Ontario History

Rumours, Ruffians, and the U.S.-Upper Canada Border
Patriots, Publishers, and Hunters Respond to the Upper Canadian Rebellion and Patriot War, 1837-1841

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Volume 115, numéro 2, fall 2023

The 1838 Upper Canadian Rebellion/Patriot War and its Aftermath

URI : https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1106167ar
DOI : https://doi.org/10.7202/1106167ar

Aller au sommaire du numéro

Éditeur(s)

The Ontario Historical Society

ISSN

0030-2953 (imprimé)
2371-4654 (numérique)

Découvrir la revue

Citer cet article

Steedman, J. (2023). Rumours, Ruffians, and the U.S.-Upper Canada Border: Patriots, Publishers, and Hunters Respond to the Upper Canadian Rebellion and Patriot War, 1837-1841. *Ontario History*, *115*(2), 227–248. https://doi.org/10.7202/1106167ar

Résumé de l'article

Cet article passe en revue l'histoire de la réaction sociale et politique américaine aux événements entourant la rébellion du Haut-Canada. Il se concentre sur les efforts des habitants du Michigan et des membres de sociétés secrètes qui ont soutenu la rébellion et la guerre des Patriotes, ainsi que sur leurs expériences d'engagement dans des activités révolutionnaires. En s'engageant contre un ennemi étranger, réel ou imaginaire, ces Américains cherchaient une panacée pour apaiser leur angoisse générationnelle et nationaliste. En retour, ils pensaient qu'en libérant les Canadiens de la tyrannie britannique, ils consolideraient leur héritage dans l'histoire américaine. Cet héroïsme, associé à la formation d'une société secrète, les Hunters' Lodges, a temporairement détourné l'attention de ces Américains, ainsi que de certains représentants du gouvernement, des difficultés économiques, des troubles intérieurs et politiques et, peut-être plus important encore, d'un monde en pleine mutation.

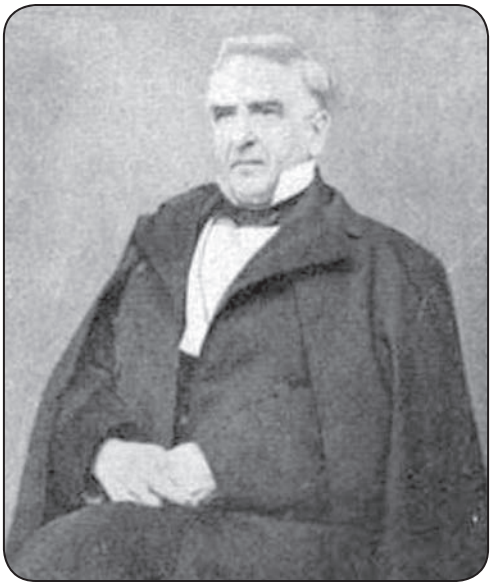
Rumours, Ruffians, and the U.S.-Upper Canada Border

Patriots, Publishers, and Hunters Respond to the Upper Canadian Rebellion and Patriot War, 1837-1841

by Josh Steedman

Introduction

In 1840, the Spirit of '76 invigorated the "eldest Queen City of the West."[1] On St. Patrick's Day, Detroit's Sons of Erin, an Irish American organization, held a public dinner. Several prominent Detroiters, including mayor Dr. Zina Pitcher (1797-1872), attended the event. Libations flowed, and the evening's viands were plentiful. Aside from food and drink, attendees enjoyed music and other festivities at Detroit's American Hotel. This grand fete honoured more than Ireland's patron saint. In one of many spirited orations, Mayor Pitcher proclaimed: "*Liberty*—and those who died for it—... [Upper] Canada's Lount, Matthews, Moreau, Von Shoulz, Woodruff, Putnam, and others, whether on the scaffold or on the battlefield—may their blood so moisten the tree of liberty, that its branches will over shadow the earth."[2] Mayor Pitcher's proclamation, along with the night's celebratory activities, orations, and toasts,



Dr. Zina Pitcher. Credit: Ralph D. Williams The Honorable Peter White: A Biographical Sketch of the Lake Superior Iron Country (Cleveland: Penton Publishing Company, 1905), 31. (Via: Hathi Trust)

[1] The term "Queen City" is a rather nebulous moniker. It refers to a city that is the largest city in a geographic locale but is not the capital. In this context, the "eldest" Queen City of the West refers to Detroit. For context of this use of "Queen City" and more toasts which saluted Detroit, see: "The Celebration," *Democratic Free Press*, 17 July 1839.

[2] "St. Patrick's Day—Festival," *Democratic Free Press*, 1 April 1840.

Abstract

This article surveys the history of the American social and political reaction to the events surrounding the Upper Canadian Rebellion. It focuses on the efforts of Michiganders and members of secret societies who supported the rebellion and Patriot War and on their experiences of engaging in revolutionary activities. By engaging with an enemy abroad, whether real, or imagined, these Americans sought a panacea to ease their generational and nationalistic angst. In return, they believed that liberating Canadians from British tyranny would cement their legacies in American history. This heroism, coupled with the formation of a secret society, the Hunters' Lodges, temporarily distracted these Americans as well as some government officials from economic hardship, domestic and political turmoil, and perhaps most importantly, a rapidly changing world.

Résumé: *Cet article passe en revue l'histoire de la réaction sociale et politique américaine aux événements entourant la rébellion du Haut-Canada. Il se concentre sur les efforts des habitants du Michigan et des membres de sociétés secrètes qui ont soutenu la rébellion et la guerre des Patriotes, ainsi que sur leurs expériences d'engagement dans des activités révolutionnaires. En s'engageant contre un ennemi étranger, réel ou imaginaire, ces Américains cherchaient une panacée pour apaiser leur angoisse générationnelle et nationaliste. En retour, ils pensaient qu'en libérant les Canadiens de la tyrannie britannique, ils consolideraient leur héritage dans l'histoire américaine. Cet héroïsme, associé à la formation d'une société secrète, les Hunters' Lodges, a temporairement détourné l'attention de ces Américains, ainsi que de certains représentants du gouvernement, des difficultés économiques, des troubles intérieurs et politiques et, peut-être plus important encore, d'un monde en pleine mutation.*

venerated the memory of the rebels and rebellions in the Canadas.

A small but influential group of Michiganders supported the Upper Canadian Rebellion. Some citizens of the Wolverine State supplied the rebels with weapons and munitions. In late 1837, volunteers took these goods to the rebel encampment on Navy Island. Many Michiganders interacted with each other at meetings headed by civic leaders—such as Mayor Pitcher—which stirred public opinion. The excitement Americans experienced reading about and potentially participating in a rebellion manipulated the emotions of the men and women who supported the Upper Canadian Rebellion and Patriot War. These feelings permeated the rapidly populated antebellum Midwest and were only one of many responses to the multi-dimensional Upper Canadian Rebellion in 1837. Michiganders, sympathetic to the plight of the Canadas, reacted to the outbreak of rebellion in Upper Canada similarly to their counterparts in the Empire State. Throughout Michigan, men and women held mass public meetings and condemned the atrocities committed by the Crown in the two Canadas. In lieu of offering their thoughts and prayers, hoping the rebellion would succeed, Michiganders instead had a rough-and-tumble response. They supported the rebellion

by holding fundraisers, stealing weapons, and in some cases, engaging American, Upper Canadian, and Crown forces in armed combat.[3]

After the Upper Canadian Rebellion and during the early years of the Patriot War, the State of Michigan was a relatively new concept. Some cities in Michigan, such as Detroit, were historic colonial outposts, while others, such as Monroe, were significant during the War of 1812. What propelled Michigan to statehood was an overblown argument (the so-called "Toledo War") over the Toledo Strip. Decades of conflicting cartography, the uncertain landscape of the Great Lakes, and the formidable Great Black Swamp (nearly 1,500 km^2 wetlands, the result of prehistoric glaciers which spanned Northwest Ohio, Southern Michigan, and portions of Indiana) hindered settlement. At the "war's" conclusion, Michigan did not acquire the Port of Toledo. One could argue that Michigan won the Toledo War. Michigan gained vast mineral and natural resource reserves in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan which was later admitted into the Union as a free state, negating the short-term losses because of losing Toledo.[4]

This article surveys the history of the American social and political reaction to the events surrounding the Upper Canadian Rebellion. It focuses on the efforts of Michiganders and members of secret societies who supported the Upper Canadian Rebellion and Patriot War and on their experiences—particularly thrill, excitement, and enjoyment—engaging in revolutionary (or treasonous) activities. Borrowing from psychology and historians Walter Hixson and Richard Hofstadter, the excitement American sympathizers felt engaging with the rebellion temporarily relieved a psychic crisis, or, perhaps more specifically, a bout of generational anxiety the result of rapid changes and economic turmoil (particularly the effects of the Panic of 1837) in the United States. By engaging with an enemy abroad, whether real, or imagined, these Americans sought a panacea to ease their generational and nationalistic angst. In return, they believed that liberating the Upper Canadians from British tyranny would cement their legacies in American history. This heroism, coupled with the formation of a secret society (or perhaps, more accurately, a paramilitary association), the Hunters' Lodges, temporarily distracted these Americans as well as some government officials from economic hardship, domestic and political turmoil, and perhaps most importantly, a rapidly changing world.[5]

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[3] Detroit Public Library, Burton Historical Collection, Father James Whelan Papers, Letter to General Rensselaer van Rensselaer from [?] in Pittsford, Michigan, 29 December 1837.

[4] For more on the Toledo War, see W.V. Way's *The Facts and Historical Events of the Toledo War of 1835, As Connected with the First Session of the Court of Common Pleas of Lucas County, Ohio* (Toledo: Daily Commercial Steam Book and Job Printing House, 1869); Ravi K. Perry, *Black Mayors, White Majorities: The Balancing Act of Racial Politics* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 41-42.

[5] Walter L. Hixson, *The Myth of American Diplomacy: National Identity and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New

Rumours Have It

Rumours and speculation surrounding the Hunters' Lodges and the Patriot War spiralled out of control. From 1838 to at least 1841, these rumours proved to be a powerful discursive tool which delegitimized the rebels and their American sympathizers. Speculation provided politicians in the United States, Upper Canada, and Great Britain adequate fodder to engage in an international bout of he said, she said. Sociologist Gary Alan Fine explains that such rumours often reflect the "uncertainties about procedural democracy." Opposition groups, such as the Hunters or the U.S., Upper Canadian, and British governments, often utilized rumours, too, as they illustrate "the inchoate disaffection of citizens, diverting allegiance, but lacking any positive program of change." It was also reported many politicians, civic leaders, and other public officials—particularly from Ohio, New York, and Michigan—readily aided and were ranking members of the Hunters' Lodges.[6]

Sir George Arthur (1784-1854), the seventeenth Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada (1838-39), wrote to General Hugh Brady (1768-1851), the commander of Military Department number 7, Detroit, and informed him of widespread rumours associated with the Hunters' Lodges. These rumours involved individuals holding public office. In Ohio, Sir Arthur wrote some local militias "declared that their arms were at the disposal of the patriots." A widely circulated rumour throughout the U.S. and Upper Canada was that public officials aided the Hunters. After the rebellion, Arthur reported weapons caches and armouries throughout the American Midwest were left laxly guarded, and these arsenals "were at the disposal of the patriots." Arthur even accused the sitting Governor of Michigan, Stevens T. Mason (1811-1843), to be an active member of the Hunters' Lodges.[7]

The Canadian-born Captain Eber B. Ward (1811-1875), an early Detroit industrialist and the so-called "steamship king of the Great Lakes," corroborated Arthur's assertion that public officials aided the Hunters and the Patriots. Ward wrote that as the rebellion broke out, Americans supported the rebels. Influential Detroiters were quite active and "not only furnished provisions and pecuniary assistance to them, but their influence had induced the public officers to allow the insurgents" to acquire U.S. arms from

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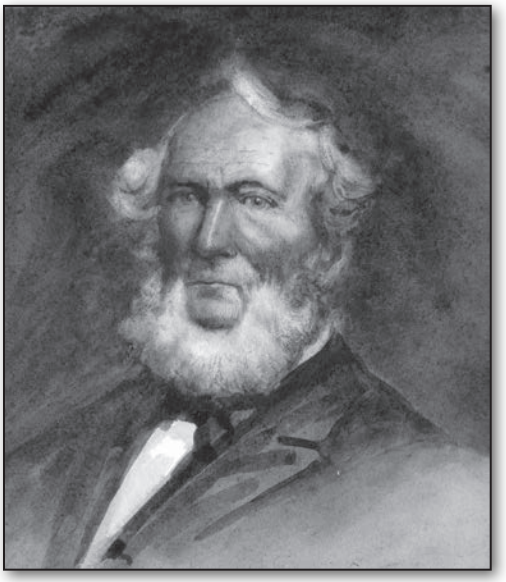
Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), 15. Richard Hofstadter applies the term "psychic crisis" to American populism in the 1890s. For Hofstadter's use of psychic crisis, see: Richard Hofstadter, "Manifest Destiny and the Philippines," *America in Crisis. Fourteen Crucial Episodes in American History,* ed. Daniel Aaron (New York: Knopf, 1952), 173-200.

[6] Gary Alan Fine, "Rumours Matters: An Introductory Essay" in *Rumours Mills: The Social Impact of Rumours and Legend*, edited by Gary Alan Fine, Veronique Campion-Vincent, and Chip Heath (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 5.

[7] Sir George Arthur to General Hugh Brady, 26 October 1838 in *Territorial Relations, United States and Great Britain, Message from the President of the United* States (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1839), 116-19.



Dr. Charles Duncombe. Source: E.I. Hirst, Portrait of Dr. Charles Duncombe ca. 1860, (1895); Baldwin Collection of Canadiana (Toronto Public Library Digital Archive)

"places of deposits." Ward asserted that public officials allegedly supported the Hunters and Patriots and allowed the rebels to violate American and international laws.[8]

In a broader sense, the public on both sides of the border was aware of the growing speculation surrounding the Patriots and the Hunters' Lodges. Concerned Michiganders were quite alarmed when conflict erupted in Upper Canada. Eber Ward communicated these concerns in a letter to some of his friends. The speculation, Ward explained, was a "universal topic of conversation from Maine to Fort Gratiot." Ward supported the rebels and their struggle and hoped they would take "his [majesty's] dominion by force to establish a government of liberty" in Upper Canada.[9]

Detroit and Dr. Theller

One individual at the heart of many of these rumours—especially those surrounding a Patriot invasion of Upper Canada—was Detroit's Dr. Edward Alexander (E.A.) Theller (1804-1859). Theller, an Irish immigrant and editor of the pro-Patriot newspaper, *Spirit of '76* and Theller's *Daily Republican Advocate*, moved to Detroit from Montreal, Lower Canada, between 1832 and 1836. Prior to engaging in the Patriot cause, Theller was a wholesale grocer, doctor, and pharmacist. He was charming, and held radical tendencies which embodied the antimonarchical Jacksonian ethos. In the first volume of his newspaper, he informed his readers that he was a member of the Democratic Party. Theller claimed to be so influential that he was among those who helped select the men who wrote Michigan's state constitution.[10]

In early 1838, a particular rumour

[8] Eber Ward was an early American steel and shipping magnate. There is a short biographical essay on Ward found in the April 1911 issue of the periodical, *The American Marine Engineer*. For more, see "Real Builders of America: Captain Eber Brock Ward," *The American Marine Engineer* 6:4 (April 1911). Detroit Public Library, Burton Historical Collection, MS Ward Family Papers, Eber Ward to "Friends," 18 January 1838,

[9] Anderson, to Anderson, 24 January 1838; E.B. Ward to Friends, 18 January 1838.

[10] Robert Budd Ross, *The Patriot War*: *Published in the Detroit Evening News by the Author for the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society* (Lansing: Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society, 1890), 13; "Our Prospectus," *Spirit of '76 and Theller's Weekly Republican Advocate*, 17 August 1839. Colin Read,

floated around the Detroit-Windsor border. Dr. Theller and Dr. Charles Duncombe (1792-1867), another radical leader, planned an invasion of Upper Canada on the western frontier. In Sandwich, Upper Canada, town officials prepared to endure an attack by a "party of refugees and *American volunteers*" stationed in Detroit. Dr. Theller commanded this band of rogues. In response, leaders in Sandwich assembled a civic defense force which provided "defence against the incursions of the above-mentioned clan." Between two and three hundred well-armed volunteers from all classes gathered in Sandwich as a show of force in defence of Upper Canada from the threat of the American-based marauders—a temporary remedy to alleviate some anxiety felt by those living in the area.[11]

The Mysterious Refugee Paper: *The Canadian*

On 1 January 1838, *The Canadian* was published in Jackson, Michigan. The newspaper, according to its header, was "edited by [an anonymous] refugee—published by a Democrat—printed by a Whig, and read by all the world." *The Canadian* estimated there were about 20,000 Canadian refugees in the United States. The newspaper featured a lengthy letter written by "A Refugee" and titled "To Our Friends & Brethren—The Refugees from Canada." A Refugee's letter addressed British tyranny in the Canadas and extended a sense of hope and gratitude toward the Americans that supported the rebels. This letter also praised the United States for sheltering the downtrodden Canadian refugees from the "storm of the dragon's wrath..." and "the jaw of the hungry devouring lion of Great Britain." The United States, to these refugees, was "a temporary shelter from the pitiless storm..., a land of freedom to which we could fly for safety and for succor." Following the colourful and poetic language of this letter addressed to the Canadian refugees, the newspaper attempted to tell the correct story of the "Canadian commotion." The story would conclude in *The Canadian's* next volume. However, it is unclear if the paper was printed for a second time.[12]

The Canadian is a unique newspaper. Its 1 January 1838 publication date is misleading (or perhaps a typographical error). The paper was most likely published a year later, in 1839. This is evident as it contained a letter from Mrs. Elizabeth Lount (1793/5-1878) dated 12 June 1838. Mrs. Lount was the wife of an organizer of the Upper Canadian Rebellion, Samuel Lount (1791-1838). It was written and published in *The Canadian* nearly two months after Samuel Lount's

"Edward Alexander Theller," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 8, (University of Toronto/Universite Laval, 2003-). <http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/theller_edward_alexander_9E.html> (accessed 6 September 2018).

[11] *Western Herald and Farmer's Magazine*, 3 January 1838. "The Canada Struggle," *The New-Yorker*, 13 January 1838.

[12] "To Our Friends & Brethren—The Refugees from Canada," *The Canadian*, 1 January 1838, Bentley Historical Library, The University of Michigan.

execution in Toronto. Aside from Mrs. Lount's letter, *The Canadian* provided its reader with a history of the rebellion, the Battle of Windsor, and the destruction of the *Caroline*. *The Canadian*, which positioned itself as apolitical, attempted to make the Canada question transcend party politics. However, questions surrounding the Canadas and the Patriot War remained a political issue.[13]

The Dangerous General Handy

Prior to the Patriot invasion of Upper Canada, General Henry S. Handy (1804-46) was appointed Commander in Chief of the rebel forces. Originally from Illinois, Handy first gained national exposure after editing the *Annotator of News, Politics, and Literature*, a pro-Jackson and pro-Democrat newspaper published in Salem, Indiana. In 1826, Handy was described as "a sprightly little man with a remarkably prominent nose." He entered Salem "a perfect stranger" and became a prominent and boisterous member of this Indiana community. Handy was also a cogent orator. Because he edited the *Annotator* and had exceptional speaking abilities, town officials chose him to lead in festivities to commemorate George Washington's ninety-sixth birthday at a civic function.[14]

Handy's military credentials were suspect. It is a mystery why he assumed the title of "general"; in a local history, its author remembered Handy as too "monstrous [of a] little man to be a general." Perhaps he overcompensated for some of his shortcomings by using the prestigious military title. Regardless, Handy's personality benefitted his career. One of his more marketable qualities was his devotion to Andrew Jackson and the Democratic Party.[15]

President Jackson rewarded Handy for his staunch loyalty and appointed him to various offices throughout the Midwest. In a memorandum of Jackson's appointments, it was noted that Handy applied for the position of Register. Written next to his name was the annotation "be careful." The vague and somewhat ominous nature of the logbook's warning was foreshadowing; Handy's attack was a reckless venture. Several years later, he and his supporters attacked the Upper Canadian stronghold of Fort Malden—a strategically important fortification in Upper Canada, essentially the British replacement for Fort Detroit.[16]

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[13] *Ibid.*

[14] Warder W. Stevens, *Centennial History of Washington County Indiana: Its People, Industries, and Institutions* (Indianapolis: B.F. Bowen & Company, 1916), 387.

[15] For more on Adlerian psychology and an elaboration on Adler's Napoleon or inferiority complex, see Robert W, Lundin, *Alfred Adler's Basic Concepts and Implications* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 13-18; Stevens, *Centennial History of Washington County*, 387.

[16] Ron Brown, *The Lake Erie Shore: Ontario's Forgotten South Coast* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2009), 163; "April 1829: Memorandum on Appointments," *The Papers of Andrew Jackson: Volume VII, 1829*, edited by Daniel Feller, Harold D. Moser, Laura-Eve Moss, and Thomas Coens (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2007), 190; Robert M. Groceman, "The Patriot War and the Fenian Raids: Case Studies in

Dr. Theller and the Patriots supported Handy's invasion plans. Theller commanded "the first brigade of Irish and French troops which the Patriot army was "able to raise." Due to the Patriots' looming presence, Michigan Governor Stevens T. Mason demanded they leave Detroit. So, they did. The Patriots then made Gibraltar Island, Michigan, their base. This Island, located in the Detroit River, was close to Fort Malden in Upper Canada. Nevertheless, despite Mason not supporting the Patriot army, other state officials did. Military officials left the state arsenal at Dearborn unattended, which allowed the Patriots to acquire weapons to prepare an invasion to take Upper Canada.[17]

General Thomas Jefferson Sutherland and Invading Upper Canada

General Thomas Jefferson Sutherland, "an unprincipled adventurer," and rebels from Cleveland, Ohio, joined the Patriots at Gibraltar Island. Handy, Theller, Sutherland, and their followers intended to invade Upper Canada. When Handy learned his "presence was embarrassing to the government," he "moved to Bois Blanc Island near Fort Malden, within British territory." Detroiters and others situated along the U.S.-Upper Canada border supported the rebellion in the Canadas through a fundraiser at a Detroit theatre. The Patriots gained so much excess capital they purchased a schooner, the *Anne* which was armed to the teeth and a part of "the floating [Patriot] arsenal." The Patriots and sympathetic Americans dared "State and National authorities to stop her."[18]

The purported invasion gained the attention of the two top British and American diplomats in the United States. On Wednesday, 24 January 1838, the British Ambassador to the United States, Henry S. Fox, wrote to the American Secretary of State, John Forsyth, concerning the Patriot invasion. Fox had acquired intelligence that the Patriots stole weapons which belonged to the State of Michigan and "overpowered both the State and United States authorities in that district." Fox admitted the information could be exaggerated; however, he implored that the United States should act to prevent the Patriots and their supporters from launching a rebel attack from Detroit.[19]

Border Security on the U.S.-Canada Border in the Nineteenth Century" (MMAS thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2007), 34-35. Stevens, *Centennial History of Washington County,* 387.

[17] Alexander Fraser, *A History of Ontario: Its Resources and Development* (Toronto & Montreal: The Canada History Company, 1907), 347.

[18] "The Canadas," *The United Service Magazine,* May 1839; "Copy of the Confession of the American General Sutherland, made a Few Minutes Before he Attempted Self-Destruction" in *The United Service Magazine* (May 1839), 51-52; "History of the Recent Insurrection in the Canadas," *The United States Magazine and Democratic Review* (January 1838), 28.

[19] Henry S. Fox to John Forsyth, in Document 181, *Territorial Relations—United States and Great Britain: Message from the President of the United States* (Washington D.C.: House of Representatives, 1839), 3.

In a letter dated Wednesday, 24 January, Forsyth responded to Fox. He noted that other than a letter from Governor Stevens T. Mason, no new information from Michigan regarding the rebellion reached the U.S. Department of State. Forsyth assured Fox that as a state, Michigan, like the rest of the U.S., would remain neutral in Canadian affairs. However, if the rebels and their sympathizers gained support from Michigan, Mason would be implored to use what power he had to maintain peace between the United States and Great Britain. Forsyth also deployed General Winfield Scott to the Western Frontier, which ensured stability for the U.S. along the international border.[20]

Scott was a career soldier; he served in the military from the War of 1812 to the American Civil War. During the Upper Canadian Rebellion and the Patriot War, Scott and his forces patrolled the border that separated the U.S. and the Canadas. Along the western frontier, two steamers, the *Barcelona* and the *Robert Fulton*, patrolled the waters to prevent hostiles from embarking.

Peace on the Great Lakes was short-lived. Rumours surrounding possible invasions seemed endless. Prior to the conflicts at Fighting Island and Pelee Island, General Hugh Brady and his volunteer regiment, the Brady Guard, were summoned north of Detroit. This was a false alarm, as Brady's forces were not needed. For the Patriots, getting the Brady Guard away from their headquarters was key. With the soldiers nearly two days away, the Patriots raided the Brady Guard's company quarters, stealing munitions and a large brass drum marked "Brady Guard." Following the incident, Winfield Scott wrote to Colonel John Maitland—a commanding officer in Upper Canada—who had questioned the faithfulness of the Brady Guard, as the brass drum was in the hands of the Patriots. Scott reassured the Upper Canadian and British officials that the Brady Guard did not aid the Patriots, and by no means were they able to prevent the Patriots from stealing the supplies stored at their headquarters.[21]

Rumours of a Patriot invasion of Upper Canada were on the minds of all parties in the Great Lakes region. A looming existential threat—a mob of ragtag marauders raiding Sandwich, Fort Malden, and its environs disrupted British hegemony north of the border. The Crown searched "for [a] homeostatic balance" and blamed American politicians and military officers for allegedly supporting the Patriots. For the British, the drive the Patriots and their supporters experienced was "a fatal attraction," which threatened to disturb the British power in Upper

[20] John Forsyth to Henry S. Fox, 24 January 1838 in Document 181, *Territorial Relations—United States and Great Britain: Message from the President of the United States* (Washington D.C.: House of Representatives, 1839), 3-4.

[21] Winfield Scott to Colonel John Maitland, 17 April 1838, in Document 181, *Territorial Relations—United States and Great Britain: Message from the President of the United States* (Washington D.C.: House of Representatives, 1839), 106.

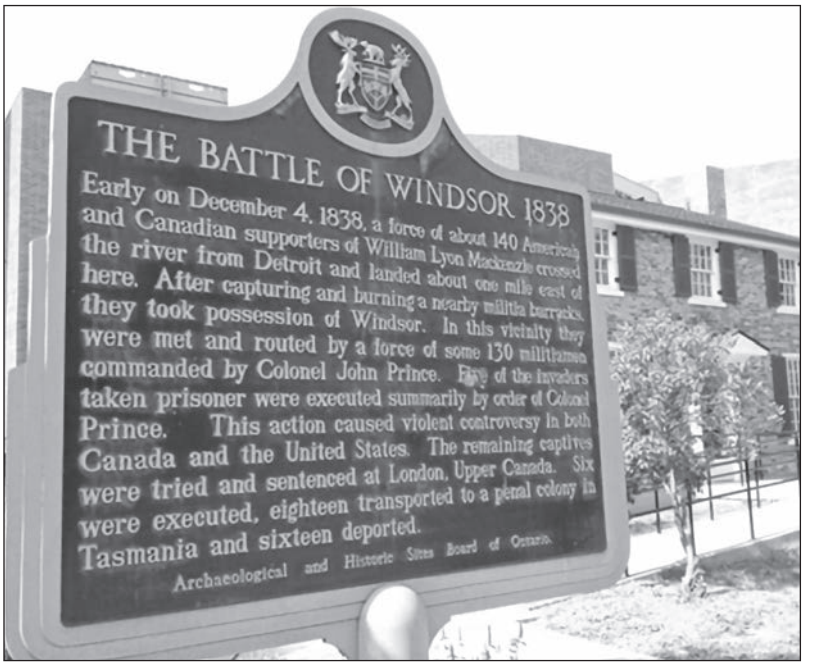

Image #4: Historical Marker Battle of Windsor. Battle of Windsor Historical Marker Historical Marker in front of François Baby House in Windsor Ontario, 2012(photo by Lowell Boileau [CC BY-SA 3.0], via Wikimedia Commons) <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/hunters-lodges#>.

Canada.[22]

The Battle of Windsor

From 24 to 25 February 1838, the Upper Canadian Patriots and their American supporters travelled westward toward Windsor, Upper Canada (now Windsor, Ontario). By the late 1830s, Windsor was a burgeoning commercial hub situated across the river from Detroit. Like its American counterpart, Windsor has French roots. It is currently the oldest European-inhabited community in Ontario. Growth from market-driven capitalism and improvements in transportation allowed Windsor to expand. It was established in 1834, and by 1840, about three hundred people were living in the area. In a time when public health issues ravaged urban centers, contemporaries hailed the settlement as relatively healthy. Windsor was built on a high bank of the Detroit River, about "thirty to forty feet above the river" and "about a mile in width." In the city, there were military barracks which the Hunters and Patriots targeted in the so-called Battle of Windsor.[23]

[22] Slavoj Zizek, *The Parallax View* (Cambridge, MA: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2006), 187-188.

[23] Windsor's French roots are in plain sight. There are several street names, such as Ouellette, that reflect this. Windsor is adjacent to Detroit, another city with French heritage. For more, see: Larry L. Kulisek, "Windsor (Ont.)" in *The Canadian Encyclopedia* accessed 12 August 2018, <www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/windsor-ont/>; William Henry Smith, *Smith's Canadian Gazetteer: Statistical and General Information Representing All Parts of the Upper Province, Or Canada West* (Toronto: H&W Rowsell, 1846), 221.

On 4 December 1838, around 3:00 AM, the Patriot army invaded Windsor. Patriot General Lucius V. Bierce (1801-1876) commanded the invading force. As the Patriots sacked the settlement, militia men discharged their rifles and pistols aimlessly into the night. Adding to this chaos, the Patriots burned homes and businesses. Further downstream, they razed the steamer *Thames* as retribution for the *Caroline*. The Patriots also took control of the military barracks and set them ablaze. Following the raid, the Patriot force briefly held Windsor; however, their control of the area was short-lived. Nearly eight hours later, around 11:00 AM, about 150 men from the Upper Canadian militia arrived from Fort Malden in Amherstburg.[24]

Justice and Colonel Prince

Five Patriots were taken prisoner and killed by Colonel John Prince (1796-1870). Prince was a former lawyer and recent migrant to Upper Canada who settled in Sandwich. He and his family relocated to North America in 1833 due to legal trouble; apparently he was seeking to "escape the humiliations which he felt humankind wanted visited upon him." The politically-minded Prince advocated for Americans to purchase land in Upper Canada and later brought a bill to that effect before the legislature, which was thrown out. By 1840, however, he vehemently opposed the bill and "had quite enough of Americans in Upper Canada."[25]

Prince was brutal and made an example out of the Patriot invaders. Marginal evidence suggests that executions were planned. In his diary, he wrote that he ordered five men to be shot on the spot and forced them to run before shooting them after which he shot them once more in the head to make sure they were dead. Apparently, he did this because an American schooner was in the vicinity. Historian R. Alan Douglas describes Prince as "a defender of the established order of things but of a madman." The colonel's actions held symbolic meaning as they allowed him to "have [his] cake and eat it too." These acts allowed him "to assert [his] superiority over the Other in/through the very gesture of guaranteeing his equality and your respect for his difference." Prince's actions inadvertently acknowledged the legitimacy of the Patriots and the Patriot War by creating a group of martyrs.[26]

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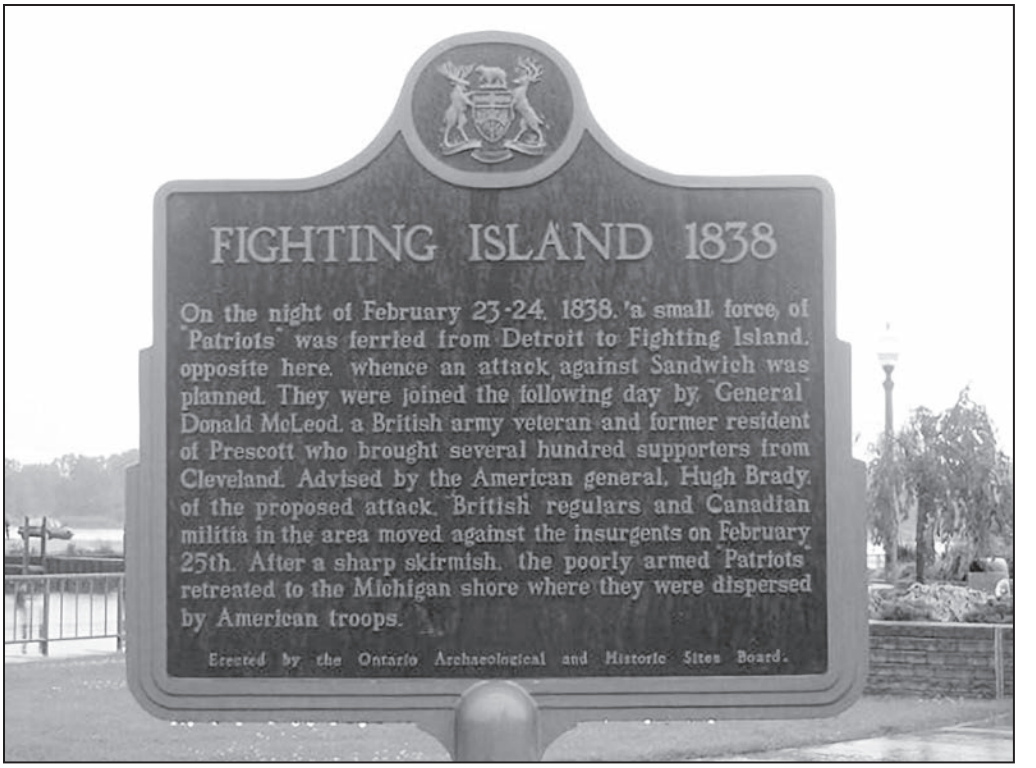
[24] "Battle of Windsor 1838" Historical Marker, Archaeological and Historic Sites Board of Ontario, Windsor, Ontario, Canada. R. Alan Douglas, *Uppermost Canada: The Western District and the Detroit Frontier, 1800-1850* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2018), 164-69.

[25] R. Alan Douglas, "John Prince" in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography,* vol. 9, University of Toronto/Universitie Laval, 2003-, <http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/prince_john_9E.html> (accessed 7 September 2018). C.B. Marryat, *Second Series of A Diary in America with Remarks on Its institutions* (Philadelphia: T.K. & P.G. Collins, 1840), 233.

[26] "Battle of Windsor 1838" Historical Marker. Douglas, *Uppermost Canada*, 168-169. Slavoj Zizek, "Appendix: Multiculturalism, the Reality of an Illusion," <http://www.lacan.com/essays/?page_id=454> (accessed 7 September 2018). Marryat, *Second Series of a Diary in America*, 233.



Fighting Island Marker. Fighting Island Historical Marker, Located in a park at the end of Laurier Drive in LaSalle. Source: Alan L. Brown (Sept. 2004) <courtesy: https://www.ontarioplaques.com/Plaques/Plaque_Essex12.html>

Fighting Island and Pelee Island

Fighting Island, or *Grose Isle aux Dindes* (Big Turkey Island), is the largest Canadian island in the Detroit River, located about four miles from Detroit. In the nineteenth century, the island had very little utility for Upper Canadians. It was mostly pasture and lacked wood. Native Americans living in the area frequently camped there and planted corn in its pastures. Because of the island's proximity to the Upper Canadian mainland, the Patriots attacked it.[27]

Pelee Island is located in the Canadian portion of Lake Erie in Southern Ontario and a part of the Put-In-Bay archipelago. The United States and Canada claim islands within this chain. After the American Revolution, displaced Loyalists from the newly liberated colonies flocked to Pelee Island, which they obtained from the Ojibway and Ottawa peoples for 999 years in exchange for three annual bushels of corn. In the

[27] Henry Scadding, *First Gazetteer of Upper Canada* (Toronto: Copp, Clark, and Co, 1876), 381-82.

eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the island was known for its timber, specifically red cedar which was so valued that, in 1797, the British used it to build Fort Amherstburg (Malden).[28]

On 1 March 1838, about 450 Patriot rebels landed on Pelee Island and quickly overtook the home of Mr. McCormick, the island's owner. (McCormick, an enemy of William Lyon Mackenzie, placed a $1,000 bounty on his head and hoped the prize would lead to his capture.) By 3 March, there were nearly 1,300 men on the island. Anticipating a successful invasion of Upper Canada, Americans flocked to the island. Braving the cold and the fifteen-inch-thick ice, these spectators believed they were witnessing history. Detroit journalist and historian Robert Ross wrote that the Patriots "spent their time for two days in constant drill."[29] This enjoyment felt by the spectators was eventually squandered, leading to a sense of malaise as the insurgents were quickly driven from Pelee Island by British forces.[30]

On 5 March 1838, Colonel Maitland wrote to Hugh Brady from the Western District Headquarters in Amherstburg. In a cordial display, Maitland commended the kindness of both Brady and Scott. Maitland hoped the military advancements he and his forces make against the "banditti assembled on her Majesty's Island... will have the result, as anticipated by General Scott of quieting both sides of the frontier." Maitland hoped the rebellious rapscallions would be fully prosecuted for violating American law. Maitland ended his communication with General Brady in a gentlemanly fashion. He regretted hearing that Scott had left Detroit so hastily. However, he requested that Brady relay to Scott his "thanks for his polite communication."[31]

Major H.D. Townshend's report to Colonel John Maitland described the campaign at Fighting Island. Between 6:30 and 7:00 in the morning, Upper Canadian forces fired at the rebels encamped there. Townshend seemed pleased that such action "was attended with the best results." The rebel forces were "discomposed by the precision and rapidity of the fire" and dispersed from the island, leaving a surplus of goods behind, including a cannon "which was only discharged once," weapons such as rifles, muskets, pistols, and other goods including gunpowder, a barrel of crackers, and boxes of smoked herring. Townshend cheekily commented on the rebels' hodgepodge of goods, opining that they "would have been contributed by a *sympathising* public rather than by a Commissariat." Townshend, however, went

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[28] Pelee Island was first settled by Europeans in 1788. A British land agent, Thomas McKee negotiated with the Native Americans living in the region. For more, see: Brown, *The Lake Erie Shore*, 163.

[29] Ross, *The Patriot War*, 26.

[30] Paul Verhaghe, "Enjoyment and Impossibility: Lacan's Revision of the Oedipus Complex" in *Jacques Lacan and the Other Side of Psychoanalysis: Reflections on Seminar XVII*, edited by Justin Clemens and Russell Grigg (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2006), 34-35.

[31] John Maitland to Hugh Brady, 5 March 1838, in Document 181, *Territorial Relations—United*

further, wishing that the fighting had been more extensive to disprove the supposed American myth that the Upper Canadians would not fight the rebels.[32]

Notably, during the tumult, an American, Ashley Fuller, took advantage of the British running roughshod over the Patriots. He, a "well-known character of Cleveland, [Ohio] no doubt a camp-follower," stole fourteen horses from Pelee Island. Deputy Collector George R. Morton of Portland noticed Fuller's actions and charged Fuller with stealing the horses, but he escaped to the United States. This enraged the Upper Canadians and the British who threatened American officials over the incident and agitated for Fuller's arrest and the return of the horses. This, however, became nothing more than a moot point. After the horse theft, Fuller disappeared from the historical record.[33]

The Hunters' Lodges

After the failure if the Upper Canadian Rebellion, treasonous Canadians and some unruly Americans took refuge in Michigan where they, as Charles Lindsay noted, "commenced an organization for revolutionizing Canada, comprising a much larger number of Canadians than has ever been suspected." General Handy promoted and organized a group of men sympathetic to Canadian independence in Michigan and appointed himself the Commander-in-chief. He instructed the new members of this organization, later dubbed the Order of the Sons of Liberty (OSL), to take orders only from him and General Roberts. To pledge their loyalty to Handy and the OSL, members took the following oath:[34]

> You do solemnly swear in the presence of the Almighty God, that you will bear allegiance and fidelity to the SONS OF LIBERTY engaged in the PATRIOT service and in the cause of CANADIAN INDEPENDENCE—that you will obey the orders of your superior officers in whatever department you may serve—that you will never communicate or in any way divulge the existence or plans of said organization. You also will swear that you will devote your time, your person, and your interest in promoting said cause, so far as may be consistent with your duties—that you will never sell, barter, or in any way alter any badge that may be bestowed upon you for the purpose of designating your rank in said association. You also will swear that you will not disclose or in any way communicate to any person the contents or purport of this Oath, and that you will not converse with any person in reference to this Oath, except in Convention with the man who first presents it to you.[35]

For these new refugees and their American compatriots, this oath sated a

States and Great Britain: Message from the President of the United States (Washington D.C.: House of Representatives, 1839), 125.

[32] "Important from the West: Rout of the Pirates at Fighting Island, In the Detroit River," *The Albion: A Journal of News, Politics, and Literature*, 17 March 1838.

[33] D.W. Cross, "The Canadian Rebellion of 1837," *Magazine of Western History* VII: 4 (February 1888), 363.

[34] Lindsay, *Life and Times of William Lyon Mackenzie*, 192.

[35] According to Charles Lindsay, this oath may have been changed prior to the Sandwich Affair (Bat-

need for belonging—especially in a rather tumultuous chapter of U.S. and Canadian history. Members pledged themselves to this secret society, which created a sense of loyalty to a common cause. The idea of loyalty, according to sociologist James Connor, "affects the object of her loyalty by giving loyalty to the cause, while the cause responds by helping to define the individual and giving her social cachet." Handy's new organization provided its members a sense of belonging and engaged them in a Jacksonian fantasy which would pit them against the British. If successful, these men would liberate Upper Canada and eliminate the British presence in North America once and for all. After Handy established the OSL in Detroit, subordinate members of the organization travelled throughout Michigan's lower peninsula and Upper Canada, establishing branch chapters of the organization. Similar organizations had existed in Detroit since 1764, which may explain the popularity of the OSL. Handy's group, however, was ill-fit to undertake the heady task of not only committing treason but also shamelessly violating American neutrality laws. The OSL was short-lived. The organization eventually folded into a larger, more clandestine group, the Hunters' Lodges.[36]

The French political scientist and historian Alexis de Tocqueville observed in *Democracy in America* that, during the nineteenth century, Americans established numerous voluntary societies and fraternal organizations: "as soon as several inhabitants have taken up an opinion or an idea they wish to promote in society, they seek each other out and unite together once they have made contact." After the burning of the *Caroline* and General Handy's "farcical expedition against Fort Malden," historian Edward P. Alexander opined, "the Patriot Uprising was in danger of becoming a joke." To continue the rebellion in the Canadas, "clever Patriots began to organize secret societies with the usual rituals, oaths, signs, grips, and codes." Different societies emerged "on both sides of the border from Maine to Wisconsin."[37]

Historians and other scholars trace the origin of the name "Hunters' Lodges" (or the Lower Canadian *Frères chasseurs* ["Brother Hunters"]) to Dr. James Hunter. The organization was also known as the "Hunters and Chasers in the Eastern Frontier" and the "Lodges of Patriotic Masons." Dr. James Hunter, the Lodges' namesake, lived in Whitby, Upper Canada—a port on Lake Ontario. After Mackenzie's failed rebellion at York, Dr. Hunter, an advocate for Canadian liberty and a participant in Mackenzie's rebellion, hid inside a large stove and evaded capture by the Crown. When tensions

tle of Windsor). William Lyon Mackenzie was unaware of the oath, and it was read aloud by a Colonel Prince in court and published. For more, see Lindsay, *Life and Times of William Lyon Mackenzie*, 192-93.

[36] James Conner, *The Sociology of Loyalty* (New York: Springer, 2007), 78-80.

[37] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America and Two Essays on America*, trans. Gerald E. Bevan (London & New York: Penguin 2003), 599; Edward P. Alexander, "Documents: The Hunters' Lodges of 1838" *New York History* 19:1 (January 1938), 64.

dissipated, Hunter sought refuge in the United States. While in the U.S., Hunter joined what would eventually become his namesake organization—the Hunters' Lodges. Historian Oscar Kinchen posits a more reasonable explanation for the organization's name was "found in a pretext of the Patriots for prowling about the Canadian frontier while armed."[38]

Dr. Robert Nelson and the Hunters' Lodge

In May 1838, Dr. Robert Nelson formed the first Hunters' Lodge near St. Albans, Vermont. The Hunters' Lodges, like other secret societies, were hierarchical. Their members were organized thrill seekers who capitalized on a state of crisis and ease of opportunity. Hunters performed rituals which emulated mainstream fraternal organizations. Historian Allan Greer explains that the rites and rituals of the Lodges emulated The *Carbonari*. The Hunters swore an oath of initiation which promised to uphold republican forms of government. Also, according to a dispatch from Sir George Arthur to General Hugh Brady, the Hunters used a series of passwords and secret signals to communicate with each other.[39]

After being blindfolded and presented in front of the Lodge, new Hunters took one the following oaths of initiation:

> I swear to do my utmost to promote Republican Institutions and ideas throughout the world—to cherish them; to defend them; and especially devote myself to the propagation, protection, and defence of these institutions in North America. I pledge my life, my property, and my sacred honor to the Association; I bind myself to its interests, and I promise, until death, that I will attack, combat, and help to destroy, by all means, that my superior may think proper, every power of Royal origin, upon this continent; and especially never to rest till all tyrants of Britain cease to have any dominion or footing whatever in North America. I further solemnly swear to obey the orders delivered to me by my superior, and never to disclose any such order, or orders, except to a brother 'Hunter' of the same degree. So, help me God.[40]

Or:

> You swear, in the presence of Almighty God, that you will not reveal the secret sign of the snowshoe to any, not even to members of the society. You will not write, print, mark, engrave, scratch, chalk, or in any conceivable

[38] *Ibid*., 64; Oscar Arvle Kinchen, *The Rise and Fall of the Patriot Hunters* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1956), 31; Orrin Edward Tiffany, *The Relations of the United States to the Canadian Rebellion of 1837-1838* (Buffalo: Buffalo Historical Society, 1905), 61-62.

[39] *Ibid*.; Alan Greer, *The Patriots and the People: The Rebellion of 1837 in Rural Lower Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 341; Charles Moore, *History of Michigan: Volume II* (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1915), 1106. Sir George Arthur to Hugh Brady, 26 October 1838, in Document 181, *Territorial Relations—United States and Great Britain: Message from the President of the United States* (Washington D.C.: House of Representatives, 1839), 116. Ursula M. Wilder, "Why Spy? The Psychology of Espionage," *Studies in Intelligence* 61:2 (June 2017), 19-20.

[40] The first oath of initiation was taken from a prisoner's interrogation. It is possible there may have been other oaths. For more, see Tiffany, *The Relations of the United States*, 62.

> manner whatsoever, make the shape or sign of the snowshoe to any living being, not even to the members of this society. You, furthermore, solemnly swear that you will not reveal any of the secrets of this society, which may not come to your knowledge, though the president, vice-president, or his cabinet. You, furthermore, solemnly swear that you will render all assistance in your power, without injuring yourself or family, or to any brother or member of this society, who shall at any time make the sign of distress to you. You, furthermore, solemnly swear that you will attend every meeting of your Lodge, if you can do so without injury to yourself or family. This you swear, as you shall answer to God.[41]

The Hunters used these oaths coupled with complicated cyphers in print media, specific rhythmic patterns to knock on doors, secret hand signals, and other codes to communicate with one another. These codes determined "the degree or rank of the various Lodges and as if to make more certain the secrecy of their intentions." The mystery behind the Hunters and their secret modes of communication ultimately held a symbolic function. And, in many cases, such as contemporary accounts found in correspondences between government officials, they maintained a "minimal distance towards reality" between each other and placed themselves and their codified language in the realm of fiction—and this worked. Their secrets kept some, but not all, information out of the hands of American, Upper Canadian, and British spies.[42]

The Hunters' Lodges had four degrees: the snowshoe, the beaver, the master hunter, and the patriot hunter. To identify other members, Hunters would ask each other a series of questions or perform a series of tasks. One common test, which was performative in nature, asked an individual if they ever saw a snowshoe. According to lore, the initiated members of the Lodges knew of the signs and symbols associated with the snowshoe rank. Depending on an individual's answer, the person questioned was required to draw images associated with the snowshoe rank. If their drawing resembled a snowshoe, he was not a member. Handshakes and hand gestures were also used to identify members. When shaking hands, "the parties take the cuff of each other's coat between the finger and thumb." While the hand gestures involved both hands, letting them fall "carelessly in front of the body."[43]

Another question used to identify other Hunters included the straightforward and rather simple: "Are you a Hunter?" To identify as a Hunter, the correct answer was "Yes on Tuesday." This is because "the day following the one on which the sign is made being [is] always used." Rituals, as Butler suggests,

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[41] "Appendix B: Hunters Lodges in 1837-1838" in Tiffany, *The Relations of the United States*, 538.

[42] Slavoj Zizek, "Superego by Default" in *The Metastases of Enjoyment: Six Essays on Women and Causality* (London & New York: Verso, 2005), 75-76. Tiffany, *The Relations of the United States*, 62-63.

[43] Toronto Reference Library, Baldwin Collection, "Hunters Lodges," Ephemera, 1838 in Sir George Arthur Papers (1838.Hunters Lodges.sb). Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York & London: Routledge, 1997), 153-54.

are repeated over and over, and, in some cases, failure to abide by them resulted in (as per the Hunters' oath of initiation) "ostracism and even death," which ultimately "control[ed] the [organization's] shape of production." Other questions asked included: "Do you know the Beaver to be an industrious animal?" To answer this question correctly, no verbal answer is required. However, the person being asked the question is to imitate the action of a beaver gnawing on a piece of wood. The Patriot Hunters were asked, "Do you snuff *and chew*?" If the person being asked the question has a snuff box on them, they are to scratch the box three times with their nail. If they do not, they are to scratch their waistcoat.[44]

The Hunters Are Everywhere

Like thieves in the night, the threat of the Hunters' Lodges lingered in the background of the United States and the Canadas throughout the 1830s and into the early 1840s. Canadian spies, according to the *Niles Register*, easily joined the Hunters' Lodges. The meetings were generally disorganized; a ranking member of the Lodge took attendance at every meeting and recorded the names of the men in attendance. This disorganization allowed Canadian spies to attend the meetings. When roll was taken, the official count of those in attendance was often exaggerated. This led to false reports being submitted to Sir George Arthur, and he mustered 40,000 Upper Canadian men to prevent an invasion by the Hunters. According to contemporary accounts, this hoax "led the Canadian people into the great error of believing that our whole population were enlisted against them and bent on the conquest of Canada." The mustering of 40,000 troops and Arthur's associated acts was costly. The Hunters' ruse cost the British government millions of dollars.[45]

On 3 January 1840, Upper Canada's House of Assembly attempted to formally addressed the threat of the Hunters' Lodges. After a brief description of the organization, Upper Canada's Governor General Charles Poulett Thomson had no pertinent information to share with the House of Assembly at the time. However, as noted in the *Journal of the House of Assembly of Upper Canada*, it was the opinion of the Governor General that it is "most desirable to allay irritation, and to calm, instead of exciting, unnecessary alarm; and nothing can more impede the return to tranquility, so essential to the prosperity of this Province, than any unnecessary inquiries into the past; calculated only to harass individuals, and excite the public mind." The very real threat of this secret society—whose goal was to overthrow the government of Upper Canada—excited governments in both Upper Canada and the United States. However, this led to little action as there were limits to what each side could do to

[44] Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (London & New York: Routledge,1993), 95. "Hunters Lodges," 1838.

[45] "The Hunters' Lodges," *Niles National Register*, 7 September 1839.

combat the presence of this clandestine society.[46]

On the 19 November 1841 the *Detroit Free Press* reprinted an article from the *Cleveland Herald* which included statistics on the extent of the Hunters' Lodges in North America. It estimated that about 80,000 men were members of the secret society. A more detailed, state-by-state and province breakdown of the chapters listed the following: Michigan's 54 lodges, Ohio's 86, and New York's 263. In Lower Canada, the *Herald* proclaimed, "nearly the whole population are organized in lodges," while in Upper Canada, there was a total of 84 chapters. Other states mentioned included Maine (99), Vermont (107), New Hampshire (98), Wisconsin (7), Illinois (21), Indiana (17), Pennsylvania (49), Kentucky (11), Virginia (21), Maryland 16), Delaware (2), New Jersey (17), Missouri (39), Iowa (3), and Louisiana (11). According to the *Herald*, contemporaries estimated about 100 more chapters existed in the states not listed above.[47]

Historians have more realistic estimates of Hunters in North America. Orrin Edward Tiffany's *The Relations of the United States to the Canadian Rebellion of 1837-1838* (published in 1905) estimated anywhere from 15,000 to 200,000 members. When the Hunters' activities peaked in 1838-1839, there were 25,000 to 40,000 members located primarily across the northern United States and both Upper and Lower Canada. Accurate numbers are difficult to calculate because the Lodges kept no formalized records. However, their method of keeping records (or lack thereof) did benefit the U.S., Upper Canadian, and British governments as it was rather difficult to keep their plots secret. This ultimately thwarted their plans.[48]

On a more local level, in Detroit, the Hunters frequently gathered at the home of Mr. Horace Heath, the owner of the Eagle Tavern on Woodbridge Street near Griswold. Heath's contemporaries characterized him as a "liberal Patriot" and highlighted his benevolent qualities of being "warm-hearted" and "generous" to the Canadian Patriots. He opened his hotel to the Hunters and provided them with copious amounts of food and drinks. Heath's contemporaries recalled that he was so charitable to the Patriot cause that he sank himself into poverty. He allowed the Hunters to pay "what they were willing and able." His charity may have not been the best business plan, but it kept him in the Hunters' good favours. At these gatherings, "inflammatory harangues" and addresses emanated from Heath's home, "some of which would

[46] G.S. Boulton, "Hunters' Lodges Address," 3 January 1840, *Journal of the House of Assembly of Upper Canada*, *Session 1839-1840* (Toronto: Hugh Scobie, British Colonist Office, 1840), 109.

[47] The number of chapters per state are listed next to the state in parenthesis. What is interesting about these numbers is the extent of the lodges in North America. Historians emphasize the lodges' northern connections – and rightfully so. The Hunters' Lodges do, however, reach as far south as Louisiana. For more, see: "Hunters' Lodges in N. America," *Detroit Free Press*, 19 November 1841.

[48] Tiffany, *Relations of the United States*, 63; Greer, *The Patriots and the People*, 342.

have done credit to the palmist days of the era of seventy-six." These meetings, only miles away from the border, kept the international community on high alert.[49]

After their defeat at Windsor on 4 December 1838, the Hunters passed a series of resolutions which included a condemnation of the American military for acting on behalf of British spies by policing the border while the Patriot army suffered losses. The Hunters believed the U.S. government had violated their rights as Americans and expressed disgust toward the federal government for exercising force on American citizens. The federal government, they believed, had overstated its boundaries and violated Michigan's sovereignty. Army officers acting at the federal level "are not sheriffs or constables, but soldiers, in war to defend us, and in peace to prepare for war." According to the Hunters, the federal presence along the border was unconstitutional—especially as the U.S. military opened fire upon American citizens—in peacetime.[50]

Despite such demands a minimal military presence along the frontier, the Hunters' meeting turned to nationalistic fervour. The Hunters appreciated American patriotism and openly condemned the actions of the British Empire, presenting the British as inhuman oppressors violating the sovereignty and committing atrocities against other powers, which included:

> ... the slaughter of the Turks by England and France, conjointly in Navarino Bay [Greece], while in profound peace with the Sultan; in the unjustifiable assumption, by England, in openly putting down Don Miguel, with her troops in Portugal; in the British Parliament sanctioning the legion at Sebastian, against the Spanish Pretender, Carlos; and in the unnatural and inhuman massacre of American citizens, on board of the steamboat *Caroline*, at Schlosser, while in profound peace with the United States.[51]

Following the meeting, the Hunters took to the streets. Dr. Theller attended the event, claiming that the Detroit meeting was "the largest ever congregation in Detroit." At the meeting, he proclaimed, the joy and excitement felt by those in attendance transcended the physical realm. Those in attendance were of a "purer spirit of generous, whole-souled, patriotic enthusiasm." The event "was a glorious spectacle; one that would have made the cringing, truculent Tories of the day blush for their own recreancy," by which Theller, to add insult, called their manhood into question. The glee, pomp, and spectacle would have been enjoyed, Theller concluded, by the "hovering spir-

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[49] Friend Palmer, *Early Days in Detroit*, edited by Harry P. Hunt and Charles M. June (Detroit, Hunt & June, 1906), 687. Talcott E. Wing, *History of Monroe County Michigan* (New York: Munsell & Company, Publishers, 1890), 207. Robert B. Ross and George B. Catlin, *Landmarks of Wayne County and Detroit*, edited by Clarence W. Burton (Detroit, Evening News Association, 1898), 401.

[50] Appendix VI: "Resolutions of a Hunter Meeting at Detroit Following the Defeat at Windsor on on December 4, 1838" in Kinchen, The Rise and Fall of the Patriot Hunters, 137-39.

[51] Edward Alexander Theller, *Canada in 1837-38; Showing, by Historical Facts, the Causes of the Late Attempted Revolution, and of its Failure* (Philadelphia: H.F. Anners, 1841), 310.

its of our forefathers," which shows how some believed this crusade was ordained by some higher power—if not God, the Spirit of '76, and the memory of the Revolutionary War generation.[52]

The Hunters were very proud to be American. In an era of sectional tension, they harped on states' rights issues and defended what they believed the United States was at home and abroad. The Hunters' form of nationalism was transposed to the "social field." The Slovenian philosopher and cultural critic Slavoj Zizek writes, "We always impute to the 'other' an excessive enjoyment." The federal government, as well as the British, wanted to "steal the Hunters' enjoyment (by ruining [their] way of life) and/or he has access to some secret, perverse enjoyment." The U.S. Federal government, military, and the British stood in the way of the Hunters' overarching goal of conquering Upper Canada, putting an end to British thralldom.[53]

Conclusion

Sweeping changes from the Market Revolution and the outbreak of rebellion in Upper Canada transformed life in Michigan while, at the same time, officials from the U.S. and the Crown worked diligently to contain the rebels. The battle defeats at Windsor, Fighting, and Pelee Islands marked the end of major conflict between the Patriots and the Crown. However, these losses did not necessarily end the Patriot War. International relations between the United States and Britain were still strained. The American, Upper Canadian, and British forces did all they could to prevent the Hunters and Patriots from making their somewhat isolated rebellion an international conflict.

Americans, such as the enigmatic Jacksonian "General" Henry Handy and the Irish-born Detroit transplant, E.A. Theller, manipulated some people to join their crusade to topple British rule in North America. Handy used the strength of voluntary associations—his Order of the Sons of Liberty and, later, the Hunters' Lodges. Societies, such as the Hunters' Lodges, seemingly "penetrated everywhere." The American Unitarian preacher William Ellery Channing (1780-1842) wrote that voluntary organizations were

> one of the most remarkable circumstances or features of our age... the energy with which the principle of combination or the action of joint forces, by associated numbers, is manifesting itself... This principle of association is worthy the attention of the philosopher, who simply aims to understand society and its most powerful springs.[54]

Channing, perhaps without ever knowing, evoked a Tocquevillian reading

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[52] Theller, *Canada*, 310-11. Ross, *The Patriot War*, 13.

[53] Slavoj Zizek, *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 202-203.

[54] John Lardas Modern, *Secularism in Antebellum America* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 53.

of the Hunters' Lodges, and, despite this eloquent call to understand these societies and the excitement one gets joining them, this flowery rhetoric did not stop North Americans from becoming members of these organizations including the Hunters' Lodges.

The emotions felt by the Hunters and the Patriots were short-lived. The public meetings and goodwill felt by the rebels seemingly overshadowed their losses. Regardless of their numerous defeats, the Hunters and Patriots in Detroit still gathered and critiqued the federal government. They claimed that federal officials violated Michigan's state's rights, and the military officials stationed along the border acted on behalf of the British and the loyalist Upper Canadians, not the Upper Canadian rebels and American sympathizers who played soldier on the frontier.