CONFLICTING COMMEMORATIONS: THE SAINT JOHN WAR MEMORIAL AND THE WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION FOUNTAIN, 1922–1925

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Abstract

This article explores the construction of the war memorial in Saint John, New Brunswick. There was intense debate surrounding the location of the memorial because many in the community wanted to remove the Women's Christian Temperance Union's fountain, which had been built to honour the Loyalist women who founded the city. Some prominent Saint John citizens, including the mayor, thought that removing the fountain would be erasing that "sacred" memory. This debate reveals that even though the country was in the wake of a deadly global conflict, local memories and identities held strong.

Résumé

Le présent article explore la construction du monument de guerre à Saint John, au Nouveau-Brunswick. Il y a eu d'intenses débats au sujet de l'emplacement de ce monument, car de nombreuses personnes de la collectivité voulaient retirer la fontaine du Women's Christian Temperance Union, qui avait été construite pour honorer les femmes loyalistes qui avaient fondé la ville. Certains citoyens influents de Saint John, y compris le maire, pensaient que le fait de retirer la fontaine effacerait le souvenir « sacré ». Un tel débat révèle que, même si le pays était dans le sillage d'un conflit mondial meurtrier, les souvenirs et les identités collectifs restaient vivants.

On 10 June 1925, thousands of Saint Johners lined King Street to witness the unveiling of their war memorial. The ceremony was planned for the evening in the hope of attracting a large crowd. As they assembled, the people saw a tall figure shrouded in a Union flag, and rows of returned soldiers stood on guard with their medals beaming in the evening sun.[1] The memorial had been three years in the making, but they were a contentious and tense three years. Controversy stemmed over the precise location of the memorial and whether it would be appropriate to relocate the Women's Christian Temperance Union's (WCTU's) drinking fountain to give the war memorial the most prominent site in the city. This article explores the construction of the war memorial in Saint John, and argues that despite being in the wake of a global conflict and unforeseen deaths, some prominent Saint John citizens resisted "forgetting" the city's Loyalist roots. These debates marred the commemorative process and became contentious discussions in the city, leading to confusion and difficult relationships between the mayor, city council, and the WCTU.

Archival documentation for war memorials is often sparse. Most war memorials across the country, and certainly in New Brunswick, were organized by ad hoc committees of interested citizens and paid for largely by public subscription. The memorial in Saint John was no different. Committee records were not kept and are therefore lost to the modern historian. However, the newspapers of the time took a keen interest in memorial building, and diligently reported on the committee's activities as well as public opinion about the memorial proposals. Therefore, most of the documentary evidence for

this article comes from the pages of the *Saint John Globe*, a liberal daily newspaper.[2] In his book *To Mark Our Place*, Robert Shipley makes a passing reference to the Saint John memorial and the controversy over its location, but he does not go into detail about the monument's history.[3] This article fills that gap.

After the Great War, there was an intense desire across the country to commemorate and memorialize the dead. Municipalities, religious groups, service groups, and schools took it upon themselves to build monuments of various kinds and sizes to keep the memory of the dead alive. Communities resisted standardization of war memorials, preferring to build monuments that reflected the town and those who lived there. "A locally commissioned monument," Jonathan Vance writes in his landmark work, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War*, "said more about a community's memory of war than any design foisted on citizens by a committee in Ottawa or Toronto could ever have done."[4] Vance argues that Canadians constructed war memorials—and the myths that surrounded them—so that the soldiers of the First World War had not died in vain.[5] In the European context, Jay Winter asserts that "local memorials arose out of the postwar search for a language in which to reaffirm the values of the community for which soldiers had laid down their lives."[6] Vance and Winter paint a picture of a society in mourning, a society that needed to find a discourse to reaffirm middle-class values of temperance and liberty, and honour the values for which soldiers had died.[7]

The perspective of Vance and Winter dominates the Canadian historiography; however, it is not the only interpretation. Ian McKay and Jamie Swift's *The Vimy Trap: Or, How We Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Great War* argues that the collective memory of the Great War—which they have deemed "Vimyism"—is far more fragmented. They posit that most Canadians of the 1920s were not grief-stricken or patriotic, and therefore the traditional view of memorials as the manifestation of that grief is exaggerated.[8] The story of the Saint John war memorial does not support McKay and Swift's thesis, however. Newspaper editorials, letters to the editor, and meeting proceedings published in the Saint John *Globe* reveal that Saint John was very much a city in mourning and that the act of building a war memorial was a critical step in the personal and collective grieving process that many middle-class residents participated in.

Commemoration of the Great War was inherently gendered. In many contexts, including Moncton, New Brunswick, women's civic groups such as the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire organized community memorials.[9] In the case of Saint John, the WCTU fountain to Loyalist women, which once was the star on the city's memorial landscape, was challenged by the new need for a memorial springing from the Great War. The memorial that would be built to Saint John soldiers commemorated a new set of masculine values such as bravery, sacrifice, and victory that would supplant the feminine values of temperance and family.

In "The 1910s: The Stillborn Triumph of Progressive Reform," Ian McKay paints Saint John at the outbreak of the Great War as a city of social reformers: promoters of equal suffrage, anti-tuberculosis campaigners, and advocates of town planning made the city progressive and vibrant.[10] Temperance was an increasingly important value in New Brunswick, and temperance societies pushed for tougher liquor laws.[11] In 1912, Saint John was the first city in Canada to adopt a model of civic government in which elected officials were chosen by all voters—and not by wards run by "bosses and liquor-sellers"—resulting in a municipal government run by experts.[12] The new style of government had more legitimate authority in the decision-making process.

War fervour swept through New Brunswick in the summer of 1914, and the announcement of war at the Imperial Theatre on King's Square was greeted with cheers and "a great demonstration of emotion."[13] But enthusiasm for the war did not result in high enlistment levels. The mayor of Saint John feared that the low enlistment numbers would damage the Loyalist honour of his city and province. A September 1915 recruiting rally in King's Square drew fifteen thousand people, but the event recruited only nine new soldiers. Enlistment was equally low in rural areas of the province. The war brought with it new concerns over public morals, and the efforts of temperance organizations resulted in new, more stringent legislation concerning the sale of alcohol.[14]

Saint John in the 1920s was, like the rest of the country, reeling from the horrendous death toll of the First World War. As in many cities, the First World War brought with it increased labour disruption; in 1921–22, there were six labour disputes in the city, all of which were instigated by employers' desire to cut workers' rights and increase control over their employees.[15] Veterans who were also workers were particularly discontented and the Great War Veterans Association advocated for new clothes, back pay, and economic security for war widows.[16] The Maritime Rights movement mobilized a sense of regional patriotism and sought to increase the political power of the easternmost provinces during the 1920s.[17] The decline of shipbuilding and other maritime industry in the 1920s threatened to impoverish Saint John; however, the city experienced relative prosperity due to the booming pulpwood industry, which benefitted the fundraising campaign for the new war memorial.[18]

Saint John has a rich heritage of public memorialization and commemoration. After the Boer War, a memorial was erected on the grounds of Riverview Memorial Park to the memory of New Brunswick volunteers who died in the conflict.[19] Saint Johners also commemorated Samuel de Champlain in the tercentenary of his landing in 1604. Like most commemorations, the celebration of Champlain was meant to boost civic engagement and establish historical authenticity for Champlain's story.[20]

The city's nickname, "Loyalist City," has dominated Saint John's commemorative events and public memory, even though most of the city's population was of non-Loyalist descent. While no longer a part of the contemporary framework of the city, Loyalists were once thought to represent the moral pinnacle of what it meant to be a New Brunswicker, and thus they have been extensively commemorated. Greg Marquis claims that the Old Loyalist Burial Ground and Trinity Anglican Church (which was built on the site of the first Loyalist church in the city) were critical memorials to the Loyalists, and are city landmarks.[21] Murray Barkley contends that various anniversaries in the late nineteenth century sparked renewed interest in the Loyalist "cult" that would last until the outbreak of war in 1914.[22] Marquis also suggests that Saint John's public memory was dominated by an Anglophone, Protestant, and imperialist narrative exemplified by the Loyalists. While Acadians were also involved in commemoration and were interested in their collective identity, Loyalists were more concerned with the commemorative act, and thus their memory dominated the cultural landscape prior to the First World War.[23]

In the broader Canadian context, the Loyalist tradition is "one of the defining elements of the English-Canadian identity." Centenary commemorations heralded the Loyalists as the founders of colonial society.[24] Loyalists were seen as symbols of Canadian nationalist spirit while still being bastions of British imperialism.[25] Yet as Norman Knowles has demonstrated, women were entirely absent from Loyalist commemorations in Ontario, but in 1883 Saint John celebrated the centennial of the arrival of the Loyalists with a variety of public ceremonies, including a drinking fountain erected at the head of King Street by the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU).[26] This was the most

prominent location in the city, and the fountain was dedicated to Loyalist women, reflecting the importance of Loyalists in Saint John's public memory. WCTU drinking fountains were common across Canada and the United States. Chapters across the continent built the fountains in high-traffic areas because men used the lack of clean drinking water as an excuse to drink liquor. The WCTU felt that these water fountains, especially in the United States, gave men a place to find clean water without setting foot in a public house and sinking to the temptation of having something stronger. They also symbolized the power, prominence, and importance of the Union.[27] The fountain sponsored by the WCTU was one of several fountains dedicated to Loyalists in Saint John during the 1880s.[28]

Loyalists took on new importance during the Great War and many pro-Loyalists saw the war as a fight for the survival of the British Empire.[29] True to Saint John's commemorative heritage, once the war ended there was a fervent desire to integrate those who had died into the historical landscape of the city. On 18 May 1922, there was a public meeting called by the Municipal Chapter of the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire (IODE) to discuss a memorial to those who had fallen in the Great War. The chapter's regent, Mrs. Boyle Travers,[30] opened the meeting by explaining the purpose of the gathering, asking those present to give their opinion, and by reading a letter from the Great War Veterans' Association in support of a soldiers' memorial. The meeting was "largely attended" and the Saint John *Globe* reported on it the next day. There were several opinions and ideas put forward; many thought that the memorial should stand for all soldiers and sailors, regardless of whether or not they had died in battle. Travers said that the IODE wanted a memorial in the form of an arch or a cenotaph and that King Square would be the best place for the monument. Others advocated for a flagstaff, and some still thought that King Square was not the best place for the monument. At the end of the meeting, a committee was struck to explore the necessary steps to erect a memorial. The committee was composed of R.T. Hayes, F.B. Ellis, Col. Sturdee, Mrs. J. Boyle Travers, Mrs. Hugh Mackay, the Rev. Canon R.A. Armstrong, Mrs. Herber Vroom, and C.A. Owens.[31]

Only four days after the report of the meeting ran in the *Globe*, letters to the editor began to appear. Ewyn Bruce MacKinnon had lofty ideas for what Saint John should do for the war memorial. He suggested renovating the whole of King Street to form a "memorial boulevard," transforming King Square into a "Garden of Victory," and beautifying the waterfront. MacKinnon cited several examples of large European cities—Brussels, London, Paris, and Edinburgh—which had undertaken similar schemes with great success. He argued that if Edinburgh, "the poorest of capitals," can do such a thing, then "St John, in our own humble way," could do something similar. Saint John, MacKinnon posited, was much "better off than Edinburgh" and ought to "possess one magnificent memorial avenue from water to water." MacKinnon's plan was unrealistic, but it foreshadowed an important debate surrounding the memorial's location.

MacKinnon also had a vision for what he wanted the memorial to look like: he believed that it should be a semi-circular colonnade with a bas-relief bronze panel of a prominent battle. On one side, he proposed a bronze statue of a figure representing Canada hanging a wreath of maple leaves on a cross; on the other side, he recommended another figure of Canada supported by Britannia holding a trident, placing a wreath of maples into the waves in memory of the Canadian sailors who died on the seas. Finally, MacKinnon proposed renaming King Square "Patriots' Place."[32] In many ways, MacKinnon's suggestion is an archetypical example of Canada's focus on victory and victorious imagery in response to the Great War. Canadians had no room for "gloomy commemorations" and preferred to commemorate a victorious, just war.[33]

The memorial committee met on the same day as MacKinnon's letter was published, and they decided to approach organizations in the city that were involved in war work for their input on what they wanted to see in the memorial.[34] The committee met again in mid-June to discuss the progress the various committee members had made. Hayes reported that they were trying to contact other cities to ask what they had arranged for memorials, despite the fact that they had already received sketches of the proposed memorial. Some suggested that they replicate the arch that stood at the head of King Street before the Great Fire of 1877; this was met with both enthusiasm and trepidation. Col. Sturdee felt that they needed to first choose a site for the memorial and then call for designs; L.P.D. Tilley disagreed, and thought they should proceed in the opposite direction, and made a motion to that effect, but no vote was taken. David Hipwell then moved that King Square be chosen as the site for the memorial and that they decide on a form later. Hipwell's motion passed, and Tilley amended his original motion, calling for a subcommittee to be struck to choose a precise location in King Square and to recommend a design and report back to the committee; that motion was seconded and carried unanimously.[35] L.P.D. Tilley was the son of Sir Samuel Tilley, a prominent Saint John politician and Father of Confederation and who had a statue already in King's Square.[36]

R.T. Hayes, former mayor of the city and a member of the Legislative Assembly, assumed the role of chairman of the committee; he appeared before city council in August to give a report and to solicit their support for the memorial. He reported that the memorial committee had decided emphatically against a utilitarian memorial and was in the process of deciding what site would be most appropriate. The mayor, Frank Potts, favoured a civic centre because the city was in desperate need of one, but Hayes responded that the memorial committee was not open to such a suggestion.[37] While not a major debate in Saint John, the discussion over whether to erect a utilitarian memorial rather than an aesthetic one was a major source of debate in many communities.[38] Other suggestions continued to emerge, until A. Lewis Watson of the Canadian branch of the Imperial War Graves Commission visited Saint John in September and proposed that they erect Sir Reginald Blomfield's Cross of Sacrifice, arguing that it was the "most suitable memorial" to the men of the Great War.[39]

At the end of September 1922, the War Memorial Committee met again, but they did not feel that they had sufficient attendance to make any decision about how to proceed with the two memorial designs that had been submitted to them. They did, however, allocate $500 to secure more designs. Miss Frances Alward, secretary of the War Memorial Committee, read the report from the subcommittee, which recommended that $20,000 ($280,000 in 2018 currency) be earmarked for the memorial and that it be either a Cross of Sacrifice, to cost $6,000, or a shaft with bronze figures, to cost about $20,000. The mayor and city council granted permission for the memorial to be erected at the head of King Street. Chairman Hayes acknowledged that many people wanted an arch, but he said that it would be too expensive. In terms of design, Judge R.E. Armstrong advocated for Watson's proposal of a Cross of Sacrifice. He felt that "a soldier in the uniform of the present day would be obsolete in years to come," whereas a cross would withstand the test of time. Canon Armstrong, F.B. Ellis, and Mrs. T.H. Carter disagreed, arguing that something more distinctive was necessary. The subcommittee would continue to deliberate, and was asked to report again at a better-attended meeting.[40] It is worth noting that Canon Armstrong, rector of the Loyalist Anglican church in the city, was not in favour of a monument with overt religious imagery.

Reports of the War Memorial Committee in the Saint John *Globe* went quiet until 19 December, when a photo with the headline "Design for St. John War Memorial" appeared. The caption revealed that the design competition had closed and that the winning entry had been selected. Toronto sculptor

Alfred Howell's design took the prize.[41] An article accompanied the photo and elaborated on the design. "The general scheme," the *Globe* reported, "is to symbolize the triumph of Victory through Sacrifice." The monument was to be a winged bronze figure holding a flag of victory and a cross. She would be standing on a globe, suggesting the "universal victory for which men died." The design featured a second mourning figure resting her hands on a sword. At the mourning figure's feet, there was a soldier's helmet on which was placed a spray of laurel leaves. The committee awarded Howell $300 for his design. Three other subcommittees were struck: one to take care of the finances, a second to arrange the contract and erection of the monument, and a third to obtain official permission from the city to place the memorial at the head of King Street. This would require removing the WCTU fountain that was in that space.[42]

The War Memorial Committee, either knowingly or unknowingly, had selected the design of one of Canada's most prolific sculptors, Alfred Howell. Howell was born in England and educated at various schools in Britain, including the Royal College of Art, where he received the Royal Exhibition Scholarship in 1909. In 1922, Howell was working as the director of art at the Central Technical School in Toronto. The monument in Saint John was one of Howell's finest works. The models for the sculptures, victory and sacrifice, would appear in the 1922 Ontario Society of Artists Exhibition in Toronto.[43] Howell's design for Saint John's war memorial, winged victory, was one of the most popular styles of war memorials in Canada.[44] The only other design mentioned in the *Globe* was by sculptor Hamilton McCarthy who designed the city's Boer War Memorial in Riverside Park.[45]

The committee and subcommittees were busy in the first months of the new year. In March 1923, an editorial ran in the Saint John *Globe* urging citizens to support the appeal, noting that the monument will be a "testimony to the gratitude and love of the present generation," and that it would also serve as a "beacon light of patriotism to recall the heroic acts which inspired its erection."[46] Various community organizations rallied around the war memorial movement and did what they could to raise funds. The War Memorial Committee launched a fundraising drive and the Local Council of Women—a women's civic organization—set up a tag day as a fundraiser. Twenty-one thousand tags were ordered emblazoned with "Lest We Forget."[47] Canvassers for the four-day-long drive went door-to-door with the goal of raising $20,000.[48]

However, the committee would be disappointed in the fundraiser. At the end of the drive and tag day, the War Memorial Committee had only raised half of their goal. There were a few suggestions made about how to proceed: L.P.D. Tilley and others supported another tag day and thought that they should appeal to the city for a grant. Despite raising only half of the desired amount, Howell was notified that his design had won the competition and that they were committed to the memorial and that he should begin work.[49]

Almost a year elapsed before anything of substance was published about the memorial in the *Globe*. On 31 May 1924, an editorial appeared noting that the work on the monument was "too long delayed," reminding the citizens of Saint John that the memorial was suitable "in every respect" and that it would be an "outward and visible sign of the city's appreciation of her soldier dead." The editors of the *Globe* noted that the War Memorial Committee had yet to raise all of the money required for the project.[50] At the 17 June meeting of Saint John City Council, a letter from the Saint John War Memorial Committee was read requesting that the fountain that currently stood at the head of King Street be removed to make room or the new memorial. This was met by opposition from the mayor and

Councillor Harding, despite their previous support.[51] This would be the first move in a contentious debate in Saint John that would last for over a year.

The War Memorial Committee wanted to place the monument at the head of King Street, which is in the centre of the city and close to many prominent buildings and institutions, including the city market, Trinity Anglican Church, and the Old Loyalist Burial Ground. At the 2 July 1924 meeting of council, Hayes suggested that the WCTU fountain be removed from the head of King Street, and that the memorial be set up between it and the bandstand in the centre of the square. However, Councillor Harding and the mayor were adamant that the fountain would remain in its current location. The *Globe* reported that Howell wanted the memorial to be placed on the grass and not the pathway.[52] However, documents obtained by researcher Lawrence Hayward from the New Brunswick Museum in the 1960s state that Howell wanted the memorial to be placed "directly at the head of King Street."[53] There were various other opinions expressed at the 2 July meeting, but no decision was taken; this, however, did not stop the mayor from expressing his staunch opposition to the proposed site.[54] Eventually, Mayor Frank Potts emerged as the most vocal supporter of the project. Mayor Potts believed that the war memorial should not replace the WCTU fountain, which he considered to have been given in "sacred trust" to the women of Saint John.[55]

The War Memorial Committee initially conceded to Mayor Potts. In August, they reported to city council that the location would be in the triangular grass across the street from the Admiral Beatty Hotel on the south side of the square. The mayor was pleased, and the committee further announced that Spoon Island granite would be used for the memorial and that a company out of St. George would be charged with cutting the stone.[56] The War Memorial Committee needed council's permission to erect the monument in King Square, which was granted. This allowed the committee to raise the balance of the money, and to proceed with building the memorial.[57]

On 17 March 1925, the War Memorial Committee announced that they would unveil the new memorial on either 18 May or 3 June, and that they had $2,000 left to raise.[58] On 27 March, an announcement ran in the *Globe* advising that a public meeting would be held to urge the War Memorial Committee to place the Soldiers' Memorial Monument at the head of King Street where they had originally planned. One citizen said that there were "no insurmountable difficulties" in erecting the memorial at that location.[59]

Support to have the monument erected at the head of King Street was increasing. The Rotary Club, the Gyro-Garo Club, and the Carleton War Veterans threw their support behind the movement and presented their cases at the public meeting. They argued that the public donations to the fund were on the assurance that the memorial would be placed at the head of King Street. They felt that city council should hear their point of view, and the memorial committee encouraged a wide attendance at the meeting.[60] The municipal chapter of the IODE, who started the campaign, also expressed their strong support for the head of King Street.[61]

Ironically, veterans were largely absent from this debate. They were not formally consulted about what they wanted for a memorial, and there was no veteran on the War Memorial Committee. This is consistent with the story of memorials across the province. In St. Stephen, for example, veterans were excluded from the memorialization process when it was determined that they wanted a useful building rather than an aesthetic monument.[62] Similarly, in Fredericton, veterans were also excluded from the commemoration of their fallen comrades. Those veterans in Fredericton who did contribute to

the public discussion concerning memorialization also favoured a building.[63] While a building was never seriously considered for Saint John's war memorial, the lack of veterans contributing to the discussion about the memorial is striking. Desmond Morton and Glenn Wright suggest that veterans of the First World War were not concerned as much with commemoration as ensuring that they received the civil re-establishment that they were promised.[64]

The only way for returned soldiers to have their voices heard was to write to the newspaper. The Byng Boys' Club of Saint John—a veterans' association named in honour of Lord Julian Byng, the commander of the Canadian Corps at Vimy—weighed in on the debate early in the process. The *Globe* published a report of their meeting that had been called specifically to ascertain the members' opinion about the site for the war memorial. They expressed unanimous support for the head of King Street, arguing that it is "the premier location in the city," and that the committee should "consider no other site" than the head of King. They called for the WCTU fountain to be removed and a semi-circular path be made around the memorial leading to the bandstand. They also felt that since city council had not yet made any contribution to the war memorial fund, that the city take responsibility for moving the fountain and creating the paths.[65] Alexander I. Machum, Secretary-Treasurer of the Saint John branch of the Great War Veterans' Association (GWVA), wrote to Miss Alward to express the branch's opinion that the head of King Street was the right location for the memorial because it would ensure that passersby would see the memorial and it was certain that the memorial would not be destroyed by urban development. The GWVA felt that the fountain could be easily relocated to the northern side of the square, which would not diminish its value.[66]

Machum's letter was published on 31 March 1925, which marked the apex of the war memorial debate in Saint John. The *Globe* was inundated with passionate letters about the placement of the war memorial. Robert Firth, for example, did not have a problem with the location of the memorial per se, but with the memorial itself. He believed that the figure at the bottom, which he saw as representing death, was inappropriate, especially if it was located at the top of King Street. Firth argued that a better location for the memorial would be the Old Loyalist Burial Ground, just east of the square. Firth argued that the memorial should be redesigned to make it joyous and triumphant and then, and only then, would the head of King Street be the appropriate place for it.[67] Another letter to the editor was signed by "Anti Humbug," who lambasted the mayor for having "horn-swoggled" the people into believing that the memorial committee had chosen the site. They argued that Mayor Potts had gotten his way but deflected any hard feelings from him onto the memorial committee. This, "Anti Humbug" stated, was "really too much."[68]

The 2 April 1925 meeting of city council was flooded with opinions about the memorial. Returned soldiers, the IODE, civic organizations, and wives, mothers, and sisters of the fallen gave their unanimous support for the head of King Street, which, according to the *Globe*, the artist called "one of the best [sites] in Canada." The mayor promised that council would reconsider its decision, but after representatives from various veterans' organizations spoke against the proposed location in front of the Admiral Beatty Hotel, Mayor Potts dug in his heels. He argued that the WCTU fountain had been given to the city in "sacred trust" and that the new soldiers' memorial would have to be placed elsewhere.[69]

L.P.D. Tilley disagreed wholeheartedly with the mayor, saying that there was no reasonable objection to the memorial being placed at the head of King Street. Tilley thought that the WCTU fountain should be moved and that "the people here, today, are not going to have the Memorial elsewhere than at the head of King." This was met with "loud, prolonged cheers" from those assembled

at the meeting. Mayor Potts was irate, resenting the attitude and the notion that "anyone should attempt to order the city to do anything." He challenged Tilley and said that he would match his contribution to the war memorial fund; Tilley responded that he had already made his contribution. This was a curious stance for L.P.D. Tilley to take: his father, Sir Samuel, was an ardent temperance advocate and a member of various temperance organizations.[70]

Frank Potts decided that for the fountain to be moved, he would need permission from the provincial WCTU.[71] The Saint John branch of the WCTU responded in the *Globe*. Hope Thompson, the president of the branch, wrote that the fountain belonged to them, not the provincial branch. Therefore, the city would require permission from the Saint John branch to move it, which had been given when the planning began in 1922.[72] Nevertheless, the mayor stood firm that they would need the permission of the provincial WCTU. The provincial president, Effie Bruce, sent a telegram to the city to say that she was not prepared to give her permission because she did not know all of the facts. After some discussion, and despite Hope Thompson's assertion that the city needed her permission, city council decided that they would need the permission from the provincial WCTU to remove the fountain.[73] A few days later, the *Globe* reported that Bruce had written to the city to give her permission, saying that the proposed soldiers' memorial was in memory of something "bigger and better" than the WCTU fountain and should therefore take precedence.[74]

In an interesting turn of events, the Saint John branch dug in their heels: at the meeting held on 14 April, all ten members voted against the removal of the fountain, thereby revoking their original permission. Thompson, who as president did not vote, said that she had no objection personally to the removal, but that she would carry out the wishes of her branch.[75] The same day that the meeting was reported in the *Globe*, 15 April, "A Loyalist Woman" took umbrage with the mayor's stance that the fountain was a "sacred trust." She argued that "the neglected condition of the fountain makes it perfectly obvious that…neither Mr. Potts nor any one else had looked upon it as a 'sacred trust.'" She also called the fountain ugly and insignificant. The "Loyalist Woman" believed that the best way to respect the fountain would be to repair it and move it to the Old Loyalist Burial Ground, "where many of those it commemorates sleep their last sleep; little dreaming that an evil day would come when there would arise any who would render scant honour to their soldier descendants."[76]

April 15, 1925 was an important day in the decision-making process. Mrs. David Hipwell—who was the president of the WTCU when the fountain was erected and whose husband was on the memorial committee before their relocation to New Westminster, BC—wrote to the War Memorial Committee through her daughter, Annie, to say that they supported the site at the head of King Street. "Father," Annie wrote, "was a member of the Memorial Committee…and was under the impression that [the] matter of [the] site was definitely settled." Annie reminded the War Memorial Committee that the WCTU, and Mrs. Hipwell herself, had given permission for the fountain to be removed.[77] This allowed the local branch to save face. Thompson wrote to the *Globe* the next day to say that because the WTCU had granted permission in the initial stages of the memorial, the decision that they had taken on 14 April was out of order. "Further discussion of this matter," Thompson wrote, "is, therefore, unnecessary."[78]

Meanwhile, the editor of the *Globe* implored the subcommittee to halt the project until a final decision was taken about the location. The *Globe* argued that the resolutions passed by the subscribers were morally binding, and that the memorial must be located at the head of King Street.[79] The following day, the paper printed an editorial criticizing the mayor for attempting to shift responsibility for the delay. The editorial quoted the mayor as saying that if the War Memorial Committee wanted to unveil

the memorial on 18 May, as they had planned, then "they should get busy and decide to erect it either in the plot opposite the Admiral Beatty Hotel or in the triangle to the north of the centre walk." According to the *Globe,* the mayor and council had failed the people of Saint John. "For that," wrote the editor, "the Mayor himself is responsible."[80]

The Saint John *Globe* was unimpressed: council alone was responsible for delaying the monument, and this was unacceptable. They ran a very short editorial on 18 April asking city council to take a vote at its next meeting and decide the question once and for all.[81] A week later, the *Globe* denounced council, noting that they still had not even discussed the proposal.[82] Citizens also began to show their frustration with city council. "Verb. Sap." wrote to the editor of the *Globe* asking, "'How long Oh Lord, how long' are the citizens of Saint John…to remain quiescent without an answer…to their earnest and respectful request that the war memorial be erected at the head of King Street—the 'finest site in Canada' for such purpose?" The writer thought that city council was in contempt and suggested that they be re-called.[83] The same day, "An Admirer of True Canadian Valor" asserted that the head of King Street was the ideal place for the monument, and that the hotel and the rest of the buildings around the square would dwarf it.[84]

On 27 April, City Hall finally acted. The councillors rescinded the motion to place the memorial in front of the Admiral Beatty Hotel, instead offering any *vacant* site in King Square. Mayor Potts wanted the issue to be put to rest; he was not going to entertain moving the fountain because twelve trees would have to be cut down to make way for the memorial. Interestingly, Howell had previously suggested that the memorial committee do just that.[85] The mayor argued that "a great many people oppose moving the drinking fountain." If so, they certainly did not voice their opinion in the *Globe*. There is not one letter to the editor in favour of keeping the fountain. Not only did the public disagree with Mayor Potts, several councillors were also against him. In the end, the mayor won out and his motion to offer any location except the fountain site passed.[86] But this decision did not satisfy the *Globe*. In an effort to shame city council, the *Globe* declared that "the people want the War Memorial placed on the site at the head of King street [sic], and the Council ought to take the needed action at once."[87]

The War Memorial Committee made a last-minute attempt to sway city council to abide by their decision. At a meeting held on Friday, 1 May, they passed a unanimous resolution to approach city council once more for permission to use their desired site. The motion provided that should council refuse their request, they would store the memorial for a year and try again. Any other site for the war memorial would be unacceptable.[88] Council did not respond, and two weeks later there was a meeting of the subscribers to the memorial. The report in the *Globe* states that the location of the memorial had been referred to them and that they had permission from city council to erect the memorial "anywhere on King Square not now occupied." They resolved to have the monument on King Square in line with the memorial to Sir Samuel Leonard Tilley. A second proposal was aired at that meeting to put the memorial at Market Square at the foot of King Street, but when put to a vote, that motion was defeated. This would have been unintentionally symbolic, as Market Square is considered the landing site of the Loyalists.[89] A third idea was put forward, which was that they store the memorial and wait until they would be allowed to have the memorial at the head of King Street. This proposal was a popular one but ended up being defeated on a vote of ten to nine.[90] With this meeting, the question was settled: the mayor had won, the fountain would stay, and the war memorial would have to be put elsewhere.

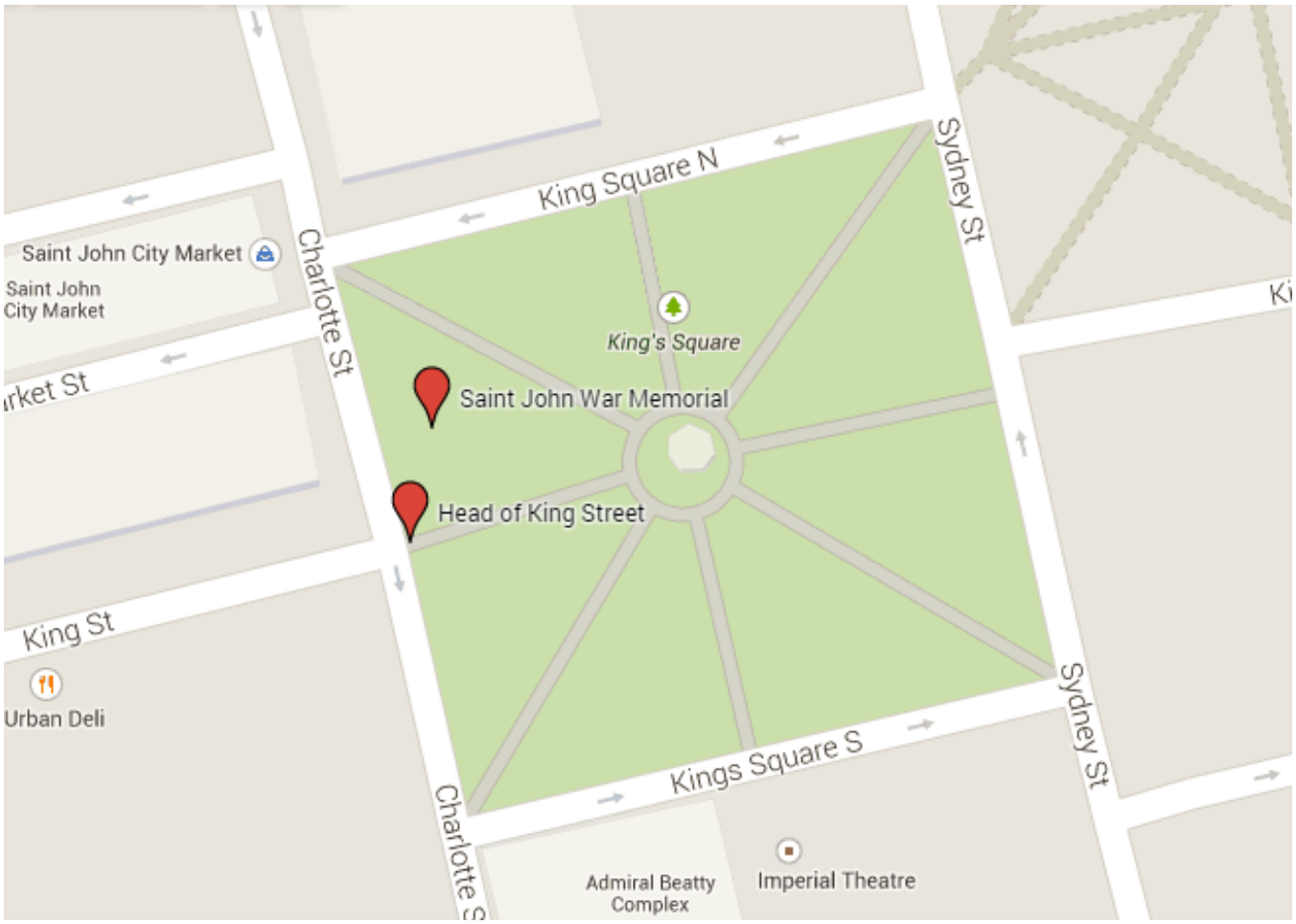

Figure 1. *Map of King Square denoting the head of King Street and the eventual placement of the Saint John memorial.*

Though the site had been decided, it did not prevent "A Woman" from writing to the *Globe* to express her displeasure. In a beautifully written, passionate letter, the woman asserted that the fact that the memorial committee had to choose a second-best location suggests that the city has not done its duty to the fallen. She argued that the fear of insufficient funds, untoward comments, ridicule, and indifference were the driving factors in their decision, and that it was an unfortunate compromise to have been made. She promises, however, to do her duty, to honour the new memorial and those in whose memory it was erected, but she wondered if, due to the controversy, there would always be a question in the minds of Saint Johners whether they had "kept the faith with those who died."[91]

Regardless of the reservations of the community, the memorial site had been chosen and it was time to begin work and to return attention to the purpose of the memorial.[92] The memorial committee had to act quickly in order to finalize the plans for the unveiling ceremony. They decided to set the date tentatively between 10 and 15 June and would wait until they received a report from the builders before they confirmed the date. This suggests that the statue itself had been in the city for some time, trapped in limbo until a site could be decided. The memorial committee decided to invite Major-General the Honourable A.H. Macdonell, CMG, DSO, to preside over the ceremony and to ask the Rev. Canon Gordon Lawrence, rector of Trinity Church, to give the dedication. It was fitting that General Macdonell

unveil the memorial, as he commanded the 5th Infantry Brigade of which the local regiment, the 26th New Brunswick Battalion was part.[93]

The date was eventually set for 10 June at 7:30 p.m.; the committee opting for an evening ceremony so that the greatest number of people could attend. The memorial committee received a suggestion that all the names of the men from Saint John who had died in the war be submitted so that a book of remembrance could be compiled and put in the city vaults. The committee thought that the GWVA would be the best organization to do this.[94] Despite the suggestion, there is no indication that this was ever done. The article also reported that there would be an honour guard and that the music for the ceremony would be provided by the Saint John Fusiliers' band. The memorial committee also announced that the total subscriptions to that date were $15,438.88. There was no effort made to engrave the names of the dead, which distinguished it from other memorials in the province: the war memorials in Moncton and Fredericton, for example, have honour rolls included.[95] Jonathan Vance suggests that honour rolls were communities' way of marking individual sacrifices; in omitting an honour roll, the Saint John war memorial emphasizes collective sacrifice.[96] The WCTU fountain also emphasized collective, rather than individual, values: temperance, loyalism, and femininity.

At the time of the unveiling, the memorial had been in place for a few days and had been "inspected" by hundreds of people. The traffic officer on duty on the night of the unveiling reflected that there was "an air of sadness in it all and much to think about."[97] The memorial was described by the designer, Alfred Howell, as symbolizing "the triumph of victory though sacrifice." He achieved this by sculpting the figure of Winged Victory holding a cross. She is standing on top of a globe, suggesting the universal nature of the victory which was won.[98]

Thousands of people lined the street and the square that Monday evening in June 1925. Crowds of people parked along the streets and watched the ceremony from inside their cars. A "long double line" of veterans, in their uniforms with medals shining, stood silent and straight in front of the memorial. "Scores of white surpliced choir boys" were on hand to provide musical leadership. A platform had been set up for the memorial committee and dignitaries. The lower statue, representing mourning, was covered by a Union Jack which General Macdonell had the honour of pulling off and dedicating the memorial to "the glory of those citizens of Saint John who served in the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, or as nursing sisters who lost their lives in the Great War." Macdonnell extolled the agony and sacrifices of the soldiers who died, and reminded the crowd that the soldiers had died for their liberty. The chairman of the memorial committee, R.T. Hayes, delivered a speech about the process that the city underwent to have the memorial erected. He noted that the committee still owed $2,800 on the monument, and took the opportunity to ask city council for assistance.

Figure 2. *Lewis Merrit Harrison. Unveiling of the Saint John War Memorial. 1989.83.183, New Brunswick Museum—Musée du Nouveau-Brunswick, www.nbm-mnb.ca.*

Once the memorial was unveiled, the band played "O Canada," the buglers called the Last Post, the piper sounded the Reveille, and the choirs sang "Abide with Me." Canon Lawrence prefaced his dedicatory prayer by saying that Saint John was a "blessed" place to live, thanks to the sacrifices of the men whom this memorial remembered. He implored the assembled crowd to make Saint John worthy of the men who had died during the Great War. The final speaker at the unveiling ceremony was Mayor Frank Potts, who referred to the location debate in his speech, saying that the city was founded by Loyalists, so "it was fitting that the sun which in rising would shine upon the city's memorial to its fallen, should shine in setting upon the memorial to the Loyalists." In essence, this was the mayor's attempt at a victory speech. He accepted the memorial on behalf of the city, though it had not yet been entrusted to them for caretaking. The ceremony closed with the singing of "God Save the King," after which the crowds began to disperse while organizations and individuals placed wreaths and mementos of remembrance at the base. Crowds remained until midnight, admiring the monument which was illuminated by electric lights from store windows on Charlotte Street at the western edge of the square.[99]

In the days that followed, many citizens of Saint John placed flowers at the base of the monument and scores of people visited it. The traffic officer on duty is quoted in the *Globe* as saying that there was an "air of sadness…and much to think about." Floral tributes and wreaths were placed by IODE branches, the Jewish community, the GWVA, the Catholic Women's League, and various other

civic organizations as well as individuals who had come to mourn a personal or collective loss.[100] On 24 June 1925, the city of Saint John formally took over the war memorial; it would be responsible for its care and maintenance "for all time."[101]

The erection of the war memorial required public support, both financially and ideologically. By donating to the war memorial fund, Saint John residents were able to pay tribute to their lost loved ones. For those who could not visit their relative's grave, war memorials become a de facto headstone, a focus for individual and collective grief. The war memorial in Saint John has become a feature of King Square. After its unveiling, the memorial provided a focal point for the city's grief and gave families a place to gather to mourn their loved ones who had been sacrificed in the Great War. The dates of the Second World War, Korean War, and Afghanistan were added to the memorial after those conflicts and, until recently, the memorial was the site of the municipal Remembrance Day ceremony. By 1962, the WCTU fountain had fallen into disrepair and was removed.[102]

Commemoration of the Great War was distinctly gendered. Men and manhood were prominent in the country's commemoration of the conflict. Many communities erected a statue of a soldier, exemplifying the purity of the young Canadian nation. Women often spearheaded commemorative efforts, and in some communities the WCTU was the driving force.[103] In the case of Saint John, the local IODE branch launched the campaign for the memorial, and although the organization for the monument was taken over by an assortment of citizens, women were still critical to the story because of the debate surrounding the WCTU and the fountain dedicated to Loyalist women. These eighteenth-century women were once the ideal of what it meant to be a good citizen, but by the 1920s, they were replaced by men who died in the Great War. While some in Saint John wanted to continue to remember Loyalist women, masculine values of honour, virility, and sacrifice became the new values worthy of commemoration. Soldiers died on the battlefields of the First World War for those values, and therefore the community had to make sure that they lived up to those values and sacrifices.

As with any memorial or public statue, the monument in Saint John tells its own story and it reveals a great deal about the city itself. As this paper has demonstrated, the intense debate surrounding the Saint John war memorial was its placement in conjunction with the temperance fountain. The city was proud to call itself the Loyalist city and that pride is evident in Mayor Potts's vehement defence of a monument that was erected in memory of Loyalist women. However, many citizens of the city did not agree. They believed that the cause of the Great War, and the sacrifices of the soldiers, was far more important than the contributions that the Loyalists had made to New Brunswick in the eighteenth century. Once the bastion of morality, Loyalists were replaced in the minds of many by the bravery of soldiers during the Great War. However, that change did not come easily, as not everyone was willing to consent to the erasure of the Loyalist memory and imprint on the city.

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Endnotes

[1] "Unveiling of the War Monument," *Globe*, 9 June 1925.

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[3] Shipley, Robert. *To Mark Our Place: A History of Canadian War Memorials*. NC Press Limited, 1987, pp. 125–6.

[4] Vance, Jonathan F. *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War*. University of British Colombia Press, 1997, pp. 203–5.

[5] Vance, p. 262.

[6] Winter, Jay. *Sites of Memory Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History*. University of Cambridge Press, 1995, p. 79.

[7] Vance, *Death So Noble*, p. 7; Winter, *Sites of Memory*, p. 79.

[8] McKay, Ian, and Jamie Swift. *The Vimy Trap: Or, How We Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Great War*. Between the Lines, 2017, pp. 62, 219–20.

[9] Littlewood, Thomas. *"We Caught the Torch You Threw": Great War Memorials in New Brunswick, 1918–1925*. University of New Brunswick, 2015, pp. 76–95.

[10] McKay, Ian. "The 1910s: The Stillborn Triumph of Progressive Reform." *The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation*, edited by E.R. Forbes and D.A. Muise, University of Toronto Press, 1993, p. 192.

[11] McKay, "The 1910s," p. 195.

[12] McKay, "The 1910s," p. 200.

[13] McKay, "The 1910s," p. 203.

[14] McKay, "The 1910s," pp. 208–10.

[15] Nerbas, "Revisiting the Politics of Maritime Rights," pp. 113–15. Unfortunately, there has been very little research done about Saint John's—or even New Brunswick's—role in the First World War. This is made clear by Roger Sarty and Doug Knight's *Saint John Fortifications, 1630–1956*. New Brunswick Military Heritage Project and Goose Lane Editions, 2003.

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[17] Frank, David. "The 1920s: Class and Region, Resistance and Accommodation." *The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation*, edited by E.R. Forbes and D.A. Muise, University of Toronto Press, 1993, p. 252.

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[20] Marquis, "Celebrating Champlain," p. 27.

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[26] Marquis, "Commemorating the Loyalists," p. 27.

[27] Mattingly, Carol. "Women's Temple, Women's Fountains: The Erasure of Public Memory." *American Studies*, vol. 49, no. 3/4, Fall/Winter 2008, p. 140.

[28] Marquis, "Commemorating the Loyalists," p. 27.

[29] Marquis, "Commemorating the Loyalists," p. 28.

[30] The *Saint John Globe*, true to its time, referred to women by their husband's name prefixed with "Mrs." The author has kept this naming convention not as an endorsement of it, but for historical accuracy.

[31] "Monument to our Fallen Heroes," *Globe*, 18 May 1922. Noticeably missing from the membership of the committee was a Great War veteran. The uniformed member of the committee, Col. Edward Thankful Sturdee, served in the 1885 North-West Rebellion.

[32] Ewyn Bruce MacKinnon, "Suggestions for a War Memorial," *Globe*, 22 May 1922.

[33] Vance, *Death So Noble*, pp. 17–20.

[34] "Naming Committee on War Memorial," *Globe*, 23 May 1922.

[35] "War Memorial on King Square," *Globe*, 13 June 1922. The subcommittee was as follows: Mrs. Hugh Mackay, Mrs. Herber Vroom, Mrs. J. Boyle Travers, David Hipwell, Mrs. D.P. Chisholm, L.P.D. Tilley, Dr. G.B. Peat, Charles Owens, the Rev. Canon R.A. Armstrong, Col. E.T. Sturdee, R.T. Hayes, Commissioner Bullock, Mrs. E. Atherton Smith, and Mrs. Alfred Morrisey. Miss Frances Alward was appointed secretary.

[36] "Judge J.L. Tilley, Former Premier of NB, Dies," *Ottawa Citizen*, 26 December 1947.

[37] "Memorial to St John Soldiers," *Globe*, 7 August 1922.

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[41] "Design for St. John War Memorial," *Globe*, 19 December 1922.

[42] "The St. John War Memorial Design," *Globe*, 19 December 1922.

[43] Alfred Howell documents, R8270 Volume 3, File 11, Lawrence Hayward Collection, Library and Archives Canada (hereafter LAC), Ottawa.

[44] Vance, *Death So Noble*, pp. 17–20.

[45] Shipley, *To Mark Our Place*, p. 129.

[46] "Our War Memorial," *Globe*, 8 March 1923.

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[48] "The Memorial to Our Heroic Dead," *Globe*, 9 March 1923.

[49] "War Memorial Fund $10,117.90," *Globe*, 16 May 1923.

[50] "The War Memorial," *Globe*, 31 May 1924.

[51] "Site for the War Memorial," *Globe*, 18 June 1924.

[52] "War Memorial Site Considered," *Globe*, 3 July 1924.

[53] Hayward Collection, LAC. Despite various attempts, I was unable to obtain documentation relating to the Saint John memorial in the New Brunswick Museum. Archivists at the NBM have no record of what material Hayward consulted. Vance, in *Death So Noble*, also cites documents from the NBM concerning

the Saint John memorial (p. 207). The archivists at the NBM have no textual files relating to the Saint John memorial or records of Vance's visit.

[54] "War Memorial Site Considered," *Globe*, 3 July 1924.

[55] "More Delay Takes Place in War Memorial Site Matter," *Globe*, 6 April 1925.

[56] "Spoon Island Granite to Be Used," *Globe*, 25 August 1924.

[57] "Morning Session of Common Council," *Globe*, 26 August 1924

[58] "To Be Unveiled On May 18 or June 3," *Globe*, 17 March 1925.

[59] "Head of King Street for the Monument," *Globe*, 27 March 1925

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[61] "All in Favour of King Street Site," *Globe*, 31 March 1925.

[62] "Memorial Project Advacend [*sic*] A Stage," *St. Croix Courier* (St. Stephen, NB), 11 March 1920.

[63] "To Consider War Memorial," *Daily Gleaner* (Fredericton, NB), 14 February 1920.

[64] Morton, Desmond, and Glenn Wright. *Winning the Second Battle: Canadian Veterans and Their Return to Civilian Life, 1915–1930*. University of Toronto Press, 1987, pp. 121–2.

[65] "No Other Site than Head of King St.," *Globe*, 30 March 1925.

[66] Alexander I. Machum, "War Memorial Site," *Globe*, 31 March 1925.

[67] Rowland Firth, Letter to the Editor, *Globe*, 31 March 1925.

[68] Letter to the Editor, *Globe*, 31 March 1925.

[69] "More Delay Takes Place in War Memorial Site Matter," *Globe*, 6 April 1925.

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[72] Hope Thompson, "War Memorial Monument," *Globe*, 3 April 1925.

[73] "More Delay Takes Place in War Memorial Site Matter," *Globe*, 6 April 1925.

[74] "War Memorial Site Question," *Globe*, 11 April 1925.

[75] "Against Removal of Fountain," *Globe,"* 15 April 1925.

[76] A Loyalist Woman, "War Memorial Site," *Globe*, 15 April 1925.

[77] "Mrs. David Hipwell Endorses Project," *Globe*, 15 April 1925. It is worth noting that Mr. and Mrs. David Hipwell's son, John, was killed in the Great War and his name appears on a monument in Woodstock, New Brunswick.

[78] "W.C.T.U. Decision Means Nothing," *Globe*, 16 April 1925.

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[80] Editorial, "The Responsibility," *Globe*, 17 April 1925.

[81] Editorial, *Globe*, 18 April 1925.

[82] Editorial, *Globe*, 22 April 1925.

[83] Verb. Sap., "War Memorial Site," *Globe*, 25 April 1925.

[84] Letter to the Editor, *Globe*, 25 April 1925.

[85] Hayward Collection, LAC.

[86] "Making Progress in the War Memorial Site Matter," *Globe*, 27 April 1925.

[87] Editorial, *Globe*, 28 April 1925.

[88] "Head of King St. for Memorial Site," *Globe*, 2 May 1925.

[89] Marquis, "Celebrating Champlain," p. 33.

[90] "War Memorial Site Question," *Globe*, 13 May 1925.

[91] "War Memorial Site," Letter to the Editor, *Globe*, 14 May 1925.

[92] T.H. Sommerville, Letter to the Editor, *Globe*, 14 May 1925.

[93] "Unveiling of the War Memorial," *Globe*, 22 May 1925.

[94] "War Memorial Unveiling June 10," *Globe*, 2 June 1925.

[95] Littlewood, *"We Caught the Torch You Threw."*

[96] Vance, *Death So Noble*, p. 118.

[97] "Wreaths Placed on War Memorial," *Globe*, 11 June 1925.

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[101] "War Memorial Formally Taken Over by City Today," *Globe*, 24 June 1925.

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