

IN DEFENCE OF LIBERTY: 17TH CENTURY ENGLAND AND 19TH CENTURY MARITIME POLITICAL CULTURE

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I intend to address you with the boldness of a Free Born British Subject.¹

The history of every country in Europe commences in the reign of fable.²

Membership, the saying goes, has its privileges. For a great many people in 19th century New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, membership in the British Empire brought an important privilege: access to an epic national history stretching back to the Roman Empire. The Maritime British American political class, racked by religious, ethnic, regional discord and lacking disciplined political parties and a common economic and communications system, naturally looked to Britain for historical guidance. Aside from the Loyalists and the Acadians, there was scant local material for the manufacture of tradition. Awareness was not lacking of ancient history nor of the history of continental Europe and the United States, but the touchstone in political language was England. Part of the "British Diaspora" was the transmission of English history into colonial political culture.³ This paper explores this influence in the Maritimes from the 1820s until Confederation.

During this period, the civil and religious struggles of 17th century England, although distorted by an idealized philosophy of history and the demands of partisanship, were very much alive in the colonial mind. This attachment to the 1600s was reinforced by political debate, the press, Protestant religion, British immigration, the growth of education and literacy, and voluntary organizations and the flowering of British Victorian historiography. The historical symbols discussed below were not the exclusive property of the political class: merchants, lawyers, journalists and prosperous farmers and artisans. That class, however, was the most vocal and important. The degree to which political rhetoric reflected popular understanding and uses of history must remain somewhat impressionistic. Nonetheless, a number of speculations can be made.

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¹"Selden" to Lord Falkland, *Novascotian*, Halifax, 29 January 1843.

²T. C. Halliburton, *History of Nova Scotia*, (Halifax, 1829).

³H. Tinker, "The British Diaspora" *The Diaspora of the British*, unpublished seminar papers, University of London Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 1982, p. 1.

Political culture is a flexible concept embracing the variety of a community's or nation's orientations towards civil authority. Canadian historians, wary of models, have been reticent about defining it.⁴ Two important variables in political culture are expressive symbols and national history. The study of political symbols and their manipulation can enrich our knowledge not only of popular culture, but also of political and intellectual history.⁵ In the case of a decentralized state such as 19th century British North America, it would be mischievous to argue for the existence of a unifying political culture. Furthermore, there is danger in assuming that official views of the political system were accepted by the masses. Political culture was largely polite culture. Yet in the interplay of competing ideologies and interests, a core of beliefs can crystallize. Public attitudes towards the law, for example, were often based less on reality than on an idealization of national character. National history formed a consensus, but it also provided a justification for political action such as resistance to authority, or even revolution, particularly when couched in terms of "custom." The tradition of appealing to antiquity to justify a political or religious position linked British North America to a wider European tradition. In that tradition, a tension in the rhetoric and rituals of politics revealed discrepancies between elite and popular notions of the past and its uses.⁶

The Maritimes, as with Canada as a whole, have not been rich in treatises on political theory. Pamphlet literature, utilized so effectively by Bernard Bailyn in *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, is limited and lacks the intellectual focus of the 18th century American variety.⁷ Another source for the study of political thought, the correspondence of leading politicians, is heavily used in Canadian political historiography, particularly biography. That correspondence tends to be short on explicit ideology or political theory and long on party and

⁴G. Stewart, *The Origins of Canadian Politics: A Comparative Approach*, (Vancouver, 1986) discusses political culture, but offers no definition.

⁵G. Almond and S. Verba, eds., *The Civic Culture Revisited*, (Toronto, 1980), p. 27; L. Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class in the French Revolution*, (Los Angeles, 1984); P. Mellini and R. T. Matthews, "John Bull's Family Arises" *History Today*, XXXVII (May 1987), pp. 17-23; L. Kramer, "Intellectual History and Reality: The Search for Connections" *Historical Reflections*, XIII (Summer/Fall 1986), pp. 535-538; M. J. Murphy, "Signs, Acts and Objects" *Social Science History*, II, 2 (Summer 1987), pp. 211-232.

⁶J. H. Elliot, "Revolution and Continuity in Early Modern Europe" *Past and Present*, XLII (February 1968), pp. 35-36; H. J. Berman, *Law and Revolution: The Formation of a Western Legal Tradition*, (Cambridge, 1983), p. 15; J. G. A. Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law: A Study in English Historical Thought in the 17th Century: A Revision with a Retrospect*, (New York, 1987); E. P. Thompson, "Custom(s) and Culture(s)" unpublished paper, 1988; G. Marquis, "Doing Justice to 'British Justice': Law, Ideology and Canadian Historiography" B. Wright and W. Pue, eds., *Canadian Perspectives on Law and Society: Issues in Legal History*, (Ottawa, 1988), pp. 43-69.

⁷B. Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, (Cambridge, 1967). The anthology *Canadian Political Thought*, edited by H.D. Forbes (Toronto, 1985) contains a lone Maritime selection – an extract from Joseph Howe's 1866 pamphlet on the Empire.

constituency matters.⁸ The emphasis on patronage distribution has led more than one commentator to minimize the intellectual context of political life. Echoing a fifty-year-old article by J.B. Brebner, Gordon Stewart's study of 19th century Canadian politics identifies patronage as the engine of political culture.⁹ A detailed reading of the Macdonald and Laurier papers could produce no other conclusion. Have political historians been misled? In describing affairs of state, 19th century British North American politicians were decidedly laconic when it came to theorizing, as the Confederation debates and the *British North America Act* remind us. Politics was about power, and patronage was a key mechanism of legitimation. The emphasis was on utilitarian issues and, in the frequent clash of personality, on bitter partisan invective.¹⁰ Donald Swainson ascribed this "pragmatic" political heritage to the weakness of powerful national myths on par with those of the United States or France.¹¹

Despite the important contribution of W.S. MacNutt, much work remains to be done on the political history of the 19th century Maritimes. If the 1840s-1860s were the region's Golden Age, the last twenty years are its Golden Age of social and economic historiography. Scholars of the region settled down in the 1970s to explore social, economic and religious themes, arguing that the older political history downplayed socio-economic structure and context. Economic and business issues are of particular interest because of the region's poor economic health in the post-Confederation period. As a result, few monographs on 19th century political history have appeared in the last decade.¹² There are signs of innovative

⁸For example, see J.S.D. Thompson Papers: MG26 D, Public Archives of Canada.

⁹Brebner, "Patronage and Parliamentary Government" *Canadian Historical Association Annual Report*, 1938, pp. 22-30; *supra*, note 4, pp. 30-31.

¹⁰G. Smith, *Canada and the Canada Question (1891)*, (Toronto, 1973), ch. 8; E. Porritt, *Sixty Years of Protection in Canada*, (London, 1908), p. 458; W.L. Morton, "Victorian Canada" Morton, ed., *The Shield of Achilles: Aspects of Canada in the Victorian Age*, (Toronto, 1968), p. 317; C. Armstrong, *The Politics of Federalism: Ontario's Relations with the Federal Government, 1867-1942*, (Toronto, 1981), p. 5; S. Brooks, ed., *Political Thought in Canada*, (Toronto, 1984), pp. 3-10.

¹¹Swainson's paper, "Corruption, Irresponsibility and Elections in 19th Century Canada" argues that Canada was "highly political" despite a limited electorate. There is also the influential and controversial Ouellet thesis of French Canadian nationalism, which argues that Lower Canadian politicians and journalists exploited nationalist ideology to advance their own power and status. See *Lower Canada 1791-1840: Social Change and Nationalism*, (Toronto, 1980).

¹²Exceptions include K. Pryke, *Nova Scotia and Confederation 1864-1874*, (Toronto, 1979); J.M. Beck, *Joseph Howe: Volume I: Conservative Reformer, 1804-1848*, (Montreal and Kingston, 1982); *Joseph Howe: Volume II: The Briton Becomes Canadian, 1848-1873*, (Montreal and Kingston, 1983); P.B. Waite, *The Man from Halifax: Sir John Thompson, Prime Minister*, (Toronto, 1985); and P.A. Buckner, *Transition to Responsible Government: British Policy in British North America 1815-1850*, (Westport, 1985). For an indication of the historiography consult P.A. Buckner, " 'Limited Identities' and Canadian Historical Scholarship: An Atlantic Provinces Perspective," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, XXXIII, 142 (Spring/Summer 1988), pp. 178-198.

work on the development of the state, electoral activity and party formation, but, for the most part, 19th century political history takes a back seat to social history.¹³ This is an unfortunate development, because Maritime British Americans took their politics seriously and, to borrow the words of J.M.S. Careless, did not dismiss contemporary debates such as responsible government as “bourgeois constitutional trivia.”¹⁴ Politics defines local power relationships and was an intensely social activity, providing a channel for community, ethnic, religious and proto-class aspirations. Politics, not demography, the work place, agricultural practices or the relations of the sexes, provided the fundamental issues of colonial society.

Historians of early and mid-Victorian Maritime political life, concerned about group conflict and accommodation, expediency and the scramble for patronage, have underestimated the role of political ideology or theory. Religious principles – and animosities – are another matter. The importance of religious pluralism, a force which fragmented institutional and political life, must be considered.¹⁵ Yet secular issues such as responsible government, Crown lands, commercial policy, railway development, temperance, the rights of tenant farmers and Confederation did mobilize opinion. Historians, however, tend to treat political rhetoric in a cynical fashion. Creighton, in describing anti-Confederation Albert J. Smith (“A hardened professional in the game of bluffing, abuse and demagoguery that normally made up New Brunswick politics”)¹⁶ was not far in spirit from more moderate observers such as P.B. Waite, W.L. Morton, William Baker and MacNutt. MacNutt’s sophisticated portrayal of “popular tribunes,” men of wealth and influence who spoke on behalf of “the people,” furthered their political and business interests and delivered patronage to their supporters, remains largely intact.¹⁷ According to Baker, for example, following the achievement of responsible government, the New Brunswick electorate cared little

¹³G. Campbell, “‘Smashers’ and ‘Rummies’: Voters and the Rise of Parties in Charlotte County, New Brunswick, 1846-1857” *Canadian Historical Association Historical Papers: Communications historique*, (1986), pp. 86-116; R. Langhout, “Developing Nova Scotia: Railways and Public Accounts, 1849-1867” *Acadiensis*, XIV, 2 (Spring 1985), pp. 3-28. For a social history approach to political history, see G. Campbell, “Disenfranchised but not Quiescent: Women Petitioners in New Brunswick in the mid-19th Century” *Acadiensis*, XVIII, 2 (Spring 1989), pp. 27-54.

¹⁴“Robert Baldwin” Careless, ed., *The Pre-Confederation Premiers: Ontario Government Leaders 1841-1867*, (Toronto, 1980), p. 89.

¹⁵Such issues have been explored by Scott. See “‘Mickeyes and Demons’ vs. ‘Bigots and Boobies’: The Woodstock Riot of 1847” *Acadiensis*, XXI, 1 (Autumn 1991), pp. 110-131; and B.A. Wood, “The Significance of Evangelical Presbyterian Politics in the Construction of State Schooling: A Case Study of the Pictou District, 1817-1866” *Acadiensis*, XX, 2 (Spring 1991), pp. 62-85.

¹⁶Creighton, *The Road to Confederation*, (Toronto, 1964), p. 356.

¹⁷MacNutt, *New Brunswick: A History: 1784-1867*, (Toronto, 1963); *The Atlantic Provinces: The Emergence of Colonial Society 1712-1857*, (Toronto, 1965).

for "intelligent debate on the merits of various philosophical approaches" to government.¹⁸ In *The Life and Times of Confederation*, Waite stressed the intensity of political life in the three colonies, where party discipline was less important than local patriotism and the assemblyman's obligations to his county.¹⁹

In contrast to New Brunswick, where candidates and electors adapted ungracefully to the concept of party, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island experienced movements that approximated parties. Yet elections, such as the crucial victory of the Nova Scotia Reformers in 1847, were seldom dominated by over-arching theoretical debates and hinged instead on personality, "interest," and the management of voters. Political philosophy proved vulnerable to the defection of popular leaders, shifting coalitions, and the exigencies of administration. The Liberals, by championing land reform and responsible government, presented the most articulate political philosophy in 1840s P.E.I. The Island was, after all, an agricultural colony where the majority of farmers were tenants. As Ian Ross Robertson has illustrated, Liberal support, based on both class and ideology, was undermined by skilful Conservative manipulation of sectarian issues.²⁰ According to MacNutt, the rule of the Smashers, the dynamic Reformers who took New Brunswick into the Confederation era, "moved from one gentle expediency to another." One of the classic reforms of the era, the increase of the electorate through manhood suffrage, has been portrayed not as the articulation of political theory, but as a cynical strategy for mobilizing electoral support.²¹

The relative weakness of political theory in Maritime political life was not lost upon contemporaries. Charlotte County lawyer, George S. Hill, decriing the

¹⁸Baker, *Timothy Waren Anglin, 1822-96: Irish Catholic Canadian*, (Toronto, 1977), p. 45. Morton viewed mid-century Nova Scotia politics in terms of sectarian rivalries, "local works" and corrupt but popular electoral practices. See Morton, *The Critical Years: The Union of British North America, 1857-1873*, (Toronto, 1964), p. 46. Recently Gail Campbell has argued that temperance served as a catalyst in the beginnings of voting for slates of candidates rather than individuals in one mid-century New Brunswick county. See, Campbell, "'Smashers and Rummies'" *supra*, note 13.

¹⁹Waite, *The Life and Times of Confederation: Politics, Newspapers and the Union of British North America, 1864-1867*, (Toronto, 1962), ch. 1. See also, W.M. Whitelaw, *The Maritimes and Canada Before Confederation*, (Toronto, 1934), p. 17. Kenneth Pryke, discussing the looseness of Nova Scotia party ties, the unimportance of an articulated party platform, and the electors' lack of control over candidates, identified the county élites as the brokers of political power in the 1860s. See Pryke, "Nova Scotia and Confederation, 1864-1870" Ph.D. thesis, Duke University, 1962, ch. 4.

²⁰Beck, *Joseph Howe: Volume I*, *supra*, note 12, ch. 18; Robertson, "Party Politics and Religious Controversialism in Prince Edward Island from 1860 to 1863" *Acadiensis*, VII, 2 (Spring 1978), pp. 29-59; "Political Realignment in Pre-Confederation Prince Edward Island, 1863-1870" *Acadiensis*, XV, 1 (Autumn 1985), pp. 35-58; "Reform, Literacy and the Lease: The Prince Edward Island Free Education Act of 1852" *Acadiensis*, XX, 1 (Autumn 1990), pp. 52-71.

²¹MacNutt, *New Brunswick*, *supra*, note 17, p. 363; J. Garner, *The Franchise and Politics in British North America, 1755-1867*, (Toronto, 1969), p. 33.

“prostrated franchise” of New Brunswick, blamed ignorance and the constituency-centred politics of the pre-responsible government period:

The Russians under Peter the Great thought the privilege of wearing long beards the essence of liberty – our people judge it to consist in the right of sending members to the Fredericton legislature to get their by-road and school money – all beyond is a *terra incognita*, which they have no curiosity to explore.²²

In 1834 the *Novascotian* argued that a closely contested election in a town or county required not political ideas but the judicious expenditure of between £100 and £500. Two years later, the same journal looked with favour upon a departure from standard electioneering tactics, which had usually amounted to little more than “a vague promise to behave well if elected.” Rather than merely stressing personal claims to office and expounding on such statesmanlike topics as roads, wharves and bridges, candidates were now stating their principles.²³ The demoralization of political life, however, was a constant complaint in the press of the period. Despite the existence of rough party identities of Liberal and Tory after the initiation and consolidation of responsible government at mid-century, scepticism remained as to the importance of political theories. In 1853, a correspondent to the *Chatham Gleaner* suggested that the average freeholder did not consult “books, philosophy, science or even a newspaper” for political guidance; his soul was in the care of the clergy and his liberty in the hands of designing politicians.²⁴ In light of contemporary observations and the assumptions of historians, can a case be made for a political culture devoid of intellectual content or political theory? The clue to this question lies not in the practical workings of government, but in political culture, the language and symbols of politics.²⁵

Newspapers, despite their limitations, are the starting point for the study of

²²George Hill Papers, 3/26, Draft speech (n.d.): MC 1001, Provincial Archives of New Brunswick. A similar complaint is found in the letters of Paul Clifford on New Brunswick politics published in the *Novascotian*, Halifax, 9 and 29 May 1843.

²³*Novascotian*, Halifax, 16 January 1834; 4 August 1836. At *supra*, note 4, pp. 87-89, Stewart discounts the role of patronage in the pre-Confederation Maritimes, citing as evidence Howe’s distaste for this aspect of politics. Yet Howe, in support of the Tory ministry of Lord Falkland in 1842, boasted that the key administrative duty of the government was “dispensing the patronage of the County.” He described the consultation of assemblymen on the appointment of justices of the peace as “a substantial concession from the Crown to the People.” See J. Howe, *Lord Falkland’s Government*, (Halifax, 1842), pp. 2-7. It can be argued that before the introduction of municipal institutions, local magistrates were equally, or possibly more important than assemblymen to ordinary Maritimers.

²⁴*Chatham Gleaner*, 31 January 1853. A cynical contemporary tale of Maritime politics is examined in G. Marquis, “Anti-Lawyer Sentiment in Mid-Victorian New Brunswick” (1987) 36 U.N.B. LJ 163.

²⁵For the utility of the study of language see L.G. Harvey and M. Olsen, “French Revolutionary Forms in French-Canadian Political Language, 1805-35” *Canadian Historical Review*, LXVIII (1987), pp. 374-376.

Maritime political culture. According to Paul Rutherford, in the decades following Confederation, few Canadian homes were without one or more newspapers.²⁶ In the pre-Confederation Maritimes, newspaper influence was still growing. The relatively underdeveloped market was in the rural districts. In 1848 the Saint John *Loyalist and Protestant Vindicator*, discussing the political awareness of the New Brunswick electorate, identified the press as the key to civic virtue. Editor Thomas Hill estimated that the colony's twenty journals reached one in every six families but lamented that the nine-tenths of the country people did without. The result was "an ignorant constituency, who would lick the dust for a road grant."²⁷ The Acadians were a case in point; even for literate individuals there was no French-language journal until 1867. Nonetheless, as in 19th century Quebec, newspapers, because of rural oral culture, exerted an influence beyond their numerical circulation and the levels of literacy.²⁸ By the 1860s the press was an important cultural and political force. Halifax, having early claimed cultural and political hegemony over the outports and interior, was home to eleven journals in 1865. Saint John's attempt, through its several newspapers, to act as arbiter of taste for New Brunswick was challenged by journals in St. Stephen, St. Andrews, Fredericton, Chatham, Newcastle and Sackville. In the 1860s Charlottetown was positively overrun with newspapermen.²⁹

For all its populism and parochialism, the press was largely the instrument of factions of the political élite who struggled for the hearts, votes and, sometimes, the minds of readers. The *Novascotian* modestly claimed that the press had evolved into an informal part of the constitution, "a more permanent guarantee to the liberty of subject than are Magna Carta, the Bill of Rights, trial by Jury and the Habeas Corpus Act all combined." For John C. Lorimer, editor of the St. Stephen *Provincial Patriot*, the press was "a lever capable of hurling tyranny and

²⁶P. Rutherford, *A Victorian Authority: The Daily Press in Late-19th Century Canada*, (Toronto, 1982), pp. 3-4.

²⁷*Loyalist and Protestant Vindicator*, Saint John, 6 January 1848.

²⁸A.I. Silver, *The French-Canadian Idea of Confederation 1864-1900*, (Toronto, 1982), ch. 1. If the 1871 census can be relied upon, the majority of adult Nova Scotians and New Brunswickers were able to read. See Canada, *Census*, 1871, II, Tables VII and X. Margaret Conrad, on the basis of a series of diaries of Maritime women, has suggested that Victorian women of non-British origin lived in a largely oral culture. See *Recording Angels: The Private Chronicles of Women from the Maritime Provinces of Canada 1750-1950*, (Ottawa, 1982). Given the low levels of Acadian literacy, the 1871 literacy rates for anglophones in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia were indeed high. See D. Alexander, "Literacy and Economic Development in 19th Century Newfoundland" *Acadiensis*, X, 1 (Autumn 1980), pp. 10-11.

²⁹Waite, *supra*, note 19, p. 13. For a late 19th century assessment of the importance of the press, see J. G. Bourinot, *The Intellectual Development of the Canadian People: An Historical Overview*, (Toronto, 1881), ch. 3.

error into the vortex of destruction.”³⁰ As a voice of public opinion, it was narrow, but as a forum for the colonial “political nation” it was indispensable.³¹ Editors published political tracts (often of questionable originality or scholarship), official correspondence, endless letters, petitions, notices to the electors, editorials, poems, satire on local issues and personalities as well as reports of speeches, public meetings, lectures, elections and legislative proceedings. The inclusion of annual indices by some editors suggests that journals, in certain circles, were regarded as literature. The writings of Agricola and T.C. Haliburton, for example, appeared initially in the Halifax press.³² Reprints from scores of British and American periodicals and innumerable monographs were further political offerings. Thus, readers in 1840s Prince Edward Island, even when navigation was suspended during the winter months, were treated to excerpts from the latest edition of the *Edinburgh Review* and *Blackwood’s Magazine* and reviews of important new books such as Thomas Babbington Macaulay’s *History of England*. Finally, there were the speeches and writings of British and American statesmen, ranging from Lord Brougham to Abraham Lincoln, reproduced largely for public interest, but partly for local political considerations.³³

Like their counterparts in the pre-Revolutionary American press and colonial assemblies, members of the Maritime political class drew on a variety of intellectual traditions to develop and legitimate their beliefs. Law and history were the most important sources of metaphor and example.³⁴ Contemporary public

³⁰*Novascotian*, Halifax, 3 July 1843; *Provincial Patriot*, Saint Stephen, 27 May 1853. See also, *Loyalist*, Saint John, 24 November 1842; *Morning Chronicle*, Halifax, 18 March 1845. The motto of E. Whelan’s Charlottetown *Examiner* was taken from Milton’s “Euripedes”: “’Tis True Liberty when Free-born Men – Having to Advise the Public – May Speak Freely.”

³¹Public opinion as it was understood by governors and Colonial Office officials was not popular opinion, but that of “the majority of the intelligent members of the community.” See Earl Grey to Lt. Gov. Sir John Harvey, 3 November 1846, W. P. M. Kennedy, ed., *Documents of the Canadian Constitution 1759-1915*, (Toronto, 1918), p. 571.

³²D. C. Harvey, “The Intellectual Awakening of Nova Scotia” *Dalhousie Review*, XIII (April 1933), pp. 1-22; “History and Its Uses in Pre-Confederation Nova Scotia” *Canadian Historical Association Annual Report*, 1938, p. 10; G. P. de T. Glazebrook, *A History of the Canadian Political Thought*, (Toronto, 1966), p. 72; MacNutt, *The Atlantic Provinces*, *supra*, note 17, pp. 194-195.

³³On 25 December 1852, the Halifax *Presbyterian Witness and Evangelical Advocate* discussed the *de rigueur* contemporary British “reviews”: the *Edinburgh Review*, *Blackwood’s Magazine*, the *London Review Quarterly*, the *Westminster Review* and the *North British Review*. These magazines, standard fare for Mechanics’ Institutes, were available in American reprint editions.

³⁴R. Morris, *Studies in the History of American Law*, (New York, 1964), pp. 67-68; Bailyn, *supra*, note 7. On the question of political representation in the 18th century American colonies, Jack P. Greene has written: “Imperial authorities maintained that the lower houses existed only through the consent of the Crown, but the houses insisted that an elected assembly was a fundamental right of a colony arising out of an Englishman’s privileges and that they did not owe their existence merely to the King’s pleasure.” See *The Quest for Power: The Lower Houses of Assembly in the Southern Royal Colonies 1687-1776*, (Chapel Hill, 1963), p. 15.

questions were distilled and clarified through an understanding of history. The press and the proceedings of the legislative councils and assemblies revealed an infatuation, particularly by lawyers, with classical quotations and allusions. The Bible, the political document of the Reformation, was another source of wisdom and phraseology. The plain language of politics, however, came from England. Its history, real and mythical, provided a collection of folk tales and folk heroes accessible to the unsophisticated. The Loyalists and even their revolutionary opponents were admired precisely because of their Englishness.³⁵ The fundamental national events of the pre-Confederation Maritime British Americans, therefore, were not the conquest of Acadia, the establishment of Crown colony rule or the arrival of the Loyalist refugees, but the Battle of Hastings, the Magna Carta, and Henry Tudor's break with Rome. A powerful tendency to ancestor worship, reinforced by politicians and the press, was not the preserve of important public figures such as Joseph Howe, but a natural cultural manifestation of colonies in search of self-definition. As was the case in contemporary England, "the mode of political discourse was still strongly marked by historical allusion and by the sense of historic party loyalties."³⁶

Rather than seeing themselves as residents of an Imperial backwater, Maritime British Americans took solace in a thousand-year history that was elevated to a form of civil religion.³⁷ Three major national crisis periods held the attention of 19th century Britons on both sides of the Atlantic: the Norman Conquest; the Reformation; and the political upheavals of the 17th century. The presumed antiquity of English legal and political institutions, which produced in the 17th century a school of thought known as the Ancient Constitution, lent prestige to local political questions.³⁸ Both proponents and opponents of change found refuge in the past. The most parochial of disputes could be elevated in tone and significance by reference to the Saxon Heptarchy, King Alfred, or "the patriots of

³⁵The Americans were also feared because of their Englishness. The memory of the Loyalists was invoked by both Conservatives and Reformers, reflecting the ambiguity of the Loyalist legacy. On this point, see D.G. Bell, *Early Loyalist Saint John: The Origin of New Brunswick Politics 1783-1786*, (Fredericton, 1983); W. Nelson, "The Loyalist Legacy" *Acadiensis*, XV, 1 (Autumn 1985), pp. 141-145.

³⁶J.W. Burrow, *A Liberal Descent: Victorian Historians and the English Past*, (New York, 1981), p. 17. See also, Morton, *supra*, note 18, pp. 51-54. Howe, the best-known orator of the period, incorporated humour, local colour and history and English history and politics in his speeches and journalism. See, Harvey, "History and Its Uses" *supra*, note 32, p. 11.

³⁷The religious analogy works well for almanacs which listed the historic dates of the English in a manner reminiscent of the lives of the Saints. *The British American Almanack for the Year 1792*, printed at Saint John by John Ryan and Christopher Sower, included a "Table of Remarkable Areas and Events" listing the invasion of the Saxons, the Norman Conquest, the Dutch revolt against Spain, the Gunpowder Plot, the "Cruel Irish Maffacrees" of 1641, the martyrdom of Charles I, the death of Cromwell, the discovery of the Popish Plot in 1679 and the *Habeas Corpus Act* (Saint John, 1791).

³⁸Burrow, *supra*, note 36, p. 1; Pocock, *supra*, note 6.

Runnymede” who secured the first charter of English liberty, the Magna Carta.³⁹ The cornerstone of English liberty, the common law, as an ancestral gift, was not to be taken lightly; it was a birthright to be guarded. History was commonly employed to defend the *status quo*. In 1825, during discussion of a bill on special juries, the Speaker of the Nova Scotia Assembly urged respect for the past:

Now sir, one thing which has come down to us, immemorial from usage, and has stood the test of the ages is trial by Jury It is a right which is founded upon and preserved by the common law – in all matters connected with it, we are guided by its practice. Whence comes I ask the trial by Jury? It is from our ancestors, but its first establishment is now covered with the dust of obscurity – and it is sanctioned and rendered venerable by its antiquity. For God’s sake, do not touch it.⁴⁰

This rhetoric was most common with, but by no means confined to, lawyer-politicians. Men of practical pursuits who had made no special study of the common law or history still purported to understand the constitution.⁴¹

England’s first great revolution, the Reformation, was viewed in Protestant thinking as an essential stage between the Magna Carta and the Glorious Revolution. In 1831, the *Chatham Gleaner* printed an excerpt from Sir James Mackintosh’s popular history of England which explained that the Reformation was “the first successful example of resistance to human authority.”⁴² Mackintosh, Charles James Fox, Lord John Russell and Macaulay were Whig politicians who each produced a widely read history of England focusing on the 17th century.⁴³ In 1844 a Nova Scotia assemblyman, commenting on recent Colonial Office despatches, reminded the House that the reign of Elizabeth I secured two important advantages, the beginnings of the English press and the defeat of the Catholic Spanish Armada, which had threatened the liberty of England and “Europe” (the Netherlands).⁴⁴ By mid-century the link between Calvinist Protestantism and the spread of liberty, captured in works such as George

³⁹*Morning Chronicle*, Halifax, 20 March, 12 April 1845; *Provincial Patriot*, Saint Stephen, 10 June 1853; *New Brunswick Courier*, 27 March 1858; *Ross’s Weekly*, Charlottetown, 22 April 1861.

⁴⁰*Novascotian*, Halifax, 12 March 1825. Trial by jury was a standard topic of speech makers and, naturally, lawyers in court. See also, *New Brunswick Courier*, 4 February and 28 July 1832; *Novascotian*, Halifax, 28 August 1843; *Charlottetown Herald*, 21 March 1840; *Morning Chronicle*, Halifax, 11 February 1845; *Examiner*, Charlottetown, 5 June 1850; *Acadian Recorder*, Halifax, 18 November 1864.

⁴¹See the remarks of Chatham timber baron Joseph Cunard: *New Brunswick Courier*, 2 April 1831.

⁴²*Chatham Gleaner*, 23 August 1831.

⁴³Burrow, *supra*, note 36, p. 18; Mackintosh inspired the *Novascotian* 1830s motto, “The Free Constitution Which Guards the British Press.” The original masthead had a Latin quotation. Howe cited Mackintosh during his celebrated libel defence in 1835. *Novascotian*, Halifax, 142 March 1835.

⁴⁴*Morning Chronicle*, Halifax, 19 February 1845.

Bancroft's *History of the United States*, was deeply engrained in Protestant culture. These historic truths appeared to be confirmed by contemporary European nationalist struggles, particularly in Italy. Colonial political thought was not entirely divorced from theology, thus the prominence throughout the pre-Confederation period of sectarian conflict kept the revolt against Rome in the limelight, particularly in journals with overtly religious mandates.⁴⁵ Yet the use of the past for present purposes, in the cause of the Anglican Church or Presbyterian factionalism for example, revealed that the Reformation was a potential minefield for Protestant politicians.⁴⁶

The most important period for historical political discourse, particularly during the "Responsible Government" period of the 1830s and 1840s, was the 17th century. A political system based on parliamentarianism could find no more important era. The Maritime political class, in an attempt to make colonial political questions intelligible and legitimate their activities, made extensive use of that dramatic national period. In terms of sheer volume of rhetoric, both spoken and written, the Loyalists, later enshrined as the founding fathers of English Canada, were a mere footnote compared to the Parliamentarians and Royalists, Roundheads and Cavaliers, Whigs and Tories and Williamites and Jacobites. Professions of loyalty to the Crown went hand-in-hand with extremist "Country party" rhetoric aimed at the centralization of power and the erosion of customary rights.⁴⁷ Following the broad patterns of contemporary English historiography, there was a certain ambivalence towards the Civil War of the 1640s, the execution of the king, radical political manifestations, and the rule of Cromwell. The Puritan Revolution had posed a far more serious threat to social order than did the events of the 1680s and 1690s. Despite the power of Whig historiography, consumers of popular history and writers of historical fiction, for example, sympathized with the Royalist cause and looked with disdain upon the Puritans or the Scottish Covenanters.

⁴⁵*Presbyterian Witness*, Halifax, 26 June 1852; I.R. Robertson, "The Bible Question in Prince Edward Island from 1865 to 1860" *Acadiensis*, V, 2 (Spring 1976), pp. 3-25; A.J.B. Johnston, "Popery and Progress: Anti-Catholicism in Mid-19th Century Nova Scotia" *Dalhousie Review*, LXIV, 1 (Spring 1984), pp. 146-163; J.R. Miller, "Anti-Catholic Thought in Victorian Canada" *Canadian Historical Review*, LXVI (1985), pp. 474-494. Bancroft's ten-volume study appeared between 1834 and 1874.

⁴⁶For the question of Protestant dissent, see N. Story, "The Church and State 'Party' in Nova Scotia, 1759-1841" *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society*, XXVII (1947), pp. 35-57; D.G. Bell, "Religious Liberty and Protestant Dissent in Loyalist New Brunswick" (1987) 36 *U.N.B.L.J.* 146. The potential of history to divide the community on religious and social grounds appeared to be understood by the organizers of the Halifax Mechanics' Institute in the 1830s, who purposely avoided lectures on politics and recent history. See *Novascotian*, Halifax, 27 November 1833.

⁴⁷This relative insignificance of the Loyalists in political language of the pre-Confederation period appears to confirm the thesis of Murray Barkley in "The Loyalist Tradition in New Brunswick: The Growth and Historical Evolution of an Historical Myth, 1825-1914" *Acadiensis*, IV, 2 (Spring 1974), pp. 3-45.

The Glorious Revolution, despite its prominence in 19th century British and colonial Protestant culture, neither disestablished the Church of England nor granted full civil rights to Dissenters.⁴⁸ The Anglican Church, although no longer ascendant by the early 19th century, had strong views on the martyrdom of Charles I. Cromwell was a controversial figure. There was also ambivalence in the uses of the Scottish and especially the Irish past, although politicians and journalists were prepared to appeal to the history of both if circumstances were favourable. In their public utterances, politicians of Irish or Scottish birth or descent appeared comfortable with the less controversial parameters of English domestic history. When the English headed north or across the Irish Sea, that consensus was no longer assured.⁴⁹ Rhetoric on the 17th century focused on England during the final years of Stuart rule, the Glorious Revolution, the revolutionary settlement under Mary and William of Orange and the appearance of political parties, a period that produced a broad agreement, even among political enemies, on the governing of England:

After 1688, there was a consensus over basic constitutional principles that was embodied in the Bill of Rights (1689) and the Act of Settlement (1701), and accepted by all, whig and tory alike, court and country, anglican and dissenter.⁵⁰

The personalities and issues involved in the struggle of Parliament against the Crown produced a vivid gallery of heroes, martyrs and villains for 18th and 19th century Britons.

In metropolitan and colonial political culture the bloodless revolution of 1688 marked a turning point in English history; for many it was the beginning of the modern world. 1688 was particularly significant for colonials because it marked a watershed between England's traditional caution in foreign policy and an era of war and diplomacy that resulted in overseas expansion. To the generation who founded Halifax in 1749 and secured the remnants of French Acadia for the

⁴⁸L. Stone, *The Causes of the English Revolution 1529-1642*, (London, 1972), pp. 48-49; G. Holmes, "Introduction: Post Revolution Britain and the Historians" (p. 6) and J. Carter, "The Revolution and the Constitution" (p. 43) Holmes, ed., *Britain After the Glorious Revolution 1689-1714*, (London, 1984); J. Kenyon, *The History Men*, (Pittsburgh, 1983), ch. 2; Burrow, *supra*, note 36, p. 12. Evangelicals did not always appreciate the unfavourable image of Dissenters in the works of popular writers such as Sir Walter Scott and Charles Dickens. See A.J. Crockett, "Winter Harbour Library," *CNSHC*, XXVII (1947), p. 71.

⁴⁹*St. Croix Courier*, 3 March 1866; S.F. Wise, in "God's Peculiar Peoples" suggests that each ethnic and religious group in Victorian Canada had "its own tragic myth to sustain it." See Morton, ed., *supra*, note 10, p. 38. The Scottish interpretation of the 17th century, particularly among Presbyterians, would stress the freedom won by the Kirk. The "Scottish Revolution," however, was intimately connected to the English Revolution and involved important secular and political motives. See D. Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution 1637-1644: The Triumph of the Covenanters*, (Newton Abbott, 1973). Journals serving special interests such as Roman Catholics or militant Protestants often presented distorted versions of Irish history.

⁵⁰J. R. Jones, *Court and Country: England 1658-1714*, (Cambridge, 1978), p. 5.

Empire, the Revolution was not history but a recent event. After 1688 the English were destined to spread their commerce, military power, and institutions around the globe. This sense of mission was captured in 1832 by "Nova Scotia's Blackstone," lawyer Beamish Murdoch, whose *Epitome of the Laws of Nova Scotia* included the observation of a leading writer on colonial law: "Let an Englishman go where he will, he carries as much of law and liberty with him as the nature of things will bear."⁵¹ Britain's political, commercial, industrial, scientific and artistic achievements, and dozens of imperial wars, provided Maritimers with a sense of history in the making. A feeling of participation in this grand design added a proud and aggressive dimension to political culture in the white settler dominions.

Political language, in its more emotional moments, involved a sense of racial destiny and obligation. It was assumed that the English or British thrived in struggle; their achievements, the export of their Revolution, were important contributions to Western civilization. As George Hill wrote, "The Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-American race have for some hundred years been more favoured in the matter of political freedom than any other people."⁵² Here modern romantic nationalism converged with the Ancient Constitution. The use of blood as a symbol was particularly effective in conveying those sentiments: blood that was spilled for British liberty; blood that boiled with righteous indignation over infringements on customary rights; and blood that linked the past to the present. "Orion," a regular political contributor to the *New Brunswick Courier* in 1834, used this device in criticizing the government: "Part of the blood that flows in our veins has been shed in the defence of the British name, but the remainder is no less pure."⁵³ That racial interpretation catered nicely to the colonial search for identity within a larger polity. In addressing a Fredericton audience in 1864 Thomas D'Arcy McGee, the eloquent Confederation politician, compared the union of the Anglo-Saxon, Celtic and Hibernian races in British North America to the casting of bronze. With such sturdy racial stock, McGee argued, a British North American federation was destined for a higher nationality. Race destiny, however, was not a rhetorical device monopolized by the pro-Confederation forces. Anti-Confederates and Repealers in Nova Scotia also turned to history in their

⁵¹Murdoch, *Epitome of the Laws of Nova Scotia*, I (Halifax, 1832-33), p. 36. See also, D.C. Harvey, "Nova Scotia's Blackstone" (1933) 11 Can. Bar Rev. 339. The work cited was *Chalmer's Colonial Opinions*.

⁵²Hill Papers, 3/27, undated letter.

⁵³*New Brunswick Courier*, 19 April 1834. See also, *Novascotian*, Halifax, 1 March 1827, *Chatham Gleaner*, 2 August 1831; *New Brunswick Courier*, 14 March 1835; *Morning Chronicle*, Halifax, 12 April 1845; Robertson, "Political Realignment ..." *supra*, note 20, p. 38.

protests against Imperial policy.⁵⁴ To demand liberty was the historic duty of the British people; anything less could result in racial decline and possible extinction. In this light, it was possible for loyal Maritime British Americans to view the American Revolution, however unfortunate its impact on the integrity of Empire, as a natural stage in the history of the race. It also made agitation for "rights" a moral and patriotic duty.⁵⁵

The political culture's revolutionary heritage was suggested by the language of combat, not only between the nation and external enemies, but also between the "people" and royal tyranny. In the English past there were many examples of armed resistance that resulted in the purification of the constitution. In describing the plight of the tenantry of Prince Edward Island, a correspondent to the *Novascotian* in 1843 expressed confidence through an "acquaintance with English history" in the historic tendency of the race to throw off oppression. Later in the century Reverend J.W. Wadman captured this sentiment in a sermon to the Orangemen of Saint John:

The eye flashes, the pulse flashes, the heart throbs, and the soul swells with enthusiasm when we think of those fathers of ours, who fought for liberty, who toiled for reform, who struggled for freedom in a day when the larger part of our race lay shackled in the fetters of superstition and barbarism.⁵⁶

Popular sovereignty, although guarded by the constitution, had been won by the sword. Rev. T. Berton Smith, addressing the St. Stephen Literary Association on the topic of "Liberty," posed the following question: "If people would not grant us liberty, what should we do?" His solution? "Take it." The retribution theme was used in 1868 by an Anti-Confederate who compared the Canadian design on the liberties of Nova Scotia to the rule of the Stuarts:

⁵⁴*Headquarters*, Fredericton, 10 August 1864; *British Colonist*, Halifax, 6 May 1868; *Acadian Recorder*, Halifax, 6 March 1868; *Telegraph*, Saint John, 24 March 1871. See also Charles Tupper's 1860 speech to the Saint John Mechanics' Institute, "The Political Condition of British North America" *Recollections of Sixty Years in Canada*, (Toronto, 1914), pp. 15-35.

⁵⁵*New Brunswick Courier*, 1 February 1834; *Novascotian*, Halifax, 31 January 1839; *Loyalist*, Saint John, 10 and 17 November 1842; *Morning Chronicle*, Halifax, 6 March 1845; *Chatham Gleaner*, 6 June 1853; *Ross's Weekly*, Charlottetown, 12 May 1864; R. G. Haliburton, *The Men of the North and Their Place in History*, (Montreal, 1869). Howe used the racial argument in his libel defence in 1835 and in his letters to Lord John Russell in 1839. See *Novascotian*, Halifax, 12 March 1835; Howe to Lord John Russell, 18 September 1839, Kennedy, ed., *supra*, note 31, pp. 480-487.

⁵⁶*Novascotian*, Halifax, 17 July 1843; *Daily Sun*, Saint John, 18 July 1885. See also *Novascotian*, Halifax, 29 May, 4 December 1843, 29 January 1844, 7 August 1845; *Morning Chronicle*, Halifax, 19 March 1844, 11 and 29 March 1845; *Loyalist*, Saint John, 30 March 1848. Another perceived characteristic of the British and their institutions was "masculinity." This theme was evident in the influential works of American historian Francis Parkman on the struggle between France and England in North America. See Carl Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing 1900-1970*, (Toronto, 1976), p. 4.

When the first monarch of the Stuart line came down to England to hang a man without a judge or jury, there were men who took a note of it and remembered until the day he was smitten to perdition, and the rights of the people vindicated. I ask you do you have any of the old stuff of your forefathers in you? (Cheers).⁵⁷

Politicians and journalists resorted to this rhetoric purely for its emotive powers, not to encourage violence, but the fact that the images of combat and violence found their way into political discourse is worthy of note.

In 1839, a lecturer who had toured Upper Canada concluded, in the wake of the 1837 Rebellion, that the British constitution was "imperfectly understood by a great many of Her Majesty's Canadian subjects."⁵⁸ There was broad agreement that the constitution, whether or not it had been or should be adapted to the colonies, was the nearest thing to perfection in human government. Englishmen of the 17th century, after much bloodshed and not a little divine aid, had clarified the relations of Parliament and the Crown and provided a civil framework for stability and prosperity.⁵⁹ The political class of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island was not always able to explain the constitution on theoretical grounds. Even within the same political grouping, before mid-century there was little consensus as to the nature of the local constitution.

Was colonial society sufficiently mature for the full implementation of the English constitution? Could the constitution be altered by local customs and precedents? Were royal instructions (Colonial Office despatches) part of the constitution? Were political parties constitutional? Did the local assemblies enjoy fundamental rights within the Imperial system?⁶⁰ In political discourse such questions drew many answers. The correspondent "Scaevola," who in 1827 contributed nine letters to the *Novascotian* on the constitutional situation, noted that these questions attracted the attention of "men versed in human passions and the history of revolutions." Proponents of land reform in P.E.I. demanded nothing less than the full implementation of constitutional principles. In 1868 the anti-Confederate Nova Scotia legislature, protesting the alien *B.N.A. Act*, agreed with Attorney-General Martin Wilkin's theory of "a valuable and admirable working

⁵⁷*St. Croix Courier*, 3 February 1866; *Acadian Recorder*, Halifax, 18 January 1868. The speaker was confusing James I and Charles I.

⁵⁸*A Digest of the British Constitution*, compiled by Dr. Bridges and delivered by him as a Lecturer at Many of the Principal Towns of Upper Canada, (Montreal, 1839), p. i.

⁵⁹Glazebrook, *supra*, note 32, pp. 40, 140. For the constitution as providential, see Bishop John Medley's sermon in honour of the visit of the Prince of Wales to Fredericton in *The Tour of H.R.H. The Prince of Wales Through British America and the United States by a British American*, (Montreal, 1860).

⁶⁰*Yarmouth Herald*, 27 March 1841; *Morning News*, Saint John, 1 April 1850; *Headquarters*, Fredericton, 6 January 1864. For this confusion, see the Nova Scotia legislative debates of 1844.

constitution," British in spirit, Nova Scotian and practical in operation.⁶¹

Emotional and historical appeals and a mythical view of the British constitution, generally took precedence over scholarly discussion, but on occasion editors, correspondents, assemblymen and councillors displayed evidence of erudition. In 1827 lawyer Alexander Stewart, debating Nova Scotia custom house salaries, defended the rights of "Parliament" against "the Prerogative." Stewart spoke of the Law Library's "musty volumes" which contained the most important information for the people: "the Magna Carta- the bill of rights- the grand, immortal principles under which British liberty is founded."⁶² Constitutional treatises even entered the boisterous New Brunswick assembly, where members were more interested in political economy. In 1835, lawyer L.A. Wilmot, a leader in the lower House's struggle for control of Crown Lands, brandished and quoted from "one of the best of those books," Jean Louis DeLolme's *Constitution of England*, first published in English in 1772.⁶³

The standard constitutional works cited in political debate included those of Coke, Hale, Blackstone, Burke and Montesquieu. Burke, regarded by many legislators as the father of political science, and the omnipresent Blackstone were cited most frequently, largely because of the prominence of lawyer-politicians and the fact that their arguments could be used by both Tories and Reformers.⁶⁴ The most practical source for journalists and politicians were the English narrative historians. In an intellectual age often characterized as Whig, the colonial political class did resort to influential Whig historians such as Henry Hallam, James Mackintosh and Macaulay who celebrated the Revolution and its 19th century offshoots, Catholic Emancipation and the Reform Bill of 1832. Yet equally popular were David Hume's sophisticated "sociological" history of England and Archibald Alison's ten-volume account of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. Hume did not sing the praises of 1688 and Alison, a Tory, was

⁶¹*Novascotian*, Halifax, Letter 1, 31 May 1827; *British Colonist*, Halifax, 20 August 1868. The Tory Wilkins told the assembly that in signing the *BNA Act* the Queen had "rebelled" against Nova Scotia. Citing the precedent of 1688 he claimed, rather absurdly as Morton notes, that "Nova Scotians were released from their allegiance." *Supra*, note 18, p. 231.

⁶²*Novascotian*, Halifax, 1 March 1827.

⁶³*New Brunswick Courier*, 14 March 1835. DeLolme's work, written in exile from Switzerland, was considered a classic in its day and strongly influenced the French Philosophes.

⁶⁴Hill Papers, 3/26 Draft Speeches, 3/27 Letters to Editor; B. Cuthbertson, *The Old Attorney General: A Biography of Richard John Uniacke*, (Halifax, 1980), pp. 133-134; Beck, *Joseph Howe Vol. 1*, *supra*, note 12, p. 34. On occasion, reference was made to more esoteric jurists such as Grotius. Murdoch's *Epitome* advised law students that "A thorough knowledge of the English language, a familiarity with its early writers of celebrity, an acquaintance with the chief features of the history of the mother country, are so pleasing a pursuit, and so valuable to the lawyer in every part of the British dominions." Murdoch urged the study of the orations of the Ancients and British statesmen such as Chatham, Walpole, Fox, Burke, Canning and Erskine. *Supra*, note 51, pp. 2-9.

a strict opponent of reform.⁶⁵

Whig history and political writing appealed to those with Reform, Liberal or levelling sympathies, but supporters of "the prerogative," like 18th century English Tories, were not oblivious to the usefulness of 1688 for standing Reform ideology on its head. Liberals could refer to the Glorious Revolution to justify political or legal reform; Tories could employ 1688 to preserve the *status quo*. Tories, in the parlance of the day, also considered themselves freemen.⁶⁶ Reform politicians, assisted by popular historians, naturally claimed exclusive rights to 17th century heroes and compared their opponents to obsequious supporters of the Stuarts. In the debate on despatches in 1845, a Nova Scotia assemblyman described William III, enemy of James II and Louis XIV, as "the most illustrious benefactor of Europe." G.R. Young, arguing that the executive council should command the confidence of the assembly, asked Lieutenant-Governor Falkland to inaugurate "the principle established by 1688."⁶⁷ L.A. Wilmot, who as a judge would deliver anti-American lectures, claimed in 1848 that the American Revolution had been justified on the grounds of 1688.

Long-winded Liberal speeches on constitutional issues frequently endorsed the moderate Parliamentary leaders of the 1640s, martyrs to Stuart tyranny and the Whigs of the Glorious Revolution. Charles Fairbanks, debating the issue of taxation in 1827, recalled the tale of John Hampden and the ship money. Edward Whelan, attacking Tory slurs on the loyalty of the P.E.I. Liberals in 1848, appealed to the memory of "the Hampdens, the Sydneys, the Marvels and the Pyms." Such a self-righteous and partisan use of history proved too much for T.C. Haliburton in 1827: "For his part, he knew that when they [the British government] saw these high flown resolutions, and heard the great stand the Nova Scotia Hampdens were taking, they would convulse with laughter."⁶⁸ Although no longer as prevalent after the constitutional debates of the 1830s and 1840s, images of the 17th century found their way into discussions of Confederation. New Brunswick Anti-

⁶⁵Kenyon, *supra*, note 48, ch. 3. For a balanced review of Macaulay, see *Examiner*, Charlottetown, 22 January 1849. T.C. Haliburton's *History of Nova Scotia*, *supra*, note 2, was cited on occasion but generally for facts, not interpretation.

⁶⁶In 1847-48 the Saint John *Loyalist* and the Fredericton *Headquarters* argued over which political tradition represented the true spirit of 1688. In extreme Tory thinking the 19th century British Liberals, by endorsing Catholic Emancipation, had betrayed 1688. See, *Loyalist*, Saint John, 16 December 1847, 20 January 1848; *Islander*, Charlottetown, 3 April 1863.

⁶⁷*Morning Chronicle*, Halifax, 4 and 18 March, 1845. See also, *New Brunswick Courier*, 6 February 1830; *Novascotian*, Halifax, 23 October 1843, 5 February 1844; *Presbyterian Witness*, Halifax, 27 December 1851, 18 December 1852; *British Colonist*, Halifax, 18 July 1868.

⁶⁸*Loyalist*, Saint John, 9 March 1848; *Novascotian*, Halifax, 1 March 1827; *Examiner*, Charlottetown, 29 May 1848. For a Liberal comparison of Howe and Hampden, see G. E. Fenety, *Life and Times of Hon. Joseph Howe*, (St. John, 1896), p. 123.

Confederate Albert Smith compared Lieutenant-Governor Arthur Gordon to Charles I for "prostituting the prerogative of the Crown." At one of the many Repeal meetings held in Nova Scotia in 1868, a speaker denounced Confederation as "an invasion of the liberties of Britons," comparing Canada's designs on Nova Scotia to attempts by Louis XIV to buy support of English Members of Parliament before the secret Treaty of Dover in 1670. Unlike the patriots of the 17th century, it was argued, unscrupulous Nova Scotians had bartered away their birthright.⁶⁹

In constituencies that were largely rural, 17th century Country party rhetoric, based on the primacy of "Parliament," opposition to taxation, suspicion of centralized government, and defence of local custom, was bound to enter the political vocabulary. Anti-lawyer feeling was one manifestation of this sentiment. This rhetoric was strongest before the leading officers of the government were responsible to the assembly.⁷⁰ One favourite Country party theme was the portrayal of executive influence and patronage in a conspiracy against the freeholder. "Placemen," both bureaucrats in general and the higher officials and judges provided for under civil list agreements, were prominent targets of Country party language.⁷¹ Political speeches, editorials and letters, usually aimed at the "court," "city," or "compact" rule of lawyers, executive councillors and officials in Halifax, Charlottetown and Fredericton, referred to haughty public servants fattened by salaries, fees and pensions. In the 1830s the New Brunswick Department of Crown Lands, criticized as the bane of the honest farmer and lumberman, was a prominent target of this rhetoric. Verbal and written attacks on P.E.I.'s proprietary interest stressed that absentee landlords were an incubus sapping the political and economic vitality of the colony.⁷²

The independence of the English judiciary from the Crown, part of the Revolutionary settlement, was established through the 18th century, strengthening the ideology, embraced by Whig and Tory alike, of the rule of law. Although the quality of "British Justice" in the colonies was not always popularly endorsed, few

⁶⁹C. Wallace, "Albert Smith and Confederation: Reaction in New Brunswick, 1852-1882" *Canadian Historical Review*, LIII (1963), p. 293; *Acadian Recorder*, 17 January 1868.

⁷⁰*Supra*, note 4, ch. 1; Marquis, *supra*, note 24; *Examiner*, Charlottetown, 19 June 1848; *Loyalist*, Saint John, 16 December 1847; *Provincial Patriot*, Saint Stephen, 2 September 1853; *Semi-Weekly Advertiser*, Charlottetown, 15 September 1863; *Headquarters*, Fredericton, 19 June 1865; Beck, *Joseph Howe Volume 1*, *supra*, note 12, p. 122. For a nostalgic view of mid-century P.E.I. political culture, see D. Weale and H. Baglole, *Prince Edward Island and Confederation*, (1973), p. 109.

⁷¹*Novascotian*, Halifax, 2 April 1834 and 20 May 1844. Bailyn, *supra*, note 7, ch. 4. MacNutt called anti-placemen rhetoric an "historic American prejudice" but its origins were in 17th century England. *New Brunswick*, *supra*, note 17, p. 257.

⁷²*New Brunswick Courier*, 19 February, 19 March 1831, 1 December 1832, 12 January 1833; *Herald*, 15 February 1840; *Novascotian*, Halifax, 13 November 1843; *Examiner*, Charlottetown, 11 May, 13 June 1850; *Hazard's Gazette*, Charlottetown, 7 November 1853; F. W. P. Bolger, ed., *Canada's Smallest Province: A History of Prince Edward Island*, (Toronto, 1973), chs. 3-5.

wished to return to the days of the Stuarts. When searching for examples of the ultimate in legal corruption and tyranny, the colonial political class turned not to Czarist Russia or the tribunals of Revolutionary France, but to the Star Chamber and the courts of High Commission, abolished by the English parliament in 1640-41. Writing in the 1840s, Macaulay remarked that after the lapse of two hundred years, these royal courts, the former for political offenses and the latter religious, were still "held in deep abhorrence by the nation."⁷³ Another favourite allusion was to Sir George Jeffries, whose "Bloody Assizes" wreaked vengeance on the participants in the Monmouth Rebellion of 1685. Jeffries, who was imprisoned in the Tower of London at his own request following the flight of James II, was one of the chief characters in the "demonology" of Whig historiography. Yet in the Maritimes this demon was criticized by opponents of reform politics such as New Brunswick barrister David S. Kerr.⁷⁴ Perceived "political" acts by the judiciary were criticized in 17th century terms. The issue of salaries and the controversial appointment of a new Chief Justice in 1850, disrupting the normal patronage pattern of New Brunswick politics, brought forth the champions of the people against judicial and executive aggrandizement.⁷⁵ When Nova Scotia judges were accused by Anti-Confederate journalists and politicians of violating the constitution by actively supporting Confederation, 17th century rhetoric, predictably, was in the forefront.⁷⁶

Images of the 17th century also were invoked in political debates over control of revenues and taxation, powers intimately related to the constitutional situation in the 1820s and 1830s.⁷⁷ In 1827 the Colonial Office, in the hope of shifting the financial burden of colonial administration, demanded the payment of quitrents from the occupiers of land. This perceived infringement on the liberties of farmers and speculators produced a political backlash: "Rebellion was a word that

⁷³*History of England from the Accession of James II Volume II (1848)*, (New York, 1962), p. 67. In 1850 the New Brunswick Master of the Rolls gave a speech on the independence of judges to the legislature that was heavily laced with Macaulay. He noted that the historian's work was "in every one's hands." See, *Headquarters*, Fredericton, 1 May 1850.

⁷⁴*Loyalist*, Saint John, 16 October 1843; *Novascotian*, Halifax, 7 September 1831, 16 October 1843; *Headquarters*, Fredericton, 22 May 1850; *Ross's Weekly*, Charlottetown, 21 July, 11 August 1867; Burrow, *supra*, note 36, p. 13; G. Marquis, "A Hard Disciple of Blackstone"; David S. Kerr, 1809-1886" (1986) 35 U.N.B.L.J. 182. Macaulay was confident the memory of the infamous Bloody Assizes would last "as long as our race and language." See, Macaulay, *ibid.*, p. 478.

⁷⁵*New Brunswick Reporter*, 24 January 1851; MacNutt, *New Brunswick*, *supra*, note 17, pp. 223-224, p. 341; J.W. Lawrence, *The Judges of New Brunswick and Their Times (1907)*, (Fredericton, 1985), pp. 353-358; D.G.G. Kerr, *Sir Edmund Head: A Scholarly Governor*, (Toronto, 1954), ch. 4.

⁷⁶*Acadian Recorder*, Halifax, 22 May 1868; *British Colonist*, Halifax, 27 August 1868.

⁷⁷D.C. Harvey, "The Civil List and Responsible Government in Nova Scotia" *Canadian Historical Review*, XXVIII (1947), pp. 365-382; W.S. MacNutt, "The Politics of the Timber Trade in New Brunswick, 1825-1840" *Canadian Historical Review*, XXX (1949), pp. 47-65; Beck, *Joseph Howe Volume I*, *supra*, note 12, pp. 122-123.

came, only half jocosely, into common use." The press was flooded with letters discussing popular sovereignty.⁷⁸ An order for collection in New Brunswick in 1833 met with a similar outburst. Although the sums were paltry, the principle was elevated into a constitutional battle over the issue of taxation and representation. The people, represented by the Assembly, confronted the Crown, represented by the Colonial Secretary. Assemblymen, editors and correspondents such as the populist "John Gape" (who knew his Blackstone) pointed out that Englishmen in the 17th century and American colonists in the 18th had settled this question by force of arms. Writing in the *New Brunswick Courier* in 1833, "X.Y.Z." argued that quitrents, abolished in England during the 17th century, violated the principle of "Free Government" established in 1688. In addition to being impolitic, their collection denigrated the Ancient Constitution of the Saxons.

It is indeed astonishing that in this late period, a part of the *odious* and oppressive Feudal system, could be introduced into British Colonies – a system which has nothing *British* in it, having been forcibly introduced into England by a rapacious foreign conqueror, but which, being too oppressive to be long endured there, was utterly abolished, as before observed, in the reign of Chas. the 2d – a system which was known in England at the time of the landing of Julius Caesar, fifty-five years before the Christian era, and for 1100 years afterwards, to the *Norman Conquest*; a system which originated with the Barbarian Despots of the North of Europe, who carried it with them, in their *conquest* and *desolation* of the fairest portion of that quarter of the globe.⁷⁹

The undated document "Articles of Impeachment" in the papers of George Hill addressed the quitrent issue in a 17th century style, comparing government supporters of the Colonial Secretary to "the high prerogative lawyers" who defended the doctrines of the house of Stuart such as the Divine right of Kings. According to Article XI, support of these doctrines constituted "a high political offence" against the constitution of the "revolution."⁸⁰

Having focused on the rhetoric and historical consciousness of the political class, can we speculate as to popular attachment to the English past? The population of the three colonies was far from homogeneous, consisting of five major religious denominations; Scots, English and Irish immigrants; blacks; the Mi'kmaq and Maliseet; the Acadians and the offspring of 18th century "foreign Protestants," Planters, and Loyalists. Yet political debate was decidedly anglocentric. Although divided on the basis of ethnicity and sectarianism, the

⁷⁸MacNutt, *The Atlantic Provinces*, *supra*, note 17, pp. 189, 194. For the same issue in colonial North Carolina, see Greene, *supra*, note 34, pp. 43-44; 141-146.

⁷⁹*New Brunswick Courier*, 12 January 1833. See also, 8 December 1832, 29 March 1834; MacNutt, *New Brunswick*, *supra*, note 17, p. 234.

⁸⁰Hill Papers, 3/37, Articles of Impeachment, n.d. See also, *New Brunswick Courier*, 28 March 1835; *Loyalist*, Saint John, 2 March 1848.

population, or at least large segments of it, was receptive to political symbolism and appeals to history. One school of working-class historiography suggests a gulf between the political traditions of the élite and the masses, portraying liberal party politics as a disruptive force in working-class culture. It is difficult, after examining the importance politicians placed on populist rhetoric, to discount the appeal of political symbols to the masses. It is more difficult to ignore popular interest in politics. In the colonial era political participation was not limited to the voters, nor was popular support preconditioned by an understanding of constitutional principles or, for that matter, party platforms. In the Maritimes, as in neighbouring Canada, plebeian interest and participation was manifest during turbulent electoral contests.⁸¹ During the 1840s, for example, it was customary to "chair" victorious candidates in Prince Edward Island constituencies. The triumphant carriage was accompanied by music, banners, flags, cheering and the firing of guns, a celebration meant to humiliate and intimidate the losing parties and their supporters.⁸² Average Protestant Maritime British Americans emulated their anti-Papist forbearers by entertaining a healthy suspicion of Roman Catholicism. The lower classes also were aware of a constitutional heritage that prided itself on safeguarding the rights of "the people." This tradition, however latent, shaped the political climate.⁸³

The key group in any discussion of politics and popular culture are the freeholders. The generous suffrage of the three colonies often involved tenants, but in political language the freeholder was awarded the most attention. In 1834, popular tribune Charles Simonds proclaimed the ultimate political duty of the New Brunswick Assembly to be the preservation of the rights of the freeholders.⁸⁴ The demand of the P.E.I. tenantry for freehold tenure went beyond the economic burdens of individual farmers. Despite the existence in the mid-1850s of virtual manhood suffrage, the tenant movement involved the status of an entire class. Anti-quitrent writing suggested a similar sentiment. The American political heritage had its impact on Maritime British America, but voters, often idealized as the "yeomanry," were most commonly described as British subjects, not citizens.

The term "citizen" conjured up a host of ambivalent images: the Commonwealth of the English Civil War, the American Rebellion and the excesses of the French Revolution. It was more prestigious to stand on the rights and privileges of British subjects, rights guaranteed by the true Revolution, than on the

⁸¹G.S. Kealey, "Orangemen and the Corporation: The Politics of Class During the Union of the Canadas" V.L. Russell, ed., *Forging a Consensus: Historical Essays on Toronto*, (Toronto, 1984), pp. 41-86.

⁸²*Examiner*, Charlottetown, 1 January 1848.

⁸³Marquis, *supra*, note 6.

⁸⁴*New Brunswick Courier*, 28 March 1834.

rights of man. Candidates and press supporters, particularly when elections did not centre on political issues, usually established their credentials by ritualized flattery of the “free” electors. Rhetoric on the yeomanry implied that the possession of land by a large number of freeholders, however humble, was a bulwark against the power of the Crown and ambitions of corrupt politicians. This was Country party sentiment at its best. But the cult of the yeoman, derived from English history and adapted to the New World, was not totally democratic; freeholders, for example, could look with contempt upon demands for universal manhood suffrage. Independent farmers were also suspicious of the introduction of municipal institutions, partly because county councils threatened to disrupt established rural patterns of deference and patronage based on assemblymen and justices of the peace. The “free-born” Briton was propertied; the individual possession of property, guarded by the law, was one of the pillars of liberty secured during the 17th century.⁸⁵

County politics, although often dominated by influential families, revealed a degree of independence on the part of the yeomanry. One illuminating example, a ceremony reminiscent of the May pole rituals in early 19th century rural Lower Canada, occurred at Arichat in 1844 when 150 freeholders of Richmond County signed an address thanking the Hon. Peter DeCarteret for his public services. A large body of freeholders, led by the British ensign and “a picked guard of twelve armed volunteers,” paraded to DeCarteret’s residence to present a flag staff that required fifty men to transport. The gift was erected and the colours hoisted amid cheers and volleys. The address expressed the hope that the flag staff would “on similar occasions serve as a rallying point for all friends of order, and, under the flag which now waves so proudly, we shall ever be found ready to combat for these rights and privileges which as British Subjects are our birthright.” DeCarteret responded with a flourish of paternalism: “When I am no more my son will, I hope, be left to aid your children to maintain your rights unimpaired.”⁸⁶ The Richmond County freeholders on one level were performing a ritual of deference; on another they were acting out a primitive interpretation of popular sovereignty.

The monarch, Walter Bagehot’s “dignified” part of the English constitution, was meaningful in the popular sphere, but not always for the superstitious reasons

⁸⁵*Examiner*, Charlottetown, 20 July 1850; *Provincial Patriot*, Saint Stephen, 14 October 1853. Garner, *supra*, note 21, p. 9, notes the obvious connection between Calvinism and the cult of the independent yeoman. Both Haliburton and Howe promoted a flattering image of the yeoman farmer. See, J. Howe, *The Public Dinner at Amherst, Nova Scotia, 29 June 1852*, (n.p. 1852); M. B. Taylor, “Thomas Chandler Haliburton as a Historian” *Acadiensis*, XII, 2 (Spring 1984), p. 57; Beck, *Joseph Howe: Volume I, supra*, note 12, p. 77.

⁸⁶*Novascotian*, Halifax, 19 February 1844. For a discussion of ritual and symbols in French political culture, see Hunt, *supra*, note 5.

assumed in Bagehot's classic 1867 study of the English constitution.⁸⁷ The British Maritime colonies were a bastion of pro-monarchist feeling, yet this enthusiasm was complex. Part of it was a folk appreciation of tradition and British power. In the constitutional tradition "loyalty" went hand-in-hand with an element of independence. 1688, in theory, had ensured the reciprocal nature of this relationship. The Glorious Revolution was "no mere palace coup"; it marked the end of a royal absolutism that offended all levels of society.⁸⁸ The limited monarchy, a prestigious national symbol, now belonged not to the élite but to the people. The popular attraction of the monarchy was evident during the 1860 visit of the Prince of Wales to the Maritimes. At Saint John, a party of "stalwart, though gentle" firemen unhitched the horses from the royal carriage and pulled "their dear prince" across a bridge. The royal visit, like elections, public holidays and parades, allowed members of the lower classes an opportunity to assert that they were an integral part of the community.⁸⁹

The Loyal Orange Association, which by mid-century was experiencing a membership boom with the recruitment of native born Protestants, emerged in the popular sphere as the most important transmitter of 17th century historical myth. This secret society, brought to the region by members of British garrisons, eventually attracted young and old, rich and poor, urban and rural, immigrant and native born. Membership included merchants, ministers, justices of the peace, assemblymen, farmers and tradesmen. Orangeism began to prosper in New Brunswick in the mid-1840s, a period of heavy Irish Catholic immigration. By 1850 there were several thousand Orangemen, organized in over one hundred lodges. Saint John and its suburb Portland were the seats of Orange power. Although not lacking in anti-Catholicism, the more populous Nova Scotia, with only eight lodges by mid century, lagged behind. By the Confederation period this number had trebled.⁹⁰ In P.E.I., which contained few Ulster immigrants but roughly equal numbers of Protestants and Catholics, the first lodge appeared in 1849. Although condemned by the Lieutenant Governor in 1852, the association grew quietly through the 1850s. By 1862 there were fifteen primary lodges and the

⁸⁷W. Bagehot, *The English Constitution*, (1867), introduction by R.H.S. Crossman (Glasgow, 1963).

⁸⁸Jones, *supra*, note 50, p. 235. It has been suggested, however, that few benefits of the Glorious Revolution accrued to the English masses. See C. Hill, *The Pelican History of Britain Volume 2: Reformation to Industrial Revolution 1530-1780*, (New York, 1967), pp. 213-214; A. McInnes, "The Revolution and the People" in Holmes, ed., *supra*, note 48, pp. 80-95.

⁸⁹Medley *supra*, note 59, p. 47; Marquis, *supra*, note 6. For a rural celebration of the monarchy, see *Islander*, Charlottetown, 20 March 1863.

⁹⁰See Scott, "The Orange Order and Social Violence in Mid-19th Century Saint John" *Acadiensis*, XIII, 1 (Autumn 1983), pp. 73-76; T.W. Acheson, *Saint John: The Making of a Colonial Urban Community 1815-1860*, (Toronto, 1985), pp. 106-107; Waite, *supra*, note 12, pp. 11-12. See also, Kealey, "Orangemen and the Corporation" H. Senior, *Orangeism: The Canadian Phase*, (Toronto, 1972).

Orangemen, reportedly strong in the ranks of the militia, were confident enough to seek an act of incorporation.⁹¹

The Orange lodge's social function combined with its ideology makes it of central importance for mid-Victorian political culture. Orangemen had a keen sense of the past, a memory sharpened on a regular basis by lodge ritual, poems, songs, sermons, and celebrations such as the anniversaries of the Gunpowder Plot (1605) and the Battle of the Boyne (1690). Orange ideology held the Protestant Succession, which delivered the throne from Papal interference, as the key achievement of the Glorious Revolution. Orange hagiography revered William III, Prince of Orange, as a folk hero in the manner American republicanism admired Washington.⁹² In the pre-Confederation period, the "marching season," 17 March to 12 July, was often marked by tension and outright violence between Orangemen and Irish Catholics. Most of its members were moderates, but the LOA's constant attention to Ireland's bloody past did not strengthen chances for goodwill.

Like the Whig historians, Orangemen were supremely confident in their use of history. The failings of the Catholic lower classes and the demands of the Catholic hierarchy for public funding and legal status confirmed that wisdom of the Protestant throne. Despite its constitutionalist rhetoric, Orangeism measured the outcome of the Glorious Revolution mainly by the state of the Protestant ascendancy in Ireland. The claim of loyalty to British institutions, the monarchy and Parliament, therefore, was predicated on Irish affairs. This and its violent past made the order unattractive to many liberal Protestants. Many Protestants, however, tended to see the lodge as a benign force and heeded its Old World message. Reverend W.O. Raymond, one of the founders of New Brunswick historiography, was not an Orangeman, but his 1885 Centennial sermon to Dominion Lodge No. 141, Portland, explained that the LOA celebrated "the overthrow of oppressive bigotry and the restoration of pure religion." Raymond praised British institutions but, unlike Reverend J.W. Wadman, did not review the events surrounding the formation of the order. Those were "matters of history and known to us all."⁹³ Orange ideology was bound to the establishment of the

⁹¹*Examiner*, Charlottetown, 15 July 1861; *Evening Patriot*, Charlottetown, 13 July 1867; *Islander*, Charlottetown, 5 July 1867; Reverend J. MacMillian, *The History of the Catholic Church in Prince Edward Island, 1835-1891*, (Quebec, 1913), "Controversialism" pp. 34-51.

⁹²*Islander*, Charlottetown, 30 April 1852; *Protestant and Evangelical Witness*, 18 January 1862; C. Houston and W.J. Smyth, *The Sash Canada Wore: A Historical Geography of the Orange Order of Canada*, (Toronto, 1984).

⁹³*Loyalist*, Saint John, 17 November 1842; *Islander*, Charlottetown, 7 April, 1 May 1863; Marquis, *supra*, note 6; *Daily Sun*, Saint John, 13 and 18 July 1885. In the 1850 N.B. assembly debate on an Orange incorporation bill, Orange sympathizer John Boyd read from Hume's history of England and Charles Fisher discussed Macaulay. See, *Headquarters*, Fredericton, 6 and 13 April 1850.

constitutional monarchy beginning in the 1690s and argued that the rule of law in itself was insufficient protection against Papish intrigue. Each Orange lodge functioned as a history tutorial, indoctrinating members with a particular version of the past. The centrepiece of this history was not the flight of James II, the *Bill of Rights* or the *Act of Settlement*, but the Battle of the Boyne, the military victory that secured the constitutional settlement and solidified the Williamite myth. Thus Protestant popular culture, particularly in the rural areas where Orange celebrations were more public, lived through the past.⁹⁴

Conclusion

The post-Confederation political framework provided the self-absorbed Maritime British Americans with a new orientation, Canadian politics and history. As federal institutions were consolidated and party networks and patronage extended, Maritimers began to come to terms with the meanings of Canadianism. Yet Confederation, John A. Macdonald and the Conservative party did not, as Gordon Stewart seems to imply, invent political culture.⁹⁵ Maritime politics were characterized by patronage, personality, debate over economic policies and sectional and regional rivalries well before the 1870s. The struggle for political power and legitimacy in the early-to-mid-Victorian Maritimes was in part a struggle over the past. Lacking a unifying political creed or historical experience, politicians and journalists turned to the world's success story, the history of England. Using periodical literature, popular narrative history and constitutional works, the political class exploited the prestige of the English past and strengthened the British cultural inheritance.⁹⁶ The 17th century, particularly the complex of ideas embodied in the term "1688," provided an idealized benchmark for early Victorian political life. It would be too sweeping a generalization to identify this tradition as an "ideology" dominating Maritime society. 1688, however, not the Loyalists, dominated political language for half a century or more. Although persons subscribing to Reform or Liberal values made good use of 17th century symbols, Tories rushed to the defence of the 1688 constitution. Despite the pragmatism of most debate and all policy, 19th century Maritime political culture was never divorced from religion, as the 1870s New Brunswick school question would painfully illustrate. An appeal to the general principles of British liberty, therefore, was an attempt to form a consensus in the face of religious and ethnic rivalries. The secular Whig version of the Glorious Revolution, however, faced a strong competitor in the more sectarian Orange

⁹⁴*The Constitutional Lyrist: A Collection of National Songs*, (Fredericton, 1845).

⁹⁵Stewart, *supra*, note 4, pp. 87-88.

⁹⁶A similar process characterized the teaching of history in public schools. See P.T. Phillips, *Britain's Past in Canada: The Teaching and Writing of British History*, (Vancouver, 1989), ch. 1.

interpretation. As the social importance of the Orange order grew, 1688 vied with 1690 as the turning point in the history of the Britons.

Maritime political culture did change over time. The late 1850s and Confederation period were marked by signs of a new awareness of indigenous history and institutional development.⁹⁷ In Nova Scotia William Annand published a collection of Howe's speeches and letters and the provincial authorities began to collect and preserve the early records of the colony and replaced British school readers with a local series. 1867 saw the publication of Beamish Murdoch's history of Nova Scotia, Liberal George Fenety's political history of modern New Brunswick and John Lepage's second volume of P.E.I. poetry, which included political satire.⁹⁸ The attention devoted by the press to the American Civil War added to an awareness of a North American past. Ironically, in a negative sense the changing political framework provided the region with a new historical myth, one that became deeply rooted in political culture. This was the myth of a Maritime Golden Age that ended with Confederation.⁹⁹ The political class, as it had done before 1867-73, continued to exploit the past for present purposes. In the meantime, as they began to develop a regional memory, the Britons of the Maritimes continued to follow the history of the Britons "at home."

⁹⁷M.B. Taylor, *Promoters, Patriots and Partisans: Historiography in 19th Century English Canada*, (Toronto, 1989) chs. 2 and 6.

⁹⁸W. Annand, *The Speeches and Public Letters of the Honourable Joseph Howe*, 2 vols. (Boston, 1858); T.B. Aikins, *Acadian and Nova Scotia: Documents Relating to the Acadian French and the First British Colonization of the Province 1714-1750 (1869)*, (Cottonport, Louisiana, 1982); J.A. Evans, "Too Many Cooks Spoil the Broth: School Readers From a Century Ago" *Nova Scotia Historical Review*, II, 1 (1982), pp. 63-85; Harvey, *supra*, note 51; Fenety, *Political Notes and Observations*, (Fredericton, 1867). Lepage's first work was *The Island Minstrel: A Collection of Poetical Writings*, (Charlottetown, 1860); P.D. Clarke, "Beamish Murdoch: Nova Scotia's National Historian" *Acadiensis*, XXI, 2 (Autumn 1991), pp. 85-109.

⁹⁹J.M. Beck, in "An Atlantic Region Political Culture: A Chimera" P.A. Buckner and D.J. Bercuson, eds., *Eastern and Western Perspectives*, (Toronto, 1981), pp. 147-168, argues that provincial identities have outweighed regional consciousness.