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A STUDY OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF
LATTER-DAY SAINTS IN UPPER CANADA,
1830-1850

A Thesis

Presented to the
Department of History
Brigham Young University

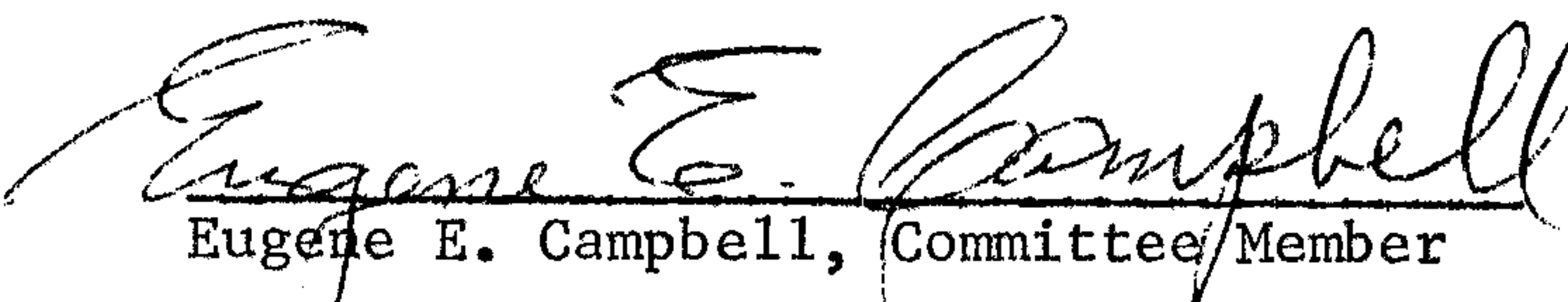
In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Richard E. Bennett

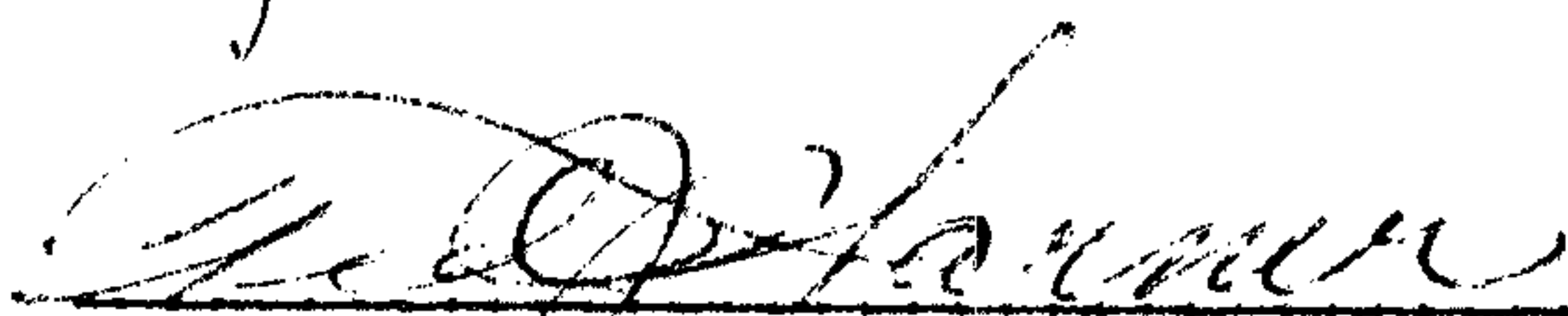
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This thesis by Richard E. Bennett is accepted in its present form by the Department of History of Brigham Young University as satisfying the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.


Marvin S. Hill, Committee Chairman


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CHAPTER I

SETTLING THE CANADIAN FRONTIER AND THE RISE OF RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

Canada had been a French colony since the coming of Jacques Cartier in 1534. For over two centuries it remained little more than a French military and trading post. Fur traders and coureurs de bois abounded as did a network of forts extending from Quebec City and Montreal westward to Fort Frontenac on Lake Ontario and to Fort Duquesne and other areas southwest amidst the Ohio and Missouri River regions.

However, unlike the early English colonies in America, the French settlements failed to attract permanent settlers. The climate of the St. Lawrence was colder, the soil not the best. Furthermore Catholic France did not experience the religious turmoil that racked England in the early seventeenth century and which prompted so many Englishmen to embark for the new world. By the time of the Revolutionary War in 1776 approximately 2,500,000 (primarily of English descent) inhabited the American colonies whereas less than 100,000 Frenchmen were found in Canada, or as it was then called, New France.¹

English explorers like Davis and Hudson and many others had demonstrated a British interest in Canada, while the formation of the

¹Edgar McInnis, Canada-A Political and Social History (New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1947), p. 101.

Hudson's Bay Company also testified to British determination not to be excluded from fur trading profits.

The claims and interests of the two European powers led to inevitable clashes. The British in the U. S. Colonies before the American Revolution sought to prevent the expansion of French military posts throughout the Great Lakes and in the Mississippi River areas. Opposing territorial claims led to recurring warfare which was not settled until the end of the Seven Years' War (1763), at which time the British dispatched a large army under General James Wolfe to Quebec to crush the French once and for all. It is well known history that Marquis de Montcalm, the French commander, lost the battle of the Plains of Abraham in 1759 and Canada fell as a permanent prize to the English.² Nonetheless, the major settlements remained in and around the city of Quebec and Montreal, and continued French.

The first English settlement in Canada did not come until after the start of the American Revolution.

Of the many American colonists who were tory in their leanings and who opposed the colonial insurrection against England, many decided to move north to the vast colony of Quebec where they could remain loyal to the crown. These "United Empire Loyalists" formed the nucleus of future English and American settlement in Canada. Over 30,000 United Empire Loyalists came north of the border during or right after the war. Because of them large pockets of population sprang up in the Maritime areas of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick as well as south of the cities of Quebec and Montreal and also further west on land north of

² John M. Blum et al, The National Experience, 2 vols. 3d ed., (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1963), 1:80.

the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario.³

Because of the steady though undramatic growth in the numbers of new settlers who arrived in Canada, it was decided to split the colony. Lower Canada was the more easterly, French settlement, where the cultural influence of the French and the Roman Catholic Church was dominant. Although the British had conquered the military forces of the French, a large number of French Canadian customs, including religious practices, language, and the system of civil law based upon the Napoleonic code, were tolerated and defended.

Upper Canada was the more westerly English settlement, literally "up" the St. Lawrence River from Montreal, and had become the home for the Loyalists and other English-speaking settlers. The two provinces retained their own separate political structures with their crown-appointed Governors, and elected assemblies all of which were yet ultimately responsible to the British Parliament.

Upper Canada owes most of its early growth to American immigrants. Marcus Lee Hansen and John Bartlett Brebner in their excellent study The Mingling of the Canadian and American Peoples describe in rich detail the American immigration into Canada from 1785 until the War of 1812. By 1812, eight out of every ten persons in the province were of American birth or of American descent. Approximately 25% of that number were Loyalists with their children who settled primarily along the north shore of Lake Ontario and in the Niagara peninsula. Later townships that sprang up north of Lake Erie and along the Thames River were settled in the main by pioneers from Pennsylvania, New Jersey and

³McInnis, Canada, pp. 160-165.

New York. By 1812, approximately 100,000 people were living in the southern areas of the province.⁴

Although the original Loyalists who came to Canada immediately following the Revolutionary War did so in large part because of British loyalties, the succeeding and much larger waves of American settlers were attracted to the Canadian frontier for a variety of other reasons. As the American frontier pushed west across the Appalachians, eager settlers determined to capitalize on large new land tracts and favorable farming opportunities. The argument of cheaper land was used to good advantage in Upper Canada.⁵ Some specific land grants were offered free by Lieutenant Governor Lord Simcoe, to attract the American settler. Many had relatives, United Empire Loyalists, living in Upper Canada and longed to be united with them. For some, a significant factor was the 1791 Constitutional Act which not only politically divided Quebec but more importantly insured the existence of a new province, Upper Canada, that would not be dominated by the French and by the Roman Catholic Church. No longer were many American settlers afraid of such French Catholic influence. Others were attracted by the fact that Indian problems were greatly minimized in that Canadian province. Unlike the United States, the Canadian Indians were much less volatile. Furthermore, although Upper Canada was not yet independent of the British Parliament, many were convinced that they would enjoy most of the same political freedoms that they had grown accustomed

⁴Marcus Lee Hansen and John Bartlett Brebner, The Mingling of the Canadian and American Peoples, a Series of Studies Prepared Under the Direction of the Carnegie Endowment, Vol. 1 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), p. 90.

⁵Ibid., pp. 79-81.

to in the American republic.⁶

An important factor in the American attraction for Canada was its geographical proximity and increasing accessibility. Her internal improvements in roads, steamship and canal transportation brought Canada much closer to many Americans. It was no further from many New England communities than areas in the Ohio region and much closer than many others in the South or West. Boston was much closer to Montreal than it was the frontier. Albany, Rochester, and other northern New York towns were relatively close to Canada.

Even more important than proximity, was the comparative ease in reaching Canada. Some preferred to sail from American coastal ports to new homes in Canada than trudge through unimproved roads or trails or over the Cumberland pass. Those in New England could travel north by boat up the Hudson River or via the Lake Champlain route and on to Lake Ontario in a relatively painless manner. After 1826 some could travel the Erie Canal to Buffalo and there cross the border near Niagara Falls into the western portions of Upper Canada. Those in upstate Ohio or Pennsylvania could sail across Lake Erie with relative ease. Travel by boat was much preferred in a day and age when roads were mud slicks in spring and frozen ridges in winter. Even in winter travellers could cross the frozen lakes and rivers to their new Canadian homes. For years travel by road had been practically intolerable. As one writer explained:

Probably every traveller who came to Canada in the first half of the 19th Century talked or wrote of the curious kinds of roads he found and the acute discomfort of travelling on most of them. Only in winter, when the snow covered ruts and mud and stones had made of the rivers a flat surface, could land travel be comfortable

⁶Ibid., pp. 82-83.

...Yet the winter was the best, as spring was the worst part of the year, with the thaw bringing mud everywhere.⁷

But gradually this situation improved. A growing number of respectable roads appeared, most of them originally parallel to the Lake Ontario shoreline. Perhaps the most important was the Dundas Street, a major trunk line that stretched roughly east and west from the Ottawa River on the east to Niagara on the west with a growing number of feeder roads constantly being added. Other roads, improved and maccadamized, gradually appeared linking Toronto and London, Toronto and Lake Simcoe, (Yonge Street) and many other points.⁸

This improvement in roads was somewhat paralleled by the improvement in canals. Like America of the 1820's Canada shared in the canal building fever. At approximately the same time the Erie Canal was transforming Governor Clinton's dream into a reality, the British were busy building a major canal of their own although primarily for military reasons. Fearful of a possible major frontal attack on Kingston by American forces, the British army built the Rideau Canal connecting Kingston on the lake with Bytown (now Ottawa) on the Ottawa River, some two hundred miles north. The Canal stretched through Leeds and Lanark Counties taking advantage of the many lakes and streams throughout this Bathurst District area. In time this facility not only facilitated commercial shipping (as the St. Lawrence rapids could now be circumvented) but it also provided a new water highway for those settlers who wished to open up this relatively barren though now accessible area

⁷George Parkin De G. T. Glazebrook, A History of Transportation in Canada (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1938), p. 123.

⁸Ibid., p. 133.

of the Canadian frontier.⁹

A second project, the Welland Canal, designed to allow shipping to bypass the unnavigable Niagara River, was only partially completed by 1833 but it successfully opened up all of Lake Erie to eastern shipping and encouraged greater Western Ontario settlement.¹⁰

The improvement of the steamboat contributed to increased Great Lake transportation. By 1817, "over thirty schooners and other smaller vessels had cleared from the ports of York, Kingston and Buffalo within a fortnight." Two large steamboats were on Lake Ontario and others "were building." It was also "expected that there would be one or more steam-propelled vessels on Lake Erie as well."¹¹

Until the War of 1812 the population of Upper Canada remained well below the 100,000 mark. But by 1824, that number had climbed upwards to 150,000.¹² But the greatest growth came immediately following the War. Between 1825 and 1846, in less than a quarter of a century, the population of British North America tripled, arising from 150,000 to 450,000.¹³

Post-war immigration derived from many countries and for many reasons. Those from America, who settled primarily in the western districts, were attracted by the offer of free lands. The Highland

⁹Ibid., pp. 81-83.

¹⁰Gerald M. Craig, Upper Canada - The Formative Years 1784-1841 (London: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1963), p. 157.

¹¹D. G. Creighton, The Commercial Empire of the St. Lawrence 1760-1850 (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1937, p. 193.

¹²McInnis, Canada, p. 201.

¹³Helen I. Cross, British Emigration to British North America (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), p. 185.

Scottish (most responsible for settling the Bathurst District) were seeking to escape conditions in Scotland brought on by the economic revolution. The chief influx from Ireland resulted from the potato famine. The English emigration, overwhelmingly the largest, was basically caused by the crowded urban conditions stemming from the Industrial Revolution and by the agricultural depression following the Napoleonic Wars.¹⁴ The English reached into almost every District and country.

The great bulk of Canadian settlement occurred in areas north of but not far from the St. Lawrence River, on the shores of Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, that were in close proximity to the United States. The following chart, citing 1842 population statistics, described only those districts (a political division that included one or more counties) that bordered on the above mentioned bodies of water. The districts are arranged, with their counties in order from east to west. The total Upper Canada population for 1842 was approximately 500,000.

Districts and Counties

1.	EASTERN	29,893
	1. Stormont	
	2. Dundas	
	3. Glengarry	
2.	JOHNSTOWN	36,768
	1. Leeds	
	2. Grenville	
3.	MIDLAND	38,770
	1. Frontenac	
	2. Lennox	
	3. Addington	
4.	VICTORIA	15,842
	1. Hastings	

¹⁴William Stewart Wallace, A History of the Canadian People (Toronto: Copp Clark Company, Limited, 1930), p. 170.

5.	PRINCE EDWARD	16,000
	1. Prince Edward	
6.	NEWCASTLE	32,033
	1. Northumberland	
	2. Durham	
7.	HOME	58,853
	1. County of York	
	2. City of Toronto	
8.	GORE	31,507
	1. Wentworth	
	2. Halton	
9.	NIAGARA	31,549
	1. Lincoln	
	2. Welland	
10.	TALBOT	9,626
	1. Norfolk	
11.	LONDON	31,350
	1. Middlesex	
12.	WESTERN	27,619
	1. Essex	
	2. Kent	
	TOTAL	359,810 ¹⁵

Thus by the early 1840's a sizeable majority of the Canadian population resided within one to two hundred miles of the states of New York, Ohio, Vermont, and upstate Pennsylvania.

With these recurring injections of peoples from America and the British Isles, Upper Canada witnessed the gradual pushing back of the frontier. Settlers fanned out in an east-west direction and filled in the intervening spaces. The pattern of settlement north of the lakes was very slow in materializing due to rocky terrain and even today has not become pronounced or characteristic. Nevertheless, in areas

¹⁵William H. Smith, Smith's Canadian Gazetteer (Toronto: H & W Rowsell, 1946), pp. 1-226.

immediately north of the lakes, where soil was fertile, settlements flourished. Americans, British, Irish, Scotch mingled together laying the groundwork for a new political, social and religious order.

In 1840 through the Act of Union, Upper and Lower Canada were put under one central governing body although they maintained specific jurisdiction over their internal affairs. At this time they were re-named Canada West and Canada East respectively. Twenty-seven years later, in 1867, these two provinces and two others in the Atlantic Maritimes were joined together to form the confederation known as Canada. At this time, Canada East became Quebec and Canada West assumed its present name of Ontario.¹⁶

The Rise of Religious Pluralism Within The Canadian Settlement

Before the turn of the nineteenth century, Upper Canada was generally Anglican in sentiment. Sectarian conflict was not yet a major issue although the question of the separation of Church and State was ripening into open conflict. Many felt that Anglicanism should predominate and become the legally established church, but there were representatives of many different faiths in the province, so that religious discord was a distinct possibility by 1800.

But the next thirty to forty years radically altered this state of affairs. Whether immigrants came from America, England, Scotland, or elsewhere, a very vital part of their social luggage was their denominational identity and religious commitments.

¹⁶Michael S. Cross, ed., The Frontier Thesis and the Canadas: The Debate on the Impact of the Canadian Environment (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing Company, 1970), p. 5.

The Anglican Church was not prepared for the influx of settlers for it lacked missionary zeal. With emphasis upon aristocracy and orthodoxy, the Anglicans could not invest sufficient effort in missionary work. Anglicanism survived best amidst an urban population. Its clergy catered to the more educated and strongly favored British social mannerisms and habits. None of these characteristics suited it for missionary work on the Canadian frontier.

Anglican clergy required a great amount of schooling at much expense. Few Canadians could afford the journey to English seminaries and the cost of study. And fewer still who finished their studies desired to return to a rectory where the people were relatively poor and few in numbers. Anglican clergy were trained to inherit congregations, not to search after them. Few opted to come to an underdeveloped, rural, democratic, and unknown colony when there were much better, more lucrative opportunities in England.¹⁷

In addition, the Church of England became closely identified with British imperial interests and with the cause of an ecclesiastical establishment and gradually lost a broad base of popular support. The obvious failure of the Anglicans to actively proselyte left an inevitable vacuum for other sects--especially evangelicals--to fill.¹⁸

Haven for the Persecuted

Members of certain religious sects in America saw in Upper Canada refuge from harassment and prejudice. The Pennsylvania

¹⁷Craig, Upper Canada, pp. 169-70.

¹⁸S. D. Clark, "The Sociology of the Frontier Religion," in The Frontier Thesis and the Canadas: The Debate on the Impact of the Canadian Environment, ed. by Michael S. Cross (Toronto: The Copp Clark Publishing Company, 1970), pp. 84-86.

Quakers, suspicioned in America for supposed Tory sympathies and maligned for their refusal to fight during the Revolutionary War, found much to their liking in Upper Canada. No stigma for their refusal to take up arms was placed upon them and in fact Quakers were freed from the usual compulsory military service. Soon Quakers from New York, Vermont and New Jersey settled new communities north of Toronto along Yonge Street.¹⁹ At the turn of the nineteenth century, a large number of German Mennonites came to Canada from eastern Pennsylvania, for many of the same reasons as the Quakers. The county now known as Waterloo was settled by the Mennonites who were the first white settlers in the region. Between 1786 and 1825, many hundreds of Mennonites arrived in the province from Pennsylvania.²⁰ Dunkers also spilled into the same general area.

The Presbyterian and Dutch Reformed Churches made significant inroads into Canada, at least until the War of 1812 at which time a temporary anti-American reaction set in to the detriment of all American evangelical churches. American Presbyterians entered Upper Canada soon after the formation of the province, and settled primarily in the Niagara region. By 1833 they had founded thirteen churches with 1200 members.²¹ American style Presbyterianism eventually conflicted with the more dominant Scottish Brand. These Scottish Presbyterians settled in many of the areas north of the original Loyalist settlements along

¹⁹Hansen, Brebner, Mingling, p. 84. Yonge St. had originally been built as a military route connecting Toronto with Lake Simcoe, 50 miles north.

²⁰Craig, Upper Canada, pp. 46-47.

²¹John Banks, "American Presbyterians in the Niagara Peninsula 1800-1840," Ontario History 57 (September 1965): 135-40.

the St. Lawrence. Their "missionaries won a majority of Presbyterians for the Kirk and imprinted on Canadian Presbyterianism a conservatism that it never lost."²² Hence, counties such as Lanark, Glengarry, Frontenac, Dundas, etc. were heavily populated with the Presbyterians who grew in size and became a powerful voice in opposing Anglican supremacy.

Another group worthy of notice were the Baptists, who settled parts of the Ottawa River Valley. However, divisive forces "frustrated their educational and missionary efforts during the period."²³ Just at the time the Baptists should have been concentrating on meeting the challenge of the Canadian frontier the Regulars and Separates were at odds one with another. The former supported revivals and other spiritual exercises while the latter opposed them. As a result of these and other frictions, the Baptists in Canada were a relatively weak proselyting and social force.

The Roman Catholic Church was also a contributor to the growing matrix of religious pluralism. Although not the force in Upper Canada it was in Lower Canada, the Catholics, made up of English, Irish, and some French, exercised considerable influence. Unlike most other churches, the Catholics tended to gather into isolated frontier areas as a unit with their religious leaders taking a significant part in the resettlement process.

There had been Methodists in the province well before 1790. Some came with the Loyalist multitudes, but were absorbed into the Anglican

²² John S. Moir, "American Influences on Canadian Protestant Churches Before Confederation," Church History 36 (December 1967): 447.

²³ Ibid.

communities. The first concerted and organized effort to proselytize Methodism in Upper Canada occurred in 1790 when William Losee, a one-armed pioneer preacher, crossed the St. Lawrence River on a prospecting tour into the Canadian provinces. According to one account

He was the first regular itinerant to enter the Canadas. . . . The next year he was duly appointed by the New York Conference to Kingston, Canada . . . the next year (1792) there were 165 members and two chapels . . . Thenceforth it made continual progress in the two Canadas.²⁴

Losee concentrated his initial efforts in the Bay of Quinte area establishing the first Methodist Church in Adolphustown in 1792 and the next at Earnestown.²⁵

Others soon joined Losee and gave testimony to spiritual manifestations and heavenly displays of divine favor.²⁶

From 1790 to 1812, Methodism spread up both sides of the St. Lawrence and deep into the Canadian hinterlands, despite growing Anglican opposition.²⁷ Labelled by leading Anglican politicians and Church leaders as "itinerant fanatics" teaching "their obnoxious principles," the Methodists were "viewed with alarm from the earliest times."²⁸

The early activities of the movement centered in present-day

²⁴M. L. Scudder, American Methodism (Hartford, Conn.: S. S. Scranton and Company, 1867), pp. 246-47.

²⁵J. E. Sanderson, The First Century of Methodism in Canada, 2 vols. (Toronto: William Briggs, 1908), 1:215.

²⁶James Porter, A Comprehensive History of Methodism (New York: Jennings and Pye, 1875), p. 310.

²⁷Scudder, American Methodism, pp. 262-63.

²⁸Craig, Upper Canada, p. 165.

Prince Edward County, primarily because of its geographical proximity to upstate New York. Preachers found it most convenient to board a steamer at Sacketts Harbor or at Oswego in New York state and sail across the Lake to Kingston. Others crossed the St. Lawrence at Ogdensburg or at Brockville. The sect also gained strength in western areas of the province especially in the Niagara District. The first Methodist chapel was erected in 1818 in the town of York, later re-named Toronto.²⁹ The success of the Methodists in Upper Canada must be seen as one of the most significant ecclesiastical developments in Canadian Church History. To some extent, this spilling over of American Methodism into Canada was really a by-product of the "second great awakening" in America, a religious revival with its "falling exercises, jerks, camp meetings, noise and confusion."³⁰ But Methodist success also can be attributed to their ability to spread the word in a frontier situation. The Methodist camp meeting and circuit rider were ideal institutions for meeting frontier proselyting demands.

Methodism was phenomenally successful in Canada, raising its membership from a meager 165 in 1792 to 367,000 adherents by 1867, although its membership was divided among various offshoots of the parent sect.³¹ A variety of other sects--Lutherans, Campbellites, and splinter groups from the larger faiths, filtered into Canada in the years before and after the War of 1812.

²⁹Sanderson, The First Century, p. 83.

³⁰Walsh, The Christian Church, p. 137.

³¹J. A. Williams, "Methodism in Canada," The Methodist Quarterly Review 49 (April 1867):221.

By 1825 the Canadian religious scene resembled that in the United States to a considerable extent. There was great variety in religious commitment, and some considerable sectarian conflict. As we shall see an unsettled religious situation was matched by emerging economic and political upheaval.

CHAPTER II

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONFLICT

Upper Canadian political and social conflicts of specific importance to this thesis can be capsulized under three short headings: the struggle for an Established Church: an abortive civil war: and the 1836-37 depression. For the purpose at hand, the political and religious turmoils are discussed together since in fact they were inextricably intertwined.

The Question of Ecclesiastical Establishment

As in many of the original colonies of America, an Established Church in Upper Canada was thought desirable by many British. It was assumed that since the province was a British colony, the Church of England would receive statutory establishment by vote of the British House of Commons. The bill presented to the lower House in 1790 (which eventuated in the aforementioned Constitutional Act of Canada in 1791) was designed to insure that the Canadian colonies would be far less democratic and independent of England than their American counterparts had become. One feature of the act was to call for the creation of a church or rectory "according to the Establishment of the Church of England." Further, to guarantee a loyal and able clergy, the act included a provision that one-seventh of all government land surveyed in the provinces be reserved for "a Protestant Clergy" which land could be sold to support the Church. This statute, obviously designed to insure

the political establishment of a state church, came to be known as the "Clergy Reserves."¹

It should be understood here that establishmentarianism, as it was referred to in Upper Canada, allowed for religious toleration. Yet, though other faiths were permissible, an established church expected to receive governmental revenues and political sanction thereby giving it a most favored and enviable position.

Although the Anglican zealots were firm and adamant in their assertion that this provision called for the establishment of only the Church of England, critics soon were making the point that the act "did not specifically state that the Church of England was to be established in the Canadas"² and that the Church of England was therefore not of the most favored status, and not deserving of the revenues realized from the sale of the Clergy Reserves.³ This eventually developed into a prolonged and fierce battle in Canadian Church history. Opponents of "establishmentarianism" were incessant in their declarations that the wording of the act was indefinite and vague and that the provision for a "Protestant Clergy" did not necessarily exclude all but Anglicans. They continually remonstrated against every attempt of the Anglicans to claim exclusive rights to the Reserves.

However, Lieutenant Governor-General Lord John Graves Simcoe, the crown's personal representative and highest political officer in the province, was an outspoken proponent of the political establishment

¹Craig, Upper Canada, p. 16.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 16.

of the Anglican Church. He called for an Anglican Bishop but was unable to secure one at that time. He implemented extensive land surveys insuring that one-seventh of all measured property was allocated for the support of the Anglican clergy. When, in 1793, he overruled the opposition of the elected assembly and determined that lawful marriages could be performed only by the Anglican ministry, he stirred a loud storm of criticism. Despite his determination Simcoe's efforts and those of his supporters were but "desperate attempts to halt an inevitable trend."⁴ The trend against an established church gained momentum with the immigration of many thousands of American and British settlers who brought with them a multitude of new faiths.

These new churches, represented among a large number of new immigrants, not only posed a threat to the religious dominance of Anglicanism but because of their relatively democratic backgrounds also represented increasing opposition toward what Simcoe and others had desired--a British-patterned social and religious system.

As the members of these denominations multiplied through immigration and conversion throughout the province during the early decades of the nineteenth century, Anglican leaders became increasingly concerned and even fearful, referring to the new brands of religious enthusiasts as "dissenters" and "fanatics." They could not regard the "saddlebag" preachers, particularly of the Methodists and Baptists, as bona fide clergymen and spontaneously labelled such as a "dangerous element," "highly prejudicial to the peace of society."⁵

⁴H. H. Walsh, The Christian Church in Canada (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1956), p. 6.

⁵Craig, Upper Canada, p. 55.

During the 1820's and early 1830's, a "relatively small, tightly-knit group of men" dominated the government of the province under Sir Francis Bondhead and other conservative Lieutenant Governors. These men filled prominent positions in the assemblies and in other administrative and executive positions and were characterized as very Tory, very loyal to the Crown, of high birth and education, and extremely British. As one commentator described them, "They sometimes seemed more British than the King."⁶

This clique of provincial leaders, termed "the Family Compact," favored the Anglican religion and aristocracy. Bishop John Strachan of the Anglican Church epitomized the spirit of the Compact and its determination to preserve the revenues of the Clergy Reserves solely for the Anglican Church. Reformists made opposition to the Clergy Reserves proposal a major part of their political plank on the grounds that religious freedom would be jeopardized and that other faiths should not suffer such discrimination.

By 1831, the Canadian Methodists commenced wide-scale attacks on Bishop Strachan and the Clergy Reserves. In the vanguard of this opposition were the four outspoken Ryerson brothers (George, William, John, and Egerton) who brilliantly and enthusiastically attacked Strachan's position and his counter-charge that Canadian Methodists were really pro-American. Egerton Ryerson, the most popular of all the brothers, had, in 1829, become editor of the newly-founded Christian Guardian, official organ of the Canadian Methodists. Through the pages of the Guardian, Ryerson demanded "a complete separation between church

⁶Ibid., p. 109.

and state,"⁷ argued for voluntary support of clergymen by their adherents, and in general condemned the Anglican aristocracy. William Lyon Mackenzie, famed leader of the reformers or patriots who demanded home rule, greater democracy and a nullification of the Clergy Reserves, quickly sided with Ryerson. In its early years, the Guardian was "widely regarded as a recruit to the ranks of reform"⁸ in the province. However that would prove a false impression as Ryerson was much more concerned with cleansing the "Ecclesiastical Establishment" than furthering broad political reform.

This apparent alliance of the Canadian Methodists under Egerton Ryerson and the reformers under Mackenzie greatly disturbed the British or Wesleyan Methodists in England and in the neighboring province of Lower Canada. They had withdrawn from the upper province in 1820 at the time the Canadian Methodists had successfully divested themselves of any American or British Methodist official connections. However, the "Wesleyans," by 1830 looked with disdain and concern at Ryerson whom they falsely interpreted as being anti-government, anti-British, and in league with Mackenzie and his forces of opposition. The Wesleyans were unquestionably loyal to Britain and were not particularly concerned about the Clergy Reserves question and could not sympathize with Ryerson's separation of church and state issue. By 1832, on request of government leaders, the Wesleyan Methodists came back into the upper province to set things in order.

Although bitter and resentful, John and Egerton Ryerson decided to form a union in 1833 between the Canadian and the Wesleyan

⁷Craig, Upper Canada, p. 177.

⁸Ibid.

Methodists, in order to avoid a most bitter struggle within the Methodist ranks. One of the most insulting aspects of this union, to both Ryerson and many of his former followers, was the British government's insistence to allot a large sum of money to aid the Methodist congregations in Canada. Ryerson accepted this reluctantly.

But, many Canadian Methodists who had been reformers politically were so disconcerted by Ryerson's act of union, that they resolved to set up an independent conference of their own in 1834 calling it the old revived name of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Canada. These Methodists opposed Ryerson on at least three major points: his growing English or Tory connection; his apparent desertion of the Canadian Reform Movement; and his apparent surrender on the issue of Church financing. Says H. H. Walsh, a leading Canadian religious historian, "thus was precipitated an internecine strife on the circuits"⁹ that led to mass dissatisfactions and disaffections. Many splinter groups were formed amidst conflicts and friction between British and Canadian elements. Mackenzie and his reformers broke away from Ryerson, a man they never really understood anyway. For Ryerson, although against the established church concept, was, unlike Mackenzie, enamored with British government and its social order. He wasn't a republican as were many of the reformers and did not view America as any better democratic example. Mackenzie took many Canadian Methodists with him and led the province into some of the most turbulent times in early Canadian history. This religious-political ferment began to reach a climax in 1836 and 1837.

⁹Walsh, The Christian Church, p. 180.

This ongoing conflict between the aristocratic Family Compact factions and the reformers as led by Mackenzie and Robert Baldwin contributed to an anxious restlessness and fear of open rebellion and conflict. That fear was realized in December, 1837, when Mackenzie led an unsuccessful insurrection against the British authorities which has since become known as the "Rebellion of Upper Canada."¹⁰ The revolt was led by reformers who disliked aristocratic rule in a frontier society where democracy and individualism were on the rise. They denounced absentee government and demanded self-rule although falling short of seeking total independence from England. They entertained a predominant religious desire to end the Clergy Reserves and the recurring efforts to establish a state Church.

However, the Rebellion failed and in the aftermath, British authorities pursued, captured, and punished many leaders and sympathizers of the revolt. The latter 1830's were uncomfortable, even dangerous years for those who had sided with the reformist cause.

This political unrest was further aggravated by a rising economic crisis. Canada and the United States went through similar economic cycles in the late 1820's and 1830's. A good harvest in England in 1832 and an economic boom there released capital for investment in America. At the same time there was a spectacular rise in the opium trade to China, accompanied by a decline in the demand for specie, which led to an increase in the supply of specie in the United States. These two developments contributed heavily to the galloping inflation in America. It wasn't long before the Bank of

¹⁰McInnis, Canada, pp. 219-223.

England brought the inflationary spiral to an end. Alarmed at its dwindling reserves and the large amount of credit already extended to America, the Bank stopped the issuance of credit to America. Soon, following suit, American financial institutions vastly cut back on their loans to private capitalists and businessmen in a time of excessive inflation. With the drying up of capital and the uncontrolled inflation, an economic panic or depression set in across America.

Signs of an impending crash were also evident in Canada. The Canadian grain harvest for 1836 was an almost complete failure. Imports dropped. The Upper Canada legislature, without consciously studying the impending financial and banking crises in America or England, plunged recklessly after the cause of "public improvements" pouring large capital expenditures into the Welland Canal Company and the Trent navigation scheme. Bills were approved for new banks as well as for the establishment of loan and trust companies and for the construction of a "Great Western Rail Road."¹¹

With America's impending economic failure, London and Liverpool banking houses, in desperate attempts to avoid collapse, applied "intolerable pressure" upon their debtors in Canada and in the U. S. As a result, the entire North America "passed abruptly into an acute financial panic."¹²

The effects of the depression in Canada were devastating. Loans dried up as banks enforced tight money measures and rigid contraction of credit. During 1837, the government of Upper Canada did not issue

¹¹D. G. Creighton, The Commercial Empire of the St. Lawrence (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1937), p. 309.

¹²Ibid., p. 310.

a single tender for the construction of public works. The gloom and burden of depression affected all classes of people but perhaps not so onerously as the farmers who, in both Canada and the United States, stood to lose all they possessed. Perhaps the Canadian situation in 1837 is best summed up by D. G. Creighton:

And so, in the oppressive atmosphere of rebellion, defeat and political chaos, the year of crisis closed. The country has not been able to endure the grinding stresses imposed upon it; and now at last its breakdown was complete. The finances were in disorder, the public works were suspended, the commerce of the country had dwindled away under the pressure of renewed competition, and the stagnation of the slump. The population, still suffering from the effects of the financial crisis and the depression, was now divided by the rancorous political hatreds of an abortive civil war. Upon the weaknesses inherent in its economy, its political structure, and its social composition, the commercial state had piled the burdens of ambition. Its strength had not sufficed; and it now lay wrecked in moral and material disintegration.¹³

It is little wonder, then, that many people, plagued by the above scourges and discomforts, considered moving elsewhere to improve their worsening situation. According to one authority, America became a haven for many Canadians:

The emigration assumed disturbing proportions. A thousand a week were reported as crossing Niagara River into the state of New York during July 1838: and from Detroit came similar accounts describing the extent of the exodus during that and the succeeding year.¹⁴

As we shall see, to many Canadians the Mormon doctrine of gathering would seem especially appealing during this time of social upheaval. Because of the social and political conflict raging in Upper Canada in the 1830's, the Mormons could not have picked a better time to concentrate on the British province.

¹³Ibid., p. 320.

¹⁴Hansen and Brebner, Mingling, p. 118.

CHAPTER III

MORMONISM AND ITS INITIAL THRUST INTO CANADA

Mormonism entered into Upper Canada shortly after the early frontier had been conquered. It followed the routes of easy access, and in the wake of the Methodists, Quakers, Baptists, Presbyterians and other denominations. It arrived in the province just as the Canadian society was bracing for the social and political turmoil of the 1830's. There were many elements within society and many doctrines and practices within Mormonism that when combined, contributed to the success of the Latter-day Saint proselyting efforts in the province especially between 1832 and 1838. Within a very few years, Mormonism won approximately 2,000 converts through an energetic proselyting attempt in different areas of the province. The purpose of this and ensuing chapters is to describe this activity while discussing the most salient factors contributing to its success.

A Short Glimpse at Mormonism

Mormonism may be said to have started with a young man by the name of Joseph Smith Jr. whose family had moved to Palmyra, Ontario County, in the State of New York in 1815. In the spring of 1820, Joseph Smith proclaimed to have seen God the Father and God the Son in a heavenly vision in a grove not far from the boy's farm house. That single experience propelled Joseph Smith into the life-long role of a Prophet. This early emphasis on revelation was re-emphasized in coming

years as Joseph Smith received other angelic visitations. The best known was that of Moroni, whose series of visits led to the discovery and translation of the Book of Mormon, regarded by Mormons as an ancient American scripture and counterpart to the Bible, a source of new doctrine for the developing American religion. Other manifestations included the restoration of two divine priesthoods by ancient apostles and prophets. Ten years after the "First Vision," the Church of Christ (eventually called The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) was organized near Palmyra, New York on April 6, 1830.

Ardent missionaries spread the message in every direction. A desire to convert the Indian or "Lamanite" led missionaries into Ohio and other western frontiers. Though success with the Indian was meager, a large Mormon community sprang up in Kirtland, Ohio, following the conversion of Sidney Rigdon, a fiery Campbellite preacher. Before too long, Kirtland had become the central gathering place of the movement.

By this time (1831), the basic tenets of the faith had been developed or foreshadowed. Mormonism claimed to be a restored gospel, with authority and spiritual power as in the ancient Christian Church. Its organization was also restored with a Prophet, Apostles, Evangelists, Patriarchs, Seventies, Elders, and other officers becoming the hierarchy of the Church. The extent to which Mormonism was primitivistic in its orientation has been argued by Marvin S. Hill. He indicates that Mormon preachers stressed primitive Gospel principles--a reliance on the Bible, a conviction that established churches had apostatized from divine truth. Mormonism even went further than other advocates of "primitive gospelism" in that it taught that not only was

the Bible a fallible source of information, but that current or modern revelation was an indispensable ingredient to the true Church of Christ.¹

A vital part of the Mormon theology was its claim to divine authority. Mario S. De Pillis refers to religious authority as one of the key ideas in Mormonism. "The Mormons never watered down . . . the right and power to act authoritatively for God. Only the restored Priesthood could save a torn and divided Christianity."² He went on to say that the Book of Mormon with its emphasis on restoration and one true church rooted Mormonism in the idea of divine authority.³ One can readily see how the Mormon emphasis on divine authority could appeal to a people who were searching for certainty in an uncertain society, a people who were longing for a spiritual, divinely perfect government since the present earthly one was so unacceptable and so insufficient.

As a proof of that authority, a great deal of emphasis was placed on the operation of spiritual gifts such as healing the sick, casting out devils, raising the dead, etc. Elmer T. Clark has categorized Mormonism as one of the "perfectionist sects" for the "refugees of the emotionally starved" to whom "experience means feeling. Hence they covet 'blessings', gifts, and outpourings of the Holy Spirit . . . There is the fundamental assumption . . . that God may be directly

¹Marvin S. Hill, "The Role of Christian Primitivism in the Origin and Development of the Mormon Kingdom, 1830-1844" (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 1968), pp. 9-12, 61.

²Mario S. De Pillis, "The Quest for Religious Authority and the Rise of Mormonism," Dialogue 1 (Spring, 1966): 77.

³Ibid., p. 88.

apprehended and that He reveals Himself to man through the feelings."⁴

Undergirding its primitivistic emphasis was the abiding belief that the second coming of Christ was nigh at hand. Before He could return, all the faithful had to be gathered together at one central location initially called the New Jerusalem. The Mormons made efforts to gather in Missouri as well as Kirtland and afterwards in Illinois before finally moving west to Utah. That early Mormon preachers hammered hard upon the theme of gathering is shown by William Mulder.

The gathering was Mormonism's way of channeling what the nineteenth century called the religious affections; it disciplined into action the fervor that in revival faiths was dissipated in an aimless love affair with Christ. Though Mormonism, like other adventist faiths, was a millennial proclamation, a warning that the days were at hand when "kingdoms, governments and thrones are falling" it was also a program to deal with these eventualities . . . The invitation and the promise were as magnetic as the warning . . . The gathering was to be a roll call of Saints without halos, in whom divinity had yet to breed wings-of a people not already saved and sanctified but, one in faith and fellowship, eager to create conditions under which sainthood might be achieved . . .

Gathering came to be regarded the sign of one's faithfulness and the convert who did not feel the pull was considered a queer fish in the gospel net.⁵

While the Church remained in Kirtland, there developed an emphasis on communitarianism. The concept of a United Order or Order of Enoch in which all would pool wealth and resources into one single reservoir to be distributed equitably for the good of the whole was one of the experiments characteristic of the early Mormon movement.

Other important principles included faith, repentance and baptism by immersion for the remission of sin. Mormons held that every

⁴Elmer T. Clark, The Small Sects in America, rev. ed. (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1937), pp. 131 and 221.

⁵William Mulder, "Mormonism's 'Gathering'" An American Doctrine with a Difference, Church History 23 (September 1954): 3 and 5.

man is a free agent, morally accountable for his own sins. Mormons saw man as capable of repentance and good works, and in time of self improvement and ultimately perfection. There were many Mormon ideas that would appeal to those in the Canadian frontier.

Why Canada?

One of the cardinal principles in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was the conviction that the "Gospel" would be preached in every nation. The revelations to Joseph Smith were very clear on this point. He and his fellow laborers were commanded to "lift up your voices and spare not. Call upon the nations to repent, both old and young, both bond and free, saying: 'Prepare yourselves for the great day of the Lord.'"⁶

Nine months later, Joseph Smith claimed to have received another revelation on the same subject stressing the need for the Church to carry the word abroad, to find "the pure in heart" and to gather the people to Zion, the center of the Church.

Send forth the elders of my church unto the nations which are afar off; unto the islands of the sea; send forth unto foreign lands; call upon all nations, first upon the Gentiles, and then upon the Jews.

And behold, and lo, this shall be their cry, and the voice of the Lord unto all people; Go ye forth unto the land of Zion, that the borders of my people may be enlarged, and that her stakes may be strengthened, and that Zion may go forth unto the regions round about.

. . . And this gospel shall be preached unto every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.⁷

Therefore, by divine mandate Mormon missionaries were to preach beyond the border of the United States. Canada's proximity made it an

⁶The Doctrine and Covenants of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1941), Section 43:20.

⁷Ibid., Section 133: 7-9, 37.

early choice of the Mormon elders. The distance from Palmyra, New York to Kingston Upper Canada was only one hundred and twenty-five miles by way of Oswego, New York and across Lake Ontario. From Palmyra to Toronto, via the Lake, was approximately one hundred miles although substantially further by road around the west end of Lake Ontario. From Kirtland, Ohio to Long Point, Upper Canada across Lake Erie was roughly sixty-five miles and from Kirtland to Toronto was approximately one hundred and fifty. In contrast, the overland distance from Palmyra to New York City was over two hundred and seventy; to Boston three hundred and forty, and to Philadelphia almost two hundred and seventy. From Kirtland Ohio, some two hundred and twenty-five miles further west of Palmyra, the distances to these New England centers increased significantly.

One can see why missionaries found Canada more easily accessible: rapidly improving roads and canals, natural winter ice highways across frozen lakes and channels, and in the warmer months steamship routes across Lake Ontario made Canada nearby indeed.

Mormon missionaries entered into Canada in one of four ways, following the established route patterns of the day. First, depending on whether missionaries had visits to make in upstate New York, they could enter Canada by crossing some point on the St. Lawrence River. Brigham Young recorded that in December of 1832 he and his brother Joseph "travelled about six miles on the ice from Gravelly Point to Kingston."⁸ In the Spring of 1833, Brigham Young reached Kingston by circuiting through far northern upstate New York communities to visit

⁸"History of Brigham Young," Millennial Star 25 (July 11, 1863): 439.

Latter-day Saints in those areas before going onto Canada. Wrote Brigham Young regarding one such excursion:

May 15. Went from Watertown to Indian River Falls to Ira Patton. 16. Found Brother David Patton in good spirits . . . 21. Left the place for Ogdensburg . . . went to Prescott that night. 22. Took the steamer 'Great Britain' landed at Kingston and from there to Brother James Lakes . . .⁹

Secondly, Mormon preachers gained access to the province by following a well-travelled land route via Niagara Falls. Joseph Smith first visited Canada in the fall of 1833 by following this route on his way to the Mount Pleasant area.¹⁰ Benjamin F. Johnson said that he and A. W. Babbitt also "went down the lake to Buffalo, visited Niagara Falls, then went to Toronto and visited."¹¹ He returned in much the same way he came.

As a third alternative, they could choose to sail directly from Oswego, New York to Kingston as did Brigham Young, Orson Hyde, and Phineas Young in the summer of 1835. Leaving Kirtland for Canada by ship, these men first sailed to Buffalo on Lake Erie and from Buffalo they travelled overland to Youngstown on Lake Ontario. There they went by boat to Oswego, and from Oswego they "took the Boat 'William Avery' to Kingston." The entire journey, including a one day layover in Oswego, took only four days.¹²

⁹"Journal of Brigham Young," 15-22 May 1833, Brigham Young Papers, Church Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah hereafter referred to as Church Historical Dept.

¹⁰"Journal of Joseph Smith, Jr.," 17 October 1833, Joseph Smith Jr. Papers, Church Historical Dept.

¹¹Benjamin F. Johnson, My Life's Review (Independence, Mo.: Zion's Printing and Publishing Co., 1947), p. 72.

¹²"Journal of Brigham Young," 24-27 June 1835, Brigham Young Papers, Church Historical Dept.

Finally, they could travel first to Sacketts Harbor, New York (north-east of Oswego) and sail from that point to Kingston on the lake as did Wilford Woodruff in 1837.¹³

Travel routes affected the growth of the Church in Canada. Mormon influence tended to be most concentrated in areas on or near well-travelled highways (such as Mt. Pleasant, Brantford, Toronto, etc.) or in or near port cities such as at Kingston, Toronto, and others. Even the major exception to this pattern (the John E. Page missionary harvests northeast of Kingston) was made possible by the Rideau Canal water system. Consequently, the proselyting emphasis was very localized, confined to those areas most easily accessible to Mormon travelers who generally did not have time to waste.

Establishing a Beachhead

The first successful Mormon penetration into Canada came in 1832 and centered in and around the port city of Kingston. Phineas, Joseph, and Brigham Young were the men most responsible for this initial development. All of them had at one time been members of the Reformed Methodist Church. Phineas and Joseph had preached the gospel of Reformed Methodism from 1830 to 1832 in upstate New York and in Canada as well, not far from Kingston.¹⁴

It was during a return trip to Canada in the late summer of 1831 that the two preacher brothers first heard of Mormonism from one Solomon

¹³"Journal of Wilford Woodruff" 6 June 1838, Wilford Woodruff Papers, Church Historical Dept.

¹⁴"Journal of Joseph Young, Sr.," no date, Joseph Young, Sr. Papers, Church Historical Dept. See also

"History of Brigham Young" Millennial Star 27 (May 20, 1865): 311.

¹⁵Ibid.

Chamberlain. (Chamberlain himself had been a Reformed Methodist). Phineas was initially more impressed with the message of the Book of Mormon than was his brother Joseph and consequently tarried longer studying the new faith before catching up with his brother in Canada. Once back in Canada, Phineas resumed his labors but was all the while perplexed by the challenge of trying to "tie Mormonism with Methodism."¹⁵ Commenting on his gradual conversion, Phineas recorded:

We soon reached Earnest Town where we commenced our labor. I tarried some time with my brother [Joseph] trying to preach, but could think of little except the Book of Mormon. . . . I then told him I could not preach and . . . I accordingly started in a few days.¹⁶

While returning home to America, he attended a Methodist Episcopal quarterly meeting at Kingston, all the time enraptured about the new religion. Afterwards, in a downtown Kingston hotel, he met with many of those who had attended the conference, and made his first public discourse on the new faith, likely the first reference to the Latter-day Saints in the old "limestone city."

After all were seated in two large rooms . . . I asked them if any one present had ever read the Book of Mormon? . . . This seemed to take the attention of the whole assembly, consisting of more than one hundred. A gentleman requested me, in behalf of the people present, to give them some account of the book.¹⁷

Phineas stressed the "Golden Bible" and the emphasis it placed on converting the Indians to Christianity, a task which the Methodists in Canada were at that time busily engaged in and for which specific topic the Methodist Kingston conference had been called.

¹⁶"History of Brigham Young," Millennial Star 25 (June 1863): 375.

¹⁷Ibid.

Sometime in January of 1832 both Phineas and Brigham Young left for Kingston to convince their brother Joseph to come home for a season and to join with them in converting to Mormonism. Apparently Brigham exercised much powerful persuasion over Joseph while no further persuasion was needed to convince Phineas. All were baptized in April, 1832. It is significant that within a very few months of their conversion, the Young brothers were back in Canada teaching their new gospel to their old Reformed Methodist friends whom they knew so well.

It is the author's contention that an important reason for the success of the church in this area of Canada was the fact that there existed many similarities between the gospel of Mormonism and that of the Reformed Methodists. For one to transfer his allegiance from one to another did not require widescale abdication of principle or even of major theological philosophy. Like Mormonism, Reformed Methodism was of very recent vintage, having split with the parent Methodist Episcopal Church in Vermont in 1814. Like Mormons, the Reformed Methodists believed that "the true church had apostatized," which in turn demanded a restoration. Unlike the standard Episcopal Methodist Church from which they had broken off, the Reformed Methodists placed much emphasis on faith that worked miracles. They believed in spiritual gifts such as healing the sick, speaking in tongues, casting out devils, etc. Repentance was a cardinal principle and admission into the church came by way of baptism by immersion. Once converted, members were expected to engage in zealous proselyting efforts to spread the new word to the world.¹⁸

¹⁸As to the history of Reformed Methodism in Canada, it came with much the same zeal as did the later Mormons.

"Reformed Methodism was planted in Upper Canada by the Rev.

Had not Mormons adhered to many of these doctrines the Young brothers and others of the Reformed Methodist belief may not have listened to the new gospel. Phineas was immediately attracted to the new faith because of the Book of Mormon, but Joseph Young did not join until he had made a more careful study. Regarding his conversion, he wrote:

Brother Brigham visited me awhile in Canada and reported many things of interest concerning the signs and wonderful miracles (sic) being wrought through the believers in his new faith. I was ripe for receiving something that would feed my mortal cravings . . . I hailed it as my spiritual jubilee.¹⁹

Joseph Young's experience demonstrates that Mormon emphasis on spiritual gifts was crucial to his conversion, as assuredly it was to his two brothers. The missionary zeal of Mormonism fit perfectly well into their previous pattern of missionary labors. For as previously indicated immediately after the Young brothers had been converted, they sought out their old fields of labor, and old acquaintances.

That the affinities between Reformed Methodism and Mormonism helped converts to the new faith is clear from the experience of Phineas Young:

We arrived in Earnest Town at the close of the yearly conference of the Methodist Reformed Church, and attended their quarterly meeting on the Sabbath. The priests had heard that I had become

Messrs. William Lake and E. Baily, some time in 1817 or 1818. Here they soon found faithful co-laborers in the persons of Rev. Messrs. Robert and Daniel Perry. The history of the revival which followed their first labors in this province would be most instructive, affording one of the most interesting instances of the conversion of hardened sinners, found in modern history revivals." Wesley Bailey, "The Reformed Methodist Church," in An Original History of the Religious Denominations at Present Existing in the United States comp. I. Daniel Rupp. Philadelphia published by J. Y. Humphreys 1844 pp. 466-477.

¹⁹"Journal of Joseph Young, Sr.," MSS in Joseph Young Sr., Collection, Church Historical Dept.

a Mormon, and consequently did not know me, although it was not two years since I had preached in the house and attended a conference with the most of them where we then were. At the close of the meeting I begged the privilege of preaching in their meeting-house at five the same evening, which they very reluctantly granted. I had a full house and good liberty, and at the close of the meeting I had more invitations to preach than I could attend to, but I sent seven appointments to different places for the ensuing week.²⁰

Brigham Young records that during his missionary tours in Canada, he would attend Reformed Methodist quarterly meetings.²¹ No doubt such a tactic increased the scope of his contacts among the people and may have even supplied him with some of his very best preaching opportunities.

After contacting a core of sympathetic listeners among the Reformed Methodists, the Mormon missionaries moved out into surrounding areas. In the summer of 1832, Phineas Young in company with three other Mormon preachers, Enos Curtis, Elial Strong, and Eliazer Miller, started out from Kingston and travelled west to Earnestown on what appears to have been the Bay of Quinte circuit.²² Here they reaped their first substantial harvest. Referring to the reception extended

²⁰"History of Brigham Young," Millennial Star 25 (June 1863):376

²¹"Journal of Brigham Young," 1 June 1833, Brigham Young Papers, Church Historical Dept.

²² There were two prominent regular Methodist Church circuits in the early 1830/s in the Kingston area which may or may not have been identified to that of the Reformed Methodists. But they at least show the areas of local concentration. 1. The Bay of Quinte District comprising the towns of Kingston, Kingston West (near Earnestown), Bay of Quinte, Hallowell, (presently Picton), Belleville, Cobourg, and Sidney. 2. The Augusta District, further east comprising the towns of Brockville, Prescott, Matilda, Augusta, Rideau, Cornwall, Perth, Mississippi, and Bytown (presently Ottawa). J. E. Sanders, First Century of Methodism 2 vols., 1:411.

to the missionaries, Strong and Miller reported, in possibly exaggerated tones:

Thousands flocked to hear the strange news . . . we had to repair to groves. Much were partly convinced and some were wholly so and when we left, a small church was founded there.²³

From Earnestown, it was a simple matter for the missionaries to go north up the Napanee and adjoining rivers to the townships of Portland and Loughborough (also spelled Loborough and Loughboro) to the present town of Sydenham. During the same summer Phineas teamed up with his brother to preach in the Loughborough area.²⁴

Very early in January of 1833 Brigham Young, in company with his brother Joseph, commenced the first of his three missionary visits to the Frontenac-Addington County region. Referring to this, Joseph Young reported that they

arrived in Kingston and found a friend who was going that evening near to the place where we were first to call . . . Proceeding to West Loughborough [Sydenham] we remained about one month and preached the gospel there in the regions round about. We baptized about forty-five souls and organized the West Loughborough and other branches.²⁵

Brigham Young's account mentions that during this excursion, they travelled five to six hundred miles, "held about forty meetins" but baptized only fourteen in Canadia [sic] ."²⁶

²³The Evening and Morning Star (May 1833): 189 for a letter by Elial Strong and Eliazer Miller dated March 18, 1833.

²⁴Joseph Smith, Jr., History of the Church, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1950), 1:296.

²⁵Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 19 March 1833 in Journal History Collection in Church Historical Dept. This voluminous source includes typewritten copies of documents and clippings from newspapers, letters, diaries, etc. Cited hereafter as "Journal History."

²⁶"Journal of Brigham Young," January-March 1833, Brigham Young Papers, Church Historical Dept.

Brigham Young's second missionary journey to Upper Canada came in the spring of the same year, 1833, not quite two months after his and Joseph's return from Kingston. Evidently they believed that much work remained to be done.

Many old and interesting stories have circulated for years in rural communities near Kingston about Brigham Young and those he converted. A Mr. Peter Bristol of Napanee, a town twenty miles west of Kingston, in 1913 at the age of ninety-three reflected on bygone experiences:

There was quite an excitement in the county [Addington] over the Mormon missionaries who went about the different townships Bath, Earnestown, Fredericksburg preaching and baptizing converts. Quite a number were baptized in Big Creek. Brigham Young was here himself; and if I remember aright, he preached at Bath. That must have been nearly eighty years ago. The headquarters of the Mormons was not in Utah, then, but somewhere in Ohio. Joseph File and his family, John Detlor, Jr. and two Lloyds went away with the missionaries to their "Promised Land" but they all came back but one of the Lloyds who died out there.²⁷

Between 1832 and 1834, approximately one hundred and fifty settlers embraced the new faith in this region and at least four branches were organized, one each in Loughborough township, West Loughborough (Sydenham), Earnestown, and Kingston.²⁸

Proselyting efforts continued into 1835. Mormon preachers fanned out across the countryside southwest of Kingston from Bath to Prince Edward County and also began spreading east into Lanark County. That same year, the Quorum of Twelve Apostles had been organized, and

²⁷Walter S. Herrington, History of the County of Lennox and Addington (Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada, Ltd., 1931), pp.187-88. Both the Detlor and Lloyd families were of Loyalist extraction.

²⁸Journal History, 1 April 1833.

one of its first assignments was "to take a mission through the states and hold conferences in all the churches."²⁹ Said Orson Hyde, one of the original Twelve:

Thence we passed into Upper Canada and attended a conference on the 29th of June, not far from the majestic St. Lawrence. The actual location was West Loughborough. Impressed with his first visit to Canada, Hyde stated: Notwithstanding we had passed from the happy institution of our free republic into another realm, yet we could with propriety adopt [sic] the words . . . God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation, he that feareth God . . . is accepted by him.³⁰

In concluding this study of the Church in the eastern districts of the province, there are records showing that some missionaries had been combing through communities east of Toronto along Dundas St. as far as Kingston. In the summer of 1836, Parley P. Pratt, and Orson Pratt taught in Kingston.³¹ What with the added efforts of Almon W. Babbitt, and Benjamin Brown, who together baptized another thirty in the Frontenac county in the summer of 1836, it is concluded that by the end of that year, a strong branch existed in the limestone city of Kingston.³²

The proselyting efforts of the Young brothers in these areas after their conversion from the Reformed Methodist Church to Mormonism not only was a source of their own personal satisfaction but it had far-reaching consequences to the Latter-day Saints. The success of the Youngs was evidence to Mormon leadership that the new gospel could

²⁹"Biographical Sketch of Orson Hyde," Orson Hyde Papers, Orson Hyde Collection.

³⁰The Latter-day Saints Messenger and Advocate 2 (October 1835): 205.

³¹"Canadian Mission MSS," 26 July 1836. A collection of letter excerpts, diary entries, published accounts, etc. on the Canadian Mission.

³²Ibid.

indeed transcend national bounds. If Mormonism could succeed in Canada, it was plausible to think that eventually it could succeed in other foreign lands.

CHAPTER IV

FAMILY TIES AND FINE PREACHING

The existence of strong family ties among many early Mormon converts was a major reason why Mormonism came into Canada and why it experienced success. Many were the occasions in which American converts to Mormonism were anxious to interest relatives across the border in the new faith. The first example of this occurred some four hundred miles west of Kingston and at almost the same time the Young brothers were establishing a beachhead on Canadian soil.

The beginning of the Latter-day Saint influence in those counties near the west end of Lake Ontario (Brant, Wentworth, Haldimand, etc.)¹ can be traced to the influence of one man--Freeman Nickerson. Nickerson had been baptized into the Church at Cayton, Catteragus County, New York in April 1833 by Elder Zerabbabel Snow.² Anxious to convert his entire family to the new religion, Nickerson determined to go to Canada where his son Freeman A. Nickerson was living with his family. Nickerson persuaded Joseph Smith, Jr. to accompany him, by offering Smith transportation.³ Sidney Rigdon also accompanied the two men as they set out for the province on October 14, 1833 on what was to become the first of two visits that the Prophet Joseph Smith would

¹Appendix 1 contains a map of Upper Canada.

²Smith, History of the Church, 1:416.

³Journal History, 22 January 1847. ¹⁸³⁷

make to Canada. The Mormon leader described the occasion as follows:

Friday 17th--arrived at Freeman Nickerson's in Upper Canada having after we came into Canada passed through a very fine country and well cultivated and had many peculiar feelings in relation to both the country and people . . . On Sunday the 20th held meeting at Brantford on Sunday at ten o'clock to a very attentive congregation at candlelight the same evening held meeting at mount pleasant [sic] where Freeman Nickerson lived to a very large congregation which gave good heed to the things which were spoken what may be the result we cannot tell but the prospect is flattering this morning . . . Left Mount plesent [sic] tuesday and arrived at the village of Coulbourn [sic] held meeting at candle lighting . . . we were publicly opposed by a Wesleyan Methodist . . . We hope that great good may yet be done in Canada which O Lord grant for they names sake.⁴

This was Joseph Smith's first visit to a foreign country and he spent most of it preaching.

On October 24, Freeman A. Nickerson and his wife were baptized into the Church by his father.⁵ Three days later, many other family members including Moses C. Nickerson, another son, Eliza F. Nickerson, Eliazer Nickerson, Lydia Bailey (later the wife of Newel Knight) and others joined the Church.⁶ A branch was immediately established in the small town of Mt. Pleasant⁷ and Freeman A. Nickerson was ordained an Elder and made the local presiding officer.⁸

⁴"Journal of Joseph Smith, Jr.," 17-22 October 1833 in Joseph Smith, Jr. Papers, Church Historical Dept.

⁵Journal History, 24 October 1833, Church Historical Dept.

⁶Ibid., 27 October 1833.

⁷Ibid.

⁸A short essay on this activity is found in the "Tweedsmuir Histories" on microfilm at the Ontario Public Archives, Toronto, Ontario. Among other things it states:

"In 1836 there was living in Cattaraugus County New York--not far from Buffalo--a well-to-do farmer by the name of Freeman Nickerson, Sr. who, with his wife, had become a latter day Saint . . . Shortly after the dedication of the temple at Kirtland, Nickerson and his wife appeared there with the request that the missionaries be sent

For a short period of time the Mormons met in the Bathesda Methodist chapel in Mount Pleasant. Having established a base of operations because of family connections, the elders soon established branches in Brantford and Colborne, causing no small amount of disruption in many of the communities throughout the area.

Missionary work was also carried on in the nearby townships of Burford, Oakland, Malahide, etc. Malahide, on the north shore of Lake Erie, came under rather heavy emphasis in 1835 and 1836.⁹ Peter Dustin, a missionary from Kirtland illustrated the trend:

I left this place [Kirtland] the 11th of June, to fill a mission in the province of Upper Canada by way of Buffalo, from thence to Mt. Pleasant, and from thence to Malahide, U.C. I have succeeded in establishing a church there, which is composed of 32 members . . .

There, as in all other places, when the people or the meek began to embrace the truth, the enemy raged and the meek rejoiced in the midst of all the slanderous reports. I stayed there about two months; one month baptizing and laboring publicly and from house to house and the remainder of the time I spent in teaching them the pure daily walk.¹⁰

to Mt. Pleasant, Ont., where two of their sons had taken up new farms 'in the bush'. (Now Fliece property) Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon themselves accompanied by Nickerson Sr., made the trip coming via Buffalo, Niagara, St. Catherines, and Brantford. Smith and Rigdon preached in Mt. Pleasant, Brantford, and Colborne, making a number of converts and organizing a branch of the Church at Mt. Pleasant, and Freeman Nickerson Jr., was ordained elder and made pastor of the Mt. Pleasant congregation. The Nickerson property sold in 1837 sets the approximate date when the Mt. Pleasant Latter-day Saints moved on to the Zion of the Saints--then at Nauvoo, Ill. [sic] The records show that Freeman Nickerson Jr., had so many converts he wrote to Joseph Smith for assistance a few months after he was ordained."

The "Tweedsmuir Histories" are a collection of small town historical writeups by local residents that have been gathered into one large scrapbook.

⁹Malahide was a well-settled township strong in lumbering and with an 1842 population of 2,372. William H. Smith, Smith's Canadian Gazetteer (Toronto: H. & W. Rowsell: 1846), p. 104.

¹⁰The LDS Messenger and Advocate, 2 (October 1835): 207 for a letter from Peter Dustin to John Whitmer dated Oct. 21, 1835.

Various Mormon missionaries criss-crossed this area up until approximately 1840. Orson Pratt spent some time in the region in 1836 while on his way to join his brother Parley P. Pratt then actively proselyting in Toronto. Orson Hyde also canvassed some communities. But what had started with the Nickerson's fairly well ended with the Nickersons. After their emigration in 1837, there was no longer a central hub or focus from which Mormon proselyting efforts (like Mt. Pleasant) could be centralized, coordinated, and dispersed.

The Ministry of John E. Page

There was never a more successful missionary in Canada than John E. Page. Reasons for his great success include his indefatigable zeal that brought him back to the province on two different occasions; his powerful preaching abilities; his considerable scriptural knowledge and his ability to capitalize on the stagnant and depressed economic conditions extant in the northeastern regions of Upper Canada (Bathurst and Johnstown Districts).

John Edmonds Page was born in Oneida County, New York of English heritage, and was converted to the religion of the Latter-day Saints in August of 1833, primarily because of his conviction of the authenticity of the Book of Mormon.¹¹ For the two years immediately following his baptism, he continued to reside in Brownhelm, Lorain Co., Ohio preaching the new Gospel to his friends and family. In the fall of 1835, he moved to Kirtland, Ohio along with so many of the other Saints. It was while Page was in Kirtland that Joseph Smith asked him to go to Canada.

¹¹Justin E. Page to Wilford Poulson, 20 December 1938, Wilford Poulson Papers, Brigham Young University Archives, Provo, Utah.

At the time brother Page was called to go on a mission to Canada, he objected, for the reason that he was destitute of clothing. Brother Joseph Smith took off his coat and gave it to him, and told him to go, and the Lord would bless him abundantly on his mission.¹²

In company with William Harris, Page departed Kirtland, Ohio on May 31, 1836 determined to specifically proselyte in Leeds County immediately east and north of the Frontenac-Addington counties where the Youngs had reaped success only three years previously. Page and Harris reached Loughborough on June 26 in preparation for their missionary tours northeastward along part of the Rideau Canal system. Page recounted some of his endeavors.

We commenced our ministerial labors in township of Loughborough some eighteen or twenty miles north of Kingston, where we added fourteen members to the Loughborough branch. From thence we travelled to Leeds Church . . . and baptized three. From thence we travelled twenty-five miles to Bedford Mills and North Crosby where we planted a church that now numbers sixty-eight.¹³

At this point, Harris returned to America leaving Page to carry on by himself.

On the 5th of September . . . I took the field alone, without brother or assistant to comfort or cheer my heart, in the moments of ragings of wicked persecutors who seemed to double their force when I was alone . . . From Bedford I went to South Crosby and Bastard townships and labored alone until the 25th of September.¹⁴

Upon that date, James Blakesly from America joined him in Leeds County and the two labored so well together that by mid November, 1836 they had baptized another ninety-seven converts. After Blakesley left the province, Page carried on preaching in the Elgin, Wesport, and

¹²"History of Brigham Young," Millenial Star 27 (February 18, 1865):103.

¹³The LDS Messenger and Advocate 3 (January 1837): 447.

¹⁴Ibid.

Portland areas and reached as far north as Perth where a score of listeners joined the faith. Over this initial seven month period, he and his helpers had amassed a membership of no less than two hundred and sixty-seven and had established branches in the townships of Perth, Elgin, North and South Crosby.¹⁵

At the end of the year, he returned to Kirtland for a short visit with his family and friends. But he soon came back, bringing his family with him.

I again left Kirtland with my family of wife and two small children takeing [sic] with me all the earthly goods and possessions which consisted of one bed and our wearing apparel of the plainest kind to continue my mission in the same region of country.¹⁶

Page, on his second missionary tour, converted another four hundred souls, and established a series of branches in such rural farming townships as Bedford, Bathurst, North and East Bathurst, Leeds, Williamsburg, Bastard and West Bastard. By the end of his second mission, Page had converted six hundred people and had established a wide circle of active branches.¹⁷

Because of his success, Page wrote enthusiastically about prospects for further missionary work in Canada: "A wide door is opening in that country for preaching; and I humbly trust that my

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶"History of Brigham Young," Millennial Star 27 (February 18, 1865): 103.

¹⁷Andrew Jensen, Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City, published by the Andrew Jensen History Company, 1901), 1:92-93.

brethren in the ministry will not be slothful in improving the opportunity to promulgate the truth."¹⁸

As indicated, one of the reasons Page enjoyed such success was because of his native preaching abilities. There is little doubt that Page was one of the finest preachers the young church possessed. A "strong, healthy, vigorous and ambitious young man, and large in stature,"¹⁹ Page enjoyed preaching and excelled at it. Justin Page, son of John E. Page, said his father was called "Son of Thunder" because of his preaching capabilities,²⁰ and that he "seemed to have in his preaching a faculty of discussing both sides of a question."²¹ Evidently, one of his favorite topics while a Mormon preacher was the Book of Mormon. Said his son:

I have in my possession an old canvas some twenty inches wide and twenty feet long from which he would lecture on the divinity of the 'Nephite record,' and very convincingly show that this record commonly known as the Mormon Bible really was and is a history of the past, present and future of the Americans and our Indians right here where we live.²²

A tireless preacher, Page "wore out his lungs and speaking organs" during his years of preaching "to establish what he thought was the truth."²³

Local Canadian accounts spoke of Page in a positive manner. A younger brother to Mary Judd Page, Zadok Knapp Judd recalled

¹⁸Journal History, 24 January 1837.

¹⁹Justin E. Page to Wilford Poulson, 16 March 1936, W. Poulson papers, BYU Archives.

²⁰Justin E. Page to W. Poulson, 22 April 1935, Wilford Poulson papers, BYU Archives.

²¹Justin E. Page to W. Poulson, 6 January 1933.

²²Justin E. Page to W. Poulson, 22 April 1935.

²³Justin E. Page to Mrs. P. W. Watts, no date, Poulson Collection.

the coming of the Mormon Elders, John E. Page and James Blakesley. They made quite a stir in the neighbourhood. They preached a new doctrine. My father went to their preaching and after hearing two or three sermons I heard him remark 'If the Methodists would preach as they do and prove all their points of doctrine like that, how I would like it.'²⁴

In addition to his preaching talents and abilities, Page benefited from the depressed economic situation in the Bathurst District in the 1836-1838 period. Both the natural poverty of this area and the added stimulant of the 1837 depression played into the hands of the Mormons who held out the promise of a new land and a rich new opportunity through gathering to "Zion." Perhaps it is not entirely coincidental that the large Mormon exodus led by Page in 1838 was simultaneous with the largest emigration of settlers from Canada to America up until that time.

There were few other areas of the settled portions of the province that were more forboding and more discouraging to settlement and farming than the Bathurst District in which Page experienced so much of his success. That the land was extremely poor is evidenced by the following record of a Canadian Mormon convert who moved out of the area prior to his conversion in another part of the province.

The Hill family were settled upon allotted 100 acres on the 26 July 1821 in . . . Lanark. . . .

Unfortunately the land upon which the Hills had been settled, turned out to be a very poor piece of ground. It was mostly rocky and not very productive. Many of the settlers were dissatisfied with the lots they had been settled on. After several years struggle, it became increasingly apparent that they could not wrest a decent living from the land.²⁵

²⁴"Journal of Zadok Knapp Judd," no date, Zadok Judd Papers, Church Historical Dept.

²⁵Dell H. and Deloris A. Hill, comp., Daniel Currie Hill - Ancestry, History and Descendants (Providence, Utah : Keith Watkins and Sons, n.d.), p. 8.

From another early Canadian convert who likewise was forced to leave the area came this more detailed account of the hardships in making a living off the land.

Bathurst District was a very poor part of the country, consisting of rocky ridges covered with heavy timber, mostly hemlock, pine cedar and some hard wood. There were also swamps and mud lakes, and only here and there small patches of land that would do to cultivate . . . There was a kind of thistle that comes up among the grain which compelled us to reap it with gloves, or mittens on our hands, while cutting with a cradle . . . It was a hard cold country to live in . . . People who have been raised in the far west [Utah] have but little knowledge of the labor it took to make a start in the Canada timbered lands . . .²⁶

Wilford Woodruff, during an 1837 visit to the branches in the Bathurst District which had been reared by Page, gave his appraisal of the land.

We took the steem [sic] boat at 8 o'clock at Kingston Mills to go up the Rideau Canal. We passed through a swamp of above 12 miles in length which abounded with fir such as muskrat, avter [sic] beaver, etc. . . . the face of the country around . . . presents a scene of the most gloomy aspect such as a rocky, hilly, barren, uncultivated country.²⁷

The conference at which Woodruff attended was held at Portland, Leeds Co. in June of 1837. As of that date, substantial branches were flourishing in townships in both the Johnstown and Bathurst Districts as the following chart indicates. See Table 1 on next page.

It is significant that almost all of the areas represented at this conference were agriculturally poor. North and South Crosby townships shared poor, stoney land with rivers and lakes in abundance.²⁸

²⁶Robert Gardner, Jr., "History of Robert Gardner, Jr.," Robert Gardner Jr. Papers, Church Historical Dept. pp. 2 & 3.

²⁷"Journal of Wilford Woodruff," 8 June 1837, Wilford Woodruff Papers, Church Historical Dept.

²⁸Smith, Canadian Gazetteer, p. 40.

TABLE 1

BRANCH MEMBERSHIPS

North Bathurst)		West	73
East Bathurst)		Bedford	50
Williamsburg)	120	Bathurst	<u>58</u>
Leeds)			
South Crosby)		TOTAL	301

SOURCE: "Canadian Mission Manuscript," 11 June 1837.

Bedford, a township in Bathurst District also had poor land with many lakes, and was sparsely settled.²⁹ The other communities were little better. The Bathurst areas in Lanark Co. were generally very poor in farming land. In fact, the early Scottish immigrants to Lanark in 1816 soon pulled out stakes to find greener pastures elsewhere.³⁰

In addition to these natural conditions, a debilitating depression described earlier, racked the province. Records show that all districts associated with the St. Lawrence River trade (as were Bathurst and Johnston) were particularly hard hit. Wrote D. G. Creighton:

During the spring and summer of 1837 the whole carrying trade of the St. Lawrence dried up to a mere lethargic trickle of business . . . Late in May it was reported in Montreal that business in Upper Canada was almost at a standstill . . .

A winter of high prices and real scarcity, a winter which distressed the villages by an abrupt financial panic and a commercial slump.³¹

²⁹Ibid., p. 18

³⁰"The Lanark area was not to become one of the famed agricultural regions of Upper Canada . . . the totals of new arrivals declined after 1819." Yet their vacancies were always filled by other newcomers. Helen I. Cowan, British Emigration to British North America-the First Hundred Years (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), p. 64.

³¹D. G. Creighton, "The Economic Background of the Rebellions of 1837," W. T. Easterbrook and M. H. Watkins, ed., Approaches to Canadian Economic History (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1967), p. 234.

The combination of a harsh winter and business depression when coupled with a naturally poor farming land, no doubt drove many Bathurst residents to the point of starvation in 1837. It is little wonder that the preachings of men like Page, Woodruff, Blakesley, Draper and others, who preached the gathering and doubtless spoke of better agricultural areas in Ohio and Missouri attracted many to the "promised land" of America. This was the conclusion of one Canadian historian who wrote:

In 1837, a number of Mormon missionaries entered the municipality [Bastard township] and held meetings, at which they secured a great many converts. The converts were drawn from . . . ignorant and poor people who were led to believe that they would better their condition by becoming followers of Joe Smith.³²

Canadian converts who gathered in the American Zion wrote with assurance of their new economic situation and no doubt influenced some to join the Mormon movement. William Draper informed relatives in Frontenac county of how good things were in Kirtland.

Things went on comfortable and pleasantly . . . and by the assistance and council [sic] of the Prophet I prospered exceedingly well so that I got me a nice little farm of twenty acres on which I built a good comfortable house and made other suitable improvements suitable for the comforts of life.³³

Draper returned to Canada to preach in the same places as Page and at the same time. Quite likely, a part of his doctrine was his very positive attitude toward better farming opportunities in America.

³²Thad W. N. Leavitt, History of Leeds and Grenville Ontario (Brockville, Ontario: Recorder Press, 1879), p. 121.

³³"A Biographical Sketch of the Life and Travels and Birth and Parentage of William Draper Who was the Son of William Draper and Lydia Luthdrop Draper," p. 3. William Draper Papers, Church Historical Dept.

When Page returned to America in May of 1838 he led a group of over 100 converts to the American Zion.³⁴ Powerful preaching and the promise of a better standard of living account for much of his success.

³⁴There is some discrepancy as to the total number of emigrants who went to America with Page. In Smith, History of the Church (3:37) it is mentioned that in May of 1838, 200 wagons "with families" left Canada with Page. Actually this figure is probably exaggerated as the May 14, 1838 Journal History entry records that only "30 wagons" reached Missouri "made up of men, women, and children." Two hundred wagons would have represented more people than the numbers converted. (See Canadian Mission MSS, 14 May 1838, Church Historical Dept.)

3:27

CHAPTER V

CAPITALIZING ON POLITICAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL DISCONTENT

The finest example of how the Mormons took advantage of Canadian political and religious unrest occurred in Toronto, the provincial capital and in surrounding communities. However, that success did not materialize until the Mormons had established at least a small nucleus of center of operations.

Although the most prominent and successful period for the Mormons in Toronto was from 1836 until 1838, there is mention of the city in earlier Church history. During the winter of 1829-30, it was suggested that Joseph Smith consider selling the copyright of the Book of Mormon in Canada.¹ David Whitmer, one of the three original witnesses to the Gold Plates of the Book of Mormon, indicated that Joseph Smith had received a revelation that "some of the brethren should go to Toronto, Canada and that they would sell the copyright of the Book of Mormon" in that place.²

Oliver Cowdery and Hiram Page made the journey but were without success in selling the copyright. Although Cowdery made passing reference to this event in his Defense of My Rehearsal of My Grounds for

¹Brigham H. Roberts, A Comprehensive History of the Church, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret News Press, 1930), 1:162-63.

²David Whitmer, An Address to All Believers in Christ (Richmond, Mo.: By the author, 1887), pp. 30-31.

Separating Myself from the Latter-Day Saints³, no detailed account was given of the trip. Nevertheless it is reasonable to assume that these two men were the first to preach about Joseph Smith and the new book of scripture in Canada.

From 1830 until 1836 there is no record of any Mormons in the city. But in that latter year, and for two to three years afterward, Mormonism made significant inroads in and around the provincial capital. By this time Toronto was attracting people from all over the province. The city was situated in the Home District which in 1842 had a population of 58,853 making that district the most populace in Upper Canada.⁴ As a town on the rise, it was well described in the following letter written by an English immigrant in 1835:

Toronto the capital of the Upper province, is a handsome and very flourishing city . . . Parliament House, the Government Buildings, the Upper Canada College, etc. are very handsome edifices; and there are many beautiful houses, and numerous shops, almost as capacious and elegant as the best of those in London. It is altogether an interesting place and more like an English town than any other . . . now they have three miles of excellent Macadamized road which is to be extended great and almost that of some of the roads leading to London . . . this said street is in reality a great public road leading from Toronto to Lake Simcoe, more than 40 miles.⁵

³Oliver Cowdery, Defense in a Rehearsal of My Grounds for Separating Myself From the Latter Day Saints pp. 1-2. (Norton, Ohio: by the author, Pressley's Job Office, 1839). This pamphlet was written while Cowdery was out of the Church.

⁴Smith, Canadian Gazetteer, p. 81. Referring to the city's history, Edgar McInnis has written:

"Governor Simcoe, in his search for a capital that would be comfortably remote from American attack, had fixed on the wilderness site where London now stands, but in 1793 he was over-ruled by his superior Dorchester, who decided on the old carrying place at Toronto. That spot, which contained a single wig-wam at the time, was christened York and only resumed its older name on its incorporation in 1834." McInnis, Canada, p. 180.

⁵N. Bosworth to Richard, Esq., 8 January 1835. R. Bosworth Papers, Toronto Metropolitan Library, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

One can understand why Church leaders may have seen in Toronto a possible field of labor. With missionary work progressing in the Canadian eastern townships as well as in the Brant County area, Church authorities looked with optimism on proselyting possibilities in the largest city in the province.

The most effective missionary in Toronto was Parley Parker Pratt. Pratt, formerly a Disciple of Christ, was converted by the Book of Mormon.⁶ Pratt soon demonstrated outstanding talent and ability in preaching the new doctrine. In February, 1835, he and his brother Orson were ordained members of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles.

One of his first missionary journeys after being called to the Apostleship was to Toronto in April of 1836. Heber C. Kimball, prominent Church leader, had prophesied that Pratt would

go to Upper Canada, even to the city of Toronto, the capital and there thou shalt find a people prepared for the fulness of the Gospel, and they shall receive thee, and thou shalt organize the Church among them, and it shall spread thence into the regions round about, and many shall be brought to the knowledge of the truth.⁷

On his way to Toronto, Pratt was accompanied by Freeman Nickerson Sr. as far as Hamilton.⁸ Here Pratt became acquainted with Moses Nickerson who gave him a letter of introduction to a Mr. John Taylor who lived in Toronto.⁹

⁶Parley P. Pratt, ed., Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1938), p. 37.

⁷Ibid., pp. 130-31.

⁸Ibid., p. 131.

⁹B. H. Roberts, The Life of John Taylor (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon and Sons Co. Publishers, 1892), p. 135.

Pratt reached the city and immediately sought out the Taylors. At first they were hesitant, but were impressed with the Mormon preacher's ideas. According to Pratt:

Mrs. Taylor received me kindly, and went for her husband, who was busy in his mechanic shop. To them I made known my errand to that city, but received little direct encouragement. I took tea with them, and then sought lodgings at a public house.¹⁰

The following day he visited "each of the clergy of the place" and was categorically "denied the opportunity of preaching in any of their houses or congregations."¹¹ All but ready to bundle up and depart the city in utter frustration, Pratt was approached by a Mrs. Isabella Walton, a friend of Mr. and Mrs. Taylor, who was intensely interested in Pratt's message. She became the first of a nucleus of believers. Mrs. Walton, her neice Ann Wanless, and Sarah Kavanaugh were baptized in Toronto Bay.¹² A contemporary, Isabella Johnson, (daughter of Isaac Russell) recorded how the movement spread after this initial conversion:

From Mrs. Walton the news was carried to her brother and sister, Isaac Russell and Frances Dawson in the country, her brother-in-law John Dawson conveying an appointment for Mr. Pratt to preach in their settlement, but the Methodist minister refusing to give out the appointment and the county meeting house being closed against him, it was arranged that he should preach at Mr. Dawson's house. After the appointed time, his neighbours being notified, gathered in, the house was crowded. Mr. Pratt arrived accompanied by John Taylor [as yet not a member] and that night held his first meeting at Mr. Dawson's house.¹³

¹⁰Pratt, Autobiography, p. 135.

¹¹Mrs. Isabella Johnson, "Biographical Sketch of Isaac Russell," n.d. the Isaac Russell Papers, Church Historical Dept.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

This community was nine miles northwest of downtown Toronto in what was then called Charleston settlement, now known as Downsview, York County, Ontario, a suburb of Toronto. According to Isabella Johnson

At the close of his remarks Isaac Russell arose and announced himself ready for baptism, saying that 'this was the Gospel he had been looking for and was ready to live or die by.' After this meeting 'the people wishing to hear more,' the meeting house was now opened for further meetings and soon after a branch of the Church was organized . . . Half a mile west of the meeting house and settlement was the little stream called Black Creek. Thither Mr. Pratt repaired, baptizing Isaac Russell and ordaining him an elder at the water's edge. At the same time and subsequent thereto, baptizing Mary Russell, his wife Frances, and John Dawson his sister and brother-in-law, their son William Dawson, and their three daughters, Margaret, Ruth and Isabella, also John Goodson, Joseph Fielding, and sisters Mary and Mercy Fielding, . . . John Snider, Margaret and James Wardlaw, Lucy Bridgeland, and many others . . .¹⁴

After this, numerous meetings were held at Mrs. Walton's or with her many friends and relatives.

As Isabella Johnson indicated, Mrs. Walton urged Pratt to go north of the city to preach to some of her relatives. As a result, he began proselyting in small rural areas, such as Scarborough (also spelled Scarboro), Markham and Charleston settlement,¹⁵ where he experienced more success than in Toronto itself. He was able to make the Charleston Settlement a base of operations from which missionary work could spread throughout the surrounding regions. Pratt himself described these developments:

My first visit to the country was about nine miles from Toronto, among a settlement of farmers, by one of whom I had sent an

¹⁴Ibid. Many of the named persons listed at the end of above account were baptized "subsequent" to this time. John Taylor and Isaac Russell were not baptized at the same time or place.

¹⁵Scarborough, in 1842, contained many good farms, one grist and eighteen saw mills, and maintained a population of 2250 principally composed of English, Irish, and Scotch. Smith, Canadian Gazetteer, p.167

appointment beforehand. John Taylor accompanied me--this was before he was baptized. We rode on horseback. We called at a Mr. Joseph Fielding's, an acquaintance and friend of Mr. Taylor's. This man had two sisters [Mary and Mercy Rachel] young ladies, who seeing us coming ran from their house to one of the neighboring houses, lest they should give . . . countenance to "Mormonism." Mr. Fielding stayed, and as we entered the house he was sorry we had come, he had opposed our holding meetings in the neighborhood; and, so great was the prejudice, that the Methodist meeting house was closed against us, and the minister refused, on Sunday, to give out the appointment . . .¹⁶

Joseph Fielding describes the experience in much the same fashion, adding:

We had determined not to go to hear him but as an old friend (Bro. Taylor) brought him to my house I could not refuse to hear and I soon discovered that he had the Spirit and Power of God.

Elder Pratt laid before us the Ordinances of the Gospel which were very plain being perfectly in accordance with the Scriptures, being still more clearly expressed in the Book of Mormon. I therefore with my two sisters then with me embraced it and entered the Church of Latter-day Saints by Baptism.¹⁷

The pattern was becoming very clear. News spread from friend to friend and from family to family.

Rapidly the work spread throughout the townships so that the circuit of Pratt's labors had so much enlarged that he "had to travel continually from branch to branch and neighborhood to neighborhood."¹⁸ Overworked, he called for help. His brother, Orson Pratt, who had been preaching in the Brantford-Mt. Pleasant regions, answered the call and in company with Freeman Nickerson took the steam boat from Hamilton to the city of Toronto on May 20, 1836. Upon disembarking, the elders "left Toronto and went out into the country about nine miles where we

¹⁶Pratt, Autobiography, p. 151.

¹⁷"Journal of Joseph Fielding" pp. 5 and 7, Joseph Fielding Papers, Church Historical Dept.

¹⁸Pratt, Autobiography, 153.

found Elder Pratt and at which place he had baptized some the same evening."¹⁹ From May 20 until June 4 much preaching was conducted in the Charleston settlement and other outlying communities.

Orson Hyde also preached in Canada at this time. Another fiery preacher who was undaunted by opposition, Hyde participated in an open air debate against a Reverend Jenkins, a Presbyterian. Hyde described it thus:

The time arrived and about one acre of people assembled in a grove, wagons arranged for pulpits opposite each other and presently the priest came with some less than a mule load of books, pamphlets, and newspapers, containing all the slang of an unbelieving world . . .

All things being ready, the battle began by a volley of grape and canister from my battery which was returned with vigor and determined zeal. Alternate canonading, half hour each, continued until dinner was announced. An armistice was proclaimed and the parties enjoyed a good dinner with their respective friends. After two hours the forces were again drawn in battle array. The enemy's fire soon became less and less spirited, until, at length, under a well-directed and murderous fire from the long "Eighteens" . . . to wit, the Spirit of God, the enemy raised his hand to heaven and exclaimed, with affected contempt, "Abominable." I have heard enough of such stuff." I immediately rejoined: "Gentlemen, and ladies, I should consider it highly dishonorable to continue to beat my antagonist after he had cried enough."²⁰

Hyde affirmed that forty persons were baptized in Scarborough following the debate and that afterwards the Mormons continued preaching in Markham, Scarborough, and Toronto.²¹

The following year, 1837, many prominent Mormon leaders came to the Toronto area, particularly to the community of Churchville, northwest of Toronto. That they reaped a bounteous harvest is evidenced by

¹⁹"Journal of Orson Pratt," 20 May 1836, Orson Pratt Papers, Church Historical Dept.

²⁰Orson Hyde Biographical Sketch, no date, p. 1, Orson Hyde Papers, Church Historical Dept.

²¹Ibid.

the fact that such future Church leaders as William and Wilson Law, Theodore Turley, and others came into the Church in this tiny community.

To more fully understand the factors accounting for Mormon success, one must see that political and religious conflict were exploited by the Latter-day Saints in the 1836-38 era. It is very likely that the Rebellion of 1837 and the subsequent defeat of the reformist movement were factors in promoting converts. There is no doubt that Mormon leaders in America encouraged their Canadian followers to get out of Canada and escape civil war, and no doubt that many followed such counsel. It may not have been coincidental that the peak of Mormon activity and Mormon emigration from the province coincided with the zenith of political agitation.

To begin with, the reformers despised the concept of an established church and were more than tolerant of dissenting sects like the Mormons.

Evidence suggests that unlike some officials who prevented Parley P. Pratt from preaching, William Lyon MacKenzie, leader of the reformers, was quick to offer his facilities to Pratt in order for him to preach. In the fall of 1835, Pratt approached MacKenzie "for some large public halls or rooms of his, which would hold hundreds of people." The latter very willingly offered his assistance.²² MacKenzie apparently followed Pratt's mission and other activities through newspaper clippings until the latter's martyrdom in 1857.²³

²²Parley P. Pratt, Autobiography, p. 179.

²³1842-1857 Newspaper Clippings on P. P. Pratt, are found in the MacKenzie-Lindsey Papers, Ontario Public Archives, Toronto. There are almost 50 clippings in the collection.

It cannot be argued with complete certainty that Canadians who joined the Church were usually political reformers. Unfortunately the early converts chose to fill up their diaries with accounts of their treks to Missouri or Nauvoo and with later experiences in the Church rather than to discuss in detail their lives while yet in "Babylon." Nonetheless it appears possible that at least some Mormons were active reformers. David Seely (1819-1892), born in Whitby, east of Toronto recorded the following:

My father was an ardent siypathiser [sic] of the Patriot cause and the Canadian Authorities, fearing that he would take William L. McKenzie to the American or U. S. side of the lake [Ontario], he being the Patriot leader of the upper Province they dismantled and cut down both masts of the Enterprize of Windsor, one of my father's vessels for which he could obtain no redress.²⁴

The Seely family joined the Church in Illinois.

Another example of a reformer who fled Canada and then entered the Mormon flock was Gilbert Belnap. Because of his opposition to the British government, he was exiled in 1839 to America. Shortly after his arrival there, he too became a convert.²⁵

It can be argued, however, that the political ferment caused much insecurity and anxiety, and that Mormon emphasis at gathering to Zion appealed to many.

A Canadian newspaper grudgingly acknowledged that Mormon apocalyptic had influenced Canadians.

The recent accounts of battle in Missouri, between the Mormons, and the other inhabitants of that region, do happily 'turn for

²⁴David Seely, "Autobiographical Sketch of David Seely," the David Seely Papers, Church Historical Dept.

²⁵Biographical Sketch of Gilbert Belnap, in the Gilbert Belnap Papers, Church Historical Dept.

testimony' to some here, who have been urged by them to flee from Canada because of impending woes to the refuge they pretended to have found in the 'Far West', one good woman whose fears had been strongly appealed to by one of their leaders, very properly replied, that they need not think of trying to escape wars, by leaving Canada for Missouri, so long as they had mobs, and Indians to fight with there.²⁶

Hepsibah Richards, writing from Kirtland to a friend on the east coast of America, recounted some of the turmoil in Canada and the Church's warning for Canadian Saints to leave.

A young Canadian has just informed us that he has received a letter by the hand of Elder [Justin] Green informing him that two or three of his near relatives are shot. [Elder Green] says he saw nothing in the last war that would compare with the distress that is now experienced in Canada . . . About 400 men have been stripped of their arms, convicted of treason and cast into prison, 40 of them were convicted of high treason . . . Many others have fled to avoid a similar fate . . .

President Joseph Smith told his Canada brethren last summer to sell while they could and get out of the place or blood would be upon their heels. Elder G [reen] was followed day and night and seriously threatened because, they said, he had prophesied evil respecting them . . .²⁷

John Taylor, Isaac Russell, Joseph Fielding and sisters, the Law brothers and Theodore Turley were among those who emigrated to America during the period of greatest turmoil in the province.

Although Toronto Mormons were apparently most immediately affected by the political controversies, others elsewhere were dissatisfied and happy to get out of the country with its continuing strife. Zadok Judd of North Crosby was one of those who sold out and went south.

About all the people who had joined the church sold their possessions and had counted on starting to Kirtland, Ohio in the spring of 1838. Owing to some trouble arising between

²⁶Christian Examiner, December, 1838, p. 356.

²⁷Hepsibah Richards to Mrs. Rhoda Richards, 28 January 1938, Levi Richards Papers, Church Historical Dept.

some party and government (*italics mine*) our folks thought it best to start mid-winter, with cold, deep snow, we hitched up.²⁸

Judd's reminiscence points to a fear by his family--and no doubt by many others--that the political situation was rapidly deteriorating and that the quicker they left, the safer they would be. On arriving in America, he recorded a sense of relief: "We are now in the United States where we anticipated no more trouble from party strife."²⁹

It is concluded that one important factor responsible for the missionary activity of the Church and hurried emigration of many of her converts in the Toronto area especially was the current political instability.

If political unrest favored Mormon proselyting, so did religious discord. The divisions within the Methodist Churches because of the Ryerson decision to join with the British Wesleyans could not have come at a more propitious time as far as the Mormons were concerned. Some parties believed Egerton Ryerson had compromised his patriot or reformist position to such a degree that they formed their own Methodist society entitled the Methodist Episcopal Church of Canada. Religious discontent was rampant.

It was in this kind of a climate that John Taylor and other discontents formed or joined Methodist splinter groups. And it was among these splinter organizations that Pratt and his associates were so successful.

²⁸"Journal of Zadok Knapp Judd," n.d., Zadok Judd Papers, Church Historical Dept.

²⁹Ibid.

The Mormon influence reached its peak in 1836 and 1837 and was a cause of concern, if not alarm among the Methodists. In the 1837 Canadian Methodist Convention under Egerton Ryerson, much time was devoted to the opposition and its efforts at siphoning off Methodist membership. Wrote one observer:

Among the causes may be mentioned the unholy efforts of schismatics and separatists to divide the Church; the obtainment, to some extent, on several circuits, of certain delusions well known as Irvingism and Mormonism; and an unusual number of removals.

By the schedules of various circuits it appears that there have withdrawn to the party which has assumed the name Episcopal Methodists, 283; to the Irvingites, 15; to the Mormons, 52; expelled and dropped, 830; removed, 876; died, 131.³⁰

It is more than likely that of the 830 "expelled and dropped" many joined the Mormons.

Referring to the upsurge in Mormon popularity, Fred Landon, prominent Southern Ontario historian recognized that "the village of Churchville in the Home District was a stronghold of the belief with frequent meetings and baptisms."³¹ Landon went on to say that the Yonge Street circuit of the Canadian Methodists under Ryerson "lost heavily to the Mormons, the membership declining from 951 to 578 in 1836."³² Landon quite accurately attributed this to the conflict raging between the warring Methodist societies.

Egerton Ryerson amplified and corroborated Landon's later reference.

³⁰P. E. Shaw, The Catholic Apostolic Church - Sometimes Called Irvingites (Morningside Heights, New York: King's Crown Press, 1946), p. 115.

³¹Fred Landon, Western Ontario and the American Frontier (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1941), pp. 125-26.

³²Ibid.

Owing to politics and Irvingism, the city circuit had a difficult year and barely held its own. The Mormons also took a heavy toll, but mainly outside the city on the Yonge Street circuit, which declined from 951 in 1833 to 578 in 1836.³³

Many other contemporaries spoke of the Mormon harvest at Methodist expense. Mrs. Mary Isabella Horne wrote of her family's conversion in Charleston Settlement:

About the 1st of June [1836], they first heard Orson Pratt, who preached in the neighborhood, and a little later, a week perhaps all of her father's family went with them to hear his brother Parley P. Pratt preach. They were all so delighted with his preaching that all her father's family joined the Mormons. This made quite a stir among the Methodists. Every effort was made to convince them that it was all a false religion.³⁴

Isaac Russell, a later prominent missionary to England, who had immigrated to Canada from England in 1817, had allied himself to the Methodist Church and had become a class-leader. But after hearing Pratt preach, Russell was baptized in 1836 in the Charleston Settlement not far from Toronto. William and Wilson Law had also been Methodists.³⁵ Theodore Turley, who emigrated from England in 1818, had been a Methodist preacher for almost 20 years in Canada before Isaac Russell introduced him to Mormonism in 1837.³⁶ The Fieldings had also been

³³Melvin S. Tagg, "A Collection of Historical and Genealogical Items Concerning the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Eastern Canada as copied from the collection of Thomas S. Monson and Mahala M. Waywell," (April 1963), in personal possession of the author.

³⁴Mrs. Joseph Horne, "Migrations," n.d., Mrs. Joseph Horne Papers, Church Historical Dept.

³⁵Said Joseph Horne, another Toronto convert about William Law in 1836: "He was at that time thought to be a very good man." Joseph Horne, "Reminiscences of Joseph Horne," Joseph Horne Papers, Church Historical Dept.

³⁶"Journal of Theodore Turley," p. 1, Theodore Turley Papers, BYU Archives.

Methodists. It is not coincidental that of the Mormons in Toronto for which there are available records, the great majority had previously been Methodists.³⁷

Of the many disaffected Methodists who came over to the Mormon camp, none became so prominent and so important to the Church as John Taylor. An emigrant from England, he and his wife had taken up residence in Toronto on Newcastle St. (presently Adelaide St.) Originally a Wesleyan Methodist, Taylor and his wife and many close friends aligned themselves to a distinguished group of disgruntled Methodists who termed themselves Primitive Methodists.³⁸

Taylor and those within this group were all very much opposed to the Canadian Methodist leader, Egerton Ryerson, and his efforts to unite with the British Wesleyan Conference. They were part of the "expelled" or "dropped" classification. Taylor later gave this description of the Primitive Methodist Society. Taylor recalled his conversion and this radical Methodist movement, and some of its principles:

I was associated with a number of gentlemen in searching the scriptures. Many of us were connected with the Methodist Society.

³⁷See Appendix 2.

³⁸B. A. Barber, "Primitive Methodism," in The Methodist Church: Its Origin, Division and Reunion ed. A. W. Harrison (London: Methodist Publishing House, 1932), pp. 82-138. The Primitive Methodist Church, sometimes referred to as the Primitive Methodist Connexion, began in 1811 in Staffordshire, England under the leadership of Hugh Bourne and William Clowes. Although the Church believed in the fundamental doctrines of Methodism, it became distinctive for the desire to preach in the open air, to encourage camp-meetings, and to demonstrate a more evangelical spirit. They very much favored the gifts of the Spirit. The word "Primitive" meant that they believed themselves to be "in accord with the genius and spirit of John Wesley and the early Methodists." They sharply defined Heaven from Hell, having no half-way houses in their theology. The movement did not reach America until 1829 and Canada shortly after.

We did not believe their doctrines because they did not accord with scripture. Nevertheless we did not interfere with them; we considered them as near correct as others. We rejected every man's word or writing, and took the Word of God alone. We had continued diligently at this for two years. We made it a rule to receive no doctrine until we could bring no scriptural testimony against it. The gentlemen with whom I associated were, many of them, learned and intelligent . . .

We believed in the gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the ten tribes. We gathered from the scriptures that just judgment would overtake the churches of the world, because of their iniquity. We believed that the gospel which was preached by the apostles was true, and that any departure from that was a departure from the order of God, and that churches having thus departed were consequently corrupt and fallen. We believed that there ought to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers as in former days, and that the gifts of healing and the power of God ought to be associated with the church. We, of course, believed that where these things did not exist there could not be a true church. But we believed that we had no authority ourselves to teach these principles. We were praying men and asked our Heavenly Father to show us the truth . . . 39

The Mormon missionary, Parley P. Pratt, on seeing the division in the Methodist ranks, made the most of it. Taylor invited Pratt to their group meeting "at the residence of a Mr. Patrick, a wealthy, aristocratic gentleman, who held office in the government."⁴⁰ Wrote Pratt of this assemblage:

In a large apartment, well furnished, was soon convened a solemn well-dressed, and, apparently, serious and humble people, nearly filling the room. Each held a bible in his hand and several more lying on the table before him. With one of these I was soon furnished, as was any other person present . . . In this manner these people had assembled twice each week for about two years, for the professed purpose of seeking truth, independent of any sectarian organization to which any of them might nominally belong.

Here had assembled John Taylor, his wife, Mrs. Walton, and some others who now knew me, although to the president and most of the congregation I was entirely unknown, and, from my appearance

³⁹G. Homer Durham, ed., The Gospel Kingdom (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1964), pp. 367-68.

⁴⁰Pratt, Autobiography, p. 139.

was supposed to be some farmer from the country, who had dropped in by invitation . . .⁴¹

In preaching to this group, Pratt emphasized the primitive gospel, relying heavily on the Bible. He spoke of the apostacy, the restoration, divine authority, obedience to commandments, spiritual gifts, and the impending Millenium.⁴² Pratt was a well-versed bibli-
cist and his scriptural knowledge was the dominating factor that ac-
counted for his proselyting success. As Taylor stated:

I wished him to confine himself to the scriptures. We talked for three hours or upwards, and he bound me as close to the scriptures as I desired, proving everything he said therefrom. I afterwards wrote down eight sermons that he preached, in order that I might compare them with the work of God. I found nothing contrary.⁴³

Only after this was Taylor invited to examine the Book of Mormon. Taylor recalled in his reminiscences that the primitive gospel message was what converted him to Mormonism.

A number of others and myself were baptized May 9, 1836 and we realized those blessings according to his word. The gifts and power of God were in the church, the gift of tongues and prophecy, the sick were healed, and we rejoined in the blessings and gifts of the Holy Ghost.⁴⁴

From the above discussion of the Church in Toronto, it appears evident that wherever the Methodists were in turmoil, the Mormons--if they were on or near the scene--stood to benefit. A seasoned Methodist preacher noted in a letter that Mormonism flourished where there was a great variety of competing sects.

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 139-40.

⁴²Ibid., p. 142 and pp. 150-51.

⁴³Durham, Gospel Kingdom, p. 368.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 368.

When I reached Mount Pleasant, I found a couple of preachers had been there the day before, who are of the sect of the Mormonites. This sect lately sprung up in the United States . . . Their converts profess to speak in unknown touns. sic But what to you may appear most strange is that 14 persons at this place joined them, 3 of them were Methodists. They baptize their converts by immersion . . .

This place surpasses all for parties and sects, that I ever saw. There are Ryanites, Baptists, Quakers, Presbyterians, Churchment, and Methodists . . . (italics mine).⁴⁵

In summary, Toronto affords the best example of how Mormonism took advantage of concurrent social unrest. It could not have appeared at a better time.

⁴⁵Rev. Samual Rose to John Rose, Nov. 21, 1833, Samuel Rose Papers, Ontario Archives, Toronto Ontario, Canada.

CHAPTER VI

THE EMBERS COOL - THE FIRE DIES

1838 marked the zenith of Mormon activity in the province of Upper Canada. With the departure of preachers the caliber of Parley P. Pratt, John E. Page, Orson Pratt and others, who took with them the cream of the Canadian converts, the Mormon position gradually began to erode. Missionaries still reaped new converts during the early and mid-1840's but in fewer numbers. By the mid century mark, the Church had all but abandoned its Canadian proselyting efforts--a situation that prevailed until the end of the century.

After 1838, there was little if any Mormon activity in the three major areas where the Church had previously experienced its greatest success. In the eastern Districts of Midland and Bathurst, where the Young brothers and John E. Page and their associates had once reaped such a numerous harvest, the missionary efforts diminished sharply. Furthermore, the Mt. Pleasant area ceased to provide converts after the initial Latter-day Saints had emigrated. Proselyting efforts literally came to a standstill in Toronto, following the Rebellion and the simultaneous Mormon migration from the provincial capital.

However, there were outposts of sporadic Mormon proselyting activity in other areas of the province that continued into the 1840's. What success the Mormons did experience during these later years was due primarily to Canadian converts returning to their native country in an effort to baptize friends and family.

In 1839, Christopher Merkley, a recent convert from Williamsburg, Dundas County, returned to preach Mormonism in his home area. Having some skill as a preacher, his efforts resulted in the establishment of two or more congregations in the townships of Williamsburg and Mountain in Dundas County east of Kingston.¹

In 1841, Samuel Lake came to Canada on a short-term mission and succeeded in winning a number of converts. In Tossorontio Township (presently Simcoe County), north of Toronto, Lake, and his partner James Standing, also of Canada, baptized approximately thirty, with the Alexander Hill family forming the nucleus of the new Mormon community. Joseph Hill Richards presided over the "Essa and Tossorontio" branch (Essa Township was immediately east of Tossorontio) which grew to include some fifty members.² Most of these were Scottish settlers and Presbyterian by faith and had moved to the area from Lanark County in 1831.

A Simcoe historian noted these settlers and how most emigrated after their conversion.

The Mormon movement in the early forties took some hold in West Essa. A Mr. Lake was the Mormon missionary, and held services from house to house in the settlement, the meeting being attended by crowds, as preaching from higher ideals was then scarce. At these meetings, William Kitchey also did some preaching in an unknown tongue. They baptized in Hall's Creek, having made a number of proselytes. Before long these left their lands, several families in number, and like a swarm of bees they went off all at one time in covered waggons [sic] or prairie schooners, going to swell the Mormon settlement in Illinois or Missouri, and later at Salt Lake City.³

¹Untitled Biography of Christopher Merkley, n.a., p. 2, Christopher Merkley Papers, Church Historical Dept.

²Dell H. and Deloris A. Hill, comp., Daniel Currie Hill Ancestry, pp. 8-16.

³Hunter, "History of Simcoe County," quoted in Melvin S. Tagg, "A Collection of Historical and Genealogical Items, pp. 61-62.

Another example of former Canadians returning to preach occurred in the far western regions of the province, in Lambton and Essex counties. Lambton county lay directly south of Lake Huron and east of the State of Michigan, separated only by the St. Clair River. It was one of the last regions in the province to be developed, not coming under active settlement until the mid 1830's.

This region was not singled out by Church authorities as a suitable missionary field but some Canadian elders, notably Thomas, John and Robert Borrowman made history in the area by baptizing the influential Gardner family, originally from the Bathurst District who had left that region in search of better farming land.⁴ The Gardners were responsible for beginning the village of Alvinston and established the first grist mill in the tiny community. Robert Gardner, Jr. recalled their conversion:

About 1844 the Gospel of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was brought to our neighborhood by an Elder whose name was John Boraman [Borrowman] My brother William joined the Church, to the great surprise of Archibald and I. We were not at home at the time he joined and of course did not oppose him, but said inasmuch as he was a converted Methodist and his sins forgiven what more did he want . . . The Methodist preachers used to hold their meetings in my house, but when their meetings came at the same time as the Mormon's meeting I would go to the Mormon's meetings two miles away . . . I wanted to hear what the Mormons had to say . . .

The Methodists soon withdrew their meetings from my house. I continued to go to hear the Mormons preach, and compared their doctrine with the doctrine of Christ and His Apostles, until I was satisfied it was from God.⁵

Three of the Gardner brothers soon joined the Church. Within a short period of time there were twenty-five members in Alvinston and the

⁴Robert Gardner, Jr., "History of Robert Gardner, Jr.," Robert Gardner, Jr. Papers, Church Historical Dept., pp. 1-2.

⁵Ibid., p. 4.

surrounding area. William Gardner became the Presiding Elder.⁶

In the winter of 1845-1846, according to the account of Robert Gardner, Jr., John A. Smith, arrived in the small Alvinston Community

to tell us that the Saints were driven from Nauvoo by the mob, and would leave that Winter for the Rocky Mountains, and if we wanted to travel with them there was no time to lose. The branch received the message with thankful hearts, and all went to work to dispose of the property the best they could and fitted themselves out with teams and wagons, tents and other things, for a 1600 mile journey.⁷

In giving evidence to the oft-time financial sacrifice that many Mormons endured in order to emigrate, Gardner concluded:

Property at that time was very low in price. My father and I sold our farm consisting of 100 acres fifty of it cleared off and farmed, with a barn 60 feet long and 30 feet of it covered with walnut boards and pine shingles with a 60 foot reed frame and good log house, all for \$500.⁸

Archibald, one of the brothers, possessed even more property, including saw and grist mills,⁹ and suffered severe financial loss in selling out.

A modern Lambton County historian tells of the Gardners exodus from Canada after their conversion.

Gardner had his mills only a few years when Mormon missionaries converted him . . . Later in the year 1846, Gardner's family and other converts chopped a road through the bush to London and abandoned their homes to go to Nauvoo. . . . In 1946, one of the stones from Gardner's mill was erected as a monument to them and Gardner beside the Nauvoo Road that they made, now called Highway 79.¹⁰

Another historian states that Mormon efforts at proselyting "were scattered through the townships of Sarnia, Plympton, Brooke, and

⁶Ibid., p. 7.

⁷Ibid., p. 10.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Jean Turnbull Elford, A History of Lambton County (Sarnia, Ontario: 1967), p. 62.

Enniskillen, centering around what now is Mandaumin, Watford, and Alvinston."¹¹ Further south, in Essex County, there were won a few more converts in the township of Mersea, again due to the efforts of the Borrowman brothers. By 1846, this last cluster of Mormons, in the province also followed precedent by emigrating.

Looking back across the fourteen years (1832-1846) of most active Mormon proselyting activity in Canada, we can see that the Latter-day Saints experienced a good return on its missionary investments. From all available evidence, it seems that approximately 1500 to 2000 Canadians joined the Church. Many cannot be specifically accounted for but the Table 2 enumerates the number of known branches organized in Upper Canada between 1830 and 1850 with an appraisal of the highest attained membership for each.

TABLE 2

TOTAL KNOWN BRANCHES IN UPPER CANADA WITH ACTUAL AND ESTIMATED MEMBERSHIPS,^a1800-1850.

Loughborough	(40)	Bastard (Portland)	(50)	L'Original	(11)
W. Loughborough	(40)	Mt. Pleasant	(50)	Churchville	(100)
Bedford	(50)	Malahide	(50)	Charleston	(100)
Nth Crosby	68	Warwick-Alvinston	35	Scarborough-	(50)
Sth. Crosby	(50)	Leeds	(50)	Markham	
W. Bastard	73	Williamsburg	(50)	Earnestown	55
Essa-Tossoronto	43	Nth. Bathurst	(50)	Bathurst	58
Whitby	25	Mountain	(40)	E. Bathurst	(50)

SOURCE: Canadian Mission Manuscript; Tagg, "A Collection of Historical and Genealogical Items,"; "Brigham Young Journal"; "Joseph Smith, Jr. Journal"; "Joseph Young, Sr. Journals"; Journal History; "Zadok Judd Journal"; "Joseph Fielding Journal"; "Christopher Merkley Journal"; and Pratt, Autobiography.

^aEstimated Membership figures are bracketed.

¹¹Address by William Nisbet to Sarnia Historical Society, as cited in Melvin S. Tagg's "A Collection of Historical and Genealogical Items," p. 64.

Besides the above, there were small groups of Mormons in Mersea, (not far from present day Windsor), Long Point, Perth, Brantford and some surrounding communities, downtown Toronto, and Kingston. With so much to show for only a few years of concentrated missionary effort, one wonders what Mormonism could have accomplished had it remained. However, the emphasis in the early years was upon the gathering and Canadian Mormons moved southward to build the Kingdom in the United States.

There were forces outside the Mormon community which also contributed to its waning influence. Political turmoil and dissatisfaction, economic depression and ecclesiastical discord, which for a period of time had aided the Mormon effort, gradually subsided inside Canada, and the social appeal of the call to gather to a new land of new opportunity lessened as Canadian society improved.

Whereas politically the late 1830's represented years of conflict and violence, the 1840's, in contrast, brought stability. The appointment of Lord Durham as Governor-General to set in shape colonial policy in British North America was integral to the improvement of the political situation. Sympathetic to the Canadian needs, he made many recommendations in his famous "Report" the most important of which were 1) the union of the Canadas, 2) the granting of responsible government, and 3) the separation of local from imperial affairs.¹²

At the core of Durham's report was the proposal that with union must also come self-rule by which England would gradually grant to the provincial assembly increased responsibilities and privileges. Upper

¹²Edgar McInnis, Canada - A Political and Social History, p. 227.

Canada was to be governed by the voice of her people more than by the dictum of an appointed Governor-General. According to one historian "this meant responsible government as advocated by the Canadian reformers," particularly Robert Baldwin.¹³ The inevitable consequence was the reduction of imperial aristocratic interference and the rise of Canadian democracy and autonomy. The reformist parties in Canada were jubilant and although there was much controversy concerning Durham's recommendations, especially from the Tories, the Family Compact, and others, Durham's Report eventually carried the day. This marked the beginning of modern Canada and eventually ended the smoldering political discontent.

In economics, improvements were also made. Durham's plea for a union of both Canadas which occurred in 1841 under the Act of Union, injected a buoyant confidence in the Canadian economic setting. The country gradually recovered from the financial panic of 1836-38. By the end of 1839, the trade of Upper Canada had begun to pick up and real estate values were increasing. British demand for Canadian foodstuffs at good prices spurred on greater Canadian farm exports. Shipping tonnage increased noticeably.¹⁴ Canada also benefitted from the British Corn Laws of 1842 that gave Canadian wheat a greater tariff preference than wheat from America.¹⁵ The Act of Union also prompted England to provide a £1,500,000 imperial loan which vastly improved

¹³Ibid., p. 228.

¹⁴D. G. Creighton, The Commercial Empire of the St. Lawrence 1760-1850, p. 341.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 347-48.

the financial situation. The government launched large-scale public projects including developing the Welland Canal and improving the St. Lawrence River for large-scale navigation. For several years, Canada enjoyed a return to prosperity which effectively removed many of those indigent forces which had previously contributed to the massive emigration.

Finally, in the ecclesiastical setting, the passage in 1839 of the Clergy Reserve Bill which proposed that "after honouring existing obligations . . . one half of the income from the sale of the remaining Clergy Reserves should be divided among all other denominations" removed "the one great overwhelming grievance."¹⁶ Afterwards, the Methodists in particular began to close ranks and the once festering divisions healed as the Act of Union brought Canada a new sense of political independence and identity. No longer was the situation as ripe for dissenting faiths such as Mormonism to stand by and pick up the disaffected stragglers.

Thus it may be concluded that within the few years immediately following the zenith of Mormon activity in Upper Canada, many of the social irritants that had once benefitted the Latter-day Saint cause, were effectively removed.

Doctrinal Discords and Sectarian Opposition

As Mormon proselyting efforts intensified and as her religious platform became more familiar, it increasingly became the object of sectarian opposition. Eventually Mormonism was contained by the

¹⁶Craig, Upper Canada, p. 273-74.

pluralism it profitted from. Although such a pluralistic religious society had allowed for the entertainment of the new faith, in time enough of the diverse sects and secular groups joined together to oppose Mormonism that their combined efforts were very influential.

There were two fundamental tenets of Mormon doctrine that brought down increasing opposition and condemnation. The first was the emphasis on a living prophet as personified in Joseph Smith. The second was the presentation of the Book of Mormon as a book of scripture. The Canadian press carried many an article on these two subjects. In general, the Canadian press was very much opposed to Mormonism. There were some exceptions to this, of course. The Constitution and the Globe, both Toronto newspapers and both rather liberal in their political orientation, managed to print as much good as bad about the Latter-day Saints. However, most major conservative newspapers of the day were generally critical. These included the widespread and widely read Christian Guardian (which as a Methodist organ had an axe to grind with the Mormons from the beginning), the St. Catherines Journal, The Brockville Recorder, The Kingston Chronicle, The Cobourg Star, The Chatham Gleaner, The Cornwall Observer, The Bathurst Courier and other less known newspapers. The author has discovered two hundred and twenty articles in nineteen different Canadian newspapers between 1830 and 1850 which dealt with the Mormons. Most of these (90%) were originally written in the United States and published in American newspapers. Invariably Canadian editors added their own commentary after reproducing an American piece. The overwhelming majority of these articles were critical of Mormon doctrine and of the Mormon missionary efforts in Canada. And since, as Gerald

Craig insists, "the Upper Canadians were a newspaper-reading much more than a book-reading people,"¹⁷ the Mormon cause was not assisted by the Canadian press.

The general themes or tones that came across the printed page are those of criticism, condescension, and even pity for the "deluded fanatics." Joseph Smith was usually given to appear as an imposter, a fraud, without morals or decency--although this sentiment changed to being more sympathetic towards him and the Church after his martyrdom in 1844. Newspapers made a point of exploiting his money digging propensities. Appearing in a December 1834 issue of the Christian Guardian was the following account not unlike in tone to the accounts of Joseph that appeared elsewhere in many eastern American newspapers. In a copied letter from a Palmyra, New York resident, appeared these comments:

I begin with the leader 'Joe' as he is and has been called for twenty years past. For ten years he has been a man of questionable character, of intemperate habits, and a noted money digger . . . Joe pretended that he had at length found, by digging, a wonderful curiosity, which he kept closely concealed.

After he had told different stories . . . he at length called it, the Golden Plates of the Book of Mormon.¹⁸

The pages of the Christian Guardian, inasmuch as they reflected Methodist sentiment, carried the tone of sectarian discord as exemplified in the following calumnious article from a Methodist minister.

Marshville, Nov. 17, 1842.

Sir, - If it ever was the duty of the pulpit and the press to declare war against the delusions and absurdities of fanaticism, and unmask the brassy face of hypocrisy, it is at the present time. Mormonism is exerting its baleful influence, and

¹⁷Gerald Craig, Upper Canada, p. 200.

¹⁸Christian Guardian (Toronto), 3 December 1834.

prowling through the Province like a beast of prey, seeking whom it may devour. Some persons possessing warm hearts and weak heads have already fallen into the embrace of this delusive and dangerous error. They unfortunately mistake the frothy feeling of animal excitement for the unerring influence of the Holy Spirit. Joe Smith, an illiterate and vulgar imposter, surrounded by a coterie of foolish persons, sets himself up for a prophet, whilst good and sensible men set him down for an incorrigible blasphemer. His dupes regard his hollow mummerly and unmeaning jargon as infallible evidence of the divine authenticity of his mission . . . Soon after the book of Mormon was issued, I had a personal interview with the man who printed the first edition of that history of hobgoblins and book of deception--He informed me, and others concurred in the statement, that Joe was lazy, ignorant, and superstitious, indulging an unwavering belief in dreams, spooks, [sic] ghosts, hobgoblins, fortune-telling, witchcraft, and that the earth was enriched with hidden treasures. Much of his time was occupied in seeking for buried treasure, and he became an expert necromancer. He usually carried a peepstone and a divining-rod with him, and his indolent and credulous associates assisted him in digging into hills, mountains, and lonely places for gold. - These excavations were afterwards pointed out as the original graves of the notorious places. Prior to the discovery of the plates, he pretends to have had several interviews with angels, who informed him of their location . . ."19

Commenting on the rise of Mormonism in L'Original (Prescott), the Congregational Harbinger of Montreal reflected a similar attitude toward the Prophet Joseph Smith. The article was reprinted in the Christian Guardian.

A few individuals have embraced the crude absurdities of the imposter of Nauvoo . . . Surely enough is now ascertained as to the personal character and public personage of Joseph Smith to induce, on the part of all rational men, contempt for him as a knave, or compassion for him as a maniac . . ."20

If it were not Joseph Smith the person that came under attack, then most often it was the Book of Mormon, although both topics were often criticized simultaneously as the monstrous creator and his

¹⁹Christian Guardian, 21 November 1842.

²⁰Christian Guardian, 8 February 1843.

monstrous creation. The Book of Mormon was either attributed to the fruitful mind of Rev. Solomon Spalding or an outgrowth of the wild and demented imagination of him who first told of it.²¹

Men tried to discredit the book on many fronts. One writer called it a "mere rhapsody . . . a constant endeavor to imitate the simplicity of the Old Testament narratives." "The style of writing was inadequate . . . a wretched pigmy" whereas it ought to be "the perfection of writing." The Book of Mormon was pictured as being contradictory to the Bible and merely a copy of whole parts of that sacred book.²² Quite simply, outside critics of the book saw it as a threat to the authority of the Bible and attacked it on every front, including the argument that it was not only unscriptural but unnecessary.

The authors of this miserable production have made a miserable attempt to imitate the style of King James the 1st . . . Every page and paragraph abounds with blunders which might make a school boy blush . . . Is it possible for the Book of Mormon to furnish any arguments in favour of experimental religion not found in the Bible? Is it possible for the Book of Mormon to furnish invitations and promises more encouraging than those found in the Bible? . . . Can it point out a safer and shorter way to that better and brighter land? Does it contain any important and indispensable articles of faith omitted in religious publications . . . Can it present a better and more correct code of morals than the Book of books presents? . . ."²³

With increased Mormon missionary success opposition in the press multiplied. From 1831 until 1835, only eleven articles appeared in the Canadian press which this author has examined that were critical in nature. But between 1836 and 1842, the period of the greatest Mormon missionary activity in Canada, fifty-seven articles appeared

²¹Brockville Recorder, 9 September 1836.

²²Christian Guardian, 19 March and 27 May 1840.

²³Ibid., 21 November 1842.

similar in tone to those thus far quoted. Such a constant campaign to discredit the Latter-day Saints very probably had an injurious effect on the Mormon cause. It became increasingly more difficult for one to be a Mormon and not suffer social abuse or worse.

Appearing in the Kingston Herald was the following denunciation of the Mormon gathering process, no doubt to discourage others who might have been considering the possibility.

Not long ago we mentioned that several persons in this District had been so far misled as to join the fanatical sect called Mormonites. We have since understood that one of the individuals has returned from the "Land of Promise" quite satisfied that deception is the basis on which Mormonism is founded.²⁴

Further and more pronounced hostility towards the Mormons came from the sectarian newspaper Christian Guardian during the 1837-38 era of greatest Mormon activity. The following excerpt is a good example:

Notwithstanding it presents every mark of an imposition, some thousands have been so strongly convinced that it came from heaven, that they have submitted to the loss of friends, the diminishing of property, and the danger and trouble of a pilgrimage to the distant land of Missouri. Some in Upper Canada having the same faith, have resolved on the same folly. But for a recent revelation requiring the preachers to send up to Zion only the 'wise' (or wealthy) many would have forsaken their native or adopted country; and they reluctantly submit to spend another winter within the precincts of Babylon. Not far from this town, lies a dead child unburied, that its parents may have the pleasure of covering it with the earth of Zion!

The object of their gathering in one part, is to escape the calamities soon to visit other parts of the world; as if God could not save his people apart as well as when together.²⁵

Steadily the opposition mounted. Ministers began to increasingly tackle the Mormons as evidenced by the following Methodist report

²⁴An Article originally in the Kingston Herald appearing in the Canadian Emigrant and Western District Advertiser (Sandwich, U. Canada) 27 July 1833.

²⁵Christian Guardian, 29 November 1837.

from the western end of the province, where the opposition seemed more intense.

Mormonism! This deluded and fanatical sect having occasioned considerable excitement in Oakland and its vicinity, it was thought necessary by those who love the truth, that a challenge should be forwarded to the leaders of that party, to a thorough discussion of the Divine Authority of the Book of Mormon . . .

The Rev. James Nall of Burford undertook to prove that the Book of Mormon was not divinely inspired, but on the contrary was a base forgery . . .

It was understood at the time he commenced, that the Mormon preachers would have come forward to a discussion of each point separately, but was surprised to find, that after he had gone through with the first part, no defence would be put in by his opponents, until he had gone through with the whole of his objections to the book, after occupying the floor for four hours and a half in supporting the cause of truth, and satisfactorily proving the deception and base fabrication of Mormonism to an attentive and crowded house, a truly miserable defence was attempted by one of the Mormon preachers . . . Many got up and left the house.

After working upon the passions of the people nearly two hours, he came to a close, when a resolution condemnatory of the Book of Mormon, as a base fabrication and a libel on the Christian Religion was passed universally with four exceptions of which three were Mormon Preachers, and one a layman who appears to be thoroughly initiated into their system . . .²⁶

Many ministers refused to allow Mormons the opportunity to preach their religion in areas where they had desired to preach. According to Orson Pratt

brother Freeman Nickerson and myself went to visit a Baptist Priest in the town of Boston Mills desired to have a privilege of preaching to the people in that place who were principally Baptist but he refused and said he would take the responsibility upon his own head and suffer the consequences in the general judgement. We therefore left him and washed our feet against him.²⁷

Parley P. Pratt recorded that after his arrival in Toronto in April 1836, he "sought in vain for a chapel, court house or other

²⁶Christian Guardian, 27 July 1837. The article originally appeared in the Brantford Sentinel.

²⁷"Journal of Orson Pratt," May 1836 in Orson Pratt Papers, Church Historical Dept.

public building in which to preach, all being closed against me."²⁸

Anti-Mormon sentiment almost broke out into harmful persecution, as evidenced by the following report by Orson Pratt.

On the 27th of April last Elder F. [reeman] Nickerson and myself went to the village of Brantford, U. C. and obtained the privilege from one of the trustees of the school house of leaving an appointment for the next evening . . . The next evening I went down alone . . . to fill the appointment and went to the school house, found it crowded with men but no females. I went to the pulpit and was about to open the meeting by reading a chapter in the Bible when the . . . congregation began to stamp with their feet and hiss. They also began to be divided the more part were determined to hear, while the remainder said that I should not preach, and the whole house was in an uproar some crying one thing and some another . . . while others were yelling delusion, imposter, etc. and they began to contend one with another very sharply, becoming angry they proceeded to blows, two or three were knocked down in the school house. The noise was such for one or two hours that it might have been heard some distance, but I stood in the pulpit very much composed lifting my heart in silent prayer . . .

At length some gentlemen present kindly assisted me in escaping . . . The whole congregation however followed us through the main street of the village and seeing myself surrounded . . . I concluded the better way of escape would be to go into a tavern and pass out the back door, which I accordingly did . . .

Thus we can see the zeal of the religious denominations of our land in opposing what they call Mormonism."²⁹

Perhaps the following portrays what might have been a turning point against the Mormons as they were maligned by other sectarian groups and had not the manpower or influence to withstand the change in attitude and common opinion marshalled against it.

Dear Sir, - In the present day, there is a great stir, and noise in the Western world about Mormonism . . . The vile monster has made its appearance in this neighbourhood [Credit] and some of its votaries have held conversations with some of our Indians . . . At another time, one of our Indian Local

²⁸Journal History, 26 May 1836, Church Historical Dept.

²⁹The LDS Messenger, Advocate, 2 (September 1836): 396-97 for a letter from Orson Pratt to Oliver Cowdery, dated 5 September 1836.

Preachers, came to me to enquire something of the opinions of the Mormons. I happened to have a copy of the "Book of Mormon" by me. I proceeded to show him some parts of that senseless production, wherein it contradicts the Scriptures. He listened attentively for some time. At length he interrupted me by saying, "Shut it up, shut it up: if it contradicts the Scriptures I want to hear no more of it. This Book" continued he emphatically, and with a peculiar air, laying his hand on a small Bible, laying on the table, "does me good here," laying his hand on his heart, "and I want no other" . . .

Benjamin Slight
Credit, Dec. 13, 1837³⁰

What Mormon activity existed in the province after 1838 was almost always accompanied by strong local prejudices and occasional violence, as evidenced by the following:

In the early part of January, 1844, Elder William Burton and his wife came to Mersea, in order that Sister Burton might bid goodbye to her parents in that vicinity . . . While in Mersea, Elder Burton preached the gospel whenever possible, which caused much opposition, many falsehoods being circulated in regard to him. Some exhibited their wickedness by baptizing a dog in a place that had been prepared to baptize some converts on January 2. A few days later placards were posted in various parts of the town, threatening to tar and feather Elder Burton, if he preached any more. This, however, did not deter Elder Burton from preaching the next evening, when a gun was fired, but no harm done except to disturb the meeting . . .³¹

What was becoming painfully evident for the immediate future of the Latter-day Saints in the province was that whereas the religious persecution the Mormons were suffering through their expulsions from Missouri and Illinois often led to a strong sense of loyalty and unity, persecution in Canada generally resulted in emigration. The Church sacrificed whatever influence it may once have had in Canada for the purpose of centralizing and consolidating its position south of the border. For the next half century and more, the Mormon influence in

³⁰Christian Guardian, 29 December 1837.

³¹"Canadian Mission Manuscript," 22 January 1844.

the province was negligible. The 1861 official Census³² indicated that there were only seventy-four Mormons (who identified themselves as such) in the entire province. It would not be until the end of World War I that the Church would create a separate and distinct Canadian Mission in Ontario,³³ headquartered in Toronto, and once again resume the missionary efforts that in the 1830's had once netted the Church some of its finest leaders.

Mormonism was not alone in suffering a waning influence in Canada. Other millenarian sects such as the Millerites, Campbellites, Irvingites, and Primitive Methodists which had once been active in the 1830's and 1840's, had all but vanished. Where once such sects thrived on political disunity, rural depopulation, economic disparity and depression, and social disequilibrium, by the 1860's such sects could no longer exploit these disruptive conditions. As the indigent population gained social status, became more middle class and more urban; as the province experienced a decline in political and sectarian conflict, millenial sects ceased to flourish.³⁴

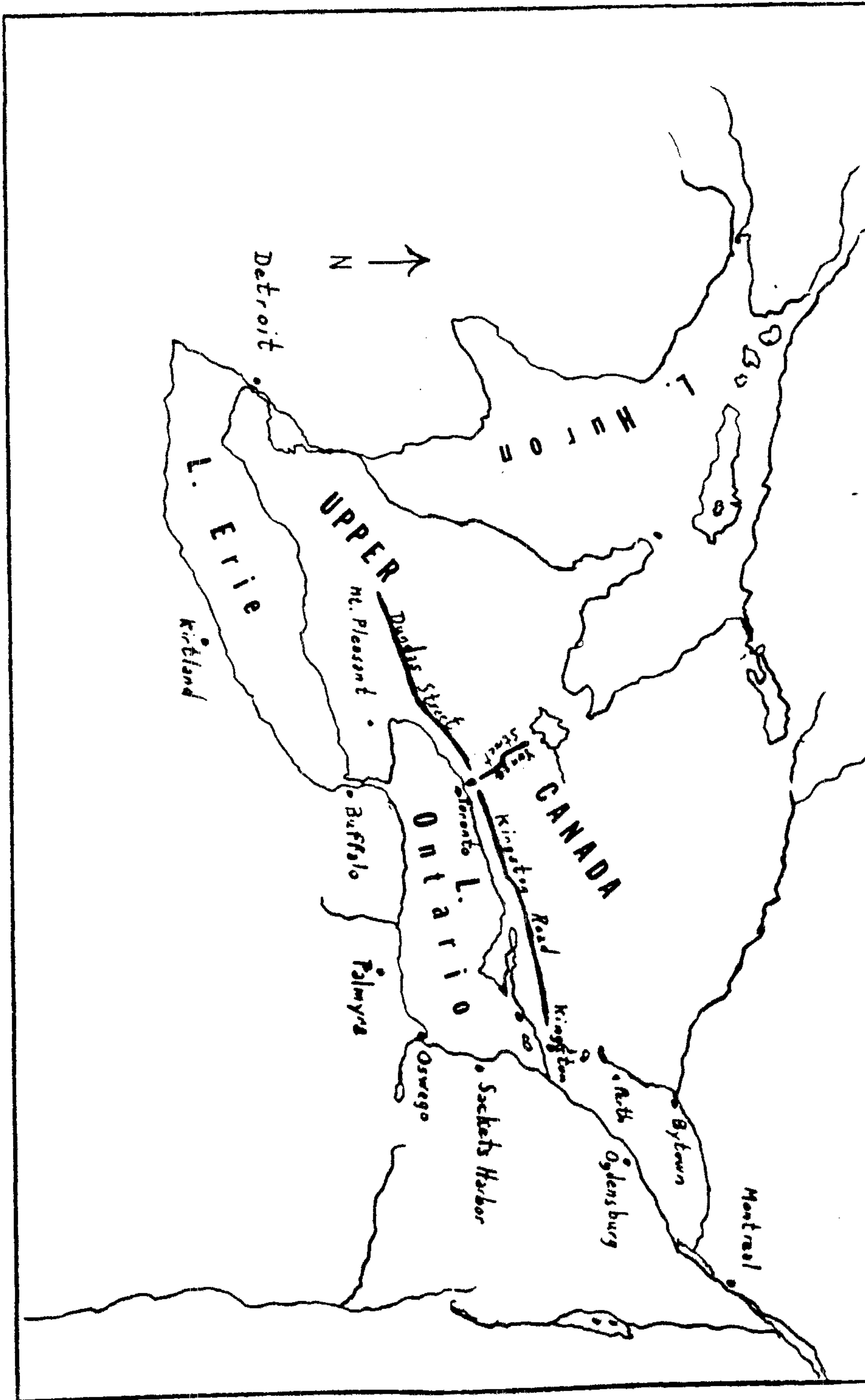
³²Census of the Canadas 1861-62, 2 vols. (Quebec: Printed by John Lovell, at His Steam Printing Press, est. 1853), 1:40-71.

³³Charles H. Hart, "Canadian Mission," The Improvement Era, 31 (May 1928): 572.

³⁴S. D. Clark, Church and Sect in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1948) pp. 272 and 328.

APPENDIX

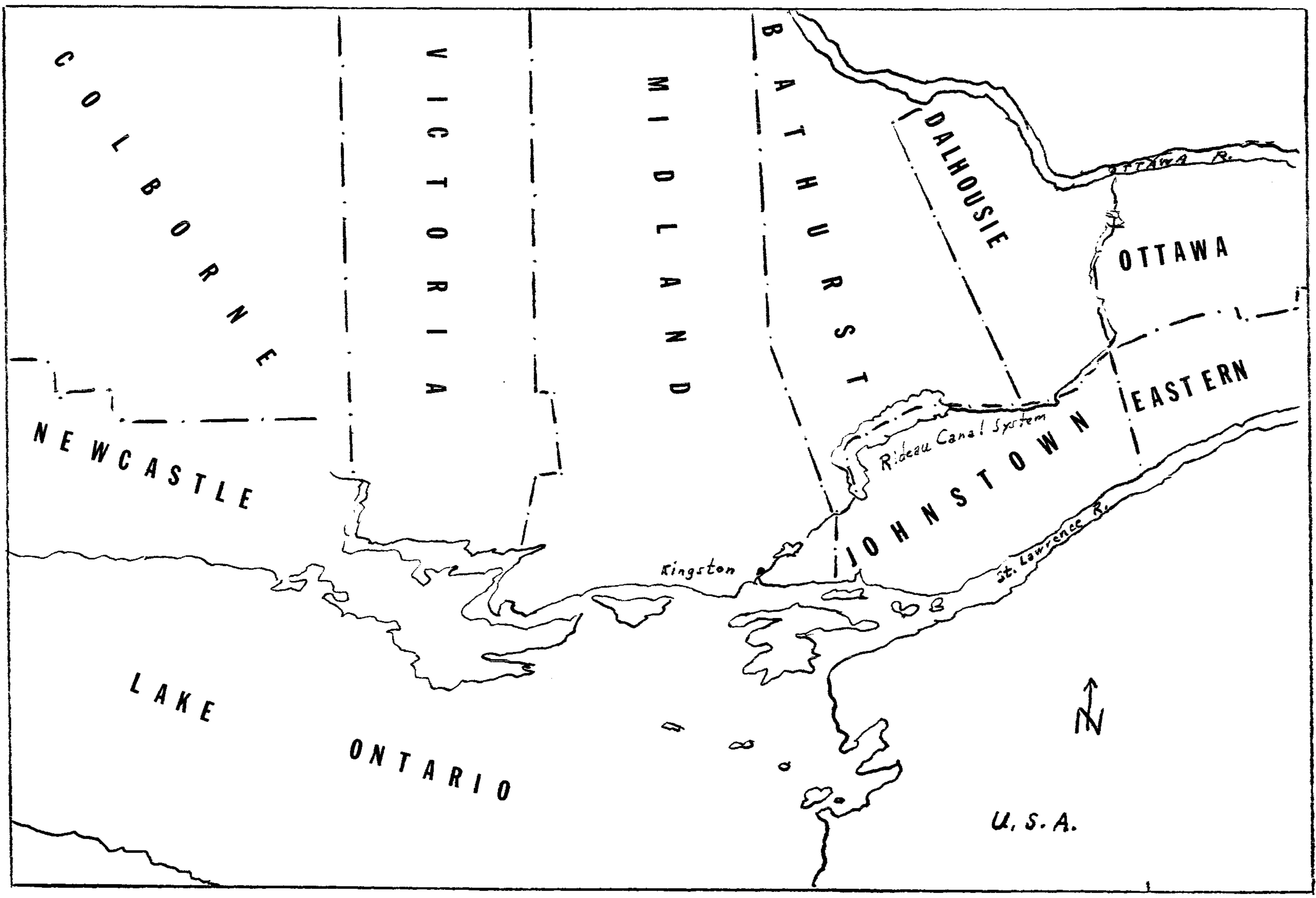
APPENDIX 1



Map of Upper Canada - Approximately 1825

APPENDIX 2

Map of Districts in Eastern Upper Canada



APPENDIX 3

MISSIONARY EFFORTS IN UPPER CANADA 1830-50^a

Year	Missionary	Area of Labor
1830	Joseph Smith, Sr.	North Shores Lake Ontario
	Don Carlos Smith	North Shores Lake Ontario
1832	Joseph Young, Sr.	Earnestown-Loughborough
	Phineas Young	Earnestown-Loughborough
	Elial Strong	Earnestown-Loughborough
	Enos Curtis	Earnestown-Loughborough
	Eliazer Miller	Earnestown-Loughborough
	Daniel Wood	Earnestown-Loughborough
	Abraham Wood	Earnestown-Loughborough
1833	Joseph Young, Sr.	Earnestown-Loughborough
	Phineas Young	Earnestown-Loughborough
	Brigham Young	Earnestown-Loughborough
	William Draper	Earnestown-Loughborough
	Joseph Smith, Jr.	Mt. Pleasant
	Sidney Rigdon	Mt. Pleasant
	Freeman Nickerson	Mt. Pleasant
	Moses Nickerson	Mt. Pleasant
Orson Pratt	Brantford	

SOURCE: Compiled from all documents used in this history.

^a Only missionaries for whom there is record are listed.

APPENDIX 3 (Cont'd)

1834	Missionary	Area of Labor
1834	John P. Greene	Mt. Pleasant
	Zerabahal Snow	Unknown
	William Draper	Earnestown
1835	William Draper	Earnestown
	Brigham Young	Earnestown
	Peter Dustin	Malahide
1836	Orson Hyde	Toronto and Kingston
	Orson Pratt	Toronto and Brantford
	Parley P. Pratt	Toronto and Kingston
	Freeman Nickerson	Toronto
	Almond W. Babbitt	Toronto
	Benjamin Brown	Toronto
	John E. Page	Bathurst District
	William Draper	Earnestown-Kingston
	Luke Johnson	Earnestown
1837	Joseph Smith, Jr.	Toronto
	Robert B. Thompson	Toronto
	Mercy R. Fielding Thompson	Toronto

APPENDIX 3 (Cont'd)

Year	Missionary	Area of Labor
1837	Mary Fielding	Toronto
	Joseph Fielding	Toronto
	John Taylor	Toronto
	William Law	Toronto
	Wilson Law	Toronto
	John Snider	Toronto
	Isaac Russell	Toronto
	Theodore Turley	Toronto
	Parley P. Pratt	Toronto
	John P. Greene	Toronto
	John E. Page	Bathurst District
	William Harris	Bathurst District
	William Draper	Bathurst District
	Wilford Woodruff	Bathurst District
	Jonathan Hale	Bathurst District
Zera Pulsipher	Unknown	
----- Baker	Unknown	
1838	John P. Greene	Toronto

APPENDIX 3 (Cont'd)

Year	Missionary	Area of Labor
1838	Christopher Merkley	Dundas County
	Elijah Able	Dundas County
	Arza Adams	Kingston
1840	Benjamin F. Johnson	Union District
1841	John F. Morrison	Kingston
	---- Bates	Kingston
	Samuel Lake	Essa-Tossorontio
	James Standing	Essa-Tossorontio
	William Burton	Mersea
1843	Bradford W. Elliot	Niagara District
	Ralph G. Coats	Niagara District
1844	Gordon E. Deuel	Addington County
	William Burton	Mersea
	Robert T. Burton	Mersea
1846	Robert & John Borrowman	Lambton County
	Freeman Nickerson	Mt. Pleasant

APPENDIX 4

KNOWN CANADIAN CONVERTS, 1830-1850

Name	Place of Conversion	Year
Adams, Arza & Family	Not known	Not known
Bailey, (Not known)	Not Known	Not Known
Barnum, C. D.	North Crosby	1836
Barrus, Emery	Mt. Pleasant	1833
Barzee, James	Fredericksburg	1835
_____, Betsey	Fredericksburg	1835
Beach, Truman	Portland	1836
_____, Lyman	Portland	1836
Beamer, (Not known)	Colborne	1833
Belnap, Gilbert	U.S.A.	1836-37
Belnap, Gilbert	U.S.A.	1838*
Birch, Mary	Mt. Pleasant	1833
Bolton, Samuel	Warwick	1845
Boice, John	Fredericksburg	1835
_____, Jane	Fredericksburg	1835
_____, William	Earnestown-Loughborough	1835*
_____, Martin	Earnestown-Loughborough	1835*
Bridgeland, Lucy	Toronto ^a	1837*
Bullock, James	Tossorontio	1840

SOURCE: Compiled from all documents used in this history

^aReferences to Toronto include all surrounding localities

*Approximate year

APPENDIX 4 (Cont'd)

Name	Place of Conversion	Year
Bullock, Mary	Tossorontio	1840
Burtch, Audelia	Scotland, U. C.	1836
Burton, William & Family	Mersea	1842*
Burton, Robert & Family	Mersea	1842*
Chipman, Ami & Family	Portland	1836
_____, Stephen & Family	Portland	1836
Clark, Samuel	Mt. Pleasant	1836*
_____, Mariah	Mt. Pleasant	1836*
Cook, Phebe	Mt. Pleasant	1833
Cooper, Harvey J.	Mt. Pleasant	1833
Corry, George	Warwick	1845
Cox, William	Earnestown-Loughborough	1835*
Dawson, John	Toronto	1836*
_____, Frances	Toronto	1836*
_____, Isabella	Toronto	1836*
_____, Margaret	Toronto	1836*
_____, Ruth	Toronto	1836*
Detlor, John, Jr.	Bath-Napanee	Not Known
Devenish, Henry & Family	Toronto	1836

APPENDIX 4 (Cont'd)

Name	Place of Conversion	Year
Dickson, William	Portland	1836
Dixon, Billia	Bastard Township	1836
_____, David	Bastard Township	1836
Draper, William	Earnestown-Loughborough	1832
_____, William	Earnestown-Loughborough	1832
_____, Lydia L.	Earnestown-Loughborough	1832
Eaton, (not known) & Family	Bastard Township	1837
Eddy, Charles	Scotland, U. C.	1836
Elliot, Dave	Mt. Pleasant	Unknown
Ellsworth, Benjamin	Bastard Township	1836
_____, Noel	Scotland, U. C.	1836
Empey, William & Parents	Preston	Not Known
Ferre, Lodawick	Bastard Township	1836
_____, Roswell C.	Bastard Township	1836
Fielding, Joseph	Toronto	1836
Fielding, Mary	Toronto	1836
_____, Mercy	Toronto	1836
File, Joseph & Family	Bath-Napanee	Not Known
Flanners, (Not Known) & Family	Mt. Pleasant	1833

APPENDIX 4 (Cont'd)

Name	Place of Conversion	Year
Gardner, Archibald & Family	Warwick	1844
_____, Margaret	Warwick	1844
_____, Robert & Family	Warwick	1844
_____, Robert J.	Warwick	1844
_____, William & Family	Warwick	1844
Gates, Mary	Mt. Pleasant	1833
Gibbs, Elizabeth	Mt. Pleasant	1833
Clines, (Unknown) & Family	Toronto	1836
Goodson, John	Toronto	1836
Graham, "Mrs."	Toronto	1837
Hales, Stephen & Family	Toronto	1836
Hall, William	Tossorontio	1840
_____, Jane	Tossorontio	1840
Handy, Charles	Tossorontio	1840
_____, Mary	Tossorontio	1840
Harris, Rachel	Malahide	1836
Hartman (Not Known)	Earnestown-Loughborough	1836
Harvey, Mary Ann	Scotland, U. C.	1836
Hill, Agnes	Tossorontio	1840

APPENDIX 4 (Cont'd)

Name	Place of Conversion	Year
Hill, Alexander	Tossorontio	1840
_____, Archibald	Tossorontio	1840
_____, Elizabeth	Tossorontio	1840
_____, Esabela	Tossorontio	1840
_____, John	Tossorontio	1840
_____, Margaret	Tossorontio	1840
Holmes, Milton	Not Known	Not Known
Horne, Isabelle	Toronto	1836
_____, Joseph	Toronto	1836
Houghton, John	North Crosby	1836
_____, Oliver	North Crosby	1836
Hubbard, Caroline	Mt. Pleasant	1833
Humphrey, H. & Wife	Toronto	1836
_____, (Not Known) & Wife	Toronto	1836
Hunt, Cyrus	Scotland, U. C.	1836
_____, Lucinda	Scotland, U. C.	1836
Hunter, (Not Known)	Toronto	1836
Jackson, (Now Known) & Family	Hamilton	1833
Johnson, Edward	Malahide	1836
Judd, Arza	North Crosby	1836

APPENDIX 4 (Cont'd)

Name	Place of Conversion	Year
Judd, Artemus	North Crosby	1836
_____, Joel	North Crosby	1836
_____, Mary	North Crosby	1836
_____, Thomas	North Crosby	1836
Kavanaugh, Sarah	Toronto	1836
Kent, Eliza	Mt. Pleasant	1833
_____, Christopher	Mt. Pleasant	1833
Lake, Janes & Family	Earnestown-Loughborough	1832
Lamoreaux, Andrew L.	Toronto	Not Known
Lander, Ebenezer	Bastard Township	Not Known
Landers, John	Bastard Township	1836
Law, Wilson	Toronto	1837*
_____, William	Toronto	1837*
Lawrence, (Not Known)	Toronto	1836
Lee, Zenus	Bastard Township	1836
Levi, Frederick	Toronto	1837
Lloyd, (Not Known)	Bath-Napanee	Not Known
Luckam, Mary	Warwick	1844
_____, Robert	Warwick	1844
McAllister, Samuel	Mt. Pleasant	1833
McKnoll (Not known)	Toronto	1836
MacLanin, David	Tossorontio	1840

APPENDIX 4 (Cont'd)

Name	Place of Conversion	Year
MacLanin, Jane	Tossorontio	1840
Mansfield, John	Scotland, U. C.	1836
Miguire, (Now Known)	Earnestown-Loughborough	1832
Mooney, James	Tossorontio	1840
_____, Maryan	Tossorontio	1840
Mulholland, ^{James} (Not Known)	Toronto	1836
Nickerson, Eliazer	Mt. Pleasant	1833
_____, Eliza F.	Mt. Pleasant	1833
_____, Moses	Mt. Pleasant	1833
Now, Andrew	Mt. Pleasant	1833
Park, David & Family	Warwick	1845
_____, Janes & Family	Warwick	1845
_____, William & Family	Warwick	1845
Potter, Clara	(Not Known)	(Not Known)
Richards, John	Tossorontio	1846
_____, Agnes	Tossorontio	1846
Roberts, John	Bastard Township	1836
Russell, Isaac & Family	Toronto	1836
Scott, Isaac	Toronto	1836
_____, Jacob	Toronto	1836

APPENDIX 4 (Cont'd)

Name	Place of Conversion	Year
Scott, Robert	Toronto	1836
Seaman, William	Portland Township	1836
_____, Amanda	Portland Township	1836
Seely, David	(Not Known)	(Not Known)
Snider, John & Family	Toronto	1836
Southworth, Chester	Leeds Co.	1837
_____, Mary B.	Leeds Co.	1837
_____, Sarah	Leeds Co.	1837
Standing, James	Boston Mills	1836
Stephens, (Not Known) & Family	Mt. Pleasant	1833
Stevens, Arnold	Portland Township	1836
_____, Marinda	Portland Township	1836
_____, William	Portland Township	1836
Stoddard, Lyman	Portland	1836
_____, Truman	Portland	1836
Stowbridge, Prechard	Mt. Pleasant	1833
(SON) Taylor, John	Toronto	1836
(FATHER) TAYLOR, JAMES & AGUE		
Thompson, Robert B.	Toronto	1836
Turley, Theodore & Family	Toronto	1836
Van Louven, Cornelius	Earnestown-Loughborough	1832

APPENDIX 4 (Cont'd)

Name	Place of Conversion	Year
Van Louven, John	Earnestown-Loughborough	1836
_____, Ramson	Earnestown-Loughborough	1836
Walton, John & Family	Toronto	1836
Wardlaw, James	Toronto	1836
_____, Margaret	Toronto	1836
Weston, William A.	Bastard Township	1837
Whittle, Thomas Levi	? Metron, Essex, Ontario	1837
Wilkinson, Matilda	Tossorontio	1840
Williams, Janes Van Nostrand	Toronto	1836
Wood, Abraham & Family	Earnestown-Loughborough	1832
_____, Daniel & Family	Earnestown-Loughborough	1832
Wright, Alexander	(Not Known)	1836

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A STUDY OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF
LATTER-DAY SAINTS IN UPPER CANADA
1830-1850

Richard Edmond Bennett

Department of History

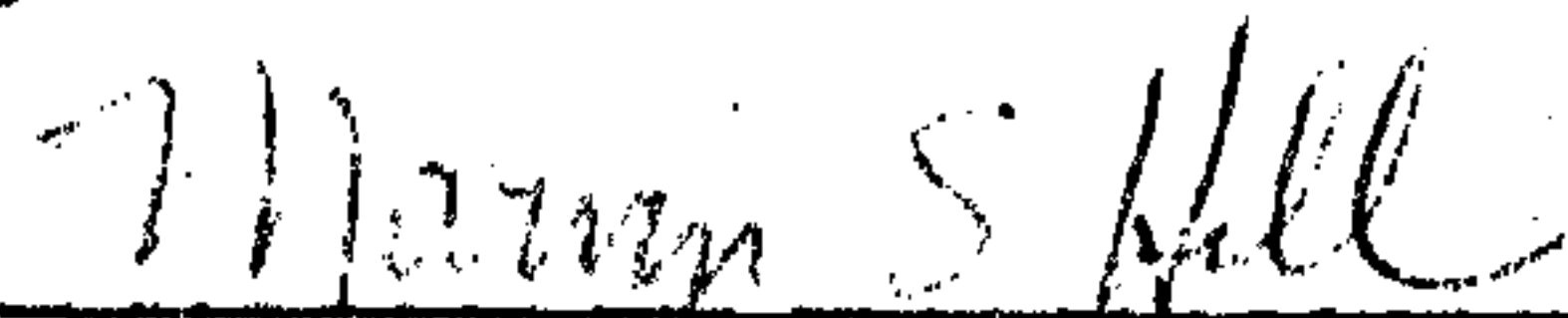
M. A. Degree, August 1975

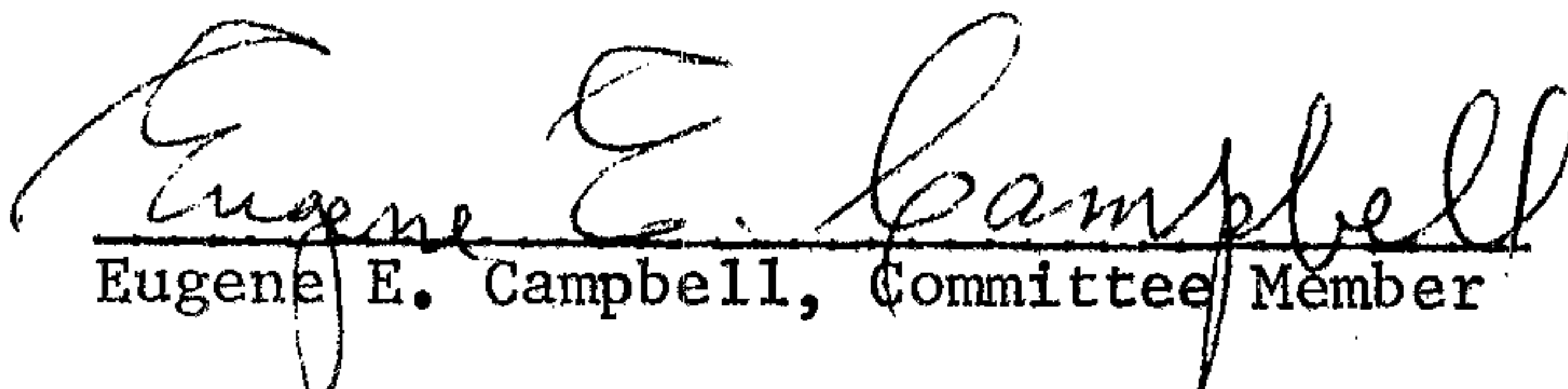
ABSTRACT

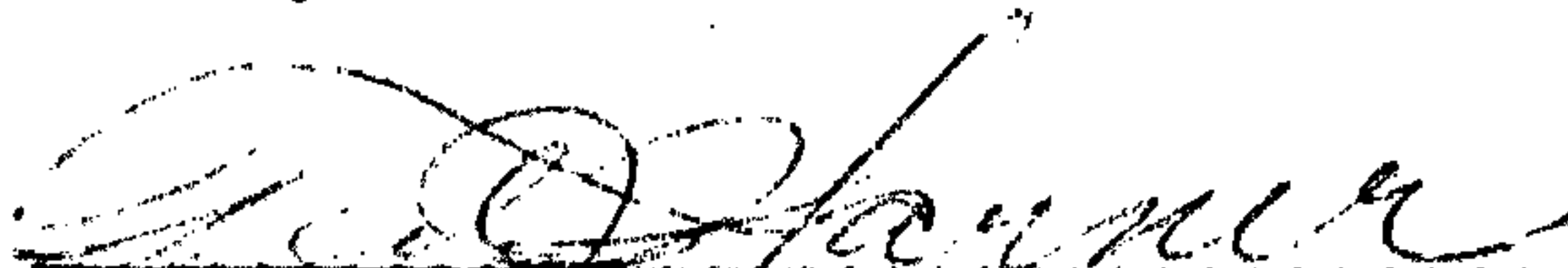
The purpose of this thesis is to critically examine the factors contributing to the rise and subsequent decline of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Upper Canada. Although the time period of this study spans from 1830 until 1850, the principal years of activity were from 1832 until 1840. An effort is made to discuss any major location wherein the Church made substantial progress.

The major contribution of the thesis lies in the effort to stage the Mormon drama against a Canadian background of changing social factors. During the times of greatest economic stagnation, political upheaval and Methodist divisions, Mormonism made its greatest strides. In contrast, once the economy had improved, the political rebellion quelled, and religious divisions healed, the Mormon influence waned. Furthermore, the Church emphasized so strongly the doctrine of gathering to America that not enough stalwart converts remained behind to form a permanent nucleus of activity.

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