the colonies. She had a petition written to claim ownership of her husband's grant of land, as well as a sum of money to which would have enabled her to support her children. Barker then reached out to her late husband's former commanding office in the Royal Navy to boost her chances of success. He sent a letter accompanying the petition which implored Maitland to present the document to the lieutenant governor.⁸¹

In addition to the help they received from military settlers, widows also communicated with each other about their claims, and offered advice to one another. This is demonstrated in two petitions sent to Maitland by Marie Ann Flack in 1824. She was the

⁷⁹ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 38, Microfilm C-4601, Folio 18066b. Meeting of the Executive Council of Upper Canada to deliberate a grant of land to Mary Friel, 18 March 1818.

⁸⁰ Ibid. Volume 60, Microfilm C-4610, Folio 31881. Petition of Thomas Jobson on behalf of a widow, 25 May 1823.

⁸¹ Ibid. Volume 49, Microfilm C-4605, Folio 24157. Petition of Elizabeth Barker, 12 September 1820.

widow of John Flack of the 10th Veterans Battalion who had passed away shortly after his arrival in the colonies. Marie Ann's first petition for land was submitted on 12th September 1824 and praises Maitland for his 'superior judgement and your well known benevolence to the widows and settlers'.⁸² This point suggests that she was aware that Maitland had granted claims made by other army widows. Indeed, a second petition submitted by Flack further supports this argument. The second petition was submitted in October 1824 but provides no clues as to why she wrote again only one month after the first application. She again asks for land and states that 'I have been induced to make this application on the advice of my friends...I have also understood that similar applications from unfortunate widows situated as I am have met with success'.⁸³ She goes on to refer to the cases of Mrs Adams (widow of the late adjutant general of the 60th Regiment) and Mrs Shearer (widow of a lieutenant in the Royal Navy) who had all made successful claims for land. This section of the petition is important as it shows (along with the comments in the first petition) that military widows did have success in their claims for land. It also shows that women were discussing their claims with each other and advising on how to make applications. When considering the women mentioned in Flack's petition, and of the other instances where women have supported each other or been supported by other military settlers, it must be noted that the settlers came from different regiments and areas. This makes their army status the common factor between all of them. The assistance that women received from former soldiers adds a new dimension to the understanding of community assistance in the colonies.

Conclusion

This thesis has discussed the veterans and their position as part of networks of patronage and the fact that they could count on the support of other military settlers during difficult times.

⁸² Ibid. Volume 68, Microfilm C-4613, Folio 36055. Petition of Mary Ann Flack, 12 September 1824.

⁸³ Ibid.

While women were not officially granted their own land, we have seen how the support that veterans benefited from also extended to widows. The women in this chapter reached out to serving soldiers, or veteran settlers to ensure that their claims reached the colonial government and had support from men of influence. There was little to distinguish veterans from their wives. Significantly, there also appears to have been a readiness for widows to support each other and provide advice. These connections were not bound by geography or regiment, the military status, which benefited the veterans in their settlement, was also conferred to their widows.

The first half of this thesis has been concerned with the private world of petitioning which encompassed veterans, women, the military, colonial authorities and occasionally the Colonial Office itself. Through these networks, a veteran and his family could acquire a grant of land, a position in local government, or monetary assistance. We have seen how the petitions regularly referenced military service and loyalty above all other concerns. The second half of the thesis looks in more detail about how the veterans presented themselves in public settings. We would expect that from what we have seen in the first chapters that they would readily emphasise their military status. However, in their day-to-day lives this was generally not the case. The men became important civic figures rather than military figures. Another surprising feature of their lives in the colony is that they did not commemorate their military past. The anniversaries of Waterloo, or battles from the War of 1812 came and went without fanfare from the veterans. As a result of the difference between their private correspondence with the colonial authorities, and their public interaction with other settlers, the veterans and the impact they had on the development of settler society began to be forgotten in the later decades of the nineteenth-century.

Chapter Five. Problems of commemoration

Onlookers at the funeral processions for militia officers in Toronto in the 1830s and 40s would regularly see a veteran named David Wilson marching at the very front. Wilson had served for many years in the 103rd Regiment of Foot, and upon his discharge in 1819 he settled in Toronto where he started a business and became a successful shoemaker. He was prominent at the head of the funeral processions where he marched ‘with musket reversed, and displaying with great precision and solemnity the extra-upright carriage and genuine toe-

pointed step of a soldier of the days of George the Second.’¹ The memoir which referenced Wilson described how ‘observant lads and others’ were always on the look-out for him as an object of curiosity as a figure from a former time which was evident by his ‘antique style of military movement’.² A militia funeral procession afforded Wilson the opportunity to pay his respect by putting on his old uniform and displaying his status as a former soldier of the British army.

Wilson’s presence at the head of the procession is a neat illustration of one of the chief findings of this thesis: that former military men were highly visible and influential figures in Anglo-Canadian life in the first half of the nineteenth-century. But what is interesting is that Wilson was in fact unusual. Despite the large numbers who settled overseas, most were not like Wilson, and most were unwilling to involve themselves in organised, public commemorations of these events. Anniversaries of battles came and went with only the official acts of remembrance left to *servicing* soldiers- not the veterans- in garrison towns. Such acts were cultivated by local or colonial elites. The lack of participation in commemoration becomes more pronounced when keeping in mind the large numbers of veterans who settled in the colonies, the influence of former officers in colonial administration, and finally the large numbers of men who served in the militia. In Britain the army and navy celebrated the anniversary of Waterloo and Trafalgar by organising their own events.³ However, in comparison with Canada, the battles were also marked on a much wider and more conspicuous level with public dinners, balls, church services and the gathering of veterans.

¹ H. Scadding, *Toronto of Old: Collections and Recollections, Illustrative of the Early Settlement and Social Life of the Capital of Ontario* (William and Williamson, Toronto: 1878), p. 177.

² Ibid.

³ R. E. Foster, *Wellington and Waterloo: The Duke, the Battle and Posterity* (The History Press, London: 2014), p. 85. C. White, ‘Official and Popular Commemoration of Nelson’ in H. Hoock, ed. *Trafalgar 1805-2005. History, Commemoration and National Preoccupation* (Oxford University Press, Oxford: 2007), p. 26.

The lack of a commemorative culture presents a contradiction between the way the veterans privately presented themselves to the colonial authorities, and the way they interacted with their communities on a day-to-day basis. To this point we have seen how veterans were keen to emphasise their military service in their correspondence with the colonial authorities. Documents such as petitions demonstrate that their status as a former British Army soldier was a central part of their identity for many of the emigrants. However, the men did not outwardly express their military past. Why, then, were military settlers in Upper Canada apparently so reluctant to engage in marking the anniversaries of battles many of them had fought in? This reluctance means that they discarded their military past in their public lives. It is possible that memories were too raw and painful, with few wishing to relive what might have been traumatic experiences in public. The distance separating the colonies from events such as Waterloo and the Peninsular War was also a factor. These battles may not have been seen to have been relevant to the wider public in the colonies. Waterloo after all marked the end of a long war for the people of Britain and the threat of invasion from France was lifted. Although there were significant numbers of military settlers in the colonies, it must be remembered that only a small minority of these were veterans of significant Napoleonic battles. Just 12.5% of the sample of men examined in this research had fought at Waterloo and/or Quatre-Bras, and likewise 17% were veterans of the Peninsular campaign. While these battles may not have been relevant to many military settlers and the wider population in the colonies, the War of 1812 certainly was. Yet there was also a distinct lack of military settlers commemorating the battles of this war.

Another explanation for the lack of commemoration by soldier settlers is that the veterans, like other colonists, were unfamiliar with commemorative culture. Michael Bennett, writing on the Australian context, has argued that in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries ‘for most of the population [in England or the colonies] history could have been no

more than a bundle of half remembered tales and historically located prejudices'. He points to an increase in monument building, formation of historical associations, and the publication of monographs which appeared in the later decades of the nineteenth-century as an indication of the time when people began more widely to engage with their past.⁴ Celia Morgan makes a similar case for Canada: she argues that historical consciousness as shown through commemorative activities did not arise widely until the last third of the nineteenth-century.⁵ But there was a significant growth of interest about the history of colonial Canada during this period with the formation of numerous historical societies and the building of monuments (mainly to Queen Victoria) in towns and cities.⁶ Indeed, Morgan and Bennett go too far when they emphasise the late emergence of commemorative culture. Whereas individuals and groups, among them soldier settlers, rarely marked their own past in a public way, commemorative culture did take root in certain sections of colonial society - namely the Orange Order and the Freemasons - from an early date. These organisations were heavily indebted to the past.

The absence of any commemoration of Waterloo or Peninsular battles such as Vittoria of 1813 is curious, but as this chapter will show, veterans did express a 'collective memory' of these military events through other forms. In his study of war memory and commemoration, Timothy Ashplant has argued that collective memory forms when individuals with shared experiences group together to share and preserve their past.⁷ There is evidence of this occurring amongst the soldier settler in the colonies. Firstly, there was the campaign, instigated at Perth, which raised money for the construction of a monument to mark the death of the Duke of York. Secondly, military settlers across the colonies

⁴ M. Bennett, 'The Heritage of Old England' in M. Lake, ed. *Memory, Monuments and Museums: The Past in the Present* (Melbourne University Press, Melbourne: 2006), p. 83.

⁵ Morgan, *Commemorating Canada: History*, p. 44.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 12.

⁷ T. G. Ashplant et al, *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration: Contexts, Structures and Dynamics* (Transaction Publishers, London: 2000), p. 18.

contributed funds for the construction of a monument to General Brock, who fell leading his men to victory at the Battle of Queenstown Heights in 1812. However, such acts of collective memory and commemoration were cultivated by a narrow body – generally, they were orchestrated by local elites (the ubiquitous half-pay officers), or the colonial authorities. These campaigns were more than just acts of commemoration; they were also a demonstration of the elite status and wealth. They provide examples of commemorative activities undertaken at the behest of a powerful minority.

The way that the veterans interacted with each other and the military men who administered the colonies, in terms of the networks of support and patronage, has suggested that the men were a community, connected by a shared military status. But the lack of a commemorative culture is problematic for this argument. However, this chapter responds to this problem by proposing that we must see the veterans as connecting with each other privately through their petitions and networks of support which were based around their militarism. At the same time, they connected with each other publicly through membership in the Orange Order and the Freemasons, albeit in a less overtly militaristic manner. This chapter will show how organisations in the colonies, namely the Orange Order and the Freemasons, explain how soldier settlers used and adapted them as a vehicle for commemorative culture. The men utilised the frameworks provided by these organisations such as parades, marching and meetings as way of becoming involved in public displays of loyalty and remembrance. Parading, as Michael Ryan points out, was a way of expressing the past in a visual form.⁸ Likewise Gillian Leitch believes that commemoration through parades allowed organised groups to ‘act out their own identity’.⁹ These organisations monopolised

⁸ M. Ryan, ‘The American Parade: Representations of 19th Century Social Order’ in R. Mohl, ed. *The Making of Urban America* (SR Books, New York: 2006) p. 74

⁹ G. Leitch, ‘Claiming the Streets: Negotiating National Identities in Montreal’s Parades’, in M. Hayday and R. Blake ed. *Celebrating Canada: Holidays, National Days and the Crafting of Identities* (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 2016), p. 15.

commemorative culture and left little space for group expressions. A platform was provided for the men to channel their militarism and so fulfilled their need for remembrance and commemoration.

The fifth and sixth chapters of this research address the themes of remembrance and forgetting. From the 1840s onwards, the impact of the veterans and their importance to the history of the development of Upper Canada was gradually forgotten. The sixth chapter will show how the men were effectively overlooked by a generation of early Canadian historians as they focused on the loyalists and discarded the veterans. Their reluctance to commemorate their military past in the decades after 1815 is an explanation and a reason for the cause of this. Instead of commemorating battle, the veterans became absorbed in the rituals of organisations such as the Orange Order and the Freemasons.

The absence of military commemoration

Given the prevalence of former soldiers who were veterans of significant battles and campaigns in communities across the colonies, we might expect these men to have been instrumental in organising events to commemorate and remember their past. Yet there was a surprising lack of commemorative activities in the colonies during the anniversaries of significant military events such as the Battle of Waterloo, and the Peninsular War. Even the War of 1812 was not commemorated, despite its impact on the lives of Upper Canadians and the continuing rivalry with the United States. The absence in Upper Canada becomes more striking when compared with events that took place contemporaneously in the British Isles. Foster's study of the impact of Waterloo notes the popularity of the commemoration of the battle for decades. Waterloo Day was marked by the military through dinners and balls where veterans would reunite to remember the battle and toast the victory. The wider public also

held their own social activities to ‘eat, drink and be merry’.¹⁰ After the battle, Wellington became a national hero and in the following years, the surviving veterans were celebrated and became ‘an object of romantic interest to their neighbours’.¹¹ The end of the Napoleonic Wars was followed by demands from the British public that a conspicuous monument that would act as a ‘symbolic tribute to British heroism and valour’ be raised.¹² The Battle of Trafalgar was also commemorated and became an ‘annual ritual of loyalist and royalist pageantry’.¹³

Clearly there was an interest in remembering British military history in Britain itself and the veterans of the conflicts were an important feature in the commemorative events. In comparison, the veterans in Upper Canada were largely silent. Service records reveal the presence of Napoleonic War veterans spread throughout settlements in the colony. James Graham, who settled in Perth in 1815, had fought in the 1st Battalion of Artillery during the Peninsular War.¹⁴ Peter Lee, another Perth settler (he arrived in 1817) had fought at Waterloo in the 92nd Regiment of Foot.¹⁵ William Brook, who came to the colonies in 1822, had survived the battles of Badajoz, Vitoria and Ciudad Rodrigo.¹⁶ John Cox, who settled in Elmsely Township in 1819 saw action in Upper Canada during the War of 1812 with the 19th Regiment of Dragoons.¹⁷ The petitions for land reveal many more who had participated in battle, not forgetting Lieutenant Governors Maitland, Colborne and Bond Head who were all Napoleonic veterans. As well as the former soldiers, there was also their wives who had accompanied them on campaign and came to reside in the colonies. The fourth chapter has

¹⁰ Foster, *Wellington and Waterloo*, p. 84.

¹¹ N. Gash, ‘After Waterloo: British Society and the Legacy of the Napoleonic Wars’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 28 (1978), p. 147

¹² A. Yarrington, *The Commemoration of the Hero 1800-1864: Monuments to the British Victors of the Napoleonic Wars*, (Garland: London, 1988), p. 173.

¹³ T. Jenkins, ‘Contesting the Hero: The Funeral of Admiral Lord Nelson’, *Journal of British Studies*, 39:4 (October 2000), p. 433.

¹⁴ TNA, Records of Individual Service of James Graham 1804-1817, WO97/1231/17, Folio 3.

¹⁵ Ibid. Peter Lee 1802-1816, WO97/1009/83, Folio 3.

¹⁶ Ibid. John Cox 1797-1817, WO97/287/95, Folio 4.

¹⁷ Ibid. WO97/34/144, Folio 3.

shown how these women were keen to tell the colonial government of their experiences when applying for land. However, as with the soldiers, there is no evidence that the camp followers publicly acknowledged or displayed their past experiences.

Despite the careers of the veterans and their family members who came to reside in the colonies, a search through colonial newspapers does not reveal public remembrances undertaken by the veterans on the anniversaries of the battles they had participated in. The military men and women demonstrated a readiness to highlight their military past in their petitions (as shown in chapter two). But their behaviour in their day-to-day lives complicates the situation, as once they settled, they did not make their stories public, effectively discarding their past. In his work on British military settlers in the Australian colonies, Wilcox shows some similarities with the situation in Canada. For example he states that ‘most Waterloo settlers made little of their experience’ and that ‘the anniversaries were silently observed by many’.¹⁸ His argument is that British military victories were remembered by the veterans, yet it was done in private as they preferred to simply get on with their day-to-day lives without drawing attention to their status as former soldiers. This is one explanation for the behaviour of the veterans in the Canadian colonies. Settlers were preoccupied with the hardships of supporting themselves and their families, and so there was not a wide spread interest in commemorating distant battles. This interest did eventually come to the colonies, but many decades after the events themselves.

The commemorations of battles that did occur in Upper Canada tended to involve serving soldiers and were organised by the colonial elite. The veterans of the battles did not feature. In addition, events took place in seats of power, such as Kingston, where there was a substantial presence of regular British regiments. While there was interest from the public in

¹⁸ C. Wilcox, *Red Coat Dreaming: How Colonial Australia Embraced the British Army* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2009), p. 29.

terms of watching the proceedings, their role was one of passive spectatorship. In 1840, for instance, the garrison stationed at Kingston marked the anniversary of Waterloo by parading through the streets and re-enacted moments from the battle including forming into squares. Waterloo was described as ‘the never-to-be-forgotten day on which Wellington vanquished the scourge of Europe and gave peace to the world’.¹⁹ Those veterans present just watched on. A similar re-enactment in 1840 also occurred in Quebec. This featured marching, charges and bayonet advances. Once again, the event was organised by the local garrison without any participation from the public. Such commemorative activities came about because they were organised by military commanders, not because of public demand.²⁰

Alongside Waterloo, there was limited commemoration of battles of the War of 1812 in the decades which followed. These events resembled the Waterloo commemorations as they involved serving soldiers rather than veterans. For example, the anniversary of Queenstown Heights was marked in Gore in 1827 by a military parade of the local regiment.²¹ Once again this is an example of commemoration organised by the military and the actual veterans of the battle participated, like the public in general, as observers. Sources are not available to reveal the exact reasons that soldier settlers did not wish to participate in these events or hold their own acts of commemoration. Speculation as to why in this case is unavoidable, but there may have been veterans who preferred to forget their involvement in battle, or at most mark the anniversaries in a private manner. There may not have been an appetite for commemoration. The lack of diaries and other personal accounts make it difficult to gain a real insight into people’s thoughts and opinions on this matter.

The most public form of remembrance of British battles that occurred was in the form of the sporadic publication of poetry and literature which appeared in colonial newspapers

¹⁹ *Kingston Chronicle*, 8 July 1840, p. 2.

²⁰ *Montreal Transcript*, 23 June 1840, p. 2.

²¹ *Gore Gazette*, 6 October 1827, p. 1.

around an anniversary. These works often referenced veterans who were living in the colonies. A poem from 1833, published in the *Niagara Gleaner* celebrated the battle of Waterloo and the veterans who were residing in the colonies as settlers. Titled 'Up Guards and at them', the poem described how Wellington's 'gallant sires of old, still maintain your Country's fame'.²² The anonymous author of this poem showed that there was a feeling of pride that the battle's veterans were living in the colonies; they were still reluctant to make themselves known. Another poem printed in 1846 lamented the loss of the veterans who had settled in the colonies and called for them to be remembered. It stated that 'tho the sun of the most of thy warriors has set, we will honour the living, and tread with respect, near the spot where thy veterans now sleep in the grave'.²³ The content of the poem is significant as it was a rare example calling for the veterans to be remembered, particularly as a wider consideration of the past did not occur until later in the nineteenth-century.

John Wolfe has argued that the 'great deaths' of the Victorian age helped concentrate the public mind on the Napoleonic period.²⁴ The death of the Duke of Wellington on 14 September 1852, prompted a reaction in Upper Canada and was reported in colonial newspapers in early October. This was followed by an intense coverage of the funeral preparations, the laying-in-state, and the funeral itself. In addition, colonial newspapers regularly featured poems, hymns and letters glorifying Wellington's life.²⁵ This wave of interest is not surprising: according to Miles Taylor, Wellington's death was a 'truly global phenomenon' that was reported quickly across the Empire. The funeral itself was 'one of the last great ceremonial send-offs' of the Victorian age.²⁶ The interest in his life was also marked by adverts for Wellington's biographies and books about his campaigns. For

²² *Niagara Gleaner*, 31 August 1833, p. 1.

²³ *Perth Courier*, 7 July 1846, p. 4

²⁴ J. Wolfe, *Great Deaths: Grieving, Religion, and Nationhood in Victorian and Edwardian Britain* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2000).

²⁵ *Hamilton Gazette*, 18 October 1852, p. 3.

²⁶ M. Taylor, 'Wellington's World: The Duke of Wellington and the Making of the British Empire', *The Fifteenth Wellington Lecture* (University of Southampton, 2003), p. 5.

example, a book detailing the ‘Life and Exploits of the Duke of Wellington, including a complete history of the Peninsular War’ was advertised for sale in the *Kingston Chronicle* in December 1852. The advert warned that ‘the demand is so great that the supply will soon be exhausted’.²⁷

However, the coverage was not universally positive, as evidence by an article in Toronto’s *North American Semi-Weekly*. As one of the earliest colonial comments on his death (it appeared 8 October), the article announced that ‘the last link of the chain which bound us Britons to a warlike age has now suddenly snapped asunder’. It also hoped that ‘the military spirit which in the Duke has its greatest, most powerful, and most effective embodiment has now forever fled from the wide realms which Victoria reigns’.²⁸ Although this article appears as a lone voice amongst the eulogies of Wellington and British militarism, its views may reflect an opinion in colonial society which meant that former soldiers commemorating their past was not particularly welcome. Overall, the death of Wellington prompted a sudden interest in the past in relation to the British military success. However, it can be seen as simply a momentary revival which lasted for a few months in the immediate aftermath of his death and funeral. This is because in the years that followed, the anniversaries of Waterloo and battles of the Peninsular War continued to pass without fanfare. Similarly, a search of colonial newspapers reveals that commemoration of Wellington himself quickly faded from the news, and subsequent anniversaries of his death were not marked.

Interest in commemorating British militarism became far more popular and widespread in the latter decades of the nineteenth-century and into the early twentieth-century. There was more interest in the important events in the history of the British Empire,

²⁷ *Kingston Chronicle*, 22 December 1852, p. 3.

²⁸ *North American Semi Weekly*, 8 October 1852, p. 2.

and the battles which had been fought in Canada. The timing of this change in attitude coincides with what historians of commemoration have found. As with the studies referenced at the beginning of this chapter, Roland Quinault agrees that centennial commemorations of important events or famous people were rare before 1850, but over time became increasingly common. He believes this change in attitudes was ‘primarily caused by an increased public interest in the past, which was encouraged by current development in literature, art and politics.’²⁹ There is evidence of this in Upper Canada, as while the earlier anniversaries of Waterloo were barely marked, the 65th anniversary, in 1880, attracted comment in colonial newspapers. The *London Advertiser* featured a profile of a British veteran from Lanark, aged seventy-nine. It described how he had enlisted in the 13th Regiment of Foot at eleven years old and proceeded to outline his service record. The veteran, named Thomas Kirkham, had marked the anniversary of Waterloo by walking from Lanark to Ottawa to meet the governor general to ask for an increase in his pension.³⁰ Another example of later commemoration is the events which took place in Ottawa on Trafalgar Day in 1905. The school children on the city staged a march carrying British flags from their schools to the statue of Queen Victoria at Parliament Hill where they laid wreaths. The purpose of the day was to show how the population of Canada remembered and celebrated Nelson’s victory and express their gratitude of ‘how much we owe to the bravery of Nelson’.³¹ The account of this day suggests that there was a sense of pride that Canada was part of the empire and sought to link Canada to this history.

We can see then, that commemoration of battle rarely occurred in Upper Canada until the second half of the nineteenth-century. During their own life time, the veterans did not organise, initiate or feature in events which celebrated British military heritage. The fact that

²⁹ R. Quinault, ‘The Cult of the Centenary c1784-1914’, *Historical Research*, 71:176 (October 1998), p. 303.

³⁰ *London Advertiser*, 18 June 1880, p. 4.

³¹ Anonymous Pamphlet, *Trafalgar Day at Ottawa: Celebration of the Centennial of the Battle by the Children of the Schools* (1905, archive.org), p. 8.

they did not display their military past was one reason why veterans were excluded from early Canadian historiography: they simply were not very visible (this issue will be discussed in the next chapter). But the absence of commemoration does not mean that veterans and their families cannot be viewed as a community or a class. In private they supported each other through their petitions, but there was no public space to allow them to display their military status. Instead, the final part of this chapter will show how their involvement in the Orange Order and Freemasons replaced militaristic commemoration.

Campaigns for the creation of monuments

Despite their unwillingness to engage in commemorations to mark specific battles, soldier settlers did participate in campaigns for the creation of monuments. The first was the attempt in the Bathurst region to construct a monument to honour the Duke of York following his death in 1827. The second was the construction of Brock's monument in 1823 on the site of the battle of Queenstown Heights. The task of erecting this monument (and renewing it after its destruction in 1840) involved veterans from Upper Canada. On the surface it appears military men played a key role in fundraising and maintaining enthusiasm for the projects amongst the public. However, both occasions were orchestrated by elites who used the events to show their own wealth and influence. In the case of the Duke of York's monument, it was a small group of local half-pay officers who raised the majority of the money and controlled the campaign. The construction of Brock's monument was done at the behest of the colonial government.

During the first half of the nineteenth-century, the creation of monuments was rare in Upper Canada. Several monuments had been erected in Lower Canada, such as a statue of George III in Montreal's Place D'Armes which was constructed in 1773, and a monument to Nelson in 1809. These two examples commemorated British power and authority in the

French-Canadian city. In her research on colonial monuments, Morgan has argued that it was not until the last three decades of the nineteenth-century that monuments were constructed in Canada in larger numbers.³² Certainly there were numerous new statues constructed of Queen Victoria in Hamilton, Kingston, Ottawa and Toronto during this period. However, this point neglects to mention the campaign to build the monument to the Duke of York in Perth. The campaign to create a monument to the Duke of York was unusual as it was not to be repeated. Efforts to raise money for this project was a result of the activities by a small group of former officers who lived together in Perth town, and they attempted to secure the support of the local population. Their fundraising activities and the large sums of money they donated was done in a conspicuous manner and would have signified their disposable wealth. The actual monument itself, and the choice of the Duke of York as the person to dedicate it to, was not about honouring the man himself. Rather it was what he represented – namely militarism, monarchy and hierarchy.

Prince Frederick, the Duke of York, who died in January 1827, seems an unlikely individual to honour with a monument in Perth. While he was the Commander-in-Chief of the British army, and therefore the former soldiers had some form of attachment to him, his connection with Canada was minimal. His death occurred just over a decade into the life of the newly created military settlements in the Bathurst region, and the communities had struggled to survive their first years. Given this, it seems strange that settlers would take up the expensive process of constructing a monument. The Duke himself was unpopular in Britain and had drawn criticism for his military failures as commander-in-chief in the Low Countries and his gambling debts. An article in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* several weeks after his death noted that 'the fruitlessness of the campaigns in France rendered the commander in chief unpopular' and that 'the recesses of his private life had been searched

³² Morgan, *Commemorating Canada*, p. 12.

with an inquisitorial zeal and malignancy'.³³ *The Times* also carried a piece from the *Dublin Morning Register* which commented that in regards to the Catholic population of Ireland, the Duke had 'marshalled the antipathy of a nation against him'.³⁴ Yarrington has argued that in Britain the Duke's death 'only produced a few isolated demands for some form of public tribute'.³⁵

Outpourings of grief and admiration featured in colonial newspapers and sermons in the months after his death. On the 24 March the *Gore Gazette* printed a statement from George IV which 'conveyed to the army the melancholy satisfaction which His Majesty derives from the deep feeling of grief manifested by every class of the military profession'.³⁶ Sermons also spoke about the loss of the Duke and its impact on people in the colonies. For example, on 11 March 1827, the Reverend Hudson, Church of England military chaplain, addressed the congregation present at the garrison service in York. He stated that it was well known that the virtues of the Duke were 'deeply engraven...on the hearts of our brave and loyal soldiers'.³⁷ Similar expressions were uttered by the Reverend Robert Alder at St James chapel in Montreal on 25 March 1827. He remarked that the population of Lower Canada was in mourning with the people of Britain and that 'no distance of time or place can destroy the love of country which we boast'.³⁸ The newspapers coverage and subscription initiative in Britain were top-down attempts by the elite to manufacture the Duke's death for public consumption. The colonies reacted in a similar way through newspapers and sermons. Plans were also made in Toronto and Perth to raise money for a colonial tribute. This was a campaign organised and funded by a small group of influential, wealthy individuals

³³ W. Blackwood, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 21:122, Edinburgh (February 1827), p. 230.

³⁴ *The Times*, 12 January 1827, p. 2.

³⁵ Yarrington, *The Commemoration of the Hero 1800-1864*, p. 249.

³⁶ *Gore Gazette*, 24 March 1827, p. 1.

³⁷ Hathi Trust (HT), J. A. Hudson, *Sermon on the Death of his Late Royal Highness the Duke of York, Commander in Chief of his Majesty's Forces, Preached in the Episcopal Church of York, Upper Canada*, 11 March 1827.

³⁸ HT, R. Alder, *The Substance of a Sermon Delivered in St James Chapel, Montreal on the Occasion of the Lamented Death of His Royal Highness the Duke of York*, 25 March 1827.

seemingly with money to spare; it was not a popular movement driven by the mass of settlers who wanted to show their appreciation of the Duke of York.

The campaign to create a monument for the Duke began with a meeting held at a hotel in York on 7 April 1827. The attendees were elite individuals described as members of the clergy, magistrates and the ‘principle inhabitants’ of the area.³⁹ It was resolved that an address of condolence be drawn up and circulated through Upper Canada to gather signatures and the document would be transmitted to London via lieutenant governor Maitland. It was hoped that the address would provide an opportunity for the inhabitants of the colony ‘to testify their loyalty and sense of public duty in this respect’.⁴⁰ The local elite in the Perth settlement, who tended to be half-pay officers, followed the lead set by the colonial elite by organising their own efforts. The reaction in the colonies provides an example of what Ward has called a ‘heightened sense of collective self-awareness’ which was common in young societies.⁴¹ This manifested itself in the need of settlers to maintain a sense of belonging to the mother country and a determination to uphold ‘political and cultural markers of Britishness’.⁴²

Following the meeting in York, a similar gathering of the ‘respectable inhabitants’ of the Perth military settlement took place with the aim of deciding how the Duke of York should be honoured.⁴³ It was resolved that a public subscription be enacted to raise funds for a monument commemorating the Duke to be built in the town. There are two reasons why the Duke was the subject of such elite efforts. Many of the local elite had served in the military when he was the commander-in-chief and so they responded to the death of a man described

³⁹ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Microfilm C-6863, Volume 83, Folio 45254. Meeting held in York for the purpose of raising money for a monument to Brock, 7 April 1827.

⁴⁰ Ibid. Folio 45255.

⁴¹ S. Ward, ‘Imperial Identities Abroad’ in S. Stockwell *The British Empire: Themes and Perspectives* (Blackwell: London, 2008), p. 219.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 85, Microfilm C-6864, Folio 46659. Meeting of the inhabitants of Perth to discuss a monument to the Duke of York, 20 September 1827.

as the soldier's friend. Yarrington's point that public monuments in the early nineteenth-century were a means of 'providing central symbols of citizens' civil pride and patriotism' is also relevant here.⁴⁴ As a member of monarchy, the Duke was an appealing figure to commemorate. The monarchy had wider appeal than a battle commemoration. In the Canadian colonies, as other scholars have pointed out, the monarchy was revered by the governing elite as a symbol of the power of the empire, the connection with Britain, and a marker of the difference with the United States.⁴⁵

The process to construct the monument began with a meeting held in Perth in November 1827 which was organised by a group of half-pay officers. This included prominent locals such as Charles Sache, Colonel C. Lloyd and C. J. Bell formerly of the Royal Navy.⁴⁶ It was resolved that a monument was to be built in the town which would display the inhabitants' 'attachment and regard' and 'sincere respect for the Duke'. The aim of the officers who organised the campaign was to 'perpetuate the memory of our late Commander in Chief'.⁴⁷ This meeting and the subsequent subscription list may have been the first campaign by veterans in the area to commemorate their military heritage in a public manner, but the subscription list itself reveals more about the motivations behind this campaign. The list was a conspicuous method for the local half-pay officer elite to demonstrate to their community how much money they could afford to donate. It also provides evidence of the influence they had in directing the population of the area. Bearing in mind that the community was only fifteen years old in 1827, the military men were donating significant sums of money. For example, officers such as Henry Graham and Josias Taylor each gave £5 and Alexander Thom gave £6. There were far more military settlers than

⁴⁴ Yarrington, *The Commemoration of the Hero 1800-1864*, p. 326.

⁴⁵ C. M. Coates, ed. *Majesty in Canada: Essays on the Role of Royalty* (Dundurn, Toronto: 2006), p. 12.

⁴⁶ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 85, Microfilm C-6864, Folio 46659. Meeting of the inhabitants of Perth to discuss a monument to the Duke of York, 20 September 1827.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

civilians donating money; and when they did donate, civilians gave one or two shillings or pence. In addition to giving the most money, the former soldiers further drew attention to themselves by having their names placed at the top of the list.⁴⁸ The civilians who gave smaller amounts were positioned at the end.

The leading half-pay officers also drew attention to their status by writing ‘HP’ after their name, as well as describing themselves as Esquire. This was an attempt to mark themselves out on the record from the other settlers. These men were amongst the most prominent community members and they would have been recognised as half-pay officers by the local community, without any need to highlight this on record. However, by clearly designating themselves as half-pay officers, the men were showing the rest of the population that they had the largest land grants, and benefited from a regular income. The other veterans on the list displayed their military status by writing their former regiment after their name. Men such as Thomas Coos and John Wills wrote the word ‘pensioner’ after their name to show they had been in the army. In total over £60 was raised locally. On the surface, the actions of the veterans during this campaign provides a very rare example of when military men did draw attention to their status in a public way. We have seen how the veterans had an affinity with the Duke due to his role. Most of the men listed on the subscription would have served in the army when the Duke was Commander-in-Chief. Therefore, the men may have been keen to display their contribution to the campaign to their fellow veterans. It must be remembered that the fund for the monument only involved a small group of no more than sixty people, the rest of the population of the military settlement seemingly had no input. In addition, the small group all lived nearby one another in and around Perth town itself. We do not know whether the veterans deliberately kept the fundraising efforts amongst themselves as the local elite of the town, or whether the campaign in fact did not meet with much

⁴⁸ Ibid.

enthusiasm from the wider population. Whatever the explanation, their efforts to create the monument was restricted to the small community of military men, so they were not necessarily displaying their status amongst the mass of the people. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the campaign was successful, or that the monument was ever constructed.

As well as the campaign for the Duke of York's monument, efforts were made across Upper Canada in 1823 to construct a monument to Major General Isaac Brock, who had been killed at the Battle of Queenstown Heights during the War of 1812. If the Duke of York was a figure with tenuous links to Upper Canada, Brock was a far more useful character as a subject of public commemoration. At his death he was considered to be a 'the hero of Upper Canada' and the legislative assembly issued a statement that he had died for the defence of the people of Canada.⁴⁹ Morgan has stated that monuments were 'setter histories in visual form'.⁵⁰ In this case, the monument was a mark of British military success in the colony and became a symbol of loyalty and anti-American feeling. The campaign was organised by the colonial government with significant financial input from prominent individuals. Soldier settlers did help to raise money and attended meetings alongside militiamen. However, although they were involved, they did not have an organisational role. One again this was a top-down attempt at commemoration orchestrated by the colonial government.

Construction of the monument began in 1823. Two years prior to this a fundraising initiative began in Upper Canada. In October 1821 a letter was sent to Maitland to seek his permission to allow for the creation of a subscription. It asked that he 'greet the wishes of the brave and loyal inhabitants' by granting permission to undertake the fundraising. The letter argued that the purpose of the monument was to perpetuate Brock's memory and that he was 'respected by the many, honoured by our sovereign and idolised by the army and the valiant

⁴⁹ D. B. Read, *The Life and Times of Major General Sir Isaac Brock* (William Briggs, Toronto: 1894), p. 253.

⁵⁰ C. Morgan, *Building Better Britons? Settler Societies Within the British Empire 1783-1920* (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 2017), p. 159.

defenders of the colony you have the honour to command'.⁵¹ Maitland agreed and the process began. Money was donated by serving soldiers such as the garrison at Quebec, and further funds followed from colonial militia regiments.⁵² The residents of Amherstburg, a town with a sizeable population of soldier settlers, donated £24.0.10 to the total.⁵³ The bulk of the money came from individual subscribers who gave significant amounts. This process compared to the Duke of York memorial in London as the list of donors reads as a roll-call of the upper echelons of society. A total of thirty-five individuals were listed as subscribers in March 1822.⁵⁴ For example Lord Dalhousie donated £11.13.4. Francis Cockburn, the head of the Settling Department gave £1.5.0. A second list of subscribers from June 1822 tells a similar story, but this time there were several small donations from former soldiers. For examples William Nickle, who had served in the 79th Regiment of Foot donated ten shillings. Former Staff Surgeon William Caldwell gave ten shillings, and William Ambridge, a former soldier, donated five shillings.⁵⁵ A total of £128.2.11 was raised which led to the monument being completed in 1824.⁵⁶

In April 1840, Brock's monument was damaged beyond repair by an explosion of dynamite. The culprit was never confirmed, though suspicion fell on Benjamin Lett who had fought as a rebel in the 1837 uprising.⁵⁷ Lett was born in the British Isles and had emigrated to Upper Canada where he came to support the efforts of McKenzie and the radicals. An assizes carried out after the destruction of the monument failed to confirm his involvement.

⁵¹ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 54, Microfilm C-4607, Folio 27042. Letter to Maitland for the creation of a monument to Brock, 12 October 1821.

⁵² Ibid. Volume 55, Microfilm C-4608, Folio 28305. Donation from the garrison at Quebec for the construction of a monument to Brock, 25 March 1822.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid. Volume 56, Microfilm C-4609, Folio 29206. List of subscribers who donated money for the construction of a monument to Brock, 30 June 1822.

⁵⁵ List of Subscribers Ibid Folio 29204. William Nickle: LAC, Upper Canada Land Petitions volume 385, bundle N19, Folio 7 Microfilm C-2482. William Caldwell Dictionary of Canadian Biography. William Ambridge LAC Upper Canada Land Petitions, volume 8, Bundle A13, Folio 16, microfilm C-1611.

⁵⁶ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 60, microfilm C-4611, Folio 33086. List of subscribers who donated money for the construction of a monument to Brock, 2 November 1823.

⁵⁷ R. Bothwell, *The Penguin History of Canada*, p. 89.

The destruction was denounced by colonial newspapers and became a rallying point for anti-American feelings; the colonial government pledged to rebuild the monument. The *Perth Courier* described the act as sacrilegious as it disturbed the resting place of ‘the gallant and honourable dead’.⁵⁸ The *Montreal Transcript* stated that the monument was ‘a spot that should on every account have been held sacred’ and that despite the damage done ‘the enduring fame of the long lost general cannot be obliterated from memory’. The paper believed that the attack was a result of ‘the incursions of predatory foreigners’.⁵⁹ In general, colonial newspapers were quick to blame the Americans and their coverage suggested that the colonies were threatened.

Efforts were made to raise money so that the monument could be rebuilt, and a meeting to discuss the course of action to be taken was convened in Kingston in October 1842.⁶⁰ The attendees gave thanks to the inhabitants of Montreal and militia regiments for raising £3228.17.3 towards a total of £5000 which was needed to complete the construction. The colonial militia played an important part in the fundraising activities as they were present at several meetings across the colonies. For example, on 8 July 1840, members of the 3rd and 12th regiments of Gore militia assembled in the town to discuss the destruction of the monument and the actions they wished to take. They expressed ‘in the strongest terms our disgust and abhorrence lately made to destroy the monument...violating the sanctuary of the illustrious dead’.⁶¹ The men agreed to assist with the efforts to reconstruct the monument so they could ‘restore and perpetuate the honourable testimonial to his memory’.⁶²

The campaign to rebuild the monument was, like its predecessors, a top-down affair, and culminated in a gathering on the battlefield at Queenstown Heights which the colonial

⁵⁸ *Perth Courier*, 1 May 1840, p. 2.

⁵⁹ *Montreal Transcript*, 2 June 1840, p. 2

⁶⁰ *Kingston Chronicle and Gazette*, 5 October 1842, p. 2

⁶¹ *Kingston Chronicle and Gazette*, 8 July 1840, page 3.

⁶² *Ibid.* p. 2.

government used as a means of bringing the population together around a focal point of loyalty, during a troubled time. The event was attended by Upper Canada's Lieutenant Governor George Arthur as well as prominent individuals and militia officers. This event took place shortly after rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada, so it was also a show of strength of the loyalty of the population and a rejection of the views of the rebellious reformers. George Arthur and other leading individuals gave speeches and informed the assembled crowd that they were there to show their 'outrage' at the act of destructions, as well as their 'desire to honour and cherish his [Brock's] memory'.⁶³ Military settlers who were veterans of Queenstown Heights were in attendance to greet the lieutenant governor. They were also part of the group who pledged to raise the money to restore the monument, and donations were collected.

By 1841 the money needed to restore the monument was still to be raised. To resolve this problem the *Toronto Examiner* proposed that festivities should be held to mark the next royal birth in towns across the colony, and the money raised would then be donated to the monument fund. The article advised that military settlers should have a role in managing the events and that they would 'render a fitting gratitude to himself [Brock] who died in defending this country from foreign invasions'.⁶⁴ This summation of Brock's legacy is important to explaining why he was commemorated and battles were not. It also highlights why Brock was deemed to be so relevant to the population. The campaign to rebuild the monument came just after the rebellions which threatened the colonies with invasion from America, and, in the eyes of the colonial government, sought to sever ties with Britain in place of ties to the United States. To the colonial elite, Brock was a symbol of defiance against America and loyalty to Britain. His legacy was used to focus the population and provide a rallying point. Like the campaign for the Duke of York's monument, the effort to

⁶³ *Kingston Chronicle and Gazette*, 1 August 1840, p2.

⁶⁴ *Toronto Examiner*, 27 October 1841, p. 3.

mark Brock's memory did not necessarily celebrate the man himself. Rather, the campaign to commemorate his life was more about what he stood for- monarchy, militarism, and a reminder of the colonies' ties to Britain. Both campaigns also provided an opportunity for colonial and local elites to demonstrate their wealth and influence. For these reasons, the commemoration of these two men was far more important to the organisers than efforts to remember individual battles.

The Orange Order and the Freemasons

We have seen that veterans did not organise or participate in individual commemorative displays in terms of the battles they had been involved in. While they did take part in the campaigns for monuments to the Duke of York and Brock, these were not explicitly militaristic in terms of marking their involvement in battles. Rather they were symbols of the colonies' attachments to Britain and the monarchy, as well as the pervasiveness of anti-American views. So instead of publicly displaying their status as veterans the men turned to organisations such as the Orange Order and the Freemasons which satisfied a popular need for belonging to a tight-knit organisation, and for parading and ceremonial activities.

Veterans displayed a civic, rather than military identity through their membership of these two organisations. Rather than striking out as individuals or in groups to commemorate the anniversaries of battle, military settlers worked within, and adapted the structures of the Orange Order and masonic lodges. The large number of military men in the ranks of these organisations show that their meetings provided the change to gather with likeminded individuals with similar pasts. In addition, the former soldiers were a regular fixture in parades where they would march through their local communities with banners, uniforms and regalia, and which on some occasions resulted in acts of violence. By utilising these existing organisations, the men were able to become publicly involved in commemorative activities in settler communities.

The Orange Order and Freemasons were organisations with a history of a significant military presence among their memberships, and this proved crucial in bringing lodges to the colonies. The Orange Order was founded in 1795 as a popular Protestant organisation which aimed to tackle, what its members saw, as rising Catholic assertiveness in Armagh and Ulster. Lodges traditionally held parades every 12 July to mark the anniversary of ‘King Billy’s’ Protestant victory at the battle of the Boyne. The organisation gained a reputation for violence and igniting religious tension across the British Isles. In relation to the Order and its establishment in British North America, secondary studies are generally in agreement in acknowledging the importance of its military roots. For example, Gray has pointed out that the first lodges in Britain were formed by soldiers. When these men were posted to the colonies, they carried warrants with them from British and Irish lodges which permitted them to establish overseas branches.⁶⁵ As Smyth has pointed out, Orange lodges in the colonies had military origins through the serving soldiers who organised meetings in garrison towns.⁶⁶ However, the historiography of the Orange Order in the colonies does not appreciate the full impact that former soldiers had on its growth and character. These men, particularly the half-pay officers, would have been naturally inclined to join the ranks as it provided a platform for ambitious individuals to make connections. As well as this, the meetings themselves were an opportunity for former soldiers to ‘return momentarily to a realm of myth and familiar tradition’.⁶⁷ By examining the locations that lodges were formed, it is no coincidence that the areas with large numbers of military settlers were the same places where lodges were quickly established and thrived

⁶⁵ T. Gray, *The Orange Order* (The Bodley Head: London, 1972), p. 90.

⁶⁶ W. J. Smyth, *Toronto, The Belfast of Canada: The Orange Order and the Shaping of Municipal Culture* (University of Toronto Press, Toronto: 2015), p. 77.

⁶⁷ C. J. Houston and W. J. Smyth, *The Sash Canada Wore; A Historical Geography of the Orange Order in Canada* (University of Toronto Press, Toronto: 1980), p. 35.

The straightforward process required to start a new lodge made the organisation extremely successful in replicating itself throughout the colonies. A military lodge was formed in Montreal in 1800 and ‘many demobbed soldiers and Irish emigrants established the solid foundation of the order’.⁶⁸ Senior’s research has concluded that the meetings of military lodges in garrison towns were often attended by civilians, and they in turn started their own lodges.⁶⁹ Ogle Gowan, Canadian Grand Master, wrote in his 1859 history of Orangeism that by the end of the Napoleonic Wars ‘lodges of the association had expanded into nearly all the battalions of the regular army, especially the Royal Artillery; nearly all the members of which arm of the service were Orange members’.⁷⁰ Likewise, the establishment of masonic lodges in Upper Canada was driven by former soldiers. The benefits and attraction for joining were similar as a masonic lodge also provided a social setting for men in settler communities. Importantly, former soldiers had an impact on the organisations by making them increasingly militaristic and hierarchical in their organisation and internal procedures. Particularly as the leading positions in these groups were taken up by military men. The Freemasons were associated with respectability, and loyalty to the crown and empire.⁷¹ The lasting popularity of the Orange Order and the Freemasons in Canada throughout the nineteenth-century is also an example of the legacy of military migration. Smyth has remarked that ‘in no other country outside the British Isles did the order achieve the strength, power and notoriety that characterised the Canadian organisation’.⁷² Orange members gained political power in the local level in Toronto and nationally in Canada during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The masons continued to flourish in the same period, and their lodges, including

⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 16.

⁶⁹ H. Senior, *Orangeism: The Canadian Phase* (McGraw Hill Ryerson: Toronto, 1972), p. 7.

⁷⁰ O. Gowan, *Orangeism: It’s Origin and History* (Lovell and Gibson: Toronto, 1859), p. 281.

⁷¹ J. Harland Jacobs, *Builders of Empire: Freemasons and British Imperialism 1717-1927* (The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill: 2007), p. 157.

⁷² Smyth, *Toronto, The Belfast of Canada*, p. 23.

the 'True Britons' lodge in Perth which was founded by soldier settlers, still continue. The later success of these organisations was rooted, largely, in the actions of the military settlers.

Masonic lodges had a similar history to the Orange Order in the colonies in terms of their spread and growth in the colonies, particularly in the newly formed military settlements after 1815. Masonic lodges had long been associated with the military, for example meetings were held by soldiers serving in the War of 1812.⁷³ In the years following the French revolution, Masonic ideology became firmly rooted in the ideas of 'upholding and promoting monarchy, state and empire'.⁷⁴ In the first decades of the nineteenth-century, the masons 'cultivated their reputation as members of a loyal and respectable institution that was closely connected with imperial elites'.⁷⁵

Military settlers made up a significant part of the membership of masonic lodges in the colonies. The formation of the first masonic lodge in the military settlements occurred in Perth on 24 September 1818 and it was named the 'True Britons Lodge'.⁷⁶ Twelve men attended the first meeting which was held at the home of John Adamson in the town. The partial list of names of those who attended included Adamson, John Parker, Angus Cameron, Alexander Matheson, William Matheson, John Hughes, Henry Graham, David Hogg and John Ferguson.⁷⁷ With the exception of John Ferguson, all were former soldiers.⁷⁸ The second lodge which was formed in the military settlement was in Richmond. The *History of Freemasonry in Canada* has remarked that this lodge was particularly popular. As with the

⁷³ J. E. Taylor, 'Freemasonry in Old Canada and the War of 1812', *The Papers of the Canadian Masonic Research Association*, 730:2 (1986), p. 787.

⁷⁴ Harland Jacobs, *Builders of Empire*, p. 131.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* p. 164.

⁷⁶ J. Ross Robertson, *The History of Freemasonry in Canada: Volume One and Two* (The Hunter Rose Company: Toronto, 1899), p. 1138.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* p. 1138-1139.

⁷⁸ John Adamson, Angus Cameron, John Parker: LAC, Upper Canada Land Petitions, RG1 L3, Volume 420, Perth Military Settlement Bundle, Microfilm C-2738. Folio 5b
David Hogg: *Ibid.* Folio 11k.

True Britons Lodge, it is possible to uncover the military background of the membership.⁷⁹ At least seven of the founding members were former soldiers; it has not been possible to ascertain the background of the others. Elsewhere in the Rideau Valley military settlements, former soldiers helped to establish lodges in Wolford Township in 1822 and North Elmsely Township in 1839.⁸⁰ Although the membership rolls are incomplete, the names of lodges across the Canadian colonies do suggest the influence of military men. For example, the Royal Rose lodge was formed in Sorel, Lower Canada, in 1816 by men of the 7th Regiment of Foot. Montreal's lodge which was formed in 1815 was named 'Wellington Preserving'. There was also a 'Waterloo' lodge from 1816 to 1837 in Three Rivers and a 'Nelson Lodge' in Quebec.⁸¹ The impact that soldier settlers had on the growth of masonic lodges demonstrates the central role they played in the organisation. Ambitious military settlers, in particular the half-pay officers, would have been drawn to the lodges as the freemasons had a 'well-deserved reputation for being an institution that offered its members a passport to countless benefits in all parts of the empire'.⁸² A lodge generally formed early in the life of a settlement (as was the case in Perth and Richmond) and provided opportunities for its members to make connections and gain influence. Harland Jacobs has argued that Freemasonry was 'critical for imperial pioneers who devoted themselves to remote localities into enclaves of British society'.⁸³

Although membership roll data is largely unavailable for Orange lodges in Upper Canada until the 1850s, it is still possible to show that former soldiers were present in large numbers in the order throughout the colonies. In his study on the composition of the

⁷⁹ Ross Robertson, *The History of Freemasonry in Canada*, p. 1161.

⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 212. The military men who founded the Wolford lodge were James McLean: LAC Upper Canada Land Petitions, RG1 L3, Volume 420, Perth Military Settlement Bundle, Microfilm C-2739, Folio 23t. Daniel McCarthy: Ibid, Folio 3. James Maitland: Ibid.

⁸¹ J. H. Graham, *Outlines of the History of Freemasonry in the Province of Quebec* (John Lovell and Son: Montreal, 1892), p. 103.

⁸² Harland Jacobs, *Builders of Empire*, p. 1.

⁸³ Ibid. p. 53.

membership of the organisation, Cadigan has found that in rural areas membership was ‘dominated by farmers of all status groups side by side with agricultural labourers’.⁸⁴ Membership in regional centres (such as Perth) was dominated by clergy, Irish gentry and half-pay officers. Similarly, these people held the offices of power in the organisation. However, Cadigan does acknowledge that the lack of membership data before 1850 makes this difficult to confirm. Senior has argued that during the 1820s, Orange membership outside York was composed of half-pay officers, clergy and doctors who sought influence. Local lodges encouraged officers to join due to the prestige they could confer as ‘gentlemen leaders’.⁸⁵

Veterans were an integral part of the membership of local lodges, and so were key to sustaining the growth and development of the organisation. They were present at the highest ranks of the organisation can be confirmed with several useful sources. In 1840 the leading members of the order came together in Toronto to agree on rules and ordinances to govern the Grand Lodge of British North America. District lodges sent their own representatives to the event, and their names are useful to ascertain the extent of the presence of military settlers. In total 130 men are listed.⁸⁶ Settlement records make it possible to identify the background of fifty-five of these individuals. Sixty-one percent of this group were former British army soldiers and they made up the regional membership of the grand committee. This group included men such as Joel Robinson who had served in the Light Dragoons, and Ira Schofield Jnr who had served in the 2nd Regiment of Foot.⁸⁷ The President of the Committee, named Duggan, was a half-pay officer. The remaining thirty-nine percent of the group was composed of civilian emigrants such as William Beatty from Ireland, or native

⁸⁴ S. T. Cadigan, ‘Paternalism and Politics: Sir Francis Bond Head, the Orange Order, and the Elections of 1836’, *The Canadian Historical Review*, 72: 3 (September 1991), p. 326.

⁸⁵ Senior, *Orangeism: The Canadian Phase*, p. 12.

⁸⁶ *Laws and Ordinances of the Orange Order of British North America. Adopted by the Grand Lodge Brockville in 1840* (Roger and Thompson: Toronto, 1840), pp. 5-7.

⁸⁷ Robinson: LAC upper Canada Land Petitions, RG1 L3, Volume 438a, Bundle R3, Microfilm C-2749, Petition 21. Schofield: Ibid. Volume 468, Bundle S18, Microfilm C-2817, Petition 94.

born Upper and Lower Canadians such as Thomas Galt from Toronto.⁸⁸ The men were generally prominent individuals as in addition to the former soldiers there were twenty-two justices of the peace, a deputy sheriff, a merchant, the master of the Toronto grammar school, a member of the legislative assembly and the emigration agent for Canada.⁸⁹ Evidence also shows that military settlers held important administrative posts at the highest level. In 1833, Ogle Gowan drew up an address to the lieutenant governor of Upper Canada which was then signed by the principle office holder of the Grand Lodge.⁹⁰ These signatures allow us to identify former soldiers amongst the leading ranks of the organisation. For example, Richard Bullock, the Deputy Grand Master was a half-pay officer.⁹¹ As was Charles Clarke who was the Deputy Grand Treasurer.⁹² Several Grand Secretaries were also half-pay officers such as J. K. Hartwell and Thomas F. McQueen.⁹³

At a local level, former soldiers made up a significant part of Orange Order lodges, particularly in the military settlements. In the absence of membership details, Ogle Gowan's regular presence in the military settlements is an indication of the level of Orange Order activities in these areas. He attended several meetings of prominent community members in the region such as one held in Perth town in 1836. The *Perth Courier* reported that a resolution was passed at the meeting which affirmed that the area's inhabitants had the 'fullest confidence in the integrity and ability of Ogle R. Gowan' and that during the election campaign of that year he would be provided with 'loyal, constitutional, unbiased and fearless support'. The article does not tell whether the inhabitants actually agreed with these sentiments or even whether their opinion was sought. The attendees of the meeting were

⁸⁸ Beatty: LAC, Upper Canada Land Petitions, RG1 L3, Volume 47, Bundle B14, Microfilm C-1627, Petition 143. Galt: Ibid. Volume 211, Bundle G20, Microfilm C-2035, Petition 45.

⁸⁹ *Laws and Ordinances of the Orange Order of British North America. Adopted by the Grand Lodge Brockville in 1840* (Roger and Thompson: Toronto, 1840), pp. 5-7.

⁹⁰ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 113, Microfilm C-6880, Folio 73202-07.

⁹¹ LAC, Upper Canada Land Petitions, RG1 L3, Volume 40, Bundle B11, Microfilm C-1624, Petition 204.

⁹² Ibid. Volume 420, Perth Military Settlement Bundle, Microfilm C-2739, Petition 23t.

⁹³ J. K. Hartwell: Ibid. Thomas F. McQueen LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, Volume 48, Microfilm C-4605, Folio 24052.

apparently ‘magistrates and leading men of the place’ by which was presumably meant the half-pay officers who have featured prominently in this thesis. After the meeting, Gowan was entertained by soldier settlers and they drank toasts to the King, the Queen and Sir John Colborne.⁹⁴ A year before this visit to Perth, Gowan had spent time in the neighbouring military settlement of Lanark where he attended a meeting of the inhabitants of the townships of Elmsely and Burgess. Reports suggested there were 300 people present, including former soldiers. At this meeting the people declared their support for the ‘protection...from the oppression of radical tyranny and bigotry’. Again Gowan was entertained by prominent half-pay officers such as Powell and Taylor and the group celebrated the re-appointment of Sir Robert Peel as Prime Minister and the return of the Conservative party to power. They ended with three cheers for the King and three more for Peel.⁹⁵

The Orange Order had a significant ability to multiply across settler communities, but why did Protestant military men join the organisation in the colonies? One reason was that lodges were amongst the first communal groups to be set up in a new community, usually due to the activities of a small group of new arrivals.⁹⁶ The organisation was an ‘integral part of community life in the frontier...acting as a focal point for community development’.⁹⁷ Kealey has argued that the reasons for joining was dependent on the individual. There was the religious appeal to Protestants, the desire to belong to a society, the opportunities to socialise away from the home, and finally the opportunity to make connections which could result in personal gain.⁹⁸ Lodge meetings provided the chance for old soldiers to meet together where they could take part in solemn rituals such as oath taking, meetings and

⁹⁴ *Perth Courier*, 12 February 1836, p. 3.

⁹⁵ *Perth Courier*, 29 May 1835, p. 3.

⁹⁶ Houston and Smyth, *The Sash Canada Wore*, p. 112.

⁹⁷ W. Smyth, *Toronto, the Belfast of Canada*, p. 20

⁹⁸ G. Kealey, ‘The Orange Order in Toronto: Religious Riot and the Working Class’, G. Warren, ed, *Essays in Working Class Canadian History* (McClelland and Stewart: Toronto, 1976), p. 24.

dinners.⁹⁹ For ambitious military settlers, the Orange Order also provided a useful set of contacts in local politics and business.¹⁰⁰

Obviously not every former soldier who came to the colonies was Protestant and the popularity of the Orange Order begs the question of what Catholic military settlers did in terms of their commemorative activities. Senior has found that Gowan did make attempts in the later 1830s to encourage Catholics to join the organisation on the basis that they were loyal subjects. He argued that this was part of his attempt to shift the Order from its religious base to being based on political loyalty.¹⁰¹ In a letter from 1839 he wrote that ‘no country can prosper where disloyalty is allowed to flourish; the utmost latitude should be given to a conscientious difference of opinion in all matters whether religious or political’.¹⁰² His opinion that Catholics should be allowed to join was based on their participation in defending the colonies during the rebellions. He declared in a speech that ‘many of our Roman Catholic fellow subjects nobly stepped forward in 1837-38 to avow their loyalty, and stem the advancing tide of treason’.¹⁰³ A Grand Lodge meeting at Brockville in the same year passed a resolution that the members of the order had ‘feelings of delight in the recent manifestation of loyalty and patriotism displayed by our Roman Catholic fellow subjects in this province’.¹⁰⁴ Despite these words, there had been no support for Catholics prior to this. Warren has argued that Gowan’s attempts did not deny the Order’s key characteristics of Protestant British identification.¹⁰⁵ The Orange Order was an organisation which excluded Catholics and no doubt many of the Catholic soldier settlers would have felt uncomfortable with its existence

⁹⁹ D. MacRaid, *Faith, Fraternity and Fighting: The Orange Order and Irish Migrants in Northern England c1850-1920* (Liverpool University Press: Liverpool, 2005), p. 73.

¹⁰⁰ Houston and Smyth, *The Sash Canada Wore*, p. 113.

¹⁰¹ Senior, *Orangeism: The Canadian Phase*, p. 21.

¹⁰² O. Gowan, ‘An Important Letter on Responsible Government’, *Toronto Examiner*, 1839, p. 15.

¹⁰³ O. Gowan, *Speech of Mr Ogle R. Gowan Delivered in the George Street Orange Hall, Toronto, Addressed to the Young Britons Lodge*, 1840, p. 5.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ G. Warren, *Essays in Working Class Canadian History* (McClelland and Stewart, Toronto: 1976), p. 15.

in the colonies. The controversies that it caused by its actions in settler societies, in which former soldiers were often involved, speaks of anti-Catholic views.

The main activities of the Orange Order, and the Freemasons in terms of marching, parades, meetings and social dinners provided former soldiers with a means of participating in commemorative activities in a public manner. Such public commemoration, through the lens of the Orange Order or the Freemasons meant that there was no reason to commemorate battles as the organisations satisfied this need. For example, parades often featured participants wearing uniforms, carrying regalia such as banners and flags, and being accompanied by a band.¹⁰⁶ Therefore this was an opportunity for former soldiers to express their British identity and loyalty in ways reminiscent of their time in the army.¹⁰⁷ This was also a key motivating factor for these men to join one or both of the groups and maintain their membership over the long term.

Orange Order and masonic parades were a common feature in the Rideau Valley military settlements. The Orange Order was particularly active in this area and held regular events in the towns of Perth and Cavan. MacRaild argues that Orange public processions were a means for a lodge to express its power by showing that the movement had popular support.¹⁰⁸ The presence of military men in these events was not explicitly stated but it was hinted at. A parade in Perth in July 1827 was remarked upon in a letter by assemblyman William Morris who stated that the local lodge ‘marched there through the town with colours’ and ‘although a strong feeling of indignation exists on the part of the Catholics in consequence of these proceedings, I am happy to report there was no public disorder’.¹⁰⁹ The local lodge’s parade was an annual event in the area. A report to Colborne in 1830 described

¹⁰⁶ G. Leitch, ‘Claiming the Streets: Negotiating National Identities in Montreal’s Parades, 1840-1880’, M. Hayday and R. Blake et al, *Celebrating Canada: Volume One. Holidays, National Days and the Crafting of Identities* (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 2016), p. 17.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 18.

¹⁰⁸ MacRaild, *Faith, Fraternity and Fighting*, p. 157.

¹⁰⁹ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 85, Microfilm C-6883, Folio 46277.

a procession through the town of Cavan ‘with music and flags’.¹¹⁰ It was noted that the lodge assembled at the home of Mr Elliott (a soldier settler) before they set off to parade through the town. There was criticism of the actions of magistrates who were also Orangemen as it was alleged that they did not use ‘their influence to suppress these processions’.¹¹¹ The description of the magistrates as being Orangemen implies the involvement of soldier settlers as the previous chapter has shown the extent to which they dominated these roles in the military settlements. A second letter to the colonial government which also commented on the Cavan march wrote that ‘it is regretted that some of the officers belonging to the 2nd Regiment of Durham militia have attended’ and the author also complained that prominent community members were supporters of the order. The marches ‘should not be countenanced by men of influence’.¹¹² An additional letter from a resident of Perth named Maguire, to an undisclosed recipient, described the situation regarding the Order in the area. He also complained of the conduct of the magistrates and stated that ‘my brother magistrates in this place is [sic] a good deal tainted with that prejudice which prompts these ignorant individuals to triumph’.¹¹³ Senior has found that lodge activity was often led by half pay officers, and there were repeated demands from the public to the Lieutenant Governor that they be deprived of their commissions’.¹¹⁴

Orange parades in the military settlements courted controversy and did not always end peacefully. There were a number of high profile clashes between Protestants and Catholics in the military settlements, the first of which occurred in 1824 in a tavern in Cavan. One year prior to this, an emigration scheme had facilitated the settlement of 500 mostly Catholic Irish settlers to the area. These settlers had been employed on the construction of the nearby

¹¹⁰ Ibid. Volume 101, Microfilm C-6870, Folio 57172.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid. Folio 57170.

¹¹³ Ibid. Folio 56996.

¹¹⁴ Senior, *Orangeism: The Canadian Phase*, p. 11.

Rideau Canal. The new arrivals clashed with the established Protestant Orange Order members of the community. A former soldier named James Fitzgibbon, who was employed by the colonial government, was sent to the area to investigate the situation. He issued a printed letter to the lodges of the townships of Cavan and Perth in June 1826 ahead of a planned march through the area.¹¹⁵ He cautioned against the march due to ‘the conduct of the two classes of countrymen who have come to reside in this province in recent years’.¹¹⁶ This was followed by the remark that there was no ‘justifiable reason for your continuing to go abroad in processions...offensive and insulting to Catholics...I am extremely desirous that our differences should be amicably settled by ourselves’.¹¹⁷ A biography of Fitzgibbon, written by his daughter, claimed the appeal was successful and the march was called off.¹¹⁸

There were large areas of the colonies where marching did not take place or where the Orange Order did not receive support from the public or prominent community members. The lack of activity in these areas could be because veterans were not dominant local figures. This further points to their central importance in the organisation of Orange events. For example, in the township of Peterborough, not far from York, a letter was sent in 1830 to the colonial government describing the activities of the lodge in the local area. It stated that marches had not taken place in the town, and although there were local people who belonged to the organisation ‘they receive no countenance from the respectable part of the inhabitants’.¹¹⁹ Although parades were frequent in York, they regularly faced objections from the town’s authorities.¹²⁰ A parade in 1833 had seen a riot break out between Orangemen and Catholics. The event was criticised in the newspapers and it was hoped that the order would cease to

¹¹⁵ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries RG5 A1, Volume 78, Microfilm C-4617, Folio 41932. Printed address from James Fitzgibbon to the Orangemen of Cavan and Perth, 18 June 1826.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ M. G. Fitzgibbon, *A Veteran of 1812: The Life of James Fitzgibbon* (William Briggs: Toronto, 1894), p. 260.

¹¹⁹ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 101, Microfilm C-6870, Folio 57123. Letter to Colborne regarding the activities of the Orange Order in Peterborough, 15 July 1830.

¹²⁰ *Perth Courier*, 24 July 1834, p. 2.

‘give offence to the Catholics of Upper Canada, who have given such sterling proofs of their loyalty’.¹²¹

The ideology of the Orange Order in the colonies was based around loyalty to Britain and the monarchy, and its members were dedicated to upholding the link with Britain. This ideology was shaped by Ogle Gowan during his leadership, but soldier settlers also played their part, particularly as they were dedicated to proving their loyalty to Britain in their petitions for land or jobs. Lord Durham’s 1840 report into conditions in the colonies described the Order as having a political, rather than religious bearing.¹²² Scott See’s article on the Orange Order in British North America has described its ideology as a ‘complex blend of full-throated dedication to the Empire and unwavering support for Britain’s imperial endeavours’.¹²³ The contents of the 1833 address drawn up by Gowan provides further insight into this view. The document helps to define the loyalty of the Order and demonstrates how Lord Durham came to his conclusions. It states that the Orangemen had an ‘unaltered attachment to the throne and the constitution of our country’. Furthermore, they:

Deeply deplored the idea that there could be found in this colony, even one man, so malignant as to seek the destruction of that Glorious constitution, from which emanates the liberty of conscience, the political freedom, the personal security, which flows upon the inhabitants of this province, under the mild and equitable sway of a British governor.¹²⁴

¹²¹ *Niagara Gleaner*, 20 July 1833, p. 2.

¹²² Lord Durham, *Report of the Affairs of British North America* (Robert Stanton: Toronto, 1840), p. 71

¹²³ S. See, ‘A Colonial Hybrid’: Nineteenth-Century Loyalty as Articulated by the Orange Order in the Maritime Colonies of British North America’, A. Blackstock and F. O’Gorman ed, *Loyalty and the Formation of the British World* (The Boydell Press: Woodbridge, 2014), p. 181.

¹²⁴ LAC, Upper Canada Sundries, RG5 A1, Volume 133, Microfilm C-6880, Folio 73203-07. Address by Ogle Gowan on the Orange Order of British North America, 3 September 1833.

The members also pledged that they were ‘ever ready to come forward, in defence of the peace and good order of society’.¹²⁵

The activities associated with being a member of the Freemasons would also have appealed to soldier settlers who wished to participate in commemorative activities such as parading. Furthermore, the internal procedures of a masonic meeting were highly regimental and based on hierarchy. Regalia and secret codes were integral events. A masonic lodge was a visible presence in a local community, and their activities (aside from meetings) also often involved interaction with different lodges over a wide area. Annual celebrations were held by lodges on St John’s Day (St John was their patron saint). These celebrations involved a procession through the town with full regalia and music, finishing with commemorations in the lodge meeting room.¹²⁶ The True Britons lodge marked the creation of their organisation with a procession through the town to the church where a special sermon was held. The membership then dined together afterwards.¹²⁷ It was also common for lodges to be given the opportunity to lay the foundation stone of important public buildings. In 1842 the True Britons lodge laid the stone for the new court house in Perth. The lodge’s secretary, Donald Fraser (a half-pay officer), led a procession of the members through the town to the construction site.¹²⁸

As with the Orange Order, the masons were supportive of ideas of loyalty, monarchy and the British connection. A report from a meeting in Perth in December 1836 described how the men celebrated the ‘true principles of the British constitution’ and condemned the reforms in Lower Canada’s assembly. The lodge called on the ‘worthy veterans of the Bathurst district’ to repel any intrusions by reformers into their town.¹²⁹ There is also

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ *Perth Courier*, 3 May 1842, p. 3.

¹²⁷ Ross Robertson, *The History of Freemasonry in Canada*, p. 1141.

¹²⁸ *Perth Courier*, 3 May 1842, p. 3.

¹²⁹ *Perth Courier*, 1 January 1836, p. 3.

evidence to show that half-pay officers who were masons were also members of the Orange Order, or at the very least sympathised with their beliefs. This is because complaints arose from the military settlement that masons were taking part in the antagonism of Catholic settlers which occurred in the area in the 1820s.¹³⁰

Conclusion

Soldier settlers did not publicly commemorate their own involvement in significant battles such as Waterloo. The limited scale of events that took place to mark anniversaries of battles during the first half of the nineteenth-century only involved the regular British army soldiers who were stationed in garrison towns. There was no widespread desire from the colonial population to carry out commemorative activities to mark British militarism. Therefore, rather than publicly commemorating their past, Protestant veterans turned to organisations such as the Orange Order and the Freemasons. In this capacity the men attempted to position themselves as civic, as opposed to military, figures. This corresponds with what we have seen in the third chapter as veterans became influential businessmen, farmers, and local government administrators. Their status as civic figures in their day-to-day lives operated alongside the private world of networks and petitioning. When interacting with members of their community, veterans did not display their military past. However, their dealings with the colonial government required them to push their militarism to the fore. Similarly, support networks continued to exist between veterans, widows and children, but they operated in the private world of petitioning. If the veterans chose to remember the battles they had been involved in, and their comrades who were killed or wounded, they did so in private.

Military men also became involved in the campaigns to build monuments to the Duke of York and General Brock. These campaigns, as well as their involvement in the Orange Order and Freemasons, are a reminder of how important the military settlers were in creating

¹³⁰ Ross Robertson, *The History of Freemasonry in Canada*, p. 415.

lasting legacies in Upper Canada. The Duke of York monument was an expression of their power and leading role in the settler communities. A group of wealthy, prominent half-pay officers were in the position to organise local people to fund and construct a monument which had a special significance to these men. The amount of money that the leading officers donated, and their willingness to make this publicly known, is further evidence of their status. Military men also had a crucial role in the organisation of Orange and Masonic lodges. Both organisations spread quickly through settler communities, and it is no coincidence that the areas where military settlers were common saw a rapid growth of new lodges. The continued existence, and power of both organisations during the nineteenth-century is a testament to the legacy of the military settlers. Indeed, the True Britons lodge is still active in Perth.

However, despite the power of the military settlers in not only founding lodges but also their leading role in local government and business, they were quickly forgotten by Canadian historians and the historical associations which emerged during the second half of the nineteenth-century. The memory of the military settlers and all they had done in the colonies began to die with them. Instead of recalling the lives and achievements of the military settlers and their families, early Canadian historians looked to the Loyalists as the most significant migrants, and this trend continued into the twentieth-century. The process of overlooking the military settlers in favour of the loyalists began remarkably quickly. James Roy's 1850 history, *The History of Canada*, omitted the military settlers who came to the colonies after 1815; Roy instead claimed that the prosperity and development of contemporary Canada was due to the coming of the Loyalists.¹³¹ Part of the reason for this was that it was difficult for the early historians to see the veterans as one coherent group under an umbrella term, as was done with the Loyalists. The centennial of the arrival of the Loyalists was celebrated in Canada in June 1884; but there is no one day which marks the

¹³¹ J. Roy, *The History of Canada* (Armour and Ramsay, Montreal: 1850).

coming of the military settlers. The public behaviour of the veterans themselves also contributed to the process of forgetting as their status as a military settler was not overtly demonstrated. Despite being influential members of their community, they blended in with the mass of civilians. The next chapter explores the ways in which Canadian historiography overlooked the military settlers and explains why Loyalists were so heavily promoted.

Chapter Six: The absence of the veterans in early Canadian history

In June 1884 celebrations were held across Canada to mark the centenary of the arrival of the first Loyalist settlers. The rhetoric that surrounded these events, whether in speeches, pamphlets or sermons, lavished praise on the Loyalists and held them up as the founding fathers of Canada. Furthermore, a direct line of progress was imagined from the achievements of the Loyalists to late nineteenth-century Canada. In addition to the celebrations, the work of historical societies and monographs by early Canadian historians sought to cement the Loyalists as the most important group of settlers. In doing so, the veterans were not merely overlooked, but almost entirely written out of history in these sources.

Publications from the 1870s to the turn of the twentieth-century are crucial in terms of showing us how Canadian society viewed itself and its roots, particularly in terms of the settlers who were written about and those who were disregarded. The praise and importance attached to the Loyalists which feature in these works have been the subject of study by historians. For example, Michael Taylor's research on nineteenth-century Canadian historiography argues that a generation of Canadian historians emerged in the 1870s whose work was intended to show contemporaries how Canadians had 'struggled to raise the united

province to its present state, overcoming both the wilderness and irresponsible elite'.¹ The desire to show that the Loyalists were the founding fathers was a common theme throughout the historiography and this has also attracted the interest of historians. Carl Berger and George Killan have both highlighted a political motive for this. Berger states that 'the praise of the Loyalist past was generated in part as a response to the increasing criticism of the British connection'.² Similarly, Killan has argued that the desire to highlight their Loyalist heritage was a result of nationalists seeking to 'preserve and strengthen imperial ties by invoking the past' as a result of 'attacks on the British connection by... advocates of independence'.³

For a sense of context, it is important to keep in mind how political and economic events at the time would have helped shape the desire to promote a sense of Britishness through the Loyalists. Between the 1870s and 1880s the Canadian population was declining due to emigrants preferring the United States as the destination to forge a new life, and at the same time, Canadians themselves moved south of the border in greater numbers than ever before. Canada had a lower standard of living than America, Britain and Australia.⁴ As a result, the creation of a sense of pride in their Loyalist past which occurred during this period was hoped to 'bolster a range of national and imperial sentiments'.⁵ The aim of the late nineteenth-century writers was to show a connection to the empire born out of loyalism. Therefore surely it would have been logical for them to have referenced the contribution made by former soldiers. However, this was not the case. We have seen in the previous

¹ M. Taylor, *Promoters, Patriots and Partisans: Historiography in 19th Century English Canada* (University of Toronto Press, Toronto: 1989), p. 152.

² C. Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism 1867-1914* (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 1970), p. 82.

³ G. Killan, *Preserving Ontario's Heritage: A History of the Ontario Historical Society* (McMaster University, Hamilton: 1973), p. 63.

⁴ R. Bothwell, *Your Country, My Country: A Unified History of the United States and Canada* (Oxford University Press, Oxford: 2015).

⁵ C. Morgan, *Building Better Britons? Settler Societies Within the British Empire 1783-1920* (University of Toronto Press, Toronto: 2017), p. 176.

chapter that the veterans themselves contributed to the fact that they were overlooked by not displaying a military identity in their day-to-day lives. They were then discarded by early Canadian writers.

Recent research on the Loyalists, particularly by Knowles, has revealed a very different picture of these settlers than one that was painted by the supporters of their promotion. For one, Knowles has found that the motives of many for coming to the colonies was decidedly mixed. Instead of being driven solely by a sense of attachment to Britain and opposition to the newly independent United States, many Loyalists migrated for patronage and commercial ties. ‘Others were merely opportunists who pledged allegiance to whichever side seemed in the ascendency locally.’⁶ Also, rather than being composed entirely of members of the upper class (as the early Canadian historians claimed), 90% were pioneer farmers of modest means and they were of mixed national origin which included Dutch, British, French and German settlers.⁷ Jasanoff has also researched the origins of the Loyalists in detail, and her conclusions are similar. Her work makes the point that the Loyalists should not be considered as a homogenous group, and that it ‘would be a mistake to think the Loyalists were ideologically uniform’.⁸ As both of these works extensively cover the Loyalists, this chapter will not explore the details of the myth of the Loyalists, its creation, and the reality behind it.

Instead, this chapter will show how veterans, and indeed post-1815 emigrants in general, were excluded from the work of early Canadian scholars. This chapter will also propose the reasons for this by looking at the perception of colonial society in the late nineteenth-century. Studies by Knowles and Jasanoff have considered the place of the Loyalists at a colonial level. However, this chapter takes a different approach by also

⁶ Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists*, p. 15.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 16.

⁸ Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles*, p. 24.

including an assessment of the ways that local historical associations engaged with their past. While nineteenth-century Canadian scholars tended to look at the Loyalists in Upper Canada on a national level, local histories were often more varied and did include discussions on emigrants from the British Isles. The ‘Home Days’ which took place at the beginning of the twentieth-century in different towns provide examples of where veterans did appear in local history. Therefore, this chapter will highlight the differences between local and colonial history in terms of the remembrance of veterans.

Home Days and local history

‘Home Days’ (sometimes referred to as ‘Old Boys Reunions’) took place in towns across Ontario at the beginning of the twentieth-century. For example, events were held in London in 1900, Hamilton in 1903, Perth in 1905, Ottawa in 1907, and Belleville in 1910. Very little secondary research has been carried out on the Home Days, yet they were an opportunity for communities to reflect upon their past, and the coverage of the events in local newspapers illustrates how these areas remembered and commemorated the contributions made by early settlers. It was common for the events to last for a full week and they were extensively covered by local newspapers. A Home Day provided the chance for former residents to return to their family or ancestral home, reunite with old friends, and have their achievements celebrated by their community. This chapter considers the Home Days held in Perth in 1905 and Ottawa in 1907, and we will see that veterans were acknowledged as important early settlers during the course of both of these events. Two local newspapers, the *Perth Courier* and the *Ottawa Citizen*, are useful sources because of their extensive coverage of the events, and also due to the fact that they detailed the preparations which led up to the occasions. The newspapers recalled anecdotes and stories of the founders of the town and explored issues around local identity. The coverage in the *Perth Courier* played-up the area’s military heritage, as well as remembering the Scottish settlers who arrived in 1815. The Ottawa Home

Day also celebrated the town's military founders and celebrated 'old boys and girls' who achieved regional and national prominence.

The advent of Home Days coincided with the expansion of the railways across Canada which facilitated the movement of the Old Boys and Girls. Their arrival by train in the days leading up to the events were announced enthusiastically by the newspapers. For example, the *Ottawa Citizen* reported that 'five hundred Old Boys' had arrived by train from Toronto 'with more coming from Winnipeg'.⁹ The Perth Home Day was held on 30 June 1905. Coverage of the event looked back at the early years of the settlement and highlighted the first settlers. There was clearly an interest in the lives and experiences of the military men who settled after 1815, and they were praised for the contributions they made to the development of the town. The main aim of the event was 'to bring back home as many as possible of the town's offspring'.¹⁰ The Home Day saw large numbers of 'Old Boys' from Perth and the surrounding Bathurst area return to the town to celebrate their heritage. The preparations made during the months leading up to the event were covered by the *Perth Courier*. There were also regular reminders for residents to contact their family members who lived outside of town to encourage them to attend. In February 1905 the organising committee stated that 'there are still hundreds who have not been heard of yet, of those who read this find out if your friends name has been sent in. Every old boy and girl of Perth is wanted home this year'.¹¹

As well as the social aspect of the event, there was also a celebration of the area's heritage. The *Perth Courier* called on its readers to remember 'our forefathers striking into the unbroken vastness of the old Perth settlement ninety years ago, and gradually hewing out

⁹ *Ottawa Citizen*, 26 July 1907, p. 1.

¹⁰ *Perth Courier*, 17 February 1905, p. 5.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

their homes in the forest primeval'.¹² The coverage of the event provided an opportunity to reflect on the history of the area, as well as publicise reminiscences by descendants of the earliest settlers. The settlement's roots as a destination for emigrants from the British Isles featured prominently. There was a focus on Scottish heritage due to the 'three hundred men, women and children who arrived from the highlands...among the first pioneer settlers were John Halliday, Alexander McFarlane, and James MacDonald...who settled in Bathurst Lanark and North Elmsley'.¹³ However, it was clear that there was a belief that the area owed its existence to the military settlers who arrived from 1815. Biographies of prominent veterans featured in the coverage and the impact that they had on the town was discussed. For example:

Among the military settlers in North Elmsely in 1816 were Captain O'Brien and Lieutenant Pelton, whom Pelton's Bay a few miles down the River Tay is named...among the first settlers in Perth was a Staff Surgeon named Thom, a native of Scotland who owned that section of town now called Grantville.¹⁴

There was a degree of pride attached to contemporary residents who could trace their ancestry to the first military settlers. At the time of the Home Day, the *Courier* stated that Alexander Thom had a daughter still living in the town, John H. Graham of Perth was the son of Captain Henry Graham, and the Provincial Treasurer of Ontario was the son of Roderick Matheson. In addition, Lieutenant Colonel Josias Taylor was the grandfather of Robert Walker of Perth, Sergeant Cameron was the father of the Honourable Malcom Cameron (Assemblyman for Lanark) and Lieutenant Colonel Playfair was the grandfather of the Honourable Peter McLaren of Perth.¹⁵ The Home Day also celebrated the contribution made by the European soldiers from the De Wattville and De Meuron regiments who had settled in

¹² Ibid. p. 2.

¹³ Ibid, 1 July 1905, p. 2.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

the townships of North Burgess and Bathurst. Although ‘the great majority only remained a short time and returned to their native lands...sufficient of them remained to impress their names, their religion and their customs upon the localities where they lived, and their descendants in the two townships and in Perth are numerous today.’¹⁶

The Home Day was an opportunity for longstanding members of the community to publicise stories from their family histories which were significant moments in the development of the town. The descendants of the veterans featured heavily. One of these stories came from Donald Fraser, the grandson of Colonel Fraser of the 74th Highland Regiment. Fraser stated that his grandfather had come to the settlement in 1820 after retiring from the army on half pay. ‘In the 1830s people wanted the power of the family compact broken, my grandfather prevailed upon to be the people’s candidate and was elected [as the town’s first assemblyman], Captain McMillan being his opponent.’¹⁷ However, he was soon removed from office for not meeting the property requirements. A second reminiscence was provided by John Douglas, a retired Major in the local militia. In his younger days he attended the Perth fair and would see the ‘meeting together of old soldiers who fought their battles over again...whisky flew and may an old grudge eventuated in free fights which everyone viewed as a matter of course’.¹⁸ The coverage of the Home Day shows that the community explored and publicised its military heritage as efforts had clearly been made to research the soldier settlers to show the important role they had played in the area’s foundation. The inclusion of discussions of the veterans in the Home Days complicates the forgetting narrative. The reflections of the people of Perth and Ottawa on their past had to feature veterans as military settlers had such an important role in the founding of the towns.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 4.

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 3.

But the Home Days are part of a trend which saw local histories give more time to the veterans, rather than disregarding them entirely as national works did.

The work of early historical societies.

Historical societies sprang up across Canada towards the end of the nineteenth-century. The publications of these societies were a mix of local histories, which featured discussions of veterans and other settlers from the British Isles, and work which promoted Ontario's Loyalist past. The London and Middlesex Historical Society, which was founded at the beginning of the twentieth-century, tended to produce works which focused on local history. A 1908 publication on the history of London and the surrounding townships did credit the impact that settlers from the British Isles had on the development of the area. However, while civilian settlers did feature, the veterans did not. This publication also praised the Loyalists by describing them as 'a large number of loyal citizens who were compelled to seek a new home under the old flag'. Similarly, the publication acknowledged the settlement of emigrants from the British Isles in Niagara but held that the Loyalists were the most important founders of townships in the surrounding area.¹⁹

While the Ontario Historical Society published work dealing with local histories, it was overt in its praise of the Loyalists. The Ontario Historical Society was formed in 1898 as a successor to the Pioneer and Historical Association of Ontario. Both organisations had similar aims. The earlier Pioneer association stated that its purpose was to 'foster the spirit of British Canadian nationality' and to do so its members looked to 'the United Empire Loyalists and others of 1783, the pioneers and founders of this and each maritime province'.²⁰ The constitution of the Ontario Historical Society, which was enacted in 1898, described its

¹⁹ T. Campbell, 'The founding of London', *Historic Sketches of London Ontario* (The London and Middlesex Historical Society, London: 1908), p. 15.

²⁰ Pioneer and Historical Association of Ontario, *Programme of the Association* (published by the association, Toronto: 1888), p. 9.

aim as being ‘to unite the various pioneer and historical societies in the province on one central head’ as well as publishing works which looked at the ‘history of the province and dominion’.²¹ Despite these broad aims, the organisation’s publications, and that of its predecessor, was dominated by work investigating the genealogy of Canada’s inhabitants. As a result, the institution devoted a significant amount of effort in proving the Loyalist roots of the population, which ultimately led to a disregard for soldier settlers and migrants from the British Isles more generally. Morgan’s research on the work of Ontario’s historical societies between 1890 and 1920 has found that they were overwhelmingly concerned with documenting Upper Canada’s pioneer past. Invariably this means that the Loyalists figured prominently.²² The history of Upper Canada was formed into a neat narrative of progress from a sparse, hostile pioneer environment to a prosperous contemporary society.

The Ontario society produced numerous works which promoted the idea that contemporary Canadian society was founded by a virtuous Loyalist population, and by implication these virtues were handed down through the generations. A sense of pride is evident in these works. For instance Daniel Clendennen’s paper described the Loyalists as ‘sturdy...Presbyterian pioneers’ and claimed they ‘are the ancestors of thousands who today are proud to call Canada their country’.²³ William Burritt’s study from 1901 argued that the Canadian people’s Loyalist ancestors experienced suffering and privation, but were ultimately heroic survivors who claimed the mantle of ‘the King’s Men’.²⁴ The Ontario society did not stand alone as a Canadian organisation which promoted the importance of the Loyalist through historical study.

²¹ *By-Laws and Constitution of the Historical Society of Ontario* (James Murray and Co, Toronto: 1898), p. 6.

²² C. Morgan, ‘History, Nation and Empire. Gender and Southern Ontario Historical Societies: 1890-1920’, *The Canadian Historical Review*, 82: 3 (September 2001), p. 498.

²³ D. W. Clendennen, ‘Some Presbyterian United Empire Loyalists’, *Ontario Historical Society, Papers and Records Volume three* (William Briggs, Toronto: 1901), p. 117.

²⁴ W. Burritt, ‘The Settlement of the County of Grenville’, *Ontario Historical Society, Papers and Records, Volume three* (William Briggs, Toronto: 1901), p. 103.

This fascination with the Loyalists also included efforts to praise them for their political ideals which they were able to maintain after the revolution. In this regard, the Loyalists were credited with allowing the colonies to maintain the imperial connection with Britain in the face of the danger posed by the United States. Lawrence Tasker, in his 1900 publication, described the Loyalists as being possessed of a ‘zeal for the unity of the empire’ which ‘laid deep the foundations of the institutions of freedom...the loyalty and prosperity of our land’.²⁵ Tasker’s work assumed that the Loyalist population were entirely united in their political beliefs and opinion of Upper Canada’s place in the empire. The idea of a homogenous population is also found in his argument concerning the background of the settlers. Tasker argued that they were ‘men who possessed a high moral ideal and an elevated mind; men of education and unsullied honour. Even American historians are now coming to admit they were of the noblest descent’.²⁶ In Tasker’s estimation, the Loyalists were ‘lawyers, judges and physicians, men of education and refinement and of deep religious conviction’.²⁷ By idealising the Loyalists in this manner, Tasker’s work also reflects the common theme that contemporary Canadians were descended from upper class settlers and that their virtues were passed down through the generations. It must also be noted that like many of the publications by the historical societies, Tasker focuses solely on male settlers. This creates the skewed impression that there were no Loyalist women or children. Morgan picked up on this when she stated that the Loyalists were seen to be of a ‘particular type of masculine character...endurance, integrity, and industry in the Canadian backwoods’.²⁸ The work of the historical societies contributed to the early literature’s promotion of the Loyalists above all other settlers. The themes follow on from the sentiments expressed in the centenary celebrations. While there was undoubted pride in their Loyalist heritage, this does not explain

²⁵ L. H. Tasker, ‘The United Empire Loyalist Settlement at Longpoint, Fort Erie’, *Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records, Volume 2* (William Briggs, Toronto: 1900), p. 10.

²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 15.

²⁷ *Ibid.* p. 16.

²⁸ Morgan, ‘History, Nation and Empire’, p. 501.

why soldier settlers, and indeed settlers from the British Isles should be excluded so thoroughly from the narrative. This is a question which will be explored in more depth in the next section with the consideration of the content of early historical monographs.

The Centenary celebration of the arrival of the loyalists

During June 1884 celebrations were held in Adolphustown, Toronto and Niagara to mark the centenary of the arrival of the loyalist settlers in Canada. In one respect, the events were an opportunity for the dependents of the Loyalists to remember their ancestors; but at the same time, they were occasions to publicly promote the idea that the Loyalists were the most important group of settlers to arrive in Canada in terms of their achievements and legacy. The literature and speeches which were central to the celebrations recounted stories of the contribution that the settlers made to the development of settler society, and drew a direct link from the Loyalists to contemporary Canada. Knowles argues that the celebrations had a political motivation as they were organised by a group of Conservative Loyalist decedents, under the leadership of George Taylor Denison. Born in Toronto, Denison was a member of an influential settler family, and served in the militia during the Fenian raids of 1866. The 1880s were a period when Canada's relationship with Britain, and position in the Empire were being discussed and questioned. Denison and his supporters reacted by using the celebrations to shore up pro-British, and anti-American feeling.²⁹

The events that took place in all three towns portrayed the Loyalists as the founding fathers of Canada and claimed that without their achievements, contemporary Canada would have been less prosperous, unsecure, and undeveloped. In Adolphoustown, residents gathered to listen to speeches by prominent local politicians, clergymen, and authors of historical studies. Locals who could claim to be from a Loyalist family also took a central role. Lewis Bogart, known to be the oldest living descendent of a Loyalist settler in the area, addressed

²⁹ Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists*, p. 73.

the crowds and stated that it was through the efforts of the Loyalists that the town had grown from a wilderness.³⁰ Similar sentiments were issued in an address given by Dr Canff, an historian of the Bay of Quinte Loyalists. He stated that the past century had seen the Loyalists and their descendants engaged in ‘converting the wilderness into comfortable homes’.³¹ The praise heaped on the Loyalists, and the descriptions of their importance were generally similar throughout each event, and beyond that. Early monographs and publications by historical societies (examined later in this chapter) all followed the same themes.

Accordingly, the Loyalists were wilderness pioneers who through their own efforts, hard work, and sacrifice, laid the foundations for future Canadian prosperity. The second event in the series, held in Toronto on 3 July 1884, focused on these themes and sentiments. Again, the day was marked by music, a public meeting and speeches. The chairman of the organising committee in Toronto, a self-declared descendant of a Loyalist, stated that ‘it must not be forgotten that all of the advantages we have today we owe to our ancestors, the United Empire Loyalists, and the sacred trusts handed down by them should be passed on intact and unimpaired’.³² Further speeches declared that ‘one hundred years ago, the foundation of this province was laid by a band of pioneers known as the United Empire Loyalists’. The anti-Americanism which Knowles argues was present in the events was articulated by speeches which praised the settlers for ‘refusing to renounce their allegiance to the King’ and rejecting the values and aims of the revolutionaries to set up a system of government in Canada which was ‘simpler, cheaper and more dignified’.³³

Denison attended the event in Niagara held on 14 August and his speech- they were all delivered by men- was one of a number that venerated the Loyalists. The records of the

³⁰ *The Centennial of the Settlement of Upper Canada by the United Empire Loyalists 1784-1884* (Rose Publishing Company, Toronto: 1885), p. 13.

³¹ *Ibid.* p. 19.

³² *Ibid.* p. 73.

³³ *Ibid.* p. 75.

proceedings show that at no time during any one of these events were military migrants, or indeed any settlers who came to the colonies after 1815 mentioned. As Knowles states, while Denison was using the events to articulate his pro-British views, he did not call upon the legacy of settlers from Britain. It is curious to think that events which tried to promote pro-British and pro-Empire sentiments, did not actually consider the settlers who came from the British Isles and their links to contemporary Canada. Rather we will see that they claimed the Loyalists as being part of a North American heritage, distinct from British history. The celebrations themselves heavily featured British flags, and royalist heraldry. The stage at Niagara was decorated with a Union flag at the centre of the stage, each of the four corners featured flags with British ensigns, and there was a painting of the Royal coat of arms at the front.³⁴ Despite this, the organisers did not associate themselves or Canada's past with settlers from the British Isles. Denison's speech argued that the Loyalists were 'the very best of the old colonists' as this was shown 'by the fact that in the early years of this country crime was almost unknown, the settlers being an orderly, peaceable and well-behaved people'.³⁵ There was clearly a sense of pride attached to the notion that Canada was founded by the Loyalists. The Bishop of Niagara stated that 'there are other colonies in the empire whose first settlers were convicts, Botany Bay and Van Diems land, but such was not the case with our country. It was settled by men of high principle, men of education'.³⁶ Similarly, James Hiscott, the Warden of the County of Lincoln, described the Loyalists as 'noble' and spoke of their sacrifices and bravery.³⁷

The centennial celebrations also saw praise for the Loyalists from other parts of society, for example in sermons. A sermon in July 1884 by the Reverend McNabb of Bowmanville called the Loyalists the fathers of Upper Canada. He followed the familiar

³⁴ Ibid. p. 79.

³⁵ Ibid. p. 95.

³⁶ Ibid, p. 86.

³⁷ Ibid. p. 120.

themes that were present in the town events. The Loyalists were praised for their pioneer spirit. McNabb told of the ‘obstacles, privations and miseries’ the settlers overcame but that ‘our Canadian fathers were prepared to live anywhere, endure any toil, undergo any privations, so long as they were in British dominions’.³⁸ Like the speeches in the events, he also endowed the Loyalists with positive moral characteristics, calling them a noble class whose members had ‘great natural abilities...and the greater part of them were men of sound Church principles and ardent piety’.³⁹ A second sermon which praised the Loyalists was given in Kingston in May 1884 by the Reverend R. S. Forneri. The content of this was strikingly similar to McNabb’s in its description of the toils that the Loyalist settlers bravely battled against and eventually overcame, and their status as educated, God-fearing people. Forneri told his parishioners that the Loyalists ‘were fit men, under God, to lay the foundations of a young nation...lofty principles of loyalty, and morality to which this day distinguishes the Canadian character’.⁴⁰ The praise heaped on the Loyalists from various sources during the centennial year follow the same basic structures. At the heart of these efforts was an attempt to show that the Canadian people had their roots in a superior set of people. At no point during these celebrations were there any efforts to link contemporary society with the settlers from the British Isles who arrived after 1815.

The Loyalist celebrations did not pass without criticism, and the colonial newspapers featured letters of complaint and disagreement. The criticisms came in three forms: a critique of Denison and his political principles; an argument that the focus on the Loyalists obscured the achievements of other settlers; and finally exception was taken to the positive characteristics the Loyalists were supposed to have. In terms of a political criticism; an

³⁸ Rev. A. McNabb, *Centennial Sermon: The Fathers of Upper Canada. Sermon Preached before Staff Officers 45th Battalion, and Officers and Men of the Number One Company of Volunteers in St John Church, Bowmanville* (Bowmanville: News Stream Print, 1884), p. 5.

³⁹ *Ibid.* p. 6.

⁴⁰ Reverend R. S. Forneri, *The United Empire Loyalists of Canada: A Sermon Preached in St George Cathedral, Kingston, May 18th 1884* (Kingston, The Daily News Office: 1884).

editorial from the *Ottawa Sun* which was republished in the *London Advertiser* remarked on the event in Niagara that:

There is something ridiculously appropriate about the United Empire Loyalists celebration in Niagara on Thursday last having been wound up by a war dance. It is meant that the men who were so far behind the age slop over about this United Empire Loyalist business should take part in an aboriginal rite. Both war dances and United Empire Loyalism are anachronism [sic] in the Canada today.⁴¹

A letter which was published in the *London Advertiser* also equated the focus on the Loyalists and the politics which accompanied it with being old fashioned. The author (known as EWP) described the centenary events and the fascination with the Loyalists as a 'long since exploded, obsolete, musty fossil custom...seeking to be revived'. It went on to criticise the Toryism, and ultra-loyalism which the festival promoted to reminisce about 'an obscure remnant of the population' whose services to Canada 'may be summed up in the word nothing'.⁴² The fact that the promotion of the Loyalists coincided with the memory of other settlers being discarded also drew criticisms which were expressed in letters to colonial newspapers. A letter to the editor of the *Toronto World* implored readers to 'remember and to emphasize the fact that Canada has been settled and served by a very great number of others besides the United Empire Loyalists'. It pointed out that 'there have been a large immigration of English who care not for the fetich [sic] of Loyalists. It is to them Canada owes most'.⁴³ The need to remember other groups of settlers also featured in a second letter to the *Toronto World*. It conceded that 'while great credit is due to the Loyalist immigrants due to their pioneer success...at least equal credit is due to the thousands of other immigrants who came

⁴¹ *London Advertiser*, 22 August 1884, p. 2.

⁴² *Ibid.* 18 August 1884, p. 6.

⁴³ *Toronto World*, 10 July 1884, p. 2.

direct from Great Britain'. The author of this letter accused Denison and the organisers of the centenary celebrations of knowing and caring nothing about these other groups.⁴⁴

The characteristics which were ascribed to the Loyalists also proved to be contentious. A letter published on 18 August complained that the Loyalist migrants were motivated by the need to preserve their wealth rather than 'sentimental loyalty to old farmer George'. Secondly, as Knowles' research bears out, the letter stated that many of the first Loyalist settlers 'returned to live as contented citizens of the republic as soon as the bitter feelings provoked by the conflict of independence subsided'. Because of this, 'it is certain that a greater proportion of the descendants of the United Empire Tories are now citizens of the USA than are to be found in Canada'.⁴⁵ During the summer of 1884 when the celebrations were in full swing, the letter pages of colonial newspapers like the *Toronto World* and *London Advertiser* featured numerous dissenting voices. The dominant narrative of the Loyalists and their legacy was often challenged by this means. However, despite these criticisms, the early histories of Canada, and the burgeoning historical societies maintained the narrative surrounding the Loyalists and the military settlers remained ignored.

The Loyalists and early Canadian historical monographs

The publication of monographs which traced the history of Canada coincided with the creation of the historical societies in the 1870s and 1880s and they helped to further the importance of the Loyalists on a Colonial level while diluting the memory of soldier settlers. Berger has argued that the efforts of early Canadian historians were important contributors to the view that the Loyalists were 'the founders of British Canada and God's chosen people'.⁴⁶ In doing so, these works form an additional means by which soldier settlers came to be forgotten as the nineteenth-century closed. Existing works are useful points of reference in

⁴⁴ Ibid. 19 August 1884, p. 2.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 18 August 1884, p.2.

⁴⁶ Berger, *The Sense of Power*, p. 99.

terms of understating why colonial historiography favoured the Loyalists and excluded veterans. In her study on the place of gender in the works of Ontario's historical societies, Morgan has identified that the Loyalists were endowed with particular masculine characteristics such as endurance, ingenuity, and industry in the backwoods. Loyalist men were valued for their supposed hard work and determination that their wives and children should not suffer poverty.⁴⁷ Allan Smith also explored this idea by looking at the myth of the self-made man which came to the fore in English Canada between 1850 and 1914. Accordingly, this myth was centred on values of hard work and individual effort which were argued to have been essential to Canada's development. Smith believed that English Canada had a 'deep seated impulse to self-reliance'.⁴⁸ However, Smith has argued that this society never really existed in Canada; he has used the importance of education as an example of how individuals made their way.⁴⁹ We will see in this chapter that nineteenth-century Canadian authors venerated the Loyalists for their supposed hard work, pioneer spirit and individualism which allowed them to survive and thrive in colonial Canada. However, this dissertation has shown how soldier settlers benefited from their connections, patronage, land grants and pension income to make their way in society. These men benefited from a hierarchical society. Their story was not always one of individual effort and merit as the Loyalists were perceived to be. For this reason, the experience of soldier settlers was an inconvenient reality to the myth of the Loyalist devotees that held that Canada was built by individual pioneers. This might explain why they were simply ignored and excluded from these works.

⁴⁷ C. Morgan, 'History, Nation and Empire: Gender and Southern Ontario Historical Societies 1890-1920', *The Canadian Historical Review*, 82:3 (September 2001), p. 501.

⁴⁸ A. Smith, *Canada: An American Nation? Essays on Continentalism, Identity and the Canadian Frame of Mind* (McGill-Queens University Press, Montreal: 1994), p. 326.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* p. 328.

Present in the work of the early Canadian historians was also a debate about the merits of emigration. The works which praised the Loyalists and disregarded the soldiers, often spoke in negative terms about emigration from the British Isles in general. For these authors the settlers who came from Continental America brought their own hard work and had a positive impact, whereas those from the British Isles brought disease and squalor. As with the centenary celebrations and the historical societies, historical monographs idealised the characteristics of the Loyalist settlers- it was assumed formed a cohesive group possessed of these essential characteristics- while also describing them as the founders of Canada. Links were drawn between their achievements and the state of contemporary Canada. The exception to this were studies which had an interest on local history. Soldier settlers did appear in these publications and their legacy considered. However, in the main they were absent from national narratives.

The role that veterans played in the Lanark and Bathurst districts was emphasised in early works of local history. It is here that comparisons can be drawn with the contents of publications for the Perth home day. In 1896, Mary Campbell (the sister of the curator of the Perth museum) published a study on the foundation of the military settlements and their early years. This credited former soldiers as having played a vital role in the development of the community.⁵⁰ A second example comes from *The Story of Lanark County* which was published in 1912. This work explained how the area had been settled 'to a considerable extent by discharged soldiers...at great expense the British government tried to make these old soldiers and their families as comfortable as possible'.⁵¹ The residents of Perth celebrated the town's 100th birthday in December 1916; and like the coverage of the Home Day the local newspaper ran articles detailing the history of the area. As well as highlighting the early

⁵⁰ M. A Campbell, *The Early Days of the Perth Settlement* (Lanark County Historical Society, 1896).

⁵¹ *Perth Courier*, 12 November 1912, p. 2.

Scottish settlers, an article on ‘the beginnings, the condition and the progress’ of settlement spoke of the ‘veteran military heroes’ who ‘turned their swords into ploughshares’.⁵²

As with the previous studies on the history of the area, the anniversary celebration also sought to link the first military settlers with contemporary residents. The *Perth Courier* claimed that many of the lots of land granted to the soldiers remained intact and were owned and maintained by their descendants. The article also wrote of the contribution that the soldiers had made to the development of the area; such as Captain Adams who opened the first tavern and Benjamin DeLisle who owned the first store which ‘still stands in the town’. It went on to describe that a distillery established by Captain Henry Graham had ‘formed an important item in the commerce of the place...situated on one side of the bridge...now known as Graham’s Bridge’.⁵³ On a local level there was pride that these communities had their roots in the former soldiers who came to the colonies after 1815. However, these local works are a small exception to the trend when most monographs published during the same period, and concerned with national history, promoted the Loyalist and discarded the military settlers.

Jeffers’ *History of Canada* was published in 1894 and described how the Loyalists came to the colonies to escape persecution from American patriots. He also claimed that they were motivated by their love of British institutions. Jeffers called the loyalist ‘true men and women...who chose rather to lose all than give up their allegiance to, and love for, the mother country’.⁵⁴ This work idealised the Loyalists and saw them as embodying the values and characteristics which resulted in successful settlement. This included hard work, resilience, an unbreakable attachment to Britain and a disdain for the United States. By possessing these values the settlers were able to lay the foundations of the province of Upper

⁵² *Perth Courier*, 22 December 1916, p. 5.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ J. F. Jeffers, *History of Canada* (Toronto, Canada Publishing Company: 1894), p. 42.

Canada and New Bruswick'.⁵⁵ Because soldier settlers are entirely absent from Jeffers' history, it is the Loyalists who embodied British values. Indeed, post-1815 migration is barely mentioned meaning that the author did not see these people as making any sort of lasting contribution to the progression to contemporary Canada. There were other early Canadian historians who published work in a similar vein to Jeffers through their attempts to present the Loyalist settlers as possessing characteristics which allowed them to prosper. Haight's 1897 study told of the physical efforts made by Loyalists to establish themselves and so contribute to the development of the colonies. His work describes the Loyalists as being hard working and prepared to shoulder a series of hardships and sacrifices for the greater good of colonial society.⁵⁶ Similar sentiments regarding the virtues of the Loyalists can also be seen in Harris' 1897 publication. He believed that they were 'with few exceptions, educated and refined people. They were the successful representatives of trade, commerce, agriculture and professions'.⁵⁷

In addition to forming a positive picture of the loyalists, the Canadian historians then went on to argue that they were the founders of the colonies. In doing so a direct line of progress was drawn which linked them with contemporaries. Harris believed that the descendants of the Loyalists held a special place in Canadian society. Having 'the blood of the banished Loyalists in one's veins may be the greatest boast on this continent'.⁵⁸ Two separate nineteenth-century works on the history of Canada be Jennet Roy proposed that the Loyalists were the most important settlers due to the significance of the impact they had on the development of the colonies. He believed that the American Revolution was a turning point for Canada as it facilitated the movement of the Loyalists. This event gave a 'considerable advantage to Canada' as the United States lost a proportion of its best and

⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 42.

⁵⁶ C. Haight, *Before the Coming of the Loyalists* (Haight and Company, Toronto: 1897).

⁵⁷ E. Harris, *United Empire Loyalists* (William Briggs, Toronto: 1897), p. 11.

⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 11.

brightest. Subsequently, these settlers 'laid the foundations of that prosperity' which he believed that the dominion enjoyed during the period of writing.⁵⁹ His later work credited the Loyalists with founding townships across the colonies with emphasis on the area near the St Lawrence River which was close to Upper Canada's border with the United States.⁶⁰ Although he links the townships to the Loyalists there is no consideration of the effects that later settlers had on these areas. Significantly Roy does not engage with the creation of the military settlements or how the population of the Loyalist areas changed with the arrival of new settlers. Here is another instance of late nineteenth-century writers contributing to the promotion of the Loyalists and the forgetting of the soldier settlers. Their absence suggests that the very mention of former soldiers would reduce the significance that the authors placed on the legacy of the Loyalists, so they were simply omitted. The authors tended to treat the Loyalists as a homogenous group, they also coupled them to the virtues which they would have valued. Particularly as they were considered to have laid the foundations for contemporary Canadian society, there was a concerted effort to show that the foundations were built by upstanding settlers.

The authors of the early monographs often inserted their own views on emigration to the colonies, and these opinions helped to colour their opinions towards the soldier settlers. A debate on the merits of emigration and its place in Canadian history was present in several of the works. In some cases the only mention of emigration (after the Loyalists) was of the perceived problems that it brought to the colonies. The American Loyalists were compared with settlers who were born in the British Isles, and there was often a clear difference in opinion of the two groups. Jeffers rarely touched upon emigrant settlers who came to the colonies after 1815; but when he did he generally disparaged them. He spoke of emigrants

⁵⁹ J. Roy, *The History of Canada* (Armour and Ramsay, Montreal: 1850), p. 127.

⁶⁰ J. Roy, *The Coming of the Loyalists* (Armour and Ramsay, Montreal: 1859), p. 16.

arriving from the 'Old Country' after 1815 'chiefly owing to the failure of crops in Ireland'.⁶¹ While he does concede that these settlers found employment in public works, he also believes that they brought problems. For Jeffers, emigrants were carriers of disease as they were responsible for bringing 'fever and pestilence' which 'spread through the frontier towns'.⁶² These sentiments were common as they also featured in works which dealt with emigration to other parts of Canada. For example, James MacPherson Le Moine, in his history of Quebec, described how Cholera was brought to Lower Canada by Irish emigrants in 1832, which caused 'ruin' to Quebec and Montreal. It was the 'poorer class of emigrants' who were to be feared.⁶³ A further outbreak of cholera which took place in Quebec in 1854 was also blamed on 'the emigrants who landed in crowds on our shores'.⁶⁴

Not all publications agreed with these opinions as there were attempts to talk about the benefits which settlers from the British Isles had brought to the colony. In 1886 Henry Canner published a study on the experiences of emigrants and described the benefits that countless settlers had brought to Canada's industry and agriculture.⁶⁵ An anonymous study of emigration also argued that settlers were readily supported by local communities as 'almost everyone will do his best to assist a new-comer'.⁶⁶ This would suggest that the negative opinions of emigration, expressed by some of the early histories were not present in the population.

Conclusion

The historical works which appeared from the late nineteenth-century and looked at the foundation of British North America (whether historical societies or monographs) had a

⁶¹ F. Jeffers, *History of Canada* (Toronto, Canada Publishing Company: 1894), p. 65.

⁶² *Ibid.* p. 84.

⁶³ J. M. Le Moine, *Quebec Past and Present: A History of Quebec 1608-1876* (Augustin Cote and Co, Montreal: 1876), p. 269.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p. 272.

⁶⁵ H. Canner, *Successful Emigration to Canada* (The Department of Agriculture, Ottawa: 1886), p. 19.

⁶⁶ Anonymous, *What Emigration Really is: By a Resident in Canada and Australia* (The Graphotyping Company London: 1870), p. 9.

common theme. The authors venerated the Loyalists and presented them as the settlers who had the most important impact on the development of the colony. The Loyalists who appear in these works are uniformly presented as being virtuous, educated, and hard-working pioneers whose individual effort allowed them to overcome the challenges they encountered. Similarly, they are seen to have been motivated to move north due to their love of Britain, their persecution from the Americans and their refusal to live under a republican government. The descendants of the Loyalists were endowed with the prestige attached to their ancestors and the Canadian historians sought to trace a line of progress from the Loyalists to their contemporary society.

The common feature of these works is that the impact of veterans is ignored. While the legacy of the men and their families were remembered during the Perth and Ottawa Home Days; on a colonial level, they had been forgotten by the last decades of the nineteenth-century. But why did this happen and why was the process so fast? The soldier settlers were part of an empire which was administered by military men. In Upper Canada, the veterans engaged with the world of hierarchy, connections, and patronage; and they made use of this to further their own situation. In contrast, the world of the Loyalist, which emerged from the early Canadian historians, was based on merit, individual effort and a pioneer spirit. The veterans, just like the Loyalists had a connection to Britain, British values and the empire. However, for the writers of the late Victorian period, it was not the embodiment of empire that they looked to. The soldier settlers did not represent the Victorian empire. Instead they were part of an older, militaristic, conservative empire and the early Canadian historians did not want their legacy to be associated with these people and this empire. The soldier settlers and their world was a problematic, inconvenient past that was to be forgotten, not noticed, or celebrated.

Conclusion

This thesis has explored the settlement of British army and naval veterans who arrived in Upper Canada from 1815. By making use of records from the Chelsea Hospital, service and discharge papers, and petitions to the colonial authorities, it has been possible to build a picture of the lives of these settlers and the impact they had on the development of colonial society. Veterans became important figures in business, agriculture and local government; and they also contributed to the growth of the Orange Order and Freemasons. Further still, we have seen how the men, and the family members who accompanied them to the colony, were part of a military support network. This enabled them to acquire land grants, assistance and coveted jobs. As such, the military settlers help us to understand more about the nature of Upper Canadian society during the first half of the nineteenth-century. The process of forgetting also offers an insight into colonial values at the beginning of the twentieth-century.

The settlement of the veterans was facilitated by schemes introduced by successive British governments which provided land grants, transport and tools. The thesis has investigated five different schemes, beginning with the settlement of veterans in Perth and Richmond in 1815, through to the grants of land to disbanded Ordnance Department servicemen in 1855. During this forty-year period, countless soldiers and sailors arrived in Upper Canada alongside their wives and children. This thesis has provided evidence that the historiography has tended to view the settlement of former soldiers as just one facet of migration to British North America.¹ However, the evidence provided by this work means we need to see the significance of military settlers, and so it is imperative to understand them separately from civilian migration. The fact that the first chapter has shown that successive British governments always treated military migration differently to civilian migration is just one example of this. A second example is shown by the connections veterans had with the

¹ McGowan, 'Famine, Facts and Fabrication'. Rees, *Surplus People*.

military men who administered the colony that allowed them a significant advantage over civilians when it came to securing land grants or appointments.

A common theme throughout the history of military settlement in Upper Canada is the way that successive British governments, both Liberal and Tory, viewed the veterans. Lord Bathurst's Colonial Office initiated the government policy of support for the settlement of former military men in British North America. This emerged due to concerns for the security of the colonies following the end of the War of 1812. Both central government and the colonial authorities feared another American invasion and looked with suspicion on the population of the colonies who they believed would be more likely to turn away from Britain, than rise to defend British North America in the event of another war. The letters analysed in the first chapter of this thesis have shown that Bathurst looked to populate Upper Canada with veterans due to the security they could provide, as well as their perceived loyalty to Britain. As a result, the first efforts were made to settle large number of veterans in the colonies through the creation of the military settlements in the Rideau Valley. The fact that townships such as Perth, Richmond and Bathurst were positioned in strategic areas close to the border with the United States shows that security was at the heart of military settlement. Indeed, the preoccupation with security, and the view that veterans would help cement the links between Upper Canada, continued to be the main focus behind the settlement policy for decades. Even the later schemes of the 1850s were still formed around the need for veterans to defend against the Americans. This is also highlighted by J. D. Tulloch's review of military settlement and the potential for veterans to enlist in the militia which was carried out in 1855.² Throughout the period explored in this thesis, successive governments treated the settlement of former soldiers and sailors in a very different manner to the settlement of civilians. While the veterans received land, tools and transport, civilian migration was left to

² Tulloch, *Report on the Inspection of Pensioners in the North American Provinces*.

individuals or private companies to arrange. The close attention which was paid to the veterans demonstrates the esteem and importance which they were held in by successive British governments.

Throughout this thesis we have seen how patronage and connections were utilised by the veterans and their family members to acquire land, appointments, or monetary assistance. This theme has proven to be of central importance to the history of military settlement in the decades after 1815. Along with their larger land grants, and regular pension payments, the veterans were also able to call on networks of connections formed during their time in the army. Petitions have proved to be vital sources allowing us to gain an understanding of how patronage operated. The use of these documents has enabled the thesis to contribute to historiography of petitioning in Upper Canada. The process of petitioning has been the subject of research by Johnson and Wilton.³ While Johnson remarks on the petitions submitted by military claimants, neither he nor Wilton have considered the letters of recommendation which accompanied these claims. The letters are important as they reveal networks which encompassed the settlers, their commanding officers, key figures in the colonial government, and occasionally even the Colonial Office. The discussion of patronage in this thesis has also built on the work done by Laidlaw.⁴ While Laidlaw's work has focused on high ranking members of the colonial elite and government in London, it is now possible to see that the networks she discussed encompassed half-pay officers and rank and file servicemen in Upper Canada.

The documents submitted by the veterans regularly made references to their military service, their loyalty, and their dependability as British subjects. Whether asking for land or an appointment, the contents of the petitions was almost always the same. This tells us that

³ Wilton, *Popular Politics and Political Culture in Upper Canada 1800-1850*.

⁴ Z. Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections 1815-1845*.

the veterans knew how to interact with the colonial authorities by, in effect, telling them what they wanted to hear. The men were conforming to the expectations set by the government in terms of their desire to see loyal men with military prowess settle in the colonies. A veteran who wanted to apply for the position of a local magistrate did not need to show his knowledge of colonial law, his character, or even his ability to read and write. Rather, he would write of his military service, his loyalty, and his connections with prominent individuals. While using connections to gain an advantage, the thesis has shown how veterans, particularly half-pay officers, in the military settlements regularly applied for numerous vacancies. They were often successful and held multiple positions at the same time. Military support networks, which were detailed in the third chapter, allowed these officers to be aware of new and upcoming vacancies. They took advantage of this to apply early. While veterans did hold numerous positions and often for decades at a time, their power did not go unchallenged by civilian settlers. The records held in the *Upper Canada Sundries* collection have revealed that complaints were routinely issued to the colonial government based on the conduct and character of veterans who held offices. These challenges from civilians were investigated and the thesis has provided examples of veterans who were removed from their roles. Therefore, while it has been shown that military settlers enjoyed privileges that allowed them to acquire prominent positions, their power was not unquestioned.

The veterans often brought their families to Upper Canada, and evidence has been gathered that gives an insight into the lives of women and children in the colony. Contemporaries recognised that the support provided by women was invaluable, particularly in remote locations. The thesis has referenced accounts of settler life written by Parr-Traill and Moodie. These sources are well known and frequently feature in the historiography; therefore an aim of the research has been to expand on our understanding of the experiences

of women by going beyond these sources. We have seen that in times of crisis such as the death of their husband, the wives of the veterans did not take on a passive role. Instead they petitioned the colonial government for access to land to secure a future for themselves and their children. The volume of petitions in the archives which were submitted by women in this situation attests to their agency. While some widows based their claims on the military career of their late husband, it was also common for women to tell of their time on campaign or of the improvements they had made to the land grants. From these sources we have seen examples of women operating their own businesses and managing farms.

The petitions examined in this research also show how widows were also part of the web of military connections. They knew how the system of patronage operated, and they were also aware of how to present themselves to the colonial authorities. There are numerous examples of widows who reached out to serving officers, or veteran settlers to increase their own chances of successfully gaining grants of land. These women knew the most effective means of getting their claims presented to a lieutenant governor. Significantly, there were also women who supported other military widows by providing advice about the workings of the petitioning system. Such efforts were not limited by regiment or location. The fact that women were conferred with the special status held by their veteran husbands is further proof of military settlers being a distinct class.

A major feature of this work has been to reconcile the differences between the ways that veterans behaved. On one hand, their interaction with the colonial authorities through their petitions focused almost exclusively on their military status. The veterans spoke at length about their service and their loyalty and they highlighted their relationships with military men in positions of power. In addition, the veterans, and the women who accompanied them, supported each other through petitions whether this was helping to acquire relief, or a job. Again, these interactions were based on a common military heritage.

However, all of this was achieved through the private sphere of petitioning which was hidden from civilian settlers. The public, day-to-day lives of the veterans and their families was not built around their military status. They became civic figures, rather than military ones. As far as records state, there were no annual gatherings of veterans to mark the anniversaries of the significant battles that they were involved in. For all the declarations of their service records in their petitions, publicly acknowledging their heritage was not a feature of colonial life. Instead of commemorating British militarism, veterans became members of the Orange Order and Freemasons. The structure of these organisations allowed them to spread rapidly. Evidence has shown that veterans were at the heart of the foundation of numerous Orange Order and masonic lodges, and new lodges were amongst the first community buildings to be created in settlements. Their subsequent activities such as parades and ceremonial meals often featured prominent veterans who were also magistrates. The legacy of the settlement of veterans and their impact on Upper Canada is shown in the popularity of these organisations. This is particularly true of the Orange Order which flourished in Canada in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

From the middle of the nineteenth-century, the veterans began to be forgotten. This process was partly a result of the work of early Canadian historians, but also because the veterans themselves publicly discarded their military past. Rather than celebrating the arrival of the veterans in the settlement schemes, early Canadian historians looked to the Loyalists when it came to tracing the foundation of Canada. The fact that veterans were generally written out of these histories all together suggests that their settlement was an uncomfortable subject matter for the early writers. The veneration of the Loyalists was based around a promotion of their supposed pioneer spirit. Accordingly, through their hard work and individual effort, these settlers secured the development of Canada.

The writings of Parr-Traill and Moodie tell of the privations that the veterans and their families endured, and the hard work which was required to eke out a living. This, coupled with their scars from years of service would have meant that veterans also needed to call upon a pioneer spirit to survive. However, the colonial society which these men and their families were part of was not looked upon favourably by the early historians as it stood in stark contrast to the mythical ideals they had allocated to the Loyalists. The veterans owed their success to the support provided to them by successive British governments in terms of rations, tools, and significant land grants. In addition to this support, the regular income they received from their pensions provided them with a significant advantage over civilians. Discharged soldiers and sailors were part of a network of connections and patronage that allowed them to secure land, and powerful local government positions. These rewards were not based on merit, but hierarchy, patronage and privilege.

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