

# Maroons and Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia, 1796-1800

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*Déplacés de force par le gouvernement jamaïcain, les « Marrons » de Trelawney Town, en Jamaïque, atteignirent Halifax en juillet 1796. Le lieutenant-gouverneur John Wentworth, ancien gouverneur loyaliste du New Hampshire, fit des tentatives d'intégration et de conversion de ces 150 familles noires déracinées et réfugiées de guerre. Sa bienveillance pleine de suffisance créa et prolongea une fracture dans les relations entre la communauté noire et la communauté autochtone de la région. Cet article aide à démontrer les limites du paternalisme britannique et les conséquences énormes qu'entraîna la distinction faite entre les personnes d'ascendance africaine et les membres de la communauté autochtone.*

*Forcibly relocated by the Jamaican government, the Maroons of Trelawney Town, Jamaica, reached Halifax in July 1796. Lieutenant-Governor John Wentworth, former loyalist governor of New Hampshire, experimented with integrating and converting these 150 uprooted black families, refugees of war. His self-congratulatory benevolence created and extended the fractured relationships among black and Aboriginal communities in the region. This article helps demonstrate the limits of British paternalism and the far-reaching consequences of distinguishing people of African ancestry from Aboriginal people.*

DURING THE LAST FOUR YEARS OF THE 18TH CENTURY, approximately 150 deported Maroon families – fugitive slaves and their descendants from northern Jamaica – lived in Preston, Nova Scotia, under the tutelage of 59-year-old Lieutenant Governor Sir John Wentworth, former governor of New Hampshire and the only Loyalist who served again as head of a British North American colony. Wentworth, the oldest of three children born to the richest man in New Hampshire, was nothing if not ambitious.<sup>1</sup> Having recently been granted a baronetcy, he seized upon the Maroons to push the colony towards greater agricultural competence and even prosperity. Voluntary English migration to Nova Scotia, known for its harsh winters and poor soil, remained difficult to promote and, moreover, many settlers drifted south to better opportunities in the United States.<sup>2</sup> The Maroons represented an unexpected boon – a chance to reinvigorate the Loyalist enclave and to showcase

1 Paul W. Wilderson, *Governor John Wentworth & the American Revolution: The English Connection* (University of New England Press: Hanover, 1994), 99; Brian C. Cuthbertson, *The Loyalist Governor: Biography of Sir John Wentworth* (Halifax: Petheric Press, 1983). I am deeply thankful to John G. Reid and Harvey A. Whitfield for critical feedback at every stage of this work; Elizabeth Mancke's work on empire and loyalism remains foundational.

2 Graeme Wynn, "On the Margins of Empire, 1760-1840," in *The Illustrated History of Canada*, ed. Craig Brown (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 2002), 189-278; Graeme Wynn, "A Region of Scattered Settlements and Bounded Possibilities: Northeastern North America, 1775-1800," *Canadian Geographer* 31, no. 4 (December 1987): 319-38; Julian Gwyn, *Excessive Expectations:*

Wentworth's talents as imperial mediator.<sup>3</sup> Wentworth's plan for them derived from his experience both with the black Loyalists and the Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia: the Maroons would function as cheap labour like the former and serve as military allies like the latter.<sup>4</sup> Eager to promote cultivation in the colony, and to protect the region in the midst of the ongoing Anglo-French war, Wentworth convinced British authorities that Nova Scotia should become the Maroons' permanent home. Wentworth's calculations towards Maroon integration reveal the complex machinery of colonialism in the anti-slavery era, one that extended the fractured relationships among black and Aboriginal communities in the Maritimes.<sup>5</sup> They also draw explicit attention to the intertwined histories of Aboriginal and black people.

Three large transports brought 549 Jamaican Maroons to the harbour of Halifax in late July 1796, on a "glorious day of warmth and sunshine."<sup>6</sup> The rebellious

*Maritime Commerce and the Economic Development of Nova Scotia, 1740-1870* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998).

- 3 A host of recent studies have emphasized the adaptability and resilience of Loyalist roles in a new context. See Alan Blackstock and Frank O'Gorman, *Loyalism and the Formation of the British World, 1775-1914* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 2014); Jerry Bannister and Liam Riordan, eds., *The Loyal Atlantic: Remaking the British Atlantic in the Revolutionary Era* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012); and Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World* (New York: Vintage, 2012). For black slaves who lived alongside white Loyalists and Loyalist blacks in the Maritimes, see Harvey Amani Whitfield, *North to Bondage: Loyalist Slavery in the Maritimes* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2016). And Elizabeth Mancke's 1997 essay set a new trajectory for considering loyalism in the British Atlantic context. See Mancke, "Another British America: A Canadian Model for the Early Modern British Empire," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 25, no. 1 (January 1997): 1-36.
- 4 Wentworth's use of Aboriginal and black people as military allies drew from a long tradition. See Wayne E. Lee, *Empires and Indigenes: Intercultural Alliance, Imperial Expansion, and Warfare in the Early Modern World* (New York: New York University Press, 2011) and Christopher Leslie Brown and Philip D. Morgan, *Arming Slaves: From Classical Times to the Modern Age* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2006). On black Loyalists, see the unmatched scholarship of James W. St. G. Walker, *The Black Loyalists: The Search for a Promised Land in Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone, 1783-1870* (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1976). Also see Robin W. Winks, *The Blacks in Canada: A History* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1971). On the Maroons, see John Grant, *The Maroons in Nova Scotia* (Halifax: Formac, 2002); Mavis C. Campbell, *Back to Africa: George Ross and the Maroons, From Nova Scotia to Sierra Leone* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1993); and Mavis C. Campbell, *The Maroons of Jamaica, 1655-1796* (Granby, MA: Bergin & Garvey, 1988).
- 5 See Zainab Amadahy and Bonita Lawrence, "Indigenous Peoples and Black People in Canada: Settlers or Allies?" in *Breaching the Colonial Contract: Anti-Colonialism in the US and Canada*, ed. Arlo Kempf (Toronto: Springer, 2009), 105-36; Mary Louise McCarthy, "Mixed-Race identity Black and Maliseet: My Personal Narrative," *Acadiensis* XLIII, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2014): 117-24; and Mary-Ellen Kelm, "Living as a Treaty People: Lessons from the Mi'kmai'ki and Beyond," *Acadiensis* XLIII, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2014): 185-93. Kelm notes that the changing mechanisms of colonization shaped Mi'kmaq historical consciousness. For situating Nova Scotia in a broader world, see Robin W. Winks, "Future of Imperial History," in *Oxford History of the British Empire: Historiography*, vol. 5, ed. Robin W. Winks (New York: Oxford, 1999); Jeffers Lennox, "Crossing Borders, Changing Worlds: Eighteenth-Century Nova Scotia's Atlantic Connections," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 42, no.1 (2008): 213-19, and Jerry Bannister, "Atlantic Canada in an Atlantic World? Northeastern North America in the Long 18th Century," *Acadiensis* XLIII, no. 2 (Summer/Autumn 2014): 3-30.
- 6 "Slavery in Nova Scotia," MG 1, vol. 356, #10, Nova Scotia Archives (NSA), Halifax.

Maroons, from the northern mountains of Trelawney Town, had been deported after an eight-month violent struggle that took the lives of hundreds of British troops and Jamaican militia. In the midst of the nearby revolution in Saint Domingue, the Jamaican government refused to tolerate the proximity of rebellious free blacks; Nova Scotia proved conveniently distant from the Caribbean zone. The Maroons came with two white superintendents and 25,000 pounds of Jamaican currency as reparation.<sup>7</sup> No one knew how long the refugees would stay in Nova Scotia as instructions on their final destination had not arrived.

The civil and military leaders of Nova Scotia – Lieutenant Governor Sir John Wentworth, Prince Edward Augustus as the British commanding officer, and Admiral John Murray – disembarked the Trelawneys without waiting to hear from London. They had no reason to fear the Maroons' military background: unarmed and weary families, many sick and enfeebled from being imprisoned in transport ships for four months, hardly posed a danger in an environment alien to them.<sup>8</sup> Two-thirds were women and children. Halifax was a garrison and could answer misbehaviour by military force.<sup>9</sup>

As it had in Jamaica, the ongoing war between France and Britain created urgency in the British Maritimes – but in the Maroons' favor. Nova Scotia was in dire need of military labourers; just a year before, Wentworth had tried to request 200 men for repairing fortifications. The Trelawneys met Nova Scotia's needs with no cost to government.<sup>10</sup> Wentworth and Prince Edward ordered the Maroons to come on shore so they could build the fortifications in Citadel Hill to guard against a French attack on the city.<sup>11</sup> An even longer confinement in crowded vessels would have led to more sickness and deaths; as it was, some died soon after reaching Nova Scotia.<sup>12</sup>

7 Earl of Balcarres to Duke of Portland, 17 April 1796, quoted in Alexander Crawford Lindsay, Earl of Crawford, *Lives of the Lindsays or a Memoir of the Houses of Crawford and Balcarres . . . Volume III* (London: John Murray, 1849), 126. The war had cost over 350,000 pounds in just eight months.

8 Prince Edward to "My Lord Duke," 25 August 1796, CO 217/71, The National Archives (TNA), Kew, UK (in this letter, Prince Edward notes 540 Maroons had arrived); Dr. John Oxley to John Wentworth, 31 May 1797, enclosure in letter from John Wentworth to Duke of Portland, 2 June 1797, MG II NS "A," vol. 125, NSA. Oxley notes the long confinement and the bad water in Jamaica; they "can do us no harm . . . nor do they seem disposed to evil." See also John Wentworth to G. Hammond, 16 August 1796, RG 1, vols. 50-51, 1337-N, NSA.

9 Disposition of Thomas Barclay of Annapolis in the County of Annapolis, 23 May 1799, CO 217/37, NSA.

10 John Wentworth to Admiral Murray, 24 June 1795, RG 1, vols. 50-51, 1337-N, NSA. One contemporary noted: "It appears they have brought some MONEY with them and the project is likely to be useful to this country, should the Maroons prove industrious." See *True Briton* (1793), 2 September 1796, in *Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Burney Collection Newspapers*, <http://www.gale.com/17th-and-18th-century-burney-collection/>.

11 John Wentworth to Duke of Portland, Nova Scotia, 25 July 1796, C9137, NSA. The citadel had remained in a state of disrepair since 1783; see MG 12, HQ 1, NSA.

12 John Wentworth to Dr. Morris, 1 May 1799, RG 1, vol. 52, reel 19, 1337-N, NSA. John Oxley noted that the Maroons met with "many losses" on their first arrival, "principally owing to their long confinement on board of the ships and the badness of the water . . . occasioned by the great drought at that time." See Dr. John Oxley to John Wentworth, 31 May 1797, vol. 125, NSA.

The Maroons' arrival during the harvesting season made them particularly valuable to the colony. They could substitute for white workers working on fortifications who clamored to return to their farms.<sup>13</sup> In a colony where families grew food for subsistence and the growing season was short, the absence of men on farms, especially between April and July, could have dire results.<sup>14</sup> The Maroons' labour would help save white families from wrenching scarcity in the winter.

In 1796, the Maroons' appearance of submission inspired confidence. As Prince Edward noted approvingly, "It is but justice to them to say that they conduct themselves in the most orderly and obedient manner, and that whatever may have been their former errors, they now seem fully determined to do their utmost to merit His Majesty's favour and forgiveness."<sup>15</sup> The Trelawneys earned goodwill. They reassured Wentworth that they regretted the conflict in Jamaica and had only sought self-preservation.<sup>16</sup> Yet memories of the bloodhounds that had created terror and compelled their surrender had not faded. In September Wentworth heard them mention Spanish dogs "as objects of terror." When he inquired further, they reassured him that they had "never suffered by or even seen them." Preoccupied with his own agenda, Wentworth accepted their studied humility: "I rather think they are ashamed of being frightened by them, and that they would now be esteemed a ridiculous Scarecrow."<sup>17</sup>

No one suggested re-enslaving the Maroons, although the hardships of a northern climate had not prevented African slavery in the Maritimes.<sup>18</sup> Slave advertisements in newspapers and wills showed the wide acceptance of the institution amongst the populace and the elite.<sup>19</sup> Britain also legally protected slavery in 1790, encouraging the importation not only of household utensils and farming implements but also of immigrants who owned slaves.<sup>20</sup> Most slaves toiled side by side with their owners on farms, shops, or the docks.<sup>21</sup> White settlers used slaves to clear stumps, cultivate

13 This arrangement was already set with Prince Edward. See John Wentworth to the Duke of Portland, 25 July 1796, microfiche (mf) 232 (CIHM/ICMH series no. 47614), British Library (BL), London.

14 John Wentworth to Henry Dundas, 7 May 1794, RG 1, vol. 48, 1336-N, NSA.

15 Prince Edward letter to "My Lord Duke," 25 August 1796, CO 217/71, TNA.

16 John Wentworth to Duke of Portland, 20 September 1796, RG 1, vols. 50-51, 1337-N, NSA.

17 See John Wentworth to the Duke of Portland, 20 September 1796, mf 232 (CIHM/ICMH series no. 47614), BL.

18 In the discussion of African-descended people in the Maritimes, I am indebted to Harvey Amani Whitfield's work. See Whitfield, "Reviewing Blackness in Atlantic Canada and the African Atlantic Canadian Diaspora," *Acadiensis* XXXVII, no. 2 (Summer/Autumn, 2008): 130-9, and Whitfield, "The Struggle over Slavery in the Maritime Colonies," *Acadiensis* LXI, no. 2 (Summer/Autumn, 2012): 17-44. See also Whitfield, *North to Bondage*.

19 As one slave advertisement stated in 1773: "Ran away from her master, John Rock, on Monday, a negro girl named Thursday, about four and a half feet high, broad set, with a lump over her right eye. Had on, when she went away, a red cloth petticoat, a red baize bed gown, and a red ribbon about her head." Thursday is also mentioned in his will in 1776. See *Slavery in Nova Scotia*, excerpts, MG 1, vol. 356, #10, NSA.

20 Ken Donovan, "Slavery and Freedom in Atlantic Canada's African Diaspora: Introduction," *Acadiensis*, XLIII, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2014): 109-15; Donovan notes that 3,550 black people eventually emigrated from the American colonies to Nova Scotia of whom approximately 34 per cent remained slaves (111). On legal protection of slavery by the British Empire, see Winks, *Blacks in Canada*, 26.

21 Whitfield, "Struggle over Slavery," 20; the black Loyalist influx included 1,200 people designated as "servants," who arrived with the white Loyalists.

fields, fell trees, and build homes and barns; slave women did domestic chores and minded white children. The fewer number of slaves in Nova Scotia did not blur the racial divide; as in the United States, deeply ingrained racial prejudices precluded black people's chances of integrating into Nova Scotia's civil society. Slaves, along with free blacks, received harsh indications of their servile place: public whippings for small offences were the most visible and painful reminders.<sup>22</sup>

Yet white Nova Scotians imagined themselves as a people apart. Criticism of slavery and the slave trade appeared in Nova Scotia's magazines and newspapers. Anti-slavery debates in the House of Commons circulated widely. Long essays delineated the disposal of slaves in the West Indies in minute detail. Slave buyers, the essayists declared, eyed slaves in auctions and encircled slaves with two hands; others used several handkerchiefs or tied the slaves with ropes. When some slaves fled the scene in fear, they were "hunted down and retaken." The essays condemned slave purchasers as bargaining for bodies with the "ferocity of brutes."<sup>23</sup> Nova Scotians portrayed West Indian slaves as worked to death, always hungry, and inhumanly punished by evil, power-hungry tyrants. In contrast, Nova Scotia appeared to them to be humane: the prevalence of black servitude and racism in its midst did not compare, supposedly, to the callousness in the Caribbean.

No slave code existed in British Nova Scotia during the 18th century. During the 1780s and 1790s, Nova Scotia's courts, drawing support from slave runaways and voices of sympathetic whites, ruled against slaveholders.<sup>24</sup> An incipient anti-slavery movement in the 1780s, charted by immigrants such as the Scottish Presbyterian minister James McGregor, challenged the injustice of black enslavement and the prevalent thinking in the Maritimes moved in the direction of anti-slavery.<sup>25</sup> Although these sentiments did not lead to a large-scale evangelical movement, as they did in Britain, they affected the sensibilities of influential whites.<sup>26</sup> Legal opposition to slavery, of course, did not equate to social or political equality with blacks, and racism persisted long after slavery faded away by the late 1810s and early 1820s.<sup>27</sup> Still, Wentworth might have been more likely to liken the Maroons to free blacks than to slaves.

22 Whitfield, "Struggle over Slavery," 27.

23 "Manner of Selling Slaves in the West Indies," *Nova Scotia Magazine*, 26 January 1790 (loose pages), Akins Collection, NSA.

24 Robin W. Winks, "A Sacred Animosity: Abolition in Canada," in *The Antislavery Vanguard: New Essays on the Abolitionists*, ed. Martin Duberman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965): 302; Winks notes that some slaves escaped to the New England states to find freedom. See also David G. Bell, "Slavery and the Judges of Loyalist New Brunswick," *University of New Brunswick Law Journal* 31 (1982): 9-42; Barry Cahill, "Habeas Corpus and Slavery in Nova Scotia: *R v. Hect, ex parte Rachel, 1798*," *University of New Brunswick Law Journal* 44 (1995): 179-209; and Barry Cahill, "Slavery and the Judges of Loyalist Nova Scotia," *University of New Brunswick Law Journal* 43 (1994): 73-135.

25 Barry Cahill, "The Antislavery Polemic of Rev James MacGregor: Canada's Proto-Abolitionist as 'Radical Evangelical'," in *The Contribution of Presbyterianism to the Maritime Provinces of Canada*, ed. Charles H.H. Scobie and G.A. Rawlyk (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997). In addition, Chief Justice Thomas Strange and Chief Justice Sampson S. Blowers made it difficult for slaveowners to prove legal ownership over slaves.

26 Whitfield, "Struggle over Slavery," 17-44. Slavery faded in Nova Scotia during the 1820s, about a decade before imperial emancipation.

27 Slavery died out in the Maritimes for three reasons: the challenge presented by slave runaways, the voices of key anti-slavery chief justices who ruled against slaveowners, and the repeated

Yet, surprisingly, Wentworth distinguished the Maroons sharply from the black Loyalists.<sup>28</sup> In 1796, when the Maroons arrived, approximately 3,000 free blacks lived in the colony – but in scattered locations distant from Halifax. Disillusioned by racist treatment, unfair wages, and rocky soil, over 1,000 had left for Sierra Leone in 1792.<sup>29</sup> The black Loyalists' exile just four years before the Maroons' arrival in Halifax naturally invited comparisons. Wentworth insisted that the two groups were absolutely distinct. The black Loyalists – recent ex-slaves “who lacked every idea of providing for themselves or having any property” – could not adjust to freedom.<sup>30</sup> They suffered because they arrived with thousands of white Loyalists with whom they competed for lodging and place. And they struggled because local administrators lacked local knowledge in settling inhabitants.<sup>31</sup> Wentworth's prejudices stood apparent when he wrote that British charity had encouraged black Loyalists' “idleness and profusion.”<sup>32</sup> British handouts – and not the humiliating conditions they endured – had created dissatisfaction. Wentworth dismissed the black Loyalists as immoral and indolent but upheld the Maroons as a people ready for redemption. He would come to regard the Maroons, in effect, as “black Mi'kmaq.”<sup>33</sup> The Maroons' military background, their physical strength, as much as their self-representation as a separate and independent people, likely led Wentworth to associate them with the Mi'kmaq.

Within weeks, Wentworth received permission to settle the Trelawneys permanently in Nova Scotia. The secretary of state, the Duke of Portland, sidestepped Major General George Walpole's concerns about the injustice and illegality of the Maroons' expulsion from Jamaica. He hedged. He sent news of imperial approval to settle the Maroons in Halifax “for the present.” Pragmatically, the duke encouraged their use in military works: “Consider whether some of the young men may not be applied usefully on the works now carrying on for completing the defences of the province.”<sup>34</sup> Wentworth, of course, had already put the duke's recommendations into effect. Other details of Maroon settlement the duke left to Wentworth and the two accompanying Jamaican superintendents, William Dawes Quarrell and Alexander Ochterloney.

The question of Maroon settlement caused disagreement between Quarrell and Wentworth. Quarrell, a member of the Jamaican assembly, advised the dispersal of the

refusal by the Nova Scotia legislature (in 1787, 1789, 1801, and 1808) to give statute recognition to slavery. See Whitfield, *North of Bondage*, chap. 5.

28 John Wentworth does not explicitly mention Loyalist slaves in his correspondence. His family owned slaves in New Hampshire; although blacks worked in his household in Nova Scotia, their precise status remains unclear. See Cuthbertson, *Loyalist Governor*, 78. This information is also based on private correspondence with Harvey Amani Whitfield.

29 Appointed as surveyor general of woods in the early 1790s, Wentworth knew of the black Loyalists and their subsequent exile; see John Wentworth to John King, Esq., 14 September 1792, RG 1, vol. 48, 1336-N, NSA.

30 John Wentworth to Duke of Portland, 29 October 1796, MG II NS “A”, vol. 124, NSA. During the war, they exchanged obedience for provisioned subsistence.

31 John Wentworth to Duke of Portland, 29 October 1796, in Nova Scotia, Miscellaneous, 1798, CO 217/69, TNA. As the letter states, the government “did not have the experience of settling inhabitants in a new country, which requires that sort of local knowledge derivable from experience only.”

32 John Wentworth to Henry Dundas, 22 March 1793, RG 1, vol. 48, 1336-N, NSA.

33 This phrase is my own.

34 Duke of Portland to John Wentworth, 15 July 1796, CO 218/27, TNA.

Maroons to remote areas in Nova Scotia.<sup>35</sup> As Quarrell observed to the Jamaican agent in London nearly six months after the Maroons' arrival in Nova Scotia, "nothing but dispersal and that pretty extensively promises a proper disposal of them."<sup>36</sup> Quarrell proposed segregating them: a hundred should remain near Halifax, with a hundred sent to remote locations in Nova Scotia, a hundred sent to slave states in the United States, and a hundred each to Bermuda and the Bahama Islands. Quarrell also suggested dispersing the most "peevish and discontented" Maroons to a location most remote from Nova Scotia: Sierra Leone, the British colony in West Coast of Africa.<sup>37</sup>

Quarrell, like other white Jamaicans, blamed the war there on the Maroons' sense of superiority and exclusivity. He echoed Jamaican Councilor, Bryan Edwards, who regretted that the 1739 treaty had kept the Maroons segregated from colonial society; it had encouraged "keeping them a distinct people," and "introduced among them what the French call an 'esprit de corps'."<sup>38</sup> This sense of togetherness had allowed them to sustain resistance for eight grueling months. Quarrell hoped that the Maroons' dispersal would lead to their incorporation with other inhabitants and weaken their sense of being a separate people. Ambitiously, he also hoped the Maroons would facilitate a trade relationship between Nova Scotia and Jamaica: the Trelawneys could cut timber and catch fish and ship both to the West Indies; in return, Jamaica would send its produce to Nova Scotia.<sup>39</sup>

Yet Wentworth decided against dispersion. He disregarded Quarrell as having Jamaican prejudices and saw himself as managing and directing the Maroons' settlement.<sup>40</sup> Wentworth took advantage of Quarrell's confinement to bed in late July and early August by violent attacks of fever.<sup>41</sup> Within two months of their arrival, using the money supplied by Jamaica, Wentworth moved the entire community of Trelawneys to Preston, across the harbor from Halifax and some six miles to the northeast. As Wentworth reported to the Earl of Balcarres: "These people are settled in a little village near the town: this was a happy and cheap purchase as it furnished houses for them which could not possibly have been built in time for this season."<sup>42</sup> Preston, previously a settlement of black Loyalists, offered multiple conveniences. It would serve as adequate preparation for farming; here, the Maroons, as tenants, would acquire a "knowledge of agriculture and discover inclinations and exertions to support themselves."<sup>43</sup> Maroon men would sell the fruits of their labour – potatoes

35 Quarrell also rented the Cuban bloodhounds used to compel Maroon surrender in Jamaica.

36 William Quarrell to Sewell, 15 January 1797, *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica* (Spanish Town, Jamaica: Alexander Aikman, 1795-1829), 547. Quarrell mentioned 530 Maroons.

37 William Quarrell to James Wedderburn, 29 October 1796, *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica*.

38 Signed five decades previously, the treaty confined the Maroons to a mountainous settlement outside of Jamaica's civil society; Edwards lamented that the Trelawneys regarded themselves as separate – and superior – in relation to enslaved blacks. See Bryan Edwards, *Historical Survey of the Island of Saint Domingo . . . in the Years 1791 and 1792* (London: n.p., 1801), 317-18. Young notes that he took his account of the Maroons from Edward Long, *History of Jamaica*, written in 1774.

39 *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica* (2 July 1799): 339.

40 *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica* (4 March 1801): 544.

41 William Quarrell to Earl of Balcarres, 27 November 1798, in *Votes of Assembly, 1798-1799*, National Archives of Jamaica (NAJ), Kingston.

42 *Journals of Assembly of Jamaica* (10 October 1796): 454.

43 Michael Wallace, provincial treasurer, and member of General Assembly, from county of Halifax, 15 July 1799, Colonial Office, Nova Scotia, "A," July-December, 1799, vol. 130, p. 41, NSA.

and turnips – along with firewood to the nearby marketplace in Halifax.<sup>44</sup> The soldiers stationed in Halifax would benefit from much-needed provisions, and the settlers could utilize surfeit Maroon labour to build fences and construct homes. Most of all, the Trelawneys would live within Wentworth’s jurisdiction but “separate from the [white] inhabitants.”<sup>45</sup> Quarrell, when he got over his sickness, witnessed a fait accompli.

Wentworth’s vision for keeping the Maroons together – in a single site – drew from his association of the Maroons with the Mi’kmaq.<sup>46</sup> The confusion about the Maroons’ origins crossed the Atlantic. During the Maroon war, London’s newspapers expressed puzzlement about the Maroons’ origins, reflecting muddled thinking on Aboriginal people in the growing empire. Were the rebels more similar to the Mi’kmaq or Africans, or were they something in between?<sup>47</sup> Another report from March 1796 described them as “the remains of the aborigines and of the Spanish and other negroes.”<sup>48</sup> In Wentworth’s first estimation, the Maroons stood closer to the Mi’kmaq and hence merited the same paternalistic benevolence. Like others influenced by romantic ideals of colonization, Wentworth regarded Aboriginal people as noble savages: a community to be admired for their endurance, pitied for their sufferings, and pacified through gift giving.<sup>49</sup> In 1796, he created a similar fantasy of savage innocence around the Trelawneys: they could transform into law-abiding farmers if properly civilized and Christianized.

44 John Wentworth to Duke of Portland, 5 May 1799, C9138, Colonial Office, Nova Scotia, “A,” January-June, 1799, vol. 129, p. 104, NSA.

45 Governor Wentworth to Duke of Portland 13 August 1796, mf 232 (CIHM/ICMH series no. 47614), BL. There is also mention of black Loyalists in John Wentworth to Duke of Portland, 5 May 1799, C9138, Colonial Office, Nova Scotia, “A,” January-June, 1799, vol. 129, p. 105, NSA.

46 The Maroons entered a diversified society. First, there was the backbone of the colony: the English, Scots, and Americans who had settled there since the 1750s. There were also Germans in Lunenburg and some Irish immigrants. A few hundred Acadian families – those not deported in 1755 – remained. There was also the group of black Loyalists – at least 2,000 free blacks – who had been granted refuge in Nova Scotia after the Revolution; the remaining 1,200 had left Nova Scotia for Sierra Leone in 1792, about four years before the Maroons arrived. There were slaves – many who had accompanied the white Loyalists who had arrived in Nova Scotia after the war. And, of course, there were Mi’kmaw families. See Wynn, “A Region of Scattered Settlements” and also Graeme Wynn, “A Province Too Much Dependent on New England,” *Canadian Geographer* 31, no. 2 (June 1987): 98-113, and Philip A. Buckner, “Was there a ‘British’ Empire? *The Oxford History of the British Empire* from a Canadian Perspective,” *Acadiensis* XXXII, no. 1 (Autumn 2002): 110-28.

47 *True Briton* (1793), 2 September 1796, in *Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Burney Collection Newspapers*. See extract from letter from a gentleman at Halifax on 23 July 1796; the letter states: “About 700 of the Maroon Negroes from Jamaica arrived here, in two transports, convoyed by the Dover, of 44 guns.”

48 *Oracle and Public Advertiser* (London, England), 28 March 1796, *Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Burney Collection Newspapers*. This compares the Maroons to the “Aborigines.”

49 See Second Address, delivered in 1814, of the “Deplorable State of the Indians in Halifax, Nova Scotia,” <https://www.hathitrust.org/>. Five topics were covered, and the first four included the following: “The natural disposition and intellectual powers of the Indians; The causes of their jealousy and suspicion of the integrity of the Europeans; Their identity and strict observance of the treaties of peace with the English; The probability of their acceding to any wise plan that may be proposed for their civilization.” The last dealt with reasons why British plans failed.



Wentworth's acquaintance with the Mi'kmaq was longstanding.<sup>50</sup> He first encountered the community when he arrived in the colony after rebel victory in the War of American Independence. He was one of approximately 30,000 white Loyalists who entered Nova Scotia to escape the punishment of the victorious rebels to the south.<sup>51</sup> Wentworth sought a replacement career after his loss of the governorship of New Hampshire.<sup>52</sup> In 1783, at the age of 46, he secured an appointment as surveyor general of Nova Scotia. He undoubtedly received help from the Mi'kmaq as he traveled west to east, reserving regions with white pine trees suitable for masts in British ships.<sup>53</sup> Holding his post as surveyor general for nearly a decade, Wentworth also witnessed the constraints on Mi'kmaq ways. The massive Loyalist immigration disrupted the Aboriginal-imperial balance that had sustained relations in the colony for decades. Previous British-sponsored settlements by Germans, Highland Scots, and New England planters had remained confined to the coastal areas and to farms along the Bay of Fundy.<sup>54</sup> But the scale of Loyalist immigration as much as Loyalist demands touched every region in Nova Scotia and would compel the Mi'kmaq to transform their way of using the land.<sup>55</sup>

The Mi'kmaq had co-existed with Europeans for almost 200 years.<sup>56</sup> Before the British takeover of the region in 1710, French settlers, few in number, had lived in

50 For a deep contextualization of the Mi'kmaq world, see John G. Reid, "Empire, the Maritime Colonies, and the Supplanting of Mi'kma'ki/Wulstukwik, 1780-1820," *Acadiensis* XXVIII, no. 2 (Summer/Autumn 2009): 78-97.

51 Neil MacKinnon emphasizes that the Loyalists came from a broad spectrum of the population – ex-governors as well as the poor from small towns – and stayed loyal for a variety of motives. He cautions against a one-dimensional view of their perspectives. See "Nova Scotia Loyalists," in *Loyalists and Community in North America*, ed. Robert M. Calhoun, Timothy M. Barnes, and George A. Rawlyk (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994). More recently, see Maya Jasanoff, "Revolutionary Exiles: The American Loyalist and French Émigré Diasporas," in *The Age of Revolutions in Global Context, c. 1760-1840*, ed. David Armitage and Sanjay Subrahmanyam (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). Graeme Wynn goes as far as to say that the Loyalists shared little but their experience of exile and their uncertainties. See Wynn, "A Region of Scattered Settlements."

52 John Wentworth fits Ann Gorman Condon's description of elite Loyalists who sought to reassert patriarchal hierarchy in a new context. See Condon, "Loyalist Style and the Culture of the Atlantic Seaboard," *Material History Bulletin* 25 (Spring 1987): 21-8, and Condon, "The Family in Exile: Loyalist Values After the Revolution," in *Intimate Relations: Family and Community in Planter Nova Scotia, 1759-1800*, ed. Margaret Conrad (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1995). See also Patricia Rogers, "The Loyalist Experience in an Anglo-American Atlantic World," in *Planter Links: Community and Culture in Colonial Nova Scotia*, ed. Margaret Conrad and Barry Moody (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 2001), 165-74.

53 Cuthbertson, *Loyalist Governor*, 32.

54 William C. Wicken, *Mi'kmaq Treaties on Trial: History, Land and Donald Marshall Junior* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 130; William C. Wicken, *Colonization of Mi'kmaq Memory and History, 1794-1928* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 8, 97.

55 John G. Reid powerfully shows how the demographic shift that occurred with Loyalist immigration impacted the Mi'kmaq. See "Pax Britannica or Pax Indigena? Planter Nova Scotia (1760-1782) and Competing Strategies of Pacification," *Canadian Historical Review* 85, no. 4 (December 2004): 669-92. As Reid writes, "The Loyalist emigration extended into Nova Scotia a weight of settlement that was incompatible with Aboriginal economies" (673).

56 For more on the Mi'kmaq, see Virginia Miller, "The Micmac: A Maritime Woodland Camp," in *Native Peoples: The Canadian Experience*, ed. R. Bruce Morrison and C. Roderick Wilson (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986), chap. 15.

close proximity to the Mi'kmaq; French missionaries converted many to Catholicism and French imperial officials solidified alliances with the Mi'kmaq through annual presents of arms, ammunitions, food, and clothing.<sup>57</sup> The British recognized the political and religious ties between their French enemy and their inherited Aboriginal subjects. Multiple treaties signed between 1725-1726 and 1778-1779 indicate British acknowledgement of the Mi'kmaw position; diplomatic ties with the Mi'kmaq were viewed as essential.<sup>58</sup> However, the treaties hardly guaranteed Mi'kmaw submission to the British government. During the war with France from 1744 to 1748, the Mi'kmaq sided with the French and against the British; they also defended Louisbourg in 1758.<sup>59</sup> In 1783, after more than seven decades of British jurisdiction over most of the region, a Hessian soldier observed the Aboriginal people's casual observance of Catholic ritual: on hearing bells from the church, they crossed themselves and said, "Au nom de Dieu, du pere, du fils, et du saint esprit."<sup>60</sup> The close ties between the Mi'kmaq and the French, combined with a scarcity of Protestant settlers and soldiers, long precluded British domination over the area.

The process of Mi'kmaw dispossession began with the sudden arrival of thousands of American Loyalists.<sup>61</sup> Earlier treaties did not protect the Mi'kmaq from this massive demographic shift. Endemic respiratory ailments and outbreaks of typhus and smallpox swept the region.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, the displaced Loyalists saw themselves as entitled to rewards for their sacrifices on behalf of the empire. The Loyalists, many of whom had traveled all the way to the Maritimes from the southern colonies of Georgia and South Carolina, viewed the Aboriginal nations who "wandered" across the countryside as vagrants and as inferior. The Mi'kmaw peripatetic life, which the immigrants exploited, became intolerable after Aboriginal

57 L.F.S. Upton, *Micmacs and Colonists: Indian-White Relations in the Maritime Provinces, 1713-1867* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1979), 36.

58 Wicken, *Mi'kmaq Treaties on Trial*, 40. Stephen Patterson also argues that the "interaction of indigenous and colonial peoples is best understood from the inside" (24); see Patterson, "Indian-White Relations in Nova Scotia, 1749-61: A Study in Political Interaction," *Acadiensis* XXIII, no. 1 (Autumn, 1993): 24.

59 Wicken, *Mi'kmaq Treaties on Trial*, 175, 192.

60 Johan Seume, *Mein Lebin*, tran. Horst Deppe, in *The Old Man Told Us: Excerpts from Micmac History, 1500-1950*, ed. Ruth Holmes Whitehead (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 1991), 175. The Mi'kmaq speak an Eastern Algonquian language. See Robert M. Leavitt, *Maliseet & Mi'kmaq: First Nations of the Maritimes* (Fredericton: New Ireland Press, 1995), 41.

61 John G. Reid must be credited for his observation that "a new and demonstrably different phase of settler colonization began during the later years of the Revolution, with the Loyalist migration." See Reid, "'In the Midst of Three Fires, a French one, an American one, and an Indian one': Imperial-Indigenous Negotiations during the War of 1812 in Eastern British America" (paper presented at "The War of 1812: Memory and Myth, History and Historiography" conference, University of London, 12-14 July 2012), 6. Like Harvey A. Whitfield, Catherine M.A. Cottreau-Robins calls the Loyalist period in Nova Scotia an age of slavery; see Cottreau-Robins, "Searching for the Enslaved in Nova Scotia's Loyalist Landscape," *Acadiensis* XLIII, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2014): 125-36.

62 Cole Harris, *The Reluctant Land: Society, Space, and Environment in Canada before Confederation* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008), 179; Reid, "Empire, the Maritime Colonies, and the Supplanting of Mi'kma'ki/Wulstukwik," 83. Reid notes the effects of smallpox and dysentery brought directly by the settlers in 1801 and 1803.

land became British property. In one instance, a leading Loyalist proposed regulations so that “every Indian shall be obliged to Stay att his Respective place of River and Not be Running from one place too an Other.” To secure against Mi'kmaq mobility, some advocated that they carry a pass if outside of an allotted area.<sup>63</sup>

By 1796 – when the Maroons arrived in Nova Scotia – the numbers and the ambitions of the American settlers had begun to overwhelm the Mi'kmaq way of life. The Loyalist immigrants did not want Mi'kmaq neighbours. As one settler, Edward Barron, put it: “I do not mean to have an Indian Town at my Elbow.”<sup>64</sup> As never before, the Loyalists' takeover of Mi'kmaq grounds created displacement and led to impoverishment. As Loyalist settlers set fires to clear land, they destroyed the slow-growing moss and thereby destroyed the game that fed on it. Eager to settle in their new homes, the Loyalists grabbed land along rivers for agriculture, for the building of sawmills, and for fishing.<sup>65</sup> As wildlife and fish became less plentiful, the customary Mi'kmaq means of earning a livelihood became much more difficult to sustain.<sup>66</sup> When the Office of Superintendent of Indian Affairs lapsed in 1784, no one protected land for Mi'kmaq use or prevented the newcomers' unfettered claims to the land.<sup>67</sup>

Wentworth undeniably had some sympathy for the distress the Aboriginal inhabitants endured with the massive Loyalist influx. The “poor savages” had suffered because the extension of roads and settlements had “driven off wild beasts” and deprived them of hunting.<sup>68</sup> They had lost their means of subsistence by the “augmenting settlements of His Majesty's subjects.” Only “a royal and just charity” would benefit them: they needed the aid of “potatoes, meal, fish, bread and clothing” for survival.<sup>69</sup> Indeed, with continuous subsidies, Wentworth hoped that the Mi'kmaq “in a very few years” would support themselves. In December 1796 he noted that by his criteria the Mi'kmaq had already improved: they wore English clothes and began to understand the meaning of “property.”<sup>70</sup> He saw himself as their protective and kindly patriarch.

Wentworth had long pitied Aboriginal societies' losses in the wake of white colonization. His paternalistic compassion for Native Peoples grew out of his years in New Hampshire. In 1770, he expressed his sentiments: “I most sincerely pity these

63 Upton, *Micmacs and Colonists*, 145, 139, 140.

64 Leavitt, *Maliseet & Mi'kmaq: First Nations of the Maritimes*, 240; also quoted in Upton, *Micmacs and Colonists*, 82.

65 Upton, *Micmacs and Colonists*, 128, 133-4; one petition in 1831 described how the sound of the axe had scared away game, and how the sale of baskets and buckets did not substitute for hunting.

66 According to Council Minutes of 9 March 1790, 9,000 moose were killed in Cape Breton during the 1789 only for the sake of their skins. See Whitehead, *The Old Man Told Us*, 178. In a recent essay, Jason Hall complicates our understanding of pre-colonial cultivation; his close study suggests that both the Maliseet and Mi'kmaq managed land – they grew Jerusalem artichokes, ground nuts, and maize – well before contact with the Europeans. See Hall, “Maliseet Cultivation and Climatic Resilience on the Wəlastəkw/St. John River During the Little Ice Age,” *Acadiensis* XLIV, no. 2 (Summer/Autumn 2015): 3-25.

67 Wicken, *Colonization of Mi'kmaq Memory and History*, 102.

68 John Wentworth to Henry Dundas, 3 May 1793, RG 1, vol. 48, 1336-N, NSA.

69 John Wentworth to Henry Dundas, 23 July 1793, RG 1, vol. 48, 1336-N, NSA; John Wentworth to Henry Dundas, 19 May 1794, RG 1, vol. 48, 1336-N, NSA.

70 John Wentworth to Duke of Portland, 21 December 1796, RG 1, vol. 52, 1337-N, NSA.

poor people and shall heartily rejoice to have them under my protection, to have an opportunity of rendering them the benevolence due to Humanity, which I fear has been too much neglected toward Indians in general wherever Europeans have come.”<sup>71</sup> Other Loyalists shared his view. In 1783, when he made the Maritimes his new home, Jonathan Odell envisioned living with a transformed Aboriginal group, men involved in cultivation and farming and not hunting. He equated hunting with diversion and leisure, not labour. Odell put the matter succinctly: “If they [Indians] are ready to learn, we are willing to teach them . . . all the methods of agriculture by which an unfailing Subsistence is secured to all civilized and industrious Planters.”<sup>72</sup> But the Mi’kmaq resisted becoming a supervised society.

In the wake of the Loyalist migration, Mi’kmaq families stubbornly held on to customary sites with spiritual and cultural histories.<sup>73</sup> Their resilient cultural framework enabled them to adapt to a mixed economy, combining older practices of seasonal migration with wage work. Despite suffering material deprivation and political marginalization, they did not rush to become sedentary farmers visualized by a faraway imperial government. They preserved what white settlers called “roving practices” and sought to participate in economic activities that enabled them to survive while maintaining their rounds of hunting, fishing, and gathering. Some Mi’kmaq adopted British ways by growing potatoes, and keeping pigs, cows, and sheep.<sup>74</sup>

The Atlantic-wide idealization of the farmer impacted Nova Scotia’s vision for both the Mi’kmaq and the Maroons. In 1790, the *Nova Scotia Magazine* painted a glowing portrait of the small-scale self-sustaining farmer: “No class of men is more useful or respectable in society – none more independent or happier.”<sup>75</sup> The essayist, Columella, proclaimed: “I glory in the name of the farmer.” By meeting the subsistence needs of the whole community, farmers supported expansion in the realm of commerce. Only with the assistance of the farmer’s plough could British ships sail across the globe. In 1796, planter Bryan Edwards’s hopes for Maroon colonization in Nova Scotia followed this thinking. He anticipated that the Maroons’ removal from a “former wild and savage way of life” would produce a new people: a “useful body of yeomanry.”<sup>76</sup> Wentworth echoed Edwards. In time, he believed, both the Mi’kmaq and the Maroons would embrace to the rhythms of agricultural work.

Wentworth’s repeated requests for funds for the Mi’kmaq wearied the imperial and local government, especially when he exceeded the 200 pounds sent annually.<sup>77</sup>

71 Wilderson, *Governor John Wentworth*, 128. This quotation is from 12 January 1770.

72 Upton, *Micmacs and Colonists*, 130, 140.

73 In her recent essay in *Acadiensis*, Mary McCarthy gives the example of Zainab Amadahy, a writer of African, Cherokee, and European descent. The process of colonization left Amadahy “clanless,” with no “familiar relationship with the land.” See McCarthy, “Mixed Race Identity,” 122.

74 Andrew Parnaby, “The Cultural Economy of Survival: The Mi’kmaq of Cape Breton in the Mid-19th Century,” *Labour/Le Travail* 61 (Spring 2008): 73; Patterson, “Indian-White Relations in Nova Scotia, 1749-61,” 24. See also Wicken, *Colonization of Mi’kmaq Memory and History*, 112.

75 See *Nova Scotia Magazine*, April 1790, and the essay by “Columella” from 25 November 1789, Akins Collection, both in NSA.

76 *St. James’s Chronicle or the British Evening Post* (London, England), 20-22 October 1796, in *Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Burney Collection Newspapers*.

77 Duke of Portland to John Wentworth, 16 December 1796, C9137, NSA. Wentworth had spent 656 pounds between 1795 and 1796.

If white settlers struggled for subsistence, why should the Aboriginal residents be given a handout? Wentworth assured the home government that the expense for the Mi'kmaq would go down after the restoration of peace. He only used aid, he emphasized, as a temporary quieting tactic. Yet, in 1798, when the French threat had subsided, he continued to lament the "indigent and distressful situation" of the Mi'kmaq. Their native country lay destroyed though "progressive occupancy, culture and improvement."<sup>78</sup> But Nova Scotia's assembly had had enough. Its members viewed the Mi'kmaq as a nuisance. Despite Wentworth's opposition, it determined to cut all aid; the less civilized could support themselves by hunting or fishing whereas "civilized" Aboriginal neighbors could procure a living by cultivating land. Continuing charity only encouraged "indolence and supineness." The vast majority of the members of the assembly believed that distress proceeded from their "unwillingness to labor."<sup>79</sup> By 1799, the Nova Scotian assembly had ruled that the Mi'kmaq merited no different treatment than transient paupers.<sup>80</sup> They would be treated as refugees in their own land.

Wentworth could not overrule the determined imperial and local objections to supporting the Mi'kmaq. However, in 1796, Jamaican funds allowed Wentworth to experiment with settling the Maroons and add his signature to the age of reform. From the first, he did not view the Maroons as dangerous to Nova Scotia. He never thought to shackle or imprison the Maroon families; he viewed them as victims of Jamaican slaveholders' paranoia just as he viewed the Mi'kmaq as victims of European conquest. As zealous as the evangelical William Wilberforce, Wentworth hoped to bring the Trelawneys under his wing. The Catholic Mi'kmaq would not regard him as their savior, but he could perchance claim a paternalistic role with the Maroons. Wilberforce had upbraided Jamaican slave masters for the war: if acquainted properly with the "principles, habits and manners of the people who surrounded them," the Maroons would "neither have been ignorant or cruel."<sup>81</sup> The slaveowners, too ready to utilize the branding iron or the lash, could not become custodians of free blacks. Like Wilberforce, Wentworth blamed the Maroon war on white Jamaicans who had, even after 140 years with them, neglected to school them in Christianity or English laws, customs, and civilization. The Maroons had to remain in one group; dispersal would require a Christian teacher for every family and Jamaica would have to incur heavier expenses.<sup>82</sup>

Wentworth imagined a utopia of peaceful coexistence between whites and Maroons sealed by Anglican teachings. In contrast with his attitude towards the black Loyalists, he did not dismiss the Maroons as unredeemable and lowly.<sup>83</sup> He

78 Proceedings of His Majesty's Council in Court Assembly Session, 4 July 1798, CO 217/73, TNA.

79 *Journals and Proceedings of the House of Assembly*, 4 July 1798, CO 217/73, TNA.

80 *Journals and Proceedings of the House of Assembly*, 7 June 1799, CO 217/73, TNA.

81 *Times* (London, England) 22 October 1796, issue 3721, in *Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Burney Collection Newspapers*.

82 Benjamin Gerrish Gray, 18 June 1798, sent in enclosure to the Duke of Portland from John Wentworth, 23 June 1798, MG II NS "A," vol. 127, NSA.

83 Wentworth's deep knowledge of Mi'kmaq acculturation to Catholicism possibly prevented him from attempting this experiment with them. See Judith Fingard, "English Humanitarianism and the Colonial Mind: Walter Bromley in NS 1813-1825," *Canadian Historical Review* 54 (1973): 144; Wentworth's Enlightenment tendencies towards creating "improvement" also played a part.

saw his chance to transform them into a godly community of grateful farmers. Wentworth's words demonstrated his high esteem for Maroon families. "They are remarkably clean in their persons, houses, cloathing and utensils, and very healthy," he noted. They worked harder than "an equal number of more enlightened white people from any part of Europe or America."<sup>84</sup> And, according to Wentworth, they showed deep attachment to their wives and children.<sup>85</sup> He also praised their potential as good colonists and thought that the first steps in realizing the Maroons as a black peasantry entailed instruction in farming and religion.<sup>86</sup> What Odell had envisioned for the Maliseet, Wentworth conceived for the Maroons: to incorporate them as a farming community. Christian teachings were also essential. Wentworth would not have agreed to settle the "six hundred pagans" in Nova Scotia "without a faithful establishment for their instruction in the Christian religion and in reading and writing the English language." Only through these means could "any people be reclaimed and fitted for living in a British colony."<sup>87</sup>

Thus, Christianity would domesticate the Maroons. The church would change them from the "Maroons of war and hunting for those of peace and patient industry"; the Maroons would soon lose the "self-importance" derived from their migratory customs.<sup>88</sup> Within a month of the Maroons' arrival, Wentworth noted that "it will be of the most serious importance, both civil and religiously considered, to instruct these poor people in the Christian religion and to teach their children to read and write and common cyphering for which I find them both capable and much disposed."<sup>89</sup> Successful colonization required conversion as a rite of passage, and this could only happen in a single site.

Not only the route to farming but also the path to loyalty lay with Christian teachings. In the long run, Wentworth felt that dispersion would be more costly and conversion cheaper for the empire. Like the bishop of Nova Scotia, Charles Inglis, Wentworth linked faith in the Church of England with attachment to the empire.<sup>90</sup> Just as white youth imbued with the principles of loyalty to their king and country

84 John Wentworth to Duke of Portland, 29 October 1796, Nova Scotia, Miscellaneous, 1798, no. 4, CO 217/69, TNA.

85 John Wentworth to Duke of Portland, 20 September 1796, Nova Scotia, Miscellaneous, 1798, no. 5, CO 217/69, TNA.

86 Like Wentworth, other Loyalists believed an inextricable link existed between loyalty to the empire and Anglican worship. To ensure deeper allegiance, Charles Inglis, another Loyalist who had lived in British-occupied New York City during the war years, was appointed as the first bishop of Nova Scotia in 1787. See John Frederick Wolverton, *Colonial Anglicanism in North America* (Detroit: Wayne University Press: 1984); John Wolfe Lydekker, *The Life and Letters of Charles Inglis: His Ministry in America and Consecration at First Colonial Bishop, from 1759 to 1787* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1936); and Stanley Boyd Schletter, "Religious Faith and Commercial Empire," in *Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol. II: Eighteenth Century*, ed. P. J. Marshall (London: Oxford, 1998).

87 *Journals of House of Assembly*, 3 August 1799 – "600 pagans"; "Statement of Facts respecting the settling of Maroons in Nova Scotia referred to by the Lieutenant Governor of that Province," 30 May 1799, Colonial Office, Nova Scotia, "A," January-June, 1799, vol. 129, p. 179, NSA.

88 John Wentworth to Duke of Portland, 29 October 1796, Nova Scotia, Miscellaneous, 1798, no. 7, CO 217/69, TNA.

89 John Wentworth to Duke of Portland, 13 August 1796, MG II NS, "A," vol. 123, NSA.

90 Inglis firmly believed that Anglicanism could promote loyalty to the empire.

would be more likely to remain loyal to Britain – and much less likely to emigrate south for greater prosperity in the United States – Maroon families would establish attachments to their land and the mother country though exposure to the Church. Christian teachings would “disseminate piety, morality and loyalty among them.”<sup>91</sup> The Maroons would resist becoming “dreadful instruments in the hands of designing men.” They would refuse to side with the French enemy in times of crisis.<sup>92</sup>

The Maroons’ military experience presented no danger.<sup>93</sup> It counted as bonus. Wentworth likened the martial experience of Maroons to that of the Mi’kmaq. In September 1796, when he feared an attack against Halifax from a French squadron, Wentworth contemplated assistance from both groups.<sup>94</sup> In October, he exulted that the Maroons would be “decidedly good men against any enemy.”<sup>95</sup> He compared the Maroons to the Mi’kmaq because both could maneuver skillfully in hilly terrain. The men had experience in guerilla warfare against European armies and could assist British soldiers. British riflemen would supervise “Maroons or Indians in the wood or difficult rocky country.”<sup>96</sup> One hundred and fifty Aboriginal men could be “very serviceable” to repel an invasion.<sup>97</sup> An equal number of Maroon men would serve the same role. Wentworth imagined that each group would serve as a “useful and faithful corps” in case of invasion.<sup>98</sup> And, of course, Maroon soldiers, like Aboriginal soldiers enlisted to fight in British armies for decades, were cheap. They would receive compensation in the form of presents and provisions and not pay or pension. They would not permanently burden the resources of the imperial government.

Yet the same characteristics that made the Maroons and Mi’kmaq ideal allies also made them potentially dangerous enemies. Men with talents suited to frontier warfare could terrify adversaries but also might prove harder to discipline and control. This worry existed especially with respect to the Catholic Mi’kmaq. Too few to pose a threat on their own, the Mi’kmaq, allied with the French, could cause havoc. In 1793, during Britain’s involvement in the French Revolutionary Wars, the

91 John Wentworth to Duke of Portland, 13 August 1796, MG II NS “A,” vol. 123, NSA.

92 John Wentworth, 20 January 1795, RG 1, vols. 50-51, 1337-N, NSA. Wentworth’s worries about a possible French-Mi’kmaq alliance were real; as George Monk reported in 1794, “The Indians appear more restless and dissatisfied with their situation than I have ever known them to be; some of the more intelligent [i.e., well-informed] among them make circuitous visits to the different Tribes, and give false reasons for such long and unusual Excursions.” Quoted in John G. Reid, “‘In the Midst of Three Fires,’” 3.

93 Wentworth had experience forming a volunteer corps in British-occupied New York City during the War of American Independence. See Robert Munro Brown, *Revolutionary New Hampshire and the Loyalist Experience: Surely We Have Deserved a Better Fate* (University of New Hampshire, 1983).

94 *Journals of the House of Assembly*, 18 December 1798. As Alexander Ochterloney reported later, John Wentworth thought of embodying the Maroons and attaching them to “some riflemen to defend Cole Harbour road”; see *Journals of the House of Assembly*, 4 March 1801. Wentworth asked William Quarrell for Maroons “best deserving of commissions” (517).

95 John Wentworth to Duke of Portland, 8 October 1796, *Journals of the House of Assembly*.

96 John Wentworth to Duke of Portland, 24 September 1796, mf 232 (CIHM/ICMH series no. 47614), BL.

97 John Wentworth to Duke of Portland, 8 October 1796, RG 1, vols. 50-51, 1337-N, NSA.

98 John Wentworth to Duke of Portland, 21 April 1797, RG 1, vol. 52, 1337-N, NSA.

Indian superintendent, George Henry Monk, resumed office.<sup>99</sup> Wentworth instructed Monk to issue provisions to those who appeared most wretched or who showed proper humility, and to look for signs of “democratic French practices among the savages.”<sup>100</sup> Wentworth called the Mi’kmaq a “restless savage people” who would work to Nova Scotia’s advantage only if supported by being “fed and lightly clothed.”<sup>101</sup> But Wentworth stood ready to exploit their attachment to their families to ensure their allegiance in times of war. Holding wives and children captive would serve as “pledges for their fidelity.”<sup>102</sup> At least temporarily, Maroon and Mi’kmaq men would be induced to side with British interests.<sup>103</sup>

Just two months after their arrival, Wentworth executed his Christian vision for the Maroons. He appointed Reverend Benjamin Gerrish Gray to minister them.<sup>104</sup> Services would begin on the second Sunday in October.<sup>105</sup> The Maroons, he believed, would be “more easily reformed” than an “equal number of more enlightened white people from any part of Europe or America.”<sup>106</sup> At the same time, he authorized a Maroon school and appointed 59-year-old fellow Loyalist, Theophilus Chamberlain, as teacher.<sup>107</sup> A member of the Society for Promoting Agriculture in Nova Scotia, Chamberlain had long explored ways to stabilize Nova Scotia: he studied methods for preparing hemp and making oil-compost, and for choosing the best seeds for wheat. He would now strategize on how best to domesticate the Maroons. As a former teacher to “Indians in the wilderness of America,” Chamberlain met what Wentworth saw as the necessary qualifications.<sup>108</sup>

Wentworth’s vision for fitting the Maroons for British Nova Scotia followed earlier schemes for converting Aboriginal people.<sup>109</sup> He envisioned transforming the manners and the morals of the Maroons to make them more conformable with English occupations, burial practices and, most of all, marriages. The Trelawneys should abandon hunting wild hogs and pigeons and settle into an agricultural mode of life. They should stop “festive excesses” upon internment and desist from burying their dead near their dwellings. The men should renounce polygamy and accept the rites of a Christian marriage. The steady inculcation of Christian principles would “accomplish a reformation on their head and affect the manners of the rising

99 John Wentworth to Dundas, 23 July 1793, RG 1, vol. 48, 1336-N, NSA.

100 This issue of allegiance to the French would also arise for the Acadians. See John Wentworth to Henry Dundas, 9 November 1793, RG 1, vol. 48, 1336-N, NSA.

101 John Wentworth to Henry Dundas, 23 July 1793, RG 1, vol. 48, 1336-N, NSA.

102 John Wentworth to Duke of Portland, 24 September 1796, mf 232 (CIHM/ICMH series no. 47614), BL. In October, when the French fleet departed Newfoundland, the danger left the colony.

103 No such measures were considered for the Maroons.

104 John Wentworth to Duke of Portland, 20 September 1796, mf 232 (CIHM/ICMH series no. 47614), BL. He estimated the cost to be 240 pounds annually.

105 Nova Scotia, Miscellaneous, 1798, no. 4, 20 September 1796, CO 217/69, TNA.

106 John Wentworth to Duke of Portland, 20 September 1796, mf 232 (CIHM/ICMH series no. 47614), BL.

107 John Wentworth to Earl of Balcarres, 10 October 1796, RG 1, vols. 50-51, 1337-N, NSA. Wentworth noted that “all the Maroons understood English and many spoke it fluently.” See also John Wentworth to Duke of Portland, 21 December 1796, RG 1, vol. 52, 1337-N, NSA.

108 *Nova Scotia Magazine*, April 1790, and *Nova Scotia Magazine*, 25 November 1789, Akins Collection, NSA.

109 John Wentworth to Duke of Portland, 13 August 1796, vol. 124, NSA.



generation.” The old Maroons would carry their customs to the grave, and the newer generation would adopt English ways.<sup>110</sup>

Surviving handwritten copybooks hint at Wentworth’s core vision for the Maroons.<sup>111</sup> Maroon boys copied rules of conduct, such as “Good Manners Always Procure Respect.” They recited the catechism, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Ten Commandments perfectly. Wentworth described one 14-year old, John Tharpe, who learned to write in eight months. Another boy, John Morgans, 12 years of age, possessed “traits of the most wonderful genius and avidity for instruction.” In his correspondence with the Duke of Portland, Wentworth enclosed their copied hymns as “some specimens of progress.”<sup>112</sup>

Wentworth knew, of course, the Maroons as people of African and not Aboriginal ancestry. Multiple times, he inquired if Nova Scotia could receive an additional allowance for the Maroons from funds destined “for the civilization of negroes.”<sup>113</sup> Still, he held the Trelawneys as a people apart. He did not wish Nova Scotia to lose the Maroons, whom he saw as inherently more malleable than the black Loyalists. He viewed his charity towards the Maroons – as with the Mi’kmaq – as nurturing allegiance. His aims would succeed because he gave personal attention to the distressed people. He met the Mi’kmaq individually, “examined their respective distresses, instructed them in their loyalty, and receive engagements of their fidelity and ready appearance.”<sup>114</sup> Under his direct supervision, the Maroons too would become useful settlers. They came with funds, they would be converted, and they would stay. He would not spoil them. He visited the Preston Maroons regularly and did his utmost to “establish their happiness.”<sup>115</sup>

Wentworth downplayed the expressions of racial prejudice in the Maritimes. As slavery moved towards a slow “extinguishment,” he noted optimistically that “distinctions actually painful to these people are gradually dying away.”<sup>116</sup> His scheme for the Maroon settlement would further this goal and draw the approbation of abolitionists. In a short time, they will be “so much more happy than they ever were, that their condition will satisfy Mr. [William] Wilberforce or any other reasonable philanthropic patron of the black race.”<sup>117</sup> Here, Wentworth sought praise

110 Benjamin Gerrish Gray (parson of Maroons) to John Wentworth, on 18 June 1798, MG II NS “A,” vol. 127, NSA.

111 At least one was expelled for attending a cockfight on a Sunday. See John Wentworth to John King, 14 April 1799, Private and Confidential, Colonial Office, Nova Scotia, “A,” January-June, 1799, vol. 129, NSA.

112 John Wentworth to John King, 14 April 1799, Private and Confidential, Colonial Office, Nova Scotia, “A,” January-June, 1799, vol. 129, NSA.

113 Duke of Portland to John Wentworth, 12 June 1797, *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica*.

114 John Wentworth to Duke of Portland, 21 April 1797, MG II N.S. “A,” vol. 125, NSA.

115 John Wentworth to G. Hammond, 16 August 1796, RG 1, vols. 50-51, 1337-N, NSA. Wentworth’s relations with a Maroon woman would produce a son, George Colley Wentworth, who lived until 1893. See Cuthbertson, *Loyalist Governor*, 83.

116 Harvey Amani Whitefield notes “slavery lasted longer in Maritime Canada than in any New England state, and continued well into the early nineteenth century, as it did in New York and New Jersey.” See Whitfield, “Black Loyalists and Black Slaves in Maritime Canada,” *History Compass* 5, no. 6 (November 2007): 1984.

117 John Wentworth to G. Hammond, 16 August 1796, RG 1, vols. 50-51, 1337-N, NSA.

from British eyes monitoring his experiment. He went so far as to assure the Duke of Portland that the Maroons could not “be prevailed on by any persuasion to return to Jamaica.”<sup>118</sup> The duke stood taken aback: Wentworth’s reports exceeded his every expectation.<sup>119</sup>

But Wentworth’s confidence in the pacification of the Trelawneys came too soon. One Jamaican Councilor, Bryan Edwards, had suspected the Maroons’ resistance to Christian teachings and incorporation into farming society. As Edwards would later write in 1801, the “conversion of savage men from a life of barbarity to the knowledge and practice of Christianity, is a work of much greater difficulty than many pious and excellent persons in Great Britain seem fondly to imagine.”<sup>120</sup> Edwards’s observation unwittingly acknowledged the independence and pride of the Trelawneys. An assimilated and grateful group of Christianized Trelawneys did not materialize.<sup>121</sup> Jamaican funds and Wentworth’s Christian zeal could not compel the exiles to forsake dreams of living on their own terms.

Starting in 1797, with the help of anti-slavery colonists and soldiers, the Maroons petitioned the imperial government to relocate them to a warmer climate.<sup>122</sup> In an age of anti-slavery, the Maroons’ circumstances in Nova Scotia caught the ears of British evangelical reformers and, by 1800, the Maroons, denied a return to Jamaica, embarked for an uncertain future in Sierra Leone.<sup>123</sup> Imperial humanitarians had long regarded the deportation of the Maroons from Jamaica to Nova Scotia as a flagrant injustice; they supposed that the cold in Nova Scotia was unfit for black bodies and the tropical climate of Sierra Leone would better suit them. Like free blacks who migrated to Sierra Leone in 1787 and 1792, the Maroons would help extend British claims over the struggling settlement in Sierra Leone.

The Mi’kmaq found no comparable supporters in Nova Scotia or elsewhere in the empire in the 1790s. The British favored the allegiance of white Loyalist families over the friendship of the Mi’kmaq. As American Loyalists encroached on the best lands in Nova Scotia, the Mi’kmaq gradually found themselves with fewer resources and supporters. Imperial administrators and humanitarians, when they considered the Mi’kmaq at all, viewed them as an annoying expense, to be watched and pacified during times of war with France, and otherwise dismissed as a nuisance; promises made to the Mi’kmaq in earlier treaties appeared extravagant and breakable. It would be white settlers who would build and protect British Nova Scotia.

After 1815, when an outside invasion from France or the United States became unlikely, the Mi’kmaq lost more ground. They endured insults from white

118 John Wentworth to Duke of Portland, 20 September 1796, RG 1, vols. 50-51, 1337-N, NSA.

119 Duke of Portland to John Wentworth, 16 December 1796, RG 1, vol. 124, NSA.

120 *Historical Survey of the Island of Saint Domingo*, 319.

121 Sustained attention to the plight of the Aboriginal nations came in the early 19th century, on the part of British officers such as Walter Bromley.

122 The question of legality pre-occupied early anti-slavery proponents. Just as Nova Scotian judges questioned whether masters had legal title to slaves or whether they were “stolen property,” anti-slavery proponents also debated – and determined – that the Maroons were illegally deported from Jamaica. See Whitfield, “Struggle over Slavery,” 39.

123 Note that the experience of black Loyalists and Maroons – both of them free – remained distinct: free blacks in Nova Scotia dreaded Jamaica as a land of enslavement while Maroons sought to return to freedom in Jamaica.

newcomers who felt entitled to Mi'kmaw land, and who viewed the dispossession of the Mi'kmaq as a logical outcome of white settlement. In 1819, Walter Bromley cited one disturbing instance of settlers' readiness to use violence against Mi'kmaw families. In Chedabucto Bay where the Mi'kmaq had long fished, white people "entered their camps, defiled their women, abused and beat the men, and in fact, conducted themselves in such a manner as to prevent the possibility of their remaining any longer."<sup>124</sup> While the Maroons left Nova Scotia to become black colonizers in Sierra Leone, the Mi'kmaq endured appalling violence as white colonizers engulfed their world and shattered the friendship that had persisted between the Mi'kmaq and the British imperial state for decades.

Drawing attention to the Maroons helps bring Aboriginal and African Nova Scotian history into conversation with one another. Like the Mi'kmaq, Nova Scotia's blacks – ex-slaves and Loyalists – confronted, in place of slavery, a pervasive racism.<sup>125</sup> Intolerance and openly segregationist policies greeted the 2,000 black refugees who arrived in the Maritimes at the end of the War of 1812. They were placed on the worst land and given the most menial work. In 1815, the government attempted to block further black migration; they shrewdly adopted the environmental rhetoric of an earlier era and maintained that the cold was unsuited to the black constitution. In 1834, two decades later, Nova Scotia tried to prohibit the landing of liberated slaves from the Caribbean. Like the Mi'kmaq, free blacks symbolized nuisance and disorder; the former should be pushed down and latter kept out of the Maritimes.<sup>126</sup> In place of slavery, racism and poverty remained.<sup>127</sup> An exclusive and narrow focus on the political evil of slavery enabled do-good reformers to ignore the economic deprivations and racial assumptions that kept non-white groups unequal – and unfree.

124 Bromley, 1819, cited in Wicken, *Colonization of Mi'kmaw Memory and History*, 113.

125 The racism was aimed as much at the Mi'kmaq as towards blacks.

126 For legislation from 1815 and 1834, see Whitfield, "Struggle over Slavery," 43-4.

127 See Whitfield, *North of Bondage*.