ISSN: 1753-5794 (online)

Canadians' Consternation: Irish Immigration, Competition, and Canada's Relationship to the United States and the British Empire in the 1840s

Jonathan Keljik
George Washington University*

British consul T. C. Grattan sat in Boston at the end of January 1843 hoping that the United States would disappoint Irish immigrants. Grattan believed that if the Irish tried their luck in the United States first, they would eventually settle in Canada. Irish immigrants would go to Canada, Grattan reasoned, because "the Irish peasantry look to this country [the United States] as their land of promise, and nothing is so likely to make them satisfied with a final settlement in the British North American colonies as having tried and been disappointed in the United States."[1] He wanted Irish immigrants to fail in the American republic and turn to Canada because of a competition for immigrant labour and population between Canada and the United States in the 1840s.

Later in the decade Canadians had more to worry about than a competition to attract immigrants. In June 1847, Montreal mayor John E. Mills beseeched Queen Victoria to stop destitute and sickly Irish people from coming to Canada. As thousands of dying immigrants overran Montreal and filled its poorhouses and hospitals, Mills reported that Canadians could not "exclude the ship-loads of famishing beings arriving in search of food and shelter," as the United States had done.[2] Circumstances that year made Canadians like Mills understand the disadvantages that not only proximity to the United States, but also inclusion in the British Empire, could cause for Canada. Mills was earnest in his duty to help the newcomers in Montreal and died in November 1847 from typhus contracted by tending to sick Irish immigrants.[3]

Mills was one of thousands to die in Canada in the catastrophic year of 1847, as Canadians found that the problems caused by poor and diseased Irish immigrants overshadowed the competition for immigrant labour with the United States from earlier in the 1840s. In 1847

* Jonathan Keljik is a Ph.D. candidate in History at the George Washington University in Washington, D.C. His dissertation explores Irish-American children's experiences with ethnic identity in the nineteenth century. It is tentatively titled "Between Irish and American: Irish Ethnic Children and the Evolution of Irish America." He can be contacted at jkeljik@gwmail.gwu.edu.

ISSN: 1753-5794 (online)

however, American and British policies caused more Irish immigrants than usual to travel to Canada, where the Irish could not easily be excluded, as they were subjects of the British Empire. The sickly Irish immigrants - many of whom were attempting to reach the United States - drained Canada's finances, threatened its populace with disease and frustrated the Canadians who had provided for them by leaving Canada when they had the opportunity. Canada urged the British government to stop dumping paupers in Canada; Whitehall responded by altering the Passenger Acts, which changed the flow of immigrants to the United States. The British Passenger Acts were parliamentary laws which regulated the transportation of emigrants from the British Isles, dictating such details as the cleanliness and food aboard ships and the amount of space required for each passenger. If shipping companies could not cram as many emigrants into their ships because of space restrictions, they raised their prices to maintain a profit. The increased price meant that the routes to Canada and the United States were more comparable in price, so immigrants chose to sail directly to their desired destination: the United States. Canadians did not want to cut immigration so drastically however, and lamented that they continued losing the contest for immigrants. Throughout the 1840s, Canadians blamed the attractions of the United States for many of their difficulties in attracting immigrants to settle in Canada, with Canadians additionally finding fault with the British Empire for the negative consequences of Irish pauper immigration in 1847. These factors caused them to push the British government for further immigration regulation and resulted in a majority of Irish immigrants choosing direct travel to the United States and Canadians again losing the immigration competition with the United States.

While the historiography of Irish immigration to Canada addresses re-emigration to the United States, no author has traced the development of Canadian attitudes to Irish immigration, empire, and the United States in the 1840s. Scholars such as Pádraic Ó Laighin, James Whalen, Donald McKay, and Cecil Houston and William Smyth all contribute insights regarding the importance of Canada as a transfer point to the United States, but their works do not analyse how Canadians understood their country's links with the United States through the issue of immigration.[4] William Spray and Gerard Moran address the ways in which the United States affected immigration to Canada and the anger that Canadians felt toward their government for the immigration of 1847, but Spray does not explain his points in terms of competition, or Canada's relationship with the United States. Although Moran presents sound arguments about

ISSN: 1753-5794 (online)

the various parties that Canadians blamed for the immigrant influx of 1847, he does not take a wider view of the 1840s to see the continuity of immigration competition.[5]

In histories of Canada before confederation, many of these scholars designate the provinces eventually united as the dominion of Canada as 'Canada,' although New Brunswick, for example, was not part of Canada until 1867. Following this precedent, this essay uses the term Canada to include all the provinces that became the modern country of Canada, though it is important to recognize that modern Canada was, in the 1840s, comprised of separate colonies in British North America. Many of the government officials who dealt with immigration in the 1840s were not born in Canada, but this essay designates members of the imperial government who served and resided in Canada as 'Canadians.' Of the prominent imperial government officials considered by this article, only Moses H. Perley, emigration agent at Saint John, was born in British North America. Though Alexander C. Buchanan, chief emigration agent at Quebec for the imperial government, was born in County Tyrone, Ireland, he likely shared a concern for the welfare of the people of Canada with representatives of local government and Canadian newspaper editors and writers. When examining Canadians' conceptions of immigration, the United States and the British Empire, this article includes New Brunswick as part of Canada and refers to those who lived and worked in British North America as 'Canadian.'

Due to a competition with the United States for cheap labour and an increase in the settler population, the British government encouraged immigrants to settle in Canada. They hoped to increase the colony's success and maintain the strength of the British Empire.[6] Demonstrating the British government's goals, Lord Monteagle, a Member of Parliament, remarked in 1847 that parliament should "contribute to make the colonies [in Canada] as attractive to the emigrant as the U. States."[7] Canadians consequently tried to deter Irish immigrants from going to the United States and hoped that the Irish would choose Canada instead. Alexander Buchanan believed he had proof that conditions in the American republic were not as wonderful as immigrants imagined, so in 1841 he publicised an address by the Irish Emigrant Society of New York. The address warned that many Irish immigrants did not find success in the United States and that life was little better in New York than in Ireland.[8] Buchanan believed that the report would convince Irish emigrants to forego their adventure in "a foreign state" and stay within the British Empire. Irish immigrants in Canada, he hoped, would contribute to "the prosperity and glory of a colony" which would "attain the highest destinies under the fostering care of Great Britain."[9] Buchanan

ISSN: 1753-5794 (online)

believed that convincing Irish immigrants that life was better in Canada than in the United States would attract them to settle in Canada, where they would benefit not only the colony, but add to the British Empire's commercial power in North America. Canadian officials' support of competition with the United States compelled them to find ways to counteract its allure and make immigration to Canada attractive and easy.

The competition also meant that Canadian government officials searched for methods to draw settlers from the United States. The Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick, William M. G. Colebrooke, hoped that the immigrants who had gone over to the United States could be "attracted [back] to Canada by the public employment held out to them in this quarter."[10] In the same year, Lord Stanley, British Colonial Secretary, initially supported a plan by Charles Franks, the head of a land sales company, to set up a British agent in New York to encourage imperial subjects to settle in Canada. Franks wrote that, for immigrants in Canada "little is necessary to secure for them a high degree of prosperity" and more settlers would be "a vast addition to British power in North America."[11] Franks wanted to sell land, but knew that the British and Canadian governments wanted immigrants to increase the industry and market for British manufactures, thereby maintaining Canada's competitiveness with the United States.

To the dismay of Canadian emigration agents and the British government, many of the Irish who landed in Canada did not stay in Canada. Although officials attempted to keep exact counts, most of them could not be sure how many people Canada was losing to the United States. Buchanan thought that 7,000 immigrants left Canada East (Quebec) and Canada West (Ontario) in 1846, but could not accurately count the number who went "from Canada to the United States along our extensive frontier."[12] In New Brunswick in the same year, 4,500 Irish immigrants, almost half of that year's arrivals, went to the United States soon after arriving in the colony.[13] Because there were no checks at most border points, estimates were the best that emigration agents could give for American departures, and the lack of exact data was almost as frustrating as the inability to retain Canada's immigrant population.

Canada had been steadily gaining emigrants from Ireland in the 1840s, but in 1847 as a result of the famine, the number of Irish people wishing to leave overwhelmed the emigration system. After a fungus that made the potato inedible appeared in Ireland in 1845, the Irish peasantry began to starve. About one million Irish people died from starvation and disease and another million or more emigrated.[14] The worst impact of Irish immigration hit Grosse Isle at

ISSN: 1753-5794 (online)

Quebec and Partridge Island at Saint John during the summer of 1847, but the immigrants' malady touched places across Canada and the United States. Many immigrants carried typhus, which was spread by lice and proliferated on board the filthy, overcrowded ships crossing the Atlantic.[15] Before the summer of 1847, there were warnings of an impending catastrophe. In December 1846, Earl Grey, the British Colonial Secretary, warned the Earl of Elgin, the new Governor General of Canada, that because "of the distress that unhappily prevails in Ireland…a very large emigration may be expected," and, keeping finances in mind, added that the government should try to "prevent suffering amongst the emigrants, or any undue pressure upon the provincial resources."[16] The Montreal *Morning Courier* reported in April 1847 that Canadians were "rather alarmed at the prospect of an enormous emigration," and hoped that the "fright may have the effect of inducing" the government to prepare for "the coming storm."[17]

Despite the advice, few planned for the "coming storm." The immigration for the year was more than 100,000 immigrants, consisting of mainly poor Irish.[18] Compared with less than half that number the year before, Canadian authorities were unable to cope with the extent of the immigration and suffered extensive financial and public health distress, causing them to blame both the United States and the British Empire. The quarantine stations at Grosse Isle and Partridge Island were overcrowded and the large number of sick Irish immigrants outpaced anyone's ability to deal with widespread contagious disease and destitution. As the quarantine system was inadequate, immigrants who were healthy stayed with the sick, and some of those with fever made their way to cities like Montreal and Toronto, where hundreds more became infected and many died.[19] Imperial authorities reported that the number of Irish immigrants who died whilst emigrating in 1847 amounted to 20,000 or more.

American passenger ship regulations caused most of the starving Irish to turn to Canada because in February 1847 the U.S. Congress amended the laws governing ships bringing passengers to United States ports, giving passengers more room and raising taxes for landing indigent immigrants.[20] State and municipal legislatures also passed their own acts, including one in Boston that required captains to post a bond of $1,000 for passengers who were likely to become a public charge. These acts discouraged Irish immigrants from going to the United States directly because the route was so expensive. Canadians believed that American policies negatively affected Canada because Canadians now had to care for more sickly and indigent Irish immigrants than usual, most of whom were attempting to reach the United States. A report from

ISSN: 1753-5794 (online)

the Executive Council on Matters of State for Canada blamed the devastating influx of Irish to Canada on the "misery and distress" in Ireland, but at least equally on the "stringent measures adopted by the Government of the United States…for regulating the transportation of indigent immigrants to their ports."[21] The Montreal *Morning Courier* observed that there "could be no doubt that the object of the Congress [of the United States] in passing it [the new passenger act] was to prevent any alarming influx of paupers from Ireland."[22] Instead the paupers ended up in Canada. In the first two weeks of April 1847, 2,938 Irish emigrants departed Cork for Canada, while only 960 went to the United States.[23] Canadians wanted immigrants, but not diseased Irish who could not provide for themselves. Imperial or local governments were unable to affect American laws, but Canadians believed that American laws had a negative impact on them.

The case of the ship *Seraph* is an example of the harmful consequences of U.S. laws for Canadian communities. Coming from Cork, the *Seraph* attempted to land at Boston in July 1847, but the ship "was not even allowed to go up to the quarantine ground, and came to anchor off Partridge Island." The *Seraph* could not land at Boston because the authorities there required the captain to provide $1,000 for each passenger in case they became a public charge. The captain promised to pay for sea passage from Saint John to Boston for those who wished to reach their original destination, but Moses Perley, the emigrant agent at Saint John, feared that "many of them will never travel so far, being greatly debilitated."[24] Perley said that at least forty of the passengers on the *Seraph* and three of the crew had ship's fever. Not only did American laws direct more Irish to Canada, but immigrants too sick to go to their intended destination had to stay in Canada, shifting the responsibility for supporting poor Irish immigrants from Americans to Canadians.

In addition to seaboard ports turning ships away, communities along the border attempted to keep the Irish out. Anthony B. Hawke, the emigrant agent for Canada West, complained in an October report that the Irish were turned back when they tried to cross the border into the United States. The steamboats at Lake Champlain refused to take Irish passengers into the country, "the American authorities at Ogdensburgh [New York] invariably sent them [the Irish] back," and "the ferryman at Lewiston [north of Buffalo] was imprisoned for landing Irish emigrants at that place." Hawke asserted that Americans let other immigrants cross the border but kept the Irish out.[25] On at least one occasion, an entire American community forcibly prevented the Irish from crossing into the United States. After sectarian riots in Woodstock, New Brunswick, between

ISSN: 1753-5794 (online)

Irish Catholics and Protestants from a local Orange Order, the *Woodstock Telegraph* stated that "many of the Roman Catholics had escaped to the United States, but the American inhabitants of Houlton [Maine] had driven them back across the boundary line."[26] American port regulations directed more Irish passengers to Canadian ports, and border cities in such states as New York and Maine made crossing the border difficult for the Irish. Due to its policies toward Irish immigrants in 1847, the American republic was an object of blame for Canadians who dealt with a sharp increase in Irish immigrants who required support from Canada. Receiving more immigrants than the United States did not please Canadians in 1847, because most of these immigrants did not wish to stay in Canada and only strained Canadian charity on their way through the country.

Governments and communities found their finances stretched to the limit in the summer of 1847 and connected some of these issues to the draw of the United States. New Brunswick Lieutenant Governor Colebrooke wrote that "men often proceeded to the United States in search of employment, leaving their destitute families dependent on the charity of the colonists, who from the numbers seeking relief, are enabled to afford them but little aid."[27] Colebrooke objected to the expenses incurred by men depositing wives and children to go to the United States when fathers should have stayed in Canada to provide for their families. In April, the Montreal *Morning Courier* stated that it was "unfair to the inhabitants" of Canada to have to "maintain several thousand persons who have no title to be thus relieved" because they would simply move to the United States once they were well enough.[28] Although using provincial finances to provide for destitute Irish immigrants had never been popular, Canadians in 1847 felt that their own resources could not cover the expenses involved and they needed more financial aid from the home government to help imperial subjects dumped, often only temporarily, on Canada's shores.

Canadians had more than financial reasons to be angry in 1847. Irish immigrants brought a deadly disease that infected communities and alarmed Canadians. The Grand Jury in the Prince Edward District, Canada West, expressed their anger that diseases brought by Irish immigrants had "swept away" many of "the settled inhabitants of this province."[29] Toronto mayor William H. Boulton complained that the "city has already lost some of her best and most valued citizens by the malignant fever introduced by the emigrants."[30] The immigration of 1847 had much direr consequences for Canadians than they experienced before that year. Not only did Irish

ISSN: 1753-5794 (online)

immigration threaten imperial commerce and colonial finances, but it also threatened the lives of Canadians who had to care for the diseased Irish.[31]

Canadians might have been willing to help poor immigrants if they had intended to stay to develop the country, but many Irish immigrants had no such intention. Canadians believed the aid they gave Irish immigrants was a total loss, as this transitory population simply sapped the resources of Canada before moving to the United States. Before the brunt of immigration hit Canada in 1847, the Montreal *Morning Courier* predicted that Irish paupers would come through Canada on their way to the United States, making Canadians care for people who would provide nothing for the country in return. The paper thought that poor Irish would create a "heavy drain on the charities of the people of this city," saying "we probably will have to maintain an immense number of these people during their transit, and pay their traveling expense to boot."[32] Moses Perley later complained that although many of the immigrants who landed at Saint John left immediately for the United States, "a large number of those who remain have become a public charge, from their inability to work, and utter destitution."[33] At the same time, the *Morning Courier* lamented that "whether the emigrants intend to remain in Canada or merely make the St. Lawrence their road to the U.S., here they will come, and they must be provided for all along the line of their route."[34] In the negative consequences of the immigration of 1847, Canada's contentious relationship with the United States continued to show through, as the attractions of the United States for immigrants furthered the health and financial tribulations that Canadians experienced with immigration in 1847.

Canadians also thought being part of the British Empire had enabled the lowliest immigrants to trouble Canada. The Montreal *Morning Courier* believed that Canadians did not have enough say in British policies. In May 1847, the *Courier* was incensed that British ministers would conceive a plan to send people to Canada without first consulting Canadians, and hoped that the British would "perhaps have the condescension to allow the colonists a voice in a matter so deeply affecting their interests."[35] The Legislative Assembly in Montreal stated that they should, as subjects in the British Empire, welcome fellow imperial subjects, but that the emigration of paupers from Ireland intending to reach the United States would damage the prosperity of the country. It was therefore up to the British Empire to halt it.[36] An editorial in *Le Canadien* asserted that the immigration of 1847 taught Canada a cruel lesson to "take all its own precautions to avoid a recurrence of the sad scenes [Canadians] had witnessed," because the

ISSN: 1753-5794 (online)

British government would not protect Canada.[37] Canadians understood that part of Canada's role in the empire was to receive emigrants from the British Isles, but many wanted a say in who should come.

As the crisis abated, British government and Canadian officials conceded that, because Ireland and Canada were a part of the same empire, there was no simple way to prevent the Irish from entering British North America. Earl Grey admitted that it was "beyond the power" of the government to "prevent the effects of the calamity by which Ireland has been visited from being severely felt in other parts of the British Empire on both sides of the Atlantic."[38] Agents for the Colonial Land and Emigration Office, explaining that the British Government could not control emigration from Ireland to Canada, pointed out that "no system of passports exists in our country," and that it would be impractical that "any of the Queen's subjects having the means of payment in their possession, should be prohibited from passing from one part of Her dominions to another."[39] Before 1847, Canada thought of immigration as a competition with the United States, but by the end of 1847, they realised that their inclusion in the British Empire had rendered it difficult to overcome the threats to colonial finances and the health of its citizens that accepting poor Irish immigrants entailed.

While the United States may have been a source of trouble for Canadian immigration, many Canadians and British officials concluded that, because the U.S. passenger act had largely prevented a comparable disaster in the United States, the empire should emulate American laws. At the end of 1847, agents from the Colonial Land and Emigration Office examined the American passenger law because Canadians thought it was "conducive…to the health of the people," and might prove an "example [that] ought to be followed."[40] *Le Canadien* argued that Canada should have a right to protect its citizens from disease and suffering, asking "must we not immediately pass a law by which we would force, like the United States, captains or ships' owners to give insurance that they [the immigrants] will not be public charges for at least a year?"[41] Though the laws of the United States had presented difficulties for Canadians in 1847, these laws could also inspire Canadians looking for remedies for their immigration system.

Canadians successfully pushed parliament to amend the passenger act in late 1847, imposing stiffer penalties on ships for quarantine measures and raising taxes for passenger fees. Although the price for an adult passage was only five shillings higher than in 1847, the price for an entire family's passage was now doubled.[42] Before the law went into effect, Earl Grey pointed

out to the Earl of Elgin that "if the Canadian-law is rendered much more stringent than that of the other British provinces and of the United States, its tendency will be to divert the stream of passengers to those destinations and to stop emigration into Canada, and thus materially to check the general trade of the province."[43]

Grey was right. The new passenger act did more than Canadians or the imperial government intended and dissuaded many immigrants from coming to Canada. Buchanan reported from Quebec that the number of immigrants arriving in 1848 was reduced because the passenger act's "terms were interpreted in a more severe sense than was intended," and he feared continued "misinterpretation to the same hurtful result."[44] The Committee of Executive Council on Matters of State communicated to the Earl of Elgin in January 1849 that the increased tax for passengers in Canada had "led to the erroneous opinion that there is a desire on the part of the Canadian Legislature to discourage immigration."[45] Canadian and British officials had wanted to halt pauper immigration to Canada, not cut off all immigration. But they realised too late that increasing the cost of the trip to Canada would mean fewer immigrants choosing the route to British North America.

After the new passenger acts went into effect, emigration officials noticed that the emigrants departing Ireland were almost all headed to the United States. Charles Friend, an inspecting officer for the Royal Navy, reported from his post at Cobh, Ireland in 1849 that although there was "every prospect of a large emigration to the United States this season, that to the North American Colonies will be very small. Indeed, there is no intention at present to charter any vessels for them." He added that the "heavy tax on emigrants seems quite to have driven emigration to the United States."[46] Canadians learned with dismay that if the passage to Canada was not cheaper than to the United States, Canada again lost the immigration competition to the United States.

The data below illustrates the decline in Irish immigration to Canada after 1847. The first two columns show the number of departures from the United Kingdom, including both Great Britain and Ireland, to the United States and to Canada; Canada encompasses the main ports of entry in New Brunswick and Quebec. The number of emigrant departures for Canada clearly decrease after a peak in 1847. The second two columns illustrate the number of departures from solely Irish ports for the United States and Canada.[47] From 1843 to 1847, the number of departures from ports in Ireland to Canada exceeded the number going to the United States.

ISSN: 1753-5794 (online)

From 1848 to 1851, however, Irish departures for the United States outnumber those for Canada. Although the total number of immigrants from the United Kingdom departing for Canada returned to roughly pre-1847 figures after the peak in Black '47, the number of emigrants going to the United States from the United Kingdom, and from Ireland only, far outpaced the number going to Canada after 1847. Except for 1843, when the numbers were nearly the same, the numbers going to the United States from all United Kingdom ports were higher than those going to Canada. From 1844 to 1847, the ratio between the departures for the United States and Canada was at most two to one. That ratio increased to an average of six and a half to one from 1848 to 1851. The numbers thus illustrate the change in Irish immigration destinations and British immigration destinations after 1847 as a result of the increased price of passage to Canada.[48]

Table 1. Number of Emigrant Departures from All Ports in the United Kingdom and Ports in Ireland for the United States and for Canada, 1843-1851

Year	From the United Kingdom to the United States	From the United Kingdom to Canada	From Ireland to the United States	From Ireland to Canada
1843	28,335	28,518	1,617	9,974
1844	43,660	21,236	2,993	11,490
1845	58,538	30,296	3,708	19,325
1846	82,239	41,932	7,070	31,136
1847	142,154	106,151	24,502	69,360
1848	188,233	27,928	38,483	20,687
1849	219,450	40,536	43,673	26,415
1850	233,078	32,213	31,297	19,615
1851	267,357	41,984	38,418	23,799

An examination of the opinions of Canadians and British officials as they discussed their frustrations with Irish immigration to Canada in the 1840s shows that Canadians conceived of their problems as intertwined with the United States and their colonial status in the British Empire. Canada's status as simply a gateway to the United States aggravated Canadians and forced them to conclude that the American republic drew immigrants away from Canada, adversely affecting Canada's goals for immigration. Canadians from Saint John to Canada West were jealously aware of the pull of the United States for immigrants and the contributions that

ISSN: 1753-5794 (online)

immigrant labour would therefore make to the economy and power of the United States rather than to Canada. 'Black '47,' however, made Canadians consider how being part of the British Empire had forced Canadians to bear the brunt of an influx of diseased Irish paupers. Canadians reacted with anger that the British government had allowed Irish peasants to invade Canada without giving adequate aid to its colony. The imperial government, as well as the usual target of the United States, received the blame for the public health and financial difficulties that Canadians suffered as a result of the Irish immigration of 1847. Canadian reactions to the events of 1847, which led to British amendments to the passenger acts, also provide an explanation for the major shift in the numbers of immigrants to Canada and the United States. With the price of passage to Canada no longer as cheap as it had been in the early 1840s, fewer immigrants chose to pass through Canada, instead deciding to skip the British colonies entirely.

Taking a wider view of the interconnections within North America and investigating how Canadians, and the British government officials who served them, felt about Irish immigration in the 1840s show that immigration to Canada was inextricably tied to the United States. The Canadian border was not simply a crossing point for Canadian immigrants. The border was an important place of exchange for many groups, including the Irish in the nineteenth century. The border was also a major impediment to achieving Canada's immigration goals. Judging by the views of government officials, businessmen, and newspaper editorials, Canadians saw the advantage of immigrants who could populate their sparsely populated colonies. But Irish immigrants did not want to stay in Canada, mainly because of the lure of better and more lucrative job prospects in the United States and perhaps also to escape the British Empire. Twenty years before confederation, it was also critical for Canadians that they felt they had little autonomy within the Empire. The dramatic events surrounding the immigration to Canada in 'Black '47' are important not only in their own right, but also because they taught Canadians a valuable lesson, forcing many to conclude that they needed to have a greater capacity to decide their own policies. Including Canadian voices from the mid-nineteenth century adds an essential perspective on how a society conceived of the benefits and drawbacks of immigrants for their national welfare, how imperial connections could help or harm a colony, and the issues governments and citizens faced by having an extensive border with a rival country. Though many people give attention to the southern border of the United States, the U.S.-Canada border was important for Canadian and American immigration. Telling the story of Irish immigration to

ISSN: 1753-5794 (online)

Canada without a consideration of Canada's southern neighbour is not telling the complete story, for it was the nearby attractions of the United States that frustrated Canadians in so many ways. The Canadian and British sources demonstrate the intimate ties between the United States and Canada. These sources indicate both the significance of the United States for Canadian immigration history and Canada's critical presence in the story of American immigration.

Endnotes

[1] T. C. Grattan to The Earl of Aberdeen, 28 January 1843, in 'Colonial Lands and Emigration, Correspondence Relative to Emigration, Part I: British North America,' 1843, in *Irish University Press Series of British Parliamentary Papers: Reports, Correspondence, and Other Papers Relating to the Affairs of Canada, 1842-46, Colonies: Canada*, Volume 16 (Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1970), p. 574 (hereafter cited as *BPP: Colonies: Canada*, Vol. 16).

[2] John E. Mills to Her Majesty the Queen, 23 June 1847 in 'Papers Relative to Emigration to the British Provinces in North America and to the Australian Colonies, Part I: British Provinces in North America,' 1847, in *Irish University Press Series of British Parliamentary Papers: Correspondence and Other Papers Relating to Canada and to Immigration in the Provinces, 1847-48, Colonies: Canada*, Volume 17 (Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1969), p. 204 (hereafter cited as *BPP: Colonies: Canada*, Vol. 17).

[3] Marianna O'Gallagher, *Grosse Île: Gateway to Canada, 1832-1937* (Ste. Foy, Québec: Carraig Books, 1984), 54.

[4] Pádraic Ó Laighin, "Grosse-Ile: The Holocaust Revisited," in *The Untold Story: The Irish in Canada, Volume 1*, ed. Robert O'Driscoll and Lorna Reynolds (Toronto: Celtic Arts of Canada, 1988), 92; James M. Whalen, "'Allmost as Bad as Ireland': The Experience of the Irish Famine Immigrant in Canada Saint John, 1847," in *Untold Story*, 163-164; Donald McKay, *Flight from Famine: The Coming of the Irish to Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Inc., 1990), 161, 182; Cecil J. Houston and William J. Smyth, *Irish Emigration and Canadian Settlement: Patterns, Links, and Letters* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 21-28; and Cecil Houston and William Smyth, "The Legacy of Irish Emigration to the Canadas in 1847," in *Fleeing the Famine: North America and Irish Refugees, 1846-1851*, ed. Margaret M. Mulrooney (Westport, Conn.: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 135, 138.

[5] William A. Spray, "Irish Famine Emigrants and the Passage Trade to North America," in *Fleeing the Famine*, 5, 10, 17; and Gerard Moran, *Sending Out Ireland's Poor: Assisted Emigration to North America in the Nineteenth Century* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, Ltd., 2004), 100, 101, 103-107, 115, 122.

[6] Timothy J. Sarbaugh, "The Spirit of Manifest Destiny: The American Government and Famine Ireland, 1845-1849," in *Fleeing the Famine*, 47; and David Dykstra, *The Shifting Balance of Power: American-British Diplomacy in North America, 1842-1848* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, Inc., 1999), xix, xxxiii, xxxiv.

[7] *Cleveland Herald*, 15 July 1847.

[8] Irish Emigrant Society of the City of New York to the people of Ireland, n.d., in 'Emigration-Canada, Despatch from the Governor-General of British North America, Transmitting the Annual Reports of the Agents for Emigration in Canada for 1841,' 1842, in *BPP: Colonies: Canada*, Vol. 16, p. 152-154.

[9] A. C. Buchanan to Sir Charles Bagot, 31 December 1841, in 'Emigration-Canada, Despatch from the Governor-General of British North America, Transmitting the Annual Reports of the Agents for Emigration in Canada for 1841,' 1842, Ibid., Vol. 16, p. 135

[10] Sir William M. G. Colebrooke to Lord Stanley, 27 May 1842, in 'Colonial Lands and Emigration, Part I: British North America, 1843, Ibid., p. 499.

[11] Charles Franks to Lord Stanley, 11 November 1842, in 'Colonial Lands and Emigration, Part I: British North America, 1843, Ibid., p. 452.

[12] A. C. Buchanan to Government Emigration Office, 24 December 1846, in 'Papers Relative to Emigration to the British Provinces in North America,' 1847, in *BPP: Colonies: Canada*, Vol. 17, p. 65; A. C. Buchanan to Earl Cathcart, 24 December 1846, in 'Papers Relative to Emigration to the British Provinces in North America,' 1847, in *BPP: Colonies: Canada*, Vol. 17, p. 55.

[13] Moses H. Perley to William M. G. Colebrooke, 29 December 1846, in 'Papers Relative to Emigration to the British Provinces in North America,' 1847, Ibid., p. 83.

[14] Cormac Ó Gráda, *Black '47 and Beyond: The Great Irish Famine in History, Economy, and Memory* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1999), 38, 39, 41, 43; Kerby Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 280-284. For more on the Irish Famine, see Peter Gray, *Famine Land and Politics: British Government and Irish Society, 1843-1850* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1999); *Fleeing the Famine*, ed. Mulrooney; *The Irish World Wide: History, Heritage, Identity, Volume 6: The Meaning of the Famine*, ed. Patrick O'Sullivan (London: Leicester University Press, 1997); *The Great Famine and the Irish Diaspora in America*, ed. Arthur Gribben (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999).

[15] The scale of the emigration amazed people accustomed to dealing with the emigrant trade from Great Britain. A report from the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners in Liverpool in April 1847 stated that by the spring, "great numbers of ships have sailed for Canada crowded with passengers, and the emigration has been proceeding at a rate never witnessed before." The commissioners went on to say that in one week in April, 5,000 Irish immigrants were cleared from Liverpool alone, and "3,000 of them were cleared out in a single day." Colonial Land and Emigration Office to Earl Grey, 30 April 1847, in 'Seventh General Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners,' 1847, in *Irish University Press Series of British Parliamentary Papers: General Reports of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners with Appendices: Emigration*, Volume 10 (Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1969), p. 6-7 (hereafter cited as *BPP: Emigration*, Vol. 10); Houston and Smyth, *Irish Emigration*, 39.

[16] Early Grey to Earl of Elgin, 31 December 1846, in 'Papers Relative to Emigration to the British Provinces in North America,' 1847, in *BPP: Colonies: Canada*, Vol. 17, p. 47.

[17] *Morning Courier* (Montreal), 24 April 1847.

[18] The death rate for passengers on board ships and in quarantine was often staggering. The *Avon*, which arrived at Grosse Isle from Cork in July, had 247 passengers out of 552 die at sea or in quarantine. The *Virginius* out of Liverpool arrived in mid-August with 159 of her passengers already dead, with another 109 to die in quarantine, out of 476 who began the voyage. André Charbonneau and Doris Drolet-Dubé, *A Register of Deceased Persons at Sea and on Grosse Île in 1847* (Ottawa: Canadian Heritage, 1997), 101, 108; Michael Quigley, "Grosse Île: Canada's Famine Memorial," in *The Great Famine and the Irish Diaspora in America*, 143; Moses H. Perley to Government Emigration Office, Saint John, New Brunswick, 31 December 1847, in 'Papers Relative to Emigration to the British Provinces in North America, and to the Australian Colonies, Part I: British Provinces in North America,' 1847, in *BPP: Colonies: Canada*, Vol. 17, p. 435; A.C. Buchanan to Emigrant Department, Montreal, 31 March 1848, in Papers Relative to Emigration to the British Provinces in North America, and to the Australian Colonies, Part I: British Provinces in North America,' 1847, Ibid., p. 468-469; McKay, *Flight from Famine*, 14; and Whalen, "'Allmost as Bad as Ireland,'" in *Untold Story*, 162.

[19] Moran, *Sending Out Ireland's Poor*, 99-101; Spray, "Irish Famine Emigrants," 9; McKay, *Flight from Famine*, 14, 260, 262, 272; and Tyler Anbinder, "Lord Palmerston and the Irish Famine Emigration," *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (2001), 441-469, 459-460.

[20] *Congressional Globe*, 18 February 1847, 29th Congress, 2nd Session, 446.

[21] Extract from a Report of a Committee of the Executive Council on Matters of State, dated 7th December, 1847, approved by his Excellency the Governor General in Council on the 8th instant, 7 December 1847, in 'Papers Relative to Emigration to the British Provinces in North America, and to the Australian Colonies, Part I: British Provinces in North America,' 1847, in *BPP: Colonies: Canada*, Vol. 17, p. 386.

[22] *Morning Courier*, 20 May 1847.

[23] Colonial Land and Emigration Office to James Stephen, 22 April 1847, in 'Papers Relative to Emigration to the British Provinces in North America, and to the Australian Colonies, Part I: British Provinces in North America,' 1847, in *BPP: Colonies: Canada*, Vol. 17, p. 360.

[24] Moses H. Perley to W. M. G. Colebrooke, 7 July 1847, in 'Papers Relative to Emigration to the British Provinces in North America, and to the Australian Colonies, Part I: British Provinces in North America,' 1847, Ibid., p. 264; W. M. G. Colebrooke to Earl Grey, 30 July 1847, in 'Papers Relative to Emigration to the British Provinces in North America, and to the Australian Colonies, Part I: British Provinces in North America,' 1847, Ibid., p. 279; Moses H. Perley to W. M. G. Colebrooke, 23 July 1847, in 'Papers Relative to Emigration to the British Provinces in North America, and to the Australian Colonies, Part I: British Provinces in North America,' 1847, Ibid., p. 281.

[25] Anthony B. Hawke to the Earl of Elgin, 16 October 1847, in 'Papers Relative to Emigration to the British Provinces in North America, and to the Australian Colonies, Part I: British Provinces in North America,' 1847, Ibid., p. 216.

[26] *Woodstock Telegraph* (New Brunswick), from the *Morning Courier* (Montreal), 30 July 1847. For a more complete account of the 12th of July riots in New Brunswick in the 1840s, see Scott W. See, *Riots in New Brunswick: Orange Nativism and Social Violence in the 1840s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

[27] W. M. G. Colebrooke to Earl Grey, 6 July 1847, in 'Papers Relative to Emigration to the British Provinces in North America, and to the Australian Colonies, Part I: British Provinces in North America,' 1847, in *BPP: Colonies: Canada*, Vol. 17, p. 260.

[28] *Morning Courier*, 24 April 1847.

[29] John Roblin, Foreman: Grand Jury of the Prince Edward District, 9 October 1847, in 'Papers Relative to Emigration to the British Provinces in North America, 1848, in *BPP: Colonies: Canada*, Vol. 17, p. 390.

[30] W H. Boulton to Earl of Elgin, n.d., likely early 1848, in 'Papers Relative to Emigration to the British Provinces in North America, 1848, Ibid., p. 402.

[31] George M. Douglas, the medical superintendent at Grosse Isle, reported that there were 43 deaths out of the 180 people who contracted fever tending to the sick at Grosse Isle in 1847. He left a note that said, "many of the hospital orderlies, nurses, and cooks, where [were] emigrants who were employed after their convalescence from fever, otherwise the proportion of sick would have been greater, as nearly all those who came down from Quebec and Montreal, to be engaged, contracted fever when at Grosse Isle, or soon after leaving it." G. M. Douglas to Earl of Elgin, 27 December 1847, in 'Papers Relative to the Emigration to the British Provinces in North America,' 1848, Ibid., p. 541.

[32] *Morning Courier*, 15 April 1847.

[33] Moses H. Perley to W. M. G. Colebrooke, 28 July 1847, in 'Papers Relative to Emigration to the British Provinces in North America, and to the Australian Colonies, Part I: British Provinces in North America,' 1847, in *BPP: Colonies: Canada*, Vol. 17, p. 286.

[34] *Morning Courier*, 21 July 1847.

[35] Ibid.,, 1 May 1847.

[36] Allan N. MacNab to The Queen's Most Excellent Majesty, 25 June 1847, in 'Papers Relative to Emigration to the British Provinces in North America, and to the Australian Colonies, Part I: British Provinces in North America,' 1847, in *BPP: Colonies: Canada*, Vol. 17, p. 203.

[37] *Le Canadien* (Quebec), 16 August 1847. Translations from French are my own.

[38] Earl Grey to Earl of Elgin, 1 December 1847, in 'Papers Relative to Emigration to the British Provinces in North America, and to the Australian Colonies, Part I: British Provinces in North America,' 1847, in *BPP: Colonies: Canada*, Vol. 17, p. 224.

[39] T. Frederick Elliot, Chief of Colonial Land and Emigration Office to B. Hawes, 20 November 1847, in 'Papers Relative to Emigration to the British Provinces in North America, and to the Australian Colonies, Part I: British Provinces in North America,' 1847, Ibid., p. 232. Earlier in 1847, an editorial in the *Quebec Gazette* agreed with this opinion, saying, "the whole of the British Empire is, and ought to be, free to British subjects, to go and come and earn an honest livelihood." *Quebec Gazette*, 10 May 1847.

[40] T. Frederick Elliot, Chief of Colonial Land and Emigration Office to B. Hawes, 20 November 1847, in 'Papers Relative to Emigration to the British Provinces in North America, and to the Australian Colonies, Part I: British Provinces in North America,' 1847, in *BPP: Colonies: Canada*, Vol. 17, p. 233.

[41] *Le Canadien*, 5 July 1847.

[42] A.C. Buchanan to Earl of Elgin, 20 December 1848, in 'Papers Relative to Emigration to the British Provinces in North America,' 1848, in *Irish University Press Series of British Parliamentary Papers: Reports, Correspondence, and Other Papers Relating to The Red River Settlement, the Hudson's Bay Company, and Other Affairs in Canada, 1849, Colonies: Canada*, Volume 18 (Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1969), p. 465 (hereafter cited as *BPP: Colonies: Canada*, Vol. 18).

[43] Earl Grey to Earl of Elgin, 6 April 1848, in 'Papers Relative to Emigration to the British Provinces in North America,' 1847, in *BPP: Colonies: Canada*, Vol. 17, p. 408-409.

[44] A. C. Buchanan to Earl of Elgin, 20 December 1848, in 'Papers Relative to Emigration to the British Provinces in North America,' 1849, in *BPP: Colonies: Canada*, Vol. 18, p. 464-465.

[45] Extract from a Report of a Committee of the Honourable the Executive Council on Matters of State, dated 17th January, 1849, approved by his Excellency the Governor-General, in Council on the same day, 17 January 1849, in 'Papers Relative to Emigration to the British Provinces in North America,' 1849, Ibid., p. 479.

[46] Charles Friend, R.N. to Emigration Commissioners, 31 January 1849, in 'Papers Relative to Emigration to the British Provinces in North America,' 1849, Ibid., p. 491.

[47] The data for Canada include the two Canadas (Quebec and Ontario, or Canada East and Canada West) and New Brunswick, which encompass the main immigration ports of entry. Though New Brunswick had separate returns because of its status as a separate colony from the united colonies of Canada East and Canada West, the table combines these numbers into one total under the more generalised heading of 'Canada.' The numbers who landed in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, or Newfoundland, considered separate colonies with separates immigration returns, were nearly all negligible (usually under 100). Furthermore, these numbers indicate immigrant *departures*, not the number who actually landed in North America.

[48] General Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners to Lord Stanley, 2 April 1844, in 'General Reports of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners,' 1844, in *BPP: Emigration*, Vol. 10, p. 28; Fifth General Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners to Lord Stanley, 20 March 1845, in 'Fifth General Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners,' 1845, Ibid., p. 28-29; Sixth General Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners to Lord Stanley, 30 April 1846, in 'Sixth General Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners,' 1846, Ibid., p. 40-41; Seventh General Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners to Earl Grey, 30 April 1847, in 'Seventh General Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners,' 1847, Ibid., p. 36-37; Eighth General Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners to Earl Grey, 17 May 1848, in 'Eighth General Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners,' 1848, Ibid., p. 36-37; Ninth General Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners to Earl Grey, 17 May 1849, in 'Ninth General Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners,' 1849, in *Irish University Press Series of British Parliamentary Papers: General Reports of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners with Appendices: Emigration*, Volume 11 (Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1969), p. 34-35 (hereafter cited as *BPP: Emigration*, Vol. 11); Tenth General Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners to Earl Grey, 3 April 1850, in 'Tenth General Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners,' 1850, Ibid., p. 38-39; Eleventh General Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration

Commissioners to Earl Grey, 2 May 1851, in 'Eleventh General Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners,' 1851, Ibid., p. 34; Twelfth General Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners to Sir John Packington, 6 May 1852, in 'Twelfth General Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners,' 1852, Ibid., p. 78-79.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Ford, P., and G. Ford, series ed. *Irish University Press Series of British Parliamentary Papers: Reports, Correspondence, and Other Papers Relating to the Affairs of Canada, 1842-46, Colonies: Canada*, Volume 16. Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1970.

----------. *Irish University Press Series of British Parliamentary Papers: Correspondence and Other Papers Relating to Canada and to Immigration in the Provinces, 1847-48, Colonies: Canada*, Volume 17. Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1969.

----------. *Irish University Press Series of British Parliamentary Papers: Reports, Correspondence, and Other Papers Relating to The Red River Settlement, the Hudson's Bay Company, and Other Affairs in Canada, 1849, Colonies: Canada*, Volume 18. Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1969.

----------. *Irish University Press Series of British Parliamentary Papers: General Reports of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners with Appendices: Emigration*, Volume 10. Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1969.

--------. *Irish University Press Series of British Parliamentary Papers: General Reports of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners with Appendices: Emigration*, Volume 11. Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1969.

Congressional Globe, 29th Congress, 2nd Session, Feb 18, 1847, accessed at http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lwcg.html on 6 January, 2012.

Cleveland Herald. Cleveland, OH, USA.

Le Canadien. Quebec, QC, Canada.

Morning Courier. Montreal, QC, Canada.

Quebec Gazette. Quebec, QC, Canada.

Secondary Sources

Anbinder, Tyler. "Lord Palmerston and the Irish Famine Emigration." *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 44, No. 2, 2001. 441-469.

Charbonneau, André, and Doris Drolet-Dubé. *A Register of Deceased Persons at Sea and on Grosse Île in 1847*. Ottawa: Canadian Heritage, 1997.

Dykstra, David. *The Shifting Balance of Power: American-British Diplomacy in North America, 1842-1848*. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, Inc., 1999.

Gray, Peter. *Famine Land and Politics: British Government and Irish Society, 1843-1850*. Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1999.

Gribben, Arthur, ed. *The Great Famine and the Irish Diaspora in America*. Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999.

Houston, Cecil J., and William J. Smyth. *Irish Emigration and Canadian Settlement: Patterns, Links, and Letters*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990.

----------. "The Legacy of Irish Emigration to the Canadas in 1847." In *Fleeing the Famine: North America and Irish Refugees, 1846-1851*, edited by Margaret M. Mulrooney. Westport, Conn.: Praeger Publishers, 2003. 133-148.

McKay, Donald. *Flight from Famine: The Coming of the Irish to Canada*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Inc., 1990.

Miller, Kerby. *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Moran, Gerard. *Sending Out Ireland's Poor: Assisted Emigration to North America in the Nineteenth Century*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, Ltd., 2004.

O'Gallagher, Marianna. *Grosse Île: Gateway to Canada, 1832-1937*. Ste. Foy, Québec: Carraig Books, 1984.

Ó Gráda, Cormac. *Black '47 and Beyond: The Great Irish Famine in History, Economy, and Memory*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999.

Ó Laighin, Pádraic. "Grosse-Ile: The Holocaust Revisited." In *The Untold Story: The Irish in Canada, Volume 1*, edited by Robert O'Driscoll and Lorna Reynolds. Toronto: Celtic Arts of Canada, 1988. 75-101.

O'Sullivan, Patrick, ed. *The Irish World Wide: History, Heritage, Identity, Volume 6: The Meaning of the Famine*. London: Leicester University Press, 1997.

Quigley, Michael. "Grosse Île: Canada's Famine Memorial." In *The Great Famine and the Irish Diaspora in America*, edited by Arthur Gribben. Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999. 133-154.

Sarbaugh, Timothy J. "The Spirit of Manifest Destiny: The American Government and Famine Ireland, 1845-1849." In *Fleeing the Famine: North America and Irish Refugees, 1846-1851*, edited by Margaret M. Mulrooney. Westport, Conn.: Praeger Publishers, 2003. 45-58.

Spray, William A. "Irish Famine Emigrants and the Passage Trade to North America." In *Fleeing the Famine: North America and Irish Refugees, 1846-1851*, edited by Margaret M. Mulrooney. Westport, Conn.: Praeger Publishers, 2003. 3-20.

Whalen, James M. "'Allmost as Bad as Ireland': The Experience of the Irish Famine Immigrant in Canada Saint John, 1847," in *The Untold Story: The Irish in Canada, Volume 1*, ed. Robert O'Driscoll and Lorna Reynolds. Toronto: Celtic Arts of Canada, 1988. 155-168.