

Aboriginal Dispossession in the Emergence of a Capitalist Resource Extractive Region: The Ottawa Valley, 1800-1830s

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Introduction

This paper considers the legacy of indigenous dispossession in the founding institutional structures of capital accumulation by natural resource exploitation in Canada. It considers this topic via the transition to capitalism based on timber exploitation in the Ottawa Valley. With a state able to choose freely between high royalties on little land or low royalties on much land, the Ottawa region lacked an effective "landlord interest", that is, one sufficiently autonomous from the interests of timber capitalism. The Algonquin people did have interests compatible with serving in this role, but as a matter of historical legacies and deliberate choice rather than anything inherent in their collective character. The result is a mode of capitalist accumulation that has systematically overemphasized investments in transportation infrastructure, and therefore an accumulation strategy overly dependent on extensive accumulation. Algonquin dispossession therefore deserves more attention in the analysis of this regional transition to capitalism.

Timber operations first came to the Ottawa Valley following the Napoleonic blockades of the early 19th century. The first historical section of this paper discusses this early period, when logging was closely intertwined with agricultural clearances. But a complex subsequent set of transformations in the 1830s remade logging and driving on a capitalist basis. This second transition triggered capitalist growth on the explosive, unchecked basis just described. Its peculiar and "cyclonic" (Innis 1936) character as a capitalist region qualities set the timber-dominated Ottawa Valley apart from the more diversified pioneer agriculture of Upper Canada, the urban industrial centre of Montréal, and the less dynamic

agriculture of old Lower Canada . The middle section of this paper identifies key features of this transition, and reframes the events surrounding Bytown-Hull from 1835-7 as ‘threshold’ encounters.

The elements of this transition included: 1) official commercialization of the timber trade; 2) rudimentary, stable, and unevenly applied stumpage charges at Bytown; 3) deepening capital investment in river-based log transportation; 4) turbulent emergence of a distinctive labour market and wage norms; and, as we have already seen 5) the extinguishment of direct Algonquin charges on “squatters” who used river islands (the latter a potential impediment to new strategic investments in log transportation infrastructure). The last and longest section of this paper lays out key developments in the Algonquins’ demands for their rights amidst the chaos of the 1830s, and the irresponsible acts that blocked these rights amidst the turn to ‘responsible government’ and to the Union of both the Canadas and the Ottawa Valley itself.

The paper does not and cannot explore every aspect of this transition or the place of Algonquins in it. In particular, space did not permit consideration of the story of a key Algonquin chief, Constant Penancy, who while based in the summers at Oka, was dispossessed of his wintering grounds in the immediate vicinity of the Chaudière Falls in the Bytown area during the 1830s . This story will complete this part of a larger project on the intersection between social and political conflict over the forestlands of the Upper Ottawa Valley in the late twentieth century, and the interplay of the spatio-temporality of the everyday experiences of key stakeholder groups over the previous three and a half centuries. The present paper begins with the theoretical basis for treating Bytown-Hull in

1835-7 as a threshold 'chronotope', and therefore as a spatio-temporal envelope where bewildering things are said and done in the midst of transitional encounters and conflicts.

Capitalism and the Chronotopes of Encounter and Crisis

Both the establishment and the ongoing maintenance of capitalism, whether as a mode of production or as a wider social formation, are crisis-ridden. They depend on moments and places in which limits to accumulation are encountered and then transformed into thresholds. This informs the leading trope in David Harvey's now-classic interpretation of Marx's principal works on capital, *Limits to Capital* (1982). In it, the contradictions encountered at every moment of the unfolding of capital's inner logic constitute 'limits to capital'. At each stage in Harvey's exposition, these limits are partly and temporarily overcome, notably through mechanisms of temporal deferral and spatial displacement. And each stage, the circuit of capital is temporarily restored. But at each subsequent stage, Harvey also finds that capital's contradictions are ultimately intensified and multiplied rather than resolved. Harvey therefore re-affirms Marx's classical overall conclusion that capitalism's contradictions cannot be resolved: capitalism itself must be transcended.

The space-time of capital has been a matter of intense theoretical exploration since the late 1970s. Writing a neo-Marxist reply to Deleuze and Guattari's treatment of space, Poulantzas observed that capitalism operates in and through a contradictory spatial matrix peculiar to it: "composed of gaps, breaks, successive fracturings, closures and frontiers", nonetheless, "it has no end: the capitalist labour process tends towards world-wide application." The result is "*serial, fractured, parcelled, cellular and irreversible space*" (Poulantzas, 1978, p. 103, compare p. 101). Capital must always generate a specific 'spatio-temporal fix', but then must always destroy it, transcend. So says David Harvey, and so argue such critical geographers as Storper and Scott. For Harvey, the primarily spatial logic of rent theory and the primarily temporal logic of finance capital's interest and

discount rates emerge as central tools for the study and critique of capital's spatio-temporal contradictions, both separately and in combination.

The moments where 'limits' are 'transformed' into thresholds in Harvey's account express themselves historically and geographically in moments of economic and social crisis, centred on particular locations and spatial relationships. For the writer of history informed by the critique of capital, the times and places marked by social crisis have been particularly fruitful points of investigation. Although of course they are not the only possible focal points, a number of reasons can be adduced to explain that fascination.

In the first place, moments of crisis are to a greater or later extent open-ended, and we are led not only to sympathize with the actors who face them, but also to draw lessons for ourselves in a contemporary context where the future is still veiled. This open-endedness has at least two sides. Subjectively, moments of crisis present actual actors, both individual and collective, with (conditional) moments of decision. Objectively, moments of crisis can usually be resolved in a number of different material ways, though never any way we might wish. These transformations will not only change our surroundings: they will also change us.

In the second place, because capital as a process consists of contradictory social relationships conditioned by contradictory social structures, these moments of individual and collective decision are also necessarily moments of encounter and conflict between both individuals and collectivities. Decisions are made strategically rather than technocratically. Usually, however, insufficient attention is given to the spatio-temporal 'envelopes' in which certain kinds of encounters are possible and others are impossible. In short, these envelopes set the stage for certain kinds of narrative plot to play out, and simultaneously establish barriers to the possibility of other plots.

For a number of reasons, I have increasingly found it helpful to think of such space-times as ‘chronotopes’, a term adapted from the Russian literary theorist and student of narrative, Mikhail Bakhtin. Such moments of encounter and conflict are the crystallizations of both a time and a place that condition the course of events. In Bakhtin’s words, chronotopes are described as concrete space-time configurations where ‘the “knots” of narrative are tied and untied’ . In chronotopes, time and space are forged together in highly particularized amalgams: time ‘as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history’ . Bakhtin wrote about fiction, but non-fiction examples are easy to provide. For example, “Bretton Woods” (at least as most people use the phrase) is not really meaningful when considered as a location alone. Instead, its meaning derives from encounters at a particular location and at a particular time. That is, Bretton Woods marks a turning point in world capitalist history *only* as a *spatio-temporal* category.

Based on the chronotope in question, particular spatio-temporal *limits* are not only *encountered* and *confronted* by actors: real *encounters* and *confrontations* between particular actors are also *delimited* (without being entirely determined), and the subsequent course of events is channelled. Like the chronotope itself, the ‘dialogism’ between characters in a plot (in historical contexts, individual and collective social actors) in these conditioned encounters and confrontations distinguishes itself conceptually from the Hegelian/Marxist dialectic by its rich concreteness .¹

Bakhtin thinks of the chronotope at various levels and as serving several functions.

Through his development of a ‘historical poetics’, for example, Bakhtin uses chronotopes

¹ This refusal of the dialectical at the abstract level is no doubt an understandable response to Bakhtin’s own sufferings under the deadening official Stalinist line about the dialect within the Soviet Union of the early to mid-twentieth century.

as a marker for distinguishing the characteristic plotlines of different novelistic genres. But in the process, he also grounds this taxonomy in a proposed tie between the spatio-temporality of the characteristic plotlines of particular genres, and the real-world spatio-temporality prevailing in world history when the particular genre first emerged. The critical significance of this move for present purposes is the link Bakhtin establishes between the implications of the chronotope for seemingly esoteric problems of narrative form, and historically (and geographically) specific conditions prevailing in the real world. Insofar as history, like fiction, is a narrative craft, narrative form, or how we choose to narrate history, therefore has a critical bearing on a specific aspect of the narrative's truth-telling capacity: namely that aspect of presenting a story stylistically that points to the real spatio-temporal frames that condition the course of real events.

At a smaller scale, Bakhtin points to characteristic chronotopes that provide the spatio-temporal frame for characteristic encounters within a given plot. This level of analysis is of particular interest for this paper. He develops chronotopes at this scale with particular care, notably in a pains-taking analysis of Dostoevsky's works . The choice of Dostoevsky is not an arbitrary one. Bakhtin emphasizes that author's striking focus on space-times of encounter, crisis, and conflict. (By contrast, Tolstoy's preference is for developments traced over a lifetime of gradual development .) The chronotopes that Bakhtin particularly stresses therefore serve as striking analogues to the needs of those Marxist scholars who would emphasize the study of history through moments of rupture, crisis, and confrontation.

Three Chronotopes: The Private Salon; The Threshold; and The Road

Bakhtin identifies and discusses three chronotopes that seem particularly relevant to the idea of the limit/threshold in general, and to the years of encounter at Chaudière Falls in 1835-7, the central chronotope of encounter in the present study. The first is the enclosed

private salon and its analogues. The second is the door or threshold and its analogues. The third is the open road and its analogues. Each is defined by a characteristic spatio-temporal pattern; each leads to a characteristic kind of encounter and of 'dialogue'.

The first chronotope, the private salon, is an enclosed and private space in which encounters regularly occur among familiars. Like Marx's 'hidden abode of production', the factory whose gates warn 'No admittance except on business' (Marx [1912, 1978] 1986, 172), the salon is a setting unique to modernity. Modern novels frequently organize encounters amongst their characters in such enclosed spaces. It is a chronotope that privileges encounters amongst familiars; in the salon, dialogue is possible that reveals the inner thoughts of the characters. Intrigues can be spun out in a salon; the plot may also conclude there. But the salon is not the place of the purely private: instead, it is the privileged point at which the public and private realms intersect.

Because salon encounters occur in private space, specific 'logistical' problems apply. An author must be able to show how certain characters can plausibly gain entrance to and remain in the private space, particularly if a given character has an antagonistic relationship to the residents. How the reader acquires access to knowledge about this space must also be plausibly explained: Bakhtin points out that for this reason, modern novels often depend upon an omniscient and highly abstracted narrator; or upon the reports of a servant, a family member or friend, a detective, or a spy.

The second chronotope, the threshold or doorway, is a favoured chronotope for staging a turning point or crisis in the plot. Cognate settings are the adjoining staircase or corridor, and even (though this seems to stretch the point) the public square. The doorway or threshold is *objectively* a point of transition from one enclosed setting to an adjoining one. *Subjectively* for any character passing through, it is also a moment of temporal change

between past and present. The doorway for Dostoevsky is the supreme place of encounter that necessarily involves life-changing decisions. More generally, Bakhtin discusses ‘threshold dialogues’ at length, dialogues that often appear to be conducted in an exceptional ways. The characters engaged in them typically transgress social bounds and speak or behave towards one another in unexpected ways. Their identities in transition, they are denaturalized and say things on this threshold that they would never say otherwise.

The third chronotope of encounter, the open road, is peculiarly suited for chance encounters among a wide variety of strangers . Depending upon whether it is construed as a road within one’s home country or as a foreign road, the encounters are either a lesson in the familiar, or a bewildering kaleidoscopic exposure to the exotic: in short, different kinds of plot result from the distinction between home and foreign territory. The road is distinguished from the private salon or the threshold on one key point: the experience of linearity in space is coterminous with the experience of linearity in time; the passage of hours coincides with the passage of miles. The road presents the possibility of encounters involving random transgressions of all kinds of social divide, albeit encounters that operate at a relatively superficial level. The road serves simultaneously as a metaphor for all manner of passages through time.

For present purposes, these three chronotopes, arranged in this order, figuratively express the chronotopes experience in moments of capitalist crisis. The private salon is a space defined by its limits, and encounters occur amongst familiars. The threshold

The story that follows pursues the interplay of particular spatio-temporal configurations that were operative along the Ottawa Valley, and it concomitantly marks their inner transformations during the first three decades of the 1800s. I have already suggested that the interplay of different spatio-temporal configurations (and thus of the social forces

engaged in these practices) is shaped by the characteristic operations of the social forces that give rise to each of the spatio-temporal configurations involved. But in each instance, the interplay or encounter is also shaped by the specific ‘time-space envelope’ in which it takes place.

Early Ottawa Valley Timber Extraction

In the first decade of the nineteenth century, the Wright family laid the foundation for the first major timbering operation in what is now the Ottawa area. Economic migrants from America, the Wrights brought with them a cluster of lower-class settlers, following the ‘leader and associates’ colonization system of those times. Their base at Wrightsville (later Hull and more recently Gatineau) held a commanding position at the confluence of the Gatineau and the Ottawa, just across from the mouth of the Rideau River system. At the time, they were clearly pioneers: Wrightsville was well beyond any obvious ‘frontier line’ the English or the French before them would recognize. Indeed, it was crowded up against the Chaudière (‘cauldron’) Falls, whose power and height created a substantial outer limit to timber rafting.

Wrightsville was first intended as an agricultural colony. But in 1809, the Wrights floated the first recorded Ottawa timber rafts from Wrightsville all the way to Montréal. Almost immediately, the Napoleonic blockades cut Britain off from its traditional source of naval timber in the Baltic. Steep retaliatory tariffs and other emergency measures catapulted the Ottawa Valley, the St. Lawrence, and New Brunswick into the centre of imperial supply strategy. This began with navy-grade pine timbers, and to a lesser extent oak, but extended to include a substantial grey market in white pine timber destined for civilian use. In the decades that followed, squared white pine timber was at the centre of forest-based production on the Ottawa Valley, and river rafting was the dominant method for transporting it. Back at the Chaudière Falls, the Wrights placed more and more of their

day-to-day efforts into the timber trade, though the family patriarch Philemon Wright never abandoned an agrarian vision for his little colony.

At about the same time as the Wrights, the Hamilton family had founded a precociously large-scale commercial sawmill. But this was far downstream at Hawkesbury, not far from the Ottawa River's confluence with the St. Lawrence. The two families had chosen significant locations. For several decades, they marked the real initial horizons for three prominent forest products from the region, and three distinct ways of extracting and transporting them. These were 1) red pine, transported in simple masses of individual logs; 2) white pine in rafts of squared timber, with ancillary wood and agricultural products either built into the raft itself and/or transported on deck; and 3) 'deals' of rough cut, large-dimension lumber, which had to be sawn and then transported dry. Each product depended on specific species being available to axemen and their horse and ox sleds within about three miles of a 'floatable' river. Both the logs and the rafts also had to survive a long and uncertain journey downstream. And in the end, of course, the associated costs of each process had to be recouped with a surplus on notoriously fickle (but protected) commodity markets.

The Hamilton mill stood just downstream from a series of substantial rapids and minor falls; for many years, their saw-mill marked the westward limit for transporting finished lumber by water from the Ottawa watershed. Wright's settlement, far above many other such obstacles, stood at the much more formidable Chaudière Falls. Wright had established early on that mixed-wood timber rafts could be floated profitably from any point below the Falls to export markets on the St. Lawrence. Rafting was ideal for a timber trade linked initially to agricultural clearance, and whose interests were deeply interwoven with settlement. And on the banks of the Ottawa and its tributaries below the Chaudière, white pine and oak were both available in apparent abundance. In retrospect, we also know

that the area below the Falls also marked the limits of lands well-suited for independent commercial agriculture on the Anglo-American model (McCalla, 1993, p. 53; compare Hammond, 1993, pp. 18-25). Beyond the Chaudière, red pine, a prized substitute for a Baltic species penalized under Imperial tariffs, was overwhelmingly the species being cut. Log drives, rather than the vulnerable and labour-intensive rafts, could bring a commercially viable quantity of that wood past the churning Chaudière Falls to market (McCalla, 1993, p. 50; Reid, 1990, p. liii).

Similar constraints held on all the major tributaries of the Ottawa, and the changing limits of existing transportation infrastructure set the shifting outer boundaries of each pattern of logging and transportation activity. But overall, no clear 'line of settlement' began at Montréal and moved steadily upstream. Instead, the march of 'progress' in the industry depended on the product-transportation combination in question, in relation to the rapids and falls large enough to block such methods. Over the nineteenth century, progress could be counted in the number of such obstacles that had been overcome between any given logging site and the Island of Montréal (Innis and Lower, [1933] 1977, p. 271; MacKay, 1993; Reid, 1990, pp. xlvii-xlix).

Such river 'improvements' were expensive. Which improvements should be selected and how they should be paid for was a matter of constant policy debate over the century. One option was government financing and construction. Bytown (now Ottawa) had begun in 1827 across the Great River from Hull as a marshalling ground and recruiting area for the state construction of the Rideau Canal. This imperial undertaking was justified by the same postwar climate of mistrust of US and continental European liberalism that was undergirding the wider naval monopoly and Imperial tariffs that was drawing so much Valley timber across the ocean to England.

But that naval monopoly co-existed with such low state enforcement capacities in the region that a burgeoning grey commercial market had emerged in timber and other wood products. The barriers to access were also very few, amidst the pervasive clearances along the Lower Ottawa. Worse, standing timber clearly had a *negative* real value for most settlers and timber operators:

People in Britain, who buy wood at a high price, would be sorry to see large fields of the finest timber here committed to the flames. But in this wood country, it is so far from being of any value, that at present, we pay 20 dollars an acre for clearing it off, and fencing the land. We pay 8 dollars an acre for chopping, 8 for burning off and 4 for fencing; and considering the number and size of the trees, I wonder it does not cost more. (Bell, [1817] 1990, p. 15)

Have you not said, that, as a proprietor of woodland, you should not conceive that taking away the timber by another person, not the proprietor, would be very injurious to you? -- I should consider that he had no right to do it, but I should not think it a matter of much importance.

It is your idea that the timber itself is of little value to the proprietor? -- Yes, as it stands in the forest, without the labour of getting it out. (Hamilton, [1820] 1990, pp. 84-5)

By the 1820s, this low valuation of timber, and ready practical access to timberlands, had become an enormous problem. Despite a rudimentary timber berth system delineating lengths of the shoreline and designating them for specific logging interests, both emergent timber firms and more casual producers simply took what they wanted wherever it was found. Timber officials and merchants taking deliveries on behalf of the monopoly routinely ignoring the naval monopoly centred at Québec. By the 1820s, commercialization of the timber trade became inescapable, if policymakers hoped to regularize and control the trade under the rule of law.

This opened an opportunity for the Crown. While Crown representatives were still directly in charge of Crown lands and resources, and would be until the 1840s, Upper Canadian Crown representatives had not been able to benefit directly from a naval monopoly organized at Québec City even if the trees had been cut in Upper Canada. In 1829, Upper

Canada's Lieutenant-Governor Sir Peregrine Maitland threw the official trade open to all, in return for the payment of stumpage fees to the colonial state (Ryerson, 1973, pp. 34-36). A Surveyor-General, Peter Robinson, was appointed to establish, advertise, and auction off timber limits in Upper Canada. Though it would be decades before timber limits would be properly surveyed and respected in the woods (MNR, 1993, p. 3), Bytown was made the centre for Upper Canadian stumpage charges in 1828. Upper Canada's far-away colonial state thereby acquired a material interest in the Ottawa Valley timber trade, an interest expressed almost entirely through the rough-shod arrangements at Bytown.

Actual Upper Canadian stumpage arrangements deviated sharply from Robinson's instructions, mostly in deference to local interests and local financial realities (Mackay, 1985, p. 20; Reid, 1990, pp. li- lii; Southworth and White, [1899] 1957, pp. 173-4). With primary responsibility for agricultural settlement elsewhere in the colony, timber rights were not Robinson's priority. The Shirreff family, themselves settlers at Chats Falls near Bytown, had been instructed to take advance payments from lumbermen at Bytown at the point of selling the logging rights, and to collect on bonds for the remainder once sales were made at Québec City. Instead, they permitted payment based on merchants' credit instruments at Québec:

In the summer or autumn of one year the persons wishing to engage in lumbering applied for a license to cut timber, stating the quantity proposed to be cut, upon which a license issued in [a form], the lumberers paid to the Collector 25 per cent. as an advance upon the Crown dues, and entered into a bond. (Southworth and White, [1899] 1957, pp. 176-7)

The Shirreff system allowed the licensees to understate their cut at Bytown, and ignored questions of material waste. The strictly annual time-frame also reflected the casual and fluid nature of the business of the time. But the system produced revenue conveniently where no revenues had flowed to Upper Canada before, and it was backed by the Québec merchants who brokered deals delivering the timber to Britain itself. Hence, though a bank

collapse led to public losses from the Shirreff's arrangement, and prompted their personal dismissal, the stumpage system they arranged continued with few revisions up to the mid-century.

The timber trade and agricultural settlement grew up rapidly together southeast of the Chaudière Falls and in the lower reaches of the Ottawa's major tributaries. Since at least the War of 1812-14, many agricultural settlers, including many veterans on government pension, had begun clearances along the Rideau, and also along the Ottawa. As McCalla has noted, it is nearly impossible at this point to distinguish the forest industry from the settlement process in this area. Local trees were being cut, explicitly to clear the way for local farms. Very often, though not always, the woodworkers themselves were current or prospective farmers, perhaps producing for a merchant from whom they received supplies on credit and payment on delivery, perhaps on contract with wealthier farmers (J.R. Craig, 1808, qtd. in Innis and Lower, [1933] 1977, p. 269; Reid, 1990, pp. xlvi-xlix; Usborne, [1821] 1990). There is a sophisticated statistical debate in the historical literature about just how fast this was occurring, which appears to depend on whether cutters could be hired and how long the men of a pioneering family could dedicate themselves full-time to clearing rather than actual farming. By this grassroots, multifaceted process, much of the Algonquins' wintering grounds began to be converted to enclosed agricultural lands.

With commercialization and the introduction of stumpage fees, longer time horizons and bigger investments could be contemplated. Commercialization attracted some existing 'big fish' into the region for the first time: in 1828, the transnational Pollok, Gilmour, and Company conglomerate of timber firms founded an affiliate at Montréal. (In 1841, they would found another firm in Bytown/Ottawa itself.) As agricultural clearances chewed steadily through the most accessible forests on the south shore of the Lower Ottawa Valley, people involved in the industry began to think about its parameters.

For about twenty-five years, the Chaudière Falls had remained the definitive westward barrier to timber rafting, the most elaborate of the three extraction assemblages described above. Bytown (founded 1827) and Hull (founded 1826, replacing Wrightsville) had grown up around those limitations. They had been fed both by red pine traffic coming in drives of single logs down the Ottawa and over the Chaudière Falls, and by squared timber that could be taken up the Rideau from the south and down the Gatineau from the north.

Large-scale, longer-term investments became thinkable. But only very large operators or a cartel of large operators had pockets deep enough to finance river infrastructure on their own. Even for daily operations in the trade, bank credit was hard to get. British common law was ill-adapted to the financial needs of timber, because securities were assessed by type, and logging necessarily involved the conversion of wood from one kind of security (land) to another (chattel) (Risk, 1976, p. 335). Private or internal financing was accordingly common, and remained so for decades.

An abiding additional challenge for the larger operators who could overcome these financial limitations was that smaller operators without the burden of infrastructural overhead could compete away adequate returns on timber sales that would be needed to pay off the big operators' river investments. In order to open more of the Gatineau River to logging while avoiding these financial problems, several large operators formed the Gatineau Privilege. This cartel was intended to link joint investment in river improvements with a joint monopoly of use, and thus with effective joint monopoly over the Gatineau's timberlands. But the logic of monopoly had become socially unacceptable. In 1832, riots broke out against the cartel, spawning an investigation and ultimately its dissolution (Gillis and Roach, 1986, p. 20; Upper Canada. Executive Council, 1840).

If peaceful conditions removed the dominant justification for publicly funded ‘improvements’, and if the model of private timber monopolies was also under pressure, what was to be done about the Chaudière Falls? An answer began to emerge soon after commercialization: river investment by individually held, integrated operations, operations with pockets deep enough to sustain a heavy financial burden over many years. The result: the first timber slide on the Ottawa, specially adapted by the Wrights from single-log designs that Ruggles Wright had seen in Scandinavia. The altered design could accommodate the Ottawa’s raft traffic, and became available to all comers on a fee for service basis. Construction began at Chaudière Falls before everyone’s eyes in 1829, and was completed only in 1837.

The completion of the timber slide allowed an explosive physical extension of logging onto new lands, far beyond the limit of soils that could support an independent commercial agriculture. The increasingly valuable commercial markets for white pine in Britain and increasingly in the United States could now draw on a much larger catchment basin to the western-most limits of the Ottawa River. Over just a few decades, the timber slide design would be replicated many times, both at Bytown-Hull and at similar obstacles throughout the watershed. Chaudière Falls did not disappear from the industry’s point of view (rafts still had to be broken down into individual cribs for the slide, and reassembled below), but they did become a simple transfer point in a much longer transportation corridor.

Bytown-Hull, 1835-7: Threshold Encounters

From a critical obstacle to certain key kinds of timber production, Chaudière Falls became a key intersection in a one-way timber transportation corridor. At the turning point, the timber-slide became a kind of threshold, opening onto both a new period and a new region in forest-based production and associated accumulation strategies. The particular

contingent events that converged on Bytown-Hull at 1835-7 can therefore be analyzed as a critical 'threshold moment'.²

Bytown had taken shape as headquarters for the massive Rideau Canal construction operations, and Colonel By, who was in charge of construction, as its namesake. Once the Rideau Canal was completed in 1832, Bytown also became the third point in an upstream transportation triangle between Montréal and Kingston, the St. Lawrence still too ridden with rapids to handle heavy traffic. But Bytown was never only about the Rideau. It was a service centre for the rural farming communities of Carleton County, many of which were Protestant half-pay veterans of the War of 1812-14. It also was a centre of the boisterous timber industry.

By the late 1820s, timber operators were grappling with commercialization of the trade and the end of formal monopoly by navy supply merchants at Québec City. There were signs already of targeted violence. These incidents pitted mobs of axemen against the town merchants, cullers, and clerks: against those, in short, who held their debts, serviced their needs, and priced their pleasures (Gaffield, 1994, p. 215).

By the 1830s, however, the Bytown-Hull area was riven by social conflict at a much greater scale. The so-called Shiners' War of 1835-7 has long been a focus of scholarly investigation, as a period of particularly intense inter-ethnic and inter-class conflict on the Ottawa Valley. Bytown-Hull was its central 'theatre'. Many scholars have attempted to explain why this place and this time became an exceptional 'space-time' of encounter and conflict. It was certainly substantially different in social character and in timing from the agrarian rebellions that shook the central regions of Upper and Lower Canada in 1837-8.

² On the space-time of the 'threshold', and on the concept of 'threshold dialogue', see

Mundane sociology goes far to explain this social disorder: long, hard, and dangerous work away from family; brief city visits, replete with both leisure and a season's wages. There was a macho woodworkers' culture, pervasive alcohol abuse, a degree of recreational violence, and a code of honour whose breaches demanded combat (Reid, 1990, p. xxxiv, xli). But the violence was not disconnected from real interests. At least in part, the Shiners' War was a struggle over local labour market control. The completion of the Rideau Canal in 1832 notoriously released the canal's remaining workforce, largely desperate and immiserated Irish immigrants with no other means of support, onto the streets of Bytown. Woodworkers were already known as a rowdy but lucrative presence in the streets of Bytown, 'blowing off steam' and 'blowing' their wages after payday at the end of a winter logging season. But by 1835, largely Irish mobs of loggers, including the recently unemployed Rideau Canal diggers, suddenly turned with heightened intensity on the French-Canadians who had previously predominated in the timber industry. The apparent goal was to throw the French-Canadians out of the industry entirely and to achieve a kind of ethnic cartel in the local labour market.

These historical facts present important analytical problems. The year 1835 was a hard year for agricultural settlers and Algonquins: crops and gardens failed, and so did the hunt. In 1835, lease periods were increased, further disadvantaging the smaller and newer operators. But it was actions of the new and amorphous Irish proletariat who captured most of the attention. In some respects, the jaqueries against French-Canadian woodworkers appeared to rest on classical working class interests: Irish-born timber baron Peter Aylen assumed leadership of their cause, promising them high wage rates and job security.³ But it is equally obvious that their xenophobia violated the terms of class identity. Moreover, much of the violence was orchestrated by Aylen who was trying to break into the top ranks of the local timber barons, and some of the immediate conflict concerned access to timber berths

rather than pay rates. Over the course of the unrest a few of the other noted Irish-born capitalists and notables also broke with the largely non-Irish establishment of Bytown to side at least part-way with their fellow Irishmen. Was this sectarian conflict carried over from Ireland? The Shiners disrupted and took over the meetings of Carleton County's lead agricultural society, and nearly took Nepean township government by force. Goaded by racist Anglican clergy, the Orange Order, and by firewater, Protestants from Carleton County marched several times against the Irish-Catholic 'Shiners' in Lower Bytown, causing panic before they were talked into retreat by the authorities. Later conflicts in 1848-51 might also suggest that this was so.⁴ This revived violence, occurring primarily in the woods and out of town, pitted Orangemen and Irish Catholic against one another. In the absence of state enforcement capacity, that fight was again about control of the bounds of timber berths, and involved employees for rival firms who employed on an ethnic and sectarian basis. But the central targeting of fellow Catholics in 1834-7 seems to rule sectarianism out in the earlier period. Peter Aylen was a Protestant, and the Scottish-dominated Catholic clergy offered the Shiners little support. But the critical enormities committed by this protean social force (in the eyes of local authorities and their allies) were not the enormities committed against other woodworkers. They were notoriously the acts directed against a more established 'gentility'. These were the largely but not exclusively Protestant ex-military farmer-shopkeepers, whose interests centred on the lands of Carleton County and on the downtown Bytown shops and taverns that the loggers frequented.

The roots and nature of the Shiners' War are important to grasp, because it was crucial marker in this space-time of encounter and conflict. The years 1835-37 also brought with them broader economic changes to the Valley as a whole. They closed off a period of quasi-mercantile metropolitan timber supply in the Valley, a trade symbiotically linked to the dominant settler project of agrarian land clearances in the Lower Ottawa Valley and

Eastern Ontario as a whole. By 1837, as Rebellion disrupted key agricultural centres of both Upper and Lower Canada, the violence had fallen off along the Ottawa. Migration to the Canadas collapsed, temporarily reducing pressure on the labour market. Key conservative figures in the Valley, regaining control of the local scene, were freed up to strengthen the will of pro-government forces elsewhere in the two colonies. As we will see later in this paper, violence soon returned to the Valley, but it was subtly redirected and relocated.

But the Shiners' War is not the only aspect of Bytown-Hull, 1835-7, that deserves attention. In the wider scheme of things, 1837 was a year of spectacular macro-economic collapse across the major capitalist centres of the world. It was also an El Niño year, and therefore a year of world-wide crop failures, though locally, 1835 seems to have been the worst year of this period for both farmers and hunters.

For the Ottawa Valley, 1837 was of equal importance as the year that the first Wright timber slide broached the Chaudière Falls. For over twenty-five years, the Chaudière ('cauldron') Falls had been an insurmountable barrier to timber rafting. It had ripped rafts apart. Only single logs could survive the trip – everyone in the business knew it – but so much the worse for wear and with so much wood disappearing in the process that only the highly prized red pine was worth bringing downstream.

As social violence whirled around the river narrows, and just before crop failures and rebellion shook the dominant classes and societies in other regions of both Canadas, Ruggles Wright's slide triggered an explosive and highly targeted wave of capital intensification, under specifically capitalist leadership, the only leadership structure that could mobilize it under the circumstances. Rapidly, a section of river and its tributaries that had hitherto brought only red pine to market, now haemorrhaged white all the way

from Lake Temiskaming. Because the river improvements had to be financed out of deep pockets and steep fees, cooperative timber production involving farmers' fields and merchants' general stores was left behind, in favour of company farms and company stores.

The Emergence of a Capitalist Industrial Region

What opened up after 1837 above the Chaudière Falls was a region/period of more clearly capitalist development. The Upper Ottawa Valley – in this context, the part of the Valley located above the Chaudière Falls – was clearly its catchment area, and Bytown-Hull was its regional hub. It was a region and a period in which timber extraction rather than agriculture was dominant. And it was an economic transition to capitalism that was both precocious and structurally unique, measured against the wider mid-century transitions experienced in central Canada .

In subsequent decades, figures that were more clearly independent capitalists accumulated capital equipment and money capital, hiring what were more clearly seasonal labourers in return for what was more clearly a piecework wage. The big, vertically integrated capitalist operations still had to cope with the competitive implications of a large, transient body of small operators, but the body of large operators assumed centre stage (Chew, 1992, p. 68, 89; Reid, 1990, p. xlvi, lii-liii, lv). The state's very weakness in the region became a tool to establish and enforce class solidarities. The re-emergence of street violence in the 1840s was ultimately put down by local militia, and the state ordered timber licensees themselves to crack down on the mobs on penalty of losing their licenses.⁵ Peter Aylmer broke with his rowdy impoverished workers in Lower Bytown, and became a 'respectable' figure of law and order across the river. He died one of the genuine business 'pillars' of Aylmer, Québec .

⁵ Bleasdale, 1982; Brown, 1968, pp. 10-11; Gaffield, 1994; Mackay, 1985, p. 20; Reid, 1990, pp. xxxvii, 42, 45-6, 52-7, 102, 133, 146.

What opened, then, was a period marked by big timber barons, very soon joined by what Lee calls 'lumber kings' (These were saw-millers, usually selling to the American construction market, and often Americans themselves investing directly in local operations .) But this was not the full story, and it could not be confused with monopoly. As Lee writes, there was a general spirit of cooperation rather than cutthroat competition amongst the big operators on matters of common concern such as transportation improvements and finance . On the other hand, 'there always seemed to be room for newcomers and small dealers' , and even the great could not protect themselves fully against the vagaries of the market . The logic of local monopoly also ended in two respects. First, on the side of the owners of the means of log extraction, log shaping, and log transportation, competitive markets pressured to assume organizational control of these work processes and to repeatedly invest in transformative capital improvements. On the side of the workers of the region, individual competition also prevailed in the labour market. Collective worker competition over timber berth boundaries brought violent disturbances back, primarily between segregated work crews over timber berth boundaries in the forest. But the latter 'wars in the woods', while irrational for capitalists, served workers' interests in part and for a time: the need for small private armies of 'enforcer' axemen drove up each operation's total payroll. Decades passed before any other organizing effort succeeded among workers, whether against the timber barons, or against the subsequent overlapping waves of lumber and pulp and paper interests.

The early regional capitalist cluster that emerged after 1837 was marked by special features. They left enduring marks on Canadian resource capitalism:

- a preference for capital-intensification of transportation infrastructure and a far slower transformation of work in the woods themselves,

- an entrenched pattern of relatively low and stable price for timber cutting rights, or ‘stumpage’,
- piecework as the dominant wage relation,
- a highly differentiated seasonal workforce whose mobility allowed them to support part of their annual subsistence needs through farming for subsistence and for petty commodity production, reducing the going wage, and
- an overarching pattern of explosive and violent geographic expansion and wasteful treatment of an apparently abundant resource. What Harold Innis later identified as the abrupt ‘cyclonic’ effect of frontier silver mining on the Tri-Town area of Lake Temiskaming at the turn of the twentieth century could with equal justice be applied decades earlier to Ottawa Valley logging as it advanced on Lake Temiskaming from far downstream.

Regulating this region is another way by which 1835-7 marked a turning point: the region was a primary beneficiary of the rapid transition to unify the two Canadas. Indeed, the extent to which affairs were handled on a unified or parallel basis on either side of the Ottawa far exceeded the extent to which real unity was achieved in the new Province as a whole. For instance, because only a few seigneuries were ever founded at the base of the Ottawa, both shores of the Ottawa were governed by common-law property law, and this meant a more coordinated approach to problems affecting the whole valley.⁶

The Role of Algonquin Dispossession

Much of this story has already been told, and told over the years with increasing care. But it has been told primarily as a story of violence and of its control; more particularly of transformed identities of ethnicity, religion and class; and finally of transformed

⁶ There were precedents for this unified approach in the Upper Ottawa. These include a single cross-river fur district of the Hudson’s Bay Company in the Upper Ottawa under Fort Timiskaming, and a single taxation system at Bytown for logs passing the Chaudière Falls.

relationships between the agricultural and the timber sectors of the settler economy. Since Michael S. Cross's seminal work in the 1960s and 1970s, much scholarship has emphasized that the Shiners' Wars were a watershed in the conscious development of institutions of social cohesion, representation, and control. Indeed, the world of the 1970s is clearly reflected in Cross's reinterpretation of Turner's 'frontier' conditions, which are to be found not only amidst physical hardship of the landscape and distance from metropolitan centres, but rather in terms of institutional deficits. For Cross, frontier conditions may exist even in the 'urban ghetto'. Chad Gaffield has in many ways reinforced this reading of the Shiners Wars as a reflection of institutional deficits, pointedly following his coverage of this period of conflict with documentations of major advances in subsequent years in the development of such institutions.

In the stories of Shiner excesses, by contrast, indigenous people appear as individuals, no more or less impacted by the general hooliganism than others. Cross notes, for instance, the case of three Shiners' assaulting and raping 'an old Indian woman'. This approach is common in histories of agricultural and timber settlement in the Valley. Allan Dhu ('the Black'), son of the infamous Laird MacNab who established another 'leader and associates' settlement on the Valley, later entered the white oral tradition of the region as a serial rapist and murderer of aboriginal women. His 'accidental death' at the mouth of the Bonnechère was widely viewed as a covert execution by First Nations people (Finnigan, 1981, pp. 26, 39, 40, 43).

The story of Algonquin rights and dispossession during this period has also been told. But it has generally been told separately, in research broadly intended to advance Algonquin identity, rights, and title in the region. Here the repeated violent deprivations of agricultural clearances, of logging as an industry, and of their perpetrators on the Algonquin community are inserted into a story of determined political petition and

resistance . While the implications of the expansion of logging upstream for the Algonquins has been thoroughly documented in that literature, the political-economic significance of Algonquin dispossession for this regional industrial cluster has been understated in both literatures.

In my view, the central theoretical basis for linking these two stories is neither the sociological discussion of violence and societal cohesion, nor the legal discussion of the question of aboriginal title. Instead, it is an adaptation of David Harvey's now-classic insights into Marx's analysis of differential ground rent in agriculture . A powerful landlord interest, structurally separate in their economic interests from the economic interests of their capitalist tenants, has a structural interest and concrete capacity to charge the maximum differential rents on lands of varying fertility, and simultaneously on lands of equal fertility that are subject to different levels of investment (Harvey, 1982, p. 370).

While in practice this power can never be fully disentangled from the dysfunctional capacity of landlords to charge monopoly and absolute rents as well, by charging the full differential rent, a powerful independent landlord class usefully redistributes overall investments in the soil away from an overemphasis on the most fertile soils (Harvey, 1982, p. 357).

In the absence of plantation forestry, and because the maturation period of northern timber far exceeds the planning periods of timber companies, both historically and in the past, the closest parallel to 'the most fertile soils' in the Upper Ottawa Valley is the forest frontier, and the closest parallel to investments in that soil are the 'cruising' activities (timber prospecting) that identify the quantity and exact location of valued resources, and the transportation investments that brought new forestlands within the range of profitable extraction. But who is the landlord?

Since HV Nelles's *Politics of Development*, scholars have reflected on the puzzling pattern of continued Crown ownership in the key northern resource sectors. Notwithstanding the economic and environmental case for turning both lands and ocean resources over to private ownership by industry, Crown ownership in these sectors has likely continued to the present day because it has served the economic interests of those sectors well. A third possibility, a continued separate landlordship of clergy and Crown on reserves set aside for them, was certainly an accepted – even a welcome reality – for undercapitalized Eastern Ontario farmers in the early decades of the 19th century, where the land sales role of the Canada Company was attenuated. This third possibility had a strong parallel in the more celebrated case of seigneurial lands in Québec,⁷ and the same advantages of leasing over purchase for under-capitalized farmers apply. The economic implications of these reserves for the timber industry of the time are potentially important, but beyond the scope of this paper. It is worth noting, however, that this possibility closed in 1834 in Upper Canada. (Québec's seigneurial system was abolished in 1854.)

A fourth possibility now pressing on these industries, particularly in the northern territories and in British Columbia, is more and more recognized indigenous ownership of these resources. In many regions of the country, the substantive implications for industry practice are uncertain. Recognized indigenous rights over public resources could simply mean a particular form of indigenous integration into the logic of capitalist accumulation, and therefore a simple redistribution of rents from 'business as usual'. The tantalizing alternative possibility, embodied in part in such institutions as the Iisaak initiative on the West Coast of Vancouver Island, is a more substantial pressure on the industry to end its heavy reliance on the remnants of the Canadian resource frontier. That, it seems, would

⁷ For a classical account of this system, see . I wish to thank Robert Sweeny of Memorial University for this insight.

depend on more than a redirection of the rents. It depends on the retention or revival of a substantive indigenous interest in the land, over against ordinary resource extraction.

For this reason, we need to reconsider this early transition to a fully capitalist industry-region based on resource extraction from public and unceded lands. We need to examine one feature of this transition much more systematically. The Algonquins whose summer base was situated in Oka (that is, in Québec) included among them members who had wintering grounds on the Upper Canada side of the Ottawa. This had important implications. On the one hand, they were among those indigenous peoples in Québec who enjoyed leasing revenues from squatters on islands in the major rivers. On the other hand, they claimed lands in Upper Canada, and therefore claimed aboriginal title in the manner normally handled by treaty under the terms of the Royal Proclamation of 1763. Finally, in the absence of meaningful state capacity in the region and in the presence of substantial delegation of state authority to the industry for the provision of public goods, contemporary officials considered that Algonquin dispossession had occurred as the result of the direct impact of agro-forestry and ultimately forestry, rather than as the result of state intervention. In combination, these rights appeared to some officials to open a window for a direct link between agricultural and forestry settlers and an Algonquin right to compensation. The decision to dispossess the Algonquins of a *de facto* expression of such a right, most immediately on the islands and banks of the Ottawa River but also by inference on either side of the River, removed state acknowledgement and support for the only social force in the region with an active material interest in acting as a true landlord class, and a moral and legal case to have a right to the ground rents.

That active interest is not derived from an interest in rent revenue alone, but also from an interest in *alternative* uses for the timber, such as the interest in retaining hunting and gathering grounds. With the capitalist colonial state arrogating this rent-charging power

entirely to itself, industry instead confronted a broadly sympathetic interest in its 'landlord', one broadly indifferent to the actual distribution of rent charges on the land, provided its overall revenue targets were met. Balanced against its own overarching interest in fostering capitalist accumulation, the state as 'ideal collective landlord' repeatedly demonstrated in the subsequent decades an affinity for long periods of moderate and stable ground rents and/or stumpage, whether by volume or by acreage. Far from closing the forest frontier or severely restricting it, which would have driven up the overall differential rent charges, overall resource revenue was maintained instead by constructing new transportation corridors into the retreating resource frontier and by periodically releasing major new timber acreages for harvest.

My argument for the indigenous landlord, both in general and in the case of the Ottawa Valley, depends not only on a legally enforceable right of indigenous people to charge ground rent, but also on an enduring indigenous economic interest in charging the maximum rent possible. I would stress that this argument involves no romantic assumptions about First Nations *in general* being wed to pre-contact hunting and gathering interests in the region. Following Knight's pioneering *Indians at Work*, van Wyck's pioneering thesis certainly demonstrated that 'Indians' in the Ottawa participated in the timber industry as well as in tourism throughout the 19th century. Oka-based Mohawks were well-known as raft drivers in the vicinity of that community and the Island of Montréal.

But partly as a historical legacy and partly as a matter of deliberate choice, Algonquin economic practices on the Ottawa River could be distinguished by contemporary observers from those of Kanienkehake (Mohawk) and other indigenous peoples who were also active on the River. Until the end of the government's historic treaty gift-giving at Oka in the summer and the relocation of most of them to Maniwaki, Québec, and Golden Lake,

Ontario, Oka Algonquins notoriously occupied Oka for just a few months in the summer, whereas the Oka Kanienkehaka stayed closer to that site, and left it at different times of year. It also seems clear that the winter departures represented continued participation for many Oka Algonquins in economic activities undertaken well beyond the line of timber exploitation: in short, in historic patterns of hunting and gathering, supplemented by petty commodity production based on adaptations of these practices. Throughout the nineteenth century, up to the foundation of Algonquin Park, the record repeatedly shows Algonquins protesting the disruption of their hunting and gathering practices along the advancing perimeter of logging activity, and petitioning the government for relief, for a stop to industry expansion, or for their own relocation beyond the predations of loggers. Finally, it is clear that other Algonquins without active ties to Oka were also participating in these activities in many parts of the Valley. Although most Algonquin communities are now located in Québec on both sides of the Ottawa, non-Oka Algonquins can be documented on both sides of the Great River.

In summary, then, because river rafting was central to Ottawa Valley timber transportation, the post-1837 emphasis of regional capitalists on *transportation* investments in particular meant investment in *timber slides* and *chutes* at the Ottawa Valley's many falls and rapids in particular. This was new, and it profoundly altered the economic significance of strategic features of the main rivers where logs were floated. One consequence of this re-valuation of the river landscape appears to have been a policy decision to dispossess Algonquins of informal rights to charge rent from squatters on islands in the Ottawa River, including Kettle Island in the immediate vicinity of Bytown-Hull. Coming as it did at a time of high stress on the seasonal rounds practiced by the Algonquins who summered at Oka, the loss of this revenue – and the legal foothold it clearly presented for a much wider land and resource case – had significant implications for the Algonquins' multi-faceted political-economic strategies. To an exceptional degree for the period, the latter had sustained (in

part aided by supplementary rents and diplomatic gifts) historic patterns of seasonal rotations with an element of hunting, gathering, and petty commodity production from 'the chase'. But the reverse is also true: without this element of a sustained interest in standing timber, the ecological basis for hunting and gathering practices, the ecological dimension of the rent-charging or 'landlord' interest of the Algonquins would have altered qualitatively.

It is the purpose of the remainder of this paper to lay out this story of rent capture and the character of Algonquins' 'landed interests' in greater detail. This research is based on a combination of secondary materials, published primary materials, and the compendium of historical documents compiled by Joan Holmes and Associates and published by the Ontario Government in support of opening negotiations on the land question with the Algonquins of Golden Lake .

The Ottawa Valley at the Opening of the Nineteenth Century

It is no secret to any Person at all acquainted with the state of Indian Affairs, that the Aborigines of this Part of His Majesty's Dominions are beginning to appreciate their lands not so much by the use in which they are in the habit, or are capable of making of themselves, as by the value at which they see them estimated by those who purchase them, and either cultivate them, or dispose of them in their natural state -- It is equally notorious, that if the Indians wanted penetration to make the discovery, there are a great many persons of European Origin who ... will not fail to inform them that the value of an Article depends as much upon its importance to the purchaser as on its usefulness to the present possessor --

But if this were doubtful now, when the lands purchased from the Indians are distributed among His Majesty's Subjects, at a Fee hardly exceeding the prime cost of them, it cannot possibly remain so when the Indians discover as they unquestionably will, that the purchases made from them are to be converted into a source of wealth to ourselves....For we are satisfied that the purchase of 50 or even 100 Townships, if made now, will cost us less than the purchase of ten after the promulgation of the Governor General's plan. (Executive Council, 1798, qtd. in McNab, 1999b, pp. 223-4, n. 43)

Buy cheap; use or sell dear. Our story begins apart from the developments on the Ottawa, with the origins of a settler project towards the rights of First Nations in Upper Canada.

Upon arrival in what became Upper Canada, the earliest Loyalists encountered – to their considerable alarm – not only guarantees preserving Québec's seigneurial system (a matter that would soon lead to the partitioning of the old Province of Québec), but also explicit, well-established land guarantees for the First Nations. As the above quotation clearly shows, the Loyalists pressed the Crown to purchase as much land as possible from First Nations, and to do so quickly.

By 1841, the Algonquins had clearly developed a bitter understanding of the realities the Loyalists just quoted had sought to conceal:

We were too good and generous: We permitted Strangers to come and Settle our own Grounds and to Cultivate the Land [and] Wood Merchants to destroy our Valuable Timber, who have done us much injury, as by burning our Rich Forests, they have Annihilated our Beaver and our Peltries, and Driven away our Deer. Had our Hunting Grounds belonged to the whites they would never have allowed this... (qtd. in Author Unknown, 1841)

But by this time, the Algonquins were not bewailing the sale of their lands at a price that was too low. They were upset with the physical transformation of their territory, without real compensation or transitional arrangements. For a few early decades, this conversion of the land had been confined to a few doubtful Loyalist footholds on the St. Lawrence and the lower Great Lakes. From the point of view of the settlers, at least, those lands had been fastidiously purchased at an early stage. Then, at the turn of the nineteenth century, the Ottawa Valley, hitherto a minor settlement area, was catapulted into Imperial consciousness. For a time, it remained a divided jurisdiction, but it quickly became a united and vital economic region.

The combination of logging and settlement had specific impacts on the preconditions of the First Nation's political economy and its spatiality. On one hand, logging and clearances

radically disrupted ecological relationships underlying their patterns of consumption and reproduction:

We your red Children Algonquins and Nipissingues are the ... sole proprietors of these [once] rich hunting grounds and majestic Fat Forests but at the present day Father your Children are reduced to beggery caused principally by the innumerable squatters and lumberers who not content of taking possession & establishing themselves on the most fertile parts of our hunting grounds, destroying our magnificent forests and appropriating to themselves our fine timber now ... they most maliciously set fire to our woods, by which means they have destroyed our beavers and peltries, and driven away our Deer, the only dependance we had to support, clothe and bring up our Children. (Meiawinawatch et al., 1847)

This destruction would occur repeatedly in the coming decades, and brought with it social and economic immiseration, and ultimately political turbulence:

[François Odjik] said and declared that having been this spring on the hunting grounds belonging to his tribe, he found there the person name Robert McGregor having already begun to cut down trees and prepare the land saying that is was intended to cultivate and hunting there and said François Odjik declare that the establishment started by the said Robert McGregor is found around the Lake know vulgarly in their language as Lake of Fishing, or about eight leagues from the mouth of the river named the White Rivere, and says nothing more. (Odjik, 1829)

The Algonquin Chief Antoine Pekinawatik of the Village on the Lake of Two Mountains, has placed in my hands the accompanying Petition to His Lordship the Governor General praying...for a Grant of Land on the West bank of the River Gatineau....The claims of the Algonquin and Nipissingue Indians to compensation for the loss of their Hunting Grounds, having been inquired into, and reported on, by the late Commission -- of Inquiry, I transmit...the enclosed Extract of the Report of the Commissioners thereon. (Napier, 1847)

The petition of the undersigned Indians of the Rouge and North-Nation Rivers humbly sheweth that whereas the county in the neighbourhood of the aforesaid Rivers having been surveyed and is now becoming thickly settled and as a consequence the forest game our precious means of subsistence are being gradually but surely destroyed or driven off it has become necessary for your petitioners to give up our former occupations.... (Indians of Rouge and North Nations Rivers, 1881)

But on the other hand, the norms of seasonal rotations between summer gathering places and dispersed wintering grounds proved to be remarkably resilient. Certain rotational practices themselves sustained the more obvious material preconditions of the rotation,

including the maintenance of portages, firing hillsides to stimulate new vegetation, and 'nursing' beaver. As an ensemble, these practices survived their underlying ecological preconditions at any particular location (e.g., Hughes, 1834). Many Algonquins retained rotational and hunting-gathering practices long thereafter. This can be seen even in the wide time period over which particular clusters of them abandoned these practices in despair, seeking relief:

The Algonquin and Nipissingue Tribes are exclusively devoted to hunting in the Indian Country, and are seldom to be seen in any number at their Village except for a few weeks previous to the distribution of His Majesty's Annual Bounty.... These Indians subsist principally by the profits arising from the Chace (Napier, 1829)

To the Honourable Commons of the Province of Canada....[H]aving thus remained a hunting people while you have destroyed all the means of hunting for them, your petitioners leaving their families without help, *have continued nevertheless to go in convenient seasons to the depths of the forests to seek furs and to trade them*; but the uselessness of this occupation is of such a nature as to render it derisory, to the point where few among them venture to follow it, and that many remain their village, discouraged, without hope and without resources; that the poverty which is the result of this has as its companions miseries of all kinds and sicknesses which quickly harvest their wives and children (Papino et al., 1851)

Very few of the Indians [at Golden Lake] have much taste for farming. I might say there are only three who farm to any extent, while the rest prefer to hunt and work on the river in the spring for the lumbermen. (E. Bennett, qtd. in Canada. Indian Affairs, 1897b)

Various supplements became integral to the Algonquins' rotation framework in the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, without displacing the latter. The first supplements were diplomatic gifts sanctioned and maintained by the colonial military secretary, the first institutional housing for 'Indian Affairs'. Diplomatic gifts became important in the Algonquins' calculations, but not in a linear or straightforwardly economic way. For instance, as late as 1843 Algonquin groups with intact, remote hunting grounds were alleged to be 'enabled to kill more furs and peltries in the space of the time they would take for their journey to the Lake of Two Mountains, than would purchase four times the amount of their presents [received there]' (Hughes, 1843a). The timing of gifts

and their significance in attesting to extra-economic obligations between the Crown and the Algonquins added to the complexity in ways that were not easy to predict:

Brother, tell our Father that *the very late Season* at which we have received our Presents these several Years past has been of great Detriment to us. It has been the Cause of our suffering much from the Cold, of our starving, and of our being unable to make Hunts in Furs. We beseech him to order that for the future we may receive our Great Father's annual Bounty as we used to do some Years back, about the Middle of Summer, so that we might have it in our Power to reach our Hunting Grounds early, and be enabled to lay up a Stock of Provisions for the Winter. (Hughes, 1836b, emphasis added)

The increase of the population of these Tribes now annually visiting the Village [at the Lake of Two Mountains] for these two years past -- proceeds from a number of families of these Tribes not making their appearance at the general Issues at the Lake for several years prior to 1840... they being at too great a distance from the Village, on their hunting grounds, where they had it, then, in their power, to procure from their hunting furs & peltries, much more than the value of their annual presents -- But it appears that these two years past 1841 & 1842, the greater part of these very families, from the ruined state of their hunting grounds, & and the great scarcity of Beaver, martins, deer, &c that now prevails, caused by the continual fires made by the lumber men, who have overrun great part of the hunting grounds of the poor Tribes, They cannot as they were formerly accustomed to do, procure a sufficiency of furs, to admit of them Cloathing themselves & families. (Hughes, 1842)

In sum, a few factors became critical in combining a rotational element of hunting and gathering with other activities in Algonquin political economy: acquiring use and exchange values reliably on either side of the rotation, and acquiring them in a timely fashion; maintaining the social and ecological preconditions of those values, such that they at least covered the effort and costs of transportation to acquire them; and in the last instance, maintaining the capacity to relocate either the winter or the summer pole of the rotation system. (The summer gathering place was less mobile, based as it was on official agreement with the Crown as a distribution centre for diplomatic gifts.) The last condition -- relocation -- was critical in the nineteenth century: it kept the progressive loss of hunting

territories surmountable in the short term as the agro-forestry conversion of Algonquin lands swept westward and became more and more complete.

Leasing Land to Non-Aboriginal People

To add to this complex and transitional situation, the disrupted land between the system's separating poles yielded a side benefit whose importance deserves more attention: rents charged by Algonquins from non-aboriginal settlers. In that potential lies the link between Algonquin dispossession and the timber industry's development model. Such leases, often paid irregularly or in-kind, appear to have been relatively common, with special collection and distribution arrangements (Constant Penency, qtd. in Hessel, 1993, p. 70; Secretary for Indian Affairs, 1830). The rents collected were apparently used internally to maintain important traditional institutions: communal expenses for feasts and for the support of leaders, and relief for the invalid elderly and sick:

The Monies received from Tenant Squatters...have generally been collected by one or two of the Chiefs of the different Tribes each in their turn assisted by one or two of the warriors. The Tenant Squatters previous to the arrangements made with them in 1838 gave us in a manner what they pleased with the exception of a few honest Squatters, some gave money & others produce such as Corn flour, potatoes, calves, sheep. The monies were pleased [sic] in a Public purse for the use & benefit of the two Tribes, This purse was handed to two Chiefs in charge one of each Tribe appointed by the Council... (Samuel Hughes, 1843)

These lease arrangements are often first documented at the point where the non-aboriginal tenant tires of a long-standing arrangement. For instance, one tenant, Joseph La Flamme, failed in an appeal to convert an island lease he held from the Algonquins into a Crown grant. Algonquin leaders took the authorities' subsequent refusal to act on La Flamme's request to be an implied warrant for Algonquin leasing. It seemed to them that the Crown was properly distinguishing direct aboriginal-settler leasing arrangements from direct land sales, an important point because the latter were clearly forbidden under the terms of the Royal Proclamation of 1763 (Nipissing and Algonquin Tribes, 1840). The Algonquins had

also agreed with the Crown to focus on islands on the Ottawa in exercising this right.⁸ Algonquin relationships with these squatters must certainly have been tinged with a degree of resentment: their presence inevitably meant the destruction and loss of hunting grounds. But distinctions were made for 'honest' settlers, who did pay their rents. In 1829, the Algonquins and Nipissings petitioned Lieutenant-Governor James Kempt about the less 'honest' settlers' depredations. He responded by ordering expulsions of the resistant settlers, subject to 'competent proof' (e.g., Napier, 1834).

Kempt was probably merely trying to maintain good relations: that would have been consistent with his wider mandate from London with regard to all colonial parties. It also corresponds with some other actions in Algonquin affairs. In 1830, for example, he confirmed before the Chiefs in Lower Canada that the government would continue its policy of presenting annual diplomatic gifts to the First Nations, a policy that had become controversial in colonial society and in Great Britain (Earl of Gosford, 1837a). Second, there were wider reasons to accommodate the Algonquins where this was possible: there were other fences to be mended with the Algonquins, who were already angered over an intense land and hunting dispute with the Haudenosaunee and Abenaki in locations beyond the Ottawa Valley (Duchesnay, 1830). Third, while hunting territory trespasses were known to be serious matters in Algonquin society, the government would have been concerned to prevent First Nations enforcing these rights directly on settlers.

The following decade resolved little with respect to the settlers, except in increasing Algonquin diplomacy about an increasingly intolerable land and resource situation. In general, despite summering in Oka on the Lower Canadian side, the Algonquins with

⁸ From the standpoint of the hunting territories' reliance on watershed boundaries, a First Nation could claim rights to a river. Originally, this probably included the associated watershed. From the standpoint of the space of boundaries and maps that prevailed in the dominant society, claiming a river could be taken to mean merely rights to the river proper.

hunting grounds on the Upper Canadian side came to lobby for an ‘Upper Canadian’ solution to their case, which meant a settlement under the land-cession terms of the Royal Proclamation. (Lower Canada was generally exempt from these terms of the Proclamation, though the Algonquins could point to evidence that the governor had extended its principles to themselves at the time of its proclamation.) That is, they sought a reserve for themselves (and for any squatters who would pay them rents) at the then-remote Ile des Allumettes, with annual per capita compensation for the lands lost downstream.⁹ In this, they had the general support of Indian Department officials concerned with their case and involved in the leasing arrangement. (See, for example, Nipissing and Algonquin Tribes, 1840.) The question, of course, for colonial officials was how this was to be paid for, without angering middle-class electors either in the colonies or in the imperial homelands.

In Toronto in 1835, the Algonquins and Nipissing successfully lobbied the outgoing Upper Canadian lieutenant-governor, John Colborne, for these aims. But a year later, his successor, Francis Bond-Head, was prepared only to assist in resettlement, claiming implausibly that the other issues concerning downstream lands must already have been settled under existing treaties. In addition, settlers were now sweeping onto the Ile aux Allumettes (Givins, 1836a; Givins, 1836b). In 1837, officials claimed that the island itself had been officially considered part of the southeastern lands already ceded by the Mississauga Anishnabai (or Ojibway). The Algonquins counter-claimed that Mississauga rights ended at ‘a ridge of land (called Hauteur des terres [i.e., ‘height of land’])’ between the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa. This of course reflects the historic tendency of Algonquian hunting territories to follow watersheds rather than shorelines. But the government conveniently agreed with the Mississaugas that the earlier cession ran down to the *shore* of the Ottawa (Hughes, 1838b; compare Ontario. Attorney-General, 1898, pp.

⁹ Algonquin and Nipissing Indians of Lake of Two Mountains, 1836; Algonquins and Nipissings of Lake of Two Mountains, 1835; Ducharme, 1834; Givins, 1835; Hughes, 1836a; 1836b; Hughes, 1838a.

55-6). In a report on this subject in 1839, Justice J.B. Macauley would offer a simplified version of the boundary at the height of land: he determined 'a line midway between the two Rivers [i.e., the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa]' (Macauley, 1839). Macauley's wider solution was radical and could hardly have been welcome to the Algonquin petitioners: he called for Algonquin relocation out of the region entirely. But he also established an otherwise interesting tie between the costs of any such relocation, and the timber industry. He recommended the relocation costs and annuities for lost land be funded specifically from the charges on timber licenses, on the grounds that the industry's activities rather than direct Crown actions were what had made relocation necessary.

On the ground, the Algonquins also had to contend with mounting resistance amongst their settler leaseholders. In 1838, the Algonquin elders sought written endorsement of their leases from Indian Affairs, as well as administrative support and enforcement of rent collection by the government. Among their grievances, they cited both the resistance of settlers and internal abuses of the rental system by younger Algonquins (Hughes, 1838a; Napier, 1838). In response, James Hughes, Superintendent of Indian Affairs at Montréal, ordered Captain Ducharme, a department translator, to accompany the Algonquins. His instructions were to substitute the existing informal relationships with Crown leases that would be levied to benefit the Algonquins. Hughes suggested relatively low terms of about a shilling per acre per year on short-term leases, with no private sales or commercial logging allowed. Ducharme was to carry Kempt's written order as authorisation (Hughes, 1838c; Hughes, 1838d).

For two years, this collection yielded only some £40 or £50 per year. But this support did show a turning point in policy which, in the absence of a wider settlement of their

grievances, the Algonquins and Nipissings were eager to expand.¹⁰ Paradoxically, addressing Napier in order to expand the arrangements or to forge a final settlement, proved to be the undoing of these arrangements (Hughes, 1839a). In the investigation of the arrangements that followed, their superior, Indian Affairs Secretary D.C. Napier, alleged that he had never been informed about this arrangement, and did not approve.

Cutting Off the Leasing Power

The official credence given to the Mississauga treaty clearly jeopardised Algonquin leases in the lower Ottawa Valley. Still, it did not address the *principle* of Algonquin leasing. In principle, these could simply have been moved upstream, where island-based infrastructural investments were increasingly consequential. But an 1837 executive council ruling in Lower Canada, concerning two petitioners seeking relief from a 99-year Algonquin lease to Kettle Island, closed the door entirely on the existing leases:

The committee, however, conceive that the claims of these, and indeed of all the Indian tribes, in respect of their former territorial possessions, are at the present day to be resolved *into an equitable right to be compensated for the loss of the lands from which in former times they derived their subsistence*, and which may have been taken by Government for purposes of settlement....(qtd. in \Lower Canada. Executive Council, 1839, emphasis added).

This lease was held below the mouth of the Rideau in the Bytown/Hull area, originally under Eleazar Gillson and dating back at least to 1818. The costs for relocation and arrangements to ‘place and maintain them in a condition of at least equal advantage with that which they would have enjoyed in their former state’ came rightly, they argued, from the Imperial government, at least until Indian affairs came under provincial control. But

¹⁰ Algonquin and Nipissing Chiefs and Warriors, 1838; Algonquins and Nipissings, 1838; Account of Timber Cut on Crown Lands in Upper Canada, 1828, qtd. in Reid, 1990, pp. 94-5. The orders issued to Captain Ducharme to accompany the Algonquin chiefs appear twice in the Holmes compilation as documents D-8, 176 and 177 and D-11, 229 and 230. Documents 177 and 229 are identical copies of the same original, not different transcriptions. In the first case, the orders are presented as events of 1830; in the second, as events of 1838 (which more nearly reflects the S-shaped 8's on the document itself). Such errors reflect the speed with which the Holmes report was prepared.

this 'equal advantage' was not a guarantee of the rotation system. The executive council was also committing itself at this time to economic and cultural assimilation. Aboriginal communities beyond current white settlements should be re-organised as compact communities, organised to teach the institution of property (Earl of Gosford, 1837).

Two years later, the Lower Canada executive council targetted the subsequent leasing arrangements directly, all the while holding out the propriety of compensating the *petitioners* from Indian funds or the government's own future rents from Kettle Island, once they had relocated:

As the recommendations of this report tended not only to exclude the Indians from any participation in the management of their affairs, but negatived their right of property at the present day in the lands which they once held as hunting grounds, the committee respectfully suggest that the officers of the Indian Department be instructed to act in accordance with the tenor of the aforesaid report, it appearing to have been overlooked in recent orders given by Colonel Hughes, for leasing the islands in the Ottawa River, and of which the secretary, Colonel Napier, had no knowledge (Lower Canada. Executive Council, 1839, emphasis added; compare Ontario. Attorney-General, 1898, p. 58)

The 1839 decision did have a practical point, for the Crown insisted that it alone purchased First Nations land. If a *99-year* lease could be transferred freely from the original lessor and converted to a grant, that policy could rapidly become meaningless. But other remedies to this loophole were apparently not considered.

The Algonquins and Nipissings, suddenly caught between the annuities of a land settlement and the annual lease rents, now forbidden, frantically sought a revival for the lease arrangement, at least temporarily. In this, they had the support of the local Indian Department agents. Some payments apparently continued, but pending clarification, 'the great majority of the Tenant Squatters' abstained, and eventually sought release from the

terms of their leases . After 1840, the newly united government began to investigate the practice.¹¹ Algonquins' exercise of these rights was ultimately halted.

The Policy Context -- Colonial Devolution, Indian Dispossession, and Capitalist Development

Along with its restriction to islands in the Ottawa, the context of the Hughes/Ducharme initiative must be explained. First, the Imperial government was already trying to reduce colonial costs in the 1820s, and total diplomatic gifts to First Nations alone totalled some £90 to 100 thousand at the turn of the nineteenth century (McNab, 1999d, p. 51). To the new middle-class electors of 1830s England, these commitments and the principles underlying them were inexplicable. (See below, Canada. Indian Affairs, 1845, p. 9; Earl of Gosford, 1837b.)

Second, the Algonquin leases were being discussed against the backdrop of a new settlement policy directly inspired by Wakefield's colonization policy. In general, Wakefield argued that Imperial colonies were starved of capitalist investment because they offered land cheaply, and thereby starved local labour markets of waged labour. His policy sought to raise the price of colonial land grants to settlers, in order to keep a larger portion of poor settlers off the land longer, and therefore available for employment by larger farmers and other nascent capitalist investors. Wakefield was a contemporary Upper Canadian politician at the time, and in keeping with this new orientation, free land grants were ended in 1827 .

In the early decades of Ottawa Valley settlement, ready access to timber provided a second mechanism for new immigrants to maintain marginal farms and thereby avoid full

¹¹ Author Unknown, 1849; Buchanan, 1849; Hughes, 1838d; Hughes, 1839b; Nipissing and Algonquin Tribes, 1840; Hughes, 1840; Murdoch, 1841.

proletarianisation. For all its risks, the earliest logging required little capital investment, *relative to other industrial activities in the Imperial market*. As Harvey's discussion of Marx suggests, relatively labour-intensive sectors provide a real basis for levying an absolute rent on the lands and resources involved. This is as true of timbering as it would be for the agriculture that Marx discussed. Consequently, in the early decades of the timber trade, absolute rents were probably available to be captured through this relatively labour-intensive industry. (Compare Hamilton, [1820] 1990, pp. 84-5.) Beyond the fact that the actual terms of real access to timber were such that petty commodity producers whittled away the potential profit rates of large, capitalist operations with heavier investments, it is therefore possible that absolute rents from early timber activities underpinned wages in the early lumber camps. By the 'teens and 'twenties, these wage rates were certainly reported to be outcompeting the rates that agricultural employers could afford.¹² And while much of these trees simply went up in flames on-site, some of them were also brought to market. Contractors paid to clear land were therefore also being paid for the value of the timber at market.

It is unclear just how and whether First Nations were to fit into a Wakefieldian policy of proletarianization through hikes to land prices. Repeated calls to relocate the Algonquins upstream suggest that they were not considered relevant on this point. But Napier suggested that the Algonquin youth could and should be proletarianized. Their re-education as an agricultural labour force would rapidly render 'them valuable as Subjects and Settlers at a trifling expense to the Public' (Napier, 1829). Significantly, the continuation of diplomatic gifts from the Crown struck him much as Wakefield viewed free land: as barriers to a recalcitrant hunting and gathering population joining capitalist 'civilization'.

¹² Pinhey, [1821] 1990, pp. 89-91; compare Cronon, 1991, pp. 148-51; Radforth, 1987.

Napier's subordinates pointed in a contrary direction on the lease issue. This seemed to open up another potential role for the Algonquins in a Wakefieldian order, incompatible with their proletarianization. But their vision was quite in keeping with the aristocratic and military sensibilities of these ex-servicemen, still under orders from the military services of the Crown. By treating the Algonquins as landowners, or even to enforce their rights in unceded land, could have contributed to a Wakefieldian policy. It would place a social force at the outer limits of the total agricultural land stock that had an interest in driving up the marginal price of land. This future could be reconciled with the Algonquins continuing their hunting/trapping practices, and the rents could even spare the government the direct costs of relocation.

The Algonquin position was therefore ambiguous, as befitted their difficult position and their distinct interests in their summer base and in their wintering grounds. On the one hand, their leasing arrangements with squatters probably owed their longevity to the colonial authorities' long-standing inability to enforce policy. On the other, this de facto anarchy both before and during the Shiners' War also left extra room for the sexual assault and murder of Algonquins (*Bathurst Courier*, [1835] 1990, pp. 51-3; Brown, 1968, pp. 2a, 8).

Documents from the 1837 rebellions show that the rebels sometimes mentioned aboriginal equality among their goals, but for the Algonquins, most settlers, the timber industry, and even the unelected governments were all taking advantage of them (Creighton, 1956, p. 277; Ryerson, 1973, pp. 55, 65, 71-5, 77). Much like the English-speaking Tories of Montréal and of the Ottawa Valley, leading Algonquins were therefore ferociously loyal to the Crown. This connection had a concrete historical basis: in the War of 1812-14, they had fought beside some of the men who now formed the Ottawa Valley 'gentility' and indeed their own Indian Agents. The Algonquins protested their allegiance to the Crown, though

characteristically on their own terms. (Ironically, the Algonquins also had grievances against the Sulpician seigneurs at Oka that not only resembled the concerns of Lower Canadian reformers, but also the mounting resistance of their own leaseholders.) For precisely these reasons, the Algonquins must have been to some leaseholders upstream, symbols of an unjust old régime, indeed, one of the régime's easiest targets, as general feelings rose against the privileges of land-owning interests.

Other Resistance to Algonquin Rents: Large-Scale Investment and Capitalism in the 1830s

If squatters and workers had reasons to resist their Algonquin leases, thus contributing to the leasing enforcement arrangements in 1837-8, the transformations afoot in the timber industry ensured that timber operators, too, would be led to question their Algonquin island leases. By 1829, some such operations were leaseholders from the Algonquins, and some of these, such as Alexander Henderson, expressed an interest in converting to a Crown grant. Of course, this would allow him to develop the land. Despite Henderson's confidence and impatience 'as the season for operations is now arrived', officials balked at his application. Their hesitation involved the Crown differences with the Algonquins over title, but also intercolonial jurisdiction and possible use by the Rideau Canal.¹³

As timber operations assumed a more capitalist form, one would expect a process of capital-intensification, including a degree of investment in fixed capital and the soil itself. That should have meant that potential monopoly and differential rents would become relatively important elements in the regulatory régime, and absolute rents decreasingly so (Compare Copithorne, 1979; Copithorne et al., 1985.) But effective differential rent diversions generally were not instituted, and because the intergenerational character of

¹³ Yorke, 1829a; Yorke, 1829b; Henderson, 1838; Hessel, 1993, p. 70; Lower Canada. Executive Council, 1839; Lower Canada. Surveyor General's Office, 1829; Nipissing and Algonquin Tribes, 1840.

investments in second growth forests reduced interest in them, many of the available rents were captured instead within the industry itself.

Harvey warns us of the negative consequences of ineffective differential rent charging. Investments would be expected to go in several undesirable directions. In particular, it could concentrate investments on the 'richest soils'. In this industry, that meant the ever-retreating, previously uncut forestlands, or in transportation investments that ensured access to them. And indeed, with the waterslides and chutes, the 'war with the wilderness' entered a new phase: whole cribs of square timber could now negotiate the host of falls and rapids that had hitherto been indomitable; and already-viable trips now took far less time. The Algonquins' island leasing had been a relatively harmless practice for an industry primarily concerned with easy access to timberlands on the mainland. But on islands, slides as well as secondary processing were often easiest to construct. Now Algonquin leasing began to conflict with these very precise investment needs, and islands near Bytown and Hull were now at the site of a critical bottleneck.

Now the entrepreneurs who made such improvements could levy their own 'passage taxes' in the form of slide and chute tolls. Indeed, many investors began to go further, and demand monopoly cutting rights for such improvements. The 1832 Gatineau privilege has already been mentioned.¹⁴ Later in 1853, such a monopoly right was ruled a general legal principle in Upper Canada/Canada West, but then only for rivers which could not have floated timber without such investments (Risk, 1977, p. 220). Instead, general floating rights at high water periods (subject to reasonable tolls) were guaranteed explicitly in 1849, and government also began to buy up existing slides or build new ones to ensure general

¹⁴ Gillis and Roach, 1986, p. 19; Lower Canada. Office of Crown Lands. Department of Wood and Forests, 1832; Reid, 1990, p. lii; Upper Canada. Executive Council, 1840.

access, again subject to tolls. The Algonquins' ability to participate in tolls, private monopolies, or government purchases was in the process of being shut down.

Violence and Algonquin Disruption from the Shiners' War to Imperial Free Trade

Goaded by racist Anglican clergy, the Orange Order, and by firewater, Protestants brawled with the Irish-Catholic 'Shiners' over religion; Irish-Catholic 'Shiners' brawled with the francophone Catholics, though perhaps less than previously thought. The ongoing fracas dragged into the mid-1840s, but was ultimately put down by local militia, with a weak state organising a counter-mobilisation. Having created an inadequate presence in the Valley apart from the timber license offices at Bytown, the state ordered timber licensees themselves to crack down on the mobs on penalty of losing their licenses.¹⁵ Earlier violent tendencies certainly continued in the region. Church burnings are recorded as late as 1856 (Gaffield, 1994, p. 219), and First Nations remained targets of violence. But the Bytown notables of 1836 worked hard to reduce the jacqueries and petty social violence that endangered profit. The Anglo-American timber barons, law courts, and merchants began to act concertedly on workplace discipline, labour blacklists, and river improvements.¹⁶ By 1840, a united province reduced cross-river stumpage evasion, or other evasions of the law. By 1854 Bytown/Ottawa was safe enough to become the new capital.¹⁷

At the same time, timber production increased, peaking only in the 1860s. These two inverse trends should be viewed in relationship, and not merely because capitalists, like churches and benevolent societies, contributed to the Valley's institutional 'maturation' or respectability. Instead, the target of violence was shifting, though its overall force was not

¹⁵ Bleasdale, 1982; Brown, 1968, pp. 10-11; Gaffield, 1994; Mackay, 1985, p. 20; Reid, 1990, pp. xxxvii, 42, 45-6, 52-7, 102, 133, 146.

¹⁶ *Bathurst Courier*, [1835] 1990; Brown, 1968, pp. 8, 10-11; Buchanan and Christie, [1836] 1990; Gellie et al., [1836] 1990; Kennedy, 1970, p. 160.

¹⁷ Compare Authors Unknown, [1837] 1990; Bell, [1837] 1990; Stevenson, [1843] 1990; Gaffield, 1994, pp. 221-249.

diminishing (Mackay, 1985, p. 21). But this was a violence with which business could grow. Aylen, with little comment from his fellow timber owners, could shift after the Shiner's War to the gentler sport of stumpage evasion, and ultimately join the genteel racket of mid-century Ottawa's timber aristocracy (Gaffield, 1994, p. 220).

One sign that the violence had shifted rather than diminished was the increasingly confused Algonquin responses to the accelerating depredations. Initially, their recorded grasp of the implications of responsible government was sure, royalist, anti-democratic, and anti-localist. Too late, and in anger, they took to petitioning the assemblies directly, shortly after full responsible government began:

[But the Algonquin and Nipissing petitioners] cannot but represent energetically to your honourable House that neither the government nor any other body or authority, nor the mass of the European inhabitants, have done anything to help come to pass for them the awaited advantages of the civilized state; that having stripped them in fact of the land which was their inheritance, nothing has been given them in exchange, and that they have often been brought to believe as a result that the principles of religion and humanity that civilized men profess, are not well rooted in their hearts. (Papino et al., 1851)

But gradually, their political formations, always flexible, appeared to descend into turmoil:

One's impression of the period is of nearly continuous change, with movements of people into bands first at one location, then on to another. Bands arose, grew, and divided or disappeared as individuals moved about. In some favoured locations large permanent bands arose like that of River Desert. While it is difficult to describe process, an analogy might be seen in wind-formed dunes that arise, disappear, and reform from the same body of sand (Black, 1989, p. 67)

Another indication of the redirection of violence is the industry's response to mounting evidence that standing merchantable timber had its limits. Economic rents in standing timber grew, and the theft of timber from the latter ceased to be a matter of indifference. But licensees on Crown land had no common-law protection against trespass, and the surveys were notoriously liable to error (Risk, 1977, p. 216). Under these circumstances,

endemic violence grew in the forest. Employers protected their timber by hiring more bushworkers, intended less for cutting than for asserting timber control against other operations (Allen, [1841] 1990; *Bytown Packet*, [1846] 1990; Lambert and Pross, 1967, p. 127; compare McCalla, 1993, p. 53; Walker, [1843] 1990).

After 1837, it was a predominantly capitalist business, led by considerable but still limited fortunes, and vulnerable to the abrupt in- and outflow of much smaller producers, skimming off superprofits from boom times. It was a business of owner-operators like John Egan. Egan was an innovative investor in river improvements on the Upper Ottawa, founder of Eganville southeast of Golden Lake on the Bonnechère, a man ultimately ruined by the subjection of his extensive overhead to the volatility of the business (Reid, 1990, pp. lviii-lxxi).

But it was an industry which in 1837, like the Algonquins themselves, was still reliant on the Crown in a liberalising age, a Tory business haunted by the specter of free trade, responsible government, and global competition. Its revenues rested on Imperial monopoly, and advantages accorded by the Crown like the Gatineau privilege. In return, timber revenues strengthened the Crown (Southworth and White, [1899] 1957, pp. 181-86, 189). Its cause had been Imperial protection against Baltic competition and against the local 'mob'. But this industry was about to face a further transformation at the hands of colonial masters far more liberal than itself. With the end of Imperial preference and the advent of responsible government, the Ottawa Valley timber trade would undergo a final wave of intense sectarian, political, and inter-class violence before fully committing its full energies to the 'war against the wilderness'.

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