

# What Evil Felled the Duke?

## A Re-examination of the Death of the 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Richmond

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### Article abstract

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# WHAT EVIL FELLED THE DUKE?

## A Re-examination of the Death of the 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Richmond<sup>1</sup>

By Hugh Whitney

### Introduction

Canadian students of medicine, or of the early colonial history of Canada, may know the strange tale of the death of Charles Lennox (Figure 1), 4th Duke of Richmond and Governor-in-Chief of British North America from 1818 to 1819.

According to the standard storyline,

“His Grace” blessed our shores, not at his own request, but rather at the insistence of others, after a distinguished military and political career in Europe.<sup>2</sup> While on a tour of duty, this “illustrious nobleman”<sup>3</sup> was bitten on the hand by a rabid fox on 28 June 1819, at Sorel, Québec (then Fort William Henry, Lower Cana-

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<sup>1</sup> This information was first presented in a condensed form at the *Rabies in the Americas XX Conference*, 18-23 October 2009, Québec City. A short synopsis is also included as Hugh Whitney, “The Myth of the Duke of Richmond,” in *Taking the Bite out of Rabies: The Evolution of Rabies Management in Canada*, edited by David Gregory and Rowland Tinline, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> Alan C. Jackson, “The Fatal Neurological Illness of the Fourth Duke of Richmond in Canada: Rabies.” *Annals of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada*, 27:1 (1994), 40-41.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Christie, *Memoirs of the Administration of the Government of Lower Canada, by Sir John Coape Sherbrooke, the late Duke of Richmond, James Monk, Esquire, and Sir Peregrine Maitland*, CIHM 43593, (Quebec: New Printing Office, 1820), 182.

## *Abstract*

*Charles Lennox, the 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Richmond, was Governor-in-Chief of British North America from 1818-1819. His death in Richmond (Upper Canada) is usually attributed to rabies contracted from a tame fox that he had encountered two months prior to his death. Though rabies may have been the cause of his death, the sources of information for most historical writings on the subject are limited to official accounts and give no insight into the known character of the Duke. This article provides an alternative explanation for the death of His Grace.*

**Résumé:** *Charles Lennox, 4<sup>e</sup> duc de Richmond, fut Gouverneur-en-chef de l'Amérique Britannique du Nord en 1818-1819. Sa mort, à Richmond (Haut-Canada), est généralement attribuée à la rage, contractée d'un renard apprivoisé avec lequel il avait été en contact deux mois avant sa mort. Même si la rage a pu être la cause de la mort, la plupart des écrits historiques sur le sujet trouvent leurs sources dans les compte-rendus officiels et ne nous disent presque rien sur le caractère du duc. Cet article propose une explication alternative de sa mort.*

da). Symptoms started on 24 August and finally, on 28 August, he succumbed to rabies, after bearing his infliction "...with

that unshaken fortitude which distinguishes the noble and true christian spirit..."<sup>4</sup> in the farmhouse of the Chapman

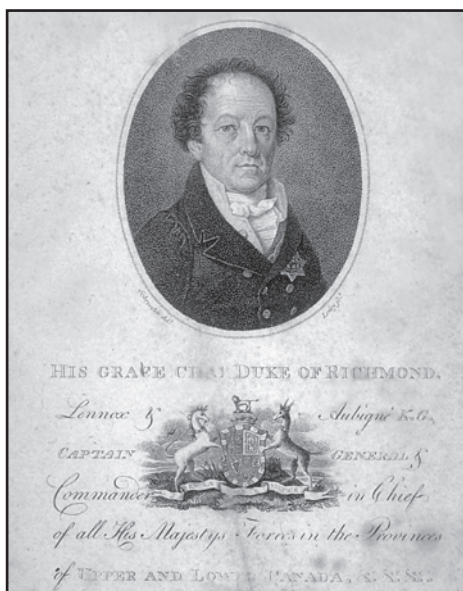


Figure 1: His Grace Chas. Duke of Richmond, Lennox and Aubigne K.G., Cornelius Schroeder, 1819. McCord Museum, McGill University, Montreal, M2970



Figure 2: Richmond memorial cairn on the site of the Chapman Farm. Image source: Author.

family (Figure 2), in Richmond, Ontario (Upper Canada).

This story has been reported as part of the history of rabies in Canada,<sup>5</sup> with Richmond considered as the first recorded case of human rabies; deter-

<sup>4</sup> *Kingston Gazette*, 10 September 1819, 3.

<sup>5</sup> H. Tabel, A.H. Corner, W.A. Webster and C.A. Casey, "History and Epizootiology of Rabies in Canada", *Canadian Veterinary Journal*, 15:10 (1974), 271-281.

mined to be a medical probability,<sup>6</sup> repeated numerous times as fact in both medical<sup>7</sup> and popular publications,<sup>8</sup> in the history of the Dukes of Richmond and their estate at Goodwood,<sup>9</sup> and absorbed into the municipal identity of the community of Richmond (Ontario) (Figure 3).

The primary sources of information are usually limited to the official accounts<sup>10</sup> written by two of the officers who accompanied Richmond on this journey, his military secretary Major George Bowles and Lieutenant-Colonel Francis Cockburn Deputy Quarter-Master General to the Forces,<sup>11</sup> as well as a frustrating number of unreferenced or anonymous sources.<sup>12</sup>

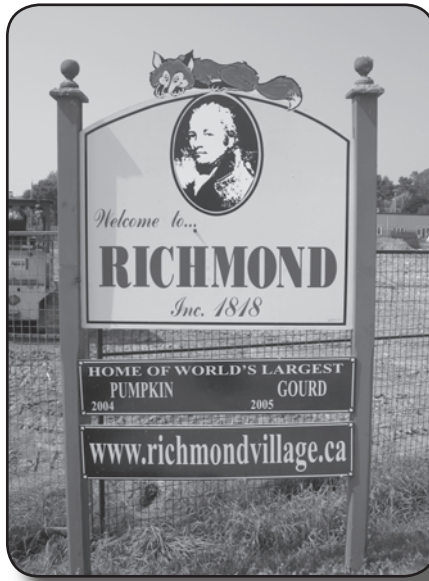


Figure 3: Welcome sign for Richmond (Ontario). Image source: Author.

At this point, it may be best to apply the caution provided by James Stephen, the English lawyer, MP, and abolitionist, to Earl Grey in 1850, “Commentators on colonial or any other history who confine themselves to official documents are as sure to go wrong as if they entirely over-

looked them.”<sup>13</sup>

Few other historical documents are brought into the story, little perspective given on the known life history of the Duke, and little questioning of the officers’ accounts attempted, either of what they wrote, why they wrote, or what they chose to leave out. There is a protective

<sup>6</sup> Jackson, “Fatal Neurological Illness”.

<sup>7</sup> Ian Cameron, “Grace in extremis”, *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 176:6 (2007), 819-820. John Hayes, “The Death of the Duke of Richmond from Hydrophobia in 1820”, *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 16:3 (1926), 319.

<sup>8</sup> George E. McElroy, “The Strange Death of the Duke of Richmond”, *The Beaver*, 70:3 (June-July 1990), 21-26. Harry J. Walker, *Carleton Saga*, (Ottawa: Runge Press, 1968), 41- 50.

<sup>9</sup> Rosemary Baird, *Goodwood: Art and Architecture, Sport and Family*, (London: Francis Lincoln, 2007), 170-171.

<sup>10</sup> *Particulars of the Death of Charles, 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Richmond. Colonel Cockburns Accounts. Major Bowles’s Account.* Goodwood MS 2021, West Sussex Record Office, Chichester, UK.

<sup>11</sup> He is also referred to as the Inspector of Military Settlements in British North America, Baird, *Goodwood*, 170.

<sup>12</sup> For example, a “private letter from Quebec” is reproduced in Sylvanus Urban, *The Gentleman’s Magazine and Historical Chronicle*, volume LXXXIX, part 2, July – December 1819, (London: John Nichols and Son, 1819), 467, but with no attribution of the author and therefore no sense if these were first hand observations or merely the repetition of the commonly accepted story.

<sup>13</sup> N.D. McLachlan, “Bathurst at the Colonial Office, 1812-1827: A Reconnaissance”, *Australian Historical Studies*, 13:52 (April 1969), 477-502.

bubble placed around the nobility that deflects analysis or critique. If we wish to accept that the fairytale version of the aristocracy (i.e. “rule by the best”) is an accurate portrayal of history, with premature deaths being, by necessity, both tragic and heroic, then, gentle reader, please read no further. However, if we recognize that this form of government is at best described as “rule by the related” (the peerage), or at worst a kleptocracy (rule by thieves), then the perspective changes and we are freed from our post-colonial intellectual deference.

With the assistance of his contemporaries and historians, let us poke then a bit at this bubble and see what escapes.

### Life before Canada

The 1st Duke of Richmond (1672-1723) was initially named Charles Fitzroy,<sup>14</sup> being the illegitimate son of King Charles II of England and one of his many mistresses, Louise Renée de Penancoët de Kérouaille. At the time of his birth, the King already had at least fifteen other illegitimate children. He held

the name Fitzroy for three years until the King decided to make him the 1st Duke of Richmond and chose the surname Lenox.<sup>15</sup> This illegitimate beginning hung as an albatross around the family’s neck, always available as a convenient taunt when someone wished to criticise, as we will see.

Our Charles Lennox was born in Scotland, on 9 September 1764.<sup>16</sup> His parents, Lord George and Lady Louisa (Kerr) Lennox were on a fishing trip and, falling into labour, Lady Lennox was obliged to give birth in a nearby barn.<sup>17</sup>

His uncle, also Charles Lennox, was the 3rd Duke of Richmond, and lived near our Charles’ home, in the Goodwood family estate. The 3rd Duke died in 1806, with no legitimate heirs, though numerous children existed through a series of mistresses. With his younger brother George (our Charles’ father) having died in 1805,<sup>18</sup> the natural heir became the 3rd Duke’s nephew. It was with reluctance that this inheritance was passed on, as he had felt that the younger Charles drank and socialised too much.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>14</sup> The name Fitzroy means literally bastard son (Fitz) of the king (Roy).

<sup>15</sup> This account must, by necessity, present only a brief view of the Duke’s personal and family history. For readers with an interest in more, a start can be made with Baird, *Goodwood*. As well, the original spelling of the family name was Lenox but later became Lennox.

<sup>16</sup> Baird, *Goodwood*, 157.

<sup>17</sup> It is often said that he died as he was born, in a barn, as stated in Neville Thompson, *Earl Bathurst and the British Empire, 1762-1834*, (Barnsley: Leo Cooper, 1999), 122.

<sup>18</sup> Baird, *Goodwood*, 154.

<sup>19</sup> Baird, *Goodwood*, 160. To have stated that the younger Charles drank too much must have meant that he drank more than what was normal for his contemporaries. Charles’ son William Pitt Lennox gives a lengthy account of the bacchanalian feasts common in those days, once “the ladies left the room”, involving the Prince Regent (and afterwards when he became King George IV), Lord Bathurst and many others, often occurring on the Goodwood estate. Though too lengthy for this article, it makes for interesting reading and can be found in *My Recollections from 1806 to 1873* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1874), volume I, 8-14. His uncle’s comment that Charles socialized



The 4th Duke had kept himself busy in the years leading up to his inheritance, spending much time in sports (such as cricket, tennis and horse-racing), the army, and as Tory MP for Sussex. Far from a distinguished military career, his only identifiable duty in the army was in 1794-95 fighting the French in the Leeward Islands and Martinique,<sup>20</sup> where all that comes to us through history is that, due to his excellent health, he somehow managed to avoid getting yellow fever while 250 of his crew died.<sup>21</sup> His only other military activity was garrison duty in Gibraltar (1796) from where he was sent home for insubordination.<sup>22</sup> It has been bluntly stated, "The duke has had no opportunity to show his talents as a soldier, having been employed in civil

life."<sup>23</sup> He attempted to get into active service, but was routinely blocked.

He also had two duels, both in 1789. The first was with the Duke of York (26 May), younger brother to the Prince of Wales and, therefore, second in line to the throne of England. The matter likely originated from a misunderstanding, though political tension did occur between the families over opinions on the appropriateness of a Regency, as King George III was hovering on insanity. But as honour became in question, Charles asked the Duke of York to "appoint the Time and Place."<sup>24</sup> Charles' shot apparently grazed the Duke's locks, however in an act that can clearly be interpreted as condescension, and which infuriated Charles,<sup>25</sup> the Duke chose not to fire at all (contrary to

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too much may be referring to his habit of mixing and drinking with common soldiers which he did throughout this story, from England, through Ireland and up until his final days in Upper Canada.

<sup>20</sup> Baird, *Goodwood*, 159.

<sup>21</sup> E.A. Cruikshank, "Charles Lennox, the Fourth Duke of Richmond", *Ontario History Society, Papers and Records*, XXIV (1927), places Richmond in these battles though unclear as to his role, but does suggest an active one, his source is John Kay, *A series of original portraits and caricature etchings, Volume 1, Part 1* (Edinburgh: Hugh Paton, Carver and Guildier, 1838), 90-91. The Reverend Cooper Wilyams' *Account of the Campaign in the West Indies in the year 1794*, (London: T. Bensley, 1796), 101-102, identifies the "Honourable Colonel Lenox" as one of its subscribers but, though very detailed for the roles of various officers, makes only one reference to Lennox "After the islands were captured, a small reinforcement arrived, which was to be retained by Sir Charles Grey, if he saw fit; but as he knew it was much wanted to carry on the war at St. Domingo, and as it was insufficient to enable him to undertake an expedition against Cayenne, which he at first intended, he sent it on to Jamaica, under the command of Brigadier General Whyte; and Lieutenant Colonel Lennox, who came out soon after, he dispatched thither also." David Miller, *The Duchess of Richmond's Ball, 15 June 1815* (Spellmount: Staplehurst, 2005), 10, suggests that he was active in the capture of Port-au-Prince. In an April 10<sup>th</sup>, 1815 letter to Lord Bathurst (Cruikshank, "Charles Lennox", 336), pleading to be engaged in the upcoming military activities at Waterloo, Lennox states that "I hope I am not apt to make out grievances but I must own I shall have a serious one if I do not succeed in getting the only military employment I see a chance of in my life." which, coming from the Duke's own hand, must be the final word on this question.

<sup>22</sup> Miller, *Ball*, 10.

<sup>23</sup> *The Monthly Magazine, or British Register*, volume XLVIII, part II for 1819 (London: J. and C. Adlard, 1819), 373.

<sup>24</sup> Baird, *Goodwood*, 158.

<sup>25</sup> Cruikshank, "Charles Lennox", 323-351.

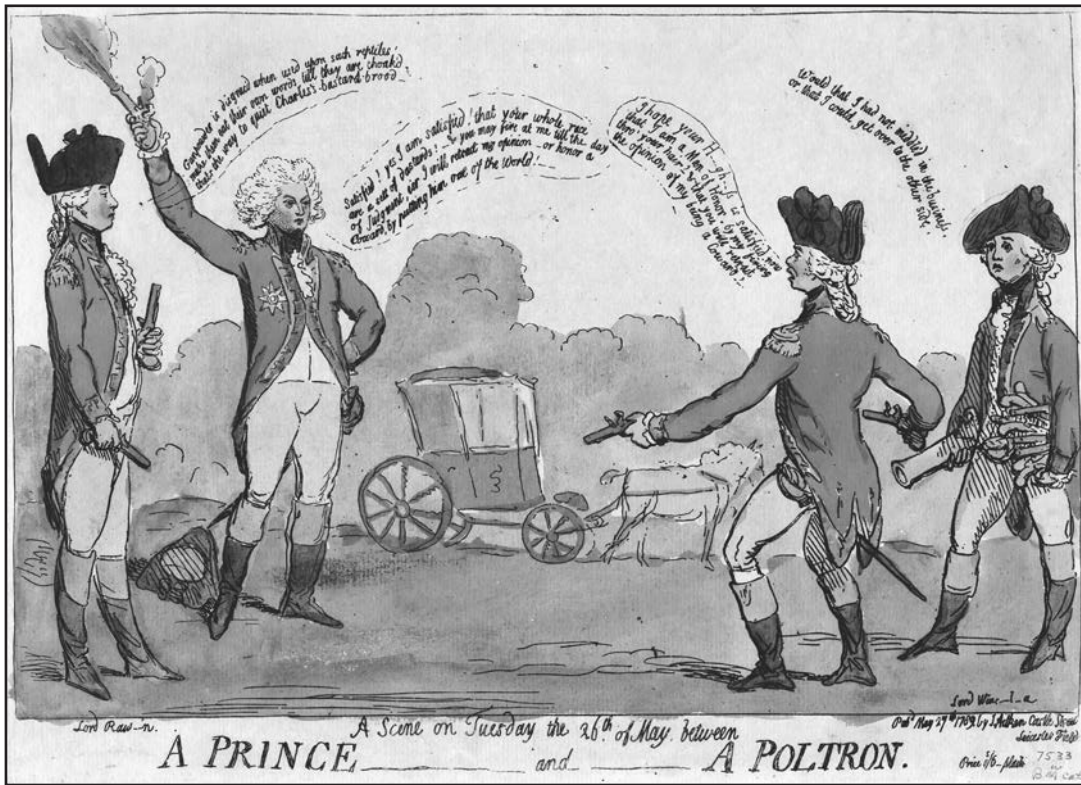


Figure 4: “A Scene on Tuesday the 26th of May between A Prince --and-- A Poltron” May 27<sup>b</sup>, 1789, James Gillray. Image source: Courtesy of The Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University. Public domain.

the impression given by Gillray, Figure 4). Indeed Charles asked repeatedly that the Duke fire and was repeatedly told that the Duke had no cause against Charles, he was only appearing to provide satisfaction to Charles and if he wished to take a second shot he could do so.<sup>26</sup>

The public lampooning of Richmond was severe, including a series of caricatures by England's foremost cartoonist of the day, James Gillray, on 23 May, 27 May (Figure 4) and 29 May (Figure 5),<sup>27</sup>

in which he is variously referred to as a coward, poltroon; and, tugging at his albatross, one of the “bastard brood” and dependent upon his uncle (the 3rd Duke) for advancement. “...if you are kicked out of one regiment, Nunkle will beg another for you, as a reward for your Gallantry & goodwill to the house of Hanover.” (Figure 5) William Pitt looks on as Charles is tended by his future wife Charlotte and his “Nunkle,” the 3rd Duke of Richmond.

The second duel, less than two

<sup>26</sup> William H. Mason, *Goodwood its House, Park and Grounds*. (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1839), 85-87.

<sup>27</sup> All three cartoons are available for viewing on The Lewis Walpole Library website, <[www.library.yale.edu/libraries/walpole.html](http://www.library.yale.edu/libraries/walpole.html)>.



Figure 5: “The Coward Comforted; or A Scene Immediately After the Duel” May 29<sup>th</sup>, 1789, James Gilray. Image source: Courtesy of The Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University. Public domain.

months later, was with the pamphleteer Theophilus Swift, who, giving a further tug at the albatross, publicly criticized the “polluted person,” Charles, in an open letter to the King, for so rashly endangering the throne of England. That this “illegitimate descendant of the Stuart family” should attempt “to cut off the lawfull issue and presumptive heir of Your crown” should be sufficient to enact a new law against such an “impossible crime.”<sup>28</sup> In this second duel, Theophilus was slightly

wounded.

At this point, discretion became the better part of valour, and Charles departed to cool his heels in Edinburgh as the newly appointed Lieutenant-Colonel of the 35th Foot, having left his position with the Coldstream Guard in which the Duke of York was his commanding officer. His position was obtained, as Gillray had predicted, by a direct request from "Nunkle" to the King.<sup>29</sup> Nunkle had also arranged for his first position with the

<sup>28</sup> Theophilus Swift, *Letter to the King; in which the conduct of Mr. Lenox, and the Minister, in the affair with His Royal Highness the Duke of York, is fully considered.* (London, 1789)

<sup>29</sup> Miller, *Ball*, 10.





Figure 6: *Scotch Wedding*, 1789, William Holland. Courtesy of The Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University. Public domain.

Coldstream Guard.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, for many, merit had to compete with favour and purchase as a means of advancement in the British Army.<sup>31</sup> He was very popular with his soldiers, playing cricket with them and buying them drinks.<sup>32</sup>

He was also very popular with Lady Charlotte Gordon, whom he had known in London, marrying her a short seven weeks after arriving in Scotland. As in

many historical events, we have a choice as to which version of history we now accept. We can state that the two were married at Gordon Castle “with great pomp”<sup>33</sup> or that “...they were hastily married, at no notice, in the Duchess’ dressing room, with two maids as witnesses...”<sup>34</sup> The latter appears to have greater historical legitimacy.<sup>35</sup>

Charlotte’s mother had five daugh-

<sup>30</sup> Urban, *Gentleman’s Magazine*, 466.

<sup>31</sup> T.H. McGuffie, “Bibliographical Aids to Research: XIV - The Significance of military rank in the British Army between 1790 and 1820”, *Historical Research*, 30:82 (2007), 209.

<sup>32</sup> Baird, *Goodwood*, 158.

<sup>33</sup> Cruikshank, “Charles Lennox”, 325.

<sup>34</sup> Baird, *Goodwood*, 158.

<sup>35</sup> The *St. James’ Chronicle*, 19-22 September 1789, issue 4433, reported on page 4 “Colonel Lennox was married to Lady Charlotte Gordon in the Duchess’s dressing-room, at Gordon Castle. They had been married three days even before it was known to the servants of the family.”

ters, for whom she wished to find suitable husbands, and haste may have been necessary to see that it was all done in time. In the end, three were married to dukes and one to a marquis.<sup>36</sup> A further caricature (published by William Holland) entitled *Scotch Wedding* (Figure 6), captured this interest in a hasty wedding. It shows the mother piping the two young lovers as they leap over a broomstick on their way to the nuptial bed with a Scotch pint on hand. The broomstick was a symbol of social irregularity, likely referring to the rushed marriage, outside of a church, and possibly without a minister.<sup>37</sup> The Duke's pistols refer to his previous duels.

Another marriage occurred in 1789 that would prove very advantageous to Charles. His sister Georgina married Henry, Lord Apsley, later to become the 3rd Earl Bathurst, and Secretary of State for War and the Colonies (1812-1827).

When he actually became the 4th Duke of Richmond, Charles moved back to the family estate at Goodwood but inherited a building that had been severely damaged by a fire in 1791. His uncle's attempts to rebuild, the debt associated with it, and a will that left significant payments to his mistress and her three daughters,<sup>38</sup> provided an impoverished start to his dukedom.

It was at this point that the Duke's brother-in-law first assisted in his fortunes, possibly also due to his friendship with William Pitt, Prime Minister (1783-1800, 1801, 1804-06). With some reluctance, but with a need to refill his coffers, Richmond accepted the position of Lord Lieutenant (Viceroy) of Ireland, which he held from 1807-1813. The previous Lord Lieutenant had been another of Richmond's brothers-in-law, the Duke of Bedford.

His role in Dublin was to represent the English interests, which included keeping the Irish Catholics in their place. This responsibility towards the Protestant Ascendancy, and against the Catholics, would also be exercised again some years later in Canada. He attempted to leave Ireland, possibly feeling that the distance from London would hurt his chances of further advancement. He asked for a position in the foreign service while recognizing that it would likely not be in the military.<sup>39</sup>

His Chief Secretary upon first starting in Dublin was Sir Arthur Wellesley (later the Duke of Wellington and Prime Minister of the UK) who shortly left for other opportunities.

In spite of political tensions,<sup>40</sup> the Duke appeared to have been well liked

<sup>36</sup> George Paston, *Social Caricature in the Eighteenth Century*, (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1905), 29.

<sup>37</sup> Rebecca Probert, *Marriage law and practice in the long eighteenth century: a reassessment*, (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2009), 89.

<sup>38</sup> Baird, *Goodwood*, 154-155.

<sup>39</sup> Cruikshank, "Charles Lennox", 335-336.

<sup>40</sup> During Richmond's rule in Ireland, John Magee, proprietor of the Dublin Evening Post, was charged with libel for his printed comments on the Duke's administration, which included "If the Administration of the Duke of Richmond had been conducted with more than ordinary talent, its

by some in Ireland, partly due to his lavish parties, "it is alleged that his grace's influence was chiefly exercised through the hospitalities of his table."<sup>41</sup> But these hospitalities were excessive and damaged both his credibility and his health:

As both friends and enemies were well aware, he was fond of the wine-bottle, and his too frequent excesses exposed him in the savage warfare of contemporary politics to damaging public criticism. It is also true that he was conscious of his weakness and made...efforts to overcome it, even though opportunities for a relapse presented themselves with tempting frequency. Partly perhaps because of the pleasures of the table, his health was not strong, and he also had some trouble with his eyes.<sup>42</sup>

As an example of the "savage warfare of contemporary politics," upon it being announced that Richmond was to leave his post in Ireland, Sir Hubert Montgomery said in Parliament that:

"he trusted that the new Lord Lieutenant would show an example of sobriety to the country, and that they would not hear of midnight orgies, of songs and toasts tending to inflame one part of his Majesty's subjects against another."<sup>43</sup>

In spite of having a "very large salary,"<sup>44</sup> upon leaving he was in greater debt than when he arrived, blamed partly on his own excessive drinking habits as well as the gambling habits of his wife.<sup>45</sup>

He was an engaging if slightly dissolute personality and he maintained a splendid court. Lavish expenditures enhanced his popularity among Dublin's merchants and vintners, while his catholic tastes in wine and women provided a rich source of gossip as did his wife's jealousy. A gregarious man, he was appreciated by a convivial people, though the costs of sociability, financial and physical, eventually necessitated a change in his life-style. Before the end of his term he had been obliged to economize in the

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errors might, in some degree, have been atoned for by its ability; and the People of Ireland, though they might have much to regret, yet would have something to admire; yet truly, after the gravest consideration, they must find themselves at a loss to discover any striking feature in his Grace's Administration, that makes it superior to the worst of his Predecessors. They insulted, they oppressed, they murdered, and they deceived." He was defended by the famous Irish lawyer Daniel O'Connell but nonetheless, was found guilty, fined and imprisoned. *The trial of John Magee, proprietor of the Dublin Evening Post, for publishing an historical review of the Duke of Richmond's administration in Ireland*, (Dublin: John Magee, 1813), 13-14.

<sup>41</sup> George Godfrey Cunningham, *Lives of Eminent and Illustrious Englishmen*, volume VII (Glasgow: A. Fullerton and Co., 1837), 279-281.

<sup>42</sup> Norman Gash, *Mr. Secretary Peel: the Life of Sir Robert Peel to 1830* (London: Longman, 1961), 98-99.

<sup>43</sup> Charles Stuart Parker, ed., *Sir Robert Peel, From His Private Papers*, volume I, (London: John Murray, 1899), 101.

<sup>44</sup> *The Monthly Magazine, or British Register*, volume XLVIII, part II for 1819 (London: J. and C. Adlard, 1819), 373. It is stated that in both Ireland and Canada, the Duke had a "very large salary".

<sup>45</sup> Miller, *Ball*, 11. On a salary that started at £20,000 per annum and increased to £30,000 in 1810, he left Ireland with a debt of £50,000. Baird, *Goodwood*, 160, refers to the impact of her gambling on their finances.

face of mounting personal debts and was persuaded by his friends to limit his prodigious consumption of claret.<sup>46</sup>

One of the local merchants with whom he was no doubt popular was the Dublin producer of Kinahan's Irish Whisky. During his time as Lord Lieutenant, the Duke asked Mr. Kinahan to put a vat of whisky aside for him, placing upon it the LL and ducal coronet of his position, which was ever after sold as the LL brand of Kinahan's whisky.<sup>47</sup>

Gossip no doubt circulated about his various affairs, including a lengthy one with Augusta Everitt (the Lady Edward Somerset). No attempts were made to hide the romance, as she would commonly dine with the family.<sup>48</sup>

His return to England and Goodwood was brief. As with many impecunious nobles, he left for Brussels and a more modest lifestyle,<sup>49</sup> one also further from his creditors,<sup>50</sup> "So hospitable, indeed, was his Grace's style of living while in the sister island, that he was ever after rendered incapable of living at Goodwood."<sup>51</sup>

Arriving in Brussels in August 1814, and joined by his family, he served in the army reserve.

Their time in Belgium was well-re-

membered in history due to the famous Duchess of Richmond's Ball held on 15 June 1815. As the social swirl was the normal life of the aristocracy, the ball would not have been the subject of as many paintings (e.g. *The Duchess of Richmond's Ball*, Robert Hillingsford, 1870s; *Before Waterloo*, Henry O'Neil, 1866; *The Black Brunswicker*, John Everett Millais, 1860) and poetry (e.g. *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Lord Byron, 1818) had it not been that the Duke of Wellington received news of Napoleon's advance into Belgium during the ball, necessitating the call to arms of the officers present and the subsequent defeat of Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo on 18 June.

Wellington, previously Richmond's subordinate while in Ireland, had risen to Field Marshall status and was now commander of the allied forces against Napoleon. There is some confusion and apparent embarrassment over the interests that Richmond expressed in joining this battle. He had no experience in active combat and had risen to his current rank of general through political connections. It is stated that Richmond wished to be in the active forces and Wellington concurred, though Wellington added that as the fa-

<sup>46</sup> Brian Jenkins, *Era of Emancipation. British Government of Ireland, 1812-1830*, (Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 1988), 63.

<sup>47</sup> Paul Duguid, "Developing the Brand: The Case of Alcohol", *Enterprise and Society*, 4:3 (2003), 405-441; and Jack Kinahan, "Kinahan's LL: A Forgotten Dublin Whisky", *Dublin Historical Record*, 60:2 (Autumn 2007), 151-160.

<sup>48</sup> Baird, *Goodwood*, 160.

<sup>49</sup> The Marquess of Anglesey, ed., *The Capel Letters: Being the Correspondence of Lady Caroline Capel and her daughters with the Dowager Countess of Uxbridge from Brussels and Switzerland, 1814-1817*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1955), 57.

<sup>50</sup> Cruikshank, "Charles Lennox", 335.

<sup>51</sup> *The Annual Biography and Obituary, for the Year 1821*, volume V, (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1821), 216.





Figure 7: *The Battle of Waterloo*, George Jones, 1820<sup>69</sup>  
Royal Collection Trust  
/ © Her Majesty Queen  
Elizabeth II 2012.

ther of many children perhaps he should not serve. In addition, should Wellington fall, Richmond would then be the senior officer.<sup>52</sup> London expressed no such ambiguity, “in every point of view his employment would be unadvisable,”<sup>53</sup> and so the matter ended. One senses that everyone else got it, except Richmond, that he was unreliable and would not be given a position of military responsibility.

Lady Caroline Capel,<sup>54</sup> family friend of the Richmonds, who refers to the Duke as “...the most Gloomy Melancholy person I ever met with...,”<sup>55</sup> complains in her letters of how “This is without excep-

tion the Most Gossiping Place I ever heard of,”<sup>56</sup> then, with little hesitation, joins in: “The Duke continues his old system of smoking till 3 or 4 in the Morning & drinking Gin & Water - He has made some unsuccessfull attempts to get Capel into his parties, but some of the young Men, of course, he succeeds with...”<sup>57</sup>

Richmond did watch part of the Battle of Waterloo as a civilian on the sidelines and collected trophies once it was over.<sup>58</sup> This story gets distorted in the telling such that it has been suggested that Richmond actually fought at Waterloo.<sup>59</sup> Some of the confusion seems to come from a painting by the British painter George Jones (1786-1869) entitled *The Battle of Waterloo* (Figure 7), which shows Richmond<sup>60</sup> with Wellington in the field of battle. The painting

<sup>52</sup> In Cruikshank, “Charles Lennox”, 335-336, as well as Thompson, *Earl Bathurst*.

<sup>53</sup> Nicholas Foulkes, *Dancing into Battle: A Social History of the Battle of Waterloo*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2006), 73-74.

<sup>54</sup> The Capels, like the Richmonds, were broke and addicted to gambling (Foulkes, *Dancing*, 6) and, with others of their situation, were collectively known in Brussels as the *Idlers*.

<sup>55</sup> Anglesey, *Capel Letters*, 71

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>58</sup> Baird, *Goodwood*, 164 and 168

<sup>59</sup> For example see McGuffie, “Bibliographical Aids”, 220, “...and was at Waterloo”.

<sup>60</sup> Richmond is identified in the painting in footnote 42 of Baird, *Goodwood*, 167.

seems to be intentionally ambiguous, a casual interpretation would put Richmond at the battle; a more critical one would see that all are mounted and active except for Richmond, who stands flat-footed and inert with his restless horse's head bowed as if in shame, perhaps suggesting that though ready and willing, he was actually left behind.

One more name from the Battle of Waterloo also bears remembering, the Prussian Field Marshall Gebhard Leberecht von Blücher.

In 1818, still in Brussels, Richmond received notice that he was being appointed Governor-in-Chief to British North America. He had been anxious for a further appointment that would help him recover his finances, eventually allowing him to return to London. He had hoped for the Cape Colony (Cape of Good Hope) but settled for Canada, assuming that a two-year stay would return him to financial security.<sup>61</sup> There had been a previous consideration of sending Richmond to serve in this position in 1814 after Sir George Prevost's lukewarm performance, however Bathurst declined for fear of "the public comment that it would provoke."<sup>62</sup>

The Duke's new son-in-law, Sir Peregrine Maitland, had also received an

appointment as Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada. The colonies were a necessary source of jobs for the numerous friends and family of the royalty,<sup>63</sup> and providing Maitland with a position assured the Duke that his daughter would be taken care of. The consideration of Maitland for this position appears to have been known in Upper Canada at least as early as August 1817, as a letter written on the 31st in York (Toronto) from Mrs. Annie Powell, wife of the Chief Justice of Upper Canada, William Powell, to her brother George, refers to an article in the London papers announcing Maitland as the new Lieutenant-Governor. She adds, "The gentleman named has lately married a daughter of the Duke of Richmond, her father is a strange man."<sup>64</sup>

As a final observation before leaving Europe, the habits of the Duke and Duchess hadn't improved while in Brussels. The English diarist, Joseph Farington, wrote on 26 May 1818, "She has ruined Him by gaming. He paid £30,000 to Marshal Prince Blucher, which she lost to Him."<sup>65</sup>

Perhaps then, this is why the family named their dog Blucher.

Farington continued "—By hard living, His person is very much altered.—He looks to be a very old man."

<sup>61</sup> Thompson, *Earl Bathurst*, 120-121.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>63</sup> McLachlan, "Bathurst at the Colonial Office", 481.

<sup>64</sup> *Letters of Mrs. Wm. Dummer Powell, 1807-1821*, held by the Toronto Public Library, transcription online at <<http://images.ourontario.ca/niagara/57210/data>>. This a bit odd that Maitland's appointment would be announced in 1817 when the Duke's appointment was only made in May 1818 (Baird, *Goodwood*, 170), there may be a dating error in the Powell letters.

<sup>65</sup> James Greig, ed., *The Farington Diary*, volume VIII, (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1928), 182.

## Life and Death in Canada

From the perspectives of his contemporaries and historians on the European side of the ocean we now switch to those on the Canadian side. The historian, Church of England clergyman, lecturer, militia officer and classical scholar, Charles Pelham Mulvany chose the Bard for his references when describing the Duke in 1884, as "...a dissipated and spendthrift noble, who had often 'heard the chimes at midnight' 'with the wild Prince and Pains'"<sup>66</sup> A later historian, Helen Taft Manning, referred to him as "undoubtedly, one of the most reactionary and irresponsible men ever sent to rule over a British colony."<sup>67</sup>

The Duke, six of his children, and Sir Peregrine Maitland arrived in Quebec City on 29 July 1818. The Duchess stayed behind in London with the younger children, in a "small leased house in London."<sup>68</sup> Richmond replaced Sir John Coape Sherbrooke who was ill and displeased with London's disinterest in reform.

The coming of this "semi-deity"<sup>69</sup> to Canada at all was not universally ac-

claimed. Indeed Lord Dalhousie, then Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia, was incensed at the choice, as he felt that he had served his time in the colonies, and had been promised by Bathurst as recently as 1 May,<sup>70</sup> that he would be the next in line after Sherbrooke, only to learn two weeks later that it would be Richmond. "What can have led to this appointment, not more extraordinary as to the person than the manner in which it has been done, I cannot imagine."<sup>71</sup> He contemplated resigning in protest. He couldn't know at the time, that two years later he would become Richmond's successor.

Louis-Joseph Papineau, the Lower Canada politician, sounding much like Ireland's Daniel O'Connell, quite clearly saw that Richmond had come to Upper Canada to re-establish his family fortunes ("*s'en vint ici pour réparer les débris de sa fortune*"),<sup>72</sup> no doubt by those means available to the aristocracy of "appropriating to it the surplus of the peasant-producer."<sup>73</sup>

Québec historian Léandre Bergeron, interprets the British colonial strategy as continually alternating conciliatory and

<sup>66</sup> Charles Pelham Mulvany and Charles M. Ryan, *History of the Country of Peterborough, Ontario*, (Toronto: C. Blackett Robinson, 1884), 137.

<sup>67</sup> Helen Taft Manning, "The Civil List of Lower Canada", *Canadian Historical Review*, 24:1 (1943), 24-47.

<sup>68</sup> Thompson, *Earl Bathurst*, 121.

<sup>69</sup> Charles Roger, *The Rise of Canada, from Barbarism to Wealth and Civilisation*, volume I, (Montreal: H. Ramsay and B. Dawson, 1856), 346.

<sup>70</sup> Marjory Whitelaw, ed., *The Dalhousie Journals*, volume 1, (Ottawa: Oberon Press, 1978), 78.

<sup>71</sup> Whitelaw, *Dalhousie*, 1:79-80.

<sup>72</sup> Yvan Lamonde, "Conscience coloniale et conscience internationale dans les écrits publics de Louis-Joseph Papineau (1815-1839)" *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, 51:1, (1997), 20.

<sup>73</sup> Allan Greer, *Peasant, Lord and Merchant. Rural Society in Three Quebec Parishes, 1740-1840*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 8.

tyrannical governors, alternating the carrot (Sherbrooke) with the cudgel (Richmond), as a means of “winning over” the colonized.<sup>74</sup> These are the days of the Château Clique in Lower Canada and the Family Compact in Upper Canada, whose policies set the stage for the rebellions of 1837/38. When the taxpayers of the Canadas were looking for more local decision-making in government policy, Richmond was discussing with Bathurst the necessity of creating a Canadian aristocratic ruling class.<sup>75</sup> In the words of Agnes Laut<sup>76</sup> “It was not the tyranny of England that caused the troubles of 1837, it was the dishonesty of the ruling rings at Quebec and Toronto,...”, “just when imperial statesmen of the modern school were needed, governors of the old

school were appointed,...” and these governors were Richmond and Maitland.

The conciliatory moves made by Sherbrooke towards the Catholic Church were reversed and Richmond intentionally snubbed the “papists” in favour of Bishop Mountain and the Church of England.<sup>77</sup> Mountain had sent many anxious letters to Bathurst detailing the loss of power of the Church of England and upon meeting him in London in 1818, had made a condition of his return to Québec that the Church of England be declared the “Established Church of the Canadas.”<sup>78</sup>

Having little sympathy for democratic interests,<sup>79</sup> when Richmond looked for further surpluses to appropriate, (i.e. an increase in the discretionary funds permitted to his position),<sup>80</sup> which included funds

<sup>74</sup> Léandre Bergeron, *Petit manuel d'histoire du Québec*, (Montréal-Nord: Éditions Québécoises, 1971), 86.

<sup>75</sup> W.L. Morton, “The Local Executive in the British Empire 1763-1828.” *The English Historical Review*, 78:308 (July 1963), 436-457.

<sup>76</sup> Agnes C. Laut, *Canada: The Empire of the North - Being the Romantic Story of the New Dominion's Growth From Colony to Kingdom*, (Toronto: William Briggs, 1909), 417.

<sup>77</sup> Whitelaw, *Dalhousie*, 1:129 “The Duke, I am told, shews him [Catholic Bishop] no more than common respect & civility, very seldom invites him to the Castle & thus gives him neither cause to boast, nor ground to complain of neglect.”

<sup>78</sup> Thomas R. Millman, *Jacob Mountain: First Lord Bishop of Quebec*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1947), 76-77.

<sup>79</sup> In Manning, *The Civil List*, 47, she references a letter sent from Richmond to Bathurst in which he states “that parliamentary government was a mistake anywhere except in England, and that in England the electorate should be cut in quarter.”

<sup>80</sup> As discussed in Charles R. Tuttle, “*An Illustrated History of the Dominion, 1535-1876*”, (Montreal: D. Downie and Co., 1877), 360. The elected representatives met in committee to review the proposed 1819 budget of £81,432, which was a £15,000 increase from the previous year and included £8,000 that would be granted in perpetuity for use at the sole discretion of the governor, whose annual salary was £4,500. The committee reviewed each entry and recommended a 25% reduction concluding that “Your committee are of opinion that this House, on making a suitable provision for such offices as are indispensably necessary, will also act in conformity with the desire and interest of the province at large, by making an unqualified reduction of those sinecures and pensions, which, in all countries, have been considered as the ground of iniquities, and the encouragement of vice; which, in the Mother Country have been, and still are, a subject of complaint, and which in this province will lead to corruption.”



for the payment of patronage appointments on the infamous “civil list,” and the elected Legislative Council dared to protest, wishing instead to see the list and the rationale for each person, the Duke simply prorogued parliament.<sup>81</sup> Britain feared that the republican wave that had swept through France and the USA, would now spread into her colonies.

The social life surrounding the Château St-Louis did improve, and any best intentions of economising while in Canada seemed to have been short-lived. Frederic Tolfrey, a half-pay English officer who ended up in Lower Canada due to a poorly chosen fondness for a certain pair of “well turned ankles”<sup>82</sup> and his father’s subsequent decision that the colonies were a place for cooling his passions, reflected how the new Governor-in-Chief “gave an impetus to every sport and amusement within and without the Garrison,” a contrast to his predecessor (Sherbrooke) who was more likely to admonish him for his “night’s follies” of whitewashing the undertaker’s hearse.<sup>83</sup> Stories of snipe hunting in Sillery and

horse racing on the Plains of Abraham, were now expanded to include amateur theatricals with the Duke, “balls and parties were more numerous than ever, the hospitality of the Chateau was conducted on a scale of princely liberality.”<sup>84</sup> His last ball was hosted shortly before leaving on the ill-fated inspection tour of Lower and Upper Canada.<sup>85</sup> Leaving from Quebec City in late June, they stopped briefly in Fort William Henry, which is where the dreaded event apparently occurred.

The Duke’s fourth son, William Pitt Lennox, who wrote three versions of his memoirs, couldn’t remember enough details to be credible, though he may have been with his father within a day or so of the event (he isn’t sure of that either). It was either Captain Fitzroy’s Bull Terrier or the family dog (Blucher) that excited the fox, it was either a deep wound that bled profusely or a minor scratch that was inflicted by the fox, or by either the fox or the dog, or there was no bite at all but rather a sprain, however he does state that the dog returned to England with him and “never went mad.”<sup>86</sup> This was

<sup>81</sup> Christie, *Memoirs*, 186-189.

<sup>82</sup> Frederic Tolfrey, *The Sportsman in Canada, volume I*, (London: Newby, 1845), 2.

<sup>83</sup> Tolfrey, *The Sportsman, volume II*, 137-139.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 216.

<sup>85</sup> Wm Pitt Lennox, *Fifty Years’ Biographical Reminiscences, volume II*, (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1863), 113.

<sup>86</sup> His first memoirs, (Lennox, *Fifty Years*, volume II, 114), refer to Captain Fitzroy’s bull terrier, as well as stating that he met up with his father at Fort William Henry when he heard the story. The second was entitled *Draft on My Memory* (two volumes, London: Chapman and Hall, 1866) and contain no reference to the event at all. His third was published under the title of *My Recollections from 1806 to 1873* (two volumes, London: Hurst and Blackett, 1874) and indicate (volume II, 31-32) that the dog in question was the family dog, presumably Blucher, which returned to England with the family and survived for years afterwards. William was also the author of his brother, the 5<sup>th</sup> Duke of Richmond’s biography, *Memoir of Charles Gordon Lennox, Fifth Duke of Richmond, K.G., P.C.*, (London: Chapman and Hall, 1862) in which (page 4) he states that he (William) and another

corroborated by his sister Louisa who wrote this in a letter written many years later, at age 95, which also stated that the fox attacked Blucher.<sup>87</sup>

He makes reference to a “...circumstantial account, by an officer present...”<sup>88</sup> which is likely the one published in *The Gentleman's Magazine*,<sup>89</sup> attributed to a private letter from Québec. This has the most ring of truth to it, though still unverifiable, and is extracted below:

Québec, Sept. 6.— ... it is asserted to have originated from the bite of a fox on the 28th of June. His Grace having left this place about the 24th of June on an extensive tour through the Canadas, after his arrival at William Henry, 135 miles up the river, whilst walking about the village with his little dog Blucher, met a fox about the place, with which the dog appeared sociable, and they entered into play together. His Grace seemed much pleased, and expressed something like a wish the fox should be purchased. Accordingly, the hint was attended to by a servant belonging to the suite, who purchased the fox the

same night. Next morning Sir C. Saxton, seeing the fox tied to a tent pitched for the accommodation of the servant, and apparently much irritated from his restrained situation under a scorching sun, desired that the animal might be removed somewhere into the shade. He was then fixed to a wicket-gate in front of the house. His Grace, on coming out in the morning, observing the fox, which he knew to be the same he had seen the day before, went up to him, saying, ‘Is this you, my little fellow?’ and on offering to put out his hand to caress the fox, Sir Charles S. touched the Duke on the shoulder to prevent it, apprising his Grace at the same time of the irritation of the fox, and that he might bite. ‘No, no,’ said his Grace, ‘the little fellow will not bite me!’ and putting out his hand, the fox snapped and made three scratches on the back of his hand, which drew blood. His Grace, quickly drawing it back, said, ‘Indeed, my friend, you bite very hard.’

Another account identifies the heel as the site of the alleged bite,<sup>90</sup> or it was a rabid dog that licked or bit him,<sup>91</sup> or fox

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brother, Frederic, did not meet up with their father until Niagara. W.H. Smith, *Smith's Family Physician* (Montreal: John Lovell, 1873), 380. “Dr. Watson says, ‘A lady who had read this, was good enough, in 1862, to inform me, upon the authority of a friend of hers, who was living at Montreal at the time of the Duke's death, and acquainted with his family, that his disease was caused by the bite of a dog. And I have since been told by Mr. Lawrence Peel, the Duke's son-in-law, that it was uncertain whether the bite was made by a fox or by a dog; that the Duke was interfering in a fray between a tame fox and a pet dog, the fox retreating into his kennel. It is not accurately known which, or whether either of the animals had rabies.’”

<sup>87</sup> Baird, *Goodwood*, 170, and accompanying footnote 52.

<sup>88</sup> Lennox, *Fifty Years*, volume 2, 114.

<sup>89</sup> Urban, *Gentleman's Magazine*, 467.

<sup>90</sup> The Reverend John L. Gourlay, *History of the Ottawa Valley* (Ottawa: 1896), 74.

<sup>91</sup> There is a strange account from a “Charles Cambridge, Esq.,” purported to be from an official dispatch sent to Earl Bathurst of the event, which appeared in the *Caledonian Mercury*, on 28 October 1819, which fundamentally tells the same story as related by Richmond's officers but adds elements not otherwise reported, such as the Duke seeing trees outside his window on the morning of 25 August and imagining them to be faces looking in at him, and that when his body arrived in

that bit him,<sup>92</sup> on the chin in the Châteaueau. The fox in question was apparently killed, no doubt for daring to draw blood from “The Blood.”

From Fort William, the Duke then went to Montreal, proceeding by canoe to Coteau-du-Lac and Cornwall, then by waggon to Fort Wellington where they were swarmed by mosquitoes. The next stop was Kingston where they rested for a few days (8-12 July) before ending up in York on the 14th. On 15 July, his daughter Louisa wrote to Mama back in London and commented on her father's health, suggesting that he was “quite well”<sup>93</sup> though there is a sense that Papa's health was a common topic of conversation. Indeed, Louisa's sister Charlotte, while waiting for her father in Montreal, unaware of his having died the day earlier, also wrote to Mama saying that the reports she had received from her sisters and brother William upon their return from Kingston were also that Papa was “quite well...I hear every body say they

never saw him looking so well when he was at Kingston. I know you will be delighted to hear this”.<sup>94</sup>

“Every body” could not have included Lord Dalhousie who met the Duke of Richmond on this trip on 11 July in Kingston. On the 12th he commented that “The Duke is much broken, looks old & beaten down, very thinking & low, untill spoken to; then his manner is exceedingly gracious kind and lively; a rough but agreeable countenance.”<sup>95</sup>

The official accounts of Cockburn and Bowles, detail the daily events starting on 17 August (Cockburn) and the 20th (Bowles).<sup>96</sup> Bowles' account also appeared, without stated authorship, in numerous British newspapers such as *The Edinburgh Evening Courant*<sup>97</sup> on 8 October 1819, and others.

On the 21st, Cockburn comments that the Duke “took very little breakfast, however did not complain of being unwell.” At what was likely midday, they arrived at a tavern owned by a man named

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Montreal on 30 August, “it was in a state which I shall not outrage your Lordship's feelings by detailing”. He states that the Duke associated his illness with a bite on the chin from “a favourite dog” he had received in the Chateau five months earlier when lifting the dog to lick a wound received while shaving. This report by Cambridge was subsequently retracted on 1 November in the same paper, with a statement that no such dispatch had been received by the Colonial Office and that the report is erroneous. It is not known who Cambridge was (though McElroy, *Strange Death*, 25, places him in the vice-regal party), nor what within the text was found offensive, perhaps it was the reference to the state of the Duke's mortal remains, after transportation in the heat of the summer, or simply that this was an unofficial account that could not be permitted.

<sup>92</sup> Hayes, “The Death of the Duke”.

<sup>93</sup> Louisa Lennox to her mother. July 15<sup>th</sup>, 1819, Goodwood MS 364, National Archives of Canada, Microfilm A-1643.

<sup>94</sup> Charlotte Lennox to her mother, August 29<sup>th</sup>, 1819, Goodwood MS 364, National Archives of Canada, Microfilm A-1643.

<sup>95</sup> Whitelaw, *Dalhousie*, 1:128-130.

<sup>96</sup> *Particulars of the Death of Charles*, Goodwood MS 2021, West Sussex Record Office, Chichester, UK.

<sup>97</sup> Baird, *Goodwood*, 171 and footnote 53.

Oliver. "On our arrival the Duke asked anxiously for refreshment, and some bread and cheese being produced he partook of it heartily." At this point, we may wonder whether the Duke also took advantage of this tour as one more attempt to reduce his alcohol consumption, thus prompting the comments from his daughters on how well he was doing. Perhaps the 21st was a day when his resolve was significantly weakened, depending upon how one interprets "refreshment," but this is merely speculation.

Upon their arrival that evening in Perth, it was recorded by the abstentionist Presbyterian the Reverend William Bell that "His landlady at the inn stated, that, on the evening of his arrival in Perth, he drank seven glasses of brandy and water, which clearly proved that he had been very thirsty".<sup>98</sup> Indeed.

On the 22nd Bell gave a speech prior to a supper of 30-40 gentlemen. "I could not however enjoy the entertainment, and was very sorry I had anything to do with it." He also stated that

The dinner I thought was rather too expensive, 28/ each person, though a splendid one, yet the idea of dining with a Duke so far flattered my vanity, as to induce me to join it.

His Grace certainly discovered much civility

and good nature, but I must confess that I saw nothing in his conduct to call forth all that fulsome panegyric that was bestowed on him on that occasion.<sup>99</sup>

He doesn't state the exact reason for his dissatisfaction, but he added "Though he remained one Sunday in Perth, he did not attend public worship, which gave me an unfavourable idea of his piety. Yet if we are to believe the newspapers of that day, he was a pattern of every virtue,"<sup>100</sup> but there are sources that describe the supper as a big drunk.

Dinner parties among the officers were numerous and the wine flowed freely. The best remembered was the one given by Colonel Powell for the Duke of Richmond, in an old frame house opposite Mr. McMaster's; this house was torn down about fifteen years ago. The Duke was a heavy drinker and the day after the dinner party died on his way to Bytown, the cause of his death being attributed to hydrophobia from the bite of a tame fox, but people who know said it was from too much wine.<sup>101</sup>

This story is a bit odd as it describes an event on the 22nd in Perth, then suggests that the next day was when the Duke died. It may be confusing a supper in Richmond on the 26th. However, others repeat the idea that the wine flowed freely.<sup>102</sup>

On the 24th the Duke again did not

<sup>98</sup> The Reverend William Bell, *The Condensed Diaries of the Rev. William Bell*, held at the WD Jordan Special Collections, Queen's University, Kingston (Ontario), and available online at <[http://www.electricscotland.com/history/articles/bell\\_diaries1.htm](http://www.electricscotland.com/history/articles/bell_diaries1.htm)>. The transcribed version states six glasses of brandy and water, the original handwritten account states seven.

<sup>99</sup> Bell, *Condensed Diaries*, 270-271.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 271.

<sup>101</sup> M.G. Armour, *A Few Notes About The Forming Of A Military Settlement At Perth And Surrounding Country*. Undated manuscript from the Perth Historical and Antiquarian Society, assumed to be about 1900. <<http://globalgenealogy.com/LCGS/mostly/M-MSET.HTM>>, accessed 22 April 2011.

<sup>102</sup> Andrew Haydon, "Richmond and the Duke", Chapter III, *Pioneer sketches in the district of*



eat his normal breakfast, nor eat much at all during the day, was fatigued and throughout the day drank “constantly of Weak Brandy and Water.” He slept poorly again that night, rising early on the 25th and scarcely eating.

His condition continued to deteriorate and his behaviour became more bizarre. However, this is where the story relies solely on the words on his two officers. We are supposed to believe that on the 27th, a man already described by Dalhousie as broken, old and beaten down, jumps over a six-foot fence. In addition, while in Chapman’s barn, he is bled by Dr. Collis who removed two pints of blood and was then given both 1 grain of opium and 20 drops of laudanum (traditionally a 10% solution of tincture of opium) to help relieve this distress. He may also have been bled by Collis on the night of 26th if the account of “Charles Cambridge, Esq.” is to be believed. This combination of bleeding, treatment with various forms of opium, and his, no doubt, compromised liver functions alone would have been sufficient to kill him at this point. He then died in a bed in the Chapman’s house on the morning of the 28th.

There is a suspicious void of other written accounts of the Duke’s death that should have been generated by those who were close to an event of this impor-

tance. The Reverend Bell, so opinionated about the details of the supper, does no better than repeating the story of Colonel Cockburn, providing no sense that the observations made were his own, though it is reasonable to assume that if this event occurred in such proximity to him that he would have perspectives or details of his own to contribute.<sup>103</sup> The surgeon Collis left no known written account. Dalhousie, back in Nova Scotia at the time, is first advised of the death on 11 September and ponders what the event will mean to his own future. If promoted to replace Richmond he will accept, if passed over again he will retire (15 September). On the 27th he receives further dispatches including one from a Judge Pike of Montreal that strongly suggest that rabies was the cause though in his own mind he retains doubt “the invincible impression on my mind is that fatigue & hot sun in the woods caused nervous affections; fever in his constitution and broken frame soon terminated his life...”<sup>104</sup> This impression was shared by others.<sup>105</sup>

There were those who did express doubts including Sir John Harvey, then Deputy Adjutant-General in Quebec City, and one of the Duke’s pallbearers.<sup>106</sup> Bathurst, upon hearing the news also doubted that it was rabies, apparently due to the moments of clarity between

*Bathurst. Volume 1*, 54-81, on page 77 they state the “wine flowed freely” (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1925).

<sup>103</sup> Bell, *Condensed Diaries*, 271-272.

<sup>104</sup> Whitelaw, *Dalhousie*, 1:163.

<sup>105</sup> Christie, *Memoirs*, 191.

<sup>106</sup> The Rev. Canon A.R. Kelley, “Pre-Confederation Governor of Canada Died in Dominion”, *Montreal Daily Star*, 7 March 1940, Microfilm 5758, Quebec National Archives. Rev. Kelley states

fits.<sup>107</sup>

Poorly substantiated, though local, stories also arise suggesting that it was not in the house of the Chapman family that he died but rather “he slipped away and was drowned in the river which he sought to quench his burning thirst”.<sup>108</sup> It is also suggested that a Chapman family oral history indicates that it was *delirium tremens* that felled the Duke, not rabies.<sup>109</sup>

This is where we must look at who Cockburn and Bowles were and whether we can be assured that they are providing an accurate account of the facts, or whether we are simply reading the “official account” of the death as a means of covering up a more sordid truth, what

today we would call ‘spin’. Under Lord Bathurst’s administration of the colonies, it was expected that there would be two streams of information, official and private, and that colonial governors and officials were not to confuse the two,<sup>110</sup> so spin is certainly not a modern invention. If a private account of this death exists, it is yet to be uncovered.<sup>111</sup>

With respect to the characters of the authors, Dalhousie, in his journal, commented “Col. Cockburn a pompous, bullying sort of fellow, not liked by any of the party. Col. Macleod & Major Bowles gentlemanlike young men.”<sup>112</sup> and that “Colonel Cockburn is a very powerful man, & looks as if he could kill them all.”<sup>113</sup> Reverend Bell’s dealings with the

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“The Quebec papers did not convey the impression that his death was due to hydrophobia, nor did the Deputy Adjutant-General, Col. Harvey, believe it was due to this cause.” Unfortunately no source is provided for Colonel Harvey’s comment.

<sup>107</sup> In a letter from Bathurst to Wellington on 10 October 1819 referenced in Thompson, *Earl Bathurst*, 123.

<sup>108</sup> “How Franktown Got Its Name”, *Perth Courier*, 21 July 1922.

<sup>109</sup> Herbert F. Gardiner, *Nothing But Names*, (Toronto: George F. Morang and Company, 1899), 75. “There are old residents in Perth who maintain the tradition that it was delirium tremens and not hydrophobia that cut short the career of the Duke of Richmond. A descendant of the owner of the barn in which the Duke died insists that this is the correct story.” The circulation of this suggestion had its detractors. John Charles Dent, *The Story of the Upper Canada Rebellion* (Toronto: C. Blackett Robinson, 1885), 60. “It may perhaps be as well for me to refer here to a story which seems to have obtained some currency, to the effect that the Duke of Richmond’s death was due, not to hydrophobia, but to delirium tremens. There is not the shadow of truth in the story. The evidence as to the Duke’s having been bitten at Sorel by a tame fox; as to his showing the healed wound on his thumb several weeks afterwards; as to his dread of water during the day before his death, and as to all the circumstances attending that tragical event, is as clear as evidence can very well be. Moreover, his habits were by no means such as to lead to *mania a potu*. He was a *bon vivant*, but, so far as I have been able to ascertain, he did not drink to excess, and was always master of such brains as he possessed. His end was one which his family might honestly mourn, and there was little in his life, nothing in his death, of which they had any cause to feel ashamed.”

<sup>110</sup> McLachlan, “Bathurst at the Colonial Office”, 500-501.

<sup>111</sup> There is a brief account written by Major George Bowles in private correspondence to Lord Fitzharris on 1 September 1819, in which Bowles repeats, in summary, the rabies story. Bowles, as a Captain, had been present at Waterloo and was a longtime friend of the Duke. James H.H. Malmesbury, ed., *A Series of Letters of the First Earl of Malmesbury, his Family and Friends from 1745 to 1820, volume II*. (London: R. Bentley, 1870), 528-529.

<sup>112</sup> Whitelaw, *Dalhousie*, 1:130.

Colonel give the impression that he was the Duke's "fixer," the muscle sent in to clean up any messy business. Cockburn had gone to Perth in July, ahead of the Duke's arrival, to deal with complaints against one of his agents, Mr. Daverne, secretary of the settlement. The Reverend Bell had been both a complainant against Mr. Daverne, as well as a commissioner appointed by Cockburn on the Board of Inquiry hearing the accumulated complaints. The secretary had been embezzling funds intended for the improvement of the community. Though the case appeared to have had merit, Cockburn took exception to the complaints having been made against one of his agents. This poor relationship continued after the Duke's death as Bell was pushed out of his school/church when an Anglican minister, The Reverend Mr. Harris, arrived in October suggesting that he would now be taking over his building and role, a decision supported by Colonel Cockburn, and stated to be under the order of the now departed Duke.<sup>114</sup> Presbyterians may have been above Catholics in the Protestant Ascendancy but were still below the Anglicans.

Perhaps then, this was just more messy business to be cleaned up. It would be conceivable that under the steely gaze of Colonel Cockburn, the local citizenry, so dependent upon the military establishment for their existence, would do no more than mutter at the untruths being

published about the Duke, and did do little more than pass down through oral tradition, the truths as they saw them.

The accounts themselves sit in the West Sussex Record Office (Goodwood Manuscripts). The originals appear to have been bound in leather with the title "M.S.S. Duke of Richmond" on the cover. The manuscript number is Goodwood MS 2021 and the internal title is "Particulars of the Death of Charles, 4th Duke of Richmond". There then follows 36 pages subtitled "Colonel Cockburn's Account" followed by 19 pages subtitled "Major Bowles's Account". These appear to be a transcription of what may have been the original accounts written by these two officers, as the writing is clear and the same person appears to have written both scripts. The transcriber is not identified. This is the document most often referred to when individuals refer to this account.

There are two other manuscripts as well, identified as Goodwood MS 1986 and Goodwood MS 2250. These two documents are both versions of Major Bowles' account. The first looks more like an original account by the Major, the handwriting is rough and more abbreviating is done. It is also fundamentally the same text used by *The Courier*<sup>115</sup> on 30 October 1819 and attributed to "an Officer on his Grace's personal Staff." The second account (MS 2250) is in a much finer hand, not resembling the writing in

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.* 131.

<sup>114</sup> *Condensed Diaries of Rev. Wm. Bell*, 270-271.

<sup>115</sup> *The Courier*, October 30, 1819, available as Goodwood M 1947, West Sussex Record Office, Chichester, UK.

either of the other documents, and has cleaned up the style of the first. For example, the first entry of MS 1986 reads:

Aug. 20. The D. Col. Cockburn & myself left Kingston on the Mg of the 20 & traveling sometimes in waggons & sometimes on horseback & the last 3 or 4 miles on foot arrived at 9 in the Evg. at the Stone Mills 30 miles from Kingston. We dined at a farmhouse on the road & rested there several hours, the D. did not appear fatigued, he went to bed apparently quite well.

The first entry of MS 2250, now in a much finer hand, reads:

August 20th., 1819. His Grace left Kingston with Col. Cockburn and myself on the morning of the 20th and travelling sometimes in Waggons, sometimes on horseback, and the last three or four miles on foot, we arrived about nine in the evening at the Stone Mills, 38 miles from Kingston, we dined at a farm house on the road and rested there some hours, The Duke did not appear fatigued, was in good spirits and did not retire to rest until his usual hour.

There appears to be little substantial difference between the two, other than correcting the Major's too familiar reference to Charles as "The Duke," when he should be initially identified as "His Grace," a possible transcription error of the 30 versus 38 miles from Kingston to Stone Mills,<sup>116</sup> some change in spelling, a grammatical correction of writing out all numbers under ten, and the addition

of some inconsequential information on when the Duke went to bed. This is the text that ended up in the final version. Though this does not suggest intentional meddling with the details, it does now identify at least three different visible hands involved in the writing of this account and an unknown number of invisible hands.<sup>117</sup> This continues through the three versions of Bowles' accounts (MSS 1986, 2250 and 2021). There are some apparent transcription errors or oversights, and the occasional detail left out or altered from one to another, though never appearing as an intent to change the storyline. It does strongly suggest though, that the document was written for the scrutiny of a larger and potentially critical audience

A variety of symptoms are described that come and go, a pain in the throat, in the chest, in the right shoulder, spasms, insomnia, fatigue, anxiety, hallucinations, some loss of appetite, increased thirst, the possibility of a fever and a revulsion to water. The contributing factors to his condition include a long journey over uneven roads, hot weather and staying out unprotected during a downpour (22 August).

He continues to consume alcohol as the opportunity arises, on the 21st, (Colonel Cockburn's account, hereafter CC) upon arrival at a tavern "the Duke asked anxiously for refreshment" which

<sup>116</sup> It is also difficult through all accounts (including the Colonel's) to determine whether the community named is Stow Mills, Stowe Mills or Stone Mills, however it is likely Stone Mills which is now Delta, 30 miles from Kingston, home of the Old Stone Mill National Historic Site.

<sup>117</sup> A brief note accompanies MS 1986 that states "This memo on the circumstances of the 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Richmond's death was found amongst Gen. S. Browne's papers. - It was evidently written by one of his staff. He died of hydrophobia in Canada 28<sup>th</sup> Aug. 1819". It is not known exactly who General Browne was nor his role in the writing of these accounts.



may have only been hunger, it is not clearly stated. It was that evening that the Reverend Bell noted the landlady's comment of the Duke having consumed seven glasses of brandy and water.

On the 22nd he had hot wine after the rainfall (CC), neither officer otherwise refers to alcohol on that date. Of the supper in Perth on the 22nd Major Bowles (hereafter MB) says only "We dined a large party, and retired to smoke about Eleven, the Duke went to bed at his usual hour," though in MS 1986 it states that "he went to bed soon after."

On the 23rd he took some wine and water (CC).

On the 24th, both officers acknowledge his thirst, "He drank frequently; drank weak brandy and water" (MB), "during this days journey the Duke drank constantly of Weak Brandy and Water" (CC).

On the 25th Bowles states "I persuaded him to drink a large wine glass of hot wine and water after going to bed which he did" (this is absent in the first manuscript and *The Courier* article).

On the 26th "Three or four officers belonging to the Settlement dined with us. The Duke was in good spirits, drank wine with most of the party and made a joke of the spasms." (MB), and

Shortly after setting down to dinner he asked some one to drink wine with him, and on filling his glass I saw for the first time the effect to which he had previously alluded. The sight of the wine produced a Convulsion in the first instance and so great was his difficulty in drinking it that he was obliged to raise the glass sideways to his mouth after

which he appeared to swallow it with the greatest difficulty. The same appearance continued through the whole of dinner and was particularly marked on his taking some Wine and water. He continued however to take his Wine after dinner, and occasionally talked of the extraordinary effect it produced on him. I think it was during dinner that in alluding to the subject he said 'It is fortunate I am not a dog or I should have been shot some time ago.' (CC)

We might well ask whether the Duke's problem was a difficulty in swallowing any liquid (the suggested hydrophobia) or whether it was actually the alcohol that his body was now rejecting.

Their description of the Duke's final hours feels scripted so as to provide a tragic/heroic ending that elevates someone whose life more resembles Dorian Gray, to one closer to the historical depictions of General James Wolfe (Figure 8), or Admiral Horatio Nelson (Figure 9). Indeed Richmond's funeral seems fashioned after Nelson's, using Handel's *Dead March*, as the accompaniment, first started at Nelson's funeral only a few years earlier in 1806. We can imagine the painting that would come out of this description, in the lowly Chapman barn surrounded by his closest officers and *Baptiste* his loyal Swiss, dictating his final words, resolving all past grievances.

Blaisdell, in his review of this story was also doubtful of the diagnosis, suggesting that the fox bite, if there was one, would have been considered a justifiable bite in today's world as the fox was being provoked by one or more dogs<sup>118</sup> and had been kept tied up in the sun, with-

<sup>118</sup> John D. Blaisdell, "Rabies and the Governor-General", *Veterinary History*, 7:1 (1992), 19-26.

*Figure 8: The Death of General Wolfe. Benjamin West, 1770. Image source: © National Gallery of Canada, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, transfer from the Canadian War Memorials, 1921 (Gift of the 2nd Duke of Westminster, England, 1918).*



out water. Certainly the survival of Blucher for years after the attack by this fox supports this argument. His suggestion was that the Duke died due to a combination of exhaustion from the trip, excessive heat, and a series of mild strokes that ended in a major one. He also adds three cases of human rabies that appeared in advance of the Duke's tale, in the years 1814, 1816 and 1817, and wonders why these cases were covered so well by the newspapers, including follow-up discussion on treatments, when someone of such profile as the Duke gets no coverage when bitten by a potentially rabid fox and such a delayed reference to rabies being a cause of death after his demise. He states that prior to being suggested in October, heat exhaustion and fatigue were the commonly attributed causes.

There is plenty of reason to consider alcohol abuse as the cause of the Duke's death. He had a known life of excess, having unsuccessfully tried stopping on occasion. His health and family finances were broken down by this addiction and comments on his deteriorated appearance followed him wherever he went, long before any encounter with a fox. Records

of his journey through Lower and Upper Canada make constant reference to his need for significant daily consumption and his anxiety when it becomes restricted. His reluctance to swallow appears predominantly to be a problem in swallowing alcohol. Altered behaviour is reported with alcoholic liver disease and terminal hepatic encephalopathy. Indeed, as suggested earlier, with a damaged liver, compounded by the apparent blood letting by Dr. Collis, no doubt resulting in a lowered blood pressure, the treatment with a combination of opium and laudanum would have been sufficient in itself to cause the Duke's death.

Alan Jackson's medical explanation gives good justification for considering rabies as the final diagnosis but accepts that all symptoms must be associated with this disease rather than a series of afflictions that could be associated with his getting soaked in a rainstorm; and aggravation of previous injuries, or indeed

rheumatism, which gave him the pain in his shoulder while in Sorel and Upper Canada. He does not reference the possible link to a life of alcohol abuse nor the impact of the “heroic medicine” applied by Dr. Collis. There is also no questioning of the objectivity of the officers.

The constant reference to the Duke’s hydrophobia seems overstated, while other common symptoms of rabies are absent, these include extreme irritation at the site of the initial infection, and an ascending paralysis, both of which are completely absent from this story. This is one of the difficulties in the diagnosis of rabies, there are a variable number of symptoms, not all of which need occur.

## Conclusion

This short account provides an alternative cause of death and introduces other documents to support this alternative. Further information may be uncovered with time or the truth may forever remain entombed beneath the altar floor of the Holy Trinity Cathedral in Quebec City, where the Duke was buried (Figure 10).

So indeed, we may well ask what evil felled the Duke? Was it the biter, or the liquor?



Figure 9: *The Death of Nelson*, 21 October 1805. Arthur William Devis, 1807. Image source: National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, England, Object ID BHC2894.

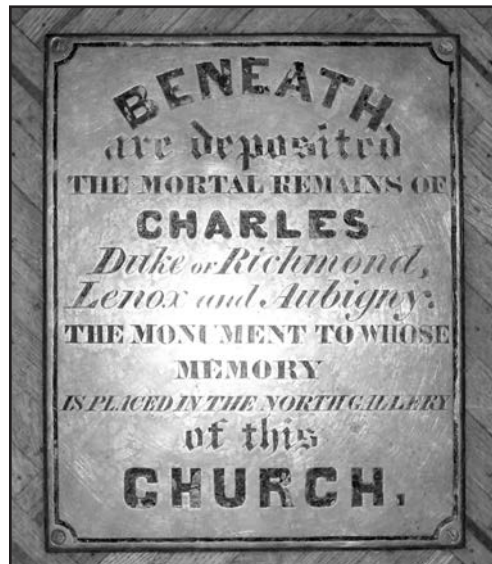


Figure 10: Holy Trinity Cathedral, plaque on altar floor: Beneath are deposited the mortal remains of Charles, Duke of Richmond, Lenox and Aubigny. The monument to whose memory is placed in the North Gallery of this Church. Image source: Author.