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Résumé de l'article

Entre les années 1780 et 1840, les chefs des Premières nations et les fonctionnaires impériaux de la région des Grands Lacs ont souvent fait cause commune pour promouvoir l’établissement de communautés autochtones dans les territoires revendiqués par l’Empire britannique. Constitués en grande partie de réfugiés venus de l’autre côté de la frontière internationale nouvellement établie, ces établissements offraient aux peuples autochtones la possibilité d’accéder à la sécurité et à la prospérité, tandis que les administrateurs impériaux les considéraient comme un appui essentiel à la puissance britannique. Bien que ces projets aient souvent invoqué le discours de la civilisation, l’approche qu’ils préconisaient était très éloignée de la vision de l’assimilation que l’historiographie d’aujourd’hui entend souvent par « civilisation ». En s’inspirant du modèle des nations domiciliées de la vallée du Saint-Laurent, ces projets pourraient être mieux compris comme suivant un modèle de « domiciliation », défini par l’alliance militaire, l’autonomie autochtone et l’adoption sélective d’éléments de la culture transatlantique. Ce modèle, cependant, est constamment remis en question par un discours de « mi-civilisation » qui, au milieu des années 1840, donne naissance à une politique d’assimilation plus totalisante.

A Model of Civilization: Imperial Projects, Indigenous Peoples, and "Domiciliation" in Upper Canada, 1784–1844

NATHAN INCE

Abstract

From the 1780s to the 1840s, First Nations leaders and imperial officials in the Great Lakes region frequently made common cause to promote the establishment of Indigenous communities within the territories claimed by the British Empire. Largely made up of refugees from across the newly established international border, these settlements offered Indigenous Peoples the possibility of safety and prosperity, while imperial administrators viewed them as crucial props to British power. Although these projects often invoked the discourse of civilization, the approach they advocated was a far cry from the vision of assimilation that is often understood by "civilization" in today's historiography. Drawing on the model of the nations domiciliées *of the St. Lawrence Valley, these projects could be better understood as following a model of "domiciliation," defined by military alliance, Indigenous autonomy, and the selective adoption of elements of transatlantic culture. This model, however, was consistently challenged by a discourse of "half-civilization" that by the mid-1840s gave rise to a more totalizing policy of assimilation.*

Résumé

Entre les années 1780 et 1840, les chefs des Premières nations et les fonctionnaires impériaux de la région des Grands Lacs ont souvent fait cause commune pour promouvoir l'établissement de communautés autochtones dans les territoires revendiqués par l'Empire britannique. Constitués en grande partie de réfugiés venus de l'autre côté de la frontière internationale nouvellement établie, ces établissements offraient aux peuples autochtones la possibilité d'accéder à la sécurité et à la prospérité, tandis que les administrateurs impériaux les considéraient comme un appui essentiel à la puissance britannique. Bien que ces projets aient souvent invoqué le discours de la civilisation, l'approche qu'ils préconisaient était très éloignée de la vision de l'assimilation que l'historiographie d'aujourd'hui entend souvent par « civilisation ». En s'inspirant du modèle des nations domiciliées de la vallée du Saint-Laurent, ces projets pourraient être mieux compris comme suivant un modèle de « domiciliation », défini par

l'alliance militaire, l'autonomie autochtone et l'adoption sélective d'éléments de la culture transatlantique. Ce modèle, cependant, est constamment remis en question par un discours de « mi-civilisation » qui, au milieu des années 1840, donne naissance à une politique d'assimilation plus totalisante.

On 10 August 1808, Teyoninhokarawen John Norton dispatched a letter likely intended for Sir Evan Nepean, the former undersecretary of state for the Home Office.[1] As the adopted protégé of the recently deceased Mohawk leader Thayendanegea Joseph Brant, Norton had for some years carried on an extensive correspondence with prominent Britons, including leading members of the evangelical Clapham Sect, regarding the condition of Indigenous communities in British North America.[2] In this particular letter, Norton proposed his vision for a project to further "the civilization of the tribes within the British limits." As might be expected, the scheme Norton outlined suggested several measures that reflected the rising tide of liberal humanitarianism championed by many of his metropolitan correspondents.[3] As part of his civilizing project, Norton recommended encouraging Indigenous participation in a market economy, securing government funding for missionary activity, making grants of land to individual families in freehold tenure, and establishing an educational institute "to instruct the youth in agriculture and letters."

Despite the inclusion of these liberal nostrums, Norton's vision of civilization was principally concerned with military power. Following the Chesapeake Affair of 1807, war between the British Empire and American Republic seemed increasingly likely. It was in reaction to this threat that Norton proposed his scheme for civilization. As Norton explained, the chief aim of his plan was to draw the remaining communities of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy living south of the international border away from American influence and to relocate them in a compact military settlement on the frontier of Upper Canada in order to help secure the province. Norton's inspiration for this project was the model of the French Empire. In the same letter to Nepean, Norton pointed out that, like the French in the eighteenth century, the British Empire was currently dependent on maintaining alliances with Indigenous communities to safeguard its presence in a region not easily accessible to reinforcements from across the Atlantic. When placed in this situation, Norton argued that the French "to secure more effectually the services of the tribes, always used their utmost endeavours to have their settlements compact." Norton iden-

tified the *nations domiciliées*, or domiciled nations, of the St. Lawrence Valley as the remnants of this system, and he commented approvingly that these communities could still muster 600 warriors between them.[4]

The elements of civilization that Norton proposed in this scheme were therefore instrumental rather than fundamental. For Norton, there was no question of *either* promoting civilization *or* strengthening the Indigenous-imperial military alliance. Government support in adapting to new lifeways was intended primarily to induce Indigenous communities to relocate to the proposed garrison settlement and ensure its material prosperity and long-term stability. Military mobilization, not acculturation, was Norton's foremost goal. He expected Indigenous men to preserve the warrior traditions that made them such valuable allies to the empire; they would continue to prosper as hunters as well as farmers. The settlement itself would remain autonomous, despite its incorporation into a wider imperial project. In short, he did not frame his proposal as the solution to an "Indian Problem." Rather, by granting assistance to First Nations communities in adapting to the impact of settler colonial cultures and economies, by increasing the number of Indigenous individuals inside the borders of the empire, and by consolidating these warriors into one powerful body, Norton presented this scheme as the potential solution to an "Empire Problem."

Humanitarian projects and civilizing missions have come to occupy a prominent place in the historiography of the late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century British Empire. Numerous works describe the upswelling of anti-slavery sentiment in the 1780s, the subsequent confluence of evangelical humanitarianism with liberal progressivism, the new wave of humanitarian fervour that swept the empire in the 1820s and 1830s, and the disillusionment engendered by colonial violence and economic disappointment in the middle years of the nineteenth century.[5] In Canadian historiography in particular, the idea of civilization has long been central to histories of Indigenous-newcomer relations. According to a prominent narrative, the 1820s and 1830s witnessed an important shift in Canadian "Indian Affairs" as the old model of military alliance was discarded in favour of a program of coerced acculturation that was most often described by contemporaries as a policy of "civilization."[6]

Historians of Canada have good reason to pay attention to the idea of civilization. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth

centuries, observers frequently described the diverse peoples and landscapes of British North America in terms of their proximity to a civilized ideal.[7] The ubiquity of appeals to civilization, however, meant that inevitably individuals using the same vocabulary ended up talking at cross-purposes. Perhaps nowhere was the contested meaning of civilization in Canada more apparent than in the conflict between those like Norton who favoured the continued autonomy and military relevance of First Nations and others who advocated the disintegration of Indigenous communities through their complete assimilation into settler society.[8]

While Norton's proposal to Nepean might appear anomalous given the tendency in Canadian historiography to equate civilization with assimilation, he was far from alone in holding such views. This was particularly true in the province of Upper Canada, a region that perhaps more than any other has been associated with the shift to civilization in Canadian historiography.[9] Prominent members of the Upper Canadian Indian Department made proposals similar to Norton's throughout the period 1784–1844. In a number of cases, such as at the Bay of Quinte and Grand River in 1784, at Chenail Ecarté in 1796, at Coldwater-Narrows in 1829, and on Manitoulin Island in 1835, the government adopted the proposed projects, while on the St. Clair River in the late 1830s and early 1840s they were presented with a *fait accompli*. What is more significant, Indigenous Peoples themselves were often the most important advocates for such projects. Relocating communities to the proximity of allies in times of crisis was a longstanding practice among the nations of eastern North America. The period of 1784–1844 was full of many such crises, and therefore policies that from an imperial perspective were meant to reinforce British power found willing partners among Indigenous leaders looking to secure peace and prosperity for their communities.

The significant divergence between what is usually understood in the existing historiography by "civilization" and schemes like those proposed by Norton suggest that more nuance is needed to differentiate these projects. Following the work of E. A. Heaman, what has usually been termed civilization could be described more accurately as a particular project of assimilation.[10] By way of distinction, I propose that schemes like those suggested by Norton might more meaningfully be called projects of "domiciliation," taking inspiration from Norton's own reference to the *nations domiciliées* of the St. Lawrence Valley. Establishing a distinction between these two different

programs does not mean that they were always diametrically opposed. Oftentimes actors pursuing a policy of domiciliation made alliances with others who were advocating the approach of assimilation, since there was clear overlap between the methods that each advocated, even if their goals differed. These alliances, however, proved to be of short duration. By the 1840s, the supporters of assimilation made clear that they would no longer tolerate the so-called "half-civilization" of autonomous Indigenous communities that had been embraced by the proponents of domiciliation.

Defining Domiciliation

As early as the seventeenth century, the French adjective *domicilié* was used in Canada, in the sense of "settled" or "resident," to describe someone who lived at a particular location. Originally applied to the colonists of New France, it later became the most common French descriptor to distinguish the mission settlements of the St. Lawrence Valley from more distant Indigenous nations.[11] While each had its own unique origins, the mission villages that existed by the mid-eighteenth century all shared a common history of having removed from other parts of their traditional territories to live within close proximity of French allies.[12] While these settlements were tied to the French Empire by commerce, diplomacy, and religion, they always maintained their political autonomy, a fact most clearly illustrated by the independent peace treaties these communities made with the British in the final stages of the Seven Years' War.[13]

Extrapolating from the history of these mission settlements, the most basic element of a broader model of "domiciliation" might be the relocation of autonomous Indigenous communities to the proximity of non-Indigenous allies. Such an undertaking necessarily required cooperation between imperial and Indigenous leaders, but each party's underlying motivations and understandings could be vastly different despite a common overarching framework. From the perspective of imperial agents, domiciliation was endorsed as a critical support to empire. While controlling the movement of Indigenous populations has always been central to imperial projects in the Americas, two key elements help differentiate domiciliation from other approaches to empire.[14] The first was that, again from an imperial perspective, projects of domiciliation were intended to create auxiliaries who could lend their military strength, diplomatic influence, and local knowledge to

a broader project of sovereignty. Because only willing partners could be relied upon for such critical assistance, projects of domiciliation had to rely more on negotiation and compromise than on coercion. Thus, the second element that separated domiciliation from other imperial projects was that Indigenous Peoples remained essentially autonomous within the partnership. In the language of nineteenth-century British North America, domiciled communities were "allies" rather than "subjects."[15]

Independent of these imperial concerns, Indigenous communities had their own reasons to pursue projects of domiciliation. Rather than a free choice made from a position of strength, the decision to relocate within proximity of imperial allies tended to result from immediate necessity brought on by warfare, political upheaval, or epidemic disease.[16] Such migrations therefore represent a continuation of the longstanding practice of Indigenous communities moving closer to friendly settlements in times of crisis.[17] In many cases, a second important element of continuity facilitated such movements. Often Indigenous communities were not moving to new and unknown lands but were returning to ancestral territories that had long been considered part of a broader homeland.[18]

Aside from the prospect of peace and stability, relocation to the proximity of European outposts also offered Indigenous communities the possibility of accessing new forms of power and prosperity.[19] In the case of the *nations domicilées* of the St. Lawrence Valley, the attractions of relocation included the possibilities of claiming a place of privilege in the Franco-Indigenous alliance system, unlocking new spiritual powers by adopting elements of Christianity, or gaining access to new trade routes and transatlantic markets.[20] In no way, however, did embracing these new advantages imply the disavowal of older principles of social and political organization. Although Louis XIV and his ministers generally advocated the *francisation* of the *nations domiciliées*, these communities largely maintained their own languages, cultures, subsistence patterns, and legal frameworks, and they only selectively adopted cultural practices from across the Atlantic.[21]

Applying this principle to a broader model suggests that it was not simply the possibility of adopting new cultural models that made domiciliation attractive to First Nations. Just as critical was the ability to control the nature and extent of such adaptations in order to ensure the continued social and political independence of their communities.[22] Perceptive imperial partners not only recognized this fact, but

endorsed it. Some authorities in New France argued it was preferable that mission communities retain their traditional lifeways in order to make better partners in the fur trade and more effective allies in war.[23] In the British Empire, Sir William Johnson criticized the totalizing evangelization adopted in New England because it aimed to eradicate traditions of hunting and warfare, and thus made Indigenous men lose "those qualities which render them useful to us."[24] Instead, Johnson openly admired the hybridity of the St. Lawrence *domiciliées*, writing that these communities proved "that a civilized member of society and an Indian hunter are not incompatible characters."[25]

Despite the possibility of cooperation within the framework of domiciliation, it is important to stress that First Nations leaders and imperial officials often had radically different understandings of these shared projects. While European supporters often used the linear language of advancing civilization to promote their vision of domiciliation, Indigenous descriptions of these projects tended to rely on metaphors of regeneration, including the rekindling of a fire, the rebuilding of a longhouse, or the rebirth of flesh and bone.[26] This suggests that the term domiciliation, potentially implying a seminal undertaking, might better express imperial perspectives. Indigenous views might be more accurately described by an idea closer to "re-domiciliation," stressing renewal rather than foundation. Nonetheless, even if the understandings of imperial administrators and First Nations leaders did not always sit comfortably, such projects could only prosper if both sides were willing to commit to a common overarching framework.

Domiciliation in Upper Canada

From the 1780s to the 1840s, there was a common understanding among allied Indigenous leaders and their British interlocutors that both groups were members of a common political family. To keep their relationship mutually beneficial, both sides had committed to fulfill important obligations. The British Empire promised to respect the autonomy and protect the property of Indigenous nations, while these nations pledged to support their British brethren in times of peace and war.[27] In the region that the British came to call Upper Canada, shared projects of domiciliation likewise became a salient feature of this relationship. The prevalence of domiciliation in Upper Canada was the direct result of the expansion of the American Republic south of the Great Lakes. From the Revolutionary War to the period of Indian

Removal, American interests used every method at their disposal to break Indigenous power and open this region to settlement.[28] While the British pursued their own program of settler colonialism in Upper Canada, this project was mediated by the political and military importance of the Indigenous-imperial relationship, as well as by the relative marginality of settler interests to the broader political order of the colony, at least into the 1840s.[29] In fact, both First Nations communities and imperial officials viewed Indigenous demographic strength as an important check to the persistent threat of insurgent settler sovereignty.[30] These circumstances made Upper Canada a promising theatre for British officials and Indigenous leaders, both looking to limit the tide of settler power in their own way, to cooperate in projects of domiciliation.

The case of the Haudenosaunee after the American Revolution provides a starting point for this history. Devastated by the war, some of the constituent communities of the Confederacy viewed removal across the newly delineated border as preferable to living in lands claimed by the new republic.[31] British administrators endorsed this relocation, considering it a crucial step to reconsolidating their diminished North American empire. Accordingly, cooperation between community leaders and imperial officials led to the creation in 1784 of two Haudenosaunee settlements on the northern side of the Great Lakes, one at the Grand River and another on the Bay of Quinte.[32] As part of this arrangement, the British administration promised to build a saw mill, a grist mill, a church, and a school on the Grand River, and committed an annual grant of 25 pounds sterling to support a schoolmaster.[33] Similar promises were made to the Bay of Quinte settlement.[34] While missions, schools, and mills were all associated with contemporary British views of civilization, the Haudenosaunee settlements on the Grand River and Bay of Quinte were not conceived as assimilationist projects.[35] Instead, these establishments were provided by the imperial government as part of the reciprocal exchange of alliance, both as compensation for Haudenosaunee losses in the recent war and as a pledge for the fruitful continuation of their relationship. John Deseronto, the leading spokesman for the Bay of Quinte community, explicitly outlined this context for the British administration. Before moving to their new village, Deseronto insisted that the King should reemploy a schoolteacher for the community, as had been the case before the Revolution. Deseronto asserted that this was a matter of utmost importance, and he even named a Mr. Vincent as the man the community wanted employed.[36]

Similar to the situation following the revolution, the extension of American power in the Northwest War pushed a number of communities into the relative safety of British North America during the 1790s. Among these communities were the Moravian Delaware, who relocated their village from west of Lake St. Clair to the Thames River in 1792.[37] Around the same time, a community of Munsee Delaware moved from south of Lake Erie to a new settlement on the same river, some 40 miles above their Moravian kin.[38] Many from the Wyandot village of Brownstown likewise relocated across the Detroit River to the vicinity of the British outpost of Amherstburg in 1796.[39] The choice to remove rather than accommodate themselves to American power, as many of their neighbouring nations did, was undoubtedly influenced by the settler violence these communities had suffered, from the massacre of the Moravians at Gnadenhutten to the threatened murder of Wyandot chief Adam Brown.[40]

Alongside these smaller migrations, the 1790s also saw British administrators and their Indigenous partners formulate a project for a larger pan-Indigenous settlement on the Chenail Ecarté River, just north of Lake St. Clair. This was intended as a "residence for the Western Indians" following the American victory at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794.[41] The Chenail Ecarté project was also intended to be a key prop to British power. In the words of a senior Indian Department official, from this new settlement "a constant intercourse and communication will be kept up with all the western and southern nations to the Mississippi, and also with all the eastern tribes as far as Lorette. This accomplished the British possession in this country and the British Interest will be perfectly secure."[42] At a meeting with representatives of the Indian Department on 30 August 1796, the local Ojibwe agreed to establish a "general council fire for all Nations" on a tract of land twelve miles square on the banks of the Chenail Ecarté in exchange for goods worth 800 pounds currency. At this meeting, the deputy superintendent general of the Indian Department, Alexander McKee, reiterated the promise that the land would be open to "all such Indians as are desirous of planting and living within the King's dominions."[43] Accusations of Indian Department corruption, however, led to the end of government support for this project by 1797.[44] While the local Ojibwe continued to request that the government fulfill their promises to assist their kin from Saginaw relocate to Chenail Ecarté, Alexander McKee lamented that he was no longer authorized to support any prospective emigrants.[45]

The years following the War of 1812 saw a new wave of proposed projects of domiciliation, particularly in the region of the upper Great Lakes. In advance of the British evacuation of Michilimackinac in the summer of 1815, the British commander Robert McDouall wrote that it was "much to be desired" that the Odawa of Arbre Croche might accompany the British garrison to their new post. McDouall wrote that this desire was shared by many among the Odawa, who "wish to be at a greater distance from the American Garrison, and to be in the vicinity of our new Post."[46] Indian Department officer John Askin Jr. likewise reported that a number of leaders from Arbre Croche had signified "their intentions of removing to an island which [lies] between St. Joseph and Matchedash, also to endeavour to get the whole of their nation to remove to the same island with them."[47] While not mentioned by name, this was undoubtedly Manitoulin Island, revered by contemporaries as the location the Odawa Nation had first been placed by the Great Creator.[48]

Jean-Baptiste Assiginack, a close ally of the British Indian Department, was likely one of the Odawa leaders encouraging this move. Pawquawkoman Amable Chevalier was likely another. In 1826, Chevalier approached the British government in partnership with Yellowhead, the hereditary leader of the Ojibwe community at the Narrows of Lake Simcoe. The two spokesmen proposed that a new settlement might be established on lands bordering Lake Huron offered up by Yellowhead, "in the hope of getting his [Odawa] friends to settle in the adjoining islands, as from their residence in the United States he much fears that they are becoming disaffected to the British Government."[49] Similar proposals continued to circulate around the upper Great Lakes in the years after the War of 1812, including one proposal by Indian Department officer T.G. Anderson in 1827 that the government should provide missionary, educational, and agricultural support in order to establish a population of 30,000 Indigenous and métis individuals in the region around Manitoulin Island as "the most serviceable defence which could be brought to contend, on equal footing, with the bush fighting Americans on the frontier."[50]

Despite the number of proposals from both Indigenous leaders and government employees, it was only in 1828 that the British administration openly endorsed a project of domiciliation on the upper Great Lakes. This plan was written down by T. G. Anderson in March 1829 in order to ensure the continued viability of the Indigenous-im-

perial relationship in the aftermath of the British surrender of the post of Drummond Island to American forces the previous autumn. First, Anderson suggested that the government circulate a large belt of wampum throughout the upper lakes in order to signal the empire's continued commitment to its alliance with the region's First Nations. Second, he proposed that a pan-Indigenous settlement should be established near the British naval outpost at Penetanguishene. Similar to the plans for Chenail Ecarté in the 1790s, Anderson imagined that this new establishment would anchor the empire's relationship with Indigenous Peoples throughout the region. Anderson also suggested that teachers, schools, and blacksmiths should be provided in order to entice communities from United States territory to relocate to the proposed settlement, and that potential emigrants should be allocated individual lots of land and given assistance to bring these under the plough.[51] Anderson's proposals were endorsed by the government, and during the summer of 1829 the first steps were taken to reorganize the area around Penetanguishene into the new centre of Indigenous-imperial relations on the upper lakes.[52]

The Ojibwe villages of Coldwater and the Narrows, between which ran a new Ojibwe-built road connecting Lake Simcoe and Georgian Bay, formed the two nuclei of the project. The establishment of the Coldwater-Narrows scheme has often been understood as a key moment in the emergence of a new approach to "civilization" in Canadian Indian Affairs.[53] To a certain extent, this was true. Early in the project, the Methodist Episcopal Church established an evangelical endeavour at Coldwater-Narrows firmly grounded in an assimilationist approach.[54] This mission operated in the same space as the Indian Department, but it was nonetheless essentially independent of government control. Despite advocating some common measures, the end goals of the two groups often appeared incompatible. In fact, it did not take long for these differences to devolve into public vitriol. Methodist missionaries accused members of the Indian Department of corruption and duplicity, even comparing them to "the slave-holding planters in the West Indies."[55] Indian Department members in turn decried the Methodists as disloyal republicans who sought to undermine the alliance between Indigenous communities and the British monarch.[56]

Like the Methodists and the Indian Department, the local Ojibwe had their own plans for the Coldwater-Narrows project. In his original proposal, T. G. Anderson wrote that John Aisance, the

hereditary leader of the Coldwater Ojibwe, was the real originator of the plan. According to Anderson, Aisance wanted to establish a pan-Indigenous settlement in his people's territory in order to secure a school for their children, to acquire assistance mastering plough-based agriculture, to gain access to a government-funded blacksmith, and to increase the local demographic strength of First Nations in response to settler encroachments.[57] While a number of these conditions were met, the settlements of Coldwater and the Narrows largely failed to attract the promised emigration of the western nations. Despite sending delegates to visit the new settlements, the Odawa from around the Straits of Mackinac were ultimately unwilling to relocate to an area that was increasingly swarming with European settlers.[58] Instead, following up on plans that had circulated since the end of the War of 1812, the Odawa began a small-scale emigration from United States territory to Manitoulin Island as early as 1832.[59] Taking heed of this movement, T. G. Anderson proposed in September 1835 that the government support this Odawa-led initiative. Like the earlier project of Coldwater-Narrows, Anderson's latest proposal was firmly rooted in the same considerations that had been so prominent since the close of the American Revolution. As Anderson explained, the congregation of Indigenous communities from around the upper lakes into one great settlement would offer safety and autonomy to First Nations, while securing to the empire "useful and loyal Subjects during Peace, and [who] in the Event of War might become an important Support to the Government."[60] Lieutenant Governor Colborne endorsed Anderson's proposal, and he was dispatched to Manitoulin Island that same fall to lay the groundwork for this new project.

One last notable case that adheres to the model of domiciliation unfolded at the very end of the Upper Canadian period. In the late 1830s, the project of domiciliation at Chenail Ecarté was revived by Potawatomi refugees fleeing the violence of Indian Removal in the United States.[61] When they arrived across the St. Clair River, the refugees reminded the British of their previous commitments. In a lengthy speech, the Potawatomi spokesman Manitogabowit recalled the promise made in 1796 that the western nations could always take shelter on the lands at Chenail Ecarté. While this original tract had since been taken from its rightful owners and opened up to white settlement, nearby Walpole Island remained in Anishinaabe hands. The Potawatomi accordingly claimed the right to settle thereon in fulfillment of the promises made decades earlier.[62]

The Potawatomi were not alone in wanting to see the British Empire fulfill its earlier promise. The Ojibwe living along the Canadian side of the River St. Clair were happy to be joined by their Anishinaabe kin from across the border. They helped ferry the Potawatomi across the river and provided the starving refugees with 60 bushels of their own corn.[63] The Ojibwe of Walpole Island in particular invited the Potawatomi to settle alongside them.[64] By the late 1830s, Walpole Island was inundated with squatters, and no doubt the Ojibwe hoped that the addition of the Potawatomi would lend strength to their ongoing struggle against the invaders. The officers of the Indian Department likewise enthusiastically welcomed the Potawatomi. Acting Assistant Superintendent J. W. Keating in particular insisted that the empire welcome the refugees as a matter of both principle and policy. With ongoing border tensions in the aftermath of the Canadian Rebellion, Keating highlighted that "the terror they inspire in our *friends* across the river" would do much to dissuade further Patriot incursions.[65]

Despite this, the Potawatomi received a cold welcome from the British administration. American authorities claimed that the British Indian Department was encouraging the Potawatomi to break their treaty obligations to the United States by offering them shelter across the border, and the ministry in London forbade the government of Upper Canada to offer any enticement to potential refugees.[66] In 1844, the Canadian government went further, ordering an investigation into whether the Potawatomi could be excluded from the annual presents, with the implication that their presence in British territory was illegitimate.[67] The Indian Department's report on the subject presented an unambiguous defence of the Potawatomi. Referring to the speeches made by leaders such as Manitogabowit, the officers of the department explained that the Potawatomi had come "in the hour of their need to seek an asylum in that country for which they fought and bled, in the soil which it was promised by solemn treaty should always be open to them." The annual presents were an "unconditional and sacred engagement, there can be no doubt. Every wampum records it, every aged man is acquainted with it, every speech alludes to it." The report concluded that under no circumstance could the Potawatomi be excluded from settling on Walpole Island. The communities along the St. Clair River still remembered the treaty of 1796, and all recognized that the land there was "intended as a place of refuge for three tribes, Chippewas, Ottawas, and Pottawatomies, that it was assumed by government for that purpose and that only."[68]

Opposition to Domiciliation

Projects of domiciliation had an ambiguous relationship with the projects put forward by the advocates of assimilation. While men like J. W. Keating, John Aisance, T. G. Anderson, John Norton, and Jean-Baptiste Assiginack could sometimes ally themselves with members of the Clapham Sect, the Aborigines' Protection Society, or the Methodist missionary groups, often such relationships were strained. There were two main points upon which the proponents of domiciliation disagreed with the champions of assimilation. The first was the question of whether or not Indigenous warriors constituted legitimate or even desirable military allies. The second was whether the selective and limited acculturation to transatlantic ideals, referred to by its critics as "half-civilization," was acceptable, or whether more coercive methods were needed to bring Indigenous communities to true civilization.

The position of Indigenous men as legitimate British allies had been attacked in the English-speaking world since the American Declaration of Independence.[69] While the employment of these auxiliaries had long been decried as a stain upon British honour, by the mid-nineteenth century a new criticism was levelled against the practice. With a novel twist on an old theme, the proponents of assimilation took up the argument that not only was Indigenous military participation an evil to the empire, but also an evil to Indigenous communities themselves. The Aborigines' Protection Society (APS), headed by prominent humanitarians such as Fowell Buxton, Sir Augustus d'Este, and Saxe Bannister, made clear that there was no room for Indigenous allies in their vision of a civilizing empire. In their 1839 report on Upper Canada, the APS declared that "the Indians having hitherto taken a part in military service disproportioned to their number in the province; and the character of their mode of warfare being at once disgraceful to their allies, and irritating and horrible to their enemies, it would be alike expedient for us and for them, either greatly to limit or wholly to abolish their employment on military duty for the future."[70] While the APS framed this idea as a humanitarian measure, the proposal to disenfranchise Indigenous warriors as legitimate military actors was abhorred by its supposed benefactors, who had no intention of abandoning their martial traditions.[71]

Still, views like those held by the APS were widely shared. During the period of the Canadian Rebellion, the metropolitan government issued directions that the employment of Indigenous warriors should

be strictly limited, and similar directives were issued in Upper Canada itself.[72] In January 1842, a patrol of 20 warriors was called to the St. Clair frontier in response to rumours of an imminent Patriot raid. While Indigenous men had helped guard this border since the beginning of the Rebellion in 1837, this latest mobilization was decried by outside observers, and the local military commander accordingly ordered that "the employment of the Indians may be terminated as early as possible, as it is decidedly inexpedient to bring these people into active service, or to revive in them their warlike habits and dispositions."[73]

Inherent in this criticism was the idea that Indigenous communities had only reached an imperfect level of civilization and could easily backslide into "warlike habits and dispositions." To many outsiders, the inhabitants of communities like Kahnawake, the Grand River, and Manitoulin Island were neither civilized subjects nor noble savages, but were instead labelled "half-civilized." Already in 1795, the Duke de La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt wrote after a visit to the Grand River that it seemed to be government policy to impart "a half civilization to all the Indian nations in the interest of England."[74] Twenty-five years later, John Howison echoed this idea in his *Sketches of Upper Canada*, remarking that the inhabitants of the Grand River were at most half-civilized, and that any further attempt to civilize them would necessarily fail. While in Howison's opinion the community of Kahnawake had made further strides than the communities on the Grand River, he noted that even there "a partial civilization had contributed but little to extinguish their savage propensities."[75] Other writers, including the extended clan of Catharine Parr Traill, Susanna Moodie, Samuel Strickland, and Agnes Strickland, likewise frequently described First Nations communities in Canada as half-civilized.[76]

In their landmark report on Indian Affairs in Canada released in 1844, the commissioners appointed by Governor General Bagot attempted to explain the historical origins of this half-civilized state. They explained that during the French regime the domiciled communities of Lower Canada had adopted Christianity and had become "partially civilized." During the period of British rule, the communities of Upper Canada had advanced somewhat in civilization while those of Lower Canada had remained stagnant, so that by the 1840s, First Nations communities in both provinces had attained a similar level of half-civilization. The commissioners cautioned that this first step towards civilization had been the easiest. To progress beyond this

half-civilized state, the commissioners explained, would require "more enlarged measures and more active interference."[77]

By the 1840s, many observers agreed that Indigenous communities in Canada would not make any further advance in civilization without a radical break from the approach that had previously been adopted. Governor General Sydenham was one. During his brief tenure at the head of the administration of the newly united Province of Canada, Sydenham castigated the past management of Indian Affairs, writing that "the attempt to combine a system of pupilage with the settlement of these people in civilized parts of the country leads only to embarrassment to the Government, expense to the Crown, a waste of resource to the province, and injury to the Indians themselves. Thus circumstanced the Indian loses all the good qualities of his wild state, and acquires nothing but the vices of civilization."[78] When presenting evidence to the Bagot Commission, the Mississauga missionary Kahkewaquonaby Peter Jones generally agreed with Sydenham. Unless a new system of education could be established, including industrial schools that would separate children from the influence of their parents for long periods of time, Jones argued that "the Indians will forever remain in their half-civilized state."[79] This had been the position of the Wesleyan Methodist Society, of which Jones was a leading member, for a number of years. In 1837, the Reverend Robert Alder, secretary of the society, had written a lengthy report to the secretary of state for war and the colonies proposing among other things that Indigenous children "be removed from their imperfectly civilized parents and placed under the exclusive direction of their religious and secular instructors."[80]

The most comprehensive illustration of what exactly constituted this state of half-civilization can be found in a list of questions sent out by the commissioners appointed by Governor General Bagot to the officers of the Indian Department. Fifty-three such queries were dispatched by the commissioners as part of their efforts to gather information on the state of Indian Affairs in Canada. Many of these questions presented simple juxtapositions of more and less civilized states. Question 3: "Where and in what manner are they settled, whether in villages or upon small farms?" Question 6: "Is the land cultivated by the Indians under your superintendence subdivided into regular blocks or parcels, or does each Indian select the spot he wishes to cultivate according to his taste, or is the land selected by chiefs for him?" Question 19: "Is their fondness for hunting and fishing as great as formerly?"[81]

In each of these examples, the difference between half-civilization and civilization is implied within the question. Living in villages, farming irregular lots, and living by hunting or fishing were all markers of half-civilized life. Living on farmsteads, cultivating regularly subdivided blocks, and decreased dependence on hunting and fishing were civilized. While other questions were less direct, when paired with the answers given by the superintendents, this survey from the Bagot commissioners paints a detailed picture of the difference between civilization and half-civilization. Growing potatoes was half-civilized; growing wheat was civilized. Breaking the soil with a hoe was half-civilized; using a plough was civilized. Cultivating land in common was half-civilized; cultivating the land in private lots was civilized. Seasonally living in wigwams or other impermanent dwellings was half-civilized; permanently living in stone or frame houses was civilized.[82] Other markers of civilization inquired after by the commissioners included stock keeping and taking meals "at regular stated periods of the day, as is customary among the white settlers." A final important question involved the gendered division of labour. Question 16 asked "By whom is the field labor performed? If by the young men, do they take their fair share of the labor?" In many Indigenous societies of northeastern North America, women had traditionally carried out the bulk of agricultural work, but to outside observers, women working in the fields was a clear indication of a society only half-civilized.[83]

While some of the activities described as half-civilized were simply longstanding practices that did not meet European expectations that First Nations had lived entirely in a "state of nature," others represented cultural or social practices that were transatlantic in origin but had been partially or selectively adopted. Despite being decried by assimilationists, this half-civilization illustrated one of the potential appeals of alliance with the British Empire. While adopting certain newcomer practises could strengthen Indigenous communities, it was important that these communities retained the ability to determine their own engagement with these new lifeways.[84] The relationship with the British, including shared projects of domiciliation, was desirable in part because it could facilitate new modes of power and prosperity, but there was never any question that such changes should be imposed from the outside.

For their part, imperial agents such as Sir William Johnson, John Norton, and T. G. Anderson had also long embraced "half-civilization."

From this perspective, teachers, missionaries, millers, blacksmiths, and agricultural instructors had been provided not to dissolve First Nations societies into the mass of settlers, but to attract partners to the empire's side in order to counterbalance settler power. Nor had there been any intention that Indigenous nations would lose the warrior ethos or other elements of their political and social organization that made them so useful to the empire. In 1833, for example, the superintendent of the Indian Department, Joseph Brant Clench, expressed his belief that Indigenous communities who remained unconverted to Christianity were superior to those who joined nonconforming Christian sects such as the Methodists. Here, Clench echoed the sentiments of his great-grandfather, Sir William Johnson, decades earlier, writing "I find the pagan Indians more industrious and much more healthful than the Methodists, who from their violent mode of worship, become so exhausted that many of them expectorate blood."[85]

For most observers, however, half-civilization meant the worst of all worlds. In the words of the 1844 report commissioned by Bagot, "in his half civilized state, [the Indian] is indolent to excess, intemperate, suspicious, cunning, covetous, and addicted to lying and fraud."[86] In the same vein, Susanna Moodie wrote that the child of a mixed marriage "is generally a lying vicious rogue, possessing the worst quality of both parents in an eminent degree."[87] Viscount Bury commented in his 1855 report on Indian Affairs that "half-civilization, as they now possess, would lend the Indian nothing but its vices."[88] Even Kahkewaquonaby Peter Jones was apt to claim that half-civilization could render an Indigenous person "ten times more the child of the devil than he was before."[89]

In this view, enforcing the proper form of civilization was more important than building a relationship within which First Nations communities could themselves determine their interaction with new cultural, social, or economic modes. The movement of the Potawatomi into Upper Canada in the late 1830s and early 1840s neatly illustrates this divergence. While the Potawatomi and the officers of the Indian Department mobilized the old discourse of alliance to justify welcoming the newcomers across the international border, the commissioners appointed by Governor General Bagot only considered this movement's implications for their self-imposed civilizing mission. The newly arrived Potawatomi, they wrote, were "wild, turbulent, mendicant, and dishonest. They have been kindly received by the resident tribes, and allowed to settle on their lands, but their roving habits ren-

der them averse to settling; they prefer remaining poor, ragged, and filthy, to the restraint of civilized life." Without reference to ancient promises or military alliance, the commissioners lamented the negative impact the Potawatomi would have on the ongoing government efforts to assimilate the local Anishinaabe communities. They concluded that the arrival of these refugees in Upper Canada was "in every respect to be regretted."[90]

Domiciliation Discarded

Even while Indigenous speakers and Indian Department officials continued to advocate the importance of military alliance and community autonomy into the 1840s, the advocates of more complete assimilation were gaining strength. During his tumultuous tenure as lieutenant governor of Upper Canada from 1836 to 1838, Sir Francis Bond Head took steps to erase Indigenous settlements from the province, terminating the settlement at Coldwater-Narrows and strong-arming other communities, such as the Wyandot on the Detroit River and the Moravians on the Thames, into significant land surrenders. The backlash to Head's policies was led by Upper Canadian Methodists and their allies in the Aborigines' Protection Society, and the resulting debates only ended up strengthening their influence.[91] After the union of the Canadas, the view expressed by Governor General Sydenham that First Nations "should be compelled to fall into the rank of the rest of Her Majesty's subjects" grew increasingly prevalent.[92] As discussed above, the Report of the Bagot Commission of 1844 advocated a policy of total assimilation. The clearest iteration of this approach in the years before Confederation was the Gradual Civilization Act of 1857, whose stated goal was the dissolution of Indigenous communities. No longer was there serious discussion of selective cultural adaptation, military alliance, or continued autonomy.[93] Even if its full implementation was still decades away, the policy of assimilation that was to culminate in the residential schools of the Dominion of Canada had already taken root.[94]

The rapidity with which the model of domiciliation was overturned was matched by the completeness of the revolution. The dominant position of assimilation by the time of Confederation is likely why subsequent histories of Indian Affairs in Canada have tended to dichotomize policies of military alliance from policies of "civilization," paying little attention to the long relationship between the

two.[95] Indigenous agency in selectively adopting elements of transatlantic culture, especially outside of the evangelical model advocated by missionaries such as Kahkewaquonaby Peter Jones, has likewise largely been written out of histories of civilization in Canada. One of the greatest victories of assimilation was erasing the possibility that other paths could have been taken. The model of domiciliation helps to present a more complete picture of a more complicated past.

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Endnotes

1 Letter of John Norton, 10 August 1808, 170–177, vol. 111, Q series, C.O. 42, MG11, Library and Archives Canada (hereafter LAC). While this letter is unaddressed, a second letter of the same date suggests that Nepean was the intended recipient, see John Norton to John Owen, 10 August 1808, 128–129, Norton Letter Book, Ayer Collection, Newberry Library.

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Dussart, *Colonization and the Origins of Humanitarian Governance: Protecting Aborigines across the Nineteenth-century British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Elizabeth Elbourne, *Blood Ground: Colonialism, Missions, and the Contest for Christianity in the Cape Colony and Britain, 1799–1853* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014).

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7 See, for example, Elizabeth Simcoe, *The Diary of Mrs. John Graves Simcoe,* ed. J. Ross Robertson (Toronto: William Briggs, 1911), 115, 175, 257; Edward Allen Talbot, *Five Years' Residence in the Canadas* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1824), 31–41; John Richardson, *Wacousta*, vol 1 (Philadelphia: Key and Biddle, 1833), 7–11.

8 E. A. Heaman, *Civilization: From Enlightenment Philosophy to Canadian History* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022), 165–66.

9 This is largely due to the exceptional life and writings of Kahkewaquonaby Peter Jones. See Donald B. Smith, *Sacred Feathers: The Reverend Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby) and the Mississauga Indians*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013).

10 Heaman, *Civilization*, 165–68.

11 Jean-François Lozier, *Flesh Reborn: The Saint Lawrence Valley Mission Settlements through the Seventeenth Century* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2018), 16.

12 Lozier, *Flesh Reborn*, 6–7; Maxime Boily, "Les terres amerindiennes dans le regime seigneurial: Les modeles fonciers des missions sedentaires de la Nouvelle-France." (Master's thesis, Université Laval, 2006), 197–210; D. Peter MacLeod, *The Canadian Iroquois and the Seven Years' War* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2012), x–xii.

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14 For examples of other imperial approaches across the hemisphere, see Jeremy Ravi Mumford, *Vertical Empire: The General Resettlement of Indians in the Colonial Andes* (Durham, NC: Duke university Press); Alida C. Metcalf, "The Entradas of Bahia of the Sixteenth Century," *The Americas* 61, no. 3 (2005): 373–400; Greer, *Property and Dispossession*, 428–32.

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18 Daniel Rück, *The Laws and the Land: The Settler Colonial Invasion of Kahnawà:ke in Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2021), 28–29; Susan M. Hill, *The Clay We Are Made Of: Haudenosaunee Land Tenure on the Grand River* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2017), 138–39.
19 Rück, *The Laws and the Land*, 28; John S. Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Residential School System, 1879 to 1986* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999), 14.
20 Lozier, *Flesh Reborn,* 55, 202. Jan Grabowski, "Les Amérindiens domiciliés et la 'contrebande' des fourrures en Nouvelle-France," *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec* 25 (1994): 45–52.
21 Lozier, *Flesh Reborn*, 6. For *francisation*, see Mairi Cowan, "Education, Francisation, and Shifting Colonial Priorities at the Ursuline Convent in Seventeenth-Century Québec," *Canadian Historical Review* 99, no. 1 (2018): 1–29.
22 For an illustrative comparison, see the discussion of the Karihwiyo of Handsome Lake in Hill, *The Clay We Are Made Of,* 46–51.
23 Lozier, *Flesh Reborn*, 198–200.
24 Sir William Johnson to Daniel Burton, 8 October 1766, in *The Papers of Sir William Johnson (PWJ)*, vol. 5, ed. James Sullivan et al. (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1921–65), 388–91. For New England evangelization, see Neal Salisbury, "Red Puritans: The 'Praying Indians' of Massachusetts Bay and John Eliot," *William and Mary Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (1974): 27–54.
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26 Speech of Pashekishequeshkum, 12 October 1838, 64919, vol. 69, RG10, LAC; Hill, *The Clay We Are Made Of*, 139–141; Lozier, *Flesh Reborn*, 5–11.
27 Nathan Ince, "'As Long as that Fire Burned': Indigenous Warriors and Political Order in Upper Canada, 1837–1842," *Canadian Historical Review* 103, no. 3 (2022), 389–90.
28 Jeffery Ostler, "'To Extirpate the Indians': An Indigenous Consciousness of Genocide in the Ohio Valley and Lower Great Lakes, 1750s–1810, *William and Mary Quarterly* 72, no. 4 (2015): 587–622; Phil Bellfy, *Three Fires Unity: The Anishnaabeg of the Lake Huron Borderlands* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 92–101.

29 Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens*, 109–12. It is important to stress that this *relative* disparity in violence resulted from the particular configuration of imperial power in British North America, not from a fundamental difference in Upper Canadian settler society. Settlers in Upper Canada commonly enacted the same sort of small-scale violence as in the United States, including theft, murder, squatting, assault, and rape.

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31 Rhiannon Koehler, "Hostile Nations: Quantifying the Destruction of the Sullivan-Clinton Genocide of 1779," *American Indian Quarterly* 42, no. 4 (2018): 427–53; Hill, *The Clay We Are Made Of*, 133–34.

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47 John Askin Jr. to William Claus, 4 May 1815, 167, vol. 10, Claus Papers, MG19, LAC.
48 Council of 7 July 1818 (Council No. 1), 42, McKay Letter Book Part 1, William McKay Fonds, McCord Museum Archives.
49 James Givins to William Claus, 17 January 1826, 22896–22897, vol. 43, RG10, LAC.
50 Queries by Bishop McDonell to T. G. Anderson, no date (1827), 23300–23312, vol. 44, RG10, LAC.
51 Memorandum of T. G. Anderson, 29 March 1829, 23752–23754, vol. 45, RG10, LAC; T. G. Anderson to Lieutenant Colonel Napier, 20 February 1829, 193, vol. 269, RG10, LAC.
52 T. G. Anderson to James Givins, 21 June 1829, 23803, vol. 45, RG10, LAC.
53 Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, 105.
54 James Ralph Handy, "The Ojibwa: 1640–1840: Two Centuries of Change from Sault Ste. Marie to Coldwater/Narrows" (Master's thesis, University of Waterloo, 1978), 75–87.
55 For slave-holding planters, see Letter of Gerald Alley, 5 April 1832, 56125, vol. 50, LAC. For further examples of this criticism, see James Richardson to Edward McMahon, with enclosures, 9 May 1832, 56284–56293, vol. 51, RG10, LAC.
56 T. G. Anderson to James Givins, 27 May 1834, 58390–58391, vol. 55, RG10, LAC; T. G. Anderson to William Hepburn, 22 April 1837, 63325–63326, vol. 65, LAC.
57 Memorandum of T. G. Anderson, 29 March 1829, 23752–23754, vol. 45, RG10, LAC
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59 T. G. Anderson to James Givins, 28 May 1832, 56324–56325, vol. 51, RG10, LAC; T. G. Anderson to James Givins, 3 July 1832, 56472, vol. 51, RG10, LAC.
60 T. G. Anderson to Sir John Colborne, 24 September 1835, 59886–59896, vol. 59, RG10, LAC.
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of Canada, 1975), 65–71. I use the term refugee here not only because this is the historical language that appears in the archive, but to stress the immediate context of genocidal violence faced by the Potawatomi. Rather than undermining Potawatomi rights in the eyes of colonial law, the language of refuge was often invoked by contemporaries to defend these rights, as will be emphasized below.

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66 George Vardon to S. B. Harrison, 2 November 1840, 68368–68371, vol. 75, RG10, LAC; Lord Russell to Sir George Arthur, 22 June 1840, 502-504, vol. 95, RG7 G1, LAC.

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73 McIntosh to the Military Secretary, 21 January 1842, 277–278, vol. 270, RG8, LAC.

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77 Report on the Affairs of the Indians in Canada (RAIC), in *Appendix to the Fourth Volume of the Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province*

of Canada (Montreal: Rollo Campbell, 1845), Appendix EEE, unpaginated (page 8).

78 Sydenham to Lord Russell, 22 July 1841, 127–129, vol. 58, RG7 G12, LAC.

79 RAIC, in *Appendix to the Sixth Volume of the Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada* (Montreal: Rollo Campbell, 1847), Appendix T, unpaginated (pages 181–82).

80 Robert Alder to Glenelg, 14 December 1837, in *Parliamentary Papers 1839*, 95.

81 RAIC 1847. The queries are in Appendix 2, the answers in Appendices 3–45.

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